



Marches, Mazurkas, and Hymns

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The Presence of Giovanni Aberle in Central America and Other Notes for a History of Musical Composition in El Salvador

Preface

At all educational and social levels in the country, the historical amnesia suffered by Salvadorans is robbing us of significant sections of our past, a reality that condemns us to ignorance of our origins and prevents us from envisioning collective achievements for the future.

Thus, beginning in July 1996, I sent communications to the main governmental entities, urging them to prepare, in a timely manner, national commemorative acts for the 150th anniversary of the birth of Giovanni E. Aberle, composer of the music of *El Salvador's National Anthem*. The responses to these letters were silence and discourtesy. However, those initial disappointments were overcome thanks to my conversations with painter Roberto Galicia—a friend and then-president of the

National Council for Culture and the Arts (CONCULTURA)—who advocated dedicating the *National Symphony Orchestra* concerts to this notable figure in our history. These concerts, scheduled for December 10, 11, and 12, 1996, were conducted by Dr. Germán Cáceres Buitrago at the *Teatro Presidente* in San Salvador.

The kindness and solidarity of journalist Janet Cienfuegos Ochoa and *El Diario de Hoy* allowed me to utilize their publication in December 1996—as well as their website—to disseminate the initial findings of my research on the life and works of this Italian musician and composer. I must acknowledge that, upon reaching José Federico Batlle Aberle, these primary materials were handed over and meticulously reproduced by the diligent researcher Carlos Enrique Prahler Redondo¹. It is from him that I now retrieve valuable details about Aberle's work in Guatemala.

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¹ Cfr. the chapter "The Master Juan Aberle Sforza," in *The National Conservatory of Music of Guatemala*, Guatemala, self-published edition, June 1998, pp. 21-30.

A broader version of this attempt at Aberle's bibliographic reconstruction was published by Dr. Ricardo Roque Baldovinos in **Cultura** (No. 80, September–December 1997, pp. 67–86), a magazine still issued in San Salvador under the sponsorship of CONCULTURA.

Supported by Lic. Gilberto Aguilar Avilés²—who gifted me an imperfect cassette copy of six Aberle pieces recorded by a musical quintet in late 1979 motivated by the meticulous work of Guatemalan writer and researcher Dante Liano³, and encouraged by Salvadoran painter Clara Angulo—who introduced me in 2003 to some of Aberle's descendants associated with the Italian Canossa family—I subjected the study to a process of revision and correction. Its final version, which I now present to readers, remains provisional but aims to disseminate still-unexplored aspects and information about both the biography of this great Italian composer and the history of musical composition in El Salvador and Central America.

Giovanni Aberle: An Attempt at Biographical Reconstruction

Giovanni Enrico Aberle Sforza—known in El Salvador and Guatemala by the Spanish translation of his first name, Juan—was born in Vicaria, near Naples, Italy, on December 11, 1846, to Heinrich Aberle, a German gentleman, and Angela Sforza, a Milanese citizen. However, some authors, such as Guatemalan Dante Liano, record the maternal surname as Storga⁴.

Although concrete details about his childhood and adolescence are scarce, it is known that he enrolled in the Royal Conservatory of Naples on August 15, 1863, against the wishes of his parents, who had envisioned a "less fanciful" profession for him.

At this prominent European center for musical arts, the young Aberle studied piano and violin under Claudio Conti, Benjamín Cesi, Fernando Ponti, and Giuseppe Porre, while his education in Sciences and Letters was provided by Father Esteban del Giudice.

Pivotal to his entire musical career were his studies in harmony and composition, which he undertook under the mentorship of Paolo Serrao and the blind composer Saverio Mercadante, who recognized and nurtured his musical talent.

Born in Altamura in September 1795, Mercadante was a prolific and tireless composer. Thanks to the flexibility and dignity of his style—honed at the musical school of Nicola Zingarelli at the Conservatory of Naples—he enjoyed a successful career as a creator of operas and melodramas.

Already recognized for *Apoteosi di Ercole* (1819) and *Elisa e Claudio* (comic opera,

² *New Encounter with Don Juan Aberle*, La Prensa Gráfica, San Salvador, Wednesday, February 25, 1998, p. 18.

³ *Biographical Dictionary of Italians in Central America*, Milan, Vita e Pensiero, 2003, 170 pp.

⁴ *Liano, op. cit.*, p. 3.

1821), the height of his fame came with *Il giuramento* (1837) and *La Vestale*, a melodrama staged in 1840. Mercadante by then chapel master at the cathedral of Novara—was called that same year to succeed Zingarelli as the director of the Neapolitan Conservatory, a position he held until he was struck by blindness (1862), a condition that would accompany him until his death on September 17, 1870.

Under such a learned baton, young Aberle composed the lyrics and music for the work *Jerusalem*, which was performed on a special occasion by the conservatory's student orchestra and highly praised by his mentors and the audience attending the event (1864), which served as a springboard for him to be appointed second director of the Neapolitan orchestra the following year.

In 1866, he was named the first student of the conservatory, from which he graduated—on August 21 of that year—with honors as a concertmaster and orchestra conductor.

During his student months, he composed two masses, a *Dixit* and a *Te Deum*, works that were performed by his fellow students in the Church of San Pedro in his hometown.

Once his academic and formal education was completed, the city government hired him as the music director of the Second Regiment of Marine Infantry, a position that did not fulfill his artistic aspirations, prompting him to emigrate to America.

On a stopover during his journey, he passed through Paris, where he was received and hosted at his home by Rossini, to whom Mercadante had sent a prior letter announcing the arrival and musical qualities—his great memory and ease of composition—of his dear student.

In 1867, Aberle arrived in New York, an American city of immigrants, where he worked as the director of the Grand Opera Theater, accompanied the famous prima donna Clara Luisa Kellogg, and performed his duties as organist and chapel master at the Epiphany Church. At this religious institution, he composed masses, psalms, motets, and other short pieces of sacred music. Years later, the New York Philharmonic Society appointed him its honorary vice-director.

In 1868, at the Opera Theater, the staging of *Love and War*, a four-act piece by Aberle inspired by the libretto written by American poet Katherine Adams, was performed, a success repeated the following year with the performance of the three-act mimed action *Flick Flock*.

During his time in New York, Aberle introduced the public to twenty-two piano fantasies, two string quartets, a quintet for string instruments, three overtures, fourteen collections of waltzes, eight polkas, and four mazurkas for orchestra, some of which were already known and danced in Central America before his arrival.

In 1870, Aberle left New York and embarked on an artistic tour with the opera

company of Egisto Petrilli⁵, arriving in Guatemala on June 5, 1871. After the company dissolved due to financial problems, the orchestra director decided to settle in the other capital of the Captaincy General of Central America, where one of its theaters served for the staging of his four-act opera *Conrado di Monferrato*, which premiered in 1872.

Settling in the city of Guatemala, he dedicated himself to the staging and conducting of the operatic works *Vítor Pissani* and *Los falsos monederos*⁶. Additionally, with limited resources and a small teaching staff, he founded the *Conservatorio de Música de Guatemala*, which opened its doors on March 29, 1873, in what had recently been the Convent of Santo Domingo. This building was later occupied by the General Directorate of Taxes and Contributions and is now marked by a commemorative plaque installed at the Basilica of Our Lady of the Rosary, at the intersection of 12th Avenue and 11th Street in the central zone.

With 52 boarding students and 29-day students at the time of its foundation, Aberle's private conservatory—whose secretary was José A. Morán—was supported by the government through an agreement dated May 27, 1874, which established a monthly allocation of 165 pesos for the payment of teaching and administrative staff, as the classes offered to regular students, both male and female, were free, while those for amateur students cost three pesos per week. As part of their education, students received courses in

theory, sight-singing, piano, singing, harmony, counterpoint, organ, violin, cello, double bass, flute, oboe, clarinet, cornet, trombone, choir, orchestra, and courses in Spanish grammar, geography, arithmetic, reading, and musical lithography⁷.

With the teaching and administrative support of Leopoldo Cantilena, several students attended this conservatory, including María García Granados and Raquel Toledo, as well as Vicente Mata, Camino V. Polanco, Juan de Mata y Menéndez, Ezequiel Zarazúa, Jorge Flores, Víctor Pérez, Francisco Ruiz, Manuel Medina, Pedro Pineda, Federico Pérez, Marco Coello, Manuel Batres, Octavio Bercián, Manuel E. Moraga, Herculano Alvarado (1873-1921)⁸, Ángel Paz, Francisco Gutiérrez, Agustín Ruano (1869-1900), Luis Escobar, Francisco Valdés, Antonio Méndez, and Agustín Campo⁹.

When the official subsidy was withdrawn, the Conservatory building was repurposed

⁵ The company dissolved in Guatemala due to financial problems, and this opera singer settled in the city of San Salvador. He performed many of his presentations at the first National Theater of the Salvadoran capital, built in 1866 and which burned down in 1910. In the city center, he opened the Gran Hotel, a renowned guesthouse and restaurant that began operations in August 1881, where the teenage poet Rubén Darío stayed during his first visit to El Salvador from August 1882 to October 1883.

⁶ Lehnoff, Dieter. *La Creación musical en Guatemala*, Guatemala City, Universidad "Rafael Landívar" - Fundación G&T Continental, 2005, p. 190.

⁷ Barrios y Barrios, Catalina. *Estudio histórico del periodismo guatemalteco (época colonial y siglo XIX)*, Guatemala, Editorial Universitaria, 2003, p. 180.

⁸ Lehnoff, op. cit., p. 196.

for use by the Guatemalan military. Before the end of 1876, the institution closed its doors. Although there was an attempt to revive it legally on August 3, 1880, by reestablishing it in the La Merced Convent under the direction of Maestro José Cayano, it was not until 11:00 a.m. on January 1, 1883, that the National School of Music and Declamation was officially founded. It was established in the El Progreso School building, formerly the San José de Calasanz School, located on 7th North Avenue, between 5th and 6th Streets, also in Zone 1.

Despite Aberle's contributions to music education in Guatemala, the modern three-story National Conservatory, complete with a basement and concert hall (constructed at 3rd Avenue 4-61, Zone 1, between September 12, 1946, and Sunday, September 18, 1955), lacks any room, mural, or plaque commemorating its founder and first director. His baton, however, remains a notable piece in the National History Museum of the neighboring country.

