

Rondas Corales – Conducting in Children and Youth Choral Singing

ADICORA (2020): Esteban Conde Ferreyra (President). Academic Committee: Viviana Bognar, Andrea Aventuroso, Elisabeth Guerra, Angela Burgoa, María Soledad Gauna, Macarena Gómez Delgado

The “Conducting in Children and Youth Choral Singing” event was held on Zoom from September 27 to October 2, 2020. Sponsored by the Association of Choir Conductors of the Argentine Republic (ADICORA), the event featured a series of debates moderated by qualified professionals, as well as interviews with 70 personalities renowned in the choral field. Our purpose was to generate interaction, debate and discussion and to raise professional awareness on issues related to the challenges faced by contemporary communities.



| RONDAS CORALES

LA DIRECCIÓN Y EL CANTO CORAL INFANTIL Y JUVENIL

*Encuentros virtuales con rondas temáticas, entrevistas y conciertos
Del Domingo 27 de Septiembre al Viernes 2 de Octubre*



CHILD AND YOUTH CHOIRS – Where and When

In Argentina, child & youth choral activities take place in schools, clubs, cooperatives, churches, town halls, recreational centers, union centers and cultural organizations, each of which takes on the characteristics of that organization. Choir projects are begun either on the conductor's own initiative or derived from educational or cultural programs that encourage their development. These choral activities are not always supported financially by the

institutions and organizations where they take place: The conductors are often poorly paid, working hard at their jobs with remarkable dedication and out of love for choral singing. Voices can be heard warning of the urgent need to provide equal opportunities to all children and young people in our country through:

- Public policies that support programs for training child and youth choirs, with budgets protected by law to guarantee their continuity.
- Curricular spaces for training teachers, music teachers and choir conductors, with specific content related to children's choral singing, children and youth voices and repertoires suitable for each age.
- The formation of collaborative working teams that guarantee greater inclusion so that the right to sing receives more than mere lip-service.

SCHOOL CHOIRS – Everybody can sing

In a session on the fundamental issue of school choirs, teachers from throughout Argentina shared their experiences working for a better future for choral music and the integral education of our children and young people. Thanks to these experiences, we became aware of their implications and impact: the common denominator of all was the emphasis on **conductors' training**. With patience, confidence, and, of course, technical resources, we can make a significant difference for the soul of any student. Schools should be places where individualities are respected, potentialities restored, and **the right to sing** guaranteed.

“The school is the place to learn par excellence and the choir must be there.” Maestro Ricardo Barrera

Other issues addressed were state policies and institutional

decisions needed for these projects to succeed, since teachers' commitment, competence and will-power are often insufficient. We recall Zoltan Kodály's words: "May the music belong to everyone" and we state the urgency of recovering classroom singing.

VOCAL PEDAGOGY – Who will sing?

Round-table participants included doctors, speech therapists, otorhinolaryngologists, pedagogues, composers, directors, singers, actors, vocal technique teachers, university teachers, musician-therapists, and choir singers. These people represented the professional body that deals with youth singing issues and it is the one to be addressed when undertaking the teaching of choral singing. Their specialties are usually not elaborated deeply enough in the curricula for our teaching and university degrees. To compensate for this deficiency, interdisciplinarity and the cooperation of teachers are required.

In this round, the topics covered were:

- Characteristics of a child's voice
- Voice change
- Transgender voices
- Inclusion of non-binary people in choirs
- Adapting choral music to people's abilities
- Functional and aural scientific knowledge on vocal peculiarities

REPertoire – "Singing has meaning, understanding and reason"

By doing interviews and holding a live round-table discussion with prominent conductors, composers and arrangers from the country's different socio-educational and artistic-cultural

sectors, we sought to broaden perspectives and concepts related to child and youth choral repertoires.

The choice of these repertoires is based on different relevant aspects:

- Guidance and stimulation of the psychomotor and cognitive development of the singers.
- Momentum for new Argentinian choral productions composed for different child and youth groups

We understand the choice of repertoire as a dynamic fact that demands study, dedication, exploration, curiosity and creativity to open ourselves to new possibilities, as well as sensitivity to connect with the concerns and needs of both choirs and audiences.

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SINGING AND MOVEMENT – From rehearsal onto stage?

We set out to study body movement in choral activities from different perspectives, with the intention of moving away from the existing regional belief that considers that practice to be an “extra” on stage, one that is useful only for warming-up voices in rehearsal. We affirmed that our voice and our body should not be perceived as two separate entities, but as one single unit.

To illustrate this, García Malbrán, from the neurosciences

field, shared concepts such as the *crossmodal* model, defined as a “lexical encounter (not an overlapping), an example of conjugating a visual message with a sound message that activates multimodal neurons” while Alberto Grau, talking about eurythmics, stated that “the child singer becomes an actor; for this reason he or she must exercise the body rhythm and think about musical works together with body expressions”. Likewise, new concepts arose regarding the roles of conductor and choir, the most relevant being: The conductor as a moderator; innovative leadership; the intelligent choir (more horizontal leadership) and the importance of working on the corporality of the conductor. These brand-new concepts break with the modernist tripod (composer, performer and listener). In conclusion, we reaffirm our readiness not only to enlarge inclusive spaces in the curricula but also to increase the number of places in our country where teacher and school training occur.

ADICORA National YouTube channel
<http://adicora.org/>

Edited by Anita Shaperd, USA

The Association of Choir Conductors of the Argentine Republic (ADICORA) is composed of choir conductors from all over the country, working together in 16 subsidiary and 5 regional delegations. The national management is led by a Counseling Directory, whose members are from different provinces, and an Honorary Consultant Council comprised of the most prestigious Argentinean choir conductors. We work in ADICORA to empower choir conductors and choral activities. We organize and manage congresses, seminars, workshops,

and choir festivals in every province of our country through the creation of subsidiaries in the different regions to attend to specific needs. Agreements and collaborations with official organizations and national or international NGOs support professional conductors and promote recognition of original choral pieces by contemporary Argentinean composers and arrangers, prompting the creation and publication of new compositions for all voices as well as arrangements of popular and folk music. From the start, this Association has created ties to public and private institutions, counselling them on the creation of new choirs as well as strengthening the environment of the choir conductor.

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