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MUSIC RESEARCH IN SOUTH AMERICAN LIBRARIES

by Robert Stevenson

During 1958-1959 I held a Research Fulbright award in Peru, where I gathered material for a history of music that has recently been published by the Pan American Union. Some of the discoveries that I made included the score of the earliest opera known to have been composed and produced in the Western Hemisphere and also of the first imprint to contain a piece of polyphonic music. I told the story of the opera in an article published in the January, 1959, Musical Quarterly, and I describe and transcribe the four-part chanzoneta with Quechua words in an article scheduled for early release in the Journal of Research in Music Education.

My purpose in this paper is not so much a description of the various interesting discoveries that I was able to make in the course of my year in Peru as to tell the places where material was to be found. Fortunately for my research I was able to work at numerous national libraries — at those in Quito, Lima, Santiago de Chile, Sucre, and Rio de Janeiro. In addition, I worked at the capitular libraries in Trujillo, Ayacucho, Cuzco, Arequipa, La Paz, Sucre, Santiago de Chile, and at the municipal library in São Paulo. In Lima itself, I studied at the library of the National Conservatory, of the Viceroyal Museum, of the Lima Cathedral, and of the Lima Archdiocese. I am therefore in the uniquely happy position of knowing not only the character of the holdings in these many libraries, but also of having made the acquaintance of numerous librarians and archivists throughout Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Argentina, and Brazil.

The National Library in Lima is housed in a relatively new building on the wide avenue known as Abancay. The hours are from 9 in the morning until 11 at night on weekdays, and from 9 until 1 on Sundays and holidays. The director is Don Cristóbal de Losada y Puga, whose field of specialization prior to assuming the librarianship was engineering. He is a most prepossessing and distinguished gentleman with many scholarly achievements to his credit. The Peruvian National Library serves a vast public, including hordes of college and university students. At regular intervals concerts are given in the spacious auditorium on the first floor. In this hall, which seats about 600, I heard a series of twelve concerts devoted to contemporary Peruvian composers. It serves also as an assembly hall for numerous learned congresses, and for library association meetings. The top floor of the four-story National Library is given over to a library school, one of the best in South America.

The books in the Peruvian National Library are divided into such sections as Humanities, Local History (Sala Perú), Encyclopedias and Dictionaries, Sciences, and Rarities (Sección de Investigaciones). The Rare Books are in charge of a most efficient niece of a former president of Peru, Señorita Graciela Sánchez Cerro. Earlier, this section was superintended by Dr. Alberto Tauro, a distinguished bibliographer, who has been on the most extensive round-the-world tour that I have heard of any Peruvian's making in the last five

years. His trip is sponsored by UNESCO and takes him to the Philippines, India, various countries in the Near East and in Europe. The Rare Books section contains the score of the 1701 opera which I discussed at length in my Musical Quarterly article. It also contains the best collection of aboriginal language dictionaries that I have encountered anywhere. These dictionaries include the many that Paul Rivet, the most eminent Quechua and Aymará scholar of our generation, was able to assemble in a lifetime of study and travel. Those who have read my article on "Ancient Peruvian Instruments" published in the 1959 Galpin Society Journal know what stress I laid on the valuable organological information to be picked up in such dictionaries as those published by Domingo de Santo Tomás, Ludovico Bertonio, Diego González Holguín, and other pioneer lexicographers. These distinguished dictionary-makers were working amidst the Incas, the Mochicas, and the other Peruvian enclaves, when the indigenous tongues were still unsullied by Spanish importations, and when they were still preserving their native music and art intact. To add to the usefulness of the dictionary section, Dr. Jorge Basadre — formerly national librarian, but minister of education at the time of my arrival in Peru — saw to it during his term as librarian that the collection should include dictionaries for native languages of other far-flung American areas, Guaraní and Nahuatl, for instance.