During his stay, Aberle's musical work was commented on by various print media in Guatemala's capital, including the Sunday publication *La Juventud* (August 1873), written and edited by Gabriel Adolfo Azmitia, which was laid out and printed at the Padilla Press¹⁰.

Aberle conducted the orchestra of *La Sociedad Filarmónica* in the capital city and composed additional musical pieces, including a symphony, several fantasies,

waltzes for orchestra, and the three-act zarzuela *Galanteos en Venecia* (1874).

Giselda, a three-act pantomime, was one of the last works Aberle presented to the Guatemalan public. At the beginning of 1876, he took on the role of orchestral director for the traveling *Compañía de Ópera Italiana*, led by impresario and first tenor Ercole Pizzioli¹¹, which was on tour through Central and South America.

The company included prima donnas Ercilia Cortesi, Emilia Rosemberg, and Anastasia Romero; first tenors Carlo Bulterini and Ercole Pizzioli; baritone Guglielmo Murri; first bass Enrico Rossi-Galli; comic actor Eduardo Papini; and comprimario bass Alejandro Giametti—most of whom had performed at La Scala in Milan—as well as dancers Catalina Cerso and Eugenio Casati. Through the port of La Libertad, Aberle arrived in El Salvador on June 5, 1876.

With this cast and the support of Alfonso Méndez (director of both choirs), Abel Pena (stage director), Heinrich Drews (guest first violinist), and tailor Eulogio Mejía, the company debuted on the stage of the former National Theater with a

⁹ Cfr. *La República*, supplement of the Official Gazette, San Salvador, Year V, No. 1325, Wednesday, July 7, 1937, pp. 2-3, and Barrios y Barrios, *op. cit.*, pp. 180 and 317-318.

¹⁰ Barrios y Barrios, *op. cit.*, pp. 172-173.

¹¹ Settled in the city of San Salvador, he opened the doors to the renowned *Gran Café Central* (1887). However, the following year, he inaugurated a similar establishment in the Honduran capital. He passed away in Guatemala City on July 9, 1899.

performance of Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* on the night of Friday, July 28, 1876.

The tickets for that initial performance and the subsequent ones were sold in advance at the Dorner y Cía. commercial house, located on Calle del Calvario, one block east of the homonymous Catholic church and adjacent to the pharmaceutical establishment of Prussian Otto von Niebecker. For the anonymous chronicler of the *Gaceta Oficial*¹², that opening night, "the artists fully accomplished their mission; and it is no surprise they arrive in this capital preceded by an established reputation." However, Aberle's work did not entirely meet the chronicler's satisfaction, as the orchestral performance was described as "adequate."

Aberle participated in the successive performances of more operas by Verdi and Donizetti, as well as in the extraordinary nighttime function on Tuesday, September 12, 1876, held in the now-demolished coliseum to benefit the reconstruction of San Salvador's general cemetery. The cemetery, originally built in 1849, had been devastated by the great San José earthquake on March 19, 1873.

Thanks to connections within the high society of the time, the maestro conductor soon formed a friendship with the Salvadoran ruler, Dr. Rafael Zaldívar, who encouraged him to abandon his wanderings and settle permanently in the country, just as Pizzioli did, later becoming the owner of the renowned *Gran Café Central* (1887).

This presidential offer was formalized on December 15 of that same year through an executive decree from the Ministry of War, which contracted Aberle to direct the Military Band of the La Libertad department—also called *Banda Marcial No. 2*, based in Nueva San Salvador¹³—for seventy pesos a month. This position was followed by a similar appointment to lead the Military Music Band of the Santa Ana department, for which he composed over two hundred short pieces, including one titled *Recuerdo de Norma*.

However, performing these public duties required the appointee to hold a military rank—a provision abolished by the Ezeta government through an executive decree and regulation dated November 27, 1890¹⁴-. Thus, Aberle had to be appointed an effective lieutenant colonel in the Salvadoran army at the beginning of the following year. During that year, he served as the orchestra director for the renowned operatic company of prima donna Potentini.

On the last day of 1877, he acted as general director, conductor, and accompanist pianist in the vocal and instrumental concert held in favor of the capital hospital and the orphanages of San Salvador and Santa Tecla.

¹² Volume I, no. 57, Saturday, July 29, 1876.

¹³ Cf. *Gaceta Oficial*, San Salvador, Volume I, no. 177, December 17, 1876, p. 737.

¹⁴ Cf. *Diario Oficial*, San Salvador, Volume 29, no. 271, November 29, 1890, p. 585.

At the beginning of 1879, President Zaldívar entrusted the poet and Colonel Juan José Cañas with composing the lyrics of a new Salvadoran national anthem to replace the one dedicated to President Francisco Dueñas in 1866 by Cuban physician, journalist, and printer Tomás M. Muñoz.

The musical component of this new patriotic composition was assigned to Maestro Aberle, who carried out the task promptly and meticulously under the trees of a property he owned along a stretch of the old road leading to Mexicanos. Unfortunately, the original score is now lost, most likely destroyed in the fire that consumed the former National Palace and General Archive of the Nation on the night of November 19, 1889.

For the debut of this anthem, Professor G. Muny dedicated three strenuous months teaching the lyrics and melody to the schoolchildren of the capital, as reported by the San Salvadoran newspaper *La Nación* in its issue of September 10, 1879. With the voices of students such as Alberto Masferrer, Víctor Jerez, Manuel Mayora Castillo, Rafael Zaldívar Jr., Salvador Rodríguez González, Vicente Loucel, Carlos Bonilla Jr., Rogelio Ruiz, Lucilo Paiz, Ismael Anzora, Salvador Arriza Godoy, Isaac Guevara, José Antonio Delgado, José Antonio Ruiz, Leandro Vásquez Guzmán, and others, the National Anthem by Cañas and Aberle was sung for the first time on the esplanade of the former National Palace on the morning of September 15, 1879. This event was witnessed by the State's leading officials,

special guests, and the capital's public as they celebrated Central American independence.

In the same year, Aberle performed his march for two military bands, Independencia, as well as the much-discussed Himno a Arturo Prat Chacón, dedicated to the Chilean lawyer and frigate captain of the warship Esmeralda (1854), which was sunk in battle off Iquique by the Peruvian ship Huáscar (1865). The literary audit of this elegiac hymn for voice and piano was also done by Juan José Cañas. Published in seven 32-centimeter-tall pages by the lithography of Auguste Feussier in San Salvador, a copy of this edition exists in the National Library of Chile. Below is the text of the hymn, taken from issue 16 of the monthly Saturday publication *El Pueblo* (San Salvador,

¹⁵ The academic degree was earned by Prat through his liberal thesis, *Observaciones a la ley electoral vigente* (Observations on the Current Electoral Law, Santiago, July 26, 1876, 75 pages), which was analyzed 129 years later by Gustavo Fiamma Olivares in his work, *La memoria de prueba de don Arturo Prat Chacón a 129 años de su presentación: un ensayo de informe* (The Trial Thesis of Don Arturo Prat Chacón 129 Years After Its Submission: An Essay Report), published in *Revista de derecho público* no. 60, Department of Public Law, University of Chile, Santiago, July–December 1996, pp. 137–141.

¹⁶ In tribute to his memory, several institutions bear the name of Arturo Prat, including the Naval School of Valparaíso, the Historical Institute of Santiago (1964), and the University of Iquique (formerly a branch of the University of Chile), founded on November 28, 1984. The Battle of Iquique and the biography of Captain Prat have been explored in numerous books, among them: *Arturo Prat y el combate de Iquique* (Arturo Prat and the Battle of Iquique, Santiago de Chile, Gutenberg, 1880)—excerpted by Colombian editor and educator Francisco A. Gamboa in volume VIII of his *Biblioteca económica* (Economic Library, San Salvador, Tipografía La República, 1902, unpaginated); *Breve reseña histórica de la guerra del Pacífico* (Brief Historical Overview of the War of the Pacific), written by Pedro de Santiago Concha (Madrid, Antonio Álvarez Press, 1899, 28 pages); *Vida de Arturo Prat* (Life of Arturo Prat), by Rodrigo Fuezalizada Bade (Santiago de Chile, Andrés Bello, 1874, 511 pages); and *Arturo Prat*, by Gonzalo Vial Correa (Santiago de Chile, 1995, 293 pages).

August 27, 1879):

Hymn to Prat
The Hero of May 21, 1879

And that sea, which calmly bathes you,
Promises you future splendor.
Eusebio Lillo

Chorus
May Mars' trumpet dedicate,
As centuries continue to run,
Its notes to the hero of Iquique,
Who has triumphed over death itself.

I
Like the sun that lights up the orbs,
Suspended in its exalted realm,
So does Prat today dazzle the world
With his glory across the vast expanse.

And his noble, commanding figure
Rises gigantically above,
Surpassing the mysterious heights of the
stars,
With the Pacific Ocean as his pedestal.

II
His sword is a living spark,
Shining bright in the shadows,
Under the matchless tricolor of the star,
Whose motto is "Triumph or Die."

And he fulfilled that formidable charge
With unparalleled pride and resolve;
No deed is more deserving
Of the highest historical acclaim.

III
The heroes of Homer are but pygmies,
The Titans, too, are mere dwarfs...
There are no warriors before this warrior
Who are not eclipsed by his greatness.

There are no annals that preserve an
example

Of such rare and sublime valor
As the one the world now reveres,
With these heroes as his honor guard.

IV
Who, like Prat on a fragile vessel,
Could ever oppose their chest
To the fury of a steel monster
That spreads death wherever it strikes?

Only Prat remains undaunted by such
terror,
Unmoved is his great heart,
Stronger than iron and stone
Amid the ceaseless thunder of cannons.

V
Defending the heroic *Esmeralda*,
With unparalleled bravery and resolve,
He made it his own garland
As he leapt into immortal life.

Illuminated by a mass of fire,
He ascended to glory in one leap,
When the very colossus, humiliated,
Served him as nothing but a stepping
stone.

VI
Eternal glory to the indomitable sailor,
Whose name is surrounded by splendor,
For becoming the admirable emblem
Of loyalty, patriotism, and honor!

With the present and future ages
Astonished by such virtue,
"You," they will say, "who shine through
time
Like a sun without setting, hail to you!"

Under the batons of Aberle, Drews, and Olmedo, the military bands of San Salvador, Santa Tecla, and Los Altos Poderes performed several fitting pieces during the nuptial ceremonies of one of the president's daughters, Sara Zaldívar, and the gentleman Francisco Aguilar. This family event took place on August 25, 1879, at the Metropolitan Cathedral (now the site of the Church of El Rosario) and in the halls of the Presidential Palace, which had been established in 1877 in the former Military Academy (currently the grounds of the old Cine Libertad).

