Spring 2024

“Sabor A Mi”: Uncovering the Taste Left in Postmodern Identity of Latin American Diaspora

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Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of Languages and Literature
of Bard College

by

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Annandale-on-Hudson, New York
May 2024

Dedication

For my family.

Acknowledgements

The biggest thanks to my advisor Nicole Caso.

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Introduction

In search of a topic for my Senior Project, I related back to why I decided to pursue a degree in Spanish. I found a lot of different good reasons to undertake a degree in the Humanities. One that pertains to this investigation was my desire to further my connection to my ethnic and cultural background. With Irving, Texas being my place of birth and my parents status as Colombian immigrants, the term first generation Colombian-American would be the simplest way to categorize myself. Another factor that influenced my decision was my studies with music. As I continue to pursue a degree in flute performance at Bard Conservatory, I wanted to select a discipline to mutually complement my passion for music. I really wanted to develop my understanding of the place where most of my family was born, Colombia, and what it meant to be "Latino". The opportunity to have a better grasp over the Spanish language and the history of my family's culture through the uncovering of different forms of media was what most appealed to me when thinking about choosing to moderate in Spanish Studies. I would obtain the ability to uncover why I loved the cultural products I grew up with, the things that were the cornerstones to my being. The vibrant designs of flowers on our *sábanas* and *cobijas*, the half dozen packs of *arepas* in the shelfs of our refrigerator, the *tiple* and guitar out on display in our *sala*, made up only a small fraction of what I considered to be foundational aspects of myself.[1] For example, the album at the heart of this discussion *Eydie Gormé canta en español con Los Panchos* spoke to my own yearning to close the gap of my present self and my cultural origins. Having grown up

[1] A twelve string Andean guitar descendant of the 16th century Spanish vihuela. "TPC Tiple Colombiano," La Bella, accessed April 20, 2024, https://www.labella.com/product/tpc-tiple-colombiano/

in the United States of America, I might succeed in filling the internal void left as a result of my metaphorical and literal separation from Colombia.

It was not something external since the physical presence of my family's nationality was undeniable. We appeared Hispanic. All of us, except for my younger sister Rosario, had pitch black hair and if we would have to fill out a form asking our race, the answer would be white with the added ethnicity category clarifying our hispanic heritage. My parents and older sister were the ones who spoke Spanish natively, and while I remember speaking Spanish as some of my earliest speaking moments, English was shared between Rosario and I as our primary method of communicating. We all could speak to each other in English, with the exception of my father who was the least comfortable with the language. He would speak to me and Rosario in Spanish regularly and we would usually respond in English. The only instance I can think of when the non-speaking US born children of the family spoke with our more Spanish inclined speaking Father would be when we prayed every night to our guardian angels. Every night we would recite a prayer to our guardian angel, "Angel de mi guarda" *Guardian angel*, "mi dulce compañía" *my sweet companion*, "no me desampares" *do not abandon me*, "ni de noche ni de día" *nor in night nor in day*, and while I memorized the words, their inflections, rhythm, and the places to breath between the verses, I did not understand its meaning. I, along with my little sister, merely replicated the sounds my father uttered to us every night over the phone, and it would take until I began pursuing my degree in Spanish that I even decided to google what the words in the prayer meant.

This attempt to copy what my dad tried to bequeath to his children could characterize my experience growing up as a first generation Colombian American, one that was spent trying to replicate or find what I perceived to be missing. Though an abundance of cultural products like

language, instruments, food, and furniture abounded in my family's household, my attachment to Colombia as something fundamental to my sense of identity was limited. Yes, I was the child of Colombians, and inherited most of the sensibilities that my Colombian parents had, but I myself was not Colombian. These qualities given to me were more than just genetic, and the most natural example for myself was that of music.

I remember my father sometimes bringing his guitar with a little book full of classic boleros with us to the park. "Los mejores boleros" by William Martínez G. A very compact and condensed book, it would rest across his lap, I would see the fingers of my father struggle against the guitar trying to place them in the right spot. Rushing through the strumming pattern, hinting at the correct rhythms, but not exactly, he would recite the standard repertoire of boleros from the book. I would ask him to let me borrow it from him, but it wasn't until years later that I finally got ahold of that book. With the chord diagrams on top of the music staff, and the song lyrics below that, it was a very understandable guide to replicating my favorite boleros. My favorite bolero was "Perfidia" by Mexican composer Alberto Domínguez Borrás, and my dad would teach me how to play and sing it on guitar. The alternating of the thumb to function as the bass while using my pointer, middle, and ring finger was such a satisfying strumming pattern to finally nail down. While I tried to find recordings to grab inspiration from, my father informed me that his father's favorite version of the Mexican bolero was by the Montgomery, Alabama native, Nat King Cole.

As a student of Jazz, I was blown away by the revelation that a jazz singer from the United States was a hit for people like my Colombian grandfather in Latin America during the late 1950s and early 1960s. In fact, at least according to my dad, many who listened to Cole's Spanish albums "A mis amigos" released in 1959, or "More Cole Español" in 1962, would have

been surprised to have learned that Nat King Cole was an already highly established artist in the US. What became clear in that moment was the interwoven nature of a cultural product that has been valued for generations in my family and maybe others as well.

In researching articles to examine bolero's cultural impact the paper "Bolero y Modernismo: La Canción Como Literatura Popular" by Mariano Muñoz-Hidalgo served as an important catalyst to this thesis. The quote that resonated most was about the function of Latin American music: "Pero más importante que su difusión mundial, lo que en última instancia es sólo un reconocimiento ulterior, lo esencial de la canción latinoamericana es su función identitaria, por configurar un discurso redundante y sostenido acerca de la propia cultura donde se origina y, al mismo tiempo, ser producto directo de ésta" [what is essential about Latin American song is its identitarian function, through both creating a redundant discourse and being sustained close to the origin of the respective culture and, at the same time, being a direct product of it].[2] Relating this quote to the genre I was so in love with was what became the topic for my Senior Project. However, this supposed culturally representing function served by Latin American music was hampered by the ambiguity of my own connection to the culture bolero hails from. The need for a different understanding of the self led to the following question: how does the collaboration album between Eydie Gormé and Los Panchos, *Amor-Great Love Songs in Spanish,* invoke postmodernist identity within the context of Latin American diaspora? To answer this question, I will investigate the different elements present in three songs of the album *Amor*, "Historia de un amor", "Sabor a mí", and "Cuando vuelva a tu lado", after contextualizing the methodology and terminology that will be used.

[2] Mariano Muñoz-Hidalgo, "Bolero y Modernismo: La Canción Como Literatura Popular", *Literatura y lingüística,* no. 18 (2007) http://dx.dor.org/10.4067/S0716-58112007000100005

Methodology and Hypothesis

Borrowing again from Muñoz-Hidalgo, the aspects I felt most worth exploring about the album *Amor* were the function and interaction between the words, the music, and the interpretation created by Los Panchos and Eydie Gormé. To explain how each of these factors individually and collectively evoke postmodernism's deconstruction of the self, an explanation of musical and sociological terms is required. First, music theory will be briefly discussed to the extent that it remains relevant to the harmonic and melodic particularities of the boleros "Cuando vuelva a tu lado" and "Historia de un amor". Then, globalism and postmodernism will be defined insofar as they relate to the hypothesis: Through the implementation of literary and musical allusions, Eydie Gormé and Los Panchos' 1964 release of the album *Amor* invokes the postmodern identity of a subject within the framework of Latin American diaspora to the United States. Following the logic argued by Muñoz-Hidalgo, by means of its physical proximity to the Latinx experience, the resulting cultural byproduct of *Amor* creates a representation and serves as a source of ailment for the distressing crisis of identity during the mass migration taking place at the turn of the 20th century till the present day. Afterwards, the reader will be given context to the music in *Amor* and postmodernist theory to see how it fits into a globalist framework. Following all explanations of background and terminology, each bolero will be deconstructed into the three categories used by Muñoz-Hidalgo, and ascribed to different features of the diasporic experience of being displaced, and the emotional outcome the album manifests in the shape of a community-bonding cultural artifact.

Music Terminology

In order to give the readers a fuller picture of what musical techniques *Amor* integrates into each song, an explanation of terms is in order. Beginning with chords, they are described as an arrangement of notes that when played together create a harmony, as a result of combining the different frequencies of each pitch. Depending on the space between the frequencies, the complex waveform produces what is referred to as the "color" or quality of the chord. Chords usually use three notes called triads that are made up of the root, the third, and the fifth. The root is the first note of the triad that determines a chord's name. An example is the C major chord which begins with its root note C, followed by E (the third), and G (the fifth).

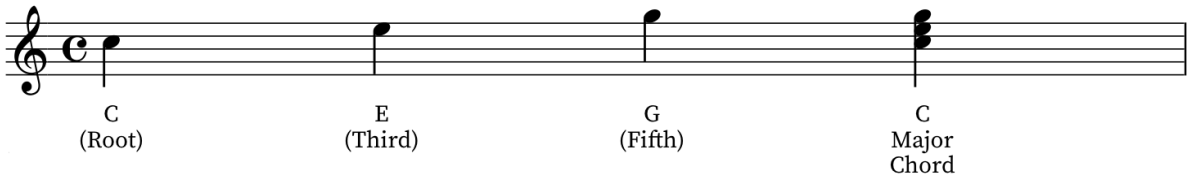

Figure 1. The individual notes of the C major chord

Separated by several semitones, the terms root, third, and fifth are designated as such because of their positions in the scale of their respective key. Semitones are half steps between all of the twelve pitches used in music theory, with some sharing the same pitches.

