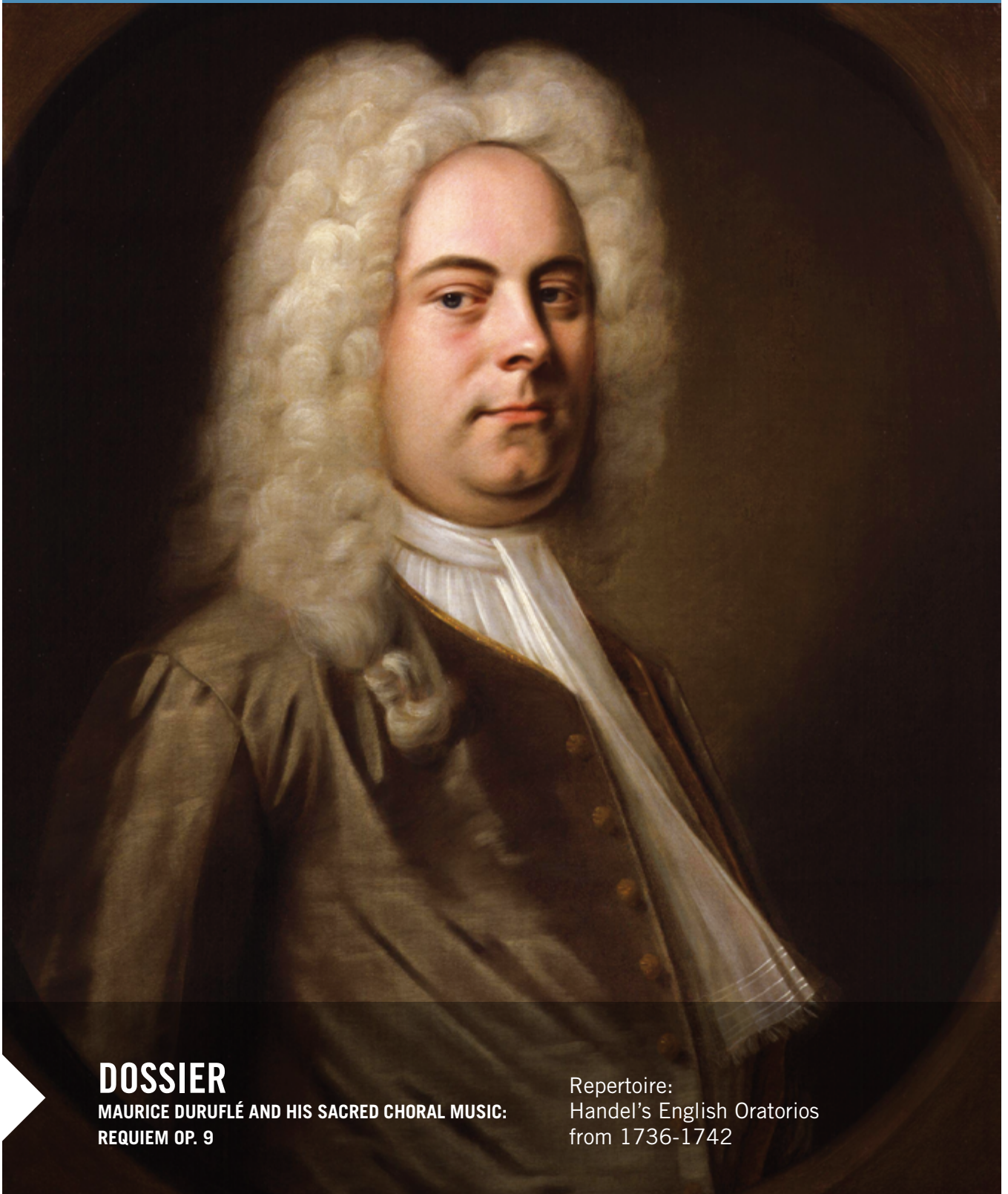




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DOSSIER

MAURICE DURUFLÉ AND HIS SACRED CHORAL MUSIC:
REQUIEM OP. 9

Repertoire:
Handel's English Oratorios
from 1736-1742

INTERNATIONAL CHORAL BULLETIN

COVER

Portrait of Georg Friedrich Händel (1685–1759) by Balthasar Denner National Portrait Gallery, London

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



DR. MICHAEL J. ANDERSON

President

Dear Friends,

As IFCM is now entering its 35th year, I'm writing to you today simply to say thank you. IFCM has come so far, especially in the last six years, and none of this would be possible were it not for generous colleagues like yourselves. Your interest, support, and involvement in world-choral music ensures that IFCM can continue its educational and artistic efforts for the betterment of a peaceful people.

