

Joaquín Díaz Foundation





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Interviewee
Joaquín Díaz

Interviewer
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Palmar: We are with Joaquín Díaz at the Foundation that bears his name in Urueña, Valladolid. Joaquín was born in Zamorano, a musician, ethno-musicologist and folklorist. He has published more than 70 albums and books, has dedicated his life to the recovery, study and dissemination of novels, traditional stories, Sephardic music and other expressions of oral tradition. I would say that your career has made you one of the great references in the research, conservation and dissemination of Iberian popular music. And we are here to talk about several things that have to do not only with our cultural tradition, but also with this Foundation. So I'm going to start at the beginning of your biography. Let's start when you were little and you discovered your first musical vocation. I heard in the documentary they made from Grifilm that there is a time when you remember thinking of yourself as a child already as a musician. Can you go back to that moment and remember what you thought?

Joaquín: Yes, maybe it's an exaggeration, because being a small person you don't think about those things either. But hey, I think that my first feelings, in which music is important, take place in Zamora, I was in Zamora until I was four years old and apparently my parents took me to all kinds of events such as Holy Week processions, such as parades of kings, and so on and I have the feeling that the music band, by the way, of the teacher Inocencio Aedo, had a lot to do with that first encounter with music. I always relate that to domestic life as well. In my house there were some girls who usually came from rural areas. Many of them were from Sanabria, where my father had worked a lot as a forestry engineer. And then that freshness, let's say, of the people who came from the countryside and who sang while doing household chores and so on. Even my mother too. And radio, which was another element that greatly influenced that first discovery of music. I think that all together are the facts that relate me to music in my early years.

Palmar: And, besides, you don't associate yourself with any type of music, but rather it's about traditional folklore linked to the rural environment. When we talk about folklore, in your case, what are we talking about? And how is it related to the rural world?

Joaquín: Well, the rural world is where that type of knowledge has been best developed, which I try to show that it belongs to a tradition and whose fundamental characteristic is that they have been able to evolve and that they have come from the past to the present. They have arrived and despite how old they may be, they are useful and can be used as if they were current. And I always had the feeling that whoever invented the word folklore, apparently it was an Englishman who related it to all the subjects of the antiquarian. Because he was an antiquarian. William Holmes. It seems that he did a lot of work on



antiques and so on. And I also imagine that he discovered that there were many of those antiques that could be like today. They are called vintage. They could attract people's attention and that those people would discover in them something more than a remnant of the past, something archaeological, something that could be used at the time they were living, right? So, I've always respected that idea of William Jones and I have it almost as a rule, right? Tradition requires this evolution and evolution indicates that this material, that knowledge, that wisdom that people or, at least, some specialists within society are supposed to have, comes to us renewed and recycled and with the intention of being able to continue to be used over time.

Palmar: You are considered the renovator of folk music since the 70s in Spain. Do you recognize yourself in that statement?

Joaquín: Well, sometimes there is no choice but to recognize that you are older and that you are already an old age. When I started, it is true that in the 60s it was difficult to explain all this and difficult to explain what tradition was and difficult to demonstrate that this vision or that look at the past, had or could have positive results for the individual and for society.

Palmar: But do you think that in the 60s there was a perspective that valued all this cultural tradition?

Joaquín: On the part of some, yes. Among which I include myself. That's why people usually always say, of course, when you started there was nothing, right? Well, you had to... Indeed, a few of us were beginning to discover those possibilities that tradition had and that meaning that looking to the past could have.

Palmar: I remember another interview in which you say that after singing a Bob Dylan song in English, someone close to you asked you why you didn't sing the living tradition of your country.

Joaquín: Of course. I get that intuition and that offer, so to speak, from the voice of Jagger, who is a person with whom I try to contact from the moment I make my first trip to the United States and who is a person who guides me very well and says "look, folklore in general has common elements that can be taken advantage of, but it is also important to approach one's own heritage. It's simpler on the one hand and on the other hand it's more positive because you're going to better understand what that knowledge means and you're going to assimilate or disseminate it better."