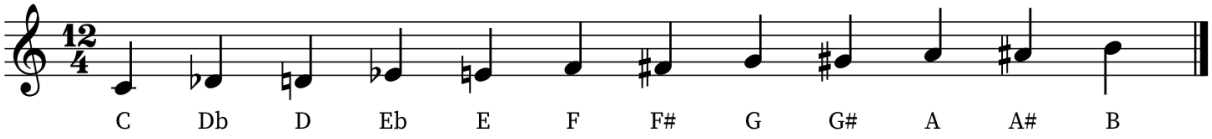

Figure 2. A chromatic scale showing all twelve pitches used in Western music theory

The sign b (flat) means the pitch is lowered a half-step from its normal position, otherwise referred to as a natural (♮). The symbol # is called a sharp and raises the pitch up a half step from a natural note, meaning a note in between two natural signed pitches can have an en-harmonic counterpart. This means a note like D# is the same pitch as Eb, the difference only being in name so that composers and musicians can be more efficient in the context of writing music. Back to the example of the C major chord, it consists of three tones derived from the C major scale. The major scale is a famous seven note arrangement of all these twelve semitones, formed by a specific order of intervals or the spaces of semitones between each note. The key of C major would have the seven notes C, D, E, F, G, A, B and C again.

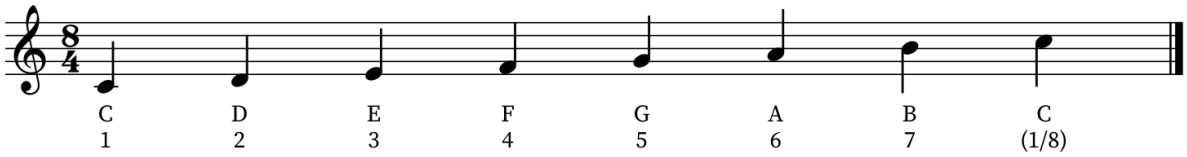

Figure 3. The C major scale as it appears in staff notation

The semitones omitted show the spaces between all seven notes, with a whole step (two half steps) between C and D, it means a major scale skips the first semitone after C, C# or Db, and goes directly to D.

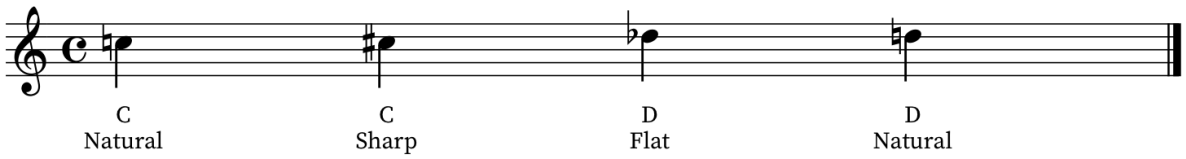

Figure 4. C sharp and D flat are both a semitone away from C and D natural because they are en-harmonic

This exclusion also applies to the notes between D and E, D#/Eb, requiring there be a total of four half steps between C and E. The amount of half or whole steps for the major scale would be as follows: whole step, whole step, half step, whole step, whole step, whole step, with one last half step back to the root.

Relating back to the major chord, the intervals in between C, E, and G are essential for the construction of a major chord. The specific intervals are classified as a major third (four half steps) between C natural and E natural, and a minor third (three half steps) on top between E natural and G natural. The outcome of these intervals is a perfect fifth (seven half steps) between the root C and the fifth G, leading to a rich and triumphant sounding combination of different frequencies fitting into each other. There exist other blends of tones that result in the many scales and chords that exist, however only the chords that are in the compositions of the songs being investigated will be explained.

In line with the prominent bolero motifs of heartbreak and mourning, slow paced tempo and the usage of minor and seventh chords are vital to the unstable and emotional qualities ingrained in the genre. The somberness trait of the minor chord is an effect of the melancholic sounding implementation of a minor third (three half steps) interval instead of the major third.

The chord C minor would be organized as C, Eb, and G, containing a minor third between C and Eb, and a major fifth in the form of the G. The flattening of E natural to E flat is what achieves the characteristic minor sound. When analyzing the harmonic structures of the different ballads, minor chords will be connoted with the name of the first scale degree followed by a lowercase letter m, which would be Cm for C minor.

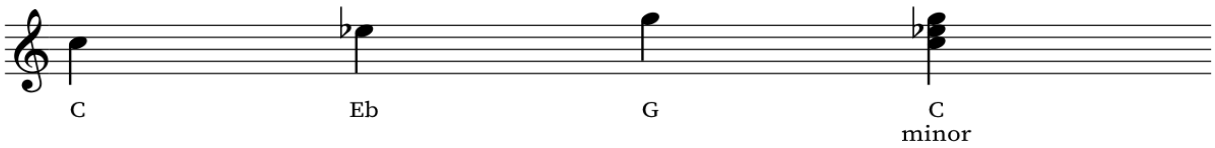

Figure 5. Construction of C minor chord

Seventh chords are made up of four notes, with the seventh degree of the scale being added on top of the previous triad. In the key of C, the seventh could be either a major (B natural), dominant (B flat), or diminished (B double flat or A natural). The added tension of the seventh note creates an extra layer of complexity and richness for the listener. Written as a chord letter followed by the number 7, a major 7th chord would be notated as C major 7.

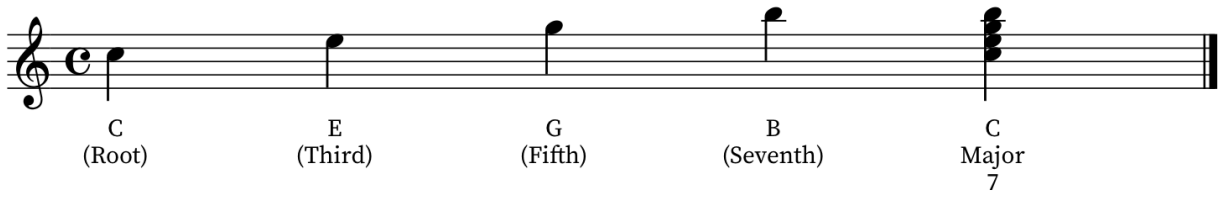

Figure 6. Notes of C major 7

Combining these seventh chords with the qualities of minor chords creates a couple of tensions, one being the dominant 7th chord which incorporates a minor 7th degree on top of a

major triad. Staying with the tonal center of C, a C dominant 7th chord has the inclusion of a B flat with G, E, and C underneath. The space between the degrees 3 and 7, E and B flat, creates what is called a tri-tone, the interval consisting of six semitones, or three whole tones, in between the tonic 1 and the minor 6th in the chromatic scale. In which case for B flat is exactly three whole steps away from E, both ascending and descending. A C dominant 7th chord would be written with the letter of the root note followed by a 7, so C dominant 7th would appear as C7.

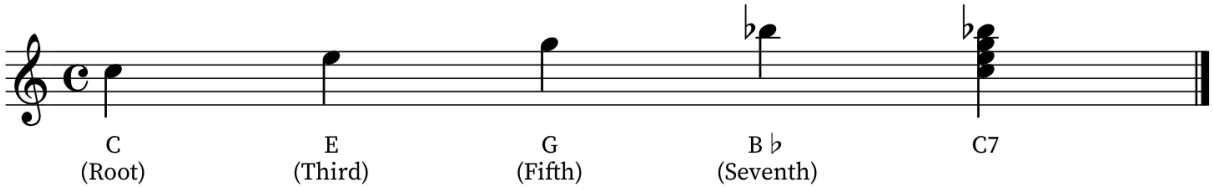

Figure 7. Notes of C dominant 7

The intricacy of pitches created as a result have an anticipatory effect when used in the context of chord progressions. In Western Popular music one of the most important chord progressions is the Authentic or Perfect cadence. Categorized as the progression from a five (V) chord to a one (I) chord, its stable sounding resolution serves as one of the most used patterns in harmony in tonal music in the west. The relation between all of the chords in the key of C major is shown through the use of Roman numerals to label the root scale position for all seven triads and their respective chord qualities through a lowercase numeral to signal a minor quality and a capitalized numeral to signify major, as displayed in figure 8.

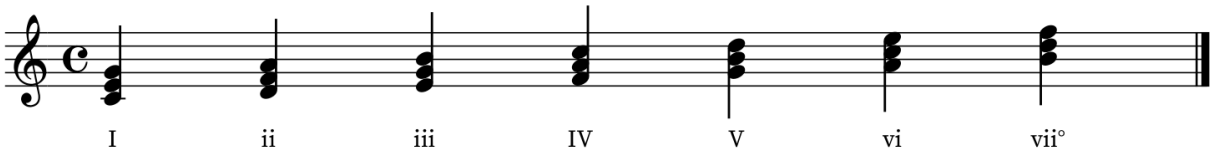

Figure 8. The triads and their qualities in the key of C major

A good way to visualize the change from a five chord to a one chord, would be to show the close nature of the V chord in relation to the tonic I chord. Let's say we take the C major chord with the notes C-E-G, its V chord would start on G as G is the fifth note in the C major scale (C, D, E, F, G, A, B). Thus the chord progression would be as follows; the G major triad (G, B, D) moving to the C major triad (C, E, G), as seen in figure 9.

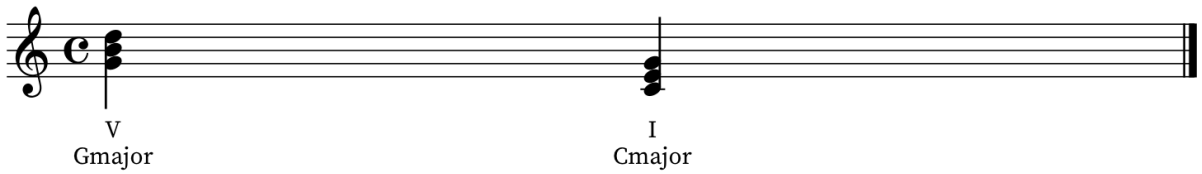

Figure 9. The V and I chords in the key of C major.

