
The Mexican Odyssey

NOVEMBER 1, 2008

MCNEIR HALL, GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

AND

NOVEMBER 6, 2008

THE HARMAN CENTER FOR THE ARTS,
SIDNEY HARMAN HALL



PRESENTED BY
POST-CLASSICAL ENSEMBLE

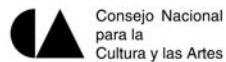


IN COLLABORATION WITH
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY



THIS PROGRAM IS MADE POSSIBLE WITH SUPPORT FROM

THE MEXICAN COUNCIL FOR CULTURE
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AND THE
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Post-Classical Ensemble

Post-Classical Ensemble makes a special commitment to the music of the Americas.

Embracing and advocating the music of the United States, our repertoire has ranged from *The Doctor of Alcantara*, Julius Eichberg's hit operetta of 1879, to the classic film scores of Aaron Copland and Virgil Thomson, to recent and brand-new music by John Adams and Zhou Long. However, our primary crusade has been in support of the music of Mexico; and Silvestre Revueltas is by far the composer we have most performed. We feel a mission to make the music known "finally" in the U.S.

If this week's "Mexican Odyssey" festival, coming a season after the week-long Chávez/Revueltas festival we initiated at the Library of Congress, signals a continuation, it also marks a beginning: of our Educational Partnership with Georgetown University. Our programming is thematic and interdisciplinary; its intellectual core would be squandered were we not capable of reaching out to area colleges and universities. We have been fortunate in our past and ongoing alliances with the University of Maryland at College Park, George Washington University, and Catholic University. The partnership with Georgetown University is something even more: an ongoing collaboration, including classroom visits by Ensemble artists and guests, and conferences and concerts on the Georgetown campus.

In addition to sharing our Mexican Odyssey, Georgetown University presents a Post-Classical Production, "Copland and the Cold War" on January 31. Next season, a two-part Post-Classical Ensemble Stravinsky festival -including a conference, a folk ensemble, a piano marathon, a staged *Soldier's Tale*, and much else — will be shared by Georgetown University and the Music Center at Strathmore. Our every season has marked new growth, and our network of collaborating institutions grows apace.



Angel Gil-Ordóñez
MUSIC DIRECTOR, POST-CLASSICAL ENSEMBLE

Joseph Horowitz
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, POST-CLASSICAL ENSEMBLE

Georgetown University

Georgetown University is honored to join Post-Classical Ensemble in a new Educational Partnership. By combining our resources and interdisciplinary interests, we are committed to bringing the joy of music to a new generation.

Music is more than entertainment; more than a relic of the past. And the study of music has long outgrown the confines of the conservatory. This week's "Mexican Odyssey" serves as the first step along a path to the future. The Department of Performing Arts at Georgetown University recently established a new undergraduate major in American Musical Culture. The goal of this program is to bridge the fields of "music performance" and "music as a liberal art" through an integrated study of history, cultural studies, theory, and performance. Under the leadership of Joseph Horowitz and Angel Gil-Ordóñez, Post-Classical Ensemble is bringing an innovative approach to contemporary music culture that inspires our students. They are living proof that understanding music is both an artistic and an intellectual achievement.

Through collaborative concerts and conferences, Georgetown and Post-Classical Ensemble are committed to bringing students, scholars, performers and audiences together in new and exciting ways. As partners, we hope to show with events like our "Mexican Odyssey" that music is both a manifestation of multiculturalism in the American World and a creative activity within contemporary society.

Anna H. Celenza
CHAIR, DEPARTMENT OF PERFORMING ARTS
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY



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The Mexican Odyssey

BY JOSEPH HOROWITZ

If historically classical musicians and orchestras in the United States have paid insufficient attention to American music—if the European pedigree has loomed over-large —our ignorance of the concert music of Mexico is as unsurprising as it is extreme. We may know the murals of Diego Rivera. We may know something about his companion Frida Kahlo and her paintings. We may know the novelist Carlos Fuentes (at least by name). As for Mexican music, what we know best is mariachi: guitars, trumpets, sombreros.

Since its debut program, featuring the classic Mexican film *Redes* with music by Silvestre Revueltas (in live performance), Post-Classical Ensemble has stressed the music of the Americas. In fact, Revueltas is by far the composer we have most performed. Last season, we initiated a week-long Revueltas/Chávez festival at the Library of Congress. And our 2006–2007 season included an “Encounters” program devoted to one of Mexico’s leading contemporary composers, Mario Lavista.

The present “Mexican Odyssey” festival, a partnership between Post-Classical Ensemble and Georgetown University, attempts an overview of Mexican music and visual art in the context of a larger conversation about Mexican identity.

* * *

Mexico’s musical odyssey began centuries earlier than American classical music. This is of course because Mexican culture before Columbus remains a vital part of Mexican identity, whereas in the United States the Native American lies outside our sense of who we are. Also, Mexico was conquered by Spaniards for whom music—in the form of church music intended to facilitate religious conversion—mattered far more than it did to our Pilgrims and Puritans.

