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ABSTRACT
During the latter half of the nineteenth century, the countries of Central America incorporated European musicians into their state-generated projects. Administrations from Guatemala to Costa Rica appointed composers from Italy, Germany, Belgium, and Spain to help stimulate national musical culture and education, giving them leadership roles in state institutions. Belgian composer and conductor Alejandro Cousin arrived in the late 1850s and spent the rest of his life in El Salvador and Nicaragua where he established the national military band. This article, in the form of an obituary, sheds light on his noteworthy artistic legacy in Central America.

KEY WORDS
Alejandro Cousin, cosmopolitanism, military band, Nicaragua, Central America.

TÍTULO
Cosmopolitanismo musical en América Central: en busca de un obituario de Alejandro Cousin

RESUMEN
Durante la segunda mitad del Siglo XIX, los países de América Central integraron músicos europeos a sus proyectos de construcción estatal. Desde Guatemala hasta Costa Rica se contrataron compositores de Italia, Alemania, Bélgica y España en posiciones de liderazgo en instituciones del estado. El compositor y director belga Alejandro Cousin llegó a América a finales de la década de 1850, permaneció gran parte del resto de su vida en servicio gubernamental en El Salvador y en Nicaragua, donde estableció la banda militar nacional. Este artículo, a manera de obituario, ilustra su importante legado artístico en esta región.

PALABRAS CLAVE
Alejandro Cousin, cosmopolitanismo, bandas militares, Nicaragua, América Central.
Musical Cosmopolitanism in Central America: 
In search of an Obituary of Alejandro Cousin (ca. 1835–1910)

Bernard Gordillo Brockmann

Introduction

In one of his many chronicles for the Argentine newspaper La Nación, Rubén Darío (1867–1916), celebrated Nicaraguan modernista poet and essayist, wrote a memoir of his trip to Belgium in April of 1907. Among the individuals he highlighted was Blanca Cousin Oudart de Zelaya (1875–1957), wife of Nicaraguan president José Santos Zelaya López (1853–1919). Born in Namur, Belgium, Cousin had left the country as a child along with her family, subsequently living in Central America, where she rose to prominence in Nicaraguan society. At length, the poet showered her and Zelaya with praise, both whom he had known for a number of years. He also paid tribute to another member of their family: “My home country owes much of its artistic progress to her father, Mr. Cousin.”

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1 I would like to thank Leonora Saavedra for her guidance and suggestions on this article; Jorge Eduardo Arellano for providing beneficial source material; the administration and staff of the Instituto de Historia de Nicaragua y Centroamérica (IHNCA, Managua) for their generous support over many years; and the University of California Institute for Mexico and the United States (UC MEXUS) for the residency I undertook at their university-wide headquarters that allowed for the completion of this article.


This brief, passing mention only hinted at the extent to which Alejandro Cousin (b. Belgium, ca. 1835–d. Cherbourg, France, September 2, 1910), a Belgian composer, conductor, and instrumentalist, had contributed to the cultural development of Nicaragua during the second half of the nineteenth century. What follows is a biography of Cousin that traces his personal and professional path in Latin America. It is presented in the form of an obituary that seeks to shed light on a little-known Belgian musician from the nineteenth century. My hope is to show that European immigrant musicians were protagonists in fomenting musical culture and education in Central America, not infrequently taking a role in more than one country. Indeed, they contributed to state-generated projects across the region, and fulfilled cosmopolitan desires that drew from European culture, particularly in music and theater.

A Belgian Musician Dies

On September 2, 1910, while on a transatlantic passenger vessel nearing Cherbourg, France, Alejandro Cousin passed away at approximately 75 years of age. At the time of death he was accompanied by his daughter, Blanca Cousin Oudart de Zelaya, and grandchildren (Figure 1). José Santos Zelaya, recently deposed President of Nicaragua, awaited them at Cherbourg, and expected to take family to Brussels. In lieu of transporting the deceased to the Belgian capital, he was buried at Cherbourg. Cousin was preceded in death by his wife, Léonie Oudart de Cousin, who is buried in Managua.

