

**CULTURAL COUNTERPOINTS:  
Examining the Musical Interactions between the U.S. and Latin America**



**Meisten, Kimberly D. (VocalEssence):  
“Increasing Cultural Awareness through Choral Music”**

**Abstract:**

This paper examines the impact of a unique community engagement program called ¡Cantaré!, which places Mexican composers in Minnesota classrooms to serve as composers-in-residence. Since 2008, the Minnesota-based chorus VocalEssence has connected eight different Mexican composers with more than 20 school, college and community choruses. Urban, suburban and rural communities have participated. The composers work directly with the singers and write new choral works specifically for each group. Through the VocalEssence ¡Cantaré! program, more than 5000 people have heard 35 new choral works, commissioned and premiered in community concerts throughout the state.

The paper will clarify the effects of the program on audiences, composers and performers by reviewing evaluation results and exploring the cross-cultural influences of the compositions. Data has been collected from student, teacher and composer surveys; teacher and student focus groups; classroom observations; Cultural Advisory Committee meeting notes; audience and budget statistics; and related ¡Cantaré! educational resources developed for music teachers and conductors.

Key findings reinforce the profound impact of the arts (in this case, contemporary choral music) in the assimilation process of immigrant populations. As the public face of the immigrant group, the arts can enhance understanding and tolerance, easing the incorporation of present and future immigrants. It is our hope that this paper will demonstrate the program’s positive social and musical impact, thus motivating others to replicate the program nationally.

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**Editorial Disclaimer:**

This paper was presented at the Latin American Music Center’s Fiftieth-Anniversary Conference titled “Cultural Counterpoints: Examining the Musical Interactions between the U.S. and Latin America,” Indiana University, Bloomington, October 19-23, 2011, and was accepted on the basis of its abstract, which was peer-reviewed. This paper is presented as submitted by the author, who has authorized its dissemination through *IUScholarWorks*.

## *Increasing Cultural Awareness through Choral Music*

**Kimberly D. Meisten, Director of Community Engagement, VocalEssence**

**October 20, 2011**

American society has grappled with issues of immigration, tolerance and acceptance since before the inception of our country. Read any history book and these patterns readily emerge. David McCollough's biography of John Adams reveals insightful discussion in the 1770s about the terrible irony of Americans fighting for freedom from England while supporting the existence of slavery. Stephen Jay Gould outlines racist immigration policies during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in his book *The Mismeasure of Man*. Even stories in children's schoolbooks of the common school movement reveal negative immigrant stereotypes.<sup>1</sup> It is just not easy for people of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds to live peacefully together. Compound this with the history of slavery and native Americans' struggle for survival, and it begins to feel like an impossibility. But the reality of the situation is that we should continue to find a way. In *The World Is Flat*, Thomas Friedman states "It is simply too easily forgotten that when it comes to economic activities, one of the greatest virtues a country or community can have is a culture of tolerance. When tolerance is the norm, everyone flourishes. Because tolerance breeds trust. And trust is the foundation of innovation and entrepreneurship. Increase the level of trust in any group, company or society, and only good things happen."<sup>2</sup>

The arts, especially choral music, are perfectly suited to building a community of trust. Several sources support this argument, both for adults singing in community choirs as well as children singing in K-12 schools. In 2009, Chorus America, the professional organization for community choruses in the United States, found that singing in a choir is strongly correlated with increased social skills, greater civic involvement, volunteerism, discipline, and teamwork—all of which requires tolerance and trust. Choral singing also provides an extraordinarily accessible entry point for arts exposure, with fewer barriers to participation—economic, cultural, and educational—than those posed by other art forms. The voice is a readily available instrument!<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> (Elson)

<sup>2</sup> (Friedman, 327)

<sup>3</sup> (Chorus America)

Since 1991, the internationally-renowned Minneapolis-based chorus VocalEssence has recognized the power of choral music to create a community of tolerance and understanding through its educational program, WITNESS. WITNESS celebrates the contributions of African Americans to our shared American cultural heritage and includes a School Program for grades 4-12, Young People's Concerts, CD-collection and annual subscription concert. Since the beginning of WITNESS, the demographics of the Twin Cities have changed significantly—between 1990 and 2008, the immigrant population in the Twin Cities grew by 236% with about 25% from Latin America. That is 10 times faster than the growth rate for the native-born population during the same period (23%).<sup>4</sup> The growing Spanish-speaking population in Minnesota coupled with the creativity of Artistic Director and Founder Philip Brunelle inspired a new educational program—¡Cantaré!

The planning for ¡Cantaré! began in 2007 with an initial grant from General Mills and the development of a cultural advisory committee made up of Mexican Americans in the community. At our first meeting in November 2007, community leaders including the Consul General of Mexico in Saint Paul, the head of the Minneapolis Foundation, and the President of Comunidades Latinas Unidas en Servicio, met with VocalEssence staff to advise on fundraising, venues, translators, marketing and audience. Philip Brunelle proposed his ideas to the group, which included the following: 1) an initial focus on Mexico (vs. other Latin American countries), 2) the primary activity would be composer residencies with new music written and a community concert, 3) composers needed to be Mexican (vs. Mexican American), 4) schools would be an important audience, 5) this program would be more than writing new music—the focus also needed to be about building self-esteem and creating a community of tolerance, and 6) eventually, the music needed to be published and shared nationwide. The committee agreed that it was a good idea to initially focus on Mexico instead of Latin America as it is our closest neighbor to the South. Furthermore, the highest percentage of Latinos in the Twin Cities came from Mexico, and the establishment of the Mexican Consulate in Saint Paul in 2005 could help provide the support needed for the program.<sup>5</sup> The committee also supported the idea of

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<sup>4</sup> (Helmstetter)

<sup>5</sup> The 2000 census recorded 41,600 Mexican-born people in Minnesota, up from 3,500 counted in 1990. From Eduardo Porter and Elisabeth Malkin, "Way North of the Border," *New York Times*, 30 September 2005.

involving Mexican (versus Mexican American) composers—this could create a unique cross-cultural experience that few organizations could provide. After discussing possible school partners and their demographics, there was consensus that VocalEssence serve a mix of urban and suburban schools as well as schools with different demographics. Several committee members spoke to the importance of the program for Latinos, since often aspects of culture can be lost as kids try to fit in socially in their schools. On the flip side, they felt it was important that this music be brought to the mainstream—this would help provide greater visibility to the richness of Mexican culture as well as enhance a new understanding (it was agreed that much of the media about Mexico is negative—focusing on drug cartels and illegal immigration).

With additional input from the Community Engagement board subcommittee, the following mission and objectives of the program were outlined:

*Mission Statement:*

¡Cantaré! will actively engage VocalEssence audiences and the wider community in the discovery, celebration and creation of music from Mexican traditions of the past and present.