Though “pre-Columbian” Mexican music is lost—the Spanish colonizers purposefully eradicated it—pre-Columbian artifacts, buildings, and texts remain vividly a part of Mexico. And the *idea* of **pre-Hispanic music** powerfully animates the Mexican musical imagination.

“**Mexican Baroque**”—psalms, motets, masses fostered by Spanish Catholics and Mexican converts—survives as part of a significant body of liturgical music with no equivalent in the United States. Music historians tell us that, when European traditions are transplanted, a necessary early phase in the evolution of a national style is imitative. In the U.S., the two symphonies of John Knowles Paine, composed in the style of Beethoven and Schumann in 1872 and 1880, signified a coming of age. In Mexico, such church composers as **Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla** (1629–1664) established a mastery of Baroque polyphony and antiphony. In the nineteenth century, **Ricardo Castro** (1864–1907), whose career took him to Paris, Berlin, and Leipzig, wrote the first Mexican symphony.

In this narrative, **Manuel Ponce** (1882–1948) is the fulcrum figure. In such works as the orchestral tone poem *Ferial* (1940)—a tapestry of elements Indian, creole, and European, ancient and modern, religious and secular, choreographed in and around a rural church—Old World models remain evident, but the Mexican infusion transcends the superficial. Ponce studied at various times in Italy, Germany, and France; he also, late in life, dedicated himself to exploring and teaching Mexican folk music. Our extensive sampling of Ponce on November 6 reveals a composer of unsuspected scope and weight, an important North American voice.

* * *

Many centuries of Mexican history texture the history of Mexican music. Pre-Hispanic Mexico featured at least four “classical civilizations” beginning in the fourth century; of these, the Mayans by far survived longest. The Aztecs, arriving in central Mexico in the twelfth century, came to dominate a confederation of city states. Re-envisioning Aztec ceremonial music, Carlos Chávez surmised a winds-and-percussion idiom “of great power, implacable in its rhythms, strong and obstinate.”

Hernán Cortés, the conqueror of Mexico, appeared with his eleven vessels in 1519. He was named governor of “New Spain” three years later, having destroyed the Aztec capital Tenochtitlan (site of today’s Mexico City). In the Yucatán, Francisco de Montejo subdued the Mayas in 1546. During three centuries of ensuing Spanish colonial rule, the Catholic Church served as the chief instrument of Spanish culture. Juan de Zumarraga, the first

bishop of Mexico, instructed missionaries to use and teach music as “an indispensable aid in the process of conversion”—and they did; by 1600, 13 liturgical books with music had been published in Mexico.

The Spanish did not eliminate the Indians; rather, in contrast to the effects of our genocidal Indian Wars, Indian and European influences blended. But a caste system privileged an imposed elite. Beginning in 1810, the Mexican War of Independence was ignited by long suppressed Indians and mestizos. Though the Spanish were ousted in 1821, gross social inequalities remained. The reformist presidency of Benito Juárez (1858–1872) was succeeded by the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz (1876–1911). In music, meanwhile, the nineteenth century was dominated by Italian opera; Mexico’s own opera composers included Luis Baca, Cenobio Paniagua, and Melesio Morales. An elegant salon culture of pianist/composers also flourished. Of our festival composers, Ricardo Castro composed for both the opera house and the salon.

The Mexican Revolution, overthrowing Díaz, also banished the most popular of the salon composers: Juventino Rosas (1868–1894). There followed the unstable decades of Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata, of the counter-revolutionary dictator Victoriano Huerta, of the progressive presidencies of Alvaro Obregón and Lázaro Cárdenas. It was Cardenas who in 1938 famously expropriated British and American petroleum holdings. The concomitant musical revolutionaries were **Carlos Chávez** (1899–1978) and **Silvestre Revueltas** (1899–1940); in their different ways, both espoused a radical break with the past, and with European traditions imported or imposed.

Chávez, whose own lineage was part-Indian, expressed “unlimited admiration” for pre-Columbian architecture, sculpture, and painting. Revueltas, born in a rural obscurity, traced his musical lineage to band concerts on the plaza—the sound of which permeates his biting orchestral palette, with its shrill trumpets and booming tuba parts. The smell of the marketplace and a hubbub of loud talking and singing likewise saturate his sonic imagination. Writing from Paris, he once told his wife: “I’d love to perform [my music] here, simply to see the expressions of disgust on their faces.”

In retrospect, both Chávez and Revueltas engaged in a necessary rite of passage. In the US, the nationalist modernism of Copland was followed, after World War II, by international high-modernists like Milton Babbitt and

Elliott Carter. In Mexico, Chávez was likewise succeeded by such “higher” modernists as Julián Carrillo (1876–1965) and **Mario Lavista** (b. 1943), for whom finding “Mexico” was no longer an urgent cause. Carrillo composed in microtones. Lavista masterfully applies his refined sensibility and keen ear to a range of “experimental” procedures. And, just as Babbitt and Carter were followed by composers less exacting in their listening demands, a younger generation of contemporary Mexicans features a range of less esoteric voices—including that of **Ana Lara** (b. 1959).