5 The registry of birth for Cousin is not extant. However, a manifest of a ship traveling from British Honduras (today, Belize) to New Orleans, on February 14, 1868, listed an “A. Cousin… Belgian” as 33 years of age; see “A. Cousin,” New Orleans, Passenger Lists, 1813–1963, Ancestry.com, accessed May 23, 2018, [database access limited to subscription]. The date of death was announced in the Salvadoran newspaper Diario del Salvador, which cited the French periodical Le Matin (Paris); see “El ex Presidente Zelaya en Bruselas. La muerte de su suegro frente a las costas de Francia,” Diario del Salvador (San Salvador), Oct. 3, 1910.

6 All of the Zelaya Cousin children traveled with their mother and grandfather: Berta, Isabel, Leonor, Emelina, Santos, and Anita. They remained in Nicaragua after José Santos Zelaya left the country in late 1909; see “Desde la Havana. Entrevista con el ex-presidente Zelaya…,” Diario del Salvador (San Salvador), Mar. 8, 1910; and “Nicaragua. Don Alejandro Cousin solicitó…,” Diario del Salvador (San Salvador), Aug. 10, 1910.

7 “El ex Presidente Zelaya en Bruselas. La muerte de su suegro frente a las costas de Francia,” Diario del Salvador (San Salvador), Oct. 3, 1910. An alternate account of Cousin’s death is evidenced in the ship manifest of the Tagus, dated September 5, 1910. On a voyage from New York to Southampton, England, “Alejandro Cousin, male, 80 [years old], musician, Belgian” passed away as a result of “senile decay, gastritis, cardiac syncope, [and] malaria.” Apparently, he had been traveling alone as none of his family members are accounted for in the manifest; “Alejandro Cousin” Sep. 5, 1910, in UK and Ireland, Incoming Passenger Lists, 1878–1960, Ancestry.com, accessed Mar. 6, 2020, [database access limited to subscription].

8 I have confirmed that Léonie Oudart de Cousin is buried in Cementerio San Pedro, a historic burial ground for foreigners in Managua; see Figure 4.
Cousin (Alexandre Joseph Theodore Cousin) was born in Belgium, possibly from Namur. He may have been the son of or related to Alexandre Cousin (1801–1861), former Director of Music of the 2nd Regiment of the Belgian Infantry. Documentation of the early years of his life is unknown, particularly his musical education. Yet his professional activity in Latin America points to a substantial background in music, and training as a civil
As a piano accompanist, he arrived in Panama in June of 1858 on a tour with “M.C. Tolly, violinist, from the Paris Conservatoire, with his wife, prima donna of the Paris Opera.” They gave performances in Panama City and Aspinwall (today, Colón) before traveling to Lima, Peru, where Cousin briefly resided as a private teacher of voice and piano. He returned to Aspinwall not long thereafter and similarly worked as a teacher of “singing, the piano, and other instruments,” in addition to advertising his services as a piano tuner and technician. At Aspinwall he collaborated as piano accompanist in a public performance with prima donna Sophie Amic Gazan and her sister, Emilia Kammerer, in a program of opera arias and duets (Figure 2). The concert also featured Cousin as piano soloist in the waltz Las perlas de oro (Pearls of Gold), a composition of his, and in a demonstration of the “saxophorno,” perhaps one of the earliest appearances in Latin America of the musical invention by Adolphe Sax (1814–1894). He interpreted opera arias by Rossini and Donizetti, in arrangement for the saxophone, with Kammerer.

12 It is unclear as to when he received training as a civil engineer, perhaps during the period in which he returned to Belgium (ca. 1872–ca. 1882). Nevertheless, beginning in 1889, he took part in a Commission of Isthmus Studies to determine the viability of an inter-oceanic canal through Panama, and was listed as having such expertise; see “The Canal Commission to make a Fair Report,” Panama Star and Herald (Panama City), Nov. 18, 1889; “El canal de Panamá”, El Siglo Diez y Nueve, Mexico City, Nov. 27, 1889; “La venida del a Comisión de Estudios al Istmo…”, Estrella de Panama, Panama City, Jan. 18, 1890; and “Le Canal”, Panama Star and Herald, Panama City, Mar. 19, 1894.

13 “We learn that a troupe of French Artistes…”, Panama Star and Herald, Panama City, Jun. 12, 1858. Tolly and his wife continued to tour Latin America the following year, collaborating with an ensemble in Guatemala City on at least one occasion; see Rafael Vásquez A., Historia de la música en Guatemala, Guatemala: Tipografía Nacional, 1950, p. 314.

14 “A. Cousin, Profesor de canto y piano…”, El Comercio, Lima, Peru, Sep. 17, 1858.

