



## LITERATURE AND CULTURAL STUDIES

# The Apolitical Politics of Classical Music: The Mozarteum Argentino under the Dictatorship of 1976–1983

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During the almost constant political turmoil of the 1970s up to Raúl Alfonsín's election in 1983, classical music in Buenos Aires was arguably one of the most stable domains of cultural life in Argentina. If this applies to public institutions such as the Teatro Colón, it is even truer of private concert associations like the Mozarteum Argentino, whose president Jeannette Arata de Erize remained in charge from 1955 until her death in 2013. Under the dictatorship of 1976–1983, the Mozarteum concerts were supported by leading economic groups like Techint, whose CEO, Roberto Rocca, was a member of the board of directors, as was the minister of Economy, José Alfredo Martínez de Hoz. Politics, though, were totally absent from the association's life. This apoliticism, derived from the Romantic era, strengthened the cohesion of the upper classes while converging with the alleged apolitical nature of the military regime itself.

En medio de la crisis política casi permanente que va de comienzos de los años setenta a la elección de Raúl Alfonsín en 1983, la música clásica en Buenos Aires fue probablemente uno de los ámbitos más estables de la vida cultural argentina. Eso vale para instituciones públicas como el Teatro Colón, y más aún para asociaciones de conciertos privadas como el Mozarteum Argentino, cuya presidencia ejerció Jeannette Arata de Erize entre 1955 y 2013. Durante la dictadura de 1976–1983, los conciertos del Mozarteum contaron con el apoyo de grupos económicos tales como Techint, cuyo CEO Roberto Rocca era miembro de la comisión directiva, lo mismo que el ministro de economía José Alfredo Martínez de Hoz. Sin embargo, la política estaba totalmente ausente de la vida de la asociación. Este apoliticismo de la música clásica, heredado del Romanticismo, fortalecía la cohesión de las clases dominantes, a la vez que la naturaleza supuestamente apolítica del régimen militar.

Argentina's classical music world in the 1970s and 1980s can be seen as a case of "apolitical politics." This paradoxical expression results from two different meanings of the word *politics*, which are actually but two poles of its polysemy. One, familiar to political scientists, refers to the public arena, dominated by the government, political parties, and the media, and it illustrates the common sense of those years under both dictatorial and democratic rule. Expressions like "art is more powerful than politics," or "I was never involved in politics," uttered by Jeannette Arata de Erize, the permanent president of the Mozarteum Argentino, one of the country's leading concert associations, are meaningful according to this definition. They resonate with the wide assumption that of all topics of potential public interest, the fine arts are among the least political (Fitzgerald 2013).<sup>1</sup>

The other definition of *politics* alludes to social power relationships in general, and implies that the very distinction between the public and the private, hence the identification of the public sphere with politics in the first sense, is essentially political. In Foucault's oeuvre, to name but one key author, it covers techniques

<sup>1</sup> In Jennifer Fitzgerald's interesting study, fewer than 10 percent of the respondents mentioned "museums exhibitions" as a political topic, against 87 percent for "tax cuts." They were all members of a concert association, yet, unfortunately, music was not included as a topic in the survey.

ranging from governmentality (*biopolitique*) to individual “practices of freedom” (Raffin 2017). Current today in the social sciences, and also in popular versions of feminism (“the personal is political”), it helps one to understand claims to apoliticism as political messages. For one thing, the ideological role of apolitical art is clear under dictatorships that delegitimize politics (in the first sense) to pursue their own politics (in the second sense).

In the history of the Mozarteum Argentino, apolitical politics appear at the crossroads of two different traditions. On the one hand, the Proceso de Reorganización Nacional (1976–1983) excluded politics and politicians from Argentina’s public sphere and invoked technical reasons to justify the liberal orientation of the economy (Ansaldi 2006). Under General Jorge Rafael Videla’s leadership, the economy was conceived as a technocratic, autonomous realm, whose growth depended on its isolation from politics (Heredia 2014). This apolitical economic liberalism had been a hallmark of Cold War Latin American dictatorships, most notably that of General Juan Carlos Onganía (1966–1969) in Argentina. It was compatible with illiberal tendencies in other government areas such as the cultural realm. Economic elites backed military governments because they thought that “politics” was a thing to get rid of, often equating it with Peronism, and that the military were the best “technicians” to do that. The pragmatic side of this discourse showed in that the dictatorship named José Martínez de Hoz as minister of the economy, not for his scholarly credentials or practical experience but as the grandson of a founder of the powerful Argentine Rural Society (a body representing the interests of landed elites), as the chief executive officer of the steel corporation Acindar, and as a leader of entrepreneurial associations whose members met at the socially selective Jockey Club and, for that matter, classical music venues (García Heras 2018).

On the other hand, the dominant discourse on apoliticism in music institutions transcends the historical divide of the 1976 coup. The Asociación Wagneriana (founded in 1912), Amigos de la Música (1946), and the Mozarteum Argentino (1952) reflected a much older belief in the apolitical nature of classical music, anchored in nineteenth-century ideas on the alleged universal value of the “musically beautiful” and its humanistic mission (Hanslick [1854] 1957; Dahlhaus 1978). This apolitical politics was closely tied to the belief in the autonomy of art, which is taken here as an ideological discourse rather than as an analytical category (Buch 2018). Despite nuances and tensions resulting from changing political contexts, this ideology was remarkably stable and existed even in radically illiberal societies like Nazi Germany and Vichy France (Kater 1997; Schwartz 2001; Iglesias 2014). This might sound surprising, because the concept of totalitarianism has tended to overshadow the ideological role of claims to autonomy, which might also apply to other practices such as sport or recreational activities. In many twentieth-century dictatorships, the established rules of the musical field even allowed for state-music works with political content to be performed as part of an allegedly autonomous musical life (Buch, Contreras, and Silva 2016). The situations differed mostly in that fascist regimes did not claim to be apolitical as the Argentine military did under Videla. Yet in Germany, for all the general exacerbation of nationalism under Nazi rule, musical institutions largely relied on their traditional functioning and discourse, which was nationalist on their own grounds. After Hitler’s fall, the reconstruction of cultural life in the German Federal Republic was led by the political conviction that to avoid politics altogether was the best way to depart from the Nazi heritage.