Shortly thereafter, in the early hours of October 12, 1879, the young Nicaraguan Fidel Guerra Avilés, a nephew and protégé of Dr. Zaldívar, passed away in San Salvador. In the face of this mourning, and with the president's birthday approaching, he and his wife chose to leave the city and seek refuge in the town of San Andrés, in the neighboring department of La Libertad.

Although he was unable to hear it on the intended occasion, the hymn composed by Aberle in honor of Dr. Zaldívar was well received by the public. The verses of this occasional song—written by the young Nicaraguan poet Román Mayorga Rivas—were performed by the visiting Mexican Children's Company and circulated through flyers and newspapers, including *El Pueblo* (No. 25, October 24, 1879):

To the President of El Salvador
Doctor Rafael Zaldívar
(October 24, 1879)

Chorus

Today, the voice of the people is heard,
Singing of Zaldívar on his natal day,
And his glory, which rises on the wings of
the wind,
Ascending to the heavens like a hymn of
peace!

This selfless, heroic people
Enthusiastically offers their greetings
To the illustrious patriot who governs
Their destiny with glory and honor.
In paying him such a well-deserved
homage,
The nation follows the mandate of its
soul.
On the wings of the homeland, they offer
him
Their strongest and steadfast loyalty.

Chorus

Gratitude and loyalty, eternal glory
Zaldívar has attained everywhere,
Raising high the august banner
Of Progress, Labor, and Union.
Under its shadow, the people find
The bulwarks of justice and law,
Where Sciences and Arts flourish,
And hearts beat with unwavering faith.

Chorus

With justice, the joyous people today
Send their greetings to Zaldívar,
As the sun shines more brightly in the
sky,
Illuminating this day with greater
splendor.
They offer prayers to heaven, asking
That his life, happy and serene,
May glide along peacefully,
While Fame's trumpet resounds in his
honor.

Among the artists of the Mexican Children's Company—the first of its kind to perform in Salvadoran territory—stood out the young talents Carmen and Guadalupe Unda, Gonzalo Dávila, María Murillo, and Josefa and Soledad Mújica.

Under the administration, staging, and orchestration of Mr. Leandro Hernández, Eduardo Unda, and Maestro Tizol, the Mexican Children's Company presented several comic operas and zarzuelas, such as *Marina*, *La cabra tira al monte*, *El barberillo de Lavapiés*, *La fille de Madame Angot*, *La gran duquesa de Gerolstien*, *La gallina ciega*, *C. de l.*, *La isla de San Balandrán*, *La colegiala o sea La ganga*, *Catalina de Rusia o La estrella del norte*, *Girofla*, *El juramento*, *Los madrigales*, and *Robinson*.

On the night of July 28, 1880, in front of the balconies of the presidential residence, the ninety members of the military, war, and Los Altos Poderes bands—directed respectively by Aberle, Serra, and Drews—offered a musical retreat to President Zaldívar, an event that mainly featured pieces composed by the Italian musician.

As rewards and incentives for the celebration and for their services leading the bands, Giacomo Serra had his meager salary doubled, and Maestro Aberle was promoted to the rank of effective colonel.

Despite being considered by reporters and chroniclers of the time as “an intelligent and hardworking artist,”¹⁷ the German maestro Heinrich Drews was inexplicably

excluded from these honors by the president. However, thanks to an official decree, the War Band was abolished in May 1884 to allocate more resources and personnel to the ensemble led by the German musician.

In the same year of 1880, the zarzuela *El gran maestro* was staged in the city of Santa Ana, an event exalted by the verses of Salvadoran poet and banker Calixto Velado, published in his book *Arte y vida* (San Salvador, 1922). Additionally, he composed a patriotic hymn, with lyrics by the late poet and literary critic Antonio Guevara Valdés (1845-1882).

On the occasion of the third gathering of the "La Juventud" Society, held on February 15, 1880, the Neapolitan arranged, conducted, and played the piano in some of the grand performances, including the *Dúo a dos pianos sobre Eurianthe* (by Lisberg), *Fantasia sobre Favorita* (by Vilbac), *Fantasia de concierto a dos pianos* (by Liszt), *Excena dúo de la ópera Vestale* (by Mercadante), and *Capricho de concierto sobre El trovador* (by Verdi and Aberle).

For these parts of the lyrical and musical act, Aberle was assisted vocally and pianistically by the young ladies Guadalupe Angulo, Ángela Andrade, María Zaldívar, Julia and Gertrudis Guirola, and Mrs. Dolores Pérez de Trabanino.

On March 15, 1882, issue number 20 of the newspaper *La palabra* published the poem titled *Al artista Juan Aberle*, written by a woman hiding behind the pseudonym Beatriz, which vaguely mentions the

passing of Laura, one of the Neapolitan musician's daughters, about whom no other biographical details of interest are known.

During those same dates, and on the occasion of the unveiling of the statue of General Francisco Morazán in the square bearing his name—built in 1882 to the north of the first National Theater, which was destroyed by fire in 1910—the march to Morazán was declared of national importance and marked with honors¹⁷. Years later, in its edition of March 8, 1898, *Diario del Salvador* would recall this piece and recommend it as an honorary march worthy of being performed at official ceremonies.

Shortly thereafter—during two of his brief stays in the city of San Salvador—he composed the requiem masses that were performed at the old Metropolitan Cathedral during the respective funerals of Mrs. Ojeda and Dolores Zaldívar de Aguilar. Marked by an adverse fate, this other daughter of the then Salvadoran ruler—married to Tomás Aguilar on January 25, 1880—died in San Salvador at the age of 19 on the morning of May 5, 1882, and was buried seven days later.

Her firstborn daughter, María Sara, survived her only until the following September. Two years later, Dolores, her other daughter, was also taken by the vastness of death.

¹⁷ Cfr. *Diario Oficial*, San Salvador, July 30, 1880.

¹⁸ Cfr. Executive Decree of March 18, 1882, *Diario Oficial*, San Salvador, no. 66, vol. 12, Tuesday, March 21, 1882, pp. 285-286.

The Literary Society *La Juventud*, based in San Salvador, incorporated him as an honorary member. Thus, in the June 1, 1882 edition, their magazine published a four-page article titled *La música árabe-persa*, written by him and dedicated to his friend, Ecuadorian writer Federico Proaño (1848-1894).

Even before his admission, as already noted, Aberle had been in charge of the musical direction of the recitals for this artistic-literary institution, which—as an interesting point—admitted women as part of its active membership, revealing its innovative spirit. In some of those occasional meetings, the male choir and poetry readings were led by the young modernist writers Rubén Darío, Francisco Gavidia, Vicente Acosta, Román Mayorga Rivas, Carlos Arturo Imendia, and others.

Thus, at the civic-cultural evening of September 15, 1882, held at the National Theater by the members of *La Juventud*, young Nicaraguan writers Darío and Mayorga Rivas read a dialogued love poem. This work was accompanied by background music—like a melopoeia—performed by Masters Aberle and Rafael Olmedo¹⁹, to whom the following stanza

¹⁹ Rafael Olmedo was born in San José Guayabal on March 12, 1837, into the family of José Manuel Trinidad Olmedo and Juliana Artiga de Olmedo, indigo farmers descended from Spaniards. Olmedo pursued his musical studies in San Salvador at the Preparatory Music School of Guatemalan musician José Escolástico Andrino, who resided in the capital's San Esteban neighborhood near the Catholic temple of La Merced. Andrino left

Guatemala City and arrived in San Salvador in 1845 to lead the musical band established four years earlier by Cuban-Spaniards José Martínez de la Rosa, Juan Guido, and Manuel Navarro.

Andrino's position was preceded and succeeded by notable figures, including Barcelonian Frances Libbons, Joaquín Navarrete, Rafael Orozco, Alexandre Cousin (both in 1860), Emile Dressner (hired in Germany in 1870), Heinrich Drews, Giovanni Aberle, Karl Malhmann, Raúl Santamaría, Paul Müller, Richard Hüttenrach, Cesare Perotti, Alejandro Muñoz Ciudad Real, Estevan Servellón, Gilberto Orellana H., Germán Cáceres, and others.

At Andrino's San Salvador music school (1846), Olmedo's peers included musicians Hilario Reyes, Dámaso García, Félix Castro, Cosme Damián, Laureano Campos, Gabriel Montoya, Antonio Zelada, Luz Fuentes (male), Juan Daniel Alas, Ponciano Cruz, and Eusebio Castillo. Castillo later directed the orchestra organized by Andrino in 1860, which performed a notable requiem mass in honor of Petrona Espinosa, the late mother of then-President General Gerardo Barrios.

Olmedo gained national recognition at the age of 10 when he masterfully performed an A major Fantasia composed by his teacher Andrino. Impressed by the young prodigy, then-President Eugenio Aguilar awarded him a remarkable prize. At 18, Olmedo settled in Suchitoto to lead the parish choir, where he married Refugio Durán and fathered 16 children, many of whom died young.

Among the surviving children were Soledad (married to Dr. José Samuel Ortiz, passing away in late September 1940); Joaquina, a certified teacher (born in Cojutepeque, married lawyer and journalist Dr. Eduardo Álvares, and mother to painters Ana Julia and Refugio, who trained under José Mejía Vides and Salarrué in the 1930s; Joaquina died at Clínica Olmedo in San Salvador on the morning of Monday, January 4, 1960); Father Horacio F.; Manuel; and cellist Rafael (deceased in 1928). Another musician in the family, Rafael Herrador Olmedo, was born outside of formal wedlock. In 1859, Olmedo and his family returned to San Salvador, where he was appointed chapel musician for the Cathedral. Two decades later, in 1879, he moved to Cojutepeque to lead the choir, subsequently serving as a music teacher at

the secondary school and normal school directed by Dr. Rafael Reyes in San Salvador (1881). He later moved to Santa Ana to conduct the choir of the Church of La Concepción.

During Rafael Zaldívar's presidency, Olmedo published editions of his concert music, a guitar album, and some scores of his sacred compositions. In gratitude for the presidential support, Olmedo dedicated his challenging violin capriccio with piano accompaniment, *Las hadas* (Concertante), to Dr. Zaldívar. This piece is only a small sample of Olmedo's extensive repertoire, most of which was published by La Ilustración Press (Calle de La Unión No. 45, San Salvador). Some of these compositions were even performed at St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City.

