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## Contexts for Musical Modernism in Post-1945 Mexico: Federico Ibarra - A Case Study

Francisco Eduardo Barradas Galván, *The University of Western Ontario*

Supervisor: Ansari, Emily., *The University of Western Ontario*

Co-Supervisor: Wiebe, Thomas., *The University of Western Ontario*

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Music

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## Abstract

This monograph examines the musical modernist era in Mexico between 1945 and the 1970s. It aims to provide a new understanding of the eclecticism achieved by Mexican composers during this era, using three different focal points. First, I examine the cultural and musical context of this period of Mexican music history. I scrutinize the major events, personalities, and projects that precipitated Mexican composers' move away from government-promoted musical nationalism during this period toward an embrace of international trends. I then provide a case study through which to better understand this era, examining the early life, education, and formative influences of Mexican composer Federico Ibarra (b.1946), focusing particularly on the 1960s and 1970s. Lastly, I analyze three of Ibarra's works from the 1970s, observing the major compositional techniques used by Ibarra during this period with the purpose of situating this composer's experimental phase in the context of the international modernist scene of the second half of the twentieth century.

To date, there is no published comprehensive study of the implications of the changing musical context of the fifties, sixties, and seventies on the musical thought of Mexican composers. Ibarra's life and work has also been little examined by scholars. This project aims to start to bridge the gaps in our knowledge about these topics.

## Keywords

Mexico, Mexican Music, Twentieth Century, International Modernism, Avant-Garde, Experimental, Latin America, Federico Ibarra.

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I want to thank my family—even though we are far from each other and we do not talk often, you always checked on me in the most critical moments. I thank my brother Marco, my aunt Martha, my lovely cousin Mariana, and my beautiful nieces Gaby and Dani whose smiles and messages brightened my cloudy days. I want to particularly thank my Dad, who offered me exactly the right words in the moment when I needed them the most. I want to thank my Mom, whose spirit lays deep within me.

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## Preface

During my undergraduate years, I enjoyed witnessing the recitals of the different instrumental studios taking place at my university in my hometown, Xalapa. Once, I stumbled upon a piano studio recital. I remember entering the small auditorium of the Faculty of Music while the audience clapped, welcoming the musician as she walked towards the stage. From all the works I heard that evening, one remained in my memory. More than the virtuosic style, what struck me the most was its dark, eerie, and violent character. During the intermission, I borrowed a program to check the composer and title of the piece that grabbed my attention—*Sonata para Piano No. 2* by Federico Ibarra. I was surprised to find out, later that evening, that Ibarra was a Mexican composer. Ibarra's musical style sounded nothing like what I had in mind when thinking about Mexican music.

Since my childhood, most of the Mexican concert music I had experienced consisted of only a few works from a handful of Mexican composers. When I was five or six years old, I remember listening to an excerpt of José Pablo Moncayo's *Huapango* as the soundtrack of a TV advertisement of a popular beer brand. Shortly afterwards, I became familiar with a few works of Carlos Chávez, Silvestre Revueltas, Manuel M. Ponce, and Blas Galindo. Even when the music of each one of these composers had a distinctive style, the works I knew of them were audibly based on popular, folk, or indigenous themes. Growing up, I thoroughly enjoyed hearing and playing the music of these composers (and I still do). I have always felt very proud that my country, in spite of its many seemingly insurmountable problems, has nurtured its people with the creativity to write such marvellous works.

The moment I heard Ibarra's music, however, something changed. While I still liked the music of the more popular Mexican composers, I wondered why it seemed that my own environment conspired to give a small number of works by a handful of composers constant exposure, while the rest of Mexican music was ignored. I could corroborate this experience at different stages in my formative years. At some point in my undergraduate education, I joined the Youth Orchestra of the State of Veracruz. The few Mexican works

I performed with this ensemble were the same ones that I had heard during my childhood. A few years later, when I joined the professional orchestra of my hometown, the story was not that different. Even when I moved to the United States, I experienced the same situation. Whenever there was a Mexican work on the program, it was always one of the same few pieces.

As I was preparing an audition to apply to DMA programs, I was aware that I was going to be asked about my topic of interest for research. Thinking about the answer to that question, the piano sonata I had heard years before echoed in my mind. I wondered why Ibarra's music sounded so different in comparison to the music of the other, more popular Mexican composers. I wondered why that evening, years before, had been one of only two times I had ever heard a live performance of his music. As much as I love the overtly nationalist music of my country, I wondered what other music had been created in Mexico that was, like Ibarra's, not in this category.

With this monograph I embarked on a journey to satisfy my own curiosity, and soon realized that I was also stepping into new scholarly territory. My initial interest in Ibarra's musical style led me into the historical context nurturing not only his music but all of the music composed during the second half of the twentieth century in Mexico. I discovered a whole different era in the history of Mexican music; one which I did not know, and which had also been largely neglected. I became fascinated by its diversity and eclecticism. This monograph is the result of this journey, offering a glimpse of some of the reasons why that sonata sounded so different.

## Introduction

Music has always been a fundamental part of Mexican culture. Among the different genres of music employed historically by Mexican composers, “art music” linked to the Western tradition has been a constant preoccupation for over four centuries. Scholar Robert Stevenson acknowledged this fact in his seminal work *Music in Mexico*, stating:

[...] The reconstruction of the past makes it ever clearer that Mexico not only now, but through the long sweep of four centuries has been a country whose total musical contributions places her in the forefront of Western Hemisphere republics. As more and more documents bearing on Mexico’s musical history come to light, her neighbours on either side can confidently anticipate ever securer reason to congratulate her on the achievement of the past, as well as the promise of the future.<sup>1</sup>

From the different eras in the history of Mexican art music, there is one stage that has enjoyed significant attention from global audiences and scholars: the first half of the twentieth century. During this period, Mexico faced a revolution (1910-1920) which delivered, among numerous outcomes, a blossoming of intellectual and creative vitality. During the post-revolutionary years, much of the art produced in Mexico was inspired by a strong nationalist spirit; Mexican artists realized the possibilities that indigenous cultures, pre-Hispanic heritage, and popular folk culture could offer to develop an original artistic aesthetic, different from anything that had been created before. The great enthusiasm shown by artists participating in this new nationalist art was exploited by the Mexican state, which sought to unify a country ravaged by ten years of armed conflict using all means possible. Art provided a powerful propagandistic tool to disseminate post-revolutionary ideals and therefore was well supported by the government. In this context, Mexican nationalist art thrived in myriad ways. On one side, the state provided the financial means for its creation and diffusion; on the other, Mexican artists identified themselves with the nationalist message of unity and cultural uniqueness and were eager

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Stevenson, *Music in Mexico: A Historical Survey* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1952), 268.

to create art imbued with nationalist values.<sup>2</sup> Soon nationalist art became the official art to represent Mexico nationally and internationally.

During this era, many Mexican composers preoccupied themselves with writing music portraying the identity of the Mexican culture. This was “simple, melodic, worthy, and noble music, of a unique Mexican flavour,” as Mexican composer Carlos Chávez put it—“music with the potential to reach the masses and to replace the commercial and vulgar music then in vogue.”<sup>3</sup> Mexican musical nationalism reached its pinnacle during the 1930s, and its dominance is felt up to this day. If the reader has ever heard a work by a Mexican “classical” composer, it will most likely be the work of one of the so-called, nationalist composers: personalities such as Manuel M. Ponce, Carlos Chávez, Silvestre Revueltas, Blas Galindo, or José Pablo Moncayo, to name a few. Indeed, even now the works of these characters seem to eclipse much of the music created by Mexican composers from other eras. With all the great success that Mexican art was experiencing under these circumstances, it seemed that musical nationalism was going to last forever.

The second half of the century, however, looked very different for Mexican art music. The nationalist trend that had enjoyed grand success and support during the 1930s and 1940s started to decay during the 1950s. During this decade and in those that followed, a series of events promoted the propagation of foreign artistic ideas and philosophies. Influential personalities, like Carlos Chávez, who had previously been the main representatives of the nationalist school of composition, claimed that it was necessary to leave the nationalist aesthetic behind while making efforts to put young Mexican

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<sup>2</sup> According to Carlos Chávez, in the immediate years after the Mexican revolution, the Mexican state supported nationalistic art but never requested or obliged Mexican artists to make art in a particular style or aesthetic vein. The artists themselves—starting with Mexican muralists such as Diego Rivera, José Orozco, and David Alfaro Siqueiros, and under the revolutionary spirit—decided to base their work on the post-revolutionary ideals and to create art “for the people.” In Carlos Chávez, *El Pensamiento musical* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1964), 79.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 80. “[...] Música sencilla y melódica, de un peculiar sabor mexicano, que tuviera cierta dignidad y nobleza de estilo; música que estuviera dentro del alcance de la gran masa del pueblo y que eventualmente pudiera remplazar la música comercial y vulgar entonces en boga [...].”

composers in contact with the latest international compositional trends. Furthermore, by the 1960s, important educational and cultural institutions such as the National University of Mexico and even the National Institute of Fine Arts (INBA)—which had adopted a pro-nationalist agenda at the onset of its creation (1947)—were attempting to support new, modernist, and experimental music, through the organization of music festivals and concert series in Mexico that premiered works from all over the world. The resulting cultural effervescence created a favourable environment for the proliferation of diverse and contrasting aesthetic styles, much of which had nothing in common with the music that had been previously created.

The profound stylistic changes occurring in the Mexican art music of the second half of the twentieth century raise the next questions: what were the main components shaping the musical context of Mexico during this era? How did such events take place? How were the lives of composers living in Mexico during that era impacted by this environment? What can the music composed in this period tell us about the interests of Mexican composers? This monograph aims to answer these questions by adopting a different observational perspective in each one of its three chapters. Chapter One examines several of the events shaping the musical scene in Mexico during the post-1945 era. This chapter examines how the main post-1945 international modernist trends permeated the musical context of Mexico during the second half of the century, scrutinizing the major personalities, projects, and events that played a role in the internationalization of the musical style of Mexican composers. Chapter Two provides a case study through which to better understand this era by examining the life and work of Mexican composer Federico Ibarra (b.1946) from the 1960s to the 1970s. The fact that Ibarra reached maturity during the post-nationalist period in Mexican music offers him an excellent lens through which to observe the effects of post-War modernism on Mexican composers and their music. This chapter examines the diverse factors influencing Ibarra's unique musical style and provides a bibliographical introduction to a composer who has not yet been studied in English language scholarship. Chapter Three offers an analytical examination of Ibarra's avant-garde and experimental music. I examine three of Ibarra's works from the 1970s, with the purpose of situating this composer's experimental period in the context of the international modernist scene of the second half of the twentieth

century. Although the chapter centres on the technical components of Ibarra's experimental music, it also offers a brief examination of the extra-musical elements influencing Ibarra's musical aesthetic.

To date, there is no published comprehensive study of the implications of the changing musical context of the fifties, sixties, and seventies on the musical thought of Mexican composers, or Ibarra's life and work. This study aims to provide a new understanding about the eclecticism achieved by Mexican composers during the post-nationalist era of Mexican music. I achieve this by first examining the components that shaped the musical and cultural context of Mexico in this specific historical era, then by exploring Federico Ibarra's formative years in this time-period, and finally by analyzing the music that Ibarra wrote during this stage. I hope that the different angles provided by each chapter—historical/contextual, causal/biographical, and musical/analytical—can at least begin to fill some of the significant gaps in our knowledge of recent Mexican art music.

## Definition of Terms

Given the historical time-frame of this study (1945 to 1970s), the terms “modernism,” “experimentalism,” and “avant-garde” appear throughout the different chapters. What these concepts have in common is that I use them to label philosophical and aesthetic stances in musical phenomena generally occurring during this period in Mexican and international music. Many times, the individual characteristics of these terms overlap with each other. Thus, for clarity's sake, a general definition of the terms follows.

The concept of “modernism” has been used to define a philosophical, artistic, and cultural phenomenon that originated at the end of the nineteenth century and developed well into the second half of the twentieth century. “Modernism” is an ideological discourse that aimed for progress through positivist thinking, science, research, and discovery. In art, very broadly speaking, modernism aimed to create a new-progressive art: art often at odds with pre-established artistic values. Modernist art (whether in the visual, literary, or performing arts) is far from being a homogeneous movement. On the contrary, it

encompasses a wide variety of stylistic stances. The concepts of “experimentalism” and “avant-garde” fall under the umbrella of “Modernism.”<sup>4</sup>

The term “avant-garde” has military origins and according to Jim Samson, “it signified an advance group clearing the way for the main body of troops. The connotations of frontiers, leadership, unknown territory and risk accompanied the term as it was appropriated for and by artists.” Samson adds that “the term is often used loosely to describe any artists who have made radical departures from tradition.”<sup>5</sup>

The concept of “experimentalism” applied to music is defined by Cecilia Sun as “a set of musical practices that gained momentum in the middle of the twentieth century, characterized by its radical opposition to and questioning of institutionalized modes of composition, performance, and aesthetics [...] Sharing a rejection of musical institutions and institutionalized musical values, experimental composers worked outside the European art music mainstream, finding an alternate path to the then sanctioned choice between neo-classical and serialism.”<sup>6</sup>

David Nicholls provides further insight into the relationship between the avant-garde and experimentalism by claiming that “there is no clear demarcation line between the composers and repertoires to which the terms [“avant-garde” and “experimental”] are

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<sup>4</sup> See more about “Modernism” in Leon Botstein, “Modernism,” *Grove Music Online*, accessed January 10, 2019, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000040625>.

<sup>5</sup> Jim Samson, “Avant-Garde,” in *Grove Music Online*, accessed February 2, 2019, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000001573>.

<sup>6</sup> Cecilia Sun, “Experimental Music,” in *Grove Music Online*, accessed February 2, 2019, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000001573>.

usually applied, or between the territory supposedly described by *combining* the two terms [...].”<sup>7</sup> Nicholls adds that:

at any given time [avant-garde music and experimental music] exists at the forefront of contemporary music thought and practice (and are therefore *de facto* likely to disturb rather than reassure, challenge rather than comfort) [...] What distinguish them is the extent to which they take the Euro-centric art music tradition as a reference point. Thus, very generally, avant-garde music can be viewed as occupying an extreme position within the tradition, while experimental music lies outside of it.<sup>8</sup>

Attempting to demarcate the differences between both concepts Sun adds that “experimental music displays musical values that stand in opposition to the music of the modernist avant-garde: chance procedures instead of total control, graphic scores and written instructions instead of conventional musical notation, radical simplicity instead of complexity, and unorthodox performance requirements instead of traditional notions of virtuosity.”<sup>9</sup>

A thorough analysis of these concepts is beyond the scope of this monograph. What is important is that whenever I use any of the terms mentioned above, I do it to discuss late twentieth century compositional trends in Mexico; trends that were heavily influenced by European and North American compositional tendencies and that resulted in the composition of works devoid of intentional nationalistic references.

## Literature Review

While there is a considerable amount of literature addressing the events shaping the musical scene in Western countries during the post-war years, the way these changes unfolded in Latin American countries such as Mexico has scarcely been explored. This

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<sup>7</sup> David Nicholls, “Avant-Garde and Experimental Music,” in D. Nicholls, *The Cambridge History of American Music*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 517-518.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Sun, “Experimental Music,” *Grove Music Online*.



fact is particularly evident in English language sources dealing with the general history of art music. For example, comprehensive works such as *Twentieth-Century Music* by Elliott Antokoletz (1992), *The Cambridge History of Twentieth-Century Music* (2004), and *The Oxford History of Western Music-College Edition* (2013) include scant information regarding Mexican music, only considering music from the nationalist period. Music created in Mexico after the 1950s is entirely overlooked in these works. The *Cambridge History* does include a chapter named “Expanding Horizons: The International Avant-Garde, 1962-1975” which includes information about several countries where avant-garde tendencies started to emerge after the 1950s, but nothing is mentioned about Mexico.

Sources that deal specifically with the history of Mexican music such as *Introduction to Twentieth-Century Mexican Music* (1974) by Dan Malmström, *Music in Latin America: An Introduction* (1979) by Gerard Béhague, and *The Course of Mexican Music* (2016) by Janet L. Sturman provide the names of the most recognized Mexican composers during the twentieth century, lists some of their works, and in some cases—as in Béhague and Malmström’s studies—offer analytical comments about the music of some of the composers they cover. These studies, however, offer little or no information about the cultural context that shaped these works, particularly when addressing the second half of the twentieth century. None of these works include information about Federico Ibarra.

Several Master’s theses, DMA theses/monographs, and PhDs dissertations about non-nationalist Mexican music from the second half of the twentieth century have been written. Examples are, “Stylistic Tendencies in Three Contemporary Mexican Composers: Manuel Enríquez, Mario Lavista and Alicia Urreta” by Carol Jeannine Wagar (1986), “Mario Lavista and his music with an analysis of *Ficciones*” by Beatriz Bonnet (1988), “Resonances of Sound, Text, and Image in the Music of Mario Lavista” by Ana Ruth Alonso Minutti (2008), and “Embracing Internationalism: An examination of Mario Lavista with an analysis of *Cinco Danzas Breves*” by Amy Thiemann (2017). These studies, however, focus primarily on technical/analytical aspects of the music of these composers while forgoing the opportunity to make a thorough examination of the role of the Mexican cultural context in the shaping of these composers’ styles.

Sources in Spanish offer more significant—although not comprehensive—insights about the events that shaped the musical scene in Mexico during the second half of the century. The National University of Mexico attempted to expand the available scholarship dealing with post-nationalist music in the book *La Música de México: Periodo Contemporáneo* (1984), edited by Julio Estrada. The last volume (No. 5) focuses on the development of Mexican music during the period 1958-1980. This source puts together articles (mainly analytical and descriptive) about different pieces by Mexican composers active during this period but avoids any discussion of the role played by the cultural context in composers' decisions to depart from the nationalist tendencies.

In *La Composición en México en el Siglo XX* (1994), Yolanda Moreno Rivas makes a valuable addition to the existing scholarship on Mexican art music of the twentieth century, including a general discussion of the musical context of the second half of the century. In this work, Moreno links socio-cultural changes occurring in Mexico with the shaping of its musical scene during the post-World War II years—factors such as the economic development that took place at this time, which resulted in an increased industrialization and globalization in the artistic context, leading to an inevitable influx of international ideas. Moreno Rivas lists composers, compositions, and tendencies adopted by Mexican composers between 1900 and the 1990s. In some cases, some composers' works receive a critical, albeit brief, analysis. Particularly relevant is an appendix that includes fourteen interviews with living composers (Federico Ibarra included) conducted by Moreno, offering direct access to the composers' opinions about different topics. Although Moreno's book certainly provides valuable general information about the historical context of the post-nationalist era of Mexican music, it does not provide a consideration of how and to what degree specific events shaped the styles of Mexican composers. Even though this is one of the few works that discusses Federico Ibarra, she offers more of an introduction to his music than an in-depth analysis.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Scholar Ricardo Miranda has referred to *La Composición en México en el Siglo XX* by Moreno Rivas as “up to now, the only source dealing with the general history of Mexican music in that period [the twentieth century].” “*La Composición en México en el Siglo XX* [...] es hasta ahora, la única historia general de la música Mexicana en ese periodo.” In Ricardo Miranda, “Historias y Silencios de lo Sonoro,” in *La Música en los Siglos XIX y*

Further insight into the cultural events shaping the musical context of Mexico during the second half of the twentieth century is gained in Aurelio Tello's chapter "La Creación Musical en México Durante el Siglo XX" included in the book, *La Música en México: Panorama del Siglo XX* (2010), coordinated by the same author. Tello provides an updated overview of twentieth-century Mexican composers and their music (but not as comprehensive as Moreno's). When addressing the second part of the century, Tello's study describes the increased presence of international composers in the Mexican musical scene (during and after World War II, a few international composers established their home in Mexico), and the increased contact of influential and powerful music people such as Carlos Chávez with avant-garde music. It also reveals the growing engagement of Mexican composers with the musical scenes of Europe and the United States as some of the reasons behind the abandonment of the nationalist style. Tello's study, however, is very general and like Moreno's work, does not delve into details about the different components playing a role in the abandonment of nationalist tendencies in Mexican art music. The information Tello includes about composer Federico Ibarra does not add anything new to what Moreno had written sixteen years earlier.<sup>11</sup>

The most recent comprehensive study of the history of Mexican music is *Historia de la Música en España e Hispanoamérica: La Música en Hispanoamérica* (2015) edited by Consuelo Carredano and Victoria Eli. In this work, the authors attempt to track down the various interconnecting threads influencing the development of art music in Latin American countries during the twentieth century. Like Moreno, Carredano and Eli point toward globalization as an important reason behind the internationalization of Mexican music. They also explore specific projects—festivals, conferences, educational institutions—taking place in the United States, Venezuela, Cuba, and Argentina during the 1950s and 1960s, which helped bring international trends to Latin American composers. This source, however, provides scant information about the projects that

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*XX*, coord. by Ricardo Miranda and Aurelio Tello (México DF: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 2013), 222-223.

<sup>11</sup> Aurelio Tello, "La Creación Musical en México Durante el Siglo XX," in *La Música En México: Panorama Del Siglo XX* coord. by Aurelio Tello, (México, D.F.: Fondo De Cultura Económica, 2010), 486-555

facilitated the dissemination of international modernist trends in Mexico. Furthermore, like most sources, the information it includes about composer Federico Ibarra is limited to a list of works and a consideration of a few of these pieces' technical details.

While the aforementioned secondary sources offer valuable background for this study, the examination of primary sources such as newspaper and magazines articles, journal articles, essays, written speeches, music scores, documentaries (about Federico Ibarra), audio recordings, and interviews, was paramount for the development of this study. Particularly useful among these sources were articles written by music critics Raúl Cosío Villegas, Juan Vicente Melo, José Antonio Alcaraz, and Juan Arturo Brennan; interviews conducted by María Ángeles Gonzáles and Leonora Saavedra, Roberto García Bonilla, Luis Jaime Cortéz, and myself; and texts by composers navigating the musical context of Mexico during the time-frame concerning this study (such as Federico Ibarra, Carlos Chávez, and Mario Lavista).<sup>12</sup> Diverse publications and articles included in the musicological magazines *Heterofonía* and *Pauta* were useful for reconstructing the historical, biographical, and analytical parts of this study. The most up to date information about Ibarra's life and work has come from two interviews that I conducted with him in May 2018 in Mexico City. An edited transcription of the interviews (in Spanish) is included in the appendix section of this monograph, with an accompanying English translation.

A considerable number of sources used in this study were obtained from the library of the National Center for Music Research in Mexico City (CENIDIM) as well as its online

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<sup>12</sup> Examples of those sources are: María Ángeles Gonzáles and Leonora Saavedra, *Música Mexicana Contemporánea* (1982); Roberto García Bonilla, *Visiones Sonoras: Entrevistas con Compositores, Solistas y Directores*, (2001); *La Música en México en la Segunda Mitad del Siglo XX: Hemerografía de Raúl Cosío Villegas*, ed. by Citlali Ruíz CD-Rom; Juan Vicente Melo, *Notas sin Música*, comp. by Alberto Paredes (1990); the documentaries about Ibarra's life and work *Federico Ibarra: Experiencias de la Música, Ideas, e Imaginación* (2009) and *Federico Ibarra: Premio Nacional del Arte 2001* (2011); articles of the cultural context of Mexico during the 1960s and 1970s in magazines and newspapers such as *Proceso*, *Siempre!*, and *La Jornada*; and the newspaper articles of Carlos Chávez compiled by Gloria Carmona (2000, 2014), to mention a few. For a complete list of sources, please refer to the bibliography.

repository. Rare CDs, article compilations, and unpublished music scores were also obtained from the audio recording collection of the Faculty of Music of the National University of Mexico (UNAM), and/or provided by their authors.

## Chapter 1. Post-1945 Modernism in Mexico

On March 22, 1953, Carlos Chávez (1899-1978), the most powerful and influential Mexican composer, asserted that the pursuit of artistic originality via a nationalist aesthetic “had been a mistake.” Chávez’s words prophesized the international influences that would soon take over Mexican music. According to Chávez, the problem with artistic nationalism was that it restricted the creative spirit of artists. Chávez stated that its inward-looking nature—focusing on the “localism” and “exoticism” of Mexican culture—limited the resources available for artistic expression and neglected the universalist nature of art; “Aiming to create original and unique art while restricting oneself is as impossible as it is suicidal.”<sup>13</sup>

At the time of Chávez’s statement, nationalist music had been both the official style supported by the Mexican state and the dominant trend in Mexican music for over two decades.<sup>14</sup> Musical nationalism had been deeply entwined with the post-revolutionary cultural agenda between the late 1920s and the early 1950s—an agenda that, among its goals, aimed to exalt the unique qualities of Mexican culture through its art. This was a time in which many artists in Mexico, Chávez included, identified with the nationalist spirit, while the Mexican state provided the sponsorship that allowed for the proliferation of this aesthetic. In this context, several incentives motivated the composition of

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<sup>13</sup> Carlos Chávez, “Arte Americano,” *El Universal*, March 22, 1953, in *Carlos Chávez, Escritos Periodísticos 3*, ed., Gloria Carmona (México, DF: El Colegio Nacional, 2014), 131-134.

<sup>14</sup> Even when the nationalist aesthetic was the dominant trend, other aesthetic styles co-existed with it during the post-revolutionary years. For example, Mexican composer Julián Carrillo (1875-1965), explored microtonal music as early as 1895 and continued to do so for the rest of his career. Carrillo never adhered to the nationalist style. He considered himself to be as nationalist as composers such as Chávez or Revueltas. In Gerald R. Benjamin, “Carrillo (-Trujillo), Julián,” *Grove Music Online*, 2001, accessed Nov. 7, 2018, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000005018>; See more about post-revolutionary aesthetic trends outside of musical nationalism in, Alejandro L. Madrid, *Sound of the Modern Nation. Music, Culture, and Ideas in Post-Revolutionary Mexico* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008).

nationalist music. Composition competitions would reward works “that best represented the unique qualities of Mexican culture”<sup>15</sup> and nationalist music would be chosen to represent Mexico in international arenas.<sup>16</sup>

By the 1950s, however, revolutionary ideals were waning among the artistic community in Mexico, while an increasingly cosmopolitan environment facilitated contact with foreign cultures. The post-World War II era brought numerous changes to the socio-cultural context in Mexico, which deeply influenced Mexican artists’ interests. Instead of aiming for a continuous exaltation of “the Mexican,” there was a search driven by curiosity to engage with the diverse international ideas of this time. The changing cultural context influenced particularly the youngest generations of composers, leading to a diversification of styles in concert music that had no precedent in Mexico.

This chapter provides an overview of the diverse components and events leading to the embrace of internationalist modernist musical languages in post-World War II Mexico. Through the careful examination of primary sources that have not been previously addressed on academic scholarship, this chapter aims to arrive at a better understanding of the musical and cultural context of Mexico during the period 1945-1970s. I begin with an overview of the cultural context in Mexico during the immediate post-war years (the late 1940s to early 1950s), revealing an atmosphere in which the national cultural agenda, which sought artistic nationalism, conflicted with the individual interests of the Mexican artists, who were increasingly captivated by foreign ideas. Next, I summarize official musical policy during the 1960s and 1970s, drawing on relevant secondary literature that

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<sup>15</sup> Consuelo Carredano and Victoria Eli, eds., *Historia de la Música en España e Hispanoamérica: La Música en Hispanoamérica en el Siglo XX* (Madrid: FCE, 2015), 244.

<sup>16</sup> A clear example of the favouring of nationalist music over other aesthetics is evident in the programming of the concerts organized by Carlos Chávez as part of the exhibition *Twentieth Centuries of Mexican Art*, held at the Museum of Modern Art of New York in May 1940. In these concerts, all the music presented in the program has pre-Hispanic, popular, or folkloric influences. In <https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/2985>; [https://www.moma.org/documents/moma\\_catalogue\\_2985\\_300061954.pdf](https://www.moma.org/documents/moma_catalogue_2985_300061954.pdf); See more in Carredano and Eli, *Historia de la Música en España e Hispanoamérica: La Música en Hispanoamérica en el Siglo XX*, 91-98.

deals with this period. Using primary sources I observe the attempts that different personalities made to define a cultural policy during this era. Then, I track the gradual arrival of the most prominent modernist musical ideas in Mexico, specifically serialism, experimentalism, and the use of technology in the creation of music. Aiming for a deeper understanding of the emergence of such ideas in Mexico that has been provided thus far in scholarship on Mexican music, the chapter further explores the different efforts that enabled the Mexican music scene to achieve a truly cosmopolitan reputation. Among the people responsible for such efforts, two personalities stand out as paramount in the introduction and embrace of modernist musical languages in Mexico: Carlos Chávez and Manuel Enríquez (1926-1994). Both would have a major impact on the careers of younger composers. Consequently, the chapter examines the endeavours that these two individuals undertook to further the diversity of musical styles in Mexico.

## 1.1 Post-War Years: National Cultural Context

Although the war brought economic devastation to Europe, it actually advanced economic development in Mexico. Mexico entered the war in May 1942, after a German submarine sunk two Mexican oil tankers transporting fuel to the United States.<sup>17</sup> In response, Mexico joined the Allies, sending military troops to fight alongside the United States in the South Pacific.<sup>18</sup> Mexico's main support to the war effort was not military, however. When the war caused the fall of the European market, Mexico significantly

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<sup>17</sup> Josefina Zoraida Vásquez and Lorenzo Meyer, *The United States and Mexico*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1985), 155-162.

<sup>18</sup> Of the military contribution made by Mexico to the war effort, Squadron 201, aka Águilas Aztecas (Aztec Eagles), was the most famous military unit sent to fight overseas. Squadron 201 consisted of 33 pilots and 270 support personnel units. Squadron 201 provided "close air support to American ground units as well as long-range bombing strikes deep into Japanese held territory." Furthermore, Squadron 201 "provided not only close in ground support to the advancing U.S. 25th 'Tropic Lightning' Division and Philippine Army units on Luzon [Philippines], but also strenuous and dangerous seven-hour long-range fighter strikes on strategic Japanese targets on the island of Taiwan." In Bryan D. Carnes, "Remembering the Aztec Eagles," Nationalmuseum.af.mil, accessed February 23, 2019, <https://www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/Upcoming/Press-Room/News/Article-Display/Article/198764/remembering-the-aztec-eagles/>.



contributed to the United States' war economy through trade agreements in the form of massive export of raw materials and labour.<sup>19</sup> Because of this trade between Mexico and the United States, the Mexican economy boomed during the war years, and Mexico entered a stage of modernization defined by industrial development and urbanization.

Immediately after the war, the government established the National Institute of Fine Arts (INBA). The INBA was founded on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1947 under the presidential decree of Miguel Alemán Valdés (in power from 1946-1952) with Carlos Chávez as its first director. The INBA was created to oversee artistic education, creation, promotion, and distribution across the entire country. The creation of a centralized agency for arts administration translated into tangible benefits for the arts scene in Mexico. Some relevant musical projects, for example, were the creation of the National Symphony of Mexico, the foundation of the first music publishing house, the commissioning of many Mexican musical works, and the organization of concerts in several cities across the country. The concentration of power in a single institution also meant that art support followed an official cultural agenda, which, at the onset of INBA's founding, centered on reemphasizing national identity.<sup>20</sup>

The emphasis on Mexican identity through the arts was not a new phenomenon. As has been explained in the Introduction, artistic nationalism in Mexico can be traced back to the 1920s as an outcome of the Mexican Revolution. Yet, while the initial proliferation of nationalism was the product of coinciding political and artistic ideals, by the 1950s a divergence of interests between the official cultural agenda and the individual artist's desires was evident. This discrepancy was accentuated when other cultural centers of the Western world moved away from the nationalist aesthetic.

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<sup>19</sup> Zoraida Vásquez and Meyer, *The United States and Mexico*, 155-162.

<sup>20</sup> Armando Gómez Rivas, "Instituciones Musicales. La Conformación de una Cultura Musical en el México del Siglo XX," in *La Música en los Siglos XIX y XX*, coordinated by Ricardo Miranda and Aurelio Tello, (México DF: Consejo Nacional Para la Cultura y las Artes, 2013), 382-384; Yolanda Moreno Rivas, "Las políticas Culturales en la Música", in *Política Cultural del Estado Mexicano*, ed., Moisés Ladrón de Guevara (México DF: CEE: GEFE, 1983), 187-189.

One early example of this cleavage between official interests and individual artistic aspirations was revealed during the early 1950s by a young painter named José Luis Cuevas (1934-2017) in a manifesto titled *La Cortina del Nopal* (The Cactus Curtain).<sup>21</sup> Cuevas' manifesto delivers its message through a fictional narrative in which a talented and curious young painter named Juan is forced to make numerous aesthetic concessions, in order to succeed in the Mexican cultural scene of the 1950s. Juan is faced with the dilemma of either following his artistic preferences—heavily influenced by contemporary and abstractionist works appearing in international art magazines of the mid-1950s—or succumbing to the ubiquitous nationalist trend represented in paintings by the famous muralists, such as Diego Rivera. Juan ultimately chooses the latter option, knowing that his financial stability is at stake. Juan's story, therefore, suggests the existence of a cultural barrier that permits only one path to success in the Mexican art scene of that moment—cultural nationalism.<sup>22</sup> Cuevas' manifesto also insinuates that the cultural context of Mexico during the fifties was a microcosm of the international cultural rivalry between East and West during the Cold War era. On one side, in Mexico, there were individual (often young) artists genuinely interested in new and novel art forms and languages—as were artists in many Western countries. On the other, as in the Soviet bloc, there were government officials whose cultural interest was to conserve national identity, refusing to support artists that did not follow their artistic agenda.

In his article “Sexenio Musical 1946-1952,” Chávez recounts the musical activities organized and financed by the INBA during his tenure. According to this document, a significant number of ballets, operas, and instrumental works were commissioned through the INBA between 1946-1952.<sup>23</sup> Yolanda Moreno Rivas and Aurelio Tello have confirmed that several of the works that Chávez's lists on “Sexenio Musical 1946-

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<sup>21</sup> Different sources mention different dates for the original publication of *La Cortina del Nopal* (1951, 1956, 1957).

<sup>22</sup> José Luis Cuevas, “La Cortina del Nopal,” *Ruptura* (Mexico City: Museo Carrillo Hill, 1988), 84-91.

<sup>23</sup> Carlos Chávez, “Sexenio musical 1946-1952,” *México en el arte*, November 30, 1952, in *Carlos Chávez, Escritos Periodísticos 3*, ed., Gloria Carmona (México, DF: El Colegio Nacional, 2014), 93-96.

