THE FLUTE MUSIC OF PAUL DESENNE: A COMPARATIVE ANALYTICAL STUDY OF REPRESENTATIVE WORKS

Javier A. Montilla
University of Nebraska - Lincoln, javiemm@yahoo.com

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A COMPARATIVE ANALYTICAL STUDY OF REPRESENTATIVE WORKS

by

Javier A. Montilla

A DOCTORAL DOCUMENT

Presented to the Faculty of
The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
For the Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

Major: Music

Under the Supervision of Professor John R. Bailey

Lincoln, Nebraska

August, 2010
THE FLUTE MUSIC OF PAUL DESENNE:
A COMPARATIVE ANALYTICAL STUDY OF REPRESENTATIVE WORKS

Javier A. Montilla, D.M.A.
University of Nebraska, 2010

Adviser: John R. Bailey

The significance of the works by Venezuelan-born composer Paul Desenne lies in his unique compositional style that incorporates elements of Latin American folk, pop, and traditional music within the framework of the Western European tradition. His works, though easily classified as art music, nevertheless gain much of their emotional and referential meaning through this rich borrowing.

This document focuses on three of Desenne’s flute pieces: the Solo Flute Sonata (2001), Gurrufio for flute orchestra (1997), and Guasa Macabra for flute and clarinet (2003). It provides an analysis of the three works, examining formal, structural, motivic, and rhythmic aspects. Scores and interviews with the composer have been employed as primary sources. Bibliographical material closely related to his music and other secondary sources support this analytical approach. This document also provides an introduction and stylistic discussion of Desenne’s other pieces that incorporate the flute.

Chapter one consists of an introduction to Desenne’s life and general considerations of his musical style. Each of the following three chapters focuses on one of the three aforementioned flute works, including information about the composition and premiere of each piece as well as analysis and an examination of its incorporation of traditional folk elements. The final chapter presents an introduction to and stylistic discussion of the other flute pieces by this composer. This study intends to provide a basic understanding of Desenne’s flute music, including general characteristics of his musical style, paving the way for further investigation of Desenne’s music, and flute music in particular.
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank with my deepest gratitude Dr. John Bailey, who has been not only my flute professor throughout the D.M.A. program, but also a person who has been completely devoted to mentor me, help me with revisions, and ultimately, provide me with the most important advice about this study. I would also like to acknowledge the other members of my Advisory Committee, consisting of Dr. Pamela Starr and Dr. Diane Barger, who have provided important advice and supervision throughout my D.M.A. program, and who read and critiqued the present study. I would like to thank Paul Desenne, the subject of my document, an extraordinary composer as well as a great human being, who has always been willing to collaborate and help in this research. I would like to acknowledge as well a number of persons who have provided invaluable assistance at different stages in the writing of this study, and whose support was vital to its completion: Jorge A. Montilla, Marie Sue Racine, Ana Paola Rincones, Rosemary Holland, and Alejandro Lozada. And special thanks to my parents, Haydee and Jorge Montilla, who have been the most important persons in my life and who have been for me an immense source of inspiration.
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Biographical Sketch of Paul Desenne

Paul Desenne was born in Caracas on December 7th of 1959.¹ His father, a French medical doctor, Jean-Jacques Desenne works for the Embassy of the United States of America in Caracas as well as for two private hospitals in the same city. His mother, Monica Hable, is a professional astrologer born in Wisconsin, and currently living in Boston.²

Desenne spent his childhood in Caracas. As a child, he was exposed to diverse types of music at home. His father was a fan of Indian music and Ravi Shankar; he also liked composers of the Baroque period such as Johann Sebastian Bach and Georg Philipp Telemann. His mother valued the folk music of the United States, Bob Dylan, Woody Guthrie, and Joan Baez, being the most unforgettable to Desenne. Desenne recalls Dylan as the “eternal soundtrack” of their lives.³ He also remembers that Venezuelan music or Latin music was not heard at home at all, with the exception of some Colombian music that was brought by his stepfather from that country.

Although Desenne’s parents were not directly linked to musical arts, musical genes run in his family on both sides. On his paternal side, his grandmother, a citizen of Lyon in France, was an accomplished pianist, although she was forbidden to pursue a

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are the author’s.
² Paul Desenne, interview with the author on October 20, 2008.
³ Ibid.
career as a concert player because of her bourgeois background. On the same side of the family, Desenne’s uncle took a few years of piano lessons as a child, and even after six decades without practicing, he could play, to the surprise of his nephew, all sorts of incredible arpeggios, scales, and improvisations, as if he were a master player. On the other side of the family, the two grandparents of Desenne’s mother were violin players, in Bohemia. One of them switched to the clarinet and made the perfect clarinet/violin Klezmer combination, a good one, considering their Jewish lineage. Furthermore, a great uncle of his mother, Andrew Grill, was a composer of polkas and dance music in the United States.

When Desenne approached his teen years, he was influenced by American pop groups, which, more than their musical contribution, were a television phenomenon. He dreamt about the idea of forming a group similar to those he thought successful. That is when his first big step into music occurred. In association with some school friends at the Colegio Francia of Caracas, he founded, with some family help, his first music group, One Foot One Eye, in 1973. In this group, Desenne functioned as a conceptual leader and confessed that he was the “most demanding member of the group.” He was not the most technically prepared of all the members, but he wanted to go beyond the obvious and was pushing toward an innovative style.

Desenne’s musical training up to that point was limited. He had played only drums in the gaita groups at school (a rather rhythmical training), and had taken some

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4 Paul Desenne does not clarify in the interview why his grandmother’s bourgeois background forbade her to pursue a career as a pianist; however, this author presumes that her family had different life expectations for her, and music as a career was not considered a dignifying option.
5 Paul Desenne, interview with the author on October 20, 2008.
6 Gaita is a Venezuelan musical genre that is performed at Christmas time. José Peñín and Walter Guido, Enciclopedia de la Música en Venezuela (Caracas: Fundación Bigott, 1988), 633.
guitar lessons with Maurice Reyna,⁷ which proved frustrating because Desenne is left-handed. Nonetheless, Desenne invented his own way of playing the guitar sideways, practicing on the four lower strings of the instrument, as if it were a bass.⁸

Even though One Foot One Eye was short lived, it was a successful group that performed on many occasions in important venues of Caracas. It was also an important beginning for Desenne’s musical career. With them, he performed different instruments, learned the ways of interacting in an ensemble, and had the opportunity to create music in a collective effort.

Soon after he embarked on this first musical adventure, he started taking cello lessons, the instrument that he finally chose as the most important in his life as a performer. His first cello teacher, Antonieta Franzosa, was a member of the Venezuelan Symphony Orchestra. He remembers her as a wonderful teacher, who had “a beautiful tone”⁹ and who taught him in a few lessons everything about sound. Playing this instrument was not unnatural for a left-handed person. At the same time Desenne also started theory lessons with another member of the aforementioned orchestra, an Italian named Jose Gay, whose strictness was demonstrated by his demand that Desenne should learn a complete book of solfège in only a few months.

⁷ Reyna, Maurice (b. 1948). He is a Venezuelan guitar player. José Peñín and Walter Guido, Enciclopedia de la Música en Venezuela (Caracas: Fundación Bigott, 1988), 516.
⁸ Paul Desenne, interview with the author on October 20, 2008. “[T]he problem came from a totally different sphere: Maurice insisted on having me play right handed, a totally unnatural thing for a left handed person. I felt terribly frustrated, and he lacked the flexibility to accept my condition. After a few lessons I abandoned the instrument that I really loved and wanted to play; the insistence and poor choices of a bad or stoned teacher can ruin everything! This young man was an authority and the guitar authority denied my access to the guitar. This I will not forgive, as I will not forgive myself for not insisting (later I met his father, the fabulously capricious Freddy Reyna, an astonishing showman, and heard him play in parties many times in that intimate surrounding of La Trinidad, both at Zitman's and Pierre Barthélémy’s⁸ home, a legendary house). But I kept playing on the upside-down guitar, and ended up dreaming I had a bass, using the four low strings: it was easier and it was possible; so I used to play the best bass lines in pop: Pink Floyd's "Money", and many others from King Crimson to Deep Purple...So finally I did insist on playing something like a bass guitar until the cello came along.”
⁹ Ibid.
In 1974, Desenne enrolled in the composition class of the Greek-born composer Iannis Ioannidis, at the Universidad Metropolitana in Caracas. Ioannidis was a Greek exile who married a Venezuelan and lived and taught in that country for some years. His pedagogical vision was holistic and his musical analysis emphasized concepts over techniques. In two years, the students covered “almost every step in the history of Western music, and studied some points of ancient and ethnic music as well.”

From Ioannidis’ teaching, Desenne assimilated and developed a capacity to understand the roots of music within every specific context. However, as Desenne points out, that rational process of understanding and composing music was difficult to change thereafter in order to reconnect with the “mysterious roots of music.”

While studying with Ioannidis, Desenne was supported by the Venezuelan government to attend the Fifth Latin American Contemporary Music Composition Course in Buenos Aires in 1975. This course was not only his first opportunity to visit another Latin American city, but also to learn from the most important composers and teachers of the region that time, such as Coriún Aharonián, Gerardo Gandini, and

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10 Ibid.
11 Ibid. Desenne explains in detail how this process occurred: “[A]fter meeting him everything changed, of course. I could not see things the same way, it was impossible to write music without really controlling everything: style, language, concepts...this was ridiculous! I lost my spontaneous imagination and it took years to recover from that extremely conceptual approach. I hadn’t had contact with ethnic Venezuelan music, and that discovery I made a few years later, in Paris, and helped me rediscover some powerful ‘instinctive’ elements that I had kept aside.”
Hilda Dianda, among others. The main topic of the course was to learn contemporary techniques and styles through the analysis of works written by other Latin American composers. There was also a discussion about identity in Latin American music, although, of course, nobody had an answer. Desenne explains some of the possible directions explored, as he remembers them:

Was Latin Identity the new Austerity of Selso Garrido-Lecca? Was it música povera? Was it the magical sound of Del Mónaco's Solentiname? Was it folkloric composition? No! Of course not! That branch was absolutely taboo! Nothing tonal, folkloric or rhythmic could become the new identity of Latin American Composition! It had to be very harsh, and suffering, of course: Las venas abiertas de América Latina ["The Open Veins of Latin America"], that silly book, was the bible of that particular period. Nothing happy could represent a continent of victims! Everybody was crying, except for us, the tourists from 'Venezuela Saudita'!

The following year, 1976, Desenne moved to Paris to complete his high school studies, and ended up living there for eleven years. He completed his high school degree at the Lycée Janson de Sailly, where he obtained high grades that allowed his entrance to the Hypokhâgne, a preparatory school for the École Normale Supérieure. Desenne turned down an opportunity to study philosophy, deciding to continue his music education instead.

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17 Del Mónaco, Alfredo (b. 1938). He is a Venezuelan composer whose interest is in electronic music and serialism. José Peñín and Walter Guido, Enciclopedia de la Música en Venezuela (Caracas: Fundación Bigott, 1988), 498.
18 Galeano, Eduardo (Uruguay, 1940). The book is a study on the economical history of South America since Colonial times, and it was written in 1970. Eduardo Galeano, Las Venas Abiertas de América, 10a ed. (Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno, 1989).
19 Paul Desenne, interview with the author on October 20, 2008.
Desenne’s music studies in Paris were at the Conservatoire National de Région de Boulogne Billancourt and at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Paris, from 1979 to 1985. His main professors in these conservatories included Michel Strauss and Philippe Muller in violoncello; Marc-Olivier Dupin, Solange Ancona, and Luc Ferrari in composition; in medieval music Marc Robert; in baroque music William Christie; and Gérard Caussé, Alain Meunier, Jean Mouillère, and Maurice Bourgue in chamber music. Desenne received degrees from both conservatories. He obtained the Premier Prix (First Prize) in violoncello performance and chamber music from the Conservatoire de Boulogne Billancourt in 1981 and the Premier Prix in violoncello performance from the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Paris in 1985.

In Paris, Desenne came into close contact with music and musicians from all around the world. To him, Paris presented two musical worlds: the serious music academy, represented by the conservatories, and the music that provided bread on the table, and that also provided a valuable opportunity to learn, perform, arrange, and compose in a new light the popular, folk, and ethnic music of the non-European world, and especially of Latin America. In an article written for Revista Número, a Colombian arts magazine, he describes himself during his years in Paris, in an ironical and critical tone, as a performer who crossed back and forth from the academic music world:

While I was studying violoncello in Paris, I had the opportunity to stir up my instrument outside the anemic French academic music environment. For me each group combination means a new chapter, a credit in my program of off-the-wall studies. Cello with arpa llanera in the subway, which is the music of hunters that collect coins, “guahibos”.

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of the tunnels; cello with accordion of the vallenato\(^{22}\) in the parties of the Caribbean, sad for their exile \(\ldots\); cello with tumbadora,\(^{23}\) cello with the kemancha\(^{24}\) of Armenia, with the drums and bamboo flute of Guadalupe, with the ūd\(^{25}\) and darbuka\(^{26}\) of Algiers; cello with tuberculosis bandoneon\(^{27}\) of an exiled “porteño.”\(^{28}\) My cello professor, a Stalinist “trasnochado,”\(^{29}\) undermined my inclination for a bourgeois instrument by saying that I, who was a South American of the elite, could afford that luxury only because of the richness of a country like Venezuela, which exports oil. He doubted my talent and vocation. I began to discover in the music of Latin America and the non-Western world everything that he was lacking in musical expression and authenticity. I never dared to reply to him that he enjoyed the luxury of playing the violoncello because France sold arms to Africa and nuclear plants to Iran. But the reality is that the barrier of prejudice that separates academic music from other music in France, has condemned the very traditional music of France, of any kind, and it has led music to an impoverishment and to an immense professional discredit. The valid function of music, ancestral and legitimate, is not transmitted in conservatories any longer. Only a few academic musicians know and act upon the truth that has been murdered slowly, in a crisis that has lasted for over a century, the organic nature of the music education, as well as the relationship between the audience and the academic musicians.\(^{30}\)

Desenne wrote that the experience obtained from playing in unconventional settings as an academic musician was precisely what fed his artistic inspiration. He gained a great deal of mastery in adapting and arranging music for the cello in different formats, and this mastery gave him the insight to create his first serious compositions in


\(^{28}\) It is a colloquial way to name someone that was born or lives in Buenos Aires.

\(^{29}\) Literally it means someone who did not have a good night sleep. But in a political context it refers to people who wish communism as the ideal political system.

1981. These compositions were for a unique mixed ensemble: flute, oboe and English horn, violin, cello, and the Venezuelan *cuatro*. Desenne performed the first versions of these quintets in Paris along with Venezuelan students who were music students at the same time there (Pedro Eustache, flute, Jaime Martínez, oboe, Inocente Carreño, violin and Pastor Mendoza, *cuatro*). These pieces constituted the chosen works on Desenne’s first compact disc, *Tocatas Galeónicas*, recorded by the Venezuelan music label Musicarte in 1990, and released later by the American label Dorian Discovery in 1994.

In 1987 Desenne went back to Venezuela and since then that country has been the place from which he has projected his activities as a performer, teacher, and composer. The first years after his return, Desenne divided his activities as a performer between the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra and soloing with other orchestras and in recitals, giving remarkable performances around Latin America. Desenne also taught the cello privately and at the Simón Bolívar Superior Conservatory of Music in Caracas. In 1990 he left the Orchestra to devote himself to composing.

Ever since Desenne returned to Venezuela, his compositional output started to grow immensely. He has been commissioned to compose for prestigious ensembles and soloists from all around the world. These are some of the ensembles for which Desenne has composed: Kremerata Baltica, the Nederlands Blasers Ensemble, the Fodor Quintett of Amsterdam, the Violoncello Octet of the Paris Conservatory, the Duo Marimolin from New York City, the Palladian Ensemble of London, the New Julliard Ensemble, and the Ensemble Continuum. Numerous instrumentalists of international fame have also asked Desenne to write for them. Some of these remarkable soloists are: Gabriela

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Montero, Carlos Prieto, Paquito D’Rivera, Chelsea Chen, Jacques Zoon, and Alexis Cárdenas.

From 1997 to 1999, Desenne participated in a unique musical project, along with the multi-talented musicians Pedro Vásquez and Alonso Toro, requiring his talent as a performer and arranger. The aim of this unique group was to create a fusion of genres that established an intermediate point between acoustic performances and electronic manipulation of sounds. The final objective was to release a compact disc, since live performances were almost impossible (and not intended). The name of the recording and the group was Alzheimer. However, this laboratory-produced product opened new ways to showcase not only their music but also the key concept of the group: a weekly radio show that was broadcast in Caracas for three years (2000-2003). Desenne explains how this happened:

One of my latest CD is a collective creation called Alzheimer, an exploration of cultural confusion, using an approach to studio music production which is more akin to cinematography than to other procedures. On this record I perform mainly on the electric cello, and I have created versions of, for instance, a Beatles song performed by an absolutely realistic African ensemble, or a Gregorian chant/rock cocktail of Jimi Hendrix’s Purple Haze. The record also explores new paths in Venezuelan music, and represents part of my recent activity in the recording studio, where our team also prepared a weekly radio show for a local FM station. (This weekly half hour consisted of our versions of all sorts of music, as well as fake news, fake interviews, fake ads and political satire. Aside from writing the script of the show, I created the musical setting and the editing with my colleague Alonso Toro, and I directed the team of professional speakers and actors that contributed to the show).32

Recently, Desenne’s energies have been dedicated almost exclusively to writing new compositions. He composed a concerto for violin and string orchestra, The Two

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Seasons (2003), after Vivaldi’s Four Seasons, dedicated to and premiered by Virginie Robilliard. Desenne also wrote the orchestral work, Sinfonia Burocratica ed Amazonica (2004), which was premiered at Lincoln Center’s Alice Tully Hall in New York, by the New Julliard Ensemble under Joel Sachs. Another orchestral work was La Furia y la sombra (Fury and the Shadow, 2005), an overture that was premiered by Manuel Hernández Silva with the Bogotá Philharmonic in 2005. Two other recent works, both of which employ bigger musical forces, are the symphonic-choral works: La Fiesta de Contrapunto (Counterpoint Party, 2004) and El Reto (The Challenge, 2002-2003). These two works were premiered in Caracas by the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra of Caracas and the Camerata Criolla of Caracas, respectively.

Currently, Paul Desenne lives in the mountains near Caracas, where he spends his time composing, practicing the cello, and doing one of his favorite hobbies: painting in oil.

Musical Style: General Considerations

Paul Desenne’s musical and life influences were eclectic and his compositional output shows it. Desenne’s childhood was spent in a social and family context that allowed him to observe and enjoy multiculturalism in many ways. Not only did his parents come from different backgrounds, but also the country where he grew up, Venezuela, is a multicultural place that features the encounter of three dissimilar roots:

33 It is not the music compositional technique, Contrapunto is the name of a vocal group of Venezuela.
the indigenous, the Spanish, and the African. To a Venezuelan, the *mestizaje*[^34] that happened after the arrival of the Spaniards in 1492, far from creating a social and racial division, encouraged a deep reflection and identification with what constitutes this astonishing mix. Desenne understands well this complex social process and explains how music has been a faithful mirror of it. In the program note of the first compact disc of his music, *Tocatas Galeónicas*, he wrote:

> Venezuelan music contains elements taken from just about everyone who landed on its Caribbean coasts over the past five centuries. Cultural interweaving seems to have chosen this wild territory to show how much diversity could spring from a handful of different seeds. Western musicologists would be stunned to find very pure strains of European Renaissance music, almost unchanged, in many popular Venezuelan songs and instrumental forms today.[^35]

Desenne also identified the main musical contributions of each of these groups in the Venezuelan *mestizaje*: from the Europeans the *cuatro* (Venezuela’s most important folk instrument), from the Africans “hundreds of rhythmic ingredients”, and from the indigenous culture the shamanic dancing and chanting and the *maracas*.[^36] All these influences are prominent in his compositions.

Desenne’s aesthetic has been described by Tulio Rondón in his dissertation “Cultural Hybridization in the Music of Paul Desenne.”[^37] Rondón has referred to the composer’s creative conception as *La Sopa* (the soup), for the way in which Desenne

[^34]: This word is used to describe the process of mingling and mixing of the indigenous, Spanish, and African populations after the Spanish colonization.
[^36]: Ibid.
combines different “ingredients.”\textsuperscript{38} In \textit{Jaguar Songs} for solo cello, the piece that Rondón chose to analyze in order to demonstrate his thesis on hybridization, Desenne used elements from the folk music of Spain, Colombia, and Brazil; indigenous music of Venezuela and Latin America; European music, such as Gregorian chants and baroque dances; as well as North American pop music.\textsuperscript{39} Rondón concluded his research by stating that:

Through \textit{Jaguar Songs} the voices of Latin American people speak, manifesting the diversity and contributions of the various populations that make up Latin American society. Desenne intermixes classical traditions with popular cultures, giving them equal status in their journey following the footsteps of the jaguar from the depths of the jungle to the busy streets of Caracas.\textsuperscript{40}

This comment is corroborated in a general conception of the state of the present music in Latin America by Rafael Salazar, a Venezuelan musicologist:

The musical history of Latin America contains a new world of cultural values that range from the ritual singing, as a token of the empathy of the man with nature, up to contemporary works orchestrated under the folk influence. Those works employ European academic techniques as resources of expression to offer a different artistic work that is sensual, magical, rhythmic, of new sounds and novel harmonies, and that aspires universality, even though they are based upon the vernacular, from that collage of multiple and heterogeneous national forms that characterize our identity.\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid. P. 22.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid. P. 87.
\textsuperscript{41} Rafael Salazar, “La Música del Mestizaje,” Revista Musical de Venezuela 40 (Jul-Dic 1999) : 225-256. “América Latina encierra en su historial musical un mundo nuevo, de valores culturales que van desde el canto ritual como empatía primaria del hombre con la naturaleza, hasta las obras contemporáneas orquestadas, con substrato folklórico, que utilizan las técnicas académicas europeas como recurso de expresión para brindarnos una obra artística diferente, sensual, mágica, rítmica, de propuestas tímbricas y armónicas novedosas, que aspiran a la universalidad, partiendo de lo propio, de ese collage de formas nacionales, múltiples y heterogéneas, que caracterizan nuestra identidad .”
But, has this mestizaje been a coherent and continuous process throughout Latin America and all its composers? The answer is no. The Cuban musicologist Alejo Carpentier makes a point of this process through a comparison between the European and the Latin American musical history.

To those who study the musical history of Europe, the process of its development is logical, continuous, according to its own organic development; it can be traced as a sequence of techniques, tendencies, schools, that have been nurtured by the presence of brilliant creators, and that has led, through successive achievements, to the most cutting-edge quests of the present…the music of Latin America does not evolve toward the same cultural values and facts. Instead, its evolution obeys events, contributions and impulses that rely on factors of growth, mood pulsing, racial strata, graft and transplants, producing a result that is unbelievable to the ones that pretend to apply certain analytical methods to an art that is ruled by a constant replay of confrontations between the native and the foreign, the vernacular and the imported.\textsuperscript{42}

In Latin America, the establishment of a style has been always the main question for composers. What should the style be? Perhaps the style should rest on the roots of each country, in a kind of nationalistic quest, or it should aim at the universal trends, such as neo-classicism, serialism, dodecaphonism, avant-garde, or any of the other international schools developed in the twentieth century. But, as Carpentier stated, there is no a logical sequence of events in Latin America which allows a continuity of style. As a result, composers look for their own voice within their own sphere.