Whether you are a teacher, project developer, writer, composer, editor, manager, conductor, singer, board member, or officer, your active participation sends a very strong message to the world: choral music has more to give than just beautiful sounds. It enriches our lives with something more powerful—a means to unify the world's population through song!.

The holiday season is a time to reflect on family, and IFCM is a big one! Given the turmoil happening throughout the world, it is important that our family remain interconnected, working together to benefit everyone.

Thanks for singing so beautifully with our family!

Wishing a happy 2017 to all of you!

Michael J Anderson, President

International Federation for Choral Music



IFCM wishes you  a happy new year

Thank you for your support in 2016



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DOSSIER

DURUFLÉ AND HIS SACRED CHORAL MUSIC



Duruflé and his sacred choral music
Requiem Op. 9
Francesco Barbuto

DURUFLÉ AND HIS SACRED CHORAL MUSIC, REQUIEM OP. 9

FRANCESCO BARBUTO

choral conductor and composer

THE *REQUIEM* (MASS FOR THE DEAD) HAS BEEN ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PARTS OF THE CATHOLIC LITURGY SINCE THE 11TH CENTURY.

In the Requiem mass, some parts of the *Ordinarium* (Gloria and Credo) are taken out and other specific parts such as the *Introit* (Introduction), *Dies Irae* (Day of Wrath), *Lux Aeterna* (Eternal Light), *Libera me, Domine* (Deliver me, Lord) are added.

The word *Requiem* comes from the recitation of the first prayer in the Introit: "Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine" (Eternal rest grant unto them, Lord).

Throughout history, many composers have tried their hand at writing a *Requiem* based on, as a thematic source, the original Gregorian melodies; among these are Dufay, Ockeghem, La Rue, Vittoria, Mozart, Berlioz, Verdi, Liszt, Brahms, Britten, Ligheti. Duruflé himself harks back "faithfully" to Gregorian chant in the VI mode, the *Hypolydian*, used by the Benedictine monks of Solesmes:

In the footsteps of the musical compositional style of Gabriel Fauré, who broke with the tradition of writing a *Requiem* with a sweeping "dramatic" character:

He composed his Requiem in D minor, Op. 48 between 1870 and 1890, and offers a comforting view of death, as if wanting to convey a journey towards to a place of peace and rest, rather than to somewhere horrifying. Responding to critics, Fauré replied: "It has been said that my Requiem has failed to convey a sense of the terror of death... but this is how I imagine it: more a surrender filled with peace and a wish for happiness in the afterlife."

Duruflé too, in true homage to the great Master, follows this aesthetic, which will formalise a new, typically French, tradition. It is not coincidental that neither will set to music the *Dies Irae*, the movement usually considered to be the most 'dramatic' of the texts and passages of the Mass for the dead. His *Requiem, Op. 9* (dedicated to the memory of his father), in three versions:

vi

Requi-em * aetér- nam dó- na è- is Dómi- ne: et lux

perpé- tu- a lú- ce- at è- is.

for choir, organ and orchestra, choir and organ, choir and string quintet and organ (with the option of trumpets, harp and timpani), is by far the longest and most complex work he composed during his professional musical life. It appears that Duruflé was already working on a *suite* of pieces dedicated to the dead when he was asked to write an actual *Requiem* by his French editor, Durand.

Duruflé accepted, immediately implementing his already-formed idea of combining the ancient world, and its Gregorian melodies - perfectly in accord with the recommendations of Pius X's *Motu Proprio* of 1903 (as with his later *Quatre Motets sur des themes grégoriens pour chœur a cappella, Op. 10*) - with a modern harmonic setting and orchestration typical of the 20th century. His neomodality hark back particularly to the music of Debussy and Ravel. He in fact declared the orchestral work by Debussy *Prélude à l'Après-midi d'un faune* to be a masterwork he "adores".

In a direct statement by the composer about his Requiem, he affirmed:

"My Requiem is entirely constructed on Gregorian themes from the Mass for the dead. At times the text is uppermost in importance, and therefore the orchestra is there to support or

provide a commentary on the meaning of the words. At other times an original musical backdrop, inspired by the text, takes centre-stage.”

Gregorian chant, modality, compositional style rich in counterpoint and modern harmonies, originality, power and aesthetic and expressive beauty allow performers the opportunity for very sensitive musical interpretation and rhythmic freedom, which results in a natural and extremely smooth flow in the text and the music.

