

## Impact of choral singing on the formation of responsibility value in students

## Impacto del canto coral en la formación del valor responsabilidad en los educandos

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### Abstract

This research constitutes a response to the current need to contribute to the formation of the responsibility value of the 7th grade students of the ESBU: "Desembarco del Granma". Starting from the determination of the problematic situation, choral singing actions are elaborated with different periods, indications and ways of realization that intertwine their implementation with technical-formative elements, as well as general considerations addressed to the selected students. Research methods are used for the theoretical and methodological study with international and national authors in relation to the subject in question, which allow assuming scientific positions and empirical methods were applied for the initial diagnosis. The proposal is implemented in 150 students; it will be evaluated by 5 specialists. The evaluation of the results in practice will be carried out through the application of observation, together with the systematization of experiential experiences, which, when contrasted, will be consistent and will allow confirming the need and effectiveness of choral singing actions, a significant contribution in the practice, with social relevance and scientific novelty, which makes it relevant for the contribution to the formation of the responsibility value of the 7th grade students of the ESBU: "Desembarco del Granma".

**Choral singing, Value responsibility**

### Resumen

Esta investigación constituye una respuesta a la necesidad actual de contribuir a la formación del valor responsabilidad de los estudiantes de 7mo grado de la ESBU: "Desembarco del Granma". A partir de la determinación de la situación problemática, se elabora acciones de canto coral con diferentes períodos, indicaciones y vías de realización que entrelaza su implementación con elementos técnicos-formativos, así como consideraciones generales dirigidas a los estudiantes seleccionados. Se emplean métodos de investigación para el estudio teórico y metodológico con autores internacionales y nacionales en relación al tema en cuestión, que permiten asumir posiciones científicas y se aplicaron métodos empíricos para el diagnóstico inicial. La propuesta se implementa en 150 estudiantes, será evaluada por 5 especialistas. La valoración de los resultados en la práctica, se realizará mediante la aplicación de la observación, junto a la sistematización de las experiencias vivenciales, que al contrastarlo será congruente y permitirá confirmar la necesidad y efectividad de las acciones de canto coral, un aporte significativo en la práctica, con pertinencia social y novedad científica, que lo hace relevante para la contribución a la formación del valor responsabilidad de los estudiantes de 7mo grado de la ESBU: "Desembarco del Granma".

**Canto coral, Valor responsabilidad**

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## Introduction

Singing is an activity of the human species, a natural means of expression common to all races. Its origins go back to prehistoric times, naturally to man's fascination with rhythm, the emission of sounds to identify objects, phenomena and people. These very elementary sounds in their beginnings would later form the inflections of language.

In order to express themselves, primitive man used singing as a means of communication, where he linked his activity to the rhythmic process, i.e. when hitting one stone with another, when clapping his hands in joy for a good hunt or the arrival of rain, when drawing his living reality, as well as other ways of manifesting his primitive art or culture.

According to Hurtado, A (2003), the emergence of music is related to singing because man gave a characteristic stamp to his voice to stimulate the animals that accompanied him in his agricultural tasks or to help himself with the rudimentary farming instruments. Thus appeared the work songs that exist and are used today in some countries. In periods such as the Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic, this type of singing was also used, and constitutes the antecedents of what would later receive the name of choir.

According to Saimí Risquet (2012), the word chorus comes from the Greek *ronda*. He also states that Greek choirs were formations of men, women, mixed, or men and children who sang only monodic music (in one voice), usually in the theatre (p.8).

The name choir as we know it today comes from the Middle Ages, a time when the Catholic Church curbed the imagination of the creators of music conceived for collective singing, by establishing strong dogmas in this respect. The chorus arose in ancient Greece as a collective musical and theatrical expression and the term corresponded to the place destined for the dancers in tragedies and comedies. Later the dance itself was called chorus and the number of singers accompanying it was also called chorus. Choral singing was used to worship their deities (gods). In other cultures, such as Hinduism, it was also used to tell legends about the creation of the world.

In Rome, its presence is recorded in musical acts of the Flavian circus, at the time of the emperor Claudius. In ancient Egypt, only men were allowed to sing, because music was considered the immediate hierarchy of the pharaoh and the main musicians in the orchestra of the royal palace were like relatives of the king. In Mesopotamia, it was intimately associated with rites of worship of the stars and gods, and women's choirs were also organised when they received men returning victorious from war.