\textsuperscript{42} Alejo Carpentier, "América Latina en la Confluencia de Coordenadas Históricas y su Repercusión en la Música," in \textit{Musicología en Latinoamérica}, ed. Zoila Gómez García, (Habana: Editorial Arte y Literatura, 1984), 254-255. "Para quien estudia la historia musical de Europa, el proceso de su desarrollo resulta lógico, continuado, ajustado a su propia organicidad, presentándose como una sucesión de técnicas, de tendencias, de escuelas ilustradas por la presencia de creadores cimeros, hasta llegarse, a través de logros sucesivos, a las búsquedas más audaces del tiempo presente…. La música latinoamericana, en cambio, nos encontramos con que esta no se desarrolla en función de los mismos valores y hechos culturales, obedeciendo a fenómenos, aportaciones, impulsos, debido a factores de crecimiento, pulsiones anímicas, estratos raciales, injertos y transplantes, que resultan insólitos para quien pretenda aplicar determinados métodos al análisis de un arte regido por un constante rejuego de confrontaciones entre lo propio y lo ajeno, lo autóctono y lo importado."
After Desenne arrived in Paris, he discovered an interesting line of thought, a connection between the folk music and the baroque tradition that was brought into Latin America, and remained somewhat unchanged in some folk music. In Paris Desenne met wonderful exponents of the Latin American folk and popular music who taught him how to play and adapt those music realms. One of them was Guillermo Jiménez Leal, a Venezuelan song writer, who provided Desenne with a great deal of information about the folk music of Venezuela and posed interesting questions on how those genres could be translated and transposed into the classical music world. Jiménez Leal was particularly fond of bringing up the connection between Venezuelan folk music and European baroque music. At the same time, in the early 1970s, some musicologists in Venezuela were researching precisely that relationship, which motivated Desenne to explore even further the possibilities of a new music born out of that connection. This resulted in his first collection of woodwind quintets (1981), which were later compiled in the compact disc Tocatas Galeónicas (Musicarte and Dorian Discovery). In those quintets, Desenne created music in which identifiable elements of Venezuelan folk music were present, within the frames of baroque conventions, such as a complex and rich counterpoint. The genesis of his style began by writing simple arrangements, exploring the possibilities of classical instruments to express folk language and he added the cuatro, a versatile instrument whose harmonic and rhythmic possibilities made it function as a continuo.

Desenne’s way to achieve the integration of the Latin American folk and ethnic genres in his writing consisted of two chronological phases. The first stage began by shifting genres, which were taken from their original instrumentation and were then
written into a chamber music context. This, to Desenne, was an aesthetic revelation of hidden structures and of musical content. Furthermore, that transposition was a source that allowed for structural expansiveness. For instance, short ideas of a Venezuelan joropo, which could be repetitive in their original state, were developed and transformed, creating as a result, a new sense of time, space, and ideas. Desenne describes this process as an “expansion of both the forms and the poetic form.”

He emphasizes that his point is not to transpose genres in order to stylize or dignify that vernacular music, but instead to compose by using elements from those genres in a shifted manner. In this process, the original medium is violated. Only a few aspects or appearances are taken, or just a concept, which can be very abstract. Desenne explains here at length how this transposition is achieved:

…The transposition has nothing to do with the range of the timbre; it is rather something abrupt. I feel that just the simple transposition proposes something and brings the audience into a new situation. What I care about is to take elements of a tradition and copy them down into a different setting and try to make a poetic creation that uses those atmospheres and games. Finally, there is a violation. First, the original setting is violated, the original structures are not respected; only some aspects are taken upon, appearances. For instance, the Pizzi-Quitiplá for three violoncellos uses the imbrications of the Quitiplá, which is a percussion instrument made of bamboo. I take only the element of the intricate rhythmic machinery; the close interdependence of the players and the motives. In this music, a motive means nothing if it is not played with its rhythmic couple which produces the rhythmic counterpoint. What is transposed is a concept that might be very concrete or abstract. In this case I would say that is rather abstract. But, for example, in another piece for cello, I used the pseudo-parallel fifths of the flauta cuna and the hocketus play that they produce. There I employed the elements more literally; then, the concept approaches the original reality more closely. That transposition of concept generates

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44 Ibid.
45 These bamboos are cut in various sizes thus affecting the pitches.
implications at the complexity level of the material. This has made my music difficult to perform because the performer needs to have a clear image of the final result before reading it. This music is hard to read since the global idea is built upon dialogue and imbrications.\textsuperscript{46}

A second phase of Dessene’s compositional development is the one he uses today.

These creations aim at a more personal language and feature three main aspects: timbre, color, and instrumentation. This quest is realized mainly by exploring the possibilities of an instrument in order to create new sounds and enhance the poetics of that instrument. For instance, instead of taking the European lyrical quality of the violoncello, the percussive possibility is explored and the sounds of the quitiplás are adapted, thus nationalizing the instrument through its timbre and poetic possibilities: the violoncello speaking a local language.\textsuperscript{47}


CHAPTER II: *SOLO FLUTE SONATA* (2001)

Conception and Premiere

Desenne intended to portray a musical vision of the American Continent in his *Solo Flute Sonata*. He states that the music of America, from all the points of the Continent, possesses the “greatest bank of musical forms and ideas in the world.”\(^\text{48}\) However, he complains that in academic circles, this wealth of music is never taken up for further musical development, not even as a form of amusement.\(^\text{49}\) Desenne considers enjoyment as his ultimate motive for listening to music. In his own words, and in reference to this piece, Desenne wrote:

> …[G]ood dancing and singing, and not only good thinking, should be the measures of musical success in ‘serious’ composition. My musical references have usually been related to the context I live and work in: Latin American and Caribbean music, and this piece is not an exception, of course. This fact explains the genres I have adopted, the language, the style, and the general tone of the work, which is not devoid of humorist intentions.\(^\text{50}\)

The *Solo Flute Sonata* was completed in 2001 and premiered by this author. The premiere took place at the University of Colorado at Boulder in 2002, and the piece was included as a part of the program of a Master of Music recital. The first movement, the first one to be written, is dedicated to the Venezuelan flutist Luis Julio Toro. The *Solo Flute Sonata* was recorded by Luis Julio Toro (b. 1961) in 2006, in an independent

\(^\text{48}\) Paul Desenne, Program Note for the Premiere of the *Solo Flute Sonata*, 2001.  
\(^\text{49}\) Ibid.  
\(^\text{50}\) Ibid.
record production, and it has been played by Venezuelan flutists and some international flutists. Its last movement, *Rancho Son*, was included in the list of repertory of the Yamaha Second National Young Soloist Flute and Piccolo Competition in Venezuela (April, 2010).

The first time I listened to Desenne’s music I was captivated by its capacity to reveal the substances of the traditional and folk music of Venezuela, through a language that was powerful, exciting, seductive, and which ultimately motivated me to investigate its musical language. As I started to become familiar with Desenne’s flute pieces and to listen to his complete output of works, I became even more astonished by the broad scope of his compositional oeuvre. In his music I noticed a new language that is personal but that also relates to various points in history of music and of societies, sometimes with a humorous twist.

An Introduction to the *Solo Flute Sonata*

Before I came to premiere the complete *Solo Flute Sonata* in 2001, I had the pleasure of participating as a member of the National Flute Orchestra of Venezuela in the premiere of *Gurrufto* (1997), a piece that Desenne composed for flute ensemble. In conversations with him at that time, he explained that he was always interested in composing for the flute, and had included it in several previous chamber music compositions. I asked him about the composition of a piece for flute alone, and he replied
that he had already begun a piece of that sort. He composed the first movement of the 
*Solo Flute Sonata* in 1998 and in 2001 he had finished the complete work.

Although I did not commission the work, Desenne granted me with the privilege of premiering the complete piece in 2001. I related immediately to many of the main points of the piece. Just the movement titles - *America, Divagación, Variaciones Imposibles sobre el tema de Misión imposible, Guasa Charcosa (Pondy Guasa), Guasaranas II (Guasa of the frogs) Rancho Son* – aroused my curiosity to discover and understand all the fun that might be underlining those titles. It looked at first as if there were a joke behind the work. Music from movies and television shows (*Mission Impossible*), from Broadway musicals (*America—West Side Story*), from popular Latin American dances (*Rancho Son*), and from the folk of Venezuela (*guasa*) are rarely all put together, and never in a recital hall. I understood that the fact of setting all those different contexts in one piece was of a great significance. Then, I asked myself several questions as a performer that also stirred further questions that were useful in this research. The main questions I posed were: Was there a matter of confrontation of contexts or instead was there an attempt to bring those worlds together? And how is it possible to achieve coherence through the complete work by basing the music on such different sources?

The *Solo Flute Sonata* is a large piece (approx. 19 minutes) that contains three large-scale movements separated by interludes. The opening movement titled *America, Divagación*, is followed by *Guasa charcosa*, which is the first interlude. The third movement is named *Variaciones Imposibles sobre el tema de “Misión Imposible”* (Impossible variations on the *Mission Impossible* theme), and it consists of six separate movements
that include a theme and five variations. Another interlude follows, entitled *Guasaranas II*, and the final movement is called *Rancho Son*.\(^{51}\)

**Different Worlds**

Desenne employs music quotation as a device to stimulate a historical and social awareness in the audience. The first quotation, the son “America” from Broadway musical *West Side Story* (music by Leonard Bernstein music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim), is about the confrontation between two cultures and love. Based on Shakespeare’s “Romeo and Juliet”, *West Side Story* is set in a context where two rival communities were clashed: the “Jets” (Americans) and the “Sharks” (first generation Americans of Puerto Rican descent), in the New York City of 1957. In “America” there is homesickness for the motherland left behind (Puerto Rico), with all the memorable things that it evokes; but there is also a justification for emigration from the island.\(^{52}\)

Most important, Desenne invokes the delight in being America: “I like to be in America! O.K. by me in America! Everything free in America, for a small fee in America.” This issue of different worlds is implicit in the first musical quotation that Desenne uses in the *Solo Flute Sonata*.

Desenne also quotes the theme music of the American television series *Mission Impossible*\(^{53}\) and uses it as a theme for five separate variations. The show “Mission Impossible” is about covert agents who have to accomplish highly risky missions, usually in other countries. The subtext of the series is the Cold War, although missions

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\(^{51}\) The *Solo Flute Sonata* has not been yet published.

\(^{52}\) Leonard Bernstein (music) and Stephen Sondheim (lyrics). “Puerto Rico, you lovely island, island of tropical breezes. Always the pineapple growing, always the coffee blossoms blowing. Puerto Rico, you ugly island, island of tropical diseases. Always the hurricanes blowing, always the population growing, and the money owing, and the babies crying, and the bullets flying.”

\(^{53}\) This television series was broadcasted in two seasons: from 1966 to 1973 and 1988 to 1990.
in other countries out of the East European side are carried out, such as in Central and South America. The music of this show was composed by the native Argentinean composer Lalo Schifrin. The inclusion of this music has several meanings for Desenne. In the first place, there is the highest level of confrontation when two super powers threaten each other with a capacity to destroy the whole planet. There is also a reference to a group of people who have the power to intervene in other countries by force and impose their own agenda. Somehow the capacity of this group to affect and change the course of political life in other countries is similar to the power enforced by American television as the most powerful media communicator in the modern world.

Desenne addresses folk and popular music of Latin America when he creates for the solo flute the sounds of the Venezuelan guasa and the Cuban son. Among all the types of Venezuelan folk music, Desenne has a special predilection for the guasa. Guasa means joke and the music of the traditional guasa always depicts and emphasizes the humorous and picaresque expression of the lyrics. On the other hand, the Cuban son has become one of the most influential genres in the Latin American and Caribbean area and its popularity is based upon its dance and festive character.

The types of music that Desenne chooses to reference in the Solo Flute Sonata are very dissimilar, and are produced for very different audiences. Mission Impossible belongs to the category of mass media. No doubt almost any person in the world might know about the television series, or the latest movie versions of the show. While Broadway shows and the popular music of Latin America (Cuban son) are less influential worldwide, they are both definitely iconic references on the American continent. And finally, the guasa represents a type of music that only Venezuelans could recognize, and
since it belongs to the folk realm, many Venezuelans might not know much about that genre.

There is a world of difference between the musical quotations generated in the United States and the ones referenced from the Caribbean. There is an attempt, in one way, to contrast those two music histories, one developed within the aesthetic of American popular entertainment, the other that comes from the Caribbean people. One could speculate about some obvious contrasts that this juxtaposition reveals: refined versus wild, urban versus rural, commercial versus non-commercial, planned versus spontaneous. But Desenne also managed to situate these different worlds within the same piece, therefore providing a new space for the communion of all. The song “America” invades the Solo flute Sonata, right from the beginning, with the possibility of opening a space for the “other,” what comes from abroad, the melting pot, the new blend of people, ideas, and, of course, music. All of this occurs in the Solo Flute Sonata not without a great touch of irony and fun.

The Autobiographical Nature of the Work

Desenne was born in Venezuela, the son of a French father and an American mother. This personal triangulation implanted in him a cultural openness that is always present in his works. But in the Solo Flute Sonata there are many references that could indicate a specifically autobiographical content. “America” might mean for him a personal desire to live in the United States, or in any other country that would offer him better social and economical conditions than his native country; and overall better conditions to promote and develop his career as an artist. The two interludes, the guasas, feature the croaking of native frogs, a recurrent sound at nights in the mountains where
he has been living for the past twenty years. Those movements represent the composer in his daily environment. They also might represent his idealization of a world in peace and in communion with nature. These movements create a central stability within the work, a safe ground that relates to the composer as a symbol of his own peacefulness and satisfaction, isolated from civilization. But guasas usually refer to jokes and funny stories, so was Desenne faking a state of peacefulness? Mission Impossible refers to the great difficulty for the composer to move on and change his current state of life. It is both an irony and a joke because the composer gives the impression of wishing to change his life, but in fact, five variations show how difficult and pointless that it is. The variations represent all the different ways in which the composer attempts to accomplish a change. But, in the end, that change is not reached, or not desired, and Desenne accepts defeat by placing a son, a party dance, at the end of the piece. However, he goes a step further and adds social commentary, titling the movement Rancho Son. “Rancho” is a word employed in Venezuela to denote the cheapest houses, built with cardboard. In short: it suggests the happiness of the dance within the worst living conditions.

In the Solo Flute Sonata, Paul Desenne, who has been in social self exile, expresses a desire to return to normal conditions of living in society. Another explanation might suggest that he only proposes the possibility of the return as an impossible illusion, as a game in his mind. The musical references employed, the order in which the movements are placed, the selection of only one instrument (as if only one person were speaking), point toward an autobiographical character in the Solo Flute Sonata.
Salient Musical Features

Variation is the most important organizing device of the *Solo Flute Sonata*. Desenne makes use of it at different levels through the complete work. The third movement, *Variaciones Imposibles sobre el Tema de Misión Imposible*, represents variation on a large scale. This movement is divided into six separate sections, including the theme. In the presentation of the theme itself, Desenne uses melodic, rhythmic, and structural variations of Schifrin’s original. In the next five sections, an important feature is the taking of elements from the *Mission Impossible* theme, in combination with elements of the previous two movements (*America, Divagación* and *Guasa Charcosa*).

Variations and varied repetition is used structurally within sections of some movements. Notable examples include the first movement *America, Divagación* and the fifth movement *Rancho Son*. In the Cuban *son*, melodic variation over a fixed harmonic and rhythmic pattern is a common technique. Desenne uses this structural principle in *Rancho Son*, respecting for the most part the length of the repeated pattern. On the other hand, in *America, Divagación*, variations are of different types, mostly free. The length of variations is not at all uniform, they depend on the musical content Desenne is varying. In this movement, Desenne develops melodic, rhythmical, metrical, and harmonic content from Bernstein’s theme, illustrating the digression implied by the title of the movement (*Divagación*) with these transformations.

Another important musical feature in this piece is the use of an unaccompanied solo melodic line. Desenne’s treatment of the melodic line greatly resembles the style of writing in Baroque pieces for solo instruments, especially those of Johann Sebastian Bach. The illusion of more than one single voice is created through compound melody,
with distinguishable lines in soprano and bass and strong implied harmonic content. In order to achieve this, Desenne makes use of short-note figurations and extensive use of arpeggios. In the *Guasa Charchosa*, for instance, he uses a melodic layout of cells that reminds us of the contours of Bach: all the notes in the cells have the same rhythmic values, arpeggiation provides an established bass, the harmony is revealed by the ascending and descending notes, and a soprano melody is clearly audible. This texture occurs not only in the fast movements, but also in the slow ones, noticeable, for instance, in the third variation of the *Mission Impossible* Variations.

Desenne expresses diverse musical elements solely through unaccompanied melody, for example, in the initial presentation of the theme. In the *Mission Impossible* Variations, where the solo flute takes on all the roles of Schifrin’s original orchestra. All the elements that make up the original theme can be heard: 1) the “firing fuse” that is running to produce an explosion (trill), 2) the “explosive glissando” (chromatic ascending sixteenth notes), 3) the “on the move” idea, which features the clave rhythm (spaced single eighth notes), 4) the main lyrical melody (descending and ascending triadic cells, called “descending motive” and “ascending motive” respectively), and 5) the “bongo” (repeated sixteenth notes). Desenne assigns the quality and character of each of these elements within the expressive and technical capacities of the flute.

Desenne also utilizes range and register of various melodies to create contrast and emphasize various expressive characters throughout the *Solo Flute Sonata*. For instance, in *America Divagación*, the Bernstein’s theme is set in the low register, somewhat removing the cheerful and powerful expression of the original. However, this

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54 The following labels of the various components of the Theme are an attempt to characterize their rhythmic and melodic content as well as their evocative nature.
setting provides a starting point to contrast with the following variations, especially when the range expands. Later in the same movement Desenne changes abruptly to the highest register at the softest dynamic, creating a huge contrast and attributing to the high register a peaceful and refined character.

When writing melodies in the *Solo Flute Sonata*, Desenne favors disjunct motion. On one hand, by doing so, he creates the illusion of more than one single voice. On the other, this provides a sense of fullness of texture that might imprint on the listener the memory of specific sound worlds instead of mere melodies to take home.

The sources quoted and employed by Desenne in the *Solo Flute Sonata* are traditionally tonal, and his harmonic language in general is also tonal. Nonetheless, his structures are often atonal or exhibit expanded tonality, with an emphasis on intervallic relationships instead of tonal centers. There is a particular use of the ascending major seventh that is associated with the croaking of tropical frogs (abundant by his mountain cabin surroundings), and which is employed particularly in the two interludes (*Guasa Charcosa* and *Guasaranas II*). Ambiguity of major/minor mode is a constant throughout this piece. For example, the notes of the last two measures of *America, Divagación*, suggest a chord of C, that involves the seventh major as well (B natural), but the mode is simultaneous major and minor (both E-natural and E-flat), creating a split third. At a larger level, different movements in the *Solo Flute Sonata* show Desenne’s various approaches to tonality. For example, in *America, Divagación* the internal variations do not necessarily follow the harmonic frameworks of the theme; and as a whole, the framing tonalities of variations do not relate to the theme. This is precisely one of the ways in which Desenne represents the *Divagación* (digression). By contrast, in the three-
section movement *Rancho Son*, tonality is well established in each section: Section A in E major, Section B in C-sharp minor and Section C in E major.

Desenne has a preference for irregular meters. The first movement is in $7/8$, the second in $5/8$, the theme of the third movement is in $5/4$, the fourth movement is in $5/8$ and, and the last movement in $4/4$. Variations in metrical groupings within the bar are present throughout the *Solo Flute Sonata*. For example, in the first movement, the meter is given by Bernstein’s theme, $3+3, 2+2+2$ (in eighth notes); however, Desenne changes the meter at times, such as in mm. 50-52 to $4+4+4+4$. Constant accent displacements and syncopations add to the richness and variety of Desenne’s rhythmic approach.

**Analysis**

**First Movement -- *America, Divagación***

The Spanish word *divagación* translates into English as “divagation” or “digression.” Desenne represents digression by the use of variations on a theme. The theme is a varied quotation of “America,” a song from the Broadway musical *West Side Story*, composed by Leonard Bernstein and from which the movement partially gets its name.

Quotation is not only a matter of bringing to the attention of the listener some known musical material, but also carrying with all the associations and cultural baggage this material holds. David Metzer’s explanation of the borrowing process, as a general concept, nevertheless helps to understand Desenne’s use of a quotation in this work:
The original is the fragment as it exists in that source, prior to any alteration made to it. As such, it never sounds in the new work, for there is always some degree of alteration in bringing that fragment into its new surroundings. Nonetheless, the original maintains a strong presence. All transformations are viewed in relation to it, making it a constant point of comparison. In addition, no matter how small or slight, it transports the weighty cultural discourses of the borrowed work into the new one, forcing the borrowing musician and listener to confront those associations. The other part of a borrowing is the transformation, the name given to the fragment as it exists in the new work. As the term states, this side of the gesture involves any alterations made to the original as well as the changed form it assumes in its new context. The transformation is the borrowing as we hear it; however, we hear more than just it for the original still demands our attention, even if never stated. Borrowing then creates an unceasing interaction between the two sides, between both the original and the altered musical material, and the original and the new cultural associations.55

In this movement, the quotation is placed in the very beginning, without any type of introduction, and it will function as the theme of a set of continuous variations. Some features of the theme are maintained very close to the original. The melodic range of the theme is narrow (C sharp1-B2), typical of most singable Broadway tunes. The tonal plan, shown here by measure, follows exactly Bernstein’s original: B major: I64 – II64 – I64 – V64 – D: I64 – V64 - B: §V164 – I64. But there are some differences from the original such as the time signature, which is 7/8 throughout the whole movement, contrasting with the 6/8 meter of the model. The theme consists of two melodic gestures or cells that form the basis for the succeeding variations. The first is the “ascending cell”: F-sharp-F-sharp-B-B-B (m. 1) and the other as the “descending cascade”: G-sharp-E-C-sharp-E-C-sharp-A-sharp (m. 2). The second cell is given an

additional decorated two-note figure (E.g. C-sharp-A in bar 2) by Desenne in his version of Bernstein’s theme.

Ex. 1: *Solo Flute Sonata*, Mov. I, mm. 1-8, theme after Bernstein’s “America”

The structure of the movement consists of a theme, six variations and a *codetta*. The theme extends to measure 8. The variations occur in measures: 8-17 (var. 1), 18-27 (var. 2), 27-42 (var. 3), 43-63 (var. 4), 64-70 (var. 5), 70-89 (var. 6), and the *codetta* occurs in measures 89-96.