*Objectives:*

- Discover and celebrate Mexican musical traditions (past and present)
- Nurture the creation of new quality choral music in partnership with Mexican composers
- Create a series of bilingual educational materials, published music & CDs for choral groups, singers & schools using established best practices
- Encourage singing in schools while instilling and celebrating cultural pride and awareness of Mexico's heritage throughout the community

Philip Brunelle and Associate Conductor Sigrid Johnson selected three composers with the invaluable support of composer Jorge Córdoba; I recruited eight partner schools and two community choirs, and the first residency occurred in Fall 2008. The composers spent five weeks over the course of three visits from October 2008-May 2009, each working with 3-4 groups, engaging them in music from Mexico. The first two-week long residency was

envisioned as a time for composers to become familiar with the level of their ensembles and for students to be introduced to the music of each composer. The composers returned to Mexico to write new music for each choir, which VocalEssence distributed in early January 2009. The composers traveled to the Twin Cities for another two-week residency in March, working with each group to see how they were doing and make revisions to their music, assist in teaching and refining performances. Their last week-long visit occurred before the concert, when they worked with choirs putting the finishing touches on the performance. All of these residencies would not have been possible without the relationships developed with the U.S. Embassy in Mexico City and the Mexican Consulate in Saint Paul, as temporary work visas were necessary for their travels. VocalEssence also felt it was important to provide additional support to schools, so they contracted Nyssa Brown, the music coordinator at Perpich Center for Arts Education, to write a Teacher Resource Guide, which included activities and music for teachers to help them introduce their students to the music and culture of Mexico before and in between the residencies. On May 12, 2009, VocalEssence presented the first ¡Cantaré! Community Concert in Orchestra Hall in Minneapolis to an audience of 1800. The program has continued annually with VocalEssence just beginning the fourth year of the program in Fall 2011.

We have gathered data about ¡Cantaré! from a variety of sources over the past three years. In 2008, VocalEssence engaged Action Consulting and Evaluation Team (ACET) to evaluate the success of the first of year of the program. ACET developed a logic model (see appendix A), student surveys, facilitated a teacher focus group, and presented their findings to the Advisory Committee at the end of the school year. With the recession in 2008, it was not possible to hire a professional firm for the second year of the program (2009-10), although VocalEssence felt it was important to continue the teacher focus group meeting since it was so helpful in providing guidance the past year. In 2010-11, VocalEssence expanded ¡Cantaré! outstate with an Arts Learning grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board, having residencies and concerts both in the Twin Cities and in Worthington, Minnesota.<sup>6</sup> The funds also enabled VocalEssence to hire UpFront Organization Development Consulting (UpFront) to evaluate the program in Worthington. They translated the logic model into a program theory (see appendix

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<sup>6</sup> In November 2008, Minnesota passed the Clean, Water, Land and Legacy Amendment, which increased the sales tax by .375% and thus provided funding in part “to preserve our arts and cultural heritage.”



B), developed student, teacher, and composer surveys, made classroom observations and facilitated focus groups, surveyed adult choral singers and community audience, submitting their final report in June 2011. In addition to the data and analysis collected through the evaluation projects from the past three years, VocalEssence has ¡Cantaré! Cultural Advisory Committee Meeting minutes, participant and audience data and information about the music written. All of these sources contribute to a more thorough understanding of how the program has impacted community, especially the composers, teachers and singers.

A comparison of the data received from teachers and students from the past three years demonstrates several consistent successes in raising cultural awareness. *First, it is clear that singers and students learned the most about Mexican history and culture from interacting with the composers.* Student surveys from year one showed that students of all ages enjoyed learning songs from Mexico and wanted to learn more about Mexican music and culture after the program ended. Students' enjoyment of Mexican music and culture were also mirrored by teachers in the focus group interviews. Teachers said students "soak[ed] up all the information the composer would give them" regarding Mexican music and culture. They also noted that students responded well to the challenges presented to them by the composers and were "keenly interested" in learning about Mexican history, culture, and music from the composers.<sup>7</sup> Similar comments were apparent in year three as another teacher wrote "Horacio [a 2010-2011 composer] was great about sharing pictures and videos from Mexico so that students could get a slice of his life back home. I think it broadened their thinking about another culture and approach to living." Student thank you notes in the second year also supported how students learned about Mexico from the composers. One high school student wrote "Thank you so much for the time and energy you put in for our choir. *La Iglesia* was so personalized and just what our choir asked for. The melodic harmonies and chords were so uniquely and originally composed, and the effect was simply stunning. The song really did feel like flickering candles, with the light coming through the windows at San Juan. Thank you so much for sharing *La Iglesia* with our choir and helping us better feel and understand Mexican culture."

*Second, much of students' learning about Mexico's history and culture occurred through learning and performing the compositions that the composers wrote for them.* An examination

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<sup>7</sup> (Kirsten Rewey)

of the 49 songs that composers wrote or introduced to students through ¡Cantaré! reveals the myriad of ways that composers introduced students to aspects of Mexican culture through their songs (see appendix C). Seven of the songs are written in indigenous languages such as Purepecha, Nahuatl, and Mayan while the remainder (with the exception of two that are in English) are in Spanish. Almost all of the texts are written by Mexican poets, or by the composers themselves. And the texts reveal many aspects of Mexican culture from Day of the Dead in “La Ofrenda” to Mayan culture in “Xtoles” to the philosophical poetry of Nezahualcōyotl in “Dejemos Cantos” and “Cantos de Primavera.” Students also worked hard to understand the meaning of the music. One student from year three commented “I learned that knowing how to pronounce the text isn’t the only important thing when singing in a foreign language. Singing the emotion of the text is just as important.” Elements of music—specifically song forms, rhythms and melodies—within the majority of songs contained characteristics of Latin American music, contributing to a better cultural understanding. These included the cumbia in “La Cumbia Nieve,” jaracho son in “Madrugada,” and the medley of popular Mexican melodies such as “Ay Jalisco No Te Rajes” and “Viva México” in *Popurrí*. Latin rhythms permeate much of the ¡Cantaré! music—especially the compound duple-meter feel (6/8) as in “Cara de Pingo.” One student said “I learned the history of 3/2, 6/8 and 4/6 music in Hispanic culture.” A teacher from a different school commented “Latin rhythms can’t be taught from the page. They have to be seen, felt, incorporated. And only Horacio could do this effectively.”

