PERCUSSION INSTRUMENTS IN TWO COMPOSITIONS BY CARLOS CHÁVEZ: *XOCHIPILLI*: AN IMAGINED AZTEC MUSIC (1940) AND CHAPULTEPEC: THREE FAMOUS MEXICAN PIECES (1935)

by

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The purpose of this study is to examine percussion instruments and their role in two works by Carlos Chávez. Each composition represents a specific time period in the history of Mexico. *Xochipilli, An Imagined Aztec Music* reflects the music of the Aztecs before the Spanish Conquest of 1519. *Chapultepec, Three Famous Mexican Pieces* is an arrangement of *mestizo* tunes popular at the time of the Mexican Revolution in 1910.

Xochipilli is Chávez's recreation of the way Aztec music might have sounded. Chávez employed representatives of indigenous percussion and wind instruments in this composition to evoke the melodic system and the compositional procedures that he determined were reminiscent of fourteenth-century Aztec music. This paper surveys the wind and percussion instruments, with emphasis on the latter, and describes their prominent role in the Aztec religious ceremonies.

Chapultepec is a setting of *mestizo* music demonstrating musical instruments and characteristics of Western-European music of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries

in Mexico. This study examines the significant cultural changes introduced by the Spanish after 1519, transforming the music of Mexico with new musical instruments and new musical styles. Biographies are included of composers such as Ponce, Revueltas, and Chávez, who promoted pride of country in their Mexican nationalistic music in the early twentieth century.

The last two chapters in this study consist of analyses of *Xochipilli, An Imagined Aztec Music* and *Chapultepec, Three Famous Mexican Pieces*, demonstrating how Chávez used percussion instruments and compositional devices to capture the sound and spirit of two musical cultures in Mexico.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The music of Mexico today illustrates one of the most diverse music cultures in the Western Hemisphere.[1] This variety of cultures may be attributed to the cultural changes brought about by the Spanish Conquest. Before 1519, the indigenous peoples of Mesoamerica[2] had developed complex societies in total isolation from the rest of the world. A series of tribal kingdoms, such as the Olmec, Toltec, Maya, and Aztec, developed over the course of many years, from about 1000 B.C. to 1519 A.D., without benefit of outside contact from Europe or Asia.

The Aztec society, dating from about 1250 A.D., was destroyed in 1519, by Hernán Cortés and his Spanish *conquistadores*. The conquerors in the name of the King of Spain and the Roman Catholic Church imposed their culture into every aspect of the lives of the native population.

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[1]Charles Seeger, foreword to "*El estado presente de la música en México*," by Otto Mayer-Serra (Washington, D.C.: Music Division, Pan American Union, 1946), xii.

[2]Mesoamerica includes the areas of present-day central Mexico south to the Yucatán, Chiapas, Belize, Guatemala, and Honduras.

They suppressed native musical practices and imposed both sacred and secular music from Western Europe.

As a result, music of the people in Mexico, folk music, was thrust into a secondary position and developed separately within Indian communities.[3] In addition to the dictates of Spanish rule, folk music was isolated from Western-European art music for several reasons. First, indigenous peoples remote from urban centers were separated geographically from Spanish influences, including music. Second, their barter economy did not permit purchase of musical instruments. Instruments were inherited or home-made. And finally, Indians consciously sought to preserve their own cultural identity through their music.[4]

During the period of three centuries of colonial rule, the lives of Spanish and Indian people merged. The resulting *mestizo* (mixed race) society, transformed Spanish and other Western-European musical forms and Indian musical characteristics into a blend that is neither Indian nor Spanish but Mexican in character. This process is called

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[3]Otto Mayer-Serra, "*El estado presente de la música en México*," translated by Frank Jellinek, with foreword by Charles Seeger (Washington, D.C.: Music Division, Pan American Union, 1946), 26.

[4]E. Thomas Stanford, "Mexico." New Grove, 12:236.

syncretism.[5] Through the centuries *mestizo* song and dance forms evolved, including the *villancico, corrido,* and *canción.* Each form, with its own characteristic rhythms, accompanimental pattern, lyric content, and performance practice, is distinctly Mexican in character.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the policies of dictator Porfirio Días, who ruled from 1876 to 1911, became intolerable to the people of Mexico. The widespread social and economic abuses of his government provoked the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920). Students in academies of art and music, formerly educated in Western-European practices, wanted radical change. They turned to the revitalization of Mexican culture by representing the struggle of the people for democracy in music, art, and literature.

The concept of nationalism, or pride in national identity, became an important element in the arts, arising as a means of protest during the upheaval of the 1910 Revolution. *Mestizo* folk music provided the musical

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[5]Syncretism is the process of transferring musical characteristics, such as scales, rhythm, and melodic movement from one culture to another. The music resulting from this transfer often produces "new" music displaying characteristics of both cultures.

material for the nationalistic music movement in Mexico.[6] Carlos Chávez (1899-1978) was the "first Mexican composer to enunciate this new nationalism"[7] through music that encouraged performers and listeners to unite in an expression of pride and loyalty to the Mexican community. Chávez' goal was

> . . . to incorporate the essence of previously assimilated folk elements . . . of melodic, harmonic, or instrumental nature that confer on a piece a distinctly national flavor."[8]

Chávez wrote a number of compositions identified as specifically nationalistic, such as *El fuego nuevo*, *Los cuatros soles*, *Caballo de vapor*, *Sinfonía índia*, and the two works to be examined in this paper, *Xochipilli, An Imagined Aztec Music* (1940) and *Chapultepec, Three Mexican Pieces* (1935). Each work demonstrates the role of percussion instruments during a distinct time period in Mexican history.

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[6]Otto Meyer-Serra, "*El estado presente de la música en México*," with a foreword by Charles Seeger, translated by Frank Jellinek (Washington, D.C.: Music Division, Pan American Union, 1946), 25 and 31.

[7]Robert L. Parker, Carlos Chávez: Mexico's Modern-Day Orpheus (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1983), preface.

[8]Gerard Béhague, Music in Latin America: An Introduction, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1979), 130.

The performance practice of percussion instruments and the instruments themselves changed dramatically from the time of the native Aztec people before 1521 to the *mestizo* society following the Mexican Revolution of 1910. This study is an examination of the contrast between the musical practices of the ancient Aztec civilization and those of the Western-European influenced culture in Mexico in the early twentieth-century. Chávez used only the limited number of percussion and wind instruments developed by the early Aztecs percussion instruments, representative of early sixteenth-century Aztec musical practices, in *Xochipilli, An Imagined Aztec Music*. Chávez praised the pre-Columbian Indian music as communicating "what is deepest in the Mexican soul."[9] In *Chapultepec, Three Mexican Piece*, Chávez utilized the wide variety of stringed, brass, woodwind, and percussion instruments of Western-European practice as their use was modified by the Mexican culture. Analysis of these works will concentrate primarily on specific percussion instruments used in each work and the manner in which they reflect the performance practice of each musical era.

This study has implications for percussionists for

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[9]From a lecture delivered under the auspices of the National University of Mexico in October 1928, quoted in Robert Stevenson, Music in Aztec & Inca Territory (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 16.

several reasons. First, percussion instruments used in different two musical periods in Mexico are surveyed. Second, the contrast in percussion instruments and their musical function offers an historical perspective of the music of Mexico.

Limited to a discussion of only *Xochipilli, An Imagined Aztec Music* and *Chapultepec, Three Mexican Pieces*, this study does not consider the remaining large number of compositions by Carlos Chávez. The musical instruments to be examined are limited to those used by Chávez in the two selected works.

Several theses and dissertations have been written about the music of Carlos Chávez. Investigation into these studies indicates that neither *Xochipilli* nor *Chapultepec* has been used as a topic for a dissertation in the area of percussion. Earlier documents, including those by George[10] and Peterman,[11] concentrate on either (1) the mechanics of performance, instrument choices, stick selection, and

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[10]John Matthew George, "An Examination of Performance Aspects of Two Major Works for Percussion Ensemble: Toccata by Carlos Chávez and Cantata para América Mágica by Alberto Ginastera" (D.M.A diss., University of North Texas, 1991).

[11]Timothy James Peterman, "An Examination of Two Sextets of Carlos Chávez: Toccata for Percussion Instruments and *Tambuco* for Six Percussion Players" (D.M.A. diss., North Texas State University, 1986).

arrangement of instruments, or (2) the position of Chávez in relation to other twentieth-century Latin American composers. Other dissertations have omitted the investigation of the significant relationship of percussion instruments to historical circumstances that influenced and shaped music in Mexico. In this study, the role of percussion instruments will be examined within the cultural framework of the two musical eras of pre-Columbian Indians and early twentieth-century Mexicans.

CHAPTER II

PRE-COLUMBIAN MUSICAL CULTURE

They were astonished. Hernán Cortés and his men were amazed when they first saw the city of the Aztecs in central Mexico in 1519. That a complex society, so strange and so different from their own, existed on this distant continent was incomprehensible to the men from Spain. "When we saw such astounding things, we did not know what to say, or whether what appeared before us was real."[1]

Octavio Paz[2] has commented on the "circular nature" of Mesoamerican history. The cultures preceding the Aztecs rose and fell as variations of a single pattern. Unlike the continuous exchange of technology, languages, and ideas found in the Old World, conquest in the New World brought new blood not new ideas. Descendants of marauding tribes built new centers that were seldom more than copies of earlier societies.

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[1]Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España*, edited by Miguel León-Portilla (Madrid: n.p., 1984), 312.

[2]Octavio Paz, "Will for Form," Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1990), 11.

Successive kingdoms made outstanding achievements in areas such as the discovery of the concept of zero, astronomy, architecture, and sculpture. In contrast, the Mesoamerican technology was comparable to the Bronze Age in Europe, except in specialized areas such as in gem cutting and goldsmithing. Mesoamerican cultures did not use draft animals or wheels, except in toys.[3] They lacked navigational skills. Paz writes:

> A civilization is not measured solely by its technology. Its thought, its art, its political institutions, and its moral achievements must also be weighed.[4]

The first immigrants to America came from Asia during a period of fifty thousand years. By 6000 B.C., hunter-gatherers had progressed to farmers of maize, beans, and squash. Pottery and woven textiles emerged some time after 2500 B.C.

Three Periods of Mesoamerican History

The history of Mesoamerica has been divided into three periods. All of the dates are approximate.

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[3]Ibid., 9.

[4]Ibid.

Formative Period (1500 B.C.-300 A.D.)

True civilization began about 1000 B.C. with the Olmecs settling first in the area of the Gulf of Mexico and later expanding to the central area of Mexico. The first villages appeared about 2000 B.C. Around 1000 B.C., the Olmecs established the first known city states organized within a hierarchy of kings, priests, and warriors. They built ceremonial centers complete with pyramids, sculpture, and palaces set around plazas set with mosaic tiles.[5]

Classic Period (300 A.D.-900 A.D.)

The Classic period refers to the apogee of Mesoamerican civilizations and is not related to the Classical Era of either Greco-Roman culture nor to the Classical Era in music. Two areas developed concurrently during the Classic Period. One was the city of Teotihuacán in the *altiplano* (high plane) region of central Mexico, and the second was Palenque, the city of the Maya, on the lowlands of the Yucatán Peninsula.

The most important center of culture in ancient central Mexico was the city of Teotihuacán, City of the Gods, northeast of present-day Mexico City. A metropolis of more than 200,000 inhabitants and covering an area of nine

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[5]Ibid., 21.

square miles, Teotihuacán flourished from about 300-900 A.D. This was a time of enormous development in the arts and sciences, including mathematics, astronomy, time-reckoning, architecture, sculpture, ceramics, and mural painting.[6] The influence of Teotihuacán reached the territory of the Maya, and there was some reciprocal trade and commerce between the two kingdoms.[7]

The Classic Maya civilization began around the fourth century A.D., in southeast Mexico and adjacent parts of Central America. Little is known about the origin of the Mayan people, and the reasons for the collapse of their empire is relatively unknown. Scholars have documented their sophisticated knowledge of mathematics, astronomy, architecture, sculpture, and system of hieroglyphics.

Post-Classic Period (900 A.D.-1500 A.D.)

The Post-Classic Period was a period of reconstruction. During the mid-thirteenth century the Mexicas,[8] pronounced Mesheekas, came to power in central Mexico. Historians have used the name Aztec, for want of a better term to designate

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[6]Rubén Cabrera Castro, "The Metropolis of Teotihuacán," Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries, 87.

[7]Nigel Davies, The Ancient Kingdoms of Mexico (London: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1982), 87.

[8]The word "Mexico" is derived from the term "Mexica."

the three tribes that became the Aztec empire. The word Aztec derives from Aztlán, Place of the Cranes, the home of the Mexica tribe before they migrated southward. Tenochtitlan, founded on the site of present-day Mexico City, the center of Aztec government, had a population of more than 250,000 inhabitants. The city was laid out in a grid pattern, set on an island in the center of Lake Texcoco, and was connected to the mainland by a system of causeways and canals. Table 1 is a comparative chronology between the Old World and New World.

The Aztecs

Mendoza[9] suggested that musical-artistic culture developed in only four of the fifteen Indian groups in Mexico at the time of the Spanish Conquest. These indigenous groups were the Purépechas, the Mixtec-Zapotec, the Maya, and the Aztecs. Evidence of the important role of music played in ancient Mesoamerican societies has been preserved in the testimony of Spanish observers during the initial period of contact with the Aztecs. Writers such as Bernal Días del Castillo[10] (ca.1492-ca.1581), who traveled

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[9]Vicente T. Mendoza, *Panorama de la música tradiciónal de México* (Mexico: Imprenta Universitaria, 1956), 18.

[10]Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España*, 2 vols., edited by Miguel

TABLE 1

COMPARATIVE CHRONOLOGY

MESOAMERICA		**OLD WORLD**
		B.C.
First agriculture	6500	Farming in Asia & Near East
Cultivation of maize	5000	
Seasonal villages	3500	Drums & reed pipes in Mesopotamia
	3000	End-blown flutes, tambourines, sistra used in processional music in Egypt
Pottery appears	2500	Suspended stone chimes in China
First permanent villages	2000	
	1500	Bronze metallophones in Java
Olmec (c.1000-100 B.C.)	1000	
	600	Kettledrums appear in Persia
	500	Pythagoras proposes scale theory
	400	
	300	Lute & music theory in India
Maya (c.100B.C.-900 A.D.)	100	
		B.C.
		A.D.
	100	
Teotihuacán (c.200.-800 A.D.)	200	
	300	Plainsong develops in Europe
	400	
	500	Boethius writes music treatise
	600	Metal gongs in China
	700	
Toltec (c.800-1200)	800	Hucbald first to use letters for pitches
	900	
	1000	Guido d'Arezzi & sightsinging device
	1100	Trouveres in northern France
	1200	Kettledrums in Europe
Aztec (1250-1520)	1300	
	1400	Franco-Flemish composers: Machaut, Dufay, & Ockeghem
	1500	Xylophone (*strohfiedel*) in Germany

León-Portilla (Madrid, 1984); English ed., abridged, The Discovery and Conquest of Mexico, 1517-1521, ed. by Genaro García, translated with introduction and notes by A.P. Maudslay (New York: n.p., 1956).

with Cortés, and Fray Bernadino de Sahagún[11] (ca.1500-1590), who wrote his multi-volume work about New Spain in the mid-sixteenth century, provide valuable information about the Aztec culture. Archaeologists have discovered physical evidence of musical instruments, such as the *huehuetl*, a single-headed wooden drum, and the *teponaztli*, a wooden slit drum. These artifacts now are housed in museums such as the *Museo Nacional de Antropología* in Mexico City.

Instrumental music, dance, and song were essential ingredients in the religious ceremonies of the Aztecs. Ceremonies were communal activities associated with "intricate overlapping royal, military, and priestly powers."[12] Religion was the Aztec response to the forces of nature around them. Offerings were made, prayers were uttered, and elaborate ceremonies were performed to influence the gods to act in favor of the Aztec community.[13]

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[11]Bernardino de Sahagún, Florentine Codex, General History of the Things of New Spain, 11 vols., translated from Nahuatl by Charles Dibble and Arthur J.O. Anderson (Santa Fe, New Mexico: The School of American Research and The University of Utah, 1950-1968).

[12]Paz, "Will for Form," Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries, 10.

[13]George C. Vaillant, The Aztecs of Mexico: Origin, Rise and Fall of the Aztec Nation (New York: Doubleday, Doran and Co., Inc., 1944; reprint, Suffolk, England: Penguin Books, 1951), 168.

They developed an enormous pantheon of gods, over two hundred of them, ranging from the chief gods to lesser gods representing creation, fertility, fire, rain, death, the planets, and pulque, an intoxicating drink made from the fermented juice of the maguey plant.

Stevenson[14] maintains that Aztec musical instruments included only idiophones, membranophones, and aerophones and that stringed instruments were unknown in Mesoamerica before the Spanish arrived in Mexico in 1519. Because of the debate[15] arising from conflicting evidence of the origin of stringed instruments in Mexico, it appears that additional examination of extant materials is needed.

