

Enrico Chapela Offers a Soundscape

Composer Enrico Chapela (Mexico City, 1974) shares his vision for *Chinampa y Trajinera*, his own composition that premiered in Germany in 2020, was performed by the State of Mexico Symphony Orchestra in 2022, and this year will be presented with the Mexico City Philharmonic Orchestra (OFCM) on February 15 and 16 at the Silvestre Revueltas Hall, and with the UNAM Philharmonic Orchestra on March 1 and 2 at the Nezahualcóyotl Hall.

In an interview, the Mexican musician explained that the piece is a mix of traditional Mexican sounds and a "contempo-weird" structure, which pays homage to the cultural richness of Mexico and its soundscapes.

"Mexico City doesn't have a specific folklore; however, it brings together influences from all over the nation. Xochimilco is an example of that: you can be navigating on a *trajinera* and, all of a sudden, you come across another one that has a mariachi, a marimba, a harp, a Huastecan trio, or a Jarocho group on board. So, it becomes a melting pot of folk music," he said.

The piece, Chapela noted, was a commission from the Mannheim Orchestra in Germany, which asked him to incorporate a Mexican element. Being a "*chilango*", he sought inspiration in the capital, discovering that it holds an amalgamation of cultural influences within it.

"The piece is organized in a sequence of musical pictures that reflect various aspects of this landscape, with variations where *sones* from different Mexican regions are incorporated," the composer explained.

In addition to being inspired by Xochimilco, the Mexican composer's piece was influenced by the work *Pictures at an Exhibition* by Modest Mussorgsky (1839-1881), a Russian composer who created this suite inspired by ten paintings and drawings by his friend, the artist and architect Viktor Hartmann (1834-1873), who died at the age of 39.

"I consider *Chinampa y Trajinera* to be a musical piece that describes the experience, where all the pictures are different musical themes with distinct atmospheres; it's a soundscape," said the Mexican composer, who also shared that he will take this piece to Argentina in May with the Río Negro Philharmonic Orchestra.

Regarding other projects, he indicated that he has been commissioned to compose a piece to commemorate the 250th anniversary of US independence, along with a coalition of orchestras from different cities in the North American country. Additionally, he is in talks to compose a piece for the inauguration of the cultural events of the 2026 FIFA World Cup in North America.

Regarding the composition to commemorate the 250th anniversary of US independence, he explained that the goal is to represent the diversity of the American experience. For this reason, the piece was also commissioned to an African American composer, an Asian composer, a Caucasian composer, and himself, who represents the Latino part. "Although I hope to continue being invited, despite all the chaos that is happening, since I don't have a passport or am a US citizen," he concluded.

- This is one of Chapela's most emblematic compositions.
- It is a piece inspired by the Mexican sound and the work of composers like Silvestre Revueltas, Carlos Chávez, or Gabriela Ortiz.
- He has received commissions from companies such as the Los Angeles Philharmonic (United States), the Mannheim Orchestra (Germany), the Mining Symphony Orchestra (Mexico), the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing (China), among others.

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