

Music in Toronto . . .

A glimpse of things to come?

From the sound of African and Indian drums to the muted strains of the traditional and classical, music helped create the festive feel of a truly global multi-cultural spiritual gathering as the church convened its 57th world conference in Toronto this summer. While to many, the colorful musical collage spelled a tolerance for a healthy robust global and generational celebration of musical diversity, for others it was an uneasy experience, a disturbing display of what they perceive as an ongoing musical apostasy.

Was the music heard in Toronto the emerging sound of worship in a new millennium? Is an acceptance and even a cross-fertilization within this diversity a requirement if we as a church are going to become a truly universal brotherhood? Should acceptable musical diversity be determined only by comparison with the traditional western classical standard? Or should non-western music be allowed to stand as a genuine and pure expression of the culture from which it comes?

And what of the newer music of the younger generation in our midst? Should all of it be condemned? Or, are there elements in some of that music that may contribute to an evolving worship music suitable for the generations that will follow? And how can the older generation dialogue with the younger about these changes in a productive way?

Is the only solution to "cleanse the temple" of all impurities and restore that which was? Or is there, in reality, no going back? Rather than railing against the influences of modern and global culture, should we be looking for ways to shape attitudes and opinions in constructive and creative ways?

And that is where IAMA can play a role by serving as a forum for discussing the issues and talking about ideas that can help each of us meet the present challenge. Final answers will always be elusive when discussing music, given its many dimensions. Even so, as long as we as musicians, pastors, and members can continue to talk and listen to one another, we have a chance to positively affect the course of music and worship in our church.

On the following pages several persons who were there express their reactions to and views about the music at Toronto. If you were in attendance and want to share your reaction to the music there or the thoughts of those writing in this issue of Notes, we invite you to do so.

Dan Shultz

The Music was Wonderful

John McLarty, editor

Adventist Today

Nearly every piece of music I heard, whether on the main stage of the SkyDome or on the Global Mission or Adventist Book Center stages in the exhibit hall, was performed with verve and virtuosity. Styles ranged from classical to folk to “world music.” The sound of drums was constant. The music from East Africa, especially, included not only drums but “movement.” Those who believe drums and dance have no place in worship would have been left with a difficult choice: either Adventists in Africa and India have fallen into very deep apostasy or much of what we label as morality in music is, in fact, cultural.

One seminary professor told me of his grave reservations about the music. And Samuele Bacchiocchi, self-appointed guardian of Adventist standards, did more than privately

disapprove. At one point he interrupted a young group named Valor, who were performing on a stage at the Adventist Book Center. He

grabbed one of their mikes and began a tirade against “this rock music.” The ABC manager had to come out and retrieve the microphone.



Jeannville Reign Dayo from the South Asia Pacific Division

In contrast to the music, the preaching was quite forgettable. With the exception of the final weekend, I heard very few positive comments about the preaching... The music had been carefully selected from audition tapes from Adventist musicians around the world. We were hearing the best of the best. It appeared to me that the preachers were chosen on the basis of political concerns associated with their official positions rather than their ability to preach. Hence the unevenness of quality.

From an editorial in the July/August issue of Adventist Today

President's Message . . . cont.

great dignity, poise, sensitivity and beauty, I was moved.

This experience was especially noteworthy for in this very year, the year 2000, the world is remembering both the 250th anniversary of the death of Johann Sebastian Bach, and the introduction of the pianoforte by the Italian clavier maker, Bartolomeo Cristofori, 300 years ago. This

instrument, today known as the piano, is the most widely used of all musical instruments. The performance of Bach on the piano at the General Conference Session was a special tribute bringing these two memorable events together.

To all musicians who shared your talents in Toronto, and who continue to do so with God's people

throughout the world, our prayers are with you as you continue to inspire others in your service for God and the church. And for all of you who continue to bring music into our weekly worship services with dignity, beauty and honor to God and His holiness, please accept our deepest gratitude and respect.



