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The Journal of the Graduate Association of
Musicologists und Theorists at the
University of North Texas

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Congratulations to Emily Smith, whose paper “The Female Mariachi: How Women are Navigating a Traditionally-Male World” is the winner of the 2018 Graham H. Phipps Paper Award.

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Nationalism, Internationalism, Intertextuality: Mario Lavista's Influence Domestically and Abroad

ERIN CAMERON

Mario Lavista, Mexico's leading composer-pedagogue, remarkably remains almost completely unknown outside of his own country. His prestige in Mexico is indisputable; he holds a prominent position as Professor of Composition at the Conservatorio Nacional de Música in Mexico City and has received numerous national awards and grants. Composer Jaime Luis Cortez describes Lavista's work as influencing "(in a subtle or in a violent way) practically all the Mexican composers younger than he."[1] Many of these composers; including Gabriela Ortiz, Gabriel Pareyón, and Graciela Agudelo; count Lavista as one of their composition teachers.[2] Despite his domestic reputation, his numerous orchestral works are seldom performed in the United States or Europe. Some of his chamber works (especially *Marsias* for solo oboe and crystal glasses) have found an international audience; however, the majority of his works are performed only domestically.

Foreign concerts of Mexican music most frequently include works by Carlos Chávez, Silvestre Revueltas, and José Pablo Moncayo—composers whose senses of nationalism in music differ greatly from those of Lavista. Nationalism in Mexican classical music emerged after the Mexican Revolution as a way of simultaneously elevating Mexican culture to outsiders and educating its own citizens about the value of European art music through the inclusion of Mexican folk and indigenous influences. Lavista has reacted against the tenets of nationalist composers like Chávez by identifying as an "internationalist" composer and consciously drawing from American, European, and South American literature and music. Considering Lavista's interest in internationalism, it is even more intriguing that performances of his music are so limited abroad. Meanwhile, works that include Mexican folk, indigenous, or popular elements are frequently played abroad, whether the composers selfidentify is nationalistic (Carlos Chávez) or non-nationalistic (Arturo Márquez). This paper explores the reasons for Lavista's exclusion by focusing on his conceptions of nationalist and internationalist identity and posits that leaving his music out of the wider contemporary music canon negatively affects not only Lavista, but an entire generation of Mexican composers.

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[1] Beatriz A. Bonnet, "Mario Lavista and His Music with an Analysis of "Ficciones"" (Master's thesis, Rice University, 1988), 7. Parentheses are present in the quoted material.

[2] Pareyón, Gabriel. "Dr. Gabriel Pareyón." *Universidad Nacional Autónoma De México*, 2009, www.posgrado.unam.mx/musica/div/docentes/personal_docente/pareyon.html; Ortiz, Gabriela. "Bio." *Gabriela Ortiz*, 2013, www.gabrielaortiz.com/movil/interna.php?id=1; "Graciela Agudelo (1945-2018)." *Música En México*, 2018, musicaenmexico.com.mx/musica-mexicana/graciela-agudelo/.

Historical Background

It is impossible to understand Lavista's conception of nationalism without first examining the history of nationalism in Mexican music. As a professor at the Conservatorio Nacional, Lavista is one of the cultural successors to Carlos Chávez, the former director and composition professor of the Conservatorio and founding director of the Orquesta Sinfónica de México. The Conservatorio is a publicly sponsored institution which states its historical nationalistic mission prominently on its website.[3] Unlike the United States, which has numerous public and private universities and conservatories of music, Mexico's environment for classical music composition largely centers around the Conservatorio Nacional. Many prominent living Mexican composers, including Juan Trigos and Gabriela Ortiz, have completed at least part of their education there.[4] The Conservatorio was founded in 1866 and started to emphasize a new nationalistic mission after Carlos Chávez was appointed its director in 1928.[5] The Mexican government focused on building a national culture for classical music and composition through the creation of programs like the Secretaría de Educación Pública (SEP, 1921), Orquesta Nacional (1928), and Instituto de Bellas Artes (1946).

The SEP's interest in developing a culture for Mexican art music was articulated by delegate José Bonilla in 1922. He supported artistic production that:

> will make the beauty of our own soil be known and felt; which will cultivate the emerging Mexican music…that instead of being inspired by the masterworks of foreign artists, our painters will find

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[3] "Historia." Conservatorio Nacional De Música. 2019. https://conservatorio.inba.gob.mx/menu-prueba-cnm.html.
[4] Ortiz, Gabriela. "Bio." *Gabriela Ortiz*, www.gabrielaortiz.com/movil/interna.php?id=1.
[5] *Conservatorio Nacional De Música*, 2018, conservatorio.inba.gob.mx/.

> inspiration upon the sublime and majestic creations
> of our exuberant nature.[6]

Bonilla expresses several manifestations of musical nationalism. First, he wants the work of Mexican artists be "known and felt," both domestically and abroad. The SEP and Ministry of Fine Arts believed that art should appeal both to local audiences and foreign ones, as a way of elevating Mexican culture abroad.[7] Bonilla also believes that artists should be inspired primarily by domestic influences. For Carlos Chávez and many other composers working in the 1920s and 1930s, the solution to the challenge of making Mexican culture presentable abroad was to incorporate Mexican folk melodies and indigenous instruments into Western classical forms.

The convictions of the Mexican government played a large role in Carlos Chávez's compositional and pedagogical life. Although he had almost no formal composition training, he would go on to be one of Mexico's best-known composers. One of his primary compositional influences was his piano instructor, Manuel Ponce, who was also a composer known for integrating Mexican folk melodies into Romantic and modern harmonic settings. In the early 1920s, Chávez also became close with Edgard Varèse, who founded the International Composers Guild in New York City and eventually performed several works by Chávez.[8] In 1928, Chávez became director of both the Conservatorio Nacional and Orquesta Sinfónica de México and began programming many works by Mexican composers, including himself. As a result of these endeavors, he was appointed director of the Ministry of Fine Arts in 1933. Chávez's cultural importance in Mexican classical music is unparalleled: his influence extended over education and arts administration. To this day, he remains one of Mexico's most frequently performed composers both at home and abroad. Chávez's music is a reflection of his belief in cultural evolution—that Western art music is a higher form of art than folk and popular music.[9] He fully supported state-sponsored art and believed that "art is a human phenomenon, which the state must promote and use as a weapon to educate the proletarian class" about the Western art music tradition.[10] His emphasis on the pedagogical nature of art is evidenced by his incorporation of Indian (pre-Cortesian) folk melodies into his compositions. For him, art music was a way of uplifting indigenous instruments and melodies; folk music became culturally valuable through its inclusion in art music. In 1929, he clarified his views about art music in a statement about the new nationalist mission of the National Conservatory: "Do not think that the socializing task of art consists in adopting the artwork from the unprepared or uneducated masses. On the contrary, the work of socialization should be to impose the beauty of high art [arte superior] on people who ignore it or hardly understand it."[11] The work of Chávez, often considered to be the epitome of nationalism in Mexican art music, ironically contains as much influence from European classical and Romantic music as it does from Mexican indigenous and folk sources. In *Sinfonia India* (1936), he uses folk melodies borrowed from the Huichol and Yaqui tribes, and also incorporates a variety of indigenous percussion instruments. Yet, these themes are arranged into a Western symphonic form, condensed into a single movement.[12]

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[6] Luis Velasco Pufleau, "Nationalism, Authoritarianism and Cultural Construction: Carlos Chávez and Mexican Music." Translated by Silvio J. Dos Santos. *Music and Politics* 6, No. 2 (Summer 2012).

[7] Pufleau, "Nationalism," 3.

[8] Saavedra, Leonora. "Carlos Chávez's Polysemic Style: Constructing the National, Seeking the Cosmopolitan." *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 68, No. 1 (Spring 2015). 105, 116.

[9] Pufleau, "Nationalism," 5.

[10] Pufleau, "Nationalism," 8.

In comparison with Chávez, Lavista spent a far greater period of his education studying internationally and learning about serialism and avant-gardism. When Lavista enrolled in Carlos Chávez's Taller de Composición (Composition Workshop) at the Conservatorio Nacional in 1963, Chávez was the most influential figure in Mexican classical music. In the 1960s, European avant-garde compositional styles like serialism and polytonality were first becoming known in Mexico. Despite Chávez's interest in folk melodies, his pedagogical style involved strict, organized study of European classical and Romantic composers including Debussy and Wagner. Rodolfo Hallfter, a Spanish composer and pianist who moved to Mexico to teach at the Conservatorio, introduced Lavista to serial music and the works of Webern, Berg, and Schoenberg. In 1967, Lavista traveled to Paris to study with Jean-Etienne Marie and Nadia Boulanger (who taught numerous twentieth-century composers, including Copland). He also visited Darmstadt to study avant-garde and electronic music with Karlheinz Stockhausen and Gyorgy Ligeti, among others. Upon his return to Mexico, Lavista founded the short-lived improvisation group Quanta and worked for a few years in an electronic music lab in Mexico City.[13]

These international influences have affected not only the concepts Lavista considers when writing his works, but how he represents his identity as a composer. He has never publicly expressed Chávez's desire to write a work that would be immediately recognized as Mexican and has explicitly stated that his music is not nationalistic. Lavista criticizes nationalist composers "who quote Indian music in order to be Mexican. That's a fallacy. Being Mexican is much deeper. It belongs to the realm of the soul and of the spirit."[14] The topic of *mexicanidad* ("Mexicanness") comes up in almost every interview with Lavista; interviewers want to know how he connects his compositions with his Mexican identity. Lavista has always responded to this question by stating that he is an "internationalist" composer, whose "music is going to be Mexican music, or at least as far as I am Mexican. As far as I have this universal past, I have an international past as well as a national past."[15] Lavista's sense of internationalism is both a reaction against post-Revolution Mexican nationalist music and a selective identification of "international" textual sources and inspiration in his works. Unlike Chávez, he has specifically chosen not to include Mexican folk and indigenous elements in his works, choosing instead to incorporate texts by multi-national artists whose work he admires.

