

Carlos Chávez

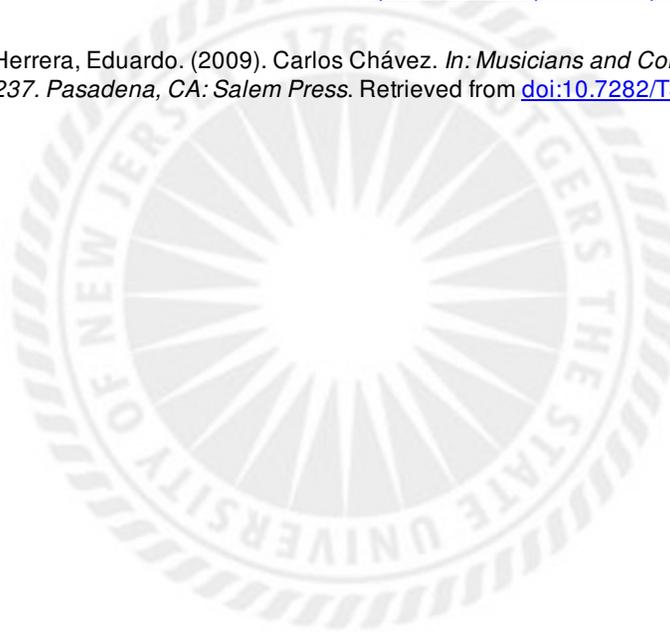
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Further Reading

Charles, Ray, and David Ritz. *Brother Ray: Ray Charles' Own Story*. New York: Da Capo Press, 2004. Charles tells the story of his life (until 1978) in his own words. Written in a conversational style, this book is especially helpful in understanding the singer's early life.

Duggleby, John. *Uh Huh! The Story of Ray Charles*. New York: Morgan Reynolds, 2005. This excellent biography builds a convincing case for the significant contributions Charles made to twentieth century music, influencing the Beatles, Presley, and other musical icons. Includes color photographs.

Evans, Mike. *Ray Charles and the Birth of Soul*. London: Omnibus Press, 2007. Evans, who has written books on the Beatles and Presley, uses interviews with Charles to tell his life story. Since it was published after his death, the book covers Charles's entire life. Includes discography.

Lydon, Michael. *Ray Charles: Man and Music*. New York: Routledge, 2004. A veteran music journalist adds fresh details to Charles's life story, covering the performer as well as the offstage man. Includes photographs and bibliography.

See also: Blakey, Art; Burke, Solomon; Cash, Johnny; Cole, Nat King; Costello, Elvis; James, Etta; John, Sir Elton; Jones, Quincy; Jordan, Louis; King, B. B.; Morrison, Van; Nelson, Willie; Pickett, Wilson; Presley, Elvis; Rush, Otis; Sinatra, Frank.

Carlos Chávez

Mexican classical composer

Chávez's music balances traditional forms with intense chromaticism, nonrepetitive development, polyrhythms, contrapuntal textures, and a characteristic Mexican sound. He held significant government positions in the arts.

Born: June 13, 1899; Mexico City, Mexico

Died: August 2, 1978; Mexico City, Mexico

Also known as: Carlos Antonio de Padua Chávez y Ramírez (full name)

Principal works

BALLETS (music and libretto): *El fuego nuevo*, unstaged; written 1921 (*The New Fire*); *Caballos de vapor*, 1932 (*Horsepower*); *La hija de Cólquide*, 1946 (*Dark Meadow*; libretto by Martha Graham); *Los cuatro soles*, 1951.

CHAMBER WORKS: *Sonatina*, 1924 (for cello and piano); *Energía*, 1925; *Sonata No. 3*, 1930 (for four horns); *Soli I*, 1933; *Toccata*, 1941 (for six percussionists); *Xochipilli: An Imagined Aztec Music*, 1941 (for wind and percussion instruments); *Violin Concerto*, 1950; *Invention*, 1960 (for strings); *Soli II*, 1961 (for wind quintet); *Soli IV*, 1966.

