

https://doi.org/10.23913/ride.v14i27.1720

Artículos científicos

Los movimientos perdidos de la Suite bucólica de Ramiro Luis Guerra

González (1933-2003)

The lost movements of the Suite Bucólica by Ramiro Luis Guerra González (1933-2003)

Os movimentos perdidos da Suíte Bucólica de Ramiro Luis Guerra González (1933-2003)

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#### Resumen

Ramiro Luis Guerra González fue un compositor regiomontano que vivió el rompimiento del nacionalismo en México y formó parte de la siguiente generación de músicos. Una obra importante en su producción es la *Suite bucólica* para orquesta y coro de voces blancas, la cual se estrenó en 1959 en el Palacio de Bellas Artes en la Ciudad de México, y en 2015 se reestrenó en su ciudad natal, Monterrey. En este concierto se tocaron tres movimientos: *Preludio*, *Ronda en el bosque* y *Pastoral*. Es posible que la suite esté conformada por más movimientos, y, de ser así, habrá que encontrar los restantes y el porqué no se ejecutaron. En este trabajo se continúa la labor de reunir esta bella obra que se inició con la tesis doctoral en la que se catalogó toda la producción disponible del compositor. Ahora, se ahonda en ella y sus fuentes a través de un estudio filológico en el que se comparó el papel, la tipografía y el estilo musical. Como consecuencia de esta investigación, se encontraron las tres piezas faltantes de la *Suite bucólica*, así como el orden que el compositor determinó: *Preludio*, *Ronda en el bosque*, *Danza del ogro*, *Pastoral*, *El encantamiento* y *Postludio*. Este hallazgo da pie a que esta obra se reestrene de forma íntegra.

Palabras clave: archivo, autógrafo, epístola, música mexicana, música orquestal.





#### **Abstract**

Ramiro Luis Guerra González was a composer from Monterrey, México, who experienced the break of nationalism in Mexico and who was part of the next generation of musicians. An important work in his production is the *Suite bucólica* for orchestra and chorus of white voices, which premiered in 1959 at the Palacio de Bellas Artes in City of México. In 2015, it was repremiered in his hometown, three movements were played in this concert: *Preludio, Ronda en el bosque* and *Pastoral*. It is possible that the suite has more movements. If so, the remaining movements will have to be found and why they were not played. This work continues putting together this beautiful piece that began with the doctoral thesis in which all the composer's available production was catalogued. Now, this research delves into it and its sources through a philological study in which paper, typography, and music style are compared. As a result of this investigation, the three missing movements of the *Suite bucólica* were found, as well as the order that the composer determined: *Preludio, Ronda en el bosque, Danza del ogro, Pastoral, El encantamiento* and *Postludio*. This discovery gives rise to re-release this piece in its entirety.

**Keywords:** archive, autograph, epistle, mexican music, orchestral music.

#### Resumo

Ramiro Luis Guerra González foi um compositor de Monterrey que viveu a crise do nacionalismo no México e fez parte da próxima geração de músicos. Uma obra importante em sua produção é a Suíte Bucólica para orquestra e coro de vozes brancas, que estreou em 1959 no Palacio de Bellas Artes da Cidade do México, e em 2015 foi reavivada em sua cidade natal, Monterrey. Três movimentos foram tocados neste concerto: Prelúdio, Rodada na Floresta e Pastoral. É possível que a suíte seja composta por mais movimentos e, nesse caso, teremos que descobrir os restantes e porque não foram executados. Neste trabalho continuamos o trabalho de montagem desta bela obra que começou com a tese de doutorado na qual foi catalogada toda a produção disponível do compositor. Agora, nos aprofundamos nele e em suas fontes através de um estudo filológico no qual foram comparados papel, tipografia e estilo musical. Como consequência desta investigação foram encontradas as três peças faltantes da Suíte Bucólica, bem como a ordem que o compositor determinou: Prelúdio, Rodada na Floresta, Dança do Ogro, Pastoral, O Encantamento e Postlúdio. Esta descoberta faz com que esta obra seja relançada na íntegra.

