

Caimaré: The Saxophone at the Crossroads of Colombian Music

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Resumen

La obra colombiana *Caimaré* (1949) del compositor Luis Uribe Bueno (1916-2000) es un ejemplo inusual de música escrita para saxofón y orquesta en Latinoamérica. Esta pieza alcanza una particular relevancia en el repertorio para saxofón y orquesta no solo porque abre una ventana a la cultura musical de ese tiempo, sino porque simboliza una conciliación en la diversidad de elementos culturales que representa de la identidad nacional musical de Colombia.

En este artículo examinaré los aspectos principales de *Caimaré* y su relación con la historia, composición y ejecución-interpretación del saxofón en Colombia. Demostraré cómo el saxofón jugó un rol predominante en la música popular de la Costa Atlántica en contraste con su relativa rareza en el contexto de la música tradicional y folclórica Andina Colombiana. Mi estudio también explorará el uso del saxofón en una de las orquestas tropicales más representativas en la música Colombiana como lo fue la de Lucho Bermúdez y la influencia que esta tuvo en la composición de Uribe Bueno. Finalmente, este estudio ilustrará cómo el compositor fusionó ritmos españoles tradicionales como el pasodoble e influencias del bolero cubano

dentro del pasillo tradicional colombiano en su representación de la identidad musical nacional.

Abstract

The Colombian composition, *Caimaré* (1949), by Luis Uribe Bueno (1916-2000) is a rare example of music written for saxophone and orchestra in Latin America. This piece reaches a particular importance in the repertoire for saxophone and orchestra because not only does it open a window into Colombian musical culture at the time, but it also presents a conciliation of the diverse musical elements that represented national identity of Colombia at that time.

In this paper, I will survey key aspects of *Caimaré* and its relationship to the history, composition, and performance of saxophone music in Colombia. I will show how the saxophone played a predominant role in the popular music of the Atlantic coastal region, as opposed to its relative rarity in the classical music tradition and in Andean folkloric contexts. My study will explore the role of the saxophone in one of the most representative tropical bands in Colombian music, Lucho Bermúdez's orchestra, and the influence that orchestra had on Uribe Bueno's composition. Finally, this study will illustrate how Uribe Bueno combined traditional Spanish rhythms from the *pasodoble* and Caribbean influences from the Cuban *bolero* within the traditional Colombian *pasillo* in his representation of national music identity.

Palabras clave

Saxofón, música colombiana, *Caimaré*

Keywords

Saxophone, colombian music, *Caimaré*

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The objective of this article is to offer the reader a general overview of the saxophone in Colombia through an emphasis on the original solo music by Colombian composers during the last sixty years. In this study, I focus on Luis Uribe Bueno's (1916-2000) *Caimaré* (1949), which is one of the earliest known pieces for saxophone and orchestra. This piece is significant because it opens a window not only into Colombian musical culture at the time, but also into the conciliation of national musical identities of such a vast and culturally diverse country as Colombia. Additionally, the piece raises unsettling questions: Why did Uribe Bueno compose music for saxophone and orchestra when the saxophone was an uncommon instrument in classical music and even more so in Andean Colombian repertoires? Why did he write this piece? For whom? Was *Caimaré* just an isolated example, or were there other similar compositions? What were the music-cultural influences?

In contrast to the rarity of the saxophone in Colombian classical and Andean contexts, the instrument has played a predominant role in the popular music of the Atlantic coastal region (which is also known as *costeño* or *tropical* music). In this paper, I will explore the role of the saxophone in one of the most representative tropical bands in Colombian music, Lucho Bermúdez's orchestra, and the influence that this orchestra had on Uribe Bueno's composition.

