

25 YEARS  
OF THE GREAT  
CULTURAL DONATION BY JAPAN

REPUBLIC OF COLOMBIA  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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**PRESENTATION**

Fernando Araújo Perdomo

**MEETING OF CULTURES**

Tolima Conservatory

**MUSIC EVERYWHERE**

Batuta Foundation

**A BANK THAT RADIATES CULTURE**

Luis Ángel Arango Library

**TV IS CULTURE**

Inravisión

RTVC

**A SPACE FOR LIFE AND SOCIALIZATION**

Jorge Eliécer Gaitán Municipal Theater

**CALI IS CALI, THE REST...**

Municipal Cultural Center of Cali

Los Cristales Open Air Theater

Jorge Isaacs Theater

**A THEATER NAMED AFTER A PRESIDENT**

Guillermo León Valencia Municipal Theater

**THE GRANDFATHER OF ALL THEATERS**

Cristóbal Colón Theater

**THE MIRACLE OF COLLECTIVE MEMORY**

National Center for Restoration

**TO THE RHYTHM OF WINNERS**

National University

Music Conservatory

**THE TIMELESSNESS OF BOOKS**

National Library of Colombia

Center for Music Documentation

**A LIBERATOR WHO LASTS IN THE MEMORY**

Bolívar House Museum

**A GREAT THEATER FOR PEREIRA**

Santiago Londoño Theater

**A MEETING POINT FOR THE  
CULTURAL MOVEMENT**

Culture and Beaux Arts Institute of Boyacá

**HEALTHY BODIES, A HEALTHY COUNTRY**

Colombian Recreation and Sports Institute

COLDEPORTES

**A SPACE FOR CULTURE IN THE MOUNTAIN**

La Media Torta Cultural Center

**GREAT CULTURAL DONATION BY JAPAN**

Chronology of donations

## PRESENTATION

Japanese cooperation in Colombia has enabled the consolidation of spaces and initiatives aimed at strengthening the culture, making it possible for more Colombians to exert their cultural rights while looking at it as an alternative for improving their personal development. Through the Great Cultural Donation by Japan the Government of this country is trying, precisely, to make a contribution to the promotion of cultural activities while fostering the economic development of developing countries.

As a result of the close friendship relation between both countries, and thanks to the decisive commitment of Japan as a friend country, the Colombian people have been able to benefit from and to give continuity to cultural initiatives. Since 1982, when the cultural donation started, 25 projects have been favored through investments totaling approximately 11 million dollars.

These have been the cases of the *Colón*, the *Jorge Eliécer Gaitán*, the *Jorge Isaacs*, the *Guillermo León Valencia*, the *Santiago Londoño* and the *Media Torta* theaters, which have been handed over sound and lighting equipments; or the National University, the Batuta Foundation and the Tolima Conservatory that received the donation of a great number of musical instruments.

Among other examples, the following could be mentioned: Coldeportes, which received equipments for Olympic and artistic gymnastics; the Bolívar House Museum which received audiovisual and HVAC equipment for the conservation of historic assets; the Luis Ángel Arango Library received audiovisual equipment; the National Library received equipment for the conservation of bibliographical heritage; the Center for Music Documentation, from the former COLCULTURA, received systematizing equipment, and Inravisión (RTVC) had access to educational programs for children's television.

It is overwhelming but the donation does not end here. The Japanese Government has not only provided better spaces for the cultural life of Colombians, it has also passed on the knowledge and the experience of their people to these entities. This has contributed to the strengthening of the technical and artistic abilities of those Colombians who work in favor of culture at these offices. Therefore, donations are not limited to the component of providing instruments, equipment and programs, among others, but they are complemented by an important training and accompaniment component provided to the benefited entities to guarantee the good use of the elements that have been handed over to them.

Thanks to the commitment and the generosity of the Japanese people, we can commemorate 25 years of these cultural donations in Colombia today. We cannot miss this transcendental moment without expressing our most sincere gratitude for this incredible work to the distinguished Government of Japan, carried out through the Embassy in Colombia and aimed at our becoming a fairer and more developed nation.

This is a feeling that we want to share through these pages. Based on a magical trip to different places of Colombia, these 19 chronicles tell the fascinating stories behind each one of the projects that benefited from the cultural donation made by Japan. These pages show how the cooperation between friendly countries improves opportunities and reaffirms hope so more Colombians can have access to culture and perceive it as an alternative towards a better quality of life.

The stories show the feelings of thousands of Colombians who, amid difficulties, find in the majesty of a theater or in the simplicity of a flute a possibility for change, an alternative for personal growth and the strengthening of solidarity, freedom and, particularly, the respect towards cultural diversity.

Consequently, the Colombian people view the Great Cultural Donation as a privileged opportunity at the service of a fairer, more human and inclusive society. May this be the opportunity to reiterate, on behalf of the Government and of the Colombian people, our deepest gratitude to the Japanese Government that, since the beginning of this long journey of friendship one hundred years ago, has enabled the possibility of making the dream of many compatriots come true.

FERNANDO ARAÚJO PERDOMO  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

## Tolima Conservatory

# MEETING OF CULTURES

...those who, like him, brought music in their soul, had to pay for it by wandering around the world with one less layer of skin in the body than the rest of the people.

The short chronicle  
**Anna Magdalena Bach**

It is here that notes can be breathed. People listen in amazement. The delicate notes of *Maestro* Toru Takemitsu come, evidently, from another land. Outside, in the garden of the Tolima Conservatory lay the remains of *Maestro* Alberto Castilla, its founder. If from that place he can listen to what his students are playing in this somewhat cloudy day, he wouldn't believe that they were born in Tolima or, at least, he would think that the musicians who are playing are Japanese. The audience has difficulty following the harmony from Daniel Moncayo's guitar. Nonetheless, it is paradoxical that the notes come from another island: Hika, the piece he is playing was composed by a Cuban, Leo Brouwer, in memory of the Japanese Toru Takemitsu.

It is followed by a piece for marimba. As melancholic and sweet in other closer rhythms as those from the Pacific, it has a solemn and much older air today. It sounds so...Japanese. Even *Maestro* Castilla would think that the one who is playing comes from the East, but the piece was actually composed by a Scottish Armenian, Alan Hovhaness, and the one who plays it is Juan David Forero, a percussionist as Colombian as coffee. This is the great miracle of music: the one who plays or listens to it can travel kilometers and kilometers, and can mingle with other cultures if he so desires.

On second thought, maybe *Maestro* Castilla could not have imagined this moment, but he would certainly evidence the sufficient skills for the interpretation of a Japanese piece by his students. Maybe Takemitsu never dreamed that in a South American country, amid a mountain range unknown to him, his music would be eventually studied, all this thanks to the great meeting of cultures derived from the cultural donations by Japan, one of which is being officially handed over today, Friday, April 28, 2008. That is the reason why so different rhythms as the ones already mentioned will be part of the program along with a piece from the Colombian *Maestro* Francisco Zumaqué.

More than two hundred instruments have been donated. Among them there is a flute that the Japanese Ambassador has given to Juan David González, a young musician who is just 12 and who, in gratitude, has played *Colombia, tierra querida* spontaneously.

Well, I was a little nervous, but playing a flute like this is easier because one does not have to make an effort. One can trust that the instrument will sound well, he says after the event concluded.

By his side is Guillermo Guzmán, the director of the Music School or, in other words, of the education program for work and human development, which is just one of the programs the conservatory has. It is devoted to teaching short music courses (between two months and a half and four months) for people who do not wish to pursue a musical career. *Maestro* Guzmán has around 700 students under his responsibility and teaches personalized classes to 250 of them with the help of other teachers, of course. This program has grown so much that it now has branches in Espinal, Mariquita and Líbano, benefiting more than 300 people.

The Regional Centers are designed and structured so people with musical talent who do not live in Ibagué, coming from small cities such as Honda, La Dorada, Fresno, Veredas, Falan, Palocabildo and Armero-Guayabal may have the chance to “tune” with teachers from the conservatory without leaving the places where they live and then continue studying at any formal education institution in their daily lives as musicians.

The fact that new instruments are being handed over today, here at the conservatory, is great news for those centers since not all the instruments to be replaced are in bad shape, so they can still be used.

But let's consider some aspects in detail since the work of the conservatory includes such a wide range of activities. Currently, it has academic programs (school, high school and the professional studies) as well as the possibility of studying an instrument in a more informal way. When *Maestro* Alberto Castilla founded the conservatory in 1906 it was just a music school. Then it was classified as a conservatory and, in 1960, thanks to the vision of a woman named Amina Melendro de Pulecio, who joined the staff as a piano teacher in 1927 and was later appointed director for a number of decades, the institution became also a musical high school. The tireless work of *Doña* Amina led the people of Ibagué to committing themselves to the cause of music.



However, the difficult situation of the Department of Tolima forced the conservatory to undergo a restructuring process and the music high school was suppressed. *Doña Amina's* mission could not end in such a way, all of a sudden. Therefore, the Department Assembly decided to create a new institution after her name. Currently, the Amina Melendro de Pulecio Musical Educational Institution includes preschool education up to level 13 musical high school, and has more than 1,200 students enrolled. Almost 500 are high school students and they are at the headquarters of the Tolima Conservatory. The rest of the students, preschool and grade school, study at a building the institution received four years ago that has a capacity of one thousand students. All these children and youngsters have ten hours per week of musical instruction and play concerts every fortnight, while taking the regular courses at the same time. In other words, what appeared to be bad for *doña Amina's* work ended up being the expansion of her ideas to the highest reality: a school for musicians.

The false idea that musicians cannot earn their own living is well behind. Many of these students have learned to use their musical knowledge to work and to make their living. They can even pay their higher education. However, the most important fact is that they learn to work with others. Before finishing their high school studies, these students have to participate in a kind of social service through which they teach music in educational institutions of the State where children from the poorest strata of society study. Likewise, those who graduate as Musicians carry out a similar activity in the last semesters of the program. They help build choirs, musical and folklore groups thus benefiting over 600 low-income individuals. Included also in the social work of the conservatory is the program Our Music in the Countryside, which is aimed at respecting and disseminating the rhythms of the particular area so inhabitants gather around their own roots. This program is mostly for kids between 5 and 12 years of age, and more than 200 come from places like Tres Esquinas, Chucuní, La María, Calambeo, San Cayetano, Ambalá and Las Amarillas.

As Bach wrote to one of his students:

It does not depend on you that you learn everything I know. In return, I only demand you to assure me that, when time comes, you will transmit this modest knowledge to your pupils.

Music is paid with music and, undoubtedly, in a hostile and difficult environment it can be great nourishment for the soul, and a great way to dissociate violence from the young people. Evidence of this is also the life of Daniel Oviedo, a violinist,

composer and teacher of Musical Grammar since 1978. He, as many of his teachers, studied at the conservatory.

Thanks to the fact that a teacher from the neighborhood school told my father that I was always singing, and that I would be happier attending musical high school at the conservatory, I came here when I was just 8. I can say that I am an arm or a joint of this institution since I have been here for 43 years!

Looking at Daniel teaching how to play the violin to a five-year-old kid is incredible.

It is pleasant to say that hundreds and hundreds of high school musicians, to be exact 888, have graduated from the conservatory, and that almost one hundred have graduated as Musicians, regardless of the number of instrumentalists that are trained at the conservatory without attending the high school or majoring in music.

The name *Ibagué, musical city* makes full sense thanks to the donations made by Japan, which have enabled the conservatory to summon musicians from different places of the world, as Milan and Paris, to carry out the International Polyphonic Competition and that its own musicians travel to various countries with their groups to greatly heighten the names of Colombia and Ibagué. Without the instruments that older and younger students receive today it would be much harder to rescue and keep the musical tradition of this department.

The fact that ten musicians who studied at this conservatory are current members of the Symphonic Orchestra of Colombia is just one of the merits that can be highlighted among many successful cases of musicians from Tolima, from the founder of the conservatory, Alberto Castilla, to cellist César Augusto Zambrano, including pianist Leonor Buenaventura “Ibagué’s girlfriend,” the director of the Tolima Chamber Orchestra, César Augusto Barreto, as well as other popular musicians, among which it is worth highlighting the *Garzón y Collazos* and the *Silva y Villalba* duets.

Everything is easy to understand in such a musical environment. The conservatory offers the people of Ibagué, at least a free concert every week interpreted by the Symphonic Orchestras (children, pre-juvenile, juvenile and *maestros*), the Chamber Groups, the Symphonic Bands or the Symphonic Choirs. In just one year there are more than fifty concerts at different venues, small squares and parks of the city. Many of them are didactic, particularly the Christmas Concert interpreted by the Children Orchestra. Those who listen to them are children their own age and even younger.

As Bach also said in one of his letters to his wife Anna Magdalena:

It is easy to understand that musicians who are treated with dignity avoid material concerns and may perform wonderfully.

Even though worries never end in the life of human beings, it is true that they are less if ones devotes oneself to doing what one likes. Donations made by Japan have a direct influence on a factor that has never been measured by any poll: happiness.

## Batuta Foundation

### MUSIC EVERYWHERE

The chances that a good violin reaches a boy in the middle of the jungle are essentially nonexistent. This sole idea brings to memory epic scenes from Herzog's film where Klaus Kinski portrays Fitzcarraldo, the mythical character who wanted to build an opera house in the jungle and bring Caruso there. The character of the film existed in real life and his wife pawned her jewels to help him in this quixotic project. Here, in the land of Macondo, this type of magical realities has been made possible thanks to the Great cultural donation made by Japan, after two previous donations of instruments for the Batuta Foundation.

It is like a magic flute. And although we are not talking about the famous masterpiece by Mozart, as in opera, a flute or any other instrument reaching children like those from the *Jerusalén* neighborhood have the power to change the mood of those who play or listen to them.

This is a contemporary story showing the magnitude and benefits of the Japanese contributions to culture in Colombia. At its beginning stage, Batuta welcomed 400 kids in its program and was present in three cities. Nowadays, it covers 84 cities and many of the children and youngsters who belong to the program –around 28,000- come from families that have been displaced because of violence. Its growth accounts for the great social work benefiting those children struggling to keep on with their lives despite the difficult conditions they live in. They heard the magic flute and, surely, in the future will be familiarized with the Magic Flute, Mozart's last opera which was performed for the first time more than two centuries ago, barely two months before his death. Everything thanks to Batuta.

This foundation coordinates the national system of juvenile and children symphonic orchestras of Colombia and, through the 196 orchestra centers it has in the 32 departments of the country it is contributing to the development of music in inhospitable places such as Leticia, the capital of the department of Amazonas, and Buenaventura, a city on the Pacific coast where musical traditions of the region show a deep African origin. Native rhythms as the *currulao*, the *patacoré* or the *maquerule* are taught to children who attend (for free) the pre-orchestra program of the Foundation. In this first stage emphasis is made on the psychomotor and auditory development of the children. They also learn basic music reading and writing to familiarize themselves with music language. It is incredible when you see little children playing Carl Orff with sistra, xylophones,

percussion and a flute. The repertoire also includes Colombian folk pieces as the *Guabina Huilense* by Carlos E. Cortés and *La Piragua* by José Barros, among others.

Juan José Ortiz, one of Batuta's teachers says that the best way to raise the awareness of a child who has never listened to music is through the popular repertoire played by an orchestra. He directs the orchestra from the Kennedy center and teaches trumpet.

There is nothing as gratifying as watching students grow with an instrument, choosing it, making it their own. I have a seven-year-old student who could not hold the trumpet because she was too small, but she was so convinced that it was her instrument that we had to put a stool where the trumpet could rest while she was playing. Another student learned to take a bus on her own because she did not have anybody who could bring her or come with her to the center. Her determination was instructive.

At Batuta, kids like Alma Beatriz put their hope in music, regardless of the difficulties they have to face since many of them come from low-income strata. Nonetheless, Batuta's directors and teachers emphasize that pity is never to be used. "Music is an endless source of healing but also of enjoyment, a choice, a happiness that is not trying to hide any sorrow," says Norma Poveda, administrative director of the Foundation.