Important characteristics of harmony, melody, meter, and rhythm in Variation 1 will be discussed, in order to exemplify how Dessene’s compositional style works. Thereafter a broader analysis will compare the internal sections and highlight important features of the complete movement.

It is a challenging task to define the harmonic aspects of a piece composed for a melodic instrument such as the flute. However, as the baroque masters did in such compositions, Desenne strives to create the illusion of harmony in the way he lays out
the melodic line, using implied bass, melody and accompaniment, and arpeggiation. Desenne’s concept of harmony is tonally centric, although often far from diatonic.

One way to achieve the illusion of harmony is to use musical figures of short duration, such as eighth and sixteenth notes, organized in various ways, as can be heard throughout this movement. As a matter of fact, the longest musical figure is a dotted quarter note, which is used just a few times. An important type of musical organization for Desenne is the use of arpeggios as a device to define harmony.

It would be a mistake to suppose that the harmonic simplicity of the theme pervades the variations. Right from the beginning of the first variation, in measure 8, Desenne abruptly changes the expressive tone. That measure starts to reveal the expansive expressive capacity that can be observed during the rest of the movement.

Ex. 2: Solo Flute Sonata. Mov. I, mm. 8-18, variation 1, use of jazz riffs and arpeggiated cells, extended harmony.

The pointillistic and linear aspects of the theme are changed in measure 8 by an arpeggiated slurred line that resembles a jazz riff. The harmony is richer: the rising arpeggio is a major ninth chord (B-D-sharp-F-sharp-A-C-sharp), or it could be also
understood as a split chord, B major and F-sharp minor, followed by a descending augmented arpeggio on F natural, and a final arpeggio that is ambiguously both a major and minor B chord (interpreting the E-flat enharmonically). Besides the harmonic importance of the last two notes of the measure, they form with the first note of measure 9 a chromatic line, a melodic movement that is not seen in the theme. Summarizing, through the use of arpeggios, Desenne forms a great harmonic wealth that combines major and minor modes with an augmented chord, thus creating harmony that strongly emphasizes a sense of ambiguity. This kind of ambiguity will be observed through the rest of the movement.

The harmonic complexity shown in measure 8 will be reversed toward the end of the variation, to a less complex harmony, which reminds us of that of the theme. This return to simplicity can be seen, for example, in comparing measures 9, 11, and 13. Those measures are like the first measure of the theme, which will be called the “ascending cell,” and which show the melodic movement of an ascending fourth: F-sharp-F-sharp-B-B-B. Measure 9 breaks with the rhythmic sequence of the “ascending cell” and brings to the foreground an angular melody composed by the notes D-flat-C-F-sharp-E-B-E-B-B-B. In comparison to measure 1, this is a varied version of the original F sharp-F sharp-B-B-B. In measure 9 Desenne also uses the characteristic interval of fourth of the “ascending cell” to build a varied version of the original “ascending cell”, with a more expanded range and a more complex harmonic sound (C-F-sharp-B-E). Measure 11 follows slightly the melodic layout of measure 9, and the interval of major seventh is introduced between the extreme notes (D-flat-C), one of Desenne’s favorite intervals. Measure 11 also reveals that Desenne does not follow the
harmonic changes from the Bernstein’s original to construct the variation, since the expected tonic from measure 3 of the original is changed here for a tonic but in C major, instead of the original B major. In measure 13 the melodic layout of the theme is strictly followed, in fact, it is the only exact reference to the theme in this variation. It also serves as a stabilizer of harmony, since it maintains the original minor third relation that happens between measures 4 to 5 in the theme; in this case, from C major to E-flat major.

Desenne introduces a new melodic element in Variation 1. This element consists of slurred eight notes (m. 14), in groupings of 3 and 2, which later will constitute an important material in the next variations, especially in Variations 3, 4 and 6.

Desenne’s writing is very rich in terms of rhythmical and metrical conception. The fact that he chose a quotation that features the rhythmic aspect of a Mexican huapango - a dance that emphasizes within the same time signature of 6/8 an alternation of two different meters: duple and triple - points out a special predilection for metrical and rhythmical complexities.

At a first glance, the time signature of 7/8 established by Desenne from the beginning (and for the complete movement) removes somewhat the huapango characteristic of mixing two meters. However, instead of losing metric flexibility, Desenne enhances the possibilities by displaying an immense metric and rhythmic palette. The 7/8 proposes a meter of 2+2+3 (three main strong beats) in the theme. Nonetheless, that meter will be taken into account only as a reference for countless variations throughout the movement.
In Variation 1, the reference to that scheme is maintained particularly with the third strong main beat, as in measures 9, 11, 12, 13, and 17. In measures 9 and 11, the 2+2 meter of the beginning of each measure is displaced rhythmically by the slurring of three eighth notes (the second, third, and fourth eighth notes). But Desenne goes beyond changing the metric scheme of a single measure and stretches those boundaries. From measures 13 to 17, Desenne shows how difficult it will become to recognize the theme’s melodic material, and how the interaction between harmony, melody, meter, and rhythm function in his music. In detail, measure 13 (which corresponds to measure 5 in the theme) does not have any alteration from the original but that of the key. The following measure, instead, undergoes through a remarkable variation. In measure 14, melodically is difficult to hear the theme’s melody - D-B-flat-F - for the pitch placement, and the meter is changed into 3+2+3. The next measures correspond to the last two of the theme, and the notes featured should be E-flat-E-flat-A-flat-A-flat-A-flat-G (and an E should be added if following Bernstein’s original). Instead, Desenne added another measure up and wrote an ascending A-flat major arpeggio that later moves down, as well in an arpeggiated fashion, and he included the E, or the interval of sixth major that he omitted to write in his theme, in comparison with Bernstein’s.

Another important feature to stress in Variation 1 is the process of obtaining a new expression through the inclusion of sixteenth and thirty-second notes, as well as the slurry and arpeggiated fashion of melodies, which seem to gain settlement as the variation moves on. In fact, measure 13, an exact insertion of the “ascending cell”, seems to be a short and weak point of reference within the whole variation. This process of adapting new material could be called “mutation.”
At a large level, one of the most salient features of the movement is the constant change of implied harmony, internally in each section, and as a whole. As mentioned above, this illustrates musically the digression suggested in the title of the movement. Not a single variation will stay in the same key as the tonal plan of the theme. Variation 1 starts in B major but it modulates to C major. The next variation begins in C major but it will end in B-flat major. Variation 3, longer than the two previous variations, hovers around the keys of F minor and G minor. The fact that none of the chords in the theme are minor raises the question of what the composer is addressing to in this variation. Variation 4 starts in E-flat major but it ends harmonically unclear. Some of the keys to make out in the last measure of Variation 4 (m. 63) are: D-flat major, B-major, and F-sharp major. Variation 5 starts in C, but the mode is not shown; it ends in C minor. Variation 6 begins and ends in E-flat major. The codetta, which begins in A flat major, ends the movement on what seems to be a C, both major and minor.

The harmonic digression follows a different plan in terms of general structural cohesion. In order to understand how this works, a dialectical play can be established among elements of the theme and “new elements.” These “new elements”, which are introduced in Variation 1, are also identifiable during the rest of the movement. In fact, each of these elements will be taken in a greater or lesser consideration in each variation. The “new elements” referred to are of two kinds: a type of outburst, like jazz riffs, present in mainly sixteenth notes, (e.g., mm. 8, 12), and the arpeggiated cells, as seen in the slurred eighth notes in arpeggios (e.g., m. 14).

In Variation 2 the notes of the “ascending cell” are organized differently. Measure 18 should be: G-G-C-C-C, but Desenne writes G-E-C-G-E, creating a more
playful quality, given by the melodic contour that suggests a bouncing quality. There is also a melodic emphasis on the third main beat, which changes the metrical structure (mm. 19–22). Two melodic-harmonic elements are also to be noticed in this variation: the fragmented octatonic scale in bar 22 and the upward line, as an arpeggio, mainly built with intervals of fourth in measure 24, which gives to the music a special harmonic tension. In this variation the “new elements” gain more predominance and in consequence, in the dialectical play, to recognize the theme is more difficult. In comparison with Variation 1, the order in which the “new elements” come in are switched around, so the arpeggiated cells comes in first place, then toward the end of the variation the jazz riffs appear.

Ex. 3: Solo Flute Sonata, Mov. I, mm. 18–27, variation 2, displacement of the “ascending cell” and the “descending cascade,” switching of the elements: arpeggiated cells, later jazz riffs.

Variation 3 features the arpeggiated cells and only once the “ascending cell” without any variation (m. 30). This variation functions as an interlude. As a matter of
fact, the arpeggiated cell is very close, in melodic shape, to the melodies in the two interludes of the *Solo Flute Sonata*. The implied metrical division of the original theme is $2 + 2 + 3$, but in this variation, the metrical division is switched to $3 + 2 + 2$. These arpeggiated cells alternate with recognizable of the theme, such as measures 30 and 37. The arpeggiated cells usually show a clear accentuation of their smaller components ($3 + 2 + 2$), although the composer breaks that stability by introducing rests and changing slightly the accentuation as observed in measures 33 and 35. From measure 36, there is a return to the original $2 + 2 + 3$, by reducing the arpeggiated cell from seven notes, to six, five, four, and finally to three.

**Ex. 4: Solo Flute Sonata, Mov. I, mm. 27-42, variation 3, predominance of arpeggiated cells.**
Variation 4, from mm. 43 to 63, is the longest. Here, previous material is reworked to achieve even more complexity. The first measure abruptly introduces sixteenth notes in combination with eighth notes (as in Variation 1) that sets the tone for the following musical material. From measure 44 to 49, literal material from the theme, as well as arpeggiated variations are heard. In measure 50 the structural bass appears in single eighth notes, as if in a baroque solo piece. From 53 to the end of the variation there is an alternation of material of the theme and the arpeggiated cells, plus added sixteenth-note motion, which becomes predominant from measure 59. This variation expands the range (E₁–G₃) and the dynamics (louder than forte and softer than piano). In measure 58 an ascending succession of fourths is employed again. Harmonically this is the richest variation. For example, in measures 58 to 60 the harmony travels thus: B-flat: V7 – I6 E: I – VI₆⁺ – vii A-flat: V7; somewhat arbitrarily, as if perturbed by the loss of the home key. From measure 59 to the end of this variation (m. 63), the intensity of the sixteenth notes, used mostly in arpeggios and wide intervals, and with the alternation of detached and slurred notes, and in a fortissimo dynamic for the first time in the piece, bring a sense of exhilaration and tension.
Ex. 5: Solo Flute Sonata, Mov. I, mm. 43-63, variation 4, expansion of range, dynamic contrast, alternation of jazz riffs and arpeggiated cells

Variation 5 provides maximum contrast, with its pp dynamic mark, the exclusive use of eighth notes, the transparency of its harmony, and the simplicity of the meter. From measure 67 the irregular metrical placement of eighth rests breaks the continuity, reaching the breve (brief) fermata in measure 69 with descending figures. This variation
provides a moment of solace and peacefulness within movement as a whole. It also sets a new mood, freer and quieter, before the final variation and the *codetta* section.

Ex. 6: *Solo Flute Sonata*, Mov. I, mm. 64-70, variation 5, free and quiet atmosphere

Variation 6 proposes two main ideas in succession. The first idea is expressed by the ascending arpeggiated cells, from measures 70 to 82, and whose implied harmonic content hovers between F minor and E-flat major until measure 75, where the harmony gets more complex by the introduction of intervals of fourths. The predominant harmonies after m. 75 are E-flat minor seventh (m. 75), A-flat major (m. 76) and B-flat minor (m. 77). In measure 80, a combined chord of B major plus F-sharp major precedes the chord of D-flat major (m. 81). The second idea, in measure 82, presents a melody, ascending and then descending in its contour; harmonic ambiguity (split third) is noticeable, given by the E-C of the descending arpeggio and the two last notes: C-E-flat.

Ex. 7: *Solo Flute Sonata*, Mov. I, mm. 82-84, variation 6, harmonic ambiguity
The melody leads to another fermata, *forte*, longer this time, after a clear delineation of E-flat major. The resolution of this section comes, in a humorous way, with a detached and simple melody in the low register (mm. 87-89).

Ex. 8: *Solo Flute Sonata*, Mov. I, mm. 70-89, variation 6, ascending arpeggiated cells and wavy melodic contours

The *codetta* or final section of this movement, from measure 89 to the end, is the least strict metrically. It is a series of declamations, indicated by the phrase breaks and *cédez* indications. The sixteenth notes in measures 91 and 92 bring harmonic instability. In measure 91, the tonality suggested is D-flat major, but the chromatic line plus the tritone between the D-flat and the G blurs it. In measure 92, A-flat major is the preponderant harmony, but the low E introduces a strong dissonance. In measure 93 an
E-flat major chord is followed by a D major ninth, a relationship of a minor second. A descending arpeggio in measure 94 splits the harmony between an incomplete chord of F-sharp minor seventh and one of C major seventh. The last two measures feature C major, although the B is like a disturbance, an unexpected fall, and the split third E/E-flat, emphasizes the ambiguity of the chord color.

Ex. 9: Solo Flute Sonata, Mov. I, mm. 89-96, codetta, declamations, harmonic instability

First Interlude — Guasa charcosa

In the music of Venezuela the guasa is very close to the merengue. In fact, there is not a clear boundary between the two. What could distinguish one from another is the name itself. Guasa means “joke” or “to make fun of something.” Guasas and merengues are dance music in duple meter. In both the lyrics are humorous, with a local content, and the music expresses this by wide leaps and wavy melodies. How to notate guasas and merengues has been an issue for discussion, since many musicologists insist that they are to be written in 2/4 or 6/8. The problem is that musical practice has never been like
this, since the second half of the measure is usually shorter than the first. In addition, since the beginning of these genres (around 1880), “rucaneo” has been employed, which is a type of rubato that stretches or shortens that half of the measure. Lately, in the last twenty years at least, composers and musicians of recent generations have started to write in 5/8, stretching longer when it is needed, but keeping a general feeling of five eighth notes. Accentuation usually occurs on the first and fourth beats of the bar. But it is important to this music to vary and change that stability by introducing rests in the first beats, for instance, or accenting the last beats of bars, or to produce syncopations by tying the last and the first beats.\footnote{Jose Peñín and Walter Guido, Enciclopedia de la Música en Venezuela (Caracas: Fundación Bigott, 1988), 694-5.}

*Guasa Charcosa* and *Guasaranas II* function as interludes in the *Solo Flute Sonata*. The composer explains the meaning and importance of these interludes in his program note for the premiere of the piece:

The Second movement, a short interlude, gives the ‘natural’ background soundtrack on the set: the sound of nocturnal frogs as seen by the Venezuelan 5/8 guasa. Its harmonic mode and behavior should create a total contrast with the previous and the next pieces. This idea will return in the fourth movement, in a slightly longer piece, after the Variations. The climate of this interlude is very special; it plays on the fringe of melancholy.\footnote{Paul Desenne, Program Note for the Premiere of the *Solo Flute Sonata*, 2001.}

The *Guasa Charcosa*, which was initially titled *Guasaranas I*, is strongly related to the croaking that ranas or frogs produce. In the mountains near Caracas, where Desenne lives, nights are peaceful with the exception of the continuous sound that small frogs make, especially during the rainy season of the year. As Alejandro Lozada pointed out in his study of the Puerto Rican composer Roberto Sierra, in Puerto Rico these frogs are
colloquially called *coqui* (pronounced “cokee”) for the sound that they emit: two notes that approximately constitute a quick, ascending interval of a major seventh.\(^\text{58}\)

The “nocturnal frogs” are represented by continuous rhythmic motion in eighth notes and wide leaps that move upward and downward, emphasizing the interval of a major seventh. There is also a minimalistic approach to the movement, with its use of repetition, static harmony, and restricted pitch and rhythmic material.

A link from the first to the second movement is provided by the use of the exact same pitches of the last two measures of the first movement in the first measure of the second movement: C1-B1-E2-D-sharp2 (E-flat2)-C3. The new, added material is the F-sharp2-G1-E2, in the second measure of the *Guasa Charcosa*. The sonority of these two initial measures is that of C, but with a split third (E and D-sharp). This pitch collection also contains two major sevenths: between C1 and B1, and between F-sharp2 and G1.

\[\text{Ex. 10: Solo Flute Sonata, Mov. I, mm. 95-96 and Guasa Charcosa, mm. 1-2, comparison between the end of the first movement and the beginning of the second, showing similarity of the first five notes and use of the major seventh}\]

The *Guasa Charcosa* is divided into four Sections. Each Section features melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic material that is subject to repetition and variation within the same section and among them. In Section A (mm. 1-12) there are two-measure groupings, which can be called cells. It is observed that the second measure of each cell starts the same, with a descending major seventh (F-sharp2-G1), except in measure 12,

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where the descending seventh is replaced by a syncopated figure. In this Section, C can easily be heard as the tonal center, with a discursion to E-flat in bar 7 and an immediate return to C in bar 9. The rhythmic pattern of the first two measures is broken in measure 5, by introducing an eighth note rest, which also occurs similarly in measure 11. Bar 12 sets a new rhythmic pattern, with eighth note rests in the first and third beat.

Ex. 11: *Solo Flute Sonata, Guasa Charcosa*, mm. 1-12, Section A, two-measure melodic cells, harmonic and rhythmic variation

Section B, the longest section, extends from measure 13 to 37. The grouping (cell) is now every four measures, and there are six phrases. There are two basic scale collections, including arpeggiated chords, that can be noticed within each phrase: G major and A harmonic minor. In the first two cells this harmony is clear, although later cells contain non-chord tones. These notes introduce new dissonances or soften some. That is the case, for instance, of the first note of measure 21 where the D-flat introduces a strong dissonance. The first measure of each of these phrases contains the reversed melodic contour of the first measure of the movement (descending, rather than ascending leaps), while each second measure contains the same descending seventh of
bar 2. In fact, the descending major seventh will be present in that position of the phrase with the exception of bar 26. The following two measures of each phrase repeat the structure of the first two measures, in wider leaps and in a higher register, The last two notes are always A2-A1, with the exception of measure 20 (A2-E1). Another changing feature is the melodic content of the rhythmic motive of eighth note-two sixteenth notes, which occurs in the second measure of each cell, and which is varied every time it occurs, with upward or downward motions, arbitrarily, as if the frogs are jumping from one place to another.

Ex. 12: Solo Flute Sonata, Guasa Charcosa, mm, 13-37, Section B, four-bar cell grouping, sixteenth-notes vary
Section C (mm. 37-51) contains four asymmetrical phrases of three bars, four bars, and five bars, all related. The first and second phrases start and end similarly, and although the pitch placement is angular, the collection of notes belongs to A harmonic minor, except for the last note of both phrases where G natural introduces an Aeolian modal connotation (mm. 37-42). Phrase four adds an eighth note (B-flat2) in the first measure (m. 48) and the phrase ends one bar earlier than its predecessor. These last two phrases (mm. 43-51) emphasize the pitches A, B, and B-flat, which produce dissonances with the other notes.

Ex. 13: *Solo Flute Sonata, Guasa Charcosa*, mm. 37-51, Section C, assymetrical phrases, fragmentation

Section D (mm. 52-59) is a codetta. It differs in the harmonic content from Section C. The pitch collection suggests C-sharp minor: C-sharp-D-sharp-E-F-sharp-G-sharp-A-sharp (many of these notes are notated enharmonically). The collection is
incomplete, and there is an inclusion of a B natural that does not correspond to C-sharp minor. Two similar phrases form this *codetta*, although the second is fragmented and varied. The rest in measure 52 changes the repetitive atmosphere of Section C, and the leaps are wider and less sinuous. However, what is relevant about the end of this movement is the last three notes: E-F-sharp-G-sharp (beginning of the diatonic E major). These notes, which are indicated with *tenuto* marks, change dramatically the jumpiness of the previous melodic motion. Perhaps, they can be understood as belonging to a more human expression, far from the natural environment of the frogs.

![Musical notation](image)

Ex. 14: *Solo Flute Sonata, Guasa Charcosa*, mm. 52-59, *codetta*, last three notes belong to E major

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**Second Movement**

*Variaciones Imposibles sobre el Tema de Misión Imposible*

The title of this movement translates as “Impossible Variations on the *Mission Impossible* Theme.” The pun refers to the technical challenge for the player; nevertheless, as every episode of the television series demonstrates, in spite of all the difficulties, the mission can be accomplished and the variations can be performed. In addition, seen from
an autobiographical slant, the composer portrays the difficulty in achieving his desired goal: to leave his current life style.

Desenne explains in his program note for the premiere of this work the meaning of the set of variations on Schiffrin’s “Mission Impossible” theme song. In Desenne’s words:

‘Variaciones Imposibles’, on the television theme by Argentinean composer Lalo Schiffrin, briefly exposed here in my own version for flute, is another piece of light irony. I don’t know how much TV music has been used as a source of inspiration for concert music. I am sure it probably has, but the idea of linking both worlds seemed amusing. I feel Schiffrin’s Theme makes a great flute character, and the combination of “I want to live in America - Mission Impossible” is a great subtext in the work, an implicit message I develop in the fifth variation where the two themes clash openly. The set of short variations puts the Theme in various contexts, some more Latin than others, but expectation and tension are the substance behind them all, owing to the theme, of course.59

Theme

In Desenne’s Theme, the meter signature is 5/4, as in the original. The basic sections are maintained, as in the original, although, as seen in Bernstein’s theme, they have already undergone variation. For the purpose of analysis the main theme can be divided into three smaller sections, which are called blocks 1, 2 and 3, plus an introductory and a closing section. The central section occurs from measures 7 to 18 and the closing section begins in bar 19. The key of this movement is G minor. Two considerations about instrumentation are worth mentioning. The initial melody of

Schiffrin’s theme, a descending motive, was on the flute. This was most probably a motivation for the inclusion of this music into a work for solo flute.

The introduction of the Theme is initiated by a long trill, the “firing fuse,” concluded by a group of three sixteenth notes, which will be called the “explosive glissando,” leading into the “on the move,” motive, a rhythmic idea that quotes Schiffrin’s original idea for two measures (mm. 3–4) and whose metric accentuation is a clear 3 + 2. Then, Desenne introduces with some lines in eighth-note triplets, in a swinging fashion, and which he indicates with “dududada,” a distinctive legato articulation, and “super cool” (mm. 5–6). The main notes of “on the move” can still be heard at the same places as the original (circled in the next example). The melodic flow of this first internal variation plays around in a wider register and G minor prevails, although the C-sharp in bar 5 introduces harmonic tension and a dose of exoticism and/or mystery to the music.

