

FOREWORD

I remember a conversation with a scientist friend a couple of years ago, when the research that resulted in this document was already underway. During our conversation I asked her about the reason for the disproportional presence of women in the field of scientific research. "Why are there so few women in the top research positions?" she asked back in sign of surprise. "It's obvious," she said, "it is the result of pure ignorance and prejudice!"

My friend's bold answer touched a sensitive nerve, one that directly relates to the preoccupation that started this soul-searching research. That day, after our conversation, I asked myself again "why is Latin American art music so neglected?" and sadly, as my friend pointed out, I became aware that the answer to this question could be very obvious as well. It does not require hypotheses or sophisticated methodology. The bottom line is that Latin American art music is alienated because of ignorance and prejudice.

However, after thinking about it over and over again, I came to the realization that ignorance and prejudice are not causes but they are attitudes that result from some other hidden issues. If one takes these attitudes to be the causes of this predicament it would mean buying into the mechanisms behind preconceived opinions on this issue and, hence, contributing to perpetuate the ignorance surrounding this particular topic.

It is with this realization in mind that I seek answers for the marginal status of Latin America's art music. This search takes me into a hermeneutical investigation that allows me to conclude that the root cause of this predicament is the paradigmatic style in which Latin American art music has been interpreted and represented so far. An inadequate language of description that has hindered appreciations and has tainted judgments made of the works by Latin American composers characterizes this style.

In short, this sphere of music is currently at the mercy of an inappropriate, philosophically poor intellectual framework, one in which the arbitrarily imposed structures of order do not allow the appreciation of the subtleties in the patterns of disorder.

Therefore, this research deconstructs the current intellectual framework inhabited by Latin American art music with the aid of an interdisciplinary strategy. My discourse incorporates literature from the fields of musicology, cultural anthropology, ethnomusicology, psychology, hermeneutics of music, literary criticism, as well as thoughts and statements by Latin American composers and authors. By weaving together a variety of writings from these sources, I provide a

road map that could lead researchers towards further untangling the intricate web of vague, taken-for-granted and wrong assumptions that have contributed to maintain the field of Latin American art music in a state of intellectual neglect and confinement.

It is my hope that *Voices in Limbo: Identity, Representation, and Realities of the Latin American Composer* will provide windows into new theoretical and musicological approaches which together could contribute to bring about a paradigm shift to the field.

I am indebted to Dr. Philip Bohlman for his encouragement, guidance and support throughout the entire process of this research. It was he who introduced me to the art of critical thinking and to many of the sources I relayed upon. I am also grateful to the second readers of this dissertation, composer Marlui Miranda and Dr. Bertholdt Hückner, for their time and valuable comments. In addition, I am very thankful to Dr. Carmen Téllez for her thorough editing suggestions concerning Part One as well as to Dr. Fernando Coronil, Dr. Julie Skurski, Mario Lavista, and Juan Orrego-Salas for allowing me to indulge in intense discussions on the subject with them.