

ARTICLE

Jorge Peña Hen's *La Cenicienta*: Sociopolitical development through compositional techniquesAndrew Sutherland*

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Abstract

Jorge Peña Hen (1928-1973) was responsible for promoting cultural activities and music education throughout Chile, establishing a social youth movement based on participation in music, that resulted in the critically acclaimed Children's Symphony Orchestra. In the weeks following the September 1973 coup d'état under Augusto Pinochet, the Caravan of Death executed at least 75 political prisoners, including Peña Hen. His opera for children, *La Cenicienta* (1966), written to be performed entirely by youth was suppressed under Pinochet's regime, and remained so until revived interest in Peña Hen's work were possible. I explore the importance of this opera through the lens of sociopolitical development, connecting his opera with his efforts to promote music through social equality. His widow, Nella, now in her 90s, and their daughter Maria, reflect through personal communication on the circumstances of *La Cenicienta*. Extracts of the original score are examined, and the link with the Venezuelan youth music movement known as *El Sistema* is discussed.

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1. Introduction

A growing interest in the work of Jorge Washington Peña Hen (1928-1973) since the end of the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile in 1990 has resulted in research, festivals, and performances to honour his legacy. So far, much of this activity has been understandably concentrated in Chile, and specifically La Serena, where his work was largely focused. Progress has been gradual, but the reissue of Miguel Castillo Didier's book in 2015 marked a major step forward since the original self-published release in 2001 of just 50 copies.^{1,2} With access to personal communication from Peña Hen's widow, Nella, and daughter, Maria as well as scanned copies of the autograph score of his opera, *La Cenicienta* (1966), I aim to better understand his work for children in the context of the changing political landscape in which he worked.

Viewing *La Cenicienta* through the lens of Sociopolitical Development (SPD), allows a contextualised perspective of the work. Watts and Guessous³ observe that SPD can be considered as a branch of liberation psychology, the core tenets of which are: exposing social injustice; creating just societies; promoting self-determination and solidarity with others; and ending oppression. Social inequality for adolescents can impact their

vocational expectations.^{4,5} Peña Hen's motivation to provide musical opportunity to underprivileged children in Chile is examined in the wider context of the changing political environment. Accordingly, the research question asks, how are the socio-political interests of Peña Hen reflected in his opera for children, *La Cenicienta*?

2. Peña Hen and socialism

Discussion of Peña Hen's musical contribution to Chilean music can be considered in two areas; his efforts as an education advocate, and his work as a composer. Both areas are viewed in this article from the SPD perspective. Although he was clearly guided by a deep-rooted socialist philosophy, he forged his own agenda, strengthened by his convictions that music could positively impact the lives of children. However, his adherence to institutional ideology, formed through formal or informal collective decision-making is not a strong characteristic of his work.

Peña Hen's links to the Socialist Party were not as well-defined as his father. Salvador Allende's presidency coincided with a period of intense political polarisation in Chile, during which ideological tensions permeated many aspects of social and public life. His government, formed by the Popular Unity (Unidad Popular, UP) coalition, brought together a diverse collection of left-wing political parties and movements committed to implementing a socialist programme through democratic means. Within this politically charged context, Peña Hen's vision for music education intersected with the broader cultural aspirations of the Popular Unity government, particularly its emphasis on expanding access to artistic participation and positioning culture as a means of social inclusion. There are no extant photographs of Allende and Peña Hen together, however he was photographed with President Eduardo Frei Montalva of the Christian Democratic Party. Support for either party only came into focus when it could further Peña Hen's projects. In 1972, accompanied by academic, Américo Giusti, he addressed the central committee of the UP, requesting support for a larger space at the La Serena School of Music. In return, he promised to return to being a socialist militant.⁶ Disgusted by his need to create political alliances in order to further his music education endeavours, and with memories of previous frustrations, he reportedly exclaimed to Giusti shortly after the meeting, "My only candidate is Juan Sebastián Bach!" Peña Hen never renounced his militancy or stopped identifying with either party, instead expressing his socialist ideals through music education. Avoiding the promotion of elitism, he sought to educate *en masse* by creating large orchestras, and in doing so, promoting self-determination and solidarity and creating a microcosm of a just society.

In his children's opera, *La Cenicienta*, opportunity to promote social equality can be seen through his choice of libretto, and several of his compositional techniques. Stylistically, Peña Hen did not attempt to follow a major musical trend in Chile at the time. A folk music movement had been brewing in the form of Violeta Parra's music in the 1950s. Sibling musicians Isabel and Ángel Parra created *Peña de los Parra* in 1965, a vibrant centre for singer songwriters and the momentum culminated in the *Nueva Canción Chilena* from around 1969. Soon after *La Cenicienta* was written, the movement crystallised significantly. In July/August 1967, an event took place in Cuba during which fifty musicians from eighteen countries gathered to exchange ideas regarding the role of the singer and songs. According to Fairley,⁷ the *nueva canción* movement, strongly linked with communist ideology, was also known by several other nomenclature: *cancion protesta*; *cancion comprometida*; *cancion política revolucionaria*; *cancion folklorica*; *canción popular*; *cancion política*; *canciones de lucha y esperanza*; *canto libre*; and *canto nuevo*. The collective musicians resolved that songs should be used to rebel against colonialism and imperialist influences from the United States. The movement was particularly prominent in Chile, and following the 1973 Coup, remained an important source of cohesion for artists who had either fled or refused to return to the country, such as the groups, *Inti Illimani* and *Quilapayún*, and the resistance group ¡Karaxú! formed by Patricio Manns, Franklin Troncoso, Bruno Fléty and others. The musical style of *nueva canción* was usually more closely associated with folk-music idioms, often with folk-lore elements stemming from the Mapuche and drawing heavily on Andean instrumentation and repertoire. It was music for the people, and although stylistically, had little in common with Peña Hen's compositions, the sociopolitical sentiments were closely aligned.

