

# RECENT STUDIES ON THE MUSIC OF LATIN AMERICA

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- LATIN AMERICAN MUSIC: PAST AND PRESENT.* By ELEANOR HAGUE. (Detroit: Blaine Ethridge, 1982. Originally published, Santa Anna, Calif.: The Fine Arts Press, 1934. Pp. 99. \$18.00.)
- THE MUSIC OF BRAZIL.* By DAVID P. APPEBY. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983. Pp. 209. \$22.50.)
- THE LATIN TINGE: THE IMPACT OF LATIN AMERICAN MUSIC ON THE UNITED STATES.* By JOHN STORM ROBERTS. (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979. Pp. 246. \$14.95.)
- HISPANIC FOLK MUSIC OF NEW MEXICO AND THE SOUTHWEST: A SELF-PORTRAIT OF A PEOPLE.* By JOHN DONALD ROBB. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980. Pp. 891. \$35.00.)
- CARLOS CHAVEZ, MEXICO'S MODERN-DAY ORPHEUS.* By ROBERT L. PARKER. (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1983. Pp. 166. \$21.95.)
- HISTORIA DA MUSICA BRASILEIRA.* By VASCO MARIZ. (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Civilização Brasileira, 1981. Pp. 331.)
- MUSIC AND POETRY IN A COLOMBIAN VILLAGE: A TRI-CULTURAL HERITAGE.* By GEORGE LIST. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983. Pp. 601. \$35.00.)
- SABIDURIA POPULAR.* Edited by ARTURO CHAMORRO. (Zamora, Mexico: El Colegio de Michoacán, Comité Organizador pro la Sociedad Interamericana de Folklore y Etnomusicología, 1983. Pp. 609.)

As Latin American societies continue to maintain a marked stratification, their corresponding musical expressions and traditions remain distinguishable. Customarily, scholars in Latin America and Latin Americanists elsewhere have paid serious attention to the so-called art-music tradition or music of the elite but have paid less attention to the various kinds of regional folk music. Only since the 1960s have traditional primitive music as well as urban popular and commercial music begun to receive the scholarly treatment that they deserve. Historical musicology dealing with the European art-music tradition and its extension to other continents has developed a methodology that tends to emphasize the musical text itself (viewing the piece of music as

a finished artifact) over the context of music making. Ethnomusicology, on the other hand, has attempted to strike the ideal balance between musicological analysis of music as sound structure and the ethnological, semiological, and specific sociocultural meanings of music. The "anthropology of music" offers therefore more substantial avenues of inquiry into the various levels of meanings of musical phenomena regardless of the nature of the social group or the musical tradition itself (that is, whether the tradition is written or oral). Although the gap between musicology and ethnomusicology is now being bridged in some European and North American circles, the chasm remains wide in Latin American musical studies. Historical studies continue to be essentially descriptive, with little or no effort to achieve a deeper understanding of the sociocultural determinants of musical styles considered either in diachronic or synchronic approaches. Perhaps as a result of the traditional affinity between folklore and ethnomusicology, Latin American investigators of oral folk music have benefitted from the maturity of the theoretical and methodological formulations achieved in the discipline of folklore. The general description of folk music data is usually a point of departure in most studies, rather than the final objective.

For the general musicologist and most Latin Americanists, the various kinds of music of Latin America continue to be viewed as a peripheral or exotic area of interest. Many social scientists have yet to realize the importance of music as one of the most structured of human behavioral patterns and one of the strongest reflections of cultural values. Ill-prepared musicians, journalists, and music critics often undertake to write on some aspect of Latin American music with little or no research experience in the field and little empathy for the culture area that they purport to discuss. The results are often full of misinformation and oversimplification and are at worst a detriment to the field. Uninformed publishers too frequently tend to sponsor monographs and books that add little to the current state of research on a particular topic. A case in point is the reprinting of Eleanor Hague's *Latin American Music: Past and Present*. Already limited in its usefulness when it was first published in 1934, this "chronological development of music in the Latin American countries" is sketchy and marred by factual errors and frequent misinterpretations. Its republication almost half a century later is undeniably anachronistic because its only current relevance is as an early example of Latin American music studies in the United States.