CHORAL WORKS: *Imágen Mexicana*, 1923; *El Sol*, 1934 (*The Sun*); *Ah! Freedom*, 1942; *Prometheus Bound*, 1956.

OPERA (music): *Panfilo and Lauretta*, 1957 (libretto by Chester Kallman; based on Giovanni Boccaccio's *Fiammetta*; revised as *The Visitors*, 1973).

ORCHESTRAL WORKS: *Symphony No. 1*, 1933 (*Sinfonía de Antígona*); *Chapultepec*, 1935 (for a band); *Symphony No. 2*, 1935 (*Sinfonía India*); *Concerto for Piano with Orchestra*, 1938; *Toccata para orquesta*, 1947; *Symphony No. 4*, 1953 (*Sinfonía romántica*); *Symphony No. 3*, 1954; *Symphony No. 5*, 1953 (for string orchestra); *Symphony No. 6*, 1961; *Resonancias*, 1964; *Soli III*, 1965; *Pirámide*, 1968; *Mañanas mexicanas*, 1974 (for a band); *Tzintzuntzan*, 1974 (for a band); *Zandunga Serenade*, 1976 (for a band).

PIANO WORKS: *Sonata No. 1*, 1917 (*Fantasia*); *Sonata No. 2*, 1919; *Ten Preludes*, 1937; *Sonata No. 4*, 1941; *Miniatura: Homenaje a Carl Deis*, 1942; *Danza de la pluma*, 1943; *Sonata No. 5*, 1960; *Sonata No. 6*, 1961.

WRITINGS OF INTEREST: *Toward a New Music: Music and Electricity*, 1937; *Musical Thought*, 1961.

The Life

Carlos Antonio de Padua Chávez y Ramírez (CHAH-vehz ee rah-MIH-rehz) was born to Juvenicia Ramírez, the principal of a school for young women, and Agustín Chávez, an inventor who died in 1904. His youth was framed by the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920), a period of intense political and social turmoil. When Chávez was around nine years old, he started studying piano with his

brother Manuel and later with Asunción Parra. Between 1910 and 1914, he received piano lessons from the famous composer Manuel María Ponce, and between 1915 and 1920, he received piano lessons from Pedro Luis Ogazón. Chávez started composing for the piano by the age of ten, and he took lessons in harmony from Juan B. Fuentes. A determined autodidact, Chávez decided not to seek the instruction of a composition teacher; instead, he studied on his own the works of Ludwig van Beethoven, Richard Wagner, and Claude Debussy. Significant during his formative years were his family's frequent trips to Tlaxcala, where he came in contact with indigenous Native American music.

Chávez married the pianist Otilia Ortiz on September 1, 1922, and soon after they left to tour Europe for seven months. In Germany, the firm Bote und Bock accepted two of his piano pieces for publication, and in France the composer Paul Dukas encouraged him to continue incorporating popular music in his compositions. Back in North America, he traveled to New York, where he met Edgard Varèse, at the time one of the most visible proponents of musical modernism. Varèse commissioned him to write a chamber work, *Energía*, which he finished in 1925.

Back in Mexico, Chávez organized a series of concerts of new music between 1924 and 1926, featuring compositions by Béla Bartók, Arnold Schoenberg, Igor Stravinsky, and Edgard Varèse. Around this time, he finished the ballet *Los cuatro soles*, which dealt with Aztec mythology. Avoiding dependence on indigenous themes, the piece presented Native American sonorities, and it included indigenous percussion instruments in the orchestra. In 1926 Chávez traveled again to New York, where he worked in collaboration with muralist Diego Rivera on another ballet, *Horsepower*.

When Chávez returned to Mexico in 1928, the Musicians' Union asked him to direct the new Orquesta Sinfónica de México. Chávez was able to establish the first long-standing orchestra in the country, remaining its musical director for twenty-one seasons. In addition, in 1928 Chávez was appointed director of the National Conservatory of Music, where he reformed what he saw as an old-fashioned education. He developed courses in free composition, and among his students were Candelario Huizar and Silvestre Revueltas, as well as

the Grupo de los Cuatro: Daniel Ayala, Blas Galindo, Salvador Contreras, and José Pablo Moncayo. Chávez also created in the conservatory the Academy of Investigation to collect and catalog indigenous music from Mexico, and he started the music journal *Música, revista mexicana*. In 1932 Chávez visited the RCA Victor studios in New Jersey and the Bell Telephone Laboratories in New York, and this gave birth to his book *Toward a New Music: Music and Electricity*.