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[11] Pufleau, "Nationalism," 8.
[12] Pufleau, "Nationalism," 11.
[13] Ana R. Alonso-Minutti, "Resonances of Sound, Text, and Image in the Music of Mario Lavista," PhD diss., University of California Davis, 2008), 43.

Lavista's Internationalism Exemplified by *Ficciones* and *Simurg*

Lavista regularly incorporates non-Mexican sources into his music using intertextuality; the inclusion of other works of art, literature, and music within the context of a new work. Intertextuality is a term more commonly applied to literary analysis, where it refers to the phenomenon by which readers bring their own background and experiences of literature to any new work they read, creating a "network of textual relations."[16] This concept, which emerged in the twentieth-century theories of Bakhtin and Kristeva, was first applied to the works of Lavista by Ana Alonso-Minutti.[17] Intertextuality is related to ideas of interdependence and connectedness and implies a flattening of hierarchy, in which texts can influence other texts without one being considered a definitive or higher form of art. This is what differentiates Lavista's incorporation of intertextuality from that of Carlos Chávez, who incorporated folk and indigenous texts with the intent of creating a higher art form.

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[14] Jeannine Wagar, "Stylistic Tendencies in Three Contemporary Mexican Composers: Manuel Enriquez, Mario Lavista and Alicia Urreta" (PhD diss., Stanford University, 1985), 130.

[15] Wagar, "Stylistic Tendencies," 129.

[16] Allen, Graham. *Intertextuality.* (New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2000), 1.

[17] Alonso-Minutti, "Resonances," 3.

Lavista's intertextuality is key to understanding the piano solo *Simurg* (1980) and its orchestral reimagining, *Ficciones* (1980). In these works, layers of musical and textual references are laid upon each other, creating a rich counterpoint of music and literature. *Simurg* was commissioned by Gerhart Muench: one of the first performers to introduce serialism to Mexican audiences. As in many of Lavista's works, the score includes an epigraph: "…*no de un pájaro, sino de muchos"* ("not of one bird, but many"). This quote comes from poet and musician Ezra Pound's *Canto LXXV*, for violin solo. Pound did not originate the phrase "not of one bird, but many;" violinist Olga Rudge said this line as she performed Clement Janequin's *Le chant des oyseaux,* which Muench had arranged for violin and piano. Both Pound's *Canto LXXV* and Lavista's *Simurg* utilize musical material from *Le chant des oyseaux*.[18] Notably, Lavista has stated that the epigraphs present in many of his scores are not necessarily intended to be read to the audience. Instead, they exist to help performers interpret the work.[19]

Lavista's use of intertextuality in *Simurg* and *Ficciones* supports his assertion that he is an internationalist composer. He specifically chose to source his texts from non-Mexican sources: Borges from Argentina, Pound and Rudge from America, Janequin from France, and Attar from ancient Persia. Perhaps more importantly, the sound of the music is distinct from works by early twentieth-century Mexican nationalist composers. Because of Lavista's decision to channel his "international past," the music does not sound Mexican—at least not in the way that Mexican classical music has sounded before.

The unifying feature of all these works by Pound, Rudge, Janequin, and Muench is an interest in birds. The title *Simurg*, which roughly translates as "king of the birds," references a story by Jorge Luis Borges, *El Acercamiento a Almostasin*. In this story, Borges summarizes the story of a group of birds looking for the Simurg. At the end of their journey, they discover that the Simurg is every one of them; the Simurg is the mirror image of their collective whole. The story is highly symbolic, depicting a journey of self-discovery that is different for each bird on the quest.[20] Like the Pound text, more intertextuality is at play here: Borges drew the story of the Simurg from a poem by thirteenth-century writer Farid ad-Din Attar entitled *The Conference of the Birds*.[21] In turn, the poem is itself intertextual; it is a compilation of ancient Persian folklore. Lavista chose to incorporate these texts about birds because he viewed Gerhart Muench as “a bird ... that started a long trip a long time ago in search of knowledge.”[22]

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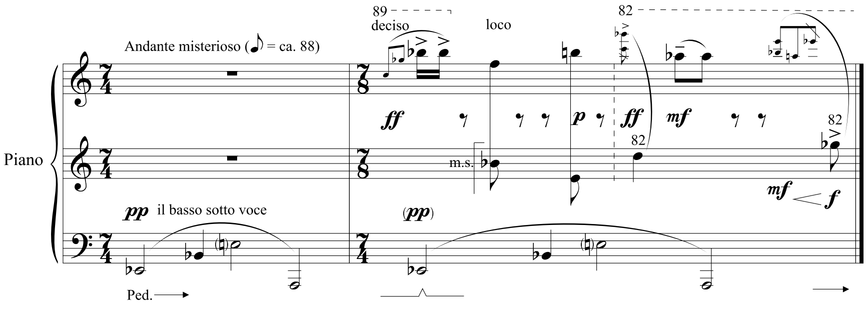
[18] Alonso-Minutti, "Resonances," 128.
[19] Alonso-Minutti, "Resonances," 78.
[20] Wolpé, Sholeh. "Foreward." *Attar: The Conference of the Birds*, W.W. Norton & Co., 2017.
[21] Alonso-Minutti, "Resonances," 123.

Lavista has documented some of his literary influences, giving performers and audience members insight into the inspiration for the work. By deciding to include intertextuality in many of his pieces, he has expressed how he perceives his own artistic lineage: as a composer influenced by artists of all kinds, including those who are still alive and working. In *Simurg,* he has created a new work based on these influences, although he argues that the piece is not specifically programmatic. Ana Alonso-Minutti has argued that Lavista’s personal interviews on the music actually support the assertion that the piece is programmatic. For example, he states that the choice of the 7/8 signature is related to the Seven Valleys in the story of the Simurg.[23] While the work may or may not be considered programmatic, Lavista’s artistic decisions are related to the general atmosphere and themes of the text. The musical depiction of the Simurg captures the mood of the story, portraying the atmosphere of the text by using a symmetrical harmonic language (see Example 1). The first four notes outline two pairs of tritones (A, E-flat and B-flat, E), which are a fifth apart. This set of pitches is both symmetrical and unstable, as the tonality is highly dissonant. Lavista’s decision to use mirrors in his harmonic structures reflects the idea of the Simurg, who is the mirror image of the birds. This is reminiscent of the story’s tone, in which the birds are constantly journeying and enduring trials, never arriving at the destination they seek.

Example 1. Lavista, “Simurg,” mm. 1-2.



Lavista’s interest in the story of the Simurg continued in a later work from 1980 entitled *Ficciones,* after the short story collection by Jorge Luis Borges.[24] In this work, Lavista directly quotes himself; from m. 114 to the end, *Ficciones* is a reorchestration of *Simurg.* Example 2 shows mm. 114–116 of *Ficciones.* Notice that the opening gesture of *Simurg* appears in the harp, now transposed down a minor third and with added octave doublings. *Ficciones* includes a program note, written by Borges, that summarizes the story of the Simurg from Attar. Dealing with similar aesthetic and textual issues, *Simurg* and *Ficciones* are a pair of intertextual works connecting literature and music by Pound, Muench, Janequin, Borges, Attar, Rudge, and Lavista himself.

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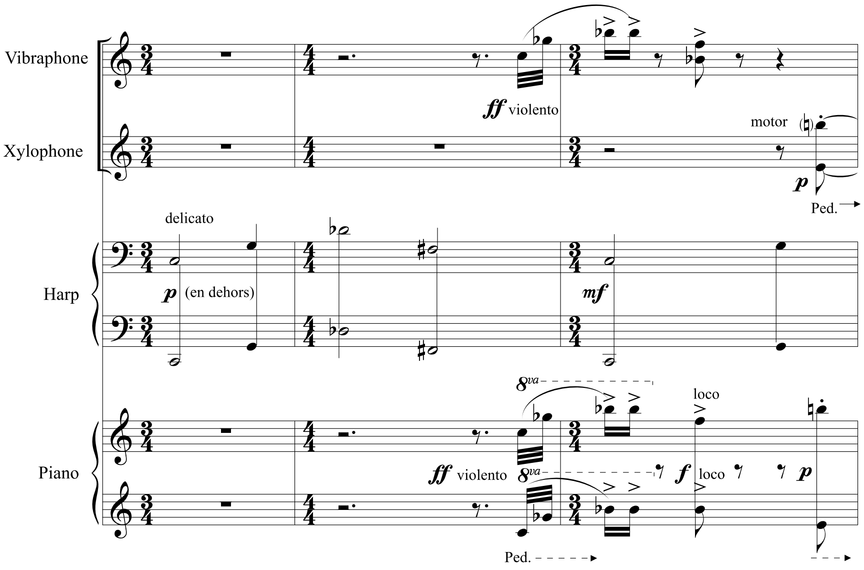
[22] Bonnet, “Mario Lavista and His Music,” 22.

[23] Alonso-Minutti, “Resonances,” 138.

[24] Alonso-Minutti, “Resonances,” 139, 144.

Example 2: Lavista, "Ficciones," mm. 114–116.