**Palavras-chave:** arquivo, autógrafo, epístola, música mexicana, música orquestral.





Revista Iberoamericana para la Investigación y el Desarrollo Educativo ISSN 2007 - 7467

Fecha Recepción: Mayo 2023 Fecha Aceptación: Noviembre 2023

# Introduction

Ramiro Luis Guerra González was born in Monterrey, Nuevo León, on November 26, 1933. He began his musical studies self-taught and later studied composition with Antonio Ortíz and, later, with Carlos Chávez and Alfonso de Elías in Mexico City. In 1960, he took classes with the Italian composers Boris Porena and Goffredo Petrassi in Italy. He lost his sight around the age of 35 due to the hereditary retinitis pigmentosa he suffered. Hence, some handwritten documents are not autographs, while the documents that are autographs represent a stage of youth and early adulthood in his musical production. Likewise, the suite was written while the composer was visually healthy, but this does not guarantee that the sources for the piece are autographs. In 1997, he was awarded the Mozart Medal by the German embassy in Mexico. Finally, non-Hodkin's lymphoma ended the composer's life on July 18, 2003 in his native Monterrey (Hernández and Valdez, 2022).

The known production of Ramiro Luis Guerra González is kept in the Archivo Musical Guerra, in the city of Monterrey, under the care of María Luisa Guerra González and María Luisa Barrón Guerra (sister and niece of the composer, respectively).

In the catalog is the *Suite Bucólica*, the center of this study, a work for orchestra and choir of white voices and cataloged under the register GVo-1.

The background to its premiere begins in the letter sent by César Tort (Mexico City) to Ramiro Luis Guerra (Monterre and) on May 15, 1959. Below are the relevant fragments:

Your news that you give me about how your *Suite Bucólica is going is very timely*, because I have something to tell you that fits perfectly into the time you ask me for so that your music can be played here.

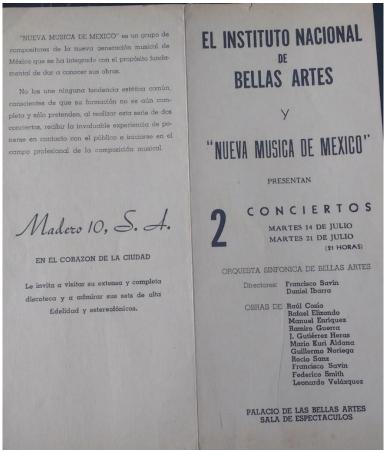
The concert I told you about previously was transformed by the pressure we have exerted on the Institute of Fine Arts into two concerts in the large hall of the Palace with the opera orchestra and the sponsorship of the institute. The dates and this is the best for you, they already gave it to us in a definitive way. They are next July 15 and 21. Both concerts will be entirely programmed with our symphonic music, and your music was in the concert on the 21st.

This piece was premiered in 1959 in the first cycle of concerts supported by the National Institute of Fine Arts and the Nueva Música de México group, which was made up of the composers Raúl Cosío, Rafael Elizondo, Manuel Enríquez, Jorge González Ávila, Joaquín Gutiérrez Heras, Guillermo Noriega, Rocío Sanz, Francisco Savín and Federico Smith (Pareyón,



2006). In the concert program (figures 1 and 2) it was documented that the work premiered at the Palacio de Bellas Artes with the Orquesta Sinfónica de Bellas Artes and under the direction of Daniel Ibarra Zambrano (Nueva Música de México, 1959).

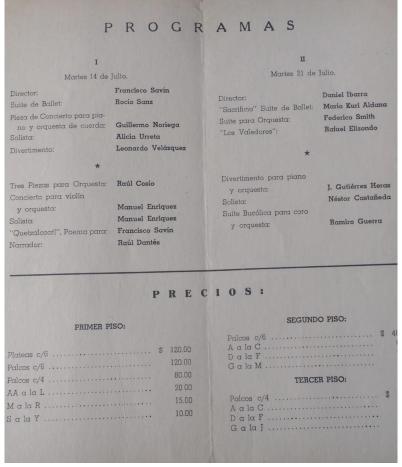
Figure 1. Exterior of the program for the premiere of the Suite Bucólica



Source: Archivo Musical Guerra



Figure 2. Interior of the program for the premiere of the Suite Bucólica



This is the only performance of which there was a record until, in 2015, Guillermo Villarreal performed it for the second time with the Orchestra of the Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León. Three movements were performed in this concert: *Preludio*, *Pastoral* and *Ronda en el bosque*. In the interview with María Luisa Guerra González (sister of the composer) conducted on September 20, 2016 by Alberto Valdez, she states that, in the revival, the order of the movements (already described) was changed in order to give, with the movements that were had, an energetic end to the suite. Consequently, it is natural to ask the following questions: how many movements make up the work? what is the order of execution? And, if there are more than three movements, were only these executed because the rest are lost? Furthermore, in the few books where the work was mentioned, such as in *Composers of Nuevo León: first era* by Hernán Palma y Meza and Alfonso Ayala Duarte (2015), in *Latin American classical composers: a biographical dictionary* by Martha Furman (2008) or In the *Dictionary of Mexican composers of concert music* by Eduardo Soto Millán (1996), the movements were not stated.