Palmar: I propose that you return to the 70s because at that time in Spain there was an important political change that enabled the arrival of a superb modernity that projects a future of capitalist promises and absolute well-being. At that time you are already a singer-songwriter and traditional culture seems to have no value. How do you live this moment?

Joaquín: Well, I have always been in favor of balancing and reconciling things and not being so drastic that I abandon one path because it seems to me that another is better in that sense. What I tried to do was to say at first in recitals, then in books or publications, that the future and the past are not incompatible. Not much less. In other words, in the present we have to have a vision of where we come from and based on that knowledge of our own heritage, to try to invent a future that is also positive.

[00:09:23] Do you think it's right to think that during the Franco dictatorship, rural culture was valued in certain traditional cultural sectors for nationalist purposes and that then that same culture experienced a decline due to the opposition to Franco's regime?

Joaquín: Well, it's likely. Anyway, I have always thought or believed in personal tradition. In other words, the social aspect is undoubtedly important, but those who are curious by nature and are interested in knowing what things belonged to the culture of their parents or grandparents are, in fact, accepting and carrying out work that can probably later have a social reach. But it certainly starts with the personal. It is true that for a long time there was folklore, so to speak in some official way, carried out by the Women's Section and others who did a job, I believe in some positive aspects, always a little nuanced because of what you have spoken, because of that nationalism or because of that attempt to make the national, and in this case national socialism, be the most important thing in tradition. The most important thing in the tradition was obviously the lives of those people who together had established a way of existing, some customs. Everything that was received naturally from parents is what is beginning to be questioned. The intergenerational relationship is also questioned, that is, the generations that had normally received the tradition of parents and grandparents are beginning to separate a little, because even from the point of view of the media, it was questioned whether the past had a future. The media, as I have said before, were determined to show that people lived very poorly in the countryside. That the countryside was almost a pseudonym for poverty and overwork and so on. And they were constantly pouring that into the only television there was. And of course, when I saw a journalist who was going to interview a man working in the field at 15:00 in the afternoon and I said "if you could you would get out of here." Logically the man said yes, of course. But I missed that I was also going to do that interview with a man on the subway at 15:00 in the afternoon in Madrid and tell him "if you could, you would still be here." The other would say, "Well, it's a shame that I came, didn't I?"

Palmar: Effectively. And then thinking, you mention the radio, the television, the news. But I'm thinking about the movies, right? A Paco Martínez Soria ridiculing being from the people. Yes, yes. In other words, it is not only a communication campaign against life in the rural world, but also a discrediting of the rural world in favor of urban people.

Joaquín: Yes, yes, yes, that is obvious. And it's something that doesn't really explain how much of the tradition has been maintained. But, as I said, the personal was always present. So, a musician who had, let's say, his shared work, because generally the musician couldn't just be a musician, but who was a shoemaker, or who was a tailor or who was... And that from time to time I attend the festivities of the peoples with their repertoire and with their interest in maintaining those festivities and those traditions, those dances and so on. Well, he did a lot for tradition, he did a lot and besides, I think that at the time I started there was dulzaina, for example, as a popular instrument about to disappear, that They gave those few musicians and, however, based on the virtuosity that some of them demonstrated, the interest they were constantly renewing, because a few young people began to experiment with an instrument as hard and as sonorous as the dulzaina. And today it can be said that the dulzaina has evolved so much that right now it is almost an orchestra instrument. It's a very versatile instrument that can be used for a lot of things and I think it has grown thanks to those young people who somehow came to that tradition. Thanks to the older people because at that time it was about to disappear.

Palmar: And thanks to people like you who began to collect all this tradition, because in 1975 you decided to leave the stage and dedicate yourself to researching all this, right?

Joaquín: Indeed, yes, that's it. I think it was also a good idea to dedicate that attention to popular and traditional culture. And, in fact, this is the moment when some institutions such as councils, then autonomous communities, and so on, also look back. And for whatever reason, right now it can't be analyzed with finesse, but, for whatever reason, they decide to preserve that, to show it as the heritage of that community, or that or those provinces. And I think it was a key moment in which both the people who were researching and the institutions that supported them, restored some luster to tradition.