Even more perplexing is the publication by a reputable university press of a survey of the sort offered in David P. Appleby's *The Music of Brazil*. Although a survey cannot be comprehensive, some original contribution to the subject can be expected despite the brevity of treatment. This book seems more like a report of the author's readings on the subject than the result of personal reflection, assimilation, and interpre-

tation of the fundamental aspects of the history of music in Brazil. As a result, the reader is offered a compilation of data from secondary sources, which Appleby quotes or paraphrases extensively, usually without verifying the accuracy of the data. Erroneous data seem to become part of all surveys, but what is most disturbing and disappointing about *The Music of Brazil* is its level of overgeneralization, its lack of conceptual formulation on Brazilian music history, and the consequent neglect of rigorous analysis of the music itself, surely the key to an adequate understanding of the historical process. Consider, for example, the contents of Chapter 4 in this book, "Folk, Popular, and Art Music." It deals with obsolete and irrelevant definitions of the terms "folk" and "popular," relies extensively on source materials collected almost sixty years ago by Mário de Andrade, repeats indiscriminately the doubtful information of Melville Herskovits on Afro-Bahian religions and the out-of-date analysis of *candomblé* music provided by Alan Merriam in his 1951 doctoral thesis, and advocates incomprehensibly Renato Almeida's discredited classification of folk dances of the early 1940s. Hailed by the publisher as "the most comprehensive history of Brazilian music available in English," *The Music of Brazil* unfortunately adds little to Brazilian musical studies because it lacks well-conceived objectives. Latin Americanists know too well that European or North American subjects in any discipline are generally evaluated more seriously by publishers.

Another case in point is John Storm Roberts's *The Latin Tinge: The Impact of Latin American Music on the United States*. A pioneer effort on a subject virtually ignored in the United States, this introduction to the impact of Latin American popular musical idioms on U.S. music has merit despite its superficial approach to the subject. Roberts's avoidance of a scholarly treatment of the subject could be justified if he could demonstrate at least serious involvement and knowledge of the subject by accurately describing first the music and then the process of acculturation through music. But Roberts's writing about music leaves a great deal to be desired. For example, he explains the so-called *clave* Cuban rhythmic pattern as "a 3-2 (occasionally 2-3) rhythmic pattern, which covers two measures that are treated as if only one" (p. 4). Musicians and nonmusicians alike will remain perplexed by such a description. Similarly, Roberts asserts that Latin American musical forms defy proper description because "they usually involve a rhythm, a dance, a style or styles of playing, typical tempi and even subject matter" (p. 5). One would be hard put to find any music in the world with different "characteristics." His treatment of Cuban and Brazilian popular music is unfortunately riddled with factual inaccuracies. Roberts does provide a wealth of information on specific Latin American musicians, groups, and musical and dance genres in the United States, but the long lists of

names and activities of performers in given theatres or clubs and of the various renditions by different groups of a particular tango or rhumba tune rapidly become tedious. Surely a meaningful, albeit popularized, history could have been written by focusing on the specific socio-cultural circumstances of Latin musicians in the United States during various periods, and by comparing the original styles of popular music species, their meaning and functions in the various countries of origin, the attempted Americanization of such species, and the resulting function and meaning of the acculturated styles in the United States. Questions of musical influence are difficult to elucidate when the original musical styles are themselves an amalgamation of various heritages. Because the "Latin tinge" in American popular music seems to have been identified with rhythm, a careful scrutiny of Afro-Latin American rhythmic organization indeed could have indicated its idiosyncrasies and the degree of "Latin" influences on American popular idioms.

Hispanic folk music in the United States has received little attention until recently, in comparison with other so-called minority musical cultures in the United States. John Donald Robb, longtime Dean of the College of Fine Arts at the University of New Mexico, has been for over thirty-five years the most assiduous folk song collector in the Southwest. His anthology *Hispanic Folk Music of New Mexico and the Southwest* is the most comprehensive study of this corpus of music. The enormous size and range of forms and genres in Robb's collection are sufficient to make it an invaluable contribution. A "panoramic survey of the Hispanic folk music of the Southwest, including representatives of every formal type and dozens of subjects, both secular and religious, from Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas," *Hispanic Folk Music* actually goes beyond the logical implications of its title by including some material from Spain and Central and South America, presumably to substantiate the common heritage of New Mexican folk music with these areas. Robb insists that his intended approach is "primarily that of a musician" (p. xii), but a clear emphasis on the literary aspects of the repertoire is reflected in greater space devoted to transcribing song texts than to any folk music materials as such. In fact, despite the profuse musical illustrations, the number of songtexts reproduced far surpasses the musical examples. In addition, the transcriptions of these examples bespeak a collector inexperienced with accurate transcription and sophisticated methodology. Indeed, the elementary transcriptions of one-part melodic pieces neglect such important stylistic features as parallel polyphony, or double stops in fiddle tunes, and small, but significant, variants from one verse of a folk song to the next. Perhaps more important is the lack of clearly defined criteria for selection of materials for the anthology. Certain types of folk songs originating from a given area are excluded while others of the