After this first five-semester pre-orchestra stage the transitory orchestra comes. It is divided into the string group and into the wind group, each one having its own repertoire. They are temporary orchestras allowing students to achieve tuning between instrument families and also learning to interact with the other instruments of the orchestra. In this way, it is shown how music is not only an incredibly beautiful art but it can also teach us to live harmonically with others. And that teaching is more important in countries like ours, where violence threatens to permeate all the sectors of the society. Batuta integrates youngsters from different regions of the country through meetings like the ones held in Pereira in 2007, where the best students of all the schools got together.

Sandra Tatiana, one of the students who shared the stage with kids from other regions says that she was moved knowing that those kids did not even have three meals a day.

However, they were there, happy, sharing with us and showing rhythms from their towns. I remember there was a

kid from Valledupar who astonished me with his talent for percussion. I believe that “flair” has to be inbred.

That type of collective construction teaches the kids the value of team work. Besides, they learn to use their free time. Kids have two weekly sessions, an hour and a half each, but they know that a musician could hardly become one if not studying on his own. Luis Fernanda Cano says that when she first came she was very rebellious and as time went by she became involved with her instrument, which is the flute. Nowadays, she plays in the orchestra of Bogotá and not a day passes without her studying at home.

The project is so big that musicians of the category of *Maestro* Juan Carlos Rivas have gotten involved in it. Juan Carlos is Batuta’s musical director. A *Magna Cum Laude* graduate from Los Andes University, and holding a Master’s Degree in Orchestral and Opera Direction from the Mannes School of Music in New York, Juan Carlos says that Batuta has a special magic only achieved by music.

We are not talking about food or money. What music achieves is a change of the souls, of the mentalities; it is a change of the human being. As long as a child feels that he is giving something to the community, that his work is important, that his effort is important, that he is doing something jointly with other children, what he learns by the practice of music is immediately reflected on his daily life. Many of these kids are being rescued from delinquency, vices and other problems that we have, particularly in those places where there is a shortage of resources, where the less favored population lives.

In less than five years there were 22,106 new places, surpassing the objective posed for the four-year period which was the creation of 21,000 new places. Currently, Batuta has more than 25,000 students at the basic musical education level showing not losses but profits. Culture is, undoubtedly, not just charity. While it makes us better human beings, it can also generate business opportunities. This is what the Foundation has shown since its assets grew 33% in 2007. Its net worth as of December 31 is COP\$5,304 million, which means that it grew 22% in just one year. It has 196 orchestral centers in 32 departments and 84 municipalities. These centers have welcomed more than 35,000 kids which indicate that, from the outset, when it received 6.400 kids, Batuta has multiplied its places by five.

From all these centers, the ones directly benefited by the instruments of the last donation from the Japanese government are the twelve that make up the string, woodwind, brass, and percussion orchestras. Seven of them are in Bogotá, and the other five are in other smaller cities such as Villavicencio, Barrancabermeja,

Bucaramanga, Medellín and Buenaventura. However, it is worth noting that other two donations made by Japan have benefited the Foundation: one in 1992, when the instruments were handed over to the Presidency of the Republic, just before formalizing Batuta; and the other one in 2001, through the Ministry of Culture.

### *Winds from other lands*

It is only necessary to watch the expectation and illusion in the faces of the children to understand why the arrival of these instruments is crucial in their lives. For the handing over of the instruments it is necessary that they first undergo the curatorial process for their adaptation so they can sound no matter what. The care for the varnish and the woods is essential, taking into consideration that many instruments go to places where temperatures reach up to 32°C, as Buenaventura or Amazonas, which also have the highest humidity indexes of the planet.

The more than two hundred instruments of the last donation have been destined to juvenile orchestras, which is the final part of the project in which musical knowledge is applied and, at the same time, the instrumental technique is polished. An example of this latter stage is the Juvenile Symphonic Orchestra – Bogotá, made up by kids and youngsters chosen from seven of the Batuta Orchestral Centers operating in the city (*Santa Bibiana, Fontibón, Jerusalén, Kennedy, Candelaria, San Cristóbal Norte* and *La Gaitana*). Most of the instruments donated by Japan are wind instruments: saxophones, oboes, clarinets, trumpets and trombones, among others. However, there is one instrument that raises Sebastián Ruiz's hopes as a percussionist from the Kennedy orchestra. It is a marimba. Sebastián says that what is most important in music is that it lets us see part of the lives of other people, "As in Mahler's piece, *The Dead Children's Songs*. Through it we can get to know something about the pain he felt because of having his daughter sick."

Thus, each one of these kids and youngsters finds his / her own instrument and pathway. Sebastián Carreño, for example, plays an instrument that is as long as tall he is when he stretches it: the trombone. He says that it sounds like an elephant and says that since he began playing it he exchanges music with his friends at school. That is how he got to know The Canadian Brass, a quintet including two trumpets, a trombone, a horn and a tuba. In turn, he lent his friend Carmina Burana.

Daniel Felipe García is a thirteen-year-old boy who is about to graduate from his school. His genius allowed him to skip two courses and he says that playing the harp has been a good way of letting all that energy flow. He teaches his parents

how to differentiate the instruments. Classic harp is his chosen instrument which, unlike the other harps, has pedals to regulate the tones. Juan Pablo Silva, in turn, is learning to play the oboe. Although his favorite music is the *vallenato* – particularly Jorge Celedón, he points out. He wants his two younger brothers, one and two years old respectively, to learn how to play music: “Sofía the violin as my two aunts and Sebastián the oboe, like me.”

Empathy with an instrument is a way of defining the personality. Karol Ricardo Linares Correa says that his instrument, the French horn, is the most sublime of all. He reminds their first encounter:

There was no sound the first time I tried. On that day, the teacher brought a walkman so we could listen to music for horn. It was like love at first hearing. I succeeded nafter 10 minutes trying moving my lips like a “horse.”

That was eight years ago. Nowadays, Ricardo is 20 and the horn allows him to express many feelings at the same time: “It is as if you were showing an immense happiness and a sense of peacefulness, intertwined as one, creating an electrical shock in your whole body.” Although Ricardo would prefer to watch TV to listen to music, he went once to a Batuta concert in which his older brother played an instrument.

I saw many things. The environment caught my attention and I decided to join. When I went to choose my instrument there wasn’t any chance except for the horn. I do not believe in chances. It is as if we were made for each other.

Ricardo says that he would define music as the natural way to express all his feelings:

It is difficult to explain it with rational concepts, but when I listen to Jupiter (from Gustav Holst’s suite The Planets) I go to a world where concerns vanish and where there is only total happiness and solemnity. That is how heaven should be: you only worry about giving and smiling to everyone.

*Sons and daughters who educate their parents, students who are teachers*

The Japanese word “hana” means flower. That is the name of the song that a group of kids of the Batuta Foundation sang the day of the official handing over of the donation, and it is enough just to notice the cultural exchange that relationships with Japan have yielded.



The sense of belonging and being aware of diversity are really enriching for these kids and they permeate the family. Clara Muñoz, a violin teacher, does a two-voice exercise with two violinist girls: Ángela and Carmen. Andrés Felipe Carreño, Ángela's little brother, is sitting in the living room with their mother. He is just eight and plays the flute in the pre-orchestra, but he wants to learn how to play the cello because, to him, it roars like a lion. His mother says that she does not know much about music, but that she adores *boleros*. She is a humble and sweet woman that got a violin for her daughter with a great effort so she can study when not in the center.

For its fifteenth anniversary, Batuta decided to give a concert with 32 kids from all over the country (one for each one of the 32 departments). Just looking at the excited audience is moving because it shows that these children are not only approaching music but that they are also creating a continuously-growing audience in Colombia, based on their own families; however, this audience is not only made up of the parents who had not listened to a complete Mozart's concert before but of music lovers and knowledgeable musicians who appreciate and foster Batuta's work because they see that this foundation is a feasible way of making culture democratic, that it does not linger at the highest levels of society but is free in the streets, as it should be. In just one year, Batuta has given more than one hundred concerts attended by 65,000 people.

But the exchange is not only with other regions of the country. The Bogotá orchestra, for example, played a repertoire jointly with the South West Orchestra Dorset of the United Kingdom, under the direction of Lancelot Fuhry. They played together *Soy Colombiano*, composed by *maestro* Rafael Godoy.

"This is the way the English got interested in our music. Otherwise, they would know only about Shakira," says Ignacio, one of the youngsters who took part in the event. Likewise, meetings like the Latin American Forum of Musical Education Forum (*Foro Latinoamericano de Educación Musical – FLADEM-*, in Spanish), have generated a wide exchange of regional repertoires. In this type of meetings and during several days working in workshops, teachers learn the method used by other teachers to teach their students.

And here comes the best part of Batuta's history, the part that prevents Batuta from dying. Several of these kids who, in other times, were students at the Foundation are today teachers there. Not only out of their own conviction: they are hired and they are paid a salary which gives more stability to the Foundation. It is the case of Sergio Trujillo, one of the 235 teachers at Batuta, who is also a member of the National Symphonic Orchestra. Therefore, the one who gives then receives, the

retribution received by the Foundation in its efforts is nourished by the only source that may keep it alive: the music of its own students.

## Luis Ángel Arango Library

### A BANK THAT RADIATES CULTURE

It is really encouraging that the central bank of a country is not only devoted to the issuance of bank notes and to foreseeing figures that are, apparently, so distant from the day-to-day reality of the people, as the GDP, devaluation or the foreign debt. What emerged as a small reference library for the employees of the Bank is today a real cultural icon of the city. Little by little it began purchasing and receiving private libraries up to the point of becoming the *Luis Ángel Arango*, honoring the general manager of the bank who, in 1955, led the construction of its premises.

For 50 years the *Banco de la República* has contributed a priceless amount of culture to the Colombian people. It is no little thing that the Luis Ángel Arango Library has become the public library with the highest number of users around the world, even more than the Pompidou in Paris, or the National Library from New York. There is a reason to it and it lies in the fact that the Luis Ángel Arango has known how to compete with other cultural and entertainment venues by widening its horizons (beyond keeping bibliographical collections, bank notes and coins, stamps, pre Columbian pottery and goldsmith pieces, plastic arts) with musical and plastic-art-related activities, as well as with video projections.

Besides its eleven rooms, classified by areas of knowledge and according to the type of material they house (newspaper and periodicals library, general room, map library and reference room), it has two very particular places: a room for language learning and a modern room for audiovisuals. These audiovisual aids, that nowadays are available to the public in the room of the *Luis Ángel Arango*, had a great benefactor in the Japanese government. It received state-of-the-art screens, plasma monitors, equalizers, consoles, microphones, earphones, audio distributors, amplifiers, speakers, video reproduction equipment (VHS and DVD), as well as video recorders in 2004.

The tradition the Bank had in carrying out its cultural activities was the most important guarantee the Japanese people had to ensure that the donation would be assigned to responsible hands and, most of all, influential for the cultural development of a society that, despite not reading much, visits the library often and participates in its activities almost on a daily basis.

Despite the fact that, at the beginning, the library had one audiovisual room, there is a total difference in the service rendered today with the new equipment. An

auditorium and a free projection room were added. Now, there are not 15 seats as before but 32 individual seats available. The consultation of the audiovisual material available in the library has doubled.

Almost 12,000 users visit the room every month. Support events are organized in the auditorium with a seating capacity of eighty. The sitting room is used, independently, by small groups that choose their own programming to be projected on a plasma screen. It is comforting to see three senior citizens sitting there as if they were at the movies, watching a film of their times for free.

Most of the people who come to this room are unemployed or retired. It is great that they can spend their time in a useful way. "What's the use in my staying at home being a pain in the neck and wasting my time? I come here, I watch interesting things and I pass the time," says Gonzalo Castañeda and then he adds:

It is not that I am an erudite, but things are happening.  
How am I going to find out about a bridge being built in  
Africa, for example, or about the Chinese wanting to  
make a whole city in just one building, imagine!

In the thirty cubicles with personal laptops, users consult other materials about Colombian and universal classic films, as well as about science and technology, or they can use the material that still exists in cassettes or CDs, mostly audio books.

On top of that, it was possible to organize three more auditoriums with the arrival of this new equipment. Their quality responds to the need of using them permanently, twelve hours a day. The donation is also used at the concert hall of the *Luis Ángel*, considered one of the best venues for chamber music concerts. Important musicians have played their music there: interpreters as important as Jordi Savall, who explores the sounds of ancient music through unusual instruments as a *viola da gamba*; or the French organist Pascal Marsault, whose concerts helped to raise money for the restoration of old and neglected organs in churches and theaters, just to name a few of the most important. The library promotes the development of Colombian musicians also by organizing activities as the Guitar Week, with lectures by important soloists as *maestro* Víctor Monge Serranito, and even awarding scholarships to young talents as pianist Carolina Noguera who, in 2007, went to Birmingham (England) to study.

It was at this hall where the young cellist Santiago Cañón played his instrument causing a good impression on Yo-Yo Ma during his visit to Bogotá. Santiago would have never reached the level he has now but he enriched his ears with the concerts in this place and he studies hard. Before leaving for New Zealand to take

an intensive cello course with Professor James Tennant, Santiago met Yo-Yo Ma who listened him play his cello and was so delighted that he almost missed his flight.

Concerts and recitals are grouped in cycles at this venue: Music of the World, Ancient Music for Our Time, Traveling through Chamber Music, Colombian Music and Musicians, Great Interpreters and Jazz Time. The annual programs also include didactic concerts attended by kids from different schools so they can be familiarized with classical music, as well as concerts called Sunday Family Concert.

Going back to the film collection, there is a Japanese collection including *Rashomon*, by Kurosawa, *Floating Clouds*, by Ukigumo, and *In the Realm of Senses*, by Nagisa Oshima, among others. The collection is complemented by a leaflet which is used as a study guide. Carla has come to watch Japanese films. She is just 17.

What I really liked the most was the sleeve, but hadn't I come here I would not have discovered other great things as *In the Mood for Love*, by Wong Kar Wai, or *Hannabi*, *Fire Flowers*, which is very aggressive but very good. I also watched a film based on the life of a writer that I did not know, Mishima. The film is not Japanese but led me to know the author and his terrible life because he was somewhat mentally insane. I know that some people think that one should not watch these things that are so strong but if not, how does one learn to live?

As a coincidence, Carla's words bring to mind a statement from Japanese writer Mishima which perfectly fits at the time of concluding why the work of the *Luis Ángel* is so important:

Human beings have the tool of knowledge to make of life something bearable. For animals, those things are not necessary because their lives are bearable. But we human beings need something, and with knowledge we can make a tool of the intolerability of life (...).

Thus, with Mishima's words, the fortunate existence of a library that has been so important for Colombians as their own homes is justified.

## Inravisión – RTVC

### TV IS CULTURE

Television is not just a business. For many decades, it was the most direct way of reaching people and shaping their opinions. When the experts analyzed this fact in depth, they noticed that there should be what the British called “Media Literacy,” which is something like an “education for the media” through which people, and mostly children, learn to decode and interpret TV language, for example.

At the beginning it was thought that this type of education was a tool *against* the evils produced by television, but later it was happily concluded that not everything coming from the box is harmful.

The television and entertainment business is not always against culture. The most valuable tool a country has for this idea to survive is that public television survives also, and that it is aimed at having interesting content enriching the life of television viewers.

It is precisely what RTVC, formerly Inravisión, has been doing in our country. It is admirable to see how today many of its cultural programs steal, little by little, rating points at the *prime time* and compete with private channels broadcasting soap operas and reality shows, while *Señal Colombia* offers an alternative and well-thought programming to support culture.

Taking into consideration the aforementioned, RTVC asked the Japanese government for a series of programs aimed at the large group of viewers of the planet: the children. Adverse phenomena in cultural TV can only be eradicated if the viewers of the future are offered programs with quality content, leading them to keep watching programs that make a better contribution to their lives than just an entertainment moment. But the fact that programs have interesting content should not mean that they are boring. This is the great cultural contribution of Japan to RTVC: programs with interesting content but also amusing.

It is hard to imagine a boy learning about the way solar energy works or why there is a rainbow under a conventional and discursive method. In turn, it is fascinating seeing him understanding such complex phenomena in his own language and participating in an experiment. Without even noticing it, these kids have learned pure Physics. After watching programs like *10 Minutes of Science*, they understand what motion is, and even what uniformly accelerated motion is, which sounds really

boring to learn under conventional methods. This type of formats uses science to offer an appealing, amusing, and also didactic *show*.

