

## Conductors Without Borders – OFADAC/IFCM Miraflores (El Impenetrable) Chaco Province - Argentina

### Background:

As part of the AGREEMENT proposed by the Argentine Federated Organization of Coral Activities (OFADAC), within the framework of its 3rd Argentinean and 1st Latin American Coral Congress held in Tandil (Prov. of Buenos Aires) in May 2018 and signed in this year, OFADAC launched the Program "Conductora Without Borders" (CWB).

For this, a public and open call to all the choral directors of Argentina was made through the website of the institution ([www.ofadac.org](http://www.ofadac.org)) in order to select two regular Directors and three alternates to fulfill the activity in the two proposed locations: **Miraflores**, in the region of the National Park "El Impenetrable" in the Province of Chaco and the **Huilque Menuco** area located in the Andean region of the Patagonic Province of Neuquén.



With a very good reception from the Argentine professionals, there was an enrollment of applicants that was around twenty. Of these, the selection jury composed by Oscar Escalada (member of both institutions) and Annele Moroder (Member of the OFADAC and former Director of the "Isaías Orbe Conservatory" of the City of Tandil), designated Marisa Lilian Anselmo and Roxana Lucía Muñoz as headlines and Laura María Favre, Romina Paula Fernández and María Je-

sús Bonel as alternates.

Informed the designated holders, they immediately accepted these designations being formally in charge of the realization of the work Marisa Anselmo in Miraflores and Roxana Muñoz in Huilque Menuco.

Simultaneously and thanks to the management of the Vice-President of OFADAC, Mario Figueroa, the obtaining of the necessary funds to carry out the program was specified, including CWB in the agreement that OFADAC and ADiCoRA (Association of Directors of Choirs of the Argentine Republic) own with the INAMU (National Institute of Music). To this end, Rubén Videla was appointed to manage the first stage of the Program in Miraflores and Mario Figueroa himself, to carry out the second stage in Huilque Menuco.

### CWB Miraflores:

#### The beginning:

For the realization of the first edition in Argentina of CWB, contact was made in June with the director of the School No. 1034, Prof. Adriana Cragolini who was very interested in the Program being carried out in her locality. As soon as Prof. Cragolini accepted the role of local coordinator of CWB, it was suggested:

- establish contact with the local Municipality to request their support through the use of a physical space or municipal infrastructure;



- conduct a survey in the community of possible local referents with knowledge in music (instrument, reading, etc.) or qualified in the field;
- make an open call to the population for the registration of the members of the choir that was defined will be for children from 8 years to 12/14;
- to disseminate the Program through local media and social networks, for which a flyer was designed and sent an explanatory text with clarifications in this regard;

- The date from October 18 to 26 for the completion of the Program was established.

#### On going:

Arrived in Miraflores, Marisa Anselmo (“Conductor Without Borders” designated); Thierry Thiébaud (Vice-President of the IFCM) and Rubén Videla (Secretary of OFADAC), their first activity was a meeting with all the local referents who would receive the training, in order to explain the mechanics of work.

They were informed that the work would be carried out in the San Rafael Arcángel Church (temple under construction). For children who attend their school in the afternoon shift, from 9:00 a.m. to 11: 00 a.m. For students who attend in the morning, from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. And the specific activity for referents, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. They were suggested that in addition to attending their own activity, it would be very important that they attend at least one of the two daily rehearsals with the children.

Put to work, in the 9 days of permanence in Miraflores a total of 14 rehearsals with the children, 8 classes for the referents and a final concert / sample of the “Singing Children of Miraflores Chorale” were held in which a repertoire was exhibited of about 12 musical works worked at that time, some of which were conducted by the local referents (below the report by Marisa Anselmo).

#### **Report of the proceedings in Miraflores (Chaco) between October 18 and 26, 2019**

##### **“CORO DE NIÑOS CANTORES DE MIRAFLORES” (“Singing Children of Miraflores Chorale”)**

*With the children who came to participate in the choir we were able to carry out a great variety of activities and we approached a considerable amount of repertoire. It should be noted that most of the choir's children were of Creole origin and some children belonged to the Qom community.*

*From the first meeting they responded positively and enthusiastically to the different musical proposals made. The rehearsals sometimes began with melodic echoes with the names of the children (as a presentation), body percussion (which later served as a basis to accompany some of the songs), movements with music to experience pulse and accent, games to socialize*

the group, and on other occasions, in the traditional way: with postural exercises, breathing, vocalizations, and then continue teaching different songs. The intonation of the C Major scale and the intervals from 2nd to 8th always intercalated between song and song (that were learning progressively over the 9 days).



