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## **AN ANALYSIS OF ERNESTO LECUONA’S MALAGUENA’S PIANO PERFORMANCE FROM THE PEDAGOGICAL AND TECHNICAL PERSPECTIVE**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The aim of the study was to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the piano performance of “Malagueña” by, taking into account pedagogical and technical aspects. The research methodology was based on the use of historical analysis to study Lecuona’s creative activity in the context of the development of Cuban musical culture, music-theoretical analysis to determine the form, harmonic and rhythmic features of “Malagueña”, and comparative analysis to systematise the technical difficulties of performing the work. The method of pedagogical analysis helped to identify the optimal approaches to the educational process aimed at mastering the composition. The study showed that Lecuona combined classical European compositional techniques with the characteristic rhythmic and harmonic features of Cuban music, which

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contributed to the formation of the national piano tradition. Analysis of “Malagueña” revealed that the work is based on the verse and variation principle with a gradual complication of the texture and harmonic structure. The analysis of pedagogical approaches to learning “Malagueña” allowed identification of key methodological principles, including the phased learning of musical material, isolated study of technical elements, and work on dynamic and articulation features. The results of the study confirmed the significance of E. Lecuona’s work in the development of Cuban academic music and identified “Malagueña” as one of the key piano works that combines European and Cuban musical traditions. The identified technical and pedagogical aspects of the performance of the work can be used to optimise the educational process in piano pedagogy.

**Keywords:** Harmonic structure, dynamics, pedalling, rhythmic models, Phrygian scale.

## **ERNESTO LECUONA'NIN MALAGUENA'SININ PİYANO PERFORMANSININ PEDAGOJİK VE TEKNİK AÇIDAN ANALİZİ**

### **ÖZ**

Çalışmanın amacı, Ernesto Lecuona'nın "Malagueña" adlı eserinin piyano performansının pedagojik ve teknik yönlerini de dikkate alarak kapsamlı bir analizini yapmaktır. Araştırma metodolojisi, Küba müzik kültürünün gelişimi bağlamında Ernesto Lecuona'nın yaratıcı faaliyetini incelemek için tarihsel analiz kullanımına, "Malagueña"nın biçim, armonik ve ritmik özelliklerini belirlemek için müzik teorisi analizine ve eseri icra etmenin teknik zorluklarını sistematize etmek için karşılaştırmalı analize dayanmaktadır. Pedagojik analiz yöntemi, kompozisyonda ustalaşmayı amaçlayan eğitim sürecine yönelik optimum yaklaşımları belirlemeye yardımcı olmuştur. Çalışma, Lecuona'nın klasik Avrupa kompozisyon tekniklerini Küba müziğinin karakteristik ritmik ve armonik özellikleriyle birleştirdiğini ve bunun ulusal piyano geleneğinin oluşumuna katkıda bulunduğunu göstermiştir. "Malagueña" analizi, eserin doku ve armonik yapının kademeli olarak karmaşıklaştığı mısra ve varyasyon ilkesine dayandığını ortaya koymuştur. “Malagueña” öğrenimine yönelik pedagojik yaklaşımların analizi; müzik materyalinin aşamalı olarak öğrenilmesi, teknik unsurların izole biçimde çalışılması ve dinamik ile artikülasyon özellikleri üzerine yapılan çalışmalar gibi temel metodolojik ilkelerin belirlenmesine olanak sağlamıştır. Elde edilen bulgular, Lecuona'nın eserlerinin Küba akademik müziğinin gelişimindeki önemini doğrulamış ve ‘Malagueña’nın, Avrupa ile Küba müzik

geleneklerini birleřtiren temel piyano eserlerinden biri olduđunu ortaya koymuřtur. Eserin performansının belirlenen teknik ve pedagojik y6nleri, piyano pedagojisindeki eđitim s6recini optimize etmek i7in kullanılabilir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Armonik yapı, dinamikler, pedal 7evirme, ritmik modeller, Frigya gamı.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The piano music of Ernesto Lecuona, in particular his work “Malagueña”, played a significant role in the development of Cuban academic music, as it combined the harmonic principles of the European classical tradition, such as functional tonality and sectional melodic development, with rhythmic structures characteristic of Cuban music, such as syncopated accents, two-bar ostinatos, and Afro-Cuban patterns. The study of this work is relevant from a performing and pedagogical point of view, as its technical complexity was due to the rapid transition between registers, accented staccato in the right hand, complex pedalisaton, which required control over sound transparency, and the need for dynamic balancing between voices. The musical expressiveness of the work was based on the contrast between dramatic chordal sections and sophisticated legato phrases, which required not only technical skill but also a deep understanding of the stylistic features of Cuban piano music. The problem is the lack of a comprehensive approach to the study of “Malagueña”, which complicates its methodical teaching and performance interpretation. Despite the existence of scholarly works on Cuban music, there are gaps that require a detailed study of this work in the context of musical structure, performance difficulties, and pedagogical approaches.

The historical development of the piano in Cuban music was studied by Vazquez (2022), who analysed the process of forming musical nationalism through popular piano music in Cuba (p. 105). The author found that the development of the piano tradition in Cuba was strongly influenced by European musical styles, in particular Spanish and French classical music, but at the same time retained a unique national identity. The development of Cuban dances for piano was studied by Ortiz (2023: 55), who determined that composers such as Lecuona used the characteristics of folk music to create an original style. Specific elements of Cuban music have been studied by Bălan (2023), who found that Afro-Cuban rhythmic structures and characteristic harmonic movements played a decisive role in the formation of performance traditions.

The rhythmic aspects of piano performance were considered by You (2023), who proved that mastering such rhythmic models required special training methods, including working on the accuracy of accents, tempo uniformity, and hand independence. Another possible challenge for a performer, regarding the rhythmic aspects, is the use of polymetry, as noted by Ak and Tanatar (2025). Despite its complexity, polymetry significantly enhances the rhythmic diversity throughout the piece and reinforces its dramatic framework. The national peculiarities of harmony in piano music were studied by Jia and Jia (2021), who determined that characteristic harmonic sequences and the use of alternations created a specific sound of national schools.

