

**“QUIEN CANTA, SUS MALES ESPANTA:”  
LATIN AMERICAN CHOIRS IN CANADA**

A Thesis Submitted to the  
College of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the Degree of Master of Arts in Musicology  
In the Department of Music  
University of Saskatchewan  
Saskatoon

By

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## ABSTRACT

Among the great variety of choirs developing in Canada (Abbott and Meredith, 2012), Latin American choirs represent an important group since the beginning of this century. This research addresses eight previously unstudied Latin American choirs in five Canadian cities, most of which were founded after 2000 and are still active today: *Ágora Ibero-American Choir*, *Cantares Latin Choir*, *Canto Vivo*, *Fusión Latina*, *Los Parranderos de Vancouver*, *Nuestras Voces*, *UNAM-Canada Choir*, and *Viene Sonando*. The aim of this study is to examine how these choirs function in the Canadian musical context. The methods used to carry out this research were interviews and questionnaires with the conductors of these choirs and the analysis of videos of their performances and other primary sources related to the choirs.

Informed by works that approach choral activity from a viewpoint related to society, traditions, cultures, and identity - which propose an effective way of dealing with Canadian multiculturalism (Bradley, 2006 & 2017; Diamond, 2000); and through studies that address the identity quest of Latin American musicians in Canada and the U.S. - who must deal with the possible hybridization of their music (Galván 1996 & 2010; Pacini, 2010), I examine the strategies used by Latin American choirs to preserve their tradition, maintain authenticity, and reaffirm their identity in the multicultural Canadian context.

My findings suggest that these choirs place great value on the preservation of Latin American cultural traditions, while preserving their authenticity. To achieve this, they have developed preservation strategies to ensure the persistence of their tradition and the choirs themselves. Moreover, these choirs have not had the need to resort to processes of musical hybridization, but on the contrary, they preserve the performance of their repertoire as authentically as possible. All of this contributes to reaffirming the Latin American identity of both conductors and choristers. From my research, I can suggest that these choirs have been able to successfully maintain and shape their identity in the Canadian musical context through the preservation of Latin American musical tradition and authenticity.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I want to thank my supervising professor, Dr. Amanda Lalonde, for guiding me through this enriching experience with her wisdom, patience, kindness, solidarity, understanding, sincerity and so on... Her help in this work meant everything to me, intellectually and emotionally.

I want to thank my wife, Dr. Ana Karina Zúñiga, who encouraged me to pursue this Master's degree. Even though it meant that we were separated for a long time, she always supported me and inspired me to continue working on this thesis.

I would also like to thank my parents, who from the very beginning helped and supported me in every way to complete this Master's.

I wish to thank my Graduate Committee, Dr. Jennifer Lang and Dr. Gregory Marion, for kindly agreeing to participate in the review of my work. Their suggestions and corrections were crucial in this process.

In addition, this work would not have been possible without the selfless participation of the choral conductors of the choirs studied here. Their open and genuine sharing of their experiences with me was not only useful for this research, but also made the process more enjoyable. It was very nice to meet these lovely people committed to a noble cause.

I cannot leave out of these acknowledgements Catalina Mendoza, Camilo Gouët, my cats (Linus and Bowie), Reanne, and Tony. The support they gave me during the course of my Master's and my stay in Saskatoon was essential to carry out this research.

Thank you everyone!

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## INTRODUCTION

For this thesis, I have conducted research on Latin American immigrant choirs in Canada. The central research question is: How do Latin American immigrant choirs function in the Canadian musical context? That is, how do they select their repertoire, carry out their performances, recruit members, and perceive their function; and how these behaviours relate to how they are received by the Canadian community? This research is important because it will help us to understand a previously understudied group of musicians and their role in the choral and larger musical culture of Canada.

From my perspective as a Latin American researcher, music teacher, and youth choir conductor who was studying in Canada, I was able to observe with greater familiarity these phenomena of Latin American insertion in Canada. On the other hand, thanks to my experience acquired during my undergraduate period working with topics such as insertion, adaptation, and hybridization of Latin American music, I believe that I have the necessary tools to carry out this new project.

The chosen proverb that appears in the title of this research (“Quien canta, sus males espanta”), can be translated as “The one who sings, drives away his/her sorrow.”<sup>1</sup> This popular saying, used throughout Hispanic America, appears in the iconic book *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes.<sup>2</sup> Since its appearance, the proverb has been present in countless songs, poems and books produced throughout Latin America. For this research, I chose it as a title not only because of how it has transcended over four centuries, but also because of its deep meaning, which I personally interpret as: no matter how bad things are or how much you miss certain people or moments in your life, by singing, you will make all the bad things go away. As we will see, the members of Latin American choirs in Canada feel great joy in participating in their respective choirs and performing Latin American repertoire, which undoubtedly must mitigate or somehow

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<sup>1</sup> All translations that appear in this thesis are my own.

<sup>2</sup> Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, 1st part (Madrid: Edimat Libros, 1998), 149.



overcome the negative causes – whether political, social, or economic - that led some choristers to leave their countries of origin.

Previously, scholars have addressed Latin American music developed by Latin American musicians in Canada and the U.S. as a form of musical hybridization in diaspora, approached from the perspective of identity issues. Mainly, these matters have been addressed in relation to musicians who played Latin American Popular Music, including Cuban-Canadian musicians in Toronto,<sup>3</sup> Latin American musicians in Toronto,<sup>4</sup> Latin American musicians in Ottawa and Montreal,<sup>5</sup> Latin American musicians in the U.S.,<sup>6</sup> and the exiled Chilean musicians Alberto Kurapel in Montreal<sup>7</sup> and Eduardo Maturana in Toronto.<sup>8</sup> In addition, there is research that, although it does not deal with Latin American music as such, addresses issues directly related to immigration and the Latin American diaspora in Canada. One such example is scholarship by Gloria Rodríguez, who in her research interviewed some members of the *Fusión Latina* choir, one of the choirs that is part of this thesis.<sup>9</sup>

Some of the scholars examining these topics largely understand hybridization as a concept related to the misunderstanding of multiculturalism, since the influence of a musical expression acquired from other genres can be misconstrued as a natural and voluntary interaction of different cultures converging in a musical expression, when in fact hybridization often occurs under circumstances in which political and social self-representations are at stake. In turn, they

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<sup>3</sup> Brígido Galván, “Arranging Hybridity: Cuban-Canadian Musicians, Global Culture and the Politics of Genre in Toronto” (PhD diss., York University, 2010).

<sup>4</sup> Lise Waxer, “Latin Popular Musicians in Toronto: Issues of Ethnicity and Cross-Cultural Integration” (M.A. thesis, York University, 1991).

<sup>5</sup> Brígido Galván, “Partially-Automated Live Performance of Latin American Musicians in Two Canadian Cities: Musical Identity and Authenticity in a Globalized Cultural Economy” (M. A. thesis, University of Ottawa, 1996).

<sup>6</sup> Deborah Pacini, *Oye Como Va!: Hybridity and Identity in Latino Popular Music* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010).

<sup>7</sup> Laura Jordán, “Garganta de Piedra: el Canto Artificial de Alberto Kurapel y la Recepción de Chilenos Exiliados en Montreal Durante los Setenta,” *Resonancias* Vol. 18, n°34 (enero-junio 2014): 15-35.

<sup>8</sup> Graciela Paraskevaídis, “Eduardo Maturana, a Forgotten Musician,” *Revista Musical Chilena*, Año LXVIII, N° 222 (Julio-Diciembre, 2014): 58-69.

<sup>9</sup> Gloria Rodríguez, “Personal A/R/Tographic Narratives of Cultural Displacement: In Latino American Immigrants Living in Canada” (M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 2012).

consider the concept of globalization to be a phenomenon that encourages fragmentation, while at the same time homogenizing musical cultures as a whole.<sup>10</sup> In this way, multiculturalism and globalization are approached critically, highlighting the first as an opportunity for cultural appreciation and expansion, and the second as a form of degradation of the subtleties of each musical expression with the intention of making the differences among them invisible and appreciating them more horizontally.

On the other hand, racial dichotomies that have historically been present in Canadian musical activity have also been addressed, such as the hidden intention of “whitening” non-Canadian music as part of an acquired “musical Eurocentrism,” or the privileging of “white spaces” over inclusive ones.<sup>11</sup> As will be seen in the literature review below, and throughout this thesis, the work carried out by the scholars of the aforementioned studies was useful as a starting point for my research in two areas. First, it provided me with much of the theoretical and conceptual underpinning necessary to frame my proposed thesis and its objectives. Second, it provided me with a body of research on the experiences of Latin American musicians in Canada that was useful as a point of reference for my study.

Since no scholars have directly addressed the choral music of Latin American communities in Canada, my research fills this gap by studying the ways in which these choirs operate and perceive their roles, based on their performances, the preservation of their traditions, the maintaining of their identity, the recruiting of their members, and their reception in the Canadian musical context. As we shall see, many of the conclusions we can draw from the experience of the choral conductors interviewed for this study differ to a large extent from those of other Latin American musicians based in Canada who have been addressed in the research mentioned above. However, it must be recognised that contrasting experiences and conclusions

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<sup>10</sup> Galván, “Arranging Hybridity;” Galván, “Partially-Automated Live Performance;” Deborah Bradley, “Global Song, Global Citizens? Multicultural Choral Music Education and the Community Youth Choir: Constituting the Multicultural Human Subject” (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Toronto, 2006); Deborah Bradley, “The Inclusion Conundrum and Community Children's Choirs in Canada,” In *The Oxford Handbook of Choral Pedagogy*, ed. Frank Abrahams and Paul Head (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017); Beverley Diamond, “What's the Difference? Reflections on Discourses of Morality, Modernism, and Mosaics in the Study of Music in Canada,” *Canadian University Music Review* 21 (1), (2000).

<sup>11</sup> Diamond, “What's the Difference?”; Bradley, “Global Song, Global Citizens?”; Bradley, “The Inclusion Conundrum.”

make an investigation more interesting in that it is possible to see an evolution of the phenomena over time, or to learn about a different approach to the same issue. For instance, identity issues or the importance of maintaining authenticity in repertoire performance are two important areas that are approached from very different points of view and that have varied over time according to different circumstances.

### **Literature Review.**

As mentioned, while no research has so far directly addressed the choral music of Latin American immigrant communities in Canada, there is literature that discusses important points related in some way to this subject. Concepts such as multiculturalism, musical Eurocentrism, global song, identity, hybridization, authenticity, globalization, contamination, whitening; and topics such as Multicultural Choral Music, the traditional and the modern, social and cultural space, current choral activity in Canada, and popular music performed by Latin American musicians in Canada are addressed in the literature reviewed here and broadly used in my research.

In addition, there are works concerning other choral traditions of immigrant communities in Canada, such as Ukrainian and Jewish immigrants. Alexandra Pritz addresses the Ukrainian choirs who have struggled to preserve their cultural traditions both through the performance of their repertoire and in their functioning in general, as it gives them a sense of social unity and ethnic identity. This is why Pritz claims that Ukrainian immigrants immediately join a Ukrainian choir or other artistic group as soon as they arrive in Canada.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, Latin American choristers join their choirs looking for the same thing as Ukrainians: a sense of belonging given by a sense of unity. However, the big difference between the Latin American choral tradition in Canada and the Ukrainian one lies in the latter's long-standing tradition. This is for the simple reason that Ukrainian immigration to Canada began in 1891,<sup>13</sup> while Latin American immigration - as discussed in chapter one of this thesis - took place mainly from the 1970s

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<sup>12</sup> Alexandra Pritz, "Ukrainian Cultural Traditions in Canada: Theatre, Choral Music and Dance, 1891-1967" (M.A. thesis, University of Ottawa, 1977).

<sup>13</sup> Pritz, "Ukrainian Cultural Traditions in Canada," ii.

onwards.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, many of the phases that Latin American choirs are just now experiencing, for Ukrainians, are probably already history.

Another immigrant choral tradition addressed in the literature is the Jewish one. Benita Wolters-Fredlund studies the rhetoric created by the *Toronto Jewish Folk Choir* as a way of fostering a multiculturalism that allowed them to carve out a space in Canadian culture during and after the Second World War. It is this rhetoric, which includes choral performance, that they use to reaffirm their identity, just as the Latin American choirs studied here do. However, a significant difference lies in the fact that the Jewish choir uses this rhetoric to construct a Canadian identity,<sup>15</sup> while, as we shall see, the Latin American choirs use it to reaffirm their original identity.

Returning to the central concepts of this study, it is important to have a basic understanding of the foundations of Canadian multiculturalism policy. According to Elke Winter, Canada is one of the countries that considers multiculturalism as one of the bases of immigrant integration. This official policy was first established in 1971 and later passed as law as the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* in 1988.<sup>16</sup> Winter points out that some scholars believe that this multiculturalism policy has contributed to promoting ethnic and racial diversity in the Canadian population, to protecting minorities and to re-establishing values. Other scholars think that some minority groups have been able to forge a national identity and a notion of citizenship based on multiculturalism over time.<sup>17</sup> However, Shibao Guo and Yan Guo assert that in Canadian multiculturalism “the tension between immigration, ethnicity, and minority rights is still prominent.”<sup>18</sup> For instance, they mention that some ethnic organizations have been criticized

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<sup>14</sup> Fernando G. Mata, “Latin American Immigration to Canada: Some Reflections on the Immigration Statistics,” *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies / Revue canadienne des études latino-américaines et caraïbes* Vol. 10, No. 20 (1985): 28-33.

<sup>15</sup> Benita Wolters-Fredlund, “‘We Shall Be Better Canadians by Being Conscious Jews’: Multiculturalism and the Construction of Canadian Identity in the Toronto Jewish Folk Choir,” *Intersections* 25, (1-2), (2005): 187–201.

<sup>16</sup> Elke Winter, “A Canadian Anomaly? The Social Construction of Multicultural National Identity,” In *Revisiting Multiculturalism in Canada: Theories, Policies and Debates*, ed. Shibao Guo and Lloyd Wong (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2015), 51.

<sup>17</sup> Winter, “A Canadian Anomaly?,” 52.

<sup>18</sup> Shibao Guo and Yan Guo, “Rethinking Multiculturalism in Canada: Tensions between Immigration, Ethnicity and Minority Rights,” In *Revisiting Multiculturalism in Canada:*

“for threatening national unity, diluting Canadian identity, and promoting ghettoization and separatism.”<sup>19</sup> Likewise, Ho Hon Leung explains that although Canada became a world leader by seeking to apply this multiculturalist policy as a method of inclusion, it has not been without controversy.<sup>20</sup> However, over time, positive modifications were made to the policy, such as the emphasis placed on combating racial discrimination in 1975, the equity sought in the recognition of the ethnic diversity of society in the 1980s, and the emphasis placed on citizen inclusion to build society in the 1990s.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, according to Leung,

“the concept and the execution of federal multiculturalism, implemented at different provincial and municipal levels, are never static. Many programs, such as integration of immigrants, support of new arrivals, professional accreditation, fighting against racism, to name a few, have been developed in the context of multiculturalism in order to meet the challenges generated from different political, social and cultural changes in the Canadian society.”<sup>22</sup>

This is why, as Guo and Guo explain, multiculturalism policy has been established over time as a mechanism that can deal with the phenomenon of immigration as a positive contribution to the Canadian economy and society.<sup>23</sup>

One scholar who addresses issues related to multiculturalism and identity in the choral world is Deborah Bradley. Her work is crucial for the framing of my project, as she approaches choral activity from a globalizing viewpoint directly connected to my research: related to society, traditions, cultures, and identity. In her PhD dissertation, “Global Song, Global Citizens? Multicultural Choral Music Education and the Community Youth Choir: Constituting the Multicultural Human Subject,” her aim is to bring to light the results achieved by the choir she conducted in the creation of “multicultural human subjects,” based on anti-racist education and the search for a new identity.<sup>24</sup> The creation of “multicultural human subjects” responds to the

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*Theories, Policies and Debates*, ed. Shibao Guo and Lloyd Wong (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2015), 123.

<sup>19</sup> Guo and Guo, “Rethinking Multiculturalism in Canada,” 123.

<sup>20</sup> Ho Hon Leung, “Canadian Multiculturalism in the 21st Century: Emerging Challenges and Debates,” In *Revisiting Multiculturalism in Canada: Theories, Policies and Debates*, ed. Shibao Guo and Lloyd Wong (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2015), 107.

<sup>21</sup> Leung, “Canadian Multiculturalism in the 21st Century,” 109.

<sup>22</sup> Leung, “Canadian Multiculturalism in the 21st Century,” 110.

<sup>23</sup> Guo and Guo, “Rethinking Multiculturalism in Canada,” 123.

<sup>24</sup> Bradley, “Global Song, Global Citizens?”

need to reach a globalizing consciousness that feels part of the world, different from the implicit excluding ideas of traditional choral practice. Bradley applies this as a form of resistance against what she calls “musical Eurocentrism.” Scholar Sarah Morrison notes that many Canadian music students show a fascination with local and foreign choral music, cultures and periods, suggesting that musical Eurocentrism is also resisted by youth in Canada.<sup>25</sup> The vision given by Bradley helped me to approach Latin American choral music in Canada - although she does not mention it - as an expression that favours multiculturalism and that in turn fights against Eurocentrism.<sup>26</sup> In addition, Bradley proposes addressing choral activity as a performative activity that creates and reinforces the identity of its members, since musical practice can have a deep influence on our beliefs and behaviour, even if the repertoire performed is not familiar at first.<sup>27</sup> The sense of collective identity in a choir inevitably leads to a sense of “belonging,”<sup>28</sup> which has been central for my research, as I have explored how this applies to Latin American choirs’ functioning based on their performances, their repertoire selection, their members’ recruitment, and their behaviour related to how they are received by the Canadian community, at the same time that they insert themselves into it. This “sense of belonging” is also addressed by scholar Lee Willingham, as he considers a choir as “a community, a subculture in the greater society” where the need for belonging to an experience outside oneself can be satisfied.<sup>29</sup>

In another work, “The Inclusion Conundrum and Community Children’s Choirs in Canada,” Bradley refers to the first attempts to create Canadian multicultural choirs by trying to recruit children who reflect Canadian cultural diversity and incorporating songs in languages other than English or French into their repertoire. For Bradley, multiculturalism is a positive step that has been taken in Canada, but has been ineffectively implemented in community children’s choirs.<sup>30</sup> Her research shows that these types of measures are not being successfully implemented

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<sup>25</sup> Sarah Morrison, “Music Makers: Choral - Bringing a World of Choral Music into the Classroom (and Assessing it!): An Adaptation of an ISME Conference Workshop.” *Canadian Music Educator* 46, no. 2 (Winter, 2004): 2.

<sup>26</sup> Bradley, “Global Song, Global Citizens?,” 13.

<sup>27</sup> Bradley, “Global Song, Global Citizens?,” 18-19.

<sup>28</sup> Bradley, “Global Song, Global Citizens?,” 245.

<sup>29</sup> Lee Willingham, “What Happens When People Sing? A Community of Voices: An Investigation of the Effects of Belonging to a Choir,” *The Phenomenon of Singing* Volume 5 (31 July 2005): 329.

<sup>30</sup> Bradley, “The Inclusion Conundrum,” 7.

by 2017, at least not by the children's choirs in the Greater Toronto Area. Due to factors such as affordability and musical standards, Bradley argues that while these choirs might present themselves as multicultural groups, they are essentially designed as "white space."<sup>31</sup> For my study, this raised the question: have the Latin American choirs been created partly as an answer to this ineffective attempt at multiculturalism? As we shall see, although they have been able to benefit from the positive aspects of Canada's multiculturalist policy - such as the efforts to include other cultures - Latin American choirs have been initiated and have developed in different ways from the children's choirs that face the problems explained above. The problems that Latin American choirs face have more to do with strategies for the presentation of their choirs and traditions than with issues related to the unsuccessful implementation of multicultural choirs. Moreover, it is possible to assume that Latin American choirs are a step ahead with respect to these kinds of problems, as they give the impression of having overcome the Eurocentric model of choirs in Canada, if they ever had to face this expectation at all.

On another note, Bradley refers to an imagery established since the colonial period that non-white choirs needed to express themselves physically, unlike choirs formed by white Canadians, who had to keep still to sing uniformly and as a sign of discipline. She says that unfortunately this ideology is still implicitly in force.<sup>32</sup> This might concern the Latin American choirs, whose repertoire contains a variety of works that include choreography and/or body movements as fundamental elements of the works. The point is that whether this ideology is present or not is of no relevance to these choirs, because in my research I demonstrate that the local milieu values and appreciates the inclusion of physical performance in their presentations as a way of enhancing their activity, while the choirs value this inclusion as a way of maintaining authenticity in the performance of Latin American choral music.

Turning to research by another scholar who also addresses Canadian multiculturalism, in "What's the Difference? Reflections on Discourses of Morality, Modernism, and Mosaics in the Study of Music in Canada," Beverley Diamond states that, even though Canadian multiculturalism is approached through the lens of a "mosaic effect," she believes that ethnic minorities can be at a disadvantage under the concepts of "diversity" and "multiculturalism," as

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<sup>31</sup> Bradley, "The Inclusion Conundrum," 10.

<sup>32</sup> Bradley, "The Inclusion Conundrum," 14.

they are often addressed in a horizontal, abstract manner, and are vulnerable to being dominated.<sup>33</sup> In contrast, Diamond states that each community has its own particularities that need to be appreciated individually, as many of them use their music to fulfil important roles. In this way, she proposes that it is necessary to change the discourse that neutralizes different musics in Canada.<sup>34</sup> The concept of “mosaic” is also addressed by scholar Stephen Chatman, as Canada has always been a nation composed of Indigenous people and immigrants where different cultural expressions converge. He claims that this “mosaic” is always evolving.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, I wonder, do Latin American choirs have any influence on the diversification of this mosaic? And if so, what is their contribution? Informed by Diamond’s and Chatman’s work, my research has investigated how Latin American choirs in Canada, being part of this great “mosaic,” have used their choral performance as a “survival tool” which maintains and shapes identity.

Despite the lack of studies related to Latin American choral music in Canada, Latin American musical hybridization in Canada is not a new research topic. This is demonstrated by Brígido Galván in “Arranging Hybridity: Cuban-Canadian Musicians, Global Culture and the Politics of Genre in Toronto” and in “Partially-Automated Live Performance of Latin American Musicians in Two Canadian Cities: Musical Identity and Authenticity in a Globalized Cultural Economy.” Galván addresses the process of the search for identity of Cuban musicians in Toronto and the effects produced by the technology used in live music on the search for identity of Latin American musicians in Ottawa and Montreal. To do so, he resorts to the concept of “hybridization” as an integral part in the construction of cultural identity and as a process through which aspirations and power relations are articulated, transformed, and negotiated. He

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<sup>33</sup> Diamond, “What's the Difference?” 69.

<sup>34</sup> Diamond, “What's the Difference?,” 75. This abstract and horizontal way of understanding multiculturalism within a choir is similar to the vision of ineffective multiculturalism put forward by Bradley, who believes that many choirs are thought of as a “white space” that encourages the creation of “good citizens.” Bradley, “The Inclusion Conundrum,” 15. As well, it is related with events such as the Jesuits in Canada teaching European music to First Nation People as a way of achieving “moral progress,” associations that were also applied in some way to immigrants of the prairies. Diamond, “What's the Difference?,” 59.

<sup>35</sup> Stephen Chatman, “The Influence of Multiculturalism on Canadian Contemporary Art Music,” *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences* 2, (2010): 7403.



understands hybridization as “a selective and, thus, interpretative process through which groups and individuals make/create political sense of cultural heterogeneity. [...] [It] can be understood as a politics of genre or classification.”<sup>36</sup> From this concept, he focuses on “the construct of the world as a centre-periphery political, economic and cultural system,” in which Latin America is located on the periphery and the predominant vision of the world is the Eurocentric.<sup>37</sup> To develop this concept, Galván relied mainly on previous scholarship by Theo Goldberg<sup>38</sup> and Rick Altman.<sup>39</sup>

Galván also informs my thinking about musical authenticity with regards to Latin American immigrant musicians in Canada. He associates the concept of authenticity with the differences between various musical expressions that involve “social categories like nationality, race, ethnicity, gender and class.”<sup>40</sup> This is why he states that “[I]ssues of cultural authenticity [...] must be looked at as political positioning in which questions of power and survival are at stake for individuals and collectivities aiming to participate in a globalized cultural economy.”<sup>41</sup> Thus, he states that opposing paths such as hybridization and authenticity are increasingly being managed by Latin American musicians as they have managed to position themselves politically, culturally, and socially through their music.<sup>42</sup> Similarly, Jennifer Scheper Hughes and Ariane Dalla Déa refer to the concept of authenticity as “artistic creative autonomy, the persistence of the expertise of the artist and artistic communities as authorities,” which adhere to their own meanings and referents, considering “the efficacy of the arts as a site of political critique and resistance.”<sup>43</sup> As we will see, Latin American choirs, as experts, feel that they have the necessary authority to preserve and put into practice authenticity in the repertoire they perform. This gives

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<sup>36</sup> Galván, “Arranging Hybridity,” 46

<sup>37</sup> Galván, “Arranging Hybridity,” 44.

<sup>38</sup> Theo Goldberg, “Heterogeneity and Hybridity: Colonial Legacy, Postcolonial Heresy,” In *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies. Blackwell Companions to Cultural Studies. vol. 2*, ed. Henry Schwarz and Ray Sangeeta (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000).

<sup>39</sup> Rick Altman, *Film/Genre* (London: British Film Institute, 1999).

<sup>40</sup> Galván, “Arranging Hybridity,” 2.

<sup>41</sup> Galván, “Partially-Automated Live Performance,” 121.

<sup>42</sup> Galván, “Partially-Automated Live Performance,” 11-12.

<sup>43</sup> Jennifer Scheper Hughes and Ariane Dalla Déa, “Introduction: Authenticity and Resistance: Latin American Art, Activism, and Performance in the New Global Context,” *Latin American Perspectives*, March 2012, Vol. 39, No. 2, Arts, Culture, and Politics: Part 1: Art, Activism, And Performance (March 2012): 5.

them the autonomy and freedom to develop their art in the way they consider most authentic. We will also see that Latin American choirs have not felt the need to resort to the type of hybridization discussed by Galván, but rather that they have been able to construct and reaffirm their identity through other strategies that do not compromise the maintenance of authenticity in the performance of their repertoire.

On the other hand, Galván shows the tension experienced by Latin American musicians in terms of the representation of their identity in the traditional and the modern, due to external pressures received by the music industry. This is a double-edged sword, since by going in the direction of the modern, one risks losing the authenticity of the traditional. But on the contrary, by remaining in the traditional it is possible to project the image of a static and little-developed music.<sup>44</sup> This raises the questions: do Latin American choirs have the dilemma of going in the direction of the modern or remaining in the traditional? If so, how would they deal with the maintenance of Latin American authenticity, if they care to maintain it? The answer to these questions is interesting because of the near unanimity expressed by the conductors of these choirs: they highly value the preservation of Latin American authenticity and choral tradition. While the choral directors' visions have some variations, they all point in the same direction of preservation, without even questioning whether this will make them look static or old-fashioned, and without feeling any pressure from any industry or social force to modernise their approach. Thus, the vast majority of these directors agree that this is ultimately the way to build and reaffirm their identity.

Similar to Galván, Deborah Pacini focuses on the dilemma that Latin American musicians in diaspora (in the U.S. in this case) face in relation to the hybridization of their music. In *Oye Como Va: Hybridity and Identity in Latino Popular Music*, Pacini establishes from the outset that the process of hybridization is often considered dangerous and contaminating by Latin American musicians, as it can result in something that is in the middle of something and in turn, nowhere:<sup>45</sup> on the one hand there is the desire to preserve the purity of the Latin American tradition, but at the same time there are influences from outside this music circulating in the environment that threaten to "contaminate" it. Nevertheless, she states that, in one way or

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<sup>44</sup> Galván, "Arranging Hybridity," 319-320.

<sup>45</sup> Pacini, *Oye Como Va!*, vii.

another, hybridization is a characteristic feature present in Latin American music in the U.S. This last statement contrasts with what Graciela Paraskevaídis argues happens with classical Latin American composers in exile, who have felt the need to choose between three options when deciding how to continue with their creative activity: to detach themselves completely from their musical origins; to continue composing considering their new context (country) which, according to Pacini's idea, would mean resorting to hybridization; or to silence themselves definitively, that is to say, to stop composing.<sup>46</sup>

As do Bradley, Diamond and Galván, Pacini refers to the overvaluation of “whiteness and [the] Eurocentric” as they relate to Latin American music in North America, as ideals that supposedly produce better human beings with higher expectations. As an example of this hybridization, she points out that the most significant Latin American music genres have emerged from the poorest and most underprivileged sectors, as is the case with New York Salsa. Indeed, scholar Leslie Hall, who highlights the importance of Latin dance music, points out that in the 1990s in North America, dancing in pairs re-emerged thanks to the popularity achieved by Latin-influenced popular music and salsa, among other genres.<sup>47</sup> However, before being accepted in circles with high social status, these and other Latin American genres went through a process of “whitening,” which consists of distancing them from humble and racially different origins, where, for instance, “musical aesthetics deemed too ‘black’ were reduced or eliminated.”<sup>48</sup> Cases such as those of Andy Russell and Ritchie Valens - Andrés Rábago Pérez and Ricardo Valenzuela, respectively - are some of the most representative of Latin American musicians in the U.S. who fell into this process by entering the music market, resorting to changing their names to make them sound “whiter.” However, today there are Afro-Latin music genres, such as *Mambo* and *Reggaeton*, that have achieved great popularity and never passed through a whitening filter.<sup>49</sup> Thus, Pacini makes it known that the history of Latin American musicians and their music in North America has developed on the basis of this dilemma: to what extent do we embrace or reject hybridization? Here, it raises the question, are Latin American choirs in

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<sup>46</sup> Paraskevaídis, “Eduardo Maturana,” 59.

<sup>47</sup> Leslie Hall, “Rumba and Chachachá: Multicultural Contexts in the Greater Toronto Area,” *MUSICultures* 30 (2003): 4. I wonder, then, if this revival has been beneficial for Latin American choral music?

<sup>48</sup> Pacini, *Oye Como Va!*, 10.

<sup>49</sup> Pacini, *Oye Como Va!*, 10.

Canada forced to change their image, repertoire, or performance style in order to look and sound “whiter” and thus enter the Canadian choral circle? As will be discussed in chapter three of this thesis, so far there is no evidence that these choirs have been influenced or forced to go through a “whitening filter.” On the contrary, the Canadian context constantly encourages them to cultivate their tradition while preserving its authenticity. This cultural openness is demonstrated by the positive reception given by the local public. Within this musician-audience relationship, scholar Laura Jordan, in her study of an exiled Chilean musician in Montreal during the 1970s, uses the term “persona musical” [musical persona], to refer to the “fictitious” figure of the artist - and not the “real” figure of the person - who emerges during the musical performance and is finally the one who is observed and heard by the audience.<sup>50</sup> Faced with this persona, the Canadian public has declared its openness, for which, as the conductors report, the choirs are very grateful.

The works addressed in this literature review provide a firm foundation for my project, due to the depth with which they address the various problems that Latin American choirs in Canada are or could be confronted with, even though there is no work that addresses them directly as a group.

### **Methodology.**

According to my research, there have been ten Latin American choirs in Canada, of which eight are included in this thesis.<sup>51</sup> The instruments and procedures followed in this research have included: conducting questionnaires and interviews with the choral directors of these choirs; and conducting performance and musical analyses of audiovisual recordings of their concerts.

The methodology used to analyze the results obtained from these instruments was the qualitative methodology explained by John W. Creswell.<sup>52</sup> Specifically, I drew on some procedures from ethnographic and case study methodologies.

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<sup>50</sup> Jordán, “Garganta de Piedra,” 27.

<sup>51</sup> The histories of these choirs are examined in depth in chapter one.

<sup>52</sup> John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2013).

Due to the current state of pandemic, it was not possible to conduct “fieldwork” in the manner described by Creswell in order to carry out an ethnographic methodology.<sup>53</sup> However, as this methodology suggests, my research includes collecting data primarily through interviews and questionnaires to find cultural patterns shared by the groups being studied.<sup>54</sup> Likewise - within the framework of the case study methodology - the questions asked in the questionnaires and interviews were designed to be answered from the “real-life, contemporary context or setting”<sup>55</sup> of the Latin American choirs in their development in the Canadian context, considering that they are “multiple bounded systems (cases).”<sup>56</sup> Thus, considering this methodology as a “comprehensive research strategy,” it was necessary to resort to multiple sources of information, such as questionnaires and interviews,<sup>57</sup> in addition to the audiovisual sources I refer to below.

The criteria for including participants were that the subjects be conductors (present or former) of one of the eight Latin American choirs that I have studied in this research. Conductors who were involved in the choirs for less than a year were not considered for interviews or answer questionnaires. In addition, there were two choirs - both of which ended several years ago - that I did not include in this research. It was not possible to arrange an interview with the director of one of the choirs; and the other choir did not last long enough to develop as such. These were the reasons that I decided not to include them. It is also important to note that some questionnaires and interviews were conducted in Spanish and others in English, depending on the language in which each director felt most comfortable.

I applied to the University of Saskatchewan’s Ethics Office for this project on October 20th, 2020. On January 8th, 2021. After some minor revisions to my project, I obtained the Certificate of Approval from the Ethics Committee on March 9th, 2021.<sup>58</sup>

The questions posed to the conductors in the questionnaires and interviews were related to the positive aspects and challenges of conducting the choir, their audiovisual recordings, their views on the concept of “authenticity,” their stance on the preservation of Latin American choral

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<sup>53</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*, 92.

<sup>54</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*, 92.

<sup>55</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*, 97.

<sup>56</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*, 97.

<sup>57</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*, 97.

<sup>58</sup> The Behavioural Research Ethics Certificate of Approval is attached in Appendix C.

identity and tradition, and the theoretical/technical musical variations or modifications applied in the works performed with their choir.<sup>59</sup> The questions were formulated in an open manner in order to privilege spontaneous responses and were not pre-delimited by biases of any kind. In spite of the openness of the questions, it was possible to find patterns in many of the answers that allowed the narrative of the thesis to be pieced together. For instance, the terms “bridge” and “latinity” are concepts that some of the directors mentioned in the interviews and/or questionnaires and that coincided with ideas that other directors explained. Thanks to these instruments, it was also possible to discover key (and sometimes unexpected) phenomena that are explored in this thesis, such as the fact that these choirs have not resorted to the process of hybridization in their repertoire, unlike other Latin American musicians in Canada.<sup>60</sup>

The role that I assumed in translating seven of the eight interviews conducted (since one was in English) from Spanish into English was not a major complication. I tried to make these translations as accurate as possible, verifying that each of the words and phrases did not lose their original meaning. The only difficulty that arose, perhaps, was with certain Latin American idioms, which, as is the case with idioms in any language, are often difficult to translate accurately. However, since most of the directors interviewed have been living in Canada for several years (and therefore speaking English every day), they express many of their ideas from an English-speaking point of view, that is, as if they were explaining them in English, which facilitated the translation process.

Following the qualitative methodology explained by Creswell, the results of the interviews and questionnaires were analysed by looking for common patterns and existing trends (ethnography model)<sup>61</sup> and similarities and differences (case study model)<sup>62</sup> in the answers given by the subjects. At the same time, the outlying answers were still considered, given that they may reflect another type of phenomenon or set of priorities that may not be considered by other choral conductors. This way of analysing the results gave me a “context of the case”<sup>63</sup> and I think that

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<sup>59</sup> The questionnaire and interview questions are attached in Appendix B.

<sup>60</sup> Galván, “Arranging Hybridity.”

<sup>61</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*, 90.

<sup>62</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*, 98.

<sup>63</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*, 101.

the important thing here, as Creswell points out, is never to generalise across cases,<sup>64</sup> as the contexts in which each choir operates are likely to be different. By doing so, it was possible for me to probe the issues that arise during this analysis.

The views given by each of the choral directors were synthesised from an ethical perspective, describing his/her visions regarding the choir in which he/she participates, and the issues addressed in the study, thus developing a “cultural interpretation.” Only in this way could the essence of the choirs’ functioning be fully understood.<sup>65</sup> Furthermore, Creswell argues that the only way to achieve an “in-depth understanding” of a case study is to draw from multiple sources<sup>66</sup> and to make a “description of the case,”<sup>67</sup> as ethnographic methodology also suggests. Both methods were used by me with the instruments and results obtained.

Specifically, to analyze interviews and questionnaires I made a description based on the facts registered - which is suggested for both ethnography and case study - by carrying out a “categorical aggregation,” which consists of seeking “a collection of instances from the data, hoping that issue-relevant meanings will emerge.”<sup>68</sup> This description, although it was my own interpretation, also needed to be detached from my personal tendencies, prejudices, or political inclinations.<sup>69</sup> The end result of this study was what Creswell calls a “cultural portrait,” which includes both the views of the conductors (in this case) and the researcher,<sup>70</sup> which is what will eventually show us “realistic scenarios.”<sup>71</sup>

In addition, in order to understand the reception of each choir it was key to establish clear boundaries<sup>72</sup> beforehand by circumscribing the information within certain bounds such as “place and time”<sup>73</sup> - as Creswell suggests for case studies. In the cases of choirs that are current and in progress, their reception is currently evolving, while those choirs that are not currently active had

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<sup>64</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*, 99.

<sup>65</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*, 92.

<sup>66</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*, 98.

<sup>67</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*, 99.

<sup>68</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*, 199.

<sup>69</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*, 93.

<sup>70</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*, 96.

<sup>71</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*, 237.

<sup>72</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*, 123.

<sup>73</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*, 98.

a history of reception limited by the end of their activity. Thus, the approach to both types of choirs was differentiated by considering not only the city where they are (or were) based, but also whether they are active or not.

Since Creswell recommends drawing on multiple sources of information,<sup>74</sup> I also conducted an analysis of the available videos of the choirs in their streaming channels and social networks, in order to study the inclusion of choreography and body movements as an important feature in their choral performances. In this search, I found one hundred and fifteen videos - totalling approximately eight hours of video footage.

I have addressed these primary sources mainly because I needed “to have a wide array of information about the case to provide an in-depth picture of it.”<sup>75</sup> Furthermore, I approached them on the basis of the three phases that Creswell recommends: “description, analysis, and interpretation of the culture-sharing group.”<sup>76</sup> Only then was I able to describe and interpret “the shared and learned patterns of values, behaviors, beliefs, and language of a culture-sharing group,”<sup>77</sup> since I consider it important to “study the meaning of the behavior, the language, and the interaction among members of the culture-sharing group.”<sup>78</sup> The latter also applies to the analysis of questionnaires and interviews, as with the information provided I expected to conduct a descriptive analysis of a shared cultural setting of Latin American choirs in Canada, their social behaviour related to choral activity, and the patterns expressed in their functioning.

### **Summary of the chapters.**

In this thesis, I demonstrate that Latin American choirs in Canada function according to the needs they have in terms of reaffirming their Latin American identity and the possibilities offered by the local context. I suggest that these choirs have been able to successfully maintain and shape their identity in the Canadian musical context through the preservation of Latin American musical traditions and authenticity. In chapter one, I address the history of Latin American choirs in Canada. Thanks to the information provided by choral conductors in

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<sup>74</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*, 100.

<sup>75</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*, 123.

<sup>76</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*, 197.

<sup>77</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*, 90.

<sup>78</sup> Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*, 90.



questionnaires and interviews, and the information collected through the internet (websites and social media), in this chapter I elaborate the history of each of the eight choirs studied from their origins to the present day (in the case of those choirs still active). I address data about the choirs' rehearsals and meetings, their methodologies of learning the works, their live performances in person or remotely held so far, the processes and criteria applied in the selection of their members, the awards or recognition received for their performance, the sponsorships or funding received, and their partnerships with institutions or organisations. This chapter is crucial for establishing the objectives, motivations and plans of the conductors and their choirs, which help us to approach with greater knowledge the issues that are presented in the later chapters.

In the second chapter, I examine how Latin American choirs in Canada function as communities that maintain and shape identity, drawing on materials from the questionnaires and interviews with the choral directors. I argue that they do so primarily by promoting the idea of the choir and its activity as an identity-affirming "survival tool," promoting social cohesion and a sense of common experience, transmitting "latinity" to non-Latin American choristers, and fortifying the relationship with the Latin American community outside the choirs. In the eight choirs studied there have been different situations in which the desire for identity reaffirmation and preservation of the Latin American community is evident. These have occurred through the choral activities themselves, or through external actions directly or indirectly related to the choirs' tasks.

In the third chapter I examine how Latin American choirs in Canada face the challenge of maintaining their authenticity and preserving their traditions, while at the same time inserting themselves into local communities and garnering a positive reception from the broader Canadian community. I argue that this way of embracing and maintaining their Latin Americanness is used as a preservation strategy, which ultimately allows them to reaffirm their identity. The different conductors' views on the importance of maintaining authenticity will be addressed. One common point of view is that they lean towards the preservation of original versions and arrangements of the repertoire and believe that their choirs must represent Latin American culture. When the choirs do use musical arrangements and adaptations, they do not respond to a process of hybridization, but rather to an adaptation of the works to the type of choristers and their abilities, to the instruments and instrumentalists at their disposal, and to meet the motivational

expectations of the choristers. In addition, these adaptations are carried out to obtain a good reception from the audience. The use of these arrangements is therefore a preservation strategy. I also address how the open inclusion policies that conductors apply when calling new members to join - another strategy for the preservation of the choirs - determines the way in which choirs develop in artistic, pedagogical, and social terms. Finally, I discuss how the choirs employ the preservation strategy of insertion in their local communities as a way of “sharing their art” and getting closer to them. In turn, the reception from Canadian audiences is seen as a multicultural openness, since the broader Canadian community values the choirs’ Latin American authenticity. All of these preservation strategies are nothing more than a way for these choirs to embrace and preserve their Latin Americanness, with the ultimate goal of reaffirming their identity in the Canadian context.