To give the correct order to the movements of the suite, the information is rescued from the journalistic note by Elva González in the newspaper *El Norte* unknown day and month), although it can be deduced that the note was published between May 15, the date of César Tort's letter, and July 21, 1959, the premiere date of the work. In figure 3 we read that there are six movements and in the following order: *Preludio, Ronda en el bosque, Danza del ogro, Pastoral, El encantamiento* and *Postludio* (González, 1959). Furthermore, Ramiro Guerra stated that the suite is based on a story, although he did not mention its author or title.

Tocará la Sinfónica de la Opera una suite de Por ELVA GONZALEZ C. he hecho algunas abstraccio-Una importante obra de Ranes, para ponerlas en mego y miro Luis Guerra, joven recomponer las partes de que giomontano maestro de musiconsta: Preludio, Ronda en el ca y composición, estrenara el xiia 21 de julio próximo la Ortoral. El encantamiento y Post questa Sinfónica de la Opera, de la ciudad de México, en el ¿Por qué has escogido un Palacio de Bellas Artes, de la cuento infantil; misma Capital de la Repúbli-Lo he escogido porque Lo anterior fue informado argumento se presta mucho pa ra dar muy buenos efectos d a EL NORTE por el propio Ramiro Luis Guerra, en una es-¿Cuantos instrumentos for pecial entrevista. Suite bucólica" es el titu-Los necesarios para una lo de la obra, inspirada en un cuento infantil, "de cuyos prin bra de "orquesta grande

Figure 3. Order of movements

Source: El Norte Newspaper in the Archivo Musical Guerra

Therefore, the main objective of the present study is to reintegrate the missing movements or determine if they are lost from the *Suite bucólica*.

## Materials and methods

Prior to his trip to Europe, Ramiro Guerra wrote music on Mexican or American-made paper, so documents written in European notebooks can be eliminated as part of the suite. Of the twenty-five scores cataloged for orchestra, five were written in an oblong booklet, which indicates that they were written before 1950. Likewise, three are lost or were not performed, thirteen are incomplete and cannot be played, and four are complete or incomplete., but executable (table 1).





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**Table 1.** Status of records in the AMG catalog

Before 1950	Lost or not realized	Incomplete not	Incomplete	
		executable	executable or	
			complete	
GVo-11, 13, 14, 23,	GVo-5, 6, 7.	GVo-2, 3, 4, 12, 15,	GVo-1, 8, 9, 10.	
25.		16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21,		
		22, 24.		
Total: 5	3	13	4	

Source: self made

The suite is cataloged with the GVo-1 registry and, according to the catalog, consists of seven sources from which the role, writing and musical structure will be analyzed to determine if they belong to the work studied. Based on Valdez's doctoral thesis (2019), the sources are:

- (1) MEX-MONamg, without placement; 1 p., 30.7 x 40.2 cm, vertical; non-autograph handwritten cover sheet.
- (2) MEX-MONamg, without placement; 104 pp., 31.5 x 39.6cm, 31.8 x 39.4 cm., vertical; incomplete autograph score with non-autograph annotations, Andante, Ronda in the forest, Adagio (82 cc.),
- (3) MEX-MONamg, without placement; 90 pp., 31.5 x 39.6cm, 31.8 x 39.4 cm, vertical; incomplete autograph score with non-autograph annotations, Andante, Ronda in the forest, [Adagio] (0 cc.), G major 3/4, D major 3/4.
- (4) MEX-MONamg, without placement; 29 pp., 30.7 x 40.2 cm, vertical; incomplete autograph score, [Adagio] (37 cc.), [The Enchantment] (79 cc.), [Postlude], G major 6/8, G flat major 6/8, G major 3/4.
- (5) MEX-MONamg, without placement; 56 pp., 30.7 x 40.2 cm, vertical; complete autograph score with non-autograph annotations, [Dance of the Ogre], E major 6/8.
- (6) MEX-MONamg, without placement; 20 pp., 30.7 x 40.2 cm, vertical; complete autograph score with non-autograph annotations, [Dance of the Ogre], E major.
- (7) MEX-MONamg, without placement; 20 pp. including cover sheet, 30.7 x 40.2 cm, vertical; incomplete non-autograph manuscript parts, *Andante* [fl I and II, fl III o picc, ob I and II, cor inglese], *Ronda en el Bosque* [fl I and II, cl I].

