Jacobo Ficher, Argentine composer, and his Rapsodia, op. 88 for mixed choir and saxophone quartet

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JACOBO FICHER, ARGENTINE COMPOSER,
AND HIS RAPSODIA, Op. 88 FOR MIXED CHOIR AND SAXOPHONE QUARTET

by

Trevor Allen Loes

An essay submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts
degree in Music in the
Graduate College of
The University of Iowa

May 2019

Essay Supervisor: Professor Timothy J. Stalter
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Soli Deo gloria
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would to express my sincere appreciation to my thesis advisor, Dr. Timothy Stalter, for his unwavering support of me and my research throughout this process. I am also grateful to my committee members: Drs. David Puderbaugh, Trevor Harvey, Kenneth Tse and Robert Cook, and my master’s degree mentors Dr. Myron Welch and Mr. Kevin Kastens. Their expertise and guidance have been invaluable to me throughout this process. I am indebted to Dr. Ilda Ficher, daughter-in-law of Jacobo Ficher, for granting me permission to create this edition of Jacobo Ficher’s Rapsodia. I have been humbled by the opportunity to promote Ficher’s life and work. I am also grateful to the organizational and governing bodies that assisted me along the way: 1) from the University of Iowa, the Rita Benton Music Library, Graduate College and Graduate Student Senate and 2) the superb staff of the Music Reading Room at the Library of Congress. Lastly, I would like to thank my teaching colleagues, Jodi Smith and Elizabeth Powers, for their expertise and assistance.

Above all, this research and degree and would not have been possible without my family. My wife, Ana, and our children Ezra, Hadley and Wyatt have been great sources of inspiration, perspective and stress relief. My parents, Frederick and Patricia Loes, have offered countless prayers, Masses, rosaries, novenas (you name it, they’ve prayed it), as well as child support and supervision. My mother and father-in-law, Dale and Marie Ziegler, have truly helped raise our three children, and have assisted Ana and I in countless other ways. My extended family members, Ron and Judy Wilgenbush, helped provide a home away from home during my research trips to Washington D. C. My family is tremendously loving and supportive, and I am reminded of that every day.
PUBLIC ABSTRACT

Jacobo Ficher (1896-1978) immigrated to Argentina from Russia in 1923 shortly after the Russian Revolution of 1917. Although Juan José Castro, Alberto Williams, and Alberto Ginastera are the composers most often named as representative of twentieth-century classical music of Argentina, Ficher, with nearly 140 chamber, piano, vocal and symphonic works, and numerous composition awards and professorship appointments to his credit, deserves to be listed with the others as a great contributor to the history, scope, and quality of art music in Argentina.

The goal of this essay is to familiarize the reader with Jacobo Ficher by way of a performance edition of his *Rapsodia* op. 88 (1956) for mixed choir and saxophone quartet. This unpublished work of Ficher’s will include a discussion of the structure, text, style, premiere, and performance history and reception of the composition, but will also serve as an introduction to Ficher’s life and contributions to the classical music canon of Argentina.
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PART I

Historical and Musical Context
CHAPTER ONE

JACOBO FICHER (1896-1978)

Purpose of Study

Jacobo Ficher (1896-1978) was a leading musical figure in Argentina throughout most of the twentieth century, having composed nearly 140 works of which only two were unpublished. Despite a large and varied body of compositions, compositional awards and prominent teaching positions, Ficher remains largely unknown outside of South America. The primary goal of this doctoral essay is to create a performance edition of one of those unpublished works, *Rapsodia* op. 88 (1956), for mixed choir and saxophone quartet, and to provide a discussion of the structure, text, style, premiere, and performance history and reception of the composition. Because Ficher and his music remain largely unknown in this country, this essay also features a biography of Ficher and a brief summary of his compositional output.

Most of Ficher's works were originally held by the local publisher Editorial Argentina de Música (E.A.M.) in Buenos Aires, which in the 1930s became a subsidiary of the New York-based Southern Music Publishing Company. Southern Music launched its classical division in 1948, eight years before Ficher's *Rapsodia* was composed and premiered. ¹ Ficher began negotiations with Southern Music to publish *Rapsodia* as early as 1967. After Ficher pursued the matter for seven years, letters from the Jacobo Ficher collection at the Library of Congress indicate that *Rapsodia* was never published by Southern Music. Southern Music later changed its company name to Peermusic to reflect the global nature of the company and honor its founder.

Ralph S. Peer. The current production manager of Peermusic's Classical Division could not confirm that Rapsodia had ever been published by its house, but did confirm that Peermusic "no longer controls rights to Jacobo Ficher Rapsodia Op. 88." 2 I have obtained rights to make an edition of this work from Ficher’s family, which is discussed below.

My discovery of Jacobo Ficher and Rapsodia came as the result of general research into works for saxophone and voice. I am keenly aware of the desire amongst saxophonists, of which I am one, to expand the depth and range of the saxophone repertoire. Works for saxophone and voice are very limited; however, I discovered more than I expected to find. I believe the availability of this work will contribute positively to the saxophone repertoire and help to shed some much-needed light on a prolific and well-respected musician.

**Historical Background**

Argentina and its capital, Buenos Aires, have undergone dramatic population and musical changes in the last two hundred years. In the twentieth century alone nearly 6 million people immigrated to Argentina, many of them from European countries, with most immigrants arriving from Spain and Italy. Many were Jewish immigrants escaping persecution, which gave Argentina the highest Jewish population in Latin America, and the seventh highest in the world. Between 1895 and 1914 Argentina was second only to the United States as the most common destination for immigrants, and during that period Argentina's population nearly doubled from 4 million to 7.9 million. 3 By 1947 the population boomed to 15.8 million. Most immigrants to

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2 Erin Rogers of Peermusic, correspondence with author, 21 June 2012, electronic mail, Iowa City, Iowa.

Argentina arrived through the port of Buenos Aires and either stayed in the capital city or within the Buenos Aires province. Among them were musicians who would dramatically shape the direction and scope of art music in Argentina, including the Jewish violinist, conductor, composer and teacher Jacobo L. Ficher.

Although Juan José Castro, Alberto Williams, and Alberto Ginastera are the composers most often named as representative of twentieth-century classical music of Argentina, Ficher, with nearly 140 chamber, piano, vocal and symphonic works, and numerous composition awards and professorship appointments to his credit, deserves to be listed with the others as a great contributor to the canon of art music in Argentina. In fact, Ginastera cited Ficher as "one of the leaders of the modern musical movement."  

Ficher's compositions were frequently performed throughout Argentina as well as in many other countries throughout South and Central America. Yet, even though Ficher’s Seventh Symphony has received some attention in the United States and a substantial number of his compositions/manuscripts are housed at the Library of Congress and in the Fleisher Collection at the Free Library of Philadelphia, his works remain largely unknown in the United States.

**Brief Biography**

Jacobo Ficher was born on January 15, 1896, in Odessa, Ukraine, formerly part of Russia. He came from an artistic family that included many musicians as well as actors on the Russian stage. His father, Alexander, was a trombonist with the Odessa Philharmonic Orchestra. Ficher began his violin studies when he was five years old, and when he turned sixteen he moved...
to Saint Petersburg and was accepted in the Imperial Conservatory. There he studied for six years under prominent musicians and pedagogues such as Sergei Korguieff and Leopold Auer on violin, and Vasili Kalafati, Maximilian Steinberg, Nokolay Tcherepnin and Nicolai Sokoloff in fugue, harmony, counterpoint, composition, and orchestration.

Following his graduation from the conservatory as a “Free Artist” in 1917, Ficher composed his first works for piano and violin, and was appointed concertmaster of the Imperial Opera Orchestra.\(^5\) He remained in that position for a short period until, following the Russian Revolution of 1917, life in Ficher’s native Odessa became difficult due to an oppressive famine. Even though Ficher won a competition for the position of concertmaster of the Petrograd State Opera Orchestra in 1919, he left the country that year with his new wife Ana and immigrated to Poland.\(^6\) Within a few years the Ficher family, including his father, Ana, and his youngest brother and a sister-in-law, traveled to South America and settled in Buenos Aires.

Prior to moving his family to Buenos Aires, Ficher had also visited New York and saw potential in moving his family there. In 1893, however, Alberto Williams, the well-known Argentine composer who studied with César Franck and enjoyed great success by cultivating native forms and styles, founded a chain of conservatories and music schools in Argentina. In fact, it was reported that one could not pass a city block in Buenos Aires without encountering an “academia de música” or a “conservatorio.”\(^7\) It was the great number of academies and conservatories that largely drew Ficher to Buenos Aires. He would later become disappointed to

\(^5\) This orchestra was later renamed the Academic Opera Orchestra.
\(^6\) Jacobo married Ana Aronberg, a pianist and pupil at the Odessa Conservatory, in Odessa on June 3rd (16 in the Gregorian calendar), 1920.
learn that those conservatories and academies were nothing more than one-man shops for private lessons and tutoring.

The Ficher family arrived in Buenos Aires at the peak of the Carnival season, and within one day Ficher was employed to play violin and provide additional music for masked balls. Within a few months the Ficher family formed a small orchestra to play for silent films around Buenos Aires. The exhausting playing schedule forced the family to resign, but they were soon hired by an up-scale Buenos Aires hotel to play popular music as well as medleys of music by classical composers. Ficher also began to compose again, completing his first orchestral work, *Suite No. 1*, in 1924. Four years later in 1928, Ficher received international recognition when his third symphonic work, *Poema heroico* op. 7, shared the second prize with Dimitri Shostakovich for a contest sponsored by the Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra.  

Because of the diverse backgrounds of its immigrants, musical life in 1920s Buenos Aires was bustling. The local composers, many of whom were trained in Europe, were intensely proud of their new home and integrated native and folk themes into their art music. However, one group of young composers was looking to honor the folk style of their new homeland while staying true to their European training and current with new European trends. Ficher fit perfectly into the latter category. Together with Juan José and José María Castro, Juan Carlos Paz and Gilardo Gilardi, he founded the Grupo Renovación in 1929. According to musician and lexicographer Nicolas Slonimsky, the group declared that it was "to discuss compositions of its members; to perform and to publish their best works; to arrange performance of native music abroad; and to discuss publicly the general subject of music, with the intention of contributing to

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8 In 1991 the orchestra was renamed the St. Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra.
the progress of musical culture."¹⁰ Juan José Castro and Gilardi withdrew in 1932, but Honorio Siccardi joined the group in the same year. Alfredo Pinto, an Italian-Argentine composer, joined the group for a brief time in 1935, and in 1936 Juan Carlos Paz left the group and founded his own series of concerts, Conciertos de la Nueva Música, dedicated to the development of what they felt was ultra-modern music.

The Grupo Renovación published many works composed by its own members and presented concerts in the large hall of the Teatro del Pueblo in Buenos Aires, which was managed by a cooperative theatrical company specializing in modern drama. They provided the hall at the lowest possible cost, enabling the group to keep the price of admission to just half a peso. In the mid-1940s, the Grupo Renovación gave as many as fifteen concerts a year, in a season lasting through the winter from March to November.¹¹

The Grupo Renovación rapidly became the leading organization for the promotion of new musical trends in Argentina. The range of creative composition in the country varied from traditional European forms to contemporary and experimental models. Meanwhile, folkloric tendencies, including the desire to incorporate native songs as a basis for symphonic and other works, materialized among members of the younger generation. However, a strong anti-folkloric tendency also existed, and the Grupo Renovación led the opposition against fully integrating folklorism. Paz’s Conciertos de la Nueva Música went even further toward the ideal of absolute music and music without nationalistic connotations.¹² Differences of opinion, which included the extent and role of folk elements, led to the dissolution of the organization in 1944. Ficher went on to found the Liga de Compositores de la Argentina in 1947 with his colleagues Julian

¹⁰ Slonimsky, 81.
¹¹ Ibid.
¹² Ibid.
Bautista, Jose Maria Castro, Juan Jose Castro, Washington Castro, Roberto Garcia Morillo, Luis Gianneo, Alberto Ginastera, William Graetzer, and Pia Sebastiani.\textsuperscript{13} This new organization shared the same general mission as the Grupo Renovación.

