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Stylistic Development in the Piano Works by Manuel Maria Ponce (1882-1948)

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Abstract

A composer, pianist, and music educator, Manuel Maria Ponce (1882-1948) put Mexico on the musical map in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Andres Segovia wrote to Ponce in a letter in December 1929, “to sum up, your work is what has the most value for me and for all musicians who hear it.”¹

Manuel Maria Ponce, known as one of the key composers of guitar music, also composed music for almost every instrument and for nearly every variety of media and genre: prelude, fugue, mazurka, gavotte, lied, voice and orchestra, duo, trio, quartet, choir a capella, symphonic work, and concerto.² Yet, unknown to all was that Ponce was first and foremost a pianist who composed over seven volumes of music for the piano.

Examining works for piano spanning Ponce’s whole life, this document focuses on their origins and stylistic development. Written in two parts, Section One offers two chapters: the first contains a brief history about Mexico leading up to the Revolution of 1910, and its effects upon the socio-political atmosphere during Ponce’s lifetime; the second outlines Ponce’s biography and his search for innovative musical techniques.

Section Two presents Ponce’s changing piano styles alongside a discussion of Ponce’s compositional life, through selected piano works in four chapters. The first and second chapters discuss a young composer exploring Western compositional techniques and aspiring to bring Mexican tunes to the concert stage.

The key stages of Ponce’s compositional life lie in the latter years of his work. The third and fourth chapters introduce important piano works that demonstrate the

² Manuel M. Ponce, Complete Solo Piano Works of Manuel M. Ponce, Hector Rojas (México; Sony Music Entertainment, 1988): 5.
maturation of his compositional styles. Revealed in these works is Ponce’s nationalistic fervor in his use of Mexican themes integrated with Western compositional techniques. Numerous musical examples are included in the discussion of the selected works. The Appendix includes a list of all the piano works in each compositional stage as well as a list of known recordings and their catalogue numbers. Overall, this document hopes to serve as a summation of Ponce’s working life: foremost as a composer for piano.
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Part One:

Manuel Maria Ponce’s Mexico and Biography
Chapter One
Social, Political, and Cultural Mexico from 1910-30

Mexico before and during Ponce’s lifetime

Mexico did not begin as a nation born to its own identity. Rather, it was conceived as a reaction to over three hundred years of foreign domination.³ It was in 1519 that this domination over the people of Tenochtitlan, capital of the Aztec Empire on the island of Cozumel, ruled by Emperor Montezuma (c.1480-1520) began with the arrival of the Spaniards led by Heman Cortes (1484-1547). The Spaniard’s arrival initially was a peaceful affair; however, on July 1, 1520, this peace ended when the Spaniards took and disposed Montezuma in the battle known in Mexico as La Noche Triste (The Sad Night). This night, however, did not mark success in the Spaniards’ conquest over the Aztecs, instead it was not until after many battles that the Spaniards officially took over Tenochtitlan on August 13, 1521.⁴ Thus, from 1521 to 1821 the Aztecs and other indigenous peoples were under the colonial yoke of Spain.

During the colonial period the Spaniards implemented race and class vocabulary to create division within the Mexican society. Caucasians born in Spain were known as the peninsulares (Peninsula People) and occupied the top position on the social hierarchy; criollos (Creoles) were Spanish born in Mexico and claimed the second highest seat on the social ladder; however, the criollos were excluded from positions in the church and government. The indigenous were the pre-conquest society, or the Indian population,

and the *mestizos* (half-blood) were the common working-class people who were mixture of Spanish and indigenous heritage.

The categorization of social classes stimulated much unrest among the Mexican people, producing a hunger to be independent from their 300-year-old captors. Priest Miguel Hidalgo (1753-1811), a known dissenter of the Spanish rule, promoted the idea of gathering the indigenous and *mestizos* to rise against the *peninsulares*. On September 16, 1810, Hidalgo initiated a revolt against the Spanish rulers that sparked the beginning of the Mexican War of Independence (1810-1821). It took eleven years of war before Mexican people succeeded in overthrowing rule by the Spanish and were able to establish their own independent government as a republic. Continuing on its path as an independent nation, in 1824 Mexico established its first President, Guadalupe Victoria (1786-1843). During Victoria’s rule (1824-1828), measures were taken to make Mexico a democratic society, measures such as abolition of slavery, instituting a military academy, and expelling the Spanish citizens disloyal to the new government. This government succeeded in being recognized by the United States and European countries, particularly Spain, England, and France, who wanted to have a relationship with this newly established nation.

Alongside this newfound government came obvious large divisions between liberals and conservatives. The conservatives took power from 1853 to 1861 and implemented a number of reforms that led Mexico to a civil war known as the Reform War (1857-1861). This conflict polarized the nation’s politics and in 1861 caused the conservatives to be defeated by the liberals led by Benito Juarez (1806-1872).

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5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
Faced with bankruptcy from the war, President Benito Juarez, known as one of Mexico’s most beloved leaders, made a decision to suspend payment of all monies owed to other countries for two years to prevent his country from falling further into debt.\textsuperscript{7} Reacting to Juarez’s decision, England, Spain, and France landed on the coast of Veracruz in December of 1861 out of fear of losing their financial interests. England and Spain soon withdrew, but France had conquest in mind and fought with the Mexicans for two years before succeeding in capturing Mexico City. French Emperor Napoleon III (1803-1879), wanting to secure a foothold in this New World, concocted a plan of placing Archduke Maximilian of Austria (1832-1867), whom he knew had ties to the conservative Mexicans exiled in Europe, on the throne as a puppet for the French in 1863.\textsuperscript{8} After the French conquest of Mexico City, Archduke Maximilian of Austria was pressured by Napoleon III and made to believe by the conservatives that the Mexicans had voted for him to be king. Thus, President Juarez was forced to retreat to the city of Juarez near the United States’ border until 1867, when the French were forced to withdraw because of the continuing resistance of the Mexican people as well as growing criticism from the French people and their government. President Juarez returned to Mexico City in 1867 to resume his presidential term and was re-elected in 1871, only to die after only one year of service, in 1872.\textsuperscript{9} 

The Mexico in which Ponce lived was a nation struggling to find its place in the world, trying to define its own identity and voice. “The history of post-colonial Mexico was dominated by a struggle to acquire nationhood despite obstacles of diversity, race,

\textsuperscript{7} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{8} Peter Kun Frary, \textit{Music & The Socio-Cultural Environment of Post-Revolutionary Mexico} (Hawaii: 2001), 5.  
\textsuperscript{9} Ibid.
religion, language, culture, and geographic isolation.” ¹⁰  Mexico had just suffered two major wars against foreign domination, one against the Spaniards (its occupying force of three hundred years) and one against France, as well as smaller wars between its own people such as the Reform War. Unknown to its people, Mexico was on the verge of another war, this time an internal war to establish a unified nation.

