

**Constanza Toledo (Vienna)**

**European Art Music without Europe? Orchestrating Community and Social Identity in El Sistema Nacional de Orquestas y Coros Juveniles e Infantiles de Venezuela**

José Antonio Abreu's "El Sistema Nacional de Orquestas y Coros Juveniles e Infantiles de Venezuela" ("El Sistema") is widely regarded as one of the world's most successful music education initiatives, establishing Venezuela as a relevant global music agent. The project has reached countries in the Global North through its adaptation and implementation, as well as through the worldwide recognition of the Simón Bolívar Orchestra (SBO) and Gustavo Dudamel. Through a single case study consisting of a descriptive analysis of audio-visual recordings of Dudamel's and the SBO performances at the BBC Proms in 2007 and 2011, their repertoire, subsequent press reviews and semi-structured interviews with former members of El Sistema, this research will focus on examining the juxtaposition of global music flows (Appadurai 1990; 2010) between Europe and Latin America, and a local collective identity tied to the project. Among the main findings, the intertwining between a "Latin American identity" and a European conservatory-based musical training seems to relate to colonial conceptions of civility and progress. Furthermore, a strong sense of community linked to the project correlates to precarious implementation of El Sistema in some regions as well as with a cultural development history linked to community-based oil extraction during Venezuela's oil boom. Stereotypical perceptions based on (auto)exoticism (Savigliano 1995; Taylor 2007) characterize the musicians' performance, functioning as a means of othering (Said 2019) for both Venezuelan musicians and English audiences. Displaying "Latinamerican-ness" while performing art music also enables El Sistema to propose new approaches to canonical Musicking (Small 1998), the use of the body, and the relationship between musicians and audiences during performances.

**Constanza Toledo** is a university assistant in pre-doc at the *Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien*. She holds a *Master of Arts in Musicology* from the *Universität Leipzig* and a *Bachelor of Music in Performance (Violin)* from the *Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile*. As a violinist, she collaborated with several Chilean orchestras and supported various children's and youth orchestra projects. She received funding to complete an Erasmus+ semester at the *University of Vienna* and the *Chile Crea* scholarship from the *Ministry of Cultures, Arts and Heritage of Chile* to complete her master's degree. Constanza led a research project funded by the same ministry titled "Sounding spaces: Cartography of Chilean art music activity between 1973 and 1990", followed by its second phase "Sounding spaces in transition: Cartography of Chilean art music activity between 1990 and 2007", creating a digital map of the art music scene in Chile during and after the military regime. She is currently leading a third state-funded research project in which children from two rural schools in central and southern Chile will create soundscape cartographic models as an exploratory ethnographic approach to their local environments.