The close proximity of the G major chord notes B and D to the notes of C and E from C major is shown when the C major chord begins the triad on the fifth scale degree of G. This way of writing a chord is referred to as an inversion. It is in root position when the first scale degree is the lowest note in the chord. Staying with C major, root position would be the order of C-E-G, first inversion is G-C-E, and second inversion would be E-G-C.

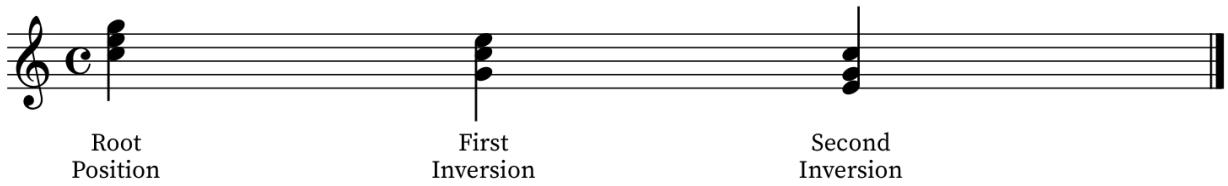

Figure 10. All inversions of the C major chord.

Examining the authentic cadence in the context of a first inversion C major chord, the sharing the same lowest bass note G providing audial coherency shifting from the V to the I. In figure 11, the pitch B resolves upwards a half step to the root of C major and D resolves upwards a whole step to E. When played together, these individual motions create a cathartic resolution to the more unstable yet anticipative sound of the V chord.

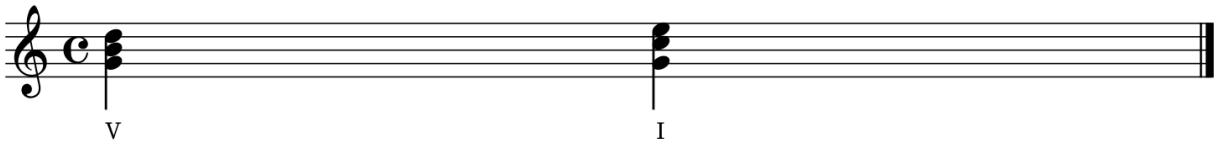

Figure 11. G major chord and 2nd inversion C major

After understanding the tension and release inherent in the use of V-I chord progressions, a look at the ideological and international context of the album *Amor* is necessary.

Globalist Context of the boleros in *Amor*

Before entering into the discussion of how the album *Eydie Gormé canta en español con Los Panchos* represents Latin American Identity in a postmodern and globalist context, it is important to define these terms and explain their ties to the creation and consumption of *Amor*. Globalism refers to the exchange of cultural and economic products on the international stage. Fitting the album into a discussion of global interdependence, the album came into being as a media product through the medium of Columbia Records. The genre of bolero itself is a cultural product of the ever growing influence of labor markets between countries in the Caribbean and Central America at the end of the 19th century. In order to see how pivotal the intersectional exchange of capitalist and cultural products that was occurring across the Gulf of Mexico was to the development of bolero before the recording of *Amor (Great Love Songs in Spanish)* in 1964, a look at the origins of the bolero genre is necessary.

The Boleros performed in *Amor* can trace their origin to a genre of music in Cuba usually performed with two voices accompanied alongside guitars. The style of song shares its name with the bolero dance in Spain, however the similarities between the two musical traditions stop with their name, and historians are not in accord with whether the Cuban and Spanish bolero are related to each other. Born out of the trovador tradition that passed through Cuba during the 19th century through musicians named trovadores who traveled from place to place performing and spreading their songs, the influence of the trova genre could be found in the development of many different Cuban musical styles like guaracha, habanera, and of course the bolero.

The word Trovador translates into troubadour in English and traces its roots to the south of France during the Medieval Ages in the 11th century. With the abundance of vagabond artists

and musicians traveling through the different neighboring towns and cities assisting their singing with different accompanying instruments, a troubadour in that time consisted of a composer or musician that played and sang Occitanian poetry. The concept of the troubadour had existed in many forms across the eastern hemisphere, including Spanish bards who performed metrically regulated folk ballads called romanceros. History's first recorded use of the word troubadour was by the famous Cercamon, one of the first troubadours who was most likely a jester to William X of Aquitania in France.[3] The origins of the troubadour tradition have been debated, with some historians arguing that it has Arabic influences having first arrived into Europe through the Iberian peninsula spreading throughout the continent.[4] The songs pertained to themes of chivalry and love, with more genres existing including some that were played with string instruments, and it is here where the root of the 12 boleros in *Eydie Gormé canta en español con Los Panchos,* could be found.

Trovador tradition arrives to Cuba

The environment of Cuba was perfect for the continuation and evolution of the troubadour. With the abolishment of slavery coming into full effect in 1886, a newly freed and unemployed population entered the musical scene of Santiago de Cuba. Though the demand for workers on plantations had the same newly freed unemployed population take part in work contracts and suffer similar conditions as they did during slavery, many would come in the form of contract laborers called *colonos* who hailed from China, Mexico, Africa, and the Canary

[3] Gingerich, Philip Dean, "A new genus of Adapidae (Mammalia, Primates) from the Late Eocene of southern France, and its significance for the origin of higher primates". *Contributions from the Museum of Paleontology, University of Michigan* 24, no. 15 (2009): 163–170.

[4] Abu-Haidar, JA, "The Diminutives in the "dīwān" of Ibn Quzmān: A Product of Their Hispanic Milieu?". *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London* 52, no. 2: 241.

Islands. The cross pollination between Mexico and Cuba could be seen starting economically speaking with the *colonos*, but it would not be long after in the last quarter of the 19th century to see it in the realm of music. [5] Meanwhile in the province of Oriente, workers at low wage jobs like tailors, tobacco twisters, or laborers would go on to perform with their homemade guitars supplementing their incomes. Called cantadores, it would not be until the 1930's when these musicians would be referred to as trovadores, of which the majority of artists were Afro-Cuban men who played the guitar, an instrument that was considered low class, the accessibility of the trova genre assisted its own popularity to both listen to and recreate.

One can see a remaining influence in not only the music of Cuba and the genre of bolero, but globally, with the usage of guitar. The instrument's origins are still not completely clear, with some finding its name having evolved, like the string instruments that came before, from the ancient Greek word *kithara*. An instrument related to the *lyre* with usually around seven strings, a wooden body, and tuning pegs, it would be played upright similarly to its instrument family member or like our modern day guitar on its side on top of the lap.[6] The guitar's ancestor, the lyre in Ancient Greece, has descendants in form of the oud which predates written history in Southern Mesopotamia. The ouds own introduction to Europe through the Moor invasion of Spain in 710 would result in the advent of its successor, the lute in Renaissance Europe and its eventual heir the baroque guitar. The modern guitar used in the boleros of the *Cantadores* has its history tracing back to all over the eastern hemisphere of the globe, and the instruments' story would continue with its introduction to Cuba.

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[5] "Cuban Slavery Documents Collection." *Cuban Slavery Documents Collection - Brown University Library*,

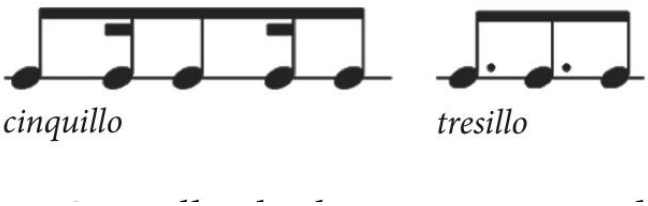
[6] Cartwright, Mark. "Kithara." *World History Encyclopedia*, https://www.worldhistory.org#organization, 24 June 2012, www.worldhistory.org/Kithara/.

The humble training and instruments of the Cuban trovadores was in stark contrast to those who studied at the established music conservatories in the country with a central focus on orchestral classical music and the instruments involved in them. For the *cantadores* who more often than not came from stringent means, this meant accessibility to a formal music education was far from happening. They would however "sing their own poetry, or set pieces of poetry to music in duo harmonies with the accompaniment of two strummed guitars." (Sublette, 252) This would result in music that was more folkloric and designed for poorer listeners in Cuba. Instead of a 100 piece orchestra to put on a performance, it would only take a couple of voices alongside a guitar to capture the ears of its listeners. In essence, this was not a genre for the elite, as they deemed it "poor and outlandish", but rather a new musical tradition that arose out the aspirations and concerns of the Cuban working class.

The most renowned trovador that helped the birth of the bolero was José Pepe Sanchez (1857-1918) who was a part of the movement/group that is now considered to be the Vieja Trova. Sanchez composed what is widely deemed as the first bolero "Tristezas" published in 1885, however due to his composing and memorization of his songs in his head, most of them are lost with him not having written them down. He worked as a tailor and was a self taught musician who mixed with both the social elites and humbler circles of Santiago, Cuba. He was already becoming associated with other well known important figures of the time and when he would go to watch the visiting theater performances of zarzuelas[7], his knowledge of the Franco-Haitian music would lead him to derive what would become the Cuban bolero. By implementing the cinquillo rhythm of the cocuyé instrument with the romantic lyrics from

[7] Bufo and zarzuelas are forms of comedic small scale operas. Robreño, Eduardo 1961. *Historia del teatro popular cubano*. La Habana. p15

traditions that came before, the Cuban bolero would be born.



