

**“COMPOSITORES LATINO-AMERICANOS”
(LATIN AMERICAN COMPOSERS): A GENUINE
ALTERNATIVE TO SUBVERT TRADITIONALISM IN THE
CLASSICAL MUSIC FIELD¹**

**“COMPOSITORES LATINOAMERICANOS”: UMA
ALTERNATIVA GENUÍNA PARA SUBVERTER O
TRADICIONALISMO NO CAMPO DA MÚSICA CLÁSSICA**

Eliana Monteiro da Silva
Escola de Comunicações e Artes da Universidade de São Paulo
ms.eliana@usp.br

Amilcar Zani
Escola de Comunicações e Artes da Universidade de São Paulo
azani@terra.com.br

Abstract

This paper presents the genuine initiative of pianist Beatriz Balzi (1936-2001) to improve the quality of the 20th century piano repertoire through alternative choices. From 1984 to 2000 the Argentinian-Brazilian interpreter produced and performed a CD collection of seven volumes, enclosing 54 contemporary piano pieces to exemplify 13 countries of Latin America. Aware of the public's inexperience about this music, hardly divulged by the ordinary Western media at that time, Balzi adopted a pedagogical posture while organizing the compositions on her CDs, as

¹ Comunicação apresentada no dia 16 de outubro de 2014, no Departamento de Música da Faculdade de Filosofia, Ciências e Letras de Ribeirão Preto da Universidade de São Paulo, dentro da programação do VI Encontro de Musicologia. Disponível em <https://youtu.be/XvyNfvOX0Co?list=UU7kMPRd6yA9PwlInj16voHXA> (acesso: 10/11/2015).

we show in this article.

Keywords: Latin American composers, Beatriz Balzi, Latin American classical music, Contemporary music, Piano.

Resumo

Este trabalho apresenta a genuína iniciativa da pianista Beatriz Balzi (1936-2001) para enriquecer o repertório pianístico do século XX com escolhas alternativas. Entre 1984 e 2000, a intérprete argentino-brasileira produziu uma série de sete CDs, exemplificando 13 países da América Latina através de 54 gravações por ela realizadas. Ciente do desconhecimento do público acerca desta música, então pouco divulgada pela mídia ocidental, Balzi adota uma postura pedagógica na organização de tais composições em seus CDs, como mostramos neste artigo.

Palavras-chave: Compositores Latino-americanos; Beatriz Balzi; Música erudita latino-americana; Música contemporânea; Piano.

Introduction

In 1999, Argentinian-Brazilian pianist Beatriz Balzi created a research project to Fundação Vitae (Vitae Foundation). She asked for financial support to record the seventh volume of her CD collection, called by her “Compositores Latino-americanos” (Latin American Composers). Balzi’s interest in making public such an unequal repertoire - concert music created in Latin America during the 20th century - was motivated by her personal involvement as an immigrant to Brazil. Since she left Argentina in 1960, the pianist observed how inexperienced Latin American artists were about the music and the culture of their neighbors,

and tried to fill up this gap by showing Brazilian music in her native country and Argentinian works in the Brazilian stages.

Step by step Balzi amplified the spectrum of her practice, studying and spreading other Latin American composers' piano pieces. She started being invited to festivals and meetings, especially to those whose focus were the Latin American and the Contemporary music. The "Compositores Latino-americanos" collection was initiated in 1984, when the independent recorder Tacape produced her first LP in vinyl. Until 2000 she managed to record 54 works from 13 countries of this continent, such as Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Venezuela and Uruguay².



Figure 1: the first LP of Balzi's "Compositores Latino-americanos" collection

Although her colleagues and students were enthusiastic about "Compositores Latino-americanos" first LPs, Beatriz Balzi abandoned the task after the third volume of the series, in 1986. The Uruguayan compos-

² The first Balzi's LP cover was designed by Cid Forghieri and can be viewed at www.presentesdopassado.mercadoshops.com.br.

er and sound engineer Conrado Silva, along with José Maria Neves and other partners, had to close Tacape's door, due to economic difficulties. Just in 1995, when she stopped teaching piano and contemporary music at the Julio de Mesquita Filho University (UNESP), Balzi restarted her project. She would record the fourth volume of her series, now in digital medium (MONTEIRO DA SILVA, 2014, *passim*).