In turn, it will be studied whether the GVo-8, 9, 10 and 24 records coincide with the paper, orientation, careful writing and musical style with the main sources.





- GVo-8, MEX-MONamg, without placement; 14 pp., 30.7 x 40.2 cm, vertical; Complete autograph score with non-autograph annotations.
- GVo-9, MEX-MONamg, without placement; 16 pp., 30.7 x 40.2 cm, vertical; incomplete handwritten score not executable.
- GVo-10, MEX-MONamg, without placement; 18 pp., 30.7 x 40.2 cm, vertical; Complete autograph score with non-autograph annotations.
- GVo-24, MEX-MONamg, without placement; 8 pp., 30.7 x 40.2 cm, vertical; incomplete autograph score (47 cc.).

As James Grier (2008) explains, the objective of applying the method in philology is to determine, as closely as possible, the text of an original by the author. In this way, it is assumed that the documents available are the closest to the original, since this is considered lost because it does not show corrections or sketches, as would happen in a score that has just been started. So, we start from some copies of the original that the composer made and that, at least, he did his best.

# **Results**

Initially, it is necessary to understand the essence of each sought movement. The word ogre comes from the French ogre and represents a northern European giant that feeds on human flesh, mainly infants (Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française, 2019). According to Molero (2003), enchantment refers to medieval literature in which magic is used to cause natural phenomena, bend a monster or the will of a loved one. Finally, the postlude is an instrumental intervention with which the work closes.

Of the seven sources of the GVo-1 register, there are four - 1, 2, 3 and 7 - those that explicitly belong to the suite. Source 1 is handwritten, not autograph, it only consists of the cover sheet and presents advanced deterioration. The theme of sources 2 and 3 is presented on French horns, in 3/4 time and in the key of G major with the royal notes: D 3,  ${}^{1}G$  3, A 3, B 3, with quarter note figure, C 4, B 3, A 3, G 3, with a quaver figure and A 3, D 3, D 3, with a quarter note figure (figures 4 and 5) which is the main theme. Both sources are handwritten and with careful calligraphy. Source 2 consists of 104 pages, while source 3 consists of 90. Also, pagination is observed in the upper corners with non-autograph writing in both sources. Additionally, source 2

According to *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, the acoustic index used is middle C = C4 (Sadie, 1980).