Just as Peña Hen's political alliances took the shape of informal support, rather than active membership, he did not conform completely with the characteristics of the *nueva canción* (new song) movement. His compositional style stemmed from a more Eurocentric and classical influence rather than a contemporary, folk idiom. His orchestration; use of formal, classical structures and adaptation of Perrault's fairy tale could not be linked to the emerging artistic movement. However, the way his musical techniques emphasised the message of unjust suppression and his ability to enable maximum involvement regardless of background or training, encapsulated his own version of a socialist artistic movement.

3. Data sources

For this article, I drew on three primary sources,

including the original opera manuscript with hand-written annotations by the composer; several email communications from Peña Hen's widow, Nella Camarda, and emails from his daughter, Maria Fedora Peña. The first-hand accounts of the circumstances of *La Cenicienta*, encapsulate a pivotal moment in his life's work with impoverished children. Nella's recollections of the political turmoil in Chile as well as the work of her late husband is translated for this article from Spanish into English. I have framed the discussion with further information from the growing body of literature.

Nella first responded to my request to look at the score of *La Cenicienta* in February 2020. I discovered that she was an accomplished musician and that her extensive experience with music and education formed a symbiotic fusion with that of Jorge. She prefaced her first email by saying, "I have already turned ninety, of which only four were without music" After politely asking to communicate in the familiar form, she continued,

First of all I will introduce myself so that we get to know each other a little. I have dedicated myself to piano all my life. It has been my passion; I am a graduate of the Bachelor's Degree in Piano. Since my marriage, I subordinated my career to the work of Jorge Peña Hen, my husband, which is why my performances were aimed at the musical development of the entire region since his ideals regarding music were also mine. (Nella Camarda, personal communication, January 29, 2020).

The unpublished piano/vocal score of *La Cenicienta* was scanned and sent to me from the *Biblioteca Nacional de Chile*. The hand-written document includes scribbled notes in pencil, presumably by the composer during rehearsal about changes that he later intended to make to the opera. The score itself was handwritten in pen on manuscript, and the libretto was produced on a typewriter.

Nella's transcript provides further context and personal insight into the composition of *La Cenicienta* and is timely, as she explains, "I assure you that I can say that almost nobody has had this kind of narrative on my part, because you approached me at a special moment in my life and very close to my departure" (Nella Camarda, personal communication, January 29, 2020).

4. The emerging musical agitator

Jorge was the eldest son of Dr Tomás Peña Fernandez and Vitalia Hen Muñoz. His father founded the Socialist Party in Coquimbo, in northern Chile, just south of La Serena. Jorge began composing at the age of fourteen and attended the country's most prestigious university,

the University of Chile at eighteen. He studied piano and viola and demonstrated his enthusiasm for social change when he co-founded a student magazine, *Psalterium* to voice concerns about the Chilean art world. He entered the National Conservatory, studying composition and conducting where he became President of Student Centre, furthering reforms in music and art. Agustín Cullell (1928-2017) recalled,

I met him in 1946 - almost half a century ago - when he came to Santiago from Coquimbo to study Composition at the National Conservatory of Music and perfect his instrumental knowledge. We were of the same age and I still remember the impression that our contact with a personality as vital, restless and compelling as his made on all the students of that time. He did not come alone. Along with him, an important group of young people from La Serena and Coquimbo joined the Conservatory, whose members were distinguished by their exceptional dynamism and to whom we soon gave the qualification of "Los Serenenses."^{8(p5)}

Cullell and Peña Hen jointly directed concerts in 1947 of the Conservatory orchestra in La Serena and Coquimbo as 19-year-olds, and Cullell noted Peña Hen's tireless organization, as well as his abilities as a conductor, pianist, violist, and composer.⁸ During this time at the Conservatory, Peña Hen actively promoted changes to the curriculum by forming multiple chamber ensembles, and then instigating numerous performances, talks and conferences both within the institution and in the community. One of Peña Hen's most important achievements at this time was his role in the formation of a society dedicated to the performance of the works of Bach, many of which, such as the *St Matthew Passion*, BWV 244, had not yet been performed in South America. Camarda reflected,

I will refer, as briefly as possible, to the first antecedents of our work in the North of the country, which allowed the Experimental School of Music to be developed, which now bears his name. In 1950, Jorge, still a student of the National Conservatory in the compositional career, founded in La Serena, a city near Coquimbo, where he lived, the Johann Sebastian Bach Society. (Nella Camarda, personal communication, January 29, 2020)

To successfully achieve the formation and continuation of such an ensemble in the north of the country was, according to Camarda, a 'titanic' effort. She reflected on the lack of stable financing, and the integration of a wide variety of community sectors such as doctors, dentists, teachers, and others to establish the Bach Society. This society, as

well as his formation of the La Serena Philharmonic Orchestra, established La Serena as the musical capital of the north, at a time when the professional training of orchestral musicians was insufficient.¹

