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## The Romantic Style in the Piano Works of Manuel M. Ponce

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THE ROMANTIC STYLE IN THE PIANO WORKS OF MANUEL M. PONCE

by

Oscar Vázquez Medrano

A DOCTORAL DOCUMENT

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

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# THE ROMANTIC STYLE IN THE PIANO WORKS OF MANUEL M. PONCE

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University of Nebraska, 2022

Advisor: Mark Clinton

Manuel M. Ponce is one of the most recognized Mexican composers of the twentieth century. He is known for his contributions to the guitar and piano literature, but more importantly, for his efforts to introduce musical nationalism in a world where Romantic opera and salon music dominated Mexico's music scene.

This document has an introduction, six chapters, a conclusion, a bibliography, and three appendixes. The introduction includes pertinent background on Ponce's music and the types of research dedicated to him, as well as the stylistic division of his music by Ponce scholars.

Chapter one explains the historical context in Mexico during the *Porfiriato* and the Mexican Revolution; discusses the Mexican composers that followed European ideas; and describes how Ponce initiated Mexico's musical nationalism movement. Chapter two contains Ponce's biography with topics related to his life, influences, studies, compositions, and other significant information. Chapter three provides information about Ponce's Romantic style and how he adopted European Romanticism using the *character piece*, virtuosity, Neo-Classicism, and nationalism.

Chapters four and five focus on *Mexican Ballade* and *Romantic Concerto*, considered two of the most important compositions from the peak of Ponce's Romantic style. Each chapter includes background information of the piece, a structural and harmonic analysis, and description of the different Romantic and nationalistic elements

found in each work. Chapter six briefly examines the Romantic and nationalistic elements of Ponce's shorter pieces in his Romantic period.

After the conclusion and bibliography are three appendices. Appendix A is a chronological list of Ponce's piano works in his Romantic style. Appendix B lists the piano works of this period whose date of composition is unknown. Finally, Appendix C contains a discography of Ponce's Romantic piano works.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER I: HISTORICAL CONTEXT	4
CHAPTER II: BIOGRAPHY	7
CHAPTER III: ROMANTICISM IN THE MUSIC OF PONCE	16
CHAPTER IV: MEXICAN BALLADE	20
CHAPTER V: CONCERTO FOR PIANO AND ORCHESTRA	28
CHAPTER VI: ROMANTIC ELEMENTS IN PONCE'S SHORTER WORKS	51
CONCLUSION	58
BIBLIOGRAPHY	60
APPENDIX A: Chronological list of piano works from Ponce's Romantic period	63
APPENDIX B: Piano works from Ponce's Romantic period without a completion date	66
APPENDIX C: Discography of piano works from Ponce's Romantic period	67

## LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES AND DIAGRAMS

Ex 1.1: Ponce, <i>Mexican Ballade</i> , mm.1-4	21
Ex. 1.2: Ponce, <i>Mexican Ballade</i> , mm. 26-30	22
Ex. 1.3: Ponce, <i>Mexican Ballade</i> , mm. 89-94	22
Ex. 1.4: Ponce, <i>Mexican Ballade</i> , mm. 104-107	23
Ex. 1.5: Ponce, <i>Mexican Ballade</i> , mm. 116-118	23
Ex. 1.6: Ponce, <i>Mexican Ballade</i> , mm. 140-143	23
Ex. 1.7: Ponce, <i>Mexican Ballade</i> , mm. 207-211	24
Ex. 1.8: Ponce, <i>Mexican Ballade</i> , mm. 240-255	24
Diagram 1: Structure of <i>Mexican Ballade</i>	25
Ex 2.1: Ponce, <i>Romantic Concerto</i> (first movement), mm.1-8	30
Ex 2.2: Ponce, <i>Romantic Concerto</i> (first movement), mm. 44-49	31
Ex 2.3: Ponce, <i>Romantic Concerto</i> (first movement), mm. 60-63	31
Ex 2.4: Ponce, <i>Romantic Concerto</i> (first movement), mm. 77-80	32
Ex 2.5: Ponce, <i>Romantic Concerto</i> (first movement), mm. 89-92	33
Ex 2.6: Ponce, <i>Romantic Concerto</i> (first movement), mm. 104-106	33
Ex 2.7: Ponce, <i>Romantic Concerto</i> (first movement), mm. 125-130	34

Ex 2.8: Ponce, <i>Romantic Concerto</i> (first movement), mm. 148-153	35
Ex 2.9: Ponce, <i>Romantic Concerto</i> (first movement), mm. 212-221	36
Ex 2.10: Ponce, <i>Romantic Concerto</i> (first movement), mm. 234-238	36
Ex 2.11: Ponce, <i>Romantic Concerto</i> (first movement), mm. 250-253	37
Ex 2.12: Ponce, <i>Romantic Concerto</i> (first movement), mm. 286-288	37
Ex 2.13: Ponce, <i>Romantic Concerto</i> (first movement), mm. 306-308	38
Ex 2.14: Ponce, <i>Romantic Concerto</i> (first movement), mm. 405-416	39
Diagram 2: Structure of <i>Romantic Concerto</i> , movement one	40
Ex 2.15: Ponce, <i>Romantic Concerto</i> (second movement), mm. 1-6	41
Ex 2.16: Ponce, <i>Romantic Concerto</i> (second movement), mm. 9-21	42
Ex 2.17: Ponce, <i>Romantic Concerto</i> (second movement), mm. 50-54	43
Ex 2.18: Ponce, <i>Romantic Concerto</i> (second movement), mm. 129-134	44
Ex 2.19: Ponce, <i>Romantic Concerto</i> (second movement), mm. 296-298	44
Diagram 3: Structure of <i>Romantic Concerto</i> , movement two (A-B-A)	45
Diagram 4: Structure of <i>Romantic Concerto</i> , movement two (sonata-allegro form)	45
Ex 2.20: Liszt, <i>B minor sonata</i> , mm. 6-14	46
Ex 2.21: Pablo Castellanos, motivic transformation of the <i>Romantic Concerto</i>	47



Ex 2.22: Liszt, <i>Piano Concerto No. 1</i> , mm. 1-6	48
Ex 2.23: Ponce, <i>Romantic Concerto</i> (first movement), mm. 1-4	48
Ex 2.24: Liszt, <i>Piano Concerto No. 1</i> , mm. 29-37	48
Ex 2.25: Ponce, <i>Romantic Concerto</i> (first movement), mm. 306-308	49
Ex 2.26: Liszt, <i>Piano Concerto No. 1</i> , mm. 482-485	49
Ex 2.27: Ponce, <i>Romantic Concerto</i> (second movement), mm. 304-307	49

## INTRODUCTION

Manuel M. Ponce (1882-1948) is considered one of the most important musical figures in Mexico. He had an enormous impact on Mexican music, Latin American music, and music written for the piano and the guitar. As a composer, he brought innovations in harmony and form to Mexican music that undoubtedly helped influence subsequent generations of Mexican performers and composers alike. In addition, Ponce became the first Mexican musician to extensively collect and classify Mexican folk music.

Today, Ponce's reputation around the world rests mainly on his works for the guitar thanks to the Spanish guitar master Andrés Segovia (1893-1987) who commissioned, promoted, and published Ponce's guitar music so that guitar players around the world might play these important works for teaching and performance purposes. Surprisingly, Ponce is mainly known for his works for the guitar even though his output for this instrument is smaller than his musical production for the piano, which includes extensive and diverse works inspired in the style of the Baroque, Romantic, Neo-Classical, and Impressionist composers. About Ponce's piano music, pianist Héctor Rojas says:

I think the piano music of Manuel M. Ponce is the most important and transcendental contribution made by a Mexican composer to the literature for this instrument, due to the extension, the variety of forms and styles, harmonic findings, the profound knowledge of the instrument, the evolution of the language and the great inspiration it contains.<sup>1</sup>

Almost seventy-four years after Ponce's death, there is still a great deal of interest in research related to his life and works. One example of this is the "Editorial Project

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<sup>1</sup> Rojas, Héctor. "*Manuel M. Ponce: obra completa para piano.*" Program book, 1998. pp. 44-45

Manuel M. Ponce” created in 1988 by the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) after the organization received all of Ponce’s documentary and musical legacy (manuscripts, letters and first editions) left to his pupil Carlos Vázquez (1920-2013). Another example of the continued interest in Ponce’s music is “The Ponce Project,” an organization created a few years ago in the United States of America to promote the music of Ponce and other Latin American composers.

Though UNAM houses the largest collection of Ponce’s legacy and has made strides in publishing his works, there remains much work in order to elevate Ponce to the level of distinction and recognition he deserves. The existing research on Ponce is limited to a few books, articles, essays, and some dissertations. This research can be divided in two categories: most common, one focused on Ponce’s life and stories revolving around his interactions with others; and less common, one focused on specialized topics such as his music for the guitar and the piano, or his role as a teacher and lecturer.

Ponce’s two main scholars Pablo Castellanos and Jorge Barron, agree in dividing his musical output into three phases: Romantic, Transitional and Modern.<sup>2</sup> Castellanos conceived Ponce’s output as follows:

- Romantic, from 1891 to 1924, before and after his first trip to Europe
- Transitional, from 1925 to 1932, during his second trip to Europe
- Modern, from 1933 to 1948, after his second trip

This view holds the opinion that Ponce’s Romantic music contains the influence of national folklore by presenting popular themes in many of his compositions. The Transitional phase begins to use Impressionist techniques, and the Modern phase

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<sup>2</sup> Miranda Pérez, Ricardo. *Manuel M. Ponce*. Ciudad de México: Ediciones Akal, 2020. p. 278

continues this trend while including Mexican elements in combination with polytonality and Neo-Classicism<sup>3</sup>

Jorge Barron agrees with Castellano's description of Ponce's Romantic and Modern phases, though he divided Ponce's output differently by showing changes earlier in time as follows:

- Romantic, from 1891 to 1915
- Transitional, from 1915 to 1925
- Modern, from 1925 to 1948<sup>4</sup>

For the Transitional phase, he states the following:

...many of Ponce's compositions show transitional characteristics that mark his first significant incursions into the music of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. They begin to include elements such as unresolved dissonances, non-traditional chord progressions, and neomodality, as well as some traces of Impressionism. However, they still rely for the most part on traditional tonal harmony.<sup>5</sup>

This document addresses piano works from Ponce's Romantic period from the viewpoint of both Castellanos and Barron (1891 to 1925), focusing on two peak works: *Mexican Ballade* (1915) and *Concerto for piano and orchestra* (1910), better known as his *Romantic Concerto*. In doing so, it contributes to the second category of research explained above.

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<sup>3</sup> Pablo Castellanos, *Manuel M. Ponce*. México, D.F.: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1982: 18-19

<sup>4</sup> Jorge Barrón, *Manuel Maria Ponce, a Bio-Bibliography*, Westport: Praeger, 2004, p. 22

<sup>5</sup> Jorge Barrón, *Manuel Maria Ponce, a Bio-Bibliography*, Westport: Praeger, 2004, p. 25

## CHAPTER I: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Ponce's compositional output is without a doubt linked to the evolution of Mexican society, culture, and music of the late 19th century. For this reason, it is imperative to understand the historical context in Mexico during the *Porfiriato* and the Mexican Revolution eras and how they influenced and shaped Ponce's style as a Romantic and nationalistic composer.

The *Porfiriato* can be described as the thirty-five-year period (1876-1911) in which Mexican president and dictator Porfirio Díaz ruled Mexico through repression that favored mostly the upper and middle classes. In this period, Mexico also experienced extensive modernization and unprecedented economic growth through the introduction of foreign capital from Britain, France, and the United States in an effort to create a more "civilized country."<sup>6</sup> Railroads were expanded, and Mexican society was open to foreign influence, especially from France and Europe, where arts were cultivated according to the ideas of Romanticism as a way of expression.<sup>7</sup>

In music, Romantic opera and salon music monopolized the music scene while popular music was ignored and isolated to smaller towns. In fact, the *Porfiriato* imposed the idea of imitating the Romantics, influencing people to think that "good music" could only be achieved by following European models. Unfortunately, Mexican musical Romanticism did not evolve as quickly as Europe's due to the poor musical education available, the ordinary musical production created by upper class amateur musicians, and

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<sup>6</sup> Britannica accessed July 26, 2022. *Porfiriato* <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Porfiriato>

<sup>7</sup> Víctor Manuel Carlos Gómez, *Manuel M. Ponce: El nacionalismo romántico*: Aguascalientes, México: Instituto cultural de Aguascalientes, 2010. p. 19

the political instability in the country that led to the Mexican Revolution in 1910.<sup>8</sup>

Among the most representative Mexican composers who followed the European ideas were Melesio Morales (1838-1908), Felipe Villanueva (1862-1893), Ernesto Elorduy (1853-1913), Julio Ituarte (1845-1905), Gustavo Campa (1863-1934), Ricardo Castro (1864-1907) and Manuel M. Ponce (1882-1948).

