

**Illinois ACDA
Summer Retreat - 2017**

**Going Beyond the Exotic:
An Interdisciplinary, Unbiased Approach
to Teaching Latin American Repertoire**

**Dr. Daniel R. Afonso Jr.
California State University, Stanislaus**



Mission

- The National Committee on Ethnic and Multicultural Perspectives serves the members of ACDA by recognizing the multifaceted and *multi-ethnic realm of world music* through identifying and encouraging the performance of repertoire of diverse cultures, and developing projects that enhance the choral art.



Standards

- **Repertoire**
 - Informed repertoire selection, preparation, and performance
 - Presentation accompaniments / instrumental accompaniment; related movement
 - Being informed about and transmitting the music's historical and cultural context
 - Identify 'informants' from the culture



- **Choral/Vocal Production**

- Vocal Health related to diverse singing styles found in world music
- Intonation & Tuning / non-traditional scales and vocal tuning must be understood and are important
- Styles that require varied types vocal production
- Begin with good basic vocal technique and expand singers' experiences and vocal education from there



- **Rehearsal Techniques and Instruction**

- Instruction through the oral/aural tradition
- Use of technology in the learning process
- “Deciphering” the printed page
- Appropriate use of terminology and vocabulary (avoid using words such as “exotic” (ARGH!!!!), "Third World," "Non-Western," "other music...")
- Attention to cultural sensitivity
- Accuracy and authenticity



- **Professional Growth and Development**

- Copyright literacy
- Networking to learn about diverse choral repertoire and world cultures
- Broader range of languages to understand, translate, and pronounce



- **Recruitment & Retention**

- Recruitment challenges of non-traditional ensembles / the world music ensemble 'unknown'
- Addressing the needs of students whose main interest may be in world music repertoire or ensemble / challenges to “participation requirements” in the traditional choral program
- This repertoire may provide access to choral music for singers with different life experiences and help certain individuals feel valued in ways they had not felt in the past



- **In Performance**

- Audience development & education / use “informances” to involve and inform audiences
- Have more than homogenization in balance & blend as a performance goal; add conviction, energy, and passion to performances in ways found in the culture of origin; seek a broader definition of “good choral singing”
- Help the audience understand that this diverse, “non-traditional” repertoire is as important as any other music your ensembles perform



- **Advocacy**

- Establish a goal to develop support for “world choral music” all around you—including (and maybe **especially**) during periods of political unrest, or social and/or economic crisis.



Culture

- Beliefs
- Customs
- Arts
- History
- Language
- Political systems
- Foods
- Clothing
- Social Organizations
- Ways of thinking
- Characteristic ways of living

*What? Why? Where?
When? How?*



Context

“The situation in which something happens: the group of conditions that exist where and when something happens”

“The interrelated conditions in which something exists or occurs: environment, setting...”

(Merriam-Webster)



Issues of cultural misrepresentation

- Trivializing historical oppression
 - Indiscriminate use of stereotypical repertoire
(Uh-oh! Here we go...)
 - Lack of interest for the culture of the Native-American peoples
(or should we call them American-Indians? Is it ok to say “tribes?” Maybe we shouldn’t talk about this anymore... Oh, I love your dress!!)
 - Marginalized peoples adopt elements of the dominant culture in order to survive the conditions: colonialism, immigration, forced ethnic migrations, civil war, etc.

(are we uncomfortable yet...?)



- Ethnicity – Ethnic


- *“of or relating to races of large groups of people who have the same customs, religion, origin, etc.”*
- *“associated with or belonging to a particular race or group of people who have a culture that is **different from the main culture of a country.**”*

- Nationality

- *“a group of people who share the same history, traditions, and language, and who usually live together in a particular country”*
- *“the fact or status of being a member or citizen of a particular nation.”*

- Race

- *“a class or kind of people unified by shared interests, habits, or characteristics”*
- *“a category of humankind that shares certain distinctive physical traits”*

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- Oversimplifying cultural and/or religious traditions
 - Prejudice and misinformation about non-Christian beliefs (Voodoo, Umbanda, Santeria, non-theistic communities, etc.)
 - Hanukkah as the only mention of the Jewish culture (did you know there's a large Jewish community in Brazil?!)

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- Love for the culture, but prejudice against its people:

- Careful attention to linguistic accuracy (diction)
and comprehension


X

People who speak with accents

- Use of traditional costumes

X

Physical appearance

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- Dissemination of misinformation and stereotypes
 - Multicultural music = Folk music
 - Latin American music = rhythmic drive and “fun” elements (and dance, and movement, and save the rain forest, and naked people during Carnaval... Wait! I thought it was spelled “carnIval!!)
 - “Let’s save the rain forest!!” (the “savior” myth - *barf*)
 - The native peoples of the Americas were “savages.”
 - The Europeans ***claimed*** the Americas, they didn’t “discover” them. There were millions of people living in the Americas and some advanced societies (Incas, Mayas, Aztecs, Guaranis, Tamoyos, Tapajós, Tupis, Xavantes, etc.) living here for centuries before the Europeans arrived.



- Denying or ignoring trans-cultural influences

- The *sarabande* (“zarabanda”) and *chaconne* (“chacona”) are music forms that originated with the mestizos in Latin America

- Cultural exchange: no systematic power dynamic (bossa-nova and jazz)