2 The spirit throughout the Peruvian National Library is one of uniform hospitality and helpfulness. Even in such sections as the Periodicals Room, where the demands of the public are often excessive, Don Cristóbal de Losada y Puga has seen to it that the staff shall be alert, conscientious, and kind. It is in such a room as Periodicals, indeed, that the visitor soonest feels that his journey to South America justifies itself. In Peru, as in other South American nations, many periodicals lead a precarious and ephemeral existence. Because of the wait-and-see policy adopted by so many libraries in the United States, these little magazines that live through only a few issues never reach us. But they also will often contain the most precious data for a historian of culture. One such short-lived magazine went through only three issues with the noncommittal title of *Música* during 1957 and 1958. But each issue contained first-rate articles on Peruvian topics that saved me months of labor. Naturally, no library that I have visited in the United States subscribed; no one seems to have known that such a periodical was in existence. I can think of two other short-lived periodicals that served me equally well. Much of the most valuable data of a local historical nature appears either in such transitory publications, or in program notes for historical concerts of the kind given in the mid-'fifties by musicians closely associated with Andrés Sás (Entre Nous Auditorium was the usual locale), or in university annals that seem never to reach the readers in foreign nations who would most profit. In the lengthy bibliography that serves as appendix to my Pan American Union book on *The Music of Peru*, I make a real effort to cite all these hard-to-find articles, newspaper interviews, chapters in unlikely books, catalogues and lists in university annals, and especially catalogues of museum exhibitions, that proved especially valuable for my research. Future investigators should therefore be spared the preliminary digging.

One especially attractive lure of the Biblioteca Nacional in Lima is the extensive subject-indexing that has been attempted in connection with materials in the Rare Division, and in the Sala Perú. Service on books in all divisions is quite fast. Young university students from San Marcos often are the runners in the Sala Perú, and I must here compliment them. In comparison with the time that it takes for a university runner at UCLA to fetch a book, the National Library runners in Peru operate with the speed of lightning. This is all the more remarkable a feat, because the demands on them are much heavier. They are expected to reshelv all books immediately after use. This is the division chief's way of assuring maximum use of available materials. In comparison with UCLA, where use of a book means that it is out of circulation in the following three days for reshelving, this service cannot be praised too highly.

All in all, I think we must award the Peruvian National Library some sort of palm for its excellence. True, the old library that burned during World War II must have contained twice the rarities. The librarian when it burned was Don Carlos Romero, who suffered onslaughts by many leading Lima newspapers. He was also renowned as a scholar and writer in his own right; and the difference in service to the public in the old days of his régime and presently may in part reflect the different attitude of a librarian who is bent on serving the public, and the librarian who is preoccupied with his own research to the

exclusion of all else. Any travelling scholar highly lauds a librarian such as the present director, who believes in helping the library-user, without neglecting his own studies. Of course, we must here add that this same kind of problem exists all over the world, and stems from differing philosophies concerning the librarian's function.

The largest collection of old music in Lima is housed at the Archiepiscopal Library. A catalogue was drawn up by Rudolph Holzmann, originally from Germany, in cooperation with César Arróspide de la Flor, a Lima musicologist. This catalogue was published in annals of the Catholic University of Peru about a decade ago; I used it with great profit, and allude to it constantly in my book. The proper study of the rich musical archive in the Archiepiscopal Archive would occupy, I believe, some two or three years of a trained musicologist's time. Even if facilities for photographing existed, this music could not be studied from microfilm. It exists in separate parts, sometimes rising to 16 vocal parts with an equal number of instrumental parts. The repertory is predominantly polychoral, and predominantly baroque. Obviously, burdened with microfilms of separate sheets, a scholar makes little headway, especially if he is attempting to assess the merits of a large repertory of unknown music by little known composers. He must have all the parts before him, so that he can quickly and efficiently score. The handling of the Lima repertory will also pose the usual basso continuo problems. No neophyte is likely to face the task with courage. Yet, I think that this large repertory of baroque music ought to become known. Here we face problems of prestige. Students at the doctoral level may spend years mulling over the repertory of the early Moravians, the cathedral composers in Mexico, or in Peru, or in Bolivia, and still find themselves against a stone wall of indifference, so far as American musicology is concerned. Time after time, as I sat working with these old parts, I thought how valuable and useful in uncovering a hidden chapter of early American musical life would be a concentrated study of the local repertories at Lima, or at Sucre. But, after further meditation, I realized how unlikely these repertories are to be investigated with the care that must precede any wide appreciation.

