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LATIN AMERICAN ART MUSIC IN THE MUSIC HISTORY CURRICULUM: TAKING STOCK IN THE UNITED STATES

In his 2013 book *Latino Americans*, the journalist and newscaster Ray Suarez describes his conversation with Ricardo Jiménez, a Puerto Rican teenager advocating for a Puerto Rican studies course at his run-down and overcrowded high school in Chicago's Humboldt Park neighborhood. The young activist explained his desire for such a course, telling Suarez, "I found out that we [Puerto Ricans] have authors, that we have painters, that we have poets; I mean, we have all these things that I didn't know, that I never knew were in existence".¹ To that list, Jiménez could have added the art-music composers Roberto Sierra, Rafael Aponte-Ledée, Luis M. Álvarez, Ernesto Cordero, Felipe Gutiérrez Espinosa, Juan Morel Campos, William Ortiz, and Raymond Torres Santos, all of whom could figure in a Puerto Rican studies course.

When we look back on the excitements and tensions of the 1990s, a decade that saw massive shifts in disciplinary priorities under the hospitable embrace of the "new musicology", we will recall similar epiphanies experienced by other groups. The musicologist Suzanne Cusick has recalled two commonly asked questions apropos the historiography of female musicians: "(1) where are the women in music, in music's history? and (2) what are the representations of women in music, in the music we love and continually canonize in our performances, our teaching, our speaking and writing about music?".² What kinds of answers do we arrive at today when we ask these same questions but substitute "Latin Americans" for "women"? Let us take stock of the situation in the United States.

Certainly those of us who research Latin American music have much to celebrate. First, since 1993, the AMS-sponsored Ibero-American Study Group, with its webpage and yearly meetings, has done much to stimulate research and promote solidarity in what was once a lonely sub-discipline.³ Next, in 2004, the Robert M. Stevenson Award was established to recognize outstanding research in Iberian music, defined as "music composed, performed, created, collected,

¹ R. SUAREZ, *Latino Americans: The 500-Year Legacy that Shaped a Nation*, New York, Penguin, 2013, p. 206.

² S. G. CUSICK, "Gender, Musicology, and Feminism", in *Rethinking Music*, ed. by N. Cook and M. Everist, Oxford - New York, Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 482.

³ The Study Group was established in 1993, first under the name International Hispanic Music Study Group (IHMSG).

belonging to, or descended from the musical cultures of Spain, Portugal, and all Latin American areas in which Spanish and Portuguese are spoken”.⁴ Each year, a growing number of scholarly works are submitted, with topics ranging from sacred music, *zarzuela*, reception history, biography, and genre studies. Also, after much debate the Society for American Music now officially accommodates music of Latin America, with its revised mission statement proclaiming that “the mission of the Society for American Music is to stimulate the appreciation, performance, creation and study of American musics of all eras and in all their diversity, including the full range of activities and institutions associated with these musics throughout the world”.⁵ Finally, Spanish, the language of Cervantes and García Márquez, is at long last accepted for the language exam in PhD musicology programs, something a graduate student couldn’t take for granted even in the forward-looking 1990s.

Despite these positive developments, one might reasonably ask why things have taken so long. After all, the Hispanic and Latino population of the United States has been steadily growing, reaching 16% in 2010 and projected to reach 29% by 2050.⁶ This delayed reaction to reality-on-the-ground may well prove interesting for historians of our discipline a century from now. Below, I outlined some of the main points in this overlong and sluggish process.

When we consider pedagogy in general in the United States, we acknowledge a trend with which many of us are all too familiar: the idea that “American” history started with the New England colonies. According to this orientation, we are free to overlook New Spain, despite the fact that its territories pre-dated the Pilgrims and Puritans by roughly a century. This practice is rooted in several unfortunate habits of mind that have seeped into the educational system over many decades. Let us consider a representative sample from the twentieth century. A widely used textbook of 1919, by general historian William Warren Sweet, emphasized the preponderance of “half-

⁴ <http://www.ams-net.org/awards/stevenson.php> (accessed 10/10/2016).

⁵ The previous mission statement read “The mission of the Society for American Music is to stimulate the appreciation, performance, creation and study of American music in all its diversity, and the full range of activities and institutions associated with that music. “America” is understood to embrace North America, including Central American and the Caribbean, and aspects of its cultures everywhere in the world”. A more detailed history of the new mission statement is found in “The Bulletin of the Society for American Music”, XXXIV, n. 2, 2008, pp. 25-28, in a lead article, “SAM’s Mission Statement: Rationale and Discussion”, by then-President John Graziano. In the same journal see also C. A. HESS, “Reviews”, XXXIX, n. 2, 2013: <http://american-music.org/publications/bulletin/2013/VolXXXIX2-Spring2013.php>.

