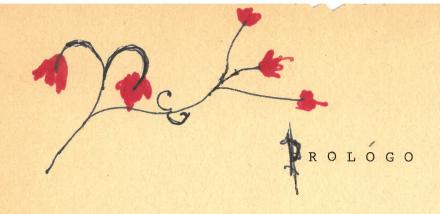
EL SON TOP IE JANK FEDERALL MIMPO



The material for this term paper, "El Sonido Lejáno de Federico Mompou", has, with the exception of two brief references, been translated from Spanish, French and Catalan sources. And although the information has been re-written in my own words I have chosen to footnote credit where credit is due.

The metaphysical thoughts have been given to me by my Higher Creative Intelligence and I have allowed them "to be," even though I realize they may not be completely understood at this time.

Gracias to Profesor Jean Paul Sevilla of the University of Ottawa who encouraged me in 1975 to go to Spain and the idea for this term paper.

Gracias to Profesor Steven Gellman also of the University of Ottawa for his support and assistance in matters beyond my comprehension.

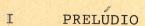
Muchas gracias to Profesor Douglas Voice of the University of Ottawa for time and patience and guidance given so unstintingly in the interpretation and discussion of the music for this paper.

And finally to my Higher Creative Intelligence the acknowledgement and thanks that without Divine Guidance anything I do would not be possible. It is my sincere hope that the information contained within these pages will be for the higher good of all concerned.

Dated this 3rd Day of March, 1993

Donksona Solis

Paper 9370 Exam 7570 = A (8470)



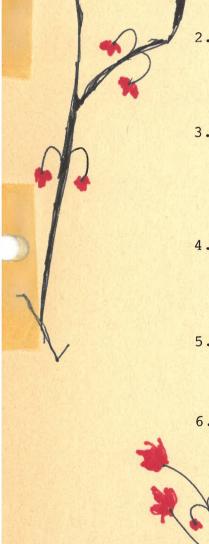
A. Introduction

- 1. The Mystical Sound of Federico Mompou
- 2. Las Doce Canciones y Danzas de Federico Mompou

Elements and Influences from the Far Distant Past on the Mystical Sound of Federico Mompou

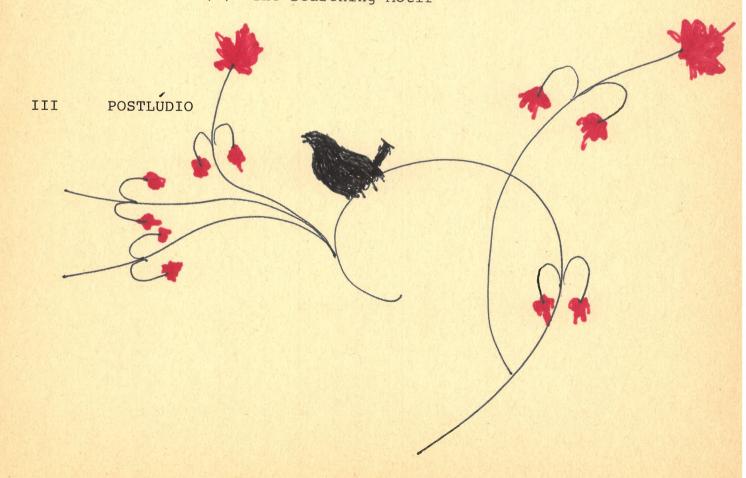
- 1. The Remote Past
 - (a) Ancient Andalucia
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 - (e) Danza #1
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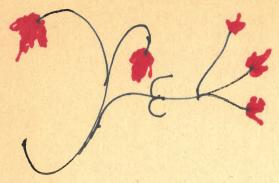


II PRIMITIVISM AND RITUALISM

- A. Los Cantos Mágicos
 - 1. To Numb the Pain of the Suffering
 - (a) Exorcism
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 - (a) The Phenomena of Mompou's Sound
 - (b) The Searching Motif



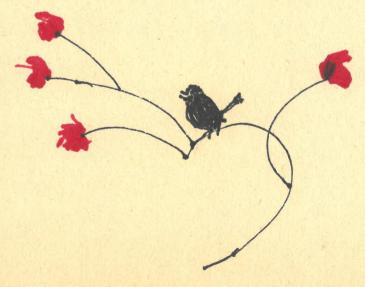




The essence of the music of Federico Mompou is its sound. Through its sound the music is mysteriously transported to the far distant Past where nostalgia and longing wash gently over it and leave the Timelessness of their Absent Presence.

Federico Mompou personally admitted that he could not always explain the phenomena of his sound. It was as if the music fell from Heaven and found its way to his fingers which already seemed to know how to play it. To enhance the timeless, mystical quality of his sound, Mompou drew upon certain elements and influences from his own past and the remote past. These distant fragrances enrich his music and make it captivating, enchanting and above all else, charming.

In order that the timelessness and mysticism of the sound of Federico Mompou may perhaps be a little more clearly and easily understood, two works by the composer have been selected for the purposes of giving examples at the piano and discussion of certain pieces. These are the cycle of the Twelve Canciones y Danzas and Los Cantos Mágicos.

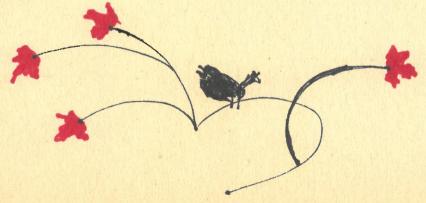


The Twelve Canciones y Danzas belonged to what Federico Mompou called his Descriptive Period. Written over a span of 40 years (1921 - 1961), the cycle pays hommage to his beautiful, native Cataluna. Aromas from the various regions permeate each song and dance evoking memories of the Timeless Past. Each echoes of nostalgia and longing for that Past.

One of the most outstanding features of the cycle of the Canciones y Danzas is the remarkable way in which they are linked together. A song is followed by a dance which matches it. So perfect is the pairing of the song with the dance, that it is almost a mystery the way in which Mompou seemed to know how to do this. There is no doubt that the dances upon closer analysis, do contain elements that permit their association with the songs. A further important feature of the mystical pairing is the fact that all of the songs can be danced and all of the dances can be sung. The overall number of 12 chosen for the original cycle had a special significance for Mompou in that he has himself noted that the number of Danzas Espanolas composed by a fellow countryman, Enrique Granádos was 12 and the tour de force suite Iberia by Isaac Albéniz consists of 12 works.

The songs by themselves are serenades of contemplation.

A peaceful presence pervades them and hovers around them as their modal inflections reflect the serene regions of Languedoc and Rosellon.



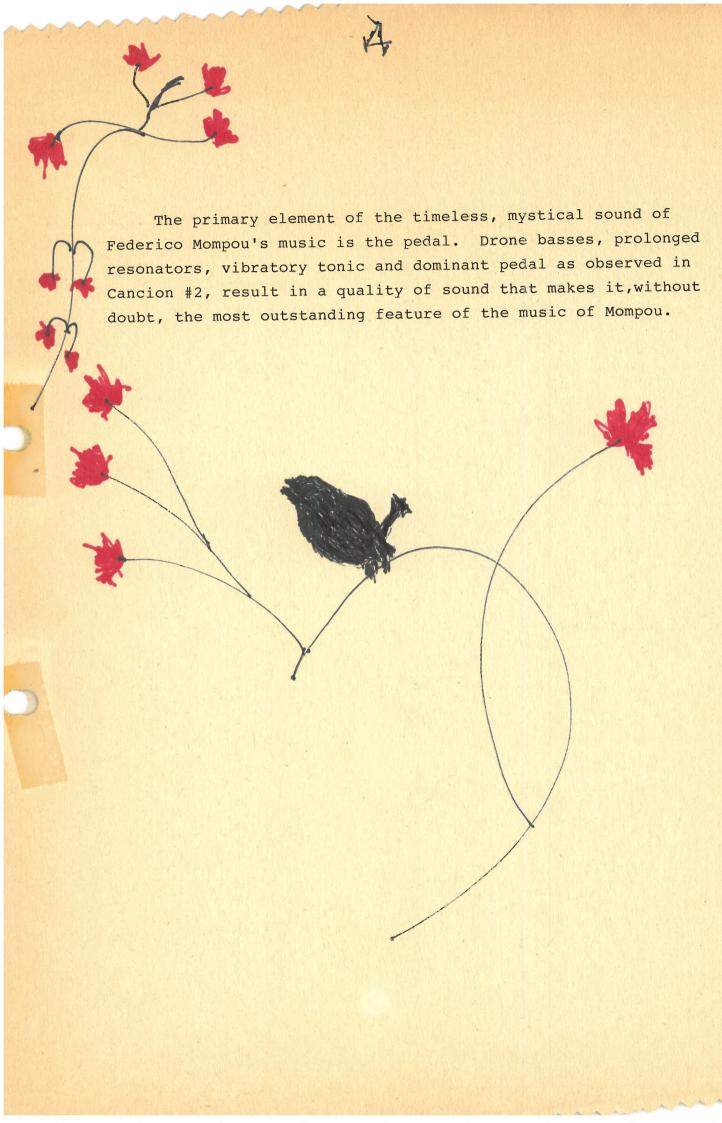
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The dances are persistent and vigorous. From rustic simplicity to dignity and elegance, the dances of Cataluna are captured exceedingly well by Mompou through his choice of rhythm and meter.