We are fortunate to have Mario Lavista and Ana Lara as participants in our Mexican Odyssey festival, alongside Gregorio Luke, Barbara Tenenbaum, and John Tutino—all of whom can help align the saga of Mexican culture with the larger enterprise of “Defining Mexico.”

Conference

Defining Mexico

NOVEMBER 1, 2008

MCNEIR HALL, GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

- 12:45 PM **INTRODUCTORY REMARKS:**
ANNA CELENZA (CHAIR, DEPT OF PERFORMING ARTS)
 & **JOSEPH HOROWITZ**
- 1 PM **JOHN TUTINO ON “MAKING MEXICO: NATIVE LEGACIES,
 SPANISH ENERGIES, NORTH AMERICAN HISTORIES”**
- This fresh vision of Mexican history proposes two broad trajectories: a “Mesoamerican” tradition built on indigenous states, religious institutions, and strong rural communities that persisted through Spanish colonial times to help shape modern Mexico, and a “North American” tradition grounded in native egalitarianism before the conquest, ceding to dynamic commercial ways in the colonial era—ways that still mark northern Mexico and the U.S. Southwest.
- 2 PM **GREGORIO LUKE ON “ASSEMBLING MEXICAN CULTURE”**
- In what ways does the centuries’ old trajectory of Mexican visual art and music elaborate a search for national identity? How does Mexican history—including the Spanish Conquest and the Revolution—infiltrate Mexican culture?
A lecture with slides and recorded music
- 3 PM **COFFEE BREAK**

3:15 PM MARIO LAVISTA AND ANA LARA "ON BEING MEXICAN"

Two leading Mexican composers reflect upon Mexican identity, in conversation with Joseph Horowitz.

4:15 PM ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION:

Angel Gil-Ordóñez

Joseph Horowitz

Ana Lara

Mario Lavista

Gregorio Luke

Barbara Tenenbaum

John Tutino

5:15 PM WINE AND CHEESE RECEPTION

Choral Concert

"The Voice of Mexico"

NOVEMBER 1, 2008, 6 PM

MCNEIR HALL, GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY CHAMBER SINGERS

Frederick Binkholder, conductor

Gregorio Luke, host

FRANCISCO LÓPEZ CAPILLAS (1608–1674)

Laudate Dominum

Aufer a nobis

HERNANDO FRANCO (1532–1674)

Magnificat (quinti toni)

ANONYMOUS (PUEBLA I, SOLS. 70–71)

Et incarnates est

JUAN GUTIÉRREZ DE PADILLA

(CA. 1590–1664)

*Exsultate Justi in Domino**

*Vidi turbam magnam**

*A la Xácara xacarilla**

LUIS SANDI (1905–1996)

Quisiera te pedir,

Nidida, cuenta

GERÓNIMO GONZÁLEZ (CA. 1570–CA. 1629)

Serenissima una Noche

GASPAR FERNÁNDEZ (1566–1629)

Xicochi xicochi

JUAN GARCÍA DE ZESPEDES (CA. 1619–1678)

Convidando está la noche

**Translations on page 15–16*

Concert**The Mexican Odyssey**

A traversal of Mexican music and visual art, with visual accompaniment



POST-CLASSICAL ENSEMBLE

ANGEL GIL-ORDÓÑEZ, MUSIC DIRECTOR

JOSEPH HOROWITZ, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

NOVEMBER 6, 2008, 7:30 TO 10:30

SIDNEY HARMAN HALL

THE HARMAN CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Pedro Carboné, piano

Roberto Limón, guitar

Georgetown University Chamber Singers;

Frederick Binkholder, director

Gregorio Luke, commentator

Angel Gil-Ordóñez, conductor

Produced by Joseph Horowitz

CARLOS CHÁVEZ (1899-1978)

Xochipilli (1940)
with replicas of pre-Hispanic instruments
furnished by Dr. Chalón Rodríguez

JUAN GUTIÉRREZ DE PADILLA
(CA. 1590-1664)

*Exsultate Iusti in Domino**
*Vidi Turbam Magnam**
*A la Xácara, Xacarilla**

RICARDO CASTRO (1864-1907)

Vals capricho (1901)

MANUEL PONCE (1882-1948)

Balada Mexicana (1914)

Intermezzo III: Andantino
malinconico (1921)

Sonatina (1932)

Semplice, in tempo d'Allegretto

Andante, alla maniera d'un

Notturmo

Allegro

INTERMISSION

MANUEL PONCE

Scherzino mexicano (1909)

Variations and Fugue on "La Folia"
(1929)

CARLOS CHÁVEZ

Three Pieces for solo guitar (1923)

