VIOLIN IMPROVISATION IN AFRO-CUBAN RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES

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ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, I study the violin improvisations performed during Violín a Ochún events, one of the collective celebrations of Santería, a religion practiced in Cuba. The study focuses on different structural organizational models at the basis of improvisation and their attendant cultural meanings and associations. The research aims to expand the study of cognitive and music analytic model-based improvisation into a culture-sensitive direction. Furthermore, I comprehensively present the social, historical and cultural context in which improvisations emerge: one of the main chapters of the research focuses on the phenomenon of the Violín a Ochún, its formation process, content and structure.

The study has been carried out using ethnographic methods. A special method of participant observation, the idea of bi-musicality, has been emphasized. The research is a field study, consisting of several phases of fieldwork and analysis. The research material includes forty video-recorded improvisations (and transcriptions of them) from 2007 to 2010, the work of twelve violinists who lived in Havana when the fieldwork phases were carried out. Additionally, the research material contains forty-two interviews, the most recent of which is from 2022.

The study indicates that there are both similarities and generation-based differences in the manner in which the violinists exploit the models. The similarities appear especially in relation to the guiding role of the *clave* pattern. However, its significance is emphasized particularly on *son*-based improvisations that stress the anticipated harmony. Furthermore, the collectively shared rhythmic-melodic vocabulary is similar in many ways, and it is learned partly when performing on these occasions. On the other hand, there are differences based on the violinist's generation. The violinists of the older generation more clearly follow the traditional *típico* style, while the improvisations of the younger violinists reflect more modern currents. This has been influenced by the emergence of systematic music education in post-revolutionary society and new role models among the violinists.

However, violinists, regardless of what generation they represent, emphasize the importance of local tradition and the role of improvisation as part of the collective occasion in which interaction with the audience – which participates in several ways in the progress of improvisation – is essential. In addition to guiding musicians, musical models interplay with cultural models and include different cultural meanings and associations that both guide the behaviour of the participants of the Violín a Ochún event and underline commonly shared cultural knowledge.

KEYWORDS: models, improvisation, violin, Cuban music, ethnography, Santería, ethnomusicology, cognition, culture, hermeneutics, methodological triangulation

TIIVISTELMÄ

Tutkin väitöskirjassani Kuubassa harjoitettavan *santería*-uskonnon Violín a Ochún -tilaisuuksissa esitettyjä viuluimprovisaatioita. Tutkimus keskittyy viulistia improvisaation aikana ohjaaviin musiikillisiin rakenteisiin, niin sanottuihin malleihin, sekä niihin liittyviin laajempiin kulttuurisiin merkityksiin ja assosiaatioihin. Tutkimus pyrkii laajentamaan kognitiivista ja musiikkianalyyttista mallipohjaista improvisaatiotutkimusta kulttuurisensitiiviseen suuntaan. Lisäksi yksi tutkimuksen luvuista käsittelee laajemmin esityskontekstia, Violín a Ochún -juhlaa.

Tutkimus on useasta Havannaan suuntautuneesta kenttätyömatkasta koostuva etnografinen tutkimus, jossa painottuu bi-musikaalisuuden ajatus osallistuvan havainnoinnin muotona. Tutkimusaineisto kattaa 40 videoitua improvisaatiota (ja niistä tehdyt transkriptiot) yhteensä 12:lta tilaisuuksissa soittaneelta viulistilta. Lisäksi aineistoon sisältyy 42 haastattelua.

Tutkimus osoittaa, että viulistien tavoissa hyödyntää musiikillisia malleja on sekä yhtäläisyyksiä että sukupolvien välisiä eroja. Yhtäläisyydet liittyvät *clave*-rytmisolun huomioimiseen erityisesti *son*-pohjaisessa musiikissa. Lisäksi viulistien improvisaatioissaan hyödyntämä rytmismelodinen sanavarasto, joka opitaan osittain tilaisuuksissa soittamisen seurauksena, on monilta osin samankaltainen. Toisaalta vanhempaa sukupolvea edustavat viulistit seuraavat selvemmin perinteistä *típico*-tyyliä, kun puolestaan nuorempien viulistien improvisaatioista heijastuvat vallankumousta seuranneen systemaattisen musiikkikoulutuksen sekä nuorempien viulistiroolimallien vaikutus.

Kaikki viulistit painottavat paikallisen perinteen tärkeyttä ja improvisaation roolia osana kollektiivista tilaisuutta, jonka aikana vuorovaikutus yleisön kanssa on keskeistä. Sen lisäksi, että musiikilliset mallit ohjaavat muusikoita, niiden voidaan nähdä olevan vuorovaikutuksessa kulttuuristen mallien kanssa. Ne sisältävät erilaisia kulttuurisia merkityksiä ja assosiaatioita, jotka ohjaavat tilaisuuteen osallistuvien ihmisten käyttäytymistä ja korostavat yhteisesti jaettua kulttuurista tietoa.

ASIASANAT: mallit, improvisaatio, viulu, kuubalainen musiikki, etnografia, santería, etnomusikologia, kognitio, kulttuuri, hermeneutiikka, metodologinen triangulaatio

Acknowledgements

Table of Contents

Tables

Figures

1   Introduction

1.1   Background of the Study

Santería or Regla de Ocha is the most popular tradition among the syncretistic religions practiced in Cuba. Santería and other syncretistic religious traditions practiced on the island can be called Afro-Cuban[1] religions, because of the African-based features that are dominant. This is also reflected in music of the religious ceremonies, in which percussion instruments and polyrhythmic practices play the main role. In addition to certain events that have a secret character, such as the initiation ceremony and the funeral, it is possible to organize the following kinds of collective celebrations within the context of Santería: Tambor de Santo, Güiro, Bembé, Cajón de Santo and Violín (Balbuena Gutiérrez 2003, 31).

    The last of these, the event in which violins are played, is an interesting exception among the ceremonies. Although all these celebrations share some similar features in terms of ritual, structure and music, the Violín – which is also called Violín a Ochún (referring to the goddess for whom the event is mainly organized) or Violines Santorales – differs from other collective celebrations because of its evolution process, instrumentation and musical content, which has adapted a number of features from popular music. These musical features appear, for example, through the influences of the *charanga*[2] tradition, which also includes a traditional way to improvise on the violin in the Cuban context.

    This kind of ritual phenomenon, in which different musical traditions appear in the same context, and which includes sections of violin improvisation, is an integral part of both the religious and social life of Santería practitioners and the local culture in Havana in general. The event is an interesting entirety both in a musical and a cultural sense. The Violín a Ochún ceremony has emerged recently, around the middle of the 20th century, and it reflects different ways the syncretistic process, a

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[1]   The term *Afro-Cuban* was introduced by Fernando Ortiz (1906), and it refers to African religious and other cultural elements and traditions that were syncretized in Cuba.

[2]   The term *charanga* refers to a particular instrumental line-up consisting of strings (usually violins and occasionally cello), flute, piano, bass, *timbales*, *güiro* and *tumbadora*, as well as the style of music associated with this type of ensemble.

central feature in Afro-Cuban cultural phenomena. The roots of this event are in spiritual occasions, which gradually adapted influences from both Santería religion and popular music. Although the phenomenon nowadays is called the Violín a Ochún, it is not a stable entirety, but the structure, instrumentation and musical content include variation and constant change, depending on the ensemble and geographical location.

Although the Violín a Ochún feast has established its place in the field of Santería's collective celebrations, it remains a largely unexplored phenomenon both in a musical and a cultural sense. I noticed the lack of research literature when I was collecting data for my Master's thesis in 2004. During that time I was particularly interested in the violin improvisation produced during ceremonies. My own background is in classical music, and I had just discovered the phenomenon of improvisation as a way of making music. Mostly for this reason, improvisation was the basis from which I approached this cultural performance[3] when writing my thesis. However, I was also interested in the Violín a Ochún ceremony as a cultural phenomenon. Due to the lack of literature, I felt even at that time that it would be important to study the subject more comprehensively in the future.

After finishing my thesis, I wanted to learn to play Cuban popular music well enough to start a band and also improvise in this genre. In the beginning, even before I began studying the subject in Havana in 2007 under a violinist named Omar Nilo González Álvarez, the easiest way to approach González Álvarez's improvisations – which I studied in my Master's thesis – was to perceive them through the recurring musical structures appearing in solos. Based on this experience, I found it logical to continue my PhD study from the same research perspective as in my Master's thesis. My purpose was to find out what kind of violin improvisation is produced in this genre in general, and how it is possible to approach the subject by studying the relations between the musical structures. The analysis chapter in this study dealing with the *clave* pattern is related to this idea; I initially drafted it with the idea concerning the structural relationships occurring in music.

However, during the first fieldwork periods I carried out, I noticed that the particular context within which I collected the improvisation material also had an impact on the content and nature of the material. The improvisations seemed to be an integral part of this collective celebration. Additionally, it seemed to me that a certain kind of communication through the musical structures united the members of the community and took the solo forward. Musical structures at the basis of improvisation appeared to be more than just structures guiding the musician: they

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[3] According to Milton Singer (1955, qtd. in Béhague 1984, 4), 'cultural performance' includes both 'cultural' and 'artistic' performances, such as music concerts and plays, and religious rituals, rites and ceremonies.

seemed to have a broader connection to the culture. As a consequence of this finding, I felt that research resembling style analysis would, in some way, remain superficial and out of context.

At the beginning, however, I was not sure how to combine these two themes, musical analysis and cultural analysis, in the same research. At some point, I planned to write two different studies, in which musical improvisation and the cultural approach to the subject are studied separately. However, over time I learned to understand and interpret the research subject also in its broader social, historical and cultural context. As a result, the musical structures underlying improvisations began to appear in a different light, highlighting the commonly shared tradition in different ways. This observation concerning the musical structures appearing in improvisations and their connection in creating different, more profound cultural meanings and associations in this particular performance context provided a basis for studying improvisations from a broader cultural perspective as well.

1.1.1 Research Material

I collected the research material, which includes video recordings from 2007 to 2010, interviews from 2007 to 2022, and transcriptions made of improvisations during the several fieldwork periods I carried out in Havana between 2007 and 2020.[4] The most extensive period, five and a half months, took place at the beginning of the whole research process. At that time I started building a social network with musicians playing in Violín a Ochún events. I also began collecting ethnographic data, especially interviews and video recordings of improvisations by different violinists. During the later fieldwork periods I kept shooting videos, but I also participated in several events as a musician and made more extensive interviews with the members of this religious community.

I had already spent half a year in Havana collecting data for my Master's thesis. However, this time I spent about ten months in the field. The implementation of fieldwork periods proceeded as follows:

23.09.2007–06.03.2008 (Havana)
27.04.2009–24.05.2009 (Havana)
10.01.2010–08.04.2010 (During this period I stayed in Miami most of the time but also spent one month in Havana)
10.05.2011–31.05.2011 (Havana)
01.12.2011–06.02.2012 (Havana and Santiago de Cuba)

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[4] Furthermore, the material includes three interviews and one improvisation from the time I collected material for my Master's thesis.

In 2013 and 2014 I worked in Managua and Mexico City in jobs unrelated to my research. However, as I was staying close to Cuba, I managed to make a few short visits to Havana. During these trips I continued conducting interviews with González Álvarez, who was also my key informant and gatekeeper[5] in Havana from the very beginning of this study. Furthermore, I visited Havana briefly in 2017, 2019 and 2020.

The central ethnographic method I have used in the course of fieldwork is participant observation, including the idea of bi-musicality (Myers 1992, 31). Bi-musicality refers to a method in which a researcher coming from outside of the culture under study approaches the culture through their own musicianship in order to better understand the subject under study (Hood 1960). In addition to playing in these religious events myself and taking violin classes from González Álvarez, I approached the subject by drawing on the principles of hermeneutics (Gadamer 1979). In short, this study follows a method of inductive reasoning in which the research material collected from the field forms, together with my gradually deepened understanding, the basis for a broader interpretation of the phenomenon under study.

The primary research material contains interviews and forty improvisations (with transcriptions)[6] from twelve violinists who lived in Havana during the time the fieldwork was carried out.[7] The oldest violinist, Jorge Hernández Mora, was born in 1937. The youngest, Alejandro Vistel, was born in 1991. All the violinists were male (see section 1.5.2). Furthermore, I conducted interviews with other Cuban musicians and researchers, and also one Finnish musician with a long history of residence in Cuba. The fact that I studied the improvisations of these particular twelve violinists

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5   Key informants and key actors refer to individuals who are articulate and knowledgeable about their community. They are sometimes considered teachers, because of their ability to share information and insight (Fetterman 2008b, 477). Gatekeepers refers to individuals who provide the access to a community under study (e.g. Hammersley & Atkinson 2005).

6   https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/11GoEXLxD1mJmQjjQywHJYcDanA6fpo71 (transcriptions); https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1x0pWFc815abXbyZctJ-gLviZZlQylfRX (annexes).

7   Improvisation videos can be found at the following links: **Ronny Cabarrogas Fernández** https://youtu.be/JlgrkEKkM_U; **Eduar Marzán Betancourt** https://youtu.be/jJGE_a0zrSU; **Edel Lazága Ortega** https://youtu.be/FOVbeq1pThg; **Jorge Denis Molir** https://youtu.be/-VGTDUa3VDg; **Alejandro Vistel** https://youtu.be/Z_bueN-_fJ0; **Jorge Hernández Mora** https://youtu.be/JjnD3bnJgzI; **Ricardo Cortez García** https://youtu.be/fLPl-7hyFCU; **Raúl Ríos Chassagne** https://youtu.be/eRTsn76X2JA; **René García González** https://youtu.be/vVTkP6fP8i0; **Felix Parreño** https://youtu.be/sHl_pOk5tU0; **Omar Nilo González Álvarez** https://youtu.be/dBdS4uKFn9w and https://youtu.be/jCpJ52ZdlMw (this improvisation contains only audio track); **Mario Argudin** https://youtu.be/_kFi5a4eTv0.

was not planned beforehand, but took place in a natural way. As my social network in Havana expanded, I made new contacts with violinists who improvised in these events, and I started to film their solos. In the end there were twelve of them, and it was possible – by coincidence – to divide them into two groups of almost equal numbers of violinists, based on the generation they represented.

The reason that in some cases only one improvisation from a violinist is included, while at the same time there are several from another, is that I worked more closely with some violinists and sometimes had a chance to film certain violinists on only one or two occasions. The material also contains solos that were performed during a *montuno* section[8] of the same song in several different years. For example, the solos played during a *montuno* section of a god named Babalú Ayé were collected during the four-year period from 2007 to 2010. Furthermore, there is more than one improvisation example of this particular *montuno* section from some of the violinists; this is because violinists almost always improvised during this particular *montuno* section. In fact, improvisations played during a *montuno* section of Babalú Ayé cover a quarter of all improvisations studied in this research.

In addition to the broader improvisation material from a *montuno* section of Babalú Ayé, I have studied solos played during *montuno* sections of the songs dedicated to gods named Ochún, Obbatalá, Yemayá and Elegguá, and during other religious and secular themes. Sixty percent of the improvisations were based on major key and forty percent on minor key. There was considerable variation concerning the length of these solos. The shortest one was only eight bars long, while the longest ones included more than hundred bars. The total material I video-recorded during the fieldwork periods included more improvisations than just these forty. However, because the process of transcribing solos took so much time, I chose to limit them to this number. Additionally, I noticed that certain musical features, such as some particular melodic phrases, began to recur in material as I transcribed the improvisations. Thus, I felt that some sort of saturation point concerning repetitive musical structures was achieved among these solos.

1.1.2   Ethical Considerations

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), a European Union regulation on the protection of natural persons with regard to processing of the personal data and on the free movement of such data, entered into force in 2018. This has also influenced the ethical principles of academic research: the person participating in

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[8]   *Montuno* section or *montuno* part refers to the open section of a song, which includes instrumental solos and responsorial singing style between the lead singer and the rest of the participants.

research must be asked for consent to ensure that the participation is voluntary. Although the GDPR is generally applicable within the European Union, there are national differences in possible ways of handling informed consent during fieldwork (Huber & Imeri 2021, 14–15). According to responsible conduct of research (RCR; 2012) and the guidelines for ethical review in human sciences (2019) – published by the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity (TENK)[9] – informed consent to participate in research is a central ethical principle in research with human participants: the researcher documents the participants' consent to participate in the research, either orally, in writing, electronically or by other means.

The manner and form in which informed consent is requested varies between research fields. For example, unlike in sociological research or experimental settings in medical institutions, the participants in anthropological research and ethnographic accounts are not just a 'sample'; rather, they are informants, consultants, teachers and gatekeepers for the researcher (Huber & Imeri 2021, 4–5). They pass alongside the researcher during several fieldwork periods and, together with the researcher, produce ethnographic data. Thus, as Huber and Imeri (ibid., 5) put it: 'consent is understood as an ongoing intersubjective relational process' (see also Iphofen 2013, 30). Although informed consent is often taken in written form in different research fields, recorded oral consent on audio is also used, especially in the context of the anthropological research tradition (Iphofen 2013, 30). The quality of consent is a key, not its form (Huber & Imeri 2021, 14), and recorded oral consent on audio may replace written consent (ibid., 16).

From the beginning of my research project, I always asked the participant at the beginning of the interview if I could use their name in my study concerning violin improvisation in Santería's religious ceremonies. Everyone consented. Neither did I change this habit of asking for oral consent to seeking written consent in the course of this study. None of the participants wanted to amend their consent during the research years, although I met with them several times. Only one of my key informants refused to give recorded interviews, and therefore I did not ask for her consent to use the data either. For this reason, I use a pseudonym for that person in this study.

1.1.3 Concept of Model in Science and in Context of this Study

As mentioned above, from the beginning my interest focused on the musical structures appearing in improvisations, which I later also approached from a cultural

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[9]   https://tenk.fi/en (accessed 24 May 2023)

perspective. In the literature concerning musical improvisation and organizational structures governing performances, the term 'model' has been used (e.g. Nettl 1974; Lortat-Jacob 1987; Huovinen 2010). However, this term is also widely used in different contexts in other disciplines, such as physics, biology, sociology, psychology, and cognitive sciences. Before introducing the research questions of this study, it is necessary to briefly bring out how the concept of model has been used in science. I will also explain why I use this term in this study.

Models have referred to both abstract sets of ideas and to physical objects. They do not describe the world directly, but through the target systems, thus observing some aspect of it (Knuuttila 2005, 1261; Elliot-Graves 2020, 2; Frigg & Hartmann 2020). In natural sciences, the term has been used to describe physical and non-physical objects or systems they represent, and in mathematics the use of the term has been related to predictive purposes, such as when using theoretical models in climate modelling (see e.g. Achinstein 1965).

The term model has also been used in the field of psychology and cognitive science. For example, 'information-processing model' refers to the model of how the memory processes work. According to this model, the information stored in memory should pass through the three stages of mental processing: sensory memory, short-term memory, and long-term memory (Atkinson & Shiffrin 1968). On the other hand, the term mental model or schema has referred to subjective cognitive structures, which are based on experiences, perceptions and understanding and are stored in the long-term memory (Jones et al. 2011). These structures are large networks of memories and associations, and they form a basis of reasoning and decision making in different recurrent situations (ibid.; see also Snyder 2000).

In the field of cognitive anthropology, the term model (or schema) has been used to explain cultural understanding at a collective level, and it has referred to a cognitive schema that is intersubjectively shared by a cultural group (D'Andrade 1989). Like mental models, cultural models are also considered unconscious and dependent on the function of memory. The difference between personal mental models and cultural models is that the former are idiosyncratic and the latter are based on more socially constrained experiences and guided by social norms (Shore 1996, 46–47). That is, when a community shares similar recurring experiences, its members also end up sharing similar schemas (Quinn 2005, 38; Boutyline & Soter 2020). In Quinn and Holland's view (1987, 4), cultural models are 'presupposed, taken-for-granted models of the world that are widely shared (although not necessarily to the exclusion of other, alternative models) by the members of a society and that play an enormous role in their understanding of the world and their behaviour in it'. Cultural models have been seen to represent the structural nature of cultural knowledge (Shore 1996, 45), which depends on the operation of memory and thus must be acquired, stored and recovered (Bloch 1998, 4; Widdess 2012, 88).

Cultural knowledge is acquired non-verbally and through repetitive observation and imitation (Widdess 2012, 88).

In the context of the study of musical improvisation, Bruno Nettl (1974) brought up the term model in his article *Thoughts on Improvisation: A Comparative Approach* when referring to precompositional musical structures characteristic of different cultures. In Nettl's view (1974, 11), models are culture specific – 'certain things that are at the base of the performance, that he [improviser] uses as the ground on which he builds.' Both Nettl and later Bernard Lortat-Jacob (1987, 46) refer to models as structures that are organized in time and appear on the macro level of music.

Jeff Pressing (1984, 1988, 1998) uses the term 'referent', which, in terms of its semantic content, is broader and more cognitively oriented than Nettl's model.[10] According to Pressing (1998, 52), a referent is 'a set of cognitive, perceptual, or emotional structures (constraints) that guide and aid in the production of musical materials.' In addition to referring to guiding musical structures at the foundation of a solo, referent also comprises different extra-musical phenomena – such as guiding visual images, emotions, stories and poems – that musicians can use as a point of departure for their improvisation (Pressing 1984, 346). Pressing mentions several cognitive benefits a referent possesses. In his view, when using referent, the performer allocates less processing capacity, reduces the extent of decision-making, reduces the novelty of motoric control, and reduces the need for detailed attention to fellow musicians (Pressing 1998, 52).

Because my intention is to approach the research subject on the basis of musical structures, I think the concept of model, introduced by Nettl, works well for this purpose. However, I also take into account Pressing's term referent (1984, 1988, 1998), according to which the factors that can be defined by non-musical concepts might also influence the improviser's decisions at the moment of soloing. However, in order to keep the terminology coherent, I call them extra-musical models. The exploitation of structural musical models, mental models and cultural models is related to the function of long-term memory. It stores information structures based on experience, learning and understanding over an extended period, and it also creates a framework through which people of some particular society experience and understand the world. I would assume that these structures are strongly related to each other and that the connections between them appear in different ways in the course of cultural performance.

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[10] Pressing has also written about a model of improvisation. By this he has, however, meant the cognitive functions underlying the process of improvisation in a broader way (Pressing 1988).

In summary, the term model has been used in scholarly research in various contexts. In this study the term is used, first of all, in the sense that Nettl does: to refer to structural organizational models guiding performance. However, I also approach the performance context from a broader perspective by taking into account that a solo, including the structural models it contains, takes place on a particular interactive cultural occasion and appears as an integral part of it. Therefore, I would assume that the performance context as a whole also affects the improvisation. For example, the occurrence of a structural musical model in a musician's playing may also be based on some sort of an extra-musical model, or referent, as Pressing calls it. However, because my attention is focused on concrete musical structures, I am interested in how these possible extra-musical phenomena appear and are carried out through the specific musical structures in the course of performance. I also use the term model to refer to cognitive cultural models shared by the members of the community. These models are approached in light of different conventions related to this specific cultural performance and also through the explicit musical structures appearing in music. Furthermore, my purpose is to study how these concepts of model (structural organizational model and cultural model) interplay with each other in this particular research context.

1.2 Research Questions

As the title of the present study suggests, this research focuses on an entirety that combines two parts: violin improvisation and the religious context in which improvisation occurs.

According to Berliner (1994, 492), jazz musicians often use metaphors of language when referring to improvisation, because there are similarities between the learning process of language and improvisation: studying the vocabulary, grammar, and syntax; analysing the literature; and practicing conversation are all included in comprehensive study of a foreign language. Improvisation based on some particular style or genre is learned in the same way. The ability to improvise in a given style is related to the musician's musical knowledge; this expands with practice and includes a musical vocabulary and different conventions that together help the musician formulate ideas in the course of performance (ibid.).

Improvisation practice in Cuban popular music is also based on certain vocabulary and conventions that musicians should grasp in order to be able to express themselves spontaneously when playing a solo in this particular style. In addition to idiomatic culture-specific playing techniques and particular licks associated with improvisation styles of different instruments, there is also a certain coherent aesthetic foundation that joins all the instruments together. This is evident, for example, in the way the musicians follow the *clave* pattern guiding the

polyrhythmic framework and in how they exploit different interrelated rhythm cells during a solo (see e.g. Manuel 1998, 128–129).

However, when studying improvisation in the context of a particular cultural performance, one must take into account that improvisation appears as a part of the occasion on which members of society share different perspectives and values, including both music and associated concepts and behavioural models (cf. Herndon 1971, 340). I would assume that a religious ceremony, for example, is largely based on collective religious narratives which contain values and beliefs about cultural and social realities, guiding – also through the music – the behavioural norms of the society (cf. Frye 2017; Bliuc and Chidley 2022). Additionally, music has been considered a diverse and multi-layered phenomenon which elicits various social, historical and cultural meanings for community members through sound, lyrics, body movements, ritual functions and visual symbols (Widdess 2012, 89). On the other hand, music has also been seen as an autonomous, abstract convention, which includes elements that resist social and cultural determination (ibid.). However, when studying improvisations emerging during a religious occasion, and when a culture is considered an ideational system – in which the members share different collective cognitive structures that are reflected in their behaviour – I would assume that this particular performance context assigns a certain role to improvisation and also partly modifies the content of musical vocabulary the improviser exploits in the course of performance.

How, then, can the connection and interplay between musical models and cultural models be approached? As a starting point, the definition of the cultural model can be approached through musical phenomena. According to Boutyline and Soter (2020, 17), 'cultural schemas are socially shared heuristic representations deployable in automatic cognition.'

First of all, cultural models are socially shared. When taking into account that cultural models are distinguished from personal models by their collective and intersubjective nature, one can ask, as Shore (1996, 45) does in his study, how extensively shared a cultural model must be in order to be a true cultural model. As an example of a cultural model in a music-related context, he brings up the national anthem, presented at a public baseball game, which is followed by certain acquired behavioural models (standing up and taking off one's hat; ibid., 47). According to Boutyline and Soter (2020, 21), anything that can be considered a social norm must be socially shared, because it delineates cultural and non-cultural models from each other. When different norms, stereotypes and heuristics are replicated in interactions, they become cultural (ibid.). In the context of Cuban music, this could refer, for example, to different musical structures, typical of the culture, which largely guide aesthetic features across stylistic boundaries, fundamentally affect the conventions of playing and dancing, and are also closely related to the manner in which people

discuss music. On the other hand, different repetitive behaviour models during a religious ceremony can be closely related to the perception of certain specific musical structures that emerge in the music performed during the ceremony.

According to Quinn and Holland (1987, 4), shared cultural models may also include alternative models. I agree with this view. I also assume that in the wide context of a complex cultural whole, it is possible that a collectively shared cultural model – activated, for example, by some melody shared in the community – might also function as a personal model to a musician or a listener, thus creating different interpretations on a personal level. This could refer to a melodic quotation often used by a musician during a certain improvisation, which could also have broader connotations in a religious context. According to Frye (2018, 4), narratives (e.g. *patakís* – Yoruba legends – in the context of this study) become collective when they are frequently recounted. Collective narratives intertwine around cultural schemas and define symbolic events (ibid.). When taking into account the religious context in which improvisations are performed, and that narratives are more convincing when they resonate with the listener (ibid.), one can assume that an individual listener can also create associations between the melody they hear and some extra-musical phenomena based on collective narratives. A violinist can also use a melodic phrase they have adopted, for example, from a well-known violinist. However, if the criterion of a cultural model is that it should be socially shared, then playing such a phrase does not necessarily lead to the emergence of shared meaning or guide particular collective behaviour in the course of a cultural occasion. Of course, the situation could be different: a single melodic phrase could open up differently if solely musicians were considered to form a community. That is, the extension of the ways schemas can be shared varies greatly (Sperber 1996, 25).

In addition to being socially shared, cultural models are heuristic representations (Boutyline & Soter 2020). Representation is something that carries meaning or content (Sperber 2006, 432) or interpretable information – which can be evaluated semantically or morally – about real or imagined states of the world (Boutyline & Soter 2020, 22). According to Stuart Hall (1997, 15), 'representation is an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture. It does involve the use of language, of signs and images which stand for or represent things.' In short, representation is the production of meaning through language (ibid., 16). By language, Hall refers more broadly to different means of expression, such as music (ibid., 19). Signs, on the other hand, represent or stand for mental concepts, and they refer to words, visual images or spoken sounds of a common language in a culturally shared context. Signs and concepts make up the meaning-systems of culture (ibid., 18–19). In the context of music, signs (or symbols) could therefore refer, for example, to musical structures that are

characteristic of the music of a particular culture or a particular context in which the music is performed.

By heuristics, Boutyline and Soter (2020, 25) mean that the representations contained in models (or schemas) are not explicit, exact or verbal, but they rather roughly describe phenomena or processes: people may follow cultural patterns without being able to articulate their content. One can assume that this kind of implicit knowledge is central in the context of a religious ceremony in a culture in which a person has been integrated since birth. Music encodes certain behaviour patterns and can activate some schema during a collective interaction. In the context of Afro-Cuban ceremonial music, an example of this could be the so-called *toques*, drum calls that are used to communicate with *orishas* during celebrations that have trance-inducing functions (cf. Miller 2014, 199). Most people participating in these events dance; even those who do not know the dance try to imitate other dancers or simply move with the rhythm of the *batá* drums (Balbuena Gutiérrez 2003, 68). On the other hand, in the context of improvisation, one can refer to situations in which the musician, by exploiting a particular musical structural element, directs the audience to collective singing. Repetitive ritual conventions can also lead to the automatisation of different cultural (and musical) models. Social norms can be difficult to articulate if they have been internalized (Boutyline & Soter 2020, 28), even if some degree of control over consciousness is retained (ibid., 19).

Considering what has been said so far, it seems that there is a certain interplay between cultural models and different kinds of musical models. As a result of the musician exploiting different musical models during improvisation, different collective and individual meanings might emerge within the social group. Thus, it is possible to ask to what extent and in what ways the structural organizational models that the improviser exploits create different cultural meanings – for example, by activating cultural models or creating different cultural associations among individuals during this particular religious celebration. In light of the above, I ask the following research question:

What structural organizational models and attendant cultural meanings and associations are involved in the violin improvisations in the Violín a Ochún ceremony?

As regards the research question, it is necessary, first of all, to study this occasion of collective interaction more deeply and to reflect on the role of improvisation during the ceremony: what purpose it serves, and how the meanings and associations involved in improvisations open up in a broader cultural context. Second, it is relevant to study how the structural organizational models at the basis of improvisation that represent different musical parameters guide the behaviour of community members during the

interactive event. Topics under study include how they guide the musician; how the different structural models exploited by the musician guide the audience; and how the audience and the collective interaction situation guide the musicians' use of the models during their improvisations. Furthermore, when taking into account that the violinists improvising in these events represent different generations and have different educational backgrounds, the basis behind the use of different structural models in relation to this particular performance context, culture-specific improvisation style, and individual expression can be studied in more detail. With all this in mind, I ask in my research material the following sub-questions:

What are the role and function of improvisation in the Violín a Ochún event and in its music?

In what ways is the culture reflected in improvisation and in concepts and behaviours related to it?

In what ways do the different aspects of tradition and change appear in the improvisations during the Violín a Ochún event?

What factors guide the selection of the structural models of the improvising violinist, and how do these models guide the process of improvisation?

In short, in this study I am interested in violin improvisation as a part of the Violín a Ochún ceremonies in the city of Havana. My focus is on structural organizational models that guide both the musicians and the audience, and also contain broader cultural meanings and associations in a wider historical, social and cultural context, in which improvisations emerge. I will discuss the research questions in more detail during this chapter.

1.3   Previous Research

There is plenty of literature in Spanish related to Afro-Cuban religions and spiritism practiced in Cuba.[11] Furthermore, the studies concerning different particular

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[11]   For example, Ortiz 1965; Cabrera 1969; Cabrera 1971; Sosa 1984; Núñez Cedeño 1988; Murphy 1988; Bolívar Aróstegui 1990; Lachatañeré 1992; Enrique Lopez 1994; Barnet 1995; Millet 1996; Fernández Martínez & Porras Potts 1998; Esquenazi Pérez 2001; Lago Vieito 2002; Arce Burguera & Ferrer Castro 2002; Brown 2003; De La Torre 2004;James Figarola 2006a; 2006b; Rodríguez Dago 2007; Bolívar et al. 2007; James, Alarcon & Millet 2007; Dodson 2008; Fernández Robaina 2008; Fuentes Guerra

syncretistic ceremony types have also been recorded in other languages (Hesse 1971; Warden 2006). The Violín a Ochún feast, however, has received little attention in the literature concerning Afro-Cuban culture. As an exception, there is one article written by Lovio Díaz et al. (2006) concerning the first Violín a Ochún event organized in the city of Matanzas, and another written by Ana Koprivica (2010) in which she gives an overview of the event on a general level and discusses the possible reasons behind its emergence. Additionally, Balbuena Gutiérrez (2003) briefly approaches this event type in her book dealing with different Santería ceremony types. I would say that these works do not investigate the subject in great depth, although Balbuena Gutiérrez provides a good and concise overview of the ceremonies organized in Havana. Neither do they detail the wide variation between these events practiced in Cuban religious society. To my knowledge, the present study is the first ethnography approaching this phenomenon more profoundly by studying its history and evolution, the influences behind its emergence, and how it was transformed into an event – with its variations – as practiced in the Havana religious community today.

In addition to the literature concerning Afro-Cuban religions, numerous studies also exist on Afro-Cuban music and Cuban popular music in general.[12] Some works deal the subject from an educational point of view, and some also approach the phenomenon of improvisation (e.g. Mauleón 1993; Del Puerto & Vergara 1994; Mauleón-Santana 1999; Bardfeld 2001; Miller 2003; 2014; 2021; Valiente 2015). Others approach the typical features of this improvisation culture in a more general way (e.g. Béhague 1980; Manuel 1998; Washburne 1997; 1998).

The terms Afro-Cuban and Cuban music are often dealt with in parallel in the literature (e.g. Mauleón 1993; Bardfeld 2001); the influence of African-based features, such as percussion instruments and different rhythmic cells in popular music genres that emerged in Cuba, has been crucial (Mauleón 1993, 1; Manuel 1998, 128–129). On the other hand, popular music based on Afro-Cuban rhythms, including *salsa*, born in the Hispanic Caribbean and its diaspora, has been referred to as Latin dance music (see Manuel 1998, 127).

        & Gómez 2009; Feraudy Espino 2009; Torres Zayas 2010; Soso & Sastre 2010; Bolívar Aróstegui & Porras Potts 2011; Bolívar et al. 2011; Rivero Glean 2011; Pérez, 2011

[12]   For example, Ortiz 1955; Ortiz 1965; Béhague 1980; León 1981; Toledo 1981; Benmayor 1981; Ortiz 1983; Galán 1997; Singer 1983; Manuel 1985; Moreno 1988; Acosta 1987; Murphy 1991; Mauleón 1993; Waxer 1994; De León 1996; Washburne 1997; Pasmanick 1997; Eli Rodríguez et al. 1997; Washburne 1998; Loyola Fernández 1997; Moore 1997; Manuel 1998; Orovio 1998; Alén Rodríguez 1998; Floyd 1999; Eli Rodríguez & Rodríguez 1999; Mauleón-Santana 1999; Marrero 2001; Bardfeld 2001; Leymarie 2002; Carpentier 2004; Sublette 2004; Giro 2007; Lapidus 2008; Washburne 2008; Peñalosa 2009

Olavo Alén Rodríguez (1998) makes a clearer distinction between Afro-Cuban and Cuban music: Afro-Cuban music refers to musical traditions of different African ethnic groups – especially those of Yoruba- and Bantu-speaking nations – which have been preserved in Cuba. Cuban music instead refers to different musical genres that have emerged in Cuba. Additionally, Omar Nilo González Álvarez, the violinist who was my teacher in Cuba, uses the term Cuban popular dance music (música popular bailable cubana) in the context of musical genres that emerged in Cuba, but refers to traditional percussive music played on religious occasions with the term Afro-Cuban music.

For clarity, I follow the division used by Alén Rodríguez and González Álvarez in this study. The music played during the Violín a Ochún event includes both music with its base in Yoruba tradition and popular music that originated in Cuba. When referring to violin improvisation, I use the term Latin violin improvisation alongside my discussion of Cuban violin improvisation, because it also includes influences from the *salsa* tradition.

In the theoretical literature concerning improvisation in general, structural elements of music have been the objects of the studies (Nettl 1974; 1998; Lortat-Jacob 1987; Huovinen 2010). On the other hand, different studies have also concentrated on cognitive processes involved in improvisation (Pressing 1984; 1988; 1998; Johnson-Laird 1988; 1991), and recently special attention has been paid to embodied cognition (e.g. Iyer 2004; Keller et al. 2014; Schiavio & Høffding 2015; van der Schyff et al. 2018; Staveley 2020). In general, it is accurate to say that the subject of musical improvisation has been studied widely. As a consequence, several articles, anthologies (e.g. Nettl & Russel 1998; Solis & Nettl 2009; Huovinen 2015; Lewis & Piekut 2016), and monographs (e.g. Sudnow 1978; Bailey 1980; Lundberg 1994; Berliner 1994; Monson 1996) have been published.

There is a substantial body of written material and studies concerning and linked with ethnomusicological research, fieldwork, and ethnography, also including the concept of bi-musicality.[13] The study of musical performance has also been widely discussed in ethnomusicological literature (e.g. Herndon 1971; Béhague 1984; Stone 2008). This study takes a cultural approach to the study of music, and it is linked to the tradition of ethnomusicology, in which the subject is traditionally studied as part of its cultural context using ethnographic methods. More specifically, the object of this particular study is to approach improvisations taking place during a musical

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[13]   For example, Hood 1960; Hood 1971; Merriam 1964; Blacking 1967; Blacking 1973; Spradley 1979; Spradley 1980; Stone & Stone 1981; Hammersley & Atkinson 1983; Van Maanen 1988; Moisala 1991; Seeger 1992; Myers 1992; Ellingson 1992; Titon 1994; Davis 1994; Gupta & Ferguson 1997; Eriksen 2001; Emerson et al. 1995; Nettl 2005; Guest et al. 2006; Cooley & Barz 2008; Titon 2008; Rice 2013

performance, which reflects different codes, values, and musical and extra-musical behaviour models shared by the community.

Referring more specifically to the previous research, this study concerning the syncretistic Violín a Ochún celebration seeks to expand the already comprehensive literature of Afro-Cuban religious traditions. However, the perspective on this subject differs from previous studies because it is approached through the musical structures – i.e. musical models (e.g. Nettl 1974; Lortat-Jacob 1987; Huovinen 2010) – that appear in the violin improvisations of the musicians playing in these events. The identification of musical models is based in part on previous pedagogical and research literature on Cuban music and improvisation (e.g. Bardfeld 2001; Mauleón 1993: Mauleón-Santana 1999; Manuel 1998; Peñalosa 2009), but also on participant observation (e.g. Béhague 1984; Myers 1992) during Santería religious occasions. One can say that the combination of participant observation, transcribed interviews and musicological analysis of the musical transcriptions – all highlighted in the text – follows the methodological approach of some previous studies (e.g. Berliner 1994; Miller 2014).

Sue Miller (2014) has analyzed the improvisations of some well-known Cuban *charanga* flautists. In her research, Miller brings out relationships between musical structures and, on the other hand, also refers to different cultural references these structures contain. In this respect, the present study has similarities to Miller's study. However, this study focuses more specifically on the interplay between musical models and cultural models in the particular context of religious performance, in which musical models are seen to entail different meanings and associations, which also activate collectively shared cultural models.

1.4 Theoretical and Methodological Framework

1.4.1 Improvisation and Models

The fact that musical improvisation is considered a cultural phenomenon has made it difficult to define the term as a unitary concept (Nettl 1974). Whereas jazz music as a concept already contains the idea of a musical culture based on improvisation (Bailey 1992, xii), some other non-Western cultures – in which, from the Western perspective, the idea of improvisation would be firmly anchored – do not recognize the term corresponding to this kind of activity. It is not always the case that pre-composed and improvised music would be explicitly distinguished in a culture (Nettl 1974, 4, 6; Racy 1998, 104). It is accurate to say that the improvisation activity between different cultures varies considerably and appears at different levels, because it is always connected to the musical practices of a given culture.

The generally accepted idea concerning improvisation is 'the suddenness of the creative impulse' (Nettl 1974, 3). Besides creativity, different definitions of this phenomenon have referred to the act of performance (Nettl 1998, 11). The act of improvisation has been associated with real-time composition (e.g. Berliner 1994, 221), with creativity and ingenuity being considered central features. However, improvisation does not come out of nothing; it is always based – to some extent – on a predetermined and previously known foundation. This also applies to so-called free improvisation (see Pressing 1984, 346; Sawyer 1999, 37; Riikonen 2000, 100–101). As mentioned above, this foundation consists of models or points of departure, as Nettl later (1998; 2009; 2016) put it, referring to the basis, which is more comprehensive than just a structural model (Nettl 2009, 191; 2016, 174). In his definition of improvisation, Micheál O'Suilleabhain also brings up the idea of models as the foundation for improvisational process. In his view, improvisation is 'the process of creative interaction (in private or in public; consciously or unconsciously) between the performing musician and a musical model which may be more or less fixed' (qtd. in Nettl 1998, 11). In this study, improvisation refers to the creative use of the structural properties (or the models) of a performance, including features related to melody, harmony, rhythm and form. However, models used by the improviser can also include different expressive properties, such as sudden changes in timbre or changes in tempo and the use of rubato (see Young & Mattheson 2000, 127).

As mentioned above, improvisation is always context-related, and the models that guide it can be quite different depending on the culture in question. Models are temporally organized structures regardless of culture, but their density and length properties are culture-specific. They can refer, for example, to the blues sequence of chords or some kind of tune melody in jazz; to different modal configurations or melodic types (e.g. *dastgah* in Iranian, *maqam* in Arabic or Turkish, and *raga* in Indian music); to a certain kind of rhythmic content in West African drumming (Nettl 1974); or to the rhythmic framework guided by the *clave*, the binary rhythmic pattern in Afro-Cuban and Cuban popular music, as mentioned above. Thus, as one can notice, regarding length and density properties, the *clave* is quite different, for example, from Arabic music. In the latter, melodic improvisation includes different sequential melodic phases, each with its own central tone (point of reference), around which the melodic patterns are formed (Touma 1996, 40–42). The central feature in models guiding improvisation is that they include different kinds of obligatory musical events that temporally relate to each other and can be measured, at least very roughly (Nettl 1974, 12–13).

An interesting and clearly visible feature in Cuban culture is its syncretistic nature, which is pervasive throughout the culture, also extending to music. The roots of the *clave* are in West African musical heritages, but local popular music also

includes influences from European musical traditions – for example, in the use of functional harmony. When improvising, a violinist can lean on different guiding models, often at the same time. However, the essential feature is that even if the chord progression or some kind of tune melody would guide the violinist, they also appear – at least on some level – in relation to the *clave* pattern.

According to Lortat-Jacob (1987, 48), in those cultures in which people explicitly know the predetermined model at the basis of improvisation, some definitive terms and concepts have been used to describe it. During the interviews I carried out with the violinists who improvise in Santería's violin feasts, a certain kind of terminology regarding the musical structures at the foundation of improvisation was brought out. Cuban musicians use the term *patrón* (pattern) when referring to musical structures guiding the improvisation.[14]

In addition to the rhythmic pattern (*patrón rítmico*), which refers to the *clave* rhythm and to the polyrhythmic framework it is guiding, it is common to talk about the harmonic pattern (*patrón armónico*). In the context of a *montuno* section of the song, it refers to a repetitive – normally two or four bars long – monotone chord progression that lasts for a whole *montuno* section. Typical chord progressions include I-IV-II-V, I-V-V-I, I-IV-V-I, I-VI-II-V, I-IV-V-IV, IV-V-I-VI, and II-V-I progressions (cf. Mauleón-Santana 1999; Del Puerto & Vergara 1994). For example, if the chord progression begins on the (anticipated) tonal chord, it is normally played at the onset of the weak part of the *clave*; if the progression starts on the dominant, it begins at the onset of the strong part of the *clave* (Del Puerto & Vergara 1994, 25–26; regarding the weak and strong parts of the *clave*, see section 4.1). Furthermore, violinists performing in the Violín a Ochún events exploit the melodic patterns (*patrón melódico*). Melodic patterns refer to more stable melodic structures, such as song quotations. Just like chord progressions that appear in relation to the *clave* pattern, the rhythm of different tune melodies is related to the *clave* in different ways (see sections 5.2 and 5.3).

In his article *Musiikillisen improvisaation psykologia*, Huovinen (2010) uses the term 'background model' (or 'deep model') when referring to these kinds of explicit

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[14]   In addition to structural elements in music, the term *pattern* can refer to a particular improvisation style – characteristic to some individuals (such as Miguel Barbón or Dagoberto González), which has affected the way musicians approach improvisation in general; for example: 'Dagoberto [González] [--] has been the pattern for all this new generation of violinists' ('Dagoberto [–] ha sido un patrón para toda esta generación de nuevos violinistas.') (RCF 18052009) Furthermore, pattern can refer to musician's personal improvisation style; for example: 'The pattern is a way I have of saying things. [--] Look right here, how many *tresillos* there are, how many scales by thirds' ('Un patrón es una forma que tengo de decir las cosas. [--] Mira aquí mismo, cuántos tresillos parecen, cuántas escalas por terceras.') (OGÁ 18052009)

guiding structures at the basis of improvisation, which the improviser thinks about (or 'feels internally'; cf. section 4.1) in the course of performance. In addition to background models, Huovinen (ibid.) refers to 'surface models' that guide the concrete musical decisions – just like different pitch choices – that the musician carries out in relation to guiding musical structures that are the foundation of the solo. Surface models might include different kinds of building blocks (cf. Nettl 1974), licks, motifs, phrases and rhythmic cells that guide the improvising musician in choices related to the use of specific pitches or rhythmic features (Huovinen 2010). Just like the stable structures that form the basis of improvisation, these models are normally – at least in some respect – pre-composed as well (cf. Berliner 1994, 102–105; 227–230; 492). That is, the improvisation is commonly based on learned and acquired musical vocabulary, typical to a particular culture, which includes specific structural and recurring elements. In several music cultures it is expected that the musician's expression will be linked to these structures (cf. Nettl 1974, 18–19). The musician's creativity will be reflected within that framework (cf. Berliner 1994, 138).

How, then, do these temporally organized musical structures in the background and on the surface level of music relate to each other? Huovinen (2010) approaches this issue the same way Nettl (1974) does, by taking into account the length and the density of the structural element. In his article, he brings up different culture-specific examples of melodic models in relation to their length and density. For example, in the context of jazz, if the melody functions as the basis (or background model) for the improvising musician but the musician does not add any melodic embellishment when playing over it, the melody can be called a long and dense melodic model for the musician.

However, the melodic model becomes a looser model for the musician if they add pitch elements between the pitches that identify the original model, as in so-called paraphrase improvisation (Kernfeld 1995, 131–158), in which it is common to decorate the melodic line with shorter melodic figures (Huovinen 2010, 413). Thus, a musician can hierarchically 'embed' the shorter structural elements, or surface models, into the longer guiding background model representing the same musical parameter, and consequently use the guiding model in a looser way (ibid., 416). Surface models can be approached using the same principle: for example, a short and dense melodic pattern based on the tones of the seventh chord becomes looser if the musician adds, for example, lower chromatic leading-tones to the pattern when playing it (ibid., 418).

These observations regarding the background and surface models and the relations between them can also be applied when studying the violin improvisation during the Violín a Ochún events. One can first study how the accompanying musicians approach the background models that guide the improvising violinist. The

binary *clave* pattern can be considered a short and dense rhythmic background model in Afro-Cuban music traditions and in Cuban popular music. It constantly exists on the deep level of music and can be brought out explicitly by playing it, for example, with the *claves* wooden sticks. Although the *clave* pattern is not always audible in music as such, the accompanying rhythmic-harmonic framework must be correctly aligned with the *clave* pattern. Musicians – both the accompanists and the soloist – momentarily emphasize particular *clave* strokes or particular accents within the *clave* cycle. For example, when violinists accompany the music by playing the so-called *guajeo* patterns, they should relate their playing in a correct rhythmic manner to the *clave* pattern. When studying the properties of the repetitive chord progression itself, one can say that it appears as a short and dense background model, as is common in this specific culture. Sometimes – although less frequently – the guitarist (and sometimes accordionist or pianist) can embed passing chords or ii7–V7 progressions into the basic progression, in which case they treat the harmonic model as a looser model.

The *clave* also has an impact on how the improvising violinist approaches the rhythm of the melodic line. When the improviser exploits, for example, a particular song quotation, they draw on both the melodic background model and the rhythmic background model at the same time. In addition to decorating a melodic line by employing different rhythmic-melodic licks and shorter phrases – the surface models – and treating the melodic background model as a looser model, they follow the *clave* pattern in different ways. The same occurs when the violinist (or the flautist; see Miller 2014, 98–103) draws on the *clave*-related *guajeo* pattern as a background model when improvising. Although the *guajeo* pattern would not be played as such, this accompaniment pattern serves as a reference for improvising musician (cf. Bardfeld 2001, 30; see Chapter 4). One can say that it is more appreciated if a soloist treats the rhythm line creatively in relation to the *clave* pattern. According to Washburne (1998, 171; cf. 2008, 178–197), the more creative the musician can be, stretching the emically accepted limits in relation to the *clave*, the more appealing the music is amongst other musicians.

The relation between the background model and surface models representing the same musical parameter varies during a solo: sometimes the surface models are farther and sometimes closer in relation to the background model (Huovinen 2010, 418). For example, when a musician breaks an instant chord in the background, one can say that they play closer to the harmonic background model (cf. ibid.), compared to situations where a musician would use, for example, out-side playing technique (cf. Levine 1995, 183). When studying the rhythmic parameter, it is common to find different phases that are characterized by the rhythmic tension and release between the rhythm of the melodic line and the *clave*. This is typical both to Afro-Cuban music and Cuban popular music (cf. Peñalosa 2009, 211). On the other hand, a

common feature in these music traditions is the use of a set of interrelated rhythmic cells, a manner which comes out also in pre-composed music between the rhythm of the melodic line and the *clave* pattern (e.g. Mauleón 1993; see Chapter 4), in which case the rhythmic surface model appears in a closer relation to the rhythmic background model.

As discussed above, the improviser's musical vocabulary consists of various shorter structural musical elements – so-called surface models. Most of the Cuban musicians I have interviewed call these shorter pre-existing musical elements patterns, thus using the same term as when referring to guiding musical structures at the foundation of improvisation. Another term, which was repeated in the interviews, was *recurso* (resource). Although the term is sometimes used synonymously with surface models in a musician's vocabulary, it primarily refers to different possibilities a musician has when using musical material during a performance in a broader sense.

Resources are musical tools, options, possibilities, ideas or techniques through which a musician approaches the patterns at the basis of a solo and improvisation in general. They can refer, for example, to culture-specific ways of approaching rhythmic conventions, different possibilities of using blues scale during a solo, or a manner of using some specific shorter musical quotation, such as a melodic fragment, in the flow of soloing. In the latter case it is also possible to speak about a (melodic) resource based on a (melodic) pattern (CdP 31032015). Thus, the possibilities, options and techniques the musician uses at the foundation of their improvisation come to light in the form of different structural patterns that appear in relation to the model that is guiding a solo at that moment.

> Resource is a technical capacity that each instrumentalist can have. According to their capacity, so are the resources they use. One example: in an improvisation I can do something similar to a cadenza of a certain violin concerto, but that is already dependent on the technical capacity of each one. And that is a resource. (OGÁ 03022014)[15]

> Resources are the possibilities. For example [--] a type of scale, a type of phrase or a style of phrase, or the way you move over the chords, a type of relation you do between the chords. [--] And the patterns are predetermined things [--] such as phrases that already exist. [--] If I am improvising, I leave the base in order to

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[15] 'Recurso es la capacidad técnica que pueda tener cada instrumentista. De acuerdo a su capacidad, así son los recursos que utiliza. Un ejemplo, en una improvisación puedo hacer algo parecido a una cadencia de determinado concierto de violín, pero ya eso está en dependencia de la capacidad técnica de cada cual. Y ese es el recurso.'

move away from the tonic chord. I always think about the high fifth of the chord. If the chord is C, I play the G. That is a resource. (CdP 31032015)[16]

The description of resources resembles affordances, a concept used in the embodied cognition perspective. Affordances refer both to properties of the environment that provide opportunities for particular kinds of action and behaviour (Chemero 2003, 181–195; Zipoli Caiani 2014, 275–293) and to functional and potential possibilities that, for example, the violin as an instrument has for its player (Deák 2014, 153). When a violinist resorts to different sensorimotor strategies or genre-specific musical resources during their improvisation, one can talk about affordances (e.g. Staveley 2020; Krueger 2014).

The concept emerged from Gibson's (2015) ecological psychology, which emphasizes the agent's direct perception without any inference. The meaning of perception is dependent on individual abilities and concerns in the particular situation. That is, the affordances are not the same for everyone, but they emerge in the environment in relation to needs, interests, preferences and pre-existing sensorimotor skills of the musician (Rieveld & Kiverstein 2014, 341–342). In addition to the instrument itself, the performance environment and other people can have musical affordances that the improviser can use when extending their thinking in interaction with them (Staveley 2020). Although perception is considered to be direct and affordances are related to the perceiver's personal abilities and concerns, they occur in a cultural context shared by the community. According to the theory of embodied cognition, musical cognition is essentially connected to the sociocultural environment (Wilson 2002, 626; Iyer 2002; Leung et al. 2011). The body and its associated mental representations are not random but can be informed by cultural habits, norms and values in its context and by the person's personal invisible 'histories' (Leung et al. 2011, 592; Staveley 2020, 30). Ramstead et al. (2016, 2) propose that cultural affordances are affordances that humans encounter in the niches that they constitute.[17] According to them, conventional cultural affordances are

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[16]   'Recursos son las posibilidades. Por ejemplo [–] el tipo de escala, el tipo de frase o el estilo de la frase o la forma en que tu te mueves sobre los acordes. [–] Y los patrones son cosas ya predeterminadas [–] como frases que ya están hechas. [–] Si yo estoy improvisando, yo parto de la base que para alejarme desde la tónica del acorde yo siempre pienso una quinta alta del acorde. Si el acorde es el do, yo toco el sol. Ese es un recurso.'

[17]   A niche in ecological psychology refers to a set of affordances in the environment in which organisms behave (Gibson 2015, 120).

[P]ossibilities for action, the engagement with which depends on agents' skilfully leveraging explicit or implicit expectations, norms, conventions, and cooperative social practices in their ability to correctly infer (implicitly or explicitly) the culturally specific sets of expectations of which they are immersed. These are expectations about how to interpret other agents, and the symbolically and linguistically mediated social world.

As González Álvarez and Del Puerto suggest in interview quotations above, the resource is more related to the technical skills and possibilities of the musician in relation to their instrument. The concept of affordance further extends this relationship to the environment. However, according to Gibson (2015, 53–54), the perception is direct, not sensation-based, and the signal – whether visual or auditory – is not transmitted to the brain where it would be processed. On the other hand, the interviews with the musicians participating in this study also contain references to certain kinds of mental representations between perception and action. In addition to resources and affordances, I would therefore refer to perceptions that are representations containing mental concepts. One can also call these visual sensory stimuli emerging from the environment extra-musical models when they influence the musician's actions in the course of improvisation.

The terms pattern and resource can also be compared to 'in-time' model and 'out-of-time' model, the terms used by Pressing (1984, 347–348). The former refers to temporally organized models which have a built-in temporal dimension in the same way as in structural background and surface models. On the other hand, an example of an out-of-time model could be a musical scale. When studying the musical properties of a scale independently, it is clear that it is not temporally determined but rather appears as a kind of abstract storehouse of pitch-related material, which may be used quite freely. However, it is worth mentioning that structural melodic in-time models can also be based on melodic scale patterns, if these models appear as structures that are identified by certain kinds of obligatory recurring musical events. That is, a certain kind of scale passage can be an established structural surface model when it appears in a similar way in the structure of improvisation from one improvisation to another. On the other hand, if the violinist only leans on the possibility of using the scale during improvisation, and it does not appear, for example, in the form of a repeated established pattern, it can be called a resource.

As the interview quotations above suggest, resources (or affordances) – different possibilities, options and techniques – are essentially related to a musician's knowledge base and technical ability to exploit the conventions typical of music culture in relation to the structures that guide improvisation. Although the local musicians use the term pattern, I use – in order to keep the terminology coherent in

relation to earlier studies concerning the musical structures in improvisation (Nettl, 1974, 1998; Lortat-Jacob 1987; Huovinen 2010) – the term model to describe particularly the structural predetermined elements appearing both on the macro (background) level and on the micro (surface) level of music. The term 'pattern' – the term the violinists use – is also an alternative term to 'model', and its semantic content corresponds with both the structures guiding the improvisation in the background and the structural elements that are carried out on the surface level of music. However, along with model, I also refer to fragments, phrases and licks. Cuban musicians also use these terms when dealing with models on the surface level of music.

1.4.2   Music in and as Culture

According to the earliest definitions in the field of anthropology, culture is a 'complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society' (Tylor 2016, 1). All of these domains can be said to interact together and form the basis for culture-specific behavioural models and the ways in which people of some particular society interpret the world. According to Ward Goodenough (1956, qtd. in Herndon & McLeod 1979, 58), culture 'is the forms of things that people have in mind, their models for perceiving, relating and otherwise interpreting them'. It refers to learned and accumulated experiences and to the socially transmitted patterns of behaviour characteristics of some particular social group (Keesing 1981, 68).

In the study of ethnomusicology, music is considered part of culture and a product of society. Indeed, ethnomusicology is sometimes called the 'anthropology of music' (Merriam 1964; Myers 1992, 3; Nettl 2005, 5). In addition to studying music in its cultural and social context, ethnomusicology has adopted some central research methods from anthropology, such as the importance of fieldwork. Furthermore, the study focuses – besides the music itself – on different concepts and behaviour related to the music. Ethnomusicology seeks to explain musical phenomena by using different methods of music analysis and taking into account the role, uses and functions of music in its cultural context. In short, the music analysis and the anthropological point of view complement each other.

Culture considered as an ideational system includes different systems of shared ideas, systems of concepts, and rules and meanings that underline and are expressed in the ways humans live (Keesing 1981, 68). Cognitive anthropology focuses on finding, identifying and explaining cognitive structures and models of thinking shared by a particular group or society, which are reflected and expressed in observable phenomena and behaviour (Moisala 1991, 19–22). In ethnomusicology, music is approached from this kind of culture-sensitive point of view. According to

John Blacking (1971, 92), music should be treated 'as humanly organized sound whose patterns are related to the social and cognitive processes of a particular society and culture'.

In his book *The Anthropology of Music* (1964, 32–33), Alan Merriam proposes a tripartite model for the study of ethnomusicology: how to study music in culture. In his model Merriam stresses the ideational basis of music. According to Merriam's model, there are three analytic levels – conceptualizations about music, behaviour in relation to music, and music sound – that cannot be separated from each other. In order to understand the entirety they form, one should be able to understand all three levels included in the model. According to the model, the conceptualizations the society has about the music affect behaviour in relation to music (embracing musical and non-musical acts of the musicians and audience participating in a musical event, and also verbal expressions about the music) and the resultant sound of music. The model is dynamic and includes the idea of music as a phenomenon that constantly changes. The resultant music has an impact on conceptualizations about music, and the kind of music a society regards as acceptable is produced more. Merriam also introduces the concepts of 'use' and 'function' (ibid., 209–227). The former refers to the situation in which music is used, and the latter to the reasons behind its use as well as its broader purpose (ibid., 210). These functions may include, for example, the function of entertainment or the function of validation of religious ritual (ibid., 223–224).

When referring to music as culture (Merriam 1977, 202, 204), the focus of the study moves to a deeper level: how the complex cultural whole and its domains are reflected in musical sound and in the concepts and behaviour models related to it. It is possible, for example, to approach musical structures or musical conventions through the culture's central values, such as religion, and study how these values are reflected in music, and how music accommodates or modifies them. According to Nettl (2005, 218–219), in comprehensive studies, both of these approaches – music in culture and music as culture – are present at different stages of study. Sometimes their borders are blurred, and they overlap with each other (ibid., 219; see also Herndon and McLeod 1979). At this point, I refer to the first and second sub-questions of this work and the aim of studying the role and function of improvisation and the wider cultural reflections included in it in the context of this particular occasion.

As mentioned above, the concept of culture includes the idea of dynamism and constant change over time. In addition to the dynamic nature of culture, it is also stable: it does not change completely, and the change does not happen overnight (Merriam 1964, 303). Changes take place inside the system and reflect its continuity (ibid.). However, the changes take place at different levels and depend on the context. For example, 'transculturation' (or syncretism) is a concept that has been

widely used in the context of Cuban cultural studies. It refers to an intercultural process, which results in the emergence of new cultures and new ways of doing things. For example, it can be said that Afro-Cuban culture, including Afro-Cuban religious and music traditions, has emerged as a result of this kind of process. However, the process of transculturation also includes the idea of continuity; even though different elements appear in a new syncretistic context, one can trace their origins to those cultures that have been part of the syncretistic process (cf. Nettl 2005, 278).

The process of musical change has been assumed to be slower in those societies in which a musical system has, through previous change, been adapted effectively to the social system and thus need not adapt further (Nettl 2005, 280). Also, if the music culture includes improvisation over the model, the model itself remains constant and changes occur in other components of the music (ibid., 289). According to John Blacking (1986, 11), musical change does not follow the same patterns of change as other social and cultural factors. Additionally, it has been suggested that the musical concepts and behaviour related to them change more easily than the musical sound itself, although it echoes cultural change as well (Nettl 2005, 288).

Cuban musicians emphasize the importance of the guiding binary *clave* structure at the basis of music. Different *clave* rhythms and their polyrhythmic framework are closely related to different music styles evolved in Cuba, thus giving the music a distinctive character. In addition to the *clave* pattern, Cuban music includes other musical structures that have a binary character, such as responsorial singing, common both in religious and secular music. Floyd (2002, 49–70) uses the concept of Call-Response to describe the dialogical and conversational character, which is fundamental to all black music developed in America. He refers more broadly to the entirety, which includes elements such as the interaction between musicians and the audience, the complete intertwining of music and dance, and the system of reference contained in music and lyrics (ibid., 68). Miller (2014, 198, 217–218) brings up the Call-Response trope when approaching different phenomena in Cuban dance music. In addition to the *clave* pattern and call-and-response singing style, it is reflected in a dominant to tonic harmony, in a typical division between *macho* (small) and *hembra* (large) drums in the context of bongo, congas and *timbales*, and in the relationship that stresses a direct communication between dance styles and music, which have traditionally evolved simultaneously following the demands of the dancers. Furthermore, this binary relationship appears in musical phrases and song lyrics that include double entendres and coded references to Afro-Cuban religious traditions (ibid). To sum up, one can say that a certain binary nature, which emerges in the structures of music and different referential relationships within the culture, creates stability in the dynamic environment.

In this context, I refer to sub-question three concerning the relationship between the stability and change among the musical structures appearing in the foundation of improvisations. Because the *clave* pattern has a central role in Cuban popular music, I would assume that this pattern, alongside the accompanying chord progression, functions as a certain kind of model for the improvising violinists. Because Cuban popular music has been referred to as extremely self-referential music (Bardfeld 2001, 30), it is necessary to ask whether other guiding models can be recognized that represent different musical parameters, which have some sort of stable character and are repeated in improvisations. On the other hand, is it possible to find any references to some kind of change in the way of using some musical parameter or some particular structural elements between the improvisations of the violinists representing different generations?

1.4.3   Violin as an Artifact

The embodiment of music is considered to emerge in a unified, interactive relationship between the musician and their instrument (Torrance & Schumann 2019, 255). Extended cognition means that the musician extends thinking into the instrument to lighten the cognitive load (cf. Clark 2005). The instrument is included in the body schema as if it were a part of the body, in which case the object outside of the body becomes a part of the brain and is experienced as a transparent extension of the body (e.g. Magnusson 2009, 168; Krueger 2014, 5; Bertinetto 2021, 8). When cognition extends to the instrument, it activates cognitive processes such as interpretation, reasoning, and perception (e.g. Chemero 2016, 5). This is achieved through practice and learning (e.g. Andrada 2020, 4): when an expert plays, the instrument becomes a part of the user's body, an object through which they experience music without paying attention to such things as how the instrument is held or played (Staveley 2020, 87–88; Heersmink 2021a, 11). In such a situation, the instrument has been referred to either as an embodied tool or an embodied artifact (Heersmink 2013; Burnett & Gallagher 2020; Staveley 2020; Andrada 2020; Heersmink 2021a).

According to Heersmink (2021a, 3), an artifact differs from a tool. Like a tool, it can be a single handheld device, but it can also be any other more complex material product of a human agent, such as a skyscraper. Another characteristic of an artifact is that it has a function and a task that often has an effect on the user or the world. Heersmink (ibid., 2–3) divides artifacts into four groups: embodied, perceptual, cognitive, and affective artifacts. However, these categories can overlap depending on the artifact.

One can say that in addition to being an embodied artifact, because it performs its function through bodily interaction with it, the violin can be seen as an affective

artifact, since it is used to express one's emotions and moods during the Violín a Ochún ceremony. The violin as an instrument can also be considered a cultural artifact that embodies cultural knowledge and, when played, can influence people and their interactions (cf. Raczaszek-Leonardi et al. 2019). One can say that the violin plays a central symbolic role in the expression of cultural identity during the ceremonies dedicated to saints. The expression of cultural identity takes place through institutions, practices and especially artifacts (Heersmink 2021b). Cultural groups have narratives and historical knowledge that characterize their identity and ensure their continuity over time; these are manifested in the cultural memory and materialized in artifacts, cultural practices and so-called memory specialists (see Assmann 2008; Heersmink 2021b). The symbolic role of the violin in the Violín a Ochún event emerges in the narratives stemming from Yoruba mythology regarding the formation and function of the event, as well as in the associations between Ochún and the sound and the melodies produced by the violin (see section 3.4.1). Furthermore, the *babalawos* – Santería memory specialists – who participate in these ceremonies interpret these issues in relation to the progress of the event.

The function of the artifact is manifested in different ways during the interactive event. In intersubjective temporal activities between the listener and the performer, music provides a sense of mutual embodiment (Iyer 2016, 79). Mirror neuron research (e.g. Gallese et al. 1996; Gallagher & Zahavi 2008) has been exploited in the context of rhythm perception. According to Iyer (2016, 76–77), rhythm causes the brain to prepare the body for movement, facilitating or activating a physical response (see also Todd 1999). The phenomenon, in which we bodily respond in kind to what we think we hear another body doing, has been called 'aural mirroring' (Iyer 2016, 76–77). That is, when listening to music, humans respond to it in a sympathetic, synchronous bodily action, like dancing (ibid., 77). This also refers to the idea that perception and cognition of music are actively constructed by the listener, rather than passively transferred from performer to listener (Iyer 2004, 159; Iyer 2016, 78; Giomi 2019, 3). This kind of interaction can also be seen between the music played by the violinist and the audience both in Cuban popular music and Afro-Cuban music. In addition to being a melodic instrument, the violin can be used as a rhythmic instrument: it participates in the construction of a polyrhythmic framework – which guides the audience's dancing – through the accompanying *guajeo* patterns. Furthermore, the traditional role of violin improvisation based on the *charanga* style has been combined with the ability to communicate with the dancers in a responsorial manner (see section 3.6). On the other hand, musical information can also be processed without bodies, and music can suggest semantic concepts (Iyer 2016, 84, 87), such as when playing different melodies that create associations outside of music.

1.4.4   Musical Performance and Improvisation

In ethnomusicological research, based on the ethnography of musical performance, the importance of the values and concepts shared by a society, as well as the different codes and rules behind cultural performance, has been emphasized. Musical performance refers to a social expression that is conducted by individuals (Rice 2013, 27) in which music is used in the way that is typical for a particular society (Merriam 1964, 210). The study of musical performance should take into account different musical and extra-musical behaviour models having an impact on the musical outcome, different rules and codes at the basis of performance, the consequent social interaction between the participants and the meaning of interaction for the participants (Béhague 1984, 6–8).

Marcia Herndon (1971, 340) uses the term 'occasion' when referring to musical performance. According to her, an occasion encompasses the following features: 1) it is an encapsulated expression of shared cognitive forms and values; 2) it includes not only music but the totality of associated behaviour and underlying concepts; 3) it is usually a named event with a beginning and an end; 4) it contains varying degrees of organization of activity, audience, performances, and location (see also Stone 2008, 140).

The occasion organized in honour of Santería gods, in which violins are in the main role, is referred to with different names. Because it is normally organized in honour of Ochún, people often call it Violín a Ochún (Violin for Ochún). Sometimes the event is called Violines Santorales, which refers to saints in general. At times, people just use the names Violín or 'fiesta', which contain a presumption of the nature of the event. This occasion also has a clear beginning and an end: just like in other Santería ceremonies, it is opened and closed with music dedicated to the god Elegguá.

Bárbara Balbuena Gutiérrez (2003, 25, 29) refers to *fiestas rituales* (ritual feasts) in the context of Santería celebrations. She mentions that the primary character of these events is sacred or religious, not recreational, and that the objective of these celebrations is communication with the *orishas*, in order to achieve a moral end in this way. Although the Violín a Ochún feast has a religious character, just like other Santería celebrations, I would claim that a recreational ambience is also an essential part of its nature. This is reflected in a less rigid and more variable structure, as well as in the popular music played during events.

The structure of the event varies a great deal depending on the ensemble and the organizer. There are also differences in the musical content of different events, although the essential musical numbers are the same. Although the ceremonies are only loosely tied to the same kind of ritual structure and there are differences in their implementation, the function and deeper meaning for organizing the event are similar. Additionally, the wide variety of songs presented at the events is part of a

broader cognitive and social entirety, and they reflect in different ways the meanings the community has attached to this celebration.

When approaching violin improvisation in the context of the Violín a Ochún feast, I would suggest that it has a particular role during the event. I would further suggest that the social interactions – both between musicians and between the musicians and the audience – in the course of the ceremony influence the content of the improvisation. At this stage, I would refer to a form of symbolic interaction in which the behaviour of human beings is based on their interpretation of the meanings that different symbols have for them.

According to Herbert Blumer (1998, 2), symbolic interactionism is based on three premises. First of all, 'human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them.' That is, people attach different meanings to things and act accordingly. Both the ensemble playing in the Violín a Ochún event and the audience participating in it evolve certain kinds of assumptions and opinions regarding the structure, the type of music that should be played, and the role of improvisation during the event. According to the second premise (ibid.), 'the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows.' The third premise (ibid.) is that 'these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person dealing with the things he encounters.' Social interaction occurs in many different situations and in many different ways. For example, I would assume that the musicians and the audience are aware of each other's actions at some level during the performance and that this is based on the interpretation of different gestures between the participants. I would also suggest that in the course of improvisation, different behavioural norms and communicative codes – such as some particular melodic model giving a signal of coming action, or other kinds of verbal and non-verbal codes – form a central part of the performance.

The self-concept is fundamental in symbolic interactionism. In this view, two components of the self, 'I' and 'Me', are in continuous communication during an interpretive process of the self. According to Aldiabet and La Navenec (2011), the 'I' refers to the impulsive, spontaneous and creative part of the human self and represents the acting and experiencing self. The 'Me' refers to the social self and represents a 'generalized other' that directs and controls behaviour. The 'Me' arises through the interaction with others and is the organized set of attitudes, definitions, and cultural-historical expectations that individuals have internalized to direct their behaviour (ibid., 1064–1065).

Generalized others may refer, for example, to individuals or social groups with whom we spend time (Aldiabet & La Navenec 2011, 1064–1065). I would suppose that in addition to a musician's experience, creativity and ability, the established practices of a particular ensemble, the example of more experienced violinists, and

the general attitudes and the expectations of the audience have an influence on how the musician produces improvisation in the course of performance. That is, when a violinist starts playing in these events, their improvisation skills regarding this particular genre develop partly due to sociocultural influence (cf. de Bruin 2018, 484). Thus, I would suggest that people have more than a single generalized other forming the interactive framework in which the individual acts at the time of the improvisation.

Although the context-based improvisation style related to a religious occasion is partly learned when participating in cultural performances, violinists have different backgrounds that affect the production of improvisation during the celebration. None of the violinists in this study is a beginner as a violinist, but they have all studied classical music. However, some have studied further than others. Additionally, most of the violinists have played in *charanga* orchestras. There are also those who have a strong home learning background because they come from well-known families who are associated as *charanga* musicians (e.g. Edel Lazága Ortega).[18] However, some violinists improvise for the first time when they participate in these occasions.

How, then, has this process of learning improvisation been approached? Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1980) drafted a five-stage model of performance between a novice and a master ('master' was in later publications replaced by 'expert') based on David Sudnow's (1978) book on becoming a jazz pianist (Dreyfus and Dreyfus 1980, 1). To reach the expert level, one should progress through the lower levels. The novice follows the rules and has an incomplete understanding, whereas in the expert stage, the intuitively functioning 'proficient performer, immersed in the world of [their] skilful activity, sees what needs to be done but decides how to do it' (Dreyfus 2004, 179; see also Honken 2013).

Torrance and Schumann (2019) approach the development of jazz improvisation skills based on Dreyfus' ideas. According to them, a novice may begin learning with context-free rules but later start to see contextual distinction features. As the knowledge of rules and contextual distinctions accumulate, they have choices to act in different ways, and through successful performances a notion of 'significance' emerges. As a 'proficient performer' (stage 4/5), they have a notion of significance, and sensations of risk and fulfilment begin to work in the background of a new form of learning, in which the application of rules moves to learning situational and salient goals. Being at the expert level, they have acquired a repertoire of contextual 'sensations about' and 'actions within' their domain, knowing what can be or needs to be done and knowing how to do it (ibid., 261).

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[18] Related to this subject concerning home learning, more formal training and 'street' musical education in the Cuban context, see the films by Professor Geoff Baker: http://www.growingintomusic.co.uk/cuba-rumba/ (accessed 24 May 2023).

Kratus (1991, 1996) has also outlined a model based on seven learning levels corresponding to the developmental stages of an improvisation student. An improvising musician's level is determined by the person's level of knowledge and skills. At the first level, exploration, the person explores the instrument, sounds, and sound combinations in a loosely structured context, gradually learning to audiate the patterns and later to produce more cohesive patterns within larger musical structures. Kratus (1991, 38) refers to these learning stages as a process-oriented improvisation. In the subsequent levels, the improvisation becomes more product-oriented, as the musician continues to develop into an expert and learns to improvise skilfully within a given style (ibid.). The seventh level, the 'personal improvisation' level, is reserved by Kratus for those few musicians who break new boundaries and create their own rules and practices. He mentions Miles Davis as an example (ibid., 39).

In Cuban violin improvisation, the musicians who have created their own style – and from whom many violinists take influences – are, for example, Miguel Barbón, Dagoberto González and Alfredo de la Fé. However, their improvisation styles are also based, in a way typical of Cuban culture, on a common shared cultural tradition, where *charanga* influences are visible throughout. However, creating one's own personal style with some recognizable trademarks is considered the ideal of improvisation, as well as in the context of *charanga* music (cf. Miller 2014). The violinists participating in this study also emphasize this fact.

Kratus (1991, 37–38) identifies a difference between 'process-' and 'product-oriented' improvisation. The former means that 'a person creates music for the sake of experiencing the process of creation.' According to Kratus, this is characteristic of novices. The latter refers to an action with the aim of creating a certain kind of product. That is, 'a person creates music that is or could be shared with others.' By this, Kratus refers to improviser's ability to produce coherent improvisation based on rules, norms and style.