A Secular Flavor

Ruth Ann Wade

Associate Professor of Music
Montemorelos University

While the Montemorelos University music faculty thought there was a lot of good music and that it was well organized, carefully planned, and on schedule, they also felt that there also was much that was not “sacred.” It appears that the Guidelines Towards a Seventh-day Adventist Philosophy in Music, released by the Autumn Council in 1972, has been forgotten.

There was the feeling that some of the schools in the United States and nearby countries should have been invited to present outstanding groups, such as orchestras or choirs. One of our faculty members felt that the orchestra that was used seemed

to be just “put together” and the level of performance was low.

As a whole, members of our choir and brass ensemble, who were there from Thursday through the first weekend, felt that there didn’t seem to be a philosophy of music guiding the music of the participating groups. They were greatly surprised at some of the things they heard and saw.

Everyone commented on the African choir which was nearly dancing as it sang and felt it was entirely out of place. Another observation was that some of the music representing different countries performed at the session would not

have been acceptable in the churches back home.

The director of our university and conservatory music programs, Norka Castillo, felt there were some groups who made superb presentations of sacred music, but that others, such as one group of young children from Africa, seemed to be presenting music drawn from their secular folklore. She felt we should adhere more closely to the clear guidelines found in E. G. White’s writings and that a GC committee should provide guidance in this area.

Francisco Stout, choir director and theory teacher, believes that the



An Indonesian choral group from the Southern Asia-Pacific Division sings at the SkyDome



General Conference session should be an opportunity for the church to demonstrate its philosophical position about what music is appropriate in the world church. Some of the concerts were inspiring and led to a new vision of what we yet need to do hasten the coming of Jesus.

Even so, there were times when it seemed that the music was primarily a cultural event and that there was not a well-defined position on music defined by world church leaders. He was pleased to see activity in forming an organization, Adventist Music Society, to do what the church seems unwilling to do, provide guidance in this area.

Ivan Flores, a brass teacher, felt that while some of the music was good, there was more that was not. He attended the youth meetings and felt that what he heard there was

totally different from what was used in the main auditorium. He had difficulty with what he perceived as no distinction between worship and secular music. Ivan observed that he saw two groups dancing, one of which was singing rap music. He questioned particularly the music presented by the divisions during their evening reports, which tended to be a cultural show rather than an uplifting experience.

I personally thought that the women's choir from Korea and the men's choir from Oregon were outstanding. It was a joy to hear Del Delker sing; in fact, it brought tears to my eyes it was so beautiful. And the little violinist was marvelous.

In a recent conversation with the director of Children's Ministries from the North Mexican Union, her

response to my query about how she liked the music at Toronto was met with a shaking of the head and an immediate, "yo me sali," which translates "I got up and went outside." Obviously she couldn't have done that on everything, but some of the music bothered her and that is what she thought of immediately when asked.

The last General Conference Session I had the privilege of attending was in 1985 at New Orleans. The music there was much different than this time, the tenor being significantly more sacred. Considering the power of music to affect the spirituality of the church, it seems we need to take steps as a church to teach with love that there needs to be a difference between the sacred and the profane (Ezk. 22:26).

A Global Music Paradox

William Chunestudy
Associate Professor in Music
La Sierra University

In addition to directing choral groups and giving voice lessons at La Sierra University and serving as Minister of Music for the university church, William Chunestudy teaches classes in ethnomusicology and world music, areas of great interest to him, given his personal heritage as a Native American. One of his groups, The La Sierra University Vocal Octet which performs a wide range of music at a sophisticated level, performed on the SkyDome and Global Mission stages and presented a concert in the Bassett Theatre.

At the 2000 General Conference session in Toronto it was clear that the question of musical standards for the church will never be resolved until we all agree that those standards must be based upon cultural context. While the GC

is rightly responsible for many aspects of the world wide church, none of us would want nameless persons or committees to tell us what is right or wrong in the area of music. Even so, the failure of the church to promote constructive dialogue about this

important issue, particularly at this time, is a glaring oversight.