As previously mentioned, Duruflé chooses to continue an aesthetic style initiated by Fauré, with an intimate and restricted orchestration. Even in the *forte* or *fortissimo* moments, there continues to be felt a quality in the music, both polyphonic and harmonic, of profound delicacy and refinement.

The *Requiem* is made up of nine movements, each with a tripartite structure: *Introit*, *Kyrie*, *Domine Jesu Christe*, *Sanctus*, *Pie Jesu*, *Agnus Dei*, *Lux Aeterna*, *Libera me* and *In Paradisum*.

Like Fauré, Duruflé has the *Domine Jesu Christe* and the *Libera me* sung by a baritone soloist and the *Pie Jesu* by a mezzo-soprano.

Although both composed their *Requiem* in D minor, in Duruflé's version the tonality ranges more widely, and is also more modal and modern.

The first version for choir, organ and orchestra was written in 1947 and it is said to be the version preferred by the composer. In 1948 he wrote the second version for choir and organ, with the intention of allowing this work to be used by choirs in churches. In the same year he also wrote the third version for choir, strings, organ and optional parts for harp, trumpets and timpani.

MUSICAL ANALYSIS

(For illustrative purposes, we are confining our attention here to the version for choir and organ - *Introit and Kyrie* - believing it to be the most suitable for the member choirs of AERCO (Regional Association of Choirs) and provincial choral associations)

Introit

The structure of this movement is in the typical A-B-A ternary form.

The first chord is in D minor with the seventh (17). This ensures that the harmony is ambiguous right from the beginning. We can definitely interpret this start within a “modal” framework. The accompaniment goes into an arabesque which in fact dissolves the tonic seventh, with neighbour notes and passing notes on B flat and G.

The tonal ambiguity we encounter right from the start is also due to the fact that entrance of the male voices faithfully echoes the Gregorian melody in the key of F (VI mode Hypolydian mode). For the listener this therefore creates a melodic harmonic progression which alternates between D and F. This progression is also found in the long finale of this movement which actually ends in F major and also faithfully follows the *Finalis* of Gregorian melody.

Bar 56 - end of movement:

The complex harmonic structure moves through the Doric (D), Aeolian (A), Phrygian (E) and Mixolydian (G) modes, to end finally in the Hypolydian (F). From the point of view of metre and rhythm, Duruflé faithfully recreates the smooth flow of the delivery of the text, freely alternating two-beat and

The musical score is for the Introit of the Requiem by Maurice Duruflé. It is in 3/4 time and marked 'Andante moderato (♩ = 60)'. The score includes four vocal parts: Sopranos, Altos, Tenors, and Basses. The vocal parts enter in bar 2 with the text 'Re - qui - em a - et - ter - nam'. The organ part (G.R. Fonds 8) and the harp/celeste part (Péd. Soucbasse 16 Bourdon 8 Flûte 8) provide accompaniment. The organ part features a complex harmonic structure with neighbour notes and passing notes on B flat and G.

three-beat bars, simple and compound time, irregular forms. From the point of view of performance therefore, it is important to pay attention to following the natural accents of the liturgical text, to continue expressing and recalling the style of delivery and Gregorian mood of this passage. Care should be taken, for example, right from bar 2, where the male voices come in on the second beat with the word *Requiem*. This start is not to be interpreted as a headlong attack. This way, one would fall into the trap of accenting the final syllable of the word *Requiem* (-èm) which would upset all the melodic and prosodic phrasing. The correct emphasis in the word *Requiem* is in fact on the first syllable (Rè-)

The second section (from bar 24) begins in A minor and broadly in the Aeolian mode.

S *dim. poco a poco*
 A *dim. poco a poco*
 T *dim. poco a poco*
 B *dim. poco a poco*
 Organ *dim. poco a poco*
 Ped. R. *Rall.*

S *Poco ced.*
 Organ *Tempo*
 G.R. *espressivo*
 Ped. Flûte 8

Ps. Te dé-cet hýmnus Dé-us in Sí-on, et tí-bi reddétur vótum in
*Jerúsa-lem: * exáudi ora-ti-ónem mé-am, ad te ómnis cáro véni-et.*

Sopranos
Poco ced.
 Te - de - cet hym - nus De - us in Sí - on, et tí - bi red - de - tur vo - tum in Je - ru - sa - lem,

The cadence Vm-I confirms this at the end of the phrase, without using the leading tone G#.