The final chapter examines the use of choreography and body movements by Latin American choirs in Canada through an analysis of forty-eight songs in audiovisual records of live performances by the choirs from 2006 to 2019. The aim of this is to examine the choral practice of these choirs to understand the scope, characteristics, and functions of the use of choreography and body movements in their performances. My findings suggest that choreography and body movements are recurrently used by these choirs as a way of preserving the Latin American repertoire in its most genuine way of interpretation. This is achieved by uniting the musical styles with elements of dances associated with them, in such a way as to highlight their characteristic properties and to reveal the multimodal nature of Latin American choral music. In this chapter, I analyze the videos from a comparative perspective, considering in turn, the repertoire interpreted, its musical style, the attitude of the choristers demonstrated in their movements, and the role played by the conductors. From my research I can suggest that these choreography and body movements fulfill a function that goes beyond the enhancement of choral performance to forge Latin American representative elements of identity in the Canadian context.

## CHAPTER 1

### History of Latin American Choirs in Canada.

In this chapter, I examine the case of eight established Latin American choirs in Canada, of which six are still active today. As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, there were only two choirs - defunct some years ago - that I could not include in this research.<sup>1</sup> According to the directors themselves, there were no other Latin American choirs in Canada prior to their own choirs. This information is corroborated by my own research, as I found no record or trace of the existence of any such choirs in Canada beyond to the ten choirs outlined above. Given the lack of research to date on Latin American choirs in Canada, one of the contributions of this study lies in establishing the histories of these choirs.

It is important to mention that this study does not consider choirs belonging to the different Hispanic churches present throughout Canada. Rather, it focuses on choirs that perform (or performed) in more than one physical location, participating in different types of events (festivals, private concerts, charity concerts, commemorations, religious celebrations, etc.), and addressing different types of audiences (of different nationalities, ages, and religions).

The choirs I approached were first researched on the internet, through their websites and social media profiles. Thanks to this information, I contacted the conductors of each choir via email, inviting them to participate in this project, which they kindly accepted. The eight conductors completed the questionnaire that I sent them, and we agreed on dates for interviews.

The following table (1.1) shows the choirs studied, together with a summary of some important data. As we can see, the choirs are located in Western Canada and in Ontario, which is explained by the waves of Latin American immigration to Canada from the 1970s onwards. According to reports from the 1970s and 1980s, most Latin American immigrants preferred to

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<sup>1</sup> One of these was a male choir called *Voces de América*, which was located in Hamilton and performed between 2011 and 2015. The other was a Brazilian choir directed by Sergio Pires called *Nosso Canto*, based in Vancouver, which ran for almost two years. Sergio Pires, interview by Esteban Mendoza, May 25, 2021, video.

settle in large urban centres of Ontario (Toronto), Quebec (Montreal) and Western Canada (Vancouver, Calgary, and Edmonton) in search of better job opportunities.<sup>2</sup> Over the following decades, these trends did not change significantly, as these cities continue to be among the most preferred destinations by Latin American immigrants.<sup>3</sup>

In addition, most of these choirs were founded after 2000, and usually include 15-25 members. It is important to note as well that the origin of the specific repertoire performed by each choir is related in part to the nationality of the conductor. That is to say, choirs whose conductors are Venezuelan include in their repertoire a large number of works from their country (although not exclusively). The same is true of the choirs with a Brazilian conductor, with a Chilean conductor, and with a Mexican conductor.

Table 1.1. Latin American Choirs in Canada.

<b>Choir Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Years active</b>	<b>Directors</b>	<b>Interviewed directors</b>	<b>Repertoire</b>	<b>Members (approx.)</b>
Ágora Ibero-American Choir	Toronto	2019-present	Valeska Cabrera	Valeska Cabrera (Chile)	Latin American, Caribbean, and Spanish repertoire, covering periods from the Spanish Renaissance to Contemporary music	18
Cantares Latin Choir	Calgary	2010-present	Juan Sosa	Juan Sosa (Venezuela) and Norka Markano (assistant director, Venezuela)	Traditional and folkloric Venezuelan and Latin American music	25
Canto Vivo [Alive Singing]	Vancouver	2017-present	Sergio Pires	Sergio Pires (Brazil)	Spanish and Portuguese language repertoire	25
Fusión Latina [Latin Fusion]	Vancouver	2005-2014	Fabiana Katz, María Goobar, Sarit Aloni (last director)	Fabiana Katz (Argentina)	Latin American choral folkloric music	23

<sup>2</sup> Fernando G. Mata, “Latin American Immigration to Canada: Some Reflections on the Immigration Statistics,” *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies / Revue canadienne des études latino-américaines et caraïbes* Vol. 10, No. 20 (1985): 28-33.

<sup>3</sup> “Immigrant population by selected places of birth, admission category and period of immigration, Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas and areas outside of census metropolitan areas, 2016 Census,” Statistics Canada, published October 27, 2017, <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/dv-vd/imm/index-eng.cfm>.

Los Parranderos de Vancouver [Vancouver's Revelers]	Vancouver	1996-present	Iván C., María Luces (current director)	Iván C. (Venezuela)	Venezuelan Christmas Carols	15
Nuestras Voces [Our Voices]	Hamilton	2013-2020	Lil Acevedo, Jeimee Foronda, Julia Clarke, Lorena Espinosa (last director)	Julia Clarke (Chile)	Latin American popular and traditional music	20
UNAM-Canada Choir	Ottawa	2015-present	Ricardo Guzmán, Francois Gravel, Ana Cristina Ramirez	Ricardo Guzmán (México)	Mexican and Latin American popular and traditional music	20
Viene Sonando [It Comes Sounding]	Vancouver	2015-present	Marianella Ramos	Marianella Ramos (Venezuela)	Latin American popular and traditional music	15

As is likely true for most choirs in the world, Latin American choirs in Canada have been strongly affected by the health restrictions imposed by governmental authorities during the Covid-19 pandemic. Their performances, rehearsals and meetings have had no choice but to take place virtually at best, and in other cases they have simply not taken place, resulting in the discontinuity of these choirs or, indeed, their suspension. As we shall see, some choirs have been able to cope well with the technologies used in “virtual life,” managing to carry out rehearsals and audio-visual recordings of some works, and promoting continuity in the choir’s development. These strategies have also encouraged the discovery and enhancement of skills previously unknown to choristers and conductors, such as being able to sing without having the support of listening to others (in the case of choristers) or conducting without listening to the choristers (in the case of conductors), among other skills.

As mentioned, the information gathered to write the history of the choirs was collected through two instruments - questionnaires and interviews - addressed to their respective directors. Based on this information, chapter one reveals the origins of each of the eight choirs, the motivations of the conductors for founding and/or agreeing to conduct them, the frequency and place of rehearsals, the methodology used to learn the works, their live performances as of the date of this thesis (in person or remotely), the processes and criteria applied in the selection of

choir membership, the awards or recognition received for their performances, the sponsorships or funding received, and their partnerships with institutions or organisations. Through the presentation of this information, I aim to acquire a basic knowledge of each choir, in order to obtain the necessary tools to then address deeper issues regarding the functioning of each choir in relation to, for instance, the reaffirmation of identity of its members (chapter two) their preservation strategies applied in the Canadian context (chapter three) or the inclusion of choreographies or body movements in their performances (chapter four).

### *Ágora Ibero-American Choir.*

Valeska Cabrera is a Chilean choral conductor and founder of the *Ágora Ibero-American Choir*, which is based in Toronto. The choir came into existence in 2019, which was when Cabrera was in her second year of the Master of Music in Choral Conducting at the University of Toronto.<sup>4</sup> She explains her motivation for founding the choir as follows:

[I] felt the need to have a choir of my own, despite the high workload I already had as an assistant conductor and singer in various ensembles. I was learning so many new techniques in rehearsal methodology and voice teaching that I wanted to put them into practice as soon as possible with a group of my own. So, I proposed the formation of this choir to my university tutor, Dr. Mark Ramsay, who supported the initiative.<sup>5</sup>

As to the reasons for founding a Latin American choir in Canada, Cabrera states that “Toronto is a city full of choral activity in which choirs of all ages and in diverse communities operate. When I wanted to found my choir, I saw that one of the least represented communities in this choral universe was the Latin community.”<sup>6</sup> The challenge for Cabrera was to set up a choir similar to the one she had conducted in Chile, where it is common to work with choristers

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<sup>4</sup> Valeska Cabrera, “*Quien Canta, Sus Males Espanta: Latin American Choirs in Canada. Questionnaire for Choir Directors,*” SurveyMonkey, March 29, 2021.

<sup>5</sup> Cabrera, survey. [“sentí la necesidad de tener un coro propio, a pesar de la alta carga de trabajo que ya tenía como directora asistente y cantante en diversas agrupaciones. Estaba aprendiendo tantas nuevas técnicas en cuanto a metodología de ensayo y enseñanza de la voz, que deseaba ponerlas en práctica lo antes posible con un grupo propio. Por eso propuse la formación de este coro a mi tutor de la universidad, Dr. Mark Ramsay, quien apoyó la iniciativa.”]

<sup>6</sup> Cabrera, survey. [“Toronto es una ciudad plena de actividad coral, en la que funcionan coros de todas las edades y en diversas comunidades. Cuando quise fundar mi coro, vi que una de las comunidades menos representada en este universo coral era la comunidad latina.”]

who do not necessarily have musical training and/or previous choral experience. Cabrera wanted to learn how to use the tools she was acquiring through her master's degree studies in this type of choir, in order to apply them in Chile when she returns to her country. Therefore, the initial invitation to join the *Ágora Ibero-American Choir* was aimed at people who did not necessarily have musical knowledge.<sup>7</sup> It is for this reason that the call for applications poster specifies (in Spanish) that the music reading level of the applicants “is not exclusive” (see figure 1.1). Furthermore, the announcement is written in English and Spanish in order to facilitate the inclusion of all those who wish to join the choir.

When she founded the choir, Cabrera set out to address Spanish choral music from all periods. And by including music from Spain, she tells us that: “[I] decided to take into account the Brazilian and Portuguese repertoire and that the choir should be called ‘Ibero-American,’ to reflect that inclusion.”<sup>8</sup> Cabrera also makes this commitment clear in the first call for applications poster (figure 1.1) by revealing her nationality (Chile) as a transparent way of showing that she is also part of the project, as another Ibero-American.

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<sup>7</sup> Valeska Cabrera, interview by Esteban Mendoza, May 13, 2021, video.

<sup>8</sup> Cabrera, survey. [“decidí tomar en cuenta el repertorio brasileño y portugués y que el coro se llamara ‘Iberoamericano’ para que diera cuenta de esa inclusión.”]



Figure 1.1. *Ágora Ibero-American Choir's* first call for applications.

In order to select members who would form part of the choir, an open call for auditions was made. The means of dissemination used were the social networks of the Ibero-American cultural centres in Toronto and the distribution of posters in key places in the city, such as the Latin market in Kensington Market. Cabrera also received support from the Chilean General Consulate in Toronto, which included the call for applications in its monthly newsletters.<sup>9</sup> Regarding the selection process Cabrera explains,

More than a selection, it was a classification of voices. All those interested were welcome, because the choir had a strong educational component. Therefore, previous musical (in)experience or knowledge did not matter. Those interested had to come to the

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<sup>9</sup> Cabrera, survey.



Chilean consulate offices, where there was a piano, and perform a couple of short vocal exercises that I proposed, and then sing a song of their own choice.<sup>10</sup>

In the choir there are and have been choristers who were not native Spanish speakers, who according to Cabrera have not had considerable difficulty singing in Spanish and Portuguese. This is since the call for applications made it clear that the choir would perform works in these languages, a situation that the non-Spanish-speaking applicants - who generally have an upper-intermediate level of Spanish - had in mind when they applied and accepted the challenge as a way of perfecting the language.<sup>11</sup>

The choir managed to have three performances. The first was in June 2019 at the Church of the Holy Trinity in Toronto; the second was a Christmas concert at the Spanish Centre in December 2019; and that same month they gave a performance at St. Paul's Church Runnymede.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Cabrera, survey. [“Más que una selección, se trató de una clasificación de voces. Todos los interesados fueron bienvenidos, porque el coro tenía un fuerte componente educativo. Por eso, no importó la (in)experiencia musical previa o los conocimientos. Los interesados debían acercarse a las oficinas del consulado chileno, donde había un piano, y realizaban un par de breves ejercicios vocales que yo proponía, y luego cantaban una canción de su propia elección.”]

<sup>11</sup> Cabrera, interview.

<sup>12</sup> Cabrera, survey.



Figure 1.2. *Ágora Ibero-American Choir's* concert poster: “Serenata para la tierra de uno.”

In addition to directing the choir, it is Cabrera who is in charge of choosing the repertoire to be performed. She explains her rationale for the repertoire selection to date as follows:

For the first performance, I wanted to perform a concert of Latin American music with the theme ‘Serenata para la tierra de uno’ [Serenade for one’s land]. The whole repertoire was organised around that idea, which gave us a lot of freedom, as it was a broad theme. The second concert was for Christmas, so we made a selection of pieces from the *Auto Sacramental por Navidad* by Chileans Gastón Soublette and Fidel Sepúlveda, as well as some old Spanish pieces. At that time, in December 2019, Chile was in the midst of a Social Explosion, so I felt that our singing should reflect in some way the reality that the country was experiencing. So, in January 2020 we began to prepare a concert dedicated

to social justice, which we were going to present in May. Unfortunately, because of the pandemic, we couldn't do it.<sup>13</sup>

Cabrera has thus sought to perform thematic concerts directly related to Latin American tradition and reality. “Serenata para la tierra de uno” is not only the title Cabrera chose for the concert on 30 June 2019, but also the name of a traditional Argentinian work; and *Auto Sacramental por Navidad*, is a traditional Chilean choral work. Social justice, on the other hand, is a theme frequently addressed in Latin American musical activities, due to the dictatorships and political instability experienced in the past and present by these countries.<sup>14</sup> The case of the Chilean Social Explosion in October 2019 is an emblematic case due to the scale of social demands and the level of violence that had not been experienced since the military dictatorship.<sup>15</sup> Considering these factors, Cabrera would hardly have failed to contemplate such a historic event in her choral repertoire. Thus, in the announcement poster for the “Social Justice” concert (Figure 1.3) the use of music as a means to demand peace and justice becomes a goal of the choir rather than a goal of the concert, as the choir sees itself as a “collective” working together to achieve a common mission.

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<sup>13</sup> Cabrera, survey. [“Para la primera presentación, quería realizar un concierto de música Latinoamericana cuyo tema fuera “Serenata para la tierra de uno”. Todo el repertorio se organizó en torno a esa idea, lo que nos dio mucha libertad, ya que era un tema amplio. El segundo concierto era de navidad, así que hicimos una selección de piezas del *Autosacramental por Navidad* de los chilenos Gastón Soublette y Fidel Sepúlveda, además de algunas piezas españolas antiguas. En ese momento, diciembre de 2019, Chile estaba en pleno estallido social, por lo que sentí que nuestro canto debía reflejar en cierto modo la realidad que estaba viviendo el país. Por eso, en enero de 2020 comenzamos a preparar un concierto dedicado a la justicia social, que íbamos a presentar en mayo. Lamentablemente, por la pandemia no pudimos realizarlo.”]

<sup>14</sup> The practice of demanding social justice through musical expressions in Latin America began with the *Nueva Canción Latino Americana* [New Latin American Song] during the 1960s and 70s. This tradition marked a milestone in the history of Latin American music, such that this repertoire is still practiced today and is used as an influence in contemporary musical works of various genres. See Fabiola Velasco, “La Nueva Canción Latinoamericana. Notas sobre su origen y definición,” *Presente y Pasado. Revista de Historia* Año 12, N° 23 (Enero-Junio, 2007): 139-153; Hirmarys Pérez Flores, “La Nueva Canción Latinoamericana en su forma y contenido. Bases ideológicas, principios y propuestas de orden social (1960- 1970),” *Humania del Sur* Año 7, N° 13 (Julio-Diciembre, 2012): 139-154.

<sup>15</sup> Ernesto Londoño, “What You Need to Know About the Unrest in Chile,” *The New York Times*, October 21, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/21/world/americas/why-chile-protests.html>; Tom Phillips, “Chile on edge as worst unrest in three decades claims 11 lives,” *The Guardian*, October 21, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/oct/21/chile-braces-after-worst-unrest-in-three-decades-claims-11-lives>

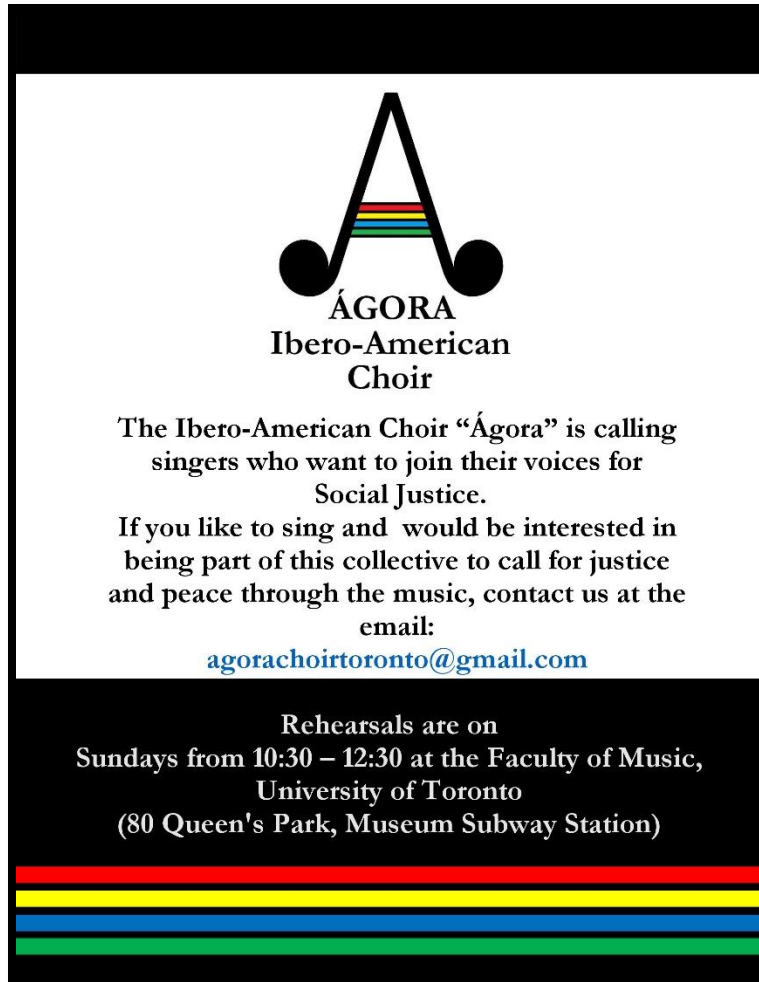


Figure 1.3. *Ágora Ibero-American Choir*'s calling poster for the “Social Justice” concert.

The *Ágora Ibero-American Choir* has not received financial support from any organisation. However, both the place where they rehearse and the venues where they have performed have been free of charge. And although minor expenses - such as photocopies - are paid for by Cabrera herself, the flyers and concert programmes for their performances were provided by the Chilean Consulate.<sup>16</sup>

Until March 2020 – when the pandemic took hold in Canada – they used to rehearse every Sunday at the Faculty of Music at the University of Toronto. Now they rehearse virtually.<sup>17</sup> However, the pandemic did not mean that the choir had to stop its activities

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<sup>16</sup> Cabrera, survey.

<sup>17</sup> Cabrera, interview.

completely. During this time, they began to work on repertoire by Chilean women composers in virtual mode, also inviting choristers from Chile, Spain, Colombia, Venezuela, and other countries to participate.<sup>18</sup> Once the restrictions caused by the pandemic are lifted, Cabrera plans to resume face-to-face rehearsals and to continue work on this and other projects.<sup>19</sup>

### *Cantares Latin Choir.*

The idea of founding a choir arose in June 2010 in Calgary from a group of ex-Venezuelan choristers led by Norka Marcano - who is currently the assistant conductor of *Cantares Latin Choir* - and they soon extended the invitation to other people who wanted to join.<sup>20</sup> Juan Sosa, the current director of the choir, reflects “I was later invited to participate in their first rehearsal as a chorister. At that time, they didn’t have a conductor. [...] One of the basses asked me if I’d mind being the conductor and I accepted it.”<sup>21</sup> Although neither Sosa nor Marcano earned degrees as choral conductors, nor did they obtain a professional music degree in another speciality, both have musical training acquired during their years of study in music conservatories. In addition, at one point both took private lessons in choral conducting with a Canadian choral conductor in Calgary, which was very useful for them.<sup>22</sup>

Sosa states that “[t]he goal of forming this group has always been to have the ability and the opportunity to share the Latin-American rhythms with the Canadian public.”<sup>23</sup> As we shall see, one of the important factors that has favoured the realisation of this objective is the institutionalisation of the choir as a cultural entity. That is to say, it was clear to them that the most effective way to encourage the opportunity to share their music with the local environment was through the institutional formalisation of the choir. In keeping with this mission as well, the repertoire of *Cantares Latin Choir* is composed of traditional Latin American music, with an

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<sup>18</sup> Cabrera, survey.

<sup>19</sup> Cabrera, interview.

<sup>20</sup> Juan Sosa, “*Quien Canta, Sus Males Espanta: Latin American Choirs in Canada. Questionnaire for Choir Directors,*” SurveyMonkey, April 23, 2021.

<sup>21</sup> Sosa, survey.

<sup>22</sup> Juan Sosa and Norka Marcano, interview by Esteban Mendoza, May 15, 2021, video.

<sup>23</sup> Sosa, survey.

emphasis on Venezuelan music, which is mainly selected by Sosa and Markano. However, they also perform works of sacred music, and other works in English.<sup>24</sup>

According to Markano, in Canada, in order to be eligible for grants to carry out activities, an organisation needs to be registered. For this reason, the organisers of the choir decided to register it officially as an organisation. But in reality, they wanted to go further, because they also wanted to carry out other cultural activities on a broader level. This is how *Cantares Venezuelan Cultural Foundation*, of which the *Cantares Latin Choir* is a part, was born. In Sosa's words, although the *Cantares Latin Choir* is only "one of the programmes of the Foundation"<sup>25</sup> and is composed of a board of directors who are not necessarily members of the choir, in reality the choir "was the main reason that the foundation was created."<sup>26</sup> It was necessary then - Markano explains - to establish the pillars of the choral project by conceptualising it as a cultural and community activity. Through the Foundation, the choir applies for and periodically receives operational grants from the Alberta Foundation for the Arts, thanks to which they have been able to conduct various choral workshops with top local conductors. In addition, throughout the years they have also received donations - although not always monetary ones - from private organisations, some of which the choir members themselves work for. In turn, tickets for concerts performed by them are generally charged as donations or at very low prices. The aim is to make concert attendance accessible to everyone, and part of the funds that are received are used for operating expenses.<sup>27</sup> For instance, figure 1.4 shows a poster advertising a "Christmas Charity Concert" organised by the *Cantares Latin Choir*, where 50% of the proceeds were donated to a non-profit centre.

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<sup>24</sup> Sosa, survey.

<sup>25</sup> Sosa and Markano, interview. ["uno de los programas de la Fundación"]

<sup>26</sup> Sosa and Markano, interview. ["fue la razón principal por la cual se creó la Fundación."]

<sup>27</sup> Sosa and Markano, interview.

**CANTARES VENEZUELAN CHOIR  
CHRISTMAS CHARITY CONCERT**

**GUEST CHOIRS**

**CALGARY ZHI-YIN CHOIR**  
CONDUCTOR: SHANA YANG

**FRESH BLEND**  
CONDUCTOR: STEVEN MORTON

**\$10 – ADMIT ONE**  
\$5 WILL BE DONATED TO THE BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB OF CALGARY

SATURDAY DECEMBER 9, 2017 @ 7:30 PM  
PARKDALE UNITED CHURCH  
2919 8 AVE NW, CALGARY

**PROGRAMME**

**FRESH BLEND** **Steven Morton**

Caroling, Caroling A. Burt & W. Hutson

This Christmas D. Hathaway & N. McKinnor  
Arr. by P. Langford

Carol of the Bells P. Wilhousky & M. Leontovich  
Arr. by P. Wilhousky

Deck The Halls Traditional Welsh Carol  
Arr. by F.J. Núñez & J. Papoulis

**CALGARY ZHI-YIN CHOIR** **Shana Yang**

Adventi Enek Z. Kodaly

Courtship on the Prairie H. Zeng Rong

Jingle Bells through the Ages A. Pote

**CANTARES VENEZUELAN CHOIR** **Juan Sosa**

Chiquiriquitin Arr. by O. Martí

El Caminante Calderón Chacín  
Arr. by F. Ruiz

All I want for Christmas M. Carey & W. Atanasieff  
Arr. by K. Aguero

Amanece C. A. Carrillo  
Arr. By E. Arteaga

Esta bella noche L. E. Galian

Que gran tradición J. de los Rios  
Arr. by C. A. Carrillo

Venezuela P. Herrero & J. L. Armenteros  
Arr. by V. L. González

**CLOSING PERFORMANCE – ALL CHOIRS**

*Thanks for attending our event tonight  
Merry Christmas – Feliz Navidad*

Figure 1.4. *Cantares Latin Choir’s* concert programme: “Christmas Charity Concert.”

Sosa and Markano assert that they make a constant effort to maintain the roots of the Latin American repertoire they perform, which is why they are obliged to ensure the quality of their standards of interpretation at all times. This aim has been successful mainly thanks to three elements. One is that although about 70% of the choir had no choral training at the time of joining, the remaining 30% had 20 to 30 years of solid choral experience, distributed in such a way that there was at least one experienced chorister in each voice classification; Sosa refers to these choristers as “high quality section leaders.”<sup>28</sup> While these “pillars” have been fundamental to the choir’s development, on the other hand, the fact that in each of the choir sections there are experienced and inexperienced choristers helps to create a balance in terms of the final sound of the choir as a whole. The second element is that, within this 70%, the majority of the choristers

<sup>28</sup> Sosa and Markano, interview. [“líderes de cuerda de alta calidad.”]

came from church vocal groups. So even though they had no experience in polyphonic works or choral arrangements, “they had a certain inclination towards singing,”<sup>29</sup> according to Sosa. The final element is that already within the first week of the choir’s formation, they were contacted by Gloria Vargas, a Puerto Rican soprano soloist and voice teacher, who worked with them for several years, helping them with everything related to vocal technique, body posture and interpretation. Sosa admits that “most of us didn’t know that.”<sup>30</sup> These three elements (the “high quality section leaders,” the inclination towards singing by most of the choristers, and the classes with the voice teacher) encouraged Markano and Sosa to demand quality from the choir, and according to Sosa, have been key “to being able to get to where we have arrived.”<sup>31</sup>

In order to participate in local choral activities, early on the *Cantares Latin Choir* became affiliated with the Alberta Choral Federation, which organises the annual *Calgary Chorfest*, in which the choir has participated since 2011 and has won silver (2013 and 2014), gold (2011, 2012, 2015, 2017, and 2018), and platinum medals (2016) for their performances. Here, the expert jury that evaluates each choir holds a small workshop after the performances, in which *Cantares Latin Choir* has participated since its second year of formation. Therefore, year after year they have been nurtured by this training opportunity, and consequently the choir members have felt “more involved in the choral activity as such and not only in the cultural one.”<sup>32</sup> By this, Sosa means that these workshops have become useful for the choristers not only to enter the choral world with all the technical aspects involved, but also to overcome the lack of understanding of the real meaning and scope of a choir as a collective musical expression. Another more recent recognition they received was the *Talento Latino* award in 2020 in the category “Folklore,” which is an annual competition where the best representatives of Latin American arts in Calgary are awarded.<sup>33</sup>

Other festivals in which the choir has participated include the *Calgary Carol Festival* (in which they have been performing since 2011), the *Kathaumixw International Choral Festival* in

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<sup>29</sup> Sosa and Markano, interview. [“tenían cierta inclinación hacia el canto.”]

<sup>30</sup> Sosa and Markano, interview. [“la mayoría de nosotros no sabíamos eso.”]

<sup>31</sup> Sosa and Markano, interview. [“para poder llegar a donde hemos llegado.”]

<sup>32</sup> Sosa and Markano, interview. [“más involucrados en la actividad coral como tal y no solo en la cultural.”]

<sup>33</sup> Sosa, survey.



Powell River (BC) in 2012, and the *Unisong Festival* in Ottawa (ON) in 2019. Additionally, they have collaborated with other Canadian and international choirs based in Calgary and surrounding areas,<sup>34</sup> such as the “Let’s Sing Together Choral Encounter 2017” (figure 1.5), where they performed together with three other choirs.



Figure 1.5. *Cantares Latin Choir’s* concert poster: “Let’s Sing Together. Choral Encounter 2017.”

Prior to the pandemic, the choir used to rehearse once a week at various locations in Calgary, mainly in the Eau Claire community room and the Old Y Centre. Sosa points out that they have not had rehearsals “virtually,” basically because it is very difficult to do so. However, they have uploaded some videos of Christmas choral works that they performed “with the

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<sup>34</sup> Sosa, survey.

purpose of not letting the desire we have to continue making music with our choir die. We don't want the choir to disappear."<sup>35</sup> Markano adds, "we don't want the work of all these years to be lost."<sup>36</sup> In fact, once it is possible to resume rehearsals as normal, Sosa says he would like to propose new projects for the choir, such as participating in the World Choir Games and other international festivals outside Canada.<sup>37</sup>

### *Canto Vivo.*

Brazilian choral conductor Sergio Pires, a founding member of the Vancouver Latin American Cultural Centre (VLACC), presented to the organisation's committee the project to create a Latin American choir. When his proposal was approved, it gave birth to the *Canto Vivo* choir in 2017. Thus, to fit into the VLACC schedule, the choir offers Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer terms, in which the choristers register and pay a quarterly fee.<sup>38</sup>

In order to join *Canto Vivo* it is not necessary to pass an audition, and all those interested can enter. Pires says "the choir is open to everyone,"<sup>39</sup> and adds,

When a person is interested, I invite him/her to the practice, and I pay special attention during the warm-up. At the end of the practice, I do some exercises to define the type of voice. If I detect tuning problems, I do specific exercises for that to evaluate how much extra ear training work that person will need. If the person doesn't seek to improve, I increase the pressure until they work or leave the choir.<sup>40</sup>

Since membership in the choir is not restricted, Pires has faced this challenge using other strategies as well, such as performing tuning exercises for the whole choir, even though it is only one member who has problems; or suggesting to those who have difficulties to perform tuning exercises individually by recommending some websites and programmes. In this process,

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<sup>35</sup> Sosa and Markano, interview. ["con el propósito de no dejar morir esa inquietud que tenemos de continuar haciendo música con nuestro coro. No queremos que el coro desaparezca."]

<sup>36</sup> Sosa and Markano, interview. ["no queremos que se pierda el trabajo de todos estos años."]

<sup>37</sup> Sosa and Markano, interview.

<sup>38</sup> Sergio Pires, "*Quien Canta, Sus Males Espanta: Latin American Choirs In Canada. Questionnaire for Choir Directors,*" SurveyMonkey, April 13, 2021.

<sup>39</sup> Pires, survey.

<sup>40</sup> Pires, survey.

inevitably some choristers feel pressured and “they get upset of course, but what can I do? I cannot risk losing the work of twenty other people because one is singing out of tune”<sup>41</sup> Pires explains. Even under the aegis of a cultural centre open to the community, Pires shows here his interest in reaching a high level with the choir, and not being satisfied with the amateur level one might expect from a community and non-professional choir. He wants to make the most of it.

In order to make the choristers’ learning of the repertoire more effective, Pires creates audio files for each voice using *Finale* software. Although he acknowledges that this is not the ideal system to professionalise the choir, at least it serves as a guide for the choristers, as they not only hear their own voice, but also hear the other voices in the background, so they get a general harmonic idea of the work being worked on.<sup>42</sup>

Regarding the repertoire addressed, Pires was clear from the beginning that:

Besides Brazilian music, the music that interests me the most is from the Spanish speaking countries of the Americas. I have always considered Brazilian [music] as part of the Latin American culture, despite the misuse of the term ‘Latino’ in the Anglophone countries which reduces the Latin American [culture] to Hispanic only.<sup>43</sup>

As we know, Brazil is the only Latin American country where Portuguese rather than Spanish is spoken, so Pires’ concern stems from a language issue that has historically made it difficult for Brazilian culture to have a closer relationship with the rest of Latin America.<sup>44</sup>

Currently, the repertoire the choir performs “is 100% popular music from Latin America, with an emphasis on the original and diverse musical genres from all the countries.”<sup>45</sup> When the time comes to choose the repertoire to be performed, Pires makes a selection of those works he likes and those suggested by the choir members.<sup>46</sup> Pires explains: “I decide the repertoire using

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<sup>41</sup> Pires, interview.

<sup>42</sup> Pires, interview.

<sup>43</sup> Pires, survey.

<sup>44</sup> Helio Jaguaribe, “El Brasil y la América Latina,” *Foro Internacional* Vol. 15, No. 4 (60) (Apr. - Jun., 1975): 619.

<sup>45</sup> Pires, survey.

<sup>46</sup> Each new member who joins the choir, on the first day, fills out a form where they must indicate as specifically as possible the musical genres or songs they would like to sing with the choir. Pires, interview.

diverse criteria: representation of countries and genres, availability of arrangements (although I write many of the arrangements), preferences of the singers, level of difficulty, etc.”<sup>47</sup>

Since the choir is part of the VLACC, it is this last organisation that provides the rehearsal and performance spaces, as well as administrative and financial support to complement the fees paid by the members.<sup>48</sup> This is how from 2017 to 2019 the choir performed at the Museum of Vancouver, the Vancouver Public Library, the Britannia Community Centre, UBC Hospital Care Home, St. Mark Lutheran church (in the event *Viva la Música* with the choir *Viene Sonando*) and at meetings of VLACC members. All of these performances were free of charge.<sup>49</sup>

The choir has not received any awards or recognition for its performances so far. Pires believes this is because “the choir started as a community choir and, although the quality of the singing has improved a lot, it hasn’t got to the big stage yet.”<sup>50</sup> To this it must be added that, as already mentioned, all those interested in joining the choir are welcome, so it is hardly going to be a professional, let alone a competitive choir. This was the intention of the 2019 recruiting poster (figure 1.6), which only says “Join our Choir” without any other specification regarding requirements, which evidences this total openness towards the community.

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<sup>47</sup> Pires, survey.

<sup>48</sup> Pires, survey.

<sup>49</sup> Pires, survey.

<sup>50</sup> Pires, survey.



Figure 1.6. *Canto Vivo*'s call for applications, 2019.

Until the pandemic began, practices were once a week for two hours at the Britannia Community Centre, which has a partnership with the VLACC. During the pandemic, Pires has continued to hold rehearsals, but they are virtual, rather than in person. In order to avoid out-of-sync problems, he asks one member per section to sing his/her part while the others sing on their own with their microphones turned off. Although Pires is aware that this is not the most appropriate way to rehearse, he says that it is at least useful, because it allows him to correct the chorister who sang with the microphone on and the rest of the choir can also learn from it. However, he says that conducting two-hour rehearsals in this format is quite exhausting, so he decided to include a playful “karaoke” section at the end of each rehearsal.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Pires, interview.

Prior to the pandemic, the choir numbered between 25 and 27 members, but during the pandemic, virtual rehearsals are attended by about half of the members, with no tenors. Due to this difficulty, Pires has had to adapt much of the repertoire to three voices. However, he believes that the choristers that attends the virtual rehearsals will come back more prepared when the in-person rehearsals return. Pires states that there is a strong core group that makes up the choir, so he is convinced that despite all the difficulties, the choir will persist.<sup>52</sup>

### ***Fusión Latina.***

*Fusión Latina* was born from a group of about eight Venezuelans who met to sing folkloric music in Vancouver. At one point, they wanted to establish a more formal choir, so they contacted Fabiana Katz - an Argentinian choral director - who agreed to be their director. The choristers organised themselves to pay a monthly fee to remunerate Katz for her services, which was mostly a symbolic salary, due to the difficult economic situation of each of the choristers. Thus, Katz directed the choir between 2005 and 2009, and the first choir rehearsals were held once a week at the home of one of the choristers. Later, they decided to rent a space in a church, which was where Katz worked.<sup>53</sup>

Owing to the nationality of the choir members, the choir initially sang mainly Venezuelan music, but soon expanded to include repertoire from other Latin American countries, mostly popular secular music, but occasionally sacred as well. In addition, other non-Venezuelan Latin Americans living in Vancouver joined the choir.<sup>54</sup> According to the description in the documentary *Infusión Latina* dedicated to the choir, they were “Canada’s first and only choir

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<sup>52</sup> Pires, interview.

<sup>53</sup> Fabiana Katz, interview by Esteban Mendoza, June 26, 2021, video.

<sup>54</sup> Fabiana Katz, “*Quien Canta, Sus Males Espanta: Latin American Choirs in Canada.* Questionnaire for Choir Directors,” SurveyMonkey, May 3, 2021.

dedicated to performing Latin American choral folk music.”<sup>55</sup> As music and artistic director, Katz was always in charge of choosing the repertoire to be performed.<sup>56</sup>

Although there were no auditions to join the choir and the only requirement for admission was the ability to speak Spanish, it was stipulated that if a choir member missed three rehearsals, he or she could not participate in the concert being prepared at the time. However, Katz acknowledges that she never followed up to ensure that this norm was effectively enforced, so she was not aware of whether all of the choristers adhered to it.<sup>57</sup>



Figure 1.7. *Fusi3n Latina*’s logo.

Even though Katz’s teaching methodology consists strongly of the use of vocal technique, she points out that with *Fusi3n Latina* she did not have enough time during rehearsals to teach vocal technique thoroughly. She explains, “when you have one rehearsal a week for two hours and you have to learn repertoire because you have a concert in six months, you don’t have

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<sup>55</sup> “Infusion Latina,” RPM Infinity Productions Ltd., accessed July 26, 2021, <http://www.rpminfinityproductions.com/infusion-latina.html>

As can be seen in table 1.1, *Los Parranderos de Vancouver* was founded in 1996, i.e., much earlier than *Fusi3n Latina*. However, *Los Parranderos de Vancouver* specialise in performing only Venezuelan Christmas music, while *Fusi3n Latina* (as mentioned in this quotation) was the first choir to perform choral folkloric music from various Latin American countries.

<sup>56</sup> Katz, survey.

<sup>57</sup> Katz, interview.

time to teach them vocal technique!”<sup>58</sup> In other words, this difficulty speaks to a lack of resources (time, in this case) to professionalise or achieve high quality standards in the choir, which is what Katz would have liked to achieve, at least in part.

Since they were never associated with any organisation or institution, it was the choir members themselves who organised the concerts they gave, which were held at community cultural festivals, summer markets, and seniors’ homes, among other venues.<sup>59</sup> From some concerts, the choir received income because they were hired or they were able to charge admission. With this income they were able to afford to rent the space in the church where they rehearsed weekly. However, Katz mentions that it was never necessary to incur expenses for scores, as both she and the choir members had plenty of them, which they could share among themselves.<sup>60</sup>

### *Los Parranderos de Vancouver.*

The origins of the choir date back to 1996 when a group of Venezuelan friends in Vancouver wanted to take up the Venezuelan Christmas tradition of going door to door on a December night, singing Christmas carols from their native country. This experience encouraged the group to make a name for itself and to continue this tradition in the following years, as well as to offer performances in other venues - indoors and outdoors - within the context of Christmas.<sup>61</sup> Iván C. states that the birth of the choir took place “[t]o keep our Venezuelan traditions and culture alive and re-unite with other Venezuelans around Christmas times; [t]o combat our nostalgia [for] our music, culture, and traditions.”<sup>62</sup>

Within that group was María Luces - Iván C’s mother - who was in charge of directing the choir during its first years, which Iván soon joined. Owing to work reasons, María had to

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<sup>58</sup> Katz, interview. [“cuando tienes un ensayo por semana de dos horas y tienes que aprender un repertorio porque tienes un concierto en seis meses ;no tienes tiempo de enseñarles técnica vocal!”]

<sup>59</sup> Katz, survey.

<sup>60</sup> Katz, interview.

<sup>61</sup> Iván C., interview by Esteban Mendoza, May 12, 2021, video.

<sup>62</sup> Iván C., “*Quien Canta, Sus Males Espanta: Latin American Choirs In Canada. Questionnaire for Choir Directors,*” SurveyMonkey, April 23, 2021.



leave the choir for a while, so during the years 2013 to 2017 Iván was in charge of directing it, being appointed by the same group. Although Ivan's profession is developing software and web applications, his choral training as a child and the teachings acquired through his mother allowed him to carry out the task of directing *Los Parranderos de Vancouver* during those years.<sup>63</sup> He recounts that since he was a child, "my mum has always sung in choral groups. So, when she had to go to a rehearsal, concert or event, she would take us and we would sit in the audience and learn a lot [about] how a choral piece is put together [...] You learn something, as if by osmosis."<sup>64</sup>

According to Iván, the terms "*parranda*" and "*parranderos*" have a double connotation. On the one hand, *Parranda* is a Christmas musical sub-genre (like *Gaita* and *Aguinaldo*) quite popular in Venezuela, especially during the period around Christmas celebrations. On the other hand, the term has a connotation related to partying, bohemian life and unbridled celebration. Thus, in the Latin American world, a "*parrandero*" is someone who goes from party to party, enjoying life. Iván states that the choir takes advantage of this double connotation of the term, in that they have specialised in the interpretation of Venezuelan Christmas music, taking the party to the different places where they have performed.<sup>65</sup> Thus, *Los Parranderos de Vancouver's* repertoire, which is chosen by its director, is composed exclusively of *Parrandas*, *Aguinaldos*, and *Gaitas*. "*Aguinaldo* is a folk genre of Christmas music, which began as a derived form of the Spanish *Villancicos*. *Gaita* is the name of a Venezuelan folk music from Zulia state."<sup>66</sup> Of these genres, the choir had to its credit a repertoire of almost sixty songs at the time of the interview.<sup>67</sup>

One of the big challenges for the choir is to manage to rehearse the amount of works that are proposed between the set months and times. There are around twenty to twenty-five songs, of which one or two are new works that are added to the repertoire. Sometimes these new additions are difficult, because they may be unfamiliar and/or difficult for some choristers,

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<sup>63</sup> Iván C., interview.

