

the world of music (new series)

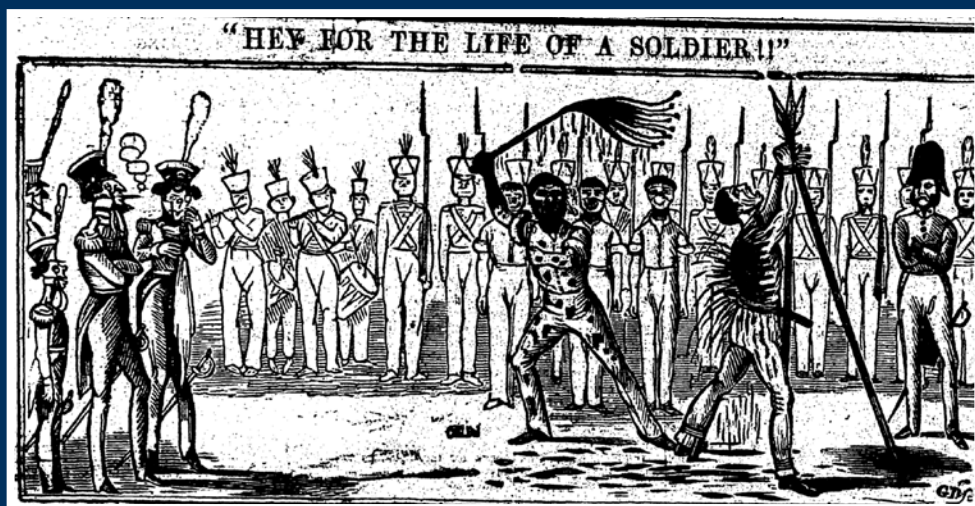
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Music and Torture | Music and Punishment



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Editor: Birgit Abels
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Anti-flogging cartoon from the British newspaper *The Northern Star*, 17 February 1838.

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Music and Torture in Chilean Detention Centers: Conversations with an Ex-Agent of Pinochet's Secret Police

Katia Chornik

Abstract

On seizing power on 11 September 1973, General Augusto Pinochet established over a thousand detention centers, from the Atacama Desert to the Magellan Strait. Tens of thousands of prisoners were held in these centers, without recourse to fair trials and lacking elementary judicial guarantees. Most inmates were subjected to serious abuse through physical and psychological torture; many were killed, their bodies "disappeared." Despite the regime of terror, precarious living conditions and censorship, prisoners developed diverse musical activities on their own initiative, including composition, performance and teaching. Pinochet's system also used music to indoctrinate detainees and as a form of and soundtrack to torture. Evidence of the above is fragmented and little known, and has been largely overlooked by critics. This article documents and contextualizes the testimony of a former agent of Pinochet's secret police recently interviewed by the author, discussing the musical landscape of various detention and torture centers in Santiago and the provinces, including Chacabuco, Londres 38, Villa Grimaldi, Tejas Verdes, Irán 3037 (aka La Discothèque) and José Domingo Cañas 1305. To the present day, this is the most detailed account specifically dealing with forced musical activities in captivity during the Pinochet regime, but also the only one coming from a Chilean ex-agent.

In 1998 the British Metropolitan Police arrested General Pinochet in London after an international warrant was issued for extradition to Spain, indicting him for human rights violations committed during his dictatorship (1973–1990). Pinochet was eventually released by the British government on the grounds of ill health. Back in Chile, he was charged with a number of offenses and placed under house arrest, yet he never faced the courts or was convicted of any crime. Among his regime's measures was the imprisonment of circa 40,000 political prisoners in 1,132 centers throughout the country (Comisión Presidencial 2011/1:301), without recourse to fair trials and

lacking elementary judicial guarantees. Most inmates were subjected to gruesome physical and psychological torture, thousands were killed or “disappeared.”¹

Despite the regime of terror, precarious living conditions and censorship, inmates developed diverse musical activities on their own initiative, evidence of which is fragmented and little known, and has been largely overlooked by critics.² Evidence of music in relation to punishment and torture is even scarcer. Although the report of the National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture (Comisión Presidencial 2011/1, aka Valech Report) mentions music being used by agents in various torture centers, it does not contain details about its practices, repertoire and effects. It has been very difficult to compile a repertoire and explore in depth how music was experienced by the inmates under these circumstances: my perception is that victims are far more open to discussing musical activities they initiated. In December 2012, I distributed an email call through networks of survivors of Villa Grimaldi, Estadio Nacional, Cuatro Álamos and José Domingo Cañas 1367 (Santiago), asking for information about compulsory singing and music during interrogation and torture. I received circa 20 replies dealing with music in captivity, of which only four referred to the specific question asked. Former prisoners reported being obliged to sing the national anthem, “Orden y Patria Es Nuestro Lema” and “La Novia Va Prendida en el Avión,” and having sung or listened to, during torture, songs by Julio Iglesias, Edith Piaf’s “La Vie en Rose,” George Harrison’s “My Sweet Lord,” Félix Luna’s “Alfonsina y el Mar,” Nino Bravo’s “Libre” and Wendy Carlos’s soundtrack to Kubrick’s film *A Clockwork Orange*.