Students worked very hard to learn the music. This can be seen through the high level of appreciation and respect students had for the composers and how it motivated their learning. In the first year of the program students of all ages agreed that the composers “worked hard to get them interested in the music.” Furthermore, secondary/college students reported that the composers did a good job of “creating music that ‘fit’ the choral group” and that their interactions with the composer were educational and informative.<sup>8</sup> In year two, teachers were very impressed with range of composers’ musicality and overall, enjoyed working with them—even when facing challenges in different rehearsal styles and difficult repertoire. One teacher expressed that the students’ connection with the composers was the reason they did not give up

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<sup>8</sup> (Action Consulting and Evaluation Team (ACET))

on the music and continued to work hard. In the third year, one fifth-grader described his favorite part of the experience as “We get to meet a famous Mexican person from Mexico!”, and a high school student described his as “Getting to see and work with Diana throughout the process.”<sup>9</sup>

The students’ commitment to learning the music can also be seen through their strengthened musical skills and literacy. In the third year of ¡Cantaré!, third grade students described how much they liked learning how to sing in a round. Fifth grade students in a focus group described new skills in singing in “four parts,” as well as in pronunciation. This was echoed in the survey of fifth graders. High school singers described learning new ways to warm up, singing with a “bright” tone, working on improvisation, and mastering different rhythms. Concert Choir members described learning about dissonance, singing “vertically” and “horizontally,” tone quality, and syncopation (including “a triple-dotted eighth rest” as one described it). Individually, when asked why they were now more confident in their vocal skills, many told the evaluators it was because they had practiced so much and so hard. One reported, and others nearby agreed, “We found our voice.” Some described specific skills they had learned that led to increased confidence.<sup>10</sup>

One of the reasons for this increased motivation and commitment to learning can be linked to the culturally responsive pedagogy in ¡Cantaré!. The Heinz Endowments’ research in 2009 highlights the importance of using culturally responsive pedagogy in K-12 classrooms to promote resilience and academic success. One of their recommendations is to employ the arts in lesson plans, as they provide pathways of expression and understanding that come directly from the students’ experiences.<sup>11</sup> Looking at the demographics of student population in schools who participated in ¡Cantaré!, the percentage of Hispanic students ranged from 19% and 49% in elementary schools versus the 2% to 26% in high school schools (see appendix D). Many of these students personally related to the ¡Cantaré! composers because of their similar native language and cultural backgrounds. *A third important way that ¡Cantaré! consistently succeeded*

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<sup>9</sup> (UpFront)

<sup>10</sup> (UpFront)

<sup>11</sup> (Noblit)



*in raising cultural awareness is shown through the sense of pride that Latino students felt in learning about Mexican culture.* In year one, teachers shared how Mexican students were utilized by teachers as “experts” in a lot of areas and that teachers and students alike looked to these students for additional information and help with pronunciations. One teacher offered an example of a student with behavioral issues and how by connecting with the composer, the student became more engaged in class and their behavior was dramatically improved. Another teacher shared how one student who had lived in a Spanish-speaking country had the opportunity to have several conversations (in Spanish) with the composer; thus increasing this student’s sense of pride.<sup>12</sup> This same empowerment of Hispanic students was observed in Worthington. Both composers described watching Spanish-speaking students in the classroom helping their peers—and in one case the teacher—with Spanish pronunciation. Hispanic students in the focus groups talked about their previous knowledge of Spanish as important and described how it allowed them to help their classmates.<sup>13</sup>

This sense of pride for Mexican culture was also felt at the Community Concerts, for students, community singers and audience members alike. Although only 2%-6% of audience members returned surveys in the second and third years (VocalEssence did not survey the audience in year one), the majority of feedback was extremely positive and supported that audience and community gained a better understanding of Mexican culture. In year two, 84% of audience members who returned surveys said that the concert enhanced their understanding of Mexico. In discussing how it enhanced their knowledge, one person noted “the exposure to Mexican contemporary composers and following translations of lyrics,” while another said “the lyrics of the songs tell stories of all things Mexican.”

For students, the performance was the most enjoyable part of the program. Teachers noted in year one how the younger students were “star struck” and “energized” by the performance. Elementary students were in awe of the older students’ performance, and were inspired to continue their choral education.<sup>14</sup> In year two, one high school student remarked “Thank you so

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<sup>12</sup> (Kirsten Rewey)

<sup>13</sup> (UpFront Consulting)

<sup>14</sup> (Action Consulting and Evaluation Team (ACET))

much for the experience you gave me to sing in the Basilica. I LOVED it. It was so different. Being up there made me feel somewhat important – it was like I wasn't myself. Like I was in a different place and time, and it was awesome.”

In addition to surveys, VocalEssence received very compelling e-mails after the concerts. Alberto Monserrate, the President and CEO of Latino Communications Network (LCN Media) wrote this after the first concert:

Those who know me know I'm not an easy judge, but last night's performance of ¡Cantaré! surpassed any expectations I might have had. It was a great performance! To see that many talented people from such diverse backgrounds singing in Spanish and Mexican Native languages and united celebrating the best of Mexican culture was a great experience that I wish I could share with more people.

I want to congratulate VocalEssence and its excellent staff for putting together such a complicated, but successful venture. This was a great idea that was so hard to implement, but the implementation was flawless. It was very well organized.

Reaching out to the Minnesota Latino community effectively is not easy. But the staff of VocalEssence did it right! From putting together a great advisory committee to reaching out to community organizations and their great media outreach, they did a great job. There are many organizations that could learn from you. I look forward to helping out in any future events for ¡Cantaré!.

Thanks for such an enjoyable night. Thanks to your efforts there are now hundreds of Minnesota kids and thousands of Minnesota adults that know more about the richness and beauty of Mexican culture. Let's figure out how to turn those hundreds into millions. Que viva México!

A ¡Cantaré! Advisory Committee member wrote this in the second year:

I was so impressed with the quality of the music and the program. I was elated that the composers wrote music that blended cultures and kept the Mexican culture as a spotlight. The program was brilliant and I loved the Latino children's choir! Thanks for all you, Phillip, VocalEssence and the staff do to make our community more equitable!

The evaluation of ¡Cantaré! in Worthington also highlighted the importance of the program to the community. Virtually all respondents from the audience survey agreed it was very important to the Worthington community. One of the composers remarked on the Worthington concert “The best is obvious...just today I heard that people who have never been to the Memorial Auditorium had that experience last night...farmers and other workers with their kids. Some have never been to a concert before. This is a big step...I hear lots of comments that this is important for the community. Yesterday a Mexican boy embraced me, and the African American boys did too. This was very important to me...a sense that all of us are accepted...it is the best part of the project.” Many of the comments written in English thanked the program for helping the community to understand Mexican culture and music (see appendix E for a listing of additional community activities with composers in the Twin Cities and Worthington). The program evaluators noted that it was likely true that the program had a larger community impact in a small town like Worthington compared to a major metropolitan area. They also created a word cloud to highlight the words used most often (which are in a larger point size) to describe the audience’s experience of the concert (see fig. 1).<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> (UpFront)



thing for me is to get to know other cultures, to see the differences... and to pass along my philosophy, using music as a reflection of the culture.” Another stated “Philip told me it’s not about the music, it’s about people...music with a social conscience.... The children are very excited and enjoyable. They want to know more about Mexican music...so I teach them styles from Jalisco. I think the program is working...I love the beautiful songs, but also the deeper achievement.”<sup>16</sup>

