

No doubt as the American Army and Navy make more active contact with the Fascist forces, American songwriters will be given a fresh jolt, a really creative impulse. The sting of battle, the spirit of a fighting war will develop a bitterness against the enemy, which in its turn may inspire a new and more fervent music.

G. Michailov

INTER-AMERICAN REVIEWS

CHILEAN TRAVELS

Santiago

AS a beginning to this somewhat hasty travelogue, I may say that if South America squirms under the impact of a stream of good-will ambassadors who are known locally as "parachute jumpers," the lot of the visiting "norteño" is no snap either. I know that I was catapulted in two hours up from Barranquilla to Bogota, up from Guayaquil to Quito, down from Las Paz to Arica, anything from sea-level to twenty thousand feet, with the result that I travelled with the bottle of paregoric in one hand, the cork in the other.

Anyway, it is a pleasure to report that of all the variety of good-willers we have sent - to mend dentures, or plant rubber, or lay drains, or buy pictures - by far the best and most gratefully remembered have been the musicians: particularly Marshall Bartholomew, Carleton Sprague Smith and Aaron Copland.

In music in Latin America, as everywhere else, there is the division between the Old Guard and the New. The Old Guard consists largely of people who are dead, some who are still alive, and some who may be said to be both. The Old Guard is impressive; but it has often been written up and needs no laurel from me: Uribe Holguin in Bogotá, Enrique Soro in Chile, Daniel Alomia Robles in Peru.

There is another division, too; and that is a line drawn between Chile and the rest of the West Coast. Because, in the main, the strictly Andean countries (Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru) have little music of account other than the rich and still largely unexplored vein of Indian music. (En passant, an index of Andean Design and of Andean Music is an urgent necessity; and I commend the idea to all Foundations). Lima is struggling to get out of this category; and much of the Europeanized music there is excellent; but until the composers have the teachers and the time to learn how to orchestrate their own works, there is bound to

be little of international importance there. To this general statement there are obviously exceptions: In Colombia, Antonio Maria Valencia; in Peru, Andrés Sas and Sanchez Malaga and Roberto Carpio; in Bolivia, Velasco Maidana. The fact remains that outside of Chile there is only a sprinkling, whereas in Chile there is an astonishing, often admirable flood.

In 1941 was celebrated the four hundredth year of the founding of Santiago. To the musical celebrations, Aaron Copland came as a judge and as an honored guest. Already by the end of 1940, local composers were busy writing for the competition, and practically all non-competitive composition ceased. After the prize pieces were played normal production resumed its course, the non-winning or lesser pieces saw the day, and uncompleted works were finished. The years 1942-1943 have been very fruitful and it is on this various profusion that there is much to say.

The mere list of premieres is extraordinary. For Jorge Blondel Urrutia, two; for Carlos Isamitt, two; for Alfonso Letelier, three; for Acario Cotapos, one; for Prospero Bisquertt, two; for Domingo Santa Cruz, two; for René Amengual, two; for Enrique Soro, one; for Pedro Umberto Allende, one; for Samuel Negrete, one. And among those "first performances" there are undoubtedly three or four works of permanent value. If you add to this list the names of Alfonso Leng, who writes little, and of Carmela MacKenna, you have the round dozen of composers who dominate and make illustrious the Chilean scene. And it is illustrious, for this music is not cheap or tawdry or overly imitative or ponderous, but authentic and workmanlike.

I left as the season began, but I heard several rehearsal under Armando Carvahal's able direction. I did not hear him in a regular concert-performance (except a noble experiment before some five thousand school children under ten, which was more of a riot than a concord of strange sounds). I heard Rayen Quitral, the soprano, sing. A phenomenal voice, and quite an artist. Eric Kleiber considers her the best "Queen of the Night" these days. And I heard a concert at which Longas (the Spaniard) played his concerto, and Casanova conducted his charming *Esquisses Sinfonicos*. And I heard the latest records made for the Faculty of Bellas Artes.

Among the more notable recent works, there is Letelier's *Sonnet to Death*, for soprano and orchestra. Like all his music, it is admirably written and ably orchestrated; clear and convincing, and – in this case – moving. The piano concerto written by Amengual, the pianist now in the States, was also an interesting novelty. Amengual and Letelier are

the two young hopefuls of Chile; and it is surprising and disturbing, that, either in or out of the Academia circles, and despite inspiring teachers, there seem to be no other young musicians of promise.

