

CANADIAN COMPANIES IN MEXICO

LE BUREAU D'ARTISTES DE MONTRÉAL

Le Bureau d'artistes de Montréal is an artists' agency specializing in classical music. During the company's year-and-a-half in business, it has planned and led tours in Mexico for two of its clients. These are the viola da gamba duo, *Les Voix Humaines*, and organist, Réjean Poirier.

Company founder Jean-Philippe Trottier says he was attracted to Mexico for a number of reasons. He knew that there is a growing interest in Mexico for classical music, and that Mexico was becoming more active in the international classical music circuit. He also speaks fluent Spanish, so there was no language barrier. In addition, he finds the Mexican people extremely "chaleureux" and enjoys dealing with them.

The problems encountered in booking the company's clients in Mexico were relatively minor, although Mr. Trottier observes that not all of them have a solution. There appears to be a different interpretation of time, as it relates to deadlines.

Scheduling has been difficult because of the uncertainties of the Mexican economy. Throughout the world, classical performers are booked one-to-two years in advance. But the unpredictability of Mexican funding cuts the lead time there to much less. This makes coordination of multi-country tours quite difficult.

Mr. Trottier also advises Canadians to be aware of exploring Mexican cuisine. The food is much more interesting and tasty than most Canadian dishes, but it can cause serious disturbances for the uninitiated, enough to jeopardize a performance.

Some performers have received financial assistance both from the Canada Council, and *le Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec*. Mr. Trottier says that the Canadian Embassy in Mexico City was instrumental in organizing an additional concert date during one of his tours. He adds that the Mexican consulate in Montreal has also been extremely helpful.

The performers booked into Mexico by the *Bureau* have been well received both professionally and culturally. Mr. Trottier notes a strong affinity between Québécois, who are seen as "Northern Latins," and other Latin Americans. He adds that while Mexicans don't know a lot about Quebec, there is a great deal of curiosity about it.

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ORCHESTRAS

Mexico has three symphonic orchestras. *Orquesta Filarmónica de la Ciudad de México*, the Mexico City Philharmonic Orchestra, is sponsored by the Federal District of Mexico City. It is the most independent of Mexico's orchestras in terms of salaries, itinerary and the hiring of foreign musicians. It is also the most extensively endowed by the private sector.

The *Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional*, National Symphonic Orchestra of Mexico, is sponsored by INBA. This orchestra is strongly reliant on emerging local talent, and is almost entirely dependent on funds from the government.

The *Orquesta Filarmónica de la Universidad Autónoma de México*, Philharmonic Orchestra of the National Autonomous University of Mexico, is considered to have the broadest repertoire of any of Mexico's orchestras.

During an interview, an official of the *Orquesta Filarmónica de la Ciudad de México* said that salaries are paid by the Federal District of Mexico City, while other expenses are sponsored by private companies. Major private sponsors include *Transportación Marítima Mexicana*, *Transportación Aérea Mexicana (Tamsa)*, and the Spanish Embassy. He added that Canadians, Russians and Americans are the best in the classical music field and are highly sought-after to work with the Mexican philharmonic orchestras. Two Canadian musicians have been working with the orchestra for the past four years.

RECORDING COMPANIES

Recording in Mexico is dominated by the large multinational firms. The Mexican media giant *Televisa*, and three other Mexican companies are interested almost exclusively in "superhit" material, according to industry observers. Small independent labels are rare, because they find it difficult to compete with the majors on one hand and pirates on the other.

Sony is the industry leader in terms of sales, while Polygram is considered more technologically advanced.

Sony's sales in Mexico are divided as follows:

- 1.6 percent international music;
- 23.5 percent Mexican music;
- 65.5 percent popular music;
- 1 percent rock music; and
- 0.5 percent classical music.