Ex. 15: Solo Flute Sonata, Mov. II, Theme, mm. 1–7, theme varied, circled notes show “on the move”
The main melodic material comes in measure 7 and it can be subdivided into two parts, one that features a descending motive from measure 7 to 10, Block 1, and another that goes from measures 11 to 14 and features an ascending motive Block 2. As in the introduction, lines with swinging triplets complement these motives. In the “descending motive” harmonic tension is created by the motion of the fifth note of the triad on G minor: B-flat-G-D, B-flat-G-D-flat, B-flat-G-C, B-flat-C (mm. 7-9), and also when the octave undergoes the same half-step fall in the descending motive B-flat-G-G, B-flat-G-F-sharp, B-flat-G-F, E-flat-D (mm. 11-14). These motives provide intervallic and harmonic material that the composer explores in the variations to follow. In measures 8, 12, and 13, sixteenth notes are linked to the original “explosive glissando.” Another element to take into analysis is the repeated notes in measure 10, and which imitates the “bongó” in Schifrin’s original.
Ex. 16: *Solo Flute Sonata*, Mov. II, Theme, Blocks 1 and 2, mm. 7-14, featuring the “descending” and “ascending” motives

Measures 15 to 18, Block 3, features the “descending motive” already heard in Block 1, but now in C minor. The metric accentuation 3 + 2 of “on the move” influences the harmonic pace. Some chords sound unexpected: D major in the last beat of m. 15, G major with an added major ninth (last two beats of m. 16), an A ninth (last three beats of m. 17), and finally, in measure 18, an A-flat seventh major. It seems like these complements of the motive pursue sudden different, unrelated, harmonic directions.
In the Closing Section, harmony returns to the home key and it features the ascending motive of Block 2; however, there is a variation in the structure. The original melody is B-flat-G-F-sharp, B-flat-G-F, B-flat-G-E, E-flat-D, but an exact repetition occurs (B-flat-G-F-sharp, B-flat-G-F) only in measures 21–22. To end the Theme, Desenne chooses the two last notes (E-flat3-D3) of the “Mission Impossible” melody, instead of taking Schiffrin’s original ending that consisted on a final long chord, a big band final fermata. These notes provide a great sense of conclusion by the loud dynamic, the highness of the register and the sharpness of the rhythm.
**Variación Imposible 1**

Variation 1 provides an immediate contrast to the mood of the Theme. Its angular setting of pitches, complex harmonies, and rhythmic drive bring excitement and tension to the work. Broadly, two ideas from the Theme are developed. One is the “on the move” and the other the “descending motive.” The first two measures are a good example of the interaction of these two ideas. “on the move” is shown by the circled notes and the “descending motive” in a box:

Ex. 19: *Solo Flute Sonata*, Mov. II, Var. 1, mm. 1-2, “on the move” and “descending motive” indicated

The time signature is the same as for the Theme, 5/4. However, sometimes the metric accentuation is changed from 3 + 2 for a 2 + 3, as seen in bar 11. The “bongó” idea is also considered. The repeated sixteenth notes are now transfigured by the “descending motive” and turned into a wavy melodic line, with the *fortissimo* and *staccato* expression of the “bongó” (m. 7). Although it is hard to establish a clear tonal plan, these are the main keys employed in Variation 1: D minor (mm. 1-5), G minor (mm. 6-12), D minor (mm. 13-15), F-sharp minor (mm. 16-23), D-minor (mm. 23-25), and free tonality until the end (25-end). The loss of a clear tonal center from mm. 23 to the end is notable. That area also fosters metric freedom. The last two notes, E-flat2-C-sharp3, are reminiscent of the final two notes of “America,” but as an augmented sixth. The soft
dynamic in the end of this variation, plus the harmonic and rhythmic disorder, might suggest, in a narrative perspective, a loss of control and an internal state of confusion, after all the abrupt mood changes throughout the variation, which are expressed by the music and indications such as *deciso, acquarello* (like a watercolor painting), *ampiamente*, contrastando (contrasting), *bonito-sereno* (beautiful, serene), *un poco agitato*, and *lontano*. 
Ex. 20: Solo Flute Sonata, Mov. II, Var. 1, complete
Variación Imposible 2

The “bongó”, “on the move,” and the “descending motive” are the most prominent features of Variation 2. Three main sections are found, from mm. 1 to 7, 8 to 11, and 12 to 19.

In Section A there are two subdivisions. The key signature corresponds to that of G-sharp minor, but it is not until Section B that tonality is clearly established. The sixteenth notes of the “bongó” dominate, with its staccatissimo, furioso (furious) and forte indications, in a very fast tempo (quarter=200).

Ex. 21: *Solo Flute Sonata*, Mov. II, Var. 2, mm. 1-3, repeated notes as in the “bongó,” circled notes indicate a reordering of “on the move.”
The time signature is 5/4, like the Theme and Variation 1, but the metric accentuation of the music itself in the first three measures indicates differently, the music is grouped with an accentuation every two quarter notes. The melodic contour suggests the notes of “on the move” but in a new order: C-G-B-flat-G, instead of G-G-B-flat-C.

The second subdivision maintains the sixteenth notes of the “bongó” as the basic musical material, but harmonic content plays a more important role. There are four phrases which all start the same way but ends differently. The fixed notes consist of: E-sharp-G-sharp-(B)-B-sharp-D-sharp, an E-sharp major seventh chord, which in terms of constitution of the chord is both minor and diminished (B and B-sharp). An E natural gives the short illusion of an E minor tonality in bar 4. The first three phrases end on two eighth notes that paraphrase the two-note ending of the Theme.

Ex. 22: *Solo Flute Sonata*, Mov. II, Var. 2, mm. 4–7, one-measure structures, whose beginnings are similar but differ harmonically toward the end.
Desenne quotes himself by pasting in this variation the “Block 1” of the Theme (mm. 8-10), but transposed a semitone higher. The key now is G-sharp minor. Desenne has now added the expression indications: *subito seductor* (seductive), *cremoso* (creamy), and “fashion.”

Ex. 23: *Solo Flute Sonata*, Mov. II, Var. 2, mm. 8-11, literal quotation from Desenne’s Theme, but a semitone higher

Section C, from m. 12 to 15, is based on the development of the “*bongó*” idea, in which eighth notes alternate with sixteenth. The rhythm gets a syncopated feeling in the three first beats of each measure, except in measure 15. Those syncopations correspond somewhat to the accentuation of tango music. In fact, Desenne asks for *acentos piazzolescos* (Piazzolla-type accents) at the beginning of this section, as if mixing in Schiffrin’s Argentinian background into the work. Harmonically, the tonal areas feature diminished chords and there is an expressive emphasis on the piquancy that the
tritones create. The next example demonstrates the existing tritones with a line over the corresponding notes.

Ex. 24: Solo Flute Sonata, Mov. II, Var. 2, mm. 12–15, tritones indicated

In Section D, there is a rework of previous material. The arpeggiated idea of the first four notes of measure 16 is combined with the four notes of the fourth beat of measure 15, like a mosaic design. Measure 16 is repeated exactly in measure 17; perhaps, in imitation of the repetition that occurred in mm. 19–22 of the Theme, thus, creating a stationary atmosphere. The expression indications are pianissimo and sempre staccatissimo. The key belongs to the realm of F-sharp minor. The melodic and metric flow of the final two measures is freer. The following final measures are contrasting. The harmony in measure 18, which could be A minor, is clouded by the abundance of
non-chord tones. However, it clears up towards the end, in measure 19, as the listener hears D major and three final notes that suggest B minor. The explosive nature in measure 18 fades out in the last measure from a forte dynamic to a diminuendo and a pochissimo calando, as well as a fall in the tessitura.

Ex. 25: Solo Flute Sonata, Mov. II, Var. 2, mm. 16-19, mosaic design (mm. 16-17), abundance of non-chord tones (m. 18)

Variación Imposible 3

The “guasa” and “on the move” are the two prominent elements developed and combined in Variation 3. There are three section, of which Sections A and C share similar thematic material and Section B is contrasting. E minor is the key for both
Section A and C, while A minor is the one for Section B, a fourth relation that comes from the tonal plan of the Theme. In comparison with the previous material in the Theme and first two variations, the time signature here is 3+2/8. The 3+2/8 or 5/8 time signature not only defines the *guasa* in this variation, but also the jumpiness of the melodies, the accentuations on the first and fourth beats, as well as a rhythmic characteristic of Venezuelan *guasas*, which consists of a change of either half of the measure for four notes. In some cases, this procedure also applies to the whole measure, so instead of five eighth notes of a regular measure, eight sixteenth notes are written, as it happens in measure 19. This effect introduces a great rhythmic and metric contrast.

In Section A, which goes from mm. 1 to 18, there are repeated ideas that through subtle harmonic and rhythmic variation create a state of minor hysteria by the lack of resolution. For instance, the harmony of the first four measures can be understood as: F-sharp-E min-F-A min7. The E minor comes in measure 7, but it is blurred by the seventh of the chord. In the same measure (m. 7) a sequence of three four-measure phrases begins. The grouping of these phrases is given by the similarity of their rhythmic and melodic material; however, the harmony varies among them. As in the *Guasa Charcosa*, the intervals of a fourth and a seventh are important to the melodic structures.

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60 In Venezuelan *guasas*, a normal procedure is to change the quantity of notes in any of the main beats. For example, when playing a piece written in 5/8, which accentuation would be on the first and the fourth note (thus creating the two main beats, first main beat: three eight notes, second main beat: two eight notes), it is common to change the three first eight notes for four sixteenth notes; or to change the last two eight notes for four sixteenth notes. This produces a great feeling of instability and it is associated with the funny and picaresque situations that the lyrics of the *guasas* narrate.
Ex. 26: Solo Flute Sonata, Mov. II, Var. 3, mm. 1-18, varied repetition of ideas, leaps in the melody, abundance of intervals of a fourth and a seventh

The “guasa” and “on the move” are combined in Section B (mm. 19-65). There are ten repetitions of the “on the move”, beginning in bar 24, each one consisting of four measures, and which keep the same strict rhythmic placement, in spite of the change of time signature. The measures that introduce the variations, mm. 19 to 23, set a more lyrical expression, harmonically supported by implied minor chords with sevenths (both minor and majors) followed by the repeated notes of the “bongó” of measure 23. These mini-variations one to eight are within the realm of A minor, but in variation 8 (m. 52) there is a harmonic switch to a Dorian mode on D. Variation 10 is fragmented and
Ex. 27: *Solo Flute Sonata*, Mov. II, Var. 3, mm. 19-65, ten variations indicated, based on the “on the move” motive
functions as a transition to Section C, with arpeggiated chordal figures, reminiscent of Section A.

Section C shares similarities with Section A. In fact, good portions of Section A are transplanted literally, then repeated (with slight variations) with the addition and deletion of some measures. Measures 66 to 78 correspond literally to measures 5 to 17. Measure 79 is new material, and measures 80 and 81 correspond to measures 5 and 6, then two measures with new material is written, and for 84 to 89 the music matches measures 9 to 14. The last two measures bring in new material. The rhythmic and harmonic abruptness of this section is outstanding.
Ex. 28: Solo Flute Sonata, Mov. II, Var. 3, mm. 66-end, equivalent measures to Section A, but not exact
Variación Imposible 4

Variation 4 sets a great contrast at this point of the work by its slow tempo, 60
the quarter note. Furthermore, some expression marks help to establish the overall
character: molto espressivo, ma con poco vibrato, glacial, regular, subito Shostakovich, senza
espressione, lento and siberiano (Siberian-like). The time signature is 3/4 and there are no
flats or sharps in the key signature, however, neither C major nor A minor are main
keys to this variation.

What is mostly developed are the “descending motive” and “on the move,” in
that order, which is in reverse order from the Theme. Formal divisions are generally
not clear-cut in this variation, except for two noticeable stops, one at measure 15 and
another at measure 24.

The first four measures reveal much of the harmonic and melodic nature, which
is also related to the other movements. Tritones and sevenths are intervals of
importance. An implied E minor chord in measure 1 turns in measure 2 into an E
diminished plus seventh major (E-flat1 is enharmonically D-sharp), thus showing the
“descending motive” G-E-B (m. 1) and G-E-B-flat (mm. 2-3). Tritones can be heard in
measures 2 and 3: E2-B-flat1 (m.2) and B-flat1-E1 (m.2 and 3). Measures 3 and 4 could
be understood either as E minor then C minor from the E-flat1, which would form a C
minor plus a major seventh (C1-B1); or the whole two measures as a C chord that
fluctuates through major and minor. A two-part texture (compound melody) is also noticed.

Ex. 29: Solo Flute Sonata, Mov. II, Var. 4, mm. 1–4, featuring the “descending motive”

Then, in bar 5 the “descending motive” shapes the melody, with a freer melodic movement, in a *preludio* fashion. Like in the beginning, a two-part texture is employed, and in measure 11 the first appearance, fragmented, of the “on the move” appears. In that measure E minor is again established, as in the first measure, and for two measures (mm. 11-12) the collection of notes is diatonic to E minor. The next two measures (mm. 13-14) feature C harmonic minor.

From measures 15 to 24, a set of four mini-variations on the “on the move” motive are made. Each mini-variation is two measures long, and there is a compression or diminution of “on the move” to fit the 3/4. The leading key is A minor. The first mini-variation employs the collection of notes of A natural minor (mm. 16-17). Within the second mini-variation, in measure 19, an A major seventh major can be interpreted (D-flat as an enharmonic equivalent). In the third mini-variation (mm. 20-21), a major seventh reminds us of the *coqui* frog (A₂-B-flat₁). And, in mini-variation four (mm. 22-23) a tritone between A₂ and E-flat₁ enriches the harmony. The following sixteenth notes, as a *preludio*, feature the melodic shape of the “descending motive” and noticeable
within its harmonic intricacy are tritones between D3-A-flat2 and C2-F-sharp2 and a
major seventh between F-sharp2 and G1.

Ex. 30: *Solo Flute Sonata*, Mov. II, Var. 4, mm. 1-15, *preludio* style; first appearance, in m. 11, of “on the move”

What follows, from bars 25 to 28, continues *preludio*-like, and mostly in running
sixteenths, play harmonically around A-flat minor with a raised major seventh. The last
set of mini-variations occurs from measures 28 to 33. Again the “on the move” motive
predominates. Similar to the previous set of mini-variations, each mini-variation is
structured in two-measure parcels. This time, G minor is the leading key, although
variations on the harmony exist as well. An interesting procedure is how, following the
“on the move” design: G-G-B-flat-C/G-G-F-F-sharp, the last two notes of the design
are taken to form a longer melody that provides a deeper level of connection among the mini-variations (second note of measure 32, F₂, and second note of measure 33, F-sharp₂).

Ex. 31: *Solo Flute Sonata*, Mov. II, Var. 4, mm. 15-25, mini-variations on “on the move”

Furthermore, if the second note of each measure starting 30 is considered as part of an independent structural line, it forms D-E-flat-F-F-sharp-G (the first note of measure 34). This line could be seen as an augmentation of the “Explosive Glissando.” The closing measure (34) breaks in dynamic, tonality, and rhythm, what happened in the previous mini-variations. The mood of this mini-variation has been quiet, cold (Siberian-like), and intimate (*piano*). The last measure comes in *forte*, with an ascending scale based in Dorian mode on C, and in sixteenth notes whereas the past variations were written in only eighth notes.
Ex. 32: *Solo Flute Sonata*, Mov. II, Var. 4, mm. 25-35, *preludio*-like, mini-variations on “on the move”

**Variación Imposible 5**

In Variation 5 there is an integration of musical elements from previous movements. The “guasa” is the first to be noticed for the time signature: 5/8. Furthermore, its melodic, harmonic and rhythmic elements interact with Bernstein’s and Schiffrin’s themes. Bernstein’s theme is used as the basis for other elements in this variation, including structural ones. Bernstein’s theme, originally in 6/8, transformed in
the first movement into 7/8, is now fitted into a 5/8, but still maintain its melodic nature. The following example demonstrates how this transformation is accomplished.

Ex. 33: *Solo Flute Sonata*, Mov. II, Var. 5, mm. 1-2, Bernstein’s cell

The way elements are integrated occurs in a multilevel process. This Bernstein’s cell is complemented with the “guasa” (mm. 3-4), thus creating a four-measure phrase. Also “On the Move” is embedded within that “guasa” complement, keeping its original rhythmic structure and being the only element adapting to the key signature: E-flat minor. In summary, the first phrase contains all of the most important elements of the piece so far, including both Bernstein and Schiffrin.

Ex. 34: *Solo Flute Sonata*, Mov. II, Var. 5, mm. 1-4, Bernstein cell plus “on the move”

In measures 7 and 8, the Bernstein’s theme cell is now in the voice of the “On the Move”, integrated with the “guasa” as well. In measure 9 Bernstein’s theme is more lyrical. In measure 10 a complete statement Bernstein’s theme comes to an end with an arpeggiation.
Bernstein’s theme frames measures 11 to 29, but the “descending motive” and the “bongó” are brought into play. The descending motive is apparent in measure 11, and it works as a bridge to the next statement of the Bernstein’s theme. This “descending motive” is rhythmically and harmonically different (mm. 11-13). The first appearance of the “bongó”, in bar 16, breaks the 3+2 accentuation imposed by the guasa, to a 3+3+2+2 (mm. 16-17). The “bongó” repeats its appearances in measures 20 to 21 and from 24 to 25. It is remarkable that every time that the “bongó” is called in, an embedded transfiguration of the “on the move” motive is used.
Ex. 36: Solo Flute Sonata, Mov. II, Var. 5, mm. 11-27, addition of “bongó” and “descending motive,” displacement of accents

The next section can be seen as a fight among elements (mm. 27-57). The initial importance of the “guasa” from 1-11, is lost from mm. 11 to 27. However in this new section, there is a return of the “guasa” that results in a triumph over the other elements. From measures 29 to 39, Bernstein’s theme and the “bongo” rhythm establish a dialectic play, with a free tonal plan, in which Bernstein’s theme can be associated with major modes and the “bongo” with minor. In measure 39, a new melodic design, within the guasa character, is introduced, although in bar 43 the Bernstein’s theme is present. In measure 47, the repeated notes suggest the Bernstein’s theme, but they are already swollen up and transfigured by the four sixteenth notes of the “guasa.” The indication
salvaje (wild) and the ff dynamic confirm this transformation. Measures 48 to 54 represent an outburst that suggests the climax of the fight. The melodic line is shaped by the “on the move”, while the internal intervals, including tritones, and rhythmic material correspond to those of the “guasa.” This climax fades away in measure 54, where Bernstein’s theme serves as an ostinato bass, and the “guasa” element is clearly heard.

Ex. 37: Solo Flute Sonata, Mov. II, Var. 5, mm. 27-57, conflict among elements
In bar 58, there is an intense agitation for a period of eight measures. In the first four measures this agitation is given by the angular changes in register and the bitterness of the harmony (mm. 58-61), while in the subsequent four measures the intensity of the rhythmic drive maintains the agitation. This entire disturbance resolves in measure 66, where a new section is dominated solely by the “guasa,” in this case a triumphant dance.

Ex. 38: Solo Flute Sonata, Mov. II, Var. 5, mm. 58-65, rhythmic and harmonic agitation

The cheerful spirit of the last section is darkened by an enigmatic ending, from measures 66 to 81. The “guasa”, in a display of rhythmic possibilities, is perceived as a representation of happiness, supported by simple harmonies, away from tritones and major seventh intervals. However, in measure 80, the “descending motive” is suggested and the profusion of major sevenths and tritones announces the enigmatic ending. From measure 83 to the end, the integration formed by the “bongó”, “on the move” and “guasa”, in the lowest register of the flute, are thrown like broken pieces after a battle, therefore creating a sense of irresolution, of indecision, of unanswered questions.
Second Interlude — Guasaranas II

This interlude is closely related to the Guasa Charcosa. Nonetheless, the elements that refer to the frogs and the guasa are explored and developed further. The movement is longer, but its formal structure is less clearly delineated. The structure of the Guasaranas II is a modified rondo. Three sections or musical “environments” make up its constituent parts.

Ex. 39: Solo Flute Sonata, Mov. II, Var. 5, mm. 66-91, triumphant appearance of the “guasa” and enigmatic ending
A minimalistic evocation of the repetitive call of nocturnal frogs pervades the atmosphere in the beginning of the movement, from measures 1 to 23. The repetition of the first phrase (mm. 1-6) that occurs fragmented in measure 7 to 9, and exact, from measures 13 to 18, intensifies this. The harmony stays in the Aeolian or natural mode of A, thus reinforcing that static atmosphere.

Ex. 40: *Solo Flute Sonata, Guasaranas II*, mm. 1-23, fragmented and varied phrase repetition, melodic leaps, compound melody

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Interrupted brackets indicate that the structure of the variation has been altered.
The melodic lines suggest the characteristic jumpiness of the guasa, and now also associated with the croaking of the frogs. Rhythmic patterns here are diverse and they play with and against the natural accentuations of the guasas. A use of a compound melody is also observed. This section, which is modal, returns with some variation toward the end of the piece (mm. 101 to 122).

Ex. 41: Solo Flute Sonata, Guasaranas II, mm. 101-122, variations

The Section B can be referred to as the “mad frogs” (mm. 23-35). The rhythmic patterns are less varied and stress the 3+2 in an incisive fashion. The melodic content shows chromaticism and intervals such as tritones, diminished fifths, sevenths, both major and minor, and ninths. The indicated mood at the beginning of this section is ranissimo or “very frog-like,” the dynamic grows to a fortissimo, which, along with the widening of the intervals into both high and low registers creates a climax.
Ex. 42: *Solo Flute Sonata, Guasaranas II*, mm. 23-35, “mad frogs,” with chromaticism and diminished fifths, sevenths, and ninths

The “mad frogs” material recurs in measures 49 to 57 and from m. 123 to the end. In the first two appearances of the “mad frogs”, it can be observed that the chromaticism of the intervals lessens after the first five measures. In the case of the last one, the implied harmony stays dissonant up to the end.

Ex. 43: *Solo Flute Sonata, Guasaranas II*, mm. 50-57, “mad frogs”
Ex. 44: Solo Flute Sonata, Guasaranas II, mm. 123-end, “mad frogs”

The last section will be referred to as the “song of the frog.” These remaining bars feature a melodic shape that contrasts with the preludio-like designs of the other two environments. In its first occurrence, from mm. 35 to 49, there is an acceleration of the tempo, expressed by the *accel un poco* in m. 47 and *fluyendo* (flowing) in measure 48.
Ex. 45: *Solo Flute Sonata, Guasaranas II*, mm. 35–49, “song of the frog”

But it is in the longer occurrence of the “song of the frog”, from mm. 58 to 100, where the flexibility of tempo breaks the continuous motion of these interludes. There are some phrases that suggest recitatives. An example of this happens from measure 68 to 75, a phrase that is framed between full stops. The collection of pitches belongs to Dorian mode on F. The pitch organization reminds us a tongue-twister, although the general mood is that of melancholy or despair by the static implied harmony and the subdued melodic shapes. Following that, there is another recitative-like moment, from measures 75 to 88. This, more in line with the *preludio* style, sets another mood of restrain, but this time the melody has a wider register and there is more varied implied harmony. The mode is Aeolian on C, and the only non-diatonic note is the B natural in measure 81, which is preceded by a C natural, thus forming a major seventh, imitating the *coqui*. 
Ex. 46: *Solo Flute Sonata, Guasaranas II*, mm. 58-100, “song of the frog,”
tempo flexibility
Third Movement -- *Rancho Son*

The last movement of the Solo Flute Sonata is based on the Cuban *son*.62 Desenne wrote for the premiere of the piece about this movement the following text:

The final movement is a quick *son*, originally a form of Cuban music which is now considered standard in Latin music. The material developed here is almost ordinary, common, cheap... (A *rancho* is a tin and cardboard shack, here in Venezuela). It’s stuff for dancing and improvising with the band. The flutist should go into a dance trance here, taking us swiftly through the various tonalities and colors of this *son*. Tapping and thumping with the foot on the stage is perfectly legal in this style, as well as wiggling like a dancing worm while blowing away...63

When Desenne combines *rancho* and *son*, and he refers to the musical material that he employed as “ordinary, common, cheap”, there is an association between a social situation that is tied to this kind of music. The Cuban *son* is the foundation to *salsa*, a music form that generated in the slums in the Caribbean area of Latin America and soon became a representative music of the Latin communities in New York City. Leopoldo Tablante explains the social context for the establishment of the *salsa* style:

In the early Seventies, the lifestyle of the Latino *barrio*64 manifested similarities and affinities with the lifestyle of the African-American ghettos in the United States. These similarities and affinities were not restricted only to the field of music creation. In New York, both communities shared violence and poverty problems. In 1975, when the financial crisis of New York struck, the urban decline of the African-Americans as well as the Latin Americans was considered one of the

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62 In referring to Cuba, Desenne draws only on musical sources. Not a single political connection to that nation’s current regime has been found.

