A SURVEY OF MUSICAL BACKGROUND AND AN ANALYSIS OF
MEXICAN PIANO MUSIC FROM 1928 TO 1956

THESIS

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By

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The Revolution of 1910 in Mexico marked a great political and social upheaval. At the same time a recasting of Mexico's music occurred. Modern Mexican music is a unique combination of the influence inherited from Europe and the indigenous music of the country. This work attempts to trace the development of that combination.

Chapter I gives a background of music in Mexico through Pre-Cortesian times, the colonial period and the operatic nineteenth century. Chapter II deals with the men who shaped present day music in Mexico. Chapter III is an analysis of selected twentieth century piano works. The analysis shows the tendencies of ten Mexican composers in their use of melody and rhythm. It includes a discussion of harmonic structure and tonality. The composers whose works were chosen for consideration in the analysis range from Manuel M. Ponce, considered the father of modern Mexican music, to Carlos Chávez, recognized as the outstanding exponent of music in Mexico today.

Much of the music from the contemporary period is unpublished and remains in manuscript form in Mexico. The author spent the summer of 1954 in Mexico gathering material
there and interviewing musicians in that country. An appendix contains these interviews.

It is hoped that this work will encourage musicians to investigate further the promising field of contemporary music in Mexico, particularly contemporary Mexican piano music.
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CHAPTER I

PRE-CORTESIAN MUSIC, THE COLONIAL PERIOD,
AND THE OPERATIC NINETEENTH CENTURY

The nature of the earliest music of Mexico, that of its aborigines, is a matter of speculation today. On one hand there are those who believe that no records can be found of the actual musical system of the ancient Indians and, therefore, any conclusions drawn are unfounded and not valid. Of the opposite view are those who believe that definite conclusions can be drawn concerning this music. One leading proponent of the latter view, Robert Stevenson, believes that conclusions can be reached following three lines of investigation: (1) the systematic study of the musical instruments which such peoples as the Aztecs, Mayas and Tarascans are known to have used; (2) the assembling of opinions on Aztec music from sixteenth century authors who were friendly to Indian culture rather than opposed to it; (3) the collection of melodies from certain out-of-the-way Indian groups which even today, after the lapse of centuries, may still preserve in their music some of the basic elements found in the pre-Cortesian system.¹

After prolonged investigation of pre-Conquest instruments, scholars have gathered sufficient evidence to establish the following conclusions concerning the development of music among the aborigines in Mexico.

(1) An essential sameness prevailed everywhere in the type of instruments used

(2) the organography of pre-conquest music was static

(3) all pre-Conquest instruments were either idiophones, aerophones, or membranophones.²

Idiophonic instruments were used to produce a sound which was to convey a special meaning symbolically. An instrument of this type was the teponaztli, a sort of two-keyed xylophone struck in the center. In the same classification of idiophonic instruments were the omitzicahuastli, a rasp of human or animal bone, and the ayacachtli, a rattle of clay with pebbles inside or a gourd with seeds. Aerophones included instruments for the increasing of sound. Among these were the tlapitzalli, a four hole flute of clay, reed or bond, and the tepuzquiquiztli, a conch shell trumpet. The membranophones were the group of instruments producing sound through varieties of drums struck at either end such as the huehuetl, akin to our modern kettledrum.³

²Ibid., pp. 8-12.

Stringed instruments, in accordance with our western conception of them, were entirely unknown. In remote Indian tribes today can be found instruments employing only one string and these are used for rhythmic purposes rather than for melodic efforts. The Aztecs frequently inscribed their various instruments with carvings which tell symbolically what purposes the instruments were intended to serve. In museums throughout Mexico can be seen many of the actual instruments used by the early peoples of the country.

As the aborigines had no written musical notation, the exact nature of their musical system remains a matter of conjecture. Carlos Chávez, composer-investigator, maintains that "the Aztecs understood and applied the natural phenomenon of harmonics." He bases this conclusion on a study of the sounds produced by the conch shell. Chávez states that the Indians derived a pentatonic scale from these sounds. According to Vicente Mendoza, the indigenous peoples of Mexico founded a musical system using seconds, fourths, fifths and thirds derived from a scale of seven tones obtained through double flutes.\(^4\) Through investigation of

\(^4\)Ibid., pp. 24-28.

\(^5\)Carlos Chávez, La Música Azteca (México, 1928), p. 4.

ancient instruments and recordings made of the music of remote Indian tribes, scholars have reconstructed what they believe to be the melodic and rhythmic system of the early indigenes. Examples of this information transposed to our system of notation can be seen in present day works.7

Assuming the validity of the musical system and melodies of the aborigines, the question arises as to their importance. What bearing do these melodies have on the music of contemporary Mexico? Robert Stevenson gives this answer to the question:

In a country such as Mexico, which even today contains a larger group of Indians than of persons with pure European blood, the indigenous expressions in art and music assume almost the value of national palladiums. As symbols of Indian cultural achievement in a nation so largely made up even yet of pure-blooded Indians, any fragment or shard of Indian music gathers to itself a spiritual significance that far transcends its objective value in the eyes of foreign musicians.8

The European element entered the music of Mexico with the arrival of the Spaniards in 1521. After subjugating the natives in a military way, Cortez sought to completely dominate the Indians by destroying their culture and supplanting it with the Spanish mode. Precisely because music

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7 Martí, Instrumentos Musicales Precortesianos, pp. 159-179.
8 Stevenson, Music in Mexico, pp. 43-44.
constituted an important ideological factor in the state organization of the ancient native kingdoms, it was banned and replaced by European music which the conquerors employed very deliberately as a political weapon. The indigenes took up and mastered the European music with amazing speed, attesting to the innate musicality of the aborigines. Not only was the music of the Roman Catholic Church readily absorbed by the Indians but everything which was sung and played by the entourage of competent musicians in the company of Cortez was eagerly copied by the natives. Thus with the advent of religious, secular and folk music brought to Mexico by the Spaniards, there began what Miguel Galindo terms in his history of Mexican music "Neo-Hispanic" music.

Among important figures and happenings of colonial church music in this Neo-Hispanic period one finds the Catholic priest Pedro de Gante (1480-1572). Gante is recognized as the first teacher of European music in Mexico, and his methods of music education for the Indians as the best means of conversion soon spread and were used in all the

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9 Stevenson, Music in Mexico, p. 51.

10 Miguel Galindo, Nociones de Historia de la Música (Colima, 1933), p. 291.
missionary schools of New Spain. A printing press, the first in the New World, was set up in Mexico City in 1539. And the first book containing musical notation to be printed in the Americas was issued at the capital city in 1556. Instrumental music developed with the formation of orchestras in connection with the church music, and the variety of instruments available in sixteenth century New Spain and the generally high quality of their manufacture took on widespread proportions in the latter part of the century. Hernando Franco, an early colonial chapelmaster at the Mexico City Cathedral, was author of the first vocal composition to a text in the Aztec language. Manuel Zumaya, the first chapelmaster at Mexico City who can definitely be identified as a creole, produced the first opera written by a native of the New World in 1711, entitled La Partenope. Author of the oldest printed music composed in Mexico was


13Stevenson, Music in Mexico, pp. 68 and 92.

14Ibid., p. 69.


16Stevenson, Music in Mexico, p. 149.
Juan Navarro with his *Quatuor Passiones*; and noted particularly for his rhythmic vitality in Neo-Hispanic music was Pedro Bermudez.\(^{17}\)

The above mentioned composers were all connected with the Church; their works, if not preserved in manuscript, are available through descriptions left in ecclesiastical records and writings of that period. In the realm of colonial secular music, people of today are not so fortunate, as it received no such elaborate documentation. With the coming of the Spaniards, the Spanish folk and art songs spread over all of New Spain. Secular instrumental music did not appear until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Only three tablatures of this music remain from which can be gained an insight into colonial secular offerings. These contain largely dance music.\(^{18}\)

Pianofortes were imported into Mexico during the last decade of the eighteenth century. In 1796 a piano manufacturing shop was established in Mexico City.\(^{19}\) These pianos were probably constructed by a German who chose Adan Miller as a trade name.

\(^{17}\)Ibid., pp. 131-132.

\(^{18}\)Galindo, *Nociones de Historia de la Música Mejicana*, p. 368.

\(^{19}\)Slonimsky, *Music of Latin America*, p. 220.
In 1799 the price asked for pianos in Mexico City was 400 pesos; the same year the annual rental of a house near the zócalo, which was considered then the best location, cost between 500 and 600 pesos. Although it has not been possible to find any advertisement listing English pianos before 1821, pianos made in Spain "imitando a los Ingleses" were offered as the most desirable purchases in 1804.20

Toward the end of this century, composition in Mexico found expression in great part with an imitation of the style of Handel. The outstanding exponent of this period of Mexican music was José Aldana.21

With the colonization, a new folk music had grown up from below; while, from above, there was imposed a new art music. During the three centuries of the Colonial Period, this art music was imported from Spain including in it the Gregorian liturgy, classical polyphony and the secular art of the theater and ballroom dancing.22 The folk music which was forming became entirely Spanish in structure. The Mexican Huapango23 is traced to the Spanish Son, and the

20 Gabriel Saldívar and Elias Osiris Bolio, Historia de la Música en México, Epocas Pre-Cortesiana y Colonia (Mexico, 1934), p. 193.

21 Slonimsky, Music of Latin America, p. 220.


23 The Huapango combines two-four time with three-four time and six-eight time, creating cross rhythms of great complexity. The word is derived either from a native vocable meaning "on a wooden stand" (the huapango is danced on a wooden platform) or it may be a contraction of Huaxtecas, a tropical valley, and the ancient name of the river Pango.
Jarabe is a descendant of the Spanish Zapateado, although the rhythms of the Mexican dances are of the New World. The most outstanding native variant of a Spanish musical form is the Mexican Corrido, a development of the Spanish Romance. Vicente T. Mendoza made a thorough study of these in his book, Romance y Corrido, 1939. This folk music, an outcropping of the Spanish forms, began to take on abundant harmonic thirds and combination simple and compound rhythmic patterns. According to Mayer-Serra, the music of Mexico began with the Conquest to develop along the two definite levels, folk music and art music. This new area was to determine the basis of future musical culture in Mexico, and not until the two levels met and became one in the twentieth century was it possible "to speak of the existence of a specifically Mexican music idiom."

24 The Jarabe is in three-four time, with occasional interpolations of six-eight time, its rhythm resembling that of the Mazurka. The word Jarabe means syrup.

25 The Corrido is a folk ballad on topical subjects. The rhythm combines a triplet and duplet figure in a compound meter. Characteristic of the corrido is the harmonization of the singing line in parallel thirds. Of interest is the fact that the corrido, from the Spanish correr meaning to run, developed in Mexico at approximately the same time the Courante, from the French courir meaning to run, was developing in Europe; there is no known connection between the two.