The existence of organised choirs in Israel is documented in the Old Testament. They were scholastic choirs with instrumental accompaniment whose repertoire was passed down from generation to generation. The choirs were composed of adult men only, although children were allowed to join in.

In the Middle Ages, liturgical chant was formalised, derived from the East: Ambrosian chant, Hispanic chant and Gregorian chant; the first motets appeared, and a primitive polyphony appeared: the organum and the discanto.

In the Renaissance, new forms of choral singing appeared, exchanging melodic themes with profane chant: masses, motets and other religious compositions. Indeed, several secular songs, such as *L'homme armé*, were given the name of masses because their melodies were borrowed by church composers (the procedure was banned at the end of the 16th century). Profane songs are found at carnivals, in the courts and salons of the aristocrats of the time.

At the beginning of the 10th century, in the period known as *Ars antiqua*, polyphony appeared, which made the development of vocal ensembles possible. At first it was sung in two voices and later in three and four voices, although not in the form of a choir but as soloists, trios and quartets. In the 14th and 15th centuries, in the period known as the *Ars Nova*, children became part of the choirs, constituting the treble voices in polyphonic works. The 16th century saw an increase in the number of members and the voices were named according to their tessitura (cantus, altus, tenor and bassus).

In the 17th and 18th centuries, in the periods known as Baroque and Classicism, choirs continued to increase in number and the voices designating their tessitura were named with the current terms (soprano, contralto, etc.). The number of real vocal parts increases. This is the time of the great choral works of Handel, Bach, Vivaldi, Haydn and Mozart (15th-19th century).

Stereophony appeared at this time: these were masses with eight, twelve or even fifty voices, written by the masters of the time; in these masses, several choirs were distributed spatially in the churches, which explains the high number of voices. Even Baroque composers such as Vivaldi used this technique, which then disappeared.

From Classicism onwards, professional choirs sang in concert halls rather than in churches, the space that invited multiple formations disappearing, in order to encourage composers to adapt to the new topology. In the 19th century, during Romanticism, there was a revolution in the world of choral singing with the megalomania of the choral ensembles that came to group together more than eight hundred members and the phenomenon of socialisation, with choirs being considered as a means of solidarity and training for individuals.

In the 20th and 21st century, choral singing continues to have a socialising impact and fulfils inherent functions in the life of a people, both as a means of expressing community feelings and as a resource of religious, political and even military utility.

As choral singing is an artistic manifestation with a great social and educational meaning, individual and collective efforts are essential.

Particularly in young people, choral singing reveals itself as an attractive, enriching and formative alternative that teaches to live together, to share, to be disciplined and to respect others, by communicating life experiences; this is why it is of significant importance in the movement of amateur artists, because it contributes in a positive way to the integral formation of the personality, fundamentally in this stage of human development.

The choir is a representative institution within the universities of the world. Within the artistic-cultural universe of this educational level, it has been present, in one way or another, in the formative process. Choral singing is of special interest due to its characteristics, because it allows integration and the acquisition of values that make a group of students ethically and aesthetically committed human beings, by incorporating the conscience of the individual and collective act.

The presence of choral singing in Cuba dates back to the beginning of the 16th century, but very few references have survived to the present day. This absence is evident in the so-called process of acculturation, defined by the North American culturalist school as: the approximation of one social group to another by contact, that is, the simple transfer of cultural elements from one social group to another.

With the arrival of the colonisers in Cuba, and their interest in establishing their dominion and taking possession of the natural wealth, an attempt was made to exterminate the native population and with it their traditional songs and culture in general. With the Spanish and African migrations, a new culture was formed with manifestations and practices from both cultures.

With the creation of new professional and amateur choirs, the existing repertoire became scarce. Some choral conductors were forced to venture into the world of composition, such as Miguel García (1927), Octavio Marín (1929) and Electo Silva (1930).

This boom was irregular due to the economic situation in Cuba in the 1990s. These groups were summed up in the CTC Choir, the Communications Union Choir, the Havana University Choir, the choirs of the University of Matanzas and the University of Havana Choir.