Quevedo (2023) found that Cuban music has largely adapted European traditions, but retained its rhythmic and melodic identity, which allowed it to remain recognisable in the world music space. Methodological aspects of teaching piano literature were analysed by Yong (2024), who determined that traditional teaching methods need to be updated in accordance with modern performance requirements. Springer and Sorenson (2024) found that pianists who performed pieces by heart demonstrated a higher level of interpretive freedom, while performing from sheet music provided greater accuracy. In Biçak's opinion (2025), all the potential discoveries made by a composer, should be shown on the notation, in a way for a performer to present them correctly (p. 481). The interaction of classical, jazz and Latin American elements in music was analysed by Calvache Narvaez (2024), who proved that musical fusion contributed to the emergence of new forms of performance techniques and compositional principles (p. 90).

Despite the considerable amount of research, there has been no comprehensive analysis of "Malagueña" from a performing and pedagogical point of view. Some works considered general issues of Cuban music, but did not pay sufficient attention to the specific technical and methodological aspects of performing this work. The aim of the study is to carry out a comprehensive analysis of Lecuona's "Malagueña" piano performance from a pedagogical and technical point of view. The research objectives include: determining the role of Lecuona in the formation of the Cuban piano tradition; studying the musical structure of "Malagueña" and its harmonic features; analysing the technical difficulties of performing the work and identifying effective methodological approaches; outlining pedagogical methods of teaching the work.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

A set of methods is applied that allows for a systematic analysis of the work “Malagueña” by Lecuona from the standpoint of musicological and pedagogical approaches. The main focus is on identifying the musical, technical and pedagogical aspects of the work through an analytical study of its musical text, harmonic language, performance features and teaching methods. The method of historical analysis is used to determine the role of Lecuona in the formation of the Cuban piano tradition. This makes it possible to trace the development of his work in the context of Cuban musical culture, to identify the characteristic features of his style and to determine the influence of European piano schools on his compositional activity. The research includes an analysis of musical trends of the early twentieth century, the peculiarities of the development of Cuban academic music and the place of Lecuona in this process. Particular attention is paid to his contribution to the spread of national musical elements in world music practice and their synthesis with European traditions.

To study the musical structure of “Malagueña” and its harmonic features, the method of music-theoretical analysis was used. Modal and scale-degree analysis were used to determine the Phrygian scale’s impact, while Schenkerian, set, and neo-Riemannian theory were used to track harmonic changes. Metric analysis and rhythmic reduction revealed the piece's rhythmic organisation. Thematic analysis and motivic development analysis were utilised to investigate variation processes, revealing the composition's thematic development and variation strategies. The study uses these extensive approaches to increase scientific transparency and provide a complete knowledge of the analytical frameworks, boosting its credibility and impact. The musical text of Lecuona’s work was studied in order to identify the peculiarities of the form, thematic development, variation technique, harmonic transitions and rhythmic structures (Lecuona, 2023). Particular attention was given to the harmonic language of the work, including the use of modal turns, chromatic alternations, non-standard chord sequences and means of tonal expansion. The characteristic features of the Spanish and Cuban musical influences reflected in the rhythmic organisation and harmonic structure of the work were considered.

The analysis of the technical difficulties of performing “Malagueña” was carried out using the method of comparative analysis, which allowed to consider the peculiarities of the pianistic texture, coordination difficulties and requirements for performance technique. Particular attention

was given to the interaction between the hands, the distribution of functions in the texture, the role of the bass accompaniment and the variability of rhythmic models. The use of this method has made it possible to systematise technical difficulties and summarise them in appropriate categories.

To identify the optimal methodological approaches to teaching the piece, the method of pedagogical analysis was used. The main principles of the step-by-step learning of “Malagueña” were considered, starting with familiarisation with the musical text, work on rhythmic organisation, articulation, dynamic balance and ending with the formation of artistic interpretation. The effectiveness of the step-by-step learning of the material is investigated, critical points requiring special attention during learning are highlighted, and general recommendations for the performance approach are formulated.

## **RESULTS**

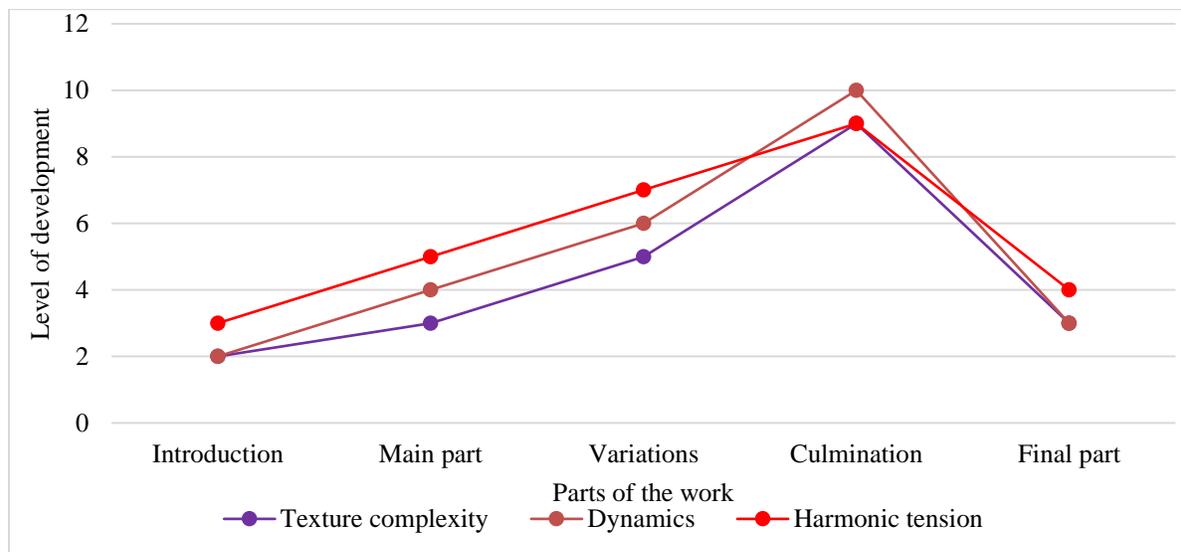
### **Analysing the musical structure of “Malagueña”**

Lecuona (1895-1963) was a Cuban composer, pianist and conductor who made a significant contribution to the development of Cuban academic and popular music. Born in Havana, Lecuona showed early musical talent and began his studies at the National Conservatory under Antonio Pfeffer. Having received a thorough musical education, Lecuona not only actively performed but also composed. Throughout his career, he composed more than 600 works, including “Malagueña”, “La Comparsa”, “Andalucía” and “Siboney”. Thanks to his tours in the USA, Europe and Latin America, the Cuban musical tradition became widespread and influential in the world of music (Jorguenson, 2022: 33).