63 Paul Desenne, Program Note for the premiere of the *Solo Flute Sonata*, 2001.

64 This word is best translated as “slum.”
emblematic symptoms of the recession and the energy crisis that The United States and Europe suffered from 1973 on… On the African-American side, poverty and violence were represented by Soul, Funk and Rhythm ‘n’ Blues, and on the African-Latin side by Salsa. On one hand, salsa took advantage of the common elements that it shared with the African-American music of the United States to develop its own commercial personality. The representation of the Afro-American social tension, through musical styles such as Soul, Funk and Rhythm ‘n’ Blues, or even, through movies about rivalries between violent groups (The cinematic style called Blaxploitation, whose best known exponent was Gordon Parks director of the movie Shaft) was with no doubts an influence on the Salsa musicians. These musicians wanted to invest their music with the same power of representation of an urban lifestyle that the Soul, the Rhythm ‘n’ Blues and the movies of the Blaxploitation period had for the African-American community.\footnote{Leopoldo Tablante, Los Sabores de la Salsa: De la Rumba Brava a La Fiesta Mansa de Héctor Lavoe a Jennifer López (Caracas: Museo Jacobo Borges, 2005), 21-22. “A principios de los años setenta, el modo de vida del barrio latino mostraba semejanzas y afinidades con el modo de vida de los guetos afroamericanos de Estados Unidos. Estas semejanzas y afinidades no se limitaban al terreno de la creación musical. En Nueva York, ambas comunidades compartían problemas de violencia y de pobreza. En 1975, cuando estalló la crisis fiscal de Nueva York. El deterioro urbano tanto de los sectores afroamericanos como del lado latino fue considerado como uno de los síntomas emblemáticos de la recesión y de la crisis energética que tanto Estados Unidos como Europa padecían desde 1973… Del lado afroamericano, la pobreza y la violencia fueron representadas por el soul, el funk y el rhytm ‘n’ blues, y, del lado afrolatino, por la salsa. Por su parte, la salsa aprovechó los elementos comunes que compartía con la música negra norteamericana para desarrollar su propia personalidad comercial. La representación de la tensión social afroamericana, por medio de estilos musicales como el soul, el funk, y el rhytm ‘n’ blues, o incluso, a través de las películas sobre las rivalidades de grupos violentos (el estilo cinematográfico llamado blaxploitation, cuyo máximo exponente fue el director Gordon Parks, director de la cinta Shaft) ejerció una influencia innegable entre los productores de salsa. Estos productores quisieron atribuir a su música el mismo poder de representación de un modo de vida urbano que el soul, el rhytm ‘n’ blues y las películas de la etapa de la blaxploitation tenían para la comunidad afroamericana.”}

One of the most important components in salsa is the convergence of diverse styles of Afro-Latin music, profoundly rooted in society and in an urban environment.

About this process, Tablante comments on the ideas of Quintero Rivero, a Puerto Rican sociologist, and writes:

…while for the Anglo-Saxon youth Rock meant a rupture with the relative socioeconomic security of the middle class after the Second World War (security that could be considered ‘a boring paradise’), salsa pretended to be, more than a revolution against the established order, an affirmation of cultural identity. Salsa has adopted the traditional music from various places in Latin America—especially those with an African
root—to an urban lifestyle. In this regard, salsa constitutes for Quintero Rivera the expression of a futuristic idea of different people that is recognizable in its sound.\textsuperscript{66}

Polyrhythm is probably the most significant characteristic in salsa music. The Cuban \textit{clave} provides the foundation for the other rhythmic layers. Each of the percussion instruments of the \textit{salsa} band (cencerro, congas, timbales) maintains a distinct rhythmic pattern that only changes when that of the \textit{clave} changes. Another feature is the rhythmic character given to the melodic instruments (trombones, trumpets, flute, sax) that participate into the complex polyrhythmic machinery.\textsuperscript{67}

Ex. 47: Rhythmic patterns of the \textit{clave} in the Cuban \textit{son}

The harmonic concept of the \textit{son} is based on a repeated harmonic pattern: I-IV-V-IV. However, in New York, through the very powerful influence of jazz, then dissonances were introduced. Seventh, eleventh and thirteenth chords became part of the standard harmony.\textsuperscript{68} Another important element in salsa is the bass. The bass functions both as a rhythmic and harmonic-melodic foundation; in fact it is difficult to notice the division between these two roles. The Cuban bass player Israel “Cachao”

\textsuperscript{66} Ibid, 47. “Mientras que para la juventud anglosajona el rock significaba una ruptura con respecto a la relativa seguridad socioeconómica de la clase media tras la segunda guerra mundial (seguridad que podría cobrar la forma de un ‘paraiso aburrido’), la salsa pretendía, más que una revuelta contra el orden establecido, una afirmación de identidad cultural. La salsa ha adaptado músicas tradicionales provenientes de varios puntos de América Latina —sobre todo músicas de raíz afro— a un modo de vida urbano. En este sentido, la salsa constituye para Quintero Rivera la expresión de una idea de futuro de los pueblos que se reconoce en su sonido.”

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid, 49-55.

\textsuperscript{68} Ibid, 61-62.
López developed a technique in which the chord changes are anticipated, before the actual harmonies are sounded. This is called the “anticipated bass.” Therefore, the task of the bass is to maintain the sense of progress in the music. The bass reinforces the rhythm in general, and distributes the tension throughout the piece. These moments of tension are expected by the listener and the dancer and they also define the struggling forces within the band.\textsuperscript{69} Tablante also points out the importance of the syncopation in this music and how within a European musical context, this music is perceived as “irregular.”\textsuperscript{70}

Desenne’s \textit{Rancho Son} is a three-section movement. The sections are perceived due to their harmonic and thematic organization. Section A extends from mm. 1 to 38 (E major–F minor and E minor), Section B from mm. 39 to 82 (C-sharp minor), and Section C (E major) from 83 to the end (m. 100). The phrase structure throughout is that of the Cuban \textit{son}, in clear four-bar phrases. Melodic variation is present in the entire movement. The tempo is fast, 172 to the quarter, and the tempo indication is \textit{Allegro Marginal}. Marginal means that something or someone is on the margin, on the side. In Venezuela, \textit{marginal} refers mostly to poor people who live in slums.

The first phrase (mm. 1–4), Theme A, immediately presents the mood of the melodic, harmonic and rhythmic character of \textit{Rancho Son}. The harmony follows the pattern: I-IV-V-IV, although not strictly. This pattern repeats twice in every phrase. In the first two measures, the traditional pattern is followed, but with a twist. The last beat of the second measure, D-F, is not closely related to the key signature of E major. These notes could belong to either a D minor chord or a B diminished chord, or even further, a

\textsuperscript{69} Ibid, 66-68.
\textsuperscript{70} Ibid, 67-68.
fully diminished G-sharp seventh. The harmony diverges from the traditional harmonic pattern in the next two measures. In bar 3 the first two beats are the simplest, still in E major and now arpeggiated, and the third and fourth beats belong to the seventh degree (D-sharp-F-sharp-A). The fourth measure can be heard as a dominant seventh chord on the lowered seventh degree (D-F-sharp-A-C), which should lead to the key of G (major or minor), but instead, there are two strong repeated E’s. It is to be remarked that the effect of the dominant, which always looks for resolution of its tension, is avoided here by the diminuendo dynamic.

Ex. 48: *Solo Flute Sonata*, Mov. III, mm. 1-4, Theme A, typical four-bar son phrase, implied harmonic pattern I-IV-V-IV, last two notes: “conga”

The last E’s of measure 4 not only remind us with great fierceness, the home key but also introduce a rhythmic element, which will be labeled “conga”. The “conga”, in line with Tablante’s analysis, is one of the examples of how the melodic instruments participate within the rhythmic layers of the band.

The first phrase serves as a model for the next phrase (mm. 5-8), but with subtle variations in the first three measures and a noticeable change in the fourth measure. Some of the rests are filled up of with notes, thus, proposing new harmonies, without affecting the rhythmic structures. But also some notes, like the first E2, have been
removed. In the fourth measure (plus pick up) the “bongó” is back in play. There is also a change in the mood of the “conga”, this time it is marked *tenuto* and *piano*.

From measure 9 to 12 there is a predominance of the “bongó”, first in repeated notes, and later in arpeggios. In measure 11, the first beat of the arpeggio suggests a whole-tone scale.

The key signature from measures 13 to 16 suggests F major, but measure 13 contains both major and minor inflections. The first fourth notes in measure 13 (C-F-A-C-A-flat) as well as measure 15 (pitches of the whole-tone collection are heard) define the melodic shape of the new theme. The “bongó” (mm. 13-14) is still present (m. 16) and
the “conga,” in measure 14, has undergone its most radical transformation: C2 in piano and F3 in ff.

Ex. 51: *Solo Flute Sonata*, Mov. III, mm. 13-16, “conga” transformation

From measures 17 to 26 the phrase grouping is by two measures. Theme B, which goes from 17 to 18, leads this area. The indication asks for *sempre in tempo*, reminding the performer that the continuous *clave* is to be followed, and *swing malandroso*, which translates as *malandro*-like feeling or swinging. *Malandro* is what Venezuelans call a street thief. That *malandro* feeling might imply a kind of laziness in the interpretation, a type of relaxed attitude, characteristic of those persons, but, of course, without changing the tempo. The Theme’s key is F minor, nonetheless, from mm. 21 to 22 and mm. 25 to 26 chromatic inflections are noticed, the first leading back to F minor and the second modulating to E minor, the key of the next subsection.
Ex. 52: *Solo Flute Sonata*, Mov. III, mm. 17-26, two-measure phrases, variations

The sub section in E minor extends from measures 27 to 38, and there are three phrases of four measures each. The first phrase is Theme C, which has a strong likeness to Theme A, and the following phrases contain harmonic changes.
Section B is the longest one in the movement, from measure 39 to 82. The Section is ruled by four-measure phrases. The traditional harmonic pattern of the son is easier to hear here. From 39 to 54, there are two themes. One of them, Theme D, starts in measure 39. The phrasing indication is *dabudaba daba pip*, an exclusive type of articulation or phrasing that the composer asks for, and which can best be interpreted as a type of swung rhythm. Theme D is presented in the low register and its expression is rhythmically oriented, while the following phrase (mm. 43-46) owns a solo quality that features a wider register and contains a declamatory character. Theme E extends from measure 47 to 50. The melodic contour does not provide great contrast with the previous theme, but this theme will be seen again in measure 75. From 51 to 54, there is a transition, less rhythmical and it establishes, especially its two final measures (mm. 53-54), the material for the Theme F in the following sub section.
Ex. 54: *Solo Flute Sonata*, Mov. III, mm. 39-54, Theme D and E, four-measure phrases with variations

From measure 55 to 82, the measure grouping stays the same, every four bars. Theme F comes from 55 to 58, with the indication *bailando fuerte*, which means dancing intensely. There is another Theme, G, in measure 67 and 70. The previous harmonic simplicity is now changed for a more complex set of implied harmonies, from mm. 67 to 74. In measure 72 the “bongó” participates in this Latin “party.” C-sharp minor continues to be the unifying material in the two four-measure phrases (mm. 75 to 82); however, each phrase proposes its own rhythmic and melodic variation.
Ex. 55: *Solo Flute Sonata*, Mov. III, mm. 55–82, Theme F and G, complex implied harmonies
Section C is divided into two parts. One extends from measure 83 to 92, which is a variation of Theme A; and another from m. 93 to the end (m. 100), which functions as a codetta. E major, the home key, comes back and reaffirms its tonal importance. The codetta has a strong impact by its contrasting material. The use of triplets has been rare in this work, and they introduce here a feeling of rhythmic instability. The implied harmony confirms this by its ambiguity and complexity. On one hand, at a large scale, there is a struggle between F minor and E major. On the other, major and minor modes opposes each other, as seen in measure 93. Within this excited finale, bits of previous material are referenced, the “Mission Impossible” elements. The next to the last measure brings to the foreground “on the move”, mixed with the “descending motive”, within a very complex harmonic setting. The first four notes belong to a whole-tone collection, (arranged in ascending order: F-sharp-G-sharp-A-sharp-C-sharp), and the next notes to a B minor major seventh (B-D-A-sharp). The last note of the piece is an E3, plain and dry, which despite of being the tonic of the home key, comes unexpectedly. This finale produces a feeling of inconclusiveness. The melodic contours seem to have lost any center, as a snake under attack that tries to escape. But, there is not a possible escape, just one hit that finishes with any ray of hope.
Ex. 56: *Solo Flute Sonata*, Mov. III, mm. 83–100, Swung articulation *duwadaduba* indicated by composer, Theme A and *codetta*
Summary

The Solo Flute Sonata epitomizes in many ways Paul Desenne’s most important compositional characteristics. Confrontation and fusion of musical elements is the most relevant aspect to refer in this work. There is a synthesis of musical elements that ultimately provides a social and autobiographical content.

At a conceptual level, the integration of dissimilar music styles such as television music, Broadway show tunes and folk and traditional music, is a challenging task. There are no other pieces known to this author that have united all these styles. Musical quotation is a central technique throughout the work. But Desenne does not merely refer to or paste together literal quotations within the work. Quotations are positioned as initial points of departure for development and interaction. They provide the basis for the piece’s musical structure. They also provide the substance for a work that is born of juxtaposition and that manifests its historical self-consciousness by blending pop, traditional, Classical, and folk styles from different points in history.

The potential of variation was a crucial factor for Desenne to accomplish this process of integration. Variation is not only employed as a set music form, as seen in the set of “Impossible Variations”, but also as a valuable developmental technique that is used throughout the entire work.

Some features of this work suggest that Desenne adopted in his style characteristic elements from the Baroque composers. Desenne chose the Baroque sonata
da camera configuration, a series of stylized dances. In this work he includes the guasa, son, and a suggested huapango (Bernstein). Another consideration that relates this work to the Baroque is the scoring for a solo instrument. Desenne’s composition follows the tradition of one of the greatest works ever composed for the flute: Johann Sebastian Bach’s Partita for flute alone.\textsuperscript{71} Like the Baroque pieces for solo instrument, Desenne’s work contains compound melody and implied organizing harmonies. His implied harmony is fundamentally diatonic, and it is infused with modal sonorities, as well as free chromaticism.

The rhythmic complexity of this work, and Desenne’s output as a whole, deserves more detailed investigation. It is noticed, however, how important an element this is, and how richly and ingeniously Desenne explores rhythmic possibilities according to the stylistic framework he has chosen. The displacement of strong and weak beats is one important procedure, which it is also utilized to enlarge and shorten metric structures. It is also observed how (perhaps a Baroque comparison is appropriate here as well) Desenne’s affinity for short musical figures and repeated notes in order to create both the illusion of more textural voices (compound melody) and a sense of forward motion.

The autobiographical nature of the work must be also acknowledged. The composer represents himself in his current living conditions, in close contact with nature, surrounded by frogs (Interludes). But, an attempt to improve those living conditions by moving out to another (supposedly) better place (“I want to live in America”) is frustrated many times (becoming a Mission Impossible), and it leads to the

\textsuperscript{71} Johann Sebastian Bach, Partita for Solo Flute in A minor, BWV 1013.
acceptance of his native environment, which he faces with resignation but also with an 
appreciation of the pleasures that might be found there (Rancho Son).
CHAPTER III: *GURRUFÍO FOR FLUTE ORCHESTRA (1997)*

**Conception and Premiere**

*Gurrufío* for flute ensemble was commissioned and premiered by the National Flute Orchestra of Venezuela in 1997. The piece is dedicated to Nicolás Real and Víctor Rojas, who were the conductors of that ensemble at that time. Both of them, flutists, were active members of the System of Youth and Child Orchestras of Venezuela and flutists of the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra. Nicolás Real was also the flutist on Paul Desenne’s first compact disc of his own compositions, “Tocatas Galeónicas.”

In 1999, *Gurrufío* was performed at the XXIXth convention of the National Flute Association of the United States in Atlanta, Georgia. Further performances of this piece have been rare for several reasons. First, the work has not yet been published. Desenne does not want to publish it through standard channels. Second, it is a complex work to understand, and finally, it requires extensive rehearsals that are not generally feasible for most flute ensembles. The National Flute Orchestra of Venezuela, under its current artistic conductor María Gabriela Rodríguez, has announced the recording of this piece on a compact disc to be released in 2010.

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An Introduction to *Gurrufío*

*Gurrufío* is the name of one of the traditional children’s toy in Venezuela. It consists of a wood, plastic, or metallic flat disc\(^{78}\) that produces a hissing sound when it is spun around. A string, of approximately twenty-four inches, is attached through two small holes in the center of the disc, and the two ends of the string need to be tied together. Then the string, with the disc in the center, is twisted on itself many times. The player then starts pulling from the sides. The freed disc spins forward, then backward, producing a hissing sound that fluctuates in pitch and dynamic depending on the pressure that the player administers. Desenne associated the hissing noise that is produced by the toy with the flute, an instrument that is capable of reproducing closely this airy sound.

![An image of the gurrufío toy](image)

Fig. 1: An image of the *gurrufío* toy

The scoring of *Gurrufío* is for five parts: three flutes in C, plus alto and bass flute. In each part, Desenne requires doubling, often writing *divisi.*

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\(^{78}\) It can be also made with a very large plastic clothes button.
There are two salient characteristics in *Gurrufío*. One is its rhythmic drive, with many short rhythmic patterns combining to form complex-sounding machinery. When listening to *Gurrufío*, the audience is drawn into a rhythmic world that might be closer, at times, to that of a percussion ensemble. The other main characteristic is the use of an extended technique to reproduce as closely as possible the hissing noise of the *gurrufío*. This technique is carried out by blowing on the lip plate hole of the flute, not across as is normally done, but into the hole. In other words, it is as if blowing into a brass mouthpiece. The difference is that the lips do not need any special tension and the airstream needs to be as concentrated and as fast as possible.

**Analysis**

*Gurrufío* is a one-movement work, in ternary form, whose sections are organized as A-B-A1. The time signature of both A sections is 6/8; the tempo indication is 80 to the dotted quarter for the first A section and 96 for the second (Section A1). Section B starts slower, in 2/4, and is marked 72 to quarter note, with succeeding sections in 6/8 and 5/8, with a final tempo acceleration that leads into Section A1.

*Gurrufío* is constructed with short rhythmic motives that are interrelated in many ways and used to build successive blocks of texture that provide the logic for the piece. A hallmark of *Gurrufío* is repetition as a representation of the toy’s mechanical function. The point of the game is to produce a loud hissing noise when pulling the string outwards with the arms again and again, an action that is performed quite rapidly. The music portrays this oscillating and repeated movement. A minimalistic
approach is undertaken in these blocks, in which the harmonic underpinning remains static while the rhythmic motives repeat several times with slight variations that suggest, as with the toy, that an exact repetition is impossible. The composer also takes advantage of the homogenous sound that the flute ensemble offers to mingle and mix the voices in hocket. This means that when one line has a rest, another line fills that gap. This provides rhythmic intensity and cohesion among all the voices of the ensemble.

Ex. 57: Gurrufio, Section A, m. 1, hocket procedure

The identification of these blocks is essential in order to understand the structure of the piece. Blocks provide the formal organization, especially in Sections A
and A1. These individual blocks have a particular sound identity and, overall, a specific sense of direction. For example, from measure 1 to 4, the sound produced is like that of a fast pendulum, with some lines going in contrary motion (flute 1 and 2 in measure 3).

Blocks are made up of repeated motives. But these motives, characteristic of a specific block, can overlap into other blocks, or be used, in their original presentation or in a varied form, in other blocks. For example, from mm. 1 to 4, there are four motives, one per part (each repeated every measure), their aggregate makes up Block a. Block b, which features four distinctive motives, extends for two measures (mm. 5-6). However, Block b2, which is located in measures 12 and 13, contains motives from blocks a and b, in varied presentations. For instance, the motive of flute 3 in measure 1 is in flute 2 in mm. 12-13.

Eight different blocks are identifiable in Section A. Block a, from measure 1 to 4, has a sound that recreates an oscillating pendulum, given by the one-measure motive of each line. Notable in all a blocks is the difference among all their alto and bass parts, at times taking material from other blocks. For instance, Block a1 has the alto and bass part of Block b (mm. 5-6), but Block a2 has the line of the flute 3 of block b, in the lower voices.
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Subsection II of Section A

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Subsection III of Section A

Table 3: Formal diagram of Section A, with its respective subsections
Block b (mm. 5-6) is marked by a static feeling. Each line holds a limited quantity of pitches. For instance, the alto and bass parts play only three notes each. The first flute only two notes, although toward the end of measure 5 two more notes are added. The second flute has five notes, and the third flute plays the *gurrufío* effect in *divisi*. In this block, short rhythmic motives are repeated twice in each measure, but in flute 1 the repetition of motive is by measure.

Ex. 58: *Gurrufío*, Section A, Block a, mm. 1-4, one measure motives, pendular movement

Ex. 59: *Gurrufío*, Section A, Block b, mm 5-6, static feeling, limited quantity of pitches
Block c (mm. 17-19) introduces new material in all the parts except flute 3 (a duplication of flute 3 in block a), and it extends for three measures, although it has a different distribution: the motives of flute 1 and 2 extend by two measures, and the third measure is fragmented (similar to the first measure), while flute 3 has a one-measure motive. The alto and bass have two motives per measure, extending for two measures, then in the third measure new material is observed. In this block there is a displacement of accents produced by the syncopation in the second note of the highest flutes (1 and 2). This produces a great sense of rhythmic instability against the bass lines (alto and bass), which play six notes per measure thus reaffirming the “beaty” aspect of the 6/8. It is as if flutes 1 and 2 were in a time signature of 3/4. Desenne makes sure that that instability is heard when he indicates the lower lines be played fortissimo. The sound quality of Block c is strident, and it can be associated with the loudest moment when playing the toy gurúfio.