1952,”—works such as *Balada del pájaro y las doncellas* (1947) and *La luna y el venado* (1949) by Carlos Jiménez Mabarak, *Día de difuntos* (1947) by Luis Sandi, *El Zanate* (1947) and *La Manda* (1952) by Blas Galindo, and *El Chueco* (1951) by Miguel Bernal Jiménez, to name a few—have indeed nationalist characteristics, which confirms that, just as in the visual arts, the nationalist aesthetic was also favoured in music of this period by the official cultural agenda.<sup>24</sup>

Besides providing insight about the type of projects that the INBA supported in the post-war years, “Sexenio Musical 1946-1952” implicitly illustrates the differences between the official cultural agenda and the individual artists’ interests in the early 1950s. By juxtaposing Chávez’s stance when he was the INBA’s director (supporting the nationalistic agenda, whether willingly or unwillingly) with the position he adopted immediately after he stepped out of that position (revealed in “Arte Americano,” the article quoted at the start of this chapter and published only a few months after he left the INBA), one can infer that the tensions between the official cultural stance and the individual artists’ interests was felt by even the most powerful musician in Mexico.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Yolanda Moreno Rivas, *La Composición en México en el Siglo XX*, (México, DF: Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, 1994), 46-47; Aurelio Tello, “La Creación Musical en México,” in *La Música en México: Panorama del Siglo XX*, coord. by Aurelio Tello (México: CFE, CONACULTA, 2010), 505-506.

<sup>25</sup> Chávez’s article “Xenofobia, no” suggested that he attempted to expand the boundaries of the concept of nationalist music at least as early as 1944. In this document, Chávez stated: “[...] We must strive, radically, for Mexico to develop a Mexican musical culture, made by Mexicans for Mexicans. However, that does not mean that Mexico will deny its position as heir to the Western musical culture that corresponds to it as its inescapable heritage. Nor does it mean that it [Mexico] is going to abstain itself from all the universal manifestations of great art, nor from the teachings that could come from outside: Mexico must actively seek them, take advantage of them and assimilate them.” “[...] Debemos pugnar, radicalmente, porque México desarrolle una cultura musical mexicana, fundamentalmente de los Mexicanos y para los mexicanos. Pero eso no quiere decir que México vaya a negar su posición heredera de la cultura musical occidental que le corresponde como patrimonio ineludible y justo. Ni quiere decir que vaya a privarse de todas las manifestaciones universales de gran arte, ni de las enseñanzas que pudieran venirle del exterior: debe buscarlas activamente, aprovecharlas y asimilarlas.” In Carlos Chávez, “Xenofobia, no,” *El Universal*, September 22, 1944, in *Carlos Chávez, Escritos Periodísticos 2*, ed., Gloria Carmona (México, DF: El Colegio Nacional, 2000), 129.

Even though Chávez might have been the most powerful and influential composer in Mexico departing from the official aesthetic agenda during the early 1950s, he was not the only one. As the 1950s progressed, an increasing number of particularly younger composers detached from the nationalist aesthetic, too, even when it initially meant having to endure a lack of state support.

## 1.2 Cultural Policy: 1960s and 1970s

When examining the cultural policy of Mexico during the 1960s and 1970s, one must necessarily consider that these decades were full of social upheaval and political turmoil. A growing quantity of scholarship is emerging about the “dirty war”—an internal conflict in which the Mexican administrations from the 1960s and 1970s actively eliminated any political opposition to the regime.<sup>26</sup> Perhaps the most infamous consequence of the dirty war was the Tlatelolco massacre, where the Mexican army and police brutally assassinated numerous students on October 2, 1968.<sup>27</sup>

The cultural agenda of this period and its consequences for the musical environment of Mexico has been scarcely analyzed. Yolanda Moreno Rivas provides the most relevant—albeit brief—scholarly work considering cultural policy in musical terms during this era. According to Moreno Rivas, the administrations following President Alemán’s tenure (1946-1952) were “stagnant” and continued with the policies established at the onset of the INBA’s founding.<sup>28</sup> It was in this context that alternative institutions emerged to

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<sup>26</sup> For more information about the dirty war see, Juan Forero, “Details of Mexico’s Dirty Wars from 1960s to 1980s released,” *Washington Post*, November 22, 2006, accessed February 28, 2019, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/11/21/AR2006112101740.html?noredirect=on>.

<sup>27</sup> See more in Stephen Woodman, “Mexico students v the state: Anniversary of 1968 massacre reopens recent wounds,” *BBC News*, October 1, 2018, accessed on February 28, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-45705009>; Jesse Franzblau, “LITEMPO: The CIA’s eyes on Tlatelolco,” *The National Security Archive*, published October 18, 2006, accessed on February 28, 2019, <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB204/index.htm>.

<sup>28</sup> Moreno Rivas, “Las Políticas Culturales en la Música,” 189. In Moreno’s words: “The administrations following Aleman’s tenure [1946-1952] had no interest in expanding or

support initiatives outside of the official agenda among which the efforts made by the National University of Mexico were noteworthy.

Moreno Rivas goes on to mention that in the 1960s, the musical policy of the state was undefined. Yet, at least three main general ideas were shaping the musical agenda: to use music as an instrument of national connection; to use music as a tool to foster international politics; and to use music for the promotion of international tourism. According to Moreno Rivas, projects or activities that aligned with any of these ideals were given priority during this decade by the government.<sup>29</sup> How exactly these general ideas translated in terms of music support is unexplained by Moreno. Yet, given the fact that during the 1960s there was a variety of projects funded or organized by the government through the INBA for the promotion of non-nationalist music—projects such as music festivals, concert series, and music associations—one can infer that there was an increment of interest from the government to open up the boundaries of its cultural plan.

It was not until 1973 that, in an attempt to modernize the cultural policy of Mexico, the administration of President Luis Echeverría (1970-1976) asked Carlos Chávez to create a national plan for cultural development. Moreno Rivas stated that “Chávez’s project was partial, inadequate, totalitarian, and centralist.” Chávez planned a reunification of musical aesthetics with the aim to create a “unified and illustrious authority” that did not allow “a plurality of criteria.” Chávez’s project, “in appearance universal and progressive, concealed an authoritarianism that demanded absolute control, the disappearance of orchestras, and the dismissal of musicians and alternative organizations that were not aligned with the official agenda,” according to Moreno.<sup>30</sup> While Moreno does not

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renewing the established musical policies, and generally were content to follow without major changes the directives initiated by Carlos Chávez.” “Las administraciones posteriores al periodo Alemanista [1946-1952] no tuvieron interés en ampliar o renovar las políticas musicales establecidas, y por lo general se contentaron en seguir sin grandes cambios las directivas iniciadas por Carlos Chávez.”

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, 190.

<sup>30</sup> Moreno Rivas, “Las Políticas Culturales en la Música,” 190-192. “Este criterio en apariencia universal y progresista, ocultaba un autoritarismo que exigía un control absoluto, a más de la desaparición de orquestas, el despido de músicos y el sometimiento de los músicos y las organizaciones no estatales a los fines determinados por el Estado.

mention Chávez's proposals in terms of an aesthetic definition, or what the "official agenda" was aiming for at that moment, she claims that Chávez's vision was impossible to implement in the 1970s, an era when the population and cultural heterogeneity of Mexico had exponentially grown (in comparison with the 1950s).<sup>31</sup>

In the middle months of 1973, the musicological magazine *Heterofonía* published a series of articles commenting on Chávez's plans and documenting its consequences. These documents confirm that the plan proposed by Chávez "lacked foresight and diplomacy" and was eclipsed by Chávez's personal interests.<sup>32</sup> In the wake of these events, different musical groups (orchestra musicians, conductors, vocalists, and administrative personnel of the leading musical institutions in Mexico) organized a National Congress of Music on August 20-23, 1973.<sup>33</sup> Forty conferences took place during the four days, in which several points concerning the musical scene of Mexico were discussed.<sup>34</sup> One of the relevant

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Se trataba, según consejo de Chávez, de evitar 'la pluralidad de criterios' para entronizar una 'autoridad ilustrada y unitaria.'"

<sup>31</sup> Ibid; While Chávez made numerous efforts to put younger Mexican composers into contact with modernist music of the second half of the century, it has been argued that he often adapted his artistic interests to fit the different official agendas of the administrations in turn, even if this contradicted his previous standpoints. Although the relationship of Chávez's artistic pursuits and his political stances are beyond the scope of this monograph, the reader can find more about this topic in Luis Velasco Pufleau, "Nationalism, Authoritarianism and Cultural Construction: Carlos Chávez and Mexican Music (1921-1952)," translated by Silvio J. Dos Santos in *Music and Politics*, vol. 6, issue 2 (Summer 2012), accessed February 25, 2019, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/mp/9460447.0006.203?view=text;rgn=main#N1>.

<sup>32</sup> "El Asunto 'Carlos Chávez,'" *Heterofonía*, no. 29 (March-April 1973): 3-4.

<sup>33</sup> Previous National Congresses of Music took place in Mexico City in 1956 and 1963. While these events hosted various conferences encouraging a "radical change in the pedagogic structure of the musical institutions in Mexico," they had no tangible benefits in the musical scene of Mexico. See more in Domingo Lobato, "Aspectos de la Vida Musical en México," *Heterofonía*, no. 19 (July-August 1971): 6-9; "Opiniones Diversas Acerca del Congreso de Música en México," *Heterofonía*, no. 31 (July-August 1973): 13-14.

<sup>34</sup> Some of the issues discussed in the different conferences at the 1973 National Congress of Music were: the development of a national plan for musical education to children, the creation of a centre for music research, the decentralization of resources for the development of regional music institutions, an increase of state support for instrumentalist as well as chamber and symphonic groups, the creation of a festival

outcomes of this congress was the creation of a National Council of Music—an organization comprised of several personalities representing different musical institutions in Mexico with the purpose of defining a clear musical policy attending to the interests of the various musical groups in the country.<sup>35</sup>

The functioning of the National Council of Music was not free of problems. Articles of the period suggest that different difficulties obstructed its ability to formulate a defined policy: lack of state support, disorganization, and—paradoxically—sharp divisions caused by the pursuit of personal interests, were the principal causes of discord among the different musical figures, groups, and institutions.<sup>36</sup>

In 1983, analyzing the musical policies of Mexico, Yolanda Moreno stated that “the principal result of the musical policy of the current regime has been a heterogeneous but disjointed musical offer, insufficient musical dissemination, and an absence of concrete goals regarding musical education and promotion.”<sup>37</sup> Moreno continues by stating that

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presenting Mexican music exclusively, the increment of funding for the government’s radio stations, and the creation of a policy regulating the broadcast of music in public spaces. *Heterofonía* does not mention any regulation regarding the aesthetics of Mexican music. In “Conclusiones Importantes del Congreso,” *Heterofonía*, no. 32 (September-October 1973): 39-40.

<sup>35</sup> See “El Congreso Nacional Extraordinario de Música,” *Heterofonía*, no. 32 (September-October 1973): 2-3; and, “Conclusiones Importantes del Congreso,” *Heterofonía*, no. 32 (September-October 1973): 39-40; The National Council of Music members were Clemente Zanabria from the National Symphony of Mexico (President of the council), Raúl Ladrón de Guevara from the University of Veracruz (Vice-President), Manuel Enríquez from the National Conservatory (Secretary), Raúl Cosío and Eduardo Laorca (Counselors for musical distribution), Alicia Urreta and Fausto de Andrés Aguirre (Counselors for professional activities), Domingo Lobato and Rogelio Barba (Counselors for musical education), and Carmen Sordo (Coordinator).

<sup>36</sup> See “Consejo Nacional de la Música,” *Heterofonía*, no. 32 (January-February 1974): 30; “De los Editores,” *Heterofonía*, no. 40 (January-February 1975): 3-5; “A última hora,” *Heterofonía*, no. 42 (May-June 1975): 37; “Carlos Chávez,” *Heterofonía*, no. 43 (July-August 1975): 38-39.

<sup>37</sup> Moreno Rivas, “Las Políticas Culturales en la Música,” 192. “Es obvio que la nota predominante de las políticas musicales de éste régimen [...] ha sido el abigarramiento de la oferta musical, la insuficiente distribución de ella y la falta de directivas y finalidades claras en el aspecto educativo y promocional.”

between 1976-1982, the music department of the National University of Mexico stood out among the Mexican cultural institutions—once more—for its continued commitment to support young performers and composers.<sup>38</sup>

Given the fact that Mexico was passing through a period of considerable social and political turbulence during the 1960s and 1970s, it is plausible that a clear definition of an official cultural policy—and its adaptation into musical terms—was not a priority for the Mexican state. Furthermore, while there was a clear divergence between cultural policy and individual artists' interests during the 1950s, evidence suggests that by the 1960s and 1970s the gap was at least partially closing as the government increasingly supported more projects to further the flourishing of non-nationalist music.

It was amid these profound social, political, and cultural changes that the most relevant international musical trends of the post-war permeated Mexico, influencing Mexican composers to different degrees.

## 1.3 Post-1945 Trends in Mexico

### 1.3.1 *Serialism*

The prestige that serialism gained in Europe and the United States during the decade after the end of World War II soon extended to other parts of the world.<sup>39</sup> Serialism reached

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 194-195.

<sup>39</sup> The resurgence of serialism was one of the most significant musical events after the Second World War. Serialism became such an influential trend that many renowned composers around the world engaged with this compositional technique. Scholars have attributed different reasons behind the resurgence of serialism in North America and Western Europe after the War. Some claim that Serialism represented “a symbol of resistance [...] and creative freedom” against the autocratic regimes. Others claim that Serialism represented the most advanced stage in the history of musical development and, consequently, it was the only style relevant for artistic progress. Yet, others have stated that Serialism was associated with the scientific rigor, progressive development, and intellectualism of academia in the United States during the post-War years. See more about the different ideologies behind the proliferation and the growing of prestige of Serialism in Richard Taruskin and Christopher H. Gibbs, “Starting from Scratch: Music in the Aftermath of World War II,” in *The Oxford History of Western Music-College*



Mexico through the Spanish émigré Rodolfo Halffter (1900-1987). Halffter was born in Madrid in 1900 and arrived in Mexico in 1939 as a Republican exile after the conclusion of the Spanish Civil War, becoming a Mexican citizen months after his arrival. Halffter had little formal music education and had never attended a conservatory. While Halffter acquired basic knowledge of solfège and harmony through private lessons with Francisco Esbrí—director of a military band in Madrid—he was mainly self-taught. It was through an in-depth study of Schoenberg’s *Harmonielehre* (*Theory of Harmony*) that Halffter acquired a deeper understanding of harmony.<sup>40</sup>

Soon after his arrival in Mexico, Halffter became an influential part of the Mexican musical scene, working as a teacher, composer, administrator, and cultural advocate. When Halffter arrived in Mexico, he was composing music in a neoclassical style, using a polytonal language. The first work he composed in his adoptive nation, the *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra* (1939-1940), reflects this stage in Halffter’s evolution. The composer describes the concerto as “developed in my personal nationalism, super Spanish in style but without the popular colours. Only the traditional essence is present. I repeat, traditional, not popular.”<sup>41</sup>

While Halffter arrived in Mexico writing tonal music, by the 1950s he had shifted his attention to serialism. In a letter to his nephew, the Spanish composer Cristóbal Halffter

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*edition*, (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1014-1053; Anne C. Shreffler, “Ideologies of Serialism: Stravinsky’s Threni and the Congress for Cultural Freedom,” in *Music and the Aesthetics of Modernity: Essays*, ed. Karol Berger and Anthony Newcomb (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005); René Leibowitz, *Schoenberg and His School. The Contemporary Stage of the Language of Music*, trans. by Dika Newling, e-book ed., (New York: Philosophical library, 2015); Pierre Boulez, “Schoenberg is death” in *Notes of an Apprenticeship*, trans. by Herbert Weinstock (New York, 1968).

<sup>40</sup> María Ángeles Gonzáles and Leonora Saavedra, *Música Mexicana Contemporánea* (México, DF: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1982), 13; Xochiquetzal Ruíz Ortiz, ed., *Rodolfo Halffter: Antología, Introducción y Catálogo*, (México: CONACULTA, INBA, CENIDIM, 1990), 23-38.

<sup>41</sup> Ruíz Ortiz, ed., *Rodolfo Halffter: Antología, Introducción y Catálogo*, 32. “[En] el concierto [...] he desarrollado mi estilo nacionalista personal, un españolísimo que ya ha perdido su adiposidad pintoresca y ha quedado reducido a sus rasgos tradicional esenciales. Tradicionales, repito, y no populares.”

(b.1930), Halffter mentions that “folkloric nationalism represents a dead end, and consequently, we must look to new ways to be nationalist. Twelve-tone music may be one of those ways. The proof is that Dallapiccola’s serial music sounds Italian while Boulez’s sounds French. What about Stravinsky? *Agon* sounds so close to Webern’s art while sounding as Russian as *The Rite*.”<sup>42</sup> Halffter’s letter suggests that the fact that recognized composers of the stature of Stravinsky were employing serialism played at least a partial role in his embrace of the technique. It also suggests that Halffter believed that nationalism and serialism were not mutually exclusive.

Halffter claimed to have composed the first serial pieces written in Mexico: *Tres hojas de álbum*, for piano and *Tres piezas* for string orchestra (1953-1954).<sup>43</sup> Yolanda Moreno has claimed that it was through Halffter’s analysis classes at the National Conservatory of Music that the younger generations of composers in Mexico had their first academic contact with the music of the Second Viennese School during the 1950s.<sup>44</sup>

Despite Halffter’s efforts to introduce serialism in Mexico, this technique was not popular among Mexican composers. On March 12, 1955, Carlos Chávez published an article titled “El Dodecafonismo en México,” which suggested that he was ambivalent towards the style. On the one hand, Chávez asserted that the study of serialism was important from an evolutionary perspective. Like other influential international personalities such as René Leibowitz (1913-1972) and Pierre Boulez (1925-2016), Chávez’s argued that “it is evident that twelve-tone music is the next step in the evolution of music[...],” therefore

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid, 34-35. A transcription of a section of the letter appears undated in the cited source, but its content implies that it must have been written after 1957. (Halffter mentions Stravinsky’s *Agon* which was premiered in 1957). “[...] el nacionalismo folklorico (el acarreo fácil) representa hoy un callejón sin salida y que, por tanto, hay que buscar el ‘ser’ nacional por caminos nuevos. [...] La dodecafonía puede ser uno de esos caminos. Prueba de ello es que la música dodecafónica de Dallapiccola suena a italiana y la de Boulez a francesa. ¿Qué decir de Stravinsky? *Agón*, tan próxima al arte de Webern, es al mismo tiempo tan Ruso como la consagración.”

<sup>43</sup> González and Saavedra, *Música Mexicana Contemporánea*, 23.

<sup>44</sup> Moreno Rivas, *La Composición en México en el Siglo XX*, 60-61.

making its study relevant.<sup>45</sup> On the other hand, Chávez does not mention anything about the ideological connotations—political or philosophical—attributed to serialism by composers in the United States or Europe. Furthermore, Chávez warns about the dangers of dogmatically following any compositional technique: “[...] The dictatorship of serial structures and atonal music limits like any other dictatorship; good art is not created through limited mediums, but open paths. [...] Serial tyrannies, dogmatically applied, horizontally or vertically, that is, in melody or harmony, will not produce music of quality.”<sup>46</sup> Whether or not Chávez’s warning about dogmatism was related to the growing popularity of the technique in the cultural capitals of the world, this article gives insight into Chávez’s uneasiness with the abandonment of tonality, implicitly rejecting one of serialism’s fundamental characteristics. In this regard, Chávez states:

Why should we deprive ourselves of it [tonality]? Tonality, in any form, is an immense source of expression [...] Even when the dodecaphonic system may try to annihilate it [tonality], it is impossible to get rid of the cadential functions completely. Furthermore, our tendency towards tonality cannot disappear, because just as there is a physical relationship in the resonance of sound matter establishing tonality, there is also in us [humans] an innate physiological affinity towards tonality.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Carlos Chávez, “El dodecafonismo en México,” *El Universal*, March 12, 1955, in *Carlos Chávez, Escritos Periodísticos 3*, ed., Gloria Carmona (México, DF: El Colegio Nacional, 2014), 161. “Es evidente que la música de doce sonidos es el paso siguiente en cuanto a que, en el curso de la historia, la música ha ido usando cada vez más sonidos.”

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 162-64. “La dictadura de las estructuras seriales y de la atonalidad limita como todas las dictaduras; y al buen arte no se llega por medios limitados, sino por caminos abiertos. [...] Las tiranías seriales, estrictamente aplicadas horizontal y verticalmente, es decir, melódica y armónicamente, no puede preverse que vayan a dar lugar a manifestaciones musicales de mucha altura.”

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* “¿Por qué hemos de privarnos de ella para siempre? La tonalidad, en cualquier forma que se presente es una inmensa fuente de expresión [...]. La tonalidad actúa por sí sola, a pesar de que pretendan aniquilarla los sistemas dodecafónicos. Éstos pueden sofocarla a medias. Será imposible llegar a liquidar totalmente las funciones cadenciales. Además, nuestra propia tendencia personal a la tonalidad no puede desaparecer, porque relativamente al fenómeno físico de la resonancia de la materia sonora que establece la tonalidad, hay en nosotros una función fisiológica congénita e igualmente natural, afín a la tonalidad.”

Other Mexican composers such as Manuel Enríquez (1926-1994), Joaquín Gutiérrez Heras (1927-2012), Francisco Núñez (b. 1945), Daniel Catán (1949-2011), and Federico Ibarra (b. 1946), have also suggested certain antipathy towards the serialist style. Manuel Enríquez, for example, stated that his use of the technique was “very personal” because he always “enjoyed breaking the system’s” rules. Enríquez also claimed that he was never drawn to the system for developing his personal language and only used it “to pay his dues” to his teacher, Stefan Wolpe.<sup>48</sup> Gutiérrez Heras, meanwhile, suggested that serialism did not allow composers to work freely stating that “I have the impression that when one works with the serial system, one must submit their desires to the system itself [...] I simply did not get used to it [...].<sup>49</sup> Francisco Núñez declared that even though he was influenced by serialism, he never used the principles of the technique in a prescribed canonical form and that he “never believed” in the system.<sup>50</sup> Daniel Catán assured that although his musical language emerged from the study and practice of the serial technique, he did not use it in an orthodox manner and that he “would never call” his style “serial.”<sup>51</sup> Federico Ibarra stated that even though serialism was known in Mexico, he did not believe it was ever popular among the majority of Mexican composers. Ibarra attributed the rejection of serialism in Mexico to its high level of intellectuality at the expense of emotive content.<sup>52</sup>

Yolanda Moreno Rivas and Aurelio Tello have diverging accounts of serialism’s popularity in Mexico. Moreno Rivas agrees with Ibarra in claiming that “the highly intellectual conception, ascetic nature, and orthodox manner of the use of musical

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<sup>48</sup> Carol Jeannine Wagar, “Stylistic Tendencies in Three Contemporary Mexican Composers: Manuel Enríquez, Mario Lavista and Alicia Urreta,” (DMA diss., Stanford University, 1986), 122; See also Moreno Rivas, *La Composición en México en el Siglo XX*, 114-115.

<sup>49</sup> González and Saavedra, *Música Mexicana Contemporánea*, 62-63. “[...] Me da la sensación que no es uno el que está trabajando sino que está uno en manos de otra cosa [...] Lo que pasa es que no me acomodé con él [con el dodecafonismo].”

<sup>50</sup> Moreno Rivas, *La Composición en México en el Siglo XX*, 133-134.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, 140.

<sup>52</sup> Federico Ibarra, interview with the author.

material”<sup>53</sup> alienated many composers from serialism. Aurelio Tello, conversely, has argued that Chávez’s endorsement of dodecaphony—an endorsement suggested by Chávez’s conference about dodecaphony that took place at the Colegio Nacional in November, 1955—encouraged “all of the younger composers to embrace the new technique.”<sup>54</sup> Tello goes on to mention composers such as Luis Herrera de la Fuente (1916-2014), Jorge González Ávila (1925-1995), Armando Lavalle (1924-1994), Leonardo Velázquez (1935-2004), Gloria Tapia (1927-2008), Francisco Savín (1929-2018), Mario Kuri Aldana (1931-2013), Carlos Jiménez Mabarak (1916-1994), and Salvador Contreras (1910-1982) as composers who wrote serial music during the period 1956-1975.<sup>55</sup> Tello states, however, that some of these composers used the serial system “with a complete creative liberty, avoiding the rules prescribed by some of Schoenberg’s music as well as René Leibowitz texts [...] with immense doses of imagination, avoiding the restrictions of strict serialism [...] and ] merging the serial technique with nationalist reminiscences, such as Malipiero does [...],”<sup>56</sup> suggesting that even in the cases when serialism was embraced, it was not utilized in a strict manner.

One can deduce from these rather contradictory accounts that the high prestige of serialism was powerful enough to draw some Mexican composers’ attention to the system—albeit, to a certain degree. Nonetheless, the style never reached the level of

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<sup>53</sup> Moreno Rivas, *La Composición en México en el Siglo XX*, 67. “La concepción altamente intelectual, ascética, y la exigencia de una predeterminación del material, alejó a muchos compositores de dicha disciplina [del serialismo].”

<sup>54</sup> Aurelio Tello, *La Música en México: Panorama del Siglo XX*, 514. “Prácticamente todos los compositores nuevos de México abrazaron dicha técnica [el dodecafonismo].”

<sup>55</sup> Ibid; For example, *Adagio* (1956) by Armando Lavalle, *Sonata para cuerdas* (1963) by Luis Herrera de la Fuente, *Bagatelas para piano* (1970-1975) by Leonardo Velázquez, *Sonata para viola y piano* (1962), *Seis variaciones para piano* (1963), and *Trío de cuerdas* (1963) by Gloria Tapia, *Formas plásticas* (1965) by Francisco Savín, *Puentes* (1965) by Mario Kuri Aldana, and *Misa de Seis* (1960) by Carlos Jiménez Mabarak.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 514-515. “[...] El sistema dodecafónico se aplica con una libertad y espíritu creativo que escapa a los cánones que fijaron no sólo las obras de Schoenberg, sino los textos como el de René Leibowitz [...] Con inmensa dosis de imaginación y de alejamiento de las rígidas prescripciones serialistas [...] Adaptación extrema de la técnica serial al fundir la técnica dodecafónica al modo de Malipiero con ideas de corte nacionalista.”

prestige it enjoyed in academic circles in the United States and Europe, and, most importantly, Mexican composers did not hesitate on breaking the rules associated with this compositional technique.

### 1.3.2 *Experimentalism and Technology in Mexican Music*

Just as serialism emerged in Mexico as a consequence of the technique's growing international prestige, the enthusiasm for experimentation—that is, going beyond the boundaries of tradition in all senses—increasingly influenced music in Mexico during the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>57</sup> While evidence suggests that many influential musical figures in Mexico perceived serialism as a constraining system, the experimentalist trend emerging from the work of Cage and others was perceived as liberating. Although this freedom encouraged creativity and experimentation at a level rarely seen before, it also implicitly endorsed the emergence of “artists” with no training whatsoever, whose only purpose was to create something radically new. Concerning the experimentalist trend in Mexico, composer Mario Lavista states:

The most significant issue [during the 1960s] was the fact that the concept or idea was more important than the work itself. It is no coincidence that during this era many untrained musicians and artists emerged. To exert that kind of vanguard, no one needed training because the idea was much more important than its execution. Program notes could be more interesting than the actual work.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Musical experimentalism was a strand of composition arising alongside serialism during the post-1945 years. Musical experimentalism stood further apart from tradition than serialism, challenging existing notions of how to compose, perform, and listen to music. Some experimentalists aimed to challenge the very essence and purpose of music. See more about experimentalist composers in Michael Nyman, *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); See more about Experimentalism in Cecilia Sun, “Experimental Music,” in *Grove Music Online*, accessed February 22, 2019, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.proxy1.lib.uwo.ca/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000001573>; See about Experimentalism in Latin-America in Ana R. Alonso-Minutti, Eduardo Herrera, Alejandro L. Madrid, eds., *Experimentalisms in Practice: Music Perspectives from Latin-America*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

<sup>58</sup> Moreno Rivas, *La Composición en México en el Siglo XX*, 118. “El punto que a mí me parecía más significativo en ese momento era la importancia que se le daba al concepto,

This eagerness for experimentation drove Mexican composers to give special attention to whatever their international colleagues were doing and then attempt to emulate it.

Composers such as Manuel Enríquez, Julio Estrada, Mario Lavista, Federico Ibarra, Francisco Núñez, Marcela Rodríguez, Eduardo Soto Millán, Rodolfo Ramírez, Ana Lara, Luis Jaime Cortéz, and Gabriela Ortíz have mentioned to have been influenced in different degrees from the music and ideas of composers as diverse as John Cage, Earle Brown, Morton Feldman, and George Crumb in the United States, Oliver Messiaen, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Witold Lutosławski, Krzysztof Penderecki, Pierre Schaeffer, Iannis Xenakis, Luciano Berio, Salvatore Sciarrino, and György Ligeti in Europe, Tōru Takemitsu in Japan, and Gerardo Gandini and Leo Brouwer in Latin America.<sup>59</sup>

In this era of experimentation, electronics opened up a whole new world of possibilities for exploration and composers in Mexico did not hesitate from trying their hand at this novel medium.<sup>60</sup> The first laboratory of electronic music in Mexico was created at the National Conservatory of Music in 1970 by electronic engineer and composer Raúl Pavón (1928-2008) and composer Héctor Quintanar (1936-2013).<sup>61</sup> Before the foundation

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más que a la realización de la obra. No es una coincidencia que hayan surgido muchos músicos o artistas en otras ramas que carecían de un oficio. Evidentemente, para ejercer esa clase de vanguardia, no hacía falta ningún tipo de oficio porque la idea era mucho más importante que la realización. Las notas al programa podrían ser más interesantes que la audición misma de la obra [...].”

<sup>59</sup> See, for example, the interviews that Yolanda Moreno Rivas, María Ángeles Gonzáles, and Leonora Saavedra have conducted with the Mexican composers mentioned above. In González and Saavedra, *Música Mexicana Contemporánea*; Yolanda Moreno Rivas, “Catorce Compositores Hablan de Estética y Oficio,” in *La Composición en México en el Siglo XX*, 114-165.

<sup>60</sup> The technological developments of the second half of the twentieth century also influenced the way in which composers engaged with composition. Technology allowed the creation of new sounds and forms to manipulate sound itself hitherto non-existing. Centres for the production of electronic music appeared in Paris and New York during the late 1940s and 1950s and soon composers associated with international modernism such as John Cage, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Milton Babbitt, Iannis Xenakis, and Pierre Boulez, to name a few, engaged with the new technologies. Although never reaching the same level of popularity as serialism, electronic music became another significant trend in composition during the post-war years.

<sup>61</sup> Carredano and Eli, *Historia de la Música en España e Hispanoamérica: La Música en Hispanoamérica en el Siglo XX*, 486.

of this laboratory, however, electronic music had already formed part of the musical scene in Mexico. Manuel Rocha Iturbide has claimed that composer Carlos Jiménez Mabarak (1916-1994) was both the first organizer of a concert of electronic music in Mexico (1958) and the first Mexican composer to compose an electroacoustic work (*El Paraíso de los Ahogados*, 1960).<sup>62</sup> Between the time of the first electroacoustic work in Mexico (1960) and the creation of the Laboratory of Electroacoustic Music at the National Conservatory in 1970, Mexican composers had to travel abroad to Paris and New York to experiment with electronics, working with people such as Jean-Étienne Marie (1917-1989), Vladimir Ussachevsky (1911-1990), Mario Davidovsky (b.1934), and Milton Babbitt (1916-2011).<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Manuel Rocha Iturbide, “México Electroacústico 1960-2007,” CD, liner notes, 7; Despite the new possibilities presented by technology, reviews from the time suggest that not everyone was impressed with the results, at least initially. Salomón Kahan offers insight about the reception of experimental music in Mexico City in his article “¿Música del provenir?,” published in the newspaper *El Universal* in 1961. Kahan reviews a concert of *musique concrète* and electronic music. Kahan states that throughout the article he uses the word “music” inside quotation marks to denote that what he heard “did not coincide with the concept that a listener educated in the tradition of modern and contemporary music, from Debussy and Stravinsky to Schoenberg and Webern, attributes to the term music. Therefore, it is natural that we were not enthusiastic about it.” “Cada vez que hablamos de lo que formaba el programa de la Audición de Música Experimental, pusimos la palabra “música” entre comillas. Lo hicimos porque lo que se escuchó en la memorable velada de la Ponce [la Asociación Musical Ponce] no coincide con el concepto que un oyente educado en la tradición (para ya no mencionar la de los clásicos y románticos) de la música moderna y contemporánea, desde Debussy y Stravinsky hasta Schoenberg y Webern, puede considerar como música propiamente dicha. Y si lo escuchado en esta ocasión no coincide con lo que nosotros entendemos por música, es natural que aquello no nos haya entusiasmado.” See more in, Enrique Jiménez López, ed., *70 Años de Música en el Palacio de Bellas Artes: Antología de Crónicas y Críticas (1934-2004)* (México, DF: Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, 2004), 104-105; A different review of the same concert by Mexican composer and historian Salvador Moreno mentions “[...] with experimental music, even good program notes are useless because the truth is that when one hears that [the music], the only thing in mind is that silence is golden.” “[...] Fueron inútiles las excelentes advertencias impresas de Juan Vicente Melo y las notas al programa de José Antonio Alcaraz, no menos excelentes, porque a la hora de la realidad no se puede menos que pensar que ‘el silencio es oro’ [...]” In Salvador Moreno, *Detener el Tiempo: Escritos Musicales*, ed. by Ricardo Miranda (México: CONACULTA, INBA, CENIDIM, 1996), 52.

<sup>63</sup> Rocha Iturbide, “México Electroacústico 1960-2007,” 6.



Even with the establishment of the National Conservatory's laboratory, electronic music did not thrive in Mexico during the 1970s to the extent seen in many other countries. Little effort was made to maintain and update the laboratory after its creation. According to Rocha Iturbide, fewer than forty electronic pieces were composed in Mexico in the 1970s, many of which now are lost. Additional evidence suggests that Mexican composers limited themselves to treating electronic means superficially, neglecting the in-depth research necessary to exploit the full possibilities it offered.<sup>64</sup>

Rocha Iturbide claims it was not until the 1980s that electronic music actually gained momentum in Mexico, more through the individual efforts of composers Antonio Russek (b. 1954), Vicente Rojo (b. 1960), Arturo Márquez (b.1952), and Roberto Morales (b.1958) than through the support of cultural institutions.<sup>65</sup>

## 1.4 Musical Education in Mexico

While in the United States and Europe, festivals and academic institutions were in charge of disseminating music of the post-war era and educating young composers about new developments, evidence suggests that in Mexico, there were significantly fewer resources available for musical education. Manuel Enríquez and Eduardo Mata (1942-1995), for example, have both described a gloomy and disheartening musical scene in Mexico during the middle years of the twentieth century, characterized by ignorance and conformism tied to the government's bureaucracy. Enríquez declared in 1963 that "in all regards, the National Conservatory is still in the nineteenth century. The study programs

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<sup>64</sup> For example, Manuel Enríquez, when interviewed about the contributions of technology for his development, answered: "[Electronics] were one more tool we had at our disposal. That's it, nothing more." Moreno Rivas, *La Composición en México en el Siglo XX*, 117; On his part Mario Lavista stated: "For many years I utilized[electronics], but there came a time when I realized that my interest was much more intellectual than emotional and I realized that it was not the right means of expression for what I wanted to say." Moreno Rivas, *La Composición en México en el Siglo XX*, 121.

