



Musical expressions

during the

liberal period

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When reference is made to the art of the period from 1871 to 1900, it is associated with movements such as Modernism, Realism, among others, which in those years were the most important expressions developed in the arts. However, when analyzing such movements in America (Darío, Gómez Carrillo, José Martí) we realize that they are variants of Romanticism with a multiplicity of forms that include in their characteristics, the Escape from Reality, Exoticism, Realism, and so on. Such relationship is undoubtedly some of the currents that make up such current.

From the studies on Liberalism and the Positive current that have been carried out in Guatemala, specifically two of them have served for their importance as critical models to analyze the elements that were handled in the interest of diverse sectors that integrated the Liberal government, therefore, according to the preceding exposition, we will point out the fundamentally political, party and even personal arguments that were applied by the governors in that time period, and their relation or lack of it with the fundamentals of philosophical-political Liberalism. Regarding the latter, we agree with

the authors of such works (*Amurrio*, and *La ideología Liberal*) in the sense that as politicians they were totally unaware of the philosophical ideas and the scientism of the Positivist movement, and we agree with Amurrio's statement (p. 64) that the intellectual generator of the 1871 constitution, Miguel García Granados -in his ideology- "was Liberal and nothing but Liberal".

The latter, with the intention of reviewing and determining the causes and elements that will characterize the musical and plastic expressions in said stage.

A PREVIOUS EXPOSITION

During the first half of the 19th century, the political upheavals of the republican era altered the life of the nation; a conservative society imposed, in addition to politics, the ideas and lifestyles that shaped the era, due to the growth of the population and the search for resources, which led to policies that propitiated the deeds of 1821-23, which would determine considerable changes as a cause of the nation's development.

A faction of the colonial society, faced with the changes that were taking place in Europe in the political, social and economic order, felt inspired by a new spirit for the future of the nation, so they promoted changes in their way of thinking by participating in this new ideological way of thinking.

Although it is true that within the changes they separated from the Spanish government, the aristocratic class nevertheless continued maintaining the supremacy in the new stage of the political life of the country, and of course in what concerns customs and social and cultural forms.

Music in this sense, as a result of the deeds of 1821-23 maintained for a number of circumstances its relationship with the church, which is why the religious forms extended beyond the liberal revolution, with some modifications that were mostly related to prohibitions, limitations or dispositions in the work system of individuals, forced by the political situation and not by the formal evolution of music, a subject that I will try to address later.

In such aspect, the fact of the expulsion plus the suppression of certain celebrations, specified this in governmental decrees, and as consequence this last one of the "*Atentado de la Bomba*" against Barrios, reduced the works of the musicians that depended in their majority on the activities of the temples of the city, fulfilling the religious services, particular festive celebrations and others, affecting the economy of the same ones. In the houses of the aristocrats, a class that did not disappear, the gatherings* continued, they attended the *Teatro de Carrera*, later called *Colón* in 1892, in memory of the discoverer of America, Cristóbal Colón, to the opera representations that mainly made Italian campaigns.

Therefore one of the features that characterize the music in the Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción, is the sharper differentiation of religious and profane music, in part not only to the organization of the social classes, but to a new ideology that was known from the socio-political movements in Europe, a consequence of the French Revolution, which can be followed through some important figures of the art. Such is the case of the composer Eulalio Samayoa, who both struggled in religious music, as well as in foreign forms to it, imbued with a certain classicism that reminds us of Haydn.*4

What happens then in the field of music at the beginning of the Republican period until the revolution of García Granados in terms of its role within the political, social and religious context?

During the beginning of the 19th century, the political convulsions were the result of the previous movements occurring in Europe and whose ideology was filtered in readings during the Colony. These readings that are the republican ideological source in Guatemala are cited by García Laguardia in his work "*La Reforma Liberal en Guatemala*", as follows:

"Father Martin Merida, an important man of the reform, elaborated an "inventory of documents, books and prints of the commissariat of the Inquisition of Guatemala", which with new documentation findings, allows us to reconstruct the republican ideological sources in our country. Rousseau, Abbé Pradt, Baron de Montesquieu, Voltaire and Jeremy Bentham, seem to us to be the most significant authors. The doctrines of the pact or social contract, popular sovereignty, division of powers, natural rights, constituent power and representative ideas. And it is curious to note the modernity with which these instruments are connected. Rousseau's Social Contract, which was first translated into Spanish in 1779 by Spanish exiles in London, was known in Guatemala only four years later, a minimum time if we take into account the difficulties of printing, circulation and transportation" (Laguardia- pp. 15-26).