By order of the Executive Power, the National Press produced another print run of Olmedo's scores in September 1927, which was handed over to his son Rafael for distribution and commercialization. As a composer of sacred music, Olmedo excelled in the creation of a dozen *Misas de Gloria* with orchestra (dedicated to El Carmen, San Antonio, San José, Corazón de Jesús, Salvador del Mundo, etc.), eight requiem masses (seven with orchestra and one with organ), six collections of Rosary songs, five collections of religious marches (ranging from three to twelve pieces), two collections of Easter *sones*, numerous hymns to the Virgin Mary (the most popular being *La más hermosa* and *Tiernos himnos de castos amores*), hymns to the Sacred Heart of Jesus (one titled *Jesús amable*), eight *Salve Regina*, a Re minor mass for a large orchestra, ten *Ave Maria* (one in Latin with soloist and orchestra, another in G major for duet and choir), funeral psalms (*Regen cui*, *Domine in furore*, and *Parce mihi*), the elegy *Memento Mei*, a grand March (*Marcha de iglesia en Do mayor* for a large orchestra), *Tonada a la Virgen* (with choir and orchestra), *Dulcísima paloma*, *Venite Filii*, *Corazón Santo*, and the quartet *Santa Elena*. This musical repertoire, now almost entirely lost, also included secular works, particularly with romantic themes. Notable titles included *La aurora*, *La amorosa*, *Ilusión que muere*, and *Ilusión perdida* (mazurkas); *El viejo verde* and *Ciro el grande* (concert waltzes for violin and piano); a G minor waltz for two violins and piano; a romance; a concert fantasy for cello and piano; *Juanita*, *La*

salvadoreña, *Polka*, and *Polka no. 2* (polkas); *Marcha en Mi mayor*; *La coqueta* (mazurka for guitar); *El caballero de la triste figura*, *Sagitario*, *El 12 de marzo*, *Si me querrá*, *Soconusco*, and *El Cisne* (waltzes); *Quejas al viento* (ca. 1882, dedicated to his friend from Suchitoto, the ill-fated poet and lawyer Isaac Ruiz Araujo); *No tardes en volver* (with lyrics by Ruiz Araujo); *Serenata de los diablos*; a capriccio for cello; a melodic jeu d'esprit; five etude-capriccios for solo violin; fifteen pieces for guitar; ten songs (including ballads such as *Ayer no más te vi*, *No tardes en volver*, and *El naufrago*, with lyrics by Isaac Ruiz Araujo), and many more works. He was a close friend of Drews and Aberle, to whom he dedicated the mazurka for violin and piano *Una Corona*. He also taught solfeggio, singing, and piano at Santa María College (San Salvador, 1885), served as director of the Martial Band of San Salvador—stepping down on October 18, 1885, in favor of Drews—and later directed the band of Santa Tecla (1891). Frustrated as the would-be director of the Music Conservatory that General Rafael Antonio Gutiérrez's government planned to establish in Villa España, San Salvador, Olmedo contracted a severe illness requiring major surgery. The procedure was performed without the use of anesthesia. Amid cruel post-operative pain, he passed away in the capital city at 10:00 a.m. on June 14, 1899. Prior to his death, he had composed a grand Funeral Office to be performed at his own funeral, presided over by his children. Given his remarkable musical career as a virtuoso violinist, pianist, and guitarist, Olmedo's death was mourned by many intellectual figures of the time. His funeral expenses, amounting to 200 pesos, were covered by the Supreme Government, and his remains were interred in the General Cemetery of San Salvador. His funeral was marked by poignant speeches from notable orators and the mourning of his children and widow. In 1938, the government of the republic decided to establish the National School of Music, naming it "Rafael Olmedo" and placing it under the direction of Maestro Domingo Santos. Students from this institution paid heartfelt tribute to the late musician, composer, and conductor in a ceremony held at the National Theater of San Salvador on June 14, 1939. Since 2005, Olmedo's guitar compositions have been rediscovered and studied by American guitarist Richard "Rico" Stover, as

of that joint recitation was dedicated:

The Castilian Guitar
The melody of the Moorish guzla,
and the vibrating string
of sweet Aberle and Olmedo,
translate the seductive voice of love
into a joyful rhythm.

On that memorable night of harmonious dialogue, Rubén Darío recited a sonnet dedicated to Aberle, which was published on the 22nd in the already mentioned magazine *La Juventud*:

Giovanni Aberle

In this Eden of the American world,
Where stormy winds have brought you,
Do you not grieve to miss the melodies
And harmonies of that Italian soil?

Silence, for when your hand moves,
And gives notes to the gentle zephyrs,
From your ITALY are heard the accents
In the resonant strings of your piano.

To it, then, you go, cheerful and content:
The artist's glory is no myth,
And in crossing life's path,

He holds only one ideal, a blessed ideal,
A homeland, my home, the whole world,
And one contemplation: the Infinite!

well as Salvadoran guitarist Walter Quevedo-Osegueda. Quevedo-Osegueda included *El caballero de la triste figura* and other subtle compositions in his album *Piezas íntimas* (San Salvador, 2007), where they were performed alongside works by Domingo Santos, Agustín Pío Barrios "Mangoré," and Germán Cáceres Buitrago.

On May 15, 1883, Aberle launched a new facet of his talented and restless spirit by initiating the publication of the biweekly issues of his magazine, *La Ilustración Musical Centro-Americana*, the second of its kind produced in the 19th-century city of San Salvador²⁰.

This specialized publication, characterized by its large format and clear typography, provided not only engravings and biographical notes about prominent musicians from the isthmus and around the world but also transcriptions of sheet music for local, regional, and international musical works. Among many pieces, Aberle included the sheet music for a Mazurka of his creation in the second issue of the magazine.

Regarding this unprecedented initiative by the musician, a musical publication of the time remarked:

"Even if this periodical served only to spread to other regions the echo of our appreciation for the art immortalized by Beethoven, which has brought forth other luminaries to the world, it would still merit our approval. However, its significance is not confined to such a narrow scope: this magazine publishes useful news and showcases the fruits of the talent and study of individuals dedicated to philharmonic tasks, particularly the challenging work of composing, which demands both

inspiration and a mastery of the rules of harmony. Justice and common sense require the constant support of the Government and the public for the periodical of the diligent and admirable maestro [Aberle], who has taken upon himself such a heavy burden with so much enthusiasm²¹."

By this time, some of Aberle's compositions, such as the Mazurka *Julia* and the waltzes *Los heliotropos* and *Danzando siempre* (1883), were performed in public concerts by marimbas, military bands, and student orchestras in parks, temples, plazas, and other public spaces in Guatemala City²².

Aberle performed alongside Olmedo and Drews—who in June had renewed his contract as conductor of the Banda de los Altos Poderes for another four years—at the wedding celebration of Sara Zaldívar and Francisco Aguilar. He later accompanied this couple, from afar, in their mourning after the loss of their young daughter Matilde, who passed away in Paris on May 24, 1884.

Subsequently, with Olmedo and Petrilli—who since August 1881 had become the proud owner of the Gran Hotel in the capital—Aberle directed the musical program for the onomastic or saint's day celebration of Pía Zaldívar. Pía was a member of the extended family of President Rafael Zaldívar and the wife of Dominican printer and educator Francisco Mendiola Boza²³. The event took place at

²⁰ González Sol, Rafael. "A New Musical Magazine in the Country," *El Diario de Hoy*, San Salvador, year XI, no. 1469, Wednesday, July 3, 1946, p. 5. Dr. Manuel Zúñiga Idiáquez provided clarifications to this publication, *ibid.*, Wednesday, July 10, 1946, p. 2.

²¹ Cfr. Anonymous. "Music in Particular and the Fine Arts in General," *Diario Oficial*, San Salvador, no. 186, vol. 15, Tuesday, August 14, 1883, pp. 773–774.

her residence starting at 8:00 PM on Wednesday, July 11, 1883.

Thanks to a new commission by President Zaldívar, Aberle composed the musical arrangement for a *Hymn to Bolívar*, performed at the old National Theater by Mrs. Linda Brambilla and students from

²² Barrios y Barrios, op. cit., p. 226.

²³ As a naturalized Salvadoran, Mendiola Boza was the owner of the *Imprenta del Comercio* (1876–1877), whose workshops were located on La Aurora Street in San Salvador (currently 8th West Street). He served as secretary of the Board of Directors of the Hospice (1878), head of the San Salvador Ladies' College (1879), and editor of the weekly *La Opinión Pública* (1880). Known and detested for his fondness for gossip, which he used to secure government favors, he was shot at the Salvadoran Casino in March 1881 by Dr. Tomás M. Muñoz.

Dr. Muñoz, a Cuban physician, journalist, poet, printer, and former private secretary to President Francisco Dueñas, was editor of *El Constitucional* and the *Diario Oficial*. He also taught rhetoric at the Liceo de Santo Tomás, directed by renowned educator José María Cáceres (Zacatecoluca, 1818–Santa Tecla, 1889). Muñoz authored the one-act drama *Óptimos Frutos o El Arrepentimiento* (c. 1892).

Mendiola Boza also owned the steam printing press *El Cometa*, served as Director General of Primary Public Instruction (1883), replacing Polish Freemason José Leonard y Berthollet, and was Consul of the Dominican Republic in El Salvador (August 1883). He was a constituent deputy for the department of Gotera (October 1883), editor of the *Diario Oficial* (1883–1884), and later of *Cuscatlán* (1886, with pro-Zaldívar leanings). Additionally, he was captain of the Third Company, Battalion No. 7 of the San Salvador militias (1884–1885) and Director General of Posts (1891) until his exile in San José, Costa Rica, in 1894, where he died in January 1905.

In late June 1890, after the bloody fall of Francisco Menéndez's presidential regime (1885–1890), Mendiola Boza was commissioned by the new rulers—Generals Carlos and Antonio Ezeta—to monitor Nicaraguan poet Rubén Darío during his maritime escape to Guatemala. Darío, former director of the semi-official evening paper *La Unión*, refused to join the circle of traitors, which nonetheless earned Mendiola Boza the position of Director General of Posts (1891).

both male and female schools in the capital, as part of the lyrical-literary events held during national celebrations dedicated to the South American hero.