<sup>64</sup> Iván C., interview. ["mi mamá siempre ha cantado en grupos corales. Entonces, cuando ella tenía que ir a un ensayo, concierto o evento, nos llevaba y nosotros sentados en la audiencia [...] aprendíamos mucho [respecto a] cómo se ensambla una obra coral [...] Uno va, como por osmosis, aprendiendo algo."]

<sup>65</sup> Iván C., interview.

<sup>66</sup> Iván C., survey.

<sup>67</sup> Iván C., survey.

especially for those who are not Venezuelan. One example is the case of the *Gaitas*, which are songs with a high level of musical and lyrical complexity. For Iván, the way to approach this challenge is to try to optimise the time in the best possible way, assigning great importance to the personal work of studying the songs individually before each rehearsal.<sup>68</sup>

Since *Los Parranderos de Vancouver* are dedicated to performing only Christmas repertoire, in August they begin to call the choristers for rehearsals in September, although Iván acknowledges that the first meeting is mostly for socialising, as the choristers have not seen each other for several months. However, during December the number of performances is such that after the Christmas period all of the choir members long for a break. Thus, the choristers do not see each other until the next September.<sup>69</sup> However, there was a group of the choir who wanted to continue their musical activity for the rest of the year. This is how *Así Somos* came about, a group of five members who perform popular and traditional Venezuelan music, and not necessarily Christmas music.<sup>70</sup>

To apply for the choir, Iván points out that “all we ask is the commitment to attend rehearsals and dedication to learn the songs/repertoire we will be performing that year.”<sup>71</sup> They accept practically anyone who wants to join the choir without the need to be Venezuelan. However, fluent Spanish is required, because for Iván, communication between the choir members must be good:

Rehearsals are like group therapy [where] people get together, make jokes, make merry. So having a person who doesn't speak Spanish would be a bit awkward [...]. If someone wants to jump in and practice their Spanish that's fine. But [speaking Spanish] is the recommended thing to do, otherwise the person might feel a little bit left out.<sup>72</sup>

Here it is not only the social component that is important, where rehearsals become “group therapy” due to the level of communication that can take place, but the choir also tackles

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<sup>68</sup> Iván C., interview.

<sup>69</sup> Iván C., interview.

<sup>70</sup> Iván C., interview.

<sup>71</sup> Iván C., survey.

<sup>72</sup> Iván C., interview. [“Los ensayos son como una terapia de grupo [en donde] la gente se reúne, se hacen chistes, se alegra el momento. Entonces, tener una persona que no hable español sería un poco incómodo [...]. No es un requisito exactamente. Si alguien se quiere meter y practicar su español está bien. Pero [hablar español] es lo recomendado, sino la persona se puede sentir un poco apartada.”]

lyrically complex repertoire that would be difficult to deal with even for any Spanish-speaking person (as mentioned above in the case of *Gaitas*).

*Los Parranderos de Vancouver* perform annually on Granville Island, at Canada Place, at local schools, churches, retirement homes (as showed in figure 1.8), community centres, and cultural centres. For two years in a row, they won second place in the “Best Creative Performance” category at the *Yule Duel Carolling Competition* in Gastown (Vancouver), which is the Vancouver’s largest street carolling competition. During the pandemic, as expected, they have not been able to perform in person, but at least in December 2020 they released a public video with a medley of the songs they frequently perform.<sup>73</sup>



Figure 1.8. *Los Parranderos de Vancouver* concert announcement at Langley Seniors Recreation & Resource Centre, 2011.

The choir receives no government or private sponsorship or funding. All of their funding comes from their performances - as long as there is ticket revenue or a performance fee - or from donations from the choristers themselves.<sup>74</sup> However, this does not prevent them from doing charitable work, since at the *Yule Duel Carolling Competition* itself, all the funds raised go to

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<sup>73</sup> Iván C., survey.

<sup>74</sup> Iván C., survey.

May's Place, a low-income seniors' home in Vancouver. *Los Parranderos de Vancouver* also raise funds for this campaign on their website at the time of the invitation to the competition. They did something similar at a Venezuelan Christmas Bazaar, where they encouraged attendees to donate money or food to the Vancouver Food Bank.<sup>75</sup>

Before the pandemic, the choir rehearsed once a week for two hours in a rehearsal room in Burnaby from September to December. During the pandemic, they continue to meet weekly for two hours on the same date, through videocall and with only a section of the choir.<sup>76</sup>

### *Nuestras Voces.*

Julia Clarke is a young Chilean Canadian director, who as a child had a strong musical inclination (taking piano and singing lessons) and later studied music for two years at university. The girls' choir *Nuestras Voces* was founded in Hamilton by Julia Clarke's mother in 2013. Her reasons for founding a Latin American choir - in addition to benefiting Hamilton's Latin American community - were to encourage her daughter (Julia Clarke) to participate in All Souls Church (with which the choir was associated), to socialise with peers, to develop her Spanish language skills,<sup>77</sup> and "to keep [Clarke's] Latin roots alive."<sup>78</sup> Thus, before becoming the third director of the choir, Clarke participated in the choir as a chorister for six years.<sup>79</sup>

Initially, the choir performed only at All Souls Church. However, the Asociación Fraternidad Hispana (AFH) [Fraternity Hispanic Association], shortly after it was founded, asked the choir to participate in the events they organised and later directly asked them to become part of the Association. From then on, *Nuestras Voces* performed at various events in Hamilton, even performing at City Hall of Hamilton.<sup>80</sup> However, the choir did not cease to participate in the

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<sup>75</sup> Iván C., interview.

<sup>76</sup> Iván C., survey.

<sup>77</sup> Julia Clarke, interview by Esteban Mendoza, May 29, 2021, video.

<sup>78</sup> Julia Clarke, "*Quien Canta, Sus Males Espanta: Latin American Choirs in Canada. Questionnaire for Choir Directors,*" SurveyMonkey, April 28, 2021.

<sup>79</sup> Clarke, interview.

<sup>80</sup> Clarke, survey.

various events organised by All Souls Church, such as Christmas and New Year’s concerts, among others. All concerts offered by the choir were free of charge.<sup>81</sup>

Regarding the selection of the choir members, the only requirement to join *Nuestras Voces* is to be a girl between the ages of five and fourteen years old, and to pay a small monthly fee. However, the age criteria is more or less flexible, as on some occasions there were girls who wanted to continue in the choir after they turned fifteen, and were permitted to do so.<sup>82</sup>



Figure 1.9. *Nuestras Voces*’ call for applications announcement on Facebook, 2020.<sup>83</sup>

Clarke says that one of the forms of motivation used to ensure that the girls stayed in the choir was for her to sing with the choir as well as to conduct it, so that the girls would see the

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<sup>81</sup> Clarke, interview.

<sup>82</sup> Clarke, interview.

<sup>83</sup> “AFH Hamilton (Asociacion Fraternidad Hispana),” Facebook, published January 15, 2020, <https://www.facebook.com/AsociacionFraternidadHispana/posts/2857570867608053>

conductor as part of the choir and become more confident.<sup>84</sup> This strategy, although not generally used in the choral world, may be justified because of the young ages of the girls, who probably need certain stimuli and reinforcements different from those that an adult choir would need, such as watching the conductor singing along with them as another choir member.

While Clarke was the choir director, it was she and her mother who decided on the songs to be performed. Much of the repertoire included is from Latin American folklore, but they also added some songs by modern pop artists in Spanish (such as *Gente de Zona* and Marc Anthony) and pop in English (such as Justin Timberlake).<sup>85</sup> This inclusion of popular music speaks to a search for closeness to the musical spectrum known to the choir members, which can bring many benefits, both in terms of group performance and personal enjoyment for the girls.

Prior to the pandemic, they met to rehearse once a week. During 2018, Clarke was directing the choir from Chile virtually, a modality that lasted only one year due to the limitations of a non-face-to-face rehearsal. Currently, due to the pandemic, the choir is not active, but they will probably resume their activities once the pandemic is more manageable or has been overcome.<sup>86</sup>

### ***UNAM-Canada Choir.***

The choir originated as a project of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) with the aim of promoting Mexican culture and helping students of Spanish to practice the language through Mexican and Latin American music in Canada. To select the director of the *UNAM-Canada Choir*, UNAM launched an open competition for recent graduates of the university's Faculty of Music to carry out their professional practice in Canada. From this competition, Ricardo Guzmán - a Mexican choral conductor - was the first scholarship recipient to conduct the choir in Ottawa, and did so between July 2015 and May 2016.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Clarke, interview.

<sup>85</sup> Clarke, survey.

<sup>86</sup> Clarke, interview.

<sup>87</sup> Ricardo Guzmán, "*Quien Canta, Sus Males Espanta: Latin American Choirs in Canada. Questionnaire for Choir Directors,*" SurveyMonkey, April 25, 2021.

Like the institution that supports it, one of the choir's main objectives is the dissemination of Spanish, which is why its repertoire focuses on Latin American music in this language from Mexico, Colombia, Cuba, Venezuela, Peru, among other countries.<sup>88</sup> In this way, the choir also offered the opportunity to learn Spanish for those interested non-Spanish speakers.<sup>89</sup>

In order to participate in the choir, all those interested had to pass a series of tests consisting of short listening, rhythmic and intonation exercises. And those who demonstrated greater musical aptitude were also asked to perform a song of their choice. However, Guzmán points out that this was never a discriminatory selection process. He explains, “for me as a director, inclusion is very important. Therefore, the simple fact that a person is interested in singing is enough to belong to the choir.”<sup>90</sup> So with those choristers who had more difficulties with intonation, hearing, or who had never sung in a choir before, Guzmán did a more personalised step-by-step work: he asked them to attend rehearsals first as listeners and at other times they worked alone (him with the chorister), but he never rejected an applicant because of any kind of limitation.<sup>91</sup>

Rehearsals were held at UNAM Canada, twice a week, for one and a half hours per rehearsal.<sup>92</sup> Guzmán's teaching methodology is as follows: he gives the choristers the score, sends them an audio file of the corresponding melodic line of the piece (soprano, alto, tenor or bass) made with music notation software (such as *MuseScore* or *Finale*), and sends them a choral version (if any exists) of the piece in question. With all of these resources, each chorister had to arrive for the rehearsal with the piece already studied on their own. In this process Guzmán claims to have been very consistent, requiring each chorister to fulfil his or her task. Thanks to this methodology, he believes, they were able to reach a good level.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Guzmán, survey.

<sup>89</sup> Ricardo Guzmán, interview by Esteban Mendoza, June 1, 2021, video.

<sup>90</sup> Guzmán, survey. [“Para mí como director la inclusión es muy importante. Por lo tanto, el simple hecho de una persona estar interesada en cantar, es suficiente para pertenecer al coro.”]

<sup>91</sup> Guzmán, interview.

<sup>92</sup> Guzmán, survey.

<sup>93</sup> Guzmán, interview.

While Guzmán directed the choir, they had performances at the UNAM Canada’s Multipurpose Hall (figure 1.10) and Sor Juana Inés De la Cruz Hall; the Festival Latino; Ottawa City Hall; the Maison du Citoyen Gatineau (Quebec); and Carleton University.<sup>94</sup>



Figure 1.10. *UNAM-Canada Choir’s* concert poster: “Anniversary Concert.”

Guzmán points out that it is UNAM that is responsible for underwriting the financial expenses of the choir, sending funds from Mexico.<sup>95</sup> Therefore, both membership in the choir and the concerts performed by the choir were free of charge. At the same time, the venues where the concerts were held were generally provided by the mayor’s office or governmental authorities.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Guzmán, survey.

<sup>95</sup> Guzmán, survey.

<sup>96</sup> Guzmán, interview.



## *Viene Sonando.*

*Viene Sonando* is a choir located in Vancouver and directed by Marianella Ramos, a Venezuelan pianist and choral conductor,<sup>97</sup> who says that,

Previous to *Viene Sonando*, there was a Latin American choir called *Fusión Latina*, founded and directed by Fabiana Katz at first. I was a member of the choir for two years until I first went back to Venezuela. The choir dissolved and some members wanted to continue singing and honouring Latin-American culture in Canada. They asked me if I could organise and direct the group. That is how in 2015 we decided to fund *Viene Sonando*.<sup>98</sup>

This is how this choir was born as a “more informal” version of *Fusión Latina*. From the beginning they decided to cover - in addition to Latin American and traditional songs mostly in Spanish - more popular repertoire linked to Latin rock and pop, as well as Anglophone repertoire (for example, songs by the Jamaican Bob Marley). Also, although the group chose Ramos as director because she has the best musical training and experience, they established that all the members would have a leading role in the choice of repertoire.<sup>99</sup>

Ramos points out that she decided to found and direct the choir “because I thought it was a good way to contribute to the community through art. Singing in a choir it is much more than just singing: it is belonging to a community, sharing your culture, healing, among many other things. I wanted to share all those benefits.”<sup>100</sup> On the one hand, this director stresses the importance of inserting oneself into the local community through choral activity; on the other hand, she highlights the positive side effects of participating in a choir, such as the reaffirmation of a sense of belonging and the opportunity to share one’s own culture with others.

There is no selection process to join the *Viene Sonando*. It only requires “the willingness to learn, share, enjoy, and be part of the community.”<sup>101</sup> In addition, choir members do not have to pay any kind of registration or monthly fee to participate. In this way, in the choir there have been participants from other regions besides Latin America, such as Indonesia, Iran, and Canada.

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<sup>97</sup> Marianella Ramos, interview by Esteban Mendoza, June 9, 2021, video.

<sup>98</sup> Marianella Ramos, “*Quien Canta, Sus Males Espanta*: Latin American Choirs in Canada. Questionnaire for Choir Directors,” SurveyMonkey, June 3, 2021.

<sup>99</sup> Ramos, interview.

<sup>100</sup> Ramos, survey.

<sup>101</sup> Ramos, survey.

These choristers, not being Spanish speakers, dedicated more time to personal practice, due to the difficulty of not singing in their native language. Moreover, their participation in the choir was seen as a means of practising Spanish, strongly supported by the group, as they would explain the meaning of certain expressions, or help them with pronunciation, for instance. However, the choir is currently made up only of Latin American members: those from the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Peru, Venezuela, and Mexico. In addition, at the beginning the choir included both men and women, but over time the men left the choir, leaving only women in the end.<sup>102</sup>

Some of *Viene Sonando*'s concerts have been in festivals, in seniors' homes, at different community events (charity, farmers' markets, etc.), and community centres, among others.<sup>103</sup> In these concerts, they have generally charged admission by donation, the funds of which go to these same aid centres. In private concerts or concerts they have organised themselves, the funds they received from the ticket sales were also donated to charity, even though the choir does not receive money from any organisation to cover its own operational expenses.<sup>104</sup> Figure 1.11 is a reproduction of a playbill in which one of the charity concerts performed by the choir is announced.

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<sup>102</sup> Ramos, interview.

<sup>103</sup> Ramos, survey.

<sup>104</sup> Ramos, interview.



Figure 1.11. *Viene Sonando*’s concert flyer: “Viva la Música Spring Concert.”

Although the choir has been downsizing over the years, Ramos is quite happy with the current group’s commitment during the pandemic, as they have been meeting faithfully every Tuesday in a virtual environment since March 2020. However, she says that this format has

given her the opportunity to “reinvent and be creative with rehearsals,”<sup>105</sup> so she has improvised a setting in which,

I give the vocal recordings and I ask the singers to sing individually, but on top of one of the voices. Or I record just two voices and I ask one to sing over the two voices, and so on... so that they have an idea of what it’s like to sing in a group. I also take the voices alternately. In other words, I sing the voice and they repeat it, and I alternate the person who represents the first voice and the rest put their microphone on mute and sing the other voice... and that’s how it’s worked.<sup>106</sup>

Another methodology she uses is to record a guitar or *cuatro* track, so that the choristers can sing over that harmonic base.<sup>107</sup>

Since the “virtual life” began, they have only dedicated themselves to rehearsing, so they have not recorded a work entirely “virtually,” since, on the one hand, it is something that requires a lot of technical knowledge that Ramos says she does not have – in terms of recording, editing, production, etc. – and on the other hand, it requires a lot of time. In addition, she points out that the choir also needs to have a very high technical level, since in a recording it is more feasible for the listener to hear the mistakes or shortcomings, as somebody can listen to it many times. That is why she states: “I wouldn’t want to put anything on air that isn’t up to the standard it should be.”<sup>108</sup> In a face-to-face manner, she adds, other elements are also at play, such as spontaneity, staging, and the energy that is transmitted, so a choir is allowed to take some licences.<sup>109</sup> In other words, Ramos considers that the live in-person performance (as opposed to recording), goes beyond sound perfection alone, as here, too, other performative elements are important, such as the gestures of the choristers, the direction of the conductor, or the staging.

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<sup>105</sup> Ramos, interview. [“reinventar y ser creativa con los ensayos.”]

<sup>106</sup> Ramos, interview. [“Doy las grabaciones de las voces y pongo a cantar a las coristas individualmente, pero encima de alguna de las voces. O grabo nada más dos voces y pongo a una a cantar sobre las dos voces, y así... como para que tengan una idea de cómo es cantar en grupo. También saco las voces alternadamente. O sea, yo canto la voz y ellas la repiten, y voy alternando a la persona que representa la primera voz y resto ponen su micrófono en silencio y canta la otra voz... y así como que ha funcionado.”]

<sup>107</sup> Ramos, interview.

<sup>108</sup> Ramos, interview. [“No me gustaría sacar nada al aire que no esté al nivel que debería ser.”]

<sup>109</sup> Ramos, interview.

Viewers can therefore appreciate a choral performance as a whole, valuing all the areas addressed in the performance and not only the sonic aspect.

When the restrictions caused by the pandemic are ended, Ramos hopes to organise a big concert involving different musical genres, with different choirs and instrumental groups, and to raise funds to donate to a non-profit organisation.<sup>110</sup>

To conclude this chapter, it can be said that in this brief journey through the history of each of these eight Latin American choirs, we have learned about their origins and some of the basic aspects of their development in Canada. From this, we can highlight the motivations of both the choristers and the directors in founding the respective choirs, which in general have in common the preservation of the Latin American cultural tradition and the creation of a meeting place among Latin Americans where a sense of belonging is forged. For the same reason, all the choirs unanimously agree on the almost indiscriminate acceptance of practically all applicants to the choir. That is to say, none of the choirs makes a strict selection of those who wish to join their ranks, but on the contrary, they all declare themselves to be “open to the community.” Moreover, this openness is also demonstrated by the fact that all the concerts they perform are free or at very low cost, precisely in order to favour the access of the entire (Canadian, Latin American and others) community to their performances.

Another area to highlight is the different ways in which each choir maintains itself in economic terms; while some of them have (or had) the good fortune to be supported by institutions or organisations, others have managed to obtain funds to cover their operating expenses on their own. Moreover, in the case of *Cantares Latin Choir*, they managed to form an organisation legally in order to access grants from the Canadian government. This shows that, although every choir needs to have a certain amount of funds for its subsistence, Latin American choirs in Canada have been able to opt for three different ways of achieving this: belonging to existing institutions; being self-maintained; or becoming an institution.

Finally, it is striking how the various teaching methodologies applied by each of the choirs differ in certain details, and especially with respect to the use of technology. As we have

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<sup>110</sup> Ramos, interview.

seen, the use of this medium has increased during the pandemic, leaving all the choirs with no choice but to adapt to virtual rehearsals and performances, although unfortunately in some cases, certain choirs have not been able to adapt completely, subsisting partially or simply halting their performances until further notice. In any case, seven of the eight choirs surveyed (all but *Fusión Latina*) plan to continue their performances once the health restrictions caused by the pandemic are lifted, which is undoubtedly good news for Latin American choral music.

## CHAPTER 2

### **Latin American Choirs as Communities that Maintain and Shape Identity.**

Deborah Bradley states that choral activity is related to society, traditions, cultures, and identity.<sup>1</sup> However, the Latin American choristers' search for their Latin American identity must constantly coexist with their awareness of being in a part of the world (Canada) other than their countries of origin. This is a dilemma that, according to Gloria Rodríguez, Latin American immigrants in Canada must face when they find themselves "in-between" two nations, in a "space in which they are constantly re-creating their identities due to the self-learning experience of living abroad,"<sup>2</sup> and which can lead to the feeling of not belonging anywhere. With this aim of re-creating their identities, Latin American choirs feel the obligation of constantly evading what Bradley calls musical Eurocentrism.<sup>3</sup> And although for these choirs this task is made easier by the fact that their mission is to perform non-European (but rather Latin American) repertoire, Bradley admits that the process to evade the Eurocentrism is not easy, because, to begin with, the term "choir" is European.<sup>4</sup> It is also necessary to remember that Canadian culture, having a strong European basis, also has a Eurocentric musical tradition (and vision).<sup>5</sup> This is why the sense of belonging of Latin American choristers must be frequently reaffirmed in their corresponding choral communities thanks to the commitment they make: to acquire the strength and tools necessary to re-create their identities by evading Eurocentrism. This is why Latin American choirs in Canada have become a "survival tool," as they function as a community that welcomes those Latin Americans who seek their original identity in Canada, being far from their country of birth.

In this chapter I examine how Latin American choirs in Canada function as communities that maintain and shape identity. I understand Latin American identity as that which refers to the

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<sup>1</sup> Bradley, "Global Song, Global Citizens?"

<sup>2</sup> Rodríguez, "Personal A/R/Tographic Narratives of Cultural Displacement," 18.

<sup>3</sup> Bradley, "Global Song, Global Citizens?," 12.

<sup>4</sup> Bradley, "Global Song, Global Citizens?," 13.

<sup>5</sup> Bradley, "Global Song, Global Citizens?," 62-64.

ethnic, political, and cultural roots originating in Latin American territory, which in turn has its origins mainly in the mixture of Indigenous, European and African cultures that took place in those lands. The search for Latin American identity carried out by Latin American immigrants around the world is the need to retake these roots in order to remember their own origins: who am I, where do I come from, who are my ancestors, what are my traditions? These choirs fulfill these functions primarily by promoting the idea of the choir and its activity as an identity-affirming “survival tool,”<sup>6</sup> promoting social cohesion and a sense of common experience, transmitting “latinity” to non-Latin American choristers, and fortifying the relationship with the Latin American community outside the choirs. In the choirs studied, there have been several situations in which the desire for identity reaffirmation and preservation of the Latin American community is evident. These have occurred through the choral activity itself, or through external actions directly or indirectly related to the choirs’ tasks. This would certainly not be the first case of immigrant choirs in Canada striving for similar motivations from the moment of their formation, as choirs such as the Ukrainian ones have also endeavored to maintain their cultural traditions both through the performance of their repertoire and in their functioning in general.<sup>7</sup>

As we shall see, the social function of these choirs is that they are addressed as meeting points and community choirs that use the choral activity as a “survival tool.” In turn, these choirs demand a commitment from their members - who are “in-between” two nations - in order to provide them a sense of belonging (a place to say “me”). In this way, thanks to this commitment, these choirs function as communities in which all members share a common identity and seek to maintain this identity although they are in Canada, far from their country of birth.

An example of how the commitment of choristers fosters a sense of community is given in *Canto Vivo*, as Sergio Pires, its director, tells us that although his choir has some very skilled singers, he admits that it is not a professional choir, but rather a “community choir” in which the “community spirit is very high.”<sup>8</sup> In *Canto Vivo*, people feel first and foremost part of a community and at the same time, they are certain that they represent the Latin American

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<sup>6</sup> Diamond, “What's the Difference?,” 71.

<sup>7</sup> Pritz, “Ukrainian Cultural Traditions in Canada.”

<sup>8</sup> Pires, interview.



community in Vancouver. A sense of belonging has been forged through the cultural identification that has taken place. And throughout its four years of operation, the VLACC (*Canto Vivo*'s home institution) has recognised this effort by constantly supporting the choir.<sup>9</sup>

Another example can be found in *Ágora Ibero American Choir*, as its director, Valeska Cabrera, tells us that the call to participate in her choir was answered by people with no musical experience whatsoever, motivated in large part by meeting Latin American people and being able to speak in Spanish. As a result, she had to face the challenge of teaching the basics of choral singing to people with no other tools than the intrinsic motivation to make Latin American art and to socialise with other Latin American people. However, she says that the choir “has a very important community component.” It is a place where people come together and share, building a community, from which “something beautiful” can be created. According to her, in this choir “people come more to get together and talk with their peers, even more than for singing (although they love to sing).”<sup>10</sup> We see here how the preservation of a community is directly linked to a sense of identity: the choristers come together to perform a common task (performing music originating from their respective countries) and to socialise (sharing on common themes), so that together they (re)construct a sense of identity that may have been disrupted for various reasons, such as the prolonged time they have been away from their country of origin or the lack of contact with other Latin Americans.

Ricardo Guzmán, former director of the *UNAM Canada Choir*, tells a similar story:

A lot of the people who went to the choir were there to socialise. The choir and UNAM definitely function as a meeting point to get to know people, to socialise. So, we also had that role as a choir. [...] People see UNAM as a little Mexico because they know part of what we are. And their curiosity is so great that many decide to come because of the contact there in that small place.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Pires, interview.

<sup>10</sup> Cabrera, interview. [“tiene un componente comunitario muy importante.”]; [“algo bello.”]; [“la gente viene más para juntarse y conversar con sus pares, incluso más que por cantar (aunque les encanta cantar).”]

<sup>11</sup> Guzmán, interview. [“Mucha de la gente que iba al coro era para socializar. Definitivamente el coro y la UNAM funcionan como punto de encuentro para conocer personas, para socializar. Entonces, teníamos también ese rol como coro. [...] La gente ve a la UNAM como un pequeño México porque conocen parte de lo que nosotros somos. Y tanta es su curiosidad que muchos deciden venir por el contacto que hay ahí en ese pequeño lugar.”]

Here, Guzmán adds an important element to what Cabrera has already mentioned: one of the roles of the choir is to set itself up as a “meeting point” and socialisation. Therefore, it begins to glimpse an objective outside the purely musical sphere that one would expect a choir to fulfil. Moreover, if we consider the other idea added by Guzmán, that a choir can function as an embassy (or “little Mexico,” as he puts it) in order to fulfil the social role just mentioned, the idea of the search for identity that a choir can have in this context is reinforced.

This sense of community was also present in *Fusión Latina*. Its former director, Fabiana Katz, mentions that it was tremendously positive to “get together weekly and make our music, which gives you a sense of community and a certain kind of culture, of our culture, of art... we had a lot of fun for a long time.”<sup>12</sup> These instances even served to introduce Katz to many other works from the Latin American repertoire with which she was previously unfamiliar. With this assertion, Katz touches on a crucial point regarding the meaning of participating in a Latin American community. That is to say, in this community it is possible for a fruitful cultural exchange to take place in which someone who has been away from their country of origin for many years (as is the case with Katz herself) has the opportunity to get to know new Latin American repertoire that they might not otherwise have known. The community thus becomes a source of culture.

However, the attempt to “make community” can have consequences when the focus of the common goal is lost. For some members of *Fusión Latina*, the eagerness to meet weekly with Latin Americans living in similar situations in the same Canadian context was such that they sometimes forgot what it was that brought them together. They sometimes devoted more time to socialising than to focusing on rehearsing and practising the repertoire on which they were supposed to be working. According to Katz, the lack of attention and attitude towards disciplined choral activity was the reason that the choir was unable to go beyond being a meeting place and to endure for more years.<sup>13</sup>

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UNAM has branches in different countries that function as cultural extensions. According to Guzmán, the one in Ottawa functions as a kind of embassy of the university.

<sup>12</sup> Katz, interview. [“juntarse semanalmente y hacer nuestra música, que te da una sensación de comunidad y cierto tipo de cultura, de nuestra cultura, del arte... nos divertimos mucho por mucho tiempo.”]

<sup>13</sup> Katz, interview.

The sense of community has also been enhanced by other factors. Luisa Veronis states that thanks to the introduction of the official multiculturalism policy during the 1970s, it was possible for immigrant communities to appropriate different spaces (real or imaginary) in order to produce a collective identity and establish a sense of belonging.<sup>14</sup> She emphasizes that, “[a]lthough still based on essentializing stereotyping of ethnic and immigrant groups, ethnic settlements began to be portrayed in a positive light as emblems celebrating Canada’s diversity.”<sup>15</sup> According to this scholar, it is possible to establish that the multiculturalist policy and its implementation have favoured the rooting of Latin American communities in Canadian lands. This fact can be corroborated by the interviews conducted with the directors, who, at least in their experience, mention having developed a sense of belonging in their Latin American community (their choirs) in the respective Canadian cities where they are based. Veronis herself points out that under multiculturalist policies, the cultural activities carried out by immigrants “are now strategically used by visible minorities to make their voices heard: ethnic festivals have become political stages where groups make claims to belonging.”<sup>16</sup> For instance, she refers to the *Canadian Hispanic Day Parade* as:

a multicultural event celebrating Latin Americans’ diverse cultures and identities, but with the goal to promote a sense of community. Latin Americans use multiculturalism to overcome internal group tensions and to mobilize for a greater engagement in their struggle for belonging. In this process, they reaffirm the presence of a Latin American identity and community in Toronto.<sup>17</sup>

Although this is a different event from the activity carried out by Latin American choirs in Canada, I believe that they share a fundamental similarity: they both promote a sense of community to reaffirm their identity.

As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, Beverley Diamond states that, even though Canadian multiculturalism is approached through the lens of a “mosaic effect,” she

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<sup>14</sup> Luisa Veronis, “Strategic Spatial Essentialism: Latin Americans’ Real and Imagined Geographies of Belonging in Toronto,” *Social & Cultural Geography* Vol. 8, No. 3 (June 2007): 463.

<sup>15</sup> Veronis, “Strategic Spatial Essentialism,” 463.

<sup>16</sup> Luisa Veronis, “The Canadian Hispanic Day Parade, or How Latin American Immigrants Practise (Sub)urban Citizenship in Toronto,” *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 38, no. 9 (September 2006): 1658.

<sup>17</sup> Veronis, “The Canadian Hispanic Day Parade,” 1664.

believes that ethnic minorities are sometimes at a disadvantage under the concepts of “diversity” and “multiculturalism,” as these concepts are often poorly applied and addressed in a horizontal, abstract manner.<sup>18</sup> Diamond points out that the appropriate way to deal with the “mosaic effect” is to acknowledge that each community has its own particularities that need to be appreciated individually, as many of them use their music to fulfil important roles, such as being a “survival tool,”<sup>19</sup> for instance. This survival tool (choral music in this case) can be understood as a resource that can be used to keep a tradition alive, and that helps to maintain and shape the identity of individuals and the community. For this reason, Diamond proposes that it is necessary to change the discourse that neutralizes different musics in Canada.<sup>20</sup> Diamond’s comments bear a certain similarity to the vision of ineffective multiculturalism put forward by Bradley, who believes that many choirs are thought of as a “white space” that encourages the creation of “good citizens.”<sup>21</sup> In other words, this latter way of looking at choirs is nothing more than a reaffirmation of the Eurocentrism present in certain choral circles that are not capable of dealing with multiculturalism in a well-understood way. Informed by Diamond’s and Bradley’s works, it is consistent to assert that Latin American choral music has its own features that demand to be specifically addressed and that Latin American choristers in Canada use their choral activity and the choir itself as a “survival tool,” in that it generates or reaffirms their identity. Just as Brígido Galván asserts that Cuban musicians in Toronto were able to develop new strategies of self-representation - because the “diasporic communities contribute to the forging of emergent concepts of citizenship and nationhood based on diversity and multiculturalism as exemplified by Canada”<sup>22</sup> - I believe that Latin American choirs have also been able to take advantage of Canadian multiculturalism, which the directors describe as a cultural “openness.” At the same time, it is necessary to consider that, as Deborah Pacini states, in order to maintain or reaffirm a sense of identity it is not necessary to be embedded in or dependent on the local mainstream. Therefore, “[c]ommunities and individuals must decide for themselves when and where it is

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<sup>18</sup> Diamond, “What’s the Difference?,” 69.

<sup>19</sup> Diamond, “What’s the Difference?,” 71.

<sup>20</sup> Diamond, “What’s the Difference?,” 75.

<sup>21</sup> Bradley, “The Inclusion Conundrum,” 15. This is related as well with events such as the Jesuits in Canada teaching European music to First Nation People as a way of achieving “moral progress,” associations that were also applied in some way to immigrants of the prairies. Diamond, “What’s the Difference?,” 59.

<sup>22</sup> Galván, “Arranging Hybridity,” 324.

appropriate to participate and when and where it makes more sense to withdraw and resist.”<sup>23</sup> This is how Latin American choirs stand as an alternative to the parameters of a choral “white space” that promotes the emergence of “good citizens.” On the contrary, these choirs are strongly dedicated to establishing and strengthening their ties with the Latin American community, contributing to the preservation of their identity.

This way of understanding the choir and its activity as an identity-affirming “survival tool” is partly what Marianella Ramos (as director) is looking for with *Viene Sonando*, as she states that her choir plays a role in reaffirming identity in that it contributes to not forgetting one’s own music and language. She notes that in the case of most choristers, who speak English all day in their jobs, the opportunity to sing in Spanish in the choir is “like when you take off a tight pair of trousers,” because it is like “being you again. You’re one person when you speak one language and you’re another when you speak another. You show another personality when you speak in your language,” which is when authenticity and spontaneity emerge.<sup>24</sup> Ramos adds here a much deeper element, in addition to those addressed, in terms of the shaping of identity: connection to authentic personal identity. That is to say, participating in a Latin American choir goes beyond the action of singing in a particular language and approaching the music of a particular culture, but this action is directly related to your way of being, to your way of behaving in the world and to your way of being “me” in whatever context. It is in this way that for *Viene Sonando* - and all the other choirs concerned - choral activity becomes not only a source of culture, but also a “survival tool.”

The connection to authentic personal identity, i.e., the reaffirmation of personal identity in relation to the community to which one wants to belong, is fundamental to the successful development of a sense of belonging to the community. In this research I have observed how

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<sup>23</sup> Pacini, *Oye Como Va!*, 53.

<sup>24</sup> Ramos, interview. [“como cuando te quitas un pantalón que te aprieta.”]; [“ser tú. Eres una persona cuando hablas un idioma y eres otra, cuando hablas otro. Muestras otra personalidad cuando hablas en tu idioma.”]

Similarly, one of the conclusions drawn by Gloria Rodríguez from the testimony of three members of the *Fusión Latina* choir is that “[b]eing a member of the choir has helped participants to re-connect with their culture. In a unique family environment, participants are free to speak their native language (Spanish) and act according to their culture, tease each other, laugh and dance. Additionally, the choir allows them to share their Latin heritage with others.” Rodríguez, “Personal A/R/Tographic Narratives of Cultural Displacement,” 62-63.

representation of the individual identities of the choristers is approached as a “bridge” to their countries of origin, and that repertoire selection relating to these countries is key for each of the choristers to feel represented. This is achieved by those conductors who try to select varied repertoire from different nations in order to perform works from the countries of origin of each of their choristers. It is in this way, as we will see in the examples below, that the choirs themselves become bridges for both the choir members and the conductors. This bridge is another aspect of the choir functioning as a survival tool, in that it becomes a useful resource for reaffirming personal and community identity.

According to Juan Sosa, director of the *Cantares Latin Choir*, in his choir there has been not only a good cohesion among its members, but also “a very big sense of family [...] and a sense of community.”<sup>25</sup> Likewise, Norka Marcano, assistant director of the same choir, explains that although the choir was initially called *Cantares Venezuelan Choir*, it later changed its name to *Cantares Latin Choir* - evidencing an opening towards the rest of Latin America (although the emphasis remains on Venezuelan music, for the simple reason that most of the members are originally from that country). According to her, this reflects a reaffirmation of identity, as the choristers see the choir “as a bridge, a connection that is needed when one is far away [from one’s country].”<sup>26</sup> Marcano points out that in *Cantares Latin Choir* they have placed emphasis on two fundamental points related to the quality of the choir’s performance: the learning of the choristers (attending workshops, for instance) and being faithful in the interpretation of the repertoire, where the important thing is not only to show one’s own culture through choral singing, but also to have the opportunity to perform “something that connects one to one’s country.”<sup>27</sup>

Sergio Pires has tried to forge this same “bridge,” although he acknowledges that it has been a great challenge for him to try to encompass a diverse repertoire, due to the wide variety of musical genres that exist throughout Latin America. Representing each of the nationalities of the choristers through the selection of “original genres from each country, [...] like Samba in Brazil,

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<sup>25</sup> Sosa and Markano, interview. [“un sentido de familia muy grande [...] y un sentido de comunidad.”]

<sup>26</sup> Sosa and Markano, interview. [“como un puente, una conexión que hace falta cuando uno está lejos [de su país].”]

<sup>27</sup> Sosa and Markano, interview. [“algo que lo conectara a uno con su país.”]

or Tango in Argentina”<sup>28</sup> has been a constant search to achieve a balance for Pires. In the same way, Ricardo Guzmán says that by having choristers from different parts of Latin America, every time they performed works from a particular country, the choristers from that country felt a strong identification with the music.<sup>29</sup> Valeska Cabrera has the same intention of selecting the music to be performed in such a way that the nationalities of all her choristers are represented. Thus, she states that the choristers feel welcome and “tell their experiences and memories in relation to this music.”<sup>30</sup> We can thus summarise that the challenge taken up by Pires, Guzmán and Cabrera has been to find a balance in the musical genres from different countries in their repertoire, so that each member of their choirs (who are of different nationalities) feel represented. This search for identity reaffirmation is not different from that alluded to by Norka Markano, in terms of the vision of the choir as a “bridge” that brings cultural expression to a chorister who is far from the origin of that expression. In other words, this bridge successfully fulfils the function of a survival tool, in the sense that by keeping a tradition alive, the ties to the roots that forge individual and community identity are kept alive as well.

The community forged in these choirs also embraces a larger Latin American identity, rather than the specific nationality of each choir member. Thus, it is intended to foster a sense of common experience. One such situation has occurred in the *Ágora Ibero-American Choir*. As mentioned in chapter one, the choir was about to prepare a concert for social justice that could not take place due to the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic. The idea for this project came after the social explosion in Chile in October 2019, while the choir was preparing a Christmas concert to be performed at the Spanish Centre in Toronto.<sup>31</sup> Valeska Cabrera explains:

Suddenly the social explosion happens, and I feel totally asynchronous with the situation. I mean, I said ‘what are we doing singing this if this is happening;’ and we really need to do something; at least we need to express ourselves. We are not going to change the situation that is happening in Chile, but at least we can say something through music; say a message through a concert, something that is powerful. So, I didn’t feel comfortable. Still, we took the Christmas songs project to the end and did the performances. But then the idea started that the next topic for a concert was going to be social justice, thinking

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<sup>28</sup> Pires, interview.

<sup>29</sup> Guzmán, interview.

Guzmán also mentions that in the *UNAM Canada Choir* there were also choristers from other non-Latin American nationalities such as Canada, Spain and India.

<sup>30</sup> Cabrera, interview. [“cuentan sus experiencias y recuerdos en relación a esta música.”]

<sup>31</sup> Cabrera, interview.

about the case of Chile. But since there are also many other Latin American [members in the choir], they could relate it to their own reality, or show solidarity with what was happening to us Chileans.<sup>32</sup>

The search for synchronicity that Cabrera alludes to in two areas is interesting. In the first, she says she feels “uncomfortable” because the repertoire she is preparing with the choir at a given moment is not in tune with the exceptional reality her native country (and also that of some of the choir members) was experiencing. Despite being thousands of kilometres away, she was not content to be preparing Christmas repertoire when extreme violence was occurring in Chile due to legitimate social demands. Thus, she felt that their music must be in accordance with what was happening in Latin America, at least in order to transmit a message. In the second area, Cabrera intended to use the voice of the choir as a call for social justice for the sake of a particular country (Chile), so that non-Chilean choir members could empathise with what was happening in that country. At the same time, the concert would address situations of injustice experienced by other Latin American nations. In this way, Cabrera began to compile repertoire for a concert on social justice to be performed in May 2020, which was intended as a starting point for a larger project to be developed later: a concert with a symphony orchestra of works by Víctor Jara;<sup>33</sup> something like “Víctor Jara Symphonic (for choir and orchestra).” She explains, “that tiny presentation in May actually had a longer tail which was that other project, which if it had worked out, we would have done in October or November 2020.”<sup>34</sup> For this big project, Cabrera

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<sup>32</sup> Cabrera, interview. [“De repente sucede lo del estallido social y yo me siento totalmente asincrónica con la situación. O sea, digo ‘¿qué estamos haciendo cantado esto si está pasando esto otro?’; y en realidad necesitamos hacer algo; por último necesitamos expresarnos. No vamos a cambiar la situación que está pasando en Chile, pero por lo menos podemos decir algo a través de la música; decir un mensaje a través de un concierto, algo que sea potente. Entonces, no me sentí cómoda. Igualmente, llevamos el proyecto de las canciones de navidad hasta el final e hicimos las presentaciones. Pero ahí empezó la idea de que el siguiente temario para concierto iba a ser la justicia social pensando en el caso de Chile. Pero como también hay muchos otros [integrantes] latinoamericanos [en el coro], éstos podrían relacionarlo con su propia realidad, o solidarizar con lo que nos estaba pasando a los chilenos.”]