Jorge Peña returned in 1950 to the city of La Serena in the province of Coquimbo. A year later he married the pianist Nella Camarda, with whom he had two children, Maria Fedora and Juan Cristián. He worked as Professor of Music Education at the La Serena High Schools, where he directed the choirs of the Men's High School and the Girls High School.⁹ This period undoubtedly formulated his understanding that in order to stabilise a functioning national symphony orchestra, a grass roots campaign involving systemic music education was necessary. After fifteen years of unpaid work, Jorge and Nella's tireless efforts to improve the ecology of orchestral musicianship won support from the National Conservatory, and a Regional Conservatory was established in La Serena. In 1964, wanting to learn from the band and orchestra models used in United States schools, he travelled to Bloomington, Indiana, where he met the teacher and composer, Juan Orrego-Salas who reflected,

I noticed that one of the initiatives that he was most interested in researching was the development of children's orchestras in different cities in the USA, sponsored many times by music schools. And there - I think - Jorge's inspiration was born to establish the children's orchestra here in La Serena.^{10(p62)}

The experience allowed him to see music as a catalyst for social change, tackling integration and poverty. During this trip, the news reached him that his proposed Philharmonic Orchestra in northern Chile, 15 years in the making, had been rejected by Congress. Nella recalled,

When we heard about the news, my husband and I had been invited to the US, where we witnessed precisely a concert in which a group of children was the most important part. That was when it occurred to us that this was what we should do.^{11(p70)}

He returned with organisational and pedagogical strategies, as well as a firm conviction that a replication of youth ensembles should occur in Chile. With the crushing news that the La Serena Philharmonic Orchestra was dissolved, due to President Alessandri's programme of economic austerity, Peña Hen and a group of musicians from the orchestra focused their attention on two primary functions: the creation of a Chamber Orchestra, and teaching in primary schools.¹²

After a quick selection of 100 fourth-year high school children from five different primary schools, 30% from low-income households, he began the

unrestricted musical development of this group, teaching them based on new modern musical methods, of practical type, producing active musicians in the short term. The children were distributed in sixteen classes of six students each, within the framework of a symphony orchestra. Students of both sexes began to play instruments, allowing them to choose the instrument they wanted to play themselves and gradually becoming familiar with the theory, music theory and performance of the chosen instrument. In December 1964, after only seven months of study, the La Serena Children's Symphony Orchestra offered its first concert in the city.^{12(p3)}

Camarda explained that in March 1964, Peña Hen personally went to each of the schools, selecting six students in each, to form part of a symphony orchestra. Each child was assigned an instrumental teacher who delivered two weekly lessons. She recalled the need for Peña Hen to not only find instruments for the children to play, but to create and adapt musical material for them to learn. Peña Hen was not looking for musically talented children, as his philosophy was firmly based on the notion that any child, given adequate instruction, was capable of playing in an orchestra.¹³

Before long, Peña Hen created children's orchestras in Coquimbo, Ovalle, and Copiapó. He then selected 100 students from La Serena to participate in specialist 'whole day' music classes as part of the 'teaching extension plan'. This advanced group of student musicians became known as the Symphony Orchestra of Children of Latin America, and by 1965 performed advanced works for the public to critical acclaim. The first such concerts took place at the Municipal Theater of Santiago followed by a performance before the Senate of the Republic. The authorities of the country were convinced, and The Experimental School of Music was founded (Nella Camarda, personal communication, January 29, 2020).

Significantly, the majority of the children involved came from impoverished backgrounds, and Valdés noted in his contemporary account, that the parents of these children enjoyed comparatively "low cultural levels", which were enriched by their children's musical experiences. In 1966, the Urban Experimental School operated six courses of primary education, with an enrollment of 190 students, all studying a variety of instruments. Although the school operated independently of the national Conservatory, Peña Hen intended for around 20-30% of graduates to attend the newly established Regional Conservatory of Music. This pathway was strengthened by the creation of scholarships and other incentives. The careful structure of courses

with clarified objectives at each stage was seen as a ten-year plan and would ultimately result in the operation of five Symphonic Orchestras in La Serena: one for children aged five and six; another for children aged 7 and 8; one of secondary students from the Conservatory; another of university students, and a professional orchestra made up of professors from the Experimental School and the Regional Conservatory of Music.

As a result of the successes obtained in 1965 by the teachers and students of the Urban Experimental School of La Serena; the success of the pedagogical work and the exceptional conditions of Chilean children in the cultivation of music, a ten-year plan like the one outlined could become a reality not only for students from La Serena, but this experience should be studied and applied to all the selected schools from the country.¹²

Such approval by Valdés and other observers would likely have been confirmation for Peña Hen and his colleagues that their efforts were bearing fruit. Valdés uses the phrase, “*las excepcionales condiciones de los niños chilenos*”, which goes unexplained. There may be tacit understanding for the reader in 1966 that these ‘exceptional conditions’ refer to the sociopolitical injustices experienced in the community. The opinion expressed here that the programme could be replicated throughout the country must have been further validation of the value of the experiment.

The project was heralded by a special ministerial decree in 1965, integrating the teaching and collective practice of music into the national curricular plan from the fourth year of primary school until the end of high school. This educational project remains in force in the association of this school with the Department of Music of the University of La Serena.¹⁰ Peña Hen's objective was “that the Music reaches all, regardless of race, creed or social position” (Nella Camarda, personal communication, January 29, 2020). With overwhelming interest in the Urban Experimental School resulting in two schedules to cater for the student enrollments, Peña Hen had clearly established himself as a driving force in the Chilean music community. He maintained his interest in composition throughout this period, but his most socially transformational work would allow his students to take to the stage in an opera written entirely for children.