While drawing from international sources of art, Lavista makes no attempt to place a hierarchy upon them, instead allowing the influences to interact as a network. This is the most significant manner in which Lavista's attitude towards artistic production differs from that of Chávez. Chávez did not consider Mexican indigenous and folk melodies to have musical merit on their own.[25] By contrast, Lavista considers artistic production a deeply personal process, and allows himself to be influenced by any art that affects him.[26] No source of inspiration is placed on a higher plane than any other; all of his influences intermingle in his process of artistic production. His open attitude towards textual influences translates to his teaching as well. Internationally-recognized composer Gabriela Ortiz describes Lavista as "a wonderful teacher who always respects the esthetic expression of his students, and never imposes his own point of view."[27]

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[25] Pufleau, "Nationalism," 8.

[26] Jeannine Wagar, "Stylistic Tendencies," 51.

[27] Moore, Tom. "Gabriela Ortiz—An Interview." *Opera Today*, 10 Feb. 2010, www.operatoday.com/content/2010/02/gabriela_ortiz_.php.

Lavista and International Conceptions of Mexican Music

Ficciones was premiered in 1980 with the Orquesta Sinfónica de Minería, and to date it remains Lavista's most performed orchestral piece. The Orquesta Sinfónica de Minería and the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional frequently program works by Lavista, but those pieces are rarely heard outside of Mexico. This raises questions about what international programmers are looking for when programming Mexican music. Mexican art music composers like Lavista are faced with a dilemma: incorporate stylistic features that are distinctly Mexican (such as Chávez's use of the indigenous folk melodies), or embrace an internationalist style and risk, as Lavista has, having an almost unrecognizable name outside of one's own borders. In *An Approach to Compositional Trends in Latin America,* Coriún Aharonián attempts to make a list of significant works by Latin American composers (as of 1994), noting that "recognition outside a region's borders is not a warranty of real historical value, which can be defended from an adequate perspective in 50 or 100 years."[28] Although Lavista's music is rarely heard outside of Mexico today, composers like Silvestre Revueltas have achieved significant fame after being rediscovered after their deaths. It is possible that the same might happen to Lavista, whose works challenge international conceptions of what defines Mexican music.

It remains to be seen whether the youngest generation of Mexican composers, many of whom have studied with Lavista at the Conservatorio, will find international recognition. Some students of Lavista are already forming a foreign reputation; Ortiz recently won a Guggenheim Fellowship and has been nominated for two Grammys for her film scores. With an increasing number of researchers, including Ana Alonso-Minutti, focusing on the works of contemporary Mexican art music composers like Lavista, more Europeans and Americans are turning their gaze toward Mexico. International ensembles, like the Los Angeles Philharmonic under Gustavo Dudamel, have focused on recording the works of Mexican and Latin American composers. Programs like the Los Angeles Philharmonic's CDMX (Ciudad de México/Mexico City) Concert Series have emphasized programming the works of living Mexican composers, including Lavista. CDMX was a 2017 Los Angeles-based concert series featuring composers and performers from Mexico City. Another successful program is Music of the Americas, an international concert series based in New York, which includes works by living American, Central American, and Mexican composers. Unfortunately, this type of programming is uncommon.

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[28] Coriún Aharonián, "An Approach to Compositional Trends in Latin America," *Leonardo Music Journal* 10 (2000): 3.

Works by living Mexican composers continue to be avoided both by foreign symphony orchestras and by new music organizations.

Foreign concert programmers' selection of works may be more damaging to living Mexican composers than it appears. As an example, consider a 2018 program of Latin American music programmed by the Dallas Symphony Orchestra (see Table 1).[29] Of the five composers included on the program, four are Mexican; Márquez is the only living composer on the program. Moncayo, Márquez, and Revueltas, like Chávez, are featured in works that utilize Mexican forms of popular music (Moncayo and Márquez) and themes designed after indigenous folk melodies (Revueltas). Audiences across the globe are likely to recognize the popular and folk song forms and rhythms as distinctly Mexican. Left out are the works of Lavista and numerous other composers who "[reject] explicit representations of the national" in their music.[30] This exclusion sends a message to foreign audiences that all Mexican art music is nationalistic and utilizes folk, indigenous, or popular elements. It stereotypes Mexican composition by including only works that outsiders are likely to identify immediately as Mexican, without including artists whose musical sounds and ideas challenge those stereotypes.

Table 1: Dallas Symphony Orchestra "The Sounds of Latin America" Program: September 16, 2018

José Pablo Moncayo, *Huapango*
Arturo Márquez, *Concierto Son*
Alberto Ginastera, *Four Dances from Estancia*
Silvestre Revueltas, *La noche de los Mayas*
Carlos Chávez, *Sinfonía India*
Arturo Márquez, *Danzón No. 2*

Lavista's work is valuable not only for its musical merit, but because his teaching and writing exemplify a new trend in internationalism among Mexican composers. The living generation of Mexican musicians cannot be categorized: they work in idioms from film to concert music, writing in a variety of styles and incorporating numerous global influences. Many of them have studied abroad in Europe and America. To leave out works by these composers is to ignore the heterogeneous community of composers in modern Mexico. Foreign programmers' decision to reject these works is damaging, not only for Lavista, but for generations of Mexican composers to come.

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[29] Dallas Symphony Orchestra. "DSO on the Go: The Sounds of Latin America." *Dallas Symphony Orchestra*, 2018, www.mydso.com/buy/tickets/dsootgo-denton-the-sounds-latin-america.

[30] Alonso-Minutti, Ana R. "Forging a Cosmopolitan Ideal: Mario Lavista's Early Music." *Latin American Music Review* 35, no. 2 (2014): 1.

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Wolpé, Sholeh. "Foreward." *Attar: The Conference of the Birds*, W.W. Norton & Co., 2017.

The Female Mariachi: How Women are Navigating a Traditionally-Male World

EMILY M. SMITH

Mariachi has long been considered a man's world. The cultural contexts of the rugged male, wearing a *traje de charro*, belting out a heartfelt bolero in front of a mariachi band while a loving woman admires from a distance is iconic in the minds of Mexicans and non-Mexicans alike. These images, songs, and the connotations they bring are not only embedded in the mariachi genre, but go further to evoke feelings of national pride, *mexicanidad*, and heritage. They are not only symbols of Mexican song, but Mexico itself.

Until recently this tradition has held onto its strongly male-centric atmosphere. The image of the mariachi is predominately masculine, the lyrics are often from the viewpoint of a man, and the connections to the ideologies of *machismo* and *mexicanidad* create a world in which women are often sidelined as merely observers or objects of affection. Yet, women have been a part of the genre for decades, maneuvering in the world of mariachi and its issues in a variety of creative ways. Their involvement raises questions concerning how they are working with—or against—these male-centric associations, what is expected of them by their peers and the public, and whether they are taking on the male traditions or changing the standards to exhibit their own femininity.

Building from the discussions on the cultural and social contexts surrounding male and female mariachis by leading scholars of the genre, issues facing female performers concerning dress, social pressures, and personal identity are examined in this paper through performer statements, personal biographies, and promotional materials of the musical ensembles. The examination of these elements in particular provides a basis for understanding the various solutions that women are finding to firmly establish their own place within the tradition. While some elements of gender acceptance and embodiment in the world of mariachi have been examined in the past, this paper aims to add to the growing body of scholarship by focusing on the specific ways in which women have been using key elements of iconic mariachi performance to successfully navigate this traditionally male world.

Cultural Contexts Within the Mariachi World

The mariachi genre is closely linked with the *mestizo*, *machismo*, and *mexicanidad* ideologies. This is true not only in

Mexico, but also across the border in the United States where mariachi performance has established a firm footing in the culture—especially in the southwestern regions. Within its musical stylings, lyrics, and visual imagery are coded meanings that reflect the ideal male persona and the Mexican heritage. Central to these meanings are the *mestizo* (a person of mixed race that was upheld by some 20th century nationalist projects as the truest form of Mexican[1]), the idealized countryside with its rugged lifestyles, and the expressions of pain and loss (typically caused by a woman). Mary-Lee Mulholland, in her studies of how Mexican audiences of mariachi perceived these elements explains:

> An authentic *mariachi* must live and embody the music and, in order to express the sentimentality of the music, experience the pain and suffering felt by the rural life of a *mestizo* male. The ability to express an authentic sentimentality (thus as authentic *mexicanidad*) comes from the blood, sweat and tears of the musicians. The music runs through the blood of the *mestizo* passed down from father to son, the pain is in the sweat of the land-working man, and the tears of a man left broken hearted by a woman. Thus, the authenticity of the *mariachi* is literally rooted in the *tierra* (the dirt, land and homeland) of Mexico (preferably of Jalisco) and the blood of the *mestizo* passed down from father to son.[2]

Therefore, for a person to accurately and authentically perform mariachi, he must convey the sentiments of the Mexican male, in terms of his heritage, hardships, and experiences. Mulholland continues, explaining how these elements tie together to express the essence of *mexicanidad*, or what it means to be Mexican, as mariachis are able to "perform idealised and, at time, hegemonic representations of Mexican identity."[3]

Mariachis perform these idealized representations through the styles, lyrics, and standard costume of the genre. With their voices, men convey the ultra-expressivity through the typically male-centric lyrics of hardships in life, work, loss, rejection, and women.[4] Sentimentality is key for the soloists but is also expressed in the *gritos* (yells) of the other players and the audience. The bel canto singing style, a staple of the genre that descends from the influences of Italian opera, adds to the expressivity with its powerful vocals and sentimental features.[5]

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[1] Ana María Alonso, "Conforming Disconformity: 'Mestizaje,' Hybridity, and the Aesthetics of Mexican Nationalism," *Cultural Anthropology* 19, no. 4 (Nov. 2004): 462.

[2] Mary-Lee Mulholland, "Mariachi, Myths and Mestizaje: Popular Culture and Mexican National Identity," *National Identities* 9, no. 3 (2007): 256-257.

