

Fiesta!

Orchestra Version

- 2 Flutes (2nd doubling Piccolo), 2 Oboes, 2 Clarinets in Bb, 2 Bassoons
- 4 Horns in F, 2 Trumpets in Bb, 3 Trombones, 1 Tuba
- Timpani; Perc. 1: Congas, Crash cymbals; Perc. 2: Bongos, Gran Cassa
- Strings

Ensemble Version (14 musicians)

- Flute, Oboe, Clarinet in Bb, Bassoon
- Horn in F, Trumpet in Bb
- Perc. 1: Gran Cassa, 3 Tom-toms (high-medium-low); Perc. 2: Congas, Crash cymbals; Perc. 3: Bongos, Drum set bass drum
- Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, Double Bass

FIESTA!, four pop dances for orchestra. Published by Filarmonika.

Duration: 10 minutes.

During recent years, eclecticism has become an important part of my musical language. The challenge of creating musically sensible interactions out of the juxtaposition of apparently incompatible musical sources -some of which result in unexpected contrasts-fascinates me. 'Fiesta!' draws influences from several musical sources including: European academic compositional techniques, Latin-American music, Afro-Peruvian music and today's pop music. It utilizes elaborate developmental techniques while keeping the primeval driving forces still latent in popular culture.

Movements one (Trance 1) and three (Trance 2) are connected to each other in spirit and form. Both start energetically, feature slow passages and lead to the following movement by means of open endings. The word trance belongs to the realm of techno music. Techno is a form of electronic dance music which generally makes use of hypnotic and repetitive rhythms. I use this term to establish a connection with younger generations who are not usually drawn to concerts of classical music. But a musical connection can also be found at the end of the above-mentioned movements, both of which feature soft melodies over an ostinato or a pedal note. Although ostinatos and pedal notes are mostly associated to the world of classical music, they do establish a connection with the repetitive world of techno music. In the latter, the purpose of repetition is to keep a steady pulse so that everybody can dance continuously. It is also an effective way of building up tension and keeping it high at all times. But I also use the word 'trance' in its original meaning, thus trying to convey the hypnotizing state achieved while listening to a constantly shifting melody against a static background, much like in Hindu music, where melodies unfold through a series of melismas against a pedal note and over a span of several minutes.

Movements two (Countertime) and four (Techno) are conclusive in character

and keep high levels of energy from beginning to end. Latin rhythms also play an essential part in them; therefore, the percussion section rises to prominence on several passages. 'Countertime' is an interplay of syncopes where the downbeat is constantly shifted from the strong to the weak beat of the bar. The word countertime has been derived from 'counterpoint', which in the realm of music theory defines the rules of coexistence and interaction between two or more melodies, the goal being to produce a harmonious whole. I use the word countertime to underline the interaction between an underlying steady pulse (not written out in the score) and the actual rhythms playing against it.

Techno, the fourth and last movement, uses Latin-American rhythms such as merengue. The trumpet and trombone solo at bar 70 marks the beginning of a section where techno rhythms are made explicit. In a regular techno piece, this type of solo would be played by synthesizers, and would generally happen at the precise moment in which the constant beat of the bass drum has been momentarily suspended in order to give the music a certain lightness that wouldn't be otherwise achieved if the electronic bass drum were to continue its non-stop beat. Bar 84 constitutes the most direct allusion to the techno genre; Timpani and Bass Drum replicating the steady beat while cymbals play in syncope.

This is the first piece where I have made explicit use of elements from popular music, but it is certainly not the first time it's being done. Composers from the past, especially during the baroque, would write suites that would consist of a series of dances with names such as allemande, gigue, sarabande, etc. These dances were very popular at European courts: the nobles would gather and dance to the accompaniment of a small instrumental ensemble in residence. Later on, some composers decided to use these dances and make them more sophisticated. That was part of my intention when picking up the genres that I mentioned earlier. I believe they have enough potential to justify further development, but always keeping the primeval driving forces present in them.

This piece (originally scored for chamber ensemble) was commissioned by Miguel Harth-Bedoya to mark 100th anniversary of the Lima Philharmonic Society in 2007. The full orchestra version received its first performance in May 2008, under Miguel Harth-Bedoya and the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra.

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