



## **XII LATINAMERICAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE IN MUSIC EDUCATION**

### **IV PANAMERICAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE IN MUSIC EDUCATION**

**July 2nd - 4th, 2019, Resistencia/Corrientes, Argentina**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Diversity has been a widely discussed topic and it is a term with several meanings that answer to different contexts. The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect and implies that each individual has a place and a voice that is heard. According to UNESCO (Jérez, n.d.), public policies in education are responsible for turning diversity into an element of understanding and social inclusion. It also states that the Latin American context is in need of policies inclusive of cultural diversity, in particular of the culture of native peoples.

Cultural diversity has been a recurrent theme among music educators because it is considered a source of pluralism and social cohesion. UNESCO, through the Seoul Agenda (2010), recognizes that arts education plays a crucial role in the constructivist transformation of educational systems, fosters peace, intercultural understanding, and a way for post-industrial economies to develop creative and adaptable work mindsets. This perspective has promoted the

development of teaching and research practices within the arts focused on inclusive agendas that foster coexistence and the acquisition of knowledge based on respect, acceptance, and interactions.

The XII Latin American Regional Conference and the IV Pan American Regional Conference in Music Education of the International Society for Music Education (ISME) were held in Resistencia and Corrientes/Argentina, from July 2 to 4, 2019. It was organized by the School of Arts, Design, and Cultural Sciences at Universidad Nacional del Nordeste (Resistencia, Chaco, Argentina) in partnership with the Argentinian Association of Music Teachers (ADOMU) and the Higher Education Music Institutes of the province of Corrientes and Arts Teaching of Chaco. The main theme for the conference was “Diversity in the music education and production of the Americas.” The conference’s overall objective was the generation of spaces for debate and reflection about different issues and realities regarding music education throughout the Americas. The main topics of discussion were the following:

1. Theoretical foundations and teaching practices in Music Education: General and Specific Topics;
2. Music in Early Childhood Education;
3. Training in Music Careers: Professorship, Music Production, and Training for Professional Musicians;
4. Special Education: Music Therapy, Music and Neuroscience;
5. Transmediality in STEAM Music Education: Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics;
6. Expanded Sonorities: Stages, Installations, Audiovisual, and other Languages;
7. Music, Citizenship, and Communities: Experiences in Management and Policy Development, Inclusion, Diversity, and Gender.

The conference was opened with the participation of the Qom Chelalaapi-Bandada de Zorzaes Choir, followed by a panel presided by Prof. Federico Alfredo Viravé, Dean of the

School of Arts, Design and Cultural Sciences at Universidad Nacional del Nordeste; Dr. Susan O'Neill, current ISME president, Dr. Ana Lucía Frega, former president and current honorary member of ISME; and Professor María Delfina Veiravé, president of Universidad Nacional del Nordeste, who delivered powerful messages for the Latin American music education community.

Over 250 participants from Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, Chile, Mexico, Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, and the United States attended presentations, debates, and workshops. For three days, the conference served as a platform for dialogue and a laboratory for ideas and actions, where participants emphasized the need to broaden our perspectives on Latin American music education. This event had a large number of exchanges, practices, and concrete initiatives that show a connected and responsible vision of music education.

## OPENING SESSION



The opening session began with the participation of the Qom Chlalaapi Choir, representative of the folkloric music of the Chaco province and founded almost 60 years ago. They performed a series of works accompanied by dances and native instruments including drums, mate rattles, hooves, bones, and one that drew special attention, a *nwiké* or *n'viqué* widely used by the indigenous peoples of the provinces of Chaco and Formosa.

The Choir has been declared Living Cultural Heritage by the UNESCO, as well as Ambassador of the Qom Ethnic Group, Official Choir of the Province of Chaco, and Cultural Heritage and Symbol of the Chaco Culture. Their performance was the ideal start for an event focused on the inclusion of diversity in the music education programs of Latin American countries.

After the choir performance, Prof. Federico Alfredo Veiravé, Dean of the School of Arts, Design and Cultural Sciences at Universidad Nacional del Nordeste welcomed the conference participants. He stressed the importance of creating spaces for discussion and reflection regarding the development of a transversal vision of music education. As an educational leader, he also discussed the role of universities in promoting a better understanding about the value of artistic disciplines through research productions and methodologies relevant to artistic processes. This, he added, could be the ground basis of a change in the dynamics of the artistic, cultural, and social transformation of Latin American cultures.