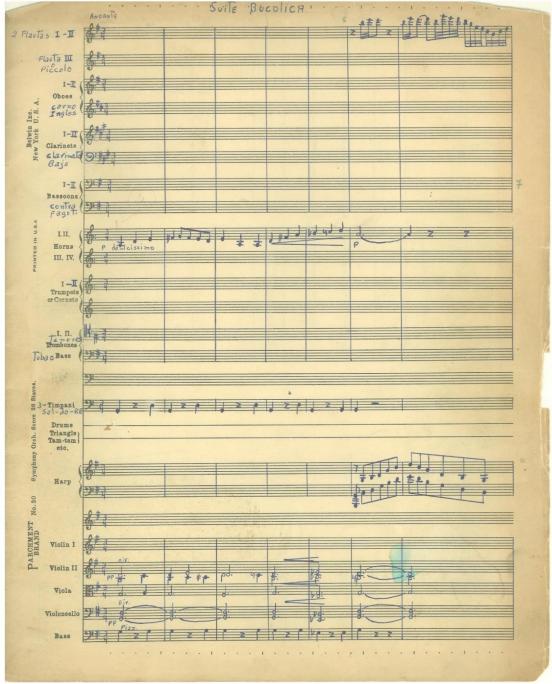




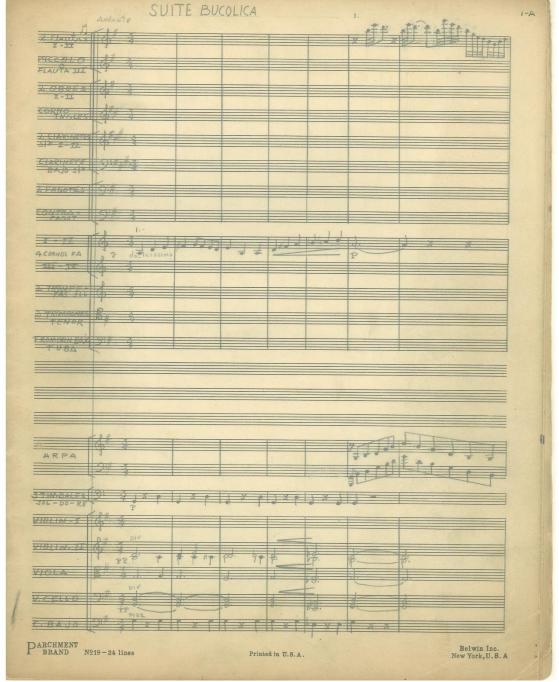
was written in ink on Parchment Brand paper (Figure 4). Likewise, source 3 was written in pencil on Parchment Brand lined paper. and Schirmer Imperial Brand (figure 5). As for source 7, they are the parts of the woodwinds in an incomplete state — *Andante* [Prelude] and *Ronda en el bosquet*—; However, it is worth mentioning that it is written on Monograma Extra brand paper.

The seven scores listed below were written on Monograma Extra brand paper and as already mentioned, their instrumentation is for orchestra: GVo-1 -sources 4, 5 and 6-, GVo-8, 9, 10 and 24. The analysis of each of these documents is of capital importance to find the missing movements that are *Danza del ogro*, *El encantamiento* and *Postludio*.

Figure 4. Beginning of the Suite Bucólica, GVo-1, source 2

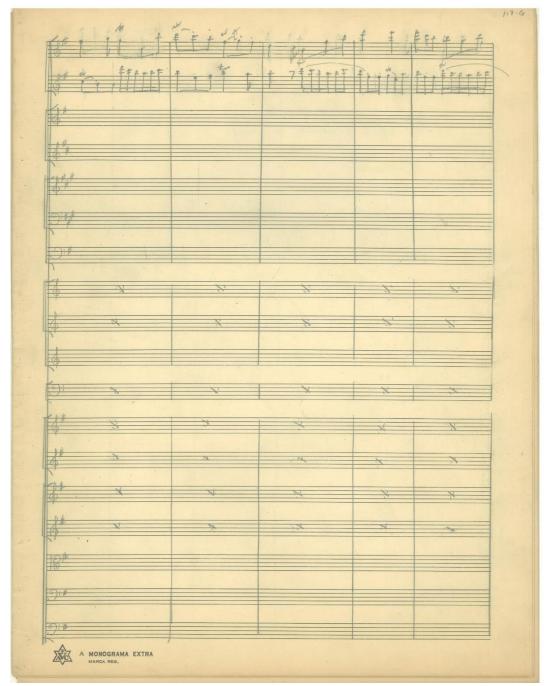


**Figure 5.** Beginning of the *Suite Bucólica*, GVo-1, source 3



In the archival work it was found that source 4 presents evidence that relates it to the two main sources. It consists of 29 pages, is handwritten and carefully written in pencil. At the same time, the same non-autograph numbering is observed in the upper corners as sources 2 and 3, as well as its instrumentation, although written on different paper than the main sources. Figure 6 shows a folio from source 4.

Figure 6. Probable movement of the Suite Bucólica, source 4



In figure 7, the initial scale of source 4 that appears on the English horn, which is constructed in the key of B flat minor, was transcribed. and uses the harmonic minor scale with chromatic appoggiaturas with a hypnotic result when listening to it.



Figure 7. GVo-1, source 4



Source: self made

Later, in figure 8, the obverse of folio 12 of source 4 is shown. written on Extra Monogram paper. In the English horn part, where the topic shown in the *Preludio* is heard again in five instruments while the others accompany this significant return.