Beatriz Balzi and the 20th century panorama of the western classical music

Beatriz Balzi's curiosity about the 20th century classical music was due to its completely new language³. Her taste for novelties and challenges made her enhance the task of deciphering this kind of score, including the more recent repertoire in the programs of her concerts. She felt quite the same about the Latin American piano music. She decided to gather these two interests in her "Compositores Latino-americanos" series, although she knew that the 20th century musical panorama was not used to postures like hers.

As comments her friend and acknowledged composer Graciela Paraskevaïdis (2002, p. 46):

Balzi's clear option for the diffusion of Latin American contemporary music kept her distant of the easy triumphs obtained through the performance of classic-romantic European repertoire. Her strict and altruist character could also be seen in her pedagogical work and in her human commitment.

³ After the two world wars, Western composers were encouraged by their governments to think a new musical language to replace the traditional Classic-Romantic German music, which reminded them of the Nazi era. Such an enterprise, favored by festivals and courses like Darmstadt Summer Courses on Contemporary Music, stimulated authors such as Luigi Nono, Pierre Boulez, Karlheinz Stockhausen and John Cage to create new techniques to express their musical ideas (MONTEIRO DA SILVA; ZANI, 2013, p. 119).

Only for producing the seventh CD of her “C. L. A.” series, in 1999, Beatriz Balzi sought for financial aid at a supporting agency. In her Projeto Vitae (Vitae Project) she explains: “I want to contribute, through my pianistic skill, to increase the acknowledgement about Latin American culture” (BALZI, 1999, p. 1). She probably believed that her successful career, both as a pianist and as an academic teacher, would be enough to convince them about the seriousness and the importance of her enterprise. But the public’s resistance - both to Latin American music and to the contemporary composition - must have spoken loudly, causing the Vitae rejection to the pianist’s project.

The public resistance to the contemporary music

Despite the bloom of some festivals and courses focusing the avant-garde music, such as Brazilian *Festival Música Nova*, Uruguayan *Cursos Latinoamericanos de Música Contemporânea*, German Darmstadt Summer Courses on Contemporary Music, among others, traditionalism still prevailed in the classical music’s field in the end of the 20th century. According to Espiridião (2001, p. 413), Brazilian conservatories “still keep disciplines, methods and subjects aligned with the traditional pedagogy, aiming to develop an adequate technique to perform the 18th and 19th century repertoire”. The same reality can be observed in many countries of the continent and abroad.

Conscious of this fact, Balzi not only promoted the Latin American piano music throughout the world, but also chose pieces that could exemplify many new styles, techniques and musical forms created in the second half of the 20th century. She complemented the recordings with written information about the compositions and their authors, making them publicly available through specially created booklets.

Such an enterprise, which gathers performance, historical re-

search and analytical information about piano works from 13 Latin American countries, is still rare in the 21st century. For this reason the pianist organized so carefully the recorded piano pieces in the seven volumes of her CD collection, as we shall see in the next items of this paper. All of the CDs present tonal and nationalist pieces, created in the first half of the 20th century, among atonal and experimental ones, composed from 1950 on.

Presenting 54 Latin American piano pieces in the “C. L. A.” collection

A pedagogical concern can be observed in the way Beatriz Balzi chose and organized her 54 recordings, to present them in the seven CDs of her C. L. A. series⁴. She started the first CDs with tonal compositions with nationalist character, followed by atonal and experimental pieces⁵. The first double album of CDs, named “Compositores Latino-americanos 1, 2, 3”, brings the piano works previously recorded by the interpreter, in the three vinyl LPs produced by Tacape. Table 1 shows all the recordings presented in this double album of CDs.