Aztec Percussion Instruments

Percussion instruments of the Aztecs were similar to those of earlier societies in Mesoamerica. Confirming the circular nature, or variations on a single pattern of successive cultures, the Aztecs acquired many musical

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[14]Stevenson, Robert, Music in Aztec & Inca Territory (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 22-28.

[15]Among those who cited evidence of stringed instruments in pre-Columbian cultures were Daniel G. Brinton, "Native American Stringed Musical Instruments," American Antiquarian 19 (Jan. 1897): 19-20; and Marshall H. Saville, "The Musical Bow in Ancient Mexico," American Anthropologist 11 (Sept. 1898): 280-284; quoted in Stevenson, Music in Aztec & Inca Territory, 22-28.

instruments from peoples they conquered. Castañeda and Mendoza[16] determined that the same instruments appeared in a number of societies, differing only in the names used among the different languages. The Aztec *teponaztli,* for example, is the same instrument as the Maya *tunkul*, the Tarascan *cuiringua*, the Otomí *nobiuy*, and the Zapotec *nicáche*.

Percussion instruments were vital components in pre-Columbian culture. The *huehuetl* and *teponaztli* were the epitome of Aztec instruments. They were considered more than musical instruments; they were regarded as gods themselves. The Aztecs also believed the *huehuetl* and *teponaztli* possessed magical powers and were worthy of worship. The two instruments always were paired together, the father-mother duality, as the creators of all other beings. Mendieta,[17] who arrived in Mexico in 1554 as a missionary, reported the following Aztec legend:

> Teponaztli and Huehuetl dwelt at the court of the Sun. A priestly messenger from earth invaded the heavenly precincts and poured forth in song the story of man's

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[16]Daniel Castañeda and Vicente T. Mendoza, "Los Teponaztlis," "Los Percutores Precortesianos," and "Los Huehuetls," *Anales del Museo Nacional de Arqueología Historia y Etnografía*, 4ª época, VIII (1933), quoted in Stevenson, Music in Aztec & Inca Territory, 18.

[17]Gerónimo de Mendieta, *Historia Eclesiástica Indiana* (México: Antigua Librería, 1870), quoted in Stevenson, Music in Aztec & Inca Territory, 111.

> grief. The Sun, however, forbade his servitors to listen to the early messenger. Teponaztli and Huehuetl disobeyed the Sun, and for their disobedience were expelled from the heavens. They fell to earth and assumed the form of musical instruments. Ever since their expulsion from the skies they have assuaged man's grief with the sound of their music.

Drummers performing in the Aztec rituals enjoyed considerable social prestige. They were associated with the hereditary nobility, *pilli*, and professional warriors, *tecuhtli*, the highest class of Aztec society. As participants in religious-military ceremonies, drummers were exempt from taxes. Being in a position of prominence, however, had its price. Any drummer who missed a beat during the ceremonies was promptly withdrawn from the ensemble and executed.[18]

Teponaztli

Prominent among the instruments of Pre-columbian culture was the *teponaztli*, also known as slit drum, log drum, or slit-gong. The *teponaztli* was constructed from a hollowed-out log of hardwood, with a slit carved horizontally in the wood in the shape of the letter "H". The two keys or tongues were chiselled on the underside in

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[18]Robert Stevenson, "Mexico City," New Grove, 12:241.

different thicknesses, producing two distinct tones.[19] Studies of *teponaztlis* from archaeological digs indicate a natural resonance of the sound chamber produces a fundamental pitch with the tongues usually tuned to intervals of a minor third or a perfect fifth in that overtone series.[20] The *teponaztli* was played by striking the tongues with two uncovered sticks or sticks tipped with rubber or covered in animal hide.[21] The *teponaztlis* ranged in size from those small enough to be hung on a cord around the neck, while the large *teponaztlis* were up to five feet long. The Aztecs frequently placed the *teponaztlis* on a braided straw mat. If the player stood, the instrument was braced on a tripod support, with or without a mat, which had the added advantage of increasing the resonance of the instrument.[22] The player also could sit on a low stool or

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[19]James Blades, Percussion Instruments and Their History (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1975), 47.

[20]Daniel Castañeda and Vicente Mendoza, *Anales del Museo Nacional de Arqueología Historia y Etnografía* 8 (Mexico: Talleres Graficos del Museo Nacional de Arqueología, Historia y Etnografía, 1933), s.v. "*Los Teponaztlis en las Civilizaciones Precortesianos*," quoted in Norman Weinberg, "Aztec Percussion Instruments: Their Description and Use Before Cortés," Percussive Notes 19 (March 1982): 78.

[21]Arturo Chamorro, Los instrumentos de percusión en México (El Colegio de Michoacán, México: 1984), 25.

[22]Stevenson, Music in Aztec & Inca Territory, 71.

squat on the ground. Existing *teponaztlis* are often carved in the shapes of men or animals and are items of beautiful woodworking.

The *teponaztli* was a versatile instrument. It was indispensable in religious rituals and funeral ceremonies for nobility as well as accompaniment to entertainment at banquets given by "millionaire merchants." According to Sahagún:[23]

> A merchant did not reach the apex of his career until he could invite his peers to a banquet at which the choice viands were cooked slave. Not any slave would do, but only the ones who danced best to the sound of the *teponaztli*.

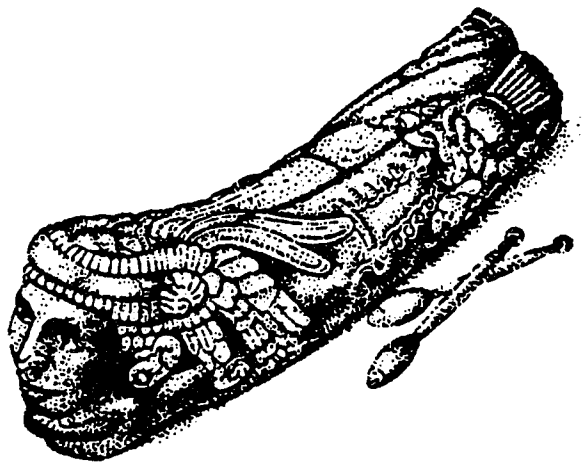

Figure 1. *Teponaztli.*
(Used by permission, Columbia Records)

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[23]Sahagún, Florentine Codex: General History of the Things of New Spain, Book 9, The Merchants, 67, quoted in Stevenson, Music in Aztec & Inca Territory, 67.

Captive warriors were executed while stretched over the *teponaztli*. Sacrificial blood nourished the *teponaztli* and represented the vigor of the gods.

Huehuetl

The only recorded membranophone of the Aztecs was the *huehuetl*, meaning old or venerated. Like the *teponaztli*, the Aztecs believed the *huehuetl* possessed magical power. It was so important to musical activities that the term *huehuetitlan* came to identify both the musical event and the sacred place where the instruments were stored.[24] The one-headed upright drum was hollowed from a single log including three or five pedestal legs at its base. These legs not only supported the drum but also increased its resonance.

Castellanos[25] suggests that the pitch of the head, made of deerskin or jaguar hide, could be altered to suit the tune being performed. Hot coals placed under the drum raised the pitch while, alternately, applying moisture to the head lowered the pitch. The *huehuetl* was played with the hands and fingers. The player also could change the

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[24]Norman Weinberg, "Aztec Percussion Instruments: Their Description and Use Before Cortes," Percussive Notes 19 (March 1982): 82.

[25]Pablo Castellanos, *Horizontes de la Música Pre-cortesiana* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1970), 54, quoted in Weinberg, Percussive Notes 19 (March 1982): 83.

pitch of the drum by depressing the head with one hand. Various sizes of *huehuetls* are known, and the largest surviving instruments stand more than three feet high.

Figure 2. *Huehuetl*.
(Used by permission, Columbia Records)

Huehuetls often were meticulously carved with figures associated with warfare. In defense of negative observations about the primitive characteristics of the Mesoamerican societies, Mendoza[26] asserted that "drums so finely wrought and so elaborately decorated can never have been drudges to a merely 'simplistic music.'"

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[26]Vicente Mendoza, Esplendor del México Antiguo (México: *Centro de Investigaciones Antropológicas*, 1959), I, 323, quoted in Stevenson, Music in Aztec & Inca Territory, 42.

Small Accessory Percussion Instruments

Other percussion instruments indigenous to Mesoamerica were used by the Aztecs. One was the rasping stick, or *omichicahuaztli*, more commonly known by the Portuguese term of *guiro*. Made by cutting grooves in human or deer leg bone, the rasping stick was scraped with a shell or bone pick.

In performance, the *guiro* was often placed over a conch shell or skull resonator[27] producing a gritty sound that the Aztecs considered appropriate for funeral ceremonies. One codex[28] provides evidence that the *omichicahuaztli* was used as accompaniment to singing for funeral rites.

Rattles were another category of native percussion instruments. Like the *huehuetl*, the *ayacachtli* was borrowed from older indigenous cultures. Rattles now are more commonly know as *maracas,* the name used by the Brazilian Indians in the sixteenth century.[29] Made of gourds or baked clay with an attached handle, rattles were filled with

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[27]Stevenson, Music in Aztec & Inca Territory, 59.

[28]*Codex Vindobonensi*, one of Cortés' earliest gifts to Charles V in 1519, contained fifty-two deerskin leaves. One leaf illustrated the god *Quetzalcóatl* holding the rasping stick during a funeral ceremony. Quoted in Stevenson, Music in Aztec & Inca Territory, 59.

[29]Stevenson, Music in Aztec & Inca Territory, 35.

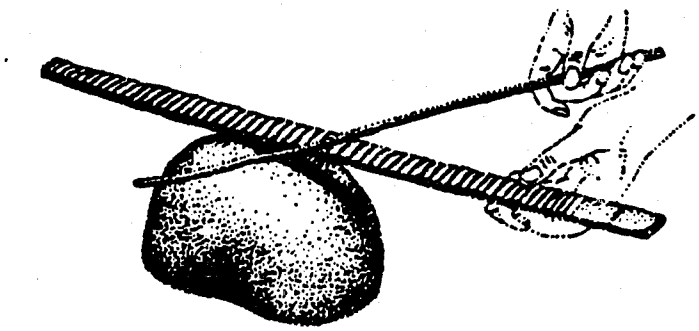

Figure 3. Rasping Stick or *Guiro*.
(Used by permission, Columbia Records)

seeds or pebbles. Rattles were one of the few instruments permitted in both religious and secular musical ensembles and always accompanied dance.[30]

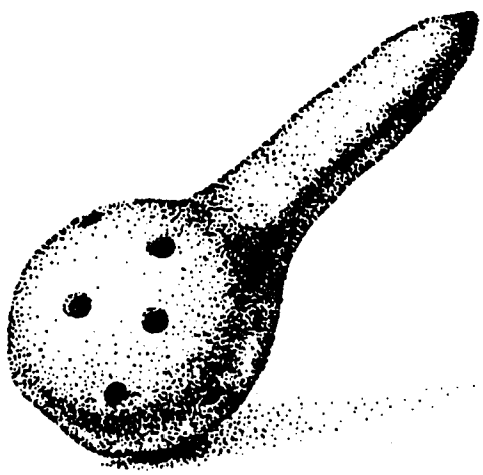

Figure 4. Rattle.
(Used by permission, Columbia Records)

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[30]Ibid., 34.

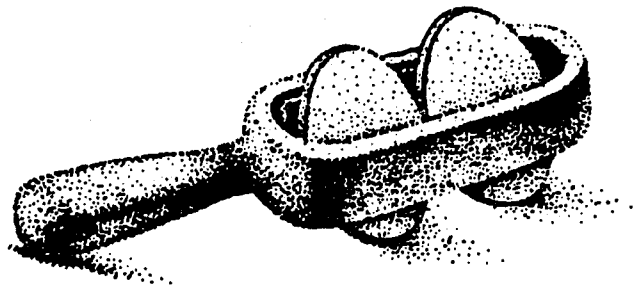

Figure 5. Bells or Jingles.
(Used by permission, Columbia Records)

Bells or jingles of various kinds have been identified as members of the Aztec family of percussion instruments. Several bells have been described as follows:

1. Stevenson[31] indicates that *coyolli,* or jingles, with a hard pellet inside were made of various materials such as clay, nutshells, dried fruit, and occasionally gold and copper. The jingles were strung together and worn as necklaces, bracelets, and anklets on the dancers.

2. Historians[32] have identified *tetzilácatl* as bells, probably beaten, made of copper or gold used in Aztec dance ceremonies, although nothing was known of their form.[33]

3. An archaeological find in Mexico City in 1900,

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[31]Ibid., 40.

[32]Stevenson, in Music in Aztec & Inca Territory, cites several documents containing evidence of copper bells, among them as follows: Eduard Seler, "*Altemexicanischen Knochenrasseln,*" Globus 74 (6 August 1898); and Bernardino de Sahagún, Florentine Codex: General History of the Things of New Spain, Book 8.

[33]Stevenson, Music in Aztec & Inca Territory, 79.

uncovered thirty, tortoise-shaped clapperless bells made of copper.[34]

4. *Cascabeles,* Spanish for hawksbells or sleigh bells, are shaken idiophones with a beating element inside of the same material. Most of these bells were made of clay, although some were copper or gold.

Wind Instruments

Aztec music also included wind instruments, among them flutes, ocarinas, and conch or seasnail shells. Wind instruments were so important in Aztec culture that one author, Martí,[35] devotes sixty-four pages to ancient flutes, while allotting only fourteen pages to percussion instruments.

Piccolo and Flute

Researchers have catalogued many ancient flutes from Mesoamerica. The Aztecs used vertical, end-blown flutes only. Although usually made of clay or bone, *tlapitzalli,* Seler[36] suggested that some were of reed or cane,

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[34] Ibid., 73, n. 145.

[35]Samuel Martí, *Instrumentos musicales precortesianos* (México: Instituto Nacional de Antropología, 1955).

[36]Eduard Seler, *Gesammelte Abhandlungen* II (Berlin: A. Asher, Behrend, 1904, 1908), 677, quoted in Stevenson, Music in Aztec & Inca Territory, 40.

çoçoloctli, and were noted for a buzzing[37] sound caused when air was blown over the spider egg sack covering a hole near the neck of the flute. Archaeological artifacts indicate that the Aztecs cut only four finger holes in their flutes, perhaps symbolic of the significance of the number four in the Náhuatl universe, i.e., the four seasons, the four winds, the four points of the universe, or the four eras of their history.

The end-blown flutes of the Aztecs made of clay characteristically ended in bells that flared "so abruptly and widely as to look like a flower opening at the end of a stalk."[38] A fipple, or notched, mouthpiece extended as much as a third of the length of the instrument. The techniques[39] of overblowing[40] and half-stopping the flute by

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[37]The mirliton or kazoo device is a contemporary feature of the marimbas of Mexico and Guatemala. A membrane from a plant called *cheché*, or a pig intestine is placed over a small hole near the bottom of a resonator, vibrating when the key is struck. This buzzing or sympathetic vibration is considered essential to the timbre of the marimba. Discussed in Vida Chenoweth, The Marimbas of Guatemala (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 1974), 16.

[38]Stevenson, Music in Aztec & Inca Territory, 81.

[39]Ibid., 82.

[40]By forcing more air into the instrument, a wind player produces higher modes of vibration in the air column, thereby sounding overtones rather than the fundamental pitch.

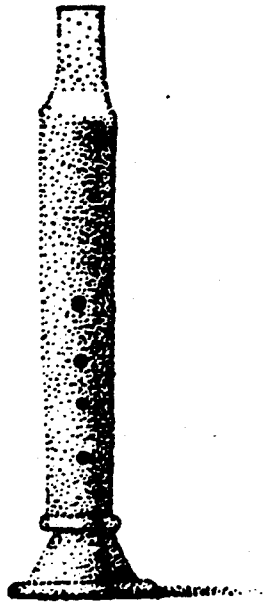

Figure 6. Flute.
(Used by permission, Columbia Records)

partially closing the finger holes, considerably extended the range of possible pitches beyond the usual pentatonic pitch series.

Ocarina

Only one ocarina, *huilacapitzli*, of six examples in the *Museo Nacional de Antropología* has been identified as Aztec. This clay artifact, shaped like a human head, with eyes closed, mouth wide open, has five pitches.[41] Larger ocarinas, capable of six, seven, or eight fixed pitches, have been found in Nicaragua and Costa Rica. The ocarina

[41]Ibid., 54.

was a popular instrument in the Maya and other cultures of the Gulf coast, but its use has not been satisfactorily documented in the Valley of Mexico.[42]

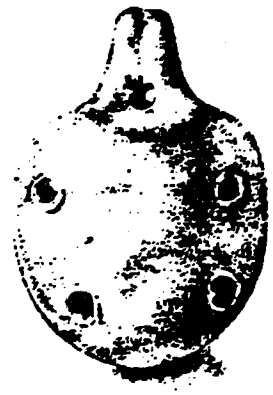

Figure 7. Ocarina.
(Used by permission, Columbia Records)

Conch-shell Trumpet

The frequent use of conch or sea snail shells was recorded in the early Spanish chronicles of Aztec culture. In his *Historia de las Cosas de Nueva España*, published in 1529, Bernardino de Sahagún applied two Náhuatl terms, *atecocoli* and *tecciztli*, to the shell trumpet. In 1571, Alonso de Molina[43] cited a third word, *quiquiztli*, as a type of conch-shell instrument.