Broadly speaking, it tells us about the concerns of the inhabitants of Guatemala at the time, and if we look for some elements of weight regarding the Spanish absolutist government that in 1700 proclaimed Felipe V, and that initiated the era of the Bourbons succeeded by Fernando VI and Carlos III, in relation to the expressions

of art we find that in the colonial policy to establish the Regime of Intendencia in the attempt to control in "effective form, the activity of the colonists and overseas wealth" (idem. Laguardia, p. 169) clashes with the church and this constituted the only power that could oppose the royal absolutism. Its property had increased considerably and that of dead hands prevented goods from being alienated and entering the circulation of the economic process. The attack was directed against the two institutions that, in the service of Rome, disputed royal absolutism: "The Inquisition and the Society of Jesus. The expulsion of the Jesuits must be linked to Spanish royalism: "it is an incident in the struggle for absolute power of the king against a religious order that sought to limit his authority" (Laguardia- Idem, p. 16).

In such poles, the power of the church is extensive, and the artistic manifestations are not exempt of it. Several possibilities arise as an explanation of the expressions of music, among them is to consider the education of the musicians, the religious spirit of the same, the possibilities of work in such an environment, which will result in the love towards religious forms, and even the fervor as faithful of most of the musicians, so it is logical such expressions within this genre. Forming with these characteristics the musicians of the colonial period, they are not imposed forms but dominant, since there was worldly music of palatial court in the same plane.

This, survives through the families dedicated to music as a profession, moving to the Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción. Here such expressions are maintained by the same circumstances, but in many cases the new thinking has been permeabilized in some authors, more those who have an open spirit to different things, so that their production participates in

both the religious and new expressions away from the sacred. An example of antecedent that we could find is in families of musicians such as the Sáenz family. **Benedicto Sáenz (father)**, who inherited the positions of chapel master and organist of the Cathedral, **Benedicto Sáenz (son)** who had one of his compositions printed in Paris (Sáenz Poggio. P.29) *, a great number of works with a religious character, such as the Domine Slavam fac Republicam, the "Regina Sine Labe Cocepta", the "Te deum Laudamus", to mention only part of his production.

The surname Paniagua represents another of the families dedicated to music whose hereditary line comes from the early years of the Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción and reaches our days (2007) with the names of the eminent cellist Juan Carlos Paniagua who was a disciple of the great Pablo Casals, a man who died some years ago, and a man who walked his virtuosity for the old and new continent. He is also recognized by the brilliant violinist José Santos Paniagua, brother of the previous one, great violin master, owner of an exquisite interpretative quality who performed for many years as a violinist and soloist in the National Symphony Orchestra, and other prestigious musical ensembles.

Within this panorama of tradition, expressions of Romantic character, innovations in the New Guatemala as seen in the work of "Classic" character of Eulalio Samayoa towards the first half of the 19th century, and the knowledge of ideas of the "Enlightenment" that arise from the beginning of the mentioned century in the Nueva Guatemala de la Asunción, the elements that contribute aesthetically towards 1871, would be necessary to analyze carefully.

Individuals staked in various activities of the post-1871 period are dragged by the changes

that the Liberal government imposes as a political line, as always happens when political changes occur, more radically for certain issues, finding themselves in such a way even for those not politically involved and extending to other manifestations outside of it. Thus, although it was ideologically "liberal" within "politics", Liberal philosophy and positivism, its bases were completely unknown by the common citizens, and even the leaders of the movement (Jorge García Granados, "Cuaderno de Memorias"). This means in a way that being liberal, politically and ideologically, does not contradict the Christian religious beliefs, and such political ideology is questioned only at the level in which it tries to impose itself on the individual, which are not questioned as such, but when they are seen as the only way to conceive and solve everything. In synthesis, the philosophical factors of positivism that are generally exposed are ignored by the members of the POLITICAL movement.