“Compositores Latino-americanos 1, 2, 3”

The first double album “Compositores Latino-americanos 1, 2, 3” was, in fact, produced after the fourth CD of Balzi’s series. This sample brings together recordings of the three LPs made available to the public

⁴ German pianist and composer Clara Schumann have adopted a similar posture in the 19th century, to present some Robert Schumann and Frederic Chopin’s music for the first time. At that time, people was used to Rossini’s operas and other kinds of entertaining music. (See, for instance, MONTEIRO DA SILVA, 2011, p. 53).

⁵ This and the following tables were based on the more frequent procedures observed in Balzi’s repertoire, and must not be considered too strictly, since even the most tonal and nationalist piece can present elements of the Avant-guard music and vice-versa.

between 1984 and 1986, digitally remastered in 1997. The insertion of Ernesto Lecuona's *Tres Danzas Afro-Cubanas* in a classical music CD shows the including character Balzi wanted to attribute to her work, since his music always surpassed the classical-popular frontiers.

Balzi's desire of subverting traditionalism in the classical music's field can also be noted when she introduced Eunice Katunda's piano works, among the recordings of "Compositores Latino-americanos 1, 2, 3"⁶. Women composers' works were even less performed in the Eighties than were Latin American's pieces, at least in Brazil. In the next volumes of her collection, she recorded Graciela Paraskevaidis, Cacilda Borges Barbosa and Marisa Resende too.

	CD 1	CD 2
Tonal and Nationalist pieces	1. Manuel Ponce <i>Cuatro Danzas Mexicanas</i> ; 2. Juan Plaza <i>Sonatina Venezolana</i> ; 3. Eduardo Fabini <i>Triste no 2</i> ; 4. Ernesto Lecuona <i>Tres Danzas Afro-Cubanas</i> . 5. Alberto Ginastera <i>Tres Piezas para piano Op. 6</i> ; 6. Eunice Katunda <i>Dois Estudos Folclóricos</i>	1. Carlos Guastavino <i>Sonata para Piano Guillermo</i> 2. Uribe Holguin <i>Trozos en el sentimiento popular - Op. 22</i> 3. Eduardo Caba <i>Leyenda Queshua</i> ; 4. Carlos Sanchez Málaga <i>Yanahua</i>
Atonal and Experimental pieces	7. Sérgio Vasconcellos <i>Correa Contrastes</i> ; 8. Mario Lavista <i>Simurg</i>	5. Gilberto Mendes <i>Los Tres Padres</i> ; 6. Coriún Aharonián <i>¿Y ahora?</i> ; 7. Manuel Enriquez <i>Hoy de Ayer</i> 8. Luis Mucillo <i>...selva oscura...</i>

Table 1: Nationalist and Experimental pieces presented in CD 1 and 2 of "C. L. A. 1, 2, 3"

⁶ Balzi knew Eunice Katunda in 1979. In spite of Katunda had been an active member of Musica Viva Group and acclaimed both as a composer and as a pianist, in that occasion she was quite depressed and distant of the Brazilian musical scene due to political and aesthetical quarrels (Verbal information given by Katunda's biographer Carlos Kater, in 2014). Balzi premiered many of her works since their first meeting, helping to promote the talented friend.

“Compositores Latino-americanos 4”

The fourth CD of the “C. L. A.” series was recorded in Germany, in 1995. Almost ten years had passed since the artist produced her last LP. She seems to be less worried about the reception of this volume than she was in the 1980 decade, since tonal and nationalist compositions are fewer than the atonal and experimental ones.