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[42]Ibid., 55.

[43]Alonso de Molina, *Vocabvlario en lengva castellana y mexicana* (*México: Antonio de Espinosa*, 1571).

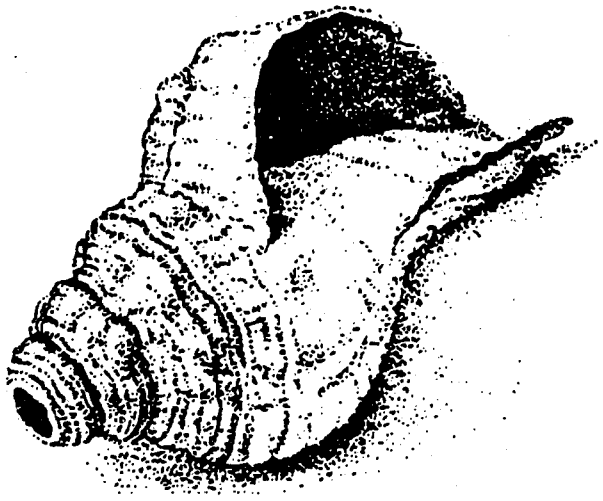

Figure 8. Conch Shell Trumpet.
(Used by permission, Columbia Records)

Although possible differences in the characteristics of the instruments or of their functions are not known, their widespread use is indicative of their regard. Stevenson[44] reports the role of conch-shell trumpets during sacrificial executions, as a call to prayer, as means of military signaling, and as accompaniment to the dance of young Aztec warriors. Because so many conch-shell trumpets were needed, occasionally they were fabricated in clay to fill the demand. A clay mouthpiece[45] in a shell trumpet also would have increased the range of the instrument.

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[44]Stevenson, Music in Aztec & Inca Territory, 60.

[45]Ibid., 32.

Drum Rhythms in Náhuatl Poetry

A manuscript in the Mexican National Library, *Cantares en idioma mexicano*, 1551-1563, is a sixteenth-century collection of Náhuatl poetry chanted or sung in association with music in Aztec public ritual, as recorded by native informants. Garibay[46] considered *Cantares en idioma mexicano* "one of the most valuable and authentic sources" of pre-Columbian life and thought. The interpretation of the collected edition,[47] first printed at the end of the nineteenth century, has been a topic of considerable conjecture since that time. The songs themselves provide useful insights into the Aztec religion and the symbolism associated with it.

As the only sixteenth-century chronicle containing clues about drum rhythms in Aztec music,[48] the *Cantares* are valuable in the study of percussion. The *teponaztli* and the

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[46]Angel Garibay Kintana, *Historia de la Literatura Náhuatl*, 2 vols. (México: Editorial Porrúa, 1953-1954), I: 52, quoted in Stevenson, Music in Aztec & Inca Territory, 46.

[47]Antonio Peñafiel, ed., *Cantares en idioma mexicano* (México: Secretaría de Fomento, 1899; *reproducción facsimilaria*, same publisher, 1904 [1906]).

[48]John Bierhorst, *Cantares en idioma mexicano* (Songs of the Aztecs), trans. from Náhuatl with an introduction and commentary by Bierhorst (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 72.

huehuetl always were used in accompaniment to singing, as unaccompanied singing did not exist.[49] Many of the *Cantares* are headed with four syllables of two vowels and two consonants, and the four resulting syllables are as follows: *ti, to, co, qui*, pronounced tee, toe, ko, kee. This notation has been interpreted as representing mnemonic notation for two-tone drumming patterns, a kind of solfege or syllabic guide, for both pitch and rhythm.

This simple notation has a number of limitations in regard to performance of pitch, rhythmic patterns, dynamics, duration, and accents. In the mid-twentieth century various interpretations[50] of the syllables were posited with differing views and conclusions. Several of the following factors have been addressed. First, two pitches are designated by assigning the vowel sound "i" to the upper tone, while the vowel sound "o" is the lower tone. Thus, a cadence, such as *toto tiquiti tiquiti*, produce a series of higher and lower pitches possible on both the *teponaztli* and the *huehuetl*. Second, rhythmic patterns are created by the

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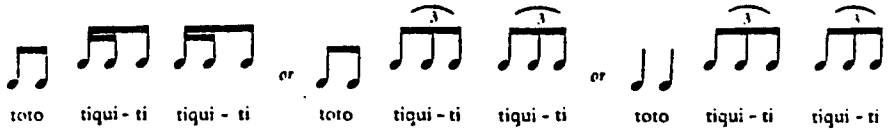
[49]Garibay, *Historia de la Literatura Náhuatl*, II: 403, quoted in Stevenson, Music in Aztec & Inca Territory, 53.

[50]Mendoza, *Panorama de la música tradiciónal de México*; Karl A. Nowatny, "*Die Notation des Tono in de Aztekischen Cantares*," *Baessler-Archiv*, Neue Folge 29 (Dec. 1956); Leonhard Schultz Jena, *Alt-Aztekishe Gesänge* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1957).

groupings of syllables as they appear in the headings of the songs. Problems occur in the grouping of syllables into precise rhythmic patterns, especially in the use or prohibition of triplets. And third, evidence of dynamic expression, i.e., crescendo and diminuendo, can be found in the *Cantares*. Although Stevenson[51] questioned the validity of Martí's[52] claim of *crescendos* and *diminuendos*, he conceded the possibility of the Aztecs achieving more volume by adding more *huehuetls*, in terraced-dynamics fashion. Chávez,[53] however, maintained that sixteenth-century chronicles did record such expression markings.



Example 1: Possible Transcriptions of
Song 46, Canto D, *Cantares en idioma mexicano*.

As Bierhorst suggests: "It must be granted that no entirely satisfactory analysis [of the two-tone drumming

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[51]Stevenson, Music in Aztec & Inca Territory, 52-53.

[52]Samuel Martí, *Canto, danza y música precortesianos* (*México: Fondo de Cultura Económica*, 1961), 145.

[53]Carlos Chávez, "*Xochipilli*, An Imagined Aztec Music," booklet in Mexico, Its Cultural Life and Art, 52, Columbia Records, Legacy LL 1015, 1964.

notation] is likely to be invented."[54] Studies have documented that the *huehuetl* and *teponaztli* always were used in accompaniment to singing in Aztec performance practice. Although reconstruction of drumming patterns may not be possible, the *Cantares* provide valuable pieces to the puzzle of the sound of Aztec music.

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[54]Bierhorst, *Cantares en idioma mexicano*, 72.

CHAPTER III

SPANISH INFLUENCE IN THE MUSIC OF MEXICO AFTER 1521

Christopher Columbus sailed westward from Spain and arrived in San Salvador Island, Bahamas, in the New World in 1492. Financed by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain, Columbus was seeking a new sea route to the Orient. He believed he was in the Orient throughout his subsequent explorations of Central America. By 1493, Columbus, on his return trip from Spain, led seventeen shiploads of colonists to New Spain. The Conquest of the New World was an important factor in Spanish expansion in the name of the king and the Church. The Conquest also brought significant personal gain, prestige, and power to the conquerors.

Hernán Cortés was one such soldier who emigrated to the West Indies in 1504. In 1519, he led an expedition to Mexico with an army of five hundred men with the purpose of subduing the native peoples, converting them to Christianity, and imposing the European feudal system.

Chronicles of events following the arrival of Cortés in 1519 describe the early missionaries who came soon after the *conquistadores*. Although almost all of the priests were

Spanish, priests also came from the south of France, Flanders, and northern Europe. The missionaries purpose of converting indigenous people to Christianity created a need for chapels and schools. In less than fifty years, the face of the country changed with the construction of monasteries, churches, and new urban communities. This immense undertaking by the Spanish could not have occurred without the cooperation of the native population. Participation by the Indians was more than good will on their part for two reasons. First, the exertion of constructing open chapels and convents was less than that demanded under harsh Aztec rule, and second, to the Indians, there was no dividing line between ritual functions and labor. To them, the task of building sanctuaries was a duty to their new religion.[1]

The Spanish conquerors concentrated more on imposing new religious beliefs and musical practices upon the indigenous peoples than in suppressing them.[2] Gradually forms of European music, derived for the most part from the liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church supplanted native songs

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[1]Paz, "Will for Form," Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries, 22.

[2]Carlos Chávez, "A Brief Perspective," booklet in Mexico: Its Cultural Life in Music and Art, 46.

and dances. Given the fact that the Spanish attempted to impose their language, religious beliefs, and social administration on Indian life, "it is really a miracle that anything at all of the pre-Columbian music has survived."[3] Table 2 lists important dates in Mexican History. The impact of the Spanish on the music of Mexico will be explained in the following two sections.

Music in the Period 1521-1800

The lives of the indigenous peoples changed dramatically beginning in the sixteenth century. The conquest of *Tenochtitlan*, present-day Mexico City, by Cortés and his *conquistadores* in 1521 was spiritual as well as military. For several years *Moctezuma*, the war chief of the Aztecs, had been warned by his soothsayers of impending doom for the Aztec people. He also had heard rumors of four-legged monsters with human bodies rising from their backs, i.e., Spanish soldiers on horseback. These monsters were considered supernatural beings. Notwithstanding the superior military skills and weapons of the Spanish, the real defeat of the Aztecs was the destruction of their gods

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[3]Mayer-Serra, "*El estado presente de la música en México*," 26.

TABLE 2

IMPORTANT DATES IN MEXICAN HISTORY

1519	Hernán Cortés landed at Veracruz with five hundred men and sixteen horses. On 8 November, he reached Tenochtitlán (later Mexico City), conquered the Aztecs, annihilated their city and destroyed their culture.
1520	On June 30, Moctezuma, Emperor of the Aztecs, died.
1521	Mexico began three centuries under Spain.
1810-1821	The War of Independence with Spain.
1824	Republic of Mexico established.
1846	War with United States. In 1848, Mexico ceded 40 percent of its territory to the United States, receiving an indemnity of $15 million.
1876-1910	Dictator Porfirio Díaz ruled the republic. Sold land, oil fields, mines to foreign investors.
1911	Mexican Revolution.
1917	Establishment of Federal Republic: twenty-nine states, two territories, and the federal district, a progressive, humanitarian democracy, stressing education and land reform.

who were helpless before the invaders. "The defeat of their gods left the Indians in a spiritual orphanhood that we moderns can scarcely imagine."[4]

Sacred Music

By 1523, the first Franciscan missionaries arrived in Mexico to begin the task of converting and educating the native peoples in the ways of Spanish cultural conventions. Among them was Pedro de Gante [Peter of Ghent] (ca.1480-1572), a Flemish lay brother distantly related to Emperor Charles V.

Gante arrived in Mexico in August 1523. He prepared himself by spending the first three years by mastering the Aztec language, Náhuatl,[5] before establishing the first school for the sons of influential Aztec families. Gante's curriculum included music as well as reading and writing. His teaching methods were so extraordinarily effective[6] that

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[4]Paz, "Will for Form," Mexico: Splendors of Thirty Centuries, 22.

[5]Náhuatl lacks the consonants *b, d, f, g, r,* and *s.* Gante, who stuttered badly in Spanish, spoke Náhuatl fluently, as noted by Stevenson, Music in Aztec & Inca Territory, 92.

[6]Gante, understanding the difficulty in attracting the local natives to religious services so different from their own, composed an elaborate ceremony celebrating Christmas in a style similar to the Aztec tradition. After training his students, who fashioned new ceremonial costumes, Gante

they were widely adopted by other missionaries. Several of the twelve missionaries who arrived a year later, in 1524, wrote to the Emperor about the merit of teaching music to the young Aztec men as an effective method of conversion. The Indian men were quick to learn how to read, write, and sing European musical notation. At first they were taught plainchant, followed by polyphony in mass settings and religious *villancicos* in the finest Spanish tradition.[7]

The missionaries taught instrument making and performance as well as singing. The Indians accepted instruction readily for several reasons:

1. Great emphasis had been placed on instruments in the Aztec musical tradition.[8]
2. Indians in the missionary music program enjoyed prestige among their contemporaries.[9]
3. Indians often were exempt from taxation.
4. Widespread destruction of pre-Conquest instruments and subsequent penalties exacted for playing native music discouraged indigenous music.[10]

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invited the local populace to attend. The venture was enormously successful. Gante described the event in a letter to Philip II, dated 23 June 1557, quoted by Stevenson, Music in Aztec & Inca Territory, 93.

[7]Gerard Béhague, "Mexico," New Grove, 12:226.

[8]Gerard Béhague, "Latin America," New Grove, 10:520.

[9]Stevenson, Music in Aztec & Inca Territory, 167.

[10]Ibid., 520.

The Mexican Indians' soon became skilled imitators in fashioning instruments like those originally brought by the Spanish *conquistadores*. In addition to wind instruments, the natives made drums, guitars, and *vihuelas de arco,* a bowed viol, under supervision.[11]

> The first instruments of music manufactured here were flutes, then oboes, and afterwards viols and bassoons and cornetts. After a while there was no single instrument used in churches which Indians in the larger towns had not learned to make and play. It became unnecessary to import any of these from Spain. One thing can be asserted without fear of contradiction; in all Christendom there is nowhere a greater abundance of flutes, sackbuts, trumpets, and drums, than here in New Spain."[12]

Secular Music

When Spanish secular instrumentalists arrived in Mexico before 1530, they came in such numbers that housing became a problem, and they were distributed to surrounding villages. As a result most musical instruction for the Indians was not by friars but by lay teachers.[13] These teachers, anxious to accumulate riches in the New World,

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[11]Gilbert Chase, The Music of Spain (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1941), 258.

[12]Juan de Torquemada, *Tercera parte de los veinte i vn libros rituales i Monarchia Indiana* (Madrid: N. Rodrigues Franco, 1723), cited in Stevenson, Music in Aztec & Inca Territory, 173.

[13]Stevenson, Music in Aztec & Inca Territory, 221.

introduced traditional Spanish ballad forms such as the *romance*, the *corrido*, and the *canción*. In this way the process of acculturation spread to rural areas.

Historians have reported the wide variety of European percussion instruments were introduced into Mesoamerica in the sixteenth century. Chamorro[14] explained the process as follows:

> Regarding the percussion instruments we remember especially the introduction of European idiophones such as castanets, woodblock, rattles, cymbals, bells with clappers, in addition to idiophones of the African race as is the case with the marimbas. Among the membranophone instruments we place in general the drums, a generic name for all types of drums coming from the European world, such as the two-headed drum with snares, the bass drum, and kettledrums probably developed from the ancient Arab world. Perhaps among the most important contributions in the manufacture and performance of percussion was, on one hand, the introduction of new performance techniques, especially for drums. . . . On the other hand, new systems of mechanical tensioning for tuning the heads that began to develop in the colonies, from a simple system of rope tensioning to a more complicated system of metal tension rods.

New rhythms also were introduced into the New World from Spain. An important rhythmic concept contributing to the development of a greater variety of rhythms was

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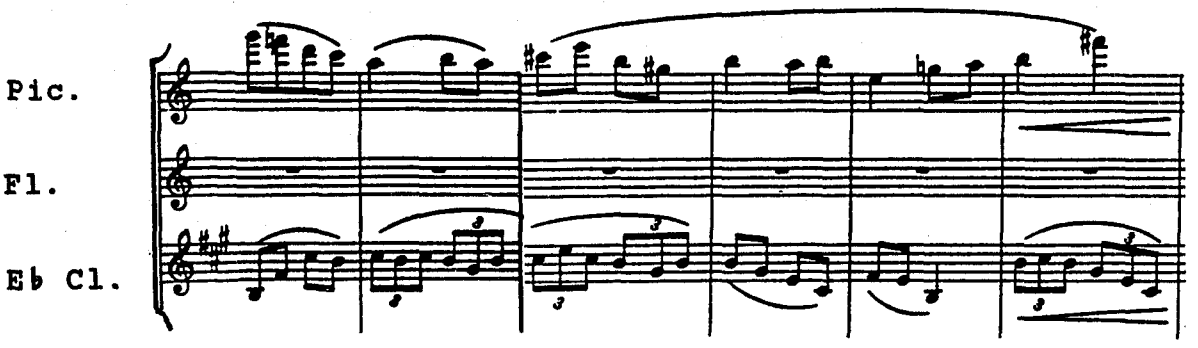
[14]Chamorro, *Los instrumentos de percusión en México*, 47.

sesquiáltera,[15] six that alternate, the hemiola pattern of 3:2 proportion. Hemiola is described as follows:

> The simultaneous use of different metric subdivisions of the basic pulse, the hemiola feature of *mestizo* rather than Indian music in Mexico, appears both polyphonically and in succession.[16]

Chávez used hemiola in *Xochipilli, An Imagined Aztec Music*, as illustrated in Example 2.