During the Cold War, many North Americans associated political freedom with allegedly apolitical movements like abstract expressionism, and the US developed a “politics of apolitical culture” through organizations such as the CIA-funded Congress for Cultural Freedom (Scott-Smith, 2002). On the other side, Marxist states like the German Democratic Republic, the Soviet Union, and Cuba assumed an overt politicization of the arts, including classical music, as an instrument of hegemonic power. This last scenario was never that of Argentina. Among the upper and upper middle classes, classical music had symbolic significance, especially when private and public cultural actors converged at concerts that associations like the Mozarteum organized at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, the country’s most prestigious arts institution (Buch 2003; Benzecry 2011). Despite the cosmopolitan belief in the universal value of “good music,” these associations shared concerns about national patrimony and culture in their promotion of art forms appreciated in other “civilized” (i.e., Western) countries. In this vein, the Mozarteum provided scholarships to young local musicians, organized free concerts, sponsored radio and TV programs, and offered inexpensive concert tickets and special lectures for young patrons. Explaining the creation of *Música para la Juventud* (Music for the Young), Arata de Erize declared in her memoirs: “We were perfectly aware of the fact that many young people had little or no access to the best music. The Colón Theater still has an aura of *élite*, intimidating for those who do not belong to the higher level of society” (Arata de Erize and Beccacece 2003, 226). These activities could be depicted as contributions to the nation’s social cohesion

without contradicting the apolitical nature of art, since under this scenario, an essential part of the nation's life lay outside the realm of politics.

The idea that classical music is apolitical was a widely shared belief throughout the twentieth century. In that respect, Peronism was *not* an exception. Many disagreed, equating the first Peronist government's (1946–1955) use of the Teatro Colón for political gatherings to a threat to high culture (Matamoro 1972; Fernández Walker 2015). A case in point was the 1948 union meeting during which the march “Los gráficos peronistas,” forerunner of “La marcha peronista,” was first publicly performed in the presence of Eva Perón (Adamovsky and Buch 2016). Yet, despite its rants against the Teatro Colón as the “temple of the oligarchy,” Peronism was less interested in dismantling high culture than it was in enlarging the elegant theater's audience through cheaper prices and pedagogical programs for “the people,” following Evita's dictum that the poor should “live like the rich” (Ballent 2010).

A brief exception was the chaotic tenure of the Colón director Bruno Jacovella, appointed in July 1973, months after Peronist Héctor Cámpora's victory in the general election. Waving the ideological flag “nacionalizar el Colón” (nationalize the Colón), Jacovella announced a radical change in the “orientation and attitude” of the theater, including the immediate canceling of contracts with foreign singers, a systematic priority given to Argentine works, and the performance of Spanish versions of already scheduled operas. This he described as part of a “heroic” will to “liberate” the fatherland, and to make Argentina “great with justice and creative with authenticity.”<sup>2</sup> To achieve this ambitious program, Jacovella, a “folklorist” anthropologist without experience in operatic institutions, shared responsibilities with artistic director Luis Zubillaga, an avant-garde composer, and other artists with few credentials in the Colón's traditional circles.

Jacovella's discourse was in tune with the left-wing leanings of Cámpora's brief presidency, which abruptly ended ten days after Jacovella's designation (Csipka 2013). This left him without official backing in the face of a heated campaign unleashed by former directors of the theater, most of the press, and conservative members of the audience who noisily booed him during a performance of *Rigoletto*. In *Clarín*, the critic Jorge D'Urbano explained the “true sense” of “artistic nationalism,” arguing that it could not result from “a few governmental measures or a couple of magic formulas” (D'Urbano 1973). *La Prensa* held “xenophobia and populism” responsible for “a terrible conception of the fatherland, and a deep contempt for the people who inhabit it.”<sup>3</sup> While other anti-Peronist critics attacked Jacovella's “chauvinism and demagoguery,” the Peronist newspaper *Mayoría* denounced a “conspiracy of money” behind the overthrow, overtly blaming “coteries of dubious exclusivist tone (Wagneriana, Mozarteum, Amigos de la Música)” (Camps 1973; Cortés Paz 1973; Kandell 1973; Clarke 2009).

After Jacovella's resignation, the last period of Peronist rule was a relative return to normalcy. The beginning of Juan Domingo Perón's third presidency was celebrated by a gala held in the Colón on October 12, 1973, where Perón was accompanied by his wife and vice president María Estela Martínez de Perón and by his private secretary and minister José López Rega. The program showed that the nationalist “liberation” of the theater was already passé, with the national anthem, Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*, and a spontaneous “Marcha peronista.” *La Nación* commented: “This show, which gave back to our city's coliseum the brilliance and sight of times gone by, was a return to a tradition that had recently fallen into oblivion.”<sup>4</sup>

Compared with the constant turmoil of the Peronist democratic interregnum, the history of the Teatro Colón during the new dictatorship that started on March 24, 1976, was one of institutional stability and high artistic standards, partly thanks to the collaboration with the Mozarteum Argentino and other private entities. Indeed, the Mozarteum's series of concerts at the Colón, featuring the most prestigious performers, was by itself an emblem of the fertility of the public/private alliance on behalf of a universalist cultural heritage, seen as sign of Argentina's belonging to the “civilized world.” In the theater, the authoritarian rule exerted by its director, Air Force officer comodoro Guillermo Gallacher, combined with the artistic leadership of Enzo Valenti Ferro, a music critic who had previously run it under the dictatorships of Onganía and Alejandro Agustín Lanusse. “Great divos [*sic*], great conductors, great authors, great dancers and great soloists,” boasted Gallacher about his tenure when he resigned awkwardly in the midst of the Malvinas/Falklands War. On the same occasion, he denounced the “serious problem” of “foreign artists who often get exaggerated and distorted information about our reality.”<sup>5</sup> A high point of the period was the visit, organized

<sup>2</sup> “Teatro Colón,” *La Razón*, July 2, 1972.

<sup>3</sup> “Plan contra la cultura musical,” *La Prensa*, August 4, 1973.

<sup>4</sup> “La función de gala en el teatro Colón,” *La Nación*, October 13, 1973.

<sup>5</sup> Guillermo Gallacher, interview, *Clarín*, May 1982.

in 1979 by the Mozarteum, of famous Argentine composer Alberto Ginastera, who by then was living in Switzerland, and who attended a concert of his music at the Colón and met privately in the Casa Rosada with General Videla. All this confirmed the Colón's traditional status as Argentina's *Gran Teatro*—the title of a 1979 novel by Manuel Mujica Lainez dedicated to Jeannette Arata de Erize, Ginastera, and choreographer Oscar Araiz—where economic and political elites could perform together the fiction of a nation united by the worship of high culture (Buch 2003).