Tonal and Nationalist pieces	1. Edino Krieger <i>Preludio (Cantilena) e Fuga (Marcha Rancho)</i> ; 2. Roque Cordero <i>Sonatina Rítmica</i> ; 3. Alberto Ginastera <i>Suite de Danzas Criollas</i>
Atonal and Experimental pieces	1. Eduardo Escalante <i>Prelúdios n. 3 e 4</i> ; 2. Luis Campodónico <i>Cinco líneas para mi hermana Clara</i> ; 3. Calimério Soares <i>Dois momentos nordestinos - Lamento e Dança</i> ; 4. Graciela Paraskevaidis <i>un lado, otro lado</i> ; 5. Cergio Prudencio <i>Umbrales</i> . 6. Osvaldo Lacerda <i>Estudo n. 3</i>

Table 2: the musical organization of “C. L. A. 4”

Balzi introduced works in which the piano strings had to be played directly by the interpreter. Few musicians faced works like this in Brazil at that time. Brazilian’s Calimério Soares’ *Dois Momentos Nordestinos* presented this practice in the first piece of the cycle, *Lamento*. In *Dança*, second piece of the same work, the instrument box should be tapped to obtain a special percussion sound, as the next figure shows.



Figure 2: Calimério Soares’ *Dois Momentos Nordestinos (Lamento)*, m. 1.
The arrows point out where and how the strings must be played by the pianist



Figure 3: Calimério Soares' *Dois Momentos Nordestinos (Dança)*, mm 4 to 6. Notes in the low staff point out a rhythm to be tapped on the piano box

Other experimental work recorded on “C. L. A. 4” is Argentinian-Uruguayan Graciela Paraskevaïdis’ *un lado, otro lado*. This music score presents an open form, where the interpreter may choose which of the previous sections she/he wants to repeat, and how many times.

The composer’s note to the interpreter says: “* One can either finish here or, instead, to restart (A). In this case one can finish at ** (B) or, again, here (*). The possible forms are: AB or ABA or ABAB or, finally, ABABA”. Balzi premiered Paraskevaïdis’s *un lado, otro lado* in Brazil on the 20th November of 1984, the year of its creation.

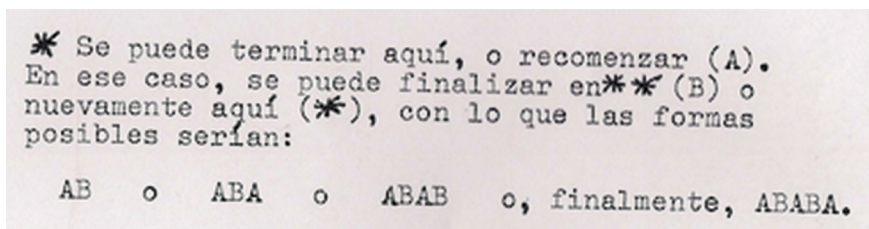


Figure 4: Graciela Paraskevaïdis’ notes for the interpreter in *un lado, otro lado*

“Compositores Latino-americanos 5”

The “C. L. A. 5” was dedicated to Mercosul, a South American entity created in 1998 to endure commercial trading among South American countries. All the piano pieces that figure in this volume were composed in the South America. Once again Balzi presented tonal and

nationalist compositions first, followed by the atonal and experimental ones. The pieces came from Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay.

Tonal and Nationalist pieces	1. Carlos Guastavino <i>Tierra Linda / Bailecito</i> ; 2. Camargo Guarnieri <i>Suite Mirim</i> 3. Juan Carlos Moreno González <i>Tres Aires Paraguayos</i> 4. Jaurès Lamarque-Pons <i>Milonga</i>
Atonal and Experimental pieces	5. Rodolfo Coelho de Souza <i>Barcarola</i> ; 6. Aylton Escobar <i>Mini Suite das Três Máquinas</i> ; 7. Eduardo Bértola <i>Las Doradas Manzanas del Sol</i> ; 8. Héctor Tosar <i>Tres Piezas para Piano</i> ; 9. Edson Zampronha <i>Modelagem II</i>

Table 3: Nationalist and Experimental pieces of the “C. L. A. 5”

In this volume Balzi introduced, once more, a classical-popular work. This is the case of *Tres Aires Paraguayos*, composed by Juan Carlos Moreno González. She was also the first interpreter to record Edson Zampronha’s piano works, when he was a young and unknown composer. Nowadays Zampronha’s music is internationally acknowledged.

