

Liszt *Nocturnes*. Why not end up by singing the Octave *Polonaise*?

As for new music in Lima it is a calumny to say that the public is not ready. Audiences are ready everywhere. Ours is not one of the poorest, having more than once proved its sensibility. Recently Erich Kleiber won a notable success by presenting us for the first time with *The Fire Bird*. Late in 1941 we heard Copland's *Billy the Kid* and Thomson's *Filling Station*. True, they had the additional attraction of choreography, but the music itself pleased and was applauded and praised with sincere and legitimate enthusiasm. This was the fate also of works by Hindemith, Villa-Lobos, Piston, and other contemporaries including the Peruvians, Carlos Sánchez Malaga and Andrés Sas, whose music was revealed to us by the excellent American Wind Quintet; and of the few modern works Nicolas Slonimsky played here to illustrate a lecture on contemporary music. But that was all in 1941. The 1942 season was frankly poor in contemporary works. Let us not despair however. Our public still needs to become acquainted with much of the past. Meanwhile, we will continue to hope that on some not-too-distant day the great concert artists who visit us will vary (even if but briefly) the business of concerts with a more generous manifestation toward musical art. Then we will welcome them with greater enthusiasm and more gratitude.

Carlos Raygada

POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCE,

Montevideo

MUSICAL life in Uruguay, insofar as important public performances are concerned, has been decreasing in quality for some time. It is directed and almost monopolized by the SODRE (Official Service of Radio Broadcasting), a powerful agency possessing, among other groups, a symphony orchestra of high quality. In addition to offering many kinds of performances, it rents out its hall at reduced prices to important artists and groups. Our whole musical life is practically centralized in that hall. Now the SODRE once had a certain artistic autonomy. But, as a government agency, it has been put under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Public Instruction, and consequently under the direct influence of local politics. This has produced a rapid lowering of its artistic level. Lacking permanent, competent direction that might subject its members to discipline and introduce sane, professional concepts, the SODRE's orchestra has received a mixed treatment, both from inadequate foreign conductors, many of the second and third rank, and from natives of the same or inferior categories.

Even when the SODRE has a chamber ensemble, it does nothing for contemporary music, much less for American creations. The quartet (or quintet) invariably plays programs of extremely familiar compositions, from Brahms to Fauré, or small pieces in the style of Bridge and Grieg.

Busch directed one symphonic concert in which he presented for the first time two of his Bach transcriptions. Juan José Castro gave us the premiere of Hindemith's *Neues vom Tage*, his brother José María Castro – in an end-of-the-season concert – the premiere of one of his own overtures. As is well-known, José María is a very talented composer, as his brother Juan José is an excellent conductor. Armando Carvajal, of the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de Chile, attracted attention by including in his concerts the first performance of Domingo Santa Cruz's *Five Pieces for Strings*, a work of real value, and repeated Allende's *Escenas campesinas*, a folkloric piece that becomes more and more pallid when judged by contemporary standards. Carvajal was assisted by his wife, Blanca Hauser de Carvajal, who has a notable voice, and gave first performances of a small work by the Uruguayan, Carlos Estrada, *Luna en el monte*; *La lluvia lenta*, an impressive song by Santa Cruz to a text by Gabriela Mistral, and the dramatic *Deja que mis lágrimas corran*, to a Goethe text, by the Chilean, Alfonso Leng. A youthful Italo-Brazilian conductor, Eduardo Guarnieri, offered well thought out versions of Mignone's *Canto nostálgico sertanejo* and Gnattali's *Suite brasileira*. Though a novice, his enthusiasm and musicality made a good impression. Pahissa conducted the premiere of his own *En las costas del Mediterráneo*, and Alejandro Szenkar, of Buenos Aires, gave Bruckner's *Third Symphony*, new to our public. Finally, Albert Wolff, who was unconvincing as a conductor because of his superficial and unbeautiful interpretations, directed a recent work by a competent ex-director of the Municipal Band, Benone Calcavecchia, an Italian who has written an appreciable number of symphonic works that are well made, if lacking in personality. I must mention also some first performances of stage works: the ballet *Paganini* (Rachmaninov) by the Ballet Russe; a ballet, *Zuzul*, by the local composer, Rodríguez Socas – a work of such poor musical content that it drew protests in our press; the first performance of Mozart's *Bastien und Bastienne* by local forces directed by Calcavecchia, and *La última gavota*, a one-act opera by the Uruguayan composer César Cortinas, directed by Carlos Estrada, a youthful work of very weak structure.