The incorporation of the saxophone into the musical culture in Colombia dates back to the early twentieth century. Nevertheless, the inclusion and role of this instrument in Colombian music has not been discussed extensively in the literature. Even though several resources, such as the *Comprehensive Guide to the Saxophone Repertoire* (which contains ca. 18.000 citations) and *El saxofón en la música docta de América Latina* (which lists 1.093 works), have referenced a broad catalog of new saxophone repertoire from all over the world, these sources provide little or no detailed information about Colombian saxophone music. Indeed, there is no published book, thesis, or article on the subject. For this reason, I will begin my study by surveying the historical, compositional,

1. These scholars document that instruments such as clarinets, flutes, and saxhorns were sold in music stores in the river port city of Mompox between 1869 and 1874. It can be inferred that saxophones, like those other instruments, came to Colombia through international trade in port cities. This information was also confirmed by Alvaro Rojas Gómez, (a Colombian arranger, clarinet, and saxophone authority) when I asked him about the possible origins of the saxophone in Colombia.

and performance aspects of the saxophone in Colombia, focusing especially on Medellín, in order to achieve a better understanding of the contextual framework that surrounded the creation of Luis Uribe Bueno's composition.

History

In Colombia, the saxophone is mainly known as a popular and traditional instrument that played a predominant role in the music of the Atlantic area and figured less prominently in the Andean, Pacific, and Eastern plains regions. It is difficult to establish an exact date for the first use of the saxophone in Colombia, but probably it dates back to the music played in nightclubs in the Atlantic coastal cities of Cartagena and Barranquilla during the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries. In these international port cities, ships from all over the world arrived with passengers and cargo for the entire country, also bringing the latest musical trends from Europe and the United States, where the saxophone had achieved an important role in popular music (Bermúdez, et al., 2000: 201)¹.

Certainly a decisive factor in the increasing spread of the saxophone in Colombia had to do with its broader inclusion within international military bands. The introduction of the saxophone into this context came in 1852 when an official edict of the French government established a new configuration of the national military band. This new set-up contained five of the seven members of the saxophone family (soprano, alto, tenor, baritone and bass) (Segell, 2005:22). Two repercussions of the inclusion of the saxophone were especially significant: 1) the creation of a specific repertoire for the instrument and 2) the 1870 opening of a saxophone professorship at the Paris conservatory.

Figure 1. Jazz Nicolas band, ca. 1927. Pictured standing from left to right: Nicolás Torres Baenz (banjo), Enrique Castro (violin), Enrique Suarez Duque (flute), Jaime Santamaría (piano), Juan de Dios Durán (saxophone), and Efraim Osorio (bombardino). Seated left to right: Jorge Marín Vieco (alto sax), Luis López (banjo), Arturo Salazar (drums), Samuel Martínez (bass), and Emilio Antonio Velásquez (tuba) (Gómez, 2007:57).



In Colombia, the French development of the saxophone had a strong impact. The earliest use of the instrument in Colombian symphonic bands dates back to the period 1915-1920. Major ensembles included the *Banda de la Policía* and the *Banda Nacional* in Bogotá and the *Banda Departamental* in Medellín. These ensembles played repertoire that consisted mostly of polkas, waltzes, *pasodobles* and adaptations of segments from operas, suites, and symphonies. Most of these pieces were arrangements and adaptations made by European (especially French) and North American publishers. The instrumental scoring of these works accordingly included the five foregoing members of the saxophone family.

But it was not just through wind bands that the saxophone made its way into Colombia. In early 1920s through the 1930s, due to the international influence of the growing blues and jazz movement in the United States, some music groups in Bogotá, Medellín, Barranquilla, and Cartagena embraced the use of the saxophone as part of their instrumental configuration to liven up social meetings, radio programs, and concerts².

Initially, Uribe Bueno, the composer of *Caimaré*, was a musician involved mostly with Andean Colombian music.³ Born in 1916 in the Colombian city of Salazar de las Palmas, Norte de Santander, he wrote 450-500 pieces⁴, almost all of them based on Andean rhythms. He expressed his early affinity for this music at the age of seven when he wrote his first *pasillo*. However, Uribe Bueno also had close contact with Colombian tropical musical forms (mostly *porros*, *cumbias*, and *gaitas*). His experience with these types of music was mostly linked to Lucho Bermúdez's orchestra where he played bass from 1946 to 1952. Lucho's music would eventually come to redefine the musical identity of Colombia and the international perception of its music. It is therefore important to discuss briefly the relation of this ensemble to Uribe Bueno's creation of *Caimaré*.