One can say that all the violinists participating in this study produce product-oriented improvisation. Although there are differences between the improvisers, for example, in terms of technical skills, the improvisations follow the given style in different ways. However, the terms used by Kratus should not be confused with the nature of improvisation in general: the basic idea of the improvisation involves engaging in the present moment (cf. Sarath 2016, 135), no matter how experienced the musicians are. I think that Kratus' view works up to a point, but it should always address how these two facets, process and product, overlap and are simultaneous, as argued by O'Suilleabhain. In his definition, O'Suilleabhain (see above) refers to the concept of improvisation as the process of creative interaction between the musician and a musical model. On the one hand this definition emphasizes the process of improvisation, but on the other, the interactivity and the creation in relation to the model links it to a certain kind of improvisation style, which is closer to product-

oriented improvisation. For example, if the improvisation activity is part of some collective ritual related to religion, I would assume that the improvisation itself might have a more profound function and meaning. That is, the process of this kind of improvisation might involve some obligatory product aspects on a level between the music and the symbols it transmits, and the musicians, no matter how experienced they are, should take this into account when soloing.

Both Dreyfus' and Kratus' models put forth the same idea: as musicians' improvisation skills develop, they learn to improvise skilfully within a given context. When the knowledge base increases, the violin as an artifact also provides more resources (or affordances) to the improviser. With experience, the knowledge base, which is built into the musician's long-term memory, includes a large knowledge set accrued via practicing, listening and performing music; generalized motor programs; different problem-solving routines and perceptual strategies; and hierarchical memory structures and schemas (Pressing 1998, 53). According to Johnson-Laird (1988), effective improvisation requires the musicians to have sufficient motor programmes and that their subconscious knowledge base processes are automated, so that they can access these in the course of performance and are able to concentrate on developing a coherent unity. This refers to a phase in which a musician has somehow 'overlearned' what they have conceptually mastered (Pressing 1998, 53).

Although improvisation takes place in real time, as autonomous from past events and future possibilities (Sarath 2016, 135), it is also associated with the idea of retrospection, which means that a musician can produce events in relation to what they have played just before (Gioia 1988, 61; Pressing 1988, 153; Hsieh 2009, 53; Norgaard et al. 2022, 6). On the other hand, the improviser might 'pre-hear' what the sounds they will produce next will sound like (Pressing 1984, 356). However, the concept of improvisation also includes the ideas of uncontrollability, instant creation and being involved in the process of creation. That is, musicians can also be surprised by the musical solutions they have made (Berliner 1994, 218–219). All musical events take place during a joint musical performance: the progress of the improvisation and the choices made by the improviser are influenced by the interaction they have with other musicians and the audience (cf. Johnson-Laird 1991; Schiavio & Høffding 2015).

Joint action is based on shared goals, which influence the fact that the musicians take each other's actions into account in the course of performance (Keller et al. 2014, 4). According to Palmer and Zamm (2017, qtd. in Staveley 2020, 101), two types of joint action exist amongst ensembles: spontaneous and intentional. As an example of intentional joint action, Staveley (2020, 101) brings up a question-answer style improvisation, which is characterized by musical and social understanding of turn-taking. On the other hand, it is also spontaneous, when the musicians respond to each other through music (ibid.). One can assume that intentionality is emphasized

in different ways in collective events, which have a ritual character and a certain kind of pre-determined structure in order to achieve a common goal. In this context, the referent that the improvising musician follows in order to achieve the desired result can refer to the *montuno* section in a broader sense. Furthermore, it can function as a certain kind of structure for the audience. In addition to increasing processing efficiency, the referent also creates expectancies from the listener's perspective: improvisation brings out emotional experiences and musical meanings (Pressing 1998, 52–53). Spontaneous joint action, on the other hand, appears in several ways during improvisation, both between musicians and between musicians and the audience. In addition to different manners of communicating musically, the progress of improvisation is guided by verbal and physical gestures, such as shouts, nods, and gazes.

All these points relate back to my fourth sub-question concerning the different kinds of factors guiding the selection of the models of the improvising violinist, and – on the other hand – how these models guide the creative process of performance.

1.4.5   Three Dimensions of Musical Experience

When studying violin improvisation in the context of the Violín a Ochún event, I approach it through Timothy Rice's (2003; 2017; see also 1987) idea of the three dimensions of musical experience. It stresses the subject-centred point of view but also takes into account the fact that the subjects are social beings and interact with each other in time and place (Rice 2003, 157–158). Rice's three dimensions of musical experience are time, place, and metaphor.

In this model, the temporal dimension is approached both from a historical and chronological and from the experiential and phenomenological point of view of the musicians. The former can be represented as sequential events. The latter, the musical experience in the present, is partly conditioned by previous experience. The time passes both in a straight, measured line and also in such way that the periodized time spans related to cultural and social changes have an impact on the musician's experiences of the world (Rice 2003, 162–163). When taking into account that the musicians participating in this study represent different generations and have been present and acted in different stages of historical, cultural, and social change, I would suppose that these experiences are also reflected in certain ways in their improvisations.

The location, the sociogeographical dimension, is considered a multiple interactive social setting in which people produce, experience, and understand music. According to Rice (2003, 160–162), people live and experience music socially in multiple locales. In addition to on-the-ground realities, the locations may be seen as

complex mental locales in which musicians and the audience experience music. These locales range from individual to global musical experiences (ibid.).

In this research I use the term local in the following four senses: 1) individual, which refers both to those twelve violinists participating in this study and to certain individuals whose innovative improvisation styles have influenced Cuban and Latin violin improvisation in general; 2) local, which refers to Havana's religious society, and more specifically to the context of the cultural unit in which the violinists of this study act; 3) national, which refers to Cuba in a geographic sense and to the politics and practices the state represents; and 4) global, which refers more broadly to global influences and connections (Rice 2003, 159–162).

The third dimension is the metaphor. According to Rice (2017, 93), 'metaphors are ways of understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another, guide the actions of individuals operating in society, and serve understanding and experience.' In Rice's view (2003, 159, 163), metaphors make claims about the fundamental nature of music and take music closer to other domains of human experience. Metaphors create a basis for behavioural, interpretative, and discursive strategies, which put these claims into practice. In this study I use the following metaphors introduced by Rice: music as art, music as social behaviour, and music as symbol.

According to Rice (2003, 166; 2017, 91–92), the music-as-art metaphor refers to the processes of performing and composing music, the musical products that result from these processes, and the reception of them in perception, cognition, and interpretation. Music as social behaviour suggests that the musical performance is – in addition to being the musical occasion – also a performance of past or existing social structures or social relations, because music is made and understood by people in society (Rice 2003, 166; 2017, 92). Music as a symbolic system refers to the existing music and to a world beyond music; it may refer to different things, ideas, worlds, and experiences outside music itself (Rice 2003, 166).

Rice's model is close to Merriam's ideas: the concepts people have about music influence behaviour, leading to the use of music – which has a certain kind of broader function and purpose – in a particular situation (Merriam 1964). The central difference between their ideas is that according to Merriam (ibid., 210), the uses and functions of music should be evaluated by the outside observer, but Rice (2003, 157, 163; see also 2017, 93), instead, emphasizes the subject-centred approach when referring to musical experiences that may differ depending on the individual, time and place. However, I see these two approaches, outside observer and subject-centred approach, as two sides of a coin (cf. Nettl 2005, 249), both of which are present in the present study.

1.4.6   Position of the Researcher

I am well aware that the researcher coming from outside the culture under study approaches culture from the etic perspective (Eriksen 2001, 36–37; Nettl 2005, 186). However, my goal is to write an ethnography that takes into account how the community under study perceives and understands the world. This approach is close to the idea of the so-called thick description, which refers to the description of culture through the understanding of a symbolic system embedded in social activity (Geertz 1973, 7; Titon 2003, 171–180). In addition to bringing out the different experiences of the subjects in the context of the Violín a Ochún event, and with the aim of seeing the phenomenon from the insider's perspective myself as well, I also observe the phenomenon from outside and try to see it as a multivoiced wholeness based on different experiences of the subjects in the field.

The dichotomous concept concerning the cultural 'insider' (the emic) and 'outsider' (the etic) is often brought out in cross-cultural studies. The former refers to a cultural actor who shares a similar cultural background with the members of community under study and thus offers the culture's own perspective (Nettl 2005, 153). Cultural outsider, on the other hand, refers to a person coming from outside the culture with a comparative and universal approach to interpretation (ibid.). I would say that it is easier for an insider researcher to get in touch with the subject under study. This is because they have – at least on some level – a common background with the members of society regarding social and cultural practices. Outside researchers, on the other hand, come from outside the community with different cultural backgrounds (Suwankhong & Liamputtong 2015).

Both perspectives, insider and outsider, have strengths in understanding and interpreting the subject under study. As a result of their cultural background, insiders may be so close to the subject that some things might appear common or obvious. On the other hand, because of a lack of knowledge, the outsider might be able to see a phenomenon from a different perspective because they have to approach it more closely (Suwankhong & Liamputtong 2015, 2, 6). A different perspective held by the outsider can also provide a contribution to the insider's understanding (Nettl 2005, 157).

It has been claimed that the outsider researcher will never 'know' the music as the insider does, although it is possible for an outsider to 'get to know' the music of the other (Nercessian 2002, 25). It is true that the process of enculturation, in which a person acquires the understanding and beliefs of the particular society in which they grow from birth (e.g. Demorest et al. 2008, 213), is something unique. Even if the ethnomusicologist uses a culture's own analysis or evaluation in order to understand and interpret the subject, their own cultural base – in which they have enculturated – also influences them in the background. However, I would claim that it is possible to narrow the gap between the perspectives of the insider and the

outsider. Also, I do not think that this kind of division between perspectives is absolute in any real sense, but rather includes an unlimited number of nuances and levels that are constantly changing. As Timothy Rice (2008, 57) aptly states of the insider-outsider dichotomy: 'I am neither insider nor outsider; I speak as myself, a self formed, reconfigured, and changed by my encounters with and understandings of, and indeed all kinds of other musical works and performances.'

When I started collecting research material, I already had some knowledge on the subject, and I had established relationships with some local musicians. However, as a result of long-term fieldwork and the development of my own musicianship, my understanding of the subject deepened. This process, in which the interpretation of different meanings leads cyclically to a deeper understanding of the subject, is called a hermeneutic circle. The understanding deepens at the moments of 'hermeneutic experience' or 'fusion of horizons' (Gadamer 1979), when the different perspectives intersect (see section 2.2).

I would claim that my personal understanding during the research process began to deepen along with the violin classes and when I started to play with different ensembles. As a result, I had a chance to bring the concrete themes and questions that had emerged through my own playing into the discussions with the locals. At the same time I video-recorded, made transcriptions and analyzed the improvisations, which, together with the interviews I conducted, deepened my knowledge in several ways. However, through playing with the bands and having opportunities to improvise, my understanding deepened in a special way: in those moments, the boundaries between outsider and insider were blurred. I was observing the subject through my own musicianship – at the same time being and experiencing it at the core of performance and also personally participating in the creation of the event.

I guess that both the interpretation of information and the deepening of knowledge would have proceeded a bit differently if I had been initiated into the religion. Naturally, this would have led to a more religion-related understanding. However, because of the respect I had for the religious people who assisted me, I did not initiate. I did not experience any kind of religious revival and I wanted to be as transparent as possible in front of the community. However, a conscious exclusion from the practice of religion also underlined the outsider role I held, and sometimes made it more difficult to participate in Violines Espirituales ceremonies. These events differed from the celebration of the saints, as they had a more intimate character and were based strongly on the spiritistic traditions (see Chapter 3).

1.5 Violinists Participating in this Study

1.5.1 The Influence of the Revolution in Musical Education

In the context of this study, the most remarkable factor, which illustrates a difference between the improvisations of the violinists who were born before and after the 1959 revolution, may be their educational background in music. Most of the violinists participating in this study who were born before the revolution did not have systematic or formal musical education before the reform, which took place after the revolution. According to Lisandro Otero's article, *Política cultural de Cuba*, which was published in UNESCO's collection in 1971, the two main reasons for this were the lack of musical institutions and the high cost (Otero 1971, 19). However, according to other sources, the number of private conservatories in Cuba before 1959 was the largest in the world in proportion to its population (García Alonso 2005, 97).

According to Carlos Del Puerto (b. 1951), a Cuban bass player and a teacher, most of the musicians, including the ones who used to play in symphony orchestras, did not have any kind of institutional title at the beginning of the revolution (CdP 31032015). Because of this, the Escuela de Superación de Músicos Profesionales was created. At this school, every musician had to attend an evaluation of their musical skills and earlier music studies. Based on these assessments, the musicians were divided into three different categories, A, B, and C, of which A was the best. The salaries of the musicians and their options to play in different ensembles were based on this classification (Otero 1971, 27). The Escuela de Superación de Músicos Profesionales also provided the opportunity to carry out complementary studies and graduate with a certain degree. By contrast, the musicians who were born in the decades following the revolution already lived in the society, which offered systematic classical music studies at different institutions maintained by the state.

One interesting thing to note between the generations is that while the older generation had more experience in the areas of *charanga* ensembles and popular music, some of the younger violinists had a musical education based only on systematic classical music studies. As Alejandro Vistel (b. 1991) put it: 'I graduated last year and until I finished school, I only knew classical music' (AV 26022010).[19] However, three of the five younger violinists in this study, who were born in the 1970s and 1980s, used to play in different *charanga* ensembles during their studies at conservatories. Thus, they had already gained some practical experience in the context of Cuban popular music while studying classical violin.

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[19] 'Me gradué año pasado y hasta que terminé la escuela, nada más que conocía la música clásica.'

After the revolution the new educational model was established, and many of the professors, as well as the materials used in education, were adopted from the Soviet Union. The gap between art music and popular music remained wide until the 1980s, and playing and studying popular music was prohibited in Cuban music institutions (OGÁ 26102007). Carlos Del Puerto, who is also the founder and the original member of the group Irakere, was one of the first people to include popular music workshops in the educational programs of the conservatories in the 1980s. According to him:

> Popular music was prohibited in Cuban conservatories until the 1980s and even later. I can tell you that, for example, several famous Cuban musicians were kicked out of conservatories for playing popular music. [--] The musicians [of popular music] of that generation, from the 1960s to the first half of the 1980s, they either left the conservatories or they were kicked out. (CdP 31032015)[20]

However, attitudes have changed over the years. Although it is still not possible to study popular music or jazz in Cuban music institutions, several musicians – not only the violinists – dedicate their free time to those genres of music and make their living partly from this.

1.5.2   A Short Introduction to the Violinists

The primary research material of this study includes improvisations of twelve violinists who lived in Havana during the time I carried out the fieldwork. These violinists can be roughly divided into two different groups based on their ages. This division can also be justified because of some of the features in the content of their solos (see Chapters 4 and 5). The violinists who formed the group of the older generation were Jorge Hernández Mora (JHM; b. 1937), Ricardo Cortez García (RCG; b. 1941), Raúl Ríos Chassagne (RRC; b. 1942), René García González (RGG; b. 1944), Felix Parreño (FP; 1945–2009), Omar Nilo González Álvarez (OGÁ; b. 1948) and Mario Argudin (MA; b. 1950). The violinists representing the younger generation were Ronny Cabarrogas Fernández (RCF; b. 1978), Eduar Marzán Betancourt (EMB; b. 1982), Edel Lazága Ortega (ELO; b. 1984), Jorge Denis Molir (JDM; b. 1990) and Alejandro Vistel (AV; b. 1991).

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[20]   'La música popular fue prohibida en los conservatorios en Cuba como hasta el año 80, algo así, incluso más. Yo te puedo decir que por ejemplo muchos de los músicos famosos cubanos, los sacaron de los conservatorios por tocar la música popular. [--] Los músicos de esa generación de los 60 hasta los medianos de 80, todos se fueron de los conservatorios o les botaron.'

It is common that some violinists play together in the same ensemble. For example, Alejandro Vistel – and Eduar Marzán Betancourt, at one point – used to play together with Ronny Cabarrogas Fernández. On the other hand, Jorge Denis Molir used to work in the same line-up with Edel Lazága Ortega. The violinists playing in the group called Iré all represented the older generation (González Álvarez, Ríos Chassagne, Hernández Mora), although sometimes Cabarrogas Fernández also joined the group. Normally two violinists played at the same time during the event. Mario Argudin worked together with Lazága Ortega, Denis Molir and García González. Ricardo Cortez García was playing in Orquesta Estrellas Cubanas. Felix Parreño, when improvising, was the only violinist on the occasions I participated in. However, he also played in the events in which the client requested more violinists.

It was interesting that sometimes violinists playing in different line-ups joined together when the client requested, for example, an ensemble consisting only of five violins. Normally, Mario Argudin, who had an extensive network, was the one who contacted the violinists. This convention among the local musicians was called '*ven tú*' (you come). It meant that the musicians did not necessarily know with whom they were going to play until the event began. This was one of the reasons that the basic themes played during the occasions were normally played in easier keys everyone was familiar with.[21]

A common feature among the older violinists is that they all attended the evaluation of the Escuela de Superación de Músicos Profesionales mentioned above. These violinists have very different backgrounds in music education from the time before the revolution. For example, Jorge Hernández Mora, Felix Parreño and René García González took private lessons before the revolution, but the school that was established allowed them to obtain a more systematic education. Ricardo Cortez García, in turn, told me that before the revolution he went several years without a systematic music education because of his parent's financial problems. However, he had the opportunity to begin his studies again at the dawn of the revolution. Raúl Ríos Chassagne studied in the free evening classes organized by the municipal conservatory before the revolution took place, and Mario Argudin studied at the Conservatory of Caturla.

Omar Nilo González Álvarez is originally from the city of Camagüey, where he studied in a local conservatory before the revolution. Later, he complemented his studies in Havana at the Escuela Nacional de Arte in the department that was established for the professors and musicians playing in different symphony

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[21]   However, in addition to the specific repertoire played during the Violín a Ochún occasion, it is also common that the music performed by the *charanga* orchestra is written in keys that are comfortable for the strings (Miller 2003, 22).

orchestras. In the 1970s, he worked at the commission that evaluated musicians at a national level. Furthermore, he has worked as a violin teacher and played in different ensembles performing different musical genres. At the moment he works as a concertino of the Orchestra of the Radio and the Television of Cuba (Orquesta de la Radio y la Televisión de Cuba).

In addition to González Álvarez, Ríos Chassagne and Hernández Mora have played in the Orchestra of the Radio and the Television of Cuba. They have also worked – like all the musicians representing the older generation – in different *charanga* ensembles. They are remembered from Orquesta Ritmo Oriental, which has been called the most important contemporary *charanga* orchestra (Bardfeld 2001, 20).

In Chapter 3, I present in more detail the history of the Violín a Ochún tradition, dating back to the 1940s and 1950s. However, it is worth mentioning at this point that González Álvarez is the only violinist in this study who had experience playing in spiritual violin events during the 1950s. These spiritual events, together with Santería traditions, were the basis from which the Violín a Ochún tradition emerged. An interesting fact I discovered while conducting the interviews was that most of the violinists of the older generation began to play in the feasts dedicated to Ochún in 1992. This coincided with the time known as the Special Period (Período especial), described as the economically difficult time in Cuba after the socialist camp had fallen down. The financial support granted by the Soviet Union to Cuba had been halted, but the US embargo continued unchanged.

It seems that most of the older violinists' motives for playing at these events were based on economic, not religious, reasons. Raúl Ríos Chassagne describes the time he started playing at Santería's religious feasts as follows: '[--] It was the Special Period, when there was not work for the orchestras. [--] There were almost no dance gigs, so one had to do something.' (RRC 26022008)[22] I would assume that the Special Period in particular was the factor that affected the expanding popularity and stabilization of Santería's violin feasts, increasing the work of the violinists in this field. It has been noted elsewhere that the role of religion increases during a social crisis. According to data, this is what happened in Cuba during the Special Period (Ramírez Calzadilla 2013, 201). Furthermore, as Balbuena Gutiérrez (2003, 36) points out, during the Special Period the Cuban state began to take a more permissive attitude towards the organization of religious events, which had previously been restricted.

The violinists of the younger generation began to play at religious celebrations later on, in the 1990s and the 2000s, when this tradition was already established in

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[22]   'Fue el Período especial, cuando no había trabajo para las orquestas. [--] No había bailes casi, y entonces, había que hacer algo.'

the city of Havana. In addition to economic reasons, younger violinists cited their interests in the musical features of this special folklore genre, which lent excitement to playing at these events.

> That kind of work interested me a lot, folklore music interested me a lot. [--] There is no [--] paper or score to follow [--] you have to learn the things with time and by listening [to music]. (RCF 03112007)[23]

> One day a friend of mine [--] took me [to the event] [--] I was fifteen years old when that happened. [--] I liked it because it was something I had never seen before. [--] So, I liked the way of playing the violin and singing at the same time. (ELO 27122007)[24]

Of course, there are also religious motives in the background when playing in these ceremonies. In general, many of the musicians have received at least the so-called *Mano de Orula*. This refers to the initiation into the religion, and it precedes the Full Initiation (*Kariocha*) as a *santero* (male) or *santera* (female). When receiving the *Mano de Orula*, a person comes under the protection of Orula (the god of divination and *Ifá*-board). During the time I collected data for my study, there were also a couple of violinists who had gone through more of Santería's initiation ceremonies, and thus were 'children' of some particular saints (or *orishas*). Furthermore, Mario Argudin is a *babalawo*, a Santería priest. This means that Argudin has completed the initiation ceremony called *Ifá*, wherein a person is fully initiated and is able to use the table of *Ifá*, employed during the initiation ceremonies.

The religion as such plays an important part in Cuban culture and in Cubans' everyday lives, even if a person does not practice religion in an 'official' way. Omar Nilo González Álvarez, for example, who neither is *santero* nor has received *Mano de Orula*, has built two little thrones in his house: one for Santa Barbara (who is associated with the god named Changó) and the other for San Lázaro (who is equivalent to Babalú Ayé).

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[23] 'Ese tipo de trabajo me interesó mucho, la música folclórica me interesó mucho. [--] No hay una guía de un papel o una partitura que uno se puede guiar [--] tienes que ir aprendiendo de las cosas con el tiempo y oído.'

[24] 'Un día un amigo mío [--] me llevó [--] tenía quince años cuando eso. [--] A mí me gustaba eso porque era una cosa que no había visto nunca. [--] Entonces, me guardaba la onda esa de tocar el violín y cantar a la misma vez.'

1.6 Structure of the Study

This study contains six chapters. In Chapter 1, I have discussed the background of the study and brought out the research questions and theoretical and methodological framework. I have also presented the violinists whose improvisations form the primary research material for this study. In Chapter 2, I will introduce the methods I have used both during fieldwork and at the basis of analysis of data. First, I will present the idea of the hermeneutic circle at the base of the interpretation of meaning and discuss the methodological triangulation in the context of this study. After this, I will deal with the methods of analysis of ethnographic research data in more detail.

In Chapter 3, I will focus extensively on the religious and musical background of the Violín a Ochún ceremony, on the process that led to the formation of the event being what it is today, and on the role of violin improvisation during these ceremonies. I believe this kind of broader ethnographic presentation is necessary in order to understand the context in which violin improvisations are produced. Furthermore, I want to supplement the literature concerning this celebration type, which is very limited.

The analysis of improvisations will be carried out in Chapters 4 and 5. In Chapter 4, I will deal with the central background model in Afro-Cuban music, the *clave* pattern, and its relation to the rhythmic features and accents appearing in improvisations. In Chapter 5, I will study melodic background models and surface models violinists use as the foundation of their improvisations. I will discuss the pitch-related and structural features of the models. Additionally, the models and their relation to *típico* style and more modern currents will be brought out. The subject will be approached in light of the role and function that improvisation occupies when it is perceived as a part of the interactive religious popular event.

In Chapter 6, I will summarize the research results and combine them using Rice's model of 'three dimensions of musical experience'. Following Rice's idea about the time, place, and metaphor, I will present a plain figure concerning the improvisation in the course of the *montuno* section of the song. The act of improvisation will be brought out as a part of the interactive occasion and in light of historical and sociogeographical influences and changes. Furthermore, I will also discuss the contribution of this study to the research field, evaluate its validity and trustworthiness, and provide possible perspectives concerning future research.

2   Methods of Fieldwork and Analysis

Fieldwork is an essential part of ethnographic research. During fieldwork the researcher participates closely in the daily routines of the community under study, collects research data by using different research methods (e.g. Van Maanen 1988, 1; Myers 1992, 22–23; Emerson et al. 1995, 1–2; Fetterman 2008c, 347) and aims to understand the world from the viewpoints of the members of the society under study in their own cultural setting (Geertz 1973; 1983). As Spradley (1979, 3) put it: 'rather than studying people, ethnography means learning from people.'

In anthropologic traditions, two terms, *emic* and *etic*, are commonly used. Emic level (or perspective) refers to different ideas that members of the society have concerning the reality in which they are living and also how they are experiencing it. Etic level refers to the researcher's perspective of the culture under study. It includes both the analytical description and the interpretation concerning the culture. These two concepts, emic and etic, are related to each other. The study normally begins with emic perspective when the researcher starts collecting information. The analytical description with different comparative concepts – the etic level – takes place in a later phase (regarding the emic/etic distinction, see e.g. Eriksen 2001, 36–37; Fetterman 2008d, 249).

According to Eriksen (2001, 36), the description of the culture can never be purely emic for several reasons. First of all, the researcher often has to translate between different languages, and the translation is always different from the original. Secondly, the meaning of utterances changes when transforming them into written text. Thirdly, it is impossible for the researcher to become identical to the people under study, unless the accounts are written by natives in their own vernacular. Additionally, it is expected that both emic and etic levels be present in study; the anthropologist should maintain the balance between the cultural immersion and the analytical writing concerning the culture (Myers 1992, 31; Hammersley & Atkinson 2005, 112).

When interpreting different cultural meanings, it is possible to use two different kinds of concepts to describe the action. These concepts, which Clifford Geertz (1926–2006) borrowed from Gilbert Ryle (1900–1976), are called *thin description* and *thick description*. The former refers to only the physical and behavioural

description of the action (Geertz 1973, 7). The latter, however, refers to a stratified hierarchy of meaningful structures, including cultural meanings and social codes, which all are reflected in human action (ibid.). Thus, thick descriptions refer to emic explanation of the action in its cultural context (Maxwell & Mittapalli 2008, 880). In Geertz's view (1973, 452), the culture of a people is an ensemble of texts, which the anthropologist strains to read over the shoulders of the people living in the culture. For example, when referring to thick descriptions in the context of the ethnography of music, the researcher aims to describe the ways people make music: 'how the sounds are conceived, made, appreciated, and how they influence individuals, groups, and social and musical processes' (Seeger 1992, 89).

In order to apprehend and interpret the meaningful cultural structures at the basis of some particular cultural system from inside, the ethnographer uses different kinds of research methods during the fieldwork. These might include participant observation, interviews, taking photos and videos, and making written field notes (Myers 1992, 22). Furthermore, a special feature in ethnomusicological research is that the ethnographer approaches the subject by learning to play, sing and dance in a same way the locals do (Rice 2013, 27). It is common to refer to so-called bi-musicality, a special mode of participant observation in which the researcher participates in making music with the locals. Close cooperation, which emerges when the researcher studies the culture by learning to play, leads to shared musical experiences between the ethnomusicologist and the representatives of the culture (Myers 1992, 31).

2.1   Research Cycles on Basis of Fieldwork

Scientific research is a systematic process that is defined by different stages. Depending on the context, these stages are divided differently. It is common in both qualitative and quantitative research traditions that the research process contains three phases when collecting the data (before, during and after), a time period when the data is analyzed and interpreted, and a time when the actual research report is written. This entirety is called the research process cycle (e.g. Creswell 2005).

Ethnographic research also includes different stages that guide the research process. They are not discrete stages; they all proceed simultaneously, and there is constant feedback between them (Spradley 1979, 93; cf. Coffey & Atkinson 1996, 6). One of the basic elements defining ethnography is long-term fieldwork, during which the researcher lives in close relation with the members of the society under study and collects and documents material from living informants (e.g. Hammersley & Atkinson 1983, 2; Myers 1992, 22; Eriksen, 2001, 24). The analysis begins in the field and thus guides data collecting in general. According to Spradley (1979, 94), writing the ethnography, both in the field and after the fieldwork period, is part of

the analysis. Writing can stimulate new hypotheses and send the ethnographer back to the field to collect more data (ibid.). The ethnographic method is quite flexible: the ethnographer collects and analyzes data with an open mind and does not base the research on an extensive pre-fieldwork design. This gives researchers an opportunity, during the progress of the study, to reflect their understanding, concepts and research strategy concerning the phenomena under study (Hammersley & Atkinson 1983, 23–24).

It is typical that the ethnographer spends several fieldwork periods with the culture under study (e.g. Kjellgren 2004, 154–155). The researcher returns to the field, collects more data, leaves the field, analyzes data, creates new hypotheses, and then repeats this cycle over and over again (Spradley 1979, 94). Although different stages of the research are mixed together, they also follow each other.
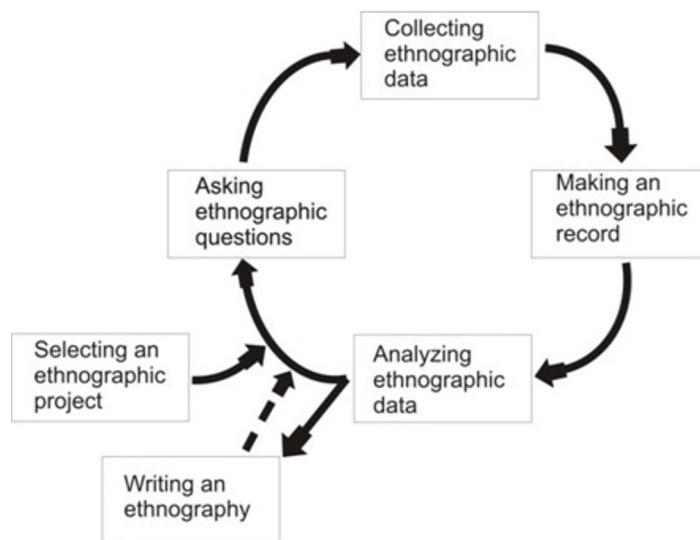
Figure 1. The ethnographic research cycle (Spradley 1980, 29).

The first research cycle is obviously the most difficult one. The researcher needs to get inside the subject, create the contacts, gain the confidence of the people who present the culture, and at the same time absorb a large amount of information about the culture under study. In my case I noticed that once I had gotten inside this society, new contacts appeared automatically and my social network expanded rapidly.

During my research process I always returned from Cuba to Finland, where I continued analysing data I had collected, and also made plans concerning the next fieldwork trip. Because of the contacts created and my deepening understanding, it was always easier to return to the field. This transformative process, in which the researcher gradually achieves a higher knowledge of the culture, has been called a

rite of passage (Van Maanen 1988, 14; Gupta & Ferguson 1997, 16). However, although the ethnographer's understanding deepens as a result of recurring research cycles, they always approach the subject, at least on some level, as an outsider and from the etic perspective. This deepening process of interpretation of meaning, which is influenced by the researcher's background and pre-understanding, has been called the hermeneutic circle (Gadamer 1979, 1988).

2.2 The Progress of Reasoning in Hermeneutic Circle

2.2.1 Review of the History of Hermeneutics

The concept of the hermeneutic circle (or hermeneutic cycle) plays a key role in the fieldwork and analysis stages of this study. I see both the process of learning more about the culture and the cyclical progress of the study through the phases that can be connected with the ideas of Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002). The philosophical hermeneutics Gadamer represents contains different principal concepts, such as the hermeneutic circle, effective history and fusion of horizons. Before Gadamer, however, hermeneutics had already been used to refer to different ways of interpretation.

Hermeneutics has been defined as the theory or philosophy of the interpretation of meaning (Bleicher 1990, 1). Its origins can be derived from the literary interpretation of ancient Greek and the biblical exegesis of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Modern hermeneutics originated in the first half of the 19th century when Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834) related hermeneutics to the interpretation of texts in general and also more extensively. According to Schleiermacher, the text must be interpreted both on 'grammatical' and 'psychological' levels (cf. Howard 1982, 9). This means that in addition to placing the text in its literary and linguistic contexts, it should be reconstructed to understand the motives and the spirit of the author (ibid.). Later, Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911) made a distinction between the natural sciences and the human sciences: the epistemological goal of the former is to explain and of the latter, to understand (ibid., 12–14). In addition to texts, Dilthey extended hermeneutic interpretation to concern other kinds of human creations as well, such as cultural products (Betti 1990, 52).

In the 20th century the discipline of hermeneutics was transformed. It was no longer seen as a doctrine of how the subject understands the meaning of the text (or other kind of phenomenon) that is interpreted. Rather, Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) proposed that the interpretation in hermeneutics should be based on existential understanding. He used the expression *Dasein* to refer to the ontological experience of *Being-in-the-world*, which is something characteristic of all the human beings

(Heidegger 1973, 78, 188–189). According to hermeneutic philosophy, represented by Heidegger and Gadamer, all the phenomena that are interpreted come to light in the act of self-understanding, which is based on its historical existence (Gadamer 1979, 276; Betti 1990, 97). It proposes that understanding is something that we are. The interpretation of the text is determined through the pre-understanding of the interpreter (e.g. Gadamer 1988, 74).

2.2.2   Hermeneutic Circle

The hermeneutic circle refers to a circular process that demonstrates the progress of understanding meanings. The circle is used to describe both the methodological principle of interpretation and the relationship between the whole and its parts. According to Gadamer (1979, 258–259), we must understand the whole in terms of the detail and the detail in terms of the whole. The essence of the circle is that a part can be understood only as a part of the whole, and that the whole is composed of its parts. This movement between the whole and its parts exposes new information, which is interpreted and which then leads to deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study.
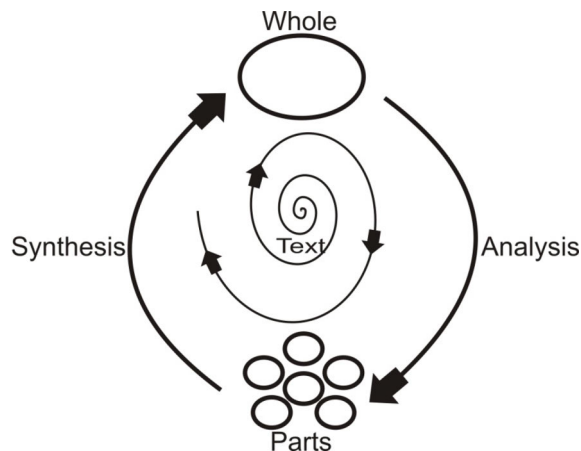
Figure 2.   Hermeneutic circle.

In hermeneutic philosophy, the concept of the circle was seen as an ontological hermeneutic circle, within which the interpreter with their preconceptions forms a part of it. Because of the existing role of the pre-understanding at the base of any understanding, one can say that there is not an absolute starting point in the process of interpretation. On the other hand, the hermeneutic circle is also unending because

new interpretations alter the pre-understanding and thus have an effect on new interpretations that create a new kind of understanding.

When using the concept of effective history, Gadamer (1979) proposes that the interpreter should be aware of their prejudices, which are the results of tradition. The interpreter should be able to question these prejudices and approach the phenomenon under study in an open-minded manner in order to be capable of understanding it (ibid., 236–238, 258–263, 270; Wachterhauser 1986, 9.) The idea is not to recapture the author's attitude of mind, as in the case of Schleiermacher's subjective interpretation, but to try to recapture the perspective within which the author has formed their views (Gadamer 1979, 259–260; Gadamer 1988, 69). Understanding is not a mysterious communication of souls, but rather a participation in shared meaning (ibid.).

Understanding is also not some kind of superior understanding of the subject. It is enough to say that an individual understands in a different way, if they understand at all (Gadamer 1979, 264). Understanding and truth are never absolute, because both the existence of human being and the pre-understanding that emerges from the cultural tradition of the interpreter are always bounded and restricted by time and space (ibid., 261–264).

According to Gadamer (1979), it is possible to use concepts such as 'hermeneutic experience' or 'fusion of horizons' when referring to the common meaning one achieves with the text or with another person as a result of the dialogue. During a successful dialogue, different perspectives connect, and as a result, the fusion of different horizons leads to new interpretations of the subject (ibid., 238, 266, 269, 273, 331, 351). The circular movement in which pre-understanding – when passing through the fusion of horizons – creates understanding, which creates a new pre-understanding again, is the essence of the hermeneutic circle. When our understanding deepens, we are able to centralize our attention to the subject in a more detailed way. The fusion of horizons can refer both to the fusion of the interpreter's present and past horizons (Gadamer 1979, 273; Wachterhauser 1986, 36) and the fusion of horizons between the interpreter and the text (Gadamer 1979, 269; Weinsheimer 1991, 14).

2.2.3   Dialogue and Improvisation

According to Bruce Benson (2003, 168), a successful dialogue in a musical context leads to the fusion of horizons between the listener and the performer, the composer and the tradition. I would claim that the interpreter can be in dialogue with a human being, musical performance, musical piece or transcribed improvisation as well. During the dialogue the subject under study 'speaks' to the interpreter, who in turns intends to understand it as well as possible.

How, then, is it possible to achieve a dialogue with the improvisatory action and the product that follows from it? I suppose there are several ways to achieve the fusion of horizons when approaching the improvisatory process from different points of view, but participation in some form is essential. In ethnographic research it is possible to identify different levels of roles of observation, when the researcher gathers firsthand information by observing people and places (Creswell 2005, 211; see section 2.3.1). It is common to refer to participant observation, which means that the ethnographer takes part in everyday activities of the culture under study (Eriksen 2001, 25). The researcher aims to adopt the role of an 'insider of the culture' in order to elicit accurate information (Béhague 1984, 9; Creswell 2002, 212). The ethnographer can, for example, write notes and memos, record videos or participate in musical performance as a musician. The latter one, the idea of bi-musicality as a research method, has been used in ethnomusicology for decades, but during recent years it has received new emphasis. In so-called new fieldwork, the experiences one has making music are considered more accurately on the basis of the whole research process. 'Fieldwork is experience, and the experience of people making music is at the core of ethnomusicological method and theory' (Cooley 2008, 14). According to Jeff Todd Titon (1994, 13):

> An epistemology for ethnomusicology [--] is based on a musical way of being in the world which is [--] a special kind of being and knowing, special in the sense that it differs from the kind of being and knowing [--] that typifies scholarship and is represented by the ethnomusicologist, alone, in the library, or the study, contemplating a text, and thinking and writing about it. The differences between these ways of being and knowing produce a tension and a dialectic which leads, ideally, to a way of knowing that incorporates musical experience into the texts we, as scholars, generate.

New fieldwork emphasizes the phenomenological, experiential, dialogic and participatory musical way of being in the world (Cooley 2008, 16). It stresses the subjective and lived experience of the researcher at the basis of interpretation, rather than reading culture as texts (Titon 2008, 25, 29). In this sense it differs from Geertz's idea of thick description, in which the purpose is to read (interpret) the texts (cultural symbols) 'over the shoulders of those to whom they properly belong' (Geertz 1973, 452). However, I do not think that the aim of describing and interpreting the behaviour of society from the emic perspective would exclude the idea of the musical way of being in the world and the intersubjective experiential state that the researcher/musician who studies the subject could achieve with fellow musicians in the course of performance. On the contrary, when following Geertz's view of societies containing their own interpretations (ibid., 453), I would claim that

this kind of being in the world is focal during a dialogic process. The process may then lead to the fusion of horizons and increasing understanding in a hermeneutic circle, and further to emic interpretation of the subject.

Gadamer (1979, 274–275, 278) uses the term 'application' when referring to that part of understanding in which the result of interpretation is applied to personal action and practical situations (Warnke 1987, 95). In the context of improvisation, the concept of application could refer to a situation in which the ethnographer participates in the performance as an improvising musician. As a result of the time spent in the field and the increased experience and understanding, the ethnographer is able to produce the improvisation that is typical of the culture under study. When I was doing fieldwork research, I found this kind of participatory approach to the process of improvisation very useful. There were also moments when I was in the role of a spectator or as a member of the audience, but the playing itself offered a chance to learn to copy the aesthetic style the violinists were implementing during the event. In addition to these different forms of participant observation, I completed the data by using other research methods as well to understand the phenomenon under study. This kind of multi-method approach is called methodological triangulation (Denzin 1970; see also Hammersley & Atkinson 2005, 231).

2.3 Methodological Triangulation

In addition to participant observation, interviews and other data-collecting methods that are typical of qualitative research, the ethnographer can make use of different quantitative methods. Statistics, for example, could be compared with the analysis of the interviews in order to obtain a more complete picture of the research problem (Rothbauer 2008, 893; see Chapters 4 and 5). However, the main strategy in ethnomusicology and in anthropologic research in general is participant observation, which refers to informal field methods that form the basis for fieldwork. Participant observation means that the ethnographer participates in the daily life of the society, records observations and asks community members to comment on them. The purpose is to get as close as possible to the cultural and social field of the culture under study (Hammersley & Atkinson 1983, 2; Myers 1992, 29; Eriksen 2001, 25–26).

In ethnographic research, community members, the sources of information, have also been called 'informants'. The informant is the one who has an insider perspective on the culture and can offer extensive information on the research topic (Spradley 1979, 25; Myers 1992, 23; Ogden 2008, 430–431). This term has also been criticized because of the connotations it might suggest. Different words, such as colleague, friend, respondent, participant, interviewee, source, mentor and teacher, have been used to replace it (Myers 1992, 23; see also Titon 2008, 30). However, as

Spradley (1979, 28) proposes, the conversation between friends is reciprocal and more balanced, whereas during fieldwork the ethnographer asks questions and the informant talks about the activities that make up their lifestyle.

I do not see a problem in using the word 'informant' when referring to a person who offers information. However, in addition to that word, I also use terms such as mentor or teacher. Sometimes I just use the name of the person I have been interviewing. Both my personal relationship with the interviewee and the interview type I have used affect the choice of word I use to reflect my relationship with the interviewee at that very moment (see about different interview types, below). The informants could be very important gatekeepers, when choosing to allow the possibility of creating relationships with other informants of the culture. In addition to providing information at the beginning of the fieldwork, the informant also clarifies and strengthens the information the ethnographer has adopted during the research (Ogden 2008, 430–431).

2.3.1   Different Forms of Participant Observation

As a method, participant observation is central when studying music performance as an event. Traditionally, four different gradations of participant observation methods have been identified: 1) complete participant, 2) participant as observer, 3) observer as participant and 4) complete observer (Myers 1992, 29–30; Hammersley & Atkinson 2005, 104). The roles of complete participant and complete observer are both extremes, and they cannot be seen as supporting the ethnographic research. The former refers to the situation in which the observer is completely concealed. This in most cases is unattainable. The latter refers to a situation which neglects social interaction (for example, when the observation takes place behind a one-way-mirror). Participant as observer means that the role of the observer is kept secret, whereas observer as participant means that their role is publicly known. The last one has been considered an essential form of participant observation in ethnographic research (Béhague 1984, 9; Myers 1992, 29–30).

Since the 1960s, ethnomusicology has taken into account a special research method, so-called bi-musicality, which emphasizes participation at the expense of observation (Myers 1992, 31). Mantle Hood (1960) was the first to use the term. By bi-musicality, Hood meant that in order to deeply understand the music culture under study, the researcher should be able to achieve the basic musicianship of the culture. When obtaining potential insights of the music culture and acquiring a certain kind of knowledge about music, the personal musicianship of the researcher is important (see Baily 2001, 86). When approaching the culture through the musicianship one has, it is possible to experience some specific feelings of 'illumination' or fusions of horizons in the way described above. However, Hood's idea concerning bi-

musicality was not something new. There had already been researchers such as A.M. Jones (1934), who defended the importance of participation in music making as the base of ethnographic research.

In addition to bi-musicality, other terms and expressions, such as poly-musicality (Brinner 1995) and learning to perform (Baily 2001), have been used. In this work I see the terms bi-musicality or poly-musicality referring to a research technique but also to the nature of a specific music culture or an event that forms a part of it. That is, in Caribbean syncretistic religious events it is common that several music traditions appear side by side, and the same musicians interpret them (Davis 1994, 157; see Chapter 3).

2.3.2 Interviews

Besides participant observation, another central method in ethnographic research is conducting interviews with the informants. In addition to the violinists playing in Afro-Cuban religious events, I also interviewed other musicians playing at the feasts, the Cuban (and Finnish) musicians who had no experience of these events, Cuban anthropologists, and also people who just practiced Afro-Cuban religions.

All the interviews I carried out during this research process were in-person interviews. In this data collection method, the researcher and informant face each other (Clark 2008, 432). The language used during the interviews was always Spanish (except in one case where the interviewee was Finnish). The interviews were sometimes conducted in the interviewee's home, sometimes in my home, and occasionally during the religious event. Interviews conducted during the event were always quite informal conversations and were an inseparable part of participant observation (cf. Spradley 1979, 58; Hammersley & Atkinson 2005, 139). I used this method especially at the beginning of my research, when writing jottings in my notebook concerning various names of places and people, along with vocabulary and different concepts the musicians used (cf. Myers 1992, 36–37; Yow 1994, 63). When I had acquired a certain level of basic material concerning my study, I began to prepare different kinds of question frames.

Interview types can be distinguished in different ways, depending on how the interviewer takes control over them. The broadest interview type is the informal interview, which is unstructured and remains a relaxed conversation. According to Myers (1992, 37), these kinds of interviews are useful especially at the beginning of the fieldwork when the ethnographer aims to learn the basic facts about the society and strives to build trust with the members living in it. The opposite of the informal interview type is the so-called structured interview. In this type the researcher follows the questionnaire form and controls the pace and direction of the interview. The third interview type may be called a semi-structured interview. This refers to

situations in which the conversation revolves around the themes the interviewer has presented, but the interviewee is encouraged to expand on themes by talking about them freely (Myers 1992, 36–37; Cook 2008, 422–423).

During this study I used all the interview techniques mentioned above. Furthermore, an additional interviewing method I found very useful was the feedback interview (see Stone & Stone 1981; Stone 2008, 131–133), which I used – although to a lesser extent – when coming back to the field after the research cycle was over. When I returned to Havana, I brought with me the musical transcriptions I had made in Finland and also the videos I had shot during my last visit in Cuba. We then reviewed them with the interviewee and tried to analyze them and in some way reconstruct their meaning. These interviews resembled semi-structured interviews.

2.3.3 Field Records and Ethnographic Tales

In addition to participant observation and interviews, the ethnographic description may include different categories of field writing, such as jottings, field notes and diaries (Myers 1992; Emerson et al. 1995; Brodsky 2008). When participating in the celebrations, I normally wrote jottings on the basis of which I later composed a more complete description of the event. I also took advantage of a diary in which I reflected on my thoughts and experiences more broadly concerning the fieldwork and the phenomena I had seen and experienced.

According to Johan Van Maanen (1988, 7), it is possible to identify three forms of ethnographic tales: realist tales, confessional tales and impressionist tales. Realist tales refer to tales providing a direct and matter-of-fact portrayal of the studied culture. Confessional tales are the opposite, focusing more on the fieldworker than on the studied culture itself. Impressionist tales include elements of both realist and confessional tales, providing personalized accounts of fleeting moments of fieldwork. In addition to these, one can refer to so-called reflexive ethnography (Cooley & Barz 2008, 16–20), in which the ethnographer tries to understand their position in the studied culture, represent that position in the written ethnography, and be aware of the personal context of the experience. Rhetorical and narrative conventions of this study follow different types of ethnographic tales: in addition to providing a realistic description of the research topic, I also bring up my own experiences. Therefore, the study also contains similarities with autoethnography. However, autoethnography focuses more clearly on the study of the researcher's own experiences, perceptions and beliefs that are based, for example, on texts produced by the researcher (e.g. Ellis & Bochner 2000). The experiences I occasionally bring up and refer to are related to the learning process, during which I tried to understand – through my own musicianship – improvisations in their broader cultural context.

2.3.4   Videos and Photography

Video recording and photography also form a part of the methodological triangulation when collecting ethnographic data. Gibson (2008, 917) divides ethnographic video recording into two different approaches: research-generated and participant-generated recordings. In the former approach the researcher chooses the subject and content of the video and films the social activity of the society in its natural setting. The latter approach means that the participants have control over the camera and they decide what to film. I would say that this study reflected both approaches. At the beginning of the study I concentrated on shooting ensembles playing and the violinists improvising. Later I also filmed – if I was allowed to – other things, like the moment of raising a toast in front of the throne at the end of the ceremony.

There were two main reasons for deciding to film mostly the musicians. Primarily, I was interested in the musical parts of these events. Secondly, the society seemed to accept my interest in filming the band, but not the entire feast – especially if there were new initiates present. There is a mandate originating from the Santería religion, which states – among other rules – that for the first year following a person's initiation into the religion, they must wear only white clothing and they may not be filmed. On the other hand, there were also moments when the participants asked to be filmed. Additionally, sometimes some people tried to move to dance in front of the camera when I was shooting the band. This always depended on the particular celebration.

It was common that when arriving at the event, the members of the ensemble asked the person who organized the celebration if I could film the band, as I was doing research concerning the music. Additionally, I briefly explained my study. Sometimes I was reminded that if someone participating in the ceremony got possessed, I would not be allowed to film it, even though I would otherwise be allowed to film at the event. Furthermore, sometimes the organizer would ask me in return for a DVD of the music filmed during the celebration, in which case I would edit some of the songs I had filmed, make a DVD copy, and bring the disc to the organizer a few days after the event.

Video recordings were an important part of my study; I would make transcriptions of the improvisations and study their content at a later phase. The videos also revealed other important issues that had occurred during the event. Video recordings capture the details and the complexity of social interaction and behaviour – things that are difficult to achieve when using traditional observation methods (regarding video recording, see Gibson 2008). Additionally, one of the analysis methods I used was to carry out an interview with the violinist as we watched his improvisations on video. This method, as mentioned above, is known as a feedback interview.

One of the methods I used to a lesser extent was traditional photography. However, I took pictures of the orchestras and the altars that were built for the events. When taking photos of the altars, I always had to ask permission of the host of the

feast. I was interested in the altars for reasons of both aesthetics and research. First of all, they were beautiful while at the same time displaying the hard work that was put into building them. Secondly, all the altars included similar kinds of Afro-Cuban religious objects, reflecting a religious syncretism and the coexistence of different cultural traditions in the same context. However, the altar always highlighted the particular saint that was celebrated as well as the personal religious idiosyncrasies of the ceremony's organizer.

In summary, this study was based on several research cycles that included fieldwork periods carried out in Havana. During the fieldwork, I drew on different research methods typical of an ethnographic approach. The central method was to understand the subject by approaching it through the idea of bi-musicality. This method also enabled me to participate in these events as a musician.

2.4 Analysis

The analysis of data is not a distinct stage of ethnographic research, but it begins in an early phase of the study. It continues through the entire research process until the writing of the report has been completed (e.g. Bernard 2006, 452–453; Fetterman 2008a, 291). From the beginning of the process researchers compare their analytic notes and ideas with the data collected in the field and search for cultural symbols and relationships among them (see Spradley 1979, 93–94; Hammersley & Atkinson 2005, 205–206). They then formulate ethnographic hypotheses, go back to the field and collect more data, develop and transform the research problem, formulate new hypotheses, and repeat these stages over and over again until the scope of study is clarified and its internal structure explored (ibid.).

According to Spradley (1979), a cultural symbol is any object or event that refers to something we can perceive and experience. A symbol could be, for example, a certain kind of phenomenon or feature that emerges from the improvisation or from the behaviour of the audience during the event. Symbols refer to referents or they represent some referent, which, in human experience, can be anything conceivable. The relationship between a symbol and a referent is the third element when studying symbolic meaning. This means that the referent becomes encoded in a symbol. In addition to decoding several cultural symbols, the researcher should discover the relationship among these symbols. This is the key to understanding the culture (ibid., 95–97).

Due to the nature and cyclicality of ethnographic research, the research material often involves a large combination of data from different sources. The purpose of the research is to discover similar patterns of behaviour and thoughts by exploring different data sources. The basic idea is that the descriptions concerning the phenomenon under study be as reliable as possible. This process, in which the research data is analyzed by studying different data sources, is called data

triangulation (cf. Denzin 1970; Coffey & Atkinson 1996, 4–6; Hammersley & Atkinson 2005, 230–232; Rothbauer 2008, 893; Fetterman 2008a, 291).

In order to analyze data in a more manageable way, it must be transcribed first. 'Transcription' is the term referring to the process whereby audio or video recordings are turned into textual or notational material (transcripts), which then is used as research data for the analysis (e.g. Poland 2008, 884; McGinn 2008, 882).

2.4.1   Textual Transcriptions

Depending on the nature and the purposes of the research, the textual transcription can be highly detailed, including silences, hesitations, etc. (e.g. conversation and discourse analysis), or it can include issues that seem essential for the study (cf. Hall & Hall 2004, 152; Hammersley & Atkinson 2005, 187). For this particular research, I sometimes transcribed the interview as a whole and sometimes decided that the full transcription was not necessary. The transcriptions were never as detailed as when conducting a conversation analysis, for example.

It took quite a lot of time to carry out the transcriptions. According to some estimations, a word-for-word transcription takes six to eight hours per hour of recorded material (Myers 1992, 37). I carried out several interviews, including interviews with twenty-four Cuban musicians and some other participants as well. With some of the informants, I conducted more than one interview. The interview material amounted to a total of forty hours. Additionally, I recorded all the violin classes with González Álvarez. These contained more than thirty hours of recorded material. However, I did not have to transcribe all this, because most of the time we played music. All the interviews were conducted using an Olympus Digital Voice Recorder WS100. The material was stored in a digital format, which I then transferred to my computer in order to transcribe it later.

2.4.2   Ethnomusicological Transcriptions

There is a centuries-old tradition in using the European notation system when transcribing the music of non-Western cultures (Ellingson 1992, 112). However, methodological and intellectual tradition concerning ethnomusicological transcription can be traced back to the turn of the 20th century, and to the works of such figures as Alexander J. Ellis (1814–1890), Carl Stumpf (1848–1936) and Erich M. von Hornbostel (1877–1930) (Ellingson 1992, 111). The goal of these researchers was to develop the traditional Western system and achieve a manner of transcribing and studying non-Western music in a reliable way (see Ellingson 1992).

Charles Seeger (1958) proposes a basic functional contrast between 'prescriptive' and 'descriptive' music-writing concerning the accuracy of

transcription '[--] between a blue-print of how a specific piece of music shall be made to sound [prescriptive notation] and a report of how a specific performance of it actually did sound [descriptive notation]' (ibid., 184). Prescriptive notation refers, for example, to a lead sheet in popular music that shows the essential elements of a song, such as lyrics, melody and harmony. Descriptive notation, on the contrary, describes how the music accurately sounds. This can be achieved, for example, by using a computer-aided transcription.

Another pair of concepts, which refer to the difference between more and less detailed transcriptions, is phonemic-phonetic transcription (Hood 1971; Nettl 2005, 82). Phonemic transcription is less detailed, whereas phonetic transcription includes more details. This means the transcription technique, in which a phonemic outline, for example, the most important notes of the melody, is written first (Hood 1971, 59–60). Thereafter, the rest of the notes are gradually added to a melodic line, which then becomes a more phonetic transcription (ibid.). The concept of phonemic-phonetic, which has its origins in linguistics, can also be compared with the emic and etic perspectives described above (Ellingson 1992, 135). In the context of musical transcription, emic transcription follows the way the cultural insider thinks about music. Etic transcription refers to the outsider's perspective and does not take into account the native's point of view in a similar way (Chenoweth 1972, 50–58).

I would say that an accompanying rhythmic-melodic pattern, known as *guajeo*, is an example reflecting the difference between emic and etic transcriptions. *Guajeo* refers to the pattern which is generally played with violin, *tres* guitar or piano in Cuban popular music. These patterns are typically used during a *montuno* section of the song before and after the improvisation. Sometimes these patterns are also used as a basic element when creating the improvisation (Bardfeld 2001, 30). These two different ways to transcribe this pattern, as demonstrated in Note example 1, sound similar; however, Cuban musicians normally write it in the emic way without using the rests. However, the etic way is sometimes used in pedagogical literature in order to make a pattern more readable (Mauleón 1993, 118; Bardfeld 2001, 28). In order to understand the emic notation in a certain culture-sensitive way requires, of course, a tacit knowledge of the culture. As Hornbostel (1909, qtd in Ellingson 1992, 145) put it in his article at the beginning of the 20th century, the best way to learn the transcription technique would be to learn how to perform the music from a qualified teacher living in the tradition and to obtain feedback from discerning listeners in that culture.

When I was taking violin classes, González Álvarez always asked me to transcribe, as homework, all the songs we had played during the session. I found this very useful, since I always received some feedback on my transcriptions in the next week's class. When referring to *guajeo* patterns, my mentor emphasized the difference between transcription and musical interpretation.

> The Cubans write the music in one way and play it in another. [--] We almost always cut the [note] values. [--] When we encounter melodic or rhythmic figures [--], as a general rule, we cut the [note] values. [--] It is the way to interpret. [--] To make it sound like it is supposed to sound, it would be necessary to make staccatos [in transcription]. But then it would be German music; it would not be Cuban music anymore. (OGÁ 08112007)[25]

Although in the context of pedagogical purposes *guajeo* patterns are sometimes transcribed in the etic way – based on the eighth notes – for purposes of clarity regarding subdivisions of the bars, it is also stressed that the notes should be felt in a more legato way when playing, not mathematically or literally (Mauleón 1993, 122; Bardfeld 2001, 28).

Note example 1.   Emic and etic transcriptions of a *guajeo* pattern[26] (the upper note example is from Bardfeld 2001, 33; all other note examples in this study are transcribed by the author, unless otherwise mentioned).

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[25]   'Los cubanos escriben la música en una manera y la tocan en otra. [–] Casi siempre quitamos valores. [–] Cuando nos encontramos dibujos melódicos o rítmicos [–], por regla general, le quitamos valores. [–] Es la forma de interpretar. [–] Para que sonara como se debe sonar, habría que hacerle ya staccatos. Pero entonces ya sería música alemana, no sería ya la música cubana.'

[26]   Traditional *son* music is normally written in 2/4 time signature, whereas *cha-cha-chá* is written in 4/4 and *salsa* music is often written in cut time metre (2/2, *alla breve*). In this study I follow this last convention, 2/2, which is also typical in pedagogical literature, in order to compare the rhythmic relationship of improvisations based on different genres and the *clave* rhythm with each other.

When transcribing the improvisations, I used the phonemic-phonetic approach mentioned above. I began the transcription with the easiest parts between the melodic line and the accompanying rhythm. After that, I added more details to the transcription. There were also certain parts in some of the improvisations where I had to slow down the original tempo by using a software program called Audacity in order to transcribe them correctly. Additionally, in some contexts I did not transcribe the exact pitches or their accurate rhythmic time values. All the transcriptions I have made are somewhere between descriptive and prescriptive music writing.

Most of the time I followed the traditional Western notation in transcriptions, although there were exceptions concerning some of the rhythmic and melodic features. For example, there were moments when the violinist played a note with a quick slurred slide up to the actual pitch. In these cases I added an arrow sign before the written note. On the other hand, if the violinist used a longer-lasting tremolo-glissando (which is typical in Latin violin improvisation), I just wrote the first note, and if it was necessary, a note in which a glissando was ended. Neither did I write trills or pralltrillers in the descriptive way, but just pointed these events with a symbol.

I also marked the positions – violinist's left hand placements on the fingerboard – in transcriptions. In Figure 3 one can see the fingerboard of the violin and the fingering in the first position. The letters G, D, A and E refer to the violin's open strings. The letters and the numbers in circles identify the pitch and the octave range of the pitch. I use scientific pitch notation in this study. It starts from the C0 in sub-contra octave (16.352 Hz) and proceeds in octaves upwards.
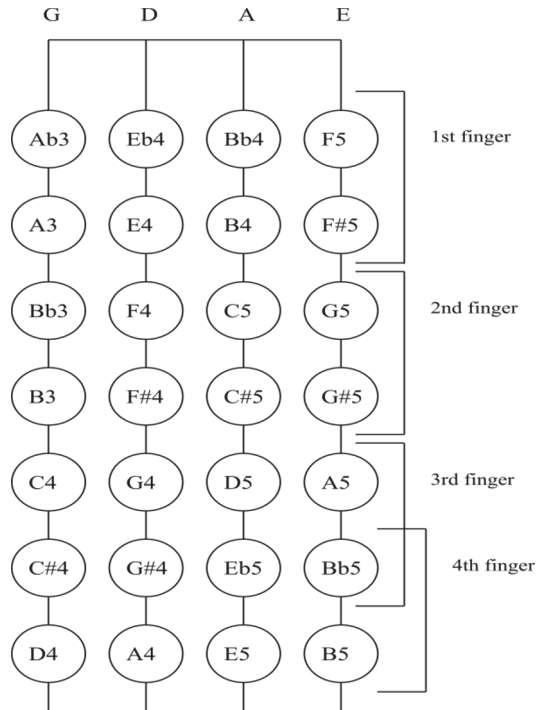
Figure 3.   The fingerboard of violin and the fingering in the first position.

Note example 2.   Fingering in the first position on the A string.

When the violinist plays in the second position, their first finger falls on the pitch that is played in the first position with the second finger (e.g. C5 on the A string). Playing in the third position means that the first finger falls on the pitch that is played with the third finger in the first position (e.g. D5 on the A string). When the violinist plays in higher positions, the same principle is followed. In the improvisations of this study, the first and third positions are the most used.

2.4.3   Analysis of the Ethnographic Data

In addition to having its special traits, ethnographic research shares common features with other analysis methods used in qualitative research, such as coding and segmenting of data (Coffey & Atkinson 1996, 26; Benaquisto 2008, 85). Depending on the research method, the coding might proceed in different ways. However, when coding data on the inductive process, the themes, categories and concepts emerge

directly from data. 'Open coding' and 'initial coding' refer to the first phase of the coding process. During this stage the researcher aims to identify as many ideas and concepts as possible by exploring data (Benaquisto 2008, 87; Saldaña 2013, 100–101).

When studying different themes, concepts and phenomena that emerged from research data, I used the method known as thematic analysis. I found this analytic method useful because of the nature and large extent of the data I had. Thematic analysis moves beyond counting explicit words or phrases as in the so-called grounded theory approach and focuses on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas within data (Guest et al. 2012, 10). According to Boyatzis (1998), there are two different levels at which themes can be identified: semantic and latent levels. Semantic themes refer to explicit and surface meanings of data, whereas latent themes refer to the interpretation of data, the assumptions it includes and the underlying ideas behind it. By encoding the raw data, the important moments and data fragments are identified. These are then organized into different groups or categories, which are then related to larger thematic bodies. These encoded units should bring out the importance of the central essence of different thematic entities under study (cf. Boyatzis 1998; Hammersley & Atkinson 2005, 193).

During this research I encoded all data I had collected, including the transcribed interviews and improvisations, different field notes, and also the video clips I had recorded during the events. All these data sources brought out different codes, which were then compared with the content of the entire data.

The term 'in vivo codes' can be used when inducing the codes directly from data by using the terms and concepts of the informants (Strauss & Corbin 1990, 68; Bernard 2006, 402; Benaquisto 2008, 86; Saldaña 2013, 91). According to Spradley (1979, 94), searching for the cultural symbols and relationships between them among data by using the native terms is important when looking for cultural meanings. The coding can also begin by creating a 'start list' of codes, which can be based on different theoretical or conceptual frameworks that have emerged from the research literature (Coffey & Atkinson 1996, 31–32; Benaquisto 2008, 86–87). However, all data should be encoded irrespective of whether the coding was more 'data-driven' or 'theory-driven' (Braun & Clarke 2006, 88–89). In this study the analysis of data was approached using both of these encoding techniques. The concepts and essential features emerged from data, but I also compared them with different conceptual and theoretical ideas based on the research literature.

After the researcher has identified different data categories, they should compare them within data in order to discover similar codes or combinations of the codes (Hall & Hall 2004, 156). As the coding progresses, some of the categories and themes take on a stronger and more important role. This analysis phase, in which data is studied through fewer specific concepts and categories, is called 'selective

coding' (Hall & Hall 2004, 156; Benaquisto 2008, 87). According to Braun and Clarke (2006, 87, 91–92), during this phase of thematic analysis the themes based on data should generate different coherent patterns that are related both to each other and to research questions. The researcher should define the essence of these themes and which aspect of the data each theme captures. In ethnographic analysis the researcher should also take into account how the informants conceptualize these cultural components and their relations and how these thematic entities relate to the culture as a whole (Spradley 1979, 93–94).

The researcher should keep on coding until the informants share new information. The phase of the study in which the information starts repeating itself is called the point of saturation (Hall & Hall 2004, 156; Benaquisto 2008, 87; Firmin 2008, 868). Determining the saturation point is, of course, problematic when studying improvisations: it is not accurate to say that new material will no longer be created at some point. However, I inferred that there was enough material to carry out the research when, for example, certain surface models appearing in improvisations started to repeat themselves in solos within the improvisations of some particular individual or between the improvisations of different violinists, and also during the larger period of time. Furthermore, as my knowledge and understanding of these events deepened, it was also easier to recognize certain structures emerging from the performances. Additionally, I took into account that the material covers enough improvisations played during different pieces in relation to genre, key and tempo. It should be noted, however, that if I had filmed and transcribed more improvisations in addition to these 40, the material would certainly have produced even more comprehensive information on the subject. Regarding the interviews, my aim was to conduct one or two interviews with each violinist and deal with the same themes with everyone. On the other hand, if there were questions emerging from the research material at a later phase, it was natural for me to bring them up in conversations with Omar Nilo González Álvarez, with whom I remain in close contact.

In summary, in order to study and analyze research data, I transcribed it into textual and notational form. This process began on the first fieldwork trip and continued alongside the writing of the research report. Using a thematic analysis method during the process of encoding data made it possible to study the subject through different thematic entities that were related to each other.

2.5   Summary

In this chapter I have presented the methods and the basis of analysis used in this study. Although the collection of data was based on methodological triangulation, I would underline the importance and exploitation of bi-musicality in the

implementation of the research. Taking violin classes, playing and improvising during occasions, transcribing improvisations, and also studying them along with my informants were all essential when I was trying to understand the research subject more profoundly.

However, coding different types of research data and combining them with theoretical and cultural background material was fundamental in creating themes and broader cultural connections between them. The thematic entities dealt with different social changes and cultural phenomena of the time before and after the 1959 revolution, Afro-Cuban popular culture and religion, and the role of music in society as well. In accordance with the complex nature of culture, thematic entities, including semantic and latent themes, were interconnected in different ways and made it possible to study different culture-specific behavioural models in the context of this particular cultural performance.

3 Violín a Ochún – Feast for the Saints

3.1 Transculturation

In order to better understand the process of the Violín a Ochún event establishing its place within Santería, it is worth describing briefly how different processes and results regarding intercultural encounters have been approached in the Cuban context.

In Cuban cultural studies the term 'transculturation', introduced by Fernando Ortiz (1881–1969) in his book *Contrapunteo cubano del tabaco y azúcar* (*Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar*; 1940), has been widely used when studying syncretistic phenomena. By using this term, Ortiz differentiated its meaning from that of the term 'acculturation', which was introduced in the late 19th century. According to Kartomi (1981, 232), the Latin origin of the term acculturation refers to 'adding together' different cultures, and this leads to an 'adult-centric' situation, which does not recognize the identity of the offspring. Furthermore, the term has sometimes contained ethnocentric overtones, and it has been used in a negative sense to refer to the process in which a weaker culture under the influence of a dominant culture gradually assimilates into the stronger culture and abandons its own traditional culture (ibid.). Instead of assimilation, Ortiz emphasizes the processes based on intercultural contact, which creates new cultures and new ways of doing things. According to Ortiz (1983, 90; emphases in original):

> We understand that the term *transculturation* expresses better the different phases of the transitive process from one culture to another, because it is not just about acquiring a different culture, which is what the Anglo-American word *acculturation* strictly indicates, but the process also necessarily implies the loss or uprooting of a previous culture, which could be said [to be] a partial *deculturation*, and it also means the subsequent creation of new cultural phenomena that could be called *neoculturation*.

In his works, Ortiz deals extensively with different expressions of Afro-Cuban culture, from religious music and ritual to organology, dance, and theatre, and

approaches transculturation mainly through descriptions of syncretic products created by this process (cf. Moore 1994, 32; 1997, 211; Còté 2010, 125). When he approached the phenomenon of cultural evolution in Cuban context, he abandoned the term 'melting pot' that was used in the United States. Instead, Ortiz referred to the evolution process by using the culinary metaphor of the *ajiaco*, a traditional Cuban stew (Ortiz 1993, 5).

> The characteristic thing about Cuba [--] is that since it is an *ajiaco*, its people are not a finished stew, but a constant [process of cooking] [--] Hence the change of its composition, and [the fact] that *cubanidad* has a different flavor and consistency depending on whether one tastes what is at the middle [of the pot], or at its surface, where the foods (*viandas*) are still raw, and the bubbling liquid still clear (Palmié 1993, qtd. in Stewart 1999, 48; emphases in original).

Two main elements in the Cuban cultural stew are the ones that arrived with the Spanish conquistadors and the ones that found their way to Cuba among the traditions of different African ethnic groups. The latter ones also create characteristic features of Afro-Cuban culture as the prefix 'Afro' implies. However, there are influences from other areas and cultures as well, such as Asia, North America and the pre-Columbian cultures. Like the *ajiaco*, the cultural stew also changes its composition, and the fusions of different elements (which are the result of previous fusions) create different flavours and new ways of doing things within the framework of this syncretistic entirety.

Both Violin a Ochún and Cajón pa' los Muertos (see Warden 2006) ceremonies are the result of this kind of transcultural process, in which cultural elements are interpreted in a new way. Both of these cultural phenomena have emerged in Cuba recently, and they can be traced back to the cultural practices and structures that have influenced their evolution. Furthermore, changes are still occurring. For example, the structure of the violin events, the emphasis of religious features in the structure, the musical content played during the events, and the instrumentation of the ensembles vary considerably, though they all fit under the concept of the Violines Santorales.

The concept of transculturation is widely used in Cuban cultural research, including in musicological literature dealing with the emergence of Cuban music (e.g. Alén Rodríguez 1998; Linares 1999). Maybe the clearest example of the fusion of different musical cultures is the syncretistic urban *son* music, emerged at the early 20th century, which reflects in an interesting way African and European musical influences (discussed further in section 3.3.2). According to Patrick Froelicher (2005, 13), '[I]n the discourse about Cuban music, this mixture, transculturation, is the primary characteristic of this music, something which constitutes the 'essence'

of Cuban music.' There are many examples of the essence of Cuban music referred by Froelicher, in which it also openly receives musical influences from outside the island, modifying them into a Cuban context and also creating new styles of music on this basis (ibid.). This has happened with jazz, rock and rap (Acosta 1989, 20) as well as with New York–born *salsa* (Froelicher 2005, 13).

Besides the terms transculturation and syncretism, the term 'hybridization' has been used. Argentine anthropologist Néstor García Canclini (b. 1939) introduced the term in his book *Culturas híbridas. Estrategias para entrar y salir de la modernidad* (*Hybrid Cultures. Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity*), published in 1990. García Canclini (1995, xxv) defines hybridization as follows:

> I understand for hybridization socio-cultural processes in which discrete structures or practices, previously existing in separate form, are combined to generate new structures, objects, and practices. In turn, it bears noting that the so-called discrete structures were a result of prior hybridizations and therefore cannot be considered pure points of origin.

The definition of hybridization does not really differ from that of transculturation. Both terms include the idea that fusions of different, previously distinct cultural practices define new forms of cultural practices. The central difference between Ortiz's and García Canclini's ideas is that Ortiz deals with the historical development of Cuba and America until the mid-20th century, while García Canclini focuses on the later phases on the continent, also taking into account the current state of globalization (cf. Còté 2010, 132). Furthermore, García Canclini brings out the idea that there are also coexisting traditional cultural domains that have not been transcultured in the way Ortiz proposes (ibid.). However, on the other hand, the Afro-Cuban culture also includes innumerable syncretistic cultural practices, which have emerged as a result of different types of fusions.

In this study, the concepts of transculturation and syncretism refer to ongoing processes of fusion of cultural elements or practices that lead or have led to the emergence of new practices, interpretations and ways of doing things. In addition to transculturation and syncretism, I use the term fusion, which has also been used in the context of syncretistic musical genres emerged in Cuba (e.g. Manuel 1998, 130).

3.2   Religious Bases

Christopher Columbus arrived on the island of Cuba for the first time in 1492. At the time, the island was populated by the indigenous peoples, such as *siboneys* and *tainos* (see García Molina et al. 2007). By the middle of the 16th century, most of the Cuban indigenous people had been eradicated as the consequence of forced labour,

oppression and different diseases. However, the Spanish conquistadors needed a labour force for their mines (and later their sugar and tobacco plantations as well) so they started a massive slave trade from Africa. According to some evaluations, there were as many as 1.3 million slaves who were taken to Cuba during the period of slavery, from the beginning of the 16th century until 1886, when Spain officially prohibited the slave trade (Rivero Glean 2011, 11). The victims of the slave trade represented different ethnic nations, cultures, religions and linguistic groups. Among them were people from places ranging from sub-Saharan West Africa to present-day Congo and Angola. Altogether, they represented 84 different ethnic groups (Fernández Martínez & Porras Potts 1998, 33).

The Spanish colonialists divided the slaves into the different societies, called *cabildos*, based on their ethnic background and the language they spoke. This led to the following situations: all the people who used to live in the Congo Valley and formed a wide Bantu linguistic group were called Congos (Bolívar Aróstegui 1990, 20). In the same way, the people who shared the same language in the sub-Saharan area were added to the group of Yorubas (or Lucumis), regardless of the fact that they were neither united nor politically centralized (Brown 2003, 211). Yoruba people shared the same kind of cosmogonic worldview. However, the area they inhabited was made of different city-states, each having their own special customs and gods (Bolívar Aróstegui 1990, 20–21; Barnet 1995, 9–15).

In addition to Yorubas and Congos, other important ethnic groups among the slaves were Carabalis from southern Nigeria and Ararás from Dahomey kingdom, the area called Benin nowadays. As Brown (2002, 34) points out, the idea of these *cabildos* was to control the slaves more easily. However, *cabildos*, which were placed outside of the city walls, partly enabled the preservation of different African traditions. They were also the places where different neo-African social groups were born (ibid., 34–35).

As a process of transculturation, the religions of different African ethnic backgrounds adopted elements from each other. They also fused both with the formal Catholicism of the church and folk Catholicism. The latter refers to Catholicism as people used to practice it in Spain; it also included animism, paganism and superstition (Lago Vieito 2002, 20–21). Instead of stressing the holy sacraments, the persons – such as the Virgin Mary, Jesus Christ and the saints – were the focus of attention. In contrast to the people who annually organized different kinds of feasts for the saints and based these activities on the detailed legends about them, the official Catholic Church made a clear distinction between honouring the saints and worshipping God (De la Torre 2004, 169–172). However, Spanish folklore and mythology formed the basis of the Christianity of the masses (ibid.). With this background, it is easy to see the similarities between the folk Catholicism and

African religious traditions, with the presence of animism, sorcery and a certain kind of polytheism.

The slaves were forced to adopt Catholicism. This led to a process in which they paralleled their own gods with the Catholic saints. However, the basis of the religion remained in its African origin (Barnet 1995, 39). For example, in Santería, when a person prays in front of the picture of the saint, they actually direct the prayer to the *orisha*, the African god, who appears behind the picture (De la Torre 2004, 13).

The African-based religions that are mostly practiced in Cuba are Regla de Ocha or Santería, Regla de Palo Monte, Regla de Arará, Abakuá and Vodú. The evolution process at the basis of the Violín a Ochún event is primarily connected to Santería and Palo Monte, which both are popular religious traditions in the area of Havana and Matanzas.