Example 2: *Xochipilli*, mm.103-108.
(Used by permission, CPP/Belwin, Inc.)

The arrival of black Africans also had an impact on the music of colonial Mexico. One of the first black Africans to arrive in Mexico was one of Cortés gunners. Later they were brought in great numbers as substitute labor for the less vigorous Indians. By 1553 there were more than 18,500

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[15]Ibid., 109.

[16]Gerard Béhague, Music in Latin America: An Introduction (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1979), 138.

blacks compared to 15,000 Spaniards in Mexico.[17] The blacks brought their native musical traditions including drums, idiophones, including the marimba, and dance. By 1598, drums played by the blacks were better known than the Aztec *huehuetl* prompting one Indian historian[18] to describe the Aztec drum as "a drum of the Negroes who nowadays dance in the plaza." African and Aztec percussion instruments were combined in 1624, in the performance of a *payá,* a pre-Conquest dance, directed by a black slave that included both *teponaztli* and African *bambalos* or tom toms. In the cities black men taught music and presented a type of musical comedy, so called secular "oratorios." These entertainments were advertised by groups of blacks playing trumpet and drum visiting local wine shops.[19] The music of Mexico was a blending of "many new factors--historical, geographic and ethnic circumstances--which have worked directly on the artistic phenomenon."[20]

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[17]Béhague, "Latin America," New Grove, 10:522.

[18]Hernando Alvarado Tezozomoc, *Crónica Mexicana* (México: Editorial Leyenda, 1944), 87, quoted in Stevenson, Music in Aztec & Inca Territory, 231.

[19]Stevenson, Music in Aztec & Inca Territory, 234.

[20]Chávez, "A Brief Perspective," booklet from Mexico: Its Cultural Life in Music and Art, 46.

Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Music

By the nineteenth century, European musical materials and practices dominated art music of Mexico. After the War of Independence from Spain (1810-1821), opera, especially Italian opera, became the passion of the elite. Performances of European romantic piano music were also extremely popular pastimes for the ruling classes. Salon-music repertoire[21] from Western Europe in the late nineteenth century included medleys and improvisations of well-known opera and operetta melodies, waltzes, contredanzas, and military marches. Most twentieth-century Mexican composers, such as Carlos Chávez, rejected the music of this period as being a barren imitation of Europe.[22]

Mexican Revolution and Nationalism

The Mexican Revolution of 1910-1920 was the battle for independence against the dictatorship of President Porfirio Díaz, who ruled from 1876-1910. A highly stratified society existed under the Díaz regime, placing Spanish descendants as superior to Mexican Indians. Before the Mexican Revolution beginning in 1910, "Indians continued to be set

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[21]Claes af Geijerstam, Popular Music in Mexico (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1976), 82.

[22]Béhague, Music in Latin America, 101.

apart economically as well as culturally,"[23] living and working in the poorest conditions. The participation of the Indians in the Revolution influenced a shift in attitude toward them as a positive force in the national community. After 1917, government programs were designed to integrate Indian groups into the national life of Mexico.[24] The support of Indian culture also generated a new concern for their musical heritage. Music was a key ingredient in providing a sense of national identity to a large audience, especially to those denied access to the written word by illiteracy.[25]

For many years historians had criticized Aztec music as the product of brutal and savage people. As late as 1917, Alba Herrera y Ogazón,[26] faculty member of the National Conservatory of Music, labelled Aztec music as "lugubrious, incoherent, and macabre as the passions that inspired it." Mexican musical opinion of Aztec music changed dramatically

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[23]Frederick C. Turner, The Dynamic of Mexican Nationalism (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1968), 74.

[24]Ibid., 174.

[25]Ibid., 279.

[26]Alba Herrera y Ogazón, *El Arte Musical en México* (México: Dirección de las Bellas Artes, 1917), 10, quoted in Stevenson, Music in Aztec & Inca Territory, 15.

in the 1920s, due primarily to Chávez, who was a major spokesman for the so called Aztec Renaissance, the movement that presented Indian music as the central to Mexican music.[27] Musical characteristics that had been viewed as faults, such as minor modes, polyrhythms, and faulty intonation, were now considered to be virtues.[28] Musical nationalism in Europe, generally discontinued after 1930, persisted in Latin America until the 1950s.[29]

Mexican Composers

A national musical style appeared in Mexico at the end of the nineteenth century. Composers of opera and performers of salon-style piano music began to incorporate folk and popular genres into stylized arrangements of these materials. Chávez and other twentieth-century composers rejected these compositions as "a barren imitation of Europe"[30] by clothing popular Mexican music in European forms to make them acceptable to concert audiences.

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[27]Ibid., 132.

[28]Stevenson, Music in Aztec & Inca Territory, 17.

[29]Béhague, Music in Latin America, 124.

[30]Ibid., 101.

Manuel Ponce (1882-1948)

Manuel Ponce was the first Mexican composer to develop a identifiable nationalistic style, based on *mestizo* folk melodies, hemiola rhythms, dissonant harmonic language, and orchestration imitating the village band. Thoroughly trained in the techniques of European post-romanticism, he studied in Bologna, Berlin, and later with Paul Dukas in France, and his place in music history might have been only as an outstanding apprentice to Dukas. Ponce, however, initiated the musical nationalism movement by merging the characteristics of Mexican *mestizo* folk material into the environment of art music at a time when pride in native musical tradition was shaping national identity. His works, such as *Chapultepec* (1929, revised 1934) and *Ferial* (1940) were a blend of Mexican musical characteristics and nineteenth-century popular romantic style. Ponce is remembered for his still-popular songs "related to the salon-music tradition,"[31] such as "*Estrellita*"[32] (1912) and "*Cielito lindo*" (1914). Chávez, however, dismissed Ponce's

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[31]Ibid., 128.

[32]Because of a technical oversight in the copyright contract, "*Estrellita*" has been reprinted without benefit of royalties to the composer or his estate, as noted by Nicolas Slonimsky, Music of Latin America (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1945), 245.

work as merely imitative of European styles. "He never was a Mexican nationalist in music."[33]

Silvestre Revueltas (1899-1940)

Silvestre Revueltas, both a contemporary and a composition student of Chávez at the National Conservatory of Music, was initially a concert violinist and conductor. He began composing at the age of twenty-nine at Chávez' suggestion. Mayer-Serra,[34] respected Mexican musicologist, considered the works of Revueltas as an important link between Ponce's romantic folklorism and Chávez' universalism.[35] He was a gifted composer of works such as *Sensenmayá* (1938) and "*La Noche de las Mayas*" (1939).

Carlos Chávez (1899-1978)

Carlos Chávez has been described as the "chief animator"[36] of the music of Mexico in this century. Because of his skills as a composer, administrator, conductor,

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[33]Robert L. Parker, Carlos Chávez: Mexico's Modern-Day Orpheus (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1983), 126.

[34]Mayer-Serra, "*El estado presente de la música en México*," 37

[35]Universalism is defined as the acceptance, but not imitation, of folk musical materials in combination with contemporary international techniques.

[36]Parker, Carlos Chávez, 121.

teacher, lecturer, and writer, Chávez generated world-wide attention to an often overlooked country. Chávez has been described as the "most accomplished practitioner of the nationalist movement"[37] in Mexico. Although one-third of Chávez' more than two hundred compositions have been identified as nationalistic, Béhague[38] states that "it is inaccurate to refer to a 'nationalistic period' in his career." The majority of his nationalistic compositions, however, were written between 1921 and 1940, as indicated in Table 3. His understanding of Mexican musical characteristics, both Indianist and folk-music, was so closely connected to his more abstract compositional style that his music has been characterized as "profoundly non-European."[39]

Born on 13 June 1899, in Potpola, a northwest suburb of Mexico City, Chávez began composing short piano pieces in the salon-music style at the age of nine, about the time he began piano lessons with his brother. From 1910 to 1913 he was a piano pupil of Manuel Ponce. Although he studied composition and theory at the National Conservatory of Music

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[37]Béhague, Music in Latin America, 130.

[38]Ibid.

[39]Ibid., 131.

TABLE 3

SELECTED WORKS BY CARLOS CHÁVEZ
WITH MEXICAN NATIONALISTIC MUSICAL ELEMENTS

COMPOSITION	**DATE**	**GENRE**	**ELEMENTS**
Caballos de vapor [Horsepower]	1926	Ballet	Mestizo
Cantos de Mexico	1933	Orchestra	Mestizo
Chapultepec, Three Famous Mexican Pieces	1935	Orch. arrangement	Mestizo
Los cuatro soles [The Four Epochs]	1925	Ballet	Aztec
El fuego nuevo [The New Fire]	1921	Ballet	Aztec
Llamadas [Calls]	1934	Chorus & orch.	Mestizo
Paisajes Mexicanos [Mexican Landscapes]	1973	Orchestra Rework of *Llamadas*	
Mañanas Mexicanas [Mexican Mornings]	1974	Band, first part of *Llamadas*	
Tintzuntzan	1974	Band, second part of *Llamadas*	
Nonantsin	1972	A cappella chorus	Indian
Pirámide [Pyramid]	1968	Ballet	Aztec
Sinfonía índia	1935	Symphony	Indian
El sol, Corrido Mexicano [The Sun, Mexican Ballad]	1934	Chorus & orch.	Mestizo
Xochipilli, An Imagined Aztec Music	1940	Orchestral	Aztec

in Mexico City, Chávez preferred to analyze the great masters on his own.[40] He summarized the quality of instruction available during his students days in a 1977 interview as follows: "There were only two teachers of composition . . . their music was a weak reflection of French and Italian nineteenth-century music."[41]

As a boy, Chávez heard indigenous Indian music on numerous trips to nearby Tlaxcala with his family, providing a foundation for his intense regard for native music in his compositions. In 1921, the new President of Mexico, Álvaro Obregón, provided funds to the secretary of Public Education in support of Mexican culture. From these funds Chávez received his first commission, the composition of a ballet based on themes from ancient Aztec culture. The resulting work was a ballet titled *El Fuego Nuevo*, The New Fire. Although containing no actual Indian melodies, the ballet began "a new era of nationalism in Mexican music."[42]

During the ensuing fifty-five years, Chávez continued to compose works in all genres, from songs[43] to chamber

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[40]Parker, Carlos Chávez, 2.

[41]Ibid.

[42]Ibid., 106.

[43]One song by Chávez is titled "North Carolina Blues," published in 1961. The lyrics by Xavier Villaurrutia

works, six symphonies, five ballets, and one opera. Chávez regarded composition as his primary concern. Other activities such as conducting and teaching were viewed as adjuncts to writing music.[44] While living in New York from 1916 to 1928, Chávez formed friendships with Copland, Varèse, and Cowell, whose avant garde music influenced some of his own compositions. More detail concerning Chávez's compositional procedures will be examined in Chapter IV and Chapter V.

Chávez was active in many areas. One aspect of his personality that pervaded Chávez' life was his ability as an organizer. According to Virgil Thomson, Chávez was a man who "made things happen."[45] A man of immense drive and energy, Chávez put his organizational skills into every aspect of his career. In 1928, he founded the Mexican Symphony Orchestra. Between 1928-1933, Chávez was also director of the National Conservatory where he restructured the curriculum, hired progressive young teachers, and provided students with opportunities to perform at the

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comment on African Americans in southern United States.

[44]Parker, Carlos Chávez, 121.

[45]Ibid., 130, in an interview with Thomson, 21 March 1980.

conservatory concerts.[46] As the most celebrated artist in Mexico in the 1940s, Chávez was asked by the Mexican president, Miguel Alemán, to organize a new Institute of Fine Arts supporting the activities of the arts and literature at a national level. As its director, beginning in 1947, Chávez was extremely successful in bringing music, theatre, and dance to the attention of the Mexican public.[47]

As with composing, Chávez was self-taught as a conductor, learning through experience and his own musical talent. As a conductor, Chávez was meticulous in his attention to details of technique, preparation, and musicianship. In addition to being the principal conductor of his own Mexican Symphony Orchestra from 1928 until 1949, Chávez served as guest conductor for major orchestras in the United States and around the world. In a conducting career of over fifty years, Chávez directed more than one hundred orchestras.

Chávez taught composition to a select group of students at the National Conservatory during the periods, 1928-1933 and again in 1960-1964. In Chávez' new Class of Musical Creation, later called the Composition Workshop, students

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[46]Ibid., 9.

[47]Ibid., 18.

worked without textbooks and were encouraged to write "simple, melodic music with a peculiar Mexican flavor that would have a certain dignity and nobility of style."[48] Among his students in 1931 were a few older musicians such as Vicente Mendoza, Candelario Huizar, and Silvestre Revueltas as well as four boys under twenty: Salvador Contreras, Blas Galindo, José Pablo Moncayo, and Daniel Ayala. The four young men, later known as *Grupo de los Cuatro*, focused on Mexican nationalistic music in their distinguished careers.

Beginning in 1943, the year of his induction into the National College, Chávez began lecturing at public occasions or lecture concerts sponsored by this same organization.[49] Over a period of forty years, he delivered more than one hundred lectures in Latin America and the United States. In 1958, Chávez was honored as Charles Eliot Norton Poetic Chair at Harvard University. His lectures were published in 1961 by Harvard University as Musical Thought. In an interview, the noted Mexican composer and former student of Chávez, Blas Galindo remarked that he "was always able to

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[48]Carlos Chávez, Musical Thought (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), 97.

[49]Parker, Carlos Chávez, 132.

convince the listener of his point of view."[50]

Chávez was a prolific writer for both the public press in Mexico and for scholarly music journals in the United States, such as Musical Quarterly and Modern Music. In the early years Chávez wrote program notes for the Symphony Orchestra of Mexico as well as for other orchestras he conducted worldwide. Although much of his writing concentrated on the musical environment in Mexico, whatever topic Chávez chose, ranging "from aesthetics to ethnic music, from avant garde music to jazz, . . . his message was clear, authoritative and spontaneous."[51] The ways in which Chávez created his own personal style into a vigorous, discordant reconstruction of ancient Aztec ceremonial music is explained in Chapter IV.

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[50]Robert L. Parker interview with Galindo, 25 August 1980, quoted in Carlos Chávez, 133.

[51]Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

XOCHIPILLI, AN IMAGINED AZTEC MUSIC

Xochipilli, An Imagined Aztec Music, published by Mills Music in 1964, was originally titled *Xochipilli-Macuilxóchitl*, pronounced Sho-chee-pee-lee Ma-kweel-sho-chitl, and is so listed in several references. The title was chosen by Chávez, because its sound "seems to evoke the flavor of an ancient Indian culture."[1] *Xochipilli* was the Aztec god of music, dance, flowers, and love. Chávez conducted the premiere of *Xochipilli* on 16 May 1940, with an ensemble of Mexican musicians[2] presented at a special exposition titled "Twenty Centuries of Mexican Art" at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City.

Stevenson[3] has commented on the regrettable loss of documentation concerning the characteristics and sound of native Aztec music, "a more fragile kind of cultural remains than writing." Because the characteristics of Aztec music

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[1]Carlos Chávez quoted in Roberto García Morillo, Carlos Chávez: *Vida y obra* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1960), 110.

[2]Slonimsky, Music of Latin America, 234.

[3]Stevenson, Music in Aztec & Inca Territory, 121-123.

have survived only in the early Spanish assessments of indigenous music, Chávez gathered information in preparation for writing *Xochipilli* from available sources as follows:

1. He read the written chronicles of Aztec musical culture, such as the Florentine Codex by Bernardino de Sahagún, and especially that by Fray Juan de Torquemada.[4] Chávez commented that "this document of Torquemada's is a very important document, illustrating our understanding of pre-Cortesian music."[5]

2. Chávez also examined the displays of archaeological percussion instruments in museums in Mexico.

3. His admiration and study of pre-Columbian sculpture and painting influenced his opinion that "it is not impossible to derive from plastic arts a sensitivity that can be transcribed into music."[6]

4. Finally, he drew from his own recollections of the music of the *Tlaxcala* Indians he had heard as a child. Chávez believed that this centuries-old musical tradition had changed little in a society he perceived as encouraging "sobriety, conciseness, purity, and vigor."[7]

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[4]Juan de Torquemada, *Veinte i vn libros rituales i Monarchia Indiana*, 3 vols. (Madrid: N. Rodríguez Franco, 1723).

[5]Herbert Weinstock, ed. Mexican Music (New York, Museum of Modern Art, 1940), Chávez is quoted from a brochure published for the concerts.

[6]Carlos Chávez, preface from *Xochipilli, An Imagined Aztec Music* (New York: Mills Music, Inc., 1964), ii.

[7]Ibid.