During the Proceso, the musical and the liberal genealogies of autonomy converged, as Martínez de Hoz doubled as both economy minister and secretary of the Comisión Directiva (Board of Directors) of the Mozarteum Argentino. Far from being an anecdote, this fact throws light on the complex sociological dynamics involving the civilians and the military who ran or backed the regime. Civilians aligned with the liberal discourse and cosmopolitan pretensions of the country's elites could rely on a dense network of social relations and cultural activities that owed nothing to its alliance with the military. While officers close to Videla and Martínez de Hoz understood the political benefit that such socializing with the elite brought to their "reorganizing" projects, others, like Admiral Emilio Massera (who prided himself on his interest in popular culture) could resent them as a further sign of their ideological differences with the "liberal" axis of the regime (Novaro and Palermo 2003; Canelo 2008). The Proceso's fragile inner cohesion partly depended on these cultural nuances, even though what happened in theaters and concert halls in ordinary circumstances had no impact on political events.

Overall, independently of the government, the dictatorship was a strong period for classical music in Argentina. While the Mozarteum, Amigos de la Música, and Wagneriana all maintained high international standards, the popular Festivales Musicales de Buenos Aires started in 1976. Other important classical music societies were also founded during this period, such as the Argentine branch of the International Wagner Society (1978), the Fundación Teatro Colón (1978), the Fundación San Telmo (1979), the Fundación Música de Cámara (1982), the Academia Bach de Buenos Aires (1983), the Estudio Coral de Buenos Aires (1981), and the Orquesta de Cámara Banco Mayo (1982) (Valenti Ferro 1992). This did not enrich the dictatorship's record as something meant to offset state terrorism and other atrocities and failures, if for no other reason than it did not directly result from the military's cultural policies. Rather, the destruction of other areas of the cultural field through censorship and persecution, coupled with the propaganda on the moral virtues of apolitical attitudes and liberalism, indirectly strengthened the role of classical music institutions on the nation's cultural scene.

This put classical music in a singular position compared to other areas of artistic and literary production. The dictatorship was very far from being a cultural desert, as a glimpse into the cultural offering in concert halls, theaters, and cinemas in Buenos Aires suffices to show. Even if a systematic survey is still lacking, there is good evidence that reading, watching movies, and attending artistic manifestations—concerts among others—were common ways, at least for the urban middle and upper-middle classes, to keep on living while eschewing the horrors and platitudes of the time. Places such as the Goethe Institut or—more surprisingly, given its dependence on the state—the Teatro San Martín were seen as "islands," places at a remove from the dictatorship's discourse, that to some extent favored critical thinking (Sarlo 1998; Vezzetti 2002; Buch 2003 and 2016; Vallejos 2015; Verzero 2015). While the folklore Festival de Cosquín went on (Patiño Mayer 2015), in 1977 the government declared Día Nacional del Tango on December 11, the birthday of Carlos Gardel and Julio de Caro. Overall, the dictatorship did have an active cultural and educational policy, as well as a number of "organic intellectuals" (Rodríguez 2010; Vicente 2015; Zysman 2016).

Still, adding to the many who were killed or forced into exile, most artists and intellectuals were unsympathetic to the regime and/or unwilling to collaborate. The repression of both creators and works was a cruel reality that left few areas untouched (Avellaneda 1986; Invernizzi and Gociol 2003). The classical pianist and leftist Peronist Miguel Angel Estrella, abducted in Uruguay in December 1977 through the Plan Cóndor, became a cause célèbre thanks to the international campaign of solidarity that culminated in his liberation and exile in Paris in 1980 (Hess 2015; Buch and Fléchet 2017). Popular music was particularly exposed to state violence. While many folklorists, including Horacio Guarany, Mercedes Sosa, and Atahualpa Yupanqui, were blacklisted from public diffusion,<sup>6</sup> rock music gave young people a special sense of cultural

<sup>6</sup> See "Cantables cuyas letras se consideran no aptas para ser difundidas por los servicios de radiodifusión. COMFER – Presidencia de la Nación," <http://www.comfer.gov.ar>, (accessed August 17, 2009); and "Personas calificadas con fórmula 4," 1979, <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/listasnegras.pdf> (accessed November 3, 2019). The first document is not available anymore, since the COMFER's online archives were not transferred to the website of its successor, the ENACOM, after its suppression in 2016 by the Macri administration.

belonging, quite opposite of the regime's expectations (Vila 1987; Pujol 2005; Favoretto 2014; Manzano 2014; Di Cione 2015; Delgado 2015). In comparison, classical music did not favor dissent, especially since it was already part of the sociological habitus of many of the military's civilian allies, whose active presence in institutions like the Mozarteum was no coincidence.

On the other hand, this was not due to the military being an elite society of sophisticated music lovers—far from it. Uniforms were scarce in the Mozarteum's gatherings. Rather, the privilege of classical institutions like the Colón, or the backing of the state for cultural diplomacy ventures such as the Mozarteum's tours of foreign performers, were based on the commonsense notion that classical music was Music itself, with a capital letter. The development of classical music during the Proceso largely resulted from a previous cultural dynamic that did not end in 1983 with the return of democracy. If anything, the progressive revelation of the violations of human rights gave an increasingly defensive tone to claims of apoliticism raised by people who had hailed the seizure of power by the military, yet could not totally shut their eyes and ears to the growing international protests led by the Madres de Plaza de Mayo and other human rights associations. This gives us yet another reason for studying continuities in Argentina's culture and politics before and after the 1976 coup (Franco 2012; Sheinin 2012; Carassai 2013).

Classical music was arguably one of the most stable practices in Argentine culture across political upheaval in the late twentieth century. Given that most arts heavily rely on novelty, in contrast to classical music, whose core is a canonic repertoire dominated by nineteenth-century composers, it is hard to see other artistic practices that matched this stability; and this includes, despite the traditionalists' received wisdom about "roots," all genres of popular music. Pertinent comparisons, as far as rituals are concerned, might be found perhaps in religious practices. However, the evolving political role of the Catholic Church sharply differed from the apolitical, ahistorical credo of classical music institutions. Indeed, in terms of cultural stability the most appropriate comparisons in Argentine modern history might well be gastronomy and football.

### On Private and Public Philanthropy

The Mozarteum Argentino was founded in 1952. Its first president was a former director of Teatro Colón, Cirilo Grassi Díaz, accompanied by musicians and musicologists fond of studying and performing Mozart.<sup>7</sup> In 1955, Grassi Díaz handed over the presidency to the young Jeannette Arata de Erize (1922–2013), who made concerts the core of the association's activity. In a few years, Arata de Erize put the Mozarteum on the front line of Argentine art institutions. The 1965 tour by Karl Böhm and the Vienna Philharmonic, she noted, represented the organization's "conquest of maturity" (Arata de Erize and Beccacece 2003, 215).<sup>8</sup>

The Mozarteum challenged the Asociación Wagneriana and Amigos de la Música, led by Linda Rautenstrauch-Bracht and Leonor Hirsch, for Argentine cultural leadership. At the risk of inspiring excessively optimistic views on gender discrimination in the cultural field (Franze 1972), the crucial role of these three women in the history of concert life in Buenos Aires is a milestone of the history of gender relations in Argentina. Though cultural philanthropy was traditionally a feminine domain, Arata de Erize was not a wealthy patron in the manner of Princesse de Polignac in Paris, Catherine Sprague Coolidge in the United States, or Leonor Hirsch in Buenos Aires, for that matter (Chimènes 2004; Oja 1997). Rather, she pioneered in Argentina the strategy of asking wealthy people and companies for sponsorship instead of seeking the support of the state—this despite her affinities for the Revolución Libertadora that ousted Perón in 1955. Eventually, she developed an unmatched skill for social networking in the name of music (McCarthy 1984; Gautier 2015; Boistel 2012).

