

Latin American Classical Composers A Biographical Dictionary Author Miguel Ficher Published On December 2002

Latin American Classical Composers: A Biographical Dictionary by Miguel Ficher (2002) - A Comprehensive Review

The publication of Miguel Ficher's *Latin American Classical Composers: A Biographical Dictionary* in December 2002 marked a significant contribution to the field of musicology. This comprehensive work, a veritable treasure trove of information on a previously under-represented area of classical music, finally provided a much-needed resource for scholars, students, and music enthusiasts alike. This article will delve into the book's significance, examining its content, impact, and lasting legacy within the context of **Latin American classical music, Biographical Dictionaries of Composers, Miguel Ficher's contributions**, and the broader field of **20th-century musicology**.

Introduction: Filling a Critical Gap

Before Ficher's dictionary, accessing biographical information on Latin American classical composers was a fragmented and often frustrating experience. Scattered articles, incomplete biographies, and a lack of centralized information hindered research and appreciation of this rich and diverse musical tradition. Ficher's work directly addressed this issue, providing a single, accessible source for biographical data on a wide range of composers from across the Latin American continent. This meticulous compilation not only documented their lives but also illuminated their contributions to the evolving landscape of classical music.

Content and Scope: A Broad and Detailed Overview

Latin American Classical Composers: A Biographical Dictionary is far more than a simple list of names and dates. Ficher's work presents detailed biographical sketches of hundreds of composers, ranging from well-known figures to those less prominently featured in standard music histories. Each entry provides crucial biographical information, including birth and death dates, places of study, significant works, and influences. Furthermore, Ficher contextualizes each composer's life and work within the broader socio-political and cultural landscape of their respective countries and time periods. This contextualization is crucial for understanding the unique characteristics of Latin American classical music, which often reflects indigenous musical traditions, European influences, and the complexities of national identity formation.

The dictionary's impressive scope encompasses composers from various countries, demonstrating the diversity of musical expression across the continent. This expansive coverage is a defining feature, addressing the lack of comprehensive resources specific to **Latin American classical music**.

Significance and Impact: A Legacy of Scholarship

The publication of Ficher's dictionary had an immediate and lasting impact on the field of musicology. It provided scholars with a vital research tool, enabling more in-depth studies of individual composers and the development of Latin American classical music as a whole. The book facilitated comparative analyses, enabling researchers to identify common threads and unique characteristics across different national musical traditions. Moreover, its accessibility

made it valuable for students, allowing them to broaden their understanding of a musical landscape often overlooked in traditional music curricula. Ficher's work significantly contributed to a greater appreciation and understanding of the substantial contributions made by Latin American composers to the global classical music canon. His dedication to compiling this information demonstrates a commitment to reclaiming and celebrating a previously marginalized musical heritage.

Style and Approach: Accuracy and Accessibility

Ficher's approach to compiling the biographical information is notable for its accuracy and thoroughness. He clearly prioritized meticulous research, ensuring the reliability of the data presented. While the text is academically rigorous, it maintains an accessible style, making it comprehensible to a wide range of readers, not just specialists in musicology. This balance between scholarly precision and reader-friendliness is a key strength of the book, making it suitable for use in academic settings, personal study, and general music appreciation. This careful balance between academic rigor and accessibility is a testament to Ficher's skill in making significant contributions to the field of **Biographical Dictionaries of Composers**.

Conclusion: An Enduring Contribution to Musicological Knowledge

Miguel Ficher's **Latin American Classical Composers: A Biographical Dictionary** remains a landmark achievement in the field of musicology. Its comprehensive scope, meticulous research, and accessible style have established it as an indispensable resource for scholars, students, and all those interested in exploring the rich and diverse world of Latin American classical music. The book's enduring value lies in its ability to illuminate the lives and work of numerous composers, enriching our understanding of a vital, yet often under-represented, aspect of classical music history. By providing a centralized and reliable source of biographical information, Ficher's work has profoundly advanced the field of **20th-century musicology** and continues to inspire further research and appreciation of Latin American musical heritage.

FAQ: Addressing Common Questions about Ficher's Dictionary

Q1: What makes Ficher's dictionary unique compared to other biographical dictionaries of composers?

A1: Its unique focus on Latin American composers sets it apart. Most general biographical dictionaries give limited coverage to this region. Ficher's work provides a comprehensive and focused resource, addressing a critical gap in existing musicological literature. Its attention to the cultural and socio-political context of each composer's life and work further distinguishes it.

Q2: Is the dictionary primarily aimed at academic researchers, or is it suitable for a wider audience?

A2: While invaluable to academic researchers, the dictionary's clear and accessible writing style makes it suitable for a much broader audience, including students, music enthusiasts, and anyone interested in learning more about Latin American classical music.

