

San Juan, Argentina, the great choral pole in growing development

For more than a decade, San Juan, Argentina has become a centre for choral excellence in South America. Located near the foothills of the Andes Mountains and less than 200km north of Mendoza, this new choral centre boasts annual international choral competitions and symposia featuring the finest choirs and choral experts from around the globe.

At the heart of this dynamic artistic and musical resurgence is Coro Arturo Beruti de San Juan, Argentina and their esteemed director, Maestra María Elina Mayorga. Realising there was an opportunity to fill an artistic void in her community and build bridges between like-minded individuals, Maestra Mayorga has successfully created a vibrant schedule of events for choral musicians of all ages from around the world. In 2019, San Juan will continue this great tradition by hosting the third Foro y Simposio Coral Americano from 14 – 16 June 2019. The international community is invited to join Maestra María Elina Mayorga and Coro Arturo Beruti to explore and learn more about the rich choral diversity of San Juan, Argentina and South America!

As Artistic Director of the Coro Arturo Beruti de San Juan, Argentina, I'm pleased to share news with the international choral community about the activities that have been evolving over several years in an increasingly positive manner. They have gradually captured the attention of directors, choirs, and researchers in the region.

Among the outstanding projects with international participation:

San Juan Canta, Festival, Contest, and International Grand

Prix

On 20 August a new edition of the festival came to a close. It has become the most important choral event in South American. With an international jury presided by Dr. J.T. Harper, the event had record participation from choirs from USA, Mexico, Brazil, Chile, and various Argentinian provinces. The previously selected groups displayed a high level of artistry. The programme as always was based on three basic pillars:

1. *Projecting the festival into the community.* Numerous educational and choral fraternity concerts took place in schools, churches, museums, wineries, and other locations to bring choral singing to children, young people and adults.
2. *Study and development workshops.* Various Argentinian and international professionals are invited to every festival to give conferences and workshops on various topics, from Argentinian folklore, composers and their works, and resources for choral arrangements, to methods for school choirs, as well as conferences about music in various countries in South America and beyond.
3. *Gala concerts in the Auditorio Juan Victoria.* This auditorium, famous for its excellent acoustics and beautiful architecture, is the most important concert hall in Argentina for thousands of spectators and is unique in South America. It is the main venue for the competition tests and the festival concerts.



Ma

estros David Ramirez and Josué Ramirez Palmer with San Juan Canta Director, Maestra María Elina Mayorga

San Juan Canta is aimed at mixed, female and male choirs and chamber groups. The competition has two categories: universal choral repertoire and folk music. There is also a non-competitive option for choirs participating in the festival. Included in the Grand Prix for winning choirs was an additional incentive that crowned the programme.

The closing ensemble, composed of all the choirs singing Gustav Holst's Psalm 148, accompanied by Federico Ciancio on the organ and under the direction of Maestro Joshua Habermann (US) was a magnificent culmination to the latest edition of the festival.

For more information: <http://sanjuancanta.com.ar/> – Email: sanjuancanta@gmail.com

Closing concert: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yqP1nmwmmac>

Canto en Sol, International festival for children's and youth

choirs

With a programme that is similar to San Juan Canta, this festival is a privileged place for children and young people from all over the American continent to meet. Since 2013 it has taken place in October and has had delegations from various Argentinian provinces, Chile, Uruguay and Colombia as participants. The strong desire to sing in the marvellous Juan Victoria Auditorium and present their music, alongside guided visits to historic and cultural sites in San Juan to enrich their spirit and strengthen their culture, have also made this festival an important objective on choirs' agendas. The regular workshops in preparing pieces under the direction of Guillermo Pellicer make the closing concert a true choral experience for everyone (photo 1492).



Combined Festival Chorus of San Juan Canta under the direction of Dr. Joshua Habermann, USA

Video of the closing concert (October 2017)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AcKh_k1rnbc

More information: <http://cantoensol.coroberuti.com.ar/> –
Email: festivalcantoensol@gmail.com

Foro Coral Americano

No less transcendent is the most recent addition to the Coro Arturo Beruti: the Foro Coral Americano, of which two editions have already been held (2015, 2017). Work is already in progress on the next one scheduled for 2019. The Foro Coral Americano is a place for meetings, the exchange of ideas, study and reflection on the various facets of choral activity that has united eminent professionals from all over the continent in San Juan, from Canada to the extreme south of Argentina. The programme includes conferences, debates, choral repertoire reading sessions, workshops on preparing pieces and concerts, among the many diverse and attractive activities. Along with the expositions of choral personalities, researchers and choral associations from the continent, it also offers the opportunity to participate in showcases so the attendees can diversify their activities and strengthen their direct professional connections.

