

“Exportation of *Creolismus*”

Juan Antonio Pena

**FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY
JOURNAL OF MUSIC RESEARCH
VOLUME 1: MARCH 2015
James E. Cunningham, ed.**

In the early 19th Century, the music from the Caribbean Islands and also the musical European heritage were competing to gain space in the city of New Orleans. A conglomeration of diverse musical traditions coexisted. Surviving between different social stratum, and were always tied to dance. The mix was not simple as some scholars describe: a merger of music from Europe and Africa, the effect was the “Creolization” of music. The encounter was richer and broader and “illustrates the importance of remembering that the formative elements in creolization may themselves be creolized rather than primordially pure entities”. (Manuel 32)

The African elements present in New Orleans’ musical product derive from a multicultural tradition; which came from Africa to America full of distinctive characteristics. In the same manner, the European music also carried with it a variety of folkloric musical expressions.

The ethnic aspect and the events that occurred in the lives of Louis Moreau Gottschalk and Charles Lucien Lambert made them unique figures in the assimilation, development, and proliferation of a musical phenomenon that Dr. James Cunningham of Florida Atlantic University defines as *Creolismus*. In his approach to the term, Dr. Cunningham unites the ethnic aspect (referring to the interracial mix) with the musical syncretism resulting from a multicultural coexistence in New Orleans during the 19th Century.

New Orleans served as a platform for a complex of interaction of French, Spanish and new American traditions. It “provided a culturally diverse milieu for a significantly large free Negro population. Within that context the formation of a distinct urban colored Creole community”. (Anthony 12) This encounter of cultures was unique to this region of the US. That also seems to be more complex when it is added to the social aspect in which a new social class of free colored people- creoles- fluctuated between the high class and the lower one.

Creoles constituted a social class as a product of interracial marriage, similar to *mulatos* in Cuba. They were free colored people who enjoyed some “social privileges” while their relatives were still slaves. Despite their opportunities from a social point of view, this was a challenge that affected the outcome of this ethnic group in all aspects of their lives. About this outcome Lief states: “the stakes grew higher as some Creoles tried to maintain their status by trying to blend into the power elite, but discovering in the end that the Eurocentric racial formation—growing more entrenched—was utterly unforgiving of perceived mixture in ancestry” (Lief 28) This “freedom” exposed the creole people to an idyllic equality and ridiculous stereotype. Nevertheless, this ambiguous social and cultural status gave creoles an attractive feature to the European- based worldwide elite: exotics.

The language aspect cannot be left aside; French, Spanish, English, Native American, and Haitian Creole with strong influence of African-Congo folklore converged in the vernacular language of the dynamic city. Different from other cities of US and similar to some Caribbean countries; New Orleans allowed its black people to expose their musical soul. The Congo Square was the stage for this manifestation where slaves were drumming and dancing. Italian Operas were performed in the theater while the streets of New Orleans were feeling the syncopation from the music of funeral processions. European minuet and waltzes shared ballroom dances with *Cuban contradanzas* and other dances from the Caribbean islands. In New Orleans, at the beginning of the 19th Century, visitors could encounter “a festivity in which black merrymakers divided into two groups—one to dance the *bamboulá*, and the other, the contradance” (Manuel 34). This characteristic was unique due to the fact that slaves were allowed to have a place to perform their traditional musical genres. Cuba and Haiti shared similar experiences. New

Orleans reflected a macro Latin America syncretism; profound influences thus to Lambert and Gottschalk.

For more than 100 years the interaction of different cultures was present in the musical core of the American Continent. The *Habanera* and other rhythms were spread out by different mediums. Among performance, the transcription and notation of these rhythms facilitated its definition, identification, and its use by musicians of different cultural backgrounds. Printed music was very important to the power of reaching more people in a shorter period of time.

Among the oral transmission of genres from diverse places in the world, the work of academically trained composers contributed to the proliferation of the *Creolismus*. People from other countries were exposed to this composer's way of blending distinctive musical elements. This was the musical scene in which Gottschalk and Lambert took their first musical breaths. These creole composers found in New Orleans their inspiration, in Europe their enlightenment, and in Latin America their expression.