⁶ These statistics, from the Pew Research Center, are cited in “The Hispanicisation of America. The Law of Large Numbers”, *The Economist*, CCCXCVI, n. 8699, 2010, p. 35. ‘Latino’ refers to individuals of Latin American descent whereas the much disputed term ‘Hispanic’ can indicate the foreign-born.

breeds” in Latin America and its “sentimental and impulsive” elites, descendants of the temperamental *conquistadores*.⁷

Another approach, however, emerged in the 1930s and 1940s. The historian Herbert E. Bolton of the University of California at Berkeley complained in his homespun style about the usual approach to American history: “the Americans licked England; they licked the Indians. The English came to America to build homes, the Spaniards merely explored and hunted gold; Spain failed in the New World; the English always succeeded”.⁸ As an antidote, Bolton developed the concept of ‘Greater America’, challenging Anglo-centric perspectives by taking into account non-English-speaking territories. Bolton defended this approach not only in his research but in his teaching. During the 1930s and 1940s, his class on Greater America was one of the most popular on the Berkeley campus, enrolling over a thousand students per semester (he called it a “Seven-Ring Circus”).⁹

Of course, the 1930s and 1940s were the height of the Good Neighbor period. President Franklin D. Roosevelt and his administration sought solidarity between the United States and Latin America through economic and policy channels as well as through culture. Art music by Latin American composers was suddenly being showcased in concert life, in the recording industry, and in radio broadcasting.¹⁰ Exchange visits ensured that North and South American musicians became aware of the music of ‘Greater America’: as Aaron Copland, the most prominent of Good-neighborly cultural diplomats in music wrote in his diary after his 1941 nine countries goodwill tour, “it is remarkable that we have never thought of South America before”.¹¹ U.S. and Latin American musicians also enjoyed sharing ideas and establishing personal ties, whether through academic societies such as the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), music education organizations such as the Music Educators National Convention (MENC), foundations such as the Guggenheim Foundation, and programs funded by the United States government.

⁷ W. WARREN SWEET, *A History of Latin America*, New York - Cincinnati, The Abingdon Press, 1919, p. 222.

⁸ Cited in L. HANKE, *Do Americans Have a Common History? A Critique of the Bolton Theory*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1964, p. 11.

⁹ H. E. BOLTON, “Confessions of a Wayward Professor”, *The Americas*, VI, n. 3, 1950, pp. 359-362: 362.

¹⁰ See C. A. HESS, “‘De aspecto inglés pero de alma española’: Gilbert Chase, Spain, and Musicology in the United States”, *Revista de Musicología*, XXXV, n. 2, 2012, pp. 263-296 (appeared October 2013).

¹¹ C. A. HESS, *Aaron Copland in Latin America: A Composer’s Diary*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, forthcoming.

During the Cold War, however, Bolton's concept of 'Greater America' atrophied.¹² In part, political tensions between the United States and Latin America were to blame. So was an unabashedly anti-Spanish and often anti-Catholic perspective, as historian Philip Powell has shown in such disturbing detail.¹³ Authors of Cold War era textbooks on U.S. general history returned to earlier models, and again, were wont to compare bloodthirsty Spanish "conquerors" with English "colonizers" and "homebuilders". Except for specialized university-level Latin American studies programs established in the 1960s, Latin American history rarely figured in general history classes, either in secondary schools or universities. Not for nothing did one specialist complain that many of his colleagues "couldn't be sure of spelling Ecuador correctly or be quite sound on the question of whether Chihuahua is north or south of Tierra del Fuego".¹⁴

What trickle-down effect do these trends leave in the music history or music appreciation classroom? The fourth edition (2000) of a widely used textbook on the history of music in the United States holds that "we must still recognize" the preeminence of the New England colonies in the musical heritage of the United States.¹⁵ Yet happily, other current textbooks on music of the United States counterbalance this point of view, with one author including a unit on Catholic music in colonial North America and another devoting an entire chapter to "Latino Traditions".¹⁶ In addition, both authors see to it that the appropriate repertory is included in the audio examples, the surest way of making any kind of music come to life to the undergraduate student. In other words, in asserting that the Spanish presence *matters* in the history of music in the United States, these authors exemplify a point Suarez makes quite well. Addressing his U.S. readers, Suarez declares "You won't be able to understand the America [of the future] if you don't know Latino history. Latino history is your history. Latino history is *our* history".¹⁷

¹² On the status of Latin American art music in the United States during Good Neighbor period and the Cold War, see C. A. HESS, *Representing the Good Neighbor: Music, Difference, and the Pan American Dream*, New York - Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013.

¹³ P. POWELL, *Tree of Hate: Propaganda and Prejudices Affecting United States Relations with the Hispanic World*, New York - London, Basic Books, 1971, pp. 139-142.

¹⁴ L. HANKE, *Do Americans Have a Common History?* cit. pp. 20 and 68.

¹⁵ H. W. HITCHCOCK, *Music in the United States: A Historical Introduction*, 4th ed., Upper Saddle River, Prentice Hall, 2000, p. 1 (1st ed., New York, Englewood Cliffs, 1969).