In addition to the religions mentioned above, Kardecian Spiritism took its place in the Cuban religious field in the second half of the 19th century. As a consequence of this, it created fusions with Afro-Cuban religions, the official Catholic religion, and folk Catholicism (Millet 1996, 9; Fernández Martínez & Porras Potts 1998, 27–29). The spiritistic traditions practiced in Cuba had an important and fundamental role in the evolution of the violin ceremonies dedicated to saints. Next, I briefly introduce the most important Afro-Cuban religious traditions.

3.2.1   Santería

Santería is mainly practiced in Western Cuba, although the religion has also spread to other parts of the island. In Santería two branches are combined: first of all, there is so called Regla de Ifá, a fraternity of males, which is focused on divination using the *Ifá* board. This cult is based on worshipping Orula, the god of divination in the Yoruba religion. The second branch is called Regla de Ocha. It contains both male and female members and centres on the mythology of Yoruba gods. The religious system and the ritual structure of Santería are based on Yoruba religion, in which *orishas*, Yoruba gods, are combined with Catholic saints.

The Yoruba religion preserved its strength in Cuba. One reason, obviously, is that Yorubas were the last major ethnic group brought to Cuba as slaves before slavery was prohibited. Another reason is the social dispensation of Yoruba people, which had a huge impact on other African-based traditions in Cuba (Barnet 1995, 5–6). In Nigeria, as many as 405 Yoruba gods have been identified. However, in Cuba fewer than thirty deities have survived (ibid., 41). In Barnet's view (ibid., 65), this can be explained partly by the concrete occurrences that had an influence on slaves' everyday lives. Slaves preserved the gods that had something to do with the agriculture, economic difficulties, uncertain health, traumatic sexual experiences, and a geographical environment in which the woods, rivers and the ocean joined

together. In addition to the *orishas* that have their origin in a present-day Nigeria, Santería has also adapted gods from other African ethnic groups. For example, Babalú Ayé, the Santería god of diseases, has its origin in Arará culture (ibid., 61).

Yoruba mythology is comprised of the legends (*patakís*), in which the *orishas* and their different *caminos* (manifestations, avatars) are described elaborately. In Santería there are both major saints and minor saints (*orishas mayores y menores*). The first mentioned are more important. For example, a person who initiates in a religion will be a 'child' of some of the major *orishas*. The most important *orishas* in Santería religion are the following:

Elegguá is the *orisha* which is always taken into consideration first and last – also in Santería's ceremonial music. He is the god with the power to open and close all the paths. Elegguá is described as a childlike joke player. He is also one of the three soldier *orishas* (*guerrero*). Among the saints, this *orisha* is associated with Niño de Atocha.

Ochosi is another soldier *orisha*. He is also the god of hunting and the protector of prisoners. Ochosi is combined with San Norberto.

Oggún is the third among the soldier *orishas*. He always stays in company with Elegguá and Ochosi. Oggún is the god of minerals, tools and mountains. Oggún is equivalent to San Pedro.

Orula is the god of divination and the *Ifá*-board. *Ifá* plays an essential part in the religion and divinations included in it. Orula is associated with San Francisco de Asis.

Changó is the god of masculinity, war, fire, thunder, music, and *tambores batá* drums. He is described as a brave and fearless ladies' man, who likes to party. In Cuba, Changó is very popular. Among the saints he is presented as Santa Barbara, a female saint.

Yemayá is the mother goddess and a sister of Ochún. She controls the seas and salt water. She is also the goddess of intelligence. One of the avatars of Yemayá is Yemayá Olokun, a goddess who lives in a seabed. Yemayá is associated with Virgen de Regla.

Obbatalá is an androgynous god having several avatars, both feminine and masculine. Obbatalá is the god of peace, purity, wisdom, justice and harmony. Obbatalá is associated with Virgen de las Mercedes.

Oyá is the goddess of spark and wind, and also the master of cemetery's gate. This *orisha* protects and takes care of the deceased. Oyá is associated with Virgen de la Candelaria and Santa Teresa de Jesús.

Ochún is the goddess of love, femininity, gold, honey, rivers and fresh water. She is described as a musical, sensual and gentle goddess. Ochún is equivalent to Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre (Our Lady of Charity), who also is the patron saint of Cuba.

Babalú Ayé is the god of diseases and the protector of diseased people. He is one of the most popular saints in Cuba. Babalú Ayé is associated with San Lazaro.

(For more on *orishas*, see e.g. Bolívar Aróstegui 1990; Barnet 1995; Fernández Martínez & Porras Potts 1998; Arce Burguera & Ferrer Castro 2002; Rivero Glean 2011).

3.2.2   Palo Monte

In contrast to the Yorubas, the Congos did not have a similar mythological base between the sects, although they did share the same concepts of animism and sorcery (Barnet 1995, 83). The Yoruba religion, European-based spiritistic traditions, and Catholicism enriched their religion (ibid., 93). However, the roots of Palo Monte are strongly in the religious traditions of the people who belonged to the Bantu linguistic group (ibid., 71, 81).

There are three different branches of the religion: *Palo Mayombe*, *Palo Briyumba* and *Palo Kimbisa*. Palo Mayombe is the most popular. A person who practices Mayombe can work either with the good spirits and *Nsambi* (god) or with the malign spirits and *Kariempemba* (devil). Palo Briyumba is a branch in which a practitioner works mostly with the good spirits. However, it is also possible to work with black magic. Palo Kimbisa is the clearest example of religious syncretism: it is a fusion of African-based rites, spiritism and folk Catholicism. During the ritual, there are spiritism-influenced water glasses on the altar and also crucifixes and crosses that have their origins in Catholicism.

The focal point of Congolese religions is the altar called *nganga*. It contains a pot made of ceramic or iron, and everything that is inside of it. It can seal in some bones, plants, earth from the cemetery and sticks. All the supernatural beings, powers and spirits are centralized in *nganga*, which is an essential instrument during the rituals of *palero* (a person who practices Palo Monte).

Palero works with dead spirits and also with spirits that live in different parts of nature, such as in trees, rivers and sea. In Palo Monte there are also gods that have

some sort of parallel entity in Santería. For example, Lucero in Palo Monte is associated with Elegguá in Santería, Sarabanda with Oggún, Siete Rayos with Changó, Tiembla Tierra with Obbatalá, Madre Chola with Ochún, Madre Agua with Yemayá and Centella with Oyá.

(For more on Palo Monte, see e.g. Barnet 1995; James Figarola 2006a; 2006b; Rodríguez Dago 2007; Fuentes Guerra & Gómez 2009; Rivero Glean 2011).

3.2.3   Other African-Based Religions in Cuba

In addition to Santería and Palo Monte, also other African-based religions exist in Cuba. These are Regla Arará, Abakuá and Vodú. Arará has strongly syncretized with the Yoruba pantheon. The religious cult is generally concentrated around San Lazaro (Babalú Ayé). It is worth mentioning that Santería has also adopted songs and *toques*[27] that have their origins in Arará culture. The gods included in Arará have their equivalents both in the Yoruba and Palo Monte religions. Arará is mainly practiced in the area of Matanzas (regarding Arará, see e.g. Moreno 1988; Esquenazi Pérez 2001, 108–114; Rivero Glean 2011, 27).

Abakuá sects have their origins in the area of southern Nigeria and Cameroon among the Carabalí people. These fraternities, which allow only men, are secret. The idea of the Abakuá fraternity was originally based on mutual assistance between the members. The sects were persecuted especially, during the second half of the 19th century, because they were considered refuges for outlaws (Moore 1997, 41–42). The authorities also believed that the music of the Abakuá tradition – different forms of *rumba* and a carnival music style called *comparsas* – was a kind of threat to the national culture. Gerardo Machado (1871–1939), the president of the Republic of Cuba between 1925 and 1933, made the rituals of Abakuá and the *rumba* music illegal as late as in 1925 (ibid., 115; regarding Abakuá, see e.g. Cabrera 1969; Sosa 1984; Nuñez Cedeño 1988; Torres Zayas 2010).

Haitian vodú arrived in Cuba in two waves. The first one took place during the Haitian slave revolution in 1791 when refugees from Haiti escaped to the neighbouring island (Esquenazi Pérez 2001, 152). The second migration wave happened in the 1910s, when a large number of Haitian proletarians arrived in Cuba to work in sugar plantations. Cuba needed to build its labour force, mostly on the eastern part of the island (Rivero Glean 2011, 29). That is also the area where vodú is primarily practiced.

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[27]   A *toque* is a song dedicated to a certain *orisha*, and it is played with *tambores batá* drums. The term also refers to a particular religious ceremony dedicated to Santería gods.

Vodú is a fusion of African-based animistic religions, folk Catholicism, Palo Monte, Santería and *Ifá* divination system. It is possible that, for example, a *babalawo* (a person who is able to interpret the *Ifá*-board) can be at the same time a *houngan* (vodú priest). During the ritual he might mix different religious elements he is aware of, and thus create a new kind of syncretism (Rivero Glean 2011, 29–30). Actually, it is quite common that a person who practices Afro-Cuban religions is a *santero* and a *palero* at the same time (Barnet 1995, 93; Brown 2003, 28) or, in addition to these religions, also practices spiritism and is a member of Abakuá society (Fernández Martínez & Porras Potts 1998, 27–29; regarding vodú and Haitian influences, see e.g. Esquenazi Pérez 2001, 152–174; James et al. 2007; Rivero Glean 2011).

In summary, as a result of the syncretistic process in the Cuban context, Santería, Palo Monte, and other African-based religious traditions retain commonalities. Furthermore, devotees move smoothly between different traditions. Spiritism – which has also had a central effect on the formation of the Violín a Ochún event – brings its own weight to the syncretistic entirety as well. Next, I briefly introduce the spiritistic traditions and their contribution to Afro-Cuban religions. Additionally, I introduce a particular religious occasion that has emerged due to syncretism. In this event the spiritistic traditions appear in a new context, in which violins occupy a central role.

3.2.4   Spiritistic Traditions

The evolution of spiritistic traditions in Cuba began in the second half of the 19th century when the European-based Kardecist Spiritism[28] found its way from the United States to Cuba. According to José Millet (1996, 10–11), there are five different forms of spiritism practiced in Cuba. These are *Espiritismo de mesa* or *Espiritismo científico* (Scientific Spiritism); *Espiritismo de Caridad* (Spiritism of Charity), which is quite close to the former; *Espiritismo de cordón* (Cordon Spiritism); *Espiritismo cruzado* (Crossed Spiritism); and *Bembé da sao*.

These branches can be divided into two different lines: the classic and the contextualized. The classic line refers to the practice of spiritism in its original, Kardecian form, and it contains the first two forms Millet mentions. It is based on the teachings of Allan Kardec, and the people who practice it regard it as a science, not a religion. During the ceremonies people communicate with the spirits, achieving communication by praying and by concentrating mentally (Lago Vieito 2002, 13; Millet 1996, 10). The contextualized line contains the three remaining forms. These

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[28]   Kardecian Spiritism is named after its founder Allan Kardec, whose real name was Hippolyte Léon Denizard Rivail (1804–1869).

share one idiosyncratic feature, common to Afro-Cuban culture in general, in which different religious traditions coexist in the same context and bring out new syncretistic behavioural models (Lago Vieito 2002, 15–16). According to María Isabel Berbes Riveaux, an anthropologist who lives in the city of Santiago de Cuba:

> Scientific Spiritism did not have the life that Santería has had. [--] It was readapted. [--] The essence remained, but the elements changed, because the elements that forced the change were too permeable. [--] In Santiago de Cuba there were more than 100 spiritistic societies in the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century [--] and today there are none left. Scientific Spiritism remained in Bayamo, in the area where Santería was not so powerful in those days, but today it is. (MIBR 01022012)[29]

As Berbes Riveaux implies, syncretism has affected the evolution of spiritistic traditions in the Cuban context. The syncretistic forms of spiritism are more popular than the ones that follow the classic line of spiritism, which have lost their strength in modern days. Different forms of spiritism are mainly practiced in the eastern part of Cuba, in *Oriente*.

Espiritismo de cordón (Cordon Spiritism) refers to a circle form whereby the participants join hands (in a 'cord') during the ceremony (Espírito Santo 2015, 584). This spiritistic tradition combines the teachings of Allan Kardec, folk Catholicism, the influences of different African-based religions, and possibly also some features of Cuban indigenous people, like the collective circle form (Millet 1996; Lago Vieito 2002, 105; regarding the influences of indigenous peoples, see Esquenazi Pérez 2001, 36–39; García Molina et al. 2007, 44–55). Bembé da sao, which reflects the influences of the religious features of the Bantu linguistic group, is a form that preceded Crossed Spiritism (Millet 1996, 11; Esquenazi Pérez 2001, 149; Lago Vieito 2002, 15). Crossed Spiritism (or Popular Spiritism) is the most widely practiced spiritistic form in Cuba. As the name of this spiritistic tradition suggests, it is a fusion between spiritism and any Afro-Cuban religion (Millet 1996; Lago Vieito 2002; regarding Cordon Spiritism and Crossed Spiritism, see also Dodson 2008; Pérez 2011; Bolívar et al. 2011).

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[29] 'Espiritismo científico no tuvo la vida que ha tenido la santería. [–] Se fue readaptando. [–] Quedó la esencia, pero cambiaron los elementos, porque fueron muy permeables los elementos que lo obligará a cambiar. [–] En Santiago de Cuba era más de 100 sociedades espiritistas sobre el siglo 19, principio al siglo 20 [–] y hoy no hay ninguna. Adónde se quedó el espiritismo científico, a Bayamo, una zona donde la santería no fue tan fuerte en aquellos años, hoy sí.'

Those spiritistic occasions I was allowed to participate in had a more private character with a special purpose to create a connection with particular spirits. They clearly illustrated the fusion of different religious traditions on different levels. Sometimes there were both Santería and Palo Monte altars presented simultaneously – although the event was not dedicated to any particular *orisha* – and they contained different objects connected to Catholicism and folk Catholicism. However, these altars were separated from each other in the spatial dimension. As mentioned above, a large number of people practice both Santería and Palo Monte, and at the same time participate in Catholic Mass. From this point of view, it is just logical that during the religious ceremonies many different traditions are present at the same time. Additionally, the elements that emerge from different traditions appear in the same context and create new kinds of entireties, as in the case of the spirit called Mamá Francisca. In this spirit – and in the lyrics of the songs dedicated to her – both Congo and Lucumí ethnicities are mixed. This spirit is also known as the 'Conga Lucumí', thus referring to its dual ethnicity (cf. Warden 2006, 108).

Furthermore, the musical content of these events reflects the features of different religious traditions, avoiding, however, the music dedicated to different *orishas* in the Yoruba language. However, in the case of the above-mentioned Mamá Francisca, for example, the Spanish lyrics of the song dedicated to her create an association with the *orisha* Yemayá, but in the spiritistic context: 'Flow the water Yemayá, with the spiritual current' (Corre el agua Yemayá, con el corriente espiritual). I never heard this song performed at the event dedicated to *orishas*. However, according to other sources, it might also be possible to interpret this song when playing music dedicated to Yemayá during the Violín a Ochún event (cf. Balbuena Gutiérrez 2003, 120).

One distinguishing feature between the spiritual event and the Santería event is that in the former tradition the purpose is to create a connection with the spirits while the latter focuses on the connection with the *orishas*. This feature also appears in music: in a spiritual context the music reflects the spiritual manifestation of some particular syncretized entities, while the music in Santería events focuses on the saints and their different *orisha* counterparts.

It is common that different entities have connections between each other depending on the religious manifestation they represent. For example, Ochún, Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre, and Madre Chola differ from each other, although they are often seen as different manifestations of the same being. Although these entities differ from each other, they also have some similarities regarding the personal features they present for religious people.

The common feature between the entities is how they are seen in their spiritualistic and materialistic forms. Roger Bastide (qtd. in Murphy 1988, 121–122) uses the term 'mosaic syncretism' in this context. With this term he refers to the

coexistence of both African and European religious elements at the ecological level, both in time and space. According to Bastide, the determinant feature of the ecological space is juxtaposition: the material, 'inflexible' objects cannot merge with each other, but they stay side by side inside the same framework. As Murphy (1988, 122) put it, the objects associated with *orishas* are separated from the pictures of saints; the sacrifices are administered to the former, and never to the latter. Additionally, when performing a ritual, the language changes if there is a picture of a Catholic saint or an object related to *orisha*.

The African gods are seen as materialistic, and they are offered sacrifices, but the spiritual forms of these entities do not require those things. Like one of the informants of the ethnologist Lydia Cabrera, Calixta Morales, explained to her (Cabrera 1971, 19):

> The saints are the same here [in Cuba] and in Africa. The same with different names. The only difference [between them] is that ours [Africans] eat a lot and they have to dance, meanwhile yours are conformed with incense and oil, and they do not dance.[30]

As Warden (2006, 54) put it in the context of Yemayá: '[--] Yemayá and Madre Agua are material forms that serve the same function as the spirit of La Virgen de Regla, though they are all distinct.' This kind of phenomenon, in which different forms of particular entities appear in a kind of mosaic form in the same space, can also be noticed both in the structure of the Violín a Ochún event and in the lyrics of the songs dedicated to deities (see sections 3.4 and 3.5).

3.2.5 Eggún

Eggún is a concept that refers to the spirits of the deceased. It contains the spirits in general, including the spirits of the ancestors and the spirits of the dead relatives of the believer. In general, the feature that connects all the Afro-Cuban religions together is the cult dedicated to the ancestors. In Palo Monte the concept of the *Eggún* is somewhat deeper than it is in Santería. The reason for this is that the practice of Palo Monte is based on a closer relation and direct communication with the spirits (Fernández Martínez & Porras Potts 1998, 30).

Among the Santería practitioners it is believed that all these spirits assist the person who practices the religion. According to Santería, 'ikú lobi ocha', which

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[30]   'Los Santos son los mismos aquí y en África. Los mismos con distintos nombres. La única diferencia está en que los nuestros comen mucho y tienen que bailar, y los de ustedes se conforman con incienso y aceite, y no bailan.'

means that the 'dead gave birth to Santo' (el Muerto parió al Santo). *Orishas* were the kings and the queens who became divine after their death (Fernández Martínez & Porras Potts 1998, 31). This is the reason why *Eggún*'s presence should always be noticed before any Santería ceremony. The first thing the leader of the ceremony always does is to pray for the assistance of the spirits (ibid., 30). These spirits include the ones who exist in their own spiritual framework (ibid.; regarding *Eggún*, see e.g. Bolívar Aróstegui 1990, 33–34; Fernández Martínez & Porras Potts 1998, 14–16, 29–31; Bolívar Aróstegui &Porras Potts 2011, 72–82).

Kardecian Spiritism also focuses on communication with spirits. Against this background, it is not surprising that it was fused with different Afro-Cuban religions. One central element in Scientific Spiritism, which was favoured by the white bourgeoisie in the 19th century, is a spiritual altar including glasses of water. According to Soso and Sastre (2010, 15–17), the Creoles and former slaves began to apply the elements the white social class used in their spiritistic gatherings – such as the altar, which is also called a *bóveda* – for their own purposes. This process was natural, since the slaves and their descendants had adopted several Catholic traditions, like the one in which a water glass and a candle were used when the persons who had passed away were taken into consideration. These features also appear in ceremonies dedicated to spirits, in which the violin is played. These occasions differ from the traditional percussive events dedicated to African spirits, and are called *Violín para Eggún*, *Violín para el muerto*, or *Violines Espirituales*. The Violín a Ochún feast evolved as a consequence of this event. Nowadays both of these event types, Violines Espirituales and Violines Santorales, are organized in Havana.

The element that occupies the central part in the Violines Espirituales event is the *bóveda*. It contains different objects, such as some glasses of water, a rosary, and different kinds of flowers for different spirits. Among the glasses there exists also one bigger cup with a wooden crucifix inside it. Every element in the *bóveda* has a meaning. The glasses of water illustrate the presence of different spirits of protection (Millet 1996, 39–40). These spirits can be deceased family members of the owner of the *bóveda*, or they can be spirits representing different 'commissions'. A commission refers to a group of spirits who represent the same religious, cultural, national or professional tendency (Esquenazi Pérez 2001, 35; Soso and Sastre 2010, 40). For example, a commission can represent the following ethnic groups: Africans or Congos, Indians, Arabs, Chinese, or Gypsies. All these ethnic groups – as well as some other specific groups, such as Catholic nuns – have something to do with Cuban history.

In the middle of the *bóveda* there is a bigger water cup with a crucifix inside it. It symbolizes *Santísimo*, a divine power. The crucifix is used, for example, at the moment the person is possessed by a malign spirit. The only way to drive the spirit

out is to put the crucifix on the forehead of the possessed person (RQF 04012012). The object of the event is to have a connection with the spirit who possesses some of the participants during the ceremony. I have participated both in the ceremonies in which the participants tried to consult with their deceased family member and in the ceremonies with the purpose of achieving a connection with a protector who represents a certain commission.

Immediately upon starting the first fieldwork period of my research, I had a chance to participate as a musician in the Violines Espirituales event. Ms. María Suárez,[31] a singer who was leading one of the violin groups in Havana, called me on 29 December 2007, and invited me to participate in a spiritual violin feast as a musician. I had met María a few days earlier. She used to work mostly in the barrios of Pogolotti and Coco Solo, the area that forms one of the most religious districts in the city of Havana.

Other than María and me, the ensemble included another violinist, a guitarist and a *tumbadora* (conga drum) player. As the event went on, in addition to playing the previously composed music, we also had to improvise as a group. The concept of the event was quite simple: one elderly man tried to create a transcendental connection with his protector spirit, a person who had passed away years earlier. The man was sitting in his chair drinking rum. He was very quiet and his eyes were half-closed. For the first time I saw that the effort to achieve a spiritual possession in the Afro-Cuban context was not dependent on dance. This phenomenon, as well as some other features of the event, had a clear link with spiritism.

The altar reflected the process of religious syncretism, and there were some elements that strongly brought out spiritism. In addition to symbols and paintings representing different saints and *orishas*, San Lázaro, the deity of diseases, stood out from the rest of them. This saint is typically worshipped in spiritistic traditions in Cuba (see Millet 1996). The difference between this particular altar and the rest of the altars I had seen in Violines Santorales feasts was that some Catholic elements, such as paintings of Jesus Christ, were more present. The altar also included wooden sculptures and colourful paintings of Indians. They symbolized the native Cubans, although they were illustrated in the form of American Indians wearing typical headdresses made of eagle feathers used among some of the tribes in the Great Plains region. The most important element next to the altar was the old black-and-white photograph of the deceased person whose spirit was supposed to possess the elderly man. There were also several glasses of water placed on the altar. They symbolized the 'attendance' of different spirits, and the water itself expressed the clarity of the spirits.

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[31]   This is a pseudonym.

At the beginning of the event, when the man was drinking rum and trying to achieve spirit possession, he had his head down and he kept his left hand on his forehead. At some point he started to hum a sort of melody. Little by little his singing got louder and I realized that the orchestra had to catch the melody out of thin air and construct the harmony and counter-melody around it. The tune this man was singing sounded easy to accommodate with the harmony. I was not familiar with this particular melody, but it was somehow connected to the Palo Monte religion. At that moment I felt that the safest way to participate in the music was to play an accompaniment rhythmic-melodic pattern, known as a *guajeo* pattern, and accompany the song using this method. I had just started violin classes with Omar Nilo González Álvarez, and for that reason I tried to play a simple *guajeo* pattern and make sure that I was playing rhythmically and harmonically correctly in relation to the rhythmic and harmonic background.

The more experienced violinist of the group also played a musical texture based on a *guajeo* pattern. However, the way he played was much more intricate. Little by little the music became more percussive, and *guajeo* patterns somehow automatically faded down, giving more space to the rhythm of the percussion instruments. Then, with the increasing rhythmic tension, which got louder and louder, the supposed spirit possessed the man. This also meant the end of the music, and the spirit, who was supposed to control the body of the man, began to consult with the family of the house.

In addition to the tunes related to Palo Monte, the musical content in the Violines Espirituales ceremony broadly represents different genres and origins. González Álvarez describes the music of the spiritual gatherings, in which he participated in the city of Camagüey when he was a child, as follows:

> In spiritual houses (casas espirituales) the musicians played the melodies that people play here in Havana, like Santísimo, Misericordia, Padre nuestro, Ave María, waltzes, Spanish music, [music dedicated to] gypsies, [to] Arabs. [--] There were persons who composed a tune for a particular spiritual entity. Normally the music was instrumental, but the music from Europe, the waltzes. All the waltzes of Strauss. [--] Entities liked that kind of music. (OGÁ 04122011)[32]

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[32]   'En las casas espirituales se tocaron estas melodías que se tocan aquí en la Habana, como Santísimo, Misericordia, Padre nuestro, Ave María, valses, música española, gitanas, árabes. [--] Había quien escribía una canción, plegaria a determinada entidad espiritual, dedicado a fulano tal. Normalmente la música fue instrumental, pero de música europea, los valses. Todos los valses de Strauss. [--] Entidades gustaron ese tipo de música.'

As González Álvarez mentions, the musical repertoire from his childhood included songs adapted from the Catholic religion, songs dedicated to different commissions, and songs having a purely secular character. Sometimes the songs played during the spiritual event create associations with different spirits. If the purpose of the event is to consult with the gypsy (*Gitana*), the songs connected to this spirit are in the main role, and it is common that the violin is used to play different gypsy-related themes. On the other hand, if the participants of the spiritual event want to create a connection with the Congolese spirit, they mostly play percussive music, such as music connected to Palo Monte ceremonies.

Besides the doctoral thesis of Axel Hesse (1971), there are hardly any studies concerning the music played in spiritual gatherings. In his study, Hesse divides the songs played during the event into three categories: 1) those originating outside of Cuba, 2) those from Cuba but not originating in spiritism, and 3) the songs specifically created for the spiritual gatherings (see Warden 2006, 32–33). In the interview quotation above, González Álvarez also refers to songs that can be divided on the basis of these main types. In addition to the compositions of Johann Strauss (1825–1899), waltzes originating outside of Cuba include the works of several other composers as well, such as Rudy Wiedoeft (1893–1940), Ion Ivanovici (1845–1902), and Émile Waldteufel (1837–1915), among others. Furthermore, there is a wide collection of songs that have their origin outside of Cuba and represent different musical genres.[33]

Additionally, religion-related songs originating in Cuba are played during the events, such as themes connected to Palo Monte, Santería and Catholicism. Cuban songs having a more secular character are also part of the repertoire, such as *Madresita* of Osvaldo Farrés (1903–1985). There are also songs that are particularly composed for the purpose of the event, as González Álvarez mentions above. Many of these songs played in spiritual gatherings are performed during the Violín a Ochún event as well.

In summary, the syncretistic phenomenon in which spiritistic and Afro-Cuban religious traditions have fused has been called Crossed Spiritism. This phenomenon can be seen in practice on such occasions on which different features and practices reflecting different religious and musical traditions appear side by side in the same context, but on which the purpose is to create a connection with spiritual entities. An example of this kind of an event is the Violín para Eggún or Violines Espirituales,

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[33]   These include, for example, *boleros* originated from Mexico (e.g. *Besame mucho* of Consuelo Velázquez Torres, 1916–2005), classical music in general (e.g. *Träumerei* of Robert Schumann, 1810–1856; *Song of India* of Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, 1844–1908; *The Swan* of Camille Saint-Saëns, 1835–1921; *Méditation* of Jules Massenet, 1842–1912), different themes dedicated to Virgin Mary (*Ave Maria*s), and a wide selection of secular (popular) songs with a tranquil character.

an occasion from which the Violín a Ochún later emerged. The Violín a Ochún event focuses on the *orishas*, but it contains several elements adapted from the Violines Espirituales, including various musical themes. However, the musical content of the event dedicated to saints is broader in the sense that it largely reflects the different musical genres that emerged in Cuba. Next, I introduce the genres included in Cuban popular music and bring up different related popular music tunes that are played during the Violín a Ochún event. After that, I deal more comprehensively with the evolution of this celebration type.

3.3 Cuban Musical Genres in Relation to the Repertory of Violín a Ochún Event

According to Alén Rodríguez (1998), Cuban popular music is clustered around five main styles: *danzón*, *la canción*, *rumba*, *son* and *punto guajiro*. Different music styles have evolved due to transculturation or syncretism, and they are fusions of different musical elements representing different music traditions. In some styles, the fusion is more apparent than in others. In particular, the *son* is a clear example of the fusion of musical features of African and European descent (Manuel 1998, 130).

The African-based heritage is mainly represented through the percussive instruments, the rhythmic features and the formal structures in the music, such as the sections based on responsorial singing. Some of the formal structures also have their origin in European music. *Danzón*, for example, is written in rondo form. Other European-based features are the use of functional harmony, the Spanish ten-line *décima* form in the lyrics, and of course some of the instruments having their roots in European music. Furthermore, there are also some instruments that have evolved in Cuba, such as *tres* guitar and a different set of percussion instruments. These are the African and Cuban-based instruments used on Violín a Ochún occasions:

Tumbadora, or conga drum, is derived from Congolese *makuta* drums. It is a barrel-shaped, tall and single-headed drum, and it is widely used in Afro-Cuban music and in Latin dance music in general.

Bongo drums, or bongos, have evolved in the eastern part of Cuba from African predecessors. Bongos were played in the first ensembles interpreting *son* music. The instrument consists of two small hand drums that are tuned to different pitches.

Güiro is a serrated gourd scraped with a stick. Its origins are in the Congolese or Indo-Cuban culture. *Güiro* is an essential instrument in a *charanga* ensemble.

Cencerro, *campana*, or cowbell used in Cuban music has its origin in Abakúa tradition. It is commonly used in Afro-Cuban and in Latin dance music.

Claves, two rounded wooden sticks, are an instrument evolved in Cuba. The sticks are struck against one another in the *clave* rhythm, the rhythmic pattern that forms the basic rhythmic background model in Cuban music.

Chequeré is an instrument originating from West and Central Africa. It is a beaded gourd instrument and used in Afro-Cuban sacred music.

Cajón is a percussion instrument which emerged in Cuba among the slaves during the time of colonialism. It is a wooden box, and it is particularly used when playing *rumba*.

(For more on instruments discussed above, see e.g. Orovio 1998; Mauleón 1993; Eli Rodríguez et al. 1997; Bardfeld 2001).

Most of the Cuban professional musicians in the 19th century were black people (Carpentier 2004, 99). The profession of a musician was poorly paid (León 1981, 218), and the dominating white class considered musicians parallel to servants (Moore 1997, 43). At the beginning of the 19th century, black musicians played the music the white people favoured. However, little by little this music received some African-based tinges in relation to its rhythmic features. A brief retrospective of the 19th and the 20th centuries demonstrates how the white population has traditionally resisted African-based influences in Cuban music. This happened first with *contradanza* and *danzón* in the 19th century. However, by the turn of the century, *danzón* was nominated as Cuba's first national dance (ibid., 41, 44). The same happened to *son* music during the first decades of the 20th century (ibid., 60). As late as the end of the 1930s, when Antonio Arcaño added a *tumbadora* to his *charanga* orchestra, he lost his gigs for the next six months (Bardfeld 2001, 15).

A fascinating feature of Cuban popular music is that it has always been somehow connected with the religion. This can be seen in the titles of the songs (e.g. the *danzón Virgen de Regla*[34] and the *afro Mata Siguaraya*[35]) and in the song lyrics that are full of religious terminology. This tradition has continued to the modern day, and besides in music, Afro-Cuban gods are present in other art forms as well, from the poetry of

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[34] This *danzón* was composed by Pablo O'Farrill (?–1957). The title of the song refers to the Catholic association of Yemayá.

[35] *Mata Siguaraya* was composed by Lino Frías (1915–1983). *Siguaraya* refers to sacred tree in Santería.

Emilio Ballagas (1908–1954) and Nicolás Guillén (1902–1989) to the paintings of Wilfredo Lam (1902–1982) (Castellanos & Castellanos 1994, 382). Although some of the artists surely are religious people, the main reason for using Afro-Cuban religious themes may be that they represent and reflect the collective cultural tradition of the nation (ibid.).

The black musicians who began to Cubanize popular music often practiced Afro-Cuban religions as well. For example, as Moore (1997, 141) observes, the members in Septeto Munamar de Regla – a group that was founded in 1928 and played *son* music – were either members of Abakuá lodge or practiced Santería. Furthermore, Arsenio Rodríguez (1911–1970), a famous *tres* guitar player whose song lyrics include a great deal of religious terminology and who is known as an innovator of *son* music, was born into a family that practiced Congolese religion (ibid.). Additionally, Miguelito Valdés (1912–1978), a well-known *sonero*, was a 'child' of Ochún (ibid.). Valdés is remembered, for example, for his interpretation of *Babalú*, an *afro* song written by Margarita Lecuona (1910–1981). The lyrics deal with *orisha* Babalú Ayé, and it is also a song that some of the Violines Santorales ensembles play during the ceremonies. Furthermore, some other famous musicians, such as Ignacio Piñeiro (1888–1969), Antonio Machín (1903–1977), Celina y Reutilio[36] and Celia Cruz (1925–2003) have used religious terminology in their songs (cf. ibid.; Castellanos & Castellanos 1994, 356–396).

The same trend continues today. Examples of *salsa*, *timba*, and *songo* orchestras include Elio Revé (1930–1997), Adalberto Álvarez (1948–2021), Los Van Van, NG la Banda and Pupy y los que son, son. Furthermore, Síntesis, a Cuban prog rock band has published several albums with the special attention on *orishas*. The band also uses Yoruba language in their songs (e.g. *Ancestors trilogy* and *Orishas*). In addition to song names and lyrics, religion is also present in popular music on a concrete level. Tero Toivanen, who worked for a long time as a *tres* player in the city of Santiago de Cuba, shared an interesting experience from his own life regarding the gig his band had at Casa de la Trova. When the band was playing the *montuno* section of Sexteto Habanero's *son Nieve de mi vida*, where the lyrics are about Yemayá, a woman in the audience – apparently a child of Yemayá – got possessed by this *orisha* (Tero Toivanen, personal communication on 30 November 2022). This is a good example of how religion and popular culture are in many ways inseparable in the Cuban context.

Before discussing more about the Cuban popular music styles and their link to the Violín a Ochún event, it is worth mentioning that the violin, as an instrument, has played an important role in the evolution of Cuban art and popular music: in art

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36   Celina y Reutilio was a duo formed by Celina González Zamora (1928–2015) and Reutilio Domínguez (1921–1971).

music from the second half of the 18th century and in popular music since the early 19th century. Esteban Salas y Castro (1725–1803) was the earliest Cuban composer whose works have remained to the present day (Carpentier 2004, 50). He worked as the maestro of the chapel of the cathedral in Santiago de Cuba beginning in 1764. Salas y Castro founded a small orchestra, including two violins, that was able to interpret both religious music and classical works. The founding of the cathedral's chapel orchestra is regarded as the impetus to start systematic and professional violin education in Cuba (Toledo 1981, 8, 15). Claudio Brindis de Salas (1852–1911), whose nickname was 'Paganini negro', was one of the most notable Cuban violinists of the 19th century. The history of Claudio Brindis de Salas is interestingly intertwined with the development of Violines Espirituales and Violines Santorales events. Manuel De los Reyes Cajigal (1896–1972) was a spiritist and a violinist, and – according to several older musicians I have interviewed in Havana – he is generally considered the initiator of the Violín a Ochún tradition in the capital. He believed that one of his personal spiritual protectors was Brindis de Salas (NHL 04032008).

It was the beginning of the 19th century when the music began to Afro-Cubanize and the violin integrated into the popular music (see Bardfeld 2001, 12). During this era a large number of French people, their loyal slaves, and French-speaking Creoles immigrated to the eastern part of Cuba. In the background, there were two main reasons for the migration: first of all, the Haitian revolution took place in 1791, and secondly, Napoleon sold the state of Louisiana to the United States in 1803. The immigrants brought the English-based line dance, known as country dance, with them. This dance had already adopted some African features in Haiti, but in Cuba it evolved further and people began to call it the *Cuban contradanza* (ibid., 12–13; Carpentier 2004, 86–87).

3.3.1   Music in the 19th Century

Contradanza is considered part of the *danzón*, one of the five main styles in Cuban popular music. Its roots are at the court of England. Later, the dance extended to France, then to Spain and finally to Latin America, where the dominant class favoured it. In the *contradanza*, a rhythm cell, which is essential to the further musical development in Cuba, exists. It is called *ritmo de tango* or *habanera*. These terms refer to two different musical styles that were developed later in Latin America.
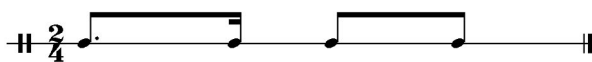
Note example 3.   *Ritmo de tango* or *habanera*.

The origin of the *contradanza* is often connected with the time when French-speaking people arrived in Cuba. However, the same rhythm cell has also been found in some of the country dances that have their origins in Spain (Giro 2007 I, 252–253). Giro (ibid.) also mentions that it is obvious that the Congolese people, who were present in Cuba already in the 16th century, brought it with them. This rhythm cell is one of the most common rhythm cells in African music and is also found in Yoruba music in Nigeria (Peñalosa 2009, 40). Although the rhythm cell already existed in Cuba before the French-speaking immigrants arrived, the use of it in popular music became more common afterwards (Giro 2007 I, 253; regarding Afro-Cuban rhythm cells, see Chapter 4).

Contradanzas were interpreted with the orchestral combination called *orquesta típica*. It included two violins, double bass, two clarinets, trombone, figle,[37] *güiro*, and a predecessor of present-day *timbales* drums, a percussive instrument that was formed with two timpani drums (e.g. Elí Rodríguez et al. 1997, 77). Later in the 19th century the *contradanza* transformed into a *danza*. In contrast to the *contradanza*, the *danza* was a couple dance, but it maintained some features from the *contradanza*, such as a binary structure in a song form and a contrast between A and B sections. Later on, the *danza* was developed further, creating a new style, the *danzón*. *Las alturas de Simpson*, written by Miguel Faílde (1852–1921) in 1879, is considered a first *danzón* (e.g. Orovio 1998, 139). *Danzóns* were written in rondo form (A-B-A-C-A-D). A characteristic feature of the *danzón* is the ostinato-type rhythmic figure called *baqueteo*, which includes the *cinquillo* rhythm cell. This syncopated, African-based figure is repeated throughout the song. At the end of the 19th century *orquesta típica* also went through the transformation. The new ensemble type was first called *charanga francesa* and some years later, only *charanga*. In the *charanga* orchestra, the clarinets were replaced by the flute, the brass instruments were left aside, and the piano was included in the ensemble (and later also the *tumbadora*).

In 1910, José Urfe made the *danzón* more Afro-Cuban by turning the last section into an open *montuno* section in his composition *El Bombín de Barreto* (Bardfeld 2001, 14). The *danzón* was developed during a time when slavery was prohibited in Cuba. However, persecution against the African-based cultures and African-based elements in Cuban culture was still strongly present. During the time period called *guerra contra los africanismos*, the war against the African influences, from the 1880s onwards, antipathy was outstandingly strong. People who practiced Afro-Cuban religions were arrested and executed, altars and icons were broken, and musical instruments with an African background were destroyed. Musicians had to hide their instruments, because possessing the 'tools of the witchcraft' was a reason

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[37]   Figle (or ophicleide) is a brass instrument.

to end up in prison (Moore 1997, 58–59; Brown 2003, 55–61). The atmosphere in general, and among the intellectuals, was against African-based features. Even in the 1920s, some musicologists, such as Eduardo Sánchez de Fuentes (1874–1944), still denied the African influences in the *danzón* (Moore 1997, 51; Carpentier 2004, 193).

At the turn of the 20th century, the *danzón* was nominated to be the first Cuban national dance. The reason behind this was that Cuban nationalism had arisen and also because people wanted to fight against the influences coming from the United States (Moore 1997, 51). The last Cuban independence war against Spain had ended in 1898. The United States was helping Cuba during this war, and when the war was over, they decided to stay in Cuba until 1902.

There are some *danzóns* that have established their presence in the repertoire of the Violín a Ochún events. One of these is *Virgen de Regla*. Another commonly played *danzón* is *Almendra*, written by Abelardito Valdés (1911–1958). Other *danzóns* that I sometimes heard played during events are *Angoa* by Felix Reina (1921–1998) and *Bodas de oro*, written by Electo Rosell (1907–1984).

The *habanera* is considered part of the *la canción* style. It evolved in the middle of the 19th century from the lyric song tradition, which had a strong European base. At the start, the *habanera* was paralleled with the *contradanza*, because they both are characterized by the same kind of rhythm cell. However, the *habanera* is played in a slower tempo and it often includes lyrics. Additionally, it gradually disappeared as a dance and remained as the instrumental-vocal style (Loyola Fernández 1997, 31).

La bella cubana (*A Cuban Beauty*) is a *habanera* written by the violinist José Silvestre White Lafitte (1836–1918). It is a *habanera* that is most commonly played during the Violín a Ochún occasion. José White dedicated this *habanera* to the most beautiful Cuban woman, La Caridad del Cobre (Our Lady of Charity), the patron saint of Cuba, who is associated with Ochún (OGÁ 10022019). Another typical *habanera* that is commonly played both in Violines Espirituales and Violín a Ochún ceremonies is *L'amour est un oiseau rebelle* (*Love is a rebellious bird*). This aria is familiar from 'Carmen', the opera composed by Georges Bizet (1838–1875). It has a special meaning in the context of Violines Espirituales events that are dedicated to *Gitana*, a gypsy woman.[38] In addition to the tunes mentioned above, there are also some other *habaneras* I have heard in the events dedicated to saints. These include, for example, *Tú*, written by Eduardo Sánchez de Fuentes (1874–1944) and *Mariposita de primavera*, a song composed by Miguel Matamoros (1894–1971).

In addition to the *habanera*, the Cuban *bolero* is also considered part of the *la canción* style. The *bolero* evolved in the context of *trova tradicional*, traditional troubadour music, in the second half of the 19th century (Alén Rodríguez 1998, 110).

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[38] Sometimes, though rarely, the gypsy spirit can also appear as a male. However, the spirits from Congo represent both males and females.

Tristezas, a *bolero* written by José Sánchez (1856–1920), was the one that demarcated the binary form of the traditional *bolero*. Originally, the *bolero* was interpreted by guitar and vocals, but at the beginning of the 20th century, *boleros* were adopted into the repertoires of different, larger ensembles.

*Bolero*s are commonly played in Violines Santorales feasts. The tranquil style they represent fits the event's nature, because one of the purposes in these celebrations is to calm down Ochún and other *orishas* (cf. Balbuena Gutiérrez 2003, 112). During the event, there are two ways of interpreting *boleros*: they can be played instrumentally or musicians can accompany the singer. In the former case, the violins take care of the melody, whereas in the latter one the violinists accompany the singer by following the harmony and playing the 'comments' between the singer's phrases. Sometimes there comes a moment when some individual participating in the event wants to interpret some *bolero* in their tonality. In these moments, both the violinist and the guitarist have to follow the vocalist. In these kinds of situations, it is also common that the violinist repeats the melody of the A-section by playing it between the two sections of the song, while the singer keeps quiet.

Playing the comments between the singer's phrases is also one typical form of improvisation, and it differs considerably from solo improvisation. At the beginning of my violin studies, I had a conversation with my teacher concerning this kind of improvisation. He gave me some concise advice: confirm the key in which the singer begins, play some short comments between the phrases, and do not become dominant. This kind of accompanying improvisation style was also the only improvisation style I practiced with my teacher during the classes. For example, he accompanied me on the piano when we played different *boleros*. In addition to playing the melody of the song, he asked me to melodically fill the spaces between the phrases.

The extensive repertoire of boleros interpreted at the events includes, for example, the following songs: *Cómo fue*, *Tú no me comprendes*, *Amapola*, *Besame mucho*, *20 años*, *Tres palabras*, *Flores negras*, *Siempre en mi corazón*, *Quizás*, *El ciego*, *Vereda tropical*, *Vanidad*, *Toda una vida*, *Fiebre a ti*, *La copa rota*, *Señora*, *Sombras*, *Allí*, *Quiereme mucho*, *Solamente una vez*, *Hermosa Habana*, *Total*, *Amor por ti*, *Ausencia*, *Si llego a besarte*, *Camino verde*, *Sabor a mi*, *Si me pudieras querer*, *Esta tarde vi llover*, *Cerezo rosa*, *La última noche*, *Noche azul*, *Háblame de ti*, *La media vuelta* and *Madrigal*.

3.3.2   Music in the 20th Century

Son music began to evolve in the latter half of the 19th century in the eastern part of Cuba. Along with the *contradanza*, the *son* has impacted most of all on the evolution of Cuban popular music (Loyola Fernández 1997, 79). However, the fundamental

difference between these music styles is that the *contradanza* and the *danzón* (which was evolved from the *contradanza*) were ballroom dances and the more traditional orchestras interpreted them, while the ensembles performing *son* music contained more percussion instruments and they accompanied the vocals and a folk dance (Carpentier 2004, 164–165). *Son* brought more percussion instruments into Cuban popular music, such as bongo drums and maracas. Additionally, the ensembles interpreting *sons* included guitar, *tres* guitar, *botijuela* and *marimbula*, and a trumpet, which was preceded a cornet. Later, the *botijuela* and the *marimbula* were replaced by a double bass (e.g. Orovio 1998, 457).

Son and the African-based features it represented became a target of oppression in the first decades of the 20th century, as the middle class was against this new music style (Moore 1997, 143–144). For example, the government of Mario Menocal (1913–1920) gave the police an order to destroy the instruments that were related to the *son* (ibid., 144). However, in the late 1920s Cubans began to see the *son* as an expression of national identity, as a symbol of Cubanity and a weapon against American influences, like jazz (Galán 1997, 346; Moore 1997, 156).

As mentioned above, the *son* was born as a result of the fusion between African and European musical heritages. It also adopted both the *canto/guía-montuno* structure and the way to use the *clave* rhythm from the *rumba*, one of the five main styles in Cuban music, which was evolved in the late 19th century (see Manuel 1998, 130–131). The *rumba* also influenced the practice that a percussion player improvises throughout the song (ibid., 130). In the *rumba* this instrument is the *quinto*, and in *son* music it is the bongos (Waxer 1994, 142–143; Manuel 1998, 130–131).

Son arrived in Havana in the 1910s. In the capital, it achieved a more complex form. The group called Sexteto Habanero was founded in 1920, and later, in 1925, Septeto Nacional, an ensemble that included trumpet in the orchestra, was established. The *son* had a huge influence in relation to other music styles. It had an impact on both the *danzón* and the *bolero,* and also on the *charanga* orchestras. A.M. Romeau (1876–1955) was the one who added the piano to the *charanga* group, when he joined the Orquesta Cervantes at the beginning of the 20th century. The piano imitated the *guajeo* patterns, the rhythmic-melodic figures that characterized the playing style of the *tres* guitar in *son* music (Bardfeld 2001, 14). José Urfé (1879–1957), in turn, added a *montuno* section to the *danzón* (ibid.). However, *charanga* orchestras and *danzón*-based music stayed in the shadow of the *son* and the orchestras that performed it. In the 1930s, the *son* was evolved further, when Arsenio Rodríguez added a *tumbadora*, piano, and more trumpets to his group (ibid., 15). This combination, which also included different jazz influences, was called the *conjunto* (ibid.). Like the *danzón*, the *bolero* also adapted a *montuno* section to its structure. This music style was called *bolero-son*. It consisted of two different

sections, in which the first one is a *bolero* and the second one is a *montuno*. According to Loyola Fernández (1997, 32), the Cuban *bolero* has always been quite flexible in order to adapt other Cuban music styles into its structure. One can see this also in music played in the Violín a Ochún event: in addition to some well-known *bolero-sons*, there are also some *plegarias* – musical prayers dedicated to the saints – consisting of two parts, a *bolero* and a *montuno* section.

The musical content of the Violín a Ochún ceremony includes *sons* with some direct connections with religion, like *Bilongo*, composed by Guillermo Rodríguez Fiffe (1907–1995) and *Cachita*,[39] composed by Puerto Rican Rafael Hernández (1892–1965). *Bilongo* is a concept used in Palo Monte religion, and Cachita is a diminutive form of the name Caridad. Caridad points to Caridad del Cobre, a Catholic manifestation of Ochún. However, according to my teacher, Rafael Hernández dedicated this song to a Puerto Rican prostitute, not to Caridad del Cobre. For this reason, González Álvarez is reluctant to play the song at religious events, unless it is specifically requested. '*Santeras* who are children of Ochún [might say]: 'Please, play *Cachita*', and I always do. [--] I do not like playing that song addressed to Virgen de la Caridad, because it was a theme written for a prostitute.' (OGÁ 24022020)[40]

However, the ensembles also perform *sons* and *guarachas* that do not have a connection with the religion but are popular tunes that everyone knows. The repertoire might include, for example, the following songs: *Guantanamera*, *Chan Chan*, *Pare cochero*, *Moliendo café*, and *Cuarto de Tula*.

Son and *clave*-based music are strongly present in Cuban society and appear in different daily phenomena and different contexts in the life of Cubans. In addition to functioning as a central rhythmic feature in the *son* and other popular music styles evolved from it, the *clave* pattern is an integral part of Afro-Cuban secular and religious music. This musical heritage also emerges in other everyday affairs, such as in the daily national newscast of Cuban television; it begins and ends with Frank Fernández's (b. 1944) theme music based on *guajeo* patterns played on the piano over a polyrhythmic foundation guided by the *clave* pattern. The constant presence of *clave*-based music seems to reflect a kind of collective, shared tradition, acquired from an early age. The meaning of the *clave* as a shared pattern among the members of society also appears through different behavioural models during the Violín a

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[39]   *Cachita* is typically performed in *guaracha* style. *Guaracha* is a *son* played at a faster tempo (Alén Rodríguez 1998, 78).

[40]   'Las santeras que tienen hecho Ochún: "Ay, canta Cachita", y yo siempre lo hago. [--] A mí no me gusta tocar esa canción dirigida a la Virgen de la Caridad, porque fue un número escrito por una prostituta.'

Ochún ceremony. It guides the music and dance, and sometimes the audience may spontaneously start clapping the pattern and accompany the performance.

When taking into account the importance of *clave*-based music in Cuban society, one can say that it was natural for Cuban musicians to bring the *clave* pattern with them to New York in the first half of the 20th century. At the early stage of Latin jazz, they used this rhythmic pattern to distinguish their music from jazz, although at the same time they borrowed elements from jazz (Fernández 2006, qtd. in Bin Md Tarip 2012, 6). According to Bin Md Tarip (2012, 6), the *clave* pattern – in addition to serving at the basis for certain musical purposes – functioned more generally as a constant reminder of the cultural heritage of Cuban musicians.

Son music also had an impact on the *charanga* orchestras in the late 1930s. Antonio Arcaño – who was the first important flute improviser in Cuban popular music (e.g. Bardfeld 2001, 15) – was the one who remodelled both the *charanga* orchestra and the music it played. He added the *tumbadora* to his orchestra and also simplified the song structure: the introduction was often followed by the *montuno* section (ibid.). The public liked the innovation, and *charanga* orchestras became popular again. This new style was called *danzón de nuevo ritmo* (new-beat *danzón*) or *danzón-mambo* (ibid.).

Miguel Barbón (1920–1992), considered the father of *charanga*-style violin improvisation, made his debut with Arcaño's ensemble, Arcaño y sus Maravillas, after which he played with several other *charanga* orchestras, such as Orquesta Melodías del 40 (Bardfeld 2001, 38). Barbón created his own improvisation style, which is still audible in improvisations performed during the Violín a Ochún occasions. This can be noticed in different licks and melodic phrases the violinists use in the course of improvisation. Barbón's tradition also connects together the violinists representing different generations. His improvisation style has functioned as a pattern for violinists playing traditional *charanga* music (see Chapter 5).

The golden age of the *charanga* began in the early 1950s as a result of a new ballroom music style, the *cha-cha-chá*, invented by Enrique Jorrín. The *cha-cha-chá* is considered part of the *danzón* main style, but its structure is simpler in relation to the *danzón*. Perhaps the most well-known *charanga* orchestra is Orquesta Aragón. It was founded in 1939 and still exists. Richard Egües (1923–2006), a famous flautist, joined the group in 1954 (Marrero 2001, 71). He is remembered as a skilled improviser and also as the composer of some classic *cha-cha-chá* tunes. He was the author of *El bodeguero,* which is included in the repertoire of several Violín a Ochún ensembles. There are also some other *cha-cha-chás* played in Violines Santorales events, such as *Rico vacilón* and *Los marcianos*, written by Rosendo Ruiz Quevedo (1918–2009); *Tamalitos de Olga*, composed by José Fajardo (1919–2001); and *Oye cómo va* of Tito Puente (1923–2000).

An interesting feature that connects the Violín a Ochún ceremony and the *charanga* boom of the middle of the century is that some of the foremost musicians of the era used to play or are still playing in Violines Santorales events. Richard Egües, among others, participated in these occasions. However, Egües mentions that he did not want to dedicate himself to this tradition; he was more interested in symphony and *charanga* music in other contexts (RE 19012004). Besides playing in Orquesta Aragón, Egües played in other *charanga* groups as well, such as in Orquesta Estrellas Cubanas, which was founded in 1959. This orchestra also dedicates itself to playing in Violines Santorales feasts. Among all the groups playing in these events, this ensemble resembles the most classic *charanga* group. However, they do not use *timbales* drums when playing for Ochún. This instrument impacts strongly on the characteristic *charanga* sound.

There are some important differences between Orquesta Estrellas Cubanas and other groups playing at Violín a Ochún feasts. First of all, Orquesta Estrellas Cubanas uses sound reproduction equipment. Secondly, the group is much larger than other ensembles. These are the reasons Orquesta Estrellas Cubanas does not have as many performances as other groups. It is more expensive for the client who hires the ensemble. Furthermore, this orchestra needs much more space than other groups when playing (RCG 26022008).

In addition to Orquesta Estrellas Cubanas, there is also another, larger ensemble playing in these events. This group was founded by Pedro Rosell (b. 1937), and its instrumentation also includes a five-key wooden flute. Omar Nilo González Álvarez uses the term 'mini-*charanga*' when referring to the groups playing for Ochún. They have some influences from *charanga*, but they are not equal. Also a huge part of the music played in these ceremonies differs from *charanga* repertoire, as one can notice later in this chapter.

Like the flautist Richard Egües, there are also some great violinists who have played or still play in Violín a Ochún feasts. One of these was Miguel Barbón, who had a huge influence on later violinists, as mentioned above. Barbón was a religious person, who – according to his brother Geronimo Barbón – actually passed away in 1992 after playing in one Violines Espirituales event (GB 13022008). In addition to Barbón, his cousin Celso Valdés Santandreu (b. 1934) also plays at religious events. Valdés Santandreu is a violinist known from Orquesta Aragón, in which he joined in 1955. According to Valdés Santandreu, he used to play along with Miguel Barbón in the violin ceremonies back in the day (CVS 31012008).

The musical content in the Violín a Ochún ceremony combines broadly different kinds of music styles that have evolved in Cuba among the different social classes. According to Moore (1997, 25), Afro-Cuban music was popularized by the two main social groups. One consisted mostly of white people who represented a sort of elitism and who had graduated from conservatories. They created black music 'from above'

for the theatres, music halls and cabarets. The other group consisted of artists from the working class, who were performing in carnivals interpreting *comparsas* and who made different genres, such as *son*, popular. According to Moore (ibid., 27), Afro-Cuban popular music transformed in the decades of the 1920s and 1930s, when the music styles played by black people were arranged to be suitable for music halls.[41]

The musical repertoire of the Violín a Ochún feast includes many works by the Cuban composer Ernesto Lecuona (1895–1963). Lecuona became famous especially because of the compositions he wrote to different *zarzuelas*.[42] In the late 1920s Lecuona began to include different Cuban popular music styles in the same context as European-based musical genres. He added styles like the *guajira*, the *bolero* and the *guaracha* to his music and thus strongly stressed the features of national identity (De León 1996; Elí Rodríguez & Alfonso Rodríguez 1999, 48–49). One of the famous songs of Lecuona that is played in the celebrations dedicated to Ochún is *Canto Siboney* from the *zarzuela* 'La tierra de Venus' (1927). The title of the song refers to the indigenous people, Siboneys, who lived in Cuba before colonialism. Thus, the theme of the song is suitable for the ambience of the feast.

Other compositions of Lecuona's that I have heard at Santería events are *Maria la O* (1930) and the waltz *Damisela encantadora* (Lovely Damsel) from the *zarzuela* 'Lola Cruz' (1935). The latter of these is generally played at the moment the participants in the event drink a toast to Ochún. This custom takes place in the final part of the ceremony. According to my teacher, González Álvarez, there is not any deeper religious meaning when performing this song during a toast.

> It has nothing to do with Ochún. They [Santería practitioners] have taken a custom to dedicate her [to Ochún] a toast *Damisela encantadora*, because, well, they call Ochún a lovely damsel [--] a very beautiful lady. (OGÁ 17012008)[43]

Besides people calling Ochún a lovely damsel, it is interesting that song lyrics describing the damsel's physical features, such as big black eyes and red lips, can be associated with the archetype of a Cuban mulatto girl. This also has a connection with Ochún. As a result of transculturation, this black African goddess adopted new elements on herself. To *santeros* and spiritists, some avatars (*caminos*) of Ochún

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[41] For example, scenic rumba of Jorge Anckermann (1877–1941), congas of salon of Eliseo Grenet (1893–1950) and some works of Ernesto Lecuona (1895–1963).

[42] *Zarzuela* is a Spanish-based lyric-dramatic genre that generally has three acts.

[43] 'No tiene nada que ver con Ochún. Lo han cogido una costumbre para dedicarle el brindis *Damisela encantadora* porque bueno, le dicen a Ochún a damisela encantadora [–] una dama muy bella.'

represent this deity as a beautiful woman with light skin and dark hair (Lovio Díaz et al. 2006; cf. Lachatañeré 1992, 99). Ochún is associated with the features such as elegance, sensuality and other previous ideals of beauty from the upper social class (Lovio Díaz et al. 2006). These features represent the archetype of the Cuban mulatto girl (ibid.). Thus, I would assume that this particular rearticulatory practice, the adaptation of this song – which Lecuona originally wrote for the singer Esther Borja (1913–2013) – to the new religious context, has occurred in a quite natural way.

Lecuona is also the author of several other songs that are played during Violines Espirituales and Violines Santorales events. These include, for example, *Noche azul*, *Siempre en mi corazón*,[44] and *Andalucia* and *Malagueña* from 'Suite Andalucia' (1927). In addition to the aria from Bizet's 'Carmen', *Andalucia* and *Malagueña* are often interpreted when playing in the spiritual occasion dedicated to *Gitana*, because Spain-related and Spain-origin themes are commonly combined with gypsyism.[45] In addition to these tunes, one typically played *danza*-type instrumental song is *Comparsa* from 1912. Although the title of the song refers to carnival dance music, it does not have anything to do with the original *comparsas*. Actually, during the time Lecuona wrote this song, dancing and playing traditional *comparsas* were prohibited (cf. Moore 1997, 121). Commonly, when the ensemble plays this tune during the Violín a Ochún event, they add a *montuno* section to the end of the song. The lyrics of the *coro*[46] often include the words 'Esto es pa' Ochún' (This is for Ochún). Thus, the song is brought to the religious context and dedicated to Ochún (see Video example 1).[47] [48]

Returning briefly to the *bolero* and a troubadour tradition in Cuba, in the mid-1960s a great deal of socially conscious music was written throughout Latin America. During that period a movement, known as *Nueva trova*, evolved in Cuba among the young artists. This movement continued a troubadour tradition in Cuba (see Benmayor 1981). Two well-known artists of this movement are Pablo Milanés (b. 1943) and Silvio Rodríguez (b. 1946). Both have written hits that sometimes

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[44] This *bolero* was included in the nominations for best original song in the Academy Awards in 1942. However, *White Christmas* by Irving Berlin (1888–1989) won that year.

[45] Other songs reflecting this thematic complex include, for example, *Granada*, composed by Agustín Lara (1897–1970); *Csárdás*, composed by Vittorio Monti (1868–1922); *Hungarian Dance No. 5*, composed by Johannes Brahms (1833–1897); *Intermedio* from 'La leyenda del beso' (1924), a Spanish *zarzuela* composed by Reveriano Soutullo (1880–1932) and Juan Vert (1890–1931); and *Pasodobles* of Spanish origin.

[46] *Coro* refers both to the collective, repetitive vocal part during a *montuno* section and to the background singers (people participating in an event).

[47] Lecuona's *Comparsa* and the *coro* 'Esto es pa' Ochún', played on 21 December 2007.

[48] Video examples used in the study can be found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hFNbYwklb1g

are interpreted in Violines Santorales feasts. Among these are *Yolanda* and *El breve espacio en que no estás* from Milanés, and *Amor* and *Rabo de nube* from Rodríguez.

There are also songs representing this genre, like *Hasta siempre, Comandante*,[49] composed by Carlos Puebla (1917–1989), which, due to its musical style would fit the mood of the event, but otherwise would not fit the context.

> It is a theme dedicated to a character of the Cuban Revolution. [--] People in a religious event, whether they are revolutionists or not, do not accept that you sing the song of Che Comandante. [--] It is not that they do not like the theme of Che Comandante, but it is not approvable [during a religious event]. (OGÁ 24022020)[50]

On the other hand, it could be possible to play this song in a certain hypothetical situation during the Espirituales ceremony. However, according to González Álvarez's experience, this has never happened.

> On the day that some Che Guevara appears during the Violines Espirituales, then the song of Carlos Puebla would have to be played for him. I have never [--] I am talking about the religious event and our patriots José Martí, Antonio Maceo, Mariana Grajales, Ignacio Agramonte, Carlos Manuel de Céspedes. I have never seen one of them. Never. And much less Fidel Castro, Ernesto 'Che' Guevara or Camilo Cienfuegos. (OGÁ 24022020)[51]

As González Álvarez implies, the practitioners of the religion want to keep politics and religion separated, and the associations and connections between them are not part of the cultural rules directing the behaviour of the members of this particular society. Not only does this apply to music played at the events, but

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[49]   This song was dedicated to Ernesto 'Che' Guevara (1928–1967), an Argentine Marxist revolutionist, and one of the major figures in the Cuban Revolution in the 1950s.

[50]   'Es un tema dedicado a un personaje de la revolución cubana. [–] La gente en una actividad religiosa, sean revolucionarios o no, no te aceptan que tu les vayas a cantar el tema de Che Comandante. [–] No es que no les gustan el tema de Che Comandante, pero no es apropiable.'

[51]   'Que en el día que se parezca alguien Che Guevara en un violín espiritual, entonces habría que tocarle la canción de Carlos Puebla. Yo nunca [–] voy a hablar de una actividad religiosa y nuestras patriotas José Martí, Antonio Maceo, Mariana Grajales, Ignacio Agramonte, Carlos Manuel de Céspedes. Yo nunca he visto ninguno de ellos. Nunca. Y mucho menos Fidel Castro, Ernesto 'Che' Guevara o Camilo Cienfuegos.'

it is also reflected in the supposed spirits that appear during the spiritual ceremony.

In summary, the fusion of different musical features that have their origin mainly in African and European musical traditions creates the characteristic sound of Cuban popular music. This is most clearly manifested in *son*-based music. Religion is an important part of local popular culture, and in the context of popular music, it appears in the titles and lyrics of songs representing different musical genres from different eras. The musical content of the Violín a Ochún ceremony broadly reflects the genres included in the different main styles of popular music, also encompassing several songs that are based on religious themes. Additionally, it includes musical numbers that devotees have associated with Ochún and with the function of the ceremony because of the tranquil style they represent.

3.4　　Violín a Ochún Ceremony Gets Its Form

The evolution of the Violín a Ochún feast reflects a gradual transformation of the Violines Espirituales event, when it began to syncretize more explicitly with the elements familiar from Santería. As a consequence, the ceremony dedicated to Ochún was formed alongside the spiritual event. Violines Espirituales, with the concepts related to it, functioned as a context within which religious people began to create music that was quite different from the conventional percussive music related to Santería. The individuals behind this event in the city of Havana practiced spiritism and played the violin. The musical repertoire evolved as a continuum of tranquil songs already presented in spiritual gatherings, such as different waltzes. However, there were many songs that were not taken to this new context but that remained part of spiritual ceremonies.

In addition to its spiritual roots, popular music influenced the formation of the musical content of the ceremony dedicated to Ochún. The event started to take shape when the *charanga* ensembles and the music they played were popular. This connection between the *charanga* boom and the religious violin feasts had, for sure, some impact on the content of the music of these events. Additionally, as mentioned above, Cuban popular songs often create associations with religion, which is an integral part of Cuban popular culture. Therefore, I would assume that the repertoire of the event took a natural shape in this respect as well. Furthermore, the music that was included on the Violín a Ochún occasion also contained classical music and themes covering the essential part of the basic repertoire of Cuban violinists, such as *La bella cubana* from José White, which also has a clear link to the religion.

3.4.1   Articulations and Associations

As mentioned above, meanings based on culture-specific discursive practices are interpreted during the interactions of members of society. The term 'articulation' refers to the form of connection in which a discourse adapts and unites to itself previously unrelated elements (Grossberg 1986, 53; Grossberg 1995, 268; Lehtonen 2014, 293–294). This occurs in the context of the historical, social and dialogical process, which is characteristic to a particular culture. During the process, the individual, interacting with the information and presuppositions they think others have as well, gives meanings to the elements (Lehtonen 1996, 16–56, 120). As a result of the articulatory practice, the identity of each new element with its origin outside of the culture is modified inside of the new context, and its meaning changes (Laclau & Mouffe 2001, 105).

In the context of the music performed in the Violín a Ochún event, there are examples of this kind of articulatory practice. An interesting one is a waltz called *Sobre las olas* (*Over the Waves*), written by Mexican composer Juventino Rosas Cadenas (1868–1894). In worldwide popular culture, this waltz has commonly been associated with the themes connected to circuses and funfairs (for example, in Laurel and Hardy's movie 'The Chimp', from 1932, and in the James Bond film 'Octopussy', from 1983). However, in the context of the feast dedicated to saints, this theme is associated with the characteristic features of Yemayá, because the name of the waltz – besides the swinging movement of the rhythm – refers to the waves of the ocean.

On the other hand, as González Álvarez mentions in the interview quotation above (see section 3.2.5), the waltzes of Johann Strauss (1825–1899) were already being performed during spiritual ceremonies before the Violín a Ochún event had evolved. According to González Álvarez, 'the (spiritual) entities liked that kind of music.' I would claim that in this type of case a reference can be made to rearticulation, in which the elements that have already been articulated in the culture appear in a new context. For example, *The Blue Danube* (*An der schönen, blauen Donau*) of Strauss or *Waves of the Danube* (*Valurile Dunarii*) of Ion Ivanovici, which are also themes played in spiritual ceremonies, are associated – when performed in Santorales feasts – with the nature of the event and the features of Ochún and Yemayá in the same way as *Sobre las olas*.

Following the idea of Merriam's tripartite model, the people's concept about the nature of this new ceremony type led to behavioural models. More peaceful and tranquil music was created in the Santería context, as was verbal behaviour based on concepts concerning the relation between the features associated with Ochún and the music that was performed in this new context. As Balbuena Gutiérrez quoted the interview of one of her informants, Lazaro Pedroso (Balbuena Gutiérrez 2003, 112; emphases added):

> [People began to organize these special events to Ochún, because] she is the *orisha* who likes to dance and possess, and she already wanted something else. She danced every day in *bembé*, *batá*, *güiro*, *cajón* and in other *toques*...she needed something more sophisticated [*fina*], calmer [*suave*].[52]

The people who began to evolve the event dedicated to Ochún were violinists – which, I would assume – was the main reason the violin became a central instrument of this new feast type. When religious people began to dedicate music to Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre and Virgen de Regla, the melodies played by the violin were explained in the new context. They were associated with water, kindness, sweetness and motherhood (Balbuena Gutiérrez 2003, 112). These are, as mentioned above, some of the elements and features related to Ochún and her sister Yemayá. The violin thus became a certain kind of cultural artifact that symbolizes different associations and narratives concerning the origin and function of the celebration, and also expresses, in part, the cultural identity of the community (cf. Assmann 2008; Heersmink 2021b).

However, such associations between sound and themes played by a certain instrument and extra-musical phenomena are not so uncommon. For example, in Africa, several traditions exist in which monochord 'violins' are played in honour of the ancestors. Ortiz (1955, 23–25) noticed that Congos, for example, used to carry out a special ceremony in Cuba back in the fifties. In this ceremony a monochord called the *uele*, which means 'sound of the dead', was played with some kind of a rustic bow. The sound of this monochord was associated with the sound of dead ancestors. Although the Violines Espirituales event has its roots in Crossed Spiritism and a four-stringed western violin, there is an interesting link when comparing the relation between the ceremonies dedicated to dead ancestors in African-based traditions and in the Crossed Spiritism that emerged in Cuba.

I would also refer to the research literature concerning the gender stereotypes associated with different instruments. Brass and percussion instruments have been considered male-stereotyped instruments, whereas high woodwinds and high strings, such as violin, have been considered female-stereotyped instruments (e.g. Eros 2008). This kind of association between the sound and music produced by the instrument and the gender comes out interestingly in the context of Santería: the Violín events were originally dedicated to female *orishas* Ochún and Yemayá. However, nowadays it is possible to organize celebrations to other saints as well. I have also participated in the ceremonies dedicated to Oyá, Obbatalá, and Elegguá

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[52]   '[–] ella es una oricha muy bailadora y subidora y ya quería "otra cosa". Bailaba todos los días Bembé, Batá, Güiro, Cajón y más toques de esos...necesitaba una cosa más "fina", más suave.'

and in one event that was dedicated to Changó. However, the last one was an exception. According to some *santeros*, it is not possible to organize this kind of feast in honour of Changó, because this *orisha* – which is strongly associated with different masculine features – only wants the ceremonies in which percussion instruments are played. According to a violinist Joaquin Izquierdo:

> The Violín [ceremony] is not for Changó, because the Violín is for Ochún. And for Yemayá too, as they are practically sisters. [--] It is also given to...Obbatalá, Elegguá and others admit it. But the Violín is actually Ochún's and Yemayá's. [--] Changó does not want the Violín. What happens, that we, when we are going to play the Violín for Changó, we must first ask permission and tell him: 'Changó, this Violín is not for anything. You will dedicate it to Ochún, because Ochún is the one who wants the Violín.' (JI 16012008)[53]

As Joaquin Izquierdo implies in the interview quotation above, in case Changó would be associated with the Violines Santorales event, the justification for organizing the celebration would be explained by the existence of Ochún, who, according to different *patakís*, is one of Changó's women (cf. Bolívar Aróstegui 1990, 108, 116).

The music played during the Violín a Ochún ceremony reflects the concepts the religious people have about the nature of this feast type and its function. First of all, the event has a religious character. Its musical content includes music adopted from Catholic, African and spiritual religious traditions. Additionally, there are religious songs composed specially for the purpose of this kind of feast, and they are generally based on music styles that have emerged in Cuba. Secondly, the event has a popular character. The musical repertoire contains popular music from both Cuba and other countries, and these songs sometimes create associations with different Afro-Cuban gods as well.

As mentioned above, the music performed during the Violín a Ochún ceremony is supposed to be music that appeals to Ochún. Furthermore, one of the functions of the feast is to calm down the *orishas*. These are some of the reasons that the content includes classical music and other kinds of music with tranquil and serene character

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[53] 'Violín no es para Changó, porque Violín es para Ochún. Y para Yemayá también, como son prácticamente hermanas. [--] Se le da también a...lo admiten Obbatalá, Elegguá y los de más. Pero el Violín en realidad es de Ochún y Yemayá. [--] Changó no quiere Violín. Que pasa, que nosotros, cuando vamos a tocar a Changó un Violín, hay que primero pedir permiso y decirle: "Changó, este Violín no es para nada. Usted se lo va a dedicar a Ochún, porque Ochún es la que quiere Violín."'

– including different globally popular songs[54] – as religious people have explained it. However, as a result of a syncretistic process, the musical content of the ceremony also includes a large amount of music adapted from other Santería events in the course of time. This will be discussed further below.

In summary, the meaning and nature of the Violín a Ochún celebration have partly been explained by the characteristic features associated with Ochún and Yemayá. These associations emerge in the musical content and instrumentation of the event. They come to light both in the sound of the violin and in the musical themes that have been articulated and rearticulated to the new context during the evolution of this celebration type.

3.4.2   From Spiritual Event to Violín a Ochún Feast

The saints are celebrated for several reasons. The same kinds of motives behind the reasons to organize an event connect all the collective celebrations in Santería (Balbuena Gutiérrez 2003, 39–40). Typically, the event is carried out in *cumpleaños de santo* – which means the anniversary feast of the initiation of a religious person – and on the day assigned in the calendar of saints. Furthermore, a religious person can organize a ceremony when fulfilling a promise made to some specific saint: a person has asked for help in relation to health, work or other issues that have something to do with their personal life. In exchange, a believer has promised to organize a celebration for the *orisha* (ibid., 40).

