

# **“Sounding out shared values: towards a European Agenda for Music”**

**How music and culture reinforce the European values of tradition, diversity and innovation**

**Keynote Speech by Enrique Barón Crespo,**

**Chairman of the International Yehudi Menuhin Foundation and former President of the European Parliament**

**AEC Congress, Liszt Academy of Music, Budapest 14/11/14**

Thank you for inviting me to address your Congress in Budapest at the Liszt Academy, founded by the great virtuoso and revolutionary. In my home town, Madrid, there is a plaque in the façade of the Museum Thyssen-Bornemisza that commemorates a concert of Franz Liszt there in October 1844. Normally, plaques remember political events; in this case, it shows that the Europe of music was very much alive and appreciated at that time.

Let me first express my recognition to Hungary. We are celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the falling of the Berlin Wall. It was not just a wall in Berlin. It was the Iron Curtain that divided Europe like a scar. This country played a decisive role in the summer of 1989, opening the fence. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Hungary and Austria, Gyula Hörn and Alois Mock, personally cut the barbed wire on June 27th in what one might call a ‘symphonic’ gesture.

I was elected President of the European Parliament that summer. Through this hole, East Germans could cross to the West. In the Nikolai-Kirche of Leipzig, conductor Kurt Masur was putting the best classical music to the service of freedom.

Less than a year later, I had the honour of addressing the Hungarian Parliament in its magnificent Neo-Gothic Hall. The new Head of Government, democratically elected, was József Antall, a great European and a fighter for freedom. Allow me quote myself:

*“The formation of a European political union is a revolutionary process in itself. Member countries voluntarily choose to pool their sovereignties for the good of all the countries. The process of constructing this new political identity is not an easy one. Every step we take along this path requires extensive negotiations and rational compromise of certain interests”.*

This message is not nostalgic. It is timely today if you consider the investiture of the Juncker Commission. This process has been a big democratic step forward in the EU, with a decisive role for the European Parliament. The case of the Culture, Education Youth and Citizenship portfolio for the Hungarian commissioner, Mr. Tibor Navrascics, is relevant. He went through only after two hearings, with huge criticism from the MEPs on his adequacy for the portfolio, given his past record as Minister. In order to get him through, President Juncker took away from his responsibilities Citizenship and rule of law. Now, if you visit his web page in the European Commission you will see that, in implementing your FULL SCORE, that I fully support, he will be your interlocutor and the manager of the policies that you are proposing (clearly, under the guidance and responsibility of President Juncker as head of the Commission).

Undoubtedly, Budapest is the right place to make this Congress because the Commissioner, and the Government that presented him, will have the possibility to hear your message directly.

As you have announced in your presentation I am an enthusiastic – although, I should add, illiterate - supporter of music. I can serve you better not by lecturing on the question of European higher music education, but by offering my views on how Europe itself must strive at this critical point in its history to balance tradition, diversity and innovation to their mutual enhancement.

The role of culture in the development of the EU is controversial. Although culture was present in the Congress of the European Movement in The Hague of 1948, it was not a foundational pillar in the creation of the United Europe. There is a very famous quotation of the founding father, Jean Monnet, about culture: *“If I could begin again, I would start with culture”*. It seems that the quotation is apocryphal. But what he did, with the other founding fathers, was cultural in the sense of transforming a deeply rooted culture of nationalism, dominance and war to one of common values and shared destiny. This was, and is today, the cultural driving force in the challenge of developing a United Europe of Cultures.

As President of the European Parliament, I worked to introduce European citizenship and the single currency in the Maastricht Treaty as the key foundations transforming the European Community into the European Union. Culture was part and parcel of the package as *“a contribution to education and training of quality and to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States”*. On this basis, I lobbied very actively with Yehudi Menuhin to upgrade culture in the subsequent treaties until the major step made in the Lisbon Treaty. The text of this states as an objective that the EU shall *“respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and shall ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced”*. Our most important asset is that, for

the first time in history, we have shared principles and common values. We have got the score of the symphony; now, we have to play and perform this FULL SCORE!

True though this may be, it is not enough. Culture is not only about building museums or auditoriums. Alongside all of that, the 500 million people in the EU live their everyday life with portions of art and music in it. Many sing in choirs or play in folkloric groups, in amateur orchestras or in rock bands. From a small village to a big capital, a feast without music and without musicians is unthinkable. We must transform this potential into an active force of searching for harmony, following the great Hungarian composer and music pedagogue Zoltan Kodaly: “He is more important who is a music teacher in a village than an opera director in the city.”

