

PREFACE

We have to thank Stefano Picciano and the publishing company Ut Orpheus for carrying out this articulated and deep study on Alirio Díaz' work and his connections with the human and cultural roots of the artist.

Italy has benefited for over fifty years of the continuous presence of this guitar giant who gave many concerts and courses throughout our Country and we cannot forget the many editions for Zanibon in Padua. It's a good thing, although much is still left to be done, that an Italian author and editor give such a great contribution to the organic and systemic knowledge of this contribution and of its meaning for today's and tomorrow's cultural life.

But according to the natural course of life, there is one creative role in society: the role of the genius. No one expresses what is felt by a society better than the genius in its midst, who has been given an eminently social charism. Most people feel that the creative work of a genius expresses what they feel better than they themselves could express it. This is why we feel that our melancholy is so much better represented in the cadenzas of Chopin or the poetry of Leopardi than if we ourselves were to set it down in notes or words.

(L. Giussani, *At the origin of the Christian claim*,
McGill-Queen's University Press)

This definition of genius – even with its artistic meaning – helps us to perceive how, in reality and at the origin, the border between “learned” and “folk” makes no sense. Not everyone “has studied” or has a great talent, but what the genius expresses belongs to all of us. It is necessary to bear this in mind today because, in an era in which the importance of common ideals has been shrinking, even in music the word “learned” has become a synonym for cultivated, academic, therefore not abstruse, intellectualistic, unintelligible; on the other hand the word “folk” seems to carry, by now, simply the meaning of “naïf”, rough, or even convey the meaning of commodification and consumeristic massification.

In this volume, as a synthesis between the folk substrate and the academic language, authors belonging to the so-called National Schools are mentioned and moreover Chopin and Liszt. However we could even

mention Bach, the Renaissance (Díaz would mention Chilesotti's studies on folk music), polyphony, Gregorian chants and we cannot forget the Opera and all that its knowledge has conveyed for generations very close to ours (I'm just thinking of the arias preserved by our grandparents, who were maybe even illiterate ...).

This book clearly explains to us the example of Alirio Díaz's career, this "farmer who played the cuatro", looked after the cattle and learnt by heart the *Divine Comedy*, who later became one of the most celebrated virtuous people of our time, admired both by Celibidache and by Rodrigo, who interpreted vitality and wisdom as an outcome of that "substrate" that he himself always remembered with gratitude. This example indicates (and so do on the other hand Villa Lobos's and Sojo's arts, here mentioned) that still today learned and folk aspects are – can and must be – the same thing. This will be difficult until that common ideal feeling which generates a people and his maestros is alive.

In thanking by turns, on this wonderful occasion, Maestro Díaz for all that his presence has meant for me, I feel I can humbly but firmly tell him that I can find the echoes of his artistic ideals still today. Some years ago the Maestro was stunned because I begged him (he said I was the first ever among his pupils) to give me the texts of those Venezuelan chants that he had transformed into wonderful guitar solos; a short time later I could tell him that some of those chants, wonderfully accompanied by "Sojo – Díaz", were by then sung by thousands of people. "Venezuelan music never had such a large audience", he commented once.

But another example of continuousness is represented by those composers (their existence is also documented in the series that I am editing for Ut Orpheus) who do not give up putting their creativity at the service of a music which, albeit challenging contemporary time, is tendentially "open" to everyone.

Thank you, Maestro!

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