The first stanza of that hymn was printed in the article *Glories of Art* by Salvadoran doctor Francisco Martínez Suárez²⁴, published in the Costa Rican magazine *Ariel*. Two years later, in this same publication, directed by Honduran poet Froylán Turcios (1878–1943), a letter appeared from Dr. Mario Briceño-Iragarry (died 1958), Venezuelan diplomatic representative in Costa Rica. In it, he revealed the entirety of the aforementioned *Darían* text²⁵, handed to him by his Salvadoran friend Joaquín Leiva.

Finally, Nicaraguan *Darían* researcher José Jirón Terán and his wife Yolanda found the sheet music in a second-hand bookstore in Costa Rica. He dedicated his study to this work in his article *The Unknown, Almost Unpublished, Hymn to Bolívar by Rubén Darío* (*La Prensa Literaria*, Managua, Saturday, October 3, 1977) and his pamphlet *Hymn to Bolívar by Rubén Darío* (León, Nicaragua, Museo-

Mendiola Boza's surveillance efforts could not prevent Darío from setting sail on June 28 from the port of La Libertad and arriving in Guatemala at 6 a.m. on June 30. From there, the author of *Azul...* traveled by train to Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción, arriving early in the afternoon amid celebrations of another anniversary of the 1871 Liberal Revolution.

²⁴ San José, Costa Rica, No. 32, July 15, 1938.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, No. 71, August 1, 1940, p. 1774. Both the article and the cited letter were reproduced in *La Prensa Gráfica*, Managua, No. 3568, Saturday, September 3, 1966, p. 12.

Archivo "Rubén Darío" – Editorial Universitaria, 1980, 16 pages):

Glory to genius! Upon the face of the earth, let us follow its Idea, for its arm carries the ardor of war, and its brow shines with glimmers of God. Epic tale! The stanza cannot depict the splendid stature of the great hero, whose gallant battle steed bears a shield of firmness and truth. And ascending the summit of the Andes, gazing upon the infinite brilliance, crowned with light, he cried out a word that echoes everywhere: Freedom!

During that same patriotic occasion, Darío recited his ode *To Bolívar*, while Mr. Petrilli, Miss Sordelli, and students from San Salvador performed the National Anthem by Cañas and Aberle. The Neapolitan musician played Rossini's *William Tell Overture* on the piano, accompanied on another piano by Miss Ángela Andrade.

Months later, Aberle was hired as conductor and director of the Italian opera company formed in San Salvador by prima donna soprano Elisa D'Aponte, baritone and impresario Petrilli, tenor Michelangelo Benfratelli, bass Giovanni Citri, and choir director Arturo Morini. In the main hall of the city's former theater, this new company presented operas such as *La Traviata*, *Hernani*, and *La Favorita*

as part of their program on September 16, 20, 25, and 27, 1883.

Unfortunately, despite Aberle's renowned musical intelligence, the audience turnout was very low, and the performances were harshly criticized by the theatrical review of the capital's official newspaper *La República*.

With the support of the voices of Misses D'Aponte and Sordelli and gentlemen Petrilli and Citri, Aberle had the opportunity to present a *Solemn Mass* of his own composition. It premiered on Saturday, June 14, 1884, to mark the official closure of the smallpox lazaretto, which had operated from June 6, 1883, to June 13, 1884, treating 433 people affected by the smallpox epidemic that struck San Salvador, of whom 164 died in the general hospital²⁶.

In addition to his editorial work, Aberle continued with his musical compositions and bureaucratic duties, serving as General Administrator of the capital's cemetery (1884), steward of the August festivities dedicated to the Savior of the World (1885), and director of the male and female musical ensembles of the city of Santa Ana, both created in 1886.

This overwhelming workload proved too much for Aberle, and on September 24, 1886, he was forced to resign from his position as director of the Santa Ana Military Band.

The male ensemble of Santa Ana included Abel Peña, Pedro and Rafael Paz, Manuel

Calderón, Abel S. Hernández, Carlos and Rodolfo Cordón, Javier and Trinidad Díaz, Pedro León, Cipriano Vides, and other young men. Under Aberle's direction, they performed in that locality, other parts of the national territory, and Tegucigalpa, the capital of the neighboring Republic of Honduras.

The female musical ensemble of Santa Ana, for its part, held a concert at the home of Simón Vides on October 17, 1886, to benefit the local hospice, whose construction was about to begin. On that occasion, Aberle performed a mazurka alongside Miss Jespus Montalvo, while other members of the group (Teresa Carbia, Anita Valle, Trinidad Regalado, Josefina Sandoval, and others) recited poems, sang gentle pieces, or played others on the piano.

At 8 p.m. on Tuesday, February 22, 1887, Aberle and maestro Nemesio Moraga directed the inaugural concert of a new female musical ensemble in Santa Ana, named *Lira de Euterpe*. During this lyrical, comedic, and musical evening held at General Montalvo's residence, participants included Adriana Rodríguez, Arcadia Celaya, Basilia Gómez, Teresa Pereira, Ester Lara, Isabel Muñoz, Julia Lara, Milagro Montalvo, Mercedes Moreno, María Quinteros, Otiliza Lara, Pilar Gutiérrez, Sara Meza, Pilar Avilés, Sara Lara, Trinidad Montalvo, Victoria Avilés, and Mercedes Gómez. At the climax of the event, all these

performers executed the dance *Hijas de Euterpe*, composed by Aberle²⁷.

In mid-1890, due to the intellectual and social unrest caused by the coup d'état led by brothers Carlos and Antonio Ezeta against General Francisco Menéndez, Aberle returned to Guatemala²⁸. There, the then-president, General Manuel Lisandro Barillas, appointed him as the director of the capital's Military Band. This band performed concerts in the Plaza de Armas, La Concordia Square, the plaza and promenade of the National Theater, in front of the Presidential Palace, outside the British legation, and on the hill of El Carmen.

During these public presentations, Aberle introduced his works, including the fantasies *Baile de Máscaras*, *Juramento*, *Ruy Blas*, *Luisa Miller*, *Traviata*, the waltz series *Ensueños* and *Vértigos*, the pasodoble *¡A la Victoria!*, the march-fantasy *Soledad y Colomba*, and the grand concert variations of *La Marseillaise*.

Later, as announced in various Guatemalan newspapers, Aberle dedicated himself to teaching private lessons in singing, piano, harmony, composition, and music theory daily from 6 to 7 p.m. These classes were held in his residence, located at No. 24, 5th West Street.

²⁶ Cfr. *Diario Oficial*, San Salvador, no. 140, vol. 16, Saturday, June 14, 1884, pp. 567.

²⁷ Cfr. Galdames Armas, Juan. *Hombres y cosas de Santa Ana*, s.e., 1943, pp. 144-147.

²⁸ Mentioned in the editorial *Conservatorio Nacional de Música*, *La Opinión Nacional*, Guatemala, volume I, no. 3, November 27, 1890, p. 1.

At forty-four years old, and with multiple occupations in the Guatemalan capital, the Neapolitan maestro decided to marry Gertrudis (Tula) Pérez Cáceres, a 34-year-old native of Ahuachapán. The wedding ceremony took place in the Cathedral of Santa Ana, but due to numerous commitments and the distance, the groom was unable to be present in the main nave of the church, so he was represented by his friend and best man, Manuel Pacas.

As a consequence of the Ezeta coup, the “Hymn of the Juans” was accompanied during civic and military events by *El Salvador libre*, a new national war hymn written and composed by the young Italian Cesare Giorgi-Vélez, adopted through an executive decree on June 3, 1891²⁹.

This composition was dedicated to the Salvadoran army and was only performed during the government of brothers Carlos and Antonio Ezeta, which was overthrown in April 1894 by the “Revolution of the 44.” This revolution—originating from Guatemala and Santa Ana—was led by General Rafael Antonio Gutiérrez, under whose presidency the notes of the hymn by Cañas and Aberle once again became the sole anthem in practice, though not by law.

Meanwhile, in San Salvador, Drews, Olmedo, and other musicians founded *La Sociedad Filarmónica*³⁰. In Guatemala, José María Reyna Barrios, the successor to Barillas as head of the government until 1898, appointed Aberle as director of the *Conservatorio Nacional* on April 12, 1892. This was the same educational institution that the Italian composer had

founded years earlier and for which he, on this second occasion, secured funds to purchase musical instruments, accessories, and scores from France and Germany. Since December 1890, this music school had been operating in the former premises of the Club Guatemalteco, located at the intersection of the former Fifth South Avenue and Eleventh West Street in the center of Guatemala City.

Due to his new official position, Aberle—welcomed as a member of the *Sociedad Económica* of the neighboring country, as well as the *Sociedad de Escritores y Artistas de Guatemala* (1894)—was replaced as head of the Banda Marcial by Germán Alcántara (born in 1863, who would later direct the *Conservatorio Nacional de Música de Guatemala* from March 5, 1907, until his death on July 14, 1910)³¹. The Neapolitan maestro remained in charge of the Guatemalan conservatory until August 7, 1895, when he was replaced on an interim basis by maestro Daniel Quinteros.

Perhaps because of this, by late 1895, Aberle settled for a few years in the Cost Rican town of Heredia, where he founded “a musical ensemble composed of ladies and young women from high society, based in the residence of Mr. Cipriano Sáenz, who donated his valuable piano³².” Additionally, according to the newspaper

²⁹ Cfr. *El Pueblo*, San Salvador, year I, no. 134, Friday, June 5, 1891, pp. 1 and 2. The sheet music can be found in the General Archive of the Nation, National Palace of San Salvador.

³⁰ Cfr. *El País* newspaper, San Salvador, year I, no. 7, Saturday, March 26, 1892.

La Unión Católica, in August 1897, an orchestra of 21 musicians, directed by the Neapolitan maestro himself, performed his *Mass No. 3*—composed in 1870 during his stay in New York—as a tribute to the 47 years of married life of Braulio Morales and his wife³³.

Once reintegrated into Salvadoran soil, Aberle and his wife established their joint residences in the cities of Santa Ana and San Salvador. In the latter, their family home was located at *Quinta Aberle*, a property now occupied by Embotelladora La Cascada, situated on the old road to Mexicanos and still owned by their descendants.

Aberle and Tula had one daughter and four sons, all of whom are now deceased: Virginia, Juan Enrique, Humberto, Miguel Ángel³⁴, and Ricardo Wagner.

By that time, Aberle's income came from his work as a director at the *Escuela de Música y Canto*—founded in the *Teatro Nacional de San Salvador*³⁵—and from private piano lessons he gave to ladies and young women from San Salvador's high society.