Violines Espirituales ceremonies are also carried out for various reasons. The most important, of course, is the one that precedes any Santería celebration: a consultation with dead spirits. Sometimes *el muerto*, the protector spirit one has, simply wants a celebration for itself. The occasion can also be carried out in honour of one's personal protector spirit. Dead spirits have some particular names. For example, it is common that the ceremonies dedicated to Congolese spirits are organized on specific days that are related to the calendar of saints. Spanish people

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54   For example, *Over the Rainbow* (Harold Arlen, 1905–1986), *Yesterday* (Paul McCartney, b. 1942), *Michelle* (Paul McCartney, b. 1942 and John Lennon 1940–1980), *Feelings* (Morris Albert, b. 1951), *Alma, Corazón y Vida* (Adrián Flores Álvan, 1926), *My way* (Claude François, 1939–1978 and Jacques Revaux, b. 1940), *Strangers in the night* (Bert Kaempfert, 1923–1980), *My Prayer* (Georges Boulanger, 1893-1958), *Alfonsina y el mar* (Ariel Ramírez, 1921–2010), *Just the Way You Are* (Billy Joel, b. 1949), *Africa* (Salvatore Cutugno, b. 1943), *Speak Softly, Love* (Nino Rota, 1911–1979) *A Whiter Shade of Pale* (Gary Brooker, b. 1945; Keith Reid, b. 1946; Matthew Fisher, b. 1946), *Je ne pourrai jamais vivre sans toi* (Michel Legrand 1932–2019), *The Phantom of the Opera* (Andrew Lloyd Webber, b. 1948), *Love Is a Many-Splendored Thing* (Sammy Fain 1902–1989), *Forever and Ever* (Demis Roussos, 1946–2015) and *Schindler's List* (John Williams, b. 1932).

often named their slaves with the names included in the calendar. Typical names were Francisco, Francisca, José, Julian, Pedro, Pablo and Manuel. These are the names that also commonly connect the protector spirits with a Congolese background (Esquenazi Pérez 2001, 35). Nancy Hernández Leyva (b. 1937), a Havanan singer, has decades of experience singing at the Espirituales and Santorales events. According to her, certain days in the calendar of saints directly influence the musician's work possibilities:

> For example, on the day of San José that takes place on March 19th, there was a great deal of work [--] because many persons have the African [spirit] called José, and that is why it is carried out a spiritual feast to this particular spirit on that day. On the day of San Pedro and San Pablo, people who have the spirit [*muerto*] called Pedro or Pablo, organize a feast for the spirit. On the day of San Francisco de Asís, which is Orula's day, people organize many feasts for Francisco or Francisca. (NHL 04032008)[55]

Hernández Leyva describes the content of the Violines Espirituales as follows:

> The Violín was purely spiritual, something really celestial where *plegarias*, waltzes were played and it was sung to different commissions. First to the holy commission, the Arab commission, the gypsy commission, the archangels San Miguel, San Rafael, and also Santa Clara, Santa Teresa de Jesús. For all those important Catholic saints that also form a part of folklore. [--] It started with *Padre nuestro*. [--] *Plegarias* to holy Caridad del Cobre and San Lázaro were played. All this was spiritual. [--] It was sung to African identities. [--] All this was in Spanish. All these numbers [--] were included in a spiritual mode in the feast of the African identity and other identities as well. A theme was made for any family spirit, identities of Indians, gypsies etc. All different commissions existing in the heavenly kingdom, let's put it that way. [--] When I was singing, I always said 'Commission of Indians, commission of Arabs, I call you in the name of Sun, in the name of Allah etc.' We also played to Chinese identities, because many people have a Chinese spirit. After playing for all the commissions, it was sung to any family spirit that would come. [–] After all those

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[55] 'Por ejemplo en el día de San José que es 19.3. había mucha manda del trabajo [--] porque muchas personas tienen un africano, llamado José, entonces se hacen una fiesta espiritual a ese espíritu que se llamaba con ese nombre. En el día de San Pedro y San Pablo, personas que tienen un muerto que se llama Pedro o Pablo, le hacen una fiesta al muerto. En el día de San Francisco de Asís que es el día de Orula, la gente hace muchas fiestas a Francisco o a Francisca.'

plegarias, we started to sing the African part. We sang to Eleggúa in order to move to another part, to sing to the Africans, including also music from Palo Monte. (NHL 04032008.)[56]

Hernández Leyva's interview quotation comprehensively describes an entirety that was based on Crossed Spiritism, with musical influences from Catholicism, various Afro-Cuban traditions, and spiritism. However, the Violín a Ochún ceremony as a separate celebration took its first steps when people during the spiritual ceremony began to dedicate music to the Catholic forms of Ochún and Yemayá – first to Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre and later to Virgen de Regla. Rosario Galpraieh (1919–2005) was a guitarist who used to play in the Violines Santorales ceremonies when this tradition started to take shape in the capital. She tells about the transformation of the Violines Espirituales event as follows:

The spiritual work began first. Then it extended. [--] Caridad del Cobre was often referred spiritually. So we started to pray her and we sang to Caridad del Cobre spiritually. And there the Violín a Ochún was born. [--] In the middle of the spiritual work we sang to Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre and to Virgen de Regla. It went like this. (RG 06072004)[57]

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[56] 'El Violín era puramente espiritual, algo muy celestial, donde se tocaron plegarias, valses y se cantaban a distintas comisiones. Primero se le cantaba a la comisión de santísimo, a la comisión árabe, a la comisión gitana, a los arcángeles San Miguel, San Rafael, y también a Santa Clara, Santa Teresa de Jesús. O sea, esos grandes santos católicos que también forman parte en folklore. [--] Se comenzaron con *Padre nuestro*. [--] Se tocaron las plegarias a santísima Caridad del Cobre y a San Lázaro. Todo esto era espiritual. [--] Se cantaban a identidades africanas. [--] Todo esto era en español. Todos estos números [--] eran incluidos en un modo espiritual en las fiestas de la identidad africana y otras identidades también. Se le hacían la obra a cualquier espíritu familiar, identidades indias, gitanos etc. Todos distintas comisiones existentes en reino celestial, vamos a decirlo así. [--] Yo cuando cantaba, siempre decía 'comisión India, comisión Árabe, yo te llamo en el nombre de sol, en el nombre de Alá etc.' También le tocamos a identidades chinas, porque muchas personas espiritualmente tienen identidad china. Después que se tocaron para todas las identidades, se le tocaba a cualquier espíritu familiar que viniera. [--] Ya después de todas esas plegarias y todo eso venía a cantarse la parte africana. Cantamos a Eleggúa para pasar al otro plano a cantarse a los africanos donde también se incluya parte de música de Palo Monte.'

[57] 'Primero empezó la obra espiritual. Entonces, la obra espiritual se extendía. [--] Se nombraba mucho la Caridad del Cobre espiritualmente. Y entonces nosotros empezamos a hacerle las oraciones y le cantamos a la Caridad del Cobre espiritualmente. Y allí fue naciendo el Violín a Ochún. [--] En medio de la obra espiritual cantamos a la Virgen de la Caridad y a la Virgen de Regla. Eso fue así.'

Rosario Galpraieh's interview quotation reflects a typical way of thinking among the people who practice Afro-Cuban religions: depending on the context, a particular entity has both spiritual and material forms of manifestation. However, it is still the same entity, which has a similar function despite the form in which it appears (cf. Warden 2006, 53–54). Generally speaking, the music performed during the spiritual event typically creates associations between different forms of manifestation of the particular entity. For example, the lyrics of the song dedicated to Niño de Atocha describe how this saint opens and closes all the paths, a feature associated with Elegguá in Santería.

Given that music was already performed to certain saints in the course of the ceremony, it seems natural that it was only a matter of time before the spiritists began to dedicate songs to Caridad del Cobre and Virgen de Regla as well. These spiritual manifestations were then associated with their material manifestations, Ochún and Yemayá. I would also refer to Fernando Ortiz's culinary metaphor of the *ajiaco* in this context. According to Ortiz, different elements of the (cultural) stew constantly move around during cooking and create new combinations of flavour in a naturally occurring process.

It is difficult to point to the exact moment when the first violin celebrations dedicated to Ochún took place in Havana. According to Balbuena Gutiérrez (2003, 112), these ceremonies were already in existence before the revolution of 1959. The older musicians I interviewed placed the beginning of the tradition in the 1950s also, in the era before the revolution. These musicians played in Violines Santorales events from the very beginning of their formation. According to Nancy Hernández Leyva and Rosario Galpraieh, Manuel De los Reyes Cajigal (1896–1972), a violinist and a spiritist who came from the city of Guantanamo, was the one behind this innovation in Havana. Hernández Leyva and some other older Havanan musicians said that Nancy herself was one of the musicians who participated in the first ceremonies dedicated to Ochún in the capital in 1959. However, Hernández Leyva mentions that she is unaware whether De los Reyes Cajigal had already organized these events in some form before that.

> I got to know Manuel De los Reyes Cajigal in [--] late 1959 in Marianao [barrio in Havana], at the home of a woman called Carmíta Fernández, who was a famous *santera* there. [--] She was a child of Ochún. [--] In the residence of this *santera* Schubert's and Gounod's Ave Marias were played for the first time, in the feast of the coronation,[58] that was a homage for Ochún. I remember that this was the first Violín dedicated to Ochún. [--] When the Violín a Ochún emerged

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[58]   One of the rituals during the Santería initiation process.

[--] I mean when it emerged by using the vocals, because I do not know if Reyes previously some time had played another, but what I remember is that the first time the Violín was sung was in the house of Carmen Fernández, a lady who used to live in Pogolotti [sub-barrio in Marianao], on 92nd street. (NHL 04032008)[59]

According to Lovio Díaz et al. (2006), the first violin feast dedicated to Ochún was organized 100 kilometres east of Havana, in the city of Matanzas, on 12 September 1941. According to them, the person behind this innovation was a well-known local *santera* called Aurelio Crespo Díaz (1909–1977). There is no reason to question the idea that the Violín a Ochún ceremony would have taken its first steps and forms in Matanzas, which traditionally has been a province with a strong Santería tradition. Furthermore, when comparing the general character of the celebration and the features it includes with the social development around it, one can say that the conditions for organizing the first violin feasts were already favourable before 1959.

The Violín a Ochún ceremony is associated with some sort of elegance and sophistication (Balbuena Gutiérrez 2003, 112; Warden 2006, 46), features that partly express the ideals of the white social class that used to dominate earlier. These contain the following issues: European-based and European-style music, that was strongly present especially when this tradition began to evolve in Havana; the roots of the violin that reflect European heritage; and also the spiritual background of the event, that was loosely connected to Kardecian spiritism.

For a long time, Santería had already been a religion that connected the whole nation. From the beginning of the first decades of the 20th century several wealthy people joined Santería. *Casas de Santo* (Santería houses) became bigger, and many of them had 'godchildren' with wealth and political power (Brown 2003, 256). At the country entered the 1930s, nationalism among the Cubans was strong; also the cultural elite began to pay more attention to African-based features in Cuban culture. These features were incorporated into art music, literature, poetry and visual arts (see e.g. Rey 2006; Arnedo-Gómez 2012). This time period is referred to as the

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[59]   'Conocí a Manuel De los Reyes Cajigal en finales del año 1959 en casa de una mujer en Marianao, llamada Carmíta Fernández, que era una santera famosa allí. [--] Tenía hecho Ochún. [--] En la residencia de esa santera se tocó la primera vez la Ave María de Schubert y la de Gounod, en una fiesta de coronación, homenaje a Ochún. Este fue el primer Violín que yo recuerdo que se dio a Ochún. [--] Cuando surge el Violín a Ochún [--] o sea, surgió cantado que yo no sé si anteriormente Reyes en alguna vez habrá tocado otro, pero que yo recuerde, que la primera vez que se cantó un Violín fue en casa de Carmen Fernández, la señora que te dije, que vivía en Pogolotti en la calle 92.'

Afrocubanismo movement (see Moore 1997, 167–209; Bardfeld 2001, 15; Rey 2006). In addition, some important scholars, such as Fernando Ortiz, initiated into Santería. Between the 1950s and 1970s, the *Ifá* tradition grew exponentially and received many important members with Creole backgrounds, such as Prio Socarras, the president of Cuba from 1948 to 1952. Because of the rich and powerful initiates, several Santería houses acquired notable resources (Brown 2003, 82–84, 259). Taking into account these kinds of features in the background, I would assume that this new, more 'sophisticated' feast type had at least something to do with the increasing wealth of *Casas de Santo* and the presence of the new members with important social status.

According to Warden (2006, 46), violin events are more popular among the upper class Cubans and those who prefer a more racially neutral celebration. However, based on my own experience, this ceremony type is celebrated in different barrios, including the poorest ones, and among different social classes. I have participated both in an event organized at the Embassy of Palestine in Cuba – in which the role of religion did not occupy such an important part of the feast – and also on several occasions in some poorer neighbourhoods, in which the material conditions were modest, but the religion itself occupied the main role. Furthermore, the feast type itself has become closer to other Santería celebrations both in musical and structural senses, although, however, it does not follow such a rigid ritual structure as Tambor de Santo, for example. On the contrary, there are many differences and variations concerning the structure of the event and the formation of the ensembles playing on the occasions.

During the era before the revolution of 1959 and the first decades after it, it was not common to organize religious feasts as frankly as is done today. Religious people were expected to ask permission from the authorities before arranging any kind of Afro-Cuban religious event. People who practiced these religions also used to hide the necklaces and other items related to the religion (Enrique López 1994; NHL 04032008.) This was partly a consequence of the revolution, when the state gradually adopted Marxist-Leninist ideology and a policy of promoting atheism.

Attitudes towards religion did not begin to change until the last decades of the 20th century. One important factor was the book *Fidel y la Religion*, published in 1985 (Enrique López 1994). In this book Fidel Castro and a Brazilian liberation theology friar, Frei Betto, have several conversations about religion. However, the state atheism that took place after the revolution can be seen as a continuum of the tendency to persecute Afro-Cuban religious traditions (and in this case also Catholicism; see Holbrook 2010) in Cuba. Perhaps these backgrounds also somehow had an impact on the expansion of Violin a Ochún ceremonies among people. I would assume that the violin with its European roots was more acceptable than the Afro-Cuban percussion instruments. Also, the violin did not draw as much attention

as carrying *tambores* around did, as Mirta González, the singer for the ensemble called Iré, also brings up (Korpivica 2010, 280). However, things have changed and different religious traditions are now permanently accepted in the society.

Although the precise moment of the emergence of the Violín a Ochún tradition in Havana is unclear, one can draw a picture of its evolution into the context in which it shared some common features with other Santería celebration types. According to my informants, Manuel de los Reyes Cajigal and the musicians around him began to compose and adapt *plegarias* for different entities.[60] They also borrowed music from anonymous and well-known composers and adapted tunes from classical music and Cuban popular music to this new context.

> When I was singing at the feasts dedicated to Ochún, I included music of Jorge Anckermann and Sánchez de Fuentes. We also played *La bella cubana* by José White. All these songs had well-known composers. [–] Because it is not only celestial music that is sung to Ochún, but also *boleros*, *guarachas*, even *sons*. When Manuel de los Reyes closed the Violín a Ochún, *Óyeme Cachita* was played. It is still done today. (NHL 04032008)[61]

As Nancy Hernández Leyva implies, the musical content of the event dedicated to Ochún began to adapt influences from both Cuban popular music and the repertoire of *charanga* ensembles. *Charanga* orchestras were popular through the 1940s and 1950s (Bardfeld 2001, 15–17; Moore 1997, 166), and there were several *charanga* violinists living in Havana. The people I interviewed for this study often connected different important *charanga* musicians of the era with the initial stage of the Violines Santorales tradition.

When Santería elements and a new kind of music were included in the basis of the spiritual violin feasts, a new kind of event began to emerge. It also expanded more widely among the people. De los Reyes Cajigal had several talented violinists and other musicians around him that he used to hire to play to different parts of Havana, because he could not take care of all the events. According to my

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[60] In addition to Manuel De Los Reyes Cajigal, Nancy Hernández Leyva specifically mentions África Domech (b. 1923), who played in the same line-up with her and is known for her children's songs, as a composer of *plegarias* dedicated to Changó and Yemayá. However, according to the Orquesta Estrellas Cubanas' album 'Violín a Ochún', which includes the *plegaria* dedicated to Changó, the author is unknown.

[61] 'Yo cuando canté en las fiestas de Ochún, incluí la música de Jorge Anckermann y de Sánchez de Fuentes. También tocamos *La bella cubana* de José White. Todos tienen sus autores bien conocidos. [–] Porque no es solamente que sea música celestial que le canta a Ochún, sino que también se le cantan boleros, guarachas, incluso sones. Cuando Manuel de los Reyes cerraba Violín a Ochún, se le tocaba *Óyeme Cachita*. Que todavía hoy se hace.'

informants, De los Reyes Cajigal left Cuba in 1971 or 1972. He first moved to Spain, and later to Chicago, United States, where he died in 1972. (NHL 04032008) This spiritist-violinist had a certain kind of vision about the feast dedicated to Ochún, including its structure and musical content. However, the ceremony has evolved in the course of time.

Nowadays Violines Santorales events are quite popular among the religious people of Havana. Arisel Arce Burguera, a Cuban scholar in the field of Afro-Cuban religions, even suggests that eighty percent of religious people in Havana prefer to organize a Violín or a Cajón feast than a Tambor de Santo event (AAB 24022008). Whether that is true or not, at least it is much cheaper to organize the Violines Santorales event than the Tambor de Santo ceremony. Anyway, there are also religious ceremonies where only the sacred *tambores batá* drums can be played, not the violins.

The violinists not only play in the ceremonies dedicated to *Eggún* or saints; they also perform on certain days in particular events of the Catholic Church or in the cemetery of Colón, in Havana. In latter case, they play music next to the grave of Amelia Goyri de la Hoz (1877–1901). Goyri de la Hoz, commonly known as 'Milagrosa', is the saint of childless women. The violinists gather to play next to the grave, for example, on Mother's Day and on 28 January, the day Goyri de la Hoz was born[62] (Video example 2).[63]

In these events the music includes some of the same tunes that are performed during the celebrations dedicated to spirits and saints. These are the melodies connected to the Catholic Church, along with some secular songs that reflect tranquillity and calmness. During these events the ensemble does not include percussion instruments. Neither do the groups play anything that could be directly associated with the *orishas*, such as different melodies or lyrics in the Yoruba language borrowed from other Santería celebrations. I was told that the Catholic Church has set certain conditions on the musical content when the ensemble plays in the church. Although the violin ensembles primarily perform at different religious events, the client may also hire the ensemble to play, for example, at a birthday party. I would assume that these ensembles' characteristic feature of functioning flexibly in both religious and more secular contexts has partly influenced their popularity.

Although there are certain differences among ensembles working in Havana, the differences concerning the implementation of religious ceremonies between the

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[62] See about the legend of Milagrosa: http://www.ecured.cu/index.php/La_Milagrosa (accessed 28February, 2022).
[63] Video example 2: Musicians who also participate in Violines Santorales events playing *Ave Maria* de Lourdes, written by Alexandre Lesbordes (1912–1969), next to the grave of Milagrosa on 28 January 2008.

cities are much bigger. The Santorales event that is organized in Havana differs a great deal from the ones held in Santiago de Cuba, the biggest city on the eastern part of the island. According to Maria Isabel Berbes Riveaux (MIBR 01022012), an anthropologist and a Santería practitioner from Santiago de Cuba, the tradition of playing the violin to Ochún arrived in Santiago in the 1970s, long after it emerged in Western Cuba.

When I visited Santiago de Cuba, I met Silvio Alayo Lescay, one of the violinists who organizes the events dedicated to Ochún. During our meeting he played some tunes that belong to the repertory of the local violin groups. The music was quite similar to the Violines Espirituales ceremonies implemented in Havana, including some of the same themes, such as a song called *Se van los seres*, which is dedicated to spirits, and also several songs related to the Catholic Church. However, in Santiago de Cuba the musicians do not play *plegarias* for different major saints. Neither do they include music adapted from the Tambor de Santo ceremony when playing to saints, as people do in Havana. Alayo Lescay refers to the Mass dedicated to Ochún, in which the purpose is to play a certain kind of music in order to have people possessed by *muerto*, a spiritual manifestation of Ochún.

> It is a Spiritual Mass, purely spiritual, because those are religious songs [music related to Catholicism] that are sung to her [to Ochún]. Apart from that, sweet melodies are also sung to her, such as *Madresita* and *Besame mucho*. Calmer music. (SAL 02022012)[64]

The description of this kind of an event resembles that of the Violines Espiritual ceremony and also the first Violines Santorales feasts organized in Matanzas and Havana, in which people used to play more peaceful music in order to facilitate the religious people getting possessed by Ochún (cf. Lovio Díaz et al. 2006). However, the violin ceremonies in Santiago de Cuba also include some of the same secular songs that are played during the Santorales events in Havana. In addition to *Madresita* and *Besame mucho*, a *bolero* written by Consuelo Velázquez (1916– 2005), Alayo Lescay told me that *Cachita*, which creates an association with Ochún, is included in the repertoire of the ensembles.

In Santiago de Cuba the percussive events are more popular than the violin feasts that are in the minority. There are no established practices regarding the celebrations one dedicates to Ochún. Berbes Riveaux mentions that she organizes several kinds of events in honour of Ochún, from violin feasts to occasions that include only one

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[64]   'Es una misa espiritual, netamente espiritual, porque son canciones religiosas que le cantan. Aparte que también se le cantan melodías dulces como *Madresita* y *Besame mucho*. Música más suave.'

soprano singing. The most important thing is that music appeals to Ochún. 'In my opinion it is good that Ochún, *my Ochún*, listens to good music' (MIBR 01022012).[65]

In summary, the exact moment when the violin feast dedicated to Ochún was formed in Havana is not clear. However, according to different sources, the celebrations in which the violin was played in honour of Ochún already existed before the revolution of 1959. According to my informants, the ceremony began to emerge when the believers started to play music to Caridad del Cobre and Virgen de Regla during the Violines Espirituales event. Nowadays, besides playing both in Espirituales and Santorales celebrations, the ensembles can also perform in the Catholic Church and at the events that have a more secular character. The Violín a Ochún tradition arrived in eastern Cuba several years later. However, in Santiago de Cuba the celebration differs in many ways from the events that are carried out in Havana.

3.4.3   Violines Santorales – Cultural Innovation

Afro-Cuban culture is a dynamic entirety, consisting of different cultural modes that have emerged due to transculturation. The cultural change is constant, and it creates a new kind of syncretism and new ways of doing things. However, the syncretism takes place inside this particular cultural system, and thus reflects its continuity (cf. Merriam 1964, 303; Nettl 2005, 279). When approaching the central religious fusions – Crossed Spiritism and Santería – at the basis of the Violín a Ochún ceremony, one can refer to syncretism that occurs within the Afro-Cuban cultural framework. This phenomenon of internal change in the context of some particular culture may be called 'innovation' (Merriam 1964, 303). However, the change does not affect all cultural modes in the same way. Religious music, for example, is said to be more resistant to change than secular music (Davis 1994, 147; Nettl 2005, 280). Additionally, if the musical system has been adapted to the social system with a certain degree of perfection – as is the case in Afro-Cuban culture – the musical change is slower (Nettl 2005, 280). That is, although the culture-specific ways of making music in Afro-Cuban context appear in a new relation to each other within a new framework of the Violín a Ochún ceremony, their essence does not change.

I would reflect the innovation of the Violín a Ochún ceremony and its gradual evolution with the ideas of George Murdock concerning the process of cultural change. According to Murdock (1956, qtd. in Merriam 1964, 303–304; Nettl 2005, 276), the process of cultural change includes four different phases that follow each other: 1) innovation, 2) social acceptance, 3) selective elimination, and 4) integration of innovation as part of the cultural complex. Cultural change begins with the process of innovation: some individual creates a new custom, which is learned by other

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[65]   'Para mí es bueno que Ochún, mi Ochún, oiga una música buena.'

members of society. Types of innovation include variation, invention, and cultural borrowing. The innovation remains as an individual custom before the second process, social acceptance, takes place. During that phase the innovation spreads from the originator to other people until it becomes universally practiced. Every innovation that is socially accepted undergoes the process of selective elimination. During this process the rewards associated with the innovation are weighed against the rewards given by alternative behaviours, ideas, or things. Finally, the socially accepted innovation which has passed through the process integrates with other cultural elements and becomes an accepted part of the functioning entirety.

It is interesting to study how the Violines Santorales feast evolved over time. Religious people gradually brought this new type of ceremony with its spiritual background closer to other Santería celebrations by adding several similar structural and musical elements to its content. The *coros* and *estribillos*[66] that were borrowed from other Santería celebrations partly led the instrumentation of the ensembles in a more percussive direction. At the same time the violin ceremonies conserved the familiar features of the spiritual event, thus maintaining its distinctive style in relation to other Santería feast types. The spiritual ambience is strongly present during these events. For example, it is common that people spray perfume during the ceremony. It is used for purification, and the aroma symbolizes the spiritual presence and the nature of the soul (Bolívar et al. 2011, 200). This is a custom related especially to spiritism. Additionally, sometimes one can hear people commenting on the 'special spiritual current' of some particular Violines Santorales event. Although the Violín a Ochún is an occasion with a ritual structure, it is not as rigid as the ceremony of Tambor de Santo, for example. Additionally, there are differences between the violin ceremonies regarding the musical ensemble and the way the performance proceeds.

The Violín a Ochún ceremony follows other Santería celebrations in various ways. Commonalities include the motives behind the execution of the feast, building the altars, the first part – the spiritual part – of the event that is dedicated to *Eggún*, and the possibility of people getting possessed by beings (Balbuena Gutiérrez 2003, 127). Violines Santorales events also seem to have some similarities with the 'Velaciones' event from the Dominican Republic, in which the European- and African-based music styles are interpreted side by side without complete syncretism. Also, the temporal division of the music reflects the progress from sacred to secular, and from African- and European-based music and ritual to Creole-type music and ritual (see Davis 1994). When approaching the syncretistic process of the Violín a Ochún ceremony and its internal formation, the structural features of the event, *coros* that have their origin in the Tambor de Santo celebration, and the evolution and extension of the instrumentation can be studied.

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[66]   *Estribillo* refers to both the phrase repeated in the song lyrics and the open section of the song, which includes repeated *guajeo* patterns.

3.4.4   Oru

According to Balbuena Gutiérrez (2003, 127), one of the features connecting all Santería celebration types is a religious act called *oru*. The etymological origin of this term is the Yoruba word *oro*, which means both 'word' and 'having a conversation'. This refers specifically to a conversation with gods (Ortiz 1965, 281). In the context of Santería's religious feasts this term is also used to describe different structural parts of the event. *Oru del igbodu*, or *oru seco*, refers to the first part of the Tambor de Santo ceremony, in which only *batá* drums are played in front of the altar, without the presence of the public. This section is followed by *oru de eyá aranlá*, or *oru de afuera*. During this part of the ceremony *batá* drums are played outside of the altar room, and all the audience participates. This section includes music played with *batá* drums, singing, and dancing, and it is also the moment when the *orishas* possess people (Balbuena Gutiérrez 2003, 53–54, 58–61).

The word *oru* is also used in the context of the Violines Santorales feast. This term was borrowed from the Tambor de Santo ceremony, but its meaning has changed in the Violín a Ochún celebration. The first part of the ritual is called *oru para el muerto* (*oru* for the dead) or *oru al trono* (*oru* to the throne). Contrary to the Tambor de Santo ceremony, this opening section contains music dedicated to *Eggún*, not to *orishas*. The music played during this section is adapted from the Violines Espirituales event. According to Balbuena Gutiérrez (2003) and Lovio Díaz et al. (2006), this part of the feast is a closed session in the same way that *oru seco* is in the context of the Tambor de Santo ceremony. Sometimes this part of the event takes place in another room where the rest of the ceremony is carried out. However, based on my own experiences, it is common that the participants in the occasion in general also have the opportunity to participate in this opening part of the event – not only certain persons, as in the case of *oru seco*. This is probably because a large number of the households where these events take place are quite small, and the throne is mounted into the same space where the rest of the feast is carried out. However, the function of the *oru* has remained somewhat similar to other celebration types: it refers to the structural part, which opens the event.

De los Reyes Cajigal's original idea of the structure of the event did not include a spiritual *oru* section for *Eggún*, although he started the feast with the tunes that were also used to play in the Violines Espirituales ceremonies. The songs in question are *Padre nuestro* and Franz Schubert's (1797–1828) *Ave Maria.* Both songs have their origin in the ecclesiastical context. According to Hernández Leyva, De los Reyes Cajigal did not want to mix 'spiritual' (music dedicated to spirits) and 'material' (music dedicated to *orishas*) together; he wanted to keep these two separated: '[De los] Reyes did not permit to combine so-called material with

spiritual. If it was a spiritual feast, it was spiritual, and if it was a material, it was material.' (NHL 04032008)[67]

> Manuel [De los Reyes Cajigal] always used to play *Padre nuestro* and *Ave María*. [--] And from there he began to play *plegarias*, different things. Because *oru* did not exist before, it is a new thing. *Plegarias* were sung in Spanish for Elegguá, Yemayá. [--] [Later] they began to perform *oru*, which was only done in the Spiritual Mass. [--] *Rezo* (prayer), that is carried out in the Tambor de Santo (*tambores batá*) has nothing to do with this, but well, people carry out *oru*. [--] *Oru* is an invention that was made afterwards. It has remained [--] I do not know who did it. (NHL 04032008)[68]

Over time, the *oru* has become an integral part of the structure of the ceremony. Balbuena Gutiérrez (2003, 117; emphases added) describes the structure of the Violín feast as follows:

> In the Violines [Santorales], the *Oru* to the throne is carried out, which in this case is sung and frequently only string instruments are used. It almost always begins with *Ave Maria* and other spiritual songs, and afterwards [--] different musical themes are interpreted in honour of *orishas* in a certain order (based on how the orchestra has structured it). Then the musicians move to another room or space destined for the public party and begin the *oru de afuera* [*oru* that is carried out outside of the altar room], which evolves with the habitual structure, but interspersing all kinds of songs and instrumentals and, additionally, with the incorporation of the rest of the musical instruments that did not take part in the previous *oru*.[69]

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[67] 'Reyes no permitía mezclar lo llamado material con lo de espiritual. Si era una fiesta espiritual, era espiritual y si era material, era material.'

[68] 'Manuel siempre acostumbró a tocar *Padre nuestro* y *Ave María*. [--] Y de allí comenzaba a tocar plegarias, distintas cosas. Porque antes no existía oru, es una cosa novedad. Se cantaban las plegarias en español para Elegguá, Yemayá. [--] [Después] se empezaron a hacer oru, que nada más que se hicieron en las misas espirituales. [--] El rezo que se hacen en tambores batá que no tiene nada que ver con esto, pero bueno, la gente hace el oru. [--] Oru es un invento que hicieron después. Se ha quedado [--] que yo no sé quién lo hizo.'

[69] En los Violines se realiza el Oru al trono, que en este caso es cantado y frecuentemente se utilizan solo los instrumentos de cuerdas. Comienzan casi siempre con el 'Avemaría' y otros cantos espirituales, y luego [--] se interpretan diferentes números musicales en honor de los orichas en un orden determinado (a partir de cómo lo tenga estructurado la orquesta). Luego los músicos se trasladan a la sala o espacio destinado a la fiesta pública y comienza el Oru de afuera que se desarrolla con la estructura habitual, pero intercalando todo tipo de canciones e instrumentales y, además, con la incorporación del resto de los instrumentos musicales que no participaron en el Oru anterior.

I would complete this quotation with some details concerning 1) the beginning of the feast, 2) the musical content of the *oru*, 3) the role of the *orishas* during the *oru* section, and 4) the structure of the event.

Among the ensembles in this study that have relatively established practice in relation to the structure of the celebration, only two of them, Orquesta Estrellas Cubanas and the orchestra of Reinold Miret, begin the event with Schubert's *Ave Maria*. Most of the orchestras start with the Catholic song *Padre nuestro*, followed by *Ave Maria*. Violinist(s) and possibly a singer interpret these tunes standing in front of the altar. They are commonly accompanied with a guitarist, who takes care of the harmony. Percussion instruments are not involved (Video example 3).[70] After playing these songs, musicians generally, but not always, sit down and continue the *oru* in the way that is specific to each of the orchestras. In the course of time, people playing in Santorales events have added more spiritual tunes after these, thus creating this new structural section, *oru al trono* or *oru para el muerto.* The duration of the *oru* also depends on the group. Furthermore, all the musicians – not just the singer, the violinists and the guitar player – participate in implementing the *oru* section after *Padre nuestro* and *Ave Maria* have been played.

The music played during the *oru* is a fusion of Catholic, spiritistic, Palo Monte and Santería traditions. In addition to the songs mentioned above, the ensemble might play *Misericordia* and *Santísimo* and the themes dedicated to Virgin Mary, like *Del cielo ha bajado* (*Ave Maria* de Lourdes) and *Oh María, madre mia*. They might also play different songs dedicated to commissions representing the spirits of different ethnic and other groups. These include the themes that draw connections between Congo and Lucumi ethnicities, like *Congo de Guinea soy*, and songs dedicated to nuns who are considered spiritual guides (see Feraudy Espino 2002, 34). Additionally, there might be some secular songs involved that fit into the context, like Osvaldo Farrés' *Madresita*. Some of these tunes have well-known composers; however, most are anonymous.

In the course of the *oru*, the songs still do not have a direct connection with the *orishas*. However, the *plegaria* dedicated to Elegguá is an exception. There are some groups that involve this *plegaria* among the three first songs of the event. They play it either as the first song or after *Padre nuestro* and/or *Ave Maria*. Thus, the Santería-related character is brought out right at the beginning of the event. Elegguá is the *orisha* to whom one should always play at the beginning and at the end of the Santería ritual.

However, most of the groups do not play a song dedicated to Elegguá until they have ended the first *oru* part. They begin the second section of the feast with this

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70   Video example 3: Franz Schubert's (1797–1828) *Ave Maria* played by Ronny Cabarrogas Fernández and Alejandro Vistel on 26 February 2010.

tune, and thus make a clear difference between the part dedicated to *Eggún* and the part related to saints. In these cases, the orchestra has a little break before the *plegaria* to Elegguá is interpreted. Another interesting detail about the ensembles is that some of them play some of the songs of the *oru* section in so-called *rezo* (prayer) style. This means that the violinists use only a tremolo technique and just play the notes including to the accompanying chord progression.

The *oru* section is generally followed by the second part of the event that includes both the music dedicated to saints and secular music. However, the structure of the feast depends on the individual orchestra, because there is not an established practice between the ensembles. I have also met two groups that divide the structure into three parts including the *oru* and different *plegarias* in Spanish, music dedicated to *orishas* in the Yoruba language, and a section containing secular music.

One can connect this kind of evolution of an innovation with Murdock's ideas concerning the process of selective elimination: the features of an innovation that is socially accepted are weighed against the other possible behavioural models. By adding the *oru para el muerto* section as part of the structure of the event, people brought it closer to other Santería celebrations. The *oru* section also connected the event with its spiritual background.

However, according to Lovio Díaz et al. (2006), the *oru* had been an essential part of the structure of this feast type since the tradition was established in Matanzas in the 1940s. At the beginning of the event five 'daughters' (initiated) of Ochún were sitting in front of the altar. Perfume was sprayed on them, and meanwhile, the violinists – from one to five musicians – played peaceful music that facilitated the achievement of the state in which Ochún possessed these initiated persons. After this part of the event, the public feast took place.

3.4.5 Orisha Parts and the Extension of Instrumentation

When the Violín a Ochún tradition took its first steps in Havana, the instrumentation of the group included only five violins, because it is the number associated with Ochún (OGÁ 08112007). According to Hernández Leyva, in addition to the violins, the line-up included a guitar providing the accompaniment. Later, De los Reyes Cajigal added small percussion instruments (*percusiones menores*) to his ensemble. 'There were always five violins and an accompanying guitar. [--] Today it has become like an ensemble, it no longer has that form of five violins.' (NHL 04032008)[71]

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[71]   'Siempre se ponían cinco violines y se ponía una guitarra acompañante. [--] Hoy en día ya paso a ser como un conjunto, ya no lleva la forma aquella que era cinco violines.'

According to Geronimo Barbón, the general sound of the ensemble and the ambience of the occasion were quite different from today:

> The Violín [feast] was more sensitive [--] where people got possessed with [the sound of] violin. There was no need for that noise. [--] It was for the dead spirits [*muertos*] and when it was Santoral, it was very sensitive. (GB 13022008)[72]

Sometimes a client wants to organize (or Ochún requires) a traditional feast, in which the music contains only tunes that are played with violins. For example, I have participated in events, in which only one violinist was hired to play on the seashore. On these occasions the musical repertoire is also different, often excluding different *montuno* and *orisha* sections of the song dedicated to being. However, the believers also carry out traditional events that are interpreted with five violins, according to the number associated with Ochún. This is a good example of how religious concepts themselves, on a deeper level, influence musical practices and, further, musical sound (Video example 4).[73] As one can see in Video example 4, the ensemble including five violins does not really have an influence on the musical arrangement of the song. Four violinists play the melody of *Sobre las olas* in unison, and Lazága Ortega replaces the guitar by playing the chord progression in double stops while emphasizing the waltz rhythm. I would suggest that this is a result of a convention called '*ven tú*': all violinists know the song, but they do not form such an established ensemble that they would have made an arrangement for five violins. When the group starts playing *coros*, *A remar* and *Marinero*, they all play the accompanying chords and sing along with the *coro*, thus supporting it.

At the beginning of the Violín a Ochún tradition, the ensembles interpreted peaceful *plegarias* – the same ones as today – in honour of saints. A *montuno* section followed these *plegarias* and sometimes included a short *estribillo*. These *estribillos* were borrowed from the Tambor de Santo ceremony. According to Hernández Leyva, this custom was included in the songs dedicated to Ochún and Elegguá. However, the Violines Santorales event got closer to other Santería celebrations, when religious people – besides the *oru para el muerto* section – began to include more Yoruba-based elements in the music.

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[72] 'El Violín era una cosa más fina [--] donde la gente se montaba con violín. No hacía falta esa bulla. [--] Era pa los muertos y cuando era Santoral, era muy fino.'
[73] Video example 4: Juventino Rosas' (1868–1894) waltz *Sobre las olas* and two different *coros*, *Marinero* and *A remar*, played in the celebration that was carried out using a traditional ensemble, five violins, on 16 February 2008.

Certain *coros* were added to it. Today people almost sing in Yoruba language, because they put a set of *estribillos* that are folklore music. That is not bad, but in reality, when the Violín [feast] began, it was not like that. We always put something to it, a little piece [fragment], for example [--] '*O fe ni ki ya, o fe ni ki ya.*[74] (NHL 04032008)[75]

Nancy Hernández Leyva refers to the *estribillos* that believers have added to the songs. However, today there are also ensembles that, when performing music to some particular deity, only use the Yoruba language. For example, the tune dedicated to Yemayá may begin with a traditional Yoruba chant *Yemayá asesú*, which is followed by responsorial singing based on the same language.

At the time the Violín a Ochún celebration emerged, the larger percussion instruments, such as the *tumbadora* and the bongo drums, were included in the line-up only when playing in spiritual ceremonies dedicated to African spirits. When performing the music in the Santorales context, the smaller percussion instruments were used.

Manuel [De los Reyes] himself took the *claves* sticks and I took the maracas [--] or he took the *cencerro* [cowbell], anything. [--] Manuel De los Reyes already did all that, all those elements [that are done today]. Of course, perhaps today people have put too much percussion instruments. [De los] Reyes used the violin more, because [--] if you are carrying out the Violín [feast] to the saint [--] it is supposed that what has to sound is the violin. Other instruments are for accompaniment, such as maracas and others. (NHL 04032008)[76]

However, in the course of time, both the larger percussion instruments and the *coros* and *estribillos* in the Yoruba language have established their place in the musical content of the ceremony. Actually, nowadays the purpose is to make the

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[74] It is interesting that people sometimes sing this fragment incorrectly, pronouncing it 'Oh felicidad, oh felicidad'. 'Felicidad' means happiness, and in any case, the lyrics can be said to fit the context of the celebration.
[75] 'Se le fue agregando ciertos coros. Ya en este momento casi la gente canta en yoruba, porque se le ponen una serie de estribillos que son música folklórica. Que no está mal, pero realmente cuando el Violín comenzó, no era así. Siempre pusimos alguna cosa, un pedacito, por ejemplo [--] "O fe ni ki ya, o fe ni ki ya."'
[76] 'Manuel mismo cogió unas claves y entonces yo las maracas [--] o el cogía un cencerro, cualquier cosa. [--] Todo eso ya Manuel de los Reyes lo hacía, todos esos elementos. Claro que hoy en día la gente ha puesto demasiado percusiones quizás. Reyes usaba más el violín, porque [--] si estas haciendo un Violín para un santo [--] se supone que lo que tiene que sonar es el violín. Los otros instrumentos son de acompañamiento, como maracas y eso.'

orisha part – the one that follows the *plegaria* and *montuno* sections – to sound somehow like *batá* drums. However, the clear difference is that the *tambores batá* ensemble contains three drums that all have two membranes, and when played together, they create a unique sound, impossible to copy.

One notable feature is that during the Violín a Ochún ceremony, when moving to the *orisha* part, every musician participates in the creation of a polyrhythmic musical ambience. For example, violinists lay down their instruments and start playing minor percussions, such as the *güiro* or the *campana*. It is also typical that the guitar player turns their instrument around and plays the soundboard of the guitar as if it were a drum (Video example 5).[77] The polyrhythmic basis is completed with a *tumbadora*, bongos, or in some cases with a *cajón*. Sometimes the *chequeré* is also part of the instrumentation. Geronimo Barbón, a pianist and percussionist, and also Miguel Barbón's brother, tells about the integration of the *tumbadora* into the ensembles playing in the celebrations:

> The *tumbadora* was not used in these events. There were only violins and the guitar. [--] The 6/8[78] was involved when the time passed. [--] Because people got possessed with [the sound of] the violin. What happened is that the *tumbadora* gave it a fuller sound. (GB 13022008)[79]

Although Manuel De los Reyes Cajigal was one of the originators of this event type in Havana, the rest of religious society also had an impact on how this ceremony was formed in the course of time. As Merriam (1964, 313) put it, a new idea evolves and gets stronger if a 'purpose of society' exists. That is, several people at the same time and in cooperation study the same possibilities. Hernández Leyva also brings up this kind of progression at the foundation of this tradition. 'It [the Violines Santorales feast] got bigger in the course of time. Additionally, it was enriched in a certain way, because everyone has given their contribution. [--] Everyone works in their own style.' (NHL 04032008)[80]

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[77] Video example 5: Mario Guemez Lay using the soundboard of his guitar as a percussion instrument during the *orisha* part dedicated to Changó on 28 October 2007.

[78] Here, 6/8 refers to the metrical time signature (and the *clave* rhythm; see Chapter 4) that often exists as the basis of the *orisha* section of the song dedicated to some particular deity. In other contexts, the term *seis por ocho* (6/8) can also refer to the *cajón* of the middle size in the *cajón* ensemble (e.g. Eli Rodrígues et al. 1997, 87).

[79] 'En estas actividades no había tumbadora. Nada más que eran violines y la guitarra. [--] El 6/8 entro cuando fue pasando el tiempo. [--] Porque la gente montaba con el violín. Lo que paso es que la tumbadora le dio más lleno ese sonido.'

[80] 'Se fue engrandeciendo con el tiempo. Además, se fue enriqueciendo de cierta manera, porque todo el mundo ha dado su aporte. [--] Cada cual trabaja en su estilo.'

The musical ensembles that perform at these events have changed over time: the number of violins has decreased, the accordion or piano has replaced the guitar in some of the ensembles,[81] some of the groups have added the flute as part of the instrumentation, and also, as mentioned above, the *tumbadora* and bongos have established their place in the orchestras. Furthermore, the *cajón* is sometimes used as an instrument that takes care of the rhythmic base of the group. The orchestras that are made up only of *cajones* typically play in the events related both to *Eggún* and to saints. However, it is not so common to use this instrument in the ensemble that includes violins and guitar. According to Pablo Mondanza, whose real name is José Pablo Reyes Marrero (b. 1958), he was the one behind this innovation. I have not met other people who would use the *cajón* as a rhythmic instrument in a violin group. According to Reyes Marrero, this idea was the result of a coincidence:

> I used to work with the *tumbadora* before, but the idea emerged once when I had forgotten the *tumbadora*. [--] It occurred to me to say to her [the organizer of the event] 'give me a drawer from the closet' [--] then, with my fingers, I looked for the sound that I am making today with the *cajón*. Of course, what the *cajón* creates is a polyrhythm. [--] So, people have liked it and since that moment I have worked with the *cajón*. (JPRM 24022008; Video example 6)[82][83]

This is a good example of an artifact that was not designed to play music for the *orishas*, and which Heersmink (2021a, 3) would call an artifact with an improvised function. However, a drawer can also function as an artifact through which the cognition is extended outside of the biological body in order to perform an action to attain a certain goal.

I have also participated in two events in which both the ensemble of *cajones* and the violin group were present, and on one occasion in which a *cajón*/*güiro* (*chequeré*) ensemble and a violin group were playing. On these occasions the groups were alternating with each other, and sometimes the violinist played a monotonous rhythmic-melodic pattern over the rhythmic foundation of percussions (Video

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[81] Typically, there is a guitarist taking care of the chord progression. However, I also met two ensembles using a piano, and two ensembles using an accordion.

[82] 'Yo trabaje antes con la tumbadora, pero la idea surgió a partir de una vez que se me quedo la tumbadora. [--] Se me ocurre decir a ella "dame una gaveta del escaparate" [--] entonces yo con los dedos le busque el sonido que hoy en día estoy haciendo con el cajón. Claro, el cajón lo que crea es una polirritmia. [--] Entonces, la gente le han gustado eso y a partir de ese momento me he quedado haciendo ese trabajo con el cajón.'

[83] Video example 6: Pablo Mondanza playing the *cajón* and leading a responsorial singing during the theme dedicated to Yemayá on 25 December 2007.

example 7).[84] Although these seem to be rare occasions, they also interestingly reveal the ongoing syncretistic process creating new kinds of fusions in the context of this particular society. Anyway, the reunion of these two ensembles was not very common during the time I collected my research material. Additionally, some of the religious people used the term 'cajolín', as a mocking term, when referring to this kind of fusion between *cajones* and violin.

In summary, the instrumentation, the musical content and the structure of the Violín a Ochún ceremony have evolved a great deal over time. When this tradition began to emerge, the ensemble included only five violins (and a guitar) due to the number associated with Ochún. While the events are still carried out with the original line-up, it is now more common that the ensemble includes a couple of violins, large and small percussion instruments, and an instrument taking care of the harmonic base. Sometimes the cello (cf. Balbuena Gutiérrez 2003, 115) or the flute is also included. Little by little, the community members also evolved the structure of the event and brought it closer to other Santería celebrations by separating, for example, the first spiritual section from the rest of the ceremony. The musical content evolved as well: several songs and *coros* were adapted from the Tambor de Santo ceremony. This also led to a common feature with other Santería events, in which the possession of supposed *orishas* takes place when the Yoruba language is used and the music is more percussive. However, the violin ceremony is still not a rigid and stable entirety; rather, its implementation involves several variations in terms of music, structure and instrumentation.

3.5   Carrying out the Feast

Santería includes three divination systems with the function of consulting with the *orishas*. These are *ifá*, *diloggún*, and *coco* (also called *biaqué* or *obi*; Barnet 1995, 27). The last of these is the simplest. During this ritual, *orishas* give fast, laconic answers to the questions they are asked. The *coco* rite precedes all Santería ceremonies, including the Violín a Ochún event.

During the ritual, there is a coconut shell that is divided in four pieces.[85] The *santero* or *santera* is standing during the rite and throws the pieces on the rug in front of them. These four pieces can fall down in five different forms in relation to the dark and white sides of the shell pieces. The five forms represent five different *letras*, or answers, of the *orishas*. The answers in relation to the colour of the pieces are

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[84]   Video example 7: Violin and *cajón/güiro* ensembles playing during the same occasion in the barrio of Pogolotti on 30 December 2007.

[85]   Coconut is the most important fruit in the Santería religion; it is used to communicate directly with *Eggún* and *orishas* (Bolívar Aróstegui & Porras Potts 2011, 215).

Alafia (4 whites), *Itagua* (3 whites, 1 dark), *Eyeife* (2 whites, 2 darks), *Okana* (1 white, 3 darks), and *Oyekun* (4 darks). The first three are positive *letras* and the last two are negative *letras*. There are different questions for *orishas* concerning the issues, such as if they are pleased with all the rites that have taken place before the feast or if there is still something important that should be done before the event begins (regarding *coco*, see Balbuena Gutiérrez 2003, 50–51; Bolívar Aróstegui & Porras Potts 2011, 214–220).

After the last throw of the shell pieces, *Alafia*, *Itagua*, or *Eyeife* should remain on the rug (cf. Balbuena Gutiérrez 2003, 50–51). This means that the *orisha* has accepted everything. According to Joaquin Izquierdo, one of the musicians with his own ensemble, it is also possible that the event may be cancelled because of the result of the *coco* rite.

> We were in Virgen del Camino [barrio in Havana] in the Violín, since everything was confirmed. But before [the feast] there is a *coco* rite. [--] When we arrived at the event, the comrade [the client] said: 'The *coco* says that I cannot organize the Violín.' [--] Because if you do that, there will be a problem. [--] The [answer of the] *coco* was *okana*. She threw [the pieces] again, and *okana*. And again [--] and [the *coco*] says no. You cannot [do that]. (JI 16012008)[86]

Once this specific rite is over and the *orishas* are satisfied, the celebration can begin. The altar (or throne) that is assembled in honour of the *orishas* is the one that indicates to whom the event is dedicated. It can represent only one saint, as is often the case in Ochún. It can also represent all the major *orishas*, in which case the *orisha* who is celebrated is presented in the middle of the throne. *Orishas* are represented through different objects and clothes of different colours. The altar also contains personal *soperas*[87] of the person who arranges the ceremony. In the lowest part of the altar are the objects associated with the soldier *orishas* Elegguá, Oggún and Ochosi. Furthermore, there are cakes, pastries and fruits that are associated with different *orishas*. These are eaten after the musical part of the event has finished. Alongside them, there are several objects – such as maracas, bells and a dried fruit of the flamboyan tree – that people use when they arrive at the event and greet the saints. Additionally, in front of the altar are the pieces of coconut shell in the form

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86 'Nosotros estuvimos en Virgen del Camino en un Violín, ya que estaba cuadrado todo. Pero antes se le da el coco. [--] Cuando nosotros llegamos a la actividad dice la compañera: "Dice el coco que no puedo dar el Violín." [--] Porque si lo haces, hay problema. [--] El coco le salió el okana. Volvió a tirar y okana. Y volvió [--] y dice que no. No puedes.'

87 *Sopera* is a receptacle that contains different objects related to particular *orisha*.

they were in the end of the *coco* rite. The thrones have taken their form in Cuba in the course of time; they have reflections from Catholicism, material culture of the colonial era, and different features from Yoruba cosmogony as well (see Brown 2003).

Figure 4. Throne for Ochún, including different objects representing other major saints as well. Photo: Ville Iivari.

3.5.1   Structure and Content of the Occasion

According to Hernández Leyva, the spiritual events in which she used to perform with Manuel De los Reyes Cajigal lasted between one and a half hours and two hours, and they had to be over before midnight. 'The event had to end before midnight, because *el maestro* [De los Reyes Cajigal] said that when that time came, the spirits were allowed to rest. After midnight it was not possible to play the violin or anything.' (NHL 04032008)[88] Those Espirituales and Santorales events I have participated in have normally taken place in the afternoon and they have always ended before 10 p.m. However, the duration and the content of the ceremony depend on the particular occasion, although the Violín a Ochún ceremony usually lasts approximately three hours.

The Violines Santorales events in Havana that I have participated in can be divided into three categories in relation to the structure and content of the event:

1) i - *Oru para el muerto*; ii - The second part of the ceremony that contains only music played to saints and *orishas*.
2) i - *Oru para el muerto*; ii - The second part of the ceremony that contains both music dedicated to saints and *orishas* and secular music.
3) i - *Oru para el muerto*; ii - The second part of the ceremony that contains only music played to saints and *orishas*; iii - The third part of the ceremony that contains only secular music.

In all of these structure types, *oru para el muerto*, a section dedicated to spirits, is played first. This section lasts between thirty and sixty minutes. After this part is over, the ceremony evolves in a way that depends on the orchestra in question. Most ensembles divide the structure of the feast into two sections. These are *oru al trono* and the latter part, in which they combine both music dedicated to saints and *orishas* in the Spanish and Yoruba languages, and instrumental and secular music.

I have also met two groups, the orchestra of Pedro Rosell and the ensemble of Joaquin Izquierdo, who divide the ceremony into three parts. These are *oru para el muerto*; the section dedicated to *orishas* (*parte africana*), in which most of the songs are sung in the Lucumi (Yoruba) language; and the one in which Creole music is played (*parte cubana*). In these cases, the structure resembles a syncretistic event called Velaciones from the Dominican Republic, in which the music proceeds from

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88   'La actividad había que terminar antes de las 12 de la noche, porque el maestro decía que cuando llegara esa hora, a los espíritus se les dejaba descansar. Después de las 12 de la noche no se podía tocar más el violín ni nada.'

Catholic and African-based religious music to Creole music (cf. Davis 1994, 152–155).

> Velaciones illustrates a common Caribbean pattern of integration of European and African ritual and music into a single religious event, in which the sacred European-derived music tends to be executed first, the sacred African-derived (if any) second, and the [C]reole third (Davis 1994, 152).

In addition to the internal temporal progression, Davis brings up the spatial progression of the event: European-based music is played in front of the altar and African-based, percussive music, in another space (ibid., 155). As mentioned above, the Violín a Ochún feast sometimes follows the same kind of spatial order. Often, however, the entire event is carried out in the same room, although during the *oru al trono* the throne is taken into account more noticeably, and it is the centre of attention. A significant feature that distinguishes the Violín a Ochún ceremony from other Santería celebrations is that the violinists often momentarily return to the altar during the event and play some peaceful tunes – such as Jules Massenet's (1842–1912) *Meditation* or Frank Fernández's *Tema de amor* – that are particularly dedicated to Ochún.

The music dedicated to saints is performed primarily after the *oru al trono* section is over. However, some of the ensembles instead play the *plegarias* dedicated to Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre and Virgen de Regla – the Catholic counterparts of Ochún and Yemayá – during the first section of the event. In this case, the proceeding of the ceremony is more similar to the Violines Espirituales ceremony at the time the celebration dedicated to Ochún took its first steps. Later, after this section is over, these ensembles play music for the *orisha* counterparts of these saints in the same context in which they perform music to other *orishas* as well.

However, most of the groups play the tunes dedicated to the Catholic counterparts of Ochún and Yemayá during the second section of the event. When the songs dedicated to these deities are played during this part of the ceremony, they normally contain both *plegarias* in the Spanish language and the so-called *orisha* parts in the Yoruba language. However, according to the musicians, there are also some clients who do not want the ensemble to play music dedicated to the *orishas* in the Yoruba language, but only in Spanish, during the ceremony. In this case, the celebration more clearly follows De los Reyes Cajigal's original idea of the nature of the ceremony. I have never attended such an event, but the lyrics of the songs performed during the celebration always alternated between Spanish and Yoruba.

The exception regarding language is Babalú Ayé, to whom only the *plegaria* and a *montuno* section that follows this song are performed in Spanish. Some people think that Babalú Ayé is so spiritual a being that when dedicating a *plegaria* to him,

it should be included only in the Violines Espirituales ceremony, when the ensemble plays to this deity's *Palo Monte* counterpart Cobayende as well. On the other hand, some ensembles play this *plegaria* – for the same, spiritual reason – only during the *oru para el muerto*. However, most commonly this song and a *montuno* section included in it are performed after the *oru* section, and as the first *plegaria* dedicated to saints, but, of course, after Elegguá. Iré is an exception among the ensembles: this group plays a *plegaria* dedicated to Babalú Ayé only during the spiritual violin ceremonies. Sometimes they also dedicate a song to this *orisha* in the Santorales context, but in that case they play Margarita Lecuona's (1910–1981)[89] popular composition *Babalú.*

A certain kind of syncretism, typical of Afro-Cuban religious traditions, which sometimes appears to be mosaic-like, and sometimes a fusion merging mosaic tiles together, is also present in music dedicated to *orishas* during the Violines Santorales event. For example, a fusion is present in song lyrics, which treat different forms of being of some particular entity side by side in the same context. On the other hand, material and spiritual forms of Ochún are clearly separated when playing music to this particular *orisha*. As mentioned above, some of the ensembles play the *plegaria* dedicated to Caridad del Cobre during the *oru para el muerto* section, and the *orisha* part later, during the material section of the event. Furthermore, when these parts are played one after another, the lyrics of the *plegaria* that are in Spanish do not mention the *orisha* form of Caridad del Cobre.[90] The *orisha* name of this deity is left to the following part, when the music is totally percussive and the lyrics refer to the *orisha* in the Yoruba language.

In addition to music dedicated to Ochún, all the ensembles playing in the ceremonies interpret the music for other major saints as well, normally in both Spanish and Yoruba. The way the tunes dedicated to different saints are related to the structural content of the feast depends on the orchestra. Generally, the ensembles play music that is dedicated to Elegguá, Babalú Ayé, Obbatalá, Oyá, Yemayá, Changó and Ochún. Sometimes they play to Oggún, Ochosi and Orula as well. One can say that the orchestras follow the same order when playing to the first three *orishas*. After the songs dedicated to Elegguá, Babalú Ayé and Obbatalá, the order of the *plegarias* changes depending on the orchestra and also on the *orisha* that is being celebrated. The one who is celebrated is strongly taken into consideration in the final part of the event.

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[89] Margarita Lecuona was Ernesto Lecuona's cousin.

[90] As with many other songs played during the Violín a Ochún ceremony, the author of this tune is uncertain. According to the journal of the Cuban Catholic Church – Verdad y Esperanza, Segunda Época Año 2, No 2, 2010 – Sindo Garay (1867–1968) was the one who composed this beautiful song.

The interaction between the participants of the event is extremely present when someone gets possessed by the *orisha*. This normally happens during the *orisha* part of the song. When musicians notice that someone is close to achieving the possession state, they start playing louder and thus support this special moment. The music becomes more percussive, and often a guitar player turns their instrument around and starts playing it as a drum. Both the musicians and the audience participating in the occasion try to assist the person in question in order to create a perfect ambience for the possession.

In summary, the Violín a Ochún celebration lasts approximately three hours. Each event begins with a section called *oru al trono*, after which the structure of the occasion proceeds in a way specific to the particular ensemble. The musical content of the ceremony includes music broadly from different traditions. Music is played for all the major saints, and normally the lyrics of these songs are in both Spanish and Yoruba.

3.5.2   Bi- and Polymusicality in Relation to the Repertoire of the Feast

In the ethnomusicological tradition, the term bi-musicality has been used in the context in which a scholar learns to play, sing or dance the music of the particular culture they want to study (e.g. Jones 1934; Hood 1960, 1971; Myers 1992; Baily 2001). However, bi- or polymusicality can also refer to individuals, events, and music cultures (Davis 1994, 157). According to Davis, bi-musicality is common at both individual and collective levels among Caribbean music cultures. As an example, she mentions the Velaciones feast in the Dominican Republic, in which the people participating in the religious event first sing Salve Regina in Spanish and after that start playing drums and sing in Afro-American style (ibid.). This kind of progression resembles, as mentioned above, the celebrations organized in Havana.

The Violín a Ochún feast is unquestionably a polymusical event. It contains several music traditions side by side, performed by musicians who are capable of interpreting these traditions. Furthermore, a violinist is expected to be able to play some percussion instruments. However, this is not unusual, since it is well known that many *charanga* musicians are multi-instrumentalists (cf. Valiente 2015, 134). It is also assumed that the violinists, besides knowing some repertoire of classical and popular music, are familiar with certain conventions of Afro-Cuban music, including different musical themes based on the traditions of Santería and Palo Monte.

Although many of the violinists participating in this research have studied classical music in conservatories, they also mention the inner rhythm the Cuban

musicians should instinctively carry inside themselves. With this concept, they refer to the *clave* rhythm, on which the rhythmical thinking both in Afro-Cuban music and in Cuban popular music is based.

> In the symphonic music or the popular music of other countries, of other regions, they are not guided by that concept of rhythm of the *clave*, while we are. Cubans and some other Caribbean countries are guided by that. [--] We are stricter with that. (OGÁ 18052009)[91]

The *clave* rhythm itself is not always audible in music, but it still guides the polyrhythmic framework. Musicians consider the *clave* concept a certain kind of 'state of mind' (Mauleón-Santana 1999, 16; see Chapter 4). Although violinists are expected to be familiar with the *clave* rhythm and the different music styles and genres, the musical repertoire is also learned by participating and playing during the events. The same concerns the art of improvisation.

3.6 The Role of Improvisation During the Ceremony

In *charanga* music, the flute has traditionally been an instrument with the role of improvisation (Valiente 2015, 10). It is common for flautists to improvise throughout the song, not just during the *montuno* section (Manuel 1998, 137). The violin, by contrast, has mainly played the role of an accompanying instrument. When violin solos take place, they usually appear during a *montuno* section.

Montuno refers to the structurally open section, which is normally played as the last part of the song. It remains harmonically stable and is characterized by a call-and-response form between the soloist and the background singers (*coro*; regarding *montuno* section, see e.g. Mauleón 1993, 256). Responsorial procedure is found worldwide. It is present in almost every African society (Kauffman 1980, 403). From African musical traditions, this heritage transferred to Afro-Cuban music and Cuban popular music. In Cuba, the *montuno* section was first used in *rumba* music, from which it passed to *son*, and after the huge popularity of the *son*, it was adapted to other Cuban popular music styles as well.

The *montuno* chord progression is often two or four bars long. A soloist (singer or instrumentalist) can improvise, for example, four or eight bars, after which the *coro* repeats a certain phrase by singing. If the solo is longer, the chord progression

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[91]   'En la música sinfónica o la música popular de otros países, de otras regiones, no se rigen con el concepto ese de ritmo de la clave, que nosotros sí. Los cubanos y algunos otros países caribeños sí se rigen con eso. [--] Nosotros sí somos más estrictos con eso.'

remains equal, but the length of the solo is generally undefined. In such a case, it is common for violinists playing at the Santorales celebrations to present the upcoming melody of the *coro* at the end of their improvisation.

According to interviews I have conducted with the musicians participating in these events, the improvisations that last longer have taken place at a later phase. At the beginning of this tradition, the improvisations more clearly followed a responsorial procedure, and their role was to communicate and alternate with the *coro*. However, this kind of traditional responsorial style has changed a bit in the course of time. There are also several younger violinists playing at these events today. They are technically advanced and have been influenced by jazz and other global music genres (see Chapter 5). These features have, for sure, also affected the evolution of the improvisation tradition in these events in the course of time. Celso Valdés Santandreu, one of the violinists of Orquesta Aragón, mentions that during the time Miguel Barbón was playing in the ceremonies dedicated to Ochún, improvisation had a role a bit different from today.

> During that time [--] they made the *coros* and he [Miguel Barbón] improvised with the violin, but always on the basis of the *coros*. [--] It is possible to improvise something, but not for long, as if it were a violin solo, but interchanging with the *coro*. It cannot be too exaggerated. [--] There is a concept [of improvisation] of not being so virtuoso, but to improvise in order that people dance with improvisations. Today the improvisation has changed a bit. Many violinists stand out as soloists. But during his time [of Miguel Barbón], people danced with his improvisations. [–] They were not watching how he was playing. It was in function of making melodies that people will dance. (CVS 31012008)[92]

Valdés Santandreu encapsulates well the traditional role of improvisation in Latin dance music. Although improvisation is an important part of the genre, its major function is to support this social dancing form rather than to command attention to itself in the same way as in jazz or Latin jazz traditions (Manuel 1998, 127). Anyway, improvisation has been present in these ceremonies at some level from the beginning of this tradition. The popular character of the event – including

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[92] 'En esa época [--] hacían los coros y el improvisaba con violín, pero siempre en función de los coros. [--] Se puede improvisar poco, pero no largo, como si fuera un solo de violín, sino como intercambio entre el coro. No muy exagerado la improvisación. [--] Hay un concepto de no tanto de ser virtuoso, sino que improvisar para que la gente baile con improvisaciones. Hoy en día cambiaron un poco la cosa de improvisar. Muchos violinistas se destacan como solistas. Pero en la época de él, la gente bailaba con sus improvisaciones. [--] La gente no estaba mirando como tocaba. Era en función de hacer melodías que la gente bailará.'

the practice of improvisation – was one feature that distinguished it from the spiritual event.

This is how the musicians with experience from both the earlier Espirituales ceremonies and the Santorales events commented on the role of the violin regarding improvisation:

> During the time of De los Reyes there were a great deal of Espirituales [feasts]. [--] There was not so much improvisation of violin. (GB 13032008)[93]

> It was already different [in the Violín a Ochún event]. The *plegaria* was sung and then *montunos* and popular music took place. [--] He [De los Reyes Cajigal] also improvised a lot during *montuno* sections. (NHL 04032008)[94]

> After the *plegaria*, the *montuno* was played [in the Violín a Ochún event] [--] in order to make the *plegaria* a little more pleasant. [--] The violin always has to maintain improvising. (PMA 11022008)[95]

As the interview quotations above imply, it appears that violin improvisation was linked to popular music being increasingly featured in the musical content of the event. In this sense, the celebrations organized in the city of Havana resembled the ones that were carried out in Matanzas. According to Lovio Diaz et al. (2006), the violin feasts organized in Matanzas back in the day had a public character. After the closed *oru* section was carried out, the event moved to the street, and all of the people, not only the initiated ones, were able to participate in it. According to Lovio Diaz et al. (ibid.), different popular front-line ensembles, such as the *charanga* groups Orquesta Aragón and Sublime and the orchestra of Felix Chapottín, were playing music on these public occasions. Thus, one can assume that *montuno* sections and improvisations were also strongly present during these first collective violin events in Matanzas.

Some of the ensembles performing in Havana pay more attention to improvisation than others. Based on my own experience, I would argue that this has something to do with the musical skills of the violinists playing in the line-up. However, most groups include violin solos in *montuno* sections of certain songs. The

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[93] 'En esa época de De los Reyes se tocaban muchas espirituales. [--] No había mucha descarga de violín.'

[94] 'Ya era distinto. Se cantaba la plegaria y venían los montunos y la música popular. [--] El también improvisaba mucho en los montunos.'

[95] 'Después de la plegaria se hacían el montuno [--] para amenizar un poco más la plegaria. [--] El violín siempre tiene que mantenerse improvisando.'

improvisations can take place when playing different secular pieces but also during the *montuno* sections that follow both the *plegarias* dedicated to different saints and the songs performed during the *oru* part of the event.

3.6.1   Learning to Perform

According to Edward Tylor's (2016, 1) definition of culture, the complex whole of the culture – including music – is acquired by humans as members of society. When violinists join the Violines Santorales orchestra, they already have some collectively shared musical information, such as different traditional tunes and *coros* and *estribillos* that are performed in these events. The violinists are also aware of some of the features connected to popular music, such as *montuno* sections and the *clave* rhythm. Thus, the local violinists, when taking their first steps in learning how to improvise in this context, already have some basis to take lean on. However, if one has not improvised before, it takes time to learn the principles of this tradition. As Jorge Denis Molir put it:

> Before I used to play notes, without thinking resources or anything. Because improvisation above all requires a great deal of routine and habit and I did not have that habit. [--] And when I began to enter the world of the Violines Santorales, I saw it more obligated [to improvise] and that is when I began to develop it. And since then I began to incorporate things [into solos], but above all, Edel [Lazága Ortega] has guided me on how to move in this. (JDM 14052009)[96]

Like Mr Molir, I had hardly any experience with improvisation when I started collecting my research data. Additionally, my roots are in a culture that differs significantly from Afro-Cuban culture. In other words, the basis for learning this particular culture and the music that is part of it was quite different from the basis of the local musicians. I would suppose that the musical improvisation and the music in general played during the Violín a Ochún ceremonies reflect the culture on different historical, social and individual levels (cf. Rice 1987). Thus, they create different cultural meanings which open up in divergent ways for the local musicians compared to a musician and researcher coming from outside the culture. I felt that

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[96]   'Antes lo que hacía, era poner notas, pero sin pensar mucho en recursos ni nada. Porque improvisación sobre todo requiere de mucha costumbre y mucho hábito y yo no tenía ese hábito. [--] Y cuando yo empecé a entrar en el mundo de los Violines Santorales, me vi ya más obligado a chocar más, y es cuando empecé a desarrollar eso. Y a partir de ahí empecé a incorporarle cosas, pero, sobre todo, Edel es que me ha guiado a mi como moverme en este.'

the only way to try to understand this particular culture from the emic point of view was to spend as much time as possible with the musicians. Furthermore, I wanted to begin systematic studies concerning the traditional way of playing violin in Cuban music.

In my master's thesis I had studied the violin improvisation of Omar Nilo González Álvarez, so I decided to ask him to be my teacher. Besides the fact that I had gotten to know him well and I trusted him, I also knew that he represented the generation familiar with the *charanga* tradition. Additionally, González Álvarez had earlier worked as a teacher and had experience of playing classical music in both symphony orchestras and chamber orchestras. His playing reflected years of practice, huge technical knowledge, and clear articulation. Of course, I consulted with other violinists as well, but the personal features of González Álvarez were the reason I wanted to start classes with him.

González Álvarez's teaching methods were based on constructivism in the same way as in jazz, in which the student is responsible for their personal development. In addition to playing music, the student is encouraged to listen to different recordings and the improvisations of musicians with more experience, in order to achieve some personal insights and increase their storehouse of improvisatory vocabulary (Berliner 1994, 59, 95). For the most part, González Álvarez tried to provide me with different musical tools for improvisation. The aim was that I would learn to use these tools in unique and creative ways in this particular stylistic context. In addition to playing during the classes, we also had many discussions about Cuban music and the Violín a Ochún event in this specific cultural context.

González Álvarez emphasized the importance of learning the rhythmic-harmonic foundation, the framework created by the *clave* rhythm, and the chord progression at the basis of the music. This subject was approached by studying different kinds of accompanying *guajeo* patterns (this is discussed further in Chapter 4). On the other hand, he wanted to teach me Cuban popular music in chronological order. He started from typical songs of *contradanza* and *habanera* – the ones that were also played during the Violín a Ochún events – and gradually we followed the progress of the development of different Cuban music styles by getting familiar with *danzón*, *bolero*, *son* and *cha-cha-chá*. Always at the end of the violin class, González Álvarez played a few Cuban songs. I taped these tunes with my recorder and later made transcriptions of the melodies. After that I tried to learn how to play the songs by rote for the next week's class. The foundation of this method seemed to be that not only did I learn Cuban music from different eras, but I also learned to understand the rhythmic cohesion that is the basis of Cuban music.

Furthermore, learning to play different tunes by rote was important, because everyone played from memory when performing in these events. The musicians studied new possible songs and themes in their spare time in order to be prepared to

play them in different keys when the event took place. Additionally, learning to play the traditional music from memory was important to the violinist who improvised, because one common feature of improvisation is playing different quotations from traditional themes, which, for its part, places the solo in its cultural context (Bardfeld 2001, 30–31; Valiente 2015, 113; see Chapter 5).

Because violinists often approach improvisation for the first time during religious events, it is common that certain kinds of relations between the teacher and the student are formed. This can also be seen in the content of improvisations. Imitation of more advanced musicians is an important part of the learning process (Berliner 1994, 144), and sometimes in the solos of a beginner appear clear influences reflecting the improvisation style of a more experienced violinist in the same line-up. In this sense, a beginner follows the expert's improvisation style before their personal knowledge basis evolves and expands. A violinist with more experience functions as a 'generalized other' at the beginning of the learning process, during which a violinist with less experience learns how to use the basic models defining a particular music genre. For my part, I can say that when I had a chance to improvise during these events, I consciously used the musical ideas borrowed and adapted from the solos of González Álvarez, Lazága Ortega and Cabarrogas Fernández. In this way I tried to approach the style of the more experienced violinists. However, I felt strongly bonded with some particular surface models I had learned, and I always exploited them without any variation. As a consequence, these solos were not creative at all. However, my aim was just to try to play in a 'correct' way in this particular stylistic context. I would claim that I was closer to the development level, which Kratus (1991, 37–38) calls 'process-oriented' improvisation, referring to the learning phase in which the musician does not improvise smoothly in the way specific to the music culture, nor reflect their musical ideas as a more experienced musician does.

Perhaps the most important thing at the basis of improvisation is to learn to make it sound coherent with the tradition it represents. The solo in Afro-Cuban music should sound Afro-Cuban, like improvisation in jazz music should be connected to its context (cf. Berliner 1994, 249). However, the aim of the improviser is – just like in jazz (ibid., 59) – to create a unique improvisation style. This is how Cabarrogas Fernández describes the way he approaches improvisation:

> I think I have created a style [--] that I have my own style. I have created a style by repeating things in almost every improvisation. It is important, because one has to discover their own style [--] through the resources, through the melodies. I do not always repeat the same melody or resource, but there is at least something that I always repeat. I always look for the way that, for example, not that they [the listeners] see me, but that they listen to me. Maybe they are

listening to me through a recorder and they say 'wait, wait, that is the guy, look what he did.' That is important. (RCF 18052009)[97]

Jorge Denis Molir also refers to the importance of a personal style, within which the knowledge base should be used creatively. In his view, relying on repeated similar practices can lead to a monotonous improvisation style, which should be avoided.

One has to figure out how to do it [a musical idea] differently, because it does not make sense that I can use it the same way. It would be better if you found your own way of using it so that it would not be the same as everyone else's. Resources is one thing that you cannot get hooked on. If you get hooked on resources, you might become monotonous and stay there in the same. You have to look for the new ways. (JDM 14052009)[98]

Referring to the interview quotations above, I would claim that it is easy to recognize the personal improvisation style of each of the twelve violinists participating in this study. There are differences between the technical knowledge, the purity of timbre, and the way different musical ideas and licks are employed, and also how the violinists approach the internal structure of the improvisation. Although all the improvisations of this study follow the given style in different ways, the violinists, primarily those with less technical knowledge, use some specific licks and mannerisms that are commonly used in the same way from one solo to another. The solos of violinists having more experience are more technical, the timbre sounds cleaner, and they are more versatile in the sense of musical ideas. These solos reveal both the consciousness of the musical tradition they are part of, and the creative use of their own particular musical mannerisms.

How, then, can one determine what a good improvisation is like? According to Cabarrogas Fernández, the violinist should find a balance between different musical

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[97]   'Yo pienso que he creado un estilo [--] que tengo un estilo propio. He creado un estilo por hacer cosas que repito en casi todas las improvisaciones. Eso es muy importante porque uno tiene que buscar su estilo [--] a través de los recursos, a través de las melodías. No siempre repito la misma melodía o el mismo recurso, pero hay aunque sea uno que siempre repito. Siempre busco la manera que, por ejemplo, no que me vean, sino que me escuchen. A lo mejor me están oyendo por una grabadora y dicen "espérate, espérate, eso es el fulano, mira lo que hizo". Eso es importante.'

[98]   'Uno tiene que ver cómo hacerlo diferente, porque no tiene sentido que yo puedo usarlo igual. Mejor sería que tú te encontraras tu propia forma de utilizarlo para que no sea igual de los demás. Recursos es una cosa que no puedes engancharte. Si tú te enganchas en los recursos, puedes caerte monótono y quedarte allí en lo mismo. Tienes que buscar vías nuevas.'

elements. However, he emphasizes that improvisation is, after all, a creative process that emerges in the moment.

> I do not know how to explain it. It [improvisation] simply comes out. [--] It is not conscious at all. [--] It is feeling and heart and apart from the resources you can have. [--] You have to find a way to do something that catches the attention of the one who is listening to you, and at the same time it cannot be extremely virtuous or that nothing just happens either. Both extremes are bad. Put a little bit virtuosity in it, put a little bit resources in it, but at the same time look for the melody. That is my way to see things. (RCF 18052009)[99]

Cabarrogas Fernández sees the development of improvisation as a coherent process that combines different musical elements. According to him, the solo is structured by sequential ideas, which are presented, developed and rejected before moving to the next musical idea. 'You take one idea, a phrase, you develop it a bit and then you abandon it, and then you take another phrase and you do the same. I see the development of improvisation very organic.' (RCF 18052009)[100] This kind of proceeding of a solo is common both in West African drum music and in Latin music improvisation in general (Manuel 1998, 138; Valiente 2015, 189).

Musical ideas developed during a solo often pertain to the vocabulary of the improvising musician. I would argue that in the improvisations of the expert, a certain kind of self-reflection concerning the musical decisions made during a solo appears, and the ability to somehow control the progress and structure of improvisation is more present (cf. Pressing 1988, 153; Gioia 1988, 61). This is partly a result of the fact that a musician with more experience – one who already exploits a wider storehouse of improvisatory vocabulary – improvises more fluidly and is able to concentrate more effectively on the structure of improvisation (cf. Kratus 1991, 38–39; Pressing 1988, 139).

However, in addition to the musical ideas in the musician's storehouse, new ideas may also emerge in the course of performance. As a result, they can be saved and used again in a later phase, either during the same solo or in forthcoming solos. When I asked Eduar Marzán Betancourt if he ever returns to ideas that emerge during

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[99] 'Yo no sé cómo explicarte eso. Sencillamente sale. [--] No es nada consciente. [--] Es sentimiento y corazón y aparte de los recursos que puedas tener. [--] Tú tienes que buscar la manera de hacer algo que llame la atención a que te está escuchando y al mismo tiempo que tampoco no sea extremadamente virtuoso o que sencillamente no suceda nada. Los dos extremos son malos. Ponle un poco virtuosismo, ponle un poco de recursos, pero al mismo tiempo búscale la melodía. Es mi forma de ver las cosas.'

[100] 'Tu coges una idea, una frase, la desarrollas un poco y después la botas y coges otra frase y haces lo mismo. Yo lo veo muy orgánico el desarrollo de la improvisación.'

a solo, he told me that exceptionally good musical ideas might stick in his mind, and he can use them later.

> If the resource that comes to me at the moment is good – if it is really good – I receive it, I save it and I use it in another harmony. [--] You know that memory works fast. If something occurs to me [--] if I like it and if it sounds good, I receive it, I save it and I study it. (EMB 16052009)[101]

The solo of González Álvarez in a *montuno* section of Babalú Ayé (03112007) reveals an example of the musical idea that emerges during a solo and reappears later in the same performance. I made a transcription of the mentioned improvisation and showed it to González Álvarez, who commented on it. According to him, the phrase emerges in the course of performance, and he returns to the same idea later (see Note example 4). However, when he repeats the idea, he consciously changes the rhythm of the melodic figure. As one can see, the repeated musical idea also leads to a different kind of musical solution.