Largo

Tranquilo

Un poco mosso

**Translations on page 15-16*

(CONTINUED)

MARIO LAVISTA (B. 1943)

Three Secular Dances for cello
and piano (1994)
Lento flessibile ed espressivo
Allegro giocoso e leggiro
Lentissimo. Presto delirando

ANA LARA (B. 1954)

Serenata (2005; East Coast
premiere)
I Trio
II Variation
III Trio II
IV Romance
V Adagio
VI (Non) Adagio

SILVESTRE REVUELTAS (1899–1940)

Homenaje a Federico García Lorca
(1936)
Baile
Duelo
Son

POST-CONCERT DISCUSSION

Translations

JUAN GUTIÉRREZ DE PADILLA (CA. 1590–1664)

Exsultate Iusti in Domino

Shout for joy in the Lord, all who love justice! For praise is fitting from the right-hearted. Give thanks to the Lord on the lyre, sing his praises on the ten-stringed harp. Sing a new song to him; sing well, and with a loud voice! For the word of the Lord is true, he is faithful in all his works. He loves compassion and right judgment, all creation abounds in his mercy. By the word of the Lord the heavens were established; by the breath of his mouth, all that they hold.

Vidi Turbam Magnam

I saw a great multitude, which none could number, out of all nations, standing before the throne.

A la Xácara, Xacarilla

To this dance-feast and song-fest,
though it be but village fare
I bring my song with style and flair
as if a platter of the best.

To the dance that tells a tale,
what's happening, the latest hit:
against a thousand songs to praise
the Birth, this is the best of all.

Tell the tale, tell it, then:
that the Most High became most low!
Tell this story in dance and song,
that Love exceeded nature's bounds.

For now and always, on this night
all that's wrong is held at bay;
and to set right others' wrongs
a child of grace is born to us.

If my voice could reach this king,
O! How well I'd sing a song
like no song ever sung before
in praise of this wondrous child!

With permission of the muses—
Here's a song whose tale is true;
like burning rays its message hits you.
Listen up, kids—I mean you!
At last a praise-song of a hero
whose praise began when he was born.
Everybody danced for joy
on seeing him on earth that morn.

Reflected in María's eyes
a brilliant sun begins to rise,
sending fire throughout her heavens
to reveal a dawn beyond all dawns
with the beauty of the ages
in her but few years of age,
For this sun that so adorns her
is the Godhead Sun himself.

To this dance-feast and song-fest...

Notes on the Program

BY JOSEPH HOROWITZ

The first attempt to present a historical survey of Mexican music to a U.S. audience took place at New York's Museum of Modern Art in May 1940. These were concerts organized by **Carlos Chávez** in conjunction with an exhibition of Mexican art spanning from pre-Hispanic times to the present day. This evening's concert is similarly conceived. Its central purpose is to counteract stereotypes of Mexican culture as a primarily Hispanic enterprise. Not only does Mexico's cultural legacy begin centuries before the Spaniards showed up; its subsequent course has at all times been remarkably polyglot: a blending of disparate influences.

As our co-host, Gregorio Luke, puts it: "Mexican culture is a fusion. A strong indigenous element is always present. Ancient Mexico is not just mythic." Mr. Luke, who curated the visual component for tonight's event, further comments that music has been exceptionally important throughout the entire history of Mexico—that before the coming of the Spanish, music was inherent to Indian ritual; that with the advent of Catholicism "Mexico had as many churches and cathedrals as Italy, and every one had its own music;" that when liberal reformers condemned the church and its liturgical repertoire, a significant secular Romantic tradition resulted; that with the Mexican Revolutions there arose in music "a fresh vision of what Mexican culture could be: not European." In each of these incarnations, moreover, Mexican music richly resonates with Mexican painting and sculpture.

Pre-Hispanic Mexico

Our program begins, then, with a consideration of pre-Hispanic artifacts and instruments and with a work introduced as part of the Museum of Modern Art's Mexican survey of 1940: *Xochipilli* by Carlos Chávez. Subtitled "An Imagined Aztec Music," *Xochipilli* at its premiere included instruments created as facsimiles of pre-Columbian drums, rattles, flutes and whistles. Nowadays, the work is normally given with modern winds and percussion. Tonight's performance, however, utilizes replicas of Axtec

instruments—Ayotl (turtle carapace), Atecocoli-Quiqitzli (conch shell horn, in place of a trombone), Tlapitzalli (flute of clay, bone, cane or wood), Teponatzli (horizontal “slit” drum), Omichicahuatzli (rasp of serrated wood or bone), and Chichtli-Caililiztli (whistle)—supplied by Dr. Chalin Rodriguez. In Aztec lore, *Xochipili* is the Flower Prince, mythic patron of music, games, dancing, and love, and representative of the summer. Chavez’s seven-minute “Aztec music” appeals as much to the listener’s imagining eye as to the imagining ear: we “hear” Mexico’s living past: a visitation of palaces and canals, chanting priests and pounding instrumentalists, standing shadowless in the brazen sun.