¹⁶ R. CRAWFORD - L. HAMBERLIN, *An Introduction to America's Music*, New York, Norton, 2013 (1st ed., New York, Norton, 2001); L. CANDELARIA - D. KINGMAN, *American Music. A Panorama*, 5th ed., New York, Schirmer, 2015 (1st ed., New York, Schirmer, 2002).

¹⁷ SUAREZ, *Latino Americans* cit., p. XI.

When it comes to the broader panorama of Western art music, several authors of music appreciation textbooks take a similar approach and introduce students to Alberto Ginastera, Silvestre Revueltas or Andrés de Martínez.¹⁸ The two most recent editions of W. W. Norton's venerable *A History of Western Music* also reflect this trend. In 1960, when the first edition appeared and Donald Jay Grout was the sole author, Latin America received exactly one paragraph, reflecting the practices of the Cold War described above. J. Peter Burkholder, the third author in this important project (the second, Claude Palisca, took over after Grout died in 1987) has included Tomás Torrejón y Velasco, Juan de Araujo, Heitor Villa-Lobos, and Revueltas. (He also added several Spanish composers, ensuring that students will go beyond *O magnum mysterium*.)¹⁹

We and our students can be grateful to these authors, and not just those of us employed in California, Florida, or the Southwestern United States. In mid-Michigan, my students were from Colombia, Bolivia, Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Venezuela and Panama. For whatever reason, they decided to years of study abroad in the Midwestern United States. Numerous Latinos also found the Midwest attractive. Like young Ricardo Jiménez, they were curious about their own music and its relationship to history, music and otherwise. Some had never heard of Billings. Some had never heard of Ginastera.

So far, we have taken stock of (1) the slow rate at which Latin American art music has come to be recognized in scholarly circles the United States, (2) some historical fits and starts in this process, and (3) some significant improvements in pedagogical resources for this repertory. Nonetheless, one sometimes wonders if Latin American art music has but a foot in the door rather than full entry. Two texts widely used in undergraduate music history surveys, cover "Western art music", just as Burkholder's does. One, however, despite its many virtues, is proportionally speaking in the same league as the 1960 edition of Grout, however, with only one of its 1.123 pages treating Latin American music.²⁰ (The author mentions Carlos Chávez, along with Revueltas, but without representing either in the listening anthology.) Another, a best-selling trade book on music of the Twentieth Century that many a music history instructor has used since it appeared, refers briefly to Chávez and largely in relation to Copland, who was one of his staunchest allies in the

¹⁸ R. KAMIEN, *Music: An Appreciation*, New York, McGraw Hill Education, 2011 (1st ed., New York, McGraw Hill, 1976); K. FORNEY - A. DELL'ANTONIO - J. MACHLIS, *The Enjoyment of Music*, New York - London, Norton, 2015 (1st ed., New York - London, Norton, 2013); D. K. HOLOMAN, *Masterworks: A Musical Discovery*, new ed., Upper Saddle River, Prentice Hall, 2001.

¹⁹ *A History of Western Music*, ed. by J. P. Burkholder, D. J. Grout, and C. V. Palisca, 9th ed., New York, Norton, 2014 (1st ed., New York, Norton, 2005).

²⁰ R. TARUSKIN - C. H. GIBBS, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, New York - Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013.

United States.²¹ Students curious about Ginastera, Villa-Lobos, music of the California missions, Antonio Estévez, or more contemporary composers will simply have to look elsewhere.

One is curious to know why. The Cold War mentality just described simply cannot be a factor. Is it force of disciplinary habit? Lack of interest? Both books are dazzlingly written and have the power to excite imaginations young and old. I hope that in subsequent editions, the authors will take all necessary steps to correct this oversight. The words of the late Brazilian musicologist Luiz Heitor Corrêa de Azevedo may serve as a goad. In a 1969 talk at CUNY, Luiz Heitor, as he was known, described a “musicological scandal”, namely, a *Histoire de la Musique* that appeared in 1963 with an army of authors under the editorship of Roland-Manuel. Yet in its nearly 2,000 pages, Latin America is not even a gasp. As Luiz Heitor bluntly put it, for Roland-Manuel and his authors, “Latin America just does not exist”.²²

As we look to the future, let us see if we can persuade *all* authors of comprehensive histories both to examine this trap and to avoid falling into it. In the coming decades, such omissions would be noteworthy not so much for their potential for “musicological scandal” but for being glaringly out of sync with reality in the United States.

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²¹ A. ROSS, *The Rest Is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century*, New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013 (1st ed., New York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007).

²² L. HEITOR CORRÊA DE AZEVEDO, “The Present State and Potential of Music Research in Latin America”, in *Perspectives in Musicology*, ed. by B. S. Brook, E. O. D. Downes, and S. Van Solkema, New York, Pendragon, 1972, p. 250.