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Reiterating Hierarchy and the Failed Promise of the Global

CHELSEA BURNS
University of Texas at Austin, USA

Abstract
The idea of global modernisms rests upon freighted power relationships. Far from decolonizing, this concept reinscribes values of Euro- and US-centric discourses. This article addresses the inherent friction of global musical modernisms through Carlos Chávez's 1940 composition *La paloma azul*, written for concerts at New York's Museum of Modern Art. Tasked with appealing to a US audience, Chávez created work that participates in modernism's hierarchical frame, where Mexico provides exotic fantasy for bourgeois New Yorkers.

Chávez was not alone in having been positioned as 'modernism's shadow' – the negative counterexample that confirms modernism's progressive image. Global musical modernism suggests that modernism can shed its exclusionary identity and encompass more. But it hides how modernism has always been international, and how composers such as Chávez have been central to its construction. By ignoring modernism's historical realities, global musical modernism shores up existing understandings and maintains the marginal status of whatever is categorized as 'global'.

This article discusses the Mexican composer Carlos Chávez (1899–1978), but it is not about him. Rather, it is about how scholarly attempts to achieve diversity and inclusion often reinforce the hierarchies they mean to dismantle.[1] This article is about how Chávez's own experiences call into question academic efforts to expand horizons while maintaining investments in intellectual enterprises – such as the articulation and assignation of modernism – that embed coloniality, patriarchy, and racism.

Calls to the 'global' are pervasive in humanistic scholarship today, ranging from the broad ('global history') to the specific ('global history of music theory'). Like many of these calls, the idea of global musical modernism, an adjunct to global modernism more broadly, offers a tempting promise: that perhaps modernism is or can be inclusive, or perhaps, by appreciating the modernist character of works hitherto denied that label, we can come to understand

Email: cburns@austin.utexas.edu

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1 Of course, this issue is not exclusive to scholarly endeavours. At a minimum, it is deeply embedded in the institutional structures of the academy, but it is also a broader issue. For more on institutional use of diversity initiatives and committees to undermine broader efforts at inclusive reform, see Sarah Ahmed, *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012).

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modernism anew. But in practice, this sort of inclusion ill fits the modernist project, and for two quite basic reasons that I will explore throughout this article. First, while modernism has varied uses and definitions, it often translates in music studies to an aesthetic, a way of describing art. Yet it would be more accurate to say that musical modernism is a historical circumstance, one that both fostered and was created by hierarchy. Second, the call for global musical modernisms assumes that modernism has ever been other than global, which is misleading. If we wish to move beyond the coloniality of which modernism has been a servant, we should seek to understand that coloniality and its relation to art, not imagine it out of existence or assume that we can easily part ways with it by finding new exemplars.

The key difficulty underlying the notion of global musical modernisms is that it too readily asks us to seek out marginalized artists who in some way conform to pre-existing US and European notions of style or approach. Exactly how this might decolonize music studies is unclear. A truly emancipatory intellectual project would reckon with the fact that artists beyond these geographical boundaries have for generations engaged directly with modernism while making works that do not necessarily follow the stylistic norms associated with canonical modernists.[2] The terms of such 'peripheral' participation, at least as much as the contents of modernist aesthetics, must inform our understanding of what modernism is.

In this article, I explore one of these modernist works that does not sound modernist according to common stylistic tropes, Carlos Chávez's *La paloma azul*. The piece lacks many of the aesthetic markers associated with modernism: it is a lyrical, highly tonal work for SATB chorus and chamber orchestra. Indeed, when I first discussed *La paloma azul* as a subject for this issue, I received dubious responses centred on the tonal qualities of Chávez's work. More specifically, this work seemed perhaps less modern than some of Chávez's other compositions due to its tonal character. Yet *La paloma azul* is decidedly modernist, no matter what one may hear, because it responds to the modern condition. Modernism is, again, variously defined, but if it describes anything consistently, it is the artistic rendering of a profound sense of historicity – the self-conscious appreciation of a rupture separating a supposedly naïve past (continuous with its own past and therefore unaware of history) from a too-knowing present (so fundamentally distinct from the past as to be hyper-aware of history). In this respect, *La paloma azul* embodies the anxieties of modernism perfectly.

To appreciate the ways in which Chávez participated in a modernist conversation that was unquestionably global when he wrote *La paloma azul* in 1940, scholars and critics must be willing to dig into the context of the work's creation, listening with a knowledge that extends beyond aesthetic tropes. In particular, it is critical that Chávez labelled *La paloma azul* as 'traditional, arranged for orchestra and chorus by Carlos Chávez', even though he heavily manipulated the folk materials he drew on in generating a unified work, thereby both undermining his contribution and positioning the piece as essentially Mexican. Doing so made the

2 This is something that scholars of modernism outside of music have done for some time. See, for example, Mary Louise Pratt, *Planetary Longings* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2022) and Esther Gabara, *Errant Modernism: The Ethos of Photography in Mexico and Brazil* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008).

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composition marketable in the context of the concert series of which it was a part, *Twenty Centuries of Mexican Music*. Held at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in Manhattan, the series presented Mexico and its people as a suitable Other for bourgeois consumption by the kind of New Yorker who would visit the museum. The work and its history show Chávez's clear conception of his role in an international modernist hierarchy that, far from excluding Mexico and Mexicans, welcomed them as novelty objects. For US cosmopolitans, Mexico represented the past, preceding the rupture with modernity, and artists such as Chávez could gain commissions and critical esteem by lending their authority to this conceit – a conceit inextricable from modernism itself.

La paloma azul, therefore, is definitively a product of the modernist project, one in which the primitive and the exotic are necessary foils for modernism's progressive image. Further, the piece demonstrates that modernism has always been global, but perhaps not in ways that feel empowering or emancipatory to today's scholars and critics. Our response should not be to ignore modernism's global history, asserting that only now are we making it global. Our response should be to dwell in the discomfort that attends the recognition of *La paloma azul* as modernist and of modernism as ever global. Modernism has always been global because it has always been shadowed by 'peripheral' musics, which serve as fodder for metropolitan fantasy and which evidence the hierarchical logics that form the backbone of modernism. It is tempting to believe that the global could provide an alternative route through these materials, one that empowers historically underrepresented groups and rehabilitates aesthetic agency for all. But this proposed alternative separates modernism from its deep coloniality, laundering history with the cleanser of aesthetic theory.

La paloma azul does not sound modernist in the common narrative of expanding pitch collections and alienation from historical modes of expression. That is precisely why scholars and critics need to see modernism differently, with less priority on aesthetics and more focus on its position in history as a site of power, constraint, and productivity that has served economic and political interests and primarily those of white men. Crucially, this means that racism, patriarchy, coloniality, and the global are not incidental to modernism; they are why modernism exists, having both nurtured it and been nurtured by it. *La paloma azul* is undeniably modernist in its participation in international culture markets that demanded artists from 'exotic' locations serve as modernism's primitive shadow, demonstrating modernity through its negation. And this modernism is undeniably global because modernism necessitated the Other – the native, the savage, the simple, the bucolic – to serve as its foil. I am of course not the first to observe this paradox; Alejandro L. Madrid has also discussed the topic with respect to Mexican modernism, and the failure of US scholars to understand it as such, or to treat modernism as a phenomenon that already was global and historically situated.[3]

This sort of understanding of modernism – historical first, aesthetic second – is not novel. Modernist studies have long emphasized this dual character of modernism, which is central, for instance, to the journal *Modernism/Modernity*. But studies of musical modernism have

3 Alejandro L. Madrid, 'Rastreando las huellas de la escucha performativa: la escritura como constelación archivística', *Anuario Musical* 76 (2021). See also Alejandro L. Madrid, 'Introduction: Nor-tec and the Borders', in *Nor-tec Rifa!: Electronic Dance Music from Tijuana to the World* (Oxford University Press, 2008).