EXPRESSIONS OF ART DURING LIBERALISM

When we refer to the expressions of art in the period from 1871 to 1900, associations are made with movements such as modernism, realism, among others, but if we make a deeper analysis of such movements in America (Darío, Gómez Carrillo, José Martí) we realize that they are variations of romanticism with its new forms (modernism) which include in their characteristics the escape from reality, exoticism and realism. Such relationship is undoubtedly some of the features that we can find in the artistic manifestations in Guatemala.

Now, what actually determines a change in music during the liberal period, which can be considered as the acceptance or participation of the "liberal ideology" in politics or with "positivism" as a new way of thinking? It is a difficult situation to establish, according to the

political context when it is declared by those in charge of the new stage, such as the case of Lorenzo Montúfar, in charge of education, who considered that: "Blessedly the end of literature had arrived" (with the new regime), since in his opinion the arts were something useless. Then the other contradiction is considered, regarding the fact that General García Granados was a fan of the arts, given that poets, writers and intellectuals of the time used to meet in his house. So if any reference can be made to a change - would it be in relation to new artistic forms, structure or style?

The answer to this must be sought on some deductions on which I would dare to comment on the basis of what is known today about the manifestations that occurred in that period, since as a phenomenon and dynamics of such art, even in the worst conditions such expressions occur, either in the form of denunciation or by being in agreement with the established system.

In the known literary works on music in Guatemala where allusion is made to the musical life of these years (Sáenz Poggio, Rafael Vásquez), generally the names of the musical works are given without entering into any reference to style, form or school. Therefore, it is necessary to make use of diverse information in other fields, but which reflect the importance within the system, and the social and daily life of the city, as a basis to determine what kind of music was practiced by the social groups in Guatemala City in different situations, and what role or reaction the composers assume when faced with the cultural environment of the moment, which is reflected as a change in the musical history of the country.

I have resorted in this case to two quotations as an argument to situate the existing state at that time regarding the taste and demand

for a certain type of music, on one hand, and on the other the interest and enthusiasm of people like Benedicto Sáenz (son), who wrote a Valse entitled "*Todo lo muda el tiempo*", as well as the fact that in 1839 a symphony by Beethoven was played according to an advertisement of the time, which referring to the musical performance textually says: "The scene will open with a famous symphony by Mr. L. Van Beethoven. L. Van Beethoven, never heard in this city, since it is one of the best of several that have come to the music director S. Benedicto Saenz...".

Such events occurred during the first fifty years of the 19th century, that is to say as eminently romantic forms, that happen "around thirty years before the liberal revolution..." so that even though the romantic works existed and were already known to the public and composers, however, the romantic they were not able to enthuse the authors of the country, nor a public that was not only new in settling in Guatemala City, but also other problems and needs of daily life were more in the spotlight. Then we must remember that the musicians, both in their formation and in their dependence, were linked to the Church, where the role of the chapel masters was very important, the great religious celebrations, in which the musical art fulfilled its main role. And it should not be discarded that the association of economic, political and social phenomena were determinant in the conformation of a stratified social culture, according to interests more of economic and political power than of cultural and artistic order, this last one was only allowed by the wealthy classes, in which the artists were definitely not included.

According to such references, the class that pretended to be the most distinguished in the country, had contact with foreigners of the same stratum. This resulted in the cultivation of a

"culture" of European type, at the same time that the middle and lower social classes maintained different cultural forms, given the socio-economic conditions.

Government policies during the mid-nineteenth century stimulated the immigration of Europeans to the country, in an attempt to improve the economic aspects of the nation. Regina Wagner Henn (*Historia General de Guatemala*, p.443) refers that between 1821 and 1890, an estimated "23 million Europeans emigrated overseas, and the main nations involved in this movement were Ireland, Germany, Italy and Great Britain" (Idem, p. 443).

There existed in Germany for example "German agencies for the colonization of Texas, Central America, Brazil and other South American countries". There was a first German immigration to Guatemala from 1843 to 1870, this due to the climate produced mortality, causing many to emigrate to other countries or to the interior of the republic, in such a way that the government to enable them decided that the colonists who "could not or did not want to remain in Santo Tomás de Castilla, would like to settle in the country and move to the capital" could do so, which was happily received among them. The fact that the German immigrants were united by social aspects and identification in the country, propitiated the appearance of "The Vereine", or exclusive clubs for the German-speaking immigrants.