A decree by the national executive power, issued on June 30, 1900, appointed Aberle as administrator of the *Teatro Nacional* and director of the Conservatory. With a monthly salary of 200 pesos, his duties at the latter institution also included teaching harmony, piano, viola, violin, cello, and double bass.

Since neither Cañas nor Aberle had received any payment for the lyrics and music of the National Anthem, at the initiative of legislative president Dr. Dionisio Aráus and first secretary Dr. Justiniano Hidalgo, the National Assembly issued a decree on April 9, 1902, granting each of them a gold medal. This award was made official on September 15 of that year, when the president of the republic, General Tomás Regalado, presented them with the golden distinctions.

This tribute also included Maestro Drews, born in 1847 in Memel, East Prussia (now called Klaipeda, incorporated into Lithuania after World War I), a port city located on the shores of the Courland Lagoon, which connects to the Baltic Sea

³¹ Lehnoff, op. cit., p. 214.

³² See also Segura Chaves, Pompilio. *Desarrollo musical en Costa Rica durante el siglo XIX. Las bandas militares*, Heredia, Editorial de la Universidad Nacional, 2001, p. 34.

³³ *Ibidem*, pp. 34 and 37.

³⁴ Born in the Costa Rican town of Heredia, he married Hortensia Pineda. In their home, they raised Gloria—born on September 13, who married José Daniel (married since January 1968 to Roxana Rivera Samayoa), Edgardo Alfredo (born on May 31), and Gloria Patricia (born on October 2, 1956). Mrs. Aberle de Castellanos passed away in San Salvador in September 2003—and Lilian, a graduate of the commercial secretary program at the Instituto Nacional "General Francisco Menéndez" (February 1942), who married Dr. Ernesto Argüello Loucel and settled in Mexico City from the early months of 1957.

³⁵ Later transformed into the *Conservatorio Nacional de Música*, by 1901 the institution had 45 students who received preparatory classes from Miss Adela van Severen and Aberle himself.

via the Neman River (*Nemunas* in Lithuanian and *Memel* in German). In his teenage years, he moved to Cologne³⁶, where he pursued his musical studies at the conservatory.

After arriving in San Salvador in 1875, hired by Marshal Santiago González's government to replace the German Emile Dressner, Drews offered music lessons at the *Instituto Normal de Señoritas* or *Colegio de Institutrices*—founded in San Salvador in September 1879—and directed the *Banda de los Altos Poderes* for nearly 40 years. The author of musical pieces such as the orchestration of *El Salvador's National Anthem* (1879), *El ferrocarril galopa* (circa 1882–1883), *La travesía feliz* (a march composed in 1884 in honor of President Zaldívar's return from an official trip to Europe), and *El triunfo* (a pasodoble considered his masterpiece), he married Elena Aschoff (who passed away in 1911) and had five children: Emilia, Federico, Enrique, María, and Teresa, all of whom later played significant roles in various national fields.

As part of his intense and varied activities, on May 3, 1902, Aberle premiered his hymn *La fiesta de los árboles*, with lyrics written by the poet Carlos A. Imendia from Sonsonate. It was performed by a student choir of nearly 1,500 voices from the capital. Two years later, in October 1904, he participated in a lyric-literary evening

in Santa Ana, sharing honors as a successful organizer with the distinguished Mrs. Victoria Magaña de Fortín.

Almost a decade later, Aberle was honored by *Diario del Salvador* with the publication of a photographic portrait of him (on Tuesday, July 15, 1913). He was invited to the centennial festivities of Guatemala's *Sociedad Musical*, an occasion for which he composed and donated a *Misa de gloria*.

Two hundred fifty performers and choirs came together to perform this solemn mass on July 21, 1913, as part of the *Fiesta de los músicos*, held in the plaza of the *La Merced* temple. The following day, Víctor Miguel Díaz penned a laudatory article—*Juan Aberle*—in the *Diario de Centro América* in Guatemala City.

All these demonstrations of affection for Aberle were accompanied by his designation as "*Benemérito del Arte y Benefactor del Gremio de Músicos*³⁷", as well as a concert offered in his honor at the home of Licenciado Salvador Falla on the 23rd, "*when Julia Falla and maestros A. Donis and D. Gaytán performed the four movements of the Grand Trio in E Major for piano, violin, and cello, composed by Aberle*"—followed by the enjoyment of light and dance pieces held at the *Hotel España* on the 25th.

After two attempts at resignation, both rejected by successive rulers Manuel Enrique Araujo and Carlos Meléndez, Drews's old age prevented him from

³⁶ Cfr. Section *Nuestros grabados*, illustrated magazine *El porvenir de Centro-América*, San Salvador, year III, no. 62, January 15, 1898, p. 1006.

continuing as head of the *Banda de los Altos Poderes*. Consequently, the German musician "*bids farewell to his constant admirers with a final concert [...], on a beautiful moonlit night [...]. A massive crowd applauds the maestro at the concert's conclusion, and after handing over his baton to his illustrious successor, the renowned maestro Aberle, he is triumphantly carried to his residence by the crowd, preceded by his band, which performs grand marches along the way. There, he is paid heartfelt homage, elevated to apotheosis*", as noted by Dr. Juan Gomar when reading a tribute to Drews³⁸.

This composer and conductor passed away on the morning of February 10, 1916, at his residence located at 104 Avenida España and 11th Calle Poniente, across from the former Sagra residence, in the city of San Salvador. President Carlos Meléndez came to offer his condolences to the family, and the musician's funeral took place the following morning in the section for distinguished persons at the General Cemetery of San Salvador.

However, the transfer of musical direction of the band to Aberle was temporary, as soon after, the also German musician Karl Malhmann took charge of it. Yet, he soon had to leave the position as he went to fight in World War I with the Austro-Hungarian army.

In light of this, the government fully hired Aberle to lead the musical ensemble, which would be known a few years later as the *Orquesta Sinfónica de los Supremos*

Poderes, the precursor to the current *Orquesta Sinfónica de El Salvador*. Aberle held this position from April 22, 1915³⁹, to May 1922. In reference to this new and significant appointment, the international editors of *El libro azul de El Salvador* (November 1916) dedicated page 163 of this bilingual work to him, where the Spanish version reads: "*Many years of existence have not been enough to extinguish in that superior spirit the divine fire of art, and here you have the distinguished maestro leading the Banda de los Altos Poderes of El Salvador, with the same enthusiasm as in the days when his successes began, guiding the select band entrusted to him along the path of perfection, supported by his talent and effectively encouraged by the public.*"

On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of his graduation as a musician and conductor, the government and Salvadoran society paid tribute to him with an apotheosis on Monday, August 21, 1916. That night, part of the organizing committee of the event went to his house to pick him and his wife up and take them to the central *Teatro Colón*, where the commemorative evening took place. This

³⁷ By arrangement of the Aberle family, in April 1930, the gold medal that embodied this conferred honor was handed over to maestro Ciriaco de Jesús Alas, so that he could wear it at public and official events where he performed.

³⁸ Cfr. *Ante la tumba del maestro Drews*, revista *Ateneo de El Salvador*, San Salvador, 1916, pp. 740 and 742.

³⁹ The first concert of the Band under his direction was given in front of President Carlos Meléndez's residence on the night of Thursday, April 22, 1915. Cfr: the brief related news note on the front page of *Diario del Salvador*, year XXVIII, no. 5842, Friday, April 23, 1915.

event was covered by the capital's newspapers *La Prensa* and *Diario del Salvador*. The concert venue was located in the eastern block of *Parque Bolívar* (now *Parque Barrios* or *Plaza Cívica*) and was frequently used due to the destruction of the old wooden and sheet metal *Teatro Nacional* by fire in 1910.

The keynote address of that day was delivered by the writer and orator Dr. David J. Guzmán, a speech fully reproduced by the *Diario del Salvador*, edited by Román Mayorga Rivas, in its Sunday edition of August 27 of the same year.

As recorded by newspapers and magazines of the time, the tribute was culminated when President Carlos Meléndez and his wife, Sara Meza de Meléndez (married in the city of Santa Ana on May 12, 1896), presented Aberle with a gold medal and crowned his brow with a laurel wreath while the theater's dome resonated with a fanfare performed by the *Banda de los Supremos Poderes*.

Subsequently, a select orchestra composed of the cream of national musicians performed *Amoris Dea* by Aberle under the direction of Italian maestro Antonio Gianoli-Galletti⁴⁰. This interpretation was followed by the *Banda del Primer Regimiento de Infantería* (formerly *Brigada de Línea*, a military institution located at the current *Mercado Ex-Cuartel* or *Mercado de Artesanías*), led by Spaniard Pedro Ferrer y Rodrigo, who performed *Il Trovatore* (1853) by Verdi.

Once again, the orchestra filled the acoustics of the Colón Theater with the theme of *La Coronación* (an overture based on motifs from the *Himno Nacional de El Salvador*), conducted by its composer, maestro and colonel Ciriaco de Jesús Alas⁴¹. He also conducted the *Banda de los Supremos Poderes* and the *Banda de Sonsonate* in the performance of *El Poeta* by Aberle.

Trío, a composition by the Neapolitan musician for piano, violin, and cello, was interpreted by Ángela Esquivel de López, Francisco López, and Rafael Olmedo h. This was followed by *Salve Reina* by Aberle, sung by Carolina Gianoli-Galletti with orchestral accompaniment directed by Antonio Gianoli, who also led the *Banda de los Supremos Poderes* in

⁴⁰ Musician and educator, he was born in 1858, the son of singers Geronimo Gianoli and Isabella Galletti. His siblings Fernando, Luis, and Carolina were also distinguished performers with internationally renowned voices. He earned his diploma as a music professor at the Royal Conservatory of Bologna. Married to Estefanía Lazzarini—who later moved to live in Russia—he set off for the Americas and settled in El Salvador around 1880, arriving in the city of San Salvador as a member of the Lambardi itinerant opera company.

For the select circles of Salvadoran society, he was one of the great promoters of opera performances at the beginning of the 20th century, founding the Salvadoran Orchestral Society in 1910. In 1924, he served as the director of the musical band of the Departmental Command of La Libertad, based in the city of Santa Tecla. From 1927 until the day of his death, he worked as the director of the musical band of the First Infantry Regiment, based in the Salvadoran capital, which had been founded by the Spaniard Pedro Ferrer y Rodrigo.