[3] Mulholland, "Mariachi, Myths and Mestizaje: Popular Culture and Mexican National Identity," 251.

Beyond the music itself, however, is the visual imagery that is tied to both the mariachi genre and the iconic Mexican male image: the *traje de charro*. This outfit, with the dark jacket, pants, large hat, and fancy embellishments has become the essential uniform of the mariachi world, and each element retains its own coded meanings of the "macho" male mariachi and *mexicanidad*. Originally unadorned, the suit pants and jackets were worn by Mexican ranchers and landowners, and as such represent the heritage, rural life, and ruggedness of the Mexican countryside. The *botonadura* (the buttons, buckles, elaborate embroidery, and other adornments) were added in the eighteenth century by the ranchers of rich families[6], thus creating the symbols of wealth and prestige. Finally, the iconic black color was added by emperor Maximiliano de Habsburgo when he adopted the charro suit during his reign, inherently attaching to the color the symbolism of power.[7]

Therefore, the iconic imagery of the mariachi *traje de charro*, the vocal stylings, and lyrics have created underlying meanings of *mexicanidad*, *mestizaje*, and *machismo*. This imagery garnered rapid recognition as mariachi performance was promoted and spread in the popular cowboy films during the "Golden Age" of Mexico's movie industry in the 1930s-1960s. With the aid of these films, the recording industry, and the growing popularity of the genre, these elements were carried throughout the mariachi world as symbolic and authentic representations of both the mariachi and Mexico itself.

With these considerations, a large question brought to the forefront is how are female performers dealing with these inherently male-centric elements of mariachi performance? The assumption is often made that women have not been performing long in the genre, due to its male-dominated nature, but this is not entirely true. However, to state that women have been able to perform alongside male mariachis in all aspects of the genre would be misleading.

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[4] Cándida F. Jáquez, "Meeting La Cantante Through Verse, Song, and Performance," *In Chicana Traditions: Continuity and Change*, edited by Norma E. Cantú and Olga Nájera-Ramírez (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 171.

[5] Mulholland, "Mariachi, Myths and Mestizaje: Popular Culture and Mexican National Identity," 258.

[6] Leonor Xóchitl Pérez, "Transgressing the Taboo: A Chicana's Voice in the Mariachi World," In *Chicana Traditions: Continuity and Change*, edited by Norma E. Cantú and Olga Nájera-Ramírez (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 148.

[7] Pérez, 148.

Women have been active in the mariachi world throughout its history, but it is only in the last few decades that Mexican and Mexican-American women have made significant progress on their own terms. Historically, a woman could perform with mixed-gender groups, or as the only female, in the role of singer or occasionally as a violinist. These were deemed the more respectable positions that a woman could have on the stage, and many popular female performers who successfully mastered the bolero and ranchera singing styles were accepted in the genre in this role. However, if a woman wished to perform in a group permanently—which was not as common in Mexico as in the United States—or on other instruments, the reception was not always as welcoming. Cándida Jáquez, who studied these attitudes in Mexico and the southwest United States, observed,

> Even among male musicians who are willing to accept women as instrumentalists, the language portrays the nuances of these highly gendered spaces: "Well, of course a good violinist or singer is good—no matter woman or man"; "we have had some good women musicians on the violin"; "she sings mostly, though sometimes she'll play guitar when we're short a player." While the statements are clearly meant to validate women's presence in mariachi, they also illustrate the unequal acceptance of women in all spheres of musicianship.[8]

In dealing with these difficult elements, some women chose to band together forming all-female mariachi groups. The earliest known is Las Coronelas, which was started in the 1940s in Mexico City under the direction of Carlota Noriega. After them came the Mariachi Las Adelitas in the 1950s, the Mariachi Las Estrellas de México in the 1960s, and Las Perlitas Tapatías in Guadalajara in 1989.[9] Finally, Las Reynas de Los Angeles, founded in 1994, claims to be the first all-female professional mariachi group in the United States, with the following decade seeing over twenty more professional groups being formed throughout the country.[10]

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[8] Jáquez, 176.

[9] Mary-Lee Mulholland, "A Beautiful Thing: Mariachi and Femininity in Jalisco, Mexico," *Anthropolgica* 55, no. 2 (2013): 363.

[10] Elizabeth Massie and Matthew Buzzell, dir. *Compañeras: The Story of the First All-Female Mariachi Band*. DVD. United States: CHC Productions, 2008.

Despite the growth that women have seen in this genre, they must still navigate issues concerning their acceptance, education, dress, and identities as performers within the mariachi world. The following sections examine these elements in detail, discussing the cultural and social issues that come with being a female mariachi and the ways in which these women are currently finding success in mediating these issues.

A Man's World

One of the major road blocks women have had to face is simply the resistance within the tradition to their mere presence. Family members and teachers often reject outright the idea of a daughter or young woman wanting to learn the music; some male mariachis may refuse to perform alongside them; or the general public may react negatively to the inclusion of a female on the stage.

The major argument for this rejection is the ideology that the mariachi world is not an acceptable place for women. Mariachi bands perform in open plazas, bars, cantinas and other locations that are considered "seedy environments,"[11] and as such the tradition is inherently associated with drinking, rough men, and male-oriented concerns. Especially in the early years of mariachi, many of the women who frequented the bars were prostitutes—or were perceived as such.[12] Therefore, a woman who worked as a mariachi in these environments could easily gain a poor reputation. Another concern related to this is the idea that the people and environment could influence her negatively, ultimately ending up in situations unfavorable to her family or society. Leonor Pérez, a former violinist in the Mariachi de las Américas in Washington D.C., explains her family's resistance to her performing mariachi saying:

> My parents were the first to contest my participation in mariachi…I recently asked my mother why she objected to my playing with the mariachi, and she said, "Tenía miedo que te vayas a ir con un hombre" (I was afraid that you'd go with a man). A few of my cousins became pregnant out of wedlock when we were adolescents, and my mother was concerned that my involvement with this group, my turning into a *callejera*, would lead me to compromise my status as a "good Christian girl."[13]

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[11] Mulholland, "A Beautiful Thing: Mariachi and Femininity in Jalisco, Mexico," 363.

[12] Massie and Buzzell.

[13] Pérez, "Transgressing the Taboo: A Chicana's Voice in the Mariachi World," 151-152.

Others have likewise spoken out about their issues with rejection based on gender. Luisa Fregoso, a member of Las Reynas de Los Angeles, recalled how even though her father was a professional mariachi player he refused to teach her when she fell in love with the music.[14] José Hernández, director of Mariachi Reyna and Sol de México and himself a fifth-generation mariachi, points out that while he and his five brothers became mariachi players, for his sisters "It wasn't an option for them to be mariachi musicians at all."[15] Additionally, David Sheehy mentions how the famous female mariachi Laura Sobrino, of the Mariachi Los Galleros in Los Angeles, "had similar experiences along the fault line between older social standards that excluded women and her presence in the mariachi, such as men treating her like someone to dance with rather than a musician to listen to."[16]

Despite these resistances to their presence in the genre, girls and women have been finding ways to gain a foothold on the stage and raise acceptance within the tradition. In some cases, these women have gone completely against their relatives' wishes, pursuing a mariachi education and career without the support or assistance from their families. At times this has meant that the girls had to learn the music on their own—like Fregoso, who after being turned down by her father, picked up an old violin of her sister's and taught herself. In an extreme example, Perez (whose family had initially rejected her decisions), took an internship with the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Foundation in D.C. after high school that enabled her to join the Mariachi de las Américas without the cultural and familial pressures she was experiencing at home in Los Angeles.[17]

However, arguably the most significant—and unexpected—solution has been the inclusion of mariachi programs in the public-school systems, mostly in the American southwest and Texas. Mariachi classes such as these date back as far as the 1970s.[18] They are established alongside the traditional band and orchestra programs in the schools and thus give the students another outlet to learn both the music and culture in an academic setting. Through this particular avenue girls (and boys) may learn the mariachi tradition in cases in which they would not have been able to learn from relatives or their cultural upbringing. As increasingly more girls have gone through these programs, proving their enthusiasm, ability, and worth as equal performers, the oddity of seeing a woman on the stage has diminished and the social pressures have begun to ease. Perez notes that after spending five years in Washington D.C., she came back to her hometown to find the atmosphere and attitudes regarding women had changed:

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[14] Massie and Buzzell.

[15] Massie and Buzzell.

[16] David Sheehy, *Mariachi Music in America: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 59

[17] Pérez, 152-153.

[18] Pérez, 144-145.

> When I returned to Los Angeles in 1985…it had been at least eleven years since mariachi was institutionalized in the school system in Los Angeles. Students who played mariachi throughout their secondary education now graduated from high school not only as individuals but also as cohorts of mariachis who stayed together and went on to play semiprofessionally. I imagined that the families of the Chicanas in these semiprofessional groups accepted them more easily, as mariachi performers, than my family had accepted me.[19]

Therefore, female performers have been able to gain a foothold into the predominately male world of mariachi despite the social, cultural, and familial pressures that have historically persisted. By insisting on their ability to contribute to the genre just as equally as men, finding ways of educating themselves, and gaining training and experience in the school systems where possible, these women are progressing the image of mariachi as being a place for both men and women.

The Cultural Connotations of Dress

As mentioned previously, the *traje de charro* is an iconic image linked to the ideologies of the *mestizo*, *machismo* and *mexicanidad*. It contains connotations of Mexican heritage, tradition, and pride that are reflected in the various elements of the charro suit and meant to be exhibited in the people who wear it. Subsequently, the mariachi tradition took up the outfit as its uniform, tying these qualities visually to the *machismo* and sentimentality expressed in the music.