As someone whose parents suffered political imprisonment and torture under Pinochet, my tendency has been to consider the topic from the point of view of prisoners only. It is now my belief that research on perpetrators allows the possibility of constructing a stronger case against torture and in defense of human rights. With this view, on 26 and 28 December 2012 I interviewed an ex-agent of Pinochet’s secret police; for ethical reasons, I will not call him by his real name but by the pseudonym of González. González was doing his military service when Pinochet came to power on 11 September 1973, overthrowing the government of Salvador Allende which represented the coalition of left-wing parties Unidad Popular (Popular Unity). After the coup, González was sent to the Atacama Desert to work at Chacabuco concentration camp and later became a member of Pinochet’s secret police, the Dirección Nacional de Inteligencia (DINA—National Intelligence Directorate). As a DINA agent with the rank of *Suboficial* (Warrant Officer), he operated primarily in two notorious torture centers in Santiago, Villa Grimaldi (aka Cuartel Terranova) and Londres 38 (London Street). González also worked at the DINA headquarters Rinconada de Maipú (Santiago) and centers Tejas Verdes and Rocas de Santo Domingo (Valparaíso region). In addition, he had contact with personnel from four other Santiago centers—Irán 3037 (aka Venda Sexy and La Discothèque), José Domingo Cañas 1305, Cuatro Álamos and Marcoleta 90—as well as with Colonia Dignidad (Maule region in the south), a German sect led by the Paul Schäffer, a former colonel of Hitler’s army. In 1975 González deserted the DINA and fled to Germany, where he lived for

over a decade. He has given evidence for the Rettig and Valech Truth Commissions, and for various criminal court cases in Chile and Europe, in some cases on a voluntary basis. González is one of the 98 former DINA personnel prosecuted in relation to the so-called *Operación Colombo* (part of the multi-national operation *Caravana de la Muerte*), which resulted in the killing and disappearance of 119 opponents (it was the *Operación Colombo* that stripped Pinochet of his parliamentary immunity). Although González is not currently imprisoned in relation to this case, he has to report to the Chilean Supreme Court on a monthly basis.

The present contribution documents and contextualizes González's testimony. With the purpose of keeping the focus on the relationship between music, punishment and torture, and protecting the identity of the interviewee, I have summarized and omitted substantial sections of his oral account, which is circa four hours long. When interviewing González, I used biographical-interpretive techniques developed by Hollway and Jefferson (2000), eliciting stories and avoiding closed and "why" questions. I felt it was inappropriate to tackle issues of personal responsibility and purposely did not pursue questions that he answered with "I don't know" (e.g. "how did music played during torture sessions impact on prisoners and agents?" and "what do you think were the motives for choosing you for the DINA?"), or that he ignored (e.g. "was it your experience in Villa Grimaldi that made you take the decision to leave the DINA?").

An in-depth analysis of this material will follow at a later stage, once I have conducted further interviews that will allow me to fill in gaps in the former agent's account and gain a deeper understanding of the way jailers used and abused music. To test possible overlapping of inmates' and jailers' musical experiences, I asked six ex-prisoners, who were in Chacabuco, Villa Grimaldi and José Domingo Cañas 1305 and have a strong musical background, to confirm if they had been obliged to sing, or listen to any of the pieces mentioned by González during torture sessions. All ex-inmates firmly denied they had come across these pieces while they were detained. On the other hand, former detainees mentioned a number of songs that González did not recall in his account. These discrepancies, which I will examine in a future study, may be due to prisoners being held at various times and dealt with by different staff.

González's Testimony

González was born in La Serena, northern Chile, in 1954. He moved to Santiago with his family aged six. Once he finished school, he entered the Army:

The military service was compulsory and people who did it were from the middle classes.³ So I had to do it. Before joining the Army, I was part of a movement called FER [Frente de Estudiantes Revolucionarios—Revolutionary Students Front]: all students were revolutionized, we were all into that. But in the Army I kept away from this as I was not studying. At that time I liked the music of Inti-Illimani, which was very popular, and Quilapayún.