<sup>65</sup> Rocha Iturbide, "México Electroacústico 1960-2007," 8-10.

and the teachers do not respond to our current times. It is an old and expired institution.”<sup>66</sup>

That same year, Mata similarly claimed:

The musical scene in Mexico has been static, following the same routine for the last ten years [1953-1963]. We have many deficiencies and the [musical] leaders in whose hands we have been in this period are way too ignorant and inept [...]. In composition and orchestra conducting, we still lack individuals with adequate preparation and dedication. Much of the blame should be attributed to the [National] Conservatory and the National School of Music of the University which, with their outdated curriculum and without trained teachers to fill the deficiencies of this curriculum along the way, have spoiled our hopes for the future.<sup>67</sup>

Music critic Juan Vicente Melo (1932-1996), and composer and music critic Raúl Cosío Villegas (1928-1998) offered a similar assessment in the same year.<sup>68</sup> However, their

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<sup>66</sup> Manuel Enríquez, “Trayectoria de Manuel Enríquez,” interview by Juan Vicente Melo, *Siempre!*, January 30, 1963, in Juan Vicente Melo, *Notas sin Música*, comp. by Alberto Paredes (México DF: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1990), 99. “En todos los aspectos, el Conservatorio continúa en el Siglo XIX. Los métodos de enseñanza, la inquietud de los maestros, no responden a los imperativos de nuestro tiempo. Es una institución vieja, caduca.”

<sup>67</sup> Eduardo Mata, “Breve historia clínica de 10 años de música en México, interview by Juan Vicente Melo, *Siempre!*, July 10, 1963, in Melo, *Notas sin Música*, 261-262. “El ambiente musical de México ha permanecido estático, siguiendo la misma rutina de hace 10 años. Son muchas nuestras carencias y demasiada la ignorancia y la ineptitud de los dirigentes en cuyas manos hemos estado en este lapso. En la composición y en la dirección de orquesta, seguimos careciendo de individuos con preparación adecuada y con dedicación. Buena parte de la culpa se debe imputar al Conservatorio y a la Escuela de Música de la Universidad que, con sus planes de estudios lamentablemente desactualizados y sin maestros capacitados para suplir en el camino las deficiencias de estos planes de estudios, han echado a perder vocaciones y esperanzas para el futuro.”

<sup>68</sup> In their articles, “La Música en 1963” and “Música 1963,” Melo and Cosío Villegas respectively offer their assessments of musical activity in Mexico during 1963. Both critics agree that the panorama of the music scene in Mexico was disheartening. Melo declares that regardless of the efforts that institutions made to support new music, the state of Mexican music was still subjugated by conservative bureaucratic interests. Cosío Villegas said he was perplexed about the feeling of musical progress that “many people” seemed to perceive. For Cosío Villegas, this sense of progress was completely delusional: excepting Manuel Enríquez’s music, he wrote, 1963 had been a bad year for Mexican music. In Juan Vicente Melo, “La Música en 1963,” *Siempre!*, January 8, 1964, in Melo, *Notas sin Música*, 262; Raúl Cosío Villegas, “Música 1963” *Ovaciones*, January 19,

writings of the era also suggest that, despite the enormous hurdles confronting the new music scene in Mexico, there was a palpable desire to update the musical language and the aesthetic of Mexican music amongst composers and critics. In 1962 Vicente Melo wrote that “the older composers [...] insist now that we must be serialists [...] otherwise, we will always be fifty years behind.”<sup>69</sup> Composer Federico Ibarra, for his part, declared that even though the musical institution where he received his education (National School of Music from the National University of Mexico) was “very disorganized,” the decade of the 1960s was “crucial” in the development of Mexican music “due to the series of influences permeating Mexico.”<sup>70</sup>

#### 1.4.1 *The North Looks at the South*

According to Raúl Cosío Villegas, one of the earliest efforts to redirect music education in Mexico toward a more internationalist inclination came from a proposition made by the members of the group Nueva Música de México (NMM) to John P. Harrison in the late 1950s. NMM was a group formed in 1957 by composers and performers of different academic backgrounds. NMM had among its purposes to fight for greater institutional support for composers and to present their projects—such as music and concerts—in the main cultural centers of Mexico. The members of NMM aimed to offer an alternative to music programming at the time, which mainly consisted of music from the traditional canon or music by Carlos Chávez and his inner circle. NMM’s members included Manuel Enríquez, Francisco Savín (1929-2018), Joaquín Gutiérrez Heras, Leonardo Velázquez, Guillermo Noriega (b.1926), and Raúl Cosío Villegas.<sup>71</sup> Meanwhile, John P. Harrison

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1964, in *La Música en México en la Segunda Mitad del Siglo XX: Hemerografía de Raúl Cosío Villegas*, ed. Citlali Ruíz CD-Rom (México DF: CONACULTA-FONCA).

<sup>69</sup> Juan Vicente Melo, “Los jóvenes músicos ante el camino más difícil,” *Siempre!*, November 11, 1962, in Melo, *Notas sin Música*, 320-321. “Los compositores mayores [...] insisten en declarar: ‘Seriales, señores, has que ser seriales.’ [...] Mientras eso no suceda—afirman—permaneceremos con 50 años de retraso.”

<sup>70</sup> Federico Ibarra, interview with the author.

<sup>71</sup> Yolanda Moreno claims that even though this group was not in open conflict with the artistic bureaucracy of the moment, it suffered from a lack of state support—just as Cuevas denounced in *La Cortina del Nopal*.

(whom NMM's members approached in the late 1950's) was an officer of the Rockefeller Foundation. Eduardo Herrera claimed that "Harrison might be the most important and least known figure in the history of Latin American art music during the 1960s, all from his post at a philanthropic organization."<sup>72</sup> Harrison was Assistant Director for the Humanities Division at the Rockefeller Foundation between 1956 and 1961. According to Herrera, Harrison is the primary person behind grants awarded by the Rockefeller Foundation to encourage projects for research and teaching of Latin American music during the 1960s in the United States and abroad, such as the Latin American Music Center (LAMC) at Indiana University and the Centro Latinoamericano de Altos Estudios Musicales (CLAEM) at the Di Tella Institute in Buenos Aires, Argentina.<sup>73</sup>

Several of the members of NMM who were concerned about inadequacies in higher musical education in Mexico came up with the idea of requesting financial support from North American institutions to organize composition seminars at the graduate level. NMM first pitched the idea in the late 1950s to the Ford Foundation in Mexico; however it was not approved. A second proposal was made directly to John P. Harrison shortly thereafter. The contact between NMM and Harrison came through the illustrious Mexican intellectual Daniel Cosío Villegas (1898-1976), Raúl Cosío Villegas' uncle, who had previously received funding from the Rockefeller Foundation to develop an unnamed history project.<sup>74</sup>

According to Raúl Cosío Villegas, Harrison was eager to support this project, mentioning that it fit the interests of the Rockefeller Foundation for Latin America. The main condition to obtain the Rockefeller Foundation's support was to convince a Mexican institution to host and develop the project. Harrison proposed the National Institute of

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<sup>72</sup> Eduardo Herrera. "The Rockefeller Foundation and Latin American Music in the 1960s: The Creation of Indiana University's LAMC and Di Tella Institute's CLAEM." *American Music* 35, no. 1 (2017): 51-74.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Raúl Cosío Villegas, "El Proyecto con la Rockefeller," *El Semanario Cultural de Novedades*, July 1, 1990, in *La Música en México en la Segunda Mitad del Siglo XX: Hemerografía de Raúl Cosío Villegas*, ed. Citlali Ruíz CD-Rom (Mexico DF: CONACULTA-FONCA).

Fine Arts (INBA) since it was the central institution for arts administration in Mexico. Members of NMM talked to the director of the music department at the INBA, Luis Sandi (1905-1996), as well as the conductor of the National Symphony, Luis Herrera de la Fuente (1916-2014), to ask for their support—the former for the administration and the latter for access to the National Symphony to perform whatever works were composed in the seminars. Raúl Cosío Villegas states that both Sandi and Herrera de la Fuente rejected the project, claiming that the Rockefeller Foundation’s interest reflected the United States’ systematic cultural imperialism during that era. This project never came to fruition, but the story of NMM attempting to involve the Rockefeller Foundation in a project to develop music education in Mexico demonstrates the eagerness of the younger generation of composers to move into a more internationalized art scene during this period.<sup>75</sup>

#### 1.4.2 *Musical Update: National Efforts*

The primary educational centre for composition education in Mexico after the post-war years surfaced in 1960. This was a composition workshop founded and organized by Carlos Chávez. Early plans for this project are revealed in a letter sent to Chávez by

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<sup>75</sup> Composer Joaquín Gutiérrez Heras (1927-2012)—also a member of NMM—confirmed Villegas’ story as early as 1963, when he declared that amid the uneventful Mexican musical scene during the period 1953-1963, the only event that “might have been important was a project to create a center for higher musical studies in Mexico. NMM proposed this project, and it was backed up by the Rockefeller Foundation, but the indifference and bad faith of the officials in charge destroyed it [...]” “No ha sucedido nada notable en la música de los últimos 10 años. Algo que pudo ser importante fue el proyecto de fundar un seminario de altos estudios musicales en México. Este proyecto fue promovido por el grupo Nueva Música de México y casi puesto en práctica por la Fundación Rockefeller, pero se estrelló contra la indiferencia y la mala voluntad de los funcionarios y músicos a quienes se pidió su intervención [...]” Joaquín Gutiérrez Heras “Breve historia clínica de 10 años de música en México,” interview by Juan Vicente Melo, *Siempre!*, July 10, 1963, in Melo, *Notas sin Música*, 262; In the notes of Eduardo Herrera’s article, “The Rockefeller Foundation and Latin American Music in the 1960s: The Creation of Indiana University’s LAMC and Di Tella Institute’s CLAEM” (previously cited), it is mentioned that Harrison “considered the possibility of organizing such a center [speaking about the CLAEM] elsewhere, for example, in Mexico.” See note 53 in Herrera’s article (page 74).

Armando Echeverría in March 19, 1959.<sup>76</sup> In this letter, Echeverría informs Chávez that Luis Sandi—then director of the music department at INBA—wanted him to go back and “modernize the [National] Conservatory.”<sup>77</sup> The letter does not specify what kind of modernization Sandi had in mind. Furthermore, it is not clear if Sandi’s request occurred before or after he denied support to the members of NMM. We do know that Chávez founded a composition workshop at the National Conservatory the following year and directed it until 1964. Chávez’s workshop was created with the intention to teach a thorough compositional course that encompassed the study of the compositional styles from Gregorian chant to integral serialism.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Armando Echeverría was a close friend of Chávez with strong connections in the musical/bureaucratic spheres of Mexico. Echeverría is described as “a singular character, rubbing shoulders equally with ministers and presidents, as well as the musicians of the [National] Symphony [...] Armando had been a violinist of the *Orquesta Sinfónica de México* (OSM) [the precursor of the National Symphony] since its founding. Most importantly, Armando Echeverría was Chávez’s personal and loyal server.” “Armando Echeverría [...] personaje singular que se codeó con ministros y presidentes, frecuentó consagrados y poderosos, con la misma desenvoltura con que se movía entre los músicos de la Sinfónica [...]. Don Armando había sido violinista y como tal había militado en las filas de la Orquesta Sinfónica de México desde su fundación. Una vez que menguaron sus facultades ocupó el puesto de bibliotecario, cargo que siguió desempeñando una vez que la [Sinfónica] de México se convirtió en la Sinfónica Nacional. Pero Don Armando fue, sobre todo, y por una afinidad entrañable, un servidor personal de Carlos Chávez [...] con una fidelidad sin par.” In *Carlos Chávez, Vida y Pensamiento de México. Epistolario Selecto de Carlos Chávez*, ed., Gloria Carmona (México DF: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2000), 20-21.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid, 838.

<sup>78</sup> Moreno Rivas, *La Composición en México en el Siglo XX*, 64; According to composer Mario Lavista (b.1943)—currently, one of the most prominent Mexican living composers and graduate from Chávez’s workshop—students at the workshop were required to take courses for eight hours every day. The curriculum was geared toward the study of traditional music. Subjects of study covered from Bach to Debussy’s music, passing through Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Chopin, Wagner, Richard Strauss, and Brahms. In González and Saavedra, *Música Mexicana Contemporánea*, 115-116; Even though Lavista does not mention anything about the training he received in serialism at Chávez’s workshop, composer Julio Estrada (b. 1943)—another of the students at the workshop—mentions that the curriculum at the composition workshop indeed encompassed the study of integral serialism. In Julio Estrada, ed., *La Música de México: Periodo Contemporáneo* (México DF: UNAM, 1984), 194-195.

The younger generations of composers welcomed Chávez's efforts to improve their education. For example, Eduardo Mata described Chávez's workshop as "the remarkable exception in the gloomy panorama [of the musical scene in Mexico of the early 1960s]." <sup>79</sup> Yet the size of the workshop was not broad enough to educate all young composers in Mexico, and the National Conservatory's age limit policies made it impossible for most students over eight years old to access this education center, forcing them to study at other institutions in Mexico. <sup>80</sup>

Chávez's efforts to introduce the younger generation of composers to modernist musical trends was not limited to the composition workshop, however. He also offered numerous conferences—such as the conference mentioned above about dodecaphonism—in different educational institutions. Composer Federico Ibarra, for example, claimed that the most striking encounter with experimentalist music during his early formative years was through a conference organized at the National School of Music by Carlos Chávez about the work *Metastaseis* (1952-1953) by Greek-French composer Iannis Xenakis. <sup>81</sup> Ibarra claimed that the exposure to Xenakis' music in this event "was a discovery for all the assistants and marked the guidelines of the avant-garde techniques of the moment." <sup>82</sup>

While Chávez's efforts to bring Mexican composers into contact with foreign ideas were influential and decisive for many, other Mexican composers traveled abroad to receive their musical education. The direct contact these composers had with the musical scenes

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<sup>79</sup> Eduardo Mata, "Breve historia clínica de 10 años de música en México," *Siempre!*, July 10, 1963, in Melo, *Notas sin Música*, 261-262.

<sup>80</sup> Music critic Raúl Cosío Villegas states—regretting—in his article "Música," that Joaquín Amparán, Director of the Conservatory during the period 1960-1967, imposed the age of eight years old as the limit for entering at this institution for most students. Raúl Cosío Villegas, "Música," *Siempre!*, January 3, 1968, in *La Música en México en la Segunda Mitad del Siglo XX: Hemerografía de Raúl Cosío Villegas*, ed. Citlali Ruíz CD-Rom (Mexico DF: CONACULTA-FONCA).

<sup>81</sup> González and Saavedra, *Música Mexicana Contemporánea*, 180-181; Federico Ibarra, interview with the author.

<sup>82</sup> González and Saavedra, *Música Mexicana Contemporánea*, 180-181. "[*Metastaseis*] marcó definitivamente una pauta y un descubrimiento para todos los que la escuchamos, introduciéndonos de lleno en las técnicas de vanguardia."

of other countries was of great importance in the changing aesthetics of Mexican art music. By being directly exposed to new ideas, Mexican composers were able to compare objectively the aesthetic differences between the music of Mexico and other places such as the United States and Europe.<sup>83</sup>

## 1.5 Patrons for New Music

### 1.5.1 *Nuestra Música*

During the middle years of the twentieth century, new associations were formed in Mexico to support the creation and presentation of new Mexican music. An association named *Nuestra Música* (NM) appeared in 1946, founded by the Mexican composers Carlos Chávez, José Pablo Moncayo (1912-1958), Blas Galindo (1910-1993), and Luis Sandi (1905-1996), and the Spanish emigrés Rodolfo Halffter, Adolfo Salazar (1890-1958), and Jesús Bal y Gay (1905-1993). *Nuestra Música*'s manifesto states:

Each one of us is motivated by a desire to promote, to the extent of our ability, a renewal of the Mexican music environment. We want to contribute decidedly—as composers, organizers, and critics—to the development of Mexico's musical life [...]. We are united by the admiration we feel towards personalities and works of our time that are still rejected by an important sector of our audiences. For the benefit of culture, we believe that our inescapable obligation is to expand the circle of supporters of such personalities and works [...]. We want to reflect the reality of Mexican music through *Nuestra Música*. [... speaking about the name of the group] We consider “*Nuestra*” [our], in the first place, the music written by ourselves, and then, the one [music] we admire due to its content, its aesthetic, or for its perfect technical realization—that which offers, in short, enduring models of superior music.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Some of the composers of the younger generations that studied abroad were: Joaquín Gutiérrez Heras, (the Paris Conservatoire in 1952 and The Juilliard School in 1960; Manuel Enríquez (The Juilliard School, 1955-1957), Leonardo Velázquez (studied at the Los Angeles Conservatory), Rafael Elizondo (studied at the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow), Alicia Urreta (studied at Paris), Mario Kuri-Aldana (studied at CLAEM in Argentina), Hermilio Hernández (studied at Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music in Rome), and Héctor Quintanar (studied at New York and Paris).

<sup>84</sup> González and Saavedra, *Música Mexicana Contemporánea*, 20-22. “[...] A todos y cada uno de nosotros nos anima—eso sí—un idéntico deseo de impulsar, en la medida de



To achieve its purpose, NM focused on three elements: the founding of a music publishing house, the creation of a musicological magazine, and the organization of a concert series in Mexico City. The music publisher was named Ediciones Mexicanas de Música, and its primary objective was to publish and distribute the music of the members of NM as well as the music of other composers considered by NM's members to be worthy of publishing. Ediciones Mexicanas de Música became the first music publishing house in Mexico and is still active today.<sup>85</sup> The musicological magazine received the same name as the association (*Nuestra Música*) and was published for seven years. Besides the members of NM, international composers such as Aaron Copland, Arnold Schoenberg, and Darius Milhaud wrote articles for it. Consuelo Carredano has claimed that in comparison with other music publications in Mexico at the time, “this is the one that perhaps has managed to achieve the highest number of articles and collaborations written exclusively for it. Yet, probably its biggest achievement is the fact that it was the first publication that compiled information about international trends.”<sup>86</sup> NM's concert

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nuestras fuerzas, la corriente renovadora del ambiente musical mexicano. Queremos contribuir decididamente—como compositores, como organizadores, como críticos—al desarrollo de la vida musical de México. Nos une asimismo una viva admiración hacia las personalidades y obras representativas de nuestra época que todavía rechaza un sector importante de nuestro público melómano. En beneficio de la cultura, creemos que nuestra obligación ineludible consiste en ampliar el círculo de partidarios de dichas personalidades y obras [...]. Pretendemos, además, que Nuestra Música refleje la realidad musical Mexicana, enfocada—claro está—desde nuestro particular punto de vista. Tenemos decidido empeño en divulgar la labor de todos aquellos maestros nuestros—vivos o muertos—cuyo significado, dentro de nuestra vida musical, represente una aportación. [Hablando acerca del nombre de la agrupación] consideramos ‘nuestra,’ en primer término, la música que escribimos nosotros mismos y, luego, aquella que admiramos. Bien por su contenido, por su tendencia estética o bien por su perfecta realización técnica. Aquella que ofrece, en suma, modelos imperecederos de música superior.”

<sup>85</sup> Consuelo Carredano, *Ediciones Mexicanas de Música, Historia y Catálogo* (México, CONACULTA, INBA, CENIDIM, 1994), 30; Other secondary objectives of *Ediciones Mexicanas de Música* were to rent music and orchestra material as well as to edit books about music education, pedagogy, and musicology.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 42. “[...] ésta es quizá una de las que ha logrado reunir el más alto número de colaboraciones especiales, artículos de fondo, o de temas de investigación *ex profeso* para su publicación en ella. Pero quizás su importancia mayor consiste en haber sido la primera publicación que reuniera en México todas las tendencias universales.”

series was called *Conciertos de los Lunes* (Monday concerts), and it was launched in March, 1946. The Monday concerts' specific purpose is described in the NM's manifesto as:

[...] to contribute to enhancing the circulation of Mexican music everywhere, and music of international composers in Mexico, as well as to promote the development of performers and audiences interested in art music in Mexico.

Our other resolutions, more specifically, are those that refer to sharing our own music in a receptive and open environment, showing our intelligent audiences not only the characteristics of singular works but the evolution that we have had and will have [...]. The fact that we work together [on this project] does not imply the adoption of an aesthetic position or any mandatory creed.

We intend to establish a practical, regular, and permanent musical activity. We are interested in spreading music by ourselves and by composers—Mexicans or not, contemporaries or not—who identify more with what we like and consider better in music.<sup>87</sup>

During the first year, NM's programming included music by composers as diverse as Francis Poulenc, Manuel de Falla, Igor Stravinsky, Claude Debussy, Aaron Copland, Maurice Ravel, Darius Milhaud, Paul Hindemith, J.S. Bach, Modest Mussorgsky, Carl Maria von Weber, E.T.A. Hoffmann, Hector Berlioz, Castelnuovo Tedesco, Gesualdo, and Orazio Vecchi. Mexican music was also represented in works by Carlos Chávez, Blas Galindo, Manuel M. Ponce, Silvestre Revueltas, and Luis Herrera de la Fuente. The Monday concerts initiative was short-lived, ending in 1947. Yet, the excitement it caused

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid, 64-65. "El primer [ideal] es el muy amplio de contribuir al cultivo de la música Mexicana en todas partes, y al de todas partes en México, así como de ayudar en México al desarrollo de los músicos ejecutantes y los públicos interesados en la música superior. Otros ideales nuestros, más particulares, son los que se refieren a hacer conocer nuestra propia música en ambiente receptivo y abierto, mostrando a los públicos inteligentes no solo las características de obras singulares, sino el desarrollo que en el curso del tiempo haya sufrido y haya de sufrir la personalidad de cada uno de nosotros.[...] Hemos convenido en ponernos a trabajar en una reunión *sui generis*, que no implica la adopción de posición estética ni credo alguno obligatorio para los así reunidos. Pretendemos establecer una actividad musical práctica, regular y permanente. Nos interesa difundir la música de nosotros mismos y la de los maestros—Mexicanos o no, contemporáneos o no—que más se identifique con lo que en música gustamos y consideramos mejor."

amongst its participants (composers, performers, and the audience itself) triggered the eventual appearance of several new initiatives in the form of associations and festivals focusing on the support of Mexican and international contemporary music.<sup>88</sup>

### 1.5.2 *La Asociación Ponce*

La Asociación Ponce was created in 1948 by close friends of Mexican composer Manuel M. Ponce (1882-1948). Its original purpose was to preserve Ponce's artistic legacy through the organization of concerts featuring Ponce's music. Soon, La Asociación Ponce extended its efforts to organizing concerts with the music of younger and less well-known Mexican composers, many of whom were unable to obtain official support. Furthermore, La Asociación Ponce also made efforts to support composers and performing artists outside of Mexico City, attempting to counter the centralization of artistic support in Mexico.

Juan Vicente Melo's recounting of the musical activities organized by La Asociación Ponce in 1967 reveals an association deeply concerned with the enrichment of musical life of Mexico. From organizing concerts series featuring music written between the Renaissance and the twentieth century, to organizing conferences of electronic and aleatory music, to the foundation of a project to stage small operas across the city named *Microópera de México*, La Asociación Ponce made great efforts to enhance the quality and variety of musical life in Mexico.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid, 65-67.

<sup>89</sup> Juan Vicente Melo, "La Asociación Ponce y la Soap 'Soap' Opera," *Siempre!*, March 29, 1967, in Melo, *Notas sin Música*, 166-172; Musicological magazine *Heterofonía* published in its different issues the programs of several of the concerts organized by La Asociación Ponce, offering a glimpse to the eclectic programming supported by this association. See *Heterofonía* No. 1, 2, 6, 7, for example; Composer Federico Ibarra also benefitted from the efforts of La Asociación Ponce to enhance the musical scene in Mexico. Ibarra worked with *Microópera de México* during the period 1967-1968 on the staging of the operas *Une education manqué (An Incomplete Education)* by Emmanuel Chabrier, *Der Schauspieldirektor (The Impresario)* by W. A. Mozart, and *L'incoronazione di Poppea (The Coronation of Poppea)* by Claudio Monteverdi. Ibarra has claimed that his work at *Microópera de México* put him in direct contact with the "singers' world" and allowed him to discover the relationships between music and

### 1.5.3 *The National University of Mexico*

During the second half of the twentieth century, the National University of Mexico (UNAM) took a prominent role in the development of the musical scene in Mexico. Under the Department of Cultural Diffusion, the UNAM founded La Casa del Lago in 1959, its first off-campus cultural center. Since its origins, La Casa del Lago became a melting pot for the art scene in Mexico, uniting artists, intellectuals, and musicians from many parts of the country in a single location. La Casa del Lago became a hub for the presentation of avant-garde and experimental art as well as conferences about music, art, and philosophy. According to Raúl Cosío Villegas, what was impressive about La Casa del Lago was its attractiveness to all kinds of audiences, particularly when abstract art was presented, attesting to the innate curiosity of audiences in Mexico.<sup>90</sup>

Mexican writer and journalist Carlos Monsiváis described the UNAM's role in furthering Mexico's embrace of international modernist tendencies with projects such as La Casa del Lago with the following words:

In a city not entirely used to modernity, UNAM's Department of Cultural Diffusion exceeds expectations [...]. In these times of information overload, UNAM's determination for cultural dissemination is essential: it banishes censorship, it encourages experimentation, it rejects chauvinism, and it aims to update generations.<sup>91</sup>

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theatrical staging. In Juan Arturo Brennan, "Cantatas, Operas, insomnios: Entrevista a Ibarra," *Revista de la Universidad de México*, 28, (August, 1983), [http://www.revistadelauniversidad.unam.mx/ojs\\_rum/index.php/rum/article/view/11719/12957](http://www.revistadelauniversidad.unam.mx/ojs_rum/index.php/rum/article/view/11719/12957).

<sup>90</sup> Raúl Cosío Villegas, "Densidad Cultural: Casa del Lago, Refinamientos, Tradiciones," *Excelsior*, December 22, 1974, in *La Música en México en la Segunda Mitad del Siglo XX: Hemerografía de Raúl Cosío Villegas*, ed. Citlali Ruíz CD-Rom (México DF: CONACULTA-FONCA).

<sup>91</sup> Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, "Historia: Casa del Lago Juan José Aurreola. UNAM," <http://www.casadellago.unam.mx/sitio/index.php/la-casa-del-lago/historia> (accessed November 10, 2018). "En una ciudad no muy acostumbrada a la modernidad, Difusión Cultural de la UNAM cumple con creces la tarea de proponer nuevos ámbitos [...]. Y en el vértigo informativo y formativo Difusión Cultural es esencial: proscribire la censura, alienta la experimentación, se deshace del chovinismo, quiere poner al día a una generación."; Due to its stature, the UNAM had resources that no other small associations had at their disposal, including a professional symphonic

#### 1.5.4 Music Festivals and Concert Series: Collective and Individual Efforts

Just as festivals in Darmstadt, Donaueschingen, and Warsaw became epicentres for the proliferation of new music and experimental approaches to composition in Europe, festivals in Washington, Caracas, Habana, Mexico City, Buenos Aires, Montevideo, and Rio de Janeiro fulfilled the same function in the Americas.

In Mexico, the INBA organized a Festival of Contemporary Music in 1961. This was held again every year from 1964 to 1968. In these events, leading national musical institutions such as the National Symphony, the Chamber Orchestra of Fine Arts, and the Woodwind Quintet of Fine Arts premiered a considerable quantity of musical works.<sup>92</sup>

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orchestra (OFUNAM) and a radio station, both of which exhibited pronounced support for international and national twentieth-century music. Composer Federico Ibarra tracked the OFUNAM's programming from 1936 to 2003. During this period, Ibarra states, the OFUNAM presented 4712 works from varying composers and eras. Ibarra's study indicates that while in the period 1936-1961 more than 50 per cent of the programming encompassed music of the romantic period and 21 percent music of the twentieth century (with 23 percent of music coming from the Classical period and 4 percent the Baroque), in the period 1962-1965 the percentages shifted. Romantic era programming decreased to 38 percent, and twentieth-century music increased to 34 percent. The figures changed more dramatically in subsequent years, with the music of the twentieth century being the most programmed during the period 1966-2006 (47.4 percent in the period 1966-1975; 45.4 percent in the period 1976-1992; 49.3 percent in the period 1993-2006). While the data shows that most of this music was by composers that were not associated with the post-war avant-garde and experimentalist trends—international composers such as Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Debussy, Sibelius, Bartok, de Falla, and Copland and Mexican composers such as Chávez, Revueltas, Moncayo, Blas Galindo, and Bernal Jiménez—the music of Mexican composers interested in post-war experimentalist trends such as Manuel Enríquez, Héctor Quintanar, Mario Lavista, and Federico Ibarra was also performed. See more in Federico Ibarra, *Orquesta de la Universidad Nacional de México: Historia y Desarrollo en el Contexto Cultural del País*, (México: UNAM, Dirección General de Publicaciones y Fomento Editorial, 2011).

<sup>92</sup> The first version of the Festival of Contemporary Music included a series of five concerts with music by composers as diverse as Rolf Liebermann, Béla Bartók, Luigi Nono, Milo Cipra, Igor Stravinsky, Rodolfo Halffter, Francesco Malipiero, Hans Werner Henze, Arthur Honegger, Luigi Dallapiccola, Paul Hindemith, Carlos Chávez, Arnold Schoenberg, Luis Sandi, and Cristóbal Halffter. Other editions of the festival included the music of composers such as Witold Lutosławski, Krzysztof Penderecki, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Pierre Boulez, André Jolivet, Luis de Pablo, Maurice Ohana, Gardner Read, José Antonio Alcaraz, Héctor Quintanar, Manuel Enríquez, Oliver Messiaen, Jesús Villaseñor, Roberto Bañuelas, Armando Lavalle, Luis Herrera de la Fuente, Manuel de

These festivals were rare opportunities for composers living in Mexico to become acquainted with some of the works of the most nationally and internationally renowned composers.

Paired with the institutional efforts to support the production and dissemination of new music, a growing number of personalities created a variety of projects that suggest a collective determination to enhance the exposure of new music to a broader audience. For example, Francisco Savín (1929-2018), as director of the National Conservatory of Music, founded a concert series in 1968 (Sociedad de Conciertos del Conservatorio) where avant-garde music was often presented and young Mexican composers were given support for presenting their music.<sup>93</sup> Savín also invited personalities such as Stockhausen and Jean-Étienne Marie to deliver lectures in their respective fields of expertise at the National Conservatory.<sup>94</sup>

In 1973, composer and pianist Alicia Urreta (1930-1986) founded the Festivales Hispano-Mexicanos de Música Contemporánea (Hispanic-Mexican Festival of Contemporary Music) in collaboration with the Spanish composer Carlos Cruz de Castro (b.1941).<sup>95</sup> Over the course of its ten iterations (1973-1983), this festival became a hub for the musical exchange of ideas between Mexican and Spanish composers.<sup>96</sup>

The Sociedad Mexicana de Música Contemporánea (Mexican Society of Contemporary Music) was founded in 1971 by several Mexican composers. Among its objectives was the promotion of new music through the organization of concerts, the publication of a

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Elías, Mario-Kuri Aldana, Joaquín Gutierrez Heras, Lan Adomián, Alberto Ginastera, Iannis Xenakis, María Teresa Prieto, Alcides Lanza, Francisco Núñez, and György Ligeti. In *50 Años de Música en el Palacio de Bellas Artes*, (México: INBA/SEP, 1986), 118-141.

<sup>93</sup> See more in “Conciertos.” *Heterofonía*, no. 6 (May 1969): 38.

<sup>94</sup> Francisco Núñez, “Nuevas Orientaciones del Conservatorio Nacional de Música,” *Heterofonía*, no. 2 (Sept. 1968): 14-16.

<sup>95</sup> González and Saavedra, *Música Mexicana Contemporánea*, 101.

<sup>96</sup> While most of the festivals took place in Mexico City, the 1980 festival took place in Madrid. In Marta Cureses, “América en la Música de Carlos Cruz de Castro,” *Cuadernos de Música Iberoamericana*, Vol. 4, (1997): 223-240.

musicological magazine, the commission of works by Mexican composers, the recording of contemporary Mexican music, the organization of conferences with some of the most influential international composers of the moment, and the strengthening of links with other international associations of contemporary music.<sup>97</sup>

The fact that the associations, institutions, and individuals mentioned above planned and organized these diverse events to internationalize the musical scene in Mexico reveals a willingness to form part of, and more importantly, to be recognized by, an increasingly connected global artistic community. Juan Vicente Melo published an assessment of the music scene in Mexico during 1966. In comparison with the assessment he made in 1963 (stating that the Mexican scene was in “agony”), by 1966 he felt that “Fine Arts [the INBA] is now musically better—in healthy and younger hands—supporting our younger composers [...]. For many reasons, this year was exceptional and is a starting point, a rejection [of traditionalism], a new path. Groups, authors, critics, young audiences, and performers fight for the rebirth of the Mexican musical scene.”<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> The founders of the Mexican Society of Contemporary Music were Mario Lavista, Héctor Quintanar, Manuel Enríquez, José Luis Gonzáles, Eduardo Mata, Francisco Savín, Clemente Sanabria (also spelled Zanabria in some articles), Manuel de Elías, Fernando Lozano, Alicia Urreta, Armando Lavalle, Marta Cuéllar, and David Negrete. In “Noticias de México,” *Heterofonía*, no. 17 (March-April 1971): 35; Composer Manuel Enríquez mentioned that the Mexican Association of Contemporary Music fell short of its purposes and the only goals it achieved were “a few isolated concerts, two or three recordings, zero magazines, and zero music publications.” Enríquez has claimed that many musical projects in Mexico fall short of their original goals because of the appalling paucity of teamwork prevailing in Mexican society. In González and Saavedra, *Música Mexicana Contemporánea*, 40.

<sup>98</sup> Juan Vicente Melo, “La música en 1966,” *Siempre!*, December 28, 1966, in Melo, *Notas sin Música*, 283-289. “[...] Bellas Artes—ahora, musicalmente, en mejores y más saludables y jóvenes manos—se obstina en dar oportunidad y cabida a jóvenes autores [...]. El año 1966, por una razón u otra, es excepcional porque repetimos, es un punto de partida, un rechazo, otro camino. [...] Autores, críticos, con un público joven, intérpretes, resucita, renace, batalla por la vida musical Mexicana [...].”

