

ness was the Spanish renaissance polyphony of, for example, Tomás Luis de Victoria. Music which had just recently been composed reached us, and even the works of some minor composers known in Europe at that time, were used in religious services. This immediately generated local composition. There were Indians who already understood European compositional method during the early years of the Conquest. One of the monks who taught at the San José de los Naturales College, was never able to communicate with the Indians in Náhuatl, but somehow was able to teach them solfege, to sing and to play instruments, and thus we saw the first Indian composers of polyphonic music. Everyone has heard, for example, of the piece “Sancta Mariae-Dios I tlazonantzine,” a composition produced by an Indian who took the name Don Hernando Franco.

The choirmaster was chosen through competition. He had to be a great musician, since he had to play several instruments, conduct, compose in Gregorian and contrapuntal style, improvise on a given theme, compose a piece in a very short period of time, and so forth. Under his command was a musical group complete with instrumentalists and singers, and a part of their responsibilities, which touches on our subject here, was to train children to sing in choruses and to educate the best among them to be musicians. One of these was Manuel de Sumaya, the pride of Mexico, whose work you can hear today in the marvellous Chanticleer recordings, with some of the outstanding works of the colonial culture. These give us some idea of what was being done in the country’s different cathedrals, primarily those of Mexico (state), Puebla, and Oaxaca, and to a lesser degree Guadalajara, Durango, and other cities.

Later came the debacle of the nineteenth century. Something akin to what is happening now: foreign debt, civil wars, hunger, the fall of one government and takeover by another, foreign invasions—something which could happen to us today.

The most important fact in the twentieth century, despite some efforts to the contrary, is that even today, there is no official program approved for musical education. Everything that exists is temporary. After so many years of the reign of the Mexican Revolution, this tells us to what degree our authorities have lacked real interest in developing this area.

I would like to conclude by noting that those of us who know something about music, cannot allow Beethoven to be less well known than Juan Gabriel. It is an aberration, but this is what is going on. We see that everyone knows Superman, or worse, but not Cervantes, or Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, or our Mexican authors of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Everyone can describe in detail what they see on television, in pornographic magazines, and so forth, and this is the inheritance we are leaving our children and youth.

I insist that we cannot tolerate this. We must rebel, we must do something, and not just complain. We must fight with the force of knowledge and sensitivity, and take advantage of the moral authority which the music teacher has traditionally

had in the community, although nowadays, he is denied his leadership role. The good music teacher is a natural leader, who must use his position to rescue our educational system. Thank you very much.

## Time to take a stand for musical education

*The following are excerpts of other speeches delivered at the “Classical Music and Excellence in Education” seminar on Oct. 10-12.*

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### Patricia Morales

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*Patricia Morales, whose degree is in Musical Education, is the director of the Children’s Choir of the National School of Music of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM).*

Now, more than ever, it is urgent to take a personal stand with respect to musical education. And that is, of course, to think of it as the opportunity to awaken and develop the integral faculties of the human being, penetrating his sensory, emotional, and mental spheres.

We are intimately motivated in this task by the conviction and enthusiasm of knowing that it is in our hands to help the student in perfecting his auditory and psychomotor capabilities, as well as in developing his memory, his critical judgment, and capacity of expression, without forgetting that under our guidance, he may discover and enter into contact with the musical and artistic works of humanity. Our responsibility is not minor, nor is it trivial.

One of the educator’s tasks would be to provide the student many opportunities to practice abilities, emotions, attitudes, and concepts. . . . Our efforts as teachers would involve orienting and leading with respect to the discovery of new and authentic artistic-musical realities, valid for different societies at different historic moments.

The composer and pedagogue Zoltan Kodály showed us the way to comprehensive musical development through the exercise of the inner ear and auditory imagination, achieved through song, and especially group singing. He indicated that this training should precede any instrumental training, since, “if, at the beginning of reading music, a child is capable of singing a small piece in two voices with another child, he will have acquired 100 times more musical sense than if he had been practicing the piano from morning to night.”