However, when women began to appear on the stage alongside their male-counterparts, the decisions of dress immediately raised some issues. On the one hand, the *traje de charro* is a major symbol, as emblematic as the music itself, and the coded meanings imprinted on the suit are an integral part of the genre. Performers who choose not to wear them may not be considered authentic mariachis. With all the other difficulties facing female performers, the need to appear authentic visually is one that cannot be readily ignored. On the other hand, if a woman chooses to wear the *traje de charro*, she immediately raises questions concerning her gender, and in some cases her moral character. Just like the men, Mexican women have their own traditional modes of dress, imbued with their own coded meanings and character connotations.

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[19] Pérez, 153-154.

Mexican culture, like most cultures throughout the world, includes undercurrents of how men and women should behave in their public and private lives. For men, this means exhibiting the *machismo* discussed previously. For women, social and cultural norms for what is deemed acceptable behavior and the characteristics of femininity stem from the pervasive understandings of the figures of Malinche and the Virgin Mary. The first is considered earthly with her status as both a traitor to the country and lover to Cortez, while the second is considered wholesome, moral, and nurturing. Mary-Lee Mulholland explains how the pervasiveness of these two iconic figures within the culture grew into the expectations of the ideal female character:

> In Mexico, *malinchismo* is the term used to refer to a perceived inferiority complex in Mexico that leads to some Mexicans privileging or preferring foreign things (as did Malinche apparently). In the studies of Mexican gender roles, the concept of *marianismo*, the cult of the Virgin Mary and the counterpart to machismo, became a popular method to capture the manner in which the adoration of the Virgin determines the parameters of acceptable femininity in Mexico and much of Latin America. In this construct of ideal femininity, women are passive, stoic, spiritual, moral, loyal and devoid of sexual desires. Moreover, particularly in Mexico, idealized women's roles are not only understood to reside solely in the realm of the private and domestic but also in the spiritual and religious.[20]

Mulholland points out that this virgin/whore binary is overly simplistic, and that real-life experiences of women in Mexico are understandably much more complex than these categorizations indicate.[21] However, she does concede that "certain characteristics emerging from that complex do influence the parameters of an idealized femininity in Mexico—in particular, notions of piety, dependability, hygiene and beauty."[22]

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[20] Mulholland, "A Beautiful Thing: Mariachi and Femininity in Jalisco, Mexico," 360.
[21] Mulholland, "A Beautiful Thing: Mariachi and Femininity in Jalisco, Mexico," 360.

This ideal femininity is thus exhibited in the traditional dress, the *china poblana*. This dress typically includes a white blouse, and a long skirt in bright colors. The skirt will often have symbols reflecting Mexican heritage embroidered on it, such as eagles, cacti, or the colors of the Mexican flag.[23] The coded meanings attached to these dresses indicate the woman's roles as a child bearer and nurturer; the mother of her household who provides the moral ground for her husband and children, but who also needs protecting.[24]

For the female mariachi, these coded meanings of the *traje de charro* and the *china poblana* create difficulties for establishing her identity on the stage. She is expected to express her femininity and moral character through her choice of dress but must also retain the symbolic images of mariachi performance to maintain her authenticity. In attempting to navigate this dichotomy, women have come up with a variety of solutions.

The first choice is for the female performer to wear the charro pants. This goes against the expectations of how she should appear on stage but stays solidly within the mariachi's traditional look. While it may cause the public to react negatively by questioning her sexuality or moral character, it also causes both the performer herself and the public to reevaluate their notions of *mexicanidad* and gender norms. For Leonor Pérez, who wore the charro pants while performing in groups during her teenage years, the ability for her to perform mariachi this way allowed her to reconsider her identity:

> The experience of being a mariachi was transformative. It provided an alternative to the traditional Chicana gender roles and the expectation that I form an identity based solely on my sexuality as child bearer, nurturer, and sexual partner. Simply by wearing the traditionally male charro, the suit worn by mariachis, my gender identity was altered.[25]

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[22] Mulholland, "A Beautiful Thing: Mariachi and Femininity in Jalisco, Mexico," 361.

[23] Mark D. Lacy, "La China Poblana," Traditions of Mexico, Houston Institute for Culture, accessed May 5, 2018, http://www.houstonculture.org/mexico/lachina.html.

[24] Pérez, 149.

[25] Pérez, 148.

Likewise, Rita Vidaurri famously wore the charro pants throughout her professional career in Mexico in the 1940s and 1950s. Her decision stemmed not only from the simple fact that she liked the outfit, but also from her desire to represent herself in the traditional costume despite social and cultural pressures. Deborah Vargas argues that by doing so, "Vidaurri's pants-wearing-female-body re-sutures the constitutive elements of charro sensuality that has been reduced to femini[ni]ty as powerlessness and masculinity as heterosexuality."[26] In this way, Vidaurri and other charro-wearing women like her create an atmosphere that causes the public to "fashion alternative constructions of mexicanidad."[27]

An alternative choice to the pants is the charro skirt, a full-length skirt that mimics the look of the charro pants with an A-line silhouette and the elaborate *botonaduras* running down both sides. Many of the all-female groups have adopted this skirt as part of their official uniform and it has become over the last few decades its own standard for female mariachi attire. Additionally, many of the female groups have done away with the dark colors of the men's suit in favor of bright or muted colors such as pink, purple, and light blue. The colors chosen are often cultural symbols of femininity and reflect the desire to signal their pride and establish their presence as women in the genre.

Thus, the gender roles that are implied by the choice of dress for both men and women have remained strong within the Mexican and Mexican-American communities. The charro suit promotes power and *machismo* that the mariachi ensemble performs visually and aurally for their audiences, while women are expected to embody their status of upstanding mothers, daughters, and wives with their imagery as pious homemakers. By wearing the charro pants a woman can reconstruct how this dichotomy is considered within society and offer alternative modes of thinking about gender expectations. Or by altering the suit in the abovementioned ways, the women are able to express their femininity through the skirt and choice of color while maintaining the mariachi image of power and prestige with the preservation of the embroidery, buttons, and sleek design.

Mariachi as Male Identity versus Female Occupation

A final consideration in how women are navigating the mariachi world is in the way that male and female performers construct and promote their identities. As opposed to the previous topics which focus primarily on how women are perceived by their societies and how they are successfully working within or around those perceptions, this area is concerned with what these individuals value about themselves and what values they choose to promote to their audiences as reflections of their status as mariachi performers. As with other areas, there is a noticeable difference between men and women regarding their personal identity.

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[26] Deborah R. Vargas, "Rita's Pants: The Charro Traje and Trans-sensuality," *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 20, no. 1 (2010): 10.
[27] Vargas, "Rita's Pants: The Charro Traje and Trans-sensuality," 13.

For male performers, working within the mariachi world is often the most significant part of their lives. Many have been brought up in the tradition, following in the footsteps of generations of performers in their families. They have been encouraged from a young age to take up the music, learn the instruments and songs, and begin performing in family or local groups as soon as they are competent. While they do receive an education, and often get married and have children, it is the mariachi side that they tend to focus on as the fundamental aspect of their lives. For example, José Hernández states that:

> Mariachi to me is my whole life, my whole being, my whole everything. Since I was a child, I have never ever thought of not being a mariachi musician. I am a fifth generation mariachi musician. It goes back over 125 years, from my great-great-great grandfather, Pedro Hernández.[28]

Examining the published biographies for mariachis today provides additional evidence of this mindset. For instance, in reviewing the biographies of the professional groups Sol de México, Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlán, and Mariachi Nuevo Tecalitlán, it is clear that these men promote their identity as mariachi above most everything else. First and foremost, each biography documents the performer's heritage within the profession. The number of generations in their family that have been performing is a prominent feature, and it is clearly a point of pride to be from a long-standing, active mariachi family. Also significant is whether or not he can trace this heritage back to key areas of Mexico, such as Guadalajara or Jalisco, where mariachi is believed to have first begun. For example, Guadalupe Gonzalez Orozco, a violinist in Sol de México, states in the first paragraph of his biography:

> I am the son of Atanacio Gonzalez Gomez and Esperanza Orozco Vazquez, both from the state of Jalisco in Mexico. I am a descendent of a family with Mariachi roots which date to the final years of the

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[28] Massie and Buzzell, dir. *Compañeras: The Story of the First All-Female Mariachi Band*.

> past century- the late 1800's. Furthermore, my father as well as my grandfather both played musical instruments, specifically the harp. This occurred over by the region of "La Sierra del Tigre."[29]

Augmenting their heritage are facts surrounding the training these men received in the mariachi world leading into their careers. For instance, Gilberto Aguirre, a vihuela player in Mariachi Vargas, specifies how he learned to play the instrument from his father, and by the age of thirteen, was performing in Mariachi Nuevo Jalisciense. His biography continues, explaining how "at 15, he joined Mariachi Juvenil Guadalajara, and went on to play with a succession of mariachis that included Los Tecolotes, Los Toritos, Los Galleros, Internacional Guadalajara, San Francisco, and Alas de México."[30] By listing their teachers and playing experience, these men authenticate their place in the mariachi tradition while at the same time establishing how much value they place on this aspect of their lives.

Within the biographies of these groups there is almost no mention of other parts of life, such as academic education or other professions. Only two of the men in the three groups above mention obtaining college degrees, both of which are bachelors of art. The few who mention work outside their mariachi performance all maintain jobs that complement the lifestyle: working as a recording studio owner, mariachi instructor, or interpreter. There is almost no reference to spouses or children. Those that do mention family members do so to acknowledge relatives who are previous or current mariachi performers.