3

Just for the record here, let me say that the Lima repertory at the Archiepiscopal Archive, an archive open to the qualified public from 9 until 12 daily, contains no sixteenth-century music. For sixteenth-century music brought over to Peru in colonial times, we must travel to 11,440-foot-high Cuzco, the oldest continuously inhabited city in the Western Hemisphere. Cuzco was the capital of the Incas. In my monograph on "Cathedral Music in Colonial Peru" I go at length into the musical survivals at Cuzco, Arequipa, Trujillo, Ayacucho, and Lima. This monograph, in expanded form, appears in *The Music of Peru*. I add much fascinating material from Bolivian archives in the book; since Bolivia was closely knit with what is now Peru throughout all the viceroyal period, there was much interchange of music and musicians throughout the colonial epoch. Discoveries at Sucre often shed light on the careers and activities of musicians in Lima, halfway across the continent.

Bolivia and Paraguay are, of course, the two landlocked countries of South America. Because of revolutions and the like, Bolivia has had a chequered history. Still, there is no finer paleographer in all South America than Dr. Gunnar Mendoza at the National Library in Sucre. Not only does he superintend the National Library, but the National Archive as well. Sucre, which lost its position as the capital of Bolivia to La Paz a half century ago, is one of the most remarkable cities in South America. At one time, the income from the Potosí mines made it the richest governmental seat in inland South America, and its officers, ecclesiastical and civil, vied with those at Lima. The musical archive in the Sucre Cathedral is even richer than the archive at Lima. At Sucre are to be found scores of early classic symphonies, attesting to a vigorous symphonic activity in the late eighteenth century. Here I found a previously unknown Mass by Zipoli, who is supposed to have emigrated to South America. Also in the Sucre archive are to be found Masses by numerous other eighteenth century composers from Michael Haydn to Jommelli. The very exciting finds that came up in Sucre form the gist of my last chapter in *The Music of Peru*. (Again, for those unacquainted with South American history, Bolivia was Alto Perú in colonial times — "High Peru.")

The National Library at Santiago de Chile is much better known, because it contains the magnificent collection assembled by the greatest of all South American bibliographers, José

Toribio Medina. The Sala Medina was assembled during the days when Chilean foreign exchange was enriched by copper, and when nitrate sales brought in large sums. For this reason, and for others that are less obvious, Medina was himself able to own a large proportion of the rare imprints that he so meticulously describes in his monumental series on early American imprints in Spanish and indigenous tongues. The Sala Medina is an elegant room, and the collection is reputed to be the best in South America. Still, it is inadequately staffed. At the present moment, the Chilean government is trying hard to reduce bureaucracy, and in so doing has lopped off government employees in libraries, museums, and other public buildings. The hours of service at the National Library in Santiago de Chile were from 1 until 7 in the afternoon during my visit; yet I was there in the Chilean winter. This may add to six hours daily, but any scholar wishes the library to be open from early morning to late at night. Then also, the Chilean library does not allow any books on open shelf, even encyclopedias and dictionaries. The tedium of sending in call slips for reference books grips the employees; since the library is not staffed adequately, the morale of those that remain is hurt and the service is hampered.

Without stopping to describe the cathedral library in Santiago, where I was very helpfully and courteously entertained, I hasten on to mention the pleasant encounters in Rio de Janeiro. The Brazilian National Library is a handsome building close by the American Embassy, the National Theater, and numerous other imposing public buildings. This library has a music room, well stocked with up-to-date periodicals and books. The librarian was formerly an assistant to Charles Seeger in Washington, and knows the larger musical world with absolute authority. Francisco Curt Lange, who was editor of the *Boletín* that appeared in a number of South American capitals during the 1940's is now at work in Brazilian eighteenth-century music, and has made several important and enlightening discoveries. His editions of music by colonial masters in Minas Gerais prove the vitality of music in this rich interior province during the last colonial century.