Jacob Ficher's prominence as a composer, conductor, and teacher continued to flourish throughout his career. He was the recipient of numerous composition prizes and invitations from the Municipality of Buenos Aires the Asociación del Profesorado Orquestal, the Idelsohn Association of Johannesburg, South Africa, the Coolidge Prize at the Festival de Música de Cámara panamericana in Mexico City, the Comisión Nacional de Cultura, the E. A. Fleischer Collection, the Asociación Wagneriana Carlos López-Buchardo, the Indianapolis Orchestra, the Festival de Música Latinoamericana de Caracas, the Il Festival de Música Latinoamericana of Caracas, the Festival Interamericano de Música in Montevideo, the Argentinean Mozarteum (Academia Nacional de Bellas Artes), and the Conservatorio Municipal Manuel de Falla.

As a conductor he led the Orchestra Asociación del Profesorado Orquestral, the Radio Nacional, Radio Municipal, and Radio Begrano orchestras, and the AGMA (Asociación General de Músicos de la Argentina) Symphonic Orchestra, as well as Radio Splendid. His teaching career began as Professor of Harmony at the Asociación General de Músicos de la Argentina in 1943, and in 1956 he was appointed to the same position at the Escuela Superior de Música de la Universidad de La Plata. Two years later in 1958, Ficher was appointed Professor of Composition at Buenos Aires National Conservatory and Musical Advisor to the Fondo Nacional de las Artes. In 1966, he was appointed Professor of Composition at Buenos Aires

Conservatorio Municipal Manuel de Falla, and two years later appointed Professor of Instrumentation at the Teatro Colón's Conservatorio e Instituto in Buenos Aires.

Ficher was clearly a significant force in the musical life of Buenos Aires. In recognition of his contributions, several concerts were performed in Buenos Aires to celebrate his seventieth birthday in 1966, and an homage was given in 1977 by the Instituto Luchelli Bonadeo with a concert of Ficher's piano works and the presentation of new piano pieces published by the Instituto. Ficher died on September 9, 1978, and one year later on September 8th the Dirección Cultural de la Municipalidad de Buenos Aires organized a tribute to his memory that included introductory words by the Director of Education, a lecture by Dr. Pola Suárez Urtubey, and a concert of his works. Lastly, in November, 1988, a Memorial Concert was held at the Fleisher Art Memorial in Philadelphia under the auspices of the Leningrad-Philadelphia Sister Cities organization.

Ficher was a father of two children with his wife, Ana: Miguel, born on June 24, 1923, just after the family arrived in Buenos Aires, and Myra, born on February 7, 1928. Ana died two years before Jacobo on July 27, 1976. Dr. Miguel Ficher passed away on November 3, 2011, in Philadelphia. He had been a research chemist at hospitals in St. Louis and Philadelphia as well as an accomplished violinist, conductor and music researcher.

Review of Literature

The Jacobo Ficher Collection at the Library of Congress is rich in primary documentation. The collection contains 6,000 items collected in 68 boxes; the items include many (if not all) of Ficher's manuscript scores, his correspondence, newspaper clippings

14 Dr. Urtubey is an Argentine musicologist, and author of several works on musicology.
pertaining to his career, critical reviews of performances of his works, concert programs, and pictures. The Ficher Collection was assembled by Dr. Ficher in 1998, established in 1999, and processed primarily by Susana Salgado of the Library of Congress. The collection became available for research in 2005.

Another valuable source for manuscripts and published music of Ficher’s in general is the Fleischer Music Collection at the Free Library of Philadelphia. In the 1950s the Fleischer Music Collection boasted to have housed the largest body of Latin American music in North America, and the library contacted Ficher to add some of his works to their collection. The library did add many of Ficher’s compositions, but his choral works, including *Rapsodia*, were not included. At that time the Fleisher Collection was devoted to works for orchestra, band, or solo instrumental works with orchestral accompaniment. They did not accept vocal, choral, or chamber music. However, while the Fleisher Collection was not a useful resource for this essay, it would be very useful resourceful for anyone looking to study Ficher’s instrumental works.

Dr. Miguel Ficher's work as a music researcher serves as a springboard into the state of the secondary literature surrounding Jacobo Ficher. Daniel Webster, a music critic for *The Inquirer* newspaper in Philadelphia, interviewed Miguel Ficher in 1995. According to Webster, when Miguel arrived from Argentina in 1961 his “realization that serious Latin American music did not cross the borders into the United States was a source of regret, but not a trumpet call to action.”¹⁵ Miguel needed to focus his attention on his hospital jobs and supporting his family. However, when he retired from Thomas Jefferson University in 1987, Dr. Ficher began to wonder about his father's legacy and the legacy of other Latin American composers. He

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immediately set out to create a dictionary of Latin American composers in which his father
would be a prominent entry. The result was *Latin American Classical Composers: A
Biographical Dictionary* published by Scarecrow Press in 1996 and edited by Dr. Ficher, Martha
Furman Schleifer, and John Furman.

Dr. Ficher's text includes some fairly well-known composers, but its value rests in the
information about numerous composers whose music is not known in North America, including
those of his own father. It is somewhat ironic that Dr. Ficher, who wanted the text to
prominently feature his father, did not afford his father greater depth or scope than any of the
other composers listed in the text. The same can be said of other biographical dictionaries that
refer to Jacobo Ficher.

Aside from the volume discussed above and a brief Oxford Music Online entry, there is
scarcely any secondary literature that pertains to Ficher. Biographical dictionaries that include
Ficher limit discussion of his biography and compositional style to one or two brief paragraphs,
and when those sources provide a list of his works, the list is often incomplete and occasionally
inaccurate. There has not been a scholarly article written about Ficher since 1946, and only one
dissertation has mentioned him, albeit briefly.  

Currently, the only extensive biographical
source for Ficher is the short biography written by Boris Zipman in 1966, twelve years before
Ficher's death. The text gives a brief biography, and discusses his compositional style and
thoughts on music, however, it is also filled with a great deal of hyperbole and a bit of idol
worship.

16 John Francis Roberts, "The 'Khan Variations' for Solo Marimba by Alejandro Viñao: Musical
Analysis and Performance Practice" (DMA diss., University of North Texas, 2010).
17 Boris Zipman, *Jacob Ficher* (Buenos Aires, Argentina: Ediciones Culturales Argentinas,
1966).
Secondary sources that were particularly helpful were the various biographical and analytical books on Rafael Alberti. Sources like Salvador Jimenez-Fajado’s book on Alberti’s poetry was an excellent English-texted book describing Alberti’s style and providing background information on Alberti’s *Baladas y canciones del Paraná*.

**Methodology**

The bulk of my research was accomplished through an examination of the documents and scores in the Jacobo Ficher Collection. I completed two research trips to the Library of Congress in May of 2012 and July of 2014 to examine the contents of the Jacobo Ficher Collection. The Ficher Collection is the only source that provides a score to Ficher’s *Rapsodia*. In fact, the collection has two scores of the work. The first is a rough, hand-written manuscript in pencil with non-transposed saxophone parts, and is thought to have been completed in 1955. The second draft is also hand-written, but in ink and with transposed saxophone parts, and was completed in 1956. Having viewed Ficher’s other vocal and instrumental scores in the collection, it became clear that Ficher preferred to compose a non-transposed score first when using instruments, then later transpose the instruments in a new score.

When examining and analyzing these scores, some of the larger challenges involve an inconsistent approach Ficher took to enharmonic spellings in general, and more specifically, enharmonic inconsistencies with the transposition of the saxophone parts. These inconsistencies may have been the result of an effort to avoid a double accidental at times, or to ease the flow of a chromatic passage. An example will be shown in the Editorial Practices section of Part II.

In addition to the manuscript scores, there are other valuable components in the collection. The first is a series of correspondence between Jacobo and Miguel and Southern Music
Publishing Company/Peer-Southern. These letters, written in English, provided the initial evidence that proved *Rapsodia* had never been published and released by Peer-Southern. Multiple scrapbooks in the collection contain concert programs, newspaper clippings, and pictures related to Ficher’s career throughout his lifetime.

The Spanish-texted information in these scrapbooks provided first-hand accounts of the premiere of *Rapsodia*, as well as some important biographical information on Ficher. The collection also contains various Spanish-texted writings by Ficher concerning his thoughts on music and composition. These writings were largely transcripts from radio and television interviews, as well as speeches he would give to various academic and arts organizations. Lastly, there are many examples of Spanish-texted writings by some of Ficher’s contemporaries who offered their thoughts on Ficher’s compositions and contributions to the musical art in Argentina.

As expected, the vast majority of the collection’s contents are in Spanish. I completed most of the translations on my own, however, I paid a service to have some documents translated, and a Spanish language educator assisted with the translations of Alberti’s poetry. When Spanish-texted sources are quoted in the document, the English translation will appear in the body of the paper, and the original Spanish text will appear in the footnote.

I have obtained written permission from Ilda Ficher, the wife of the late Dr. Miguel Ficher, to copy materials from the Ficher Collection, and to create a performance edition of *Rapsodia*. As mentioned above, Peermusic, the previous copyright holder, has provided written confirmation that they do not possess engravings or hold any rights to *Rapsodia* op. 88. I intend my edition to be a performance score, approached in a scholarly manner. Editorial practices have been presented in Part II and a critical apparatus is included.
According to Alberto Ginastera (1916-1983), the modern musical movement in Argentina during the mid-twentieth century is credited to composers like Jacobo Ficher who were born in the late nineteenth century and trained in Europe and Russia. He stated that these composers "were influenced by the initial splendors of Debussy's impressionism and the Italian realism of Puccini." These composers continued to be drawn towards the large romantic forms such as operas and symphonic poems, and they used those forms to introduce Argentinian folk elements. Their chamber works were frequently modeled on César Franck (1822-1890) and Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924).

Jacobo Ficher's compositional style employs a variety of styles and techniques including neoclassicism, neoromanticism, polytonality, serialism, and atonality. He blended those traits with traditional Russian and Jewish tunes, especially in his early works. He preferred to explore as many systems as possible, and above all, he refused to be bound to a single technique so as to maintain "stylistic individualism enriched by his own motifs and themes" as Salgado states in the Oxford Music Online article on Ficher.

I feel Ficher’s compositions demonstrate roughly three compositional periods. The first period, c. 1920-1940, encompasses approximately forty pieces including three symphonies and numerous chamber works. This period reflects inspiration from his Jewish heritage, use of dense counterpoint, experimentation with serialism, and his interest in the music of Hindemith.

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18 Ginastera, 266.
19 Ibid., 166.
Throughout his second period, c. 1940-1958, Ficher maintained his neo-romantic and neo-classical style but with greater use of polyharmony and a more transparent polyphonic style without the density of his earlier period. His later works, beginning around 1958 with his Seventh Symphony, *Epopeya de mayo* (Epic of May), were largely influenced by Argentine nationalism, rural folk music, and popular urban music.

**Ficher’s Choral Music**

Ficher’s thirteen works for choir are spread across his three compositional periods encompassing over fifty years. While his compositions in general reflect a great variety of styles and techniques, his choral music utilizes a relatively small number of compositional traits and techniques and is mostly conservative in approach. Homophony dominates over 75% of his choral works because Ficher did not want to compromise the clarity of the text. For instance, Ficher used polyphony sparingly in his two cantatas and his Tenth Symphony with choir. Nonetheless, he did vary the texture in one of several ways. He would begin a section monophonically for two or three measures before having the full chorus join in. At other times, he has each voice enter with an imitative canonic motive before joining together for a homophonic texture. In other situations, but less frequently, he restricts the texture to a pair of voices for a short duration before returning to a homophonic texture.

Ficher’s use of texture and style was governed by the texts he chose to use. Clarity of those texts and honoring the totality of a poet’s message seemed very important to Ficher, and this is evident in his decision to set nearly every choral and vocal work in a through-composed manner. If the poet did not repeat a word or phrase, then Ficher did not repeat a word or phrase. An emphasis on clarity is also evident in Ficher’s use of proper text declamation (word stress), and
he found the use of multiple meters to be an indispensable tool in accomplishing that. Many of his works, including *Rapsodia*, contain meter changes. Some works show more conservative use of meter changes as in Ficher’s *Cuatro Sonetos de Amor*, op. 104, whereas other works, i.e. 3 *Coros A Cappella*, op. 14, contain more frequent changes. Ultimately, allowing the text to seemingly drive his compositional decisions allowed him greater flexibility with phrasing so he could accurately reflect not just the general meaning of specific words, but the artistic message of the text as a whole.