“Compositores Latino-americanos 6”

The sixth volume of Balzi’s series is the more extant one, with 29 recordings lasting 72 minutes. It presents eight Latin American countries, more than any other CD of the collection. Avid for novelties, this time Balzi included a *lieder* cycle among the piano solo recordings. This is Nicolás Pérez González’ *Tres juguetes rotos*. She accompanied the Paraguayan singer Eládio Pérez González, his close friend and composer’s brother. The cycle was presented in the middle of the CD, after five piano solo recordings and before other four.

1. Ricardo Castillo <i>Oito Prelúdios</i> ; 2. Angel E. Lasala <i>Impresiones de mi Tierra</i> ; 3. Ernst Mahle <i>Sonata 1971</i> ; 4. Alfredo Rugeles <i>Tanguitis</i> ; 5. Marcos Cámara <i>E pur si muove</i>	1. Nicolás Pérez González <i>Tres Juguetes Rotos</i>	1. Armando Rodriguez <i>Variaciones sobre un tema de Leo Brouwer</i> ; 2. Gerardo Gandini <i>Eusebius</i> ; 3. Eduardo Cáceres <i>Seco, Fantasmal y Vertiginoso</i> 4. Juan José Iturrberry (... <i>sin querer</i>)
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Table 4: *Lieder* cycle among the solo piano pieces, in “C. L. A. 6”

In gathering *Tres juguetes rotos* with the instrumental works of the “C. L. A. 5” CD, Balzi challenged musical traditionalism for its texts, written by Jorge Enrique Adoum. The poems *El barco de papel* (*The paper boat*), *La pelota de trapo* (*The rag ball*) and *La cometa* (*The kite*), cried for the victims of dictatorships that ruled many Latin American countries from 1960 and 1980. Texts like this were more commonly viewed in the popular music’s field.

Table 5 brings the poem of the *Tres Juguetes Rotos* first song, *El Barco de Papel*. Eládio Pérez González (*apud* BALZI, 1998, p. 12 and 20) responds for the translation, shown in Beatriz Balzi’s “C. L. A. 6” CD booklet.

<i>El Barco de Papel</i>	<i>The Paper Boat</i>
Nuestro astillero, papeles que no sirven; Cartas que esconde el padre, libros De poesía o cuentas de tender Y mi cuaderno donde desaprendo geometría... Barcos pájaros, mojados y alabiertos Telegram que el río llevó al mar; cuando sea grande"... "algún día"... Pero me fui quedando, aprendiendo Geografía para abajo, o sea historia, Es decir recogiendo muertos, No sé. Tal vez después, cuando termine, O cuando se termine el traje negro	My father's secret letters, Poetry, bills, school notebooks; Open-winged-boat-birds in our shipyard... Telegrams the river carried to the sea; "when I grow up"... "Maybe one day"... But I didn't go forward and learnt How to gather our deal... Perhaps I still shall go... later... When we are no longer in mourn...

Table 5: Jorge Enrique Adoum’s poem, used by Pérez González in his song

“Compositores Latino-americanos 7”

The seventh and last CD produced by Balzi was recorded in Germany, in 2000. Facing a negative answer from Fundação Vitae, the pianist decided to travel with her sister Velia, celebrating her 64 birthday.

Listening to this volume, the older and the newer compositions of the “C. L. A.” collection can be known. They are Julian Aguirre’s *Cinco Tristes*, composed in 1898, and Graciela Paraskevaïdis’ ... *a hombros del ruseñor*, created in 1997 ⁷.

This CD brings three women composers’ works, more than all the other volumes. They are Marisa Resende’s *Ressonâncias*, Cacilda Borges Barbosa’s *Estudo Brasileiro n° 1* and Graciela Paraskevaidis ... *a hombros del ruseñor*.