26 Vicente T. Mendoza, El Romance Español y el Corrido Mexicano (Mexico, 1939)

27 Mayer-Serra, Present State of Music in Mexico, p. 2.
At the end of the Colonial Period, Mexican music was in a depressed state. Even the more ambitious composers such as Manuel Arenzana, Soto Carillo and Luis Medina devoted themselves not to the larger forms of musical composition but entirely to journeyman work on theatrical farces, interludes and "comedies with music." Performance standards had notoriously declined. Better off economically than most American colonies, Mexico attracted foreign talent but in doing so lost a chance to exploit her native-born talents needing encouragement.\textsuperscript{28} The individual performer who won the most liberal praise was the pianist, Soto Carillo. His polished performances of Haydn sonatas were admired and he was considered an excellent extemporizer. Along with another pianist, Horacasitas, he helped to popularize the piano as the coming instrument of Mexico.\textsuperscript{29} It became fashionable for the upper classes to play the piano at home, and the era of musical amateurs had dawned in Mexico as it did in Europe.\textsuperscript{30}

In the area of folk music at this time, the \textit{jarabe}, banned by the church authorities, was adopted as the

\textsuperscript{28} Stevenson, \textit{Music in Mexico}, p. 173.

\textsuperscript{29} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 176.

\textsuperscript{30} Slonimsky, \textit{Music of Latin America}, p. 220.
song and dance of the revolutionaries everywhere throughout Mexico.31

An outstanding musician during the revolutionary epoch of 1810 was José Mariano Elízaga (1786-1842). A child prodigy at the piano, Elízaga's education was undertaken personally by the viceroy. The boy was sent to study with the best musicians of the time and he eventually arrived at the seminary in Morelia, then known as Valladolid, where he became third organist of the cathedral at the age of thirteen. The particular seminary at Valladolid could not have been more pregnant with influence; Hidalgo, the George Washington of Mexico, was rector there when Elízaga was still a child; and Morelos, the other principal figure in Mexico's fight for independence, was a fellow townsman of Elízaga's and had gone to school under Hidalgo.32 Later Elízaga was engaged as piano tutor for a girl in one of the leading families of the town; Doña Ana Maria, his pupil, later became the wife of General Iturbide who, after the expulsion of the last viceroy, contrived to have himself named first emperor of Mexico. Iturbide later sponsored the ardent patriot Elízaga and made it possible for the musician


32 Jesus C. Romero, José Mariano Elízaga (Mexico, Ediciones del Palacio de Bellas Artes, 1934), pp. 14-17.
to publish in 1823 a theoretical treatise, Elementos de Música. Elizaga, recognized as father of music education in Mexico, founded the first music society, Sociedad Filarmonica, in 1824; established the first conservatory of music, the Academia Filarmonica de México, in 1825 although it did not survive; organized the first printing press for publication of secular music in 1826; and assembled the first symphonic ensemble in Mexico in 1826. In 1835 he produced another book, Principios de la Armónica, comparable to a first year college text in four part harmony at the institutions of the United States today. According to Stevenson, Elizaga's energetic efforts as music educator can be compared with those of Lowell Mason in the United States. Stevenson says this about the two men:

Both realized that any permanent success depended upon raising the general level of music sensitivity in a young republic. Both were intensely interested in pedagogy; both adopted their churches as foci for their professional activities in music. Both men contributed immensely to the advance of music in their respective countries by publishing music textbooks.

Independence began a phase in the music of Mexico of frenzied enthusiasm for opera, mainly Italian, which has lasted to this day. The two important Mexican composers of early nineteenth century opera, Cenobio Paniagua (1821-1882)

33 Slonimsky, Music of Latin America, p. 222.
34 Stevenson, Music in Mexico, p. 189.
and his pupil, Melesio Morales (1838-1908), produced works in a second-rate style reminiscent of the efforts at that time in Italy. Paniagua's opera, Catalina di Guisa, was performed by an Italian troupe and received more tribute than any other opera produced in that era.35 Morales wrote a "Mexican" opera, Anita, Mexican in that the plot centered around a theme of conflict between Mexican and French soldiers in a local setting. During this same period, the emphasis on opera and on the training of musicians for opera work helped to produce "The Mexican Nightingale," Angela Peralta (1845-1883), who is described as the most spectacular performing artist perhaps ever developed in Mexico.36 Angela met with great success in European capitals and later returned to Mexico to form her own opera company and tour her native land. On one of these tours, she contracted yellow fever and died on the west coast of Mexico. Playing in the orchestra accompanying her on this last tour was a young violinist, Juventino Rosas (1865-1891), who later was to compose a set of waltzes, one of which has achieved world-wide popularity—Sobre las Olas.37 Angela composed

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as well as sang. Her efforts included a set of nineteen piano pieces, all of the salon type. A later composer of opera in the nineteenth century was Aniceto Ortega whose work, Guatimozín, featured as protagonist the last Aztec prince of that name. At approximately the same time Ortega's opera was being premiered, the whole country was astir with Indianism due to the fact that salvation from the French had been achieved because a Zapotec Indian had willed victory. The opera served a patriotic purpose and achieved an enormous success.

During this time, numerous Italian and German musicians came to Mexico in the capacity of teachers. One such musician, Hermann Roessler, came in the retinue of Emperor Maximilian, publishing several piano pieces and writing vocal music to texts in the Aztec language.\(^3\)

The years 1877-1911 mark the regime of the dictator, Porfirio Díaz, a time in which Mexico was allowed to be virtually owned by foreign capital. This economic domination also heralded a similar domination over social manners, fashion, architecture and the fine arts in which all of these were modelled after the reigning tastes of Europe.\(^3\)

For the privileged class in Mexico, this ushered in a period

\(^3\)Slonimsky, *Music of Latin America*, p. 221.

when a piano was found in every home and the staple of Mexican musical production was salon music in the manner of Chopin and Schumann. The most conspicuous success among all the salon pieces composed in Mexico at the time was the Sobre las Olas (Over the Waves) by Rosas. Rosas, an Otomí Indian, died at the age of twenty-six; he composed his internationally acclaimed set of waltzes in 1891 when he was twenty-three.40

Three names stand out among Mexican composers who excelled in this salon type of composition. These are Aniceto Ortega and Melesio Morales, previously referred to, and Felipe Villanueva (1863-1893) who, like Rosas, was a full-blooded Indian. Villanueva cultivated Mexican themes in his numerous salon pieces, and therein lies his importance in the development of a national style in the music of Mexico.41

The first internationally renowned pianist to visit Mexico was Henri Herz in 1849. His piano playing made a lasting impression on Tomas León (1826-1893) who became the first professor of piano in the first permanent conservatory, the Conservatorio Nacional de Música, founded in 1877. León in this capacity became the earliest person to

40 Stevenson, Music in Mexico, p. 206.
propagandize extensively in behalf of Beethoven, playing the solo sonatas and four hand arrangements of the symphonies. Ortega dedicated to León his Invocación a Beethoven, one of the more serious Mexican piano pieces of the period. José Antonio Gomez, an immediate successor of Elizaga, brought out a series of bravura variations for the piano using a jarabe for the theme. León was the second to do the same in a Jarabe Nacional and Julio Ituarte was next, publishing a series of variations on national airs called Ecos de México. The progress of nineteenth century virtuostic ideals was clearly apparent in these three, and an awareness of nationalism in the music of the country was beginning to emerge. Julio Ituarte (1845-1905) was León's best pupil. Although he lacked the solid interest in Beethoven and Mozart of his teacher, Ituarte became a more talked-of pianist simply because he catered to public taste instead of forming it. He composed a number of fantasies for piano and transcribed what was probably the first Mexican piece of program music, an orchestral fantasy, La Primavera. In 1900 Paderewski made his first appearance in Mexico and Ituarte was among the critics of the Mexican journals who criticized the artist harshly for his excesses and his

42 Stevenson, Music in Mexico, pp. 208-209.
43 Ibid., p. 209.
failure to play the written notes and observe the written signs for expression. After Ituarte the next virtuoso of distinction was Villanueva, mentioned previously as a composer of salon music.

Three composers toward the end of the nineteenth century sought artistic success in the European capitals and returned to Mexico to introduce not only an expansion of romantic piano virtuosity but also French lyric opera. Ricardo Castro (1864-1907), like Villanueva, died at a young age. But he became probably the best piano virtuoso Mexico possessed during the century during his short lifetime. His two colleagues were Ernesto Elorduy (1853-1912) and Gustavo E. Campa (1863-1934). Castro, the most outstanding of the three, had studied composition with Morales and piano with Ituarte. In 1882 he began a tour of the northern cities of the United States and, on returning to Mexico, played the Grieg Concerto at the Teatre Nacional in 1892. Castro also organized a chamber music group through which he gave first performances in Mexico of the Schumann Piano Quintet, the Tschaikowsky Piano Trio in A Minor and the G Minor

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46 The Grieg Piano Concerto was written in 1879. The fact that it was performed in Mexico only thirteen years later points up the degree of cultural consciousness prevalent in Mexico at that early date.
Rubinstein Piano Trio. Mexico issued a grant to Castro for further study in Europe where he was praised extravagantly both as pianist and as composer for a Paris concert. In Paris, Castro took some lessons with Eugene d'Albert who had recently played two of Villanueva's short pieces in his European concert programs. Castro visited Germany at that time where he made connections to have his piano concerto published. Stevenson compares this work to the First Piano Concerto of Edward MacDowell, and gives the following description of the work by Castro:

The opening movement in a minor, allegro moderato, allows the piano a rather pompous entry with a dialogue between a thunderous octave bass and high chords in the treble. The cantabile duet between piano and clarinet strikes a better pose. At letter 5 in the score the diminished seventh chord receives a too thorough workout. The recapitulation proceeds conventionally with the second theme decoratively presented in A major. The piano cadenza, conspicuously lacks thematic significance. The second movement, a large ternary form, poises itself between a B major andante and an A minor allegro appassionato. The last movement is a lively polonaise in A major. Its affinities lie not with Chopin but with the von Weber of the Polacca Brillante.

From our present-day vantage point it seems the piano does too much in this concerto; the solo part too uniformly carries the musical substance. Though the orchestra, which is standard in size with added flute and English Horn part seems always well enough treated when the piano ceases playing, its part otherwise than in interludes seems supplementary rather than complimentary. The modulations are often as abrupt as Liszt's, and the Lisztian technique betrays itself in the figuration. But if the technical difficulties are

no greater than those encountered in other fin-de-siecle concertos, they do prove Castro had mastered the conventional pianism of his epoch. Even reasonably well played this concerto would as well split the ears of the groundlings as the next one.48

In January, 1907, Castro was named director of the Conservatorio Nacional but died at the peak of his accomplishments in that same year. Though Castro achieved distinction in his time, he is regarded with what Stevenson terms "polite indifference" today by sophisticated Mexican musical circles, and his style has completely gone out of fashion.49

Religious music produced nothing of lasting value during the nineteenth century. In connection with national and regional music and dances, there took place further development of the jarabe, the huapango and the zandunga.50

About this time there came into existence an instrumental group called mariachi bands. The mariachi group consists fundamentally of two violins, a large five-stringed guitar, a small guitar and a five octave harp. In modern ensembles the harp is frequently omitted, while clarinet and trumpet are added. The derivation of the word mariachi is unknown, but it is supposed that it came about as an adoption of the

48 Stevenson, Music in Mexico, pp. 213-214.

49 Ibid., p. 214.

50 The zandunga is a Mexican air in waltz time. The word means a graceful woman.
French word *mariage* since these musical groups sprang up about the time of the French occupation of Mexico in the 1860's.51

In Mexico during the nineteenth century, opera was the dominant musical form. At that time social behavior, fashions in clothing, literature and all phases of life among the upper class were patterned after current European trends. Opera in Mexico was made to sound exactly like that produced in Italy. The ruling dictator of the time, Porfirio Díaz, even began to build a ponderous marble opera house (which is sinking from its own weight in the spongy soil of Mexico City) designed to look exactly like those in Italy. This opera house was to symbolize to the world Mexico's cultural achievements accomplished under Díaz in an era of "peace and prosperity." The Palace of Fine Arts, begun in 1910 to commemorate one hundred warless years in Mexico, heralded instead the bloody Revolution which began in the same year.52 The Revolution not only brought violent social and economic reforms to Mexico; it also marked an abrupt departure in its music from the ornate nineteenth century style of composition. Replacing this style, a nationalistic mode of composition arose which incorporated


indigenous materials, a practice unheard of up to that time. The Palace of Fine Arts was only partially completed when fighting halted its progress. It is today a unique mixture of periods, composed of an elaborately adorned nineteenth century exterior and an interior with walls containing the stark murals of Mexico's modernists such as Orozco and Rivera. The flowery arias which were to have been sung for Díaz have been replaced by the strident music of modern Mexican composers led by Carlos Chávez.
CHAPTER II

PERSONALITIES INFLUENCING TRENDS IN PIANO MUSIC

Mexican piano music of the twentieth century and the pattern of its progress can be seen more clearly by examining the biographies of the various composers of the period. The outstanding man at the beginning of this period and one who figured in the introduction of a truly distinctive Mexican music was Manuel M. Ponce. Not only did he achieve recognition as a composer, but he served as the teacher of several of the important composers to appear later in the century. The relative importance of Ponce in the eyes of Mexican musicians today can be seen in that almost every program of contemporary music in Mexico begins with a work by this man. Honoring his memory, a room devoted to chamber concerts in the Palace of Fine Arts was recently designated Sala Manuel M. Ponce.