Last, Ficher set the works of poets and other writers from his adoptive country as well as other prominent writers and poets in Spanish. In fact, of Ficher’s eleven works for chorus and twenty-one works for solo voice, only two (with texts drawn from the works of Shakespeare and Longfellow) are in a language other than Spanish. Spanish texts by the famous poet Rafael Alberti are set most often with five of Ficher’s works for chorus and solo voice incorporating the poetry of Alberti. This includes *Rapsodia*.\(^{21}\)

An interesting aspect to Ficher’s music is that he never composed with a key signature. He preferred to use accidentals and at times would utilize both flats and sharps within a single chord in order to achieve a particular seventh or ninth chord, tone cluster, etc. The reason for this practice is unclear. He made frequent use of chromatic passages, but did not always follow the standard practice of writing sharps in ascending passages and flats in descending passages. However, there are many instances when it seems he is trying to avoid chromatic spellings of minor seconds on the same line or space.

\(^{21}\) Further discussion of Ficher’s use of text by Alberti will be discussed in Chapter Three.
Ficher’s Thoughts on His Music and Composition

Ficher was often asked to speak at various events, and frequently took part in radio interviews. He often spoke about the role of classical music in society, the role of the composer, and the role of musical criticism. His words on these topics provide much insight into his own compositional process. In June, 1966 and September, 1970 Ficher gave presentations under the same title: *El Compositor y Su Obra (The Composer and His Work).* During these presentations he covered seemingly broad but essential topics about the nature of music, its function, and how he attempts to address those topics as a composer and conductor. Topics and questions he addressed include: What is music?, Music as a language, What is composition?, the Art of Directing, and the need for autonomy. I will frame his thoughts and beliefs on these topics by first discussing how those ideas informed his own compositional process and choices, and then how those ideas informed his interpretation of works of other composers.

What is music? For Ficher the answer can be summarized in one word: communication. Ficher once referred to artistic expression as a language because it is used to “manifest and transmit to our fellow men our own ideas, our own feelings, and our own sensations.” He was quick to point out that the written or oral word of human language reigns supreme when it comes to providing the clearest means of communication, though all of the possibilities and aspects of expression that can be found in the word can also be found in art, both visual and musical.

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22 The speech in 1970 addressed to the faculty and students of the Conservatorio Municipal Manuel de Falla. The audience of his 1966 speech may have been the same since Ficher began a professorship there in 1966.

There is, however, a huge difference between the language of visual arts and musical arts. Ficher felt that visual arts are static works of art, without movement. They are suspended moments frozen in time and space serving as snapshots of beauty whose past and future are impossible to guess since movement is stopped in an eternal and infinite present. In short, they lack the language of movement, transformation, the passage from one place to another. To that end Ficher stated that “all forms of art…aspire to movement, as if the gods or destiny pushed them out of their own world towards a world with a superior power of expression.”24

Music, in Ficher’s mind, can be defined and described as an authentic language, not only because its forms and content are limitless, but also because its expressive possibilities are infinite. In addition, music, as well as manifesting itself in space like visual arts, exists in time. It has duration, it moves, goes forward, and transforms. This fluidity places music in a superior category and serves as the secret of life since life is intimately linked to the idea and notion of movement.25

Ficher also referred to music as a “live language” that describes, suggests, evokes, narrates, and comments on all external and internal images of the human soul.26 Music is also more complex and complete than literary language since it makes use of sounds and confers expressive meaning and values to these sounds in infinite combinations. Of course, this occurs simultaneously in harmony or successively in melody. In Ficher’s opinion, these meanings, though, are not concrete like words. They have a broad capacity or content in which the sensitivity of the listeners can fluctuate, move, and collect a thousand echoes and different

24 “Todas las artes, sin embargo, aspiran al movimiento, como si los dioses o el destino las empujassen fuera de su propio mundo, hacia o tro mundo de superior poder expresivo.” Ibid.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid., 5.
resonances and reactions according to the listeners’ degree of spirituality, culture, and preparation in the subject of musical technique. The combinations of this type of sonorous tapestry have an affinity for oral language since both have rhythm.27

Ficher also felt that musical language has laws of beauty and purpose that respond to the harmony and art of composition, but it is not subjected, like literary language, to the exact definition of things and feelings. Ficher stated that “music possesses the huge freedom to say indemonstrable, inexistent, fantastic, arbitrary, and absolutely imaginary ideas. This should not lead us to the mistake of believing that music could be the language of absurdity, falsehood, and craziness.”28

Finally, Ficher felt music is a language common to all humankind. It is a language that spans international boundaries, and transcends the obstacles between men and women regardless of race, religion, or nationality:

Precisely, since music is a language common to all mankind, a language that greets you in the crib and stays with you until you die through all misery and glory, it is the language of human unity, the unique expression of what is eternal within, and common among, human beings. Music is thus a superior language that is divine and untranslatable.29

How did Ficher’s thoughts on music translate into his thoughts on composition? When Ficher began his compositional journey he first had to convince himself that there was a great talent as a musical creator within him and that it had to be awakened. How does one awaken

27 Ibid., 5.
28 “Goza la música de una enorme libertad para decir cosas indemostrables, inexistentes, fantásticas, arbitrarias y absolutamente imaginativas. Ello, sin embargo, no debe inducirnos al error de creer que la música pueda ser la lenguaje de lo absurdo, lo falso o lo disparatado.” Ibid.
29 “Precisamente por ser la música un lenguaje común a todos los hombres, un lenguaje que lo saluda en la cuna y le acompaña hasta la tumba a través de todas sus glorias y todas sus miserias, es el lenguaje de la unidad humana; es la expresión única de lo que hay en todos los seres humanos de eterno y de común entre ellos. La música, pues, es un lenguaje superior, divino e intranslatable.” Ibid., 6.
talent within and put it to work? Ficher soon determined that it must come down to inspiration, musical intuition or talent, and the profound study of all the subjects of composition. Ultimately, “the authentic creator must be a learned and intelligent person open to all messages of life and society.”

He was quick to point out just how difficult it is to compose by using a bit of sarcastic humor:

It (composition) is the art of creating and writing a musical work. It is very simple and within everyone’s reach, since to be a composer it is only necessary to have genius or talent, inspiration, knowledge of the constructive elements and have the work capacity to collect, order, and harmonize said elements. Do you still think it is easy?

In Ficher’s mind the theory of composition includes melody, counterpoint, harmony, and instrumentation as material or constructive elements. Additionally, all of these materials require that the person handling them should have “special super glue” in the form of genius. Genius allows the elements to assemble resulting is the creation of master works, and is linked to the work of art the same way the soul is linked to the body.

Ficher believed that genius is innate; one is born with it. Talent, on the other hand, is acquired:

The talented composer, through study and observation, will be able to create well-constructed, masterful, and perfectly formed works. But a composer who is a

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31 “Es el arte de crear y escribir una obra musical. El asunto es muy sencillo, y al alcance de todo el mundo, puesto que para ser compositor resulta necesario, solamente, tener genio o talent, inspiración, conocimiento de los elementos constructivos, y disponer de una capacidad de trabajo para recopilar, ordenar y armonizar dichos elementos. Les parece fácil, todavía?” Jacobo Ficher, “El Compositor y Su Obra, 1970,” Translated by Vanan Services, Jacobo Ficher Collection (Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.) Box 62, Folder 36, 6

32 “Especie de poxipol.” Ibid.
genius will do much more; he will be ahead of his time, paving the way for new paths in art, and starting new perspectives.\textsuperscript{33}

Ficher also explained that two key elements are necessary to set genius ablaze: intuition and expression. Intuition itself is a primordial element but insufficient without expression, and ultimately perfection through expression is achieved through deepening technical knowledge.

Deepening technical knowledge can be accomplished in a couple of ways. First, a composer must have practical knowledge of one or more instruments. Ficher went so far to say:

\begin{quote}
Whoever is not a soloist, or at least a front row performer, will not be able to perfectly compose a work for solo instruments, which requires being familiar with the characteristics of the sonorous material, both instrumental and vocal.\textsuperscript{34}
\end{quote}

Second, in addition to theoretical studies, Ficher advocated for the analytical study of the works of the great masters to the point of assimilating their most intimate traits and compositional details. After getting to know and comprehending those models, a composer must be induced to express in his own language if the composer has something to say or the composer’s imagination allows it. According to Ficher, “the most exciting thing for the imagination is the remembrance of the wonderful examples read or studied.”\textsuperscript{35}

Finally, Ficher cautioned that originality of musical style should not be too prematurely pursued. Impatience has resulted in the birth of many ill-fated works. In the evolution of the

\textsuperscript{33}“El compositor de talento, mediante el estudio y la observación, podrá crear obras bien construídas, magistrales, perfectas de forma. Pero el compositor genial hará mucho más: se adelantará a su tiempo, abriendo nuevos caminos al arte, inaugurando perspectivas.” Ibid, 6-7.
\textsuperscript{34}“Quien no sea concertista o al menos ejecutante de primera fila no podrá escribir a la perfección obras de concierto para instrumentos solistas, debiendo estar familiarizado con las características del material sonoro, tanto instrumental como vocal.” Ibid., 7.
\textsuperscript{35}“Y el mayor excitante para la fantasía es el recuerdo de los magníficos ejemplos leídos o estudiados.” Ibid., 8.
great masterminds of music, their initial works have stemmed from others, and only later were those geniuses able to find their own path, advancing slowly but steadily.36

**Ficher’s Thoughts on Conducting, Musical Interpretation, and Engaging the Spirit**

In addition to being a composer, Ficher was also well known as a conductor, and he viewed conducting as an art in itself. After all, the art of conducting is the art of interpreting the symphonic or theatrical works with balance, emphasis, and comprehension of the spirit of the composer. The conductors, the interpreters, regardless of how much they respect the composer and how much technical knowledge they might possess, must always give their personal version.

The reason for this was quite simple to Ficher. Even though the graphic signs of music are abundant, they are not enough to precisely express the ideas and intentions of the composer. That is why there will never be two interpretations that coincide:

> There will always be differences, contrasts in the moments of exaltation, depression, or in the colorful moments in general, in the same manner that two actors do not employ the same tone, accent, or emphasis in their declamation.37

In fact, Ficher welcomed different interpretations of his own works, and believed that there can, and will often be, multiple interpretations of the same work. These interpretations are not only admissible, but also convincing, if both versions are guided by the subtle quality called “good

Furthermore, there are cases when a talented composer hears their work interpreted by a performer and has to admit that the interpretation is superior to his/her own.

Ficher also acknowledged a certain margin of error that varied depending on the time period and genre of the work. For example, Ficher used the example of the music of Bach to illustrate how the lack of notated musical expressions causes the interpreter to be less confined to the spirit of the creator. However, in works whose scores have detailed expressions, it is an essential norm for the interpreter to confine himself to those expressions, as well as researching the style, time period, and other circumstances in which these compositions were written. Ultimately, as Ficher states:

The interpreter accentuates or highlights a topic, adds details, or increases the effects. All of this can be admissible, but under certain conditions: sincerity, devotion to the work, and most importantly of all, good taste.39

Ficher, in addition to his concern about the artistic merits of composers and their craft, was also concerned about the state of contemporary music and the role of music criticism. Ficher rarely spoke of his own music out of concern that he would turn into his own critic for three reasons: 1) he felt self-praise was inelegant; 2) harshly criticizing his own compositions was not something he allowed himself to do; and 3) he felt strongly that the compositions are exclusively in charge of describing the merits, talents, and endurance of a composer’s name.40

He was cautious about self-criticism because as a prize-winning violinist and performer in prestigious artistic circles, Ficher had a very comfortable and successful life at an early age. However, he soon found himself questioning this secure career path: “Why should I continue to

38 “Buen gusto.” Ibid.
39 “El intérprete acentúa o hace resaltar un tema, afiade detalles, o recarga los efectos, todo ello puede ser admisible, pero con ciertas condiciones: sinceridad, devoción hacia la obra, y lo que es más importante que todo, buen gusto.” Ibid., 9.
40 Ibid., 1.
use my violin and bow as small weapons to face a knowledgeable audience that would not be happy with anything less than a Kreisler, a Heifetz, or a Milstein?”

