

December 5, 2024

A Milestone Year Comes to a Close

Dear Friends of the Latin American Music Center,

As a crowning achievement of an academic year filled with celebratory activities and significant accomplishments for the Center, we are proud to present a scholarly paper by one of our Scholars-in-Residence, the distinguished **Colombian guitarist and researcher, Leon Salcedo**. We hope you enjoy reading his paper, "*The Guitar and Violin Works of Blas Emilio Atehortúa as an Expression of His Syncretic Aesthetic: An Examination of Sonatina Op. 164 for Violin and Guitar.*" Further information about Salcedo can be found in the body of this newsletter.

We have now reached the conclusion of our year-long celebration of the **40th anniversary** of the Center's founding. In every event we organized—concerts, lectures, newsletters, and research—the legacy of **Dr. Elaine Walter, Dr. Emma Garmendia, Dr. Santo, and Dr. Wagstaff**, among others, was ever-present in my thoughts as a way of honoring the immense contributions they have made over the past four decades.

This final semester has been particularly intense and moving. We began with **TorcuArt's gala**, where the legacy of flamenco in Ibero-American music was celebrated. This was followed by the **Sonus International Music Festival**, which, as always, delivered an exceptional level of artistry with performances by the acclaimed pianists **Nancy Roldán** and **Lilia Salsano**—the latter traveling from Argentina specifically for the event—alongside the brilliant violinist, **Maestro José Cueto**. I had the honor of participating in this performance, interpreting works by our beloved and illustrious Argentine composer, **Carlos Guastavino**.

Subsequently, we were privileged to host a lecture by **Dr. Leonardo Manzano**, who traveled from Uruguay exclusively to participate in the celebrations of his **Alma Mater**. His presence was profoundly moving, as he brought with him recollections of a golden past that many of us were unaware of, along with

invaluable suggestions for shaping a bright future for the Latin American Music Center. Thank you, Dr. Manzano, for your outstanding contributions.

Finally, to close the semester, and in collaboration with the **Cultural Office of the Embassy of Spain in Washington, DC**, we presented the extraordinary young Spanish countertenor, **Mikel Uskola Cobos**. His performance at Ward Recital Hall was marked by elegance, refinement, and a level of vocal and musical artistry that was nothing short of exceptional. He was accompanied by our esteemed former faculty member and current **Associate Professor of Piano at The Hartt School, Maestro José Ramos Santana**, whose authority and talent made this performance an absolute delight.

We could not be more proud and satisfied with this semester of vibrant celebrations. We are currently working on sharing some of our recordings on **YouTube**, so that those who could not join us in person can witness the extraordinary achievements of this remarkable year.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to everyone who accompanied us with their presence, guidance, and support. A special acknowledgment goes to my assistant, **Enrique Victoria Obando**, whose dedication and tireless efforts made these accomplishments possible, and to our Dean, **Jackeline Leary Warsaw**, for her unwavering support and trust in my leadership.

Additionally, I extend my heartfelt thanks to the **Friends of the LAMC Council**, whose advice, insights, and steadfast commitment have been instrumental in guiding the vision and activities of the Center. Their invaluable contributions have helped us celebrate our history and pave the way for a promising future.

With heartfelt gratitude, I wish you a blessed and joyous Christmas, celebrating the miraculous gift of Christ's resurrection and the hope it brings to our lives,

Gustavo Ahualli

Director, Latin American Music Center

The Guitar and Violin Works of Blas Emilio Atehortúa as an Expression of His Syncretic Aesthetic: An Examination of Sonatina Op. 164 for Violin and Guitar

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Introduction

The Latin American Music Center (LAMC) previously examined the oeuvre of Blas Emilio Atehortúa (1930? -2020)¹. In this same forum in 2021, Giampiero Bugliarelli emphasized the case of Blas Emilio Atehortúa as a prominent figure in Colombian avant-garde music, underscoring the significance of the persistence of certain myths about Atehortúa in scholarly discourse that raises important questions regarding the nature of musical historiography and the construction of Colombian national musical narratives. This phenomenon underscores the necessity for a critical analysis of his works and comprehensive examination of sources and the importance of ongoing research to distinguish facts from fiction in musical biography.

This article presents a reflective exercise concerning the concept of syncretism in Atehortúa's musical aesthetic, following a line of exploration based on consultation with musicological works that analyze specific repertoires. Additionally, statements from performers and Atehortúa are considered, representing opinions grounded in the artistic experience surrounding this composer's musical oeuvre.

