

**CULTURAL COUNTERPOINTS:
Examining the Musical Interactions between the U.S. and Latin America**



**Saavedra, Leonora (University of California, Riverside):
“Revisiting Copland’s Mexico”**

Abstract:

Aaron Copland’s love for Mexico, epitomized by his orchestral piece *Salon Mexico*, is well known. *Salon Mexico* bears the name of a dancing club that Copland visited and in which he was able to grasp a moment in the life of the average Mexican. His composition is full of Mexican folk tunes that speak of Copland’s enchantment with the country, the people and the popular music. Copland, however, was also exposed to and equally marked by Mexico’s ebullient art music scene. Indeed Copland’s assimilation of the Mexican folkloric was mediated by the work that Mexican composers were doing as they aimed to construct musical signifiers of the post-revolutionary Mexican. Unlike his visits to other Latin American countries, prompted by the American good neighbor policy during the Cold War, Copland visited Mexico in a decade where he, his Mexican counterparts, and Mexico’s cultural and educational institutions toyed with the idea of socialism and of an art for the people. This paper will look at Copland’s activities in Mexico, the concerts he attended, and the music he might have known. It will examine the reception of the many compositions by Copland that were performed, even premiered, in Mexico City, and the response—as Copland may have experienced it—that audiences gave Mexican compositions intended to represent the Mexican people. Finally, the paper will show the indebtedness not only of Copland’s Mexican style but also of his American style, and the ideology behind it, to the work and political ideas of Mexican composers.

How to Cite this Paper:

Saavedra, Leonora. “Revisiting Copland’s Mexico.” Paper presented at the Latin American Music Center’s Fiftieth Anniversary Conference “Cultural Counterpoints: Examining the Musical Interactions between the U.S. and Latin America,” Indiana University, Bloomington, 2011. Available from *IUScholarWorks* (<https://scholarworks.iu.edu/dspace/handle/2022/15547>); accessed [Date Accessed].

Editorial Disclaimer:

This paper/abstract was presented at the Latin American Music Center’s Fiftieth-Anniversary Conference titled “Cultural Counterpoints: Examining the Musical Interactions between the U.S. and Latin America,” Indiana University, Bloomington, October 19-23, 2011, and was accepted on the basis of its abstract, which was peer-reviewed. This paper is presented as submitted by the author, who has authorized its dissemination through *IUScholarWorks*.