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HECTOR CAMPOS PARSI

Divertimento del Sur

MILTON KATIMS

conducts members of the

Casals Festival Orchestra

Sonata in G for Piano

Jesús María Sanromá

PIANIST

Puerto Rico may be one of the world's beauty spots, but it does not generate many serious composers. Perhaps an island paradise without garrets is an incongruous place to starve in. Or perhaps it . . .

HECTOR CAMPOS PARSI

*Jesus Maria Sanroma is Puerto Rico's most famous concert musician and probably its most outrageous punster. Like Campos Parsi after him, Sanroma was sent by his government to study in the States, and he made his Boston concert debut at 19. In 1926, he became official pianist of the Boston Symphony, a tribute to his musical precision as well as to his dazzling finger-work. He left that post 20 years later in favor of his concert career, which he is still actively pursuing. This recording of Campos' **Sonata in G** is one of his most impressive performances.*



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101 SECOND STREET, STAMFORD, CONN.

... is simply that whenever a Puerto Rican feels music, he simply breaks out his guitar, opens his mouth and gives out with a bolero, like as not of his own invention.

Whatever the reasons, Hector Campos Parsi is a flaming exception to the rule, a young man of distinctly European stylistic inclinations, plenty of energy and a full measure of native talent. Inevitably, he became the darling of culturally conscious Puertorriquenos, who have swamped him with prizes for his music, and commissioned him to compose for official films, radio programs and ballets. They also made him the first Puerto Rican composer to be sent abroad for study, originally at the New England Conservatory, then at Nadia Boulanger's salon in Fontainebleau, France, and then for summer sessions with the composition department at Tanglewood, Mass. Recently he has become an official of the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture, where his gift for organization and his suave manner as an emcee have served well. It is no surprise that when word went around that Cook Labs wanted to record his music, the University of Puerto Rico sponsored the performance of his **Divertimento del Sur** and the Institute his **Sonata in G**.

Divertimento del Sur was recorded on the afternoon of the last day of the first Casals Festival in the new sound-shell in the University of Puerto Rico Theater, with the composer, stage hands and bystanders keeping ears open for passing cars and slamming fire doors. Even the air conditioner was turned off, to avoid rumble. **Sonata in G** was recorded in the new ultra-modern studios of the government station, WIPR-TV, a few days before its official opening.

The **Divertimento del Sur** ("of the south") is so named because Campos was born in the south seacoast city of Ponce, Puerto Rico's second largest. Campos conceives of the score's sunny spirit and indolent sensuousness as expressive of that part of the island, but of course this sentiment is strained through the memory of a young man who was already exposed to the more sophisticated pleasures of Paris. The music is scored for string orchestra with flute and clarinet solos. Flutist Bernard Goldberg displays all the alluring qualities of his instrument in the long pastoral solo in the second movement; clarinetist Wallace Shapiro displays his talent mostly in the dramatic movement that follows. The finale starts with a duet between solo violin and viola, and quickly moves into a wickedly bouncing dance.

Sonata in G is dedicated to Jesus Maria Sanroma, who gives it its record premiere. It contains some of the flavor of Stravinsky, or at least of his followers in France. But in Campos, the contours are softened and the rhythms eased, and a nice sense of satire moves side by side with Campos' keen logic and his flair for tight thematic relationships. Listeners familiar with Puerto Rican traditional music will recognize many old tunes. In the first movement, sentimental wisps of Tchaikovsky also blow in on a tropical trade wind, and blow right out again in a wry variation. The slow movement begins in stately restraint which later melts into the dramatic. Near the end comes a gorgeous low B flat—next to the lowest note on the piano—which could only be produced by a concert grand. The finale is filled with dash and brilliance, and some fiendish rhythms which Sanroma executes to perfection. The "chorale" which relieves all the activity in this movement, is actually a Puerto Rican seis.