According to Morillo,[8] the music of Chávez was more than merely picturesque or colorful. The compositional methods used by Chávez were much more than a systematic elaboration and synthesis of elements. He went into the soul of the country and offered a music of undoubtedly Mexican stamp by means of universal musical values. Mayer-Serra[9] has written as follows:

> By universalism in Latin American music we mean the stage when the alien substances, whether of folk or of European origin elaborated in countries with an ancient tradition, become transformed into original material elaborated by the composer's talent for manipulation by purely musical methods. This is precisely the case with Chávez.

Chávez is quoted as follows: "Naturally, being Mexican does not increase aesthetic quality. Only when Mexican music attains artistic quality is it truly national art."[10] Chávez created not an authentic work, the music before the Conquest has been lost, but rather an impression of how the Aztec music might have sounded, based on his knowledge of ancient instruments, the sixteenth-century chronicles, and his recollection of folk music he heard in his childhood in

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[8]Morillo, Carlos Chávez: *Vida y obra*, 211-212.

[9]Mayer-Serra, "*El estado presente de la música en México*," 41.

[10]Morillo, Carlos Chávez: *Vida y obra*, 212.

Mexico. In *Xochipilli, An Imagined Aztec Music*, Chávez combined the musical elements of instrumentation and compositional techniques in his own personal style. "His attempts at reconstructing pre-Conquest Indian music constitute ultimately a pretext for writing music of a specifically new character."[11]

Instrumentation

Chávez designed the instrumentation of *Xochipilli* to evoke the sounds of ancient Aztec music. The combined sonority consists of winds and percussion, the only two classifications of instruments used by the ancient Aztecs. As explained in Chapter II above, stringed and brass instruments arrived with the Spanish in 1519. Chávez used the timbres of indigenous instruments to achieve "skillfully integrated timbral effects, based on a large variety of instruments with subtle color differences."[12] The contrasting sonorities of winds and percussion enhance the impact of the work.

Xochipilli, with a performance time of six minutes, is a short work for a small ensemble of ten players, six of the

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[11]Béhague, Music in Latin America, 131.

[12]Ibid., 133.

players being percussionists. The instrumentation[13] as listed by Chávez is as follows:

1 Piccolo

1 Flute

1 E-flat Clarinet

1 Trombone

Percussion

I Marimba (or small *Teponaxtle* or *Omichicahuaztli*)
Rasping Stick or Güiro (small)

II Marimba (or large *Teponaxtle*)
Hawksbells (*fr. grelots*) in copper (small)

III Bongoes (or two very small Indian drums)
Clay Rattles (small)

IV Tenor Drum (snares released or medium *Huehuetl*)
Soft Rattles (made of pasteboard)

V 1 Timpani (large *Huehuetl*)
Clay Rattles (medium)
Hawksbells in copper (medium)

VI Bass Drum (large, or extra large *Huehuetl*, or *Omichicahuaztli*)
Rasping Stick or Güiro (large)

Wind Instruments

Chávez scored for piccolo, flute, and E-flat clarinet as melodic instruments. The piccolo and flute represent the ancient Aztec flutes of bone or clay. The E-flat clarinet

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[13]Carlos Chávez, *Xochipilli, an Imagined Aztec Music*, iii.

is a substitute for the clay ocarina, also part of the indigenous heritage. Chávez is thought to have selected the E-flat clarinet rather than the more usual B-flat clarinet, because, being pitched a perfect fourth higher, its timbre was closer to that of the ocarina. The trombone does not function as a brass instrument but as an imitation of the sea snail or conch shell.

The woodwind parts in *Xochipilli* are written in a way that emphasized their timbres. Chávez considered wide spacing and range an Indianist characteristic.[14] Melodic lines of the piccolo, flute, and clarinet do not cross but each maintains its own sonority in a range at least an octave away from the next voice. The piccolo, called upon to play at the top of its range throughout the work, provides a shrill, piercing timbre in contrast to the flute and clarinet. At the end of the work, the trombone, simulating the sound of a sea snail shell, sounds a series of upward glissandi. The trombone timbre is intrusive and brash, a "haunting fanfare"[15] to the spirit of Aztec music.

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[14]Béhague, Music in Latin America, 133.

[15]Parker, Carlos Chávez, 50.

Percussion Instruments

Chávez was innovative for his time in the use of percussion instruments. It was unusual in the 1940s to distribute thirteen percussion instruments among six players, because percussion ensemble[16] was not a recognized genre until later in the century.

Knowing that most modern orchestras would not have access to authentic percussion instruments, Chávez furnished instrument substitutions to recreate the sonorities of ancient Aztec instruments. For the *teponaztlis,* or slit drums described in Chapter III, he suggested that two players share one marimba[17]. The interval of a minor third, the most common interval of *teponaztlis* recovered from archaeological sites, is indicated for both players. Pitches of e-flat and g-flat are assigned to Percussion I, while Percussion II has pitches of G and B-flat. The family of *huehuetls,* or upright, single-headed membranophones, is represented by a variety of drums without snares simulating

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[16]Although Amadeo Roldán wrote *Rítmica V* and *Rítmica VI* for percussion ensemble in 1930, the acknowledged pivotal composition for percussion ensemble is Ionization by Edgar Varèse, published in 1931.

[17]The timbre of a modern slit drum is preferred to that of a marimba. The relative tuning and limited resonance of a slit drum more accurately conveys the sound of an ancient instrument.

the wide pitch range of the Aztec instruments.

Modern replicas of accessory instruments such as the rasps or *guiros* and rattles are readily available to the contemporary percussionist. Sleighbells or tambourine may be substituted for hawksbells.

Percussion instruments serve multiple functions in an instrumental ensemble, the most common being dynamic reinforcement and rhythmic development. Chávez, however, used percussion instruments in *Xochipilli* as the vital ingredient to the timbre or tone color of the work. A variety of timbres are produced and may be classified according to the Hornbostel-Sachs[18] system. Two struck idiophones, marimba or slit drums, provide melodic as well as rhythmic material. A range of membranophones supply a wide range of relative pitches, from low to high. Special coloristic effects in a range of relative pitches are contributed by scraped idiophones, *guiros* or rasping stick, and shaken idiophones, rattles and hawksbells.

Form

Chávez chose to set *Xochipilli* in a symmetrical ABA' form. The two A sections in faster tempos, *Allegro animato*,

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[18]Erich M. Von Hornbostel and Curt Sachs, "*Systematik der Musikinstrumente*," *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* 46 (1914): 553-590.

quarter note = 100, and *Vivo*, quarter note = 104, represent music of the "great sacred festivities [that were] implacable in rhythm, strong and obstinate."[19] The sections frame the contrasting, slower B section, *Lento*, quarter note = 58, expressive of vocal music based on "a continuous melodic line more or less varied, although, undoubtedly based on the repetition of simple musical phrases."[20]

Xochipilli may be classified as a heterophonic[21] rather than a polyphonic form. Chávez interpreted the Aztec musical practice as a horizontal design of instrumental voices. "Everything leads one to believe that they were never conscious of harmony and polyphony . . . not even in an elementary manner."[22] Each group of instruments performed its own melodic material without regard to vertical sonority or chord structure. In addition, flutes probably did not play precisely in unison, because this

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[19]Carlos Chávez, preface from *Xochipilli, An Imagined Aztec Music*, ii.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Heterophony is the simultaneous variation of one theme in two or more parts as defined in Curt Sachs, The Wellsprings of Music, ed. Jaap Kunst (The Hague, Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962; reprint New York: Da Capo Press, Inc., 1962), 194 (page references are to reprint edition), 187.

[22]Chávez, preface from *Xochipilli, An Imagined Aztec Music*, i.

would have required a highly specialized training. As a result, the ensemble is thought to have produced an

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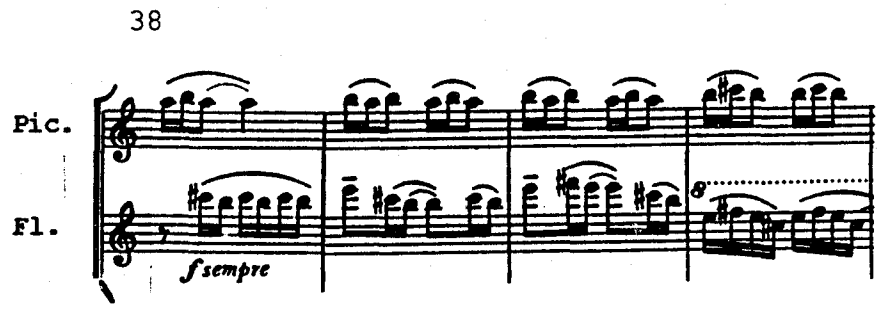
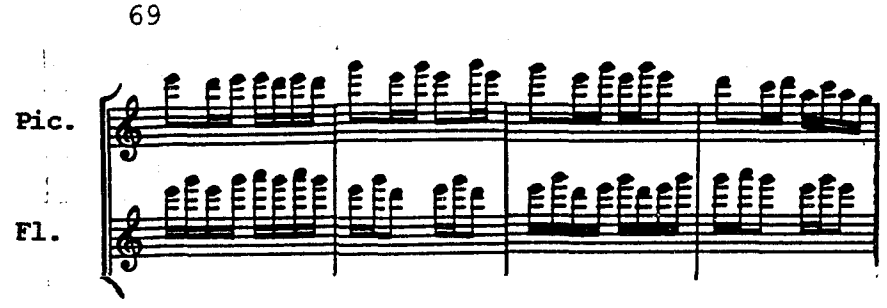


b.



Example 3: *Xochipilli*.
(Used by permission, CPP/Belwin, Inc.)

"elemental polyphony in which the different parts were counterpointed in a very free and instinctive way."[23] Heterophony between the piccolo and flute in a type of accidental counterpoint. Melodic and rhythmic motives are similar in each part but the overlapping patterns create irregular variations, as illustrated in Example 3, in the

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[23]Ibid.

piccolo or flute parts.

Melodic System

From his study of ancient musical instruments, Chávez[24] theorized that the early Aztec melodic system was based on pentatonic scales. These five-note sets could begin or end on any scale degree within a given whole-step mode. Because there were no fourth and seventh scale degrees, leading tones, so important in the Western-European tradition, were absent. Harmonic progressions and modulation to a different tonal center were also excluded from the Aztec melodic system.

The conclusions of Carl Lumholtz,[25] a highly-regarded Norwegian musicologist, appear to support the melodic system Chávez used in *Xochipilli*. After studying the music of Indian tribes living near present-day Mexico City at the end of the nineteenth century, Lumholtz posited conclusions[26]

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[24]From a lecture by Chávez titled "*La Música Azteca*," delivered under the auspices of the National University of Mexico in October 1928, quoted in Stevenson, Music in Aztec & Inca Territory, 16.

[25]Carl Lumholtz, Unknown Mexico (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902), quoted in Stevenson, Music in Aztec & Inca Territory, 131.

[26]Stevenson suggests in Music in Aztec & Inca Territory (131), that music of nineteenth-century Indians surely would not have remained static over a period of four hundred years, and the use of similar instruments by the Huicholes

about the music of the Huichol Indians that might apply to the ancient Aztecs themselves:

1. The melodies are preeminently pentatonic.
2. The melodies are nonexpressive in the Western sense.
3. The melodies usually end on a note that Europeans recognize as a "satisfactory" tonic.
4. The melodic range is an octave or a tenth.
5. Melodic climax is not their goal.
6. A strong, rhythmic, propulsive force informs all the songs.

The use of pentatonic pitch sets and the absence of Western-European harmonies are significant in generating the characteristics that Chávez considered typical of the Indian melodic system.

Pitch Sets

Chávez uses primarily one pentatonic pitch set for the piccolo and flute in the first section of *Xochipilli*: E, F♯, G♯, B, and C♯. The E-flat clarinet, entering six measures before the second section, serves to introduce the modal tonality of the slower section to be addressed below. In the correspondingly forceful third section, three different sets are used, one set for each woodwind

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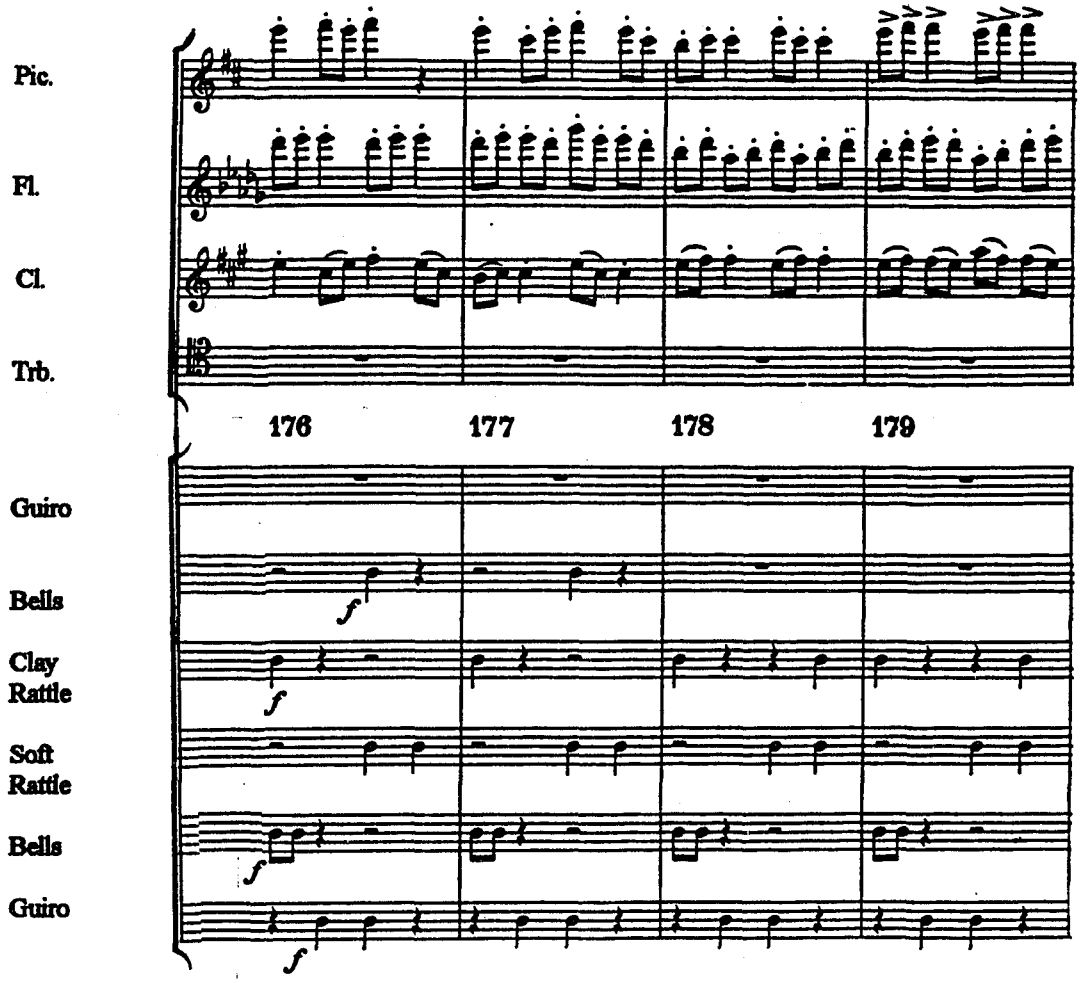
and the Aztecs does not necessarily infer similar melodies were used by both groups.

instrument:[27]

Piccolo: A, B, C♯, E, F♯

Flute: G♭, A♭, B♭, D♭, E♭, or written enharmonically as F♯, G♯, A♯, C♯, D♯

Clarinet: C, D, E, G, A

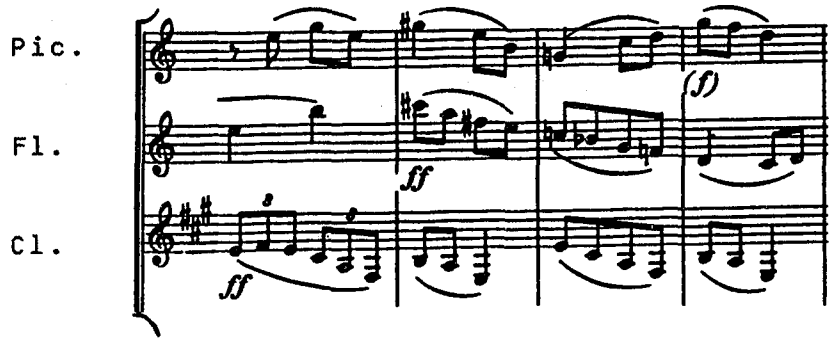


Example 4: *Xochipilli*, mm.176-179.
(Used by permission, CPP/Belwin, Inc.)

[27]The trombone part, playing only *glissandi*, is not included in the pitch set analysis.

A comparison of these pitch sets reveals the many possibilities of non-triadic vertical sonority, such as D♭ (C♯), E, G, in m.176, and dissonance, such as D♭ (C♯), D, E, in m.177, as illustrated in Example 4.

In the slower middle section, Chávez expands the pitch set to a C Major/minor scale. As in the faster sections, traditional Western-European vertical sonorities are absent, and accidentals are added in order to avoid half-step intervals, as is shown in Example 5.