Note Example 4.   Omar Nilo González Álvarez varying rhythmically the same melodic idea during a *montuno* section of Babalú Ayé on 3 November 2007.

> It is something that occurred to me. I did it in one way in 13th bar and starting from 25th [bar] I play the same theme but with a different rhythm. [--] Those are things that occur to one. [--] It is like when you play a theme with variation. [--] You present the theme [--] you do the same theme but with a certain variation [-

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[101]   'Si está bueno el recurso de momento que me viene – si está bueno de verdad – lo recepciono y lo guardo y lo utilizo para tocarlo en otra armonía. [--] Tú sabes que la memoria trabaja rápido. Si se me ocurre algo [--] si me gusta y si me queda bien, lo recepciono y lo guardo y ya lo estudio.'

-] in improvisation it is simply the same. [--] It is a decoration. You have decorated, you have changed the colour, the way of saying a phrase, although you have used the same melody. (OGÁ 18052009)[102]

When a musician gets more experience and their improvisatory vocabulary increases, the content of solos gets closer to the stylistic features of improvisation culture (Berliner 1994, 492). This feature also appears in Note example 4 above, in which González Álvarez – when playing the melodic idea a second time – plays it in syncopated rhythm, which is typical of this particular music culture. However, being familiar with the particular improvisation style does not exclude the fact that a musician would not be able to feel the process of creation, as one can notice in the interview quotations of Cabarrogas Fernández, Marzán Betancourt and González Álvarez above.

3.6.2   Collectively Shared Experience

Improvisation during a *montuno* section can begin in several ways. A typical way is to carry out a certain number of call-and-response cycles between the solo singer and the *coro*, after which the violinist starts improvising. It is also possible that just before the solo takes place, the rest of the ensemble collectively stress the '*conga* pattern' – in which certain strokes of the *clave* pattern are emphasized (this is discussed further in Chapter 4) – and decrease the dynamic level. These are signs for the violinist, indicating that there is room for improvisation. Another way to start the solo is a spontaneous shout – such as 'Juega!', 'Florea!', or 'Pa'rriba!'– by one of the band members encouraging the violinist to improvise. Sometimes the musicians just use different non-verbal codes, like nods and glances, when giving a sign about the upcoming solo.

Violinists I have interviewed often emphasize the importance of the beginning of improvisation, and the way to start developing it. However, if the tempo of a *montuno* section is faster, it is common that the solo is faster as well; that is, the musical texture is thicker from the beginning. 'Every time I improvise, I start softly in order to present a harmonic concept of what I want to achieve, and that people

[102]   'Es algo que se me ocurrió. Lo hice en una forma en compas 13 y a partir de 25 hago el mismo tema, pero con el diferente ritmo. [--] Esas son cosas que se le ocurren a uno. [--] Es como cuando tú haces un tema con variación. [--] Presentas el tema [--] haces el mismo tema, pero con determinada variación [--] sencillamente en la improvisación es lo mismo. [--] Es una decoración. Has decorado, has cambiado el color, la forma de decir una frase, aunque hayas utilizado la misma melodía.'

know that I know the harmony. And then I use my resources, you know, where the virtuosity and stuff can be seen.' (ELO 27122007)[103]

> In my case, when I am going to improvise, I like to start with some kind of melody that comes to my mind. It might be something I have prepared to some number, but something short that occurs to me. And upon that doing a development, until I take it to a climax, where I play double stops. (RRC 26022008)[104]

> Look for the melody to prepare the audience. I think that one has to prepare the one who is listening to you with a certain kind of soft melody. Then, suddenly change and put one resource, suddenly you play something virtuosic. [--] One has to have taste at the moment of improvisation. (RCF 18052009)[105]

As the interview quotations imply, the violinists with more experience think that improvisation should begin calmly and be developed gradually in a controlled manner. At the same time, the audience must also be taken into account. In the musicians' view, one should avoid an aggressive entrance and uncontrolled use of possibilities: 'You cannot shoot all the bullets in your first shot, because when you run out, what do you do?' (ELO 04032010)[106] and 'If you come out from the beginning attacking aggressively, for me you are not saying anything. You have to prepare the audience so that they are listening to you.' (RCF 18052009)[107]

There are also other ways to start a solo. For example, Jorge Hernández Mora often begins his improvisation with an ascending scale. He connects this feature with Latin piano improvisation. 'That is called impressionism. You can see that the pianists when they begin to play their solo, they [Hernández Mora sings an ascending scale]. That is nothing more than to impress. It is a normal scale, but it sounds great.'

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[103] 'Siempre cuando improviso empiezo suave para darle un concepto armónico de lo que quiero lograr y pa que la gente sepa que esta sabe armonía. Y ya después se lo hago mis recursos, entiendes, ya donde se ve el virtuosismo y esa historia.'

[104] 'Yo en mi caso, cuando voy a hacer improvisación, me gusta empezar haciendo algún tipo de melodía que se me ocurra. Puede ser que tengo alguna preparada para algún número, pero algo corto que se me ocurre. Y sobre eso haciendo un desarrollo, hasta llevarlo a un clímax, donde hago doble cuerdas.'

[105] 'Busca la melodía para preparar la gente. Yo pienso que se debe preparar a que te escucha con una melodía, algo suave. Entonces, de repente cambias y metes un recurso, de repente haces algo virtuoso. [--] Hay que tener gusto a la hora de improvisar.'

[106] 'De primer disparo tú no puedes echar todas las balas arriba allí, porque cuando se te acaba, ¿entonces qué vas a hacer?'

[107] 'Si tu salgas desde el principio atacando agresivo, para mí no estás diciendo nada. Tienes que hacer una preparación al público para que te están escuchando.'

(JHM 17052009)[108] Different improvisatory mannerisms, typical of different instruments in Latin dance music, are also copied throughout the solo, not just at the beginning of it. I return to this subject in Chapter 5.

The behaviour codes and the manners of interaction between the musicians and the audience differ according to the music culture. As mentioned above, Latin music is primarily dance music, in which improvisation's role is partly to support it. The interactivity is a bit different than in jazz, in which the audience – which often consists of musicians – follows the improvisations especially, and is expected, for example, to applaud and whistle after solos (cf. Berliner 1994, 456–457). On the other hand, for example, in Arabic *Tarab* culture the interaction between the audience and the musicians is essential in order to create a successful performance: the musician tries to achieve an ecstatic state that is called *saltanah*, with the assistance of the audience's participation, which should be neither too passive nor too eager (Racy 1998, 100–102).

In Latin music, however, the purpose of improvisation is to intensify the groove for dancers (Manuel 1998, 143). According to Manuel (ibid.), Latinos often use the terms *caliente* (hot) or *brava* (wild, fierce) as a contrast to *fría* (cool) when talking about their music. This drive and liveliness are strongly present when regarding the interaction between the musicians, and the intensive involvement of the audience during the Violín a Ochún event. In addition to dancing, the audience also participates in the occasion by singing *coros* in both *montuno* and *orisha* sections. It is common that the melody of the forthcoming *coro* emerges from violin improvisation. Thus, the audience should be attentive in order to catch the melody, which leads to the *coro*, the collective vocal part.

In addition to participating in the *coros*, the musicians expect the audience to follow both the music the ensemble is playing and the improvisations that are part of a *montuno* section. When the violinist begins a solo, the rest of the ensemble decreases the dynamic level and thus gives more space to the improviser. However, the audience does not always drop their volume. This is understandable when taking into account that it is a feast-like event, in which people are celebrating, drinking alcohol and having a good time. However, violinists consider that the ambience in which the audience interacts strongly with the musicians is also important in creating a successful improvisation.

> One thing that contributes a great deal to the issue of improvisation is the ambience. [--] You go to play in the places where people are listening to you.

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[108] 'Eso se llama impresionismo. Tú ves que los pianistas cuando van a empezar a tocar una descarga, van [--]. Eso es nada más que por impresionar. Es una escala normal, pero se oye candela.'

They look at you, they applaud, whatever. But other times they just talk and talk [--] not paying attention to you. Of course, the education level influences, because if a person is playing, singing, whatever, you have to pay attention. But it depends, if they take a few drinks and are in their madness and they do not care what you are playing. [--] If the person is a child of Changó, and you say 'Viva Changó!', then they attend you right away. That is why I tell you that the ambience helps you a lot. (JHM 17052009)[109]

The ideal situation requires that the audience somehow 'understands' the improvisation and is able to respond to the signals coming out of it (see Berliner, 1994, 456; Racy 1998, 100–102; Manuel 1998, 143). That is why a musician should have the ability to construct a solo that fits the context. According to Ronny Cabarrogas Fernández:

You also have to realize that you are playing to the audience, and the audience is very diverse. [--] What you have to look for is the commercial part of the music because the most important thing is that it reaches people. Because right now I can play fifty notes per second and that is maybe what the musicians are going to celebrate, but people do not understand you. (RCF 18052009)[110]

As Cabarrogas Fernández implies, the function of a solo from the beginning of the performance is partly to create a connection between the members of the community. The audience also has certain expectations regarding improvisation. I would assume that the improvisation style that follows particular aesthetic and structural features typical of this culture shares different kinds of meanings between the people participating. Thus, I would claim that the audience with its expectations also functions as 'generalized other' when the improviser creates music in the course of the performance.

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[109] 'Una cosa que te contribuye mucho al problema de improvisación es el ambiente. [--] Tú vas a tocar en lugares donde la gente te está oyendo. Te miren, te aplauden, lo que sea. Pero otras veces hablan pa'ca, hablan pa'lla [--] no te están prestando la atención. Claro, el nivel de la educación de personajes influye en eso, porque si una persona está tocando, cantando, lo que sea, tú tienes que prestar la atención. Pero depende, si toman dos tragos y están en su locura ese y no les importa lo que tu estas tocando. [--] Si tiene hecho Changó, cuando tú dices que Viva Changó, entonces enseguida te atienden. Por eso te digo que el ambiente te ayuda mucho.'

[110] 'También tienes que fijar que estas tocando para el público y el público es muy diverso. [--] Lo que hay que buscar es la parte comercial de la música porque lo más importante es que a la gente le llega. Porque ahora mismo yo puedo meter 50 notas por segundo y eso lo que van a celebrar a lo mejor los músicos, pero la gente no te entiende.'

Improvisation is an integral part of the collectively shared experience among the people participating in the Violín a Ochún event, because both the musicians and the audience participate in its proceeding. The improvising violinist may receive immediate feedback – such as encouraging shouts – from the audience and their fellow musicians when they make some musically interesting solution or use a melodic model that contains shared meanings within the community. However, normally these supportive comments and shouts occur when a solo achieves some kind of climax and a musical texture differs notably from the previous playing. As Jorge Hernández Mora put it: 'Maybe at a certain moment I carry out a nice passage and they say "Agua!" [Water][111] And I already know that it is a nice passage and I repeat it "Agua! A gozar!" [Have fun! Enjoy!].' (JHM 17052009)[112]

During the process of interpretation, members of the community interpret meanings and respond to them in different ways. In addition to catching the melody leading to a *coro* section, the audience may react in certain ways, as mentioned above, to familiar melodic phrases, typical of this culture. I would suppose that this, in part, encourages improvisers with less experience to use these same repeated musical elements – such as commonly known melodic fragments or rhythmic figures that connect solos with tradition – in their own improvisations.

In summary, violin improvisation has been part of the *montuno* sections since the beginning of the Violín a Ochún tradition. Some ensembles give it more importance than others. Sometimes a violinist has no experience in improvisation before playing at the Santorales events. However, the improvisatory vocabulary of the musician evolves when playing in the same line-up with a more experienced violinist. The aim of musicians improvising at the events is to create their own improvisation style, which, at the same time, follows a commonly shared tradition. The role of improvisation is, in part, to create a connection with the audience. In this sense, violinists with more experience emphasize the importance of the beginning of the solo and its gradual development in the course of performance. One can say that the act of improvisation is a shared entirety, which includes different meanings. Its function, on the one hand, is to elevate the mood of the event and, on the other, to lead the solo to the *coro* section that follows.

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[111] 'Agua' is also an expression that is used when finishing a *montuno* section. Someone in the ensemble says 'Agua', and everyone knows that the song is going to end.
[112] 'A lo mejor en un momento determinado yo hago un pasaje bonito y me dicen "Agua!" Y ya yo sé que es bonito pasaje y lo repito. "Agua! A gozar!"'

3.7 Summary

The Violín a Ochún event emerged as a result of a syncretistic process in which the elements with their basis in the spiritual violin ceremonies and in Santería created a new kind of religious event with a popular character. The musical content of the ceremony reflects a fusion of national and international popular music, art music, and music familiar from the spiritual ceremonies and Santería celebrations. The religious aspect, typical of Cuban popular culture, is reflected in several traditional Cuban songs that are performed during the celebration. On the other hand, the musical content of the event also includes national and international themes that have been articulated and rearticulated into a new context and are sometimes associated with different entities. The fact that the individuals behind this innovation in Havana were violinists has undoubtedly influenced the musical content of the ceremony. Many of the songs performed at the events are related to the *charanga* tradition and the basic repertoire of a Cuban violinist.

As a result of syncretism, the ensemble including five violins has gradually changed to a group that is capable of interpreting both popular dance music and music dedicated to *orishas* in Yoruba language. However, sometimes a client requires a traditional ensemble of five violins as well. The *montuno* section, which includes a responsorial singing style and instrumental improvisations, is a typical feature in Cuban popular music. The use of these sections in the music of the event underlines the more relaxed nature and popular character of these celebrations.

Improvisation and the different behavioural codes between musicians and the audience are commonly learned when playing at ceremonies, because many violinists with a classical music background improvise for the first time when participating in these events. The evolution of the violinist's improvisation skills is related in part to certain kinds of teacher-student relationships in the context of the event. However, the essential idea is that violinists create their own styles that musically reflect this particular tradition and this specific improvisation genre. One of the functions of the solo is to create a connection with the audience, which also contributes to the progress of the improvisation during this interactive occasion. Furthermore, one of the collectively shared behavioural models is related to improvisation's role in leading music towards collective singing.

4 Clave as a Background Model

4.1 Clave and Syncopation

African polyrhythmic drumming is based on a regular and recurrent rhythmic pattern that guides the other simultaneously played rhythms. Scholars have called this pattern the 'timeline pattern' or the 'standard pattern' (e.g. Kauffman 1980, 408–409). The pattern is ubiquitous in most parts of sub-Saharan drum music, and it was described by A.M. Jones (1959) over a half century ago. It has been assumed that the timeline pattern can be related to a fast regular pulse, which exists at the basis of music. This pulse is called the 'density referent'. Therefore, the timeline pattern can be considered an accentual grouping of density referent.

In addition to the terms mentioned above, this pattern has also been called the '12-pulse pattern' because of the density referent at the basis of the pattern, which has been considered a sequence of 12 eighth notes. In addition to the cyclically recurring timeline pattern, the rhythmic framework is also based on different rhythmic cycles. When referring to these cycles, David Peñalosa (2009) calls them primary and secondary beats. Primary beats contain four main beats that are repeated within the timeline pattern. Secondary beats appear in rhythmic relation to the beats of primary cycle, and they regularly and systematically contradict the primary beats (ibid., 21). The resulting cross-beats create a rhythmic tension and a sense of forward momentum (ibid.). Just like sub-Saharan music, Afro-Cuban *clave*-based music is generated through cross-rhythm (ibid., 24). The cross-rhythm is a result of polyrhythmic texture that emerges because of the combination of the main beats and the cross-beats over them (ibid.).

It is common to use a concept called 'three-over-two' (3:2) when referring to the rhythmic relation between primary and secondary cycles, in which three secondary beats occur within the two main beats. This rhythmic relation between primary beats, secondary beats and the timeline pattern is shown in Note example 5. It is typical that violinists improvising in Violín a Ochún events bring out this kind of polyrhythmic texture by using different kinds of rhythmic-melodic surface models. I return to these features later in both this and the next chapter.

Note example 5. Rhythmic relation between primary beats, secondary beats and the timeline pattern (see Peñalosa 2009, 68).

The pattern mentioned above also exists in the Yoruba people's music in the area of Nigeria. The standard pattern found its way to Cuba with the slaves who brought it with them. Nowadays, it is a basic rhythmic pattern in Santería music and is also used in Santería's violin feasts. In Cuba this rhythmic pattern is called the 6/8 *clave*. This means that the 12-pulse pattern is divided into two parts by the bar line (Note example 6). The strong part of the *clave* refers to the bar that begins on a downbeat in contrast to the weak part that begins on an upbeat (Bardfeld 2001, 27).

Note example 6. 6/8 *clave*.

The concept of the 6/8 *clave* is the result of the fusion between African and European musical heritages: the pattern is understood through the European metrical concept, and it is written down with the European-derived time signature. However, it is worth mentioning that although in the transcriptions and in the pedagogical literature concerning Afro-Cuban music both bars of the *clave* are identified separately, the Cuban musicians – even if they use the term 6/8 – generally think that the *clave* pattern is a single entity, including the whole time span of this rhythmic cell. One can identify this concept with West African Ewe music, in which the metre contains both the timeline pattern and its division by the flow of beats, thus embodying both the musical period and the accents within it (Locke 1982, 221).

In addition to the 6/8 *clave*, Cuban music also involves some other *clave* patterns. The most typical *clave* pattern used in Cuban popular music is called the *son clave*. The origin of the *son clave* is in the standard pattern mentioned above. There is a particular variation of this pattern, typical of Yoruba folklore, in which two strokes of the pattern are eliminated (King 1960, 51; Mauleón 1993, 50). Together with the primary and secondary beats, it forms a rhythmic combination as demonstrated in Note example 7. Triple-pulse rhythm patterns found in sub-Saharan music have a

duple-pulse correlative in Cuban music, as the duple-pulse *clave* music simulates the triple-pulse cross-rhythm (Peñalosa 2009, 24, 38, 47; see also Mauleón 1993, 50). In Note example 8, triple-pulse rhythm is altered to 2/2 metre, and the primary and secondary beats are related to the strokes of the timeline pattern in the same way as shown in Note example 7. The rhythmic pattern, which nowadays is called the *son clave*, appears in the top line of Note example 8.[113]

Note example 7.   Specific variation form of the standard pattern (cf. Peñalosa 2009, 92).

Note example 8.   Duple-pulse correlative form of the pattern of Note example 7. *Son clave* appears in the top line (cf. Peñalosa 2009, 92).

Another essential *clave* pattern, the *rumba clave*, is particularly used in Afro-Cuban folklore music. The origin of this pattern is in Abakuá music, a tradition which comes from Cameroon and southern Nigeria (Mauleón-Santana 1999, 50–51). The structural difference between the *son clave* and the *rumba clave* is that in the latter, the last stroke of the bar including three strokes begins an eighth note later (Note example 9).[114]

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[113]   However, it is worth mentioning that this rhythmic pattern has had a kind of universal character. The earliest historical documentation of it is from the half of the 13th century from Persia (Toussaint 2013, 26). Thus, it is difficult to determine the actual origin of the pattern.

[114]   In addition to these patterns, other guiding patterns exist as well, such as the *bossanova clave (*Mauleón 1993, 57).

Note example 9.   *Rumba clave*.

In the pedagogical literature concerning Cuban music, there is a tendency to perceive the *clave* either in 'three-two' (3–2) or in 'two-three' (2–3) form. This refers to the quantity of strokes during a bar (e.g. Mauleón 1993; Mauleón-Santana 1999; Bardfeld 2001). At the beginning of my research, I asked Rodolfo Quesada Febles, a musician who used to play the bongo drums in Iré, about the difference between the 3–2 and 2–3 *son clave* and *rumba clave*. He told me that the *son clave* is in 3–2 form and the *rumba clave* is in 2–3 form. At first, I did not understand what he meant. Then a friend of mine who wanted to show me the basic patterns of *tumbadora* counted the *rumba clave*, which was in so-called 3–2 form, as the following: one-two-one-two-three. According to Peñalosa (2009, 249), since the *rumba clave* has a group of two strokes (the first ones on the 'three-side'), followed by a group of three strokes, many Cuban folklorists assume this is what their students mean by the 2–3 *clave*. Thus, as mentioned above, it is important to notice that the Cuban musicians do not necessarily think the *clave* as in 2–3 or 3–2 form; rather, they see it as a single entity (Mauleón-Santana 1999, 7; Peñalosa 2009, 249).

In his book *Latin Violin* Sam Bardfeld refers to the *clave* in 3–2 or 2–3 form. We used the exercises in Bardfeld's book as study material when González Álvarez wanted to teach me the basics of *guajeo* patterns. However, he never spoke about the *clave* in the way mentioned above. I surely used these terms, and he understood what I meant. Instead, my professor spoke about *clave*'s strong (or first) part and *clave*'s weak (or second) part when he wanted to explain something concerning the rhythmic relation between the *clave* and an accompanying *guajeo* pattern or other rhythmic-melodic figure. With these terms he referred to *clave*'s strong part, which contains three strokes and a syncopation, and *clave*'s weak part, which contains two strokes. In this study I use the same terminology as my teacher and talk about the strong and the weak part of the *clave*.

In addition to the *clave* pattern, there are other typical interrelated rhythmic patterns used in Afro-Cuban and Latin dance music. Beginning with the set of these interrelated rhythmic cells, there are some basic 'building blocks', short rhythmic models typical of the culture and used both in previously composed and improvised music.[115] Besides the *clave* pattern, one can see the most common rhythmic cells in their basic forms in Note example 10. These are *tresillo, cinquillo, ritmo de tango* or

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[115] According to Nettl (1998), it is common to use the same kinds of models both in previously composed and in improvised music regardless of the music culture in question.

habanera, and 'displaced *cinquillo*' (Manuel 1998, 128–129). These short patterns have also been fundamental ostinato figures in different Cuban musical genres and thus have represented some specific music styles. For example, the rhythmic cell that includes three strokes in the strong part of the *clave* is called *tresillo* (tres = three). It is widely used in Cuban popular music.[116] 'Displaced *cinquillo*' was one of the trademarks in *contradanza* (country dance), as well as *ritmo de tango* or *habanera*, which was also used both in *habanera* and *danzón*.[117] The *cinquillo* pattern (cinco = five) characterizes *danzón, contradanza* and *bolero* (ibid.). However, these cells do not necessarily appear in their basic forms. For example, in *bolero* music it is typical to vary the *cinquillo* pattern rhythmically (Loyola Fernández 1997, 30).
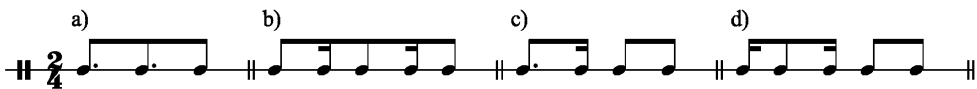
Note example 10.   Basic building blocks: a) *tresillo*, b) *cinquillo*, c) *habanera*, d) displaced *cinquillo* (Manuel 1998, 129).

The rhythmic cells mentioned above might also appear on top of each other or side by side. For example, it is typical in *son* music to play a syncopated *cinquillo* rhythm in the melodic line during the strong part of the *clave*. On the other hand, it is common that in *danzón* music the *tresillo* pattern in the bassline is played during the second part of the *baqueteo* pattern (an accompanying ostinato rhythm of *danzón*) in which the *cinquillo* is not played[118] (Del Puerto & Vergara 1994, 2). In this case, the bassline complements the polyrhythmic framework (Note example 11).

Note example 11.   Bassline in relation to the *baqueteo* pattern (Del Puerto & Vergara 1994, 2).

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[116]   Besides African and American music, this rhythmic pattern can also be found in Asian, such as in Indonesian music. According to Peñalosa (2009, 236), it is possible that this rhythmic cell migrated from North Africa to Asia through the spread of Islam.

[117]   This rhythmic cell is a result of the cross-beats (secondary beats or *tresillo* over primary beats) as shown in the first half of Note example 8.

[118]   However, the bass can also be played in coordination with the *cinquillo* pattern.

The syncopated features, prominent in the patterns mentioned above, underline the music culture in general. They are reflected in an anticipated bassline, in a fondness for stressing offbeats, and in a particular approach to syncopation (Manuel 1998, 129). Syncopation is also an essential part of violin improvisation in Latin dance music. It is common that improvisations proceed rhythmically syncopated: in addition to employing different short syncopated rhythmic models, violinists often stress offbeats when performing a solo. Furthermore, violinists use particular fragments, which are characterized by articulations of ternary phrasing of binary subdivision or binary phrasing of triplets (cf. ibid., 138, 144).[119] The accent is not congruent with the metrical structure, but it subverts the metre temporarily, until it eventually returns to it again. Every violinist participating in this study uses these kinds of rhythmic-melodic surface models during their solos (see Note examples 12 and 13). However, violinists also exploit other techniques when subverting the metre temporarily. In Note example 14 Edel Lazága Ortega first uses the ternary phrasing of binary subdivision by playing repeating sequences that each cover three eighth notes. Then suddenly he moves to another rhythmic idea and – using the same pitch material – starts phrasing a rhythmic figure in the cycles of five sixteenth notes.

Note example 12.   Ternary phrasing of binary subdivision during a *montuno* section of Babalú Ayé, played by Eduar Marzán Betancourt on 22 October 2007.

Note example 13.   Binary phrasing of triplets during a *montuno* section of *Las dos aguas*, played by Felix Parreño on 22 February 2008.

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[119]   However, these rhythmic features are also common in other music genres, such as in rock and pop music.

Note example 14.   Edel Lazága Ortega using different phrasing techniques: ternary phrasing of binary subdivision and cycles of five sixteenth notes during a *montuno* section of Babalú Ayé, played on 3 January 2008.

In his teaching, González Álvarez never gave attention to this specific kind of phrasing technique but stressed the importance of syncopation in general when playing Cuban music. As a rule, he did not tend to bring out different separate licks in his teaching. Instead, he focused on the basic background material, through which one can approach the improvisation and use it at the basis of different surface models when soloing. This background material included both the importance of the conventional accompanying role of the violin within this particular rhythmic-harmonic framework and different traditional pieces that one can lean on when soloing (see Chapter 5).

Because the syncopation was so strongly present in improvisations, I tried to pay special attention to it. I felt that the syncopated features emerging from solos were something clear and easier to learn. I listened to and studied the improvisations of local musicians and tried to separate different fragments based on syncopation in order to use them in my own solos. Gradually, the way of using these kinds of fragments became more automatized in different keys and over the different chord progressions. If I compare myself now with the time I recorded the improvisations of this study, I must say that I do not use these fragments as separate pre-practiced licks anymore. Rather, I feel that these phrasing techniques are a kind of option and possibility to exploit the syncopation in the flow of soloing and that they come out in different contexts in a more natural way. In his article, Pressing (1998, 53) refers to this kind of phenomenon and to the importance of improvisational practice. When the knowledge base increases, different musical techniques and patterns are overlearned. As a consequence, the motoric use of them becomes more automatized, as they gradually join into the musician's long-term

memory. Thus, they can be used in a more natural and creative way and more diversely in different contexts.

In addition to the improvisations of the violinists, syncopation is also present in the accompaniment of the guitarists. However, it is more common for the guitarists playing at these events to approach the rhythmic-harmonic basis by playing a steady accompanying rhythmic-harmonic pattern. They normally stress the first beat of the bar or anticipate the harmony of the strong part of the *clave* by slurring the last eighth note across the bar line from the weak part of the *clave* to its strong part. Sometimes the *clave* is brought out more explicitly by emphasizing, for example, the *tresillo* pattern during the strong part of the *clave*. However, the way the guitarists play during the events differs from Orquesta Estrellas Cubanas, the largest Violín a Ochún ensemble I met in Havana. The instrumentation of this line-up includes the electric bass. During the *montuno* section, the bass player occasionally plays a rhythmic ostinato figure, a *tumbao*, which is formed by slurring the *tresillo* rhythmic cells one after another to anticipate the upcoming harmony. This is a common way of playing bass in *son* music (Del Puerto & Vergara 1994, 3). At the same time, the percussion instruments maintain isochronous, *clave* neutral basic patterns.

In addition to playing a steady, less syncopated rhythm, it is more common for guitarists – with some exceptions – to approach a chord progression as a dense model: they rarely add any extra chords between the basic chords in order to extend the harmonic basis. Sometimes, however, they can approach a chord progression as a looser model by playing, for example, a 'two-five-one' progression (ii-V7-i) instead of alternating only between the dominant seventh and the tonic.

The playing style of Mario Guemez Lay, who played a guitar in Iré, differs from that of other guitarists playing in ensembles that do not include a bass. When accompanying the music, he also tries to imitate the rhythm of the bass in his playing. However, this can sometimes be challenging for an improvising violinist playing with him.

> Mayito [Mario Guemez Lay] is an excellent guitar player and he uses a great deal of resources in defined moments. He is carrying out the role of the bass and the offbeat harmony. It is quite difficult but he does it. And sometimes it is a bit difficult to play with him, because sometimes he uses a large amount of offbeats. He is playing [--] the harmony on offbeat so one has to follow the percussion. [--] I have seen violinists who have wanted to improvise with him, but he [--] starts playing offbeats with the guitar and they have a hard time

entering, because they do not locate themselves [inside the metric structure]. (OGÁ 18052009)[120]

However, as mentioned above, the accompanying style of guitar players participating in these events often stays rhythmically quite stable and less syncopated. I would assume that this is partly due to the slower and less syncopated *cha-cha-chá* rhythm, which often appears at the basis of violin improvisation. Naturally, when playing in a *son* style, the role of the guitarist is also quite challenging: in addition to playing the harmony, the ideal situation requires the ability to bring out the syncopated bassline as it is in *clave*-based music.

Note example 15 illustrates how the rhythmic-harmonic basis is formed during a *montuno* section of Ochún, played by Iré (see also Video example 8). The grandchild of the singer Mirta González plays the guiding *clave* pattern with the *claves*. Normally he did not play in the ensemble, but this time he was involved. This shows a good example of how the songs of the event have already been learned by an early age during social interaction (cf. Gauvain et al. 2011, 123). Mirta González plays the *chequeré*. First she plays the half notes, but after a while she starts playing the *clave* pattern as well. Antonio 'Tonyto' Rodríguez Dutil plays a stable *martillo* (hammer) rhythm on the bongos, adding some slight rhythmic variation, but maintaining a basic ostinato *tumbao*. Omar Nilo González Álvarez plays a repetitive *guajeo* pattern in which he brings out the harmony and a typical syncopated rhythmic line. Mario Guemez Lay takes care of both the bassline and the harmony. In this example both González Álvarez and Guemez Lay anticipate the harmony when slurring the notes to the strong part of the *clave*. Video example 8 also illustrates how all the musicians (except the grandchild of the lead singer) also participate in singing. The *montuno* section proceeds in the call-and-response form between the vocalist and the *coro*. Mirta González sings a phrase to which the other musicians response with the following phrase: 'Charity, protect us. Protect us Charity' (Caridad, amparanos. Amparanos Caridad).[121]

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[120] 'Mayito es un excelente guitarrista y entonces él utiliza muchos recursos en determinados momentos. Está haciendo un papel de bajo y el contratiempo armónicamente. Es un poco difícil, pero él lo hace. Y a veces es un poco difícil a tocar con él porque a veces él utiliza mucho contratiempo. Está tocando [--] la armonía en contratiempo entonces uno tiene que regirse por la percusión. Yo he visto violinistas que han querido improvisar con él, pero él [--] pone a hacer contratiempo con la guitarra y les cuesta trabajo entrar, porque no se ubican.'

[121] This phrase refers to Caridad del Cobre, who is associated with Ochún.

Note example 15.   Rhythmic-harmonic basis in a *montuno* section of Ochún, played by Iré on 3 November 2007 (Video example 8).

In addition to guiding the accompanying rhythmic-harmonic background, the *clave* also guides the rhythmic-melodic phrases on the surface level in a certain way. That is, the rhythm of the melodic phrase commonly indicates the direction of the *clave* and also is rhythmically structured around the *clave* strokes. According to González Álvarez:

> There are figures, motifs, that in relation to the *clave*, in the way these rhythmic-melodic motifs are structured, some of them enter in the first part of the *clave* and some others in the second part of the *clave*. [--] The concept, the sense of when a melody begins in the second or the first part of the *clave* [--] is acquired over time. (OGÁ 26102007)[122]

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[122]   'Hay figurados, motivos, que, con relación a la clave, en la forma en que están estructurados estos motivos rítmicos-melódicos, algunos entran en la primera parte de la clave y otros en la segunda parte de la clave. [--] El concepto, el sentido de cuando una melodía comienza en la segunda parte o la primera parte de la clave [--] se va adquiriendo con el tiempo.'

An example is the *estribillo* of a *montuno* section of Obbatalá, in which a phrase begins during the strong part of the *clave.* The rhythm of the melodic line stresses the second and the third stroke of the *clave* pattern.[123]

Note example 16. The beginning of the phrase falls on the second and the third strokes of the strong part of the *clave*.

Several examples concerning the interrelation between the rhythmic cells of the melodic line and the *clave* can be found in previously composed music. For example, it is common that the *cinquillo* pattern is played simultaneously with the strong part of the *clave*, as in the internationally known song *El manisero* (The Peanut Vendor), written by Moisés Simons (1889–1945). In this example, three longer strokes of the *cinquillo* pattern fall on the *clave*'s *tresillo* strokes.

Note example 17. Rhythmic relation between the *tresillo* and *cinquillo* patterns in *El manisero* (cf. Mauleón 1993, 160).

If the melodic line is started rhythmically incorrectly in relation to the *clave*, it is considered *cruzado*, rhythmically crossed with the *clave*. This is obviously true when referring to *montuno* patterns and previously composed music. However, according to Peñalosa, it is sometimes difficult to define exactly what kinds of rhythmic patterns *cruzado* and counter-*clave* are (Peñalosa 2009, 170–171). For example, when the *tresillo* encounters the weak part of the *clave*, it can be considered a counter-*clave* for the weak part of the *clave* pattern. As Peñalosa (ibid., 172) put it:

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[123]   Translation of the lyrics: 'Obbatalá, you are the light of the foundation of Lucumí.' The term Lucumí is used as a synonym for the words Yoruba and Santería.

[A] repeating single-celled pattern cycling with a repeating two-celled pattern is an essential dynamic of the music and is not considered *cruzado* [--] [it] is counter-*clave* to the two-side. This is not only the correct relationship, but it is part of the generative structure.

The concurrence of the *clave* and the rhythmic cells interrelated with it does not seem to be so significant in the course of performance unless the violinist, for example, switches to play a *guajeo* pattern during a solo. The rhythmic patterns used in improvisation's melodic line do not always directly indicate whether it is the strong or the weak part of the *clave* in the background. According to Peñalosa (ibid., 211), Afro-Cuban music should express the four-part rhythmic counterpoint either explicitly or implicitly in order to make the music *clave*-based. In addition to the *clave*, and the primary and secondary beats, there is a melodic line (for example, an instrumental solo) which should contribute the necessary rhythmic variation to this repetition-based music.

In summary, when a musician plays a solo, they do not have to be locked into particular rhythmic conventions all the time in the same way as when they are playing an accompanying *montuno* pattern or a previously composed song (cf. Ibid., 169–171). As Mauleón-Santana (1999, 8–9) put it:

The over-all structure of an arrangement is affected by the *clave*, as are the possibilities for improvisation. [--] all of these factors are always subject to individual interpretation, and that – above all – the quality of the music should never be sacrificed for purposes of "*clave*'s correctness".

Violinists refer to the 'inner feeling' regarding the presence of the *clave*. This means that no matter whether the pattern is audible or not, it should always affect the foundation of the musician's rhythmic thinking. According to Raúl Ríos Chassagne and Ronny Cabarrogas Fernández: 'Although we do not think it, we have it [the *clave*] internal. [--] The one who does not notice [the moment when playing *cruzado*] does not have it inside.' (RRC 26022008)[124]

I think it [the *clave*] is carried inside. I do not know if you have noticed that when we are playing, there is no *clave* [played as such]. The only thing we have is the rhythm of the *tumbadora*. And the *tumbadora* maintains its rhythm, but it is not playing the *clave* as such. One must have that internal rhythm in order not to lose the rhythm or tempo. And upon that tempo you can play around, because

[124] 'Aunque no la pensemos, la tenemos interna. [--] Él que no se da cuenta, es que no la tiene interior.'

I can both delay and advance the music. [--] But delay and advance within the same tempo. I cannot lose that tempo. (RCF 03112007)[125]

As musicians imply, the *clave* pattern is something natural and an integral part of musical thinking. I would claim that the presence of this pattern in the musical thinking of the community is important in a broader sense as well. I would argue that the *clave* is a certain kind of culturally acquired model, which – due to the surrounding music culture – is already internalized at an early age. A good example appears in Video example 8 above, in which a young boy plays the pattern with the *claves* sticks. Another example reflecting a broader presence of the *clave* at the basis of collective musical thinking appears in the behaviour of the audience during the Santorales celebration. For example, there are moments when the audience participating in the event starts clapping the pattern at the basis of the music – although the *clave* rhythm as such would not be audible in the music – and thus participates in the progress of the performance.

How, then, can this relation between the rhythm of the melodic line and the *clave* pattern be studied? In order to approach this issue during the analysis later in this chapter, I draw on the article of Richard Washburne (1998), in which he introduces different musical features that he calls 'guidelines'. According to Washburne (1997, 67; 1998, 162–163), it is possible to determine whether or not the musical phrase is 'in *clave*' and to which bar of the *clave* it corresponds. According to him:

(1) Accented notes correspond with one or all of the clave strokes. (2) No strong accents are played on non-clave stroke beats unless they are balanced by equally strong accents on clave stroke beats. (3) The measures of the music alternate between an 'on the beat' and a 'syncopated beat' phrase or vice versa. The last eighth note of the two-stroke measure is often tied to the first beat of the three-stroke measure to accentuate the syncopated clave measure. (4) A phrase may still be considered 'in clave' if the rhythm starts out clashing but eventually resolves strongly on a clave beat creating rhythmic tension and resolution.

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[125] 'Pienso que eso se lleva por dentro. Porque no sé si te has dado cuenta que cuando nosotros hemos tocado no hay clave. Lo único que tenemos es el ritmo de la tumbadora. Y la tumbadora lleva su marcha, pero como tal no está haciendo la clave. Ese ritmo interno uno lo debe tener para no irte del ritmo ni irte del tiempo. Y sobre ese tiempo puedes jugar porque lo mismo puedo atrasar la música que la puedo adelantar. [--] Pero atrasar y adelantar dentro del mismo tiempo. Yo no puedo ir de ese tiempo.'

Although Washburne approaches trombone improvisation and *soneo*[126] in his article, I would assume that the same guidelines can be applied when studying violin improvisation. In fact, Washburne's first three guidelines are suitable to describe the traditional accompanying *guajeo* pattern. Learning and understanding the *guajeo* patterns also played a central role in González Álvarez's teaching.

4.2   Montuno Concept

A significant and recognizable feature in Cuban *clave*-based music is the manner in which some of the instruments accompany the music by playing ostinato-type rhythmic-melodic patterns that – besides following the *clave* – also follow the harmony. These patterns are called *guajeo*, *montuno* or *tumbao*.[127] *Guajeo* patterns can be played on the *tres* guitar, as is done in traditional *son* music; on the violin, as in *charanga*-based music; or on the piano, as is common in Cuban popular music and *salsa*. When piano and violin are used in the same line-up, it is typical for the violin to complement the *guajeo* pattern played by the piano.

In general, the most important rhythmic feature in the relationship between a typical *guajeo* pattern and the *clave* is that a *guajeo* pattern in the weak part of the *clave* almost always begins on a downbeat, whereas in the strong part of the *clave* it almost always begins with the syncopation or contains the syncopation within the first beat (Bardfeld 2001, 25). When listening to the rhythm of the *guajeo* pattern, it is possible to notice the direction of the *clave*, that is, which of the two bars of the *clave* is present at that moment.

From the beginning, González Álvarez emphasized the importance of the *guajeo* patterns in his teaching. One of his methods was to teach me every week a few patterns that differed rhythmically from each other. He also wanted me to study those patterns in different keys and play them over the different chord progressions.

The importance of the *guajeo* pattern has also been stressed in the pedagogical literature concerning Latin violin improvisation. According to Sam Bardfeld (2001, 30), Johnny Almendra, a percussion player, once told him that the violin improvisation should be based on the '*montuno* concept'. According to him, there are two ways of following that idea: first, a *guajeo* pattern can be the central motif during a solo. Secondly, the *guajeo* concept can be thought of in a more abstract way: a *guajeo* can be seen as a kind of reference or base which can be played or not. Miller (2014, 98–103) also draws attention to a similar issue in her study concerning

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[126]   Song section, in which the lead singer improvises a text and melody (Washburne 1998, 164).

[127]   In this study I use the term *guajeo*. By *montuno* I refer to the open vamp section of a song including *coro* parts and violin improvisations.

Cuban flute improvisation. She brings up how the accompanying violin *guajeo* pattern can function as a reference for the improvising flautist during *Angoa*, a *danzón* composed by Felix Reina (1921–1998).

It is easy to agree with the idea of the referential function of the *guajeo* pattern. At least when I am playing, I find myself relating, on some level, the rhythm of the improvisation to the *guajeo* pattern that preceded a solo, especially if the tempo is faster. Additionally, there is a clear connection between the definition of the '*montuno* concept' above and the purpose of my teacher: González Álvarez wanted me to internalize the importance of thinking of Cuban music primarily through the rhythmic features. That is why he wanted me to learn several different *guajeo* patterns every week. He once told me that the purpose behind learning different *guajeo* patterns was for me to understand that everything is based on the backbeat and the syncopated form.

The improvisation material of this study reveals moments when a violinist, in the middle of the solo, switches to play an accompanying syncopated *guajeo* pattern in its basic form before moving ahead.[128] This is usually also the sign for the *coro* to start a responsive section. Another common situation is that a violinist starts playing a *guajeo* pattern at the end of the solo, which then leads to a responsorial singing style as well. This is a way to indicate to fellow musicians that a solo is going to end. Sometimes these patterns are pre-arranged and repeatedly occur in the same way. Ricardo Cortez García, for example, always plays the same pattern at the end of his solo during a *montuno* section of the *plegaria* dedicated to Obbatalá. 'It is a *guajeo*, but rather it is like a closure. [--] It is a *guajeo* but a *guajeo* as an ending in order to give them [for the rest of the ensemble] an entry.' (RCG 06052009)[129]

Note example 18.   *Guajeo* pattern (or closure pattern) at the end of a solo in a *montuno* section of Obbatalá, played by Ricardo Cortez García on 16 December 2007.

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[128]   See Omar Nilo González Álvarez: Ochún (03112007); Edel Lazága Ortega: Ochún (23112007); Raúl Ríos Chassagne: Ochún (28022008).

[129]   'Es un guajeo, pero más bien es como un cierre. [--] Es un guajeo pero es un guajeo como un final para darles la entrada.'

Regardless of whether or not the *clave* pattern as such is audible in music, a *guajeo* pattern always appears rhythmically correct in relation to the *clave*. Although it is common not to hear the *clave* pattern overtly played, it is always implicit in the music, and the other rhythm lines indicate its direction. Thus, a *guajeo* pattern is one of the conventions used to underline the rhythm of the *clave* in *son*-based music.

In his role as a teacher, González Álvarez applied his wide knowledge of national and international art music. When I started classes with him, the first thing he asked me to do was to play a musical piece in baroque style. After I had played a part of J.S. Bach's violin concerto in A-minor, he told me that the typical way of using the bow when playing baroque music was also the key to playing any *guajeo* pattern: when playing a *guajeo*, the bow should be used to emphasize the sharpness and clarity of the dynamic accents, especially on the first quarter note and the last eighth note during the weak part of the *clave*.

He also told me that in order to have a clear sound, a *guajeo* pattern should be played with the middle bow and not next to the bridge. González Álvarez's instructions somehow corresponded the description of the correct way of attack and articulation style in *charanga* flute improvisation, in which the attack of the tongue should be strong, short, crisp, and incisive (Valiente 2015, 118; see also Miller 2003, 23). This articulation style was also reflected in improvisations in general: they were mostly more percussive and the legato playing was avoided, such as in Afro-Cuban flute improvisation (cf. Valiente 2015, 113).

González Álvarez once told me that the mirror is my best teacher. He suggested that I study *guajeo* patterns in front of the mirror and observe my body. In his view, it was important that I keep my upper body relaxed and that I not move my hips too much while playing. However, he told me to mark the basic pulse in the music with small movements of my knees so that I move my right and left knees in turns during the first, second and third beat of the bar. He told me that in addition to feeling the pulse in my body, I should also be aesthetically 'inside' the music: little movement in the body when playing *guajeo* patterns, at the same time when standing on the stage, is also part of visual presence when playing Latin dance music.

González Álvarez also brought up the importance of a *montuno* section, *guajeo* patterns, and different kinds of rhythmic cells when stressing the continuity of different Cuban popular music styles. When teaching me the *montuno* section of the *danzón Almendra*, he emphasized the importance of syncopation:

Notice how many *mambos*, *estribillos* or *guajeos* exist in the *danzón Almendra*. The same happens with the rest of the *danzóns*. Let's repeat: the *danzón* is based on the *cinquillo* form. If we study the *cinquillo*, it is written in syncopated form. [--] From there, that is the structure of the *son*. The *son* appears in syncopated

form. [--] The *son* as such, like the *guaracha*, is written in syncopated form. (OGÁ 26102007)[130]

In addition to *son*, González Álvarez mentions the faster *guaracha* style, which is also based on syncopation. For example, the *montuno* section of the song dedicated to Elegguá, the one that opens the Santorales event, includes a *guajeo* pattern typical of *guaracha*. As Note example 19 illustrates, González Álvarez always emphasizes the first beat of the *clave*'s weak part and slurs the last eighth note of the weak part across the bar line.

Note example 19.   *Guajeo* pattern during a *montuno* section of Elegguá, played by Omar Nilo González Álvarez.

In contrast to *danzón*, *son*, and *guaracha* styles, the *cha-cha-chá*, which was born in the early 1950s, does not stress syncopation in a similar way. The *clave* pattern was not traditionally used in the *cha-cha-chá*, although it is sometimes played explicitly during Violines Santorales events. The research material of this study includes several improvisations based on the *cha-cha-chá* rhythm. In most of these improvisations the *guajeo* pattern that precedes a solo is different from the *guajeos* played in *son* or *guaracha* styles. It does not bring out the *clave* rhythm or the anticipated harmony in a similar way, even if the *clave* would be audible in the background (Note example 20). However, it is also possible to use non-syncopated *guajeo* patterns when accompanying *clave*-based music. Actually, one commonly

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[130]   'Fíjate cuantos mambos, estribillos o guajeos tiene danzón Almendra y así sucede con el resto de danzones. El danzón – volvemos a repetir – está basado en la forma cinquillo. Si estudiamos la forma cinquillo, está escrito en forma de síncopa. [--] A partir de allí eso es la estructura del son. El son está en forma sincopada. [--] El son como tal, igual que la guaracha, se escribe en la forma sincopada.'

played *guajeo* pattern in the Latin violin tradition is rhythmically reversible; both bars played over the *clave* pattern repeat the same figure (Note example 21; see also Bardfeld 2001, 26).

Note example 20.   *Guajeo* pattern during a *montuno* section of Babalú Ayé, played by Jorge Denis Molir on 9 May 2009.

Note example 21.   *Guajeo* pattern during a *montuno* section of Ochún, played by Raúl Ríos Chassagne on 22 February 2010.

When taking into account what has been said above regarding the '*montuno* concept' at the basis of improvisation and the relationship between the *clave* pattern and the rhythm of the melodic line, I will next examine – in light of Washburne's guidelines – the accents appearing in improvisations.

4.3   Accents of the Melodic Line

In his article, Washburne does not further define what is meant by an accent. However, he refers to the way of creating rhythmic tension and resolution, which, in a manner specific to the culture, is achieved by stressing both metrical weak beats and strong beats in relation to each other. In the following analysis, I focus on these kinds of metric accents, but I also take into account other kinds of musical accents. What kind of musical event then could fill the characteristics of the accent? Different definitions concerning the musical accent emphasize the same feature: the accents are local sound events that differ in some way from surrounding events and attract listeners' attention (Huron & Royal 1996, 489; Hannon et al. 2004, 956; Bisesi & Parncutt 2010).

The object of this analysis was to compare the rhythmic relationship between the different accent types in the melodic line and the *clave* pattern in general, not only

at the level of individual phrases. As the starting point, I used the description by Lerdahl and Jackendoff (1983, 17) of the phenomenal accent and metric accent:

> By phenomenal accent we mean any event at the musical surface that gives emphasis or stress to a moment in the musical flow. Included in this category are attack points of pitch-events, local stresses such as sforzandi, sudden changes in dynamics or timbre, long notes, leaps to relatively high or low notes, harmonic changes, and so forth. [--] By metrical accent we mean any beat that is relatively strong in its musical context.

I studied the following accent types: metric accent, durational (rhythmic) accent, melodic accent, and accent types that have something to do with a sudden change of timbre. I also took into account the dynamic accent during the moments the violinist was clearly emphasizing a certain note by using a louder sound or stronger articulation in relation to surrounding notes – for example, at the end of the phrase or during the collective breaks played by the entire ensemble. Otherwise, one can say that the moments when a violinist seems to emphasize a note dynamically typically occur at the same time as another type of accent. Examples might include a change of melodic direction or an offbeat accent. Additionally, it is also common that some of the different accent types used in this analysis – such as melodic and rhythmic accents – appear during the same *clave* strokes simultaneously. When the definition of accent covers a wide range of different musical phenomena, one can assume that the majority of musical phrases are 'in *clave*' in one way or another. Next, however, I will study the mentioned accent types separately.

In this analysis, the accent is considered to occur when the start of the accented note coincides with the start of the *clave* stroke. In this regard, I follow Washburne's (1998) manner of taking into account the accents in the transcriptions presented in his article. In my own transcriptions, I have not taken the microrhythmic nuances such as playing behind the beat (cf. Washburne 1998; Iyer 2002) that are typical in this music culture into account either. Instead, I have followed a traditional form of transcription, in the same way as Peter Manuel, for example, in his article *Improvisation in Latin Dance Music: History and Style* (Manuel 1998, 139). Furthermore, when studying syncopations at the onset of the bar, I have considered as accents those syncopations that start from the last eighth note of the preceding bar, thus following the idea of Washburne (1998) and Bardfeld (2001).

4.3.1   Syncopation at the Onset of the Bar

In his article, Washburne brings up the convention of slurring the last eighth note of the two-stroke bar across the bar line when accenting the syncopated *clave* bar.

Bardfeld (2001, 25) also states that in a standard *guajeo* pattern, in addition to the downbeat of the first beat, there exists another natural accent during the weak part of the *clave*: the upbeat of the fourth beat. One can say that this accent is relatively strong in its metric context. It clearly brings up the rhythm of the melodic line in relation to the strong part of the *clave* pattern. Before studying the accents that fall on the *clave* strokes, I will take a closer look at how the accent that anticipates the strong part of the *clave* is used in different contexts within all improvisations of this study. I am also interested in how the rhythm of the melodic line follows the idea of a standard *guajeo* pattern.[131]

Among the improvisations I have filmed in Santería celebrations, there are both improvisations that are played over the audible *clave* pattern, which is played with the *claves* sticks, and improvisations, in which the *clave* is not heard in its basic form. Although the *clave* pattern is always implicitly present in music and the musicians feel it while playing, I used this distinction and divided the improvisations into two groups. Group A, in which the *clave* pattern is audible, includes 12 improvisations from four violinists, and Group B, in which the *clave* pattern is not audible, includes 20 improvisations from nine violinists (Ronny Cabarrogas Fernández has improvisations included in both groups).[132] Half of the improvisations of Group A (6 out of 12), and 40% (8 out of 20) of Group B are based on minor key, so it seems that there is no significant difference in relation to the mode at the base of the improvisation.

The data concerns the prevalence of syncopation at the onset of each structural half of the *clave* cycle within the total number of *clave* cycles in all improvisations by all violinists in both groups. Table 1 shows the percentage of the mean and in round brackets the median within all improvisations in Group A and Group B.

Table 1. The percentage of the prevalence of syncopation at the onset of the structural half of the *clave* cycle; mean and median.

	Slurring to strong part	Slurring to weak part
Clave audible	14.8% (10.9%)	8.6% (6%)
Clave not audible	5.9% (3.2%)	4.1% (2.9%)

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[131] However, in this analysis I did not take into account the moments a violinist switches to play the accompanying *guajeo* pattern during a solo.

[132] The total research data also contains eight improvisations, in which the violinists do not slur the last note of the bar across the bar line.

The first thing that emerges from the results is that no matter whether the *clave* is audible or not, slurring across the bar line to the strong part of the pattern is more common within improvisations. Additionally, the distribution of values is not symmetric, but it is right-skewed. The location and distribution of values within the groups can be compared using box plots, as in Figures 5 and 6. The boxes represent the interquartile range (IQR) of the values of syncopation at the onset of each structural half of the *clave* cycle. The middle line inside the boxes indicates the median and the 'X' points to the mean. The lower quartile (the middle value of the lower half) is denoted as Q1 and the upper quartile (the middle value of the upper half) as Q3. The lines (whiskers) coming out from each box extend from the maximum to the minimum values of each set. The outliers (data points going above at least 1.5 times the size of the box) are marked with the dot. The box plot values appear in relation to the percentage numbers of the y-axis scale.
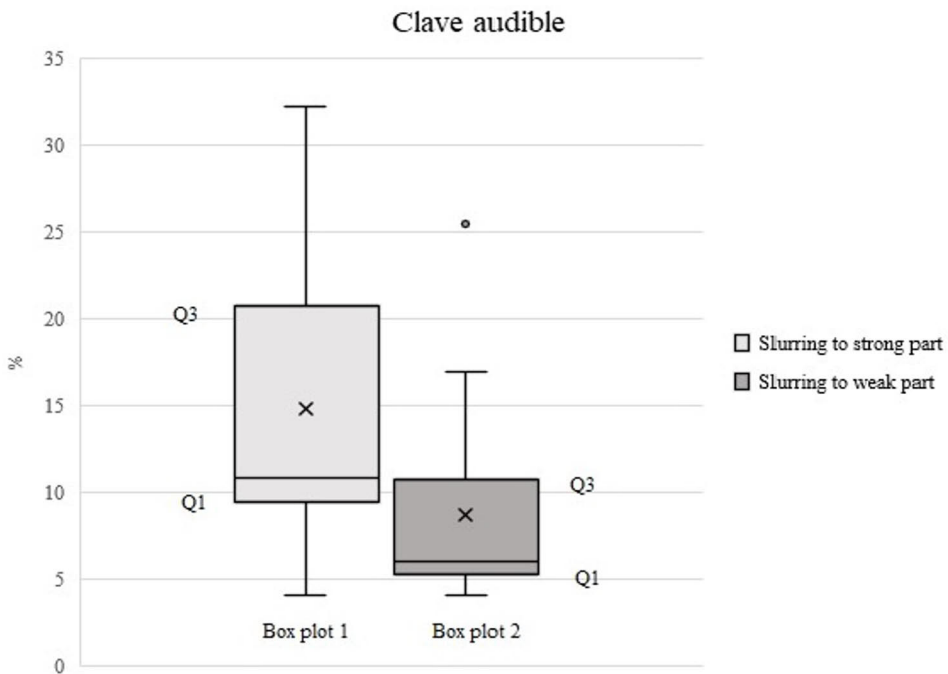
Figure 5.   Distribution of data in Group A.
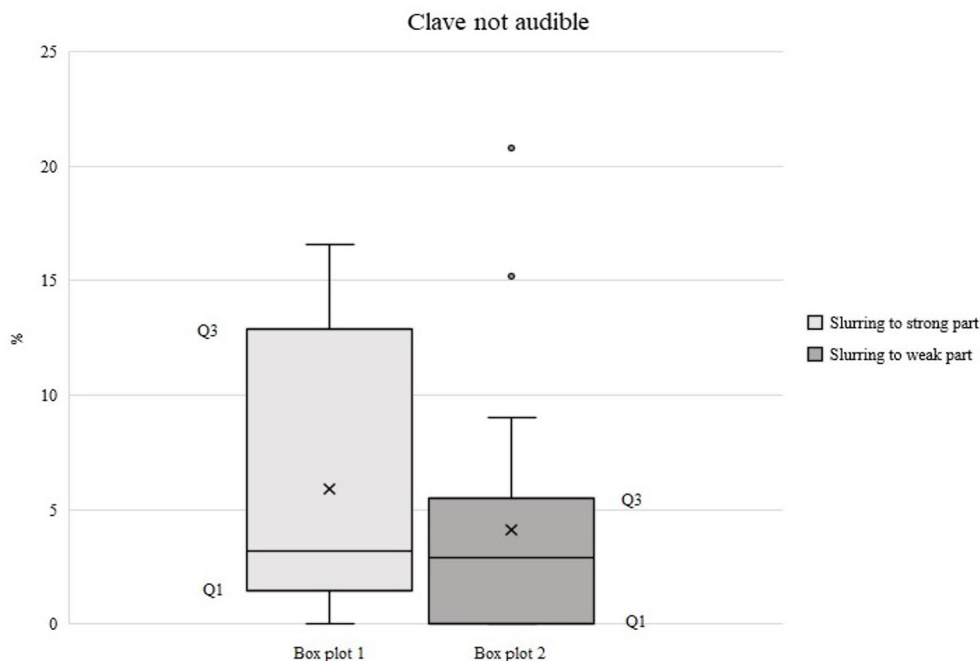
Figure 6. Distribution of data in Group B.

Next, I will bring up some observations concerning the data of Group A. Figure 5 illustrates the dispersion of values when slurring to the strong part of the *clave* (box plot 1) and to the weak part of the *clave* (box plot 2) when the *clave* pattern is audible in the background. First of all, the medians draw attention. The median line of box plot 1 lies outside of the middle half of the values of box plot 2. That is, the upper half of the values of box plot 1 locates higher than 75% of the values of box plot 2. This indicates that slurring the last eighth note of the bar across the bar line to the strong part of the *clave* is more common. The upper half of the values in box plot 1 locates between 10.9% and 32.2%, whereas the upper half of the values in box plot 2 locates between 6% and 17% (with the exception of one separate outlier value, 25.5%). As mentioned above, the distribution of data is right-skewed. The data is more concentrated between Q1 and the median: in box plot 1 between 9.4% and 10.9%, and in box plot 2 between 5.3% and 6%.

When comparing the IQR's, one can notice that the box indicating the middle half of the values when slurring to the weak part of the *clave* is comparatively short. In this sense, slurring to the weak part is more consistent. The box locates between 5.3% and 10.7%. On the other hand, the IQR in box plot 1 is between 9.4% and 20.7%. The overall distribution of the values is much larger in box plot 1. The results indicate that slurring to the strong part of the *clave* is more common and more dispersed in improvisations played over the audible *clave* pattern.

The medians between box plot 1 and box plot 2 in Group B are almost similar (see Figure 6). However, the values are more dispersed in the lower half of box plot 1. In box plot 2 the lower quartile (Q1) is the same as the minimum value of the data, 0. Thus, one can say that in huge number of improvisations there appears no syncopation at the onset of the weak part of the *clave*. The taller box and the overall larger range of box plot 1 imply there exist more dispersion in data comparing to box plot 2. The middle half of the values when slurring to the strong part of the *clave* is dispersed between 1.4% and 12.8%, whereas in box plot 2 the middle half lays between 0 and 5.5%. The top quartile of the values in box plot 1 locates between 12.8% and 16.6%, and in box plot 2 between 5.5% and 9%. It is interesting that although the value of Q1 in box plot 2 is 0, there exist also two outlier values, 15.2% and 20.8%. Although there are improvisations in which slurring is absent, the data also contains extremity values. As in Group A, in Group B it is also more common that syncopation appears at the onset of the strong part of the *clave*.

In addition to group differences, data can be studied as an entirety, and it can be illustrated in relation to the tempo at the basis of *montuno* sections, as in Annex 1.[133] Annex 1 includes all 32 improvisations of this analysis, and they are listed according to the tempo of the *montuno* section, from the fastest to the slowest one. On the left side of the tempo mark is the name of the song during which the improvisation was performed, as well as the initials of the violinist who played the improvisation. On the right side is the percentage number of the eighth notes slurred across bar lines preceding both the strong part and the weak part of the *clave*. The 'Cna' text next to the percentage number refers to those improvisations in which the *clave* pattern is not audible.

According to results, slurring across the bar line preceding the strong part of the *clave* pattern is more common within all data. This occurs in 22 improvisations out of 32. On the contrary, there are only six improvisations in which the syncopation occurs more commonly at the onset of the weak part of the *clave*. Furthermore, in four improvisations the last eighth note is slurred to both parts of the *clave* equally many times.

One may ask if the audibility of the *clave* pattern has an impact on slurring. At least slurring the last eighth note across the bar line (and mostly to the strong part of the pattern) is more typical in improvisations played over the audible *clave* rhythm. On the other hand, however, in improvisations that are played during faster *montuno* sections and without the audible *clave* pattern in the background, the prevalence of syncopation at the onset of the strong part of the *clave* is more common. When taking into account that slurring across bar lines increases in relation to the faster tempo, and that the musicians refer to the *clave* as an internal rhythm, I would assume that

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[133]   https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1x0pWFc815abXbyZctJ-gLviZZlQylfRX (annexes).

hearing the pattern explicitly played does not necessarily have such a significant impact on how the musicians feel its presence. Instead, the manner of exploiting syncopation seems to be more connected to the tempo of the *montuno* section.

The eleven slowest *montuno* sections in Annex 1 are played in *cha-cha-chá* rhythm, and they do not include the audible *clave* pattern. In these improvisations slurring across bar lines is less common and does not follow any systematic line. Neither do these improvisations contain alternating phrases between 'on the beat' and 'syncopated beat', like in faster *guaracha*-based improvisations. In four out of these eleven improvisations, the syncopation most often falls at the onset of the strong part, and in five improvisations at the onset of the weak part. Although the *cha-cha-chá* differs from the faster *son* and *guaracha*, in which the anticipated bassline is stressed, it is remarkable how the prevalence of syncopation increases in *bolero-chá*s proceeding in a faster tempo (*Forever and Ever* is played as *bolero-chá* or *bolero-son*). The results in general seem to indicate that a faster tempo at the basis of the *montuno* section appears to have an effect on how violinists slur the last eighth note across bar lines, especially to the strong part of the *clave*.

This phenomenon can be demonstrated using a scatter plot of the slurrings over tempo combined with a simple linear regression line (see Figures 7 and 8). The x-axis displays the tempo at the basis of the *montuno* and the y-axis the percentage of syncopation at the onset of the structural half of the *clave* cycle (strong part, Figure 7; weak part, Figure 8). Improvisations are marked with dots.
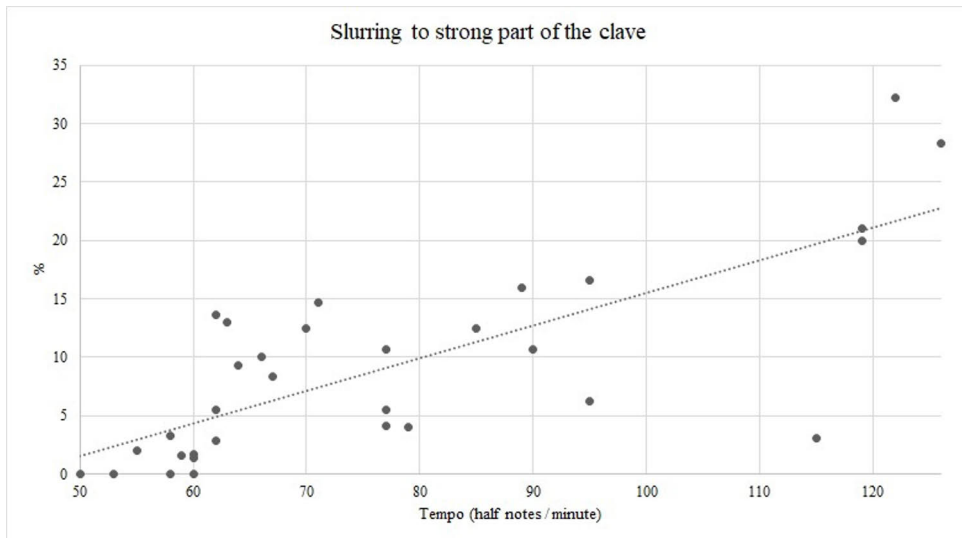
Figure 7. The percentage of slurring the last eighth note of the bar across the bar line preceding the strong part of the *clave*.
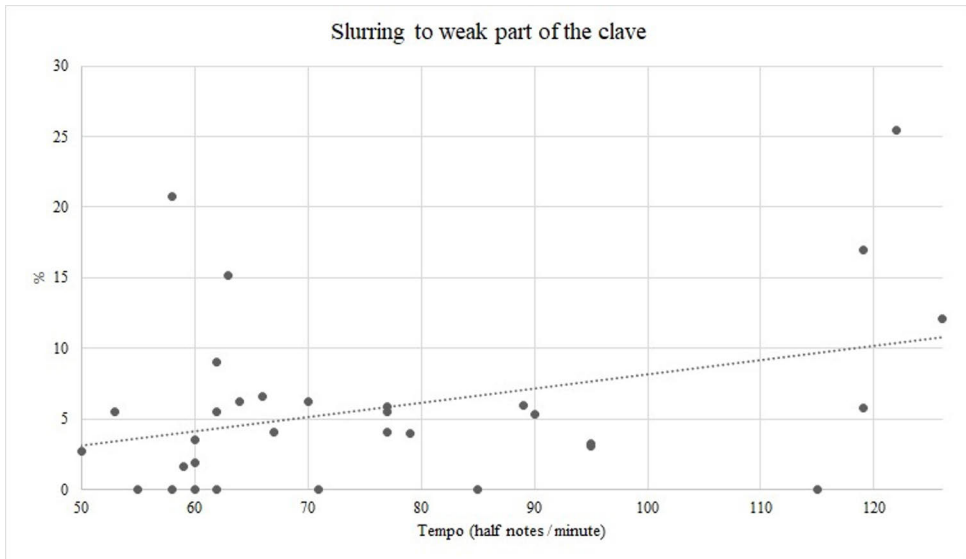
Figure 8. The percentage of slurring the last eighth note of the bar across the bar line preceding the weak part of the *clave*.

Figure 7 illustrates that the prevalence of syncopation at the onset of the strong part increases quite steadily as the tempo increases. The same does not happen with the weak part, but the highest values appearing separately from others are related to faster *montuno* sections that are also more syncopated in general. The fact that slurring across bar lines appears to be a function of tempo is supported when individual violinists' improvisations are compared with each other. For example, Edel Lazága Ortega hardly slurs the last eighth note of the bar across the bar line when improvising during *montuno* sections of Babalú Ayé. However, during the *montuno* section of Ochún, when the tempo is about 89 half notes per minute, he more clearly emphasizes the syncopation at the onset of the strong part of the *clave*. A similar observation can also be made in Ronny Cabarrogas Fernández's improvisations. Furthermore, the improvisations of Omar Nilo González Álvarez and Raúl Ríos Chassagne follow the same kind of convention.

In improvisations that are played during faster, *guaracha*-based *montuno* sections, slurring to both structural halves of the *clave* increases, and syncopation is commonly used, as mentioned above. According to González Álvarez, in addition to a fast tempo, an anticipated harmony forces the violinist to improvise in a more syncopated way: 'Velocity forces you. Velocity and harmony.'[134] (OGÁ 09032017) Note example 22 shows a fragment from a solo of Ríos Chassagne during a *montuno*

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[134]   'La velocidad te obliga. La velocidad y la armonía.'

section of Obbatalá. The improvisation is guided by a syncopated bassline played by Guemez Lay and an audible *clave* pattern. The tempo of the *montuno* is the second fastest in all the *montuno* sections of this study, and the syncopation at the onset of both structural halves of the *clave* is the highest of all improvisations. In addition to anticipating the chords, Guemez Lay stresses the *clave*'s strong part all the time by playing the *tresillo* pattern during it. According to González Álvarez, this feature is typical when a tempo is faster and Guemez Lay is accompanying a solo: 'He [Guemez Lay] marks the *clave* [--] so I try to make another [rhythmic] design that complements [the rhythmic basis], but without losing the harmony'[135] (OGÁ 21122007).

Note example 22.   Syncopated melodic line, in which the last eighth notes of the bar are slurred across bar lines both to the strong part and the weak part of the *clave*, during a *montuno* section of Obbatalá, played by Raúl Ríos Chassagne on 18 February 2008.

González Álvarez says he relies on the bassline – which also brings out the *clave* pattern – when playing with Guemez Lay. 'Perhaps I am not so much guided by the *clave*, although I carry it internally. The thing that assists me is the bass. I mean, the

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[135]   'Él marca la clave [–] entonces yo trato de hacer otro diseño que complemente, pero sin perder la armonía.'

way to play the bass.'[136] (OGÁ 18052009) According to González Álvarez, he feels the *clave* pattern, but when playing with Guemez Lay, the way the guitarist stresses the offbeats guides his performance. Additionally, González Álvarez mentions in the interview quotation above that Guemez Lay plays according to the *clave* pattern, so he aims to complete the rhythmic foundation with the violin. Thus, in this sense, the *clave* appears explicitly at the background, although it would not be played in its basic form with the *claves* sticks.

An interesting feature of improvisations proceeding at a faster tempo – especially in Cabarrogas Fernández's improvisation during a *montuno* section of Obbatalá – is that the rhythm of melodic phrases occasionally follows the first half of a standard *guajeo* pattern in relation to the *clave*'s weak part: the downbeat of the first beat and the upbeat of the fourth beat are stressed, and the strong part of the *clave* is achieved by using a syncopation.[137] In these contexts, Cabarrogas Fernández seems to follow (consciously or unconsciously) the '*montuno* concept' to some extent. In other words, it could be said that the conventional *guajeo* pattern functions as some kind of reference at the basis of the rhythmic proceeding of the improvisation.

Note example 23.　　The rhythm of the melodic line during the *clave*'s weak part resembling a rhythmic structure of the standard *guajeo* pattern during a *montuno* section of Obbatalá, played by Ronny Cabarrogas Fernández on 17 October 2007.

There are also violinists who imply that a more complex rhythmic-harmonic framework at the basis of the solo could be a kind of restrictive factor for improvisation. According to Jorge Denis Molir, he feels the *clave* internally, but creating a solo is easier and more flexible if the accompanying rhythmic-harmonic basis is simpler. This is how he commented on his improvisation during a slower *montuno* section of Babalú Ayé:

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[136]　'No me rijo quizás tanto por la clave, aunque la llevo internamente. Lo que sí me ayuda es el bajo. O sea, la forma de tocar el bajo.'
[137]　See bars 10-11; 14-15; 22-23; 24-25; 26-27; 28-29; 110-111; 112-113; 118-119; 122-123; 124-125; 126-127.

When you do not have so many rhythms [in the background], it gives you some ease to do certain things. [--] There are also moments when guitarists play the bass[line] and the bass is uncomfortable. When the bass is very crossed like in *salsa*, in *timba*, it would be like that [comparing to] when the bass is only in the harmony. [--] Not having the *clave* so strong makes it [improvisation] more flexible. [--] But notice that before that moment [of playing a solo] I am playing a *tumbao*. I already carry my internal *clave* with it. And when the moment comes, the image of the *tumbao* that you were playing always sticks with you. And from there you start to break it. [--] When I start [to improvise], I start breaking that schema, [--] I start to feel relieved. I am starting to feel better because I am doing something else [--] because you already broke the schema, the *tumbao*, and started to improvise. (JDM 14052009)[138]

As mentioned above, the rhythmic-harmonic foundation at the basis of the *montuno* section proceeding in a slower *cha-cha-chá* rhythm differs from faster *son*- and *guaracha*-based *montunos*, in which an anticipated bassline, in part, guides the proceeding of a solo in a rhythmic sense as well. Additionally, the *guajeo* pattern played by the violinists does not follow the rhythmic-harmonic framework in the same way as in *guajeos* based on an anticipated bassline. In addition to a slower and less syncopated basis on which Denis Molir improvises, it is interesting how he refers to the *guajeo* pattern preceding an improvisation. Denis Molir implies that the *guajeo* pattern somehow always stays involved during the improvisation. Following the idea of the '*montuno* concept', this kind of *guajeo* at the foundation of the *montuno* section of Babalú Ayé produces corresponding improvisation in the same way as in improvisations played over the faster *montuno* section, as in Note example 23 above.

4.3.2   Metric Accents

Taking into account the importance of syncopation in this music culture, I will next focus more closely on how syncopation – in addition to appearing within the first

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[138]   'Cuando no tienes tantos ritmos, te da alguna facilidad para hacer ciertas cosas. [--] También hay veces que guitarristas van a hacer bajo y cuando hacen bajo y el bajo está incómodo. Cuando el bajo está muy atravesado como en la salsa, en la timba, seria así [--] como cuando está bajo solo de armonía. [--] No tener la clave tan fuerte, que te lo hace más flexible. [--] Pero fíjate que yo antes de ese momento yo vengo haciendo tumbao. Ya llevo mi clave interna con eso. Y ya cuando llega mi momento, siempre se te queda grabada la imagen de tumbao que venías haciendo. Y a partir de allá empiezas a romperla. [--] Cuando voy, empiezo a romper el esquema ese, [--] empiezo a sentir como un alivio. Empiezo a sentir mejor porque ya vengo haciendo algo diferente [--] porque ya rompiste el esquema, el tumbao, ya empezaste a improvisar.'

beat of the bar – relates to different *clave* strokes. I will study syncopated chains, rhythmic cells based on syncopation and different metric patterns, in which syncopation emerges because of phrasing. I call these accents metric accents. These accent types, as well as other accent types of this analysis, are marked in the transcriptions above the melodic line. Metric accents are marked with the symbol '○'.[139]

Annex 2 shows the appearance of metric accents in relation to all *clave* strokes within all improvisations of this study. As one can see, accentuating the second stroke of the strong part of the *clave* is typical in improvisations. This stroke is called the *bombo*, and its accentuation is central to Cuban popular music. Accenting it clearly identifies the strong part of the *clave* (Peñalosa 2009, 93–94). The annex also illustrates that stressing the *bombo* is emphasized in improvisations proceeding at a faster tempo (cf. RCF: Obbatalá; RRC: Obbatalá; OGÁ: Obbatalá and Misericordia). A typical way, especially in these four specific improvisations of Cabarrogas Fernández, Ríos Chassagne and González Álvarez, is to play larger syncopated chains containing notes that all represent the same note value. In these passages the stress and accent constantly fall on an offbeat because the stress is shifted back by an eighth note. These groupings – as well as the building blocks discussed below – are marked in the transcriptions below the melodic line.

There is no specific order or regularity on how the syncopated chains appear in relation to the *clave*. They are of different lengths, and they may begin and end anywhere during the *clave* cycle. Syncopated chains appearing in two improvisations of González Álvarez are an exception in this sense. In six passages out of fourteen, the chain begins on the *bombo*, and in five passages out of fourteen, from the last eighth note of the weak part of the *clave*. Thus, the first note of the chain commonly stresses two central accents of the clave *cycle*: the *bombo* and the last upbeat of the weak part of the *clave*. In this sense, the guiding rhythmic background model is noticed more explicitly in the course of performance.

In these four improvisations, the rhythmic balance within and between phrases is achieved in different ways. For example, the beginnings of González Álvarez's improvisations during the *montuno* section of Misericordia and Obbatalá are quite similar. If not taking into account the so-called Legarreta lick[140] – which González Álvarez always plays at the beginning of the improvisation of Obbatalá – the first phrases of both improvisations (Obbatala b. 5–8; Misericordia b. 1–6) end with a syncopated chain. The following phrases, on the other hand, are based only in eighth

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[139] Other accent types are durational accent (x), interval size accent (+), contour pivot point (-) and registral extreme accent (^); see below.