During a tour of Chile with the Children's Symphony Orchestra and the La Serena Dramatic Art Ensemble, the achievements of the children drew praise from critics. In Valparaíso, Germán Carmona Mager commented in the ‘Art and Culture’ section of the Valparaíso newspaper, *El Mercurio* on the concert at the Federico Santa María Technical University on Friday, January 26.

We were able to appreciate the positive results achieved by the teacher Jorge Peña Hen in children's musical education. Peña Hen has distinguished himself as a seasoned baton, directing the National Symphony or the Municipal Philharmonic or his La Serena Philharmonic, now a “subsidiary” of the Chilean Symphony. But above all things he has “awakened” that city musically, he has created an artistic environment. All this has undoubtedly been worth his efforts and he has even encountered misunderstandings, as happens when he pioneered a company of this size. But his tenacity has triumphed over difficulties.^{2(p85)}

5. *La Cenicienta*

Peña Hen's children's opera, *La Cenicienta* (*Cinderella*, 1966) was composed to showcase the musical abilities of the impoverished children with whom he had been working. Driven by a desire to promote advanced musical experiences for disadvantaged children, tenets two and four of Watts and Guessous's³ SPD model, Peña Hen wrote the opera to be performed entirely by children, with the orchestral parts taken by his flagship student ensemble. The work was set to a libretto by Chilean author, Óscar Jara Azócar (1910-1988). Camarda explains the purpose of the work, as a motivational tool for the children of the school. She describes the composition process,

I think it didn't take more than 10 days to do so. At our dining room table and with me by his side, he was happy doing it, because he imagined the little protagonists in full action, walking, singing, dancing. He sang and smiled writing on the stave with a speed I had not seen before. His imagination flew. (Nella Camarda, personal communication, January 29, 2020)

The libretto is entitled,

LA CENICIENTA

Dramatización de la obra de Perrault

Adaptación para la OPERA Para Niños

The type written text has the words, ‘*Adaptación para la*’ crossed out in pen. Also, the word ‘*gato*’ (cat) appears in *Cinderella*'s opening text, whereas in the score, the word ‘*flojo*’ (lazy) is used. The role of the cat seems to be a wordless role in the opera.

The children's opera was written in three acts, or tableaux (*Cuadro*) for soloists, dance group, chorus and symphony orchestra. It premiered at the *Liceo de Niña de La Serena* theater on November 16, 1966. This was

an unprecedented event in Chile and joined a growing international opera repertoire that included children. Benjamin Britten's (1913-1976) operas involving children in the such as *The Little Sweep* (1949) and *Noye's Fludde* (1958) involved adult performers on stage, and Australian composer, Malcolm Williamson's (1931-2003) *Cassations* appeared the following year, in 1967. In South America, Argentinean composer, Alberto Ginastera (1916-1983) wrote minor children's roles in his operas, *Don Rodrigo* (1964), and *Bomarzo* (1967). *La Cenicienta* was notable, however, in being written exclusively for children, including the orchestra. Perrault's *Cinderella* has been set by several other opera composers, notably, Nicolas Isouard (*Cendrillon*, 1810), Gioachino Rossini (*La Cenerentola*, 1817), Jules Massenet (*Cendrillon*, 1899), Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari (*Cenerentola*, later revised as *Aschenbrödel*, 1900), Pauline Viardot (*Cendrillon*, 1904), Leo Blech (*Aschenbrödel*, 1905), the all-children production by Peter Maxwell Davies (1980), and the full-length opera by 10-year-old, Alma Elizabeth Deutscher (2016).¹⁴

In January 1967, a production of *La Cenicienta* toured Chile. The children, under the direction of Peña Hen, performed in Santiago on the 18th, in Concepción on the 22nd, in Viña del Mar on the 25th and in Valparaíso on the 26th. Along with the production of *La Cenicienta* was a performance of a symphonic program of works by Bach, Gluck, Mozart, Johan Strauss and Tchaikovsky. Camarda describes the cast of children,

They were modest, poor children who never imagined getting on a plane, not even an elevator! At that time they could not dream of buying beautiful toys from other countries. They did not even know how to express themselves, which they acquired by answering all the interviews made by journalists. Less still they thought they were going to represent a character in that beautiful story (Nella Camarda, personal communication, January 29, 2020)

Juan Ehrmann, the chronicler from *La Serena* who reviewed the concert at the Municipal Theater, alluded to the performance of the children, especially in *La Cenicienta*. With the title of 'Musical Revolution of the 90 dwarfs', Ehrmann discussed the performance of the musicians:

The second part of the program consisted of La Cenicienta, an opera by Jorge Peña. The orchestra moved into the pit and tiny singers appeared on stage. What was surprising was the ease of interpretation that director Fernando Moraga got from them. There were no trained little children here, but little actors who understood what they were doing.^{2(p85)}

Valparaíso critic, Germán Carmona Mager, described the presentation of *La Cenicienta*,

Cinderella, an opera inspired by the famous story, music by Peña Hen. The Maestro knows the orchestra well and reveals himself as a composer. Modern harmonies, counter-songs, syncopations, and a clear and deep melodic line. Very festive themes, as if the children had been by his side when he composed it. However, the execution is not easy for professionals and much less for children. But there were no pitfalls. There was experience and a fine spiritual message. And the actors and singers also do it to the heights. Coordination of the scenes without fear of the tables, with a true interpretive sense. A simple set design, but well adapted by Fernando Moraga. Likewise, Silvia Morales Pettorino's choreography is filled with the best compliments and reveals a very encouraging situation in La Serena in the cultural field.^{2(p84)}

Performances of *La Cenicienta* continued in various cities of Chile between 1967 and 1972. During the dictatorship, and shortly after Peña Hen's death, Camarda was teaching at the INTEM (Inter-American Institute of Musical Education), in Santiago, and met Colombian composer and musician, Blas Emilio Atehortúa (1943-2020).¹ Atehortúa asked Camarda for some of Peña Hen's compositions and managed to smuggle one of his string quartets as well as a copy of *La Cenicienta* out of Chile. Any mention of Peña Hen's name was prohibited and carried considerable risk. Atehortúa produced *La Cenicienta* in Ibagué, Colombia, on December 4 and 9, 1986, at the Tolima Theater, later sending Camarda a video recording of the performance.