## 1.6 Manuel Enríquez: Pioneer of International Modernism in Mexico

Of all the personalities who fought to embrace avant-garde and experimentalist compositional techniques in Mexico, Manuel Enríquez had the most immediate and tangible impact on younger Mexican composers. Musicologists, composers, and theorists such as Yolanda Moreno Rivas, Aurelio Tello, José Antonio Alcaraz, Consuelo Carredano, Victoria Eli, Mario Lavista, Federico Ibarra, and Julio Estrada agree that Enríquez was a pioneer in the use of experimentalist techniques in Mexico during the post-World War II era. While Enríquez was not the only personality adopting an abstract musical language, he was one of the most important and influential characters during the 1960s and 1970s.

Enríquez's compositions from the early 1960s already show an adoption of the avant-garde techniques of the moment. His work, *Preámbulo* (1961) reveals an abstract composer fully engaged in experimentation with textures, timbral possibilities, instrumental colours, indeterminacy, graphic writing, and open forms.<sup>99</sup> The novel ways in which Enríquez engaged with composition opened up a whole new world for young composers in Mexico, particularly those who had not yet been able to travel abroad. On June 26, 1967, for example, the Palace of Fine Arts in Mexico City held a chamber music concert as part of the Fifth Festival of Contemporary Music organized by the National Institute of Fine Arts. This concert featured the premiere of several works among which was Enríquez's *Second String Quartet*.<sup>100</sup> Enríquez's quartet made a great impression on the audience—which included several young Mexican composers—not only due to its high degree of abstraction and uncommon sonorities but also due to the unusual way in

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<sup>99</sup> Susana Enríquez, Aurelio Tello, Iracema de Andrade, *Manuel Enríquez: Hoy de ayer*, E-book edition, (México: Centro Nacional de las Artes, 2017), 11-13.

<sup>100</sup> Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, *50 Años de Música en el Palacio de Bellas Artes*, (México: INBA/SEP, 1986), 136.



which it was written.<sup>101</sup> Mexican composer Mario Lavista (b. 1943) was present at that evening's concert and said the following about that occasion:

Listening to [Enríquez's] *Second Quartet* was very important to me, not only because of the novelty of the score, which was graphic, but also because of all the colours that Manuel was able to get from the strings due to his vast knowledge of string instruments. I think that before his work, there were no works for strings in Mexico exploring those techniques. He was, without a doubt, the first to do that because he was able to combine, in an extraordinary way, the composer and the performer [...].<sup>102</sup>

Like Mario Lavista, composer Federico Ibarra has also recognized on numerous occasions Enríquez's music as an influential force in his acquaintance with modernist compositional techniques. In an interview with the author, Ibarra stated that “around the late 1960s [I] came in contact with European avant-garde ideas through Enríquez's music. He was the only one [in Mexico] that was up-to-date about everything that was happening in Europe.”<sup>103</sup>

It was not only through his compositions that Enríquez influenced the Mexican musical scene. Enríquez was also a passionate administrator and cultural advocate, holding important administrative positions in musical institutions through which he founded noteworthy projects for the support of new music.<sup>104</sup> Perhaps due to these factors,

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<sup>101</sup> Leonora Saavedra, “Los cuartetos de Enríquez (Primera parte),” *Pauta*, 19 (Julio-Septiembre, 1986): 58-71.

<sup>102</sup> Luis Vilar Payá, Ana R. Alonso Minutti, “Estrategias de Diferenciación en la Composición Musical: Mario Lavista y el México de Fines de los Sesenta y Comienzos de los Setenta,” *Revista Argentina de Musicología*, 12-13 (2012): 276-277.

<sup>103</sup> Federico Ibarra, interview with the author. “Poco tiempo antes del 68, la explosión que se estaba dando en la música en Europa, de alguna manera fue dada a conocer a través de ciertas partituras de Manuel Enríquez, que era el único que estaba al tanto de toda esa serie de cuestiones que se hacían en Europa [...]”; See also *Federico Ibarra: Premio Nacional del Arte 2001*, directed by Julián Hernández, CONACULTA, 2011.

<sup>104</sup> Enríquez was director of the National Conservatory (1972-1974), the National Center for Music Research (1977-1985), and the music department of the National Institute of Fine Arts (1985-1991), for example. He was also the founder of the Foro Internacional de Música Nueva “Manuel Enríquez” (International Forum of New Music “Manuel Enríquez”). Originally created with the name of International Forum of New Music,

musicologist Coriún Aharonián has depicted Enríquez as Chávez's successor, claiming that he (Enríquez) held more institutional power than any other Mexican composer from the 1970s to the early 1990s.<sup>105</sup> Whether Enríquez achieved institutional power of a degree comparable to Chávez or not, we know that he did steer the music scene in Mexico towards a more internationalist approach.

Given Enríquez's significant role in introducing international modernist ideas and popularizing the experimental attitude in Mexico during the 1960s and 1970s, it seems paradoxical that—just as Chávez did with the nationalist aesthetic—by the late 1980s, he was making statements that suggest he was reconsidering experimentalism.<sup>106</sup> The international scene was already entering a post-modernist era, leaving experimentation behind. Mexican composers had shown for decades how willing they were to engage with

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Manuel Enríquez's name was added after Enríquez's death, as an homage to the composer. The International Forum of New Music was founded in 1979 and has been running annually since its creation, celebrating its fortieth edition in 2018. The primary purpose of the forum has been to provide a space for the promotion of the newest compositions in Mexico and to create links between Mexican and international composers to share their creative compositional ideas. Many Mexican composers premiered their works there, and several internationally recognized composers have visited to attend conferences and present their music at this forum. Currently, this event is one of the most important events of contemporary music in Mexico.

<sup>105</sup> Coriún Aharonián, "La Muerte de Manuel Enríquez," *Revista Musical Chilena*, Año XLVIII, (Julio-Diciembre, 1994): 121-126.

<sup>106</sup> In the welcoming speech during the acceptance of composer Mario Lavista into the Academy of the Arts in Mexico, Manuel Enríquez regrets the attitude adopted by many composers during the experimentation era in which "[...] it seemed that the one who was more aggressive or indifferent toward the listener was the brilliant one. Happily, that era is gone. The rabid experimentation does not surprise anyone anymore, and although all of us have transited on that path, it is necessary for us to enter a more rational era; with balance but without giving up an original and innovative character." "Durante algunos años, pareciera que aquél que más audaz se manifestara en la agresión o indiferencia hacia el oyente se convertía en el más 'genial' y digno de imitarse. Felizmente esa época pasó, la rabiosa experimentación ya no sorprende a nadie, y aunque casi todos hemos transitado por ese camino es justo que entremos ahora en una etapa más racional; [...] con un mejor equilibrio [...] sin que el creador claudique de su carácter original de innovador nato [...]." In Manuel Enríquez, "Respuesta de Manuel Enríquez." *Heterofonía* 98-99 (January-December, 1988): 66-68.

the ideas of their time. As global artistic trends were changing, it was time for Mexican composers to follow along.<sup>107</sup>

## 1.7 Conclusion

The emergence of post-1945 musical trends in Mexico took place in a period of profound social and cultural changes. This chapter has examined different factors playing a role in the internationalization of art music in Mexico during the second half of the century. It has been revealed that at least as early as the 1950s, artists in Mexico expressed a lack of interest in continuing pursuing the nationalist aesthetic that had been prominent in previous decades. The artists' rejection of the nationalist aesthetic was in direct opposition with the official cultural agenda, which was still aiming to further national identity during the 1950s.

Evidence suggests that during the decades of the 1960s and 1970s this situation slightly changed. In these decades, government support to projects fostering non-nationalist styles of music appeared. Furthermore, alternative institutions emerged to support the music of younger composers, much of which was completely devoid of nationalist features. The combination of these facts promoted the flourishing of avant-garde Mexican music completely detached of the nationalist aesthetic. This period was not free of political turmoil. General disorganization among the different musical figures in Mexico, as well as the pursuit of individual interests, created sharp divisions that made impossible the conception of a defined musical policy.

The most influential international musical trends of the post-war years—serialism, experimentalism, and the use of technology—all arrived in Mexico, influencing composers to different degrees. Serialism, representing the traditional and academic side

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<sup>107</sup> For biographical information about Manuel Enríquez see José Antonio Alcaraz, "Manuel Enríquez (1926-1994)," *Armonía*, No. 8 (January, 1995); Susana A. Enríquez, Aurelio Tello, Iracema de Andrade, *Manuel Enríquez: Hoy de ayer*, E-book edition, (México: Centro Nacional de las Artes, 2017); Aurelio Tello, "En prosa: Semblanza de Manuel Enríquez," [manuelenriquez.com](http://www.manuelenriquez.com), <http://www.manuelenriquez.com/frames/semblanzacentrado.html>, (accessed February 12, 2018).

of the musical continuum, was not as popular in Mexico as in Europe and the United States. In the cases when Mexican composers decided to engage with serialism, they did it in a free and unorthodox manner. Other factors influencing the lack of popularity of serialism in the Mexican scene were the scarcity of musical institutions teaching serialism and the fact that some composers felt that serialism lacked emotive content, limiting itself to be a merely intellectual process. The experimentalist trend, meanwhile, was more popular in Mexico, offering the potential for complete liberation from any technical restraints while fostering creativity. Furthermore, the experimentalist vein did not necessarily require an academic background, making it more accessible to a broader range of people. This fact encouraged the appearance of artists with no preparation whatsoever, which produced a considerable quantity of artistic works of diverse artistic value. Also under the banner of experimentalism came new music technologies. Electronics opened up a whole new world of possibilities for composers worldwide and Mexican composers did not hesitate to experiment with this new medium.

Efforts of various kinds fostered interest in post-war musical trends. Carlos Chávez, being the most influential composer in Mexico, undertook several projects to strengthen and internationalize the musical scene in Mexico. He was behind the foundation of a compositional workshop at the National Conservatory in 1960 to offer the most complete education for composers up to that time. Chávez also presented conferences, wrote articles, and was a member of associations that further the support to new music, encouraging the younger generation of composers towards a more internationalist stance. Similarly, festivals, concert series, and associations appeared with the sole purpose of strengthening the contact of Mexican musicians with then-current international artistic ideas. Whether consciously or unconsciously, the combination of these different efforts suggests a multidimensional determination by Mexican composers to advance alongside the artistic interests of the Western world.

Manuel Enríquez emerged as one of the leading figures during Mexico's experimentation era. Enríquez exerted considerable influence among the younger generation of composers through the novel trends of composition he displayed on his music. Additionally, Enríquez also organized far-reaching projects to modernize the Mexican music scene as

the head of the most important music institutions in Mexico. Keenly aware of the international trends, however, by the late 1980s Enríquez did not hesitate to recognize that it was time “to enter a more rational path.”<sup>108</sup>

The combination of all the events mentioned above created a cultural melting pot that profoundly influenced the composers navigating in this period. Federico Ibarra reached maturity right in the middle of this vibrant musical and cultural environment, and his musical style was profoundly shaped by this era.

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<sup>108</sup> Manuel Enríquez, “Respuesta de Manuel Enríquez.” *Heterofonía* 98-99 (January-December, 1988): 66-68.

## Chapter 2. Federico Ibarra: A Son of His Era

On February 8, 1994, the *New York Times* published a review of the festival *Sonidos de las Americas: México*. This festival presented concerts of Mexican concert music in different venues across Manhattan, the Bronx, and Queens. According to the reviewer, some of the works “didn’t sound Mexican at all [...]. One sensed little interest in politics [...], be it the politics of national identity, or the politics of current fashion.”<sup>109</sup> A different review was published on May 13, 2010, when the Philharmonic Orchestra of the Americas presented a whole program of Mexican music at Lincoln Center’s Alice Tully Hall. The first comment of the reviewer this time was that “there were no identifying national characteristics in many of the works.”<sup>110</sup> In both concerts, Federico Ibarra’s *Second Symphony* was performed and in the second review, it was described as “dramatically dark-hued.”<sup>111</sup>

Such comments highlight a common expectation about Mexican music—otherwise, nothing would be said about the absence of such “characteristics.” The fact is that Mexican music is far richer than is usually acknowledged, and many Mexican composers never tried to portray national characteristics in their music. Mexican composer Federico Ibarra aimed to avoid any of the nationalist features that permeated much of Mexican post-revolutionary music during the first half of the century. Born in 1946, Ibarra started his musical studies in 1961 at the National School of Music (ENM) of the National University of Mexico (UNAM).<sup>112</sup> During this period, the hegemony of nationalist art in Mexico was on the wane, and the cultural context was experiencing a considerable influx of novel artistic ideas coming from Europe and the United States. Eager to find a personal style, Ibarra—and many of his colleagues in Mexico—explored these avant-garde and

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<sup>109</sup> Bernard Holland, “Full Circle for Mexican Festival,” *New York Times*, Feb 08, 1994, p C16.

<sup>110</sup> Vivien Schweitzer, “Music Review: Celebrating Mexico with works of its own,” *New York Times*, May 13, 2010, p C3.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> “Federico Ibarra Groth. Datos Biográficos y Obras,” *Heterofonía*, no. 26 (September - October 1972): 23.

experimental ideas during the decades of the 1960s and 1970s, taking Mexican music into an era of unparalleled stylistic diversity.

This period was not free of challenges. The musical scene in Mexico was slow to adapt to the fast-paced stylistic changes happening around the world. Music programs in educational institutions were outdated, and most composers relied on traveling abroad for education or adopting a self-teaching approach in order to inform themselves of the latest compositional techniques and aesthetics. As if this were not enough, the centralization of musical power around the figure of Carlos Chávez and his circle made the access to opportunities even more difficult for those who did not belong to this group—Ibarra included.

Yet, Ibarra's vocation, talent, and curious personality ultimately led him to overcome such adversities and to produce an extensive compositional output. Ibarra ventured into a variety of musical genres, including instrumental and vocal music, ballet, opera, theater, and cinema. Furthermore, Ibarra's music demonstrates an internationalist facet of Mexican music that is seldom acknowledged.

This chapter examines Federico Ibarra's formative years as a case study through which I observe the repercussions that post-war modernism had on the aesthetics of Mexican art music. Ibarra's early career of composition is used as a window to observe the musical scene in Mexico during the period 1960s-1970s—the time-frame in which an experimentalist trend in Mexico emerged and peaked. Furthermore, this chapter also serves as a biographical introduction to a composer who has not previously been analyzed in English language literature.

## 2.1 Growing Up in Avant-Garde Mexico: Challenges and Inspirations

Federico Ibarra was born in Mexico City on July 25, 1946. Growing up in a middle-class and non-musical family, Ibarra's desire to pursue a musical career was opposed by his parents. His family's disagreement was based on their belief that music is an unprofitable career and, at most, music served as entertainment, not as an actual occupation. Only

after Ibarra committed to pursuing another career—architecture—did his family allow him to study music.<sup>113</sup>

Ibarra was fourteen years old when he started his musical studies at the ENM. In the early 1960s, the music program at this institution was underdeveloped, small, and disorganized.<sup>114</sup> The National Conservatory of Music of Mexico City held the most advanced program for musicians, particularly composers, as Carlos Chávez created a composition workshop in 1960 with the main purpose of giving the best musical education possible to young Mexican composers. Ibarra was not able to enter the Conservatory, however, due to age-limit policies, and had to settle on going to the ENM.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Ibarra pursued architecture for three years until he decided to quit and dedicate himself exclusively to his music studies.

<sup>114</sup> Performers, composers, and conductors made numerous denouncements about the state of music education in Mexico during the decade of the 60s, 70s, 80s, and 90s. For more information, see Melo, *Notas sin Música*; Roberto García Bonilla, “Arte Sin Sexo: Cuestionario a Compositoras Sobre Música Mexicana,” in Roberto García Bonilla, *Visiones Sonoras: Entrevistas con Compositores, Solistas y Directores*, (México DF: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 2001), 65-91.

<sup>115</sup> *Federico Ibarra: Premio Nacional del Arte 2001*, directed by Julián Hernández, CONACULTA, 2011. It is possible that other factors may have been involved in Ibarra’s inability to enter the National Conservatory, beyond age. Music critic and writer Juan Vicente Melo alludes to the age policy of the Conservatory on his article “Conservatorio Nacional de Música: Cien Años del Conservatorio o Cómo Aprender a Odiar la Música” (National Conservatory of Music: A hundred Years of the Conservatory or How to Learn to Hate Music). In this article, Melo mentions that the age limit to enter the piano program was twelve—at least at the moment he wrote the article (1966). Melo also alludes to the ubiquitous corruption of the Mexican institutions by mentioning that students older than twelve years old could enroll in the program “as long as they have money and the right connections” “no se puede aprender piano si uno tiene la desgracia de contar con más de 12 años de edad [...] pueden inscribirse adolescentes de más de 12 años de edad, siempre y cuando tengan dinero e influencias.” Juan Vicente Melo, “Conservatorio Nacional de Música: Cien años del conservatorio o cómo aprender a odiar la música,” *Siempre!*, July 27, 1966, in Melo, *Notas sin Música*, 196; Conversely, as it has been previously cited in the first chapter of this document, critic Raúl Cosío Villegas claims that the National Conservatory’s director during the period 1960-1967 (Raúl Amparán) imposed the age of eight years old as the limit to enter this institution. See Raúl Cosío Villegas, “Música,” *Siempre!*, January 3, 1968, in *La Música en México en la Segunda Mitad del Siglo XX: Hemerografía de Raúl Cosío Villegas*, ed. Citlali Ruíz CD-Rom (Mexico DF: CONACULTA-FONCA).



In the early 1960s, the ENM hired more faculty to cover a growing body of students entering the institution. One of these professors was Puerto Rican national Juan Antonio Rosado (1922-1993), who became Ibarra's harmony teacher. Rosado proposed a new initiative for his harmony course that ultimately became pivotal to Ibarra's interest in composition. Rosado required his students to write a composition to be presented in a recital at the end of the academic year—an event unusual for the harmony course. Ibarra enthusiastically tackled this assignment by writing a string quartet in one movement (*Invierno*, 1963). Ibarra wrote his *Invierno* quartet in a tonal language, using a romantic style reflecting an early predilection for the music of Tchaikovsky.<sup>116</sup> Writing a string quartet forced Ibarra to acquaint himself with the characteristics of the string instruments, none of which he played or with which he was familiar. The challenge proved to be engaging and rewarding for the young Ibarra and reinforced his view about becoming a professional composer.<sup>117</sup>

At the time Ibarra wrote his first quartet, a change was palpable in the composition environment of Mexico City. The nationalist musical style that had become ubiquitous in the arts during the first half of the century was now a trend of the past. Some influential figures such as Carlos Chávez had been mentioning for years that it was necessary to move on from the nationalist style; other emerging figures were already positioning themselves in the modernist international circles of the United States and Europe. Among these composers, Manuel Enríquez (1926-1994) pioneered the exploration of avant-garde techniques in Mexico, and became a role model for many of the youngest composers, Ibarra included. Furthermore, the burgeoning music scene in Mexico was presenting an increasing number of international modernist and avant-garde music by many composers, including Oliver Messiaen, Pierre Boulez, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Iannis Xenakis, György Ligeti, Witold Lutosławski, Krzysztof Penderecki, and John Cage, among others. These composers employed concepts, styles, and sonorities starkly different and far more

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<sup>116</sup> Federico Ibarra, interview with the author; Gonzáles and Saavedra, *Música Mexicana Contemporánea*, 179.

<sup>117</sup> Ibarra's choice of composition over performance was furthered by the widespread presupposition that a performer had necessarily to start at an early age.

interesting for Ibarra than the nationalist Mexican music rooted in indigenous and folk traditions.

While the young Ibarra was certain that he did not want to write nationalist music, the question of what to do instead remained unanswered. A seemingly random event would point him towards an appealing path. From August 3-31 of 1964, the National Institute of Fine Arts (INBA) organized an homage to the life and work of the recently-deceased émigré Remedios Varo (1908-1963). Varo was a Spanish painter linked to the Surrealist movement. Fleeing the Second World War, Varo arrived in Mexico in 1941—having lived in Venezuela between 1947-1949, but moving back to Mexico thereafter—where she established herself among the artistic circles of refugees in a similar situation. As part of the homage, several of the artist’s paintings were exhibited. Accompanying Varo’s work, there was a text dedicated to her by Mexican poet Carlos Pellicer (1897-1977) titled *Paseo Sin Pie*. Pellicer was recreating the scenes, colours, and themes of Varo’s surrealist paintings with his poetry. The way Pellicer’s words depicted Varo’s fantastic universe was a revelation for Ibarra. It signaled to him the possibility of adopting a similar approach in music. In the words of Ibarra, “there were no examples of a surrealist aesthetic in music and that strongly called my attention.”<sup>118</sup> In the wake of this event, Ibarra developed a deep interest in the subconscious nature of the mind, the oneiric worlds that Surrealist art depicted, and the poetry’s ability to evoke a variety of images and meanings from seemingly simple words. Varo’s homage became, then, not only the point of origin from which Ibarra created a connection between music, poetry—eventually literature—, and painting, but also about Ibarra’s search of a unique aesthetic style influenced by surrealist art.

Once the inspiration for an aesthetic style was planted, there was still the challenge of finding the adequate musical language to write such works. Referring to this stage in his formative development, Ibarra has acknowledged that witnessing the Mexican premier of Krzysztof Penderecki’s work, *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima*, was profoundly

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<sup>118</sup> Ibarra, interview with the author. “En la música no había ejemplos de una actitud estética surrealista y eso me empezó a llamar poderosamente la atención.”

influential in the development of his musical language.<sup>119</sup> Back then, however, the official curriculum of the composition course at ENM was not going to offer a thorough knowledge of the possibilities of the era, as it was circumscribed to the study of tonal music, and disregarded any of the modernist methods and trends. While Ibarra became acquainted with modal harmonies through private lessons with Professor Rosado, he had to adopt a self-teaching approach, in order to familiarize himself with other languages, such as serialism and aleatory procedures.<sup>120</sup>

## 2.2 Early Musical Explorations

As Ibarra navigated the diverse array of approaches to composition co-existing in the Mexico of the 1960s, he observed that composers—students and professionals, alike—usually divided into two mutually exclusive groups. On one side, there were those composers who were still attached to tradition—musical form, notation, tonality—while disregarding the ideas of avant-garde music. On the other side, there was an attitude of rebellion against tradition at all costs, in pursuit of innovation above anything else. Ibarra believed that a reconciliatory approach, considering both views simultaneously, would be more beneficial to him. In Ibarra’s view, innovation and tradition were not mutually exclusive. As he said in 1980, “[This approach] allowed me to create my universe, in which I decided that my own rules and structures would follow my personal fantasies.”<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Ibarra, interview with the author; The Mexican premier of Penderecki’s *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima* (1961) took place on July 15, 1966 with Luis Herrera de la Fuente conducting the National Symphony Orchestra. In Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, *50 Años de Música en el Palacio de Bellas Artes*, (México: INBA/SEP, 1986), 132, 410.

<sup>120</sup> Ibarra claimed in a speech in 1997, just as he was becoming a member of the prestigious Academy of the Arts in Mexico, “I owe my career as a composer to an effort of my own in which the university [National University of Mexico] has had little to do, in short, I am self-taught.” “Mi carrera como compositor la debo a un esfuerzo propio en el que la Universidad poco ha tenido que ver, en fin, que he sido autodidacta.” Federico Ibarra and Mario Lavista, “El Compositor como Portador del Tiempo: Discurso de Ingreso a la Academia de Artes,” (México DF: Academia de Artes, 1997), 7-8.

<sup>121</sup> Gonzáles and Saavedra, *Música Mexicana Contemporánea*, 176-177. “Esta resolución me permitió crear un universo propio, en el que las reglas y las estructuras yo mismo las decidía de acuerdo a mis fantasmas o fantasías personales.”

With this undogmatic attitude, Ibarra was free to navigate the realms of tradition and innovation at will, with his creative desires being the only limiting factor.<sup>122</sup>

Following his *Invierno* quartet, Ibarra wrote *Tres Preludios Monocromáticos* (1964) for piano four hands and *Suite efébica* (1965) for violin, flute, bassoon, cello, and piano. According to Yolanda Moreno Rivas, the *Preludios Monocromáticos* are an exploration of different articulations on the piano, while the *Suite Efébica* is a work with a “descriptive lyricism” close to an impressionist language, which tries to represent an acoustic idealization of Greek mythology.<sup>123</sup> After completing these instrumental compositions, an unexpected event would encourage Ibarra to venture into the writing of vocal music.

As Ibarra was progressing in his studies, he obtained his first job as a pianist for the National School of Music’s choir. This position proved to be exceptionally beneficial to him for two reasons. First, playing for the ensemble exposed him to a vast quantity of choir music. Second, Ibarra befriended the choir’s conductor, Jorge Medina, who, aware of Ibarra’s potential as a composer, encouraged him to write music for the vocal ensemble. Taking advantage of this unusual privilege, Ibarra started a series of cantatas for voice and different instrumentations. These early works were used as experiments to acquire empirical knowledge about what Ibarra was hearing in modernist and avant-garde music. Ibarra’s cantatas use different musical languages and resources—tonality, serialism, electronics, noise music, and aleatory procedures—and represent the composer’s earliest experimentation with varied instrumental combinations, showing his early desire to explore unusual sonorities on the different instruments. These cantatas also

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<sup>122</sup> Manuel Enríquez spoke about the undogmatic approach characteristic of Mexican composers in the following manner: “Some countries are very dogmatic and academic, and we are not. We are not academic because we don’t have any past in the music field. All Mexican music is Twentieth Century music. We don’t have classicism or Romanticism.” In Carol Jeannine Wagar, “Stylistic Tendencies in Three Contemporary Mexican Composers: Manuel Enríquez, Mario Lavista and Alicia Urreta,” (DMA diss., Stanford University, 1986), 120.

<sup>123</sup> Moreno Rivas, *La Composición en México en el Siglo XX*, 91.

demonstrate Ibarra's desire to merge sounds with poetry, just as Pellicer had merged poetry and painting.

The first cantata, *Paseo sin pie* (1967), takes its title and text from the poetry that Pellicer dedicated to Remedios Varo a few years earlier. It is written in three movements for narrator, mixed choir, piano, harmonium, celesta, and percussions. Julio Estrada mentions that this work shows faint aural reminiscences of Lutosławski and Messiaen's music that had no precedents in Mexican music.<sup>124</sup> Ibarra himself confirmed a profound influence from Messiaen at this stage of his development.<sup>125</sup>

The second cantata, *Nocturno Sueño* (1969), was originally composed in three movements for tenor, flute, piano, and male choir. The first two movements, which Ibarra ultimately discarded, were exclusively instrumental. The tenor and choir were added in the third movement, showing an influence of Schoenberg's *String Quartet No. 2*.<sup>126</sup> The second cantata explores the extended sonorities of the instruments through the use of clusters and plucking of the strings on the piano, microtonal playing on the flute, and a variety of effects of the voice, such as whispers, half-sung and half-spoken sections, and vocal glissandos. This cantata also shows an early interest in indeterminism and is Ibarra's only incursion into serial writing.<sup>127</sup>

The third cantata, *Nocturno de la estatua* (1969), was the most ambitious of Ibarra's projects up to that moment. It is written for two mixed choirs, a narrator, and two instrumental groups (two trumpets, two trombones, piano, electronics, and percussion). This work represents Ibarra's exploration of the sonorous and timbric possibilities of the voice through the use of aleatory procedures. This cantata is the only work in which Ibarra uses electronics.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Estrada, ed., *La Música de México: Periodo Contemporáneo*, 172-173.

<sup>125</sup> Gonzáles and Saavedra, *Música Mexicana Contemporánea*, 179.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 185.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> Juan Arturo Brennan, "Cantatas, Óperas, e Insomnios: Entrevista a Federico Ibarra," *Revista de la Universidad de México*, (August, 1983),

The fourth and fifth cantatas (*Dadá* and *De la naturaleza corporal*, respectively) were written in the same year (1971) and represent opposite approaches to composition. *Dadá* is written for mixed choir and winds quintet in an entirely tonal and traditional form, away from any modernist technique. Ibarra's decision to write tonal music was to prove to himself that he had the technical proficiency to change compositional languages at will, and, more importantly, to confirm for himself that everything he was doing followed an inner conviction and not the trends of the period.<sup>129</sup> *De la naturaleza corporal* is the most experimental of Ibarra's vocal works up to that moment—written for a *capella* choir, this work makes exclusive use of sounds and noises, such as whistles, screams, laughs, speech, breathing, murmurs, and claps. Ibarra considers that his first compositional period ended with the composition of his fifth cantata.

The fact that the self-taught Ibarra could write music in such a variety of styles is a clear testimony to his vocation as a composer and his relentlessness for finding his inner voice.<sup>130</sup> Yet, Ibarra understood that with proper academic guidance his compositional skills could evolve much further.

## 2.3 International Travels

Ibarra's first attempt to get education abroad was at Centro Latinoamericano de Altos Estudios Musicales (CLAEM) in Buenos Aires, Argentina led by Alberto Ginastera.<sup>131</sup>

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[http://www.revistadelauniversidad.unam.mx/ojs\\_rum/index.php/rum/article/view/11719/12957](http://www.revistadelauniversidad.unam.mx/ojs_rum/index.php/rum/article/view/11719/12957).

<sup>129</sup> Ibarra, interview with the author.

<sup>130</sup> Composer Manuel Enríquez described Ibarra as “the only one among the members of the younger generations of composers, that has demonstrated real talent, vocation, and personality of a composer. [Ibarra is] The only one who can truly be called like that [a composer]”. “...el único, entre los miembros de las nuevas generaciones, que realmente ha demostrado tener vocación, talento y personalidad de compositor. El único a quien verdaderamente puede llamarse así.” In Estrada, ed., *La Música de México: Periodo Contemporáneo*, 171.

<sup>131</sup> Financed by the Rockefeller Foundation, this project was created in December, 1961 with the purpose of establishing a center for musical studies of the highest quality for Latin American composers. Numerous musicians and theorists went to CLAEM during its ten years of existence to attend conferences or courses, including Aaron Copland,

The CLAEM offered graduate-level education in composition for its students during twenty months under the guidance of some of the most renowned composers in the world. Even though Ibarra was accepted to study at this institution in 1969—the only Mexican among the sixteen composers accepted that year—he could not take the opportunity due to lack of financial resources.<sup>132</sup> The first feasible opportunity to study abroad came in 1971 when Ibarra won a contest organized by the radio station of the National University of Mexico and the Office de Radiodiffusion-Télévision Française to spend one month working at the Centre International de Recherche Musicale in France. During his time at France, Ibarra had the opportunity to observe the experiments in *musique concrète* by French composers Pierre Henry and Pierre Schaeffer as well as the graphical-sounds experiments of Scottish-Canadian animator Norman McLaren. Furthermore, he witnessed a series of lectures addressing the striking aural similarities in music composed with radically opposed philosophies—integral serialism represented by Pierre Boulez on one side, and the complete freedom of aleatory procedures represented by John Cage on the other.<sup>133</sup>

For three weeks in 1975, Ibarra took another international trip, this time to Santiago de Compostela, Spain, to study at the *XVIII Curso Internacional de Música Española*, under Spaniard composer Rodolfo Halffter. According to Ibarra, this experience was not as musically stimulating as his trip to Paris. Ibarra found Spain to be culturally isolated from the rest of Europe and musically outdated. “They [the Spaniards] were musically behind

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Oliver Messiaen, Riccardo Malipiero, Gilbert Chase, Luigi Dallapiccola, Bruno Maderna, Mario Davidovsky, Maurice Le Roux, Roger Sessions, Earle Brown, Iannis Xenakis, Luigi Nono, Vladimir Ussachefsky, Gilbert Amy, Eric Salzman, and Umberto Eco. See more at Carredano and Eli, eds., *La Música en Hispanoamérica en el Siglo XX*, 391-403.

<sup>132</sup> Luis Eduardo Herrera, “The CLAEM and the Construction of Elite Art Worlds: Philanthropy, Latinamericanism and Avant-Garde Music,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, 2014), 134.

<sup>133</sup> Ibarra, interview with the author; For information about the similarities between Boulez and Cage’s music see, Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *The Boulez-Cage Correspondence*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 11-12; David Weininger, “Between Boulez and Cage, unexpected affinities,” Boston Globe, <https://www.bostonglobe.com/arts/2015/11/10/between-boulez-and-cage-unexpected-affinities/lyomqjSa00urnV3GvyrpSP/story.html>, (accessed October 14, 2018); Taruskin and Gibbs, *The Oxford History of Western Music-College edition*, 1021-1026.

in all aspects,” Ibarra mentioned.<sup>134</sup> The trip, however, would prove highly beneficial for Ibarra’s career due to another seemingly random event. As Ibarra was traveling to Spain, his flight itinerary had a layover in Paris where he had to stay for one night. Originally, Ibarra was planning to stay with an acquaintance that night, but due to a last-minute change, he ended up being hosted by Manuel Enríquez.

Manuel Enríquez was not only one of the leading Mexican avant-garde composers but also was at the peak of his career when Ibarra met him at Paris. In 1975, Enríquez was officially at the French capital on a cultural mission to promote Mexican music and to become acquainted with the operation of the Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique (IRCAM).<sup>135</sup> This short encounter between Enríquez and Ibarra was the beginning of a fruitful friendship that eventually led to an extended collaboration.

## 2.4 The Definition of a Unique Musical Style

In 2001 writer and music critic Juan Arturo Brennan wrote the following about Ibarra’s music:

The sound of his music is unmistakable [... its] staunch continuity of idea and style (often confused with monotony) [...] is in fact, a feature of his [stylistic] identity, which contrasts with the meandering (sometimes disguised as a search) that plagues some of Ibarra’s contemporaries.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Ibarra, interview with the author.

<sup>135</sup> CENIDIM, *CENIDIM: 40 años construyendo la memoria musical de México* (México: Secretaría de Cultura, INBA, CENIDIM, 2016), 36; Although official sources claim that Enríquez was in Paris serving a cultural mission, in an interview with the author, Ibarra claimed that Enríquez was actually exiled from Mexico due to an undisclosed issue involving cultural politics. For more information, please refer to the transcription of the interview conducted by the author to Federico Ibarra included in Appendix A of this monograph.

<sup>136</sup> “[...] el sonido de su música es inconfundible y esta sólida continuidad de concepto y estilo (que muchos confunden con monotonía y callejones estéticos sin salida) ha dado como resultado, a lo largo de los años y las obras, un sello de identidad que contrasta con la dispersión (a veces disfrazada de búsqueda) que padecen algunos de los contemporáneos de Ibarra.” Juan Arturo Brennan, “Federico Ibarra, Premio Nacional,” *La Jornada*, December 16, 2001, <http://www.jornada.com.mx/2001/12/16/05aa1cul.html>.