A year after the start of the Mexican Revolution, Diaz's regime came to an end. However, the revolution continued and turned into a civil war that concluded in 1917 with the establishment of a constitutional republic in Mexico.<sup>9</sup> With the revolution, the tendencies of imitating European countries came to an end and nationalistic ideas became popular. Moreover, the modernization and the expansion of the railway lines from the *Porfiriato* era allowed popular music to spread through the *rapsodas* or traveler singers who sang and collected popular songs from their travels around the country from 1890-1910.<sup>10</sup>

The primary composer who initiated the musical nationalist movement in Mexico was Manuel M. Ponce (1882-1948), who started the study of Mexican vernacular music, the classification of popular melodies, and the stylization of these melodies into his compositions.<sup>11</sup> Other composers who followed these ideas were José Rolón (1876-1945), Carlos Chávez (1899-1978), Silvestre Revueltas (1899-1940) and José Pablo Moncayo (1912-1958).

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<sup>8</sup> Víctor Manuel Carlos Gómez, *Manuel M. Ponce: El nacionalismo romántico*: Aguascalientes, México: Instituto cultural de Aguascalientes, 2010. pp. 20-23

<sup>9</sup> Britannica accessed July 27, 2022. *Mexican Revolution* <https://www.britannica.com/event/Mexican-Revolution>

<sup>10</sup> Víctor Manuel Carlos Gómez, *Manuel M. Ponce: El nacionalismo romántico*: Aguascalientes, México: Instituto cultural de Aguascalientes, 2010. pp. 24-26

<sup>11</sup> Víctor Manuel Carlos Gómez, *Manuel M. Ponce: El nacionalismo romántico*: Aguascalientes, México: Instituto cultural de Aguascalientes, 2010. p. 72

This historical context established Ponce as a truly Romantic and nationalist composer who broke down the barriers of social classes by adding the songs of the Mexican people into concert music, as discussed in chapter three.

## CHAPTER II: BIOGRAPHY

Manuel M. Ponce Cuéllar was born on December 8th, 1882, in Fresnillo, Zacatecas, Mexico to Jesús Ponce (1837-1913) and María de Jesús Cuéllar (1838-1927). Just before he was born, his parents left the state of Aguascalientes, Mexico in fear of the reprisals by the liberal party after the death of Maximilian I, Emperor of Mexico, whom his father served during the second Mexican Empire.<sup>12</sup> A few months after Ponce's birth, his family moved back to Aguascalientes.

Although his parents did not have any musical training, music was always cultivated by his mother.<sup>13</sup> Ponce took his first piano lessons from his sister Josefina, and later from his sister Maria del Refugio and his brother José. At the age of eight, when he was sick from smallpox, Ponce composed what scholars consider his first composition: *La marcha del sarampión* (Smallpox Dance).<sup>14</sup> At the age of ten, he was invited to take lessons from pianist and lawyer Cipriano Ávila. In addition, Ponce became a member of the choir of San Diego's Catholic Church in Aguascalientes, where his brother Antonio served as a priest. It is in this church where Ponce ascended through the different musical positions available, first as a member of the choir (1892), then as an organist assistant (1895), and finally as the main organist (1898).<sup>15</sup>

In 1900, when Ponce turned eighteen, he contacted the renowned Spanish pianist Vicente Mañas, a close friend of his brother José, to study piano with him at the National Conservatory of Music in Mexico City. Upon his arrival to the city, Ponce started

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<sup>12</sup> Ricardo Miranda, *Manuel M. Ponce*, Ciudad de México, México: Ediciones Akal, 2020. p. 15.

<sup>13</sup> Jorge Barrón Corvera, *Manuel Maria Ponce: A Bio-Bibliography*: Westport, Connecticut: Prager, 2004. pp. 1

<sup>14</sup> Ricardo Miranda, *Manuel M. Ponce*, Ciudad de México, México: Ediciones Akal, 2020. p. 16

<sup>15</sup> Ricardo Miranda, *Manuel M. Ponce*, Ciudad de México, México: Ediciones Akal, 2020. p. 17



studying piano with Mañas and harmony with Eduardo Gabrielli. In January of 1901, he enrolled at the National Conservatory of Music, but his time at the Conservatory ended abruptly when he realized he would be required to start the curriculum from the very beginning. Disappointed, he returned to Aguascalientes in December of the same year.

Ponce recalled this event of his life as follows:

The director refused to take into consideration the studies I had already completed...and that compelled me to return to Aguascalientes, where I gave private lessons and was the organist of the church of the Tercera Orden de San Francisco, until 1904, when without any official backing, I decided to go to Europe.<sup>16</sup>

Between 1902 and 1903, Ponce decided to open a music school instead of continuing his studies. He composed and performed while at the same time writing for the local newspaper *El Observador*. Among his piano compositions from this period are *Malgré tout*, *Gavota*, *Estudio de concierto no. 3 "Hacia la cima"*, *Once miniaturas* and his first harmonizations of Mexican folk songs.<sup>17</sup> Ponce also discussed Mexican nationalist ideas with friends Saturnino Herrán, painter, and the poet Ramón López Velarde at *Jardín de San Marcos*<sup>18</sup>, as remembered by Ponce:

With Herrán and Ramón, at Jardín de San Marcos, in Aguascalientes, I gathered every night. We talked about Mexican art. Out of the three of us, the one that made the best work was Ramón with: *La suave Patria*.<sup>19</sup>

By 1904, Ponce decided to pursue his professional studies in Europe after the advice of his former harmony teacher Eduardo Gabrielli and his brother Antonio, who was in Rome at the time as part of his duties as a priest. He financed this trip by selling

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<sup>16</sup> F. Gómez Hidalgo, *Creadores de México. El maestro Ponce*, México, D.F.: Estampa, 1943. pp. 15-16.

<sup>17</sup> Jorge Barrón Corvera, *Manuel Maria Ponce: A Bio-Bibliography*: Westport, Connecticut: Prager, 2004. p. 3

<sup>18</sup> Ricardo Miranda, *Manuel M. Ponce*, Ciudad de México, México: Edicionesakal, 2020. p. 18

<sup>19</sup> "El maestro Ponce trabaja a pesar de su enfermedad," *El Universal*, Ciudad de México, 10 December 1947.

his piano and giving a series of concerts in Mexico at *Teatro de la Paz* in San Luis Potosí and *Teatro Degollado* in Guadalajara. He also gave a concert in the United States at *St. Louis Spanish Club* in St. Louis, Missouri before boarding the *Hohenzollern* in New York towards Naples, Italy, where he spent the New Year. At the beginning of January of 1905, Ponce went to Rome to visit his brother for a few days, then went to Venice and finally traveled to Bologna to study composition with Marco Enrico Bossi, director of the *Liceo Musical di Bologna*.<sup>20</sup>

Bossi's busy schedule made it impossible for him to take Ponce as a pupil, so he advised Ponce to study harmony, counterpoint, fugue, and orchestration with Cesare Dall'Olio and Luigi Torchi. In the summer of 1905, after a few months of studies in Bologna, Ponce moved to Berlin to study piano at the Stern Conservatory with Franz Liszt's disciple, Martin Krause. However, before he was able to take piano lessons from Krause, Ponce had to perfect his piano technique with Krause's most advanced student, Edwin Fisher. Krause's influence was a turning point in Ponce's career: the inheritance of Liszt's virtuosic style is reflected in much of Ponce's output for the piano, such as his *Rhapsodies*, *Concert etudes*, *Evocaciones*, *Legend*, and his *Concerto for piano and orchestra*.<sup>21</sup>

During his first residency in Europe, Ponce also composed works for other instruments, including his romanza *Sperando sognando* for soprano, tenor, and piano; *Jeunesse* for violin and piano; *Trio Romántico* for piano trio; and *Ave Gratia Plena* and *Bendita sea tu pureza* for voices and organ. During the winter of 1906, Ponce was forced

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<sup>20</sup> Ricardo Miranda, *Manuel M. Ponce*, Ciudad de México, México: Edicionesakal, 2020. p. 19

<sup>21</sup> Ricardo Miranda, *Manuel M. Ponce*, Ciudad de México, México: Edicionesakal, 2020. p. 24

to leave Berlin for economic reasons and returned to Mexico. From 1907 to June of 1908, Ponce worked in Aguascalientes as a pianist, music teacher, and composer, but after realizing that its musical life was not very active, he moved to Mexico City.

In July of 1908, Gustavo E. Campa (composer and new director of the National Conservatory of Music of México) hired Ponce as a piano professor to fill a vacancy caused by the sudden death of Ricardo Castro (pianist, composer, and former director of the conservatory). Ponce befriended important intellectuals and artists such as Justo Sierra, Nicolás Rangel, Rafael Lopez, Gustavo Campa, and Luis G. Urbina and composers Ernesto Elorduy, Rafael J. Tello, and Miguel Lerdo de Tejada.<sup>22</sup>

In 1909, Ponce began concertizing more and gave a successful tour of Mexico with one of the most important chamber music ensembles in Mexican history, the Saloma quartet.<sup>23</sup> From 1910-1912, Ponce organized several concerts played by students, including what is considered by many scholars as the most celebrated one, the first Mexican concert dedicated to the music of Claude Debussy. Performed in Mexico City on June 24th of 1912, the performers included thirteen-year-old Carlos Chávez, who later became a celebrated Mexican composer.<sup>24</sup> Chávez would later describe Ponce as a pioneer in the use of large forms in a country dominated by the prevalence of small salon pieces.<sup>25</sup>

Ponce composed several original songs, however, and collected, classified, and harmonized Mexican folk songs later used in his own compositions. In doing this he

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<sup>22</sup> Jorge Barrón Corvera, *Manuel Maria Ponce: A Bio-Bibliography*: Westport, Connecticut: Prager, 2004. pp 5- 6

<sup>23</sup> Ricardo Miranda, *Manuel M. Ponce*, Ciudad de México, México: Edicionesakal, 2020. p. 29

<sup>24</sup> Ricardo Miranda, *Manuel M. Ponce*, Ciudad de México, México: Edicionesakal, 2020. p. 33

<sup>25</sup> Jesús C. Romero, "Manuel M. Ponce, Premio Nacional," *Nuestra Música* 3, no.10, Ciudad de México, April 1948. p. 97

became the first pioneer of Nationalism in Mexican music. Ponce wrote articles and gave a series of lectures where he promoted his nationalist ideas, inviting Mexican composers to see the value of Mexico's vernacular music by stating the following:

Popular song is the melodious manifestation of a nation's soul. A nation sings because it needs that exquisite form of expression to express its most intimate feelings. It is the relief of the suffering and silent popular soul that do not use words only because music can interpret its most intimate feelings... I consider the duty of every Mexican composer to ennoble the music of his country by giving it an artistic form, dressing it with polyphonic clothing and lovingly preserving the popular melodies which are the expression of the national soul.<sup>26</sup>

Eventually, Ponce's nationalist ideas spread and were followed by two of the most acclaimed Mexican composers around the world: Carlos Chávez and Silvestre Revueltas. However, due to the political instability in Mexico caused by the Mexican Revolution, on March 12, 1915, Ponce moved to Cuba with his friends Luis G. Urbina (poet) and Pedro Váldes Fraga (violinist), leaving behind his family and girlfriend Clementine Maurel.

Ponce immediately involved himself with the cultural and social life in Cuba by concertizing, composing, and writing for *La Reforma Social* and *El Heraldo de Cuba*. As he learned and experienced Cuban folklore, he composed works influenced by this culture: *Cuban Suite*, *Cuban Prelude*, *Elegía de la ausencia*, *Guateque* and three *Cuban rhapsodies* (two of them lost). In addition, Ponce gave private lessons at *Academia Beethoven*, opened in association with his friends Tomás Rubio (clarinetist), Chonita Sauri de Rubio (violinist), and Agustín C. Beltrán (singer). Economic difficulties and

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<sup>26</sup> Manuel M. Ponce, *La música y la canción mexicana*, *Revista de Revistas* 4, 199 (sobretiro especial navideño), Ciudad de México, 21 December 1913, pp. 17-18

homesickness forced Ponce to return to Mexico City in June 1917.<sup>27</sup>

Despite being away for two years, Ponce resumed his position at the National Conservatory of Music and taught at his private academy. On June 22, 1917, he was appointed conductor of the *Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional*, and in September 1917 he married Maurel. They did not have children, but they became attached to Ponce's piano student, Carlos Vázquez, whom they regarded as a son.