<sup>33</sup> Víctor Jara was one of the most representative Chilean singer-songwriters of the social and protest songs of the 1960s and 70s, and one of the most important in Latin American music. See: Gabriel San Román, “*Venceremos: Víctor Jara and the New Chilean Song Movement*, (Oakland: PM Press, 2014).

<sup>34</sup> Cabrera, interview. [“esa presentación pequeñita de mayo tenía en realidad una cola más larga que era ese otro proyecto, que de haber resultado, lo habríamos hecho en octubre o noviembre de 2020.”]



got an orchestra in Toronto to play for free, but to no avail as it was all ultimately cancelled with the arrival of the pandemic.<sup>35</sup>

The aforementioned issues relate to a previous study carried out by Lee Willingham and Debbie Ludolph with a group of choristers who participated in the choral event *Sing Fires of Justice*.<sup>36</sup> This research shows that the aspect of justice is powerful in that “[it] would give deeper purpose in bringing choristers together.”<sup>37</sup> The results of their study show that the vast majority of the choristers surveyed believe that music is an effective way to address social justice issues and that it is capable of bringing about the social changes demanded.<sup>38</sup> This seems to have been Cabrera’s intention, since, on the one hand, she wanted to take advantage of the convening power that social causes have in a choir, but, on the other hand - perhaps also being aware of the power that music has to address social demands - she appealed to the empathy of the non-Chilean choristers to become part of the cause, making this not just a Chilean problem, but a greater Latin American issue. As we see, the choirs search for a common experience as a way of forging Latin American identity in its broadest spectrum.

The importance given by these choirs to the preservation of Latin American identity is also expressed in the need to transmit their “latinity” to non-Latin American choristers. This is reflected in how these choirs have adopted non-Latin American choristers into their choral community. Thus, choirs become not only a place where the non-Latin American choir members can improve their Spanish, but can also “find their Latinity.” To understand this last concept, it is necessary to refer to the testimony of Marianella Ramos, who explains that the community role that *Viene Sonando* fulfils,

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<sup>35</sup> Cabrera, interview.

<sup>36</sup> *Sing Fires of Justice* is an annual multicultural choral event that in 2013 focused on the case of the “Stolen Sisters,” a group of more than 600 murdered or missing aboriginal women in Canada. The choristers interviewed by Willingham and Ludolph were university students and choristers from churches of different faiths who participated in the event. The aim of *Sing Fires of Justice* is to bring situations of injustice to light and address them as an opportunity to rescue such basic values as peace and justice through choral singing. Lee Willingham, and Debbie Ludolph. “Sing Fires of Justice: Exploring the Impact of a Community-based Music and Social Justice Tradition.” *The Phenomenon of Singing* Vol. 8 (January 2014): 62.

<sup>37</sup> Willingham and Ludolph. “Sing Fires of Justice,” 67.

<sup>38</sup> Willingham and Ludolph, “Sing Fires of Justice,” 64.

Is to offer a place to socialise with people who are very similar to you, even if they are not Latin, because the foreigner from Indonesia, from the U.S. who comes to sing in the choir becomes a little Latinised and comes looking for that Latin part; that's the attraction. So, the music ends up being an excuse to make community and to have your community.<sup>39</sup>

In addition, she points out that, because the choir is open to accepting members without musical skills, it offers “a space to share and learn,” for both the Latin American and non-Latin American community. “Learning not only music, but also learning what Latinity is; learning a little bit of history from every lyric, every rhythm.”<sup>40</sup> Ramos's consideration of non-Latin American choristers is interesting because of the approach she offers: their incorporation into the choir responds to a search for Latinity; of wanting to share in what it means to be Latin American, so that the choral activity ends up becoming an “excuse” to participate in this Latin American community.

In the case of the *UNAM Canada Choir*, Ricardo Guzmán tells an interesting anecdote about those non-Latin American members (some of them Canadians) who participated in the choir:

That people who doesn't speak any Spanish are suddenly singing in Spanish is one of the things that stuck with me. The human voice is the main instrument of people and is our means of communication. So, to be able to express, to be able to raise your voice together, is one of the things that has the most impact in a choir.<sup>41</sup>

Another situation Guzmán refers to is that, when he and his choir decided to include body movements in their performance,<sup>42</sup> some non-Latin American choristers felt ashamed of having

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<sup>39</sup> Ramos, interview. [“es ofrecer un lugar para socializar con gente que es muy parecida a ti, así no sea latino, porque el extranjero de Indonesia, de EE. UU. que viene a cantar al coro se latiniza un poco y viene buscando esa parte latina; esa es la atracción. Entonces, la música termina siendo una excusa para hacer comunidad y tener tu comunidad.”]

<sup>40</sup> Ramos, interview. [“como un espacio para compartir y aprender.”]; [“Aprender no solo música, sino también aprender qué es la latinidad; aprender un poco de la historia a partir de cada letra, cada ritmo.”]

<sup>41</sup> Guzmán, interview. [“Que la gente que no habla nada de español, de repente ya esté cantando en español es una de las cosas que me quedó muy grabada. La voz humana es el instrumento principal de las personas y es nuestro medio de comunicación. Entonces, el poder expresar, el poder levantar la voz unidamente, es una de las cosas que tienen más impacto en un coro.”]

<sup>42</sup> The inclusion of choreography and body movements by choirs will be discussed in greater depth in chapter four.

to join in this practice, so the Latin American choristers took it upon themselves to “contagiarlos” and to convince them to perform the proposed body movements.<sup>43</sup> These two cases are similar to the one reported by Ramos in that they also evidence a transfer of “latinity.” In the first case, Guzmán is struck by the ease with which a chorister who does not speak Spanish can sing in that language without any problems. In the second case, Guzmán refers to the transmission – of what I call “latinity” - as a “contagion.” Again, it is possible to observe that the non-Latin choristers are not only part of these choirs to perform Latin American repertoire, but also to acquire part of this culture in a more holistic sense. In turn, having the mission of transmitting their “Latinness,” Latin American choristers are challenged to return to their roots and thus to reaffirm their own identity.

Another way for Latin American choirs to encourage social cohesion and a sense of common experience in order to fortify their community in Canada is through the connections among some of the choirs. These links are happy extensions of the sense of community that each choir forges internally. Specifically, I refer to the relationships between Latin American choirs in Vancouver, as some of the members of *Fusión Latina*, *Los Parranderos de Vancouver*, *Viene Sonando* and *Canto Vivo* have participated or participate in more than one of these choirs. For instance, when *Fusión Latina* disbanded in 2014, some choristers joined *Canto Vivo*, others joined *Viene Sonando*, and others joined *Los Parranderos de Vancouver*.<sup>44</sup> In fact, when reviewing the videos of the performances of these choirs, it is possible to observe that some faces appear in some of the concerts of *Los Parranderos de Vancouver* and *Fusión Latina* during the same year. That is to say, some choristers participated in both choirs simultaneously. This phenomenon is a happy sign of the preservation of community ties between Latin American choirs. There is a spirit of collaboration between the choirs, which at no time has shown any

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<sup>43</sup> Guzmán, interview.

<sup>44</sup> Ramos, interview; Pires, interview.

In his interview, Pires tells an interesting anecdote in this regard: in 2009, when Fabiana Katz was leaving *Fusión Latina*, Pires participated in the interview and test rehearsal that the choir was conducting to hire a new conductor. That day, Pires woke up hoarse, so he could not perform well and could not be hired. In any case, *Fusión Latina* was looking for a conductor fluent in Spanish, so they finally hired an Argentinian conductor. However, in 2014 the choir ended, which gave Pires extra motivation to create his own choir.

signs of rivalry or of a competitive relationship. Additionally, this suggests that the identification of the choristers with the larger Latin American choral community is in good health.

This sense of community is also capable of reaching Latin American communities outside of the choirs. That is to say, the reaffirmation of identity can also reach the Latin American audience and the Latin American cultural institutions or organisations that support these choirs. This is precisely what Fabiana Katz explains, as for her, *Fusión Latina* “was a way to connect with our people, with our culture, to maintain a link, to meet more people, to open the links, to share and learn our music, not only for ourselves, but to bring it to the community,”<sup>45</sup> through performances at senior citizens’ homes, Christmas events and community centres. For instance, on two occasions the choir went to perform at a Latin American seniors’ club meeting at a community centre. Katz explains, “for seniors here in Canada, who have left their families, who have left their lives in Latin countries, it was very important to have access to that music.”<sup>46</sup> For her, in these kinds of situations there is “a certain understanding; there is no hidden comprehension of what it is to be Latin American, and I think that reaffirms a certain identity.”<sup>47</sup> The fact that this choral community transports its own culture in order to insert it into a Latin American community deprived of that culture (as in the case of the Latin American seniors) is a situation that can validate the identity of Latin Americans in a foreign context: as Katz says, it “reaffirms a certain identity,” in that it is feasible to see the fruits of this cultural transfer and insertion.

In terms of the representativeness that these choirs can have for the institutions that support them, we have the case of *Nuestras Voces* choir. According to its former director, Julia Clarke,

The choir was one of the greatest achievements of the AFH [Asociación Fraternidad Hispana]. It was a great success for them to be able to say that this choir was part of the AFH. When we went to represent the Association at City Hall, I think it was one of the

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<sup>45</sup> Katz, interview. [“fue una forma de conectarse con nuestra gente, con nuestra cultura, de mantener un vínculo, de conocer más gente, de abrir los vínculos, de compartir y aprender nuestra música, no solo para nosotros, sino de traerla a la comunidad.”]

<sup>46</sup> Katz, interview. [“para los ancianos aquí en Canadá, que han dejado sus familias, que han dejado su vida en los países latinos, era muy importante tener acceso a esa música.”]

<sup>47</sup> Katz, interview. [“un cierto entendimiento; no hay una comprensión subliminal de lo que es ser latino y me parece que eso reafirma una cierta identidad.”]

proudest moments for them; to know that the girls were representing the Hispanic community in Hamilton in a spectacular way.<sup>48</sup>

As Clarke reflects, the AFH, an association that serves a cohesive and welcoming function for the Latin American community in Hamilton, felt confident to relegate part of this role to the *Nuestras Voces* choir. While it may be hard to believe that a choir of such young girls (aged five to fourteen) would be charged with such a crucial role, the evidence shows that identity affirmation can have different faces.

Other equally revealing cases that demonstrate the outreach of these choirs to the local Latin American community are those related by Valeska Cabrera and Iván C. The former explains that a large part of their audience consisted of Spanish speakers, so she assumes that the Latin American community felt attracted by a performance in which their culture was represented, since they themselves were represented.<sup>49</sup> In the same way, Iván C., former director of *Los Parranderos de Vancouver*, says that every year, without exception, at least one Venezuelan appears in the audience who is experiencing one of his/her first Christmases outside of his/her country. When listening to the choir singing the Venezuelan Christmas repertoire, the newcomer relives with nostalgia and joy his/her Christmases in Venezuela. He/she then approaches the choir with emotion, congratulating them and asking them when he/she will be able to see them again.<sup>50</sup> Iván C. further states that Latin American choirs play an important role in the preservation of Latin American culture, since according to him,

There are songs that you are not going to hear outside of Venezuela. So, by singing them, repeating them, preserving them, recording them, and putting them on YouTube and that kind of thing, it helps to maintain them and to make them reach an audience that

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<sup>48</sup> Clarke, interview. [“el coro fue uno de los logros más grandes de la AFH [Asociación Fraternidad Hispana]. Fue un logro muy grande para ellos poder decir que este coro era parte de la AFH. Cuando fuimos a representar a la Asociación en el City Hall, creo que fue uno de los momentos en que se sintieron más orgullosos; saber que las niñas estaban representando de una manera espectacular a la comunidad hispana en Hamilton.”]

<sup>49</sup> Cabrera, interview.

<sup>50</sup> Iván C., interview.

A similar testimony is related by Gloria Rodríguez, who explains that while attending a concert of *Fusión Latina* “[m]agically, the choir took me back into my childhood and my land, when listening to songs that are traditional from my country.” Rodríguez, “Personal A/R/Tographic Narratives of Cultural Displacement,” 57.

wouldn't have heard them otherwise. [...] Maybe with our voices they reach a place they wouldn't have reached.<sup>51</sup>

We can thus see that the good reception of the choirs' local Latin American communities is evident (and almost inevitable), due to the degree of identification that is established in the Latin American choir-Latin American audience dynamic. This identification may show itself in various forms (nostalgia, joy, sorrow, etc.), but creates a sense of belonging in the end, both for those who are able to attend the choirs' concerts live, and for those who watch them via digital platforms. This is how this way of being "me" – that is, to feel and present oneself as a Latin American – in front of the world produces certain effects on people other than the choristers.

As a conclusion to the chapter, it is possible to establish that in order to maintain and shape their identity, Latin American choirs in Canada function as entities that promote Latin American social cohesion, where choir members come together to meet and socialise, in turn fortifying the community. To this end, they encourage a sense of community that has a common experience. In turn, the importance given by both directors and choristers to the preservation of this Latin American identity explains the need to transmit their "latinity" to non-Latin American choristers as a way of inviting them to become immersed in that tradition.

We have also seen that this sense of community seeks to extend beyond the borders of each choir, since (at least in the instance of the Latin American choirs in Vancouver) the choirs have maintained a friendly relationship with each other over the years, leaving no trace of a competitive relationship, but on the contrary, a collaborative one. Furthermore, the choirs' desire to maintain and shape identity has led them to extend their sense of community further, to such an extent as to involve their local Latin American communities in Canada, through contact with the audiences of their concerts or the institutions that support the choirs.

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<sup>51</sup> Iván C., interview. ["hay canciones que no vas a escuchar fuera de Venezuela. Entonces, al nosotros cantarlas, repetirlas, preservarlas, grabarlas y ponerlas en YouTube y ese tipo de cosas, ayuda a mantenerlas y hacerlas llegar a un público que no las hubiese escuchado de otra manera. [...] Quizás con nuestras voces llegan a un sitio donde no hubiesen llegado."]

## CHAPTER 3

### **Preservation Strategies of Latin American Choirs in Canada: Authenticity, Preservation, Inclusion, Insertion, and Reception.**

In this chapter I will examine how Latin American choirs in Canada face the challenge of maintaining their authenticity and preserving their traditions, while at the same time inserting themselves into local communities and garnering a positive reception from the broader Canadian community. These challenges can be seen as a chain of succession, since for Latin American choirs, the preservation of Latin American authenticity is possible only if they manage to preserve their choral tradition and their groups as such. Without choral tradition and without choirs (as expected), there would be no authenticity to safeguard. At the same time, the preservation of Latin American choirs and their tradition in Canada is only possible if they carry out an open inclusion process (to recruit as many choir members as possible), if they are able to insert themselves in the Canadian context, and if they ensure that they are well received by the Canadian public. In this chapter, I refer to these actions carried out by directors and choristers to keep their choirs alive in the Canadian context as preservation strategies, since without them the choirs would not endure for long.

Cultural authenticity is defined by Weimin Mo and Wenju Shen (cited by Patricia Sanchez) as that which “involves cultural values, facts, and attitudes that members of the culture as a whole consider worthy of acceptance and belief.”<sup>1</sup> Sánchez adds that the concept of cultural authenticity stems from a multiculturalism that values the cultural differences of diverse ethnicities and traditions,<sup>2</sup> which suggests that the search for authenticity is due to a need to preserve one’s own culture and to differentiate oneself from others. However, authenticity is also a matter of paying homage to a tradition, since for Eman Assi it is “defined as respect for the

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<sup>1</sup> Patricia Sánchez, “Cultural Authenticity and Transnational Latina Youth: Constructing a Meta-narrative Across Borders,” *Linguistics and Education* Vol. 18, Iss. 3–4 (2007): 267.

<sup>2</sup> Sánchez, “Cultural Authenticity and Transnational Latina Youth,” 266.

importance of any legacy from the past.”<sup>3</sup> As we shall see, this attempt to pay homage to one’s own legacy by extolling its unique value can be threatened by a phenomenon that is capable of joining various traditions, standardising them, and labelling them indiscriminately.<sup>4</sup> I am referring to globalization. This is what Brígido Galván demonstrates with regards to world music.<sup>5</sup> And while cultural authenticity, as seen above, is compatible with a healthy multicultural society, when multiculturalism is misapplied, the cultural diversity is addressed as something abstract, neutral, and horizontal, that is, cultural products might be disconnected from issues of racism, their political significance, of their particularities and functions within the community might be disregarded.<sup>6</sup>

Galván refers to globalization as a phenomenon that encourages fragmentation and at the same time homogenises musical cultures as a whole, creating standardised transnational labels, as is the case with various genres of popular Latin American music known throughout the world.<sup>7</sup> That is to say, it is a vision that would not allow distinguishing the unique value of a particular musical expression, nor differentiating it from another expression. Globalization is also contrary to the search for a “national choral sound,”<sup>8</sup> which would highlight its unique character and, at the same time, its belonging to a tradition that is also unique.

From this approach, globalization would result in the opposite of what – as we will see – these conductors hope for in their attempt to preserve Latin American authenticity: the original or traditional versions of the Latin American choral repertoire would be forgotten or left aside (not considering the original arrangements and roots of the works); what or whom that repertoire represents would not be considered; its original language (Spanish or Portuguese) would also probably be manipulated, as would the performative resources (such as gestures and body language). And some of the consequences of this would be reflected in the generational transfer of this tradition (if any), in that the new generations of Latin Americans born in Canada would receive a cultural heritage manipulated and influenced by elements originally external to it. To

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<sup>3</sup> Eman Assi, “Searching for the Concept of Authenticity: Implementation Guidelines,” *Journal of Architectural Conservation* 6:3 (2000): 60.

<sup>4</sup> Galván, “Arranging Hybridity,” 319.

<sup>5</sup> Galván, “Arranging Hybridity,” 25.

<sup>6</sup> Diamond, “What’s the Difference?,” 69.

<sup>7</sup> Galván, “Arranging Hybridity,” 319.

<sup>8</sup> Morrison, “Music Makers: Choral,” 34.



this must be added the fact that the children of immigrants are generally more vulnerable to being imbued with the local culture.<sup>9</sup> As we will see, Latin American choirs in Canada are able to resist these pressures.

Dimitrios Theodossopoulos points out that different visions coexist simultaneously with respect to the concept of authenticity, since it is generally associated with diverse meanings ranging “from genuineness and originality to accuracy and truthfulness.” Thus, he states that “authenticity encodes the expectation of truthful representation. It is concerned with the identity of persons and groups, the authorship of products, producers, and cultural practices, the categorical boundaries of society: ‘who’ or ‘what’ is ‘who’ or ‘what’ claims to be.”<sup>10</sup> This variety of visions mentioned by Theodossopoulos regarding the concept of authenticity was possible to appreciate when interviewing the choir directors, since each one had a more or less personal vision of the term. However, at the moment of putting it into practice, all these conductors carry out a preservation of Latin American authenticity hoping to achieve a “truthful representation” since it is directly related to “the identity of persons and groups.”

In order to understand what Latin American authenticity is, it is first necessary to outline the original sources of traditional Latin American music. Succinctly, it is important to know that Latin American music was born and developed from many ancestral cultural traditions thanks to complex processes (among others) of syncretism, hybridization, and acculturation, on the one hand, and *mestizaje* [miscegenation], colonialism and diaspora, on the other. The main traditions from which this music originally draws are Indigenous, African, *Mestizo* and European (mainly Spanish and Portuguese). This gave and continues to give rise to a myriad of diverse musical genres and sub-genres.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, as we will see in chapter four, the inclusion of dance in

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<sup>9</sup> See: Yoko Yoshida and Jonathan Amoyaw, “Transition to Adulthood of Refugee and Immigrant Children in Canada,” *Applied Psycholinguistics* 41, no. 6 (2020): 1465–95; Kathryn Harker, “Immigrant Generation, Assimilation, and Adolescent Psychological Well-Being,” *Social Forces* Vol. 79, Issue 3 (March 2001): 969–1004; John Berry and Feng Hou, “Immigrant Acculturation and Wellbeing in Canada,” *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie canadienne*, 57(4), (2016): 254-264.

<sup>10</sup> Dimitrios Theodossopoulos, “Introduction: Laying Claim to Authenticity: Five Anthropological Dilemmas,” *Anthropological Quarterly* Vol. 86, No. 2 (Spring 2013): 339.

<sup>11</sup> See: Juan Pablo González, *Pensar la Música desde América Latina* (Buenos Aires: Gourmet Musical, 2021); María Elena Larrègle, Martín Eckmeyer, and María Paula Cannova,

Latin American music is a constant, so that the rhythmic aspect is of fundamental value in this music, in which the African influence plays a fundamental role.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, when the directors involved in this study refer to the preservation of Latin American authenticity, they are referring to safeguarding this complex tradition.

Deborah Pacini states that cultural authenticity is directly related to “roots music.”<sup>13</sup> However, the promoting of cultural resources under the label of “authentic” can be transformed into a source of economic income when it is disseminated for commercial purposes. Pacini gives as an example the cultural commercialization carried out by Cuban governmental tourism companies, where the display of Cuban cultural authenticity translates into income when it is shown to foreigners, inside or outside of Cuba.<sup>14</sup> While, for some, Latin American authenticity is a means to commercialize arts and culture, the directors of the choirs addressed in this study preserve authenticity in the performance of their repertoire for the sole purpose of preserving a tradition.

The following section of this chapter will address the different views of conductors on the importance of maintaining authenticity. The conductors lean towards the preservation of original versions and arrangements of the repertoire (avoiding non-Latin American influences) and believe that their choirs must represent Latin American culture. At the same time, there is a valorisation of rhythm as a defining element in Latin American music. When musical arrangements and adaptations are employed, they do not respond to a process of hybridization<sup>15</sup>

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“Historia de la Música en América Latina. Ese Vasto Territorio entre lo Propio y lo Ajeno,” *Arte e Investigación* N.º 10 (2014): 45-53.

<sup>12</sup> See: Isabelle Leymarie, *La Música Latinoamericana: Ritmos y Danzas de un Continente* (Barcelona: Ediciones B, 1997); Javier Grijalba and Jorge Guzmán, “Educación Superior: Percusión Latinoamericana y el Patrimonio Cultural Inmaterial,” *Revista Pensamiento, Palabra y Obra* Núm. 27, ene-jun (2022).

<sup>13</sup> Deborah Pacini, “Dancing with the Enemy: Cuban Popular Music, Race, Authenticity, and the World-Music Landscape,” *Latin American Perspectives* 25, no. 3 (1998): 111.

<sup>14</sup> Pacini, “Dancing with the Enemy,” 119.

<sup>15</sup> A general definition of the concept of “hybridization,” useful for the purposes of this research, is that established by Josep Martí: “hybridization refers to the adoption by one concrete musical stream of musical elements that come from other streams. These elements are merged in such a way as to become a constituent part of the stream that has assimilated them.” Josep Martí, “Hybridization and its Meanings in the Catalan Musical Tradition,” In *Songs of the Minotaur. Hybridity and Popular Music in the Era of Globalization*, ed. Gerhard Steingress (Münster/Hamburg/Berlin/London: LIT-Verlag, 2002), 114.

with current traditions, but rather to an adaptation of the works to the types of choristers at their disposal and these choristers' abilities, to the instruments and instrumentalists at their disposal, and to meet the motivational expectations of the choristers. All of these factors are determined by the open inclusion policy that conductors apply when calling for new members to join. That is to say, open inclusion determines the way in which choirs develop in artistic, pedagogical, and social terms. In addition, these adaptations are carried out to obtain a good reception from the audience.

These choirs pursue insertion in local communities through holding concerts at seniors' and community centres, donating to charity from funds collected at concerts, participating in international festivals and concerts, cultivating relationships with other local and international choirs, and sharing their art as a way of getting closer to the local community. In turn, the reception from Canadian audience is seen by the choir directors as a multicultural openness since the broader Canadian community values the choirs' Latin American authenticity. This is why there is a feeling of gratitude towards the Canadian community that welcomes these choirs. Preserving Latin American authenticity in choral practice is considered an essential issue by most of the conductors of these choirs, although there are discrepancies among each of their visions.

For the director of *Ágora Ibero-American Choir*, Valeska Cabrera,

Authenticity is a very important concept, especially now that the whole academy is opening up to recognising and valuing music from different cultures that are not necessarily white Western. It's not just [addressing] a composer and singing [his/her work] and saying: 'Done! We've met the target of non-Western, white composers.' That's not what it's about! It's about doing it with the utmost honesty, as culturally sensitive, with a lot of respect, etc.<sup>16</sup>

Cabrera explains that, although in the choir they have never made it a goal to maintain authenticity, it is something that is intrinsically carried by the mere fact of being Latin

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<sup>16</sup> Cabrera, interview. ["La autenticidad es un concepto muy importante, especialmente ahora que toda la academia se está abriendo a reconocer y a valorar la música de distintas culturas que no sean necesariamente la occidental blanca. No es solamente [abordar] un compositor y cantar [su obra] y decir: '¡Listo! Cumplimos con la cuota de compositores no occidentales blancos.' ¡No se trata de eso! Se trata de hacerlo con la mayor honestidad, lo más apegado a la cultura, con mucho respeto, etc."]

American.<sup>17</sup> But she also points out that Latin American authenticity can also be achieved thanks to the access to knowledge and experience that the choristers themselves can provide. For instance, she explains: “when we sing a Mexican song, we ask the Mexican members ‘how do you say this... what does this mean... why does this person speak like this... would you dance to this rhythm... how would you dance to it... in what context... etc.’ Then we have the first-hand information.” For Cabrera, it is necessary to “value authenticity and try to get as close as possible to the source, just as in research.”<sup>18</sup> This is why Cabrera points out that the possibility of adapting the way of interpreting the repertoire was never considered, precisely in response to this need to preserve authenticity. In addition, she states that Latin Americans have a common root, so there are also cultural similarities that make it easier to understand and assimilate some cultural content among the different Latin American nationalities.<sup>19</sup>

According to Marianella Ramos, director of *Viene Sonando*, authentic Latin Americanness means “to be flexible, spontaneous, joyful, close, warm... And definitely all the Latin choirs in Vancouver are not rigid at all. It’s a thing that can start a planned concert one way and then the audience can be singing along or dancing with you.”<sup>20</sup> She is convinced that in her choir she puts this authenticity into practice in the way that they sing, interpret music, gesticulate, express themselves physically, and select their repertoire. For her, it is important to preserve this authenticity “because that is who we are, no matter where we are. You can’t lose who you are, because otherwise you’re lost.”<sup>21</sup> Like Cabrera, Ramos appeals to Latin American authenticity as something innate that every Latin American carries within himself or herself without needing to force it.

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<sup>17</sup> Cabrera, interview.

<sup>18</sup> Cabrera, interview. [“cuando cantamos una canción mexicana, le preguntamos a los integrantes mexicanos ‘cómo se dice esto... qué significa esto... por qué habla así esta persona... este ritmo lo bailarían?... cómo lo bailarían?... en qué contexto?... etc.’ Entonces tenemos la información de primera mano.”]; [“valorar la autenticidad y tratar de acercarse lo más posible a la fuente, igual que en la investigación.”]

<sup>19</sup> Cabrera, interview.

<sup>20</sup> Ramos, interview. [“ser flexible, espontáneo, alegre, cercano, cálido... Y definitivamente todos los coros latinos que hay en Vancouver no son para nada rígidos. Es una cosa que puede comenzar un concierto planeado de una manera y luego público puede estar cantando o bailando contigo.”]

<sup>21</sup> Ramos, interview. [“porque eso es lo que somos, no importa donde estemos. No se puede perder quién eres, porque sino, estás perdido.”]

Fabiana Katz, director of *Fusión Latina*, refers to two important aspects for preserving Latin American authenticity in a Latin American choir: language and rhythm. With language, she basically means that it is essential to have good diction and pronunciation of the Spanish language when singing. She believes that it is difficult to make Latin American music with an English-speaking accent, for instance. She points out that, when you lose the correct diction, “you lose a certain relationship with the rhythm that Canadians don’t have, because they don’t have the rhythmic sense that Latin Americans have. [...] It seems to me that it has a lot to do with language because it is related to rhythm.” The rhythm Katz refers to is “a sensation, a sense of rhythm that you don’t have to learn, but that you were born or grew up with.” On the other hand, she says it is important that there is a “recognition of styles on a subconscious level. I mean, I am Argentinian, but I listen to a *mariachi*, and I have a sense of *mariachi* rhythm even though I am not one [a *mariachi* musician].” In other words, just by virtue of being Latin American, she says, “it’s going to be easier to incorporate that sense of rhythm.” All Latin American music, however diverse, is “an overall part of a style that we can recognise and integrate.”<sup>22</sup> According to Katz, preserving authenticity was put into practice in *Fusión Latina*, as “that’s exactly what the choir was founded for; we tried to project that, to embody that and to be as true as we could to the music, the style, the meaning and significance of the music we made.” In this way, it is important to have “a sense of history, where we came from.”<sup>23</sup> The relationship Katz establishes between language and rhythm is interesting; she states that they are so interpenetrated, that someone who does not speak Spanish at a native level is hardly going to understand and develop an authentic rhythmic sensation. On the other hand, like Cabrera and Ramos, she believes that the rhythmic sensation of Latin American music is directly related to cultural knowledge that people are

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<sup>22</sup> Katz, interview. [“se pierde una cierta relación con el ritmo que los canadienses no tienen, porque no tienen el sentido rítmico que tienen los latinos. [...] Me parece que tiene mucho que ver con la lengua porque está relacionada con el ritmo.”]; [“una sensación, un sentido de ritmo que no tienes que aprender, sino que naciste o creciste con él.”]; [“reconocimiento de los estilos a un nivel subconsciente. O sea, yo soy argentina, pero yo escucho un mariachi y tengo un sentido del ritmo de mariachi aunque yo no lo sea.”]; [“va a ser más fácil incorporar ese sentido de ritmo.”]; [“parte global de un estilo que podemos reconocer e integrar.”]

<sup>23</sup> Katz, interview. [“justamente para eso se fundó el coro; tratamos de proyectar eso, de personificarlo y de ser lo más fieles que pudimos a la música, al estilo, al significado y la significancia de la música que hicimos.”]; [“un sentido de la historia, de dónde venimos.”]

steeped in from birth. That is to say, for her, it is enough to be Latin American to identify and carry those rhythms.

Ricardo Guzmán takes a very different view from Cabrera, Ramos, and Katz. He states that although the *UNAM Canada Choir* has its own identity as “a choir that performed Latin American music in Spanish” and he required the choristers to be “joyful” in their performance - just as the conductor of any choir would do - he acknowledges that he does not like “to make the distinction of ‘you are from that region, and I am from this region.’ We didn’t go around the world saying, ‘I’m Latin, I know how to move my hips.’ I try to break those paradigms. And the Canadian felt as Canadian as I feel Mexican.”<sup>24</sup> While the choir’s institutional goals were to promote Latin American culture and the Spanish language through the performance of its repertoire, Guzmán acknowledges that preserving Latin American authenticity,

Was not part of my objective. [...] More than singing and the whole thing of meeting university standards in terms of promoting culture, I’ve always believed that music is a point of communion where we are all equal and where all voices become one and there is no distinction of anything - no distinction of race, nor of beliefs, nor of anything. That is my ideal of a choir.<sup>25</sup>

More than “having a Latin American authenticity, or having a label of a Latin American choir,”<sup>26</sup> he cares about doing a good job. In contrast to the other conductors, Guzmán sees the preservation of authenticity as a form of unjustified cultural-geographical distinction based on a stereotypical way of viewing Latin American culture as one in which “hips are moving.”<sup>27</sup> It is important to consider that, as mentioned in chapter one, Guzmán was the only director who had been in Canada for a short period of time (less than a year) at the time of the interview, unlike

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<sup>24</sup> Guzmán, interview. [“un coro que interpretaba música latinoamericana y en español”]; [“hacer la distinción de ‘tú eres de esa región y yo soy de esta región.’ No íbamos por el mundo diciendo ‘yo soy latino sé mover las caderas.’ Justamente, trato de romper con esos paradigmas. Y el canadiense se sentía tan canadiense, así como yo me siento mexicano.”]

<sup>25</sup> Guzmán, interview. [“no era parte de mi objetivo. [...] Más que cantar y toda la cuestión de cumplir con los estándares de la universidad en cuanto a promover la cultura, siempre he creído que la música es un punto de comunión en el que todos somos iguales y en el que todas las voces se hacen una y no hay distinción de nada -ni de raza, ni de creencias, ni de nada-. Ese es mi ideal de coro.”]

<sup>26</sup> Guzmán, interview. [“tener una autenticidad latinoamericana, o tener una etiqueta de un coro latinoamericano.”]

<sup>27</sup> I address the body movements and choreographies included by the Latin American choirs in their performances in chapter four of this thesis.

the others who had been based in Canada for several years or longer. I make this distinction in order to contextualise his point of view, in that the other directors show a very particular longing and affection for Latin American culture and maintain contact with it through what they each consider to be the preservation of Latin American authenticity. Each conductor's attachment to Latin American choral music and their way of preserving it is different, depending on their life history, the reasons that they emigrated from their country (political exile, social-economic instability, search for better job prospects or a better quality of life), their relationship with Latin American music, the opportunities that have presented themselves, their artistic projections, and their relationship with Canadian culture.

As already briefly mentioned, for some of these conductors, the preservation of authenticity is directly related to the dissemination of the choral tradition they practice with their choirs. This is because they consider the best (and perhaps only) way to show that their choirs are successfully carrying out the preservation of Latin American authenticity is by making themselves known in the Canadian context and disseminating the music they perform.

The mission to disseminate this tradition was, as Norka Markano (assistant director of *Cantares Latin Choir*) explains, what determined their decision whether to register the *Cantares Latin Choir* as a Choral Society or a Cultural Foundation. They opted for the latter because "our main mandate has always been cultural dissemination."<sup>28</sup> Under this mandate, they feel an obligation to preserve authenticity: "we have always made the effort to go to the roots and look for original arrangements; to be very respectful of these arrangers [...] and to do our best, even though we are not expert folklorists or musical experts."<sup>29</sup> Having as a mission the preservation of Latin American culture, Juan Sosa (the director of this choir) explains that in practice "we make it very evident, even though we have pieces from many, many countries in many languages, our focus has always been to spread the Latin American contribution as a culture." According to Sosa, this is not only demonstrated when making music, but "also with our actions, with the way we communicate, with the way we live with other choirs, with the way we organise

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<sup>28</sup> Sosa and Markano, interview. ["nuestro principal objetivo siempre ha sido la difusión cultural."]

<sup>29</sup> Sosa and Markano, interview. ["siempre hemos hecho el esfuerzo de ir a la raíz y buscar los arreglos originales; ser muy respetuosos de estos arreglistas [...] y hacer nuestro mejor esfuerzo, a pesar de que no somos expertos folcloristas ni tampoco expertos musicales."]

events to incorporate the participation of other cultures. [...] I think we have managed to do that as our main objective.”<sup>30</sup> It is striking how much importance Markano and Sosa attach to what they see as their mission – dissemination and preservation of Latin American authenticity – not only for the commitment shown, but also for the ability to approach the concepts of dissemination and authenticity in such a unified way.

Sergio Pires, director of *Canto Vivo*, believes that the preservation of authenticity is one of his most important missions with the choir. He tries to keep the music as close as possible to its original form in terms of the genre it belongs to, its source, the arrangements applied and its cultural representation.<sup>31</sup> For this reason, although he also sometimes includes Anglo-American influenced repertoire in the choir, he clarifies that “mostly I don’t usually choose songs that were clearly fusion songs,” such as rock or Latin pop. “There are some people in the choir that like [rock and Latin pop] very much. [...] I wouldn’t say I don’t like it, it’s just because there are so many original [Latin American pieces of] music!... It’s kind of a waste of time to include rock from Latin America in the repertoire of a Latin American choir here,”<sup>32</sup> he adds. In order to maintain authenticity, he believes that it is necessary to stick to the fusions that were originally the source of traditional Latin American music: Indigenous, *Mestizo*, European, etc.<sup>33</sup>

It is evident that Cabrera, Sosa, Markano and Pires largely agree that preserving Latin American authenticity ensures a cultural dissemination that is as faithful as possible to the original source, and that the way to maintain this authenticity is to keep to the roots of Latin American musical genres and to be “respectful” of the original versions and/or arrangements. Moreover, Pires takes a strong view by suggesting that tackling genres such as Latin rock or pop would be “a waste of time” for the choir, not only because of the fact that it is moving away from traditional music, but also because the Latin American repertoire offers such a wide range of

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<sup>30</sup> Sosa and Markano, interview. [“lo evidenciamos mucho, a pesar de que tenemos piezas de muchísimos países en muchos idiomas, nuestro foco siempre ha sido difundir el aporte latinoamericano como cultura.”]; [“también con nuestras acciones, con la forma de comunicarnos, de convivir con otros coros, con la forma de organizar eventos para incorporar la participación de otras culturas. [...] Considero que hemos logrado hacer eso como nuestro principal objetivo.”]

<sup>31</sup> Pires, interview.

<sup>32</sup> Pires, interview.

<sup>33</sup> Pires, interview.



possibilities that he believes it is unjustifiable to tackle repertoire that shows the influence of foreign musical genres. In short, although there is no unanimous consensus on the part of the eight conductors studied regarding the importance of preserving Latin American authenticity, most of them point in the same direction regarding the preservation of the choral tradition.

The preservation of authenticity also has direct implications for the insertion of Latin American choirs in the local community. Jennifer Scheper Hughes and Ariane Dalla Déa state that “[m]any Latin American/Latino artistic communities today insist on the importance of authenticity in artistic production. Without retreating into an insulated and isolating nativism, they resist appropriation by contemporary nation-building projects.” The resistance to which these scholars refer is the perseverance in “the creation of national identities” that does not allow itself to be finally determined by discourses that “encapsulates, exoticizes, and commodifies traditional cultures.”<sup>34</sup> I believe that this is precisely what happens with Latin American choirs: their resistance is manifested in their insistence on preserving the Latin American choral repertoire in its purest state - in order to preserve their own identity - but without the need to fall into an “insulated and isolating nativism,” which is demonstrated in their constant attempts to insert themselves into the Canadian context.

When Deborah Bradley refers to the concept of “multiculturalism” in the choral world, she is referring to choirs that attempt to recruit choristers who reflect Canadian cultural diversity and incorporate songs in languages other than English or French into their repertoire. However, Bradley suggests that such measures have not always been carried out successfully, because eventually many of these choirs end up being designed as a “white space.”<sup>35</sup> Since Latin American choirs in Canada were founded by and for Latin Americans, they have avoided this well-intentioned, but ultimately unsuccessful, type of multiculturalism in both their gestation and in their development, and none of them have presented themselves as “white space.” These choirs have been able to take advantage of a different way of putting multiculturalism into practice: insertion into the local community through various strategies. As is to be expected, such insertion responds to a need for recognition and appreciation that any group would desire as immigrants in a new country - especially in the case of an artistic group of immigrants? As the

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<sup>34</sup> Hughes and Déa, “Introduction: Authenticity and Resistance,” 8.

<sup>35</sup> Bradley, “The Inclusion Conundrum,” 10.

art educator Gloria Rodríguez states, Latin American immigrants in Canada “are aware of the importance of adjusting and projecting an accurate image of themselves, with the purpose of fusing with Canadian culture.”<sup>36</sup> For this reason, as we shall see, insertion strategies are also carried out as a form of gratitude towards the Canadian community that welcomes these choirs. However, in the instance of Latin American choirs in Canada, this fusion does not involve a musical fusion, or one that is related to specific Latin American traditions, but rather involves a joining with the community through other aspects of their activities, so as not to compromise the preservation of choral authenticity that this chapter has argued is a vital mission for these choirs.

One of the forms of insertion in the local community is reported by Iván C. (director of *Los Parranderos de Vancouver*), who points out that a situation that brings great satisfaction to his choir is when they perform at senior citizens’ homes and at the end of their performance, despite not having understood anything of what they sang (since the songs are in Spanish), the elderly residents thank them for having come, since no one is going to visit them. He explains that “that always touches your heart. Those poor old people [...] are alone all year round until Christmas time and they don’t have anyone to bring them a little bit of joy. [...] That was quite satisfying.”<sup>37</sup> Iván notes that this action, along with making donations (as mentioned in chapter one) to causes such as May’s Place and the Vancouver Food Bank through charitable choral activities (such as the *Yule Duel Carolling Competition*), gives the choir a purpose and the satisfaction of helping the community in which they live, in addition to the intrinsic joy of coming together and singing traditional Venezuelan music.

A similar example of insertion is recounted by Marianella Ramos, who points out that some of the concerts given by *Viene Sonando* have been in senior citizens’ homes and community centres, which she sees as “our contribution to the community.”<sup>38</sup> Similarly, Juan Sosa says that in December each year, *Cantares Latin Choir* holds a fundraising event for

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<sup>36</sup> Rodríguez, “Personal A/R/Tographic Narratives of Cultural Displacement,” 88.

<sup>37</sup> Iván C., interview. [“eso siempre te llega al corazón. Esos pobres ancianos [...] están solos durante todo el año hasta la época navideña y no tienen quien le lleve un poquito de alegría. [...] Eso ha sido bastante satisfactorio.”]

<sup>38</sup> Ramos, interview. [“nuestro aporte a la comunidad.”]

charities (see figure 1.4). In these instances, the choristers feel very motivated to be able to help through music.<sup>39</sup>

As we can see from these three testimonies (Iván C., Ramos, and Sosa), a recurrent and effective way to get involved in the local community is through participation in and/or organisation of charity events. Making a contribution to the community through music, for these choirs, is not merely a duty, but a satisfying task for both choristers and conductors. As we can see, this contribution is not always necessarily monetary, but also emotional, as in the case of performances in seniors' homes.

