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| **Santa Cruz, Domingo Wilson** |
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| Domingo Wilson Santa Cruz was a lawyer, composer, and academic. His career was built upon several achievements in formative, artistic, administrative, and extensional fields, making him a key figure for understanding 20th century's Chilean music. His influence today is undeniable. Santa Cruz studied law at the University of Chile in 1917, completing his degree in 1921. In parallel, he received instruction in composition from Enrique Soro, and composed his first works during these years. From 1922 to 1923, he traveled to Europe as a secretary for the Chilean Embassy in Madrid, where he studied music with Conrado del Campo. Upon his return, Santa Cruz assumed a position in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Having resumed his public activity in Chile, Santa Cruz assumed the leadership of the Bach Society choir. Through it, Santa Cruz exerted a significant socio-political transformation in Chilean musical institutions: namely, the annexation of the National Conservatory of Music to the University of Chile (1928), with the subsequent classification of musicians as university professionals. |
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Through it, Santa Cruz exerted a significant socio-political transformation in Chilean musical institutions: namely, the annexation of the National Conservatory of Music to the University of Chile (1928), with the subsequent classification of musicians as university professionals. This process then led to the creation of entities such as the Faculty of Arts in the University of Chile (1929), the National Association of Composers (1935), and the National Symphony Concerts Association (1931-1938).  The climax of his efforts was the foundation of the Institute of Musical Extension (1940), which meant the recognition of musical culture as part of the State's institutions. This led to the creation of the Symphonic Orchestra of Chile, Choir of the University of Chile, National Ballet, Radio University of Chile, and Chilean Musical Review. The Institute of Musical Extension also gave rise to the Chilean Music Festival (1947-1969) - a major venue for Chilean academic music.  Between 1928 and 1953, Santa Cruz taught composition at the University of Chile, counting among his students Gustavo Becerra-Schmidt, Miguel Aguilar, Carlos Botto, Alfonso Montecino, and Juan Orrego Salas. In 1932, he was assigned Dean of the Faculty of Arts and, in 1944, appointed Vice Rector; in 1948 and 1951, served as Deputy Rector. In 1948, Santa Cruz founded the Faculty of Music Arts and Sciences, to which he worked as Dean from 1962 to 1968. Santa Cruz also held several management positions in Chilean and international institutions, such as Vice President of the International Society for Music Education (1953-1955), President in the International Committee of Music (1956-58), and President in the Chilean Academy of Fine Arts (1980-82).  In Chilean musicography, scholars tend to concur that "the history of the musical life of [contemporary Chile] is confused with the very life of Santa Cruz" (Claro 1973: 164). The institutional model formulated by Santa Cruz favored an aesthetic criteria that deeply influenced academic production in Chilean music during the first half of the 20th century. Santa Cruz combined an ideological foundation based on the Germanic tradition established by J. S. Bach, Beethoven, and Wagner with post-Romantic, Neoclassical, Expressionist, and Impressionist composers – though Santa Cruz’s music also includes medieval and Renaissance polyphonic traditions. Becerra and Leng contend that his music contains "a tendency to monumentality" because of complex and enriching combinations (Merino 1979: 23).  Santa Cruz’s creative life may be divided into three stages: initiation (1917-1929), maturation (1930-52), and maturity (1952 onwards). With the exception of the first stage, which tended towards exuberance and the privileging of the emotional, Santa Cruz assigned to melody a structural function, favoring polyphonic textures and motivic development, with autonomous melodic lines that retain sight of the harmonic outcome. In general terms, Santa Cruz used a modal setting for harmony that, in the horizontal driving and chromatic movement of voices, reaches sonority close to atonality, even dodecaphony. Frequent in his music are the gradual moving in the construction of melodic and rhythmic cells, the motivic recurrence, the resolution of jumps with opposite movement, in the way of 16th century's polyphony, and use of irregular rhythms. The thoroughness of his compositional technique is also evident in his use of traditional structures, such as the rondo and sonata. Finally, Santa Cruz’s music demonstrates a marked concern for contrapuntal density over timbre, leaving the instrumental color as a secondary factor in his compositional style.  Santa Cruz's catalog of works boasts eighty scores, many of them small vocal and choral pieces. Among his most important works are *Cinco Poemas Trágicos* (1929), *String Quartet No. 1* (1930-31), *Cinco Piezas para Orquesta de Cuerdas* (1937), *Variaciones para piano y orquesta* (1943), *Symphony No. 2* (1948) *Égloga* (1949) and *Preludios Dramáticos* (1946) for orchestra; the latter recognized as the most transcendental work of his repertoire. In 1951, he obtained the National Art Award in Music. |
| Further reading:  (Claro, 1972)  (Comité Editorial: Datos biográficos, 1952)  (Díaz, 2011)  (García, 2004)  (Leng, 1952)  (Merino, 1979)  (Salas, 1951)  (Santa Cruz, 2008)  (Urrutia, 1979) |