Of course in the field of international performers, we have had to endure, as in former years, the eternal monotony of their unvaried repertory,

an evil that will be remedied only when each nation compels these gentlemen to make one-third of their programs American works. A welcome exception was the reappearance of the great Spanish pianist, Paquita Madriguera, wife of Andrés Segovia. On the other hand, the Uruguayan artists did give us several first performances. Abel Carlevaro, an extremely able guitarist and disciple of Segovia, took part in an homage to Castelnuovo-Tedesco, and offered excellent versions of the *Variazzinni a traverso i seccoli* and *Aranci in fiori*. During another concert, he let us hear the famous and extremely difficult *Variaciones sobre la Foliá de España y Fuga*, by Manuel M. Ponce. Eduardo García de Zúñiga, a youth who has a magnificent voice and power of interpretation, presented several classic chamber works unknown here, as well as a song by Graener. Héctor Tosar Errecart, our most talented composer, who although only nineteen has already given us most interesting music in a strictly contemporary idiom, played piano works of MacDowell and John Powell, the *Fourth Sonata* of Virgil Thomson, and Copland's *Passacaglia*. Hugo Balzo offered us a very polished version of Thomson's *Second Sonata*.

Some of the concerts mentioned fall within the orbit of that meritorious institution, Arte y Cultura Popular, directed by Sra. María V. de Müller. This functions in the University of Montevideo. On most of its twenty-nine programs in 1942, there were premieres, either classics unknown in our city or contemporary American and European works. I shall mention the *Cantiga sagrada para Navidad* for three voices, by the young Colombian composer Posada Amador, now living in Mexico; popular Colombian and Venezuelan melodies; compositions by Lorenzo Fernandes; by the young Argentine composers Angel E. Lasala, Abraham Jurafsky, Magdalena García Robson, and Pedro Saenz; by the young Uruguayan composers, Celia Correa Luna, Baranda Reyes, and by Vicente Ascone, composer of several symphonic poems. In Hina Spani's concert dedicated to Castelnuovo-Tedesco, we heard the *Three Madrigals* of Petrarch-Chopin, *Cadiz*, *Two Old Romances*, *Three Poems of the Pleiades*, and *The Hermitage of Saint Simon*. One of our highly talented singers, Juliette Ruy, who had a French education, introduced Georges' *Les Chansons de Miarka*. Another, even more talented, Maria Luisa Fabini de West, gave the entire *La bonne chanson* of Fauré. The singer Walter Vecino presented Luis Gianneo's *Pampeanas*, dating from 1932. Professors Pritsch, Amadei, Santórsola, and Chela Aguiar interpreted Arnold Bax' *Quartet in one Movement*.

Broadcasts of the entire recorded contemporary repertory were carried

out by the famous National Record Library of SODRE under the direction of Francisco Curt Lange. During six daylight hours it puts the best music of all parts of the world on the air.

Here, then, is a resumé of everything important heard in Montevideo for the first time in 1942. The young composers mentioned, except for Tosar Errecart, who may justly be called contemporary, cultivate folklore or are in their first phase. Our interpreters, on the other hand, are of high quality, even if few of them are interested in contemporary works. A new organization was founded in 1942, the Centro Cultural de Música. It is made up of young performers who want to cultivate an interest in new music in the midst of general indifference and professional ignorance about contemporary matters. Among local directors, Carlos Estrada and Guido Santórsola, both composers, promise much by their seriousness, but both lack sufficient experience in interpreting the great symphonic repertory.

I should also mention the activities of the Instituto Interamericano de Músicología, which by 1942 had published seventeen works in its *Editorial Cooperativa Interamericana de Compositores*, including Chileans, Argentines, Brazilians, Peruvians, and Mexicans, all contemporaries. This collection is made up of songs, pieces for piano and violin, and choral and chamber music. The Editorial Cooperativa has up to now succeeded in obtaining performances in America and Europe for every work it has published. During 1943 it will bring out works of composers from the United States and other nations. In 1942 it brought out the fifth volume of the *Boletín Latino-Americano de Música*. The Instituto also launched a review, *Música Viva*, in the three languages of America: Spanish, English, Portuguese.

With the change in Montevideo's political situation that will have taken place by the time this resumé has been published, we can hope for a fundamental modification that will again place the SODRE, which is still the pride of Uruguayan musical culture, in the position it deserves.

R. U. A.

AT THE WORLD'S CROSSROADS

Panama

PANAMA holds a unique position in the field of music and art. During the past ten years, most contemporary performing talent has stopped at this "cross-roads of the world," to give one or more recitals while en route to South America and often again before returning to New York and Europe. And no matter how short the notice, a large and eager audience always fills the National Theatre in Panama City. The result is a year-