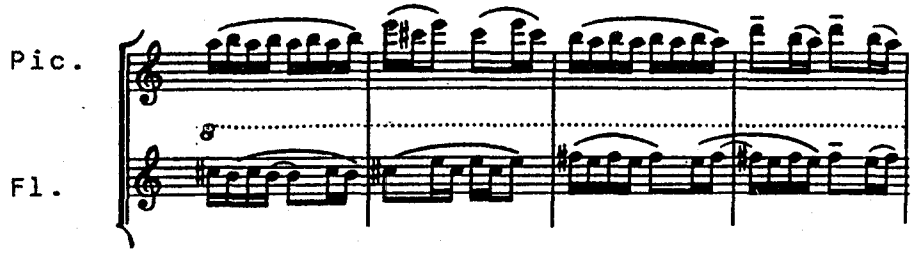


Example 5: *Xochipilli*, mm.126-129.
(Used by permission, CPP/Belwin, Inc.)

Melodic Material

Chávez uses only two pitches, either ascending or descending, as the primary melodic material of the first section, as shown in Example 6. This limited melodic

material affirms the findings of Lumholtz,[28] who concluded that the native Indians apparently regarded continuous repetition of short melodic fragments as the most efficient method of achieving success in ritual music.



Example 6: *Xochipilli*, mm.42-45.
(Used by permission, CPP/Belwin, Inc.)

The middle section contains a lyrical melody for the clarinet, spanning a tessitura of over an octave in contrast to the interval of a fifth in the first and third sections. Chávez links the melodic material with a three-pitch melodic cell as demonstrated in Example 6.

In the third section, the melodic material is expanded. Marimba I, or *teponaztli* introduces melodic/rhythmic material based on the interval of a minor third, while the flute, entering in m.143, plays the rhythmic pattern based on a pentatonic pitch set, as illustrated in Example 7.

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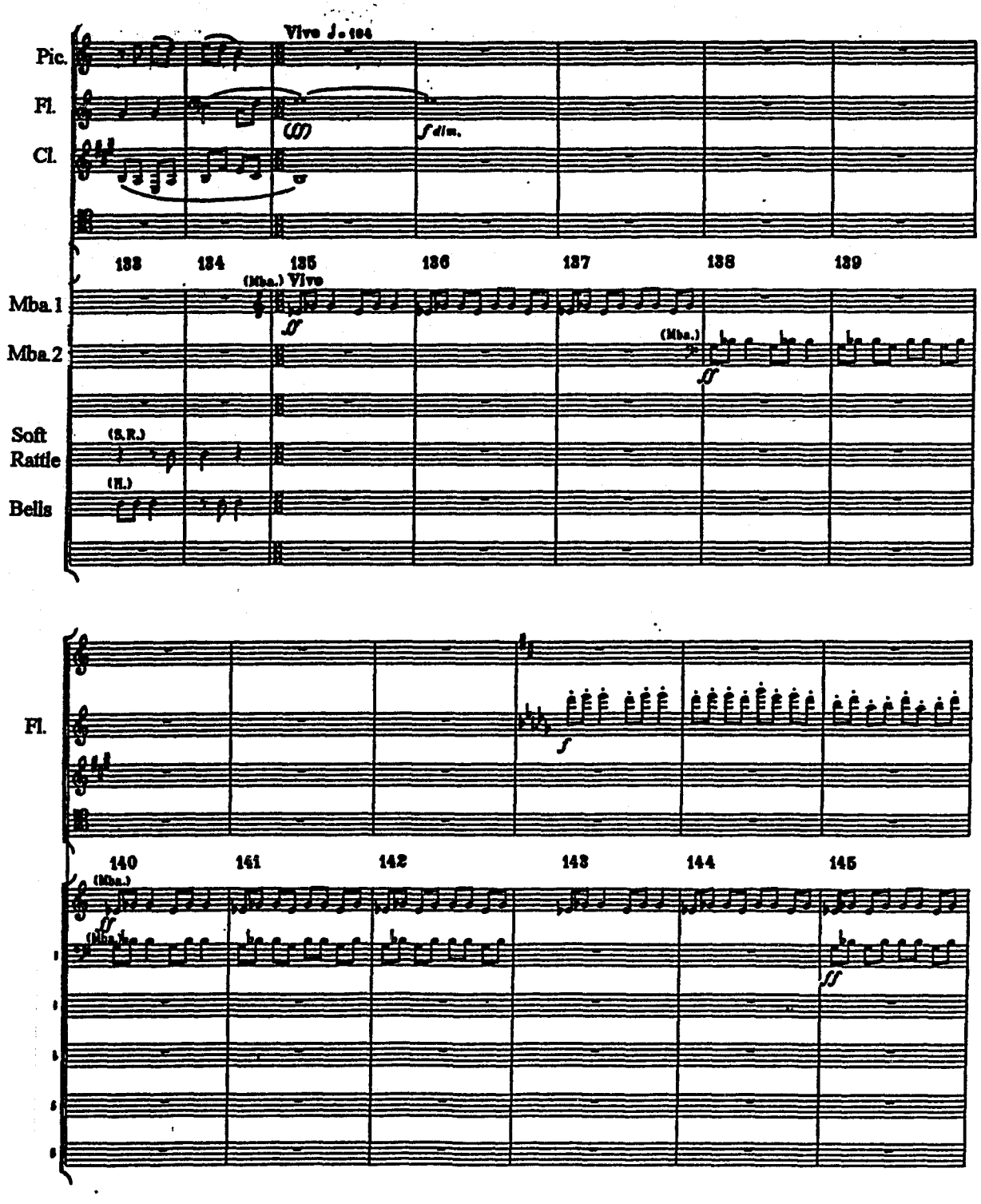
[28]Lumholtz, Unknown Mexico, quoted in Stevenson, Music in Aztec & Inca Territory, 131.



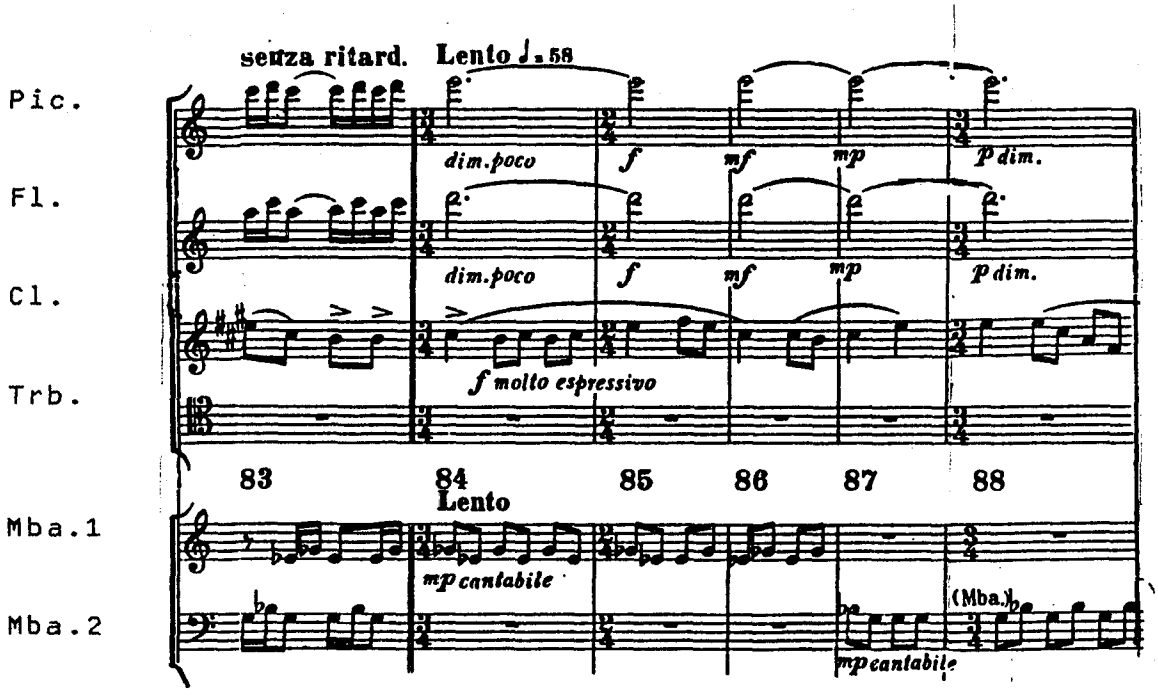
Example 7: *Xochipilli*, mm.133-145.
(Used by permission, CPP/Belwin, Inc.)

Compositional Devices

Chávez incorporates several compositional devices to illustrate his construct of pre-Columbian music. Among these devices are abrupt cadences, cross rhythms, irregular phrasing, and hemiola.

Cadences

At each transition between sections and at the end of *Xochipilli*, cadences are abrupt. The first section, *Allegro animato*, spins out in rapid, continuous motion and ends with



Example 8: *Xochipilli*, mm.83-88.
(Used by permission, CPP/Belwin, Inc.)

a sudden transition into the slower, more lyrical second section, *Lento*. The cadence is not prepared by chord

progression or sustained pitches, and the abrupt ending of the section is emphasized by the marking of *senza ritard,* without slowing, as shown in Example 8.

The final section, *Vivo*, begins suddenly without benefit of a cadence. Only the sustained pitches of the flute and clarinet convey a sense of closure to the middle section, and even these voices are partially obscured by the overlapping entrance of the marimba, Example 7.

Cross Rhythms

Throughout *Xochipilli*, Chávez creates cross rhythms,[1] or simultaneous differences in several parts, by establishing independent rhythmic patterns among the voices. Each percussion instrument has its own short rhythmic motive and timbre complementing the melodic material of the flute and clarinet, as shown in Example 4. In the last section, a variety of cross rhythms do not obscure the basic rhythm but rather demonstrate a "conscious, purposeful enrichment created by contradictory rhythmical patterns."[29]

Irregular Phrasing

The device of irregular phrases is a another technique Chávez used throughout *Xochipilli* to convey the primitive

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[29]Ibid.

aspect of ancient Aztec music. The usual European symmetry and balance of four-plus-four measures is missing. A metric shift at the beginning of the middle section heightens the effect of irregular phrases as well as setting the new tempo, as demonstrated in Example 8. The piccolo and flute have a phrase of five beats, one beat equals one quarter note; the clarinet has a phrase of six beats; and Marimba I has a phrase of seven beats. The beginning of the final section contains another example of irregular phrasing. In these eight measures, phrasing is written as three-plus-two-plus-three measures for the marimbas as shown in Example 7.

Hemiola

Finally, for rhythmic enhancement Chávez used hemiola or the *sesquiáltera* pattern of the 3:2 ratio as a compositional device. Hemiola was first used by fifteenth-century European composers such as Guillaume Dufay and John Dunstable, and was a characteristic of the Baroque dances. Hemiola, or the alternation of duple and triple meters, is a characteristic of the *son*,[30] a popular Mexican song form. In *Xochipilli*, Chávez employed this pattern effectively,

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[30]The *son*, originating from Spanish *danzas cantadas*, was brought to Mexico during the colonial period. Used as a means of protest by an oppressed people, the *son* in Mexico was originally performed by *mestizos*, and possibly negroes. Geijerstam, Popular Music in Mexico, 22.

especially in the middle section, to express the lyricism of sung poetry, as in shown in Example 2, Chapter II.

Importance of Chávez' Percussion Compositions

Chávez' emphasis on percussion instruments was remarkable for his time. In contrast to standard ensemble works, in *Xochipilli*, percussion instruments perform in over ninety percent of the work. Each timbre is apparent in short, distinctive rhythmic motives either as a solo or in combination with other instruments. Near the end of the work, Chávez devotes a long section, mm.183-232, to percussion instruments only. In this passage the texture is varied by the addition and subtraction of percussion instruments with independent rhythmic motives in a kaleidoscope of contrasting timbral colors.

Two years after the composition of *Xochipilli, An Imagined Aztec Music*, Chávez wrote Toccata for Percussion Instruments (1942) at the request of John Cage. Parker[31] believes that Chávez, having gained experience with *Xochipilli*, was willing to work with the percussion ensemble genre. Second only to *Sinfonía índia* in numbers of live and recorded performances, Toccata has been identified as "a pioneering achievement in legitimatizing percussion ensemble

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[31]Parker, Carlos Chávez, 50.

performance."[32] Twenty years later, Chávez wrote Tambuco (1964), commissioned by Clare Boothe Luce, again written for six percussionists.

Chávez developed his Indianist style using musical characteristics he believed were indigenous to Mexico. *Xochipilli* was his imaginative response to the portrayal of the sound of the music of the ancient Aztecs. Chapter V describes the music of a different era in Mexican history, music that was shaped by the *mestizo* culture three hundred years after the Conquest.

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[32]Ibid., 125.

CHAPTER V

CHAPULTEPEC, THREE FAMOUS MEXICAN PIECES

Chapultepec, Three Famous Mexican Pieces (1935) was originally titled *Obertura Republicana*[1] and first was performed the same year by the Symphony Orchestra of Mexico, the composer conducting. It was also presented in concert at the special exposition, "Twenty Centuries of Mexican Art" at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City in May 1940. This exposition also premiered *Xochipilli, An Imagined Aztec Music*.

The years between 1925 and 1940 was a period of intense nationalism for Chávez. More than half of his compositions written at this time were nationalistic, using Mexican musical materials, instruments, and literary texts. Among them were *Cantos de México* (1933), *El Sol*, *Corrido Mexicano* (1934), *Llamadas* (1933), and *Sinfonía índia* (1935), as listed in Table 3.

Chávez also was involved in many other activities in addition to composing music during those same years. A man

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[1]Parker, Chávez, 94. The title was changed to *Chapultepec, Three Famous Mexican Pieces* at the suggestion of Arthur Cohn at Mills Music when the work was published by that firm in 1968.

of enormous energy, Chávez was conducting the Symphony Orchestra of Mexico, *Orquesta Sinfónica de México*, as well as orchestras in Latin America, and the United States. The programs for these concerts included compositions of other contemporary composers as well as his own.[2] Chávez was director of the National Conservatory in Mexico City, where he also was taught music composition. In 1937, Toward a New Music, his book about the development of electronic music in the United States, was published. According to Morillo,[3] despite his many projects and commitments, Chávez considered the setting of three popular Mexican pieces a diversion from more serious work.

Chapultepec is Chávez's arrangement of Western-European influenced folk music as it was transformed in Mexico in the four hundred years following the Conquest. Most of the Mexican folk music forms originated from folk and art music genres of Spain, such as the *romance* and *virelai*. The degree of blending of imported forms into Mexican forms "has been sufficiently vigorous to convert the quantity of

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[2]Chávez conducted the premiere of *El Salón México*, by Aaron Copland in 1937.

[3]Morillo, Carlos Chávez: *Vida y obra*, 85.

assimilated elements into a new musical quality."[4] Table 4 includes the more common Mexican folk forms.

The "new musical quality" of Mexican folk music[5] is generated by the merging of Western-European musical elements with those of the native musical characteristics. Western-European elements incorporated into *mestizo* music include the use of triplets, hemiola patterns, and parallel thirds and sixths, characteristics not found in Indian music.[6] In contrast, indigenous music displays greater rhythmic variety,[7] shorter melodies with a narrow range, and without melismatic ornamentation.

The two most prominent features of Mexican folk music are the musical instrumental ensembles and the method of musical interpretation by these groups. First, native peoples quickly adopted the musical instruments of the

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[4]Mayer-Serra, "*El estado presente de la música en México*," 28.

[5]Paul Bowles criticizes talent scouts who entice the best rural musicians to Mexico City, where their music is corrupted into a popularized style, in "On Mexico's Popular Music." Modern Music 18 (1941): 225.

[6]Gerard Béhague, New Grove, 10:520.

[7]Mayer-Serra claims that Indians and *mestizos* have inherited the ability to perform complex rhythms, quoted in "On Mexico's Popular Music." Modern Music 18 (1941): 225.

TABLE 4

SELECTED MEXICAN FOLK SONG/DANCE FORMS

	Form/Origin	**Characteristics**
Canción	Song form with characteristics of 19th-C. Italian opera.	Usu. binary. Meter/rhythm not restricted. Frequent use of *rubato*. Sentimental texts.
Canción Mexicana	Song form from 19th-C. European popular lyrical tunes. Variant of canción.	Usu. duple meter, 8-mm. phrases. Alternation of song & instrumental ritornello. Patriotic, revolutionary texts.
Canción ranchera	Song form. Early 20th-C. variant of *Canción Mexicana*. Developed in Mexico in association with 1910 Revolution.	Same as *Canción Mexicana*. Texts usu. deal with *soldaderas*, patriotism. Usu. accompanied by *mariachi* ensemble.
Corrido	Song form from Spanish *romance* of Andalusía. Popular folk ballad in Mexico during Revolution.	Usu. duple meter, although also may be triple meter. Syncopation used Usu. ends on mediant of scale. Verses (*coplas*) alternate with refrains (*estrebillos*). Military, religious, or current events as text subjects
Huapango	Dance form from Spain. A type of *son*. Developed in Mexico in Gulf Coast states to highlands (*altiplanos*).	Rapid shift between 3/4 and 6/8 meters. Accompanied by stringed instruments in strummed (*rasgueado*) style.
Jarabe	Dance form from Spain. A type of *son*. One of oldest folk dances of both urban and rural *mestizos*.	Binary form. Meter shifts between duple & triple meters. Frequent key changes to related keys. Usu. in major key.
Son (melody)	Song and dance form. Generic term for folk or rural music. Precise meaning designated by particular region or state in Mexico. Developed in Gulf Coast states of Jalisco, Michoacán.	Shifts between 3/4 and 6/8 meters. Associated with *mariachi* ensembles. Texts about women & love, devoid of pathos, sentimentality. Distinct from Cuban *son*.
Villancico	From Spanish *virelai, ballata*. A type of *son*. Originally a song/dance to be used in church services.	Usu. shifts between duple & triple meters. Verses (*coplas*) alternate with refrains (*estrebillos*). Usu. devotional texts.