“Malagueña” by Lecuona (2023) was composed in 1928 as part of the Andalucía suite, which consisted of six pieces inspired by Spanish musical traditions. The title of the work refers to the Andalusian dance genre of malagueña, which originated in the province of Malaga and was part of the flamenco tradition. However, in Lecuona’s interpretation, this genre underwent a significant transformation, acquiring the characteristic features of Cuban music. “Malagueña” was marked by a special expressiveness based on a combination of large-scale chordal constructions, fast passages and bright rhythmic accents. The work became part of the repertoire of many pianists and orchestras in various arrangements, including symphonic, jazz and popular versions (Rexhepi et al., 2024: 277). An important aspect of “Malagueña” was its place in shaping the style of

Cuban academic music. Lecuona combined the European harmonic traditions of the Romantic school with the rhythmic complexity and expressiveness inherent in Cuban music (Berehova, 2022: 18). The technical complexity of the work and its virtuosic character made it popular among pianists who wanted to demonstrate their skills (Bocheliuk et al., 2019). The composition required a high level of technical training from the performer, especially in terms of speed, articulation and dynamic control. For this reason, “Malagueña” was often included in the teaching repertoire as an example of a work that develops piano technique (Troisi, 2023: 25).

The structure of Lecuona’s “Malagueña” is one-part, but within the work there is a clear division into sections, each of which plays an important role in the dramatic development of the composition. The basic form of the work is based on the verse-variation principle, where each repetition of the thematic material is accompanied by altered harmonic, dynamic or textural features (Figure 1).



*Figure 1. The general drama of Malaguena (Jorguenson, 2022 ; Troisi, 2023).*

In “Malagueña” harmonic developments provide continuity and progression, using alternate chords and the Spanish Phrygian scale to create a rich, cohesive sound. Textural shifts delineate sections and add dramatic intensity, while dynamic contrasts shape the narrative progression, building tension and release. Together, these elements craft a composition that is both structurally unified and emotionally compelling.

The work opens with an introductory section consisting of a characteristic accompaniment in the left hand in the form of arpeggiated chords and an energetic melody in the upper voice. The high

register of the right hand, together with wide intervals, creates a sense of space and lightness. This opening section prepares the listener for the main thematic material presented in the next section. The main theme is set in a moderate tempo and is vocal in nature. It is characterised by singing intonations that echo the traditional melodic phrases of Andalusian music. The melody is based on a wave-like movement that begins with a gradual ascending development, reaches a culmination point, and then gradually descends to the initial register. The second section of the work develops the initial theme, gradually adding new harmonic and rhythmic elements. Here, Lecuona uses the method of variation, enriching the melody with additional ornaments, changes in articulation and textural modifications. The role of the bass line is strengthened, which becomes more active, supporting the overall dynamics of the work. The climactic section of “Malagueña” is marked by a sharp increase in dynamic tension. The use of chord progressions in a wide arrangement, the active use of octave progressions and fast passages create the impression of an explosive emotional rise. The composer employs a dramatic shift in texture, as dense chords and a lush soundscape stand in stark contrast to the preceding lyrical passages. The final section of the work returns the listener to the main thematic material, but in a modified form. The original melody is transformed, acquiring a new sound due to dynamic changes and textural transformations. In the last bars, there is a gradual fading of the dynamics, which creates a sense of completeness in the composition. The structure of “Malagueña” is based on contrasts between episodes that succeed each other, gradually increasing in dynamics and texture. The clear planning of the sections, the logical development of the theme and the effective use of the variation method make the composition holistic, with a pronounced dramatic development (Bauer, 2023: 96).

The harmonic structure of “Malagueña” by Lecuona (2023) is flexible and varied, which allows him to achieve the dramatic effect characteristic of the work. The main key of the work is A minor, but Lecuona actively uses alternate chords and non-standard harmonic transitions, which expands the colouristic possibilities of the work. One of the defining elements of the harmonic language is the use of the Spanish Phrygian scale, in which the lowered second degree creates a characteristic tense sound, which is especially expressive in the climaxes. The harmonic development of the work is based on the alternation of open chordal structures with more intense modulations. Particularly interesting is the technique of chordal alteration at the moments of climax, which adds additional contrast between the sections (Carr et al., 2023: 209).

In terms of melody, “Malagueña” demonstrates the characteristic features of Spanish folklore (long, undulating melodic phrases that imitate the intonations of Andalusian singing). The main theme is vocal in nature and is based on long, undulating melodic phrases that imitate the intonations of Andalusian singing. Lecuona creates the effect of singing without words by using long legato phrases in the high register, accompanied by arpeggiated accompaniment in the left hand (Efremov, 2025). One of the key features of the melodic organisation is the frequent use of wide interval leaps that add drama and expressiveness. The transitional moments between sections contain increased and decreased intervals, which gives the music a special flavour and emphasizes the improvisational nature of the phrasing. Lecuona also uses a sectional development of the theme, which contributes to the gradual growth of tension in the work. The rhythmic structure of “Malagueña” plays a crucial role in creating the characteristic sound of the work. One of the most important elements is the use of syncopated rhythmic figures that create the effect of movement and energy. The accompaniment uses ostinato rhythmic forms that are repeated throughout the piece and form a stable rhythmic foundation. This creates a rhythmic pulse effect that maintains the stability of the composition despite the complex harmonic transitions (Hardegree, 2023: 106).