With the triumph of the Revolution, the rise of choirs increased as a fundamental element in the work with the masses, rescuing the forms and values of our identity. Along with this, new choral groups were formed, such as the Coro del Teatro Nacional de Cuba (1960), which became the Coro Polifónico Nacional, directed by Serafín Pró (1960), the Coro del Teatro Lírico and the Coro del ICRT, as well as various amateur choirs.

In 1961, given the boom in choral work on the island, Santiago de Cuba, today the country's choral capital, created the National Choir Festival, later International (1992), which is attended by the best choral groups in Cuba and foreign guests.

Another important event was the creation in 1963 of the Choral Conducting course at the Amadeo Roldán Conservatory and the National School of Art, where new professionals began to be trained, who were then sent to other socialist countries to complete their studies at different times from 1969 until the 1980s.

The first were Carmen Collado López and Digna Guerra Ramírez, students of Manuel Ochoa at the Municipal Conservatory, followed by another group made up of Argelia Frago, María Felicia Pérez Arroyo and José Antonio Méndez Valencia, graduates of the National Art School with the Hungarian teacher Agnes Kralovszky.

In the 1970s, the amateur movement took a great consolidated development in the National Encounters of University Choirs, the Festivals with Amateur Artists, as well as the preparation of large choral masses for political events such as the first graduation of the Escuela Formadora de Maestros de Topes de Collantes with two thousand voices; the celebrations for the first of May and others.

To achieve this purpose, choral singing can be a way for the integral formation of the student, and build a relationship of trust and cohesion with classmates; singing in a group, consciously and unconsciously incorporates human values, appreciates harmony in order and discipline, both personal and collective, since to sing all together, one must go to the same rhythm, follow the conductor's guidelines, tune and intonation well, as well as knowing how to listen.

On the basis of the experience in choral singing, the student learns musical elements, through technical-vocal exercises, the qualities of sound, vocal typology, the texts of the songs; he/she gets to internalise knowledge about vocal education, in order to be able to apply it to other contexts and create from them. In addition, it develops the affective-volitional sphere and enriches interpersonal relationships with ethics as an important aspect.

When consulting different authors, who deal with topics related to choral singing in professional training, important studies have been revealed, which are reflected in master's and doctoral theses, scientific articles at national and international level such as: Estrada, A.T and Hernández, M (2001); Castillo, J. A (2008); Guerra, D and Sánchez, P (2008); Rivas, M, Bastanzuri M.A, Olivera, M (2013); Alessandroni, N and Etcheverry, E (2013); Fernández, Y, Ramírez, C.Y and Briceño, J. M (2013); Duque, M.C (2015) and Narain, J (2016).

As a result of this exploratory stage, the fundamental deficiencies were revealed, which led to the following scientific problem: How to contribute from choral singing to the formation of the value of responsibility of the 7th grade students of the ESBU: "Desembarco del Granma"? and the objective was set: To elaborate actions of choral singing that contribute to the formation of the value of responsibility of the 7th grade students of the ESBU: "Desembarco del Granma".

## **Development**

According to EcuRed, choral singing is an artistic manifestation of a collective nature, by means of which the vocal technique (singing) is developed in the individual, its organisation and distribution in a choir, as well as the assembly of different national and international works that are interpreted. It is performed in unison or by elaborate strings.

There are various definitions of choral singing, but in general it is said that choirs are samples of the culture of all times because they have been the ideal vehicle in which the masses have grouped together to express themselves musically, as well as making available to a group of people the satisfaction of making music together with few means, since the instrument is possessed by the individual himself: the voice.

At different ages, singing can be collective, individual or organised in small groups or large choral masses, such as those carried out by Villalobos H (1959) in Brazil, of thousands of singers or by means of cantorias, choirs and other vocal combinations.

The pedagogical work of Cuban specialists of recognised scientific value such as Sánchez, P (1998), an illustrious pedagogue of the Enrique José Varona University of the University of Oriente, Borlot, A (2000), Bonne, M (2000), among others, whose results and contributions in research carried out in the field of music education constitute the theoretical and methodological foundations of the continuous improvement of this speciality, adapted to the conditions of the country, the needs and demands posed at different historical moments.

Therefore, it is necessary to take into account the social significance of education, which ensures the transmission and development of cultural heritage; it deploys the adoption of pedagogical models, since it transmits skills acquired and developed by the subjects.