From the meetings and the formation of associations, later the German clubs were born later, "the meetings were basically of social, cultural and sporting character. Their purpose was to cultivate the German language, culture, and traditions, as well as to live together in *Gemütlichkeit*: comfort or amenity" (Regina Wagner, Idem).

This attitude was also that of other immigrants from different countries (Austrian, French, Spanish, Basque and Oriental), maintaining a form of relations with Guatemalan society through trade and other activities. Of course, art had an important place in the meetings of all these, such manifestations transcended to the Guatemalan society, especially to the wealthy classes, who in their eagerness to possess the best became foreigners, adopting the taste for the European. In this relationship within the music, the Viennese waltz was cultivated, spreading in the environment in such a way that it had great acceptance. The same happens with the knowledge of other erudite forms of European music, and popular forms of this as mazurkas, minuets, habaneras, among others.

It cannot be ignored then that the "romantic" influences were already evident and practiced towards the second decade of 1800, and if we consider that the existence within the creation of the important Guatemalan composers of the "valse" - "*Todo lo muda el tiempo*" of Benedicto Sáenz, without being surprised the musical means when it is referred by Poggio in his history, who given to write down every new event so that it was not lost, would have dedicated a special indication to him as "to being the first waltz produced in the New Guatemala" or to mention it as an unknown form in the means" suggests to us that already existed antecedents of other compositions of this genre.

Derived from the rhythms of 3/4, 4/4, of other popular melodies, and reinforced by the Waltz brought by the Europeans (3/4), as well as the cultivation made by musicians like Benedicto Sáenz son who is concerned about innovating and making known the most recent forms of music in Europe and who brought to the country the romanticism, this was already

known in some way in Guatemala since long before the mid-nineteenth century, although we insist, it did not draw attention among all the authors of the time, by the aforementioned musical training, and the working relationships within the church.

Reaffirming the idea that there were no innovations or new forms within Liberalism due to other interests unrelated to art, musical production in our case remained within the known parameters, in other words, the little that was known of romanticism in the early 19th century lasted until after the liberal revolution. Seymour Menton *4, affirms that - "one of the phenomena of Spanish-American literature is the persistence of romanticism until the end of the 19th century and even, in some cases, until the second half of the 20th century".

This is valid for the musical art, which also maintained and extended its dominance well into the 19th century. Given the Guatemalan taste for theater and opera, operatic productions of romantic style were the ones they knew in Guatemala through the traveling companies that came to the country and performed in the Carrera Theater, (later called Colón Theater and then National Theater).

During the time of José María Reyna Barrios, in the eagerness and taste for the French, a taste that is reflected in the material and cultural work that is done in this period, artists are sent to study in Europe, and also brings important foreign figures who leave their mark on the artistic history of Guatemala. Among the young Guatemalans who returned from Europe with new ideas were Herculano Alvarado and Víctor M. Figueroa, fortifying the cultivated romanticism with exotic elements, one of the romantic characteristics. It would be enough to mention works by these authors such as the "*Danza sobre motivos Australianos*".

During the aforementioned period, literary figures such as José Martí and Rubén Darío also visited the country. They are known in the capital's society as the great romantics, and their relationship with romanticism in the form of "modernism" is eloquent; Darío affirms his concept in his "Canción de los Pinos":

**Románticas somos,
quién que es, no es romántico! Aquel
que no sepa de amor ni dolor, que se
ahorque de un pino será lo mejor**

Which roughly translates to:

**Romantic we are,
who is, is not romantic! He who knows
neither love nor sorrow, let him hang
himself from a pine tree, it will be the
best thing to do.**

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¹ “History *4 – Seymour Menton–” Historia crítica de la novela Guatemalteca (edit. Univeristaria – Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala– 1985)