The cinquillo and tresillo rhythms notated

Tradition arrives to Mexico

Workers from Mexico had already been coming into Cuba to help supplement the loss of slave labor for plantation owners and according to Cuban musicologist Argeliers León, by 1878 there had already been published Mexican corridos on Cuba loose-leaf paper. Having a history of its own to cover, the Mexican *corrido* is a lyric form of storytelling that can find its own roots in the prose of chivalric romance literature from the high middle ages. According to León, the style of guitar accompaniment in corridos had left their mark with "the introduction of a rhythmic raking, very segmented and constant, in the first guitar; tonally accented in the second guitar" (ibid) The unique blend of the African-Haitian rhythms along with their application to the corrido style of accompaniment on guitar would lead to the genre's gaining traction in popularity in Mexico where it would continue developing.

Having probably arrived in the Yucatáan province of Mexico in the 1910's through the same process that inspired Pepe Sanchez, by Cuban artists and traveling circus troupes, the first quarter of the new century showed the Mexican adaptation of the bolero into something that fit the local taste of the region. These new *boleros yucatecos* would feature a higher focus on the more romantic aspects of the lyrics as well as a slower tempo in the music. Of this new

generation of Yucatan musicians, an important figure would emerge with Guty Cárdenas (1905-1932). He moved to Mexico City to expand his artistic opportunities and with the emergence of radio in 1930 with RCA's (Radio Corporation of America) new radio station in Mexico, XEW, he would go on to perform on a program they had called *Calendario Artístico*. Not only would the onset of radio help spread the developing form of bolero from the Yucatan, but it would serve to circulate the genre further with listeners and musicians waiting for each new song to go on to transcribe their melodies and perform them locally. Cárdenas' recording of "Rayito de Sol" shows the evolution the genre had undergone since its travels from Cuba to Mexico. Recorded onto a 10 inch disc and written by both Cárdenas and Ermilio "Chispas" Padrón, Cárdenas is accompanied by both a second guitar and voice by Carlos "Chalín" Cámara, as well as a small orchestra. Far gone from the scene of a duo of singers/guitar players performing in bars and clubs to Cuban patrons, the music now was being shared through professionally recorded means and formal arrangements to fit alongside an orchestra. It is through Cárdenas in fact that we see an adaptation of Jazz music through his own Yucateca style with his recording of *Rio Rita* in 1927. Taken from the broadway musical of the same name written and composed by Harry Tierney and Joseph McCarthy the narrative revolves around a Texas Ranger who ventures into SanLucar, Mexico and falls in love with Rita Ferguson, an Irish-American-Mexican girl who sings in a local hotel. It is almost prophetic for Cárdenas to have taken part in such an early example of the genre mixing between the United States and Latin America through recording a song about the Mexican-American experience at the border. Unfortunately, Cárdenas' career was cut short with his death at the age of 27 in 1932 due to a stray bullet in a Mexico City bar, however his growing influence would serve as a catalyst for fellow Mexican musicians in the following years.

Early Successes with the Genre

One of these artists that flourished with the groundwork laid by Cárdenas was Augustín Lara, in fact Cárdenas had recorded plenty of Lara's compositions towards the end of his career. Born in Tlacotalpan in the Mexican state of Veracruz on October 30, 1897, Lara fell in love with music after moving into his aunt's hospice after his mother's death. During the 1920's, Lara had been playing as a pianist for cabarets in midst of Mexico City's nightlife which his music and lyrics would reflect with a transition from a more traditionally pure and modest woman as the muse or object of desire to one that resembles a scandalous prostitute, both of whom are untouchable from the perspective of the lyrics. This change from love songs into lovelorn music would remain prominent in the bolero genre for years to come marking Lara's remaining influences on the style, some of which are apparent in the albums of Gormé and Los Panchos.

As seen with the recordings of Cárdenas, boleros were becoming more acquainted with orchestral, big band, and even piano arrangements. This change in the first quarter of the 20th century could also be attributed to Lara's own style of composing. By the end of the 1930s Lara would replace the guitar's accompanying role with an ensemble or piano; he would not utilize the same cinquillo rhythm that originally defined the bolero genre. Instead, the meter would change from 2/4 to 4/4, and tonally his verses would begin in a minor key then modulate into a major key for the chorus, as seen in his "Noche de Ronda", also included in the *Amor* recording by Gormé and Los Panchos. While Lara's contributions to the genre of bolero cannot be overstated, his newer compositions had adopted a more polished presentation for audiences, contributing to bolero's growing popularity, however the simpler traditional arrangement of guitars and voices from Cuba had subsided.

Returning to the genre's roots within "Eydie Gormé canta en español con Los Panchos"

Entering into the 1940s, the resurgence of a more minimalistic style reminiscent of the old days of bolero, returned in the form of groups known as trios that consisted of three guitars and voices with their romantic singing. This is where Los Panchos would enter into the picture and forever transform the standard bolero. The three members of Los Panchos at the time of their recording projects with Eydie Gormé were not the original trio that made up their group when it was formed. Created in New York City in 1944, the group was made up of the Mexicans José de Jesús Navarro Moreno, better known as Chucho Navarro, Herminio Avilés Negrón, better known as Hernando Avilés, and Puerto Rican Alfredo Bojalil Gil, nicknamed artistically as El Güero Gil. First known to each other in the group were Navarro and Gil and their journey in finding each other begins with the Mexican.

Born as José de Jesús Navarro Moreno on January 20, 1913 in Irapuato, Guanajuato, he was one of ten children, all of whom were orphaned when his father Juan José Navarro, Director and piccolo player of the city's military band, died in 1916. He received his first guitar lessons from his sister with whom they formed their first duet playing and performing at their mother's property. His love for the music he performed led to him to place a hold on his medical studies in his third year to go begin making a group of voices and guitars to play the folkloric music he first encountered in his youth. In 1933, he worked with the orchestra of Rafael Hernandez where he would become acquainted with Charro Gil, and 3 years later they would form a trio with Navarro

as the second voice, and Gil's sister as the third in "El Charro Gil y sus Caporales".[8] It would be through their siblings that Navarro would meet El Güero Gil.

Named Farid Bojalil Gil, Alfredo Gil was born in Teziutlan, Puebla on August 5th, 1915 to Lebanese Immigrants Felipe Julián Bojalil and Carmen Gil. One of six children, all of whom were also passionate about music, el Güero would stay in Misantla, Veracruz until he left at 15 years old. Before having left, he would learn hairdressing in relation to his father's haberdashery, and there he fell in love with the guitar. It would be thanks to his brother Felipe that he would meet Navarro, after calling him up to New York City to join him on tour in 1940 with *El Charro Gil y sus Caporales*. Navarro had been a part of the group since 1936, and when the founder Felipe married Eva Garza and left the group in 1944 the duo of Navarro and Gil went on the search for the lead voice of the trio and they found him in the form of Hernando Avilés.

Born in San Juan, Mexico City on February 1, 1914, Herminio Avilés Negrón had already made up parts of groups, as well as having sung in Tango orchestras in Manhattan before joining Los Panchos in 1944. It was then on May 14, 1944, that the trio of Avilés, Gil, and Navarro would dub themselves as "Los Panchos", an idea that came from inciting the popularity and the name of Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa and also the Walt Disney character Pancho Pistolas, they would go on to make their debuts in the "Teatro Hispano de Nueva York", "Carnegie Hall", and the "Hotel Pierre".

Noticeably absent in the *Amor* collaborations with Gormé, Avilés had left the group by 1958 and was replaced by Puerto Rican singer Johnny Albino. Born of Italian descent from his grandfather's side on December 19, 1919 in Guayama, Puerto Rico, Albino demonstrated from an early age a strong inclination toward music and singing. Having experience in creating music

[8] *Biografía Chucho Navarro Los Panchos*, 13 Oct. 2013, www.espectaculosmexico.com/132498.html.

groups to perform in USO events while he was in the US Army during WWII, Albino formed in 1946 in New York City what would become a rival group for Los Panchos, the Trío San Juan. Albino would actually meet his rivals in 1957 in New York City, and he would go on to help fill in for when Avilés would get sick, simultaneously strengthening his bond with Gil and Navarro. Joining in 1958, Albino would stay with Los Panchos until 1968, thankfully having left his mark on all their albums in collaboration with Eydie Gormé.

Before finding each other, the trio of Albino, Gil, Navarro and the voice of Gormé each had their own periods of success. For Los Panchos the 1940's and 50's were when their music rose in international popularity. After a short break during 1945 because of the Second World War, the trío would go on to perform in New York, and following in the same footsteps of Cárdenas and Lara, they would play on American shortwave radio and periodically at Radio City Music Hall. International tours would follow with the trio's first countries being Venezuela and Puerto Rico in 1964, and in 1965 they would spend several months performing in Brazil. They were given the opportunity to further expand their music into Latin America beginning with their expansion into radio at the capital of Latin American music, Mexico City. They would occupy the time slots sponsored by Nestle at XEW-AM, being received with open arms.

The answer to their music finding its way into listener's ear inside and outside of the US was the trio's return and deviation from the original troubadour style of a minimalist line up of three guitars and voices arranged with rich harmonies alongside the virtuosic melodies of the *requinto,* retaking the harmonic spot filled by ensembles and pianos during the days of Lara and Cárdenas. Alongside this, they reintegrated Afro-Cuban percussion like the maracas and bongo while simultaneously diminishing the role they had once occupied like in some of Lara's earlier 'tropically' oriented music. In ironic homage to the bar scenes that the *trovadores* had occupied

in Oriente, Los Panchos entered a more high brow environment bringing with them the music that had originated in the up close and personal arena of the 'people'. The group began to feature in movies from 1949 with their first film "En cada puerto un amor". Their success would begin to subside by the 1960's and having already gone through different lineups in the trio they would be approached to collaborate with a female vocalist from the Bronx, Eydie Gormé.

