

ENSAMBLE TIERRA MESTIZA (TIERRA MESTIZA ENSEMBLE)

Gerardo Tamez, *director*

While he was part of the ensemble *Los Folkloristas*, Gerardo Tamez composed the very successful piece named Tierra Mestiza. On a deeper level it alludes to a mestizo cultural identity, a mix of native, black and Spanish influences, just like the current Mexican culture.

Since its creation in 2005, *Ensamble Tierra Mestiza* has the intention to disseminate Mexican and Latin American academic music, nourished by roots in folk music and folklore in a wider sense. It presents instruments and musical styles that serve this purpose, unfolding the colors and freshness of the original sources. The repertoire is made up of works from the Mexican baroque up to contemporary pieces and arrangements of music by Latin American composers such as Astor Piazzola, Heitor Villalobos, Arturo Márquez and Tamez himself. Included is a whole lot of music of the colonial origin of the Son and its fusion between folklore and academic music in genres like the fandango, the *danzón* and the son. Collaborations with invited musicians have included Celso Duarte, Ernesto Anaya, Oscar K-ché Aburto, Guadalupe Sierra and Natalia Arroyo.

The current members of the ensemble are Gerardo Tamez (guitar and baroque guitar), well-known composer and musician; Mercedes Gómez (harp), performer on classical pedal harp with a vast trajectory as soloist, teacher, member of chamber groups and in interdisciplinary projects; Carlos García (vocals, flute and percussion) jazz player with wide experience in various styles; and Teodoro Gálvez (violin), educated at a Moscow Conservatory, founding member and director of the Coghlan String Trio.

These musicians have a massive experience from the world of folklore, and thanks to a thorough academic training they command the tools needed in order to occupy a special place in the musical landscape. Improvisation is an integrated part in some of their arrangements and transcriptions, when called for by style and genre.

The ensemble has a didactic objective to win a connection to the audience, such that they may stimulate interest and a sensibility for the music and its evolution.

In December 2008 they recorded their first album, *IDA Y VUELTA*, distributed by Discos Pueblo. Tierra Mestiza has performed at venues like *Palacio de Bellas Artes*, *Auditorio de IMER*, the *Jardín Botánico de la UNAM*, *Teatro Reforma del IMSS*, the *Conservatorio Nacional de Música*, the *Facultad de Música UNAM*, *Auditorio San Pedro de Garza García*, in Nuevo León; in Río de Janeiro, Brazil, in Washington, Maryland and California, USA.

In December 2012 their second album, *FOLÍA Y SON* was presented at the *Sala Carlos Chávez-UNAM*,

with music by Carlos Garcia, Santiago Murcia, Gerardo Tamez and Peruvian polyphony.

"... an honest proposition, as serious as spectacular, to save the authentic esthetic and cultural values sustained by the gigantic Mexican folk music repertoire." - Daniel Garcia Blanco, director of the *Casa de la Música Mexicana*, August, 2007

"It must be said that the artistic creativity of this composer is the sum of the qualities between professional calling, form and content, while he also has the capacity to touch the inner life of the listener..."

"Tierra Mestiza, owns a position as the direct heir to the *Folkloristas*, where Gerardo Tamez has managed to join three more musicians, whose trajectories support the qualities mentioned above." - E. S. Millán. *PROCESO*, July 2007.

Ensamble Tierra Mestiza, has a host of virtues, among which emphasis lies in the understanding of a very broad musical spectrum, in a field between folkish and academic. – Antonio García de León, presenting the CD "*Ida y Vuelta*" in March 2009.

Ensamble Tierra Mestiza, directed by guitarist, composer and arranger Gerardo Tamez, has recorded an album named *IDA Y VUELTA* that offers a varied and interesting collection of pieces. On one hand a couple of traditional *Sones*, like *El llorar*, *La Petenera* and *El Fandanguito*. On the other side a few emblematic pieces by Santiago de Murcia, demonstrating the communicating vessels between folk music and certain material from courts and academies, just like the obvious feedback between the idiomatics of *jaranas* and *vihuelas*. The CD also contains three works by Tamez himself, including his most successful piece, named *Tierra Mestiza*, and an arrangement of his widely known *Arpatlán*. The collection is completed by a very interesting arrangement of *Danzón 2* by Arturo Márquez. The five members of the group play and sing with great conviction and clarity, and the combination of their wide experiences in their chosen musical field give great value for the listener. - Juan Arturo Brennan, *PAUTA* 110, April-June 2009.