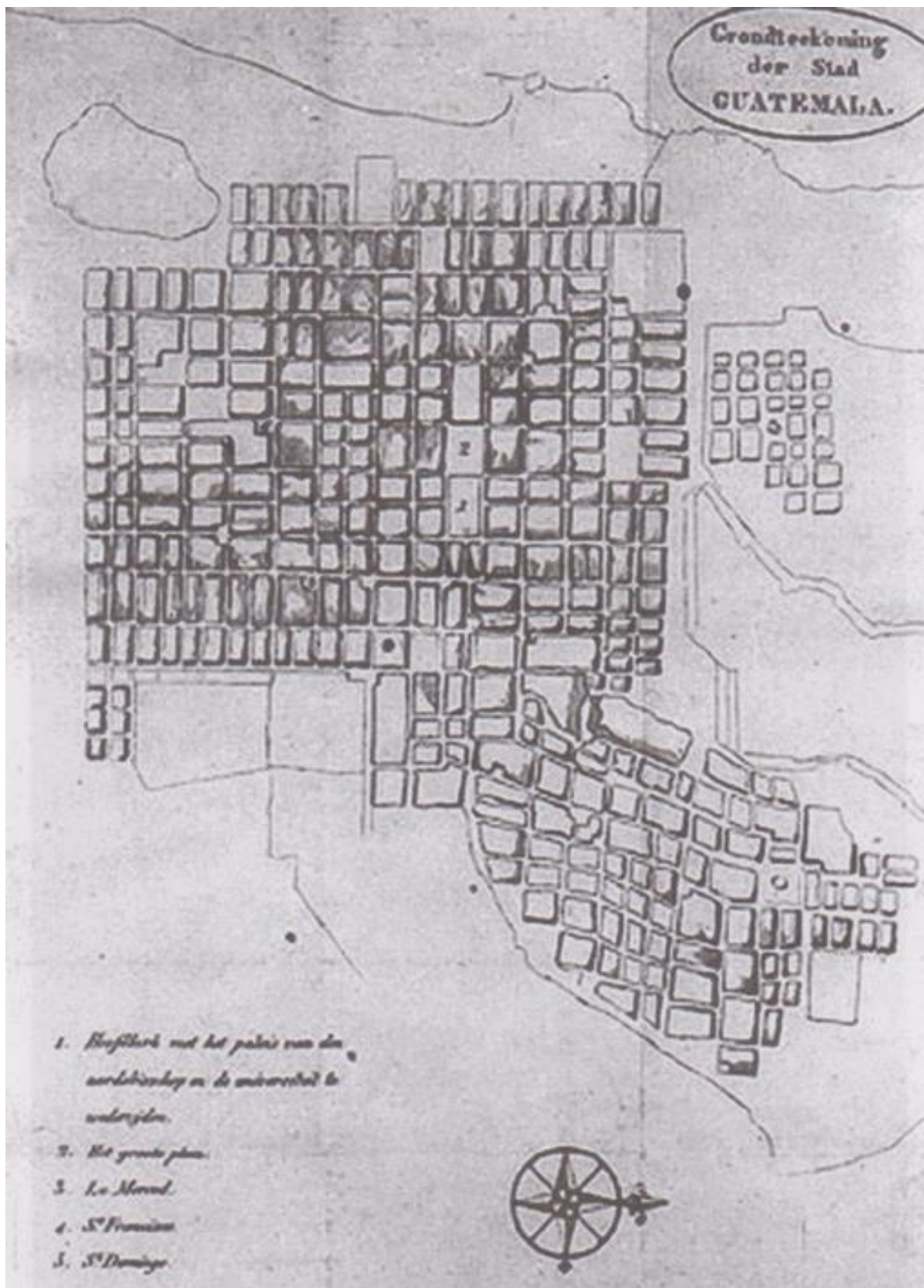




1. Corner of the house of General Miguel García Granados (12 calle and 3ª Av. de la zona 1), a place where writers, politicians and artists used to gather (ink sketch by Enrique Anleu-Díaz).



2. Monument to General Miguel García Granados (De la Reforma Avenue).



3. Map of Guatemala City, 1830- What constitutes practically until the end of the 19th century, "Political Cultural Center".



4. José Martí who was in Guatemala in 1977.



5. Rubén Darío, who was in Guatemala in 1890.

SERIE DE CANCIONES ESCOLARES

1.^o Germán Alcántara.

Bella Guatemala

Go la bella Guatemala el que pinto, en la tierra
cada centio pinto es un millo para i. so deo. nidos la paz, la libertad de floridas tierras
maravilla son por sus flores y sus frutos me. cen co la bella Guate. mala, mi patria que
- ri. da tierra de la amor. Duo al. tos mon. in.
nos. los ma. gi. cos val. ca. nos
Duo lin. das pri. de. no en can. to

6. Fragment of the Mazurka, *Mi Bella Guatemala*, a musical form cultivated since the middle of the 19th century in Guatemala City.