Durufié does not change the key modifications, perhaps leaving them there to remind us that the complex tonal structure is still in D (minor) and F (major). However whether it is in the writing or the listening, the recitative, this time in the hands of the sopranos, alternates systematically between the mother-chords of A and C, maintaining the original Gregorian melodic profile, but putting in a third over the top and moving from the Hypolydian (F) to the Aeolian (A).

Durufié inserts a subtle new element with the triplets. Together with the metric variation, highly dynamic and interesting phrasing is created despite the fact that the melody is concentrated on the two notes of A and C, with the only passing note B (natural).

At the end of this Section, the original theme returns, but Durufié has a new way of presenting the reprise. It is a simple variation which enables the new element to be heard, but at the same time faithfully reprises the first part. He gives the organ the Gregorian theme (still accompanied by the arabesque and pedals as in the first Section) and has the text *Requiem aeternam dona eis Domine* sung by the male and female voices in unison on the repeated notes of C, D, C again and A. In this way the organ enters fully into dialogue with the choir, as if it was itself a second choir.

This is also an example of what Durufié himself stated, namely that "the orchestra (in our case the organ) is there to support or provide a commentary on the meaning of the words."

This involvement means that, on the one hand the listener is recalled to the text and the original Gregorian melody via the instrumentation, and on the other they can hear the choir (which continues the

recitative just gone in the second Section), in perfect and consistent polyphonic and textural connection.

Kyrie

The structure of this movement is practically identical to the one before: A-B-A ternary form.

Durufié joins the first movement directly to the second via the instruction *Enchaînez* (continue without pausing), emphasising the feeling of continuity between the two pieces. The second movement in fact starts immediately.

This time, rhythm and tonality remain fixed and definite from the beginning to the end: 3/4 and F major. The reason for this may be motivated by the fact that the intense and complex polyphonic structure is given over exclusively to the internal development of the choir and organ which interacts directly and continually with the voices. Choir and Organ become as one.

Durufié starts with the basses, recalling the original Incipit of the Gregorian melody in the word *Kyrie*, then goes on to develop his entire complex counterpoint.

Following the exposition of the subject by the altos and sopranos, an organ comes in as a fifth voice. It is once again the Incipit of the Gregorian melody (doubled at the octave) on the word *Kyrie*, this time used in the form of *Cantus firmus*. This has the undeniable intention of reinforcing the original Gregorian melody.



Bars 10-16:

Here Durufié finds a clever way to develop his polyphonic, contrapuntal creativity and at the same time remain faithfully anchored to his choice of original source.

The combination of harmonies which are created by the vigorous movement of the voices freely creates a number of 'dissonances', which are always however 'natural' and appropriate for the polyphonic texture used.

In the second Section, on the words *Christe eleison*, Durufié chooses this time to compose of a new melody. His starting point is the melodic line of the word *eleison*, which he then develops creatively and openly.

As in the first movement, in this second Section we again shift into A minor (which recalls the Aeolian mode) with just the female voices in continuous imitation of each other.

The reprise dovetails in with the basses powerful *ff* on the word *Kyrie* in the last bar of the sopranos and altos singing the word *Christe*.

The final Section starts in imitation at the fourth (tenors), at the fifth (altos) and again at the fourth (sopranos) in a textural crescendo which leads to the 'climax' of the movement in bar 58, with the sopranos who end on the accented A flat.

In this part the F major harmonies are also occasionally coloured by the inclusion of the E flat, which seems to suggest a movement towards B flat major, without ever modulating in any real sense to this key.

Composers also often employ the flattened seventh to avoid or

reduce as far as possible the use of the leading tone which would give the listener a more traditional classical musical experience.

Once the climax has been reached, as in the first movement, there is a gradual loosening of the overall vocal and instrumental texture, which ends once again with a long tonic pedal - the choir ends up on a perfect chord of F major, meant to be understood once again (as in the first movement) as the Finalis, the final note of the original Gregorian melody - which is cleverly achieved with a melodic ascending movement of the bass, thus avoiding the functional formula of classical cadences, such as the V-I.

Even in the final two bars of the cadence V-I, Duruflé shies away from using the leading tone, thereby giving the notes he chooses to use a more modulatory than tonal quality

PERFORMANCE SUGGESTIONS

Even though the entire Requiem has been written with dynamics ranging from ppp to fff, it is important to focus on producing a performance and an interpretation which are delicate and refined above all else. The contrapuntal writing directs us towards a style of singing (with voices which are always well supported and fluid, without being too lyrical) and playing which are "flowing and smooth".

Over-singing in the forte passages, and too much falsetto in the piano and pianissimo passages would certainly result in something too heavy, static and would fail to convey correctly or adequately the complex polyphonic and textural structure which Duruflé presents.