In contrast, the professional women consider mariachi a large part of their identity, but not their entire identity. Just as with the men these women feel a strong connection to the music and lifestyle, but they also feel called to do more with their lives than just mariachi. The biographies of the all-female groups Mariachi Reyna de Los Angeles, Mariachi Las Alteñas, Mariachi Rosas Divinas exhibit this difference in how the women are promoting themselves to their audiences. While they also focus on their heritage and accomplishments in the mariachi field, most also contain information regarding their college education, professions outside mariachi, and their families. Sylvia Hinojosa, a violinist in Mariachi Reyna, comments on this issue directly stating:

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[29] Sol de Mexico de Jose Hernandez, accessed May 3, 2018, www.soldemexicomusic.com.

[30] MariachiMusic.com, "Mariachi Vargas Musician Biographies," accessed May 3, 2018, http://mariachimusic.com/events/mariachi-vargas-extravaganza/musician-biographies.

> This group is part time because women have a different agenda from men. For example, [for] the guys from Sol de México, […] this is their job, their full-time job. This is what they do. They don't do anything else but this. And women, on the other hand, they have to take care of a home, they have to take care of kids, and believe it or not mostly all the women in this group, Mariachi Reyna, go to school.[31]

This is true not only in Reyna, but in many of the other groups as well. The women pride themselves on their education and promoting education to their audiences. For instance, the official biography of Mariachi Mujer 2000 explicitly celebrates their members' academic prowess and its role as a "strong advocate for education in the arts."[32] However, female mariachis are not just seeking education in the arts and music. Their biographies include degrees that range from interior design to financing to political science. Some even hold degrees on the masters and doctoral levels. The contrast to their male counterparts is striking. Where only a small percentage of the men are obtaining—or at least, mentioning—higher education, the women are seeking it out and proudly encouraging others to follow suit. For them, being an educated woman in other fields is as important as their status as mariachi performers.

Likewise, these women also maintain jobs outside the mariachi world. In addition to expected fields such as music educators or directors, the women in these groups also work a vast array of other jobs, including a mortgage loan processor, hospital lab technician, and a longshore woman on the docks of Los Angeles.

One might conclude that these women's choices to hold additional jobs is due to their interest in other avenues of life and their desire to identify themselves as more than just performers. While this seems true, since the women proudly acknowledge their professional working lives, there is also another, more practical reason for this occurrence that needs considering. Compared to their male counterparts, professional female mariachi groups earn significantly less in the job field. This is due mostly to the public's desire to hire the "traditional" male groups more often than the female ones. José Hernández describes this stark difference in referencing the pay gap between his all-male and all-female groups:

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[31] Massie and Buzzell, dir. *Compañeras: The Story of the First All-Female Mariachi Band*.

[32] Mariachi Mujer 2000 de Marisa Orduno, "Biography," accessed May 3, 2018, http://www.mariachimujer2000.com/about.html.

> A lot of women in mariachi music just in general, they ask 'Why don't we get paid the same as the male mariachis?' That only happens, I think, in the big groups, the professional groups. And what happens is that the people who buy the all-female groups, they're…you know, we have a hard time selling the group. We're lucky we get half the amount of money, of what we charge for, for in my case Sol de México…. If I get half for Reyna of what Sol charges, that's a win.[33]

Therefore, women in the profession often do not make enough to support themselves or their families on their mariachi performances alone. To compensate for this, these women are securing full or part-time careers in other areas to afford their living expenses. Juggling a life on the stage, college educations, careers elsewhere, and the full-time jobs of being wives and mothers causes these women to see themselves as more than mariachi performers. As such, they proudly display these other aspects of their lives to show the world the complete picture of their personal identities.

Conclusions

Female performers are becoming more accepted in the mariachi professional world, partly due to their persistence in having a presence in the performance space and partly due to the gradual acceptance of audiences who value performance quality over gender. However, female mariachis are navigating this world differently from their male counterparts, which in turn, also contributes to their acceptance. By adjusting the *traje de charro*, they are keeping its historical, symbolic meanings while also expressing and promoting their femininity. In utilizing the education systems in the schools and the networking it provides in addition to their family heritage and upbringing, they are normalizing the concept of a mixed-gendered mariachi world. Finally, by identifying themselves not only as mariachis, but also as students, working professionals, wives, and mothers, they are augmenting what women can accomplish in the mariachi world and beyond. Ultimately, female mariachis are not pushing against the symbols of *machismo* and *mexicanidad* but creating a space alongside the men that complements and adds to the genre.

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[33] Massie and Buzzell.

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Two Sides of the Coin: Musical Nationalism in Mexico

JULIA WARRICK

For many citizens of the United States, to identify the term "Mexican" is met with ambiguity and may call to mind stereotypical imagery. It might be of a mariachi ensemble, or the classic "vaquero" outfit sporting a sombrero, or it may be the recollection of authentic Mexican food. However, the essence of *mexicanidad,* or "Mexican-ness," was once even more uncertain than people perceive it to be today. Part of Mexico's challenge in establishing a unique identity is that it has had not only one, but two revolutions in its history. This difficult but proud past, along with influences from multiple areas, have all contributed to this concept of *mexicanidad.* Because of the various sources of influence, however, different philosophies have emerged as to what exactly is the true representation of Mexican-ness. When the country first began crafting a national image, it often fell to artists and educators to create and promote ideals. One of the first of these in the musical world was composer Manuel Ponce, and shortly after, his student Carlos Chávez. Both of these musicians were prominent proponents of nationalism in their works. However, their personal philosophies on nationalism differed significantly from one another, as evidenced by their music. This paper will provide background on the origins of Mexican nationalism as disseminated by Manuel Ponce and Carlos Chávez, and the developments made by these composers throughout their careers. It will then conduct a detailed analysis of two orchestral works, Ponce's *Chapultepec* and Chávez's *Sinfonía No. 2 "Sinfonía India"* so as to compare the two styles of nationalism as they are put into practice.

In the early history of the Mexican nation, the indigenous natives (including the prominent Aztec Nation) lived in considerable peace for many centuries. However, they came under the rule of Spanish conquistador Hernan Cortez in 1519 and subsequently lived under the Spanish nation for over three hundred years.[1] During this time, many Spanish and indigenous people intermixed, creating a new *mestizo* race, with varying degrees of Spanish-indigenous ratios. A new social hierarchy emerged from this change, which also included the *criollos* (having Spanish parentage but born in America). Ultimately, hostility against Spanish rule escalated to the point of the first Mexican Revolution, in which the Spanish were driven out of Mexico and were forced to acknowledge Mexican independence with the Treaty of Cordoba in 1821.[2] After less than a century, a new uprising began in Mexico, this time against its dictator, Porfirio Díaz. The people objected to the feudal-like system in which Díaz gave the profits of land to wealthy landowners. They believed that the land should be owned by those who actually worked it. Emiliano Zapata led the rebellion, and his followers carried the appropriate slogans "*Tierra y libertad"* ("Land and liberty") and *"La tierra es para él que la trabaja"* (The land is for those who work it").[3] Thus, the second Revolution in the nation's history was underway. After eleven hard-fought years, Porfirio Díaz was overthrown and the nation began to initiate the formation of a democratic republic, which would prevent unlimited presidential terms. In 1917 a new constitution was adopted, which greatly aided this process.

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[1] "Mexico Timeline - History," A&E Television Networks, LLC, last modified 2019, https://www.history.com/topics/mexico/mexico-timeline.

Ultimately, after the Revolution received support from the people and became a success, many of the original terms of agricultural/social reform were forgotten. What was left post-Revolution was the notion and the hope that Mexico could now re-make itself into a modern nation that could solidify its place in the Western world. But what exactly was this place to be? Even following the Revolution, the European countries had asserted themselves as world leaders, and their music in particular was the model looked to by other aspiring nations. Beethoven, Brahms, and even more contemporary composers such as Shostakovich and Stravinsky, were the gold standards of the time. However, the new Mexican nation was reluctant to employ music that was standard in European circles, as it did not necessarily present an accurate and unique representation of their diverse and historic people. Conversely, others felt that having lived under Spanish influence was an important part of the country's history and should also be considered. Toward the beginning of the twentieth century, the United States was facing a similar dilemma, and composers such as Aaron Copland were striving to create a national musical image that was relatable to the masses. However, the "masses," referring to the common, working people, were not the ones in a position to affect change. As Luis Velasco Pufleau comments, "…the much-desired nation existed only in the political imagination of the intellectual elite, especially because Mexico did not have a cultural, linguistic, political, sociological, and economic unity that would allow the federation of this new nation."[4]

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[2] "Mexico Timeline - History," A&E Television Networks, LLC, last modified 2019, https://www.history.com/topics/mexico/mexico-timeline.

[3] Unless otherwise noted, all historical information regarding the Mexican Revolution is taken from: "The Mexican Revolution: November 20th, 1910," National Endowment for the Humanities, last modified March 19, 2012, http://edsitement.neh.gov/feature/mexican-revolution-november-20th-1910.

As previously stated, the intellectual elite were the primary facilitators of the Mexico's nationalistic image, and it was through them that a strategy began to form. The plan was to create a national identity through public education, via an authoritarian regime. José Vasconcelos was appointed the head of the *Secretaría de Educación Pública* (Ministry of Public Education), and charged with educating the people on a new, unified identity. The SEP declared the following goals in this endeavor:

> ...the new Mexican identity was constructed, on the one hand, by new appreciation of the pre-Hispanic past and the European cultural inheritance and, on the other hand, by the assertion of a Mexican culture within the dominant Western culture, which was generally perceived as universal.[5]

However, finding a perfect balance between these two facets, the "old" and the "new", proved to be complicated. The most popular medium employed by the SEP to educate the people was the arts, including statues, murals, literature, and music. Composers such as Manuel Ponce and Carlos Chávez were a part of this authoritarian project to "educate" the masses. Their concepts of balance between the two main goals as stated above differed, however.