15 Alejandro, Cousin, “To the Public”, Panama Star and Herald, Panama City, Dec. 23, 1858.

16 “Salón del Cabildo, Gran concierto vocal e instrumental”, Panama Star and Herald, Panama City, Dec. 11, 1858. Sophie Amic Gazan (born Kammerer) met an untimely death not long after her collaboration with Cousin, while traveling by steamship from Panama to San Francisco in late December of 1858. She and Emilia were the daughters of Jakob Friedrich Kammerer (1796–1857), German inventor of the phosphorous matchstick. Twenty-four years old at the time of death, Sophie was married to Theodore Amic Gazan de la Perriere, a professional musician and photographer. According to historians Peter Palmquist and Thomas Kailbourn, he and “Joseph Mazzucchelli (Amic Gazan and Mazzucchelli) were the earliest known artists to take photographs on paper on the Pacific coast of North America.” As well, he was a former French soldier once employed as such by the Mexican government. “Died. On board the Golden Age…”, Daily Alta California, Dec. 29, 1858; “We learn with regret that Madam Sophia Amic-Gazan…”, Panama Star and Herald (Panama City), Jan. 20, 1859; Otto Krätz, “Kammerer, Jakob Friedrich,” in Neue Deutsche Biographie 11 (1977), accessed March 8, 2020, https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/pnd137711999.html#ndbcontent; Peter E. Palmquist and Thomas R. Kailbourn, Pioneer Photographers of the Far West: A Biographical Dictionary, 1840–1865, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2000, p. 82; “French Expedition to Mexico”, Daily Alta California, Dec. 12, 1859.
accompanying at the piano. A positive review of the concert noted, “Sr. Cousin also added much to the entertainment of the evening by his masterly performance on the Saxophon- no, and the pretty waltz…” 17 These accounts are a testament to the professional abilities

17 “Madam Amic-Gazan’s Concert”, Panama Star and Herald, Panama City, Dec. 14, 1858.
and musical experience he initially brought to the American continent, which contributed to his later successes in Central America.

By the end of June of 1859, Cousin had secured the directorship of the Banda de los Supremos Poderes in El Salvador. On at least one occasion, his work with the band attracted a positive review: “Mr. Cousin and the young musicians, who deserved the most complete approval from people of good taste who heard them, left nothing to be desired. It was noted, above all, how much the musicians have advanced in the style of military music, under the direction of Mr. Cousin.”

His fortunes later took a turn for the worse when

18 “Crónica Local. Gran retreta de gala”, Gaceta Oficial, El Salvador, Jun. 1, 1859, p. 3. “Nada dejaron que desear el Señor Cousin y los jóvenes ejecutores, quienes merecieron la más completa aprobación de las personas de buen gusto que les oyeron; notándose sobre todo lo mucho que los individuos de la música marcial han adelantado en estilo, bajo la enseñanza de Mr. Cousin.” The official chronicle printed the concert program, yet omitted the composers. However, two works can be deduced as arrangements from opéras comiques by French composer Daniel F.-E. Auber (1782–1871): the overture Le domino noir (The Black Domino, 1837), and a “grand potpourri on the most beautiful themes” from La part du diable (The Devil’s Share, 1843). “Gran pot-pourri sobre los más bonitos motivos…”
the country descended into war during the Liberal administration of President Gerardo Barrios (1813–1865). On October 26, 1863, alongside a number of foreign officers who worked for the government, Cousin was arrested and nearly executed by an occupying military force, following the departure of Barrios from the capital. His most enduring musical composition written while in El Salvador was the military march *Gerardo Barrios* (paso doble), which functioned in a ceremonial capacity as a patriotic or national music.

From the end of the 1860s until his death, Cousin resided primarily in Nicaragua, spending about a decade elsewhere (from the early 1870s onward). In 1868, the administration of president Fernando Guzmán Solórzano (1867–1871) hired him to be the founding director of the Banda de los Supremos Poderes, a military institution with a ceremonial and educational function, based in Managua (Figures 3 and 4). Later, Cousin and French engineer Paul Lévy received government concessions to pursue business projects. Cousin left Nicaragua for about ten years, for reasons that remain unclear, and spent them in El Salvador and Belgium. In the former, he was appointed “special commissioner” to represent the Salvadoran government in assisting Honduran internal affairs.