In 1984, composer and critic Julio Estrada made a similar statement by saying:

For more than ten years Ibarra has been constructing a valuable catalog, marked by a personality that [...] jumps out as unique, tremendously interesting and endowed with an ideal combination of technique and creative ability [...].<sup>137</sup>

Indeed, Ibarra's music has an unmistakable character recognizable across his different compositional periods. Even when it is possible to identify particular traits of his music since the early works of the 1960s—such as chromatic harmonic progressions, ample use of ascending and descending chromatic melodic gestures, dissonant intervals such as tritones and sevenths, and a predilection for dark sounding atmospheres—composer Mario Lavista points out that Ibarra's style, although present, is “shy and hesitant” in his early works.<sup>138</sup> Yolanda Moreno Rivas stated that it was during the 1970s that Ibarra's style achieved the distinctive qualities that have shaped his music ever since.<sup>139</sup>

The decade of the 1970s was a period in which Ibarra reached an extreme in the experimental spectrum that gradually went back to the traditionalism of tonality and melodic lines, and away from extended techniques. While many composers around the world adopted serialism as a means to detach from tonality and get immersed in musical modernism, Ibarra was never attracted to this technique—although he used it once, in his second cantata. He considered it to be lacking in emotive content. On the other hand, Ibarra felt interested in the possibilities that aleatory procedures opened for the exploration of sonorities.

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<sup>137</sup> “desde hace ya más de diez años Ibarra ha ido estructurando un catálogo valioso, marcado por una personalidad que aun cuando hay quienes así lo consideran, no aflora plenamente, salta a la vista como muy individual, interesantísima y dotada de esa aleación entre técnica y capacidad imaginativa [...]” Estrada, ed., *La Música de México: Periodo Contemporáneo*, 171; other comments about Ibarra's unique style on, Raúl Cosío Villegas, “De nuevo, parte Orestes” *Uno más uno*, July 14, 1987, in *La Música en México en la Segunda Mitad del Siglo XX: Hemerografía de Raúl Cosío Villegas*, ed. Citlali Ruíz CD-Rom (México DF: CONACULTA-FONCA).

<sup>138</sup> Ibarra and Lavista, “El Compositor como portador del tiempo: Respuesta de Mario Lavista,” 15-18.

<sup>139</sup> Moreno Rivas, *La Composición en México en el Siglo XX*, 91.

## 2.5 Ibarra in the 1970s: Indeterminism and Exploration of Sonorities

Aleatory composition encompasses a wide variety of choices that composers deliberately make to withdraw authorial control over the outcome of a piece—whether in its actual composition or by allowing the performers to alter it during its performance.<sup>140</sup> Paul Griffiths distinguishes three categories of aleatory approaches:

- i) The use of random procedures in the generation of fixed compositions.
- ii) The allowance of choice to the performer(s) among formal options stipulated by the composer.
- iii) Methods of notation which reduce the composer's control over the sounds in a composition.<sup>141</sup>

While Ibarra never used random procedures to generate any of his compositions, he did employ both, the second and third approaches described by Griffiths. To do this, Ibarra relied on an alternative, graphic notational system.<sup>142</sup> In some cases—although rarely—Ibarra made use of a “mobile form.”<sup>143</sup> Ibarra's primary goal in using aleatory procedures was to further his exploration of colours, sonorities, timbral possibilities, textural elements, and instrumental combinations. Ibarra aimed to use the performers'

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<sup>140</sup> I use the terms indeterminism and aleatory as synonyms.

<sup>141</sup> Paul Griffiths, “Aleatory,” *Grove Music Online*, accessed 3 Sep. 2018, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000000509>.

<sup>142</sup> Alternative notational systems had appeared since the 1950s in the scores of music by composers such as Ligeti, Cage, Stockhausen, Xenakis, and Penderecki. Much of Ibarra's music from the late 1960s and 1970s uses graphic scoring. In Mexico, Manuel Enríquez introduced graphic notational systems to Mexican composers with works such as his *Second String Quartet* (1967).

<sup>143</sup> Mobile form is a form of composition in which a composer provides different options (also called “events”) to be performed at a particular section of a musical work. It is up to the performers to choose the option and/or the order, altering in this way the structure of the piece in each performance. In Griffiths, “Aleatory,” *Grove Music Online*.

creativity—by giving them freedom—as a tool to obtain ideas for achieving new sonorities and effects.<sup>144</sup>

The use of aleatory processes and indeterminacy was not free of challenges. Ibarra was troubled by the exponential probabilities of musical chaos as he left more elements open to the performers' choice. The idea of how to achieve a balance between indeterminacy and control came from Polish composer Witold Lutosławski (1913-1994).<sup>145</sup> The way in which Lutosławski used “aleatory counterpoint” to give overall unity to his music influenced Ibarra to establish certain frameworks to allow liberties while still retaining control of the overall result of the piece's performance.<sup>146</sup> Ibarra called this approach “a controlled aleatorism.”

Ibarra's “controlled aleatorism” relies on clearly defining certain musical elements such as dynamic range, articulations, and register, while leaving elements such as specific pitches, rhythms, and length of the notes open to the performer or conductor's interpretation. Ibarra explored aleatory procedures in solo pieces (*Sonata for Piano No. 1*, 1976), chamber music works (*Cuarteto del Trasmundo*, 1975; *Cinco Manuscritos Pnakóticos*, 1977; *Cinco Estudios Premonitorios*, 1976), and large-scale orchestral works (*El Rito del Reencuentro*, 1974; *Cinco Misterios Eléusicos*, 1979).

As well as composing, Ibarra was actively engaged with both performing and teaching during the mid-1970s. Besides being the pianist of the ENM's choir, Ibarra regularly

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<sup>144</sup> Ibarra, interview with the author.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

<sup>146</sup> Lutosławski was led to explore aleatory procedures after hearing a broadcast of the *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra* by American composer John Cage in the early 1960s. Unlike Cage, Lutosławski's aleatory procedures “involve no improvisation, nor any opportunity for players to choose what or when to play during a performance. In Lutosławski's aleatory passages pitch material is fully specified, as is the rhythmic material of each individual part. Only the rhythmic coordination of parts within the ensemble is subject to an element of chance. For this reason, the technique is often described as ‘aleatory counterpoint.’” In Charles Bodman Rae, “Lutosławski, Witold,” *Grove Music Online*, accessed 12 Sep. 2018, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000017226>.

performed recitals and concerts of twentieth-century music.<sup>147</sup> In this regard, the collaboration with Manuel Enríquez, who was also a violinist, was of paramount importance for Ibarra's acquaintance with much of the newest music written by both his Mexican and international composer-colleagues. On the other hand, concerned with the sub-par musical education he had received thus far in Mexico, Ibarra started to consider ways to improve the precarious situation he had faced for the next generation. In his undergraduate thesis, *La Educación Musical del Compositor* (1978), Ibarra boldly proposed a new curriculum to fix the flaws he had experienced as a student at ENM. Ibarra had the opportunity to put his pedagogical proposals into practice when he was invited to teach a composition course at the National Center for Music Research (CENIDIM) by Enríquez, who was director of that institution (1977-1985).

While Ibarra was satisfied with his performance and teaching occupations, he had mixed feelings about his future as a composer. On the one hand, he was content with his aesthetic style, and the positive reception of his music by the Mexican critics.<sup>148</sup> On the other, he observed that the highly politicized cultural environment of Mexico reserved most of the opportunities for development—opportunities such as study abroad for a prolonged period, access to the main musical venues such as the Palace of Fine Arts, and commissions—to a very small circle of composers, all of them connected in one way or another to Carlos Chávez. In the words of Ibarra:

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<sup>147</sup> For example, Ibarra stated that he premiered the complete second volume of George Crumb's *Markrokosmos* and performed John Cage's piano concerto. Ibarra also collaborated extensively with pianists Mario Lavista—also an important Mexican composer of the avant-garde era—and Carmen Betancourt in performing music by composers such as Stockhausen, Halffter, Cage, Cowell, Ibarra, Enríquez, Lavista, Feldman, and Lutosławski, to name a few.

<sup>148</sup> For example, "Federico Ibarra, extremely talented composer, premiered in the Franklin Library his *Cinco Canciones de la Noche*, written last year. With this work Ibarra positions himself among the group of timeless composers for his virtue, originality, and expressive power." "FEDERICO IBARRA, talentosísimo compositor, estrenó en la Biblioteca Franklin sus *Cinco Canciones de la Noche*, compuestas el año pasado. Con esta obra Federico saltó al panteón de los imperecederos, por su virtud, originalidad y potencia expresiva. Anonym, "Estreno de una obra de Federico Ibarra," *Heterofonia*, 55 (July-August, 1977): 27.

the composition opportunities[...] in those days [...] were limited to the students of the conservatory and especially to those who had been students of Carlos Chávez [...]. I was not part of that [Ibarra did not study either at the National Conservatory or with Chávez] ... It was as simple as that. In those moments, I started to say “if I have been like ... I don’t know, ten years or so composing... and nothing has turned out... it seems that I do not exist... [so] maybe I should dedicate myself to something else.”<sup>149</sup>

In the midst of this compositional crisis, Ibarra received a commission by the *Orquesta Filarmónica de las Américas* and its conductor Luis Herrera de la Fuente in 1979.

Herrera de la Fuente was a recognized promoter of new music by Mexican composers and was a prominent personality in the musical life of Mexico. Ibarra wrote the piece *Cinco Misterios Eléusicos* to fulfill this commission. The work was received with critical acclaim, described as a “formidable piece, perhaps the most solid and impressive work by a Mexican composer of the latter part of the century.”<sup>150</sup> With his *Cinco Misterios Eléusicos* Ibarra positioned himself at the forefront of the young generation of composers in Mexico and its success led to further commissions.

## 2.6 Post-Modernism: Return to Tradition

The same year the *Cinco Misterios Eléusicos* were written (1979), Ibarra had the opportunity to attend the Warsaw Autumn Festival in Poland—as an audience member. Manuel Enríquez, in his position as Director of the CENIDIM, took Ibarra on a field trip

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<sup>149</sup> Ibarra, interview with the author. “... el ambiente musical de la composición [...] sobre todo en esos momentos estaba muy cerrado, o no, no precisamente cerrado sino circunscrito a los alumnos del conservatorio y sobre todo a los que habían sido alumnos de Carlos Chávez [...] pues yo no entraba, simple y sencillamente [...] en esos momentos pues empecé a decir, ‘si llevo... no sé, diez años componiendo y no... vamos no resulta nada. Es decir, parece ser que no existo... pues a lo mejor me tengo que dedicar a otra cosa’”; There are numerous accounts about the relationship between power and access to the main musical institutions in Mexico such as the Palace of Fine Arts. See, for example, Eduardo Contreras Soto, “Los Compositores y el Palacio de Bellas Artes,” *Heterofonía* 134-135, (January-December 2006): 193.

<sup>150</sup> “...obra formidable, quizá la más la más sólida e impresionante de los Mexicanos de este fin de siglo.” Raúl Villegas Cosío, “Ibarra y sus misterios.” *El semanario*, May 19, 1991, in *La Música en México en la Segunda Mitad del Siglo XX: Hemerografía de Raúl Cosío Villegas*, ed. Citlali Ruíz CD-Rom (Mexico DF: CONACULTA-FONCA).

to observe the organization of the Polish festival, with the purpose of helping him organize a similar event in Mexico. While in Poland, Ibarra witnessed a production of the opera *Paradise Lost* by Krzysztof Penderecki. In this work, Ibarra detected a change in the musical language of the Polish composer: Penderecki had left behind the exploration of atmospheric textures characteristic of the avant-garde style of the 1960s and early 1970s, and, instead, adopted a neo-romantic style with Wagnerian reminiscences.<sup>151</sup> The change that Ibarra noticed in Penderecki's style was neither exclusive to the Polish composer nor the European scene. Around the world, the sonic experimentations of the avant-garde era were gradually starting to recede in favor of a return to the use of tonal centers, defined melodic lines, traditional forms, and, in some cases, a renewed influence of popular and folkloric music.

Ibarra was not exempted from the influence of global post-modernism. Although he retained an experimentalist approach, his focus changed. While during the 1970s he prioritized the exploration of sound colour, textures, masses and densities, during the following decades Ibarra shifted his attention to musical form.<sup>152</sup> Ibarra's first opera, *Leoncio y Lena* (1980-1981) marks the composer's abandonment of aleatory processes and sound experimentations—only a year after he witnessed Penderecki's return to traditionalism in *Paradise Lost*—and a return to the careful selection of all the elements present in his music, use of tonal centers, and a more conventional approach to composition.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> More about Penderecki talking about his abandonment of avant-garde style on, K. R. Schwarz, "First a Firebrand, then a Romantic. Now what?" *New York Times*, Oct 20, 1996, p H33.

<sup>152</sup> García Bonilla, *Visiones Sonoras*, 113; Ibarra, interview with the author.

<sup>153</sup> In Ibarra's case, the initial abandonment of avant-garde techniques present in *Leoncio y Lena* was related to the requirements of the commission more than personal conviction. The Theater Department of the National University of Mexico commissioned the work for actors that could sing (not singers that could act), and therefore, Ibarra had to adjust his language to make it accessible (to learn). Even though covering Ibarra's entire operatic output is beyond the scope of this monograph, it should be mentioned that Ibarra is one of the most prolific opera composers in Mexico having composed a total of eight operas so far, all of which have been staged.

Even though Ibarra gradually receded from the experimentalism that he used during the 1960s and 1970s, his unique aesthetic style remained, always disconnected from nationalist characteristics and frequently close to the early influence of Surrealism. Consequently, Ibarra's music frequently challenges widespread expectations about the way Mexican music should sound. Can Ibarra be recognized as a Mexican composer when his music takes inspiration from international composers and disregards any traditional Mexican characteristics? If one considers the fact that Ibarra has spent most of his life in Mexico, internalizing all the cultural and social events of the time and place he was living, then, yes, Ibarra and his music can be recognized as intrinsically Mexican. If anything, Ibarra's unique style represents, not a composer who detaches himself from his nation, but a nation whose musical legacy transcends the borders of the "national."

### Chapter 3. Ibarra's Avant-Garde Style

On October 9, 1979, the recently-founded International Forum of New Music (FIMNME) presented a chamber music concert in the Sala Ponce of the Palace of Fine Arts in Mexico City. The program consisted of music exclusively written by living Mexican composers—among them were Joaquín Gutiérrez Heras (1927-2012), Mario Lavista (b. 1943), Federico Ibarra (b.1946), and Julio Estrada (b.1943).<sup>154</sup> Attending the concert was a young man named Juan Arturo Brennan (b.1955), who would write over twenty years later:

After a childhood and adolescence firmly anchored in Vivaldi and Tchaikovsky, my rebellious ear resisted with intransigence to accept the music of the newest composers [...] More than twenty years ago I was reluctantly taken to a concert that was part of one of the first versions of the International Forum of New Music... I confess that almost all the content of the program has been erased from my memory. What I have not forgotten is on that night I heard, fascinated, the *Cinco Manuscritos Pnakóticos*, by Federico Ibarra, [...] thanks to which the rebelliousness was removed from my ear and I discovered the vast world of the sounds of my own time.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, *50 Años de Música en el Palacio de Bellas Artes*, (México: INBA/SEP, 1986), 499. The concert included the works *Sonata Simple*, *Cinco Manuscritos Pnakóticos*, *Canto del Alba*, and *Arruyo* by composers Joaquín Gutiérrez Heras, Federico Ibarra, Mario Lavista, and Julio Estrada respectively. The performers were Mario Lavista and Federico Ibarra (Piano), Manuel Enríquez (Violin), María Elena Arizpe (Flute), and Thusnelda Nieto (Soprano).

<sup>155</sup> Juan Arturo Brennan, “Federico Ibarra. Premio Nacional,” *La Jornada*, December 16, 2001, <https://www.jornada.com.mx/2001/12/16/05aa1cul.html>. “Después de una infancia y adolescencia firmemente anclada en Vivaldi y Chaikovsky, mi oído rebelde se resistía con cierta intransigencia a aceptar la música de los compositores más nuevos [...] Hace más de veinte años fui llevado a regañadientes a un concierto que formaba parte de una de las primeras versiones del Foro Internacional de Música Nueva; confieso que el contenido total del programa se ha borrado de mi memoria. Lo que no he olvidado es que esa noche escuché, improbablemente fascinado, los *Cinco Manuscritos Pnakóticos*, de Federico Ibarra, mi primera audición formal de música contemporánea gracias a la cual se le quitó lo rebelde a mi oído y descubrí el ancho e inmenso mundo de los sonidos de mi propio tiempo.”



By the time Brennan heard *Cinco Manuscritos Pnakóticos*, Ibarra was already in the process of consolidating a unique musical idiom, product of a contact with the modernist compositional techniques permeating Mexico during his formative years as well as an early enthusiasm for Surrealist aesthetics. The fact that Ibarra was developing his personal style in one of the most eclectic and rich periods of the twentieth century undoubtedly affected the way in which he attempted to achieve this purpose. Like many post-World War II composers, Ibarra was influenced not only by the different compositional trends of North America and Europe, but also by the attitude of experimentation that permeated much of the compositional world. While experimentation and innovation were the primary aims of many composers during this era, however, for Ibarra these two qualities were a byproduct, rather than an end, of developing his own compositional voice.<sup>156</sup>

Ibarra's focus on aesthetics allowed him to create a unique style among the myriad musical works that appeared during the 1960s and 1970s. This is why composers, critics, and musicologists have described Ibarra's works as audibly distinctive, regardless of the musical language he uses. Perhaps this is also the reason why Ibarra's musical style strongly resonated with people who were unfamiliar with modernist music, as Brennan's assertion suggests.

This chapter examines the ways in which Ibarra manipulated melodic contour, texture, timbre (sound colour), sound masses, rhythm, time, and musical character, to create his personal aesthetic style during the 1970s. Sections of three of Ibarra's musical works written during this decade are used to observe the composer's musical style during this period: *Cinco Estudios Premonitorios* (1976), *Cinco Manuscritos Pnakóticos* (1977), and *Cinco Misterios Eléusicos* (1979). While this chapter focuses primarily on musical

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<sup>156</sup> Yolanda Moreno Rivas has also observed that, in Ibarra's case, experimentation by itself was not his primary concern. She states that "although he [Ibarra] uses many of the resources that characterize recent music, none of his works make indiscriminate use of any of the techniques coming from the avant-garde movement." "Aunque [Ibarra] utiliza la mayoría de los recursos que caracterizan a la música reciente, en ninguna de sus obras se nota el uso indiscriminado de efectos provenientes de la vanguardia." In Moreno Rivas, *La Composición en México en el Siglo XX*, 91.

processes, a brief examination of the extra-musical content of Ibarra's music is also included.

### 3.1 *Cinco Estudios Premonitorios*

Ibarra's *Cinco Estudios Premonitorios* (1976) marks the experimental extreme of the composer's compositional evolution.<sup>157</sup> *Cinco Estudios Premonitorios* is a work for instrumental group and (one or more) piano(s) in five movements titled *Premonición nocturna*, *Los signos premonitorios*, *Premonición del viaje*, *Premonición de la luz*, and *Premonición del canto*.<sup>158</sup> The first page of this work provides descriptions about the different symbols Ibarra uses throughout the piece and instructions about the logistics of the performance (Fig.1).<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Federico Ibarra, interview with the author.

<sup>158</sup> The English translation of the title is "Five Premonitory Studies" and the translation of the individual movements are "Nocturne Premonition," "The premonitory signs," "The travel's premonition," "The light premonition," and "The chant premonition," respectively.

<sup>159</sup> The instructions in the score state that the piece "must (or could) be performed with one or more instruments of the various families: woodwinds, metal winds [i.e. brass], and strings." Further instructions state that: "1) If more than one instrument of the different families participate[s] in the piece, the events will not [be] played at unison, they will have entire freedom. 2) The maximum instrument's combination for one piano will be 15, no matter how many instruments play each line. 3) There is a possibility that the number of pianos may be increased. In this case, the procedure will be as number 1. 4) For a better performance of the piece, a conductor will be needed. 5) The notation in seconds that delimits the duration of the piece must be considered only as a guide. These durations could have some variations." In Federico Ibarra, *Cinco Estudios Premonitorios*, (México: Publicaciones CENIDIM, SEP, INBA, no date).

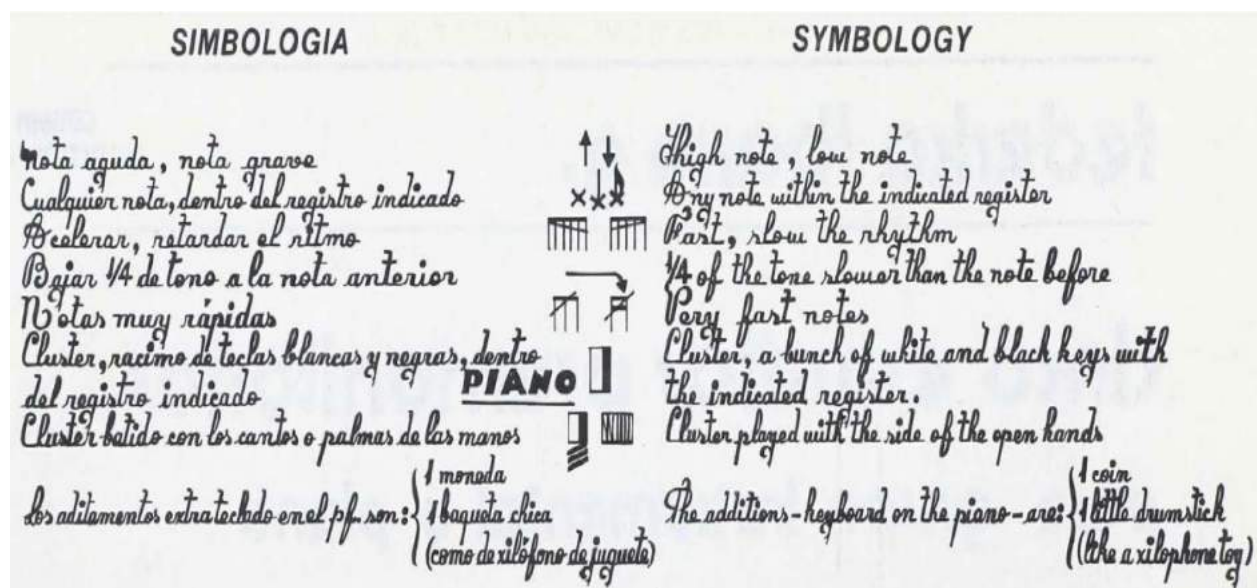


Figure 1. *Cinco Estudios Premonitorios*, symbology description.

The first notable element is the work's notation. While Ibarra consistently included a staff to write his music, he used an alternative notational format in many of his works of the 1970s. Generally, Ibarra applied alternative notation in combination with traditional writing; however, in *Cinco Estudios Premonitorios* Ibarra makes exclusive use of his alternative system. Some of the symbols in Ibarra's alternative notation reveal similarities with the notation used by composers such as Krzysztof Penderecki and Manuel Enríquez.<sup>160</sup>

<sup>160</sup> See for example, Penderecki's works *Anaklasis* (1959-1960), *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima* (1960), *Polymorphia* (1961), and *Fluorescences* (1961-1962) and Enríquez's third (1974) and fourth (1983) string quartets; Given the significant use of alternative notation in this piece, it is necessary to spend a few lines noting the functions that notation has in a musical work. Elliot Schwartz and Daniel Godfrey have written that "notation [...] is a medium that facilitates the passage of information from the composer's imagination to physical reality." The function of notation then is "to provide instructions to players" about a work's unique technical and musical demands. In some cases, notation also provides information about how to perform, how to think, and what materials to use during a performance. Notation then, "reflects priorities and hierarchies" that the composers ascribe to their musical works. In baroque to early twentieth century

The first few bars of *Cinco Estudios Premonitorios* uncover Ibarra's philosophy of "controlled aleatorism" (in which some elements are clearly defined, while others are open to the performers' interpretation).<sup>161</sup> For example, Ibarra was concerned with controlling overall mood and gesture, register, instrumental colour, articulations, sound inflections, and general time length, while allowing flexibility in specific pitch-to-pitch succession, rhythm, and synchronization of individual parts. Moreover, melody, rhythm, and harmony—three of the most fundamental components of Western music—are superseded by sound colour, texture, and density.

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Western music, the main priority of notation was to explicitly state musical elements, prioritizing melody, harmony, rhythm, and meter. However, during the twentieth century, other components of music, such as density, timbre, texture, articulation, inflection, and dynamics, achieved a greater relevance for some Western composers. While traditional notation excels at representing conventional elements of music, it proved to be insufficient for representing some twentieth-century composers' new interests. Consequently, new ways of notating music emerged in the United States and Europe during the middle years of the twentieth century to meet these new demands. In Elliot Schwartz and Daniel Godfrey, "Notation, Improvisation, and Composition," in *Music Since 1945: Issues, Materials, and Literature*, (New York: Schirmer Books, 1993), 394-413.

<sup>161</sup> In an interview with the author, Ibarra claimed that Lutosławski's *Venetian Games* (1961) was particularly influential in his realization about the possibility of utilizing indeterminate processes under a controlled framework. *Venetian Games* is scored for symphonic orchestra and is considered to be the first of Lutosławski's mature works. According to Miguel A. Roig-Francolí, it was with this work that Lutosławski developed several of the compositional processes that "were to become essential in many of his works from the 1960s and 1970s." One such compositional process is the concept known as "limited aleatory composition" in which "some elements are determined by the composer, and others are left undetermined." This technique is also referred as "aleatory counterpoint." Miguel A. Roig-Francolí, "Aleatory Music, Sound Mass, and Beyond," in *Understanding Post-Tonal Music*, (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2008), 287-291.

**I.— PREMONICION NOCTURNA**

**Figure 2. *Cinco Estudios Premonitorios*, first movement, bars 1-4.**

The first bar of the first movement presents overlapping entrances from the different instrumental families.<sup>162</sup> Density and texture are simple, yet rich, due to the timbrally diverse instruments. Each family is requested to perform (relatively) long-sustained notes in *pianissimo* dynamic, in a low register. The strings family is specifically designated to play *senza vib*, which further suggests a clean texture. An estimation of bar lengths (in seconds) replaces time signature and tempo indications, and sometimes numbers—called “events” by Ibarra—indicate the different families’ entrances. While such events point to

<sup>162</sup> In the score, the terms “Mad,” “Met,” “Cda,” and “Pf” stand out for Woodwinds, Brass, Strings, and Piano respectively. The term “En las cuerdas” written in the piano part indicates the pianist to play directly on the strings of the piano. Note that Ibarra does not indicate specific instruments but only families. This means that the strings’ part, for example, could be performed by any of the string instruments in any combination (2 violins, 2 violas, 1 cello, and 1 bass, for example).

the order of the entrances, the specific time between one entrance and the next is open to the performers' interpretation. This approach provides a certain flexibility in timing, while maintaining a general order from one performance to the next. Not all bars include event numbers, however, suggesting that the individual parts' synchronization with each other was not a priority in this work (Fig. 2)

The second bar immediately increases density, timbral, and textural complexity. The piano enters with a low-register cluster (played with the palm directly on the strings of the piano), and dynamic contrasts are added. Indeterminate rhythmic variety is prominent in the woodwind instrument(s), and timbral modulation is created in the strings through the specific request of techniques such as *vibrato*, *sul ponticello*, normal sound, and tremolo (Fig. 2).

In the third and fourth bar, texture and density are even more intricate. Ibarra's alternative notation of individual pitches indicates that any note within the given register may be played. While the notation makes obvious that Ibarra refused to provide specific pitches, it also suggests that he refused to withdraw complete control of the melodic/gestural contour (Fig. 2).

The use of extended techniques is prominent throughout all the movements in *Cinco Estudios Premonitorios*. Bars 5-8 of the first movement display Ibarra's use of extended techniques to manipulate sound colour and texture: the pianist uses a coin to play directly on the strings of the piano in a low register and *fortissimo* dynamic while the strings play behind the bridge, for example. The use of quarter-tones (in the woodwind and brass families) and glissandos (strings, woodwinds, and piano sections) add further complexity (Fig. 3).<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> If one considers that a single instrument can produce a broad degree of sounds, and that there may be more than one instrument of each family, one may imagine the texture complexity for which Ibarra was aiming for in this work.

Figure 3. *Cinco Estudios Premonitorios*, first movement, bars 5-8

Figure 4. *Cinco Estudios Premonitorios*, second movement, bars 1-3.



Another element evident in this work is the juxtaposition of characters. The second movement, for example, combines two contrasting elements simultaneously. On one side, a pointillist texture with a *scherzo* character is achieved through effects such as tremolo, trills, and fast-running passages with predominantly soft dynamics. On the other side, starting in the second bar, each family is assigned a solo indicated as “*lento, espressivo*” (a different family per bar), in which longer and sustained notes shape an overall melodic contour that does not specify precise pitches. Sound colour exploration is encouraged through the use of techniques such as *col legno* and *sul ponticello* in the strings family. The combination of all individual voices produces a thick density (thicker if several instruments per family play the work) that makes it difficult to distinguish specific pitches or rhythmic content. What is perceived instead is a mass of sound of varying interlaying timbres with two different characters defined by an overall gestural shape (Fig. 4).

Considered by Ibarra himself as his most experimentalist work, *Cinco Estudios Premonitorios* displays the composer’s concerns with post-1945 modernism. It is apparent that Ibarra was interested in the exploration of aleatory processes as a medium to stimulate his search of texture and sound colour; however, clearly, the composer was also wary of reaching a point in which he could lose control of the general outcome of his work.

According to Ibarra, *Cinco Estudios Premonitorios* became a relatively widely performed piece, due to its versatility of instrumentation. While having his music presented became a source of satisfaction, Ibarra also noted that, even with the parameters he had set to control the outcome of the piece, different performances varied dramatically to the point that he was often unable to recognize what he had written. This fact became an element of concern for Ibarra, leading him to retreat from the degree of indeterminacy he employed on this work.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Ibarra, interview with the author.



### 3.2 *Cinco Manuscritos Pnakóticos*

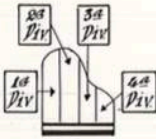


A year after composing *Cinco Estudios Premonitorios*, Ibarra wrote *Cinco Manuscritos Pnakóticos* for violin and piano, and dedicated it to Manuel Enríquez. This work was premiered in November 1977 by Manuel Enríquez and American composer and pianist Robert Parris (1924-1999) in a concert organized by the Organization of American States at the Kennedy Center in Washington DC.<sup>165</sup> The work is written in five short movements: *Orplied*, *Roulotte*, *Ogdoas*, *Samaín*, and *Acomodamientos del deseo*.<sup>166</sup>

*Cinco Manuscritos Pnakóticos* successfully manages to create a dark atmosphere through the combination of a series of musical elements among which unusual sonorities, achieved through extended techniques in both instruments, are paramount. Like in the work previously analyzed, the first page of the score provides instructions for the work's symbology and gives information about how to produce the desired sonorities, revealing a continuation of the notational trend he used on *Cinco Estudios Premonitorios* (Fig. 5).

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<sup>165</sup> José Antonio Alcaraz, ... *en una música estelar: de Ricardo Castro a Federico Álvarez del Toro*, (México: INBA, CENIDIM, 1987), 116.

<sup>166</sup> “*Cinco Manuscritos Pnakóticos*” translates as Five Pnakotic Manuscripts and the titles of the individual movements (*Orplied*, *Roulotte*, *Ogdoas*, *Samaín*, and *Acomodamientos del deseo*) are titles of paintings by Remedios Varo, Leonora Carrington, and Salvador Dalí.

<p><i>Símbolos:</i></p> <p><u>Piano y Violín</u></p> <p><i>gliss</i> = glissado</p> <p>x = cualquier nota dentro del registro indicado</p> <p>↑ = nota muy aguda</p> <p>↓ = nota muy grave</p> <p>⌈ = silencio muy grande</p> <p>□ = nota de larga duración</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Piano</u></p> <p>▮ = cluster (racimo de notas blancas y negras)</p> <p>▮ = cluster batido con las palmas o cantos de las manos</p> <p>♯ = presionar la cuerda cerca de las clavijas (con una mano) y ejecutar las notas indicadas en el teclado (con la otra mano)</p>		<p><i>Notations:</i></p> <p><u>Piano y Violín</u></p> <p><i>gliss</i></p> <p>x = any sound among the written register</p> <p>↑ = very high sound</p> <p>↓ = very low sound</p> <p>⌈ = long fermata</p> <p>□ = long sound</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Piano</u></p> <p>▮ = Cluster (of black and white keys)</p> <p>▮ = Cluster struck with the palms or sides of the hands</p> <p>♯ = press the string close to the pins with one hand and execute the indicated notes (on the keyboard with the other hand)</p>
<p>Los adimentos extra teclado que se emplean en esta obra son:</p> <p>Una goma de borrar dura.</p> <p>Una moneda</p> <p>En el teclado</p> <p>En las cuerdas</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Violín</u></p> <p> = detrás del puente (4<sup>a</sup>, 3<sup>a</sup>, 2<sup>a</sup> y 1<sup>a</sup> ead. respectivamente)</p> <p>⋈ = pausa breve</p> <p>↕ = subir o bajar 1/4 de tono</p>	<p>The extra key board accessories used in this composition:</p> <p>A hard rubber eraser</p> <p>A coin</p> <p>On the keyboard</p> <p>On the strings</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Violín</u></p> <p> behind the bridge (4<sup>th</sup>, 3<sup>th</sup>, 2<sup>th</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup> string)</p> <p>⋈ = brief pause</p> <p>↕ = play quarter of tone, up or down</p>	

**Figure 5. *Cinco Manuscritos Pnakóticos*, symbology description.**

Once more, *Cinco Manuscritos Pnakóticos* displays Ibarra's use of "controlled aleatorism." In this case, however, the combination of alternative and conventional notation reveals Ibarra's intention to exert more control in the outcome of the different performances. Sections of this work are more specific about musical elements (such as pitch-movement, melodic contour, and rhythmic clarity) that had been left to the performer's interpretation in *Cinco Estudios Premonitorios*. Moreover, while Ibarra, once more, does not specify either metre or tempo—instead using brackets to indicate the

lengths of bars in seconds—the overall character of each movement is clearly stated (*Lentísimo, Ligerísimo-Scherzando, Agitato, Prestíssimo, Lentísimo*).<sup>167</sup>

The music of the first movement reveals a primary concern for atmospheric sound colour and melodic contour. Character, pitches, sound inflections, dynamics, and phrasing are indicated explicitly in the violin section, while duration in note-to-note succession is open to the performer's interpretation. The violin part reveals one of Ibarra's characteristic melodic traits: the use of ascending and descending chromatic gestures and intervallic jumps of tritones and sevenths. The piano section uses extended techniques exclusively—such as playing *pizzicatos* directly on the strings on the piano as well as glissandos with the palm of the hand, a coin, and the fingernails at different speeds, registers, and widths. Whenever pitches are notated explicitly in the piano section, they move in intervallic jumps of major sevenths. The contrasting characters of the violin and piano sections enhance the dark and mysterious atmosphere of this movement (Fig. 6).

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<sup>167</sup> This order suggests that Ibarra probably attempted to create an arch form with the different characters of the movements on this piece (ABCBA).