Besides being directly related to the preservation of authenticity - as mentioned above - cultural dissemination by these choirs constitutes another attempt to insert themselves into the Canadian community. Participation in international festivals, networking with other choirs, and the desire to make their art known in the local context are other strategies used by the choirs.

Juan Sosa points out that one of the most positive aspects he has experienced with the choir has been “to see the group grow, [...] because we started with many ideas and goals. And to see that with only ten years we have participated in two very important international festivals [...] was an incredible experience.”<sup>40</sup> One of these festivals was the *Kathaumixw International Choral Festival* in Powell River in 2012, where according to Sosa there were,

Choirs of the highest quality. And we were only two years into our activities. So, for us it was a challenge, but it was also a great satisfaction. [...] Obviously we knew we were not going to win the festival or play the best part, but our main goal was to learn, meet and interact with choirs from other cultures; to show the Canadian audience our culture and our values. I think we did a good job in that sense.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Sosa and Markano, interview.

<sup>40</sup> Sosa and Markano, interview. [“ver crecer al grupo, [...] porque comenzamos con muchas ideas y metas. Y ver que con apenas 10 años hemos participado en dos festivales internacionales muy importantes [...] fue una experiencia increíble.”]

<sup>41</sup> Sosa and Markano, interview. [“coros de altísima calidad. Y nosotros apenas teníamos 2 años de haber comenzado actividades. Entonces para nosotros fue un reto, pero también fue una gran satisfacción. [...] Obviamente sabíamos que no íbamos a ganar el festival o hacer el mejor de los papeles, pero nuestra principal meta era aprender, conocer e interactuar con coros de otras culturas; mostrarle a la audiencia canadiense nuestra cultura y nuestros valores. Pienso que hicimos un buen papel en ese sentido.”]

The other festival Sosa refers to is the *Unisong Festival* in Ottawa, which was part of the Canada Day celebrations in 2019, and where they performed on the main stage in front of Parliament: “it was also impressive! [...] We actually shared mostly with youth and children’s choirs, and we never thought that an experience like that would be so nice; it was very enriching.”<sup>42</sup> We see here that, for *Cantares Latin Choir*, a very powerful way of inserting themselves in the local context has been to participate in different international festivals, which even gave them the opportunity to sing in front of the Parliament Buildings. This experience in such a prominent Canadian forum cannot be underestimated.

For Ricardo Guzmán (former director of *UNAM Canada Choir*), “as a Mexican and Latin American, sharing a bit of what we do here in Canada is something that meant the most to me to have been in that choir.”<sup>43</sup> He points out that as probably the only Spanish-language choir in the area (Ottawa-Gatineau) - coupled with the openness in terms of artistic appreciation of the Canadian community - he felt the need to make themselves better known. He was concerned that charging an entrance fee for performances would have meant some kind of limitation for some members of the public who wanted to attend, especially because people would not know what they were going to hear, at first. In order to encourage broad attendance, even from those unfamiliar with Latin American choral music, the choir has not charged entrance fees for concerts.<sup>44</sup>

Both Sosa and Guzmán introduce a new element here in the way that they insert themselves into the Canadian community: sharing their art. That is to say, the way to make themselves better known in a context foreign to Latin America is to show the artistic expression they practice, but under the framework of “sharing something.” In fact, Sosa also extends the meaning of “sharing” to the act of making Latin American values known and to interacting with other choirs. These strategies also respond to the desire of these choirs to preserve tradition: to share a tradition in its authentic form in order to keep it alive.

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<sup>42</sup> Sosa and Markano, interview. [“¡fue también impresionante! [...] De hecho compartimos mayormente con coros de jóvenes y niños, y nunca pensamos que una experiencia como esa fuese tan bonita; fue muy enriquecedora.”]

<sup>43</sup> Guzmán, interview. [“como mexicano y latinoamericano, compartir un poco de lo que hacemos aquí en Canadá es algo de lo que más me significó haber estado en ese coro.”]

<sup>44</sup> Guzmán, interview.

A slightly different point of view, but along the same lines of insertion, is added by Marianella Ramos (*Viene Sonando*'s director), who points out that having a Latin American choir in Canada means having the benefit of being able to disseminate Latin American culture. However, this can create some difficulties in terms of the audience's understanding of the content of the repertoire, an issue that needs to be addressed by the choir. For instance, she mentions that sometimes the Venezuelan repertoire can be very humorous, but that perhaps this type of humour would not be well received by another culture that does not understand it. She explains that "what is a joke in one culture may not be quite appropriate in another."<sup>45</sup> For example, in the song "El Negro José," the term "negro" could be considered offensive in Canadian and North American culture, but in Venezuelan culture - and Latin American culture in general - it is a traditional and friendly way of referring to Afro-Latin people. The same is true of slightly more picaresque song texts, which may not be well received in a more conservative culture and may be considered vulgar. However, she clarifies that "people understand that through music we are also talking about different cultures. And a culture like Canada's is quite open because it is very multicultural, and in this sense, it has to be tolerant."<sup>46</sup> It is for this and other reasons that in their performances they have resorted to insertion strategies like making preliminary explanations before performing some works. At the same time, although with the objective of preserving authenticity, *Viene Sonando* has favoured keeping the original language of the repertoire, but they have also considered doing versions of songs with sections in English and Spanish - alternating verses, for instance. "We're open to that just so that people feel maybe more involved or taken into account. Like respecting where we are,"<sup>47</sup> Ramos says. Beyond that, they have not considered other factors that would force them to adapt the repertoire to the Canadian context. Ramos refers to cultural diffusion as a "benefit" for the choir, and this provides us with another way of understanding the insertion of Latin choirs in Canada. It is for this reason that she and her choir make the effort to explain in context many of the works that

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<sup>45</sup> Ramos, interview. ["lo que es broma en una cultura, puede ser bastante poco correcto en otra."]

<sup>46</sup> Ramos, interview. ["la gente entiende que a través de la música también estamos hablando de diferentes culturas. Y una cultura como la canadiense es bastante abierta porque es muy multicultural, y en este sentido, tiene que ser tolerante."]

<sup>47</sup> Ramos, interview. ["Estamos abiertas a eso simplemente para que la gente se sienta quizás más involucrada o tomada en cuenta. Como respetando el lugar donde estamos."]

they perform to the public attending their concerts. With the same objective, they have considered performing songs or sections of songs in English, since cultural diffusion can be achieved in different ways, while still valuing the context that allows this benefit to be carried out, that is, “respecting the place where one is.” If we consider this vision of choral dissemination as a “benefit” alongside the vision of “sharing” Latin American art as a “mission” (proposed by Sosa and Guzmán), we get a sense of how some of the choirs approach the goal of insertion, which, ultimately, would enhance the preservation of the Latin American choral tradition in Canada.

It is not difficult to deduce that, in order to succeed in the task of this preservation, it is essential to ensure, first and foremost, the survival of the choirs. This is why it has been important for some choirs to be associated with an institution or organisation that supports them financially, as mentioned in chapter one. However, we can also see that such an association can determine the existence of the choir in more general terms and not only in monetary matters. These terms include organising and publicising events in which a choir performs, providing rehearsal space and materials (scores, music stands, piano, etc.), providing transport for the choir for long journeys, paying a salary (or a financial incentive) to the choir director, etc. As Pires (*Canto Vivo*'s director) tells us, he has experienced the absence of such support, since for almost two years, he directed a Brazilian choir called *Nosso Canto* in Vancouver, which could not survive because it had no institution to support it.<sup>48</sup> This lack of support was also, according to Katz, one of the reasons that *Fusión Latina* did not last.<sup>49</sup> However, choirs such as *Viene Sonando* and *Los Parranderos de Vancouver* are not affiliated with any institution and yet have managed to survive successfully.

Another strategy for the preservation of the choirs is the open and non-selective invitation that these choirs periodically make to the whole community to join their ranks (this process is explained in greater detail in chapter one). This openness is explained, in some regards, by the principle of inclusion that we have observed all the directors of these choirs putting into practice. At the same time, the principle of inclusion is a way of preserving the Latin American choral tradition because the more people that are invited to participate in the choirs, the greater the

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<sup>48</sup> Pires, interview.

<sup>49</sup> Katz, interview.

chance that the choir will endure over time. This is confirmed by Juan Sosa, who points out that *Cantares Latin Choir* has always tried to “educate people,” which is why “we have never discarded anyone. [...] If you want to be part of this group, you are welcome to join.”<sup>50</sup> However, new members are monitored while they are in “a probationary period,” until they finally decide whether they want to stay or leave the choir.<sup>51</sup> Similarly, Ricardo Guzmán (*UNAM Canada Choir*’s former director) states that his ideal has always been,

To break with exclusion. [...] In fact, [the choir] had people who sang almost nothing, but I gave them the opportunity. I would say to them: ‘Look, you have problems with intonation or listening. But if you really want to sing, come, we train you, we teach you, we give you lessons, and if we see that after a certain time you have the aptitude, you’re welcome.’<sup>52</sup>

But he says he never turned down an applicant in the first place. It is for this reason that Guzmán is convinced that the choir maintains “a pleasant atmosphere.”<sup>53</sup>

As we shall see, the open (and almost indiscriminate) inclusion of all those who want to join and participate in these choirs determines the way in which they develop in artistic terms (repertoire selection, adaptations, and musical arrangements), pedagogical terms (ways of teaching repertoire and choral technique) and social terms (relationships that the choristers have with each other and with the community). The conductors are willing to accommodate the choristers in these ways in order to keep their respective choirs alive.

In artistic terms, it is inevitable to wonder whether the directors have had to resort to musical arrangements, given the fact that none of the choirs - thanks to the principle of inclusion - has professional choristers. This is the case for Ricardo Guzmán (former director of *UNAM Canada Choir*), who was obliged to make arrangements of the repertoire to be performed due to the difficulty that some works posed for the choir. For this reason, he preferred to perform

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<sup>50</sup> Sosa y Markano, interview. [“educar a la gente.”]; [“nunca hemos desechado a nadie. [...] Si tú quieres ser parte de este grupo, eres bienvenido.”]

<sup>51</sup> Sosa y Markano, interview. [“un periodo de prueba.”]

<sup>52</sup> Guzmán, interview. [“romper con la exclusión. [...] De hecho, [al coro] llegaba gente que no cantaba casi nada, pero yo les daba la oportunidad. Les decía: ‘Mira, tienes problemas de afinación o al escuchar. Pero si tu realmente quieres cantar, ven, te capacitamos, te enseñamos, te damos clases y si vemos que al término de cierto tiempo tienes las aptitudes, eres bienvenido.’”]

<sup>53</sup> Guzmán, interview. [“un ambiente agradable.”]

simplified versions, especially with regard to the Cuban repertoire, which can often have a rhythmic complexity that is difficult to tackle.<sup>54</sup>

Similarly, for Julia Clarke (former director of the girls' choir *Nuestras Voces*), the arrangements made had to be simple so as not to demand something from the girls that was beyond their capabilities. For instance, the most commonly used harmonies were intervals of 5ths and 8ths. However, one of the specific objectives of these arrangements also had to do with the parents' impression of the work their daughters were doing:

So that the mums and dads could see that the girls were not just going to sing and have fun. But that I was also teaching them these harmonies, maybe not extravagant [ones] [...]. Because making a harmony, however basic it may be, is very difficult for someone who doesn't study music [...] I felt very proud to be able to achieve something like that!<sup>55</sup>

Likewise, Clarke worked with many sounds and onomatopoeias with the choir, due to the fact that all their repertoire was performed a capella (without musical instruments or playback tracks), so they themselves were in charge of emulating the harmonic and/or rhythmic instrumentation when necessary. She explains that “many times I had, for example, half of the choir doing the music with their mouths (ta-ta-ta; sh-sh-sh...) things like that); while the other half sang. That's a very difficult thing to coordinate, but you can find a way that's simple for them, but sounds like 'wow!' for people who don't know.”<sup>56</sup> From Clarke's explanation, it can be inferred that the arrangements of the repertoire she used were not only an adaptation to the abilities of the choristers, but also to the expected reception of the audience, whether the girls' parents or the general public.

Iván C. (*Los Parranderos de Vancouver's* director), for his part, points out that due to the complexity of some of the works performed in his choir, and considering that they are not professional musicians, he has had to make modifications in order to adapt works to the choir's

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<sup>54</sup> Guzmán, interview.

<sup>55</sup> Clarke, interview. [“para que las mamás y los papás vieran que las chicas no solamente iban a cantar y pasarlo bien. Sino que también yo les estaba enseñando esas armonías, tal vez no extravagantes [...]. Porque hacer una armonía por básica que sea, es muy difícil para alguien que no estudia música [...]. ¡Me sentí muy orgullosa de poder lograr algo así!”]

<sup>56</sup> Clarke, interview. [“muchas veces tenía, por ejemplo, a la mitad del coro haciendo la música con su boca (ta-ta-ta; sh-sh-sh... cosas así); mientras la otra mitad, cantaba. Eso es algo muy difícil de coordinar, pero uno puede encontrar la manera que sea simple para ellas, pero que suene así como 'wow!' para la gente que no sabe.”]



abilities (as have Guzmán and Clarke). Other arrangements have involved adding vocals or adding emphasis to a song in order to make it less monotonous, for instance. In addition, they have sometimes had to adapt to the human resources they possess. That is to say, they adapted the repertoire to the instruments and instrumentalists at their disposal, often omitting or replacing instruments that were originally intended by the composers. In the same way, it has been a challenge for Iván to find male voices for the choir. Sometimes there have been so few of them that the female voices have overshadowed them, making it necessary to resort to some arrangements in order to maintain a balance in the overall register of the choir.<sup>57</sup>

A similar difficulty has been faced by *Viene Sonando*. Marianella Ramos explains that although at the beginning the choir was made up of both men and women, over time the men left the group, leaving only women. Thus, at the time of the interview, Ramos had no choice but to select mostly repertoire and arrangements for treble voices.<sup>58</sup> While gender disparity, as Iván C. and Ramos have pointed out, is a difficulty that any choir can face, for Latin American choirs in Canada it is more likely to happen, since the potential Latin American choir members based in a city, who are interested in joining and/or have artistic skills is rather small. This is why conductors have no choice but to make do with the choristers they have and to build a choir from these human resources.

In the case of Juan Sosa and Norka Markano (from *Cantares Latin Choir*), they point out that they have also made some arrangements of the works performed by their choir. Although most of these have been minor arrangements, “adaptations that every conductor makes,” as Sosa explains, “in general we try to respect the arrangements of the original arrangers.”<sup>59</sup> In the same way, Valeska Cabrera (*Ágora Ibero-American Choir*’s director) points out that she has not made arrangements of the works performed by the choir, but rather, she dedicates herself to finding the best arrangements available.<sup>60</sup> Fabiana Katz (*Fusión Latina*’s director), for her part, points out that she did not make arrangements in any significant way. “I am an arranger by necessity. I am

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<sup>57</sup> Iván C., interview.

<sup>58</sup> Ramos, interview.

<sup>59</sup> Sosa and Markano, interview. [“adaptaciones que todo director hace”]; [“por lo general tratamos de respetar los arreglos de los arreglistas originales.”]

<sup>60</sup> Cabrera, interview.

not a composer, but I have arranged when I needed to,”<sup>61</sup> she explains. More than anything, she says she does more adapting than arranging. For instance, she says that on some occasions, works written for four voices have been adapted for three voices.<sup>62</sup>

The view that all these conductors have of the role of musical arrangements is quite different from that of Brígido Galván in his study of Cuban musicians in Toronto. Here, he approaches arrangements as “strategies” related to “attempts to adapt and establish sustainable careers in Toronto’s competitive, multicultural context.” Thus, in his study of a different set of immigrant musicians, musical arrangements directly address issues of identity for their performers, as they expose “ideas and questions about who they are and what they aspire to be.”<sup>63</sup> In contrast to the Cuban musicians Galvan worked with, the choral conductors in the present study consider musical arrangements to be primarily for the purpose of adapting the works to the types of choristers at their disposal (female or male voices; sopranos, altos, tenors, basses) and their abilities); and to the instruments and instrumentalists at their disposal. A secondary purpose of the arrangements is sometimes to obtain a good reception from the audience. Moreover, some of the conductors state that they try to respect the arrangements of the original creators. Identity issues, however, are addressed by the conductors from other perspectives mentioned in chapter two: in the commitment to the choir, reinforcing the sense of a united community, in the Latin American representation that the choir has in Canada, making a cultural transfer, constituting a meeting and socialisation point where the members can say “me,” being a “bridge” between the choir members and their native culture, and creating bonds of identity that include Latin American children and teenagers in Canada.

As mentioned above, the open inclusion in the call made by the conductors of these choirs has also influenced the selection of their repertoire. This is why Pires (*Canto Vivo*’s director) points out that, in his choir, they do not sing any compositions that were originally written for choir. That is, they are all choral arrangements - some made by Pires himself - of popular songs. He explains that if he were to ask the choir to perform choral repertoire as such, “it would be a bigger challenge for me, because it is usually more difficult for them to learn it.

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<sup>61</sup> Katz, interview. [“Yo soy una arreglista por necesidad, no soy compositora, pero he arreglado cuando necesitaba.”]

<sup>62</sup> Katz, interview.

<sup>63</sup> Brígido Galván, “Arranging Hybridity,” 4.

There would probably be more resistance from the group to sing contemporary choral music, for example.”<sup>64</sup> He adds that it is a challenge for his choristers when they do not know a song or when they cannot find a recording to listen to. “They don’t have the mentality of the choral singer: ‘put in front of me a new thing and I would like to know the song; I will sing it and I will know how it sounds.’ It’s a different kind of singing that we have,”<sup>65</sup> Pires explains.

This is also the case with *Nuestras Voces*. Although most of the repertoire they perform is Latin American music, some of the songs are in English in order to have a varied repertoire that would appeal to both the choristers and the eventual audience. Clarke explains:

For the girls I understood that it might be boring at times to sing only Latin American folklore. So, to maybe give them that motivation to go on, to practice, I would add some songs in English. And several times we sang songs in Spanish, but more pop, more urban. [...] More than anything to keep the girls present. [...] The idea is that they have a good time.<sup>66</sup>

Likewise, in *Viene Sonando*, because one of the choir’s original ideas was to address popular repertoire linked to rock and pop, both Latin and Anglophone, Ramos (like Pires) has been obliged to make choral arrangements of this repertoire that was not originally intended for vocal ensemble. She has also made arrangements of works created for mixed voices, adapting them into works for treble voices, and has taught the choir her own compositions. On the other hand, she points out that the preparation of repertoire in a language other than Spanish also brings benefits, such as knowing another type of music, another type of harmony, “a new type of vocal placement [...] and other resources that the language gives you” in terms of the position of the tongue, lips, teeth, etc. She explains, for instance, that “now we are singing in Italian, and Italian is one of the languages used to learn to sing opera. It gives you a lot of resources. So, the

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<sup>64</sup> Pires, interview.

<sup>65</sup> Pires, interview.

<sup>66</sup> Clarke, interview. [“para las niñas yo entendía que tal vez era aburrido a veces cantar solamente folclor latino. Entonces para darles de repente esa motivación de seguir, de practicar, yo agregaba alguna canción en inglés. Y varias veces cantábamos canciones en español pero más pop, más urbanas. [...] Más que nada para mantener a las niñas presentes. [...] La idea es que lo pasen bien.”]

benefit is to keep learning and to take advantage of the resources that each language gives you.”<sup>67</sup>

As we can see, the influence of the pool of available choristers is evident here, determining all possible areas. In these last three cases (Pires, Clarke and Ramos), we are no longer addressing only the arrangements made by these conductors, but what is most interesting is how they manage to adapt to the needs of the choristers in terms of repertoire selection, rather than in the arrangements as such. While the inclusion of repertoire in English and other languages (other than Spanish and Portuguese) may go against the preservation of the Latin American authenticity so longed for, the underlying reason for arranging and including works in other languages is to give the choirs flexibility in terms of the type of repertoire and techniques they approach, mainly to keep the choristers motivated, encouraging them to maintain their commitment to the choir. Thus, it is easier to understand this inclusion as a strategy for the preservation of these choirs, rather than as a way of maintaining Latin American repertoire in its authentic state. However, it is necessary to clarify that only two of the eight choirs studied in this research include repertoire in English (*Nuestras Voces* and *Viene Sonando*) and that this English repertoire comprises only a small percentage of their entire setlists. Therefore, I believe that this inclusion is not a sufficient reason to dismiss the preservation of authenticity that all Latin American choirs in Canada – without exception – strive to preserve. Generally speaking, the musical arrangements and adaptations referred to above are often carried out to suit the abilities and motivational expectations of the choristers. However, only one director (Julia Clarke), as an exceptional case, resorts to these arrangements in order to be well received by the audience. In the following, we will focus on the latter: those strategies used by choirs in order to meet the expectations of the audience, whether it be the general Canadian community or the Latin American community in Canada.

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<sup>67</sup> Ramos, interview. [“un tipo de colocación nueva [...] y otros recursos que te da el idioma”]; [“Ahora estamos cantando en italiano y el italiano es uno de los idiomas que se utiliza para aprender a cantar canto lírico. Te da muchos recursos. Entonces, el beneficio es seguir aprendiendo y aprovechar los recursos que cada idioma te da.”]

As discussed in chapter two, we already know that Latin American choirs in Canada make consistent attempts to extend their sense of community beyond the boundaries of their own choirs. This extension also needs to cross generational barriers in order to cultivate and preserve the roots of identity (more or less) intact. In practical terms, this translates into two actions, which, as we shall see, some choirs are already undertaking: to transfer the choral tradition to new generations and to preserve the use of the Spanish language in Canada.

Regarding her quest to create identity-affirming bonds, Markano (*Cantares Latin Choir's* assistant director) states that they have succeeded with “great satisfaction.” The evidence of the creation of these ties is exemplified by the teenagers who joined (some of them children of the choristers themselves), who, by participating in the choir, have not only learned more about their roots but “even improved their Spanish,” a language that some of them did not even speak well when they started singing. “And the transformation [they have] when they start singing these rhythms was something [extraordinary]! And you see that it comes from the root. So, the identity that brings us together is very strong,”<sup>68</sup> Markano explains emphatically. For Juan Sosa (director of the same choir), the inclusion of these children into the choir has meant that “they have grown as individuals, not only musically, but also socially.”<sup>69</sup> For him, this phenomenon has contributed to reaffirming social cohesion among the choir members, allowing the continuity of the dissemination of their culture with future generations. For this reason, Sosa is certain that with the choir they have managed to have a “social impact”<sup>70</sup> in this sense.

Similarly, for Iván C., the generational transfer of the choral repertoire he performs with *Los Parranderos de Vancouver* has been seen in his children, who were born and live in Canada. He explains that they already hum some of the songs, “and perhaps when they are older they will be interested in carrying on this tradition.”<sup>71</sup> Iván makes it clear here that the preservation of this tradition is also important because of the outreach it can achieve, in that Latin American choirs

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<sup>68</sup> Sosa and Markano, interview. [“gran satisfacción”]; [“incluso mejoraron su español”]; [“¡Y la transformación [que tienen] cuando empiezan a cantar estos ritmos fue una cosa...! Y tú ves que sale como la raíz. Entonces, la identidad como nos reúne es muy fuerte.”]

<sup>69</sup> Sosa and Markano, interview. [“ellos han crecido como individuos, no solo en el aspecto musical, sino que también social.”]

<sup>70</sup> Sosa and Markano, interview. [“impacto social”]

<sup>71</sup> Iván C., interview. [“y quizás cuando sean más grandes les interese seguir con esta tradición.”]

could function as ambassadors of Latin American music (reproducing their music in different corners of the world for Latin Americans who may not have access to it) and keeping a tradition alive in a foreign context, where it might be vulnerable to disappearing. Thus, this outreach can also have the effect of a generational transfer. Although this task may be difficult, considering that the children of immigrants are more permeable to the local culture, as mentioned above, there is a possibility a generational transfer that could be successful in the case of Ivan C. and his children, who have already shown small signs of interest in the tradition.

Julia Clarke, for her part, says that by performing Latin American repertoire from different countries with *Nuestras Voces*, she has put Latin American cultural preservation into practice, so as to “capture a little bit of each one so that we don’t forget it.”<sup>72</sup> For this preservation she also believes it is important to cultivate the language:

I had many friends who were born in a Latin American country and were never taught Spanish. They came to Canada when they were six years old and only practised English, so they lost that part of their culture. I found that very sad! Since I was born in Canada, my mum made sure that I knew how to speak Spanish. I think I was able to have better control of Spanish because I sang [in that language] and I had a good time learning it.<sup>73</sup>

For Clarke, the important thing is to “save the language more than anything else.”<sup>74</sup> In this way, Clarke implies that *Nuestras Voces*, in addition to being a meeting place for the girls to make new friends outside of school, is a place to practice Spanish. In fact, she says that at one point “we had two girls [of Latin American parents] who didn’t speak Spanish at all, but they loved to sing in Spanish.”<sup>75</sup> She says that without knowing it, the girls were in some way seeking a reaffirmation of Latin American identity, by wanting to learn Spanish better or to understand the meaning of the songs they were performing. She also says that many times, when new people came to participate in the AFH and saw the choir, those who had children “wanted their

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<sup>72</sup> Clarke, interview. [“capturando un poquito de cada uno para que no se nos vaya olvidando.”]

<sup>73</sup> Clarke, interview. [“tenía muchos amigos que nacieron en un país latinoamericano y nunca se les enseñó español. Llegaron a Canadá a los 6 años y solamente practicaban el inglés, entonces perdían esa parte de su cultura. ¡Encontré eso super triste! Mi mamá, siendo que yo nací en Canadá, se aseguró que yo supiera cómo hablar español. Creo que pude tener mejor control del español porque yo cantaba [en ese idioma] y lo pasaba bien aprendiéndolo.”]

<sup>74</sup> Clarke, interview.; [“salvar la lengua más que nada.”]

<sup>75</sup> Clarke, interview. [“tuvimos a dos niñas [de padres latinos] que no hablaban para nada español, pero les encantaba cantar en español.”]

daughters to be part of it. So maybe the choir also helped bring in new Latins, specifically Latins with daughters. They saw how well they sang and that they had a good time... I think a lot of new girls came for that reason.”<sup>76</sup> As we see, Clarke adds the language factor as an important component in Latin American cultural preservation. Seen in this sense, the preservation of Latin American choral music goes hand in hand with the preservation of Spanish, because although much of Latin American music is in Spanish, we have heard testimonies (from Markano, Iván C. and Clarke) that Latin American immigrants’ children do not necessarily speak the language of their parents. If these children were interested in getting involved in one of these choirs, then language would be one of the first issues to tackle. It is well known that songs are powerful tools for learning or strengthening language learning.<sup>77</sup> However, in case of the parents of the choristers who identify with the repertoire performed by the respective choirs (which was also referred to by Markano, Iván C. and Clarke), an added value appears on the scene that is difficult to subtract. Identification with a musical tradition can thus cross generational and language barriers.

Have Latin American choirs in Canada needed to change their repertoire and/or the way in which they perform in order to gain access to a social and cultural space? Galván – who researched Cuban musicians in Canada - explains that both the musicians’ performance and the audience’s responses are not monolithic, since the musicians represent themselves using different strategies - based on repertoire selection, arrangements and performance style - depending on the specific circumstances of the moment.<sup>78</sup> Galván tells of some cases of musicians who were

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<sup>76</sup> Clarke, interview. [“querían que sus hijas fueran parte de eso. Entonces, tal vez el coro también ayudaba a traer latinos nuevos, específicamente a latinos con hijas. Veían lo bien que cantaban y que lo pasaban bien... Creo que llegaron muchas niñas nuevas por esa razón.”]

<sup>77</sup> See: Vera Busse et al., “Combining Song—And Speech-Based Language Teaching: An Intervention with Recently Migrated Children,” *Frontiers in Psychology* Vol. 9 (2018): 2386; Hilda Israel, “Language Learning Enhanced by Music and Song,” *Literacy Information and Computer Education Journal (LICEJ)*, Special Issue, Vol. 2, Issue 1 (2013): 1360-1366; Robyn M. Trinick, “Sound and Sight: The Use of Song to Promote Language Learning.” *General Music Today* 25, no. 2 (January 2012): 5–10; Georgia Coats, “Analyzing Song Lyrics as an Authentic Language Learning Opportunity,” In *Fostering Connections, Empowering Communities, Celebrating the World. Selected Papers from the 2016 Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages*, ed. Aleidine J. Moeller (Richmond: Robert M. Terry, 2016), 1-22.

<sup>78</sup> Galván, “Partially-Automated Live Performance,” 39.

forced to adapt their repertoire and the way they performed it due to contextual circumstances. For instance, some of them were forced to focus their repertoire on Latin American dance music, aimed at both Latin and non-Latin American audiences.<sup>79</sup> In this respect, Veblen points out that sometimes choirs and other immigrant musicians in Canada are forced to adapt and to make more flexible the way they carry out their music in terms of “performance, aesthetics, symbolism, instrumentation and transmission,” in order to preserve traditions or rituals.<sup>80</sup> As we have seen, some of the Latin American choirs in Canada use strategies such as simple arrangements for gaining a positive reception. However, others use these same methods to satisfy their own motivational needs or according to their abilities, rather than to satisfy the public. However, as we shall see, these choirs have had to resort to strategies regarding the selection of repertoire, the way in which they present this repertoire to the audience, and the structure of their performances in order to represent themselves.

Iván C. (*Los Parranderos de Vancouver*'s director) explains that the reception he has received from the Canadian public has been quite good so far. He assumes that this positive reception is due to the fact that Venezuelan Christmas carols are not the kind of Christmas repertoire that Canadians are used to hearing, which are usually soft or slow songs. The Venezuelan Christmas repertoire they perform conveys a lot of joy, in part thanks to the body movements and choreography included. Iván is certain that the way in which the audience's expectations influence their performances is in the choice of repertoire, favouring the selection of more joyful works with accelerated rhythms, more famous works, or those that include choreography.<sup>81</sup> There are also works that they avoid singing on occasions when they know there

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<sup>79</sup> Galván, “Partially-Automated Live Performance,” 47.

<sup>80</sup> Kari Veblen, “Principal themes: Compelling connections: Community and music making in Canada,” *Canadian Music Educator* Vol. 45, N° 2 (Winter 2003): 26. An example of this adaptation as a means of flexibility (in terms of repertoire and performance) is the Toronto Jewish Folk Choir. According to Wolters-Fredlund, they adjusted their repertoire throughout the course of the 20th century as a way of adapting to the Canadian environment and period, while remaining true to their mission and identity. Wolters-Fredlund, “We Shall Be Better Canadians by Being Conscious Jews,” 187–201.

<sup>81</sup> Various Latin American musical styles are often described as “transmitting energy and joy.” For instance, Leslie Hall's survey on appreciations of Latin American dance music resulted in statements such as: “[it's] exciting; [it helps] to express and release your feelings and bound up energy; [it cheers] you up; and [it moves] my soul to dance.” Hall, “Rumba and Chachachá,” 8.



will be no Venezuelan audience, perhaps because the song is not so attractive to a general audience.<sup>82</sup> In addition, the choir usually tries to maintain a stable setlist with an order that favours the comfort and well-being of the chorus members. By this, Iván refers specifically to the fact that for the choristers, most of whom are over fifty years old, it would not be appropriate to sing three fast songs in a row. He believes that the ideal here is to alternate fast and slow songs, so that the choristers have the opportunity to rest from time to time and can perform well.<sup>83</sup>

In the same way, Pires (*Canto Vivo*'s director) points out that every time they have performed at the VLACC - a Latin American cultural centre - the public reception has been good to the point that people already recognise some of the songs. In other places they have also had a good reception, with the audience valuing the choir for the variety of styles and rhythms they have showcased. For instance, in their concerts they have created a programme in the form of a "Journey through Latin America," in which they built a programme that passes through different Latin American countries following a particular route. The public reception was quite good, as "Canadians are very into culture. They like to learn about other cultures."<sup>84</sup> When they performed concerts outside the Latin American community in places like the Vancouver Public Library and the Museum of Vancouver, Pires notes that he "could feel very good feedback from the audience in terms of energy in the place: they were happy and laughing... they had a good time."<sup>85</sup> However, Pires admits that in the future he would like to create clearer channels of communication with the Canadian public to receive their feedback. "I've seen that they enjoy, they are having a good time, even if it's an amateur choir and it's not a perfect choir... they have some problems about tuning sometimes, etc."<sup>86</sup> This is why, like Iván C., he points out that "the [Canadian] audience usually likes most more vivid songs, more dancing genres."<sup>87</sup> This is why they mostly feature works with these characteristics in their repertoire. "They expect the rhythm... they wouldn't understand the language at first... most of them, [but] they expect a

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<sup>82</sup> Iván C., interview.

<sup>83</sup> Iván C., interview.

<sup>84</sup> Pires, interview.

<sup>85</sup> Pires, interview.

<sup>86</sup> Pires, interview.

<sup>87</sup> Pires, interview.

happy thing [...]. This is one thing for the general public that we need to focus on.”<sup>88</sup> At the same time, Pires tries to strike a balance in the type of repertoire to be tackled, in that he also gives space to more contemplative works that the choir likes to perform.<sup>89</sup>

Similarly, Cabrera mentions that, thinking of the Canadian community - who are always very happy with the performances of the *Ágora Ibero-American Choir* - they included translations of the works performed in the concerts.<sup>90</sup> Sosa (*Cantares Latin Choir*'s director), for his part, also points out that Canadian audiences have always been very receptive. Due to the fact that the choral works are so joyful and rhythmically attractive, he explains that “you see people moving their arms and legs, like dancing.”<sup>91</sup> Moreover, he notes that the feedback received by festival juries usually focuses on the choir's rhythmic strengths: “They are fascinated by the rhythms we perform. They love it!” Markano (*Cantares Latin Choir*'s assistant director) says that the juries that have evaluated them “really appreciate the richness of the rhythms. The fact that an amateur choir like us can tackle such complex rhythms seems very mysterious to them. Which I attribute to genetics, actually. [...] And of course, obviously we have it in our blood, it's not the same as [having] learned it.”<sup>92</sup> They point out that many Canadians come up to the choristers at the end of concerts and make comments such as, “we don't understand anything you say, but the melody it's so beautiful, so nice, so striking!”<sup>93</sup> Markano adds that the energy the choir transmits “engages with the audience in general,” which results in “the energy of the

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<sup>88</sup> Pires, interview.

<sup>89</sup> One example to which Pires refers is the work “Jacinto Chiclana,” with text by Jorge Luis Borges and music by Astor Piazzolla.

<sup>90</sup> Cabrera, interview.

<sup>91</sup> Sosa and Markano, interview. [“tu ves a la gente moviendo los brazos y las piernas, como bailando.”]

It is not for nothing that Lise Waxer, quoted by Leslie Hall, states: “Transcending geographic and cultural boundaries has been central to Latin music's affective power—its capacity as dance music to literally move thousands of people.” Hall, “Rumba and Chachachá,” 1.

<sup>92</sup> Sosa and Markano, interview. [“quedan fascinados con los ritmos que interpretamos. ¡Les encanta!”]; [“aprecian muchísimo lo rico de los ritmos. El hecho de que un coro amateur como nosotros pueda afrontar ritmos tan complejos les parece muy misterioso. Que yo se lo atribuyo a la genética en realidad. [...] Y claro, obviamente nosotros lo tenemos en nuestra sangre, no es lo mismo que [haberlo] aprendido.”]

<sup>93</sup> Sosa and Markano, interview. [“no entendemos nada de lo que dicen, pero nada más la melodía ¡es tan bonita, tan agradable, tan llamativa!”]

audience feeling very strong.”<sup>94</sup> In other words, their way of performing can captivate even those unfamiliar with the musical genres covered, considering that other choral concerts and the other choirs at choral festivals often feature genres very different from the ones performed by *Cantares Latin Choir*. For this reason, Sosa says that they have never felt the need to change the way they interpret works in order to satisfy the expectations of a jury or the Canadian community. In other words, whether in Calgary or Venezuela, the *Cantares Latin Choir* would perform in the same way.<sup>95</sup>

Similarly, Guzmán (*UNAM Canada Choir*'s former director) points out that the Canadian public's reception of the choir has always been good, which is why he states that he never felt the need to adapt the repertoire or the way of performing, and that “we never thought of satisfying anyone.”<sup>96</sup>

In the case of *Viene Sonando*, Ramos points out that, although the reception of the Canadian public has been positive, at a certain point they decided not to perform at bazaars or large events, since people just pass by and do not pay attention to them. In addition to this, she says that “we are very small - only ten members - and we are an acoustic group, intimate, for small venues, so that people can sit and listen to us.”<sup>97</sup> Audiences at their concerts “may not understand what's going on, but people always [are] with a smile.”<sup>98</sup> She adds that, for her, personally, “what fills me the most is when we sing to older people. [...] They leave as if with a gift.”<sup>99</sup> In these senior's homes, despite the inability of some elderly people to move their bodies, she says she sees a positive bodily reaction from the audience. In turn, in the Community Centres, “the children dance with us, people stand up and dance.”<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Sosa and Markano, interview. [“engancha con el público en general”]; [“la energía del público se sienta muy fuerte.”]

<sup>95</sup> Sosa and Markano, interview.

<sup>96</sup> Guzmán, interview. [“nunca pensamos en satisfacer a nadie.”]

<sup>97</sup> Ramos, interview. [“somos muy poquitas - solo diez integrantes - y somos un grupo acústico, íntimo, de lugares pequeños, para que la gente pueda sentarse a escucharnos.”]

<sup>98</sup> Ramos, interview. [“puede que no entienda lo que está pasando, pero la gente siempre [está] con una sonrisa.”]

<sup>99</sup> Ramos, interview. [“lo que más me llena es cuando le cantamos a las personas mayores. [...] Se van como con un regalo.”]

<sup>100</sup> Ramos, interview. [“los niños bailan con nosotros, la gente se para y baila.”]

According to Katz, the Canadian public's reception of *Fusión Latina* was good, thanks to the fact that there was a resurgence of Latin American music in Canada in the 2000s, of which choral music was also a part. "We had nice audiences when we did our concerts,"<sup>101</sup> she says. Regarding audience expectations, she adds: "I don't know if I had any notion that the audience had any expectations. We didn't last long enough to have an audience and get to know them and know if they had an expectation or wanted something special."<sup>102</sup> In this way, she claims not to have changed anything in the way they performed: "it seems to me that the idea was to bring authenticity here and show what is ours without trying to change or incorporate anything that is *gringo*. The purpose of having a Latin choir is to stand out and to reaffirm and re-establish that identity."<sup>103</sup> Here it is evident that Katz, like Guzmán, did not feel the need to change the structure of their performances or their choice and organization of repertoire in order to make their concerts more accessible and enjoyable for the public. On the contrary, while conducting their respective choirs, they preferred not to change anything, as the audience reception was good from the beginning.

Clarke notes that *Nuestras Voces* had few opportunities to sing to a general Canadian audience. However, the times that they did, particularly the three times that they performed at City Hall, they were very well received, to the point that people who worked there came up to congratulate them. Clarke realised that "even when they didn't understand what the girls were saying in Spanish, they still liked it a lot. And they found it amusing that the girls, [being] so young, were speaking another language."<sup>104</sup> However, she assures us that,

It was never my direction or my vision to do a performance that the audience would like more than the girls. Honestly, [if it were], the girls would have a terrible time at the show. And that energy, that joy that you're not going to see, is going to be transmitted to people

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<sup>101</sup> Katz, interview. ["Tuvimos lindas audiencias en los momentos que hicimos nuestros conciertos."]

<sup>102</sup> Katz, interview. ["no sé si tuve noción de que público tuviera alguna expectativa. No tuvimos suficiente vida como para tener una audiencia y llegar a conocerla y saber si tenían una expectativa o querían algo en especial."]

<sup>103</sup> Katz, interview. ["me parece que la idea era traer la autenticidad aquí y mostrar lo que es nuestro sin tratar de cambiar o de incorporar nada de lo que sea gringo. El propósito de tener un coro latino es de destacarse y de reafirmar y restablecer esa identidad."]

<sup>104</sup> Clarke, interview. ["aunque no entendieran lo que estaban diciendo las niñas en español, igual les gustaba mucho. Y ellos encontraban entretenido, que las chicas, [siendo] tan niñas, hablaran otro idioma."]

and people are going to pick up that they're not having a good time and they're not going to have a good time either. So, I always focused more on the girls having a good time on stage so people would pick up on that angle more.<sup>105</sup>

Under this same lens, Clarke explains that she took great care in choosing the folk repertoire to perform, as according to her "it's hard to find folk songs that were more entertaining, livelier."<sup>106</sup> In addition, when teaching them, she explained to the singers the meaning of the songs, as many of them contain idioms or sayings with specific meanings, many of which were not known to the girls. However, Clarke admits that this type of repertoire was chosen by her mother - who was always by her side - as she did not know such a wide folkloric repertoire at the time.<sup>107</sup> We see here that Clarke has a particular approach, as the reception of the audience does not matter to her more than the enjoyment of the choristers in performing the repertoire.

Above, this chapter asked whether Latin American choirs have needed to change their repertoire and/or the way they perform in order to gain access to social and cultural space. According to the testimonies of the conductors, it is possible to conclude that these choirs have not needed to make these changes, nor are they convinced that such changes would result in a more positive reception. On the contrary, it is the Canadian context itself that somehow appreciates their maintenance (to a large extent) of Latin American authenticity in their work.