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often given aesthetics priority over historical context.[4] As Jameson argues, 'modernism must . . . be seen as uniquely corresponding to an uneven moment of social development . . . the coexistence of realities from different moments of history'.[5] I would argue that in place of 'social development', 'socioeconomic conditions' might be a more apt frame. But regardless, the priority of a certain US- and Eurocentric set of ideals fails to acknowledge these multiple possibilities and, by extension, the multiple responses they might engender – some of which may be unrecognizable to modernism as canonically constructed. As Mary Louise Pratt notes, 'This is the global, relational problem that the standard account systematically obscures'.[6]

Chávez provides a compelling lens through which to understand modernism less as an aesthetic than as a history in which money, power, and artistic opportunities flow across borders and are constituted by these flows. Artists the world over have been enjoined to participate in modernism or to reject it – but inevitably thereby to engage it – so as to be properly labelled and thus eligible to collect commissions and critical regard. Modernism has been a tool for grouping insiders and outsiders, enlightened and primitive, forward-thinking and traditional. To suggest that anyone can be a modernist by virtue of implementing modernist aesthetics or ideas is to make believe that modernism has not been an exercise in grouping and labelling in the course of using power and directing resources. To be sure, undermining modernism's political power is a good thing, in the sense that we should not accept the coercion and exploitation embedded in modernism. But to attempt this reparative work through a radically catholic modernism, focused upon aesthetics and highlighting the presence of previously ignored participants, leaves us less able to recognize modernism as a history, and specifically a history that might undermine one's aesthetic understandings. And we need to be able to think about modernism historically, lest we fail to understand how it is that we have come to the present, a present in which scholars rightly feel the urgent need to undo the hierarchies that our forebears created and that our contemporary world ceaselessly renews.

It is surely possible to scour the globe and find marginalized artists whose work sounds, look like, or reads as modernist in a readily integrated fashion. I do not mean to suggest otherwise,

4 While discussions of musical modernism are not divorced from history, the priority on a set of recognizable musical traits has been pervasive. There are numerous examples of this issue, but here three will serve to demonstrate. Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh write, 'Musical modernism emerged out of the expansion of tonality in late romanticism and the break into atonality in the early decades of the twentieth century' (12). Tamara Levitz commented upon the dominant mode of aesthetic priority when she observed that her microhistorical approach to Stravinsky's *Perséphone* allowed her to 'shift from formalistic or stylistic analysis' (21) and 'question the identity politics of modern music as they have been understood' (26). Likewise, Lawrence Kramer confronted aesthetic priorities as the norm of 'the notion that to be "absolutely modern", one must be difficult, off-putting, [and] esoteric' (269). Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh, 'Introduction: On Difference, Representation, and Appropriation in Music', in *Western Music and Its Others: Difference, Representation, and Appropriation in Music*, ed. Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000); Tamara Levitz, *Modernist Mysteries: Perséphone* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Lawrence Kramer, *Musical Meaning: Toward a Critical History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002).

5 Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990), 307.

6 Pratt, *Planetary Longings*, 49.

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and many scholars in other disciplines have already done this sort of work, generating an extensive global-modernist discourse in comparative literature, for example. But I am sceptical of the benefits that might result, in other disciplines and in music studies. Chávez's work, for example, is not benefitted by an understanding in which all of it is considered aesthetically modernist; the beneficiaries of such reframing would seem to be contemporary scholars invested in redemptive possibilities for the modernist frame – in seeing modernism as subversive rather than oppressive or coercive. Why not instead see modernism for what it is and has been? Chávez was a modernist when he wrote angular, dissonant work, and he was a modernist when he wrote – and distanced himself from – the simplistic *La paloma azul* and similar artistic creations because he was then engaged in negotiating a global modernist hierarchy. And it is in part because of cases like his that invested modernists of today should realize that they will not likely find what they seek by gathering in artists from marginalized groups. If we want new possibilities for subversive aesthetics, global modernism is not the rock to turn over. Underneath it we will discover that there is little redemption to be found.

Chávez and the Museum of Modern Art

In spring 1940, Chávez was commissioned to produce and conduct concerts of Mexican music for MoMA, alongside its exhibit *Twenty Centuries of Mexican Art*, which was held in the same building and curated by the painter and illustrator Miguel Covarrubias (Figure 1). Both the concerts and exhibit were organized by MoMA's president, the politically connected philanthropist and art collector Nelson Rockefeller. As Chávez described the concerts, he aimed to 'give some conception of the historic development of music in Mexico during the twenty centuries.'[7]

MoMA's acquisitions and publicity efforts were intense. Museums, collectors, and individual artists from across the United States and Mexico sent over 5,000 pieces to display, and the Mexican government wrote an official statement of enthusiasm for the project. The museum held receptions with journalists from *Life*, the *New Yorker*, *Vogue*, the *New York Times*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, the *New York Herald Tribune*, and many others. There was a press conference at a Texas freight yard where a train carrying art for the exhibition arrived from Mexico; Texas Rangers were enlisted to show up on horseback and make the scene 'more picturesque.'[8] Consumer tie-ins gave the exhibit still-greater visibility, and New York merchants got in on the act: Macy's decorated its eighth-floor gallery in the theme 'Mexico in Manhattan',[9] and Bonwit's department store commissioned new fashions to coordinate with the exhibit.[10]

7 Carlos Chávez, 'Introduction', trans. Herbert Weinstock, in *Mexican Music: Notes by Herbert Weinstock for Concerts Arranged by Carlos Chávez as Part of the Exhibition: Twenty Centuries of Mexican Art* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1940).

8 'Publicity Schedule for Arrival of Freight Cars Containing the Mexican Exhibition', Museum of Modern Art MoMA Exhibits Collection, folder 106.6.

9 'Mexico in Manhattan' press release for 16 May 1940, Museum of Modern Art MoMA Exhibits Collection, folder 106.2.

10 'Tentative Publicity Program for Mexican Exhibition', Museum of Modern Art MoMA Exhibits Collection, folder 106.6.

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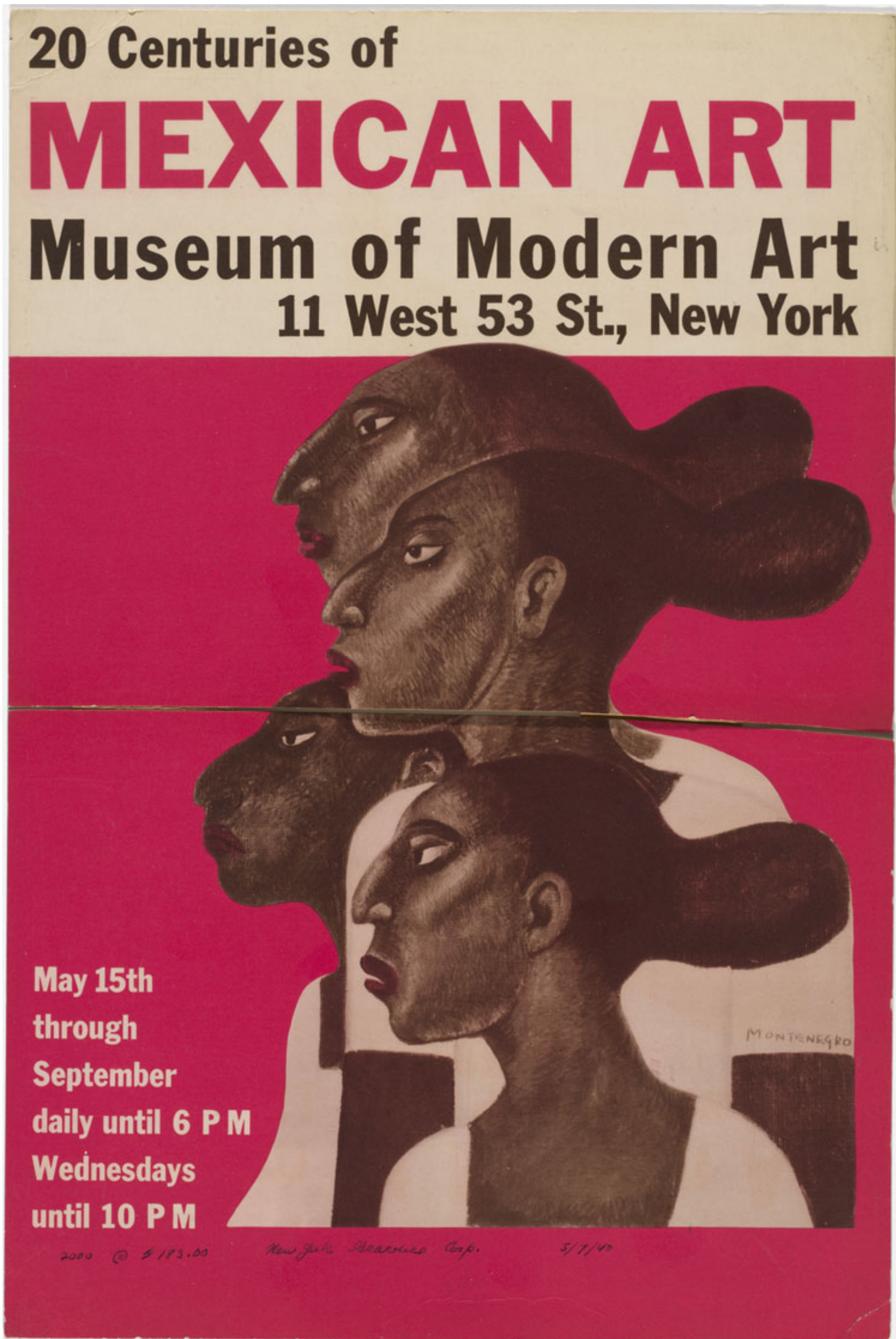