Table 6 shows the “C. L. A. 7” compositions, categorized according to their author’s genders.

Men’s compositions	Women’s compositions
1. José Pablo Moncayo <i>Muros Verdes</i> ; 2. Silvestre Revueltas <i>Allegro</i> ; 3. Julián Aguirre <i>Cinco Tristes and Gato</i> ; 4. Nilson Lombardi <i>Ponteio n° 1 and 6</i> ; 5. Amaral Vieira <i>Cenas Rupestres</i> ; 6. Acário Cotapos <i>Sonata Fantasia</i> ; 7. Edmundo Villani-Côrtes <i>Timbre n° 1 and 2</i>	1. Marisa Resende <i>Ressonâncias</i> ; 2. Cacilda Borges Barbosa <i>Estudo Brasileiro n° 1</i> ; 3. Graciela Paraskevaïdis ... <i>a hombros del ruseñor</i>

Table 6: “C. L. A. 7” compositions categorized according to their authors’ genders

⁷ Although Beatriz Balzi intended to divulge different authors, techniques and countries, she repeated three Argentinian composers in her collection: Carlos Guastavino, Alberto Ginastera and Graciela Paraskevaïdis (Argentinian and Uruguayan).

The volumes 8 and 9 of “C. L. A.” series

Balzi's death of cancer occurred in 2001. The pianist was preparing her eighth CD, and had plans to the ninth of the collection. Her personal notes testify the wish of keeping the same challenging posture, spreading the new and different despite the market pressures for globalization.

The “C. L. A. 8” would follow the CD 7 format. Among the composers three were females, and the pianist would illustrate just five countries. Balzi's list of pieces and authors can be viewed on the next figure (BALZI, undated [a]).

Composer (Country)	Composition	Form	Duration
Gilardo Gilardi (Argentina)	"La Firmeza"	4 ^a	3'
Theodoro Valcarcel (Peru)	"Surai Surita"	3 piezas	9'
Luis Cluzeau Mortet (Uruguay)	"Serie Nuestra Tierra"	Guilde	36
	1- Escucha		30
	2- Tamboriles		23
Celso Garrido Lecca (Peru)	"Preludio y Toccata"	él	5'
Jacqueline Nova (Colombia)	"Transiciones" (4 n ^{os})	Guilde	20
			16'
Damian Rodriguez (Argentina)	"Pocanota sin silencio"	él	4'
Maria Helena R. Fernandes (Brazil)	"Ciclo N° 2"	4 n ^{os} ella	7'
Renee Pietrafesa (Uruguay)	"Pieza N° 5"	ella	5'
	"Traslocaciones"	ella	5'
Estercio Marquez Cunha (Brazil)	"Música p' piano n° 4"	él	5'
			66

Figure 5: Balzi's list of compositions and authors to “C. L. A. 8”

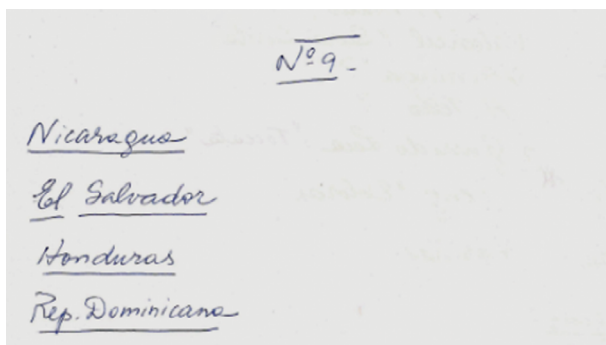


Figure 6: the selected compositions to "C. L. A. 8"

Balzi chose Gilardo Gilardi's *La Firmeza*; Theodoro Valcárcel's *Surzi Surita*; Luís Cluzeau Mortet's *Serie Nuestra Tierra*; Celso Garrido Lecca's *Preludio y Toccata*; Jacqueline Nova's *Transiciones*; Damián Rodríguez Pocanota *sin silbato*; Maria Helena Rosa Fernandes' *Ciclo no 2*; Renée Pietrafesa's *Pieza no 5* and *Transiciones* and Estércio Marquez Cunha's *Música para Piano n.º 49* to be part of the eighth volume of her CD series. For the ninth one, she planned to record pieces from Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras and Dominican Republic, as testifies her personal note (BALZI, undated [b]).