In this sense, the criterion of the Cuban pedagogue Sánchez, P (1998) is assumed, where she takes up musicalisation and its repercussions on the preparation of the music educator. Her criterion favours the formation of an integral general culture, which will contribute to the improvement of the cognitive, affective and psychomotor spheres of the personality, as part of the formation of the individual's personality, for its expression in daily performance. Choral singing as a musical expression contributes to the standards of proper education and social coexistence of human beings in the 21st century.

Choral singing is a form of expression and communication, through the use of music as an artistic manifestation, involving auditions, song, technique and repertoire. For its development, singing skills are necessary, procedures and technical-musical elements are used, it favours the formation of human values and an aesthetic attitude, which are subsequently applied to other contexts, in a way that allows it to enrich interpersonal relationships, on the platform of the ethics required by this discipline. In addition, it allows the expression of accumulated historical and social experience, based on feelings, emotions, moods and experiences.

For this research, choral singing as a musical expression is inserted within the formative process, as an option within the artistic area at school.

When considering the art of group singing from Marxist-Leninist conceptions, it can be used as a suitable tool for social awareness, where aesthetics stands out as a specifically artistic form of understanding reality. In the thesis on educational policy, it is stated that aesthetic education "is aimed at developing in individuals the ability to express and perceive, understand, feel and enjoy artistic beauty and the ideals and feelings that are manifested through art in its various forms".

In this sense, the above is shared, since it is a category that expresses, and concretises in its most generalised form, man's attitudes towards reality, which are multifaceted, as diverse and inexhaustible is the historical and social practice, in whose evolution feelings are formed, needs arise and value criteria about aesthetic categories are consolidated.

According to Frómeta, (1997), the aesthetic categories have a very complex object of study, within which the general laws of the sensitive appropriation of the world by man, the structure and the laws of the development of the artistic activity of society are recognised.

Both small choral groups, as well as large choirs, require a conductor with mastery in the organisation and direction of the group, which constitutes an important social commitment. For this, he/she will use his/her skills as an educator, where his/her image and demands will allow him/her to prepare the rehearsal, to attend punctually, to establish an atmosphere of respect, patience and tenacity become indispensable characteristics.

The correct methodology of choral singing depends essentially on the conductor's ability to guide its members towards a homogeneous work towards truly achievable goals. In this way, it contributes not only to acquiring vocal faculties, but will also benefit the individual with human values that serve his personal integrity. Therefore, it is stated that choral singing encompasses a set of formative actions that in the light of this research requires special attention for its application in students of different educational institutions, for it, with suitable linkage of theory and practice, experience and consciousness, thought and language, stimulating in students a value response shaped by the supreme entity of action.

Values are an important part of the spiritual and ideological life of society and of the inner world of individuals, they are a production of consciousness (social and individual) in the context of social relations given in the activity of the subject and exist in unity and difference with anti-values.

"The word value comes from the Latin valor, valere (strength, health, to be healthy, to be strong). When we say that something has value we affirm that it is good, worthy of appreciation and esteem. In the field of ethics and morality, values are qualities that we can find in the world around us.

Within the value system of society are political, legal, moral, aesthetic, religious, philosophical and scientific values. The content of the value system is a specific expression of the economic, social and class conditions of a particular historical epoch, in its dialectic with the universal human content they contain.

In order to organise the methodological conception of values, it is necessary to take into account a philosophical, sociological and psychological foundation which will provide us with the principles that will illuminate the way for the training we want to carry out. These principles have the dialectical-materialistic approach to the spiritual and ideological nature and the historical-social essence of values.

Karl Marx argued that the essence of man is the whole of his social relations, i.e. that man's personality is an individual reflection of the whole of the social-historical conditions of life. This man moves in the general relations of the society in which he lives, but concretely in the family, the community, in the group where he lives his life, assimilating its norms of conduct, principles, convictions, motivations, receiving daily influence.

Nancy Chacón Arteaga presents different principles that we will assume. By way of example, here are some of them.

1- Multifactorial character of values and the process of their formation: values, as part of the spiritual and ideological life of society and of the inner world of individuals, are influenced and influenced or impacted by multiple factors in the context of social reality, both in the macro and micro social environment in which people are born and develop.

