

Musical Politics in the Cuban Police Order

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This chapter explores how Cuban popular dance music nurtures and contests revolutionary values in today's Cuba.¹ I focus on the performance and discursive construction of the song 'Cubanos por el mundo' by Interativo, one of Cuba's most popular bands in the last decade, using a combination of textual and musical analysis framed by Jacques Rancière's notion of 'police' and 'politics'.² From this perspective I analyze the formation of a 'Cuban police order' structured around a shared notion of the revolutionary and discuss how the experience of the song dialogues musically with that order by associating it with pleasure and critique. Empirically I focus on the recording and an improvisation by Roberto Carcassés, the director of the band and composer of the song, during a live performance at a massive concert held to celebrate revolutionary unity at Plaza Anti-Imperialista in Havana. The second part of the chapter discusses how the song nurtured new articulations of 'politics' and 'police' discursively by studying blogs and newspaper articles written in response to the improvisation.

Listening to the pleasures and politics of Cuban grooves through Rancière's two concepts call for a relational understanding of the politics of music that both examines the broader police orders within which music makes sense *and* in-depth listening to how music disputes and amplifies such orders. It suggests that the multidimensional meanings of music in experience allow sounds to both pleasurise and criticise police orders as rhythms, melodies and sung statements interlock in time. More importantly, the study shows how these relationships create pleasurable ways of being together that both reproduce and change 'what is common to the community'.³ It resonates with John Street's emphasis on 'the political possibilities inherent in [musical] pleasure'⁴ and calls into question studies that focus

exclusively on lyrics and music's circulation to capture the politics of music.⁵ A relational understanding of the politics of music grants more political agency to musical sounds than most existing studies while still considering music's discursive context.⁶

'Police' and 'politics' in Cuban grooves

Rancière's 'police' has nothing to do with common understandings of police officers. Instead, it refers to a way of making sense of sense perceptions that shape what is common in a community by delegating different subjects to specific positions in a hierarchy.⁷ While a police order may seem universal for the subjects that live in its context it is only one, among many different ways, of 'making sense of sense' that situates subjects in relation to each other in specific ways.⁸ It should be understood as a description of how society is organised because '[t]he essence of the police is not repression but distribution—the distribution, or partitioning, of the sensible, of what is made available to the senses and what is made to make sense'.⁹ The police underscores the impossibility of instituted orders of equality, such as that claimed to be operative in post-revolutionary Cuba, because any such order creates the illusion that the problem of democracy is resolved and prevents productive ruptures in the future.

It is on this basis that Rancière defines politics as an expression of dissensus against the police that claims the emergence of a new subject and new forms of community to be imagined and acted upon. Rancière describes it as the 'declaration of a wrong' by a subject that was not there prior to that declaration and that constitutes itself through this very act.¹⁰ Expressions of politics are always relative to a given police order and they frequently use, or signify upon, the places, words and symbols defined by this order.¹¹ Here is one way Rancière describes the relationship between the two concepts:

The police says that there is nothing to see on a road, that there is nothing to do but move along. It asserts that the space of circulating is nothing other than the space of circulation. Politics, in contrast, consists in transforming this space of ‘moving-along’ into a space for the appearance of a subject: i.e., the people, the workers, the citizens. It consists in refiguring the space, of what there is to do there, what is to be seen or named therein. It is the established litigation of the perceptible.¹²

The defining feature of ‘politics’ is a gap in perception where ‘a police order’ no longer is reproduced and a new subject appears. This gap may operate in different sensible domains (e.g. sounds, images or words), which in each case works in practice by restructuring our affects, perceptions and senses of meaning by contributing to views that a different world is possible. It is in this way that Rancière understands politics as an expression of aesthetics because aesthetic experiences may change what is common to the community (the police order) and contribute to what he terms political subjectivization:

Aesthetic experience ... is a common experience that changes the cartography of the perceptible, the thinkable and the feasible. As such, it allows for new modes of political construction of common objects and new possibilities of collective enunciation.... Film, video art, photography, installation, etc. rework the frame of our perceptions and the dynamism of our affects. As such they may open new passages toward new forms of political subjectivization.¹³

We should of course add music to Rancière’s list of artistic media. This quote illustrates how Rancière grants a potential political agency to aesthetic experiences that is fruitful for studying the politics of Cuban popular dance music. However, this also forces us to operationalise Rancière’s two key terms in the context of Cuban culture and music. While

many different ‘police orders’ can be identified in Cuba I will draw attention to how shared understandings of the 1959 Cuban revolution have divided subjects and organised ‘a totality comprised of groups performing specific functions and occupying determined spaces’, which I will term the ‘Cuban police order’.¹⁴ However, as this order is defined by the rupture of the revolution, it allows us to examine the temporal interplay between ‘the police’ and ‘politics’ in practice. Furthermore, by applying the two concepts to a study of musical sound, by listening to Interactivo’s ‘Cubanos por el mundo’, we can examine how musical grooves both nurture and contest the Cuban police order. This calls for in-depth qualitative research on how specific organizations of sounds create affective communities through which embodied pleasures are shown to be fundamental to the Cuban police order, while also functioning as critiques of it. However, before we get into the groove it is important to outline what is meant by a Cuban police order.

From politics to police: A Cuban Police Order?

The ‘Cuban police order’ is structured around contradictory definitions of the Cuban revolution that emphasise both rupture and order. On the one hand it is understood as a revolutionary moment that made an end to a neo-colonialist and racist Batista government by calling for social equality and freedom of expression. One of Fidel Castro’s descriptions of that moment may illustrate:

[1] Revolution is feeling the historical moment, [2] it is changing everything that needs to be changed, [3] it is full equality and freedom, [4] it is being treated and treating others as human beings, [5] it is emancipating ourselves for ourselves and by our own efforts.¹⁵

In one sense this definition of the revolution becomes an expression of ‘politics’ because it gives voice to those Cubans that were ‘without a name [and] deprived of logos’ prior to 1959.¹⁶ However, Castro’s words also exemplify a specific ‘police order’: they were the opening of a speech to Cuban workers on 1 May, 2000 that became part of a propaganda campaign aiming to convince Cubans of the importance of continuing the revolutionary struggle forty-one years after it happened.¹⁷ This ‘Cuban police order’ can be understood as an interpretive framework that separates individuals in a hierarchical system where the revolutionary government is given full authority. It operates through an implied distinction between the revolutionary and the counter-revolutionary that undermines Castro’s emphasis on ‘full equality’ and ‘makes some more equal than others’, to borrow a phrase from George Orwell. An example is Castro’s famous statement concerning the freedom of artistic expression in Cuba: ‘Within the revolution, complete freedom; against the revolution, none’.¹⁸ The Cuban police order works through a dichotomic discourse that equates the U.S. government with American imperialism and defines it as an eternal threat to the revolutionary project and Cuba as an independent country. This declared enemy legitimises the Cuban police order as such. It is on the basis of these arguments that a footnote at the end of the Cuban constitution states that all its described constitutional rights (e.g. freedom of expression) may be subject to change based upon the priorities of the Cuban communist party, as revolutionary needs matter more than liberal rights like freedom of expression.¹⁹ In short, the Cuban police order should be understood as an interpretive lens through which certain perceptions, actions, ideas and subjects are defined as ‘revolutionary’. Within the field of music this rationale was used to ban certain structures of musical sound as counter-revolutionary although the exact definition of what was revolutionary and not has changed over time.²⁰ This distinction has structured ways of listening through shared concepts such as *música patriótica*, which refers to music that reminds the listeners of the beauty of Cuban

culture and society²¹ as well as its antithesis, *música contestatária*, which refers to songs that question this beauty.²² In short, the Cuban police order works as an interpretive principle through which any homage to *or* critique against Cuban culture can be viewed as a political act (in the conventional sense of the term).