Of course, each method in and of itself has its unique characteristics. But in each, the focus is basically on auditory

development, and especially on internal hearing, as well as on a gradual and natural introduction to the field of musical notation, while never forgetting the importance of body movement and of song, through which to obtain direct contact with the elements of music.

I would like to conclude by citing Zoltan Kodály: “We are firmly convinced that humanity will live much more happily when it has learned to live more worthily with music. Anyone who has worked toward this end, by one means or another, will not have lived in vain.”

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## Emilio Hernández

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*Maestro Emilio Hernández is director of Choral Education of the Conservatory of Mexico State.*

The creation of choral polyphony was the most important innovation of the early Renaissance, and laid the basis for all later musical advances. With the appearance of the chorus itself, the composer of the early twentieth century had to solve two new problems: to blend the voices instead of differentiating them, and to deal with dissonance differently than the Gothic composer.

Little by little, all the medieval traditions were being shattered. It was now possible to assign song to any voice, and even shift from one to another, without being forced to assign it to the tenor. . . . Later, the composer diversified song into short phrases, which were used as thematic motifs throughout the texture of the piece. Within the whole range of possibilities, the composer could choose from homophony, to using one of the great achievements of Renaissance music: imitative counterpoint, which consists of a composition in parts in which the musical material is distributed equally among all the voices. Finally, it is worth noting that the composers began to submit to the laws of spoken language in translating text to the musical staff, and this extended even to the emotional content of the words.

The appearance of choral polyphony achieved an enormous advance in the development of musical thought, and gave rise to the appearance of that great vocal instrument that we know as “the chorus.”

Apart from the strictly musical advantages, choral work in the schools would also yield other important advantages:

- A noble and economic instrument: The chorus offers the cheapest option for making music, for obvious reasons.
- Group work, discipline: Good choral work improves individuals by diminishing the ego, making the One a part of the Many.
- Development of sensitivity: Music has an intrinsic ability to guide the most profound emotions of man, thus enabling children in general to experience sentiments of tenderness, of affection, of joy, of strength, of hope.

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## Arturo Valenzuela Remolina

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*Professor Arturo Valenzuela Remolina is both pianist and composer.*

In using the expression “Classical music,” we are not referring to a specific period in the history of this art. We use the term Classical in the sense of a consecrated model, and we shall speak of the importance of including such models in both primary and secondary musical education.

Music, as a phenomenon of human communication, today has a universal nature and fulfills not one, but several, functions, both individual and social.

The question is whether music has an intrinsic value, or a direct value.

It is not difficult to answer this question if we remind ourselves of what it was that attracted the majority of us here tonight to music. I would dare to suggest that, in general, we did not get involved in music to enrich ourselves, or to acquire power and dominate our fellow man. I think that the answer is that our involvement is due to the fascination that music by itself exerts, upon our persons. . . . Its value is not instrumental, but intrinsic. It is similar to the concept of human dignity.

Thus, our proposal is to consider music in this sense as an object for study in the primary and secondary levels of education: as a valuable and gratifying activity in itself, which contributes to the aesthetic development of man. If in the process other additional advantages are gained, such as, for example, that children who study music improve in other areas such as mathematics, so much the better. But these added benefits cannot be the motive to include music in any plan of basic education.

I would like to reflect on the term alienation, which stems from the Latin *alienus*, which means distant or remote, as related to composition and to music. To be alienated or to lose control is to forget true personal needs, and that forgetfulness is due to the abrogation of various human potentialities. For example, when as adults we hear monotonous music, in which the rhythm is aggressive and predominant, we psychologically regress to a primitive state of psychomotor coordination. . . . We could ask ourselves why such rhythmically insistent music could cause a loss of self-control. The answer is simple: because it annuls higher capacities of motor coordination and, with that, also cancels out various higher functions of thought and emotion.

In sum, music, depending on the kind of stimulus it represents, could inspire mental development or block it. Bad music invalidates our greatest strengths, and with that makes us forget who and what we really are. That is the most profound sense of alienation. Although we don’t have proof, it has occurred to almost all of us at one time or another, that the lack of musical options given the Mexican people, has been taken advantage of, in order to alienate and control the population.