From the point of view of prosody, Duruflé himself, taking as his example Gregorian chant and the approach of the Benedictine monks of Solesmes, suggests that it is vital to sing in accordance with the natural accents of the text.

This approach will ensure a smooth text, enhance the phrasing and will also allow greater articulation of the expressive meaning of the spoken words.

The instrumental accompaniment is designed to help with this, often using arpeggios and arabesques which encourage singing in synchrony with the fluidity of these musical figures.

Regarding the voices, it is important to try and perform the individual parts of the section perfectly in unison, striving as much as possible for an integrated vocal timbre, avoiding individual timbres which differ too much between themselves which may lead to 'beats' (i.e. different oscillations in frequency on the same note) and will mean that the overall pitch of the choir suffers through lack of precision. This is even more vital in polyphonic and harmonic passages containing lots of dissonances.

We conclude this article dedicated to the Requiem, Op. 9 with an interesting testimony by Duruflé himself who writes a letter to Director George Guest, Welsh organist and choirmaster of St John's College, who made many recordings in the 1970s, including of this work:

Paris, 3rd April 1978

Dear Sir,

The management at Decca Records has kindly given me your address. It is a great pleasure for me to send you my sincere thanks and congratulations on the excellent recording which you were kind enough to do of my Requiem.

I very much appreciate the quality of the performance, the interpretation and the sound itself.

If you have the opportunity to conduct my Requiem again the future, might I say that I would prefer it if the baritone solos are sung by all the basses and second tenors.

It is an error on my part to have given these few bars to a soloist. Once again, with all my thanks etc etc.

*M. Duruflé
6 Place du Panthéon
75005 Paris*

Translated by Laura Massey, UK

This article has been previously published on FARCORO, the Magazine of AERCO (Emilia Romagna Association of Choirs)

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR CHORAL MUSIC



**2017 Call for IFCM Board
of Directors Election**

**World Youth Choir
Recruitment for Session
2017**

2017 CALL FOR IFCM BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION

THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR CHORAL MUSIC CALLS FOR CANDIDATES TO FILL POSITIONS ON THE IFCM BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND AT THE PRESIDENCY FOR TERMS BEGINNING IN AUGUST 2017.

As a democratic organisation, the IFCM relies on its membership to elect the positions of responsibility that will lead the organisation forward. These unpaid positions are the President and Board. Members of the Executive Committee will be selected by the President from the elected Board. There are permanent places on the IFCM Board reserved for the IFCM Founding organisations. Presidents of these Founding Organisations are not eligible to stand for IFCM President. All nominators and nominated candidates for all positions must be individual IFCM members.

The vision and future of the IFCM are reflected in the selection of these positions, hence, it is necessary for all presidential candidates to submit their vision for the IFCM in their application. It is also important that candidates for membership to the Board be informed of the recent past of the IFCM and have suitable qualifications to serve. Board candidates are asked to provide a resume and a brief statement of their work and standing in the choral world in their application.

IFCM has adopted an organizational model that focuses on artistry and education, with a business component to support it. IFCM has substantially increased its membership that more realistically represents, and provides opportunities, for the global choral community. We have increased the number of offices and staff to pursue these opportunities for our members. Presently, IFCM has purposely targeted Asia and Africa as continents and regions that are in the greatest need of IFCM's strengths.

In 2017 the right to vote for these positions can only be made in person at the IFCM General Assembly in Barcelona on 26th July.

The candidature period will end on 1st march at 00,00 GMT.

NOMINATION AND ELECTION PROCEDURES

1. All nominations must be completed on the online forms (IFCM Website).
2. Nominations must be completed within the deadline set by the IFCM: 1 March 2017, 00,00 GMT.
3. Only members of the IFCM may nominate or be nominated for the Board of Directors.
4. Please read the Statutes of IFCM, Article VII, point 1 about the constitution of the Board of Directors before submitting a [nomination](#).
5. Please read the Bylaws of the IFCM, Article VI: Roles and responsibilities of Board members and Article VIII, Roles and responsibilities of the [officers](#).
6. After closing the nomination process, all nominations will be made public.
7. The nominations will be presented in the General Assembly.
8. The elections will be carried out according to the Statutes, Article VI, point 6.