This study aims to examine how the central idea of "syncretism" in Atehortúa's work is reflected in his solo and chamber music for violin and guitar, and how the Sonatina a Due Op. 164 for Violin and Guitar synthesized this principle, as noted in impressions of performers and audiences during its premiere in Chile in 1993, performed by Luis Orlandini and Javier del Jara. To this end, this article first presents a brief account of the relevance of the concept of musical syncretism, an approach to musical practice that, although often discredited in the past, emerged

¹ The controversy over the date of birth of Blas Emilio Atehortúa has been addressed by different authors in the article "[Blas Emilio Atehortúa Amaya](#)" Published by Banrepcultural, the Encyclopedia of the Bank of the Republic of Colombia.

in the 21st century in debates on aesthetics proposed in Latin America, where the potential of this idea is highlighted, and the need for its development in the fields of art and criticism is manifested.

Subsequently, the article will deepen how Atehortúa defended and developed this idea throughout his music, and how this has been recognized and emphasized by researchers who have conducted comprehensive studies of his work for violin and guitar. Finally, through guitarist Luis Orlandini's experience, this article presents how the premiere of *Sonatina a Due* Op. 164 in Chile exemplifies Atehortúa's success in communicating impressions of his idea of syncretism to performers. The purpose of this exercise is to explore Atehortúa's work as a propitious medium for studying and developing a proposal for Latin American aesthetics in the 21st century, centered on the examination of the relevance and revitalization of the idea of musical syncretism. Future developments in this line of research may focus on conducting musical analysis exercises that allow for an exhaustive investigation of the techniques and resources used by Atehortúa and other composers to concretize the principle of syncretism in their work.

The relevance of the debate on syncretism

Regarding musical syncretism, some iconic authors within European theoretical and critical traditions have responded with disdain. For instance, Adorno (1949) characterized syncretic music as impotent. Likewise, more recent theorists, such as Mahnkopf (2006), have subcategorized it as a byproduct of postmodernism (hybrid postmodernism), the primary characteristic of which is the negation of truth (presented as irony, falsehood, deception, dishonesty, hypocrisy, and mockery). Mahnkopf (2006). Practically, this entails understanding "hybrid" music as expressions without a determined aesthetic or ethical framework (in the absence of a formal and material framework, any framework is validated). As art, the scope of its reflection would be directed towards being an anti-proposal, given that its pursuit is non-truth.

Conversely, a deeper analysis of the historiography of composers such as Atehortúa, where a dialogue between elements from different traditions exists, reveals that in these repertoires, hybridization and syncretism do not occur in a naive or uncritical manner that simply seeks to introduce any type of material or formal treatment to elude an ethical, aesthetic, or political commitment. On the contrary, proposals such as Atehortúa's are clearly determined (as we will see by the limits and components described by him), emerging as a construction and

production of subjectivity, knowingly immersed in political and social realities. This is often expressed explicitly: e.g., *Réquiem del silencio, a la memoria de Guillermo Cano I. y Rodrigo Lara, para coro mixto y orq, Op. 143. 1987.*

The limitations of these theoretical approaches that disregard or superficially address musical syncretism stem from the lack of a framework in which music is observed and analyzed through a lens different from Eurocentrism, where the evolution of musical styles is seen exclusively as a dialectic in which art (as a product of European culture) negates, transforms, and synthesizes itself, subsuming itself as a continuum. Without elaborating an extensive definition and characterization of subcategories such as "hybrid postmodernity," all music that "mixes elements of European classical music with pop or world music..." Mahnkopf (2006, p.6), is packaged under this label without much depth. In this case, the error lies not primarily in the characterization of the postmodern but in categorizing all hybrid or syncretic music within this postmodern vision. An examination of artists' opinions on their own productions, such as Atheortúa, who proclaimed himself as a proponent of syncretism, will reveal the proposition of critical interculturality as an alternative to modernity and postmodernity.

The necessity to develop theoretical and analytical frameworks, as well as artistic proposals framed in a horizontal dialogue of knowledge, has already been noted by theorists of aesthetics such as Enrique Dussel in his work "*Siete hipótesis para una estética de la liberación*" (2018), where he exposes the descriptive, analytical, and poetic limitations of modern theories of aesthetics and expresses the need to propose a new framework for artistic production, as well as for theory and criticism in the key of the global south.

"In this manner, an initial attempt at a systematic approach to the Aesthetics of Liberation manifests itself at the intersection of aesthetics and theoretical fields (as theories). The future task of producing a new decolonized aesthetic philosophy, a regional and global history of aesthetics, will be immense; both as aesthesis (that is, as subjectivity that elaborates new tastes and rules for aesthetics interpretation) and as works of art (also including their respective rules, instruments, theories of their production, development of criticism so essential for art)" (Dussel 2018, p.25).

