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Using a baton as a weapon of seduction

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Multifaceted, energetic and original, this Venezuelan has gained critical acclaim through his work in concert halls and recording studios. A graduate of East Anglia University, Cambridge, he was nominated for a Latin Grammy for best classical music recording and has composed and conducted soundtracks.

Eduardo Marturet recalls that his first interview was with *El Universal*. This little-known fact opens up a conversation on his beginnings, distant from the music world, as a student at Caracas school Colegio San Ignacio, where his grades were not necessarily outstanding. "I failed five subjects and was transferred to Colegio San José de Los Teques (in the outskirts of Caracas). That is where I got my high-school

diploma in Science. Having to survive boarding school was significant in my upbringing, from a human standpoint." He remembers his childhood as a happy phase. "I played the piano and composed without really knowing what I was doing."

He admits that he was not catered to be a musician. "I grew up like most young people and, at the age of 18, I was getting ready to begin a university career. I dreamed of being an oceanographer, but my family did not approve," a setback that set out a blank stave before him.

He remembers France as a very important place for his artistic career, but it was England where he made up his mind to become a musician.

The academy in Caracas, used to dealing with child prodigies, deemed him too old to start so he headed toward England, where he was ultimately accepted. The main conductor of the Miami Symphony Orchestra recalls: "They accepted me because for the British anything is possible, and I began conducting prior to playing. What I really wanted to be was a composer."

Despite his late calling, his development was not affected and soon his instructors found talent in Eduardo Marturet and awarded him a scholarship. "In Cambridge I never paid tuition." He explains that turning to music at a later age has also allowed him to enjoy music differently, without any suffering.

"I have always been humbled. My career took off unexpectedly. This does not mean that it was effortless, but it was definitely devoid of suffering."

On the topic of Venezuelan music, he looks up to José Antonio Abreu, founder of the Orchestra System, and acknowledges Abreu's role in changing how the country approaches music. "Nowadays, having a child who is a musician is a reason to be proud. Many parents now aspire for their children to be musicians."

Eduardo Marturet has conducted many orchestras throughout the world, including the Cambridge Orchestra, Berlin Orchestra, Venezuela Symphony Orchestra and Simón Bolívar Orchestra. With over 800 concerts under his belt, his musical pedigree enables him to define the role of a conductor and, in fact, he believes that it is very dangerous to consider one's self the be-all end-all.

"A conductor directs souls and spirits, not instruments. He seduces. I seduce musicians so that they do what I ask of them, but I do not control them. Music is magical, and grasping it is the most difficult thing." He delves into another difficult issue, which is winning the orchestra over, and elaborates: "No leader can be called so without respect from others. That can only be achieved over time and does not come for free. An orchestra is similar to a country; each musician is different, but the conductor has to deal with those individualities. A conductor's ego must be directed toward music and not toward himself. If he is just another member of the orchestra, the musicians will be entirely enveloped and the audience will be seduced as well and every concert would be a mystical experience."

Yet another chapter: his discography. It highlights his work as a composer. Records with music containing great classics alternate with his own music showcasing his originality, such as *Campanas del silencio* (Silence Bells), which was conceived to be played by the bells of a city. He has been commissioned to write scores for films, quite successfully, as well.

Composing occupies an important space in Marturet's work. "I have many musical pieces in my head and delivering them is a painstaking process." For him, writing soundtracks is like decomposing images into music.

Fina Torres and Diego Rísquez are two Venezuelan moviemakers who have entrusted Marturet with their films' soundtracks. Award-winning films *Oriana*, *Manuela* and *Miranda* showcase his talent. "With those films, I had a challenge at an audio and visual level because music in films should complement but not saturate."

He recalls how he came to conduct the Miami Symphony: "The previous conductor, Manuel Ochoa, insisted until I ended up falling in love with the project. Within the orchestra, there are 24 nationalities, and it still continues to consolidate."

When asked about his views on Florida audiences, he explains: "It is quite peculiar because they not only demand good programs but also love to be surprised. That is why I have entered the podium with a parrot and a macaw on my shoulder during pop music concerts or have worn shoes designed by Talala Briner". At present, Marturet is one of the most influential Latin Americans in Miami.