People who have been excluded in this police order have been expelled and punished in different ways because of their disagreement with the revolution.²³ These exclusions, as well as people's dissatisfaction (economic or political) within this police order, have led millions of Cubans to migrate and disrupted families. At the same time, it is important to mention that those who position themselves within a revolutionary community in Cuba have been entitled access to a welfare state that is unique in Latin America, which gives people access to music, arts, health care and education. This has led to support for the revolution, both in Cuba and abroad. However, as much as Cubans appreciate these 'beautiful' sides, the facts of disrupted families, fears of the secret police and a poor economy has led many to have an ambivalent 'love and hate' relationship to it. My informant 'Juan' elaborates on this point through a description of Cuba as a Janus face that is beautiful and ugly at the same time:

Look, you have to understand the difference between the beautiful Cuba and the ugly Cuba. Cuba has two faces, you understand? Like one of these Janus faces you know. In the face of the Beautiful Cuba we have la música, the dance, the education, public health, la cultura, all the good and beautiful things about Cuba that everybody loves, you know. But, the other face, the Ugly Cuba, is los militares, el partido, la policía, la política, la corrupción, la burocracia, the legislation and laws, you know, all the bad things. But these two faces are not connected, and in the end the Ugly Cuba is the leader. They only use the Beautiful Cuba to look nice. But the Ugly Cuba is dangerous, don't get yourself into la política, it is very dangerous. That's why we like

the music, because we don't like la política, here nobody likes la política besides the people in the party.²⁴

Following Juan, we may conceive of music as something that the Cuban government uses to show its beauty and hide its ugliness. Cuban grooves may add 'flesh and bone' to positive perceptions of the Cuban police order as 'beautiful'. Shared joys in Cuban music may even shake the hearts and souls of those Cubans who have an ambivalent relationship with the revolution because, as my informants said, Cuban music is *arte* not *política*, it belongs to a different sphere. In fact, it is this very distinction that provides Cuban music with a unique political potential as its ways of moving people may provide common pleasures that both challenge and reproduce 'who can have a share in what is common to the [revolutionary] community'²⁵ while simultaneously claiming that it is *arte* and not part of *política*. Hence in order to understand how Cuban music contests and strengthens the Cuban police order we have to listen carefully to how music moves us. I will now do so through in-depth listening to Interactivo's 'Cubanos por el mundo' by following the chronology of the song and describing how sung words groove in experience.

Listening to 'Cubanos por el mundo'

The song opens with a soft airy male voice that sings the words 'Cuba, la tierra de sublime tradición, música de corazón, e cuando bailas tu, te lo digo yo' (Cuba, the soil of sublime tradition, music from the hearth, and when you dance, you feel it) over jazzy piano chords (0:00–0:20). The sung words invoke Cuba as a beautiful sensory experience defined by music. Immediately afterwards a rich Afro-Cuban groove invites the listener to dance. Its rhythmic impetus shapes, and is shaped by, Francis del Rio's off-beat singing. He sings about strong family relations and the shared embodied experiences of partaking in the musical

groove. The family becomes a concrete example of the togetherness celebrated in the introduction. However, by also singing that these family relations contain ‘los de aquí e de allá’ (those here and there; 1:14–1:15) he hints at a Rancièrian ‘wrong’ by creating associations to the split families that have resulted from Cubans that have left the country due to the struggle of everyday life, in a context (of singing a popular song) that doesn’t allow for such critiques. In light of Juan’s argument he uses the beautiful Cuba to direct attention at Cuba’s ugliness, however, as the Cuban police order controls the cultural industries on the island, the critique is not explicit. A similar message is expressed when the chorus enters through a mixture of speaking and rapping by calling out ‘Cubanos por el mundo’ (Cubans around the world, 1:25–1:26). In one sense the words may refer to the above-mentioned migration. However, listening to the words from the viewpoint of the Cuban police order they may also refer to the global spread of ‘the revolution’ manifested, for example, through Cuban doctors’ *haciendo misión* as revolutionary workers that develop welfare capacities in third-world countries.²⁶ The sung words may also be heard as a celebration of the growing popularity of Cuban music that is evidenced by how the sounds of Cuban salsa and reggaetón remind dancing listeners around the world that Cuba is beautiful and pleasurable.

These words are followed by new voices that repeat the lyrics from the introduction; however, this time the voices are harmonised in minor sixths and phrased in the fashion RnB singing (1:37–0:52). Through this a sense of pleasure is amplified while the message from the introduction is restated; namely that what makes Cuba Cuba is the very act of dancing to Cuban rhythms. Vocalist Telmary Díaz’s subsequent rap (1:51–2:08) elaborates on how a unique Cuban community is structured around shared pleasures even though she also hints towards a critique of the police embedded within it by rapping; ‘Cuba bella todos temores, repartiendo amores’ (Beautiful Cuba, all the fears and broken hearts, 1:52–1:53). Singing about ‘all the fears’ (todos temores) bring associations of shared feelings of anxiety in Cuba

as many are afraid of expressing critique because of the secret police. However, the fast delivery of the words (with fifteen syllables expressed in less than two seconds) and the ways in which they interact with the groove draw more attention to their musicality than their literal meanings. These musical meanings consist in increased intensities as the experience grooves thanks to a series of sixteenth notes articulated slightly out of time but still within the groove.

The return of Francis del Rio's voice elaborates on how this uniquely pleasurable Cuban community is the product of Afro-Cuban religion and culture (2:08–2:25). The break and the following *montuno* (a repeating open-ended refrain organised in catchy call and response singing) increase these sensations through specific musical sounds as the interplay between a catchy piano *tumbao* (a repeated syncopated ostinato), a forward-moving rhythm played on the *güiro* and multiple breaks invites us into a more powerful *timba* groove (2:25–2:33). By responding to and interacting with the groove by singing in the Yoruba language, vocalist Oscar Valdez adds further sentiment to the rhythms. The very act of singing in Yoruba in the *montuno* is a signifier of intensification as it brings reference to the role of spirit possession and musical intensities in Afro-Cuban religions. It is further amplified by singing mainly in a pressed high register of the male voice and by articulating sounds mimicking the possessed (e.g. 'grrrrr'; 'eeeeee'). After singing about the musical pleasures that make the Cuban community valuable, Valdez articulates a hint of critique against the Cuban police order while bringing del Rio's prior evocation of Cubans 'here and there' (1:14–1:15) into a new musical context, singing: 'Que los de aquí se siente mas de allí, que los de allá se echa mas pa' acá' (So that those here can feel more at home there, and that they over there can come closer to us, 2:53–2:57). The 'here' and 'there' refer to the boundary that separates Cubans on the island from those outside of Cuba. Listened to in light of Juan's above-cited quote, Valdez's singing aims to bring down the division between the ugly Cuba and the beautiful Cuba and create a new Cuba Libre that includes those in Miami and

elsewhere as well as those on the island. However, due to hegemony of the Cuban police order the critique is not explicit but hidden through associations and metaphors. More importantly, as with Telmary's critique (1:52–1:53), musical meanings of pleasurable syncopations that interlock in an intensifying groove constitute the forefront of the sensory experience, not the words.