The use of the polymetry effect, where one rhythmic group maintains a steady metre while the other changes accentuation, is particularly noteworthy. This gives the piece a special flexibility and variability, and also requires a high level of rhythmic precision from the performer. The ending of the piece also demonstrates an interesting rhythmic solution. The gradual slowing down of the tempo is combined with the preservation of the main rhythmic pattern, which creates the effect of “fading” the energy of the piece, as if it were an echo of the main dance movement. Thus, the rhythmic structure of “Malagueña” not only supports the overall musical image, but also significantly affects the dramatic development of the composition.

### **Technical aspects of performance**

The performance of Lecuona’s “Malagueña” requires a high level of technical skill from the pianist, as the composition contains complex piano techniques in both hands that interact in close rhythmic and textural connection (Figure 2).

PEDAGOGICAL AND TECHNICAL PERSPECTIVE

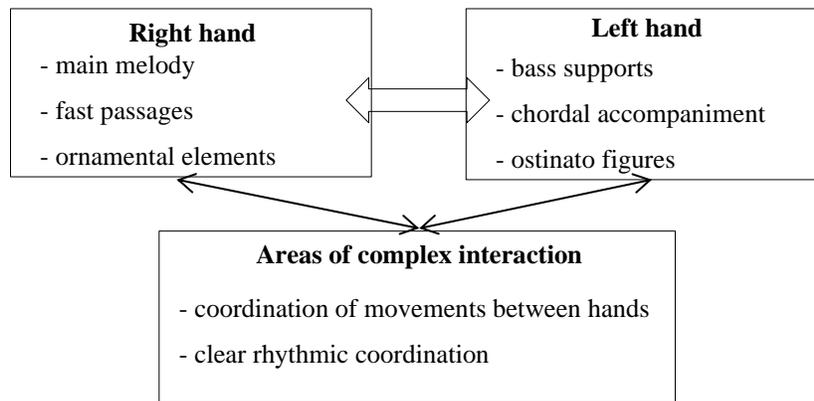


Figure 2. Distribution of functions between the hands by “Malagueña” (Kim et al. 2021; Liu, 2020).

The right hand plays a leading role in shaping the main melodic material. It has to sustain long melody lines, which often include wide jumps, arpeggios and fast passages that require precise finger control and even distribution of effort. One of the main difficulties is performing legato phrases with frequent register changes, which requires careful planning of movements and the correct use of finger changes to maintain sound continuity. In addition, in many sections, the right hand needs to combine chordal structures with melodic lines, which increases the workload and requires flexible coordination. The left hand performs an accompanying function, but within the piece it plays a significant role in forming the harmonic foundation and rhythmic stability. One of the main difficulties is the rapid arpeggiated movements and wide chordal expansions, which require a high level of mastery of the technique of distributing the weight of the hand (Kim et al., 2021). Particularly challenging are the moments when the left hand has to be ahead of the right or, conversely, adapt to its rhythmic changes.

Special attention should be paid to the technique of playing chords. In many episodes, both hands work in a tight chordal arrangement, which requires not only strength but also precision in key pressing. The peculiarity is that the chords are located in different registers, and their alternation creates the effect of spatial sound movement, which makes it difficult to control the balance between the dynamic layers. The dynamic aspect of performing “Malagueña” is one of the most difficult in the context of building musical drama. Lecuona uses a wide dynamic range, which requires the pianist to work with nuances precisely. The performance of the piece requires the ability to control sudden changes in volume and gradual increases in sound, which creates the effect of undulating development.

The dynamic balance between the hands plays a key role in creating a harmoniously coherent sound. The right hand, which plays the melody, needs careful control over the attack of the sound, especially in fast passages where it is necessary to maintain smooth phrasing. The left hand should be expressive enough to maintain the overall harmonic structure, but not drown out the melodic voice. Particularly challenging are the moments where there is a sharp contrast between quiet and loud episodes, which requires a high level of control over the dynamic balance. An important aspect of the performance of “Malagueña” is the pedalling, which has a significant impact on the overall sound of the work. Lecuona uses a rich harmonic texture that requires careful control of the pedal use to avoid excessive blurring of the sound and to ensure expressive articulation. The main pedal used during performance is the sustain pedal (right pedal), which prolongs the sound of notes after the keys are released. Using it helps to create a smooth sound and maintain a three-dimensional texture. An important technique is to change the pedal in a timely manner, especially in fast harmonic transitions, to avoid over-mixing sounds. Excessive use of the sustain pedal can lead to a loss of texture clarity, while under-use can make the sound too dry. The best option is mixed pedalling, which involves alternating between short and long strokes depending on harmonic changes. In fast passages, it is recommended to use the half-pedal technique, which allows maintaining the clarity of the attacked notes while maintaining the necessary sound resistance (Liu, 2020: 31).

The technical aspects of Lecuona’s “Malagueña” involve considerable difficulty in both the right and left hands, requiring a high level of coordination, synchronisation and control from the pianist. Dynamic transitions, articulation changes and pedalling are critical elements in creating an expressive performance that preserves the characteristic features of the piece. All these aspects need to be carefully worked out during preparation, as it is their combination that determines the overall sound of the piece and its artistic expressiveness.

### **Pedagogical approach to studying the work**

Learning Lecuona’s “Malagueña” (2023) requires a systematic methodological approach, including analysing the musical text, mastering technical techniques step by step, developing musical expressiveness and developing a performance strategy. An integrated approach to the learning process contributes not only to the technical mastery of the material, but also to an understanding of the stylistic features of the piece, its rhythmic and harmonic organisation. The

training process should be divided into several key stages, each of which contains specific pedagogical tasks and performance goals.