Although ¡Cantaré! has succeeded in many ways to increase awareness of Mexican culture, it has not been without its challenges. How immigrant populations continue their artistic traditions in their new country is affected by many influences—size and isolation, pressures to resist assimilation; economic pressures that impact the breadth and quality of distribution; closed or open artistic networks; organizational capacity, grantor support and artistic medium. Because of these influences, creating accessible artistic programs can be quite challenging. It is important to frame events as an opportunity to build bridges between immigrants & native-born Americans and to choose venues where all feel welcome—places that encourage interethnic and host interaction.<sup>17</sup> Yet, even when creating events in this manner, consistent attendance can be a challenge. One such example is the mixed success VocalEssence experienced in working with singers within Twin Cities churches in the Hispanic ministries. In the first year, composer Jorge Córdoba offered a series of workshops for adult choir members at Incarnation Church, the largest Latino church in the Twin Cities. He focused his sessions on the foundations of singing from clapping rhythms to reading music to healthy vocal production. Although 25-40 people consistently attended, it tended to be a different group every time, which made it difficult for him to build upon each session. However, by the date of the Community Concert, a group of 30 were ready to perform the hymn “Encontrarás a Dios,” which he wrote for choir and praise band, reflecting the musical style sung in their church services. Similar successes and challenges were faced by the creation of a Latino Children’s Choir in years two and three. VocalEssence decided to focus the composer residency at Church of the Ascension in Minneapolis on their children’s choir, which at that time, consisted of 10-12 children, ages 6-14. After the first residency,

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<sup>16</sup> (UpFront)

<sup>17</sup> (Jennifer C. Lena and Daniel B. Cornfield, 162)



composer Jesús López asked if it could be possible to enlarge the choir. By the end of the year, there were 40 children from five different parishes singing in the choir and they gave an amazing performance at the 2010 ¡Cantaré! Community Concert. However, attendance significantly dropped in year three. The community coordinator for Church of the Ascension suspected that there were multiple reasons for this—some families moved away, some churches lost their community coordinators, and rehearsals occurred more frequently throughout year three than in year two.

The school residencies had their challenges as well. Each year, teachers, students and composers wished they had more rehearsal time. For some Twin Cities elementary school partners, this desire stemmed from only seeing their students once a week for 45 minutes at a time, which makes it difficult to teach the songs. In some situations, teachers felt that the level of difficulty of the music exceeded their students' abilities. This was especially highlighted in year one, when teachers agreed that the program needed “to resolve classroom management/good music education principles with the composer/performer perspective.” Related to this issue of time is the challenge of incorporating activities from the ¡Cantaré! Teacher Resource Guide in their classroom. In year two, teachers stated that they planned to use the materials after the program experience. In year three, one teacher noted “I didn't have a great deal of time to use the guide. In the right setting it could be useful, but not within the time constraints in the school year. There are great resources in there, but is it realistic that it will be used? I don't know.”

Comparing the elementary school experience in Worthington with that in the Twin Cities shows how the amount of instruction time in music classrooms impacts the difficulty of music that students are able to learn. On average, Worthington elementary school music teachers met with their students for 30 minutes three times each week whereas Twin Cities music teachers met their students once a week for 45 minutes. This difference in time significantly impacted the level of music that students were able to learn—200 Worthington third graders successfully sang in four-part harmony whereas 80 Twin Cities-area fifth graders (who had music class 60% less often) could only sing in two-part harmony. Worthington teachers, in their focus group, noted that even though they were initially dismayed at the difficulty of the compositions, some agreed they were surprised and pleased that their students eventually mastered the pieces.

Other variables with ¡Cantaré! may have caused some students to disengage from the experience. Since the beginning of the program, VocalEssence has recognized the importance of performers seeing each other sing at the Community Concert. In the focus group from year one, teachers remarked how the concert experience was particularly impressive for younger students watching the older students perform, who asked their teachers, “*Is that what we’re going to do when we’re in high school?*”<sup>18</sup> However, in year two and three, it was not possible to repeat this neither at the Basilica in the Minneapolis nor at Memorial Auditorium in Worthington since there were only enough seats for the audience members. This disappointment was noted in the teacher focus groups. In year two, teachers noted that although students appreciated performing in the Basilica, they felt that students seated in the choir loft (located behind the altar) were disappointed they did not see the concert. In year three, one teacher said that “The feeling that I always got was that the ¡Cantaré! concert was a big deal...but the kids showed up and sang, they didn’t get to hear VocalEssence or the rest of the choirs...also it was scheduled on a night there were a couple of big sporting events.... A series of events like that caused kids to disengage...”<sup>19</sup>

Some of the feedback about ¡Cantaré! has also varied from year to year, revealing how some students and teachers felt a higher level of cultural awareness from the experience than others. Factors have included the kind of music sung, the composers they worked with, the ages of the groups, and the amount of collaboration that occurred between teachers and composers. These varied results between individual residencies are not surprising since different composers have worked with different schools each year. For example, in year two, composer Diana Syrse worked in residency with three Twin Cities metro area high schools. Teachers reported how the experience with Diana particularly impacted their female students—many showed surprise that a Mexican female could be a full-time composer and musician. Also, in year two, Jesús López, the composer who worked with elementary-age students, focused his time more on vocal technique than exploring Mexican culture and history. One teacher remarked “Jesus was a total pro. He was gentle, a good listener, tactful, very knowledgeable. I consider his choral skills quite

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<sup>18</sup> (Kirsten Rewey)

<sup>19</sup> (UpFront)

superior to mine. I was happy to watch him work. I felt that Jesus listened to our needs and he made necessary changes. He was an excellent choice.”

Also, teachers had mixed perspectives from year to year about students sufficiently learning about Mexican culture. Although they all agreed that their students learned the most from the composer, some felt their students learned more than others. For example, in year one, the evaluators noted that some teachers felt as though the lyrics of the compositions were “*windows into Mexico’s history and culture,*” and that additional information was not needed. One teacher followed with, “*The cultural experience and singing about the cultural experience were kind of all the same.*” However, others disagreed, desiring more opportunities for students to learn about Mexican culture. In year two, teachers reported in their focus groups that high school students learned more about Mexican culture and history than elementary students, where the focus was more on vocal skills. Examples sighted were the Latin rhythms, harmonies in indigenous Mexican music and the contemporary Latin styles in the high school students’ music. In year three, teachers also reported that high school students learned more about Mexican culture than elementary students in Worthington. The composers, teachers and the education manager all had suggestions about how these cultural learning outcomes could be strengthened, some of which are being implemented in year four. These included changes to the program theory to note the unique impact of the program on Latino students, increased mentoring for composers, adding a fall Orientation session for teachers, and providing more specific, written expectations for composers.