1991 marked an important year for the revival of national interest in Peña Hen. In October, a series of forums, presentations and performances in honour of the composer and teacher, took place at the University of La Serena. Cullell provided an educational presentation on *La Cenicienta* in the Ignacio Domeyko Hall, and the following evening, under Cullell's direction, the opera was performed in Room of the Experimental School of Music. Faced with a massive attendance that doubled the capacity of the Hall, Cullell decided not to perform the *Suite for Strings*, which was scheduled, but to repeat the opera that same night. The audience waited to enter a second performance. As a tribute to Peña Hen in 1998, *La Cenicienta* was performed, under the direction of Agustín Cullell, twice on the October 17th and a third time, as a gala function, the following day.

¹ Atehortúa's birth year is contested; the Banco de la República encyclopedia notes recent Colombian musicological research favouring 1930 over the widely cited 1943.

In 2005, an initiative of La Fenice Foundation resulted in performances of *La Cenicienta* that took place in Venice and Verona. Director of Didactic Training, Domenico Cardone, carefully translated the libretto into Italian and the opera was prepared by Director of the Conservatory orchestra, Julián Lombana. Camarda travelled to the premiere in April, at the Malibran Theater in La Fenice, ‘...and with great emotion I saw the great respect and affection that the Italians displayed in all this work. As in Chile, they were all children: the orchestra and the cast of the opera’ (Nella Camarda, personal communication, January 29, 2020). She then traveled to Verona to advise the two directors of the *Orchestra of Las Arenas de Verona* who would be in charge of conducting it in that city. Camarda reflected on the experience of the Italian production,

LA CENICIENTA is an essentially didactic opera. That is what caught the attention of Domenico Cardone. That is even more noticeable in the orchestra material, written entirely by its author at a time when this technological advance did not exist. If there was a 7- or 8-year-old boy who only played a note on the violin, there was Jorge integrating it with his part. And providing him with this immense joy and a sense of responsibility that he would never forget. (Nella Camarda, personal communication, January 29, 2020)

Camarda’s use of the term ‘didactic’ is important. She indicates that *La Cenicienta* is not simply a form of entertainment, but that the work was designed as an instructional tool. Children were given music that would develop technique and musicianship through their involvement.

Peña Hen’s daughter, Maria Fedora Peña, performed in *La Cenicienta* as a child. She was also responsible for the costume design and general direction of the 2005 performances in Italy. She recalled the experience of hearing her father’s plans to write an opera for children.

I was a girl of 11 or 12 years old and my father when he announced that he would do something, he made it happen! no matter how difficult and distant it may seem. I received a beautiful Cinderella flip book. It was in three dimensions, very beautiful. My father told me, I am going to compose an opera with the story of Cinderella, an opera just for children, that is played, sung and acted by them, that they do the concert programs too. So it was. Like everything that was proposed. (Maria Fedora Peña, personal communication, August 22, 2020)

In the following section, I aim to demonstrate a binary that Peña Hen provides using musical techniques to portray two sets of characters. In one group, there are characters with elevated power status such as the stepsisters and the King. In the other group are Cinderella and the chorus, figures of oppression and low status. He redresses the imbalance of status by portraying high power status characters with comparatively simple musical characteristics and conversely, characters of low power status with more memorable, lyrical vocal lines. Musically, this work actively echoes the tenets of SPD through characterisation and musical technique, not just for the listener, but for the young performers.

The opera begins with an overture for large orchestra. The *tutti* passages are texturally sumptuous and with a harmonic influence that is more 19-century European, rather than reflective of national influences. There are occasional suggestions of modernity with quartal harmony and *sprechstimme*. This is in contrast to the *nueva canción* movement that emphasised a working-class folk style imbued with indigenous elements. The overture introduces several melodies that are to occur later with the voices and are age-appropriate for the young singers; rhythmically simple, occupying a range between C4 and D5, syllabic throughout, and with simple patterns that help with memorisation. This is a work conceived for young children with limited musical experience.

There are three forms for vocal writing, sung melodies, spoken dialogue, and rhythmically notated speech with musical underscore. The use of set pieces throughout the opera allows for a number of musical structures, such as the orchestral interludes, taking the form of dances, which precede the second and third tableaux. Cinderella is given a returning motif at the opening of the first tableau (Figure 1). It comprises, even phrase lengths with conventional cadences and underpinned by the full orchestra.

ESCENAI : Cenicienta y la Madrastra Desde el alba hasta la noche Pegadita a la ceniza Sueña en vano el corazón.	SCENE: Cinderella and the Stepmother From dawn to night Stuck to the ash The heart dreams in vain.
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Peña Hen makes frequent notes in his piano/vocal score of the need to reduce the orchestration to allow the voice to be heard more clearly, with a variety of solutions. The annotation, presumably by Peña Hen’s hand during rehearsals, indicates a small chorus (*corillo*) is used, presumably off-stage, to double the vocal line. By distinction, the Stepmother and Fairy Godmother, are provided with recitatives with simple accompaniment only



Figure 1. Cinderella's opening aria, [piano/vocal score] p.1

(Figure 2). The rhythmic schemes are more speech-like by contrast with Cinderella's simple and catchy phrases.

