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| **Tosar, Héctor** |
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| Héctor Tosar (1923-2002) was a composer, pianist, director, and composition teacher in Uruguay, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, and USA. One of the best-known Uruguayan composers of his generation, his works are presented in festivals worldwide. Tosar started studying piano with Wilhelm Kolischer, harmony with Tomás Mujica, and composition with Lamberto Baldi, before completing his education in USA and France, where he studied composition with Aaron Copland, Arthur Honegger, Jean Rivier, and Darius Milhaud, and orchestral direction with Serge Koussevitzky, Eugène Bigot, and Jean Fournet. |
| Héctor Tosar (1923-2002) was a composer, pianist, director, and composition teacher in Uruguay, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, and USA. One of the best-known Uruguayan composers of his generation, his works are presented in festivals worldwide. Tosar started studying piano with Wilhelm Kolischer, harmony with Tomás Mujica, and composition with Lamberto Baldi, before completing his education in USA and France, where he studied composition with Aaron Copland, Arthur Honegger, Jean Rivier, and Darius Milhaud, and orchestral direction with Serge Koussevitzky, Eugène Bigot, and Jean Fournet.  Tosar’sworks are characterized by compositive principles based on “groups of sounds” and musical communication by means of expressiveness and “lyrism.” His catalogue includes soloist works, mainly for piano, as well as symphonic, chamber, and vocal works. In his final period, Tosar’s compositions incorporated new technologies and instruments, such as the synthesizer. As Coriún Aharonián observes, Tosar’s compositions fall into several stylistic periods: the first is characterized by the use of tonal procedures that become polytonal, or “free atonal;” this period includes various pieces for piano, the musicalization of texts, and orchestral pieces, including his first symphonic work, *Toccata* (1940).  Between 1946 and 1951, he was awarded scholarships by the Guggenheim Foundation and the French and Uruguayan governments to continue his studies in composition and orchestral direction in USA and Paris. He composed, among others, *Sonata para violín y piano* (1948), *Momento sinfónico* (1949), and *Sinfonía para cuerdas* (1951). The latter, arguably the most representative piece in his catalogue, was performed in Venezuela, Mexico, and USA. That same year Tosar created *Oda a Artigas* in honour of the centenary of Uruguay's national hero Gervasio Artigas’ birth, a piece for reciter and orchestra, with words by Luis Bausero. Tosar also composed songs for choirs, with the outstanding *Cinco madrigales* (1956) among them. *Salmo 102* (1957), for soprano, choir and orchestra, is a piece in one movement, highlighted by Tosar for its “exacerbated lyricism” and use of chromatism, which allows wider harmonic freedom, as seen in *Te Deum* (1960).  Invited by Juan José Castro, from 1961 to 1966 Tosar taught at the Music Conservatory of Puerto Rico, where he composed the last of his *Cuatro piezas* (1961-1963) for piano with a “tango rhythm.” Tosar’s greatest change in style materialized in *Stray Birds* (1963), for baritone and eleven instruments, inspired on a text by Tagore. Here Tosar uses serial procedures with “groups of sounds” that replace the harmony, thus creating “fixed zones in the musical space”(Aharonián 1991: 44). In the seventies, Tosar composed a series of eight *Reflejos* for various instrumental formations. In 1976, he returned to the piano with *Tres piezas para piano,* thus beginning a new compositive period, followed by *Nómoi* and *Ecos* (1977), and *Sul re* (1981) - a fundamental piece of the period in which the repetition of the D note was considered structural by the composer. From 1979 to 1981, he lived as a composition teacher, first in Venezuela at the Simón Bolivar Music Institute, and then at Indiana University in Bloomington, USA. In those years he composed the *Concerto* (1979), *Cadencias* (1979), and *Trio para cañas* (1980).  Although Tosar kept writing instrumental pieces, such as *Cinco piezas concertantes para violín y orquesta* (1987) and *Septeto* (1989), the beginning of the eighties marked the last period in his production. This decade was characterized by timbral exploration with the synthesizer. *La gran flauta* (1988), which uses flute timbres, was followed by *Música festiva* (1988), characterized by rhythmical exploration, and *Voces y viento* (1989), with moments of improvisation. His last work was *Passacaglia sobre el nombre de Bach* (1994), for organ.  File: hectortosar.jpg |
| Further reading:  (Aharonián, 1991)  (Aharonián, Héctor Tosar (1923-2002) Muerte de un gran compositor, 2002)  (López Chirico, 2002)  (Salgado, 1980)  (Salgado, Tosar (Errecart), Héctor, 2001)  (Tosar, 1994)  (Tosar, 1999)  (Tosar, 2009) |