<http://ifcm.net/run-to-be-part-of-the-new-board/>

<http://ifcm.net/run-to-be-the-new-president/>



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One more way to connect with IFCM and the choral world: Ideas, news, opportunities are only one tweet distance from you!
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WORLD YOUTH CHOIR RECRUITMENT FOR SESSION 2017

AFTER THE SUCCESS OF THE EUROPA CANTAT XIX FESTIVAL IN 2015, THE WORLD YOUTH CHOIR SESSION FOR 2017 (JULY 4-25) WILL BE HELD IN PÉCS, HUNGARY WITH A FOLLOWING TOUR IN SERBIA, BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA, CROATIA, SLOVENIA AND HUNGARY. AUDITIONS FOR THE SESSION HAS BEEN OPEN FROM THE BEGINNING OF DECEMBER AND WILL LAST UNTIL FEBRUARY 17, 2017.

The selected singers for 2017 will have the chance to perform both classical and folk arrangements directed by conductors Zoltán Pad (Hungary) and Kennedy Okeyo Wakia (Kenya).

We are looking for young, talented, experienced singers from all over the world, interested in improving their skills of choral singing. If you are a passionate and experienced high level choral singer or soloist aged between 17 and 26, have basic or professional music education, are excited to meet new friends from all around the world, eager to learn in a multicultural environment, ready to spend nearly one month with great people, don't hesitate to apply for the 2017 session.

Please visit the www.worldyouthchoir.org website in order to find further details on your national recruiters and on how to prepare your audition.

The World Youth Choir needs you! Are you ready to join?



Zoltán Pad (Hungary)



Kennedy Okeyo Wakia (Kenya)

The 11th Golden Gate International Children's and Youth Choral Festival

July 8-14, 2018

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CHORAL WORLD NEWS



The Big Sing 2016 National Finale
Celebrating New Zealand's Cultural Diversity through Choral Singing
Agastya Rama Listya

Moorambilla Voices More Than Just A Choir?
Michelle Leonard

International Choral Music Spring in Kaunas
Ieva Kananavičiūtė

An International Choral Project in St. Petersburg
Boris Abalyan's workshop
Alexandra Makarova

THE BIG SING 2016 NATIONAL FINALE: Celebrating New Zealand's Cultural Diversity through Choral Singing

AGASTYA RAMA LISTYA

choral conductor and composer

THE BIG SING 2016 NATIONAL FINALE JUST ENDED ON AUGUST 27 2016, BUT ITS REVERBERATION REMAINS STRONG THROUGHOUT NEW ZEALAND. THE BIG SING IS JUST ONE OF FOUR MAJOR CHORAL EVENTS HELD REGULARLY BY THE NEW ZEALAND CHORAL FEDERATION (NZCF).

The Big Sing enables high schools' choirs across New Zealand to compete at the regional as well as national level. The Big Sing and three other festivals (The Kids Sing, Sing Fest and Sing Aotearoa *Te Puna o te Wairua*) have become part of the NZCF's program to promote high-quality choral singing within New Zealand by providing a basis for improvement and assistance.

All finalists of the Big Sing 2016 National Finale were selected from nine regions (Auckland, Canterbury/West Coast, East Coast, Manawatu/Whanganui, Otago, Southland, Taranaki, Waikato/Bay of Plenty, and Wellington). Surprisingly, this year there were around 250 choirs from 150 high schools involved in the regional festivals, and twenty-four choirs made their way through to the National Finale. This year, Dunedin had been chosen as the host of the Big Sing 2016 National Finale. The National Finale lasted for three days, from August 25 to August 27, at Dunedin Town Hall. More than 9,500 singers took part in the regional competition with approximately 750 competing in the Finale.

The festival was divided into eight sessions, with each session consisting of five to seven choirs. All Finale choirs were required to perform twice. In the ten-minute recital each choir chose three pieces to be sung, while in the eight-minute recital they performed two songs. In order to promote New Zealand composers and Pasifika composition, the NZCF required each choir to include at least one New Zealand or Pasifika choral composition in their repertoire (Category One). Classical pieces belonged to Category Two, whereas Category Three was for any music other than works from Category One and Two. For instance, folksong, spiritual, gospel, musical theatre, popular and world music were considered Category Three.

The NZCF provided five categories of awards to be competed for by the finalists: 1) the NZCF awards were presented to all finalists based on their whole performances. The awards were awarded at gold, silver

and bronze levels. A platinum award went to the choir with the highest aggregate mark, of ninety percent or above); 2) the Hutt City Trophy was awarded for the best performance of a New Zealand or Pasifika composition; 3) the Tour Time Trophy was awarded for the best performance of a classical choral work; 4) the Auahi Kore Performance Award was presented for the best performance of a work using Māori text; and 5) The Big Sing Youth Ambassadors Award was presented to the choir which demonstrated outstanding engagement with all elements of the Finale.