González's involvement with the FER is significant, for this movement was associated with the radical *Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria* (MIR—Revolutionary Left Movement), many members of which were imprisoned, killed and “disappeared” in DINA centers.⁴ That González liked Inti-Illimani and Quilapayún, two key bands of the movement *Nueva Canción Chilena* (Chilean New Song), further suggests that his political views (at least until he joined the Army) were closer to those of the prisoners than the ideology promoted by the regime: *Nueva Canción* artists were committed to social reforms and played an active role in Allende's campaign.⁵

González went on:

As a squaddie I was sent to Calama [ca. 1,600 kilometers north of Santiago], where I had to do the *Juramento a la Bandera* [Oath to the Flag] that all soldiers do to defend the Homeland against any aggression. That was on 7 or 8 July 1973. Then I came to Santiago and stayed longer than I was supposed to. I was already a deserter. Then there was the *Tanquetazo*⁶ [The Tank Putsch], before the coup that overthrew Allende.

When he reported to the military quarters in Calama, he was arrested and on the following day was sent to Canteras de Toconao (Quarries of Toconao) in the Atacama Desert (ca. 1,400 kilometers north of Santiago), which he described as “very cold, really freezing.” He soon learned about Pinochet's coup on the military radio: “we hear they are bombing La Moneda [the Presidential Palace] and shanty towns. As the Army is always at war with the Peruvians and Bolivians, we thought it was the war.” He described the negative effects of the coup only in personal and economic terms:

The coup marked me. It was pure horror. We did not have anything to eat and went out to steal. We robbed trains. Our bosses knew about this and turned a blind eye to it. The Army was extremely poor, we did not even have shoes. They only gave us a kilo of beans, lentils or chickpeas a month. When trucks transporting meat from Argentina passed, we stopped them and took some meat. We stole in our uniforms. We were indigent, the punished ones of the Army.

González was transferred to the former mining town of Chacabuco (Atacama Desert), where he planted explosives outside the camp before prisoners arrived. Chacabuco was one of the largest camps in the country, extending to 36 hectares. Guard duty rotated between personnel from the Army, Air Force and Carabineros (Chilean police). Prisoners were routinely threatened and tortured, forced to do military training and spend long hours in the open, suffering the intense climatic conditions of the desert. The camp gradually began to empty out from July 1974, with prisoners being transferred to different camps in Santiago and Valparaíso region (Comisión Presidencial 2011/1:324f.).

González recalled that prisoners “arrived in Chacabuco in a batch, all singing the national anthem.”⁷ They would get up at dawn with the *toque de diana* (cornet call) played by guards called “*estafeta*.” Every morning, detainees had to sing the national anthem and perform the *Juramento a la Bandera*, and every evening, to sing the anthem again as well as military marches. “Prisoners sang these songs not because it sprang from them but because they were obliged to. I think the aim was to push them

to breaking point.” Nervously laughing, he added: “yes, that was the aim. I think this now, having visited Nazi concentration camps in Germany. There they made prisoners sing to re-educate them.” Soldiers working in Chacabuco were also required to sing the anthem and marches: “we all had to sing, to imbue patriotism and love for the Homeland.” The most often performed marches were:

- “Los Viejos Estandartes” (“The Old Banners”), lyrics by Jorge Inostroza and music by Willy Bascuñán, member of the vocal quartet Los Cuatro Cuartos. The march honors General Manuel Baquedano, hero of the War of the Pacific. It was popularized through the album *¡Al 7° de Línea!* (1966) by Los Cuatro Cuartos. Since 1975, it has been the official anthem of the Chilean Army.
- “Adiós al Séptimo de Línea” (“Farewell to the Seventh of Row”), composed by Gumercindo Ipinza and Luis Mancilla in 1877 as a homage to the military regiment of Carampangue. To the present day, the anthem is always performed during events commemorating the War of the Pacific.
- “Las Glorias del Ejército” (“The Glories of the Army”), brought from Prussia by Captain Emil Körner, who in 1885 settled in the country as Chief of the Prussian Military Mission, and subsequently modernized the Chilean Army and founded the Chilean War Academy.
- “El Himno de Yungay” (“The Anthem of Yungay”), composed by José Zapiola and Ramón Rengifo in 1839, in honor of the victory over the Peru-Bolivia Confederation in the Battle of Yungay during the War of the Pacific.
- “Lili Marlene,” lyrics written in 1915 by Hans Leip and music composed in 1939 by Norbert Schultze. The song expresses the anguish of separation of a WWI soldier from his sweetheart. During WWII, the song was played frequently and became popular among both Axis and Allied troops. It has been translated into 48 languages and features in military parades worldwide.