Born in 1882 at Fresnillo, Ponce first began to compose at the age of seven. At twelve he played the organ at the cathedral in Aguas Calientes, and at fourteen he composed a Gavotte subsequently made famous by the dancer, Argentina, who used it for her programs all over the world. From 1904 to 1908 he was a student at the Stern Conservatory in
Berlin where he worked under Martin Krause. He went then to Bologna where he studied under Bossi. On his return to Mexico he taught piano, composition and history of music at the National Conservatory of Music until 1915. From 1915 to 1918 he lived in Havana where he was active and became a good friend of the Cuban composer, Eduardo Sanchez de Fuentes.\(^1\) In 1916 he gave a recital of his own compositions at Aeolian Hall in New York, the major work on the program being his Concerto for Piano and Orchestra. The Concerto reveals his admiration for Chopin's pianistic style; in the second movement, Andantino Amoroso, there are themes distinctly Mexican in character.\(^2\) The occasion marked, according to Otto Mayer-Serra, the opening phase of musical nationalism in Mexico.\(^3\) Shortly thereafter, Ponce wrote two Mexican Rhapsodies for piano in which Mexican themes were explicitly represented. In 1914 Ponce published an album of songs, one of which was Estrellita, destined to become one of the most celebrated Latin American melodies. During this period, Ponce published a number of piano pieces in the


\(^2\)Slonimsky, *Music of Latin America*, p. 244.

\(^3\)Otto Mayer-Serra, *Panorama de la Música Mexicana* (México, El Colegio de Mexico, 1941), p. 95.
style of refined salon music—waltzes, mazurkas, preludes, serenades, barcarolles and berceuses—as well as romantic pieces with descriptive titles. Returning to Mexico, he resumed the teaching of piano at the National Conservatory and directed the National Symphony Orchestra for two years. Subsequently he became Director of the Conservatory and created there a department of folklore. In 1925 Ponce decided to go to Paris. There he became the good friend and pupil of Paul Dukas. Ponce founded in France the *Gaceta Musical* (1928), a musical journal which, as the first one of its kind published in Spanish, worked for the recognition of Latin American music on French soil. Ponce at this time became a close friend of the guitarist, Andres Segovia, and wrote several works for Segovia. Back in Mexico once more, Ponce resumed his teaching at the Conservatory in 1942. Then in 1943 he withdrew from the Conservatory and occupied the chair of folklore in the rival *Escuela Universitaria de Música*. In 1947 Carlos Chávez, at one time a pupil of Ponce, presented a Ponce festival concert at the Palace of Fine Arts. At this time, Segovia played the *Concierto del Sur* which Ponce had written for him. On April 24, 1948 Ponce died from uremic poisoning. Stevenson says of the composer that he had "an ability to speak directly to the masses, and yet also to speak, when he so desired, in a
sophisticated idiom appealing to the most advanced musical
mind.  

In his own words, Ponce reflects the change which the
Revolution of 1910 brought about for the Mexicans in his
world of music:

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 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 throughout the length and breadth of the land. Adelita, Valentina, and La Cucaracha were typical revolutionary songs soon to be popularized throughout the republic. Nationalism captured music at last. Old songs were revived, and new melodies for the new corridos were composed. Singers traveling about through the republic spread far and wide the new nationalist song; everywhere the idea gained impetus that the republic should have its own musical art faithfully mirroring its own soul.  

Julian Carrillo, along with Ponce, served as instructor in composition to many of the younger composers active in Mexico today. Again like Ponce, Carrillo's compositional phases fall into a romantic period of writing produced during the last years of the Porfirian era superseded by radical changes in his technique of production in later years. Carrillo was born in San Luis Potosí in 1875, and early he showed a talent for the violin. At twenty he

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enrolled at the Conservatorio Nacional where he studied harmony with Morales. He demonstrated such rapid progress in his study of the violin that he was awarded a prize in 1899 by Mexico's president for further study abroad. Carrillo went to Leipzig where he studied composition with Jadassohn and conducting with Hans Sitt. Later he transferred to Ghent Conservatory in Belgium where after two years he won another prize for his violin playing. At twenty-seven he produced his first symphony which was written in the broad, sonorous style of German romanticism. Carrillo was chosen in 1901 as the Mexican delegate to the International Music Congress. In 1905 he returned to Mexico where he gave numerous violin recitals and established himself as a conductor. In 1926 he visited the United States for a short time.

Carrillo's career falls into three phases: the first is entirely academic; the second is distinctly romantic in treatment; the third is revolutionary in character and is marked by the development of his theory of fractional tones which Carrillo calls Sonido Trece (Thirteenth Sound). In the first period a typical work can be seen in his Piano Quintet. In the second period lies Fantasy for piano and orchestra. The third phase overlaps the first two and is characterized by an inquiry into musical potentialities outside the framework of traditional harmony and scale.
structure. Often Carrillo applies new scales to music of distinctly native inspiration.\(^6\)

His most striking innovation is unquestionably Carrillo's *Sistema Lógico de Escritura Musical Derivado del Sonido 13,* or his theory of the thirteenth sound. Carrillo states that he began formulation of his theory in 1895, and, if this date be correct, he holds priority over European experimentors in quarter-tone music who began their summaries at the turn of the century. His theory presupposes any number of microtones, but for practical purposes he limits himself, in actual composition, to quarter-tones, eighth-tones and sixteenth tones. The system works on this order: the note C is represented by the numeral 0; C sharp or D flat by the numeral 8; D by 16; D sharp or E flat by 24; E by 32; F by 40; F sharp or G flat by 48; and so forth on up the chromatic scale. In-between pitches are represented by in-between numerals. The different octaves in which a particular note may be heard are, in Carrillo's plan, indicated by a system of dashes above, below or through the numeral used to designate the note in question. A red line drawn horizontally across the page in Carrillo's system represents middle C. With this system of notating the microtones by numbers instead of notes, on a five-line

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staff, the theorist feels that he has set forth an original device in music.\footnote{Julian Carrillo, \textit{Teoría Lógica de la Música} (México, 1954), pp. 9-31.} In time, says Carrillo, electronic equipment will be commercially produced to make available instruments capable of sounding middle C at 256 vibrations per second, a sharper C only a cent of a tone higher, another two cents higher, and so on. With this development he predicts that his system of numeral notation will prove indispensable. Carrillo published a magazine, \textit{Sonido 13}, in connection with his work, of which only a few numbers were issued some years ago. It appeared on the thirteenth day of each month. The number thirteen even invaded the social life of Carrillo in his position of honorary chairman of the pro-Carrillo Committee of Thirteen. In composing, Carrillo has never abandoned traditional techniques, altogether even when writing in his microtonal style. Along with his musical activities, Carrillo has devoted himself to various successful business enterprises and, after retiring from his teaching position at the Conservatory in the 1920's, he was able to settle into a comfortable life in the suburbs of Mexico City. Many of his works are contained in the Fleisher Collection at the Free Public Library in Philadelphia.

Extraordinary . . . incisive presence . . . inflexible standards . . . astonishing energy . . . dominating
intellect ... unfaltering attention ... all of these have been used to describe Mexico's best known of composers.\textsuperscript{8} Carlos Chávez, born in 1899, has distinguished himself as a conductor, a composer, a pianist, a musical scholar and as an executive director of a national bureau of fine arts. Chávez is truly of the \textit{mestizo} element, his mother being Indian, and during his later years much has been written highlighting this fact, in connection with his compositions. During Chávez' adolescence his two principal teachers were Ponce and Pedro Luis Ogazón. Ponce awakened in him an interest in the wealth of \textit{mestizo} music all about him, while Ogazón, as a masterly pianist himself, guided the young Chávez in that area. The Revolution did not interrupt the continuity of Chávez' development. According to Weinstock, it awoke in him a strong sympathy for the humble and the oppressed, and developed his confidence in the Mexican people; it also brought him into contact with men who shared this confidence.\textsuperscript{9} Still in print are such early songs as his \textit{Ecstasy} and his various songs of the Revolution, including \textit{La Cucaracha}.

His serious career as a composer may be said to date from his first symphony, written in 1918. In the following

\textsuperscript{8}Herbert Weinstock, "Preface," Carlos Chávez, \textit{A Catalog of His Works} (Washington, 1944), pp. 4-10.

