



IMC/UNESCO General Assembly – Montevideo, Uruguay. October, 2003
(CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS FOR THE MONTEVIDEO CONFERENCE)

MUSIC DIVERSITY
MANY MUSICS ACTION PROGRAMME (MMAP)

Lecture subject:

Promotion of music diversity.

Enrolment category:

Music diversity and international policies - international issues.

Title of presentation:

GLOBAL THREATS, JOINT SOLUTIONS.

Ladies and gentlemen:

First of all I would like to congratulate IMC and all those institutions and people who made Many Musics Action Program (**MMAP**) possible. Not only because of the opportune initiative of the project, but for the profound scope they've used to analyze this threat. It's quite encouraging to learn that a conscience of Music Diversity has been created.

At this stage of modern History, none of us here are unaware of the appalling damage that this **DIVERSITY** has suffered due to Globalization. Not only with respect of culture and music, but in all fields of Art; of those which contain the purest human expression where Music plays a preponderant role.

Those possibilities of loss that the referred process has brought with itself are dramatic. After having read "**MANY MUSICS**", that human emotion of a lump in one's throat is as evident as ever. Our concern is so big, at least mine, that I wonder if we're still on time to stop the negative waves that Globalization has brought to our world native, traditional and artistic expressions; let alone if we have the means and courage to do it.

As a professional of Music I have not only witnessed but also experienced daily these effects; however, as a Latin American artist it has upset me to know that in all the coordinates of the compass rose it has the same virulent effect.



The world's tragedy (and willingly I do not name it just a "problem") of the imminent extinction of valuable local musical expressions as of the Globalization is impressing; and as a world's threat, it demands a joint solution.

We're here together precisely to guarantee, reinforce and, if possible, enrich IMC's programs with proposals and actions towards those programs and strategies that IMC has designed in the search for solutions. It's most certain that the noble efforts of IMC's officers might palliate such serious situation; yet, sooner or later, we'll be able to realize that those initiatives will not be accomplished if they're not totally supported by all of us members.

This world threat of global magnitude must be counter-attacked with the same methods and proportions. It's no time for rhetoric; it's time for practical and feasible actions; especially an answer by means of GLOBALIZATION. Why? Because we're facing a monumental and urgent threat!

Nobody is unaware that a social phenomenon is bound to affect another phenomenon. Nowadays, within Globalization, Communications must be analyzed from the very legitimate approach of the evolution of human mind, memory and identity of peoples as well as tradition. The communication phenomenon, of course, especially because of its world coverage due to the technological advances and corresponding speed.

The problem we're dealing with now dates back to the first radio message; obviously, it got worse when the first audiovisual signal was sent through hertzian waves. Actually, society of those days thought that the radio would be the ideal vehicle for culture promotion, especially for universal music; they never even intuited that it would become an important space for advertising. And by thinking that television would bring society a great benefit, it's most likely that nobody suspected the short-term reach that the galloping and indiscriminated commercialization can have within the communicative contents of this noble invention. Just over half a century has been enough to be aware of the fact that the performance of the media has surpassed human values; they're way down the market and publicity's demands.

The banal and truculent pseudo-Literature, the entertainment with no intellectual commitment and the entertainment in tough formats have ended up by conforming a selection of communication codes. Yet, legitimate and genuine expressions of societies were discarded in some cases; in other cases they were altered, deformed and falsified according to a very questionable enterprise criterion. Here, I'm speaking about Mexico, but I think I can speak about a vast number of Latin American countries.



Television with education and cultural contents **does** exist, but its presence is so small that it doesn't accomplish either significance or influence in our country's social conscience. In general, the media is altering the world's culture in an alarming and illegitimate way. In the design of their programming, they're privileging those programs, which give back an immediate profit, therefore overlooking those traditional, aesthetic, ethic and human values. This, because of the lack of the building up of children's minds as well of that of adolescents' and society in general.

This situation is even more complicated with those aggravating circumstances, which arise from the very government instances:

- β On the one side, our **education systems** do not help with, or counterbalance these problems. I do insist, at least in great part of our Latin American countries, education systems don't understand that the encouragement of Music Diversity promotes the preservation of cultural identity of countries. Also, that the knowledge of "the other" is an element which enriches tolerance and acceptance, human values that are just starting to be acknowledged in our present world; yet, formative values capable of creating a less aggressive and belligerent world. And, why not? A world of peace.
- β **Health instances** look as though they're not aware of the fact that the creation and enjoyment of the musical expression of each community has been an inseparable element of social evolution and of the human being himself. And, perhaps, probably they haven't suspected that the promotion of Music Diversity could automatically propitiate a sound culture where society would be able to get to know more than just the mechanization and the electronic noise that those privileged genres that the mass media and the recording industry offer. The knowledge of other types of music and a diversified consumption might polish our ear and therefore diminish human ear deterioration, which has been gradually increasing in our young people; this deterioration will eventually result in a serious threat of deafness in our societies.
- β **Culture instances** look as though they're overlooking that advertising alters demand and that they're not only optimizing their broadcasting strategies but, while they lack a selective, methodized and congruent system to program and encourage Music Diversity, they're adhering themselves to TV proto-heroes. In this way, they're promoting a serious musical illiteracy and an artificial transculturization; a false and favoritist transculturization of a strong commercial rooting.



