

FINAL COMPOSER PROJECT: ARIEL RAMÍREZ

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Music 630: Choral Literature

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# Ariel Ramírez

## Argentine Composer, Ethnomusicologist and Pianist

### HISTORY

- Born: 4 September 1921, Santa Fe, Argentina
- Died: 18 February 2010. Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Parents were educated. Father was a teacher.
- Ramírez studied piano from age 4 with Arturo Schianca
- Early mentor, Atahualpa Yupanqui (popular folk musician/poet) paid Ramirez's expenses to travel and study Argentinian folk music during WWII (1941-1943)

### EDUCATION/POSITIONS - Was known as an Argentinean folklore specialist and celebrity

- 1950-1954 Studied in Rome and Madrid on scholarship (trip via New York in 1950, he was 31). Lived in Germany for part of this time.
- 1954 Traveled Bolivia, Peru and Uruguay and collected 300-400 folk songs and dances
- Kept a notebook of "Species" or rhythm and melody types of songs and dance music
- **1946-1956 RCA Recording Artist** - Pianist of Dance and Folk Music - over a dozen albums
- **Founder of Compañía de Folklore Ariel Ramírez**
- Director of many Musical and Argentinean government agencies related to culture, education and composer and author societies

### MAJOR TITLES

- **Misa Criolla (Creole Mass) 1964**
- Navidad Nuestra (Christmas Mass) 1964
- **Alfonsina y el Mar [Alfonsina and the Sea] 1969** (This song is comparable to an Argentinean National Anthem; it is so popularly known)
- 15 Estudios para piano 1973
- Several Film Scores
- Mujeres Argentinas (Argentine Women) 1969

### COMPOSITIONAL STYLE

- Tonal, mostly Primary chords, relative and parallel minors
- Folk music forms (Binary, Ternary), some through composed
- Music composed before text most often, except in the case of Navidad Nuestra, where the text was written and the music composed for the text.
- Dance rhythms and melodies used to supply mood to give textual meaning.
- Texture is layered by instrument and voices and are often introduced one at a time, beginning with rhythm section, adding bass and finally the higher pitched voices and instruments

The best source for performance information, especially for Misa Criolla, is Aaron Mitchell, who provides directors with score corrections, missing tenuto and segno in the Lawson-Gould edition.

Mitchell, Aaron "A Conductor's Guide to Ariel Ramírez's Misa Criolla." Electronic Thesis or Dissertation. University of Cincinnati, 2009. <https://etd.ohiolink.edu/> (accessed October 6, 2020).

LINKS TO VIDEO PRESENTATION and MUSIC

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1pwxIoF8hDAsnU1-WBBUX385yyRV4JMKy/view?usp=sharing>

[Misa Criolla Kyrie](#)

[Misa Criolla Gloria](#)

## Bibliography

Bray, Tim. "Ongoing." <https://www.tbray.org/ongoing/When/200x/2007/03/11/Misa-Criolla>. (accessed October 6, 2020).

Tim Bray is a Canadian software technician, formerly with Adobe and Google, now with a company based in Argentina. He is not a reliable source for authoritative information on Ramirez or Misa Criolla. However, in his blog, Bray shares a consumer's view of Misa Criolla. In a compare/contrast discussion, Bray shares his likes and dislikes about the recordings made by Jose Carreras versus Mercedes Sosa's version. Though Mr. Bray is not a musical scholar, his perspective is somewhat interesting and may be useful to my discussion: Misa Criolla *was* written for the people.

Dyer, Joseph. "Roman Catholic church music." *Grove Music Online*. 2001; Accessed 24 Oct. 2020. <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000046758>. (accessed October 24, 2020)

Grove Music provides a nice springboard for gleaning information on Catholic Liturgical music in South America, more specifically, how the Second Vatican Council influenced composers to utilize folk music in composing liturgical texts and masses for the people.

Escalada, Oscar. "Ariel Ramírez's Misa Criolla." *The Choral Journal* 49, no. 2 (August 2008): 26–43. <http://search.ebscohost.com.mutex.gmu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ram&AN=A826633&site=ehost-live>. (accessed October 24, 2020).

Huseby, Gerardo V. *Sistemas Tonales En La Música Criolla Rural Argentina*. N.p., 2015. Print. This work sounds very intriguing to me, yet I have not yet been able to reserve. The book discusses the frequent use of the Phrygian mode in most Argentinian and Andean folk tunes.

Mitchell, Aaron "A Conductor's Guide to Ariel Ramírez's Misa Criolla." Electronic Thesis or Dissertation. University of Cincinnati, 2009. <https://etd.ohiolink.edu/> (accessed October 6, 2020).

Based on my brief inquiry into *Misa Criolla*, Aaron Mitchell's dissertation appears to be the foremost and most thorough examination of the work. Mitchell served a two-year, church mission in South America and was later able to examine the Spanish research to inform his work. Dance and folk music origins, as well as instrumentation and performance practices are all addressed. Additionally, IPA and conducting suggestions are informed by Mitchell's research and interviews with Ramirez's family.

Mitchell, Aaron. "Folk Elements in Ariel Ramírez's Misa Criolla." *The Choral Journal* 49, no. 4 (October 2008): 10–26. <http://search.ebscohost.com.mutex.gmu.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ram&AN=A826652&site=ehost-live>. (accessed October 24, 2020).

Dance and folk music origins, as well as instrumentation and performance practices are addressed. The article contains highlights of items Mitchell included in his dissertation. Because it is a Choral Journal article, the information is more readily digestible and may enable me to focus on elements of the work the author wants choir directors to know.

Olsen, Dale A., and Daniel E. Sheehy, eds. "Argentina." *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music Volume 2 - South America, Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean*. Routledge (Publisher), 1998. 269-92. [https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic\\_entity%7Creference\\_article%7C1000223455](https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Creference_article%7C1000223455).

The encyclopedia chapter on South America and Argentina is another springboard for the purpose of instructing me on the folk instruments, music, culture and history I need to research or set aside.

Ramírez, Ariel. *Misa Criolla: Folk Mass Based on the Rhythms and Traditions of Hispanic America*. New York: Lawson-Gould, 1965.

This is one of the scores I am using for musical examples and analysis.

Rios, Fernando. "They're Stealing our Music": The Argentinísima Controversy, National Culture Boundaries, and the Rise of a Bolivian Nationalist Discourse." *Revista De Música Latinoamericana* 35, no. 2 (Fall, 2014): 197-227,320. <https://search-proquest-com.mutex.gmu.edu/docview/1641994272?accountid=14541>. (accessed October 26, 2020).

Dr. Fernando Rios is a local Ethnomusicologist at the University of Maryland, College Park. He specializes in early Andean Music and the popular folk music as it developed during the mid-twentieth century and Ramirez's lifetime. This work may inform my decision to include information on the Argentinian political and cultural climate and resurgence of national identity through folk music and dance. The work discusses the controversy many Bolivian's have had over Peruvian and Argentinian claim over some of the music and instruments native to the people, Mestizos, of the Andean mountains. The fact that my primary source, Aaron Mitchell has drawn upon his work provides me with more confidence in this source. And, because he is so nearby, I may want to reach out to Professor Rios for a brief discussion over my query on the Argentinian's use of the Phrygian mode.

*Misa Criolla*. Recorded June 27, 2006. Albany Records, 2006, Streaming Audio.

[https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/be%7Crecorded\\_cd%7Cli\\_upc\\_34061074625](https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/be%7Crecorded_cd%7Cli_upc_34061074625). (accessed October 24, 2020).