**Enríquez Salazar, Manuel (1926-1994)**

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Mexican composer and violinist. Enríquez is regarded one of the leading figures of the experimental music scene in Mexico during the second half of the twentieth century. His use of serial techniques, indeterminacy, and graphic notation was very influential for composers of a younger generation. Through his leadership of diverse institutions and festivals, he played an important role in promoting new music both at national and international levels.



Manuel Enríquez, 1981. (Photo credit: [www.manuelenriquez.com/](http://www.manuelenriquez.com/))

**Overview**

Enríquez studied composition in Morelia with Miguel Bernal Jiménez, and continued in New York with Peter Mennin and Stefan Wolpe (1955-1957). It was Wolpe who introduced Enríquez to serial techniques and to projects of interdisciplinary nature.

Enríquez’s public debut in Mexico City, both as a composer and violinist, happened at a concert in 1959 with a performance of his *Concierto para violín,* which received public acclaim. His first serial piece, *Preámbulo,* premiered in 1961 by the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional (directed by Francisco Savín), was also well received and granted Enríquez recognition among the composers of his generation. In the 1962 and 1964 La Casa del Lago, a space dedicated to the promotion of artistic projects mostly associated with the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, devoted two concerts to Enríquez’s music, which allowed the public an even greater exposure to the composer’s oeuvre. By the end of the decade he was receiving commissions both by national and international organizations and his music was being performed in new music festivals across Latin America and Europe.

After receiving a Guggenheim fellowship in 1971, Enríquez was able to work at the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center. He was involved in projects of an interdisciplinary nature, in particular with sculptor Federico Silva in the creation of multimedia works for musical theater. In 1972 he received the Premio Elías Sourasky, and the Diosa de Plata for the best score for the film *Muñeca reina*, directed by Sergio Olhovitch, and was appointed director of the Conservatorio Nacional de Música—a post he kept until 1974. From 1975 to 1977 he received a commission by the Mexican government to promote Mexican music in Europe, and during those years abroad he was very active both as a performer and composer, giving recitals and lectures across Europe while living in Paris.

At his return to Mexico in 1977, Enríquez was appointed Director of the Centro Nacional para la Documentación, Investigación e Información Musical Carlos Chávez (CENIDIM), where he initiated important work on score editions, recordings and catalogs of works by Mexican composers. Starting in 1979 he founded and directed the Foro Internacional de Música Nueva, which under his leadership evolved as one of the most renowned new music festivals in Latin America.

In 1982, Enríquez became a member of the Academia de Artes and received the Deutscher Akademischer Autauschdienst, and the Premio Nacional de las Artes a year later. He was head of the Music Department of the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes from 1985 to 1991, taught composition at the University of California Los Angeles and San Diego in 1991, and was named musical advisor of the Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes de México. Moreover he was director of the Sociedad de Autores y Compositores de México and was on the executive committee of the Consejo Interamericano de la Música.

**Works**

Enríquez’s early works are characterized by the use of polytonality, neo-classical style, and rhythmic irregularity. His free use of serial techniques introduced in *Preámbulo*, continued throughout the 1960s in works such as *Sinfonía II* (1962), *Pentamúsica* (1963) and *Tres invenciones* for flute and viola (1964), among others. Enríquez incorporates aspects of indeterminacy and open forms in solo pieces, such as *A lápiz* (1965) for piano solo, as well as in orchestral works of the second half of the 1960s, such as *Transición* (1965), and *Concierto II* for violin (1966), both of which present nonmetered sections.

Open forms and aspects of indeterminacy characterize Enríquez’s works of the late 1960s. In *Ambivalencia*, for violin and violoncello, and *Cuarteto II,* from 1967, Enríquez used graphic notation for the first time, granting liberty to the performer in selecting certain parameters of pitch, rhythm, and order of sections. While keeping elements of indeterminacy and graphic notation, Enríquez explored instrumental timbre, and dense textures with solos ad libitum in his orchestral pieces, for example *Si libet* (1968), *Ixámatl* (1969), *Ritual* (1973), and *Fases* (1978). In his chamber and solo work Enríquez utilized extended techniques to obtain a range of timbre possibilities. His interest in color variety was particularly acute in the way he used percussion, both in solo and ensemble pieces, such as *Díptico III*, for percussion and orchestra (1987), *Políptico* for six percussionists (1983), and *Canto a un dios mineral* (1992), for solo percussionist and reciter with text by Jorge Cuesta.



From left to right: Octavio Paz and Manuel Enríquez, 1988. (Photo credit: [www.manuelenriquez.com/](http://www.manuelenriquez.com/))

While Enríquez continued to present graphic elements and indeterminate aspects in his scores until the end of his life, he also incorporated lyrical melodic sections and allusions to popular tunes in works of the 1980s and early 1900s, such as *Cuarteto IV* (1983), *Cantata a Juárez* (1983), and *Piedras del viento* (1991).

**Selected Bibliography**

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**Website**

<http://www.manuelenriquez.com/>

(This site was created by Manuel Enríquez’s widow Susana Enríquez)