The record *Eydie Gormé canta en español con Los Panchos* consists of 12 songs that were chosen by the members of Los Panchos; Chucho Navarro, Alfredo Gil, and Johnny Albino. Released in 1964 as *Amor - Great Love Songs in Spanish* to the rest of the world, the encounter between the trio and Eydie Gormé happened thanks to the coordination of Goddard Lieberson, the President of Columbia Records, who had the idea for a collaboration between Los Panchos and a female vocalist. As an integral part of the Long Play disc's (LPs) introduction to Columbia Records, Lieberson knew Gormé's hispanic background and as the husband of Gormé, Steve Lawrence described the Columbia Records President, "He was a really sophisticated international man. He knew of Eydie's Spanish background. He thought of Los Panchos, and they were aware of Eydie. They all met in the studio, and it was like they were old friends."[9] Lieberson's involvement in the conjoinment of all parties was essential to the creation of such a valuable product of Latinx Diasporic identity during the Postwar era of the United States.

Born of Turkish Immigrants in the Bronx on August 16, 1928, the parents of Gormé were descendants of Sefardic Jews who spoke Ladino. When the kingdom of Spain expelled the Jews in 1492 as a part of the Edict of Grenada, most of the communities who decided not to convert to Christianity self exiled to the Ottoman Empire where they were received by the sultan Bayezid II. It was for this reason that the language Ladino, which was essentially the same Castillian Spanish used in Spain with the exception of some instances of Hebrew lexicon added, remained

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intact throughout the centuries, meanwhile the Spanish language continued to evolve. With the addition of Turkish and Greek influences, the Ladino language found use in the process of distinguishing Jewish communities from other Jews like the Ashkenazies in cities like Salona in the Ottoman empire, and later Greece, where the population was a Sefardic majority. This rich history of the language underlies the Spanish that Gormé was raised speaking with relatives in the household. After finishing high school in the Bronx, Gormé worked as an interpreter for a theater equipment exporting business while simultaneously taking night classes at City College.

The artistic and cultural experience Gormé had growing up was fundamental for what she added to her grouping with Los Panchos. At home, Gormé learned the pop songs she grew up with in both English and Spanish: “I knew every pop song written at the time. I knew all the boleros, because everyone would sing them around the house.” Mixed with her experience of singing in a big band led by Ken Greengrass whilst in highschool, she would go on to sing for the ensembles of bandleaders like Tommy Tucker and Tex Beneke. As a listener of her collaborations with Los Panchos, her style of jazz/pop vocals from her earlier work finds itself in some songs like “Di Que No Es Verdad”, “Nosotros”, and “Cuando Vuelva a Tu Lado”. The term “crooner” is usually applied to male singers, like Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra and Nat King Cole, however, its definition of speaking or singing softly aptly describes Gormés singing with Los Panchos. Some of the popularity and cult success of these classic boleros could be attributed to Gormé’s unique vocal inflections together with the harmonization of Los Panchos at her side. This distinction from previous female vocalists in their ventures into foreign music, like Connie Francis and Gloria Lasso in their performances of boleros from Latin America, is something that contributes to the melancholic and nostalgic qualities of the album and consequently its international success.

Postmodern identity

Moving to understanding postmodernism, it is often defined as a response to modernism, which itself has different meanings in the sociological and artistic sense, both of which I plan to employ in this analysis. Coming out of an ever-growing industrialist setting in the late 19th century, modernism focuses on breaking away from tradition and placing its sights on contemporary forms as it relates to art and thought, like Liberalism and Marxism. It is important to distinguish between the concepts of modernism and *modernismo*. *Modernismo* was a literary movement within Latin America in the late 19th century that similarly also focused on breaking away from the predominant forms that originally came from Spain.[10] It is strongly tied to the advent of globalism, as it borrowed from the French movement of Parnassianism which itself came as a response to the movement of Romanticism's lax approach to form as well as its focus on sensibility. Most famously known for the phrase "art for art's sake", attributed to French poet Theóphile Gautier, Parnassianism had its attention on touting "artistic control, polish, elegance, objectivity, and impassiveness".[11] Modernismo incorporated a bit of both Romanticism and Parnassianism through techniques like symbolism and introducing a more erotic and sensual approach, evolving from earlier Romantic influences.

When applied to identity, modernism borrows from the Enlightenment perspective of the 'self' being a product of the internalized aspects of ourselves. According to British historian Carolyn Steedman, modernist identity is inherently the outcome of the child's entanglement with "the adult's present identity because the interiorized self, the sense of a self within, is perceived

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[10] Porto, Julián Pérez, and Ana Gardey. "Modernismo." *Definición.De*, Definicion.de, 17 June 2021, definicion.de/modernismo/#:~:text=Se%20conoce%20como%20modernismo%20a,costado%2C%20por%20no%20considerarlas%20eficientes.

[11] "Emergence of the Republic." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., www.britannica.com/art/Brazilian-literature/Emergence-of-the-republic#ref1004455.

as internalized memory of the past, the outcome of a personal history."[12] This falls directly in line with the elements of individuality and self-determination inherent in the importance of self-constitution within Enlightenment thought. Modernism takes this concept one step further, emphasizing the "static, stable essentialized self… and the coherence of subjectivity and the notion of identity."[13] This is where we could see the role globalization plays in contributing to and disrupting modernism's construction and cementation of the subject. The anthropologist Néstor García Canclini shows how this intersection of identity and the onset of globalization redefine identity within a world where products and their consumption are no longer tied down to a singular location. Modern identities are restricted to arbitrary systems of territory and subsequently culture, however Canclini emphasizes coupling this limited spacial definition with a postmodern reaction to globalization's increased production and communication. (Canclini 29) The result is a sense of identity that positions itself through what distinguishes us or makes us belong, what we do or do not have, and what we do or do not want.

Postmodernism in the social sense is defined by Michael Peter Smith from the University of California, Davis as it responds to other systems of thought: "Postmodern theory challenges the Enlightenment belief in rational actor models of social action, be they individuals cognizant of 'universal reason' or collective actors conscious of material self-interests" (Smith 501). When asking the question of what identity is, postmodernism challenges the notion of past experiences being the sole component responsible for the present subject. To show how, a look at Chantal Mouffe's deconstruction of the subject is important: "It is indispensable to develop a theory of the subject as a decentered, detotalized agent, a subject *constructed* at the point of intersection of

[12] Benzaquén, Adriana S. "Childhood, identity and human science in the enlightenment." *History Workshop Journal*, vol. 57, no. 1, 2004, pp. 34–57, https://doi.org/10.1093/hwj/57.1.34.

[13] (ibid)

a multiplicity of subject positions between which there exists no *a priori* or necessary relation." (Mouffe, 1988) The postmodern subject is a product of more than prior experiences, there is no neat designation of identity to territorial boundaries or domestic cultural products. Since everything that had been strictly domestic is no longer possible in a globalist setting, objects that were previously considered essential cultural signifiers do not remain regulated to a single country or nation. This approach to understanding the self alongside the influx of globalism is at the center of Canclini's work *Consumers and Citizens* and will prove integral in analyzing how *Amor* taps into the Latinx diasporic experience through the nostalgic intricacies of each song.

Postmodern Identity Applied to Latin American Diaspora

Entering into the 20th century, the United States interaction with foreign populations both south and west of the border had always been fueled through monetary and territorial incentives. With the annexation of Florida, Louisiana, and northern parts of Mexico, in the early 19th century, over a 100,000 native Spanish speakers would become integrated into American citizens, exemplified through the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1847.[14] After invading and defeating Mexico, the United States would gain the territory that makes up present day California, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and Arizona alongside Texas which had been taken a decade earlier. As soon as news spread about the gold rush in California, the promise of fortune would attract thousands of Mexicans alongside other hundreds of Southern Americans.

[14] Gregory, James. *Latinx Great Migrations - History and Geography - America's Great Migrations*, depts.washington.edu/moving1/latinx_migration.shtml. Accessed 1 May 2024.

As reflected between the 1880 and 1900 US census, the Hispanic population in the US had risen from around 330,000 to almost 500,000, almost three quarters of which were born in the US.

The Mexican Civil War would see this trend continue with many Mexicans seeking to escape to the US with their eyes set on joining the growing agricultural and railroad industries, and by the 1930 census 1.6 million people in the US would identify as having Mexican heritage. This trend continued with Puerto Rican and Cuban populations after the 1898 Spanish-American War, with 87,000 Puerto Ricans and 51,000 Cubans eventually residing in the US by 1930. Again, through the advent of the second World War, a migration boom would supplement the missing male workforce that had to enter service, leaving jobs in both the agricultural and defense industries to be filled by workers from Mexico and other various Caribbean countries and colonies. From having around 2 million Latinx identifying Americans in 1930 within the US, the numbers would jump to a little over 7 and a half million by 1970, no doubt due to the similar motivations of escaping domestic threats and the gilded promises of America's prosperity.

Instability and promise are at the core of this diaspora and consequently within the music of *Amor*. The release of the album precedes the repealment of immigration quotas by the United States in 1965, amending the Immigration and Nationality Act during the 1920s, and allowing residence visa selection to be a neutral selection process based on labor force needs and family reunification. For the Latinx community within and outside the borders of the United States, such a look at what "defines" an individual requires applying a postmodern lens to the migration experience. The mix of positive and negative emotions that are tied to both the destination and point of origin is attributed to the continuous change occurring with mass production, and Canclini posits that these circumstances are now what affect the identity and its reaction to modernization. He importantly lays out how these processes work saying:

> We are leaving behind the era in which identities were defined by ahistorical essences. Today, instead, shaped by consumption, identities depend on what one owns or is capable of attaining. The constant transformations in technologies of production, in the design of objects, in the most extensive and intensive communication among societies - and the concomitant expansion of desires and expectations - have a destabilizing effect on identities traditionally bound to repertoires of goods particular to an ethnic or national community[15]

These new factors that continue to evolve from generation to generation are what create the necessity to take more than just ethnic ties and cultural practices into account for the construction of the self. The industrialization and globalization responsible for this new dimension can find their roots from the modernist motivations behind the accelerated development of technologies to transform our lives for the better. However, in the process, it created a more visible inequality for those left stranded in underdeveloped regions of the world. The emotions tied to the desire for improved circumstances are highlighted in the Latin American diasporic experience with the United States and as a result, the subject's identity is left to the nuanced mixture of all these complicated sentiments. This motif of a subject who wrestles with conflicting feelings toward their object of desire is constantly at the center of *Amor*.