His ambition started to aim towards what he felt was a higher calling to ascend the peak of musical art—composing—because that is where he felt was the true soul of music.

Ficher extensively studied composers and their compositions, but, as stated earlier, he chose not to discuss or criticize his own compositions. Ficher felt he was, in his words, an “authentic creator.” He identified composers as authentic creators who never explained their work, giving Ficher the confidence to avoid the need to explain his own work. There are certainly examples of composers who have felt the need to explain their work, and Ficher dismissed them all by stating, “All modern and ultramodern composers vastly elaborate on analysis, studies, and explanations about their production. They talk so much that finally they end up getting confused and they use the notion of esthetics and the musical school they belong to.” Ficher did not care about aesthetics or the school of the composer. Rather, his sole concern was the content of the work—the music itself.

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41 “Para qué continuar entretiendo con las pequeñas armas de mi arco y mi violin a un público muy entendido, que no se conformaba con menos que in Kreisler, un Heifetz o un Milstein?” Jacobo Ficher, “El Compositor y Su Obra, 1966,” Translated by Vanan Services, Jacobo Ficher Collection (Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.) Box 62 Folder 36, 1.

42 “El creador auténtico.” Ibid., 2.

43 Ficher’s list of other authentic composers include Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schumann, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Debussy, and Ravel.

44 “Todos los compositores modernos y ultramodernos se extienden larga, largamente, en análisis, estudios y explicaciones de su producción. Hablan tanto que finalmente ellos mismos terminan por confundirse y pierden la noción de su estética y de la escuela musical a la que pertenecen.” Jacobo Ficher, “El Compositor y Su Obra, 1966”, Translated by Vanan Services, Jacobo Ficher Collection (Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington D.C.) Box 62, Folder 36, 2. The greater context of this quote refers to Stravinsky directly.
Ficher did not subscribe to trends or labels. In fact, he indicates that a composer labeling oneself as an impressionist, expressionist, neoclassicist, dodecaphonist, or any other label has nothing to do with the musical significance of the composition:

I do not know what trend I belong to. I try to make music, and surely like to place my production in our time. I cannot compose music like Brahms or Ravel. For better or for worse, I compose music like Ficher. That is all. No explanation. I pity the music that needs to be explained by its creator!  

Though this quote demonstrates Ficher’s characteristic pointedness regarding his belief in being true to himself through his compositions, he did at other times discuss two additional aspects that define him as a composer: his Jewish heritage and the role of folk music.

In a 1966 presentation, Ficher stated, “…I am a Jewish composer. Not only because I belong to these people, but also because the Jewish spirit transcends my work.” Ficher never clarified in this particular presentation or in his other writings the specific means by which the Jewish spirit transcends his work. His best clarification came by way of what his music does not use: direct quotations of folk music. Ficher, by his own admission, never included direct use of folk music or popular songs, Jewish or otherwise, except for two or three works from his first period when the musical world still prioritized the national trend in art.

According to Ficher it is spirit alone, with the help of a strong personality, that defines a composer, and to illustrate that point he referenced several prominent composers:

Why is Debussy so French? Or Verdi so Italian? Why is Wagner so German? They never use folklore from their respective countries. Why are they national

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46 “Soy un compositor judío. No solamente porque pertenezco a este pueblo, sino porque el espíritu judío trasciende de mi obra.” Ibid., 3.

47 Ficher’s first period extends up to the early 1940’s. Examples of his use of popular themes include his first and second orchestral suites, Op. 5 and 6.
archetypes? Because of their spirit! A creator transcends with his spirit when he
has a strong personality.\textsuperscript{48}

Ficher certainly had a strong personality, but for those who lack a strong personality Ficher
suggested a wall of support is needed. For some that may be the use of folkloric elements or for
others any of the “isms” in vogue at the time. However, Ficher cautioned those who turn to
trends to bolster their compositional activity and career:

> Creators include themselves in the isms in vogue, believing that, thus, they
become in vogue with their art. What they forget is that fashion often changes
and composers remain. Frenetic practitioners of modernism and ultra-modernism,
creators as well as apologists, want to suppress the basis of all creation: spirit.\textsuperscript{49}

In Ficher’s mind that which is authentic in the spirit of a society does not need additional
explanation or clarifications. He never planned to compose Jewish music just as he felt Verdi or
Puccini never planned to compose Italian music.

It is well and good for a composer to follow their spirit and write music that they feel
genuinely expresses themselves. However, what kind of responsibility or connection does the
composer have to the listener? Musicians who immigrated to Argentina, like Ficher, were
classically trained and established a classical music tradition in Argentina. Many of those
composers were also focused on new music and incorporating newer trends like twelve-tone
music, neo-romanticism, and electronic music in composition. Therefore, the general public
would rarely differentiate between classical and modern music.

\textsuperscript{48} “Por qué Debussy es [sic] frances? Verdi tan italiano? Wagner tan aleman? Ellos jamás
utilizaron el folklore de sus respectivos países? Por qué son arquetipos nacionales? Por su
espíritu! Un creador trasciende con su espíritu cuando posee una fuerte personalidad.” Jacobo
Ficher, “El Compositor y Su Obra, 1966”, Translated by Vanan Services, Jacobo Ficher

\textsuperscript{49} “Los creadores se incluyen en los ismos de moda, creyendo que así estran a la moda con su
arte. Lo que olvidan es que las modas cambian, y sus composiciones quedan. Los frenéticos del
modernismo y del ulta-modernismo, tanto creadores como apologistas, quieren suprimir la base
de toda creación: el espíritu.” Ibid.
Ficher, however, insisted that there is no difference between classical or modern music; they are only two aspects of the same thing. Ficher described how Handel and Hindemith’s melodic treatment and musical expressions were the same and that they should be heard in the same way. What distinguishes those two composers, however, are their use of harmonies and harmonic progression even if their approaches were common and fitting for their time. Ficher and many composers of his day were concerned with their time. Ficher stated: “I am a composer who knows what happens in the world today. I write music that reflects my own experience and that is necessarily different from the experience of musicians 50 years ago.”

And yet, when Ficher spoke these words in 1960 there was a tangible discomfort with modern music among the people of Argentina as discussed in a radio interview with Juan Carlos Beschinsky. Ficher recognized that sense of public discontent but he explained that modern music, music that challenges and reshapes traditional models, has always faced discomfort, confusion, and even indifference. However, he countered the interviewer’s admitted pessimism with optimism:

However, please note, at this moment, there is a gradual increase of audience attendance to contemporary music concerts; I think this should be credited to the widely modern means that music has, such as discs, radio, and television in addition to the increased print editions.


51 “Sin embargo, tenga en cuenta que, en este momento, hay un aumento gradual de la asistencia de la audiencia a los conciertos de música contemporánea; Creo que esto debería ser acreditado a los medios ampliamente modernos que tiene la música, como los discos, la radio y la televisión, además del aumento de las ediciones impresas.” Jacobo Ficher, “Tu y la Música Moderna,” Translated by Vanan Services, Jacobo Ficher Collection (Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.) Box 62, Folder 38, 1.
Ficher strongly felt that new music, or modern music, could be embraced by the general public. His conviction was based on the belief that people will be drawn to new music that has real artistic value. “Where there is genuine musical art, there will always exist communion between the audience and the artist. Thus it happened, and always will be.”

Ficher believed that real artistic value was not merely cerebral and was not created for the sole intention of being sold and traded like a commodity. In short, when art is approached as trade, new music has no place in this art. Therefore, Ficher consistently wrote and spoke of the need for composers to create their work according to their aesthetic convictions and to express their personality without seeking approval from the public. Ultimately, it is the composer’s responsibility to “raise the public up to the artistic expression, instead of lowering the level of art where it is available to the masses.”

For these reasons Ficher and his contemporaries championed modern music. He stated that “it [modern music] is the music of our time that should be more relevant to the experience of our listeners than the music of our past, because it communicates an emotional attitude which we are familiar with.” That “emotional attitude” is what Ficher believed connected the modern composer with the modern listener. When composers write music they are composing for their own time while being driven by their spirit. That spirit and emotion are what will help a composer connect with the listening public.

52 “Donde haya un arte musical genuino, siempre existirá la comunión entre el público y el artista. Así sucedió, y siempre lo será.” Ibid., 3.
53 “elevar al público a la expresión artística, en lugar de bajar el nivel del arte donde está disponible para las masas.” Ibid.
There are certainly times when the composer and public do not agree or understand one another, and this will cause some composers to speak extensively about their own works or make comparisons within their own body of work or with other composers. Ficher made his opinion on this matter quite clear when he stated, “the true composer does not need to clarify his own works.” Nonetheless, though Ficher believed in this view, it does not prevent music critics from trying to clarify, codify, and critique the works of a composer. Ficher frequently spoke and wrote about the role of music criticism, and viewed the role of the critic and musicologist as being absolutely necessary. He frequently lamented that there was no serious musical criticism taking place in Argentina. Ficher, who wrote and presented on this topic, claimed that those who were critics did not have adequate preparation or the necessary technique for to carry out their work. He felt that critics largely improvised, issued absurd opinions, abused their influence and power to attack, and knew that those who were being criticized had no means to defend themselves.

On the other hand, Ficher reminded his listeners that, “In all times and in all countries, there have always been bad critics.” There have always been reactionary and conservative individuals in art, working as critics, who took the easier path by clinging to the traditional, and were close-minded to the changes in art and the modern expressions of the time. This came as no surprise to Ficher who claimed that all critics, both in Buenos Aires and throughout the world, are not musicians, but, instead, were individuals who could not read a score, have no aesthetic

57 “En todos los tiempos y en todos los países, siempre ha habido malas críticas.” Ibid., 1.
orientation, confused schools and periods of time, and yet dared to speak of the complexities and
subjectivity of the musical art.58

Though Ficher offered a diatribe on the state of musical criticism, he also offered his
thoughts on what musical criticism should be. First, he felt the critic should be honest and
sincere, offering what the art requires for its progress, and not be subjected to the service of any
particular interest. Second, critics should ultimately be on the side of the composer, helping the
composer throughout his/her career while analyzing each step thoroughly. Third, the critic must
be impartial, even in unfavorable, constructive and progressive cases. Last, if a critique is
produced and printed, the composer should be allowed to use that same publication to defend
themselves. Ideally, the public would have the option to participate in that discussion in addition
to the artists and critics from different aesthetic movements. After all, they are all consumers of
art in general and of music in particular.59

58 Ibid., 3.
59 Ibid.
CHAPTER THREE

RAPSODIA, OP. 88 FOR MIXED CHOIR AND SAXOPHONE QUARTET

Jacobo Ficher, as stated in Chapter Two, spoke of a desire for authentic expression and communication. He often found that authenticity by understanding the timbral and technical possibilities of every instrument, studying and experimenting with many compositional styles and forms, and drawing inspiration from non-musical sources. This quest for authenticity was at least partially built upon relationships Ficher established with other artists that he viewed as equally authentic and deeply expressive. To that end, Ficher returned to the work of one of his favorite poets, Rafael Alberti, when he composed Rapsodia for mixed choir and saxophone quartet. He found Alberti to be one of the most influential and authentic voices of the twentieth century and Alberti’s texts provided the inspiration for several of Ficher’s vocal and choral works including the highly praised cantata Salmo de alegría, op. 69 (1949).

Background of Rapsodia

The texts Ficher chose for Rapsodia include selections from the poems of Baladas y Canciones del Paraná (Ballads and Songs of the Paraná) written by Alberti in 1954 during a stay at the “Quinta del Mayor Loco,” an estate near the Paraná River. The natural beauty of the river reminded Alberti of his beloved home in western Andalusia. The Paraná River is second in length only to the Amazon River in South America. The river forms from the confluence of the Paranaíba and Rio Grande rivers in the southern part of Brazil. It continues to flow mostly to the southwest serving as a natural border between Paraguay and Argentina for approximately 120

miles, and eventually it acquires the great Paraguay River before briefly forming into the Río de la Plata and emptying into the Atlantic Ocean. For a man who fled his country for political reasons, the flow of the river personified optimistic hope overcoming melancholy longing.  