Regardless of the fact of Inravisión being liquidated and creating, in turn, RTVC (*Radio and Television of Colombia*), the agreement with the regional channels (in which Inravisión was a partner) was kept in order to broadcast programs through them.

Therefore, these programs were a great support for the educational time slot of *Señal Colombia* and of the other regional channels that broadcast them. Many of the viewers have directly called *Señal Colombia* asking for a second broadcast of a given program, as in the case of Úrsula Gutiérrez:

Listen, I had to do a particularly difficult homework from school about light waves, and a friend called me and asked me to watch 10 Minutes of Science because it was about the topic, so I called them, and asked them to broadcast it again because it was there that I understood what I had read in the textbook.

It is just wonderful that this information reaches a girl like her, who lives in the city and who has more tools to learn when being out of school (like the Internet, museums, etc.).

The real miracle happens when it reaches the screens of children living in absolutely remote places, where there is hardly another chance of their listening about Hippocrates or about protozoa. A kid in the city can be brought to the planetarium or to an astronomical observatory. The planetarium the boy in the under-developed countryside has is the Cosmos Digital Encyclopedia, a program that explains how stars are formed, or the distance between one and another celestial body.

I saw that Mars was red, but Martians cannot live there since there is no water,” says Micaela, a girl who is just 5 and who regularly watches this type of programs. Salomé, her mother, is grateful for the programs so when her daughter wants to watch television she does not feel that she is letting her waste time.

Another program that has been well received by children is *Rocky and his Friends*, an old cartoon program developed by the North American Jay Ward and Alex Anderson, whose success proves that good content is never outdated, despite the fact that the drawings are from another time (the 1960s).

To many television critics, this program keeps the best of old radio programs that do not exist anymore. "It was the one most asked program to be aired again," says Gloria Suárez, a material and management officer at RTVC.

A boy called us asking information about the Rocky live show, and when told that this program had been donated by Japan, he asked us to send him there so he could meet Rocky.

We, adults, are wrong when we think that children cannot understand topics on Physics, Chemistry, Ecology or, even, Philosophy. The key is showing them the information free of unnecessary details and previously adapted to their own way of thinking. The examples to cite are infinite because we are talking about more than 660 educational and cultural programs that have been and will be aired until 2010.

As the radio and the Internet, television is a true mass medium and, along this line, it is truly democratic. As Carolina Hoyos, director of the National Television Commission, said during an interview, "Children are a very demanding audience that needs to be studied to offer them what they like and need for their education and entertainment."

With this type of initiatives, as the donation of children content and other updates of the programs of the channel, more than a traditional TV channel, RTVC has made of *Señal Colombia* a medium for Colombians to express and recognize themselves, and that is why its slogan is Everything We Are (*Todo lo que Somos*, in Spanish).

This channel has the great virtue of not having to respond to commercial and private interests, so its contents are open to culture, education and healthy entertainment. While RTVC updated itself, something urgently needed, the content donated by the Japanese government was essential since it allowed the investment of resources it would otherwise have to spend buying the rights of foreign programs in the announcement, production and realization of local programs, that were complementing, step by step, the programming that did not have any own programs.

An example of this is *Kikirikí El Notizín*, a program aimed at children and produced by *Señal Colombia*. It is broadcast during the weekends at 11 a.m., and it is aired again on weekdays at 7 p.m. There is no reason to envy private channels.

*Latribu*, the group of young people who designed the project, has been supported by RTVC to give shape to this type of creations dealing with topics that are really



interesting for children: the importance of the good use of energy, the fact of being an adopted child, why it is necessary to work in order to obtain money, but also what the right to protest is, the meaning of beauty, the arrival of puberty, addictions, advertising and the media, many necessary topics shown in an interesting and amusing way.

The development of children programs, including intelligent and resourceful programs, would not be possible without the content donations, as the one made in 2003 by the Japanese government.

The changes can be easily seen if one turns on the TV set and watches the programs *Señal Colombia* it currently offers its viewers. Thus it is proven that television is not bad in itself. As the famous film director Federico Fellini once said, "Condemning television is as ridicule as excommunicating electricity or the theory of gravity."

## Jorge Eliécer Gaitán Municipal Theater

### A SPACE FOR LIFE AND SOCIALIZATION

The British actor, producer and director, Laurence Olivier could not have said it better: “I believe that in a big city, even in a small one or in a town, a big theater is the most visible sign to the outside that a culture is probable in the inside.”

This quotation may be a key to understanding why, since ancient times, the human being has wished to get together to watch a representation of his own life, to share his happiness and his misery at a place called theater. That is why it is essential for any city to have its “own” theater. This was the premise for the Council of Bogotá when a municipal theater was built in 1888.

The anecdotes stored within its walls ever since must be counted by the millions. These are just a few of the first ones. History says that in 1885 an Italian theater man whose last name was Zenardo did not find an adequate stage for his shows so he decided to improvise the first show right in front of the place where the theater would be built. The audience had to bring their own chairs for the premiere and even President Núñez attended. Likewise, it was at this theater that Luis Enrique Osorio, the author of popular plays, taught the people of Bogotá to laugh at themselves. We have to remember that, par excellence, the meeting point in a city was the theater. People went not only to see the play but also to socialize.

Although the Cristóbal Colón Theater already existed, the *Jorge Eliécer* came to be something like dissenting about the *Colón*, since it was shaping its own audience despite the fact that both were thought based on a similar tendency (the European). During its first period, the *Jorge Eliécer* focused its attention on European plays but later it turned to “local” shows. A new theater, less poetic and with a simple and daily-life language, started to catch the attention of the audience and of the people interested in art and culture in Bogotá. Therefore, the Colombian play writing creation was promoted by the municipal theater that, during the 1930s was also the scenario for political ideas defining the destiny of our country, a reason for its being named after the leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán. He was the one who led the activities of the “cultural Fridays” of the theater, where artists and intellectuals found the perfect space to debate their ideas.

However, the history of this theater is not only about smiling and happiness. The theater was demolished in 1952 and those who were really affected were the theater companies. When the idea of reviving the municipal theater was dealt with

again, it was decided to use the Colombia Theater, a venue that had been built for movies. Therefore, the theater was still devoted to films for more than two decades since its adaptation was never completed and it did not have the necessary features for plays.

It was then that the noble hand of the Japanese government appeared and, in 1987, sponsored the renovation of the infrastructure and the adaptation of the inside through a considerable donation of lighting and sound equipment. Therefore, twenty years have passed, and with a second intervention in 1995, the theater has been one of the most requested venues by local and foreign companies since, due to its technical conditions, they prefer the *Jorge Eliécer* to other theaters.

The space where the play is performed is essential. When a play is written and staged, one always thinks beforehand about the place. The *Jorge Eliécer* is a theater that can meet, if not all, most of the requirements of a high-quality show, as *Nebbia* from Cirque Eloize, says John Lambet, producer of this show at the last Ibero-American Theater Festival.

Therefore, the donation made by the Japanese government in 1987 had a second moment in 2000 with new sound equipments. The impact of these equipments on the life of the theater is priceless since more shows have been attracted enabling great productions that were unthinkable in past times. Today, more than three hundred shows are staged every year at the *Jorge Eliécer* that, among other things, is the theater with the biggest seating capacity in Bogotá and Colombia (1,800 people).

Many programs have been successfully implemented at the theater. The Tuesdays of the Municipal, for example, has become a meeting point for citizens to get together and analyze cultural topics guided by literature, film, music, theater, art, and culture experts. It is a program of discussion meetings that gather more than 2,700 people per year.

These are not multitudinous events. In general, they are attended by 40 to 60 people. The best thing about these afternoons is that you meet people of the most diverse backgrounds and tendencies thus enriching the discussions, says Victoria Lucena, a Sociology student who attends these meetings regularly.

Likewise, and widening the scope of the use of the theater, which should be kept as a cultural meeting point, the *Jorge Eliécer* invites young Colombian artists using new technologies in their work, whether art, design, photography, music, film or

video, through the Virtual Wednesday. Manuel Gamboa, a young musician, states that it is interesting to see that the program has different categories.

Sometimes someone exhibits his project, at other times it is a group of people exchanging ideas about the process followed in their work, or it is just a meeting focused on a current event or on the use of a digital tool. It is really practical and gives feasible ideas.

The small theater is the venue for three activities that take place on a permanent basis. One is the meeting, or gathering, held every first Monday of the month, whose topic is the city. The result of the exchange of these urban research projects is that they are not forgotten but disseminated spontaneously. Another activity is held on the last Monday of the month and it is devoted to drama reading: a country, a director and a piece characterizing the birthplace of the author are chosen. Young actors read the texts and bring the public closer to the world of scenic arts through reading or, better, through oral tradition which is the source of literature and theater.

“One feels as when grandmothers or mothers read tales so one can pay attention to the specific words used by each author while letting your imagination fly,” says María José Villamil, a music student who once attended the meeting.

“I found out because I attended a concert given by friends from ASAB on a Friday.” María José talks about the third activity which is a series of free concerts called Art and Part (*Arte y Parte*).

Each time a member of the audience goes to the *Jorge Eliécer*, he finds an art exhibit at the Exhibits Alley (*Callejón de las Exposiciones*), which is solely devoted to photography. This initiative and the Rock Series (*Ciclos de Rock*) are welcomed by the young audience who come to see national bands like *La Pestilencia*, *The Black Cat Bone*, *Pornomotora* and *Kraken*.

This scenario would be unthinkable without the support from the theater through the series. To those of us who have experience, it lets us continue working, to the new ones it gives the chance of experiencing large stages, says Elkin Ramírez, the leading voice of the *paisa* famous band.

The theater has created a program of guided visits for the children. Almost 20,000 children have had the chance to visit the premises while being explained the parts of a theater and then attending a free show.

Festivals and seasons, as *Eurocine*, can also take place at a theater that, besides staging plays from other places, intends to gather old traditions of the country by supporting popular festivities such as the *Festival Cuna de Acordeones*, the *Festival Nacional de Bandolas*, the *Fiestas de San Basilio de Palenque* and the *Festival Bat de Nueva Música Colombiana*, where the best of our folklore is shown.

To conclude, the idea that people from Bogotá could have such a high-quality stage was not forgotten thanks to the generosity of the Japanese government that has understood what Oscar Wilde said once: “The stage is not only the meeting point for all arts, but the return from art to life.”

## **Takeshima's Contribution**

### **CALI IS CALI, THE REST...**

Cali's character is something that cannot be explained with words. Perhaps music does it better. That is why a song says that Cali is Cali, and the rest is joke. The third most populated city of Colombia, it has a special atmosphere, a particular rhythm felt in the environment. Its exuberant vegetation and its people's strong and clear accent could even be overwhelming but the city won't lose its charm. Its artistic expressions are the most original and daring of the country. It is clearly shown through *salsa* which, despite its origins in Cuba and in New York, has consolidated in Cali since the 1940s. An example of this is the Niche Group that, led by its creator and leader, Jairo Varela, has reached international fame and the respect from well-known *salseros* (salsa musicians) from other parts of the world.

It is a city where music is so influential, where the first Japanese who settled in the country arrived, that it is important to recover and highlight the work of the Takeshima recording studios, where one of the most important cultural donations of the Japanese government is used. Named after the first Japanese who landed in Colombia (Juzo Takeshima), the Takeshima recording studios are the result of this donation. The studios offer the people of Cali services for the production of musical videos, recording, mixing and professional video copying, as well as the rental of video and sound cameras. Its mission is to support the production of artistic expressions through audiovisual and sound media. This work is carried out through the *Secretaría de Cultura y Turismo* (Cali's culture and tourism office) to which it is assigned. The studio is a leader not only regarding the development but also the promotion and dissemination of these rich musical expressions from *Santiago de Cali*, the department of Valle and the Pacific coast.

Therefore, more than 164 audiovisual products have been released, among which there are educational campaigns from the *Secretaría de Gobierno* and from the *Secretaría de Educación* from the *Instituto Popular de Cultura*, as well as other cultural videos as the one on the history and architecture of Santiago de Cali, another one on the tourism of the city and about its artisans, as well as several on the origins of the music of the city, about the African Colombians and about the Cali Fair.

Currently, the studio can record, approximately, ten musical productions and ten videos in one month. Patricia Elena Patiño, its director, states that within the total

hours (recording and editing), that each month could be 160, at least 70% are non profit and are a social work which is the commitment of the *Secretaría*.

Every year, almost twelve musical groups record their musical production for free. This is a project, now in its third edition, sponsored by the Ministry of Culture and its name is Sharing Territories (*Compartiendo Territorios*).

Takeshima has made recordings of more than 200 musical groups. Even though those who benefit from the rendering of these services are people from the department of Valle, as the topics of the audiovisuals make it evident, Colombians from other regions have benefited as well. This is the case of the group *Bambarabanda* from Pasto. Besides creating music experiments with theater, it has contributed to putting on stage plays like *Medea sin fuego*, *Despliega-ópera rap* and *Coxis mártir*, along with the well-known group from Nariño *Acto Único Teatro*. This group was one of the groups chosen for the recording of one of its compositions in the project *Compartiendo Territorios*, one of the leading programs directed by Takeshima.

“There are many groups in Colombia that decide to believe in their songs. Materializing these processes through recordings is a contribution so societies may know them and learn about their dreams, their denunciations, and their sad and happy situations. It was very interesting to have been chosen, even coming from another region. Sharing artistic experiences between different cultures is learning to differentiate ourselves and learning a little more about ourselves,” says *Juancho*, a member of this group.

This group deepens the roots and folk tunes of the Andean region and of the south of Colombia, so rhythms like the *san juanitos*, *huaynos*, *kapishkas*, *sonsureños*, *tinkus*, *pasillos* and *bambucos* blend with universal rhythms and tunes as rock, funk and punk, among others.

Based on testimonials like this one, it is shown that *Compartiendo Territorios* is a wonderful initiative that has grown in a noticeable way. Its first version led to the recording of ten songs from five groups. In the second one it recorded twenty compositions from ten bands and, besides launching the CDs, there were concerts, a documentary on the process and several video clips.

These and other recordings have led to the recording of more than 24 CDs including: *Ganadores del Festival de Música del Pacífico “Petronio Álvarez,” Zona Industrial, Peregoyo y su combo, Homenaje a Edmundo Arias, Ensueños Colombianos, Amor, banda y boleros, Himnos Municipios del Valle del Cauca,*

*Grupo Bahía, Zocavón, Canaló, Banda Departamental, Compartiendo Territorios I and II.*

Hugo Candelario, the leader of the group *Bahía* says, with an air of nostalgia:

Takeshima was essential for the growth of our musical project. In 2005, when *Semana* magazine reviewed our record *Bahía Trío: Pura Chonta* as the best Colombian recording of the year, we felt very proud.

Other less professional cases, but no less important, are the example of the great work carried out by Takeshima. Melchor Zapata, a traffic police officer from Padilla, Cauca, recorded his first single at the studio also. The “magician of flavor” had his music played at the Cali Fair, but he says that he could have never made a professional recording without the help from Takeshima.

If we collected the testimonials from each one of the musicians that have been to the studio, we would have a big book full of wonderful anecdotes. Another story is the Petronio Álvarez Prize, which is awarded through a competition for all the groups of the country that play music from the Pacific. Nearly fifty groups compete in different categories every August since 1997. The name of the competition makes the name of the composer of “*Mi Buenaventura*” famous.

But not everything is folklore because, besides, it would be impossible to talk about the musical expressions from Cali excluding other trends like rock, states Carlos Traub, the Chilean sound engineer in charge of the recordings. This year, in the announcement of the third version of *Compartiendo Territorios*, musicians can participate in three categories, depending on their musical style: salsa and tropical, folklore and popular music, as well as rock and pop. The idea is that those interested in professionally recording their compositions should send their demos or videos to choose between ten and fourteen groups and record them free of charge.

As if the more than thirty thousand hours worked during these eight years, both in audio and video production, were few, Takeshima has carried out twelve training workshops on audiovisual production aimed at people of the popular sectors of Cali. It also organized and carried out two diploma courses on audiovisual production jointly with “Parquesoft”, *Fundación Parque Tecnológico de Cali*.

Besides its good quality work, it sponsors community TV channels that, due to their lack of resources, do not have the necessary equipment for the production of programs with the quality standards they deserve.