Dr. Susan O'Neill, current ISME president, together with Dr. Ana Lucía Frega (translator), former ISME president and current honorary member, greeted the attendees. In her presentation, O'Neill highlighted ISME's vision of music education. In this regard, she emphasized that the International Society for Music Education respects all musics from all cultures and believes that every individual around the world has a right for music education. She further reiterated the Society's commitment to maintain a live and connected vision of music education to (1) foster an international understanding of musics, and (2) promote music education within a community of music educators worldwide.

Lastly, Prof. María Delfina Veiravé, President of Universidad Nacional del Nordeste, stressed the need for developing a regional perspective which extends beyond a globalized one, so that countries that share similar contexts identify with each other through educational, social, and cultural processes. She expanded on the Dean's idea regarding the role of the universities and their social responsibility as democratizing agents. In this regard, she portrayed music education as a universal right, and recognized its power in the development of democratic systems of education. As such, she argued that higher education institutions are key elements in the promotion of principles of social equality as well as the generation of policies for arts and culture education. Veiravé celebrated the opportunity to have scholars and practitioners offer

ideas for improvement and expansion of music education, as well as reflections regarding the challenges that characterize Latin America.

The opening session ended with a performance of Argentinian music by the Universidad Nacional del Nordeste Chamber Orchestra, followed by the Instituto Superior Profesorado de Enseñanza Artística Música (ISPEA Música) Saxophone Ensemble, and the Musikata Recorder Ensemble. These performances led to a series of oral presentations, workshops, and poster sessions focused on topics that ranged from music pedagogy to discussions regarding community, citizenship, inclusion, diversity, and gender in music education.

**KEYNOTE SESSION: Dr. Susan O'Neill, President of ISME. Translation by Dr. Ana Lucía Frega**



Dr. Susan O'Neill, current ISME President, acted as the keynote speaker for the XII Latin American and IV Pan American Regional Conference of the International Society for Music Education. The title of her presentation was **“Visions and Challenges of Transformative Music Education: Creating Equitable, Inclusive, and Culturally Responsive Learning Communities.”**

O'Neill's presentation aligned with the vision for the conference as it stressed the importance of creating spaces where all students have access to equal, diverse and high-quality music learning opportunities. However, she contended that the word 'quality' is a very complex and difficult to define word. She further argued that one of the best ways of providing quality music education is when a teacher provides guidance to someone who is learning music with the aim of removing barriers and promoting collaborative learning.

She also discussed six key elements in fostering youth musical engagement: (1) negotiating contradictors and developing resiliency, (2) constructing meanings and identities, (3) pursuing multiple pathways, (4) negotiating back and forth exchanges (connections, content, collaborations), (5) building trust and relationships, and (6) experiencing creativity. To this, she stressed the need for creating music learning experiences that consider students' perspectives in order to understand how those experiences impact the students' subjective and psychological wellbeing.

Thus, she presented a spiral model that is culturally responsive and focused on processes that involve students in diverse learning backgrounds, strengths, needs, and interests. O'Neill further argued that the development of a learning community: (1) creates collective agreements on a set of fundamental values, (2) focuses on the quality and depth of the relationships that are formed in that community (process vs. product), and (3) allows people to get involved in an inquiry process that promotes new ways of learning and informed decision making processes.

O'Neill further developed the latter and discussed the importance of the Spiral of Inquiry as a pedagogical approach consisting of six areas:

1. Scanning: What is going on for our learners?
2. Focusing: Where are we going to put our attention?
3. Developing a Hunch: What is leading to this situation? How are we contributing to it?
4. New Professional Learning: How and where will we learn more about what to do?
5. Taking actions: What will we do differently?