Palmar: What leads you to decide that the stage is no longer your field and do you want to be a researcher of all this?

Joaquín: Well, I had started out as a singer almost on a whim or I don't know what to call it, because my mother, who had been a career pianist and had also studied virtuosity and all that, thought that musicians were dying of hunger. That idea led him to prohibit me from going to a conservatory. So there was a kind of, I don't know how to say it, of challenge. A challenge in which I had to show my parents that you could also live on music or that you could carry out an activity and have your own career without having to die of hunger. And that was a bit of the model I followed at the beginning. Then it's true that I realized that life as a musician, apart from being economically unproductive, was very hard, it was very hard. I had been giving 12 or 14 recitals for months and many of them separated by 500 kilometers. In other words, I had no means of travel, I always went by train or plane or whatever. It ended up tiring me, tiring me and, above all, having to show an audience every night that everything I wanted to convey to them was very positive and that it made sense. It was a bit of a strong pressure. And since I had already discovered that everything I explained and communicated came from a popular source, I decided to go to that source and see where that spring came from, that water that seemed so interesting to me that I also saw that it satisfied the audiences to whom I explained those questions. So that's where I started a little, on the one hand, the desire I had to stop singing in public and, on the other hand, the need to go to those sources, because that second part of my life began, in which I dedicate myself more to touring villages and interviewing people from whom, well, I was trying to get the best out of their lives. Of those very important life cycles of childhood, youth, maturity or old age.

Palmar: And the next question has to do with what you are saying but also thinking about the institutionalized academic present. Because of course, research for what? Today we are used to the ethnographer or researcher coming to the community, extracting knowledge, generating that book, that material that he then puts up for sale. But for you, research has been something else. Can you tell us about this whole research process?

Joaquín: Well, I started from the idea that my own curiosity had to help me get closer to all those topics that I later intended to communicate. At university, I realized that there were no documentation centers where other people could or could work. And that was the idea of this foundation, to begin to gather materials that may be useful or practical for those people who are curious or who have that need, because sometimes there is a real need to return to the past and to their own heritage. So, the idea of this foundation was from the beginning that it would

serve as a repository and that things were constantly accumulating that could later serve as a guide and support other people's research or documentation.

Palmar: But I also think that you value a situated research model because you do research, you do research not only on that culture or on the people they transmitted, but with them. I have seen a video of you in which you are singing with the person who is singing, recording and speaking to you. It's a very particular way of researching.

Joaquín: Yes, but I think that goes a little into each person's characters. I don't know how others do research, because when I started out there weren't too many examples to look at either. Of course, I was always the Lomax or, of course, or cheesy. But I also wanted to incorporate a little bit of the way I was then. My idea was that the person I was interviewing would be comfortable, that they would quickly realize that I was on their side. In other words, what I was going to ask him interested me a lot. But he himself might also be interested in remembering it. And that memorization of everything that was, let's say, there in the past and that many times even their children had not asked them and they had not dared to transmit it to their children either, because that was what interested me. So what I used to do was, following a very simple method, either follow the cycle of the year, or follow the life cycle and gradually remove them like cherries, a few more would come out. And that's how they themselves were very satisfied with what they had transmitted at that time. They had remembered, they had fulfilled their obligation, because memory not only served them to remember, but to assert and assert themselves, that is, to know that they came from a place, that they responded to their way of being, their customs, to traditions. And all that was there and all of a sudden it came to them to satisfy the interviews. They always looked frankly good because people were very happy, they were very happy and even if at first they were a little reticent or had that difficulty communicating. However, I suppose that almost all the people I interviewed in my life had that communication skills that old transmitters, minstrels, troubadours used to have, people who were, let's say, willing to transmit things, to communicate things, and who did it with a method and with an order and with a perfection which was gradually improving.