This paper will discuss the musical development and social environment of Mexico during Ponce’s lifetime in two sections: The Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) and the two decades of post-revolutionary music and government resulting in nationalism. Within these two categories, I will point out several of Ponce’s original musical thoughts during this period.

The Mexican Revolution (1910-1920)

The social stratification caused by the domination of the Spaniards created the need to unite and revolt, out of nationalistic fervor, against this foreign power. Mexico was an immensely unstable country during this time, with much bloodshed. After President Juarez’s death in 1872, Mexican politician Porifirio Diaz (1830-1915) took advantage of the situation to revolt against the Mexican government, calling for more democracy at the municipal level and questioning the principle of re-election. Successfully seizing Mexico City on November 21, 1876, Diaz began his rule by eliminating reelections. Under the Diaz dictatorship, from 1876 to 1910, the country was split into two social classes with the government, foreign businessmen, and large farm owners at the top and the peasant indigenous, mestizo, and peasants became even more

¹⁰ Ibid., 6.
oppressed, which pushed Mexico toward the path of war. Anti-foreign sentiments ran strong under Diaz’s dictatorship. This prompted pre-revolutionary writers such as Andres Molina Enriquez (1868-1940) to encourage Mexicans to more fully embrace art, music, and prose that were purely derived from Mexican traditions. The purpose, according to Enriquez, was to glorify Mexico as a unified nation and to exalt all things that were purely Mexican.¹¹ This encouraged and stirred the peasant population to revolt, resulting in the Mexican Revolution beginning in 1910. With a series of upheavals by the peasants, the feudalistic system was demolished and a new social order, supposedly based on democratic principles, was created. However, with numerous Mexican presidents assassinated by their respective oppositions between 1910 and 1920 and one-and-one-half million people killed, this new order brought much tragedy to Mexico’s people.¹²

The election of President Alvaro Obregon (1880-1928) in 1920 marked the end of the Revolution and the beginning of a more stable government. Obregon initiated many economic and social reforms including the destruction of the feudal land system, reduced exports from foreign countries, and the creation of free education and various health and welfare programs. Most importantly, national programs were initiated to support art and music that focused on the culture of the indigenous population.

An outside force, the Soviet Union, directly influenced the importance of pre-conquest culture. In 1918 the Soviets, taking advantage of the vulnerable state that Mexico was in, entered the political scene with a mission to penetrate the Mexican Socialist Party. They succeeded two years later with the creation of the Mexican

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¹¹ Daniel James, México and the Americas (New York: Praeger, 1963), 140.
¹² Ibid., 3.
Communist Party. The Communist cultural propaganda utilized as a nationalistic icon the concept of the pre-conquest culture.

They [the communists] disparaged everything that tended to unite the Latin Americans with one another as well with the United States and Europe. To this end, they formed a narrow nationalism by playing up the glories of each national culture in Latin America, with special stress in each case on the indigenous culture (Aztec, Maya, Inca, and so on) on which the present day culture was assumed to be based.13

Renowned Mexican artists such as Diego Rivera (1886-1957), Jose Clemente Orozco (1883-1949), and David Alfaro Siqueiros (1896-1974), were members of the Mexican Communist Party.14 Mainly commissioned by the government, these three artists are significantly known for expressing nationalistic sentiments through their artwork. Due to the powerful use of revolutionary symbolism, they created a nationalistic movement in the arts, specifically in painting. Although Ponce created nationalistic music during the pre-revolutionary and revolutionary years, the mainstream movement of musical nationalism began after the post-revolutionary nationalist school of painting had been established.

Post-Revolutionary Music, Government, and Nationalism

With the government’s support, Rivera, Orozco, and Siquieros began a muralist school in 1922 and organized a union for artists. The muralist school established a standard for other artists in terms of nationalism and economic survival. Composer Carlos Chavez (1899-1978) soon set a similar standard for musicians.

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14 James, 332.
A principal student of Ponce in 1910, Chavez played a vital role in developing the support of the government for musical nationalism. Referring to the program he began at the National Conservatory in 1928, Chavez stated, “Our attempt at a similar program in music took place some years later after the Mexican painters started their movement.”

In his early twenties, Chavez became socially familiar with culturally minded politicians, specifically with the Secretary of Education, Jose Vasconcelos (1882-1959), who was in charge of Mexico’s cultural programs. Vasconcelos commissioned Chavez to write a ballet on pre-conquest Mexico or Indianism, *El fuego nuevo* (The New Fire) in 1921. This led to many more commissions for Chavez, as well as to a position for him as conductor of the *Orquestra Sinfonica* Mexico and other administrative posts. As an educator, composer, and conductor, Chavez became a very powerful and influential member of Mexico’s musical community from the 1920s to the 1950s. His popularity influenced a new generation of nationalistic composers such as Silvestre Revueltas (1899-1940), Pablo Moncayo (1912-1958), and Salvador Contreras (1910-1982). Much scholarship indicates that the youthful Chavez overtook Ponce as the leading nationalistic composer of Mexico, but Chavez acknowledged Ponce as the first nationalistic composer and folklore scholar in Mexico. He believed that Ponce directly influenced the development of music in Mexico in two ways. First, Ponce chose to “compose in larger forms achieving such magnificent results as his Piano Concerto and his Trio *Romantico* for Piano, Violin, and Cello [which were] the foundation stones of a higher Mexican

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16 Ibid., 97.
According to Chavez, Ponce’s forms differed from other Mexican composers in the early twentieth century, who displayed an unwillingness to explore beyond the borders of salon music. Secondly, Chavez believed that Ponce initiated “‘musical nationalism’... [and] it was he who created a real consciousness of the richness of Mexican folk music, and gave orientation to the process of integrating that music into the higher forms of composition.”

In contrast to Chavez, who focused on a mixture of “Indianism, neoclassicism, primitivism, and modernistic elements,” Ponce found pre-conquest elements lacking and chose to focus on factors such as folklore to evoke intimate emotions in his nationalistic-styled music. “He believed that popular and folk music of the mestizo, not reconstructed Aztec music, served the purposes of Mexican nationalism best.” From Ponce’s viewpoint, his nationalistic compositions “were not products of mestizo in a neo-romantic setting absent of strong political messages.”

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18 Ibid.  
19 Ibid.  
20 Frary, 2.  
21 Ibid.  
22 Ibid.
Chapter Two
Biography

Manuel Maria Ponce, born on December 8, 1882 in Fresnillo, Zacatecas, Mexico, began his musical career as a pianist. Ponce was not only interested in the piano but in composition as well. His first composition, titled “Dance of the Measles” (1891), was written at the age of eight, appropriately enough while he was sick with the measles.