Los CDs están nas Universidades e Radios

de: → Boston (Radio) 1,2,3 // 4 y 5 - 6 - 7 -
 → USA - Roque Cordero - Radio (Nº4)
 → Washington (Univ. Centro de Estudios Latinoamericanos)
 1,2,3 // 4 y 5 e 6 e 7 -
 → Indiana (Univ. Bloomington) 1,2,3 // 4 y 5.
 → Arizona (Univ. Tempe) 1,2,3 // 4
 → Princeton (N. Jersey) Univ. 1,2,3 // 4 y 5
Inglaterra (Leeds Universidad) 1,2,3 // 4 //
Italia (Roma: RAI radio) 1,2,3 // 4, 5, 6, 7
 e Rizzardi (Venezia) até 1997 -
Francia (Paris: Radio-Classique) 1,2,3 // 4
Suiza (Genève)
 Lausanne } local de música // 7 / (música -
 Zúrigue } até 1997
 → Houston - Nº 7 (com Una Pared)
España: Barcelona 1,2,3, // 4, 5, 6 e 7
Madrid: radio: 1,2,3 // 4 - 5 e 6 -
 envia com Zampardi
México: Revolta "Panta" 1,2,3 // 4
 CENIDIM (Tello) Nº 3 e anterior - A. Tello.
Perú: Radio Harmonia (Lima) 1,2,3 // 4 5 e 6 e 7 -
 Conservat. Música envia 16/05/00 2 Nº 6, 2 Nº 5
 deve enviar 3 Nº 1, 2, 3 p' cada
Bolivia: Escolas - Radio (?)
 La Paz -
Chile (Santiago) Universidad. Nº 6. Aigüel Castillo
Eduardo Cáceres
Argentina (Bs. Aires) Radio Nacional y Clásica.
 1,2,3 // 4 // 5 // 6
Australia: Universidad. 1,2,3 // 4
 Washington (até 6) Base
 → USA: TEXAS (Austin) 1,2,3 // 4 // 5 // 6
 Florida (Miami) Univ. todos até 6 -
 I Ninos (Universidad)
Venezuela (Caracas) Rupel - Nº 5 - 6 - 10 ojeira
 (do + 10 el sempre - 100 kts dia)

Figure 7: list of the countries to "C. L. A. 9"

According to her Projeto Vitae, Beatriz Bazi intended to complete ten volumes of her "Compositores Latino-americanos" CD series. The illness interrupted her project after the seventh CD, causing her death and the end of her enterprise.

The reception of Beatriz Balzi CDs collection

Balzi sent her CD collection to, at least, nineteen international cultural institutions. Among them figure Universities and Radios in Boston, Washington, Indiana, New Jersey, Houston, Miami and Illinois, in the USA; England (Leeds University); Italy (Rome: RAI radio); France (Paris: Radio-Classique); Swiss (Music Schools in Genève, etc.); Spain (Madrid: radio); México (CENIDIM); Peru (Radio Harmonía - Lima); Bolivia (Radio La Paz); Chile: (Universidad de Santiago); Argentina (Radio Nacional y Clásica de Buenos Aires); Australia and Venezuela (BALZI, undated [c]).

Many cultural institutions congratulated the pianist for the originality and the quality of her project. Although Fundação Vitæ did not granted the support Balzi applied to, her “Compositores Latino-americanos” series dared to offer a well-elaborated alternative to the repertoire traditionally presented.

Latin American 20th century composers and works are rather acknowledged nowadays, in the classical music scene. Beatriz Balzi undoubtedly contributed to this fact, as attests this paper.

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