Palmar: It's just that it's very nice how you're telling it, because for me your work has always meant a moment of legacy. What you have generated is a legacy. And of course, the biographical legacy. When a person realizes that they have something to bequeath, they feel an almost existential satisfaction, of meaning of life. So I always thought that your research guided a meaning of life. It is that current that links us to something that is bigger than us and us...

Joaquín: Humans.

Palmar: And that lasts over time.

Joaquín: I'm not sure I've always had that perfectly explained idea, but I had an intuition that everything could work better that way.

Palmar: Of course, before arriving at the foundation, what you opened was an ethnographic center in the year 85 and was formally constituted in 91. Why did you start with the Ethnographic Center and what did you intend to do with this center? Collect all this research and save it and treasure it or open it up to the common denominator and create a study center?

Joaquín: Well, at the beginning I already mentioned that at the university it was difficult to find documentation, bibliography, and so on. So my idea was mainly to provide teachers and teachers with materials with which they could work with students. That was the fundamental idea and, in fact, the first work we did, while still in a small office in Valladolid, was to create a collection of materials on teaching subjects that could be useful to teachers who came by constantly to collect those materials and who sometimes wrote them themselves because they had more related to a topic and they had studied and experienced it in classes or classrooms. So that was the first motivation. Make a compilation of what we already knew, that we, in the words of us, José Delfín, Val and my brother Luis and I, made a folkloric catalog from the province of Valladolid that we offered to the Provincial Council. So, all that material was also available to people. In other words, from the beginning we were clear that all this material should be open and that it could be consulted at the beginning, right there, and then, once there were possibilities, it could also be consulted on the Internet or through Wikimedia, which also offered us that possibility of having all that material there. Unfortunately, everything is not there. But there are twenty-something thousand audio files that can be consulted and that are very easy to consult, because one of the fundamental issues of storing material is order. The order. In other words, it is one thing to store materials and have them stored there and not even remember what you have collected and another thing is to have it well catalogued, well inventoried and available to the public. That is a bit of the Foundation's current foundation.

Palmar: I imagine that it also had to be a monumental work, because you were working with analog recordings, it's not like transferring your entire research project to the digital world. It had to be a big project for the center.

Joaquín: Yes, it still is, because we really have a lot of material that is still analog, that comes to us from people or descendants, from people who have worked in that, in that world of analog and who already have the old support and have no desire or no possibility of transforming it. So that's what we're working on now in that sense. We try to collect and sometimes we don't have to, because people are very generous and are constantly bringing us materials. Gather that everything, that knowledge that is there, that is on old media and we are gradually transforming them into the digital world and we hope that of those twenty-something thousand files can soon be converted into 200 and something, which is what we suppose we have.

Palmar: So since 1994, when the Foundation officially opened, have you been working on this digitalization project? He always speaks in the plural and I love to hear: "like us." But how many people are part of the team?

Joaquín: Well, on the subject of the sound library there is someone else and me. I have been staying in the world of memory for a while now and that person is working right now. He continues to do the same thing I did 50 or 60 years ago and he is still going to places where there are people who even call us and say: "Look, there is a person in this town who has a lot of knowledge who likes to communicate it. If you want to come and record it." We immediately came. We never say no to this kind of thing, even if we sometimes have to make a big effort. But yes, yes, the idea that it's a team is true, isn't it? Five or six people work here right now, because the retirement age also reaches all of us and although I am retired, I am still working administratively. But the person who was in charge of the library, for example, has already retired. The person who was in charge of cleaning and many other things

has also retired and needs to be renewed. But to renew, it is necessary to hold competitions so that people enter the way they usually do in the Administration.

Palmar: How is all this activity sustained in a foundation like this?