The three adjudicators for this National Finale were Peter Watts, a music lecturer at the Auckland University School of Music; Debra Shearer Dirié, editor of the Australian National Choral Association's Publication, *Sing Out*; and Michael Leighton Jones, a music lecturer at the University of Queensland. On their brief speeches prior to the results announcement, Mr. Watts spoke about how well the finalists communicated the meaning of their chosen songs' texts to their audience; Ms. Dirié looked at how perfectly these choirs executed every detail in each song they chose. Mr. Jones, quoting Baron Pierre de Coubertin ("the essential thing is not winning, but taking part"), spoke more about



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the process rather than the result. The Auahi Kore Performance Award's winner was decided by Kelly-Ann Tahitahi, the Coordinator for the Māori Mentoring and Orientation Program at Te Huka Mātauraka-Māori Center at the University of Otago.

It was a privilege for the Dunedin public to enjoy the last performance of the 2015-2016 New Zealand Secondary Students' Choir (NZSSC). It was their final performance as their program ended in August 2016, having worked together for eighteen months under the direction of Andrew Withington. The 2017-2018 NZSSC is planned to start soon in early 2017. The auditions for the 2017-2018 NZSSC membership were held between September 26 and October 4, 2016. The members of the NZSSC comprise ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth graders (according to NZ years, from tenth to thirteenth graders) selected from high schools throughout New Zealand. The variety of choral pieces the NZSSC performed made the afternoon's concert entertaining, enjoyable and educational as well. Their repertoire spanned from Baroque to twentieth century music, from Pasifika to jazz music. For example, *Psalm 68* by Heinrich Schutz, *O magnum mysterium* by David Childs, *Loch Lomond* a Scottish Song arranged by David Lantz, *Rotala* by Juris Karlsons, and *I Got Rhythm* composed by George Gershwin and arranged by Mark Hayes.

The Big Sing 2016 National Finale ended on August 27, 2016 with a Gala Concert. At the Gala Concert, all finalists performed one piece that they enjoyed from their Finale repertoire. The competition's results followed immediately after the Gala Concert. The Platinum Award went to Choralation from the Westlake Boys' and Girls' High Schools, Auckland. As well as the Platinum Award, Choralation also won the Tour Time Trophy. Euphony from Kristin School, Auckland, won the Hutt City Trophy and the Auahi Kore Performance Awards. Finally, The Big Sing Youth Ambassadors Award was awarded to Fortissimo from Dilworth School, Auckland.

With fifteen sopranos, thirteen altos, thirteen tenors and thirteen basses, Choralation had a very good balance of singers. The voices of their tenors and

basses were solid and mature, so they were able to compete with sopranos and altos. The selection of their repertoire was superb. In the first recital they performed Stanford's *Caelos ascendit hodie*, Ešenvalds' *Stars*, and Runestad's *Alleluia*. In the second recital they sang a Swedish work *Uti vår hage* arranged by Hugo Alfvén, and *Joy* composed by David Hamilton. Overall, Choralation's performance was excellent. Their closest competitors in this National Finale were Kentoris from St. Kentigern College, Bel Canto, and Senior Chorale from Burnside High School.

The dominance of Auckland high schools' choirs over the other choirs from different regions was very obvious in this competition. All the winners were choirs from Auckland, and five out of the total seven choirs who received gold medals were from Auckland. There is a big gap that should be filled by the other regions to be competitive at the national level. Hopefully in the coming years, the gap between the choirs will close.

More information on the Big Sing 2016 National Finale is currently available on <http://www.nzcf.org.nz/activities/for-singers/the-big-sing/> and on YouTube as well.

Edited by Samuel Hemsworth, Poland



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MOORAMBILLA VOICES:

More Than Just a Choir

MICHELLE LEONARD

founder, Artistic Director, and Conductor: Moorambilla Voices

MOORAMBILLA VOICES IS A MUCH LOVED AND NATIONALLY RECOGNISED UNIQUE CHORAL PROGRAMME. IT IS A CULTURAL INSTITUTION IN RURAL, REMOTE WESTERN NSW AUSTRALIA. FOR THE PAST 11 YEARS, IT HAS FACILITATED AN EXTRAORDINARY OPPORTUNITY FOR CHILDREN TO ENGAGE WITH HIGH-CALIBRE MUSIC MAKING, DANCE AND ART IN THEIR OWN REGION. DELVING INTO THE STORIES, LIFE EXPERIENCES AND RICH CULTURAL HERITAGE OF THE REGION, MOORAMBILLA VOICES HAS UNEARTHED PEOPLE'S POTENTIAL AND GIVEN THEM A VEHICLE WITH WHICH TO EXPRESS IT.