Therefore, in this understanding, the syncretism proposed by artists such as Atheortúa, as well as concepts such as "critical interculturality" (Grosfoguel 2023), does not aim to create a zone of exploration and experimentation where countless and indeterminate materials and formal treatments interact uncritically. Rather, it

involves the construction of artistic, and theoretical/analytical proposals for art. In Mignolo (2010) and Grosfoguel (2006), border epistemology is elaborated in response to the fundamentalist absolutisms of both Eurocentrism and essentialist fundamentalism. Following Mignolo (2000) and Dussel (1992), this entails the construction of proposals where the dynamics of art are not given by a subsumption of negations and syntheses within a single Eurocentric continuum (that is, a dialectic between the idea and its contradictions implicit in itself). Rather, this subsumption of the modern European into a new totality is redefined in alterity, that is, in the other, which in the case of syncretic music, is in the cosmologies and epistemologies of the non-European, which have historically been disregarded and exoticized.

The Guitar and Violin Works of Blas Emilio Atehortúa as an Expression of His Syncretic Aesthetic

"Neoclassicism, expressionism, and syncretism are the primary aesthetic influences on my work, derived from my mentors and overall experience. Additionally, syncretism pertains to my compositional approach, as I incorporate elements that are not necessarily erudite or academic, but rather popular in nature. There are various cultural domains, including academic culture, folkloric culture, and ethnological culture, each possessing significant value. When questioned about the relative importance of a Beethoven symphony versus a bambuco by Carlos Vico, I responded that they are equivalent as they belong to distinct cultural traditions. This perspective informs my approach to neoclassicism, which represents the legacy of past masters in creating music for their own sake, rather than descriptive music. Subsequently, romanticism emerged as descriptive music, and a combination of classical music and romanticism yielded expressionism. There is much to be said on this subject" (Atehortúa B., 2015).

According to Herrera (2013), the interplay between folkloric Latin Americanism and Avant-garde was present in Atehortúa's music since his student days at CLAEM in the 1960s, fostered by the influence of his mentor, Alberto Gnastera. As evidenced by quotes from young Atehortúa himself presented by Herrera, during this period, the manifestation of Latin American folkloric elements in Blas Emilio's music emerged organically within a universalist vision in an almost subconscious manner (Herrera, 2013). Conversely, Atehortúa's later statements reveal a more deliberate and sophisticated approach to the significance of the interaction between categories, such as popular, folkloric, and Avant-garde, as demonstrated in his discourse on the subject during a conference on his piano

music at the Luis Angel Arango Library in Bogotá in 2015. This level of awareness regarding these interactions was termed and synthesized by Atehortúa himself as “syncretism” and was elucidated by him during several interactions with performers in his later years.

Regarding this matter, recent studies have presented background information focused on Atehortúa's violin and guitar compositions: Atehortúa, Montaña, and García (2021), and Ortiz Niño (2019). These sources may serve to initiate the delineation of this specific field (Violin and Guitar) within his oeuvre as a domain for exploring his concept of syncretism as well as the elements employed by him and perceived by performers as means to express this principle of his aesthetic philosophy.

According to Montaña and García (2021), Atehortúa's catalog of works exceeds 250 compositions, reaching Opus 254. Within this body of work, his chamber music for violin occupies a prominent position, amounting to thirty-nine (39) pieces as of 2012, as reported by Rodríguez Grisales (2012).

Regarding Atehortúa's chamber music featuring violin, one of the most systematic works published has been the series of critical editions of his string quartets produced by the *Centro de Divulgación y Medios* of the Faculty of Arts at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá campus.

In the Preface to the Edition of String Quartet No. 6, opus 250 (2021), authors Julián Montaña Rodríguez and Liz Ángela García Castro provide an examination of Blas Emilio Atehortúa's chamber music, focusing on his sixth string quartet. This edition of String Quartet No. 6 was presented as part of a broader project aimed at facilitating a more comprehensive appreciation and study of Atehortúa's contributions to chamber music. Their analysis highlighted the key aspects of Atehortúa's compositional style. The authors concluded that String Quartet No. 6 reflects both the aesthetic and technical principles that characterize Atehortúa's musical approach, positioning this piece within the broader trajectory of his creative output.

