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MUSC-23

Chavez

Chavez wrote his *Sinfonía Índia* as a symphony in order to indicate that his work and his countries traditional music had more refinement than the rest of the world may have thought. By bringing the indigenous instruments into the concert hall, Chavez created the refinement of culture that European countries have long used as grounds for dehumanizing other nations. If a nation did not have the European concert hall tradition and the music was played in the street or in a village, Europeans countries felt justified in classifying the country as “indigenous” and Chavez illustrates this mentality in his writing.

Although Chavez’s music helped to bring legitimacy to the Mexican culture in the eyes of the Western world, he was still acting subservient to the social pressures of the Western world. In the time that Chavez was an active composer Mexico was undergoing an image change via the revolution of 1910. With the construction of the Palacio de Bellas Artes, Mexico was moving toward Westernizing it image to the international community. By acknowledging that Mexico’s music when played in the streets was not satisfactory for a refined society, Chavez fed into Mexico’s plan to westernize the country.

Chavez did exactly what was needed to create a Mexico in the European style, though by doing so implicitly illegitimatized the true Mexican culture. Chavez’s music was still very much in the style of Mexico and he “faced in his music almost all the major problems of modern music: the overthrow of Germanic ideals, the objectification of sentiment, the use of folk material in its relation to nationalism, the intricate rhythms, the linear as opposed to vertical writing, the specifically ‘modern’ sound images.”1 Even though he was not afraid to bring the true Mexican culture into the concert hall, by doing so, he was conceding the fact that music on the street or in a village was not sufficient to create a respectable image of the new Mexico

1. Copland, Aaron. *Our New Music: Leading Composers in Europe and America*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1941. 203.

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