In 1933 Chávez accepted the position of chief of the department of fine arts at the Secretariat of Public Education, where he oversaw programs in music, dance, and the arts, and he promoted interest in popular and indigenous Mexican culture. By 1940 Chávez's visibility in the United States led Nelson Rockefeller, at the time coordinator of the Office of Inter-American Affairs for the U.S. State Department, to invite Chávez to organize a series of concerts for an exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. At his request for a piece incorporating indigenous instruments Chávez composed *Xochipilli: An Imagined Aztec Music* for six percussion instruments and four wind instruments.



Carlos Chávez. (Library of Congress)

Chávez was inducted in the prestigious Colegio Nacional in 1943, and this provided him unprecedented governmental support. Together with other Mexican and expatriate Spanish composers, Chávez created the journal *Nuestra Música* and the publishing house Ediciones Mexicanas de Música. In 1947 the newly elected president of Mexico, Miguel Alemán, appointed Chávez to direct a new administrative body for the arts, the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes (INBA). Within the INBA, Chávez created a new orchestra, the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional, which he guest conducted until 1971. His administrative duties slowed down Chávez's compositional production, although he finished his Violin Concerto before his retirement in 1952.

The years between 1953 and 1961 were quite prolific for Chávez, both as a composer and as a teacher. During this period he finished the last four of his six symphonies and several other pieces. During this time, he gave summer courses at Tanglewood in 1953, he had a lectureship at the University of Buffalo, and he held the Charles Eliot Norton Poetic Chair at Harvard University between 1958 and 1959. The lectures given at Harvard were eventually published in 1961 as *Musical Thought*.

In 1959 Chávez started a series of composition workshops in the National Conservatory. Among his most prominent students were Eduardo Mata, Hector Quintanar, and Mario Lavista. As the 1960's advanced, Chávez's compositions moved toward the progressive and even experimental. Works such as *Resonancias* for orchestra and *Soli III*, for bassoon, trumpet, viola, timpani and orchestra, present high chromaticism, atonality, and they exemplify what he called nonrepetitive procedures.

Always a critic of tradition-bound education, Chávez lectured in 1969 regarding the substandard teaching of the National Conservatory and the poor direction of the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional. Following this criticism, President Luis Echeverría appointed Chávez in 1971 to develop a national plan for music. Chávez assumed the position of head of the music department at INBA and the direction of the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional. A strike by orchestra members who did not agree with Chávez's policies and the lack of support from the government that had appointed him caused his resignation from both positions. During the 1970's, Chávez continued composing and revising earlier works,

and his indefatigable interest in teaching continued with lectureships in several universities and colleges in the United States and England. Weakened during the last couple of years of his life, Chávez died of cancer on August 2, 1978.

The Music

Chávez's music helped define Mexican nationalist art music in the mid-twentieth century, although his compositions were strongly embedded in the classical and Romantic traditions of Western Europe. His traditional forms and intense polyphonic textures that privilege counterpoint over harmonic constructions show a highly intellectual compositional process. At the same time, although his music adopts elements from Mexican indigenous and popular music sources, he avoids the common cliché of quoting folkloric melodies. The nationalistic tendency in Chávez's compositional output peaks in the early 1930's. Compositions such as *El Sol*, *Chapultepec*, and the successful *Sinfonía India* show nationalist topics, musical materials, and texts deriving from both Native American and revolutionary Mexican sources. Nevertheless, Chávez's creative output was not only confined to nationalistic pieces. Works such as his *Sinfonía de Antígona*, *Soli I*, the Concerto for Piano with Orchestra, and even the *Sinfonía India* show a particular alignment to the neoclassicism of Paul Hindemith, Stravinsky and Aaron Copland.

