

Portland Press Herald

Concert review: Portland Symphony stirs with contemporary Mexican works

Composers as diverse as Aaron Copland, Duke Ellington and John Adams have paid homage to the music and arts of Mexico. But the many fine composers from that country have not always received the attention they deserve.

The Portland Symphony Orchestra, under the leadership of Eckart Preu, has taken a step toward righting that imbalance by presenting a program of works by three contemporary Mexican composers. As reviewed at the first performance of the program at Merrill Auditorium on Sunday afternoon, the results provided a rich and stirring look at music deserving wider recognition.

The Portland Symphony Orchestra, under the leadership of Eckart Preu, has taken a step toward righting that imbalance by presenting a program of works by three contemporary Mexican composers. As reviewed at the first performance of the program at Merrill Auditorium on Sunday afternoon, the results provided a rich and stirring look at music deserving wider recognition.

First up was Chapela's "Rotor," a work named after a "thrash metal" rock band in which the composer played years ago. They were like "early Metallica," Chapela noted.

Indeed, there was lots of thrashing and, especially, thumping during the brief piece. But the PSO was up to the task of bringing out the structural sophistication beneath the clattering tumult. Wildly expressive, yet with a controlled sense of shape and color, the piece made one curious to hear more from Chapela.

Steve Feeney 03/04/2023

<https://www.pressherald.com/2023/04/03/concert-review-portland-symphony-stirs-with-contemporary-mexican-works/>