Joaquín: Well, we basically had the idea at the beginning that a board of trustees would be the ideal formula. And if that board of trustees brought together public administration and private enterprise, that's even better, isn't it? We also started with some grants from a savings bank in Valladolid, with which I started the folklore magazine and others, which was the Popular Savings Bank, but also with the help of the Provincial Council that gave, gave up this building so that all the work of the Junta de Castilla y León could be done here, as a newborn, also began to collaborate in some way so that all of this could be done. We are, let's say, very prudent when it comes to establishing the projects that are being done for each coming year. And more. We rely on the economic possibilities we may have rather than on desires. But hey, I always say that I am satisfied with what has been done, but I am truly proud of what I have not done. In other words, I am much prouder of the dreams that I have had and that have not been able to be realized. Why? Because those dreams are untouchable and are perfect as dreams. But I have a lot that I sometimes comment on. For example, I wanted to do a workshop here, a workshop school. In a house downstairs, where he later came to live and bought Amancio Prada. I wanted to make a paper mill, for example, because they gave us a mill. El Molino de las Cuatro Rayas is called, which belonged to four municipalities and they gave it to us when it had not yet become a ruin. So it seemed to me that it was very interesting to be able to make paper that would have had a lot to do with the Book Village. Later I also wanted to do it within the town of Urueña, because I wanted to make a street dedicated to handicrafts where people could work outside their home and that people who passed by could see them work and could ask questions. In other words, all these dreams, because in the end I even wanted to do it in a small palace that is in the countryside, where I always say that Don Juan de Austria and Felipe Segundo met. Did they meet? I wanted to make a museum of aromatic plants. Well, all those kinds of things, as I say, have stayed there, have remained as projects. I have them written down and everything, but in either case I was told no, and I had that prudence that characterizes me, but at the same time with the idea that this could have come out at some point, so I left it.

Palmar: There, who knows, dreams will come true too.

Joaquín: Also, of course, of course, but well, everyone has their dreams and we will see if there is someone who has similar dreams or needs to be instilled in some way.

Palmar: For those who don't know, the Foundation is in the town of Urueña. Why come to Urueña to build the foundation?

Joaquín: Well, mainly because of the house. This house that belonged to the Valladolid Provincial Council, the Provincial Council. In the 1960s, he had a very active president who had a very active idea of the future of the province, whose name was José Luis Mosquera. José Luis Mosquera bought some old houses in Montealegre, here in Urueña, two houses in El Coso, in Peñafiel, and he wanted to dedicate all this to tourism, to cultural tourism, right? But for whatever reason, presidents are renewed. And in the case of Mosquera, no, that idea didn't end. This could have been a tourist hostel with a cultural aspect and it was not done, but a restoration of the house was done in a house from the beginning of the S. XVIII, which had belonged to a person

born in Urueña, who ended up being archbishop of Calahorra and who never came to be here. The house was purchased, purchased and eventually partially restored. So, when I saw it, I thought it was the perfect thing to be able to develop that idea and in fact we started working on that aspect. Even this whole part where we are, which was going to be the kitchens, I transformed it into a library area and we are already waiting to open the new library to be able to store the 50,000 books we have at the moment.

Palmar: How much information does this building hold? In addition, speaking of time that contains time, it is a beautiful metaphor. In this foundation, in this building where we are, we have the Library, the Sound Library, the Museum of Musical Instruments and then all this record of documentation. Do I forget any of the areas you're working on? Is there anything else?

Joaquín: At present? No. Although at another time there was a lot of interest in disseminating and at the same time attracting people to know a little about our work. So we did concerts. Now we have stopped because it takes a lot of time, a lot of work, a lot of effort and there are already concerts practically everywhere you go. At the time we started no, there wasn't. And we also did it at 11:00, which was an untimely and totally impossible time for concerts. In fact, Paco Ibáñez always told me: "When you change the time I'll go sing because I'm not a person until one o'clock in the afternoon" and the truth is that many times it was a little... But I also had to combine it with parish mass and the parish priest had mass at 12 o'clock and then he would complain to me and say: "But how do you have so many people if almost as many people don't go to mass? I said, "Well, we'll have to offer something interesting." And, well, we got along very well with the parish priest and there was no problem. But the man said, "This doesn't fit me, does it?" And that's what we did and now we don't do it. But currently we have two lines that are related to the university. In 1993, we made an agreement with the university to create a chair on tradition and that chair continues to operate. In fact, every year we have a cycle that we call the common acquis, where people specialized in different disciplines, in different subjects, come to explain things to us. We have dedicated a year to pioneers. This year we have dedicated it to handicrafts. Anyway, there is always a topic that I think may be of interest and we do that in Valladolid, at the Academy of Fine Arts in Valladolid, but we also hold symposiums here in which we bring together people, 15 or 20 people at most, to delve into the topic that may interest them. And we propose some of those topics and that's a little bit of what we do, aside from everything you've said.