El fuego nuevo. Chávez's earliest compositions were for piano and piano and voice, and by 1920 several of them had been published by A. Wagner and Levien in Mexico City. These pieces combined European models from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and settings of revolutionary and traditional Mexican songs. In 1921 Chávez received a commission for a ballet with an indigenous theme from the Minister of Public Education José Vasconcelos, a key figure in the post-revolutionary revitalization of Mexico's arts. Chávez's ballet *El fuego nuevo*, based on an Aztec legend, was scored for orchestra, women's chorus, and large percussion section, and it included flutes from Mexican Native Americans. Chávez evoked a particular indigenous character without directly quoting from indigenous tunes through his invention of neoprimitive pentatonic melodies and harmonies built on fourths and fifths.

Horsepower. During Chávez's stay in New York in 1926, he collaborated with muralist Rivera in the creation of a ballet symphony titled *Horsepower*, a hard-edged composition depicting the age of the machine and its implications in the contemporary Mexican social context. In this sense, the piece has been compared to compositions such as Arthur Honneger's *Pacific 231* (1924). The piece superimposes harsh sounds representing machines, Mexican dances, and rhythms such as the huapango and the zandunga.

Sinfonía India. Of Chávez's six symphonies, *Sinfonía India* is the most popular. Premiered by the CBS Symphony Orchestra under the composer's baton, the piece consists of only one movement for orchestra, and it features several indigenous percussion instruments. Characteristic of *Sinfonía India* and present in most of Chávez's music with nationalistic tendencies are the motor rhythms and the use of the sesquialtera, a superimposition of 3/4 and 6/8, common in popular musics of Latin America. The *Sinfonía India* is one of the few cases in which Mexican indigenous melodies are present, taken from music of the Cora, Yaqui, Sonora, and Seri Indians.

Soli chamber works. Between 1933 and 1966 Chávez wrote four pieces: *Soli I*, *Soli II*, and *Soli IV* are for small wind groups, and *Soli III* is for orchestra with four soloists. In them, a soloist is given prominence in each movement of the works. They reveal a progressive and experimental facet of Chávez, with strong dissonances, high chromaticism, angular melodies, polyrhythmic figures, and, most important, the nonrepetition of materials. As shown by scholar Robert Parker, Chávez's music after the 1950's moved toward a continuous flow void of repetition, in which each new material was generated by the previous one, in a self-perpetuating cycle.

Musical Legacy

Latin American composers during the twentieth century fluctuated between nationalistic and universalistic approaches to music composition. These tendencies were commonly seen as opposed, but they frequently were interpreted lightly, resulting in mannerism and false objectivity. Chávez, together with Heitor Villa-Lobos and Alberto Ginastera, is a part of a generation of Latin American

composers whose work attempts to synthesize nationalistic and universalistic trends. Chávez integrates through his music characteristics from the Western European musical tradition and his own personal perception of what constitutes an authentic Mexican music derived from indigenous and popular cultures.

Chávez became a key figure in the post-revolutionary formation of governmental institutions involving the arts, creating a structure of support unequaled in other Latin American countries. This structure, however, was highly hierarchical, and it paralleled the one-party rule that the Mexican revolution left as a legacy for more than seventy years. In 1969, when Chávez had withdrawn somewhat from official positions of power, he gave a lecture titled "The Lyre of Orpheus." In it, he posed the question: "What are the guardians of culture going to do?" He pointed out that nobody was yet carrying the leadership of Mexico's musical life, as he had done in the previous decades.

Eduardo Herrera

Further Reading

Carmona, Gloria. *Epistolario selecto de Carlos Chávez*.

México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1989. An extensive collection of letters exchanged between Chávez and important artistic and political figures.

Chávez, Carlos. *Musical Thought*. Cambridge, England: Harvard University Press, 1961. A compilation of the lectures given by Chávez at Harvard in 1958 and 1959. It includes essays on being a Latin American composer, art as communication, form in music, enjoyment of music, and repetition in music.

_____. *Toward a New Music: Music and Electricity*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1937. This report following Chávez's visit to the RCA Victor Studios and the Bell Telephone Laboratories discusses possibilities provided by electricity, especially radio, recording, film, and electric instruments.