During the 1940s and 1950s, tropical bands led by Lucho Bermúdez, along with other popular composers (such as Pacho Galán and Edmundo Arias), internationalized Colombian rhythms such as the *porro*, *cumbia* and *merengue*. These orchestras adopted instrumental formats similar to those of international big bands by giving the saxophone an important role. However, there were significant differences regarding the arranging techniques and the configuration of the saxophone section from those in international big bands.

Usually in tropical ensembles, the saxophone section consisted of two altos, one tenor, and one baritone; this configuration differed from the standard international big band that had two altos, two tenors, and one baritone. It seems that the difference between the two types of scoring (the presence or

2. Some of the most popular dance ensembles during these days were the Jazz Band A. Bolívar and the Ernesto Boada Jazz Band in Bogotá, the Jazz Nicolas, Jazz Begue, and Jazz Masheróni-Herranz in Medellín, the Jazz Band Barranquilla and Jazz Band Atlántico in Barranquilla, and the Orquesta de los Hermanos Londoy in Cartagena.

3. The Colombian music in the Andean region consists of a group of native rhythms (including *pasillo*, *bambuco*, *gaitas*, *torbellinos*) that were the most representative musical expressions in the national consciousness of this country during the first half of the twentieth century. These rhythms represented the musical-cultural identity of the Andean mestizo people.

4. Uribe Bueno's artistic production is still in the process of being cataloged by INER group. The above number represents an estimate of his musical production.

5. "En cuanto a la dotación si influyó...la utilización de los cuatro saxofones, y los demás instrumentos...Lucho tenía el estilo de escribir consonante, aunque utilizara en cuanto a armonía vertical, utilizara de pronto acordes disonantes...pero en su horizontalidad solamente...por ejemplo si yo escribiera la escala en C6, el primer alto toca E-F-G, el segundo alto C-C-E, no C-D-E y el otro G-G-C, ves, todo era consonante, no había el uso de los acordes auxiliares en la melodización, él no utilizaba ese tipo de manera de escribir" Rojas, A. (2009). Interview with the author on 5 June 2009. Medellín. [Digital recording in possession of author]

6. "Con el cuarto tenor ya les estaba doblando una nota, [explica] con dos altos, tenor y baritono, ya cuatro sonoridades, entonces que hacían ponían a doblar el baritono, era lo más cómodo. Y aquí las otras tres voces [señalando con los dedos] como le acabo de decir. Que otra cosa es que nosotros escribamos C-G-A-E-C o D ya tenemos cinco sonidos, ellos no tenían esa capacidad [ratifica] no le había llegado esa información, ni tenían el material para analizar. Entonces Lucho escribía de esa manera, solo la parte organológica, la parte de instrumentos, si copiaban al estilo big band que se oía Estados Unidos, pero la parte sonora era otra cosa, no podían utilizar el cuarto tenor [explica utilizando los dedos] porque ya con una voz les estaban doblando una y luego doblar con otra, doblar dos? no tenía sentido... Pacho Galán y Edmundo Arias utilizaban el mismo estilo que Lucho, con diferente prosa pero los dos manejaban el mismo discurso musical." Rojas, A. (2009). Interview with the author on 5 June 2009. Medellín. [Digital recording in possession of author]

absence of a second tenor saxophone) was principally due to technical reasons. As Alvaro Rojas Gómez, an arranger, clarinetist, and tenor saxophone player in Lucho Bermúdez's orchestra explained:

The American big band influence in Colombian tropical orchestras was mostly related to the instrumentation...The writing style in the saxophone section in Lucho's orchestra was pretty consonant, at least horizontally. A very common procedure used in the saxophone section was to write for three voices (alto I, alto II, and tenor) and to duplicate the highest voice with the lowest (baritone). For instance, in voicing this melodic line E-F-G throughout a C6 chord he [Lucho] usually would have done it this way: the first voice plays E-F-G, the second voice plays C-C-E, the third voice plays G-G-C, and the lower voice plays E-F-G, but an octave below.⁵