Gottschalk was born in New Orleans on May 8, 1829. Son of an English-Jewish father and a Creole mother, Louis Moreau Gottschalk had a childhood in the most diverse city in the US. New Orleans gave him the first taste of musical sonority which would help establish his emblematic style. All the musical elements present in the daily New Orleans of the 19th Century, among its social life shaped the future of Gottschalk.

He started piano classes very early, at the age of four. After a performing career which starting at the age of twelve, Gottschalk went to France in 1842 to study at the Paris Conservatory. This was a common practice of well-to-do in the French-speaking Creole families of New Orleans (Pruet 31). Education in France was a symbol of glamour and social prestige. Paris in the 19th Century flaunted a destiny for the artistic world elite.

Gottschalk's achievements as a performer were outstanding. The technical level of his presentations cannot be better supported than by the appreciation of Chopin and Liszt. After Gottschalk's debut in 1845 his success was recorded as: "Thalberg congratulated Moreau afterwards, and Chopin himself appeared backstage to congratulate the young American. It was a symbolic moment, with the Old World acknowledging the New World in one of those scenes so beloved by monumental painters of the nineteenth century." (Starr 59) Frederick Starr also alludes in his writing to an important detail; Moreau included his "Creole" origin in the invitations to his concert.

Works by Gottschalk such as *The Banjo*, *Bamboula*, *La Savane*, *Le Bananier* and *Le Mancenillier* show his New Orleans heritage deep influence from dances from the Caribbean, rich of syncopated rhythms, his music was well-received in the French musical venues.

Charles Lucien Lambert figures as another important Creole composer and pianist in the 19th Century. Born in 1828 to a free Creole mother and Charles Richard Lambert, a music teacher who introduced Lucien to the study of music, he has a remarkably similar childhood to Gottschalk, and the two knew each other well from an early age. "Moreau and Lucien enjoyed a friendly artistic rivalry as aspiring virtuoso pianists and composers" (Sullivan 58). Lucien Lambert also shared his musical ability with his brother Sidney. Their musical family background links them to another important Creole musician: Edmond Dede, a famous violinist and composer from New Orleans.

Lambert arrived to Paris after Gottschalk in 1854 and established himself as a performer and composer. "The publisher of his piano *Variations et Final sur l'air Au clair de la lune*, Op. 30 (1859) had to reprint it five times to meet its sales" (Sullivan). In France, he had his son Lucien- Leon Lambert who follows very well the creole musical tradition of his father. Lucien-

Leon wrote a piece that just its title represents this heritage: *Esquisses creoles sur des themes recueillis par L. M. Gottschalk*. “He was to work on a larger scale than his father, producing ballets, symphonic music, choral works and a large amount of instrumental music.” (Naxos liner notes). In the article “Quand le Brésil inspire la France : regard d’une pianiste” Zélia Chueke alludes to some of the piano dances by Charles Lambert as a sample of the influence of Brazilian Music of the 1870’s in “French” composers. She found in her analysis “*traces observables, dans la production des compositeurs français, d’un contact direct ou indirect avec la musique entendue au Brésil aux alentours de 1870*” (observable traces in the production of French composers, direct or indirect contact with the music heard at Brazil around 1870). (Chueke 147) “Traces” –creolization- which this writing refers to, were a common practice in the music of New Orleans and Latin America. The place where Lambert was born was more than just a place of origin; moreover it represents the first multicultural experience of this so called “French” composer.

Despite the international recognition of Lambert family, it is noticeable that “Of all the Lamberts, Sidney seems to have been the only one to have had a piece published in New Orleans” (Naxos liner notes); an arrangement of Monetoile, a Waltz by F. A. Rente. Unknown reasons determine this fact. The Lambert family, Gottschalk and other New Orleans composers of the time are often called “Romantic Creoles” based in their unique style.

The words of Arthur R. LaBrew will describe some issues in the approach of musicologists to this topic:

“In cases like Christian when a large amount of material amassed for possible publication is left unfinished some scholar or team of scholars should have edited his work and issued corrective tissue in subsequent footnotes. Anyone using his work should not slight him for *unpublished* inaccuracies. Then, too, of Rodolphe Desdunes’s work, Sullivan wrote that it was “more of a memoir than a

history.” Puzzling, however, is the fact that both Desdunes and Rousséve excluded any full discussion of the entire Lambert family of musicians.” Also he comments in his writing: “Desdunes was not laudatory of the Lamberts and Rousséve omitted any mention of the Lamberts for no logical reason.”