Ex. 60: Gurrufio, Section A, Subsection II, Block c, mm. 17-19, displacement of accents (fl. 1 and 2 in 3/4)
Block d (mm. 22-29) is one of the longest blocks in Section A. New material is presented in all the parts. Repetitions are by measure, with the exception of flute 1 and bass, which hold two-measure patterns. This block suggests upward movement, especially noticeable in the flutes 1, 2, and 3. There is a complex juxtaposition of rhythmic layers.

Ex. 61: Gurrufio, Section A, Subsection B, Block d, mm. 22-29, upward movement (fl. 1, 2, and 3), juxtaposition of rhythmic layers, major sevenths in fl. 1
There is rhythmic consonance among these layers, or coincidence on the main beats, that provides a sense of great unification, with the exception of the syncopation between the third and fourth beat in flute 2. Also noticeable is the major seventh in the first two notes of the flute 1, which reminds us of Desenne’s preference for that interval.

Block e (mm. 38–40) functions as a transition. Flutes 1, 2, and 3 lead the melodic movement, which does not include repetition and features an ascending motion. The alto and bass have an intermittent participation, only every other measure. Flutes 1, 2, and 3 evince a pattern based on 6/8, while the alto and bass start having an accented pattern in 3/4. In fact, in measure 40 Desenne indicated a phrasing in 3/4 for those lines, although he does not change the time signature. He also requests the same in the upper lines in measure 41, but the accentuation seems to adjust better to 6/8.

Ex. 62: Gurrufío, Section A, Subsection III, Block e, mm. 38–40, transitional, different accentuations

Block f (41–46) features some lines of Block a in the flute 1 and 3 and exact repetition occurs by measure. It is interesting how the lower lines resemble a variation
of the rhythmic pattern of the *clave* of the Cuban *son*. Perhaps this is inserted as a “call” for Section B, whose title is “Guarachita Suave.” The two basic rhythmic ideas, taking the composite rhythm of flutes 1, 2, and 3, can be summarized as follows:

Ex. 63: *Gurrufío*, Section A, Subsection III, Block f, m. 42, composite rhythm of all the parts

Ex. 64: *Gurrufío*, Section A, Subsection III, Block f, mm. 41-43, resemblance to the Cuban *son’s clave* rhythm in the lower voices

Blocks g (mm. 69-74) and h (mm. 75-84) present an important change in comparison with previous blocks. There is a gradual change from compound duple meter (6/8) to simple duple (2/4), starting in measure 69, where flute 2 plays two

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74 *Guaracha* is a genre of Cuban popular music.
groups of sixteenth notes instead of triplet divisions. Then in 70, flute 3 incorporates
the same rhythmic pattern, and from bar 71 to 74 flutes 2 and 3 switch to a rhythmic
pattern of five eighth notes reminiscent of the *guasa* rhythm.

Ex. 65: *Gurrufio*, Section A, Subsection III, Block g, mm. 69-71,

change from compound duple meter (6/8) to simple duple (2/4)

Block h (75-84) is the longest block in Section A. In measures 75 and 76 the
quintuplets of the flutes 2 and 3 are switched to duple meter, while the lower voices still
remain in 6/8. All the parts have now adapted to the simple duple rhythmic
configuration by measure 77. Syncopations in the melodic lines of the flute 1, alto, and
bass are prominent.
Based on the order of the blocks, three large subsections have been identified in Section A, as seen above in the formal diagram of this section. Subsection I is integrated by blocks a and b, then Subsection II by the new Blocks c and d, (Block a and b are present); and Subsection III features four new Blocks (e, f, g, h), alternating with Blocks a and b. An interpretation of the structure of Section A points towards a modified rondo, in which a blocks function as refrains and the other blocks as episodes; however, the lack of strong thematic and harmonic contrast between refrains and episodes takes us away from this conclusion. Nonetheless, a rondo-like ordering of the blocks is evident.

Section A1 (mm. 186-238) consists of similar material to Section A, but with a reordering of the three subsections. Some blocks are completely omitted and the order of blocks is altered. While Subsections I and II remain intact, with all their corresponding blocks, only the second, third, and fourth blocks (b7, e1, and f1) of Subsection III are present, and they are placed at the very beginning of this section.
These blocks are also longer than the ones in Section A. Block f1 (mm. 194–200) reintroduces the metric accentuation of 3/4, thus becoming the longest music span in 3/4 in the work.

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Table 4: Gurreflia, Formal diagram of Section A1, mm. 186-238
Ex. 67: *Gurrufio*, Section A1, mm. 194–195, 3/4 time signature

Other than some minor note changes, the notes of all the corresponding blocks in Section A1 remain the same, so there is no tonal change. The final block (mm. 234–238), Block i, features the *gurrufio* effect in flutes 2 and 3, the “beaty” line in the alto and bass flute, and a syncopated new melodic line in flute 1. It is interesting to note how in measures 236 and 237, the alto and bass lines follow a 3/4 pattern and the other lines move in 6/8, creating a sense of disruption. In a humorous way, Desenne ends the work with a unison *tutti* with the *gurrufio* effect.
Section B (85-186), which is titled *Guarachita Suave* (“Soft Little Guaracha”), is contrasting. The initial time signature is 2/4 (m. 85), changes to 6/8 (m. 132), and later to 5/8 (m. 140). Here, as he did in the *Solo Flute Sonata*, Desenne makes a reference to the music of a neighboring country. The Cuban *guaracha* is a genre of popular music, that holds historical and musical links to the *son*. The word has been known since the
late eighteenth century and its social affiliation is with the lower class. It was performed at dance halls; later, it became a part of the Bufo theatre in the mid-nineteenth century; and until the early twentieth century it was heard in the brothels of Havanna. Desenne not only refers musically to the Guaracha in this section but also to other Cuban genres that have influenced Latin American and Caribbean music. This is recognizable by the use of the rhythmical pattern of the habanera and the use of syncopated patterns.

In Section B two large units can be identified. In Unit a, motivic transformation and fragmentation are a hallmark. It is interesting to note how Desenne organizes the appearance and interaction of the three main components of Unit a. First, the alto flute presents the habanera pattern (85-86); second, a fragmentation of the main melody is presented by flute 1 (mm. 85-86), and third, a counter-melody is stated in flute 2, as if someone were trying to remember a song, but the memories come only in pieces. Then, in measures 88 and 89 all three components are present: the habanera, the melody, and counter-melody, although the melody and counter-melody are fragmented.

Ex. 69: Gurrufio, Section B, Unit a, mm. 85-89, fragmentation of the main components

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The complete statement of all three components is present in measures 97 to 99. There, flute 3 doubles the alto flute. This is the only full statement of all three components in the entire section.

Ex. 70: Gurrufio, Section B, Unit a, mm. 97-99, complete statement of the main elements

Desenne reworks fragments of both the habanera pattern and the main melody, to provide areas of imitation and interest, seen in measures 102 to 107. These entrances occur in stretto, and this close juxtaposition of lines creates an intense rhythmic sound. The hocket procedure can also be perceived. Desenne takes rhythmic patterns or even a few notes from a pattern and displaces them, as it happens with the last note in the alto and bass in the habanera pattern in measure 102. There is also an inclusion of an element that will be called “bass” (because it appears for first time in the bass flute in measure 94). It consists of three descending sixteenth notes that are placed on the beat or in the second sixteenth note of a beat. This “bass” motive will come to the surface toward the end of this unit, injecting rhythmic motion and tension, as an ostinato.
In Unit a, there is a tempo acceleration from measure 113 until the 6/8 in measure 132. There is also a fragmentation and variation of the “bass”, habanera, and counter-melody during this accelerando.

There are two distinct subsections within Unit b, the one in 6/8 (mm. 132-139), and the following one in 5/8 (mm.140-185). The tempo of the 6/8 is 96 to the dotted quarter. From measures 132 to 136 there is a repetition (every bar) that creates an exasperated atmosphere. The bass flute plays an ascending major seventh that reminds
us of the *guasa*. Then, for three measures (mm. 137-139) the alto and bass flutes provide
the music (in eighth notes) that will constitute the heart of Unit b.

Ex. 72: *Gurruño*. Section B, Unit b., mm. 135-139, transition to a *guasa* section

The 5/8 section (mm. 140-185) is longer and uses elements from the Venezuelan
*guasa*. This is confirmed by the 5/8, the accentuation, and the melodic contour, which is
usually in disjunct motion with a constant “shaky” upward and downward movement.\(^{76}\)
The music moves by eighth notes, although at times four sixteenth notes are written in
the space of three eight notes.

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\(^{76}\) The melodic contour of the *guasa* is described and illustrated in further detail in Chapter IV.
There are many textures that accompany the melodic contour and that provide great variety to the music, and which vary from measure to measure. One can identify many different rhythmic patterns that make up these textures and that have accentuations on the first and fourth beats, or, in syncopation, on the second and the fifth. At times some lines are in unison, but cross-rhythms are also present.
Table 6: *Gurrufío*, Section B, Unit b, table of rhythmic patterns

From measure 169 the music becomes transitional, preparing the reappearance of Section A material. Repetition is the trademark, in all voices but flute 1. Alto and flute 2 play the *gurrufío* effect and the bass and flute 2 provide rhythm and harmony.
Ex. 74: *Gurrufío*. Section B, Unit b. mm. 169-172, gurrufío effect versus *guasa* rhythms.

**Summary**

In *Gurrufío*, Desenne sets to music the particular noises that characterize the *gurrufío*, a Venezuelan children’s toy. This representation has been achieved by musical means and the use of an extended technique on the flute. The formal plan of the piece is ternary (A-B-A1), with each of these sections containing blocks of musical material that are closely related to each other. While the outer sections are fast and rhythmically intense, the central contrasting section is slower and quieter. The central section is based on the *Guaracha*, a Cuban musical genre, as well as the Venezuelan *guasa*.

The scoring of the piece is for three flute parts in C, plus alto and bass. Players are required to play *divisi* at times, thus enhancing even more the potentials of the ensemble’s sound.

A hallmark of this piece is its rhythmic and melodic complexity. The music is usually laid out in blocks of one or two measures that are repeated; therefore a type of
static and repetitive state is generated. However, not a single block is an exact repletion, since they always undergo slight variation, including changed notes, the omission or addition of notes, or a change of rhythm. But the most significant variation is the overlapping of lines between blocks and the re-use of material from one block in another.

Harmonically, this piece is tonal (though not common practice), but with an extended harmonic vocabulary. Minor natural scales, fragmented whole-tone scales and chromaticism constitute some of the recognizable melodic aspects of *Gurrufio*. The characteristic melodic major seventh of the *guasa* has also been identified. Another procedure observed has been hocket, which provides harmonic and rhythmic coherence between voices.

*Gurrufio* is one of the most complex and original pieces written for flute ensemble. It is hoped that this discussion of its structure as well its most important rhythmic and melodic features will spark interest in this work that will lead to future performances of this unique piece in the flute repertory.

Conception and Premiere

Desenne has composed only a few pieces that include the clarinet; however, after he composed a clarinet sonata (1997) he started to consider that instrument more often in his compositional output. An important fact that motivated Desenne to write a duet for flute and clarinet is the friendship that he has with Jorge Montilla (b. 1970) and this author. Desenne met Montilla when they were both members of the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra in the early nineties, and they also played some chamber music recitals together.

Desenne wrote the Guasa Macabra for flute and clarinet in 2003 and it was premiered by Jorge Montilla and this author in Las Vegas, in a recital at the thirty-first Convention of the National Flute Association. The piece has not yet been recorded and it has not been played often.

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78 Jorge Montilla is principal clarinet player of the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra (Caracas). He is brother of this author.
An Introduction to *Guasa Macabra*

*Guasa Macabra* refers to Saint-Saëns’s *Danse Macabre*, although historical or musical parallels do not exist between the works. Nonetheless, they share an important ingredient in common, namely, dance, which was a source of inspiration for both pieces.

The tone of *Guasa Macabra* is in line with that of the *guasa* genre; *guasa* lyrics always make fun of something or someone. And it is clear that *macabro* in the context of a *guasa* implies humor. The vigorous and wild rhythmic-melodic power of the *guasa* is contrasted with a smooth and innocent central section, whose indication *carrusel* directly references French carousels and their children’s music. Can this be *macabro*? For Desenne, just to quote the word “macabre” of Saint-Saëns and then associate it with a *guasa* seems to be an amusing idea. Perhaps it is *macabro* for Desenne to write such an extended *guasa*. Desenne quotes the *guasa* movements of the *Solo Flute Sonata* in their entirety in the *Guasa Macabra*, in the same order as the original. This quoting of his own music might also be seen as *macabro*.

*Guasas* have been of great importance in the three major flute pieces analyzed in detail in this document. The line that separates Venezuelan *guasas* from *merengues* is slim, maybe even non-existent. But in terms of chronology, the *guasa* came before the *merengue*, or at least, the name *merengue* has survived until the present, while the *guasa* has not. However, Desenne prefers the older name, with its associated meaning of a

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“joke,” rather than merengue, which could be confused with the music from Dominican Republic or Puerto Rico.

Merengues or guasas are taught in Venezuela in elementary school. Compadre Pancho (Godfather Pancho) is one of the first melodies that every Venezuelan child learns.\(^\text{80}\) Thus every Venezuelan understands guasas by heart. Compadre Pancho illustrates the inherent accentuation of a guasa.\(^\text{81}\) Usually accents occur on the first and fourth beats; this is corroborated by the percussion accompaniment, which is provided by a snare drum in a band or cuatro in traditional settings. However, this accentuation is often alternated with another one, on the second and fifth beats, mostly after an eighth rest on the first beat of the bar, in the melody.

\[
\text{Ex. 75: Compadre Pancho}
\]

Another popular tune of the repertory is El Frutero, which shows the snake-like motion of guasa melodies.\(^\text{82}\) It should be noticed that this tune begins with two quick upbeats, which is a common feature of guasas. A variation in the melody in measures 24 and 25 has been notated, demonstrating how in performance the last beat is tied to the

\(^{80}\) Composed by Lorenzo Herrera (1899-1960).
\(^{81}\) The melody was notated in 5/8, although as mentioned in Chapter Two, there is not yet an agreement about what the time signature of a guasa or merengue should be.
\(^{82}\) Composed by Cruz Felipe Iriarte (b. 1922), and its title translates as “The Fruit Man.”
first of the following measure, therefore changing the accentuation pattern and introducing a huge irregularity in the metric structure.

*Guasa Macabra* is a brilliant piece in which Desenne enhances and develops all the characteristic aspects of the traditional *guasa*, taking to a new dimension the expressive capacities of that genre. *Guasa Macabra* is also a work that reiterates the great affinity that Desenne has with the music of his country, without overlooking the music and the world that is beyond the limits of Venezuela.

Ex. 76: *El Frutero*
Analysis

The *Guasa Macabra* is a one-movement work structured into four sections. Section C is the longest of all Sections, in which Desenne quotes the two interludes (both guasas), in their entirety, from the *Solo Flute Sonata*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sections</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>A1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Measures</td>
<td>1-139</td>
<td>140-170</td>
<td>171-369</td>
<td>370-407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-407</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 7: Guasa Macabra, Diagram of sections*

Section A is fast (280 to the eighth note), rhythmically intricate, and contains jumpy melodic lines in both instruments that have repetitive elements. This repetition with interruptions creates a wave-like feeling. The extreme tempo lends the music a frenetic and incisive quality.
Table 8: Guasa Macabra, Diagram of Section A, mm. 1-139

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blocks</th>
<th>I</th>
<th>II</th>
<th>III</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Units</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>a, b, c, d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measures</td>
<td>1-41</td>
<td>41-62</td>
<td>63-139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1-21, 21-41)</td>
<td></td>
<td>63-81, 82-98,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>99-110-111-139</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section A consists of three main blocks: I, II, and III; Block III is the longest and for analytical purposes will be divided into four units (a, b, c, d). In Block I (mm. 1-41) the material presented in measures 1 to 21 is repeated once almost identically in measures 21 to 41 (a and a1). Desenne varies the contrapuntal relationship of the two voices, using similar and parallel motion (m. 20), contrary motion (mm. 8-9), and hocket (mm. 9-11). Desenne changes the accentuation of the main beats and emphasizes particular rhythmic pattern changes. For instance, in measure 2 both instruments play on the second beat, but in the third measure the flute plays its highest note of the melody on the very first beat. In measure 9, the clarinet’s last note is tied to the first beat of the next measure, heard as an anticipation, which is a typical practice in the *guasa*. In terms of harmony, this block, as well as the rest of the piece, is tonal. One feature of the harmonic treatment is the juxtaposition of two scales in a bitonal fashion. For example, from measures 1 to 3, the flute features notes of the A melodic minor scale.
(A-C-E-F-sharp), while the clarinet features these notes: F-A-C-D-E, which could belong to the Lydian scale, (although the B is missing). Another example of bitonal procedures is in measures 13 and 14, where the clarinet has an implied cadence I-V-I in the scale of A minor, while the flute outlines the chords of A-flat major and A minor. Desenne plays also with the clashing of dissonant notes. For instance, in measure two, there is a strong dissonance between the F in the clarinet and the F-sharp in the flute, which is less piercing to the ear because of the huge range separation.

Ex. 77: Guasa Macabra, Section A, Block I, mm. 1-24\textsuperscript{8.5}, wave-like repetitive gestures with rests in both instruments

\textsuperscript{8.5} All clarinet parts excerpted are analyzed transposed.
Also noticeable is the melodic major seventh in the clarinet line, a characteristic interval in Desenne’s guasas, between the first and the third notes of both bars 2 and 3.

Block II (mm. 41-62) continues the melodic ideas of Block I, although both lines seem to gain coordination in terms of melodic movement. There is an important feature of the guasa utilized in this block: the use of four notes in the space of three, which occurs only in the first half of the measure (mm. 45 and 47 in the clarinet, and 51 in the flute). This produces an interesting rhythmic juxtaposition of four notes versus three notes simultaneously in the other instrument, and creates rhythmic instability. This is actually heard as a type of rubato, called rucaneo in the guasa genre. Another distinctive feature of this block is the accentuation on the third beat, in the clarinet line in measures 46, 48, and 49. From measures 51 to 56, the music recaps the first six measures of the piece. It seems to be a return to the beginning but it functions as a transition to the next block instead.

All the units of Block III (mm. 63-139), with the exception of Unit b, have a new textural characteristic, with one of the instruments becoming a rhythmic accompaniment for the other’s melodic line. Desenne develops here some elements from previous blocks. For instance, in the first unit, the two sixteenth notes that begin the work are now developed. They are always placed in the last beat of the measures, as in the opening, but their melodic direction might change: the original is an ascending interval of a fourth, but in this unit there are repeated notes (measures 63-69 in the flute) or descending notes (measures 69-70 in the clarinet).
Ex. 78: Guasa Macabra, Section A, Block II, mm. 41-62, melodic coordination between voices, use of four eighth notes in the space of three eighth notes

In Unit a (mm. 63-81), the flute has the dominant melody, whose interest, however, is predominantly rhythmic. The clarinet bass line has short notes with wide leaps, sometimes more than an octave. The tonality of this unit is clearly B major.
In Unit b (mm. 82-98) the clarinet plays a rhythmic pattern that was seen in the first measure of the Unit a in the flute (m. 63). Desenne takes this pattern and develops it in the following measure, creating a rhythmical block of two measures that is repeated in the following measures (mm. 82-85). From measures 89 to 91, the two instruments play a rhythmic and jumpy pattern that seems to be a percussive section more than a melodic line, and also reminds us of the frogs in the interludes of the *Solo Flute Sonata*. In the rest of the unit the clarinet takes the melody and the flute remains with the frog-like pattern.

Ex. 79: *Guasa Macabra*. Section A, Block III, Unit a, mm. 63-81, flute dominates
Ex. 80: Guasa Macabra, Section A, Block III, Unit a, mm. 82-98, percussive feeling in both parts, frog-like pattern

Unit c (mm. 99-110) displays an established role for each instrument. The clarinet begins playing alone for four bars a fixed one-measure rhythmic pattern that features two sixteenth notes on the last beat (as in the beginning), and which will remain the same throughout, with the exception of the last two measures. The accents of this pattern are on the second and fourth beats and its pitches vary every bar. The flute plays a rhythmic pattern that complements the clarinet’s. This pattern is two measures long and its accents are located on the first and fourth beats in the first measure and on the second beat in the second measure (mm. 103-104). An eighth note in the last beat of measure 106 tied to the first eighth note of measure 107, as a metric
anticipation, that breaks the metric and rhythmic pattern. In terms of harmonic structure, two notes are important in this unit: D-flat and F. The flute has the notes F-E-E-flat; however, by the melodic arrangement of notes, it seems as if E and E-flat are in conflict. The clarinet plays D-flat repeatedly, in alternation with other notes such as E-flat, E, F, F-sharp, and B. It sounds as if Desenne were playing with chromatic clusters arranged at random, which produces an effect of disorganized repetition.

Ex. 81: *Guasa Macabra*, Section A, Block III, Unit c, mm. 99–110, anticipation of the first beat in the flute, hocket interplay

The longest of all these units is Unit d (mm. 111-139). Here the instruments alternate roles as soloist and accompanist. For the first eight measures (mm. 111-118) the flute and clarinet play a repeated one-measure rhythmic structure. It is noticeable in the flute line, how the anticipated first beat becomes a regular component of the rhythmic pattern. The accentuations go in a hocket procedure: first and fourth in the flute, and second and fifth in the clarinet. Also notable is the *guasa* major seventh in the clarinet (m. 111). Then, for a period of eleven measures (mm. 119-129) the flute plays a
guasa melody, all in eighth notes, while the clarinet accompanies with a rhythmic pattern with accents on the first and fourth beats. This is switched in measures 130 to 136, when it is the clarinet that holds the melodic role.

Ex. 82: *Guasa Macabra*, Section A, Block III, Unit d, mm. 111-139, both instruments as soloist and accompaniment
The flute accompanies with a repeated one-measure pattern that contains accents on the first and fourth beats and features the guasa interval. The three final measures are rhythmic for both instruments (mm. 137-139).

Section B (mm. 140-170) is a contrasting section. The indication is carrusel (carrousel) and the time signature is twice as slow as the previous section, now 5/4. The rhythms in this section are exclusively quarter and half notes for both instruments. The general atmosphere is that of a quiet and repetitive children’s game, or perhaps a cradle song. However, right from the beginning there are some notes that spice the harmony. C major is established as the clear tonic, but while the clarinet has C-E-F-E, the flute’s initial melodic interval is C up to B. Therefore, although all the notes belong to C major, the B in the flute and the F in the clarinet (not heard simultaneously) provide some piquancy to the C major tonic triad. There is an interesting effect of repetition in which the clarinet repeats a pattern of four quarter notes, starting on the second beat, and the flute plays a two-measure pattern, also starting on the second beat of each measure. What is especially interesting is that the order of the notes in the flute changes each time, beginning on the second note of the previous pattern, so a cyclic progression is created. Therefore if each note is numbered, the order is thus: 12345671, 23456712, 345671 (mm. 140-145). In measures 146 and 147 there is a variation in the notes of the clarinet: C-E-flat-F-sharp-E and C-E-F-sharp-E-flat, and for the next four measures Desenne changes the notes and patterns in the clarinet. In 158 the quarter rests that both instruments had on the first beat in the beginning of the section, are now augmented to half-note rests, and between measures 159 and 160 there are three quarter-note rests. It sounds as if the mechanism that provides the music for the
carousel is starting to break down. After measure 166, the lack of alignment in the rests between the instruments and the bitterness of the harmony confirms that the music box machine is in fact broken. The indication fl. escoñetar intervalos con gliss. y otras cosas at the beginning of this section means: “to make ornamentation between intervals such as glissando in the flute part.” Literally, escoñetar (in Venezuelan slang) translates as “to destroy.” For the premiere of the piece, both performers played glissandos, repeated notes, among other ornamentations, under the composer’s supervision.