When I asked Rojas Gómez if he knew the reasons why tropical Colombian bands used a different saxophone section than the standard big band, he explained:

If you had a second tenor, you would have had to have handled four voices and consequently auxiliary chords in the melodic harmonization (assuming that the baritone saxophone is duplicating the lead alto). These kinds of procedures were not used in tropical Colombian music at this time and the same can be said about the harmonic treatment used in Pacho Galán's and Edmundo Arias's [orchestras] - maybe with different prosody but basically with the same harmonic treatment.⁶

It is important to mention, that before Lucho Bermúdez's orchestra, other tropical bands had used the saxophone in their instrumentation. Nevertheless, it was in his orchestra, along with those of Edmundo Arias and Pacho Galán, where the use of the saxophone acquired a central role.

During mid 1940s to 1960s, a series of economic and cultural factors made the city of Medellín an important center of economic and cultural activity. The relative economic stability and apogee of industry in Medellín (especially in textiles) supported a dynamic economic and cultural growth of the city. Industrial patronage supported by philanthropic businessmen played a definitive role in the arts, especially in music, supporting the tours of local and international artists and causing Medellín to emerge as an important Latin American city in the international concert circuit. These conditions favored the establishment of the recording industry, which had a considerable impact on Colombian music. Two important record companies settled in Medellín: Sonolux and Discos Fuentes. The establishment of these businesses brought

an influx of composers, performers, and arrangers from all over the country, propitiating a musical revolution that would soon be recognized not just in Colombia but also all over Latin America. Finally, the establishment in Medellín of two important radio stations, Cadena Radial Colombiana (Caracol, 1948) and Radio Cadena Nacional (RCN, 1949), would become an additional source of work for musicians. The end result led to one of the most fruitful times in the history of Colombian music. Out of this context, the first known piece for saxophone and orchestra, *Caimaré*, was composed in Medellín.

The Music

In 1949, Luis Uribe Bueno composed *Caimaré* for the third annual *Concurso Nacional de Música Fabricato* (1950), a national music competition supported by one of the biggest Colombian textile companies at this time. This contest had a significant influence in the musical history of Colombia because its sponsor aimed to foster a nationalist spirit and promote an innovative artistic approach to what were considered the most traditional and representative Colombian genres of the time—the *bambuco* and *pasillo*. By suggesting that musicians entering the competition submit works for orchestra, rather than for the traditional Colombian trio of plucked string instruments (*guitar, tiple* and *bandola*), *Fabricato* demonstrated its progressive orientation. In addition, as we shall see, the pieces that won the competition departed from the traditional canon of Colombian music in terms of their musical elements and structural organization.

Why would a textile company want to support a music contest, especially one with such innovative nationalistic tendencies? In her study of Colombian music contests, the ethnomusicologist Carolina Santamaría (2006) has suggested that Fabricato used an aggressive marketing strategy supported by national music values to position itself economically. During WWII, Colombian industry underwent an important development due to the restrictions on imported goods from Europe and United States. This situation allowed Colombian companies like Fabricato to establish a preferential role for their products among Colombian consumers. With the end of the war and the resurgence of competition from industries in the United States, these companies had to develop new marketing strategies. Putting a symbolic Colombian stamp on their products allowed them to retain their dominance over the market. In addition to Santamaría's interpretation, it is also important to consider that Fabricato had previously played a large role in the arts in Medellín. As stated earlier, it was the philanthropic activities of Colombian entrepreneurs that allowed the city to develop into a major musical center. Thus, the convergence of multiple economic, cultural, and political factors contributed to the interest of Fabricato in sponsoring this competition.

7. The most common traditional rhythms associated with Andean Colombian music are: *pasillo*, *bambuco*, *guahina*, *torbellino*.