González mentioned he heard prisoners singing many songs by Violeta Parra, especially “La Jardinera” (“The Woman Gardener”), “El Casamiento de Negros” (“Wedding of Blacks”), “Run Run Se Fue Pal Norte” (“Run Run Left for the North”) and “La Paloma Ausente” (“The Absent Dove”). He did not expand on the details or significance of Parra’s music as being sung by the inmates; however, he highlighted that he never heard them attempting her song “La Carta” (“The Letter”), which explicitly deals with imprisonment, social inequality and absence of freedom of opinion and speech.⁸

After Chacabuco, González was sent to the military camp Tejas Verdes, where he became a DINA member:

It must be September 15 or 20 when the Captain, with all his medals, arrives [to Chacabuco]. He tells us to get ready, showered and shaved. “We are going to the war,” we said. When we arrived at the regiment [in Tejas Verdes], the soldiers looked strange. Silence. We did not know what was happening. Then I see some *gringos*. But now I know they were Germans, because now I know the language. To me they were all *gringos*, all handsome. They were dressed in the uniform of the Chilean Army. Then the Colonel tells us that among the entire Army we are the chosen ones to defeat Marxism. We have to sign a piece of paper that said “PMNP,” that is “Puras Mentiras

No Pregunte” [“Only Lies, Don’t Ask”]. He asks us if we know what we signed. We tell him we do not. He says we are now in the DINA. We did not know what the DINA did as it did not exist before. We were 600 people from all over the country. Then it started.⁹

He recalled that prisoners in Tejas Verdes had to sing the national anthem every morning and afternoon. In the afternoon they also had to sing anthems from various military regiments, evoking traditional values and heroism. González was then sent to the DINA training center in Las Rocas de Santo Domingo (Valparaíso region), where he took an intelligence course for two months. From January to March or April 1974, González operated in the centers on London Street (known to DINA personnel as Londres 90) and Marcoleta 90 in Santiago, sleeping at the headquarters in Rinconada Maipú every night. González did not recall hearing any kind of music in the Londres torture chamber, contradicting the Valech Report (Comisión Presidencial 2011/1:529), according to which detainees in this center “estaban expuestos a ruidos molestos durante la noche para impedirles dormir, especialmente música a todo volumen” (“were exposed to unpleasant noises during the night, especially music at full volume.”).

From April 1974 González began working in Villa Grimaldi (known to DINA personnel as Cuartel Terranova), which became the headquarters and operational center of the Brigada de Inteligencia Militar (BIM—Metropolitan Intelligence Brigade): “Before the coup Villa Grimaldi functioned as a disco for the privileged classes. I was one of the first ones to go inside. We went to clean up empty bottles of wine and expensive liquors that were not common in Chile.” Villa Grimaldi is located on the outskirts of Santiago, in the borough of La Reina, and occupies a surface of 10,200 square meters. An estimated 5,000 people were imprisoned and tortured there. The most common torture method was known as “*parrilla*” (“barbeque”), whereby naked prisoners were tied to a metal bunk bed and subjected to electric shocks. Other common methods included hanging (often aggravated by electric shocks, beatings and cuts); submerging detainees’ heads in containers of dirty water or some other liquid, or placing their heads in plastic bags, almost until the point of asphyxiation; and raping of women, including those who were pregnant. Prisoners were held at the so-called Corvi Houses and Chile Houses (nicknamed after social housing built by previous governments) and at the Tower. Corvi Houses were small structures of 80x80 centimeters used for breaking down individual prisoners. Chile Houses measured 1x2 meters and accommodated five prisoners undergoing interrogation and torture. The Tower was a six-meter water tank with tiny cubicles to keep prisoners in total isolation (Comisión Presidencial 2011/1:531f.).¹⁰

González recalled that among his duties as a DINA employee were the guarding, maintaining and cleaning of the cartel, and registering new detainees who

[...] arrived 24 hours a day, blindfolded. Some came from other DINA centers. We gave each a number, and this was our way to identify them. I would not know what number we reached. I had to write down what happened during the day, anything that was unusual. Later an officer would come, read the book and sign it. Then one could

leave. If the officer found something wrong, one had to stay. In a normal day I would start at 8 am and would finish by 6.30 or 7 pm. That was the routine every day, unless a General came, in which case one had to stay longer. General Contreras came several times a year. Prisoners were locked up all day. There were some who stayed for six months, a year, and then they were sent to other centers like Cuatro Álamos. I mounted guard in the Tower, where torture was inflicted all day and night.

González did not dwell on the subject of torture, however he mentioned a medic nicknamed Doctor Mortis, who “was bad: people said he hypnotized. With some prisoners he used Pentothal.”¹¹ He mentioned a type of torture whereby prisoners were made to lie down on the grass so that agents could drive a van over their legs. He also recalled the hitting and subsequent killing of a soldier, which he was obliged to watch. When I asked him about sexual torture, he bluntly replied: “there was not any. They just raped women or simply tortured them. One New Year’s Eve they were on their own and raped them.”