\textsuperscript{9}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 11.
years Chávez wrote extensively for orchestra, piano, ensemble and voice in a semi-classical style. This period ended in 1921. Chávez refers to it as his *juvenil* period of composition. Stevenson says of this period that, even though it may be dismissed without undue attention, it nevertheless is to be remembered, since the works assigned to it are peculiarly Mexican, in that they were written before Chávez went abroad.¹⁰

The years 1921 to 1923 were important ones in Chávez' career. At this time he came into contact with José Vasconcelos, then Secretary of Public Education in Mexico City. Vasconcelos commissioned Chávez to write *El Fuego Nuevo* (The New Fire), a Mexican ballet in which the first appearance of Indian music made its way into Chávez' works. In 1923 the Mexican composer went abroad and, for the first time, paid a visit to the United States. There Chávez became excited over what he found in technical advances and invention, new instruments and progress in recording and radio laboratories. The result of his aroused interest was the book, *Toward A New Music: Music and Electricity* (1937).¹¹

From 1921 to 1928 Chávez composed prolifically, and with increasing assurance, in his second style. This period of

¹⁰ Stevenson, *Music in Mexico*, p. 244.
seven years included another ballet, *Los Cuatro Soles* (*The Four Suns*), symbolizing four ages in the development of Mexico. During this time Chávez acquired a taste for abstract and quasi-scientific music which was emphasized by the titles given his works. *Poligonos* (*Polygons*) for piano, 1923, *36* for piano, 1925, and *Espiral* (*Spiral*) for piano and violin were typical of this period. His compositions in absolute forms such as a piano *Sonata*, 1928, and *Unidad* (*Unity*), 1930, are characterized by a style deliberately angular, sparse, unprepossessing and almost laconic in uncompromising brevity.12 Paul Rosenfeld describes Chávez' piano music of this period as "a marvel of contraction and astringency . . . austere, flinty, foreshortened . . . parital to hollow octaves and single unsupported voices."13

In 1928 Chávez accepted the conductorship of what was then the orchestra of the musicians' union in Mexico City. From this group Chávez shaped the first stable orchestra in the country and called it the *Orquesta Sinfónica de México*. At the head of the OSM he played all the orchestral works of young Mexican composers he could acquire, and in doing so he created a very definite place for himself as a conductor and champion of contemporary works. Shortly afterward, Chávez

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was appointed director of the Conservatorio Nacional; he was at that time twenty-eight years old. In this capacity, Chávez recast the curriculum, veering the conservatory away from the musty academic character it had preserved for so long toward a more useful one. From 1928 to 1933, and again for eight months in 1934, he occupied the directorship of the conservatory. In 1933 Chávez was appointed Chief of the Department of Fine Arts of the Secretariat of Public Education. He brought to bear on educational problems his intense, activating belief in the values of indigenous music. Due to political changes, he resigned the post in 1934.14

The Third Piano Sonata, 1928, began Chávez' third period of composition. This period includes three big choral works, Tierra Mojada (Humid Soil), El Sol (The Sun) and Llamadas (Calls). Also produced at this time were his Sinfonía de Antígona and Sinfonía India (Symphony of Antígona and Indian Symphony), considered two of his most significant orchestral works. In 1937 Chávez returned to composition for the piano. He wrote ten Preludes for piano solo, quite different in treatment from his piano compositions of an earlier period. The Preludes are written without a single note other than those which occur in the

14 Stevenson, Music in Mexico, pp. 240-241.
scale of C. Both in form and in the natural pianism of these preludes, Chávez renounced his former combativeness and created instead the modern counterparts—terse, linear and percussive—of Bach's Preludes.\textsuperscript{15} In 1938 Chávez embarked on the composition of a Piano Concerto which he completed on the last day of the year in 1940. Rather than use the traditional sonata form, Chávez gives the piano and the orchestra two separate sets of themes, developed antiphonally until the concluding section when both are united. In 1942, when Dmitri Metropoulos conducted the New York premier of the Piano Concerto with Eugene List as soloist, the music was described as "powerful, primitive and barbaric." Phrases such as "Indian music harking back to a remote past obviously forms the basic material . . . consistently cacophonous . . . elemental strength and originality . . . strange outbursts of sound, primeval in effect. . . ." resulted from the performance.\textsuperscript{16} Robert Stevenson asserts that the Concerto, as revealed in Claudio Arrau's interpretation, becomes one of the two or three most vital of our epoch.\textsuperscript{17} Chávez' final and mature style has been described in terms of linear music with an incessant

\textsuperscript{15}Slonimsky, Music of Latin America, p. 234.

\textsuperscript{16}Stevenson, Music in Mexico, p. 243.

\textsuperscript{17}Ibid., p. 250.
flow of a basic rhythm pattern in either eighths, sixteenths or quarter notes, and as containing in his instrumentations a consistently heavy battery of percussions.

Mexican musicians in 1949 called Chávez a "musical dictator," and the force of their protests caused him to resign his post as conductor of the OSM. He remained then Chief of the Department of Fine Arts but later was recalled from that office due to his strong leaning toward Communism and his use of the department to further interests of that political group.

At present Chávez is completing an opera commissioned in the United States, and recently his Third Symphony was premiered in New York with Chávez conducting.

Chávez' creative achievements are equalled by the importance of his influence over his juniors among Mexico's composers. This influence began when Chávez took over the directorship of the national conservatory. Students of composition there were encouraged to compose with primary materials at once and to enlarge their resources as rapidly as possible. Research in native music was furthered, and a school of young composers steeped in native idioms began to appear. Chávez gave them their most valuable encouragement when he played the best of their works with the conservatory symphony orchestra and the Orquesta Sinfónica de México. Among his pupils at the conservatory were several who later
banded together to call themselves "El Grupo de los Cuatro" ("The Group of Four"). These students of Chávez—Daniel Ayala, Pablo Moncayo, Blas Galindo and Salvador Contreras—decided, at the urging of Contreras, to present a concert of their combined works in order to show what the four of them had done since they had gone out from Chávez' class in "music creation." A newspaper critic coined the phrase Grupo de los Cuatro, and this gave the young composers attention as a group which they might have missed appearing individually. The idea that the music of the future would emerge from such a group was elaborated on in newspaper and magazine articles in Mexico and abroad.18

Blas Galindo, born in 1910, has received a great volume of publicity along with his membership in "The Group of Four" owing to the fact that he is a full-blooded Huichol Indian. His is not just the success story of a rising composer, but Galindo embodies the rise of the status of the Indian in Mexico. His musical training began late in life, after he had led the life of a wandering guerrilla in his native state of Jalisco during the years of the revolutionary processes. At nineteen he returned home to the village of San Gabriel where he learned to play the church organ and the clarinet "by ear." In 1931 he left home with the vague

idea of studying to be a lawyer in Mexico City. The first place he happened upon after reaching the city was the National Conservatory where the symphony orchestra was at the moment in rehearsal. He sat and listened to the orchestra and in that time decided on a career in music. With his only possession, a straw sleeping mat, he went to ask if he might spend the night at the music school. The next morning he enrolled there and, beginning at the first level in music study, he pursued his learning for twelve years until he graduated with a "Maestro en composición" certificate in 1944. Galindo came under the tutelage of Chávez just at the time the latter was in the process of regenerating the conservatory, and thus he began to develop a compositional technique immediately. In 1941, when he was thirty years of age, he enrolled at the Berkshire Academy in Massachusetts where he took lessons with Aaron Copland.19 Two of his ballets, Entre Sombras Anda el Fuego (Among the Shadows Walks Fire) and Danza de las Fuerzas Nuevas (Dance of the New Forces), were staged in Mexico City in 1940. Sones Mariachi (Mariachi Songs), for orchestra, was written as an illustration of the type of music played by the mariachi bands; it was introduced by Chávez at the festival of Mexican music held at the Museum of Modern Art in New

19 Francisco Agea, "Blas Galindo," México en el Arte, XXII (November, 1948), 3-5.
York City in 1940, at which time it was recorded in an album of Mexican music by Columbia Records. Galindo wrote a work scored exclusively for indigenous Mexican instruments entitled *Obra para Orquesta Mexicana* (Work for Mexican Orchestra) in 1938. All of these, his most outstanding works, are characterized by an almost literal interpretation of Mexican folklore in unrefined diatonic harmonies. After his studies at the Berkshire Academy in 1941, Galindo moderated his style toward neoclassicism. His Piano Concerto, written in 1942, is Mexican in thematic content while adhering structurally to the general outline of the classical sonata form. The principal rhythmic figure in the first movement of this concerto is a triplet followed by two eighth notes in 2/4. This figure is repeated time and again in the composition. It is an interesting one in that to the Mexican this particular pattern represents one of the country's most obscene and insulting profanities. The concerto has been performed once in 1942 by the National Symphony Orchestra in Mexico City.

Galindo is at present director of the National Conservatory. The orchestral scores of his *Danza de las Fuerzas Nuevas* is in the Fleisher Collection in Philadelphia, as is the piano score for his set of Preludios for piano. A

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second set of five *Preludios* is being published at the present time in Mexico City by Ediciones Mexicanas.

Salvador Contreras, born in 1912, belongs to the vanguard of Mexico's musicians. His musical training began when he studied violin with Silvestre Revueltas. As a young man he played in the cabarets of Mexico City and subsequently entered the Orquesta Sinfónica de Mexico under the direction of Chávez. His association with Chávez continued when Contreras began taking lessons in composition from him. In 1935 Contreras joined Daniel Ayala, Pablo Moncayo and Blas Galindo to form a Grupo de Jóvenes Compositores, later called "The Group of Four." At the first concert of this group in 1935, Contreras presented his Sonata for Violin and Violoncello and *Danza* for piano. In larger forms, Contreras has written *Música para Orquesta Sinfónica* and *Corridos*, for orchestra and chorus. The latter selection is written in four sections and is based on Mexican ballads from melodies in the book *El Romance Español y el Corrido Mexicano* by Vicente T. Mendoza. The music of Contreras is markedly contrapuntal in texture and the treatment is that of modern neoclassicism. The scores of several of his works, including *Música para Orquesta Sinfónica*, are in the Fleisher Collection.21 Contreras has produced more prolifically than

any other member of "The Group of Four," mostly works for small combinations and almost all in manuscript form. He is presently director of his own night school of music in Mexico City where he teaches composition and directs a student orchestra in the year-old institution.

Another composer from "The Group of Four" is Pablo Moncayo, born in Guadalajara in 1912. This composer, pianist and conductor began his musical training at the age of seventeen as the piano pupil of Hernández Moncada. To earn his living he played in jazz orchestras and cabarets in Mexico City, and later he joined the percussion section of the Orquesta Sinfónica de México. In his compositions he follows the precepts established by Chávez, using indigenous melodic materials in his writing. In 1935 Moncayo, along with Ayala, Contreras and Galindo, formed "The Group of Four," dedicated to the cause of modern Mexican music. Moncayo's piece for flute and string quartet, set to an Aztec subject and entitled Amatzinac, was presented at the first concert of "The Group." At the second concert of "The Group," his Romanza for piano trio was played. Moncayo has also produced Tres Piezas para Piano (Three Pieces for Piano) and Muros Verdes (Green Walls) for piano solo; the latter set of pieces was inspired by the tall trees that

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22 Ibid., p. 10.
line the Avenue Coyoacan in Mexico City. Among his more well-known works for orchestra are Homenaje a Cervantes (Tribute to Cervantes) and Huapango. He has produced also an opera in one act entitled La Mulata de Córdoba (1948) which depicts a mulatto enchantress. Moncayo teaches music theory at the National Conservatory; he is also engaged in several business ventures which he says limit his time spent in composition at present. The orchestral scores of Amatzinac and a symphonic dance, Hueyapan, are in the Fleisher Collection in Philadelphia.