A central point in Montaña and García's preface is Atehortúa's emphasis on syncretism, which they interpret as a fusion of popular and classical musical traditions. According to the authors, Atehortúa sought to integrate the elements of Latin American folk music into the structural and formal rigor of classical composition, a technique that defines much of his work. In this context, syncretism

specifically refers to the fusion of elements of European classical music with those of Latin American folk and popular music. For Atehortúa, this synthesis was not merely a superficial addition of folk themes to classical structures but a more profound and integrated process in which the essence of popular music could permeate erudite classical forms. Montaña and García suggest that the understanding of this syncretism is particularly evident in Atehortúa's approach to rhythm and melodic constructions. They noted that his music frequently draws upon the rhythmic vitality of traditional Latin American music, which is interwoven into the structural fabric of his compositions. For instance, in String Quartet No. 6, rhythmic impulse and metric fluidity reflect the influence of Latin American dance forms and popular music; however, these elements are integrated within the compositional framework of European classical music. It can be inferred from their observations that the result is a hybrid form that is neither entirely classical nor entirely popular but exists in a liminal space where both traditions contribute to the overall aesthetic.

Montaña and García also posit that Atehortúa's syncretism aligns with a broader tradition of creative synthesis in Western music, wherein composers have long drawn upon popular or folkloric elements to enrich classical forms. However, in Atehortúa's case, this hybridization of styles holds a particular cultural significance, as it reflects his Latin Americanist identity. From this observation, one can infer that by situating the composer within Latin Americanism, his work can be interpreted as an artistic response to the broader question of how Latin American composers position themselves within a global musical landscape dominated by European art music.

In this study, in addition to technical analysis, the authors focused on the collaborative nature of this critical edition. Q-Arte Quartet, which worked closely with Atehortúa and premiered several of his chamber works, played a crucial role in shaping the editorial process. Montaña and García emphasize the significance of the quartet's interpretative ideas, which were incorporated into the final edition. The flexibility Atehortúa granted performers, including the freedom to modify dynamics and phrasing, is considered an integral part of his compositional approach.

The critical edition by Montaña and García, structured around a collaborative exercise involving interpreters and composer, can be understood as a work that elucidates the technical challenges and opportunities that Atehortúa's syncretism presents to performers. By synthesizing rhythmic and melodic elements from diverse traditions, Atehortúa created compositions that demanded a high level of

interpretative sensitivity from performers, who must navigate the shifting stylistic terrain of his music. The authors observed that this amalgamation of styles is not always immediately apparent, as the composer frequently embeds popular elements within complex formal structures. Consequently, performers are tasked with unveiling these subtle layers and highlighting the tension between popular and academic-classical elements in their interpretations.

Regarding Atehortúa's guitar compositions, although his output is not as extensive as his chamber music catalog featuring violin, it is highly significant within the Colombian guitar context. This significance stems not only from his importance as a figure in academic music in Colombia, but also because, as demonstrated by comprehensive studies on 20th-century Colombian guitar music, such as González (2017), this repertoire has been predominantly dominated in terms of volume by music more closely associated with traditional expression. This observation acknowledges that Colombian composers in the 20th century, within the academic sphere, produced guitar works with a more contemporary expression, including Guillermo Uribe Holguín (1880-1971), Guillermo Rendón (1935-), Rodolfo Acosta (1970-), Mario Gómez-Vignes (1934-) Héctor González (1961-), Alberto Guzmán (1953- 2023), and Blas Emilio Atehortúa. Within this more limited group of contemporary and Avant-garde expressions in 20th-century Colombian guitar music, Atehortúa's guitar contributions comprise the following inventory of solo works, chamber pieces, and compositions for guitar duo and orchestra according to the article "Blas Emilio Atehortúa Amaya" Published by Banrepcultural, the Encyclopedia of the Bank of the Republic of Colombia.

1. *Tres preludios para guitarra, Op. 44 N 1.*
2. *En el espíritu popular colombiano, Dos piezas para guitarra, Op. 74. (1968).*
3. *Preludio para guitarra No. 1. Op. 204. In Memoriam Hector Villalobos (1999).*
4. *Concertino para dos guitarras y orq de cuerdas, Op. 111. (1982).*
5. *Sonatina a due. Para violín y guitarra, Op. 164. (1990).*
6. *Antífonas 1. Para soprano, 4 coros, 3 pianos, 3 arpas, guitarras, 10 percusiones, y contrabajos, Op. 205. (1999).*
7. *Concierto para guitarra y orquesta, Op. 261. (2019).*

Within this inventory, the aesthetic principle of syncretism can be observed in various works, such as the case of Prelude No. One Op. 204 or in the third prelude to Op. 44 No. 1, as well as in Op. 76. Within this repertoire, recent research and

analysis have focused on Op. 74, “*En el espíritu popular colombiano, Dos piezas para guitarra, Op. 74*”. Ortiz Niño (2019) presents in this article reflections on the principle of syncretism in Atehortúa's guitar music and its implications for performance, elaborated from the composer's own opinions.