While the church's publication in 1972 of Guidelines Towards a Seventh-day Adventist Philosophy in Music was well intentioned, I'm afraid



it has been misused in the quarter century since its release to set a musical standard worldwide which is unrealistic. I first encountered the booklet when I was overseas doing a week of prayer and presenting music seminars at one of our schools.

During one of the seminars a student brought it to me and asked if the church in America was following the guidelines it expressed, and, if not, why not?

I responded with a couple of questions of my own.

A gentleman there was dressed in what seemed typically African attire, so I asked him what type of music was appropriate in his home church. He responded that the people come into church singing, clapping and playing hand drums.

I asked the student who had posed the question if that would be appropriate in the church on this campus.

He responded no, it did not match the standards expressed in booklet. I then asked him if it was appropriate for the African children and adults to enter worship in their churches in that manner. With just a little thought he responded that it was probably okay because the culture was different than his own.

"Exactly," I responded. "Standards are different the world over. They change from culture to culture and they change within cultures over time. Only principles remain constant." I then listed a few principles

that I believed were never to be violated, including music must honor God, music must not honor or promote evil, and music must not be presented in a way that promotes the performer.

As the resident ethnomusicologist at La Sierra University, I have tracked many of the world's traditional musical forms in recent years, carefully observing the Western influences that have influenced and



The La Sierra University Vocal Octet

become part of them. Even ten years ago there was not this kind of permeation of Western ideas into the traditions found in world cultures.

Today, with our global technology even the most remote cultures of the world are being saturated with Western ideas and styles. It is evident in all aspects of daily living, but especially in music.

Two decades ago many remote areas of the world were without electricity. But since then, with the availability of TV, radio, boom boxes and electronic keyboards, even the

most remote Adventist churches have access to the latest artists and accompaniment tracks and have the ability to create Western style accompaniments for all types of music, both traditional and Western.

What I saw in several of the venues I attended (Skydome, Bassett Theater and performance stages in the ABC and Exhibit Hall) was, in general, Adventist musicians in native dress

from many parts of the world, performing traditional/cultural music mixed with Western musical styles (contemporary Christian, light pop, classical, Adventist hymn arrangements, etc.) or playing with accompaniments that were digital synthesis. This reflects the trend worldwide in all musical genres, a global music paradox in which the music is not authentically global but a Westernized version of it.

Examples I heard included a brass ensemble from Germany playing traditional Western hymn arrangements and classical music; an African men's group singing in a style resembling the now popular South African group Ladysmith Black Mombazo; a vocal trio from South America singing traditional American hymns in their native tongue with small keyboard or tape recorded accompaniments; a children's singing group from Eastern Europe singing beautifully in their native tongue but, again,

with a typical Adventist hymn arrangement supported by a light beat from synthesized accompaniment tracks. Black gospel choirs performed in their inimitable style, while Korean and Philippine choirs sang traditional anthems. There was an incredible variety.

So what can we make of this? Why didn't all the groups conform to the same set of guidelines? The primary question seems to be, "Is there an appropriate worldwide standard that all musicians should conform to?" I believe not. May I suggest that it would be similar to a worldwide dress code for all Adventists. In a world church made up of hundreds of cultures, each creates its own standards for appropriate dress and modesty. They should be empowered to do the same

for what they feel are musical styles suitable for worship.

A source of tension was created when most evangelized countries adopted an early 20th-century music and worship style, one which still remains the standard for some in an ever-changing world. Traditionalists mention choral anthems as the appropriate musical style regardless of the culture, yet all those great choral anthems were imported from the West and are not a part of any of the traditional cultures of non-Western countries. In time that Western music was tempered by the host country's culture and music, and a kind of hybrid music evolved. Hypothetically, if evangelism had waited until today, then the church musical standards for those countries might have been "praise songs" or maybe the music of Big Face Grace.