same genre from another area are included without explanation. Robb's very conceptualization of folk music is questionable in that he seems preoccupied with relating New Mexican Hispanic folk music to Spanish medieval music, which denotes a rather static view of cultural change. His preconceived focus on Spanish influence tends to obliterate the very Mexican sources of New Mexican Hispanic folk music. Several factual errors related to Mexican folk and popular music actually indicate Robb's lack of familiarity with the most obvious link to the subject at hand. Despite these reservations, however, this anthology represents a very valuable contribution that might well prove an essential point of departure for future research into the folk and traditional music related within the Hispanic tradition in the American Southwest.

In recent years, Latin American historical musicology has produced a number of useful publications. Some of the major twentieth-century composers of Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and Cuba have been the focus of specialized monographic studies. Robert Parker's *Carlos Chávez, Mexico's Modern-Day Orpheus* surveys the composer's "active musical and administrative career and its productivity." Parker, a musicologist and music professor at the University of Miami in Coral Gables, provides a biographical summary in his first chapter and a classification of Chávez's works by medium of performance in the following six chapters, discussing solo instrumental works, chamber music, solo vocal and choral music, symphonies, concertos, other orchestral works, and dramatic works. The careful, if succinct, analyses represent the most original contribution of this study because they generally go beyond the available literature on Chávez's music. Numerous interviews with people close to the composer, including his daughter Anita Chávez, add valuable data to the biography of Chávez. Somewhat disappointing, however, is the author's general lack of critical penetration into such questions as Chávez's position within the socio-cultural matrix of the Mexican artistic community from the 1920s to the 1960s, the sources of his aesthetic philosophy outside musical nationalism, and the specific motivation and idiosyncrasies of his compositional processes. Parker's conclusion discusses Chávez's compositional style from a strictly musical viewpoint. His "assessment" of "Chávez the composer" is limited to rather tangential comments comparing him with Silvestre Revueltas and relating his reaction to Nicolas Slonimsky's characterization of him as "Mexico's foremost composer." Despite such reservations, however, Parker's study offers a good synthesis of the career and major creative activity of one of the most original figures in Latin American twentieth-century music.

Brazilian music history has collected considerable new data over the last twenty years or so. Renewed examination of colonial music archives has yielded additional factual information. Studies of nine-

teenth-century music have not only shed new light on the well-established music institutions and figures in the major cities but have also focused on musical activity in some provincial towns (especially north and northeast Brazil) that had previously suffered blatant neglect. The twentieth century, and especially the music composition scene since the 1960s, has been a popular topic with both musicologists and music critics. In general, Brazilian musicologists have followed the traditional bi-bibliographical approach in their study of the country's music history. Only too rarely does one find interpretive, in-depth analyses of historical facts and specific musical styles that lend relevance to any history. Such analyses should ideally relate the musical products of a given period to their sociocultural coordinates and determine which factors, musical and nonmusical, motivate and shape the cultivation of specific musical styles during that period.