At the initial stage, the primary task is to familiarise yourself with the musical text and the overall structure of the piece (Spytska, 2023). The performer needs to analyse the architectonics of the composition, identify the main thematic blocks, their interrelationships, variational changes and climaxes. Listening to recordings of interpretations by different performers can be useful for forming a general idea of the character and style of the work (Efremov, 2024). Listening to different versions of a performance helps understanding the differences in tempo decisions, dynamic transitions, and articulation. Comparing interpretations helps to develop one's own understanding of the piece, which will become the basis for further mastering performance techniques. In addition, the pedagogical process at this stage includes a brief analysis of the historical and cultural context, which contributes to a better understanding of the stylistic features of the composition (Jang, 2022: 88).

The second stage involves learning the musical text, which should be done gradually, dividing the material into separate fragments for detailed study of each episode. This allows for focusing on the correct formation of performance skills, ensuring the accuracy of the rhythmic pattern and intonation (Tolegen et al., 2016). It is important to pay attention to the correct choice of finger placement, which will ensure ease of performance and reduce physical exertion (Kantor and Kubiczek, 2021). Gradually increasing the tempo helps to gradually adapt the movements and prevents unnecessary technical errors. Performing separate parts of the hands allows for a deeper understanding of their interaction, and combining them in a slow tempo helps to achieve rhythmic accuracy and balance of dynamic levels (Vicente Álvarez et al., 2020).

The third stage focuses on improving the rhythmic organisation. "Malagueña" is characterised by complex rhythmic structures, including syncopations, alternating metrical accents and ostinato figures. A useful method for overcoming rhythmic difficulties is to practice performing each rhythmic pattern separately, with their gradual combination (Zelenin et al., 2023). Working with a metronome is an effective way to stabilise the tempo pulse and avoid accelerations or decelerations in difficult sections of the piece. The next stage of work involves the development of performance technique. Playing wide chords requires precise distribution of muscle tension and the use of the natural weight balance of the hand (Makarova, 2021). The method of gradual

mastery of chord passages involves alternate work on their articulation, dynamics, and timbre variations.

Working on dynamic nuances is the next important stage in learning a piece, as it is the dynamic development that determines its expressiveness and artistic integrity. The performer must master the technique of gradual dynamics growth, which contributes to the logical construction of the dramatic line of the composition (Ryskaliyev et al., 2019). Smooth crescendos and diminuendos should be formed without abrupt transitions, preserving the naturalness of the sound. The main melody should remain distinct, even in sections with dense harmonic texture. One of the pedagogical methods of achieving dynamic balance is to practice performing different dynamic layers separately (Novosiadla, 2023; Spytka, 2024a, 2024b). For example, working out the main melody in the right hand and the accompaniment in the left hand separately, allows for developing control over the ratio of voices.

Another key aspect is pedalling, which plays an important role in creating a three-dimensional sound. Controlling the use of the right pedal is essential to avoid over-mixing harmonies, especially in fast passages. The use of short pedalling and the “clean pedal” technique can achieve greater articulatory transparency. In addition, in certain episodes, it is advisable to use the left pedal to create the effect of timbre contrast and mute the sound attack.

The final stage is to work on the artistic interpretation of the piece. Here, special attention should be paid to flexible phrasing, which allows for creating a sense of natural musical movement (Tkachenko, 2022). The pedagogical approach at this stage involves the use of a holistic performance methodology that promotes coherence between all elements of the musical material (Kyrychok et al., 2024).

A student encounters several performance challenges when studying a piece, which can impede the mastery of the content. These challenges encompass intricate technical components, coordination issues between the hands, the necessity for dynamic balance, and the maintenance of rhythmic precision. To address these obstacles, successful strategies encompass gradual tempo acceleration, a diverse approach to interpreting dynamic nuances, and the implementation of individual workouts to enhance flexibility and precision of motions. Developing the ability to independently control each hand is essential for achieving regularity in performance movement. Moreover, pedagogical practice includes exercises designed to alleviate muscle tension in the

hand and forearm, so preventing undue strain during the execution of intricate technical passages. Exercises aimed at enhancing wrist flexibility and optimising finger movement efficiency are essential for improving performance endurance.

## **DISCUSSION**

The study of the piano work “Malagueña” by Lecuona has made it possible to identify its structural, harmonic and rhythmic features, as well as the performance and pedagogical aspects of its development. The results obtained are correlated with the achievements of other researchers in the field of music analysis, piano performance pedagogy and technological innovations in piano teaching. The analysis of the dynamic features of the “Malagueña” piece has revealed a wide range of dynamic contrasts that play an important role in its expressiveness. It was found that the dynamic development of the work is associated with gradual increases and decreases in sound, which are combined with textural changes. In the study by Jones and Friberg (2023) examined an approach to modelling dynamic changes in piano performance, which made it possible to identify patterns in the construction of dynamic phrases. Comparison of the results of the present research with the findings of Jones and Friberg showed the commonality of the principles of dynamic development, but in Lecuona’s work, dynamics was also formed through a specific rhythmic organisation and accentuation, which was not considered in the above work.

The textural features of “Malagueña” included a combination of chordal structures, arpeggios and octave movements, which created a characteristic musical image of the work. Couturier et al. (2023) compared different textures in piano scores, which revealed the influence of textural organisation on performance interpretation. The analysis of Lecuona’s work confirmed the significant role of texture in shaping musical drama, namely, changing the density of the texture as a means of achieving the climactic effect. At the same time, in contrast to the general approach proposed by Couturier et al., the current study examined the relationship between texture and rhythmic and harmonic features, which is a characteristic feature of Lecuona’s work.

This study establishes that the performance of the work requires the use of individual pedagogical approaches, in particular due to the complexity of technical elements and the need to understand the stylistic features of Lecuona’s music. In the work of Lee (2021) examined interpretive approaches and pedagogical strategies in the performance of ensemble piano music, in particular their impact on the quality of performance training. Comparison of the results showed that,

although the current research's individual approach to performance work is important, the general principles of structured learning proposed by Lee proved to be relevant for mastering complex piano works.