The style of the earlier Canciones y Danzas did not change in the later ones. His harmonic colour remained very personal. Modulation was employed with no restrictions. The pause and the delicate rubatos were called upon to designate a shade of preoccupation while reminiscing upon the timelessness of the far distant past.

Chromaticism, when it does appear as one of Mompou's elements to evoke the past, is discreet. It seems to float from one semitone to the next and remembers the far distant past with sadness and resignation.

The interval of the 10th abounds in the Canciones and Danzas and Los Cantos Mágicos. Mompou used it freely, primarily because the dimensions of his own hands easily encompassed the distance. Other chords which he particularly favoured were those of the 6th and the 9th. These intervals in addition to chords of the added 6th all richly contributed to his timeless, mystical sound and established his own personal harmonic style which included the Mompou chord.

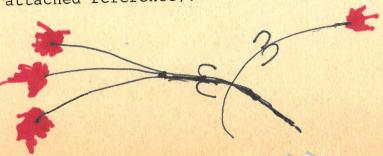


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Mompou became interested in the Ancient Music of
Andalucia or cante jondo, as it is also known, through the
music of Manuel de Falla. In order to evoke the memory of
ancient Andalucia through sound, Mompou turns to the element
of chromaticism. Chromaticism is used to recall the anguish,
sadness and tragedy of Andalucia. Advancing or retreating
by semitone, its undulating line depicts the profound expression of suffering and death associated with cante jondo.
Bars 3-7 of Danza #1 are an excellent example of chromaticism which seems to float and follow the undulating melody
of cante jondo. (See attached reference).

A rise in the opening melodic line at Bar 3 using one of Mompou's favourite intervals, a minor 6th, alludes to anguish, another important element of cante jondo. The allusion to anguish is once again heard in Bar 20 where the chord is preceded by a note to create the interval of a 9th.

To connect the danza to yet another element of cante jondo, that of resignation, the Andalucian motif is heard. The Andalucian motif is a descending motif made up of the 2nd, 1st, 7th and 6th degrees of the recognized European scale. (See example on the attached reference). Thought to have originated with the ancient Arabic civilization, the motif alludes to that time far in the distant past when Andalucia was dominated and subjugated by forces and cultures not of her own choosing. (See the circles notes from Bars 12-16 on the attached reference).



The prominence of the interval of the 5th throughout Danza #1 as a part of the harmony links it to the element of the guitar, a further feature of ancient Andalucian music. The main notes from the tonic and dominant harmonies are persistently presented in the bass line simultaneously with an appoggiatura decoration (see bars 1 and 2 of reference), broken form (see bars 6-8) or in a reversed position (see bars 28-29). In bars 20-26, the guitar element is employed as a resonator when held with the pedal.

It is entirely possible that Mompou only intended the sound of these main notes from the tonic and dominant harmonies to be a drone bass. However, there is also the personal supposition that the intervallic figure of the 5th, when it is played somewhat more slowly and is preceded by the appoggiatura, could allude to an ancient Arabic rhythm known as the Makhuri. (See reference for comparisons). The dance and the rhythm are both to be performed slowly and in a most sensuous and lascivious manner.

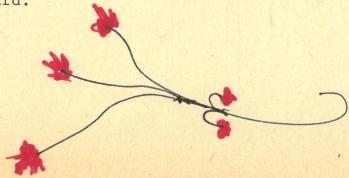


The feudal characteristic of the sound of Mompou is largely due to the inclusion of folklore. The Barcelona Master adored Catalonian folklore and made use of it to re-invent melodies but never at any time, did he pretend to be a folklorist. The feudal touch brought a sense of rustic simplicity and graciousness to those works in which it was incorporated and of course, is a particular hallmark of all twelve of the Canciones y Danzas.

One of the most outstanding examples of feudal folklore is the Danza #2. Based on an original dance from one of the mountain pueblos called Gurp de la Conca, it is classified as a true feudal dance and is one of the first to be recognized as true Catalan folklore.

The very character of this short danza evokes nostalgia and memories of feudal times. Known as the Galop de Cortésia, it is a rural dance of joy and with no complications. Even the steps of the dance are very simple and follow the old feudal dance pattern of 3 steps forward and 3 steps back. (Steps to be demonstrated). In spite of the awkward clothing the participants were required to wear at the time, the rhythm of the dance is abandoned and jovial. All who were able, entered into its spirit.

Mompou's danza #2 follows the original dance. The form of the dance consists of three short periods with each period ending in a ritard.

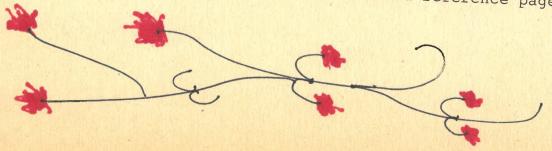


The story of the dance itself concerns a young lady of the village who is about to be married off to an old man. Twelve of the village's young men decide to rescue her from her fate. At night, they help her down a ladder that they have placed under her bedroom window onto a white horse. They have also thoughtfully provided a disguise for her. Along the road they meet her father and her brothers and alas, for the maiden, her mother who recognizes her. Reminded sternly of her daughterly duty, she is returned home in order to fulfil her obligation.

The three sections of the form may be seen at Bars 1, 17 and 33 each with an anacrussis. The ritards occur appropriately in the preceding bars with the exception of Bar 1. (See reference).

The rustic simplicity of the feudal melody is perhaps most apparent in the small range and its repetition. (See reference). For added colour, a variation of the melody in the soprano line at Bars 3 and 4 is heard in the alto line at Bars 11 and 12. (See reference). A similar rhythmic pattern to that of the alto line at Bars 11 and 12 is also noted in the tenor line in intervals of the 6th apart. (See reference).

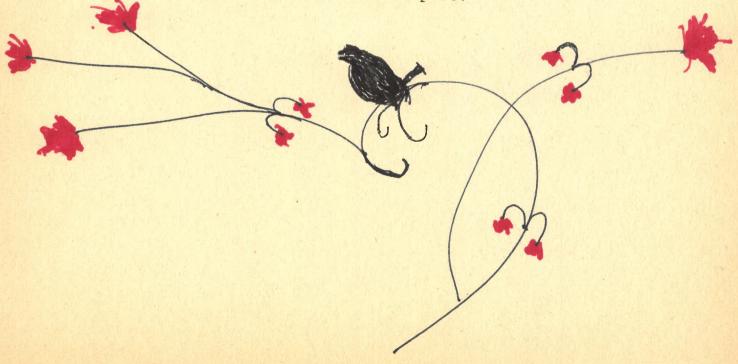
A further feudal aspect of this little danza is the flattened 7th as at Bar 2. Finally there is the feudal accompaniment in the form of the drone bass which appears on the tonic and dominant notes of the key of G major and in a vertical manner. (See applicable bars on the attached reference page).