¡Cantaré! has made a deep cultural impact, particularly on the composers and performers involved with the residencies and concert. The consistent evaluation results from year to year show how singers and students learn the most about Mexican history and culture from their interactions with the composers and through learning and performing the compositions that the composers wrote for them. They also show an amazing sense of pride that Latino students feel in learning about Mexican culture. The cross-cultural impact is also shown through the transformative experience of every composer who has participated in the program. The Mexican government has also formally recognized the impact of ¡Cantaré! through their presentation of the Ohtli Recognition Award to Philip Brunelle in May 2011. However, these successes have come with challenges as well. Engaging Latino community choirs in churches has proven

difficult, in part due to the transient nature of the population. Also the varied amounts of time that elementary music teachers have with their students in schools impact the students' experience with the music and culture. Having the concert in a large enough venue from year to year so that all students can see the other choirs perform is also a challenge, due to budget and availability. And the varied opinions from teachers about how much their students have learned about Mexican culture also needs to be addressed—especially for the residencies with students in elementary schools.

Yet, the benefits of ¡Cantaré! far outweigh the difficulties encountered. One composer from year three stated it perfectly: “The best thing is you are affecting young people who are the future generation... affecting the seed and how it is going to grow, not just the flower...this is the one sense, the integration. The other part is about Mexican music... in U.S. universities they only know two Mexican composers. So for VocalEssence to publish this music, it will expand the repertoire, adding new styles.... Mexican choral music gets performed in international festivals, but it is very unique that this is performed in [elementary and] high school.”<sup>20</sup> In November 2010, VocalEssence launched VocalEssence Music Press, publishing select music written for ¡Cantaré! (available at <http://www.vocalescencemusicpress.org/>). The opportunities to publish music in Mexico are extremely limited, which is why VocalEssence felt this to be a priority. The publication series brings this wonderful music to American choirs and beyond, but also provides resources for choir directors to better understand the cultural context of the music they are teaching. It is our hope that not only does this music get performed, but other choirs will replicate the program throughout the United States. In June 2011, the *Choral Journal* published an article about ¡Cantaré!, which shows how choirs, through working with composers from another land, could enter into similar cross-cultural experiments.<sup>21</sup> ¡Cantaré! shows the potential that choral music has to open up minds to different ways of thinking. It opens people up to seeing others of different cultural backgrounds in a new light. It instills cultural pride within people of similar backgrounds. And most importantly, it has the potential to breed a culture of tolerance and a community of trust.

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<sup>20</sup> (UpFront)

<sup>21</sup> (Becker)

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## Appendix A: VocalEssence ¡Cantaré! Logic Model and Evaluation Plan

**Mission Statement:**  
*¡Cantaré!* will actively engage VocalEssence audiences and the wider community in the discovery, celebration and creation of music from Mexican traditions of the past and present.

- Program Goals:**
- Discover and celebrate Mexican musical traditions (past and present);
  - Nurture the creation of new choral music in partnership with Mexican composers;
  - Create a series of bilingual educational materials, published music & CDs for choral groups, singers and schools using established best practices;
  - Encourage singing in schools while instilling and celebrating cultural pride and awareness of Mexico’s heritage throughout the community.

- Evaluation Questions:**
1. To what extent did students learn about Mexican music?
  2. To what extent did students have a quality learning experience in the classroom and through participating in the *¡Cantaré!* performance?
  3. To what extent did students become more aware of Mexican culture?

Participants	Activities	Outcomes	Indicators	Measurement Tools (Timeline)
<p><b>Students</b> in elementary school, middle school, high school, and college</p> <p><b>Teachers</b> of participating students</p>	<p><b>Students</b> will interact with composers to explore age appropriate skills in improvisation, composition, Latin rhythms, and discover the potential of their own voice.</p> <p><b>Students</b> will perform at Orchestra Hall.</p> <p><b>Teachers</b> will assist composers and provide instructional bridge (using VocalEssence resource guide and companion CD) between composers’ visits.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students report age appropriate improvements in improvisation, composition, knowledge of Latin rhythms, and use of their voice</li> <li>• Students report having a quality learning experience and enjoyment of the <i>¡Cantaré!</i> program and performance</li> <li>• Students become more aware of the breadth of Mexican culture.</li> </ul>	<p>A) 90% of students sing a newly composed song from memory, in Spanish, authentically (correct pronunciation, rhythm, in tune)</p> <p>B) 100% of teachers provide input to the composer’s music based on student capabilities and interest</p> <p>C) 100% of students participate at both the performance and rehearsal</p> <p>D) 90% of students report a positive performance experience</p> <p>E) 100% of teachers report students having a quality learning experience</p> <p>F) 85% of students report positive interactions with composer<sup>1</sup></p> <p>G) 95% of students report wanting to learn more about Mexico’s culture</p> <p>H) 95% of students gain a deeper understanding of Mexico’s culture</p> <p>I) 90% of students report similarities between and their own culture and Mexico’s</p>	<p><b>Student Survey</b>                      (paper and pencil, administered shortly after the <i>¡Cantaré!</i> performance) May, 2009</p> <p><b>Teacher Focus Groups</b>                      (conducted shortly after the <i>¡Cantaré!</i> performance) May, 2009</p>

<sup>1</sup> Students learned from composer; composer helped students learn; students liked learning from composer