8. Clarinet player and composer, Luis Eduardo Bermúdez (Known as Lucho Bermúdez) is considered one of the most important performers and prolific composers in popular Colombian music in the XX century. Further information: <http://www.lalbla.org/blaaavirtual/musica/blaaaudio2/compo/lbermu/indice.htm>.

9. "Estando en Medellín como director musical de Sonolux, me di cuenta que era una oportunidad muy linda para mostrar mis conocimientos sobre música colombiana [hablando de su trabajo como director musical de Sonolux]. Pero sobre todo sobre el folclor, el cual he ido ampliando ... sobre la acción directa de los ritmos de la zona andina: el bambuco, el pasillo, el torbellino, la guahina, la danza, el san juanero ... que desarrollé desde luego con base en el trabajo que se me presentaba en Sonolux. Con esto amplié mucho más mis conocimientos, practicando sobre el terreno ... grabando con toda esta gente... eso me dio muchas posibilidades de conocimiento estricto y verdadero de los ritmos llevados a conjuntos y a orquesta ... hasta el punto de presentar trabajos sinfónicos con música colombiana ya bastante elaborados ... yo gané los concursos de Fabricato del 48, 49, 50, 51 ... seguidos... Eso me demostró que yo podía hacer una labor y que iba bien encarrilado sobre la música colombiana, que he logrado efectivamente llevarla a cierta altura, a una altura en la que siempre he pensado debe estar y que no puede quedarse estancada en el terreno donde ha estado estancada hace 80 años atrás." (Emisora Cultural Universidad de Antioquia, [2006]).

The Composer

One of the names most closely connected to the Fabricato contest was Uribe Bueno, who won this competition five times, gaining national recognition with his works *El Cucarrón* (1948), *Pajobam* (1949), *Caimarí* (1950), *El Disco Rayado* (1950), and *El Duende* (1951). One of the most interesting things about Uribe Bueno's creative production was his consistent use of the saxophone—either as a soloist or within the saxophone section⁷. Despite the relative rarity of the instrument in both classical and traditional Andean contexts, I believe that Uribe Bueno had strong reasons for featuring it in both solo and ensemble capacity. In addition, I argue that he specifically selected the saxophone as a way of representing a new Colombian aesthetic.

One important motivation for his musical choice stems from his relationship with Lucho Bermúdez⁸ and his orchestra where he played bass for six years (1946-1952). There, Uribe Bueno had close contact with big band arrangements and jazz influences that gave him the experience to write compellingly for the instrument. Another powerful influence came from the friendship he shared with the eminent saxophonist, clarinetist, and flute player, Gabriel Uribe García, who performed lead alto saxophone in Lucho's orchestra and to whom Uribe Bueno dedicated *Caimarí*. Finally, his foregrounding of the saxophone relates to the contest spirit that sought new ways to revitalize and enrich Colombian identity—a spirit that fit completely with Uribe Bueno's perspectives on Colombian music. In an interview with the *Emisora Cultural Universidad de Antioquia* during the 1980s, Uribe Bueno talked about his experience as the Artistic Director of the Colombian recording company *Sonolux*—the music produced by this record label was primarily oriented toward Andean Colombian music. This position allowed him to have an *in situ* understanding of Andean Colombian music, and at the same time, to develop his personal ideas as a composer. As he stated:

With the experience acquired as Artistic Director of Sonolux, I largely expanded my knowledge, practicing in the field [and] recording with all these musicians. It gave me a true and accurate knowledge of Colombian music to put into small ensembles and orchestras, until the point when I was able to present complex works for symphonic orchestra. Some of them were awarded prizes in the Fabricato contest in 1948-51 consecutively ... It showed me that I was on the right track in Colombian music, putting it at a high level—a level I thought all my life where it should be, instead of the stagnation where it had remained for the last eighty years⁹.

