

**CULTURAL COUNTERPOINTS:
Examining the Musical Interactions between the U.S. and Latin America**



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“Cuban Art Music in the U.S. before and after the Cuban Revolution”

Abstract:

The wellspring of U.S. Pan-American sentiment toward Cuba dried up quickly after the 1959 Revolution. Prior to the Revolution exchanges between Cuban and U.S. composers was vigorous, however, the events following the Revolution not only changed economic and political relations between Cuba and the U.S., but also composers’ and musicians’ ability to maintain ties between the two countries. This paper traces the pre-Revolutionary exchanges between Cuba and the U.S. through Henry Cowell’s *New Music Society* and its related publications (which included Amadeo Roldán’s *Rítmicas*), the Pan-American Association of Composers, as well as Cuban composers who studied in the U.S. (including Gisela Hernández, and Julian Orbón). The decrease in exchanges between the two countries is most noticeable in festivals and concert series in the U.S., such as the Inter-American Music Festival (IMFA), revealing the embargo’s effect on cultural matters. A quick survey of the programs of the IAMF reveals that after their first festival in 1958 the only Cuban composers included in performances were those who were exiled in the U.S. The lack, and some years complete absence, of Cuban works in the IMFA and the dearth of scholarship about Cuban art music from this period suggests a lack of compositional activity in Cuba. In reality, however, music composition in Cuba flourished, and cultural exchanges with other Latin American countries continued, in fact even increased, with the establishment of institutions to cultivate Pan-American exchanges, most notably the Casa de las Américas. Thus, in spite of the U.S. embargo Cuba actively fostered Pan-Americanism, albeit a different kind of Pan-Americanism from that fostered by the U.S.

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Editorial Disclaimer:

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