

A NEIGHBORLY APPROACH TO GRAVE COMMUNITY PROBLEMS

by **ROLANDO ESPIRITU**

DURING the sixteenth century, begging and destitution were regarded as criminal in England. A vagrant caught begging was whipped and for further offenses could be put to death. In the early days of the Industrial Revolution, destitution was thought of as a necessary evil, second only to overpopulation. Almshouses were then built where the young and the old were herded together, as well as the tubercular and the insane. Poverty was then regarded as a disgrace so that no attempt was made to study its causes. Not until the second half of the nineteenth century did the scholars gain better knowledge; philanthropists and social workers became interested, and public opinion developed in behalf of a more systematic and human treatment for the poor.

Today, society is blind to the way the gaunt-faced destitute wander in the filthy nooks of our neighborhoods. We are faced with the problems of juvenile delinquency, the care of the aged dependents, the mentally diseased and feeble-minded persons, and finally, the worst of them all and the most ignored - commercialized prostitution.

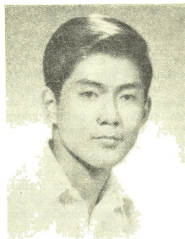
Poverty has always been regarded as the concern only of those who desire to be charitable rather than a community responsibility. To the vagrant paupers, broken families requiring help, the abused, the neglected, the delinquent and other handicapped children abandoned by their parents, and the women in the dark, we owe the duty of providing an environment where they can be taught to be self-sufficient members of the community, where facilities and useful occupa-

tions develop a healthy outlook on life.

Our dependence on philanthropic societies to ease the destitute of their daily afflictions is indeed unfair. Every citizen of the community must cooperate in a systematic approach to the problem. Irrespective of religious belief or disbelief, all should help in working out plans -- educational, recreational or cultural. The concerted effort must not limit itself to rescuing those who have already fallen into pauperism but must include in its scope the wage-earners to give them many advantages which could not otherwise be enjoyed by them within their individual means. Vigorous efforts are needed today in the neighborhood organizations to make service available, to offer integrated patterns of services to meet the varying needs of the neighborhoods, to coordinate services to prevent overlapping and overlooking, to provide opportunities at the neighborhood and district levels for people to form groups to change social goals and create new ones. In carrying out these functions the keynote must be the participation of the people in a neighborhood in this community undertaking. A committee of social agency representatives may put up a project for the prevention of juvenile delinquency. Community clubs within the neighborhood may be formed to promote community projects in the form of recreational programs. It may be a group of citizens pledged to solve some specific community problems. A group, for instance, may be formed to take charge of cultural activities while another group may take care of the moral aspect of the undertaking. The latter may launch a drive

against the maintenance of bawdy houses and arouse public opinion against the perpetrators of this indecent practice.

Often, we see hundreds of ragged children living animal-like, sleeping on dirty sidewalks; minors lingering at bars and getting involved in drunken brawls. The picture is clear that delinquent parents and broken homes produce delinquent children. This unfortunate portion of society appeals to our conscience, our sense of duty.



THE AUTHOR

The lack of recreation facilities has been frequently thought of as one of the major causes of the increase of juvenile delinquency. "No decent place to go" is heard many times. Through community cooperation and organizations, this will cease to be a big problem. There will be a study of available sites for recreational centers, playgrounds for children, and suitable places for community group meetings. The following are suggested recreational activities:

1. Hobby groups
2. Music appreciation
3. Athletics and Sports
4. Dancing
5. Radio workshop
6. Outing activities, such as camping and field trips
7. Games
8. Dramatics
9. Community service groups
10. Clubs to foster close relationship among members of the community

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FROM THE standpoint of artistic insight, the art of music is the most creative, most direct, and most expressive.

The poet pours out his feelings through beautiful verses; the sculptor, through the use of his chisel and hammer, creates his ideal form or figure; the painter, with brush and canvas, uses color to interpret



The Author

Self-Expression through Music

his sense of beauty; the dancer uses rhythm of music and dance-steps in presenting his theme, but the musician, particularly the composer, combines beauty of verse, form, rhythm, color, and other factors in order to express himself.