Spanish, especially stringed instruments. Béhague[8] states that instruments were more important in the folk music of Central America than they were in Spain, where many genres originated. Although the combination of instruments in ensembles varies regionally, the most common ensemble is the *mariachi.*[9] Typically the ensemble includes two violins, a *vihuela,* small five-course guitar; a *jarana,* slightly larger five-course guitar; and a *arpón,* harp. In the twentieth-century, however, the harp was replaced by a *guitarrón,* large bass guitar, and flutes, clarinets, and trumpets were added.

The second distinctive element of *mestizo* music is the interpretation or performance practice.

> Mexican music is insistent, childlike, impersonal, and lacks just those qualities of subtlety, hauteur and brilliance which characterize the music of Spain."[10]

Performances of Mexican music vary widely from one region to another, yet all include relentless complex rhythms, the

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[8]Béhague, New Grove, 10:520.

[9]The term *mariachi* probably is derived from the name Maria with the Náhuatl diminutive "*chi*" added, because Náhuatl was spoken in the Guadalajara region where the ensemble originated, as explained by E. Thomas Stanford, New Grove, 12:232.

[10]Bowles, "On Mexico's Popular Music." Modern Music 18 (1941): 230.

strumming, *rasgueado*, guitar technique, and the curious sonority of instruments playing not quite in tune.

By the end of the colonial rule in 1810, Spanish folk music had merged completely with the music of the Indians[11] enhanced by increasing size of the *mestizo* population. During the one hundred years between 1810 and 1910, the proportion of *mestizos* increased from 38 percent to 53 percent of the population of Mexico.[12] The growing *mestizo* population sought to alleviate their inferior economic and social conditions, and, in "trying to improve their own positions, *mestizos* came to champion the idea of a national community."[13] One source of nourishment of Mexican nationalism was *mestizo* folk music, as "the most representative and most consistent expression of Mexican music."[14] During the Mexican Revolution of 1910, folk songs, such as "*La Adelita,*" the third piece in *Chapultepec*, "*La Valentina,*" and "*La cucaracha*" became "part of the

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[11]Mayer-Serra, "*El estado presente de la música en México,*" 31.

[12]Frederick C. Turner, The Dynamic of Mexican Nationalism, 73.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Mayer-Serra, "*El estado presente de la música en México,*" 31.

revolutionary emotion . . . and have become more popular with passage of time."[15]

Mayer-Serra[16] considered nationalistic music as a country's special contribution to cosmopolitan music. Because the music is always composed by art musicians, true nationalistic music attains international recognition only when interpreted in terms of techniques used by trained composers. Because the concept of musical nationalism was the result of European Romanticism,[17] the music of Mexican Romantic piano virtuosi was the first genre to include elements of Mexican folk music. Composers such as Juventino Rosas (1868-1894) with his *Sobre las olas*, Over the Waves; Tomás León (1826-1893) in his suite, *Jarabe nacional* (c.1860); and Julio Ituarte (1845-1905) with *Ecos de México* (c.1880); were among the earliest Mexicans to use Mexican melodies with picturesque Mexican characteristics, such as rapid repeated notes in imitation of a parakeet in "*El perico.*"

Manuel Ponce, identified as the first composer to address the need for Mexican nationalistic music, also was

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[15]Turner, The Dynamic of Mexican Nationalism, 282-283.

[16]Mayer-Serra, "*El estado presente de la música en México,*" 32.

[17]Béhague, Music in Latin America, 98.

the first Mexican composer to experience the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz, "when cultural life was completely under foreign influence."[18] Ponce, trained in European Romantic composition, studied all types of *mestizo* folk music, such as *corrido*, *jarabe*, *son*, and *huapango*. His importance as the first prominent composer of Mexican nationalistic music derives from his use of folk song materials in Romantic piano settings suitable to their melodies and specific musical characteristics.

Chávez, however, rejected this appraisal of Ponce by commenting: "He [Ponce] never was a Mexican nationalist in music; he followed European trends."[19] Chávez's approach was to study the solutions of other contemporary composers and to pursue his own convictions regarding sonorities, rhythms, and reference to folk materials.[20]

Chapultepec, Three Famous Mexican Pieces is a short work, just seven and one-half minutes playing time, set as a caricature of the way these tunes must have sounded in countless town band concerts in Mexico. Chávez chose to set three popular Mexican pieces in both in band and orchestral

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[18]Mayer-Serra, "*El estado presente de la música en México*," 32.

[19]Parker, Chávez, 126.

[20]Ibid.

arrangements.[21] Morillo[22] comments as follows:

> It was not easy to achieve this mixture of extremely delicate irony that is as much deliberate exaggeration of certain sonorities and characteristics as it is in small, subtle details of writing. In the midst of vulgarity and merriment, the most authentic and profound emotions occur.

Morillo[23] describes the first piece, *"Marcha Zacatecas,"* as a burlesque, emphasizing the heroic and arrogant attitude; the second, *"Vals Club Verde,"* is lyrical with overly sentimental sonorities; and *"La Adelita,"* spirited and insolent,[24] portrays the fighting spirit of the Mexican Revolution of 1910.

Instrumentation

In contrast to the instrumentation of *Xochipilli, An Imagined Aztec Music*, imitating the sound of ancient indigenous instruments, in *Chapultepec, Three Famous Mexican Pieces*, Chávez wrote for an orchestral ensemble reflecting Western-European influences:

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[21]The band arrangement of *Chapultepec, Three Famous Mexican Pieces* was published in 1963; the orchestral version was published in 1968, both by Mills Music, Inc., New York. This paper deals with the orchestral arrangement.

[22]Morillo, *Carlos Chávez: Vida y obra*, 86.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Parker, *Chávez*, 94.

2 Piccolos
2 Flutes
2 Oboes
English Horn
Clarinet in E-flat
2 Clarinets in B-flat
Bass Clarinet in B-flat
3 Bassoons
Soprano Saxophone in B-flat
2 Alto Saxophones in E-flat
Tenor Saxophone in B-flat

4 Horns in F
3 Trumpets in B-flat
2 Trombones
Bass Trombone
Tuba

Timpani
Percussion I: Snare Drum
Percussion II: Crash Cymbals, Suspended Cymbal, Guiro, Tam-Tam
Percussion III: Triangle, Small Drum, Bass Drum

Strings

Non-percussion Instruments

In *Chapultepec* Chávez uses a large variety of non-percussion instruments, including four saxophones, to capture the "diverse sonorities of village bands.[25] As discussed in Chapter II, strings, brass, and keyed woodwind instruments were unknown in Mesoamerica before the arrival of the Spanish. After stringed instruments, brass, and keyed-woodwind instruments were introduced into the musical practices of Mexico, they were adopted selectively by the

[25]Morillo, Carlos Chávez: *Vida y obra*, 86.

native population to complement their own ensembles. The *mariachi,* originating in the early twentieth century, is an example of the synthesis of Western-European instruments combined with Western-European influenced music into a distinctly Mexican form. The *mariachi* is an instrumental ensemble composed of violins, guitars, and harp. No indigenous instruments are used, yet this ensemble is regarded by the Mexicans themselves as their own. The *mariachi* band was enlarged to include flutes, clarinets, and trumpets in the 1940s.[26]

Percussion Instruments

In *Chapultepec, Three Famous Mexican Pieces*, as in *Xochipilli, An Imagined Aztec Music*, Chávez assigns eight percussion instruments to three players, in addition to one player for timpani. The percussion section consists primarily of traditional European instruments. The *guiro* is of Latin American origin and is the only instrument played by scraping. Aside from the timpani, the remaining instruments are of indefinite pitch in the two categories of membranophones: small drum, snare drum, and bass drum, or metallic instruments: triangle, crash cymbals, suspended cymbals, and tam-tam. Within each category of unpitched

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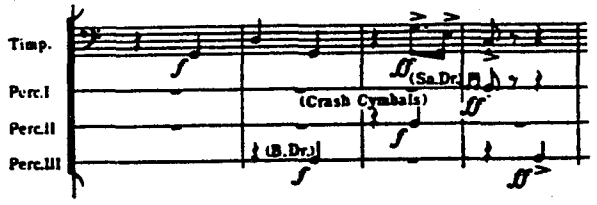
[26]Slonimsky, Music of Latin America, 218.

instruments, Chávez employs the gamut of ranges from high to low and also a wide array of percussive timbres.

Chávez wrote percussion parts with care and included no technically difficult passages. He does, however, leave certain details to the discretion of the performer, such as the number of timpani to be used. Because the part spans a range of over an octave, from F to g^1, five kettles appear to be required. Five timpani would be the most convenient number in mm.36-39, Example 9, on the basis of the quick tempo, quarter note = 120. Also, the timpani part provides no cues to prepare the player for upcoming tuning changes.



Example 9: *Chapultepec*, mm.36-39.
(Used by permission, CPP/Belwin, Inc.)

In contrast to *Xochipilli*, percussion instruments are not fundamental to the organization of *Chapultepec*. In this work, there are no extended sections for percussion only. Chávez uses percussion instruments more to emphasize rhythmic contrast and orchestral color than to perform the more usual roles of dynamic reinforcement and cadential emphasis.

Musical Characteristics

Chapultepec is a medley of European musical genres modified by *mestizo* musical characteristics. In contrast to *Xochipilli*, the pieces demonstrate Western-European elements in major/minor tonalities, vertical harmonic progressions, prepared cadences, and symmetrical phrases. Certain stylistic traits appearing in *Chapultepec* reflect *mestizo* musical characteristics, such as the alternation and combination of 6/8 and 3/4 meters, the hemiola or *sesquiáltera*[27] used in Mexican *sones*, the *pizzicati* guitar-like effects in the lower strings imitating the sound of the *mariachi*, and the piercing sonority of the trumpets typical of village bands. The blending of these characteristics produces the extraordinary sound of Mexican music.

"Marcha Zacatecas"

The composer of "*Marcha Zacatecas*," Genaro Codina (1851-1901), was born in Zacatecas, Mexico, during the regime of dictator Porfirio Díaz. His family was famous for fireworks they manufactured for the fiestas in Zacatecas. Codina, a bookkeeper by profession, also composed a number of marches, waltzes, and schottisches. "*Marcha Zacatecas*,"

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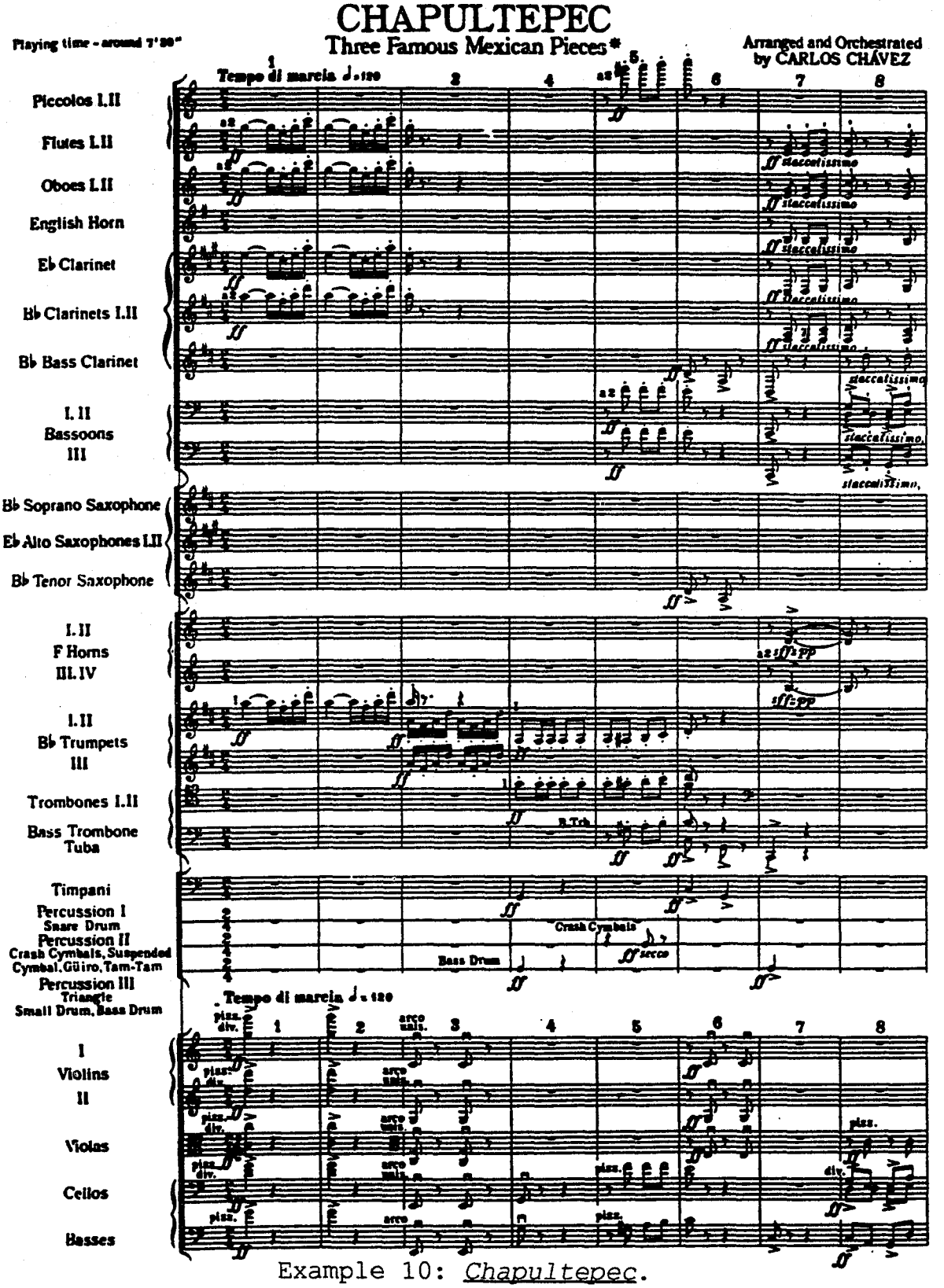
[27]Hemiola has been labelled a "national" quality by Béhague, Music in Latin America, 101.

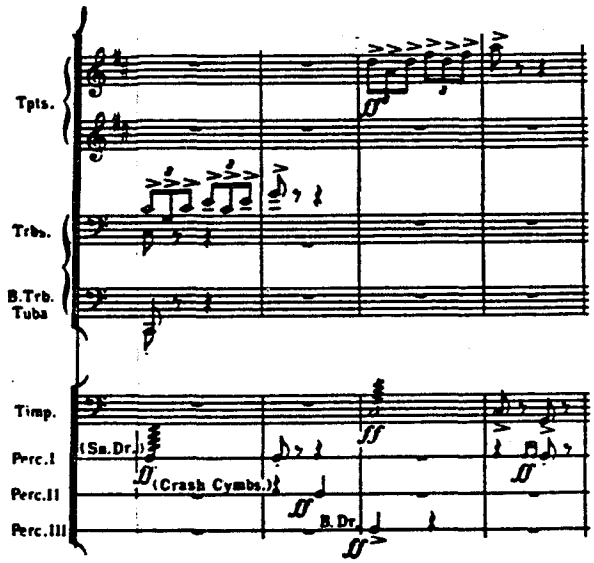


Example 10: *Chapultepec*.
(Used by permission, CPP/Belwin, Inc.)

(ca.1891) was known as the second Mexican national anthem.[28]

> According to Sordo Sodi, [the] martial music [genre] was popularized during the Mexican War of Independence in 1846-1848, though it must have existed in Mexico before then. The march was officially established in 1867, when stately military bands were formed. It came into its prime at the turn of the century, when it was regularly performed at bandstands in many Mexican towns.[29]

The march, in a brisk tempo (quarter note = 120) in duple meter, is in C Major. A six-measure fanfare ends with the punctuation of the cadence in a typically European-



Example 11: *Chapultepec*, mm.102-105.
(Used by permission, CPP/Belwin, Inc.)