Corazon Otero, author of the article *Manuel M. Ponce and The Guitar*, wrote “he [Ponce] was obsessed by music, and would drop everything at any moment to start writing. He often left the house in thought, stopped suddenly, ran back and entered the house without a word, went to his room and set to writing.”

In 1899, Ponce moved to Aguascalientes in 1899 to take a job as an assistant organist. At the age of nineteen Ponce entered the National Conservatory of Music in Mexico City and proudly presented a number of his own pieces through performance. He also made friends with prominent Mexican artists and literary figures such as painter Saturnino Herran (1887-1918) and poet Ramon Lopez Velarde (1888-1921).

Unfortunately, the music education that Ponce was receiving at the National Conservatory was not innovative enough, so he left Mexico City and returned to Aguascalientes to teach and return to his post as an organist.

Ponce thrived musically in Aguascalientes. Along with other artists and musicians, including Herran and Lopez, Ponce took advantage of the yearly Mexican Fair

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24 Ibid.
held in Aguascalientes to help develop “artistic nationalism” at this festival. “Trades people, bullfighters, theatrical people, and Bajio singers got together at the Fair of San Marcos, in the typical Mexican Fair.” This was significant because the local melodies, songs, harmonies and flavors heard at this fair influenced his works.

Still yearning to increase his musical knowledge, Ponce made his first trip to Europe in 1904, to Bologna, Italy, where he studied composition under the guidance of Luigi Torchi (1858-1920) and Cesare Dall’Olio (1849-1920) at the Liceo Musicale School. Torchi, who taught musicology and composition, inspired Ponce to write about music, and Dall’Olio, who was Puccini’s teacher and taught composition, educated Ponce mainly on counterpoint. In Italy Ponce composed several important pieces for the piano: Piano Sonata No.1, four Mazurkas, and the first two movements of Trio ‘Romantico’ for piano, violin, and cello.

After Italy Ponce traveled to Germany, in 1905, to continue his quest for innovative musical ideas and to further his piano studies. Under the guidance of Martin Krause (1853-1918), disciple of Liszt and piano teacher of Claudio Arrau, at the Stern Conservatory in Berlin, Ponce prospered both as a pianist and composer. The twenty-three-year-old pianist performed many of his compositions for Krause, including Preludio e Fuga sobre un tema de Handel. The story goes that when Ponce heard Krause perform several of Handel’s little keyboard suites, he went home and after a full night of composing presented to Krause and other students his own Preludio e Fuga sobre un tema de Handel. A subsequent piano performance at the Beethoven Hall of Berlin

\[^{25}\text{Ibid.}\]
\[^{26}\text{Ibid.}\]
\[^{27}\text{http://www.museomusicabologna.it/cataloghi.htm}\]
brought much attention to this young Mexican. Sadly, Ponce was forced to return to Mexico in 1907 due to financial difficulties.

Returning to Mexico did not stop his musical drive. He challenged the Mexican musical society by publicly performing his compositions that integrated Mexican folk melodies and gestures. This elicited quite a disapproving response from the music community:

How he fought against the prejudices that existed against everything that signified ‘popular’ or ‘indigenous’! How many forecasts of failure were made by his colleague when Ponce announced that he would play Mexican Rhapsody in a concert! He was not spared irony, or cruel phrases.  

Ponce strove for a career as a concert pianist as well as a pedagogue. He was appointed piano professor in 1907 at the National Conservatory of Music and founded the Piano Academy in Mexico City. As a piano educator he stressed that Mexico needed to expand its musical knowledge and worked to create an environment that made music education innovative for his students. For example, Ponce taught and introduced works of the Impressionists Debussy (1862-1918) and Ravel (1875-1937) to his students, including Carlos Chavez and Antonio Gomezanda (1884-1964), who gave the first Mexican performance of works by Debussy in June 1912.  

In addition to exposing the Mexican audience to the impressionist style, Ponce also introduced Mexican folk elements into classical compositions. Because of this, he was regarded by many as the first nationalistic composer of Mexico. Ponce, in these compositions, tended to set these folk elements within the framework of western

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28 Otero, 11.
29 Manuel M. Ponce, Complete Solo Piano Works of Manuel M. Ponce, Hector Rojas (Mexico; Sony Music Entertainment, 1988): 5.
European music styles such as romanticism, impressionism, and neo-classicism. Influences of romanticism were strongly reflected in his early works containing folk elements or written in the Mexican salon style. Those traits of romanticism disappeared, however, as he matured. In his later works Ponce integrated folk tunes using compositional techniques such as thematic transformation within the style of impressionism and neo-classicism.

It is important to point out that although Ponce utilized western European music styles, he tried to pave the path for future Mexican composers away from the domination of European music by collecting numerous local songs and including them in his compositions. Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887-1959), Brazilian composer, who met Ponce in Paris in the 1920s, wrote:

I remember that I asked him [Ponce] at the time if the composers of his country were as yet taking an interest in native music, as I have been doing since 1912, and he answered that he himself had been working in that direction. It gave me great joy to learn that in the distant part of my continent there was another artist who was arming himself with the resources of the folklore of his people in the struggle for the future musical independence of his country.  

“Estrellita” (Little Star) illustrates Ponce’s nationalistic spirit. In 1912 he traveled back to Aguascalientes on vacation and spent an evening looking at the starry night. This wondrous night inspired Ponce to create the words and music for the song, “Estrellita,” which is a well-known nationalistic piece. The text is as follows:

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Estrellita del lejano cielo
Que sabes mi querer que miras
mi sufrir
Ven y dime si me quiere un poco
Porque ya no puedo
Sin su amor vivir
Tu eres, estrella mi faro de amor
Tu sabes que pronto de morir,

Star from far away
You know about my love and see
my suffering
Come and tell me if he loves me a little
Because I cannot live
Without his love
Star, you are the lighthouse of my love
You know I will soon have to die,

This piece imitated the lines of Mexican Bajio songs that Ponce heard at the Fair of Aguascalientes and it is speculated by many that while echoing Mexican sentimentalism, the lyrics were describing Mexico as a little star.

In 1934 Ponce established a nationalist Mexican school that aimed to raise the “Mexican song” to the level of the concert hall. Ponce desired to make Mexican classical music aesthetically, musically, and technically fulfilling to a classical music audience. Ponce took popular Mexican songs such as La Pajarera and La Valentina, and arranged them for voice and piano.

