

M.E. in Memoriam

M.E. In memoriam, for nine players was written in 1994 on a commission from the U.S./Mexico Fund for Culture. It was premiered on October 23, 1994 during the international Cervantino Festival in Guanajuato, Mexico. The premiere performance was in charge of the Cuicani Chamber Orchestra, under the composer's direction.

When he set out to compose this work, Sanchez-Gutierrez thought about maintaining the anonymity of the individual to whom the work pays tribute, but he later made it know that the "M.E." of the title refers to Mexican composer Manuel Enríquez (1926-1994), who was born in the State of Jalisco, and who Carlos met towards the end of the former composer's life. Enríquez is an important, yet contradictory, figure in Mexico's cultural history. His contributions as a composer and organizer of cultural events are of everlasting importance. Sanchez-Gutierrez's composition is not conceived as an epitaph, but instead aims to celebrate the contradictory character and explosively powerful quality of Enríquez's music. Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez provides us with the following commentary:

"Octavio Paz wrote that 'death is a mirror where the vain gesticulations of life are reflected.' Rather than mourning the departure of a friend, this work is likely to invoke the complexity of the man's life--and the anger of those he left behind."

Certainly, without trying to be a gloss of Enriquez's work, or to imitate his style, Sanchez-Gutierrez's piece shares many general qualities with the former composer's work—if only tangentially. During the first half of the composition, the oboe appears to play a leading role through a series of gestures and motives that are reiterated across the entire range of the instrument; this resource is further explored, if less evidently, during subsequent passages. During a breaking point, the robust and tense discourse established by M.E. in Memoriam is supported by the piano and percussion instruments over a wash of repetitious pitches on the strings. The final section of the piece revisits the energy-charged expressiveness of the beginning, reminisces on other previous passages, and ends with a final peremptory gesture on the piano.

©1995, Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez

The other two composers also create atmospheric density, but through predominantly rhythmic means. Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez's superbly realized "M.E. in Memoriam" stands out in particular. A lyrical oboe is the moderator which winds through the arcs of tension created by continuous layering of polyrhythms.

"Klingende Poesie", Nürnberg Nachrichten

It would be a misconception to assume that compositions from Central America are more fiery than those of cool Europe. Nevertheless,[...] in memory of the Mexican composer Manuel Enríquez, the chamber ensemble was called upon to play exceptionally tightly and tautly. In this piece, Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez pushes the motif of upsurging over the top—above all, the oboe and the flute climb into the unattainable.

Aus Mexiko-Klangkonzept Ensemble, Nürnberg-Zeitung Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez's

"M.E. in Memoriam", dedicated to Manuel Enríquez, builds continuously in a swirling kaleidoscope of colors. "M.E. in Memoriam" brought to a close a program of intriguing and impressive recent works.

Sarah Cahill, San Francisco Classical Voice