Completing the list of members in "The Group of Four" is Daniel Ayala, born in 1908 in Yucatan. Ayala studied violin and composition in Mexico City with Silvestre Revueltas and for a time served as violinist in the Orquesta Sinfónica de México. Then in 1938 Ayala published an article in which he stated that he felt Mexico had no authentic teachers of conducting or performance. This casting off of any indebtedness to the music teaching profession in Mexico, and his condemnation of it, left Ayala on a solitary plane in Mexican musical circles. Soon after publishing the article, he moved to Morelia. Several years after that he returned to his home in Mérida, Yucatan. There he was appointed director of the Mérida Conservatory,

23 Stevenson, Music in Mexico, p. 259.
conductor of the Mérida Orchestra and conductor of the Yucatecan Band. In 1940 Ayala visited Dallas, Texas, where he conducted an orchestra. Later he produced a symphonic poem entitled, "My Trip to the United States," premiered at Mérida in 1947. In his composing, Ayala consistently utilizes the pentatonic scales, ancestral modes and rhythms of the Mayan civilization as a basis for original works. At the same time he incorporates strains of music reminiscent of the cabarets. His music has been described as "alma nueva de las cosas viejas" (the new soul of things old). Ayala's better known works include Tribu (Tribe), Panoramas de México, Sonora, Veracruz, and Yucatan, Los Yaquis y Los Seris which employs Indian percussion instruments, and El Hombre Maya (The Mayan Man), a ballet suite. Orchestral scores of Tribu and Panoramas de México are in the Fleisher Collection.24

A man who has greatly influenced current music education trends and music research in Mexico is Luis Sandi. Born in 1905, Sandi as a youth studied violin, voice and composition at the National Conservatory. Upon graduation he became a choral conductor. Later he was appointed Chief of the Music Section within the Department of Fine Arts;

later he resigned this office. While in this capacity Sandi demonstrated his ability not only as a composer but also as a coordinator of educational activities in the republic. He prepared a series of graded texts for teaching music history and theory. It is his contention that the two subjects should be presented as a synchronized study and that courses in music "appreciation" should teach the fundamentals of music theory to begin with. In his texts are found musical examples illustrating history and theory simultaneously taken from Bach and Mozart along with Mussorgsky and Stravinsky. Excerpts from works by the Mexican modern, Revueltas, are included, as well as examples of the corrido. Several units deal with pre-Columbian music in Mexico and Peru. The advantages of Sandi's treatments are, according to him: students do not find their own national music branded as inferior; students cover the whole sweep of Mexican music history, devoting as much attention to the present era as they do to past centuries. 25 Another of Sandi's educational theories is that emphasis should be placed on singing at the elementary and secondary levels in Mexico. Elementary emphasis on instruments, he feels, may yield good results in a country such as the United States where schools can rent or lend instruments to children; but

Mexico is not able to render school children such services yet. Sandi hopes to decentralize musical advantages so that children in outlying districts will share opportunities with the children of Mexico City.26

At present Sandi is connected with the educational aspect of the Division of Fine Arts in Mexico City. He also directs a group of madrigal singers called the Coro de Madrigalistas, organized in 1938. This group performs works from every period, including the contemporary epoch, and it ranks as one of the foremost groups of its kind in Latin America. Sandi has spent a great deal of time in the investigation of indigenous and folk music in Mexico. His own music is permeated with Mexican folklore, while the structural element of his works is classical.27 Sandi participated in the concert held at the Museum of Modern Art in 1940 with his contribution of Yaqui Music, an orchestral arrangement. Many of his orchestral works are displayed at Philadelphia in the Fleisher Collection.

The composer, Miguel Bernal Jiménez, is also a polished organist; he was seen on tour in the United States in 1945-1946. Born in 1910 in Morelia, he sang as a child in the choir at the Cathedral of Morelia. From 1928 to 1933 he studied at the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music in Rome.

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26Ibid., p. 42.  
27Ibid., p. 41.
where he received the master's degree in organ and church music. In 1936 Bernal Jiménez was appointed director of the Morelia school where he himself had started. In his own works, this composer uses liturgical chants as religious folklore and his compositions since his return home have reflected the local scene. His most ambitious work in the religious vein is the opera *Tata Vasco*, which is the people's name for the first bishop of Michoacan who was famous for his charity work among the Mexican Indians. In the opera, Tarascans sing neo-Indian melodies, the clergy Gregorian chant and the *conquistadores* romances. Bernal Jiménez has written a symphonic poem, *Noche en Morelia* (*Night in Morelia*), which depicts a scene at the church with the contrasting sounds of a cabaret orchestra mingling with the solemnity of the church bells. At its presentation in 1941 this work received great ovation. The orchestral score for this work, as well as others, is in the Fleisher Collection in Philadelphia.  

Bernal Jiménez has spoken against the attitude of "Indianism" as Mexico's only musical salvation. He asks in an article in 1951, "Must we elevate to a dogma everything done by indigenous and mestizo music?" He goes on to say that popular art, simply because intuitive, was not

therefore beyond improvement.\textsuperscript{29} The composer served as a guest faculty member at Loyola University in the United States during the summer of 1955.

Among Mexico's youngest composers is Orlando Otey. Born in Mexico City in 1926, Otey at an early age showed a remarkable ability at the piano. His first formal study was under the pianist, Luis Moctezuma, who instructed Otey through his teens. In 1943 Otey left Mexico to join the British Royal Air Force. Two years later, honorably discharged, he entered the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia where he studied piano and composition. Under Menotti as his instructor in composition, Otey was encouraged to incorporate in his works his background of indigenous Mexican music. Otey says of his early compositions that they are Chopin-esque owing to the strong influence of his first piano teacher, Moctezuma, who specialized in Chopin. He counts his \textit{Sonata Tenochtitlan}, opus 10, for piano, as his first composition free of the former style of writing. This sonata contains in the first movement a melody based on a pre-Cortesian Aztec theme which was obtained in the archives section of the Palace of Fine Arts. In the final movement Otey employs the rhythm of the \textit{jarabe}. In 1949 Otey went to Europe where he gave a number of concerts and played the

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\textsuperscript{29}Miguel Bernal Jiménez, "La música en Valladolid de Michoacán," \textit{Nuestra Música}, III (México, 1951), 44-45.
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Sonata Tenochtitlan at the Hampton Court Palace in England. On returning to the United States, Otey worked for a time in New York as an electronics technician and as a Spanish speaking announcer in television. More recently he has been devoting his entire time to his piano performances and a music studio. Although Otey has recently become a citizen of the United States, he counts his compositions as being Mexican in background. During the summer of 1955, Otey lived in Mexico City where he appeared in numerous concerts and worked in company with Agusto Navaro, an instrument designer and teacher of music theory in the city.

Another composer of recent note is Carlos Jiménez Mabarak, born in 1912. Jiménez Mabarak was educated in Belgium and studied music in Brussels as a young man. On returning to Mexico in 1937, he began to compose. His preference is for Mexican subjects which he stylizes in the manner of Manuel de Falla.30 With a ballet suite, La Muñeca Pastillita (The Doll Pastillita), he received an award from the Asociación de Bellas Artes. Jiménez Mabarak was first place winner in a competition sponsored by the same group in 1956 with his composition, Para Orquesta y Coro which employs a childrens' chorus. He is today a teacher of theory

and composition at the National Conservatory. Several of his scores are in the Fleisher Collection.

Eduardo Hernández Moncada (1899 - ), conductor and composer, earned his living as a boy playing in theaters and cinemas. Later he went to Mexico City where he studied composition with Rafael Tello at the National Conservatory. At this same time he was working as a book salesman, electrician and farmer in order to finance his studies. At thirty-seven Moncada was appointed assistant conductor of the OSM. He began to compose late in life, and he wrote many education pieces for music schools. His first work of importance was a symphony in four movements, performed in 1942 by the Orquesta Sinfónica de México.31

A naturalized Mexican citizen and musician who employs Mexican materials in his compositions is Jacobo Kostakowsky. He was born in Russia in 1893, settling in Mexico in 1925. Kostakowsky studied violin in Russia, and in 1908 he went to Vienna where he took lessons in composition with Schoenberg. Later he spent some time in Paris where he attended classes of Vincent d'Indy. Kostakowsky began composing late in life; all his major works date since 1935. His style is basically Russian, reflecting the lyricism of Tchaikovsky. His harmonic writing is somewhat in the style of Mahler.

In recent years he has adopted Mexican folklore as thematic material. *Marimba*, a capriccio (1939) was performed at the Palace of Fine Arts. He has written numerous symphonic works.32

Silvestre Revueltas, after Chávez, through his works and personality influenced his contemporaries perhaps more than any other Mexican composer. Born in Durango on the last day of the 1800's, he studied violin as a child and later took a course in composition under Rafael Tello from 1913 to 1916. In 1916 he went to Austin, Texas, where he continued his studies; later he attended the Chicago Musical College where he worked under Felix Borowski. He gave violin recitals in Mexico in 1920 and then returned to the United States in 1922 to study with Sevcik. From 1926 to 1928 Revueltas conducted theater orchestras in Texas and Alabama. In 1929 he was appointed assistant conductor of the *Orquesta Sinfónica de México*. In 1931 at the urging of Chávez, Revueltas began to compose. In 1933 he taught at the National Conservatory and directed the orchestra there. In 1937 Revueltas went to Spain to participate in the Spanish civil war, working in the cultural activities of the Music Section of the Loyalist Government. Returning to Mexico, he resumed his work as composer and conductor.

Weakened by a reckless mode of life, he succumbed to an attack of pneumonia on the night his ballet *Renacuajo Paseador* was produced, October 4, 1940.\(^{33}\)

Other composers whose chief contributions were in their teaching and influence include Rafael Tello (1872-1946), José Rolon (1883 - ) and Candelario Huízar (1888 - ). In 1941 Tello was honored by the University of Mexico with the naming of his *Triptico Mexicano* for piano as first place in competitions that year. Tello began his study of music with his mother and gave his first piano recital at the age of thirteen. In 1896 he became an instructor at the National Conservatory. Tello began to compose at the age of nineteen, and later he became particularly interested in the problem of Mexican national opera. Tello's *Fantasia* for two pianos and orchestra, written in a deliberately simple style, was performed by the OSM on July 2, 1943. As a composer, Tello employs a rhapsodic style which is often turbulent at climactic points.\(^{34}\)

Rolon studied in France and acquired a taste for impressionism and particularly Debussy. In France on a second visit, he attended classes under Nadia Boulanger and Paul Dukas. According to Slonimsky, the diffuseness of his

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early style went over into a contrapuntal style with harmonic compactness. The score of his piano concerto is in the Fleisher Collection.

Candelario Huízar influenced Blas Galindo a very great deal, according to the latter. Huízar is of Indian origin and has made use of folk songs and original melodies combined to form themes in free counterpoint. He has written exclusively for orchestra, using an individual orchestration to embrace his strong and compact harmonizations. In 1951 he was left paralyzed by a stroke and has not composed since that time.

Chief exponents of folklore in Mexico are Vicente T. Mendoza (1884 - ) and Gerónimo Baqueiro Fóster (1901). In collaboration with Daniel Castañeda, Mendoza has compiled a valuable treatise on pre-Cortesian instruments which was published in 1937 under the title *Instrumental Precortesiano*. Mendoza also published a comparative study, *El Romance Español y el Corrido Mexicano* in 1939. As a composer he confines himself to arrangements of Mexican folk songs and dances. Baquiero Fóster, musicologist and composer, studied under Carrillo. His own compositions are stylization or arrangements of Mexican dances and songs. His orchestral


36 Blas Galindo, "Candelario Huízar," *Nuestra Música*, X (May, 1946), 14-16.
suite, *Huapangos*, arranged from Mexican dances of the last three centuries, was included in the program of Mexican music conducted by Chávez at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1940. Baqueiro Foster has for a number of years been a music critic serving the leading newspapers in Mexico and he founded an important magazine, *Revista Musical Mexicana*, in 1942.37

Several Spaniards displaced by the Spanish civil war and now living in Mexico hold important positions in the musical posts of Mexico. Rodolfo Halffter (1900 - ) is in charge of programming for all chamber concerts held at the Palace of Fine Arts. He also heads a music publishing firm which he established, *Ediciones Mexicanas de Música*, devoted solely to the publication of contemporary works in Mexico. Jesus Bali Gay (1902 - ) is in charge of the archives section of the Association of Fine Arts and he serves also in the capacity of composer, musicologist and music critic. Adolfo Salazar (1890 - ) is termed by Stevenson as "one of the most distinguished music historians of our epoch."38 He has been music critic for a daily, *Novedades*, and in 1928 he wrote the widely read book, *Música y Músicos de Hoy* (*Music and Musicians of Today*). Salazar,

like Halffter, studied for a short time with De Falla and has composed for piano, voice and symphony.

