

# The Benefits of Choral Art

Voices from Latin America

## Introduction

Singing in chorus, sharing the oral memory of humanity through the commemoration of our songs and poetry, is at the root of what makes us human. Choirs spun the lyrical memory of our languages and choral art allows men and women of all ages to imagine that it is possible to live harmoniously.

Those of us who practice choral art and conduct choirs know that collective singing is a school of citizenship, a perfect metaphor for a just society where all its components work towards a common goal. In these times, ours is one of the necessary trades to maintain good spirits and inspire our choristers to fulfil an ethical and aesthetic ideal, generating bonds of solidarity. Choral music and art are a source of resilience and moral strength for those who participate in them.

## The choir

Singing is one of the most essential and primordial activities of the human being and in all cultures one can find examples of collective singing because of the power it has for human communication from the emotional, social and cultural point of view. In their very essence, the orchestra and the choir are much more than artistic structures: they are models and schools of social life.

## The choristers

For the singers who participate in every choir, the fact of singing provides physical and emotional well-being, communication tools, a vehicle for individual and collective expression and a virtuous expression of belonging to a certain community.

Benefits of choral singing for choral performers:

- Expands their culture
- Fortifies musical skills
- Finds new expressions of beauty through singing
- Contributes to your physical health
- Contributes to your emotional health
- Strengthens your resilience
- Creates audiences for music and the performing arts

Various scholars such as Delors, Pallás, Hemsy, Abreu and organisations such as UNESCO, ECLAC, ACDA, IFCM, have carried out studies on the importance of choral work and have shown that its practice facilitates inclusion, socialisation, cooperative development and responsible membership, all based on the common objective of making music together. Through choral singing, one gains access to a humanist culture that favours the reduction of violence and delinquency while contributing to the psychosocial well-being of all those who practice it.

## The Director

It is a person who sustains a community activity through technical, musical, emotional and psychological knowledge towards a scenic manifestation of beauty and harmony. In times of the present pandemic, we choral conductors have been forced to migrate our activities to digital platforms to keep our work alive. From our homes, conductors and singers have

reinvented choral singing – choral art. In this way we have been able to give continuity to the exploration of beauty anchored in the universal lyric that each choir possesses through its repertoires and searches. We have accepted the challenge and, as a choral movement, we have presented ourselves to join forces with specialists who will allow us to continue our work in the conditions of safety necessary to look after the health of our choirs.

In times of the covid-19, the tasks of a choral conductor include

- Sustaining the creative energy of our groups in their training
- Recording examples of each string in the choir
- Filming educational videos for our choristers
- Searching for suitable repertoire for singing and riding
- Accompanying choristers individually in technical and emotional matters
- Seeking out and exploring teaching methodologies for our choirs in line with this special distance situation
- Dialoguing with our colleagues and teachers in order to find solutions and strategies for working together
- Learning, understanding and studying the technical and digital tools to be able to do our work online. In some cases, investing in the acquisition of equipment and platforms for virtual work.

We, choral conductors, assume this vocation in a professional manner. We are not improvised, we require a solid training and constant study to be able to carry out our work with dignity.

Art dignifies people and societies. More specifically, choral art represents the best of the spirit of each institution, social group or community that promotes it. The function of the choral conductor goes beyond the artistic and becomes a tool for health, containment and an expressive vehicle for the communities.

The choir and all its actors deserve the necessary support to sustain their spaces and their projects. We appeal to those who have the authority and power to make this requirement viable to offer their support and recognition with responsibility and vehemence for the benefit of our communities and countries. We are essential.

Voices of Latin America is a group made up mostly of choral directors who began to meet via Zoom three months ago. The purpose has been to exchange experiences since the beginning of the pandemic. We have decided, in a collegial way, to write this document that talks about the benefits of Choral Art. We consider it important that our art is maintained and continues to be a space of health, creativity, encounter and artistic development.

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Photo: Festival Internacional de Coros Universitarios FICORU (Ciudad de México, 2017)

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