Feudal folklore also dominates the short 4th Cancion. Filled with melancholy and sadness, it is based on a very ancient melody called El Marinero.

The story centers on a sailor who invites a beautiful lady to go on board his ship. She dresses herself in a silk gown and carries a candle down to his vessel. On board the ship, the sailor sings her sweet songs and she falls asleep. When she awakens they are very far from shore. She entreats him to return her to land but he refuses and tells her that he has been searching for her for 7 years and he does not intend to lose her. Sadly she tells him that she is one of three sisters and both her sisters have married very well but she must be the wife of a poor sailor. The song ends with the sailor telling her that he is the son of the King of England and not just a poor sailor.

Extensive use of the interval of the 4th give this beautiful cancion an archaic graciousness and reflects another feudal aspect where through sound, Mompou is able to evoke the timelessness of the far distant past.

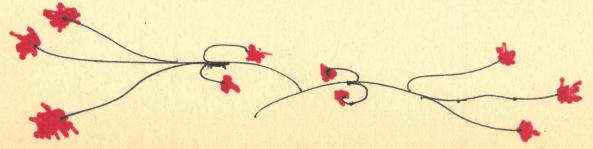


The Medieval Past is strongly evident in Cancion y
Danza #X. Both the song and the dance are based on Las
Cantigas de Santa Maria written by King Alfonso the Tenth
around the 12th century. The two cantigas on which the
#X Cancion y Danza are based are #100 and #179 respectively.

The cancion follows the Romanesque architecture of the Cantigas, that is a ternary kind of form whereby two small outer arches circumscribe a larger inner arch. See diagram below.

The original medieval melody from cantiga #100 was used for the cancion by Mompou and is severe in its contour. It is presented over a non-tonal foundation. Like the cantiga, the archaic atmosphere of the cancion is further enhanced by its very ancient aeolian modality on A.

Single-voiced lyricism from the time period known as monody appears in Bars 1 and 2 as does polyphony, many-voiced lyricism in Bars 1, 2 and 15. To further support the influences of the Medieval Past it can be observed that throughout the cancion, there are only the use of pure keys and no cadences.

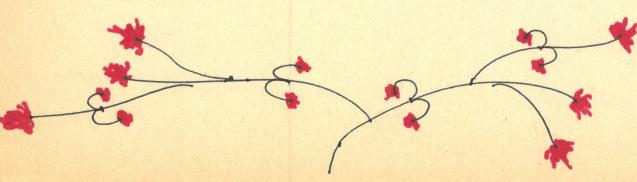


The danza is taken from cantiga #179. With its ternary rhythm, it contrasts perfectly to the binary scheme of the cancion, thus providing an excellent of how the rhythm or meter acted as a link in the scheme of pairing, which was referred to in the introduction of the cycle of the Twelve Canciones y Danzas.

Mompou chooses from the very clear structure of A-B-A, 8 bars to function as the ritornello, another element from the Medieval Past and the cantigas. The ritornello or subperiod first appears at Bars 9-12 (see reference). It is then repeated and varied at Bars 13-16 (see reference).

The musical structure of some of the cantigas also reveals a subperiod known as an estribillo. It is rather like a chorus or repetition of a certain group of words or a line or two used for emphasis of a thought.

The old medieval device of dialogue occurs in the danza and is used to avoid monotony as well as to enhance the medieval atmosphere. Dialogue takes place between two or more voices and should not be confused with a canon or accompaniment. Dialogue begins in the soprano voice at Bars 1 and 2 (see reference). It is picked up from the 3rd beat of Bar 1 by Bar 3 and continues into Bar 4 in the bass line. (See reference). Dialogue between 3 voices occurs at Bar 9. (See reference). At Bars 14 and 15, dialogue takes place between the soprano and tenor lines in a similar rhythm.

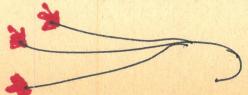


The term "la soledad sonora" is often applied to the music of Federico Mompou and most particularly, to its sound. The words are contained in one of the songs written by the great Spanish Mystic, San Juan de la Cruz who lived in the early part of the 16th century and the term literally refers to "pure sound."

Mompou became interested in la soledad sonora through mysticism. Mysticism, correctly defined, means contemplative prayer which generally follows a state of meditation. During the period of contemplative prayer when a Higher Communion is possible, temporal requests and desires of a very pure nature may be offered up to the Divine Being in whom each person has a belief.

Contemplation on the more pure things in life began at an early age for Federico Mompou. Just out back of his maternal grandparents home on the outskirts of Barcelona, was a lovely garden where he spent many happy hours playing by himself. Because he was not strong and rather timid (these qualities remained with him all his life), it was a natural impulse for him to turn inwardly and gradually come to reflect upon Higher Things.

As a result of his personal contemplations he became interested in the life and writings of San Juan de la Cruz. San Juan de la Cruz was born at Almodován in 1500 a.d. and died in 1569. In addition to the study of law at the University of Salamanca, he was known as the Apostle of Andaluciá and was a metaphysician among the mystics of the day. He believed in the soul uniting with God, being one with the Will of God and trusting totally in the Divine Will. Humility, self-knowledge and detachment were also part of his credo.



Uniting psychology with spiritual teaching, the Spanish Mystic found a unique way in which to help humankind. For this reason San Juan de la Cruz was also known as "The Mystical Doctor."

Contemplative prayer eventually led to the moment when Federico Mompou humbly petitioned the Higher Knowledge of God for purity of sound, hence the term "mystical sound" that has been given to the sound of his music.

Written in 1942, the idea for the 5th cancion was dictated to him during a dream. In the dream he saw a great wine cellar of medieval times. The wine cellar had arches and under the arches sat several enormous wooden medieval tables. 12

Marked lento liturgico and in the ancient Aoelian mode of C#, the single note theme is one of deep contemplation and meditation. It is short, severe and is without chromaticism. It does not deviate in any way from the thematic material. It is la soledad sonora, impregnated with a certain sadness. (See Bars 1-4 reference).

As the ecstacy of contemplative prayer heightens, so is the theme transferred at Bar 5 an octave higher and is heard in octaves. Dynamic indications have also been altered from the opening mf to f to express the deeper joy of the soul.

As the contemplative prayer ends, the theme is heard softly and in unison.

The inspiration for Danza #3 was the Sardana, a dance of Cataluna. Strictly and purely invented by Mompou, this Sardana is one of the most beautiful ever to be written for the piano.

The Sardana is a relic of the remote past when people literally danced for joy. Its origin can be traced back to the Pyrrhic dances of the ancient Greek civilization which had a strong influence in the Catalan region of Spain around the 4th century A.D. Pyrrhism was a cult that worshipped the Sun. The Sardana was a Hymn to the Sun and throughout history, it has become the essence of Cataluna. Music for the Sardana has traditionally been written in the mixolydian mode for the past 2,000 years.

The Sardana from (its inception,) is always danced with with gentlemen and ladies alternating in a circle. It begins with the holding of hands and a pattern of long and short steps to the right and then to the left. As the dance proceeds, the dancers raise their arms to breast level and place the thumb and third finger of each hand together. This movement is associated with the ancient ritualism of the dance and depicts a form of worship.

In 1923, an edict was issued banning the Sardana unless the flag of Cataluna was flying from a flagpole in the center of each circle where it was being danced.

There are two forms of the Sardana and they differ only in that the one from Ampurdanes begins to the left and the one from Selvata begins to the right. Both forms are still danced in Cataluna. One may join in the festivities in the Plaza directly in front of the big Cathedral in the heart of Barcelona most evenings or after mass on Sunday or go to the Parque de la Ciudadela or for authentic rustic flavour, it is suggested that rural village of Festa Major be visited. The musicians dress in old costumes and the instruments follow the original ones.

The dance is introduced by the flaviol which is a type of flute instrument but has an exceedingly bittersweet sound. 17 (See reference). Later on the rhythm is taken up by the tambourine which is lightly tapped for added colour unlike its role in some of the gypsy dances where its function is that of accompanying.