Most of the support she obtained came from personal contacts, as described in her memoirs:

Once, many years ago, an important Argentine businessman told me that he would have loved to come to our latest party. He was used to being invited to exclusive gatherings and had been surprised at not receiving the Mozarteum's invitation. Many of his friends, who gave us their economic support, had told him he had missed an exceptional party. He asked me: "What must be done in order to be taken into account by the Mozarteum?" I didn't miss the opportunity and told him with

<sup>7</sup> Project signed by Mariano Drago, Jorge D'Urbano, Juan Pedro Franze, Erwin Leuchter, Carlos Pessina and Carlos Suffern, submitted by the Mozarteum Argentino's Preparatory Commission to the Mozarteum Salzburg, March 1952, original reproduced in <http://mozarteumargentino.org/mozarteum/> (accessed June 2, 2019).

<sup>8</sup> See "Jeanette Arata de Erize, mecenas y difusora cultural," Academia Nacional de Bellas Artes, YouTube video, 9:16, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FP4au0t7MyU>.

my best smile: “It’s very simple. You must become a sponsor.” From then on, he became an enthusiastic follower of our organization. (Arata de Erize and Beccacece 2003, 214)

Besides sponsorship for specific events, philanthropy defined a special category of members, the Mozarteum’s *socios protectores* (protector members), who paid a premium, and were rewarded with better seats and their names in a *tableau d’honneur*.<sup>9</sup> The 1978 list of nearly five hundred such protector members includes the well-known family names of Argentine elites Baron Supervielle, Beccar Varela, Blaquier, Braun Menéndez, Bullrich, Campos Menéndez, Fortabat, Martínez de Hoz, Montero Ruiz, Ramos Mejía, and Rocca, among others. Also, the appearance on that list of anti-Peronist icon Admiral Isaac Rojas was a hint of the predominant political orientation of the Mozarteum’s membership. The international companies Alitalia, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, Eveready, IKA Renault, and Union Carbide were also represented. For a local company, *socio protector* status was not the only way to contribute. Techint, the powerful holding company of the Rocca family, does not appear in the 1978 list of protectors though several members of the family are present; it does appear in the 1982 list, suggesting perhaps a minor adjustment of strategy.

The Rocca family, whose first head in Argentina, Agostino, had left Italy in 1945 after years of working with the Fascist government, became a long-term Mozarteum supporter. Thanks to the family’s influence in the Fondazione Culturale Coliseum, the Roccas took special care of touring Italian musicians, such as the ensemble I Musici (1975), in partnership with the Italian embassy and the Instituto Cultural Italiano. Here as elsewhere, personal influence and corporate prestige converged with international cultural affiliations and diplomatic contacts to advance the Mozarteum’s networking. In a similar vein, the fact that Jeannette Arata de Erize and her husband, Francisco Erize, a lawyer and polo player, were of French descent eased Mozarteum contacts with the French embassy in 1980 when the Orchestre de Paris came to Argentina, conducted by Argentine-born Daniel Barenboim.

This system of cultural philanthropy allowed for the participation of public institutions, provided they were willing to comply with the same rules as private corporations. As in other areas, the pattern of Mozarteum sponsorships through the 1970s shows no immediate trace of the 1976 coup and its consequences. The Banco Ciudad de Buenos Aires sponsored the free concert cycle *Conciertos del Mediodía* from 1975 through 1977 despite dramatic changes in the city’s government. It was succeeded in 1978 by Banco de la Nación, which remained a sponsor until 1984, joined that year by Alpargatas, a private company, and by SEGBA, a public electricity company. In 1985, the role was taken over by the *Clarín* newspaper and the Gillette Foundation. The combination of private/public corporate sponsorship favored the continuity of classical music culture over violent political divides. Under the dictatorship, the logos of Aerolíneas Argentinas, Agua y Energía Eléctrica, Banco de la Nación Argentina, Banco de la Provincia de Buenos Aires, Gas del Estado, and Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales (YPF) in the concert programs showed the participation of the state in artistic events, not as a governmental sponsor but as an entrepreneur, through public companies run by the military or by their friends. This combined with private funding from Techint, Bunge & Born, Banco Francés, Renault, Société Générale, IBM, Gillette, and Shell that contributed to the cultural diplomacy of the French and Argentine governments, namely to support the 1980 Argentine tour of the Orchestre de Paris (Buch 2016).

In 1980, Martínez de Hoz, the most powerful civilian minister of the dictatorship, was on the Mozarteum board. Austrian ambassador Gerhard Gmoser served as honorary president, an homage to the Mozarteum of Salzburg. The vice president was Roberto Rocca, the son of Agostino, arguably Argentina’s most powerful businessman and a beneficiary of ties to the military government (Paulón 2014; Muleiro 2012; Klor, Saiegh, and Satyanath 2020). The board also included Eduardo Oxenford, the CEO of Alpargatas, president of the Unión Industrial Argentina, and soon-to-be minister of industry; Ricardo Grüneisen, an influential oil entrepreneur, philanthropist, and friend of Martínez de Hoz; Arturo Bullrich, an auctioneer and turf amateur (Arteaga 2008); Haydée de Montero Ruiz, the wife of a mayor of Buenos Aires under a previous dictatorship (1971–1973); and Horacio García Belsunce, a lawyer and academic and a controversial ideologue of the regime (Vicente 2015).