I can tell you from my own experience that those of us who participated made prayerful decisions when submitting music for consideration for Toronto. Will it honor God? Will we rightly represent our part of the worldwide work? Do we have the right musical gifts to present to the Lord as well as our sisters and brothers in Christ? What style is appropriate for this venue or that? These were not easy decisions for the performers or the music committee.

I suggest that we not quibble over what one part of the world is or is not doing and focus on the ministry that God has given each of us to do. For most of us that mission field is in our own back yard where our task will be best accomplished if we work with an awareness of what is acceptable in our own culture.

Choosing the Music for Toronto

Richard Stenbakken

Richard Stenbakken, Department Director for Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries, served as chair of the music committee charged with the responsibility of selecting music for the Skydome, primary venue for music at Toronto. Stenbakken, who is not a musician, was chosen for his organizational gifts and ability to work quickly and efficiently. He was assisted by thirteen other members, chosen from persons at the General Conference headquarters or from the immediate area so as to minimize expense and expedite the work. While most of the committee members were not professional musicians, several are well-known for their work in church music.

The music committee appointed by the General Conference wanted the music featured on the main stage of the SkyDome to reflect the fact that the church is truly a global community of believers. Accordingly, every attempt was made to choose well-performed

music that was culturally authentic and represented the region or country it was from.

The selection process began over two years ago when all of the world divisions were invited by the GC music committee to create division-level music committees



to review, select, and recommend possible groups and artists that would represent their region for the 130 two-to three-minute openings that existed. The division submissions were to include a performance video or recording and a written evaluation, and were to be ranked. Also, the groups or persons who were selected would need to be able to cover their own travel, lodging, and meal expenses, or be sponsored by their own division.

Over 400 submissions were made. Quality was a primary consideration and as the screening of the submissions began, equally important factors such as variety, appropriateness, cultural authenticity, appeal to all age groups, and balance in representing the world field came into play. The task proved time-consuming and challenging, but in the end, the committee made its choices, trying to schedule music that satisfied the criteria and reflected what they felt was mainstream Adventism.

Confirming letters were sent to all participants with encouragement to wear native attire when

possible and to perform with demeanor appropriate for a worldwide audience. Specific numbers for the performances were chosen by the committee from the submitted audition materials. Although the acceptance letters were sent in a timely fashion, in many instances groups were unable to get visas for travel to Canada. This was also a problem for some regular official delegates.



The Berlin brass ensemble Con Licenza performs

Music for the divine worship services was provided by a GC mass choir organized by Michael Meyers, who was associate choir director at Utrecht in 1995. Interest in performing in the choir and space constraints necessitated a limit on size (350-400). The choir was assisted on the first weekend by The New England Youth Ensemble orchestra. Musicians were not paid for their services. However, travel and hospitality expense for Meyers and the four keyboard-ists who performed throughout the sessions were covered.

It should also be noted that some divisions offered other

Music in the SkyDome by Divisions

Africa-Indian Ocean

2

Eastern Africa

5

Euro-Africa

2

Euro-Asia

3

Inter-American

6

North American

40

Northern Asia-Pacific

2

South American

4

Southern Africa Union

2

South Pacific

4

Southern Asia

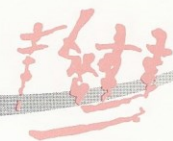
4

Southern Asia-Pacific

2

Trans-European

3



special musics during the evening meetings in their presentations. Furthermore, speakers were allowed to feature music of their own choosing if it was within the time allotted for their address. There was no attempt by the GC to limit or screen any of this additional music.

In addition to chairing the committee, I also coordinated the music scheduled during the sessions. This proved

to be a challenging assignment, similar to the stress I experienced during a year of actual combat in the military many years ago. Dealing with last minute cancellations, finding suitable replacements, meeting the needs of the performers, and being sure the schedule was kept created an unrelenting pressure . . . and a vast sense of relief when it was over.

Other Music at Toronto . . .

While the musical spotlight was focused on the stage in the SkyDome, two other church entities also provided opportunities for Adventist musicians to perform.