After the carrousel music Desennes quotes material from his Solo Flute Sonata, inserting its two guasas into the Guasa Macabra, in the same order, making Section C. The Guasa Charcosa is now located in measures 171 to 229 and the Guasaranas II in measures 230 to 369. Desenne has added the clarinet as an accompanying instrument to the flute, although at some moments it displays some solo lines. As in the first sections, here the clarinet interacts with the flute melodically and rhythmically. Interesting climatic moments are produced with the clarinet when it plays rhythmic ostinati, as can be heard in measures 268 to 271, and measures 352 to 356. The tempi of both interludes are transformed in Guasa Macabra. In the Solo Flute Sonata the first interlude’s indication is 200 to the eighth note, and the second interlude’s is 250. In the Guasa Macabra the tempi are switched. The first interlude, Guasa Charcosa is indicated Subito Inquieto (suddenly restless) and the second interlude, Guasaranas II, meno mosso (240 to the eighth note).
Ex. 83: *Guasa Macabra*, Section B, mm. 140-170, performers are instructed to make their own improvised ornaments
Toward the end of *Guasaranas II* in the *Guasa Macabra* there is an *affrettando* that leads to *Tempo Primo* (280 to the eighth note) in measure 370, where the final part of the work begins.

Ex. 84: *Guasa Macabra*, Section C, mm. 268–271, ostinato in the clarinet part

The final part of *Guasa Macabra*, Section A1 consists of two blocks from Section A. These are II and Unit a of Block III. Block II is incomplete; it starts from the fifth measure of its original (m. 45) with just a few notes changed in the clarinet (which do not alter the rhythmic or harmonic content of the original). The following music corresponds exactly to Unit a of Block III, which Desenne utilizes verbatim (in measure 82), thus ending the *Guasa Macabra*.

**Summary**

*Guasa Macabra* is a work whose title refers to Saint-Saëns’s *Danse Macabre*, but which shares only the dance element with the French work. In *Guasa Macabra*, Desenne takes the Venezuelan *guasa* and creates a work of significant artistic proportions. Elements of the *guasa* are developed, such as an accentuation that naturally occurs on
the first and fourth beats, with accents on the second and fifth beats. Another feature of
the guasa is a type of anticipation that is achieved by tying the last beat of a measure
with the first beat of the next measure. Desenne also follows the melodic contours of the
guasa, which are jumpy and snake-like. A procedure named rucaneo in which four notes
are grouped in the span of three notes was also observed. The time signature of this
piece is 5/8, a time signature that Desenne employs when writing a guasa. The formal
plan of the Guasa Macabra contains four large sections, each having several divisions,
with the exception of Section B. Section B is slower, notated in 5/4, and evoking simple
carousel music, in contrast with the wild and powerful rhythmic and melodic drive of
the other sections. Another interesting feature of Guasa Macabra is the inclusion of the
two guasas from the Solo Flute Sonata. Desenne’s harmonic language in this piece is
tonal, with a use of modes, chromaticism, bitonality, and the distinctive use of the
melodic major seventh.
CHAPTER V: AN INTRODUCTION TO DESENNE’S OTHER FLUTE WORKS

List of All the Remaining Flute Pieces in Chronological Order

1) Quinteto del Pájaro for flute, oboe (which alternates English horn), violin, violoncello, and cuatro (1981-1983)

2) Botella al Guaire for flute, English horn, violin, violoncello, and cuatro (1985-1986)

3) Quinteto de la Culebra for flute, oboe, violin, violoncello, and cuatro (1988)

4) Pizziguasa Galeónica for harp, flute (alternates alto flute), and violoncello (1988-1989)

5) Visión Galeónica & Platillos Voladores for nine instruments, flute, oboe, English horn, clarinet, bass clarinet, bassoon, contra bassoon, and 2 French horns (1990)

6) El Monocordio de la Lata for flute, English horn, violin, violoncello, and cuatro (1990-1997)

7) Táchira y Frontera for 12 instruments (1991)

8) Three Pieces for flute and guitar (sometimes called Triptico) (1994-1995)


10) Ronquirplass for wind nonet (1999)


12) Pas de Deux, Sans Trois for flute, cello, strings, and harp (2001-2002)

13) Hakuun Yu Yu Yuu for flute, violin, cello, double bass, and mixed media (2003)
An Introduction to the Remaining Flute Pieces

The flute has been an important instrument for Desenne since his initial compositions. In his first compact disc, “Tocatas Galeónicas” (Galleon Toccatas), four of the pieces include the flute: Quinteto del Pájaro (1981-1983), Botella al Guaire (1985-1986), Quinteto de la Culebra (1988), and Pizziguasa Galeónica (1988-1989). In these pieces Desenne established his style, which was influenced by traditional music of Venezuela and neighbor countries, as he took elements of those traditions and considered them as important points of departure. A rare particularity in these pieces, with the exception of the Pizziguasa Galeónica, is the inclusion of the cuatro. This creates a huge bridge with Venezuelan traditional music, since the cuatro is the most important instrument in this type of music. Later, in 1990 and 1991 Desenne wrote pieces on a bigger scale: Visión Galeónica & Platillos Voladores (1990) for nine instruments and Táchira y Frontera for twelve instruments (1991). Many other pieces have been inspired and commissioned by the Venezuelan flutist Luis Julio Toro.84 His collaboration with
Desenne has been significant and as a result he has premiered and recorded many of Desenne’s works. Toro premiered and recorded the *Three Pieces* (1994–1995); he also premiered and recorded *Haydn Tuyero, Chicharras y Galeones* (2000), and *Hakuu un Tuu Tuu* (2003); and he commissioned a piece for flute and marimba entitled *Surfay* (2007). Other compositions have been commissioned by international artists and ensembles. Such is the case with *Pas de Deux, Rronquiplas, Number Nine*, and *La Era Papayera*, which have been commissioned respectively by Jacques Zoon and Iseut Chuat, Joel Sachs, the Ensemble Onix of Mexico, and the Fodor Quintett of Amsterdam. Another large-scale piece is the *Cantata Maqroll*, which was commissioned by the Festival de Artes in Cali, Colombia.

The following stylistic discussion of these sixteen pieces is not exhaustive and is intended only to compare and highlight stylistic salient features. It includes a brief explanation of the conception and premiere of each piece, and a short comparative discussion of instrumentation, length, structure, and salient features. The texts written by Desenne, such as program and cover notes, have been very useful to discover many of the conceptual, poetical, and musical aspects of the pieces. Desenne has also adapted some of his own works for the flute, but only works originally composed for the flute have been included. Some of the scores were not available; they are now missing, lost in rehearsals and concerts. This discussion is intended to pave the way for further research on these pieces.
Stylistic Discussion of the Remaining Works for Flute

*Quinteto del Pájaro* for flute, oboe (which alternates English horn), violin, violoncello, and *cuatro* (1981-1983) (4 movements)

Premiered in Paris by the Paul Desenne Ensemble in 1983, this work was recorded in 1990 with Venezuelan musicians: Nicolás Real (flute), Andrés Eloy Medina (oboe and English horn), David Moreira (violin), Aquiles Báez (*cuatro*), and Paul Desenne (violoncello). It consists of four movements: *Seis por Derecho*, *Guasa del Borrachito*, *Alba-Vals*, and *Periquera*.

This piece belongs to what Desenne entitled *Tocatas Galeónicas* (Galleon Toccatas), which is a collection of his earliest chamber pieces. Desenne explains that this piece is an “essay on tropical baroque music.” In *Quinteto del Pájaro* (Bird Quintet) there is an exploration of genres of Venezuelan music that developed contents such as harmonic cycles, rhythmic patterns, or song form. In a liner note written by Desenne, he comments that he: “tried to translate the very volatile spirit of Venezuelan improvisation into the formal and precise terms of a chamber ensemble, bringing the *cuatro* (a small, strummed four-string guitar) as a special guest to achieve the effect of a warm continuo section.”

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85 Paul Desenne, *Tocatas Galeónicas*, Musicarte MS-089-CD.
87 Ibid.
Seis por derecho, is a type of joropo, a music, poetic, and dance form that is performed in the great plains of Venezuela and Colombia, also known as música llanera (music of the plains). This music is usually performed by a singer, diatonic harp, cuatro, and maracas. One of its characteristics is the simultaneous use of both a 6/8 meter, usually given by the cuatro and the maracas, and a 3/4 meter in the melodic and bass lines of the harp. The harmonic pattern is a four-measure sequence V-I-IV-V.\textsuperscript{88} Desenne says that in the Seis por Derecho:

\textquote quoting desenne: "Singers and players display their abilities in improvised verse and instrumental variation. A distant relative of fandango, the form relates in many ways to the spirit of Spanish baroque music, with a blend of African and Caribbean cultures that makes it an emblem of South America expression....[T]here is no main subject or melody, but instead a collective intensity.\textsuperscript{89}

In the following excerpt, the flute recreates descending harp melodic runs in 3/4, while the English horn, the violin, and cello have melodies that combine implied meters of 6/8 and 3/4. The expression is indeed that of a “collective intensity.”

\textsuperscript{89} Paul Desenne, Tocatas Galeónicas, Musicarte MS-089-CD. Liner note written by Paul Desenne.
The second movement, *Guasa del Borrachito*, or “Little Wino Guasa”, is a study of the syncopation possibilities of the genre. Desenne explains that this is:

The street drunkard who sings his little song on a bench in the town square. *Guasas* are frequently played by street bands, in New Orleans fashion. This movement recreates the colorful oozing out of a tropical band on a lazy afternoon. It is also a study in the interesting syncopation possibilities offered by the *guasa*. The general form is like a classical sonata development of a bi-thematic popular song of my own invention.\(^{90}\)

The cello has a *guasa* melody (mm. 56-63), playing with the basic rhythmic accentuation of 3+2, with various variations. The rest of the instruments play rhythmic patterns that create a hocket effect.

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\(^{90}\) Ibid.
Ex. 86: *Quinteto del Pájaro, Guasa del Borrachito*, mm. 56-72, cello and flute feature the melody while the other instruments create a hocket effect.

The third movement is a modern Venezuelan waltz, entitled *Alba-Vals* (Dawn Waltz). In the end of the nineteenth century the waltz was one of the most often performed dances in Venezuela. The Venezuelan waltz, known in Spanish as *vals* or *valse*, followed the traditions of the European genre. The pianists of Venezuela included it as a centerpiece of their repertory. It was also an important part of the repertory of
municipal bands, and more recently, in the past several decades, it has been adopted by traditional groups.\(^{91}\) Desenne explains about his *Alba-Vals*:

The Venezuelan *vals* has a tropical syncopation stressing the 6/8 somewhat more than the original 3/4 time signature, and the form is strictly classical. This piece has the sense of going adrift in an endless *vals*, with some intense rhythmic riffs at the hinges; a continuous flow of melodic embroidery on a short harmonic cycle that is continuously transposed. The classical mould of the original is broken.\(^{92}\)

In *Alba-VALS* the flute indicated is the alto flute, which adds a softer and less incisive sound to the music. The following example demonstrates the metric combinations of 6/8 and 3/4 in all the instruments, with the exception of the *cuatro*. The *cuatro* is in charge of maintaining the rhythm in 6/8 with the open stroke on the first and second, and fourth and fifth eighth notes, and dry stroke on the third and sixth eighth notes of each measure. This *vals* is melancholy and nostalgic. Desenne balances exquisitely the use of long and cantabile notes with rhythmic motives, which provides the music with an expressive vocal quality that alternates with the rhythmic flow that interests to Desenne so much.

\(^{91}\) Traditional groups consist basically of one melodic instrument such as the violin, flute, clarinet or mandolin, a *cuatro*, and a bass (usually double bass). Some famous groups are El Cuarteto Caraquita, El Cuarteto, Ensamble Gurrufio and Grupo Raíces de Venezuela.

\(^{92}\) Paul Desenne, *Tocatas Galeónicas*, Musicarte MS-089-CD. Liner note written by Paul Desenne.
Ex. 87: Quinteto del Pájaro, Alba-Vals, mm. 1-20, metric combination of 6/8 and 3/4

The *periquera*, translated into English as “flock of parrots,” is another type of *joropo*. The *periquera* comprises a series of variations on a fixed sixteen-measure cycle. Desenne says about this movement:

The successive instrumental variations and textures in this *periquera* mimic various instruments and voices of the Llanero tradition: the diatonic harp, the *bandola* (our melodic lute – similar to a banjo)*95*, the *cuatro*, the singers, and the dancers, with their heels tapping on the patio dance floor.*94

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*93 Bandola is a pear-shape instrument. It usually has four strings, although this may vary. It is played with a fingerpick.

The harmonic cycle of the *periquera*, which Desenne follows, is I-V7-I-V7/IV-IV-V7-I-V7-I. However, Desenne wrote to the *cuatro* player that there is freedom to vary any chord (probably with closely related chords or inversions) with the indication at measure 16: *repeat 16 bar sequence with variazioni*. Desenne, as in other pieces, assigns roles of both soloist and accompanist to the instruments. In this piece, only the *cuatro* remains an accompanying instrument. The interaction among all the voices is always intense. At times, instruments double the melody, as a coloristic effect, but each melodic instrument has a moment as protagonist. Desenne also employs hocket technique as a compositional device. At the end of the movement all the melodic instruments play a powerful unison. The strength and vitality of this *joropo* rounds out the expressive arc of the *Quinteto del Pájaro*. This quintet was his first serious composition and it contains many of the compositional features that Desenne continues to explore and develop in his later pieces.
Ex. 88: *Quinteto del Pájaro, Periquera*, mm. 1-16, the doubling of parts creates a coloristic effect

*Botella al Guaire* for flute, English horn, violin, violoncello, and *cuatro* (1985–1986) (3 movements)

The quintet *Botella al Guaire* was premiered in 1990 at the Teresa Carreño Theater of Caracas by the Paul Desenne Ensemble. It was written for flute (and piccolo), violin, English horn, cello, and *cuatro*, and it consists of three movements: *Guasa del 5 y 6, Canción de Cuna, Montañas de Caracas*, and *El Fulchola*. This quintet is also included on the “Tocatas Galeónicas” compact disc. *Botella al Guaire* means “Bottle into the Guaire;” Guaire is the name of the river that crosses the city of Caracas.
Another guasa is featured in *Botella al Guaire*. “5 y 6” is how a horse race is referred to in Venezuela.95 No doubt that the title embeds a joke. Musically Desenne pictures the 5 and 6 by alternating 5/8 and 6/8 successively, although there are places where three, four, and up to seven consecutive 5/8 measures are observed. It is as if the guasa is trying to dominate the other meter. But at the end of the piece he asks the cuatro to play in the rhythm of a *Seis por Derecho*; so there is a reference to that type of joropo as well. Desenne synthesizes the guasa, in 5/8, which supposedly originated in Caracas, and llanero music, in 6/8. This kind of association has an obviously humorous purpose, and demonstrates the creative capacity of Desenne to invent a music that amalgamates different elements, from different sources, with a refined sense of humor. In comparison with the previous quintet, which pays tribute to specific traditions, this one points toward a compositional direction that is freer, distant from a recognizable tradition, in search of a more personal language. Desenne wrote that: “it’s like a traffic jam in the urban tropics. The ‘Guaire’ is our capital’s river, and a hand flings a bottled message into its waters from a car rolling by.”96

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95 The most famous horse race of Venezuela takes place in Caracas. It is referred as 5 and 6 because people win with either 5 or 6 horses.
Scores of the succeeding movements are missing, but information about general compositional features and the tone of both movements has been written by Desenne. He writes about *Canción de Cuna, Montañas de Caracas* (Lullaby, Mountains of Caracas):

A simple two-note melody rides on a modern *Vals Venezolano* rhythm, like a peaceful lullaby which slowly metamorphoses as it descends from the mountain forests above our capital to the dreadful streets of civilized hell. The intense city heat triggers strange nostalgic atmospheres around an afternoon nap, but the simple two-note scheme remains unchanged all through the piece.  

He writes about the third movement, *El Fulchola*:

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Something is constantly changing in our musical behavior, and the strumming of the *cuatro* is like a plasma of electrons which can switch from binary to ternary rhythms without warning. This piece is like a rhythmic cocktail of setups suggested by different patterns in the *cuatro* accompaniment. The title, a colloquialism meaning ‘at a full speed’, defines a special mood, a form of musical impatience. To me it’s also an essay in Venezuelan rhythmic counterpoint. The *cuatro* disappears at one point in the piece, revealing the rhythmic personalities of the other players and the webbing that supports their interplay.98

**Quinteto de la Culebra** for flute, oboe, violin, violoncello, and *cuatro* (1988) (2 movements)

*Quinteto de la Culebra* (Snake Quintet) was premiered at the Teresa Carreño Theater of Caracas in 1990 by the Paul Desenne Ensemble. It consists of only two movements; the first movement, *Pajarillo de la Culebra*, was composed for flute and oboe and *Bambuco Cruzado* for full ensemble.

*Pajarillo de la Culebra* (The Snakes’s Little Bird) is based on the *pajarillo*, a type of *joropo* that follows the exact harmonic cycle of the *seis por derecho* but in minor mode. Desenne maintains most of the original gestures of the *pajarillo* as, for example, the first notes, which portrays the first strokes of the harp. To Desenne, these two movements lead us from lowlands to mountains, like a snake road, to trail up the Andes and find the fresh rhythms of the *bambuco* that Venezuela shares with Colombia.99 The score for the second movement is missing; only Desenne’s description of it survives:

*Bambuco Cruzado* is a generic term used to designate a syncopated shift of the *bambuco*, a musical genre found in Venezuela, Ecuador, and Colombia. The piece begins with some Andean gallantry, and ends in a sort of neo-Incaic counterpoint fiction. The harmony of the piece tends to pull us south, towards the music of the central Andean countries, but its rhythm is still Venezuelan *bambuco*. The formal and harmonic contents in this

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98 Ibid.
piece go beyond the simplicity of the A-B-A form of folkloric *bambucos*.”

*Pizziguasa Galeónica* for harp, flute (alternates alto flute), and violoncello (1988-1989)

The *Pizziguasa Galeónica* (Galleonic pizzicato-guasa) was also premiered at the Teresa Carreño Theater of Caracas in 1990 and also recorded as a part of the “Tocatas Galeónicas” compact disc.

Desenne explains the conception and tone of this work in the program note for the CD:

This is an underwater *guasa*, a piece in which the genre’s characteristic jittery syncopation is smoothed out by a liquid medium. The pizzicato cello hides in the harp to form a rhythmic weaving on which the flute draws pendular motifs. The image this music describes is that of a sunken galleon, gently swayed by the sea currents surrounding a coral reef, in the golden light of the Caribbean afternoon.

Features observed in other *guasas* by Desenne are present in this as well, such as time signature and rhythmic aspects of the accompaniment and melodies. However, the harmonic language is harsher, less diatonic. The listener hears a separation from tradition. The flute writing in this piece stands out for its melancholy and introspectiveness.

The flute has an exclusively melodic role, while the cello is required to play only pizzicatos and the harp provides the core of the accompaniment and at times melodies. The work was written in 1989, but it was revised in 1991. In the revised version, Desenne includes *portamenti*.

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100 Ibid.
101 Ibid.
Visión Galeónica & Platillos Voladores for nine wind instruments: flute, oboe, English horn, clarinet, bass clarinet, bassoon, contra bassoon, and 2 French horns (1990)

The first version of Visión Galeónica & Platillos Voladores (Galleonic Vision & UFOs) was composed for the Venezuelan conductor and composer Eduardo Marturet and his group Sinfonietta de Caracas in 1990. However, the same year Desenne revised the work and the piece was premiered by the Nederlands Blasers Ensemble at the Paradiso Theater in Amsterdam, under Tania Leóns’s baton.

Visión Galeónica functions as an introduction for Platillos Voladores. Its tempo is lentissimo, in 6/8, although there are some tempo fluctuations. The flute begins with a swinging melody that defines the style of the movement and that evokes a slow, underwater feel. The rest of the instruments enter later, in imitation, and ultimately forming chords that are held as fermatas. Some of these entrances function as short solos. Despite the short imitations, this music has a predominantly homophonic character. In measure 17 the time signature changes to 5/8 and the tempo is Vivo. The Vivo (mm. 17–23) works as a bridge (attaca) to the Platillos Voladores and prepares the mood for the guasa.

Platillos Voladores is the Spanish translation of “unidentified flying objects.” This movement is much longer than the first movement and contains sections that alternate between the time signatures of 5/8 and 5/4. As in the first movement, there are many moments where the music has full stops. Desenne develops the motive of the first two measures and transforms it rhythmically, melodically, and harmonically. A wide array of textures adds variety and interest to the music.
Ex. 90: *Platillos Voladores*, mm. 1-6, motivic transformation

**El Monocordio de la Lata** for flute, English horn, violin, violoncello and *cuatro* (1990-1997) (Missing)

The score of this quintet is missing and was never performed.

**Táchira y Frontera** for 12 instruments (1991)

This piece was premiered and commissioned by the Venezuelan group Solistas de Cámara at the Teresa Carreño of Caracas in 1991, under Juan Tomas Martínez’s direction. Unfortunately, the score has been lost and there are no recordings of this work.

Luis Julio Toro and Rubén Riera\textsuperscript{102} premiered this work at the Contemporary Music Festival in Caracas in 1995, and the same year they recorded them in a compact disc entitled: “620 Avenida Tropical”, in 1995.

The names of the pieces are Bossanovals, Recuerdos de Venosa, and Kumbiologia. The first piece, Bossanovals, whose title suggests a combination of the music genres bossanova and vals, is an example of motivic development. Another feature is the implied polyrhythm shown between the parts: in 3/4 for the guitar and 6/8 for the flute; this type of polyrhythm is a characteristic of Venezuelan valses and joropos. Dance influences the tone of this piece. An interesting performance indication in this piece is reventando cuerdas, which translates as “breaking the strings,” a way to indicate extremely forte. The second piece, Recuerdos de Venosa\textsuperscript{103} (memories from Venosa), is a slow piece that introduces great contrast from the outer two pieces. The flute has predominantly long notes in a descending line, at times chromatic; while the guitar has a preludio-like texture, with which also marks the rhythmic motion, adding harmonic weight and also doubling the flute line. The flute range is in the low register almost throughout the entire piece. This piece was dedicated to the Colombian writer and poet William Ospina B. Kumbiologia is the third piece of this Tríptico, and its title might be understood as the study of the cumbia (Desenne possibly spelled it with “k” to make it sound more scientific). This piece was written in the style of the Colombian cumbia. One of its unifying elements is the persistent rhythm seen in the bass of the guitar, which recreates the pace and emotion of that genre. Against this setting the flute plays snake-\textsuperscript{102} These musicians formed a duet that performed numerous recitals and released three compact discs.
\textsuperscript{103} Venosa is a town in the south of Italy.
like melodies that sound as if the flutist were endlessly improvising. The tempo indication is Allegro Sabroso, or in English: “Tasty Allegro.”