As mentioned in the introduction to this research, Deborah Pacini has established that the process of hybridization is often considered dangerous and contaminating, as it can result in cultural products that are in the middle of something and, in turn, nowhere. Her work highlights the conflicted relationship that Latin American musicians in diaspora have had with hybridization, where the desire to preserve cultural identity in its purest state and the external

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<sup>105</sup> Clarke, interview. ["nunca fue mi dirección ni mi visión hacer una presentación que le gustara más al público que a las niñas. Sinceramente, [si así fuera], las niñas lo pasarían terrible en la presentación. Y esa energía, esa alegría que no se va a ver, se va a transmitir a la gente y la gente va a captar que no lo están pasando bien y ellos tampoco lo van a pasar bien. Entonces, yo siempre me enfocaba más en que las chicas lo pasaran bien en el escenario para que la gente captara más ese ángulo."]

<sup>106</sup> Clarke, interview. ["es difícil encontrar canciones folclóricas que fueran más entretenidas, más movidas."]

<sup>107</sup> Clarke, interview.

factors that threaten to contaminate it come into play.<sup>108</sup> Thus, Pacini suggests that the history of Latin American musicians and their music in North America has developed on the basis of the dilemma: to what extent do we embrace or reject hybridization?<sup>109</sup> In Canada, however, Latin American choirs demonstrate that they have not fallen victim to the overvaluation of “whiteness and [the] Eurocentric,” as Pacini argues has been the case elsewhere. Latin American choirs in Canada have not been forced to change their image, repertoire, or performance in order to look and sound “whiter” and thus enter the Canadian choral circle. On the contrary, the Canadian community has been able to accept and value them because of the care these choirs take in conveying their art as faithfully as possible.<sup>110</sup>

According to Victor Armony, Martha Barriga and Daniel Schugurensky, the multiculturalism policy established in Canada in 1971 has been criticized by some for emphasizing ethnic differences and for encouraging immigrants to follow the traditions of their countries of origin rather than conforming to the “Canadian way of life.”<sup>111</sup> In other words, for some, ethnic diversity is seen as something negative.<sup>112</sup> However, according to the directors interviewed, Canadian audiences have always been grateful to witness a cultural expression different from the “Canadian way of life,” so the choirs have never felt any pressure to change their repertoire or the way they perform it. Thus, the Canadian public appreciates the preservation of the Latin American authenticity that these choirs have been able to convey.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Pacini, *Oye Como Va!*, vii.

<sup>109</sup> Pacini, *Oye Como Va!*

<sup>110</sup> At this point it is necessary to recall an interesting phenomenon explained by Pacini, which was already mentioned in the introduction to this thesis. She points out that the most significant Latin American music genres have emerged from the poorest and most underprivileged sectors, as is the case with New York Salsa. But in order to be accepted in circles with high social status, it went through a process of “whitening,” which consists of distancing them from humble and racially different origins. However, today there are Afro-Latin music genres - such as *Mambo* and *Reggaeton* - that have achieved great popularity and never passed through a whitening filter. Pacini, *Oye Como Va!*, 10.

<sup>111</sup> Victor Armony, Martha Barriga, and Daniel Schugurensky, “Citizenship Learning and Political Participation: The Experience of Latin American Immigrants in Canada,” *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* Vol. 29, No. 57–58 (2004): 22.

<sup>112</sup> Armony, Barriga, and Schugurensky, “Citizenship Learning and Political Participation,” 23.

<sup>113</sup> In 2004 Morrison optimistically noted that many Canadian music students have a fascination with local and foreign choral music, cultures, and periods. In the same line, she

Probably, one of the reasons for this openness lies in the good health that choral activity enjoys in Canada, since according to Abbott and Meredith, “[p]erforming choral music is a widespread and grassroots activity in Canada. There is virtually no place in Canada where choral music is not practiced. From church and school choirs to independent community choirs of every size, type, and style of repertoire, there is a choir for every skill level and every music preference [...]”<sup>114</sup> They further inform us that “[n]early every town in Canada, regardless of size, hosts its own annual music festival, of which choral singing is a major component.”<sup>115</sup> Therefore, the familiarity of the Canadian community with choral activity is evident and favours the positive reception of different types of choirs, regardless of where they come from geographically and the type of repertoire they perform.

Regarding hybridization, Galván (as we have seen), regards this process as an integral part of the construction of cultural identity and as a way in which aspirations and power relations are articulated, transformed, and negotiated. He states that opposing terms such as hybridization and authenticity are increasingly being managed by Latin American musicians as they have achieved to position themselves politically, culturally, and socially through their music.<sup>116</sup> Personally, I understand this as the empowering of Latin American communities, in that they have taken over cultural identity and power relations by adapting them according to their own requirements above all. From this point of view, we can observe that Latin American choirs constantly attempt to position themselves in the Canadian context - articulating, transforming and negotiating their aspirations - although, as we have seen, without the need to resort to a process of hybridization that might “contaminate” their art.<sup>117</sup> It is possible to say this because none of the processes discussed in this chapter would fit into the category of hybridization in the

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described valuable efforts made by herself in to “bring a world of choral music into the classroom.” Morrison, “Music Makers: Choral,” 34.

<sup>114</sup> Patricia Abbott and Victoria Meredith, “Canada's Choral Landscape,” In *The Cambridge Companion to Choral Music*, ed. André de Quadros (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 105.

<sup>115</sup> Abbott and Meredith, “Canada's Choral Landscape,” 107.

<sup>116</sup> Galván, “Partially-Automated Live Performance,” 11-12.

<sup>117</sup> Moreover, Gloria Rodríguez, who interviewed choristers who participated in *Fusion Latina*, states that “in their daily routine [they are] are constantly negotiating with both Latin culture and Canadian culture.” Rodríguez, “Personal A/R/Tographic Narratives of Cultural Displacement,” 89.

deepest sense of the term, for we have not witnessed any radical musical shift in which Canadian or English-speaking influences are borrowed in order to create a musical sub-genre according to the needs or expectations of the local milieu.<sup>118</sup> What we have seen, rather, is the search for a positive reception from Canadian audiences through actions that do not affect the authenticity of the performance or the preservation of Latin American choral repertoire: explaining the content and context of some works in their concerts, including repertoire that is attractive to the audience (and to the choristers), arranging the setlist appropriately, and including body movements and choreography. It should also be noted that the full range of these measures have not been adopted in their entirety by all of the choirs studied, and that two conductors (Guzmán and Katz) were completely unwilling to satisfy any kind of audience expectations. These attempts to reach out to audiences suggest that, in the words of Lee Willingham, “[r]elationships within the choir are extended at concert time to include the audience. The relationship to audience is also community.”<sup>119</sup> For, despite the differences in language (with an audience that does not understand the words of the works), in style (performing musical genres perhaps never heard before by the audience) and in performative approaches (adding body movements and choreography as part of the works), the directors evidence involvement with the Canadian audience in their performances that speaks of the creation of community bonds, however momentary or evolving.

Concluding this chapter, it is evident that Latin American choirs in Canada prioritize preserving their authenticity. However, for this preservation to be successfully carried out, which necessarily leads to a reaffirmation of the Latin American identity, it is first necessary to ensure that the choirs themselves endure. Therefore, the main reason that all these choirs profess a

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<sup>118</sup> One of the conclusions drawn by Gloria Rodríguez from the testimony collected from the three choristers is that the “participants showed a better adjustment to Canadian culture, acknowledging that they do not longer belong to their native countries but to both cultures. [...] Cultures that are not parallel instead they cross with each other.” Rodríguez, “Personal A/R/Tographic Narratives of Cultural Displacement,” 62-65. While most Latin American choir conductors in Canada would probably agree with this statement, they have proven themselves capable of maintaining clear boundaries between Latin American and Canadian cultures so as not to fall into musical hybridization.

<sup>119</sup> Willingham, “What Happens When People Sing?,” 330.



policy of open inclusion, in which they accept practically anyone interested in joining their ranks, is the preservation of the choir as an entity.

In addition, the importance given by the conductors to the preservation of Latin American authenticity in the practice of their choirs explains the lack of need to resort to musical arrangements or profound changes in their repertoire in order to be accepted by the Canadian community. Rather, the choirs as entities in themselves have inserted themselves into the local community, whether by performing concerts for charity (in senior citizens' homes, community centres, foster homes, etc.), by participating in choral festivals, or through the institutional bodies on which they depend. So far, these strategies have proven to be successful, for they have been met by the admirable cultural openness of the Canadian community at large.

## CHAPTER 4

### **The Use of Choreography and Body Movements by Latin American Choirs in Canada: Video Performance Analysis.**

The inclusion of choreography and body movements is a typical hallmark of Latin American choirs in their performances as, according to Gualchi and Ordás, they consider the “body as a necessary territory to inhabit for the expression and creation of new forms of transmission.”<sup>1</sup> As mentioned in chapter three of this thesis, two of the most important cultural traditions that have shaped Latin American music are African and Indigenous. From its origins, African music has been linked to dance, a feature that was transferred to Latin American music,<sup>2</sup> including the choral repertoire. And despite attempts by conservatives throughout history to ignore Africanness in Latin American music by suppressing the dance component,<sup>3</sup> this influence has remained. Dance has become a fundamental part of Latin American music to such an extent that the music-dance link seems to be inseparable. Indigenous music in the Latin American context, on the other hand, usually has a festive and/or ritual character, and both Indigenous festivity and ritual include dance as an essential element in most cases. For this reason, it is not possible to understand Indigenous music separately from dance.<sup>4</sup> As might be expected, this influence has

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<sup>1</sup> Florencia Gualchi and Manuel Ordás, “La Interpretación Coral y su Transformación a través de la Puesta en Escena,” *IV Jornadas Estudiantiles de Investigación en Disciplinas Artísticas y Proyectuales (JEIDAP)* (La Plata, 22 y 23 de agosto de 2019): 1-2. [“cuerpo como un territorio necesario de habitar para la expresión y la creación de nuevas formas de transmisión.”]

<sup>2</sup> Adolfo González Henríquez, “Danza, Mestizaje y Carnaval: Un Fenómeno Latinoamericano. El Caso de Barranquilla,” In *Colombia y el Caribe*, ed. Zoila Sotomayor, Carlos Gill and Henry Stein (Barranquilla: Ediciones Uninorte, 2005), 228.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Wade, “Identidad Racial y Nacionalismo: Una Visión Teórica de Latinoamérica,” In *Formaciones de Indianidad: Articulaciones Raciales, Mestizaje y Nación en América Latina*, ed. Marisol de la Cadena (Popayán: Envió Editores, 2007), 391.

<sup>4</sup> Francisca Fernández and Francisca López, “Thuqhuri Marka: Un Pueblo Danzante. Las Danzas Andinas en Santiago de Chile,” In *Santiago Jacha Marka: Danzas, Cosmovisión, Festividades y Acción Política en el Espacio Urbano*, ed. Compañía de Investigación y Danzas Andinas Taypi Aru (Santiago: Editorial Quimantú, 2011), 12.

also spilled over into Latin American choral music that stems from Indigenous traditions. Thus, a large portion of Latin American musical genres have emerged in association with their respective dances (which usually share generic names),<sup>5</sup> and have spread in this way throughout the world.<sup>6</sup>

With this tradition as a precedent, we can understand Latin American choral music as a multimodal expression that needs to be approached as such. That is to say, it is necessary to understand it first and foremost as one that was forged from the inseparable union of music and dance. This connection to dance is intrinsically assumed by conductors and their Latin American choirs in Canada when including choreography and body movements in their repertoire, to such an extent that it is no longer questioned, only put into practice. In turn, acknowledging these roots and putting them into practice can generate intersubjective meaning that ultimately reaffirms the identity of its performers. In other words, whenever Latin American choirs draw on their tradition by performing it multimodally - incorporating music and dance - their sense of identification with their culture can be supported.

Against the background discussed in chapter one, it is possible to understand that Latin American immigration to Canada has resulted in the founding of musical groups, including Latin American choirs. Through my research I want to discover whether these choirs have maintained the inclusion of choreography and body movements in their choral performance as a feature that maintains Latin American authenticity. The aim of this chapter is to examine Latin American immigrant choirs in Canada in order to understand the scope, characteristics, and function of the use of choreography and body movements in their performance practice.

In terms of scope, my research has determined that Latin American immigrant choirs in Canada maintain the inclusion of choreography and body movements as an important element during their live performances in the Canadian context. Furthermore, my findings suggest that this physical performance is recurrently used by these choirs as a way of preserving the Latin American repertoire in its most genuine way of interpretation. This is achieved by uniting the musical styles with elements of the dances associated with them, in such a way as to highlight their characteristic properties and to reveal the multimodal nature of Latin American choral

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<sup>5</sup> For example, the term “Salsa” is used to refer to both the musical genre and the dance genre.

<sup>6</sup> Wade, “Identidad Racial y Nacionalismo,” 393-94.

music. For the purposes of this study, I associate this genuine, multimodal form with Latin American authenticity. And as discussed in chapter three, drawing on definitions by Assi and Sanchez, I will approach the definition of “authenticity” as a way of dealing with respect “for the importance of any legacy from the past,”<sup>7</sup> which “involves cultural values, facts, and attitudes that members of the culture as a whole consider worthy of acceptance and belief.”<sup>8</sup> With this cultural importance in mind, I can suggest that choreography and body movements fulfill a function that goes beyond the enhancement of choral performance to forge Latin American representative elements of identity in the Canadian context.

Before continuing, it is necessary to delimit the concepts of *choreography* and *body movements*, which are the basic terms on which this research is conducted.

According to *Encyclopædia Britannica*, choreography is defined as the art of creating and grouping systematic and organized body movements.<sup>9</sup> “The word derives from the Greek for ‘dance’ and for ‘write;’”<sup>10</sup> and in turn, the way of composing this dance “is creative in the same way in which the composition of music is.”<sup>11</sup> Performance studies scholar André Lepecki establishes that choreography is “a mechanism that simultaneously distributes and organizes dance’s relationship to perception and signification.”<sup>12</sup> Choreographer Katrin Kolo goes further and states that a definition of choreography must consider three dimensions: “choreography as notation (writing); choreography as a social model (moving together), and choreography as a language (communicating).”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Assi, “Searching for the Concept of Authenticity,” 60.

<sup>8</sup> Sánchez, “Cultural Authenticity and Transnational Latina Youth,” 267.

<sup>9</sup> The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Choreography,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*. Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., accessed December 7, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/art/dance/Choreography#ref392646>

<sup>10</sup> The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Choreography,” *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*. Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., accessed December 7, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/art/choreography>

<sup>11</sup> The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Choreography,” <https://www.britannica.com/art/choreography>

<sup>12</sup> André Lepecki, “Choreography as Apparatus of Capture,” *TDR (1988-)* 51, no. 2 (2007): 120.

<sup>13</sup> Katrin Kolo, “Ode to Choreography,” *Organizational Aesthetics* Vol. 5, Iss. 1 (2016): 37.

These three approaches to the concept of choreography are what guide me in this research. In the context of choral music, these approaches help me to understand choreography as the art of composing physical movements into order and pattern and carrying them out as part of choral performance. In the instances that I cover later in this chapter, these definitions also make it possible to address the involved aspects of the dance genres associated with the choreography. Furthermore, that choreography must be organized emphasises that it is written (i.e., prescribed), implies a collectivity in its movements and suggest that it tries, above all, to communicate something.

With respect to “body movements,” I find interesting the vision of philosophers Elisabeth Pacherie and John Michael, in which they state that,

The expressive body movement of choral singers in a non-choreographed setting may be considered improvisational and holds the same potential in synchronization rates [compared to an instrumental ensemble]. Note that these figures are not in reference to the coordination of aural signals but simply peripheral body movement. Nor does this imply that singers should move at exactly the same rate and direction during performance.<sup>14</sup>

Choral music scholars Frank Pooler and Gail L. Shoup, for their part, understood that it was necessary to create a concept that united choral singing with physical expression. That is why they developed the concept of “choralography,” which is “intended to denote fairly simple movement that can be used by a choir to augment, visually, the impact of its work aurally. In other words, choralography is movement, gesture, or pantomime which visually enhances the text or mood of a work during a choral performance.”<sup>15</sup>

However, I believe that neither the term “expressive body movements,” nor “choralography” fully address the concept of “body movements” that my research needs to cover. Specifically, I mean that the body movements observed in the analyzed performances are not usually improvised, often respond to the coordination of aural signals, and generally involve the choristers moving at the same rate and in the same direction during performance. These three aspects do not coincide with the definition proposed by Pacherie and Michael. On the other hand,

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<sup>14</sup> Gary Seighman, “Exploring the Science of Ensemble Gestures, Emotion, and Collaboration in Choral Music Making,” *Choral Journal* Vol 55, N° 9, (Apr 2015): 12.

<sup>15</sup> Danny Green, “Choralography: Expressive Movement for Choral Singing,” *The Choral Journal* 25, no. 3 (1984): 19.

the term “choralography” - according to Pooler and Shoup - might not be as culturally relevant for the musical tradition I am studying, as it is rooted in text and mood, and not musical genres and styles. Therefore, I personally understand “body movements” as the physical expression carried out during the choral performance, which consists of a simple series of coordinated movements, usually established informally, suggested by the choral director and/or agreed upon with the choristers. They are usually simple and repetitive movements, without necessarily making direct allusion to the textual content of the work, but rather related to its musical genre, using one or two elements of the dance traditionally associated with that particular musical style. My definition of “body movements” incorporates aspects associated with “expressive body movements” and “choralography,” but creates a new concept tailored to the context of Latin American immigrant choirs.

Thus, we can understand that the main difference between choreography and body movements lies in the relatively complex, carefully established, and synchronized character of the former, and the freer and less complex nature of the latter. Both can be related to characteristic dances, but whereas choreography includes more elements of dance, body movements choose simple elements derived from them.

Now that these foundational concepts have been established, it is possible to move on to the details of this study. Seven out of the eight choirs addressed in this study have videos of their concerts available on the internet, and these audiovisual records of live performances that took place between 2006 and 2019 are the primary sources for the analysis in this chapter. In my research I found one hundred and fifteen videos available from the seven choirs - totalling around eight hours of video footage - of which forty-eight songs were considered in this analysis. The criteria for selecting these works were: to include only live performances, to avoid repeated songs by the same choirs, to consider mostly videos containing complete works (although it was necessary to include some with excerpts of works, since one of the choirs has few audiovisual records), and to include videos with decent recording quality. Of the forty-eight works performed, forty-three of them include choreography and body movements in their choral performances. This overwhelming majority shows the importance given to physical performance by Latin American choirs in Canada.

In order to analyze each performance in the videos, I made observations guided by the following questions:

1. Is choreography or body movement used in the video performance? What are its features?
2. What is the repertoire performed in the video? To which musical genre or style does it belong?
3. What is the relation between the text of the work and the choreography or body movements?
4. Which musical instruments are used by the choir in the performance of the work? Are these musical instruments incorporated into the body movements? In other words, do those who play the instruments participate in the choreography in the same way as the rest of the choristers?
5. Is the conductor directing the vocal performance and the body movements at the same time, or just the vocal performance?

The observations that arose from addressing these questions while viewing each video provide the basis for the following section of this chapter.<sup>16</sup>

In the next diagram (figure 4.1) it can be seen that, of the seven choirs studied, six use body movements in their performances; and two of them, in addition to body movements, use choreography. Only one of the choirs does not incorporate either category in its performances. This diagram shows the great consideration given by the conductors and choristers to physical performance as part of choral performance. The inclusion of both types of performance is how these choirs provide multimodal information, which refers to the projection of two or more sensory stimuli simultaneously.<sup>17</sup> And this multimodal result is ultimately perceived as a whole

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<sup>16</sup> The detailed description of each choreography or body movement included in each performance can be found in the Appendix A (chart “Detailed analysis of each video performance”).

<sup>17</sup> Antonio Camurri et al., “Multimodal Analysis of Expressive Gesture in Music and Dance Performances,” In *Gesture-Based Communication in Human-Computer Interaction. GW 2003. Lecture Notes in Computer Science*, vol 2915, edited by A. Camurri and G. Volpe. (Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer 2004), 3.

by the audience thanks to the focus that the choristers and conductors give to the elements at play.<sup>18</sup> Thus, the multimodality here is explicit, because although the removal of choreography or body movements from the performance would not greatly affect the sound result of these choirs, such a removal would result in the degradation of the multimodal message conveyed by the choristers and conductors. Thinking about it in this way, I suggest that choreography and body movements enrich the complete musical performances of Latin American choirs in Canada, without distorting the sonic aspect of their performance. As I argue in this chapter, this multimodality plays a role in the preservation of the authentic interpretation of Latin American repertoire, and in turn, supports the search and/or maintenance of identity. This is because the larger Latin American musical tradition - which, as established at the beginning of this chapter, is rooted in the unity of dance and music - has informed the Latin American choral performance practice tradition, and is taken, in turn, as a precedent for the Latin American choirs in Canada. The conductors of the choirs firmly recognise this tradition and try to maintain authenticity in their performances by preserving it.

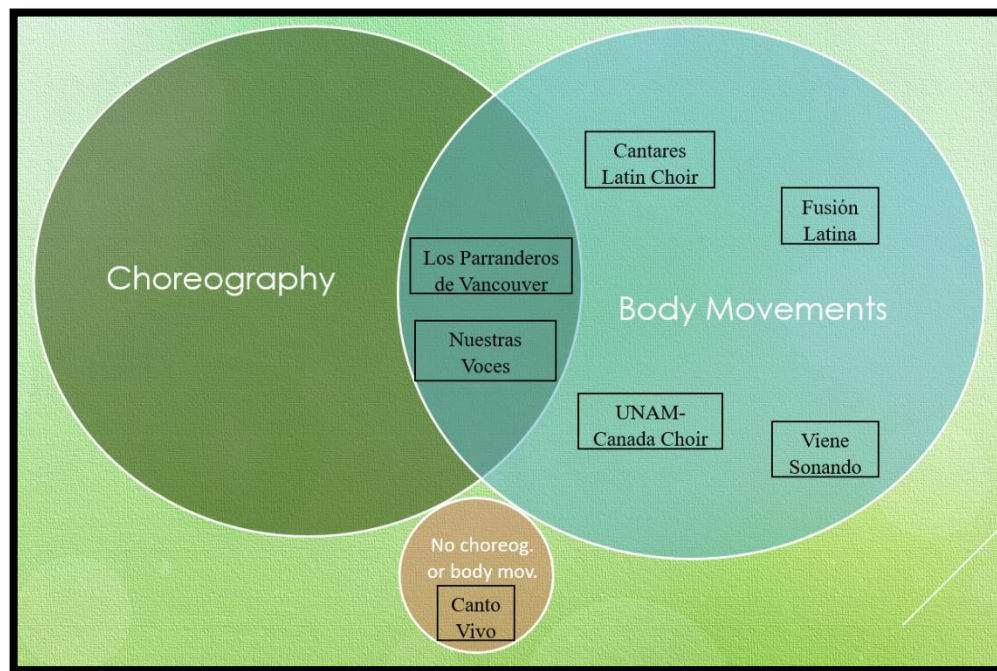


Figure 4.1. Use of choreography and/or body movements by the choirs.

<sup>18</sup> Antonio Camurri and Gualtiero Volpe, “Multimodal Analysis of Expressive Gesture in Music Performance,” In *Musical Robots and Interactive Multimodal Systems. Springer Tracts in Advanced Robotics*, vol 74, edited by J. Solis (Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer 2011), 2.



Each choir's decision as to whether to include choreography or body movements in their performance depends mainly on the approach, willingness, and skills of both the directors and the choristers. For instance, in *Canto Vivo* - which features neither choreography nor body movements - the director (Sergio Pires) acknowledges that he would not know how to include body movements or choreography, although it is clear to him that it could be an effective practice for the choir and could be attractive for the audience. Nor has he ever seriously considered including it: "I've never found out about that. I'm very concerned about the music... the tune, the rhythm, the precision, the words, etc."<sup>19</sup>

A different case occurs in *Cantares Latin Choir*, since Juan Sosa, its director, comments that at a certain moment they decided not to include choreography in their repertoire because,

The best thing is for everyone to express themselves and sing from the heart. [...] We have to transmit to the audience what we are singing, because if we don't feel it, they won't feel it. And I think [the choir] does a good job; our members enjoy very much when they sing, and they do it from their being. That gives a really good vibe with the audience.<sup>20</sup>

This is why, when watching the videos of their performances, it is possible to see that this choir only uses body movements that flow naturally, but which are always directly related to the movements corresponding to the musical-dance genres being performed. For instance, in the seven videos of *Cantares Latin Choir* included in this study, it is possible to observe that the body movements incorporated, although performed naturally by the choristers, are related to the movements used in the dances of the musical genres performed: Bossa Nova, Venezuelan Tonada, Joropo, Candombe, Venezuelan Danza, and Venezuelan Merengue.<sup>21</sup> It is possible to assume that this naturalness is ultimately what allows the choristers to connect with the audience: being spontaneous, these body movements act as a natural counterpart to the song, contributing to its enhancement.

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<sup>19</sup> Pires, interview.

<sup>20</sup> Sosa and Markano, interview. ["lo mejor es que cada quien se exprese y cante con el corazón. [...] Tenemos que transmitirle al público lo que estamos cantando, porque si nosotros no lo sentimos, ellos no lo van a sentir. Y creo que [el coro] hace un buen trabajo; nuestros integrantes disfrutan mucho cuando cantan y lo hacen desde su ser. Eso da una muy buena vibra con el público."]

<sup>21</sup> The detailed explanation of each of these videos can be found in the Appendix A (chart "Detailed analysis of each video performance").

The aforementioned relationship between body movements/choreography and musical genres is addressed in the diagram below (figure 4.2). Here, we can observe that the absolute majority of the musical genres addressed by the seven choirs are performed together with body movements; four of them are performed only with choreography; and three of them are performed with either body movements or choreography. It is interesting to note the great variety of musical styles that the choirs take on in their repertoire and perform in a multimodal way (choral performance together with physical performance). This speaks to these choirs' desire to relate musical styles to their respective dances (or related dances), with the aim of carrying out a genuine and authentic interpretation of the work, while at the same time enhancing the properties of the particular musical genre.<sup>22</sup>

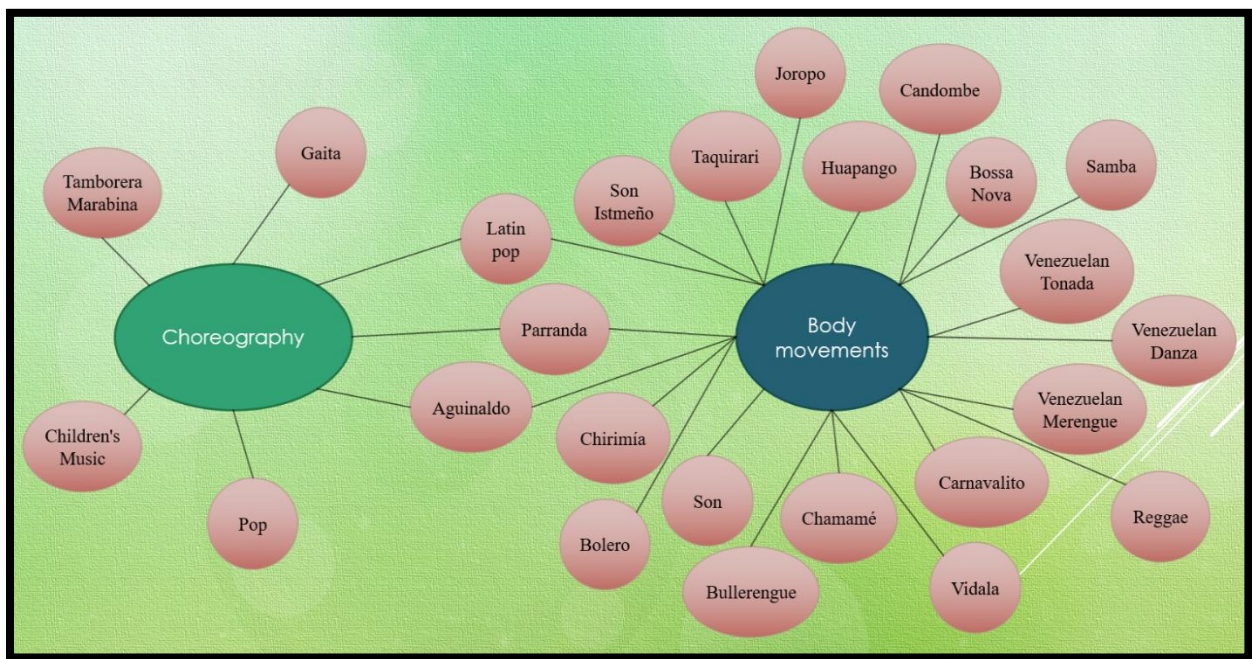


Figure 4.2. Musical genres interpreted by the choirs including choreography and/or body movements.

Regarding the relation between the text of the works and the physical movements used, of the forty-eight works analyzed, only four include choreography or body movements that are

<sup>22</sup> The titles of the works performed in each video can be found in the Appendix A (chart “Detailed analysis of each video performance”).

directly related to the text of the songs.<sup>23</sup> This shows that the inclusion of physical performance rarely enhances the textual content of the work, but rather, physical aspects of the performance are developed primarily in relation to the musical genre of the particular piece, borrowing dance components from the available spectrum. It is important to note that all of the musical styles listed on the diagram (with the exception of children's music, pop, Latin pop, reggae, and bossa nova) are also dance genres that feature their own characteristic movements or are closely related to a dance genre. An example of this can be observed in "Bullerengue" by *Fusión Latina*,<sup>24</sup> a work that belongs to the musical and dance genre *bullerengue*, in which the body movements performed by the choir - although simplified - are directly related to the *bullerengue* dance genre. During the entire song choristers perform slight leanings to the sides and displacements with their feet (but always returning to the same place), in addition to shoulder and trunk movements. These movements are incited by the ostinato performed by the drum and maracas, typical of Afro-Latin dances like *bullerengue*.<sup>25</sup> It is in this way that the attempt to enhance the musical work by reinforcing its multimodal character – that is, by developing its sonic and visual scope simultaneously - is once again evident. In other words, what is important here are the musical and bodily aspects - and not the textual ones - in order to maintain Latin American authenticity in choral performance.

During some of the live performances analyzed, musical instruments are played by choir members or invited performers. On the one hand, the use of musical instruments plays a role in the reaffirmation of identity, as most of them are typical or native to Latin American folklore. The instruments played in the videos are: *cuatro venezolano*, *charango*, *tambor*, *bombo legüero*,

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<sup>23</sup> These songs are as follows: "Bullerengue" performed by *Fusión Latina*, "El Burrito Sabanero" performed by *Los Parranderos de Vancouver*, "Color Esperanza" and "True Colors" performed by *Nuestras Voces*. The relationship between the texts of these songs and the body movements and choreography included in their performances are explained in detail in Appendix A ("Detailed analysis of each video performance").

<sup>24</sup> "Fusion Latina Latin Choir June 2006," *YouTube* video, 1:21:21 (from 1:03:23). June 8, 2020. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qIHqrraflvE>  
Descriptions of the body movements used in this work can be found in the Appendix A (chart "Detailed analysis of each video performance").

<sup>25</sup> The dances used in the musical-dance genre *bullerengue* can be watched in the documentary film *Bullerengue, la Historia de Tres Voces* [*Bullerengue, the Story of Three Voices*]. Josmi Amín, *Bullerengue, la Historia de Tres Voces* (Colombia: Negrita Films, 2014), 27 min, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAfYIN4zdUo&ab\\_channel=NegritaFilms](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAfYIN4zdUo&ab_channel=NegritaFilms)

*maracas, bongo, güira, furruco, cajón peruano, and zampoña.* On the other hand, in eighteen of the thirty-nine songs which include instrumentation, the instruments are considered within the choreography or series of body movements, because the instrumentalists participate in the movements at the same time that they play the instruments. This is because the figure of the “guest musician” is not usually used by these choirs, but rather the choristers themselves play the instruments that the piece requires. The fact that in these eighteen cases the instrumentalists participate in the physical performance is not a coincidence, since we can extrapolate that, due to the habit acquired by them of singing and performing the physical movements in the performances of the choir, they continue to do so even if they have to play an instrument at the same time. An example of this can be seen in the video of “Maquerule” by *Fusión Latina*<sup>26</sup> (figure 4.3), which features egg shakers, bell, *güira*, and *bongo*. In this case, three of the four instrumentalists (except for the bongo player) simultaneously sing and perform body movements, using movements related with *chirimía* dance, which is the genre to which this work belongs. Once again, the impulse to carry out the performance to its maximum multimodal splendor prevails here, which is capable of motivating a chorister to develop multiple functions simultaneously - vocal, physical and instrumental - in order to achieve the desired result.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> “Maquerule, Fusion Latina 2010 Nov 2010,” *YouTube* video, 3:30. December 4, 2012. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6-CWZkv204>

Descriptions of the body movements used in this work can be found in the Appendix A (chart “Detailed analysis of each video performance”)

<sup>27</sup> More details regarding which musical instruments are used in each work can be found in the Appendix A (chart “Detailed analysis of each video performance”).



Figure 4.3. Still from “Maquerule” by *Fusi3n Latina*. The musical instruments used by the choristers are circled in red. From left to right they are egg shakers, bell, and *güira*.

Addressing another area, the role that directors play in the performance of body movements and/or choreography can have different levels of importance. In the videos it is possible to see that some directors not only conduct the vocal performance during their concerts, but also sometimes lead the physical performance. The next diagram (figure 4.4) illustrates the choirs whose directors only conduct the vocal performance, and those whose directors conduct both types of performance simultaneously. It is worth noting the importance given by the choirs to physical performance, to the extent that the directors of three choirs are responsible for leading this aspect - participating in the display too - at the same time that they conduct the vocal performance.

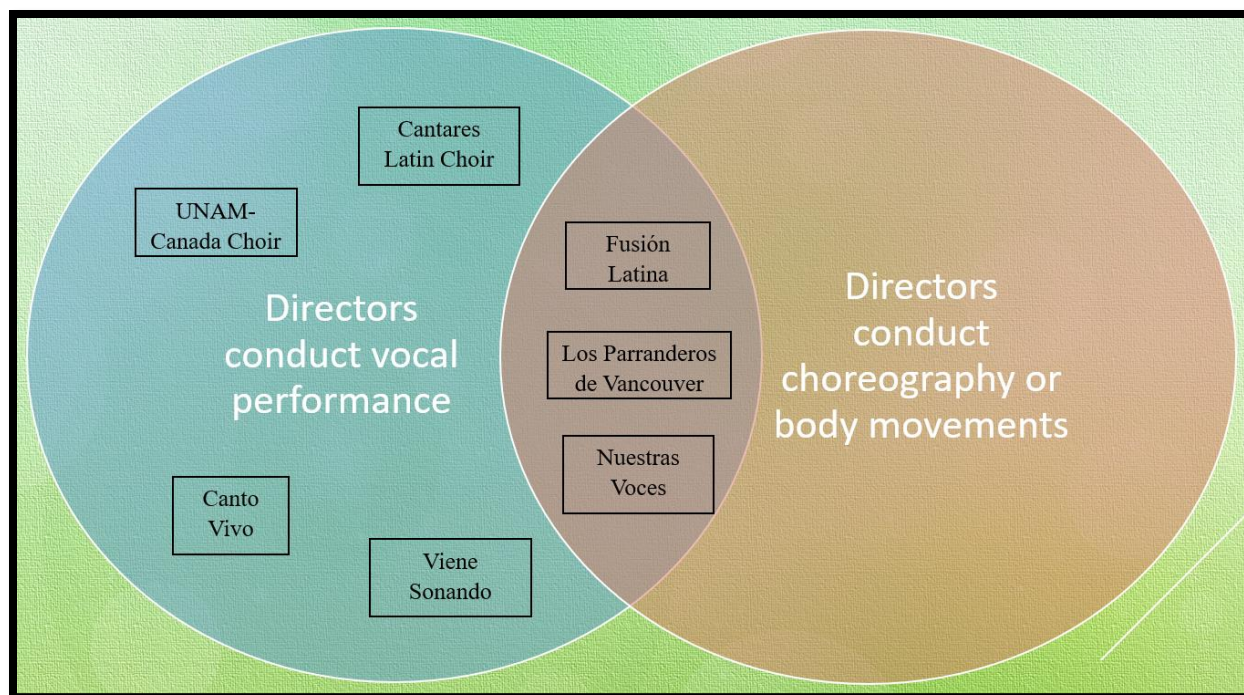


Figure 4.4. Directors' roles in conducting vocal performance and leading physical performance.

The importance given by the interviewed choir directors to the inclusion of physical movement in the performance has different emphases, depending on the areas they want to privilege. Iván C., former director of *Los Parranderos de Vancouver*, points out that in this choir they include choreography and body movements because they want to highlight the characteristic stamp of Venezuelan music and “because it’s something that North American choirs don’t do. So, it’s an attraction, it’s more of a show. Many people tell us ‘I didn’t understand anything, but you danced so beautifully.’”<sup>28</sup> On the other hand, he explains that in Venezuela “there are very few choirs that don’t have any [body] movement or choreography. [...] I don’t remember any group in Venezuela that doesn’t have some kind of dance.”<sup>29</sup> That is to say, perhaps one of the strongest arguments Iván C. had for including physical performance in the choral activity of his

<sup>28</sup> Iván C., interview. [“porque es algo que los coros norteamericanos no hacen. Entonces es un atractivo, hace más show. Muchos nos comentan ‘no entendí nada, ¡pero qué bello bailaban!’”]

<sup>29</sup> Iván C., interview. [“hay muy pocos coros que no tengan nada de movimiento [corporal] o coreografía. [...] No recuerdo ningún grupo en Venezuela que no tenga algún tipo de baile.”]

choir is the preservation of a tradition coming from his country of origin (Venezuela), which cannot conceive of a choral presentation without body movements or choreography.

Julia Clarke, former director of *Nuestras Voces*, says that the inclusion of body movements and choreography was done in order to make the performance of the repertoire more attractive to the choristers. She was interested in “giving more movement. Because I felt that the traditional [chorus] was boring: standing up, straight, with hands behind your back...”<sup>30</sup> She developed this way of thinking while she was a choir member of *Nuestras Voces* (before becoming director), because at that time she says that she would have liked “to be able to move more, to do more dances. [...] I took the things that I would have liked, taking advantage of the fact that [later] I had the power to do those things.”<sup>31</sup> On the one hand, Clarke’s testimony alludes to the Eurocentric ideal of a still, uniform, and disciplined choir, as discussed in Deborah Bradley’s research.<sup>32</sup> Clearly, Clarke demonstrates her rejection of this Eurocentric ideal. On the other hand, this director ratifies the importance of including physical performance in choral activity, not only from a director’s point of view, but also from a chorister’s. This way of looking at the problem from two different angles gives greater weight to the argument she makes for including body movements and choreography: to make the choral experience more attractive to choristers.

According to the testimony gathered from the conductors of the eight choirs studied, it is possible to establish that rhythm has a preeminent place in Latin American choral music and a privileged place in its performance. This is another reason (in addition to preserving multimodal performance traditions) that, for some of these directors, the inclusion of choreography and body movements is so important, as it is a way of feeling these rhythms in the body. In the case of the *UNAM Canada Choir*, its former director Ricardo Guzmán points out that the body movements included in some songs, besides being an attractive element for the audience, were added more than anything else to help the choristers to follow the rhythm of the pieces. Therefore, rather than being detrimental to vocal technique, for Guzmán “it was a resource to overcome some rhythmic

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<sup>30</sup> Clarke, interview. [“dar más movimiento. Porque encontraba aburrido lo tradicional [de un coro]: parados, derechos, con las manos atrás.”]

<sup>31</sup> Clarke, interview. [“poder moverme más, hacer más bailes. [...] Fui tomando las cosas que a mí me hubieran gustado, aprovechando que [después] tenía el poder de hacer esas cosas.”]

<sup>32</sup> Bradley, “The Inclusion Conundrum,” 14.

difficulty.”<sup>33</sup> Marianella Ramos, director of *Viene Sonando*, points out that in their performances they have included body movements and choreography “because it’s part of us and its another way of transmitting, another resource. And honestly, this choir can never be quiet.”<sup>34</sup> That is, this refusal to remain still in order to feel the rhythms in a more embodied way is a sign of the multimodality sought by these directors. In addition, Ramos emphasizes that many times the inclusion of body movements “favours rhythmic understanding,” because otherwise, it is more difficult for them to approach a work rhythmically. For this reason, she often requires the choir members to mark the pulse with their feet and hands during rehearsals. “When they don’t feel the rhythm of a *merengue*, a *danzón*, a *conga*... I tell them, ‘Dance it!’”<sup>35</sup> she explains. This is how they finally manage to tackle rhythmic complexity. “If they try to do it from paper, is impossible!”<sup>36</sup>

Fabiana Katz, former director of *Fusión Latina*, emphasizes the cultural importance of dance for her choristers and raises new considerations about how dance might support vocal technique:

The Venezuelans danced constantly... they dance, dance, dance. Every time we stopped, they started dancing. We would take a break in the rehearsal, and they would keep singing and dancing. They’d bring out their *cuatros*, they’d sing their stuff... all the time! And every now and then on some of the songs we did, a couple of the choristers would come out and do a little dance in front of the choir to show off. Because they did it instinctively... constantly.<sup>37</sup>

Thus, in consensus with the choir, they agreed to incorporate some body movements into some of the works. Katz explains that “when I saw them dancing in the middle of a rehearsal, we said ‘well, wouldn’t it be nice if we showed the audience this very thing, which is what the music

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<sup>33</sup> Guzmán, interview. [“fue un recurso para poder superar alguna dificultad rítmica.”]

<sup>34</sup> Ramos, interview. [“porque es parte de nosotros y es otra manera de transmitir, otro recurso. Y honestamente, este coro nunca se puede quedar tranquilo.”]

<sup>35</sup> Ramos, interview. “Cuando no sienten el ritmo atravesado de un merengue, un danzón, una conga... les digo ‘¡Báilalo!’”]