In 1920, Ponce began teaching at Escuela Nacional Preparatoria at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. During this period, he became a more prolific lecturer and writer as he founded and directed the *Revista Musical de México* (1919-1920). He was an important contributor to the magazine *México Moderno* (1920-1923) and a critic for the newspaper *El Universal* (1922-1925). Due to his busy schedule, Ponce's compositional output was lower than before, but he managed to compose important works such as his orchestral triptych *Chapultepec, Evocaciones* for piano solo, *Canción de otoño* for violin and piano, his *Sonata* for cello and piano, and the arrangement for piano and orchestra of his *Mexican Ballade*.

In 1923 in Mexico City, Ponce met the Spanish guitar player Andrés Segovia, with whom he collaborated in composing some of the most important literature for the guitar.<sup>28</sup> Segovia, who tirelessly strove to place the guitar in concert halls, wrote the following to Ponce:

I am pleased to inform you that I have recently played your beautiful *Sonata Mexicana* in Madrid to the applause of the public, assent of the critics, and effusive admiration of the musicians. I am sending you proof of all three things: the public has asked me for it again, the critics praised it without pedantry or

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<sup>27</sup> Jorge Barrón Corvera, *Manuel Maria Ponce: A Bio-Bibliography*: Westport, Connecticut: Prager, 2004. p. 9

<sup>28</sup> Jorge Barrón Corvera, *Manuel Maria Ponce: A Bio-Bibliography*: Westport, Connecticut: Prager, 2004. p. 12

reservations, and as an example of the pleasure of the musicians, I will cite to you that of the Falla, before whom I played the andante and the finale, without revealing the name of the author, and he was truly enchanted...

Also, I want to tell you of my happiness at seeing that the most interesting composers of this old world are collaborating with my eagerness to revindicate the guitar. I already have a small, beautiful work of Albert Roussel, the promise of others on the way by Ravel, and “cheerful pages” from Volmar Andreas, Suter, Schoenberg, Weles, Grovlez, Turina, Torroba, Falla, etc., etc. Seeing this new group elevating my beautiful instrument, I think each time with more gratitude of the first ones who answered my call, that is Torroba and you. (After Torroba and before you was Falla who wrote his *Homage to Debussy*). And once again, I wish to express to you my sincerest gratitude.<sup>29</sup>

On May 25, 1925, Ponce moved with his wife to France, and in October 1925, he enrolled at the *École Normale de Musique* in Paris to study composition. There, he took composition lessons with Paul Dukas and harmony with Nadia Boulanger. In 1928, Ponce became the founder and director of the music magazine *La Gaceta Musical*, a journal published in Spain with collaborations by important figures such as Paul Dukas, Joaquín Rodrigo, Alfred Cortot, Joaquín Turina, and Manuel de Falla.

Ponce’s compositional output from his time in Paris was high because most of his guitar works were composed during this period, among other works. During Christmas of 1928, Ponce was hired by Isaac Albéniz’ family to complete Albéniz’ unfinished opera *Merlin*.<sup>30</sup> Among Ponce’s most important compositions from this period are his orchestral suite *Merlin* (inspired by Albeniz’ opera), *Quatre miniatures* for string quartet; *Granada* for cello and piano; *Trio* for violin, viola, and piano; *Sonata breve* for violin and piano; *Sonata for guitar and harpsichord*; and his piano pieces *Preludios encadenados*, *Quatre pièces* and *Sonatine*.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Miguel Alcázar, *The Segovia-Ponce letters*: Columbus, Ohio: Editions Orphée, 1989. pp. 2-3

<sup>30</sup> Ricardo Miranda, *Manuel M. Ponce*, Ciudad de México, México: Ediciones Akal, 2020. pp. 157-159

<sup>31</sup> Jorge Barrón Corvera, *Manuel Maria Ponce: A Bio-Bibliography*: Westport, Connecticut: Prager, 2004. p. 16

After seven years at the *École*, he graduated in 1932. Ponce and his wife originally planned to stay in Paris for a short time, as he later recalled in an interview:

In 1925, my wife and I decided to travel to Europe, to Paris. We planned to stay for six months but lived there for nine years...Paul Dukas, who soon honored me with his sympathy and friendship, got me a job; I personally acquainted myself with the best creator of that time...the Parisian atmosphere cast a spell on us and retained us.<sup>32</sup>

In January of 1933, they left Paris and one month later arrived in Mexico City, where Ponce lived until his death. He became chairman of the National Conservatory of Music (1933-1934) and of the *Escuela Universitaria de Música*, now *Facultad de Música* (1945-1946). In addition to conducting, performing, and composing, Ponce taught piano, music history, pedagogy, aesthetics, folk music, music analysis, and composition.

Ponce wrote articles for *El Universal*, *Excelsior*, *Cultura musical* or *México Musical*. In the field of ethnomusicology, he introduced the first class of folklore at *Escuela Universitaria de Música* and became chairman of the Academy of Folk Studies at the National Conservatory of Music. Among his most important compositions from this period are *Ferial* and *Instantáneas mexicanas* for orchestra, his *Concerto for violin and orchestra*, his famous *Concierto del sur* for guitar and his piano works *Veinte piezas fáciles*, *Preludio romántico*, *Idilio mexicano* and *Cuatro danzas mexicanas*.<sup>33</sup>

Throughout his life, Ponce received several awards, including the *Premio Nacional de Artes y Ciencias* (February 26, 1948), bestowed by Mexico's president, Miguel Alemán. He was the first composer in Mexico to receive the award. Two months

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<sup>32</sup> Gómez Hidalgo, *Creadores de México. El maestro Ponce*, Ciudad de México, México: Estampa, 1943. pp. 15-16

<sup>33</sup> Jorge Barrón Corvera, *Manuel Maria Ponce: A Bio-Bibliography*: Westport, Connecticut: Prager, 2004. pp. 18-19

later, on April 24, 1948, he died due to a uremia attack.<sup>34</sup> In honor of Ponce's contribution to Mexican music, a hall at *Palacio de Bellas Artes* in Mexico City bears his name.

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<sup>34</sup> Ricardo Miranda, *Manuel M. Ponce*, Ciudad de México, México: Ediciones Akal, 2020. pp 272-273



### CHAPTER III: ROMANTICISM IN THE MUSIC OF PONCE

European Romanticism became a musical phenomenon in Mexico during the *Porfiriato* era (1876-1911). Thus, it is not surprising that the piano music of Manuel M. Ponce makes extensive use of many of traits related to it: the use of virtuosity, the importance of self-expression, neo-classical elements, and strong references to nationalism. Ponce also favored the most popular genre for piano during the Romantic period: the character piece. A character piece is usually a short keyboard composition with a descriptive title, written in a simple form (AB or ABA), where A material contrasts with B material. Some larger character pieces even employ some elements of sonata form in their structure.<sup>35</sup>

The turning point in Ponce's life as a composer happened in 1904, during his first trip to Europe, where he experienced the clash between two worlds: the conformist musical life in Mexico, and the strict, ambitious, and modern musical life in Europe.<sup>36</sup> Here, Ponce perfected his piano technique and the Romantic style within his music by composing in larger forms and by enriching his music in terms of harmony, counterpoint, and motivic treatment. He also started adding contemporary techniques to his music without departing from Romanticism.<sup>37</sup>

Among Ponce's short character pieces are his *Danza del sarampión* (1887), the dances *Suspiro and Sonrisa* (1890), *Misterio doloroso* (1899), *Malgré tout* (1900), *Tres romanzas sin palabras* (1900), *Gavota* (1901), *Hojas de album* (1903), *Miniatures* (1903)

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<sup>35</sup> F. E. Kirby, *Music for piano, A short story*: Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1995. pp. 138-139

<sup>36</sup> Víctor Manuel Carlos Gómez, *Manuel M. Ponce: El nacionalismo romántico*: Aguascalientes, México: Instituto cultural de Aguascalientes, 2010. p. 36

<sup>37</sup> Jorge Barrón Corvera, *Manuel Maria Ponce: A Bio-Bibliography*: Westport, Connecticut: Prager, 2004. p. 23

and *Nocturno* (1906). Also, Ponce grouped character pieces into one single collection like Franz Schubert (1797-1828), Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847), Robert Schumann (1810-1856) or Franz Liszt (1811-1886) did. Two examples of these collections are his *Album de amor* (1912) with seven pieces, and his *Trozos románticos* (1908-1911) with fourteen pieces.

Ponce perfected a sub-genre of the character piece known as the *mazurka*, a Polish dance immortalized by Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849). Although it was adopted by Mexican composers before Ponce, it is through his compositions that it reached its peak in Mexico.<sup>38</sup>

Another important aspect of Ponce's Romanticism is a Lisztian virtuosity in his music.<sup>39</sup> Examples of this are reflected in his *Miniatures* (1903), *Concert Etudes* (1898-1918), and especially in his *Piano concerto* (1910), where his use of virtuosity reached its peak.<sup>40</sup> Ponce also was inspired by Neo-Classicism much like Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) and Edvard Grieg (1843-1907); two excellent examples are his *Prelude and Fugue on a theme by Handel* (1906) and his *Prelude and Fugue on a theme by J. S. Bach* (1908).

During his stay in Europe, Ponce became interested in contemporary nationalistic trends in music. He took these ideas back to Mexico and sowed the seeds of Mexican musical nationalism in 1910. To do this, he investigated Mexican folk music, classified

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<sup>38</sup> Ricardo Miranda, *Manuel M. Ponce, Ensayo sobre su vida y obra*, Ciudad de México, México: CONACULTA, 1998. pp. 119-120

<sup>39</sup> Lisztian virtuosity is characterized by rapid and coloristic changes of register; dense chords; octave passages in all ranges; arpeggios that use the whole keyboard; diatonic and chromatic scales in thirds, sixths, and octaves; elaborate cadenzas; and difficult accompaniments for the main melody. F. E. Kirby, *Music for piano, A short story*: Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1995. p. 209

<sup>40</sup> Ricardo Miranda, *Manuel M. Ponce, Ensayo sobre su vida y obra*, Ciudad de México, México: CONACULTA, 1998. p. 120

different popular melodies, selected tunes that were useful to him, and stylized these melodies through Romantic or contemporary techniques while always respecting the original melodic line.<sup>41</sup>

Ponce also composed original songs for voice and piano by following the style of the *Canción Romántica Mexicana* (Mexican romantic song), a genre similar to the 19th century German *Lied*. For his songs, Ponce doubled the voice part on the piano, allowing pianists to perform them as solo pieces as well.<sup>42</sup> Examples of Ponce's nationalist pieces are his *Arulladora mexicana "La Rancherita"* (1909), *Scherzino mexicano* (1909), *Mexican Rhapsody no. 1* (1911), *Varied Mexican theme* (1912), *Mexican Prelude Cielito Lindo* (1913), *Mexican Rhapsody no. 2* (1913), *Barcarola mexicana Xochimilco* (1915), *Balada mexicana* (1915), *Sonata II* (1916), and *Scherzino maya* (1919).

Of Ponce's compositional output for the piano, there are two works that represent the peak of his Romantic and nationalist style: *Romantic Concerto for Piano and Orchestra* (1910) and *Mexican Ballade* (1915). Both pieces are from the later years of his Romantic period and show the use of virtuosity and Mexican elements. Regarding the *Romantic Concerto*, Ponce scholar Pablo Castellanos stated the following: "Particularly noteworthy is his Piano Concerto, perhaps the most important work from his Romantic phase."<sup>43</sup> About his nationalist works, Ponce commented the following in an interview:

Honestly, I have no predilection for any of my works...but if I am urged to declare which of my works I have a predilection for, I will say that I consider the *Mexican Ballade* as the most effective one.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Víctor Manuel Carlos Gómez, *Manuel M. Ponce: El nacionalismo romántico*: Aguascalientes, México: Instituto cultural de Aguascalientes, 2010. p. 13

<sup>42</sup> Jorge Barrón Corvera, *Manuel Maria Ponce: A Bio-Bibliography*: Westport, Connecticut: Prager, 2004. p. 24

<sup>43</sup> Pablo Castellanos, *Manuel M. Ponce*. México, D.F.: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1982, p. 31

<sup>44</sup> Fradique, "Encuestas de Zig-zag, Confesiones de artistas, Manuel M. Ponce," *Zig-zag*, Ciudad de México, 1920, pp. 28-29

The next two chapters will analyze the structure of the *Romantic Concerto for Piano and Orchestra* (1910) and the *Mexican Ballade* (1915), while also discussing important elements of Romanticism and Nationalism contained in both works.

## CHAPTER IV: MEXICAN BALLADE

*Mexican Ballade* is Ponce's most representative piano composition from his Romantic and nationalistic period. It was composed in 1915 and is inspired by piano *ballades* from Romantic composers such as Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849), Franz Liszt (1811-1886), Johannes Brahms (1833-1897), and Edvard Grieg (1843-1907). *Mexican Ballade* was one of Ponce's most successful pieces. It was so popular that in 1918, Ponce premiered an extended version of it with piano and orchestra at Anfiteatro at the Escuela Nacional Preparatoria in Mexico City.<sup>45</sup>

For his *Ballade*, Ponce used two popular Mexican songs: "El durazno" and his own piece for voice and piano "Acuérdate de mí." At the top left of the first page of the manuscript of the *Ballade*, there is a verse from "El durazno":

A que no me lleva el río,  
por más crecido que vaya.  
A que yo sí me la llevo  
con una seña que le haga.

