

INTER-AMERICAN REVIEW

POLITICAL SHADOW ON ARGENTINE MUSIC

DURING the last months of 1945 the political situation considerably affected artistic activity in Argentina. Argentine intellectuals, in protest against the dictatorship, decided to suspend all cultural life and the majority of musicians co-operated. However, composers have continued their creative labor, and many new works will be heard when things are normal again. Among these will be *Martin Fierro* and *Galician Rhapsody* for orchestra by Juan José Castro; *Dramatic Sonata* for piano and *Concerto* for orchestra by José María Castro; a symphony and a ballet, *Snow White* by Luis Gianneo; a *Prelude, Chorale and Fugue* for piano by Jacobo Ficher; a *Concerto* for nine instruments by Roberto García Morillo; a *Tragic Overture* by Washington Castro; and *Rustic Games*, fourteen fragments for soloists, chorus and instruments by Carlos Suffern.

Probably the most important development of the year for local composers was the founding of the Argentine Music Publishers at the instigation of Mrs. Cecelia de Debenedetti. Directed by an advisory committee of the composers, José María Castro, Jacobo Ficher and Luis Gianneo, this group has already published works by ten of the leading writers of music in the country. Their plans also include performances, and the first cycle of concerts brought us premieres of quartets by José María Castro, Ficher, Gianneo and Washington Castro besides repeats of quartets by Juan José Castro and Gilardo Gilardi.

The composers' "societies" have shown few signs of life in the past year. The Renovación offered no concerts at all, while the Argentine Society of Composers and the New Music group gave their usual inconclusive programs. A new Argentine Youth Orchestra was organized and directed by Gianneo for the "World Radio" broadcasts. It now performs regularly before the public and has enjoyed a real success. To it José María Castro dedicated three *Pastorales* which are full of beauty and serene poetry.

Under the direction of Juan José Castro, the Buenos Aires Philharmonic devoted an important part of its programs to contemporary works. We heard, for the first time here, Stravinsky's *Danses Concertantes*, Aaron Copland's *Lincoln Portrait* and the *Third Symphony* of Roy Harris, as well as two works by Argentinians, a *Chorale, Fugue and Finale* by the young and talented Pía Sebastiani and *Three Argentine Patterns* by Pascual de Rogatis.

First performances of two Argentine scores were included in the autumn concerts at the Colón Theatre, both under the direction of Albert Wolff: *Three Paintings of Paul Klee*, an effective evocation of the artist's expressionism by Roberto García Morillo, and my own *Psalm CL* for chorus and orchestra. Another score by Morillo was heard when the Colón ballet put on his *Harrild*, derived from a fantastic story by Henry Jacques. This proved to be one of the few musically worthwhile ballets done in recent years at the Colón; it revealed a strong personality as well as technical mastery. Other works of interest performed in the past season were the *Piano Concerto* by Ficher, played by Rudolf Erlich with the orchestra of the General Association of Musicians of Argentina; a *Piano Sonata* by Gianneo; two chamber music recitals, one of music by the Brazilian, Camargo Guarnieri, the other of works by the North American, Everett Helm.

Manuel de Falla, who has been living in Argentina since 1939, when he left Córdoba, is working on an oratorio, *Atlántida*, which is based on a poem by the Catalanian, Jacinto Verdaguer. According to latest reports, it is practically finished, and we should be able to hear at least some of the important parts during the coming season. Another Spanish composer in Buenos Aires is Julián Bautista, who has finished *Four Galician Poems* to texts by Lorenzo Varela and is now writing a cantata in collaboration with the great poet Rafael Alberti.

Let us hope that in 1946 the political situation will clear and leave an atmosphere more favorable to artistic expression.

Alberto Ginastera