

My music has long been influenced by the dance music from my home country (the Dominican Republic) and also by my classical training as a flautist. For the last two years, however, I have been working more explicitly on integrating Latin-American dance rhythms (e.g. *merengue*, *salsa*) into a contemporary Western European idiom. One of the main characteristics of Latin-American rhythms I am exploring is the idea of interlocking rhythms, which I use to create different musical textures and shape the work. More recently, my research has turned to Bartók and Stravinsky and how they manipulate their folk material. Their use of the octatonic scale to harmonise the melody and the symmetrical pitch construction have further my understanding of how to create coherence and development within a work.

I have a strong interest in developing classical music practice in the community, originally arising from my involvement in the National Youth Orchestra of the Dominican Republic – an organisation of which I am still a part, despite no longer playing with them. This is an interest I have pursued since coming to Manchester in September 2009 to undertake a Masters in Composition at the University of Manchester under the supervision of Dr. Camden Reeves. From November 2009 to April 2010, during my Masters year, I was the assistant composer for the *Songbook of the Earth* project with Manchester Camerata. I am currently the music trainee leader with Opera North for their residency at Bruntcliffe High School in Leeds as well as reading towards a PhD in composition at the University of Manchester. In the Dominican Republic, I have organised a creativity workshop to introduce musical composition to children and have been a guest speaker at composition classes

El corre corre (November 2010) for piano and percussion was commissioned and performed by Psappa. Due to the rhythmic capabilities of this combination (i.e. the piano's percussive nature and the different attacks and colours possible in both instruments), I decided to employ two distinct rhythmic ideas. The first one is based on the percussive sound of the tom-tom while the sec-

ond is based on the rhythmic and melodic characteristic of the upper register of the piano. These are differentiated by register, metre, dynamic and instrumentation. The first idea, in binary metre, mixes untuned percussion (tom-toms and temple blocks) with cluster chords at the lowest register of the piano. The percussionist switches to the marimba for the second idea, which is in ternary metre. Both of these ideas have pitch material based on the tritone, although explored in different ways.

My previous work, *Un inverosimil archipiélago* (August 2010) for voice, flute and cello, had a very clear but predictable structure. In *El corre corre*, in order to provide a little more contrast, I decided to interrupt the development of the first two ideas with a third idea, which is faster, pentatonic and features the piano and the marimba in unison. Nevertheless, the work has a general ascending shape that is articulated by the general pauses. These pauses indicate a 1:3:3:1 relationship between the sections of the piece. However, the returns of the themes are determined by a 2:1 ratio, which creates a structural counterpoint.

During the symposium with Jennifer Walshe, I was asked why I felt the need to compose music using elements from my home country and where

I saw my music going. My response to the first question was that I am proud to be Dominican and through my music I can pay homage to my country and at the same time have a distinctive voice as a composer. The second question proved more difficult to answer because I am still exploring the possibilities of my music. Nevertheless, Walshe suggested that I push my music as far as I can in order to know what I want to write. The symposium raised important questions that I will have to answer throughout the course of my PhD and my continuing career, but at the same time reinforced my belief that I am on the path that I want my music to take.

Jose Puello is undertaking a PhD at the University of Manchester working with Camden Reeves following studies at Manchester and the University of Birmingham. He says: "I am a Dominican composer interested in exploring elements of Latin-American music in a contemporary context. I draw my rhythmic material from Latin-American dances, whilst my harmonic language is based on Western European contemporary music. I think this fusion is at the centre of my research and my language as a composer." His work has been performed by the Manchester Camerata, by Robert Coleridge as part of the London New Wind Festival with upcoming performances by Quatuor Daniel and Psappha. He has also been active as a conductor and led composition workshops in Manchester and the Dominican Republic.