The river is not going to take me,  
no matter how swollen it is.  
I am surely going to take her  
with a sign that I make to her.

For further context, below is another verse from "El durazno", extracted from the book *El folklore y la música mexicana*:

Me he de comer un durazno  
Desde la raíz hasta el hueso,  
no le hace que sea trigueña  
será mi gusto y por eso,  
Ay dile que sí,  
dile que cuando se bañe  
que se corte bien la uñas  
para que ya no me arañe.<sup>46</sup>

I shall eat a peach  
from the root to the bone,  
it does not matter if she is trigueña<sup>47</sup>  
it'll be my taste and for that reason,  
tell her that  
when she takes a bath,  
she should trim her nails well  
so, she does not scratch me.

<sup>45</sup> Ricardo Miranda, *Manuel M. Ponce*, Ciudad de México, México: Ediciones Akal, 2020. pp. 101

<sup>46</sup> Rubén M. Campos, *El folklore y la música mexicana: investigación acerca de la cultura musical de México (1525-1925)*: México, D.F.: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1928. Pp. 244

<sup>47</sup> The definite meaning of *trigueña* in this song is unclear; it can refer to the color of one's skin color, hair color, etc.

When the second theme of the *Ballade* begins, there is a verse in the manuscript from

“Acuérdate de mí”:

Acuérdate de mí no seas ingrata,  
y oye la voz del hombre que te  
adora.  
Acuérdate de mí en alguna hora,  
soy el hombre, soy el hombre  
que te amó.  
yo te adoré mujer encantadora,  
yo te adoré con un amor profundo.  
Acuérdate de mí que yo en el  
mundo, soy el hombre, soy el  
hombre que te amó.

Remember me do not be ungrateful,  
and listen to the voice of the man  
who adores you.  
At any time remember me,  
I am the man, the man who loved  
you.  
I adored you charming woman,  
I adored you with a deep love.  
Remember me that in the world  
I am the man, the man who loved  
you.

Structurally, *Mexican Ballade* exhibits a somewhat varied version of sonata-allegro form with an exposition, a development, and a recapitulation. In the exposition (mm. 1-130), Ponce uses the coquettish “El durazno” for theme A and the romantic “Acuérdate de mí” for theme B. Theme A (mm. 1-95, Ex. 1.1) has the indication *Andantino placido* and is entirely developed in a mixed meter pattern of 3/4-2/4. This theme is exposed three times: twice in the key of A major (mm. 1-8 and 9-16) and once in the relative minor key of F-sharp minor (mm. 17-24).

The musical score for Example 1.1 shows the first four measures of Ponce's *Mexican Ballade*. The tempo is marked 'Andante placido'. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 3/4-2/4. The music is written for piano, with a dynamic marking of *p*. The melody is primarily in the right hand, with a supporting bass line in the left hand. The first measure is in 3/4 time, and the second measure is in 2/4 time. The melody consists of a series of eighth and quarter notes, with some rests. The bass line consists of quarter notes and half notes.

Example 1.1: Ponce, *Mexican Ballade*, mm.1-4

In measure 25, there is a small transitional episode that uses the F Lydian scale (Ex. 1.2) before the arrival of an explosive eight-measure *fortissimo* passage in F major that serves as the climactic point of theme A (mm. 36-43).

Example 1.2: Ponce, *Mexican Ballade*, mm. 26-30

After the climactic point, theme A is developed and restated twelve times in different registers (mm. 44-95). Harmonically, this is perhaps the most interesting part of theme A as it goes through the keys of C-sharp minor, B major, A major, and A minor. In addition, there is a passage based on the A augmented chord (mm. 60-68), and two passages where the whole-tone scale is used (mm. 74-77 and 90-95, Ex. 1.3).

Example 1.3: Ponce, *Mexican Ballade*, mm. 89-94

After the second whole-tone scale, there is a nine-measure introduction that leads us to the contrasting second theme of the *Ballade* (mm. 95-103). Theme B (Ex. 1.4) is marked as *Andante con grande espressione* and is developed in the key of D-flat major, a chromatic mediant of A major if C-sharp major is respelled (mm. 103-115). In addition, this new theme also shows a change in meter to 4/4, providing the *Ballade* with a more regular metric feeling compared to Theme A.

104  
Andante  
*p con grande espressione*

Example 1.4: Ponce, *Mexican Ballade*, mm. 104-107

Measures 115-123 and 123-130 are characterized by two variations of theme B. Here, the melody stays virtually the same while the left-hand accompaniment changes by using quick ascending arpeggios (Ex. 1.5), descending chromatic scales, and ascending and descending scales in D-flat major.

116

Example 1.5: Ponce, *Mexican Ballade*, mm. 116-118

The development of the *Ballade* can be divided into two sections: one based on theme A with the changing 3/4-2/4 meter (mm. 131-140), and one in a steady 3/4 meter with a new arpeggiated theme (C) accompanied by chords (Ex. 1.6), whose function is to lead to the recapitulation (mm. 141-156). Harmonically, the development starts in the key of C-sharp minor but spends most of its time indecisively alluding to both A major and its chromatic mediant C major.

140  
marc.

Example 1.6: Ponce, *Mexican Ballade*, mm. 140-143



The recapitulation starts with a restatement of theme A (mm. 157-190). This time, the F Lydian passage leads us to a crescendo passage that serves as a transition between themes A and B (mm. 191-208). In this section, theme B is restated and adapted to 3/4 meter in the home key of A major (mm. 208-241). In addition, this theme is entirely presented in a Lisztian virtuosic fashion by using explosive octaves accompanied by chords (Ex. 1.7).

Example 1.7: Ponce, *Mexican Ballade*, mm. 207-211

The *Ballade* concludes with a coda in the home key of A major (mm 242-261) which uses virtuosic descending octaves throughout all the registers of the piano (Ex. 1.8).

Example 1.8: Ponce, *Mexican Ballade*, mm. 240-255

The following diagram outlines the elements of sonata-allegro form in *Mexican Ballade*:

Section	Exposition	Development	Recapitulation	Coda
Measures	1-130	131-156	157-241	242-261
Themes	A-B	A-C	A-B	Extension of theme B
Key areas	A section: A, f#, F, c#, B, A, a  B section: Db	c#, C-A	A section: A  B section: A	A

Diagram 1: Structure of *Mexican Ballade*

Ponce made one major change to sonata-allegro form in *Mexican Ballade*. Rather than presenting theme B in the dominant key (E major), as is standard for most major-key sonata-allegro expositions during the Classical period, theme B starts in the key of D-flat major. Respelled, D-flat is a chromatic mediant of the home key of A major. The structural concept of sonata-allegro form applied to the *Mexican Ballade* is otherwise logical, as the rules for developing the themes and finally restating the themes in the same key (recapitulation) are followed.

One of the first Romantic elements found in this piece is the use of the word *ballade* in its title. Over the centuries, this term has been associated with a literary work, a vocal form, or an instrumental form. In music, the term is thought to have appeared for the first time in Europe in the 11th century as a poetic-musical form with the meaning of “song to be danced.” By the 13th century, the dance part was lost, and the *ballade* became a stylized vocal piece with narrative and descriptive qualities. Later, in the 18th century, *ballades* for voice and piano (mainly based on texts by important writers) began

to appear. However, it was not until the mid-19th century that the term *ballade* was used to refer to a purely instrumental composition. It was in this century that the Romantic composer Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849) adapted the instrumental *ballade* to the piano by composing four *ballades* between 1835 and 1842. Chopin combined elements from sonata form, rondo, and the variation to create one-movement piano pieces with narrative qualities characterized by changes of mood, suspenseful development of the themes, a sometimes improvisatory character, and virtuosic *codas*. In addition, Chopin's *ballades* can be compared to the literary *ballads* which usually were based on legends and historical events in combination with violence, the supernatural and the tragic.<sup>48</sup>

To this last category belongs Ponce's piece because he uses Chopin's *ballades* as a model. Ponce's *Ballade* uses sonata-allegro structure in combination with variation, as seen in the three variations of theme B (mm. 115-123, 123-130 and 208-241). He uses changes of mood by including the light, coquettish song "El durazno" for theme A and the romantic, melancholy song "Acuérdate de mí" for theme B. Like Chopin, Ponce uses a virtuosic *coda* as the conclusion. Last, the piece has a narrative character: "El durazno" tells the story of a man who is trying to gain the love of a woman, while "Acuérdate de mí" tells the story of the same man, now heartbroken because he lost her love.

The last Romantic element found in *Mexican Ballade* is the nationalistic element attached to it. First, Ponce simply used the word *Mexican* for its title. Second, he adapted the popular revolutionary song "El durazno," with its changing meter similar to those used by the *Mexican Jarabes*.<sup>49</sup> Lastly, Ponce adapted his own romantic song for voice

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<sup>48</sup> Janell E. Brakel, *The Ballades of Frédéric Chopin*. Grand Forks, North Dakota.: University of North Dakota, 1981, pp. 56-58

<sup>49</sup> A type of Mexican folk music with dance of Spanish origin usually in a 6/8 meter or a changing 3/4-2/4 meter.

and piano “Acuérdate de mí” for the *Ballade*. This last song belongs to the genre of the *Canción Romántica Mexicana*<sup>50</sup>.

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<sup>50</sup> A lyrical, melancholic love song for voice and piano in ternary form with a dramatic climax in section B.

## CHAPTER V: CONCERTO FOR PIANO AND ORCHESTRA

Ponce's *Piano Concerto in F-sharp minor*, better known as *Romantic Concerto*, is both his first symphonic work and arguably the most ambitious piece from his Romantic phase.<sup>51</sup> Completed in 1910, Ponce premiered the work as the soloist on July 7th, 1912, at Teatro Abreu in Mexico City, with Mexican conductor-composer Julián Carrillo (1875-1965) and his *Orquesta Beethoven*.<sup>52</sup> Ponce's *Romantic Concerto* is the third piano concerto written by a Mexican composer. The first was by Melesio Morales (1838-1908), *Sinfonía concierto en cuatro movimientos* (1882), and the second was by Ricardo Castro (1864-1907), who composed his *Piano Concerto* in 1904.

One of the most interesting and controversial discussions among Ponce scholars is the structure of his piano concerto. Pablo Castellanos states the following:

In a Lisztian way, the four movements of the *Concerto* are linked together, creating a single movement of the "sonata type." The initial *allegro*, of a vigorous character, represents the first theme of an exposition; the *andante*, of a romantic expression, becomes the second theme of the sonata; and the third movement, which is a *scherzo*, ends the exposition. Because each theme unfolds in its respective movement, Ponce suppressed what is called development (from sonata form), and it is mainly in the piano cadenza where he presents the recapitulation of all themes. Finally, the fourth movement constitutes an extensive *coda*.<sup>53</sup>

Although it is true that the *Romantic Concerto* was conceived in a Lisztian way without interruptions, calling it a single long movement in sonata-allegro form is rather forceful. The lack of a development section in the concerto—a vital element of this form—and the quasi recapitulation occurring in the cadenza reduces the applicability of Castellanos' analysis. A cadenza is a section that is normally introduced near the end of a

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<sup>51</sup> David López Alonso, *Manuel M. Ponce*, México, D.F.: Ediciones Botas, 1971. p. 91

<sup>52</sup> Manuel M. Ponce, *Concierto para piano y orquesta*, Ciudad de México: Proyecto Editorial Manuel M. Ponce UNAM, 2019. p. 11

<sup>53</sup> Pablo Castellanos, *Manuel M. Ponce*. México, D.F.: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1982, p. 31

movement, not in the middle of a movement. Finally, the section he designates as the “coda” contrasts in both material and style from the rest of the work. Despite any disagreement with Castellanos’ structural analysis of the *Romantic Concerto*, it is important to highlight his accurate observations about its first theme, which seems to evoke Franz Liszt’s *Piano Sonata* in B minor.

Another perspective of the *Concerto*’s structure is explained by Joel Almazán, who states that it has two movements and not four. For him, the sections marked as *allegro appassionato*, *andantino amoroso*, *allegretto* and *allegro come prima* are one single movement with a recapitulation preceded by two “false recapitulations.” In addition, he explains that the concerto’s structure is a hybrid between variation and rondo, containing a total of twenty-four variations.<sup>54</sup> However, Almazán uses the terms from the sonata-allegro form (exposition, development, and recapitulation) to delineate the different sections of the *Romantic Concerto*. He agrees with Castellanos that the solo cadenza is where the recapitulation of the themes occur, thus making his analysis just as controversial as the one provided by Castellanos.