What benefits does the community obtain? It obtains the chance to develop spaces to accept and acknowledge cultural processes of young people from Cali, while making a contribution to social interaction in the municipality. Besides, the memory of the urban popular culture is kept while artistic creation and cultural movements are stimulated. It is possible that the one who is busy playing an instrument through which he can express his emotions is never going to make an option in favor of violence or weapons. The words of one of the most important contemporary authors from Cali, included in his novel *¡Qué viva la vida!*, synthesizes this:

Music that knows me, music that encourages me, music that fans and covers me, the pact is signed. I am your diffusion, the one that opens the door and installs the step, the one that transmits through the valleys the news about your union, and your abnormal happiness, the messenger of the fast feet, the one that does not rest, the one of the terrible mission, hold me in your arms when the time of weaknesses comes, hide me, find me a shelter until I recover, bring my rhythms for my convalescence, bring me to the street with renewed strength in an afternoon with a colorful necklace when my airs confuse and get lost (...).

### *“Crystallized” efforts*

The great cultural donation made by Japan does not end there, in those lands looked at with nostalgia by the Japanese who inhabited them. It is curious that donations find a convergence point and combine efforts in order to improve the cultural offer of the city.

The *Petronio Martínez* Competition, already mentioned, through which winners have the right to record their songs at Takeshima, presents all the bands that compete in the qualifying round at the Los Cristales Open Air Theater, which was also benefited with equipments some decades ago (to be exact, in 1986).

During the 1950s, the area where the theater is today was part of a large forest reserve including the mountains from *Cristo Rey* to *Siloé*. That is why, even today, after irregular settlements and invasions have taken place leading to the construction of the ring road and to make public utilities available for this sector, the theater is still surrounded by green areas where trees from the region grow.

When the idea of building an open air theater was consolidated, the first play staged at the theater was *A la Diestra de Dios Padre*, Peralta's famous story, who

is in charge of keeping and continuing the divine plan, but who decides to use the powers bestowed upon him for his personal and self-centered use. The adaptation of Tomás Carrasquilla's novel was made by the well-known Enrique Buenaventura, the playwright, director, essayist, narrator and poet who promoted collective creation in Colombian theater.

Therefore, with the presentation of the play by the one who first directed the *Escuela de Teatro Instituto Departamental de Bellas Artes*, and who founded the *Teatro Experimental de Cali*, the life of a theater where international artists performed started: Raphael, Luis Miguel and Celia Cruz, among others (sold out and free of charge events). It was then remodeled for the celebration of Cali's 450 years, when the acoustic shell was designed and built, the seating area was enlarged, and the bathrooms and cafeteria modules were built.

Currently, the theater is still the place par excellence for the promotion and diffusion on new talents. That is why the community is committed to keeping and preserving it. "Although it has not been an easy task," says its director, Ana Lucía Varón, "the theater has been able to be well known and is greatly appreciated by private companies and by the media."

Just at big scenarios like this can people learn to respect diversity and pluralism, regardless of race, religion, beliefs and culture. Most of the concerts are free. Its goals include not only sponsoring leaders from different *comunas* (community groups) for the promotion of their artistic talent but it also works jointly with schools and educational institutions so their students can have leisure moments and get closer to the healthy environment of art. The theater has even focused some of its plans on the family nucleus as in the case of the agreement entered into with the *Fundación Hispanoamericana de Artes y Oficios Prepararte*: many artistic events are carried out within the framework of the Family Sundays at *Los Cristales*. "I did not have any money to pay for a leisure moment as the one the theater offers me and my family," says Yolanda Gallego, one of the beneficiaries of this type of initiatives.

Going back to school visits, it is exemplary and moving to see how hundreds of kids from the school *D'Ana María de Aguablanca* fill the seats with their happiness. Many of these kids have never had the chance to see a live show.

At the *Festival Mundial de Salsa* one could see 24,000 people. The best salsa dancers, among them Alex da Silva and his partner, or Alberth Torres who has organized 25 salsa congresses at the international level, like the one in Las Vegas (United States) in which the winners of the competition of the previous years, John

Jenner and Yudi, who were the first and the second places in their corresponding categories. During the seven days of the Festival, people from Cali and the visitors enjoy a varied program which includes the National Salsa Competition (*Concurso Nacional de Salsa*), salsa shows in different places of the city, and workshops for those who want to learn how to dance.

Throughout the yearly program of the theater, including important events for the population of the Department of Valle as the *Día Internacional de la Danza*, the *Festival Intercolegiado de Rock*, the *Festival Petronio Martínez* and the *Festival Mundial de Salsa* (just to mention a few of the almost fifty events taking place in this venue every year) there could be as many as 230,000 spectators. This figure is just another reason why it is worthy to thank the donations made by Japan to Colombia.

#### *The cross roads of a Takeshima and an Isaacs*

As it has been said before, joint efforts have been essential for the importance achieved by the cultural donations made by Japan. This includes also the last donation made to the Jorge Isaacs Theater this year.

Even if it looks as something eventual, there is a historical relation between the names of the projects. It does not seem a coincidence that Juzo Takeshima, the young Japanese philologist who came the department of Valle was seduced by *María*, the novel written by Jorge Isaacs, leading him to dream of that remote and heavenly place.

During the 1920s, when Takeshima discovered *María*, he might have never imagined that the bonds between the two nations were to be so tight. He started translating the novel, divided into several parts, in the Tokyo University journal, where he was a teacher, and thought about visiting the land of *María* which poet Isaacs described with beauty in his novel from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

He might have not imagined that he would live his own impossible love with Isabel Sarmiento either. She was a woman who was a member of the diplomatic delegation of Colombia at that country and the cause for him arriving in Cali. He would be so moved after finding out that, today, the Japanese have supported the development of a theater named after the author who triggered his destiny in Colombia.

Carlos Gardel came to sing at the Jorge Isaacs Theater. At the beginning (1931), it was a private theater for movies. Then it was closed for a period of time. With the

objective of recovering a scenario which is part of its cultural memory of the city, the municipal administration bought it in 1986, renovated it and opened it to the public in 1991.

All the sound equipment –cabins, microphones, processors- are part of the Japanese donation. More than 120 events open to the public, plus one hundred private and educational events have taken place every year at this theater. The *Jorge Isaacs* is proud of having brought to Cali, a warm city where mango trees grow in the gardens, the Saint Petersburg Ballet, a ballet company made up of 40 dancers, with an incredible wardrobe and a beautiful set design. It was the first time that a show on ice was performed in Latin America. There were four performances, three of them at low prices and one free of charge for charity institutions like *Parkinson*, *Cecrece*, *Fe y Alegría* and *María Goretti*, among others.

And since Japan's generosity does not end with the donations, the Zipang Drums from Japan also visited the theater with the support of the Japanese Embassy. The fact the Hiroyuki Hayashida, one of the great taiko directors and composers, did not speak Spanish was not an obstacle for him to delight people from Cali through the magic sound of drums like the Katsugi-Taiko, a drum with a barrel-like body whose sound, as the sound of several of the instruments this band plays, comes from tradition and was considered a sacred sound, despite the fact that it now blends with rock jazz. "The performance was outstanding because the taiko soloists play while making theater and dance movements," states María Victoria de Cruz, the director of the theater.

But as the theater has received support, it has returned those favors by supporting the performances of local groups as the *Fundación Arte Infantil*, the *Ballet Santiago de Cali*, *Incolballet*, *Berkana Danza* and *Azoedanza*, among others, as well as lending its premises for rehearsals to kids who are starting to study ballet, theater or folk dance.

As it is visible throughout the history of these cultural centers, the incredible dreams that *María* generated in Takeshima have created tight bonds, despite the distance between the cultures. It may be explained with the words of Haruki Murakami, the famous Japanese writer:

Each country has its own language, its own environment and its own philosophy. But when you look deep in the world of souls, there is always something common. That is why histories can be understood by other cultures.

## Guillermo León Valencia Theater - Popayán

### A THEATER NAMED AFTER A PRESIDENT

It was rightly said by historian Arsecio Aragón more than a century ago: the children from Popayán are numerous and illustrious. Perhaps that is why the city was reborn, with dignity and energy, from the ruins left behind by several earthquakes that destroyed it, the last one in 1983. It is called *Ciudad Fecunda* (Fruitful City) due to the number of presidents born there; *Ciudad Procer* (City of the National Heroes), because of all the men that were essential for the Independence; *Ciudad Blanca* (White City), because of the façades of its buildings and their architectural value. The town of the *patojos*, as people born in Popayán are known, is full of history including the Guillermo León Valencia Theater.

#### *Parallel histories*

Born on July 20, 1892, seven years before the birth of the person who would inspire its name, the theater was conceived by a group of intellectuals who commissioned the plans for the building to Mario Lombardi, a theater man who belonged to a group that performed puppets shows. Five years later the project crystallized and was then advised by Adolfo Dueñas, the architect who directed the construction of the Cathedral of Popayán, among other important projects. The Thousand Days' War, however, meant a halt to the project, from 1899 to 1903, when the partners decided to transfer their rights to the municipality.

The project started again when Guillermo León Valencia was just six. When he turned 18, without knowing that his life would be linked to the theater, it was inaugurated with *Il Trovatore* by Verdi. Casually, on a December night of that same year, the famous tenor Hipólito Lázaro would sing, playing the role of Manrique, sentences that would be perfectly suited for the president: *No, che basti ad arrestarmi / terra e ciel non han possanza...* (No! There is no power in heaven or earth to stop me.)

Since then, and only stopped by the terrible 1983 earthquake, the theater welcomed the public from Popayán and delighted them with works from different places of the world. Besides its being used for film projection, many great artists have been on its stage: the Vienna Boys Choir, Fassmann the illusionist, and even Sara Montiel, just to name a few. While the theater was used for foreign shows, it also promoted its own cultural industry and the scenic arts. The result was a number of important initiatives that lasted as the Religious Music Festival, which

was created in the 1960s. Then, the theater's destiny finally converged with Guillermo León Valencia who, at the time, was the president of Colombia. It was then that the Congress held a session at the theater and enacted the law that gave the theater his name.

The laughs and the tears this theater housed for over fifty years became ruins with the natural disaster that affected a large area of the city. The earthquake was strong but Popayán's illustrious men were also strong. The theater was rebuilt with the support from artists as Edgar Negret and Santiago Cárdenas. Edmundo Mosquera Troya, the founder of the Religious Music Festival, was a key factor for the rebuilding of the theater. He was also key for the development of the cultural and touristic aspects of the city.

There were many adaptations during the fifteen-year restoration process of the theater. By 1998, it looked perfectly well for opening its doors again. However, there was missing detail, a very important one: the theater looked perfect, but would it sound the same? That is how the support from a nation so far from the Pubenza Valley became essential. "We had to rent the equipment bringing it here from Cali," explains Libia Perafán, who was present when the donation was handed over and installed.

The sound was not only poor but expensive. Many owners of show business companies did not want to bring their shows here after a simple mathematical exercise. Figures did not match. I still remember, with emotion, when the boxes arrived and the great expectation they caused while closed, until the technicians, coming from Japan, came and installed it. It is like the moment when one renovates a bathroom, so to speak, only that this meant thousands of new performances.

Its current director, Jorge Lara Ruiz says it without the fear of making a mistake: "The donation is something without which the theater would not have been able to get ahead. The rental charges of the lighting and sound equipments they installed for us would have been unreachable." Jorge knows what he says, not only because of his own experience as director but also as an actor. His debut was when he was 16.

I almost remember, by heart, the dialogues of *An Enemy of the People*, by Brecht. Then I went to study theater to Valle University and I also took other courses, but I always kept in my mind returning to Popayán. I have always been interested in something that can be and must be done through theater work: working with the so particular and

notorious indigenous peoples and the ethnic communities of Cauca.

Therefore, Jorge works everyday for the consolidation of a program with the perfect balance between some samples from other areas and many native samples. Since Cauca has a rich musical tradition, he thinks that the meeting of *chirimías* is particularly important since they have a two-fold meaning in Colombian folklore. For the Pacific region, the *chirimía* is a popular rhythm with several flutes and a snare drum with an air of a military band, with happier and more festive tones. But the origin of the word is in Cauca, where there are great *virtuosi* who play this wind instrument made of clay or wood (today, it is made of giant reed or zinc) that has a mouthpiece and fixed holes, originating from the primitive Arabian cultures brought by the Spaniards, and has an approximate length of 40 cm. The *chirimía* makes a sound similar to that of Irish bagpipes, but it is actually produced by the throat of the player. That is why this meeting, where the most traditional musicians of the area show their skills, is so important. Black and indigenous music blends in this tradition that has rhythms from all the nearby regions of Cauca. This is the reason why this rhythm exists in the Pacific.

The theater, then, strengthens the roots through this type of gatherings, as well as through didactic workshops on traditional music from Cauca. Its work is not restricted to the premises of the building but it goes to schools to give concerts and works jointly with community radio stations. Besides its musical work, theater groups as *La Mancha Teatro* and *Azul de Popayán* also have a place at the *Guillermo León Valencia*.

The music and dance group *Aires de Pubenza* is also an example of this. Its director, Felipe Cháves, has an unavoidable motive for his wanting to keep the group alive: *Don Hugo*, his father, who founded it more than thirty years ago. What started as a family initiative, with rehearsals and simple improvisations at the family living room, ended up becoming a group with a history that has more than thirty musicians and dancers.

Our idea is that music does not become an antique. That the roots of the *paeces* and of the *guambianos* persist. That is why you see my group, and you see there my brother, my son and my nephew, everyone! Regardless of their age.

*Aire de Pubenza* has at its *chirimía* school a luthery workshop with more than 100 students. It also advises projects in other neighborhoods and communities.

Finally but not least, it is necessary to write about the famous event of this city that has taken advantage of the equipment the theater has now: the Religious Music Theater that has been carried out for more than forty years and that has even been chosen by UNESCO as a world-interest event that is also part of the cultural heritage of the nation.

Despite the fact that the organization lost the founder of the festival (the oldest and most important of its kind) in 2002, his widow, *doña* Stella Dupont, knew how to assume the event and has kept it running. "Actually, it was not just my husband. The founders were four and, as a matter of fact, only one of them, José Tomás Illera, played a musical instrument, the violin," she says while remembering the way this project came to be with the participation of Álvaro Thomas, Enrique Toro, her husband, and José Tomás Illera.

Although there is a grand piano at her home which she plays from time to time, *doña* Stella states that Popayán did not have a strong tradition regarding classical or sacred music, which is not as religious as many people think. "The *chirimía* is the true root of our liking music and I don't think the festival is against this tradition; on the contrary, it is a step forward." Everything indicates that this festival has been the best music teacher for the people of Popayán.

However, it was popular music the one that brought about composers such as Efraín Orozco, Ligia Espinosa, Leonardo Pazos or Gonzalo Vidal. *Maestro* Calvo used to say that about him that he was the most national of our musicians and his are the compositions sung by the *Orfeón Obrero* during Holy Week processions. There is also a more recent example that, through percussion, generates a dialogue between academic music and folklore in our region.

*Doña* Stella says that music and culture have overcome the religious spirit a little.

Before, people went to the temples to fulfill their religious duties, not to listen to music. Today, the concerts of the festival are 95% full and are much more elaborate than the former.

The quality required by musicians like harpsichord player Rafael Puyana, or the British guitar player John Williams is very high.

Therefore, there are productions that need special acoustics and technical conditions and the Japanese donations have been a great contribution to these



aspects. “For example, the Popayán Chamber Choir, whom I direct, sounds great at the theater.”

Thus, a generous and almost noiseless donation achieves harmony between folklore, music, scenic arts and, in general, all the arts. As her husband did for many years, *doña* Stella invites a well-known artist to design the poster for the festival every year. Jorge, the director of the *Guillermo León Valencia* has plans for an exhibit of all those posters.

The curtain is closed. The illustrious and numerous audiences applaud and leave the premises they consider their second home. The work of the Guillermo León Valencia Theater is demonstrated through the applause and the stories it has taken part in. From the *chirimía* to the harpsichord, this theater has witnessed each one of the artistic expressions of the White City.