He was a piano and singing teacher in various schools in San Salvador. He passed away in the early hours of Sunday, May 29, 1938, and his mortal remains were buried in the local cemetery the following day. Cf. *El Diario de Hoy*, San Salvador, May 17, 1939, p. 10, and June 1, 1939, p. 7.

performing *Don Carlos*, a grand fantasy by Aberle inspired by Verdi's theme (1867).

⁴¹ He was born in the city of Nueva San Salvador on April 7, 1866, to Irene Madrid Alfaro and musician Juan Daniel Alas, who was once a disciple of Escolástico Andrino. This couple also gave life to future musicians Francisco and Gregorio Alas.

The young Ciriaco studied at the Liceo San Luis, led by educator Daniel Hernández, where he began his musical training under his father's guidance. He later continued with violin studies under Rafael Olmedo Sr. For more than fifteen years, he dedicated himself to studying composition with Giovanni Aberle and the Dutchman José Kessels, both seasoned directors. Kessels dedicated his overture *Alaska* (1926) to Alas, two years before his own death in Santa Ana on Saturday, February 11, 1928. Ciriaco Alas became a singing professor at the Instituto Nacional in 1886 and began his career as a full-time musician on March 19, 1888. From then on, he served as interim director of the Tecla band and the *Trovador* musical ensemble in the same city. He also became the permanent director of the La Unión band (established April 24, 1888) and later led the regimental band of Sonsonate (1901-1944).

Married to Nela Escalante, they had several children, including Salvador Horacio (who passed away in Sonsonate at 7:00 PM on Tuesday, September 4, 1928), Mercedes, Francisco, and Mabel (married to Gabriel Hidalgo), among others.

Following a proposal from the Sonsonate society "Luz y Verdad," the Legislative Assembly decided, on June 18, 1929, to award him the Medal of Artistic Merit. The award ceremony took place at 2:30 PM on July 7 of that year, attended by Aberle, who traveled from Santa Ana for the occasion. A chronicle of this event can be found in *El Día*, San Salvador, July 10, 1929, p. 6.

Named a judge for the Salvadoran song contest by the Ministry of Public Instruction (San Salvador, September 1930), Alas was honored on the afternoon of Thursday, September 11 of that year by the students of the Colegio Técnico-Práctico de Señoritas, directed by Lucrecia Peña Rajo, during one of the evaluation sessions for the submitted works.

Among other recognitions of his artistic merits, Alas received gold medals from the Masonic Lodge Reforma No. 4 (1930, for his work *El Maestro Hiram*) and from

the national teaching community (June 22, 1933). On Monday, February 23, 1942, he suffered the loss of several personal belongings due to a fire in his residence, located in the San Francisco neighborhood of the Sonsonate department's capital (cf. *Diario de Occidente*, Santa Ana, Vol. XXXII, No. 9314, Tuesday, February 24, 1942, p. 5).

Eight years later, on October 16, 1950, his wife passed away in the same town. He survived her by just under two years, as a heart attack caused his death in the southwestern Salvadoran city on Sunday, July 6, 1952.

Among his works for solo instruments are *Nena* (a polka for lyre), *Antilla* (a rondo for violin), and *Gracias* (a whimsical waltz for violin, ca. 1924). His orchestral compositions include *Fantasia* (based on themes from *Cavalleria Rusticana*), *Rosita* (a fantasia based on *Il Trovatore*), *El maestro Hiram*, *La coronación* (an overture incorporating themes from *El Salvador's* national anthem), *Neocadina* (an idyll-fantasia), *Gracias* (a waltz for violin and orchestra), *Polca para dos piccolos*, *La sultana del Jiboa* (a fantasia composed in 1935 to commemorate the tricentennial of San Vicente's founding), *Roosevelt* (a symphony dedicated to U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, premiered in Sonsonate on April 14, 1943, Pan American Day), and *Marden* (a symphonic intermezzo).

For bands, he composed numerous fanfares and occasional pieces for beauty queens and local festivals in the Sonsonate department. He also created the overtures *Porpocato* and *El quetzal*—the latter blending the national anthems of Guatemala and El Salvador for the inauguration of the border bridge over the Paz River in February 1950. Other notable works include the fantasies *Remember* and themes from Schubert's *Serenade* and the opera *Il Guarany*, the oriental dances *Fest* and *No. 2*, and waltzes such as *Esperanza*, *Victoria*, *Antiguos recuerdos*, and *Flores de Julio*—the latter dedicated to Colombian poet Julio Flores in gratitude for his poem *Alas de Jesús*. He also composed the gallop *Amor de novia*, the bolero *Dichosofuí* (perhaps his most famous piece, dedicated to the sonorous Salvadoran bird of the same name), the minuet *Plachet*, the gavottes *Flores cuzcatlecas* and *Berta*, the marches *Siempre triunfando* and *Ariel* (dedicated to the Sonsonate literary magazine of the same name, founded in 1924 by Tiburcio Santos Dueñas), and a scherzo dedicated to Nicaraguan violinist Constantino del Castillo.

His contributions also include the music for several hymns: the *Himno del día del maestro* (with lyrics by Achupapan poet Manuel Álvarez Magaña, premiered during a lyrical-literary evening on the second Teacher's

Day, held at the Colón Theater in San Salvador at 9:00 PM on Monday, June 23, 1930, as part of a program organized by the National Pro-Teacher's Day Committee); the Himno del Ateneo de El Salvador (1930, with lyrics by Alfonso Espino); the Himno de la ciudad de San Salvador (late July 1943, with lyrics by Carlos Bustamante, submitted under the pseudonym "Cantor Nemoral" for a contest, awarded 100 colones by the city council, and premiered on November 5, 1943, during the Third National Congress of Municipalities); the heroic march in five parts titled Anita Alvarado; Adela Orantes (a hymn dedicated to this educator, with lyrics by Salvadoran poet Carlos Bustamante); the hymn for the "Anselma Sánchez de Mancía" school (inaugurated in Sonsonate in 1941, with lyrics by José Merino Rosales); a Himno a la bandera; a Himno centroamericano; and El chaparrero.

Among his sacred music compositions are several masses, including the Mass of Glory to the Sacred Heart of Jesus (awarded a gold medal by the national clergy in 1918), as well as masses dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Mary, The Infant of Atocha, Saint Job, Saint Joseph, Teresita de Jesús, Saint Margaret, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Saint Agnes, Saint Dominic of Guzmán, The Lord of Mercies, and Saint Francis of Padua. He also composed a Field Mass (for band), sixteen funeral masses, Bendita sea tu pureza, and Lágrimas en los ojos, the latter performed during the Good Friday processions in Sonsonate, celebrated with great religious pomp.

In March 1952, during a grand event at the Red Hall of the Municipal Palace of Sonsonate, the city council and residents awarded him the "Rafael Campo" medal and declared him "Sonsonate's Favorite Son."

On August 15, 1954, the choral group of the "Anita Alvarado" Girls' School in Cojutepeque, Cuscatlán, was named in his honor. Similarly, the library of the "Antonia Mendoza" School, annexed to the "España" Normal School for Teachers, was also named after him on Thursday, April 19, 1956.

On April 18, 1956, over 200 compositions by Maestro Alas—ranging from hymns, funeral and military marches, waltzes for band and orchestra, polkas, serenades, and masses—were purchased by El Salvador's Ministry of Defense for 10,000 colones. This transaction was facilitated by Colonels Marco Antonio Molina and Óscar A. Bolaños, who acquired the scores from the maestro's daughter and grandson, Mabel Alas de Hidalgo and José Sydney Hidalgo Alas, residents of San Salvador.

As the event stretched into the early hours of Tuesday, May 22, the organizers of the elderly Neapolitan's celebration had to cut the last two musical numbers from the program.

In May 1922, Paul Müller⁴² replaced Aberle as the director of the Banda de los Supremos Poderes. Shortly after arriving

At 4:00 PM on Sunday, April 10, 1967, the military band of La Libertad's Departmental Command performed a concert in tribute to Alas. The program, featuring several of his compositions, was held in one of Nueva San Salvador's parks and drew a large audience.

For additional biographical details, see Jorge Lardé y Larín's article El centenario del maestro Ciriaco de Jesús Alas, published in El Diario de Hoy, special edition dedicated to Nueva San Salvador, Saturday, December 17, 1966, p. 33. For more information on his piece Dichosofuí, refer to Joaquín Murillo Valdés' article Cómo fue que el maestro Alas compuso el Dichosofuí, published in El Diario de Hoy, special supplement dedicated to Sonsonate, Wednesday, February 1, 1967, p. 6.

⁴² Born on June 8, Paul Müller was a German subsargento mayor (senior sergeant) and a maestro director who graduated from the Berlin Academy of Music. His diploma bore the signatures of the academy's director, Dr. Kretz, and F. E. Koch, head of the composition section. Arriving in El Salvador in May 1922, Müller settled at No. 16, Second West Street, under San Salvador's former street numbering system, which remained in use until 1928.

He gave his first concert with the band on May 18, 1922, at Bolívar Park (now Barrios Park) in San Salvador, featuring music by Grieg, Rubinstein, and Strauss.

For additional details, see Ramón Arturo Macías' article, Paul Müller organizó la Sinfónica de El Salvador, published in El Diario de Hoy, San Salvador, Wednesday, January 24, 1979, p. 7.

in El Salvador, Müller established a music school for 17 students, which operated without any financial support from the Salvadoran government. During his tenure, he composed the march *Quince de septiembre* (San Salvador, 1923), which the musical ensemble performed on several occasions under his direction. Müller also provided private instruction, notably to Mercedes and Marta Zepeda, daughters of dentist Dr. Carlos Zepeda. The sisters, recognized for their talent and skill, assisted Müller in some of the concerts he organized with the *Banda y Orquesta de los Supremos Poderes*.

Dedicated to the comprehensive development of these national musicians, Müller had the opportunity to conduct the inaugural performance of the *Banda de los Supremos Poderes* Symphony Orchestra, which took place at the Teatro Colón (now Librería Colón), on the eastern side of the current Parque Barrios, on the night of November 10, 1922, with performances of Beethoven, Mozart, Komzak, Wagner, and Liszt. The third concert of this emerging ensemble took place on Friday, December 28, 1923, while the fourth occurred at the same Teatro Colón on the night of Wednesday, November 26, 1924. The fifth concert was held at the same venue on Wednesday, April 15, 1925.