Mexican Baroque and Romantic

Of the “Mexican Baroque,” we sample three choral works by **Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla**, who emigrated to Mexico in 1622 and was chapel master at Puebla beginning in 1629. Roughly a third of Padilla’s church music catalogue consisted of works not in Latin but in Spanish—as is the case with one of the three Padilla selections we hear: *A la Xácara xacarilla*. This is a Christmas *villancico*—an ibeian poetic genre dating from the Renaissance—composed in 1653. Gutiérrez de Padilla composed a cycle of villancicos for Christmas Matins in the 1650s.

If Mexican Baroque has been a startling discovery of the past decade or so (there now exists a plethora of CDs of Mexican church music from before 1800), Mexico’s nineteenth century Romantic salon tradition remains unknown in the U.S. A wealth of Mexican waltzes includes *Sobre las olas* by Juventino Rosas—a work so popular that we don’t realize that this ever-popular dance in Central European style was composed by a Mexican. The two Romantic piano works we hear Pedro Cabone perform are more substantial, both musically and pianistically. **Ricardo Castro** was the first Mexican to compose a symphony; he also wrote operas and a piano concerto. The *Vals capricho* we hear subjects a casual Latin dance tune to a generic arsenal of refined keyboard flourishes.

With the *Balada mexicana* we encounter one of the great names of Mexican music: **Manuel Ponce**, who both inhabited the salon world of Rosas and Castro and, later on, preceded Chavez and Silvestre Revueltas in the quest for an indigenous Mexican concert style. Ponce first went to

Europe in 1904; he eventually studied in Italy and Germany. In Mexico, he became an important and versatile musical presence as composer, pianist, teacher, and editor. In the years after World War I, he was a pioneering champion of Debussy (Chávez played *Claire de lune* at an all-Debussy recital given by Ponce’s pupils in 1912). Between 1925 and 1933 he lived in Paris, where he fell under the influence of Paul Dukas. Upon returning to Mexico City, he served (at various times) as director of the conservatory, editor of *Cultura musical*, and—in support of the burgeoning nationalist movement—teacher of folklore at the newly founded music school of the university.

As a stylist, Ponce was at all times highly adaptive: he changed with the times. Ponce’s prolific output for piano ranges from brilliant showpieces to sonatas and sober contrapuntal studies. Tonight’s *Balada* is memorably elevated by a Lisztian poetic strain. His late keyboard works—such as the memorably atmospheric *Intermezzo III* and *Sonatina* we hear tonight—explore a highly chromatic, almost non-tonal idiom. For guitar, similarly, Ponce ranged from cameos such as tonight’s *Scherzino mexicano* to the heroic *Variations and Fugue on “La Folia”* we also hear.

Ponce and the Guitar

In the opinion of the guitar historian John Duarte, the “La Folia” Variations crown a body of work “unsurpassed for its poetic quality and variety” in the guitar repertoire. Like Ponce’s superb guitar concerto (*Concierto del sur*), the Variations were composed for Andrés Segovia (the pioneering figure in the advent of the concert guitar as we know it today). There are 20 variations in all, of which the last is the most inward; it sets up the climactic fugue and its triple-*forte* climax. It is no wonder that this music has been called the “Old Testament” or “Bible” of the guitar. Segovia never recorded the entire 22-minute work. The version we hear tonight from Roberto Limón is also abridged. Mr. Limón comments:

Segovia asked Ponce for variations on a Renaissance theme. He had in mind something in the style of Mauro Giuliani (1781–1829). What he got instead is a work that encyclopedically samples all the traditional possibilities of the guitar. Ponce mailed the variations one by one to Segovia, with the expectation that Segovia would choose among them. Segovia

surprised Ponce by having all 20 published. For me, not all the variations are on the same high level; my version of the piece lasts from 13 to 14 minutes. Segovia asked Ponce to recompose the theme (which comes first) in a more florid style and this is the version of the theme Segovia recorded. I prefer the original setting of the theme, which is very simple and straightforward.

American classical music never produced anything like the composer of *Balada mexicana*, or the *Concierto del sur*, or the “La Folia” Variations. How is it possible that we do not better know this music from our own continent?

Carlos Chávez and Nationalism

Composer, conductor, pianist, scholar, and arts administrator, **Carlos Chávez** was for decades the veritable embodiment of Mexican music. His childhood piano teacher Manuel Ponce approvingly observed in him “the desire to be original.” A driving force, he built and led the first stable orchestra in Mexico; as principal conductor (1928–1949) he led first performances of 82 Mexican works, many of which he commissioned. He also served as director of the National Conservatory and of the National Institute of Fine Arts. His early travels in France, Germany, and Austria (1922–23) acquainted him with the new music of Stravinsky and Schoenberg—which he proceeded to introduce at home. A frequent guest conductor of American orchestras (he was at one time considered a possible candidate for the music directorship of the New York Philharmonic), he was closely associated with Aaron Copland and lived in New York from 1926 to 1928.