This comment illustrates some of the difficulties present in this research about the musical activity of Lambert. Lambert exposed his creolism in his works such as *Le Calabrais*, *Galop brilliant*, *Op. 39*, *Le Castillien*, *Bolero pour le piano*, *L'Americaine*, and *Bresiliana* among others.

In 1854 Gottschalk and Lambert met in Paris, which was the center of culture in Europe at the time. As one of the most racially open-minded societies in the world, both Gottschalk and Lambert were widely accepted, regardless of their mixed racial heritage. Gottschalk and Lambert, in Paris encountered the highest pianistic tradition both musically and technically. The greatest musicians, Chopin, Liszt, and Tchaikovsky were very active there.

After his time in Paris, Gottschalk went to Spain, where he was able to absorb the rhythms and nuances of the Spanish popular dances. *Fandangos*, *Zapateos*, *Paso Dobles*, *Sevillanas*, *Malaguenas*, left a deep impression on his musical concepts and show this Spanish influence on Gottschalk’s unique style. Pieces such as: *Caprice espagnol*, *Chanson de Gitano*, and *la Jota Aragonesa* show a Spanish element, derive from popular dances. Spain inspired musicians numerous composers including Ravel, Debussy, and Tchaikovsky. In Spain, Gottschalk was already well-known prior his arrival 1852. Despite the political tension between United States and Spain at that time his experience in this country was very positive; with the welcoming from the royal family for a private concert. “At the king's request, he offered another of his own compositions, *Le Bananier*, based on a "creole air" he heard as a youth in New Orleans. He followed that with *Danse Ossianique*, *Le Moissoneuse*, and after an "intermission"

of conversation, Bamboula, which he had dedicated to Queen Isabel and now performed at her request". (Brocket 281) Moreau never lost the opportunity to place his *Creolismus* in the pinnacle of his musical identity.

Gottschalk was frequently at street coffee shops, bars and "*tablaos*" in Spain where he was in contact with the popular music performed by Spanish musicians. Their music will be absorbed and portrayed in Gottschalk's own compositions. "Gottschalk was spending a great deal of time at the Cafe de la Esmeralda and had even joined the resident pianist, J. G. Miralles." (Brocket 284) Brocket continued narrating that a musical columnist from that time reported that Gottschalk was "practically always seated near the piano listening enthusiastically to whatever compositions our compatriot plays, especially his Jota and Pensamiento"(Brocket 284). This passage shows how Gottschalk got in touch with the popular musical expression of the countries that he visited.

Adding more flavors to his New Orleans, Paris and Spain musical experience Gottschalk went to Cuba.

His presence in Cuba left a significant legacy that made him an indelible part of the Cuban musical history. His concerts, his artistry, were recorded in the most important press media of the time. His residency in Cuba lasted for six years, where he was teaching, performing, and composing with most innovative manners. An interesting example of this was his composition for eight pianos supposedly performed by the eight most talented female pianists within the Cuban society. Also, to his musical style, the presence of Cuban music is noticeable, pieces such as *Ay! Lunarcitos*, *Adios á la Habana*, and *Souvenir de Cuba*, resembles the Cuban salon of the nineteenth century. Gottschalk had great influence on the music of the island, composers such as Espadero and Ignacio Cervantes were in direct contact with the New Orleans'

“Maestro”. Cuba of the 19th Century showed a deep presence of African traditions. The Spaniards were very “motivated” to become intimate with female slaves. This resulted in a fast growing free “*mulatos*” population as a social group which reflected favorable conditions for the practice and preservation of African music in Cuba.

The *habanera* rhythm, the Cuban “*cinquillo*”, the syncopated *counterdance* of Manuel Saumell, mixed with the *Tumba francesa* – introduced in Cuba by Haitians- and variations of Spanish dances such as *Sevillanas*, *Pasodobles*, and *Seguidillas* made the Cuban music too attractive to the creole pianist. His link to Cuban history is part of a continuous musical trade between the island and the US.