- β The institutions in charge of **social development** look as though they overlook the benefits that the practicing of music in all its aspects offer as social prevention and as a productive usage of time; this practicing, which is also an aid in social rehabilitation, family integration and a link with physiological and social factors of a pharmacoadictive nature. In addition, the discipline of “making music” contributes to individual, collective and social levels.

- β Those in charge to protect all **countries’ patrimony, heritage and traditions** seem to forget that vernacular and folkloric music is one of the most vulnerable items in the intangible patrimony of Humanity; this is why they urgently demand better protection and higher safeguard.

- β And those **entities created in our countries to invigilate the compliance with those international agreements that our authorities have subscribed** seem to ignore the importance that the knowledge of Music in all its expressions is a human right. (The Universal Declaration of Human Rights; The Rights of Boys and Girls; The International Agreement of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and The Social Commitment for the Quality of Education, among others.)

It would be naive to think that the mass media would change their policies as they have always represented the most valuable and efficient tool of Globalization. If we demand solutions, we must focus on the heart of the matter, that is, INDIVIDUALS, ENTITIES AND GROUPS WHICH ARE DECISION MAKERS, SETTING POLICIES THAT ARE TO BE APPLIED IN THE MOST IMPORTANT FIELDS OF HUMAN ACTIVITY. In every country, those ideologists and administrators of Education, Health, Human Rights, National and World Patrimony, Social Development and Culture should be trained, encouraged, stimulated and orientated to promote Music Diversity; in this aspect, the few respectable media that promote it should also be included. Not only should all of them be convinced of the innumerable reasons that justify it, but it will also be necessary to provide them with those basic tools and to make them available to those institutions, which are affecting this problem because they establish policies against it.

Should there be a positive aspect of Globalization is the fact that we’re all aware that it’s not wise for one country to tackle individually those threats that Globalization is facing us with. Neither is it wise that each organization deals with isolated projects, overlooking the natural interaction that the very existence of these processes having. As opposed to other *époques* when specialization was a sheer paradigm, nowadays facing the Globalization phenomenon is a social need. It’s now time to join efforts, not to atomize; it’s time to globalize our struggles for



Humanity's sakes. Today, our shared commitment is the most virtuous way to face the threat. It's mandatory to structure a common ideology in favor of Music Diversity which can live via the joint efforts of the most important international and regional instances, such as UNESCO, UNICEF, OMS and OEA; also AMNISTY INTERNATIONAL and the INTERAMERICAN SYSTEM OF PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS. This, because our threat is a big target which has to be aimed from all possible flanks.

In effect, Music Diversity urgently demands support from international organizations. International organizations, which look after the following: Education Democracy; Health; Human Rights; Children's Rights; Diversity and Cognitive Equity Values. Also, those which were constituted to preserve the distinctive, aesthetic, artistic, traditional and integral qualities of the vernacular expressions of peoples.

The Mexican Council of Music respectfully submits this Honorable Assembly four concise proposals for the promotion of Music Diversity: **1) support; 2) knowledge; 3) promotion and 4) practice.**

- 1. Support.** This refers to an ideological integration (or, globalization?), and putting into effect "Many Musics", as follows:

Request from the above mentioned international organizations and some others, either of regional or national nature, the following:

- β To simultaneously include the promotion of Music Diversity in their programs or edicts.
- β To exhort corresponding institutions in every country to struggle, so that Music Diversity is integrated to Culture.

- 2. Knowledge.** This second proposal consists of designing a program whereby other IMC's members and we National Councils can create an audiovisual aid/product as practical and cheap as it may be, e.g. a CD with a booklet. This aid should include a summarized record of the most representative musical expressions of our respective countries as well as the most distinctive aspect of their nature, their culture and their people. (Domi available).

- 3. Promotion.** Approach the above mentioned international instances and corresponding institutions so that they can sponsor a web site where this aid/product could be divulged; also, to finance its physical distribution in all countries to further make it accessible for schools, cultural centers and the media. The latter, in charge of the National Councils themselves and other affiliate IMC's institutions.



- 4. Practice.** “Orquestas Mitote” is a joyous project of transmission of memory via Art which was presented to those delegates attending the X TRIMALCA, held in Mexico City last October, 2002 organized by the Mexican Council of Music. It consists of the creation of orchestras of children, adolescents and elderly people who, by means of oral teaching, can recreate rhythmic structures coming from international music tradition; this is achieved by using percussion instruments built by themselves with recycled materials. They obviously build them under the guidance of a specialized teacher who provides them with technical, acoustics and musical instructions. For us, this proposal is of outmost importance as it rescues musical traditions of people and it gives these traditions their proper value; it also preserves, keeps and exalts a facet of the intangible patrimony of humanity. Furthermore, it acknowledges music diversity as a positive value as it’s applied in a creative way. (“*Projects like these will save Music*” Maestro Octavio Hasbún commented when he was presented with this project. He was President of the Music Council of Chile at the time.) (Demo available).

I’m most certain that facing such a challenge won’t be easy, but I’m also certain that we’ll be able to obtain a good deal of proposals at this forum; proposals feasible and of communion with it. However, I go back to my first thought: conscience has been created and our chance to get together to plan solutions is given! The will, the decision and the courage will have to emerge at this very forum. Yet, “our labor of ants” will have to be started once we pack up and get back home!

Graciela Agudelo
President
Music Council of Mexico

Montevideo, 16 -17 October, 2003

(Reading time: 16-18 minutes)