According to this study, Atehortúa's syncretic approach stems from an interest in establishing a dialogue between the past and present and involves utilizing elements of traditional Colombian music in an abstract manner, integrating them into a broader artistic vision without adhering to folkloric conventions. Based on an analytical exercise applied to interpretation, it is suggested that performers should find expressive flexibility that allows for the expansion of the text in aspects such as metronomic indications and explore diverse accentuations.

Sonatina a Due Op. 164 for Violin and Guitar

Figure 1. Sonatina a Due Op. 164 by Blas Emilio Atehortúa

Sonatina a Due Op. 164 represents a unique instance of Blas Emilio Atehortúa's oeuvre of composition for this instrumental configuration. The work was dated April 29, 1990, in Caracas, and as indicated in the score, was dedicated to violinist José Francisco del Castillo and guitarist Franka Verhagen. It comprises three movements: I. Allegro Moderato, II. Andantino Cantabile, and III. Allegro Energico -Toccata-. In addition to tempo markings, the composer notes an estimated duration of 9 min.

Information regarding the records of the interpretation and dissemination of this piece is limited. The score itself is found in a few archives. A copy of the manuscript is housed in the LAMC of the Catholic University of America, lacking pages 9 and 10 (of 11). However, during the research and archival investigation conducted in this study, a complete copy was found in the personal archives of Maestro Luis Orlandini in Santiago, Chile. This opportunity to connect with Luis Orlandini regarding this work facilitated the collection of valuable insights from the Chilean guitarist about the premiere of *Sonatina a Due* Op.164 in Chile, which is also the only performance for which a record and evidence were found during writing this article.

The objective of this exercise was to gather Orlandini's opinions and impressions of this work in an unrestrained and authentic manner. Therefore, no direct questions were posed to investigate the concept of syncretism in Atehortúa's music. Nevertheless, from Orlandini's exposition, it is evident that this aesthetic principle was discerned through his experience as a performer responsible for premiering this work in Chile.

The following presents a tripartite synthesis of the interview conducted with Maestro Luis Orlandini on September 26, 2024, Interview Structure; Interview Summary; Synthesis and Concluding Ideas from the Interview.

Outline, synthesis and insights of Interview with Luis Orlandini about the work *Sonatina Op. 164* for violin and guitar by Blas Emilio Atehortúa

I. Introduction

- A. Brief background on Blas Emilio Atehortúa
- B. Introduction to the *Sonatina* for Violin and Guitar

II. Historical Context

- A. Atehortúa's connection to the Latin American compositional movement of the 1960s
- B. Influence of Alberto Ginastera and the Instituto Di Tella in Argentina

III. Discovery and Performance of the *Sonatina*

- A. Luis Orlandini's encounter with Atehortúa in Colombia

B. Orlandini's performances with violinist Jaime de la Jara in Chile (late 1990s to 2005)

IV. Musical Analysis

A. Structure and form (compressed sonata form)

B. Rhythmic elements and national influences

C. Compositional style

V. Idiomatic Writing

A. Guitar writing

B. Violin writing

C. Effectiveness of the duo combination

VI. Reception and Impact

A. Audience reception in Chile

B. Significance within the violin and guitar repertoire

VII. Challenges in Research and Performance

A. Limited availability of the score

B. Lack of recordings and performance history

VIII. Conclusion

A. Importance of Atehortúa's contribution to Latin American music

B. Potential for future performances and research

Interview abstract

The Sonatina Op. 164 for Violin and Guitar by Colombian composer Blas Emilio Atehortúa had its Chilean premiere at the VI Montecarmelo Chamber Music Season on June 11, 1996, featuring guitarist Luis Orlandini and violinist Jaime de la Jara. The duo continued to perform this piece in Chile from the late 1990s to the early 2000s. Atehortúa, part of a Latin American cohort studying the Alberto Ginastera in Argentina during the 1960s, integrated Colombian musical elements with contemporary compositional techniques. According to Orlandini the piece is characterized by its concise language, engaging presentation, and distinctive rhythmic elements, demonstrating Atehortúa's proficiency in idiomatic writing both for guitar and violin. It received a favorable reception from the audience.

Orlandini acquired the score directly from Atheortúa, Bucaramanga, Colombia during the 1990s.