Year	Composer	Title	Performer	Language	Level	Style/Inspiration
Please note: Song titles that are starred (*) were existing compositions performed at the Cantaré! concerts.						
2008-2009	Eduardo Gutierrez Ojeda	*Danza del "El Venado"	Windom Spanish Immersion School, first grade	Yagui	Elementary	Sung in the Northern Uto-Aztecan language of the Sonoran desert. Language still spoken by about 15,000 people, mostly of the border Yagui tribe, in the region around the Mexican state of Sonora, and Arizona in the U.S.
2008-2009	Luis Sandi	*La Luna	Windom Spanish Immersion School, first grade	Spanish	Elementary	Luis Sandi was known for merging native music with universal music, and producing operas as <i>Carlota</i> , or symphonies <i>Suite banal</i> in 1997, among others.
2008-2009	Sabrina Covarrubias	La Cumbia Nueva	Partnership Academy Charter School, fifth grade Eden Prairie High School Concert Choir; St. Paul Central High School Concert Choir;	Spanish	Elementary	Inspired by the popular Cumbia rhythm that both the composer & the children loved dancing to
2008-2009	Jorge Cázati	*Xoles / Song to the Sun	Southwest High School Concert Choir	Maya	High School	Old Mayan song, chanted by warriors in praise of the Mayan Sun God
2008-2009	Jorge Cázati	Stitixa Binna Z'aa	Southwest High School Concert Choir	Zapoteco	High School	Zapoteco language converges in a traditional folk tune of the Tehuantepec isthmus (are with the greatest indigenous population in Mexico today)
2008-2009	Jorge Cázati	Tu Nombre	St. Paul Central High School Concert Choir	Spanish	High School	Inspired by the love one feels, expressed with long phrases and clear harmonies
2008-2009	Jorge Cázati	In Centzontocotl	Eden Prairie High School Concert Choir	Nahuatl	High School	Nezahualcoyotl (1402-1472) was the monarch of Texcoco in pre-Hispanic Mexico; about fealingness & fragility of life
2008-2009	Jorge Cázati	Trabalenguas	Southwest High School Concert Choir	Spanish	High School	Fun tongue-twister
2008-2009	Sabrina Covarrubias	The Cloud Forest	Battle Creek Elementary School, third grade	English	Elementary	Inspired by the environmental focus of this school and the ecosystem of the Cloud Forests that is endangered in Mexico
2008-2009	Jorge Córdoba Valencia	¡Aleluya!	The Viking Chorus of St. Olaf College	Spanish	Adult	Inspired by beauty of Northfield, MN; realization that you can see God in all things
2008-2009	Sabrina Covarrubias	La Ofrenda	Burroughs Community School, fourth grade	Spanish	Elementary	The Day of the Dead—the title of the piece is the type of altar or decorated table created for the celebration
2008-2009	Jorge Córdoba Valencia	Imágenes del Quinto Sol	VocalEssence Chorus and Ensemble Singers	Spanish & Nahuatl	Adult	Poem by Roberto López Moreno that reflects three moments in Mexican history—pre-Hispanic times, passing through transitional times, and the present day
2008-2009	Jorge Córdoba Valencia	Encontrarás a Dios	Sagrado Corazon de Jesus, VocalEssence Chorus and Ensemble Singers, and The Viking Chorus of St. Olaf College	Spanish	All ages	Based on a poem of Arturo Gutiérrez Martín in which the poet tells us: "You can find God everywhere you look—open your eyes and you will open your soul."
2009-2010	Jesús López Moreno	Velero de Papel	Burroughs Community School, second grade	Spanish	Elementary	Set to poetry of Verónica Murguía, alludes to the innocent games of children as a metaphor for the great events of humanity
2009-2010	Jesús López Moreno	Ensueños	Burroughs Community School, second grade	Spanish	Elementary	Roses that bloom act as a metaphor for children's dreams
2009-2010	Jesús López Moreno	El Barquito de Papel	Adams Spanish Immersion School, fourth grade	Spanish	Elementary	Set to poetry of Adela Anaya, works to recreate a brave manifestation in the face of the difficulties of everyday life
2009-2010	Jesús López Moreno	Clavelito	Adams Spanish Immersion School, fourth grade	Spanish	Elementary	Set to poetry of Verónica Murguía; refers to the passing of our lives: morning as childhood and youth, night as maturity and old age
2009-2010	Diana Syre Valdes	Tierra de Maiz	Donna di Cantare, Como Park High School	Spanish	High School	Song based on pre-Hispanic culture that includes the Mayans, Tlaxcaltecas and the Mexicas
2009-2010	Diana Syre Valdes	La Iglesia de San Juan	Andover High School Choir	Spanish	High School	Based on text of Mexican poet Andrés López Diaz about Saint John's Church (Chapas)
2009-2010	Diana Syre Valdes	Alma Libre	Miller Voices, Washburn High School	Spanish	High School	Inspired by her first residency with these students—combines Latin rhythms and salsa with elements of hip-hop (rapper & beatboxer)
2009-2010	Diana Syre Valdes	Cara de Pingo	Andover High School Choir & Donna di Cantare, Como Park High School	Purepecha	High School	Based on a folk theme sung in Michoacán, originally in purepecha
2009-2010	Diana Syre Valdes	Popuri	VocalEssence Chorus & Ensemble Singers, Andover High School Choir & Miller Voices, Washburn High School	Spanish	High School	Celebration of Mexican folk songs that includes: "Madruga" by Ventura Romero, "Muñequita Linda" by María Grever, "Cielo Rojo" by Juan Zúñiga, "Ay Jalisco No Te Rajes" by Ernesto M. Contreras and "Viva México" by Pedro Galindo.
2009-2010	Jorge Córdoba Valencia	Encontrarás a Dios	VocalEssence Chorus & Ensemble Singers, Andover High School Choir & Miller Voices, Washburn High School	Spanish	All ages	Based on a poem of Arturo Gutiérrez Martín in which the poet tells us: "You can find God everywhere you look—open your eyes and you will open your soul."