In the last years, the public debate has been centred almost exclusively on the adoration of money, not on making a more human and balanced society along ethical principles. This was already prophesized by John Maynard Keynes, an arts connoisseur as well as an economist, nearly 80 years ago. We have been saving the ‘casino capitalism’, responsible for triggering the crisis through irresponsible financing, with policies that have broken solidarity and equality among Europeans. We have turned our faces away from a European Union that was granted the Nobel Peace Prize in 2012 for bringing peace and democracy to the continent after centuries of internecine wars. As Kafka accurately depicted, the object of our adoration was the mask of an infernal machine - Höllenmaschine – residing out of reach of its citizenship.

Culture is not an ornament; it is a key sector in every developed and balanced economy. European Higher Music Education is one of our main assets in the globalised world. Look what José Antonio Abreu has made with “El Sistema” for cultural and social development in Venezuela, implementing in a unique and transformative way what are fundamentally our European methods. Moreover, intellectual property rights and copyright are very important issues for musicians, whose biggest struggle is to figure how to survive and adapt to the world of the Internet, the open-access principles of which must not mean the end of rules protecting cultural creation. We cannot accept a future dominated by robots playing a gigantic karaoke with all the musical creation in history whilst lacking real human beings creating and playing music.

Let me comment on the balance of your programme, ‘Polifonia’. Polyphony is one of the oldest principles in European music and remains as a core element of the symphony, besides opera the highest work of art in musical creation. My surprise was huge when I came into European Parliament and heard Greek colleagues talking about ‘*sinfonía*’ and ‘*armonía*’ in their political speeches, the rest of which I did not understand anyway. When we Spaniards listen to speeches in Greek, we have the feeling that someone is talking to us in our language, but without

understanding the meaning of it except for a few words like ‘*sinfonía*’, ‘*polifonía*’, or, for that matter, ‘*krísi*’ or ‘*cháos*’! The reason is that our phonetics, the music of language, is almost the same between Spanish and Greek.

The fact is that symphony, meaning "agreement", is a key concept in both politics and music for the Greeks. The question is: in which sense was it used first, the political or the musical one? The several voices of *polifonía* are necessary for there to be the agreement of *sinfonía*. The European Union can be considered as an especially complex *polifonía*, a combining of diverse voices to make a whole that is both the faithful expression of each of its parts and something greater than the mere combining of their individual values. The EU is a ‘brotherhood’ of voices, expressed musically in its unofficial anthem, the 9<sup>th</sup> Symphony of Ludwig van Beethoven, degraded from official status after being enshrined in the failed Constitutional Treaty. In spite of that setback, when the polyphonic *Ode to Joy* reverberated during the signing ceremony of the Lisbon Treaty, the leaders of the EU stood up and paid their respects.

Politics and music also have in common the search for a certain type of harmony and order through creation. In both cases, the origin is disharmony, a non-structured chaos that can only lead to something if correctly ordered. Think about an orchestra whose rehearsal is about to start: there is a chaotic mix of instruments playing apparently random patterns until the arrival of the conductor. The basic difference is that harmony in symphonic music is reached by following a score, the “*partitura*”. In politics, the point of reference is the political programme, but the piece is played *all’improvviso*, without previous rehearsal!

This is the reason why classical Greeks considered the arts so important for education, the ‘*paiedia*’. Nowadays, the progressive disappearance of arts and humanities at school is one of the most worrisome aspects of current education programmes in many countries. Teaching with, and through, the arts is not a way of escaping reality, but a fundamental part of the good education of responsible citizens, one of the most valuable tools with which to understand and transform reality in a fruitful fashion. The admirable initiative of the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, created by Daniel Barenboim and Edward Said, and offering experiences such as Arabic, Jewish and European young musicians rehearsing in Andalucía, the land where people of the Three Faiths of the Book lived together, shows the political force of music for peace and reconciliation.

Becoming a musician requires time-consuming learning, dedication and discipline. In politics, charisma, opportunism and fortune play a greater role. However, to play music is a shared responsibility, like implementing good and sound policies. The content of music studies at higher education level has to take in consideration that every musician is, in a way, also an important ambassador to all levels of the society.

One of the most impressive musicians who, throughout his life, lived out this important task was Yehudi Menuhin.

Yehudi was born in America out of Russian roots; he was European by option, a citizen of the world and a committed fighter for freedom. Béla Bartók composed for him a marvellous sonata for solo violin. He played it in the Concert of San Francisco in 1945, celebrating the creation of the United Nations, and in Paris in 1948, for UNESCO and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These were two of the most beautiful “Symphonies of Humanity” in the sad and short 20<sup>th</sup> Century, from which we can nonetheless drag great inspiration.

But Yehudi never forgot to esteem traditional music like the music of the Roma and other minorities; he played together with Ravi Shankar, Duke Ellington and many others. For him, all kinds of music and artistic expressions in a global sense were a source of sharing in the values of other cultures.