After his time in Cuba, Gottschalk moved to Brazil where he once again met his childhood friend Lambert. They were both teachers of music at the Brazilian National Institute of Music. In this country he also presented another unusual setting for performance. This time there were 31 pianists on stage, two of them were Lambert and his brother Sydney. His presence in Brazil was also warmly appreciated, where he spent the remainder of his life.

Brazil became the ultimate destiny for these two American musicians. Gottschalk and Lambert discovered in this Portuguese colony a country in search of its national identity. The Brazilian refined bourgeoisie class was thirsty to define itself as heir of the national cultural heritage. The process for almost the entire Latin America reached its pinnacle during “.....the colonial era, in which it is shown how the encounter of Europeans, Africans and Amerindians spawned an infinity of diffuse hybrid forms” (Suzel 5). Different musical genres were also exposed in Brazil similar to those related to creolism in New Orleans and Cuba. Same as the *Cuban counterdance*, the *Bamboula* and other Caribbean rhythms, in Brazil the *Maxixe*, the *Modinha*, and the *Choro* result from a rich combination of diverse musical culture; genres as a

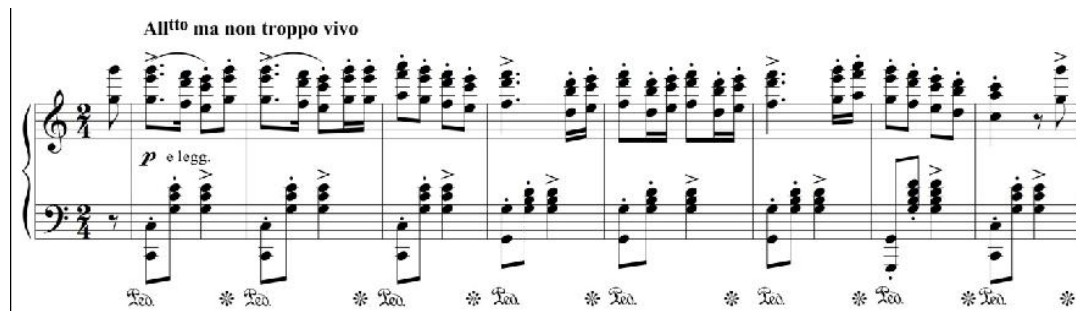
product of social transformation. These societies start to open spaces for integration; regardless of lack of acknowledgment and legal or constitutional support. Cultural exchange was a smooth way to start bringing different racial and social class groups closer. Brazil also portrayed in the 19th Century a concept of “high Art” which refers, like in America, to the European Art tradition. This trend is present in “scholarly books devoted to issues of nationalism and American musical identity that were framed solely in terms of art music” (Garrett 3). Popular Brazilian dances were displayed among the polka and the European minuet. “The *modinha* has been of interest to scholars both of popular music and of high art music, since it found niches in both universes” (Suzel 6). Unfortunately, the exponents behind this process of nationalism often do not receive the adequate recognition.

Gottschalk and Lambert in the U S have suffered this misfortune by “music historians who are committed to the high culture tradition” (Garrett 4). In reference to the presence of Gottschalk in Brazil, Appleby narrates: “In 1869 was a sensational success with his “monster concerts,” which included 650 band and orchestra players with more than 100 percussionists and an artillery piece”. The influence of Gottschalk in Brazil is witnessed by his impact in the music of some Brazilian composers. Nazareth, for example, was influenced by the Ragtime and the American Foxtrot. Gottschalk had an important role in the proliferation of his cultural heritage. Regarding this aspect Ferreira states “that *Ojos Criollos* and *Pasquinade* two Gottschalk of compositions with more conspicuous proto- ragtime elements may have had special influence in the great ragtime composers such as Scott Joplin”. The *Creolism* of the New Orleans composer transcended his own musical creativity to embrace the artistic outcomes of musicians of other confines.