Political and social difficulties arose in Mexico during the years of the Mexican Revolution (1910-20) and caused Ponce’s voluntary exile to Havana, Cuba from 1915 to 1917. Havana at that time was a center of cultural activity and a musical hub for the Latin world. The concert halls provided an essential stage for all European artists who were on North American tours. Ponce immersed himself in this rich concert atmosphere and cultivated within himself the exotic and sensual rhythms found in Cuban music.

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31 Otero, 13.
32 Manuel M. Ponce, Estrellita, trans. by Michelle Yip (permission by Ponce family, 2004).
33 Otero, 11.
[Ponce] produced several piano works that featured Cuban rhythms and music. The country’s name appear(ed) as an adjective in many pieces from those two years—*Rapsodia cubana, Preludio cubano, Suite cubana* are typical names.” While there, Ponce founded the *Academia Beethoven* and began to write articles about music. Although he had written some commentary before his stay in Cuba [for example, in 1913 he had his lecture entitled *La musica y la canción mexicana* (The Music and the Mexican Song) published which served as a catalyst for the Mexican Nationalist School] it was not until his Cuban years “that his enthusiasm to express himself in writing emerged; he wrote articles and music reviews for the newspapers in Havana.”

Thus, in his thirties Ponce became a prolific writer: He published numerous articles and essays on musical topics ranging from piano techniques to issues surrounding media and genre. As an avid music critic, during his exile, he wrote for *El heraldo de Cuba* and *La reforma social*, and upon his return to Mexico he founded and managed the magazine *Rivista musical de Mexico* from 1919 to 1920.

In 1925, Ponce traveled to Paris to study and learn new musical methods in piano and composition with Paul Dukas (1865-1935). Paris, in the 1920s, provided a center for artists and musicians seeking a more contemporary language. There, Ponce immersed himself in the French compositional style and met other influential Latin-American and European composers such as Villa-Lobos (1887-1959), Milhaud (1892-1974), Varése (1883-1965), Joaquin Rodrigo (1901-1999), and performers Alfred Cortot (1877-1962) and most significantly, Andres Segovia (1893-1987).


35 Ibid.
Although Ponce had met Segovia after a concert in Mexico in 1923, it was during the years in Paris that their friendship deepened. Segovia encouraged Ponce to compose guitar music, which he did in abundance and that served as the basis for several of his piano compositions. Works such as *Prelude and Fugue for the Left Hand Alone* (1931) and *Mazurka Espagnole* (1928) were pieces Ponce composed with the intention to be read both by the guitar and the piano.

In 1932, Ponce returned to Mexico a much more experienced and respected musician. No longer did the Mexican romantic features dominate his works; instead, the compositions written after 1932, though still using Mexican folk melodies, reflected Ponce’s knowledge of twentieth-century techniques. His piano works *Quatro piezas para piano* (1941) used bitonality and *Dos Estudios* (1933) employed seconds and thirds into a creative study within the impressionistic style, to name a few.

The 1930s and 1940s saw many important premieres and performances of Ponce’s works. His orchestral piece *Chapultepec* was performed by the Philadelphia Orchestra under the direction of Leopold Stokowski in 1934, and *Ferial* was conducted by Carlos Kleiber and the Mexican Symphony Orchestra in 1943. His *Concierto del sur* for guitar was premiered by Andres Segovia in 1941, and his violin concerto was premiered by Henryck Szeryng and the Mexico Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Carlos Chavez in 1943.

Ponce died in 1948 having received numerous prizes and distinctions, including the prestigious *Premio Nacional de Artes*, known as the “National Arts Prize,” in 1947 in Mexico. Ponce was the first musician to be awarded this prize.
Part Two:

Piano Compositions and Circumstances
Chapter Three
First Stage (1891-1906): Early Period and Exploration of Western Music

Much has been written about Manuel Maria Ponce’s music for the guitar resulting from his on-going friendship with guitar maestro Andres Segovia. This friendship inspired numerous preludes, mazurkas, concertos, suites, and sonatas. “This all is more surprising when one considers that Ponce never played the guitar. He was, first and foremost, a pianist.”

Piano compositions were the mainstay of his musical output throughout Ponce’s life. In this part, I will introduce and discuss several selected piano works that represent the development of Ponce’s musical style throughout the various circumstances of his life.

Commentators on Mexican classical music such as Pablo Castellanos, Carlos Vasquez, and Yolanda Moreno Rivas often divide Ponce’s piano music into four stages that depict the maturing of his individual style. These stages helped mold Ponce’s exploration of innovative ways to expand Mexican classical music for the piano, whether from European influence or the influence of local melodies.

By the time Ponce returned to Mexico for good, after spending a total of nine years in Europe, his music had matured from the style of 1830s piano parlor pieces to 1930s French-impressionist/neoclassic works. In addition, nationalistic tendencies, as well as his natural gift for melody, leave their mark on every page of his music.

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36 Witten, 5.
38 Carlos Vasquez, Notas de Carlos Vasquez. Preludio y Fuga para la mano izquierda, Mexico: ediciones Clema M. De Ponce, 1953.
40 Witten, 6.
To clarify the four stages of Ponce’s musical career, I have selected seven piano works for the next four chapters that examine and illustrate various styles of composition portrayed through analysis. These pieces are *Etude de Moscheles, Preludio y Fuga sobre un tema de Handel, Romanza de Amor, Dos Estudios, Mazurka Espagnole, Estrellita Metamorfosis de Concierto, and Cuatro Danzas Mexicanas.*

During his early years as a young composer, Ponce was a dynamic young pianist who yearned to further his musical education by traveling abroad to Europe. He was interested in Western European forms and how to utilize them. Thus, young Ponce journeyed to Italy to study composition with Italian teachers Enrico Bossi and Cesare Dall’Olio, and piano with Martin Krause in Germany.

One of the interests that Ponce had during his exploration of Western musical forms was the structure of the etude. He transcribed other European pieces into etudes, or studies, with romantic stylistic tendencies. An example of such a study is *Etude de Moscheles* (Op. 70 no. 1) composed in 1906; this piece demonstrates romantic characteristics within its virtuosity.

