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Interview of Gary Galván, Ph.D.

Gary Galván
La Salle University

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FIELD NOTES

Interviewee: Dr. Gary Galván
Interviewer: Gina L. Bixler
Interview date: February 5, 2015 (evening)
Interview location: La Salle University, Olney Hall Rm. 102

Field notes written on February 6, 2015

The Interviewee:

A guitarist, musicologist, lecturer, and digital archive specialist, Dr. Galván completed his Ph.D. in historical musicology at the University of Florida, where he pursued complimentary studies in art history and digital media. He has presented his research on twentieth-century Pan American orchestral music and media at myriad colloquia across the nation and around the world including: the Music and Moving Image Conference in New York City, the international College Music Society Conference in Bangkok and Ayutthaya, Thailand, and the International Conference on New Directions in the Humanities in Granada, Spain. He has published articles in a wide array of peer-reviewed journals and texts, including: *American Music*, *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music*, and *Musicians and Composers of the Twentieth Century*. He is an editor for the forthcoming issue of *Latin American Classical Composers: A Biographical Dictionary* to be published in 2015 and is working on a book about the Edwin A. Fleisher Collection of Orchestral Music in Philadelphia, of which he was recently named curator. At the Fleisher Collection, Dr. Galván coordinates an expansive archival digitization project and curates a variety of special exhibits. (writing credit: Gary Galván)

The Interviewer:

I, Gina Lee Bixler, earned my B.A. in history and secondary education with concentrations in American history and social studies, as well as a music history minor, at La Salle University in 2014. Currently, I am enrolled in La Salle's history M.A. program, in the public history track. I am a certified social studies teacher in grades seven through twelve in the state of Pennsylvania. Throughout my undergraduate career, I served as research assistant at the Fleisher Collection. I currently still have professional ties there as a curatorial assistant on a museum exhibition about the collection. Dr. Galván has served as my mentor, first as an instructor at La Salle and then as a historical musicologist at the Fleisher Collection.

Background:

As a student in La Salle University's History M.A. program, I am required to take a course in oral history methods; however, because I am in the public history track of the program, oral history is, potentially, an incredibly useful tool for me. From the coursework I have done so far, including practice interviews and looking over the criteria for professional interviews, I've come to the conclusion that the best interviews are produced when the interviewer has background knowledge of the topic of the interview. Having served as a research assistant for the Fleisher Collection, I was familiar with Dr. Galván's work and felt that it needed to be documented. Dr. Galván has become a great mentor and friend to me and happily agreed to be interviewed.

We agreed to meet at La Salle's campus on February 5, 2015 in the early evening. The interview was conducted in the music room in Olney Hall so background noise would not interrupt the recording. I had sent Dr. Galván my questions earlier in the day so he had an idea of the structure I envisioned for the interview. This allowed him to come prepared with some empirical data about the collection.

We sat across from each other at a desk with my laptop in between us. I did a test recording to ensure that the microphone picked up the audio from both of us and that it was clear. The test was fine, so I began the interview. About ten minutes in I checked to make sure everything was recording. To my dismay, I saw that the second recording had started but stopped instantaneously. We were forced to start again.

I was concerned that because some of the information had to be repeated, it wouldn't sound as good on the recording. I was afraid it would feel artificial the second time around. Thankfully, it ended up being better, in terms of content. As I said before, Dr. Galván and I are friends. So we we're able to laugh it off. Consequently, it took me a minute to get back on track when I recorded my introduction and first question. Though it starts off a little causal, I feel the interview is very rich in content.

Because the interview was only one hour, we did not take a break. Though the interview did run a little longer than planned, I did not cut Dr. Galván off because I felt this was an important story that needed to be documented. A potential danger for me during the interview was inserting too much of my own experiences with the collection into the interview. I tried very hard not to do this and for the most part I was successful, I think. I think any insertions I did do were appropriate and did not distract the interviewee. In this role I was an interviewer and I tried to remain as objective as possible and not show how wonderful I think the Fleisher Collection is.

This was the first interview I've done and I learned a great deal from it. I've known Dr. Galván for just over two years. Having worked with him on projects for the Fleisher Collection, I was eager to do this interview. I have a great amount of respect for him as an individual and he has served as a great mentor for me. I was happy with the overall outcome of the interview. It felt like two friendly colleagues chatting. I would like to include it in La Salle's archives. Additionally, I offered him a copy of the recording and transcript for the Fleisher archives.

Note on recording:

For recording, I used the extra Voice Recorder application on my MacBook Pro laptop. I then burned the mp3 file to a CD. I formatted the CD as a data disk so that I could store a transcript, a list of questions, and field notes on it, in addition to the recordings. I used NCH Express Scribe software to slowly play back the recording while I transcribed it. Then I played the entire interview again at normal speed in order to edit it.

Editing the Transcript:

My editing decisions included:

- 1) eliminating most repeated words, unless the words were repeated for emphasis
- 2) eliminating most false starts, unless the false starts seemed significant
- 3) placing information about pauses and visual cues or nonverbal sounds in brackets
- 4) deletion of one inaudible phrase because the meaning of the statement was still conveyed without it
- 5) providing limited additional explanation in footnotes
- 6) placing a time indicator at or near the top of each page and at the beginning and end of each recording session
- 7) frequently eliminating transitional words such as “and,” “so,” and “because” in order to make sentences shorter and easier to read.
- 8) using a dash to indicate an awkward transition in the middle of a sentence
- 9) using a period to show a sentence that was not completed and a dash to show a sentence or question that was interrupted.
- 10) correcting the names of composers/pieces