Musical Influences on *Caimaré*

The subtitle of *Caimaré* is *pasillo estilizado* (meaning stylized *pasillo*), which immediately calls to mind an aesthetic framework suggestive of European influences. The word *pasillo* refers to one of the most representative rhythms in the mestizo communities in the Andean region in Colombia. Along with the *bambuco*, the *pasillo* was considered an iconic form that defined the national musical identity in Colombia during the twentieth century. As a transformation of the European waltz, the *pasillo* can be traced back to the beginning of the nineteenth century, when an emerging bourgeois class was looking for cultural patterns that represented their taste for European cultural models. In this way, they chose to distinguish their elite tastes from working-class musical genres such as the *bambuco*, *torbellino* and *guabina*. Nevertheless, the social association of the *pasillo* with the elite changed completely when the working classes took the *pasillo* to their meeting places such as the plaza and turned it into the *pasillo fiestero* (fast *pasillo*).

In traditional Colombian music, a *pasillo* is written in 3/4 time and generally lacks a downbeat to the opening bar, in which the first eighth is usually a rest. Another common feature is the persistent rhythmic cell at the end of each section that is normally composed of a quarter note, eighth rest, eighth note, and quarter note.

Example 1. Characteristic phrase ending in the *pasillo*.



Its formal structure is habitually composed of three parts (A, B, C) that can be arranged in different orders. Three of the most common combinations are:

- 1) |: A :|: B :|: C :|| (*D.C. al fine*, no repetitions)
- 2) Intro |: A :|: B :| A |: C :| A | B | C || (optional repetition of the final C)
- 3) |: A :|: B :|: C :||

These formal patterns are susceptible to some degree of variation, producing small differences in the general structure. Common musical elements usually connect A and B, which typically share melodic motives and use rhythmic activity in eighth notes. On the other hand, C presents a contrasting character, using different melodic motives and less rhythmic activity, typically relying on rhythmic values such as half- or dotted-half notes (Gómez Prada, 2008:12-15).

The word *estilizado* (stylized) makes reference to a refined version of the traditional features of *the pasillo*. In *Caimaré*, one finds a more sophisticated concept of the genre in its orchestral scoring as well as in its formal and harmonic treatment—characteristics that were not common in Colombian music at the time. For instance, Uribe Bueno expands the traditional *pasillo* form. Although it is still possible to find the conventional A, B, and C sections, he develops each one of them or presents them in alternation with new thematic material. He also inserts a trio between the A and B sections and a long coda at the end of the piece. Perhaps the most unusual feature of *Caimaré* is its mixture of native Colombian elements, such as the traditional *pasillo* (Example 2) and indigenous features, with international characteristics.

Example 2, Rhythmic-melodic scheme of the slow *pasillo* in *Caimaré*, mm. 90-93

The musical notation shows four measures of music. The treble clef staff contains a melody starting with a quarter rest, followed by eighth notes and quarter notes. The bass clef staff contains a steady accompaniment of eighth notes. The key signature has one flat (B-flat).

The use of the phrygian mode in the melody, the harmonic structure (V6- i6- VII 4/3 - V6) and the accompanying rhythm in steady eighth notes (mm. 35-43) are unmistakable characteristics of the Spanish *pasodoble* (Example 3). This is a musical genre that Colombia shares with Spain and that only a few other countries in Latin America (Peru, Ecuador, and Mexico) have. The *pasodoble* rhythm relates directly to music played in bullfights, and represents a link to Spanish legacy in Colombia.

Example 3. Rhythmic-melodic scheme of traditional *pasodoble* in *Caimaré*, mm. 35 - 42

The musical score for Example 3 is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 35 to 38, and the second system covers measures 39 to 42. The music is written in a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 3/4 time signature. The upper voice (treble clef) contains a melodic line with various rhythmic values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The piano accompaniment (grand staff) features a complex rhythmic pattern with many beamed notes and chords. In measures 37 and 38, there are rests in the upper voice, with a '5' written below the staff indicating a five-measure rest. The piano part continues with its rhythmic accompaniment throughout.