A Mexican who hopes to revolutionize the structure of the violin and pianoforte is Agusto Navaro. For many years Navaro worked as an acoustics technician in the United States in the firm of Steinway Pianos. For some twenty years he has been experimenting with the construction of instruments that will offer greatly increased sound production and what he believes will be improved tone qualities. For the violin Navaro has devised a diagonal finger board and new method of stringing. This eliminates on the instrument he has constructed a cramped wrist position while finger ing the notes in the higher register of the violin. Consequently, technical facility of the instrument is increased in all registers while the fingering remains as it is on present day violins. Navaro has constructed a piano which utilizes a series of spiral frames overstrung in a manner that increases and improves the tone quality of the instrument. The key action response is quite different from that of a standard piano, and because of the enlarged possibilities in dynamics the performer must exercise meticulous control in playing. Every effect—lou ds and softs, legato and staccato, and pedaling—are amplified many times over the possibilities available on a piano today. Navaro, in conjunction with the pianist Orlando Otey, has made several
tape recordings illustrating the performance of his piano. Navaro hopes to formally introduce these instruments in the near future; he is being sponsored in his efforts by Walt Disney. Along with his work in acoustics, Navaro is an active composer and teaches composition and music theory at his home in Mexico City.

Mexico City is not only the capital city of the country from a political standpoint, it is also the cultural capital of the country and almost all of Mexico's professional musicians live and work in Mexico City. This contributes to the fact that the country's most important musical organizations are in the capital city. Ranking first among these is the Music Section of the Department of Fine Arts, under government control and subsidy. Mexico is superior to the United States in assuming the attitude that art and music are of sufficient importance to the development of the nation to warrant government support; but with this sponsorship come the inevitable evils of political appointments, bureaucratic fumbling and the bitterness of competing factions. And Mexico abounds with these evils. Director of the Music Section is Jesus Duron. Beneath him are subdivisions such as the folklore division, the Mexican Symphony Orchestra and the division in charge of scheduling concerts in the Palace of Fine Arts. Working with the Department of Fine Arts is the National Conservatory under
the leadership of Blas Galindo. Rivaling the conservatory in serving the needs of the music student in Mexico is the Escuela Universitaria de Musica which is a part of the national university. Other organizations of importance nationally in Mexico are the two leading symphony orchestras, the Orquesta Sinfónica de México called the OSM, and the Orquesta Sinfónica Universidad. Under the dynamic direction of Carlos Chávez, the OSM gained prominence. It is composed chiefly of union musicians. The University Symphony is made up of volunteer musicians selected from among the most competent men in the country. Organizations of less note which influence Mexico's musical scene are Salvador Contreras' theatre orchestra and the Mexican-North American Institute of Cultural Relations which promotes chamber concerts featuring works by composers of Mexico and the United States. All of these groups and the men directing them shape the progress of music in Mexico today.

The outlook for the future of music in Mexico is set forth by Stevenson in these words:

Despite the presence of a minute number of immigrant musicians, it is nevertheless obvious that the achievements of the century have been the doing not of these immigrants but of the Mexicans themselves. With a population vastly inferior in numbers to that of the United States--something less than a sixth--Mexican creative accomplishment has yet kept pace with that of her more populous northern neighbor. If during our generation she cannot boast of Stravinsky, Schoenberg, and Hindemith as new-found "Mexicans," at least her indigenous school can at every point be
compared favorably with the American indigenous school. Her achievement of the immediate past is, moreover, the best guaranty of her continued progress.

Mexico is a land with a dynamic, living music. But the reconstruction of the past makes it ever clearer that Mexico not only now, but through the long sweep of four centuries has been a country whose total musical contribution places her in the forefront of Western Hemisphere republics. As more and more documents bearing on Mexico's musical history come to light, her neighbors on either side can confidently anticipate ever secure reason to congratulate her on the achievement of the past, as well as the promise of the future. 39

39 Stevenson, Music in Mexico, pp. 267-268.
CHAPTER III

AN ANALYSIS OF MEXICAN PIANO MUSIC
FROM 1928 TO 1956

The contemporary music of Mexico is a combination of an inherited European tradition and the indigenous music of that country. In an effort to better understand this music and to gain an insight into this unique combination, an analysis has been made of selected piano works by ten Mexican composers. A melodic analysis of contemporary works and a comparison of rhythmic patterns from contemporary and indigenous music are included in this chapter, as well as a discussion of the tonality and harmony of the compositions.

The following composers and their works were chosen for the analysis: Ricardo Castro (1864-1907), *Concerto in A Minor*, opus 22, for piano and orchestra; Manuel M. Ponce (1882-1948), *Deux Etudes*, for piano solo; Julián Carrillo (1875 - ), "8 de Septiembre," *Fantasia Impromptu*, for piano and orchestra; Rafael J. Tello (1872-1946), *Triptico Mexicano*, for piano solo; Blas Galindo (1910 - ), *Cinco Preludios, 1946*, for piano solo; Pablo Moncayo (1912 - ), *Tres Piezas*, for piano solo; Eduardo Moncada (1899 - ), *Cinco Piezas Para Bailables*, for piano solo; Jacobo
Kostakowsky (1893 - ), Marimba, Capricco for Piano and Orchestra; Orlando Otey (1926 - ), Sonata Tenochtitlan for piano solo, and Carlos Chávez (1899 - ), Sonata, 1928 and "Prelude I" from Ten Preludes, 1940.

Castro represents the last of the nineteenth century romanticists in Mexico. Ponce is regarded as the first Mexican to exhibit a nationalistic style of composition and is looked to as the founder of the modern school of music in his country. Carrillo is best known for his theory of composition, "The Thirteenth Sound"; but for purposes of comparison in this study, a work of his composed in the tradional style is used. Tello, more than any of the ten composers illustrated in this analysis, employs nationalistic melodies and rhythms in their pure form. The composition by Tello used in the analysis, Triptico Mexicano, won first prize in competitions sponsored by the University of Mexico in 1941. Galindo and Moncayo are both members of the famous Mexican "Group of Four." Galindo, now director of the National Conservatory, is the only full-blooded Indian of the ten composers in the analysis. Moncada in his works frequently uses materials reminiscent of the cabarets where he worked for many years. Kostakowsky, born in Russia, is an example of a naturalized Mexican who uses the folk music of Mexico in his compositions. Otey, the composer of most recent development among the ten, is a concert
pianist and is the most accomplished performer of the group. Carlos Chávez is internationally famous for his compositions and efforts as educator, executive head of a fine arts bureau, author and investigator of pre-Cortesian music in Mexico. Among the composers studied in the analysis, Castro, Ponce, Moncayo, Otey and Chávez consider the piano their primary instrument.

The first phase of the analysis in Chapter III is an intervallic study of melodic movement. The predominant melody in each composition was scrutinized for tendencies in the use of the intervals: Unison, Major second, Minor second, Major third, Minor third, Perfect fourth, Perfect fifth, Major sixth, Major seventh, Minor seventh, Octave and Tritone.

The melodies fell generally into two classifications:

(1) clearly defined melody in one hand with repetitious accompanying figure in the other hand
(2) dissonant counterpoint

The following examples illustrate these two classifications.
Fig. 1--Ponce, *Deux Etudes*, Etude I, measures 1-4. Clearly defined melody in right hand, left hand accompaniment.

Fig. 2--Chávez, *Sonata*, 1928, third movement, measures 30-33. Dissonant counterpoint.

Rafael Tello and Orlando Otey have used in their works melodic fragments believed to be of Aztec origin. These were obtained at the archives section in the music division of the Fine Arts Association, located in the Palace of Fine Arts in Mexico City.
In order to arrive at concrete conclusions concerning the use of melodic intervals among the Mexican composers, an estimate was run on each composer and a comparative chart was compiled. The predominant melodies were selected in each composition and the intervals were counted, note to note, and recorded. In the case of dissonant counterpoint which appeared frequently in the compositions, melodic notes were selected for compilation according to the likelihood of their being heard above other notes. In judging that likelihood their position in the scheme of the music was considered, as well as their position on the keyboard. In some instances selection was made of notes that had clearly been marked for emphasis by the composer. When the estimate was being run on a sonata or composition for piano and
orchestra, several movements were surveyed in order to obtain an average usage of intervals. When a set of short pieces was being surveyed, several or all of these were investigated to secure an average usage. The chart is arranged so that the first composer to appear is Castro, the Mexican composer whose works are considered transitory and reminiscent of the nineteenth century. Next come Ponce and Carrillo, the older members of the present corps of composers. Tello, who employed a rather Chopin-esque style of composition, comes next. He is followed by the two representatives of "The Group of Four," Galindo and Moncayo. Then come Moncada and Kostakowsky, whose works tended to deviate most from the results shown by the majority of the composers. Otey, the most recent of the Mexican composers to appear and one who used several pure forms of indigenous and folk music, comes next to last in the lineup. Last is Carlos Chávez, recognized as the dean of the contemporary composers of Mexico. In considering Chávez' works, more of his music was analyzed in view of the fact that he is the most well-known of the present day Mexican composers and has had such a great influence on contemporary Mexican composition.

The following is a table showing tendencies in melodic movement:
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<td>8.12</td>
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<td>Galindo</td>
<td>Moncayo</td>
<td>Moncayo</td>
<td>Kostakowski</td>
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<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>2.96</td>
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The results of the table show a general predominance of stepwise movement. High in this area was Castro with 56.32 per cent stepwise movement, while Moncada was low with 34.28 per cent. Moncada was highest in his use of the interval, unison, followed by Galindo and Otey. In using the third, Carrillo exceeded, with Kostakowsky entering next; low in this category was Chávez with 8.25 per cent as compared to Carrillo's 24.68 per cent. Tello and Galindo placed high in usage of fourths and fifths. Highest in the use of the sixth was Ponce, with 6.15 per cent as compared to a low score for that interval among all the other composers. Again Ponce led the others in his usage of the seventh, his score being 3.70 per cent. Chávez had 7.70 per cent usage of the octave as compared to 1.10 per cent by Castro. Carrillo excelled in the use of the tritone with 8.59 per cent as compared to .66 per cent by Moncada.

A melodic device which occurred frequently in the music of the primitives in Mexico was a repetition of the same pitch. In contemporary Mexican music this frequent usage and repetition of the interval unison can be seen. The following examples illustrate this device as seen in the music of both epochs.
Fig. 5--Illustration of the primitive use of this melodic device, as shown in "Los Xtoles," and also in the Ancient Mexican Dance.

Fig. 6--Galindo, "Prelude II" Cinco Preludios, and Chávez, Sonata, 1928, first movement, excerpts illustrating this use of the interval unison.

The second phase of Chapter III is a study of frequent rhythmic devices found in contemporary Mexican piano music as compared to rhythmic patterns found frequently in the indigenous and folk music of Mexico. Some of the most
outstanding rhythmic patterns in this folk music can be seen in the songs used to accompany secular dances. All the music for secular folk dances is in the form of songs called sones, jarabes and huapangos.¹ The word sones comes from son, meaning literally "an agreeable sound"; jarabe means a syrup or sweet drink. The word huapango may be derived from Nahuatl, the ancient language of the Aztecs, and would mean "on a wooden platform" referring to the platform on which the dance is performed; or it might refer to Hauxtecas, in the tropical lowlands, and Pango, the ancient name of a river there.²

Fig. 7--A part of the Jarabe Tapatio, the Mexican national folk dance.