[140] This refers to Felix 'Pupi' Legarreta (b. 1940), who has used this lick as one of the hallmarks of his violin improvisations (cf. Bardfeld 2001, 38); see Chapter 5.

notes that stress the regular metric rhythm at the basis of the *clave* pattern (Obbatalá b. 9–12; Misericordia b. 7–10). After this, both improvisations proceed between alternation of syncopated and 'on the beat' phrases. The *clave* is also brought up dynamically in different ways, such as during bars 19, 21, 23 and 25 of Obbatalá, when González Álvarez accentuates the *bombo*, and during bar 22 of Misericordia, when he stresses the strokes of the weak part of the *clave* at the end of the melodic phrase. These kinds of rhythmic features in the melodic line, which both outline the *clave* pattern and bring out the rhythmic resolution on the *clave* strokes, correlate with the *charanga* flute improvisation as well (cf. Miller 2014, 158).

The same kind of 'on the beat' and 'syncopated beat' alternation between and within phrases appears in improvisations of Cabarrogas Fernández and Ríos Chassagne during the *montuno* sections of Obbatalá. For example, Cabarrogas Fernández sometimes finishes the syncopated chains at the end of the phrase by emphasizing the second and the third strokes of the strong part of the *clave*, as during bars 9 and 17, and sometimes he stresses the first beat of the bar. In Ríos Chassagne's improvisation, syncopation is emphasized, but he also balances this by alternating syncopation with a regular metric rhythm.

Another typical manner of using syncopation is to exploit the building blocks (see Note example 10, section 4.1) and their variation forms, either individually or by connecting them one after another. A common feature in improvisations is to play a longer chain consisting of a continuous alternation of two notes representing different time values in the same way as it appears in the structure of a traditional, rhythmically dense *cinquillo* pattern (Note example 24).[141] Thus, it is common that the emphasized longer note also falls on other *clave* strokes in addition to the *bombo*.

Note example 24.   Syncopated chain during a *montuno* section of Ochún, played by Alejandro Vistel on 1 March 2010.

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[141]   See e.g. AV: Ochún b. 11-14, b. 21-22; Virgen de Regla b. 2-3, b. 5-8; JDM: Babalú Ayé b. 11-12, b. 41-42; ELO: Babalú Ayé (10012008) b. 23-25; Babalú Ayé (27022008) b. 13-14; OGÀ: Babalú Ayé b. 25-27; Misericordia b. 35-36; RCF: Babalú Ayé (24112007) b. 6-7; Forever and Ever b. 61-65; RGG: Babalú Ayé b. 24, b. 39-40; RRC: Forever and Ever b. 41-42.

On the other hand, these interrelated rhythm cells can be identified as independent, separate patterns appearing in the rhythm of the melodic line, in which case their density features also come out more clearly. First of all, there exist different variation forms of *cinquillo* in addition to its basic form. The unifying feature between them is the accentuation of the third stroke of the pattern (that falls on the *bombo* when playing during the strong part of the *clave*). When this rhythmic pattern is played as a group containing five strokes, one can refer to it as a dense rhythmic model. However, it should be noted that sometimes violinists may leave the first or the last stroke of the pattern unplayed (cf. Floyd 1991, 11). It is also common for violinists to add notes between the basic strokes of the rhythm cell. In that case, the model is exploited in its looser form (see the lowest staff in Note example 25). However, I would argue that the model remains recognizable, because it can be identified as a separate entirety falling on the four beats[142] and because the notes are added only at the end of the rhythm cell, after the third stroke of the pattern. Note example 25 illustrates different variation forms of the *cinquillo* that can be found within the research data.

Note example 25.   *Cinquillo* pattern and its variations.

Rhythm cells are embedded into the melodic line in different ways. In addition to appearing independently, sometimes rhythmically the same kind of *cinquillo* pattern is repeated sequentially (Note example 26) and sometimes the variations of the pattern follow one another (Note example 27).

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142   However, in addition to the alternation between quarter notes and eighth notes, the *cinquillo* can be formed using other note values, such as eighth notes and sixteenth notes.

Note example 26.   Two *cinquillo* patterns and a syncopated chain during a *montuno* section of Babalú Ayé, played by Edel Lazága Ortega on 27 February 2008.

Note example 27.   Two *cinquillo* patterns and the 'displaced *cinquillo*' during a *montuno* section of Virgen de Regla, played by Alejandro Vistel on 1 March 2010.

The appearance of building blocks in relation to the *clave* pattern does not systematically follow a certain convention, but they can be located at different points within or across bar lines, in the same way that Floyd (1999, 9–10) brings up in his article *Black Music in the Circum-Caribbean*, and as one can see in Note examples 26 and 27 above. Thus, they do not appear in a similar relation to the *clave* pattern as in pre-composed songs (cf. Note example 17, section 4.1).

This also applies to the *tresillo* pattern, which may appear in different contexts and in different rhythmic relations to the *clave*, both during the strong part and the weak part of the pattern. This building block may rhythmically cover the entire bar in its basic form,[143] or it may appear as a shorter figure and stress, for example, only the second and third strokes of the strong part of the *clave* (Note example 28). On the other hand, the *tresillo* may also appear in a looser form in the same way as in the first *cinquillo* variation in the lowest staff of Note example 25, in which a sixth stroke is added to the pattern. In this case, the *tresillo* includes four strokes (Note example 29). Furthermore, other strokes can be added between the basic strokes of the *tresillo*, but the pattern remains recognizable due to the accentuation. The

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[143]   See e.g. AV: Elegguá b. 15; RRC: Obbatalá b. 67.

example is Ricardo Cortez García's improvisation, in which he emphasizes the *tresillo* strokes, but adds notes between the first and second strokes by phrasing in three over the binary subdivision (Note example 30).
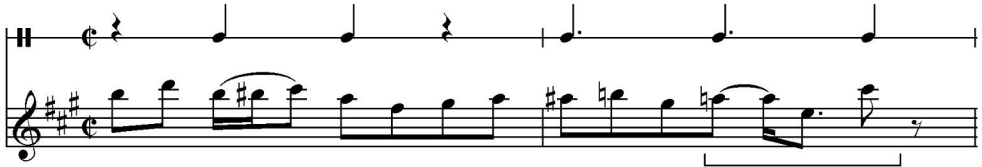
Note example 28.   *Tresillo* pattern falling on the *bombo* and *ponche* (see below) strokes during a *montuno* section of Babalú Ayé, played by Omar Nilo González Álvarez on 3 November 2007.

Note example 29.   *Tresillo* pattern during a *montuno* section of Elegguá, played by Alejandro Vistel on 1 March 2010.
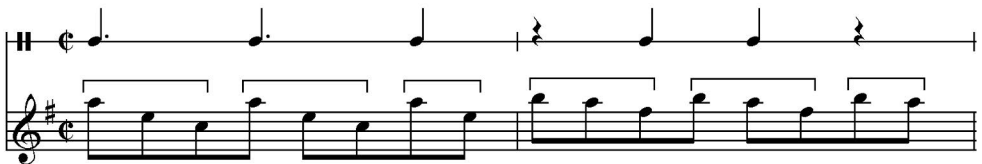
Note example 30.   The accentuation of *tresillo* pattern during a *montuno* section of Obbatalá, played by Ricardo Cortez García on 16 December 2007.

In addition to the *bombo*, the second stroke of the strong part of the *clave*, the third stroke also has a particular name, the *ponche*. In Latin dance music styles this stroke is often accented in unison breaks that make a transition between song sections (Mauleón 1993, 63, 169; Peñalosa 2009, 95). Sometimes it is also accented alongside the *bombo* during the same bar. This kind of rhythmic cell, in which the accent falls on both the *bombo* and the *ponche*, is called the *conga* pattern (Ortiz 1965, 277; Mauleón 1993, 169–170). It is often played by the whole ensemble, and harmonically a chord transition occurs between the dominant and the tonic (Mauleón 1993, 169–170).
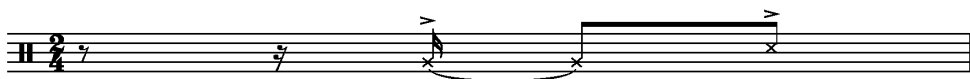
Note example 31.   *Conga* pattern.

Sometimes, when a tempo is faster, the rhythm of the melodic line is heavily syncopated, and the *clave* pattern is not clearly noticeable, the *clave* is brought to light by accenting both *bombo* and *ponche* strokes (Mauleón-Santana 1999, 162). This technique is also exploited in improvisations of this particular study, as in Note example 32 below.

Note example 32.   Ronny Cabarrogas Fernández accenting both *bombo* and *ponche* strokes during a *montuno* section of Obbatalá on 17 October 2007.

Although the accentuation of *bombo* and *ponche* sometimes occurs during the same bar, they are also emphasized separately. An example below of dynamically accented *bombo* is from Ricardo Cortez García's improvisation during a *montuno* section of Obbatalá, performed on 29 December 2007.

Note example 33.   Ricardo Cortez García accenting the *bombo* during a *montuno* section of Obbatalá, on 29 December 2007.

An example concerning the interaction within the ensemble and the moment the *ponche* is collectively emphasized is the improvisation of Raúl Ríos Chassagne during a *montuno* section of Ochún on 22 February 2010. As one can hear in the video (and see in the transcription), Ríos Chassagne starts playing a fast repeating sextuplet pattern during bar 17. The accompanying ensemble stops playing on the *ponche* stroke after the *coro* has ended. During the next bar, only the bongo player brings up the two strokes of the weak part of the *clave*. When getting to bar 19, the entire accompanying ensemble stresses the *tresillo* pattern of the strong part of the

clave. Ríos Chassagne plays sextuplets during the first strokes, but when arriving at the *ponche*, he dynamically accents the quarter note. After that the accompanying polyrhythmic texture continues in the same way as before the break. Tonyto, the bongo player, reacts to the accent by shouting 'Yalorde', which refers to Ochún. The collective break leads to a section where the violin improvisation proceeds freely and does not alternate with the *coro*. Ríos Chassagne plays the forthcoming *coro* melody from bar 33 onwards, and the *coro* will join during bar 37.

A central approach to syncopation includes the use of binary subdivision with ternary phrasing and triplet subdivision with binary phrasing.[144] All these groupings are marked in the transcriptions above the melodic line. As one can see, these kinds of metric patterns can begin at different points within the *clave* cycle. In the context of this study, the accent has been considered to emerge on the first note of the repeated pattern. The ternary phrasing of binary subdivision is more common within the improvisations of this study.

Figure 9 shows the quantity of all metric accents that emerge due to phrasing in relation to all metric accents within all improvisations. As one can see, the accent most often falls on the *bombo*. It is worth noticing that during the other *clave* strokes, the accent emerging due to phrasing covers more than half of the metric accents. The rest of the accents are the result of syncopated chains or syncopated rhythmic cells.

21/30   22/162   12/17   11/17   17/26
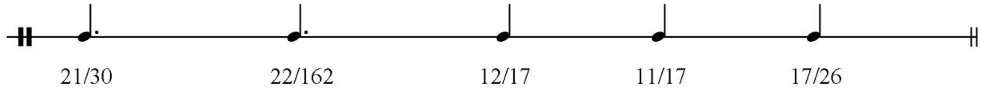
Figure 9.   The accents emerging due to phrasing in relation to all metric accents.

The transcriptions indicate that the phrasing is highly dependent on the violinist. The sequential use of contrasting syncopations, characteristic of music culture (cf. Manuel 1998, 138), comes to the fore in Lazága Ortega's improvisations. For example, in Note example 34, he alternately uses both phrasing techniques. This is a common feature in his improvisations during a *montuno* section of Babalú Ayé.

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[144]   However, other phrasing techniques also appear in transcriptions that do not follow this convention. See e.g. RCF: Forever and Ever, b. 34–37 and b. 56–57 (five eighth note cycles); ELO: Babalú Ayé (03012008), b. 23 (five sixteenth note cycles).

Note example 34.　Binary phrasing of triplets and ternary phrasing of binary subdivision during a *montuno* section of Babalú Ayé, played by Edel Lazága Ortega on 27 February 2008.

Annex 3 shows the number of all accents and accent combinations in relation to all *clave* strokes within all data. In about a quarter of all metric accents falling on the *bombo* (42 out of 162), the metric accent appears without other simultaneous accents (durational or melodic accents). In these cases, the accent is part of a syncopated, melodically parallel chain, in which the accent is not preceded by a shorter note. Similarly, in about a quarter of all metric accents (42 out of 162), both metric and durational accents fall on the *bombo* at the same time. This accent combination refers to moments when the violinist exploits the rhythm cells typical of the culture, as in Note example 27 above. However, it is also common that improvisations include a regularly repeated musical idea, in which the *bombo* is preceded by two eighth notes. In these moments, the accent falling on the *bombo* represents both the metric accent and the durational accent (see below) at the same time.[145]

Note example 35.　A common rhythmic idea in which the *bombo* is stressed, played by Ricardo Cortez García during a *montuno* section of Obbatalá on 29 December 2007.

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[145]　Regarding this kind of rhythmic approach, see also José 'Chombo' Silva's (1913–1995) improvisation during *Para bailar y Gozar* (Bardfeld 2001, 56).

This metric accent, which falls on the 2+ offbeat of the bar in different contexts, appears in improvisations both during the strong and the weak parts of the *clave*. In this context, I would refer to the *bombo* and the counter-*bombo* in the same way that Peñalosa (2009, 172) uses the term counter-*clave* when referring to the *tresillo* patterns played during the weak part of the *clave* (see section 4.1). Although this accent occurs more often on the strong part (53.6% of cases) than on the weak part (46.3% of cases) of the pattern, this feature emphasizes the importance of syncopation as part of the generative structure of music culture.

Finally, Figure 10 illustrates a bar chart showing the percentage of metric accents in relation to the five *clave* strokes in the same order they appear when the strong part of the *son clave* pattern is played before the weak part.
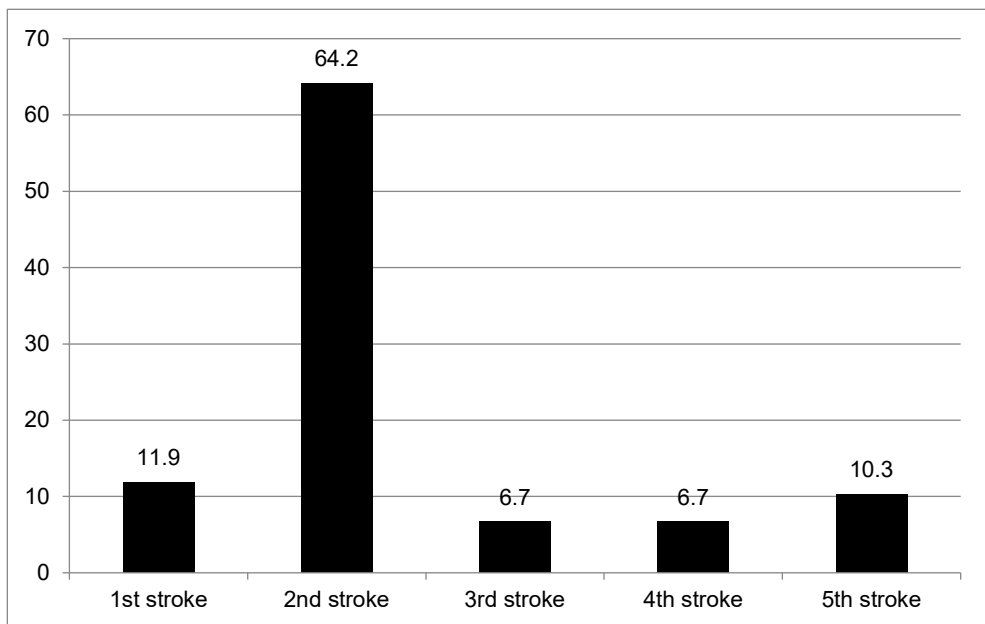
Figure 10. The percentage of the metric accents within all improvisations in relation to *clave*'s five strokes, starting from the strong part of the *clave*.

4.3.3   Durational Accent

Rhythmic accents, which in this context are called durational accents (marked 'x' in the transcriptions) are defined as 'accents caused by relatively long durations following one or more shorter durations' (Lester 1986; qtd. in Torsten 2014, 1). In his article *Modelling Durational Accents for Computer-Aided Composition*, Torsten (2014) refers to Povel and Okkerman's (1981) research on the perception of accents concerning the sequences of short sine tones which differ from their inter-onset

intervals. The author claims that the durational accent occurs 'if [the note] is longer than the preceding note, and if the preceding note does not exceed 250 msec, which corresponds to an eighth note at a tempo of 120 quarter notes per minute' (Torsten 2014, 1).

I studied my research material in this light, relating the length of the note preceding the accent to the actual tempo of the *montuno* section.[146] As one can see in Annex 4, the durational accents mainly fall on the *clave*'s strokes that appear on the strong beats of a bar (1st and 3rd beats of a bar; *clave*'s 1st stroke on the strong part and the 5th stroke on the weak part). Thus, these accents also stress a regular metric rhythm, and the strong beats are often emphasized by playing a note, which is preceded by a shorter note. Within all improvisations, the durational accent most commonly falls on the first stroke in ten improvisations, and on the fifth stroke in thirteen improvisations. The exceptions are the improvisations played during *montuno* sections proceeding in a faster tempo. In these improvisations syncopation is emphasized, and the durational accent falls mostly on the *bombo*, often at the same time as the metric accent.

If once again studying Annex 3, which shows the quantity of all accents and accent combinations in relation to all *clave* strokes within all data, one can see that the durational accent commonly appears alone when falling on the first and fifth strokes of the *clave*: on the first stroke in 67 out of 151 durational accents and on the fifth stroke in 90 out of 169 durational accents. In other words, it is quite common that the durational accent falling on the strong beat does not appear, for example, at the same time as the ascending interval leap or the change of melodic direction. The exploitation of the durational accent is stressed in those improvisations in which a melodic motion is mostly stepwise and the metric accents are avoided. In that case, it is common that the accentuation emerges through the rhythmic variation of the melodic line, which, however, does not include syncopation.

[146]   At 60 half notes per minute, the preceding note is an eighth note in maximum; 90 half notes per minute, the preceding note is a dotted eighth in maximum; 120 half notes per minute, the preceding note is a quarter in maximum.
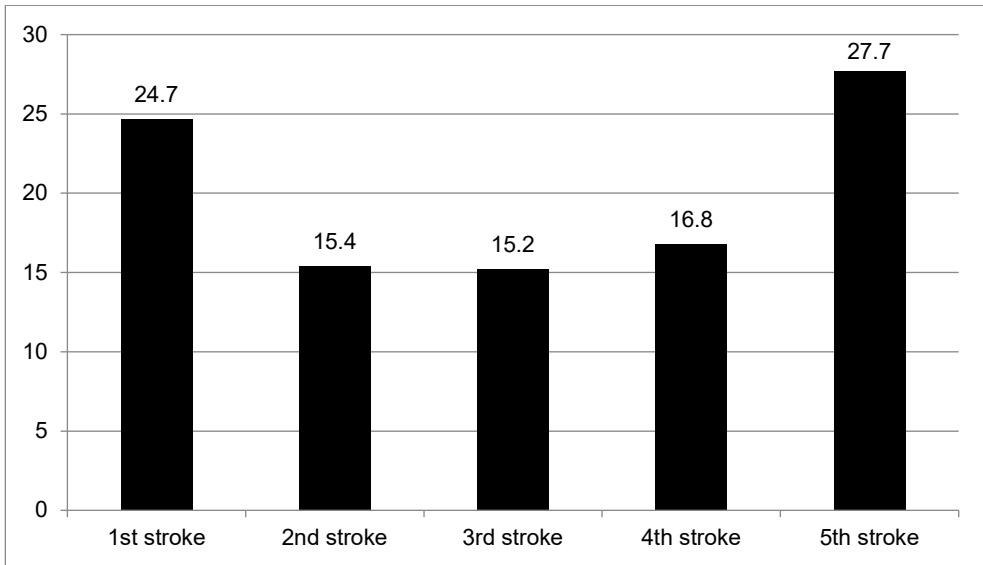
Figure 11.   The percentage of the durational accents within all improvisations in relation to *clave*'s five strokes, starting from the strong part of the *clave*.

4.3.4   Melodic Accents

Melodic accent may appear in different contexts. A leap to relatively high or low notes, for example, is called the interval size accent (Huron & Royal 1996, 490; Hannon et al. 2004, 957). In this accent type, the accent occurs at the point of arrival on the second pitch forming the interval (Huron & Royal 1996, 490). According to different studies, leaps of more than three semitones are experienced as a point of accent (e.g. Thomassen 1982; Drake et al. 1991; Drake & Palmer 1993). Additionally, ascending leaps have been considered to sound more accented than descending leaps (Graybill 1989; Rothgeb 1990; Huron & Royal 1996).

I follow the same idea in this particular analysis: all ascending leaps that include at least four semitones and occur at the point of arrival on the second pitch are considered the interval size accents (marked '+' in the transcriptions). Another melodic accent type is called the contour pivot point (marked '–' in the transcriptions). This kind of melodic accent occurs when the direction of the melody changes (Huron & Royal 1996, 490–491; Hannon et al. 2004, 957).[147] A third kind of melodic accent is called the registral extreme accent (marked '^' in the transcriptions). This refers to a note in a particularly high or low register relative to the surrounding notes (Hannon et al. 2004, 957).

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[147]   However, I have not taken into account those phrases in which the melodic pattern remains unchanged, such as during repeated octave leaps.

Note example 36. Different melodic accent types during a *montuno* section of Ochún, played by Omar Nilo González Álvarez on 3 November 2007. 1) Interval size accent/registral extreme accent (and durational accent), 2) contour pivot point (and durational accent), 3) contour pivot point, 4) registral extreme accent/contour pivot point, 5) interval size accent/registral extreme accent/contour pivot point (and durational accent).

Melodic accents are the most popular accent types in the improvisations of this study. As one can see in Annexes 5–7, they are evenly distributed between all five *clave* strokes, and there is not a clear dominant stroke in the same way as in the context of the metric accent, although the accents largely fall on the fifth stroke of the *clave* in each accent type. The bar charts in Figures 12–14 show all melodic accent types in relation to the *clave* strokes.
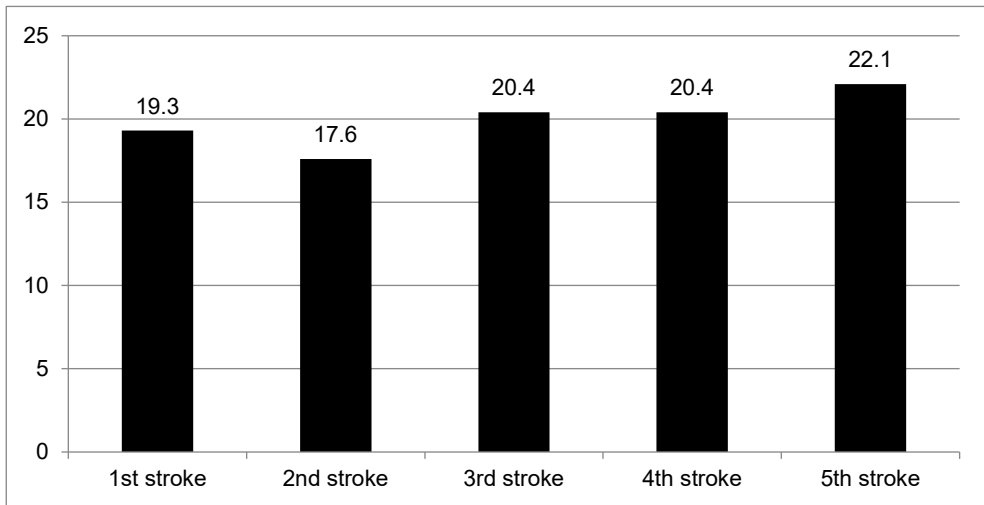
Figure 12. The percentage of the interval size accents within all improvisations in relation to *clave*'s five strokes, starting from the strong part of the *clave*.
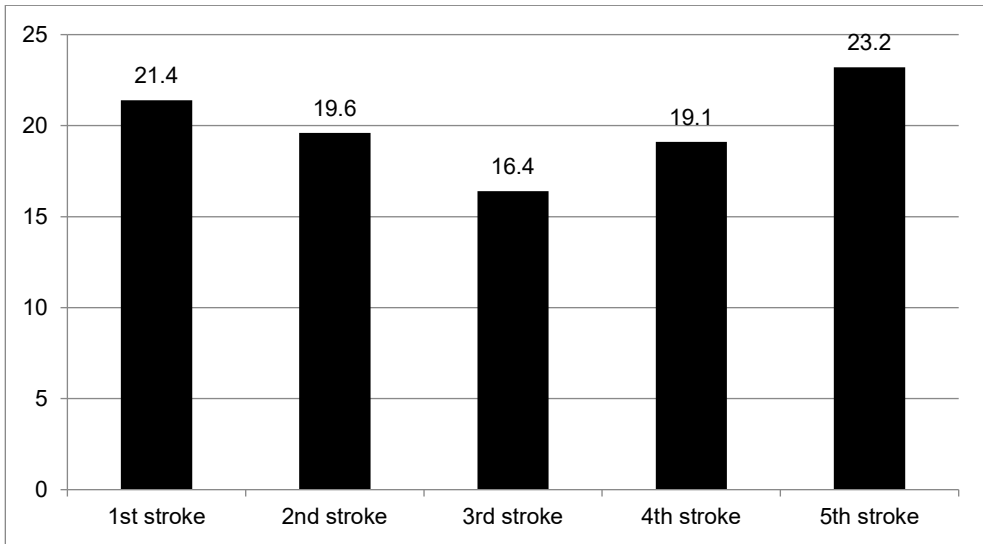
Figure 13.   The percentage of the contour pivot points within all improvisations in relation to *clave*'s five strokes, starting from the strong part of the *clave*.
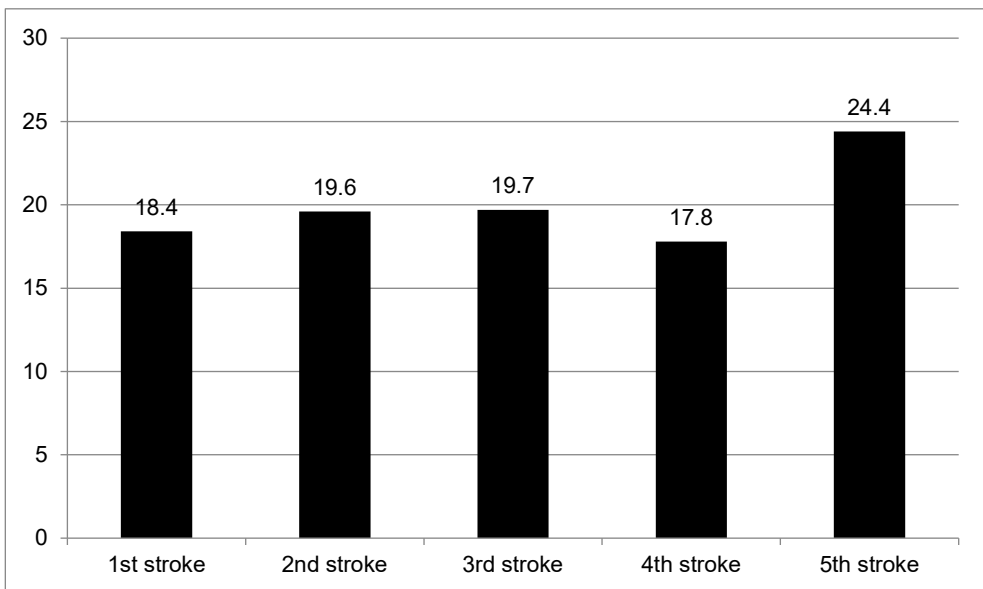
Figure 14.   The percentage of the registral extreme accents within all improvisations in relation to *clave*'s five strokes, starting from the strong part of the *clave*.

The most widely used accent type is the contour pivot point, which indicates the change of melodic direction. Almost half of all melodic accents represent this accent type. The least used melodic accent type is the interval size accent. Although the

interval size accent often occurs simultaneously with another accent, it appears most often alone during the third and fourth strokes of the *clave*. This indicates that when occurring independently on the weak beats of the bar, the accent appears as part of an ascending melodic line.

It is common that accents falling on the *clave* strokes represent different melodic accents at the same time (cf. Hannon et al. 2004, 6). Although it is typical for the contour pivot point to appear alone, it also often occurs simultaneously with the registral extreme accent, as in Note example 36 above. Sometimes the accent falling on the *clave* stroke represents all different melodic accent types – and occasionally the durational accent as well – as one can see in Note example 36 as well. However, it is rare that all five accent types mentioned so far appear during the same *clave* stroke. This happens only three times: once during the first stroke of the *clave* (see EMB: Babalú Ayé, b. 19) and twice during the second stroke of the *clave* (see RCF: Obbatalá, b. 5; Babalú Ayé 24112007, b. 19).

In most improvisations, different types of melodic accents are represented comprehensively. However, there are also improvisations of some of the violinists where all the melodic accents falling on the *clave* strokes represent the contour pivot point, often at the same time as the registral extreme accent. In these improvisations, implementation of interval size accents is almost absent: the progress of solos is mainly based on scalar motion, and arpeggios are avoided. Additionally, these improvisations are less syncopated; they hardly include any syncopated rhythm cells or syncopation at the onset of the bar.

The prevalence of melodic accents falling on the *clave* strokes within the data – especially the contour pivot point and the combination of the contour pivot point and the registral extreme accent – can be visualized by deriving a specific bar chart from Annex 3. Figure 15 shows the number of the six most popular accent types and accent combinations that fall on the *clave* strokes within all improvisations of the data. As one can see, only during the fifth stroke of the *clave* is the durational accent more common than the contour pivot point.
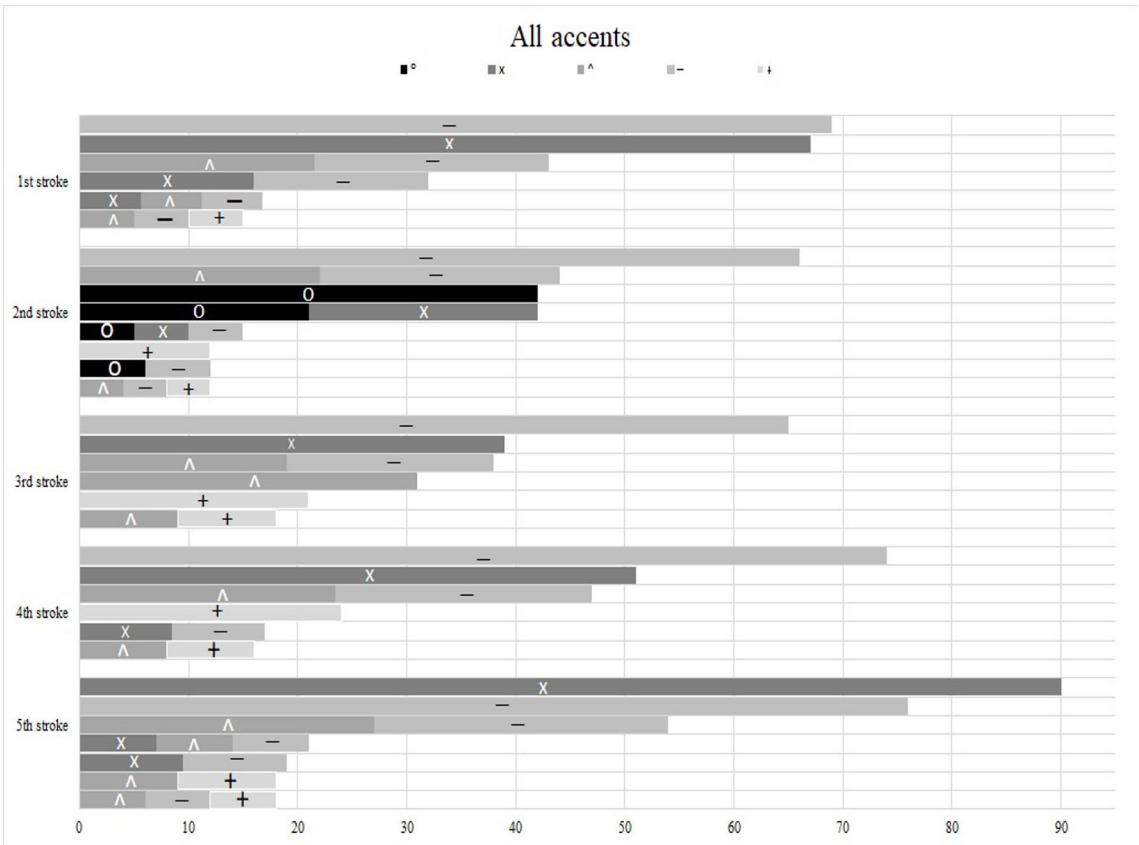
Figure 15. Number of most popular accents and accent combinations falling on the *clave* strokes within all improvisations of data (° = metric accent; x = durational accent; ^ = registral extreme accent; – = contour pivot point; + = interval size accent).

4.3.5   Natural Harmonics

I still bring out one accent type which emerges because of the sudden change of a timbre. This accent category contains natural harmonics, which are most often produced on the E string by playing the note E6. Sometimes a violinist also produces a natural harmonic by playing the A5 on the A string. One of the reasons behind this phenomenon is obviously that violinists improvise mainly on the A and E strings in order to make the solo sound louder amid the strong background noise during an event. Although the harmonics are exploited in 21 improvisations out of 40, the accent rarely occurs at the onset of the *clave* stroke – only in the improvisations of four violinists (see Annex 8). When these accents fall on the *clave* strokes, they commonly fall on the second and fourth strokes of the *clave*. The results indicate that stressing the *clave* by using the harmonics is not a characteristic feature in this specific improvisation culture but is more related to individual improvisation styles.

In the context of this study, the simultaneity of harmonics and the *clave* strokes is emphasized in improvisations of Raúl Ríos Chassagne.

Note example 37. Harmonics appearing in relation to the *clave* strokes during a *montuno* section of Ochún, played by Raúl Ríos Chassagne on 18 February 2008.
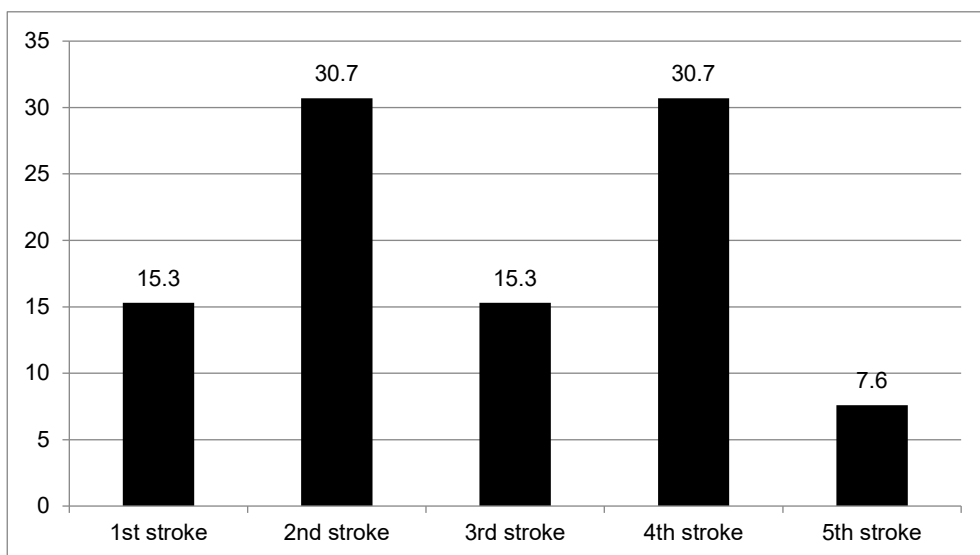
Figure 16. The percentage of the harmonics within all improvisations in relation to *clave*'s five strokes, starting from the strong part of the *clave*.

4.4   Summary

The significance of the *clave* pattern is emphasized in both pedagogical and musicological literature. Additionally, the teaching methods of González Álvarez were largely based on the idea of internalizing the *clave* pattern and understanding its guiding role in music in general and particularly at the basis of violin playing. Furthermore, it seemed to be clear to the musicians that when playing Cuban popular music, the presence of the *clave* should be felt in the background. In addition to the musicians, the *clave* was also noticed by the audience, which sometimes participated in the progress of the performance by clapping this rhythmic pattern. In light of this background, it is not surprising that the analysis of the relationship between the *clave*

pattern and the rhythm of violin improvisation brought out the results related to the guiding role of the *clave* pattern at the basis of improvisation.

This relation between the *clave* and the rhythm of the melodic line emerges, first of all, when studying the prevalence of syncopation at the onset of the first beat of the strong part of the *clave*. In most improvisations, it is more common to slur the last eighth note of the bar across the bar line preceding the strong part of the *clave* rather than the weak part of the pattern. However, this feature is emphasized in those improvisations that are performed during the *montuno* sections proceeding in a faster tempo, particularly in *son*- and *guaracha*-based improvisations, in which the anticipated bassline is stressed as well. Furthermore, it is interesting that the prevalence of syncopation at the onset of the bar – especially at the onset of the strong part of the *clave* – increases as the tempo increases. The manner of emphasizing the rhythm of the melodic line is, in a certain way, parallel to the *clave*-related rhythm of the accompanying *guajeo* patterns that are typical to these genres. Sometimes during improvisation, when 'on the beat' and 'syncopated beat' passages alternate in relation to the *clave*, the rhythm is even identical. However, syncopated sections also occur more broadly at the phrase level.

On the other hand, the prevalence of syncopation at the onset of the structural halves of the *clave* cycle is less common in improvisations played during the *montuno* sections based on the slower *cha-cha-chá*. One can say that in the same manner as in improvisations proceeding in *son* or *guaracha* styles, the rhythm of the melodic line in these improvisations is related to a less syncopated *guajeo* pattern preceding the improvisation. When taking into account the rhythmic similarities between the specific *guajeo* patterns and the rhythm of the improvised melodic line, and also the interviews with the musicians, I would claim that there is a connection between the idea of the '*montuno* concept' and the improvisations produced in the course of performance.

Regarding the different accents falling on the *clave* strokes, one can say that a certain kind of balance is maintained between the syncopated beats and the beats that emphasize the steady metric rhythm at the basis of the *clave* pattern. The two accents that constantly fall on the *clave* strokes, the contour pivot point and the durational accent, often occur alone without other concurrent accent types. The registral extreme accent, which also appears often in improvisations, commonly falls on the *clave* strokes at the same time as the contour pivot point. Different accent types are distributed quite evenly among the *clave* strokes, but they mainly fall on the fifth stroke of the *clave*, the third beat of the weak part of the pattern. The exception is the syncopated metric accent, which falls primarily on the second stroke of the strong part of the *clave*. The use of this accent is emphasized in the improvisations, which both proceed in a faster tempo and are more syncopated. In other improvisations – when this accent occurs – it is more evenly distributed among the *clave* strokes. The

rhythm cells (and their variation forms) based on syncopation are used creatively in different contexts. For example, the *cinquillo* and *tresillo* patterns appear not only during the strong part of the *clave*, as is common in pre-composed music, but these building blocks can be located at different points within the *clave* cycle. The same applies to accents that emerge due to different articulations of either ternary phrasing of binary subdivision or binary phrasing of triplets: the accents are related to *clave* strokes in different ways; however, they primarily fall on the *bombo*, the second stroke of the strong part of the *clave*.

5 Melodic Models

Jazz and Cuban popular music have traditionally evolved in parallel and influenced each other (Manuel 1998, 128, 142; Mauleón 1993, 6; Acosta 1989, 35). The strong Caribbean atmosphere affected the development of ragtime and early jazz in New Orleans (Waxer 1994, 141), and its influence on jazz – partly due to Cuban (and more broadly Caribbean and Latin American) musicians participating in the US jazz scene – remained significant throughout the first half of the twentieth century (Washburne 2020, 5). On the other hand, during the golden age of swing in the 1930s, Cuban music was influenced by jazz instrumentation and harmony (Mauleón 1993, 6), which also had an effect on the sonority and orchestral colour (Acosta 1989, 37). In the 1940s, as a result of the development of bebop, jazz started to become less associated with dance (Manuel 1998, 143; Washburne 2020, 6), but the bond between Cuban music and musicians and jazz was not broken. In the United States, as a result of fusion between Latin music and jazz, and innovative work and cooperation between musicians, such as Mario Bauzá (1911–1993), Frank 'Machito' Grillo (1912–1984), Luciano 'Chano' Pozo (1915–1948) and Dizzy Gillespie (1917–1993), 'Latin jazz' was born (see Washburne 2020, 5). At the same time, in the 1940s and 1950s, the Cuban piano style was influenced by jazz, but *charanga* music remained more traditional, avoiding jazz influences. The term '*típico*' (typical or traditional) has been used in the context of *charanga* and the improvisation styles associated with it. *Típico* style refers to a more traditional improvisation style, having its basis in the 1940s and 1950s, in which the jazz and blues influences are avoided and solos follow the features of traditional Cuban popular music, with its typical phrases and licks. Violin, trumpet and flute all have their own kind of *típico* style (see Murphy 1991, 121–122; Manuel 1998, 137–138).

In addition to having common features when approaching the rhythmic basis of improvisation, violinists performing in Violín a Ochún events also share a lexicon of melodic surface models, typical of this particular music culture reflecting *charanga* tradition. That is, there is a tendency to exploit different kinds of commonly used melodic fragments and phrases that identify this specific improvisation genre. Nevertheless, there are also differences concerning the melodic content of musical vocabulary between individuals and based on the violinist's

generation. According to interviews, the differences between the generations are partly connected with the institutional education of younger musicians, increased musical influences among the youngsters, and the emergence of young and talented Cuban violinists, whose innovative improvisation styles have become a model followed by the younger generation.

> Always for the violinists of my generation, for those who used to improvise, the model they followed was Brindis [nickname of Miguel Barbón, referring to Brindis de Salas]. Most violinists copied that style. When the young people who graduate from the art school here in Cuba begin to receive more musical information from the other regions, the horizon of improvisation expands. [--] They have another concept, another form, I would say a bit broader. [--] These people have more influences from jazz. [--] It can be seen especially among the pianists, but in the case of violinists, you can see, for example, Dagoberto [Dagoberto González]. [--] During the time of my generation there was not so much jazz influences in Cuba in the ways violinists improvise. (OGÁ 18052009)[148]

> They [the older generation] have lived in a generation where everything was *charanga*. [--] The few who still improvise [--] everything is very *típico*. It is all very elementary in the sense that they do not leave the ordinary tonic, subdominant, dominant. It is there all the time. [--] [Dagoberto González] has more age but he is not part of that generation. He has been a pattern for this entire generation of new violinists [--] because he maintains *charanga* music, but at the same time with jazz influences. (RCF 18052009)[149]

Both González Álvarez and Cabarrogas Fernández mention Dagoberto González, a violinist who has expanded the idea of traditional *típico* improvisation

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[148] 'Siempre para los violinistas de mi generación, para los que hacían improvisación, el modelo de seguir era Brindis. [--] Mayor parte de los violinistas copiaban ese estilo. Ya con los jóvenes que egresan de la escuela de arte aquí en Cuba que empiezan a recibir una mayor información musical de otras regiones es que se amplía el horizonte de improvisación. [--] Tienen otro concepto, otra forma, yo diría un poco más amplio. [--] Esta gente tiene un poco más influencias jazzísticas. [--] Se nota mucho en los pianistas, pero bueno, en el caso de violinistas, tú ves por ejemplo Dagoberto el Gordo. [--] En la época de mi generación no había en Cuba tanta influencia de jazz en las formas de improvisar de los violinistas.'

[149] 'Ellos han vivido una generación que todo fue charanga. [--] Los pocos que todavía improvisan [--] todo es muy típico. Todo es muy elemental en el sentido de que no se van un poco fuera de lo común de la tónica, subdominante, dominante. Es allí todo el tiempo. [--] [Dagoberto Gonzáles] tiene más edad, pero no pertenece a la generación de ellos. Él ha sido patrón para toda esta generación de nuevos violinistas [--] porque mantiene la música charanga, pero al mismo tiempo con influencias jazzísticas.'

style by including jazz influences on it. Then in what specific ways do these influences appear in *típico* context in the course of religious performance? On the other hand, which kinds of features in turn – in addition to the importance of the *clave* pattern – link all of the solos to a shared knowledge base concerning the *charanga* tradition? In this chapter I concentrate on the features that are related to the way of using the melodic parameter among the improvisations included in my research data. I start with smaller units: the features related to the role of single notes in the context of different keys. Next, I proceed to different structural patterns, including both melodic surface and background models.

5.1   Some Observations Concerning Pitches

5.1.1   Central Pitches

In order to study and compare the pitches used within and between improvisations, I divided the improvisations into seven groups with the following criteria: i) improvisations are based on the same key, and a chord progression of solos is alike[150]; ii) there are at least two violinists improvising over a similar kind of chord progression. After that I studied the features emerging both within the groups and between the groups. I also took into account those ten solos that are not involved in the mentioned groups because of the key or a chord progression at the basis of improvisation. The improvisations mainly proceed in violin-friendly keys. They are based on C, D, G and A majors, and A, D, E and C minors, of which C minor is the only technically challenging key. When referring to *plegarias* dedicated to different saints, the *montuno* sections of Yemayá, Babalú Ayé and Elegguá proceed in major keys and the *montuno* sections of Ochún and Obbatalá in minor keys.

I divided the Western chromatic scale of twelve pitches into octaves. The number 0 refers to C and the number 11 to B. In the Annexes (from 9 to 15) the first pitch on the left (number 7) is equivalent to G3, the lowest open string of the violin. I did not take into account different kinds of 'micro intervals', such as slide ups or glissandos,

[150]   For example, the tonic chord is followed either by the supertonic and dominant chords or the tonic chord leads directly to the dominant chord, after which the chord progression returns to the tonic chord (e.g. Am/Bdim/E/Am; Am/E/E/Am). *Montuno* sections in Groups 5 and 7 (see below) both proceed in D major. However, in both groups the improvisations are based on the *montuno* section of a particular song. Group 5 includes the improvisations played during *Forever and Ever*, and Group 7 includes the improvisation played during a *montuno* section dedicated to Elegguá. I also left out Felix Parreño's improvisation from Group 2, because this *montuno* section is based on *cha-cha-chá*, whereas all the group's improvisations proceed in *son* or *guaracha* styles, and, additionally, are played during a *montuno* section of Ochún.

but only those pitches that are clearly audible and belong to the Western chromatic scale. Furthermore, I did not take into account tremolos, except the first pitch of the pattern, because it was impossible to determine the number of the pitches included in it. On the left margin of each Annex are the initials of the violinist who played the improvisation and the date the solo was played. Additionally, for every improvisation I first calculated the percentage of the prevalence of each individual pitch used in the improvisation in relation to all the pitches exploited in the improvisation. Then I calculated the mean, standard deviation and coefficient of variation of those pitches that appear in every improvisation within the particular group. The purpose was also to study what kind of dispersion in the use of different pitches occurs within the groups. The mean, standard deviation and coefficient of variation are presented below the row indicating the pitches, and the absolute number of pitches is written inside the bold cells (see Annexes 9–15).[151]

Furthermore, Annex 16 illustrates the tessitura of each improvisation within the data. White note heads and the numbers 1-3 above them indicate the order of the three most frequently used pitches in the improvisation. It is not surprising that the fifth degree of a scale, the dominant, is the most used in both major and minor modes.[152] As a consequence of a simple and repetitive chord progression at the basis of a *montuno* section, the note that corresponds the fifth degree of a particular diatonic scale fits in most of the chords. According to González Álvarez, the fifth degree of a scale has an important role in Cuban music.

> The fifth degree of a scale in Cuban music [--] is the one that shines the most. [--] It is a characteristic of Cuban music. We use that pattern. [--] Those of us who play popular dance music, guitarists, violinists, flautists, saxophonists, whoever; that sound will always be very present, the fifth degree. It shines throughout the accompanying chord progression. (OGÁ 07012006)[153]

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[151] Group 1: C major (F (Dm)/G/C/Am), 6 violinists, 11 improvisations; Group 2: A minor (Am/E7/E7/Am; Am/Bdim/E7/Am; Am/E/E/Am), 5 violinists, 5 improvisations; Group 3: E minor (Em/Am/B7/Em), 2 violinists, 3 improvisations; Group 4: C minor (Cm/G7/G7/Cm; Cm/Ddim/G/Cm), 3 violinists, 3 improvisations; Group 5: D major (D/G/Em/A), 3 violinists, 4 improvisations; Group 6: D minor (Dm/Gm/A/Dm), 2 violinists, 2 improvisations; Group 7: D major (D/Em/A7/D), 2 violinists, 2 improvisations.

[152] The dominant is the most used pitch in 13 improvisations out of 24 (major keys), and in 10 improvisations out of 16 (minor keys).

[153] 'El quinto grado de la tónica en la música cubana [--] es que más brilla. [--] Es una característica de la música cubana. Recurrimos a ese patrón. [--] Los que tocamos la música bailable popular, guitarristas, violinistas, flautistas, saxofonistas, lo que sea; ese sonido siempre van a tener muy presente, el quinto grado de la tónica. El quinto grado de la tónica brilla en todo el giro armónico de acompañamiento que se está haciendo.'

The popularity of the dominant degree comes out in Figures 17 and 18 below, which show the three most frequently used degrees of a scale within all the improvisations proceeding in major keys (Figure 17) and minor keys (Figure 18). Scale degrees are written with the technical names. The bar charts illustrate on which degree of the scale the three most commonly used pitches of the improvisations most frequently fall, regardless of the key signature of the improvisation. The bars from left to right show in how many improvisations the scale degree is 1) most frequently used, 2) second most used and 3) third most used.
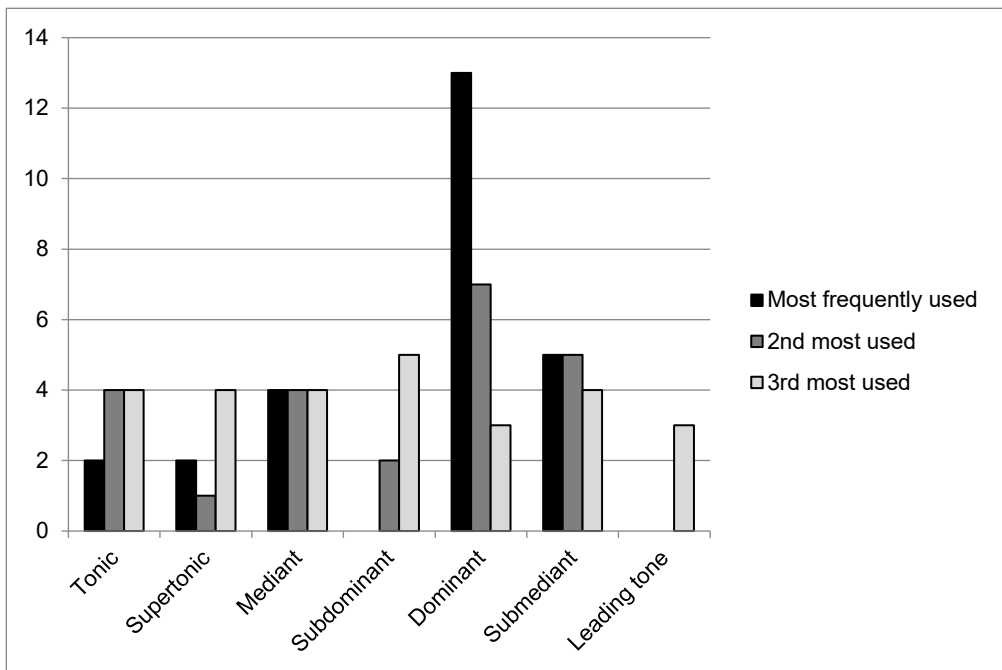
Figure 17.   The three most frequently used degrees of a scale within all the improvisations proceeding in major keys (24 improvisations).
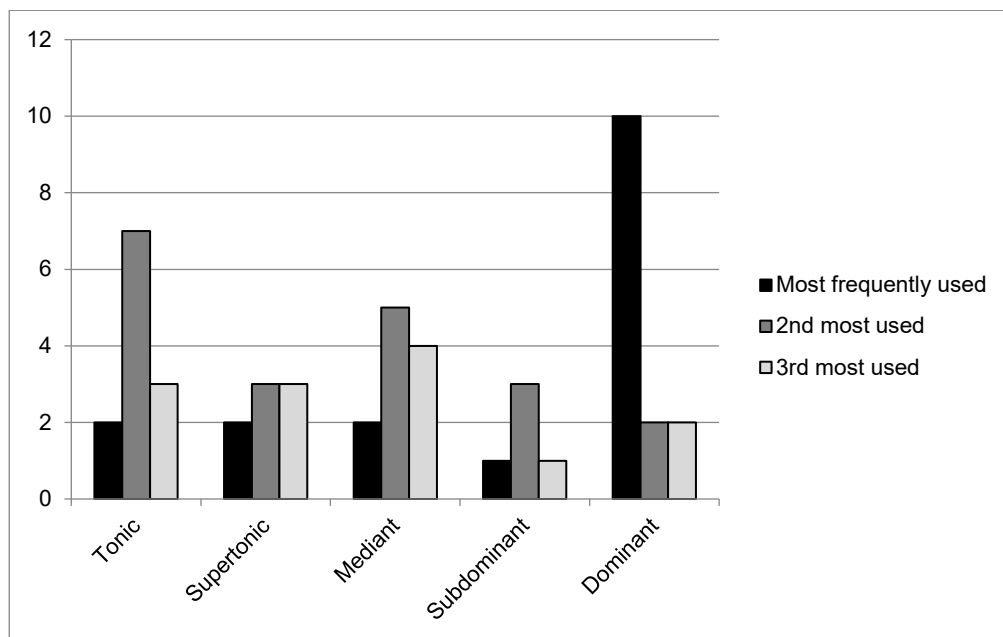
Figure 18.   The three most frequently used degrees of a scale within all the improvisations proceeding in minor keys (16 improvisations).

In addition to the dominant, other pitches indicating the triad of the key (and in major keys also the submediant, the tonic of the relative key) are quite popular. However, there are differences regarding how individual violinists approach tonal material. It is quite common that some specific pitch that is widely used within the improvisations of a particular group achieves a certain kind of peak in relation to other pitches in some particular improvisation. This feature is partly related to different mannerisms and surface models preferred by individual violinists. An example is Mario Argudin's improvisations in Group 1 (see Annex 9). Although G5 (dominant) and A5 (submediant) are common in all solos within the group, their popularity in relation to other pitches is stressed in improvisations of Argudin, in which he favours a melodic idea that is based on a sequential repetition of the mentioned pitches.

Note example 38.   Sequential repetition of neighbour pitches during a *montuno* section of Babalú Ayé, played by Mario Argudin on 12 December 2007.

According to Argudin, repeating these two pitches, the fifth and the sixth degrees of a scale, that fit the accompanying chord progression well, gives him time to think what to do next (MA 12052009). This kind of proceeding is also common in the context of jazz improvisation, in which the patterns that carry out holding operations are used. That is, the pitch is rhythmically repeated or alternated with neighbours until the musician invents a new musical idea to play (Berliner 1994, 228). Another mannerism Argudin uses in these improvisations – especially during a *montuno* section of Yemayá – is the ascending-descending melodic idea, which proceeds on the E string in the first position, and includes the pitches A5, G5, F5 and E5. This particular melodic idea also increases the amount of use of these specific pitches. For example, in the rest of the improvisations of Group 1, F5 is not included within the three most used pitches.

One can discover the same kind of mannerism in René García González's improvisation during a *montuno* section of Ochún in Group 3. F#5, the second degree of the scale, is the most used pitch in the improvisation, although it does not appear within the three most used pitches in other improvisations of the group. This is a result of the same kind of stepwise melodic motion that Argudin exploits in his improvisations proceeding in C major. García González plays on the E string in the first position the repetitive ascending-descending melodic idea that includes the pitches E5, F#5, G5 and A5. The open E string is often used as a contour pivot point when the melodic direction changes. It is interesting that during this particular improvisation García González does not use his fourth finger when playing on the E string, and thus does not bring out the dominant of the scale when playing in this octave range.

Another common resource, which both gives a violinist time before moving forward in improvisation and which is also essentially linked to the aesthetics of the music culture, is to repeat a certain kind of rhythmic pattern with or without a slight variation. This is a common *típico* feature in improvisation of Latin dance music (Manuel 1998, 138). Additionally, the pedagogical literature indicates that a musician should focus on purely rhythmic ideas when soloing (Bardfeld 2001, 31). In the context of violin improvisation, the pattern is based on the repetition of one note or – more typically – double stops. The rhythmic pattern is often, though not always, based on the fifth degree of a scale, which also increases its use in the course of performance.

The manner of using double stops is a typical affordance of the violin. This kind of technique of playing double stops is extremely common when playing Cuban popular music. One of the specific rhythmic-melodic surface models González Álvarez used to favour when improvising during a *montuno* section of Obbatalá (C minor) was a rhythmically varied double stop, based on the fifth degree of a scale, which he played in octaves (cf. bars 45–52) – the interval distance that is commonly

used when playing double stops (cf. Bardfeld 2001, 74). As another example of using double octaves with a repeated rhythmic cell that is based on a slight variation, one can study Felix Parreño's improvisation during a *montuno* section of Obbatalá (D minor), in which the pitch A5 covers 22.4% of all pitch events played during a solo. The use of this pitch is extremely high in relation to other pitches, which, in turn, is a result of its successive repetition.

Note example 39.   Double octaves with a slight rhythmic variation during a *montuno* section of Obbatalá, played by Felix Parreño on 22 February 2008.

The origin of this kind of rhythmic approach is, without question, in West African drumming. The manner of using double octaves along with some particular rhythmic pattern is also common in Latin piano improvisation, from which it was presumably adopted as part of the improvisational techniques of the violin. That is, both instruments, piano and violin, were part of the *charanga* ensemble; however, the Latin piano improvisation style evolved in this *danzón*-based context before the violin improvisation style emerged (cf. Manuel 1998, 131). According to Tero Toivanen (b. 1957), a Finnish *tres* and bass player, *tres* improvisation, in turn, had an impact on Latin piano improvisation style in the way of using double octaves (TT 27072007). This viewpoint makes sense, since octaves are produced automatically in *tres* because of its octave string pairs. Additionally, *tres*'s improvisation style had already evolved in the context of *son* music in the decades before the piano was added to *son* ensembles. Furthermore, *charanga* line-ups – in the context of which improvisation styles of piano, violin and flute evolved – received a great deal of influences from *son* music.

During those *montuno* sections that proceed in C major or A minor, it is common for violinists to use several melodic ideas based on double stops with one open string. In improvisations based on A minor (Group 2), in particular, the open E string (E5) – which is also the dominant – is stressed in all improvisations. Furthermore, E5 is the most commonly used pitch in four improvisations out of five, although it does not always appear as the open string and in the context of double stops. On the other hand, it is interesting that in solos based on D major or D minor, the use of the fifth degree of the scale, A, is more popular in the upper (A5) than in the lower (A4) octave, although A4 is the open string. This phenomenon is partly explained by the importance of making the solo sound louder by using some particular octave ranges when soloing (this topic is discussed further later in this chapter).

One can approach the importance of the open strings during double stops and, on the other hand, the importance of the use of double stops in this particular improvisation culture, by studying how the violinists exploit the pitches G3, D4, A4 and E5, which are also open strings. Annex 17 illustrates the number of the mentioned pitches appearing in improvisations and when they appear as part of double stops in all improvisations within data (see Annex 17).

As one can see, there are differences both between violinists and between groups. For example, within the improvisations of Group 1, the pitch E5, the third degree of the scale, has the second highest mean among the pitches, but the coefficient of variation is also quite high (41%; see Annex 9). This is partly explained by the improvisations of Edel Lazága Ortega. Although E5 is quite popular among all of the solos of the group, it is emphasized in Lazága Ortega's improvisations. In three of his solos out of four, E5 is the most used pitch event. For example, in his solo during a *montuno* section of Babalú Ayé (23112007), it covers 24.5% of the total number of pitch events used during a solo. In his improvisations during *montuno* sections of Babalú Ayé, Lazága Ortega typically uses a temporally long melodic surface model, based on the classic Afro-Cuban jazz theme *Manteca*,[154] which includes a great deal of repetition of the open E string (Note example 40).

Note example 40. Edel Lazága Ortega playing a melodic quotation based on a phrase played by the brass section in *Manteca* during a *montuno* section of Babalú Ayé, performed on 23 November 2007.

At the beginning of my studies I copied this rhythmic-melodic model for my personal use, as it got stuck in my mind because of its length and because I liked the timbre of those repeated dissonant intervals it contains (D5-E5, Eb5-E5). Actually, the way of using dissonant intervals when playing double stops is quite common in solos of the violinists representing the younger generation. Different kinds of soft dissonant intervals (e.g. major seconds or minor sevenths) can also be discovered in Miguel Barbón's improvisations and in the traditional *típico* style in general. These

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[154] *Manteca* was composed by Dizzy Gillespie (1917–1993), Chano Pozo (1915–1948) and Gil Fuller (1920–1994) in 1947.

might include, for example, moments when a violinist plays the open A string and G4 on the D string at the same time over the dominant seventh chord of the key (in this case, in D major or D minor). However, the violinists of this study representing the younger generation seem to favour sharp dissonant intervals, such as a tritone or minor second. During these double stops the other pitch is often produced by playing the open string. This feature is also strongly related to the idea of using blues scale passages during a solo.

In addition to the solos of Lazága Ortega, the use of the open A and E strings during double stops is also stressed in García González's and Cabarrogas Fernández's (01032010) improvisations. They appear, for example, during the metric patterns that are based on ternary phrasing of binary subdivision. In these improvisations the open string A4 is used more.

In the improvisations of Group 5 (D major) the pitches A4 and E5 are among the three most used pitches in every improvisation (see Annex 16). When appearing as a part of double stops in improvisations of Cabarrogas Fernández and Ríos Chassagne, they are often exploited during the syncopated patterns. In Hernández Mora's improvisation, the number of open strings used in double stops is emphasized. However, unlike Cabarrogas Fernández and Ríos Chassagne, Hernández Mora does not use syncopation in these contexts but plays rhythmic passages that are based only on repetition of sixteenth notes. This kind of rhythmic approach is easy to implement on the violin. For example, a violinist can repeat a single pitch (e.g. AV: Ochún, b. 15–16), two different pitches (e.g. RGG: *La última noche que pasé contigo*, b. 15–16), or a double stop, in which case at least one of the pitches is produced by the open string (e.g. RGG: Babalú Ayé, b. 8–9).

When studying the improvisations proceeding in minor keys, one can see that double stops that include at least one open string are mainly exploited within the solos of Group 2 that are based on A minor. This is not surprising, since the rhythmic-melodic ideas based on one open string, tonic (A) or dominant (E) of the key, are technically easy to carry out with the violin in this key. In each improvisation of Group 2, the percentage of occurrence of E5 in relation to other pitches within the improvisation is alike: the group-specific coefficient of variation of E5 is 13.5%. However, studying how often E5 appears as an open string and as part of a double stop shows that there are differences between the improvisations. In Figure 19, one can see on the right (darker) side of each bar pair the number of occurrences of the pitches E5, A4 and D4 in five improvisations of Group 2 (the G3 is not used in these improvisations). The left (lighter) side of each pair shows how many times these pitches appear during double stops as an open string. The initials of the violinist are marked along the x-axis.
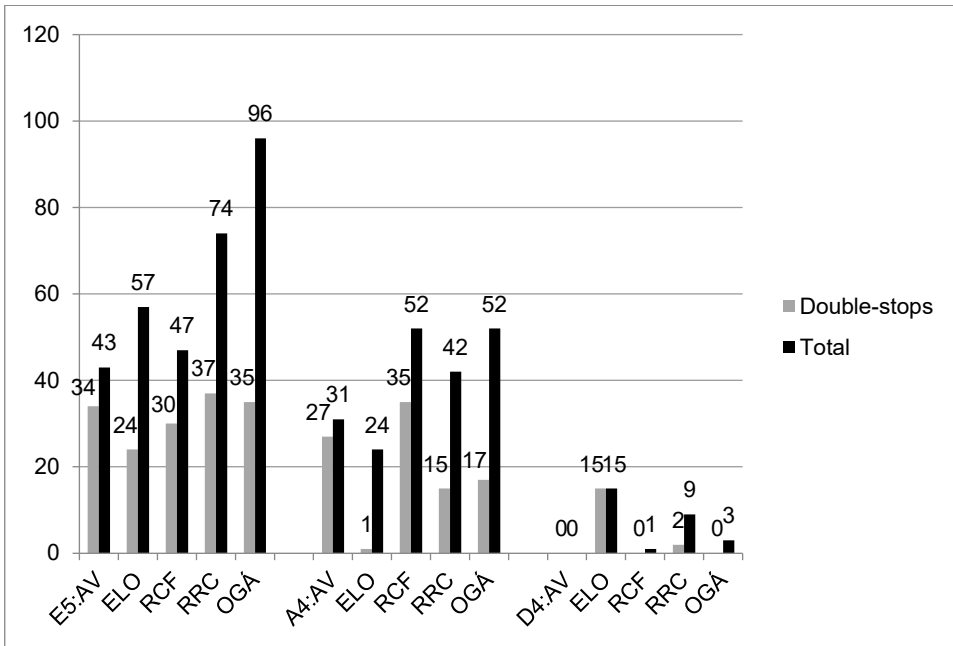
Figure 19. Number of pitches E5, A4 and D4 within Group 2: total and as part of double stops.

Alejandro Vistel's improvisation shows a good example of how a 'reversible' *guajeo* pattern – which is based on the use of the open string and precedes the improvisation – seems to function as the rhythmic-melodic idea on which Vistel begins to develop his improvisation. At the beginning of the improvisation (b. 1–5), he plays the melody on the A string at the same time with the open E string. After this, the melodic line moves to a higher octave and proceeds on the E string at the same time with the open A string (b. 6–9), until Vistel proceeds to another musical idea, syncopated chain. Ronny Cabarrogas Fernández, on the other hand, exploits open A and E strings in melodic fragments, during which he emphasizes dissonant intervals (b. 7–8). Furthermore, he uses double stops when drawing on syncopated chains (b. 9–11) and building blocks (b. 18, 29), and also when playing the metric patterns that are based on ternary phrasing of binary subdivision (b. 18–21). Raúl Ríos Chassagne and Omar Nilo González Álvarez approach these kinds of metric patterns in the same manner (RRC b. 13–15; OGÁ b. 29–32). Additionally, they use open strings when playing double stops as part of *guajeo* patterns. In the context of this study, these two improvisations are the only ones where the responsorial interaction between the violin and the *coro* (during which the violinist plays a *guajeo* pattern) alternates within the improvisation, and where the *guajeo* patterns as such are played in the middle of the solo. In Edel Lazága Ortega's improvisation the use of the open E string in double stops is also emphasized during the *guajeo* pattern at

the end of the improvisation. Additionally, unlike to most of the violinists within the group, Lazága Ortega uses the pitch D4 when playing double stops.

In Felix Parreño's improvisation (*Las dos aguas*), which proceeds in A minor but which is not included in Group 2, the use of the open A and E strings is emphasized as well. This is the result of the final part of the improvisation, which proceeds in sixteenth notes that are based on the repetition of the open strings. This particular passage could be considered a good example of a spontaneous joint action between the violinist and the accordionist, during which the coordination of behaviour leads to the achievement of a common goal (cf. Staveley 2020, 103). Normally, the violinist leads the improvisation to the following *coro* section. However, when Parreño starts playing a rhythmic pattern based on open strings, the accordionist almost immediately – after one bar – begins to play the melody of *El huerfanito*, a *coro* that is often presented during these events. It seems that Parreño notices the goal of the accordionist and keeps playing the accompanying pattern until the *coro* begins. However, one cannot be sure whether this is a previously arranged musical solution between the musicians.

The manner of using open strings is not restricted only to these kinds of rhythmic-melodic models and ideas mentioned above. If possible within the key, the open strings also simplify the fingering and thereby give room for creativity. As González Álvarez put it: 'There are keys that [--] open strings help us. You play with the open strings, with the changes of (finger) positions and with the idea that comes to your mind at that moment.' (OGÁ 18052009)[155] An example of this kind of approach, in which the open strings are exploited in the course of performance, is Eduar Marzán Betancourt's solo during a *montuno* section of Babalú Ayé.

Note example 41.   Eduar Marzán Betancourt using open strings in his improvisation during a *montuno* section of Babalú Ayé, played on 22 October 2007.

The improvisations included in Group 4, the ones that are based on C minor, differ from the rest of the groups in certain ways. First of all, the most used pitch in each improvisation is G5. When comparing the improvisations with each other, the coefficient of variation of this pitch is only 5.4% (see Annex 12). Additionally, the key restricts the use of the open A and E strings; however, Cabarrogas Fernández

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[155]   'Hay tonalidades que [--] nos ayuda las cuerdas al aire. Tu juegas con las cuerdas al aire, con cambios de posición y con la idea que te brinda a la mente en ese momento.'

uses the open E string to some extent, a total of six times. It is always played over the accompanying C minor chord, and on five occasions out of six, it is played during a double stop: once simultaneously with Eb5 and four times simultaneously with C5. These kinds of mixed triads and sharp dissonants differ from the traditional *típico* style, as Cabarrogas Fernández implies in his interview quotation when referring to the differences between the generations (see the introduction of Chapter 5). It is possible to use the open G and D strings when playing in C minor, for sure, but, as illustrated in Annexes 9–15, improvisations mainly proceed on the A and E strings and in the middle register. I would assume that a more challenging fingering when playing in C minor, together with an inability to use open strings in the same way as in some technically easier keys, has at least some impact on the manner in which violinists build their solos around the same central pitches. In addition to a challenging key, these solos are played during the fastest *montuno* sections of this study. The tempo at the basis of these improvisations is approximately 120 beats per minute. I would further assume that this, at least partly, also limits creativity and causes violinists to resort to using familiar solutions, such as the manner of stressing the fifth degree of a scale.

As mentioned above, improvisations are mainly performed on the A and E strings. One of the reasons for this approach is that there is general background noise during the event. Thus, it is important to make a solo sound louder, which is more difficult when playing in the lower register. This goal is partly achieved when using the upper strings, A and E. Another reason to use the middle register particularly rather than the higher register has to do with the fingering and tuning. Violinists normally use both first and third positions when soloing. This is technically easier compared to the higher positions used on the E string, in which the pitches do not necessarily sound clear. Additionally, the use of different registers can be seen as an effect to create contrasts. 'Almost everyone improvises in the high range. [--] We do it in the high range, on the A and E [strings], because it is where it is heard loudest. [--] And it is also easier that things come out clearer.' (JDM 14052009)[156]

According to the general noise that there is [--] in these kinds of feasts for the saints, because people are talking. It is not the same when you are in a theatre giving a concert that the public is listening to. So one has to adapt in which register and in which octave one can carry out a particular improvisation that can be heard. [--] [In the middle register] it is easier, technically less complicated and the sound is brighter. When you are playing things that are too sharp, you

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[156] 'Casi todo el mundo improvisa en la zona aguda [--] Nosotros lo hacemos en la parte aguda, en la y en mi, porque es donde más alto se oye. [--] Y las cosas también es más fácil que salgan más claras.'

have to be careful with the tuning. [--] But it is better to work in the second octave, not in the first or the third [octaves; 4th and 6th octaves according to scientific pitch notation]. The first and third is to look for contrasts. The rest is in the middle register. (OGÁ 07012006)[157]

As González Álvarez implies, people do not primarily attend Violín a Ochún events in order to be able to listen to improvisations – as would be the case, for example, at a jazz concert. On the contrary, improvised passages are embedded as part of *montuno* sections, which the audience follows in different ways. Although musicians appreciate the audience listening to their solos, sometimes, because of the noise, the improviser has to find ways (e.g. through the higher octave ranges) to make a solo sound louder. However, this does not mean that the audience would not be aware of the proceeding of a solo. On the contrary, there is a continuous interactive process – the intentional goal-directed joint action (cf. Palmer and Zamm 2017, qtd. in Staveley 2020, 101) – between the musicians and the audience, in which the role of the improvisation is to lead a *montuno* to a collective *coro* section.

In summary, the dominant of the key is the most used pitch in more than half of the improvisations of this study. The improvisations mainly proceed in violin-friendly keys, in which case some pitches (e.g. A and E) can also be used as open strings during double stops in the fourth and fifth octaves, where the improvisations primarily proceed. In the case of individual improvisations within the groups based on the same key, the use of pitches is differently distributed between the improvisations. However, in the case of more challenging C minor, the percentage of the occurrence of G5 – the most used pitch in each improvisation of the group – is alike between improvisations when comparing its prevalence in relation to other pitches appearing within individual solos.

5.1.2 Pitch Content During Performance

Although the manner of using certain pitches – such as the fifth degree of a scale – is common to all violinists, there are also pitch-related differences between

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[157] 'De acuerdo de la bulla general que haya [--] en este tipo de fiestas santorales, porque la gente atiende a conversar. No es lo mismo cuando estas en un teatro dando un concierto que el público está escuchando. Entonces uno tiene que adecuar en que registro, en que octava puede hacer una determinada improvisación que se puede escuchar. [--] [En la segunda octava] es más fácil, menos complicación técnica y más brillante el sonido. Ya cuando estas tocando las cosas que están demasiada agudas, hay que tener cuidado con la afinación. [--] Pero es mejor trabajar en la segunda octava, ni en la primera o la tercera. La primera y tercera es para buscar contrastes. Lo de más está en registro central.'

improvisations. One of the differences has to do with octave ranges and how extensively a violinist exploits the different pitches of a chromatic scale in the course of performance. Annexes 9–15, 16 (tessituras) and 18 (quantity of different pitches used in improvisations) show how many different pitches pertaining to the chromatic scale in different octave ranges are used in each improvisation of this study.

There are 27 improvisations out of 40, in which different pitches chromatically fill – in some octave range – either the upper tetrachord or the lower pentachord of the diatonic scale indicating the key. Figures 20 and 21 show both the number of bars and the number of different pitches used in each improvisation within the data. The initials next to the dots refer to the performer of the improvisation.
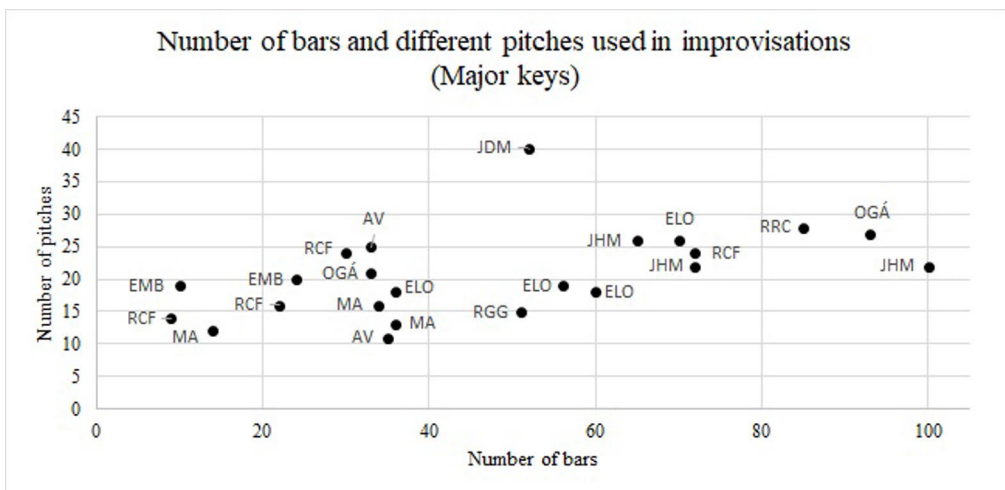
Figure 20.   Number of bars and different pitches used in improvisations (major keys).
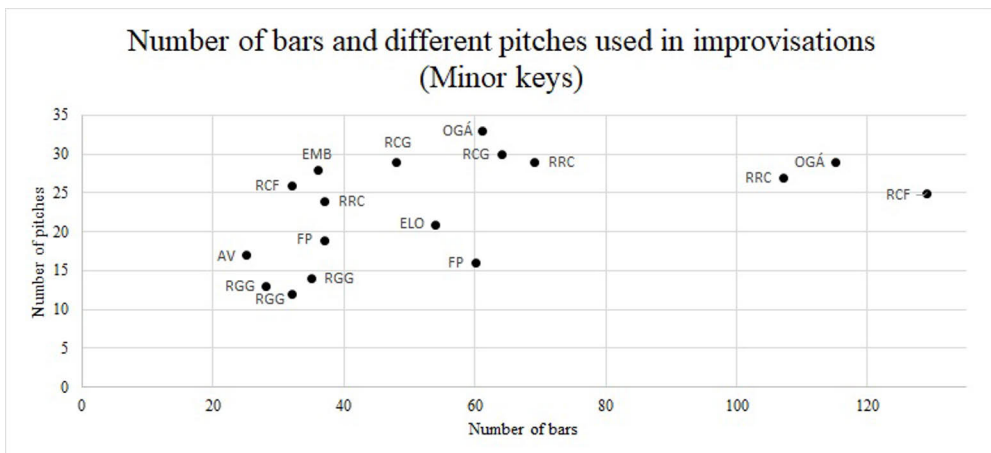
Figure 21.   Number of bars and different pitches used in improvisations (minor keys).