Figure 1a (Colour online) Museum of Modern Art poster advertising '20 Centuries of Mexican Art' exhibit. Digital image © The Museum of Modern Art. Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, New York.

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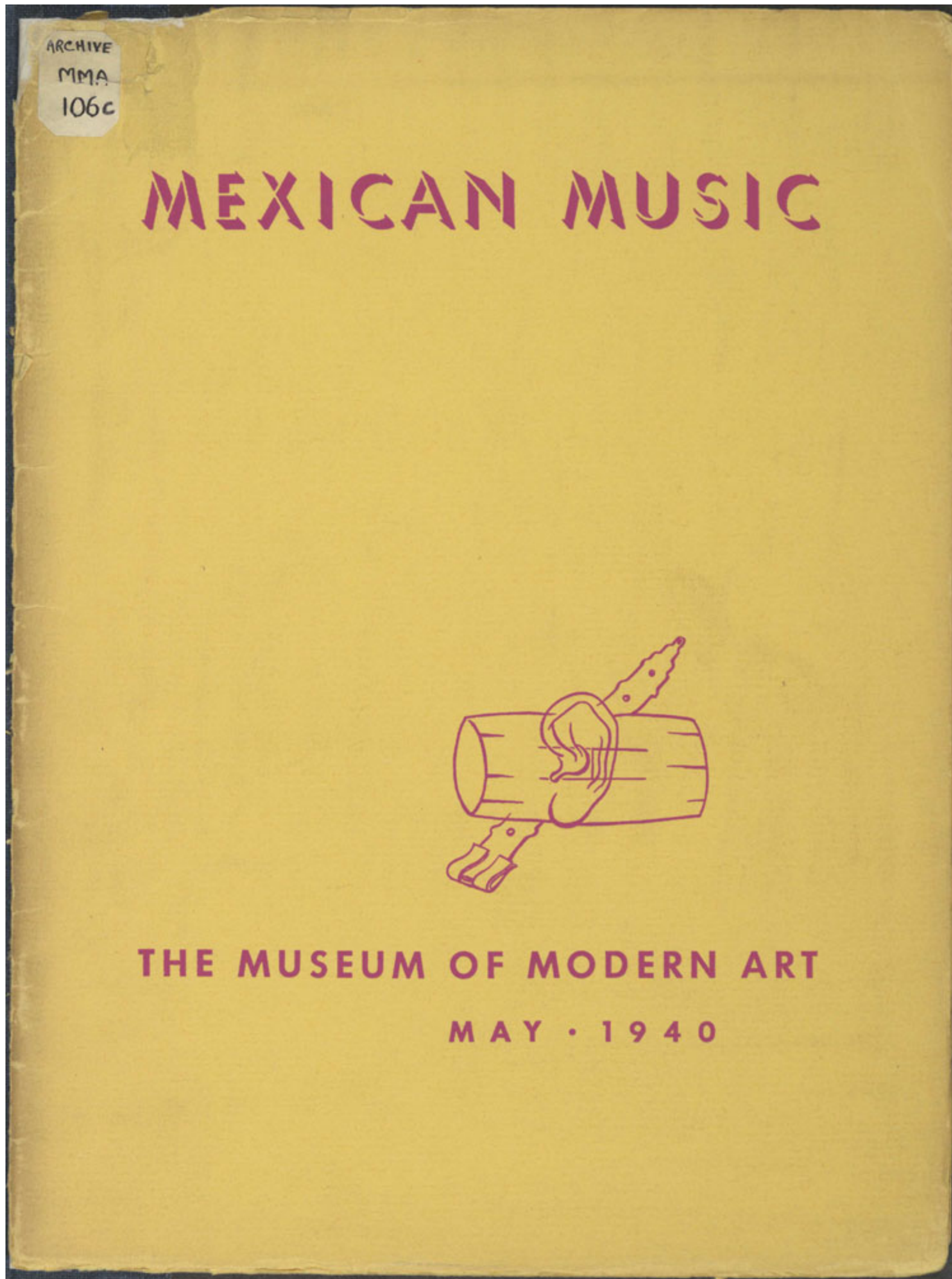

Figure 1b (Colour online) Programme cover for Museum of Modern Art 'Mexican Music' concerts. Digital image © The Museum of Modern Art. Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, New York.

The concerts received special notoriety. CBS and NBC aired them nationally, and they were broadcast on shortwave radio to Latin America and Europe.[11] These broadcasts were well

11 'Tentative Publicity Program for Mexican Exhibition'.

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received; listeners from all over the United States wrote in with enthusiastic letters about how affecting the music was, and how much they enjoyed listening to it.[12] Both Chávez and Covarrubias were praised by critics.

While the concerts and exhibit were designed to fit together, the programming choice created a unique challenge for Chávez and other composers he enlisted to write works for the event. Unlike the visual art of the accompanying exhibit, the advertised 'twenty centuries' of music were largely inaccessible. Pre-colonial music no longer existed in any recoverable form; its ephemeral sound was long gone, leaving only the physical traces of instruments to suggest certain elements of practice: pitch collections, perhaps musical ensembles. The rest had to be imagined.

And imagine Chávez did, freely. He composed works that he listed as being from the sixteenth century to the present, building the 'earliest' works loosely upon what he thought indigenous music may have been like in the pre-colonial period. He also commissioned works from Mexican colleagues, including Candelario Huízar, Gerónimo Baqueiro Foster, and Vicente T. Mendoza. Many of their works, too, were described as arrangements of folkloric or indigenous musics. A handful of musicians were brought from Mexico to join New York musicians for the performances.

Given the context of these concerts – works labelled as being old rather than new, folkloric rather than contemporary – one might ask whether these concerts were modern at all. But it is precisely this self-conscious conformity with the international bourgeois market's demand for historicity that characterizes these works as modern, products of a hierarchical cultural sphere in which Mexico was positioned below the United States, thought to be less evolved and more 'natural'. Chávez's work shows deft handling of a product designed to essentialize himself and fellow Mexicans, valuing his alterity over the composition techniques he demonstrated in other works that hew more closely to commonly highlighted modernist aesthetics.

La paloma azul

La paloma azul is one of several works Chávez composed for the concerts, and, as I discuss later, it is emblematic of the music he programmed for MoMA. *La paloma azul* is a flowing, highly consonant piece for SATB chorus and chamber orchestra, in verse–chorus form. Chávez groups the singers by gender, often setting the paired parts in parallel thirds. The work changes time signatures frequently and shifts from C major to F major, but these adjustments are seamless and smooth. Example 1 presents the basic character of the work, showing the chorus (in C major) and its transition to the start of the second verse (in F major), as printed in Boosey and Hawkes's piano-vocal score.[13]

La paloma azul is listed in the concert programme as '(traditional) – arranged for orchestra and chorus by Carlos Chávez'. This title suggests that Chávez's work is more or less a simple translation of a folk song. But the programme notes – penned by the critic Herbert Weinstock

12 '*Twenty Centuries of Mexican Art*: Correspondence in Response to Exhibition', Museum of Modern Art MoMA Exhibits Collection, box 106.18.