In Villa Grimaldi, recalled González, agents often listened to the “*lora*” (“radio” in DINA slang, literally “female parrot”). He remembered hearing Radio Cooperativa and Radio Nacional de Chile, especially the program “*el Hocicón*” (“the Big-Mouthed”) from the latter station, which played Mexican music, mostly *rancheras*, a genre dating from the Mexican Revolution (early twentieth century). (Radio Nacional was the official radio station of the Pinochet regime and broadcast numerous political speeches; interestingly, González did not remember listening to these.) He added:

We had our own radio to communicate. The radio operator was an agent called Michel Troncoso (alias) who liked singing in French. He always sang the same song: “Aline” [1965, a ballade by French songwriter Christophe], which was in fashion. He would always carry his guitar, he liked music very much. He sang all the time, even in front of prisoners. There was another agent who liked playing the songs “La Vaca Blanca” (“The White Cow”) and “La Loca María” (“Crazy Maria”) on LP. At that time, people went to *quintas de recreo* [popular premises with food, drink, music and dance], where that kind of music was played. “La Vaca Blanca” is about a cow looking for a husband. She goes to a party with a bull from the high society. And “La Loca María” is about a perfidious woman looking for a boyfriend. Typical... They played these songs every day and all the time because people liked them. Everybody liked them. Even the guards were singing them. The agent in charge would choose the record that would be played during torture sessions. Officers had a different taste; they didn’t like music like “La Vaca Blanca” and “La Loca María.” They liked classical music, they were more educated.

On being asked whether he liked “La Vaca Blanca” and “La Loca María,” he replied ambiguously: “well, that is what people listened to.” He could not remember who wrote or recorded these songs. Following his description above, I identified a *cumbia* (a dance genre originating in Colombia and Panama) called “La Vaca Blanca,” by the Peruvian group Los Girasoles, who were active in the 1960s and 70s. It goes like this:

Yo tenía una vaca blanca
 que se llamaba Piedad
 estaba comprometida
 porque ella era de sociedad.
 Ella me pidió permiso
 pa' contraer matrimonio
 con un torito pintado
 que lo llamaban Antonio.
 Mi vaca blanca se me fugó
 ese torito se la llevó
 el sinvergüenza se la raptó
 mi pobre vaca cuanto sufrió.
 Y yo le negué el permiso
 pa' contraer matrimonio
 porque la gente decía
 que ese toro es un demonio.

*I had a white cow
 that was called Piedad
 she was engaged
 because she was from the high society.
 She asked me permission
 to get married to
 a suitable little bull
 they called Antonio.
 My white cow ran away
 that little bull took her away
 that swine kidnapped her
 how much my poor cow suffered.
 And I did not give her permission
 to get married
 because people said
 that bull is a devil*

I have been unable to establish whether it was Los Girasoles' recording that circulated in Chile: DINA agents could have played one of the many covers of this song. A possible contender is the version by the Chilean tropical band Los Vinkings 5. Another candidate is the version by the band Los de Colombia, especially as it was released on the same LP as "La Loca María," also a *cumbia*.¹²

A la vuelta de mi casa
 vive la loca María
 es una loca elegante
 es una loca traviesa
 se la pasa todo el día
 haciendo de motoneta.
 Loca María
 Loca María

Loca María
Loca María, adiós mi amor.
Cuando los muchachos
le gritan adiós mi amor
adiós mi loca querida
adiós loca consentida
y ella con suave sonrisa
se pone que es furor.

*Round the corner from my house
lives crazy Maria
she is an elegant crazy woman
she is a naughty crazy woman
she spends the whole day
looking for a ride.
Crazy Maria
crazy Maria
crazy Maria
crazy Maria, goodbye my love.
When boys
shout to her goodbye my love
goodbye my dear crazy woman
goodbye spoilt crazy woman
and she, with a soft smile
becomes a fury.*

González did not report any compulsory singing in the Villa. He recalled that prisoners “did not do anything on their own initiative. They were locked up all day and had nothing to do. That they would do something creative? No, nothing, nothing. In Chacabuco they did but that was because they had a guide who was from the Army.” This statement is certainly contestable: within the tight limitations imposed by the regime, people in different levels of imprisonment managed to pursue a wide range of creative activities by themselves.¹³ Later, González did remember prisoners singing on their initiative:

On Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays we [DINA personnel excluding the commander and officers] were on our own. It was very quiet and we were the authorities. In the summer of 1974 the swimming pool was filled with water. We would swim during the day and opened the door to the prisoners so they could swim at night, to have fun. They would sit on a bench near the pool and in the afternoon would sing songs from the Mexican Revolution, corridos, “El negro José,” songs by Víctor Jara like “Juan sin Tierra” and “Joaquín Murieta.”¹⁴ I remember they sang “Un Millón de Amigos” [“A Million Friends”] by Roberto Carlos [Brazilian pop composer and singer], which deals with kindness, with humility. The lyrics would leave you a message.