Ficher incorporated three of these poems into his Rapsodia: Mvmt. 2 Canto de nostalgia (Song of Nostalgia), Mvmt. 5 Canto de esperanza (Song of Hope), and Mvmt. 6 Canto de Alegria (Song of Joy).

Prior to Rapsodia in 1956, Ficher had composed only one other piece for saxophone, Sonatina for Saxophone, Trumpet, and Piano, op. 21 in 1932. When Ficher set Rapsodia in 1956, the saxophone had begun to reemerge as a classical instrument just as Adolphe Sax intended in the mid 1800’s when he invented it. Ficher’s success with Rapsodia paved the way for his Quartet for Saxophones, op. 89 a year later, which won Second Prize at the Festival Interamericano de Música in Montevideo.

Rapsodia was completed in October of 1956 and was premiered on June 7, 1957 in Buenos Aires at the Comedy Theatre with Ficher conducting an ensemble from Montevideo, Uruguay calling itself the American Saxophone Quartet, and the choir from the Chamber Concert Association. Composed for the Chamber Concert Association, the work concluded a program of new music written for the American Saxophone Quartet whose members included Eduardo Gutierrez (soprano saxophone), Bolivar Gutierrez (alto saxophone), Horst Prentki (tenor saxophone), and Hector Gutierrez (baritone saxophone). The saxophone quartet participated in this program as part of an artistic exchange program with Uruguay.  

It was reported by an

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62 Additional compositions on the program included Pequeño Cuarteto by Jean Françaix, Tres piezas en cuarteto by Jean Absil, Cuarteto en forma rapsódica by Joseph Jongen, and Scherzo by Marcel Poot.
anonymous author that the *Rapsodia* was "well received with enthusiastic applause extended to the meritorious performers."63

**Rafael Alberti Morello (1902-1999)**

Rafael Alberti, the author of the *Rapsodia* text, was a Spanish writer of Italian/Irish ancestry, and is regarded as one of the greatest Spanish poets of the twentieth century. He was born on December 16, 1902, in the Andalusian town of Puerto de Santa María, which sits on Spain's Atlantic coast at the mouth of the Guadalete River overlooking the Bay of Cádiz. The area was one of the major distribution outlets for the sherry business in Jerez de la Frontera.64 Alberti was born to a family of vintners who had once been the most powerful in town, and were suppliers of sherry to the crowned heads of Europe.65 However, while the family was in the process of handing down the business to the next generation, bad management resulted in the sale of the business to the Osbornes of the Osborne Group of wine and spirit makers. Consequently, Alberti's father took on a diminished role in the new company as a commercial traveler and general agent for Spain representing brands of sherry and brandy that had originally only been exported to the United Kingdom.66 The experience of belonging to a bourgeois family and losing that social status over time became an enduring theme in his mature poetry.

63 “Fué recibida con calurosos aplausos, que se hicieron extensivos a los meritorios intérpretes.” Author unknown, "Un Cuarteto Uruguayo de Saxófonos Dió un Concierto de Cámara," *La Prensa* (Jacobo Ficher Collection, Scrapbook 67). This is a review from what was a local newspaper.
64 This is a municipality in the province of Cadiz. As of 2013 it is the largest city in the province and the fifth largest in the larger community of Andalusia.
66 Ibid., 21.
When Alberti was ten he enrolled in the Jesuit school Colegio San Luis Gonzaga as a charity day-boy.  

67 This means the school was funded by a charity or donations and he was not a resident of the school.


69 Alberti, 42.

70 Ibid, 105-106.

71 Jiminez-Fajardo, 17.
In 1920, however, three deaths in quick succession—his father\(^{72}\), the matador Joselito\(^{73}\) (1895-1920), and the Spanish realist novelist Benito Pérez Galdós (1843-1920) inspired Alberti to write poetry. Alberti composed his first poem during his father’s wake because it allowed him to express feelings that his painting could not express. The other two figures influenced Alberti’s writing because they were deeply entrenched in Spanish culture. Galdós was the leading literary figure in nineteenth-century Spain and considered by some critics to be the greatest novelist since Miguel de Cervantes (1547-1616). The influence of Joselito is important because bullfighting has been an active sport in Spain for centuries, and the matadors have often been viewed as heroes. Bullfighting has also been viewed as being intricately woven in with religion and religious folklore, particularly where the sport finds its greatest popularity. All three of these figures influenced Alberti greatly because, as Jiminez-Fajardo states,

> ...one seemingly representing values of traditional culture and intellectual accomplishment, the other a personification of the instinctive art of the people, they remained joined in Alberti’s mind by the bridge of his own intuition as symbols of two basic elements of his poetry, popular elegance and conceptual elaboration.\(^{74}\)

Alberti was diagnosed with early stage tuberculosis in 1921, the same disease that claimed his father. He spent many months recuperating in a sanatorium in the Sierra de Guadarrama where he read voraciously and became more interested in contemporary Spanish poetry. By 1922 Alberti decided to move away from painting and devote himself entirely to poetry.

\(^{72}\) His relations with his father had been frequently strained causing him to be deeply affected by his father's loss.

\(^{73}\) José Gómez Ortega, commonly known as Joselito. He was considered a child prodigy and was the youngest bullfighter to receive the title of *matador de toros* at the age of 17. He is considered one of the most famous bullfighters of all time.

\(^{74}\) Jiminez-Fajardo, 17.
As Alberti began to write poetry in earnest, he had a few poems accepted by various avant-garde magazines. The result of this activity and success was Alberti’s first collection of poetry, *Marinero en tierra* (Sailor on Land), which recalled the Andalusian folksong of his youth and the sea of his native Cádiz region, winning him the National Prize for Literature in 1924. He enjoyed great success over the next few years gaining artistic prestige with new literary magazines eager to publish his works, and was immediately accepted into the elite circles of Spanish literary society where he made friends with those who would eventually be grouped together as the Generation of ’27.

The Generation of ’27 has been called a *new* Golden Age by literary circles and critics alike, and is widely regarded as the fullest poetic flowering in Spain since the latter part of the sixteenth century. The group included such poets as Vicente Aleixandre, Luis Cernuda, Federico García Lorca, Jorge Guillén, and Pedro Salinas, who quickly bonded together out of a shared desire to experience and work with avant-garde forms of art and poetry. As Jimenez-Fajardo states, "The concerns of the group were more strictly poetical, and yet, even in this respect, the bonds that united them were more human than esthetic." Even though the group began to form in 1923, they chose to first wholly gather under the banner of Generation of ’27 out of respect and honor to the 300th anniversary of the death of Spanish Baroque lyric poet, Luis de Góngora y Argote (1561-1627).

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75 Alberti offers the date of 1924. Some authors offer a date of 1925.
76 Other titles have included Generation of the Dictatorship, Generation of the Republic, Generation Guillén-Lorca, Generation of 1925, Generation of Avant-Gardes, Generation of Friendship, etc.
77 Hugo Friedrich, *The Structure of Modern Poetry: From the Mid-Nineteenth to the Mid-Twentieth Century* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1974), 110.
78 Jimenez-Fajardo, 20.
79 Ibid., 21.
The approach of the Góngora Tercentenary lead Alberti to write in a style that was not only more formally demanding but one that enabled him to be more satirical and dramatic. The result was *Cal y canto (Quicklime and Plainsong)*, which amazed his readers with his skillful and seamless appropriation of Góngora's tradition. However, near the completion of *Cal y canto* Alberti felt the manner and form of the tradition were beginning to stifle his expression, so before the completion of the Tercentennial he began writing the first poems of *Sobre los ángeles (Concerning the Angels)*. This book of poems, generally considered to be his masterpiece, demonstrates a complete change of direction not only in the poetry of Alberti, but the whole group. His views on Spain began to change from love and remembrance of his Andalusian youth into something more deeply bound with the nation's future, and his departures from tradition became more frequent and severe. His next collections, *Sermones y moradas (Sermons and mansions)* and *Yo era un tonto y lo que he visto me ha hecho dos tonots (I was a fool and what I have seen has made me two fools)*, together with the play *El hombre deshabitado (The Empty Man)*, all showed signs of a spiritual crisis and a psychological breakdown. The difficulty of this period was offset by his marriage to Spanish novelist, activist, and cultural ambassador María Teresa León (1903-1988) in 1929.

Alberti’s strained emotional and physical state was exacerbated by his interest in politics. He adopted leftist ideas and participated in demonstrations against the regime of Miguel Primo de Rivera (1870-1930), the dictator who served as Prime Minister of Spain from 1923 to 1930. In 1931 the Second Spanish Republic was declared, pushing Alberti towards Marxism and,

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80 Jimenez-Fajardo, 25.
81 This was the government of Spain from April of 1931 until its dissolution in 1939 by a military rebellion led by General Francisco Franco and Emili Mola. Franco would go on to rule Spain as a fascist dictator under the title of Caudillo until his death in 1975.
ultimately, the Communist Party. As a Communist Party emissary, he finally gained financial independence from his family, and made several desired journeys to Northern Europe. However, when Gil Robles (1898-1980) came to power, the violence of Alberti’s attacks in his magazine, Octubre, led to a period of exile for Alberti. During the Civil War (1936-1939), Alberti’s position as the poetic voice of the extreme left was further strengthened by his frequent broadcasts from Madrid. When the Republicans were defeated by the Nationalists in 1939, Alberti and María escaped to France. They lived in Paris and worked as translators until 1940 when the German occupation began in World War Two, at which point they fled Germany.

From Germany, the couple moved to Argentina and lived there for the next twenty-three years until 1963 when Alberti’s writing slowed slightly while he worked for the Losada publishing house and Alberti returned to painting. He began to ponder ways in which graphics and poetry might be mixed, and that curiosity led him to work briefly in the Argentinian film industry, notably as the adaptor of the play La dama duende (The Ghost Lady) by Pedro Calderón de la Barca (1600-1681). Though he regretted his exile, he was reasonably happy during this time, largely due to the birth of his daughter Aitana in 1941. In 1944, he gained greater attention from the English-speaking world with his publication in New Directions Poet of the Month, and the following year he was added to Eleanor Turnbull’s (1875-1964) anthology. Alberti began to be recognized globally, touring frequently between 1944 and 1959 to China, the

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82 Octubre was a revolutionary magazine that Alberti and his wife began publishing in 1934.
83 He was a dramatist, poet and writer of the Spanish Golden Age. He was born when the Spanish Golden Age theatre was being defined by Lope de Vega, but Calderón de la Barca developed it further, and his work is regarded as the culmination of the Spanish Baroque theatre. He is regarded as one of Spain's foremost dramatists and one of the finest playwrights of world literature.
84 Eleanor Turnbull lived near Baltimore, MD and was an editor and translator of several volumes of Spanish poetry particularly that of Pedro Salinas.
Soviet Union, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Germany, France and Italy. Nine volumes of poetry were published during Alberti’s stay in Argentina with Losada publishing his complete works up to that time for his 60th birthday.

In 1964, Alberti and his wife relocated to Rome where he was taken in warmly by the Italian people, who considered him their very own favorite expatriate. By this time, he was devoted primarily to painting and graphics, even though he still wrote occasionally. In 1965, he was awarded the Lenin Prize for Peace, and in 1970 he produced his last great collection, *Les ocho nombres de Picasso (The Eight Names of Picasso)*, a pictorial/poetic attempt to capture various facets of the great artist’s work.  

Alberti was able to return to Spain after nearly forty years in exile on April 27, 1977, following the death of Franco. He was heartily welcomed by the Spanish people and was elected for a short term to the Spanish legislature known as the Cortes. His plays were staged, interest in his poetry was revived, and in 1983 he was awarded the prestigious Cervantes Prize. His wife María passed away in 1989 and he remarried in 1990 to the writer María Mateo. He died at the age of 96 in 1999 from a lung ailment, and his ashes were scattered over the Bay of Cádiz, the part of the world that mattered to him the most.