13 Carlos Chávez, *La paloma azul*, vocal-piano score (New York: Boosey and Hawkes, 1956).

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Example 1 Carlos Chávez, *La paloma azul*, bb. 84–99 (end of chorus and start of second verse).

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in consultation with Chávez, who also wrote a substantial introduction – suggest a more complex relationship to Mexican 'tradition':[14]

> *La paloma azul* (*The Blue Dove*) is based on a XIXth century Mexican *canción* of that name. The exact original source of its music is impossible to determine. Perhaps it is a much-changed version of one of the many Spanish songs that have drifted into Mexico across the years. Carlos Chávez leans to the theory that it is more recently descended from Italian opera, which was enormously popular throughout Mexico in the XVIIIth and XIXth centuries. It is easy to feel that it had its beginnings, or at least its pattern, in some Italian aria or *romanza*.
>
> The Mexican people must have felt a need for a simple form in which to express their personal sorrows and sentimental heartbreaks. The *canción* would seem to indicate that part of the popularity of Italian opera in their country was due to their having found that form in the sweetest of its airs, a type of song they have gradually remade in the light of their own sentiments and character.[15]

The programme note provides a series of cues for US audiences. First, it points out enduring links between Mexico and Europe, demonstrating connections to long-standing cultural centres and, by extension, some of their sophistication. Yet in this explanation Mexico has not directly imbibed European art but rather has transformed it, such that this composition authentically belongs to the Mexican nation. Opera has been remade as *canción*, a form with a specific meaning that is not indicated, leaving US readers to draw on their vague sense of the folkloric.[16] As evidence that the piece is essentially Mexican, Weinstock asserts its simplicity: the 'sorrows and heartbreaks' of Mexicans are apparently less complicated than those of more cultured peoples, so Mexicans simplify European works in order that they might adequately express the 'sentimental' state of the nation. Notice that the 'Mexican people' are adduced as expressing 'personal' feelings, a powerfully reductionist move. It is difficult to conceive of Parisian composers' works from the same period being described in this way, even those works based upon folkloric materials or written as 'lighter' pieces. Indeed, the implication that *La paloma azul* is essentially Mexican is not only a colonial gesture but also fraught with unremarked contradictions, for Chávez's relationship with the Mexican people is unstable. Is he part of the Mexican people, or is he distinct from them, an intermediary who introduces metropolitan audiences to Others? These words, written with Chávez's participation, clearly position this work as a shadow of modernist progress. Moreover, it reflects the priorities of MoMA's commission for music that 'ought to be of

14 Weinstock had a long relationship with Chávez – there are several letters between the two from the 1930s, and Chávez talks about Weinstock visiting him in Mexico and attending concerts there. Carlos Chávez collection, New York Public Library.

15 Herbert Weinstock and Carlos Chávez, *Mexican Music: Notes by Herbert Weinstock for Concerts Arranged by Carlos Chávez as Part of the Exhibition: Twenty Centuries of Mexican Art* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1940).

16 For more on the special identity of canciones in Mexico during the first decades of the twentieth century, see Leonora Saavedra, 'Manuel M. Ponce's *Chapultepec* and the Conflicted Representations of a Contested Space', *Musical Quarterly* 92/3–4 (2009).

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decided musical interest, regardless of its documental value' and 'should be capable of holding the attention of a varied public'.[17]

The note concludes by explaining the narrative of the song, in which a lover who is leaving for Laredo sings to his sweetheart, calling her a blue dove. Weinstock provides a story of farewell and desire, freedom as well as anxieties about unfaithfulness. There is also some description of the musical features. According to the programme note, the song has a verse–chorus form with a varied refrain.

Weinstock's description is misleading, and in a manner that could only have been by design. After all, Chávez was involved in crafting the text, so he well knew that *La paloma azul* as described is not the composition he created. There is indeed a popular *canción* called 'La paloma azul': it is catalogued in songbooks from the 1920s and 1930s and is still performed and recorded today. However, Chávez's composition is not simply an arrangement of 'La paloma azul'. Rather, it is built from segments of three songs, a mix of *corridos* and *canciones*: the historic 'La paloma azul' is combined with 'De Laredo' and 'El mosco'. The holograph of the full score carries the subtitle 'canciones' ('songs') – plural, showing that Chávez initially intended to describe this composition as a series of songs that had been combined but changed his mind, perhaps as a means of hiding his active hand in the work and presenting the collection as one traditional song.[18] That is to say, if Chávez were to keep his original title, audiences might expect to hear a sampler of songs, one after the other. Instead, Chávez's creation of a coherent verse–chorus form with a single narrative arc in the lyrics requires that he either acknowledge his hands-on approach or hide the fact that his piece was built by manipulating several distinct works.

Figure 2 charts the materials Chávez uses in the composition. 'De Laredo' serves as the basis of the opening vocal line and returns in chunks later, with five stanzas from the song incorporated into the final composition as verses. 'De Laredo' is also interwoven with portions of the *canción* 'La paloma azul' that provide the varied chorus. In this way, Chávez converts the strophic structures of 'De Laredo' and 'La paloma azul' into a verse–chorus form. Towards the end, Chávez also includes a half-verse that highlights 'El mosco'. As linking material throughout, he inserts instrumental interludes that reference melodic gestures from the two main sources, 'De Laredo' and 'La paloma azul'. In this structure, the chorus is long – considerably longer than the verse. For reference, the excerpt in Example 1 shows the end of 'La paloma azul' (as chorus) moving into the start of 'De Laredo' (as second verse).

Chávez's work takes advantage of musical relationships among the three songs, which share some melodic contours and phrase shapes, making it easier to combine them. But he also uses a flexible approach; he is not simply placing one tune next to another. For one thing, there are subtle alterations in the restatements: like a cataloguer cycling through different versions of folk tunes, he incorporates variants of both text and melodic gesture. He also

17 Chávez confirms this priority in a letter reviewing a conversation he and Rockefeller had about the concerts. Letter from Carlos Chávez to Nelson Rockefeller, 6 March 1940, Museum of Modern Art MoMA Exhibits Collection, folder 106.6.

18 Carlos Chávez, *La paloma azul: canciones*, New York Public Library Carlos Chávez Collection, JOB 84-11 no. 14.

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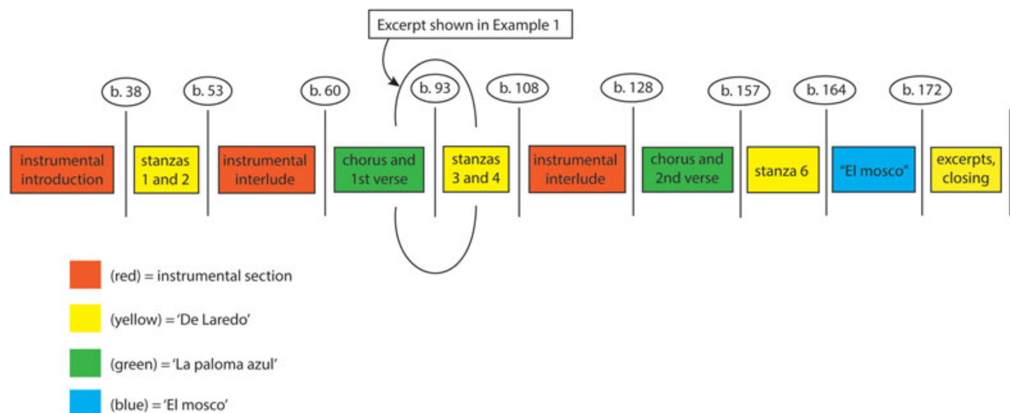

Figure 2 (Colour online) Chart of materials in Carlos Chávez's *La paloma azul.*

alters the melodies by introducing asymmetrical metres and a varying representation of the original binary forms. At times, he plays with the placement of text from the sources, positioning B-section lyrics in the A-section melody. Sometimes he skips repetition altogether. Here and there he diverges from repetition patterns typical of the source materials, repeating the entire AB form instead of each section on its own.