**Figure 8.** Main theme for source 4



Source: Archivo Musical Guerra

Figure 9 shows source 5 of the GVo-1 register, which is written in the key of E major and presents some elements of Italian dances such as a compound binary rhythm and its opposition to a simple ternary rhythm combined with a cheerful character (Latham, 2008). One of these dances is the *trescone* which, according to the *Treccani* online dictionary (sf), refers to how the peasants separated the grains from the wheat and aligns with the meaning of the word *bucolic*.

Figure 9. GVo-1, source 5



Source: self made

In source 6 it is written in the key of E minor and, as seen in figure 10, It has a passage as an introduction.

Figure 10. GVo-1, source 6



Source: self made



An element interesting is that the musical phrase in the clarinet at the beginning of source 5 (first staff) is repeated in the French horn of source 6, page 11, in measures 6 and 7 (see figures 9 and 11) and, if the corresponding transposition is made, they are exactly the same notes in the two sources with a previous musical discourse that one has and the other does not.

Figure 11. GVo-1, source 6

Source: Archivo Musical Guerra

Another important detail is that on the first page of source 6 you can distinguish, in a blurry way and as a correction, the key signature of e major, which is the same key as source 5 (figure 12).

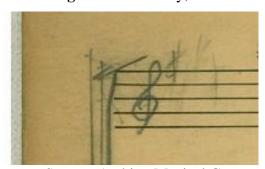


Figure 1 2. Tonality, source 6

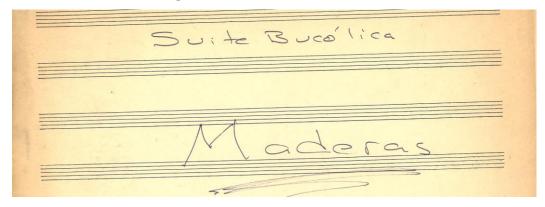
Source: Archivo Musical Guerra

As for source 7, in figure 13, it contains the non-autograph handwritten parts of *Preludio*, *Ronda en el bosque* and *Pastoral* that were probably used in the premiere in 1959.





Figure 13. Suite Bucólica, GVo-1, source 7



The GVo-8 record [untitled] is an autograph document that is written in the key of G major in simple binary time with a rhythm and character typical of a military march (figure 14).

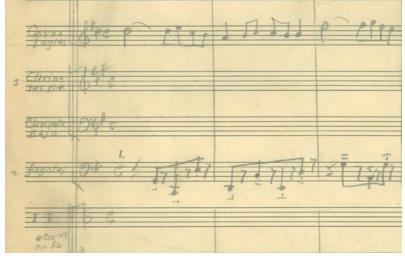
Figure 14. GVo-8



Source: Archivo Musical Guerra

The GVo-9 record [untitled] begins with a melody in the key of D major that is soft and lyrical, that is, an enthusiastic and emotional character accompanied by a constant backbeat in the bassoons. In this way, its qualities lead towards illusion and daydreaming (figure 15).

Figure 15. GVo-9



The GVo-10 number [untitled], in figure 16, has a heroic character in its melody in the key of E major. On the other hand, the white note causes an accentuation on the second beat in a 4/4 time signature. Meanwhile, the accompaniment happens when the melody rests on that note. This interaction between melody and accompaniment promotes rapid movement and a tendency to accelerate the pulse even when there is no written agogic. On the other hand, the lines of the spellings are hasty (figure 17) in contrast to the careful writing of the documents in the first case.

**Figure 16.** GVo-10



Source: Archivo Musical Guerra

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Figure 17. GVo-10



Source: Archivo Musical Guerra

The following figure is about the GVo-24 register [no title]; In this one, the strings accompany with a stable rhythm the melody built with long notes in the key of F minor and presented in the French horns, which, together, sow a martial and solemn atmosphere. In addition, there is a tension caused by the chromatic step in the second measure, A flat<sub>3</sub> -A natural<sub>3</sub>, and the diminished fifth interval that occurs between the notes A flat<sub>3</sub> and E flat<sub>4</sub> of the fourth measure (figure 18). The resulting sonority is, within a tonal framework, dissonant.

**Figure 1 8.** GVo-24



Source: self made

## **Discussion**

After observing the analysis of the sources found in the Archivo Musical Guerra, the following points stand out.

Sources 2 and 3 present evidence of being part of the work in question.

The document from source 4 has elements that make its relationship with the suite evident, such as the numbering from source 3, the same typography in the strokes and the recapitulation of the theme presented in the *Prelude*.