Palmar: Now thinking about this exhibition that you have above musical instruments, why is it important to keep the instrument? What does it tell us about the materiality of the collective?

Joaquín: Well, indeed, the musical instrument for me has a special meaning within tradition. That is, it is something with which a person tries to imitate, or to make music, or to make sounds that range from the most primitive that can be the blows on a rock in a cave, to the most sophisticated instruments that can exist today in day, like the subject of Dulzaina that I said is getting better, better and better. And each instrument, the instrument itself, is an essential piece. There is a person who makes it and a person who plays in that piece. Therefore, there is a very human part that is that of the builder and that of the interpreter, and also of the one who listens to it and can then spread that music in another way. When people approach the display cases where those are, I think they have a desire to make that sound somehow. Now with the QR we are offering the sound of those instruments that you see there and

that there is no one to touch them. But we've always had that feeling that instruments improve with sound, of course. And I have always had the idea that the instrument should remain as it is, that is, the history of the instrument cannot be modified and if we modify it, we change it and sometimes we ruin it. I mean by this that an instrument that comes to us in conditions that are not suitable for interpretation on it, is at least declaring what its history has been and what its end has been. The end of that instrument as a sound instrument, as a sound piece. But it has a story behind it that I like to explain many times, because sometimes I know the story of that piece and when I explain it everything is much better understood and it's like a lot more enjoyable. In addition, the discovery of tradition through these pieces.

Palmar: How beautiful how digital technology is at the service of the echoes of history and memory. Within this context of the Foundation, and also thinking about treasuring, safeguarding, because in Spain we have a tradition of safeguarding the territory, I have always thought of the Foundation as a guardian of material and immaterial memory. Because it's important to guard this. Yes, someone might say, "Well, this past, past is." In the digital world we live in now. Of noises, for what? Why include that memory? Why is it important?

Joaquín: Yes, besides, what you said is also fundamental for me, not only although sometimes we are very dedicated to the immaterial. But I always say that the immaterial and the material have to go hand in hand. That is, for example, a bell ringer, a bell ringer who makes bells, must know and know all the data that the manufacturer, who was his father or grandfather, never wrote down. So that is transmitted verbally, but it is also transmitted gesturally with vision. And I always remember the famous Tarkovsky film by Andrei Rublev, in which there is a part dedicated to the casting of a bell. For a number of reasons, a plague, the bellringer dies and a child is left with the obligation. Terrible obligation, because if the bell didn't ring they would cut off his head, so that the bell that the prince asked for would ring perfectly. Then the child accumulates all the data he has had throughout his life, that he has seen his father, that he has heard of his father, that he has heard of the people who worked for his father, and so on. And finally the bell rings. In other words, all that is united, it is united because the immaterial without the material is very difficult to sustain.

Palmar: And how is all this preserved? Also thinking, at a time when we are in which economic contributions to the custody of intangible heritage are scarce because it is not valued. How is this conservation work? How is that possible?

Joaquín: Well, I think so. I have some personal intervention in all this mess and I get into the topic of the Foundation. It is convincing those who work at the foundation that despite the fact that there is no money or that there is little, the most important thing is to collect, is to collect and know. All of this is the main thing, the main thing, that we then have help that allows us to move forward in some sense or to acquire instruments or improve in aspects that help to spread all this that we are doing better. Undoubtedly. But the important thing is to be in love with what you're doing and the material you're collecting. And how do you realize that in that work, in that transmission or dissemination of knowledge, you have intervened.