#### 6. Checking: How will we check that we made enough of a difference?

Scanning implies an analysis of the issue to be worked and this is where students can be involved as they can provide essential information. With this information, teachers can develop a plan and decide the approach needed to solve the issue. At this point, teachers' intuition is crucial because 'hunches' could will help teachers clarify doubts about how certain situations occurred and at what level they are involved in them. This becomes a space for reflection and is where teachers can learn from the students. O'Neill argues that students like to participate at this level of action; they usually want to bring information to think about possible solutions, which in turn will lead the teacher into taking actions based on new knowledge. The last step is when teachers check if their actions have made important differences for the students and make any changes if needed. This is where the spiral begins. She stressed that this approach would develop a broader perspective of diversity, which will have important implications regarding youth commitment and development in music.

### **THEMATIC AREAS FOR THE SYMPOSIUM, PRESENTATIONS, AND POSTER SESSIONS**

#### **Theoretical Foundations and Teaching Practices in Music Education: General and Specific Themes**

The first theme focused on how teaching practices in music can create experiences that respond to different contexts and needs of the students. One of the themes that stood out the most throughout the presentations was the need for rethinking teacher training to turn it into spaces of collective and culturally situated construction of knowledge. Four main themes were discussed: (1) the multidimensional nature of music, musical knowledge, and aesthetic experiences, and their influence in the construction of transdisciplinary dialogues; (2) the development of pedagogical practices that allow teachers to rethink how they develop musical experiences; (3)



the inclusion of popular and native cultures from Latin American contexts as a basis for the development of inclusive curricula and pedagogies; and the most recurrent theme (4) the inclusion of different social and cultural realities for the creation of flexible music curricula that allow teachers to deal with unanticipated issues. All of these themes encompass a more transformative, responsible, and responsive education for music making.

### **Early Childhood Education**

This topic focused primarily on the development of creative music teaching strategies appropriate for infants. Throughout the presentations, teachers and researchers shared their experiences and knowledge based on a wide array of research studies on early childhood music education. These academics advocated for the development of teaching practices grounded on children's musical behaviors, playing, and sound inquiry. This, they argued, will develop meaningful and transcendental cognitive, sensorial, and affective musical experiences.

### **Higher Education in Music: Music Teacher Education, Music Production, Specialized Musicians**

Throughout the presentations, workshops, and posters for this topic, researchers and practitioners discussed teacher training programs in music education as well as the development of pedagogies for performance and specialized music training. These discussions encompassed topics ranging from technique development, improvisation, to the need for creating music teacher education programs that explore diverse ways of learning. Following the main conference theme, these scholars advocated for the creation of training programs that include formal and non-formal experiences in music. Moreover, they contended that the Latin American

context needs training programs that consider traditional practices that respond to both the teaching and artistic identities of musicians.

### **Special Education: Music Therapy, Music and Neuroscience**

Presentations regarding special education included research studies and teaching practices focused on the importance of developing inclusive pedagogies for students with certain learning disabilities. These discussions ranged from the acquisition of general musical knowledge to the development of specific instrumental music skills. One of the presentations, in particular, stressed the power that practices that include music, drama, and literature, since they create spaces that offer different opportunities to the learners, their families, and their communities. Scholars further stressed the importance of creating experiences that promote a sense of community, participation, and cooperation. This will improve students' social, cognitive, memory, and psychomotor skills as well as their self-esteem and self-confidence.

### **Transmediality within STEAM Music Education: Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics**

The inclusion of music technology and Information and Communication technologies has been a recurring practice in contemporary music education, regionally and internationally. Two presentations were included in this theme discussed the use of technologies as aid for musical learning, which show the teachers' desire to develop efficient learning experiences for their students. The first presentation discussed music creativity as a result of sound exploration and the re-use of technological devices together with free software. The second presentation focused on how technology could facilitate instrumentalists to evaluate their performances through auto-generated feedback from the software. According to the conference theme, the use of

technologies in the classroom responds to students' cultures and needs. Technology can be a tool that promotes a more situated teaching approach since it relates to contemporary learning ways and keeps the students intrigued, motivated, and interested in the learning process.

### **Expanded Sonorities: Installations, Stage Arts, Audiovisual Arts, and other Languages**

Throughout the five presentations and the poster sessions, scholars discussed the value of a multidisciplinary perspective in music education. Authors in this topic highlighted the importance of combining diverse forms of expression, musical genres, traditional and non-traditional instruments, conventional and non-conventional sonorities, and movement, to create integrated experiences. This complex approach to teaching and learning has a transformative power in education because it turns it into a more dynamic and meaningful experience for the students. Furthermore, as Ana Lucía Frega and Cecilia Muriata contended in their presentation, this approach could alleviate the cognitive load of students to integrate them into more nuanced and yet, more intense artistic experiences.

