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## **Performing Peace Through Music: A Case Study on Choirs in Post-Conflict Societies**

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Oral Presentation O3.2

**PERFORMING PEACE THROUGH MUSIC: A CASE STUDY ON  
CHOIRS IN POST-CONFLICT SOCIETIES**

Marie-Claudine Villacorta and Rebecca Gearhart\*

Sociology and Anthropology Department, Illinois Wesleyan University

While music, dance, and theater have been used to propagate nationalist ideologies as well as to justify war and genocide, the performing arts, especially music, can affect positive change and instill peace among people. This paper delves into some of the ways in which choirs have been used as a particularly creative approach to peace building in post-conflict societies. By focusing on three choral groups: the Bi-Communal Choir for Peace in Cyprus, the Pontamina Interreligious Choir in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the African Children's Choir, this research demonstrates how musical production can ameliorate ethnic, class, and religious differences, and promote healing and reconciliation by communicating a message of peace among choir members, their audience, and the community at large.