10. Uribe Bueno's career had several periods in which he wrote in different styles and formats. Until 1947, his artistic production mainly focused on songs, especially *boleros*. From 1948-1954, he wrote pieces for large ensembles (symphonic orchestras and bands). *Caimaré* represents a fusion of these two tendencies. (Grupo de Investigación Valores Musicales Regionales, 2003: sp)

Another international influence is the Cuban *bolero*, which appears in measures 83-90 and relates to the cantabile character of the genre (Example 4). Although this section is in 3/4 time and typically the *bolero* is in 4/4 meter, there is a romantic expression in the melody and lyrical use of the saxophone that refers to this Cuban genre. Indeed, I believe that Uribe Bueno's use of the *bolero* here corresponds to his previous interest in writing songs, which dated back to his earliest creative years.¹⁰

Other musical characteristics of *Caimaré* include variations that feature the slower traditional Colombian *pasillo* (Example 2) and the more rapid *fiestero* character that occurs in every major section of the piece (Example 5). In addition, Uribe Bueno systematically uses half-diminished seventh chords in successive progressions—a characteristic uncommon in traditional Colombian music, but which can be attributed to his jazz influences.

The instrumentation of *Caimaré* combines the resources of chamber orchestra and big band jazz. This combination was broadly used from the 1940s to 1960s mostly in U.S. and Latin American film music and recalls the motion picture

works of the band leader and popular composer, Juan García Esquivel, one of the foremost exponents of a sophisticated style that combined elements of “Lounge music” and jazz with a Latin American flavor.

Example 4. Melodic *bolero* character in *Caimarí*, mm.83-86.

The orchestral version of *Caimarí* premiered in 1950 included the following parts: four violins, cello, bass, two flutes, clarinet¹¹, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone, three trumpets, trombone, piano, and drums, in addition to the solo alto saxophone part. Originally, Uribe Bueno had scored *Caimarí* for saxophone and symphonic band, but for some unknown reason the piece was never played in this format. As the Colombian musicologist María Eugenia Londoño stated:

I know the piece premiered with orchestra but it was initially for band. ... Although by this moment Gabriel [Uribe García] was a member of the Banda Sinfónica de la Universidad de Antioquia, I cannot explain why it was never played with the band.¹²

In my own opinion, the writing style that Uribe Bueno used during this period drove him to prefer the orchestral format. Additionally, composers in the *Fabricato* competition preferred the use of this combination.

The *Fabricato* contests ended in 1951, and the scores of pieces for all four years were stored in the textile company archives until they were donated in 2002 to Estudios Culturales, a research group affiliated with Universidad EAFIT. For some unknown reason, the score of *Caimarí* was not originally located in

11. The clarinet player doubles on tenor saxophone.

12. Londoño, M.E. (2009). Interview with the author on 21 May 2009. Medellín. [Digital recording in possession of author]

the *Fabricato* archives. It reappeared mysteriously, however, after the composer's death in July 2000, when his works were donated to *Instituto de Estudios Regionales* (INER), which is investigating Uribe Bueno's life and creative activity.

Example 5. Rhythmic-melodic scheme of the *pasillo fiestero*. mm. 120–123

The Performer

The creation and premiere of *Caimarí* required the skills of an expert solo performer. Gabriel Uribe García (1910-1989), elevated the style of saxophone performance to a level previously unknown in Colombia. His playing went beyond the spectrum of tropical and popular Colombian dance music and extended to the concert repertoire, which was practically unknown in Colombia until recent years. His background played a key role in the development of the instrument in Colombia and seems to have shaped the inclusion of concert music characteristics in *Caimarí*. For this reason, it is important to address briefly Uribe García's contribution here.

During the 1930s, Gabriel Uribe García worked as soprano saxophonist in the *Banda Sinfónica Nacional de Colombia* and as a flutist, saxophonist, and clarinetist in the Bogotá radio orchestra Nueva Granada. In 1947, he moved to Medellín, settling permanently there in 1957, after a series of tours with Lucho Bermúdez's Orchestra. The standard repertoire that Uribe García used to play included also pieces in the classical repertoire. Among his important contributions was the Latin American premiere of Larsson's *Saxofonkonser*, op 14 (1934)—one of the most challenging concertos for the instrument ever written due to its wide range and technical difficulties.