### **Music, Citizenship, and Communities: Experiences in the Management and Development of Educational Policies, Inclusion, Diversity, and Gender**

For the last topic in the conference, scholars discussed the importance of creating continuing education or university extension programs in music for specialized or non-specialized teachers. Because of the nature of music education in Latin American schools, authors stressed the importance of having training programs for teachers that are required to teach music and are not necessarily specialized music teachers. Accordingly, this type of programs should respond to the teachers' knowledge and skills and thus, be modified models of traditional programs focused on the acquisition of notation-based knowledge and skills. On

another note, some presenters criticized current educational structures and the policies that directly impact the work of music teachers in schools. They proposed models within a framework that contemplates the cultural and musical diversity of Latin America. As such, they advocated for the creation of school music programs inclusive of all people regardless of their age, as well as popular and native cultures.

**GROUP SESSION: INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY  
FOR MUSIC EDUCATION (ISME), SCHOOL OF ARTS, DESIGN AND CULTURAL  
SCIENCES (FADyCC) AT UNIVERSIDAD DEL NORDESTE WITH DR. SUSAN  
O'NEILL, PRESIDENT OF ISME**

Throughout the history of ISME, several efforts have been made to develop strategies inclusive of the international community, especially of the countries that have had little or limited presence in the biannual international meetings. These conversations resulted from criticism regarding the dominant presence of Western countries in the conferences. Despite ISME's efforts, many scholars and practitioners around the world have not been able to attend the world conferences because of economic, linguistic, cultural, and even political reasons. Thus, one of the solutions proposed by ISME leaders was the creation of regional conferences where teachers and academics from all regions can present their work.

Marie McCarthy (2003) offered an analysis of ISME's journey on the 50th anniversary of its foundation. She mentioned that besides regional conferences, the Society has (1) partially or totally financed the presence of some music educators, (2) differentiated attendance fees, and (3) created statements applicable to different regions worldwide. Likewise, she mentioned three areas ISME has developed in an effort to create a more effective global community: (1) the creation of diverse board and commission members, who provided a diverse and inclusive perspectives; (2) the development of relationships between ISME and individual countries and regions through regional conferences, as well as affiliations with national music education associations; and (3) the development of more dynamic relationships between ISME and UNESCO to create more effective intellectual exchanges. All of these actions helped redefine ISME's mission into becoming a voice for every music educator around the world.

ISME's efforts into providing access to under-represented countries have been particularly important for Latin American countries. During the XII Regional and IV Pan

American Conference, individual ISME members and faculty members of Universidad del Nordeste met with Dr. Susan O'Neill, to discuss a strategic plan for the next six years. According to O'Neill, all information collected through regional meetings will help ISME leaders organize a more effective World Conference to be held in Helsinki, Finland in 2020.

This plan includes new activities and strategies for the future based on three aspects: (1) Community: to build networks, (2) Intercultural Understanding: to promote the inclusion of diversity, and (3) Advocacy: to recognize elements that help each country promote values for the inclusion of music education in schools. Specific actions of ISME leaders include: (1) meetings and conversations with leaders and individual members at regional conferences, (2) an online survey, currently in progress, and (3) a report of each meeting regarding the needs of each region.

Members in the meeting discussed the strengths and challenges of ISME as an international organization within the context and needs of Latin American countries. The limited presence of Latin American countries was the most pervasive issue, which according to several members, has to do with problems such as:

1. Disconnection between the economic context of different regions and ISME's budget:  
Several members stressed how difficult it is for them to attend the world conference due to the high membership fees. They argued that, although there is some differentiation considering diverse world economies, decreasing membership fees even further would promote a more representative presence of Latin American countries in the world conference.
2. The universalized and non-diverse management of international events: Members argued that, while in past years academic production was translated into several languages, there is a pervasive Anglo-Saxon monopoly that denies the importance of academic work in languages other than English. This, in some way, creates a hegemonic environment, which does not allow non-English speakers to participate in

world conferences. They further argued that, although regional conferences have created stronger identities, the presence of diverse members and their world in international events would create wide networks for international collaboration and consequently, it will develop a better understanding of diverse contexts.