On being asked about the torture house Irán 3037 (Santiago), González explained that he was not based there but often went to deliver food to the “*paquetes*” (“packages,” that is “prisoners” in DINA slang). He had to collect the food from the Diego

Portales building, seat of Pinochet's executive power (1973–1981) and legislative power (1973–1990). The house on Irán Street was known as La Venda Sexy due to prisoners remaining blindfolded while they were being regularly subjected to sexual abuse (see Comisión Presidencial 2011/1:529f.). The house was also known as La Discothèque because recorded music was played constantly. González explained from where they obtained equipment and records:

For example, today I would break into your house and take all that you had, including record players and LPs. Then we would play your music, whatever you had, and what music was featured? Whatever was in fashion, whatever was played on the radio. As simple as that. That happened in Villa Grimaldi too, but not in Londres 38. The agents themselves nicknamed it La Discothèque. They had broken into the house of someone who had a big loudspeaker. They took the equipment and set it up in the room that was used for torture, on the first floor. It was so loud, so very loud. They would put music on to cover the screams of the prisoners, so people walking down the street would not think they were torturing. It was on all day long, at least the times when I went there. That would not have been called sonic torture and I do not know what the prisoners may have thought or felt about it. One could often hear recordings of “La Vaca Blanca,” “La Loca María,” “La Gallina de los Huevos de Oro” [“The Hen of the Golden Eggs”], Ramón Aguilera, Sandro (especially the song “Rosa, Rosa”) and Leonardo Favio.¹⁵

González mentioned he would also deliver food to the torture house José Domingo Cañas 1305, known to DINA personnel as Ollahue. In this center, inmates were kept blindfolded, tied up and chained, deprived of food, water and sleep. Common methods of torture included punches, electric shocks, rapes, mock executions, asphyxia and burns (Comisión Presidencial 2011/1:530f.). González recalled that

[...] in Ollahue they also played recorded music so that the screams of tortured prisoners would not be heard. There they played a *cueca* from an LP every day.¹⁶ I do not remember which one but it was always the same. They broke into someone's house searching for Marxist literature. As they took everything away, they took the record. People were singing along to it. They also had a “*lora*” [“radio”], which was always on.

As part of his duties, González took a prisoner from the DINA-operated center Cuatro Álamo (Santiago) to Colonia Dignidad (Maule region), and handed him over to the German settlers. He recalled having a superb meal in the company of the top officers including Paul Schäffer. He learnt that the prisoner was dead when Paul Schäffer “made a gesture with his hands and said ‘*fertig*’ [‘done (with)’]. From then onwards I never forgot that word.”

González left the DINA in 1975, “without any explanation, just like this.” He fled Chile and settled in Germany, living in Koblenz (a village near the River Rhine) and later in Hamburg. He became involved with Amnesty International's campaign to raise awareness of Colonia Dignidad:

One day, while walking, I saw a stall of Amnesty International. There was a British woman giving people information about what had happened in Chile. I told the *gringa*: “I was there.” She asked for my number and address. They sent me a telegram and then a priest visited me. I told them the story but they did not believe me much

because they thought I was an agent, an infiltrator. But finally I started giving names of prisoners I knew and in this way they trusted me.

Living in Germany allowed González to generate connections between Nazi concentration camps and his own past as a DINA agent:

60 kilometers from Hamburg there is a Nazi concentration camp. I did not want to go in, I was scared. But one day I went to Dachau and did go in. Not to remember the past, that would have been masochist. I went with a German friend, with whom I had a son. Then I went to almost all other Nazi camps. Chilean camps were bad, bad, but not as bad as the Nazi ones. They were in “Chilean style.”

According to him, a key difference between Nazi and DINA centers was that in the latter, orders were not carried out. “Not even the orders of General Manuel Contreras [the founder and Director of the DINA]?” I asked. “Ehhh, well, no, no. Because there were lots of people who I put on the lists to kill and were declared dead, but they are still alive. They were in the Tower of Villa Grimaldi, which was the place to kill people. No, Chilean centers were not like Nazis camps. It was not like we had a... What was the name of the musician adored by Hitler?” Here González was not counting the thousands who did get killed or “disappeared,” following the regime’s policy of eradicating political opponents. Interestingly, he drew connections with Wagner, even though he could not remember his name, to dismiss a comparison with Nazi camps.