**I Orplied** Federico Ibarra Groth

The score is divided into four systems. The first system is for Violin, marked 'Lentísimo' and 'con sordina'. It features a long melodic line with dynamic markings *p* (poco), *mf*, and *f*. Above the staff are four curved lines with durations of 15", 20", 16", and 10". The second system is for Piano, with parts for 'On the strings' and 'En las cuerdas'. It includes dynamic markings *p* and *pizz.*. The third system is for Violin, marked 'normal', with dynamic markings *mf*, *piüf*, *f*, *fff*, and *pp*. It includes performance instructions: 'with the palm of the hand / con la palma de la mano' and 'with the nail / con uña'. The fourth system is for Piano, with dynamic markings *mp*, *mf*, *c*, *ff*, and *p*. It includes performance instructions: 'ran a coin over the strings / recorrer las cdas. con una moneda'.

Figure 6. *Cinco Manuscritos Pnakóticos*, first movement.

The writing of the second movement is similar to the writing of *Cinco Estudios Premonitorios*. Ibarra's flexible approach encourages performer spontaneity concerning pitch and rhythmic specificity, while indicating an overall gestural action. Timbral manipulation becomes a central feature of this movement, with both instruments performing extended techniques. The violin, for example, is requested to play behind the bridge, use quarter-tones, and play short motives with *col legno* and *sul ponticello* techniques. The piano, on the other hand, is requested to play clusters, glissandos, and fast-running notes on both the keyboard and the strings in the extremes of the low and high registers (Fig. 7).

**II Roulette**

Figure 7. *Cinco Manuscritos Pnakóticos*, second movement, bars 1-2.

The third movement prominently features dynamics in the loud spectrum, ranging from *fortissimo* to *fortississimo* (with only one *piano* in the piano part and a *mezzo-forte* in the violin, both of which lead to a *fortississimo*). The combination of loud dynamics with energetic effects, such as tremolos, clusters, accents, and glissandos, produce a movement with a thick texture that stands out as the most violent of the five.

The fourth movement is one of the few examples in Ibarra's compositional output in which he uses a mobile form.<sup>168</sup> Four small sections labeled A, B, C, D are provided, and the performers are free to perform sections A to C in any desired order; the D section

<sup>168</sup> In Mexico, Manuel Enríquez used a mobile form in works such as his *Second* (1967), *Third* (1974), *Fourth* (1983), and *Fifth* (1988) *String Quartets*. Given the fact that Ibarra has claimed that it was through Enríquez's music that he came in contact with many of the tendencies in modern compositions, it is plausible that he became aware of the concept of mobile form through Enríquez's quartets. Other international recognized composers that have used mobile form are Karlheinz Stockhausen—a composer whom which Ibarra took a composition seminar in 1971—(*Klavierstück XI*, 1956; *Momente*, 1962-1964), Pierre Boulez (*Pli Selon Pli*, 1957-1962; *Structures II*, 1956-1961), and Earle Brown (*Available forms*, 1962), to name a few; Another work in Ibarra's compositional output using mobile form is *El Rito del Reencuentro* for symphonic orchestra (1974).

must be performed last. The four individual sections share a mysterious character achieved through *pianissimo* dynamics and rapidly-moving improvisatory gestures that creates textural and character juxtaposition in relation to the preceding movement. Ibarra asks for extended techniques hitherto unrequested in the work, such as percussive knocks in the violin's resonance box and *pizzicatos* behind the bridge. The pianist, on the other hand, is requested to play directly on the strings of the piano with mallets, if available, or with the hands' knuckles (Fig. 8).

**IV Samaín**

The score is divided into four sections: A, B, C, and D. Section A is marked *Prestissimo* and *pp y velocísimo*. Section B is marked *pp y velocísimo*. Section C is marked *pp y velocísimo*. Section D is marked *pp y velocísimo*. The score includes detailed performance instructions in both Spanish and English, such as "golpear las cuerdas con las yemas de los dedos" and "golpes en las divisiones de metal (sonoros) (con baqueta o con los nudillos de pulgares)".

Figure 8. *Cinco Manuscritos Pnakóticos*, fourth movement.

The last movement of *Cinco Manuscritos Pnakóticos* shares a few similarities with the opening movement. First, the character is the same (*Lentísimo*). The piano section makes prominent use of extended techniques previously used (playing glissandos and *pizzicatos*

directly on the strings of the instrument with the hands and with an eraser). Whenever pitches are clearly notated in the piano section, they move in intervallic jumps of semitones—the inversion of the major sevenths Ibarra used in the first movement. Conversely, the use of the violin contrasts with its employment in the first movement. While in *Orplied* the violin works predominantly as a lyric voice, in this movement it is employed to create atmospheric tension with effects such as tremolos behind the bridge, quarter-tones played with left-hand *pizzicatos*, *sul ponticello*, harmonics, and glissandos.

The masterful use and combination of extended techniques in both instruments make *Cinco Manuscritos Pnakóticos* a work shaped primarily by sound colours and atmospheres. While this work shares some similarities to *Cinco Estudios Premonitorios* regarding the musical material it employs, it is evident that the composer attempted to recede from the degrees of indeterminacy that he had been previously used. The musical result is a convincing evocation of otherworldly and frightening realms.<sup>169</sup>

### 3.3 *Cinco Misterios Eléusicos*

*Cinco Misterios Eléusicos* was composed in 1979 as a commission from the Philharmonic Orchestra of the Americas led by Mexican conductor Luis Herrera de la Fuente. Scored for symphonic orchestra,<sup>170</sup> the piece is divided into five movements:

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<sup>169</sup> Using extended techniques to create otherworldly and eerie sounding atmospheres was explored during the 1920s by American composer Henry Cowell (1897-1965), for example. The way in which Ibarra uses extended techniques in the piano part in *Cinco Manuscritos Pnakóticos* shares similarities with how Cowell uses the piano in works such as *Sinister Resonance* (1925) and *The Banshee* (1925). Elliot Schwartz and Daniel Godfrey have described Cowell's use of extended techniques in these pieces in the following manner: "'Sinister Resonance' requires the performer to reach in [the piano] and sweep, strike, strum, or mute the strings with one hand [...]. [In the *Banshee*] the pianist plays only on the strings, never touching the keyboard [...]. the entire work is played in the lowest register of the piano, where the strings are continuously swept in various ways. (Periodically fingernails stroke the strings lengthwise, producing an eerie 'scream' suggestive of the title.) [...]." In Elliot Schwartz and Daniel Godfrey, "Texture, Mass, Density," in *Music Since 1945: Issues, Materials, and Literature*, (New York: Schirmer Books, 1993), 166-167.

<sup>170</sup> *Cinco Misterios Eléusicos* is scored for 3 flutes, 3 oboes, 3 B-flat clarinets, 3 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 trumpets in c (one of them out of the stage), 6 horns, 3



*Orplied II, Sephirot, Pelops, Celephais, and Rarvarok.*<sup>171</sup> Referring to his *Cinco Misterios Eléusicos* in 1980, Ibarra stated:

[This] work became an obsessive search for colour; the different instrumental combinations (the foundation of sound colour) were worked with the utmost attention so I could achieve exactly what I wanted. For practical reasons, for the orchestra, I abandoned, to a certain degree, some aleatory processes that I had been using, returning to a more conventional writing, without changing my language. The composition of this work was a pleasant experience, since, in general, I felt more comfortable organizing the sounds for a large group than reducing my inventive possibilities with a small group of performers.<sup>172</sup>

In *Cinco Misterios Eléusicos*, Ibarra creates a wide variety of sound masses through the manipulation of timbres, pitches, rhythm, articulations, time, and dynamics. The resulting textures accomplish an extensive gamut of atmospheres: from energetic, explosive, and macabre to subdued, mysterious, and contemplative. While Ibarra does reduce the degree of freedom he encouraged in earlier works, he does not discard aleatory processes altogether. As is visually and aurally evident, in some sections the composer aimed for complete control of materials (controlling pitch, rhythm, meter, dynamics, and articulations), while in others improvisatory liberties are given to some of the orchestra's

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trombones, tuba, gran cassa (out of the stage), harp, celesta, piano, percussion, and full strings.

<sup>171</sup> *Cinco Misterios Eléusicos* translates as "Five Eleusinian Mysteries" and the individual titles of the movements in this work are taken from the titles American writer H.P. Lovecraft gave to fictional cities in his literary stories and the paintings by surrealist painter Leonora Carrington. In Alcaraz, ... *en una música estelar: de Ricardo Castro a Federico Álvarez del Toro*, 121.

<sup>172</sup> Gonzáles and Saavedra, *Música Mexicana Contemporánea*, 189-190. "obra que se convierte en una búsqueda obsesiva de color; las diversas combinaciones instrumentales (bases del color) fueron trabajadas con el máximo detenimiento, por lo precisas que quería que resultasen, y por razones prácticas para la orquesta, abandono hasta cierto grado los procesos aleatorios que había venido empleando y paulatinamente retorno a una idea más convencional de escritura, sin cambiar mi lenguaje por ello. La composición de esta obra fue una agradable experiencia, ya que, en general, mi pensamiento se hallaba más a gusto organizando los sonidos para un gran conjunto que reduciendo mis posibilidades inventivas (pues en mi caso creo que sucede) con un grupo reducido de ejecutantes."



sections. Just as in the previous works examined in this chapter, the score includes a definition of Ibarra's alternative notation as well as instructions for the performance.<sup>173</sup>

The first movement provides several examples of Ibarra's diverse approaches to generating, transforming, and juxtaposing textures. Section A, for example, presents fast-running motives in all of the woodwind sections, celesta, xylophone, and cellos, while maintaining long and sustained notes in the trumpets, and tremolos in combination with glissandos in the rest of the strings. Ibarra precisely notates all pitches, rhythms, and tempo (126 per sixteenth-note), and uses fermatas in some voices while not in others. He interposes groups of five, seven, and eight sixteen notes—displaced on purpose by the writing and the fermatas—and asks each voice to repeat their respective motives for a period of 10 seconds. This process makes evident that Ibarra was attempting to create a massive/blurred cloud of sound with aural characteristics simulating indeterminism, while still maintaining the general control of the aural results across different performances (Fig. 9).

Texture density achieves an entirely new level of complexity when different instrumental families contribute equally important musical elements. Figure 10 shows how strings, woodwinds, and brass are treated as separate timbral groups, each performing sections containing unique and contrasting material imposed on top of each other. The strings are treated with Ibarra's characteristic aleatory processes—which are evident in the notation—providing a degree of freedom reminiscent of *Cinco Estudios Premonitorios*. Conversely, Ibarra chooses to use a traditional notation in the woodwinds and brass families; the entire woodwinds section (plus the xylophone) play fast-running motives over the same three pitches (C, C-Sharp, D), while the brass instruments play motives dominated by glissandos and tremolos. Despite Ibarra's clarity of notation in the woodwind and brass sections, the result is a dense cluster of small sound particles compounding into a rich soundscape, just as individual dots make up a Pointillist painting.

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<sup>173</sup> Among the unusual instructions Ibarra gives for the performance, for example, is the allocation of a trumpet and a gran cassa outside of the main stage, preferably among the audience to create an antiphonal/stereophonic effect.

The image displays a page of a musical score for the first movement of 'Cinco Misterios Eléusicos', specifically the A section, bars 7-13. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with multiple staves. At the top, there are tempo markings: '♩ = 60' for the first four bars and '♩ = 90' for the last two bars. A circled letter 'A' is placed above the fifth bar. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, dynamics (p, f), and articulation marks. The instruments represented include strings (Violins I, Violins II, Violas, Cellos, Double Basses), woodwinds (Flutes, Oboes, Clarinets, Bassoons), and percussion (Timpani, Snare Drum, Cymbals). The notation is dense and detailed, typical of a full orchestral score.

Figure 9. *Cinco Misterios Eléusicos*, first movement, A section, bars 7-13.

10<sup>th</sup> 7<sup>th</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup>

4 ♩ = 120

(TODOS LOS ALIENTOS)

Violins I, Violins II, Violas, Cellos, Double Basses, Flute, Clarinet, Bassoon, Percussion (Xilófono III), TOM-TOM, P.OLC., BRANCOSSA, IV, Chorus (I-VI), Trumpets (I, II), Trombones (I, II), Tuba

(TODA LA CUERDA)

Figure 10. *Cinco Misterios Eléusicos*, first movement, bars 18-20.



The image displays a page of a musical score for the first movement of 'Cinco Misterios Eléusicos', covering bars 22-26. The score is written for a large orchestra and includes the following parts:

- Flutes (Fl.):** Flute I and Flute II parts.
- Oboes (Ob.):** Oboe I and Oboe II parts.
- Clarinets (Cl.):** Clarinet I and Clarinet II parts.
- Bassoons (Fag.):** Bassoon I and Bassoon II parts.
- Trumpets (Tbn.):** Trumpet I, II, III, IV, V, and VI parts.
- Trombones (Tbn.):** Trombone I, II, and III parts.
- Tuba (Tuba):** Tuba part.
- Drum (Perc.):** Percussion part.
- Timpani (Tim.):** Timpani part.
- Violins (Vn.):** Violin I and Violin II parts.
- Violas (Vla.):** Viola part.
- Cellos (Vcl.):** Cello part.
- Double Basses (Cb.):** Double Bass part.

Key features of the score include:

- Tempo:**  $d = 60$  (Allegretto).
- Rehearsal Mark:** A large bracketed rehearsal mark labeled "10''" spans the first four measures.
- Performance Instructions:** *f sempre* (fortissimo throughout) is written for several woodwind parts. *gliss* (glissando) is indicated for various instruments. The tuba part includes the instruction *(con antebrazos)* (with forearms).
- Violin Part:** The violin part features specific phrasing instructions: *subir y bajar 1/4 t.* (rise and fall 1/4 measure), *f (lento)* (forte, slow), and *subir y bajar 1/4 de t.* (rise and fall 1/4 of a measure).
- Drum Part:** The drum part includes the instruction *PTTI. ENDEKANS*.

Figure 11. *Cinco Misterios Eléusicos*, first movement, bars 22-26.

Ibarra also used clusters as a resource to create saturated sound masses, as was common in the music of György Ligeti and Krzysztof Penderecki, for example. Figure 11 shows the woodwinds and brass families producing precisely notated clusters (a different cluster per bar); the clusters encompass the entire pitches in a perfect fifth (A-flat to E-flat, A to E, B-flat to F, and B to F-sharp). The strings contribute to the saturation by doubling the high voices (piccolo and trumpet) with accented *sforzando* tremolos with glissandos. Timbral manipulation is achieved through dynamic contrasting: while some families (bassoons, trombones, and tuba) start the bars in *fortissimo* to immediately make a decrescendo, others (flutes, oboes, clarinets, and horns) start from piano followed by a crescendo. This interlacing of dynamics results in the articulation of a complex sound-mass of changing colours.

In the words of music critic José Antonio Alcaraz, the premiere of *Cinco Misterios Eléusicos* was one of Mexico's "most transcendental musical events of 1979." This piece reaches a level of technical and creative achievement that led Alcaraz to refer to Ibarra as "the most important Mexican composer of his generation."<sup>174</sup> Although this view may be contested, the fact is that this work reveals a composer striving to fuse the precision of compositional control with innovative, internationally-flavoured aleatory processes as a way to get closer to his aesthetic ideal. Judging by Ibarra's satisfaction with the outcome of this work, and the positive comments conveyed by the Mexican press during its premiere (and after subsequent performances), he apparently achieved his purpose.

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<sup>174</sup> Alcaraz, ... *en una música estelar: de Ricardo Castro a Federico Álvarez del Toro*, 117; Alcaraz's review of the premier of *Cinco Misterios Eléusicos* states: "*Cinco Misterios Eléusicos* [...] can be considered as one of the most transcendental [musical] events of 1979. [This work] is a mature and professional product of the most important Mexican composer of his generation. [Ibarra's] innate capacities as creator of sounds is evident [...]." "El estreno de los *Cinco Misterios Eléusicos* [...] puede considerarse como uno de los eventos de mayor trascendencia n 1979. Se trata de un producto tan adulto como profesional del compositor mexicano más importante de la generación a [la] que pertenece, donde sus capacidades innatas como inventor de sonidos quedan de manifiesto en forma evidente."

### 3.4 Extra-Musical Elements in Ibarra's Music

As was pointed out in the previous chapter, Ibarra felt a strong affinity with the unrestrained imagination that Surrealist artists showcase in their works. Ibarra's interest in Surrealism, however, was not limited to the aesthetics of the artistic style. The philosophy of this movement—tapping one's creative potential through the exploration of the subconscious mind—also drew his attention. Although Ibarra has been cryptic about the steps he has taken in the past for drawing creativity from his subconscious mind, he has stated that his contact with pictorial and literary works has been paramount to his creative process.<sup>175</sup>

Contact with other art forms, therefore, has imbued some of Ibarra's works with extra-musical elements. Of Ibarra's musical output during the decades of the 1960s and 1970s, almost all works—and in several cases, individual movements too—have titles that imply intersections with literature and (or) the visual arts.<sup>176</sup> On some occasions, the connection between Ibarra's music and other art forms is direct and explicit. In his cantatas, for example, Ibarra consistently draws his text from poems written by diverse authors, while striving to musically recreate the poem's rhythm and meaning by using “word-painting.”<sup>177</sup> In other cases, however, the relationship between his music and other art

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<sup>175</sup> *Federico Ibarra: Premio Nacional del Arte 2001*, directed by Julián Hernández, CONACULTA, 2011.

<sup>176</sup> From the twenty-eight works that Ibarra composed during the decades of 1960 and 1970, twenty-four have titles that suggest extra-musical connotations.

<sup>177</sup> Word painting, as defined by Tim Carter is “the use of musical gesture(s) in a work with an actual or implied text to reflect, often pictorially, the literal or figurative meaning of a word or phrase.” In Tim Carter, “Word-painting,” *Grove Music Online*, accessed 3 Oct. 2018, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000030568>; About the connection between texts and his creative process Ibarra has stated: “the influence that a text has in me finds echo in the deepest regions of [my] subconscious (even more so in the case of a surrealist poetry, which I have also frequented) and simple words can cause associations (in me, especially of colour) [that] I transfer to music [...]. I cannot explain how I do it.” “La correspondencia en imágenes que te produce un texto, halla eco en las regiones más profundas del inconsciente (más aún tratándose de una poesía surrealista, que también he

forms is more nebulous, with the title being the only apparent correlation, as exemplified by *Cinco Manuscritos Pnakóticos*.

### 3.5 Ibarra's Manuscripts: Lovecraftian Horror in Ibarra's Music

In the 1970s, the fantastic literary universe created by American writer Howard Philips Lovecraft (1890-1937) served as a source of profound inspiration for Ibarra.<sup>178</sup> In his stories, Lovecraft invented a series of fictional books whose substance is never fully disclosed, leaving much of the content open to the readers' interpretation. The *Pnakotic Manuscripts* and the more famous *Necronomicon* are examples of these fictional volumes. Referring to his decision to never explicitly describe the contents of the *Necronomicon* in any of his stories, Lovecraft stated: "[...] one can never produce anything even a tenth as terrifying and impressive as one can awesomely *hint* about it. If anyone were to try to write the *Necronomicon* [the same applies to the *Pnakotic Manuscripts*], it would disappoint all those who have shuddered at cryptic references to it."<sup>179</sup> Lovecraft's ideas permeated well into Ibarra's creative process, as he declared:

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frecuentado) y las solas palabras pueden provocar asociarse [sic] (en mí, sobre todo de color) que traslado a la música [...] el cómo y el por qué [...] quizá no lo pueda explicar.” In Ángeles Gonzáles and Saavedra, *Música Mexicana Contemporánea*, 193-194.

<sup>178</sup> Lovecraft is a writer best known for his works in horror and supernatural events. The growing significance of Lovecraft in the literary world is confirmed by the vast amount of scholarship readily available addressing the different facets of the writer's life and work. See more in S. T. Joshi and David E. Schultz, *An H. P. Lovecraft Encyclopedia*, (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2001).

<sup>179</sup> Some of the scarce details mentioned about the *Pnakotic Manuscripts* in Lovecraft's stories are that they were “made by waking men in forgotten boreal kingdoms and born into the land of dreams [...], inconceivably old [...], of Pleistocene origin [...], with pre-human implications [...], [holders of] the fiendish elder myths [...], [with a] very real and very monstrous meaning [...], too ancient to be read [...], mouldy [...], monstrous and half-fabulous [...]”; In Lovecraft's short story *The horror in the Museum* (1933), the character George Rogers claims to have been “farther than anyone else in interpreting the obscure and primal books he studied [among which were the *Pnakotic Manuscripts*], and had been directed by them [by the books] to certain remote places where strange survivals are hidden—survivals of aeons and life-cycles earlier than mankind, and in some cases connected with other dimensions and other worlds [...]. Quotes obtained from, H. P. Lovecraft, *Complete Collection of H.P. Lovecraft*, (Ageless Reads, 2014), Kindle edition.

Lovecraft is one of the writers who has strongly piqued my interest in recent times, due to the unrestrained fantasy he shows in his literature. That attracts me a lot. I am also very interested in the fact that Lovecraft creates his own lore, and refers to it in its [different] texts; among these [imaginary] sources are the *Pnakotic Manuscripts*. There is no [fixed] narrative or anecdotal element in my manuscripts [*Cinco Manuscritos Pnakóticos*]; I am simply attracted to the name and the implications that each performer or auditor may give to them.<sup>180</sup>

Indeed, in the case of the *Manuscritos Pnakóticos*, the music by itself presents musical integrity of exceptional conviction that recreates dark, macabre, and eerie atmospheres. As a matter of experience, however, the music reaches a whole new dimension when the person experiencing it—whether listener or performer—is consciously aware of the imaginary elements influencing the piece. The same is true when one recognizes that the titles of the individual movements are taken from paintings by Surrealist artists Leonora Carrington (*Orplied* and *Samaín*), Remedios Varo (*Roulotte*), and Salvador Dalí (*Acomodamientos del deseo*).<sup>181</sup> The way in which pictorial art impacts his music and aesthetic has been ambiguously described by Ibarra in the following manner:

A lot of elements in a painting attract me: the composition [distribution and positioning of the different elements on the canvas], the colours, and what the painting is expressing to me [abstract or contemplative]. What a painting gives me is certainly strange [...] a work begins to have resonances within me, which is the first [thing that happens] and, later, an involuntary desire of creation, almost without intending it [comes]. It

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<sup>180</sup> “Lovecraft es uno de los escritores que más ha despertado mi interés en los últimos tiempos, porque considero que la fantasía de sus obras es realmente desbordada. Me atrae mucho. Me interesa mucho también el hecho de que Lovecraft invente sus fuentes de información, las fuentes a las cuales se remite en sus textos; entre éstas fuentes están los Manuscritos Pnakóticos. No hay en mis Manuscritos ningún elemento narrativo o anecdótico; simplemente me atrae mucho el nombre, y las implicaciones que para cada lector o para cada auditor pueda tener.” In Juan Arturo Brennan, “Cantatas, Operas, insomnios: Entrevista a Ibarra,” *Revista de la Universidad de México*, 28, (August, 1983), [http://www.revistadelauniversidad.unam.mx/ojs\\_rum/index.php/rum/article/view/11719/12957](http://www.revistadelauniversidad.unam.mx/ojs_rum/index.php/rum/article/view/11719/12957).

<sup>181</sup> Ibid; Gonzáles and Saavedra, *Música Mexicana Contemporánea*, 197; Although during the realization of this monograph it was possible to track down the names of the first, second, fourth, and fifth movements to pictorial works by Carrington, Varo, and Dalí, none of these painters seem to have a work with the title “Ogdoas” (the third movement).



does not mean that when I see a painting by Leonora Carrington, I get a musical idea; it is not so immediate. There are a series of processes in which I am expressing an interpretation, not of one, but of many paintings that I have seen and that have had a series of resonances within me.<sup>182</sup>

Scholars have not previously examined the programmatic elements of Ibarra's music, and the composer's statements about this topic are sparse and scarce. Ibarra has declared, in fact, that he prefers to be closed about the "myth" that links his music to extra-musical components and that the music should speak for itself. He has also stated, however, that his music is accessible to those with aesthetic, aural, and imaginative skills. Indeed, Ibarra's music has the potential to transport anyone with the right disposition to fantastic aural realms, regardless of whether one is familiar with its extra-musical connotations.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> "De un cuadro me atrae una gran cantidad de cosas; cómo está la composición, qué colores se están empleando; qué es lo que me está expresando a pesar de ser una pintura abstracta o contemplativa. Lo que me da un cuadro es ciertamente extraño ya que una obra empieza a tener resonancias dentro de mí, que son el primer impacto y, después, un motivo de creación involuntario, casi sin proponérmelo. No significa que al ver un cuadro de Leonora Carrington me surja una idea musical; no es tan inmediato. Hay una serie de procesos en lo que estoy plasmando una interpretación, no de uno, sino de muchos cuadros que he visto y que han tenido dentro de mí una serie de resonancias." In García Bonilla, *Visiones Sonoras*, 113-114.

<sup>183</sup> Gonzáles and Saavedra, *Música Mexicana Contemporánea*, 196-198; Despite the considerable use of extra-musical elements on his music, Ibarra has declared that he despises composers that rely exclusively on programmatic sources to connect with audiences. Ibarra has stated: "I am not interested on being linked to Lovecraft, Leonora Carrington or anyone else. I am interested in having my music heard. Whatever programmatic content my works may have, it can or cannot be taken into account to appreciate my music [...] My works can have different interpretations; I attempt to encourage my audience's imagination. In other words, I do not want people imagining something specific; I want their imagination to be completely open, telling them their own story." "A mí no me interesa que la gente relacione mi música con Lovecraft o Leonora Carrington o con nadie. Me interesa que la música se oiga. El mito que está detrás de ella lo pueden tener o no en cuenta [...] Mis obras pueden tener diversas lecturas, más que interpretaciones; intento una apertura sobre todo a la imaginación. Es decir, no quiero que la gente se imagine algo específico; pretendo que la imaginación abierta y sin trabas juegue un papel determinante en el auditor al momento de escuchar la música."

Amid one of the most eclectic periods of music in the twentieth century, Ibarra remained committed to developing a very personal aesthetic while engaging with different, often converging, compositional processes. As the works examined in this chapter demonstrate, Ibarra's technical style during the 1970s shows a preoccupation with the manipulation of sound colour, textures, masses, densities, rhythm, and time to create unique, often other-worldly atmospheres. To explore these musical elements, Ibarra utilized aleatory processes that dictated freedom and spontaneity in his music. Ibarra was wary about the level of performance ambiguity that indeterminism brought to his work, however, and consequently, he never relinquished complete control of all the musical components shaping his music. The concept of "aleatory counterpoint" developed by Polish composer Witold Lutosławski in works such as *Venetian Games* became particularly influential in the way in which Ibarra engaged with aleatory processes. Indeed, Ibarra has acknowledged that the post-1945 Polish school of composition was profoundly influential during his experimental period, a fact which is evident not only on Ibarra's use of aleatory processes, but also in some of the symbology he uses in his alternative notation.

The works examined in this chapter exemplify Ibarra's engagement with post-war modernist trends. In all of them, he showcases an interest in experimentation, while striving to recreate a personal aesthetic style—one profoundly influenced by literature and pictorial art. Among the scores produced by Mexican composers, Ibarra's music is full of subtle connections with the often-disconcerting quality of Surrealist worlds, making his aural results eminently individual and aesthetically alluring.

## Conclusion

When comparing Mexican art music from the 1930s and 1940s against the music created in Mexico two decades later, one may wonder how a relatively short temporal difference can produce such radically different aesthetic results. Indeed, much of the post-1945 modernist art music from Mexico sounds nothing like its nationalist counterpart. Perhaps it is this lack of a cohesive style that has deterred scholars from fully examining the highly abstract, conceptual, and experimental languages of Mexican music from the 1960s and 1970s; nevertheless, this dearth of research does not negate the fact that—as Robert Stevenson pointed out in the closing thoughts of his book, *Music of Mexico*—Mexico has been a fertile land for artistic production.<sup>184</sup>

In this study, I have attempted to shed light on the history of the post-1945 avant-garde and experimentalist period of Mexican art music through three different observational perspectives. The first chapter focused on providing context about the components contributing to a radical aesthetic change in the style of Mexican art music. The second chapter told the story of Federico Ibarra searching for his individual voice amid this entanglement of profound musical and cultural changes. The third chapter presented evidence of Ibarra's music written in the 1970s, which he composed while navigating this environment. In other words, the purpose of this monograph is to offer, through different focal points, a better understanding of different elements comprising the musical thought of Mexican composers during the post-1945 era.

I have focused here on Federico Ibarra for two main reasons. First, Ibarra's life and work epitomize the causes and effects of the post-nationalist era of Mexican music. Born in a period in which an increasing number of international ideas and philosophies were permeating Mexican culture, Ibarra's perceptions, ideologies, and aesthetics exemplify the penetration of foreign influences on Mexican composers during this historical era. Second, Ibarra is one of the members of the post-nationalist generations of Mexican

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<sup>184</sup> Robert Stevenson, *Music in Mexico: A Historical Survey* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1952), 268.

composers who has not previously been the subject of study. Even when his work has been valued in Mexico—as the numerous prizes he has received attest—his music is worthy of recognition by an international audience. His musical style demonstrates a side of Mexican art music that has seldom been acknowledged, but with artistic value that is difficult to ignore. This monograph is a first step towards addressing this neglect.

Being primarily a performer, the development of this study has made me realize the untapped potential of post-1945 Mexican music to enhance the repertoire of anyone willing to commit to its challenging but awe-inspiring language. I myself have performed this music on several occasions. The last performance event I gave at Western University was a lecture recital in which I aimed to present the evolution of Mexican music through works by Manuel Enríquez and Federico Ibarra written between 1949 and 2014 (see Appendix B). Performers need to be aware that regardless of how comprehensive our knowledge of our instruments' repertoire might be, there will always be a vast realm of music waiting to be performed. Mexican composers have produced a numerous quantity of interesting repertoire from which instrumentalists and vocalists can choose. This study presents only a brief glimpse of this music.

Much research remains to be done about the works, lives, motivations, and philosophies of numerous post-nationalist Mexican composers. Figures such as Julio Estrada, Arturo Márquez, and Eduardo Angulo (to mention a few), have produced particularly compelling work deserving of scholarly attention. Furthermore, there are research tools which have been developed to analyze post-1945 modernist music in other parts of the world that have not been considered in analyzing Mexican art music of the same period. For example, while there is a growing quantity of research addressing the musical implications of Cold War politics on the artistic motivations of composers in North America and Europe, this analytical angle has been omitted in the musicological study of post-1945 Mexican art music.<sup>185</sup> Ibarra told me that he does not believe that there were

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<sup>185</sup> Scholar Peter Schmelz has pointed out that there is a general lack of scholarship addressing the implications that the Cultural Cold War had on the “non-American and non-European parts of the globe.” See Peter J. Schmelz, “Introduction: Music in the Cold War,” *The Journal of Musicology* 26, no. 1 (2009): 8; Eduardo Herrera’s research about

political motivations behind his own abandonment of the nationalist aesthetic style; however, it remains to be discovered if this was the case—whether consciously or unconsciously—for other composers in Mexico.<sup>186</sup>

It is my hope that this monograph will raise the curiosity of English-language speakers about the vastness of Mexican art music waiting to be discovered. Just as Mexican scholar Ricardo Miranda has stated, while it may be disheartening to realize how ignorant we are about our recent musical history, it is also exciting to discover the artistic variety and musical eclecticism that our culture has produced.<sup>187</sup>

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North American patronage of Latin-American projects is an important first step in addressing this omission in Latin-American music scholarship. A study focusing specifically on Mexican music remains to be done. See, Eduardo Herrera, “The Rockefeller Foundation and Latin American Music in the 1960s: The Creation of Indiana University's LAMC and Di Tella Institute's CLAEM,” *American Music* 35, no. 1 (2017): 51-74.

<sup>186</sup> Ibarra, interview with the author.

<sup>187</sup> Ricardo Miranda, “Historias y Silencios de lo Sonoro,” in *La Música en los Siglos XIX y XX*, 239; John G. Lazos has also stated that “there is not a doubt that the music from Mexico is rich and valuable. Just a small fraction of it has been studied. This great legacy cries out for proper research [...] it seems strange that much of this material is still waiting to be discovered.” “En el caso de la música en México, no cabe la menor duda de que existe un material por demás rico y valioso. Sólo una fracción de ese material ha sido tema de estudio. Sobra decir que este gran legado musical pide a gritos ser investigado y estudiado cuidadosamente. A pesar de que lo dicho ya se ha reiterado anteriormente, parece extraño que gran parte de este material siga a la espera [de ser estudiado]. See more in John G. Lazos, “Notas sobre la Musicología en México,” *Heterofonía*, no. 141 (July-December 2009): 187-192.

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## Appendix A: Interview with Federico Ibarra

Following, there is an English-translation of two interviews I conducted with Federico Ibarra on May 19 and 20, 2018 in his home in Mexico City. A Spanish edited version of the same interviews—the original version—is included following the English translation.

**• Why do you think there was a decline in the nationalist style of concert music in Mexico and the consequent adoption of international trends that emerged at the end of the Second World War?**

I believe that nationalism had various stages: a stage in which it became a valuable currency and a stage in which it was in decline. The beginning of nationalism occurred with the nationalist composers adopting the most popular international trends of the moment. Let me explain: both [Silvestre] Revueltas and [Carlos] Chávez were aware and influenced by the music that had been composed in Europe, especially Stravinsky's. The consequence was that nationalist music was initially integrated into what was happening in the rest of the world.

The second generation of nationalist composers did not do the same. Composers like [José Pablo] Moncayo, went further back to draw his influence from the music of Ravel, for example. Composers like [Miguel] Bernal Jiménez went still further back . . . He drew influence from the music created in Mexico during the colonial era. Blas Galindo wanted to continue with the same trend that Chávez had proposed, although he did not go beyond what Chávez had achieved. The other composers of that era, who were not as brilliant as those previously mentioned, did not explore different paths.

The third generation of nationalist composers did not go further either. Leonardo Velásquez tried to emulate what Revueltas had done, and his music became tonal. Worse still was the case of Mario Kuri, who started writing popular music. Consequently, the validity of their music decreased for the audiences.

**• What did this situation mean for you as a music student?**



As a music student, it was very tedious to listen to Mexican music, as it was not only completely stagnated, but it was already in a state of decline. There was a depletion of the nationalist style; however, this exhaustion began to coincide with an attempt at openness towards what was happening around the world. I am referring to the early 1960s when the then-President wanted to modernize Mexico.

The path was just opening, but in the wake of the tragedies that occurred both in Mexico and in certain countries, especially in Europe around 1968, that was definitive. The generation gap that existed between the youth and the establishment ignited a series of significant events. In this context, figures interested in the latest musical trends occurring around the world during the 1960s, such as Manuel Enríquez, appeared in Mexico. Already since the 1950s there had been a concern in Europe to strengthen certain musical trends at festivals, such as the German gatherings in Donaueschingen and Darmstadt. These festivals were led by figures such as Pierre Boulez and Stockhausen, and encouraged people to focus on the musical study of dodecaphony and serialism.