<sup>36</sup> Ramos, interview. [“Si lo tratan de hacer desde el papel, ¡imposible!”]

<sup>37</sup> Katz, interview. [“los venezolanos bailaban constantemente... bailan, bailan, bailan. Cada vez que frenábamos se ponían a bailar. Hacíamos un intervalo en el ensayo y seguían cantando y bailaban. Sacaban los cuatros, cantaban sus cosas... ¡Todo... todo el tiempo! Y de vez en cuando en algunos de los temas que hicimos salía un par de coristas y hacían un bailecito frente al coro para mostrar. Porque lo hacían instintivamente... constantemente.”]



brings to life in the course of a rehearsal or singing the song itself?”<sup>38</sup> In any case, even when they had not decided to add movements to a work, “the choir was always dancing,”<sup>39</sup> she adds. The incorporation of body movements, according to Katz, was done in such a way as not to impair the technique or comfort of the choristers when singing. Moreover, she says that movement can be tremendously beneficial:

The idea of moving and not being stiff for sure changes the ease of singing because movement relaxes tensions. When you're relaxed, the voice flows the way it's supposed to flow. Then all those tensions that we create, that keep the voice stuck and rigid, are released when you dance, when you move. The fact of feeling the music with your whole body gives you the possibility to have a holistic experience. [...] And at the same time, the idea of moving and keeping the body fluid gives you the possibility not to put your body between the vocal apparatus and the voice. As a singing teacher I realise that the more we try to support and control the sound, the more tension we create and the worse we sing. So, relaxing the body, making movements and relaxing the tensions that we generally engender in the neck and pectorals, gives the voice the possibility to engage the necessary muscles and only the necessary muscles, not the muscles that we try to grab in our quest for control. [It also] gives you the possibility to feel the music as a whole being, rather than just with your mind.<sup>40</sup>

The importance Katz gives to the relationship between body (and its movement) and singing is noteworthy. This not only refers to a technical vision, but also to a holistic experience, that is, an experience that is more connected to the singer's personal sensitivity.

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<sup>38</sup> Katz, interview. [“al verlos bailar en medio de un ensayo decíamos ‘bueno, ¿no sería lindo si le mostramos a la audiencia esto mismo, que es a lo que le da vida la música en el transcurso de un ensayo o de cantar la canción misma?’”]

<sup>39</sup> Katz, interview. [“el coro siempre estaba bailando.”]

<sup>40</sup> Katz, interview. [“La idea de moverse y de no mantenerse rígidos, seguro cambia la facilidad del canto porque el movimiento relaja las tensiones. Cuando tú estás relajado, la voz fluye como tiene que fluir. Entonces todas esas tensiones que nosotros creamos, que mantienen la voz atascada y rígida, se sueltan cuando uno baila, cuando uno se mueve. El hecho de sentir la música con todo tu cuerpo te da la posibilidad de tener una experiencia holística. [...] Y al mismo tiempo, la idea de moverse y de mantener el cuerpo fluido te da la posibilidad de no poner tu cuerpo entre el aparato vocal y la voz. Como profesora de canto me doy cuenta de que cuanto más tratamos de apoyar y controlar el sonido, más tensión creamos y peor cantamos. Entonces, el relajar el cuerpo, hacer movimientos y relajar las tensiones que generalmente engendramos en el cuello y los pectorales, le da la posibilidad a la voz de acoplar los músculos necesarios y solo los necesarios, no los músculos que nosotros tratamos de agarrar en nuestra búsqueda del control. [Esto también] te da la posibilidad de sentir la música como ser completo, en vez de solamente con la mente.”]

From my analysis and according to the testimonies of the directors, in most works choristers and directors use body movements and choreography to perceive and deal with the meters in a more precise way. In other words, they use their bodies to feel the work's tempo and rhythm closer and accurately, and to be able to manage it with greater confidence. As we have seen, the inclusion of body movements and/or choreography becomes - or maintains - a hallmark of Latin American choirs in Canada, as a way of embodying the performance even more evidently. And it is no coincidence that this "embodiment of time" can be observed in a great number of performances covered here. Another example of this "embodiment of time" can be seen in the performance of "La Flor del Cacao" by *Viene Sonando*,<sup>41</sup> since during the entire song, the choristers perform physical movements determined by the marked 3/4 meter of the song, which involve head, neck and shoulder movements accompanied by a gentle leaning of the entire body, though without moving from the spot. In the choruses there is a "question and answer" set between altos and sopranos, in which each time a group sings their phrase they lean their body slightly forward. When they finish singing it, they return their bodies to their original position, and then is the other group's turn to sing their phrase. An additional example of this "embodiment of time" can be observed in "La Negra del Tamunangue" by *Los Parranderos de Vancouver*.<sup>42</sup> Figure 4.5 shows a screenshot of this video, which captures one of the synchronised movements of the choreography performed by the choir (lifting one knee). If we consider that, according to scholars Overy and Molnar-Szakacs, physical performance is nothing more than "coordinated activity and the affective experience that results from the sound,"<sup>43</sup> it is possible to appreciate this phenomenon as an affective experience that can unveil the Latin American's identity. This authentic performance of Latin American choral repertoire, i.e., including body movements and choreography, thus motivates an identification of choristers and conductors with their own choral tradition. In this way, this "embodiment of time" responds to a

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<sup>41</sup> "Viene Sonando opening the festivities for us...!!!!" *Facebook* video, 3:15. November 19, 2016. <https://fb.watch/1yLIHCgNsG/>  
 Descriptions of the body movements used in this work can be found in the Appendix A (chart "Detailed analysis of each video performance").

<sup>42</sup> "Negra del tamunangue 2014," *YouTube* video, 3:04. December 5, 2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dByHXOEzbzw>  
 Descriptions of the body movements used in this work can be found in the Appendix A (chart "Detailed analysis of each video performance").

<sup>43</sup> Seighman, "Exploring the Science of Ensemble Gestures," 15.

passionate way of highlighting Latin American authenticity and identity traits with the tools these choirs have.



Figure 4.5. Still from “La Negra del Tamunangue” by *Los Parranderos de Vancouver*.

As we can see, for the mentioned directors, the incorporation of body movements and choreography are seen as pedagogical tools that enhance performance insofar as they are useful for feeling the rhythm of the works physically and emotionally, and for promoting the natural flow of singing (as it relaxes physical tension). Moreover, according to the comments of the conductors, the incorporation of this type of movement responds to another way of transmitting choral works, which emphasises multimodality and rejects stillness as an ideal. Additionally, it is possible to establish that the incorporation of physical performance is useful for reaffirming Latin American music as a tradition with a strong rhythmic component, preserving and highlighting that “characteristic stamp.”. In short, thanks to the testimonies mentioned above, we can understand that the complicity of music and body movements/choreography plays a strong role in the authentic performance of Latin American choral music.

As a corollary to this, I want to emphasise the significance of the multimodality that Latin American choirs in Canada bring to their performance. It is important to consider that, as scholars Ordás & Blanco state,

Body movement has a fundamental role in the construction, execution and perception of musical performance [...]. [T]ogether with the auditory component, they constitute the multimodal interaction that the performer uses to regulate his/her performance and co-construct the choral interpretation, understood as a practice of intersubjective meaning. In this sense [...] the recognition of a satisfactory interaction generates increasing levels of mutuality, making better performance possible.<sup>44</sup>

This multimodal interaction is the one that finally generates the intersubjective meaning directly related to the search and/or maintenance of identity, because all decisions made and actions taken - such as the inclusion of choreography or body movements in the performances, the performance of repertoire from different musical genres, the addition of musical instruments, the decision regarding whether to invite a guest musician or some of the choristers to play the instruments, or the director's decision regarding to conduct the vocal and the physical performance at the same time - are made taking as a precedent an existing tradition, as detailed at the beginning of this chapter, and not just a whim or a decontextualized idea conceived by the director or the choristers. And tradition, each time it is invoked, is strongly linked to a sense of identity that is reaffirmed, due to the recognition and appreciation of one's cultural roots. Furthermore, if this multimodal interaction results in a more satisfactory interpretation being achieved on stage, this sense of identity becomes even more tangible and enjoyable.

Based on my research, I can state that for at least four of the seven choirs studied (*Fusión Latina*, *Los Parranderos de Vancouver*, *Nuestras Voces* and *Viene Sonando*) body movements and choreography have a privileged position, due to the dedication and complexity shown in their movements and because on many occasions the directors conduct both vocal and physical

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<sup>44</sup> Alejandro Ordás and Amparo Blanco, "La Corporeidad y la Expresión en la Ejecución Coral: Indicios de la Identificación del Cuerpo como Productor de Mensajes," *XI Encuentro de Ciencias Cognitivas de la Música. SACCoM, TMP (FBA - UNLP) y LEEM (FBA - UNLP)*, (Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires, septiembre, 2013): 464. ["el movimiento corporal tiene un rol fundamental en la construcción, ejecución y percepción de la performance musical [...] constituyen junto con el componente auditivo la interacción multimodal de la que se sirve el intérprete para regular su desempeño y co-construir la interpretación coral, entendida como una práctica de significado intersubjetiva. En este sentido, [...] el reconocimiento de una interacción satisfactoria genera niveles crecientes de mutualidad viabilizando una mejor interpretación."]

performance at the same time. The great majority of the videos analyzed include the choirs performing choreography or body movements, which speaks of the importance attributed to physical performance. Furthermore, it can be observed that sometimes choreography and body movements may affect the good performance of the choral singing itself, since the body movements interfere to a certain extent with the ideal posture to support good vocal technique. In contrast, as we have seen, some conductors consider physical performance to be an aid to choral singing, as it is useful for feeling (physically and emotionally) the rhythm of the works, providing an “embodiment of time” and promoting the natural flow (without tension) of the singing.

Considering that my findings suggest that choreography and body movements are recurrently used by these choirs as a means of preserving the Latin American repertoire in its most genuine and authentic form of performance, we can state that the physical performance fulfils the function of forging Latin American representative elements of identity in the Canadian context. In this way, it is possible to establish that for Latin American choirs in Canada, physical movements are useful not only to enhance the sound message, but also involve a matter of identity that needs to be brought to the fore. In other words, choreography and body movements, when paired with the performance of Latin American choral repertoire, become a way par excellence to express and preserve Latin American identity.

## CONCLUSIONS

The four chapters of this thesis have addressed the research question: How do Latin American immigrant choirs function in the Canadian musical context? This question has been answered by drawing on the experiences of eight choirs, which, through their conductors, have shared information regarding how they preserve their traditions, maintain their identity, carry out their performances, recruit their members, and how these behaviours relate to how they are received by the Canadian musical community.

Before entering fully into the conclusions, I consider it necessary to present, by way of a postlude, a different aspect to the discussions in the previous chapters. I will refer to two cases that show how some conductors and their choirs have faced the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. As we know, this health emergency has resulted in a series of restrictions and the implementation of preventive measures, such as lockdowns, gathering restrictions, and masking, among others. In addition, singing has been regarded as a particularly risky activity<sup>1</sup> and, accordingly, choral activity has been strongly affected everywhere. As we have seen, many Latin American choirs in Canada were at an important point in their existence before the arrival of the pandemic. While it is not possible to know how these choirs will look in a post-pandemic era - because the pandemic might change the way that they operate in the future, or simply because some of them will never be able to reassemble - it is possible to establish how some of them have coped with this complex period. I highlight these two cases because they show how choral activity - being known to be a strictly face-to-face activity - can be adapted flexibly, achieving unexpected and remarkably positive results.

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<sup>1</sup> Florence Gregson, et al., “Comparing the Respirable Aerosol Concentrations and Particle Size Distributions Generated by Singing, Speaking and Breathing,” *ChemRxiv* Version 1 Aug 20 (2020), doi:10.26434/chemrxiv.12789221.v1.; Prateek Bahl, et al., “Droplets and Aerosols Generated by Singing and the Risk of Coronavirus Disease 2019 for Choirs,” *Clinical Infectious Diseases* Vol. 72, Issue 10 (May 2021): e639–e641. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cid/ciaa1241>

The first case is that of *Canto Vivo*, which, motivated by the VLACC (Vancouver Latin American Cultural Centre), videotaped Liliana Cangiano's "Jacinto Chiclana" during the pandemic. The conductor, Sergio Pires, says it was difficult to record it because of the inevitable difficulties in coordinating the rhythmic singing of the choristers, who made their recordings individually. However, thanks to the mixing that was done later, it was possible to achieve a good result and both he and the choristers were satisfied. This action was useful in reaffirming the "persistence of the choir even during the pandemic."<sup>2</sup>

The second case is that of *Viene Sonando*. This choir's director (Marianella Ramos) says that the virtual format has given her the opportunity to,

Reinvent and be creative with the rehearsals. I think it's been a very spiritually empowering experience as a group, because I feel like we've strengthened each other; it shows that there really is commitment and that we want to be together. And as many of them say, it's been very therapeutic during this time of crisis.<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, she states that,

Being members with no musical education, many times when they learn their parts, they are very supportive of each other. That's good, but it can also be not so good because you're always kind of leaning on the other voice and not thinking about your own. But [now] with the distance, there's no other option and they've had to build their confidence by learning their part very strongly. So, I'm really excited for when we can see each other again and get our voices together because I'm sure there's going to be a lot of growth in the group musically. We'll never rehearse the same again.<sup>4</sup>

It is interesting to note that the results that arose thanks to the circumstances caused by the pandemic can enhance the performance and the general functioning of a choir. Despite the difficulties and prohibitions brought about by the new "virtual" life, Pires and Ramos have

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<sup>2</sup> Pires, interview.

<sup>3</sup> Ramos, interview. ["reinventar y ser creativa con los ensayos. Considero que ha sido una experiencia muy fortalecedora espiritualmente como grupo, porque siento que nos hemos fortalecido; demuestra que realmente hay compromiso y que queremos estar juntas. Y como muchas de ellas lo expresan, ha sido muy terapéutico durante estos momentos de crisis."]

<sup>4</sup> Ramos, interview. ["al ser integrantes sin educación musical, muchas veces cuando se aprenden las voces se apoyan mucho una a la otra. Eso es bueno, pero también puede ser no tan bueno porque siempre estás como recostándote en la otra voz y no pensando en la tuya. Pero [ahora] con la distancia, no hay otra opción y ellas han tenido que fortalecer su seguridad aprendiéndose su voz fuertemente. Entonces estoy muy emocionada para cuando nos podamos volver a ver y juntar las voces porque estoy segura de que va a haber un crecimiento del grupo a nivel musical muy grande. Ya no volveremos a ensayar nunca igual."]

managed to make the most of the challenges that have arisen. On the one hand, there are a lot of disadvantages due to the technical difficulties of not being face-to-face (such as desynchronization or not being able to hear each other), but on the other hand, they have strengthened areas that perhaps would not have been addressed as efficiently - and perhaps as consciously - under normal circumstances, i.e., without a pandemic. I refer to the “persistence” and “commitment” that Pires and Ramos could observe emerging in their choirs, even in the face of difficult circumstances. Moreover, Ramos goes so far as to value the consequences of the pandemic as an opportunity to “reinvent and be creative with the rehearsals” and for her choristers to develop their self-confidence more strongly. This gives her the rationale to say that they will “never rehearse the same again,” once face-to-face rehearsals resume.

This is a beacon of hope in the face of one of the conclusions discussed at the end of chapter one, which states that the forced use of technology in this “virtual” life has left some choirs behind in the development of their healthy choral activity. That is, the difficulty experienced by choirs in conducting their rehearsals and performances normally led some to pursue only a part of their activities or simply to halt their activity until further notice, which is the case of the *Nuestras Voces* choir. However, all of the other choirs addressed in this study (except for *Fusión Latina*, which operated until 2014), are willing and eager to resume their choral activity as soon as some of the restrictions imposed by the health authorities are lifted. This means, for instance, that they will carry out projects conceived during the pandemic period, (such as the organisation of concerts, festivals, and choral encounters), and probably some choristers who left their respective choirs - due to the technical difficulties caused by “virtual” life or other causes - will want to rejoin them. Moreover, as Ramos expressed, both conductors and choristers are convinced that their choirs will come back with a new lease on life and new abilities.

As a conclusion and taking advantage of the impulse given by the postlude just presented, it is possible to establish several fundamental points in response to the research question with which I began, regarding the function of Latin American choirs in the Canadian context. From the four chapters presented in the course of this study, it is possible to answer this question from various fields, different contexts and different points of view.



First, it is possible to establish from the knowledge of the history (origins and development) of each of the eight choirs considered, that the motivations of the conductors for founding and directing their respective choirs (and of the choristers in participating) is the preservation of the Latin American cultural traditions in Canada and the creation of a meeting place where the Latin American community can forge a sense of belonging. These goals allow us to understand why all of the choirs unanimously agree on the almost indiscriminate acceptance of practically all applicants to the choirs, without carrying out a strict selection at the time of the call and thus being faithful to their objective of establishing themselves as choirs “open to the community.” Likewise, the fact that all of the concerts they perform are free or at very low cost is also a sign of this openness, as they aim to promote the access of the entire community (whether Canadian and/or Latin American) to their performances. It is also thanks to the knowledge of the history of these choirs that it is possible to understand how each one of them has managed to obtain the funds that allow them to survive. Since, as we have already seen, some of them were initiated within institutions or were associated with them, which allowed them to be financially sustained. Others, however, managed to get by on their own, and still others (as in the case of *Cantares Latin Choir*), were able to become an institution themselves in order to access grants from the Canadian government. I believe that these three modes of funding used by these choirs (belonging to an existing institution, being self-maintained, or becoming an institution as such) are a sign of a flexibility that any immigrant choir needs to have in order to ensure its subsistence. Second, the impulse to maintain and shape identity is demonstrated by these choirs insofar as they function as entities that promote Latin American social cohesion, where choir members come together to meet and socialise, in turn fortifying the community and the individual Latin American identity of choristers. To this end, they encourage a sense of community - which is built on a common experience – which in turn they seek to extend beyond the borders of each choir, since some of the choirs have maintained friendly relationships with each other over the years, leaving no trace of a competitive relationship. Additionally, the choirs’ intention to extend their sense of community is demonstrated by their frequent attempts to involve the rest of the Latin American community in Canada (whether through the choir-audience relationship or through the institutions that support them). In turn, the importance given by both directors and choristers to the preservation of Latin American traditions explains the impulse to transmit their “latinity” to non-Latin American choristers as a way of inviting them to

become immersed in that tradition. Third, we were able to observe that the preservation strategies used by these choirs in Canada are a reflection of the desire to maintain Latin American authenticity. Survival, for these choirs, is achieved through four main mechanisms: a policy of open inclusion (mentioned above) in which they accept practically anyone interested in joining the choirs, the insertion in the local community, the transfer of the Latin American choral tradition to new generations of Latin Americans born in Canada, and the search for a positive reception by the Canadian audience. However, for this preservation process to be successful, it is above all necessary to ensure the preservation of the choral tradition itself, which, as we have seen, goes hand in hand with a reaffirmation of the Latin American identity. This is important to the point that the conductors interviewed for this research insist that they do not resort to profound musical arrangements of the works they perform with their choirs, which would threaten the authenticity of their tradition and its preservation. When they do make modifications, they respond rather to a process of adaptation to the circumstances, which generally have to do with the choristers' skills or with the human and technical resources available to them. Crucially, there is no trace of hybridization in the process. It has thus been established that rather than hybridizing their musical activity, the choirs have inserted themselves into the community, whether by performing concerts for charity, by participating in choral festivals, or through the institutional body on which they depend. As reported by the conductors - and as deduced in this study - these strategies have been carried out successfully. In turn, this process has been facilitated by the acknowledged cultural openness of the Canadian community at large. Fourth, we have seen that for most of the choirs studied here the inclusion of body movements and choreography in their performances is a typical feature. Indeed, the importance of this physical aspect of their performances is demonstrated in the fact that it is as privileged as vocal performance. This is demonstrated, in turn, by the complexity of their movements and because, on several occasions, the directors lead both vocal and physical aspects of the performance at the same time. Moreover, some conductors take advantage of this inclusion by attributing to it the quality of being an "embodiment of time," because physical performance in choral practice is useful for feeling more concretely the rhythms of Latin American choral music (which can sometimes be very complex), as well as contributing to a more natural flow of the singing. Furthermore, choreography and body movements are frequently incorporated by Latin American choirs in Canada as a way of preserving the performance of their repertoire as

authentically as possible, by tapping into a tradition in which music and dance converge. This has the positive consequence of helping these conductors and choristers to forge their identity in the Canadian context through the elements provided by their own choral practice. In other words, this multimodality - choral music plus physical performance - is useful not only for enhancing the sound message of the choral activity, but also involves a matter of Latin American identity.

All of these factors provide a detailed answer to the research question of how Latin American immigrant choirs function in the Canadian context. However, for a more comprehensive and cohesive understanding of how these choirs work, I will summarise everything in the following explanation:

Latin American choirs in Canada place great value on the preservation of Latin American cultural traditions. This encourages them to build and preserve their choirs as meeting places that remain “open to the community,” where it is possible to forge a sense of belonging. Thus, the commitment of the choristers and conductors makes them see their choir as a “survival tool,” in that it becomes a place where they can say “me” and, in turn, becomes a “bridge” to their countries of origin. This commitment also leads the choirs to develop an identification with the Latin American repertoire in general due to a sense of common experience that they seek to cultivate. This sense of community has led some choirs to develop relationships with other Latin American choirs, Latin American audiences, and various institutions (from senior’s centres to cultural organisations) and to understand their choir as a place where even non-Latin American choristers can find their Latinity. As a result, these choirs have been able to maintain and to shape their identity successfully, which is also needed for preserving Latin American authenticity. They achieve this mainly by privileging the performance of Latin American repertoire and preserving the original versions and arrangements of the works. Through the different views of conductors on the importance of preserving authenticity we have discovered, on the one hand, the value they attribute to rhythm in Latin American choral music and, on the other hand, how globalization and hybridization are “enemies” of the preservation of authenticity. Therefore, musical arrangements and adaptations do not respond to a process of hybridization, but rather to an adaptation of the works to the choristers’ abilities and motivational expectations, to the instruments and instrumentalists at their disposal, and to obtain a good reception from the audience. But first of all, it is necessary to ensure the continuation of these

choirs together with their tradition. For this, the choirs themselves have developed mechanisms as strategies for the preservation of the choirs, four of which stand out: their open inclusion policy for anyone interested in participating in their choirs, their insertion in the local community (performing concerts at seniors' and community centres, donating to charity from funds collected at concerts, participating in international festivals, and relating with other local and international choirs, among others), transmitting their choral tradition to new generations of Latin Americans born in Canada (also preserving the Spanish language) and seeking a positive reception from Canadian and Latin American audiences. Furthermore, for these choirs the desire to preserve the performance of their repertoire as authentically as possible is also manifested in the inclusion of body movements and choreography in their performances. This typical multimodal feature requires dedication, as its complexity can reach such an extent that some conductors conduct both vocal and physical performance. And its benefits - according to the conductors - lie in promoting an "embodiment of time" (because it helps the choristers to better perceive the rhythms of the works) and in contributing to the natural flow of the singing. For all these reasons, the inclusion of physical performance is able to foster the forging of identity of Latin American conductors and choristers in the Canadian context, which I consider to be its most important strength.

This research aims to be a contribution to music studies, not only because it is the first study that directly addresses Latin American immigrant choirs in Canada, but also because it contributes to the enhancement of music and choral practice as capable of forging identity in different social and cultural contexts. Moreover, the good reception garnered by these choirs from the Canadian public in concerts, festivals, and seniors' and community centres speaks of the public's appreciation of these choirs for the cultural richness that they can bring to Canadian musical life.

On the other hand, as this is the first musicological work to study these choirs, it is possible to believe that there may be other ways to answer the same research question, especially in the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic and also thinking about a post-pandemic world. Therefore, responses to this question will be constantly evolving, as the choirs themselves will change their functioning over time. It is possible to infer that possible future areas of study will be revealed on topics not covered by this research, such as: what will happen to Latin

American choirs in Canada in the post-COVID-19 pandemic era? For instance, one possible line of research to be carried out, once our life returns to the in-person setting, is to address the point of view of the audiences attending Latin American choral music concerts. Although the valuable testimony given by the conductors in this study reveals their perception of the reception of both Canadian and Latin American audiences, it would also be interesting to study the reactions of the audience firsthand, that is to say, by attending the concerts of these choirs, observing the audience members' reactions and conducting interviews and/or questionnaires in order to get their impressions of the concert, the performance and the repertoire performed. With research like this - in combination with the present study - it would be possible to have a more complete picture of the reception of Latin American choirs in Canada, which could also be related to other immigrant choirs, thus motivating further studies.

Although my thesis does not address the following issues directly, I think it will be significant for scholarship outside of the field of music by highlighting the positive effects of immigration in the artistic-cultural field, so that the cultural resources of immigrant peoples are valued as a contribution to Canadian cultural capital, rather than simply a result of globalization.

I sincerely hope that the research I have carried out will serve as a basis for studies such as the ones just mentioned or other similar ones related to immigrant choirs or to choral music in general. Hopefully, then, this is not the first and last research to study Latin American choirs in Canada, for as we can see, there is still much work to be done.

## APPENDIX A

### Detailed Analysis of each Video Performance

<i>Cantares Latin Choir</i>							
<b>Video citation</b>	Cantares Latin Choir. “Manha do Carnaval ChoralFest 2018.” <i>YouTube</i> video, 3:00. October 22, 2018. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHREWbiJ80Y">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHREWbiJ80Y</a>	Cantares Latin Choir. “El alcaravan Let’s sing together 2017.” <i>YouTube</i> video, 3:06. October 22, 2018. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jh8008e5S94">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jh8008e5S94</a>	Cantares Latin Choir. “La Guachafita con Joropo Jam.” <i>YouTube</i> video, 2:31. October 22, 2018. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dPoqUhamgJM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dPoqUhamgJM</a>	Cantares Venezuelan Choir. “Cantares Choir’s Gala. John Dutton Theatre. April 28th, 2012.” <i>YouTube</i> video, 44:38. May 18, 2012. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-bXBmZVDclg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-bXBmZVDclg</a>	Cantares Venezuelan Choir. “Cantares Choir’s Gala. John Dutton Theatre. April 28th, 2012.” <i>YouTube</i> video, 44:38. May 18, 2012. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-bXBmZVDclg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-bXBmZVDclg</a>	Cantares Venezuelan Choir. “Cantares Choir’s Gala. John Dutton Theatre. April 28th, 2012.” <i>YouTube</i> video, 44:38. May 18, 2012. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-bXBmZVDclg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-bXBmZVDclg</a>	Cantares Latin Choir. “Venezuelan Merengue: La Negra Dorotea.” <i>Facebook</i> video, 2:21. October 20, 2019. <a href="https://fb.watch/1zUmKFZhRK/">https://fb.watch/1zUmKFZhRK/</a>
<b>Work performed</b>	“Manha do Carnaval” by Luiz Bonfá and Antônio Maria	“El Alcaraván” by Simón Diaz	“La Guachafita” by Alberto Muñoz	“Crece desde el Pie” by Alfredo Zitarrosa (min. 7:46)	“Caramba” by Otilio Galíndez (min. 21:13)	“Ese Mar” by Otilio Galíndez (min. 28:48)	“La Negra Dorotea” by Cruz Felipe Iriarte. Choral arrangement by Cesar Alejandro Carrillo
<b>Musical genre and/or style and time signature</b>	Bossa Nova, 4/4	Venezuelan Tonada, 4/4 and (mainly) 3/4	Joropo, 6/8	Candombe, 4/4	Venezuelan Danza, 6/8	Venezuelan Danza, 6/8	Venezuelan Merengue, 5/8
<b>Context of the presentation</b>	ChoralFest 2018	Let’s Sing Together 2017	Concert featuring <i>Joropo Jam</i> band	Cantares Choir’s Gala, John Dutton Theatre, Calgary. April 28 <sup>th</sup> , 2012	Cantares Choir’s Gala, John Dutton Theatre, Calgary. April 28 <sup>th</sup> , 2012	Cantares Choir’s Gala, John Dutton Theatre, Calgary. April 28 <sup>th</sup> , 2012	Venezuelan Culture Days. October, 2019
<b>Choreography or body movements?</b>	Body movements (gentle)	Body movements (gentle)	Body movements (gentle)	Body movements (gentle)	Body movements (gentle)	Body movements (gentle)	Body movements (gentle)
<b>Description of choreography or body movements</b>	Throughout the song, the choristers and the conductor make gestures relating to the music involving the head, neck, shoulders and trunk. These gestures are most evident during the beginnings of musical phrases, breathing caesuras and changes in dynamics.	Throughout the song the choristers perform gestures relating to the music involving the head, neck and shoulders that are most evident at the beginnings of phrases, breathing caesuras and changes in dynamics. In the introduction of the song these gestures are soft and long, following the 4/4 meter.	During the entire song the choristers perform gestures relating to the music determined by the marked 3/4 meter of the Joropo, which involve head, neck and shoulder movements accompanied by a gentle swinging of the entire body, though without moving from the spot. These movements are most evident in the	Throughout the song, the choristers perform gestures relating to the music characterized by a gentle swinging of the entire body, although without moving from the spot. The director, on the other hand, directs by constantly bending his knees, in such a way that he marks the 4/4 meter during the whole song.	During the whole song several of the choristers perform gestures relating to the music with their heads and necks, marking the strong beats of the time signature 6/8. This is accompanied by a gentle swinging of the whole body, although without moving from the place.	Throughout the song, the choristers perform gestures relating to the music characterized by a gentle swinging of the entire body (although without moving from the spot) and subtle movements of the head and neck. These gestures are most evident during the beginnings of musical phrases, breathing	Throughout the song, the choristers and the conductor make gestures relating to the music involving the head, neck, shoulders, and trunk. These gestures are most evident during the beginnings of musical phrases, breathing caesuras and dynamic changes.

		During the development of the work (0:47) the time signature changes to 3/4 , and in general the movements are more squared and marked, following the ternary metre.	beginnings of musical phrases, breathing caesuras and dynamic changes.			caesuras and dynamic changes.	
<b>Relation between the text of the work and body movements</b>	The text refers to the joy of being close to the loved one. Such feeling is intended to be demonstrated through the phrasing and dynamics of the work, in which the choir is immersed and carried away, expressing them through their bodily gestures.	There is no direct relationship between body gestures and the content of the text. However, it can be observed that at 1:13 – 1:28 and 2:08 – 2:22 the body movements are smoother and longer, unlike the rest of the section in 3/4. This is due to the fact that vowels are sung with long melismas and appoggiaturas, which encourage softer movements as opposed to the shorter movements made with shorter syllables and marked by the 3/4.	There is no direct relationship between body gestures and text content.	There is no direct relationship between body gestures and text content.	Throughout the song, mainly the sopranos and altos make a head and neck movement forward when singing the word “Caramba,” (that may be translated as “Geel!”), which is also synchronized with the 6/8 meter.	There is no direct relationship between body gestures and text content.	There is no direct relationship between body gestures and text content.
<b>Musical instruments</b>	No musical instruments	Venezuelan cuatro	Venezuelan cuatro, bass guitar, maracas and oboe	No musical instruments	Venezuelan cuatro	Venezuelan cuatro	Venezuelan cuatro, double bass and drums
<b>Are these musical instruments considered as part of the body movements?</b>	N/A	No. The cuatrista is dedicated only to playing the instrument without participating in body movements.	Yes. The instrumentalists make movements following the 6/8 meter. In addition, they mark the phrases in which there are quite marked duplets with body	N/A	No. The cuatrista does not appear on stage	No. The cuatrista does not appear on stage	No. The instrumentalists are dedicated only to playing their instruments without participating in body movements.

			movements (0:24, 0:39 and 1:37)				
<b>Are the choristers attentive to the conductor's direction?</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Is the conductor directing the vocal performance and/or the body movements?</b>	The conductor only directs the vocal performance	The conductor only directs the vocal performance	The conductor only directs the vocal performance	The conductor only directs the vocal performance The conductor only directs the vocal performance	The conductor only directs the vocal performance	The conductor only directs the vocal performance	The conductor only directs the vocal performance

<i>Canto Vivo</i>		
<b>Video citation</b>	Vancouver Latin American Cultural Centre (VLACC). "At the Vancouver Public Library." <i>Facebook</i> video, 2:11. December 4, 2018. <a href="https://fb.watch/1B6Jq4DAPW/">https://fb.watch/1B6Jq4DAPW/</a>	Vancouver Latin American Cultural Centre (VLACC). "Si somos americanos - VLACC Choir 2017." <i>Facebook</i> video, 2:00. December 21, 2017. <a href="https://fb.watch/1B8Yacjh5o/">https://fb.watch/1B8Yacjh5o/</a>
<b>Work performed</b>	"Capullito de Alheli" by Rafael Hernández	"Si somos americanos" by Rolando Alarcón. Choral arrangement by Alejandro Pino
<b>Musical genre and/or style and time signature</b>	Puerto Rican Bolero, 4/4	Cachimbo, 6/8
<b>Context of the presentation</b>	Presentation at the Vancouver Public Library, 2018	2017
<b>Choreography or body movements?</b>	N/A	N/A
<b>Description of choreography or body movements</b>	Apart from the inevitable gestures relating to the music - such as the gesture of breathing at the beginning of a musical phrase or looking at the score and the conductor - there are no important body movements to highlight.	Apart from the inevitable gestures relating to the music - such as the gesture of breathing at the beginning of a musical phrase or looking at the score and the conductor - there are no important body movements to highlight.
<b>Relation between the text of the work and body movements</b>	N/A	N/A
<b>Musical instruments</b>	Guitar	Guitar
<b>Are these musical instruments considered as part of the body movements?</b>	N/A	N/A
<b>Are the choristers attentive to the conductor's direction?</b>	Yes, to a great extent. However, some choristers keep their eyes fixed on the score for a long time, instead of prioritizing looking at the conductor.	Only some choristers, as some keep their eyes fixed on the score for a long time, and others are looking to the front, while the conductor is located on the right side.
<b>Is the conductor directing the vocal performance and/or the body movements?</b>	The conductor only directs the vocal performance	The conductor only directs the vocal performance

<i>Fusión Latina</i>							
<b>Video citation</b>	"Fusion Latina Latin Choir June 2006." <i>YouTube</i> video, 1:21:21. June 8, 2020. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qIHqrraflvE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qIHqrraflvE</a>	"Fusion Latina Latin Choir June 2006." <i>YouTube</i> video, 1:21:21. June 8, 2020. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qIHqrraflvE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qIHqrraflvE</a>	"Fusion Latina Latin Choir June 2006." <i>YouTube</i> video, 1:21:21. June 8, 2020. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qIHqrraflvE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qIHqrraflvE</a>	"Fusion Latina Latin Choir June 2006." <i>YouTube</i> video, 1:21:21. June 8, 2020. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qIHqrraflvE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qIHqrraflvE</a>	"Fusion Latina Latin Choir June 2006." <i>YouTube</i> video, 1:21:21. June 8, 2020. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qIHqrraflvE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qIHqrraflvE</a>	"Fusion Latina Latin Choir June 2006." <i>YouTube</i> video, 1:21:21. June 8, 2020. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qIHqrraflvE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qIHqrraflvE</a>	"Fusion Latina Latin Choir June 2006." <i>YouTube</i> video, 1:21:21. June 8, 2020. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qIHqrraflvE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qIHqrraflvE</a>
<b>Work performed</b>	"Naranjitay" by Sergio Villar (min. 0:52)	"Vidala de la Copla" by Chango Rodríguez (min. 8:26)	It is not possible to identify the work (min. 42:35)	"El Diablo Suelto" by Heraclio Fernández (min. 48:36)	"La Perica" by Giuseppe Gallignani (min. 56:39)	"Carnavalito Quebradeño" by Napoleón Benjamín Ábalos,	"Bullerengue" by Jorge Artel (min. 1:03:23)



						Adolfo Armando Ábalos, Roberto Wilson Ábalos, Víctor Manuel Ábalos y Marcelo Raúl Ábalos (min. 1:00:40).	
<b>Musical genre and/or style and time signature</b>	Carnavalito, 3/4 (mainly)	Vidala, 3/4	Cachimbo, 6/8	Waltz played as Joropo style, 3/4	Joropo, 6/8	Carnavalito, 2/4	Bullerengue, 2/4
<b>Context of the presentation</b>	June 25 <sup>th</sup> , 2006	June 25 <sup>th</sup> , 2006	June 25th, 2006. This work is performed together with solo singer and guest musicians.	June 25th, 2006	June 25th, 2006	June 25th, 2006	June 25th, 2006
<b>Choreography or body movements?</b>	Body movements (gentle)	Body movements (gentle)	Body movements (marked)	Body movements (marked)	Body movements (marked)	Body movements (gentle)	Body movements (marked)
<b>Description of choreography or body movements</b>	Throughout the song the choristers and the director make gestures relating to the music that involve the head, neck and shoulders, marked mainly by the rhythmic ostinato of eighteenth note plus two sixteenth notes, typical of the rhythm of Carnavalito.	During the entire song the choristers and director make smooth full-body up and down movements, sometimes swinging from left to right, following the 6/8 meter. From minute 10:12 the left to right body swings are emphasized.	Although it is not choreography as such, there are pre-set and coordinated steps among the choristers: movements from left to right with a slight turn of the trunk (only by some choristers) and a smooth movement with the feet, also from left to right, but always returning to their place of origin. These movements are favored by the lesser participation of the choir in this work, since the soloist and the guest musicians are the main performers here.	Throughout the song, the choristers perform body movements of the head, neck, shoulders and trunk, determined by the typical joropo metre of ¾. These movements, however, are not coordinated among the choristers, as they are performed with different intensity and in a different order.	During the whole song the choristers perform a soft swinging from left to right, which involves movements of shoulders, trunk and feet, although always keeping to the same place. This swinging is according to the ¾ metre typical of the Joropo.	Throughout the song, the choristers and the director make gestures relating to the music that involve the head, neck, shoulders, and on certain occasions a gentle swinging of the feet, marked mainly by the rhythmic ostinato of the eighteenth note plus two sixteenth notes, typical of the rhythm of Carnavalito. However, these movements are rather free, as the choristers are not coordinated with each other.	During the entire song choristers make a slight leaning to the sides and displacement with their feet (but always returning to the same place), in addition to involving shoulder and trunk movements. These movements are noticeable in some choristers more than others and are incited by the ostinato performed by the drum and maracas, typical of Afro-Latin dances, of a dotted eighth note + a sixteenth note + two eighth notes.
<b>Relation between the text of the work and body movements</b>	There is no direct relationship between body gestures and text content.	There is no direct relationship between body gestures and the content of the text.	It is not possible to identify the work.	There is no direct relationship between body gestures and text content.	There is no direct relationship between body gestures and text content.	There is no direct relationship between body gestures and text content.	This is one of the works with more marked body movements in this concert, due to the

		However, it is worth mentioning that from “Pa’ que no apaguen tu fuego, tal vez algún pobre me ayude a soplar” (10:12) is the verse where the body swings from left to right are emphasized.					content of its text. It is about a man who wishes to become different musical instruments in order to sound only for the woman he loves. This metaphorical metamorphosis deserves to be represented by the choir, “turning their bodies into musical instruments.” Therefore, in addition to singing, it is necessary to perform suggestive body movements in accordance with the song, which enhance its message.
<b>Musical instruments</b>	Güira	Double bass	Zampona, charango, guitar, and cajón peruano	Cuatro and maracas	2 Venezuelan cuatros, double bass, and maracas	Güira	Tambor and maracas
<b>Are these musical instruments considered as part of the body movements?</b>	No. In the video it is not possible to visualize who is playing the güira	No. The bassist is dedicated only to playing the instrument without participating in body movements.	No. The instrumentalists are dedicated only to playing their instruments without participating in body movements.	Yes. Mainly the maracas, because the physical gesture needed to play them when performing Joropos (moving the arms energetically up and down) makes them look like they are participating in the body movements of the choir.	Yes. Mainly the maracas, because the physical gesture needed to play them when performing Joropos (moving the arms energetically up and down) makes them look like they are participating in the body movements of the choir.	No. In the video it is not possible to visualize who is playing the güira	Yes, in the case of the person who plays the maracas, since he is a chorus player who participates in the singing. The tamborilero is at the same time the director, so it is not possible for her to participate in the body movements.
<b>Are the choristers attentive to the conductor’s direction?</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	N/A
<b>Is the conductor directing the vocal performance and/or the</b>	The conductor only directs the vocal performance	The conductor only directs the vocal performance	The conductor only directs the vocal performance	The conductor only directs the vocal performance	She directs both, although with greater emphasis on the vocal performance	The conductor only directs the vocal performance	Neither, since the director only conducts the start of the work.