23 “Noticiero Centroamericano. Nicaragua. Managua, 12 mayo”, *Diario del Salvador*, San Salvador, May 14, 1910; “Constancias-certificaciones, suscritas por A. Cousin, Director de la Banda S. S. P. P., Oct–Nov 1892”, IHNCA, RS – Sección 2 / RS – 0069 (Managua). His appointment can be deduced, as can some of the later dates of his years in Nicaragua, from a particular letter of recommendation for musician Miguel Castillo, of whom Cousin had known since 1868. Furthermore, in his *Notas geográficas y económicas sobre la República de Nicaragua* (1873), Paul Lévy claimed that Cousin had founded the Banda de los Supremos Poderes. Nicaraguan composer Luis A. Delgadillo later echoes this point, referring to the ensemble as a “banda presidencial” (“presidential band”), while noting it to have been dissolved at the end of the 1920s; Luis A. Delgadillo, “La música indígena y colonial en Nicaragua”, *Revista de estudios musicales* 1/3 (1950), p. 55.

24 “Decreto de 14 de marzo…,” *Colección de decretos legislativos*, Ministerio de Fomento, Nicaragua, 1870, pp. 159–160. Cousin and Lévy were given concession to build public water fountains in various municipalities.
resulting in the Leiva-Cousin Agreement of 1873. During his time in El Salvador, Cousin also founded a Sociedad Filarmónica (Philharmonic Society) in the capital. He then returned to Belgium and married Leonie Isidore Josephe Oudart (d. 1893). They had two children, the aforementioned Blanca and a son, Luis Alejandro (ca. 1881–1935), who later held the position of Minister of War under Zelaya. In mid-July of 1882 Cousin resided, once again, in Nicaragua, where he resumed the direction of the Banda de los Supremos Poderes. Among the official obligations of the band were to give concerts, known as retretas (tattoos), twice a week at Parque Central in Managua. The programs were published in advance, and reflected the musical tastes of the day—popular dances, military marches, and opera arrangements, as well as compositions by the director. As an entrepreneur he sold and rented pianos in the capital, and offered a selection of sheet music for piano and other instruments. Moreover, toward the end of the 1880s, he received a government concession to establish beer breweries, and much later, a matchstick factory.

Cousin was a proponent of music education, not just for the musicians under his direction, but for its inclusion in the public education system. In early December of 1888, he published an essay in the Managua newspaper El País that beseeched the government to incorporate music education into the national curriculum. The first paragraphs of the

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25 The agreement was signed by Cousin and Honduran president Ponciano Leiva on July 18, 1873; “Comunicados. Convenio Leiva-Cousin” El Porvenir, Managua, Oct. 25, 1874; and José Ángel Zúñiga Huete, Presidentes de Honduras, Mexico: Instituto Panamericano de Geografía e Historia, 2 (1988), p. 15.


28 “Retreta”, El Ferrocarril, Managua, Jul. 22, 1882. A passing mention of Cousin noted that his recent taking charge of the band, suggesting a return to Nicaragua, had produced excellent results for the band.

29 For a representative sample of published programs, see “Retreta de Esta Noche”, El País (Managua), Dec. 4–29, 1887; and “Retreta de hoy”, Diario de la Capital (Managua), Apr. 5–Aug. 30, 1891.

30 Alejandro Cousin, “Avisos. Música”, El País (Managua), Apr. 4, 1888. He also sold strings and replacement parts, and offered cornets, flutes, violins, and other instruments.

31 “Otro idem de 22 de marzo, a favor de don A. Cousin”, Colección de decretos legislativos (Managua: 1887), 70–71. Cousin received an exclusive, five-year concession from the government to establish breweries in the departments of Managua, Masaya, and Granada.

32 In March of 1903, the Zelaya government (specifically, the Ministerio de Fomento) granted Cousin a twenty-five year concession to manufacture and sell matchsticks throughout Nicaragua; see “Sección Oficial. Poder Legislativo. El Gobierno de Nicaragua concede al señor Alejandro Cousín…”, La Gaceta No. 1896, Nicaragua, March 10, 1903.
essay exhibited a nuanced argument, revealing a certain depth of argument and character of thought:

It is an apparent fact that, after a few years here, the government of this Republic has made an effort at expanding public education, reducing illiteracy in the most remote villages, and preparing a new generation that would compare favorably with many cultivated countries in Latin America.

