
Cultural Hierarchies and Music Education for Social Change: Neocolonialism and Coloniality in the SOMOS Música Program

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Global Mediterranean. Postcolonial Music Histories (16th -20th centuries)

IMS Intercongressional Symposium

July 9-12, 2025. Valencia, Spain



International Musicological Society



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INTRODUCTION



SOMOS MÚSICA PROGRAM

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- Based in Santa Fe, Argentina (Pop. 400 000).
- Its educational project aims for social impact (Diaz Geromet et al. 2024).
- SOMOS relies on the “orchestra-school methodology” (Diaz Geromet et al. 2024).

RELATED SCHOLARLY WORK

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Particularly:

- Geoffrey Baker's book: *El Sistema: Orchestrating Venezuela's Youth* (2014)
- Anna Bull's article: "El Sistema as a Bourgeois Social Project: Class, Gender, and Victorian Values" (2016).

THESIS STATEMENT

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- It reproduces cultural hierarchies by positioning European aesthetics as superior.
- These hierarchies are in tension with participants' preferences.
- Cultural hybridization occurs as a way of resisting coloniality.

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Mixed-method approach: Document and own experiences analysis.

- Personal experience analysis:
 - Based on five years of professional experience in SOMOS Música.
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 - Coloniality – Anibal Quijano (2007)
 - Cultural Hybridity – Homi Bhabha (1988)
 - Banking Education and Problem-posing Education – Freire (2000)

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- Theoretical Framework:
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 - Cultural Hybridity – Homi Bhabha (1988)
 - Banking Education and Problem-posing Education – Freire (2000)
- Sources Analyzed:
 - Syllabus for the ensemble course (Díaz Geromet et al. 2024).
 - 2024 ODP Repertoire Report (Bustafán 2024)



DISCUSSION

THE ORCHESTRA-SCHOOL METHODOLOGY



3. Estrategias metodológicas

La estrategia metodológica que será utilizada es la correspondiente a la pedagogía de Orquesta Escuela (Atela, 2018), adaptándola a las necesidades específicas del Programa SOMOS MÚSICA en general, y de cada ensamble en particular.

En este sentido la materia de conjunto focaliza como centro de acción a la orquesta en nivel inicial, nivel avanzado, y cuando se unen ambas para formar un grupo más grande. Para lograr este cometido, las materias de lenguaje musical e instrumento cumplen un rol fundamental, pero no así descentralizado de la práctica orquestal o de conjunto.

Los arreglos multinivel son indispensables para llevar adelante esta metodología. El arreglo multinivel se debe realizar de manera tal que aún dentro de la separación de niveles, cada estudiante sea capaz de ejecutar un fragmento musical del total acorde a su aptitud técnica-musical.

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- Critical thinking about music is not encouraged.
- There is an emphasis on performances and concerts.
- The methodology reflects Freire’s “banking education” model (2000).
- Social goals are not discussed in class.



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THE REPERTOIRE



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- The repertoire varies yearly by conductor.
 - No record for beginners' and intermediate ensembles.
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- Main source: Manookian's orchestral albums.
- They focus on European classical music canon.

De los álbumes arreglados por A. W. Benoy:

- G. F. Händel: March from the Overture to the "Occasional Oratorio.
- G. F. Händel: Gavotte and Furioso.

Para estas dos piezas debimos adaptar algunas de las partes de fagotes y cornos para ser interpretadas por saxofones. Fagot, trombón y clarinete tocan lo arreglado originalmente por el autor.

De los álbumes arreglados por Jeff Manookian:

- E. Grieg: In the hall of the Mountain King
- F. Lehár: Vals de "La Viuda Alegre"
- P. Tchaikovsky: Vals de "La Bella Durmiente"
- J. Strauss (h): Radetzky March

Matías Bustafán. "Informe de Repertorio General" Unpublished document, Santa Fe: Secretaría de Cultura de la Municipalidad de Santa Fe, 2024, 2.

THE REPERTOIRE

- Participants suggested two popular pieces.
- Contrast between written and oral traditions.
- Classical music centers on the score.
- Folkloric and rock music rely on oral transmission.

Como resultado del pedido de elección de obras por parte de los instrumentos de viento, se incorporaron arreglos de:

- “La Vieja” (chacarera trunca)
- “Corazón Delator” (Gustavo Cerati)

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- European classical music is reinforced as more relevant.
- Final concert is held at an opera theatre.
- Venue choice raises questions about the social project.

PARTICIPANTS' PREFERENCES

- Participants listen to different music than the one studied in the program.
- They constantly suggest reggaeton, trap, rap and cumbia.
- Duki, Nicki Nicole, WOS and Maria Becerra were frequently mentioned.

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- Popular music remain meaningful throughout.
- Many participants join formal music institutions.
- Bhabha's concept of "third space" (1988) applies.
- Appropriation and resignification of classical music is a way of resisting coloniality.



CONCLUSIONS



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- SOMOS Música reflects aspects of coloniality through the use of the “orchestra-school” methodology and repertoire choices.
- The “orchestra-school methodology” does not encourage critical thinking, mirroring the “banking education” model. (Freire 2000)
- ODP repertoire’s preference for European classical music reproduces modern ideals inherited from colonial times.
- Participants are not passive receivers. They appropriate and resignify the new cultural signifiers as a way of resistance (Bhabha 1988).

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