## Cristóbal Colón Theater

### THE GRANDFATHER OF ALL THEATERS

There is something that the people from Bogotá don't know whether to be proud of or not: we are experts at copying trends. Such was the style that started to emerge with an aristocratic and grandiose style (even though there was no aristocracy here). Such was also the need that moved José Tomás Ramírez and José Dionisio Villamizar to build the *Coliseo Ramírez* that later would become our most traditional theater: the *Colón*.

Anyway, the representation of plays was such an event in a city that, despite being called the South American Athens, was fussy about many religious and political issues. Some books like the *Historia del Teatro en Colombia* (The History of Theater in Colombia), by Fernando González Cajiao, assert that the then archbishop of the city, Jaime Martínez Compañón, offered owners of theater companies forty thousand pesos of the time so they would give up such lustful idea that would drive people away from the churches and from a healthy life.

The previous paragraphs are intended to show the kind of cornerstone the Colón Theater has been for the people of Bogotá, since the *Coliseo* was built and then, since the construction of the Maldonado Theater, which was defeated by the private literary gatherings at private homes ending up in the construction of a national theater, sponsored by two great figures of our history: poet Rafael Pombo and former president, also a poet, Rafael Núñez. The words Núñez wrote to a close friend corroborate what is still s truth today:

If I distance myself from politics to devote myself to purely artistic issues, I do so inspired by the love I feel for the Theater, since it will help us forget our distressing situation and will contribute to the promotion of Colombian theater (...).

So, on October 12, 1892 the Cristóbal de Colón Theater was founded. Even with the victory of the arts over superstitions and religious prejudices, Anibale Gatti, the artist who painted the Main Curtain, could not escape the political prejudices and was forced to paint more decorative figures on top of what he had already painted: the encounter of the indigenous peoples and the peasants with artistic figures. It is rather curious that the last names of most of the architects and painters who took part in the construction and design of this theater were all foreigners: Cantini, Ramelli, Sighinolfi, Masteralli...

However, the imitation of foreign customs was not negative. Perhaps the *ruana* was forbidden inside the theater (a particularly elitist detail), but thanks to the creation of these spaces people also gathered for a *tamal con chocolate* (a particular characteristic of Bogotá) around people of other social classes, even if they were not sharing a box. Likewise, it also promoted the creation of local plays like those by Luis Vargas Tejada or Mario Candil, as well as the composition of operas as *Florinda*, by José María Ponce de León and Rafael Pombo, which was still about European topics, as the conquest of the Moors in Spain.

This theater, which has seen all our ancestors, was declared national heritage in 1975. It has always kept varied programs that have always tried to recover our own roots. Operas and concerts have been presented there, as well as folk concerts and, thanks to its two parallel venues, the Delia Zapata Olivella Theater and the Mallarino Hall, local dancers and actors have been trained in their corresponding disciplines.

As the theater sponsors the co-production of plays, it also fosters concerts given by Colombian artists as Antonio Arnedo, Petrona Martínez o Teto Ocampo, the three representatives of different rhythms that share an element: the root, whether from the Pacific, the Atlantic or from the Andean region. The *Talento Fresco en el Ático* program has led the *Colón* to produce more than twenty concerts with new musical groups, and has also sponsored dance companies such as the *Colegio del Cuerpo* or the *Ballet Folclórico Tierra Colombiana*.

Besides, by fulfilling the premise that going to the theater is not only about shows, the *Colón* has a wide range of educational and recreational activities among which we find the recreational vacation workshops which are attended by kids who, otherwise, would not have the chance to enjoy a leisure moment or to learn so much. You can see they focused on recreating the cupola of the theater with play dough, just to mention one of the activities carried out in the mornings during the vacation course.

After the renovation the theater underwent in 1976, it has made an effort to reflect plurality in its programs, and thus has organized events widely known by teenagers and kids alike as the *Matinales del Domingo*, or the *Colón Electrónico*, which have helped to update the theater. More than twenty electronic music concerts, from national and foreign groups, are held annually at the *Colón*. Besides, there are other programs like the dancing one at the *Delia* or the midday concerts that, since 2005, have been an option for the recreation and culture of the thousands of passers-by and employees walking in the downtown area, as well as for the groups invited from companies, schools and charity institutions.

The Nutcracker ballet, for example, was seen by more than five hundred kids displaced by violence. All these people have benefited from the donation of lighting and sound equipments that on two occasions, in 1984 and in 1997, the Japanese government has handed over to the *Colón*. Its impact has been beneficial for the theater and its public.

The *Colón* is something like the visible head of a group, the grandfather of a large family in which everything is being inherited. If the equipment that theaters like the *Colón* have is replaced, the parts of that equipment that can still be used go to other theaters that do not have anything similar for their operation. Technicians can attest to that. The happiness of these key people at a theater, who are almost never applauded but who deserve the applauses, are also an additional explanation of the positive impact that a donation like this one can have on any theater. What they have done is to equip other “younger” venues, so to speak.

Leaving aside the discussion regarding what is local and what is foreign, it is necessary just to look at the *Teatro Malandro* by the Colombian Omar Porras. He staged *El Señor Puntilla y su Criado Matti*, by the German author Bertold Brecht, during the last Ibero-American Theater Festival of Bogotá. The teamwork carried out by Omar, along with some Swiss and some Colombians, explains why it was so important that, at the beginning, our only objective was to copy foreign art or even import it. This encounter between what is European and what is local resulted in an interesting blend in Colombian theater. As in the mixture of races, this theatrical blend enriches us with cultural expressions and its sole effect is to give a better flavor and an air to classic formats.

An example of this is the dance group *Teatro L'Explose* that the Theater has sponsored for many years. Its director, Tino Fernández, from Spain, states that what he has found in Colombia, in the artistic field, is very special.

There is a virgin world here where there is a lot to be done. The shortage of material resources contrasts the great human wealth. Everything is almost done in Europe, while here it is just the desire of people moving the mountains. That is why I have been living in Colombia since 1996. I kept doing what I had outlined in Europe and I started working with empirical dancers who learned by doing because, at that time, there was no real formation, especially in contemporary dancing which requires a technique but needs histrionics too, says Fernández, who has co-produced his last works at the *Colón* Theater.

I have only good things to say about the *Colón*. It is the theater that has sponsored me in my two last productions: *Frenesí* and *La Mirada del Avestruz*. The *Colón*, as a

scenario, is a good place for dancing (not too big, not too small) and has a magic because it is so old. The technical details that will need to be solved will be repaired with the intervention that started in March.

As the grandfather needs to rest to sit his grandson on his lap to tell him wonderful stories, an old construction with such a history needs a restoration that will put in shape to meet new current needs. Then, it will be able to welcome the public again.

That is why the *Colón*, as it did in 1976, closed its doors since March 24 in order to avoid its own death. And as the generous and sweet grandfather it has always been, it welcomed us with all its history and its impressive magic until its last days of operation. Therefore, we will see it born again, once and more times, with the deep happiness of knowing it is ours.

## National Center for Restoration

### THE MIRACLE OF COLLECTIVE MEMORY

What would happen to our history if we were not able to recover the material goods that deteriorate in time? What would happen to the Louvre without the Monalisa, or to the Egyptians without the pyramids, or to Italy without the Sistine Chapel? The collective memory of a people leans on its historic goods. Therefore, the Japanese government donated particular and specialized equipment to the Center for Restoration that, regrettably, closed its doors years ago but left a legacy to the younger generation studying today for the preservation or works of art and architectural buildings which project our common past.

The walls our grandparents and great-grandparents have inhabited, as well as what our ancestors have painted are an essential part of our personality as a nation. As a character from the novel *El Búfalo de Noche*, by the Mexican author Guillermo Arriaga (who also authored *Amores Perros* and *Babel*), says:

One grows, sleeps, fights, loves, fornicates, eats, hates  
and dies in the houses. Kids, they are not just buildings.  
They are the sacred spaces of life.

Therefore, it is important to preserve them although few people know what an aging chamber (part of the equipment donated by the Japanese government) is. This machine has lamps that emit UV irradiation on the samples to simulate, in an accelerated way, the degradation they would undergo when exposed to direct sunlight. This way, it can be predicted what materials are more resistant when restoring a painting or even the wall of an old building. But the wonders of this machine do not end there. It can also program condensation and rain cycles to test the materials *vis à vis* other atmospheric phenomena that also deteriorate objects. This is the proof that science has never been the enemy of art. Quite the opposite, it has always worked for it.

This is how it is understood by those using these equipments at the Scientific Laboratory for Restoration (*Laboratorio Científico de Restauración*) from the Externado de Colombia University. This institution received on gratuitous loan several of the equipments donated by Japan, since the Center for Restoration had been closed and left the equipments in the hands of its students. As María del Pilar Muñoz, who was the director of the Center at the time, explains:

When Colcultura became the Ministry of Culture, what we  
did was to entrust these activities to the School of

Restoration that, since its beginning, was working along with the Center. In other words, the program of the university was devised at the Center. We designed the educational program and then the university adopted that same program that had been in operation for twenty years at Colcultura, and that graduated six generations of restorers. In this sense, the University was the adequate entity to continue this work.

The work of these students is, therefore, aimed at keeping these objects and buildings alive, as exact as possible, as they looked in their time.

What we keep alive is the reflection of a society, its morality, its economic situation and all its characteristics. Art is a reflection of how men thought during their times, when their feelings were expressed through their works constituting a priceless legacy, says Catalina Padilla, a Restoration student at the ninth semester of studies.

The incredible thing about my career is that from the fifth semester I have actually worked. I worked on the conservation of pictures at the Bogotá Museum, and I also conducted research on Colombian artists between 1900 and 1950. Then I worked at the National Network of Museums on a diagnostic study of the museums, and I have also worked on three particular restoration processes at the *Niño Jesús de Praga Parish*. All this could have been impossible without the tools we have at the School. The aging chamber is incredible, because it is perhaps the only thing that, for sure, lets you foresee the future. The biosecurity chamber makes it possible to safeguard one's life despite the fact that the works to be rescued are so important.

One of the problems arising during a restoration process is the modification of original colors in the material of the work of art, since protectors and other products deteriorate or change the pigments. What students should look for is the chromatic homogeneity between the original materials and the new ones. As Kandinsky said in his wonderful book *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*:

The color is the key, the eye is the back pack, and the soul is the piano with all its chords. The artist is the hand that, through one or another key, makes the soul vibrate adequately.

Taking into consideration the words of this Great Russian artist, a dyphractometer may be essential to the soul (this is equipment that has been donated). This machine is the most precise way to recognize a mineral since it establishes its reticular structure and, therefore, helps to establish its type. This is helpful so when the restorer wants to imitate a color originally used knows how to mix the right

amount of pigment used in the object so it looks original and the color will not change in time. The interaction between the pigment and the material (or cementing material, as it is known by the experts) determines the color intended to achieve.

Restoring an object does not mean leaving it brand new. The restoration should return an aesthetical integrity to the object but should keep the traces of time. So, we keep remembering Kandinsky, since a restorer should not only train the eye but also the soul. His sensitivity will help him to respect the aging process of the work of art by eliminating those traces that affect its beauty. Thus, he gives back its aesthetic sense without discarding the value of what these students call documentary values or contributions from other times.

Besides the already mentioned equipments, Japan also gave the country other tools: a biosecurity chamber and three stereoscopes, used for tri-dimensional viewing of aerial pictures without making a great effort. The stereoscopes are instruments built with lenses and mirrors forcing parallel vision thus being able to see just one image with each eye. On the other hand, the biosecurity chamber protects restorers from highly toxic materials they work with. Sometimes mouth covers and protective glasses are not enough, since there can be contact with unknown viruses or bacteria. If some of the archeologists who entered the pyramids in Egypt for the first time had counted with something similar to one of these chambers, the myth that there were spells that killed them would have never spread. The truth is that what poisoned them were toxic gases trapped there.

On the other hand, the dyphractometer is a piece of equipment that would be much more useful in other areas and that was taken to the laboratory at the National University. Before the arrival of the Shimatzu-6000 Dyphractometer, donated by the Japanese government to the Ministry of Culture, the National University had similar equipment, but too old, that had been damaged for more than five years. Therefore, the Shimatzu-6000 was welcomed by professors and students of Schools like the School of Physics.

Since it was in the hands of the Center, students went and rented it by the hours, because it was really unique then. My happiness upon receiving the equipment can only be compared to the happiness I felt when the first Phd in Physics, trained by me, graduated at the National University. When we received it there were perhaps two dyphractometers in Colombia. They are scarce even today; there are perhaps five in the country, states professor Gerardo Gordillo, who knows perfectly well how to operate this odd machine.



It is basically used to study the structural and crystallographic properties of all types of materials, and with the help of specialized software it is possible to identify the chemical compounds and the structure. Those made in Japan are very reliable, easy to operate and, above all, they are seldom damaged since they are designed to work under the typical conditions of the electrical potency of our country that, in general, do not meet the quality standards for electrical energy.

Despite the closing of the Center for Restoration, the equipment remained, as can be seen, in the best hands since these will be the hands that will work for the preservation of our heritage in the future, or the hands that will conduct important research in the field of Physics.

During the Middle Ages, it was believed that the restoration work was some sort of really marginal handicraft, perfect for those who never managed to become artists. Today, after three centuries and after the appearance of Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (a French architect who studied Gothic architecture extensively and reconstructed the unfinished buildings of the time) it is clear that the work of a restorer is unique and invaluable.

This is why the School for the Study of the Cultural Heritage, as it is currently known, has been educating, for more than thirteen years, those who have participated in the analysis of more than 700 real estate properties, such as the old Law School from the Antioquia University, the research on the early pottery of *Villa de Leyva*, the appraisal of the paintings from the Tolima Conservatory, the restoration of the Faenza Theater, and the study of the materials in the works of Gregorio Vásquez de Arce y Ceballos.

Likewise, they have known how to choose and assess the national artistic production to declare all the paintings, documents or buildings, objects of cultural interest if they deserved to be classified as such.

Their preservation mission is a great task since, according to Kandinsky's words:

Every work of art is a child of its time and, frequently, it gives origin to our own sensations. Therefore, each cultural stage produces a specific art that cannot be repeated.

**National University  
Music Conservatory**

**TO THE RHYTH OF WINNERS**

*Maestro* Tetsuo Kagehira was born in Osaka, in Japan. He studied at the Musashino Academy of Music and eventually arrived in Colombia. He has been here for more than ten years. He worked for fifteen years at the Symphonic Orchestra of Colombia as a trombone player and, currently, he is a Trombone and Chamber Music teacher at the National University Music Conservatory. He is just one of the 89 professors working at the Conservatory (one for every 9 students), who created the Music and Instrumental Music undergraduate programs in 1994 and, a year later, received a donation of instruments from the Japanese government.

Since then, the School has had 11 groups of students and has graduated 43 students as musicians, while promoting its pre-university courses for young people and children. It has also strengthened its specialization and Master's Degree programs, particularly the Music Therapy, Holistic Artistic Education and Piano Pedagogy programs that have already been approved, as well as the proposal for a Master's Degree in Direction.

However, the origin of this conservatory goes back in time, to the musical movement led by Henry Price in 1846 which led to the creation of the Philharmonic Society. Precisely, Price's son, George, was the one who led the creation of this National Academy of Music, founded during President Núñez term in 1882. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it became a conservatory. Back then, Uribe Holguín inaugurated the Symphonic Concerts Society which was not playing opera and dance-group potpourris, but an international symphonic repertoire. Three of the military bands of the city merged and created just one band with professional goals. Then the university began participating in 1935, as the Music Department, and it became a conservatory once more in 1965.

Before this, musical studies were carried out at private homes, with private teachers and few Colombians knew famous pieces as Bach's.

Perhaps the most important aspect of this school is that it was not aimed just at young high school graduates. The idea than "I want to be a musician when I grow up" is so little plausible as "I will be a dancer when I grow up." Therefore, the

school has a basic program for children and young people still attending school. Mario Sarmiento, director of the conservatory states that in his own words:

If higher musical education wants to focus on professional practice, it should start during early childhood.

Therefore, students who complete the courses of the basic program before graduating from high school can take courses from the undergraduate programs. "The basic program is so important for us that it has almost three hundred students, out of a total of 500, which is 59% of the students of the institution," continues Mario.

They can take courses in advance: reading and writing, and some of the grammars that are taught by last-semester students of the In-depth Pedagogy program.