After a successful career in France, and being well-recognized by the musical elite in France, Lambert moved to Brazil in 1860. His brother, Sydney, had served in the musical court for the royal family in Portugal. Sydney moved to Brazil, and after several years, Lambert joined him. Not much information about Lambert has been discussed by musicologists in the United States, but Lambert had a significant impact on the musical legacy of Brazil. He was the teacher of Ernesto Nazareth, who was to become an important Brazilian pianist and composer. Through Lambert's presence, American popular styles such as Ragtime, the Foxtrot, and the syncopated music from the New Orleans' streets were exposed to the Brazilian audience. About Lambert in Brazil, Sullivan comments: "Now that Nazareth's piano music is enjoying a revival on recordings, it becomes increasingly evident that he may have gained from Lambert not only his love for Chopin but also an inclination towards the *pianola* style, which, coupled with Gottschalk's example in the area of local colour, suggests a line of influence from Lambert Sr. and Gottschalk to Nazareth and thence to Heitor Villa-Lobos and even Darius Milhaud". (Sullivan 59)

In Rio de Janeiro, Lambert opened a piano and music store and dedicated a great amount of time teaching at the Institute of Music in Rio de Janeiro. Not much has been written about Lambert in Brazil but some information describes him as a dedicated teacher with deep knowledge of the piano and composition techniques. Ferreira in his article "Influências na Obra Pianística de Ernesto Nazareth" expresses:

"Durante as aulas particulares, Ernesto provavelmente teve lições de técnica pianística com Lambert, pois este, além de conhecido por suas habilidades como professor [3, 4], escreveu um compêndio em 1881 com uma coletânea de exercícios e estudos extraídos das Sonatas de Beethoven [3]. Isto talvez se relacione com o fato de as 32 sonatas de Beethoven para piano constarem no espólio de Nazareth [4]. No entanto, é provável que Ernesto também tenha tido alguma orientação na arte da composição.



Ex. 1b - Lucien LAMBERT, *La Brésilienne. Polka brillante pour le piano op. 58*, mes. 21-28(Chueke)

Another example of *Creolism* is his piece *L'Amazone, caprice mazurka pour piano op. 67*, “inspirée clairement par les « modinhas de salão » jouées à la cours portugaise au XIXe siècle” (Chueke 151). The inspiration derived from this Brazilian ballroom-dance *modinhas de salão* carries a richer mix of multicultural elements because “the *modinha* and the *lundu*; while these styles followed distinct processes of historical development - the first "Afro-Brazilianizing" a European form, the later "Europeanizing" an Afro-Brazilian form - they eventually fused in the parlour context, to the point of becoming practically indistinguishable from one another, both encompassed by the generic term *modinha*.” (Suzel 6) It is important to point out that the merger of European and African music, among the Amerindian traditions reshapes the musical genres resulting from this jumble.

Gottschalk died in Brazil in 1869 and later Lambert died in Rio de Janeiro in 1896. Their acceptance outside the US was due to the similarity that these societies had with New Orleans distinct from the rest of the United States. These societies were more open to inter-racial interaction. Gottschalk and Lambert were not isolated cases of racial discrimination. Edmund Dede was another Creole musician who found more opportunities in exile, first in France then in Mexico. It demonstrates that American society did not give space for colored people to be recognized as part of the “High Art.” Black artists survived as exponents of a secondary type of art, of lesser respect, such as Jazz and club type entertainment and background music. This

supports the fact that everything that sounds “black” still has to contend with a stereotype of European cultural values which have deliberately segregated some musical expressions in the American musical history. Gottschalk and Lambert have a place in musical history due to their significance in the development and integration of their *Creolismus* within other countries’ musical traditions.

Bibliography

Anthony, A. A. (1978). *The Negro Creole Community in New Orleans, 1880-1920: an Oral History*. (Order No. 7906396, University of California, Irvine). ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, , 185-185 p. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.fau.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/302902195?accountid=10902>. (302902195).

Appleby, David P. 1983. *The Music of Brazil*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Brockett, Clyde W. *Gottschalk in Madrid: A Tale of Ten Pianos*
The Musical Quarterly, Vol. 75, No. 3 (Autumn, 1991), pp. 279-315
Published by: Oxford University Press
Article Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/742052>

Carpentier, A. 1946: *La Música en Cuba*. Mexico City. Jasen.