Example 6. *Caimaré's* Cadenza m.m 157 - 176

13. Alfred J. Gallodoro (1913-2008) was an American jazz clarinetist and saxophonist who performed from 1920s up until his death. He is notable for having played lead alto sax with Paul Whiteman Orchestra and bass clarinet for twelve years with the NBC Orchestra.

14. In one of his eight solo LPs, Gabriel Uribe recorded popular tunes such as *Hora Sonora*, *Cyarúta*, and *Mangyama*, which clearly reveal the influence of Al Gallodoro, and incorporate a virtuosic style of a playing heard in the recording of *Caimaré* (Uribe, 1958).

In Uribe García's recordings of this and other works, one can hear the influence of Al Gallodoro¹³ with regard to the use of vibrato, tone quality, double and triple tonguing, altissimo register and the sense of technical display.¹⁴ These stylistic characteristics suggest Uribe García's virtuoso influence on the creation of *Caimaré*. This influence might have explained the compositional freedom that Uribe Bueno took in the cadenza section. This part of the work is completely different from any other and is characterized by the addition of new thematic, rhythmic, and harmonic material, along with a high level of technical complexity. Uribe García's sons, Jaime and Luis, explained that, after the 1950s, their father traveled several times to the United States. During these trips, Uribe García may have come into contact with the recordings of Al Gallodoro (who was a rising star in U.S. show business) and absorbed additional classical influences into his playing.

Conclusion

The musical production for saxophone in Latin America has grown exponentially during the last thirty years with the addition of around 1,100 new pieces to the repertoire (Villafruela, 2007: 133). However, to find a piece for saxophone and orchestra in Latin America before the 1970s is simply exceptional; this is one of the particularities of *Caimaré*. But beyond the historical value of the work lie important implications that are reflected in its diversity, style and

influences. What is really extraordinary is how a piece with traditional Spanish *pasodoble* characteristics, Caribbean *bolero* influences, traditional *pasillo lento* and *fiestero* rhythms, indigenous features, and jazz harmonies could win the *Concurso Nacional de Música Fabricato* and thus represent a new concept of national music cultivated by the sponsors of the competition. With *Caimaré*, Uribe Bueno consciously or unconsciously transcended conceptions of traditional music, conciliating the multiplicity of expressions that embrace the cultural diversity of Colombia.

Luis Uribe Bueno was recognized as a musician concerned with the renovation of Colombian music, who retained a deep conviction in the traditional values of his nation. In an interview during the 1980s titled *Los otros ritmos*, he talks about the importance of studying and understanding foreign influences. He compares cultural phenomena such as rock with native Colombian rhythms, stating:

I have admiration for rock music . . . deep down, there is a message, and if there is a message it is important to understand what this message is and how it is being said . . . It is not possible to avoid these foreign influences and, moreover, they should not be avoided. If they are simply ignored, important things that you can observe and research will be lost . . . Our music does not produce euphoria as rock does but it produces a type of charm. For example the lyrics of our bambucos are truly poems.¹⁵

Thus, the integration of international elements was a bold attempt to enrich what Uribe Bueno considered obsolete in traditional Colombian music. This eclectic approach gave him the additional resources to compose and, at the same time, highlight elements that he considered transcendent in Colombian culture. The new harmonic, structural, technical, and instrumental resources that Luis Uribe Bueno included in his works formed a turning point in Colombian music.

15. "Yo admiro la música rock porque en el fondo hay un mensaje, y si hay un mensaje ahí que ponerle cuidado que dice ese mensaje, como se dice. Uno no puede esquivar la rifa de cosas que vienen de afuera, ni debe [con énfasis] esquivarla. Si uno lo hace, está dejando pasar de largo cosas importantes que uno puede observar e investigar . . . Nuestra música no produce euforia pero produce un encanto, por ejemplo nuestros bambucos, las letras son poemas completos de belleza." (Fonoteca Cultural Universidad de Antioquia, [2006]).

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