The length of a solo does not directly correlate with the number of different pitches of a chromatic scale used during a solo. Some of the violinists use different pitches and octave ranges more extensively than others, and some of the violinists use the same melodic material from one improvisation to another (cf. Annexes 9–15). Jorge Hernández Mora, for example, uses a note material representing 22 different pitches in both of his solos of *Forever and Ever* (D major) from February 2008 and February 2010, although one of the solos is 30 bars longer than the other. Edel Lazága Ortega, in turn, exploits melodic material that represents 18 different pitches in two improvisations, and 19 pitches in one, during a *montuno* section of Babalú Ayé (C major), even though the number of bars varies from 36 to 60 bars depending on the solo. This is partly explained by the implementation of identical melodic surface models that characterize his improvisations during the *montuno* sections of the *plegaria* of this particular saint.

The pitch material is broader in solos proceeding in minor keys. Obviously, one of the reasons is the possibility of using different minor scales during improvisation. However, there are also differences between violinists. Some of the violinists from the older generation exploit the pitch material in a more limited way, regardless of whether they are improvising in major or minor keys. According to Ronny Cabarrogas Fernández, the improvisations of the violinists representing the traditional *típico* style are more elementary. One central feature regarding the aesthetics of the *típico* style includes the practice of avoiding chromaticism (Murphy 1991, 121–122). In this sense, these improvisations also echo a traditional flute improvisation in *charanga* style, in which solos are diatonic and rarely include any use of notes outside the key (Valiente 2015, 112; cf. Miller 2003, 22).

In order to study the pitch-related differences between the improvisations of violinists representing different generations, I took a closer look at Groups 1 (C major) and 2 (A minor), because they encompass the largest number of improvisations and because both groups include violinists representing both the younger and older generations. As Annex 9 (C major) illustrates, Mario Argudin and René García González use in their three solos the melodic material that represents 12, 13 and 15 different pitches in fourth, fifth and sixth octaves. On the other hand, the violinists representing the younger generation use the tonal possibilities more extensively, and the relation between the pitches appearing in the melodic line and the accompanying chord progression can also be interpreted as extended chords (Note example 42). I would say that in these contexts the violinist approaches the accompanying chord progression as a looser background model in comparison to those improvisations that are more strictly based on the pitches of the instant chords and a diatonic scale indicating the key.

Note example 42.   Melodic line based on extended chords and a blue note during a *montuno* section of Babalú Ayé, played by Ronny Cabarrogas Fernándes on 1 March 2010.

The exception among all violinists is Jorge Denis Molir, the second youngest violinist in this study, whose note material represents 40 different pitches in third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh octaves. He also chromatically fills the scales from C5 and C6 and the upper tetrachord in the fourth octave. In addition to Jorge Denis Molir, Ronny Cabarrogas Fernández, Eduar Marzán Betancourt and Edel Lazága Ortega seem to emphasize a way of using pitches in a more extensive manner in some specific octave ranges in some particular solos. For example, Lazága Ortega, in three solos out of four, improvises within the same octave ranges as Argudin and García González, but uses different pitches more extensively by chromatically filling either the upper tetrachord in the fourth and fifth octaves or the lower pentachord in the fifth octave.

All violinists included in Group 1 use the first and third finger positions in these solos. However, as an exception, Jorge Denis Molir also uses higher positions when playing on the E string. The highest pitch among the solos of this group is either D6 or E6 (excluding the solo of Denis Molir, who takes advantage of the higher octave ranges as well). When playing in third position on the E string, the first finger is on A5, which means that the fourth finger in this position falls on D6. However, it is a common technique for violinists to stretch their fourth finger to E6 in order to produce a natural harmonic.

When comparing the improvisations of Group 2 with each other, one can see that two of the violinists representing the older generation, González Álvarez and Ríos Chassagne, use a wider range of different pitches compared to other violinists (OGÁ uses 33 and RRC 29 different pitches). The exploitation of all the notes of the chromatic scale is most apparent in González Álvarez's solo. However, all violinists except Alejandro Vistel take advantage of the chromatic scale in some way and use the notes that fill the upper tetrachord of the A minor mode in the fifth octave. Vistel's improvisation in this group differs from other improvisations in terms of the more limited pitch content and higher octave ranges he uses. It is also possible to study García González's improvisation during a *montuno* section of *La última noche que pasé contigo*, which proceeds in A minor but is not part of Group 2, and compare it with the improvisation of González Álvarez, another violinist who represents the older generation. When comparing the pitch-related features appearing in the improvisations of García González and González Álvarez with each other, one can

see that there are a great many differences. The main reason behind this – obviously – has to do with their musical training.

After formal musical education was institutionalized in Cuba after the revolution of 1959, González Álvarez worked in the 1970s on the commission that evaluated musicians at a national level. At the moment he is working as a concertmaster of the Orchestra of the Radio and the Television of Cuba (Orquesta de la Radio y la Televisión de Cuba). Additionally, as mentioned above, he has been working in different symphony orchestras, *charanga* groups and smaller musical ensembles. Thus, his background, as well as his professional and technical skills as a musician, differs from García González, who – after the institutional renovations – had the opportunity to graduate with a degree, allowing him to work in *charanga* ensembles.

> [--] I graduated from the Escuela de Superación [de Músicos] Profesionales, but not like these guys, like Ronny [Cabarrogas Fernández]. I have not studied the violin. It is not the same. I was from the street, self-taught. [--] I was self-taught, I was not from an academy. (RGG 09052009)[158]

It is obvious that a deeper musical education, greater technical knowledge, and wide and long-term work experience in both classical and popular music groups have influenced the way some of the older violinists – such as González Álvarez, Ríos Chassagne and Cortez García – approach improvisation. Their improvisations mainly proceed inside the framework of the key, but they explore and use the pitch-related possibilities in this context more extensively than some other older violinists.

Although some of the violinists, despite the generation they represent, use an extensive range of pitches in their solos, there is one central feature that emphasizes the difference in improvisation styles between the younger and older generations. This is the manner of using the blues scale, a common feature in blues, jazz, and rock, in which the flat fifth degree – the so-called blue note – is added to the minor pentatonic scale. Raúl Ríos Chassagne, for example, when improvising in A minor (Annex 10), exploits the material that contains 29 different pitches. However, he never uses Eb, the flat fifth degree of a scale. The same feature, the manner of avoiding the blue note, is also present in three other solos played by him. Ríos Chassagne refers to the generational difference concerning the influences at the basis of improvisation: '[--] since they [the youngsters] start at [music] school, they have an obsession with jazz, which is incredible music. We [the older generation] are more

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[158]   'Yo me gradué en la Escuela de Superación Profesionales, pero no como esta gente, como Ronny. Que yo no he estudiado el violín. No es lo mismo. Yo era de la calle, particular. [--] Yo era particular, no era de una academia.'

traditional.' (RRC 20052009)[159] The solos performed by González Álvarez are different in this sense and bring them closer to the solos played by the violinists representing the younger generation, who use blues scales as a central possibility when improvising.

5.2   Rhythmic-Melodic Surface Models

5.2.1   Jazzy Features as Part of Improvisation

Different features connected to blues, such as blues scales, slides, and particular licks and patterns, have been an important part of jazz violin improvisation from the beginning of the jazz violin tradition. Some of the most important developers of this improvisation style were the pioneers of swing-style violin improvisation: Joe Venuti (1903–1978), Stéphane Grappelli (1908–1997) and Eddie South (1904–1962). They played at the same time that Miguel Barbón (1920–1992) was creating his personal violin improvisation style – nowadays, largely associated with the *típico* style – in Havana in the 1940s. Barbón's improvisation style established the framework for *charanga*-based violin improvisation. Although it has served as a pattern for violinists playing *charanga* music to this day, violinists have also absorbed influences from outside the *típico* style.

Both Omar Nilo González Álvarez and Carlos Del Puerto emphasize the significance of the Uruguayan violinist Federico Britos (b. 1939) when approaching the evolution of violin improvisation in Cuba after Barbón's influence.

> I would say that there are two violinists who set the guideline in Cuba. The first one is Brindis [nickname of Miguel Barbón], an excellent violinist who, independently of the ideas he created, used many things from the symphonic repertoire with his improvisations. [--] And the second one is Britos, in the way of saying things in jazz, the new ways of saying Cuban music. He already came with another conception. (OGÁ 18052009)[160]

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[159]   '[--] ya desde que puntan en la escuela, tienen obsesión con el jazz, que es una música increíble. Nosotros somos más tradicionales.'

[160]   'Yo diría que hay dos violinistas que son los que marcan una pauta en Cuba. El primero Brindis, excelente violinista que independientemente de las ideas que creaba, empleaba muchas cosas del repertorio sinfónico con sus improvisaciones. [--] Y el segundo Britos, ya a partir de la forma de decir en jazz, las nuevas formas decir la música cubana. Él ya venía con otra concepción.'

Britos was a very big influence. Not just for the violinists, but for everyone. He was a musician who played with everyone, with Paquíto, Carlos Emilio, with all of us. In other words, if someone had to talk about the violin, to play popular music...because what happened with the *típico* violinists, they were a world apart. I mean, until Dagoberto [González] and those guys, I did not know any Cuban violinist representing *charanga*, who would ever go to any *descarga* [jam session] out of *típico* music. [--] There was a huge gap between the violinists. There were the ones who played classical or the ones who played popular. There was not a crossover, something in the middle. And in the case of Britos, he was the element who was there in the middle. (CdP 31032015)[161]

Federico Britos – who used to play jazz among other things in his home country – was hired together with some Uruguayan and Argentinean teachers to play in the symphony orchestra of Havana at the beginning of the 1960s. Britos stayed in Havana till 1974. During this time he played jazz, *bossanova*, *samba* and *charanga* together with the Cuban frontline musicians. He was also one of the founders of Los Amigos,[162] an ensemble that was formed in Havana in 1958.[163]

Those guys set a pattern in Cuban music and jazz. Starting from these people, Chucho Valdés etc., one can see a transformation in Cuba. And in the case of violin improvisation, the change begins from Federico Britos. A bit of Brindis, but more of jazz, more of everything, there is a creative amplitude. I tell you that

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[161] 'Britos fue una influencia muy grande. No solamente para los violinistas, para todo el mundo. Él era un músico que tocaba con todos, con Paquito, Carlos Emilio, todos nosotros. O sea, si alguien tenía que hablar de violín, para tocar la música popular...porque qué es lo que pasa que los violinistas de las típicas, eso era un mundo aparte. O sea, hasta Dagoberto y esa gente yo no conocí ningún violinista cubano de la cosa de charanga que fuera nunca a ninguna cosa de descarga, ya que no fuera una cosa de la música típica. [--] Entre los violinistas había una laguna grande. Allí estaban los clásicos o los populares. No había un crossover, algo en el medio allí. Y en ese caso de Britos fue que era el elemento que estaba allá en el medio.'

[162] The original members of Los Amigos were Federico Britos (violin), Cachao López (bass), Tata Güines (*tumbadora*), Guillermo Barreto (*pailas* and drums) and Frank Emilio (piano), who was later replaced by Chucho Valdés.

[163] I could not find any written information concerning Federico Britos and his stay in Havana. This YouTube-reference contains a three-part document about his life in Cuba (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tpAFDj40e24; accessed 13 March 2022).

at this moment there are a great deal of youngsters who improvise well but already with that conception. (OGÁ 18052009)[164]

As a result of foreign musicians living in Cuba, the local musicians also got a better idea of different musical phenomena outside the island under the embargo. This, in turn, naturally influenced musical creation in Cuba. As Carlos Del Puerto put it:

All those who were violinists of this generation [of Dagoberto González], more towards here, were violinists who were caught by the total embargo, where they did not see anyone, the discs did not come from anywhere, so of course Britos and those people had a little more access because they were foreigners. And there was always a group of Uruguayans, Argentines, Chileans and those people who lived in Cuba at the time and who had access to discs. So, of course these people were more updated. They knew the things and tendencies of the violinists more from here, more direct influences and discs. (CdP 31032015)[165]

Today this situation has changed and the musicians have more possibilities to acquire, for example, jazz music. Although music stores in Havana keep selling mostly Cuban music, the internet, to which Cubans have recently had partial access, has provided a greater ability to reach different kinds of music, as González Álvarez also points out. When I was collecting my research material, the violinists – especially the younger ones – told me they have been influenced musically by both Grappelli and the violinists representing the younger generations. They mentioned particularly jazz violinists Jean-Luc Ponty (b. 1942) and Didier Lockwood (b. 1956), but also the violinists Samvel Yervinyan (b. 1966) and Mary Simpson from the ensemble of Yanni (Yiannis Chryssomallis, b. 1954), who mixes different music genres in his art. Regarding the older generation of violinists, González Álvarez was

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[164] 'Esa gente marcaron una pauta en la música cubana y en el jazz. A partir de esta gente, Chucho Valdés etc., que se empieza a ver una transformación en Cuba. Y en el caso de la improvisación de violín, a partir de Federico Britos, que empieza el cambio. Un poco de Brindis, pero más de jazz, más de todo, hay una amplitud creativa. Te digo que en este momento hay una cantidad de los jóvenes que improvisan bien pero ya con esa concepción.'

[165] 'Todos los que fueron violinistas de esta generación, ya más para acá, fueron violinistas que les cogieron el bloqueo total, donde no veían a nadie, los discos no llegaban de ningún lado, entonces por supuesto primero Britos y esta gente tenían un poco más acceso porque eran extranjeros. Y siempre había un grupo de uruguayos, argentinos, chilenos y esa gente que vivían en aquel momento en Cuba y que tenían el acceso a los discos. Entonces por supuesto esta gente era más actualizada. Conocían las cosas y tendencias de los violinistas más de acá, influencias más directas y los discos.'

the only one who mentioned Grappelli and Ponty when referring to the violinists who have influenced his personal improvisation style. According to González Álvarez, he was obliged to study improvisation when he started working in a trio dedicated to playing Cuban, Latin American, international and jazz music.

> I inclined to listen to Stéphane Grappelli, Django Reinhardt, Jean-Luc Ponty, and began to open the path of that horizon [of improvisation]. Always for the violinists of my generation – for those who improvised – the model to follow was Brindis. (OGÁ 18052009.)[166]

Perhaps the most important melodic feature dividing improvisations of the violinists playing in the events dedicated to Ochún is – as mentioned above – the way they use the blue notes when soloing. Peter van der Merwe (1992, 119) defines the blue note as follows:

> [--] the blue notes can mean many things. One quality they all have in common, however, is that they are flatter than one would expect, classically speaking. But this flatness may take several forms. On the one hand, it may be a microtonal affair of a quarter-tone or so. Here one may speak of neutral intervals, neither major nor minor. On the other hand, the flattening may be a full semitone – as it must be, of course, on keyboard instruments. It may involve a glide, either upward or downward. Again, this may be a microtonal, almost imperceptible affair, or it may be a slur between notes a semitone apart, so that there is actually not one blue note but two.

Using blues scales during improvisation is a common feature for all younger violinists participating in this study. However, these scales are used almost exclusively during *montuno* sections based on C major and A minor. The violinists mostly use the hexatonic A minor blues scale, which consists of the minor pentatonic scale plus the flat fifth degree, or the hexatonic C major blues scale, which consists of the major pentatonic scale plus the flat third degree. Both these scales contain exactly the same pitches and they both can be played over the basic *montuno* chord progression based on C major and A minor.

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[166]   'Me incliné a escuchar a Stéphane Grappelli, a Django Reinhard, a Jean-Luc Ponty, y es que empiezo a abrirme el camino de ese horizonte. Siempre para los violinistas de mi generación, para los que hacían improvisación, el modelo de seguir era Brindis.'

Note example 43.   Hexatonic A minor blues scale and hexatonic C major blues scale.

It is interesting that during improvisations based on the other keys, violinists quite rarely make use of blues scales – except for some sparse short fragments based on them – although they do use pentatonic scales when improvising in other keys. One of the reasons for this is certainly that the manner of using blues scales is more common among the solos of the violinists representing the younger generation. They mainly improvise in C major and A minor (in eleven improvisations out of eighteen).

At this point I return to Annex 9. When studying the pitch Eb (number 3 in the annex), one can notice that every violinist except Mario Argudin uses it when improvising. It is most commonly played in the fifth octave. Annexes 19 and 20 show in which kinds of contexts the violinists – in addition to the '*Manteca* lick' played by Lazága Ortega in Note example 40 (see section 5.1.1) – use this pitch appearing in the fifth octave in the context of the blues scale. On the left side of the annexes, one can see the initials of the violinist and above the staff the date the solo was performed and the bars during which the phrase was played.

Different observations can be made on the basis of these examples. As one can notice, the melodic contour of these phrases is quite alike. They are mainly carried out in the first position, and in most cases Eb is achieved by an upward movement, either directly from A4 or via C5 and D5 (pitches pertaining in C major and A minor blues scales), after which a melodic line returns back to the open A string through the same pitches. When thinking about the fingering, musicians find this kind of melodic fragment easy to play by using the A string and the first position. The flat fifth note is also related to the accent: in addition to appearing in a contour pivot point, it is – in most note examples – temporally longer than the note preceding it. The accentual effect can also be seen in an interesting way in Marzán Betancourt's body language when he is improvising during a *montuno* section of Babalú Ayé (22102007, bars 13–15): every time he plays Eb5, he raises his shoulders.

An example outside of Annexes 9–15 is a solo that González Álvarez played during a *montuno* section of *Misericordia*, based on C major. This passage is a good example of how the violinist uses shorter syncopated melodic fragments that alternate only between pentatonic and blues scales. It is also interesting to follow the manner in which Mario Guemez Lay accompanies the improvisation. It differs completely from the style of other guitarists performing at these events. The accompaniment starts with a C-F-G-C chord progression, but suddenly Guemez Lay

makes a change in a chord progression and starts playing a chord cycle based on A-Dm-G-C. He also brings out the bass line strongly in his playing (Note example 44).

Note example 44. Omar Nilo González Álvarez leaning on C major pentatonic scale and C major blues scale when improvising during a *montuno* section of *Misericordia* on 9 October 2007.

> Mayito [Mario Guemez Lay] puts too many chords at times. It is better to play traditional in this context. Mayito studied guitar, he is a teacher. [--] He puts a hell of a lot of chords and sometimes he forces you [--] to have to go with the harmony he is playing at that moment. What happens is that sometimes he plays chords that are fast passing chords and they fit well. (OGÁ 08112022)[167]

In this example, however, González Álvarez does not pay much attention to the sharpened C of the secondary dominant in the bass line. He keeps playing the melodic idea based on the C pentatonic scale and follows the original chord progression, playing the pitch C. On the other hand, neither does he play C at the same time Guemez Lay plays the leading tone to the D minor chord when breaking

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[167] 'Mayito pone demasiado acordes a veces, mejor tocar tradicional en este contexto. Mayito estudio guitarra, es un maestro. [--] Él pone una cantidad de acordes de carajo y a veces lo obliga a uno a tener que irse con la armonía que él está poniendo en ese momento. Lo que pasa que a veces sucede que a veces se pone acordes que son de pasos rapidos y quedan bien.'

the A major chord in the bass line. One can say that González Álvarez follows the original harmonic background model in this context. The interaction between these two musicians comes out in an interesting way as the improvisation proceeds. Although Guemez Lay continues playing the A-Dm-G-C chord progression, he is clearly aware of what González Álvarez is doing. For example, in bar 42, when González Álvarez repeats C6 several times in the melodic line, Guemez Lay does not play a sharpened C, but does so immediately during the next chord cycle, when the rhythmic-melodic idea González Álvarez presents is based on the repetition of A5. After this, González Álvarez expands the melodic idea by including the pitch C5 in double stops he is playing. Guemez Lay follows the idea and plays C as well.

One of the common features in the jazz tradition, which only appears in the improvisations of violinists representing the younger generation, is a manner of using short, anticipatory upward slides (Norgaard 2008, 21–22; Haigh 2010, 17). In these fast upward slides from the distance of microtone or semitone, the final pitch is achieved at the moment the note occurs rhythmically. Slides might occur when moving to or from the flattened note, indicating the blues scale, and in the context of other pitches as well.

Note example 45. Slide to A5 (b. 1 and 3), slide to Eb5 (b. 3), and slide to E4 (b. 4 and 5) during a *montuno* section of Babalú Ayé, played by Ronny Cabarrogas Fernández on 24 November 2007.

It is common that the slides appear in the context of some typical melodic surface model a violinist favours. Lazága Ortega, for example, repeats a similar kind of melodic model including slides in two of his solos during a *montuno* section of Babalú Ayé (Note example 46). This specific fragment is a typical blues lick in the sense that two pitches are repeated, and the first is achieved by using the slide (Haigh 2010, 76).[168] On the other hand, the repetitive syncopated rhythm underlines the

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[168] See also José 'Chombo' Silva's improvisation during *Para bailar y gozar* (Bardfeld 2001, 56).

Afro-Cuban and Latin improvisation traditions. This particular lick also appears in several improvisations of Dagoberto González.[169]

Note example 46. A typical lick Edel Lazága Ortega uses in his solos. This example is from a *montuno* section of Babalú Ayé, played on 27 February 2008.

In addition to Lazága Ortega, Jorge Denis Molir uses the same surface model in his solo during a *montuno* section of Babalú Ayé (09052009). At the time I recorded this improvisation, Denis Molir had recently started to play in Violín a Ochún events in the same line-up with Lazága Ortega. When I conducted the interview with him, he mentioned that he had borrowed musical ideas from Lazága Ortega. 'The guy who drags me more into this world of improvisation is Edel. [--] He taught me most of the principles of improvisation. [--] He has given me resources and stuff.' (JDM 14052009)[170] The manner of emphasizing the slides is a common feature in Denis Molir's solo in general. He uses this mannerism throughout the improvisation and in different contexts, whereas the other younger violinists exploit it more efficiently.

Alejandro Vistel, the youngest violinist in this study, who used to play with Cabarrogas Fernández in 2010, draws on slides mainly during one specific surface model he plays in his solos during the *montuno* sections of *Virgen de Regla* and the *plegaria* for Ochún (01032010). This particular lick, such as those phrases of Lazága Ortega and Denis Molir mentioned above, is based on syncopation as well. Vistel alternately plays the fifth degree of a scale, A4 and A5, and always achieves A5 with a slide. This kind of syncopated rhythm, based on octave leaps on the dominant, is also a common feature in flute improvisation representing a *típico* style (Miller 2003, 23). Actually, Vistel mentions Richard Egües, the ex-flautist of Orquesta Aragón, when referring to the process of constructing improvisation:

> Try to create an idea. Do not kill yourself for making 500 notes [during a bar]. Make a logical idea [--] that everything is ideas after ideas. [--] You started to embellish with an octave or an arpeggio, whatever, but the fundamental thing is

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169 See, for example, González's improvisations in *Tres Lindas Cubanas* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cbL9TdKyEG8 (0:27); https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJ3PwWmDL14 (3:30) (accessed 13March, 2022).

170 'A mí qué me mete más en este mundo de improvisación es Edel. [--] Y él es que me enseño la mayoría de los principios de improvisación. [--] Me ha dado recursos y cosas.'

the idea. Try to listen to [Orquesta] Aragón. Richard Egües improvises very well. (AV 26022010)[171]

However, the use of slides in these moments underlines the specific technical possibilities and affordances of the violin as an instrument.

In summary, one of the central features that expands a traditional approach to *típico* style improvisation is related to the manner of exploiting pitches. This is reflected in the use of broader pitch material, including a convention of exploiting blue notes. Younger violinists also use slides – which are not traditionally associated with the *típico* style – in various contexts. These mentioned features also appear in improvisations of Dagoberto González, a violinist, who – according to Cabarrogas Fernández – has been a pattern for the generation of younger *charanga* violinists.

5.2.2 Role of Scale Passages and Arpeggios in the Course of Performance

Melodic improvisation in Cuban popular music is based on chords. In addition to chord tones, melodic lines also include the use of non-chord tones and scale passages. As Jessica Valiente (2015, 112) brings up, *charanga* flute improvisation includes the opportunity to play scale-based diatonic passages without regarding the chord in the background at that moment, because the chord progression constantly returns to the tonic chord. Naturally, the same occurs in the violin improvisation during a *montuno* section of the song.

Sometimes scale passages can be used as a kind of musical effect in order to imitate the improvisation style of the piano, as Hernández Mora points out above (cf. section 3.6.2). However, violinists normally draw on scales, arpeggios and other kinds of musical exercises that are used to strengthen the technical basis, when proceeding from one idea to another in the course of performance (cf. Berliner 1994, 228). As González Álvarez and Ríos Chassagne put it: 'Scales are paths to follow to develop another idea' (OGÁ 07012006);[172] and 'If your mind goes blank, use the resources of scales, arpeggios or some kind of technical study to come up with something else' (RRC 26022008).[173] Thus, these techniques used during a solo

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[171] 'Trata de crear una idea. No te mates por hacer 500 notas. Haz una idea lógica [--] que todo sea ideas tras ideas. [--] Empezaste a adornar con octava o con un arpegio, lo que sea, pero lo fundamental es la idea. Trata de escuchar Aragón, que Richard Egües improvisa muy bien.'
[172] 'Escalas son caminos a seguir para desarrollar otra idea.'
[173] 'Si se le quedara la mente en blanco, utilice los recursos de escalas, arpegios o de algún tipo de estudio técnico para que le venga otra cosa.'

involve the idea of some sort of travelling function from one idea to another (Berliner 1994, 228), when the improviser needs to evolve a solo ahead.

When referring to scales, the informants of this study do not use the term *patrón* (pattern), which they normally use when referring to structures guiding the improvisation. Instead, practicing scales is central to mastering the harmonic foundation on which improvisation is built. González Álvarez brings up the role of scales at the basis of his playing:

> I study all the scales, both in major and in minor. That helps me a little more also in creation and to have a good harmonic base. Because a string player who is not used to [--] do it in every key [--] we commonly say that he is tied up, he is stuck, and the ideas do not emerge because of the harmonic field. His harmonic basis is very limited to work in keys including three or four flats. And much more in minor keys, because you have to be thinking about where you can play a minor scale or use the sounds in a harmonic or melodic minor scale. (OGÁ 18052009)[174]

A musical scale as such in the form of an abstract construction cannot be considered a structure containing different temporally organized properties – a feature that determines the in-time model. However, I would claim that sometimes a scale could be used as an independent in-time surface model as well. If a violinist, for example, repeats the identical scale-based passage that is formed on a certain kind of recurring melodic and rhythmic structure in several solos, it could be called the model they are using.

In addition to sometimes taking the form of some specific rhythmic-melodic lick, scale passages can also be approached – as mentioned above – by studying them as a kind of filling material between musical ideas. If observing, for example, scale passages encompassing at least the interval distance of a minor or major seventh, one can see that there are differences between violinists as to what extent they exploit scales during improvisations. Although all violinists use scales in their improvisations, these passages do not always cover the interval distance of seventh. These larger passages occur in 33 improvisations out of 40. For example, Lazága

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[174] 'Yo estudio todas las escalas, mayores y menores. Eso me ayuda un poco más también en un campo creativo y a tener una buena base armónica. Porque el instrumentista de cuerdas que no se habitúe [--] hacerlo en todas las tonalidades [--] nosotros decimos vulgarmente que está amarrado, está trancado, y no le surgen las ideas porque el campo armónico. Su base armónica está muy limitada ya trabajar con cuatro b moles, tres b moles. Y si son tonalidades menores, mucho más todavía porque tienes que estar pensando en qué lugar puedes hacer una escala menor o emplear los sonidos en una escala menor armónica o melódica.'

Ortega's four improvisations during a montuno section of Babalú Ayé do not contain any larger scale passages; rather, they are based on discrete licks connected with each other.

Figures 22 and 23 show the percentage of the prevalence of scales (including at least the interval distance of seventh) in improvisations in relation to the number of all the beats (quarter notes) within the improvisations based on major keys (Figure 22) and minor keys (Figure 23). To what extent the improvisation is covered by the scales in relation to the beats is shown as a percentage on the y-axis, and the initials of the violinist on the x-axis.
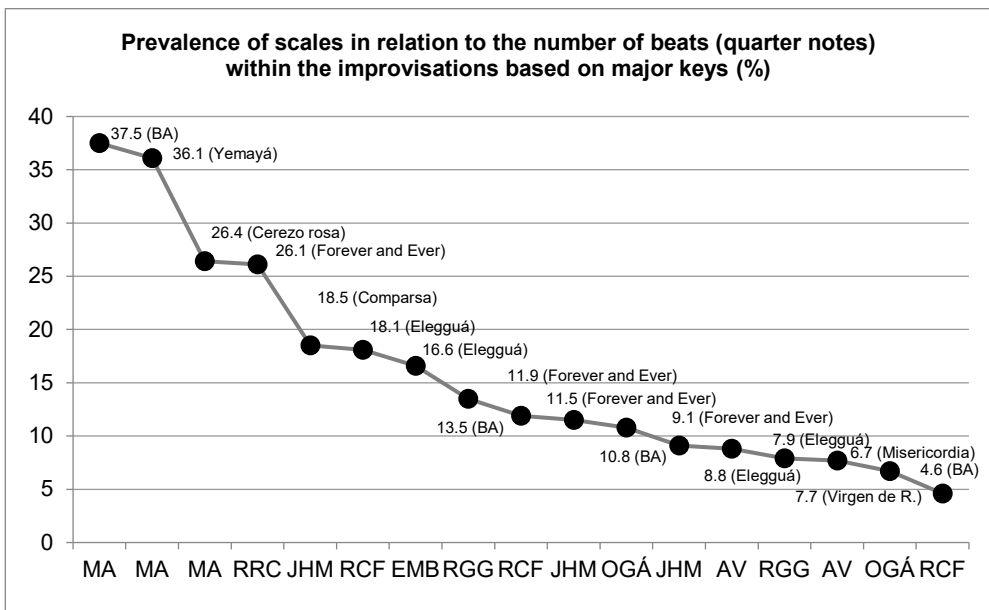
Figure 22. Prevalence of scales in relation to the number of beats (quarter notes) within the improvisations based on major keys.

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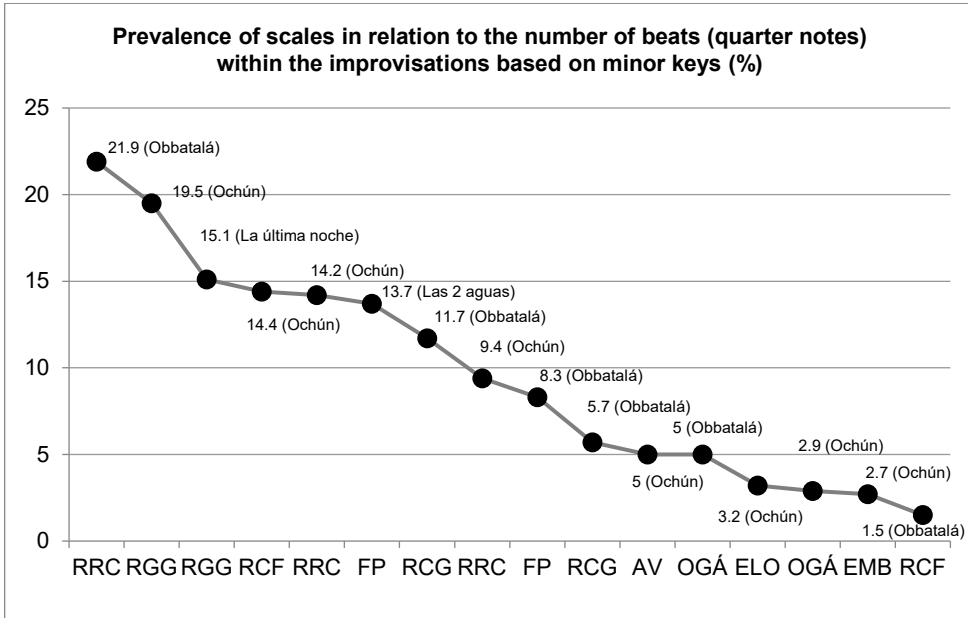
Figure 23. Prevalence of scales in relation to the number of beats (quarter notes) within the improvisations based on minor keys.

Figure 22 shows that Mario Argudin, in his three improvisations, exploits scales more than other violinists do. Playing scales is typical in Raúl Ríos Chassagne's improvisation of *Forever and Ever* as well. However, the central difference between Argudin's and Ríos Chassagne's improvisations is that the scales appearing in Argudin's solos proceed in a stepwise motion, which, on the other hand, is a common feature within the improvisations of this study as well. However, a stepwise motion comes out in particular in improvisations of those violinists who represent the older generation and use pitch-related possibilities in a more limited way compared to other violinists (Note example 47). Ríos Chassagne, on the other hand, exploits more neighbour tones, sequential scale passages and syncopated rhythm (binary phrasing of triplets and syncopated chain) when leaning on scale passages (Note example 48).

Note example 47.   Scale passage during a *montuno* section of Yemayá, played by Mario Argudin on 23 November 2007.

Note example 48.   Scale passage during a *montuno* section of *Forever and Ever*, played by Raúl Ríos Chassagne on 27 February 2008.

When studying the improvisations proceeding in minor keys, the solos of Group 4 (C minor) draw attention. In the context of minor keys, the use of scales is most typical in Ríos Chassagne's improvisation during a *montuno* section of Obbatalá, whereas scales are least used in Cabarrogas Fernández's improvisation during a *montuno* section of this saint. Although there are certain similarities between the improvisations of Group 4 (in each improvisation the percentage of occurrence of the most used pitch in relation to other pitches within the improvisation is similar, and syncopation is broadly used in each solo), the manner of using larger scale passages distinguishes the improvisations from each other. Cabarrogas Fernández uses scale passages in his improvisation as well, but they are shorter in terms of interval distance. All in all, larger scale passages are emphasized in the improvisations of violinists representing the older generation.

The improvisations of René García González – where scales are used second and third most among the improvisations based on minor keys – share similar features with Mario Argudin's improvisations that proceed on major keys. In addition to the more limited pitch content of these improvisations, the scale passages that are carried out during solos proceed only in stepwise motion. García González mainly exploits the natural minor scale in his solos. Although the natural minor scale also appears to be quite popular within other improvisations based on minor keys, some of the violinists favour the harmonic minor scale as well. The scale passages appearing in the improvisations can occur – just like in *charanga* flute improvisation – without regarding a particular chord of the instant, and they can begin not only on the tonic but also on other degrees of the scale. In addition to the major and minor scales, one can also find fragments that can be identified as modern Western modes, such as the Dorian mode.

As mentioned above, some of the violinists approach scales by playing sequential scale patterns. A typical manner of González Álvarez – in both major and minor modes – is to add a diatonic lower neighbour tone before each successive tone of the scale, as in Note example 49, which he starts by playing a syncopated chain. Another example is in Felix Parreño's improvisation, in which he moves to a following scale note by always playing an ascending third before the successive tones of the scale. Rhythmically he employs a binary phrasing of triplets (Note Example 50).

Note example 49. Scale passage during a *montuno* section of Babalú Ayé, played by Omar Nilo González Álvarez on 17 June 2007.

Note example 50. Scale passage during a *montuno* section of *Las dos aguas*, played by Felix Parreño on 22 February 2008.

Note example 51 illustrates how Ríos Chassagne plays a lower neighbour tone of the scale tone, after which he moves via the former scale tone to the following scale tone. Ríos Chassagne always stresses the scale tones by playing them temporally longer than the surrounding notes. He also accents the weak parts of the bar, as is common in this particular music culture.

Note example 51. Scale passage during a *montuno* section of Obbatalá, played by Raúl Ríos Chassagne on 18 February 2008.

Both González Álvarez and Ríos Chassagne use a melodic surface model that is based on sequential scale patterns. It proceeds as a descending natural minor scale with descending arpeggios added into its structure. Once again, this lick is based on the popular articulation technique, ternary phrasing of binary subdivision. González Álvarez told me that he copied this rhythmic-melodic scale-based model from Ríos Chassagne, who uses this model as one of his signature licks. 'That is from Raúl. [--] I use it in every key. That is typical to him. I copied that from him.' (OGÁ 09032017)[175] As González Álvarez implies, in addition to musicians having less

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[175] 'Eso es de Raúl. [--] Yo lo uso en todas las tonalidades. Eso es típico de él. Eso lo copié de él.'

experience – who sometimes copy different musical ideas from the experts – musical ideas are also shared between more experienced violinists.

Note example 52. Melodic surface model based on sequential scale patterns during a *montuno* section of Ochún, played by Omar Nilo González Álvarez on 3 November 2007.

Note example 53. Melodic surface model based on sequential scale patterns during a *montuno* section of Obbatalá, played by Raúl Ríos Chassagne on 18 February 2008.

It is hard to find temporally longer chromatic scale passages in improvisations included in my research data, although some exist. In this sense, solos share the same kind of *típico* aesthetic with other melodic instruments, in which the use of chromaticism is less common. However, sometimes there exist temporally shorter chromatic scale passages including four different pitches. There is an example of this kind of melodic surface model at the beginning of González Álvarez's improvisation in a *montuno* section of Obbatalá.

Note example 54. Chromatic passage at the beginning of a *montuno* section of Obbatalá, played by Omar Nilo González Álvarez on 17 June 2004.

This kind of fast four-note scalar ascending-descending surface model – which does not necessarily appear in chromatic form – is a characteristic *típico* lick in Latin violin improvisation in general (Bardfeld 2001). In addition to González Álvarez's solo, it appears in every solo of Lazága Ortega during a *montuno* section of Babalú Ayé, and in some of the improvisations of Ríos Chassagne and Cabarrogas Fernández as well. This particular kind of model is also common in solos of violinists such as Miguel Barbón and Pupi Legarretta (b. 1940). Legarretta borrowed this fragment from Barbón and made it as one of his signature licks (ibid., 38, 59, 61).

Note example 55. Four-note scalar ascending-descending lick during a *montuno* section of Babalú Ayé, played by Edel Lazága on 3 January 2008.

In improvisations in which chromatic passages exist, violinists often use a common descending melodic fragment, in which the first and fourth fingers are used alternately on the E string at the same time the melodic line proceeds. This kind of melodic passage creates two different chromatic lines that progress in interval distance of perfect fourth.

Note example 56. Chromatic passage during a *montuno* section of Ochún, played by Eduar Marzán Betancourt on 24 November 2007.

One of the violinists, Ronny Cabarrogas Fernández, has a characteristic way of approaching a musical idea that includes the combination of chromaticism, glissando and trill by using the first and third fingers of his left hand. In his solos he favours a particular passage based on these features, which proceeds in ascending and descending motion in turn (see e.g. improvisation during a *montuno* section of Ochún, bars 12–16, played on 7 May 2009). It resembles to some extent a traditional *típico* device, the ascending tremolo-glissando ending (see e.g. improvisations of Mario Argudin during a *montuno* section of Yemayá, played on 23 November 2007 and Babalú Ayé, played on 12 December 2007), but it is not the same, and it does not anticipate the end of the solo.

In addition to scale passages, violinists employ broken chords (arpeggios) in certain moments. According to Ríos Chassagne (cf. interview quotation above), arpeggios share the same function as scale passages: they work as a kind of filling material until the musician gets to another musical idea. Usually the violinists who follow more clearly the traditional *charanga* style play the arpeggios in a closer relationship to the harmonic background model. Note example 57 shows a passage from the improvisation of Ríos Chassagne, in which he breaks the Am and E7b9 chords in turn.

Note example 57. Raúl Ríos Chassagne breaking chords (Am and E7b9) during a *montuno* section of Ochún, played on 18 February 2008.

However, sometimes some of the violinists representing the younger generation break this line momentarily by playing notes – for example, by breaking some particular chord – that do not belong to the key or to the chord in the background at that moment. In the context of jazz, this kind of harmonic approach is known as 'outside playing' (cf. Levine 1995, 183). As Lazága Ortega and Cabarrogas Fernández put it:

> I do not like doing scales that people do. [--] I prefer to do a diminished arpeggio. If it is G major, I prefer to play a diminished seventh chord and attach other options there. Not doing scales, because I see it is very easy at the moment of playing. (ELO 27122007)[176]

> I love getting out of tonality as well. Not just being in the scheme of G minor, for example. [--] I also like to get out of the tonality using options and logical things that allow you to get out of it. [--] But they [options and things] are slight, they do not bother. (RCF 18052009)[177]

As Cabarrogas Fernández implies, the musical solutions made during improvisation should somehow appear within the framework of the traditional style.

Note example 58 demonstrates an example of how arpeggios – like sequential scale pattern passages in certain contexts – sometimes appear as separate licks. This melodic surface model, during which Lazága Ortega breaks the Bdim7 and Am6 chords in turn, is repeated in his solos. It appears as a kind of surprise effect in

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[176] 'No me gusta mucho hacer las escalas que hace la gente. [--] Prefiero hacer un arpegio disminuido. Si es sol mayor, prefiero hacer una séptima disminuida y allí pegar otros recursos. No hacerte las escalas, porque la veo muy fácil a la hora de tocar.'

[177] 'Me encanta salir de la tonalidad también. No solamente estar en el esquema de por ejemplo de sol menor. [--] Me gusta salirme de la tonalidad también utilizando recursos y cosas lógicas que te permitan que te salgas. [--] Pero son pequeñas, que no molestan.'

relation to the harmonic background, which is based on a traditional chord progression that proceeds similarly throughout the *montuno* section. However, this lick also has a clear rhythmic link with tradition, since Lazága Ortega phrases in three over the binary subdivision.

Note example 58.   Edel Lazága Ortega breaking chords (Am6 and Bdim7) during a *montuno* section of Babalú Ayé, played on 10 January 2008.

Ricardo Cortez García is an exception among the violinists having more experience and technical knowledge. In his solos, especially during a *montuno* section of Obbatalá from 16 December 2007, his manner of using arpeggios is notable compared to the improvisations of other violinists. It is common that during the accompanying repetitive four bar chord progression he breaks accompanying chords by playing exactly the same notes included in the chord at that moment. A chord progression is repeated 12 times during the solo. In more than half of the chord progression passages, Cortez García breaks the last chord by playing a similar kind of descending arpeggio before the chord progression starts over again. I would assume that most of the time in this particular solo the chord progression itself functions as a dense harmonic background model for him. It is common that Cortez García takes a small pause (normally an eighth rest) before the chord progression is repeated. In this sense he also closely follows the four-bar harmonic progression.

> Sometimes I draw on that [having a break before the chord progression starts over again]. [--] Almost always there is a metric [basis] [--] which is accompanying you. [--] Have you noticed that I do not play much in jazz style? It is because I do not have a mental training of jazz, but rather of *son*. (RCG 06052009)[178]

A fascinating feature in the course of this particular solo is the manner in which Cortez García constructs the form of the improvisation by creating increasing intensity after the midpoint of the solo. The melodic texture moves further away from arpeggios and proceeds to higher octave ranges where Cortez García demonstrates

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[178] 'A veces me apoyo en eso. [--] Casi siempre tiene como una métrica [--] que te está acompañando. [--] Has dado cuenta que no jazzeo mucho? Porque no tengo formación mental de jazz, sino más bien del son.'

some virtuosity. After achieving the culmination point of his solo by playing in a higher octave range and using a denser melodic texture,[179] a melodic line returns to the same situation as at the beginning of the solo, and Cortez García plays the last third of it using arpeggios and exploiting the chord progression as a dense background model again.

In summary, one can say that violinists exploit scale passages and arpeggios in their solos in two distinct ways. First of all, scales and arpeggios can be used as a kind of filling material between musical ideas. Secondly, violinists use different surface models that are based on sequential scale patterns or arpeggios and repeated from one improvisation to another. Larger scale passages are stressed in the improvisations of violinists representing the older generation. These passages or licks are commonly played in a close harmonic relation to the accompanying chord progression, as is common in the context of *típico* style. However, some of the younger violinists occasionally break this pattern and intentionally play a particular shorter passage in a further harmonic relation to the instant chords in the background. A common recurring rhythmic feature, popular in improvisations in general, is that these melodic passages or phrases are played in a culture-specific way: weak parts of bars are emphasized, and the melodic line is approached through syncopation by using syncopated chains and ternary phrasing of binary subdivision or binary phrasing of triplets.

5.2.3 Different Melodic Phrases and Song Quotations in the Flow of Soloing

In *charanga* music, as in jazz and many other music genres that include improvisation, a certain kind of culture-specific shared musical vocabulary exists, containing phrases and fragments that musicians use when improvising. In addition to different kinds of musical quotations, phrases, and rhythmic and melodic fragments that are shared in a common vocabulary defining Afro-Cuban improvisation in general, different instruments have their own idiosyncratic styles to be combined with them. This is partly related to the specific affordances of the instrument (e.g. the use of double stops, harmonics and slides in the case of the violin), but also to influences based on classical conservatory training.

An example of a melodic phrase commonly used by various instruments is a standard military bugle call.

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[179]   See about the increasing and decreasing of intensity e.g. Crook 1991, 143–144 and Snyder 2000, 62–63.

Note example 59.   Military bugle call (Manuel 1998, 138).

This lick – or *llamada* (call) – is normally associated with *charanga* flute improvisation (Manuel 1998, 137–138; Miller 2014, 199–200), but it also appears in solos of other woodwinds, brass instruments and violin. Yoel Terry (1970–2010), who was a Cuban flautist and saxophonist, saw a connection between a bugle call lick and a tradition of cornet, which was the instrument that was used to play this fragment during the Cuban independence wars (1868–1878; 1879–1880; 1895–1898; YT 26072007). This phrase can also be found in *mambo* sections,[180] as one can notice in Adalberto Álvarez y su Son's 'Y qué tú quieres que te den?' from their album *Que Suene el Son Caballero* (2013). In this context the phrase is suitable for song lyrics that deal with Oggún, one of the soldier *orishas* in Yoruba mythology. The brass instruments play a variation, based on this phrase at the same time when the lead singer asks: 'Where do Oggún's children go?' (Pa donde van los hijos de Oggún?). The *coro* responds 'To the war!'(Pa la guerra!).[181]

Miller (2014, 199–200) draws attention to the similar use of *llamada* in religious and more secular contexts. In addition to the Tambor de Santo ceremonies, in which Elegguá – who opens the occasion – and other *orishas* are called with certain *toques* to communicate with them, *llamadas* call references in *rumba*, *charanga*, and in the military context as announcements to herald something new (ibid.). *Llamadas* are typical in song introductions, as well as in situations preceding new structural phases, like *coros*. When preceding the *coro* section, the *llamada* call phrase is commonly formed of the melody of the *coro* (ibid., 205–206).

It is common also to find bugle call licks in violin improvisation based on the *típico* style (Bardfeld 2001, 38), as one can see in the improvisation of Raúl Ríos Chassagne during a *montuno* section of *Virgen de Regla* (18022008; Video example 9). In this example, Ríos Chassagne plays exactly the same larger melodic passage, which appears in a flute solo of Orquesta Aragón's interpretation of *Tres Lindas Cubanas*, a *danzón* composed by Antonio María Romeu (1876–1955).[182] Another example concerning the opening function of a bugle-style call is Cabarrogas

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180   In addition to refer to a specific genre in Cuban dance music, *mambo* means a section including new musical material in *salsa* arrangements (Mauleón 1993, 194–195).

181   See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKFVcc3EFjs; 7:00 (accessed 13 March 2022).

182   See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gh8lqcLFrxw; 3:02 (accessed 13 March 2022).

Fernández's improvisation during a *montuno* section of Babalú Ayé (01032010). As one can see, he opens the improvisation by playing two identical rhythmic figures and repeating the pitch A5. These fragments are separated from the rest of the texture. Only after this does he start to develop the melody of the improvisation.

Note example 60.   Ronny Cabarrogas Fernández playing a bugle-style call at the beginning of solo during a *montuno* section of Babalú Ayé (01032010).

There are also typical melodic surface models that are played at the end of a larger phrase and that unify musicians regardless of their instrument. However, these phrases do not entail the same kind of *llamada* function as mentioned above. An example of this kind of shared phrase appears in improvisations of both Cabarrogas Fernández and Lazága Ortega.[183] The phrase is played over the same chord progression, but rhythmically these examples differ from each other.

Note example 61.   A typical ending phrase at the end of the phrase during a *montuno* section of Ochún, played by Ronny Cabarrogas Fernández on 7 May 2009.

Note example 62.   A typical ending phrase at the end of the phrase during a *montuno* section of Ochún, played by Edel Lazága Ortega on 23 November 2007.

In addition to melodic phrases unifying different instruments, there also exist *típico* features that are associated particularly with violin improvisation, such as the

[183]   A trumpet player, Isbel Chamizo from the Colombian ensemble Son Varadero, playing this particular phrase during *La cartera*, a song composed by Larry Harlow (b. 1939): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rRo3gx4JIHI; 3:53 (accessed 13 March 2022).

above-mentioned four-note scalar fragment that proceeds in ascending and descending motions in turns (see Note examples 54–55 above). Another *típico*-related option is to exploit a passage based on tremolo-glissando at the end of the solo, as mentioned above. Mario Argudin, for example, always ends his improvisation by playing this kind of effect. 'It is like to raise [the intensity]. That it [a solo] is going to end. It is from Brindis [nickname of Miguel Barbón]. He was the first violinist who started using it.' (MA 12052009)[184] The ascending tremolo-glissando functions as a kind of established technique and as a sign to fellow musicians that the solo is going to end. Tremolo-glissandos are almost always played in double-stops on the A and E strings. Depending on the key, the pitches may produce either major or minor sixth interval.

In Kratus' view (1991, 37–38; 1996, 28), musicians move from a process-oriented to a more product-oriented improvisation style as their skills evolve. With experience, the improvisatory vocabulary also expands, and a musician exploits musical possibilities and different surface models in a more comprehensive way. According to Kratus (1996, 33), improvisations performed by musicians with more experience sound more genre-based, and they are organized around larger syntactic structures. However, this does not necessarily mean that the improvisations of a more experienced musician are always different from each other. On the contrary, musicians may emphasize some particular surface models over others by repeating them in their improvisations (Berliner 1994, 229). Sometimes this may paradoxically lead to a situation in which a musician creates a less innovative, more predictable and more mechanical improvisation by repeating the same fragments and phrases from one improvisation to another, and no longer uses them creatively. The temptation to use the same surface models in improvisations is related to the facts that the ensemble may play the same pieces several times a week and that the violinists improvise in the same key and during the same *montuno* section over and over again.

> Since I have been playing for a long time [the same songs], I already plan the improvisations. I no longer need to make the effort. [--] Since we play it [*Over the Rainbow*] every day in D major, I have already set the same resources. I always do it the same. (ELO 04032010)[185]

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[184] 'Es como levantar ya. [--] Que va a terminar. Es una cosa de Brindis. Fue el primer violinista que empezó usarla.'

[185] 'Como ya llevo tiempo tocando, ya yo cuadro las improvisaciones. Ya no tengo que ponerme fuerza. [--] Como la tocamos todos los días en Re mayor, ya lo tengo cuadrado los mismos recursos. Siempre lo hago igual.'

On the other hand, violinists also recognize this problem of becoming monotonous. 'The major problem that you can have in this type of group of *violines espiritules and santorales* is that you get addicted. It causes you an addiction, because sometimes I use the same pattern as well.' (OGÁ 18052009)[186] According to some violinists, the musical structures that help a musician should be used only at the moments they are not able to find a way to move ahead during a solo. The idea is that a musician does not get hooked on certain mannerisms.

> The resources are rather for the rainy days. [--] There are days that nothing goes well and you are forcing or something like that. And that is where the resources come in. When you work a lot and do not find ways, it is when you use the resources. [--] Because it is the problem of the resources: one has to be careful not to stagnate. (JDM 14052009)[187]

However, the improvisations should include different structural features that connect them with the tradition. One essential feature reflecting the improvisation style of melodic instruments in Cuban music is – as mentioned above – a convention of using quotations of different pieces. As Sam Bardfeld (2001, 30) put it:

> Musical quotations serve a somewhat different function in Afro-Cuban music than they do in jazz. Afro-Cuban music is extremely self-referential and, like recognizable Latin violin motifs and phrases, quotations help place a solo in the context of tradition.

These fragments and phrases are mainly taken from local traditional popular music (Bardfeld 2001, 30–31), although the other musical traditions are used for this purpose as well.

> Those are phrases. A phrase that identifies a piece. [--] Any piece, there is always a theme that identifies the piece. [--] It is not complete, never, never. They are

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[186] 'El mayor problema que puede tener en este tipo de agrupación de violines espirituales y santorales es que te envicias. Te hace un vicio, porque a veces utilizo el mismo patrón también.'

[187] 'Los recursos son más bien para malos días. [--] Hay días que no sale nada bien y estás forzando o algo así. Y ahí donde entran los recursos. Cuando tu trabajas mucho y no encuentras vías, ahí donde usas los recursos. [--] Porque es el problema de los recursos: uno tiene que tener mucho cuidado para no estancarse.'

brushstrokes. [--] You play a little part [of the song] and everyone will like it, because everyone knows it. (JHM 17052009)[188]

The fragments of the quotations are exploited as part of the melodic development of the improvisation, such as in jazz (Berliner 1994, 103). The most important thing, as Hernández Mora mentions above, is that the fragments are related to a shared cultural knowledge, and they originate from the songs that everyone, both the musicians and the audience, recognizes. However, there are differences between violinists regarding the frequency and extent of the use of quotations.

When collecting my research data, I found it interesting that violinists used quotations whose origins were often unclear to them. Sometimes they just said that the phrase was from some really old *bolero*, whose name they did not know or could not remember. I would assume that when the improvisatory vocabulary increases on an interactive occasion when listening to solos of other musicians, the origin of the phrase or fragment becomes less important. At least, this happened to me at the beginning of my studies when I was listening to other people's improvisations both during the events and from the videoclips I had recorded. I just tried to internalize different perceptible melodic passages, practice them, and add them into my own vocabulary. Of course, in a later phase I was also interested in their origins as a researcher.

It is important to notice that unlike during the original songs – in which the rhythmic relation between the *clave* pattern and the rhythm of the melodic line plays a central role – this issue is not relevant in the same way in the course of improvisation. Instead, it is important to bring out the melody in a suitable harmonic frame.

Ad libitum, ad libitum, in rubato. I mean [--] playing around with tempo. Do the same thing inside [of the original metric framework], advance tempo, play in rubato, taking tempo to the next bar. So, in the next [bar] we connect it with something else. It is the custom of improvisation. [--] The melody [is important], but it does not have to be rhythmic. I mean, like it was a melody but it does not have to be [congruent with the original rhythm]. (RRC 20052009)[189]

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[188] 'Son frases. Una frase que identifica un número. [--] Cualquier número, siempre hay un temita que identifica al número. [--] No es completa, nunca, nunca. Son pinceladas. [--] Tocas un pedacito y a todo el mundo le va a gustar porque todo el mundo lo conoce.'

[189] 'Ad libitum, ad libitum, rubateado. O sea [--] jugar con el tiempo. Hacer lo mismo dentro, que correr el tiempo, rubateando, cogiendo el tiempo al siguiente compás. Entonces en el otro empatamos con otra cosa. Es la costumbre del floreo. [--] La

Violinists draw on different background and surface models simultaneously and emphasize different musical parameters in turn in their playing (cf. Huovinen 2010, 417). This feature also emerges in the way they alternately play closer and farther in relation to the *clave* pattern. 'Sometimes I do it [a quotation] in time and sometimes not. [--] It is a resource. [--] You can use the same melody, but you have to move the rhythmic pattern, that is, the [rhythmic] figures you have used.' (OGÁ 18052009)[190]

This way of forgetting the rhythmic relation between the *clave* and the rhythm of the song quotation, as it appears in the original version, confused me a bit when I began my studies. The reason behind this was that at this early stage, González Álvarez wanted me to learn *El manisero*, and he stressed the rhythmic importance between the *clave* and the melodic line (see section 4.1). At the same time, I noticed that *El manisero* was one of the most used quotations in the improvisations of my informants. When I was trying to use this melodic phrase in my own solos at the beginning, I wanted to pay special attention to its rhythmic structure in relation to the *clave*. However, when I analyzed the improvisations of other musicians in a later phase, I noticed how differently they used the quotation in relation to the rhythmic background model.

Of course, I later understood my teacher's point: while he wanted me to understand the importance of the *clave* in music in general, he wanted me to assimilate essential melodic material to support my solos and, on the other hand, find out the different ways melodic phrases appear in relation to the *clave* in the course of performance. Although violinists notice the *clave* pattern in different ways when improvising, its guiding role regarding melodic phrases differs between pre-composed and improvised music, as Ríos Chassagne and González Álvarez imply above.

The melody of *El manisero* is often performed by playing both phrase members – not just a short fragment – of the melody. In this case, it guides the violinist's improvisation at the moment and can therefore be momentarily considered a melodic background model that moves the solo forward. Note examples 63, 64 and 65 show the original melody of *El manisero* in D major and two variations of it appearing in Cabarrogas Fernández's and Ríos Chassagne's improvisations.

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melodía, pero no tiene que ser ritmático. O sea, como si fuera melodía, pero no tiene que ser.'

[190] 'A veces lo hago en tiempo y otras veces no. [--] Es un recurso. [--] Tu puedes utilizar la misma melodía, lo que debes mover es el patrón rítmico, o sea, las figuras que has utilizado.'

Note example 63.   The main theme of *El manisero*.

Note example 64.   The main theme of *El manisero* during a *montuno* section of *Forever and Ever*, played by Ronny Cabarrogas Fernández on 17 October 2007.

Note example 65.   The main theme of *El manisero* during a *montuno* section of *Forever and Ever*, played by Raúl Ríos Chassagne on 27 February 2008.

The theme is clearly recognizable in both examples. Cabarrogas Fernández first introduces the theme by playing a melodically reduced variation of the first part of the first phrase member. Next, he repeats the entire first phrase member and after that begins the latter phrase member but proceeds to the new idea. This is how Cabarrogas Fernández comments on the passage: 'I started with *El manisero*, but in order to make another ending that everyone is accustomed to do, you have to find solutions to do things that not everyone does.' (RCF

18052009)[191] In the latter example, in the improvisation played by Ríos Chassagne, the quotation is also easily identifiable. Ríos Chassagne approaches the melody as a quite dense model, although he adds a chromatic passing tone and an upper neighbour tone in the melodic line.

Although the melodic form of the quotation is easily recognized in both examples, they differ from the original version in a rhythmic sense. Cabarrogas Fernández, for example, plays the *cinquillo* – which is originally played over the *tresillo* pattern – during the weak part of the *clave*. That is, the rhythmic fragment appearing in melodic line is not locked into the rhythmic background model in the same way as in the original version of the song. However, Cabarrogas Fernández pays attention to the rhythmic background model by playing a melodic and syncopated accent (B5) – consciously or unconsciously – at the same time with the *bombo* stroke when introducing the first phrase member of the melody.

In addition to *El manisero*, violinists use fragments from other well-known *sons*, such as *Guajira Guantanamera* (comp. José Fernández Díaz, 1908–1979), *Dile a Catalina* (comp. Arsenio Rodríguez, 1911–1970), *Conozca a Cuba primero* (comp. Eduardo Saborit Pérez, 1911–1963), and *Qué bueno baila usted* (comp. Beny Moré, 1919–1963 and Generoso Jiménez, 1917–2017). Furthermore, it is common that other Cuban musical genres, such as *bolero*[192] and *cha-cha-chá* are used for this purpose. Note example 66 illustrates how Eduar Marzán Betancourt, during his improvisation in a *montuno* section of Eleggúa, first plays a fragment from *Los aretes que le faltan a la luna*, a *bolero* composed by José Dolores Sotolongo Quiñones (1918–2008). After that he proceeds to another fragment, which is originally played on a trumpet during the introduction of Johnny Pacheco's (1935–2021) version of *Agua de clavelito*.[193]

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[191] 'Empecé con *El manisero*, pero para darle otra terminación a lo que todo el mundo está acostumbrado de hacer, tú tienes que buscar recursos para hacer cosas que no haga todo el mundo.'

[192] *Bolero* quotations might also be Mexicans and Colombians from their origin.

[193] This song was originally written in the form of *cha-cha-chá* by Miguel Alfonso Pozo (1908–1975). Dominican flautist Johnny Pacheco, known as one of the creators of *salsa*, later made his own version of it.

Note example 66. Eduar Marzán Betancourt using fragments from *Los aretes que le faltan a la luna* and *Agua de clavelito* when improvising during a *montuno* section of Elegguá on 24 November 2007.

However, it is necessary to point out that violinists, when using quotations of the same themes, do not always use the same fragments or phrases. Unlike Marzán Betancourt, who exploits a fragment taken from the trumpet melody as a melodic surface model, Edel Lazága Ortega approaches the song melody of *Agua de clavelito* – the one that appears after the *tres* solo in Pacheco's version – as a longer, dense melodic background model.

Note example 67. Edel Lázaga Ortega playing the melody of *Agua de clavelito* during a *montuno* section of Babalú Ayé on 27 February 2008.

The most commonly used song quotation in my research data is a traditional Spanish singing game *Al ánimo*, which is a popular children's song in different parts of Latin America (Vélez Adorno 1991, 22). Because I heard this melody so often and it was easy to remember, I used it (and still use it) myself.

Note example 68. The first phrase of *Al ánimo*, a traditional children's song.

I noticed this phrase for the first time in a solo played during a *montuno* section of Elegguá. I was wondering if violinists used this specific phrase during a piece dedicated to Elegguá, because this *orisha* is seen to be on the child's body and is associated with the Catholic Saint Niño de Atocha (Holy Infant of Atocha). I thought there might be the same kind of connection as there is when using a bugle call fragment during the lyrics that treat Oggún's children and the war in Adalberto Álvarez's song *Y qué tú quieres que te den?* mentioned above. Additionally, as Miller (2014, 102) points out, the choice of quotation in Cuban dance music can be related to the lyrics of the song. That is, the quotation might have a certain associative connection to the broader theme of the song. However, both González Álvarez and Hernández Mora told me that when they are improvising, this phrase might emerge in improvisation's melodic line due to the influences they receive from the audience.

> It [*Al ánimo*] is a children's song. [--] You see something, a child, and as you saw him, you play a little part [of the melody], but you continue. [--] It is really interesting. [--] Because many times you look at a person and it gives you an idea, a phrase that has to do with the physical aspect of that person. And you get it but you cannot say it, but the instrument says it. You remember whichever thing and then you play it. (JHM 17052009)[194]

> I play it because I see a child [--] if it fits inside of what we are playing, if it fits in harmony. I can play *Al ánimo* or *Calabasita*, a famous theme here in Cuba, a song they sing to children when they go to sleep. Or some other children's song,

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[194]   'Es un canto de los niños. [--] Ves algo, un niño, y como lo vistes, tocas un pedacito, pero sigues. [--] Es muy interesante. [--] Porque muchas veces tú le miras a una persona y te da la idea, una frase que tiene que ver con el aspecto físico de la persona. Y tú lo captas, pero no lo puedes decir, pero lo dice el instrumento. Te acuerdas a cualquier cosa y después lo haces.'

because there are so many of them, mostly of Spanish origin. (OGÁ 04122011)[195]

According to González Álvarez, the audience participating in the occasion does not see a connection between the phrase based on children's song and Elegguá.

> It has nothing to do with religion. When someone uses these infantile resources, it has nothing to do with Elegguá. [--] The musician uses it like a resource, like a jocularity, like a joke. When someone exploits certain fragments of certain melodies that have been popular and they do not have anything to do with what is played, most people interpret it as a joke. (OGÁ 04122011)[196]

Although Hernández Mora and González Álvarez do not create any association between Elegguá and a children's song, the presence of a child at an event might function as an extra-musical model for them. Seeing a child in the audience can lead to a situation in which the violinist exploits a specific melodic in-time model. It is interesting how the presence of a child in the audience functions as the same kind of symbol – and as a shared cultural meaning – for two different violinists and leads to the possibility of exploiting a phrase based on a children's song in the course of improvisation.

However, it is worth mentioning that when a musician uses *Al ánimo* as a melodic surface model, it does not mean that it is always exploited because of the presence of some child in the audience. This phrase is commonly used in Cuban violin improvisation, and one can find it also in solos of Miguel Barbón (cf. Bardfeld 2001, 39).[197] For example, when I met Ronny Cabarrogas Fernández for the first time at the end of 2007, he used to begin his improvisations proceeding in major keys with a fragment based on *Al ánimo* (see *Forever and Ever* 17102007 and *Elegguá* 24112007). *Al ánimo* belongs centrally to a shared vocabulary among violinists playing in *típico* style. This specific musical phrase and other common

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[195] 'Yo lo hago porque veo un niño [--] si cabe dentro lo que estamos tocando, si cabe en el ciclo armónico. Puedo tocar mismo Al ánimo o Calabasita, un tema famoso aquí en Cuba, la canción que se ponen a los niños cuando se acuestan a dormir. O otra canción infantil, porque hay un montón de canciones infantiles, que la mayoría son españolas.'

[196] 'No tiene nada que ver con la religión. Cuando uno utiliza estos recursos infantiles, no tiene nada que ver con Elegguá. [--] El músico lo utiliza como un recurso, como una jocosidad, como una broma, un chiste. Cuando uno utiliza determinados fragmentos de determinadas melodías que han sido muy populares y no tienen que ver nada con lo que se está tocando, la mayor parte de la gente lo interpreta como una broma, un chiste.'

[197] In this particular example from Orquesta Melodías del 40's album *Montuno Favorito* Barbón uses this specific phrase at the beginning of the solo during a song called *El Niño Prodigio* (Child Prodigy). Thus, one can also create an association between this children's song (*Al ánimo*) and the context in which it is performed.

phrases used during improvisation underline the tradition and link these solos to a commonly shared cultural knowledge, which is also familiar to the audience participating in these occasions.

It is common in jazz for musicians to draw inspiration from the specific musical ideas of their immediate predecessors in order to preserve a continuity of mood (Berliner 1994, 368–369). One can say that the same happens in improvisations of Cabarrogas Fernández and Marzán Betancourt during a *montuno* section of Elegguá, from the time they played in the same line-up. Both Cabarrogas Fernández and Marzán Betancourt begin their short improvisations – separated by the eight-bar *coro* section between them – by playing the first phrase of *Al ánimo*. However, rhythmically they differ from each other, and they also lead to different kinds of musical solutions as the solos proceed.

Note example 69.   Ronny Cabarrogas Fernández playing the first phrase of *Al ánimo* during a *montuno* section of Elegguá on 24 November 2007.

Note example 70.   Eduar Marzán Betancourt playing the first phrase of *Al ánimo* during a *montuno* section of Elegguá on 24 November 2007.

Because this particular phrase was such popular melodic material in solos, I bring out one more example: in Note example 71, Raúl Ríos Chassagne plays only the first notes of this phrase, after which he moves to a four-note scalar ascending-descending lick, which is also a typical melodic surface model in this tradition, as mentioned above.

Note example 71.   Raúl Ríos Chassagne exploiting the beginning of *Al ánimo* before moving to another melodic lick during a *montuno* section of *Forever and Ever* on 27 February 2008.

Although the violinists interviewed for this study do not see a connection between Elegguá and the children's song *Al ánimo*, it is common that when improvising, Cuban musicians in general – both instrumentalists and singers – use quotations that are directly linked with religious themes. This is not surprising, since religion is an essential part of Cuban popular culture, and many of the frontline orchestras compose themes with a religious connection and also use *coros* having their origin in Santería music.

A typical quotation used in Cuban popular music and also in improvisations performed at Violines Santorales events is the first phrase of a particular song called '*Aso kere-kere me yé*', which is dedicated to Elegguá. This song is in the Yoruba language and is performed in different kinds of Santería celebrations. Occasionally, violinists use fragments which are common in Violines Espirituales events as well. In Note example 72 one can see a phrase from the *coro A remar*, which in spiritual ceremonies is performed during a song dedicated to Mamá Francisca; however, in Violín a Ochún events it is often attached to the waltz *Sobre las olas* or other songs dedicated to Yemayá. Thus, this quotation also fits well into the context of improvisation performed during a *montuno* section of the *danzón* called *Virgen de Regla*, the Catholic manifestation of Yemayá. Also, as one can see in Note example 72, this particular phrase is preceded by an *El manisero* quotation.

Note example 72. Alejandro Vistel using *El manisero* and *A remar* quotations during a *montuno* section of *Virgen de Regla* on 1 March 2010.

In addition to the traditional melodic quotations having their origin in Cuban popular and religious music, some of the violinists participating in this study use melodic quotations from internationally well-known themes. According to Sue Miller (2014, 202), typical song quotations in *charanga* and *son* music include

American songbook tunes, popular from the 1930s to the 1950s. Examples of these are Harold Arlen (1905–1986) and Ted Koehler's (1894–1973) *Stormy Weather* (see Note example 73), Herman Hupfeld's (1894–1951) *As Time Goes By* (see Note example 74), Richard Rodgers (1902–1979) and Lorenz Hart's (1895–1943) *Blue Moon* (see JHM's improvisation during *Forever and Ever*, 22 February 2010, b. 45 onwards), George Gershwin's (1898–1937) *Summertime* and Joseph Kosman's (1905–1969) *Autumn Leaves* (*Les feuilles mortes*).

Note example 73.   Edel Lazága Ortega playing a quotation from *Stormy Weather* during a *montuno* section of Babalú Ayé on 27 February 2008.

As one can see in Note example 74, Lazága Ortega approaches the melody of *As Time Goes By* as a long and dense melodic background model and embellishes the melody only slightly. However, as is typical for this tradition, he exploits the *cinquillo* and *tresillo* rhythm cells and uses a binary phrasing of triplets. Although this quotation is a longer background model, it does not lead to a *coro* section. The themes that prepare the audience for collective singing are mainly established melodies that are repeated from one occasion to another (see section 5.3).

Note example 74.   Edel Lazága Ortega playing a quotation from *As Time Goes By* during a *montuno* section of Babalú Ayé on 10 January 2008.

One of the international melodies that is used as a quotation is *When Johnny Comes Marching Home*. This theme is connected to the American Civil War, and it has later appeared in popular culture in various contexts worldwide. Another example of music that is based on international popular culture is a theme from Ali-Baba Bound (1940), from the animated Looney Tunes series starring Porky Pig.[198] This quotation – from the music composed by Carl Stalling (1891–1972) – has already become a part of Cuban popular culture, and the musicians I interviewed did not recognize its origin. However, they referred to the theme as the Ali-Baba theme.

Note example 75.   Edel Lazága Ortega playing a quotation from *Ali-Baba Bound*, the animated Looney Tunes series, during a *montuno* section of Ochún on 23 November 2007.

One of the themes known globally, which is performed completely during the feasts but which is also used as a source for melodic material during improvisation, is Nino Rota's (1911–1979) *Speak Softly, Love* from the 'Godfather' trilogy. Note example 76 illustrates how Eduar Marzán Betancourt – who normally took advantage of different melodic quotations in his solos – first plays a fragment from Rafael Ortiz Rodríguez's (1908–1994) *bolero Muy junto al corazón*, after which he proceeds to the melodic idea, based on Rota's *Speak Softly, Love*.

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198   See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8VVY-iSI69c, from 2:50 forward (accessed 13 March 2022).

Note example 76. Eduar Marzán Betancourt playing quotations from *Muy junto al corazón* and *Speak Softly, Love* during a *montuno* section of Ochún on 24 November 2007.

Another interesting quotation is George Gershwin's (1898–1937) *Rhapsody in Blue*. Note example 77 shows how Jorge Denis Molir begins his solo during a *montuno* section of Babalú Ayé by playing the same phrase bass clarinet, tenor saxophone and French horn play at the beginning of *Rhapsody in Blue* (bars 11–12 in the original sheet music).

Note example 77. Jorge Denis Molir quoting a phrase from *Rhapsody in Blue* during a *montuno* section of Babalú Ayé, played on 9 May 2009.

In this improvisation when I start, it could be seen more or less as the beginning of *Rhapsody in Blue.* [--] One of the very important things an improviser needs is to listen to a great deal of music, lot of jazz, many improvisations, many things, especially the genre you are playing, in order to be nourished, and all that [musical material] comes out unconsciously. (JDM 14052009)[199]

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[199] 'En esta improvisación cuando empiezo, podría verse como el principio más o menos de Rhapsody in Blue. [--] Una de las cosas muy importante que necesita un improvisador es oír mucha música, de mucho jazz, muchas improvisaciones, muchas

Denis Molir mentions that the improviser needs to listen to different kinds of music. In his solo he also draws on the influences of musical genres with their origins outside of Cuba. In Note example 78 one can see how he adds some country music influences to the melodic line by using double stops and slides. This is how he comments on the musical phrase below.

> There I am more or less combining the principle of country [music]. [--] Always look for the double stops [--] at least try to find the open string, because when you combine it, it always sounds good. What I am doing is using the principle of country. (JDM 14052009)[200]

Note example 78. Jorge Denis Molir imitating a country music style during a *montuno* section of Babalú Ayé, played on 9 May 2009.

Sometimes videos that are filmed during the performance reveal the importance of the interactive environment at the basis of the violinist's decision to use some particular melodic phrase. An interesting example of spontaneous joint action between musicians, which leads the violinist to use a melodic surface model, is the improvisation of Jorge Hernández Mora during a *montuno* section of *Forever and Ever* (27022008). During bar 48 (on video from 3:22 forward) someone in the background sings the first phrase of *Ternderly*, a song composed by Walter Gross (1909–1967), to which Hernández Mora reacts immediately. He repeats the beginning of *Tenderly* and then, leaning on this phrase, begins to develop the melody until bar 57, where he ends up quoting the *bolero Tú me gustas*, composed by Beny Moré.

Besides the fact that those violinists representing the younger generation have absorbed more influences from outside the *típico* style (including the manner of using blue notes, slides and different licks), the musical education they have received affects how and to what extent they use different melodic surface models. Classical music has traditionally had a strong influence on *charanga* flute improvisation

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cosas, sobre todo el género lo que tú estás haciendo para irte nutriendo y todo eso se va descargando inconscientemente.'

[200] 'Ahí estoy más o menos combinando un principio de country. [--] Siempre busca las dobles cuerdas [--] por lo menos trata de buscar la cuerda del aire, porque la cuerda del aire cuando la combinas, siempre suena bien. Yo lo que hago es usar el principio de country.'

(Valiente 2015, 113; Miller 2014, 207). This influence also appears in the context of violin improvisation, and in the manner in which violinists with more comprehensive musical training incorporate classical themes into their improvisations.