MADRASTRA	STEPMOTHER
Siempre cantando la ociosa de la mañana a la tarde; va contigo como herencia la pereza de tu madre sin fregar están los broncea la espinaca sin hervir las cacerolas no brillan...	Always singing from the idle morning to afternoon; your mother's laziness goes with you as an inheritance the bronzes are not polished, the spinach not boiled the pots don't shine...

In Figure 3, the stepsisters are given even less musical interest, with only unaccompanied spoken dialogue to contrast with Cinderella. Following an upward mixolydian flourish over a resolving D flat, which provides a clearly established starting pitch for her, Cinderella juxtaposes simple, even-length phrases with the banality of her evil stepsisters. Whereas the characters representing power are boastful, the oppressed Cinderella is by contrast, caring. Providing roles requiring only limited singing ability supports the SPD framework; a microcosm of a just society in which all children, even those with poor sense of pitch can participate and feel valued. What Cinderella lacks in monetary wealth and status; she makes up for in the relative beauty of her musical material.

HERMANASTRA I	SISTER I
¿No es verdad que estoy esbelta Como una espiga de sol? ¡en la cadencia del baile pasaré como una flor! Ciérrame el broche de perlas y déjame mas ceñida; mis pies serán mas pequeños si me aprietas bien la cinta pues quiero ser esta noche modelo de las bonitas y cautivar corazones y sonrojar por la envidia	Isn't it true that I'm slender Like a stalk in the sun? In the rhythm of the dance I will pass by like a flower! Fasten my pearl clasp and make me tighter; my feet will be smaller if you tighten the ribbon well for tonight I want to be a pretty model and captivate hearts and make people blush with envy
CENICIENTA	CINDERELLA
¡Que bella si eres un junco que besa suave la brisa!	How beautiful if you are, like a reed softly kissed by the breeze!

The first *tableau* ends with an orchestral *tutti* and choir performing a waltz, with the appearance of the Fairy Godmother, and the preparation of Cinderella to attend the palace ball (Figure 4). The tonality and rhythms here are closely aligned with echoes of Johann Strauss, rather than anything inspired by native Latin dance music. Making use of a dance style that reflected a South American influence might have provided a nod to the emerging *nueva canción* movement, and this moment would have been an obvious moment.

CORO	CHORUS
Nació de mi encanto mas bella que el nardo Princesa de un cuento, Princesa de un cuento...	She was born of my charm more beautiful than the nard ² Princess of a story, Princess of a story ...

The second *tableau* begins with an Interlude in *tempo di polka*, placing the action in the palace (Figure 5). The waltz of the first *tableau* is repeated and with the entrance of Cinderella the polka on which the dance runs is developed. This section is dominated by recitatives and ends with Cinderella's flight with the striking of midnight the loss of her glass slipper.

The second *tableau* also includes material for the King, written in a more dramatic, and stately style (Figure 6). Once again, the character with the greatest wealth and social status, is provided with a monotone vocal line set over the ubiquitous drum roll. The accompaniment indicates military connotations, but there is a distinct lack of aesthetic richness.

Atención atención señoras y también vosotros caballeros de parte del Rey os digo que desde la media noche el principe tiene ya entregado el corazón y es esta su decisión : Será su es[posa]...	Attention attention ladies and also you gentlemen from the King I say that since midnight the prince has already given his heart and this is his decision: She will be his [wife]...
--	---

² A nard is an aromatic Himalayan plant, believed to be the spikenard, *Nardostachys jatamansi*, the source of an ointment used in antiquity.



Figure 2. Entry of the Stepmother, [piano/vocal score], pp. 1-2

Figure 3. Dialogue of Stepsister I followed by Cinderella's melodic material, [piano/vocal score], p. 4

Figure 4. Opening section of the finale of Tableau I with chorus [piano/vocal score], p. 9



Figure 5. Opening of Tableau II, Tempo di Polka [piano/vocal score], p. 11

Figure 6. Announcement from the King in Tableau II [piano/vocal score], p. 21

Figure 7 shows the two stepsisters and Cinderella in juxtaposing styles. The difference in notation can be seen with the absence of noteheads for the stepsisters, suggesting some sort of *sprechstimme* style which reverts back to melody when Cinderella sings. The two sisters are busy mocking Cinderella, who responds with a positive outcome for the sizing of the missing shoe. With the removal of the doubled part from the texture and the change to common time, the change is subtle but noticeable. Peña Hen quietly doubles the stepsisters' rhythmic utterance with support from the orchestra to assist the children.

Ja, ja, síes La Cenicienta... lo mancha la con hollín.	Ha, ha, yes, you're Cinderella... she gets smudged with soot.
Ja, ja, ja, que gran Princesa va el Principe a esposar	Ha, ha, ha, what a great Princess the Prince is going to marry.
Me queda bien, es her ma no del que cal zoen este pie.	It fits me well, it's the wrong one, the one that goes on this foot.