The real musical climax is reached by the last *coro* (chorus) 'Quiero, recuerda que siempre quiero' (I want, remember that I always wanted, 4:14–5:37). The *coro* is catchier than what has transpired thus far due its repetition, vocal delivery and musical organization—the ways in which it interlocks with the underlying *clave* rhythm—and the fact that it is easy to sing along with. Julio Padrón engages in a dialogue with the *coro* by singing groovy improvisations in response to the *coro*'s steady repetition. These call-and-response interactions add syncopated energies to the groove and interlock with funky *mambos* in the horn section and multiple 'breaks' in the percussion parts. These sounds take the listener towards euphoria by intensifying pleasures. However, the catchiness of the *coro* make these impressions even stronger than Valdez's earlier singing and make the *coro* the focal point of the song. From the viewpoint of this last part of the song the prior celebration of Cuban culture and music is what the Cuban people 'wants, and always wanted'. In one sense it situates everybody as participants in the 'Cuban police order' as they demonstrate their love for cultural traditions that the revolution has supported by dancing to Cuban grooves. However, heard another way, Cubans also want to break down the boundaries that have split Cuban families and separated Cubans from the rest of the world. Still, these acts of musical dissensus were only hinted upon, making the celebration of Cuba as a unique sensory experience the main message of the song.

As the recorded version of 'Cubanos por el Mundo'—as with most other music productions in Cuba—is controlled by the Cuban government in multiple ways it is

understandable that the song reads overtly as a celebration of Cuban culture while only hinting towards critique. If not, it would probably not have been played frequently on Cuban radio and TV or circulate freely in the system of music distribution on the island. After all, it is a risky business to run against an omnipresent Cuban police order, or as ‘Jorge’, a rapper in Santiago de Cuba, explained to me during an interview: ‘Like all musicians, we want to get our voice out there, to be heard, to become popular, and if you voice strong critique your music will not go anywhere. Your sounds won’t leave your doorstep. It is all very well controlled’.²⁷ However, in an earlier interview about Interactivo’s music, Roberto Carcassés suggested that musicians have a political duty to address what Juan describes as both the beautiful *and* the ugly sides of Cuba, and that they should partake in political debates musically:

We want to describe the good as well as the bad things about Cuba. We want to participate in the bigger debates about Cuba in our time. And we express it with our music, which is a very strong medium of communication. In our music we want to define the big questions like the concept of being *revolucionario, la revolución, socialista, capitalista*, as well as criticizing stupid laws.... As artists we both have the possibility and the duty to shape the meanings for the young Cubans. We have to constantly define *cubania* and our idiosyncrasy.²⁸

While the ubiquitous presence of the Cuban police order makes it difficult to translate Carcassés’s visions into practice through recorded music,²⁹ a dimension of Cuban music itself—namely improvisation during live performance—may create such spaces. Close listening to how Carcassés transformed ‘Cubanos por el Mundo’ from an expression of the police order into a statement of Rancièrian politics through improvisation during a big

concert at Plaza Anti-Imperialista in 2013 demonstrates how a musician can go about enacting such a political disruption musically. However, as this particular improvised utterance took place during the energetic and rhythmically propulsive montuno section of the song, it requires a specific attention to how sung words groove and interact with other musical layers. In analyzing the improvisation I will pay attention to how political statements come to the listener through the prosody of improvised singing and how they interact with other musical layers in a pleasurable groove experience. It is on this level that the political and the musical interact.³⁰ In particular I will focus on how the lead singer employs the style of *guia*-singing, a form of vocal improvisation during call-and-response parts in much *son*-based Cuban music that is marked by syncopated and melodic elaboration of existing musical material. Translated back into Rancière's conceptual terms, the following analysis aims to describe how Carcassés expressed 'politics' by changing the structure of 'who can have a share in what is common to the [revolutionary] community based on what they [can] do and on the time and place in which this activity is performed' through specific musical means.³¹

Improvised pleasurable dissensus

On 13 September 2013 Interactivo performed alongside some of the most popular bands in Cuba at the biggest concert venue in the country, Plaza Anti-Imperialista, strategically located in front of what was then the American interest section in Havana. It was a political celebration of the *Five Cuban Heroes*, which was the name of a political campaign that called for the liberation of Cuban intelligence officers that according to the Cuban government were illegally imprisoned in the U.S.³² More than thirty bands performed in addition to Interactivo, including Los Van Van, Qva Libre, Baby Llores, Amaury Pérez, Silvio Rodríguez, Tony Ávila, Elito Revé and NG La Banda. Thousands of Cubans attended the concert and many more people followed it live on national television. In different ways the music added hearts

and souls to a larger message that called for national unity in the continuation of the revolutionary struggle against an American imperialism evidenced by the illegal imprisonment of the *Cuban Heroes*.

On stage Interactivo starts vamping over the montuno of ‘Cubanos por el mundo’, one of their biggest hits. The *montuno* consists of a piano *tumbao* that interlocks with a forward-moving pattern played on the güiro, a laid back but energetic *songo* groove played on congas and drumset, a funky bassline, sparse interjections by the electric guitar, and the voice of Roberto Carcassés. The catchiness of the piano tumbao makes it the audible center of the groove as it interlocks with the played güiro pattern and an implied 2-3 rumba clave. All of this is shown in Example 1.

The image shows a musical transcription for Example 1. It consists of three staves. The top staff is labeled 'Piano Tumbao' and is in treble clef with a tempo marking of quarter note = 200. It features a complex, syncopated rhythmic pattern with notes beamed in groups of two and four. Above the staff, there are rhythmic markings: '2&' above the first two notes, '3&' above the next three, and '4&' above the final four notes of each measure. This pattern repeats across the staff. The middle staff is labeled '2-3 Clave' and is in bass clef, showing a simple 2-3 rumba clave pattern with two eighth notes followed by a quarter rest, then a quarter note followed by a quarter rest. The bottom staff is a continuation of the 2-3 Clave pattern.

Example 1: 2-3 rumba clave, piano tumbao and güiro rhythm (0:00–0:14). Transcription by the author.

An important contributor to this groove is the constant displacement of downbeats in the piano tumbao. These syncopated structures (e.g. see the relationship between tripled octaves and doubled thirds) make sense musically in that they produce pleasure in a listener that feels the beat through its syncopated suspension. The pulse becomes a source of participatory engagement thanks to the friction between multiple structures of syncopation that draws the listener deeper into the groove. It is in this musical context that Carcassés engages with the audience. However, the groove contextualises Carcassés utterances musically by separating them into syllables, which are grouped into words and statements, and which interlock with the syncopated rhythms. These musical sounds affect the way the words are felt by dancing

participants and group them in structures of on-beats (see underlined words in statements 2 and 3), and freely styled off-beats (see italics, see statement 1, 4, 5, 6, 7):

- (1) '*Es-se co-ro es fac-il-it-o*' (this chorus is easy [to sing]) (0:00–0:02)
- (2) '*e to-dos lo pue-den ha-cer*' (and everybody can do it) (0:03–0:04)
- (3) '*por que som-os Cu-ban-os*' (because we are Cubans) (0:05–0:07)
- (4) '*e quer-em-os much-as caus-as*' (and we want a lot of stuff) (0:07–0:08)
- (5) '*quer-em-os que regr-es-en nuestr-os her-ma-nos*' (we want our brothers to come back) (0:09–0:10)
- (6) '*e much-as cos-as mas*' (and a lot of other things) (0:11–0:12)
- (7) '*y el co-ro di-ce as-í*' (and the coro sounds like this) (0:12–0:13)

By calling for musical participation (statement 1 and 2) and defining this as what defines Cubans and their way of being together (statement 3), Carcassés paraphrases common perceptions of unity and togetherness in the Cuban police order. The next two statements (4 and 5) strengthen this message through a call for the liberation of the Five Cuban Heroes. However, the next statement suggests (6) that the Cuban people also wants more, without specifying exactly what that may be. On the following downbeat, the *coristas* Tammy Lopez Moreno, Brenda Navarette and Haydee Lopez sing the *coro* 'Quiero, recuerda que siempre quiero' [I want, remember that I always want] (0:15–0:18) in harmony while preserving its rhythmic catchiness. Accompanied only by the piano tumbao, the güiro and a songo pattern played on the hi-hat, it catches the listener's attention as the signature hook of the hit that people remember. Example 2 shows the repeating coro along with the implied 2-3 rumba clave.