Killing two birds with one stone: the conservatory teaches its students to teach and offers a chance of improvement to those students who need a faster program.

The growth in the number of young people who want to devote themselves to different arts, like music, makes the obtaining of more and more instruments really necessary. The figures from ICFES show that the demand of places for professional training in the arts grew 210% from 1985 to 1995 at the national level, while other undergraduate programs just grew 32%. While the number of students enrolled in all the undergraduate programs of the university increased 57%, arts had an increase of 130%. What has been said is enough to corroborate that the instruments handed over to the conservatory, at the time these percentages were calculated, have been and will be used.

But there is another story that has no figures and could be more meaningful. Mario Sarmiento, the current director of the conservatory, was one of its students when the instruments donated by Japan arrived. I was preparing my graduation recital as a percussionist and I was appointed to receive the percussion instruments and check them," says Sarmiento.

It was like giving a laboratory to a crazy scientist! Besides guitars, cellos, violins, double basses, clarinets, piccolos, flutes, saxophones and trumpets, there was what I liked the most: xylophones, gongs, snare drums, a piano... I was the one who used these instruments for the first time during my graduation recital.

The large number of *maestros* who were also students shows the great community that has been built over the years.

Speaking about other topics, Sarmiento states that the musical heritage of a culture is not just made up by folklore and tradition today.

It is important to make an effort so academic production that is more complex, current, creative and with a higher technical and artistic level, becomes part of it. That is what we strive for at the Conservatory.

According to this idea, the in-depth lines were created in 1994. These lines allow for a more specific study of music looking at it not just as an occupation or as a profession, but rather as a discipline. Students have started to “do research,” besides “playing.”

An example of this is the in-depth study of violin pedagogy which has led to the carrying out of courses on *musical initiation – string instruments* using the Suzuki method. Mauricio Posada, an amateur musician and a guitar teacher, talks about his experience:

Now that I am older, I decided to study cello. I got to know Suzuki and, without even noticing it, I learned the best method to be used with my students, not just for my own learning. The courses I have taken at the National University are incredible. It is a true source of inspiration and knowledge.

*Maestro Zarzicky*, one of the teachers who have deepened this study, has the pleasure of having published a book: *Nuevos Aspectos sobre el Estudio del Violonchelo y las Escalas*.

All this, and the intention that the Symphonic Orchestra, as well as the Symphonic Band, focus their efforts on the composition of “academic classical” music and on orchestra direction, does not mean that there aren’t other parallel efforts regarding popular music. There are workshops where students learn to play the *bandola*, the *tiple*, and the guitar through popular compositions. Research projects have also been conducted at the local level, as the one which resulted in a video by the well-known *Toño Arnedo*: *Histories of Colombia through its Music*; or the project by Elsa Gutiérrez on the onomatopoeic songs from Guajira by *Maestro Raúl Mojica*; or the five-song Cycle based on León de Greiff’s poems, sung by soprano María Pardo, accompanied by pianist Piedad Rosas.

Symphonic orchestras are divided into two categories: the *Collegium Musicum*, which was founded eleven years ago and whose members range between 12 and 16 years of age; the second one is the Symphonic Orchestra, made up by 54

students of the undergraduate program with about 40 public presentations. Its level is so good that many of them, including the ones at the basic level, have won over 50% of the competitions of the Symphonic Orchestra of Colombia and of the Philharmonic Orchestra of Bogotá. In fact, 13 member of the Philharmonic Orchestra of Bogotá, and 35 from the Philharmonic Orchestra of Cundinamarca belong to the conservatory. Likewise, four students won the competition for becoming member of the Juvenile Symphonic Orchestra of the Americas at the Puerto Rico Festival (June 2002). When competing at a well-respected venue as the *Musicalia International Festival*, held at Havana (Cuba), two singing students got the second and third awards. The list of merits does not end there: they have been awarded first prizes as the Alfa Music Award 2000 and in the competition for new members of the Salzburg Wind Orchestra, among others.

This is where the other strength of the conservatory lies, according to Mario:

We want them to have these exchanges in other countries. Having foreign degrees from foreign places such as the Tchaikovsky State Conservatory in Russia, the Higher Conservatory in Zurich, Switzerland, or the Academy of Music in Kraków, Poland, is a great acknowledgment for our musicians.

That is why a great effort is made for academic agreements. If we mention the most important ones, we have to include the agreement with the Schola Cantorum in Basel, for lectures and workshops on the theoretical bases of Baroque music, as well as an agreement with the *Universidad de Chile* to participate in the Music Therapy Satellite Symposium in 2005. These meetings have helped the conservatory develop courses as Music and Occupational Welfare, foreseeing new specializations on the topic.

Besides this exchange, the conservatory has participated in events such as the III International Suzuki Festival, or the Chair of Violoncello and Double Bass from the Academy of Music in Kraków, just to name two of the ten or twelve international events we attend. And, as music is a sort of contagious and marvelous vice, it has also promoted meetings between its students and great *maestros* such as Si Quin Lu, Joaquín Achúcarro or Geer M. Dehous, just to name only three of the twenty musicians that come to teach their workshops and seminars in just one year.

Without instruments, none of the above could have been possible. As Mario states:

There are instrumental chairs that are owed solely to the donation, like the harp and the tuba. The interpretation of ancient music cannot be fostered, for example, without a

harpsichord. The examples are numerous and the real contribution is visible and, most of all, *audible* at the concerts.

This helps us say another thing and it is that concerts given at the conservatory, at the university or in other places, are a total of 120 per year, counting the concerts from the Symphonic Orchestra and Band, the Baroque Music Ensemble, the University Choir and the pre-orchestras.

### *The history of an instrument from another time*

There is a particular anecdote about the donation that Ellie Anne Duque (Music History teacher and Research director) tells to confirm what Sarmiento said:

Most of the study instruments are Yamaha, a worldwide-known brand because of its great quality that has also the advantage of the repair-maintenance service in Colombia. The concert instruments are special. The concert harp, Aoyama, and the harpsichord were commissioned to a Japanese *luthier* so he could copy a Flemish instrument from the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

The Flanders region (The Netherlands) is very important for the development of music and art during the Renaissance. Many of the best harpsichords were built there during the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. These instruments were also built throughout the Baroque. This is the reason why the Japanese *luthier* used one of them as a model, not only regarding the decoration but also its musical characteristics.

Its role is like that of the *basso continuo*. It is such a beautiful instrument and, although I can't recall the name of the *luthier*, thanks to him we could start the Baroque Music chair.

It is well known that ancient instruments are much more valued by musicians. However, *maestros* like Yo-Yo Ma have begun to re-evaluate this idea:

I believe that playing new instruments is as important as playing new pieces. Old instruments are becoming scarce and the new ones are better and better, We could be entering a new golden age for building instruments.

Ellie Anne also remembers the criteria used for the selection of the instruments:

We thought about instruments hardly found at the homes of students: a concert baby grand piano, a harp, a concert

marimba, a harpsichord and a complete collection of percussion instruments.

More than twelve years have gone by since this donation was handed over. Today, the instruments are still the essential material of more than 500 musicians playing them every day in order to improve and become better musicians, while making of us great persons. Some of the instruments will be replaced while others will sound even better than when they first arrived. The truth is that, in the hands of the students, they have helped to express something that can only be said through music. For the rest, words are not enough.

**National Library of Colombia**  
**Center for Music Documentation**

## **THE TIMELESSNESS OF BOOKS**

This cradle of libraries in Colombia houses almost thirty thousand books published between the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries as well as an art collection. This has been achieved in many years and with the donations of private libraries from writers, scientists and figures of the life of the country such as Rufino José Cuervo, Marco Fidel Suárez, Miguel Antonio Caro, Jorge Isaacs, Eduardo Santos, Ezequiel Uricoechea and Germán Arciniegas. These books are at the *Sala del Fondo Antiguo* (the room for old books). However, there are different collections in the other three rooms. At the *Daniel Samper Ortega* (who once was one of the directors of the library) there are published works from 1830 to date.

At the *Hemeroteca* one finds all the newspapers, journals and other publications edited in the country, as well as some foreign titles. The Center for Music Documentation, as expressed by its name, houses scores and tapes, as well as video material. If you have published a book, whatever its topic, it is almost sure that two volumes will be stored at the legal deposit of the Library, which is the most organized bibliographic collection center in the country.

The National Library received a specific donation for the preservation of books and documents in 1994. Through this microfilm equipment the library has been responsible for the recovery, preservation and dissemination of the bibliographic, newspaper-journal and audiovisual heritage of our country. That is how contents of physical books that cannot be handled by many researchers who need to read them are not lost. The National Library, the first center for the bibliographic memory of the country, did not have any equipment to this effect. Therefore, the donation became the core of a system that, today, has recovered hundreds and hundreds of pieces of information that could have been lost.

By the time of the donation, the only available equipment was an obsolete microfilm reader. Therefore, receiving a whole unit with planetary cameras, a film processor, an inspectometer (to assess the quality of the films), as well as special cabinets for storing the material was, and still is, of the utmost importance.

Japanese equipments have very good quality. For example, the HiraKawa camera (for 35 and 16 mm) is an equipment that can be installed in any place, it is portable and its image is of great quality, as offered by other that are more robust and expensive in the market. To date, with the



obvious necessary repairs, the whole microfilm donated unit is in mint condition, states Sandra Angulo, an employee from the library.

It was gratifying for the library when the first boxes loaded with these new equipments were delivered, the seedbed of one of the most important preservation tools. Along with the installation of the equipments, a seminar-workshop was held with the participation of a Japanese engineer who, graciously, exchanged gestures and used the language of emotion to be understood. Looking at a document that has been translated into a sequence of microfilm photograms implies that thousands of human beings may access this information without causing any damage to the original material, she points out.

It is important for any library that the books and documents it has are known and, in that sense, the National Library has become the core of our collective memory, not just through its premises, but also through the design and planning of many public libraries operating thanks to other donations from the Japanese government.

The National Library is, then, the stem cell from which the other libraries that are visited by millions of Colombians in different areas of the country may be copied. It was founded in 1777 and since its beginnings, to date, it has had different locations, among them the San Carlos Palace, where the Chancellery is today, and the current headquarters on 24<sup>th</sup> street and carrera 5<sup>th</sup>, which opened in 1938 that is part of our cultural heritage since 1975.

It is here that the first librarians of the country were trained. Important figures from the cultural history environment as Anselmo Álvarez, José María Quijano, Miguel Antonio Caro or Manuel del Socorro Rodríguez (the father of the first local newspaper of Bogotá) were directors of the library, and each one of them left something for what the library is now.

During the last years the library has been unconditionally involved in the national plan for reading and libraries, led by the Ministry of Culture, along with the Ministry of Education, the *Banco de la República* and *Fundalectura*, as well as with other entities. Those who do not believe in the power of books would be surprised if finding out that this plan was awarded the 2006 *Premio Nacional de Alta Gerencia* (National Award for Senior Management) due to its absolute success.

After several adaptations, when the General Archive of the Nation was removed from the fourth floor of the National Library in 1994, the area for the conservation and microfilm workshops was designed to one side; the Center for Musical Documentation was located to the other side. The Center received a prior donation

and it is now assigned to the library. One could end here but, fortunately, the Center for Music Documentation has also a motive for gratitude towards the Japanese government, even before being part of the library.

### *The happy destiny of musical notes*

On January 12, 1989, at 11<sup>th</sup> street and carrera 5<sup>th</sup>, guests listened silently to poet Dora Castellanos, a great promoter of cultural life and the first woman to be summoned to the Colombian Academy of Language. “Something inside is in pain and sings / brief song, too long moan / even hell itself raises us,” says one of her poems. That was the day when the handing over of the equipments to the Center for Music Documentation of Colcultura was made official. The then director, Benjamín López Chamorro, was utterly happy. Soon thousands of scores and tapes that would have been otherwise lost were going to have a happy ending: they would be digitalized to remain forever in the hearts of the Colombians who perhaps might have not been born or who were just learning to talk.

That same eight-channel analog recording studio was reinstalled and adapted at the downtown building in 1998. It is now at the National Library where it still renders services to a highly specialized public. This is not a place whose impact can be measured by a large crowd, since it is made up of music researchers or devoted music lovers looking for rarities that have become treasures, listening to their own findings and then digitalizing analog tapes thus contributing with new treasures to the Center. Some people might think that the equipments in the center are obsolete. However, that is precisely the idea so old recordings no longer used are not lost.

It is in this place that we find Jaime Quevedo, the director of the Center, who has tried to keep it working jointly with the group of Centers for Artistic Documentation of the Office of the Arts from the Ministry of Culture. The purpose is to devise programs like the recovery, protection and use of the documentary artistic heritage available at schools like the *Liceo Parroquial San José*, and at universities such as the *Andes* and *Inpahu*.

The delicate task of handling old scores and pictures, to classify and to file them without causing any damage is an almost-zen activity which can teach a lot.

It has allowed us to build, in time, a valuable and meaningful documentary collection providing the country with a highly important musical documented memory, as well as a leadership promoting the organization and the structuring of document-related processes in the musical

sector, states Quevedo.

Thanks to him and to the donated equipments, the National Library has the most important and rich documentary collection of the documented Colombian musical heritage with over 35,000 documents in its collections.

In order to be updated, the Center has attended various international meetings in the fields of archives and documentation centers. It is also a member of the Operational Committee for the census and assessment of ethnographic sound and audiovisual documents of the Andean countries (CASAE, in Spanish). Due to this fact, it translated and adapted from French a guide for the documentary analysis of unpublished sound, for the organization of databases, and then carried out the fifth national meeting of centers for music documentation of Colombia with the objective of starting to use this guide and sharing it at the international level.

Another interesting project carried out by the Center for Music Documentation is a type of Musical Geography of Colombia on the Internet, through maps showing the different rhythms of each region.

The idea is that this should include more audio material and pictures, as well as deep layers and layers to create the cartography of musical practice, showing the complexity of each one of the rhythms, with its influences and other information, says Jaime.

This type of activities is so captivating that even a kid may listen to the rhythms of his country for hours and then identify the corresponding regions. Besides any other type of knowledge that could be acquired through music, there is a stronger reason behind the desire to preserve as many musical notes as possible. As the British poet Robert Browning said: "The one who listens to music feels that his own loneliness is suddenly crowded."

## Bolívar House Museum

### A LIBERATOR WHO LASTS IN MEMORY

On December 22, 1976, the Colombian government signed, with the Japanese government, the first *brick* of what was to become a long and close cooperation relationship between both countries. This agreement, which came into force on December 12, 1978, was signed, as a matter of curiosity, by Indalecio Liévano Aguirre, Minister of Foreign Relations during the presidency of Alfonso López Michelsen.

It is a happy coincidence that in 1993, fifteen years later, under the direction of Diana Torres de Ospina, the Bolívar House Museum (the *Quinta*) received a donation of audiovisual and air conditioning equipments for the conservation of the furniture, the paintings and the other elements that were privileged witnesses of the political and intimate moments of the Liberator, Simón Bolívar.

The truth is that this donation had a lot to do with Mr. Daisaku Ikeda, a spiritual and political leader of Japan, who visited the Bolívar House, an exceptionally sensitive human being who was highly motivated after his visit, and who published an article on Bolívar and his *Quinta* in a national newspaper.

Mr. Ikeda, besides being a prolific writer and poet, has been one of the most important peace constructors in the world, a task that he has believed to be essential for education and culture, as he says: “a great human revolution in a simple individual may allow a change in the destiny of all humanity,” words that are adequate for that human being who inhabited the *Quinta* and who inspired one of our most important politicians and historians, Indalecio Liévano Aguirre, to write about his life.

Indalecio was, and still is, besides foreign authors like Daniel Pecaualt and Malcolm Deas, the most objective *colombianista* born in our land in the last century. He knew how to study about and conduct research on all the social phenomena that have been part of our history while being impartial and having a great passion. He outlined the profiles of important figures of our Nation as Rafael Núñez and Bolívar himself. His biography of the Liberator covers all the aspects influencing the life of a human being. Bolívar appears as a child, as a young man, as a politician, as a man in love, as a general and president but, above all, as the man, body and soul, who is an icon in America today.