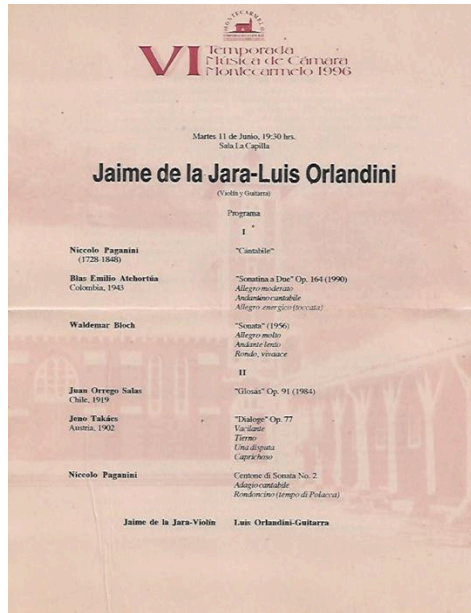


Figure 2. Hand Program for the premiere in Chile of the Sonatina Op. 164 Performed by Luis Orlandini and Jaime de la Jara.

Interview synthesis and insights

The composition "Sonatina Op. 164 for Violin and Guitar" by renowned Colombian composer Blas Emilio Atheortúa was performed in Chile by the duo of guitarist Luis Orlandini and violinist Jaime de la Jara in 1996. This performance marked an important milestone in the history of the piece, as it was possibly its absolute premier and, according to Orlandini, its Chilean premier.

Orlandini, a respected figure in the classical guitar world, acquired a copy of the manuscript directly from Atheortúa during a tour in Colombia in the 1990s, establishing personal connections with the composer.

From the perspective of Orlandini, Sonatina Op. 164 stands out as a remarkable work in Guitar and Violin duo chamber music repertoires, particularly in Latin

America. This composition showcases Atheortua's exceptional proficiency in composing these instruments and demonstrates his deep understanding of their timbres, technical capabilities, and expressive potential. The piece expertly balanced the roles of both instruments, creating a dialogue that highlighted the strength of each instrument while maintaining a cohesive musical narrative.

According to Maestro Orlandini, Atheortua's musical style, as exemplified in "Sonatina," is characterized by several distinctive features. His compositions are known for their concise nature in favor of focused, impactful musical ideas. The appealing rhythmic elements in his work were often drawn from Colombian folk traditions that infuse music with a sense of cultural identity and vitality. Most notably, Atheortua's compositions represent a sophisticated synthesis of Colombian national musical idioms and contemporary compositional techniques, bridging traditional and modern approaches to music-making.

Regarding its public improvements, Orlandini recalls that the reception of "Sonatina Op. 164" by audiences has been very positive. The piece manages to be both accessible and intellectually stimulating, balancing approachability and artistic merit.

Orlandini remarked that Atheortua's musical journey and compositional style could be better understood in the context of his educational background. He was associated with a distinguished cohort of Latin American composers who had the opportunity to study during Alberto Ginastera's tenure at the Torcuato di Tella Institute in Argentina in the 1960s.

Orlandini recognizes that the significance of "Sonatina Op. 164" is further amplified by the relatively limited repertoire available for violin and guitar duos. This unique instrumental combination presents both challenges and opportunities for composers, and Atheortua's successful navigation of these intricacies has made this piece a valuable addition to the repertoire. Its divulgation could help raise the profile of this instrumental pairing, inspiring other composers to explore its potential.

Maestro Orlandini's opinions on this piece are supported by his important artistic practice as performer and in the conservation of his personal archives, which includes concert programs and recordings of public presentations. His approach underlines the importance of meticulous documentation, as well as the potential for musicologists and performers to collaborate in researching and disseminating lesser-known compositions from the chamber repertoire for this format.

Conclusions

Blas Emilio Atehortúa's compositions for violin and guitar offer a reflection on the principle of syncretism, a concept that has gained renewed relevance in contemporary debates on aesthetics. Syncretism, as Atehortúa applied, transcends simplistic hybridization by engaging in a dynamic process of cultural and stylistic fusion. His music deftly intertwines elements from disparate traditions—Colombian folk idioms and European classical structures—into an integrated and coherent whole, exemplifying a critical interculturality that responds to both modernist and postmodernist discourses on aesthetics. This approach may have significant implications for broader discussions in musicology, where questions of cultural identity, authenticity, and global versus local dialectics remain central.

In today's aesthetic landscape, syncretism challenges Eurocentric models that have historically dominated musicological analysis. As discussed in the references consulted in this study, Atehortúa's work positions itself against the backdrop of a critical re-evaluation of Western musical hegemony, coinciding with the "border epistemology" proposed by theorists, sociologists and philosophers such as Walter Dignolo, Ramón Grosfoguel and Enrique Dussel. In this context, syncretism is not merely an aesthetic strategy but a political one—a means by which non-European composers assert the validity of their musical languages within a global framework. Atehortúa's rejection of the hierarchical valuation of cultural traditions—his assertion that a Beethoven symphony and a Colombian Bambuco by Carlos Vico are equally valid—embodies an approach to music-making that seeks to dismantle traditional dichotomies between "high" and "low" art, or between European and non-European traditions.