Palmar: What does society lose when, from this state of lack of memory in which we live, it no longer understands the importance of preserving these echoes?

Joaquín: Well, obviously yes. If culture is the cultivation of oneself, of one's heritage,

of value, of one's own and so on, which one is losing, then, as if in an inheritance a lady who could leave her children. Some money, that lady gives it to the church or she gives it to an NGO. The children would say: "But how is this? I should have received that." Ah, that's it. That is what we are trying to demonstrate and to spread. No, all this stuff belongs to everyone. And to the extent that we know how to take care of it, that we pay attention to its dissemination, its evaluation, its improvement and its storage, because we are fulfilling a social duty that I believe that society must value in truth.

Palmar: What are the values, would you say, that have been treasured within this tradition that we need to recover in order to become people again?

Joaquín: Well, for me something very important is the story. The story, that is, the story is something that unites us in a certain way with the past, because there is always a precedent that gives rise to that story, that allows it to be transmitted and finally that goes beyond time. So, the story, whether with music or without music, but always that plot line is what I think characterizes the whole tradition. There is a line and an axis that communicates us with the past and with the future. And that way of seeing life, knowledge, customs, traditions. I think it's the one we can't lose at any time. We must always have the one that can help us a lot. Even artificial intelligence. But artificial intelligence allows us, let's say, to create something, always based on something as well. But when we discover that this can be done with artificial intelligence, we have to ask ourselves why. What is behind why do we also need that transmission? Why do we sometimes need to use the most modern means we can have at our disposal? But always the why, the why of things. The curiosity about all these materials and why they were so necessary to our ancestors and why they may be necessary for us too.

Palmar: And I, thinking about all this tradition and studying this tradition, also realize that it speaks to us of respect for the ecosystem, the ecosystems, of a relationship of interdependence between human beings, of mutual help and support. All these traditional values that we are gradually losing in this quasi-apocalyptic world.

Joaquín: Yes, yes. Well, anyway, I think we keep a lot of those values. The thing is that we don't use them. I think we should also sometimes count what each person returns to the same thing they have. And how do you assess all that? And then, from the moment a person realizes what comes or remembers from their grandfather and remembers things that their grandfather told them that now seem to fit into the chaotic world. For me that is a triumph, a triumph that a person suddenly realizes that it comes from behind and that everything they have communicated to him and that maybe his parents have not been interested for whatever reason and that until now seems to him to be an anachronistic thing. However, suddenly that little light of tradition helps him to be situated in a present with possibilities for the future, but always with that retrospective view.

Palmar: Of course, because we are rings of the same tree. But someone has to take you to the tree. And there the profession, education, has a lot of work to do along these lines. Are you optimistic about the present?

Joaquín: Yes, I think so. I have always been prudent but optimistic, because I always believe that the worst human being cannot go, it always has to get better. No? It seems to me that we have done everything we could do wrong and at some point we can do something right, right? I think that tradition that I really like from the 19th century, is the moment when the individual reaches very important heights.

He invents, he has a movement, an enormous capacity for creation. And the 20th is a bit where the decline of the civilization that we have known begins and we are already suffering the last shocks. What does the future hold for us? Probably something that might make us reflect on many things as well. And I think young people have that capacity, young people right now many young people have the feeling that they are not, that we are hiding things from them. And that eagerness to discover them may be the key to putting us on another path, on another path.

Palmar: I work with young people and I realize that there is a vital sense that cannot be short-circuited and that needs to be nourished. And there tradition has a lot to teach us. But I am also cautious about new technologies and the digital sphere. I think about the music scene and I wonder, what's the point of music today when it becomes a playlist from which you select three seconds per song and that you download, many times, without paying attention to what you're listening to. You're a musician. What opinion does this digital musical context deserve for you?