**La Era Papayera for woodwind quintet (1995)**

*La Era Papayera* (The Papayera Age) was composed for the Fodor Quintett of Amsterdam in 1995, but it was premiered by the Ensemble Maslanka of Venezuela (an ensemble of which this author is a member) at the Quinta de Anauco, Caracas, in 2008. There is no available recording of this piece.

*Papayera* is the name of town bands of the north coast of Colombia. The name derives from the “papayo” tree, whose hollowed fruits were used to make the first instruments of these groups. Currently these bands consist of brass instruments, percussion, and sometimes accordion, and also voices. The music that these bands perform is mainly *cumbia*, and two related genres such as *porro* and *vallenato*. *Papayera* music is festive and it is basically associated with important town celebrations such as parades and the arrival of important figures of society; they also are performed in the popular and picturesque tourist buses called “chivas.”

The *cumbia*, which is the source music of the *papayeras*, has two possible settings of instrumental settings. One consists of one melodic instrument, the *caña de millo* (cane of millet) or *pito*. The other instruments are percussion: *tambor mayor*, *llamador* (both single-headed drums of different sizes), a *bombo* (double-headed drum), and rattles (also known as *guacharacas*) or *maracas*. This setting is called *conjunto de cumbia*. The other setting is known as *conjunto de gaitas* and it consists of two duct flutes or *gaitas*, a *tambor*

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105 This instrument sounds like a clarinet. It is a short wind instrument with four finger-holes.
*mayor*, a *llamador*, and *maracas*. These flutes are long and there are two types: *hembra* (female) and *macho* (male). The *hembra* has five finger holes and the *macho*, two. It is interesting that the *macho gaita* player also plays *maracas* simultaneously. At present, instruments of the European tradition have been included, such as the violin, the modern flute, and accordion, among others.\footnote{Javier Ocampo, *Música y Folklore de Colombia*. (Bogotá: Plaza y Janes, 1980 2nd Ed.), 110-112.}

*La Era Papayera* is another example of Desenne’s pieces that have a close tie with the folk and traditional music of Latin America. Desenne studied Colombian music and took as matter of inspiration the *papayera*, which represents one the most important genres in Colombia, and definitely the most internationally known Colombian music. The melodic instruments of the woodwind quintet reproduce the wild and vibrant force of this music and transcend, at times, their melodic nature to give the illusion of being percussion instruments of the *papayera* band.

Motivic development of melodic and rhythmic gestures is one of the hallmarks of this work. These gestures are usually short and concise. Desenne plays with the distribution of the solo and accompaniment parts, thus creating a balanced and organic interaction among all the instruments. Three ascending notes provide most of the melodic material to be developed (flute-clarinet m. 1, oboe m. 2) throughout the piece, and the short notes of the French horn in the first measures (mm. 1-3) bring to mind the sounds of the *llamador* drum, which is heard all throughout the *cumbia*. Other motives are introduced and also developed. As seen in other pieces by Desenne, the rhythmical texture is rich and complex.
Ex. 91: *La Era Papayera*, mm. 1-6, complex rhythmic texture

**Rronquiplass** for wind nonet (1999)

*Rronquiplass* was commissioned by Joel Sachs\(^{107}\) and was recorded by the Camerata de las Americas of Mexico under Joel Sachs’s direction in 2000. On that compact disc he also recorded the other two movements for nonet, *Visión Galeónica* & *Platillos Voladores*, and presented the three movements together as an integral work, placing *Rronquiplass* as the third movement.\(^{108}\) All three movements share the same instrumentation.

*Rronquiplass* is another example of Desenne’s pieces whose rhythmic approach is complex and suggests a frantic dance. Every instrument is an important part of the complicated rhythmic apparatus. As in other compositions by Desenne, the short-value

\(^{107}\) Conductor and pianist, co-director of the ensemble Continuum and founder of the New Julliard Ensemble, is a promoter of contemporary music.

\(^{108}\) The name of the CD is *Batata-Coco, Antología de la Diversidad Musical en las Américas*. Co-sponsored by FONCA, FIC, and the Fideicomiso para la Cultura Mexico/USA.
figures provide an incisive rhythmic drive. Hocket is also an important device in the texture of this piece. Within this rhythmic intricacy, as in an agitated jungle, the listener hears several short melodies that stand out from the noise-polluted environment, like desperate voices that demand to be heard.

Ex. 92: *Rronquiplas*, mm. 1-7, short-value figures provide the substance of the rhythmic machinery

*Haydn Tuyero, Chicharras y Galeones* for flute, English horn, and violoncello, with pre-recorded track (2000)

*Haydn Tuyero, Chicharras y Galeones* (Tuyeran Miranda, Cicadas and Galleons) was premiered at Hacienda Carabobo\(^{109}\) (a place near Caracas) in 2000, and for that occasion the musicians were Luis Julio Toro (flute), Jaime Martínez (English horn), and

\(^{109}\) Hacienda Carabobo is a colonial ranch (16\(^{th}\) century) in which coffee was cultivated. Now it is a museum dedicated to the history of colonial times in Venezuela. It belongs to the Cisneros Foundation. This information was obtained through the web page of the Cisneros Foundation: <http://www.orinoco.org>.
Paul Desenne (cello). It was commissioned by Gustavo Cisneros who is the owner of the Cisneros Corporation.

Desenne explains his conceptual motivation in his lengthy program note for the premiere of the work:

This fantasy evokes the musical past of the provinces near Caracas, where coffee and sugarcane were the basic staples. South of the capital city lies the Tuy river valley. The harp music of this region is famous for its Spanish baroque roots, and the remarkably complex oral traditions still alive there suggest that there was great musical talent and practice among the settlers. The music I composed tells the tale of Miranda, the forefather of Venezuelan Independence, who traveled Europe with his flute, his unquenchable thirst for knowledge, and his gallant, modern ideas. In 1785, he had long conversations on music with Josef Haydn while strolling through the palace gardens at Esterházy. One can imagine Miranda asking Haydn to write something for the flute, which he played quite well. In reality, their conversation was mostly about Boccherini, the famous Italian cellist who was stirring up musical life in Madrid, where Miranda had been living since he came from the colonies to study at the military academy. After this meeting, Miranda went off on his endless adventures, visiting Russia, meeting Catherine the Great, and later, during the French Revolution, becoming an important general of the French Republican Army. Later, he conspired to free Venezuela from Spanish domination, and played a great part in the process that eventually succeeded in doing so. I imagined Miranda's musical request to Haydn—a petition that the composer would have rejected immediately, saying, 'If you want new music, with the flavors of your land, then have somebody from your own province compose it!' In my fancy, Miranda likes this idea, and immediately writes to his nephew, Lucas de ..., who was studying music with Boccherini in Madrid. But the letter never reaches him, for the young musician had recently left Madrid and is back home at his sugarcane plantation with his new cello. Perhaps he is discovering ways to make the instrument fit into the dances and songs of the tuyero music that he loves, playing with the harpists of his village. In this very hot valley, Lucas de ... is composing, tormented by the very loud ringing of the cicadas in the burning afternoon. Instead of quitting his composition, he decides to include their piercing notes in the score. When the evening breeze finally cools the air, bringing back the precious

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110 It is music from the Tuy area. This area is about fifty minutes away from Caracas, in the Tuy river valley. Its traditional tuyero music is played by a singer who simultaneously plays the maracas and a diatonic harp that is bigger than the llanera harp and half strings are metallic. The research on this harp suggests that the plantations slaves developed this instrument to imitate the sounds that they heard in their owners' houses: the harpsichord.
silence, he expresses his gratitude with a motet, in the style he learned from an old codex brought to the cathedral in Caracas from the doomed pearl-port of Nueva Cádiz, where the chronicler-poet Juan de Castellanos had landed in the 1520s. The musical past of these regions is very rich, going back to Renaissance and early baroque sources, and it blends with pre-Hispanic and African roots, forming many hybrids. This short fantasy peers into different historic possibilities, assembling various short movements to create an imaginary landscape of Miranda's time.\textsuperscript{111}

This work is divided into two parts and each with several internal sections, contrasting in mood and style. They both end with motets, and both include elegant \textit{joropos} after the \textit{tuyero} style. Desenne includes a pre-recorded track of cicadas in one of the slow sections of the first part (fourth section). In the section that begins in measure 127, there are some interesting features. As the cicadas are sounding, the flute and the English horn play repeated notes in combination with long notes that are reminiscent of sounds of animals and insects of the tropics (mm. 167-180). In the same section, the English horn plays several times the four notes that imitate the four open strings of the \textit{cuatro}: A-D-F-sharp-B.

\textsuperscript{111} Paul Desenne, Program Note for the Premiere of \textit{Haydn Tuyero, Chicharra y Galeones}, 2000.
Ex. 93: Haydn Tuyero, Chicharras y Galeones, First Part, mm. 159-181, repeated notes resemble the cicada and the English horn plays the notes of the *cuatro* strings.

The First Part is divided into five sections: *Allegro*—*Haydn Tuyero* (Tuyeran Haydn); *Subito Adagio*—*Romance de la Perla* (Pearl Romance); *Allegro Joropero* (Allegro alla Joropo); *Poco Adagio*—*Fantasía de las Chicharras* (Cicada Fantasy); and *Motete a Tres Voces*—*Nuevo Mundo* (Three-Voice—Motet-New World). The Second Part consists of *Allegro*—*Transición al Baile* (Transition to Dance); *Allegro Campesino*—*Baile de Joropo en el Cafetal* (Farmer Allegro—Joropo Dance at the Coffee Plantation); and *Motete Final*. 
In this work Desenne returns to the idea of recreating a past, like in “a musical time machine.”\textsuperscript{112} It is a wonderful work that combines elements from European and Latin American music and from different times. This is all was tied together under a fictional tale that provides the canvas for the setting of this music.

\textit{Pas de Deux, Sans Trois, Concertino for flute, cello, strings, and harp (2001-2002)}

This work was commissioned by Jacques Zoon\textsuperscript{113} and Iseut Chuat and premiered at Faneuil Hall in Boston in 2002 by the same players, under the direction of Steve Lipsitt leading the Boston Classical Orchestra. It has not yet been recorded.

This Concertino is in two movements. The first movement connected two main sections (Section A, mm. 1-79, and Section B, mm. 80-182). Section A is in 6/8 and it begins with the two solo instruments in an interaction that is quiet and expressive, in which the flute sets a swinging mood and the cello is freer in its melodic contours and rhythms. As the movement progresses (m. 20), the solo instruments start to play with a more rhythmical intricacy and the accompanying strings participate in a type of hocket, emphasizing the rhythmic aspect and the swinging idea heard in the flute at the beginning. Section B is in 2/4 and much faster. The peaceful and dancing quality of the Section A is now changed. Some Caribbean, and mostly Colombian rhythms, infuse the material used by Desenne to create a rhythmically complex music. Section B can be

\textsuperscript{112} Paul Desenne, \textit{Tocatas Galeónicas: New Music from Latin America}, Dorian Discovery DIS-80129. Liner note written by Paul Desenne.

\textsuperscript{113} Jacques Zoon has been principal flutist of international orchestras such as Boston Symphony and Royal Concertgebouw of Amsterdam. He also taught at the University of Indiana in Bloomington. iimcm.com, \textit{Instituto Internacional de Musica de Camara de Madrid, Jacques Zoon’s biography}. On-line. Available from the Internet, <http://www.iimcm.com/iimcm.asp?p=bio/zoon&l=EN>
compared in sound and musical material to *La Era Papayera*. The second movement also has a two-part structure: one section that extends up to bar 95 and another that goes from measure 96 to the end (m. 151). Section A alternates time signatures of 2/4, 3/4, and 6/8, but a waltz feeling is felt throughout, and Section B is in 2/4, and again, as in the first movement, Caribbean and Colombian rhythms are heard, but the accompaniment is less contrapuntal.

**Ex. 94: Pas de Deux, Sans Trois**, first movement, mm. 1-10, swinging mood in the flute and melodic freedom in the cello


*Hakuu un Yuu Yuu* was commissioned by the Japanese Jodoshu Buddhist community of Sao Paulo, Brazil and was recorded as a part of a commemorative compact disc that was released in 2003. The recording was made by performers Luis Julio Toro (flute), Virginie Robilliard (violin), Paul Desenne (cello and programmed
mechanical music box), Alonso Toro (Hawaiian clarinet and sound design), and Roberto Koch (bass).

There are two important differences in this work in comparison with the other flute pieces: the incorporation of previously recorded sounds (as Desenne did with the cicadas of the *Haydn Tuyero, Chicharras y Galeones*) and a non-conventional instrument such as the Hawaiian clarinet, also known as the *xaphoon*. The *xaphoon* is a keyless instrument, made of bamboo, that resembles a saxophone or clarinet in shape and reed type.\(^\text{114}\)

*Hakuu un Yuu Yuu* consists of two movements entitled *Templo 1* and *Templo 2*. The instrumentation of *Templo 1* is as described in the title of the work, but *Temple 2* is only for flute, violin, and cello. *In Templo 1* the melodic roles are mostly assumed by the flute, the violin, and the cello. One interesting feature that pervades much of the musical material is the use of duple eighth notes against eighth-note triplets; the eighth notes carry a sense of motion while the triplets give a more whimsical melodic construction. The dialectic play created by the melodies is profound and rich. Desenne explores a sound that evokes Japanese music, or at least, how he perceives that music. Many of the performing indications are unique: *Barroco navegante* (Sailing Baroque), *Barroco Japones* (Japanese Baroque), *poco a poco Galway* (little by little Galway), *cremoso* (creamy), *sin dureza* (without hardness), *folklorico Japones* (Japanese folk), *romantico* (romantic), *chevere* (cool), and *lambada cool*.\(^\text{115}\)

The *xaphoon* and double bass are marked to play only from measure 80 to the end of the movement (m. 106). The mixed media is played between


the movements and it consists of computer-processed sounds that serve as a background for improvisations of xaphoon, cello, bass clarinet, and double bass. That recording is over six minutes long and Desenne develops the motive heard in the first measures in the flute of Templo 1. At times, these sounds provide a rhythmic and repetitive basis and they also present full chords that generate a unique atmosphere for the improvisations. The improvisations are performed in the style of the Japanese traditional music.

Templo 2 induces a meditative state and also evokes a Japanese sound, especially by the portamenti and quick appoggiaturas (Ex. 96). Another characteristic is the abundant polyrhythms, as seen in measure 22, where in a time signature of 3/4, the rhythms suggest different meters: celli in 6/8, the violin in 3/4, and the flute in 2/4 (Ex. 97).

![Templo 1 Sheet Music](image)

Ex. 95: Hakuu un Yuu Yuu, Templo 1, mm. 1-5, duple eighth notes against eighth-note triplet
Ex. 96: *Hakuu un Yuu Yuu, Templo 2*, mm. 1–4, *Portamenti* and quick figures suggest Japanese music

Ex. 97: *Hakuu un Yuu Yuu, Templo 2*, m. 22, polyrhythms

*Cantata Maqroll* for tenor voice, flute, soprano saxophone, violin, cello, and piano (2003). Song cycle on texts by Álvaro Mutis and Belisario Betancur. (7 movements, last two movements unfinished)

The *Cantata Maqroll* was commissioned by the Festival de Artes in Cali, Colombia, in 2003. It was meant to be the work in homage to the Colombian writer Álvaro Mutis\(^\text{116}\) during the Festival for the Prize of the Arts of Cali 2003. However, Mutis suffered an accident while walking down stairs, which impeded his attending the concert, and therefore the premiere was cancelled. That incident happened a month

before the premiere and in consequence Desenne did not finish the two last movements. This work has not been premiered.

Maqroll is a fictional character that Mutis used in most of his works. This experienced sailor is the center of works such as the poem “The Prayer of Maqroll” and Mutis’s seven novels that are grouped together as “Businesses and Tribulations of Maqroll the Top Sailor.” Mazeau, a graduate student of the Universidad de los Andes, explains about Maqroll that “[T]he most important characteristic is errancy, that strange drive for the unknown, that complete abandoned state to the fate that seems to be animated by the Greek god Eros.”

The extant movements of Cantata Maqroll are Me llamo Maqroll (My name is Maqroll), Dos Principios (Two principles), Hip Hop y Liturgia (Hip hop and liturgy), Triptico del Sur (Triptych of the South), and Triptico Antiguo (Ancient Triptych). In Cantata Maqroll Desenne displays a compendium of his most characteristic compositional features: contrasting internal sections, changes of time signatures, contrapuntal texture, forward motion, displacement of accents, polyrhythm, and hocket technique, among others.

**Surfay for flute and marimba (2007)**

Surfay was commissioned by Luis Julio Toro and the Mexican marimbist Ricardo Gallardo, who is a member of the Tambuco Ensemble of Mexico. The work has not yet been premiered.

Surfay is a short piece in one movement, and includes diverse time signatures such as $3/4$, $5/8$, $3/8$, $7/8$, and $5/4$. Despite the various time signatures, a continuous

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flow of the material is perceived. Many *portamenti* for the flute are requested and their range consists mainly of a semitone, although the composer at times asks for a minor third. Also noteworthy is the importance of the 5/8 *guasa* feeling, *ranissimo* (very frog-like), with abundant major sevenths in the melodic lines, and the typical expressive contours of the *guasa*. The roles of both instruments are well defined: the flute has the melody and the marimba functions as the accompaniment that establishes the rhythmic and harmonic base.

Ex. 98: *Surfay*, mm. 16–23, *guasa* feeling

**Number Nine, Quintet for flute, clarinet, cello, and piano (2008)**

This work was composed for the Ensemble Onix of Mexico in 2008, and premiered by that group at the Cervantino Festival of Guanajuato in 2009. It has not yet been recorded.

*Number Nine* is a large one-movement piece that contains several internal sections. The general tone is that of vitality provided by Desenne’s characteristic intense rhythmic force, observed in the majority of his pieces. Different textures are seen in *Number Nine*.

In the initial section (mm.1-19) there is a melodic movement consisting of two lines that are similar in their intervallic constitution. The lines are a major third (or a
minor sixth) apart. The top line on the flute has these notes: A-D-C-E-Flat-D-B-E-F-G-F-Sharp-E-B-Flat. In that melody, Desenne addresses the twelve-tone row. Another interesting feature of *Number Nine* occurs from bar 80 to 94 in which polyrhythm is created between the cello and the left hand of the piano against the other voices, which play respectively, within a 9/8 time signature, a rhythm grouped like 3+2+2+2 against 3+3+3. The general tone of the piece is that of anguish and mystery.

Ex. 99: *Number Nine*, mm. 1-6, twelve-tone row suggested in the flute
Summary

The flute is definitely an important instrument in Desenne’s compositions. He has included it in different instrumental contexts that range from a flute and guitar duet to wind nonets. Desenne has found in this instrument an ideal vehicle that is capable of a subtle and smooth expression, as in *Recuerdos of Venosa* from the *Tríptico*, or a strong and incisive sound, as in *La Era Papayera*. In Desenne’s writing the flute also evokes the exotic sound of Japanese music (*Hakuu un Yuu Yuu*) or a Classical sound in *Haydn Tuyero, Chicharras y Galeones*.

These sixteen flute pieces constitute a significant testimony of the particular music style of Desenne. His music style is varied; however, some elements in his writing are distinctive and immediately recognizable to the listener. These elements have been included since his first composition *Quinteto del Pájaro* to the last flute piece, *Number Nine*, and they include: motivic development, rhythmic complexity, displacement of accents, time signatures such as 5/8, 6/8 and 7/8, short note-value figures, contrapuntal textures, hocket, rhythmic drive, *portamenti*, dance-inspired music, and the inclusion of non-traditional Western instruments such as *cuatro* or *xaphoon*. Desenne also has a preference for one-movement structures that include contrasting sections. In some of his works he strives for an integration of disparate elements; for example, *Bossanovals* from the flute and guitar *Tríptico*, suggest an integration of music genres such as *bossanova* and *vals*, or as seen in the nonet *Visión Galeónica y Platillos Voladores*, in which he proposes a time link that comprises colonial and extraterrestrial transportation that inspires his musical material. In fact, some of his pieces are strongly related to programmatic contents, as observed in *Haydn Tuyero, Chicharras y Galeones*. 
where the music was inspired by a fictional tale made up out of historical facts. Performance indications in his scores are distinctive; Desenne combines several languages, mostly Spanish, Italian, and English. He also makes up words and assigns powerfully imaginative descriptions to the tempi, such as Allegro “Silvestre” (Wild Allegro), “Barroco navegante” (Sailing Baroque), “poco a poco Galway” (little by little Galway) or “cremoso” (creamy). A new element in his compositions has been the insertion of recorded tracks, as in *Haydn Tuyero, Chicharras y Galeones* and *Hakuu un Yuu Yuu*. 
CONCLUSION

In this document nineteen flute pieces have been considered for analysis and stylistic discussion. Several of these works have a special significance for this author, who was closely related to them from the conception stage until their premieres: the Solo Flute Sonata, Gurrufio, and Guasa Macabra. The analysis undertaken has focused on investigating Desenne’s most important stylistic characteristics and placing his folk quotations and references in context. A stylistic discussion of Desenne’s remaining flute pieces indicates the richness and diversity of his compositional output.

Paul Desenne has included the flute in numerous works, in different instrumental combinations, from his early compositions to his most recent ones. He has explored a wide range of expressive and technical possibilities of the instrument and has reaffirmed through these works that his compositional aims to bring together diverse musical styles. Desenne conceives a musical link not only between European Baroque music and the current folk and traditional music of his native country, but he also crosses over, combining elements from the pop, Classical, or folk traditions of any country in the world, especially those of his neighboring countries. This process is not always employed with humorous intentions, though it is a constant in his pieces that this blending of styles carries underneath it an ironic twist. Furthermore, in one of the pieces analyzed in this document, the Solo Flute Sonata, an autobiographical content is also suggested by this juxtaposition and synthesis.
In recent years, ensembles and soloists of an international significance have recognized the artistic value of Desenne’s music and have performed, recorded, and commissioned pieces. However, only a few flute pieces have been recorded and practically none has been published. True appreciation of his music requires both cultural context and structural understanding. It is for this reason that the challenge of analyzing and discussing his complete flute output was undertaken: in order to promote his music and reveal some of the musical procedures employed. It is hoped that this document has succeeded in setting some basic parameters for understanding Paul Desenne’s flute music and thus paves the way for further research and expanded performance of these complex, rewarding works.
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