Mompou's Sardana opens joyously in 6/8 march tempo, the characteristic rhythm of the old Catalan dance. As occurs in the popular dance of the past, there is a change of time signature to 2/4. This signifies a paseo or short walk about until the next part of the dance is to begin. (See reference). However the same rhythmic idea is intended to be maintained. Peculiar throughout the second section is the motif which is continued.

A further true characteristic of the Sardana is the sudden roughness or coarseness of the thematic material followed by a more suave passage. ¹⁸ (See reference). All of these elements truly evoke memories of the far distant past when they are combined with the special sound of Mompou.

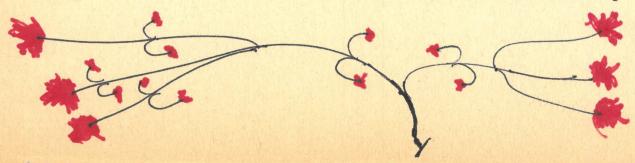
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The mysterious sonority in Federico Mompou's music was most influenced by bells. He knew their sounds intimately. As a child when he was in his grandparents garden, he would interrupt his play to listen to the bells. He recognized their grave pealing when they announced the Vespers of the Angelus at the close of the day. The happy chiming of the carillon foretold the coming of some special festival. The factory bells too, with their metallic sounds later served as a motive for one of his famous suites called "Suburbis". But the bell sounds he loved above all, were those which rang out from his grandfather's foundry, as anvil clanged against steel and sparks soared upward at the meeting of the two forces.

The sound of the bells is often described in his music. Rich and harmonious, resounding or crystalline, the presence of the bells brings a sense of Mompou's own past to his works. The far distant past is evoked through the mystic resonances of the bells, their profound basses and their insistent, penetrating, subtle and luminescent sonorities.

The melody of the second Cancion which is based on a very ancient song of Cataluna is accompanied by rhythmic pulsations that would indicate the monotonous tolling of bells. Nostalgia of the far distant past is emphasized by centering the tonality around G minor. (See reference).

The 5th Danza also exhibits bell-like qualities. At first transparent, brilliant and happy, the bells become more formal, ceremonious and archaic in their sonority. After a momentary



pause they regain their jubilance and clarity.

But perhaps it is in Danza #XII written in 1962 and the last in the cycle of the Twelve Canciones y Danzas that one hears unmistakably the great bells of his grandfather's foundry being forged out of the new steel as the anvil relentlessly strikes them again and again. Mompou's monothematic melody is accompanied by clean, constant swings of the anvil in the left hand rhythm.

Yet for all their prominent ringing qualities there is a profound sadness that underlines the sound of the great bells as the remorseless anvil descends upon them. Is it possible that Mompou was able to capture a mystical quality in the sound of the bells that would indicate that they too have an individual energy that feels and responds on its own level and that through the sound of the bells, we are able to glimpse a Truth of the Timelessness of the Far Distant Past.

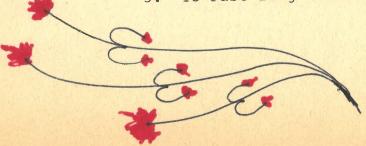


The first work to be published by Federico Mompou, Los Cantos Mágicos, is full of mystery, difficult to understand and more often than not, it totally escapes the comprehension of the outside world. Written between 1917-1919, the five brief fragments are invocations that embody primitive ritualism, aestheticism and mysticism. Their harmonic textures are diffused and swollen and their marked obstinancy is closely associated with exorcism.

The title of the work itself evokes the occult in that it refers to a memory of the far distant past when magic was in vogue. One almost imagines being present at some ritualistic ceremony where the participants are priestesses dressed in white flowing robes or where young virgins with garlands of flowers in their long hair that falls down their backs are dancing before an altar of sacrifice.

The five primitive motifs depict witchcraft, sorcery and exorcism but not in the negative sense. When one is made aware of the inscriptions for each of the invocations the work is seen from a different perspective. The invocations are as follows:

- 1. To numb the pain of those who suffer
- 2. To pierce the Soul
- 3. To Impure Love
- 4. To the Curatives and Healers
- 5. To Past Images Remembered 26



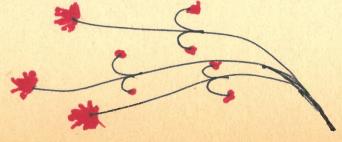
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Canto #1 opens with metallic chords over resonators which are prolonged for two lines. The assured grandiose chords immediately evoke thoughts of a primitve ritual in progress while the insistence of the repetitious resonators conjures up images of exorcism.

The lento is a sentimental theme²⁷ and is in marked contrast to the rhythm and vitality of the opening section. Perhaps the theme is an allusion to the suffering of mankind which he must necessarily endure. The brief shadowy allusion is further emphasized through the dynamics marked "piano." The invocation to "numb the pain" of those who suffer is repeated and fades away as the movement ends on an arpeggio of exactly the same notes with which it began. (See reference).

The occult is strongly reflected in the second Canto. It begins quietly and obscurely in the lower region of the piano like a humming sound of an incantation that often accompanies some aspect of primitive ritualism. As the theme rises, the Soul is pierced or bewitched with ecstacy. Deliberately, the pealing bells and grave resonators encircle the melody as one is encircled in a ritual ceremony. The deliberance gives way to a moment of nostalgic reflection and finally the theme is delicately extinguished.²⁹

Canto #3 has been described as a funeral cortege. 30 A short obsessive theme pervades the entire movement. Its profoundness conjures up a sense of utter desolation and sadness that the Soul experiences at the recognition of the Purity of Love of the Higher Realm and its own impure love as it strives toward the Perfect State of Being.

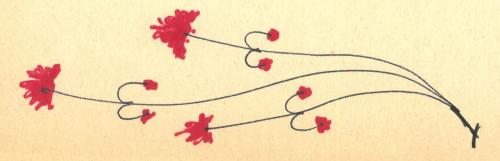


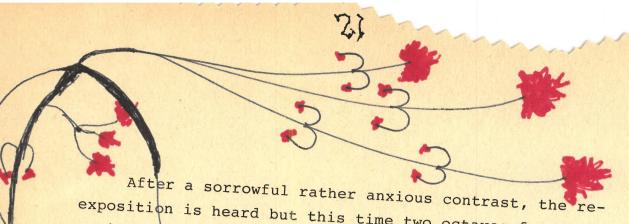
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The transposition of the theme to other registers is also an excellent example of Mompou's personal language, involving the technique of colour. The transposition breaks up the monotony and introduces contrast. The technique is not new. It was used by early English virginalists and the clavecinistas. The art of transposing the actual phrase or part of it was lost and then it was eventually replaced by modulation. Mompou re-discovered the art and this charming old technique appears in many of his works, thus re-affirming the presence of the far distant past in his sound.

Illustrated clearly in Canto #4 is the mystery of primitivism. An invocation to the "Healers and Curatives" the ritual dance as it begins, is accompanied by a single percussive note, hypnotic and mesmerizing. After a pause the movement leads into a passage that is lively and "without order." The tranquility of the 3rd period is overshadowed by a sadness that dominates it. The hypnotic accompaniment note now takes on the character of a bell or triangle-like instrument used in primitive ritual. It appears in the upper register and is repeated two octaves below. The ambiguous tonality and diffused pedal add to the mysterious sound and ritualistic qualities of the work. (See reference).

The phenomena of Mompou's sound is found in the last fragment. Over the notes of the theme which form the chord of F major, he floats harmonies 32 that search for resonances that allude to the simple motive.





After a sorrowful rather anxious contrast, the reexposition is heard but this time two octaves from the original motif in the left hand. (See reference). The final 8 chords sum up the profoundness of the work.

The final Canto is an invocation to "Remember Past Images" or to invoke the "Happiness of the Soul." ³⁴ Perhaps the motif as it searches for resonances is really the search of the Soul for a Rapture that can never be found on earth. But should the ecstacy ever be found for even a fleeting moment all else is able to be surmounted.





