

Guillermo Espinosa



FRANCISCO CURT LANGE began *Boletín Latino-Americano de Música*, IV (Bogotá: Litografía Colombia), 23-63, with two tributes (synthesized in Otto Mayer-Serra, *Música y Músicos de Latinoamérica*, I, 353-354). Both Lange tributes hail the founder of the Colombian Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional, Guillermo Espinosa. In the first, Lange outlines Espinosa's previous career: born at Cartagena January 9, 1905, he was a prizewinning student first at Milan with Giulio Cesare Paribeni (1881-1960) and Renzo Bossi (1883-1965); and next a Humboldt Foundation scholar at the Hochschule für Musik, Berlin, where he studied with the Austrian Julius Prüwer (1874-1943) who conducted the Berlin Philharmonic popular concerts 1924 to 1933.

At Berlin, Espinosa met the Russian pianist Tatjana Gontscharowa, who became his first wife, and who greatly aided him in his unfolding career.

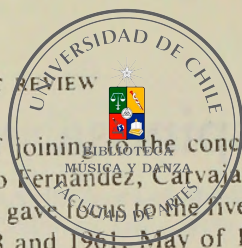
In 1928 he gave a foretaste of his organizing skills by uniting foreign musicians resident at Berlin into an orchestra under his baton. In 1931 he founded at Berlin a German-Latin American Musical Society dedicated to making known works by Villa-Lobos, Uribe Holguín, Ponce, Rolón, Fabini, and other recent composers from such countries as Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, and Uruguay.

On June 6, 1932, he offered one of the most significant Latin American programs yet heard in Europe. Combining the Berliner Rundfunkorchester and Berliner Funkchor, he conducted Rolón's *Cauhtémoc* (world premiered at Mexico City January 10, 1930), Villa-Lobos's *Danzas Africanas* (Paris, April 5, 1928), and Reynaldo Hahn's *La Fête chez Thérèse* (Paris, February 16, 1910). On his way back to Colombia, Espinosa later in 1932 stopped to conduct the Orquesta de la Asociación de Profesores at San Juan, Puerto Rico, and to lead a memorial concert at Caracas sponsored by the Venezuelan government December 30, 1932, on the occasion of the reinterment of Teresa Carreño's remains.

The Bogotá Orquesta del Conservatorio, active under Uribe Holguín's baton until 1936, gave way in that year to the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional with Espinosa, aged 31, as director. Lange's brilliant essay "Guillermo Espinosa y la Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional" continues with a magisterial exposé of the children's concerts, popular and adult season concerts, touring activities outside the Colombian capital, chamber music groups that included orchestral players, and Espinosa's "projects for the future." Lange concludes with a minute statistical account of all hitherto given OSN concerts—42 conducted by Espinosa, 4 by Antonio María Valencia, 2 each by Oscar Lorenzo Fernández and Armando Carvajal, and 1 each by Uribe Holguín, José Roza Contreras, and Nicolas Slonimsky.

An alphabetized list of all composers played, their works, the soloists who performed with the orchestra, and similar data for chamber concerts, establishes Espinosa already during his first years at Bogotá as the most Inter-American minded conductor of his generation.

The Festival Ibero-Americano de Música, which took place at Bogotá July 20 to September 6, 1938, in honor of the fourth centennial of the founding of Bogotá, prefigured the many future festivals that Espinosa was to organize at Washington, D.C., and Madrid after he became music head at the Organization of American



States. The generous idea of joining to the concerts a series of lectures by such authorities as Lange, Lorenzo Fernández, Catvatal, and Slonimsky also forecasted the lectures and booklets that gave form to the five Inter-American festivals held at Washington in April of 1958 and 1961, May of 1965, June of 1968, and May of 1971; the three of Spanish and Latin American music held at Madrid in October of 1964, 1967, and 1970; and the one at Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, in March of 1972. In 1974 he produced his sixth at Washington. As Gerard Béhague justly observed in his *New Grove* article, vi, 249, the six Inter-American Music Festivals (1958-1974) at Washington presented no less than "94 world premieres of Latin American works." Lesser as well as greater Latin American names owed their upsurge in the United States chiefly to Espinosa's huge efforts.

Espinosa's trajectory at Washington, where he began as an official of the Pan American Union in 1947, where he succeeded Charles Seeger as music chief of the Organization of American States in 1953, and retired in 1975, has fortunately been remembered in *La OEA y la música* (Washington: Secretaria General, Organización de los Estados Americanos, 1972; 129 pp.). This publication itemizes the 73 grants in music awarded by the Organization of American States 1959 to 1972 by name of recipient, country of origin, music specialty, place of study, and dates of occupancy. At pages 76-77 are listed the OEA grantees at INTEM (Inter-American Institute of Musical Education) in Santiago, Chile, at page 78 the grantees at INIDEF (Inter-American Institute of Ethnomusicology and Folklore) in Caracas, and at page 79 the grantees to a higher music education institute held at Rosario, Argentina, in April-June 1972.

Among other Espinosa projects while heading music activities at the Organization of American States, he in 1955 established the indispensable *Composers of the Americas* series, in the same year began publishing music scores sold by Peer International in New York, and in 1957 founded the *Boletín Interamericano de Música*. Paralleled by an English edition, *Inter-American Music Bulletin*, the BIM in its 82 issues between 1957 and 1972 ran the gamut from ethnomusicology and folklore, music education, analysis, news of festivals, competitions, congresses, and tours, to historical musicology. An indexing of articles in BIM and IAMB by issue, and under topics, shows the immense utility of these periodicals, defunct after issue 87 in July-October 1973 (*Handbook of Latin American Studies: No. 38*, item 9187).

No prefatory tribute in *Inter-American Music Review* can encompass the indebtedness of THE EDITOR of IAMR to Guillermo Espinosa, whose professional kindnesses during his active OAS years included publication during the 1960's of ten articles and their Spanish translations in IAMB and BIM, a publication subsidy for the 1976 Lima edition of Torrejón y Velasco's *La púrpura de la rosa*, and acceptances for OAS publication of three books, *The Music of Peru: Aboriginal and Viceroyal Epochs* (1960), *Renaissance and Baroque Musical Sources in the Americas* (1970), and *Latin American Colonial Music Anthology* (1975). Legion were the opportunities in Espinosa's OAS years to publish folkloric vignettes and anecdotal travel accounts. But few indeed were the editors willing even to consider essays and books that evaluated Latin American achievements as often equal to the best produced in the Iberian peninsula during comparable epochs. Espinosa's vision of past and future Latin American greatness saw beyond national boundaries and political epochs. Translated into musical terms, his was the vision of what the Americas have been, and will be, that inspired Bolívar, Andrés Bello, Sarmiento, and Martí.