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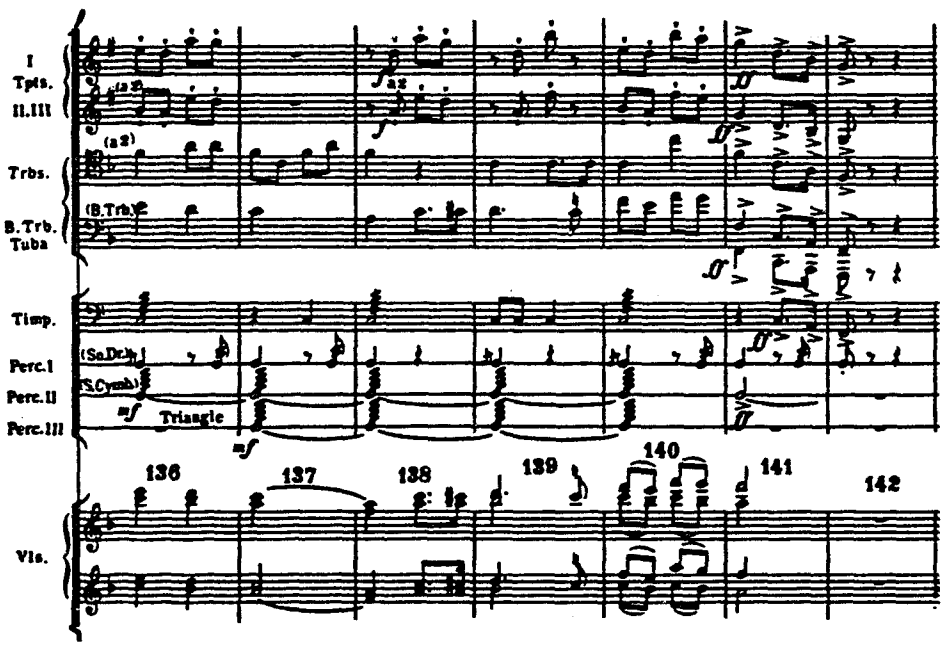
[28]Heriberto García Rivas, *Ciento cincuenta biografias de Mexicanos ilustres* (México: Editorial Diana, 1964, 1990), 231.

[29]Geijerstam, Popular Music, 80.

influenced style with a crash of cymbals and the sounding of the bass drum, Example 10.

Example 11 demonstrates a passage of cadential reinforcement and rhythmic contrast. Percussion instruments are not given the usual timekeeping function in the march but instead are used sparingly to furnish rhythmic contrast and orchestral color. A soloistic passage for percussion is enhanced by special effects of suspended cymbal and triangle rolls, while timpani and snare drum reinforce the cadence, as illustrated in Example 12.



Example 12: *Chapultepec*, mm.136-142.
(Used by permission, CPP/Belwin, Inc.)

"Vals Club Verde"

"Vals Club Verde" was written by Rodolfo Campondónico (1866-1926). He was born in Hermosillo, Mexico, the son of an Italian-born musician who conducted the town band. As a young man, Campondónico played cornet in the band and succeeded his father as conductor. He composed over a thousand melodies, over six hundred of them being waltzes. His *"Club Verde"* is well known throughout Mexico. Apparently Campondónico was well liked in his town, and his only vice was black coffee.[30]

"Club Verde" is a Mexican interpretation of nineteenth-century French salon piano music. The date is unknown when the waltz was introduced in Mexico, but an ecclesiastical report in 1815 denounced it

> . . . as a corrupt importation from degenerate France. All of man's depravity could not invent anything more pernicious, not even Hell itself could spawn a monster more obscene. Only those who have seen the *Vals* danced with complete license are in a position to warn of its perils.[31]

Chávez sets the rondo form of A A' B A' C A A' in triple meter and a slightly slower tempo, quarter note =

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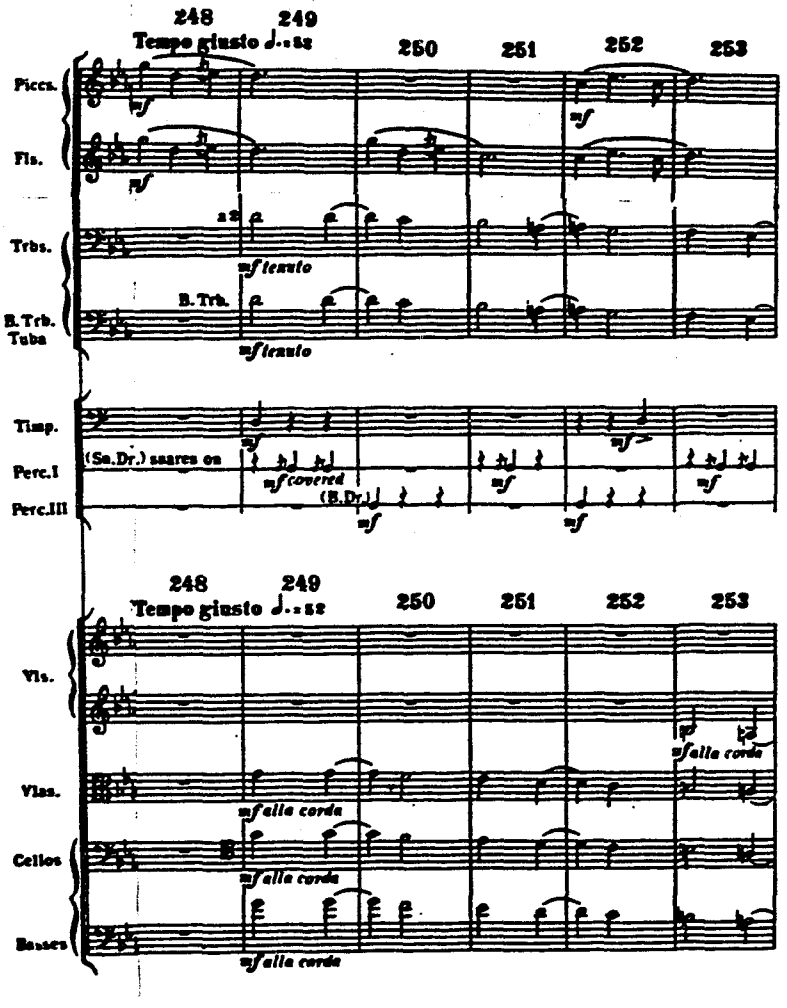
[30]Eugène Boban, *Hombres y aspectos de México en la tercera etapa de la Revolución* (*México*: n.p., 1963), 99.

[31]Slonimsky, Music of Latin America, 220.

100. The tonality moves to e-flat minor, the relative minor of C Major. The soprano saxophone begins the melody, followed at two-measure intervals by two countermelodies in the alto and tenor saxophone parts, accompanied by sustained notes in the horns and cellos. Chávez indicated that clarinets may double the saxophone parts.



Example 13: *Chapultepec*, mm.248-253.
(Used by permission, CPP/Belwin, Inc.)

Percussion instruments enter at the middle of the waltz, emphasizing the *mestizo* characteristic of hemiola found in the lower strings and brass. The snare drum supplies timbral contrast by playing "snares on, covered," illustrated in Example 13.

"*La Adelita*"

"*La Adelita*" is an anonymous traditional folk song set to a new text, during the Mexican Revolution of 1910. Chávez placed this piece at the end of *Chapultepec* to suggest the successful overthrow of the Díaz dictatorship.[32] The song portrays the story of a young revolutionary woman, or *soldadera*.[33]

"*La Adelita*" is a *canción ranchera*, a sub-class of the *canción mexicana*. According to Garrido[34], a *canción mexicana* is a "mixture of Spanish influence with a Mexican way of thinking." A canción may be any type of song, as opposed to an instrumental piece. Two distinct types of the

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[32]Parker, Chávez, 94.

[33]*Soldaderas* made significant contributions during the Mexican Revolution. They bore arms, foraged for food, and provided encouragement and companionship to the men, changing their role in the national community. Described in Turner, The Dynamic of Mexican Nationalism, 183-189.

[34]Juan S. Garrido, informant in the study of Mexican popular music, quoted in Geijerstam, Popular Music in Mexico, 67.

Mexican *canción* were popular at the end of the nineteenth century. The first, the *canción mexicana*, was overly sentimental representing the French salon tradition of the urban upper and middle classes. The second, the *canción ranchera*, emerged from the Italianate vocal style admired by the lower classes. Flourishing during the Mexican Revolution, the *canción ranchera* glorified the peasant and the urban proletariat. Mendoza[35] placed it in the category of "an occasional song born of the necessity of expression of an inflamed people."

"*La Adelita*" is written in the subdominant, F Major, of the C Major of "*Marcha Zacatecas*". The duple meter and tempo, quarter note = 120, *Vivo ed allerta*, is similar to the first piece. The charm of "*La Adelita*" is its theme and variations form. Chávez expands the simple song and ritornello form of the *cancíon ranchera* into a more complex arrangement by repeating phrases and by changing the orchestration. After the initial introduction of the simple melody, the texture thickens with the addition of thirds and sixths, a characteristic of Spanish-related *mestizo* folk polyphony.[36] The *guiro* adds tone color, beginning in m.347,

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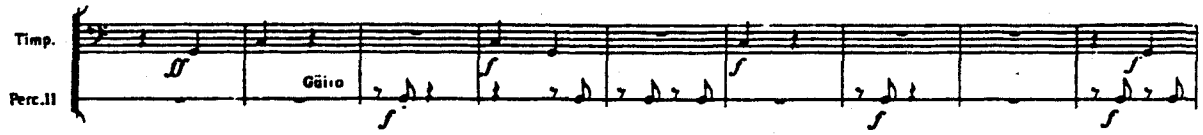
[35]Mendoza, Panorama de la música tradicionál de México, 108.

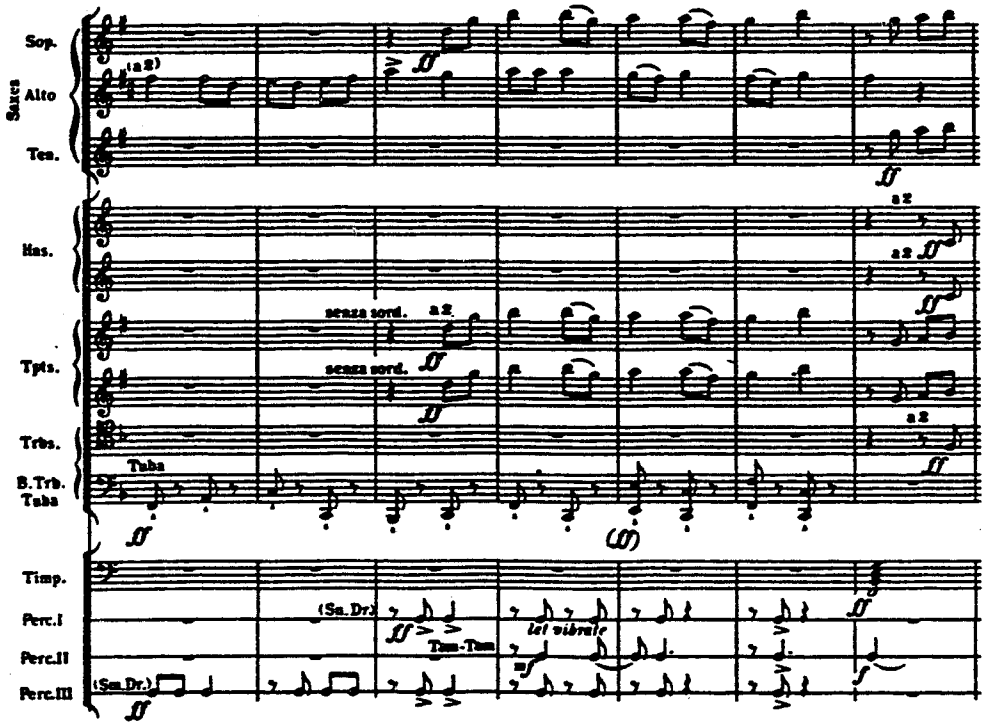
[36]Béhague, Music in Latin America, 144.

Example 14, as a cross rhythm to the melody.



Example 14: *Chapultepec*, mm.345-351.
(Used by permission, CPP/Belwin, Inc.)

Percussion instruments provide rhythmic contrast and tone color throughout *"La Adelita."* The snare drum, small drum, and tam-tam are especially effective in emphasizing hemiola and providing contrasting tone colors, Example 15.



Example 15: *Chapultepec*, mm.390-396.
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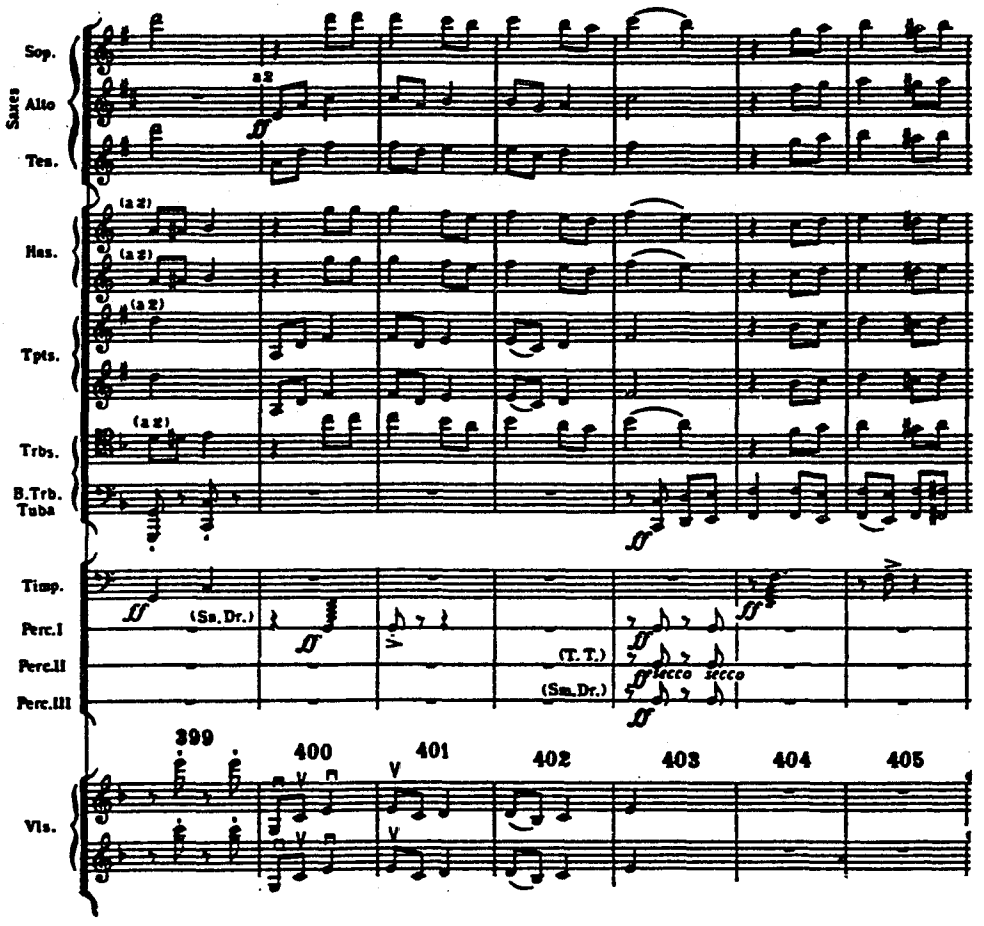
Morillo[37] points out the counterpoint of overlapping phrases near the end of "*La Adelita*." Chávez weaves melodic fragments into the illusion of several different bands marching in different directions, their sounds superimposed upon each other, as illustrated in Example 16.



Example 16: *Chapultepec*, mm.399-405.
(Used by permission, CPP/Belwin, Inc.)

"The anonymous composer would never have used this effect. It constitutes the personal creation of Chávez; and

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[37]Morillo, Carlos Chávez: *Vida y obra*, 87.

this is what interests us."[38] With increasing rhythmic activity and dynamic intensity, the piece closes with an eight-measure cadence played at *fortissimo* level.

According to Mayer-Serra,[39] Mexican folk music should include the description of the atmosphere, not just the reproduction of the music itself. Bowles[40] commented on contrast between Spanish and Mexican music as follows:

> But the great differences lie not primarily in the melodies, nor in the harmonic progressions, nor yet in the rhythms, but rather in a whole mass of innumerable details affecting all these things, details which when combined make a result distinct from the original music.

Popular tunes were important to the *mestizo* population during the Mexican Revolution of 1910. These simple melodies were a source of inspiration to the *mestizos* in their struggle for recognition and equality. Chávez regarded popular songs as the national music of Mexico, belonging to an epoch and a place. As such, they deserved to be set in a symphonic arrangement.

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[38]Ibid.

[39]Mayer-Serra, "*El estado presente de la música en México*," 29.

[40]Paul Bowles, "On Mexico's Popular Music," Modern Music 18 (1941): 230.

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October 7, 1994

Dorothy R. Conklin
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Ms. Dorothy Conklin
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re: XOCHIPILLI
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by: Carlos Chavez

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