Tonight’s **Three Pieces for guitar** were composed by Chávez for Andrés Segovia—who elected never to perform them. Their style, anathema to Segovia, is modernist, nationalist, and severely “Indianist.” They invoke an indigenous idiom (whether pre- or post-Hispanic) with seeming authenticity; comparison to Bartók is not irrelevant. For Roberto Limón, No. 1 is a “ritual invocation.” No. 2 (Tranquillo) is a song, No. 3 an explosive dance bristling with shifting accents and meters.

Modernism: Lavista and Lara

Mario Lavista, born in Mexico City in 1943, is among the most prominent contemporary Mexican composers, and a leading representative

of high modernism in Mexican music. His teachers at the National Conservatory included Carlos Chávez, Héctor Quintanar, and Rodolfo Halffter. In the late 1970s Lavista began to pursue an interest in extended instrumental techniques, exploring unusual timbre possibilities. *Three Secular Dances*, written in 1994, includes as an epigraph a line written by the naturalist and author Gerald Durrell: “The Elizabethan lovers of the animal world are the birds: they dress up with magnificent robes, they dance and they exhibit themselves.” The composer explains:

The *Three Secular Dances* for cello and piano attempt to make audible three moments—that escape any descriptive purpose—of the courtship of imaginary birds. It is a triptych that starts with a slow movement where the two instruments dialogue within a slow-moving harmonic field. The second movement (fast) presents an ostinato on the note—heard first on the cello and later on the piano—interspersed with a melodic counterpoint of a different metric that is constantly changing. The last movement (slow-fast) starts with an introduction of homophonic texture and a melody of cello harmonics that leads to a three-voice canon. Each melodic line has its own independent metric structure that never coincides with the other two, at times giving the illusion of moving at different speeds.

The resulting music—at least for this listener—acquires an exquisitely ritualistic, ceremonial aspect.

Ana Lara initially studied exclusively in Mexico City. Her teachers at the National Conservatory included Mario Lavista. In 1993–94 she was composer-in-residence of the National Orchestra of Mexico, for which she composed the apocalyptic *Angels of Darkness and Dawn*. The *Serenata* for wind quintet and string quintet, from 2005, was composed for a summer music camp in Oaxaca. Lara writes:

With the excuse of Mozart’s 250th anniversary, I decided to undertake a little homage by taking some elements of his Serenade for 13 Instruments [the famous Grand Partita, K. 361]. The idea of these brief pieces was to initiate the young participants in extended instrumental techniques through a not too complicated language. The difficulty of the movements varies, so that each instrument has its moment of brilliance. Each movement is based on minimal fragments of

movements from Mozart's Serenade. These references may range from a cadence to a melodic gesture.

The resulting 10-minute work comprises a series of cameos, each one an atmospheric soundscape intimate and concise. Movement one, for all 10 players, is a kind of chordal prelude. Movement two, for the five winds is perky and highlights the playful bassoon. Movements three (flute, clarinet, horn, double bass) floats. Romance (all 10 players), coming next, is aromatic and nocturnal. The two final movements are marked "Adagio" (oboe, violin, horn) and "(non) Adagio" (all 10 players), the last a postlude departing aloft.

Revueltas the Revolutionary

If there is a Mexican composer whose "time has come," it is surely **Silvestre Revueltas**, of whom the master Mexican poet Octavio Paz wrote: "Silvestre, like all real people, was a battlefield. Inside Silvestre lived numerous interlocutors, many passions, many capacities, weaknesses as well as refinement . . . This wealth of possibilities, divinations, and impulses give his [music]—the American continent's most important—the sound of a primal chord, like the first light that escapes a world in formation." If such praise sounds exaggerated, so has been his neglect. In spirit, Revueltas resembles Diego Rivera and other Mexican muralists of his generation (his brother Fermin was himself a muralist of consequence). He identified with "the people" and with the political left. His was a larger-than-life personality, hard-working and hard-drinking; seized by creative demons, he could compose for days without food or sleep. For Aaron Copland, Revueltas was "the type of inspired composer in the sense that Schubert was the inspired composer. That is to say, his music is a spontaneous outpouring, a strong expression of his inner emotions. There is nothing premeditated . . . about him." Tonight's three-movement *Homenaje a Federico Garcia Lorca* is a signature Revueltas work, about which the Revueltas scholar Roberto Kolb has written:

The draft of the first movement, "Baile" ("Dance"), bears the subtitle "cuasi [sic] indio" ("quasi-Indian"). Revueltas draws melodic and rhythmic inspiration from surviving ethnic melodies which were presumed to have pre-Hispanic origins. The main theme flows forth without a trace

of Revueltas's usual harshness and strident contrapuntal noise. The third movement—"Son"—employs the popular musical genre from Los Altos de Jalisco named *son*. It is presented here as a dominant, pervasive theme, leaving behind an unquestionable Mexicanistic taste.