Lead voice of the coro

Harmonization of the coro

2-3 Clave

① Qui - ro

② re - cuér - da - te - que siem - pre que ro

Example 2: The repeating coro and implied 2-3 rumba clave (0:15–0:18).

Musically, the sung words are expressed in two related phrases. (See numbered phrasing lines, Example 2). They are catchy and easy to sing along with thanks to their percussive delivery and the structural development of a melodic motif organised around a third, which is aligned rhythmically with the groove and the underlying rumba clave. One beat after the coro finishes, Carcassés starts improvising in the fashion of *guia* singing (0:19–0:23). His improvisation is composed of two short phrases, shown in Example 3.

Coro

Carcassés

2-3 Clave

♩ = 200

① Qui - ro re - cuér - da - te - que siem - pre que ro

② Yo - qui - ro que li -

5

①

② be - ren a los cin - co hé - roes y que li - be - ren a ma - ri - a

Example 3: Carcassés's first *guia*, with implied 2-3 rumba clave (0:19–0:23).

The combination of syncopations on the three-side of clave (see Example 3, measures 4 and 6) and downbeats on the two-side (measures 5 and 7) make the sung words perfectly 'in

clave' as they interlock with the syncopated piano tumbao.³³ Melodically, Carcassés elaborates on the melodic third-interval while adding diatonic elaborations (see measure 4 and the transition from measure 6 to bar 7). Rhythmically, he adds new syncopations that provide energy to the rolling groove. It is through this musical context that twenty-one sung syllables become audible and pleasurable through the words; 'Yo quie-ro que li-be-ren a los cin-co he-roes e li-be-ren a Ma-ri-a' (I want them to free the five heroes and to free Maria). Maria, a code name for marijuana, takes the audience by surprise but is, in fact, simply the first of the 'other things' that Cubans want, in addition to freeing the Five Heroes, according to Carcassés. The sung word 'Maria' changes what had been until then a patriotic revolutionary statement into a musical act of dissensus criticizing the legal regulations on drugs within the Cuban police order. Carcassés's semantic swerve plays upon political discourses linked to the recent legalization of marijuana in countries like Colombia, Uruguay and several states within the US, as well as discourses from marijuana consumers in Cuba (particularly young adults and those within artistic circles) who argue for its legalization.

Carcassés starts his second *guia* improvisation a little earlier than the first, by beginning on the last beat of the coro's last measure, and it consists of three short connected phrases. These musical features are shown in Example 4.

Musical score for Example 4, showing Coro, Carcassés, and 2-3 Clave parts. The score includes lyrics and musical notation for two systems of music.

Tempo: $\text{♩} = 200$

Coro: *Qui - ro re - cuér da - te - que siem - pre quie ro*

Carcassés: *Li - bre (acc) e - so (a)la*

2-3 Clave:

Coro: *(in)for - ma - ción pa - ra te - ner yo mi pro - pia (o)piní - ón*

Carcassés:

2-3 Clave:

Example 4: Carcassés's second guía, with implied 2-3 rumba clave (0:27–0:31).

These three phrases introduce new melodic material that is not related to the interval of a third. Instead, a sense of lyricism is expressed by the legato articulation of an arpeggiated G major triad (bar 5) through the word ‘(la) información’ [information] that also stands out thanks to an increase in ambitus (e.g. the dropping interval of a fifth in the fifth bar).

Temporally, a change in rhythmic structure makes the word ‘in-for-ma-ción’ (downbeat syllables underlined) grasp our musical attention as Carcassés disrupts the prior flow of syncopation by articulating two on-beats (beat 1 and 3 in measure 5). The guía’s lyricism is then dispelled in the next measure by a percussive stream of eighths in the second phrase (see measure 6) that starts with off-beats and moves diatonically from the seventh to the tonic to set the words ‘para tener yo’ [so that I can have] (0:30–0:31). The third phrase (Example 4) add a new layer of rhythmic tension by introducing a triplet figure that ends on the following downbeat, giving further emotional presence to the words ‘mi propia opinión’ [my own opinion] (0:31).

Taken together, the words that make up the second *guia* improvisation—‘[quiero] libre acceso a la información, para tener yo, mi propia opinión’ ([I want] free access to information so that I can make up my own opinion)—intensify the dissensus introduced in the first *guia*. They represent a sharp critique of the common Cuban experience of finding uncensored information, the exercise of free speech, and even internet access to be rigorously controlled by the government. In doing so Carcassés turns Juan’s argument on its head by using the beauty of Cuban music to declare ‘a wrong’ and show the ugliness of the Cuban police order. He breaks the silence musically by not perceiving *la política* as a dangerous and restricted place that belongs exclusively to the Cuban government and the military, as Juan argued, but as a space of musical dissensus and partaking subjects. He transforms the musical pleasures produced at Plaza Anti-Imperialista in celebration of the Five Cuban Heroes, which until this point had strengthened patriotism and revolutionary unity, into pleasurable dissensus by claiming ‘the appearance of a subject’ through groovy singing among dancing listeners.³⁴

The third *guia* elaborates on this musical dissensus via the two connected phrases shown in Example 5.

♩ = 200

Coro
Qui - ro re - cuér da - te - que siem - pre quie ro

Carcassés
yo qui - ero(el) e - gir al _ pre

2-3 Clave

5

Coro

Carcassés
- si - den - te por vo - to di - re - cto(e) no _ por ot - ra vi - a

2-3 Clave

Example 5: Carcassés's third guía, with implied 2-3 rumba clave (0:35–0:41).

The first phrase is rhythmically rich, as Carcassés alternates between binary and ternary subdivisions with an emphasis on syncopation (see for example the transformation of a triplet figure into a syncopated one from measure 4 to 5 in the example) while singing the words 'Yo quiero elegir al presidente' (I want to elect the president; 0:35–0:38). Rhythmic friction and intensity increase as Carcassés starts the second part of the third guía with two *triplet cubano* figures (see measure 7) that add a stirring affective sense to the words 'por vo-to dir-ect-o' (through direct voting, 0:39). He then concludes the last part of the third guía by returning to the binary sub-divisions in a downward diatonic movement that ends with two on-beats singing 'e no por otra via' (and not any other way; see measure 8). These structures of rhythmic complexity add sensibility to the political statement: 'Yo quiero elegir al presidente por voto directo e no por outra via' [I want to elect the president through direct voting, and not any other way]. Again political critique is intensified as Carcassés reminds the audience that the island hasn't seen a democratic election since the 1950s and that even these earlier elections were pretty corrupt affairs. It is also a critique of the practice of indirect democracy in Cuba, in which Cubans can vote on representatives for the national assembly, which then decides who will become the president.

In the fourth guía Carcassés broadens his critique by singing the phrase shown in Example 6.