There were two main waves of nationalism in existence when the nationalist movement began to take root in Mexico. The earliest form was known as traditional nationalism. This involved focusing on traditional Mexican folk melodies as the primary source of inspiration for much of the classical music. Traditional nationalists believed that while source material from Mexico's past could be used, the European romantic style of the present was the most appropriate and effective way to write music. The second wave of nationalism was known as modernist nationalism, or indigenous nationalism. Composers who belonged to this camp used ancient indigenous melodies and styles for writing music. They rejected the contemporary romantic style and believed that it stripped historic music of its authenticity. While both of these systems are very different from one another in theory, it was often challenging to carry out such extremes in practice, as nationalist composers Ponce and Chávez will prove.

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[4] Luis Velasco Pufleau, "Nationalism, Authoritarianism and Cultural Construction: Carlos Chávez and Mexican Music (1921-1952)," *Music & Politics* 6, no. 2 (2012): 1-2.

[5] Pufleau, "Nationalism, Authoritarianism and Cultural Construction," 3-4.

Manuel Ponce (1882-1948) was a strong proponent of traditional nationalism. As a child, Ponce grew up playing the piano and organ, and singing in church choirs. At age eighteen, he began studying at the Conservatorio Nacional in Mexico City, but later went to the Stern-sches Konservatorium in Germany. Here, he was encouraged to incorporate traditional melodies from his homeland into his compositions, as the Germans were learning to do with their music, rather than focusing only on European-style music. Ponce eventually returned to Mexico but was forced to flee to Cuba during the Revolution. Even while there, he strongly advocated for nationalism through music, stating:

> Our salons welcomed only foreign music in 1910, such as Italianate romanzas and operatic arias transcribed for piano. Their doors remained resolutely closed to the canción mexicana until at last the revolutionary cannon in the north announced the imminent destruction of the old order. Amid the smoke and blood of battle were born the stirring revolutionary songs soon to be carried through the length and breadth of the land.[6]

Ponce's use of traditional folk melodies, particularly the "canción", caused him to become known as the father of Mexican vernacular song, which became the trademark of the first wave of nationalism. For these reasons he is also considered one of the forerunners of this particular category.

Carlos Chávez (1899-1978), on the other hand, belonged to the modernist nationalism faction. Although he later came to be regarded as the primary representative of modernist nationalism, he initially began his study with a traditionalist, Manuel Ponce himself. After some years of study (and also some self-education), Chávez received his diploma from the Conservatorio Nacional. He later met Paul Dukas while traveling in Paris, who encouraged him to look to his own Mexican heritage as inspiration for his compositions, just as Ponce was encouraged while in Germany. This is when Chávez began to experiment with indigenous influences. After receiving international renown as a composer in the United States and Europe, he returned to Mexico, where he became the director of the Orquesta Sinfónica Mexicana (renamed the Orquesta Sinfónica de Mexico), where he served successfully for 21 years. He was also appointed director of the Conservatorio Nacional. Chávez was an important figure in politics, and was employed to participate in various nationalistic projects that would strive to "educate" the public through art. While Ponce used the present styles to inform the past, Chávez used the past to inform the present, and believed that the identity of the Mexican could take many forms:

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[6] Alastair Lewis, "Manuel Ponce," last modified 2010, http://www.maestros-of-the-guitar.com/ponce1.html.

> Convinced that nationality is a feature always in evolution, I find it sensible to call Mexican the music from the Huichols, Yaquis, or Seris Indians as well as a billion cases of other racially mixed music: sones, songs, corridos, huapangos, jarabes, sandungas, symphonies, operas, etc.[7]

Chávez held to the conviction that what made Mexicans different was precisely what brought them together. However, he chose to focus on the country's native origins in his music and believed that this was where Mexicans should look in order to experience national unity.

Both Ponce and Chávez believed in drawing material from Mexico's past to use in their music. Ponce chose to use melodies from the mestizo *canción*, while Chávez used ancient indigenous melodies. However, the manner in which they orchestrated their melodies further demonstrates the distinction between these composers' personal views on nationalism. Ponce's *Chapultepec* was an early example, written in 1921-1923 and revised in 1934. The work is meant to be a sonic description of the woods and castle of Chapultepec, located in Mexico City. The name itself is derived from the Nahuatl word (the language of the Aztecs), meaning "hill of the grasshoppers."[8] The summit of the hill where the fortress was built was once a sacred location to the Aztec people. The castle was later built there by the Spanish, and housed royalty until after the first Revolution, when it was turned into a military academy. Young cadets defended the fort in the famous "Battle of Chapultepec" during the Mexican-American War. While some presidents continued to live there, the castle was eventually made into a museum in 1939. Chapultepec played a significant role in Mexican history, and Ponce considered this to be the cultural capital of Mexico, and worth representing through the lens of Mexican nationalism. Nevertheless, though the melodies themselves might be authentically "Mexican," the orchestration itself resembles the musical styles being employed in Europe during that time.

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[7] Pufleau, "Nationalism, Authoritarianism and Cultural Construction," 12.

[8] Unless otherwise noted, all historical information regarding the Chapultepec castle is taken from: "The Storied Past of Chapultepec Castle," ThoughtCo, https://www.thoughtco.com/chapultepec-castle-2136652.

Chapultepec is comprised of three separate movements: I. Primavera; II. Nocturno; III. Canto y danza. The overall form of the piece follows a typical romantic form, in which the slower, lyrical movement is in the middle following the first, concluding with a fast dance to the end. Sonically, one listening to this piece might not immediately recognize its roots as Mexican, as there are many features that can be attributed to the recognizable European style. The simplest of these is that the instrumentation is characteristic of a standard European orchestra. There is no instrumental group that is favored over the other; the strings, woodwinds, and brass all play relatively equal roles in the performance, although the woodwinds typically play the traditional folk/indigenous melodies. Very little percussion is used at all, other than the timpani and cymbals, except in the third movement. This movement is meant to portray the indigenous element of the Mexican heritage. Here, there is some more percussion involvement, but they are still typical Western instruments (snare drum, cymbals, etc.) that are played in a manner in which to achieve a more “indigenous” sound. For example, the snare drum plays with a somewhat “rattle-y” sound, as though the snares have been loosened or it is being played with brushes.

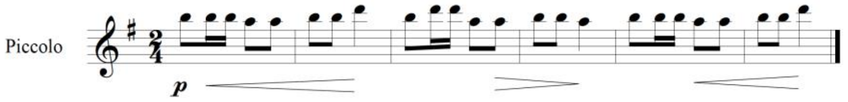
Despite the attempt to modify the timbre, however, another feature that is still distinctly European is the rhythm in the piece. Whereas in folk or indigenous music the meter or emphasis of certain beats may frequently change, the meter stays consistent throughout *Chapultepec.* The most irregular rhythmic motive in the piece, once again, occurs in the third movement. This is when the melodic line often juxtaposes triplet figures with eighth note figures. However, even this would not be radically unusual to the ears of the European musician. The rhythm and meter in the rest of the piece are quite consistent and simple. In any case, due to the minimal involvement of percussion instruments, in general, the rhythm is not a particularly significant aspect of the piece.

As previously mentioned, Ponce was a great proponent of using Mexican folk music in compositions, and *Chapultepec* is no exception. He compiled various melodies from the *canción mexicana* genre and used them as material in this symphonic work. The *canción mexicana* is a type of rural, romantic vocal song that has Italian/*mestizo* influences. However, as times changed, Ponce felt the pressure of the desire to represent Mexico with more than just one source of inspiration. Though he felt no personal connection to this culture, he felt compelled to also include the Aztecs in his representation of Chapultepec, as they were a part of the monument’s history. Therefore, Ponce’s 1934 revision of his composition included newly added material using indigenous melodies. Some of these melodies, such as the one shown in Example 1, portray the indigenous songs to be simple, tuneful, and pentatonic.

Finally, in the revised version of *Chapultepec,* written under the impact of the new expectations of the Mexican audiences regarding their representation in music, the work became a more realistic representation of the Mexican soundscape through the inclusion of stylistically disparate musics that index a socially and culturally diverse society.[9]

1934 was now the era of the modernist nationalist, including Carlos Chávez, who began composing his *Sinfonía No. 2* only a year later. It may have been this influence that convinced Ponce to rework *Chapultepec* into a more wholesome representation of Mexico.

Example 1. Ponce, "Chapultepec" mvt. 3, mm. 9-14



Although the melodies used in *Chapultepec* may be drawn from the past, they are very intentionally placed in a harmonic context that is of the present. Most of the harmonies and progressions in the piece are not authentic to the melodies that they accompany, but rather are more akin to the romantic harmonies of the European model. For example, in the third movement of the original work (second movement of the revised work), Ponce writes a lush slow section that is full of deceptive cadences and chromaticism, evoking the sense of longing that one might relate to the music of Wagner. He seems to give an intentional nod to Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* with a cello melody that includes an ascending sixth, followed by a descending semitone (see Example 2). These compositional decisions are a deliberate statement of Ponce's stance on nationalistic music:

> Musically speaking, what Ponce valued in the canción was exclusively its melodic aspect, dismissing the simplicity of its tonic-dominant harmonies as having no potential for development into an art music…But he valued complex art music as a superior evolutionary stage in the development of music and saw the duty of the composer as nothing less than "to ennoble the music of his country, giving it artistic form, clothing it in the drapes of polyphony, and

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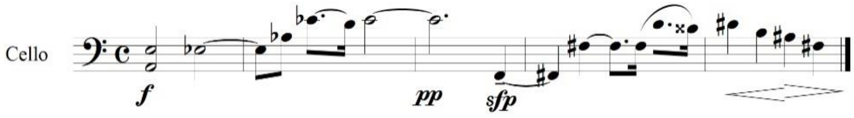
[9] Walter A. Clark, "Preface: What Makes Latin American Music 'Latin'? Some Personal Reflections," *The Musical Quarterly* 92, no. ¾ (2009): 173.