For Federico Mompou, music was a grave responsibility that had been given to him from a Higher Level in order to help humankind for the highest good. His deepest desire was that his music be a symbol of the Truth for his life and that was "To understand all is to forgive all." For this reason he absorbed himself in mysticism so that the sound in his music would be of the most pure state that was possible.

The mysticism of the sound of Mompou is difficult to explain but its legacy is a music that is Timeless.



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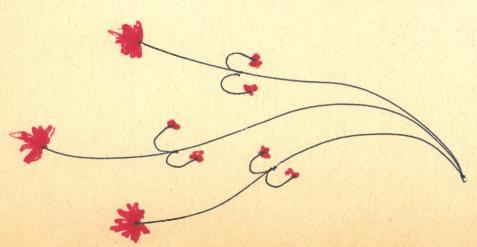
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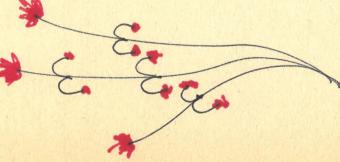
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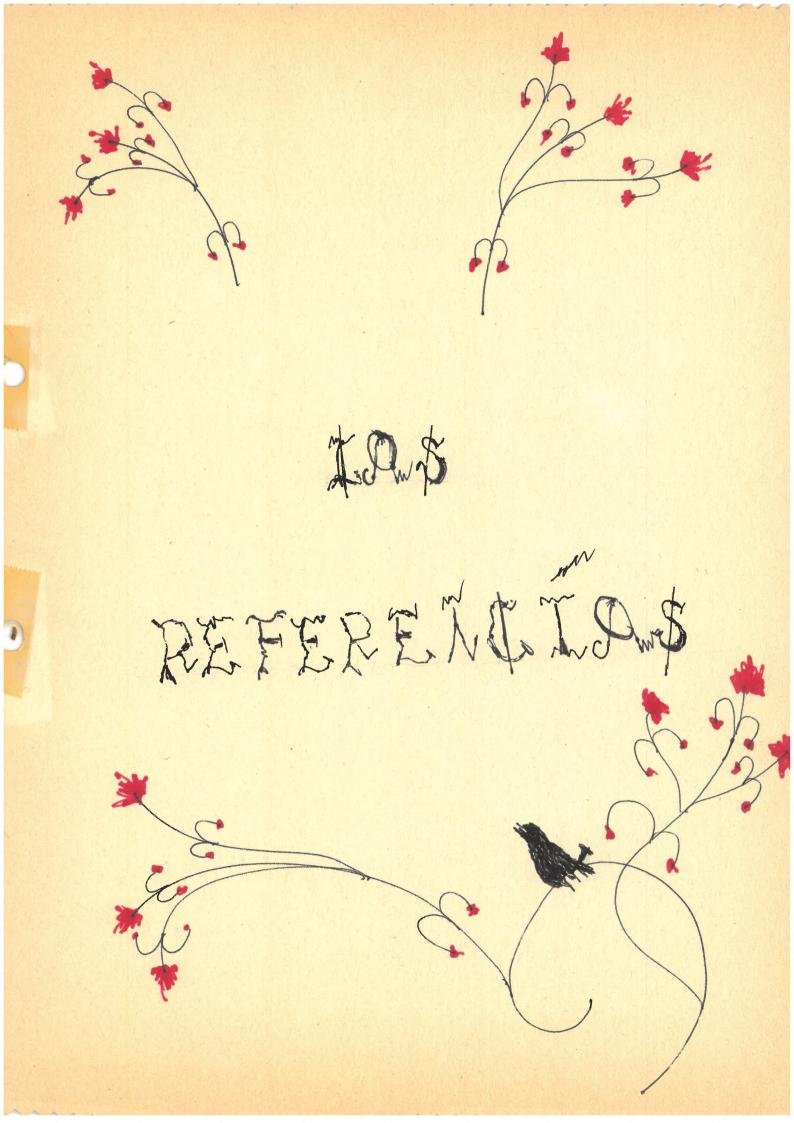
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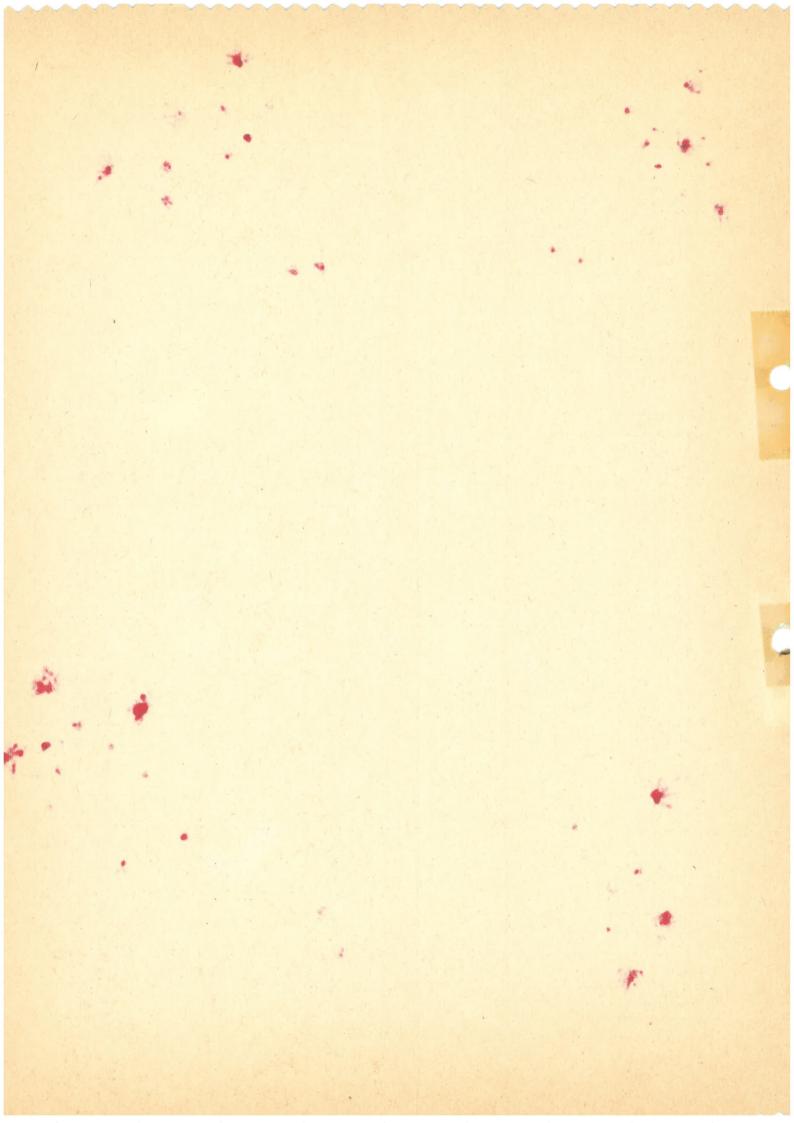
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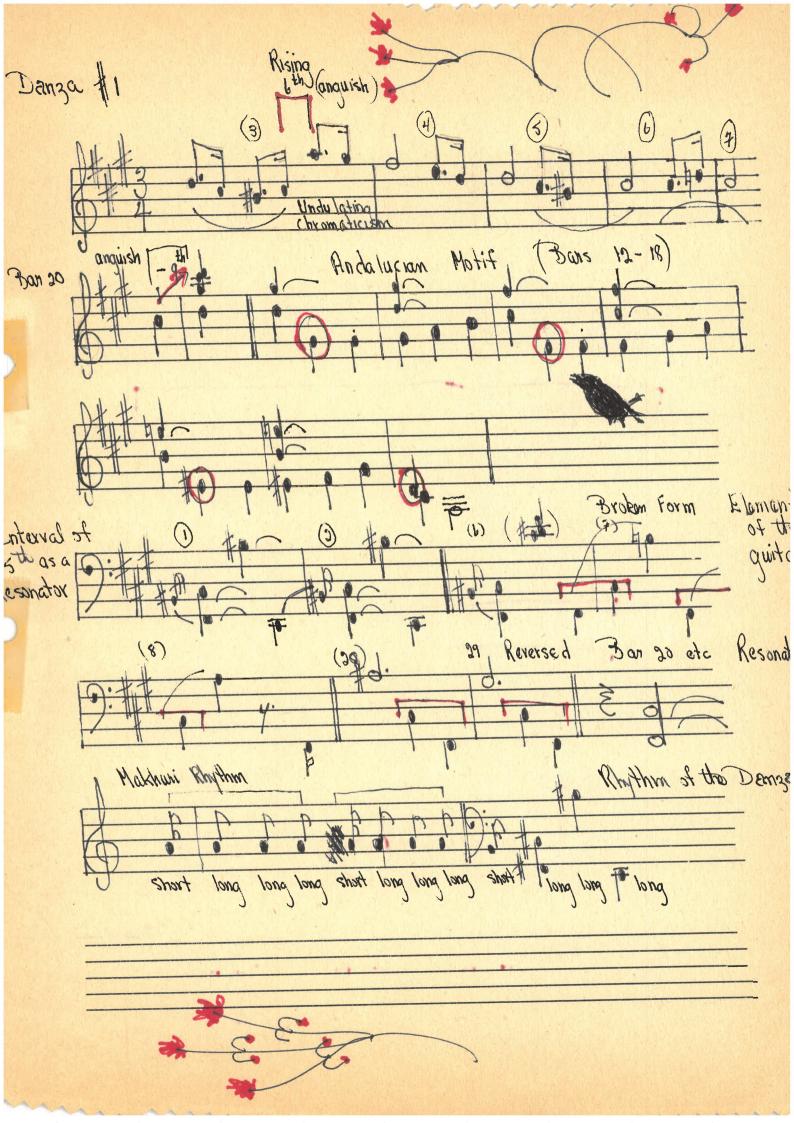
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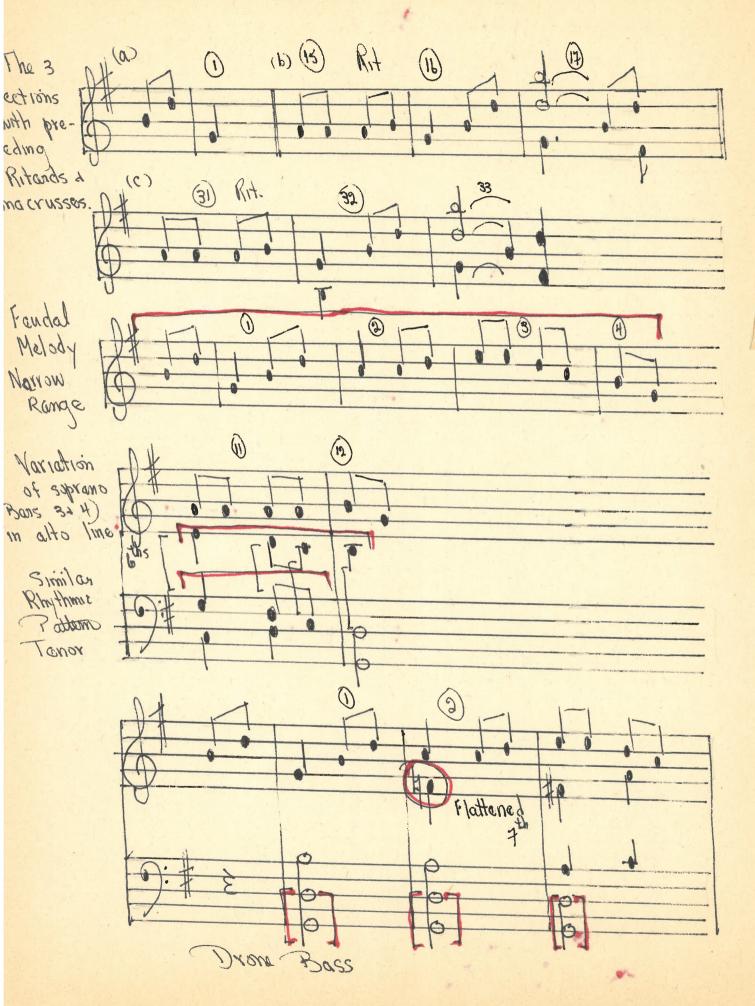
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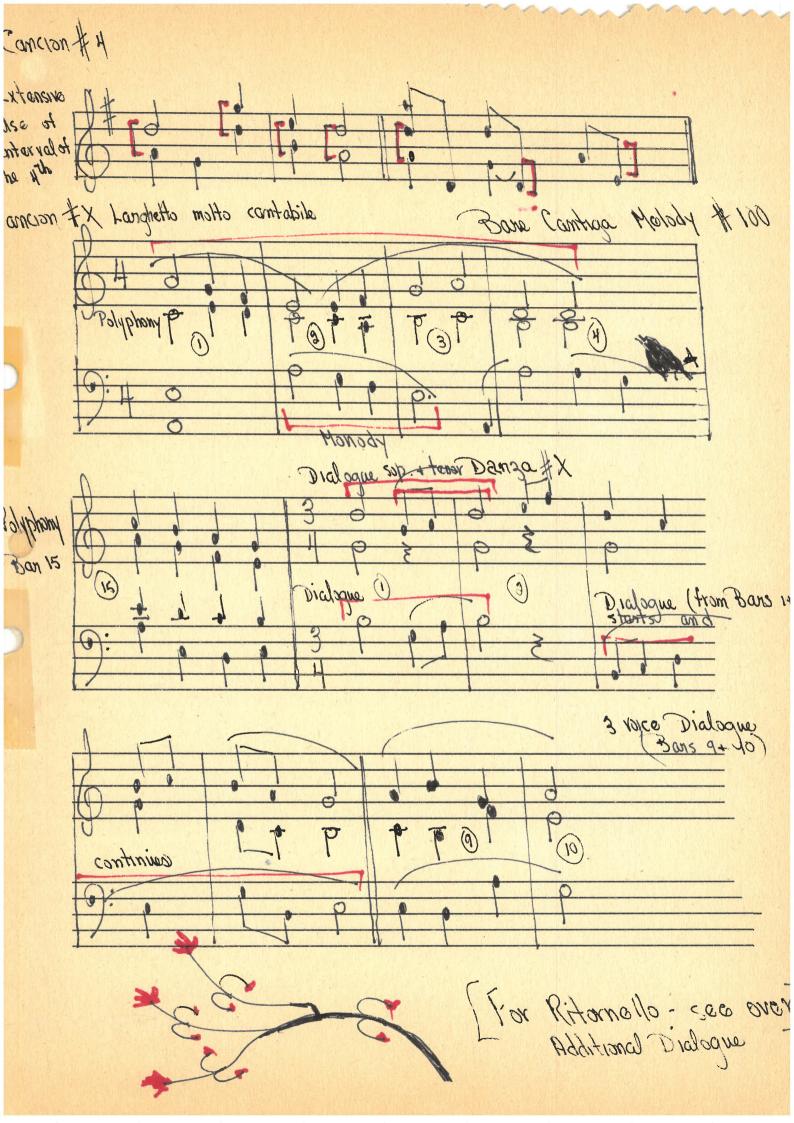