This same experience of getting to know all of Bolívar is possible at the Bolívar House, where the leader spent, though not many, very important moments of his life. It was there where Bolívar lived for a whole month before departing to the final independence campaign of Venezuela (his homeland) that ended in the famous Carabobo Battle. That same year, before setting out to liberate the south along with San Martín, he also stayed at the house which, it seems, gave him enough peace to think about and carry out his activities as political leader and as liberator.

I remember my happiness when I was informed about the donation of full audiovisual equipment, the air conditioning system, plus a piano we gave to the *Quinta de San Pedro Alejandrino* in Santa Marta, where Bolívar spent his last days. The best aspect of the donation is that it is not handed over and then "one has to think what to do." On the contrary, there is a Japanese technical team that installs everything and then teaches how to use it.

Regarding the audiovisual material, the Museum was able to record its different educational and cultural activities, as well as to interview people who are involved with the *Quinta*.

There was the announcement of an open contest by Sony Icd. The *Quinta* participated with the audiovisual *La Quinta de mi Amigo Bolívar* (The House of Bolívar, my Friend) and the educational program focused on Bolivarian thought. We were awarded a prize in the Prize category. It's just telling one of the thousands of anecdotes in which I have felt the satisfaction of having the donation.

There is nothing more important for a people than memory. And without the historic memory of our country it would be impossible to glimpse solutions to current problems. For this reason, the donation made to the *Quinta* has played such an important role. Only through the conservation of those places that welcomed not only a man but the hopes of thousands of Americans is it that people, nowadays, can understand where they come from and where they are heading. No detail is unimportant when recreating the life of a great man who, after liberating several territories, assumed the difficult task of organizing and leading a newborn state. Since his return from Peru in 1826, Bolívar ate, slept, discussed and wrote at the *Quinta* that is a museum today. He even fell in love and built his relationship with Manuelita Sáenz de Thorne there. The presence of this woman at the *Quinta* was also important since she gathered, constantly, through parties and meetings, all the figures surrounding his loved one during the hard task of building our Nation. As we have already mentioned, the South Campaign ended there and the founding of the Gran Colombia also took place there.

The Liberator would be very happy if he knew that his home is now a meeting point, for young people and children alike, around his history and around the many cultural activities as film and audiovisual projections, the making of *origami* frames, bird watching from the house, or the choosing of a plant every month to study its characteristics and getting people to know it (remembering another illustrious ancestor, the *Sabio Caldas*). There are also handicraft workshops, focused on history topics, as the relationship between Bolívar and Santander, two politicians that many deem enemies, but who shared the same idea of creating a great nation.

The kids create the figures and recreate concrete aspects of that friendship. It is in this way that they keep historical facts in their memories that, taught in a conventional way, may not look interesting to them, says Juan Palomino, director of cultural activities and diffusion of the Museum.

We also have clubs to stimulate kids to read about those historical facts that led to our independence. It is a beautiful experience because then they reflect upon it.

Nonetheless, there are also activities for adults, such as specialized visits guided by historians. Sandra Arévalo, for example, is the person in charge of the visit "*Bolívar el libertador: entre trazos y reliquias*," including all the objects and the available iconography.

In this visit, I focus my attention on the role played both by the iconography and by the collection of objects of the patriotic heroes in the construction of a nation, says the historian.

Besides the visits, there are also permanent and itinerant exhibits, like for example the one of the cannons including various pieces from different types (with different ammunition as solid cannon balls and hollow grenade-type cannon balls) and two campaign linstock, cannons, a howitzer and *pedreros* (a type of cannon for rock balls) that are useful when remembering our independence and the role played by the artillerymen in it. The idea is that artifacts are not lying there but that people receive information acting as a context for those things.

The museum carries out workshops, visits with explanations and even special visits for senior citizens every year. It is worth noting that the Month of the Grandparent program, in which almost one thousand grandparents participated in activities such as visits and lectures. More than six hundred visits, about 9,000 people, show the great work of the Museum. Besides, there are students who visit the museum thanks to collective invitations made to schools and universities.

Adding up the number of visits made by adults, kids and students, we can count over 100,000 people visiting the museum. The museum is also getting ready for the commemoration of the Bicentennial of the Independence, which will take place in 2010. It is already designing a wide program so such an important event can be organized with the participation of all those who can make a contribution to it.

The schedule of activities at the *Quinta* is so varied, and Bolívar's life is so deeply marvelous, that one can stroll in the garden to understand the thought of the Liberator, that model of the man-nature relationship he was educated in, when *don* Simón Rodríguez educated him under Rousseau's precepts, trying to help man to integrate with nature. The influence over Bolívar, thanks to his tutor, can be confirmed in these words by Rousseau:

The craft that I want to teach him is to live. I agree that when he leaves my hands he will not be a magistrate, or a military, or a clergyman; he will be, yes, first, a man, everything a man is meant to be, and he will know how to be one, if necessary, as good as the most outstanding; destiny will not succeed in changing him of place, because he will always find his own.

Bolívar will always find a place in the hearts of Colombians thanks to this museum. Undoubtedly, the *Casa Quinta* will be the most useful tool to approach the thought of this great man. Long life to this museum since, as Bolívar himself stated: "Nobody is great with impunity." The words of Mr. Ikeda are thus fulfilled: the inner revolution of this man was enough to guide our destinies.

## **Santiago Londoño Theater**

### **A GREAT THEATER FOR PEREIRA**

What would unite a young Ukrainian woman and the *Eje Cafetero* (the coffee-growing region in Colombia)? At first sight, nothing. Two worlds that are so distant from each other can only be in a relationship thanks to an even farther country: Japan. Without the cultural donation Japan made to the Santiago Londoño Theater in Pereira it would have been, perhaps, impossible for the people of Pereira to smile with the presentation of the Ukrainian Chamber Orchestra.

This orchestra was founded in 1994 and made up by 40 musicians, under the direction of *maestro* Serhiy Burko. People from Pereira were moved by this fully simple performance. Among the faces was Mirley Betacourth, the director of the Santiago Londoño Theater. She feels proud about being the head of a place that has been a space for entertainment and culture since it was built in 1990, and that was named after one of the main cultural promoters of this city which, two centuries ago, was a shelter for José Francisco Pereira and his brother Manuel when they were fleeing from the Spanish army, after the defeat of the patriotic army at Cachirí.

Since its creation, the Santiago Londoño Theater, assigned to the Secretariat of Culture of the department, has been the main cultural center where there are almost 480 performances per year, as recitals by tenor Juan Diego Flórez, concerts by pianist Leonardo Le San, the Chilean Alberto Plaza or the Colombian Andrés Cepeda, as well as ballets like the Arab Sherezade, Swan Lake or The Sleeping Beauty. There have also been other performances, greatly applauded by the audience, like the Bolero International Festival, Prague's Black Theater, the Mexican Folklore Ballet, the Vienna Boys Choir and the Bambuco National Competition.

Throughout its 18 years and with a seating capacity of 890, the theater has always averaged 140,000 spectators a year, indicating that 140,000 souls have been rejoiced, in one way or another, by this element of catharsis which theater is for human beings. If this was not enough, the theater is also good for the consolidation of popular art and culture, since it offers spaces for rehearsing and staging to all the theater groups that have been started in the city and that would eventually, without the generosity and the joint work of the theater, not exist.



An example of this is César Castaño, a 27-year-old young man who works diligently at one of the offices of the theater right before the Strauss show. He directs the theater group *El Mal Paso* that recently staged and performed a great play he adapted.

I entitled it *Antígona Incorpórea* (Bodiless Antigone) because I used a text written by the Spanish writer María Zambrano that starts with a sentence that kept sounding in my head: "And that word remained there, walking around a forgotten tomb..."

The text Diego refers to is *La Tumba de Antígona* (Antigone's Tomb), an essay that became a drama-related work divided up in fragments including dialogues between the main characters of the Sophocles' tragedy.

The theater is my home and the home of many directors and actors. The cost-benefit is immense because, although we commit ourselves to a number of performances, we have the chance of getting together in an adequate space to rehearse, continues César, who presents one of his works at least once a month.

He, along with other directors, belongs to the *Tarde de Teatro* Program, a kind of network of theater people getting together every Friday. Groups like *Cicuta*, *Telaraña Teatral*, *Cofradía Danza*, *Palo Q'sea* and *Paradigma* have found at the *Santiago Londoño* a space for rehearsing and showing plays like *Dos Pelaos y un Quebrao*, a work by *Palo Q'sea*, telling the story of two kids who are left alone at their home because the mother needs to work. This type of plays reflects reality from a local perspective.

Other groups like *Cicuta* have staged foreign plays like *La Extravagancia*, from the famous Argentinian playwright Rafael Spregelburd, which questions the idea of family through a day-to-day dialogue between two twin sisters. *Crear*, in turn, has staged a play based on the life of the late Colombian poet María Mercedes Carranza. And for the kids there have been plays like *¿Y si no fuera un cuento?*, a children's story transporting the audience of children to a remote island where two poor fishermen live.

As many others, César got a start at the Inter-School Theater Festival, an initiative from the *Instituto Municipal de Cultura y Fomento al Turismo* (culture and tourism institute) that had sixteen editions since 1989 and that, regrettably, has not been carried out in the last two years. Diego Restrepo has suggested, as Director of APGAE, the *Asociación Pereirana de Grupos de Artes Escénicas* (association of theater groups of Pereira), the revival of the festival.

This is the seedbed of many theater people, if not of all of them. There were around thirty groups participating, it was a party. Getting the theater closer to the school is a way to educate and develop an audience.

He remembers his experience at the Inter-School Festival, because he led a workshop, he was a judge and started advising the groups from the Rafael Uribe school: "It was about helping them to give shape to the projects that were not ready. The tasks included helping them to stage the play and directing the actors." APGAE, created in 2006, is made up of 23 theater companies and has contributed to them becoming a creative power. This year, for example, they got money so the members of fourteen groups could attend performances at the Ibero-American Theater Festival of Bogotá with the purpose of enriching themselves and making contacts. Needless to say, this Association has been strongly supported by the *Santiago Londoño*.

Besides, the theater has consolidated its own group through a theater school directed by Claudia López, who has been working at its premises from the beginning. "I staged *Mafalda y Pombo en el Teatro y Dulcita y el Burrito* when the theater was under construction and we have taken these plays to marginal neighborhoods, nursing homes and jails." More than fifteen young people have graduated from the four generations of actors that have been trained by the School since it opened its doors in 1996. "Despite the fact that it is non-formal education, discipline is strong and they carefully learn about corporal expression, acting, vocal technique, dancing, staging, research." Claudia says that one of the most interesting experiences is the staging, a collective creation, about the identity and the ethos of Pereira.

We held meetings where scattered ideas came up as well as the existing paradigms of our city. It was a really enriching experience. We called it *La Calle de la Otredad* (The street of the otherness), because of its urban topic and because of the relation with the other one arising in the street.

The interesting aspect of this theater is that there is no individual management since it always operates jointly with the other initiatives of the *Instituto de Cultura y Fomento al Turismo de Pereira*, which also has offices for cultural planning, tourism promotion, art schools, a library, a radio station, a band, and another cultural center, the *Lucy Tejada*.

Besides the theater movement, there is also an exhibition hall named after an important culture promoter in Pereira: Carlos Drews Castro. Besides having been a member of many organizations promoting development in Pereira, Drews was a founding member of the *Sociedad de Amigos del Arte* (Art Friends Society) so that is why the hall has his name. Prominent artists and beginners exhibit their work there, and more than 5,500 people come to the hall to see it.

There are not many opportunities to show what one does in Pereira. That is the reason why it is so wonderful to exhibit at the theater. Besides, the people who attend the shows have to pass by the hall, so they become interested in the work, says Julián Pineda, one of the painters from Pereira who had an exhibition at the hall.

Curator Enrique Hoyos confirms it:

This place has been the springboard of many new and acclaimed artists with classical, academic, unconventional and innovative proposals as a sign that art is not unique but universal. In other words, this hall can house the whole world of creativity so the spectator looking at it can be a judge in an unprepared, objective and democratic way.

The type of announcements to choose the one who can have an exhibit is also a sign of the democracy of this cultural initiative in which artists like Jesús Franco Ospina, Luz Marina Jaramillo Jaramillo and Juan Carlos Vargas have participated, without forgetting collective exhibits as *Dibujantes en el Eje Cafetero*, *Salón Regional de Artistas* or *Gráficos en la Ciudad*.

While the Ukrainian musicians played the famous polkas and waltzes from the well-know Johann Strauss, three pretty *ballerinas*, along with their partners, recreated the piece visually. The show was about to end. The percussionist of the Ukrainian Chamber Orchestra surprised the audience firing a fake weapon. Everybody was scared but then smiled. The Ukrainian *ballerinas* came out for the second time to bow before the audience. Another night has been recorded in the hearts of the people from Pereira that, luckily have this great theater.

## Culture and Beaux Arts Institute of Boyacá

### A MEETING POINT FOR THE CULTURAL MOVEMENT

Today is the Day of the Book in Boyacá and in Colombia. After the exchange of books at the *plaza* (square) and the campaign for the promotion of reading in unconventional spaces like shopping malls, cafeterias, parks and hospitals, the children crowd the entrance of a place that has known how to welcome them with music, temperas, play dough and many books, as the case of the Day is. The happy faces of these kids are enough evidence that positive things take place at this cultural center.

Many things have been happening at the Culture and Beaux Arts Institute since that day in 1988 when the Japanese government decided to donate lighting, sound, recording and video equipments, as well as other complements including a piano. The first thing worth mentioning is that, during the last four years, the institute was completely remodeled in order to meet the needs of a city, Tunja, that has grown fast; that “Powerful man” (what Tunja means in the *chibcha* language) that has become the epicenter of the cultural movement of Boyacá.

To that effect, the Governor’s Office has invested more than 1,400,000,000 pesos thus improving the premises of the Conservatory and the Beaux Arts School, while building its own headquarters for its library, at the Eduardo Santos House. The auditoriums and the exhibit hall of the Palace for Cultural Services (*Palacio de Servicios Culturales*) had the necessary interventions also.

However, the achievements of this center are not only seen but heard. The need to interconnect the different towns of the department led the Governor’s Office to widen the range of its radio station (ICTBA FM 95.6). It was through the station that important activities were organized, such as the workshops on organization and leadership aimed at the music schools and attended by people from different municipalities as Almeida, Chiscas and Ventaquemada. This radio station has made it possible for people from Boyacá to know their history and folklore in depth.

The libraries started a national reading plan through local programs as *A Leer*, *Sumercé*, which reached up to more than 120 municipalities, from which those with the better performance received large literature collections.

Music was not let behind either, since the department was committed to every workshop that could be carried out in favor of the bands and choirs from Boyacá

that every year compete, to assess their quality, at the competition held at the *Pantano de Vargas*, that historical site where our Liberator faced the Spanish army in 1819. More than 2,500 young people gathered in different groups to play the music of their regions and of other places, a delight for the audiences with a dozen concerts per year.

In turn, the Arts School benefited 258 students through its formal and non-formal education. Photography, pottery and mural painting courses are just some of the many courses taught by the institute in order to bring the community closer to artistic disciplines. Looking at the façades of many municipalities painted by their own inhabitants (with the help provided by artists from the area) is as comforting as knowing that the Departmental Theater School sponsored groups like *Arsénicos*, *La Gruta*, *Cóndores de Siscunsi* or the *Asociación Hombres de Maiz y Tierra*, and that it also organized student festivals to keep feeding the histrionic vein of the department.

But not everything is about the stage. Research projects were also financed and books from authors of the region were published in fields like literature and history. There were other activities aimed at the recovery of historical places at Iza, Monguí and Villa de Leyva, as well as the recovery of historical monuments like the Boyacá Bridge and Saint Bárbara's church.

This endless list of cultural activities was derived from the simple fact of having created the international festival of culture, which was first carried out in 1974. The organization of this unassuming festival, that nowadays has more than 150 shows, was the first step leading the *boyacenses* (people from Boyacá) to include more culture in their lives. That is how the Culture and Beaux Arts Institute was born, and fourteen years later it would receive the support from the Japanese government through a cultural donation that was distributed between the radio station, three auditoriums and three exhibit halls that are open every day, as well as the San Ignacio concert hall.

