

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



**Campbell, Jennifer L. (Central Michigan University):
“Shaping Perceptions: Early Experiments in Musical Diplomacy and Inter-
American Relations”**

Abstract:

When State Department officials inaugurated a program of cultural diplomacy in the 1930s, their actions stimulated a surge of government-sponsored activity in music. One of the most effective proponents of this initiative was the Music Committee of the Office of Inter-American Affairs (OIAA), whose membership included Carleton Sprague Smith and Aaron Copland. This committee focused on furthering musical exchange with Latin America. They decided which U.S. musicians would receive funding for South American tours, as well as encouraged musical reciprocity by commissioning and performing South American music, and, when possible, bringing composers and ensembles north.

In this paper, I examine how the decisions and actions of OIAA Music Committee played a role in the way music of the United States was represented in South America and vice versa. In many ways, this committee served as a gatekeeper for cultural exchange with Latin America. Only those U.S. musicians, ensembles, and musical works that met with the committee’s approval were financially supported. In turn, the information gathered by the leaders and participants in these tours influenced which South American musicians and composers the committee advocated to bring to the United States. Two case studies, the 1941 Yale Glee Club tour of South America and the visit of Brazilian composer Francisco Mignone to the U.S. in 1942, serve as examples, offering insight into how the committee members and, more broadly, U.S. government officials evaluated the success of these cultural exchanges and measured the perceived and potentially lasting impact of these new initiatives.

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Editorial Disclaimer:

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on the basis of its abstract, which was peer-reviewed. This paper is presented as submitted by the author, who has authorized its dissemination through *IUScholarWorks*.