It is hard to understand today why artists the world over became so emotionally involved with the Civil War in Spain. For many Mexican artists and intellectuals, it was surely the disillusion caused by the Mexican Revolution, whose ideals they considered to have been betrayed. Therefore, they put all their hopes for change in the arms of the Spanish Republic. Of the Mexicans who went to Spain, it was Revueltas who displayed the greatest devotion to the Republican cause, and it was also he who suffered the most from its eventual defeat. Spain was very much in his heart when he composed the "Duelo" ("Mourning")—the middle movement of his homage to Federico Garcia Lorca. The Republic had meant everything to Revueltas, and its defeat robbed him of the energy to go on living.

About the Participants

Post-Classical Ensemble, called by *The Washington Post* “a welcome, edgy addition to the musical life of Washington,” was created by Angel Gil-Ordóñez and Joseph Horowitz in 2001, and made its official debut in May 2003. “More than an orchestra,” it breaks out of classical music, with its implied notion of a high culture remote from popular art. Its concerts regularly incorporate folk song, dance, film, poetry, and commentary in order to serve existing audiences hungry for deeper engagement and to cultivate adventurous new listeners. The Ensemble made its sold-out Kennedy Center debut in fall 2005 in “Celebrating *Don Quixote*,” featuring a commissioned production of Manuel de Falla’s sublime puppet opera *Master Peter’s Puppet Show*. In 2008–2009 the Ensemble acquires a principal DC venue: the new Harman Center for the Arts in downtown Washington. In addition, it begins an ambitious Educational Partnership with Georgetown University. It also returns to the Kennedy Center and to the Strathmore Music Center. Its second Naxos DVD, featuring the classic 1939 documentary *The City* with a freshly recorded Aaron Copland soundtrack, will be released in January 2009. The Ensemble’s concerts have been nationally distributed both by National Public Radio and WFMT Chicago.

Angel Gil-Ordóñez is the former associate conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra of Spain, and has conducted throughout Europe, the United States, and Latin America. In the U.S., he has appeared with the American Composers Orchestra, Opera Colorado, the Pacific Symphony, the Hartford Symphony, the Brooklyn Philharmonic, and the National Gallery Orchestra in Washington, D.C. Abroad, Mr. Gil-Ordóñez has been heard with the Munich Philharmonic, Solistes de Berne, at the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival, and at Bellas Artes National Theatre in Mexico City. In summer 2000, he toured the major music festivals of Spain with the Valencia Symphony Orchestra in the Spanish premiere of Leonard Bernstein’s *Mass*. Born in Madrid, he worked closely with Sergiu Celibidache for more than six years in Germany. Mr. Gil-Ordóñez has recorded four CDs devoted to Spanish composers, in addition to

Post-Classical Ensemble’s Virgil Thomson CD/DVD on Naxos. Mr. Gil-Ordóñez also holds the positions of director of orchestral studies at Wesleyan University in Connecticut and music director of the Wesleyan Ensemble of the Americas. In 2006, the King of Spain awarded him the country’s highest civilian decoration: the Royal Order of Queen Isabella.

Joseph Horowitz has long been a pioneer in classical music programming, beginning with his tenure as artistic advisor for the annual Schubertiade at New York’s 92nd Street Y. As executive director of the Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra, resident orchestra of the Brooklyn Academy of Music, he received national attention for “The Russian Stravinsky,” “American Transcendentalists,” “Flamenco” and other festivals exploring the folk roots of concert works. Now an artistic advisor to various American orchestras, he has created more than three dozen interdisciplinary music festivals since 1985. Called “our nation’s leading scholar of the symphony orchestra” by Charles Olton, former president of the American Symphony Orchestra League, Mr. Horowitz is also the award-winning author of seven books dealing with the institutional history of classical music in the United States. *Classical Music in America: A History* (2005) was named one of the best books of the year by *The Economist*. A former New York Times music critic, Mr. Horowitz writes regularly for the *Times Literary Supplement* (UK). He also contributes frequently to scholarly journals. Last season, he inaugurated the New York Philharmonic’s “Inside the Music” series, writing, hosting, and producing a presentation on Tchaikovsky’s *Pathétique* Symphony. His *Artists in Exile: How Refugees from War and Revolution Transformed the American Performing Arts*, was published by HarperCollins in 2008 and will appear in paperback this spring. His Web site is josephhorowitz.com.

The Georgetown University Chamber Singers is a select, 16-voice ensemble dedicated to the performance of exceptional choral repertoire. The choir functions as an integral part of the growing and increasingly unified choral music program at Georgetown. Under the direction of Frederick Binkholder, the Chamber Singers perform at least one formal concert per semester on the Georgetown Campus and regularly represent the University at off-campus ceremonies and concerts.

