

TEMPO

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Readers of the article on Ginastera's opera *Don Rodrigo* in this issue may be struck by the fact that although the composer has chosen a profoundly national historical subject, Miss Urtubey makes no mention of any use of national themes or styles. Since the subject is from Spanish history this would of course, have meant the Argentinian Ginastera's working in a national musical idiom not strictly his own—though not strictly alien either, for what is loosely understood as the Latin American style still shows a strong Spanish influence. The real reason however, lies in Ginastera's temperament and outlook. He is not in this sense a nationalist, and indeed perhaps rather the reverse, aware from the example of his predecessors, both Spanish and Latin American, of the need to escape from the traditional musical idioms of their countries. The flavour of these seems to be too distinctive for sustained use at a higher musical level, and it is significant that in the Latin American style, as in the Spanish, some of the most notable successes have been scored by outsiders, such as Copland, Arthur Benjamin, and most recently Malcolm Williamson, in the quasi-Cuban numbers in his opera *Our Man in Havana*.

This particular problem is one that differentiates the Latin American composer from the North American, whose difficulty is more the absence of flavour from such popular national music as he has—except insofar as jazz (which is just as little usable as the Latin American popular idiom) can be assigned to this category. The consequence is the same for both however—that musical fulfilment must be sought elsewhere than on the basis of a popular national tradition. This has no doubt played a part in bringing into being the fellow-feeling among Latin and North American composers reflected in the steady growth of Panamericanism in the musical field, manifestations of which include the foundation of a Latin American Music Center in Indiana University, and the steadily increasing scope of the Inter-American Music Festival at Washington, held this year for the third time since its foundation in 1958.

This Panamerican solidarity is perhaps also to be interpreted in some degree as a gesture against Europe, which remains in general so indifferent to the music of America. Europe's neglect however, is not due solely, or even mainly, to her cultural superiority complex (perhaps in any case still not entirely without foundation) but also to economic causes, and it would be a pity for both sides if Panamericanism, out of a mistaken feeling of affront at the apparent European attitude, were to disdain to propagate American music in Europe. A valuable start was made last year when the Pan American Union sponsored the Madrid festival referred to at the end of Miss Urtubey's article. Much more could be done in this direction, not necessarily in the form of special festivals, but by sponsorship of performances of single American works in general concert programmes or opera repertories in Europe. In spite of any appearances to the contrary there is in Europe a vast amount of curiosity about American music, and well-directed activity of this sort could at once feed it and stimulate it further to the benefit of both sides, and without any betrayal of Panamerican ideals.