All these equipments have enabled the institute to improve its attention to the public. They have also helped to visually record the activities carried out in other municipalities through several promotional videos that are broadcast. The audiovisual hall has not only been useful for the production of television material about the department but it has also welcomed Communication students for their internships. Despite the fact that some of these equipments are already beyond their life span, some others are still used by people who know them perfectly well and who have grown with them at the professional level.

Each one of the bricks that have been added to this “pillar of culture” has contributed to the presentation of great orchestras and musical groups on Tunja’s stages such as the Leipzig Chamber Orchestra, the Symphonic Orchestra of Colombia, the Philharmonic Orchestra of Bogotá and the Boston Symphonic Orchestra. That is how Boyacá has demonstrated that its people know much more than just about potato and onion plantations.

The Culture Festival and the traditional *Aguinaldo boyacense* which includes long walks, concerts and cavalcades around the Christmas celebrations are perhaps the most well-known events, but it is worth mentioning other more recent events like a popular culture program called *Encuentros*, in which native folklore expressions are the main course, as well as events like the *Martes de Danza*, *Miércoles de Tertulia* o los *Jueves de Cine Foro*, which gather people on weekdays thus showing that culture is not and exotic and high-profile dish, but everyday food needed by human beings.

A day full of cultural activities for youngsters and adults in Tunja is over. The time for an important battle is getting closer for the department’s Culture and Tourism Institute. In 2010, Colombia will be united for the celebration of the Independence Bicentennial and the institute has to develop a proposal on the activities to be carried out at this iconic place of our Independence where the last battle took place: the Boyacá Bridge. So, they are all preparing everything concerning the museographic management of the Liberation Campaign theme park. They also want to project the Boyacá Bridge as a Cultural Historic District.

Undoubtedly, the Japanese government will be a great ally and the tools it has handed over to the institute are and will be definite for this and all future battles. Only through these fight will Colombia reconcile its people since as Mexican thinker José Vasconcelos said, “culture brings about development and without it there is no use in demanding from the people any moral conduct.”

## COLDEPORTES

### HEALTHY BODIES, A HEALTHY COUNTRY

Human beings have always been prone to think they are made up of two very different things: body and soul, or the body and the mind. This exaggerated dualism has also contributed to our distancing ourselves from the old and ancient saying: “a healthy mind in a healthy body.” The issue is more complex than that. The effects a body that practices sports has on the spirit inside may even change the historic destiny of whole communities. Needless to say, that is why the Olympic Games were created by the Greek civilization, the cradle of the most important philosophers mankind has had.

By the time Japan made two large donations to this institution (1983 and 1985) it was almost unthinkable that Colombia could be the venue for events such as the *Juegos Deportivos Centroamericanos y del Caribe*. In 1986, it was proposed by the famous Turbaco-born Fidel Mendoza Carrasquilla (who was also the personal physician of a famous Colombian sports figure: Kid Pambelé), but the government had to say no, perhaps because of lack of experience in this type of events. The purpose of this story is that experience, in any field, is only achieved through constant practice, and for practicing a sport constantly it is necessary to have the required elements each discipline requires.

So it is no little thing that the Colombian Recreation and Sports Institute (COLDEPORTES) has received, from the Japanese government, not just one but two donations of sports equipment including special equipments for Olympic and artistic gymnastics.

What COLDEPORTES was at the time resembles little of what it is today, and that is greatly due to the donations made by Japan. The evidence for this is that Colombia participates with a greater number of athletes at events such as the Olympic Games every year. While in 2007, in Athens, Colombia sent 51 athletes, it will send 61 to the Games in Beijing this year. This type of improvements leads Colombians to diversify their skills. So, currently, we have not only boxers and important soccer players but also figures in sports that are stranger, like diving or, who would believe it, automobile racing.

However, change is not only measured through the participation in foreign events. The same can be said about the celebration of the *Juegos Centroamericanos y del Caribe* in Cartagena in 2006, just to name only one of the great events in which

there has been a great effort from Colombia, since the country knows that the only way to really gather a people has a lot to do with sports and with what sports teach regarding team work. President Richard Nixon already said that once. "I don't know anything that builds the will to win better than competitive sports."

COLDEPORTES operates as a decentralized entity supporting all the regions in their action plans to provide for the sports needs of the communities. That is why it has assumed tasks like the sports census, striving to identify all the sports venues in the country to find out what they are lacking and how many people could benefit from their full development.

The most important aspect is that the scattered efforts were never able to organize Colombian's sports activities through Federations as COLDEPORTES has. Therefore, each discipline is organized in leagues and clubs at the departmental level to, in turn, become the *Federación Deportiva Nacional*. There are 47 of these organizations in Colombia, implying that all the efforts converge so the benefits are much more democratic, holding the structure together, since associations are always a source of strength and soundness.

So COLDEPORTES gets to co finance more projects than those expected in one year. In 2006, for example, its objective was to finance twelve, including a swimming complex in Manizales, an athletics track, a sports center in Buenaventura, and the fields in the stadiums of Cúcuta, Pasto and Bucaramanga.

And, as sports is not just moving muscles, it has also been interested in the promotion and support of research projects on Physical Education to implement real sports programs in the curricula of young people in the country.

During this year, 2008, COLDEPORTES published the book *Emoción, Control e Identidad: las barras del fútbol* to highlight one of the research projects. This research project on the behaviors of soccer fans, introduced at the Book Fair of Bogotá, calls the attention on the need to regulate and organize them.

It also signs agreements with the *Escuela Nacional del Deporte* and with private universities for training better teachers, not only for the country to obtain gold medals at professional championships, but also so kids and young people can use sports in their daily lives and to always count on a healthy channel to free their concerns and needs. Therefore, COLDEPORTES is not only concerned about great sports figures, who are obviously supported, but also regular people who need to do exercise in order to lubricate the body and the soul, as Benjamin Franklin once said.



Talking about the big leagues, it organizes events like the *Juegos Deportivos Nacionales*, the *Juegos Bolivarianos*, and the already mentioned *Juegos Deportivos Cebtroamericanos y del Caribe*; it also wants schools to strengthen educational services regarding sports.

Great sports do not develop overnight, so COLDEPORTES has supported non professional events as the Inter-schools in which more than two thousand kids and youngsters from seven departments participate. They are the ones who represent their country in events like the South American School Games, in which Colombia was a champion in 2006. This effort includes the *Colombia Activa y Saludable* program that has been able to disseminate stimulating information for people in general, thanks to the support from the World Health Organization (WHO). It has also focused on ethnical minorities and people whose children are not yet part of school life.

It is in this sense that it is important to mention that COLDEPORTES created the *Federación Deportiva* for disabled people. It gives a monthly allowance to more than ten handicapped athletes so they can still practice and improve their skills.

COLDEPORTES does not forget old idols. Even if it is too sad, one of the main problems for athletes who once were great figures of the country is that they end up forgotten and under financial problems. Therefore, COLDEPORTES provides economic support to more than fifty retired athletes as well as to thirty than have won medals.

In November 2008, six months after the publication of this book, COLDEPORTES will turn 40. Then, and for a long time, it will be and can be said that what was born as a small office from the Ministry of Culture has, today, almost the relevance of a completely autonomous entity that has become, through its actions, the channel to show that Colombians are not just part of that bad reputation perceived by many places of the world where there are daily headlines regarding our most serious problem: drugs.

COLDEPORTES has been the greatest support for training the most important ambassadors of our country: athletes. Despite the fact that they don't have diplomatic credentials, these people have known how to represent the country since, as stated by the famous North American basketball coach John Wooden, "Sports do not build character. They reveal it."

## La Media Torta Cultural Center

### A SPACE FOR CULTURE IN THE MOUNTAIN

The *cerro* (mountain) is one of the things that best characterizes Bogotá. To find out where you are, just look at the mountain. The east is there. Some *bogotanos* living abroad feel something special when they return to the city and see the mountain again. Paula Tobón, who currently lives in Los Angeles, California, says that “it is for the *bogotanos* what the North Star is for sailors.”

There was a construction boom during the 1920s around the mountains and many peasants settled there in an informal way, so the government had to react with a plan to organize the area in the best possible way while integrating the community. That is how the *Media Torta* was born. It was named after the *hacienda* that existed where the theater was built, and today it is better known as a Cultural Center. We owe a lot to the British who supported this project in 1938.

During its first years, the *Media Torta* invited its audience through the radio that broadcast its programs live from the theater. “The *Tocayo* Ceballos directed the program and, during the day, many artists performed. They played two or three songs,” says Consuelo Rodríguez who was around 25 by that time. “Although I never went because it was considered a venue for the *vulgo* (ordinary people), I listened to them on *Radio Continental* and I wondered why there was such discrimination,” she concludes. The problem was that the area was full of *chicherías* (places that sold *chicha*, an alcoholic beverage made with fermented corn and sugar) and *galleras* (cockpits). This situation changed in 1948 when the selling of *chicha* was regulated and a new air breathed for *La Media Torta*.

After the interruption of theatrical activities for almost a decade, and after the 1960s, the theater was the scenario for all international stars that came to our country. There was a law binding them to perform there for free. But then it was closed again for almost a year, in 1974, because it was not ready to compete with the new scenarios being built in the city.

Those who remember that slow death of the theater acknowledge that the donation made by Japan was even more positive than anything else. Besides, it was the first cultural donation ever to be made to Colombia. It paved the way for other entities to think about using this type of benefits, under the condition of guaranteeing that those receiving the donations committed themselves deeply to the promotion of culture. This is the real value behind the Japanese donating these equipments.

Nobody is generous out of the blue. Not even Mother Teresa of Calcutta. Something is being strived for. Mother Teresa wanted to be a saint. The Japanese government wants to obtain a real commitment regarding culture so it has positioned itself through its donations in the world. They may cost less than a thousand part of what a bomber may cost, but they lift human beings higher.

Nowadays, even if the equipments have gone well beyond their useful life, the *Media Torta* can say that thanks to them 120,000 Colombians have a less boring Sunday. Most of the Colombian population earns salaries that do not cover going to the movies once a month. This type of scenarios makes people have access to culture for free. This Cultural Center is also concerned about a better quality of life for the people who, because of having so few opportunities, have not been able to move forward as they wish and could have become sources of problems for their communities. This is why the *Media Torta* carries out workshops on human rights.

Likewise, it also has several projects aimed at preserving popular knowledge: *Entre Caminos* recovers the oral tradition of the people through the reading of narrations, legends and poems that have been orally transmitted, or that may have been written; *Tramando Tierra* recovers handicrafts; *Torta que te ronda* recovers traditional children's games and chants; *El Sabor de los Saberes* leads people from all the regions to share their traditional gastronomy; *La Parranda* focuses on dancing music from regional popular festivals.

As these, there are other activities that gather people from Bogotá around their own cultures since what is more interesting about the *Media Torta's* program is that it is clear that its audience is made up by people from the most remote places of Colombia. Therefore, for example, the Day of the Afro Colombian Identity exists and it was attended by 3,500 people, including children, young people and adults; or the Solidarity Committee for Political Prisoners which was expected to be attended by 1,000 people but 1,500 arrived. Even though it may be hard to accept, most of the audience of Bogotá has been displaced by violence. There are no indicators measuring nostalgia or hope felt by any of these individuals when they listen to music from their regions since there is no equipment able to measure the impact of culture on the human soul.

During the last Thursdays of each month, for example, one can find people living around the center of the city sharing their own solitude while watching a movie or a documentary. *Video afuera* allows 'dead time,' which we sometimes waste, to be invested in the spirit thus enabling us to have more culture since the main function of culture, as Freud said, is no other but defending ourselves from nature.

In order to revive indigenous and peasant traditions, the *Media Torta* called one of its programs *Minga*, which is a meeting of cultures and indigenous wisdom. Young people and adults, as well as descendants from indigenous cultures discuss the most relevant topics of their communities. They share, among other things, ancient techniques for taking care of the environment they live in as a way of keeping their memory. The Kankuam Music School would never have such a good venue as they did in October 2007. This type of events is not attended by large crowds, but the fact that 45 people from the kankuamo indigenous people attend is enough for their memory to be kept.

Besides working at the local level, part of the *Media Torta's* program is devoted to music of the world, particularly to Latin American popular music and dance, as the Mexican *mariachi* and the *bolero* trios from Cuba, two types of music Colombians have already adopted as their own. Musical groups do not necessary need to come from other places. It is just necessary that they have a musical proposal based on popular traditions from other places, regardless of the incorporation of local elements.

The *Media Torta* is the second home of all the musicians taking part in national and international festivals as the *Festival del Porro*, the *Fiestas de San Pacho*, *Rock al Parque*, the *Festival Intercolegiado de Danza Folclórica*.

Ana María Rojas, who is 15, participated with his school in 2006 and says that it is

The closest to being famous. One rehearses a lot because one could feel embarrassed if being on a stage like that without having worked. That makes children really want to win the prize.

The first time that Cabas, a worldwide-known musician, performed at a large venue he did so at *La Media Torta*.

It was not just a stage where I felt really scared for the first time. I also watched groups and figures that, at that time, were an example to follow. For example, I remember seeing *Totó* and *Bloque de Búsqueda*.

Besides supporting these festivals, the *Media Torta* organizes concert cycles where bands play after winning the public announcements designed by the *Secretaría Distrital de Cultura, Recreación y Deporte*. There are four cycles every year complemented by the *Tortazos*, intended to show new musical proposals of urban genres like hip hop, rock and other more specific genres. It is in these *Tortazos* where new proposals from young people are outlined and consolidated.

People have the chance to see musicians rehearsing, testing their music, before actual presentations.

For a musician like me, it is really useful to attend a rehearsal because I see how they fix the sound, how each element finds its expression and the adequate tone to be in harmony with the rest, says the young musician Peter Salmang.

But not everything is the efforts aimed at popular music. The *Domingazo* and the *Al Parque* Opera and Ballet festivals, for example, are aimed at familiarizing the audience with classical music. Surely, this type of music was not everybody's favorite at the beginning, The truth is that if we used one of those devices for measuring heart beats when doing exercise on each one of the people in the audience, in this and other events of the *Media Torta*, the result would be a heart beating really fast because of the emotion. Without emotions it is hard to solve difficulties in life. Therefore, we need this Cultural Center so that our heart is better tuned.

## GREAT CULTURAL DONATION

2006. **Tolima Conservatory /**  
Musical instruments
2005. **Batuta Foundation /**  
Musical Instruments
2004. **Luis Ángel Arango Library /**  
Audiovisual equipments
2003. **Inravisión – (RTVC) /**  
Educational and cultural programs for television
2001. **Ministry of Culture /**  
Musical instruments for orchestra and band
2000. **Jorge Eliécer Gaitán Municipal Theater /**  
Sound equipments
1999. **Municipal Cultural Center of Cali /**  
Audiovisual equipments and image editing equipments
1998. **Guillermo León Valencia Municipal Theater – Popayán /**  
Sound and lighting equipments
1997. **Cristóbal Colón Theater /**  
Sound equipments
1996. **National Center for Restoration /**  
Cultural heritage conservation and restoration equipments
1995. **Music Conservatory – National University /**  
Musical instruments
1994. **National Library of Colombia /**  
Audiovisual equipments for historic and cultural heritage conservation
1993. **Bolívar House Museum /**  
Audiovisual equipments and historic and  
cultural heritage conservation equipments
1992. **Presidency of the Republic of Colombia /**  
Musical instruments
1991. **Santiago Londoño Theater – Pereira /**  
Sound equipments
1990. **COLCIENCIAS /**  
Linguistic laboratory and video equipments

1989. **Center for Music Documentation /**  
Systematization equipments, document duplication,  
portable audio and video
1988. **Culture and Beaux Arts Institute of Boyacá /**  
Sound, lighting and audiovisual equipments
1987. **Jorge Eliécer Gaitán Municipal Theater /**  
Lighting and sound equipments
1986. **Open Air Los Cristales Theater – Cali /**  
Piano, sound and lighting equipments
1985. **Colombian Recreation and Sports Institute  
(COLDEPORTES) /**  
Physical education equipments
1985. **Administrative Departments of the  
Presidency of the Republic  
National Education Campaign /**  
Educations and cultural materials for television
1984. **Cristóbal Colón Theater /**  
Sound and recording equipments
1983. **Colombian Recreation and Sports Institute  
(COLDEPORTES) /**  
Physical education equipments
1982. **La Media Torta Cultural Center /**  
Lighting and sound equipments