Vasco Mariz, a successful diplomat, has been an attentive student of Brazilian music since the 1940s. His previous publications and his new history, *História da Música Brasileira*, reveal his firsthand knowledge of both the contemporary Brazilian compositional scene and that of past eras. His new history deals exclusively with the so-called art-music tradition and provides a wide-ranging description of the activities of the major figures of Brazilian composition. It covers the colonial period (in Pernambuco, Bahia, and Minas Gerais), including music at the courts of Dom João VI and Dom Pedro I in Rio de Janeiro; the early Imperial period (the 1820s and 1830s), focusing on the composer Francisco Manuel; the reign of Dom Pedro II, especially the world-renowned Carlos Gomes; and the late nineteenth century, especially Europeanized composers Leopoldo Miguéz, Glauco Velásquez, and Henrique Oswald. Out of seventeen chapters, eleven deal with some aspect of twentieth-century music, an indication of the special significance that the author rightly ascribes to the accomplishments of modern Brazilian composition. Chronological presentation of historical facts is combined with Vasco Mariz's analysis of the relative merits of various composers. The major twentieth-century figures receive justifiably special treatment, with Villa-Lobos, Mignone, and Guarnieri being discussed in separate chapters. The author becomes more liberal in evaluating contemporary composers and their work, admitting in his preface that "it is always difficult and thankless to judge contemporaries" (p. 16). *História da Música Brasileira* is unfortunately not a musicological study because it is primarily addressed to the general reader. Consequently, musical analysis of the various repertoires under consideration is deliberately avoided for fear of becoming "tedious" to the majority of readers. One could argue that a relevant synthetic analysis, if engagingly presented, would facilitate a basic understanding of musical styles. Certainly, one cannot avoid regretting that *História da Música*

*Brasileira* relegates the music itself to a secondary level of importance. Not a single musical example appears in the work to illustrate the discussion. Nevertheless, Vasco Mariz has succeeded in presenting the most updated and comprehensive account of the history of music in Brazil to date, and for this reason alone, his new volume is a welcome contribution to the existing literature.

*Music and Poetry in a Colombian Village: A Tri-Cultural Heritage* adds to the too short list of ethnomusicological studies of Latin American folk and traditional music. George List, a well-known authority in the field of Colombian folk music and longtime Director of the Indiana University Archives of Traditional Music, has tended to stress in his various publications the strictly musical factors of the culture under study. He has argued over the years that in the field of ethnomusicology, the music itself constitutes the primary source of study and therefore should be the main focus of ethnomusicologists. Other scholars have recognized that isolating musical phenomena from their social and cultural context leads to incomplete studies at best or misrepresentations at worst. One could certainly argue in favor of a more balanced *ethnomusicological* inquiry into the musical expressions of the inhabitants of the village of Evitar, in the Colombian state of Bolívar on the Atlantic Coast. A holistic approach would attempt to combine relevant ethnographic observations of musical behavior and musical symbolism, as revealed in performance contexts, for example, with corresponding musical structures.

In *Music and Poetry in a Colombian Village*, however, List chooses to emphasize the tricultural heritage and therefore searches for origins and derivations. Part 1 of the study begins by describing the context or setting (the *municipio* and the village), the musical instruments and ensembles, the musical occasions, and the singers and instrumentalists. Part 2 discusses methodology, stressing transcriptions and translations, and explains List's concepts and methods of analysis. Part 3 treats the six main genres that make up the musical repertory of the Evitar folk, namely, "Niñez," "Velorio de Angelito," "Cantos de Trabajo," "Décimas," "Cantos de las Fiestas," and "Cumbia." The concluding part presents a synthesis, with discussions of style and content and the tricultural heritage. List excels in the rigorous, precise description of musical instruments and ensembles and proves himself a master of meticulous transcriptions and analyses of the music, the song texts, and their relationships. In each of the six chapters of Part 3, he endeavors "to assess the contributions made to each genre by the Hispanic-European, the African Negro, and the Amerindian, and also to distinguish those aspects of the performances which may represent an independent development in the New World" (p. 537). This difficult task is admirably achieved, but one cannot but wonder in some instances

whether similarities in musical structure may not imply distinct meanings. They reveal at best a certain continuity of style and sometimes of repertoires. But similarities of style add little if anything to one's understanding or appreciation of the specific genre's significance in the village community. It may be argued that these concerns are of a totally different nature, but structural musical analyses that do not relate to such concerns are of limited use. Some of the main conclusions regarding the tricultural heritage as revealed in music and poetry are predictable indeed: "Spain has provided not only the language in which the songs are sung but in the majority of cases the forms into which they are cast"; "The contribution of Africa . . . is the largest as far as musical instruments are concerned, and it has also resulted in an emphasis on the use of percussion instruments and handclapping"; and, "the Amerindian culture, although indigenous, has apparently played a relatively minor role in the syncretism which has produced costeño song and instrumental music" (p. 567). In the context of Latin American folk music studies, such conclusions cannot represent the chief contribution of this volume. *Music and Poetry in a Colombian Village* is nonetheless outstanding on numerous grounds. It represents the first attempt by a highly skilled craftsman to treat exhaustively the music and poetry of a Colombian village. In addition, the accuracy of the numerous musical transcriptions and their analyses contribute a large amount of empirical data on the musical culture under study. Further, the meticulous focus on the study of repertory in functional and analytic terms provides a salient example of the kind of work currently needed in Latin American ethnomusicological studies. Indeed, if there were only half a dozen such studies of specific Latin American folk music communities, the body of knowledge in the field would be greatly expanded. For this reason alone, List's study represents a fundamental contribution to Latin American ethnomusicology.