There were no musicians among these thirty-five people, except artistic director Antonio Pini, and perhaps in a certain way Raquel Aguirre de Castro, widow of composer Juan José Castro. There was no military either, suggesting that the alliance between the civil and the military wings of the regime, solidly anchored in anti-Communism, anti-Peronism, Catholicism, and conservatism, was not based in shared tastes and culture. In this context, through the 1970s, social cohesion and uniformity of thought were strong in the Mozarteum’s

<sup>9</sup> Mozarteum Argentino, *Temporada 1980 – I* (Buenos Aires, 1980): [4].

inner circles and in the philanthropic image economic elites cultivated for themselves. Horacio García Belsunce later evoked the meetings of the board during those years:

The meetings were always held in Jeannette's house, in the splendid apartment she had in Rodríguez Peña Street. Two apartments put together, in fact, so that receptions were magnificent. ... There was no talking about politics. In a coterie like the Mozarteum, everything had to be harmonious. Never a dissident voice. Why? Because, if there was some political issue to deal with, to discuss, we left it in Jeannette's hands, for her to do it. And if she did, she did so in a most discreet way. She wouldn't bring a polemic subject or an issue to the Mozarteum. ... If there was ever an internal disagreement, she solved it silently with the dissenter; she did not debate such issues. I don't remember a single dispute during the meetings of the Mozarteum.<sup>10</sup>

Another member of the board concurs: "In our meetings politics was never a topic."<sup>11</sup>

### Playing "the Best Music in the World"

The high international standards of Mozarteum Argentino during the 1970s and later are evident in the *Memorias*, the periodic reports sent to members.<sup>12</sup> Composers and performers were generally first-rate, worthy of a European capital or of a large North American city. In 1975 alone, the Mozarteum hosted the Cleveland Orchestra, conducted by Lorin Maazel; the Baroque ensemble I Musici; the German ensemble Cappella Coloniensis, led by Günther Wich; and the British Deller Consort, among others. It also organized recitals by the Czech-American pianist Rudolf Firkusny, the Italian violinist Uto Ughi, the American cellist Leonard Rose, and by "our Miguel Angel Estrella," according to the *Memoria*, which thus incidentally pointed out that Argentine musicians were exceptional.<sup>13</sup> In 1978, the annual report noted visits by the Tonhalle Orchester Zürich led by Gerd Albrecht, France's Ballet Théâtre Contemporain, I Musici again, the Beaux Arts Trio, pianist Ralph Votapek, singer Jessye Norman, and, most spectacularly, the New York Philharmonic conducted by Zubin Mehta.<sup>14</sup>

Reports sometimes included the programs of forthcoming concerts. In its first appearance at the Teatro Coliseo, on July 21, 1976, the Cuarteto Beethoven de Roma played Mozart and Brahms together with Mahler's *Quartettsatz*; a week later, Brahms and Schumann featured in its second appearance.<sup>15</sup> In 1979, for the first concert at the Teatro Colón by the Filarmónica de las Américas under Luis Herrera de la Fuente, the program included Beethoven's Seventh Symphony and Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony. The same year, the Johann Strauss Orchestra played waltzes and polkas by Josef and Johann Strauss.<sup>16</sup> According to Jeannette Arata de Erize, "We tried to offer the Argentines the best music in the world. Quality was our choice criterion. But we not only wanted an audience, we also looked forward to becoming an instrument of education, bringing about connections between artists and promoting creation. The Mozarteum has always desired to serve as a bridge for individuals and cultures to communicate" (Arata de Erize and Beccacece 2003, 207).

Written at the turn of the century in an era of fashionable multiculturalism, this eulogy to the "communication of cultures" is hard to match with the Mozarteum's record in the years covered by this study. Performances of European musicians in Buenos Aires were hardly multicultural encounters, if one believes the traditional depiction of Argentines as Europeans, which resonated with classical musical audiences. Also, if creation means composition, it was marginal in its activities, which were dedicated to the classical repertoire and rarely included contemporary music, be it "serious" or popular. One concert by the jazz-classical vocal ensemble the Swingle Singers in 1967, one by star jazz composer Duke Ellington in 1968, and one by jazz vibraphonist Lionel Hampton in 1979 hardly balance the impression that for the Mozarteum "the best music in the world" was the classical music of the past, and nothing else. This belief was common among classical music lovers in different countries, especially in the late seventies, but it was not often put forward as in Arata de Erize's memoir. In short, the menu at the concerts of the Mozarteum was "univore" through and through (Peterson and Kern 1996). That being said, within that framework the programs did

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Horacio García Belsunce, Buenos Aires, October 30, 2014.

<sup>11</sup> Interview with Georg Porak, Buenos Aires, October 29, 2014.

<sup>12</sup> The *Memorias* were consulted at the archive of the Mozarteum Argentino, thanks to Silvia Llanos and Gisela Timmermann.

<sup>13</sup> Mozarteum Argentino, *Memoria 1975* (Buenos Aires, 1975): [4–5]. The Mozarteum's concerts are listed (without the programs) in Arata de Erize and Beccacece 2003, 161–185.

<sup>14</sup> Mozarteum Argentino, *Memoria 1978* (Buenos Aires, 1978): [3].

<sup>15</sup> Mozarteum Argentino, *Temporada 1976 – II*: [3].

<sup>16</sup> Mozarteum Argentino, *Temporada 1979 – IV*: [3].

regularly offer the Argentines high-quality performances, measuring up to the standards of the classical music genre.

For the most part, apolitical politics is apparent in the absence of societal context in the *Memorias*. This differed from equivalent reports in the corporate world, which regularly included relevant information on the current political situation. At the end of 1975, for instance, the board of Dalmine-Siderca, a steel company owned by Techint Corporation, fulminated against the Peronist government's "inefficiency and lack of coordination, of continuity, and of authority." It would soon hail the new military government with the same conviction and commitment.<sup>17</sup> It is true that, while comments on economic perspectives were meant to explain to stakeholders what the company did with their money in order to make them richer, pure altruism was supposed to be the main motivation of members of a nonprofit organization such as the Mozarteum. The December 1975 *Memoria* distributed prior to the March 1976 coup, referring to the rapidly declining economy and the exponentially rising inflation, stated: "The well-known evolution of the economic-financial situation in 1975 has made it extraordinarily difficult to finance the planned season, with contracts for all artists and ensembles already signed. This notwithstanding, the concert program was delivered, and all commitments fulfilled, by asking members for an adjustment of their participation fee that was as low as possible, in light of increasing currency devaluations."<sup>18</sup>

The *Memoria* abandoned its usual discretion by pointing to the disorder unleashed by the Peronist government. This is a clear allusion to the Rodrigazo, the brutal currency devaluation of June 4, 1975, announced by Celestino Rodrigo, the minister of economy during President Isabel Perón's administration. The 150 percent devaluation, followed by a 30 percent per month inflation rate, prompted enormous economic uncertainty. No less important were the political consequences, which led in part to the coup of March 24, 1976. The Mozarteum felt the economic burden on US dollar contracts with its visiting artists; but beyond this practical aspect, the *Memoria* of that year abandoned its usual discretion, mentioning the disorder unleashed by the Peronist government.