Musical score for Example 6, showing Coro, Carcassés, and 2-3 Clave parts. The score includes lyrics and musical notation for measures 4 and 5.

Tempo: $\text{♩} = 200$

Coro: *Qui - ro re - cuér da - te - que siem - pre quie ro*

Carcassés: *yo ni - mi - li - tan*

2-3 Clave: (Implied 2-3 rumba clave)

Measure 5:

Coro: (Silence)

Carcassés: *- tes ni di - si - den - tes cu - ba nos - to - dos con los mi smo - de - re - chos*

2-3 Clave: (Implied 2-3 rumba clave)

Example 6: Carcassés's fourth guía, with implied 2-3 rumba clave (0:44–0:49).

The first six syllables, 'Ni mi-li-tan-tes ni' (0:45; see measure 4), sustain what has now become an established pattern of off-beat phrasing before Carcassés disrupt this rhythm by singing 'dis-si-dent-es' as triplets on the following four syllables. The words that follow, 'Cu-ba-nos to-dos, con los mis-mos der-e-chos' (All Cubans with the same rights; 0:46–0:49, see bar 6–8), are delivered as a mixture of off-beats and on-beats as Carcassés starts speaking rather than singing. By singing "All Cubans with the same rights" the sung words contest the 'Cuban police order' and call the participating listener to engage in politics.

By emphasizing 'Cubanos, todos' (Cubans, all), Carcassés broadens his critique to encompass both the political authorities in Cuba (ni militantes) *and* the dissidents (ni dissidentes), who are often accused of being financed by right-wing capitalist ex-pats in Miami. In so doing, Carcassés calls for the equality of all Cubans, independent of revolutionary opinion and geographical location, and argues that Cubans should be united and enjoy the same rights. In that sense the sung words function as a critique of Castro's speech to

the Cuban workers that takes Castro's third statement at face value by underscoring the importance of 'full equality and freedom' for all Cubans. Carcassés therefore revisits a key message from the name of the recording and the album *Cubanos Por El Mundo* that advocates for unity and the reintegration of the Cuban diaspora with the Cubans still on the island.

While it is important to specify the musical structures through which Carcassés's political expressions gained affective valence, it is also crucial to examine the responses that these improvised statements generated in Cuba after the concert. However, before I move into this analysis it is important to have in mind that these seemingly disconnected discursive domains (groovy singing, in the moment of its public utterance, versus later critical responses) are related through their very difference. It is the sung melody's ability to produce affect in a shared groove experience that enabled the words to be felt as pleasurable sounds, reconfiguring 'what is common to the Cuban community' and providing the conditions for the debate that followed.³⁵ If Carcassés's sung statements were written on a piece of paper or uttered in common speech no public debate would happen. Hence, the production of musical pleasure should be understood as a precondition to the debate that followed after the performance.

From Dissensus to Censorship

Immediately after the concert, the state-run Instituto Cubano de la Música suspended Roberto Carcassés from engaging in any musical or artistic activities in Cuba. As Interactivo wrote on its Facebook page:

They invited us all to a reunion at Instituto Cubano de la Música, where we were informed that Roberto [Carcassés] will be 'separated from the sector'. In other words, he cannot play, alone or with Interactivo or any other state-affiliated group.³⁶

The Cuban cultural ministry argued that Carcassés had dishonored the revolution by expressing his harsh critique on live Cuban television at an event in honor of the brave Cuban Five. The performance also sparked a massive debate in the Cuban social media and print newspapers. While some Cuban artists and intellectuals defended parts of Carcassés's critiques, most of the commentators on state-controlled websites and social media platforms condemned the improvisation. The overarching indictment was that Carcassés had been *oportunist* by choosing such a public time and place to address these matters. A snapshot from an article written by musician Conrad Monier, who also performed at the concert, may illustrate:

I also wanted that our message should reach the hearts of the North American people, but you, Robertico [Carcassés], damaged what, with so much effort, thousands of artists aimed to express [...] What you said is not exactly the most serious thing, although it denotes a lack of political culture (*incultura política*) that I would encourage you to overcome. The unforgivable is who you told it to, where, and at what time. Then I ask myself: Why, Robertico? What did you want to achieve with that act? From my glorious Guantánamo, only millimeters from the Yankees, this humble Cuban musician tells you something: 'WE DON'T DO THAT!' [...] There are values, Robertico, that are deeply Cuban and that we don't play with!³⁷

Monier criticises Carcassés's improvisation and defends a revolutionary consensus that strengthens the Cuban police order by drawing on paternalistic arguments, as evidenced by 'WE DON'T DO THAT' written in capital letters. Monier's critique further puts into question Carcassés Cuban identity by calling him 'politically uncultured' because 'there are values that

are deeply Cuban and that we don't play with'. With this last statement, Monier evokes a broader dichotomist argument by playing with José Martí's famous statement, 'Being cultured is the only way of being free' (Ser culto es la única forma de ser libre), to dignify the revolutionary project aesthetically and criticise Carcassés's performative gesture as *incultura política*.

Other commentators elaborated on this critique by drawing on more emotional and subjective language, as illustrated through a commentary written by Digna Guerra, a highly renown Cuban choral conductor, who also performed at the concert and holds an important political position as a member of the national assembly:

Compatriots: I am writing to you to express my outrage concerning the attitude of the musician Robertico Carcassés during the concert for the Five Cubans on September 13 at the Anti-Imperialist Tribune 'José Martí'. It is not that we cannot have diverse opinions. It is about having ethics and responsibility, and to raise our voice and concerns at the right place and time. To use that scenario, in which numerous artists were representing the people in a sacred battle for the nation, is an absolutely reprehensible act, which at least reveals selfishness and lack of collective feeling. As a Cuban, as a musician and as a mother I consider this act unacceptable and I feel more committed now than ever to the cause of The Five, the Revolution and the young people that I strive every day to educate through cultura for *la Patria*.³⁸

Guerra refines Monier's critique by speaking frankly and emotionally ('outrage', 'an absolutely reprehensible act', 'unacceptable'), and by referring to dichotomies linked to personal ethics and national independence (implying that Carcassés lacks a sense of 'ethics and responsibility' and is not among the 'numerous artists representing the people in a sacred

battle for the nation'). She even appears to question whether Carcassés really is 'Cuban' in the revolutionary sense, as opposed to herself, whom she describes as 'a musician, music educator and mother' and 'as someone who is committed to the Cuban Five, the Revolution and Patria'. In a Rancièrian sense both Guerra and Monier reproduces the Cuban police order by separating 'those who take part [in the revolutionary society] from those who are excluded'.³⁹

Carcassés held his ground when confronted by acts of censorship and government critiques, writing three days after the event:

As much as I see the video and reread what I said, I do not see why my ideas do not conform to the line of the Cuban revolution, if we are trying to improve our system and if it takes courage to harm yourself by saying what you think.... Perhaps I was wrong to expect that my words would provide an image of tolerance and evolution in the current Cuban government.... I don't think that electing the president through voting would affect our system much—instead, it could give the people the chance to feel represented by the state on a higher level.⁴⁰

Carcassés draws implicitly upon Castro's aforementioned speech to the workers to legitimise his improvisation within a revolutionary Cuban society, suggesting he was only singing about 'what needs to be changed' and arguing for 'full equality and freedom'. A closer look at political developments in Cuba from 2006 to the concert in 2013 further suggests that many political reforms have occurred thanks to dialogues between the Cuban communist party and other, more progressive voices that have pushed for 'changing [what] needs to be changed' giving further weight to Carcassés's argument. Raul Castro, who was president during this period, expressed several times that the Cuban government has to learn from 'errors and

insufficiencies’⁴¹ in the past in the context of the opening of market reforms and reconciliations between Cuba and the United States during Barack Obama’s tenure as U.S. president. Still, despite Carcassés’s arguments, the Cuban cultural ministry sustained his ban, and multiple actors expressed critiques of Carcassés that were similar to those of Monier and Guerra, reproducing the hierarchical division of the Cuban police order.