> lovingly conserving the popular musics that are the expression of the national soul."[10]

Although fascinated by Mexican folk music, Ponce also believed that its musical simplicity would ultimately cause it to die out in the culture. He reasoned that by placing the music in a more complex context that was considered "superior" by the intellectual elites of the time, he could preserve those antique melodies, albeit in a different form. Ponce often used the metaphor of placing the music in different "clothing," so that while the identity of the music remains the same, it is dressed up to cater to the appropriate context.

Example 2. Ponce, "Chapultepec" mvt. 2 (1934 revised version)



Rather than adorning traditional melodies with a wholly European context, Carlos Chávez chose to maintain the "primitiveness" in his indigenous music. He (along with other modernist nationalists) thought that native music was the best informant to the Mexican identity, and believed that as a composer, he could be the vehicle through which this music survived (he did, however, maintain that Mexico's European influences should also be acknowledged). According to Chávez, gifted composers had a duty to create great music for their country:

> So, we come to an obvious conclusion: the great art, the great music of, let us say, Brazil or Mexico – just as that of Germany or France – will not be achieved merely by reaching a certain historical, sociological status, or by means of nationalistic techniques, or by any techniques whatever, but by the talent or genius of individual composers, born in such lands.[11]

Sinfonía No. 2 "Sinfonía India," written in 1935 and premiered in 1936, was Chávez's homage to the indigenous nation. The piece is meant to be played in one continuous movement, although it is comprised of three movement-like sections. Each section contains a melody that was drawn from a different indigenous tribe in northern Mexico: the Huichols, the Yaquis, and the Seris. Chávez aimed to preserve not only the Indian melody, but also harmony and rhythm, among others. However, upon closer look, not all aspects of the indigenous music were conserved.

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[10] Leonora Saavedra, "Manuel M. Ponce's 'Chapultepec' and the Conflicted Representations of a Contested Space," *The Musical Quarterly* 92 no. 3/4 (2009): 283-284.

[11] Carlos Chávez, *Musical Thought,* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961), 18.

While all of the instruments of a traditional orchestra are used in *Sinfonía India,* the ratio of woodwinds to brass is considerably more disproportionate than in *Chapultepec.* The piece is written for two piccolos, two flutes, three oboes, one E flat clarinet, two B flat clarinets, one bass clarinet, three bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, two trombones, percussion, and strings.[12] The clear dominance of the woodwind instruments points back to the wind instruments used by the native tribes. In addition, Chávez specifically uses many authentic percussion instruments used by the Huichols, Yaquis, and Seris. Some of these include a güiro, an inverted gourd placed in water and struck with sticks, a string of butterfly cocoons, and a string of deer hooves. Chávez notes in the part that if the correct instruments cannot be found, substitutes may be used, but the authentic instruments should be used whenever possible.

As opposed to *Chapultepec,* the significance of the percussion in *Sinfonía India* emphasizes the rhythm and meter as substantial characteristics of the piece. The percussion helps to change tempos in between sections, and also defines the (constantly changing) meters. Throughout most of the piece, the piece switches between meters such as 2/4, 5/8, 7/8, with such a frequency that it is difficult to predict where the piece will go next. However, the constant running eighth notes help to give the piece a sense of forward momentum, as many indigenous musics would also treat the rhythmic subdivision. Often in the piece, the listener experiences the "sesquailterra" effect, in which the number of beats stays the same, but the emphasis of the beat changes (for example, oscillating between 6/8 and 3/4 meter as in Example 3). In fact, this phenomenon actually "characterizes the hemiola feature of *mestizo* rather than ancient Indian music."[13] While this does not contest outright Chávez's views on musical nationalism, it does somewhat delegitimize a piece that claims to be entirely devoted to the native indigenous culture.

As mentioned above, the primary sources for melodic material in *Sinfonía India* were almost precisely quoted from the

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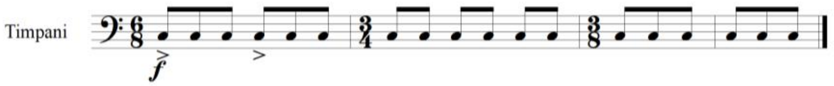
[12] Carlos Chávez, *Symphony No. 2 (Sinfonia India),* Score and Parts, G. Schirmer Inc., 1935.

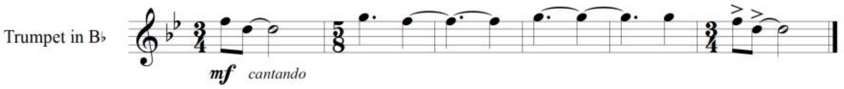
[13] Gerard Béhague, "Indianism in Latin American Art-Music Composition of the 1920s to 1940s: Case Studies from Mexico, Peru, and Brazil," *Latin American Music Review* 27, no. 1 (2006): 32.

Example 3. Chávez, "Sinfonía India," sesquailterra rhythm



music of the tribes of the Huichols, the Yaquis, and the Seris. Most of these melodies utilize a pentatonic scale, often within a modal feel. However, there is one "melodic cell" that seems to be out of context – the opening statement of the piece in the trumpets, that sounds "sol-mi-la-sol-mi" (see Example 4) This particular melodic idea, in its simplest form, resembles the familiar pentatonic children's theme. As a matter of fact, Chávez uses this idea in numerous compositions. Why would he choose to reinforce this particular melody? According to Robert L. Parker, "Most of those occasions appear to have been instances where he wanted to introduce or reinforce a peculiarly Mexican quality."[14] Parker goes on to speculate that the melody may have also originated in Mexican folk music. However, if this is true, the piece once again fails to stand with its indigenous roots.

Example 4. Chávez, "Sinfonía India," pentatonic motif (trumpet)



The "legitimate" native melodies appear to be worth closer inspection as well. One may wonder why Chávez selected those smaller tribes as musical inspiration, rather than perhaps the better-known Aztecs. Evidently, Chávez felt that he could get a more accurate description of native culture by observing the present-day tribes:

> He believed rather naïvely that "the Indian music best preserving its purity is not what remains of Aztec culture, but that of more or less primitive or nomad tribes, which have never, properly speaking, achieved a culture. These would include the Yaquis, the Seris, and the Huichols."[15]

Therefore, Chávez chose to study the music of contemporary indigenous peoples, with the assumption that their music had resisted the influences of other people groups over time. Researchers have found, however, that much of the contemporary music from these tribes did in fact have strong European influence. The music being played at the time of Chávez's research would have been significantly evolved from what it was many centuries ago. Consequently, the musical material used in *Sinfonía India,* while assumed to be authentically Mexican even by its composer, may actually have originated from additional sources outside of Mexico.

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[14] Robert L. Parker, "A Recurring Melodic Cell in the Music of Carlos Chávez," *Latin American Music Review* 12, no. 2 (1991): 171.

[15] Béhague, "Indianism in Latin American Art-Music Composition of the 1920s to 1940s," 32.

In their writings, as well as their musical compositions, Manuel Ponce and Carlos Chávez express differing ideals for musical nationalism. While Ponce and the traditionalist camp chose to focus on traditional folk melodies, dressing them up in the "clothes" of the European style, Chávez and other modernists rejected that same European style, and believed in looking to their indigenous roots as the key to expressing *mexicanidad.* While very different in their approach, they each had eventual success in their endeavors. Ponce succeeded in preserving many Mexican folk melodies that are still studied to this day. Chávez, on the other hand, is widely considered the champion of Mexican nationalism, having accomplished wide recognition for his native-inspired compositions. Both *Chapultepec* and *Sinfonía India* accurately represent these composers' best intentions to conceive a sonic depiction of an authentic Mexico. However, upon closer examination, one finds that the composers both made concessions in these works that somewhat compromised their intentions: Ponce felt compelled to revise *Chapultepec* with added Aztec melodies only after the public's nationalistic expectations changed. Likewise, Chávez unintentionally included heavily European-influenced material in *Sinfonía India,* which was meant to be purely indigenous. Because of these compromises, these two compositions have received a substantial amount of criticism in recent years. However, these remarks do not change the fact that the works had a significant impact upon those who heard them and did much to help create the unified national image that Mexico desired.

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About the Contributors

ERIN CAMERON enjoys a diverse career as a clarinetist, composer, and educator. She has worked with young musicians and artists at The Walden School in Dublin, New Hampshire, and as a Teaching Fellow at the University of North Texas. An avid proponent of new music, she has performed over 30 world and regional premieres of new works. Erin is currently pursuing her doctorate in clarinet performance at the University of North Texas; she also holds degrees from Bowling Green State University and Northwestern University.

EMILY M. SMITH is a Ph.D. student and Teaching Fellow in Musicology with a minor in Ethnomusicology. She earned her BM in trumpet performance at the Baldwin-Wallace Conservatory in 2008, and her MM in trumpet performance at Louisiana State University in 2010. In addition to her academic work, Emily has performed in choirs and orchestras in the United States, Canada, Brazil, and the UK. Her areas of interest include Renaissance and Baroque era wind ensembles, soundscape studies, and traditional Irish music.

JULIA WARRICK is currently pursuing her MM degree in Clarinet Performance, with a related field in Ethnomusicology. She holds a Bachelor of Music Education from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (2016). She also plays clarinet for the 43rd Army National Guard Band in Lincoln, Nebraska.