Although the work is sectional in the sense that one can discern which historic song provides the source material during given portions of the final piece, Chávez takes pains to ensure that his composition is seamless, pressing ever forward without a moment of real rest until the work concludes. He is always overlapping sections, eliding beginnings and endings. This can be seen in Example 1, where the completion of the chorus is anything but restful. Here, instead of a tonic-chord arrival in the women's parts, Chávez moves to scale degrees 2 and 4, simultaneously suggesting a dominant harmony in the women's key of C major and highlighting a common tone in the F major of the men's vocals that comes in the next section.[19] Similar links are used at other form-delineating moments, with overlapping words from the different source materials and lines of lyrics left half-finished as others pick up. Each verse or chorus arrival floats in and overtakes the preceding material rather than being treated as the next element in a series. While the overall flavour of the song is consonant and somewhat pastoral, these elisions create a restless feeling at pivotal moments where arrival and resolution might be expected.

This weaving together of disparate folk materials, cemented into a single cohesive work by means of extensive compositional intervention, involves more than the 'arrangement' of one traditional song indicated in the concert programme. Chávez's *La paloma azul* adroitly

19 In the Columbia recording of these concerts, this particular moment is handled somewhat differently, with the women hanging onto these notes – F and D – for a full bar before the men enter in the new key. The score as I have presented it here is the version found in both the piano–vocal and full orchestral scores. Regardless, even with this somewhat different arrangement, the chorus of the song lacks tonic closure.

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manipulates pre-existing resources, allowing them to be recognizable even as he explores their manifold possibilities and injects his own artistry.

La paloma azul raises significant analytical questions. Chávez had long since shown his deftness in composing tonally adventurous music that was angular and multilinear; why would he choose to exemplify the characterization of the programme notes – simple, sentimental – in contradiction with his own musical identity and training? Why go to the trouble of weaving together multiple songs, creating new music, and manipulating old music, only to hide all this and efface his compositional labour?

Chávez's unacknowledged labour is especially noteworthy given that he did not have a lot of time to work with. Rockefeller approved his proposal for the concerts in a letter dated March 28, and Chávez was to arrive in New York in early May with the scores and instruments for rehearsals.[20] This suggests that Chávez wrote the piece in just a few weeks, while also making additional arrangements for its printing, for provision of instruments, and for additional materials composed by colleagues. There is no reason to believe that his *La paloma azul* was an older work, repurposed for the MoMA concerts; the manuscript is dated 1940, and the premiere was at MoMA. Given the tight timing and the organizers' clear interest in presenting Mexican music, and people, as unsophisticated sentimentalists, Chávez could have been forgiven for doing what the programme notes say he did – arranging one song.

One could make related observations about other compositions from the MoMA programme. Alongside *La paloma azul*, Chávez wrote two other pieces for the concert, both of which he described as heritage music: *Xochipili-Macuilxochitl*, a fantasy Aztec composition listed as a sixteenth-century piece, and his 1935 work *Chapultepec* (*Obertura republicana*), which he renames 'Marcha, vals, canción' and characterizes as being of nineteenth-century origin. A fourth composition, the only one for which Chávez took credit, is an excerpt from his 1920s ballet *Los cuatro soles*. The other pieces in the programme (see Figure 3) were written or significantly altered by Chávez's modernist colleagues, yet their works, too, were said to be older or collected.

The cultivated simplicity of *La paloma azul* and the erasure of the composers suggest that great care was taken to make the concert seem as though it presented Mexico's historic music and therefore its national patrimony – cultural markers of Mexican identity – rather than music almost entirely of recent composition or manipulation by modernists. This very act of erasure – related to what Leonora Saavedra calls 'strategic alterity' and to Gayatri Spivak's 'strategic essentialism' – is a modernist act.[21] Achieving it requires a self-conscious

20 Letter from Nelson Rockefeller to Carlos Chávez 28 March 1940, Rockefeller Archives Personal Projects Collection, box 149, folder 1473.

21 This concept is enmeshed in a network of related concepts from postcolonial studies, such as Amaryll Chanady and Homi Bhabha's discussions of ambivalence, Fernando de Toro's review of a 'third space' created by the postcolonial condition, and Roberto Schwarz's discussion of the need to accept a 'backward status' as the price of admission to modernity. I also discuss this further in 'Misreading Revueltas: Polysemy and the Second String Quartet', *Súmula: Revista de Teoría Musical y Análisis* 1/1 (2023). Leonora Saavedra, 'Carlos Chávez y la construcción de una alteridad estratégica', in *Diálogo de resplandores: Carlos Chávez y Silvestre Revueltas*, ed. Yael Bitrán and Ricardo Miranda (Mexico City: Conaculta 2002). See also Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*

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PROGRAM

With an orchestra especially assembled, and a chorus from the National Music League.

CONDUCTORS: May 16, 17, 18 *(evenings)* — Carlos Chávez
May 17, 18 *(afternoons)* and May 19 through May 29 *(afternoons & evenings)* — Eduardo Hernández Moncada

Afternoons: 2:30 o'clock *Evenings:* 8:45 o'clock

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I. Xochipili-Macuilxochitl — *music for pre-Conquest instruments* (XVIth century) — Carlos Chávez 13

II. Sones Mariachi — *Jalisco* (XIXth, XXth centuries) — arranged for orchestra by Blas Galindo 14

III. Corridos Mexicanos — *Michoacán* (XIXth, XXth centuries) — arranged for orchestra and chorus by Vicente Mendoza . 15

IV. Mass — *Mexico City* (XVIIIth century) — Don José Aldana — arranged by Candelario Huizar 17

V. Marcha, Vals, Canción — *Zacatecas, Durango, Chihuahua* (XIXth century) — arranged for orchestra by Carlos Chávez 19

VI. Huapangos — *Vera Cruz* (XVIIIth, XIXth, XXth centuries) — arranged for orchestra by Gerónimo Baqueiro Fóster . . 19

VII. La Paloma Azul — (traditional) — arranged for orchestra and chorus by Carlos Chávez 23

VIII. Yaqui Music — *Sonora* (traditional) — arranged for orchestra by Luis Sandi 23

IX. Los Cuatro Soles — *two dances from the ballet, for orchestra and chorus* (1925) — Carlos Chávez 27

Figure 3 (Colour online) Museum of Modern Art concert programme, 'Mexican Music'. I have highlighted works by Carlos Chávez; they were not highlighted in the original programme. Digital image © The Museum of Modern Art. Licensed by SCALA / Art Resource, New York.

(New York: Routledge, 2006); Amaryll Chanady, 'The Latin American Postcolonialism Debate in a Comparative Context', in *Coloniality at Large: Latin America and the Postcolonial Debate*, ed. Mabel Moraña, Enrique Dussel, and Carlos A. Jáuregui (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008); Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge 1994 [2009 reprint]); Fernando de Toro, 'The Postcolonial Question: Alterity, Identity, and

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awareness of modernism as an architecture of global hierarchies. There were certainly not twenty centuries of Mexican music in the MoMA programme, or even three centuries. By presenting simple-sounding works as traditional, the composers and concert organizers gave the impression that modernism required: that Mexicans are as they always have been, continually reinscribing their pre-industrial nature in communal cultural practices.

If *La paloma azul* does not sound modernist in the aesthetic sense of angularity or exceeding tonal boundaries, it is because it works as a counterpart to this portrayal – a fantasy of simplicity that merits modernists' perceptions as different and sophisticated. In helping construct this fantasy, Chávez bills himself and, by extension, all of Mexico as part of the modernist hierarchy – specifically, the bottom of it, the base that supports a modernist image. Chávez understood that part of his task was to put Mexicans on display as modernism's shadow, which is as necessary to modernism as are the aesthetics widely associated with it. In order that modernism may exist, it must have a negative image to which it can be compared. Chávez self-consciously manufactured that image. I do not mean by this that he used the language of modernism's shadow; those are my words, not his. What I mean is that Chávez saw that the role of Mexico in artistic modernity was to be the foil that, through its counterexample, sharpened modernism's claims of aesthetic novelty and distinction. Here was a composer of contrapuntal music that often disrupted expectations of tonality, commissioned by a museum with the word 'modern' in its very name, and the music he created resisted modernist aesthetics. In that resistance lies a powerful modernist gesture, a means of creating modernist political-aesthetic categories.