The technical difficulties in performing "Malagueña" included coordination between the hands, fast passages, chordal technique, and control of articulatory expression. In the work of Madeira and Santos (2024) examined the peculiarities of learning piano pieces in conditions of sensory deprivation, which showed a significant impact of the lack of auditory feedback on the process of mastering technical elements. Comparing results confirms the importance of auditory control in the "Malagueña" learning process, in particular in the work on movement synchronisation and dynamic contrasts. At the same time, the methodology considered by Madeira and Santos did not take into account the complex combination of harmonic, rhythmic and textural complexity that is characteristic of Lecuona's work. Modern piano teaching technologies expand the possibilities of performance training. Contemporary pedagogical tools and digital techniques, such as motion capture technologies and AI-driven performance analysis, offer innovative ways to enhance learning and performance accuracy. These technologies can provide real-time feedback, optimize practice sessions, and help in mastering complex technical fragments more efficiently (Habrel, 2022; Kelmendi, 2024). The study by Labrou et al. (2023) analysed the use of motion capture technologies for teaching piano performance, which contributed to a better understanding of motor mechanisms during playing. Although the study of "Malagueña" focused on traditional teaching methods, the results of Labrou et al. confirm the prospects of using digital technologies to improve performance technique.

Research by Allingham and Wöllner (2022) highlighted the role of slow playing and tempo control in the process of teaching piano technique. The authors considered slow playing to be an effective method that promotes the development of motor control, improves accuracy, and awareness of musical form. This study also confirmed that gradual tempo building is a key method for achieving articulation accuracy, dynamic balance stability, and hand-to-hand synchronisation. The use of a slow tempo in the initial stages allowed for better mastery of complex technical fragments, especially in parts containing fast chord sequences and arpeggios. A comparative analysis of these two studies revealed commonalities in teaching methods, which

emphasises the importance of tempo management for improving performance skills and forming high-quality sound production.

The significance of the analytical approach to piano playing was discussed in Duinker (2023), where the connection between the analysis of musical material and performance practice was investigated. The author determined that the structural analysis of a composition allows performers to better understand the logic of the theme development, harmonic transitions and rhythmic organisation, which ultimately contributes to a more informed interpretation. This paper also confirms that harmonic and formative analysis of a piece contributes to the improvement of the performance process. It was found that a clear understanding of the composition's structure allowed for better building of dynamic contrasts, controlling the balance between melodic and accompaniment lines, and adjusting phrasing in accordance with the logical development of the theme. In this context, Duinker's work was consistent with the findings of the present study, but it focused on general analytical approaches, while the current study applied the analysis methodology to a specific piece.

The role of short-term piano training and its impact on cognitive abilities was considered in Price-Mohr and Price (2021). In the study, the authors found that even short periods of piano training have a positive effect on memory, concentration, and the ability to process complex information. This study confirmed that learning complex musical structures helps to improve the performer's cognitive skills, particularly in terms of rhythmic organisation and motor coordination. However, unlike the work of Price-Mohr and Price, which analysed the initial stages of piano learning, the present article emphasised the high technical complexity of the piece, which makes it unsuitable for the beginner level. At the same time, the general principles of gradual mastery of musical material were consistent with the findings on the cognitive benefits of piano playing.

Analysis of the work of Abdumutalibovich (2020), devoted to the methods of teaching etudes in piano performance, made it possible to identify common approaches to teaching "Malagueña". The author investigated the isolated learning of technical fragments as an effective method of mastering complex works. This study also confirmed that dividing a composition into separate technical elements and gradually practising them contributes to the effective learning of the material. In particular, the emphasis was placed on isolated work on chord sequences, fast passages, and coordination between the hands. Similar to the approach proposed by

Abdumutalibovich, the current research found that systematic work on complex elements at a slow tempo, gradual increase in speed, and emphasis on articulatory clarity are key factors in achieving quality performance.

The work of Tabuena (2020) also considered harmonic features in the context of performance and pedagogical training, but the author focused on their application to piano accompaniment teaching. Tabuena defined harmony as a structural element that facilitates the acquisition of standard musical models, while the present study found that the harmonic language of “Malagueña” aims to create an expressive sound palette and does not lend itself to rigid structural frameworks. Thus, while Tabuena’s study had a more practical and instructional bias, the present analysis considers harmony as a key element of an individual composer’s style.

In terms of textural organisation, the study found that “Malagueña” demonstrates a variable textural structure that contributes to the dramatic development of the composition. The transition from sparse accompaniment figurations to dense chordal sections plays an important role in shaping the emotional tension (Markova, 2023). In this context, the results of the work of Wohlfarth (2023) are relevant, as the author investigated the influence of textural variations in solo piano performance. Wohlfarth considered texture as a dynamic parameter that directly affects the perception of music by listeners. It was found that changing the density of the texture affects the level of emotional perception of the work, which is consistent with the findings of the present study on the use of textural variation in “Malagueña” to enhance the expressiveness of the work. The difference between the approaches was that A. Wohlfarth focused on the general principles of textural development in solo piano music, while in the current analysis, textural features were analysed in the context of a specific piece, which allowed us to detail the specifics of textural changes within a single musical sample.

Regarding methodological approaches to performing interpretation, the study has shown that mastering “Malagueña” requires gradual work on complex technical elements, including chordal constructions, fast passages and variable articulation. It has been determined that effective learning of the piece requires a structured approach that involves gradual learning of technical elements and a gradual increase in tempo. The study by Yang (2024) examined methods of developing piano technique in the context of deep learning and artificial intelligence, in particular in the form of analysing double piano performance. The author determined that the use of

technological tools can optimise the process of mastering complex technical fragments through automatic error analysis and performance correction. Compared to the results of the present study, which focused on traditional methods of performance training, Yang's approach represented a technological alternative based on algorithmic analysis of the performance. The difference was that in this study, pedagogical approaches were evaluated from the perspective of the effectiveness of sequential learning of a piano text, while in Yang's work, the emphasis was on digital approaches to analysing and improving performance technique.