The *Etude de Moscheles* is a transcription of Etude Op. 70 no. 1 in C major from the *Perfecting Etudes* by Czech composer Ignaz Moscheles (1794-1870). The way Ponce transcribed this piece is appealing because he assigned to the left hand the original part from Etude Op. 70 no. 1 and presented new material of his own for the right hand. (See Example 1 and 2).
Example 1: Moscheles’ Etude Op. 70 no. 1 in C Major, mm. 1-2:

![Example 1: Moscheles’ Etude Op. 70 no. 1 in C Major, mm. 1-2](image)

Example 2: Ponce’s transcription of the Etude by Moscheles, mm.1-2:

![Example 2: Ponce’s transcription of the Etude by Moscheles, mm.1-2](image)

It is in the right hand’s melodic fragments of *Etude de Moscheles* that one hears the vertical interval of a sixth that appears throughout the piece. These melodic fragments contain a lyrical simplicity that complements and reinforces the perpetual motion of the original material. Example 3 displays the melodic figure E-D#-E-G for the right hand comprising the interval of a sixth with the alto, which descends through the range of an octave outlining the tonic, C major.
Example 3: Ponce’s *Etude de Moscheles*, melodic motive of Ponce’s transcription of Moscheles’ Etude, mm. 1-2:

Later in the piece Ponce, through inversion in the secondary area, transformed the melodic figure into a simple and lyrical melody that continues from measures 9 to 14 (see Example 4).

Example 4: Secondary thematic area with the four-note melodic theme inverted (Ponce’s transcription, mm. 9-14):
The rhythmic movement creates much intensity. With the melodic fragments and the melody constantly beginning with the second beat shifting between measures, the climactic point occurs at the end on the tonic, C, with the unison, and an increase of motion to the end with a fortissimo. (See Example 5)

Example 5: Ponce’s Etude de Moscheles, climactic point in the last two measures, mm. 45-46:

Summary

*Etude de Moscheles* is only one example of Ponce’s early works that demonstrate his use of European compositional techniques to create a virtuosic piece for the piano. Most of Ponce’s works before his trip to Italy were composed in a simple salon style, which was popular in early twentieth-century Mexican music.

*Etude de Moscheles* demonstrates Ponce’s interest in Western musical structures and form. Other early works that display the influences of his first European trip include piano pieces such as 3 preludios (1905) and 4 fugas (1906). During this European trip Ponce began to take a serious interest in incorporating Mexican folksong into his compositions within the confines of European structures and techniques. This will be explored in the next chapter through the presentation of the piano works Preludio y Fuga sobre un tema de Handel (1906) and Romanza de Amor (1915).
Chapter Four  
Second Stage (1907-1925): European Influences and Nationalistic Tendencies

After studying composition intensively in Italy, Ponce stayed in Europe to study piano in Germany under Martin Krause. Krause embraced Ponce as a pianist and encouraged him to expand his compositional facilities. Though often evincing strong romantic characteristics, Ponce’s piano works were formally composed in eighteenth-century conventional styles and forms: variation, sonata, rondo, suite, and fugue.

Prior to the early twentieth century, the main genre written for Mexican piano music was the salon style. Neo-classicism, in this case the use of the prelude and fugue, was a new concept for Mexican composers.

Neo-classicism as a style grew out of the free forms found in the late romantic style and marked a desire to return to structure. Ponce’s use of neo-classic elements is prominent in Preludio y Fuga sobre un tema de Handel (Prelude and Fugue on a theme by Handel), written in 1906. Here, Ponce uses the baroque style of the prelude and fugue but added neo-classic elements of extended tonalities and non-functional harmony.

In this composition the neo-classic aspect is displayed by Ponce’s use of fugue. He used the theme taken from the Allegro of Handel’s Fourth Suite in E minor. Examples 6 and 7 exhibit how the thematic material in measures 1-3 of the Allegro of Handel’s suite is similar, with some variation, to the thematic material of Ponce’s fugue.
Example 6: *Allegro* from Handel’s Suite in E minor, mm. 1-5:

Example 7: Ponce’s *Fugue on a Theme by Handel*, mm. 1-3:

An interesting aspect about Ponce’s fugue is its similarity to the *Allegro* of Handel’s suite in its subject occurrences. In Examples 7, the subject is stated first in measure 1, and then, in Example 8, in measure 4. Similarly, illustrated in the *Allegro* of Handel’s suite, the subject is stated first in measure 1 and then the entrance of the second voice with the thematic material occurs in measure 4 as well (see Example 6).
Example 8: Ponce’s *Fugue on a Theme by Handel*, mm. 4-9:

Stylistically, Ponce’s fugue as a whole approaches its treatment of the subject in a manner similar to a fugue by Mendelssohn, which is as follows: first, in Example 9, the subject with the increase of sonorities with low bass drone (measure 10); second, in Example 10, the statement of the subject using *stretto* (measures 48-49) in the climactic point; third, a crescendo to a final statement of the subject in the *piu lento finale* after much arpeggiated activity with hand crossings (measure 51) seen in Example 11; and last, organ sonorities in the *piu lento finale* (measures 57-62) as the theme is emphasized once more with chords by the right hand and octaves in the lower part of the keyboard in Example 12.
Example 9: Ponce’s *Fugue on a Theme by Handel*, mm. 10-12:

Example 10: Ponce’s *Fugue on a Theme by Handel*, mm. 48-51:

(stretto begins)

Example 11: Ponce’s *Fugue on a theme by Handel*, hand crossings, m. 51:
Example 12: Ponce’s *Fugue on a theme by Handel*, Organ sonorities, mm. 57-62:

Ponce’s use of romantic expression within the conventions of eighteenth-century styles and forms is apparent. In the prelude the thematic material is taken from the subject of the fugue (See Examples 7 and 13). An augmentation of the theme occurs over the constant motion of chordal sonorities. In Examples 7 and 13 the actual augmentation of the fugal subject is illustrated in the combined soprano and alto parts of the prelude.
In addition, Ponce specified in the score to use the sostenuto pedal, which creates organ sonorities in the stepwise motion each time the thematic material appears, as illustrated in Examples 14 and 17: The statement of the theme in measure 3 is in D minor; the theme in measure 11 hints at A major; the theme in measure 21 moves towards F major; the theme in measure 26 moves toward A minor. These tonicizations illustrate the neo-classic characteristic of extended tonality.

Example 14: Ponce’s *Prelude on a Theme by Handel*, mm.1-4, in D minor:
Example 15: Ponce’s Prelude on a Theme by Handel, mm. 11-13, hinting A major:

Example 16: Ponce’s Prelude on a Theme by Handel, mm. 17-25, moving towards F Major:

Example 17: Ponce’s Prelude on a Theme by Handel, mm. 25-29, moving toward A minor:
Ponce was influenced by national folklore and included traits of romanticism and sentimentality in his works. “Influenced by the older generation of Mexican composers such as Ricardo Castro (1864-1907) and Felipe Villanueva (1862-1893), Ponce wrote salon pieces that often have a Latin mood using a habanera rhythm or alternating 3/4 to 2/4 meter.”

Ponce’s expertise in the salon style writing is exemplified in *Romanza de Amor* (Romance of Love), written in 1912 for his wife Clema. This piece depicts Ponce’s ability to create within a salon style a beautiful tune to stand on its own as a piano solo piece for the stage.