Although I disagree with the structural analysis provided by Castellanos, I agree with the link between the *Concerto*’s first theme and Liszt’s *Piano Sonata* in B minor. Moreover, I agree with Almazán in labeling the sections *allegro appassionato*, *andantino amoroso*, *allegretto* and *allegro come prima* as one single movement. My structural analysis of the *Romantic Concerto* will be explained below by using the two-piano version released by *Proyecto Editorial Manuel M. Ponce* from the National Autonomous University of Mexico.

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<sup>54</sup> Joel Almazán Orihuela, “Integración temática en el Concierto para piano de Manuel M. Ponce.” *Heterofonía* 31 no 118-119 (January-December 1998), Mexico City. p. 130

The *Romantic Concerto* can be divided into two movements that follow each other without interruptions. The first movement is the largest and comprises the parts marked as *allegro appassionato*, *andantino amoroso*, *allegretto*, *allegro come prima* and *cadenza*. Structurally, it can be divided into eight smaller sections that together create a movement in free form with some similarities to sonata-rondo form.

The first section (mm. 1-59) starts with the orchestra introducing theme A, marked as *Allegro appassionato* in the key of F-sharp minor (mm. 1-27, Ex. 2.1).

Allegro Appassionato

The image shows a musical score for the first movement of Ponce's *Romantic Concerto*, measures 1-8. The score is in F-sharp minor, 4/4 time, and marked 'Allegro Appassionato'. It features three staves: Piano I, Piano II, and Piano II. Piano I has a whole rest. Piano II starts with a forte (ff) dynamic and a 'Tutti' marking, playing a series of chords and eighth notes. Piano II starts with a five-measure rest, then plays a series of chords and eighth notes.

Example 2.1: Ponce, *Romantic Concerto* (first movement), mm. 1-8

After the orchestral presentation, the piano answers with a small introduction (mm. 28-45) before introducing a virtuosic varied version of theme A in the same key (mm. 46-59, Ex. 2.2). This new version is characterized by fast descending and ascending octaves.

Example 2.2: Ponce, *Romantic Concerto* (first movement), mm. 44-49

Example 2.2: Ponce, *Romantic Concerto* (first movement), mm. 44-49

The B section (mm. 60-211) is the longest and contains five motives, which generate four smaller subsections. Subsection one (mm. 60-83, Ex. 2.3) contains two motives. It starts with a dialogue between the piano and the orchestra where the first motive is introduced in the upper part of piano (triplets in combination with dotted half notes and quarter notes, mm. 60-67).

Example 2.3: Ponce, *Romantic Concerto* (first movement), mm. 60-63

Example 2.3: Ponce, *Romantic Concerto* (first movement), mm. 60-63



From measures 68-75 there is a transitional passage in the orchestra accompanied by the piano that leads to the presentation of the second motive. This second motive (mm. 76-83, Ex. 2.4) is constructed of descending eighth notes and is also presented as a dialogue between the piano and the orchestra. Harmonically, subsection one moves through the keys of F-sharp minor, E major, G major, F-sharp major and F-sharp minor.

Example 2.4: Ponce, *Romantic Concerto* (first movement), mm. 77-80

Subsection two of section B (mm. 84-104, Ex. 2.5) starts by introducing and entirely developing the third motive in the piano while the orchestra serves as accompaniment. This motive, presented in the upper part of the piano, is based on ascending and descending minor seconds combined with triplets. Harmonically, subsection two moves through the keys of A major and F-sharp minor and ends with a two-measure passage taken directly from the introduction of theme A (mm. 103-104).

Example 2.5: Ponce, *Romantic Concerto* (first movement), mm. 89-92

Subsection three of section B (mm. 105-126, Ex. 2.6) is a *fortissimo* virtuoso passage. Motive four is introduced and developed in the piano through descending triplets, accompanied by the orchestra. Harmonically, this subsection moves through the keys of F-sharp minor, G-sharp minor, B-flat major, and D-flat major.

Example 2.6: Ponce, *Romantic Concerto* (first movement), mm. 104-106

Finally, subsection four of section B (mm. 127-184) combines motive three (orchestra) with virtuoso figurations alternating with motive two in the piano (mm. 127-149, Ex. 2.7).

Example 2.7: Ponce, *Romantic Concerto* (first movement), mm. 125-130

From measures 150-184, motive five of section B is introduced in the orchestra while the piano accompanies with repetitive sixteenth-note patterns (Ex. 2.8). This final motive is constructed with quarter-note triplets in combination with quarter notes and half notes. Motive five is important as it will serve as a base for theme C and for the coda of

the second movement. Harmonically, this subsection moves through the keys of G-flat major, A major and F-sharp minor.

Example 2.8: Ponce, *Romantic Concerto* (first movement), mm. 148-153

The third section presents a short restatement of theme A (orchestra) in the home key of F-sharp minor (mm. 185-192). Then, a nineteen-measure passage serves as a transition to theme C of this movement (mm. 193-211).

The fourth section, marked as *Andantino amoroso*, introduces theme C in a 3/4 meter (mm. 212-286). The character of this theme is lyrical and employs two transformations of previous material. The first transformation uses motive five from section B, while the second one uses theme A. Theme C can be divided into two

subsections.

Subsection one of theme C starts with the orchestra presenting a slow and lyrical transformation of motive five (section B) in the key of A major (mm. 212-233, Ex. 2.9). It is important to highlight that motive five was faster and in a 4/4 meter the first time it was introduced.

Example 2.9: Ponce, *Romantic Concerto* (first movement), mm. 212-221

Example 2.9: Ponce, *Romantic Concerto* (first movement), mm. 212-221

Subsection 2 of theme C starts with a small introduction played entirely by the piano in A major (mm. 234- 250, Ex. 2.10). Its first nine measures of improvisatory style are related to the first two measures of theme A.

Example 2.10: Ponce, *Romantic Concerto* (first movement), mm. 234-238

Example 2.10: Ponce, *Romantic Concerto* (first movement), mm. 234-238

After this small introduction, the piano restates theme C while the orchestra accompanies (mm. 250-258, Ex. 2.11). From measures 258-272 the roles are inverted, and it is now the orchestra who plays theme C. This theme finishes with a closing section (mm. 273-286) that transitions to the next theme. Harmonically, subsection 2 of theme C moves through the keys of A major, C major, F-sharp minor, A major and D minor.

Example 2.11: Ponce, *Romantic Concerto* (first movement), mm. 250-253

The fifth section, marked as *Allegretto*, is the smallest one in the entire movement and presents theme D in a 5/4 meter (mm. 286-314). Its character is lyrical and melancholic, comparable to the style of the *Canción Romántica Mexicana*. The theme is introduced by the piano in the key of A major, and it is immediately restated by the orchestra in the same key (mm. 286-294, Ex. 2.12).

Example 2.12: Ponce, *Romantic Concerto* (first movement), mm. 286-288

After the orchestra, the piano answers with theme D in the parallel key of A minor before extending it into perhaps the most expressive passage of the entire work (mm. 294-305). The last restatement of theme D happens in the original key of A major and is characterized by its duet between the piano and the English horn (mm. 306-314, Ex. 2.13). The last measure of theme D marks the end of the slow section and the beginning of the recapitulation of themes A and B.

The image shows a musical score for measures 306-308. It consists of two staves, I and II. Staff I is for the piano, marked with a piano (*p*) and *espress.* dynamic. It features a complex rhythmic pattern with chords and moving lines. Staff II is for the English horn, marked with *espress.* dynamic. It features a simple, melodic line with long notes. The key signature is A major (three sharps: F#, C#, G#). The tempo marking is *a tempo, ma più lento*.

Example 2.13: Ponce, *Romantic Concerto* (first movement), mm. 306-308

The sixth and seventh sections of the movement are marked *Allegro come e prima* and concisely restate parts of section B and theme A in their original 4/4 meter (mm. 315-382). In the sixth section, Ponce decides to skip subsections one and four of B and proceed directly with subsections two and three (mm. 315-360). Then, the seventh section of the movement, also short, presents theme A in the piano (mm. 361-381) before the introduction of the solo *cadenza* that concludes the movement. Harmonically, section six moves through the keys of A major, G minor, A minor and F-sharp minor while section seven is entirely developed in the key of F-sharp minor.

The eighth section, labeled *Cadenza* (mm. 382-460, Ex. 2.14), is played by the piano and starts with the same sixteen-measure introduction from the beginning of the movement (mm. 28-43). The *cadenza* marks the end of the movement and is characterized by its presentation of short excerpts from all previous material in a virtuosic fashion. This section moves through the keys of F-sharp minor, A major, C-sharp minor, D minor, and A major.

The musical score for the Cadenza section (mm. 405-416) is presented in three systems. The first system shows the beginning of the section with a sixteenth-note introduction, marked *Allegro con fuoco* and *ppp*. A red box highlights the first two measures, labeled **Theme C**. The second system continues with triplet figures and a *gracioso* marking. The third system features a *cresc.* marking and a section marked *poco più lento* and *p*, which is labeled **Theme A** and includes a time signature change to 8/8.

Example 2.14: Ponce, *Romantic Concerto* (first movement), mm. 405-416



This movement is in free form and contains eight sections (A-B-A-C-D-B-A-*cadenza*). It has some similarities to sonata-rondo form with an unorthodox exposition, development, and recapitulation. The sonata-rondo form has an A-B-A-C-A-B-A structure divided into an exposition (A-B-A), a development (C), and recapitulation (A-B-A). When applying the sonata-rondo form to the first movement of the concerto, the division of the themes stated above are: Exposition (A-B-A), Development (C-D), Recapitulation (B-A) and *cadenza* as shown in the following diagram.

Section	Exposition	Development	Recapitulation	Cadenza
Measures	1-250	250-314	315-381	382-460
Themes	A-B-A	C-D	B-A	Fragments of themes
Key areas	A section: f#  B section: f#, E, G, F#, f#, A, f#, g#, Bb, Db, Gb, A, f#  A section: f#	C section: A, C, f#, A, d  D section: A, a, A	B section: A, g, a, f#  A section: f#	f#, A, c#, f#, c#, d, A

Diagram 2: Structure of *Romantic Concerto*, movement one

As shown, the movement follows sonata-rondo form in: the order of presentation of themes from the exposition (A-B-A); the rule of a development, which is to elaborate or expand the themes of the exposition, occasionally including a new theme (which Ponce does); and last, every time theme A is restated, it is in the original key as expected in the form.

However, this chart forces the movement to fit into Classical-era sonata-rondo structure as it does not follow some basic standards of the form. First, in the exposition, a minor-key theme A should move to the relative major or the dominant key for section B.

Here, section B continues in F-sharp minor instead of the relative major (A) or the dominant (C-sharp major). Second, theme A should start the recapitulation (normally A-B-A), but Ponce omits theme A and starts with B material, thus shortening the form to B-A as few composers have done. Third, in the recapitulation, both themes A and B should be restated in the home key (F-sharp minor); however, B is restated in A major. Last, the movement should finish in the home key (F-sharp minor). One or two changes alone would not deviate much from Classical sonata-rondo form, but combined, these changes significantly alter the movement's structure. Nevertheless, considering that Romantic composers pushed the boundaries of Classical forms, it is correct to label it a varied version of sonata-rondo form. Alternatively, it can also be considered a *fantasy*, as it is composed to Ponce's fancy, or a *rhapsody*, which has a free or irregular structure.

The second movement, marked as *Allegro* (mm. 1- 316), is shorter than the previous one and has a ternary structure (A-B-A), again with some aspects of sonata-allegro form. This is because Ponce extends the A-B-A form by adding a development between B and A, similar to Franz Joseph Haydn's (1732-1809) ternary movements.<sup>55</sup> This movement can be divided into four sections; the first starts with a brief *pizzicato* introduction in the strings before the presentation of theme A (mm. 1-8, Ex. 2.15).

Example 2.15: Ponce, *Romantic Concerto* (second movement), mm. 1-6

<sup>55</sup> James Webster, "Sonata form." *Grove Music Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), <https://doi-org.libproxy.unl.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.26197>

Theme A is played entirely by the piano in a 2/4 meter while the orchestra serves as accompaniment (mm. 9-50, Ex. 2.16). This fast and playful theme is generally constructed on leaping octaves and chords in combination with fragments of chromatic scales in both hands. Harmonically, this section is generally in the key of A major.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for Example 2.16. The first system, labeled 'Theme A' in red, shows the piano part (I and II staves) with a complex, rhythmic melody in the right hand and a more active bass line in the left hand. The second system, labeled 'Chromaticism' in orange, highlights a section of the piano part with an orange box. This section features a dynamic marking 'p' and an '8va' marking. The orchestra part (I and II staves) includes a flute part with a wavy line indicating a tremolo or similar effect.

