



RAGAZZI BOYS CHORUS PIONEERS VIRTUAL REHEARSAL TECHNOLOGY

The group has piloted a web application for real-time choral singing during Coronavirus pandemic.

REDWOOD CITY, CA (25 August 2020) —**Ragazzi Boys Chorus** is announcing successful testing of an innovative platform that enables real-time remote singing for chorus members. Based in the heart of Silicon Valley, the acclaimed chorus is solving the issue that has stymied musical ensembles during the Coronavirus pandemic: singing together while physically apart. Creating live music online has been untenable due to lagging audio in web-conferencing tools like Skype and Zoom, until now. Motivated by his son’s longing to sing with his Ragazzi Boys Chorus friends, Mike Dickey, a software entrepreneur, developed an inexpensive, plug-and-play solution that reduces latency to a point where singers can harmonize in real-time over common Internet connections. Created in partnership with Stanford University’s Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics (CCRMA - ccrma.stanford.edu) as part of the **JackTrip Foundation**, the new program (dubbed the Virtual Studio) has completed testing with Ragazzi and will be deployed to all choristers in Ragazzi performance ensembles, aged between 5 to 18 years old, for the Fall semester.

“Ragazzi is thrilled to be a pioneer in this game-changing venture,” said Kent Jue, Artistic and Executive Director of Ragazzi Boys Chorus. “Choruses have been devastated by the pandemic, and the need for music and community is even greater in these uncertain times. Through Mike Dickey’s extraordinary work, Ragazzi is continuing to build our musical brotherhood, grow essential skills, and sing together despite being apart. Soon, this project will also allow choruses and other musical ensembles across the world to lift their voices in virtual song.”

Members from Ragazzi Boys Chorus and Ragazzi Continuo have been testing the technology for more than two months. With testing completed, Ragazzi will deploy Virtual Studio to the entire

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chorus (which, last year, numbered more than 250 boys) for real-time virtual rehearsals during the Fall semester. Each Ragazzi chorister will be provided a kit that includes the device necessary to sing together in real time. Funding for these kits was provided by a generous Ragazzi donor.

The technical challenge to virtual music collaboration is reducing delays in sound transmission to below 25-35 milliseconds, a hurdle previously achievable only for very small groups (up to about 5 performers) who have advanced technology skills and expensive audio equipment. Virtual Studio simply requires log-in to a Website with a device powered by free custom software for choristers to sing together in large groups (up to hundreds of singers).

About Ragazzi:

Peninsula-based **Ragazzi Boys Chorus** is one of the San Francisco Bay Area’s premiere music and performance organizations for boys. Last year, more than 250 boys from over 100 schools in 30+ Bay Area communities participated in the program. Ragazzi means “boys” in Italian and is the term used in opera to refer to children’s voices. Ragazzi has performed with the San Francisco Opera, San Francisco Symphony, Opera San Jose, West Bay Opera, Symphony Silicon Valley, Masterworks Chorale, and the Stanford University Symphonic Chorus among others. The group has toured throughout the United States and internationally. Ragazzi was honored for its contribution to the San Francisco Symphony’s triple Grammy Award-winning recording of Stravinsky’s *Perséphone*, and has five CDs available: *A Holiday Collection*, *Canciones de Alabanza*, *Magnificat: My Spirit Rejoices*, *Splendors of the Italian Baroque*, and *I Dream A World*. Online auditions to join Ragazzi Boys Chorus are open, inviting Silicon Valley-based boys who love to sing the opportunity to learn more about Ragazzi’s ensembles—for more information, the public may visit <https://ragazzi.org/join-us>

About the JackTrip Foundation:

The **JackTrip Foundation** is a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing technologies to enable music collaboration over the Internet, and to facilitate the creation of music that transcends distance constraints. Stanford professor Chris Chafe, Director of Stanford University’s Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics (CCRMA -

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ccrma.stanford.edu), developed the JackTrip technology to reduce latency in audio transmissions over the Internet, allowing musicians to collaborate in real time. Mike Dickey has developed a Web server application and easy-to-use interface, allowing any singer or musician to log in and make music together in real time. These two innovators have founded the JackTrip Foundation to support this technology for the benefit of musicians everywhere. For more information about the JackTrip Foundation the public may visit **25ms.org**.

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MEDIA: High resolution photos of **Ragazzi Boys Chorus** can be downloaded from:
<http://cbpr.co/press/RagazziTech/>

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