Four days after the event, one of Cuba’s most famous musicians, Silvio Rodríguez, a deputy member of the National Assembly for fifteen years and an important spokesperson within Cuban culture and politics, openly criticised the way in which the Cuban government had banned Carcassés from all cultural activities. He also criticised Carcassés’s use of a patriotic event as an opportunity to produce a political critique.⁴²

I believe that Robertico committed a great stupidity in choosing the act for the release of the Five Cubans to launch his claims. I would have preferred if he would have done so in another concert, on a record, or in another area, because I believe that the struggle for the freedom of the Five Cubans is a sacred flag of the people of Cuba, well above other considerations.

Regrettably, my partner’s clumsiness was followed by another one from the institution that governs the work of music professionals in Cuba.

As a critique of practices of this type in the past [that is, the practice of censorship against artists who criticise the Cuban state], and as an attempt to avoid that such things happen again, I made the decision to invite the sanctioned musician to my next concerts, because one error should not lead to another, but mainly because I think it is frightening that the cause of the Cuban Five can be used as a pretext for an act of repression.

As a Cuban citizen, Robertico has the right to express what he thinks in his own country. But I think it is regrettable that he did what he did during an act for the Cuban Five, people who have sacrificed their lives for the safety of the [Cuban] people. I also don't agree with the excessive sanction of forbidding a musician to perform his function.⁴³

Via a double critique of both Carcassés's use of a sacred political space and the sanctions against him by the cultural ministry, Rodríguez assumes the role of a mediator. Under these auspices, he invited Carcassés to play with him during his then-upcoming concerts on the outskirts of Havana, which was both an implicit critique of the government's withdrawal of Carcassés's music license *and* an offering to Carcassés to practice his revolutionary musicianship by playing at a government venue. In the same paragraph, Rodríguez uses vague language and allusions to criticise earlier acts of artistic censorship in Cuba by suggesting that it is 'frightening' that 'the cause of the Cuban Five can be used as a pretext for an act of repression'. The last paragraph supports Carcassés's right to express politics musically as a Cuban citizen because he has 'the right to express what he thinks in his own country', again echoing the second and third statement in Castro's speech to the workers.

On 18 September, one day after Rodríguez's statement was published, Cuban cultural ministry officials and Rodríguez met with Carcassés to discuss the issue, and the government decided to lift the ban on the artist. In the words of Rodríguez: 'Authorities from the Cultural Ministry had a reunion today with Roberto Carcassés and the conversations were so positive that they decided to lift the sanction'.⁴⁴ Interactivo and Carcassés promptly returned to giving concerts in Havana and abroad.

Conclusion: Three Rancièorean Lessons

The aim of this chapter has been to examine the politics of Cuban popular dance music through a study of Interactivo's song 'Cubanos por el mundo' by drawing on Rancière's concepts of 'politics' and 'the police'. Three lessons can be learned.

First, in order to understand the politics of music we have to conduct a two-fold analysis that both identifies the broader 'police order' through which music make sense *and* study the specific ways in which musical sounds challenge and nurture that order through pleasurable grooves. This insight elaborates on Rancière's emphasis on the role of affect and aesthetics in the expression of politics and calls for a musical operationalization of Rancière's argument that aesthetics is prior to politics because it conditions what 'presents itself to sense experience' (in the case of music, specific structures of musical sounds with particular affordances).⁴⁵ To specify how music amplifies and alters such spaces of politics we should pay attention to how temporal structures of musical sound enable the production of new affective communities in specific contexts that change the framework of 'who can have a share in what is common to the community based on what they [can] do and on the time and place in which this activity is performed'.⁴⁶

The second lesson is that in order to understand the political power of music we should not only focus on musical ways of enacting 'a wrong' but also on the complex ways in which musical sounds amplify existing 'police orders' by modifying political communities (whether international, national or local) through affect. It is this double play of both beautifying and criticizing Cuban culture that provided 'Cubanos por el Mundo' with a unique political potential. By shaking the hearts and souls of dancing Cubans through particular musical means the song constructed spaces of simultaneous identification (with the groove) and dis-identification (with the revolutionary police order) that together created a new imagined community of equality. Music gains a particular political force in countries like Cuba where many have lost faith in political representation, as the very perception of music as

non-political makes it political as grooves move people and instigate new forms of political subjectivization. This is why Carcassés believed that music was a particularly powerful tool for communication that gave him the ‘possibility and the duty to shape the meanings of the young Cubans [and to constantly redefine] the concept of being revolutionary ... as well as criticizing stupid laws’. It is also the reason why Carcassés believed musical expressions were key in the making of a new Cuba when he gave the following response to my question of why he constantly returned to the issue of creating a new fatherland:

Probably because it is still not done. Three million Cubans are living in all sorts of different countries. They also belong to our idiosyncrasy. And we have big social problems. Still, *cubania*, *la patria* and our nation are yet to be defined. And now we are living in a crucial time, trying to find our own identity. We have to define what is Cuba, who we are, and mark the future. So, in our music we communicate messages to shape the meanings of the people.⁴⁷

As the imaginary Cuban community Carcassés aimed to construct both implied a recognition of the merits of ‘the revolution’, and the expressions of multiple Rancièrian ‘wrongs’ to improve it, the political power of Interactivo’s music was intrinsically linked to existing police orders as well as critiques of these orders.

The third lesson forces us to rethink temporally the relationship between ‘politics’ and ‘the police’ within the internal logic of existing police orders. In the same sense that ‘politics’ is always related to a given ‘police order’ we should understand the formation of a ‘police order’ as the product of earlier ‘politics’ through which that police order finds its legitimacy. The ways in which the described ‘Cuban police order’ understands itself through the ‘politics’ of the 1959 revolution underscores the temporal interplay between Rancière’s two concepts in

historical practice. Most, if not all, ‘police orders’—including those of contemporary welfare states, institutional democracies, political parties and movements, NGOs and human rights organizations—define their very existence thanks to a rupture at a certain point in time. This temporal perspective may also illuminate how expressions of ‘politics’ are linked together historically in broader ‘police orders’ of critique. Read along these lines, Carcassés’s improvised critique at Plaza Anti-Imperialista in Havana 2013 was not something new but part of a broader critical ‘police order’ that brings associations to other Cubans that have argued for a more transparent, independent and pluralistic democracy in Cuba. Examples include the work of bloggers like Yoani Sánchez, the critical Hip Hop group Los Aldeanos and civil society networks like Cuba Possible.⁴⁸

In short, while ‘the police’ and ‘politics’ play out in practice as mutually defined dichotomies they also interact temporally in that expressions of ‘politics’ invariably have a history and ‘police orders’ invariably have beginnings. To identify these connections and disconnections it is crucial to add a temporal dimension to further research on how music express Rancièrian ‘politics’ and ‘police orders’ that points both towards its causes and effects.⁴⁹

¹ Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, trans. Gabriel Rockhill (London: Continuum, 2004) and *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*, trans. Julia Rose (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

² The song was released on the CD *Cubanos Por el Mundo* in 2010 and was played numerous times on Cuban radio between 2010 and 2013 (personal conversations with ‘Maria’,

‘Alberto’, ‘David’ and ‘Alejandro’; due to the research ethics stipulated by the Norwegian Center for Research Data I refer to all informants in this study through pseudonyms).

³ Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, 19.

⁴ See John Street, “‘Fight the Power’”: The Politics of Music and the Music of Politics’, 126; see also Barry Shank, *The Political Force of Musical Beauty*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014).

⁵ This is in contrast to dominant approaches to studies on the politics of music that focus on lyrics and broader social and discursive constructions rather than on musical sounds, such as Keith Negus’s *Popular Music in Theory*, (Malden: Polity Press, 1996, 193) and Simon Frith *Performing Rights: On the value of popular music* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 22–26).

⁶ By bringing the affordances of specific musical structures into examinations of music’s political meanings, the present study echoes recent scholarship like Chris Stover’s ‘Politicking Musical time’ (*The Oxford Handbook of Time in Music*, London and New York, Oxford University Press, forthcoming 2019) and Kjetil Klette Bøhler’s ‘Theorizing musical politics through case studies: Feminist grooves against the Temer Government in today’s Brazil’ (*International Journal of Gender, Science and Technology* 9 no. 2, 2017).

⁷ Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, 22.

⁸ Joseph J. Tanke, *Jacques Rancière: an Introduction* (New York: A&C Black, 2011), 28.

⁹ Mustafa Dikeç, ‘Beginners and equals: political subjectivity in Arendt and Rancière’. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 38 no. 1 (2013).

¹⁰ Rancière *Disagreement: Politics and philosophy*, 39.

¹¹ Rancière, *Disagreement: Politics and philosophy* 33.

¹² Jacques Rancière, Davide Panagia and Rachel Bowlby, ‘Ten theses on politics’, *Theory & event* 5 no. 3 (2001), § 22.

¹³Jacques Rancière, 'Aesthetic separation, aesthetic community: Scenes from the aesthetic regime of art.' *Art & Research* 2 no. 1 (2008): 4–14.

¹⁴ Jacques Rancière. 'Dissenting Words: a Conversation with Jacques Rancière' (with Davide Panagia). *Diacritics* 30 no. 2 (2000), 124.

¹⁵ 'Nuevo Lineamientos VI Congreso del Partido Comunista de Cuba'. Political manifesto agreed upon by the Cuban Communist Party (2010).

<http://www.granma.cu/granmad/secciones/6to-congreso-pcc/Folleto%20Lineamientos%20VI%20Cong.pdf>> (last accessed 3 May 2019).

¹⁶ Rancière, *Disagreement*, 23.

¹⁷ See Maria Gropas et al., 'The Repatriotization of Revolutionary Ideology and Mnemonic Landscape in Present-Day Havana' (*Current Anthropology* 48 no. 4, 2007, 536) and Kjetil Klette Böhler, 'Grooves, Pleasures, and Politics in Salsa Cubana: The Musicality of Cuban Politics and the Politics of Salsa Cubana' (PhD diss., University of Oslo, 2013, 115-154).

¹⁸ Oscar Quiros, 'Critical Mass of Cuban Cinema: Art as the Vanguard of Society'. *Screen* 37 no. 3 (1996), 283.

¹⁹ *Constitución de la Republica de Cuba* (Havana, 1976).

<http://www.cuba.cu/gobierno/cuba.htm>> (last accessed 19 October 2018). The constitution will be updated in 2019.

²⁰ Examples here include the censorship of Anglo-American popular music (e.g. Beatles and the Rolling Stones), as well as salsa music in general in the 1970s and 1980s; see Vincenzo Perna, *Timba: The Sound of the Cuban Crisis* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

²¹ This is most commonly found in Nueva Trova; see Rina Benmayor 'La "Nueva Trova": New Cuban Song' (*Latin American Music Review/Revista de Música Latinoamericana* 2 no. 1, 1981, 11–44). However, Yvonne Daniel shows how a sense of revolutionary patriotism is also expressed musically in rumba in *Rumba: Dance and Social Change in Contemporary*

Cuba (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), while I show how this is expressed in salsa cubana in “‘Somos la mezcla perfecta, la combinación más pura, cubanos, la más grande creación’”: Grooves, Pleasures, and Politics in Today’s Cuba’ (*Latin American Music Review* 37 no. 2, 2016, 184-200).

²² For studies on *musica contestaria* see Geoffrey Baker, ‘Cuba Rebelión: Underground Music in Havana’ (*Latin American Music Review* 32 no. 1, 2011, 3-32) and Nora Gámez Torres, “‘Rap is war’”: Los Aldeanos and the Politics of Music Subversion in Contemporary Cuba’ (*Trans. Revista Transcultural de Música* 17, 2013, 2-11)

²³ The consequences of these actions have varied dramatically, as some have been sent to so-called UMAP concentrations camps to learn about truly revolutionary values, while others have been harassed, tortured and imprisoned because of their disagreement with the Cuban state. For studies on the UMAP camps see Lillian Guerra ‘Gender Policing, Homosexuality and the New Patriarchy of the Cuban Revolution, 1965–70’ (*Social History* 35 no. 3, 2010, 268-274), Joseph Tahbaz, ‘Demystifying las UMAP: the Politics of Sugar, Gender, and Religion in 1960s Cuba’ (*Delaware Review of Latin American Studies* 14 no. 2, 2013, 1-7) and Rebecca San Juan *Cuba’s Unresolved UMAP History: Survivors’ Struggles to Counter the Official Story* (PhD Diss., Mount Holyoke College, 2017). For reports on illegal imprisonment and torture in Cuba see Amnesty International: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/americas/cuba/> (last accessed 3 May 2019).

²⁴ Interview with ‘Juan’ in Vedado, Havana, 14 July 2010.

²⁵ Rancière, *Politics of Aesthetics*, 12.

²⁶ *Haciendo mission* refers to Cubans who work abroad for the Cuban government on temporary contracts, often in order to strengthen welfare services in developing countries (for example, doctors and nurses working in remote areas in Venezuela and Brazil).

²⁷ Interview with ‘Jorge’ in Santiago de Cuba, 23 July 2018.

²⁸ Interview with Roberto Carcassés in Havana, 15 November 2010.

²⁹ The recording and distribution of music is controlled by the Cuban state through a complex network including institutions like Casa del Autor, which is supposed to work for the copyrights for Cuban musicians, but which in practice also censors controversial songs. See Kjetil Klette Bøhler, 'How Live Cuban Popular Dance Music Expresses Political Values in Today's Cuba' (*Danish Musicology Online*, 2015), 64.

http://www.danishmusicologyonline.dk/arkiv/arkiv_dmo/dmo_saer Nummer_2015/dmo_saer Nummer_2015_musikcensur_03.pdf (last accessed 3 May 2019). However, the distribution of music in Cuba is also controlled by the state and the state may censor controversial songs that express strong critiques of revolutionary values.

³⁰ This perspective echoes Chris Stover's understanding of politicking musical time, which underscores the importance of considering the multiple agencies that are articulated as sounds and subjects meet in experience.

³¹ Rancière, *Politics of Aesthetics* 2004, 12.

³² However, at the time of the concert only four of the five intelligence officers, Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino and Fernando González, were still in prison, as René González had returned to Cuba in April 2013, five months prior to the concert. While the Cuban state argued that the five intelligence officers worked to prevent terrorist attack on Cuban soil and were illegally imprisoned in the US, government officials from the United States argued that the Cuban Five were engaging in espionage.