Example 2.16: Ponce, *Romantic Concerto* (second movement), mm. 9-21

The second section (mm. 51-98, Ex. 2.17) introduces theme B by using the same 2/4 time signature from the previous theme. This theme (*dolcissimo*) is played entirely by the strings in a lyrical fashion while the piano accompanies by combining triplets and

eighth notes in the right hand and quarter and eighth notes in the left hand. At the end of theme B, there is an eight-measure transitional episode in the piano (mm. 91-98) whose main function is to lead us to the development. This section moves through F major, G-flat major, A major and F minor.

Example 2.17: Ponce, *Romantic Concerto* (second movement), mm. 50-54

The third section of the movement is characterized by the development, in which the previous themes are expanded and elaborated (mm 99-253). It starts with fragments of theme A in a fugal style, first in the piano and then in the orchestra (mm 99-148, Ex. 2.18). Later, from measures 149 to 212, the strings' theme (B) is combined with theme A first in the orchestra and then in the piano. Finally, it concludes with a restatement of theme A in the orchestra while the piano accompanies with fast ascending and descending sixteenth notes (mm. 213-253). The development moves through the keys of F minor, G minor, D minor, A minor, E major, C minor, E-flat major, C-sharp minor, and A major.

Example 2.18: Ponce, *Romantic Concerto* (second movement), mm. 129-134

The fourth section starts with a restatement of 27 measures of theme A (mm. 254-280). Then, from measures 281 to 295, the theme is expanded and leads to the coda, which not only represents the end of the second movement, but also the end of the whole piece. Like the beginning, the fourth section is in the key of A major.

The coda can be divided into two parts: one marked *lentamente* and one *Allegro vivo*. The first part (mm. 296-303) includes an unexpected reappearance of theme C from the first movement of the *Concerto* (Ex. 2.19). This confirms the *Romantic Concerto* as a cyclic work.

Theme C is played by the orchestra in 3/4 meter while the piano accompanies with fast ascending and descending sixteenth-note sextuplets in virtuosic fashion.

Example 2.19: Ponce, *Romantic Concerto* (second movement), mm. 296-298

The second and last part of the coda, also in A major, returns to the original 2/4 meter of the movement and features fast octaves and chords played by the piano while the orchestra repeats an A major triad (mm. 304-316).

As mentioned before, the structure of the second movement of the concerto is ternary with some aspects of sonata-allegro form. With that said, the diagram of the second movement of the *Concerto* is as follows:

Section	A	B	Development	A	Coda
Measures	1-50	51-98	99-253	254-295	296-316
Themes	A	B	A-B	A	C (first movement)
Key areas	A	F, Gb, A, f	f, g, d, a, E, c, Eb, c#, A	A	A

Diagram 3: Structure of *Romantic Concerto*, movement two (A-B-A)

However, when attempting to force the movement into some semblance of sonata-allegro form with an exposition, development, and a recapitulation, the result is as follows:

Section	Exposition	Development	Recapitulation	Coda
Measures	1-98	99-253	254-295	296-316
Themes	A-B	A-B	A	C (first movement)
Key areas	A section: A B section: F, Gb, A, f	f, g, d, a, E, c, Eb, c#, A	A	A

Diagram 4: Structure of *Romantic Concerto*, movement two (sonata-allegro form)

Just as with the previous movement, forcing the second movement of the *Concerto* to fit

into Classical sonata-allegro form does not work as some of the basic standards of the form are not followed. First, in the exposition, a major-key theme A should move to the dominant key for theme B. This does not happen as theme B starts in one of the chromatic mediants of A major (F major) instead of its dominant (E major). Second, in the recapitulation, themes A and B should be restated in the home key; however, Ponce restates theme A in the original key and completely skips theme B, thus creating an unorthodox recapitulation with just one theme. However, as explained before, Romantic composers pushed the boundaries of harmony and form. Therefore, this movement can be considered as both a simple ternary form with the inclusion of a developmental section or as a varied version of sonata-allegro form.

The most important Romantic element attached to the *Concerto*, discovered by Ponce scholar Pablo Castellanos, is theme A and its transformations that evoke Liszt's *B minor sonata* for piano. These thematic derivations could be the consequence of Ponce's studies of Liszt's works, as well as his knowledge acquired in Berlin (1906) with Liszt's pupil, Martin Krause. This connection can be seen in the next two musical examples:

The image displays a musical score for Liszt's *B minor sonata*, measures 6-14. The score is written for piano and features two systems of staves. The first system includes the tempo marking "Allegro energico". Theme A is highlighted with a red bracket above the right-hand staff, and Theme B is highlighted with a blue bracket below the right-hand staff. The second system shows further development of these themes, with Theme B also highlighted by a blue bracket below the left-hand staff. The score concludes with the dynamic marking "f marcato".

Example 2.20: Liszt, *B minor sonata*, mm. 6-14

Theme A (orchestra)

Theme B (piano)

Theme C (orchestra and piano)

Theme D (piano and orchestra)

Introduction of the second movement (orchestra)

Theme A from the second movement (piano)

Theme A from the second movement (without octave jumps)

etc.

Example 2.21: Pablo Castellanos (motivic transformations of the *Romantic concerto*<sup>56</sup>)

Another connection between Liszt and Ponce can be seen in the fifth measure of Liszt's *Piano concerto No. 1 in E-flat Major* and the first measure of Ponce's *Romantic Concerto*. Here, both concertos have a long accented note in the second beat plus the interval of a seventh between the first and the second beats, as shown in the following two examples:

<sup>56</sup> Pablo Castellanos, *Manuel M. Ponce*. México, D.F.: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1982, pp. 65-66



Allegro maestoso. Tempo giusto.

Piano

Example 2.22: Liszt, *Piano Concerto No.1*, mm. 1-6

Allegro Appassionato

Piano II  
(Orchestra)

*ff* Tutti

Example 2.23: Ponce, *Romantic Concerto* (first movement), mm. 1-4

In addition, both concertos use *cantabile* passages in which the soloist dialogues with the orchestra, as shown in examples 2.24 and 2.25:

accentata la melodia e

Piano

*ff* *cresc.* *poco rit.*

Klar. *espressivo* *dim.*

*rubato* *poco rall.*

Piano

*ff* *poco rall.*

Example 2.24: Liszt, *Piano Concerto No.1*, mm. 29-37

306 *a tempo, ma più lento*

I *p espress.*

II Corno inglés *espress.*

Example 2.25: Ponce, *Romantic Concerto* (first movement), mm. 306-308

Moreover, fast virtuoso octaves are played by the soloist in order to finish both concertos:

Piano

**Presto.**

*sempre f*

Example 2.26: Liszt, *Piano Concerto No. 1*, mm. 482-485

T Allegro vivo

I *ff sempre*

Example 2.27: Ponce, *Romantic Concerto* (second movement), mm. 304-307

Finally, the last Romantic element found in the *Romantic Concerto* is its nationalistic character. The piece was finished in 1910, intentionally coinciding with the centenary anniversary of Mexico's independence from Spain, and Ponce uses the style of the genre of the *Canción Romántica Mexicana* for the *Andantino Amoroso* section (theme C) and the *Allegretto* section (theme D) of the *Concerto*.

## CHAPTER VI: ROMANTIC ELEMENTS IN PONCE'S SHORTER WORKS

**Neo-Classicism**

Romantic composers used the concept of Neo-Classicism as inspiration for their works before Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971) and his contemporaries established it as a musical style in the 1920s.<sup>57</sup> Therefore, it is not surprising that Ponce used Neoclassical elements in his compositions through the revival of forms from the Baroque period while keeping his own Romantic style. In his *Tempo di Minuetto* (1899) and two *Minuets* (1900), he utilized 3/4 meter and the graceful character of the 17th century French court minuet.

Ponce also revived other dances from the Baroque keyboard suite as seen in his *Pavana* (unknown date), and *Gavota* (1901). *Pavana* is modeled after the European *Pavane* with its traditionally slow tempo in 4/4 meter. *Gavota* follows the characteristics of the French *gavotte* with its moderate tempo in 4/4 meter.

There are also examples of Ponce's contrapuntal ability, particularly with the *fugue*. Examples are his *Four little fugues for Beginners* (1906), *Prelude and fugue on a theme by Bach* (1908)<sup>58</sup> and his *Prelude and fugue on a theme by Haendel* (1915).<sup>59</sup>

**Etudes**

Like composers of the Romantic and earlier eras, Ponce composed etudes. He generally used the etudes of Chopin and Liszt as models, which are remarkable for their harmonic richness, extreme virtuosity, and range explorations. Examples are Ponce's *Miniatures* (1903), *Estudio de Moscheles*, and *Estudios de concierto* (1899-1915).

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<sup>57</sup> Breanna Corah, *Neoclassical Pioneers: Neoclassicism before Stravinsky*. Denver, Colorado.: University of Denver, 2016, p. 4-5

<sup>58</sup> Based on the *E major fugue* (Book 1) from the *Well-tempered Clavier* by Bach.

<sup>59</sup> Based on the *E minor fugue* that opens the *Suite no. 4* for clavichord by Haendel.

The *Miniatures* were composed as eleven short pieces with individual technical or musical problems to solve. For example, miniatures one and eight are dedicated to the study of arpeggios; the second is focused on the so-called *Mannheim sigh*,<sup>60</sup> the seventh is a study on the creation of atmospheres through pedaling; the third is devoted to the study of clarity and speed; the fourth and the tenth are once again studies of the *Mannheim sigh* in combination with chord leaps; the sixth is focused on chord leaps; the fifth is dedicated to octaves; and the eleventh and the ninth emphasize *cantabile* and the use of polyphony.

Regarding the *Estudio de Moscheles*, it is based on the *Etude Op. 70 no. 1 in C major* from the *Perfecting Etudes* by Bohemian composer Ignaz Moscheles (1794-1870). For his piece, Ponce assigns the etude's original right hand theme to the left hand while creating an accompaniment with the right hand.

*Estudios de concierto* are the most demanding etudes ever composed by Ponce both technically and expressively. Originally, Ponce composed twelve etudes; however, five of them are lost. *Etude no. 1 Preludio trágico* is focused on repeated fast sixteenth notes; *Etude no. 3 Hacia la cima* is dedicated to octaves, arpeggios, repeated notes and voicing; *Etude no. 6 Alma en Primavera* is focused on fast broken chords while the upper voice delineates a simple melody; *Etude no. 7 Juventud* is dedicated to octaves; *Etude no. 8 Preludio Galante* is a piece of charming character for the study of arpeggios; *Etude no. 10 Jarabe* is based on the folk theme *Jarabe zacatecano* and is generally dedicated to the study of sixths where the melody is hidden. Finally, *Etude no. 12 La vida sonríe* is focused on the study of the waltz genre as its subtitle "Etude in waltz form" suggests.

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<sup>60</sup> A two-note slur practice that emphasizes the first note more than the second one.

## Nocturne

In the Romantic period, the word nocturne (night piece) referred to a short character piece in three-part form with lyrical and embellished melodies with accompaniment. John Field (1782-1837) was the first pianist who used this title by composing 20 piano pieces between 1815 and 1834. Later, other composers from the Romantic period such as Maria Szymanowska (1789-1831) and Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849) adopted the nocturne as a new genre.<sup>61</sup> Ponce also cultivated the nocturne with the following pieces: *La noche* (1905), *Notturmo I* (1906), and *Notturmo II* (1906).

## Pieces grouped into collections

Ponce grouped character pieces into single collections like Romantic composers did. Examples are his *Tres Romanzas sin palabras* (1900), *Hojas de álbum* (1905), *Álbum de amor* (1912), *Trozos románticos* (1908-1911) and his *Mazurkas* (1900-1917).

Although Ponce composed three *Romanzas sin palabras*, only two of them survive: *Noche azul* and *Ideal*. Both follow the tender and sentimental character of the *romanza*. For his five *Hojas de álbum*, Ponce generally uses an introspective and passionate atmosphere in each piece. *Álbum de amor* is a collection of seven short pieces with descriptive titles related to love: *Diálogo de amor* (Dialogue of love); *Cerca de tus ojos* (Close to your eyes); *Momento de amor* (Moment of love); *Tus ojos tienen la dulzura de los crepúsculos* (Your eyes have the sweetness of twilight); *En la paz del sendero florido* (In the peace of the flowery path); *Tú eres mi amargura y mi dolor* (You are my bitterness and my pain) and *Eternamente* (Eternally).