*Romanza de Amor* is a “love song without words” for piano in ABA’ form. In Example 18, the A section is marked with the first period occurring from measure 1 to the downbeat of measure 9, and the second period occurs from measure 9 to the downbeat of measure 16. Romantic characteristics such as the metric shifts in the alto voice occur throughout the piece (Example 18). Despite the metric shift of one melodic voice, the melodic phrase structure as a whole is in the traditional style with a double period in the A section (see Example 19, measures 1-16).

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41 Witten, 6
Example 18: *Romanza de Amor*, A section, mm.1-16, 1\(^{st}\) period, mm. 1-9; 2\(^{nd}\) period, mm.10-16; Alto voice metric shifts:

Example 19: *Romanza de Amor*, illustration of melodic phrase structure, mm. 1-16:

This piece evokes “Mexican” characteristics through the rhythm. Rhythms of Mexican dances such as the *bolero*, *son*, and *mariachi* tend to emphasize the second (weak) beat and are most commonly combined with a melody. In this case, *Romanza de*
Amor is not merely unified by the repetition of the main melodic theme but also by the constant rhythm for the left hand with a weak beat emphasis, as shown in Examples 20 and 21. Ponce used the sway of the syncopated rhythm for the left hand, paired with the main melodic theme, to conjure a romantic atmosphere with a Latin flavor.

Example 20: Romanza de Amor, mm. 1-9:

Example 21: Romanza de Amor, Section A, mm. 1-4 and Section B, mm. 21-32, Alto voice similarities; “Mexican” characteristics portrayed by L.H. rhythms:
Despite the rhythmic shift of the melodic line in the alto voice, this constant rhythm unifies this piece even through the B section, which evolved from the alto line of the A section, as shown in Example 21.

Summary

The Preludio y fuga sobre un tema de Handel and Romanza Amor, which are only two out of the forty-four works he created during this compositional period, demonstrate a range of Ponce’s compositional skill. These pieces are written in two different styles of composition, the neo-classical and the salon. Both works share Ponce’s musical thumbprint in his mixture of Mexican lyricism with Western music form.

In this stage Ponce demonstrated increased comfort writing in European structured music with a Mexican theme to be performed on the concert stage: he produced several large scale works such as Piano Trio “Romantico,” written in 1910, and Piano Concerto, completed in 1912. Scherzino mexicano (1909), two Rapsodias mexicanas (1911, 1914), and the Balada mexicana (1915) represent piano showpieces that portrayed Mexican traits through rhythms.

In addition, from 1919 to 1925 he composed works titled Scherzino maya, Preludio mexicana, and Rapsodia mexicana No. 3, all piano works that depict Mexican folklore in a serious manner. Jarabe was composed in 1925 in a dance setting familiar to Mexicans and challenges the pianist’s ability by the rapid successions of sixths, similar to Chopin’s etude in sixths.
Chapter Five  
Third Stage (1926-1932): Maturation of Ponce’s Contemporary Style

Ponce, in his mid-forties, marked his second trip to Europe by a search for a more contemporary approach and language for his compositions. Moving to Paris in 1925, Ponce began compositional studies with Paul Dukas and immediately immersed himself in the French style surrounding himself with colleagues from Romania, Switzerland, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Germany. “The intense circle of talent in Paris during those years reads like a who’s-who of musicians: Milhaud, Varese, Alfred Cortot, Joaquin Rodrigo, and, most importantly for Ponce, Andres Segovia.”

During this stage, Ponce began to use in his compositions musical traits of impressionism. These characteristics include the exploration of dissonant harmony, the use of non-diatonic scales, and non-functional harmony and chords. *Dos Estudios (Two Studies)*, composed during this Parisian period but published in 1942, represent Ponce’s integration of impressionism and influence of this “intense circle of talent in Paris.” It is important to mention that *Dos Estudios* should be played as a set and is considered a technically demanding work.

The first etude at the large-scale level uses the whole-tone scale in the melody accompanied by non-functional 6/4 chords. By the fifth measure, A as the tonal center is clarified when it appears in the bass in measure 5 preceded by its dominant (see Example 22).

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42 Witten, 7.
Example 22: Ponce’s Dos Estudios no.1, mm. 1-6: illustration of the whole-tone movement in the melody

Overall in this etude, Ponce plays with the consonant-dissonant relationship by use of a perfect 4th and major 6th that begins and continues throughout the piece in different layers through rhythm and melody. We see this in the climactic moment of the piece, the B section (measures 14ff) in Example 23, when beginning in measure 17 D-sharp (E-flat) and C-sharp (D-flat) play an important role by creating a large-scale consonant-dissonant relationship with the tonal center of the piece, A (E-flat is dissonant with A and C-sharp is consonant with A). This use of consonant-dissonant relationship highlights an element of impressionism.
Example 23: Ponce’s Dos Estudios no.1, mm. 13-26:

m. 17, R.H. E-flat=D-sharp
m. 17, L.H. D-flat=C-sharp
The key of this etude is complete with the root position, A-minor chord ending (measure 37), and the D-sharp and C-sharp in the penultimate measure remind the listener of the consonant-dissonant relationship as also shown in Example 24.

Example 24: Ponce’s *Dos Estudios* no.1, mm. 33-37:

![Example 24](image)

The second etude of *Dos Estudios* is virtuosic and filled with rich timbres of color loosely based on the octatonic scale. The octatonic scale is an eight-note scale that utilizes the alternation of a whole step and half step as it ascends. (see Example 25)

Example 25: An Octatonic scale

![Example 25](image)

In this study, we see that in the right hand, the first interval is a major second, which is a whole step and the motion to the second interval, the major third, is by half step (See Example 26, mm. 1-7). Similarly, Ponce utilizes traits of the octatonic scale, a half and whole step motion, for the contrasting lyrical melodic phrases as seen in measures 8-11 (see Example 26).
Example 26: Ponce’s *Dos Estudios* no.2, mm. 1-12
mm. 8-11 R.H. contrasting lyrical melody
Ponce’s use of material without a diatonic basis exemplifies impressionist characteristics: the pattern of seconds and thirds is constant throughout this study. In Example 27, there is a fusion of these two intervals illustrated by clusters beginning measure 46 now for both the left and right hands that crescendos into a resounding conclusion.

*Example 27: Ponce’s Dos Estudios no.2, mm. 43-51:*

During his stay in Paris, Ponce composed many vital works for the guitar, with the encouragement and influence of Andres Segovia. According to Segovia, Ponce was responsible for reinstating the guitar as a concerto instrument and reviving the repertoire for the guitar.  