By contrast, nothing of the sort appears in the *Memorias* for the years 1976 and beyond—not even when the nominal fees for the regular members rose to figures in pesos with an impressive number of zeros. True, the *Memoria 1978* also alludes to financial issues at the end of a year with a 170 percent inflation rate. But instead of pointing out a concrete situation, as the 1975 report did, it evokes them as a normal aspect of cultural ventures:

Despite the financial difficulties that always go with the organization of important cultural events, our institution was able to carry out a musical season of high artistic level, consisting basically in two subscription series of twelve concerts each, and one of eight concerts at the new San Isidro branch (*filial*), whose opening was an instant success. That was possible thanks to the subscription fees paid by our members, and to the generous support and donations from individuals and companies.<sup>19</sup>

It is hardly surprising that the Mozarteum avoided criticizing the politics of Martínez de Hoz, a government minister on its board. But this comment amounted to a declaration of principles. It asserted the disinterested, nonprofit character of artistic endeavors, stressed the collective strength of an association to organize them, and underlined the virtues of private philanthropy to carry them out, with no funding or intervention from the state. This was a reminder of how the Mozarteum Argentino had functioned since 1955; during the dictatorship, it did not benefit from government subsidies, except for a long-standing partnership with the Teatro Colón, which in 1977 offered 550 seats for the members. In the context of 1978 Argentina, though, it also illustrated the liberal principle of the subsidiarity of the state, which, in harmony with Martínez de Hoz's policies, meant that culture would be primarily funded by the private sector (Rodríguez 2015).

### Territories of Classical Music in Peace and War

The *Memoria 1978* mentions the opening of a branch in San Isidro, an upper-class suburb of Buenos Aires. This was one of the several subsidiaries (*filiales*) the Mozarteum founded between 1978 and 1983, spectacularly increasing its presence beyond Buenos Aires and across the country. In Tandil, the

<sup>17</sup> Dalmine-Siderca (Grupo Techint), *Memoria y balance general, 1974–1975*, quoted in Schorr 2014.

<sup>18</sup> Mozarteum Argentino, *Memoria 1975* (Buenos Aires, 1975): [3].

<sup>19</sup> Mozarteum Argentino, *Memoria 1978* (Buenos Aires, 1978): [3].



municipal government backed the initiative; the enthusiastic city director of culture, Daniel Pérez, a man of conservative and right-wing Catholic background, had been in the job before the 1976 coup (Larsen 2013).<sup>20</sup> More frequently, local Mozarteum branches were purely private initiatives, like that of “a qualified group of citizens of the city of Tucumán” mentioned in the *Memoria 1981* (Arata de Erize and Beccacece 2003, 87–94).<sup>21</sup> The businessman and music critic José Mario Carrer and philanthropists Raquel and Ramiro Peñalba launched the Salta branch; Ramiro Peñalba, a journalist, had been the municipal director of culture under Lanusse’s dictatorship. These cases reflect a networking pattern whose main local actors were often music lovers with some public experience and notoriety, yet not strongly marked by partisan politics. Despite some setbacks, the strategy proved to be efficient in the long run: by 2003 the Mozarteum had eight local branches, of which only that of Bahía Blanca had been founded after 1984 (Arata de Erize and Beccacece 2003, 200–201).

Besides its growing influence in the inland provinces, the Mozarteum also increased its activities in neighboring countries, most of which were also under military rule. It sponsored a pioneering Latin American tour in 1974 by the Johann Strauss Orchestra, as well as three concerts by the Orchestre de Paris in Brazil in 1980. In 1981, the Mozarteum promoted concerts by the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra in São Paulo; Les Percussions de Strasbourg in several cities in Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay; and the Chicago Symphony Quartet in Asunción.<sup>22</sup> The same year, a Mozarteum Brasileiro was created in São Paulo under the supervision of the Mozarteum Argentino. In 1982, under the auspices of the Mozarteum, the New York Philharmonic toured Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Montevideo, Santiago, and Quito.<sup>23</sup> By 1983, Bogotá and Caracas were on another New York Philharmonic tour. The philanthropists Gustavo and Patty Cisneros, friends of former Venezuelan president Carlos Andrés Pérez, founded a Mozarteum Venezuela.

This international reach was to persist in the following years. In 1985, the Vienna Philharmonic toured Buenos Aires, São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, and Caracas, inspiring this comment in *La Prensa*: “To bring musicians—and all that comes with them—is not an easy task. It requires planning, means, know-how, effort and, more than anything, international prestige. While the country as a whole tries to recover from its great loss in that respect, that of the Mozarteum is intact. ... Here is an example to imitate.”<sup>24</sup> By that time, in fact, contrary to the journalist’s assessment, Argentina’s international prestige was quite high again, mostly thanks to the human rights movement and to President Raúl Alfonsín’s policies in that field, especially the Juicio a las Juntas, the trial and sentencing of the regime’s top commanders (Sikkink 2008). But significantly, given that annual reports never included press reviews, this article is quoted in the *Memoria 1985*, thus suggesting that Jeannette Arata de Erize and her team believed in the association’s exemplarity for the country as a whole. Indeed, the domestic and international prestige of the Mozarteum Argentino for years arguably constituted, on its own grounds, a kind of cultural diplomacy, one whose face was much more gentle and attractive than that of the military who ran the official diplomacy under the dictatorship (Gienow-Hecht 2012).

This implied a kind of geopolitical awareness. Jeannette Arata de Erize’s 2003 narrative, starting in 1952 and warmly focused on anecdotes of befriending guest musicians, follows the apolitical imprint of the annual *Memorias*. An exception is her discussion of the Malvinas War:

As I have mentioned before, one of the Mozarteum’s main concerns has always been to inspire trust and credibility in artists and impresarios. This has enabled us to overcome difficult situations, such as the Malvinas War. The conflict broke out in 1982, a few days before the Mozarteum’s season started. We were going to present first the Stuttgart Ballet directed by Marcia Haydée. Ballets are complex spectacles due to the number of members in the group, the stage materials and the costumes that had to be moved. We feared that the international circumstances would hinder the performance. It wasn’t so. Art was more powerful than politics and the Stuttgart Ballet came accompanied, besides, by the duke of Würtemberg and chancellor [sic] Lothar Späth. (Arata de Erize and Beccacece 2013, 230)

<sup>20</sup> Mozarteum Argentino, *Memoria 1981* (Buenos Aires, 1981): [6].

<sup>21</sup> Mozarteum Argentino, *Memoria 1981* (Buenos Aires, 1981): [6].

<sup>22</sup> Mozarteum Argentino, *Memoria 1981*: [9].

<sup>23</sup> Mozarteum Argentino, *Memoria 1982*: [9].

<sup>24</sup> *La Prensa*, September 26, 1985, quoted in Mozarteum Argentino, *Memoria 1985* (Buenos Aires, 1985): [9]. “Traer músicos —y todo lo que con ello viene— no es tarea sencilla. Requiere planificación, medios, conocimientos, esfuerzo y sobretodo prestigio internacional. Cuando el país todo, trata de recuperar lo mucho que ha perdido en ese terreno, el Mozarteum mantiene incommovible el suyo. (...) He aquí un ejemplo para imitar.”