Comparison of the results of this study with other works has revealed common approaches to teaching piano, peculiarities of performance technique and the importance of the analytical approach in the learning process. The obtained results confirm the importance of combining traditional teaching methods with the latest technological solutions to improve the effectiveness of performance training.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The study has determined the significance of Lecuona's work in shaping the Cuban piano tradition. The analysis of his work has shown that the composer combined classical European performance and compositional techniques with national elements of Cuban music, which contributed to the development of a unique style. Lecuona integrated the rhythmic and harmonic features of the Cuban tradition into his own piano works, creating compositions that were widely recognised in the academic and popular music world. His contribution to the international promotion of Cuban music was instrumental in spreading the national musical culture beyond Cuba's borders.

A study of the musical structure of "Malagueña" has revealed that this work is an example of a synthesis of European and Latin American musical traditions. Structurally, the composition is based on the verse-variation principle, which ensured its dynamic development and dramatic expressiveness. The main theme is subjected to variation through changes in harmony, texture, dynamics and register organisation. The harmonic analysis confirmed that Lecuona used both traditional classical harmonic means and specific modal constructions, in particular the Phrygian scale, which is typical for Spanish music. The use of chromatic alterations and harmonic modulations, which created a special colouristic colouring of the work, is revealed. The rhythmic analysis has shown that "Malagueña" contained characteristic features of Cuban music, in

particular the use of syncopated rhythmic structures and ostinato figures that formed its characteristic musical movement.

The analysis of the technical difficulties of performing the work allowed us to identify the key performance aspects that required special attention. It was found that the work required a high level of piano technique, in particular in the field of coordination between hands, playing chordal constructions and fast passages. The left hand performed the function of a harmonic and rhythmic basis, which was complicated by the need for clear articulation of ostinato bass movements. The right hand led the main melody, which require flexibility, uniformity and smoothness of performance. Dynamic contrasts and a variety of articulation techniques complicate the performance process, requiring a high level of performance skills. It was found that pedalling was an important aspect, as it was necessary to ensure a balance between the transparency of the harmonic structure and its expressiveness.

It was found that the educational process should consist of several key stages, including familiarisation with the musical text, gradual learning of complex technical fragments, work on dynamic and articulation nuances, as well as the formation of an interpretive approach. It was determined that at the initial stage of studying it was important to analyse the musical structure and historical context of the work, which contributed to the understanding of its stylistic features. In the further work, considerable attention was paid to the methods of gradual complication of the material, which included the isolated development of individual technical elements and the gradual collection of texture.

Thus, the study has confirmed that Lecuona's "Malagueña" is one of the key piano compositions in the Cuban musical tradition, which combined national stylistic features with European harmonic and performance principles. The work was distinguished by its complex musical structure, rich harmony, intense rhythm and required a high level of performance skills. The analysis of its pedagogical development made it possible to formulate methodological approaches that contributed to the effective mastering of the material, the development of technical skills and the formation of artistic interpretation.

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## **EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

Ernesto Lecuona'nın Malagueña adlı piyano bestesi, sadece Küba müziğinin önemli bir parçası olmakla kalmaz, aynı zamanda piyano repertuarındaki teknik zorluklar ve pedagojik anlamda derinlemesine incelenmesi gereken bir eserdir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, Malagueña eserinin teknik ve pedagojik zorluklarını ele almak ve bu eserin tarihsel, müzikal ve pedagojik önemine değinerek öğrencilere nasıl etkili bir şekilde öğretilbileceğine dair fikirler sunmaktır. Eserin içsel yapısı, onun hem müzikal zenginliğini hem de eğitim açısından sunduğu fırsatları ortaya koymaktadır. Bu eserin detaylı bir analizine olan ihtiyaç, özellikle piyanistlerin bu eseri seslendirirken karşılaştıkları teknik ve yorumsal zorluklardan kaynaklanmaktadır. Eserin pedagojik analizinin eksikliği, eğitimcilerin bu önemli eseri etkili bir şekilde öğretmesini zorlaştırmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, bu çalışma, tarihsel bağlamdan müzik teorisi analizine, performans zorluklarından pedagojik yöntemlere kadar geniş bir perspektiften eserin incelenmesini amaçlamaktadır. Küba müziği ve Lecuona'nın eserleri üzerine yapılan mevcut araştırmalar, genellikle müziğinin tarihsel bağlamını, ritmik yapısını ve harmonik dilini incelemiş olsa da, Malagueña eserinin pedagojik ve teknik açıdan kapsamlı bir analizi yapılmamıştır. Bu eser, sadece teknik açıdan zorlayıcı değil, aynı zamanda öğrencilerin müzikal anlamda gelişimlerini destekleyen bir öğretim aracı olarak da önemli bir rol oynamaktadır.

Malagueña, Küba müziğiyle Avrupa müziği arasında bir köprü işlevi görmektedir. Senkoplu ritimler ve Afro-Küba ritmik kalıplarının Avrupa klasik teknikleriyle birleşmesi, eserin ritmik yapısının temelini oluşturur. Aynı zamanda, eserin melodik ve armonik yapıları, onu teknik açıdan oldukça karmaşık hale getirmiştir. Eser, değişen armonik yapılar ve dinamiklerle çeşitlendirilen bir şiir-varyasyon formunu takip eder. Bu form, hem melodik hem de harmonik çeşitliliği yansıtarak eserin etkileyici yapısını güçlendirir. Malagueña'nın ritmik yapısı, senkoplu ritimler ve sık sık kullanılan Afro-Küba kalıplarıyla zenginleşmiştir. Bu ritmik kalıplar, eserin dinamik yapısını ve performansını belirleyen unsurlardır.