Chueke, Zélia. *Quand le Brésil inspire la France : regard d'une pianiste* Université fédérale du Paraná Université Paris-Sorbonne/OMF-GRMB
http://www.zeliachueke.com/docs/14CHUEKE_le_Bresil_inspire_la_France.pdf

Ferreira de Souza Dias, Alexandre. *Influências na Obra Pianística de Ernesto Nazareth*
<http://ensaios.musicodobrasil.com.br/alexandredias-ernestonazareth.htm>

Foreign Musicians in Paris <http://parisforeigners.web.unc.edu/2011/01/10/white-lafitte-jose/>.

Garrett, Charles Hiroshi. "*Struggling to Define a Nation: American Music in the Twentieth Century*." Order No. 3155018, University of California, Los Angeles, 2004,
<http://ezproxy.fau.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/305219812?accountid=10902> (accessed September 22, 2014).

Kinzer, Charles E. *The Band of Music of the First Battalion of Free Men of Color and the Siege of New Orleans, 1814-1815* Source: American Music, Vol. 10, No. 3 (Autumn, 1992), pp. 348-369 Published by: University of Illinois Press Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3051599>
Accessed: 09/11/2014 19:36

LaBrew, Arthur R. *Black and White Scholarship Compared*.
<http://www.kresgeartsindetroit.org/fellowships/past-fellows/2013-fellows/arthur-r-labrew/>
<http://www.kresgeartsindetroit.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/3110665997-Media-01.pdf>

Leon, Argelier. 1964 *Del Canto y el Tiempo*. Havana: Ediciones Biblioteca Nacional Jose Marti.
Lief, Shane T. 2011. *Staging new orleans: The contested space of congo square*. Ph.D. diss., Tulane University,
<http://ezproxy.fau.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/913497752?accountid=10902> (accessed October 13, 2014).

Manuel, Peter: *Contradance and Quadrille Culture in the Caribbean*, Temple University Press 2009

Martins Oliveira, Aline *A QUESTÃO RÍTMICA E A DEFASAGEM DOS CÓDIGOS NO PIANO NACIONALISTA BRASILEIRO*
<http://livros01.livrosgratis.com.br/cp011623.pdf>

Naxos liner notes: http://www.naxos.com/person/Charles_Lucien_Lambert/22116.htm

Ortiz, Fernando. 1965. *La Africana de la Musica Folclorica de Cuba*. Havana: Editorial Universitaria.

Orovio, H. 1981: *Diccionario de la música cubana*. Havana: Letras Cubanas.

Pruett, Laura Moore. 2007. *Louis moreau gottschalk, john sullivan dwight, and the development of musical culture in the united states, 1853--1865*. Ph.D. diss., The Florida State University, <http://ezproxy.fau.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/304872380?accountid=10902> (accessed October 13, 2014).

Reily, Suzel Ana. "Introduction: Brazilian musics, brazilian identities." (2000): 1-10.
<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09681220008567289#.VBdrYPldXT0>

Rey, Mario. *The Rhythmic Component of "Afrocubanismo" in the Art Music of Cuba*
Black Music Research Journal Vol. 26, No. 2 (Fall, 2006) , pp. 181-212
Published by: Center for Black Music Research - Columbia College Chicago and University of Illinois Press
Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25433773>

Sánchez de Fuentes, 1936 *E. Ignacio Cervantes Kawanag, pianista y compositor eminente*.
Havana

Starr, S. Frederick *Bamboula! : The life and times of Louis Moreau Gottschalk*
New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
URL <http://hdl.handle.net/ezproxy.fau.edu/2027/heb.05610.0001.001>

Sullivan, Lester. *Composers of Color of Nineteenth-Century New Orleans: The History behind the Music*. Black Music Research Journal Vol. 8, No. 1 (1988) , pp. 51-82
Published by: Center for Black Music Research - Columbia College Chicago and University of Illinois Press
Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/779503>

Taylor Atkins, E. 2003 *Jazz Planet*, Univ. Press of Mississippi.
http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=wiQJmCxVICcC&oi=fnd&pg=PA41&dq=choro++Music+of+Brazil&ots=5T_rjJ3klO&sig=idXAk_ZahucxaVbk7YH92OtRdbw#v=onepage&q=choro%20%20Music%20of%20Brazil&f=false