How *Amor* taps into Latinx Diasporic identity

Upon first listen, it would be forgivable to new listeners to assume the album's collection of boleros is purely a beautiful showcase of love ballads, and it appeared as such when starting my investigation of the album when I was taking the train back home at fifteen. While I was

[15] Canclini, Néstor García, and George Yúdice. *Consumers and Citizens: Globalization and Multicultural Conflicts*. Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2003.

using the case of my alto saxophone as a stool on the platform of the 28th street station for the 1 train, I looked up the lyrics to the songs of the album. With the help of a Spanish-English dictionary app on my phone, I tried my best to translate the words of the songs into English, and gathered that the stories were those of forlorn love. My aversion to love songs back then could be considered responsible for why I was unimpressed upon first glance of what I pieced together through my shoddy decoding of the Spanish singing I was so enraptured by. This distaste for corny love songs did not, however, discourage my ear, as it was evident this album was more than just the surface level translation I had constructed. Hearing the beautiful requinto solos of Alfredo Gil and Johnny Albino's heavenly harmonization underneath Eydie Gormé's already angelic singing only fueled the many questions I had for what became my favorite album of all time.

The question posed to me by the album I would take if I were to be marooned and only allowed to listen to one record for the rest of eternity, would have to wait until the writing of what I now hopefully believe to be an answer. I asked myself why and how could this music tug on the heartstrings of fifteen year old me? I did not know enough Spanish to connect to the words on a more intimate level and the themes of love should have left me feeling disconnected with the music, but it did not. What I understood back then was the music made me yearn for something that was no longer there, or something that had never been. In deconstructing this feeling, the earlier breakdown of postmodernist definition of identity will be useful in explaining how the songs "Historia de un amor" and "Cuando vuelva a tu lado" replicate the inner conflict experienced by some Latinx migrants.

Chapter 4: Deconstruction of bolero songs in album

Historia de un Amor

Background

Released in 1955, “Historia de un Amor” was composed by Carlos Eleta Almarán shortly following the death of his sister in-law due to polio. Mercedes Casanovas Escobet, who was married to Carlos’ brother Fernando, passed away only six days after she gave birth to the couple’s third child at the age of 26, leaving Eleta in the corner of the room to write the line

“Historia de un Amor” inspired by tragedy. The despair and grief of Mercedes’ passing was shared among the surrounding regions due to the prominent role Fernando played in the community, having been an engineer, radio entrepreneur, and ex-minister of finance. With Eleta’s many connections in the radio industry he would eventually show his composition to the Argentinian singer Leo Marini in 1955 leading to the first recording of the song to take place on April 20th that same year. The song would go on to receive worldwide acclaim upon the release of a movie in 1956 sharing the song's title starring the Mexican movie star Libertad Lamarque.

On the album with Los Panchos and Gormé, the song is the fifth bolero to appear and while the song has had many renditions come before and after the version in *Canta…* released, to many including myself, the album’s instrumental style and lineup marks it as one of the most definitive recordings of “Historia de un Amor”.

Analysis

Literary

When analyzing the song, I would like to take the route of breaking down each song into three elements in order to explore how the music fulfills its role in conveying identity. Borrowing from Mariano Muñoz-Hidalgo, the three pillars I will begin to investigate “Historia de un Amor” will be the literary, the musical, and the interpretive. Beginning with the literary, the words of the song express the evident mourning at the loss of a loved one and the consequent feelings of isolation wrought on by it:

Ya no estas más a mi lado corazón, en el alma solo tengo soledad,

y si ya no puedo verte, por que Dios me hizo quererte, para hacerme sufrir más

Through the literary lens, this song speaks of what once was and can longer be. There exists a sense of solitude in the subject soul that was left empty with the absence of the object of the song. The mentioning of God's decision as being responsible for the speaker's yearning, more so to make them suffer even more. Within the first verse, the intimacy of the song's bereaved lover recounts the lost connection to the subject of the song. Whether the subject be an individual lover or a treasured object to the narrator gives the lyrics the malleability of interpretation that could apply to a listener's vicariousness. Employing our earlier understanding of postmodern identity in the context of Latin American diaspora, one could see the evocation of a migrant's nostalgia for their hometown, country, or family being the source of the subject's strife. The stages of grief apparent in the first lines such as anger and bargaining, through God's apparent transaction of love and grief unto the mourner, could be realized, if not already have been, into the lives of many. The coping done within the words of the first verse serve to show the disconnection that develops because of lost time and distance. When looking at the song's reinterpretation by Los Panchos and Gormé and the world that song was entering into, there is an important cultural product that speaks on the crisis of identity within the Latin American migration to the United States.

Siempre fuiste la razón de mi existir, adorarte para mí fue religión
y en tus besos yo encontraba, el amor que me brindaba, el calor y la pasión

Again, the apparent enslavement of the voice to the object of the song reveals a double edged sword in their source of comfort and reliance. The ounces of hope shown within the uses

of the imperfect tense in “encontraba” and “brindaba” further facilitate the desire to get back what is now lost. The idolization of the object explicitly sets up the subject for failure, the unrealistic standards placed upon the object and the over reliance on their affection shows the toxic dependency at play for the listener, maybe a dependency they could relate to. This sort of dissatisfaction with the object of desire resembles the clashing sentiments present within the attitudes of Latinx Americans towards both their country of origin and where they reside in the US. The idolization of the object who was the subject’s “reason to live” can come to represent the gilded figure the United States presents in the minds of hopeful migrants. This optimism is quickly warped for many who do arrive at their dream destinations in the US only to have to face more obstacles that provide a reality check for their misled hopes. The dream of receiving better circumstances up North can provide a semblance of comfort for those suffering outside of the US. This juxtaposed with the positive and negative emotions directed at the root of said aspirations, the deficiencies of one’s birth country, creates a multifaceted list of desires in the midst of the Latinx migration experience. This resentment becomes internalized through a modernist understanding of identity, as the subject is tied to their personal history, however a postmodern approach adds more to the equation. The variables of what the self wants and is capable of attaining are invoked by the push and pull at play in the discrepant emotions of the lyrics, speaking to the crisis of identity endured by Latinx Americans.

> Es la historia de un amor, como no hay otra igual, que me hizo comprender todo el bien todo el mal,
>
> Que le dio luz a mi vida, apagándola después, ay qué vida tan obscura, sin tu amor no viviré.
>
> Es la historia de un amor

A love story that isolates the narrator, by dismissing all other stories of love, is also one that revitalizes the subject of this heartbreak. This sort of contradicting relationship with one's love for another remains present throughout the lyrics of the song and allows a level of association with the listener. The source of life that simultaneously flips the switch off for the narrative voice reiterates the pernicious nature of not the object of the words, but the self's skewed perception. This troubled internalization translates into the complicated relationship between Latinx migrants and their native countries, one that is responsible for a defining aspect of the self through the postmodern lens. Alongside the emotions tied to the loss of something essential to the construction of one's sense of identity because of the separation from their homeland, the migrant subject might simultaneously retain resentment for having had to have leave due to threat of violence or in search of the material comforts and necessities that the North had to offer on an exponential scale compared to that of their birth country. This dynamic created by said "love story" can provide a framework to be applied to the difficult and often object-oriented "grass is greener on the other side" relationship with migrants and their destination. There also exists a flexibility to this application in regards to one's own relationship with their 'patria'. While the words paint an image full of sorrow, they serve as a catalyst for the listener to take charge of their own interpretation of the song. This malleability carries over into the musical and interpretive elements of the song creating a rich cultural product full of potential self reflection for any listener.

Musical

The musical elements of "Historia" show a harmonic layout evocative of the same themes of the indeterminate desires at the core of the self within the Latinx American diasporic experience. The harmonic progression of the song invokes these sensations through the expectations of the listener's ear being left unresolved like the subject's wishes. A closer look at the function of each of the chords and their relationship will offer a better comprehension to this connection. The progression the music follows the starts of the song with the solo and the following chords: G minor 6, A dominant 7 , D minor twice | C major, Bb major, A dominant 7, and D minor.

Starting off with a G minor 6 chord (with G, Bb, D, and E as the 6th), the established key of the song is actually D minor, thus the first 4 measures of 4 beats, (as illustrated with the repeating eighth notes on the bongos) follow a iv- V- i progression, or a minor 4-5-1 progression. The resulting music has a harmonic pattern that leaves it feeling cyclical and heart wrenchingly open-ended. The lack of catharsis within the harmony changes of the song mirrors the unfinished story of love between the widower brother of Almaran and his late wife. This same sensation of despair and grief left behind what feels incomplete is more than relevant regarding the Latinx migrant's experience of yearning for what once was. Whether it is the love-hate relationship an immigrant may have with their past home, or the melancholic thoughts of what could have been endured by those who were never granted the opportunity to say goodbye to their flawed homelands to begin with. This conflict of desires is reminiscent of the destabilized subject reflected in postmodern thought, the same grayness shared with the subject's emotions in "Historia de un amor".