Eserin en dikkat çekici özelliklerinden biri, el koordinasyonu gereksinimidir. Sol el, ritmik ve armonik temeli sağlarken, sağ el ana melodiyi çalar. İki el arasındaki kontrast, dikkatli bir denge ve kontrol gerektirir. Sol elin ritmik ve harmonik temeli, genellikle düşük seslerle çalınırken, sağ el melodiyi daha parlak ve belirgin bir şekilde çalar. Bu iki el arasındaki uyum, eserin genel doku üzerinde dikkatli bir denge ve kontrol gerektirir. Bunun yanı sıra, dramatik akor geçişleri ve legato ifadeleri arasında geçiş yapmak, dinamik kontrast ve artikülasyonda hassasiyet gerektirir. Eserin performansında, her iki elin arasındaki bu kontrastın dengelenmesi, özellikle piyano eğitimi açısından zorlu bir nokta olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Bir diğer önemli teknik zorluk ise armonik yapının şeffaflığıdır. Malagueña'nın armonik yapısı, klasik Avrupa müziğinin geleneksel harmonik dillerini ve Küba müziğinin karakteristik Afro-Küba armonilerini birleştirir. Bu birleşim, eserin zenginliğini artırırken, aynı zamanda parçanın ifade taleplerinin denge içinde sunulmasını gerektirir. Hızlı geçişler, geniş akor yapıları ve eller arasındaki karmaşık koordinasyon, eseri teknik açıdan oldukça zorlayıcı kılar. Özellikle hızlı pasajlar ve geniş akor sıçramaları, öğrenci için önemli bir meydan okuma yaratmaktadır. Öğrenciler, bu tür teknik zorluklarla başa çıkmak için sürekli pratik yapmalı ve el koordinasyonlarını geliştirmelidirler. Bununla birlikte, ritmik kesinlik de büyük bir öneme sahiptir. Özellikle senkoplu örüntüler ve ostinato figürleri gibi öğelerin doğru bir şekilde çalınması, eserin doğru bir şekilde yorumlanabilmesi için elzemdir.

Malagueña eserinin pedagojik açıdan incelenmesi, eserin öğretiminde izlenecek stratejilerin belirlenmesinde önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. Bu çalışmada geliştirilen pedagojik analiz, eserin etkili bir şekilde öğretilmesi için adım adım ilerleyen yapılandırılmış bir yaklaşımın gerekliliğini ortaya koymuştur. Öğrencilerin bu eseri başarılı bir şekilde çalmaları için, her bir teknik zorluk ayrı ayrı ele alınmalı ve bu zorluklar üzerinde sistematik bir şekilde çalışılmalıdır. İlk olarak, öğrencilere müzik metnine aşinalık kazandırılmalı, ardından ritmik doğruluk ve dinamik kontrol üzerinde yoğunlaşılmalıdır. Müzikal ifadelerin doğru bir şekilde aktarılabilmesi için, dinamik kontrol ve artikülasyon üzerine sürekli olarak çalışılmalıdır. Pedagojik sürecin bir sonraki aşamasında, hızlı pasajlar ve geniş akor sıçramaları gibi zorlu teknik bölümler izole edilip pratik edilmelidir. Bu bölümler, öğrencilerin el koordinasyonlarını geliştirmeleri ve teknik becerilerini arttırmaları için etkili bir fırsat sunmaktadır. Öğrenciler, bu bölümleri izole ederek ve tekrar ederek, teknik açıdan zorlu pasajları daha verimli bir şekilde çalışabilirler. Son olarak, tüm

parçanın birleştirilmesi sürecine geçilmelidir. Bu aşamada, öğrenciler tüm eseri bir araya getirerek, önceki aşamalarda üzerinde çalıştıkları teknik ve yorumsal becerilerini uygulamalıdır.

Malagueña yalnızca teknik açıdan zorlayıcı bir eser olmanın ötesinde, aynı zamanda Küba müziğinin kültürel bağlamıyla etkileşim kurma fırsatı sunmaktadır. Küba müziği, Afro-Küba ritimleri ve melodik yapıları ile dünya çapında tanınmaktadır. Malagueña'yı öğretmek, öğrencilere sadece bir piyano eseri öğretmek değil, aynı zamanda Küba kültürüne dair derin bir anlayış kazandırmak anlamına gelir. Küba müziğinin temel ritmik yapıları, geleneksel Küba dans müziklerinin ritimleri ve armonik dokularını yansıtmaktadır. Öğrenciler, Malagueña'yı çalarken, sadece teknik becerilerini geliştirmekle kalmaz, aynı zamanda Küba müziğinin stilistik nüanslarını da öğrenirler. Bu müzikal öğrenme süreci, öğrencilerin müzikal ve kültürel anlamda daha geniş bir perspektife sahip olmalarını sağlar. Küba müziğinin kültürel bağlamı ile etkileşimde bulunmak, öğrencilerin dünya müziği geleneklerini daha iyi anlamalarına olanak tanır. Malagueña adlı eser, Küba müziği ile tanışan öğrenciler için zengin bir öğrenme kaynağı sunmaktadır. Bu eser, öğrencilere müziğin sadece teknik yönlerini değil, aynı zamanda kültürel ve tarihsel bağlamını da öğretmektedir.

Ernesto Lecuona'nın Malagueña adlı eseri, Küba müziği ile Avrupa müzik geleneklerinin bir füzyonunu temsil eder ve bu da onu Küba piyano müziğinin gelişiminde önemli bir eser haline getirir. Bu çalışma, eserin teknik ve pedagojik yönlerini kapsamlı bir şekilde analiz ederek, icracıların eseri yorumlarken karşılaştıkları zorlukları vurgulamaktadır. Malagueña'nın hem teknik hem de kültürel açıdan sunduğu fırsatlar, piyanistlerin bu eseri çalarken derin bir müzikal anlayış geliştirmelerini sağlar. Bu araştırma, Malagueña gibi teknik açıdan zorlayıcı eserlerin öğretiminde izlenecek pedagojik yaklaşımlara dair değerli bilgiler sunmaktadır. Eserin öğretiminde geliştirilen adım adım yaklaşım, piyano pedagojisine katkıda bulunarak, diğer karmaşık eserlerin öğretimi için bir model oluşturabilir. Lecuona'nın müziği, sadece Küba müziği için değil, dünya müziği için de önemli bir miras bırakmış ve piyano repertuarındaki önemli eserlerden biri olarak kalmaya devam etmektedir.