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Passion for music: another kind of “knowledge”

We should not overlook the fact that the first statement is taken from the modern scientific world, where the word “knowledge” has a clear, precise meaning: research in order to understand part of reality, through proven theories which, in certain cases, can actually help us to use that reality. In the music world, this “knowledge” only exists in the field of performing, and as basic training during the learning period: you cannot be a musician if you cannot read and write music, and neither is it a good idea to compose music without knowledge, mastery of past techniques, for example. Apart from this kind of knowledge, which is more concerned with craftsmanship, the word has no meaning when we refer to “creation” (also quite a “dubious” word in its own right) or enjoyment. Does that mean music is of no use for achieving “knowledge”? Or could it be that the word “knowledge” transcends the field of science, and that human beings are not using their full ability to reason or their sensitivity in science, and that there are infinite ways of attaining “knowledge”? Could it perhaps be necessary (or beneficial, at least) for us to dare to explore — albeit reticently — the meaning of some of our words? I’m not a Wittgensteinian (I don’t make the grade), even though I’m quite annoyed by Stephen Hawking’s comments on one of the philosopher’s statements, “The sole remaining task for philosophy is the analysis of language,” to which Hawking retorts: “What a comedown from the great tradition of philosophy from Aristotle to Kant!”. Although it is also true that a few paragraphs further on he almost seems to aspire to “know the mind of God”. That’s not bad, is it? In spite of all this and from my humble, although constant — 60 years — stance as a composer, I would like to “stick my oar in” on this issue, perilous as it may be and unfathomable perhaps, but fascinating all the same.

BIO

Luis De Pablo was born in Bilbao (Spain). Entirely self-taught, he began studying music at the age of seven and composing at the age of twelve. He attended composition classes with Max Deutsch in Paris and courses in Darmstadt (Germany) from 1956 onwards. In 1964 he founded Spain’s first Laboratory of Electronic Music and in 1965 he created the ALEA Private Centre, where modern chamber music and music of non-European cultures were performed for eight years. De Pablo has composed over 150 works in all genres, including orchestral, chamber music, soloist, concert performances, vocal, electronic and five operas, all of which have been performed many times by renowned musicians. De Pablo received an Honorary Doctorate from Complutense University of Madrid (1996) and numerous merits including the Honegger Prize (2003), the Prince Pierre Foundation of Monaco’s Prize of Musical Composition (2004), the Guerrero Foundation Prize for Music (2006) and most recently the Tomás Luis de Victoria Award (2009).