In 1982, the war had merited no comment in the annual *Memoria*.<sup>25</sup> This silence can hardly be read as a statement on the war itself. Like many other musicians and musical organizations, the Mozarteum contributed to the war effort with a benefit concert for the Fondo Patriótico Islas Malvinas, without showing any special enthusiasm (Buch and Juárez 2019). The 2003 narrative presents the Malvinas War less as a patriotic cause than as a test for the autonomy of musical institutions in a form of warfare pitting art against politics. And contrary to Argentina's military defeat, the story is that of a victory: Art was more powerful than politics.

The Stuttgart Ballet performing in Buenos Aires during the war showed the trust and confidence inspired by the Mozarteum in artists and impresarios, and also an evaluation of the financial and legal consequences of a possible cancellation. For Lothar Späth, the conservative minister president of Baden-Württemberg, and Carl, Duke of Württemberg, accompanying the ballet on its tour might have reflected their opposition to the West German Social Democratic chancellor Helmut Schmidt, who had sided with the United Kingdom (Pedrosa 2014). Seen from Argentina, the visit of the Stuttgart Ballet reduced the international isolation of the country that followed the military occupation of the islands on April 2, 1982; seen from Germany, it raised the question of whether responding to the invitation of an Argentine institution meant backing the Argentine government.

In fact, traveling to Argentina had been a moral dilemma for artists, not so much in the face of the Malvinas War as for their unwillingness to be seen collaborating with a regime guilty of systematic violations of human rights, denounced by the international press, NGOs, and governments across the world. This was surely what Comodoro Gallacher had in mind when he spoke about foreign artists getting “exaggerated and distorted information about our reality.” Controversies surrounding the Tonhalle Orchestra Zürich in 1978 and the Orchestre de Paris in 1980, both invited by the Mozarteum, were cases in point. The directors of the Swiss orchestra were severely criticized at home by the press and by Social-Democratic politicians for legitimizing the regime through its presence in Buenos Aires. The visit of the French orchestra unleashed a serious diplomatic incident due to the solidarity of some French musicians with persecuted Argentinian artists and the Madres de Plaza de Mayo. The tour ended with a momentous performance of Mahler's Fifth Symphony in the Teatro Colón, during which the audience gave a standing ovation to foreign artists that government officials had denounced as part of the “anti-Argentine campaign,” a major topic of the regime's propaganda (Buch 2016).

In 2011, two years before her death, Jeannette Arata de Erize acknowledged that, “Not having depended on any government over the years allowed us to survive even in moments as difficult as the dictatorship, when many musicians didn't want to come for fear of appearing as supports of a de facto government. Fortunately, others understood that by coming they might offer spiritual nourishment [*alimento espiritual*] in hard times.”<sup>26</sup> Given the expansion of the Mozarteum during the dictatorship, one might wonder what its president meant by “survive.” At that time, the pianist Miguel Angel Estrella had faced a more poignant “survival” threat after his abduction in Montevideo in December 1977. The Mozarteum had twice awarded him fellowships to study in Europe, and the *Memoria* 1975 called him “our Miguel Angel Estrella.” He was freed in February 1980 thanks to an international campaign led by Yehudi Menuhin, Nadia Boulanger, Henri Dutilleux, and Yves Hagenauer, with backing by classical musicians and music lovers around the world—an impressive list that included Barenboim, Martha Argerich, Zubin Mehta, Mstislav Rostropovich, Nikita Magaloff, and Olivier Messiaen, all invited at one time or another to Buenos Aires by the Mozarteum. The list did not include any member of the Mozarteum, though, nor other people living in Argentina, for that matter. There is no evidence that Mozarteum members ever raised the detention of Estrella. Music critic Juan Pablo Bardín wrote instead that the campaign on behalf of Estrella was led by “French useful idiots,” adding, in reference to the pianist's exile in Paris and to exiles in general: “Might these nations have the antibodies needed to stop them; they do us the favor of not having to neutralize them in our country, where they can't but complicate our life” (Bardín 1980, 7).<sup>27</sup> Beyond Bardín's sinister insinuations, this lack of solidarity illustrates in a most dramatic way the possible implications, under authoritarian regimes, of the principle that art and politics should remain separate at all costs.

Jeannette Arata de Erize's late statement on survival during the dictatorship bore witness to her personal evolution since the time when a preeminent minister of the regime was one of her most noted collaborators

<sup>25</sup> Mozarteum Argentino, *Memoria 1982* (Buenos Aires, 1982): [3].

<sup>26</sup> Interview, 2011, quoted in “Murió Jeannette Arata de Erize, artífice del Mozarteum Argentino,” *La Nación*, August 8, 2013.

<sup>27</sup> “Quizá tengan esas naciones los anticuerpos necesarios para contrarrestarlos; entre tanto, nos hacen el favor de no tener que neutralizarlos en nuestro país, donde sólo pueden complicarnos la vida.”

and the institution she ran blossomed all over the country. It suggested that the worst moment of the history of Argentina had also been, in a certain way, the worst moment in the history of the Mozarteum Argentino. The statement was exceptional, and also empirically unsound. Yet its philosophical basis was still the belief in the apolitical nature of music. In other words, according to her later view, in the years of the Proceso de Reorganización Nacional art had *almost* lost its battle against politics.

### On Traveling in Music

As an “instrument of education,” the Mozarteum offered valuable cultural resources to people who were more diverse, sociologically and culturally, than the board of directors and the protector members. It is safe to assume that the regular members were statistically less wealthy than the protector members and that overall the two categories accounted for little more than 20 percent of the people who could actually attend a concert at the Teatro Colón, with its 2,400 seats. Even if overall members were dominant in the orchestra seats, opening up to the general public left room for quite different backgrounds and musical experiences, including those of people with little or no connection with the philanthropic circles of the upper classes.

Now, it is likely that, in the over-politicized context of Argentina in the 1970s, the ethical values of cosmopolitan “high culture” helped to distinguish conservative elites from political and artistic revolutionaries. When listening to Mozart in the Teatro Colón, a Mozarteum member could not but imagine a *guerrillero*, a trade unionist, a rocker, an avant-garde artist as a radical other. Yet, this social motivation for going to the concerts was unlikely to be a conscious one, in tune with Pierre Bourdieu’s analysis of the belief in the Kantian “disinterestedness” of aesthetic experience as a subjective veil on strategies of distinction (Bourdieu 1979). Instead, the subjective realities of aesthetic pleasure, and the belief in the necessity of specific spaces to access it, were crucial for conceiving the experience of concertgoing as an exceptional moment in ordinary life.