Frederick Binkholder is in his 8th year as the Music Director of the Chamber Singers of Georgetown University—an ensemble whose musical interpretations have been described by the Washington Post as “lithe and lovely.” He has served on the music faculties of Washington University, St. Louis Conservatory, Mercer University and Georgia State University. His current musical appointments also include the Artistic Director of the Capitol Hill Chorale and Music Minister at St. Alban’s Episcopal Church.

Pedro Carboné, a frequent guest with Post-Classical Ensemble, has been hailed as “one of the best Spanish pianists of our time” (*Ritmo*, Madrid). *The Washington Post* called him “a major artist” after his Kennedy Center debut. He has since performed widely in the United States and has frequently been featured in live performance on National Public Radio. In New York City he has performed as soloist with the Brooklyn Philharmonic, the American Composers Orchestra, and the Perspectives Ensemble.

Ana Lara, a native of Mexico City, studied at the National Conservatory of Music (where her teachers included Mario Lavista) and the Warsaw Academy of Music. In 1989 she founded the Mexican Society of New Music. In 1992–94 she was composer-in-residence of the National Orchestra of Mexico. She is currently Artistic Director of the Contemporary Music Program at the Festival Internacional Cervantino. Her recent commissions include a work for organ and orchestra, to be premiered this season by the Pacific Symphony Orchestra.

Mario Lavista, born in Mexico City, studied at the National Conservatory and the Schola Cantorum in Paris. Upon his return to Mexico he founded Quanta, a collective improvisation group. In 1972, he worked at the electronic music studio of radio and television in Tokyo. In 1982, he founded Pauta, one of the most important music journals in Latin America, and has served as its chief editor ever since. In 1987 he received a Guggenheim Fellowship for his opera *Aura*, based on the short story by Carlos Fuentes. Since 1998, he has been a member of EI Colegio Nacional.

Roberto Limón is a Mexican guitarist of wide experience. He has appeared as a soloist with the Pacific, San Antonio, and San Diego

Symphony Orchestras, the Leningrad State Chamber Orchestra, and the Seoul Philharmonic. He has also been a member of the Angel Romero Quartet. Of his recordings, “Tango Mata Danzon Mata Tango” was named Best Album 2001 by the Union de Criticos de Musica y Teatro in Mexico City. He is also director of the Centro Hispano Americano de Guitarra and the executive director of the Orquesta de Baja California, both headquartered in Tijuana, Mexico.

Gregorio Luke is an expert on Mexican and Latin American art and culture. He is the former Director of the Museum of Latin American Art, Consul of Cultural Affairs of Mexico in Los Angeles, and First Secretary of the Mexican Embassy in Washington, D.C. He has given over 1,000 lectures at such institutions as the Library of Congress, the Smithsonian, the San Diego Art Museum, the Detroit Institute of Art, and at universities including Harvard, Columbia, and Georgetown. In 1995 he received the Irving Leonard Award from the Hispanic Society of the Library of Congress.

Barbara Tenenbaum, Mexican culture specialist in the Hispanic Division of the Library of Congress, specializes in Mexico’s economic development from independence to revolution. She is the author of *The Politics of Penury: Debts and Taxes in Mexico, 1821–1856*, and editor-in-chief of *The Encyclopedia of Latin American History and Culture*. She is the recipient of the Jose Taribio Median Award of the Seminar for the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials and the Meritorious Service Award from the Conference of Latin American History.

John Tutino is Chairman and Associate Professor in the History Department at Georgetown University, where he also serves as Director of the Americas Initiatives, an interdisciplinary research consortium. Tutino is the author/editor of two books: *From Insurrection to Revolution in Mexico: Social Bases of Agrarian Violence, 1750–1940* (Princeton University Press, 1986) and *Cycles of Conflict, Centuries of Change: Crisis, Reform, and Revolution in Mexico* (Duke University Press, 2007). His *Making a New World, Forging Atlantic Capitalism in the Bajío and Spanish North America* is about to go into production with Duke University Press.

Post-Classical Ensemble

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JOSEPH HOROWITZ, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Flute	David Lonkevich	
Piccolo	John Lagerquist	
Clarinets	David Jones	
Bassoon	Don Shore	
Horn	Mark Hughes	
Trumpets	Tim White	
	Chris Gekker	
Trombone	Lee Rogers	
Tuba	Mike Bunn	
Percussion	Bill Richards	Greg Akagi
	John Spirtas	Jonathan Rance
	Tom Jones	Doug Wallace
Piano	Naoko Takao	
Violin	Oleg Rylatko	
	Eric Lee	
Viola	Paul Swantek	
Cello	Evelyn Elsing	
Bass	Jeff Koczela	
Personnel Manager	Susan Kelly	

Georgetown University Chamber Singers

FREDERICK BINKHOLDER, DIRECTOR

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Post-Classical Ensemble next at Georgetown University



Copland and The Cold War

Saturday, January 31, 2009, at 7:00 pm
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