For this, one factor is necessary—peace—a requirement alongside the integrity of a government which has ruled up to this point, and with the hope that the future may see a continuance, which would undoubtedly advance education towards greater strides, and as a consequence, the progress of the agriculture industry, the only future wealth that the generous soil of this beautiful country bestows upon us.

I repeat, the government has done much for education, but I dare say it isn’t everything they could have done. It might be due to omission or lack of initiative, yet one thing is certain, there’s an absence of music education in our cities. Music, which is heard in all programs on the smallest stages in other countries; music, which has raised the stature of some nations, more than their literature; music, which strengthens familial ties and relieves the soul diminished by work; music, nearly the only diversion during long tropical nights; music, a necessary adornment of youth, etc.

As a country progresses, one necessity brings about another. Nicaragua’s advancement arrived a few years ago to the point at which music education can now be introduced.  

Cousin left the directorship of the Banda de los Supremos Poderes at the beginning of the 1890s, as his social status rose with the marriage of Blanca to prominent Liberal figure José Santos Zelaya.  

According to the official registry of her marriage to Zelaya, Blanca had lived in Managua for “more than seven years.” She married Zelaya on May 12, 1892; “José Santos Zelaya”, Nicaragua,
sixteen-year administration of Nicaragua. This was to take a bittersweet turn for Cousin when his wife Léonie Oudart passed away in June of 1893 (Figure 5). Cousin also held other government positions during the Zelaya administration. Late in life he was appointed Consul General of Nicaragua in Brussels, Belgium.

His musical output, given that much of it remains lost, comprises of a couple of known compositions—the march *Roberto Sacasa* and national anthem *Hermosa soberana* (Figure 6)—that served as official music under different Nicaraguan presidential administrations, those of Roberto Sacasa and José Santos Zelaya, respectively. Modeled after the


38 Alejandro Cousin, *Himno de Nicaragua*, Managua: Tipografía Nacional, 1905. After the fall of Zelaya, *Hermosa soberana* became the official anthem of the Liberal Party in Nicaragua, a status it continues to hold at present. Its association with Zelaya would be thus inextricable, leading Luis A. Delgadillo to refer to it as a “presidential march”; see Luis A. Delgadillo, “Por nuestro himno nacional”, *La Prensa*, Managua, Mar. 12, 1939. “…marcha presidencial….”
bellicose French anthem *La marseillaise*, the unattributed text of *Hermosa Soberana* evokes an exoticist maternal image of the Nicaraguan sovereign:

- **Original**
  - Hermosa soberana
  - Cual sultana, Nicaragua
  - De sus lagos al rumor
  - Ven en sus hijos denodados
  - Los soldados del honor
  - Siempre libre y hechicera
  - Su bandera ve flotar
  - Apacible se reclina
  - Cual ondina de la mar,
  - Orgullosa cual deidad,
  - Muestra altiva y noble el pecho
  - En defensa del derecho
  - Y su santa libertad

- **English translation**
  - Beautiful, sovereign,
  - That sultaness, Nicaragua,
  - From whose lakes, it is said,
  - Sees in her valiant sons,
  - Soldiers of honor,
  - Always free and enchanting,
  - Her standard flies.
  - She reclines peacefully,
  - Like a sea nymph,
  - Proud deity,
  - Exhibits an elevated and a noble bosom
  - In defense of justice
  - And her sacred liberty.

Although few in extant number, a handful of programs of the Banda de los Supremos Poderes include works by Cousin. Published in local Managua newspapers, they include the polka-mazurka *Leonie*,\(^{40}\) paso doble *Del Atlántico al Pacífico*,\(^{41}\) and *Los Ecos del Salvador*.\(^{42}\) The aforementioned march/paso doble *Gerardo Barrios*\(^{43}\) may be the only work still performed in Latin America.\(^{44}\)

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40 “Retreta de esta noche”, *El País*, Managua, Dec. 11, 1887.

41 “Retreta de hoy”, *Diario de la Capital*, Managua, Jun. 14, 1891. The work was dedicated to Aniceto G. Menocal, a Cuban engineer employed by the United States government to oversee the construction of an inter-oceanic canal across Nicaragua.


43 A number of videos on YouTube attest to the work having been recorded in the recent past, and in ceremonial use by the Salvadorean military.