43 “Ponce is the greatest composer for the guitar, melodically,

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harmonically, and musically,” wrote Segovia. *Mazurka Espagnole* (Spanish Mazurka), written around 1928, exhibits Ponce’s skill as a guitar composer.

*Mazurka Espagnole* is composed in ABA form. This composition is unusual in that it is written in a way that enables one to read the score on the piano or the guitar in its original form. Texturally, the articulation and delivery of the chordal and melodic passages illustrate the sounds of a guitar on the piano.

The interesting aspect of this piece is not so much its harmonic structure, but how Ponce utilizes Spanish characteristics within Western structure. He cleverly combined the elements of a *mazurka*, a Polish dance, and the profound feelings of the *cante jondo*, an Andalusian word meaning a deep or grand song, that is defined as the vocal line of what one hears in *flamenco*. Example 28 illustrates the basic rhythmic element of the *mazurka* form, which shifts the accents to the weak beat of a triple bar, most often the second.

Example 28: Illustration of the basic rhythmic elements of Ponce’s *Mazurka Espagnole*:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Ibid.}
\end{align*}
\]
This rhythmic figure appears throughout the piece, especially in the climactic point as shown in Example 29.

Example 29: Ponce’s Mazurka Espagnole, mm. 79-93: mm. 84-89 illustrate some variation of the rhythmic figure of the mazurka:

The rhythmical qualities are accompanied in a free and lively manner by the vocal timbre of the melodic line in the right hand depicting the “deep song” that the *cante jondo* is known for. Take note of this in Example 30, where the gesture of the guitar is portrayed on the piano by the rolling chords by the left hand. Note that no piano rolls are
indicated in the score: however, after discussion with the Ponce family on performance practice, the performer is advised to play them as such.\textsuperscript{45}

Example 30: Ponce’s Mazurka Espagnole, mm. 1-16, mm. 6ff, R.H. exhibiting sounds illustrating the cante jondo voice:

Summary

“For the future I have no other projects than to keep writing music, trying to follow modern orientations.”\textsuperscript{46} These were Ponce’s words in a published interview in the 1920s before he made the decision to move to Paris.

The determination to move to Paris was “Ponce’s urge to modernize his musical language.”\textsuperscript{47} During his time in Paris, Ponce, in addition to Dos Estudios and Mazurka

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{45} Edgar Herrera-Arizmendi. interview by Michelle Yip, 31 November 2003.
\textsuperscript{46} Frandique, “Encuestas de ‘Zig-zag’. Confesiones de artistas,” Zig-Zag (1920), (quoted in Miranda, Manuel M. Ponce), 53.
\end{flushright}
Espagnole, composed piano works such as Preludios encadenados (1927), Cuatro piezas (1929), and Sonatina (1932) that exemplify his assimilation of modern music language. Although Ponce had the smallest compositional output during this period, these works represent the development of his contemporary musical voice. Yolanda Moreno Rivas mentions that Ponce’s new musical style is “harmonically colorful” and “deliberately dissonant.” However, it is in his last compositional stage that Ponce succeeded in personalizing his musical language and becoming an expert in twentieth-century techniques.


Chapter Six  
Fourth Stage (1932-1948): Maturity and Mexican Folklore

Although Ponce had already arranged Mexican popular melodies and folk tunes prior to his first trip to Europe from 1904 to 1906, it was in his fourth stage (1932-1948) that he most deeply integrated these melodies and tunes into his concert works and deepened his knowledge of Mexican folklore. Most of the piano works from this stage contain folk themes and works with a Mexican flavor. Much of this is a result of Ponce’s return to Mexico in 1932 and teaching folklore at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, and harmony and aesthetics at the National Conservatory of Mexico. In this period Ponce took a previously written composition named *Estrellita* (Little Star) for voice and piano (see Chapter Two for the lyrics) and in 1943 transformed it into a solo piano work called *Estrellita, Metamorfosis de Concierto* (Little Star- Concert Metamorphosis).

The form of *Estrellita* is in ABA'. Examples 31 and 32 present the melody of the original song and compare it to the first phrase of the melody in the solo piano work.

Example 31: Ponce’s *Estrellita*, original song, mm. 1-6:
Example 32: Ponce’s *Estrellita, Metamorfosis de Concierto*, mm. 1-9:

![Musical notation](image1)

Within *Estrellita, Metamorfosis de Concierto*, Ponce used the technique of thematic transformation of the main melodic phrase, depicting the melodic voice moving within non-functional seventh chords. Examples 33 and 34 display a variety of ways that Ponce presented the main melody. First, in Example 33, chords display the main melody.

Example 33: Ponce’s *Estrellita, Metamorfosis de Concierto*, mm. 1-4:

![Musical notation](image2)
Then, in Example 34, the main theme is illustrated with arpeggiated accompaniment of seventh chords from the first part.

Example 34: Ponce’s *Estrellita, Metamorfosis de Concierto*, mm. 16-25:

Lastly, in Example 35, there is a Lisztian quality in the ending of the piece with a trill resolving to the final statement: a fragment of the main melody accompanied by sixty-fourth-note septuplets followed by thirty-second-note quadruplets.
Example 35: Ponce’s *Estrellita, Metamorfosis de Concierto*, mm. 25-29:

After his experience and trip to Paris, Ponce used his new musical knowledge to further solidify his own compositional voice while retaining a Mexican spirit. Thus, Ponce created the beginnings of a profound contemporary national art in Mexican music. His nationalistic music began to take a form of its own, containing the following characteristics: harmonization of popular songs and folk tunes; integration of these folk tunes into his music as a whole; and creation of his own musical language within the native rhythms and melodies. *Cuatro Danzas Mexicanas (Four Mexican Dances)* composed in 1941, contain many examples of these characteristics.

Each of the dances of the *Cuatro Danzas Mexicanas* exhibits the musical genre called the Mexican Dance that originated from the merging of Cuban dance rhythms with melodies inspired by Mexican composers. Ponce’s inspiration for this piece probably derived from the Cuban dance rhythms he came across during his stay in Cuba from 1915 to 1917.

The form of each dance follows a two-section structure, AB. In all four dances, section A displays dance-like rhythms, and in section B, exotic melodies are set in a lyrical mood usually combining duplets and triplets to create a complex rhythmic texture.
In each of these dances, Ponce established his own musical dialect by setting the native rhythms and melodies with a wide variety of harmonic styles and ideas. A chromatic motion in fourths that characteristically appears throughout the A section in the first dance (Example 36).

