

Interviewee: Guillermo Graetzer

Date: ?

Interviewer: ?

This interview deals mainly with the difference in culture and attitude between Europeans and Argentineans. Not many biographical details. Mr Graetzer, a musician and composer Austrian born, was among the founders of the Collegium Musicum, a prestigious institution in Buenos Aires founded in 1946. Many of the principals of the school were Austrians. In 1950, he married an Austrian woman in Argentina. His children went to a private school: Rudolf Steiner, for elementary education, but then transferred to public schools for secondary education. The parents were not interested in imparting them any Jewish education. He feels that musicians are Universalists. Art is the common culture and language. Mr. Graetzer was active nationally during the 5 years of the Alfonsin government in 1983. They established the Direccion Nacional de Musica part of the nation's Department of Culture. Graetzer was its pedagogical counselor. He was also named the director of the Fondo Nacional de las Artes. These activities ceased with the change of government because the entire personnel was changed. Graetzer was never politically active, nor did he participate in the Jewish community.

Graetzer feels more Argentinean than European after 50 years, and when he travels to Austria he feels displaced. He loves its nature but doesn't feel at home any longer. Some other emigres from Austria don't agree with this feeling, not having obtained Argentinean citizenship or integrated into the culture of the adoptive country.

Graetzer loves Spanish as the common language of all his peer musicians in South America. He feels at home in any of the congresses on the matter. He edited the first ever Folk Song Book for Schools, that is even sold in Europe.

Graetzer feels he hasn't achieved the notoriety he would have liked with his compositions.

During the 5 years he was active in the Alfonsin government, they wanted to open free open schools to study music, for all ages, in the entire country. It was very frustrating that the funds were not there to do it. He managed to open just one in Rio Cevallos, in

his own private vacation home, but even so it took a year and a half to finance. The other projects died because of politics and bureaucracy.

He also tried to offer improvement courses for music teachers, but the tuition proved to be an obstacle. Even when the tuition was abolished, fewer than 30 teachers took advantage of the course. Graetzer considers that the South Americans, as opposed to the Europeans, make much less of an effort to improve. Many times students miss classes they have paid for. The difference lies in the education they both receive, even if the efforts made by the Europeans are, sometimes, exaggerated. President Alfonsín felt that Argentina could reach the level of Germany or Japan, if the people were interested in working.