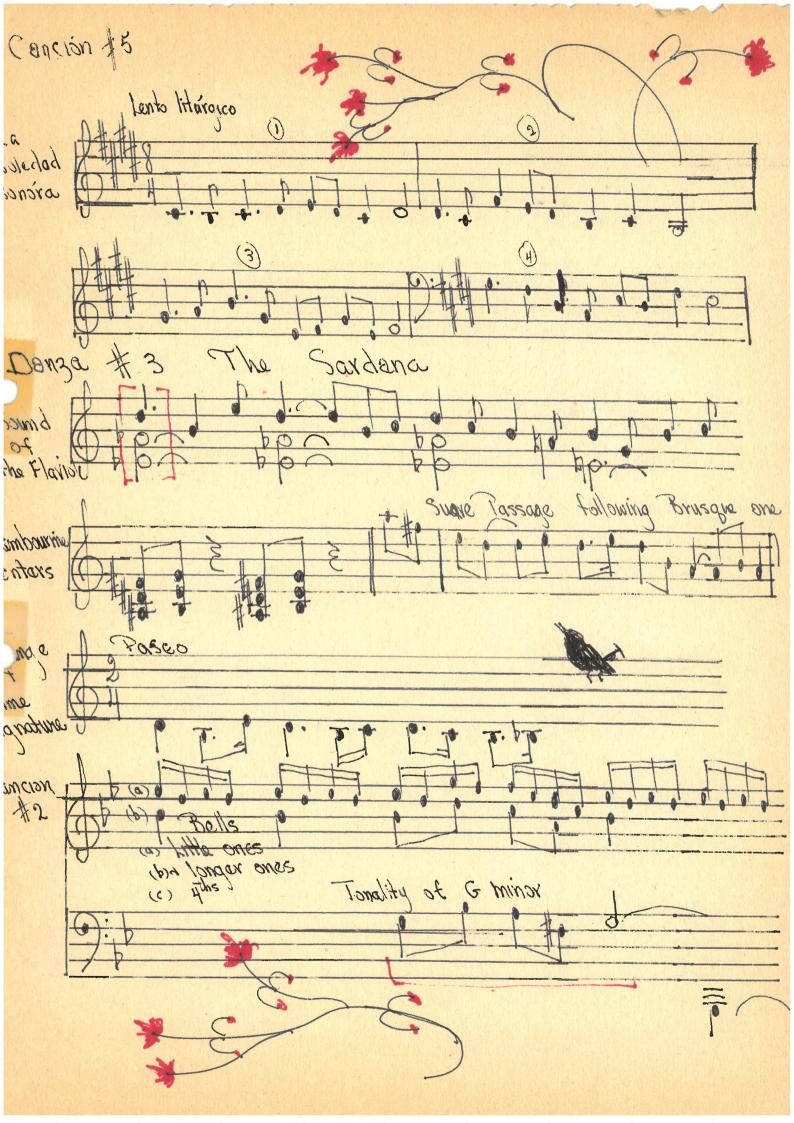


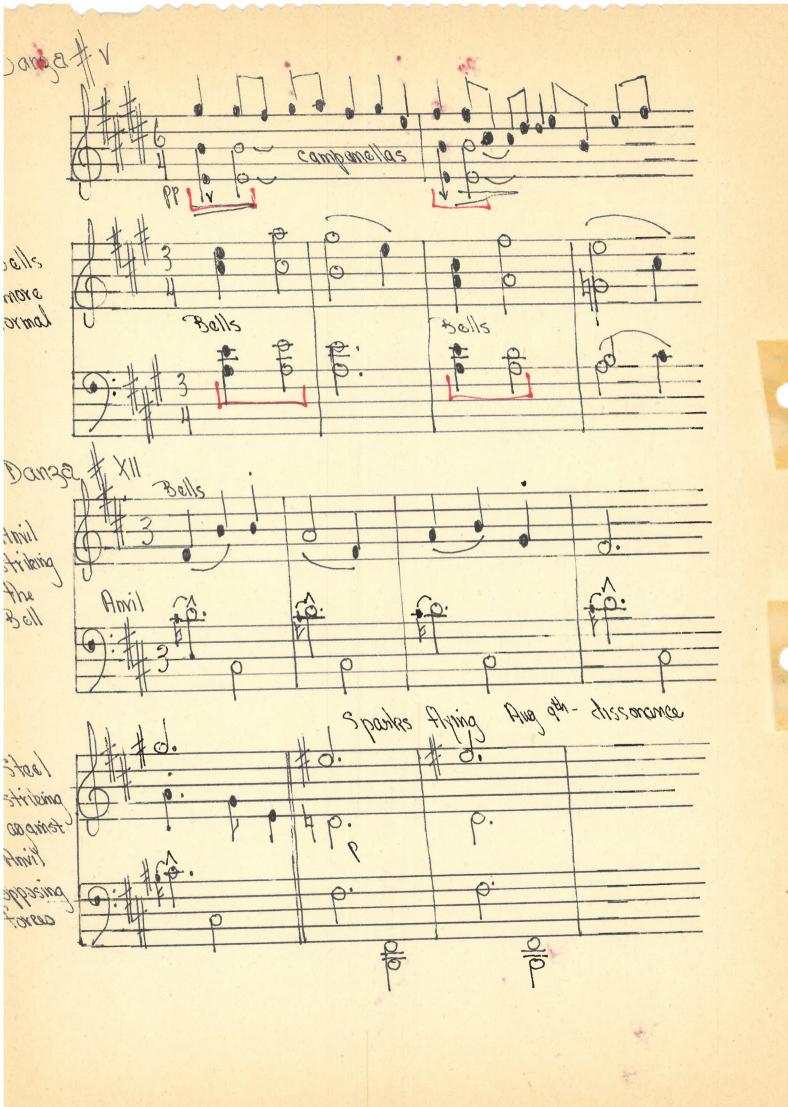
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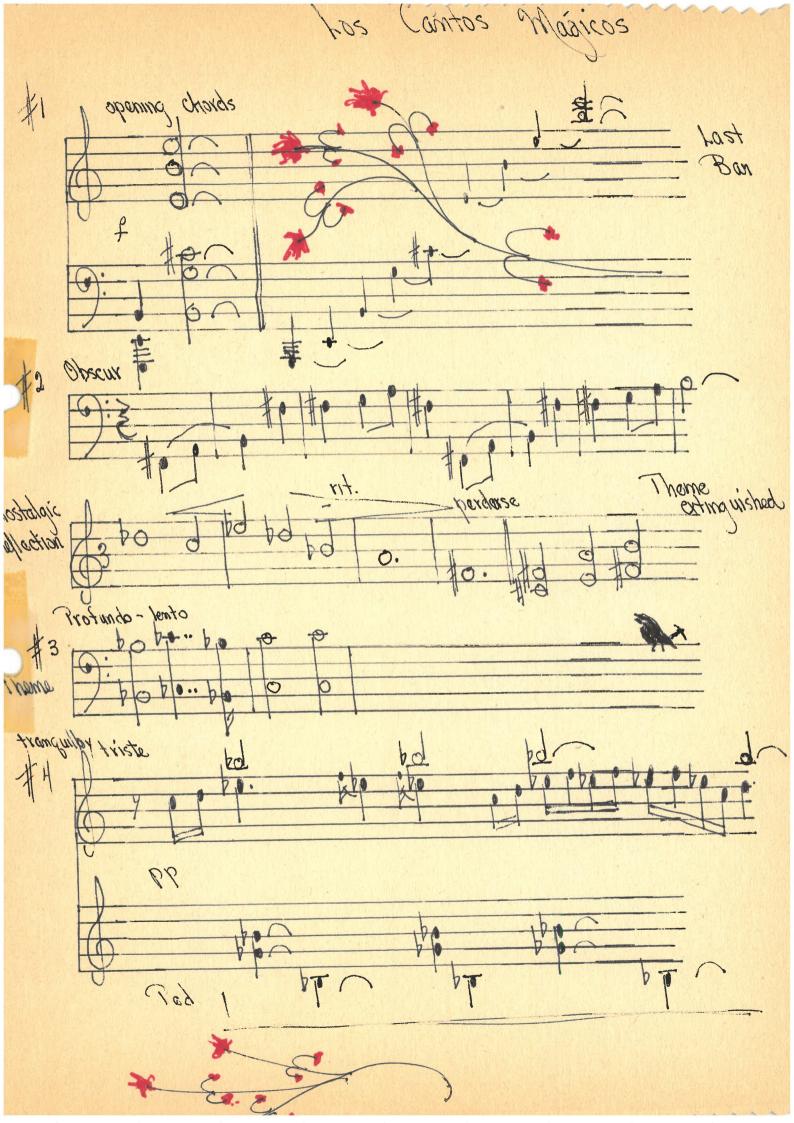