In Mexico, we were behind in all of this. The only person in Mexico who knew (more or less) what serial music was about was Rodolfo Halffter. He was one of the figures who introduced serialism to Mexico; it was thanks to him, that dodecaphony and serialism began to be known in Mexico.

• **Chronologically, did this happen around the 1960s?**

A little before . . . This was, in some ways, the only opportunity for Mexico to get more or less up-to-date on what was happening in Europe at that time.

Unexpectedly, Carlos Chávez, who was alive, began to say, very curiously, that the nationalist era in Mexico was already in decline and it was time to look outside of Mexico. I remember that, on one occasion, Chávez gave a lecture at the National School of Music—which was curious because he was not very appreciated at that institution—about Xenakis' music. It was a shock for me to hear how that music used the glissandos on the strings.

• **Would you say there was a serialist school in Mexico?**

Not at all. I mean, yes, we knew about serialism, but it was not popular. We did not like it. It was not only that we did not adopt the style, but also that it was seen as something completely cold and lacking in emotional content.

In the 1960s, however, something entirely unexpected happened. The creation of a musical work at that time changed the history of music: the *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima* by Penderecki. Unlike the intellectualism that serial music portrayed, Penderecki's music was like a breath of fresh air to aesthetics; it was no longer a purely intellectual activity, what he was proposing—it was something that appealed to feelings once more.

It was not only Penderecki's work; other composers such as Lutosławski contributed to this new era of music. But these composers at that time were not well known in Mexico. Recordings of new music were few and very difficult to obtain. Stores here did not want to import records without being confident that they were going to sell them.

Yet gradually Mexico began to open up to an unknown musical world. The decade of the 1960s was crucial, due to the series of influences permeating Mexico. I remember that, for example, Carlos Chávez premiered *Pierrot Lunaire* and *Ode to Napoleon* by Schoenberg in *La Casa del Lago*. Eduardo Mata, as director of the University of Mexico's orchestra, was premiering works of Berio, Henze, and other composers who we did not know existed. Luis Herrera de la Fuente, being director of the National Symphony, also premiered a considerable quantity of new music. In fact, it was Herrera de la Fuente who invited me to see the premiere of the *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima* in Mexico. Also, in those days, the *Turangalila* symphony by Messiaen was premiered. Guest artists, such as the pianist Claude Helffer (1922-2004), introduced works by Boulez, Stockhausen, and Messiaen. In short, progressively, we became familiar with what was happening outside of Mexico. I, as a student, was submerged in that context. The combination of all these factors began to reaffirm the departure of nationalism in Mexico and to bring people closer to what was being done around the world.

**• What were the Mexican people's reactions to the new music? How difficult was it for them to accept the latest trends?**

Although I remember that serial works tended to be rejected by the public, there was general curiosity about the novelty of the new music. I think that the combination of all the ideas permeating Mexico from the outside was producing a change that was needed in this historical stage, especially in Mexico. It certainly was a beneficial change for the musical field.

Yet, as always happens with new things, at first there was significant impact and amazement, but, eventually, the trends started to lose their novelty.

**• Of course, innovation loses its strength . . .**

Indeed. Once the innovation is gone, interest gets lost too. What was considered astonishing at that time, for example the way Penderecki used the strings, eventually became a cliché.

**• Some musicologists have argued that the aesthetic decisions of some composers in the United States and Europe during the post-war years had an underlying political agenda. My question is, do you think something similar happened in Mexico? Do you think that there was any political motivation in the stylistic decision of Mexican composers to adopt avant-garde trends?**

No. I do not think that happened. Indeed, one of the things that we all [the composers] seemed to agree on was to defy all the concepts of the nationalist aesthetic. But that had more to do with an artistic decision rather than a political one.

**• Do you think that during the 1980s and 1990s there was a tendency to abandon the avant-garde trends of the 1950s and 1960s?**

Yes. The problem was that composers engaging with avant-garde trends were distancing the audiences for originality's sake. At that time, the more original one was, the better. Having originality and innovation as the primary objective caused a mess.

Yes, there is nothing wrong with being original, but not all composers have to pursue innovation as the ultimate goal. Otherwise, a composer will find a dead end on his artistic search very soon. Fortunately, regardless of how engaged I was with the avant-garde trends, I was still a musician, and no matter how obstinate my attitude was toward the avant-garde movement, I never forgot what I had learned. That was what allowed me to continue evolving as a composer.

**• What can you tell me, broadly speaking, about your music of the 60s and 70s?**

My music education began in the early 1960s. Once enrolled in the composition degree, I found that the school was very disorganized, to the point that there was not a “composition” class in the degree’s curriculum. The harmony professor, Juan Antonio Rosado, proposed a recital with compositions written by students at the end of their second year. This was not part of the curriculum of that class, but, rather, it was an initiative of the professor himself. I chose a somewhat ambitious project: to compose a string quartet.

This was the first work that I presented in public. Fortunately, writing a quartet forced me to know other instruments apart from the piano, which I played. It was not easy, but it was very productive for me. I gained a lot of knowledge through that little work—it is a quartet in a single movement. Doing this work encouraged me to continue by taking a class of “modern harmony” with the same teacher. These classes began to open my mind to a sonorous world I did not know. A universe beyond tonal music and the tonal system. I began to learn from the modes and from other types of scales (pentatonic, hexatonic, etc.) and I practiced writing many exercises. I started to explore the possibilities that this new kind of language could bring into my music. This experience began to introduce me to the music of the first part of the 20th century, and I started to understand what this music was about. This class forced me to read many scores and to try to decipher them on the piano.

I was able to put this knowledge into practice at the moment I wrote my first cantata. By this point, I was not only studying, but I was already working within the same school. My first job was as the National School of Music choir’s pianist. This job forced me, on the

one hand, to read a lot of choral works, and on the other, to observe and analyze the way in which choral music was written. I also had the opportunity to start performing my own works with the school's choir.

This was a fantastic opportunity! Having access to a choir—which was actually pretty good—plus the approval of the choir director, allowed me not only to present my music to an audience, but also to see and hear how the things I was thinking and imagining sounded in the real world. It was an extraordinary opportunity.

**• I imagine that it must be challenging for a composer to find a group to present his own music.**

It is, but in the wake of these events my involvement in choral writing was very early and fast. I began writing music for choir and instruments. The first cantata [1967] was written for choir and instruments that I was familiar with, which were the keyboards. I wrote it for piano, harmonium—which was what was used in the solfeggio classes to do dictation—and a celesta that the school had recently acquired. The combination was very unusual, and the result gave me great satisfaction.

**• What were you looking for during your experimentation period? Was there a philosophy that motivated your compositions?**

I was mainly concerned with two things. Something that I was attentive to in that period was what kind of music I liked and did not like, and, most importantly, why. The first thing that I noticed is that, in general, in these years of prolific music production and experimentation, most works were missing an aesthetic attitude. In many cases, experimentation did not have any other reason to exist other than to innovate. There was not a concern for aesthetics at all.

I, for my own pleasure, and for many years, was inclined towards the Surrealist philosophy. Everything dreamlike, as well as the correspondences that are held within the music at an unconscious level attracted me a lot. I really liked Surrealist paintings. In music, there were no examples of a Surrealist aesthetic attitude, and that called my attention. I began to know the antecedents of Surrealism, Dadaism, and other currents

that I gladly embraced and have continued to adhere to at certain times in my life and my works.

On the other hand, I was also finding that the music of those years was missing form. That is, there was a lot of experimentation with instruments, but many works were lacking musical form—a logical structure. I mean, it does not matter if it was the logic of the nineteenth century or the thirty-first century [sic.], a logic . . . In general, with aleatory music, logic was non-existent. In those moments, the idea was to be against everything, even the pre-established forms. But then, music was left without foundation. I perceived that [lack of aesthetics and form] as a great danger.

Furthermore, I also noticed that musical form had been underestimated in Mexican music. I will give you an example: the works of Silvestre Revueltas. They are extraordinary; I cannot question that. But formally, if it is not *Sensemaya*, all his works are ABA; everything is straightforward.

My first attempt towards the exploration of form was in my first piano sonata [1976], in which, although I was not using themes as was commonly done within the sonata—but effects within the piano—I always followed a logic. I believe this is one of the reasons why my music has not been forgotten, as was the case with many works that were written at that time and never played again. Aesthetics and form were the foundations of my music.

The exploration of musical form has interested me to this day. That exploration—technical rather than aesthetic—is what I have been pursuing in recent times.

**• Is there a figure or school that influenced your music during the avant-garde era?**

I represent above all the new Polish school. Both Boulez and Stockhausen came to symbolize the continuity of the German school, in which serialism was the only way of expressing oneself. Serialism was cold music unless one had such extraordinary solutions as the ones proposed by Boulez. Serial music may have been perfectly crafted, and all the sounds could have a perfectly logical explanation, but, nevertheless, it was not speaking to me. Then, the Polish school began to address the audiences' feelings. This was

sensorial music, unlike what serialism and integral serialism were proposing, in which the only goal is to express a perfect technique. In that regard, the Polish aesthetic was decisive in the return of feelings and sensations as an essential component of music.

• **Did you ever have any influence from the North American school . . . John Cage?**

Yes, I did. The music that uses indeterminacy as a compositional resource was very attractive to me. I was allured by what was happening with that music. On one occasion, I performed Cage's piano concerto. It was my chance to get my hands on a Cage score and see what he was trying to do, and how far he was going into indeterminate processes. Cage gives indications, such as "this work may or may not be performed." Such indications, at first glance, sound like nonsense, right? But in reality, it involves a whole series of thoughts that go beyond being silly. The fact that Cage said, "this work can be done or not" made me think differently about music . . . "This piano concerto can have a soloist, or it cannot have one . . ." [Laughs].

These ideas also permeated the music of Lutosławski, who began to look for how to merge indeterminacy and control to avoid chaos in his music.

• **Lutosławski set certain frameworks, right?**

Exactly. For me, it was very revealing. Seeing how Lutosławski organized his music and how he managed to create works that sounded similar, performance after performance, even when in essence, the works were aleatory. One was not listening to a random thing, such as in Cage's *4'33*" where there was actually nothing written.

The ideas proposed by Cage began to lead to many discussions, in Mexico and Europe, about the different stages that music was reaching at that moment. For example, a Frenchman came to Mexico and began to make an aural comparison of music ascribed to integral serialism and music created through purely chance procedures. The coincidences were astonishing. Both kinds of music sounded very similar despite being composed at the opposite ends of the spectrum! [Laughs].

• **Who was this Frenchman?**

Jean-Étienne Marie.

**• In some of the scores of your works of the mid-1970s, such as *Cinco Manuscritos Pnakótios*, *El Rito del Reencuentro*, and *Los Misterios Eléusicos*, one can observe that you used indeterminacy in some musical elements while controlling others. Did you draw this idea from Lutosławski?**

Yes. For example, this is what Lutosławski does in the *Venetian Games*. The first movement is made in segments, right? He gives instructions at the beginning of the work, such as “the segment ‘a’ will be repeated, after ‘b,’ ‘c,’ ‘d,’ etc.” When I saw this, I said to myself, “this is how Lutosławski is achieving cohesion in his music.” Even though it had aleatory elements, there was something recognizable across the different performances.

**• By treating indeterminate processes in this way, were you looking for unity in your music?**

Yes. I was trying to keep control of my works. In other words, I did not want to reach a point at which I could not recognize my music anymore. Not recognizing what I had written troubled me a lot. There was a work in which I took indeterminacy to an extreme where precisely that happened. It was in a piece called *Cinco Estudios Premonitorios*, for an instrumental group. I do not specify the instruments, but it must have several. Performing this work in any meeting of musicians was easy; however, as I heard more and more performances—and it was a very performed piece, precisely due to its versatility—I noticed that I was no longer recognizing what I was listening to. That worried me a lot.

**• Would you say that this is your most open work?**

It is the one on in which I reached a limit.

**• If you were looking to have control over your works by setting specific parameters, what were you looking for by giving freedom?**



Sometimes performers are very creative. Some performers, when given certain freedom, are extraordinary; others, not so much. Seeing how performers took advantage of the freedom I granted them gave me many guidelines to take into account in my own experimentation.

**• Among the music that you wrote within the tendencies of the 60s and 70s, what is the one piece that you consider the greatest exponent of your style?**

An orchestral work titled *Cinco Misterios Eléusicos*. Everything I wrote in that work is very clear, and I can always recognize it as mine. This is a very dear work. Even though I did not follow through that stylistic path, that does not negate how much I like it.

**• Did you ever have to make a concession with your music? Did you have to write anything in a particular style or aesthetic only to fulfill a commission?**

Yes. That happened with my first opera, *Leoncio and Lena*, written in 1980. People associated me with the avant-garde movement. I got a commission to write an opera for actors, not singers. That caused me a whole series of problems. An actor, no matter how well trained, cannot sing something that abstract. So, for this work, I had to write something that could be recognizable to people who were not involved in the avant-garde styles of music.

Very interestingly, even though I was moving back from the aesthetic style I had been submerged in, this was very productive for me, because I started to see that I was able to develop in any language. The important thing was not to lose my personality only because I was writing tonal music. One just needs to express oneself, regardless of the language one uses. My vision of composition completely changed when I understood that.

At that moment, people were surprised to hear that I had written music with tonal centers . . . Anyway, this receding from avant-gardism had already appeared in Penderecki's music. I saw at a Warsaw Autumn [Festival] that he [Penderecki] had renounced everything he had been pursuing during his experimentalist era, writing instead in a Wagnerian style.

I was with Manuel Enríquez and Mario Lavista. We were astonished to see that the person that we considered to be the maximum innovator in music had abandoned his pioneering style. Manuel Enríquez, with his characteristic humour, only said “well . . . let’s just go back to writing in C major” [Laughs].

**• Speaking of Manuel Enríquez, could you tell me about the way in which you collaborated with him?**

Yes. To string things together, I’ll give you some context. When Luis Echeverría was President of Mexico, he instructed Chávez to make a national plan for the development of music. At that moment, Chávez was no longer the INBA’s director. He dedicated himself primarily to conducting. Echeverría’s request was Chávez’s opportunity to position himself, once more, at the very top of the musical scene in Mexico. The first thing that Chávez did was to remove Luis Herrera de la Fuente from the National Symphony conductor’s position, to proclaim himself as the orchestra’s conductor, even when no one had asked him to do that. The same happened with the National Conservatory of Music, I think. I do not remember if he was also going to take over the management of the conservatory or not . . .

The first terrible thing that happened was that Chávez was on the podium of the National Symphony, ready to conduct a rehearsal, and the musicians of the orchestra did not play. It was a total rebellion against Chávez, and that was his . . . it is painful to say it, but it was his fall. After being the most influential music figure in Mexico, and a significant composer, he lost all credibility, and all the musicians started to oppose him.

The result was that the National Symphony lost its conductor. Having no conductor, the musicians of the orchestra formed a committee consisting of three of its members: Manuel Enríquez, Alicia Urreta and [Clemente] Zanabria. Their work was to supervise all the orchestra’s related business while there was not a conductor. One of the requirements of accepting this position was to avoid holding any other job in any other institution for as long as they were part of this committee. The three agreed.

I do not know how Enríquez was convinced to take another job while he was part of the National Symphony's committee, breaking the pact he had made with the orchestra. As a result, Enríquez was exiled to Paris. I mean, I would have loved to have been exiled to Paris [laughs]. But Manuel Enríquez did regret it a lot. I am talking of a moment in which, if the musicians did not agree with something one did, they would protest, and one's career would be finished. It cost Chávez his career and Manuel Enríquez an exile.

At that moment, I was going to Santiago de Compostela, and I had a flight connection in France. I had to spend one night in Paris, and someone recommended that I stay at a pianist's house and spend the night there before my flight to Santiago de Compostela. At the last minute, this pianist told me that she was unable to host me, but that Manuel Enríquez would host me instead.

• **Did you know him at the time?**

Yes. I mean, we had met once, although he probably did not even remember who I was. That was really the first contact, outside of the music scene, that I had with both Manuel and his wife. Anyway, he talked to me and complained about the exile. After some time, Manuel was readmitted to Mexico to work in the music scene. It was the moment when he returned as director of National Center for Music Research [CENIDIM]. I think this happened at the end of the 1970s. I'm not sure anymore . . .

The CENIDIM was nothing really at that time. Once in the management, Manuel had many ideas based on what he had seen in Europe. A little bit in a Chávez style, he wanted the composition workshop that Chávez had founded at the National Conservatory—Chávez had already died—to be transferred to the CENIDIM. It was a strange idea because there was not a logical reason to have a school stuck in the middle of the CENIDIM's facilities. But in the end, it was done. Then he called me to see if I wanted to work with him in the composition workshop.

• **Working as a composition professor?**

Indeed. I was the one running the workshop. Once there, I knew about Manuel's plans to create an international forum of new music in Mexico akin to the one in Warsaw. A few

years later, Manuel founded the International Forum of New Music, and I had the opportunity to premiere many of my music for different group sizes, even for orchestras. The opportunities I had to present my music at the forum helped me to consolidate both my language and my writing. This forum was hugely successful since its inception. The concerts were free and the audiences were delighted.

**• Did you help to organize the forum?**

Yes. I mean, if not precisely to organize, to perform the new music that premiered there. Also, the students of the workshop could present their works in the forum. During that time, I also played a lot with Manuel. This was a perfect learning opportunity for me because I started to get directly in touch with many works of new music and to analyze how they were made, and how they sounded. I even dedicated works to Manuel. From then on, we continued collaborating until we had a series of discrepancies that caused us to stop working together. At the end of his life, we collaborated again in some concerts that he organized in the United States.

It was through my work at the CENIDIM that I got to go to the Warsaw Autumn in Poland.

**• In what year?**

At the end of the 1970s. Warsaw Autumn was the most famous festival of new music back then. While the festivals of Donaueschingen and Darmstadt were stagnated in a single style of music, the Warsaw Autumn was open to all musical currents. My first trip to Poland was a great discovery for me. I learned not only about the music I heard, but also about how a festival of that magnitude was organized.

**• Could you tell me a little about the time you were studying abroad? I know you studied in France and Spain. What was happening while you were there?**

The first time I went abroad, it was because I won a contest organized by *Radio Universidad* [The radio station owned by the National University of Mexico]. The prize was to go to Paris and study at the Office de Radiodiffusion Télévision Française

[ORTF]. The ORTF was the hub of *musique concrète*. Pierre Schaeffer and Pierre Henry had a workshop there, and it made a great impression on me going there and seeing what they were doing.

While in Paris, I witnessed some musical experiments that I did not understand at first. One of them was the audio-visual experiments done by the Canadian, Norman McLaren. He made various short films exploring the intimate relationship between image and sound . . . His experiments were interesting and preoccupied the people in Paris at that time.

On the other hand, there was a controversy taking place involving the similarity of John Cage and Pierre Boulez's music . . . The controversy was how music made entirely through random procedures sounded very similar to the music that was designed and formulated to its smallest detail. Anyway, that is what I experienced when I was in Paris.

• **What about when you went to Spain?**

I went to Spain to the composition festival of *Santiago de Compostela* led by Rodolfo Halffter. Halffter gave the Spanish people his perspective about the music of Manuel de Falla and the serial composers. Visiting Spain at that moment was very interesting because [Francisco] Franco was still in power. For me, it meant seeing a country from a very different perspective from the one I would experience after Franco's death. Spain was behind in all aspects.

• **Seriously? Even when it was part of Europe?**

Spain was never part of Europe . . . At least, this is what Europeans say. They say that Africa starts south of the Pyrenees. [Laughs]

• **Well, but they were geographically closer . . .**

And yet, very far . . . extraordinarily far away. Let me give you an example; once I traveled from Spain to Italy. The big surprise was that 80 percent of the people who went on the same tour were Spaniards who were well over 50 years old and it was the first time they went to Italy . . . It was the first time they went abroad. At that moment, I realized

how isolated Spain was from the rest of Europe. Since its civil war, Spain isolated itself. Even the railroad tracks were of a particular size in Europe and another size in Spain. That contributed to Spain's isolation . . . And, unfortunately, all of these things were designed precisely to isolate it.

**• In an interview you did in 1980, you mention that there was a time around the 70s when you went through a crisis that almost ended your career as a composer. You stated that this crisis revolved around the musical environment in Mexico and your relationship with it.<sup>188</sup> Could you talk a little more about this?**

From the first time I presented my first string quartet in the harmony class, I became much more interested in composition and started, not only to write music, but also to present my works to the public. In these moments, there was a lot of journalistic activity, and it was common for music critics to attend the concerts and write about them. My music received favourable reviews, which encouraged me to continue composing; however, the musical atmosphere of the composition scene tended to privilege the students of the [national] conservatory, and, above all, to those who had been students of Carlos Chávez. I was not part of that [laughs] . . . It was as simple as that. In these moments, I started to say “if I have been composing, like . . . I don't know, for ten years or so . . . and nothing has turned out . . . it seems that I do not exist . . . [so] maybe I should dedicate myself to something else . . .”. Anyway, in these moments came the first commission and I decided to continue my career as a composer.

**• Speaking of these circumstances, what could you tell me about what is known as “Chávez's dictatorship”? Did the composers who were not from Chávez's circle have a difficult time developing themselves in Mexico?**

This concerns the realm of cultural politics. Let me explain; for me, Chávez was, above all, a composer with many ideas, which I think is terrific. He also had a high capacity to promote his ideas from a political standpoint. There is nothing wrong with this. The problem was that he created a schism in the artistic community.

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<sup>188</sup> See Gonzáles and Saavedra, *Música Mexicana Contemporánea*, 187.

The artistic community in Mexico before Chávez was a unified community where everyone was working towards the same goals. Chávez's actions created a gap between the National University of Mexico and the government. He began to declare a series of political precepts in which he stated that musical creation had to be linked to state politics. Sometimes he was right, but not always; for example, he dismissed any other possibility of support for the arts that were not promoted by the government.

Chávez had a fantastic idea for enhancing the music scene in Mexico: to create the National Institute of Fine Arts [INBA]. It is thanks to the INBA that we still have music in Mexico. This is a fact that must be acknowledged, regardless of what anyone may think about Chávez. At the same time, however, Chávez centralized all the musical power in himself. Curiously, when Chávez was at the very top of the musical pyramid of power in Mexico, several opportunities opened up for his students. The first generation of Chávez's students is what we consider the second generation of nationalist composers: Blas Galindo and Moncayo are the highest representatives of this generation. Two of their creations, for example, *Huapango* and *Sones de Mariachi*, were premiered in the United States only because Chávez decided to program them. Blas Galindo and [José Pablo] Moncayo had a very bright and fruitful career sponsored in some way by the power of Chávez.

The same was true for the following generations of Chávez's students. For example, Eduardo Mata and Héctor Quintanar both belonged to the second generation of Chávez's composition workshop, and, even though they were outstanding students, they also enjoyed Chávez's protection. Chávez himself was responsible for opening the doors to Mata for his training as a conductor, which was decisive for his successful career. Héctor continued his career as a composer supported by Chávez. Another example is Mario Lavista, who, as Chávez's disciple, benefited from his support; this is the reason why he could study in Japan.

**• You are saying that his students had some kind of sponsorship that others did not, right?**

Exactly. A contrasting example would be the case of Manuel Enríquez. In fact, it seems that there was an uncomfortable situation between Chávez and Enríquez because when Carlos Chávez went to give lectures abroad about Mexican music, he tended to speak exclusively about his students' compositions. One time, someone in Venezuela asked him why he did not say anything about other Mexican composer's music, such as Manuel Enríquez. That comment did not please Chávez at all; he did not like that Enríquez was gaining international recognition without his support.

**• Did Manuel Enríquez and Carlos Chávez have a relationship?**

No. Manuel was not from Mexico City and grew up outside of Chávez's circle. His career was more complicated than one can imagine. My case was the same. I was studying at the University of Mexico, at the National School of Music, and Carlos Chávez did not think that someone worth his attention could graduate from that institution. Therefore, I was already discarded from the very beginning [laughs]. Consequently, my career developed entirely outside of Chávez's circle. I did not have any kind of sponsorship from Chávez's side. I do not think that after Chávez's death these things happen anymore; I do not believe there is a musical figure with enough power to make or break a career anymore.

**• What would you say are the biggest challenges a composer faces today in Mexico?**

When I was a student, writing my first compositions, there were not as many opportunities for composers as there are nowadays. That is, the current scholarship system in Mexico is, as far as I know, remarkable. What is the problem, then? Now there are too many composers. Presenting works is getting increasingly difficult, and it will only get worse. Where is all the new music created in Mexico going? Most just disappear into oblivion and that makes many composers abandon their careers. Yes, now we have scholarships that encourage one to study composition but then . . . What about after that?

**• How important do you think it is for the Mexican musician—whether composer, performer, theorist, director, musicologist—to study abroad at some point in their career?**



For me, it was absolutely necessary. At the time I studied, there was not what now exists as graduate studies in Mexico. So, if one wanted to pursue higher education, one had to go abroad. Going abroad was beneficial to me because it put me in direct contact with what was being done in other countries. I know my own country with its good and bad things, but being in a foreign country, not only studying, but living, is something very special that nothing else will give you.

**• Is there a living composer, Mexican or foreign, that currently catches your attention?**

Yes, many. Currently, however, there is not a leading current to follow. This situation has caused many unexpected things in art. In my case, this situation has not affected me because, at this point in my life, I am no longer looking to join any current or anything; I am only composing what I want, and that's it. Now there are so many different possibilities and tendencies, however, that it is impossible to identify where a particular musical style comes from.

Anyway, at this moment I do not know anymore. In Paris, I listened to an extraordinary composer whose surname is Lévinas [Michäel Lévinas b. 1949]. He was doing very interesting and unexpected things. What happened to his music? I do not know. I can tell you that I have listened to fascinating people who are still living, but I do not know what they are doing now and to what stages they have taken their music. I just do not know anymore.

### Spanish version (original)

- **¿Por qué cree que se dio el decaimiento del estilo nacionalista en la música de concierto y la consecuente adopción de las tendencias internacionales que afloraron al término de la Segunda Guerra Mundial en México?**

A raíz de esta pregunta, creo que el nacionalismo tuvo una etapa de nacimiento, una etapa donde se convirtió en una corriente muy rica, y una etapa donde fue en declive. El inicio del nacionalismo se dio precisamente con la adopción de las corrientes internacionales más populares. Es decir, los compositores, como Revueltas y Chávez, estaban muy en contacto con las producciones que se habían hecho en Europa, sobre todo las de Stravinsky. La consecuencia fue que la música nacionalista en principio estaba integrada a lo que en ese momento estaba ocurriendo en el resto del mundo.

A medida que pasó el tiempo, la segunda generación de compositores nacionalistas ya no hizo lo mismo. Es decir, encontramos compositores como Moncayo, quien se va más atrás, hasta a Ravel. Compositores como Bernal Jiménez, quien todavía se va mucho más atrás, ya no a Ravel, sino que empieza a tener toda una serie de correspondencias con la música virreinal. Blas Galindo más o menos quiso continuar por la misma perspectiva de Chávez, aunque no siguió adelante. Y por supuesto, todos los demás compositores, ya no tan brillantes como los anteriormente mencionados, no exploraron caminos diferentes.

La tercera generación fue más atrás aún... Leonardo Velásquez empezó haciendo cosas emulando a Silvestre Revueltas y después su música francamente se convirtió en música tonal. Peor aún el caso de Mario Kuri, que ya estaba directamente incursionando en la música popular. Entonces sus creaciones cada vez empezaron a tener menos validez para el público.

- **¿Qué significó enfrentarse a esta situación como estudiante de música?**

Como estudiante de música era muy fatigante el estar escuchando que, si bien el nacionalismo le había dado muchas cosas a México, en ese momento no estaba solamente estatizado, sino ya se encontraba en franca decadencia, por decirlo de alguna manera. Ya había un agotamiento de la corriente. Sin embargo, este agotamiento empezó a coincidir con un sentimiento de apertura hacia lo que estaba pasando alrededor del mundo. Es

decir, estamos hablando a principios de los años 60s en donde el presidente en turno quería que México no fuese un país aislado, sino que se integrase de alguna manera a una corriente internacional.

El camino apenas se estaba abriendo. Pero a raíz de las tragedias que ocurrieron tanto en México como en ciertos países, sobre todo en Europa alrededor de 1968, eso fue definitivo. Es decir, la ruptura que la juventud hizo en contra de la gente mayor, en contra de sus gobernantes, en contra de todo lo que le estaba rodeando, hizo detonar toda una serie de cosas. Esto dio como resultado que apareciesen figuras, como Manuel Enríquez, interesadas en las últimas vertientes que se estaban dando en la música alrededor del mundo durante los 60s. Ya desde los años 1950s en Europa estaban preocupadísimos por fortalecer las corrientes Europeas en festivales como los de Donaueschingen y Darmstadt, los dos en Alemania. Dichos festivales estaban dirigidos por figuras como Pierre Boulez y Karlheinz Stockhausen. Estas personas estaban propiciando que el enfoque de estudio se diera hacia la música dodecafónica o serial.

En México nos habíamos quedado atrás en todo esto: el único representante o maestro que conocía más o menos lo que se trataba la música serial, era Rodolfo Halffter. Halffter fue una de las figuras que introdujeron el serialismo a México. Es decir, gracias a él, el dodecafonismo y el serialismo se empezaron a conocer en este país.

• **¿Esto habrá sido por los años 60s?**

Un poco antes... Esta fue, de alguna manera, la única oportunidad que México tuvo de ponerse más o menos al día con todo lo que estaba ocurriendo en Europa en ese entonces.

Inesperadamente también Carlos Chávez, que estaba vivo, empezó a decir, muy curiosamente, que la época nacionalista en México ya estaba en decadencia y que había que ver hacia lo que se estaba haciendo fuera del país. Recuerdo que en una ocasión Chávez dio una conferencia en la Escuela Nacional de Música, en donde yo estaba. Fue un hecho muy curioso porque él [Chávez] no era muy apreciado en esa institución. La conferencia la dio con ejemplos de [la música de] Xenakis. Fue una gran sorpresa el escuchar esa música hecha a base de *glissandos* en las cuerdas.

• **¿Diría usted que hubo una escuela serialista en México?**

Para nada. No. Es decir, sí, la conocimos, pero no fue popular. No nos gustó. No solamente no fue adoptada, sino que se empezó a ver como algo totalmente frío. Faltaba una parte expresiva.

Sin embargo, en los años 60s ocurre algo totalmente inesperado que fue la inclusión de una obra que había de cambiar en ese momento la historia de la música: el *Treno para las víctimas de Hiroshima* de Penderecki. A diferencia de la supuesta intelectualidad que tenía la música serial, que de alguna manera por eso se estaba rechazando—porque todo parecía resolver un crucigrama—, la música de Penderecki le estaba dando una bocanada de aire fresco a la estética, sobre todo. Ya no era una actividad meramente intelectual la que estaba proponiendo, sino que ya era algo en donde otra vez se volvía a apelar al sentimiento.

No nada más fue Penderecki, sino también vinieron otros compositores como Lutosławski. Pero estos compositores en ese momento no eran muy conocidos en México. Las grabaciones que se hacían de la nueva música eran poquísimas y muy difíciles de conseguir. A las casas que vendían discos aquí no les hacía mucha gracia importar discos y que no se vendieran. Sin embargo, poco a poco nos comenzamos a abrir hacia un mundo que nos era desconocido.

La década de los años 60s fue crucial debido a toda la serie de influencias que estaban permeando en México. Yo recuerdo que, por ejemplo, Carlos Chávez estrenó en la Casa del lago, en México, el *Pierrot Lunaire* y *La oda a Napoleon* de Schoenberg. Eduardo Mata, como director de la orquesta de la universidad, en ese momento estaba estrenando obras de Berio, de Henze, y de otros compositores de los cuales no sabíamos de su existencia. También se organizaron las “Jornadas de Música contemporánea” con la sinfónica nacional dirigida por Herrera de la Fuente. De hecho, fue Herrera de la Fuente el que me invitó a ver el estreno del *Treno para las Víctimas de Hiroshima* en México. También en esas jornadas se estrenó la sinfonía *Turangalila* de Messiaen, evento totalmente inusitado para una ciudad como esta en esos años. Artistas invitados como el pianista Claude Helffer (1922-2004) empezaron a dar a conocer la música de Boulez,

Stockhausen y Messiaen. En fin, poco a poco se estaba sabiendo lo que ocurría fuera de México. Todos nosotros como estudiantes y como participantes del medio estábamos ahí. La combinación de todos estos hechos empezó a reafirmar la salida de la estética nacionalista y acercar a la gente hacia lo que se estaba haciendo alrededor del mundo.

• **¿Cuál fue la reacción y que tan difícil fue para las personas aquí en México aceptar estas nuevas tendencias?**

Debido a toda la serie de influencias que estaban permeando en México en los 60s, la gente empezó a tener mucha curiosidad y a acercarse a ver qué era eso de la música nueva. Yo recuerdo que las obras seriales tendían a ser rechazadas por el público. Sin embargo, creo que la combinación de todas las ideas que llegaban estaban dando un cambio que estaba haciendo falta en esta etapa histórica y sobre todo en México. Fue un cambio muy benéfico para el campo musical.

Como siempre pasa con las nuevas tendencias, al principio hubo un gran impacto y asombro, pero a medida que se empiezan a repetir determinadas formulas, se pierde la novedad.

• **Claro, se pierde la innovación...**

Se pierde la innovación y se pierde el interés también. Entonces lo que en un determinado momento fue muy impactante, por ejemplo, como la forma en la que Penderecki utilizaba las cuerdas, eventualmente se volvió un cliché.

• **Algunos musicólogos han argumentado que las decisiones estéticas que tomaron algunos compositores en Estados Unidos y Europa durante los años de la post-guerra tenían un trasfondo político ¿Usted cree que haya pasado algo similar en México? ¿cree que haya habido algún trasfondo político en las decisiones estéticas de los compositores en México o fueron decisiones meramente artísticas?**

No. No creo que haya pasado eso. Una de las cosas en la que todos [los compositores] parecíamos estar de acuerdo era en salir de todos los conceptos del nacionalismo... ya no acercarnos otra vez a ese tipo de cosas. Aunque esa fue la constante en la mayoría de compositores, fue más una decisión artística que algo con trasfondo político.

• **¿Usted cree que hubo una tendencia por abandonar las técnicas de vanguardia de los 50s y 60s, digamos durante los 80s, 90s?**

Sí. El problema fue que los compositores estaban alejando al público en nombre de la originalidad. En esa época, mientras más original se fuera era mejor. Tomar a la originalidad como el objetivo principal causó un desorden.