Conclusion

It is a remarkable fact that González, having participated in the setting up and running of some of the most significant torture and concentration centers of Pinochet’s regime, and having been indicted for a notorious case of human rights violations, was so open to talk about his past. His recurrent use of the present tense suggests his experience as a DINA agent remains vivid to him. His mixing of the first and third person (e. g. in his description of the raids in which DINA personnel obtained the records that were subsequently played during torture sessions), makes it unclear whether he took on the role of a witness or participant (or both) in episodes involving violence. Whatever his position(s) might have been, and bearing in mind that he spent most of the interview not talking about music (suggesting music had not been particularly relevant to him in general and during his time in detention centers), his references to forced singing and music as a soundtrack to torture are not only the most detailed to the present day but also the only ones coming from a former agent. As mentioned earlier, this article only provides the first reading of González’s account. For a fuller discussion of the system’s uses and abuses of music, more interviews with former prisoners and agents will need to be conducted. Possible threads to follow are the repertoire, practices and effects of music constantly played as a background to and as a form of torture in centers such as Londres 38, La Disco-

thèque and La Casa de la Música (Concepción), and possible links with CIA interrogation and torture techniques that incorporate sound and music.

Notes

- 1 According to the first list of victims of the National Commission on Political Imprisonment and Torture, aka Valech Commission (Comisión Presidencial 2003), 27,153 adults and 102 minors were imprisoned and tortured during the Pinochet regime. A second list (Comisión Presidencial 2011/2) added 9,795 prisoners, bringing the total of victims officially recognized by the State to circa 40,000. Both the Valech lists and its full report are found on <http://www.indh.cl/informacion-comision-valech>, accessed 30 January 2013. See also the second of the three-volume Report of the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission, aka Rettig Commission (Comisión Nacional 1991). English translations of excerpts of the Rettig Report relating to some of the main detention centers are found on <http://www.derechoschile.com/eng/lish/stgo.htm>, accessed 12 February 2013. All translations in this article are mine.
- 2 I was the first to study music in captivity during the Pinochet regime. See my BBC radio series and online project “Canto Cautivo” (Chornik 2005). Montealegre’s (2010) comparative study of Chacabuco concentration camp (Chile) and Punta de Rieles prison (Uruguay) has a section on prisoners’ creative activities (252–359), which discusses crafts, visual arts, theater, literature and music; the chapters on music analyze the testimonies I previously collected, adding significant new information. Recent musicological studies dealing with the Pinochet era, but not specific to captivity, include Jordán (2009), on the relationship between pirate recordings and underground political activity, and Party (2010), on apolitical music genres and the role of movements like *Nueva Canción Chilena* (New Chilean Song) beyond political agendas. Bauer (2009) discusses her music therapy work with survivors of Colonia Dignidad but does not examine the musical effects of the tight collaboration between this organization and Pinochet’s secret police. There is significant literary research dealing with captivity under Pinochet, including Lazzara (2006, 2011), on post-dictatorship narratives, memorial sites and visual art representing traumatic memories, and Peris (2005, 2008), on political uses of testimonial literature during the post-dictatorship. The present article is a pilot for a three-year project I am currently developing, which will deal with musical experiences in Pinochet’s torture chambers and concentration camps from the perspective of both prisoners and jailers, and with contemporary musical initiatives commemorating violence under dictatorship.
- 3 González may also be referring here to low-income classes. Wealthy people could “buy” their way out of the army.
- 4 The FER is still active. See <http://www.chile-fer.cl>, accessed on 12 February 2013.
- 5 *Nueva Canción* came to prominence in the 1960s, rooted in the work of artists who revitalized Latin American folk music, especially Violeta Parra (Chilean) and Atahualpa Yupanqui (Argentinean). In 1965, Ángel and Isabel Parra (Violeta Parra’s children) founded “La Peña de los Parra,” a nightclub that established the sound of *Nueva Canción* and created an audience for luminaries such as Patricio Manns and Víctor Jara. Pinochet’s coup badly affected *Nueva Canción* artists, who were forced to go underground. Víctor Jara was killed and many others (including the bands Quilapayún, Inti-Illimani and Illapu) had to go into exile. An urban movement called *Canto Nuevo* emerged after the military government banned traditional Andean instruments. For further information on *Nueva Canción*, see Anonymous n.d./1 and García 2013.