In the second edition, a call for researchers in “popular and folk music in choral development” for the Primer Simposio Americano de Música Coral, held alongside the main festival, was added. The research was published in a special edition of the Revista Cuadernos, by the Universidad Católica de Cuyo

<http://www.coroberuti.com.ar/.../REVISTA-CUADERNOS-anio3-nro3...>

<http://www.forocoralamericano.com/>

We were honoured by the presence of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) represented by their Executive Director Dr. Tim Sharp and by the Director of the International Exchange Programme Dr. T.J. Harper. Along with them were Victor Alarcon Díaz (Chile), Ana Laura Rey

(Uruguay), José Galván Castañeda (Mexico), Adam Jonathan Con and Ki Adams (Canada), Daniel Afonso (Brasil/USA) David Ramírez (Costa Rica), Diana V. Sáez (Puerto Rico), Hernán A. Salazar (Colombia), Ruth Godoy (ALACC Chile), Rodrigo Báez (Paraguay), Olga Gabus (Acordelur, Uruguay) Lourdes Sánchez (Venezuela), Denise Castilho de Oliveira, C. Andrade, P. Terceros, A. P. Gabriel, Paulo de Andrade Teixeira, Marco Antonio da Silva Ramos, Susana Igayara (Brasil), as well as eminent Argentinian professionals such as Cristina Gallo, Gustavo Espada, J. Cura, S. Ruiz, R. Albino, E. Ferraudi, Hugo de la Vega, J. Fuentes, M. Pacheco, R. Muñoz, O. Llobet, María E. Puebla, Eduardo Malachevsky (Camping Musical Bariloche), F. Rigoni, Tulio Fiorentino (Lista Musicacoral), M. Mancuso (ADICORA), Virgilio Tedín Uriburu (President of the Fondo Nacional de las Artes), C. Santostefano de AAMCANT, and many other people from the South American choral world. No less worth highlighting is the work of Alejandra Blech as Artistic Secretary and Christian Barandica in General Production, two pillars of the Coro Arturo Beruti.

The choirs included Cuchicheros and their director Juan Manuel Brarda with a well-deserved homage to two great composers of Argentinian music: Gustavo Cuchi Leguizamón and Hugo de la Vega, the Coro Universitario de Mendoza and its director Silvana Vallesi, Coral LicMu directed by Cristina Gallo and Gustavo Espada, as well as the Coro de la Ciudad de Mendoza directed by Ricardo Portillo, and the Coro Arturo Beruti, with guest directors T.J. Harper and Lourdes Sanchez.

For more information: www.forocoralamericano.com – Email: forocoralamericano@gmail.com

About Coro Arturo Beruti

Coro Arturo Beruti is a vocational, independent, mixed group composed of young people and adults united by their love of singing. Their objective is the study and dissemination of the most select choral repertoire, to which they add

interpretations of the choral-symphonic repertoire for special events and various celebrations. They have numerous dedicated works and have debuted contemporary Argentinian composers. Since their creation, they have given numerous concerts throughout the province of San Juan, as well as other cities in their country and others, such as Uruguay, Ecuador, Paraguay, Brazil, Peru, Mexico, Chile, Italy, and Vatican City (Saint Peter's Basilica), Spain, Israel, Hungary, Austria, the Czech Republic, and recently the People's Republic of China. Along with their Artistic Director María Elina Mayorga, they are the organisers of the ANSILTA National Choral Festival and Contest in San Juan, Música Sacra in San Juan, CANTO en SOL, a children's and youth choir festival, Foro Coral Americano, and SAN JUAN CANTA, International Choral Festival and Contest.



T.J. Harper is the Director of Choral Activities and supervises the Secondary musical education curriculum at Providence College in Providence, Rhode Island, USA. He directs the three choral groups at the school, as well as giving classes in direction and choral methods in higher education, applied directing, and applied voice. Dr. Harper received his doctorate in Musical Arts from the university of Southern California where he graduated with honours. His dissertation, entitled *Hugo Distler and the Renewal Movement in Nazi Germany*, focused on the juxtaposition of Distler's personal beliefs and his political/professional obligations to the Nazi party. His interests led him to funded research projects that explored the work of Johannes Brahms, Maurice Duruflé and the musical folk traditions of the Korean peninsula. Dr. Harper is also co-author of the recently published *Student Engagement in Higher Education: Theoretical Perspectives and Practical Approaches for Diverse Populations*. (Routledge). Email: harper.tj@gmail.com

Translated by Taylor Ffitch, USA