It is quite common that violinists use fragments from the first bars of different compositions of J.S. Bach (1685–1750). In addition to musical training, one of the reasons behind the idea of using the quotations based on Bach's music is probably linked to Dagoberto González. He played the violin on the album track *Un Violín pa' Chano*, which was published in El All-Stars de la Rumba Cubana's album *La Rumba Soy Yo*. This album won the Latin Grammy Award for Best Folk Album in 2001. When I interviewed younger violinists in their homes, they sometimes played this theme from the CD in order to show González's playing style. At the beginning of *Un Violín pa' Chano* González plays over the polyrhythmic percussion basis the first bars of the Presto movement of Bach's Sonata no. 1 in G minor. Although I did not hear this particular quotation played in the Violín a Ochún events, the violinists used the first bars of Bach's Double Violin Concerto in D minor, Badinerie movement From Orchestral Suite no. 2 in B minor and Allemande movement from Partita no. 2 in D minor.

Note example 79.   The beginning of Allemande movement in J.S. Bach's Partita no. 2 in D minor.

Note example 80.   Eduar Marzán Betancourt using the first bar of Allemande movement in improvisation's melodic line during a *montuno* section of Ochún, played on 24 November 2007.

Mario Argudin often uses the first notes of Vivaldi's Violin Concerto in A minor in his solos. He also emphasizes the link between his musical education and the music of Antonio Vivaldi (1678–1741) in his improvisations. 'I really like Vivaldi. When I graduated, I played the things of Vivaldi.' (MA 12052009)[201]

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[201]   'A mí me gusta mucho las cosas de Vivaldi. Cuando me gradué, yo toqué cosas de Vivaldi.'

Note example 81. The beginning of Vivaldi's Violin Concerto in A minor.
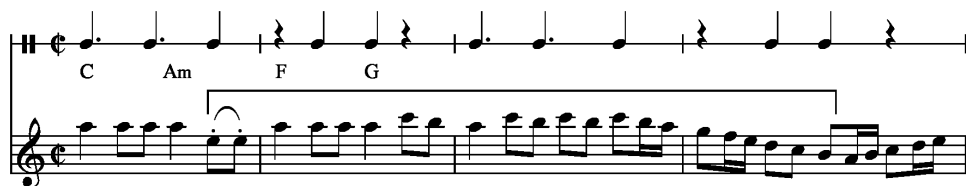
Note example 82. Mario Argudin using the first bars of Vivaldi's Violin Concerto in A minor in improvisation's melodic line during a *montuno* section of Yemayá, played on 23 November 2007.

In addition to the examples above, there were also other classical pieces, typically used in conservatory training, that the violinists exploited during their solos. For example, once when I was visiting Marzán Betancourt, he wanted to play me his lick collection in different keys. Besides Bach's Partita (Note example 79), he played the first bars of Niccolò Paganini's (1782–1840) Caprice no. 16 from *24 Caprices for Solo Violin*, op. 1. When studying the improvisations I had recorded, I noticed in several of Lazága Ortega's solos a similar kind of melodic fragment, equivalent to the first notes of the mentioned Caprice. Although the key, time signature, rhythmic structure and tempo are different from the original version, the melodic figure of the quotation comes out clearly. Note example 83 shows the first two bars of the Caprice in its original form, including the fragment that Lazága Ortega quotes in his solos. Note Example 84 illustrates three different versions of the fragment in three different solos of Lazága Ortega.

Note example 83. The beginning of Paganini's Caprice no. 16.

Note example 84. Edel Lazága Ortega exploiting a fragment from Paganini's Caprice no. 16 in improvisation's melodic line during *montuno* sections of Babalú Ayé (03012008), Ochún (23112007) and Babalú Ayé (23112007).

In summary, the use of a commonly shared improvisatory vocabulary, including different melodic quotations and rhythmic-melodic phrases typical of different instruments, originating from both secular and religious music, is a common feature in solos of all the violinists participating in this study. During improvisation, the relationship between the rhythm of the quotation and the *clave* pattern is not as strict as when the quotation is played in its original context. Furthermore, violinists exploit specific licks common to *típico* violin improvisation. The tradition of violin improvisation also includes the use of song quotations with origins in international music. However, they are mainly found in the solos of younger violinists. Additionally, violinists' backgrounds in classical music education are reflected in the use of song quotations related to classical music. Sometimes violinists pay more attention to the interactive situation, and the melodic surface models they use during improvisation are activated by extra-musical stimuli or through spontaneous joint action between musicians.

5.3   Song Quotations Leading to *Coro* Section

According to Barry Kernfeld (1995, 131–158), one of the main strategies in jazz improvisation is the so-called paraphrase improvisation, in which the original melody of the piece is modified by a little reshaping or embellishment. This is also a typical feature in the improvisations of the violinists participating in Violín a Ochún events. The longer melodic background models guiding the improvisation in these celebrations are quite dense in relation to their melodic parameter, and they are easily recognized. However, the violinists embellish them melodically to some extent. Normally, these melodic quotations appear at the end of the solo, just before

the *coro*, and they function as recognizable symbols for both the musicians and the audience, referring to a forthcoming *coro*. Sixty-five percent of the improvisations in this study end with a melodic quotation. Other conventional means of ending a solo are a tremolo-glissando and a *guajeo* pattern, which, however, lead to a *coro* section as well.

The song quotations leading to the *coro* sections are well-known melodies among the participants of the event. The idea is that the audience recognizes the melody and is able to sing it during a *coro* part. 'As it is the piece that everyone knows, everyone starts singing it. [--] That is inventiveness of… because apart from what you like to do as your inspiration, you have to work with the audience [--] an interrelation between you and the audience.' (JHM 17052009)[202] Although sometimes the violinist continues the improvisation after the responsorial cycle, most of them take place at the end of the improvisation, as mentioned above.

Coros are different in character. First of all, they may already be religious because of their original lyrics, which are either in Spanish or Yoruba. However, in the improvisations analyzed in this work, the lyrics are only in Spanish, and they are used in spiritistic traditions as well.[203] Secondly, the lyrics of *coros* may be more secular, having their roots in popular music.[204] There is one interesting *coro* which is only repeated during a *montuno* section of Elegguá. The lyrics are as follows: 'To climb up to the sky you need a big staircase and another small one' (Para subir al cielo se necesita una escalera grande y otra chiquita; see e.g. *montuno* section of Elegguá, played by René García González on 12 December 2007). These lyrics appear both in *La Bamba*, a Mexican folk song that Ritchie Valens (1941–1959) made popular, and in a children's song called *Un día de paseo*, composed by an anonymous person. However, when this text line is performed during the Violín a Ochún event, the melody is completely different from the mentioned songs. When

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[202]   'Como es el número que todo el mundo lo conoce, todo el mundo empieza a cantar. [--] Ese es de picardía de... porque aparte de lo que te gusta hacer como inspiración tuya, tú tienes que trabajar con el público [--] una interrelación entre tú y el público.'

[203]   See *montuno* section of Ochún, played by Ríos Chassagne (18022008; 22022010) and González Álvarez (03112007), in which the following *coros* appear: 'Caridad amparanos, amparanos Caridad'; 'Dame tu perdón y la bendición, Virgen de la Caridad'; 'Alumbra aquí, alumbra allá, que si tú no me alumbras quién me va alumbrar?' See also *montuno* section of Elegguá, played by Cabarrogas Fernández and Marzán Betancourt (24112007), which includes the *coro* 'Como soy tan chiquitico yo voy a ver, a mi padre, que es Elegguá; para vencer.'

[204]   See montuno section of Babalú Ayé, played by González Álvarez (03112007), in which the improvisation leads to the *coro* of *Lupina*, a *bolero* composed by Enrique González (1890–1957). See also *montuno* section of Forever and Ever, played by Hernández Mora (27022008; 22102010) and Ríos Chassagne (27022008), which include following *coros*: *Tú me gustas*, composed by Beny Moré (1919-1963); *El Jamaiquino*, composed by Niño Rivera (1919-1996); *Mulata*, composed by Nico Jiménez (1919-1962).

taking into account the context in which the lyrics are performed, the link to the children's song, and the fact that this *coro* is often followed by another *coro* 'Como soy tan chiquitico' ('Since I am so small'; see footnote 203), which refers to Elegguá, I would assume that some kind of association between Elegguá and the lyrics could appear.

Furthermore, it is common to change the original lyrics of the collectively sung melody and put them into a religious context. 'They adapt a melody that is already established, let's say, a famous *canción*, *cha-cha-chá* or *guaracha*. So they adapt it to the *orisha*, to the *santoral* context.' (OGÁ 18052009)[205] An example is a *coro* section that follows the improvisation of González Álvarez during a *montuno* section of Obbatalá (17062004). The original lyrics of this *bolero-son*, *El huerfanito*, composed by Julian Gutiérrez (1900–1966), are 'I do not have a father, I do not have a mother, I have nobody who likes me' (Yo no tengo padre, yo no tengo madre, no tengo a nadie que me quiera a mi). However, during Iré's events, the *coro* uses the following lyrics: 'I have a father, I have a mother, I have Yalorde[206] who likes me' (Yo sí tengo padre, yo sí tengo madre, tengo Yalorde que me quiera a mi).

People who attend events regularly are aware of certain conventional patterns concerning the lyrics that are used by most ensembles, and how these *coros* should be sung during a *coro* section. However, sometimes musicians – in the course of the presentation – inform the audience about the 'correct' lyrics, because they start singing it as a different version. One can hear this after González Álvarez's improvisation during a *montuno* section of Obbatalá. First, the *coro* sings (01:30) 'I have a father, I have a mother, I have Yemayá who likes me' (Yo sí tengo padre, yo sí tengo madre, yo tengo Yemayá que me quiera a mi). After that, the members of the ensemble advise with a loud voice that a *coro* should be sung as 'Yo sí tengo padre, yo sí tengo madre, yo tengo Yalorde que me quiera a mi', and sing the next *coro* like that. Then the musicians guide the audience to sing first to Ochún and after that to Yemayá.

The song quotation leading to a *coro* section that I heard most often was a piece called *Me voy pa'l pueblo*, composed by the Cuban Marcelino Guerra (1914–1996).[207] Some groups always performed the chorus of this *guajira-son* during a *montuno* section of the *plegaria* dedicated to Babalú Ayé. This quotation normally appeared at the end of the violin improvisation, just before the *coro* part. The original lyrics are 'I'm going to the town, today is my day, I'm going to rejoice with all my

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[205]   'Adaptan un giro melódico que ya está establecido, digamos una canción, un cha-cha-chá o una guaracha famosa. Entonces se la adaptan a un orisha, a un contexto santoral.'
[206]   Yalorde refers to Ochún.
[207]   The trio called Los Panchos, which included one Puerto Rican and two Mexicans, and which was founded in New York in 1944, made this song famous.

soul' (Me voy pa'l pueblo, hoy es mi día, voy a alegrar todo el alma mía). However, during the Santorales event the *coro* sings: 'I go to Rincón,[208] every day, I give a life to Babalú' (Voy al Rincón, todos los días, a Babalú yo le doy la vida).

The fact that the Violín a Ochún event is ritually a less rigid entirety compared to the Tambor de Santo is also reflected in the way the musicians invent new *coros* for the *montuno* sections. Sometimes these *coros* become part of the tradition and other ensembles start using them as well. It is also common that the person organizing the feast has heard some particular *coro* (or song) at another event and also wants to hear it on the occasion they are organizing. In addition to requests concerning musical themes and *coros*, many violinists think that the ensemble should, in any case – besides the established musical repertoire – regenerate the music over time, be somehow aware of the latest musical trends and also meet the demands of the audience. An example of this practice was the celebration in which I participated on my last visit to Havana in the spring of 2020. At the end of the ceremony, the line-up in which González Álvarez played at that time performed a song called *Me voy*, composed by 'Cimafunk' (Erik Iglesias Rodríguez, b. 1992). This song representing Afro-Cuban funk was quite popular in Havana at the time. The lyrics deal with the issue of going home, and it fitted perfectly with the moment when the audience was asking for an encore, after the last song dedicated to Elegguá was over.

An example of the *coro* that has become part of the tradition is from Cándido Fabré's (b. 1957) piece *Deja que Roberto te toque*, the song Issaq Delgado (b. 1962) made popular. The lyrics of the song deal with the healer called Roberto, and the original *coro* goes like this: 'Let Roberto touch you, let Roberto pass his hand' (Deja que Roberto te toque, deja que Roberto te pase la mano). In the Violín a Ochún feast the name of Roberto is changed to Yalorde, thus referring to Ochún (Video example 10). This is how Cabarrogas Fernández comments on the above-mentioned *coro* that his ensemble adapted to its musical content, and the importance of regenerating the repertoire in general:

> Those are things that one is looking for [--] how the music is currently in Cuba, in order to captivate the audience. When the *coro* of Issaq was popular, we adapted it. [--] That time already passed, but it [the *coro*] has established its place, it is another pattern to follow. [--] One simply looks for resources [--] to continue having clients and audience, that is the idea. [--] Everything changes, the world evolves, so you cannot stay doing the same thing as when you started.

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[208] Rincón refers to the Church and Leprosorium of Saint Lazarus in El Rincón, in Havana. People normally gather in this place on December 17, the day Babalú Ayé is publicly honoured.

Because if I am your client and I want you to play at a feast [--] because it [the feast for saints] is almost always annual [--] and maybe you will not play again until next year. But next year I hear that you played the same and maybe in the third year I will not look for you anymore, I will look for other people. (RCF 18052009)[209]

There were also ensembles which always followed the same order, without adding new songs or *coros* to the musical content of the feast. However, the musicians in general were of the opinion that having an extensive repertoire is an advantage for the ensemble. And, as Cabarrogas Fernández implies, the ensemble's ability to evolve is directly linked to its job opportunities.

An interesting feature appearing in the *coro* of *Deja que Roberto te toque* is that it is originally played in a major key, but, as one can hear in Video example 10, it proceeds in a minor key.[210] Actually, changing a key of the theme from major to minor is one technique Cuban musicians use when improvising. As González Álvarez put it:

When we are playing the *plegaria* for Caridad, when Mirta [the vocalist of Iré] sings 'And if you go to Cobre, I want you to bring me the *virgensita de la Caridad*'[211] ['Y si te vas al Cobre, quiero que me traigas una virgensita de la Caridad'], but she sings it in minor. [--] The original is in major, but she

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209 'Esas son cosas que uno va buscando [--] como está la música actualmente aquí en Cuba, para enganchar el público. Cuando el coro de Issaq estaba en auge, nosotros lo cuadramos. [--] Ya eso paso, pero se ha quedado establecido, es otro patrón también a seguir. [--] Es que sencillamente uno busca recursos para [--] seguir teniendo clientes y público, esa es la idea. [--] Todo va cambiando, el mundo evoluciona, entonces tu no puedes quedar desde que tu empezaste, a la actualidad, haciendo lo mismo. Porque si yo soy el cliente tuyo y yo quiero que tú me toques a mí en una fiesta [--] porque casi siempre se hace anual [--] y a lo mejor no vuelves a tocar hasta el año que viene. Pero ya en el año que viene te oigo que hiciste lo mismo y a lo mejor en el tercer año ya no te busco, le busco a otra gente.'

210 When listening to this example, one can notice that the key is closer to C-sharp minor than to D minor, where it normally goes (as one can also see in the fingering and the manner to use the open strings). The same thing happens in the improvisation of Eduar Marzán Betancourt during a *montuno* section of Babalú Ayé (22102007). The reason for this is that sometimes – although less frequently – musicians lower the tuning in order to save strings, because it is quite hard to get them in Cuba, where there is a shortage of everything.

211 The lyrics *virgencita de la Caridad* in this Trio Matamoros' song *Mi Veneración* refer to a little statue of Our Lady of Charity (Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre).

is singing it in minor. It is a variation. The solution the improviser used was to adapt a phrase from a major key to a minor key. (OGA 18052009)[212]

One of the popular quotations leading to the *coro* part at the end of the solo is a Russian song called *Dark Eyes*,[213] which is traditionally associated with the gypsy theme.[214] This quotation is quite popular in improvisation of Latin dance music, regardless of the instrument (cf. Miller 2021, 266). However, at the events in which the Iré ensemble was performing, this quotation was always played at the end of the violin solo during a *montuno* section of Ochún.

Gitana (gypsy), as a being, belongs to the spiritual world. However, it shares some physical and personal features with some avatars (*caminos*) of Ochún (cf. Bolívar Aróstegui 1990, 117, 119). For example, in some cases both of them are presented as beautiful women representing the mulatto race, with the same kind of outfit featuring a yellow skirt. They are also seen as beings that are libertines and have a desire for dancing. Additionally, *Gitana* is normally included in the spiritualistic frame of the person who is going to be initiated in the Santería religion. For these reasons I was thinking that González Álvarez consciously played this quotation always during a *montuno* section of Ochún in order to create an association between *Gitana* and Ochún. However, he told me that this was not the reason; it was purely a musical idea.

When one plays that song, it is not because they are singing to some gypsy or anything like that. It is done because one likes the melody and the audience likes the melody. [--] I play that melody and that is it, just like I play *The Umbrellas*

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[212] 'Cuando estamos tocando la plegaria a Caridad, cuando dice Mirta "Y si vas al Cobre, quiero que me traigas una virgencita de la Caridad", pero lo dice en el giro melódico en menor. [--] El original está en mayor pero allá lo está diciendo en menor. Es una variación. El recurso que hizo el improvisador es que adapto una frase de una tonalidad mayor a una tonalidad menor.'

[213] According to James J. Fuld (2000, 417), this song is a 'cabaret song', a Gypsy romance based on the melody of *Hommage-Valce*, composed by Florian Hermann in the 19th century.

[214] An interesting feature concerning this *coro* is that when it is performed at Violín a Ochún events, it does not contain any lyrics, but it is sung by using 'la' syllables.

of Cherbourg.[215] But it has nothing to do with the saint or anything like that. It is one's decision, to use a certain melody. (OGÁ 04122011.)[216]

Although my teacher does not create any kind of association between *Gitana* and Ochún when playing the quotation of *Dark Eyes*, I do not see it as impossible that some member of the community would parallel these elements with each other. Fernando Ortiz (1993, 5) referred to Cuban culture with the culinary metaphor of the *ajiaco* (cf. section 3.1). By this he meant that culture is in a continuous syncretistic process, during which the fusion of cultural components is constantly reinterpreted. The Violín a Ochún event as such has been formed as a result of this kind of process. Additionally, some locals referred (albeit partly joking) to a more recent phenomenon called the Cajolín, which contains influences from both the Violín a Ochún and Cajón feasts. In short, the syncretistic process is constantly present, and as a result of this, the fusion of different cultural elements continuously creates new kinds of meanings and ways to do things.

On the other hand, many believers participate in a Catholic Mass and at the same time practice different Afro-Cuban religions, in which a cult of ancestors and different branches of spiritism are always present in the background. Although the different religious traditions – including the beings that are worshipped – are separated from each other, these traditions overlap in a worldview of the believer in several ways. Additionally, as mentioned above, the beings worshipped in different traditions share some similar features between them. For example, during the spiritual gatherings the lyrics of the song dedicated to *Gitana* go as follows: 'Five flowers I dedicate to you, five flowers of humility' (Cinco flores yo te dedico, cinco flores de humildad). The number five in Santería refers to the number associated with Ochún. Furthermore, the counterpart of the *mpungu* (deity) called Mamá Chola in Palo Monte is Ochún in Santería tradition. The term 'chola', which means head, is, in turn, a loan word in Cuban Spanish, and has its origin in the gypsy language.

When taking into account the syncretistic nature of Cuban culture, different overlapping features connected to different beings, and also the other similarities between *Gitana* and Ochún mentioned above, one cannot exclude the possibility that some member of the community could associate – at least unconsciously – *Gitana*

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[215]   González Álvarez always played this theme, *Les Parapluies de Cherbourg*, composed by Michel Legrand (1932–2019), at the end of the violin solo during a *montuno* section of Obbatalá

[216]   'Cuando uno toca ese tema, no es porque se le están cantando a algún gitano ni nada eso. Se hace porque se le gusta la melodía y la gente le gusta la melodía. [--] Toco esa melodía ahí más nada, como toco las Paraguas del Cherburgo. Pero no tiene que ver nada porque sea el santo ni nada por el estilo. Es un criterio de uno que utiliza un recurso, de utilizar determinada melodía.'

with Ochún, when González Álvarez plays *Dark Eyes* during a *montuno* section of Ochún, just before the *coro*. González Álvarez considers it possible as well: 'It is true. It can happen, it might be that way. [--] Perhaps some *santero*, initiated persons associate it with that and stay with that: "That was dedicated to such a being".' (OGÁ 10022019)[217] This, in turn, leads to the situation in which the same cultural symbols are interpreted differently within the community. They have different meanings, which, however, emerge from the same cultural basis. Thus, a quotation played during a performance may create different individual meanings for the participants of the celebration. In this sense, one can speak about the connotative meaning of symbols, which includes all the suggestive significance of symbols on a larger scale (Spradley 1979, 96).

According to González Álvarez, there are also persons who think that the *Dark Eyes* quotation at the end of the violin improvisation and just before a *coro* is a constant part of the *plegaria* dedicated to Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre.

> [We play Dark Eyes] in certain pieces, so there are those who tell you: 'No, it is from such musical number. It is not from that musical number.' It is a piece called *Dark Eyes*, *Otši tšornyje*. [--] If we are playing the *plegaria* of Caridad, and since it is in minor key, I [play *Dark Eyes*] when I am improvising... When I play it 10, 15, 20 times, there are people who say: 'That is part of the *plegaria* of Caridad.' No! The melody came to my mind and I improvised it, and that is it. [--] There are many people who think that it is part of that theme, but that is not true. (OGÁ 10022019)[218]

The fact that the same melodic quotation is often repeated in the same context certainly facilitates the phenomenon of rearticulatory practice among believers. Furthermore, this ceremony is loosely tied with different structural features and musical content. It does not have one real and stable form, but instead, it leaves room for people's interpretation.

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217 'Es verdad. Puede suceder, puede ser que sea así. [--] Quizás algún santero, las personas que tienen santo hecho la asocian con eso y queda con eso: "Eso se dedicaron a una tal entidad."'

218 '[e]n determinadas piezas santorales, entonces hay quien te dice: "No, eso es de tal número. No, eso no es de ese número." Eso es una pieza que se llama Ojos negros, Otši tšornyje. [--] Si estamos tocando la plegaria de la Caridad, y como es un tema menor, yo en la improvisación, cuando estoy improvisando... Cuando lo hago 10, 15, 20 veces, hay gente que dice: "Eso forma parte de la plegaria de la Caridad." ¡No! Me vino la melodía y lo improvise y ahí nada más. [--] Y hay mucha gente que piensan que forma parte de ese tema, pero no es verdad.'

Another popular quotation at the end of the solo is *Happy Birthday to You*, the song that is traditionally sung when celebrating the anniversary of a person's birth.[219] It fits well into the context in which a person celebrates their anniversary day as a 'child' of some particular saint and has therefore organized the celebration. The time signature of both *Happy Birthday to You* and *Dark Eyes* is originally in 3/4. However, when exploiting these quotations during a *montuno* section, they should be converted into a duple time in line with the metre of a *montuno*. It happens by adding one beat to each bar (see Mauleón 1993, 162–167). In Note examples 85 and 86 one can see the melody of *Dark Eyes* written both in 3/4 metre and in 4/4 metre.

Note example 85.   *Dark Eyes* in 3/4 metre.

Note example 86.   *Dark Eyes* in 4/4 metre.

As discussed above, song quotations anticipating *coro* sections are melodically dense models partly due to their function to lead the improvisation to the following *coro*. However, a central aesthetic feature in this improvisation tradition concerns the musician's ability to rhythmically vary the melodic line of the quotation. Although the quotations sometimes sound loose in relation to the accompanying

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[219]   See OGÁ Misericordia (09102007), b. 57 onwards.

rhythmic-harmonic framework, they cover as many bars as the *coro* that follows. According to González Álvarez, it is important to respect the number of bars the original theme contains. 'I always finish the theme in the same bar. [--] The idea is to play the melody, but to break it by using different rhythmic figures.' (OGÁ 23012007)[220]

The recurring two-bar-long *clave* pattern at the rhythmic background keeps the metric framework steady and also guides the improviser who is varying the rhythm of the melodic line. It is expected that a musician is able to use the rhythmic background model in a creative way when soloing (cf. Washburne 1998, 171). This is brought out by playing, alternatively, closer and farther in relation to the *clave* pattern. This is how González Álvarez commented on one of the quotations he played at the end of his solo during a *montuno* section of Obbatalá:

> For Cuban musicians the *clave* is like one type of model. It can be used as the basis for varying the rhythm. I can advance the melody, but if you notice, the figures I used previously are *tresillos*. Here I am using a part of the *clave*. When improvising, I am listening to the *clave*, but I make my rhythm. [--] Omara Portuondo has that gift that she can play around with the melody, but she is always inside of the harmony. She can lengthen or advance the melody, but she is never out of bars or rhythm. (OGÁ 23012007)[221]

Note example 87 illustrates how the *Dark Eyes* quotation is used during a *montuno* section proceeding in cut time metre (see also Video example 11). González Álvarez plays a quotation melodically as a dense model, although he adds some embellishment into the melodic line. However, rhythmically he is stretching the melody. Sometimes he anticipates and other times he delays the pitches indicating the melody inside of the phrases. Furthermore, at times he accents the *tresillo* strokes of the strong part of the *clave*, just like Mario Guemez Lay, who is playing a guitar.

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[220] 'Siempre termino el tema en el mismo compás. [--] El recurso es tocar la melodía, pero destrozarla utilizando las figuras rítmicas diferentes.'

[221] 'Para los músicos cubanos la clave es como un tipo de modelo. Se puede utilizar como la base para variar el ritmo. Puedo adelantar la melodía, pero si te das cuenta, el figurado que empleé anteriormente son tresillos. Aquí estoy empleando parte de la clave. Cuando estoy improvisando, estoy oyendo la clave, pero hago mi ritmo. [--] Omara Portuondo tiene ese don que ella puede jugar con la melodía y sin embargo siempre está dentro de la armonía. Ella puede alargar o adelantar la melodía, pero nunca está fuera de los compases o del ritmo.'

Note example 87.   Omar Nilo González Álvarez exploiting the quotation of *Dark Eyes* in cut time metre before the *coro* part during a *montuno* section of Ochún on 12 January 2007 (see Video example 11).

In summary, a typical option at the end of a solo is to exploit song quotations that are recognized by the community. The improvising violinist approaches these melodies – or *llamadas* – as long and dense background models. They function as a bridge between the rest of the improvisation and the *coro* section, thus giving the participants a signal of the following *coro*. Depending on the context, they can sometimes also create associations with extra-musical phenomena. Although a large number of different popular melodies have established their place in the musical content of the ceremonies, some ensembles constantly aim to regenerate the musical themes and the *coros* performed at the events. Song quotations appear mainly as melodically dense background models, but it is common for musicians to vary the rhythm of the melodic line in relation to the *clave* pattern. However, the *clave* establishes the metric framework, within which the improviser approaches the rhythm of the song quotation.

5.4   Summary

There are different typical song quotations and particular rhythmic-melodic phrases that form part of the improvisatory vocabulary of the violinist playing Cuban popular music. The violinists performing in the Violín a Ochún ceremonies follow this line.

However, there are also differences regarding how melodic surface models and melodic material in general are used during these events. This phenomenon is mainly related to the generation the violinist represents.

One can say that violinists representing the younger generation use different pitch-related possibilities in a more extensive way than some of the violinists representing the older generation. The difference between generations is manifested in the broader use of the chromatic scale and especially in the exploitation of the blue notes. In addition to their broader musical education and – as a result of that – a more comprehensive playing technique, younger violinists follow the improvisation style of Dagoberto González, who has expanded the idea of traditional *típico* improvisation style by incorporating blues and jazz elements into his playing. On the other hand, those violinists who represent the older generation more clearly follow the *típico* style associated with Miguel Barbón.

Improvisatory vocabulary and its evolution over time are partly related to the performance context in which violinists are playing. According to some violinists with less experience, they borrow the musical ideas that emerge from the improvisations of more experienced violinists who play alongside them. Additionally, more experienced violinists borrow musical ideas from each other. However, the ideal situation requires the violinist to develop a unique improvisation style which, on the other hand, should be based on this particular collectively shared music tradition.

It is common for violinists – when exploiting song quotations as surface models – to vary the rhythm of the melodic line quite freely in relation to the accompanying polyrhythmic framework. For example, although there are some rules concerning how the rhythm of the melodic line should be related to the *clave* pattern in previously composed music, these conventions are not as significant in the course of the performance. On the contrary, a song quotation played in the flow of a solo might appear rhythmically in different ways in relation to the rhythmic structure of the *clave*. However, when the song quotation is performed at the end of the solo and the purpose is to proceed to the *coro* section, it appears more clearly within the metric framework guided by the *clave* pattern.

Religion is ubiquitous in Afro-Cuban popular culture. It is also present in music in different ways. At the moment of improvisation, this feature appears, for example, through the associative themes the melodic quotations represent. However, according to some interviews, the violinists improvising during these celebrations do not think about the religious context of the moment in some special, more profound way when constructing their solos, although they also use phrases that are directly related to religious themes. On the contrary, they emphasize the musical ideas at the basis of the solo. However, extra-musical models might also influence the content of the solo in the course of performance. For example, some specific

signal coming from the audience may affect the musical decision the violinist makes at the moment. One can say that this phenomenon partly underlines the significance of the interaction between the musicians and the audience during this religious popular event. After all, the function of the *montuno* section and the improvisations included in it is to entertain the audience – by taking into account also the particular religious context in which the improvisation occurs – and to work as a link between the musicians and the audience in the moment of the interactive process, in which the participants share the same cultural values.

6   Conclusions

6.1   Object of Research

The aim of this study was to answer the question regarding the structural musical models at the basis of improvisation in this particular religious popular context. The main research question, *What structural organizational models and attendant cultural meanings and associations are involved in the violin improvisations in the Violín a Ochún ceremony?*, included the assumption that structural models contain more than just a function to guide the improvising violinists.

The object of the study was initially to approach the musical structures at the foundation of improvisation from a purely music analytical point of view. However, the musical structures appeared to be more meaningful in their cultural context as I became more familiar with the topic during my fieldwork periods. I have referred to the idea of the hermeneutic cycle as the basis for approaching and learning about the subject, because I think it best describes the process of how my own understanding and interpretation concerning the musical structures, and later their attendant cultural meanings and associations, proceeded during the study.

Ethnographic fieldwork and related methodological triangulation were consciously chosen as research methods at the beginning of this study. First of all, due to little research literature being available on the subject, I found it necessary to collect more information about the ceremonies. Secondly, I decided to draw on the improvisations, transcriptions and related interviews as the primary research material at the early phase of my research process. Thirdly, I approached the topic with the idea of bi-musicality, and my purpose was to learn to play the music I was studying in its authentic surroundings. Altogether, the culture-sensitive process – including different interview techniques and participant observation – between me and the informants was the key element at the base of pursuing an emic understanding. I felt that the methods I used in this study enabled me to balance the approaches of insider and outsider perspectives.

The primary research material was collected from twelve violinists living in the city of Havana. Seven of them represented the older generation. They had a strong background in *charanga* tradition and were born before the revolution of 1959. Most of them had started playing in these particular ceremonies in 1992, due to the Special

266

Period, partly because of the reduced work opportunities with dance ensembles. Five of the violinists represented the younger generation. They were born in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s into a post-revolution society, which offered them a systematic art music education. They all had their first experiences of these events after 1992. Regardless of the violinists' generation, the improvisations included several similar repetitive musical elements across the groups. However, since the beginning of my fieldwork, I have paid attention to some differences appearing in rhythmic-melodic features on the surface level of music. I thought these could be linked to the age of the violinist and to different social changes that had taken place in the society over time. The differences and similarities between solos also partly modified the research questions of this study.

The structural musical models were approached on two different levels. Background models referred to explicit structures at the foundation of solos, surface models to shorter musical structures guiding the concrete melodic and rhythmic choices of the violinist in the course of improvisation (cf. Huovinen 2010). Improvisations were studied as a phenomenon inseparable from the cultural performance. In a way typical of ethnomusicology, music was considered a phenomenon eliciting different social, historical and cultural meanings among the members of society, and as a part of the event in which participants share the same kinds of behavioural models, values, codes and concepts (e.g. Herndon 1971; Béhague 1984). In light of the above, the structural organizational models were approached both as musical structures guiding the improviser and as cultural structures including different collective meanings and associations.

The analysis of the subject proceeded in a funnel-like manner. Because the improvisations were considered to be formed as part of this particular musical performance, I first, in Chapter 3, broadly introduced the context; the process of how the event was born; the cultural, religious, social and historical features at the foundation of this ceremony; and the function of it in Santería's religious field. Furthermore, I studied the role and meaning of improvisation in this context, the way the improvisation practice is partially learned during these events, and how the improvisations emerge during a collective interaction. In Chapters 4 and 5, I approached the content of improvisations through the musical models guiding a performance. In addition to making musical remarks about them through analysis, I also approached the cultural meanings and associations involved in the models' broader cultural context. Additionally, I reflected on my own learning process as part of the discussion. In this chapter, I will assess the research findings with reference to Rice's (2003, 2017) model of the three dimensions of musical experience (see Figure 24).
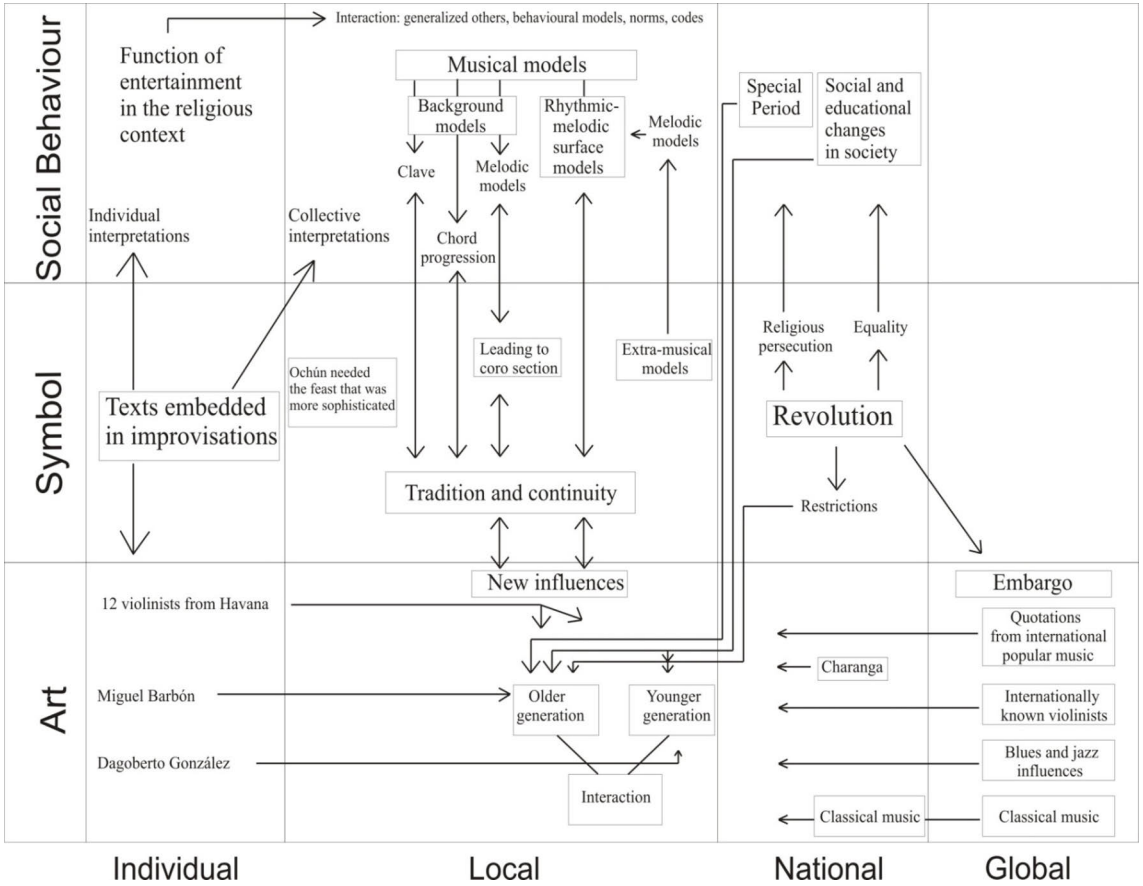
Figure 24: Violin improvisation during the *montuno* section of the Violín a Ochún ceremony in light of the three dimensions of musical experience (Rice 2003; 2017).

The 'local' in the middle of the grid refers to this particular sociogeographical dimension in which the interactive musical performance and improvisation occur during a *montuno* section of the song. When improvising, the violinist follows certain conventional practices and uses a particular musical vocabulary, typical of this music style. Skilful improvisation is partly learned when improvising on the occasion, in which the social self 'Me' – including the expectations of the audience, the established behaviour models between the members of the ensemble and between the ensemble and the audience, and the examples of more experienced violinists – creates a framework within which the violinist produces improvisation. During the performance, both the background and surface models, presented in the uppermost square in the middle of the grid, guide the musician.

6.2   Models, Improvisation and Violín a Ochún Occasion

6.2.1   Background Models

I will begin my consideration of the research question by approaching the central background model, the stable *clave* pattern, which holds the harmonic-polyrhythmic framework together. The importance of the *clave* has been stressed in both pedagogical and research literature in terms of understanding Afro-Cuban and Cuban popular music. González Álvarez also, from the beginning of his teaching, emphasized the significance of the *clave* pattern. He constantly brought up the fact that the rhythmic structure of the melodic line in a pre-composed song appears in a certain relation to the *clave*. Furthermore, he stressed the accompanying role of the violin in the *charanga* tradition and the importance of knowing how to play the accompanying *guajeo* pattern in relation to the *clave*.

The musicians I have interviewed implied that they feel the *clave* intuitively and also take it into account when improvising. The presence of the *clave* seemed to be self-evident to the musician who is enculturated in Afro-Cuban culture and has acquired and learned musically transmitted patterns in socio-musical interaction. Indeed, it was noticeable that although there were violinists who did not have so much experience in the field of improvisation, the challenges in learning the tradition concerned the adoption of different techniques and rhythmic-melodic surface models, not the presence of the *clave*.

The fact that both González Álvarez and the other informants emphasized the importance of the *clave* pattern, but at the same time seemed to deal with its guiding role more freely during a solo, confused me at the beginning of my studies. For example, the shorter fragments of different melodic quotations did not necessarily appear in a similar relation to the *clave* as in the original version of the song. Neither was this seen as essential. It was important to bring up the recognizable melodic fragment, but also to play it rhythmically in 'tempo rubato', in which case the *clave* did not control it in the same way.

Sometimes violinists played closer to the background model and sometimes they moved further away from it. Violinists played more firmly locked in relation to the *clave* pattern when they exploited the accompanying, rhythmically *clave*-related *guajeo* pattern and played momentarily as part of the accompanying harmonic-polyrhythmic framework during the improvisation or at the end of it. The *clave* was emphasized more explicitly also when a violinist played the melody of the forthcoming *coro* section at the end of the solo. In this case, the temporally longer quotation was rhythmically established in a 'correct way' in relation to the strong and weak part of the *clave*. The melody of the quotation was always recognizable

and the phrases it included appeared in a similar relation to the *clave* pattern as to the original version. However, this did not exclude the rhythmic variation inside of the phrases.

Although the guiding role of the *clave* seemed to be less important, except during the structural sections mentioned above, the violinists took it into account in different ways when creating the rhythmic variation upon the rhythmic frame. According to analysis concerning the relation between the different kinds of accents appearing in the melodic line and the *clave* pattern, the accents were divided quite evenly between the different *clave* strokes, thus maintaining a certain balance between the syncopated beats and the beats that emphasize a steady metric rhythm at the basis of the *clave* pattern. However, the accents mainly fell on the fifth stroke of the *clave*, the third beat on the weak part of the pattern. There were also differences in relation to the musical genre during which the improvisation was performed. Although the melodic accent was the most used accent type, the syncopated metric accent – which falls on the *bombo*, the second stroke of the strong part – was emphasized in *montuno* sections proceeding in a faster *guaracha* style. Accenting the *bombo* stroke in different contexts is quite common in Latin dance music. However, the velocity and the anticipated bassline also made the rhythm of the melodic line more syncopated in these improvisations. Naturally, due to the constant syncopation, the accents encountered the *bombo* quite often.

When reflecting on my personal learning process concerning improvisation, I would claim that accenting the *bombo* stroke and noticing the *clave* pattern in general is sometimes an unconscious, automated action, and sometimes an intentional action. When I started improvising at the beginning of my studies, I tried to pay attention, and perhaps did so too much on a conscious level, to the relationship between the *clave* pattern and the melodic line. This, somehow, limited the instant involvement in the process of improvisation.

As I gained more experience, this faded away, and I no longer thought about the *clave* as the pattern that limited the improvisation, or that it should be slavishly followed. I guess one of the reasons was that my way of improvising became more syncopated over time, and this, in a certain way, made the solos merge into a polyrhythmic framework in a way typical of this genre. Later I understood that González Álvarez emphasized the *clave* in his teaching so that I would internalize its presence as a natural element at the foundation of the music. As a result, it could be used as the guiding but not limiting structure at the basis of the solo. I would claim that the essential part of learning to improvise in the context of this particular genre includes the idea of recognizing the *clave* as the immanent forwarding force that sometimes appears more explicitly – both through conscious and unconscious actions of the violinist – in the course of improvisation. In my view, this is what musicians mean when they say that they carry the *clave* inside.

The research material revealed several examples in which the *clave* was explicitly brought out by using a rhythmic cell. In these moments, the violinist used, for example, the *conga* pattern – in which an accent falls on the second and the third stroke of the *clave*'s strong part – or the *tresillo* or *cinquillo* patterns that were played during the strong part of the *clave*. However, these patterns also appeared during the weak part of the *clave*, as a counter-*clave*, or across bar lines. This kind of rhythmic-related relationship between the *clave* and the rhythm of the melodic line is also a commonly used technique in this particular music culture in general: it is expected that the rhythm of the melodic line complements the polyrhythmic framework (Peñalosa 2009, 172, 211). As González Álvarez also told me, he sometimes consciously, when the guitar player marks the *clave*, tries to vary and complement the overall rhythmic framework through the rhythm of the melodic line.

In sub-question four, I asked what kinds of factors guide the selection of the model and how the chosen model guides the improvisation in turn. As mentioned above, the *clave* somehow constantly affected the proceeding of the improvisation. Especially in improvisations proceeding in a faster tempo, the melodic line alternated between syncopated and 'on the beat' phrases, during which the clave strokes were accented in different ways. However, clave's guiding role appeared to be more explicit at the end of the solo just before the *coro* section, when the relation between the melodic background model and the polyrhythmic framework was stabilized, and also at the moment the violinist momentarily played as part of the accompanying rhythmic-harmonic framework.

Sub-question two discussed the reflection of the culture in behaviour and concepts concerning the improvisation, and sub-question three the relation between tradition and change in improvisation. The Afrocubanismo movement from the 1920s brought the Afro-Cuban elements more broadly to the cultural field and connected different social classes. At the same time *son* music – which is based on the *clave* rhythm, and in which the *montuno* section has a central role – was seen as the expression of national identity. This fact has not changed over the years, but these musical features, characteristic of *son*-based music, are certain hallmarks of Cuban popular music and *salsa* even today. Furthermore, they create the rhythmic-harmonic framework in which improvisations normally emerge. As brought out during this study, popular music is strongly present in the everyday life of Cubans, and the importance of its characteristic features emerges in various everyday situations, from the theme music of daily news broadcasts to the collective celebrations. In addition to playing a central role in Cuban life, Cuban popular music also has a wide global audience and it has influenced music styles outside the island as well. In light of these factors, it is not surprising that it has even been argued that Cuban popular music is the cultural expression that best defines what is Cuban to a foreigner (Benitez-Rojo 1998, 179).

Thus, I would claim that in addition to guiding the musician in different ways during a performance, the *clave* pattern – and also the *clave*-based music in general – includes specific cultural meanings shared by the society. In addition to being a structural model, the *clave* is a focal element in popular music, which strongly underlines the Cuban identity. Its meaning and guiding influence on behaviour come out both in the interviews conducted with musicians and when observing the interaction between the ensemble and the audience in this particular religious context. For example, sometimes the audience spontaneously starts clapping the pattern during a *montuno* section although it would not be audible as such in music, thus participating in the progress of the musical performance. This partly indicates how deeply rooted a phenomenon the *clave* is in local music and how its presence is also noticed among the audience. The transference of the *clave* and the *clave*-based music from one generation to another and its collective acquisition refers to both the musical and the cultural significance of the *clave* at the basis of Cubanity.

Clave, as a concept, is at the core of Afro-Cuban and Latin dance music. It is considered an unchanging element affecting rhythmic thinking throughout, which both the musicians and dancers should take into account in order to perform *clave*-based music correctly. In this study, there are differences regarding the use of the melodic parameter between the violinists representing different generations. However, irrespective of the violinist, the improvisations are strongly connected to their Afro-Cuban rhythmic roots. Additionally, the musicians emphasize in their interviews the importance of their own tradition, and the fact that the music culture is partly identified as Cuban due to the presence of the *clave* and the idea of tradition and continuity it contains. I would claim that its inseparable connection to Cuban popular music and its presence in everyday life also explain why the violinists learning the improvisation tradition in the Santería field had no problems with the *clave*, although some of them only had a classical music background.

In addition to the *clave* pattern, the violinists exploit temporally longer melodic background models that are based on different melodic quotations. The melodies are well-known among the community members and contain little melodic variation. That is, the violinists approach them as melodically dense background models. This is understandable, since their task is normally to lead the improvisation to the next section, the collective *coro* part. One can refer to these melodic models as symbols or texts, which have a referential meaning to the religious world, including different religious narratives, *patakís* and associations the devotees have acquired (cf. Rice 2003, 166; see Figure 24, in which the symbol is decoded at the collective level, in the node of local and social behaviour). The models are decoded during a collective interaction, when the participants in the event repeat the melody by singing it with lyrics, usually different from the original, that are brought into a religious context. Additionally, some of the *coros* (and also some of the songs dedicated to *orishas*)

entailing religious connotations are composed specifically for this occasion. Although there is no certainty about the composers of these particular melodies, many older people with years or decades of experience with these celebrations, relate them to Manuel de los Reyes Cajigal, a spiritist and a violinist, who is considered the initiator of this tradition in Havana, and his ensemble. However, the melodic models – or *llamadas* (see Miller 2014) – that lead to the *coro* section can also be more secular in nature, as is typical in *charanga* music. In addition to traditionally known melodies, it is expected that the ensemble renovates *coros* periodically. However, as mentioned above, some of the *coros* have established themselves in the repertoire of different ensembles and are always performed during a *montuno* section of a song dedicated to a particular saint.

Although the melodic quotation at the end of the solo is played in a way comparable to the original version, both melodically and in relation to the two-bar *clave* pattern, it is possible that the violinists vary the rhythm inside the phrases. They may relate the rhythm of the melodic line to the *clave* strokes in different ways or stretch the phrase melody in relation to the *clave* pattern. It is also appreciated among the musicians if the musician is able to approach the rhythm this way (Washburne 1998, 171; 2008, 178–197). This feature was quite common in solos of González Álvarez. He referred to the singer Omara Portuondo (b. 1930) as a master of this style, who has the talent to stretch the phrases and at the same time pay attention to the *clave*. The most important thing is that the length of the melodic quotation temporally remains inside of the framework guided by the *clave* and a chord progression and contains as many bars as the original version, which – however – sometimes is converted into a duple metre.

Like the *clave*, melodic quotations leading to the *coro* section are strongly placed in Cuban popular culture. In addition to the melodies commonly known among the members of the community, the meaning of their own culture is emphasized in lyrics that are generally changed to fit the religious context, as mentioned above. It is also common that the updated melodic quotations originate from specific songs that are popular in the society at the very moment (Figure 24; the node of local and art).

Although the Violín a Ochún event is a religious ceremony, I would argue that the central element that makes it different from other Santería celebrations is the way the popular features are brought out. Violín a Ochún is a religious feast in which the orchestra – and the violin improvisation, for its part – has the function of entertainment, although the ceremony also contains established liturgical elements, which some ensembles stress more than others. Religion as such is intertwined with Cuban popular culture, and this fact is also evident in the musical content of the event. Musical numbers are based both on popular songs using religious themes and songs that originally had a secular character but later have been articulated and rearticulated in a religious context. When taking into account the flexible structure

of the ceremony, its popular character, and a close connection between religious thematics and popular culture in Cuban context, the Violín a Ochún feast can be seen as a fertile and natural platform which both receives and applies the latest currents of popular music. This phenomenon can be seen both through the songs and the new *coro* sections that are brought to this context.

Sometimes, however, the audience may have different expectations and assumptions about the meaning of the *coro* section. The musical model may symbolize something different to the listener than to the musician who produces it. The listener may associate the particular melodic quotation with a certain theme dedicated to a particular deity and rearticulate it with a religious context (see Figure 24, in which the symbol is decoded at the individual level, in the node of individual and social behaviour). However, the musician may – at the same time – approach the solo with musical thoughts foremost in their mind and just indicate, by using this specific melodic quotation, to fellow musicians and the audience that the solo is about to end.

As an example, I brought out a widely used quotation in Cuban popular music, *Dark Eyes*, and its association with a gypsy theme and, further, to Ochún. There are certain similarities and associations between *Gitana* of spiritism and Ochún of Santería. Additionally, the emergence of the Violín a Ochún ceremony has been explained in the community such that Ochún was the one who wanted to have this kind of an event for herself (Figure 24; the node of local and symbol). Furthermore, some of the ensembles always play this quotation during the *montuno* section of the song dedicated to Ochún. With these things in mind, I would claim that the quotation might represent to the audience or to some member of the audience the cultural or personal model associated with Ochún that has been acquired by repeated observation. This might happen despite the fact that it would not have been the intention of the violinist. That is, there are alternative models present at the same time. The cultural model that is activated through the musical stimulus might create different meanings and – in addition to being a collectively shared model – also function as an idiosyncratic model at the basis of understanding the world.

However, I do not see a contradiction here. Cuban culture has been regarded as a culture under the ongoing syncretistic process, in which the fusions of different cultural components are constantly reinterpreted. Additionally, when taking into account that the musical content of the Violín a Ochún event has partly formed through the articulatory practice, it is just logical to think that the same has happened to certain melodic quotations. As I claimed in Chapter 5, the associations created by the cultural model might include different meanings in the same context depending on its producer and receiver, although the melodic quotation as such would be widely shared among the members of the society.

The third background model guiding the improviser is a monotonic, two- or four-bar-long chord cycle, which is normally played on the guitar. Sometimes violinists play closer to the rhythmic-harmonic background model by applying a so-called *guajeo* pattern in their playing. This accompanying pattern complements the rhythmic-harmonic foundation. Some guitar players approach the chord progression by playing the anticipated bass line, which is typical in *son*-based music. In such a case, the *guajeo* pattern will commonly be adapted accordingly: the weak part of the *clave* begins on a downbeat accent and the strong part of the *clave* with the syncopation, which is slurred from the preceding bar, thus anticipating the following chord. This is also the standard way of playing the *guajeo* pattern in *son*-based music. However, patterns also exist that do not follow this line and are less syncopated. This is common during the *montuno* sections of the song dedicated to Babalú Ayé, which proceed in a slower *cha-cha-chá* rhythm and do not stress the anticipated bassline.

Guajeo patterns serve the violinists as a kind of a background model that appears in relation to the rhythmic-harmonic framework. It may function, as Bardfeld (2001, 30) brings up when determining the term '*montuno* concept', as a reference or a basis for soloing or as the central motif when building a solo. The importance of *guajeo* patterns and the ability to know how to exploit them is at the core of *típico* violin playing. The way these patterns are used on the Violín a Ochún occasion brings the violinists together regardless of the generation they represent. I would claim that the certain kind of *montuno*-related thinking during improvisations appears both explicitly and implicitly. First of all, violinists may change to play the *guajeo* pattern momentarily in the middle of a solo and also use it as a basis for the next musical idea. On the other hand, I would claim that it is also implicitly present, as a *clave*-related, more abstract phenomenon, at the basis of the violinist's rhythmic thinking. For example, it is more typical that violinists play the syncopation at the onset of the strong part, rather than the weak part of the clave, and thus follow the rhythmic idea of the traditional *guajeo* pattern and its relation to the *clave*. Additionally, this phenomenon increases as the tempo of the *montuno* increases. Furthermore, in improvisations proceeding in the fastest tempos, the rhythm of the melodic line may occasionally follow the corresponding rhythm of the traditional *guajeo* pattern. However, when the *guajeo* pattern does not follow the anticipated harmony in the same way, there exists more variation in the improvisations in relation to slurring the notes across the bar line.

Although the manner of exploiting *guajeo* patterns connects violinists with tradition, there are differences in the way they approach the harmonic foundation when improvising. Some of the violinists describing their improvisation style as more traditional follow the harmonic progression quite firmly by stressing the notes of the chords appearing in the background at that moment and by constructing separate melodic phrases that follow the length of the single chord cycle. Ricardo

Cortez García, for example, typically plays a well-articulated phrase that lasts four bars, as long as the chord cycle, and commonly breaks the last chord by playing an arpeggio based on the pitches included in it.

It is also typical that the violinists draw on the harmonic background model more closely when having a moment in which they need time to think what they will do next. In such a situation the violinists may, for example, repeatedly play the fifth and the sixth degrees of the scale and wait for the next musical idea to come to mind. On the other hand, the violinists may use a more technical holding operation, in which they draw on scales or temporarily break the chords of the harmonic foundation by playing arpeggios including the chord tones. This method brings a solo closer to *típico* style, in which the diatonic nature is emphasized and the use of notes outside the key is avoided. This feature is present particularly in solos of some of the older violinists.

The improvisations of the violinists representing the younger generation, on the other hand, include more chromaticism and particular effects – such as outside playing – that move the melodic line away from the chord cycle. That is, the harmonic basis is approached less densely, which leads a solo further away from *típico* aesthetics. However, all violinists regardless of their age draw on the fifth degree of the particular diatonic scale of the key. It is well suited to the repetitive and simple chord progression and is a common feature in this particular improvisation genre.

Regarding the chord progression, it can also be stated that most improvisations are based on easier keys, which makes improvising more comfortable. One of the reasons that most of the keys of the songs included in the repertoire are pleasant is because it is common that the content of ensembles changes from one event to another. Violinists (and other musicians) are well networked with each other. Especially on days dedicated to certain *orishas*, when there are several performances at the same time, the musicians scratch together bands including musicians that normally do not play together. On the other hand, sometimes a person organizing the event requires an ensemble including only five violinists according to number associated with Ochún. In such cases, the violinist from whom the event has been ordered takes care of the necessary number of violinists on-site. Therefore, it is important that every musician knows the basic repertoire of the event in easier keys.

The violinists emphasize the importance of practicing the melodic surface models in relation to all keys. However, the improvisations played in more challenging keys resemble each other between different violinists – for example, in the ways certain central pitches are used – more than those proceeding in easier keys. I would claim that this implies, in a way, that certain keys, the ones that are not constantly used, also somehow restrict creativity in the course of a performance. That

is, it is more comfortable to draw on some particular central solutions, which are proven to function well.

As a conclusion, I would claim that the improvisation style, characteristic of this particular genre, is reflected in the way the violinists, regardless of the generation they represent, approach the rhythmic-harmonic and melodic background models during their improvisations. Although some of the more detailed musical solutions in relation to the background models are based on violinists' personal technical abilities, preferences, background education and age, all improvisations are somehow 'product oriented'. This clearly emerges in the phases the violinists simultaneously play closer to rhythmic, harmonic and melodic background models and thus exploit them as dense models, such as during a *guajeo* pattern or when playing melodic quotations leading to a *coro* section. As a response to sub-question one, the latter also emphasizes one of the functions of improvisation on these religious occasions: in addition to reflecting an entertaining task and constant communication with the audience, the role of the improvisation is to lead a *montuno* section forward and serve as a bridge to the next section in the course of collective interaction.

The learning, understanding and acquiring of the *clave*, different *guajeo* patterns and a wide repertoire of Cuban popular songs were also the cornerstones in González Álvarez's teaching. I would argue that mastering this foundation also leads to the possibility of creating a personal improvisation style emerging from the tradition – an issue the violinists found important. In sub-question three, I asked in what ways the different aspects of tradition and change appear in improvisations. The cultural localization is apparent through the musical background models on which the improvisations are based. The tradition and its continuity, but also the influences moving improvisations further away from the *típico* style, can also be approached by studying the surface models the violinists exploit when soloing.

6.2.2   Surface Models

The musical vocabulary containing different kinds of licks and rhythmic-melodic phrases – the surface models – can be approached in the context of a wider temporal and sociogeographic dimension. First of all, the *típico* models in the *charanga* violin tradition (Figure 24; the node of national and art) include rhythmic-melodic fragments and phrases that bring together improvisation styles of different instruments. These models include, for example, melodic quotations that have their origin in both Cuban and international popular music, typical phrases adopted from piano and flute improvisation, and a commonly used rhythmic approach, in which the weak beats of the bar are accented and the ternary phrasing of binary subdivision and binary phrasing of triplets are used. Sometimes the way of emphasizing the

tradition is brought out so explicitly that the violinist may, for example, play the identical melodic phase that appears in a well-known flute solo of some particular song.

Secondly, there are phrases that can be particularly associated with the *típico* tradition of the violin and whose origins can be traced to some particular individuals, such as Miguel Barbón. Thirdly, according to violinists, it is important to create one's own style. However, depending on the generation of the violinist, the features appearing in improvisations follow either the influences of the *típico* style, often associated with Miguel Barbón, or influences of more modern currents – although still appearing in the *charanga* context – often associated with Dagoberto González (Figure 24; the node of individual and art).

In addition to the basis of collectively shared vocabulary, there are differences regarding the content of solos between violinists representing different generations. I would claim that this is mainly the result of educational differences. Younger violinists have received more comprehensive art music training, and this has affected their technical skills, which – partly, at least – support the concept of bringing out diverse musical ideas more broadly. The revolution of 1959 led to different kinds of social and educational changes, and it has also had indirect influence on the content of the improvisations produced during the events (Figure 24; the node of national and symbol).

As a result of the revolution, national music education became institutionalized. Among the violinists representing the older generation, there are those who have been evaluating other musicians in the 'Escuela Superación de Músicos Profesionales', and those who were evaluated and who were given a chance to study further. Younger violinists, on the other hand, have had access to a comprehensive art music training from the beginning of their studies. Although the musical content in the Violín a Ochún occasion is strongly structured around popular and religious music, classical music also plays an important role when the ceremony is being carried out. In addition to some traditional violin repertoire and different globally known art music themes that are played during the event, classical music is also reflected in the melodic phrases, often borrowed from well-known violin themes that are brought out in the course of improvisation. In this sense, too, the violin improvisation is reminiscent of the *charanga* flute improvisation, in which it is typical that flautists adapt phrases from the classical flute repertoire (Valiente 2015, 113; Miller 2014).

The revolution led to the persecution of religious traditions, thus also influencing the playing of traditional African-based drums, like the *tambores batá*, that were played during the religious celebrations. Perhaps this contributed in part to the emerging popularity of the Violín a Ochún events. Religious people began to consider the violin as an artifact entailing musical features that were associated with

Ochún and Yemayá. Additionally, the Special Period of the early 1990s, which was the result of the fall of the Soviet Union, can also be considered a consequence of post-revolutionary politics. During the Special Period the practice of religion became more accepted. At the same time, dance ensembles had fewer job opportunities, and several violinists began to play on religious occasions that were becoming more popular. It is interesting how the symbolism included in the revolution is decoded in the music of the event to only a limited extent. Devotees want to keep religion and politics separate from each other. Although a lot of popular music is performed at the events, there are themes – for example, Carlos Puebla's well-known song dedicated to perhaps the greatest symbol of the revolution, Che Guevara – that are not played during the celebration. This song is not used as a song quotation in the course of performance either. One can say that as a general rule, the music performed on the occasion should include a certain kind of an associative or direct religious dimension.

The revolution also resulted in the US embargo, which, for a long time, prevented the influx of outside musical influences into Cuba (Figure 24; the node of global and art). This was also promoted by Cuba's own policy from the 1960s onwards. In his speech in 1972, Raúl Castro used the term 'ideological diversionism'. By this, he referred to a new form of aggression by the imperialists, whose purpose was to influence the people through ideological manipulation. For example, the music of the Beatles was prohibited, and rock and jazz music were seen as counter-revolutionary contaminants (Guerra 2010, 270).

While the embargo continues and the music stores in Havana offer customers mainly Cuban music, the attitudes of the state have gradually changed and music from outside of the island has also become more widely available. Rap musicians were officially recognized in Cuba in 1994 (Ferguson 2003, 7). Twenty years after John Lennon's death, the John Lennon park was opened in Havana, and in 2016 the Rolling Stones had a free outdoor concert in the capital. Additionally, Cuban musicians have also been encouraged to work overseas. They have been allowed to keep a large proportion of their earnings in order to reduce the possibility of their emigration (Robinson 2000, qtd. in Ferguson 2003, 9). I would suppose that this has partly led to the spread of foreign musical influences among local musicians. I would claim, however, that the most important factor at the moment contributing to the adoption of different global musical influences is the internet, to which people in Havana currently have limited access. González Álvarez also stressed the importance of the internet as a source of access to different kinds of music.

However, it is still not possible to study popular music in Cuba at the institutional level in the art schools. According to the interviews (and the transcriptions made of improvisations), the violinists representing the younger generation have consciously absorbed influences outside of the traditional *típico* style and brought them into the

charanga context, thus following the improvisation style of Dagoberto González. These non-traditional features in the *típico* context appear at least through the use of a broader pitch material, especially the blue notes, the way of using slides, and the exploitation of different licks. When referring to influences at the basis of improvisation, the violinists also bring up some internationally known jazz violinists. However, I could not find any direct references to these violinists in the transcriptions of this study. Perhaps these musical features mentioned above are related to the influences of these violinists as well. Additionally, when taking into account the traditional connection between Cuban music and jazz, and the mutual adoption of influences, one can say that including these kinds of musical features in a *charanga* context seems to be just a logical continuation of this special relationship. In this context, I refer to the global influences (Figure 24; the node of global and art). However, it is important to notice that the musicians emphasize the importance of the *charanga*-based religious performance context and that the improvisations are played during the occasion, in which the participants share a collective tradition.

According to interviews, the improvisation style and different surface models characteristic of this genre are partly learned and transmitted between the musicians during a performance. Furthermore, newly emerging musical ideas are transferred between all violinists, no matter the generation they represent or how experienced they are. It is significant, however, and can also be noticed in the transcriptions of this study, that a more experienced violinist playing alongside sometimes influences the development of the vocabulary of a violinist with less experience. This certainly happened to me as well, since I had a chance to play with different ensembles. Like local violinists, I, too, took advantage of the phrases I adopted from the performances of other violinists, thereby increasing and expanding my own musical vocabulary.

The interaction between the ensemble members occurs partly through the musical cues that emerge as a result of the exploitation of surface and background models. In addition to musical cues, there are other kinds of verbal and non-verbal expressions guiding the process. Typical means of communication between the musicians include different shouts, gazes and nods as well. The communication between the musicians and the audience is also both verbal and non-verbal. I would claim that this particular 'social self', the one that directs and controls the social interaction between the musicians and the audience, is formed on the basis of mutuality, on which the reciprocal interaction progresses a performance forward. It contains the attitudes and expectations of both the audience and the musicians in relation to the entertainment function of the performance, but still in its specific religious context.

For example, musicians might verbally guide the audience regarding how to proceed in a given situation, such as before a particular *coro*. On the other hand, referring to sub-question four, the different changing situations in the interactive

process influence the choice of the surface model used by the musician during the improvisation. For example, the audience can have an impact on the content of improvisation. It may – in the same way that fellow musicians do – somehow encourage the musician, and this, in turn, may lead to a certain kind of proceeding of a solo. Additionally, the fact that there is often a loud background noise during the event may force the violinists to produce their improvisation in higher octave ranges and thus make a solo sound louder. This, in turn, influences the surface models the violinist exploits at the moment.

On the other hand, the musician may receive direct influences from the physical features of the audience. For example, the presence of a child may lead to the use of a specific well-known melodic surface model to which the audience, in turn, may respond in a particular manner – for example, associating the melodic fragment with the jocularity of the musician. In such a case, the extra-musical model the musician exploits is carried out in their playing as a melodic surface model connected to tradition, which further opens up to the community as the acquired cultural model, to which it reacts in a typical, learned way (Figure 24; the node of local and symbol). Furthermore, it is interesting that, at the same time, the presence of a child functions as a particular symbol or affordance for different violinists and leads them to use the same kind of surface model in the course of performance. Both González Álvarez and Hernández Mora mentioned that they play a song quotation of *Al ánimo*, a traditional Spanish singing game, which is activated in their playing when they see a child in the audience. If referring again to sub-question one, these kinds of melodic models and the cultural associations they create underline the entertaining and interactive role of improvisation on this specific religious occasion.

Violinists find it important to create a connection with the audience through improvisation, which should be based on tradition and on this particular genre. However, they also emphasize the importance of creating one's own personal style. Each violinist who participated in this study has a distinctive recognizable style, which comes out, for example, through the specific licks and rhythmic-melodic phrases they use, although they all share the same kind of basic, tradition-related vocabulary as well. It is notable, however, that the improvisation style the violinist follows is somehow connected with the influence of *típico* style or more modern currents, depending on the age and educational background of the violinist.

I would also claim that some of the traditional *típico* licks are updated in improvisations of younger violinists in a certain way. A good example in this regard is the way the violinists articulate a pattern with ternary phrasing of binary subdivision. This kind of phrasing technique is common among all violinists, but those who represent the younger generation regularly add a blue note to a melodic line and sometimes play the pattern outside of the key. Another example is the ascending tremolo-glissando. Ronny Cabarrogas Fernández often draws on the lick

that is relative to this common *típico* technique, but which is more technical in its character. It proceeds in ascending and descending motion in turns, and the tremolo-glissando is often replaced by continuous trill. Although these kinds of features move improvisations further from the traditional *típico* style in a certain way, at the same time, they share a common approach regarding typical possibilities and phrasing techniques in *charanga*-based violin tradition.

In conclusion, this study indicates that in addition to the common vocabulary emphasizing the cultural localization of the music, there are also differences regarding the surface models the violinists exploit in the course of improvisation. The improvisations of the violinists representing the younger generation include musical features that expand the idea of the traditional *típico* style associated with the *charanga*. This has been influenced by the systematic musical education and new role models among the violinists. The essential feature, however, is that younger violinists exploit the traditional and cultural self-referential surface models in their solos as well. In other words, the content of the improvisations stresses the religious popular context, in which communication between the members of the community plays a central role. In addition to guiding musicians, musical models include different cultural connotations that both guide the behaviour of the participants and emphasize the commonly shared cultural knowledge. In short, the study brings up the interplay of musical models and cultural models. Collectively shared musical structures are representations that create cultural meanings in their environment by activating cultural models that guide the behaviour of the community.

6.3   Contributions to the Research Field and Practical Implementations

This study was based around the concept of the structural model emerging from the ethnomusicological music analysis. The concept was approached in the context of the study of musical performance in the Violín a Ochún event. Furthermore, I studied structural models as broader cultural phenomena and approached them from the perspective of the cognitive research tradition as well. As is typical in ethnomusicology, the focus of collecting ethnographic research material was on fieldwork and participant observation. The idea of bi-musicality was included in this methodological basis. The results concerning the improvisation process and the temporal and sociogeographical dimensions at its foundation were brought out by taking advantage of the model of Rice's three dimensions of musical experience (Rice 2003; 2017).

Perhaps the most significant contribution of this dissertation was to expand the study of cognitive and music analytic model-based improvisation in a culture-sensitive direction. The subject was approached through specific musical structures

that were brought up by a local mentor in his teaching and the ones that emerged from the improvisations. These musical structures were studied holistically in this specific performance context and as an integral cultural part of it, by drawing on the principles of methodological triangulation. The study combined both traditional music analysis and the purpose of interpreting the subject through thick description. Furthermore, it contained features of so-called new fieldwork, which emphasizes the subjective and lived experiences of the researcher. The study focused primarily on traditional data collection and its subsequent analysis, which sought to combine the collected data in light of the traditions emerging from music analysis and anthropology.

In addition to mapping out the musical vocabulary typical to this improvisation culture, I also viewed it in its social and historical context. I approached the musical models as part of the interactive religious popular performance, in which they were considered structures transmitting different codes, rules and behavioural models, and functioning as mental and cultural schemas creating cultural meanings and associations. Thus, I claim that approaching the structural organizational models in music as an inseparable part of cultural complex whole, in which different cultural domains interact together and form the basis of how people interpret the world (see Tylor 2016), is one way to interpret and explain improvisations and models they contain as a 'humanly organized sound' in this particular cultural context.

To my knowledge, this study is the first broader ethnography concerning the Violín a Ochún ceremony. Additionally, the structural musical elements appearing at the basis of Cuban popular music and violin improvisation and their interplay with cultural models during the interactive religious popular performance have not been studied before. The previous pedagogical and research literature concerning Cuban music have widely approached the structures in music culture in general and in the context of different particular instruments. Furthermore, the influences of Afro-Cuban music, Cuban popular music and classical music at the foundation of improvisation have been explicated in different contexts. Additionally, references between musical structures and cultural context have been brought up. Although this study has focused on violin improvisation during an interactive religious event, it also follows the previous literature concerning Cuban music, which I have referred to in different ways in the course of my research.

The results of this study, together with the extensive background material including videos and transcriptions of improvisations, and musical examples highlighted in the text can also be used for educational purposes alongside the pedagogical literature. Furthermore, a strong context-based approach to improvisation, supported by extensive ethnographic exploration and the way of using interviews of musicians alongside the music analysis, can be used, for example, as a general guide on the subject or in global education.

6.4   Validity and Trustworthiness

One way to justify the validity of this study is to emphasize the methodological triangulation I have used both in analysis and synthesis. During the progress of the study my aim has been to approach, by using different perspectives, both the concept of the musical model in this particular context and the cultural connotations included in it. This approach has contained interviews, participant observation, videos, transcriptions and also some quantitative methods. I would argue that in terms of validity, the research questions have been appropriately limited in relation to my research material, which has been collected from the same performance context from a relatively large group of violinists over several years, and which is also wide enough that I can present the conclusions I have brought out. I would claim that the conclusions concerning the structural organizational models in relation to the *clave*, *montuno* concept, and the idea of the importance of tradition support the previous observations made of the subject. This relates to the generalizability of the findings, which supports the validity of this study as well.

In terms of assessing the trustworthiness of the musical structures studied in this work, the transcriptions, the videos on which they are based, and the results of analyses are presented together with the research report. However, the interviews that were partly used when constructing the bridges between the musical structures and the attendant cultural meanings are in the author's possession.

6.5   Further Research

In the present study, models connected to improvisations have mainly been approached from the perspective of the musicians playing in these events. The next logical step would be to expand the overall picture of the phenomenon and approach the topic more specifically from the perspective of audience involvement and reception. It would be important to study in a more comprehensive and detailed way how the audience perceives the musical structures emerging from improvisations in relation to the different cultural symbols these structures transmit.

Additionally, it would be useful to study the Violín a Ochún events from a wider perspective, also including the ceremonies organized outside the city of Havana. It would be interesting to study the differences and similarities between the occasions in Cuba at the city level. When considering that there are differences between the ensembles carrying out musical performance in Havana (though there are more similarities between the groups), the differences are much greater between different Cuban cities. It would also be interesting to study how this ceremony type is being performed among the Cuban communities in a diaspora outside of Cuba (such as Miami), and how environmental change impacts the realization of musical performance and the violin improvisation it contains.

In conclusion, the present study offers one viewpoint on the Violín a Ochún ceremonies and Cuban religious popular events. At the same time, it serves as the first broader research to introduce this particular phenomenon and leaves the doors open for further research. I would argue that the ethnomusicological approach to the subject, in which musical structures have also been studied and interpreted in their broader cultural context, provides a multidimensional basis and enables the topic to be approached and extended further in several ways in future studies.

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Interviews

Alejandro Vistel (AV) 26022010 (Havana)

Carlos Del Puerto (CdP) 31032015 (Turku)

Omar Nilo González Álvarez (OGÁ) 07012006 (Havana); 23012007 (Havana); 26102007 (Havana); 08112007 (Havana); 21122007 (Havana); 17012008 (Havana); 18052009 (Havana); 04122011 (Havana); 03022014 (Havana); 09032017 (Havana); 10022019 (Havana); 24022020 (Havana); 08112022 (phone interview)

Raúl Ríos Chassagne (RRC) 26022008 (Havana); 20052009 (Havana)

Ronny Cabarrogas Fernández (RCF) 03112007 (Havana); 18052009 (Havana)

Edel Lazága Ortega (ELO) 27122007 (Havana); 04032010 (Havana)

Jorge Denis Molir (JDM) 14052009 (Havana)

Maria Isabel Berbes Riveaux (MIBR) 01022012 (Santiago de Cuba)

Rodolfo Quesada Febles (RQF) 04012012 (Havana)

Nancy Hernández Leyva (NHL) 04032008 (Havana)

Richard Egües (RE) 19012004 (Havana)

Ricardo Cortez García (RCG) 26022008 (Havana); 06052009 (Havana)

Geronimo Barbón (GB) 13022008 (Havana)

Joaquin Izquierdo (JI) 16012008 (Havana)

Rosario Galpraieh (RG) 06072004 (Havana)

Arisel Arce Burguera (AAB) 24022008 (Havana)

Silvio Alayo Lescay (SAL) 02022012 (Santiago de Cuba)

José Pablo Reyes Marrero (JPRM) 24022008 (Havana)

Celso Valdés Santandreu (CVS) 31012008 (Havana)

Pedro Martínez Acuña (PMA) 11022008 (Havana)

Eduar Marzán Betancourt (EMB) 16052009 (Havana)

Jorge Hernández Mora (JHM) 17052009 (Havana)

Mario Argudin (MA) 12052009 (Havana)

Tero Toivanen (TT) 27072007 (Tampere)

René García González (RGG) 09052009 (Havana)

Yoel Terry (YT) 26072007 (Tampere)

Improvisations

Videos:
Ronny Cabarrogas Fernández https://youtu.be/JlgrkEKkM_U
Eduar Marzán Betancourt https://youtu.be/jJGE_a0zrSU
Edel Lazága Ortega https://youtu.be/FOVbeq1pThg
Jorge Denis Molir https://youtu.be/-VGTDUa3VDg
Alejandro Vistel https://youtu.be/Z_bueN-_fJ0
Jorge Hernández Mora https://youtu.be/JjnD3bnJgzI
Ricardo Cortez García https://youtu.be/fLPl-7hyFCU
Raúl Ríos Chassagne https://youtu.be/eRTsn76X2JA
René García González https://youtu.be/vVTkP6fP8i0
Felix Parreño https://youtu.be/sHl_pOk5tU0
Omar Nilo González Álvarez https://youtu.be/dBdS4uKFn9w
and https://youtu.be/jCpJ52ZdlMw (this improvisation contains only audio track)
Mario Argudin https://youtu.be/_kFi5a4eTv0

Transcriptions: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/11GoEXLxD1mJmQjjQywHJYcDanA6fpo71

Video Examples: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hFNbYwklb1g

Annexes: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1x0pWFc815abXbyZctJ-gLviZZlQylfRX

Annex 1. Syncopation at the onset of the bar

Annex 2. Metric accent

Annex 3. Number of all accents and accent combinations in relation to all clave strokes within all data

Annex 4. Durational accent

Annex 5. Interval size accent

Annex 6. Contour pivot point

Annex 7. Registral extreme accent

Annex 8. Natural harmonics

Annex 9. Group 1

Annex 10. Group 2

Annex 11. Group 3

Annex 12. Group 4

Annex 13. Group 5

Annex 14. Group 6

Annex 15. Group 7

Annex 16. Tessituras of improvisations

Annex 17. Double stops in the context of G3, D4, A4 and E5