Sí, es verdad que no hay nada malo en ser original, pero no todos los compositores tienen que ser originales ni la búsqueda tiene que estar centrada necesariamente en eso porque si no se acaba muy pronto. Afortunadamente, por muy clavado que yo estuviera en determinadas cosas que estaban ocurriendo en la moda, yo era músico, y por muy recalcitrante que fuera mi actitud hacía la vanguardia, no podía negar todo lo que había aprendido antes. Eso fue lo que me permitió seguir existiendo.

• **¿Qué me podría decir, a grandes rasgos, de su música de los 60s y 70s?**

Mi educación musical comenzó a principios de los años 60s. Cuando me inscribí a la carrera de composición me encontré con una escuela muy desorganizada, al grado de que dentro de la carrera no había una materia que se llamara composición. El profesor de armonía que me tocó en ese momento, Juan Antonio Rosado, propuso que al final del segundo año de la clase de armonía se montara un recital con obras de los alumnos. Esto no era común dentro de la escuela; más bien, fue una iniciativa del propio profesor. Yo elegí un proyecto un poco ambicioso: hacer un cuarteto de cuerdas.

Esta fue la primera obra que presenté en público. Afortunadamente, me obligó a conocer otros instrumentos a parte del piano, que era el que tocaba. No fue fácil, pero sí me fue muy productivo. Es decir, empecé a obtener muchos conocimientos a través de esa pequeña obra. Es un cuarteto en un solo movimiento. El hacer esta obra me animó a proseguir con clases de armonía moderna con el mismo profesor. Dichas clases me empezaron a abrir un mundo que desconocía. Un mundo más allá de la música tonal y el sistema tonal. Entonces empecé a aprender de los modos, de otro tipo de escalas (pentáfona, hexáfona) y a componer de todo. Me fui adentrando a las posibilidades que podía entrañar este tipo de lenguajes. Esto me empezó a introducir de una manera excelente hacia la música de la primera parte del siglo XX y me dio pautas para más o

menos entender de qué se trataba esa música, ya que el conocimiento que yo tenía en esos momentos era muy limitado. Esta clase me obligó a leer muchas partituras y tratar de descifrarlas en el piano.

Con mis primeras cantatas pude poner en práctica este conocimiento. Para esta época no solamente estaba estudiando en la escuela de música, sino que ya estaba dentro de la docencia en la misma escuela. Mi primer trabajo fue como pianista del coro de esta institución. Dicho empleo me obligaba, por un lado, a leer mucho—a leer una gran cantidad de obras corales—y, por el otro, a estar observando cómo estaba hecha la música coral. También tuve la oportunidad de empezar a estrenar mis obras con ese coro.

¡Esto fue una gran cosa! Es decir, por un lado, tenía el instrumento que se requería [un coro]—que no estaba nada mal el conjunto—y por el otro, la aprobación de su director. Esto me abrió la posibilidad de presentar mis obras al público. Esto fue una gran ventaja como compositor, ya que lo que estaba pensando, imaginando y escribiendo lo podía ver constatado en la realidad. Esta era una posición muy inusual.

• **Me imagino que debe ser muy difícil para un compositor poder encontrar los músicos necesarios para presentar obras...**

Exactamente. Entonces, mi incursión dentro de la escritura coral fue muy rápida. Pronto comencé a unir la escritura coral e instrumental. Es decir, la primera cantata fue compuesta para instrumentos que de alguna manera conocía, que eran los teclados. Fue hecha para piano, armonio—que era lo que se utilizaba dentro de las clases de solfeo para hacer los dictados—y una celesta que había adquirido la escuela de música en ese momento. La combinación fue muy inusual y el resultado me produjo gran satisfacción.

• **¿Durante la época vanguardista usted estaba buscando algo más allá de la experimentación artística? ¿Había alguna filosofía detrás de sus composiciones?**

Había dos cosas principales. A través de la producción exacerbada de toda la música del momento, me empecé a dar cuenta de qué es lo que me llamaba la atención, qué no, y por qué. La primera cosa de la que me percaté es que, en general, en estos años de tanta experimentación, faltaba en la gran mayoría de las obras una actitud estética: que no sólo

fuera la experimentación por la experimentación, sino que esta experimentación tuviera una razón de ser.

Yo, por mi propio gusto, y desde hace muchos años, estaba afiliado al surrealismo. Todo lo onírico, el sueño, y las correspondencias que se tienen dentro de la música a nivel inconsciente me estaba atrayendo mucho. La pintura surrealista me atraía bastante. En la música no había ejemplos de una actitud estética surrealista y eso me empezó a llamar poderosamente la atención. Empecé a conocer los antecedentes del surrealismo, el dadaísmo, en fin, toda una serie de corrientes a las que con gusto me adherí y me he seguido adhiriendo en determinadas épocas de mi vida y de mis obras.

Por otro lado, también estaba encontrando algo que estaba faltando en la música de esos años: una forma. Es decir, sí había mucha experimentación con instrumentos, pero dicha experimentación no estaba amparada bajo una forma que fuera lógica. No importa si era la lógica del siglo diecinueve o del siglo treinta y uno [sic.], una lógica... En general, con la música aleatoria la lógica ya no existía. Era la lógica de la ilógica, que tampoco llegaba a ser una lógica. En esos momentos la idea era un poco estar en contra de todo, incluso de las formas preestablecidas. En general, la música quedaba sin algún sustento y esto yo lo estaba viendo como un gran peligro.

También empecé a constatar que la forma había sido menospreciada en la música mexicana. Por ejemplo, las obras de Silvestre Revueltas. Son extraordinarias, eso no lo puedo poner en duda. Pero formalmente, si no es *Sensemayá*, todas las obras son ABA. Todo lo que está sucediendo es muy sencillo.

La primera incursión que hice hacia la exploración de la forma fue en mi primera sonata para piano. En ella, a pesar de que no estaba utilizando temas como comúnmente se hacía dentro de la sonata—sino efectos dentro del piano—, siempre seguí una lógica. Esta es una de las razones por la que mis obras no se convirtieron en trabajos sin sentido, como fue lo que le pasó con una gran cantidad de obras que se escribieron en ese momento y que nunca más se volvieron a tocar. Mis obras estaban sustentadas por una forma y una estética.



He encontrado tantas cosas con las cuales se puede explorar en la forma [musical] que me parece apasionante. A esa exploración—técnica más que estética—es a lo que me he dedicado últimamente.

• **¿Hay algún grupo o escuela que haya influenciado su lenguaje musical durante la época experimental?**

Yo represento sobre todo a la nueva escuela polaca. Tanto Boulez como Stockhausen representaron en algún momento la continuidad de toda la escuela alemana en donde el serialismo era la única manera de expresarse. Esta música era de repente, si no tenía una soluciones tan extraordinarias como las que tuvo Boulez, una música fría, sin más. Era una música que a lo mejor estaba perfectamente hecha y en la cual se podía explicar hasta el último sonido, sin embargo, a mí esa música no me estaba diciendo nada. Entonces, la escuela polaca empezó otra vez a incidir en la sensación del auditor. Otra vez volvió a ser música sensorial, no intelectual, a diferencia del serialismo y mucho más el serialismo integral, donde el único objetivo era expresar una técnica perfecta. En ese aspecto, sí, la estética polaca fue decisiva para que la música regresara a expresar toda una serie de sentimientos y sensaciones

• **¿Alguna vez tuvo alguna influencia por parte de la escuela Norteamérica... John Cage?**

Hubo. La música que tomaba como recurso el azar fue muy atractiva. A mí me llamó mucho la atención el saber qué es lo que ocurría con esa música. En una ocasión, se organizó la presentación del concierto para piano de Cage—yo lo toqué. En esa oportunidad pude adentrarme en una partitura de Cage y ver qué es lo que quería hacer y hasta dónde él [Cage] estaba llevando el pensamiento del azar. Las indicaciones de Cage decían: “Esta obra se puede o no se puede hacer”, por ejemplo. Son cosas que parecen tonterías, pero en realidad está implicando toda una serie de pensamientos más allá. El hecho de que Cage dijera “esta obra se puede hacer o no” te ponía a pensar de otra manera: “Este concierto para piano puede tener un solista o no lo puede tener...” [Ríe].

Esta forma de pensar permeó también en la música de Lutosławski, quien empezó a buscar cómo se puede dirigir el pensamiento de la música aleatoria para que no sea el total caos.

• **Lutosławski puso ciertos parámetros ¿no?**

Exactamente. El ver cómo Lutosławski organizaba su música para que a pesar de que fuera en esencia aleatoria, siempre se escuchara la misma obra para mí fue muy sorprendente y revelador. No estaba escuchando cualquier cosa, como en el caso de 4'33" de Cage, en donde no hay nada escrito.

A raíz de las ideas propuestas por Cage se empezaron a dar muchas discusiones, y no nada más en México, sino también en Europa, sobre hasta donde estaba llegando la música. Por ejemplo, un francés vino a México y empezó a hacer una comparación auditiva de la música adscrita al serialismo integral y de la música hecha a través del azar totalmente puro. Las coincidencias eran realmente asombrosas. ¡Se parecían mucho a pesar de ser hechas en los extremos opuestos!

• **¿Quién era esta persona? ¿Se acuerda?**

Jean-Étienne Marie.

• **En algunos de los scores de sus obras de mediados de los 70s, como, por ejemplo, los *Cinco Manuscritos Pnakóticos*, el *Rito del Reencuentro*, y los *Misterios Eléusicos* se observa que usted utiliza algunos elementos de la música aleatoria mientras controla otros parámetros ¿Este uso de aleatorismo lo tomó de Lutosławski?**

Sí. Por ejemplo, esto es lo que hace Lutosławski en los *Juegos venecianos*. El primer movimiento está hecho en segmentos. Lutosławski explica al principio de la obra: “El segmento ‘a’ es el que siempre se va a repetir, después del ‘b’, ‘c’, ‘d’, etc.”. Entonces yo decía, “esto le está dando unidad a la música.” A pesar de que fuera todo aleatorio, había algo que estaba reconociendo.

• **¿Con este tipo de aleatorismo controlado usted estaba buscando unidad?**

Sí. Se trataba de que la obra no se saliese de mis manos. Es decir, que no empezara, cuando fuese ejecutada, a no reconocerla. Eso sí me causaba mucho problema. Inclusive,

este grupo de experimentos lo lleve a un extremo en donde pasó eso, en una obra que se llama *Cinco Estudios Premonitorios*, para grupo instrumental. No especifico qué grupo instrumental, sino que puede ser cualquiera. Debe tener varios instrumentos. Entonces llegó un momento en el que era muy fácil hacer esa obra por cualquier reunión de músicos que hubiera. Sin embargo, vi a lo largo de las ejecuciones que se hicieron—y fue una obra muy tocada precisamente por eso—que ya no estaba reconociendo lo que estaba sucediendo. Entonces sí me preocupó mucho.

• **¿Diría usted que esa es su obra más abierta?**

Es hasta donde llega mi límite.

• **¿Si por un lado usted estaba buscando tener el control de sus obras por medio de poner ciertos parámetros, qué es lo que estaba buscando con dar ciertas libertades?**

A veces los intérpretes resultan muy creativos. Cuando se les dan ciertas libertades son extraordinarios. En otras ocasiones, no tanto. El ver cómo eran aprovechadas las libertades que les dábamos a los intérpretes, nos daba a los compositores muchas pautas de hacia dónde llevar la experimentación.

• **De la música que escribió dentro de las tendencias de los 60s y 70s, ¿cuál es la obra que usted considera su mayor exponente?**

Una obra orquestal que se llama *Cinco Misterios Eléusicos*. Lo que sucede dentro de la obra es muy claro y siempre lo puedo reconocer como mío. No nada más es un exponente de ese periodo de mi música, sino una obra muy querida. Que ya no haya seguido por ese camino no invalida eso.

• **¿Alguna vez tuvo que hacer alguna concesión con su música? Es decir, alguna vez tuvo que componer algo en algún estilo o en alguna estética de la cual usted no haya estado convencido solamente para cumplir...**

Eso sucedió con mi primera ópera, *Leoncio y Lena*, escrita en 1980. La gente, para ese entonces, me relacionaba al movimiento vanguardista. Pero en ese momento me llegó el ofrecimiento de hacer una ópera que fuera cantada, no por cantantes, sino por actores. Eso me empezó a causar toda una serie de problemas. A un actor, por muy adiestrado que

estuviera, no lo podía poner a cantar algo un poco sin ton ni son para su mentalidad. Entonces, para esta obra me tuve que ir al sistema modal o tonal [sic.] con el fin de hacer algo reconocible para gente que no estuviera metida dentro de los lenguajes vanguardistas de la música.

Muy curiosamente, a pesar de que me estaba saliendo de una propuesta estética, esto me fue muy productivo porque empecé a ver que un compositor puede desarrollarse en cualquier ámbito. Lo importante es que, no por escribir tonalmente, pierda uno la personalidad o su esencia como compositor. Uno simplemente se está expresando. Se me abrió totalmente otro mundo.

El resultado fue que la gente se quedó sorprendida de que empecé a escribir música con centros tonales. Esta búsqueda o re-búsqueda la había dado ya Penderecki. Yo vi cómo en un otoño varsoviano, al cual asistí, él había renunciado a todo lo que había sido su época experimentalista y empezó a escribir a la manera Wagneriana.

Ahí estábamos Manuel Enríquez, Mario Lavista y yo. Nos quedamos sorprendidos de ver que el máximo representante de las nuevas posibilidades de música se había echado para atrás. Manuel Enríquez, como siempre tomaba las cosas entre muy a la ligera y no tanto, dijo: “Bueno, pues ni modo, otra vez a componer en do mayor.”

**• Hablando de Manuel Enríquez, ¿me podría hablar de la colaboración que tuvo con él?**

Sí. Para hilvanar las cosas le daré un poco de contexto. Cuando fue presidente de la república, Echeverría le encargó a Chávez hacer un plan nacional de música. Chávez ya no estaba como director del INBA, si no que se dedicaba primordialmente a dirigir. Esta fue la oportunidad que vio para volver a estar en la primera fila de todas las decisiones que se tomaran a través de la música. La primera cosa que Chávez hizo fue quitar a Herrera de la Fuente de la Sinfónica Nacional para él proclamarse como director de la orquesta, siendo que nadie se lo había pedido. Lo mismo pasó con el conservatorio, creo. Ya no recuerdo si él también se iba a hacer cargo de la dirección del conservatorio...

La primera cosa terrible que sucedió fue que Chávez se paró al frente de la orquesta y la orquesta no tocó. Esto fue una rebeldía total en contra de Chávez y esa fue su... doloroso es decirlo, pero su caída. Después de haber sido una gran figura dentro de México y un compositor muy importante, perdió toda credibilidad y todos los músicos se empezaron a oponer a él.

El resultado fue que ya no hubo director dentro de la Sinfónica Nacional, sino que se conformó una especie de comité con tres personas que eran Manuel Enríquez, Alicia Urreta y Sanabria. Ellos integraban el comité que iba a dirigir qué es lo que se iba a hacer con ese organismo. Los tres acordaron que ninguno iba a detentar un puesto político mientras fueran parte de este comité.

Yo no supe cómo convencieron a Enríquez de empezar a trabajar en otro puesto de trabajo mientras formaba parte del comité de la Sinfónica Nacional, quedando mal con lo que había dicho que no iba a hacer. Como resultado, Enríquez fue desterrado a París. Digo, a mí mucho me hubiera gustado que me hubieran desterrado a París, pero a Manuel Enríquez sí le pesó. [Ríe] Ése era un momento en donde si los músicos no estaban de acuerdo con algo, protestaban y hasta luego. A Chávez le costó la vida y a Manuel Enríquez le costó un destierro.

En ese momento yo iba a Santiago de Compostela y por conexiones era muy complicado ir a España. Volé a París. Allí me recomendaron que fuera con una pianista para pasar la noche antes de mi vuelo a Santiago de Compostela. Esta pianista me dijo que a fin de cuentas no podía recibirme, pero que Manuel Enríquez me recibiría.

• **¿Usted lo conocía en ese momento?**

Sí. Digo, nos habíamos encontrado alguna vez. Aunque el hombre a lo mejor ni se acordaba de quién era yo. Fue solo una noche en la que me tuvieron que dar alojamiento ahí, nada más para tomar el avión inmediatamente el día siguiente. Ese fue el primer contacto, fuera de la música que tuve tanto con Manuel como con su esposa.

En fin, estuvo platicando conmigo, lamentándose un poco acerca del destierro. Ese fue el primer acercamiento. Después de eso pasó algún tiempo y a Manuel lo volvieron a

admitir para que regresase a México a hacer algo por la música. Y entonces fue cuando regresó como director del CENIDIM. Eso tuvo que haber sido a finales de los 70s. Ya no estoy seguro...

El CENIDIM en ese momento no era nada. Entonces Manuel ya a cargo de la dirección empezó a tener muchas ideas para hacer cosas en ese centro, sobre todo a partir de lo que él había visto que estaba ocurriendo en Europa. También, en un afán un poquito al estilo Chavista, quiso que el taller de composición fundado por Chávez—ya él había muerto—pasara al CENIDIM. Cosa muy extraña porque el CENIDIM no tenía por qué tener una escuela metida ahí. Pero esa fue su idea. Eso hizo y me llamó para ver si yo quería trabajar con él dentro del taller de composición.

• **¿Usted como catedrático del taller de composición?**

Sí. Yo me hice cargo del taller. También vi lo que quería hacer Manuel con el Foro Internacional de Música, el cual estaba hecho tomando como modelo el otoño varsoviano. Manuel fundó el Foro y yo tuve la oportunidad de estrenar un sin fin de obras para conjuntos de diversos tamaños, incluso para orquestas. Estas oportunidades sirvieron para consolidar tanto mi lenguaje como mi escritura. Dicho foro fue sumamente exitoso desde la primera edición. Los conciertos eran gratuitos y la gente estaba encantada.

• **¿Usted ayudó a organizar el foro?**

Sí. Digo, no precisamente a organizar, pero sí a tocar obras. También los alumnos del taller presentaban sus obras dentro del foro. Durante ese momento, yo también estaba tocando con Manuel. Esto fue para mí un muy buen aprendizaje porque entré directamente en contacto con muchas obras, conocí cómo estaban hechas y cuál era el resultado que se daba. Hasta llegué a dedicarle obras a Manuel. De ahí en adelante seguimos colaborando hasta que tuvimos una serie de discrepancias por las que dejamos de tratarnos. Ya al final de su vida, volvimos a colaborar juntos en unos conciertos que él organizó en Estados Unidos.

Fue a través de mi labor dentro del CENIDIM que Manuel Enríquez me invitó a ir al otoño varsoviano en Polonia.

• **¿En qué año?**

Al final de los años 70s. Este festival era el más famoso que existía de música contemporánea en ese entonces. Ya los festivales de Donaueschingen y de Darmstadt se habían quedado estacionados en una sola manera de escuchar música. En cambio, el otoño varsoviano se abría hacia todas las posibilidades. Esa primera ida a Polonia fue un gran descubrimiento para mí. No solamente de cómo era la música que en ese momento se hacía, sino de cómo se organizaba un festival de esa magnitud.

• **¿Me podría hablar un poco acerca del tiempo que usted estuvo estudiando fuera de México? Sé que estudió en Francia y España. ¿Qué estaba pasando ahí en esos momentos? ¿Y qué fue lo que a usted le impactó?**

La primera vez que salí fue porque gané un concurso organizado por radio-universidad. El premio era ir a París y estar en la Radio de la Televisión Francesa, la ORTF en ese momento. No era todavía Radio France. La ORTF era la sede de la música concreta. Pierre Schaffer y Pierre Henry tenían su taller ahí y a mí me causó gran impresión el ir y ver qué estaba sucediendo.

Estando en París presencié algunos experimentos que yo no entendí en un principio. Uno de ellos fueron los experimentos audio-visuales hechos por el canadiense Norman McLaren. Él hizo una multitud de cortometrajes explorando la relación íntima entre imagen y sonido. Eran experimentos interesantes que estaban inquietando a las personas en París en esos momentos.

Por el otro lado, también se estaba dando una gran controversia debido a la similitud entre la música de John Cage y de Pierre Boulez, a pesar de que representaban ideas de composición completamente opuestas. Es decir, uno con la libertad absoluta y el otro sin libertad alguna. Música hecha completamente al azar y música totalmente pensada y diseñada, daban un resultado sonoro similar.

Eso era lo que a mí me tocó en París en esos momentos...

• **¿Y eventualmente cuándo fue a España?**

A España fui al curso de Santiago de Compostela con Rodolfo Halffter. Halffter dio a los españoles su visión acerca de la música de Manuel de Falla y de los compositores seriales. Esa ida a España fue también muy curiosa porque [Francisco] Franco todavía estaba en el poder. Para mi significó ver al país de una manera muy diferente a la que tuvo después de la muerte de Franco. España estaba muy atrasada en todos los aspectos.

• **¿En serio? ¿A pesar de ser parte de Europa?**

España nunca fue Europa... Es lo que dicen los europeos. Que África empieza a partir de los pirineos. [Ríe]

• **Bueno, pero estaban más cerca geográficamente...**

Y muy lejos... Extraordinariamente lejos. Me tocó hacer una excursión de España a Italia. Y la gran sorpresa es que el 80 por ciento de las personas que fueron a la excursión eran españoles que tenían más de 50 años y que era la primera vez que iban a Italia y que salían de España. Ahí me di cuenta de qué tan aislada se encontraba España del resto de Europa. Se cerró debido a la Guerra Civil. Por ejemplo, hasta las vías del ferrocarril—creo que hasta ahora—eran de un tamaño para circular en Europa y de otro para circular en España. Eso la alejaba del resto de Europa. Y, desafortunadamente, todo eso estaba diseñado precisamente para aislarla.

• **En una entrevista que le hicieron en 1980 usted menciona que hubo una época alrededor de los 70s en la que pasó por una crisis que casi termina con su carrera como compositor.<sup>189</sup> Usted menciona que esta crisis giraba en torno al ambiente musical en México y su relación con él. ¿Podía hablar un poco más acerca de esto?**

Desde esa primera vez que presenté mi primer cuarteto en la clase de armonía, yo me interesé mucho más por la composición y empecé no solamente a componer, sino a presentar obras al público. En esos momentos había mucha actividad periodística y era común que salieran críticas musicales. Mi música recibía críticas favorables, lo cual me alentaba a seguir componiendo. Sin embargo, el ambiente musical de la composición en esos momentos estaba muy circunscrito a los alumnos del conservatorio y, sobre todo, a

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<sup>189</sup> See Gonzáles and Saavedra, *Música Mexicana Contemporánea*, 187.



los que habían sido alumnos de Carlos Chávez. Yo no fui alumno de Chávez [ríe]... Simple y sencillamente. En esos momentos me empecé a decir “si llevo, no sé, 10 años componiendo y no resulta nada... Porque parece ser que no existo... A lo mejor me tengo que dedicar a otra cosa.” Y en esos momentos, precisamente, vino el primer encargo musical que tuve y me dije: “No pues, ya no me salgo.”

- **¿Qué me podría decir acerca de lo que se denominó como la dictadura del Chavismo? Esta situación en la que compositores que no fueran del círculo del maestro Chávez se la veían difícil...**

Esto concierne el ámbito de la política cultural. Es decir, Chávez fue para mí, ante todo, un compositor; un compositor con muchas ideas, lo cual me parece muy bueno. También tuvo una gran capacidad de promover sus ideas desde un punto de vista político. No hay nada malo en esto. El problema fue el distanciamiento que empezó a provocar.

Es decir, la comunidad artística de México antes de Chávez era una única comunidad, en donde todos estaban trabajando de alguna manera para lo mismo. Chávez empezó a distanciar, sobre todo a la universidad del gobierno. Empezó a dar toda una serie de preceptos políticos para unir la labor musical y el gobierno. Sí, tenía razón en algunos momentos, pero no siempre. Chávez estaba cortando cualquier apoyo a las artes que no fuese promovido por el gobierno.

Chávez tuvo una genial idea para México: la creación del INBA. Gracias a ello todavía seguimos teniendo música en México. Es algo que hay que reconocerle, pese a quien le pese. Pero, al mismo tiempo, en el momento que Chávez centralizó todo el poder musical en su persona, sus discípulos, muy curiosamente, empezaron a ser privilegiados en cuanto a las oportunidades que tuvieron para desarrollarse. La primera generación que tuvo de alumnos fueron precisamente los que consideramos la segunda generación de nacionalistas: Blas Galindo y Moncayo, a los cuales Chávez impulsó. Por ejemplo, dos de las creaciones de ellos, el *Huapango* y los *Sones de Mariachi*, se estrenaron en Estados Unidos gracias a Chávez. De alguna manera, auspiciados por el poder que Chávez tenía en esos momentos, Blas Galindo y Moncayo tuvieron una carrera muy brillante y fructífera.

Esto también sucedió con la segunda generación del taller de composición de Chávez, donde había dos personas destacadas: Eduardo Mata y Héctor Quintanar. A Mata, Chávez mismo le abrió las puertas para que se formara como director de orquesta, lo cual fue definitivo para su carrera. Incluso, cuando Mata abandonó la composición, su carrera estuvo bajo las alas protectoras de Carlos Chávez. Héctor Quintanar siguió dentro de la composición. Otro ejemplo es Mario Lavista: como discípulo del taller, de alguna manera, también participó de estas protecciones. Mario Lavista se pudo ir a estudiar a Japón precisamente por eso.

• **Es decir, había algún tipo de apadrinamiento, ¿no?**

Exactamente. La contrapartida es el caso de Manuel Enríquez. De hecho, parece ser que era un poco feo el asunto porque cuando Carlos Chávez daba conferencias de lo que pasaba en la música en México, lo que daba a conocer era exclusivamente la música de sus alumnos. Una vez en Venezuela alguien le preguntó: “Oiga maestro, ¿y Manuel Enríquez?” No le hizo ninguna gracia a Chávez que Enríquez estuviera ganando fama internacional sin su apoyo.

• **¿Manuel Enríquez y Carlos Chávez tuvieron alguna relación?**

No. Manuel venía del interior de la república y se había formado al margen de los círculos de Chávez. Su carrera fue más complicada de lo que pudiera imaginar uno. Mi caso fue el mismo. Yo estaba estudiando dentro de la universidad, dentro de la escuela de música, y Carlos Chávez no pensaba que de ahí pudiera salir alguien. Yo ya estaba descartado, desde el principio (ríe). Entonces mi carrera se tuvo que realizar de una manera totalmente diferente. Sin ningún apoyo o padrino. Tras la muerte de Carlos Chávez creo que ya no existen este tipo de cosas: figuras que dictaminen lo que pasa con los compositores.

• **¿Cuál diría que son los mayores retos a los que se enfrenta un compositor en la actualidad en México?**

En los años en que yo estuve estudiando música y haciendo los primeros intentos de composición, no había tantas oportunidades para los compositores como las hay actualmente. Ahora, el sistema de becas que tiene México lo convierten, hasta donde yo

sé, en un país único. Pero, ¿qué es lo que sucede? Hay demasiados compositores. Presentar obras es cada vez más difícil y solo va a ser peor. ¿A dónde van a parar toda esa serie de composiciones que se están haciendo? Lo que he visto con gran pesadumbre es la deserción de la carrera de composición precisamente por ese tipo de cosas. Sí, hay becas que lo animan a uno a seguir componiendo, pero, ¿y después?

• **¿Que tan importante cree usted que sea para el músico mexicano—ya sea compositor, ejecutante, teórico, director, musicólogo, lo que sea—estudiar en el extranjero en algún momento de la carrera?**

Para mí fue absolutamente necesario. En esos momentos no había estudios de posgrado en México, por lo que forzosamente se tenían que hacer en el extranjero. Esto era muy ventajoso para mi gusto, porque lo ponía a uno en contacto directo con lo que se estaba haciendo en otros países. Nuestro propio país de alguna manera lo conocemos, lo padecemos. Pero estar en otros países, no solamente estudiando, sino viviendo, es algo muy especial.

• **¿Hay algún compositor vivo, mexicano o extranjero, que actualmente le llame la atención?**

Sí, muchos. Lo que sucede es que actualmente una de las cosas que se ha perdido, ya no sé si afortunada o desgraciadamente, ha sido el liderazgo de que haya una sola corriente, o dos, a la cual la gente se pueda afiliar. Esto ha causado muchas cosas inesperadas dentro del arte. A mí no me ha afectado, porque al fin y al cabo yo ya no estoy buscando afiliarme a alguna corriente ni nada por el estilo, sino yo solo estoy componiendo lo que quiero componer y ya. Sin embargo, el que no haya una corriente conductora evita identificar qué es lo que se está haciendo en el resto del mundo. Habiendo tantas posibilidades distintas, es imposible identificar de donde viene un estilo musical en particular.

En fin, en este momento ya no sé. En París me tocó escuchar a un compositor extraordinario cuyo apellido es Lévinas [Michäel Lévinas b. 1949]. Estaba haciendo cosas muy buenas e inesperadas. ¿Qué pasó con él? No lo sé. Le puedo decir que he escuchado a gente muy interesante y que siguen viviendo, pero, ¿qué es lo que ha pasado

con estas personas? O, ¿hacia donde han llevado su música? O en fin... ¿Cómo se han desarrollado? No se lo puedo decir.

## Appendix B: Performance Events



## STUDENT RECITAL

April 9, 2015  
6 p.m., Von Kuster Hall  
Francisco Barradas, *violin*  
Simone Luti, *piano*

Suite for Violin and Piano Op. 10

C. Sinding  
(1856-1941)

*Presto*  
*Adagio*  
*Tempo giusto*

Sonata for Violin solo No. 2 in A minor, BWV 1003

J. S. Bach  
(1685-1750)

*Grave*  
*Fuga*  
*Andante*  
*Allegro*

Spiegel im Spiegel

A. Pärt  
(b. 1935)

**- Intermission -**

Sonata for Violin and Piano No. 1 in F minor, Op. 80

S. Prokofiev  
(1891-1953)

*Andante assai*  
*Allegro brusco*  
*Andante*  
*Allegrissimo – Andante assai, come prima*

*Special thanks to the University of Western Ontario Don Wright Faculty of Music String Bank for the generous loan of the Nicoló Gagliano violin, and bow used in this performance.*

*This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor in Musical Arts degree.*



## STUDENT RECITAL

March 21, 2016  
6 p.m., Von Kuster Hall  
Francisco Barradas, *violin*  
Yolanda Tapia, *piano*

Sonata for violin and piano in A major, D. 574

F. Schubert  
(1797-1828)

*Allegro moderato*  
*Scherzo: Presto*  
*Andantino*  
*Allegro vivace*

Poème, Op. 25

E. Chausson  
(1855-1899)

A Paganini for violin solo

A. Schnittke  
(1934-1998)

**- Intermission -**

Contrasts, Sz. 111

B. Bartók  
(1881-1945)

*Verbunkos - Recruiting Dance*  
*Pihenő - Relaxation*  
*Sebes - Fast Dance*

Scott McDonald, *clarinet*

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## STUDENT RECITAL

March 23, 2017  
6 p.m., Von Kuster Hall  
Francisco Barradas, *violin*  
Yolanda Tapia, *piano*

Sonata for violin and piano

L. Janáček  
(1854-1928)

*Con moto*  
*Ballade: Con moto*  
*Allegretto*  
*Adagio*

Sonata for violin and piano No. 7 in C minor, Op. 30

L. V. Beethoven  
(1770-1827)

*Allegro con brio*  
*Adagio cantabile*  
*Scherzo*  
*Finale: Allegro*

### - Intermission -

Sonata for violin and piano, FP. 119

F. Poulenc  
(1899-1963)

*Allegro con fuoco*  
*Intermezzo*  
*Presto tragico*

*Special thanks to the University of Western Ontario Don Wright Faculty of Music String Bank for the generous loan of the Nicoló Gagliano violin, and Hill & Sons bow used in this performance.*

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Doctor in Musical Arts degree*



## STUDENT RECITAL

April 3th, 2018  
12:30 p.m., Studio 242  
Francisco Barradas, *violin*  
Yolanda Tapia, *piano*

Sounds of Mexico of the post-nationalist era:  
Evolution of art music in Mexico as demonstrated through selected musical works by  
Manuel Enríquez and Federico Ibarra

### DMA LECTURE RECITAL

Suite for violin and piano

M. Enríquez  
(1926-1994)

*Grave*  
*Despacio con insistencia*  
*Andante*  
*Allegre y gracioso*  
*Lento*  
*Allegretto*

Selections of String Quartet No. 2

M. Enríquez  
(1926-1994)

Cinco Manuscritos Pnakóticos

F. Ibarra  
(b. 1946)

*Orplied*  
*Roulotte*  
*Ogdoas*  
*Samain*  
*Acomodamientos del deseo*

Sonata for violin and piano

F. Ibarra  
(b. 1946)

*This lecture recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Doctor in Musical Arts degree.*



## Appendix C: Curriculum Vitae

### **Francisco Barradas**

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#### **Education**

- 2014 - 2019      Doctor of Musical Arts in Violin Performance  
University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada  
Teaching Assistant for the classes of Orchestra and Chamber Music (2014-2018)  
Principal Violin Professor: Professor Annette-Barbara Vogel  
Monograph Supervisors: Drs. Emily Ansari, Thomas Wiebe
- 2012 – 2014      Master of Music in Violin Performance  
Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado, United States  
Principal Violin Professor: Dr. Ron Francois
- 2000 – 2010      Bachelor of Music in Violin Performance  
Facultad de Música de la Universidad Veracruzana,  
Xalapa, Veracruz, México  
Principal Violin Professors: Carlos Marrufo, Agnieszka Macklakiewicz

#### **Teaching Experience**

- 2017 – 2018      Guest artist and faculty at the Festival Internacional de Loja  
Loja, Ecuador

#### **Orchestral Experience**

- 2014 – 2017      University of Western Ontario  
Principal second, assistant concertmaster, concertmaster
- 2014              Cheyenne Symphony Orchestra  
Substitute
- 2012 – 2014      Colorado State University  
Concertmaster
- 2010 – 2012      Xalapa Symphony Orchestra  
First violins section member

- 2009 – 2010            Veracruz State Youth Orchestra  
Assistant concertmaster
- 2006 – 2009            University of Veracruz Symphony Orchestra  
Assistant concertmaster and concertmaster

### **Awards and Scholarships**

- 2016                    London Kiwanis Music Festival. Ensemble Award. First Prize
- 2015                    Global Opportunities Award by the University of Western Ontario
- 2014                    Don Wright Graduate Entrance Award
- 2014                    Full DMA scholarship at University of Western Ontario
- 2014                    Second prize, National Chamber Music Competition,  
Escuela Superior de Música, México City
- 2014                    Member of the Pi Kappa Lambda National Music Honor Society
- 2013                    Member of the Golden Key International Honour Society
- 2012                    Fulbright Garcia Robles Scholarship
- 2012                    Colorado State University Stern Scholarship
- 2012                    Scholarship of Veracruz State for Academic Excellence