Sonatina a Due, Op. 164, for violin and guitar, is a manifestation of Atehortúa's syncretic aesthetics. According to scholarly research and performers' testimonies, this work exemplifies his ability to synthesize contrasting musical traditions. On a formal level, Sonatina adheres to classical structures, including the compressed sonata form discussed by Luis Orlandini, while its rhythmic and melodic content is deeply informed by Colombia's national folk traditions. Atehortúa's use of folkloric rhythms and metric fluidity, as identified by scholars such as Montaña and García, demonstrates a technique in which popular music elements are not merely superimposed onto classical frameworks but are intricately woven into the fabric of the composition. This integration suggests a deeper epistemological

stance, one that situates local musical traditions not as peripheral but as central to the construction of a new hybrid musical modernity.

Orlandini's reflections on his performance experience with the *Sonatina* underscore how Atehortúa's music demands a nuanced interpretative approach from performers. While concise, the piece is rich in rhythmic vitality and expressive potential, drawing on the idiomatic characteristics of both violin and guitar. Orlandini highlights how the dialogic interplay between the two instruments reflects Atehortúa's syncretic vision: the guitar, with its associations with Latin American folk traditions, and the violin, emblematic of European classical tradition, engages in a balanced exchange that mirrors the composer's intercultural approach to composition. This performative dimension of syncretism, as experienced by those who bring music to life, further supports the idea that Atehortúa's syncretism entails a lived, artistic practice, rather than merely a compositional technique.

Sonatina a Due is, however, just one example of Atehortúa's output that demonstrates his approach to syncretism. As noted, his catalog spans more than 250 works, many of which involve similar cultural fusion processes. His works on violin and guitar are particularly rich terrain for future musicological research, offering opportunities to delve deeper into the techniques and procedures he employed to achieve this synthesis. Such research could involve extensive music analysis aimed at uncovering how Atehortúa concretely integrates the elements of Colombian folk music within the formal frames of European art. This analytical work could focus on specific compositional techniques, such as his treatment of rhythmic displacement, syncopation, and metric modulation, as well as his manipulation of folk-based melodic contours within the harmonic language of classical modernism.

Future research should also address how Atehortúa's syncretic techniques compare to those of other Latin American composers who have similarly sought to reconcile local and global traditions in their work. Comparative studies with other contemporary composers such as Alberto Ginastera or Leo Brouwer might illuminate broader trends within Latin American modernism and reveal particular contributions of Atehortúa within this context. Furthermore, interdisciplinary approaches that combine musicology with cultural studies and *decolonial* theory would offer deeper insights into the political and cultural implications of his syncretism, situating his work within a larger project of decolonizing art music.

Critical-edition projects, such as those undertaken by Montaña and García with Atehortúa's string quartets, provide a model for future editorial and analytical endeavors focused on his violin and guitar works. Collaborative research involving performers, such as Orlandini's engagement with *Sonatina*, can offer valuable insights into the interpretative challenges posed by Atehortúa's music and how these challenges are intertwined with his syncretic aesthetics. By fostering dialogue between musicologists and performers, future research could contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the technical, interpretative, and philosophical dimensions of Atehortúa's oeuvre.

In conclusion, cases such as Blas Emilio Atehortúa's *Guitar and Violin's Work* provide a critical framework for understanding how non-European musical traditions can reshape and redefine the parameters of modern and contemporary music. Future research into his syncretism techniques will be crucial in expanding our understanding of this influential composer's contributions to the field of music, both in Colombia and beyond.

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Figures

Figure 1. Atheortúa, B. (1990) Sonatina a Due, op. 164: para violín y guitarra. Music Special Collections University Libraries. Latin American Music Center, or (LAMC) Catholic University of America. <https://www.lib.cua.edu/music/node/22743>

Figure 2. Hand Program for the premiere in Chile of the Sonatina Op. 164 Performed by Luis Orlandini and Jaime de la Jara. (1996) Luis Orlandini Personal Archives.

León Salcedo



Over the course of his career, León Salcedo performed as a soloist and member of both classical and jazz music groups in various locations including Colombia, Europe, and the United States. He has participated in numerous events and venues, such as the XV Festival de Guitarra de Girona – Costa Brava in Spain, the Colombian National Museum, Teatro Mayor Julio Mario Santo Domingo, the Mellon Institute Auditorium in Pittsburgh, and the Deca Auditorium at the Universidade de Aveiro, Portugal.