In this respect, Chávez's concert selections were enormously successful. In his review of the series, *New York Times* music critic Olin Downes refers to Chávez as 'the authoritative composer, conductor, and educator of Mexico', a description that emphasizes nationality. As an authoritative educator, Chávez is here to describe for us an object, Mexican music, that is apart from himself and that, in its anti-modernism, clarifies what modernism sounds like. Downes focuses on what he perceives to be the music's successful telegraphing of Mexican-ness, evident in the works' 'primitive nature', 'truthfulness of feeling', and what he believes is their faithful rendering of indigenous culture.[22] Referring to one composition of supposedly indigenous music on the programme, Downes writes:

> Then came the traditional Yaqui music orchestrated, one would say, with consummate understanding of the native music and its feeling by Luis Sandi. It is music of primitive dance patterns, with shrill tessitura of upper wind instruments, and an astonishing variety of rhythms and percussive effects. It is also music which has not been doctored, or sandpapered for politeness' sake, or given a personal or

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the Other(s)', in *El debate de la postcolonialidad en Latinoamérica: una postmodernidad periférica o cambio de paradigma en el pensamiento latinoamericano*, ed. Alfonso de Toro and Fernando de Toro (Frankfurt a.M. and Madrid: Iberoamericana and Vervuert, 1999); Roberto Schwarz, *As ideias fora do lugar: ensaios selecionados* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 2014).

22 Olin Downes, 'Perspective of Mexican Music: Museum of Modern Art's Program, Arranged by Carlos Chavez, Was a Panorama of Country's Tonal History', *New York Times*, 2 June 1940, X5.

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> ultra-sophisticated twist. Like so much genuine folk music, it carries, or seems to carry, a singular reflection of primitive nature.[23]

Downes is especially attentive to authenticity, noting that the programme 'was prepared with exceptional care and scholarship'.[24]

However, even as Downes acknowledges Chávez's authority to encapsulate and transmit Mexican music, the critic cannot avoid establishing himself as a still-higher authority. This is one of the defining privileges of the metropolitan modernist. Rockefeller, too, counted himself such an authority, hence his patronage not only of MoMA but also the Museum of Indigenous Art, later renamed the Museum of Primitive Art, which was eventually incorporated into the Metropolitan Museum of Art. In the case of the MoMA concert, Downes makes himself the arbiter of authenticity when he objects to Candelario Huízar's setting of an eighteenth-century Mass by José Aldana. Blithely presuming that actual colonial music must be just as exotic as modern creations invoking and imagining indigeneity, Downes laments that the piece fails to demonstrate an essential Mexicanness by sounding too close to European works from the time. It thus seems inauthentic, an insufficient representation of Mexican difference. Ironically, the Mass is the only work in the concert that was notated prior to the late nineteenth century. It is the lone historical document of the 'twenty centuries', the only piece in which one could reasonably claim to find hints of colonial Mexico.

Downes's compatriot at the *New York Times*, music editor Howard Taubman, also inhabited the role of authenticity arbiter in his own enthusiastic review:

> As of purely musical interest, there was much to delight the ear. Mr. Chávez has not trotted out a scholar's dry-as-dust compilation. The program has warmth and gaiety, sentimentality, color and vitality. It represents music of the people, without too many artistic frills and furbelows. Esthetes may sniff at parts of it, but listeners with open minds will relish its naïveté and simplicity of spirit.[25]

As a thoroughly modern critic, Taubman is in a position to judge. Never mind that there is nothing naïve about the MoMA concerts, their apparent simplicity being in fact a finely wrought artifice.

Of course, Taubman's perspective here is inseparable from Chávez's artistic statements in the programme notes, which Taubman cites. 'In making our choices', Chávez explains, 'we considered first the purely musical interest of the program; our second insistent desire was to give some conception of the historic development of music in Mexico during the twenty centuries already mentioned.'[26] While Chávez claims to focus on musical interest, it is clear from his selections that he is highlighting a vision of Mexican music that accords

23 Downes, 'Perspective of Mexican Music'.

24 Downes, 'Perspective of Mexican Music'.

25 Howard Taubman, 'Mexicans' Music Sung at Exhibition; First Concert in Series at Museum of Modern Art Arranged by Chavez', *New York Times*, 25 May 1940, 25.

26 Original text printed in Carlos Chávez, *Mexican Music*, 5. As quoted in Howard Taubman, 'Mexicans' Music Sung at Exhibition', 25.

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with New Yorkers' expectations, one that elicits just the right assessment from Taubman: 'of the people, without too many artistic frills'.

This is not the only time that MoMA explicitly employed Latin American music as a primitive foil, a necessary shadow for modernism's shining progress. The next year, the museum held a similar set of concerts of Brazilian music as well as a concert featuring a range of Latin American music that was publicized with a press release titled 'Voodoo Chants, Inca Tribal Dances and Primitive Songs in South American Panorama – Museum of Modern Art Concert'.[27] The persistent use of a Latin American primitive imaginary within the halls of the Museum of Modern Art speaks to a close relationship, one in which perceived difference is central to modernist claims. The fact that living, conservatory-trained composers such as Heitor Villa-Lobos and Carlos Chávez readily supplied works for these concerts exhibits a knowing participation in this hierarchical presentation.[28]

Chávez and his MoMA patrons and audiences should properly be seen as co-creating modernism and as created by modernism. Chávez was participating in modernism's cultural economy by joining many Latin American composers of the period who were most celebrated when perceived to be enacting the nation rather than the modern, which was understood as universal – not necessarily accessible to all peoples but also not bounded by the nation. The sleight of hand that underlies *La paloma azul*, and the MoMA concert generally, testifies to the lengths Chávez and his contemporaries were enjoined to go. There is much to be learned from this subterfuge in service of market demands. But it is not only the case that Mexican and other Latin American artists had to channel the nation in order to earn money and esteem in global markets, and often enough at home, too. This is all true. Yet there is more to the story, in particular the role of 'national' music in opposing and thereby delineating artistic modernism, a role that could be carried out only in a context that was already global.

What defines 'global' modernism?

If *La paloma azul* and the larger MoMA concert participate in the discourse of modernism through its negation, this does not entail that Chávez disdained modernist aesthetics. To the contrary, he was part of a network of modernist music-makers, which only serves to clarify the extent to which *La paloma azul* was self-consciously created within a modernist rubric. In fact, the piece contains references to fellow modernists – statements that affiliate the work with an aesthetic universe from which it is supposed to stand apart.

Specifically, *La paloma azul* features musical gestures and thematic references that show Chávez's personal connection to Aaron Copland, in particular the work *El Salón México*, for which Chávez had conducted the premiere. Both pieces reference the canciones 'El mosco' and 'De Laredo', with some identical adjustments. Through references such as these, Chávez connected *La paloma azul* to modernism. This relation is an ambivalent

27 Press release for 24 or 25 May 1941, Museum of Modern Art archives, Reports and Pamphlets Collection, folder 22.5.

28 More could clearly be said about composers' participation in this practice – I speak further on issues of strategic alterity and ambivalence in 'Misreading Revueltas'.

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one, to be sure, expressed through both presences and absences. But there can be no doubt that Chávez was conscious of and motivated by his concert's relation to modernism.

