

LAURO AYESTARAN

(Montevideo, July 9, 1913; Montevideo, July 24, 1966)

It is difficult to accept the fact that Lauro Ayestarán, cordial friend and exemplary colleague, ideal of the scholar and

gentleman, is no longer with us. True, most of us knew that he was suffering from a cardiac ailment and that during his last years he was living on borrowed time. Yet this foreknowledge could scarcely mitigate the deep sense of sorrow at the untimely loss of one so relatively young in years, at the prime of his intellectual powers. When I first met Ayestarán, in 1945, he told me that he intended to retire from the civil service within ten years and devote the rest of his life to research. Actually, he continued to hold several important posts up to the time of his death, and it was only under the strictest medical orders that he could be restrained from over-expending his energies. In Buenos Aires, in August of 1964, I heard him give a splendid lecture on "The Hispano-American Musical Baroque" — a subject in which he had made highly important contributions; but the effort completely exhausted him. I saw him again, and for the last time, in Montevideo, a few weeks later. With his usual amiability he accompanied me on excursions throughout the city and its environs. With admirable courage he made the long and tiring trip to the United States to attend the Second Inter-American Conference of Ethnomusicology at Indiana University in April of 1965.

Ayestarán was Professor of Choral Music and of the History of Music in the Normal Institute for Teachers, Director of the Division for Musical Research of the *Instituto de Estudios Superiores*, music critic of the newspaper "El País," Professor of Musicology in the Faculty of Humanities and Sciences at the University of Montevideo, head of the Musicology Section of the National Historical Museum of Uruguay, and artistic director of the state broadcasting system (SODRE). He also gave courses on musicology at the Catholic University of Buenos Aires. He was equally interested in historical musicology and in ethnomusicology, especially the study of folk music. In numerous field trips he made some two thousand recordings of Uruguayan folk music, which he carefully classified, analyzed, and transcribed.

Ayestarán's first important publication was the *Fuentes para el estudio de la música colonial uruguaya* (1947). This was followed by the publication of Vol. I of his massive *Historia de la música en el Uruguay* (1951). Robert Stevenson informs me that Ayestarán's widow plans to publish the materials that her

husband had assembled for the second volume of this comprehensive history of music in Uruguay. A concise survey of the evolution of Uruguayan music, *Evolución del pensamiento musical uruguayo*, was published in *Buenos Aires Musical* (Oct. 1, 1957). In the realm of indigenous, folk, and popular music, Ayestarán published a number of papers and monographs, including a study of *El minué montonero* (1950), *La música indígena en el Uruguay* (1949) ; and *La primitiva poesía gauchesca en el Uruguay* (1949).

Ayestarán first became interested in the musical baroque through his research on Domenico Zipoli's sojourn in Argentina, where the Roman organist and composer spent the last years of his life as a Jesuit priest. On this subject Ayestarán published a monograph in 1941: *Domenico Zipoli, el gran compositor y organista romano del 1700, en el Río de la Plata*. He continued his researches in the Hispano-American Musical Baroque with a transcription of Tomás de Torrejón's opera, *La púrpura de la rosa* (Lima, 1701), and continued with his important study of a manuscript collection from the Church of St. Philip Neri in Sucre, Bolivia, containing compositions from about 1680 to 1800. This study, together with the detailed catalogue of the collection, was published in Vol. I of the YEARBOOK. The Chilean musicologist Samuel Claro, reviewing that volume in the *Revista musical chilena*, stated that alone the publication of Ayestarán's paper, "El barroco musical hispanoamericano," justified the appearance of the YEARBOOK. We indeed take pride in having published this major contribution to the musical history of Hispanic America.

G. C.