2009-2010	Jesus Lopez Moreno	Festividad de la Sagrada Familia	Latino Children's Choir	Spanish	Elementary	Modal style; text taken from the Liturgy of the Hours; reveals union of the family and the different roles of each member.
2009-2010	Jesus Lopez Moreno	Himno de Vesperas	Latino Children's Choir	Spanish	Elementary	Noe-baroque style; text taken from the Ordinary for Thursday vespers; speaks of the necessary rest that all men are entitled to upon the end of the workday
2009-2010	Jesus Lopez Moreno	*Cantate Domino	Latino Children's Choir	Spanish	Elementary	Written for a Mexican children's choir by the same name; has been used as an anthem for the choral events at the Immaculada Concepcion in Morelia, Michoacan
2009-2010	Jesus Lopez Moreno	En Paz	VocalEssence Chorus & Ensemble Singers	Spanish	Adult	Inspired by introspective reflect of poet Arnaldo Nero
2009-2010	Jorge Córdoba Valencia	Tus palabras	VocalEssence Chorus & Ensemble Singers and Latino Children's Choir	Spanish	All ages	Written as an audience singalong piece; an opportunity to unite all voices into one voice alone in the fashion of a grand prayer
2010-2011	Jesus Echevarria	Caballito	Prairie Elementary School, Third Grade	Spanish	Elementary	huasteco son
2010-2011	Jesus Echevarria	Muchas Gracias	Prairie Elementary School, Third Grade	Spanish	Elementary	some references to a polka and a fox trot
2010-2011	Jesus Echevarria	Madrugada	Worthington Chamber Singers	Spanish	Adult	ironcho son called "El Carnelo" (Veracruz)
2010-2011	Diana Syre Valdes	Chubascoero	Trojan Choir, Worthington High School	Spanish	High School	Mexican vocal ensemble "Mulanxul"
2010-2011	Diana Syre Valdes	Paxional Anztl	Bel Canto, Worthington High School	Tzotzil	High School	old song about the Virgin Mary and how a group of indigenous Mayans (Tzotil) saw an image of her when the Spanish came (Chiapas)
2010-2011	Jesus Echevarria	La Praguilita de Okabena	Celebration Chorus and Worthington Middle School, fifth grade	Spanish	Elementary	Lake Okabena in Worthington, MN
2010-2011	Jesus Echevarria	Volando	Celebration Chorus and Worthington Middle School, fifth grade	Spanish	Elementary	Immigrant searching for his roots
2010-2011	Diana Syre Valdes	Dejemos Cantos	Concert Choir, Worthington High School	Spanish	High School	Nezahualcoyotl (1402-1472), philosopher, warrior, architect, poet, & ruler of city-state of Texcoco in pre-Hispanic Mexico; about fleeteriness & fragility of life
2010-2011	Diana Syre Valdes	Cantos de Primavera	Concert Choir, Worthington High School	Spanish	High School	Poem by Nezahualcoyotl (1402-1472); festive, danceable and of light character
2010-2011	Diana Syre Valdes	The Essence of Our Souls	VocalEssence Ensemble Singers	English & Spanish	Adult	VE Ensemble Singers; composer asked singers to write what makes them happy
2010-2011	Diana Syre Valdes	*Mar de Sueños	VocalEssence Ensemble Singers	Spanish	Adult	Celebration of Mexican folksongs that includes: "Madruga" by Ventura Romero, "Mufrequita Linda" by Maria Grever, "Cielo Rojo" by Juan Zúñiga, "Ay Jalisco No Te Rajes" by Ernesto M. Cortázar and "Viva México" by Pedro Galindo.
2010-2011	Guillermo Alvarez Navarro	*De la Esperanza & De la Noche	VocalEssence Ensemble Singers	Spanish	Adult	Based on a painting by artist Diego Sanchez that shows a giant wave trying to reach the moon at night
2010-2011	Jesus Echevarria	Cantaré!	Celebration Chorus and Worthington Middle School, fifth grade Concert Choir, Trojan Express, Worthington Chamber Singers and VocalEssence Ensemble Singers	Spanish	All ages	Inspired by poem by Mexican contemporary poet Jaime Sabines (1926-1999)–his writings chronicles the experiences of everyday people
2010-2011	Lilia Vázquez Kuntze	Vuela mi Corazón	Adams Spanish Immersion School, fourth grade	Spanish	Elementary	Recovery of balance and well being for our planet; explores ancient Mexican wisdom tradition (Tzatzitlpooca)
2010-2011	Lilia Vázquez Kuntze	Nido de Amor	Adams Spanish Immersion School, fourth grade	Spanish	Elementary	Recovery of balance and well being for our planet; explores ancient Mexican wisdom tradition (Tzatzitlpooca)
2010-2011	Lilia Vázquez Kuntze	Aguilita	Ramsey Intermediate 4th & 5th Grade Choir	Spanish	Elementary	Recovery of balance and well being for our planet; explores ancient Mexican wisdom tradition (Tzatzitlpooca)
2010-2011	Lilia Vázquez Kuntze	Corazon de mi Hermano	Ramsey Intermediate 4th & 5th Grade Choir	Spanish	Elementary	Recovery of balance and well being for our planet; explores ancient Mexican wisdom tradition (Tzatzitlpooca)
2010-2011	Lilia Vázquez Kuntze	Naturaleza	Adams Spanish Immersion School, fourth grade, Ramsey Intermediate 4th & 5th Grade Choir, Latino Children's Choir	Spanish	Elementary	Recovery of balance and well being for our planet; explores ancient Mexican wisdom tradition (Tzatzitlpooca)
2010-2011	Lilia Vázquez Kuntze	Alelujia	VocalEssence Ensemble Singers	Latin	Elementary	Recovery of balance and well being for our planet; explores ancient Mexican wisdom tradition (Tzatzitlpooca)
2010-2011	Lilia Vázquez Kuntze	Elementos	Ramsey Intermediate 4th & 5th Grade Choir	Spanish	Elementary	Recovery of balance and well being for our planet; explores ancient Mexican wisdom tradition (Tzatzitlpooca)
2010-2011	Diana Syre Valdes	The Essence of Our Souls	VocalEssence Ensemble Singers	English & Spanish	Adult	VE Ensemble Singers; composer asked singers to write what makes them happy
2010-2011	Jesus Echevarria	La Praguilita de Okabena	Celebration Chorus and Worthington Middle School, fifth grade	Spanish	Elementary	Lake Okabena in Worthington, MN
2010-2011	Jesus Echevarria	Volando	Celebration Chorus and Worthington Middle School, fifth grade	Spanish	Elementary	Immigrant searching for his roots
2010-2011	Diana Syre Valdes	Oda a la Pobreza	VocalEssence Chorus & Ensemble Singers	Spanish	Adult	Text by poet Pablo Neruda; personifies poverty; uses words as the main weapon to fight poverty
2010-2011	Diana Syre Valdes	Popuri	VocalEssence Chorus & Ensemble Singers	Spanish	High School	Celebration of Mexican folksongs that includes: "Madruga" by Ventura Romero, "Mufrequita Linda" by Maria Grever, "Cielo Rojo" by Juan Zúñiga, "Ay Jalisco No Te Rajes" by Ernesto M. Cortázar and "Viva México" by Pedro Galindo.

2010-2011	Horacio Uribe	De Brujas, Peteneras y otras Guineiras	South High School Varsity Choir & Women's Choir, Mound Westonka High School Concert Choir, and Como Park High School Concert Choir & Donna di Canzare	Spanish	High School	Popular songs: La Bruja (Venezuela) and La Petenera (Alicante) in the song of the sirens); written for choir & jazz band; "The meaning of the word [love]" inspired by a text of Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, a Cuban poet; "Ta-ti-ti-ti" celebrates rebirth of life with stylized Caribbean rhythms; "The Cotton Pickers" based on the poem by B. Traven that speaks the the struggles with slavery
2010-2011	Jesús Echevarría	[Cantare]	VocalEssence Chorus & Ensemble Singers, Celebration Chorus and Worthington Middle School, fifth grade, Ramsey Intermediate 4th & 5th Grade Choir, Adams Spanish Immersion School, fourth grade, Latino Children's Choir, South High School Varsity Choir & Women's Choir, Mound Westonka High School Concert Choir, and Como Park High School Concert Choir & Donna di Canzare	Spanish	All ages	[Cantare] or music of the west (Jalisco, Nayarit, Michoacán, and Colima)