4

The problems besetting a student of South American music are predominantly these: (1) apathy (2) geographic spread (3) funds. The most important hazard is apathy. Musicians the world over still consider Europe as the only legitimate area for musicological endeavour. Although an article can be published on the first opera, the first musical imprint, the first collection of folk music gathered in the Western Hemisphere, and other notable "firsts", interest dies there. The achievements in themselves are not examined closely, and the bias against anything Spanish and anything colonial militates against serious study. Name-dropping has become the musicologist's inveterate habit; if an archive yields a rare print by an already famous composer of the Renaissance — de Monte, for instance (as at Cuzco) — then the musicologists are interested. But if the name is that of a local master, a long yawn succeeds mention of his name or an invitation to scrutinize his music. This apathy joins another problem — geographic spread. The centers of musical life in South America have always been widely dispersed, because the continent is large and the population even today relatively sparse. Vast areas are still almost uninhabited. The centers were in touch with each other, but few musicologists today can travel from one capital to another merely looking for items of musical interest. At least the book that I have published will diminish the problems of the would-be traveller, in that he can now go first to the places where good stores of music are known to survive. Travel can hardly be undertaken except by air, and therefore the costs are high. Funds, as perennially in research enterprises, are in short supply. But the fundamental difficulty is apathy. The foundations mostly ignore music in Latin America. Cruel as it is to say so, the noise of a crisis is necessary to wake the slumbering public to the needs of the area, and the reorientation of the musical mind on an entirely new axis would be as dramatically necessary if any adequate attention were to be paid the musics of the Latin American countries. Even those of us who are professional students cannot escape the guilt of knowing too little about the musics of every other continent except Europe. In turn, how can we ever expect other nations of our hemisphere to take United States music history seriously when we are so reluctant to take theirs seriously?

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CONTEMPORARY MUSIC CYCLE IN BUENOS AIRES

Juan José Castro, Conductor of the National Symphony in Buenos Aires, recently presented a cycle of contemporary music which aroused a great deal of interest and admiration. This cycle included three concerts and we submit excerpts of reviews of each concert. It is our hope that through these reviews the U. S. reader may gain a more thorough concept of the programming of and the critical reaction to contemporary music in an important cultural capital like Buenos Aires, a city which together with Santiago de Chile is perhaps the most demanding of the Latin American cities in terms of its musical standards.

From the reviews of the first concert: "... about Webern we can say very simply that his life was decided when he discovered sound and knew what to do with it. Before Webern, sound was only a physical element which served as a raw material in a factory serves. (This is true after Webern, also). But only in Webern is this raw material itself used . . . to create a mood, to express surprise, happiness or sadness and from which the most disparate things are taken and have meaning to the listener. In his SIX PIECES FOR ORCHESTRA where he is free of tonal shackles and where he does not permit himself to be detained by any fixed theme, but allows himself to be carried by the incessant multiplication of his ideas, one begins to note this longing not to allow himself to be too distracted by

any thing which might be a seduction away from sound. Not even the saturated expressionist atmosphere which tries to involve him at every step is able to sway his affinity for conciseness, directness and clarity, the only qualities which can carry him through sound without casting shadows on him.... he is the most expressive of the most modern.

The SIX PIECES FOR ORCHESTRA was the most interesting work on this program which in truth was a program of contrast, because there were also some pieces from the THREE PENNY OPERA by Kurt Weil, ... a suite by Shostakovitch from his opera THE NOSE (perhaps the work least affected by the virus of gigantism which later filtered into everything that passed his hands), and the fresh songs of BACHIANAS BRASILEIRAS NUM. 5 of Villa-Lobos which rounded out this program.

The day a contest is held to determine who is the conductor in our time who has done the most in favor of musical culture for our public, the majority of voters would without doubt write the name of Juan José Castro. These brief cycles of contemporary music which he has for four years taken upon himself are keeping this little portion of new music from being lost and forgotten by us in our exuberant symphonic seasons. In these times when study and work are extravagances at which the great majority of Argentine musicians smile complacently, Castro understands that his task is to throw aside frivolity and to solve the problems which our ears come up against every time we hear music of our epoch. He does not get his results by programming a quantity of works which the listener knows little or not at all. If this were the case, his task would be simple indeed. He gets his results because in addition to completing his purely informative task, he also takes every possible precaution to insure the high quality of his interpretations and to maintain this level within a narrow margin. And if you should have any doubts as to the value of these proceedings, just ask the opinion of any one of the young people who fill these concerts or any one of the musicians in our National Symphony Orchestra." (Jorge Aráoz Badí in BUENOS AIRES MUSICAL)

From the review of the second concert: "... The second concert which the National Symphony Orchestra dedicated to contemporary music, left that satisfaction which is produced by a good idea well realized. And this connection between the intent and the result which characterizes the work of Juan José Castro in this field, obliges every person who is interested in the music of our time to give him due recognition.