Parker, Robert. *Carlos Chávez: A Guide to Research*. New York: Garland, 1998. A bibliographical annotated guide to the literature on Chávez. Includes a biography and a list of works.

_____. *Carlos Chávez: Mexico's Modern-Day Orpheus*. Boston: Twayne, 1983. In this resource, a leading Chávez scholar discusses a large num-

ber of representative compositions. It includes a list of works, discography, a list of orchestras Chávez conducted, and a selected bibliography.

See also: Bartók, Béla; Copland, Aaron; Hindemith, Paul; Honegger, Arthur; Revueltas, Silvestre; Schoenberg, Arnold; Stravinsky, Igor; Varèse, Edgard.

Maurice Chevalier

French pop and show tune singer

A cultural ambassador for France, Chevalier brought to Hollywood in the 1930's the image of the cavalier French playboy. In the late 1940's Chevalier's sunny French-jazz style influenced many singers until rock and roll took hold in the late 1950's.

Born: September 12, 1888; Ménilmontant, France

Died: January 1, 1972; Paris, France

Also known as: Maurice Auguste Chevalier (full name)

Principal recordings

ALBUMS: *Encore Maurice!*, 1982; *No Business Like Show Business*, 1994; *Fourteen Songs*, 1995; *Ma pomme y d' la joie*, 1996; *Moi avec une chanson*, 1998; *The Romance of Paris*, 2000; *Valentine*, 2002; *Inoubliable*, 2002.

WRITINGS OF INTEREST: *With Love*, 1960; *I Remember It Well*, 1970.

The Life

Born in 1888, Maurice Auguste Chevalier (mah-REES sheh-VAHL-yay) established his reputation as a singer and dancer when his career as an acrobat came to an abrupt end after an accident. While in the military, he was wounded and captured by the Germans in World War I. After a two-year incarceration, during which he learned English from a fellow prisoner, Chevalier returned to Paris, where he discovered jazz and became a huge star.

Chevalier began making short French films in 1908. He was called to Hollywood in 1928; two years later he was nominated for two Academy

Awards as Best Actor. Two films with Jeanette MacDonald, *One Hour with You* and *Love Me Tonight*, were smash hits in 1932 and helped create the craze for Hollywood musicals. Audiences loved Chevalier's naughty double entendres and insouciant characters.

Chevalier spent World War II in France and protected his Jewish wife, Nita Ray. He performed at the German prisoner of war camp where he had been interned in World War I, but he refused to sing on German radio. After the war, Chevalier was accused of collaborating with France's enemies, and he was marked for death by the French Resistance. Later, he was cleared of the charges.

Chevalier reestablished his American film career in the 1950's with Cole Porter's *Can-Can* (1960), Billy Wilder's *Love in the Afternoon* (1957), and most notably Alan Jay Lerner and Frederick Loewe's *Gigi* (1958). He received a special Academy Award for his lifetime of work in 1958. Chevalier continued to tour and made a few minor films in the 1960's and early 1970's. He died in Paris after a brief illness at age eighty-three.

The Music

A charming, smiling fellow in his trademark tuxedo and straw hat, Chevalier was the embodiment of Gallic charm. Chevalier knew the limitations of his voice, which was a natural rather than a well-trained one. His sunny performances helped audiences momentarily forget the difficult times they were enduring. He was everyone's favorite bachelor uncle or perhaps secret French lover.

Early Works. In many of his songs (such as "Mimi" and "Louise"), Chevalier spoke the middle section, which allowed him to act out instead of merely singing the song. In his work as a music-hall entertainer, Chevalier had to project a song to the last row of seats, so he developed impeccable diction. His recorded voice was so precise that listeners with little knowledge of French could understand some of the words. "Paris sera toujours Paris" (Paris, stay the same) was one of Chevalier's most popular songs during World War II, tolerated by the occupying Germans.

Love Me Tonight. Marcel Orphül's documentary on the French Occupation, when Germany occupied France during World War II, *Le Chagrin et le pitié* (1971; the sorrow and the pity) famously ends