Peña Hen's version utilises a significantly pared-back libretto compared with the well-known Romantic versions mentioned earlier. Massenet operates similarly to Peña Hen with the three stepsisters provided with comparatively more perfunctory melodic material and syllabic utterances than Cendrillon's arias. Similarly, Rossini saves his prettiest and most dramatic moments for Cenerentola in her final aria, *Nacqui all'affanno e al pianto*, a highly ornamented bel canto piece with coloratura virtuosity as well as constrained, lyrical expression. Fundamentally, where Peña Hen's version diverges from his predecessors is where the performability of his parts for children connect with the composition elements that inform characterisation. The parts are all hand-written, with scribbled revisions made presumably after he rehearsed it and include delightful, drawn figures of smiling faces and instruments in place of a cue to help the children navigate the score.

Peña Hen's decision to adapt Perrault's famous story when viewed through the lens of SPD, has obvious links



Figure 7. Duet with Stepsister and Cinderella [piano/vocal score], p. 31

with his view of social mobility. Cinderella is the victim of being reduced to a subordinate position in her family, and through the course of the opera, is ultimately transformed; oppression ended (fourth tenet). Her character reflects the very children involved in Hen's production in his overt musical treatment of her character which contrasts starkly with the privileged stepsisters. Whether this was intentional, or a subconscious decision, it is quite possible that Peña Hen saw in *Cinderella*, a socialist message of hope for his army of children musicians. Peña Hen was an agitator; a proactive humanist with a clear vision for improving the lives of his students, and it is difficult to see his musical decisions as passive. *La Cenicienta* became a metaphor for transformation from social suppression and poverty, rather than an overt expression of dissent found in much of the folk-music of the *nueva canción* lyrics.

The nexus of didactic, child-centered music that suited the singers and musicians available, with the underlying representation of socialist ideals sits comfortably within the world of opera. Peña Hen worked with a libretto that offered the range of children he had, an opportunity to perform in an appropriate piece that highlighted each child. This included the orchestration which provides short phrases for almost all of the woodwind and brass to play something simple that can be easily heard among the fuller, *tutti* sections. The orchestral score contains many sections not included in the piano/vocal score such as the

overture and other music without vocal sections and is available along with instrumental parts at the Biblioteca Nacional de Chile.

6. Peña Hen's murder

Jorge toured Cuba and Puerto Rico with the *Orquesta de Niños* in 1972. It was this last trip, sponsored in part by the Chilean Ministry of Exterior Relations that alerted him to Pinochet's regime. This tour made him a target, exposing him to the accusations to come the following year. Articles published in the newspaper, *La Tribuna*, and other anti-government publications alleging that Peña Hen was bringing firearms back into Chile to aid a socialist insurgency brought false and harmful attention to him.¹⁵ He was also accused of brainwashing his students to his socialist agenda. Camarda reflected, "They said he brought weapons in the violin cases. And I wonder, if that had happened, where would they have brought the violins?"¹¹

Jorge Omar Galleguillos Olivares, a student of Peña Hen who appeared in the first performances of *La Cenicienta*, managed to see him in prison. He went with other musician children and recalls that Jorge Peña told them that he would be released from one day to the next; that everything must be a misunderstanding, that it would be cleared up. Peña Hen advised them to continue studying and that the orchestra could continue rehearsing the programmed pieces. The day before his death, his father,

Thomas Peña visited him and shared his conviction that he would soon be released, albeit sent into exile.

Between 30 September and 22 October 1973, the Caravan of Death, under Augusto Pinochet's regime was responsible for the torture, imprisonment and murder of at least 75 Chilean citizens.¹⁶ The NGO *Memoria y Justicia* documents 97 deaths; 26 in the south, 71 in the north.¹⁷ Among those chosen for extermination led by Sergio Arellano Stark, on October 16, at 4:00pm, was Peña Hen, in the penitentiary of La Serena.¹³

There were no flowers or music or bells for the artist's repose. There was no funeral ... not even a pious grave. Recalling the words that the great Chilean poet Pablo Neruda wrote in his lament over the death of the great Spanish poet Federico García Lorca, assassinated in Granada at the beginning of that war and in terrifyingly similar circumstances.^{8(p8)}

Peña Hen's death was announced over the radio, and his body dumped unceremoniously into a mass grave, where he would remain for 25 years. In October 1998, his wife Nella finally took possession of his remains, and was able to arrange a funeral. His gravestone in La Serena, reads, "He lived for music. He died for his ideals."¹³ His ideals were borne out not only in his efforts to promote education, but in the musical decisions made in his compositions.

7. Legacy and influence

Although Peña Hen's legacy is being celebrated within Chile, his name is still relatively unknown beyond South America. Peña Hen's influence continued beyond Chile and after his death, with the *El Sistema* movement in Venezuela, which despite some controversy, is a global phenomenon.¹⁸ José Antonio Abreu (1939-2018) is generally attributed to being the founder of the *El Sistema* movement from Venezuela. Although he never met Peña Hen, the two musicians had communicated by writing, and Abreu had been sent a copy of *La Cenicienta*.^{19,20} According to Chilean researcher and filmmaker Claudio Jara,²¹ in a letter that he wrote when he visited Chile, Abreu thanked Chile for the legacy that Jorge Peña Hen left for the development of music in Latin American countries.

