

Operación Triúnfo

Operación Triúnfo was the television hit of the season in Spain last fall. Like *Gran Hermano* (*Big Brother*), *Operación Triúnfo* is another incarnation of what is called “reality TV.” In this particular version, auditions were held all over Spain to find 16 aspiring singing stars to compete against other in an attempt to make it big in the music business. The program was a big success and many of the contestants have top-selling hits in Spain and other European countries.

On February 5, 2002, Britain’s *Guardian* newspaper reported that more 18-to-24-year-olds bothered to vote for their favorite participant in the British equivalent of this television program than voted in the last U.K. general election. Loosely, *Operación Triúnfo* is *Big Brother* with songs, cleverly combining three surefire components—reality TV, music, and a contest. Following *Popstars*, initially aired in Australia and then in the U.S., the U.K., and nearly 20 other countries, the Spanish version was late in arriving—but now has become the model to follow. Its defenders say it lays bare the time-honored fabrications of the pop industry and promotes the positive values of hard work and ambition. Its detractors scoff, and claim that it kills both brain cells and the spirit of the good old teen rebellion. Both the program itself and its popularity are signs of the times, and a recent article in *La Clave* magazine suggested several reasons for its success. Among them is the involvement of lots of people—not only the competitors, but also their families, their neighborhoods, and even their hometowns—and public voting booths were set up in Spanish towns and cities so that people could vote for the local boy or girl. Then there is the importance of youngsters to the project. *Operación Triúnfo* fulfills a get-rich-quick Cinderella fantasy. According to one commentator, the sad thing about the program’s popularity is that it reveals how society now considers it more worthwhile to achieve fame via easy shortcuts than to spend 10 years studying music, a system that may create stars, but that cannot create singers.

Whatever your point of view, there is no disputing that *Operación Triúnfo* is Spain’s most popular program ever. Fifty percent of all Spaniards admit to having watched it at least once, and the Spanish record industry has sold more than 2.5 million *Operación Triúnfo* CD’s as of last spring. For the first series, 15,000 hopefuls turned out to audition for one of the 16 finalist spots. For the second series, more than 150,000 turned out.

The 16 contestants—between the ages of 18 and 28 years old—live and work in the *Academia*, where there are recording studios, practice rooms, and living quarters. The contestants study voice, interpretation, and dance with a variety of professionals. The contestants cannot leave the building, but do receive visitors and communicate by telephone.

Each week, a jury composed of professionals in the recording business proposes four students they think are not progressing the way they should to leave the Academy. One of these is saved by the teachers, another by the group of contestants themselves, and the other two are put up to a vote by the public to determine who should stay and who should leave.

Mi Música es Tu Voz, a song composed by the contestants themselves, symbolizes the spirit of *Operación Triúnfo*.

Operación Triúnfo

Mi Música es Tu Voz

Si no te conociera,
si no estuviera aquí,
no habría encontrado
la alegría de vivir.

Enciendes melodías
que brotan en tu voz,
que calman y apaciguan
mi lucha interior.

Y aunque somos diferentes,
nos une una obsesión:
cantar es nuestra vida
y mi música es tu voz.

Cuenta con mi vida,
que hoy la doy por ti.
Mi pasión la quiero compartir.

A tu lado me siento seguro,
a tu lado no dudo,
a tu lado you puedo volar.

A tu lado hoy brilla mi estrella,
a tu lado mis sueños
se harán por fin realidad.

A tu lado. . .

Estamos hoy unidos
cantando esta canción;
mañana separados,
pero unido está el corazón.

Y aunque somos diferentes,
nos une una obsesión:
cantar es nuestra vida
y mi música es tu voz.

A tu lado me siento seguro,
a tu lado no dudo,
a tu lado you puedo volar.

A tu lado hoy brilla mi estrella,
a tu lado mis sueños
se harán por fin realidad.

(repite)

A tu lado mi música es tu voz,
a tu lado mi música es tu voz,
(repite)
a tu lado mi música,
mi música, es tu voz.

My Music is Your Voice

If I didn't know you,
if you were not here,
I would not have found
the joy of being alive.

Melodies are burning
that spring up in your voice,
that calm and pacify
my internal struggle.

And although we are different,
one obsession unites us:
singing is our life
and my music is your voice.

You can count on having my life,
that today I give to you.
I want you to share my passion for it (living).

At your side I feel secure
at your side I don't doubt,
at your side I can fly.

At your side today my star shines
at your side my dreams
will finally come true.

At your side. . .

Today we are united
singing this song;
tomorrow separated,
but our hearts will be united.

And although we are different,
one obsession unites us:
singing is our life
and my music is your voice.

At your side I feel secure
at your side I don't doubt,
at your side I can fly.

At your side today my star shines
at your side my dreams
will finally come true.

(repeat)

At your side my music is your voice,
at your side my music is your voice,
(repeat)
at your side my music is your voice,
my music is your voice.