The first half of the harmonic progression utilizes 2 V-i chord changes with A7 to D minor and the other being at the end of the pattern going from Dm to Gm. (Looking at the numbered system of lettered notes, if G is 1 the sequence of notes to numbers would be as follows; A:2, B:3, C:4, D:5, E:6, and F:7, thus making the D-G motion a 5 to 1 cadence, even in "Historia de un amor*"* where D is 1 and G is 4) The second part of the harmonic progression finds its influence borrowing from the well known "Andalusian Cadence". If one looks at the chords C, Bbm, and A7, initially descending from the previous sections last chord, Dm, then the pattern appears to be a descending stepwise motion starting from the tonic, or the 1 chord, making it become Dm-Cmaj-Bbm-A7 or 1-7-6-5. As it so happens, this progression from Dm to A7 is referred to as *por medio* because the chords lie within the middle of the guitar's fretboard. Generally, the progression gives a powerful and cathartic motion for the ears since it arrives at the 1 chord, but its usage in this song falls in line with the motif of incompleteness within the lyrics of "Historia". Since the song is in D minor, the song does not end with the end of the Andalusian cadence, instead subverting the dramatic descent of the music ending on the A7 chord returning back to the tonic chord D minor and again back to the beginning of the harmony with G minor. This lack of musical resolution is fundamental to *Historia*'s invocation of the Latinx sense of self in the context of a rapidly changing global setting post WWII. The emotional and literal void left in the harmony compounds the yearning for an answer to the subject's problem..

Dm (I) Gm(IV) C (VII) F(III) A7(V)

Que le dio luz a mi vida, apagándola después,

Dm(I) Gm/Bb(IV) E(II) A7 (V)

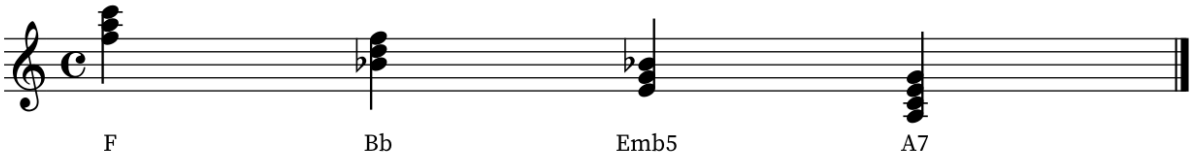
ay qué vida tan obscura, sin tu amor no viviré.

Bb(VI) A7 (V)

Es la historia de un amor

This section proves to stand out within the form of the song for its change of harmony and length, coming out to be 10 measures of music as opposed to the earlier 8 measure phrases. It also stands in line with the motif of incompleteness and the song's unresolved harmonic tensions, more specifically at the beginning of the section. The chords follow the pattern Dm-Gm-C-F-A7, or their numerical equivalent I-IV-VII-III-V, which itself diverts from a listener's expectation. This is because of a common harmonic resolution that appears often in western music that descends in fifths. If we look at each chord as their respective groupings of three notes (triads), we can see the use of the same 5-1 cadence that was at play earlier in the music. As shown with the notes below, the root note or bottom note of each chord serves as the fifth for the following chord giving each chord a satisfying sense of resolution.

However, where the music diverts from the listener's expectations occurs when the F major chord ascends to the A7 chord at the end of "apagándola después". Rather than descending a fifth from F major to Bb major, continuing the previous pattern, F major jumps to A7 skipping three possible V-I cadenzas, from F to Bb, Bb to Emb5, and finally Emb5 to A7 as shown below:



This redirection of the harmony serves as a catalyst for the emotional void left within both the subject of the song and its harmonic progressions. Employing postmodernism's conception of identity, the harmonic void speaks to the motif of emptiness and dissatisfaction shown from the subject's painful words within "Historia de un amor". The lack of catharsis within both the skipped harmonic resolutions and the song's lyrics taps into Latinx listeners' repressed and conflicted sense of self in a globalized world. Similar to Almarán's yearning for his brother's loss, the loss experienced by those within the diasporic context of postwar US and the subsequent longing for a solution defines one aspect of the postmodern Latinx subject.

Another method implemented into the harmony to drive home the circular and never-ending story of loss is done at the end of the lines ``sin tu amor no viviré, es la historia de un amor". The chords at the ending of this sequence are E major, A dominant 7th, Bb major, descending back down to A dominant 7, which follows a II-V-VI-V pattern. Like with the subversion of the authentic V-I cadence earlier in the same verse, the V-VI- harmonic motion is recognized as a deceptive cadence as any chord pattern that has the V chord not resolving to the I chord is defined as such. This deception of the listener's ear solicits the same lack of emotional release plagued by the mixed feelings wrought by the questioning of desires and values within a subject of the postwar Latinx diaspora.

The literary and musical elements of "Historia de un amor" both individually and collectively invoke powerful sensations from the listener. Through the flexibility of interpretation

of the song's lyrics and the music's use of inconclusive resolutions for the harmonic tensions, an overwhelming negative and somber product. While this does speak to the inner dissent of the metaphorical Latinx subject, the arrangement Los Panchos and Gormé delivered in *Amor* acts as a force of affirmation and consolidation for the listener.

Interpretative

The solo of Gil introduces the main melodic theme of the entire song starting on the first pitch leap of an octave. Reflected in the main melodic line sung by Gormé: "Ya no es-tás más a mi lado corazón", Gil is the only one to begin the song not accompanied with anyone by his side. Ironically enough, during the variation of the melody making up the line "Now you are no longer by my side, my love" the percussion section made up of bongos and maracas as well as the harmonic accompaniment of guitars from the other Panchos enter by Gil's "side" as his solo arrives to the "lado" portion of the melody . Within the first three seconds of the interpretation of this classic, Gormé and Los Panchos already create a musical juxtaposition with the song's words and the actions of the ensemble joining the isolated and vulnerable solo of Gil, emotions mirrored by the mourning of the song's lyrics. Similar to the melody's initial solitude prior to its accompaniment, the isolation experienced by someone within the postwar waves of Latin American migration can share in the lonely predicament of a diaspora upon leaving one's familiar surroundings under duress. This poetic moment is recreated at the end of Gil's solo with everyone cutting off at the end of the first 8 measures of the song allowing for Gormé's own bittersweet octave leap. In fact, this motif remains prevalent throughout the entirety of the song. However, whereas the conjoinment of the voices as the response to the musical seclusion of

Gormé and Gil may serve to act as an antidote to the subject's pain in the song, it may behave the same for a listener living in the globalized world of the postwar Americas.

This constant isolation and regrouping of voices plays a powerful role in the song's story of solitude and abandonment. We can see this done a few ways harmonically and melodically with Alfredo Gil's call and response with Gormé on the requinto as well as the choral singing of Los Panchos. Between Gormé's verses, "Ya no estas mas a mi lado corazón" and "en el alma solo tengo soledad", Gil's solos fill the space between the lyrics and create a musical response to the subject's expressions of pain, providing company to the potentially sympathetic listener. The following verse speaks more to the remedy community may serve for the loneliness experienced by those within the context of Latinx diaspora. "Y si ya no puedo verte, por qué Dios me hizo quererte, para hacerme sufrir más", keen listeners may recognize the voices of Los Panchos singing the descending notes of the chord progression C major, Bb major, and finally A dominant 7th. Johnny Albino joins Gormé in singing the third of each chord while the others sing the lower tonic and fifth. While the chords have a major third leading them to sound conclusive, the arrangement of intervals between each note gives the less triumphant third in the chord to the main line for the subject's melody, adding further melancholy to the performance. While a community may function as an alleviating response to the ailments of the displaced subject, the manner in which the song is interpreted shows the bittersweet comfort to be found on all ends of the Latinx diasporic spectrum.

Cuando Vuelva a tu Lado

Background

Written in 1934 by Maria Grever, *Cuando Vuelva a tu Lado* was first recorded by Pedro Vía y su orquesta on December 10th of that year. The composer María Joaquina de la Portilla Torres was born on September 14, 1885 in Guanajuato, Mexico to a Spanish father and a Mexican mother. As a woman in a wealthy family, her life growing up was very much a result of the globalism that was mentioned earlier in this paper. Being raised between Spain and Mexico, she also studied under such musical giants as Claude Debusy and Franz Lehar. She would move permanently back to Mexico at the age of 15 after her father's death, and in 1907 she went on to marry Leon Grever, an American businessman. After having four children, with only two surviving, Grever would move to the US in 1916 amidst the Mexican civil war and she would settle in New York City separated from her husband who had to remain to work in Mexico.

Being a single woman of color with two children in NYC was enough of an undertaking, but as records show, she would remain separated both distance-wise and romantically from Leon leaving only herself in a foreign land to support her family with her music. New York City as a destination was also to facilitate her musical endeavors as it was home to the songwriting capital of the US, tin pan alley. She would eventually find success through songwriting with the 1927 recording of her bolero "Júrame" by the famous Mexican tenor José Mojica. This success would catapult her career as a composer and in 1934 her bolero "Cuando vuelva a tu lado" would go on to be adapted into English by Stanley Adams with the new title "What a Difference a Day Makes", covered by greats like Bing Crosby and Dinah Washinton. With most of her

compositions being owned by Universal Music Group, *Cuando* stands out as having ended up in the hands of Gormé and company in their recording of it in 1963.

Analysis

Literary

Reflected within the poetic lyrics of *Cuando vuelva a tu lado*, it is necessary to relate the motifs of yearning and nostalgia to Grever's own migrational experience and the complicated relationship that remained after leaving her home. Her work stands the test of time and her words that illustrate the immigrant experience speak to the exponential waves of incoming Hispanic migrants entering the United States between the 1930's, when Grever's work first hit radio stations, till when *Amor* released in the 1960's, by which more than five and a half million Latinx identifying Americans were living in the US.