By musician, we mean the composer, or the interpreter, or the listener, as long as their aim is music — its beauty and its truth.

How does each one of them succeed in expressing himself through the art of music?

The Composer. What, after all, do we listen for when we listen to a composer? Is it the rhythm, the melody, the form, or the tone-color that he infuses into his musical composition?

Yes, all these. Moreover, we also apprehend the creative musician himself. His work is an embodiment of the lushest and deepest expression of himself as a man, of his experiences as a fellow being. His personality may be streaked with frailties, (no one is perfect!) but whatever is line in his music comes also from whatever is line in himself as a man.

by PETE MONTERO

Every artist's work is, of course, an expression of himself, but none so direct as the creative musician's.

The Interpreter. The middleman in music is the interpreter. No doubt, so many of us, if not all, at one time or another, interpret music either by the use of our voice or by some musical instruments. Unfortunately, however, when we try to interpret, our general tendency is to imitate — we fail to use our own musical intelligence. By imitation, a person never really interprets, unless perhaps some emotional or physical

excitation accompanies the act of interpreting.

We are trying to drive home the point that an interpreter should use mind and heart in order to succeed in transferring his thoughts, moods, and emotions to other people.

In performing a piece of music, the interpreter does not stick immovably to the notes and modulations set down by the composer. There is also a creative interpretation in which a piece is expressed according to the way the interpreter understands it, and according to the emotional appeal of the music to him. With these things in mind, the interpreter expresses himself successfully.

The Listener. We all belong to this great group, but, characterizing various types of listeners will probably help us understand better how we can express ourselves by listening to music.

The first class of listeners, that to which our younger generation belongs, consists of the "foot-listeners", who hear music with their feet. To them, a few unorganized tones sounded rhythmically, mean music;

that is, if the rhythm is enough to stir their feet to execute dance steps. It is only too obvious how these foot-listeners may be likened to the Indian war-dancers.

In time, the foot-listeners advance to become "heart-listeners" who respond emotionally and physically to music. When the heart-listeners hear music, the mood and emotion suggested by the music is absorbed in them.

The third group consists of "head-listeners" the most advanced of them all. Head-listeners create a

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The State can help these children very much. Unfortunately, it has failed to enact legislation to safeguard the rights of these children to a good home, to proper care, to education, and to respect.

When we meet a beggar and we hand out a few centavos, we feel we have done enough. But that is the least that we can do. In the United States a new system of cooperation is widely practiced. If a neighbor discovers that the family near door is in need, he goes to one of the agencies of the community and reports the situation. The agency sends a visitor to study the family situation. If the father is out of work, the visitor will procure another position for him. Or it may be that some of the members of the family are sick. Not only will the visitor attempt to provide immediate relief in the form of fuel, groceries, and medical assistance, but he will also seek to remove the cause of the unfortunate condition. The visitor in this system is the most important character because he is the very person who sees the actual situation of the indigent family. Hence, there is great stress on neighborly intercourse. The visitors are on guard to prevent them from sinking into unbearable misery. This system has three advantages. First, the poor family develops an intimate relationship with the visitor. Second, it has a good moral effect on the poor, bringing them into contact with higher standards. And finally, it shows the rich the actual conditions under which the poor live. ‡

situation when listening to music. They consider the composer's theme and the interpreter's mood.

However, the real music-lover whether he is the composer, the interpreter, or the listener, combines all three. Music is not for the intellect alone; it appeals equally to the feet, to the heart, to the head, which means physically, emotionally, and intellectually.

Finally, Music as an art is both creative and interpretative. The thoughts, moods, and emotions of an artist are conveyed to his fellow-men, like literature, in true and beautiful terms. In endeavoring to be true, the composer, the interpreter, and the listener give their own honest selves — their deepest thoughts and tenderest feelings that ennoble our humanity and uphold the ideals of the sublime art of Music. ‡