Text of *Rapsodia*

The entire collection of *Baladas y canciones del Paraná* is structured in four parts. The first part, named for the estate, is entitled *Baladas y canciones de la Quinta del Mayor Loco*, with each of the 17 canciones succeeded by a balada that carries a separate subtitle. The second and third parts are simply referred to as *Canciones I* and *II*, respectively. *Canciones I* includes

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85 Jimenez-Fajardo, 27.
57 poems, *Canciones II* includes 39 poems, and all are titled simply by a number. Part four is a short collection of two canciones and four baladas simply referred to as *Otras (Other) Baladas y Canciones*.

The text for Movement 2 of *Rapsodia* originates from the first part of Alberti’s collection, and is the balada that follows Canción 16. The balada is entitled “Balada de la Nostalgia Inseparable” (Ballad of the Inseparable Nostalgic), and Ficher set the entire text of six short, three-lined stanzas. In this poem, shown in Table 1 with a parallel English translation, Alberti expresses the ways in which nostalgia changes his perception of the world around him. The trees, water, earth, and stars see him as they always do, but the very essence of these worldly things has changed for Alberti who associates them with strong emotional moments from his life.
Table 1. Text to Rafael Alberti’s *Balada de la Nostalgia Inseparable (Ballad of the Inseparable Nostalgic)*. From *Baladas y canciones del Paraná*. Translated by Trevor Loes and Jodi Smith.

Following a saxophone quartet in Movement 3 and a choral fugue on a neutral syllable in Movement 4, Ficher chose a poem from Canciones II, Canción 28, to set in the fifth movement of *Rapsodia*. This text is set as one continuous verse rather than separate stanzas as used in the text for Movement 2. Canción 28, seen in Table 2, is much more positive and spirited as Alberti’s nostalgia turns to elation through song and thoughts of seeing his home once again.
Movement 6 of *Rapsodia* sets Canción 31, seen in Table 3, which builds upon the more uplifting tone of Canción 28. However, the structure of this poem more closely resembles “Balada de la Nostalgia Inseparable” through the repetition of particular words or phrases and the length of the stanzas. The poem is arranged in three sections with each section beginning with the same statement, “Canto, río, con tus aguas,” followed by two stanzas. The first stanza in each group consists of three short statements that are nearly identical, differing by one or two words. The second stanza is similar in structure, but includes four short statements. The last of the three main sections varies slightly by adding an additional two-lined statement between the first and second stanzas. This poem is arguably the most emotional of the three poems Ficher...
chose to set in *Rapsodia*. Here, Alberti relishes his emotional side, and takes great pride in his need and desire to cry, laugh, scream, and sing when needed. He is not a mere inanimate object like a stone in the water which simply allows life to flow passed him without a care in the world.
| Canto, río, con tus aguas:                  | I sing, river, with your water;       |
| De piedra, los que no lloran.             | Made of stone, those who do not cry.  |
| De piedra, los que no lloran.             | Made of stone, those who do not cry.  |
| De piedra, los que no lloran.             | Made of stone, those who do not cry.  |
| Yo nunca seré de piedra.                  | I will never be stone.                |
| Lloraré cuando haga falta.                | I’ll cry when needed.                 |
| Lloraré cuando haga falta.                | I’ll cry when needed.                 |
| Lloraré cuando haga falta.                |                                         |
| Canto, río, con tus aguas:                | I sing, river, with your water;       |
| De piedra, los que no gritan.             | Made of stone, those who do not scream.|
| De piedra, los que no ríen.               | Made of stone, those who do not laugh.|
| De piedra, los que no cantan.             | Made of stone, those who do not sing.  |
| Yo nunca seré de piedra.                  | I will never be stone.                |
| Gritaré cuando haga falta.                | I’ll scream when necessary.           |
| Reiré cuando haga falta.                  | I’ll laugh when necessary.            |
| Cantaré cuando haga falta.                | I’ll sing when needed.                |
| Canto, río, con tus aguas:                |                                           |
| Espada, como tú, río.                     | Sword, like you, river.               |
| Como tú, también, espada.                 | As you, too, sword.                   |
| También, como tú, yo, espada.             | Also, as you, me, sword.              |
| Espada, como tú, río,                     | Sword, like you, river,               |
| blandiendo al son de tus aguas:           | the brandishing of thy waters:        |
| De piedra, los que no lloran.             | Made of stone, those who do not cry.  |
| De piedra, los que no gritan.             | Made of stone, those who do not scream.|
| De piedra, los que no ríen.               | Made of stone, those who do not laugh.|
| De piedra, los que no cantan.             | Made off stone, those who do not sing.|
| Cantad alegría.                           | Sing joy.                             |

Table 3. Text to Rafael Alberti’s *Canción 31*. From *Baladas y canciones del Paraná*. Translated by Trevor Loes and Jodi Smith.
### Musical Structure and Performance Considerations

Table 4 gives an overview of the form of *Rapsodia* along with brief comments about distinctive features.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Movement</th>
<th>Performing Forces</th>
<th>General Form</th>
<th>Tempo</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Distinctive Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. Preludio</td>
<td>Saxophone Quartet</td>
<td>ABA’</td>
<td>Lento; Allegro Moderato</td>
<td>95 mm. 3:15</td>
<td>Establishment of motives; use of triplets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. Canto de nostalgia</td>
<td>Mixed Choir and Saxophone Quartet</td>
<td>Through Composed</td>
<td>Lento; Moderato; Lento</td>
<td>82 mm. 4:15</td>
<td>Division-level rhythms; use of chromaticism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. Interludio</td>
<td>Saxophone Quartet</td>
<td>Binary</td>
<td>Allegro Agitato; Andante</td>
<td>23 mm. 1:00</td>
<td>Restatement of motives from Mvt. I; foreshadows the fugue in Mvmt. IV.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. Fuga (Vocaliz)</td>
<td>Mixed Choir</td>
<td>Fugue</td>
<td>Andante</td>
<td>63 mm. 4:30</td>
<td>Use of secondary countersubject; no text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. Canto de esperanza</td>
<td>Mixed Choir and Saxophone Quartet</td>
<td>Scherzo-like</td>
<td>Allegro</td>
<td>62 mm. 2:15</td>
<td>Rhythmic drive; use of an attacca.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. Canto de Alegría</td>
<td>Mixed Choir and Saxophone Quartet</td>
<td>Rondo-like</td>
<td>Moderato; Andante; Allegro</td>
<td>65 mm. 2:30</td>
<td>Quick, Rossini-like ending repeating the word <em>alegría</em> [joy].</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In Movement 1, *Preludio*, the slow, *forte* homorhythmic statement in the opening two measures, boxed in Fig. 1, is the first of two main motives used in the first three movements. The oval section of Fig. 1 highlights the second main motive of the movement as voiced by the soprano saxophone, which begins the A section (mm. 1 – 33) of this ternary movement.
The primary motive is two descending triplets that can be heard throughout the A section in each voice except for the baritone saxophone. This initial section demonstrates many of the compositional characteristics found throughout the work: liberal use of chromatic passages; quick rhythmic figures; alternating textures of polyphony, homophony and paired voices; use of accidentals rather than a key signature; and use of mixed meters.

When performing this movement, the fast triplet and sixteenth rhythms in the saxophone quartet can easily dominate the polyphonic texture of the movement. A gentle approach to articulation will aid in giving this movement harmonic and dynamic clarity. In particular, the B section (mm. 34 – 64) contains a variety of textures and timbres from legato lines to the falling chromatic passages, as well as various pairings of saxophones. This movement can easily sound “busy,” but nuanced execution could be helpful in hearing the individual lines and the overall polyphonic dialogue in the saxophone quartet texture.
In Movement II, *Canto de nostalgia*, alternating homorhythmic chords in the voices, as seen in Fig. 2, serve as bookends in this through-composed movement.

Figure 2. *Rapsodia*, Mvt. 2, mm. 5-8.

At the end of the movement, however, mm. 78 – 82, the chords are split evenly between the saxophones and voices with the saxophones playing the first half note and the chorus responding with the second half note as seen in Fig. 3.
Figure 3. *Rapsodia*, Mvt. 2, mm. 78 – 80.

Chromatic passing tones and planing are used frequently in the choral parts as seen in mm. 9 – 12 (Fig. 4), as well as in the saxophone quartet as found in mm. 45 – 48.
Ficher did not typically utilize text painting, but an interesting aspect of this movement is what could be a rare attempt by Ficher at using the technique. The poem in this movement is a conversation the poet Alberti is having with himself as he compares his present life with past experiences. This conversation is evident in the alternation between the saxophone ensemble and the choir, a conversation in which the voices introduce melodic or rhythmic material that is then answered by the instruments as seen in mm. 26 (Fig. 5) and mm. 32 and 33 (Fig. 6).
Figure 5. *Rapsodia*, Mvt. 2, mm. 25-26.
Figure 6. *Rapsodia*, Mvt. 2, mm. 32-33.

This musical conversation between the choir and saxophone ensemble may also represent a mirrored reflection of the past and present just like the half-note “bookends” of mm. 5 – 7. A similar musical conversation can be seen in mm. 9 – 12 (Fig. 4) where the tenor and basses echo the descending chromatic pitches and triplet initially voiced by the sopranos and altos (mm. 9 – 11, beat 2) followed by the sopranos and altos imitating the descending chromatic triplet established by the tenors and basses (m. 11, beat 3 – m. 12). Yet another example of text painting could be inferred in mm. 25 – 28, as shown in Fig. 5. The chorus sings of the whipping wind (Ni es el mismo viento quien te está azotando/Nor is it the same wind that is whipping you.) notated by a triplet and two eighth notes which are then immediately imitated by the
saxophones. Finally, the pervasive use of triplets overall seems to reflect the undulating flow of the objects/ideas to which the poet is referring: water, land, dreams, the twinkling of the stars, and the evening breeze.

When performing this movement, it is important that all performers are aware of the text and this alternating technique utilized by Ficher when shaping these musical conversations. Additionally, the saxophone quartet will need to be attentive to the balance between the choral and instrumental forces during the homophonic/homorhythmic sections where the texture could easily be dominated by the saxophone quartet. A lighter articulation in the saxophone quartet would be beneficial, while the chorus is mindful of the clarity of their diction.

The short third movement, *Interludio*, summarizes the main themes of the first two movements while foreshadowing Mvt. 4. The beginning of the movement, as shown in Fig. 7, echoes the primary motive introduced in the soprano saxophone first heard in mm. 2-4 of Mvt. 1 and illustrated previously in Fig. 1.

![Figure 7. Rapsodia, Mvt. 3, mm. 1-2.](image-url)
Fig. 8 illustrates the start of the Andante section, mm. 16-17 of Mvt. 3, in which the soprano saxophone restates the two-measure theme from the beginning of Mvt. 1 shown in Fig. 1.

\[ \text{Figure 8. } \textit{Rapsodia, Mvt. 3, mm. 16-17.} \]

Lastly, Mvt. 3 foreshadows Mvt. 4 as the soprano and alto saxophone lines in measure 18, and shown in Fig. 9 will be used as the basis of the second measure of the main subject of the fugue as shown in Fig. 10.

\[ \text{Figure 9. } \textit{Rapsodia, Mvt. 3, m. 18.} \]
The Fuga of Mvt. 4, subtitled Vocaliz, contains several notable features when compared to most fugues. First, the fugue is sung by an *a cappella* chorus with no instrumental involvement. Second, there is no text assigned to the movement, leaving the choice of vowels and timbre at the sole discretion of the conductor. Third, it is more common for a composer to incorporate a single countersubject, but Ficher chose to employ a full secondary countersubject first heard in the alto voice in mm. 9 – 11 and shown in Fig. 11, from which he derives additional motivic material later in the fugue after the completion of the exposition.
As previously stated, the first four movements share a few melodic motives, but Mvts. 5 and 6 employ new melodic and rhythmic motivic material. These last two movements are performed (attacca) with a scherzo-like penultimate movement followed by a rondo-like final movement as one might find in a string quartet or symphony.