In June of 1982, the Colegio de Michoacán sponsored the Primera Mesa Redonda de Folklore y Etnomusicología in Zamora, Michoacán. During the conference, a preliminary discussion was held on forming the Inter-American Society of Folklore and Ethnomusicology, and the society was established a year later in Mexico City. *Sabiduría popular*, under the able editorship of Arturo Chamorro of the Colegio de Michoacán, is a compilation of the various papers presented at that round table. The second section reproduces the main contributions to the field of ethnomusicology in general and to the study of musical traditions of the Americas in particular. In addition, various papers in the sessions on traditional medicine and ethnobotany, culture and tradition in Western Mexico, and perspectives and future of folklore deal with relevant musical topics. Béhague's ethnographic approach to the study of musical performance argues for considering performance as a

cultural event. It also reviews the work of folklorists, linguists, and anthropologists Roger Abrahams, Richard Bauman, Joel Sherzer, Américo Paredes, and Milton Singer in the ethnography of speech and verbal art as performance. Béhague takes their work as a point of departure for elaborating new perspectives in the study of the practice of musical performance in the direction of integrating sound and context or performance and practice. Nicole Beaudry of the University of Montreal examines the sound and ethnographic implications of throat games among the Eskimo of Eastern Canada. An excellent attempt at classifying Mexican pre-Columbian musical instruments is presented by Felipe Flores Dorantes and Lorenza Flores García, from the Museo Nacional de Antropología. Robert Garfias reports the results of his research in Mexico and Central America on the origin and development of the marimba. In his observations about the future of ethnomusicology in Mexico, Felipe Ramírez Gil recommends establishing the discipline in educational music institutions and developing appropriate courses on the unique musical traits of the oral tradition. Ramírez Gil also advocates introducing instruction in national musical instruments at the various educational levels and teaching ethnomusicology in courses on music composition in the conservatories. Musicologist Jaime González Quiñones, in dealing with "algunos problemas en la formación del etnomusicólogo en México," laments the state of affairs in Mexican music education and criticizes the inadequacies of the course of professional studies of ethnomusicology initiated by the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes in 1980.

The third section of *Sabiduría popular* gathers several essays focusing on varying aspects of research on Mexican indigenous music. Thomas Stanford relates his findings on the survival of pre-Hispanic music in Mexico. Abraham Cáceres documents the presence in various periods of "musical hallucinogens and hallucinogenic music" in Mesoamerica. Felipe Ramírez demonstrates an interesting application of Mantle Hood's system of musical instrument classification and notation, known as "organogram," to pre-Columbian instruments. The American ethnomusicologist Henrietta Yurchenco explains the specific characteristics of performance practice of Mexican Indian music with special emphasis on the Tarascan song genre known as *pirecua*. Special case studies of Tzeltal-Mayan (Chiapas) and Mayan (Eastern Yucatán) music are presented respectively by María del Rosario Pérez and Max Jardow-Pedersen.

*Sabiduría popular* reveals a fairly wide range of concerns in the study of folk and traditional music of Latin America. It is significant that the theoretical issues in ethnomusicology do not concern Latin American scholars to the degree that they do North American and European scholars. This tendency may reflect the Latin Americans' aware-

ness that data gathering and classification remain one of the most pressing needs of the field.

Examining these eight publications has certainly confirmed my sense of the gap between musicology and ethnomusicology and the need for studies to help bridge this gap. The works reviewed also suggest the heterogeneous approaches followed by the various authors, an indication of the many different levels of approach that studies of Latin American music entail and require. One can readily perceive that Latin American musicology will greatly benefit from a prompt rapprochement with social scientific outlooks and methodologies.