The Global Mission Stage

Gary Krause

Communications Director

Global Mission

In a prime location just inside the entrance of the massive exhibition center with hundreds of booths, our 500-seat performance area of the Global Mission stage attracted large numbers and, at times, standing-room-only crowds.

Like those who chose music for the programs in the SkyDome, our goal was to present music that truly reflected the global nature of the church's work. Accordingly, we chose musicians mainly from among those the

Concerts at Bassett Theatre

Another more formal opportunity for music performance was scheduled from noon to 2 p.m. daily and from 1 to 5:30 p.m. on Sabbath. The latter was offered as an alternate activity during the meetings scheduled in the main auditorium on Sabbath afternoon. The Bassett Theatre, a 1300 seat auditorium that is part of the convention complex, provided an ideal stage. The length of time allotted for each performance varied from 15 to 30 minutes.

Those scheduled at the beginning of the sessions and on the first Sabbath played for audiences with as few as a dozen people. By the end of that Sabbath afternoon's performances, however, the audience had increased to 500. By the second weekend, word had spread about what was happening at Bassett, and performers were playing for standing-room-only audiences.



music committee had selected to perform on the SkyDome stage, providing an expanded opportunity for them, many of whom had traveled great distances.

While music was one of the most popular parts of our global Mission stage presentations, we also featured a wide spectrum of other areas of the church's Global Mission work. These ranged from Adventist World Radio to ADRA, It is Written to Maranatha Volunteers Interna-

tional. Some of these ministries provided music as part of their presentations.

We also had ten well-known Adventist speakers such as Dwight Nelson, Hyveth Williams and Charles Bradford speak on the topic "If I had only fifteen minutes to speak." Each day we printed programs that listed that day's events, which usually started at 10 a.m. and ended at 6 p.m.

The Adventist Book Center Stage

Warren Gough

Director, Chapel Music

Pacific Press Publishing Association

The Pacific Press, along with the Review and Herald, was given the responsibility to manage retail sales within a 10,000 square foot room located and connected to the main exhibit area. Chapel Music, a division of Pacific Press formerly known as Chapel Records, in its role as distributor of recordings by Adventist performers and music groups, provided two performing areas, one inside the actual room and another at the entrance in the corridor connecting our room to the larger exhibit area. A quieter type music featuring keyboardists, piano and violin performers, and others was chosen for inside the room. Louder ensembles were featured at the entrance.

Starting at 10 a.m. and continuing to 7 p.m. at thirty minute intervals a new group was scheduled to perform for 20 minutes on the stage at the entrance. As in the SkyDome and on the Global Mission Stage, we attempted to choose music and artists that reflected the diversity of cultures and countries and generations that comprise the church. Many of our performers were those featured by the music committee on the SkyDome stage. And the variety was truly amazing. Caribbean steel drums and other Hispanic, Russian, African, European and American folk and indigenous traditional and contemporary music were part of a truly international mix on our stage.

Additionally, we attempted to bridge what has been referred to as the musical generation gap in our midst. Children's groups as well as college and university ensembles were featured doing both vocal and instrumental sacred music. All of it was screened and any music with a resemblance to the rock idiom was not allowed. This is in line with our usual policy at Chapel Music for choosing music for distribution, one we feel is mainstream conservative.

While Chapel Music no longer produces recordings, it does review submitted CD's for possible purchase and distribution through ABC bookstores. Each year we choose between 25 and 35 CD's, providing music in several sacred music categories such as Traditional, Contemporary Christian, Gospel, Children, Country, and Folk. Music CD's in languages other than English are also released, most being in Spanish. For the event in Toronto, we provided shelf space for CD's other than our own with the understanding that it was only for this event and on a consignment basis.

As I screen CD's for Chapel Music, I am continually impressed with the wealth of musical talent we as a church possess. Working with the performers in Toronto reinforced that perception. You may check out Chapel's music by visiting www.adventistbookcenter.com.