³³ This is in line with existing research which points out that phrases played or sung in clave tends to have more syncopation and higher degrees of rhythmic density on the 3-side of the clave and more on-beats on the 2-side. See Ives Chor, 'Microtiming and Rhythmic Structure in Clave-Based Music: A Quantitative Study', in *Musical rhythm in the age of digital*

reproduction, edited by Anne Danielsen (London: Ashgate, 2010 42-49) and Klette Böhler, *Grooves, Pleasures, and Politics*.

³⁴ Rancière, 'Ten theses on politics', § 22.

³⁵ Rancière, *Politics of Aesthetics*, 12.

³⁶ Translated by the author, original in Spanish: 'Nos citaron ayer a todos a una reunión al Instituto Cubano de la Música, donde se nos informó que Roberto queda 'separado del sector' por tiempo indefinido. Quiere decir que no se puede presentar solo, ni con Interactivo, en ningún lugar estatal'. In 'El régimen sanciona 'indefinidamente' a Robertico Carcassés' (*Diario de Cuba* 2013) http://www.diariodecuba.com/derechos-humanos/1379201826_5071.html> (last accessed 3 May 2019).

³⁷ Translated by the author, original in Spanish: 'Yo también quise que nuestro mensaje llegara al corazón del pueblo norteamericano, pero tú, Robertico, dañaste lo que con tanto esfuerzo miles de artistas habíamos gestado. Lo que dijiste no es exactamente lo más grave, aunque denota una incultura política que si yo fuera tú, me esforzaría un poco por superar. Lo imperdonable es a quién se lo dijiste, dónde y en qué momento. Entonces me pregunto: ¿Para qué, Robertico? ¿Qué querías? Desde mi glorioso Guantánamo, a solo milímetros de los yanquis, este humilde músico cubano te dice algo: ESO NO SE HACE.... Hay valores, esos que habitan en lo más profundo de un cubano verdadero, con los que, Robertico, no se juega'. Conrad Monier, 'Carta del músico guantanamero Conrado Monier' (*La Jiribilla* 2013). <http://laplumaquecuenta.bloguea.cu/2013/09/18/blogs-y-medios-digitales-cubanos-opinan-sobre-la-actuacion-de-robertico-carcasses/>> (last accessed 3 May 2019).

³⁸ Translated by the author, original in Spanish: 'Compañeros: Me dirijo a ustedes para manifestar mi indignación por la actitud del músico Robertico Carcassés durante el concierto por los cinco el pasado 12 de Septiembre en la Tribuna Antiimperialista 'José Martí'. No se trata de que no podamos tener opiniones diversas. Se trata de tener ética y responsabilidad

para plantear nuestros criterios en su justo lugar y momento. Utilizar ese escenario, en que numerosos artistas estábamos representando a todo un pueblo en una batalla sagrada para la nación, es un acto absolutamente reprochable, que cuando menos revela egoísmo y falta de sentimiento colectivo. Como cubana, como músico y como madre considero inaceptable este hecho y me siento ahora más comprometida que nunca con la causa de Los Cinco, con la Revolución y con los jóvenes que cada día me esfuerzo en formar para la cultura y para la Patria'. Digna Guerra, 'Carta de Digna Guerra, Directora del Coro Nacional de Cuba' (*La Jiribilla* 2013) <http://laplumaquecuenta.bloguea.cu/2013/09/18/blogs-y-medios-digitales-cubanos-opinan-sobre-la-actuacion-de-robertico-carcasses/>>(last accessed 3 May 2019).

³⁹ Rancière, *Politics of Aesthetics*, 3.

⁴⁰ See 'Roberto Carcassés Responds to Banning from Cuban Stages' *Havana Times* (2013) <https://havanatimes.org/?p=98832>>(last accessed 3 May 2019).

⁴¹ Raul Castro quoted in 'Raúl Castro admite "errores e insuficiencias" en las reformas económicas impulsadas por su Gobierno', *Europapress* (2018, author unknown). <http://www.europapress.es/internacional/noticia-raul-castro-admite-errores-insuficiencias-reformas-economicas-impulsadas-gobierno-20180327184555.html>>(last accessed 3 May 2019).

⁴² See 'Silvio Rodríguez considera 'torpezas' la crítica de Carcassés y la sanción en su contra', in *Diario de Cuba* (2013) <http://www.diariodecuba.com/derechos-humanos/1379424616_5110.html?page=1>(last accessed 3 May 2019).

⁴³ Translated by the author, original in Spanish: 'Creo que Robertico cometió una gran torpeza al escoger el acto por la liberación de Los Cinco para lanzar su pliego de reclamaciones. Hubiera preferido que lo hiciera en otro concierto, en un disco, en otro ámbito, porque considero que la lucha por la libertad de Los Cinco es una bandera sagrada del pueblo de Cuba, muy por encima de otras consideraciones. Lamentablemente, a la torpeza de mi

compañero siguió otra por parte de la institución que rige el trabajo de los profesionales de la música en Cuba. Por repudio a prácticas de este tipo en otros tiempos, por rechazo a la idea de que volvieran a instaurarse, tomé la decisión de invitar a mis próximos conciertos al músico sancionado, porque un error no debe conducir a otro, pero sobre todo porque me parece espantoso que la causa de Los Cinco pueda usarse como pretexto para un acto de represión. Como ciudadano cubano, Robertico tiene derecho a manifestar en su país lo que piensa. Me parece un error lamentable que lo haya hecho en el acto por nuestros héroes aterroristas, que han sacrificado sus vidas por la seguridad del pueblo. Asimismo tampoco estoy de acuerdo con la sanción desmedida de prohibirle a un músico realizar su función'. In 'Puntualizando' published at 'Silvio Rodriguez Blog *Segunda Cita*, <http://segundacita.blogspot.no/search?updated-max=2013-09-19T09:44:00-04:00>(last accessed 3 May 2019).

⁴⁴Translated by the author, original in Spanish: 'Autoridades del Ministerio de Cultura se reunieron hoy (martes) con Robertico Carcassés y las conversaciones fueron tan positivas que han decidido dejar sin efecto la sanción'. In *Cubadebate*: <http://www.cubadebate.cu/etiqueta/robertico-Carcassés/>(last accessed 3 May 2019).

⁴⁵ Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, 13.

⁴⁶ Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, 12.

⁴⁷ Translated by the author, original in Spanish: 'Probablemente porque todavía no esta hecho. Tres millones de Cubanos están viviendo en cualquier tipo de países. Ellos también pertenecen a nuestra idiosincrasia. Y tenemos grandes problemas sociales. Todavía, Cuba, la Patria y nuestro país no están definido. Y ahora estamos viviendo en una época importante, tratando de buscar nuestra identidad. Tenemos que definir lo que es Cuba, quienes somos, y marcar el futuro. Entonces, en nuestra música comunicamos mensajes para fomentar los conceptos del pueblo'.

⁴⁸ Yoani Sánchez's blog *Generation Y* <<https://generacionyen.wordpress.com/>> (last accessed 3 May 2019) and Nora Gámez Torres "'Rap is war": Los Aldeanos and the Politics of Music Subversion in Contemporary Cuba' (*Trans. Revista Transcultural de Música* 17, 2013). For more information on Cuba Possible see their web page: <https://cubapossible.com/>> (last accessed 3 May 2019).

⁴⁹ I here refer to Rancière's emphasis on cause and effects in *The Politics of Aesthetics*, 20, as multiple and moving in different directions, and often unintended, and not in the strict sense of cause and effect understood in the natural sciences and economics.