Cuando vuelva a tu lado
No me niegues tus besos
Que el amor que te he dado
No podrás olvidar

The song follows a A B A C format with the titular lines separating each new verse until the end. The uncertainty present with the use of the subjunctive for "vuelva" sets up the tone for the rest of the song beautifully, demonstrating the subject's hopefulness. This hopefulness could be used to describe the homesickness of migrants from Latin American countries and the simultaneous doubt regarding their relationship with their homelands. This same conflicted dynamic between the subject and their object of yearning is reflected within Maria Grever's own

immigration experience. While the domestic instability of Mexico's civil war proved to be a strong factor in her decision to leave to the US, the opportunities present in her eventual destination of New York City were not available to a woman in Mexico. Her dreams as an aspiring female composer could have only reached the heights that it did because of NYC's status as the center of all the recording companies and Tin Pan Alley, the songwriting capital of the United States. This frustration with having one's home's insufficiencies being the source for their desire to leave is integral to understanding the Latinx sense of self through a postmodern lens. As Canclini suggested, the "General conflicts over what is necessary and desirable are another way to establish identities and construct what distinguishes us" (16) This side by side with the denial of subject's affection for the object, Grever's words construct a fickle confidence in their future with the song's apparent 'love'. The emplorement of the subject's love alongside the consistent use of the subjunctive paints a desperate picture of the song's narrator shared with those subjected to the struggles inherent in the setting of the Latin American diaspora. The following verses show the result of the conflict of interests within the subject of both the song and of the migration experience.

No me preguntes nada
Que nada he de explicarte
Que el beso que negaste
Ya no lo puedes dar

In contrast to the earlier hopeless mood of the first verse, a sense of agency develops in the following lines "Do not ask me anything", "there is nothing to explain to you". Whereas in the first verses, it would have seemed to the listener that the metaphorical door of love was being shut closed on the narrative voice, the tables turn and the shunning of the object of desire shows

a situation that is neither left shut nor open. The subject claims back power from the toxic dynamic between them and their object of desire, maybe a dynamic that is shared by the unresolved emotions brought on by one's involvement in a diaspora. This open-endedness is reflected with the question of postmodern identity and its nuanced relationship with outside and internalized forces. If one is a first generation US born Latin American, their relationship with their parent's birth countries will automatically be created differently than that of those who are born and raised in Latin America only to arrive and settle up in the North later on in their lives. Postmodern identity finds all of these different perspectives and applications present within the songs lyrics.

Cuando vuelva a tu lado
Y esté solo contigo
Las cosas que te digo
No repitas jamás, por compasión

Again, the repetition of the subjunctive phrase "cuando vuelva" contributes to the cyclical and open-ended nature of the words and experience shared by those within the setting of migrating to the postwar USA from Latin America. The intimacy created between the subject and object of the song emphasizes the vulnerability of the narrator. Applying this vulnerability to the fickle nature of identity within the diasporic context of the United States and Latin America, the words reflect an experience even shared by the composer Grever. One that speaks to the teetering experience of home not being strictly a space for safety and solace, instead being a complicated setting for many Latinx listeners, one that holds their emotions and the 'things they say' hostage. It was not uncommon for victims of exile to have been targeted within Latin

American countries for criticism against the standing military governments all across the hemisphere, and the words of an individual could grant them punishment from the military..

The historical persecution of dissenting opinions in Latin American countries plays a motivating factor in the mass migration to the United States that continues to take place. Dictatorial regimes existed in countries like El Salvador in 1931, Chile with Augusto Pinochet from 1971-1990, Argentina between 1943-1983, Brazil in 1964, amongst many others. Military juntas are a form of government led by military leaders with a committee of oligarchs, and 13 countries in the Americas have experienced violent repressions under the leadership of authoritarian governments between 1930 and 2000. “Las cosas que te digo” *, the things I say*, “No repitas jamás, por compasión”, *don't ever repeat, for pity' s sake*. The connection to the malignant position posed to the author’s voice in “Cuando vuelva a tu lado” mirrors the very real situations of political refugees of Latin America and their own pernicious relationships with their beloved homelands. The oxymoronic disposition that comes as a result of this interplay is at the center of a postmodern subject’s identity.

Une tu labio al mío
Y estréchame en tus brazos
Y cuenta los latidos
De nuestro corazón

The physicality of these verses are what stand out most due to the same sensual sensibilities characteristic of Romanticism. “Une tu labio al mío”, *join your lips to mine,* “Y estréchame en tus brazos”, *and hold me in your arms*, “Y cuenta los latidos”, *and count the*

heartbeats, “De nuestro corazón”, *of our heart*. The visceral desperation depicted by Grever’s writing is one that illustrates the longing endured by some to reunite both emotionally and physically with their source of adoration. This desire could be translated to the wishes Latin American immigrants may have for a mutually healthy and beneficial relationship with their respective tierras. Embodying postmodernism’s conception of the self, the possible fragmented identity of Latinx immigrants is left as a result of the wavering emotions towards objects that are essential to the composition of their individual person.

Musical

The chord sequence follows a familiar pattern to the one discussed in “Historia de un amor”, relying on the tension and release inherent in the authentic cadence, “Cuando vuelva a tu lado” uses the same harmonic progression to replicate many of the same sentiments present in Almarán’s masterpiece.

D (I) Em7 A7
Cuando vuelva a tu lado
D
No me niegues tus besos
Em7 A7
Que el amor que te he dado
D
No podrás olvidar

The I chord to the ii minor chord motion gives an ascending motion as the same time the words sing “vuelva a tu lado”, *return to your side*, a rise in anticipation that occurs in unison

with the escalation of the harmony. Once the E minor chord is over, A dominant 7 behaves as the "1" position for E minor's "5", creating a descending resolution to the harmonic tension of the ii chord for D minor. Alongside the downward motion of the ii-V, the words reflect a downshift in the emotions of the verse "No me niegues tus besos", which also incorporates the authentic cadence to resolve down to the I chord of D minor. The usage of a cadence that should sound triumphant, instead is left sounding aggrieved because of the despondent lyrics. The juxtaposed sentiments of the major V7-I cadence and the narrative voice's uncertainty harkens back to the conflicted makeup of the postmodern formation of the self. The mixed emotional release of the V7-I chord progression creates a nuanced relationship between the dejected sentiments of the narrator and the apparent satisfaction of the authentic cadence.

F# F#7
No me preguntes nada
Bm Bm7
Que nada he de explicarte
E7
Que el beso que negaste
A A7
Ya no lo puedes dar

F sharp is the third scale tone in D major, leaving the following chord sequence F#7, Bm7, E7, and A7 to be III7-vi7-II7. The chords all produce their own sort of cadence with the inclusion of the dominant 7 prior to the changing of harmony. As F sharp is the V for Bminor, it establishes a resolution that continues all the way down to A7 and its ensuing concluding chord D major. Similar to the harmonic technique implemented in "Historia de un amor", the

concluding nature of the chords along with the inconclusive story of the words recreates the incongruent emotions presented to those who underwent alienating experience of diaspora.

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                Gmaj7  Gm7
Une tu labio al mío
                       F#    Bm
Y estréchame en tus brazos
                Em 7  A7
Y cuenta los latidos
                  D
De nuestro corazón
```

In D major, the G is the fourth scale degree, making a V-I cadence between D, the fifth, and G, the root. Coinciding with the narrative voice's begging, the persistent mixture of cathartic cadences not only contrasts the subject's pleas, it also reinforces the never ending experience of being an immigrant with ambivalent emotions regarding their homelands. The tenacious effect of the chord's continual manipulation of the listener's ear paints a melancholic picture of the diasporic experience.

Interpretive

The arrangement executed between Gormé and Los Panchos is responsible for the bittersweet end product that both corresponds to the opposing emotions endured by some Hispanic emigrants and the revitalization of community between the different ethnic groups of Latinx immigrants settling in the US. Beginning with Alfredo Gil's solo, the entire ensemble enters soon after, implementing the same musical and metaphorical principles that are used in "Historia de un amor". Similar to the adjoining voices entrances in "Historia", the pattern continues in Grever's work, with Gormé's entrance "Cuando vuelva a tu lado" being musically

isolated until the ensemble joins her on the beat saying “lado”, *side*. Gil’s interpolations of the melody floor every statement sung by Gormé, not letting the desperate words of the subject fall onto the deaf ears of the ensemble who continue the perpetual motion of the harmony.

The vocal harmonic accompaniment of Los Panchos continues the adjoining motif that appears in the descending melodies of “Historia”, and accomplishes the same goal of a bonding cultural product that could be shared in the face of the Latin American diasporic situation. Reminiscent of an affirming group underneath the heartwrenching requests of Gormé’s singing, the lonely subject is supported both musically and emotionally by the additional voices. The defining qualities of the postmodern self assert that it is desires that compose the identity of a person in the setting of a globalized world. In the setting of Latin American immigration, a new community is being consolidated through the shared possibly ambiguous desires of migrating groups.

Conclusion

The renditions of the songs “Historia de un amor” and “Cuando vuelva a tu lado”, recorded by Eydie Gormé and Los Panchos in the album *Amor*, are cultural products that represent the postmodern identitarian crisis at the core of Latinx immigration to the United States. The literary, musical, and interpretive elements that are on display within each song, function in unison to construct a culturally unifying product that might serve as a coping mechanism for the Latinx communities in exile. Through the characterization of the different conflicting desires at the heart of each song’s narrative voice, which embodies the Latinx community, empathizes and affirms the complicated question of identity experienced by those who were displaced from their *patria*. The poetry in the songs rely on the incompatibility of desires that are present within a postmodernist subject. The tension between the negative and positive feelings towards the object of desire mirrors the same nuanced relationship maintained by Latinx immigrants towards their place of origin. This is compounded with the use of harmonic techniques that express the same lack of catharsis possibly endured by expatriates from Latin American countries. In the end, the result is a therapeutic product that embodies and responds to the question of Latinx diasporic identity.

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