

IDRS 2000 Congress in Buenos Aires

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While seated in the Salón Dorado of the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires, Argentina, my eyes were drawn to the ornate golden filigree adorning the room. The magnificence of the room and its name brought to mind the Spanish quest for El Dorado—the city of gold. While their quest was unfulfilled, my search for fine music and great performances was accomplished in the El Dorado called the IDRS 2000 Congress. During my quest I decided to listen to as many performances by South American and French performers as possible, since I have few opportunities to hear artists from these countries in the United States. For this reason I was not able to attend performances by many of my North American colleagues. Below are a few of my impressions of the conference, discussing the South Americans first.

Three South American double reed performers presented performances of the highest standard. **Alex Klein**, principal oboe of the Chicago Symphony, who is of Brazilian descent, gave an outstanding performance of Marco Aurelio Yano's *Concerto* for oboe and orchestra. His command of musical expression is astounding. It is hard to imagine the oboe played with greater artistry than his performance on the last evening of the conference. **Andrea Merenzon**, conference hostess, delivered several fine performances throughout the event as a soloist and a chamber musician. The best showcase of her talents was displayed on the first evening of the conference at the "Grand Fiesta Inaugural Tango of the IDRS Conference." Merenzon performed bassoon with great distinction with the "Ensamble de Tango Argentino." She later delighted the audience with her skills as a tango dancer! These performances were an amazing accomplishment given her hosting duties. Last of all one of my most delightful experiences at the conference was the concert by a group from Chile lead by bassoonist **Nelson Vinot**. This ensemble (comprised of amplified guitar, electric bass, piano, percussion, voice, and bassoon) presented music in a jazz and nightclub idiom. All the musicians displayed great artistry. The balance of the ensemble was perfect, from the most poignant moments to the times of explosive and rhythmic ferocity. Vinot played with an excellent and characteristic bassoon sound that

had all the expressive qualities one would want from a solo wind instrument in a jazz combo. I regret that so few IDRS members heard this early morning performance.

The most vivid impression I have of the conference is the wealth of South American compositions for double reed instruments. There was a wonderful selection of music for solo instruments, chamber groups, and orchestra. I hope that this conference has helped to promote this fine music and encourage future publications.

Every French performer I heard was outstanding. The future of the French system bassoon is in good hands with **Gilbert Audin**, **Laurent Lefèvre**, **Philippe Hanon**, **Ludovic Tussis**, and **David Sattler**. All performed as chamber musicians together on the second day of the conference. Later in the congress Audin, Lefevre, and Hanon were featured in solo recitals or in a concerto with an orchestra. All the musicians performed with great artistry, a smooth and singing style, and blazing technique. I would be remiss if I didn't mention oboist **Francois Leleux's** energetically elegant performance of Bach's oboe d'amore *Concerto in A major*. Leleux has been a favorite of IDRS conference attendees for many years.

Many other excellent performances were also given. Indeed, we are privileged in our profession to have so many musicians from several nations performing at high standards. I close by mentioning one of the magical moments of the conference: **George Sakakeeny's** and Ferrando Pérez's performance of an arrangement of Maurice Ravel's *Pièce en forme da habanera*. Perez started the composition with such sensitivity that the musical impression transcended the limitations of the piano and gave the impression of an orchestra. Sakakeeny's dark and lyrical bassoon created a perfect match for the accompaniment. Both delivered such a tender and poignant expression of the work that the audience was moved to great applause. The performers were actually a bit taken aback, not realizing the full impact of their performance. For all the wealth of this "Eldorado Conference," this musical performance was one of its most golden.

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