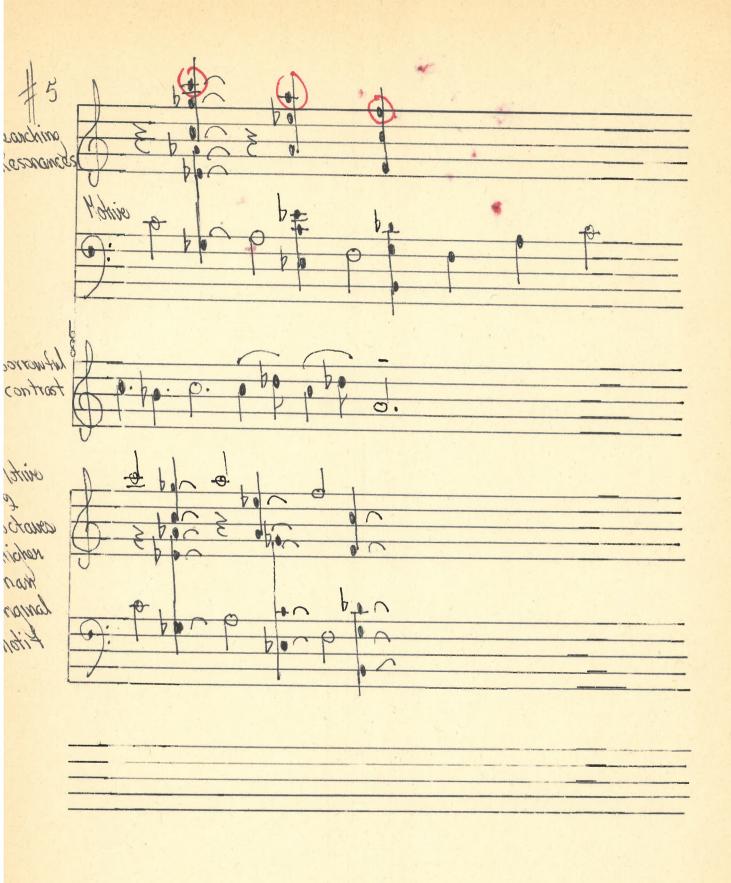


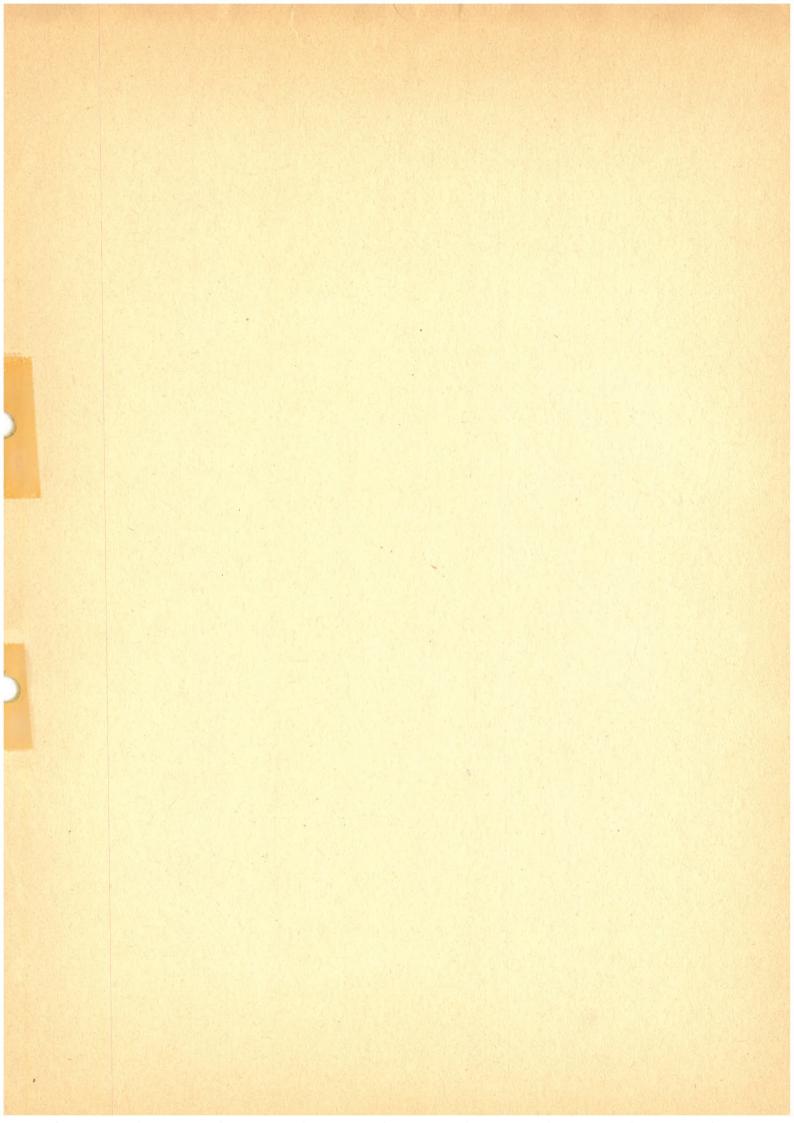
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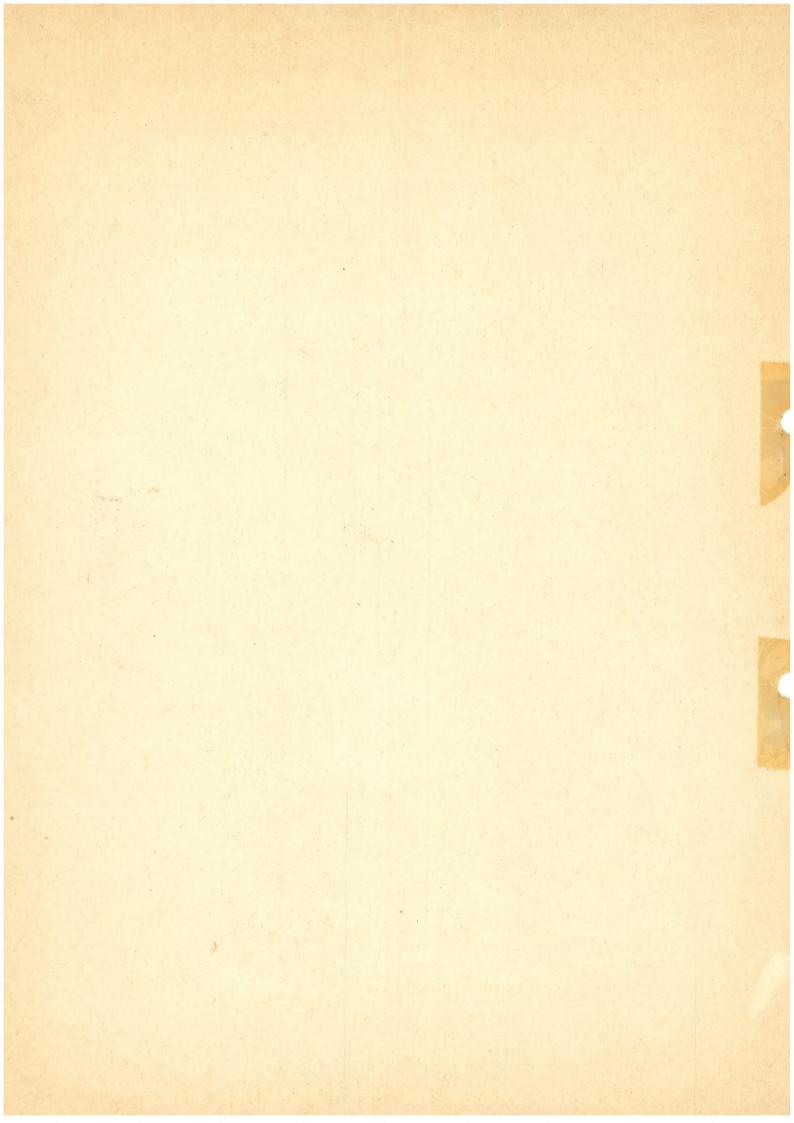












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