Example 36: Ponce’s *Cuatros Danzas Mexicanas* No. 1

**A Section, mm. 1-7:**

Chromatic motions in fourths

**B Section, mm. 23-25:**

In the second dance there are hints of the pentatonic scale in the A section (Example 37) and the contrasting lyrical melody that is contained within the triplets in the B section.
Example 37: Ponce’s *Cuatros Danzas Mexicanas* No. 2

A Section, mm. 1-6:

![Example 37: A Section, mm. 1-6](image)

B Section, mm. 19-20:

![Example 37: B Section, mm. 19-20](image)

In the third dance the contrasting element from the other dances is the melody for the left hand within the dance-like characteristics of the A section (Example 38).

Example 38: Ponce’s *Cuatros Danzas Mexicanas* No. 3

A Section, mm. 1-4:

![Example 38: A Section, mm. 1-4](image)
B Section, mm. 17-18:

In the last dance Ponce used the style of a modern *toccata* and keeps the Mexican dance quality throughout the A section. The B section is contrasted from A in its triplet melody by the right hand against the duple rhythm by the left (Example 39).

Example 39: Ponce’s *Cuatro Danzas Mexicanos* No. 4

A Section, mm. 1-3:

B Section, mm. 19-20:
Summary

Although Ponce was always extremely aware of Mexican folklore in the development of classical music in Mexico, it was not until this period from 1932 until his death in 1948 that he was able to use successfully these themes and songs in a modern musical language. *Estrellita, Metamorfosis de Concierto* exemplifies Ponce’s ability to use thematic transformation by, for example, taking traditional harmony and in its place using non-functional harmony. The *Cuatros Danzas Mexicanas* shows Ponce’s use of simple traditional two-part form and incorporation of modern elements such as non-diatonic scales (pentatonic, whole tone) and dissonances (chromatic motions of fourths). Other pieces that Ponce also composed in a modern spirit during this period include *Dos danzas mexicana y cubana, Dos danzas sobre temas de J. Gilbert, horas augustas, Rapsodia cubana*, and *Serenata arcaica* utilizing Mexican folklore successfully. Therefore, studying not only the late works mentioned in this chapter but others Ponce wrote within this period, one can see that he was able to sincerely convey his musical voice using modern musical language.
Conclusion

While the seven works represent Ponce’s eclectic piano style, they are only a few examples out of no fewer than 150 piano pieces that he composed. These piano works have been compiled into seven volumes that have been performed and recorded by the well-known Mexican pianist, Hector Rojas (b.1953).⁴⁹

The lyricism and simplicity of his musical approach make Ponce’s piano compositions different from other Mexican composers of his time. He created an expressive quality that was consistently evident despite the different genres and styles of pieces; the B section of *Estudios Moscheles*, the salon style of *Romanza de Amor*, the B sections of each dance in *Cuatros Danzas Mexicanas*, and the variations of the *Estrellita Metamorfosis de Concierto*.

Similar to Bartok and Grieg, Ponce understood the necessity to preserve and recover the songs of his heritage. As Mexico’s first nationalistic composer, Ponce incorporated a contemporary style with Lisztian virtuosity while still retaining expressiveness and directness. That he was able to incorporate “Mexican flavor” within the conventions of Western music is a testament of Ponce’s ingenuity as an artist and musician.⁵⁰

Despite the chaotic years of pre-Revolutionary Mexico and the Revolution of 1910, Ponce, along with composers Carlos Chavez and Silvestre Revueltas, played a vital role in putting Mexico on the musical map of the world. He brought innovative ways of thinking about music to the Mexican musical community by introducing fresh

⁵⁰ Rivas, 5.
compositional styles (such as Impressionism) to Mexico, and by conveying to the world original approaches to integrating folk sources with modern musical techniques. Thus, Ponce created a body of music well worth repeated listening for performers and audiences alike.
APPENDIX

List of Solo Piano Works

**Stage One (1891-1906)**
1891 Marcha del sarampion
1900 Malgre tout
1901 Gavota
1903 Bersagliera; 11 minaturas
1905 3 preludios; Arrulladora mexicana, II
1906 Estudio Moscheles; 4 fugas; Nocturno

**Stage Two (1907-1925)**
1909 Arrulladora mexicana; Primer amor; Scherzino mexicano
1910 13 romanticos
1911 Rapsodia mexicana, I
1912 Album de amor; Romanza de Amor; 2 Nocturnos; Leyenda; Preludio y fuga sobre un tema de Bach; Scherzino (Homenaje a Debussy); Tema variado mexicano; A la memoria de un artista
1913 En una desolacion; Sonata No. I
1914 Rapsodia cubana I; Rapsodia cubana II; Rapsodia cubana III; Rapsodia mexicana II
1915 Balada mexicana; Barcarola mexicana (Xochimilco); Romanza; Serenata mexicana
1916 Guateque; Morire habemus; Preludio cubano; Preludio y fuga sobre un tema de Handel (composed in 1905, published in 1916); Sonata no. 2; Suite cubana
1917 Hojas de album
1918 Elegia de la ausencia
1919 Canon; Glosario intimo; Momento doloroso; Preludio mexicano; Rapsodia mexiana III (yucateca); Scherzaino maya; La vida sonrie; Minueto
1920 Gavota y mussette
1921 Evocaciones; Hacia la cima
1925 Jarabe

**Stage Three (1925-1932)**
1927 Preludios encadenados
1928 Mazurka Espagnole
1929 Cuatros Piezas
1932 Sonatina

**Stage Four (1932-1948)**
1934 Preludio romantico
1937 Danza de la pascola
1939 Idilio mexicano por dos pianos; 20 piezas faciles
1941 Cuatros danzas mexicanas
1943  *Estrellita (Metamorfosis de concierto); 20 mazurkas; Alma en primavera; Apasionadamente; Bocetos nocturnes; Cadenza for J.C. Bach; Sinfonia conciertante; Cancion del martirio; 5 hojas de Album; 2 Cadenzas for Beethoven Piano Concerto No. 4; Dos danzas mexicana y cubana; Dos danzas sobre temas de J. Gilbert; horas augustas; Intermezzos nos. 1 and 2; Juventud; Nocturno II; Preludio tragic; Preludio y fuga por la mano izquierdo; Rapsodia cubana; Serenata arcaica

**RECORDINGS of solo piano works by Manuel M. Ponce**


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*Piano Music of Manuel M. Ponce.* David Witten. Marco Polo 8.223609.


Preludio y fuga para la mano izquierda sola; Preludio y fuga sobre un tema de Handel.  *Flute and Piano Music of Latin America.* David Witten. Musical Heritage Society MHS-512502H.

*Quatro danzas mexicanas.*  *Compositores latino-americanos.* Beatriz Balzi. Serie Musica Nova da Amdrica Latina (Brazil) TACAPE-T014.

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