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<sup>61</sup> F. E. Kirby, *Music for piano, A short story*: Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1995. p. 185

*Trozos románticos* are 14 small character pieces dedicated to a different female student Ponce had between 1908 and 1911. These pieces have a Romantic language that evokes the work of composers such as Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847), Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849), Robert Schumann (1810-1856), Franz Liszt (1811-1886) and Edvard Grieg (1843-1907). In addition, their titles allude to musical genres, moods or describe a particular situation or atmosphere. They are divided into seven collections with two pieces in each as follows:

- **Collection I:** *Barcaroletta; Cuando viene la primavera*
- **Collection II:** *Souvenir; Malinconia*
- **Collection III:** *Quimera; Su primera mirada*
- **Collection IV:** *Berceuse; A toi*
- **Collection V:** *Deseo; Hoja de álbum*
- **Collection VI:** *Petit prelude; Jeunesse*
- **Collection VII:** *Página de álbum; Scherzino*

### **Mazurkas**

From 1900 to 1917, Ponce composed 24 mazurkas that followed the Romantic language used by Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849). Though he used Chopin's mazurkas as inspiration, he always managed to imprint his own style by using melodic elements that evoke the *Canción Romántica Mexicana*. Generally, Ponce's mazurkas have three sections of contrasting character and tonality and follow the structure of the rondo (A-B-A-C-A). Section A establishes the mood of the piece while section B, the shortest, has a faster tempo and light character. Section C is characterized by its contrasting lyrical

melody, usually repeated with octaves for increased sonority and expressiveness.<sup>62</sup>

### **Nationalism**

During his first trip to Europe (1904-1906) Ponce became interested in Romantic European musical nationalism<sup>63</sup>. When he returned to Mexico, he deepened his knowledge of Mexican folk music by classifying, selecting, stylizing, and harmonizing these melodies for his compositions. Examples of nationalism in Ponce's music are:

*Variaciones sobre un tema popular religioso* (unknown date); *Arrulladora la mexicana* "La rancherita" (1909); *Preludio mexicano* "Cielito lindo" (1913); *Rapsodia mexicana no. I* (1911); *Rapsodia mexicana no. II* (1913); *Ven, ¡Oh luna!* (unknown); *Serenata mexicana* "Alevántate" (1912); *Preludio mexicano* "cuiden su vida" (unknown date); *Scherzino mexicano* (1909); *Scherzino maya* (1919); *Tema mexicano variado* (1912); *Barcarola mexicana* "Xochimilco" (1915) and *Estrellita metamorfosis de concierto* (1920).

*Variaciones sobre un tema popular religioso* (unknown date) are seven variations based on the popular Catholic religious tune (to the Virgin Mary) *Oh María Madre mía*.

*Arrulladora la mexicana* "La rancherita" (1909) is a delicate short piece based on the popular song *La rancherita*. After a two-measure introduction, the theme is presented with a simple harmonization. Then, the theme is restated twice in the form of variations.

*Preludio mexicano* "Cielito lindo" (1913) is a charming little piece on the popular song *Cielito lindo*. Ponce also composed two more versions of this tune: one for piano

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<sup>62</sup> Manuel M. Ponce, *Mazurkas*, México, D.F.: Edición especial Clema Ponce UNAM, 2002. p. 7

<sup>63</sup> European musical nationalism is a nineteenth-century movement during which composers turned to their native cultures for materials and inspiration, like the use of native songs and dances. F. E. Kirby, *Music for piano, A short story*: Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1995. pp. 256-257



and voice, and a simplified version for his *Veinte piezas fáciles* (1939).

*Rapsodia mexicana no. I* (1911) contains two popular themes from the *Jarabe Tapatío*, a traditional folk dance from the state of Jalisco, Mexico. The first theme is very rhythmic and is developed in variation form through the use of chords, octaves, sixteenth notes (accompaniment) and fugal sections. The second theme is melodic and is also developed in variation form by use of chords, sixteenth notes (accompaniment), and octaves. The second theme also contains a subtle reference to Ponce's song *Estrellita* (1912). The last section of the piece (*Allegro con brio*) brilliantly develops the first theme before the presentation of its virtuosic finale.

*Rapsodia mexicana no. II* (1913) is based on the popular melodies *Las mañanitas* and *Vamos a tomar atole* from the *Jarabe Tapatío*. The first theme (*Las mañanitas*) is introduced and later developed in variation form using octaves, *staccatos*, chromatism, changes of mood, trills, and sixteenth notes for the accompaniment. The second theme (*Vamos a tomar atole*) is treated as a *toccata*<sup>64</sup> and concludes the piece.

*Ven, ¡Oh luna!* (unknown date), *Serenata mexicana "Alevántate"* (1912), and *Preludio mexicano "cuiden su vida"* (unknown date) are examples of anonymous popular songs arranged by Ponce in his effort to rescue Mexican folk melodies. One can perform these pieces as a solo piano piece or as a piece for piano and voice.

*Scherzino mexicano* (1909) is a short piece in ternary form. The piece combines duple and triple meter in a manner characteristic of *Mexican Jarabes*.

*Scherzino maya* (1919) is a short piece of happy character and brisk rhythm. The piece contains tunes related to Mayan culture, collected by Ponce during his trips to the

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<sup>64</sup> A brilliant composition designed to display the performer's technique and dexterity.

Mexican states of Yucatán and Chiapas.

*Tema mexicano variado* (1912) is a piece that contains four variations on an original theme by Ponce that evokes the *Cancion Romántica Mexicana*. In the first variation (*Vivo*), the melody is accompanied by triplets. The second variation (*Andante*) is in minor key, and its melody is accompanied by an *ostinato* pattern in the bass. The third variation (*Piu mosso*) is characterized by its use of counterpoint, while the last variation (*Andante*) presents the melody in chords accompanied by octaves.

*Barcarola mexicana "Xochimilco"* (1915), similar to the barcarolles that evoke songs of the Venetian gondoliers, is a piece in 6/8 meter that uses the popular Mexican boat song "La barca del marino." Xochimilco is a series of canals located in Mexico City.

Finally, *Estrellita metamorfosis de concierto* (1920) is a reinvention of Ponce's popular art song *Estrellita* (1912). For this version, Ponce accompanies and embellishes the melody with chords, sixteenth notes, thirds, triplets, arpeggios, and octaves in an A-B-A structure.

## CONCLUSION

Ponce's piano works from his Romantic period are the result of an eclectic attitude in which different musical styles coexist, with European Romanticism at the core. Like his predecessors Ricardo Castro, Felipe Villanueva, and Ernesto Elorduy, he adopted the *character piece* and elevated this genre to its maximum evolutionary level in Mexico at that time. Virtuosity, Neo-Classicism, and nationalism are important elements within his music. This last element represents the crucial moment in Ponce's Romantic phase: the appearance of Mexican influences as an essential signature of his musical language.

The two most representative examples of Ponce's Romantic style are *Romantic Concerto* (1910) and *Mexican Ballade* (1915). *Romantic Concerto* is the bridge between Ponce's early Romantic compositions and the symbiosis of the Romantic with the Mexican. Here, Ponce incorporates his improved musical knowledge, acquired during his first trip to Europe, with the rising nationalistic ideas brought by the Mexican Revolution. The most important Romantic element attached to the *Concerto* is Ponce's inspiration by Liszt's *B minor sonata* and *Piano Concerto No. 1*, seen in its cyclic use of Theme C, thematic transformations, and uninterrupted structure. The two most implicit Mexican elements in *Romantic Concerto* are its completion at the centenary of Mexico's independence and the similarities in character of themes C and D with the *Canción Romántica Mexicana*.

*Mexican Ballade* is the single-most representative composition of Ponce's musical nationalism. It perfectly combines the narrative style of Chopin's *ballades* with the inclusion of two Mexican folk tunes with additional homage to Mexico's national

dance: the *Jarabe*.

Ponce was one of the most influential Mexican composers of the twentieth century. In a period where salon music monopolized the Mexican music scene, he introduced to his country the importance of musical nationalism, having been guided by European ideals of the time. He was the first Mexican composer to collect and use the songs of the Mexican people in concert music. With the marriage of European Romanticism and Mexican folk music, Ponce created a unique, expressive, characteristic language in which both elements triumph.

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## APPENDIX A

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF PIANO WORKS FROM  
PONCE'S ROMANTIC PERIOD

<b>Composition</b>	<b>Date composed</b>
Danza del sarampión	1887
Dos danzas (Suspiro; Sonrisa)	1890
Preludio (C minor)	1894
Misterio doloroso	1899
Tiempo di minuetto (D-flat major)	1899
Malgré tout	1900
Mazurka de salón (E major)	1900
Mazurka de salón (F major)	1900
Melodía	1900
Minueto II (E major)	1900
Minuetto III (F major)	1900
Tres Romanzas sin palabras	1900
Gavota	1901
Un recuerdo	1902
Cinco Hojas de álbum	1903
Mayo	1903
Once miniaturas	1903
Bersagliera	1904
La noche	1905
Legende	1905
Tres Preludios	1905
Bocetos nocturnos	1905
En una desolación	1906
Notturmo I	1906



Four little Fugues for beginners	1906
Estudio de Moscheles	1906
Notturmo II	1906
Caprice II	1907
Página de álbum	1907
Preludio y fuga sobre un tema de Bach	1908
Primer amor	1909
Vals Amorosamente	1909
Vals Apasionadamente	1909
Arrulladora la mexicana (La rancherita)	1909
Scherzino mexicano	1909
Concierto para piano y orquesta (Concierto romántico)	1910
Rapsodia mexicana I	1911
Trozos románticos (14 piezas)	1911
Álbum de amor (7 piezas)	1912
Scherzino (a Debussy)	1912
Tema mexicano variado	1912
Serenata mexicana Alevántate	1912
Cántico a la memoria de un artista	1913
Rapsodia mexicana II	1913
Serenata frívola	1913
Sonata I	1913
Preludio mexicano “Cielito lindo”	1913
Balada mexicana	1915
Barcarola mexicana “Xochimilco”	1915
Elegía de la ausencia	1915
Preludio y fuga sobre un tema de Haendel	1915
Rapsodia cubana I	1915
Rapsodia cubana II	1915
Romanza de Amor	1915
Suite cubana (3 piezas)	1915

Estudios de concierto	1899-1915
Guateque	1916
Preludio cubano	1916
Rapsodia cubana III	1916
Sonata II	1916
Dos danzas (1. Mexicana; 2. Cubana)	1916
Rapsodia yucateca	1916
Petite serenade	1917
Valse galante	1917
Serenata arcaica	1917
Mazurkas	1900-1917
Balada mexicana (piano and orchestra)	1918
Glosario íntimo	1919
Scherzino maya	1919
Gavotte et musette	1920
Bailable oriental	1920
Estrellita (Metamorfosis de concierto)	1920
Momento doloroso	1920
Evocaciones (4 pieces)	1921
Intermezzo (III)	1921
Arulladora mexicana II	1925

## APPENDIX B

PIANO WORKS FROM PONCE'S ROMANTIC PERIOD  
WITHOUT A COMPLETION DATE

Pavana	
Tiempo de schottisch	
Duerme	
Súplica	
Intermezzo (I)	
Variaciones sobre un tema popular religioso (Oh, María, Madre mía)	
Ven, ¡Oh luna!	
Preludio mexicano "Cuiden su vida"	
Intermezzo (II)	

## APPENDIX C

DISCOGRAPHY OF PIANO WORKS FROM  
PONCE'S ROMANTIC PERIOD

Abbreviations: CD for compact disc; C for cassette; SD33, SD45, and SD78 for 33 1/3, 45, and 78 RPM discs.

- **Angel SAM-3503 (SD33, Mexico 1976) "Música mexicana para piano: los clásicos de México."** Manuel Delaflor, piano. Includes: *Preludio y fuga sobre un tema de Haendel*; *Intermezzo II*.
- **Angel ASMC-77031 (3 SD33, Mexico City 1978) "Los clásicos de Mexico. Manuel M. Ponce: semblanza de un compositor. 30 aniversario 1948-1978. Volúmen 1: música para piano."** Carlos Vázquez, piano. Includes: *Danza del sarampión*; *Estrellita*; *Serenata mexicana*; *Preludio mexicano "Cuiden su vida"*; *Miniatures*; *Scherzino* (from *Trozos románticos*); *Scherzino a Debussy*; *Scherzino maya*; *Scherzino mexicano*; *Primer amor*; *Malgre tout*; *Gavota*; *Intermezzo*; *Mazurkas 2, 1, 23*; *Jarabe, Hacia la cima*, and *Preludio Trágico* (from *Estudios de concierto*); *Evocaciones* (*Broadway, Versalles, Venecia*, and *La Alhambra*); *Balada mexicana*; *Romanza de amor*; *Preludios y fuga sobre un tema de J. S. Bach*; *Preludio y fuga sobre un tema de Haendel*; *Rapsodia mexicana I*; *Arrulladora mexicana II*.
- **ASV CD DCA 874 (CD, London 1994) "Piano music / Ponce"; also Spartacus (Clásicos Mexicanos) 21019 (CD, Mexico 1998) "Balada mexicana. Piano music of Manuel Ponce."** Jorge Federico Osorio, piano. Includes: *Balada mexicana*; *Arrulladora mexicana*; *Tema mexicano variado*; *Romanza de amor*; *Preludio y fuga sobre un tema de Haendel*; *Mazurkas no. 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10*; *Scherzino mexicano*; *Gavota*; *Intermezzo*; *Rapsodia cubana*.
- **ASV CD DCA 926 (CD, London 1995) "Música mexicana, vol. 6."** Jorge Federico Osorio, piano; Eva Suk, piano; Enrique Bátiz, conductor; Orquesta Sinfónica del Estado de Mexico. Includes: *Gavota*; *Concerto* for piano and orchestra (Osorio); *Balada mexicana for piano and orchestra* (Suk).
- **ASV CD DCA 952 (CD, London 1996) "3 concertos"; also Prodisc (Clásicos mexicanos) SDX21034 (CD, 1998) "Manuel M. Ponce: los tres conciertos."** Jorge Federico Osorio, piano; Alfonso Moreno, guitar; Henryk Szeryng, violin; Enrique Bátiz, conductor. Includes: *Concerto* for piano and orchestra (Orquesta Sinfónica del Estado de Mexico; recorded 1994).