Where does this leave 'global musical modernism'? Thus far this term has been the header of an archaeological and archival project, an effort to recast works as modernist, document historical works of modernist aesthetics that scholars ignored (because they were created by marginal artists), and attend to works from marginalized places that engage approaches that are readily recognized as fitting a commonly narrativized modernist aesthetic. The idea is that this time, modernists elsewhere will not be forgotten, as they were in the past, because today's scholars understand better than predecessors how racially bounded canons perpetuate inequalities anathema to the egalitarian politics the academy claims to uphold. Modernism, on this view, can be made global in part by belatedly recognizing those artists who were modernist all along – according to the very same aesthetic considerations once used to omit them. And while there is urgent need to face the exclusionary practices that continue to govern the neoliberal university, our work remains contoured by institutional demands, disciplinary histories, academic societies, and funders.[29]

In this sense, global musical modernism is not here to open us to uncomfortable claims to modernism or to the historical experiences that have served to define modernism. We are not to understand how modernism has always been global because it was built in opposition to a traditionalism and simplicity said to be essential to Others and indicative of the way of life that preceded the rupture with modernity. Rather scholars are to be that much more thoroughly invested in modernism as a set of aesthetic categories because, at last, we might be able to divorce modernism from its centrally exploitative history. Anyone could have been modernist then, and anyone can be modernist now. All that is necessary is to update an old saw about legal definitions of obscenity: 'I know it when I see it.' In this case, we know it – modernism – when we hear it, no need to ask any other questions. To think this way is to deny and thereby perpetuate still-ramifying histories of hierarchy and racialization rather than imagine new ways of thinking that better serve egalitarian politics.

The same might be said of other disciplines that have embraced the perceived emancipatory potential of global modernism. Mark Wollaeger, a scholar of English, writes, 'We want to disorient, but not too much', arriving at an uneasy acknowledgement of the desire to expand modernism's ambit while maintaining existing understandings of modernism.[30] Similarly, literature scholar Eric Hayot argues that global modernism is possible, but 'we need to act like we don't already know what [modernism] is'.[31] Yet acting-like does not take us far. Acting-like means distancing ourselves from a behaviour that is taken for granted, so that what is taken for granted is not renounced but instead becomes that much more foundational – the ground that is always there beneath us while we pretend to think otherwise. To act-like is to engage in a kind of Husserlian bracketing, a thought experiment in which one sets

29 For more on the destructive and limiting impacts of these disciplinary threads, see Katherine McKittrick, *Dear Science and Other Stories* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2020).

30 Mark Wollaeger, 'The Global/Comparative Turn in Modernist Studies: Two Points Bearing on Praxis', *English Language Notes* 49/1 (2011), 155.

31 Eric Hayot quoted in Wollaeger, 'The Global/Comparative Turn in Modernist Studies', 154.

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aside what one knows in order to be open to that which troubles settled knowledge. But actual instances of this bracketing are seldom robust; one is rarely able to really forget their existing understandings, or effectively hold aside beliefs. In this way, global modernisms serve mainly to police canons, expanding their geographic boundaries while reinvesting in their aesthetic boundaries and in the process submerging their politics.

In music, global modernism takes as given modernism as a set of aesthetic categories and suggests that these categories are a human patrimony, rather than an elite and metropolitan one. Something similar has been going on in other fields, as Hayot's attempted reinvigoration of modernism attests. Aarthi Vadde, another scholar of English, calls this 'scaling' – an extension beyond old borders of the space in which artistic products may be described as modern, but an extension that maintains the parameters and markers of modernism that precede it.[32] In Vadde's assessment, modernism has scaled poorly, something that she takes to be a positive sign that the 'global' really shifts how scholars understand modernism.

I am sympathetic to critics of scaling, who argue that the practice fails to do justice to the more varied materials thereby encompassed. But I would argue further that the practice also does violence to modernism itself by severing its crucial connection to historicity. The vision of modernism as newly global because suddenly incorporating peripheral artists renders unintelligible the work of those whom scholars are accustomed to placing at the centre of the modernist canon. Are we now to believe that modernists were not actually cognizant of the past and of the contemporary Others who incarnated the past in the contemporary world? That modernism did not always bear the premodern, and therefore the global-as-primitive, within it?

And yet this is precisely the move that global modernists ask us to make, suggesting that there is a delicate balance to be struck between understanding what modernism *is* and what it *could be*. This approach, however, is incoherent. It claims that we might be able to maintain an open sense of modernism's capacities and affordances even as we already know what modernism is. Such a having-both-ways is not just intellectually impossible, but also the effort to untangle this Gordian Knot requires that we ignore the deep investments in whiteness and hierarchy that are central to historical experiences of modernism. This very contradiction inspired a Modernist Studies Association panel at the 2010 MLA conference, in which various panellists argued that the division between history and aesthetics should be abolished; that modernism needed to continue to leave someone out, lest it become meaningless; or that the boundaries and limits of modernism as a concept were the problem.[33]

Modernism – its canonical works, the scholarship surrounding it, its aesthetic priorities, and its claimed rejection of economic priorities in pursuit of 'difficult' art – is not merely couched in whiteness but has helped to create whiteness, especially male whiteness. Mary Louise Pratt speaks to this when she describes modernity as an 'identitarian discourse', one that allowed Europe and the United States to 'construct [] itself and its future as a centre,

32 Aarthi Vadde, 'Scalability', *Modernism/Modernity*, 2/4 (2018), https://doi.org/10.26597/mod.0035.

33 Mark Wollaeger, 'Introduction', in *Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms*, ed. Mark Wollaeger with Matt Eatough (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 11.

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as *the* centre, with the rest of the planet as a – its – periphery'.[34] But the expansive promise of the 'global' asks us to set aside modernism's constitutive role in whiteness.[35] In his introduction to the *Oxford Handbook of Global Modernisms*, Mark Wollaeger – who is deeply invested in rescuing modernism[36] – models this setting aside. He lists a number of critiques of Anglo-American modernism, focusing on the construction of the canon (largely white male) and the illiberal political leanings of some of its most central creators. But for Wollaeger, these are sins of the past, and modernism can be rehabilitated through its expansion to include hitherto-ignored artists.[37]

Other scholars, however, show us what it would look like to critique the modernist frame without assuming the promise of repair. For example, literature scholar Greg Forter treats US modernism as rooted in a perceived loss of white male power in the wake of the Civil War and Reconstruction. For Forter, modernism's language and values of white and male power constitute a response of mourning and backlash, which was available also to women artists such as Willa Cather. 'All of [these authors] – including Cather – came in part to identify with the hard, invulnerable, and dominative white manhood consolidated in this period', he writes. 'And all came to denigrate a feminine responsiveness that they also experienced as intimately linked to their creative powers.'[38] While, in Wollaeger's construction, illiberal politics are an inconvenient happenstance – a feature of the modernist canon to date, but severable from modernism – for Forter these features are constitutive of modernism itself, creating a set of aesthetic priorities that claim power and agency for white masculinity.

Likewise, art historian Kristina Wilson considers the whiteness of post-war mid-century modernism, arriving at the conclusion that whiteness is not merely incidental to modernism but rather that modernism was a technology that constructed whiteness. Wilson analyses 'Sunday Morning', a Norman Rockwell illustration that graced the cover of the *Saturday Evening Post*. Rockwell's image itself does not participate in aesthetic features of modernism, but it does insert modernist aesthetics directly into the US suburban – that is, white – experience, suggesting that American modernity just is white. In the image, a man in pyjamas and a bathrobe sits reading the newspaper and smoking a cigarette while his impeccably dressed wife and three children, heads raised high, march out of the house behind him – presumably off to church. Everyone in the scene is white. It is an amusing sight, a joke at the expense of this highly relatable layabout. Critically, however, he is ensconced in Eero

34 Pratt, *Planetary Longings*, 34, 39.

35 When I describe modernism as constitutive of whiteness, I do not mean to suggest that modernism precedes whiteness. I mean that modernism has been one of the tools for instantiating whiteness, which is coterminous with white power. Whiteness is always under creation and draws from many sources, many of which, obviously, precede modernism.

36 A small sample of Wollaeger's writings on the topic include: 'The Global/Comparative Turn in Modernist Studies: Two Points Bearing on Praxis'; 'Where and When is Modernism: Editing on a Global Scale', *Kritika Kultura* 16 (2011); and 'Central Issues in Studies of Modernist Peripheries', *Dibur Literary Journal* 10 (2021), https://arcade.stanford.edu/dibur/peripheral-modernisms-editors-roundtable#wollaeger.