As for rhythmic preparation, the body percussion of the pulse and accent of some songs were performed (and sometimes we were also marching, although the dirt floor caused a lot of dust to rise) and the rhythmic base of some folkloric genres. Since none of the children knew what a choir was, in some meetings we saw footage of children's choirs from different cultures performing works of

diverse genres and aesthetics (from the Guaraní children's choir to the Libera Choir in London).

Of the more than 100 songs I have been thinking about different possible responses of the children, we were able to sing approximately 30. Some of them were used only to train the melodic response, others were heard, with others we played, and with most of them we were able to begin to become aware of what it is to sing in a tuned way with rhythmic precision, emitting a sound without unnecessary tensions and at the same time driven by the abdominal muscles ("different muscle tonisms").

Already from the 2nd or 3rd encounter we tried the experience of singing a canon (two, three and even four parts, with the help of the referents and monitors that joined each of the groups). In the song "Estaba el negrito aquel" we managed to superimpose the main melody with one of the *ostinatos*.

In the debut concert of the SCMC, 14 songs were presented, of which the children performed 12 and the other 2 by the referents.

I believe that in these 9 rehearsals we have achieved the following objectives:

- Motivate children to be interested in the choral activity and remain in it.
- Perform intensive musical training in general and vocal technique in particular.
- Facilitate access to the acute of approximately 80% of the children who attended the rehearsals.
- Assemble a repertoire that will serve as a basis to continue working on it and be presented in the performances scheduled for November and December.
- Make up the Singing Children of Miraflores Chorale.



Organización Federada  
Argentina de Actividades Corales



INTERNACIONAL  
FEDERATION  
FOR  
CHORAL  
MUSIC

**PRESENTAN:**

# Coro de Niños

# Cantores de

# MIRAFLORES

Concierto debut como parte del Programa  
"Directores Sin Fronteras" (OFADAC – IFCM)

**Sábado 26 de Octubre – 20:00hs.**  
Iglesia San Rafael Arcángel (Templo en construcción)

### Training of local Referents:

The group of local referents was made up of 6 people, of which only 4 were able to attend the 9 established meetings, even though a wide range of schedules was offered to facilitate their assistance.

Of the 6 referents, 2 study music in the teaching staff that is taught in the neighboring town of Castelli and handle rudiments of musical reading. The other 4, at the beginning of the training, did not read any music.



After the 2nd meeting with the referents and from a conversation with Thierry Thiébaud, in which he commented that in Africa every day he devoted a part of the rehearsal to the teaching of the solfege (since he also usually met with groups that in the majority did not read music, although, unlike the Miraflores group of references, they had a lot of experience as singers) I decided to do the same and start the group in musical

reading from the book "Successful sight singing" by Nancy Telfer, allocating this activity for 15 to 20 minutes daily.

From this brief but determined foray into the musical language (activity that they received with a very good disposition) it was easier for the referents to understand the various topics that we were developing in the meetings and could be integrating more quickly what they observed in the rehearsals of the children's choir with the contents we saw in the classes, especially those referring to the extension of the child's voice, vocalizations, types of cue according to the type of initiation, etc.

Of all the contents planned to be developed, the following could be worked:

- Posture of the choir conductor.
- Schemes for marking simple and compound measures.
- Cue for pickups and on beat initiation in whole beats and in incomplete beats.
- Final cuts off and during the course of a work.
- Main moments of a rehearsal.
- Song teaching technique: Eco without interruption; Shared melody (singing the director and from recordings).
- Frequent tuning problems presented by children without musical training.
- Location of the strings in front of the director at the rehearsal and at the concert.
- Use of keyboard, guitar and recordings in the rehearsal.
- Vocal mechanism: Respiratory system / Sound system / Resonator.
- Breathing, dosing exercises, vocalizations.
- Characteristics of the primary school child's voice: extension, passagio, range.



- Exercises to help children cross the passagio.
- Voice change: outline of the subject.
- Selection and gradually increase of the repertoire according to their difficulties and the age of the children.
- Musical reading: location of notes on the staff, notions of pulse, accent and compass and some figures with their silences (quarter note, eighth note, whole note).

These contents were practiced in a group and individual way in general on the same repertoire that was taught to children and also with other songs.