In the last few years the works of Leos Janacek have begun to be heard here with some frequency. This familiarity permitted the appreciation once again of the vitality and importance of central European music. The SINFONIETTA dates back to 1926 and to my taste, it is not one of his best works. The orchestration is uneven. The best effects are gotten by a robust brass section not treated in a massive form but with rich polyphonic writing. But all is not of this quality because the music falls too often into the instrumental clichés of the music of his country, very distinctly heard and frequently unattractive. One can point out a particularly unfortunate moment (the intervention of the bell) where the sound comes close to vulgarity. The theme flows with naturalness and without vacillations but in everything there is found a frequent staining by a static localism. In any case, putting the favorable factors in balance, of which there are certainly some, this SINFONIETTA does not appear to me to be of the stature of other better works, for example, the magnificent last quartet.

The first contact with Nicos Skalkotas (1904-1949) was agreeable. THE LITTLE SUITE FOR ORCHESTRA is a sober, concise and fine work. There are no unnecessary reiterations or wanderings. Proportions are well maintained. Skalkotas manages the dodecaphonic language... with liberty and he does not fall into declamatory pathos... This work is insufficient material by which to judge the personality of the composer...

What was awaited with great interest and most justifiably so, was the first hearing of the FIVE PIECES FOR ORCHESTRA OP. 16 by Arnold Schönberg. These come before the formalizing of the dodecaphonic system, and in them are the germinal elements which later characterize the Schoenbergian art. But although they predate an artistic form, it is not to be thought that this is an immature art, like a larval prophecy of the future. Not at all. It is an art plainly possessed by a great musician. And it is in no way contrary to the

evolution of Schoenberg's style, since all artistic forms carry with them the beginnings of their metamorphosis.... This is a spontaneous work of exquisite sonority and great refinement. It is a happy combination of great knowledge and inspiration.

Castro contributed not only his skill, but also an evident personal delight to which the orchestra responded effectively." (Eduardo García Belsunde, BUENOS AIRES MUSICAL)

From review of the last concert: "... the National Symphony Orchestra rose to an elevated plane of objectives and artistic results which surpassed the previous performances It was a pleasure to hear again the STUDIES FOR STRINGS by Frank Martin, especially a version of such character as the interpreters offered us this time. The overture and four numbers which make up this work, present a clever exploration into the instrumental resources and their possible organization, with a modern feeling; but this purely technical system has been put by Frank Martin to the service of musical ideas which contribute to endow this work with an absorbing interest. An ingenious and able score, rhythmic variety and a singular richness of expression which touches points of inspiration in the slow movements, make these STUDIES... very good music.

The VARIATIONS FOR ORCHESTRA by Aaron Copland were to us of limited interest. Although the musical material, of pianistic origin, is now thirty years old, the orchestral elaboration is recent. For some time Copland has been laboriously searching for new forms of expression. His FANTASY FOR PIANO (1957) finds him speculating with the dodecaphonic system, of which it is not known whether he remains a devotee. In the VARIATIONS his language does not relate to past works, but on the contrary reaches heavily and obscurely toward objectives which are difficult to determine. Nevertheless, we can give the work a credit based on his treatment of the orchestra.

The ODE TO NAPOLEON by Schönberg, for string quartet, piano, and narrator had its Buenos Aires premiere in 1952 in its original form, by the New Music Group. The version for string quartet, is also by Schönberg... As in ERWARTUNG and PIERROT LUNAIRE, works with which in dramatic technique ODE TO NAPOLEON has an affinity, Schönberg uses the "sprechstimme", or spoken voice. In this aspect, Castro adapted the original, prescribing inflections which transform the narration into spoken song, which consists, according to Scholes, not of "sprechstimme", but of "sprechgesang". Our resistance to this work is not in terms of its dramatic scheme which has produced other works of importance, nor to the composition technique, since any technique is valid if it produces results, nor the solidity and transparency in its structure which is undeniable, but solely, as we thought when we first heard the work, on the rigid intellectualism which dominates and weakens its expressiveness... We find something fictitious here. Something which tries to recover life but cannot succeed because it cannot rise above the cold mark of the laboratory. (Enzo Valenti Ferro. BUENOS AIRES MUSICAL)

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