Equally important, the fact that source 6 of the GVo-1 register presents the blurred key signature of source 5 and shares the same musical phrase leads one to think that source 6 is linked to 5. In addition to the role in common with the source s 3 and 4, the musical elements that are observed are the following: dance rhythms, opposition of compound binary rhythms against a simple ternary rhythm, as well as its joyful character that manages to provide the emotion of triumph over evil (the ogre) are compelling for these documents to be the *Danza del ogro*.

The GVo-8 register has, due to its binary rhythm and its rhythmic figure of eighth notes and two sixteenth notes, characteristics of a march that, apparently, does not agree with any of the movements sought.

Pieces GVo-9, 10 and 24 They do not have dance elements such as the upbeat and the rhythmic density of the allemande, the ternary meter of the current and the zarabande, the ternary form of the minuet or the compound meter and the speed of the jig, which is essential in a suite room.

Table 2 shows the tonality and time signature of the movements.

**Table 2.** Tonality and meter of each movement

Motion	Tonality	Metrics
Prelude	G major	3/4
Round in the forest	D major	6/8
Ogre Dance	My major (my minor)	6/8
Pastoral	G major	6/8
The enchantment	G flat major	6/8
Postlude	G major	3/4

Source: self made



What is striking about the previous table is that all the dance pieces are in compound time, while the prelude and postlude are written in simple ternary. It is also interesting that the tonalities of the movements are close to G major; Thus, D major is its dominant, E major corresponds to the sixth degree and E minor is its relative minor. *El encantamiento* is in the key of G flat major because a distant key through a modulation by fifths, but chromatically close, would be exotic and effective for the purpose of the incantation.

The aforementioned revival of the work in 2015 is, perhaps, the first and only reconstruction work prior to this article. Perhaps the six movements were not performed in the concert conducted by Guillermo Villarreal because the set of scores only contained *Preludio*, *Ronda en el bosque* and *Pastoral*, while the rest, although they were found in the Archivo Musical Guerra, were scattered or misplaced. Therefore, the order and the first approach to the collection of movements of the suite that Valdez gave in 2016 are correct, although not conclusive or supported in depth as is now done.

For this article, two years of archival work was carried out in which each document found in the Archivo Musical Guerra was digitized. Thus, it was possible to compare Ramiro Guerra's autograph documents that are not of European manufacture, that is, the documents he wrote before his trip to Rome in 1960, a few years before he lost his visual ability.

As for the literature on this topic, there are few books that mention this suite; In fact, most of them are dictionaries and not studies specialized in reconstructing the piece or in the composer and his work. Furthermore, in the literature mentioned in the introduction, the Guerra's documents were not analyzed, but an inventory or list of works was made in a general way.

# **Conclusions**

From what has been explained in this work, it appears that the documents of the *Suite Bucólica* (not including sources 1 and 7, since they are the cover sheet and parts of the woodwinds of the piece, respectively) are the following:



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**Table 3.** Suite integration

Source	Preludio	Ronda en el	Danza del	Pastoral	El	Postludio
GVo-1		bosque	ogro		encantamiento	
2	✓	✓		✓		
3	<b>√</b>	✓				
4					✓	✓
5			✓			
6			✓			

Source: self made

Then, table 3 presents the location of the movements according to their source: *Preludio* and *Ronda en el bosque* in sources 3 and 4, *Danza del ogro* in sources 5 and 6, *Pastoral* in source 2 and *El encantamiento* and *Postludio* in source 4.

When evaluating the results obtained, it can be stated that the *Suite Bucólica* is complete, but not ready for execution, since it must still be cured before its next execution.

## **Future lines of research**

Finally, this work managed to unite a work that, as far as is known, was completed 64 years ago. Furthermore, the discovery of the three missing movements *El encantamiento*, *Danza del ogro* and *Postludio* is the first of two works; The second will be the reconstruction of the suite with the aim of transcribing it, curating it, restoring it, preserving it and presenting it to the public in a concert. In this process, and through musical analysis, possible transcription errors or even oversights by the composer will be sought, which will then be compared with their own language and can be corrected until the final objective is achieved.

In addition, it will serve as new historiographical information on 20th century Mexican music, which may be included in subsequent editions of dictionaries, encyclopedias or compilations on the subject.



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