The content statement was complemented with:

A- Projections:

- Schemes for marking simple and compound measures.
- Musical examples with pick-up and off beat cue.
- Different types of cut off.
- The characteristics of the child's voice (extension and passagio).

B- Auditions:

- Children crossing the passagio without difficulty.
- Children who remain in the grave and the teacher manages to help them ascend using resources appropriate.
- Children who remain in the grave and the teacher fails to facilitate the crossing of the passagio or because does not handle the instrument or because he does not realize or fails to use the appropriate strategy.
- Various proposals for appropriate vocalizations to perform with children.

There were two key elements that facilitated the formation of choral referents: their excellent predisposition to learn and having incorporated music reading as content.

Four of the referents each directed a song at the concert and one of them, two.

I am very happy to say that a very good team has been formed that will be in charge of the choir of singing children of Miraflores, each with different functions, complementary to each other.

We have even been able to provide a couple of performances for November and December and a new repertoire to join the choir.

I think it would be very necessary to be able to dedicate some more meetings next year to the formation of referents. Although much and hard work was done, it is necessary to deepen all that has been seen and include some more themes that are essential to sustain the continuity of a choir.

Finally, I want to highlight the accompaniment of Rubén Videla who not only dealt with the logistics required by the implementation of Conductora Without Borders in Miraflores, but was



also attentive to solving the different challenges that were presented, in addition to play the guitar, the tubes, sing as a soloist, sing with the kids, take assistance, solve technical issues, etc., etc. He was a very good travel companion!!

*¡I thank the OFADAC with all my heart for having given me the possibility of being part of a project so necessary, so well designed, so “sower” of voices, dreams and smiles! ¡Best regards!*

**Marisa Anselmo**  
Santa Fe, October 31, 2019

Actions made:

Simultaneously, the undersigned made several efforts to achieve the consolidation of the project in the locality, through the active intervention of the Municipality of Miraflores.

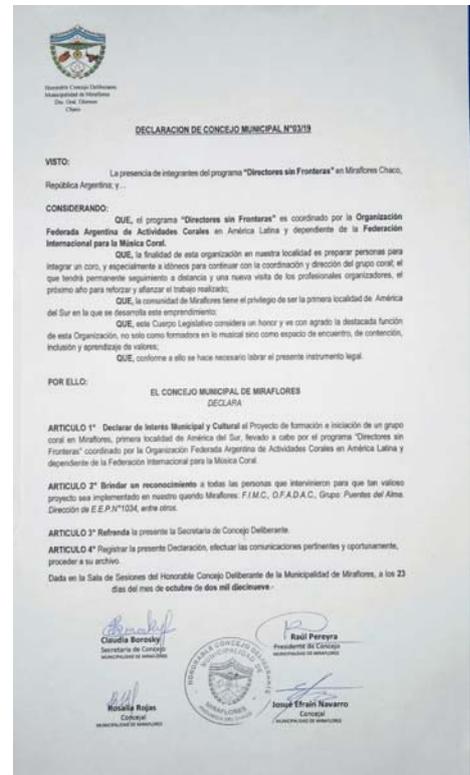
With this objective, the first meeting was held with the future President of the H. Municipal Council (elected in the last elections and who will take office on December 10) Prof. Carolina Libré, who was very interested in the project and promised to make contacts to get an interview with the elected mayor, Dr. Jorge Frank.

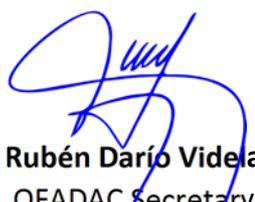
In the meeting held with Dr. Frank, he pledged in turn to take the project, expressing that he sees the activity as very conducive to “how important is the containment that this activity provides to children and the possibility of developing potentialities that may be hidden in children”, also pointing out that it is a very important tool for their training and contributes - from the creative use of leisure spaces- to prevent children from accessing other practices that are very harmful to their health and to the community all (there is a serious problem with addictions in the community).

Conclusion:

In my opinion, the objectives of the Program have been widely fulfilled, since the designated Director was able to carry out everything she had planned - both with the children and with the local referents - and in addition, the steps for the consolidation of this expressive space through local institutions.

I especially appreciate the very good predisposition, and the bonhomy of Thierry Thié-baut (despite the idiomatic difficulties), present in a good part of all the activities carried out.



  
**Rubén Darío Videla**  
OFADAC Secretary