2- Dialectic of the objective and the subjective: The spiritual and ideological nature of values expresses in the form of conceptions, feelings, points of view, ideals, qualities and attitudes, the objective conditions in which people live. In this sense, values are a subjective manifestation (internal construction by the subject in the form of principles, norms, scale of values, convictions) of the material conditions of their existence (socio-economic situation, class position, family environment, quality of life) which generate in the individual the needs, interests, motives and intentions of their relationships, their actions and to a large extent provide the nuance of the social, positive or negative significance that the facts or phenomena have for society and for the individual himself.

Values guide the activity and actions of people towards human improvement and their living conditions by proposing objectives, goals and aims. When taking into account the psychological level, it is mandatory to deal in this work with some essential aspects of the personality that facilitate the understanding in the formation of values.

The authors of this research, that is why, among so many human values, we dedicate special attention to responsibility, for conferring the subject the capacity, which allows him to fulfil his duties, consciously involved, which is demonstrated in the coherence between saying and doing, directed towards a fair moral activity and assuming the consequences of his actions.

The definition of Guillermina Zaldívar Cordón is assumed, who expresses that responsibility is a value cell, each one of the spiritual values intrinsically carries in itself, for its full development, responsibility; this in turn becomes a dimensional value that includes other values; that is why the criterion of the value of responsibility is presented, highlighting among its indicators: the fulfilment of duty, discipline, participation, constancy, decision and the capacity to consciously assume the consequences derived from the action.

In order to achieve the formation of the value of responsibility in students, it is necessary to incorporate content related to some artistic manifestation, and it is therefore of great interest to the author to highlight choral singing as one of the forms of collective musical expression, which contributes to the development of knowledge, skills, habits, personal and social aspects in students, which helps in the acquisition of a solid basic competence, as stated in the current Ministerial School Regulations.

The pianist of Shola Cantorum de Venezuela, Raga (2005) expressed: "Choral singing is therapeutic, it facilitates the identification of people, it allows them to accept themselves as they are through the magic of the union of many diverse people for a common good (...). Choral singing is a school of life". (In: EcuRed. 2019, p. 3)

This approach is assumed by the author of the research, since choral singing stimulates secondary school students, has a mobilising effect, allows the knowledge of socio-cultural roots and constitutes an ideal tool in the restoration of human balance, so that it is applicable for life; it is a successful representation to use time usefully and creatively, to channel concerns and simultaneously performs in the individual an ethical and aesthetic elevation, as well as the possibility of expressing through singing, feelings, emotions and perceptions of the world.

Choral singing, besides forming in the participants the value of responsibility, develops collectivism, humanism, solidarity, patriotism, anti-imperialism, respect, honesty, honesty, modesty, simplicity, humility, selflessness, unselfishness, a sense of fairness, love of study and work, among other values that improve the behaviour of the individual and enhances the way of acting in the personality.

An example of this vision is expressed by the pedagogue Ponsoda (2005) who stated that "choral singing is very important for the pleasure derived from the effort to achieve good collective music, providing disciplined men and women, and of noble character, its value in this aspect is incalculable" (p.79).

The practice of choral singing favours social awareness, the understanding of reality, which is concretised in some way in the formative and cultural policy carried out by the Cuban Revolution throughout its history, contextualised to the concrete historical moment, to the demands of the Ministerial Programme of Educational Teaching in Cuba and with the relation of the academic components, respectively.

Consequently, it is important to highlight in the proposal that the form of organisation used is the workshop, where the author follows the criteria of Calzado, D (1998), which states that it is "a form of organisation, (...) that agrees with the problematising and developmental conception of education insofar as, in it, the aim is to bridge the dichotomy that occurs between theory and practice; production-transmission of knowledge, skills-habits; research-teaching; thematic-dynamic" (p.12).

## Conclusions

The evaluation of the theoretical references of Choral Singing, had as a general starting point, the historical background and the benefits that Choral Singing provides to the formation of the students' value of responsibility. Theoretical-methodological considerations of Choral Singing were deployed for the usefulness and development of vocal and educational skills, which strengthen in a positive way, not only the musical skills, but also the personal qualities of the students.

The analysis of the referential theoretical framework allowed an approach to the reality and actuality of the subject, its particularities in Cuba, which made possible the conceptual positionings established by Sánchez P (2003) and Báxter E. (2006), by constituting the premises in the benefit and importance of Choral Singing for the formation of the value of responsibility of the students, an opportune aspect due to its pertinence in this formative scenario.

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