Mr. Salcedo obtained a bachelor's degree in music from the Universidad Tecnológica de Pereira and a master's degree in guitar performance from Carnegie Mellon University. He is currently a Ph.D. candidate in the Doctoral Program in Music at Universidade de Aveiro. In addition to his artistic career, he is also engaged in teaching at the Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas in Bogotá and at the Universidad de Cundinamarca, where he serves as Professor of Guitar and coordinates the research area in the Music Program of the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Political Sciences.

Professor Salcedo has been involved in a diverse range of projects such as music performance, music improvisation, Latin American music, artistic research, public music policies, music technology, curriculum development, and trans-disciplinary education. For more information, please visit

www.leonsalcedo.com

Event Highlights

The **LAMC** established a collaboration with **TorcuArt** to help promote Flamenco art in the United States. Flamenco's strong influence on Latin American music provided the foundation for this partnership, highlighting the Latin American genres shaped by Flamenco.

We were proud to honor **Mrs. Natalia Monteleon** with the TorcuArt Annual Recognition Prize for her decades of tireless contribution to the knowledge and appreciation of Flamenco in the DMV area. The keynote speaker was **Mrs. Leticia Pico de Coaña Suarez**, who served as the Counselor of the Spanish Embassy to the United States. The LAMC was proud to present our distinguished alumnus, renowned guitarist **Dr. Thomas Rohde**, who performed at this Gala.

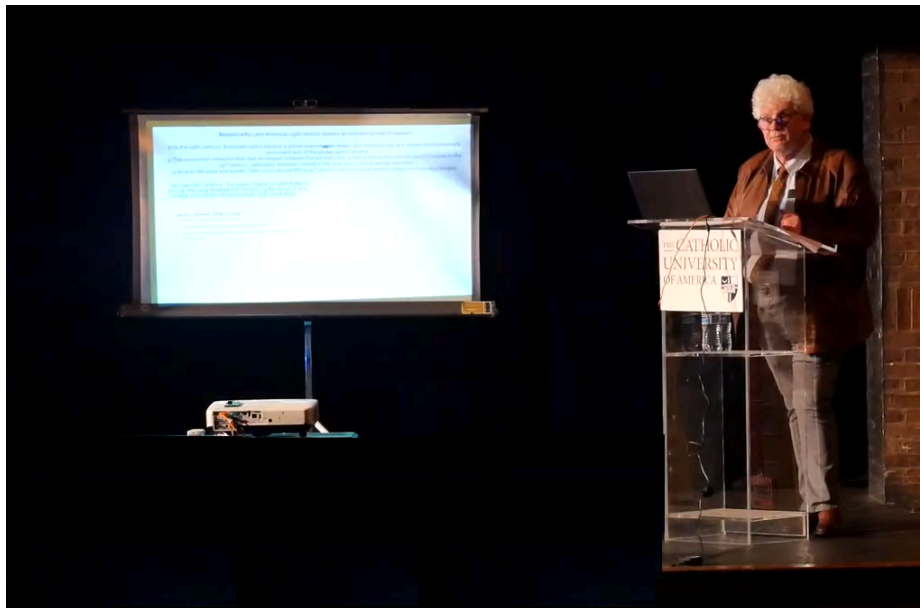


On November 2, in collaboration with the **Sonus** International Music Festival, we presented **Music from Argentina**, a captivating concert featuring pianists **Nancy Roldán** and **Lilia Salsano**, violinist **José Cueto**, and myself. The concert took place at our own Ward Hall, with a program commemorating the remarkable work of Carlos Guastavino.





On November 9, we hosted a special presentation by Uruguayan scholar and Rome alumnus, **Dr. Leonardo Manzino**, who returned to his Alma Mater after many years to deliver a lecture titled *Advances in Research: 19th-Century Latin American Opera within the Global History of Opera*. Dr. Manzino had shared this lecture at numerous international academic forums between 2019 and 2022, and we were honored to welcome him back.





Our final production of the Fall 2024 season took place on November 23. In collaboration with the Cultural Office of the Embassy of Spain, we proudly presented Countertenor **Mikel Uskola Cobos**, winner of the 88th edition of the “Concurso Permanente de Jóvenes Intérpretes de España.” Mr. Uskola Cobos was joined in concert by the distinguished Puerto Rican pianist **José Ramos Santana**.



This year, we received three significant donations of sheet music, audiovisual, and audio materials. The first was from the renowned Puerto Rican composer Carlos Alberto Vázquez, featuring his compositions. The second came from the distinguished composer and performer Max Lifschitz. Finally, the celebrated Cuban pianist, opera coach, and longtime

Metropolitan Opera House collaborator Lucy Arner donated her collection of Latin American music, including a remarkable audio tape collection.