Indeed, independently of their views on the political situation, many shared Jeannette Arata de Erize’s 2011 vision of dictatorship-era concerts as spiritually nourishing precisely because of their separation from ordinary experience. A member who, exceptionally, was a left-wing Peronist, reminisces about his concertgoing during the dictatorship: “Music was something one respected, in the sense of saying, here we can breathe. The fighting will go on, but this is a context for breathing. Somehow I thought of Germany’s horror years, when everything was crumbling, yet they never stopped playing music. ... They played as they could, but they kept playing. In that moment of terror, music was a spiritual nourishment [*alimento espiritual*].”<sup>28</sup> While some might have attended classical music concerts to consciously escape from an oppressive political reality, their listening experience was probably not different from that of the years preceding and following military rule. “Political realities don’t show up in the concert hall,” says a regular follower of the Mozarteum concerts of those years. “I just went there to listen to the music.” And he adds a moral dictum: “Everything in its place.”<sup>29</sup> According to another music lover and professional critic, “as a general rule, the audience of a concert does not associate it with politics.”<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, the harshness of ordinary life under the dictatorship dramatically enhanced the enclaves in which this aesthetic experience might take place. According to another concertgoer, “In those years we lived a double life. You could not speak your mind, because fear was too strong. The Colón was a place in which you were safe, so you could relax for a while. But outside, Buenos Aires was a scary place”<sup>31</sup> (Buch 2016).

Perhaps some concertgoers identified their experience with the words printed on the back cover of the *Memoria 1976* over the picture of a lake whose surface showed small concentric ripples:

WITHOUT MUSIC, LIFE WOULD BE A MISTAKE ...

(Nietzsche was right).

Only music can work the miracle of turning material things invisible, and spiritual things corporeal.

Only music can discover the hidden face of reality.

Only music allows traveling to eternity.

And back.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Interview with HB, January 24, 2015.

<sup>29</sup> Interview with JLS, March 6, 2015.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with CAU, March 2, 2015.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with DO, October 29, 2015.

<sup>32</sup> Mozarteum Argentino, *Temporada 1976 – II* (Buenos Aires: 1977), [8].

The first line is of course Friedrich Nietzsche's, one of his most famous. The second, stating that Nietzsche "was right," suggested to the Mozarteum's members the deep ethical meaning of their attendance at concerts organized by the association and of their membership. The origin of the remaining lines is unknown. Some may have imagined that they also belonged to Nietzsche, but they are not really Nietzschean. Anchored in German Romanticism, they stress music's metaphysical power to access reality, beyond the normal temporality of everyday life (Dahlhaus 1978). Music becomes a transcendent, even mystical experience. And the key word, here, is *traveling*, in that the page in question was an advertisement for KLM.

The choice of Nietzsche for an Argentine institution devoted to classical music is not surprising. This sentence was, and still is, one of the most frequently quoted thoughts on music, indeed a cliché. Its rhetorical strength lies in the paradoxical way it addresses a practical issue—how to live a good life—through a cognitive category such as "mistake" rather than through a moral category like "fault." It has a history of its own, built out of changing interpretations and radical decontextualizations. In its best-known occurrence in Nietzsche's oeuvre, in *Twilight of the Idols* (1888), it had an ironic twist ignored by posterity: "How little is required for happiness! The sound of a bagpipe. Without music life would be a mistake. The German conceives of God even as singing songs" (Nietzsche 2004, 7; Blondel 2001). As in many of his writings since *Human, All Too Human* in 1878, Nietzsche scorned German nationalist clichés on music and the divine. But printed on the Mozarteum's report, the sentence and its apocryphal sequel had quite the opposite meaning, namely a reminder of the quasi-religious ideal that has inspired Western classical music since the nineteenth century. In that sense, it was also an injunction.

Aesthetic pleasure was to be a magnificent, otherworldly experience. There is no reason to doubt that this was often the case for some and that this pleasure was the main reason for them going to concerts in the first place. This is what "the best music in the world" is likely to provide, if you do not listen to it only to show that you do. Others might have found that hyperbolic statements such as Nietzsche's were "poetic," that is, nice but unreal. After all, it was only an advertisement that made visible the role of sponsorship in the Mozarteum's economy. It did not last, however, for in 1978 the members were to find on the cover a period image of Baroque musicians and the slogan "Two classical ways of traveling. Good music and KLM."<sup>33</sup> Apparently, the advertising professionals who made up the KLM campaign were unsure about the best way to associate the company with the music.

In any case, neither message had anything to do with Argentina, except as implicit negative statements. The KLM ads can be read as a counterpoint to the recurrent "naturalization of violence" in other advertising campaigns of these years, by suggesting that classical music was the shortest escape route from Argentina's violent reality. This discourse resonated with the people's experience well before the 1976 coup (Carassai 2013). It also reminded concertgoers that most concerts were given by foreign artists whose professional activity in Buenos Aires started with their boarding an aircraft. And indeed, why would works by long-dead European composers performed at the Mozarteum have anything to do with Argentina, besides a preexisting tradition of listening to them and an ever-delayed democratization of its pleasures? Classical music in general was not meant to relate to the place of its performance, and that was truer in a country whose "national" composers did not weigh much in the standard repertoire. In this, it was very different from popular music such as tango, a "national" genre deemed to reflect Argentine identities and experiences. Even Argentine rock, dubbed *rock nacional* in the mid-1970s, was linked to local social and political issues despite the international range of rock music in general.

By contrast, the independence of classical music from the time and space of its performance was seen as a condition for accessing universal feelings and values. Traveling to the space-time of classical music was believed to make people *better* before their return to reality by the end of the concert (Kivy 2008). This might be a subjective experience found in many places and historical regimes besides the Argentine dictatorship. In this cosmopolitan, Western-centered vision of art, music contributed to the moral good of the nation by allowing some people to travel away from social reality and to return to it enriched by knowledge of the "hidden face of reality" and an experience of "eternity." Now, eternity is, if anything, a realm without history. This political credo, intrinsically indifferent to political circumstances, was another way of saying that music pleasures were essentially apolitical.

<sup>33</sup> Mozarteum Argentino, *Memoria 1978* (Buenos Aires, 1978): [8]. "Dos maneras clásicas de viajar: La buena música y KLM."

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**How to cite this article:** Buch, Esteban. 2021. The Apolitical Politics of Classical Music: The Mozarteum Argentino under the Dictatorship of 1976–1983. *Latin American Research Review* 56(2), pp. 484–499. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25222/larr.968>

**Submitted:** 02 June 2019

**Accepted:** 27 January 2020

**Published:** 15 June 2021

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