Soro, the father of Chilean music – Allende is the more distinguished parent, but younger – is represented by a new symphonic poem, *Three Chilean Airs*. This music is not new, it is conceived in the mind of a Verdian romanticist, but it is genuine and masterly. And when his theme, as in this poem, is adapted to his manner, heartfelt and simple, the result is excellent. Incidentally, Chilean popular songs, unlike many that Mexico, Cuba and Argentina throw off, have character and are without vulgarity. No nonsense like *God Bless America*, which Leonora Speyer calls our national Polyanthem.

The astonishing Cotapos came forward with *The Invaders*, a slice off his *Voces de Gesta*, for soprano and orchestra. You never know if a work by Cotapos is new or old, for, like Scriabin, he uses one as a study for another, and intends to lump them all together some day into a Cosmic Something which is to last four hours, with all the fixings. I think that in 1931 or 1932 Stokowski played Cotapos' *Four Symphonic Preludes*. This piece belonged to Cotapos' Paris-Edgar Varese period. The *Voces*, however, are very fetching, with the knowing simplicity of Satie. Cotapos is the most "modern" composer in Chile, still composing big works, full of chaos and intuition. And he is probably the most kindly and amusing man in South America.

Another premiere was that of Allende's *Violin Concerto*, played by Fredy Wang. Allende is a lyricist, a tone poet, synthesist of the nature of his country, of its natural aspects and heart-beat. His *La Voz de las calles* is probably the most played orchestral piece in Chile, and perhaps the most truly Chilean. Whatever Allende does, has feeling and dignity and warmth. And he is entirely in command of his material.

But undoubtedly, the most interesting new work was Santa Cruz' *Cantata de los rios*, for chorus and orchestra, which won the Grand Prize. This I was unable to hear. But I did hear the *Five Short Pieces for String Orchestra*, first played by Juan José Castro, and I thought it by long odds the most authoritative work I encountered. Domingo Santa Cruz is undoubtedly the most various and complete master in Chile, and a peer of Villa-Lobos. He has tackled every form with sureness and vigor; his works are alive and taut and substantial. As head of the Bellas Artes, he dominates the musical scene in Santiago, and if he appears to be man-

aging more than one man should, the answer is that no one else has either the mastery or the energy. I found him most generous-minded about his bitterest foes, bringing to me their music, with words of praise as well as appraisal.

Urrutia, a younger man of real talent and industry and imagination, recently presented a *Danza del Campo Yermo*, for orchestra, from his ballet *La guitarra del diablo*, and his *Pastoral de Albué*, for small orchestra. Negrete's last work was a *Quartet*, as was also Isamitt's. Santa Cruz' most recent piece was a set of *Madrigals* for mixed chorus, dedicated to Marshall Bartholomew. Bisquertt's novelty was *Metropolis*, five symphonic sketches; but I prefer his older *Miscelaneas*, for piano and orchestra, showing admirable gifts of orchestration and a charming, laconic line. Letelier's latest were a *Quartet* and a *Piano concerto*.

It is a pity that Leng had nothing new, because he is perhaps the most beloved and certainly one the most gifted of Chilean composers. Orchestrally he deals with cloud-formations, neo-Wagnerian "cumuli" which yet, somehow, are ponderable and shapely. There is no counterpoint, but there is a homogeneous solidity of consecutive patterns. There is a tendency to fragmentation. But Leng is always sensitive and elegant. His writing for piano is original and brilliant. And his songs are probably the finest produced in America.

Samuel L. M. Barlow

STRUGGLE IN MEXICO

Mexico City

FOR some years I have been struggling to organize the musical education of Mexico, but I cannot yet refer to this effort as a glorious battle happily terminated. Rather, my story is one of frequent failures, partial successes, marches forward and back, renewed enthusiasm, the enlistment of new allies and the desertion of former ones. The road is fascinating, but the end still out of sight.

I had my first educational contact with Mexican children in 1926, as a teacher of solfège and choral singing in the public schools. The district was very poor, the school of the "open-air" type, well ventilated and pretty. A teacher of the fourth or fifth year was busily introducing fox-trots and blues to the admiration of the entire school. The music I began to teach naturally inspired much ill will. Next I joined an absurd school in a small and delightful community. The classrooms were located on separate streets; singing took place in the huge building of the commissary. One could not say that discipline was bad; it simply did not exist. A sixth-year