body movements?							
<i>Fusión Latina</i>							
<b>Video citation</b>	“Fusion Latina Latin Choir June 2006.” <i>YouTube</i> video, 1:21:21. June 8, 2020. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qIHqrraflvE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qIHqrraflvE</a>	“Fusion Latina de Vancouver ‘El Cielo Canta Alegría’ St Mark’s.” <i>YouTube</i> video, 3:55. June 8, 2020. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cO_98eIfRBU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cO_98eIfRBU</a>	“Fusion Latina de Vancouver ‘El Nacimiento.’” <i>YouTube</i> video, 2:42. June 8, 2020. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ax1DZBFEERY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ax1DZBFEERY</a>	“Fusion Latina de Vancouver ‘El Niño Jesús.’” <i>YouTube</i> video, 2:35. June 8, 2020. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oqyDClie6A&amp;ab_channel=gerbaena%2FParranderos">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oqyDClie6A&amp;ab_channel=gerbaena%2FParranderos</a>	“Fusion Latina de Vancouver ‘Los Reyes.’” <i>YouTube</i> video, 2:36. June 8, 2020. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eybdgenwvi0">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eybdgenwvi0</a>	“Maquerule, Fusion Latina 2010 Nov 2010.” <i>YouTube</i> video, 3:30. December 4, 2012. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6-CWZkv204">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6-CWZkv204</a>	“Fusion Latina: La bamba.” <i>YouTube</i> video, 3:31. July 2, 2007. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QOHLp63UOEI&amp;feature=emb_logo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QOHLp63UOEI&amp;feature=emb_logo</a>
<b>Work performed</b>	“Piel Canela” by Bobby Capó (min. 1:05:30)	“El Cielo Canta Alegría” by Pablo Sosa	“La Anunciación” by Ariel Ramírez and Félix Luna	“El Niño Jesús.” There is no information regarding its composer.	“Los Reyes Magos” by Ariel Ramírez and Félix Luna	“Maquerule” (traditional)	“La Bamba” by Ritchie Valens
<b>Musical genre and/or style and time signature</b>	Bolero, 4/4	Religious music in Taquirari style, 2/4	Chamamé, 6/8	Aguinaldo (Venezuelan Christmas Carol), 3/4	Christmas carol in Taquirari style, 2/4	Chirimía, 2/4	Rock and roll, 4/4
<b>Context of the presentation</b>	June 25 <sup>th</sup> , 2006	Concert at St. Mark’s, South Surrey December 6 <sup>th</sup> , 2009	Christmas series concert at Saint Francis of the Woods (West Vancouver), November 29 <sup>th</sup> , 2009	Christmas series concert at Saint Francis of the Woods (West Vancouver), November 29 <sup>th</sup> , 2009	Christmas series concert at Saint Francis of the Woods (West Vancouver), November 29 <sup>th</sup> , 2009	November 2010	No information
<b>Choreography or body movements?</b>	Body movements (gentle)	Body movements (marked)	Body movements (gentle)	N/A	Body movements (marked)	Body movements (marked)	N/A
<b>Description of choreography or body movements</b>	Throughout the song, the choristers sway their entire body from side to side. However, during the chorus (1:06:11) this swing is much more marked due to the rhythmic nature of the melody and the “catchy” rhythm for which this bolero is traditionally known. Even more so during the chorus, this swing includes a small movement with the feet	During the whole song, the choristers perform a swing and slight turn with their trunk from one side to the other. This movement is initiated by one of the choristers who encourages the others to do it (first row, third choristers from left to right).	Throughout the song, the choristers (mainly sopranos and altos) perform a soft swing in which they move their body from their knees to their shoulders, without lifting their feet.	Apart from the inevitable gestures relating to the music - such as the gesture of breathing before singing a musical phrase or alternating the look towards the score and the conductor - there are no important body movements to highlight.	For the entire song they make soft lateral movements, moving their body from one side to the other (from right to left) and without moving from the place. At the same time, some choristers perform a slight foot movement, while others perform a light knee inflection.	As it is a dance style, the body movements of the choristers are similar to those used in Caribbean dances, but without rising to the level of choreography: there are movements of the head, neck, arms, hips and feet (although without moving from their places). Some choristers (mainly sopranos and altos) accentuate these movements in the phrases in	Apart from the inevitable gestures relating to the music of music-making – such as the gesture of breathing before singing a musical phrase or alternating between looking at the score and the conductor - there are no important body movements to highlight.

	of some members, but always returning to the place of origin.					which they sing “la la la, la la la...”. (0:50, 1:30 and 2:10) as they tilt their body from left to right more sharply.	
<b>Relation between the text of the work and body movements</b>	There is no direct relationship between body gestures and text content.	The translation of the title of the song is “Heaven Sings the Joy of the Lord.” therefore, it is necessary to reflect this joy in another way besides singing. This is why body movements are so important.	There is no direct relationship between body gestures and text content.	N/A	As a Christmas carol, it refers to the meeting of the Three Kings with the baby Jesus. Therefore, the director considered it coherent to add body movements in order to enhance the festive air of the work.	The song is about the story of an American baker who is having a hard time with the bakery he set up, added to the fact that his wife is leaving him. Therefore, the mischievous and burlesque air is reflected in the song’s danceable rhythm. For this reason, it is coherent to perform dance body movements together with this work.	N/A
<b>Musical instruments</b>	No musical instruments	Guitar, tambourine and clarinet	Piano, guitar, bombo legüero and tamborine	3 Venezuelan cuatros, bass guitar, tambor and güiro	Piano, charango and bombo legüero	Bongo, güira, bell, and egg shakers	No musical instruments
<b>Are these musical instruments considered as part of the body movements?</b>	N/A	The chorister who plays the tambourine, in addition to singing, includes the instrument as part of her body movements. However, the guitarist only plays and does not perform movements, and the clarinetist only plays the introduction and then leaves the stage.	No. Instrumentalists are dedicated only to playing their instruments, without participating in the body movements.	N/A	No. Instrumentalists are dedicated only to playing their instruments, without participating in the body movements.	Yes, because three of the four instrumentalists (except for the bongo player) participate in the choir by singing and performing body movements.	N/A
<b>Are the choristers attentive to the conductor’s direction?</b>	Yes	Yes	No, because the director is playing the piano and the choristers cannot see her.	Yes	No, because the director is playing the piano and the choristers cannot see her.	Yes	Yes
<b>Is the conductor directing the</b>	The conductor only directs	The conductor only directs	Neither of them.	The conductor only directs	Neither of them.	The conductor only directs	The conductor only directs

<b>vocal performance and/or the body movements?</b>	the vocal performance	the vocal performance		the vocal performance		the vocal performance	the vocal performance
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<i>Los Parranderos de Vancouver</i>							
<b>Video citation</b>	“Los Parranderos de Vancouver.” <i>YouTube</i> video, 1:22. November 30, 2018. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLcKb-VVwQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLcKb-VVwQ</a>	“Eso es decir Venezuela.” <i>YouTube</i> video, 3:42. November 7, 2016. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dxpy9O7851g">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dxpy9O7851g</a>	“Aguinaldo Carupanero Dec 2014.” <i>YouTube</i> video, 1:32. December 6, 2014. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qaRpL6qQrkw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qaRpL6qQrkw</a>	“Ábrannos la puerta 2014.” <i>YouTube</i> video, 2:02. December 5, 2014. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yZUysSdSnOk">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yZUysSdSnOk</a>	“La Cachua 2014.” <i>YouTube</i> video, 3:04. December 5, 2014. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WtGx-9cmOzQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WtGx-9cmOzQ</a>	“Luna decembrina, 2014.” <i>YouTube</i> video, 2:38. December 5, 2014. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IWGA Puh5Oao">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IWGA Puh5Oao</a>	“Negra del tamunangué 2014.” <i>YouTube</i> video, 3:04. December 5, 2014. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dByHXOEzbzw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dByHXOEzbzw</a>
<b>Work performed</b>	“Feliz Navidad” by José Feliciano	“Eso es Decir Venezuela” by Rafael Brito and Pedro Urea	“Aguinaldo Carupanero” (excerpt) by Rafael Suárez	“Ábrannos la Puerta” There is no information regarding its composer.	“La Cachúa” by Hugo Blanco	“Luna Decembrina” by Otilio Galindez	“La Negra del Tamunangué” by Simón García
<b>Musical genre and/or style and time signature</b>	Latin pop, 4/4	Gaita, 3/4	Parranda Oriental (Venezuelan Christmas Carol), 6/8	Parranda (Venezuelan Christmas Carol), 6/8	Gaita, 6/8	Parranda (Venezuelan Christmas Carol), 6/8	Tamborera Marabina, 3/4
<b>Context of the presentation</b>	Concert at Saint John’s College, November 2018	Concert at Fly Over Canada, Canada place 2015	Concert at St. John College, University of British Columbia. December 2014	Concert at St. John College, University of British Columbia. December 2014	Concert at St. John College, University of British Columbia. December 2014	Concert at St. John College, University of British Columbia. December 2014	Concert at St. John College, University of British Columbia. December 2014
<b>Choreography or body movements?</b>	Body movements (marked)	Choreography	Choreography	Body movements (marked)	Choreography	Body movements (marked)	Choreography
<b>Description of choreography or body movements</b>	Throughout the song, the choristers make left-to-right foot movements, returning to their place of origin, as well as slight turns of the trunk every time they lift their feet. Some choristers also move their arms as they move from side to side.	The movements used in the choreography are typical of the Gaita as a dance genre. The choreography is composed of two types of movements: 1. During the choruses (0:35, 1:42, and 2:50), the choristers perform foot movements forward and backward two steps diagonally, and with the arms bent alternately moving back and forth.	The choreography is composed of two types of movements: 1. During the choruses (0:03, 0:37, and 1:12) and the first stanza (0:22) the choristers perform foot movements moving from left to right, returning to their place of origin. 2. During the second stanza (0:59) they perform the following foot movements: left-forward-reverse-center-right-forward-	During the whole song the choristers make movements in which they make a small turn with their feet, first the left and then the right. To this is added a slight swing from left to right of the whole body.	The choreography is composed of three types of movements: 1. During the first time that each strophe is sung (0:09, 1:06, and 2:03) a circular movement is performed with their feet, in which the right foot crosses the left one, and then moves back to make way for the left foot to go forward. The arms are bent and move back and forth alternately.	Throughout the song the choristers make smooth movements of their feet by moving them from left to right and turning their body slightly as their feet move.	The choreography is composed of four types of movements: 1. During the first and second stanza (0:00 and 0:58) they form with the steps a letter “u” performing the following movements: left-up-down-center-right-up-down-center, and so on. The arms are bent, making small alternating circular movements. 2. During the first part of the

		<p>2. In the stanzas (1:20 and 2:28) the foot movement becomes left-center-right-center, etc. Bent arms make circular movements together, forward and backward.</p>	<p>reverse-center, and so on.</p>		<p>2. In the repetition of each stanza (0:23, 1:20, and 2:18) the feet move from left to right, slightly bending the knees. Arms continue to move alternately back and forth, and a soft swing of shoulders and trunk is added at the moment when the feet move.</p> <p>3. During the chorus (0:38, 1:35, and 2:32), a similar movement to the previous one is made with the feet, but this time two steps are taken to the left and then two to the right. The arms are kept bent and moving back and forth.</p>		<p>choruses (0:15 and 1:13) and the stanzas followed by the second chorus (2:04) they make slight movements of feet from left to right together with a soft swing and inclination of the body. The bending arms move back and forth.</p> <p>3. In the second part of the choruses (0:30 and 1:28) and in the final stanzas (2:19) they take a step forward, raising their bent right leg and then taking a step backwards. Thus, they repeat the sequence several times. The bent arms continue to move backwards and forwards.</p> <p>4. At the end of the second chorus (1:51) and at the coda (3:00), by way of closure, they make a kind of reverence with the right arm raised and bent, slowly lowering it, while at the same time they shake their hands with open palms.</p>
<p><b>Relation between the text of the work and body movements</b></p>	<p>As a Christmas carol that wishes happiness, the director considered it coherent to add body movements in</p>	<p>There is no direct relationship between body gestures and text content.</p>	<p>As a Christmas carol that promotes good wishes and expresses happiness, the director and/or choristers considered it</p>	<p>As a Christmas carol that promotes good wishes and expresses happiness, the director and/or choristers considered it</p>	<p>This is a festive song that talks about an artist who is willing to sing and dance in a social activity, as long as they give him/her</p>	<p>As a Christmas carol that promotes good wishes and expresses happiness, the director and/or choristers considered it</p>	<p>It is a joyful love song that needs to be performed fervently, so the director and/or choristers considered it coherent to</p>

	order to enhance the festive air of the work.		coherent to add simple choreography in order to enhance the festive air of the work.	coherent to add body movements in order to enhance the festive air of the work.	something to drink. The director and/or the choristers considered coherent to add body movements in order to enhance the festive air of the work.	coherent to add body movements in order to enhance the festive air of the work.	add a choreography in order to enhance the joyful air of the work.
<b>Musical instruments</b>	2 Venezuelan cuatros and bombo	Venezuelan cuatro, bass guitar, tambor, maracas, furruco and cencerro	Venezuelan cuatro, bass guitar, tambor, maracas, and cencerro	Venezuelan cuatro, bass guitar, tambor, bells, and cencerro	Venezuelan cuatro, bass guitar, tambor, maracas, and cencerro	Venezuelan cuatro, bass guitar, tambor, maracas, and cencerro	Venezuelan cuatro, bass guitar, tambor, and cencerro
<b>Are these musical instruments considered as part of the body movements?</b>	Yes. Mainly the cuatristas, since they follow the body movements	Only the maracas, since the chorister who performs them also participates in the singing, added to the fact that the arm movement required to play this instrument is quite noticeable (from top to bottom), so it is more likely to be added to the body movements.	Only the maracas, since the chorister who performs them also participates in the singing, added to the fact that the arm movement required to play this instrument is quite noticeable (from top to bottom), so it is more likely to be added to the body movements.	The bells are included in the performance at the beginning of each chorus (0:02, 0:27, 0:53, 1:20, and 1:46) when they are hit twice on the floor with emphasis, synchronized with the text "Tun, tun! This onomatopoeia refers to the action of knocking on a door for someone to open it. That is why the text immediately says, "leave the door wide open." Therefore, the percussion performed by the bells on the floor is consistent with the text of the song, by giving more emphasis to its literal meaning.	Only the maracas, since the chorister who performs them also participates in the singing, added to the fact that the arm movement required to play this instrument is quite noticeable (from top to bottom), so it is more likely to be added to the body movements.	Only the maracas, since the chorister who performs them also participates in the singing, added to the fact that the arm movement required to play this instrument is quite noticeable (from top to bottom), so it is more likely to be added to the body movements.	No. The chorister who plays the cencerro, although he performs the choreography, does not include the instrument within it. The other instrumentalists are dedicated only to playing their instruments, without participating in the choreography.
<b>Are the choristers attentive to the conductor's direction?</b>	The director does not conduct the song, but joins in as a member of the choir. Only at the end of the song does she stand in front of the choir	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

	and indicate the end.						
<b>Is the conductor directing the vocal performance and/or the body movements?</b>	N/A	Is conducting both	The conductor only directs the vocal performance	The conductor only directs the vocal performance	He mainly directs the vocal performance, although on some occasions he directs the body movements	The conductor only directs the vocal performance	The conductor directs both: vocal performance and body movements
<b>Los Parranderos de Vancouver</b>							
<b>Video citation</b>	“Alúmbrame el Zaguán 2014.” <i>YouTube</i> video, 3:47. November 23, 2014. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mZty9sBGKJQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mZty9sBGKJQ</a>	“Correla, correla Dec 2012.” <i>YouTube</i> video, 2:58. December 3, 2012. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LL1jJ44nCXk">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LL1jJ44nCXk</a>	“Tucusito.” <i>YouTube</i> video, 2:18. December 3, 2012. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TdU3gI85reY">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TdU3gI85reY</a>	“Navidad Morena (Edwin Martínez con Los Parranderos. Mov.” <i>YouTube</i> video, 8:30. December 18, 2009. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ebGKDW5yJ8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ebGKDW5yJ8</a>	“El Burrito, UBC. Mov.” <i>YouTube</i> video, 2:21. December 15, 2009. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FpZ-LclBsts">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FpZ-LclBsts</a>	“Los Parranderos De Vancouver (Aguinaldo Margariteño). Mov.” <i>YouTube</i> video, 2:33. December 9, 2009. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VQ5kbh18sDk">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VQ5kbh18sDk</a>	“Los Paranderos de Vancouver (Poncho Andino. Mov.)” <i>YouTube</i> video, 3:50. December 4, 2009. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jw2x6Mf5e-Q">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jw2x6Mf5e-Q</a>
<b>Work performed</b>	“Alúmbrame el Zaguán” by Hugo Blanco	“Córrela, Córrela” by Jesús Rosas Marcano	“Tucusito” by Domingo Higuera	“Navidad Morena” by Edwin Martínez (min. 4:00)	“El Burrito Sabanero” by Hugo Blanco (min. 0:29)	“Aguinaldo Margariteño” by Carlos Mendoza	“Poncho Andino” by Otilio Galíndez
<b>Musical genre and/or style and time signature</b>	Parranda (Venezuelan Christmas Carol), 3/4	Aguinaldo de Parranda, 6/8	Aguinaldo (Venezuelan Christmas Carol), 3/4	Christmas Carol in Latin Pop style, 4/4	Christmas carol in Gaita Zuliana style, 2/4	Parranda Oriental (Venezuelan Christmas Carol), 3/4	Aguinaldo (Venezuelan Christmas Carol), 6/8
<b>Context of the presentation</b>	Concert at Vancouver Christmas Market, 2014	Concert at Minoru Senior Center in Richmond, B.C. December 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2012	Concert at Minoru Senior Center in Richmond, B.C. December 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2012	Concert released in Langley, B.C. December 12, 2009. Together with solo singer/guitarist Edwin Martínez	Christmas celebration at University of British Columbia, 2009.	No information	No information
<b>Choreography or body movements?</b>	Choreography	Choreography	Body movements (marked)	Body movements (marked)	Choreography	Body movements (marked)	Body movements (gentle)
<b>Description of choreography or body movements</b>	The choreography is composed of two phases: <b>1a.</b> During all the stanzas, except for the first one (0:36, 1:13, 1:49, and 2:27) they raise their right arm, bent with the palm open, while the left hand remains at the waist, beating	Although the choristers are not very coordinated among themselves, the choreography is composed of two phases: <b>1.</b> During all but the last chorus (0:07, 0:37, 1:07, 1:37, and 2:07) they make forward	During the whole song the movements used are light footsteps and trunk turns from left to right, staying in the same place.	During much of the song the movements used are light footwork and trunk turns from left to right, staying in the same place. Along with this, there is a gentle swing from the top and bottom as the knees flare.	The movements used in the choreography are typical of the Gaita Zuliana as a dance genre. During the verses (0:35, 0:53, 1:10, 1:45) they perform 4 types of movements, one followed by another:	Throughout the song the movements used are light steps with the feet from left to right, always returning to the same place.	Throughout the song the movements used are light steps with the feet from left to right, always returning to the same place.



	<p>dotted quarter notes. At the same time, the left foot takes a step forward and repeatedly moves the knee up and down during eight beats of dotted quarter note.</p> <p><b>1b.</b> Then, they move the feet alternately forward and backward by bending the knees. Bent arms imitate the movement.</p> <p><b>1c.</b> Immediately after, they repeat movement 1a, but this time they change legs and arms.</p> <p><b>2.</b> During the chorus, except the last one (0:13, 0:49, 1:27, and 2:04) they make a little step forward, touching the ground with the toe of their left foot, and then the right one, and bending their knees.</p> <p>Together with this movement, the bent arms and the body go in the direction of the foot that takes a step forward. In addition, there is a slight movement of hips to the sides.</p> <p>On the other hand, during the last chorus (2:41), two couples come out to dance on stage. One is composed of the director and a</p>	<p>foot movements, without moving from place, alternating between left and right. The arms are bent with closed fists at the height of the belly, moving back and forth alternately.</p> <p><b>2.</b> During the stanzas (0:22, 0:52, 1:22, and 1:52) they perform steps similar to the chorus, but with the difference that they add a slight body turn toward the foot that took a step forward.</p> <p>In the last chorus (2:23) the choristers and the director sing a cappella (one round), accompanied by their clapping. In addition, the director invites the audience to join in with the clapping.</p>		<p>In addition, in the middle of the interlude “Pa, pa ra pa pa pa...” (5:07, 6:15, 7:08, 7:18, and 7:29) a descending chromatic sequence appears, with which both the soloist and the choristers descend their bodies by flipping their knees, imitating the chromatic phrase in its descent.</p> <p>On the other hand, in the minute 6:20 the singers add a different element to the performance when the soloist singer announces: “Well, it’s five minutes to twelve”. So, all the choristers start interacting among themselves showing joy and expectation when they receive the news that Christmas Eve is coming. In addition, at this moment the bells are added to give more intensity to the final section of the song.</p>	<p><b>1.</b> Left to right movements of feet and arms. The arms are bent with closed fists at the height of the belly.</p> <p><b>2.</b> The right hand is placed stretched at the height of the forehead, emulating the act of visualizing something.</p> <p><b>3.</b> Both arms are joined at belly level, moving them forward in a circular motion with closed fists.</p> <p><b>4.</b> Finally, they raise their right fist at the height of the forehead, indicating with the thumb in a backward direction.</p> <p>During the bridge (1:27), two movements are carried out:</p> <p><b>1.</b> 360° rotation of the body without displacement (to the right) and with the right arm raised.</p> <p><b>2.</b> Left to right movements of feet and arms. The arms are bent with closed fists at the height of the belly.</p>		
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	<p>chorister, and the other is composed of two choristers. Meanwhile, the rest of the chorus accompanies with clapping and singing. The dance performed uses the typical steps of Venezuelan dances, such as the Gaita and Joropo</p>						
<p><b>Relation between the text of the work and body movements</b></p>	<p>As a Christmas carol that promotes good wishes and express happiness, the director and/or choristers considered it coherent to add a simple choreography in order to enhance the festive air of the work.</p>	<p>It is a song that expresses gratitude and values regions of Venezuela. Because it is a joyful work, the director and/or choristers considered it coherent to add simple choreography in order to enhance the festive air of the work.</p>	<p>As a Christmas carol that promote good wishes and express happiness, the director and/or choristers considered it coherent to add body movements in order to enhance the festive air of the work.</p>	<p>As a Christmas carol that promote good wishes and express happiness, the director and/or choristers considered it coherent to add body movements in order to enhance the festive air of the work.</p>	<p>Movement 1 of the verse and the movement 2 of the bridge imitate the act of walking, because their text says in the verses: “[...] I am on my way to Bethlehem;” “[...] it lights up my path;” “[...] my little donkey is trotting.” And on the bridge it says: “[...] we’ll get there.” Movement 2 of the verse, imitates the act of visualizing something, because its text says: “If they see me, if they see me.” Movements 3 and 4 of the stanza imitate the act of going to a place (which in this case is Bethlehem), because its text says: “I am on my way to Bethlehem.” Movement 1 of the bridge is a small dance accompanied by the singing of an onomatopoeia,</p>	<p>As a Christmas carol that promote good wishes and express happiness, the director and/or choristers considered it coherent to add body movements in order to enhance the festive air of the work.</p>	<p>As a Christmas carol that promote good wishes and express happiness, the director and/or choristers considered it coherent to add body movements in order to enhance the festive air of the work.</p>

					without explicit textual content: “Tuki tuki tuki tuki / Tuki tuki tuki ta.”		
<b>Musical instruments</b>	2 Venezuelan cuatros, bass guitar, tambor, bells, and cencerro	2 Venezuelan cuatros, bass guitar, tambor, and bells	2 Venezuelan cuatros, bass guitar, tambor, maracas, and bells	Guitar, bass guitar, tamborine, and bells	4 Venezuelan cuatros, bass guitar and tambor	4 Venezuelan cuatros, bass guitar, bells and tambor	3 Venezuelan cuatros, bass guitar, tambor, and maracas
<b>Are these musical instruments considered as part of the body movements?</b>	No. Although the instrumentalists also participate by singing in the choir, they do not perform the body movements.	No. Although the instrumentalists also participate by singing in the choir, they do not perform the body movements.	No. Although the instrumentalists also participate by singing in the choir, they do not perform the body movements.	Yes, except for the bass guitar, all the instruments are part of the body movements, in addition to which the performers also participate in choral singing.	Three of the cuatristas move their bodies slightly from left to right following the rhythm of the song.	Only the bells since the chorister who plays them participates in the body movements and choral singing.	Only the maracas, since the chorister who performs them also participates in the singing, added to the fact that the arm movement required to play this instrument is quite accentuated (from top to bottom), so it is more likely to be added to the body movements.
<b>Are the choristers attentive to the conductor’s direction?</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	In formal terms, there is no choral conductor. But the solo singer/guitarist largely fulfills that function.	Yes, to a great extent.	Yes	Yes
<b>Is the conductor directing the vocal performance and/or the body movements?</b>	He mainly directs the vocal performance. However, in the last chorus he indicates the entrance of the clapping. And he stops conducting at the moment when he starts dancing.	He mainly directs the vocal performance. However, in the last chorus he indicates the entrance of the clapping.	He only directs the vocal performance	The solo singer/guitarist indicates the sections of the song and the body movements used in the descending chromatic sequence of the interlude.	She only leads the choreography	The conductor only directs the vocal performance	The conductor only directs the vocal performance

<b>Nuestras Voces</b>					
<b>Video citation</b>	Asociación Fraternidad Hispana de Hamilton. “Villancicos Navideños. Coro de Niñas de AFH. Iglesia All Souls, Navidad 2015.” <i>YouTube</i> video, 6:23. December 20,	Asociación Fraternidad Hispana de Hamilton. “Coro “Nuestras Voces” de AFH en el Día del Inmigrante y Refugiado Enero 18, 2015.” <i>YouTube</i> video, 5:41. January 21,	Asociación Fraternidad Hispana de Hamilton. “AFH Youth Choir Hamilton World Music Festival July 2014.” <i>YouTube</i> video, 3:56. July 20, 2014. <a href="https://www.youtube">https://www.youtube</a>	Asociación Fraternidad Hispana de Hamilton. “Hispanic Youth Choir sings at 2014 YWCA Canada Annual Membership Meeting. Hamilton, Ont.” <i>YouTube</i> video,	Asociación Fraternidad Hispana de Hamilton. “Coro Juvenil Nuestras Voces canta “Es mi mamá”. Asociación Fraternidad Hispana.” <i>YouTube</i> video, 1:28. May 5, 2014.

	2015. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xvz2ADbDiZo&amp;t=71s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xvz2ADbDiZo&amp;t=71s</a>	2015. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8GapaVYyd_g&amp;t=201s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8GapaVYyd_g&amp;t=201s</a>	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X68yivXHjdg">.com/watch?v=X68yivXHjdg</a>	9:19. June 8, 2014. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MDMFu6jH5Eg">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MDMFu6jH5Eg</a>	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uugFvOXQscM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uugFvOXQscM</a>
<b>Work performed</b>	“Feliz Navidad” by José Feliciano (min. 2:48)	“Color Esperanza” by Cachorro López, Coti Sorokin, and Diego Torres (min. 0:20)	“True Colors” by Tom Kelly and Billy Steinberg (min. 0:50)	“Mas que Nada” by Jorge Bem (min. 4:53)	“Es mi Mamá” by Adrien Rodes
<b>Musical genre and/or style and time signature</b>	Latin pop, 4/4	Latin pop, 4/4	Pop, 4/4	Samba, 4/4	Children’s Music, 4/4
<b>Context of the presentation</b>	Christmas carol concert at All Souls Church of Hamilton, Ontario. December 20th, 2015	Día del Inmigrante y Refugiado. January 18th, 2015	World Music Festival. July 2014	Concert at YWCA Canada Annual Membership Meeting. Hamilton, Ontario. 2014	Celebration of Mother’s Day, by the Asociación Fraternidad Hispana in Hamilton, Ontario, May 2, 2014
<b>Choreography or body movements?</b>	Body movements (marked)	Choreography	Choreography	Body movements (marked)	Choreography
<b>Description of choreography or body movements</b>	Almost at the end of the song (3:48) the choristers perform the only body movements: they accompany their song with claps, turning their body 90° from right to left.	The choreography can be grouped into three parts: <b>1.</b> During the first stanza (0:21) they turn their bodies 90° from right to left and vice-versa, without lifting their feet and with their arms stretched out at their sides. <b>2.</b> During the choruses (1:05 and 2:34) they perform the following sequences: <b>2a.</b> They stretch their right arm forward with their palms open at the height of their bellies as an “offering”, followed immediately by the left arm. <b>2b.</b> They make an “offering” gesture with the right arm similar to the previous one, but this time it is done by slightly bending the body forward and taking a step forward as well. Immediately after, the same arm goes backward, passing it stretched over the head, and going backward with the foot they had put forward. <b>2c.</b> They place the palms of their hands stretched out in front (first the right and	The choreography has can be grouped into two parts: <b>1.</b> During the stanzas (1:00 and 1:55) they move with their feet from left to right, together with a slight body sway. They snap the fingers of both hands, with the arms at chest level and then down at waist level. In the coda (2:45) they make the same movement, with the difference that, instead of snapping the fingers, this time they clap their hands. <b>2.</b> During the choruses (1:20 and 2:14) perform the following sequences: <b>2a.</b> They stretch their right arm forward, drawing a semicircle with their palms down and returning to their side. The same is done by the left arm. <b>2b.</b> Then they take a step forward and grasp the right hand with the arm bent upwards. <b>2c.</b> Next, both hands go forward with palms down and arms bent. <b>2d.</b> They make the same movement of 2a, but this time the palms of the hands are pointing	After the introduction (5:32) until the end of the song, the choristers raise their feet slightly, alternating between left and right, together with a snap with both hands raised simultaneously at chest level. This movement involves a gentle body swing (also from left to right) as they lift their feet.	During the verses, they make movements with their feet, raising them from left to right, keeping the body in place. During the chorus they make movements similar to those of the verses, but this time they move two steps to the left and then two steps to the right. They constantly repeat the sequence.

		<p>then the left) with the elbows thrown back. With the hands in that position, they move their feet, turning their body 90° to the left and to the right, making a little dance.</p> <p><b>2d.</b> They take two steps forward placing both hands on their chests and then hold?? them in front with open palms upwards.</p> <p><b>3.</b> During the second stanza (1:25) they take a step forward and lean their body slightly forward, and then turn back. The arms are held at the sides.</p>	<p>upwards. Then they repeat the same semicircle, but now with both hands crossed and performing the movement at the same time.</p> <p><b>2e.</b> Finally, they raise both arms at the same time, forming a semicircle above their heads toward the left, and then return to the right, where both hands rest on the thigh of their right leg slightly bent. Along with this movement, they also lean their body slightly along with the movement of the arms.</p>		
<p><b>Relation between the text of the work and body movements</b></p>	<p>As a Christmas carol that promotes good wishes and express happiness, the director and/or choristers considered it coherent to add a simple choreography in order to enhance the festive air of the work.</p>	<p>The occasions when this relationship is more direct are in the following lines of the chorus:  In “Quitarnos los miedos / Dejarlos afuera,” [“Removing our fears / Leaving them out”] the gesture of “removing” is performed when the arm that was in front moves backwards by passing it stretched over the head and moving backwards with the foot that had been put in front.  When singing: “Pintarse la cara / Color esperanza,” [Painting your face / hope color”] this action is “celebrated” by turning their bodies 90° to the left and right, creating a little dance.  And, finally, when it says: “Tentar al futuro / Con el corazón,” [“To tempt the future / With the heart”] the choristers take two steps forward, placing both hands on the heart and then hold them in front with the palms upwards.</p>	<p>The occasions when this relationship is more direct are in the following lines of the chorus:  In “So don’t be afraid to let them show,” it is when the choristers take a step forward and grasp the right hand with the arm bent upwards, wanting to represent courage (movement 2b).  “True colors are beautiful” is represented at the end of the movement 2d, in which they draw a semicircle with both hands crossed at the same time.  Finally, “Like a rainbow” is sung together with the movement 2e, when the choristers draw a semicircle above their heads to the left and then back to the right.</p>	<p>There is no direct relationship between body gestures and text content.</p>	<p>As it is a song that commemorates Mother’s Day, describing the qualities of mothers, the director considered it coherent to add a choreography in order to enhance the celebration and recognition function that the work has.</p>

<b>Musical instruments</b>	No musical instruments	No musical instruments	No musical instruments	No musical instruments	No musical instruments
<b>Are these musical instruments considered as part of the body movements?</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Are the choristers attentive to the conductor's direction?</b>	Yes	In part. The director positions herself as just another chorister, therefore, the choristers cannot observe her from the front.	In part. The director positions herself as just another chorister, therefore, the choristers cannot observe her from the front.	Yes	In part. The director positions herself as just another chorister, therefore, the choristers cannot observe her from the front.
<b>Is the conductor directing the vocal performance and/or the body movements?</b>	It is not possible to know, since the director is not shown in the video.	She directs both, but from the position of the choristers, so her conducting is rather limited.	She directs both, but from the position of the choristers, so her conducting is rather limited.	She directs both.	She directs both, but from the position of the choristers, so her conducting is rather limited.

<i>UNAM-Canada Choir</i>			
<b>Video citation</b>	“UNAM Canada Choir Anniversary Concert.” <i>YouTube</i> video, 37:11. July 7, 2016. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9QmzCHkPHA&amp;t=20s&amp;ab_channel=RicardoGuzm%C3%A1n">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9QmzCHkPHA&amp;t=20s&amp;ab_channel=RicardoGuzm%C3%A1n</a>	“UNAM Canada Choir Anniversary Concert.” <i>YouTube</i> video, 37:11. July 7, 2016. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9QmzCHkPHA&amp;t=20s&amp;ab_channel=RicardoGuzm%C3%A1n">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9QmzCHkPHA&amp;t=20s&amp;ab_channel=RicardoGuzm%C3%A1n</a>	UNAM Canadá. “Coro UNAM Canadá.” <i>YouTube</i> video, 10:50. September 6, 2015. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uxH9cR5dpQE&amp;t=51s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uxH9cR5dpQE&amp;t=51s</a>
<b>Work performed</b>	“La Mora” by Eliseo Grenet (min. 12:26)	“Cielito Lindo” by Quirino Mendoza (min. 33:11)	“Nanga Ti Feo” by Demetrio Lopez (min. 8:40)
<b>Musical genre and/or style and time signature</b>	Danzón, 2/4	Huapango, 6/8	Son Istmeño, 6/8
<b>Context of the presentation</b>	UNAM Canada Choir Anniversary Concert. May 2016	UNAM Canada Choir Anniversary Concert. May 2016	Concert at Festival Latino de Ottawa-Gatineau, City Hall Marion Dewar Plaza. September 6, 2015.
<b>Choreography or body movements?</b>	N/A	Body movements (marked)	Body movements (gentle)
<b>Description of choreography or body movements</b>	Only a few choristers perform isolated body movements linked to the rhythm of the song, but not in a coordinated or established way with the rest of the choir. However, it is important to note that the conductor performs body movements throughout the song (involving his entire body) in order to clearly mark Danzón’s tempo and 4/4 meter.	Throughout the song, the choristers swing on their knees from left to right without taking their feet off the ground, following the 6/8 meter.	Only a few choristers at times perform smooth swings linked to the 6/8 meter of the song, but not in a coordinated or established way with the rest of the choir.
<b>Relation between the text of the work and body movements</b>	N/A	There is no direct relationship between body gestures and text content.	There is no direct relationship between body gestures and text content.
<b>Musical instruments</b>	Piano	Piano	Piano
<b>Are these musical instruments considered as part of the body movements?</b>	N/A	No. The pianist is dedicated only to playing his instrument, without participating in the body movements.	No. The pianist is dedicated only to playing his instrument, without participating in the body movements.
<b>Are the choristers attentive to the conductor's direction?</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Is the conductor directing the vocal performance and/or the body movements?</b>	The conductor only directs the vocal performance	The conductor only directs the vocal performance	The conductor only directs the vocal performance

<i>Viene Sonando</i>			
<b>Video citation</b>	“Viene Sonando opening the festivities for us...!!!!” <i>Facebook</i> video, 3:15. November 19, 2016. <a href="https://fb.watch/1yLIHCgNsG/">https://fb.watch/1yLIHCgNsG/</a>	“Viene Sonando en el Night Market de Richmond, B.C.” YouTube video, 4:35. July 31, 2016. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vI_tNaOlxrM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vI_tNaOlxrM</a>	“Viene Sonando en el Night Market de Richmond, B.C.” YouTube video, 4:35. July 31, 2016. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vI_tNaOlxrM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vI_tNaOlxrM</a>
<b>Work performed</b>	“La Flor del Cacao” (traditional)	“Is This Love” by Bob Marley (Spanish version) (Excerpt) (min. 1:28)	“Ojos Malignos” by Juan F. Pichardo (Excerpt) (min. 2:13)
<b>Musical genre and/or style and time signature</b>	Joropo, 3/4	Reggae, 4/4	Son, 4/4
<b>Context of the presentation</b>	There is no information available	Concert at Night Market of Richmond, B.C. July 2016	Concert at Night Market of Richmond, B.C. July 2016
<b>Choreography or body movements?</b>	Body movements (marked)	Body movements (gentle)	Body movements (gentle)
<b>Description of choreography or body movements</b>	During the entire song, the choristers perform gestures relating to the music determined by the marked 3/4 meter of the song, which involve head, neck and shoulder movements accompanied by a gentle leaning of the entire body, though without moving from the spot. These movements are most evident in the beginnings of musical phrases, breathing caesuras and dynamic changes. In the choruses (0:36, 1:41 and 2:46) there is a question-and-answer section between altos and sopranos, in which each time a section sings its phrase they leans their bodies forward slightly. When they finish singing it, they return their bodies to their original position, and then is the other group’s turn to sing their phrase.	During the entire song, the choristers perform gestures relating to the music determined by the metre of the song, which involve head, neck and shoulder movements accompanied by a gentle swinging of the entire body, though without moving from the spot. These movements are not coordinated or established among the members of the choir, but rather spontaneous.	During the entire song, the choristers perform gestures relating to the music determined by the metre of the song, which involve head, neck and shoulder movements accompanied by a gentle swinging of the entire body, though without moving from the spot. These gestures are most evident during the beginnings of musical phrases, breathing caesuras and changes in dynamics. These movements are not coordinated or established among the members of the choir.
<b>Relation between the text of the work and body movements</b>	There is no direct relationship between body gestures and text content.	There is no direct relationship between body gestures and text content.	There is no direct relationship between body gestures and text content.
<b>Musical instruments</b>	Venezuelan cuatro and maracas	Guitar and shaker	Venezuelan cuatro and shaker
<b>Are these musical instruments considered as part of the body movements?</b>	No. The instrumentalists (the cuatrista is the director), are dedicated only to playing the instruments, without participating in the body movements.	Only the shaker, since the chorister who plays it participates in the body movements and choral singing.	Only the shaker, since the chorister who plays it participates in the body movements and choral singing.
<b>Are the choristers attentive to the conductor’s direction?</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Is the conductor directing the vocal performance and/or the body movements?</b>	The conductor only directs the vocal performance	The conductor only directs the vocal performance	The conductor only directs the vocal performance

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Questionnaire for Latin American Choir Directors**

Name:

Country of origin:

Present citizenship:

Time living in Canada:

How long have you conducted this choir?:

Name of choir:

- Please answer the following questions with as much detail as possible.

1. How did this choir originate?
2. Why did you decide to establish and/or conduct a Latin American choir in Canada?
3. Where and how often do the choir rehearsals/meetings take place?
4. When and where has the choir performed so far?
5. What are the criteria applied in the selection process of the choir members? How is this selection process carried out?
6. What type of repertoire do you place on your rehearsal and performance program? Who decides the repertoire that will be explored and performed?
7. Has the choir received any awards or recognition for its performance of Latin American repertoire? Which one(s)?
8. Does the choir receive any kind of governmental or private sponsorship or funding? Is it associated with any corporation or organization? If you prefer to decline to answer, you can write: "Prefer not to say."

### **Interview questions for Latin American Choir Directors**

1. What have been the positive aspects and challenges of conducting the choir and performing Latin American repertoire?
2. Have you performed repertoire that is not Latin American with this choir? What have been the positive aspects and challenges of performing this repertoire?
3. What is your view on preserving Latin American authenticity in a Latin American choir? How do you recognize and respect musically authentic practices? Are they put into practice in the choir you conduct?



4. Have you conducted theoretical/technical musical arrangements or variations in some choral works performed with the choir (in comparison to traditional versions)? Why/why not?
5. From your point of view, what has been the reception of the audience at the concerts towards Latin American repertoire? To what extent do the expectations of the Canadian audience and community influence how and what the choir performs (the functioning of the choir)?
6. Why do you include body movements in the performance of some works? Do you notice any differences in the choir's vocal performance when body movements are included in the performance of some works?
7. Could you refer to the concert programs, set list, audiovisual recordings and music critics you sent me by email? What could you tell me about them?

## APPENDIX C



Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB) 09-Mar-2021

# Certificate of Approval

Application ID: 2376

Principal Investigator: Amanda Lalonde

Department: Department of Music

Locations Where Research  
Activities are Conducted: Online, Canada

Student(s): Esteban Mendoza

Funder(s):

Sponsor: University of Saskatchewan

Title: Quien Canta, Sus Males Espanta (The One Who Sings, Drives Away His/Her Sorrow):  
Latin American Choirs In Canada.

Approved On: 09-Mar-2021

Expiry Date: 09-Mar-2022

Approval Of: Behavioural Research Ethics Application

Consent forms (choir directors and choristers)

Questionnaires (choristers and choir directors)

Interview questions (choir directors)

Transcript Release Form for choir directors

Acknowledgment Of: TCPS2 Core Certificate (Mendoza)

Review Type: Delegated Review

### CERTIFICATION

The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB) is constituted and operates in accordance with the current version of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TPCS 2 2018). The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above-named project. The proposal was found to be acceptable on ethical grounds. The principal investigator has the responsibility for any other administrative or regulatory approvals that may pertain to this project, and for ensuring that the authorized project is carried out according to the conditions outlined in the original protocol submitted for ethics review. This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above time period provided there is no change in experimental protocol or consent process or documents.

Any significant changes to your proposed method, or your consent and recruitment procedures should be reported to the Chair for Research Ethics Board consideration in advance of its implementation.

### ONGOING REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

In order to receive annual renewal, a status report must be submitted to the REB Chair for Board consideration within one month prior to the current expiry date each year the project remains open, and upon project completion. Please refer to the following website for further instructions: <https://vpresearch.usask.ca/researchers/forms.php>.

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*Digitally Approved by Patricia Simonson  
Vice-Chair, Behavioural Research Ethics Board  
University of Saskatchewan*

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