37 Wollaeger, 'Introduction', 8.

38 To be clear, Forter does not argue that white masculinity was actually ever under threat. Rather, his emphasis is on the perception of threat or weakness, a sense of insecurity more than an actual shift in the possessors of power. Greg Forter, *Gender, Race, and Mourning in American Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 4.

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Saarinen's Womb chair, one of the most recognizable products of modernist design. Wilson writes:

> Images such as *Sunday Morning* reinforce an idea that postwar American suburbia just happened to be White, when in fact racial segregation was legislated through federal laws and private development practices that privileged White home buyers exclusively. Moreover, this cover promotes an idea that Modernism was a racially agnostic design language for a simply White community, when in fact . . . Modernist design was a powerful tool for constructing Whiteness to White consumers in the postwar period.[39]

Critiques such as Forter's and Wilson's demonstrate powerfully the limits of inclusion. This special journal issue does, too. Why is this special issue on the topic of 'global' musical modernisms? Why are these articles not in a journal issue on modernism full stop? Such an approach is supposed to help us rethink the idea of modernism, using a lens that decentres the historical canon of modernist studies. But the effect is to secure modernism from the critique that the invocation of the global is supposed to supply. Indeed, the highest achievement of a global-modernist project would simply be to recognize that modernism – properly understood as a history – does not need the word 'global' appended to it. Modernism just cannot be both understood as a history and yet also divorced from narratives of centre and periphery, no matter who is canonized at any given time. Modernist aesthetics are parasitic on this condition, not separate from it – modernism as a means of relating to global structures of coloniality. To pursue inclusion, and to dissociate modernist aesthetics or ideas from the colonial enterprise, is to pretend that history has not happened or that it can be safely left in the past, as though the world we live in today were not in fact an accretion of histories.

Global musical modernism, like global modernism more broadly, shares strong links with comparative literature studies and thus with the limits that discipline has also encountered. Both disciplines emphasize how different repertories can shed fresh light on artistic meaning and interpretation. Yet comparative literature has struggled to move beyond works in translation, in which the English language becomes a mediator that fundamentally changes works and subjects them to ill-fitting terms for discussion.[40] In this way, comparative literature has been dogged by scaling – expansion and inclusion – rather than productive of real change.

39 Kristina Wilson, *Mid-Century Modernism and the American Body: Race, Gender, and the Politics of Power in Design* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2021), 3.

40 This is a topic that is also being addressed in current work on global claims in music theory, as in Anna Yu Wang's recent online discussion of issues with translation. As with comparative literature, the act of translation prioritizing English reiterates hierarchical logics rather than serving to change them. Anna Yu Wang, 'Towards an Ethics of Translation for Global History of Music Theory', *History of Music Theory* (blog), 11 April 2023, https://historyofmusictheory.wordpress.com/2023/04/11/towards-an-ethics-of-translation-for-global-history-of-music-theory-part-i/. For work on comparative literature in this regard, see, for example, Rebecca Walkowitz, 'Why Transnational Modernism Can't Be All in One Language' *English Language Notes* 49/1 (2011). Or for a take that argues that such translation is just fine, see Christopher Bush, 'Why Not Compare?' *English Language Notes* 49/1 (2011).

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What if modernism were changed by its engagement with the global, rather than thought of as a container that has always been able to hold 'peripheral' works? Would it still be modernism? Wollaeger and Vadde would say yes – that, indeed, that is the goal of global modernism. But I think not. This would be a modernism that rejects what modernism has always been. Academics invested in such a modernism would have to discard it in all but name only. One could maintain an admiration for modernist aesthetics but would have to accept that modernism is not the vehicle of subversion one wishes it to be. In this case one will be left with a collection of works by diverse artists, but a collection that achieves intellectual incoherence and fails to be the world-changing force that modernism purported to be. Modernists in history laid claim to being both world-straddling and world-changing. Global modernism is an anodyne project of expanding canons to the point where they no longer do anything politically.

Aims and purposes

Whom does the 'global' in global musical modernism benefit? The key beneficiary, it seems to me, are scholars committed to the belief that modernism is a subversive aesthetic. For those who wish to see in modernism emancipatory and egalitarian ideas that upset an oppressive status quo, forgotten modernists of the 'periphery' present an opportunity. But for the artists themselves, who were not forgotten by modernism but where in fact intrinsic to it, inclusion in global modernism is an offence twice over.

First, it is an offence because inclusion of this sort comes with strings attached – specifically, the global. Like other instances of tokenistic diversity, this is inclusion that simultaneously excludes by placing the newly included in a separate sphere. Second, inclusion in global modernism is an offence because it imposes the very forgetting that it is supposed to remedy. Inclusion in global modernism means forgetting what modernism has always meant for its shadows – how they actually reckoned with modernism and helped to create it.

La paloma azul can be understood in a way that subverts. We can follow the history of its creation to a place of critique. And one object of critique is modernism itself. True, Chávez aimed to please, providing for MoMA compositions that met bourgeois tastes. But when read with knowledge of material context, and when appreciated as a carefully constructed simulation of primitiveness, *La paloma azul* opens avenues for thought and for argument. We can use it to understand modernism differently – as a venue in which the terms of power, opportunity, and success are negotiated. This is as true for modernists at the centre of the canon as for those whose role is to be modernity's negative image. All artists face market strictures and operate within global (and domestic) hierarchies. Chávez makes this vivid through his subterfuge.

Investment in subversive art is laudable. Scholars should want to pay attention to such works. But this aim is not served by an ingathering of the modernists. More successful, I submit, will be Edith A. G. Wolfe's 'situated' approach, which asks scholars to pay attention to works in context and to explore their multiple possible meanings. Again, this approach is

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appropriate at the 'centre' and at the 'periphery.'[41] This is different from collecting and cataloguing modernists. Situated analysis demands that scholars do not just go looking for whatever matches what we think we already know. It demands that we do interpretive work and we allow ourselves to be open to the discomfort that artists such as Chávez can inject into cherished intellectual commitments. *La paloma azul* teaches us so much about modernism that we should know, even if we do not wish to.

I am excited by the changing nature of scholarly inquiry today – the academic interest in broadening horizons, revisiting old claims and narratives, and thinking our way towards alternatives. Modernism's remainders can help us do that thinking, but only if we take them as such – as remainders, as purposefully and meaningfully Other. That is how we discover modernism's subversive potential in the present moment. Modernism and its shadow can help us tell revealing stories about what art has meant to real people all over the world for a century and more. Within modernism's always-global history are resources from which scholars can assemble new narratives that centre artists' struggles and sacrifices for participation and recognition, that position artists as labourers in a marketplace, and that make sense of art's power in human affairs.

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41 While the terms 'centre' and 'periphery' were used at times by self-described modernists, these words have also been subject to strong critique. Prakash, Casciato, and Coslett are emblematic of this line of thought – see, for example, discussion of this paradigm in relation to architecture: 'One of the most persistent, and arguably most pernicious, of the colonial modalities that still continue to reign supreme in modernist architectural practice, criticism, and historiography is the idea of influence, of the contested relationship between centers of origin and their supposedly derivative peripheries' (17). On the other hand, Mary Louise Pratt argues for the importance of using these terms, precisely because they help bring into focus 'center-periphery relations . . . as a structure of inequality that creates or constitutes the center' (42). For Pratt, it is precisely the idea of the 'periphery' that defines the 'center', noting, 'the concept of modernity, I suggest, was one of the chief mechanisms through which Europe constructed itself and its future as a center, as *the* center, with the rest of the planet as a – its – periphery' (39). Moreover, she writes that peripheral self-narrativizing does important work in 'undermining the hegemony of modernity and its mythologies' (44). Critically, this construction argues against modernity's commonly understood traits, and fights against the characterization altogether, rather than redeeming modernity for Latin Americans. Vikramaditya Prakash, Maristella Casciato, and Daniel E. Coslett, 'Global Modernism and the Postcolonial', in *Rethinking Global Modernism: Architectural Historiography and the Postcolonial*, ed. Vikramaditya Prakash, Maristella Casciato, and Daniel E. Coslett (New York: Routledge, 2022); Pratt, *Planetary Longings*; and Edith A. G. Wolfe, 'The Challenge of a Global Modernism', *Art Journal* 78/3 (2019).

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