Year	School	Grade Level	# of students	School Type	Community Type	White	Hispanic	African American	Asian	Additional activities in school
2008-2009	St Paul Central High School	11 & 12	40	High school	Urban	37%	5%	31%	26%	
2008-2009	Southwest High School	11 & 12	50	High school	Urban	61%	17%	16%		
2008-2009	Eden Prairie High School	11 & 12	60	High school	Suburban	85%	2%			
2008-2009	Burrroughs Community School		4	100 Elementary school	Urban	72%	19%	5%		
2008-2009	Windom Spanish Dual Immersion		1	90 Elementary school	Urban	13%	40%	38%		Note: No formal music program
2008-2009	Battle Creek Elementary		3	90 Elementary school	Urban	22%	10%	19%	48%	
2008-2009	Partnership Academy		5	50 Elementary school	Suburban		40%	40%		
2008-2009	St. Olaf College		13	90 College	Rural	86%	2%	2%	4%	
2009-2010	Burrroughs Community School		2	130 Elementary school	Urban	72%	19%	5%		
2009-2010	Adams Spanish Immersion		4	100 Elementary school	Urban	34%	49%	13%	2%	Met with other choirs & Spanish classes
2009-2010	Andover High School	11 & 12		50 High school	Suburban	94%		2%	2%	Met with other choirs & Spanish classes
2009-2010	Como Park High School	10, 11 & 12		30 High school	Urban	38%	7%	23%	30%	Met with male choir as well
2009-2010	Washburn High School	10, 11 & 12		30 High school	Urban	26%	12%	51%	8%	
2010-2011	Ramsey International Fine Arts Center	4 & 5		35 Elementary school	Urban	23%	37%	35%		Met with all 4th & 5th grade as well as afterschool choir
2010-2011	Adams Spanish Immersion		4	90 Elementary school	Urban	34%	49%	13%	2%	
2010-2011	Mound Westonka High School	11 & 12		41 High school	Suburban	95%	1%	2%	2%	
2010-2011	Como Park High School	10, 11 & 12		52 High school	Urban	38%	7%	23%	30%	
2010-2011	South High School	10, 11 & 12		80 High school	Urban	53%	8%	25%	6%	Involved jazz band
2010-2011	Prairie Elementary School		3	200 Elementary school	Rural	44%	43%	4%	8%	
2010-2011	Worthington Middle School		5	100 Middle school	Rural	50%	36%	4%	10%	
2010-2011	Worthington High School	9, 10, 11 & 12		110 High school	Rural	59%	26%	4%	10%	

Date	Event Name	Presenter	Venue	Attendance
10/8/2008	Interview with Mario Duarte, La Prensa	Uri Canarena, Jorge Córdoba and Philip Brunelle	Latino Communications Network, Minneapolis	n/a
10/13/2008	hour-long presentation; work with high-school composition students	Jorge Córdoba	Perich Center for the Arts, Golden Valley	80
3/19/2009	St. Olaf Composition Class	Jorge Córdoba	St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN	10
5/5/2009	Interview with Mario Duarte, La Prensa	Jorge Córdoba and Philip Brunelle	Latino Communications Network, Minneapolis	n/a
5/7/2009	Radio Interview	Cózar, Covarrubias & Alberto Monserrate	Latino Communications Network, Minneapolis	n/a
5/10/2009	Church Service	Jorge Córdoba Premiere with Plymouth Congregational Church Choir	Plymouth Congregational Church, Minneapolis	425
5/10/2009	Church Service	Hymn Premiere with Jorge Córdoba	Sagrado Corazon de Jesus, Minneapolis	343
5/11/2009	¡Cantare! Community Concert	VocalEssence & ¡Cantare! Partner Schools	Orchestra Hall, Minneapolis	1800
10/7/2009	Workshop with Janice Hurton's Choir	Diana Syse Valdes	Perich Center for the Arts, Golden Valley	50
10/9/2009	MacPhail Composition Class	Diana Syse Valdes	MacPhail Center for Music, Minneapolis	3
3/10/2010	Composition Class at Augsburg College	Diana Syse Valdes	Augsburg College, Minneapolis	7
4/30/2010	Mallets & Melodies	Fernando Meza	Cathedral of Saint Paul	85
4/30/2010	Mallets & Melodies	VocalEssence Chorus & Ensemble Singers, Marimba Nandayapa, Ivana Bilic, Angel Frette, Nanae Mimura, Fernando Meza, Svet Stoyanov, She-e Wu, Nancy Zeltsman, Macalester African Music Ensemble, Sowah Mensah, director, University of Minnesota	Cathedral of Saint Paul	1827
5/19/2010	Choral Composers Meeting, hosted by Bill Kempe and Greg Schaffner	Diana Syse Valdes and Jesus López Moreno	Private home, Maplewood	25
5/21/2010	Reception with the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese, hosted by Jo Beld	Diana Syse Valdes and Jesus López Moreno	Private home, Minneapolis	14
5/25/2010	¡Cantare! Community Concert	VocalEssence & ¡Cantare! Partner Schools	Basilica of Saint Mary	863
11/20/2010	ACDA-MN Conference Sessions	Philip Brunelle, Diana Syse, Sigfrid Johnson	St. Cloud State University	100
1/28/2011	Song of the Stars Concert Conversation	Maria Jette, Gerardo Rábago	Plymouth Church, Minneapolis	46
1/29/2011	Community Sing with Gerardo Rábago	Gerardo Rábago	Incarnation Church, Minneapolis	43
3/16/2011	Mixed Blessings (St. Mary's Church Children's Choir)	Diana Syse & Jesús Echevarria	Worthington, MN	19
3/16/2011	Mixed Blessings (St. Mary's Church Children's Choir)	Diana Syse & Jesús Echevarria	Worthington, MN	18
3/17/2011	St. Mary's Church Spanish Speaking Choir	Diana Syse & Jesús Echevarria	Worthington, MN	19
3/18/2011	St. Mary's Church Spanish Speaking Choir	Diana Syse & Jesús Echevarria	Worthington, MN	15
3/18/2011	Dayton House Reception	Diana Syse & Jesús Echevarria	Worthington, MN	15
3/19/2011	The Meadows (Performance & Information Session)	Diana Syse & Jesús Echevarria	Worthington, MN	28
3/20/2011	Community Sing at St. Mary's Church	Diana Syse & Jesús Echevarria	Worthington, MN	30
3/21/2011	Culture Corner Event (Performance & Information Session)	Diana Syse & Jesús Echevarria	Worthington, MN	35
3/21/2011	Mixed Blessings (St. Mary's Church Children's Choir)	Diana Syse & Jesús Echevarria	Worthington, MN	35
3/24/2011	St. Mary's Church Spanish Speaking Choir	Diana Syse & Jesús Echevarria	Worthington, MN	22
4/28/2011	Worthington School Assembly, St. Mary's Church	Ensemble Singers	Worthington, MN	6
4/28/2011	Worthington Cantare Concert	VocalEssence & ¡Cantare! Partner Schools	Memorial Auditorium, Worthington, MN	200
5/24/2011	Twin Cities Cantare Concert	VocalEssence & ¡Cantare! Partner Schools	Ordway Center for Performing Arts	1250
				1030