²Herbert Weinstock, Mexican Music (New York, 1940), p. 21.
Fig. 8--Otey, Sonata Tenochtitlan, fourth movement, measures 44-49. This has the rhythm of the jarabe in the bass.

This movement, called "Coconito," represents the revolutionary process in Mexico during the twentieth century. The rhythm of the jarabe is particularly fitting here. It was regarded by the Mexican people in 1813 as the symbolic song of the revolution in which Mexico broke away from Spain. The jarabe was also a popular revolutionary song in 1910.

 Dating from the music of the indigenes, one of the most frequently used rhythmic figures in the music of Mexico, is

3 Robert Stevenson, Music in Mexico, p. 185.
the triplet. It can be seen in the music of the primitives, Mexican folk music and in the contemporary compositions of Mexico.

Fig. 9—Alabanza III (Yaqui), primitive use of the triplet, and Conchero, use of the triplet in folk music.
Fig. 10--Otey, *Sonata Tenochtitlan*, first movement, measures 6-9. This shows contemporary use of the triplet.

Fig. 11--Carrillo, *Fantasia Impromptu*, measures 406-407. This is another example showing use of the triplet.

Another frequent device is the rapid change of meter in Mexican music.
Syncopation is prevalent in Mexican music. It is often achieved by tying the last note of one measure into the first note and strongest beat of the next measure.
Fig. 14—"La Sandunga" (sandunga meaning a graceful woman) illustrates the characteristic tied notes.

Fig. 15—Moncayo, "Pieza II," Tres Piezas, measures 1-8. This illustrates the contemporary use of the last note in one measure tied into the first note of the next.

Blas Galindo, in his Prelude V, emphasizes the weak beat by accents and phrasing. In 4/4 and 3/4 time he phrases in
groups of threes, accenting at times the first note in each three-note group.

Fig. 16--Galindo, "Prelude V," Cinco Preludios, measures 9-12.

Another method of syncopation often relied upon in this music is the use of rests on strong beats. The following examples show evidence of this in folk music and present day music.
Fig. 17--Romance de Roman Castillo, from a corrido, and La Chachalaca, a folk song about a bird. The Mexican corrido is the offspring of the Spanish romance and is derived, probably, from the Spanish word **correr** meaning "to run."

Fig. 18--Moncayo, "Pieza III," Tres Piezas, measures 146-153, has a rest on the strong first beat of several measures.

Another frequent rhythmic device in Mexican music is the use of the dotted eighth note followed by a sixteenth running continuously for several measures. This and a similar dotted figure are seen in the following examples.

Toor, A Treasury of Mexican Folkways, pp. 309-310.
Fig. 19--Adelita is a revolutionary song of the 1910-1920 Social Revolution. This example taken from it contains the dotted eighth and sixteenth figure.

Fig. 20--Ponce, "Etude II," Deux Etudes, measures 24-25, contains a similar dotted note figure.

A summary of predominant rhythmic patterns found in the music of Mexico yields the following figures:

(1) The rhythmic patterns of the jarabe are often incorporated into works.

(2) One of the most frequently used rhythmic figures is the triplet.

(3) Rapid change of meter is frequent.

(4) Syncopation, achieved through tied notes from weak to strong beats, uncommon phrasing and accented weak beats,
and rests on strong beats, is a common feature in the music of Mexico.

(5) The dotted eighth followed by a sixteenth, or a similar dotted figure, is often used.

In the realm of tonality the compositions analyzed in Chapter III ranged from traditionally tonal to completely atonal. The following examples show instances of the two types of tonality.

Fig. 21--Tello, Triptico Mexicano, second movement, measures 9-12, is a show of traditional tonality.
The composers tend to align themselves tonally in this manner:

Castro--Tonal writing
Ponce--Tonal writing
Carrillo--Tonal writing in his early works, atonal in his later efforts
Tello--Tonal writing
Galindo--Atonal composition
Moncayo--Atonal composition
Moncada--Atonal composition
Kostakowsky--Tonal writing
Otey--Tonal writing
Chávez--Atonal composition

In the sphere of harmony, the Mexican moderns range from nineteenth century harmonic practices to the dissonant
counterpoint of the twentieth century. Immediately follow-
ing is an example of the traditional harmonic practices
favored by Castro, Ponce, Kostakowsky, Tello, Otey and, to
some extent, Carrillo, as well as an example of the dis-
onant counterpoint employed by Galindo, Moncayo, Moncada
and Chávez.

Fig. 23--Otey, Sonata Tenochtitlan, second movement,
measures 52-55, shows traditional harmonic structure.
A practice harmonically peculiar to the composers in Mexico is their abundant use of parallel thirds, stemming from the folk music of the country which is saturated with this "thirdsian" harmony. An example of the folk music is seen, followed by an example of a contemporary work using the "thirdsian" harmony.

Fig. 24--Galindo, "Prelude V," Cinco Preludios, measures 54-57, employs triads in a display of dissonant counterpoint.

Fig. 25--To the Señor de Sacromonte, a folk song illustrating the use of parallel thirds.
The analysis of contemporary Mexican piano works yields the following conclusions. In the realm of melody, harmony and tonality, Mexican music of today reflects a European background and tradition. Often indigenous and folk melodies are incorporated in the contemporary music of Mexico, but against this traditional background these melodies are not distinguishable to an unusual degree. Dissonant counterpoint and parallel thirds characterized the modern music of Mexico, as well as a tendency toward atonal works. The rhythm patterns found in Mexico's contemporary music set it apart from the music of other countries. Syncopation in the form of accented weak beats, ties or rests on strong beats and unusual phrasing is the most prevalent rhythmic factor. The use of the triplet is
frequent as well as pure dance forms such as the jarabe. Rapid changes in meter are found frequently in this music.

The compositions of Blas Galindo and Pablo Moncayo illustrate best the qualities that characterize the contemporary piano music of Mexico. In their atonal music can be seen the lean contours and highly rhythmic output of Mexico's modern composers drawing from an Indian past.
APPENDIX

In order to better understand the contemporary musical scene in Mexico, the author, in the summer of 1955, conducted interviews with various modern day composers in Mexico. Many of the works of these men have not been published, and several piano works listed in the analysis section of the thesis were copied from manuscripts belonging to the composers. An over-all picture of the musical setting in the country and the attitudes and opinions of the composers there today were secured through these interviews and through correspondence with musicians in Mexico.

The following standard questions were asked at the interviews:

1. What do you consider the major elements which have influenced your general musical outlook?

2. What do you consider to be the major influences in your actual musical composition?

3. Do you consider that your composition has any religious elements or influences to the converse?

4. To what extent do you consider that the non-hispanic indigenous elements of Mexico have influenced your work?

5. Do you regard pre-Cortesian musical survival in Mexico as of any particular importance or significance?
6. Do you believe that there is any important regionalism in Mexican music and, if so, has it influenced your musical thought?

7. What do you believe to be the position of music in contemporary Mexico?

8. Are there any special conditions in Mexico which would affect piano composition more than musical composition in general?

9. Do you believe that there are any important Colonial survivalisms which are affecting contemporary musical thought and composition?

Listed on the following pages of the Appendix are the responses to the above questions as these were recorded by the author.

Carlos Chávez

Chávez expressed himself more freely than did any of the other composers interviewed. This was due in part to his excellent facility with the English language and to his consciousness of being, through wide acceptance, the dean of the school of modern composers in Mexico. The record of his response to the interview is paraphrased as nearly as possible to make use of his own wording.

"Outside influences are not important so much as is the individual talent. When a person is talented--then he can shape influences. Naturally one has to be educated; and that very education will undoubtedly influence a composer. But more important is that which comes from within the composer as an individual.

Music is the expression of one's personality. Each composer is highly individual in the production of his own music, and this music will have his personal characteristics. When dressing, you do not make a conscious effort
to look like an American--quite naturally you just have the appearance of looking like an American. I myself do not go to lengths to seem Mexican. I simply look like a Mexican. A composer may have certain individual attributes. If he uses these to excess or makes too great an effort to show them, these become unnatural and cease to be attributes. They become conscious and glaring, and their effectiveness is lost. If my works contain a stamp of being Mexican, it is not the result of a conscious effort on my part to be Mexican. My music is Mexican because I am Mexican.

I strive to give to each of my compositions a singular character. Each is different; I try never to repeat myself.

As for a religious element in my works--how can I say? To a composer, or any creative artist, his creative output is in itself a sort of religion. He gives of his best to it, and he seeks to convey qualities of emotion, depth and drama. If he strives toward these aims, then perhaps those are religious elements influencing his works. It might be more fitting if I put the question to you, 'Do my works convey a quality of drama, emotion and depth; are they to you religious?'

It is not possible to say, 'This music is Mexican--and this is French!' There is not so recognizable a characteristic of nationalism in music. If my music is Mexican, it is because I am a Mexican. As for regionalism and folk music, folk music is not a habit with me. In some of my works I use it only because it helps to express my feelings to be shaped in that particular work. Mendoza expressed it well when he said of my music, "The music of Chávez is more along classic lines. His music is Indian only in outward characteristics--simplicity, clean cut, rhythmic attributes of the Indians, direct and forward..." If the composer is a skillful arranger and craftsman, then the folk music in his work will sound good. If he uses folk music and arranges it poorly, then the work will sound trite and will merit nothing. Any music, whether it contains folk elements or not, is either good music or bad music, owing to the skill of the composer."

Orlando Otey

"The major influences in my general musical outlook stem mostly from my personal life as it has affected my music. Twice I have withdrawn from music completely. At an early age I was found to have an unusual talent for the piano; following this, my childhood was spent not in normal
play with children of my own age, but at the piano practicing for hours. I was taken to a fine and very capable teacher, Luis Moctezuma, and he warned my mother that I could not stand up under such a schedule. Maestro Moctezuma was a wonderful teacher, but he had a personality that made for him many bitter enemies during his lifetime. His pupils were also discriminated against by these people, and I was never able to receive recognition or scholarships during my youth in Mexico. Later I went to Curtis Institute in the United States where I was welcomed with 'open arms,' so to speak, in contrast to my former life. The first time I left music entirely was between my youth in Mexico and my entrance at Curtis. This was during the war, and I decided to go with a group of volunteers from Mexico to join the RAF. After only a few missions, I was shot down over Germany and ended in a prison camp. I escaped from prison, practically in a state of delirium from wounds. When I got back to England I was discharged because of these wounds. As I knew nothing else, I decided to return to music. After Curtis, I made a European concert tour in 1949. Then on returning to the United States, I decided again to abandon music for a more lucrative career. So I studied television production and electronics, and after completing the long training period, I found a place in the Spanish section of the Voice of America productions. But with the change in the government and administration, that program was cut out and I was again at loose ends. Once more I returned to music, and at the present time I am quite happy teaching near Philadelphia and concertizing extensively as well as composing.

My teacher Moctezuma had as a specialty Chopin. This probably influenced my actual musical composition. He steeped me in Chopin, and my early compositions are full of that influence. Another direct influence on my composition was my study with Menotti at Curtis. We disagreed almost violently most of the time, but he did cause me to take account of myself. My first work, free of the Chopin trend, was the Piano Sonata, opus 10, called 'Tenochtitlan.' It is based in four movements on the history of Mexico. In it I use an Aztec theme, and also rhythmic patterns derived from the Mexican dance, the jarabe. Many of my later works also employ this same rhythm.