- **BMG/RCA 743215248729 (CD, Mexico 1997) "Manuel María Ponce: Intermezzo, Gavota, Mazurkas, Rapsodias." Gustavo Morales, piano.** Includes: *Legende; Versailles* (from *Evocaciones*); *Preludios y fuga sobre un tema de J. S. Bach*; *Mazurkas* no. 4, 6; *Estudio de concierto* no. 12; *Gavota*; *Intermezzo*; *Rapsodia mexicana I*; *Rapsodia cubana I*; *Rapsodia mexicana II*.
- **Capitol P-18037 (SD33, Hollywood, Calif. 1984?) "Classical Mexican waltzes." Miguel García Mora, piano.** Includes: *Valse galante*.
- **Centaur Records CRC 2539 (CD, 2001) "Horizons: piano music of Latin America." Nancy Roldán, piano.** Includes: *Estrellita (Metamorfosis de concierto)*.
- **Concermex CM 7 (SD33, Mexico) Stella Contreras, piano.** Includes: *Rapsodia mexicana II*; *Mazurka*; *Scherzino*; *Balada mexicana*; *Gavota*; *Intermezzo*.
- **Discos Columbia de Mexico DCL 89 (SD33, Mexico) "Obras de Manuel M. Ponce"; also Harmony Columbia HC-13110 (SD33, Mexico ca. 1965) "Música para piano de Manuel M. Ponce." Pablo Castellanos, piano.** Includes: *Gavota*; *Balada Mexicana*; *Scherzino mexicano*; *Estrellita*.
- **Ediciones Pentagrama PCD 1111 (CD, Mexico City 1994) "El piano mexicano." Francisco Rocafuerte, piano.** Includes: *Balada mexicana*; *Intermezzo*; *Gavota*; *Estrellita Metamorfosis de concierto*.
- **Euram Records 6 00944 00052 6 (CD, Mexico City 1997) "Las más bellas mazurcas mexicanas." Jozef Olechowski, piano.** Includes: *Mazurkas* no. 1, 2, 4, 19, and 23.
- **Filarmónica de Querétaro FQ-4 (CD, 1994) "Ponce, Velázquez, De Elías, Enríquez." Guadalupe Parrondo, piano; Sergio Cárdenas, conductor; Camerata de la Filarmónica de Querétaro.** Includes: *Concierto for piano and strings*.
- **Fonapas CE 10012 (SD33, Mexico 1980). Guadalupe Parrondo, piano; Fernando Lozano, conductor; Orquesta Filarmónica de la Ciudad de Mexico.** Includes: *Concierto* for piano and orchestra.
- **Instituto Cultural de Aguascalientes (CD, Mexico 1994) "Aguascalientes en concierto: música para piano." Héctor Rojas, piano.** Includes: *Malgre tout*; *Barcarola mexicana "Xochimilco"*; *Petite serenade*; *Rapsodia cubana*.
- **Instituto Mexicano de Comercio Exterior (SD33, Mexico) "Música mexicana para piano." Jose Kahán, piano.** Includes: *Preludio y fuga sobre un tema de Haendel*; *Mazurkas* No. 2, 6, and 23; *Tema mexicano variado*.

- **Instituto Politécnico Nacional APC-002 (CD, Mexico 1991). Héctor Rojas, piano; Salvador Carballeda, conductor; Orquesta Sinfónica del Instituto Politécnico Nacional.** Includes: *Balada mexicana* for piano and orchestra.
- **Luzam LUMC-8302 (SD33, Mexico 1983) "Las más bellas páginas del piano, vol. 1." Miguel García Mora, piano.** Includes: *Intermezzo*.
- **Luzam CD-90-001-C (CD, Mexico 1990) "Música mexicana de salón." Raúl Herrera, piano.** Includes: *Guateque; Intermezzo; Scherzino mexicano*.
- **Luzam 2000-001-CD (CD, Mexico 1992) "Mas música mexicana de salón." Raúl Herrera, piano.** Includes: *Souvenir* and *Malinconia* (from *Trozos románticos*); *Mazurka* no. 2; *Gavota*.
- **Marco Polo 8.223609 (CD, Germany 1995; recorded 1994-1995) "Manuel M. Ponce: piano music." David Witten, piano.** Includes: *Preludio y fuga sobre un tema de Haendel; Plenilunio* (from *Suite cubana*); *Intermezzo; Preludios y fuga sobre un tema de J. S. Bach; Malgre tout; Scherzino mexicano; Deux etudes; Notturmo; Balada mexicana*.
- **Musart MCD 3012 (SD33, Mexico 1957) "Recital mexicano." Miguel García Mora, piano.** Includes: *Plenilunio* (from *Suite cubana*); *Scherzino mexicano; Intermezzo; Balada mexicana*.
- **Musart MCD 3019 (SD33, Mexico 1959) "Obras de Manuel M. Ponce." Carlos Vázquez, piano.** Includes: *Intermezzo; Mazurkas No. 2, 7, 11, 12 and 23; Arrulladora mexicana; Scherzino maya; Scherzino mexicano; Scherzino staccato* (from *Trozos románticos*); *Scherzino a Debussy; Juventud* (from *Estudios de Concierto*); *Arrulladora mexicana II; Estrellita (Metamorfosis de concierto); Barcarola mexicana "Xochimilco"; Ven ¡oh luna!; Preludio y fuga sobre un tema de Haendel*.
- **Musicians Showcase MS 1054 (CD, 2000) "Canción sin palabras." Martha Marchena, piano.** Includes: *Intermezzo*.
- **Orfeón LP-12-848 (SD33, Mexico 1974) "Clásicos mexicanos." Kurt Groenewold, piano.** Includes: *Intermezzo; Preludio mexicano Cuiden su vida*.
- **Pavane ADW 7032-ADW 7033 (2 SD33, 1979) "Reflets de l'Amérique latine." Nelson Delle-Vigne-Fabbri, piano.** Includes: *Petit prelude* (from *Trozos románticos*); *Gavota*.
- **Peerles (SD33). Fausto García Medeles, piano.** Contents: *Intemezzo; Balada mexicana; Cuatro danzas mexicanas; Cuatro mazurkas; Cielito lindo*.

- **Promexa/CBS (SD33, Mexico 1979) "Los grandes maestros de la música clásica, segunda serie, vol. 18: Manuel M. Ponce." John Williams, guitar; Andre Previn, conductor; London Symphony Orchestra; Pablo Castellanos, piano.** Includes: *Preludio romántico; Gavota and Balada mexicana* for solo piano.
- **Quindecim Recordings QP013 (CD, Mexico 1997) "El siglo XX en Mexico: antología pianística (1900-1950)." María Teresa Frenck, piano.** Includes: *Romanza de amor; Duerme.*
- **Raduga CD-GRW 001 (CD, Mexico 1992) "Música mexicana para piano"; also Spartacus Records 001 (CD, Mexico 1996). Gustavo Rivero Weber, piano.** Includes: *Estrellita; Gavota; Mazurka no. 2; Lejos de ti; Balada mexicana; Mazurka no. 6.*
- **Raduga NTM 002 (CD, Mexico 1993) "Música mexicana para piano, vol. 2. Gustavo Rivero Weber, piano; also Spartacus Records 002 (CD, Mexico City 1996).** Includes: *Intermezzo; Romanza de amor; Plenilunio (from Suite cubana); Scherzino maya; Preludio mexicano "Cuiden su vida"; Scherzino mexicano; Malgre tout.*
- **Raduga MAG-003 (CD, Mexico 1995) "Música mexicana para piano"; also Clásicos Mexicanos/Spartacus Records MAG 003 (CD, Mexico City 1999) "Música mexicana para piano, vol. 3: Gustavo Rivero Weber, piano.** Includes: *Valentina; Mazurka no. 10; Tema mexicano variado; Estudios de concierto no. 10, 7; Guateque.*
- **Secretaría de Gobernación (SD33, Mexico 1973) "Obras para piano." Jose Kahan, piano.** Includes: *Estrellita Metamorfosis de concierto; Gavota; Intermezzo; Arrulladora mexicana; Scherzino mexicano; Balada mexicana.*
- **Selecciones del Reader's Digest (C, Mexico 1989) "Manuel M. Ponce: genio y figura clásica de México, volume 2. Carlos Vázquez, piano.** Includes: *Intermezzo; Malgre tout; Hacia la cima (from Estudios de concierto); Estrellita Metamorfosis de concierto; Balada mexicana; Gavota; Mazurka 2 and 23; Danza del sarampión; Serenata mexicana.*
- **Sony CDEC 486030 (CD, Mexico 1996) "Música Latinoamericana para piano"; also Clásicos Mexicanos 27105 (CD, Mexico City 2000) "Música Latinoamericana I." Silvia Navarrete, piano.** Includes: *Balada mexicana.*
- **SONY 486228 (7 CD, Mexico 1998; recorded 1996) "Manuel M. Ponce: obra completa para piano, vol. 1-7." Héctor Rojas, piano.** Includes: All the complete Ponce's Romantic piano works for solo piano.

- **SONY Classical CDEC 505513 (CD, Mexico 2001) "Manuel M. Ponce"** Héctor Rojas, piano; Carlos Miguel Prieto, conductor; Orquesta Filarmónica de la Ciudad de México. Includes: *Concierto* and *Balada mexicana* for piano and orchestra.
- **Stella STE-101 (CD, Mexico 1991) "Mexico romántico, vol. I"; also Musical Heritage Society 513091K (CD, Ocean, N.J. 1992).** Jose Sandoval, piano. Includes: *Intermezzo*; *Scherzino mexicano*; *Romanza de amor*; *Balada mexicana*; *Gavota*; *Plenilunio*; *Mazurka no. 2*.
- **Stella STE-102 (CD, Mexico 1991) "Mexico romántico, vol. 2."** Jose Sandoval, piano. Includes: *Rapsodia mexicana I*; *Marchita el alma*; *La barca del marino*; *Estrellita*; *Serenata mexicana*; *Cuiden su vida*; *Rapsodia mexicana II*.
- **Tritonus TTS-1004 (C, Mexico 1989) "Música para piano."** Carlos Vázquez, piano. Includes: *Intermezzo*; *Preludio trágico* (from *Estudios de concierto*); *Malgre tout*; *Mazurka no. 23*; *Scherzino staccato* (from *Trozos románticos*); *Scherzino a Debussy*; *Scherzino maya*; *Scherzino mexicano*; *Balada mexicana*; *Hacia la cima* (from *Estudios de concierto*).
- **Universidad de Coahuila SL-920102 (SD33, Mexico 1992) "Homenaje a Manuel M. Ponce."** Juan Huss Frausto, piano. Includes: *Preludio y fuga en Re menor*; *Preludio mexicano "Cielito lindo"*; *Preludio mexicano "Cuiden su vida"*; *Mazurka in D minor*; *Mazurka in F minor*; *Hacia la cima*, *Juventud*, *Preludio trágico*, and *Alma en primavera* (from *Estudios de concierto*); *Estrellita*; *Intermezzo*.
- **Urtext URT 24 (CD, 2000) "Ponce: tropical y cosmopolita."** Edison Quintana, piano. Includes: *Suite cubana*; *Estudios de concierto*; *Cuatro danzas mexicanas*.
- **Voz Viva de México (SD33, Mexico City 1976) "Concierto para piano y orquesta; Concierto del Sur para guitarra by Manuel M. Ponce."** María Teresa Rodríguez, piano; Alfonso Moreno, guitar; Eduardo Mata, conductor; Orquesta Filarmónica de la UNAM. Includes: *Concierto for piano and orchestra*.
- **Z (SD33, Mexico 1986) "Kurt Groenewold (piano) en concierto."** Includes: *Diálogo de amor* (from *Álbum de amor*); *Preludio mexicano "Cuiden su vida"*; *Intermezzo*; *Serenata mexicana*.