44 The Bibliothèque nationale de France holds a number of works by an “A. Cousin,” which may have been written by the Belgian composer in question. They include *Narcisse et ses deux soeurs* (“comical song-march,” 1911) for voice and piano, and eleven works for solo piano, consistently dated 1909—*Baliverne-polka*, *Balladeuse* (polka), *Fructidor* (schottisch), *Les glycines* (mazurka), *Les Libellules* (valse), *Les yeux dous* (valse), *Marche des brettiers*, *Polka des bons diables*, *Robinsonette* (marche), *Thilda* (mazurka), and *Trianon-schottisch*. 
FIGURE 6. Alejandro Cousin, *Himno de Nicaragua*, 1905.\(^{45}\)
Source: Instituto de Historia de Nicaragua y Centroamérica.

Aside from his compositions, Cousin left a legacy noteworthy for his influence on musicians with whom he worked while director of the Banda de los Supremos Poderes, in both El Salvador and Nicaragua. This also touched members of his own family. A prominent musical heir was a step-grandson, and child of President Zelaya and Brígida Pérez: Carlos Alfonso Zelaya Pérez (b. 1893), a promising vaudeville and concert pianist.

**Epilogue**

In his homage to the “Thirty Years” of conservative administrations, a period of political stability for Nicaragua during the last decades of the nineteenth century, writer Anselmo Flete Bolaños highlighted the economic policies of President Vicente Quadra (1871–1875) in an essay entitled “La banda” (“The Band”). Quadra took a reactionary approach in his oversight of the national purse, which earned him a reputation as a miser. Elaborating on this point in his anecdote, Flete Bolaños recalled the seemingly arbitrary manner in which president once adjusted the salaries of the members of the Banda de los Supremos Poderes. Set as an exchange between Quadra and an employee of the Treasury, the story moved from one musician to another, noting their musical instruments and salaries, which were adjusted depending on the size of instrument, regardless of military rank or seniority. When Quadra asked after Alejandro Cousin, whom he referred to as the man with the “palito” (“little stick” = baton), he was indifferent to learn of his reputation as a “great European musician.” Yet he was taken aback by Cousin’s salary, which was apparently insufficient for a person of his distinction, according to the employee. “And it is still meagre!” Quadra mocked, “And the man does no more than draw lines in the air with his little stick!” Although the employee tried to defend Cousin, the president was unable to appreciate the importance of the directorship of the band, and chose to eliminate his salary as an exchange between Quadra and an employee of the Treasury, the story moved from one musician to another, noting their musical instruments and salaries, which were adjusted depending on the size of instrument, regardless of military rank or seniority. When Quadra asked after Alejandro Cousin, whom he referred to as the man with the “palito” (“little stick” = baton), he was indifferent to learn of his reputation as a “great European musician.” Yet he was taken aback by Cousin’s salary, which was apparently insufficient for a person of his distinction, according to the employee. “And it is still meagre!” Quadra mocked, “And the man does no more than draw lines in the air with his little stick!”

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49. For a study on Vicente Quadra, see Jorge Eduardo Arellano, *Don Vicente Quadra: lección histórica de gobernante ejemplar*, Managua: Academia de Geografía e Historia de Nicaragua, 2008.


51. Ibid., p. 26. “Y aún es poco! Y el hombre no hace más que rayas en el aire con su palito!”
position then and there. At the expense of Cousin and members of the band, this anecdote served recall the austerity measures taken by Quadra that bordered on absurdity. Yet it also marked the high esteem enjoyed by Cousin during his early years in Nicaragua, and of the memory he left upon death.

European musicians not unlike Cousin played important roles in Central America during the latter half of the nineteenth century, often serving to enrich local culture while building musical institutions. Indeed, these musicians were found in every nation-state of the region: German composer Emil Dressner (fl. 1870–1885) in El Salvador and Guatemala; Italian conductor and composer Juan Aberle Sforza (1846–1930) in Guatemala and El Salvador; German conductor Gustavo Stamm (fl. 1880s) in Honduras; and Belgian conductor Jean Loots (1872–1929) and Spanish music educator José Campabadal Calvet (1849–1905) in Costa Rica. As Rubén Darío observed in La Nación, Alejandro Cousin was a notable protagonist in the artistic development of Nicaragua. Indeed, he left an indelible mark on Nicaraguan musical culture, and helped to build a foundation for generations of native musicians who would remember him fondly well into the twentieth century.

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