In the first half of April 1923, Müller held a meeting with his Dutch counterpart José Kessels, who was the

director of the Santa Ana Military Band and had traveled to the Salvadoran capital for this meeting to seek support for the reorganization of that western national musical group. After the lengthy interview, he returned to the coffee plantation with plans and many musical scores from renowned German composers gifted by Müller.

On Saturday, October 18, 1924, Müller conducted the band of the First Infantry Regiment, based in the Salvadoran capital. The following day, he combined this band with the *Banda de los Supremos Poderes* for the weekly concert he held at the Parque Dueñas (now Plaza Libertad) in central San Salvador. For his directing and organizational skills, national authorities renewed his contract for another two years in December of that same year, though they increased his duties by making him the general inspector of all the bands in the republic. At the end of this new contractual period, Müller left the position and went to Germany, where he became the director of the orchestra at the Könning restaurant in Berlin. He passed away in Potsdam (Germany) in February 1934.

After Müller's departure in the final months of 1926, the European musical directorship succession that had begun in the previous century continued with his

⁴³ He arrived in El Salvador in June 1925, contracted by the government to conduct the musical band of the city of Santa Ana. His introduction to the press of the time was made by Müller, who accompanied him on each of the scheduled visits. By the end of 1926, he temporarily

successor and compatriot, Richard Hüttenrauch⁴³, after a brief interim conducted by the assistant director Raúl Santamaría. It was under his direction that the first public calls emerged for the *Banda de los Supremos Poderes* Orchestra to fully become the *Orquesta Sinfónica de los Supremos Poderes*⁴⁴, a project consolidated by the Italian Cesae Perotti in 1939. "In accordance with higher dispositions," starting in January 1950, this collective musical ensemble became known as the *Orquesta Sinfónica del Ejército* and later as the *Orquesta Sinfónica de El Salvador*⁴⁵.

While those changes were taking place at his former place of employment, Aberle resided at number 36 on Tenth North Avenue and advertised in magazines and newspapers as a fencing instructor.

Aberle co-directed the Sociedad Orquestal

took charge of the direction of the Banda de los Supremos Poderes, after his compatriot Müller had resigned from his position. In the final days of June 1927, the Salvadoran government decided to officially appoint him to the position permanently. His position was renewed under the contract of May 14, 1930, and he went to Germany on vacation, returning in the final days of September of the same year to resume his duties as the director of the Banda de los Supremos Poderes and general inspector of all military bands of the Republic, for which he earned 700 colones per month. This salary was reduced by half, due to national economic reasons, starting on December 29, 1931.

⁴⁴ See *El salvadoreño*, San Salvador, Monday, August 15, 1927, front page.

⁴⁵ Further details on this matter were provided by Rafael Guillén in the supplement *Hablamos/El Diario de Hoy*, San Salvador, Sunday, June 20, 1982.

⁴⁶ See *El día*, San Salvador, Year V, No. 1628, Monday, January 19, 1925, page 4.

⁴⁷ See *El día*, San Salvador, Year VI, No. 1753, Friday, June 19, 1925, page 1.

Salvadoreña—founded by the Italian Antonio Gianoli—during the concert held at the Teatro Colón in the capital on the evening of Friday, February 1, 1924. At this event, the violins of the brothers Francisco and José López N. performed Aberle's work titled *Lucía*, a fantasy inspired by Verdi.

Shortly afterward, he was appointed as a judge in the Fine Arts section of the Exposición Nacional de Artes e Industrias—inaugurated in December 1924 at the Finca Modelo in San Salvador. According to the minutes of January 14, 1925, along with the polymath Francisco Gavidia, he awarded Pedro F. Quiteño for his national music perforation for pianola... except that one of the awarded pieces was Nocturno No. 3, written by Aberle himself!

Despite everything, Aberle's activity and energy neither wavered nor diminished, which even led him to encourage his son, Juan Enroque, to preside over the first boards of directors of the Club Deportivo "Hércules" (1923) and the Liga Nacional de Tenis, established on Monday, May 18, 1924.

For his contributions to music, Aberle was honored with a tribute concert at his own villa residence. Present at this event were Ángela García Peña, Rosa Rodríguez, Américo Oriani, Consuelo de Cabrera, and Mirte de Tinetti, who performed Aberle's pieces, including the caprice *Las españolitas*.

While this was happening with their father, Aberle's descendants were tirelessly pursuing their own paths to glory. Ricardo, another young son of the Neapolitan musician, born in San Salvador on May 16, 1903, graduated as a pilot on July 12, 1924, at the Ilopango Airfield. He completed a fifteen-minute flight in the presence of the President of the Republic, Dr. Quinónez Molina, Colonels José Tomás Calderón and Carlos Carmona, and other high-ranking dignitaries.

In separate performances but piloting the same Lincoln Standard aircraft, Juan Ramón Munés and Aberle executed five figure eights at an altitude of 200 meters. The goal was to demonstrate to onlookers that they had mastered the lessons of their instructor, the Italian captain and aerial acrobat Aquiles Travaglini, who arrived in the country as a replacement for the late Enrico Massi. The examination had to be interrupted due to weather conditions, leading to a breakfast at 8 a.m. and the decision to resume testing on the morning of Tuesday the 15th⁴⁸.

Accompanied by Munés, Aberle survived the accident involving the Neapolitan Enrico Massi (1897–1923) or Hermann Barón. Aberle piloted a Caudron aircraft and performed exhibition flights in the cities of Nueva San Salvador (Wednesday, July 16, 1924), Sonsonate (Saturday, June

20, and Sunday, June 21, 1925), Nahuizalco and Juayúa (Monday, June 22, 1925), San Miguel (August 1925), and Guatemala (1925). He also completed a flight between the capitals of Guatemala and San Salvador and, months later, set a Central American altitude record by ascending to 4,300 meters.

Due to his youth and the merit of his feats, Aberle's photo was featured in periodicals such as the magazines *Actualidades* (San Salvador, Year VIII, No. 85, October 1925) and *Jueves de Excelsior* (Mexico City, 1926).

On March 28, 1926, while flying over the Ilopango airfield, Sub-Lieutenant Ricardo Aberle lost control of the rudder of his Dalton aircraft, entered a spin, and crashed to the ground, trapped by his flying machine. Equipped with a Curtiss engine, built in San Francisco, California, by Larry W. Brown and assembled in San Salvador by the national mechanic Belisario Salazar, the aircraft belonged to the National Air Fleet. It had been donated on Monday, October 12, 1925, by Winall A. Dalton, father of the future writer and revolutionary activist Roque Dalton García (1935–1975).

For his part, Humberto Aberle—born on August 10 in Guatemala City and deceased in San Salvador on Tuesday, February 10, 1970—departed from San Salvador to Mexico City on March 18, 1921. He enrolled in the Mexican Aviation School in June 1921 and, from the Colima estate, piloted an aircraft that remained on public display for years in the courtyard of the

⁴⁸ Cfr. *La Prensa*, San Salvador, Year XIII, No. 3782, and *El Día*, San Salvador, Year V, No. 1473, both from Saturday, July 12, 1924, front page and page eight, respectively. A photo of Aberle and Travaglini appears on the front page of *La Prensa* on the following Monday, July 14.

Polytechnic School in San Salvador, after being gifted by the Mexican government of General Venustiano Carranza. Confident in his flying abilities, "El Chele" Aberle set a remarkable record in December 1922 with a flight from Tapachula to San Salvador aboard his plane *El Salvador*, earning him the position of Director of National Aviation in El Salvador and the Military Merit Cross. This award was presented by President Quiñónez Molina on Thursday, May 3, 1923, and another first-class version was granted by His Majesty Alfonso XIII in October 1926.

After completing official flights to Guatemala in October 1923, Humberto went to pursue professional studies at the "Cuatro Vientos" aviation school near the Spanish capital. In early September 1926, he undertook a three-hour flight from the Los Alcázares base to the Balearic Islands and back, using a *Dernier* and a *Savoia Fer* aircraft. After serving the Spanish government in pursuing rebellious Moorish groups in the desert, he returned to El Salvador, decorated by the Spanish monarch with another Cross of the Order of Military Merit and awarded the titles of International Aviator Pilot by the Aeronautical Federation and Military Pilot of the Spanish Army⁴⁹.

He returned to El Salvador by sea in October 1927. On Thursday, May 3, 1928, he married Isabel Meléndez Urrutia in the central nave of the now-defunct Church of El Rosario⁵⁰. They had four children: Noemí⁵¹, María Eugenia⁵², Humberto⁵³, and Juan Aberle Meléndez⁵⁴. In June of the

same year, the Spanish legation premises hosted the conferment of the Cross of the Order of Isabella the Catholic to this "navigator of the skies," who later pursued specialized studies in the United States and attained the military ranks of Major and Colonel⁵⁵.

At the time of his brother Ricardo's tragic death, Humberto was in Madrid, from where he sent his grieving elderly father a telegraphic message, reproduced by *Diario Latino* on the front page of its Monday, March 29, 1926 edition: "Madrid, 28. - Juan Aberle P., San Salvador.- Salvadoran aviation marks its glorious chapter with its first victim, who is your blood; let it be in honor of the homeland and may that be our consolation.- Humberto."

⁴⁹ Cfr. *La Prensa*, San Salvador, Friday, March 19, 1926.

⁵⁰ Cfr. *Patria*, San Salvador, Year I, No. 4, Thursday, May 3, 1928, p. 1.

⁵¹ Born in March 1929, she married in a religious ceremony in December 1950 in the U.S. capital with fellow Salvadoran Arturo Rivas Ciera, son of Colonel Arturo Rivas Mena and his wife Blanca Ciera de Rivas Mena.

⁵² In December 1956, she married in the Californian city of San Francisco in a ceremony attended by her mother. At 6:00 PM on Wednesday, March 19, 1958, this young man died in a tragic accident. His remains were buried at 4:00 PM the following day in the General Cemetery of the capital city. Cfr. *El Diario de Hoy*, San Salvador, Thursday, March 20, 1958, p. 8.

⁵⁴ On April 5, 1959, he married Eva Salazar López, with whom he had two children: Juan Alejandro—born on January 31 and baptized in the Catholic ceremony in 1960—and Juan Alfredo.

⁵⁵ More details about his life can be found in the articles *Humberto Aberle, Precursor of Salvadoran Aviation*, published by Daniel Sosa Díaz in the evening newspaper *El Mundo*, San Salvador, on Tuesday, March 20; Wednesday, March 21; Thursday, March 22; Friday, March 23; and Saturday, March 24, 1973, on pages 18, 38, 26, 47, and 10, respectively.