Joaquín: I think those lists have always existed. In other words, the repertoire that each person accumulated in their lives, which were a little what you learned as a child, what you would sing from balcony to balcony as a young person and what you would later accumulate. That repertoire made sense. It stayed in our memory or in the memory, because it made sense, for us it mattered. Sometimes the moment when we learned a song was more important than the same song that maybe wasn't even pretty, but it made sense because we wanted to remember that moment. Nowadays everything is going so fast and sometimes we don't realize the depth of many of those songs, those repertoires and so on. And let's go a little further to what the music of an elevator can offer us. It's not a bit of music as an accompaniment, but not as a meaning in life. And that accompaniment will probably in some cases give us the keys that a person is guided by when they want to remember or memorize songs. But in other cases, we will probably lose that possibility of remembering what was most experienced, what was most personal.

Palmar: What would you like young people to discover when they visit this Foundation?

Joaquín: Well, the things that surprise him. Many times, when I am explaining to young people what the Foundation is, I always tell them that tradition is communication, that it is not something of the past, that it is communication and that we are constantly communicating; that musical instruments always serve to communicate. Even the suits we have, because a collection of costume prints. The costumes were also a way of communicating what each person was, what profession they had, what social status they had, etc. Also the sheets of string, which is a splendid form of communication that has worked very well over the centuries. Why? Because normally whoever transmitted these sheets was transmitting freshness, despite the fact that 19th century journalists mess a lot with blind people because they said they weren't transmitting the truth. What the blind wanted to transmit was the believable, the imagination, what allowed them to imagine and transmit through those papers that were being sold, sung, and so on. All of that is what I am trying to convey. And I see surprised faces and that's what I turn to when I see a face that's like saying: "But what is this man telling me." Well, that's what really makes sense to me and that's what keeps making me wake up every morning wanting to do things.

Palmar: Joaquín, I want to pick up something that you wrote and that appears in the foreground of the documentary I mentioned about Grifilm film. I'm going to

read it because I think it sums up your philosophy of life very well. You write: "On more than one occasion I have compared tradition to a river. The shores would correspond to the limits of this culture, always changing, always imprecise. The flow would be all that knowledge that, in the form of an impetuous current, has been accumulating over the centuries. We contemplate this current from our vital reality, from the concrete point of view that we have had to live, and we sense that there is a past where the present comes from that flows between our sight and a future beyond the place that reaches our eyes." We live in a forgotten present, marked by collapse and root loss. That's how I see it. After a lifetime dedicated to safeguarding collective memory, I ask you, what horizon do you reach to glimpse?

Joaquín: I, rather than the horizon, focus on the path you are taking. The horizon is a very beautiful word and it is something panoramic, which allows us to dream. But I look at the road I'm walking and try not to run into the stones. Anyway. I don't see much difference between the way of thinking and reacting of an individual of today and that of 200 years ago. Yes, it is true that everything that was transmitted as one's own, individual and social knowledge had a lot to do with life, with life. And today everything that comes to us we have to learn as if it were not our own. Sometimes we select things, but it's something external, something we haven't experienced. And that's the biggest difference. We will try to communicate to younger people. That they are able to live. And may their existence be what helps them to improve. To transmit. To communicate. But let it always be something lived. Something where experience is a fundamental element.

Palmar: And to close, from the Constellation of Commons, we ask everyone we talk to to help us complete a horizon of good news by sharing some news. What would you like to share from this Foundation?

Joaquín: Well, the best news would be that everything works well and that in a very short time we have the library in place and available to everyone. I mean, there are 50,000 volumes, many of them on anthropology, on ethnography. I'm going little by little and I want to do it in a physical way, saying goodbye to the books I've had and that I've bought. I bought them one by one, I read them, I groped them, I discovered a lot of things in them. So they are like companions that I have had during my life and with whom I have shared a lot of ideas under a lot of circumstances. Anyway, that is what I want to leave for the future and hopefully, as I say, everything will soon be in place and will be a reality.

Palmar: Thank you very much for the time and for your legacy, Joaquín.

Joaquín: Thanks to you