It is generally understood that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries a scherzo was occasionally used in the third movement of a multi-movement piece in place of a minuet and trio. A scherzo is largely a rounded binary form with a B section replacing what would be a trio section. Fig. 12 illustrates the shift to a piano dynamic and legato articulation at m. 23 along with the use of triplets in the saxophone quartet at m. 26 that signal the beginning of the B section.

![Figure 12. Rapsodia, Mvt. 5, mm. 22-26.](image-url)
Figure 13 shows the return of eighth and sixteenth notes in the saxophone quartet at m. 35, which begins a seven-measure retransition to the A’ section at m. 42.

Many multi-movement compositions from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries also conclude with a movement in sonata-allegro form or a rondo such as the rondo-like form comprising Mvt. 6, *Canto de (Alegria Song of Joy)*. Ficher incorporates an alternating A section, mm. 9 – 14 (Fig. 14) with a B section, mm. 15-22 (Fig. 15). This occurs again in mm. 23 – 28 (A section) followed by mm. 29 – 36 (B section).
Figure 14. *Rapsodia*, Mvt. 6, mm 9 – 14.
Figure 15. *Rapsodia*, Mvt. 6, mm 15 – 23.
The C section is signified by mostly quarter notes in the vocal parts with triplets in the saxophone parts beginning at measure 37 and running through measure 49.

The conclusion of this movement is unusual in Ficher’s vocal music. He rarely repeats a word of text in his vocal and choral compositions. However, after the A section makes a brief, five-measure return at m. 50, the phrase Cantad alegría (Sing joy) is repeated by Ficher. Fig. 16 demonstrates how Ficher then repeats the word alegría eight times bringing the work to a joyous, emotional, and Rossini-like close.
Figure 16. *Rapsodia*, Mvmt. 6, mm 54 – 62.
PART TWO

*Rapsodia*, Op. 88 with Critical Apparatus
Editorial Practices

As mentioned in Chapter One, there are two manuscript editions of *Rapsodia* op. 88. The first is a rough, hand-written, non-transposed score on pages approximately 10 in. x 10 in. Ficher’s writing is legible but rather small and tight, particularly with sixteenth notes. As with all of Ficher’s compositions, he did not compose using a key signature, making the pages look extra busy with a great number of accidentals. The second score is a cleaner, hand-written, transposed score on pages approximately 10 in. x 6 in. The score is much easier to read but the page is still quite busy with all of the accidentals.

One of the goals in this performance edition was to make the music easier to read while remaining consistent with Ficher’s harmonic plan. Jacobo Ficher’s penchant for composing without key signatures and utilizing a great deal of chromatic passing tones led to a very busy looking score as a result of all of the accidentals and his frequent use of courtesy accidentals to provide some visual assistance and clarity. Therefore, many of the courtesy accidentals have been removed when they were not deemed necessary. A relatively few number of pitches have also been changed to their enharmonic equivalent so that a single measure was consistent in its use of flats or sharps.

Some of those enharmonic changes were also deemed acceptable when it was discovered that Ficher was not always consistent in his transposition of the saxophone parts. For example, Fig. 17 shows measure 20 from Mvt. 2 of the non-transposed manuscript.
The segment in the box contains the saxophone parts. The soprano and alto parts are written in treble clef and the tenor and baritone parts are written in bass clef. Compare that to this note-for-note edition of Ficher’s second, transposed score in Figure 18.
Notice how Ficher transposed the soprano, alto, and tenor saxophone parts. He used an enharmonic spelling of the technical transposition. The soprano and tenor saxophone should transpose up a major second and minor ninth (M2 and m9 respectively) to C-sharp, but Ficher spelled the pitch as a D-flat. The tenor saxophone should transpose up a major sixth (M6) to a
C-sharp, but was spelled as a D-flat. Surprisingly, if Ficher was being consistent, the baritone saxophone, which should transpose the same as the alto saxophone, should also read as a D-flat. However, Ficher kept the baritone transposed at its regular major sixth (M6) interval; a C-sharp. All of the changes have been detailed in the critical apparatus.

There are several other editorial practices that were employed to conform to contemporary print music practices and make the score easier to read. First, Ficher indicated dynamics below the staff and mixed with the text in the choral parts. I am following the more conventional and less obstructive practice of placing the dynamics above the staves in the choral parts to create more space for the text. Dynamic marks are still marked below the staff for the saxophone parts. Next, continuous, non-syllabic eighth notes have been barred instead of using flags. Then, measure numbers, which were included every five measures and at the end of the measure by Ficher, have been indicated on every measure. As with Ficher, no structural rehearsal numbers or letters were used. Lastly, the text in Ficher's two originals does not include most of the necessary accents needed for the Spanish text, so those accents have been added. The text, which Ficher wrote using all capital letters, also has been set using lowercase letters except, of course, when uppercase letters are properly needed.

There are many prominent Latin American composers like Jacobo Ficher whose contributions to the cannon of art music have largely been forgotten. It is my hope that this research will encourage other musicians and researchers to consider Ficher's life and compositions more closely. There are numerous opportunities for further research and performance. Ficher's ten symphonies are rarely heard and many, including his tenth symphony for orchestra and chorus, have not been premiered in the United States. A comprehensive and annotated list of his works and publishers is sorely needed. Ficher's professional and personal
relationships with the authors of the choral and vocal solo texts, especially those of Rafael Alberti, would provide an interesting discovery for musicians and researchers. A discussion of Ficher's film scores and a comparison with his art music would be insightful to composers of both art and film music. In addition, research needs to be undertaken regarding Ficher's genealogy, as well as the many avenues of discovery regarding the influence of the Grupo Renovación, the way they shaped and defined modern music, and the compositions that were created.
Rapsodia Op. 88
No. 1 Preludio

S. Sx.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

S. Sx.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

S. Sx.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

69
Rapsodia Op. 88
No. 1 Preludio

S. Sx.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

p

p semplice

p semplice cresc.

p cresc.

f

f

f

f

70
Rapsodia Op. 88
No. 2 Canto de nostalgia

Moderato  \( \frac{3}{4} \) = 84

S

A

T

B

S. Sx.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.
Rapsodia Op. 88
No. 2 Canto de nostalgia

Me miras. Y no eres ya el mismo. Ni es el mismo viento quien te espera.

Me miras. Y no eres ya el mismo. Ni es el mismo viento quien te espera.
Rapsodia Op. 88
No. 2 Canto de nostalgia
Rapsodia Op. 88
No. 2 Canto de nostalgia

la de tu gar-gan-ta. Di-me-lo tú, Di-me-lo tú, tie-rра. Te ten-go. Me tie-nes. Y

la de tu gar-gan-ta. Di-me-lo tú, Di-me-lo tú, tie-rра. Te ten-go. Me tie-nes. Y

la de tu gar-gan-ta. Di-me-lo tú, Di-me-lo tú, tie-rра. Te ten-go. Me tie-nes. Y

la de tu gar-gan-ta. Di-me-lo tú, Di-me-lo tú, tie-rра. Te ten-go. Me tie-nes. Y

la de tu gar-gan-ta. Di-me-lo tú, Di-me-lo tú, tie-rра. Te ten-go. Me tie-nes. Y

la de tu gar-gan-ta. Di-me-lo tú, Di-me-lo tú, tie-rра. Te ten-go. Me tie-nes. Y
Rapsodia Op. 88
No. 2 Canto de nostalgia

no, er - es la mis - ma. Ni, es el mis - mo sue - ño de a - mor quien te lle - na. Ni, es el mis - mo
Rapsodia Op. 88
No. 2 Canto de nostalgia

Sueño de amor quien te lle-nas. Di-me-lo tú, Di-me-lo tú, sueño.

Ni es el mismo sueño de amor Di-me-lo tú, Di-me-lo tú, sueño.
Rapsodia Op. 88
No. 2 Canto de nostalgia
Rapsodia Op. 88
No. 2 Canto de nostalgia

nú, estrella. Me

nú, estrella.

nú, estrella. Te llamamos.

nú, estrella.
Y no eres ya la misma. Ni es la misma.
Rapsodia Op. 88
No. 2 Canto de nostalgia

Con la boca cerrada
(with closed mouth)

noche clara quien te que-ma.
Dime lo tú, noche.

noche clara quien te que-ma.
Dime lo tú, noche.

noche clara quien te que-ma.
Dime lo tú, noche.

noche clara quien te que-ma.
Dime lo tú, noche.

Con la boca cerrada
(with closed mouth)
Con la boca cerrada (with closed mouth)
Rapsodia Op. 88
No. 5 Canto de esperanza

Allegro $= 120$

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

$\ldots$ Y sin em-ba-go, ¡pa\'$\alpha$ a le-gro,

$\ldots$ Y sin em-ba-go, ¡pa\'$\alpha$ a le-gro,

$\ldots$ Y sin em-ba-go, ¡pa\'$\alpha$ a le-gro,

$\ldots$ Y sin em-ba-go, ¡pa\'$\alpha$ a le-gro,
Rapsodia Op. 88
No. 5 Canto de esperanza

qué, a-le-gre y fel-i-z ha si-do,y vol-ve-rá a ser mi can - - - - to!
Rapsodia Op. 88
No. 5 Canto de esperanza

Yo sé que me lo sustenta, aunque a -
Rapsodia Op. 88
No. 5 Canto de esperanza

hora se escondan, andén ocultas, cosas y gentes que al

hora se escondan, andén ocultas, cosas y gentes que al

hora se escondan, andén ocultas, cosas y gentes que al

hora se escondan, andén ocultas, cosas y gentes que al
Rapsodia Op. 88
No. 5 Canto de esperanza
Rapsodia Op. 88
No. 5 Canto de esperanza
Rapsodia Op. 88
No. 5 Canto de esperanza
Rapsodia Op. 88
No. 5 Canto de esperanza

mis pue-blos blan-cos, aun-que cla-va-dos a-ho-ra con tres cla-vos,
Rapsodia Op. 88
No. 5 Canto de esperanza

dando, allí esperan, moriendo se lo que un día saldrá de...

Rapsodia Op. 88
No. 5 Canto de esperanza

S
nuevo al viento, cantando alegre y feliz, cantan

A
nuevo al viento, cantando alegre y feliz, cantan

T
nuevo al viento, cantando alegre y feliz, cantan

B
nuevo al viento, cantando alegre y feliz, cantan

S. Sx.
cresc.

A. Sx.
cresc.

T. Sx.
cresc.

B. Sx.
cresc.
Rapsodia Op. 88
No. 5 Canto de esperanza
Rapsodia Op. 88
No. 5 Canto de esperanza
Rapsodia Op. 88
No. 5 Canto de esperanza
Rapsodia Op. 88
No. 6 Coro
Canto de Alegria

Jacobo Ficher (1896-1978)
Edited by Trevor Loes

©2019
Rapsodia Op. 88
No. 6 Coro
Canto de Alegría

S

A

T

B

llo-ran. Yo nunca seré de piedra. Llo-ra-

llo-ran. Yo nunca seré de piedra. Llo-ra-

llo-ran. Yo nunca seré de piedra. Llo-ra-

llo-ran. Yo nunca seré de piedra. Llo-ra-

S. Sx.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

mf
Rapsodia Op. 88
No. 6 Coro
Canto de Alegria
Rapsodia Op. 88
No. 6 Coro
Canto de Alegria

20
ri - o, con tus aguas: De,

21

22

21
ri - o, con tus aguas: De,

22

21
ri - o, con tus aguas: De,

22

ri - o, con tus aguas: De,

22

21
ri - o, con tus aguas: De,

22

ri - o, con tus aguas: De,
Rapsodia Op. 88
No. 6 Coro
Canto de Alegría

S

ré cuan-do ha-ga fal-ta. Can-to, ri-o,

A

ré cuan-do ha-ga fal-ta. Can-to, ri-o,

T

ré cuan-do ha-ga fal-ta. Can-to, ri-o,

B

ré cuan-do ha-ga fal-ta. Can-to, ri-o,
Rapsodia Op. 88
No. 6 Coro
Canto de Alegria
Rapsodia Op. 88
No. 6 Coro
Canto de Alegria