3. ISME's political presence is not sufficiently representative in different countries throughout the world: Members argued about the need for establishing political relationships so that individual countries are effectively represented in the Society. This will start conversations about the true meaning of creating music education communities whose unique needs and cultural contexts are considered.

Members further presented a list of solutions to the aforementioned issues based on three specific aspects ISME president proposed:

**Community: How does/could ISME work to build and maintain a network of music educators worldwide?**

Members proposed the creation of a virtual Latin American community that allows the distribution of academic production in both Spanish and Portuguese. They emphasized that, while each country has a unique context and particular needs, there are similarities regarding political and social issues impacting Latin American music education. Hence, this community would be a gateway for collaboration between scholars and practitioners, which will promote academic production regarding educational needs in music at a regional level to report them internationally.

**Intercultural Understanding: How does/could ISME promote respect for intercultural understanding and cooperation?**

Members proposed the creation of spaces where the work of and research of Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking authors can be disseminated. This would foster a more effective understanding of the different contexts, paradigms, as well as cultural and epistemological challenges of each Latin American country. It would further create a less hegemonic perspective of academic production in music education internationally. Members contended that ISME must promote the circulation of academic papers in their original languages as that would respect not only the linguistic diversity of different countries, but also the different forms of expression of academics that present their work.

**Advocacy: How does/could ISME promote access to quality music education for all people?**

One common concern among participants was the fact that each country is represented in the United Nations, but not in the International Society for Music Education (ISME). They argued that there is a clear need for creating political paths between ISME and the different governments and ministries of education with the aim of developing direct relationships that could impact national policies in music education. Hence, it is paramount to consider members who can be politically linked to governments as ISME representatives. As such, they could ensure access to materials and knowledge in order to guarantee the presence of music in the Latin American school systems of education.



## **The Latin American Network for Music Education**

A panoramic view of the challenges discussed at the meeting with ISME president Susan O'Neill shows a clear need for creating a community whose main goal is the distribution and establishment of the work of Latin American authors. It is important to mention that, although the regional conferences have become spaces for Latin American researchers and practitioners to showcase their work internationally, their voices have not been fully represented at the highest levels of the ISME world conference. This network would open spaces and opportunities for academic production from a particular context, in its original language, which will respond to Latin American cultural diversity and consequently, generate a more inclusive understanding of the Latin American context worldwide.

Among the goals for the Development of Art Education, UNESCO establishes that arts education must be of high quality, from its planning to its implementation (Jérez, n.d.). Furthermore, it acknowledges that each government has the responsibility to develop strategic plans that ensure the implementation of the Seoul Agenda regarding arts education. However, it has been noted that although governments have good intentions for the implementation of quality arts education, their policies are nominal in nature.

In this sense, the Latin American network could generate new knowledge regarding the state of music education in Latin America, clarify concepts, and develop a potential space of collaboration with governments and administrative hierarchies in charge of music education policies throughout the region.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The final event was a celebration of all the work presented at the conference as well as a space of reflection about the future of Latin American academic production and its international

dissemination. This conference happened at a crucial moment in Latin America, one facing pressing challenges regarding its cultural diversity and access to quality music education. All of the works presented at the conference in their different settings, represented the diversity of philosophies and practices that define Latin American music education. This diversity in teaching and research practices demonstrates the authors' commitment to developing effective pedagogies in music, and in line with the conference theme, their respect for the racial and cultural diversity of Latin American countries.

Ana Lucía Frega, former president and current honorary member of the International Society for Music Education stressed the need for spaces of collaboration and establishment of Latin American production based on the different realities and responsive to the different languages of the region. Her words lead everyone to think about the true mission of the International Society for Music Education as a democratic and representative of the different voices of music educators worldwide. There is a clear need to build an action-based agenda that includes committed, innovative, and visionary teachers and researchers. This will create music learning opportunities that are respectful of the diversity, nuances, and particularities of the educational, cultural, and artistic contexts in Latin America.

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