Q3: Does the dictionary include composers from all Latin American countries?

A3: While aiming for comprehensiveness, the exact number of countries and composers represented might vary slightly due to the availability of information at the time of publication. However, the dictionary strives for a broad geographical scope, including numerous composers from diverse nations across the continent.

Q4: How has Ficher's dictionary influenced subsequent research on Latin American classical music?

A4: It has provided a foundational resource, facilitating numerous studies of individual composers and comparative analyses of national musical traditions. By centralizing biographical information, it has significantly streamlined research and stimulated further investigation into this previously under-researched area.

Q5: Are there any plans for a revised or updated edition of the dictionary?

A5: Currently, there is no publicly announced revised edition. However, given the ever-evolving nature of scholarship, future updates or supplementary volumes are possible and would be a welcome contribution to the field.

Q6: What are some key themes or trends that emerge from the biographies in Ficher's work?

A6: The biographies reveal the diverse influences on Latin American classical music, from European traditions to indigenous musical forms. They also highlight the challenges and triumphs faced by composers navigating complex socio-political contexts, often reflecting national identity formation and cultural exchange.

Q7: Where can I find a copy of *Latin American Classical Composers: A Biographical Dictionary*?

A7: Used copies may be available through online booksellers like Amazon or Abebooks. Libraries specializing in musicology or Latin American studies are also likely to hold a copy.

Q8: What is the overall legacy of Miguel Ficher's contribution to the field of musicology?

A8: Miguel Ficher's work has permanently reshaped our understanding of Latin American classical music. By bringing together the biographical data of hundreds of composers into a singular, accessible resource, he has not only provided scholars with a vital tool, but he has also profoundly enriched the appreciation and study of this rich musical heritage. His dedication to the subject serves as a model for future research and ensures the continued recognition of Latin American musical traditions within the global classical music landscape.

Unveiling the Sounds of the Americas: A Deep Dive into Miguel Ficher's "Latin American Classical Composers: A Biographical Dictionary"

In November 2002, the musical world acquired a valuable addition to its repertoire: Miguel Ficher's "Latin American Classical Composers: A Biographical Dictionary." This extensive project serves as an essential resource for anyone seeking to explore the diverse tapestry of classical music from Latin America. This paper will delve into the book's value, examining its organization and effect on the discipline of musicology.

The publication itself is a wealth of information on many of composers from across Latin America, extending from the first pioneers of the genre to the current masters defining the sound of today. Ficher's careful research is evidently apparent in the breadth of the biographical entries, which go beyond simply listing dates and works. He offers insightful interpretations of each composer's technique, inspirations, and the cultural background in which their music was created. This contextualization is especially valuable for understanding the complexities of Latin American musical legacy, which often reflects economic shifts and cultural characteristics.

For example, the book examines the influence of indigenous musical traditions on the work of composers like Silvestre Revueltas, emphasizing the pioneering ways in which they integrated these elements into Western classical forms. Similarly, it clarifies the role of national identity in the music of composers such as Heitor Villa-Lobos, showing how his work reflects a intense commitment to Brazilian heritage. The volume also addresses the obstacles faced by female

composers in a predominantly male-dominated field, offering important recognition to often-overlooked figures.

The organization of the publication is convenient, making it easy to navigate details on particular composers. The entries are ordered alphabetically, and a comprehensive listing facilitates rapid access. The addition of a reference list further enhances the publication's worth as a academic tool.

Ficher's "Latin American Classical Composers: A Biographical Dictionary" is not merely a source book; it is a spur for further investigation and appreciation of a rich and often-overlooked corpus of musical works. It unveils doors to a universe of musical sounds, expanding our understanding of classical music's global extent. It is an indispensable tool for students, scholars, and music lovers alike.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

1. Q: Who is the intended audience for this book?

A: The book is designed for a broad audience, including students of music history, musicologists, researchers, and anyone with an interest in Latin American music and culture.

2. Q: What makes this book unique compared to other biographical dictionaries?

A: Ficher's work distinguishes itself through its in-depth analysis of each composer's style within their socio-political context, providing richer understanding than simple biographical listings.

3. Q: Are there any limitations to the book?

A: Given its publication date, the book might not include the most recent composers or the latest scholarship on existing ones. Further research might be necessary for the most up-to-date information.

4. Q: How can this book be used in an educational setting?

A: The book can be used as a supplementary text in music history courses, providing valuable biographical details and contextual analysis for classroom discussions and independent research projects.

5. Q: Where can I purchase a copy?

A: While availability may vary, used copies and possibly new prints are commonly found through online bookstores and academic publishers specializing in musicology.

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