For these values, he initiated the International Yehudi Menuhin Foundation in Brussels for improving the environment of the children through the Arts at school, starting from the earliest age. The MUS-E<sup>®</sup> Programme, developed by following Zoltán Kodály’s pedagogical philosophy, promotes artistic exchanges, encourages the expression and representation of cultural identities (especially those that are endangered) and organises events. Launched 20 years ago by Yehudi, along with the cellist and Conservatory Director Werner Schmitt and the writer Marianne Poncelet, the MUS-E<sup>®</sup> Programme has made it possible for the more than a million children participating in it to develop *“their self-esteem, self-consciousness in the widest sense, and ends with the communication of what we see of ourselves and others, and of what they see of themselves and of us. An artist’s self-dialogue is a constant adjusting, correcting, re-balancing, of elements within himself”* – as Yehudi said.

MUS-E<sup>®</sup> has become my most interesting life-long opportunity for putting together music and politics. The IYMF now coordinates MUS-E<sup>®</sup> in 13 countries (10 from the EU, Liechtenstein, Switzerland and Israel) with more than 1,000 artists working with 60,000 children in 450 primary schools every year.

Artists working in the MUS-E<sup>®</sup> program are aware that their talent has a value not only in the world of competitions, festivals and big concert halls. There is an equal value to performing in a classroom of a primary school with multi-ethnic children, adding to the class teacher’s work “the fire and enthusiasm” which only art can give.

Conservatories and Schools of Arts should take into consideration that there is a huge working potential for professional artists to enlarge future audiences through concerts, theatrical events, performances, art exhibitions - and even in hospitals,

like “Música en vena”. How fruitful it could then be, were artists all over Europe to share such experiences through European exchange programmes.

Looking to the future of your ‘Erasmus Network for Music, you have reminded me that I was an active member of the ‘plot’ that led to the launching of Erasmus in 1987. It was not easy, due to the resistance of some States – a resistance that has not entirely disappeared. The main argument I used then in the Budget Committee of the European Parliament was: it is better for the future to invest in young people than in cattle. The balance is that Erasmus is the most successful investment in Europe, with more than three million students and three hundred thousand professors participating in it. Within this framework, musical training and formation is the most natural and universal network.

Recently, the European citizens have expressed in the European Parliament elections their anger, but it is also true that a majority of voting citizens still want to keep pushing forward towards a more united Europe. In some countries, the rise of populist forces reveals mixed feelings of fear and a hopeful return to an imaginary past, where everyone ends up playing alone in his own corner while feeling like a victim. Happily, the mainstream opinion of three-quarters of the electorate is still committed to the idea, or ideas, around a European *polifonía*. For me, the key message is to reinforce self-confidence and solidarity, transforming diffidence towards one’s neighbour into a basic positive force in European democracy. For these reasons, the message of music is so important. This is the added value of this Congress, and of all the nets that we can create; this is the experience of our MUS-E®.

One century after the beginning of the Great War, we can agree with Yehudi Menuhin that “*there cannot be authentic art under the bombs, hunger or torture*”. Our shared responsibility and mission is to work together to gather music and politics together in a symphonic way. Our best symphonies will be a United Europe and a democratic world.



**Sr. Enrique Barón Crespo** was born in Madrid, on the 27th of March 1944. Lawyer and economist, he obtained a P.H.D. in Law and Economics at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid (UCM), a Degree in Business Administration ( ICADE University- Madrid ) & the Diplômé de l'Ecole Supérieure des Sciences Economiques et Commerciales (ESSEC).

A former Member of the Spanish Congreso de los Diputados (1977-87), Constitutional Father, and former Minister of Transportation, Communication & Tourism of the Spanish Government which achieved the adhesion to the EC (1982-85), Enrique Barón Crespo was also Member of the European Parliament (1986-2008), President of the European Parliament (1989-92) and of the Socialist Group in the European Parliament (1999-2004). Former Chairman to the International Trade Committee and to the Foreign Affairs Committee of the EP, he speaks seven European languages and is the author of several books about Europe. The most recent are "Europe at the dawn of the millennium" (published in Spanish, English, French, Italian and Slovenian); "Europa, Pasión y Razón"; a handbook on "The Treaty of Lisbon & Charter of Fundamental Rights" (published in English, French,, Spanish, German, Italian, Portuguese, Polish and Rumanian); "Más Europa Unida, ¡Unida!", "Memoirs" and "La Era del federalismo".

Chair Jean Monnet "ad honorem", and visiting Professor in Universities all over the World, Enrique Barón Crespo is currently President of the "International Yehudi Menuhin Foundation", "The European Foundation for the Information Society" and the "Former Members Association of the European Parliament". He is Vice-President of the Istituto Internazionale per l'Opera e la Poesia di Verona-UNESCO and a member of the Patronato of the Fundación Gala-Salvador Dalí.