The third movement of the Sonata Tenochtitlan represents the religious fervor of the people between 1730 and 1810. I have one specifically religious song, 'Plegaria'; but I do not think of myself as particularly a religious composer or as employing religious elements to any extent in my works.
Some say that the validity of the pre-Cortesian music can never be actually proven. But I feel that the research done in that area is of value, and I have used the Indian rhythms and an Aztec melody in the Sonata, opus 10.

The rhythms found in various Mexican dances have to do with regionalism. And I have used the jarabe rhythms in my work.

Music in Mexico is subsidized by the government. The musical program is run by the Association of Bellas Artes. The men in the key positions of that organization play works or sponsor concerts of people within their own political group or persons of their own choosing. If one happens to threaten their position or happens not to be on friendly terms with them, then one's works are never played. Many bitter rivalries and enemies exist within the organization itself. These things influence more than anything else the musical activity in Mexico today.

No, there are no special conditions in Mexico which would affect piano composition more than any other area of composition.

No, I feel that there are no important colonial survivalisms of importance."

Blas Galindo

"The important thing is this--a mastery of the fundamental skills in music and music writing--counterpoint, a knowledge of the instruments, and such things--plus practice, practice, practice using these skills. This is the important thing. Without this mastery, no matter how talented a composer may be, he can produce nothing. The particular background or personality of each individual is naturally a large factor in influencing his works. Education usually tempers that background, and through these things the man and his music are produced.

My studies have been with Chávez. Along with my comrades in "The Group of Four," I was doubtless influenced by him. Also I studied with Huizar, and later I went to the United States to study at the Berkshire Academy. From there the answer is more or less like that to the first question.

No, absolutely no religious influence in my works!
Having spent my youth in the State of Jalisco, I might unconsciously have been influenced by indigenous elements which may appear in my works today. The Indian rhythms particularly are so much a part of my background and my personality that it is difficult to say how much I have been influenced by these things.

To me, it seems of more importance to musicologists and historians—this question of pre-Cortesian musical survivals. These scholars have done much good work in that area.

Yes, there certainly is regionalism in Mexican music. If this has influenced my works it is due to reasons which I have stated in answer to previous questions.

Pablo Moncayo

My study with Moncada in piano was the first influence of any consequence in my music. Later the study of composition under Chávez at the National Conservatory along with Blas Galindo, Daniel Ayala and Salvador Contreras left a definite mark on my music. The four of us formed into what was later called "The Group of Four." Our music was presented in several concerts here in Mexico City and later in New York. Now I am occupied with teaching here at the conservatory and this takes much of my time.

The things I have just mentioned answer the second question as well.

No, I do not have any particularly religious influences in my music.

Everyone in Mexico has Indian blood in some way or another. In this way I could not help but be influenced by indigenous elements which are born in me.

Salvador Contreras

The elements which have influenced me in my general musical outlook have been first of all my study with Revueltas. Then my study with Chávez and the formation of "The Group of Four," of which I became a member, were important.
The same influences hold true for the second question. And I have adopted a style of neoclassicism in my composition which might be included in these questions.

No, I have written nothing with any religious elements involved.

My background, like that of anyone born a Mexican, would naturally tend to be influenced by indigenous elements almost subconsciously. I feel that the use of indigenous materials in composition should come naturally, as a part of the composer's personality and background.

The pre-Cortesian musical survivals are of interest more to the historian and scholar rather than the musician. I do not feel that the work which has been done in pre-Cortesian music is most assuredly of value to us.

Yes, there is important regionalism here in Mexico, but it has influenced me as I stated before more or less subconsciously.

Mexican music today has a definite nationalistic character.

If there be a special condition affecting the composition of piano music, it would lie in the tendency of the individual composer to compose in the medium wherein he is most familiar. In my case it happens not to be piano, but strings. For that reason, I have not produced so much for piano.

No, I do not think there are any important effects in contemporary music derived from colonial survivalisms.

Luis Sandi

1. Impressionism—particularly Debussy
   Modernism—particularly Stravinsky
   Mexican folklore—particularly the Indian

2. The above annotations

3. Not any religious elements can be perceived in my music.

4. The survivals of pre-Cortesian music are scarce and very questionable.
5. The indigenous elements have especially influenced my work.

6. There are very important musical regionalisms in Mexico; more than any other, there are those pertaining to the various indigenous groups. These have influenced my musical thought.

7. Music in Mexico occupies presently a place becoming more and more one of importance. The concerts are more numerous each day and the orchestras and concert societies are multiplying. Nevertheless, the music of Mexican composers occupies a place of very little importance.

8. I don't think that the composition of music for the piano would be subject to special conditions.

9. There are very important survivals of colonial music. But it affects neither public pleasure nor the production of the composers because these survivals are practically unknown.

Carlos Jiménez Mabarak

1. My personal temperament—the discipline to which I was submitted during my student years—the constant contact with every class of music.

2. The music of the great classics previous to Beethoven and that of the moderns such as Manuel de Falla, Ravel and Stravinsky have influenced or conditioned in certain ways my particular style of composition. These confessed influences refer more than anything else to the purely formal aspect of my works.

3. I believe that in all artistic creation there exists a certain dosage of mysticism. Nevertheless, I am not looking for—nor do I evade—the use of mythical, plastic or literary elements of a religious nature as subjects of inspiration for my works. My attitude, in any event, is only that of an artisan, one embracing a religious faith.

4. The hispanic 'Melos' present in many of my works do not originate from influences but from the natural condition of my race; it was in my blood. The melodies, harmonic combinations and rhythmic motives of indigenous character which can be found in some of my works originate from a premeditated influence of the primitive Mexican music and
others from a work planned to evolve from such elements with
the object of imparting to my music a national stamp, which
makes it different from European music.

5. That which has come to us of the pre-Cortesian
music, abstractly considered, for me has no musical value.
All in all, it has served as a point of reference for many
of our composers in constructing their own style. Some of
the works which have been given an aesthetic place are truly
very valuable. On the other hand, it becomes impossible to
take into account survivals which we might wish to create
into a national language.

6. In Mexican music of a 'popular' or folkloric type,
there exist clearly defined regionalisms. Their presence in
my works explains itself in paragraph four.

7. Mexican music in the present tends decidedly toward
nationalism. With this common spirit, each composer forms
his own idiom. In some cases, as in my own, it has its
origin in the standards of the European conservatories.

8. There do not exist in Mexico special conditions
which affect composition for piano more than other types of
composition.

9. The musical survivals of a colonial type only have
value for the historian and ethnologist. Save for contra-
dictory exceptions there are no important composers in
Mexico that have undergone the influence of the above
mentioned music."

Rodolfo Halffter

1. "In Spain I studied with Manuel de Falla and, like
him, I was influenced by Scarlatti who had, in his time,
been influenced by Spanish music. The Scarlatti influence
is apparent in my earlier works, particularly in the har-
monic use of sevenths and seventh chords. Like de Falla, I
too had an early period of idiomatic or 'folk' composition,
characterized in his El Amor Brujo and Sombrero de Tres
Picos. I later underwent, in a second period of composition,
the use of polytonality. I based this on the overtone
series and particularly on the seventh of a chord as the
root of new chords on that seventh (example at the piano--
E G# B D F# A C# E . . .). My last work in this polytonal
style was the Second Piano Sonata, published this year,
1955. But at this time I have left that style and am con-
vinced, having met Schoenberg and having studied for some
time his tone row system, that the "Twelve Tone System" is the only way in which music can hope to progress. I have just completed a work for string orchestra which I feel is the best thing that I have done so far, and all of my future works will be built around and following the twelve tone technique.

2. The foregoing statements seem to me to cover question number two.

3. No!!!

4. The findings related to pre-Cortesian music in Mexico cannot be proven substantially and to me are of no significance.

5. None at all. I am Spanish, if anything, in my tendencies and the indigenous elements of Mexico have not entered my thinking and works at all.

6. There may be important regionalism in Mexico, surely, but, as I stated before, it has in no way influenced me musically.

7. In Mexico it is difficult to have one's works played. Due to lack of competent performers and a paucity in certain areas of performance, it is discouraging to composers. I feel that there is more written for the piano simply because pianists are more abundant and it is easier to have one's works performed with credit in that medium.

8. The abundance of pianos in the homes which encourage the development of pianists would seem to affect piano composition possibly more than in other realms. And it is as I stated before--there is more written for the piano for that reason.

9. No, as I see it there are no important colonial survivalisms."

Jesus Bal y Gay

Jesus Bal y Gay is a Spaniard transplanted to Mexico. He is a leading music critic in Mexico City and is in charge of the archives section of the Fine Arts Association. He is also a composer but has not been actively engaged in
composition for the past several years, and he attributes this to his lack of sufficient time to turn out what he would consider creditable. In talking with Bal y Gay, he declined answering queries having to do with Mexican music as he considers himself a Spaniard and a Spanish composer unqualified to speak on composition from within Mexico. Unofficially, Bal y Gay more or less scoffs at extreme dissonance, the Twelve Tone System and the workings of the thirteenth sound as propounded by Carrillo.

Miguel Meza

1. "My home was originally San Luis Potosí and there I heard folk music every day of my youth. I am sure that this influenced my composing in later life. I was educated at San Luis Potosí and later I came to Mexico City to study music at the National Conservatory. After this, I went to the United States and spent some twelve years there playing the piano and organ with a touring orchestra. I traveled extensively in the northern states and also in Texas. But such a life was not a good one and I eventually decided to return to Mexico. And now I am teaching here at the conservatory, piano and composition. I suppose I would say that the greatest influence in my composition was my childhood association with the folk melodies, and another great one was the process of my formal education.

2. The preceding statements seem to answer this question.

3. Yes, I have done some works specifically for the church and made many arrangements of music for church. Since I play the organ for the First Methodist Church here in Mexico City, there is often the opportunity to use such music.

4. As I said before, the indigenous elements have influenced my work a great deal, most of this influence coming from San Luis Potosí but some from other states.
5. Who can tell? No one can ever be certain that these survivals are as the Aztec music really was. But if these can be used to good advantage in composing today, that is the most important thing.

6. Yes, there is definitely important regionalism in Mexican music, existing in every different state of the country. I have been influenced by the states in which I have lived.

7. If one includes among his friends the right people in the right places, then one has his works performed. If that is not the case, then there is not much future for a composer in Mexico. As for myself, my last composition was completed about five years ago. Mexico, perhaps more than any country today, has the wealth of folk material to provide a growing nationalism in its music. And I think that is good. As a profession, music is a very poorly paid occupation in this country and that affects the musical scene to a degree in Mexico today.

No, I do not think that the colonial music has affected the contemporary composition greatly."

Juan León Mariscal

In talking with Mariscal, one is impressed first and foremost by his bitterness toward the ruling faction in the music of Mexico today. This was true of many of the composers in varying degrees of outward display. Mariscal did not say much beyond the fact that the main influences in his composing were his teacher, Carrillo, and his studies in Germany; and that he has not recently turned out any compositions as there would be no chance to have his works performed. Mariscal represents with his candor the edge of the anti-Asociación de Bellas Artes (Association of Fine Arts) which is in effect the anti-Carlos Chávez group of musicians in Mexico.
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