- 6 The *Juramento a la Bandera* is not performed on 7 or 8 July, but on 9 and 10 July. This tradition was established in 1882, during the Guerra del Pacífico (War of the Pacific) against Peru and Bolivia. See Anonymous n.d./2. *El Tanquetazo* or *Tancazo* of 29 June, 1973, was a failed coup attempt led by Army Lieutenant Colonel Roberto Souper against the Allende government. It was successfully put down by loyal constitutionalist soldiers led by Army Commander-in-Chief Carlos Prats, who was later killed by the DINA in Buenos Aires in September 1974.
- 7 Everywhere in the country, the national anthem had to be sung with an additional verse that glorifies the Army. This verse was officially added by Pinochet in 1973 and removed in 1990, when democracy was restored. However, some extreme right-wing sectors of society still sing it in private ceremonies. Neustadt (2011) discusses the changes to the music, text, reception and interpretation of the Chilean and Costa Rican anthems, arguing that these “developed, and continue to develop, changing with, and according to, shifting images of national identity.”
- 8 Violeta Parra (1917–1967) was a Chilean songwriter, performer, folk-music collector and graphic artist. Her work was inspired by diverse folk music traditions, achieving a great popularity through mass distribution, particularly from the 1950s onwards. In 1957 she founded and managed the Museo de Arte Popular at the University of Concepción in southern Chile. She lived in Paris for several years, performing at the United Nations and UNESCO, and exhibiting her paintings, tapestries and wire sculptures at the Louvre’s Musée des Arts Decoratifs. Upon her return to Chile in 1965, she set up a circus tent on the outskirts of Santiago, to promote Chilean popular culture. Parra committed suicide at the age of 49. For a personal account of the significance of Parra’s music in two of Pinochet’s concentration camps, see Montealegre 2012:76–111. For an analysis of the political content of “La Carta,” see Borland 2006.
- 9 According to the *Rettig Report*, the DINA was organized in November 1973 and officially created in June 1974 (Comisión Nacional 1991 v. I:55). The *Valech Report* confirms that the DINA began operations before its official founding (Comisión Presidencial 2011/1: 358). It is possible that DINA General Director Manuel Contreras had conceived it before the coup. In 1977 the DINA was replaced by the Centro Nacional de Información (CNI—National Information Center).
- 10 The buildings of Villa Grimaldi were demolished by the military in 1989 just before the first democratic government took office. Since 1997 it has been a Park for Peace, and since 2004 a National Monument. The Park is currently run by a corporation, which organizes educational programs and holds an oral archive of testimonies. For further information about Villa Grimaldi, see the *Rettig Report* and the website of the Corporación Parque por la Paz, <http://villagrimaldi.cl>, accessed 2 February 2013. For an analysis of the Park as aesthetic object and memory site, see Lazzara 2006:127–147.
- 11 Doctor Mortis was a sinister radio and comic strip character created in the 1940s by the Chilean writer, actor and musician Juan Marino Cabello. Pentothal is used as general anesthetic and to induce coma in euthanasia and as one of the drugs administered during lethal injections in the USA.
- 12 The LP recorded by Los de Colombia containing “La Loca María” and “La Vaca Blanca” is titled *Cumbia Colombiana: Clásicos de los 60*. Los de Colombia must not be mistaken for the Colombian band Los Ocho de Colombia, which was active and very popular in that country in the 1970s. I suspect the former band was not from Colombia: it would have been too coincidental that two bands with almost the same name would operate in the same country. I have not been able to find out whether Los de Colombia’s version of “La Loca María” is the original. To my knowledge, Los Girasoles did not record this song.

- 13 There are several testimonies in the oral archive in Villa Grimaldi that evidence activities developed by inmates on their own initiative. See also Montealegre (2010:252–359) and the website *Prisioneros Políticos de Chacabuco*, <http://www.prisionerospoliticosdechacabuco.cl/>, accessed 2 February 2013.
- 14 “El Negro José” became an anthem for political prisoners in many detention centers. See “La historia del Negro José” (Chornik 2005). “Juan sin Tierra,” an anonymous Mexican *corrido*, was popularized by Víctor Jara. Jara recorded two songs inspired by the nineteenth-century Mexican figure Joaquín Murieta: “Así Como Hoy Matan Negros” (based on the play *Fulgor y Muerte de Joaquín Murieta* by Pablo Neruda and Sergio Ortega), and with Quilapayún, the “Cueca de Joaquín Murieta.”
- 15 There are many different genres of songs under the title “La Gallina de los Huevos de Oro.” I have not been able to identify possible contenders yet. The Chilean singer Ramón Aguilera and Argentine singers Favio and Sandro (also known as Sandro de América and the Argentine Elvis) are associated with the genre *Balada romántica latinoamericana*.
- 16 *Cueca* is the most popular traditional music genre and dance of Chile. It is also played in Peru, Bolivia, Argentina and Mexico, where it is called *marinera* or *chilena*. *Cueca* is a mixed partner dance with no body contact. The man follows the woman persistently, imitating a cock courting a hen. The couple pursue and retreat, pass and circle one another in an imaginary ring, twirling handkerchiefs as they dance. *Cueca* is played in most regions of Chile with some variations.

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