38. Tú, río. Como tú, también, españa. También,
39. cresc.
40.
41. f

125
Rapsodia Op. 88
No. 6 Coro
Canto de Alegria
Rapsodia Op. 88
No. 6 Coro
Canto de Alegria

S

A

T

B

S. Sx.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.
Rapsodia Op. 88
No. 6 Coro
Canto de Alegría

pie-dra, los que no ri-en. De pie-dra, los que no can-tan. Can-tad a-le-
pie-dra, los que no ri-en. De pie-dra, los que no can-tan. Can-tad a-le-
pie-dra, los que no ri-en. De pie-dra, los que no can-tan. Can-tad a-le-
pie-dra, los que no ri-en. De pie-dra, los que no can-tan. Can-tad a-le-

S. Sx.
A. Sx.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
Rapsodia Op. 88
No. 6 Coro
Canto de Alegria

S

A

T

B

S. Sx.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.
CRITICAL APPARATUS

Movement 1

Mm. 1 - 4/4 has been used to signify the meter instead of C for common time because the meter changes later

Mm. 2 - breath marks removed from the "and" of 2 in the alto, tenor and bari sax parts

Mm. 5 – E-flat used instead of a D-Sharp on beat 4 of the sop sax part

Mm. 6 - courtesy natural removed from the A on beat 2 of the tenor sax part; mf markings added to each part at the end of their crescendos

Mm. 10 - mf marking added to the end of the crescendo in the sop sax part to be consistent with the other parts and provide a specific range to the crescendo

Mm. 13 - courtesy accidental removed from the E on beat 2 of the alto sax part

Mm. 14 - courtesy accidental added to the E on beat 1 of the alto sax part; courtesy natural removed from the F on beat 2 of the tenor sax part

Mm. 18 - courtesy natural removed from the G at the end of beat 2 in the bari sax part

Mm. 34 - p marking added to the alto sax part to provide definition and consistency

Mm. 36 - JF's first draft shows a concert E-natural, but his second draft shows a concert D-natural. Based on the other pitches and the direction of the bari sax part I have determined that JF's first draft shows the pitch (E) that he intended to use.

Mm. 40 - "and" of 3 is flagged instead of being barred with the eighth notes of beat 4 in the sop sax part; courtesy natural removed from the D on the fourth beat of the bari sax part

Mm. 49 - "piano" marking added to beat one of the bari sax part for clarification

Mm. 52 - B-naturals used instead of C-flats in the tenor sax part; courtesy natural removed from the F on beat one of the tenor sax part

Mm. 59 - E and F-sharp used instead of F-flat and G-flat respectively in the sop sax part

Mm. 62 - F-sharp used instead of a G-flat at the start of beat two in the sop sax part

Mm. 68 - D-natural used instead of E-flat in beat 1 of the alto sax part; courtesy natural removed from the C on beat 2 of the alto sax part; mf is suggested as a dynamic arrival point as one not offered in either manuscript

Mm. 69 - courtesy natural removed from the G in beat 2 of the tenor sax part

Mm. 78 - courtesy natural removed from the F in beat 2 of the sop sax part

Mm. 81 - courtesy natural removed from the C in beat 2 of the bari sax part
Mm. 83 - there is a discrepancy here as to whether the end of 83 is slurred into 84. The first original does not show one, but in the second original bars 83 and 84 are in two separate systems and the end of 83 shows a slur to 84 but the start of 84 does not show the continuation of a slur. It seems most consistent to me to have the two measures not slurred together.

Mm. 84 - the mp has been added for dynamic clarification.

Mm. 87 - B-natural used instead of a C-flat in beat 1 of the alto sax part in order to be consistent with the next two bars

**Movement 2**

Jacobo Ficher’s measure numbers are off by one measure.

Mm. 1 - 4/4 has been used to signify the meter instead of C for common time.

Mm. 5-8 - word extensions have been added to the "A" in the bass voice part.

Mm. 6 - Courtesy naturals have been omitted for soprano and alto voice parts

Mm. 8 - A breath mark has been added to the end of the measure in each vocal part.

Mm. 10 - a natural sign has been omitted in front of the E on beat two of the soprano voice part

Mm. 11 - a natural sign has been omitted in front of the B on beat two of the soprano voice part, and from the E in the alto voice part

Mm. 13 - 4/4 has been used to signify the meter instead of C for common time.

Mm. 13 - F-sharp on beat 4 of the tenor sax part has been changed to a courtesy accidental; the second triplet eighth of beat four has been notated as F-natural instead of an E-Sharp in the soprano voice part

Mm. 14 - a natural sign has been removed from the B in the bass voice part; the third triplet eighth of beat one has been notated as an A-flat instead of an G-Sharp in the alto sax part

Mm. 15 - a natural sign was removed before the F at the start of beat three in the alto voice part.

Mm. 16 - a natural was removed before the first pitch of the soprano sax and alto sax parts

Mm. 20 - a natural sign was removed before the B on beat 3 of the soprano voice part. JF notated this measure in sharps in his first draft and flats in the second transposed draft. I have opted to notate the pitches in sharps.

Mm. 21 - natural signs were removed before the D in beat 3 of the sop sax part and before the C in beat 2 of the alto sax part

Mm. 22 - accidentals in the sax parts have been notated in sharps instead of flats as in JF’s second draft.
Mm. 23 - natural signs have been omitted before the pitches on beat one in all sax parts

Mm. 24 - sharps used for alto sax part instead of flats; flats used instead of sharps for the bari sax part

Mm. 26 - an E-natural has been used instead of a F-flat in the bari sax part for consistency.

Mm. 27 - G-sharp used instead of an A-flat in beat 1 of the tenor sax part; G-flat used instead of an F-sharp in the alto voice part; courtesy “piano” marking deleted for alto sax

Mm. 28 - B-natural used instead of C-flat in the tenor voice part; courtesy natural added to beat one of the bass voice part

Mm. 33 - crescendo signs were used in both vocal and saxophone parts instead of the cresc. text

Mm. 34 - an mf marking was added to the saxophone parts to define the destination of the crescendo in bar 33. This marking also matches the vocal parts. C-natural used in place of a B-sharp in tenor voice part at the end of beat 3.

Mm. 35 - D-flat used instead of C-sharp in bass voice part at the end of beat four

Mm. 36 - courtesy natural added to the first pitch of the bass voice part

Mm. 37 - courtesy natural removed from the G on beat 1 of the tenor voice part; staccato added to the downbeat of the bari sax part to be consistent with the other sax parts

Mm. 38 - courtesy flat removed from beat four of the soprano voice part

Mm. 39 - courtesy natural removed from beat four of the soprano and alto voice parts;

Mm. 40 - courtesy natural removed from beat four of the alto voice part; an F-natural is used instead of an E-sharp on the "and" of two in the tenor voice part

Mm. 45 - courtesy natural removed from beat two of the tenor voice part; crescendo symbols used instead of printing cresc.

Mm. 51 - sixteenth note tremolos have been replaced with sixteenth notes. JF used the two methods interchangeably between his first and second drafts.

Mm. 52 - B-naturals used instead of C-flat in beat three of the tenor sax part; E-natural used instead of an F-flat on beat 2 of the alto voice part; D-flat and E-flat used for C-sharp and D-sharp respectively on beats 3 and 4 of the bass voice part

Mm. 56 - B-natural used instead of a C-flat on beat one of the soprano voice part; courtesy natural removed from beat three of the soprano voice part; B-natural used instead of a C-flat on beat 3 of the tenor voice part

Mm. 57 - courtesy natural removed from the E on beat 3 of the soprano voice part; B-natural used instead of a C-flat in the tenor voice part; courtesy naturals removed from beats 3 and 4 of the tenor voice part
Mm. 58 - E-flats used instead of D-sharps on beat 3 and 4 of the sop sax part
Mm. 59 - cresc. symbols used instead of the abbreviation
Mm. 61 - A-flat used instead of a G-sharp on beat 2 of the bari sax part
Mm. 64 - G-flat used instead of F-sharp in sop sax part
Mm. 65 - E-flat used instead of D-sharp on beat 4 of the tenor voice part
Mm. 68 - courtesy natural removed from the downbeat of the bass voice part
Mm. 69 - A-flat used instead of G-sharp on beat 2 of the sop sax part
Mm. 71 - courtesy natural removed from the B on beat 4 of the tenor voice part
Mm. 77 - pp dynamic marking added to the bass voice part for consistency (it was included in 1st original but not in the 2nd)

Mvmt. 3
Mm. 1 - Courtesy natural removed from beat one of the soprano sax part.
Mm. 5 - Alto sax/beat 4, original notation is one eighth and four sixteenth notes; changed to one eighth and four 32rd notes.
Mm. 13 - Bari sax/beat 2, courtesy natural removed from the G.
Mm. 14 - successive dashes after the rall. marking have been removed.
Mm. 18 - Sop. sax/beat 1, courtesy natural removed from the C.

Mvmt. 4
Mm. 4 – Alto voice part/beat 4, courtesy natural removed from the B.
Mm. 16 – Soprano voice part/beat 5, courtesy natural removed from the B.
Mm. 27 - The last eighth note begins a slur that extends to the downbeat of bar 29. The first original denotes this but the second does not. However, that phrasing follows the same melodic and rhythmic pattern shown in bars 25 and 26 of the bass part.
Mm. 31 – Alto voice part/beat 3, courtesy natural removed from the F.
Mm. 36 - Tenor/beat 3, courtesy natural removed from the C.
Mm. 37 - Tenor/beat2, the first original notates the A as a B-double flat.
Mm. 37 - Tenor/beats 3, 4, 5 - the second originals notates the A-flats as G-sharps.
Mm. 38 - Soprano/beat 1, courtesy natural removed from the A.
Mm. 42 - Bass, the second original indicates a slur for the entire measure, however, the first original does not. I have chosen not to include the first pitch in the slur in order to match the articulation of the tenor part as well as to provide more flexibility for the octave leap.

Mm. 52 - Tenor, a decrescendo has been added to the last two beats. A decrescendo is indicated in the first original but not the second. However, a decrescendo would be necessary to follow the phrasing and dynamic motion of the Soprano and Alto voices.

Mm. 56 - Tenor/beat 5, courtesy natural removed from the B.

Mm. 57 - Tenor/beat 4, courtesy natural removed from the B.

Mvmt. 5
Mm. 13 - Soprano/beat 2, courtesy natural removed from the B.
Mm. 15 - Tenor Sax/beat 3, staccatos added that are included in original #1 but no original #2.
Mm. 24 - Soprano/beat 4, courtesy natural removed from the B.
Mm. 24 - Tenor/beat 2 & 3, courtesy naturals removed from the B and A.
Mm. 34 - Soprano/beats 3 & 4, courtesy naturals removed from the A and B.
Mm. 37 - Tenor/beat 4, courtesy natural removed from the D.
Mm. 42 - Tenor Sax/beat 4, courtesy natural removed from the D.
Mm. 42/43 - Ficher used the word "esperando" (waiting) but the complete works of Alberti shows that the word "aguardando" (awaiting) should be used and that is what was chosen for this edition.

Mm. 44 - Tenor sax part/beat 1 & 2, the first original indicates octave concert Gs, but the second original notes the interval of a 9th. I believe the octave Gs was Ficher's intent.
Mm. 49 – Soprano voice part/beat 3, courtesy natural removed from the F.

Mm. 48-51 - Ficher used a somewhat incorrect form of abbreviating continuous eighth-note triplets. I have opted to notate them as conventional eighth-note triplets.

Mm. 49 - Sop. Sax/beat 3, courtesy natural removed from the F.

Mvmt. 6
Ficher continued to number measures from Mvmt. 5. I have opted to begin Mvmt. 6 with measure 1.

Mm. 12 - Alto Sax/beat 4, courtesy natural removed from the G.
Mm. 37 - Bari. Sax/beat 1, concert D has been used to reflect the first original. A concert F was used (I think mistakenly) in the second original.

Mm. 46 - Sop. Sax/beat 4, courtesy flat removed from the first D.

Mm. 47 - Alto Sax/beat 3, concert G-Flat has been used on the third eighth note in the triplet as indicated in the first original and not a concert G as indicated in the second original. An E-natural has been used to represent concert G on the second eighth note in the triplet.

Mm. 53 - Soprano/beat 3, courtesy natural removed from the F
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