Three of Peña Hen's colleagues from La Serena fled to Venezuela in 1974: Hernán Jerez, Pedro Vargas and Sergio Miranda.¹³ They began to replicate the important music education structures they had helped develop in the city of Carora, forming the *Orquesta Infantil de Carora* (Children's Orchestra of Carora). The Venezuelan authorities, and in particular, Abreu developed their own system in 1975.²² Abreu's orchestra, founded in a parking lot in Caracas

frequently collaborated with the orchestra in Carora, establishing a lineage of influence stemming from Peña Hen's life's work. Abreu's work was based on the motto, '*Tocar y Luchar*' (to play and strive), aimed to provide meaningful experiences through learning music to combat extreme poverty. Baker,²³ however, argues that the initial concept began as a musical project and that the social framing came later, which reflects Peña Hen's intentions. *El Sistema* then went on to be replicated in various guises in a number of countries, and those who would benefit, likely had little understanding that it originated in Chile under Peña Hen's leadership.^{20, 24}

An emotional tribute to Peña Hen was paid by maestro José Antonio Abreu, Founding Director of the System of Youth and Children's Orchestras of Venezuela, on November 10, 1996. He spoke during a concert by the National Youth Symphony Orchestra, in Santiago. The concert, at the Extension Center of the Catholic University, marked Venezuelan President, Rafael Caldera's visit to Chile and the occasion of the VI Ibero-American Summit. Maestro Abreu referred to the significance of Jorge Peña's work, recognising it as the starting point for the movement that would later develop in Venezuela and various other sister countries such as Costa Rica and Mexico.

The pedagogy and methodology applied by Peña Hen in his school was not universally accepted. The late conductor Fernando Rosas (1931-2007), one of the founders of the *Fundación Nacional de Orquestas Juveniles* (National Foundation of Youth Orchestras) argued that "no musician would come out of that school".²⁵ Rosas was focussed on strengthening chamber music activities, whereas Peña Hen felt that starting in childhood with an emphasis on social cohesion was of greater benefit. This reflects the third of Watts and Guessous's four tenets; promoting self-determination and solidarity. Years later, Rosas acknowledged his error while observing the fruits of the Youth and Children's Orchestras Foundation that continues today. The current Youth Orchestras Foundation (*Fundación de Orquestas Juveniles*, FOJI) was created in 2001 under the Ricardo Lagos government, who, as Minister of Education had traveled to Venezuela in 1992 with Rosas. The plan had come full circle. Cullell states, "they only silenced his voice but not his presence, and an artist whose work, whose message is present and, on the contrary, acquires a greater dimension through time, can never die; he will always remain alive after performing the somersault".^{8(p5)}

In Castillo Didier's book,² a short homage from a pupil at the music school in La Serena, too young to have ever met Peña Hen confirms his continued legacy. He wrote,

Remembered Señor / Jorge Peña Hen / I knew right away that you were a great man. I would like to be like you. I thank you very much for being in this School, otherwise I would not be here. I also admire him for his works that you have done like Cinderella and much more. I didn't know you but I want to know you. Thank you, I am very grateful (Letter from a student Pablo Maluenda La Serena 10-13-98).^{1(p226)}

Cullell continued his tribute,

Jorge Peña was all his life a man of great experiential concerns; a fighter of solid principles, a true humanist who always gave his best efforts at the service of the old causes that have tried to find, even unsuccessfully, a better destiny, of authentic social justice for the human being. Already in those years his deep democratic convictions were manifested with energy when he raised his voice to bravely oppose the ideological persecutions that took place, mainly in America, on the occasion of the Cold War and the so-called McCarthyism.^{8(p6)}

With the return of democracy in Chile, a network of national children's and youth orchestras was organised in 1999, thanks to the commitment of maestro Fernando Rosas and the government of President Ricardo Lagos, based on the Serenean project that currently remains in force. Consequently, there are now at least 300 orchestras throughout Chile, involving approximately 15,000 young people who are awarded a scholarship to support their study. In 1991, there were nine youth orchestras in Chile, and according to Carlson,¹⁵ this increased to over two hundred. In 2012, the Youth Orchestras America (YOA) with its 80 members from 20 countries, including 15 young Chileans, took up residence in La Serena for 15 days, before touring south to the Chilean cities of Valparaíso, Santiago, Talca, Concepción and Frutillar. The trip was sponsored by the University of La Serena and the Municipality of Coquimbo and was considered a fitting tribute to the life and work of Peña Hen.⁹ Jorge Peña Hen's social commitment and dedication to providing meaningful opportunity to the lives of underprivileged children is his legacy.

8. Conclusion

The research question asked, how are the socio-political interests of Peña Hen reflected in his opera for children, *La Cenicienta*? The use of music as a didactic tool to express the hope for children born into underprivilege is powerful. The deliberate choice not to include adults in the production, emphasises the plight of the child performers, who were celebrated as a result of *La Cenicienta*. Peña

Hen emphasised the symbolism of the characters through his use of orchestration and compositional techniques to create a powerful symbol of his socialist ideals. Peña Hen was clearly not an institutional socialist, but once he set his mind on using music to improve the lives of his students, it would take his murder to finally stop his efforts. The four tenets of Watts and Guessous's SPD framework exposing social injustice, creating just societies, promoting self-determination and solidarity, whether conscious or not, are reflected in the composition of this opera for children. The symbolism of *La Cenicienta* lacked the call to arms found in much of the music to come from the *nueva canción* movement, and Peña Hen's surprise at being arrested and conviction that his arrest must have been a misunderstanding must have been deeply felt. The tours to neighbouring countries in South America ultimately sealed the fate of Peña Hen, but it was this work which most clearly expresses the ideals of his entire youth music movement. As Chile continues to evolve politically and socially, operas like *La Cenicienta* can have sustained relevance. I sincerely hope that a published, commercially available score of *La Cenicienta* in a variety of languages will be possible. This children's opera should be performed with greater frequency beyond Chile, and the story of Peña Hen's musical activism allowed to echo throughout the world.

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