Choirs, as we all know, are an incredibly positive catalyst for social change. The three choirs of Moorambilla Voices, our regional primary-aged girls' choir, our regional boys' choir and our high school ensemble, called MAXed OUT, each bring their unique gifts to every performance, rehearsal and recording that we have.

But is it more than just a choir? And what are the critical factors that make this ensemble so life-affirming?

The energy from the Australian landscape in our region is palpable, and it is instrumental in shaping every aspect of our programme. The vast, intense blue sky; the gum trees; the rivers; the ancient sea beds; the red earth; rocks and black dust; and of course the heat! The humour and resilience of the people in this part of Australia make the distance and isolation seem like small barriers. This is a region that only has three trained music teachers, yet geographically it makes up over one-third of the state of NSW. Here sport is king; boys certainly do NOT sing "high" or dance; and there is no primary classroom or school choir at all in any of the 63 schools. Moorambilla Voices is the only choral or arts-based programme to have survived beyond three years in this region. After eleven years, it is thriving. Why? Perhaps it is because Moorambilla Voices is now not "just a choir." It is now a proven programme for children between 8 and 18 years of age, which is entirely devoted to the pursuit of artistic excellence. It gives a safe space for all (regardless of identity, race or financial circumstance) to expand their artistic potential in the fields of choir, dance, visual art and sculpture, as well as indigenous language and culture. It is an integrated art programme that looks holistically at children and supports and empowers them to think beyond their current circumstances. It meaningfully connects them with their peers and introduces them to the lifelong joy of choral singing.

The halo effect of this programme extends to the parents who volunteer as supervisors; the regional artists, both established and emerging; and our incredible professional artistic partners. It also extends to our cultural leaders and to the families of these children, and beyond....even to the catering staff! All of these people have seen, firsthand, the importance of choirs. More incredibly, they independently articulate to anyone in governmental and educational circles that this programme is vital to our country's social and cultural fabric. They are now proudly engaged in concert programmes entirely devoted to new work by leading and emerging Australian composers. This is nothing short of a miracle in rural Australia!

This cultural shift in conversation speaks volumes to people's deep need to have their sense of self, space and worldview celebrated. Moorambilla does this in an integrated and holistic way, and it empowers people to share and connect across all demographics.



Three 'Year Six Moorambilla Voices' boys from the region. (two are now in MAXed OUT)



Moorambilla Voices on the road early morning in Baradine before touring to the Canberra International music festival

By engendering the pursuit of excellence as a lifelong ambition, we are also teaching resilience, self-awareness and the power of artistic collaboration and teamwork. All this plus a lifelong respect for the arts, artists and the power of choirs to be their source of happiness throughout their lives.

I have often been asked; does this cross-art form focus, weaken or undermine the choral aspect of the Moorambilla Voices programme? And by inference - by being "more than just a choir", is Moorambilla Voices indeed a choir at all? These are all valid questions, yet interestingly I see only incredible positives in the richness that comes from this style of collaboration for our choirs.

It has been my experience that with clear artistic direction and exceptional artistic partners, trust between artists facilitates a collaborative synergy that is greater than the sum of the individual parts.

This synergy is palpable at our residency camps. The focus, the energy and the willingness to listen enables clear artistic reactions from all involved. Within this incredibly supportive context, we create a different ensemble every year, which is artistically flexible, constantly engaged and capable of co-creating incredibly sophisticated works. The choral component of the programme is thriving because of it, and we are serving our region's rich cultural legacy in an empowering and electric way.

Moorambilla Voices proves that placing professional artists of the highest calibre next to children and youth is both artistically satisfying and empowering for all. It is one of the greatest achievements of this programme, and it positively reiterates that the concept is not only possible, but also necessary for all of us and our ongoing artistic development.

Yet still I am asked: What do dance and Taiko bring to your choirs? In short, more movement means a better choral sound, better physical engagement

... and it empowers people to share and connect across all demographics.

within the choir and a more “present” physical presence on stage for many. Other outcomes are greater rhythmic capacity; a deeper respect for other ensembles; and an understanding of the intense listening and watching required to make an ensemble great. These skills are immediately transferable to the choral context.

Having an exceptional vocal ensemble like The Song Company to mentor our singers has meant that they not only have clear vocal models, but also they have emotional and musical support (and our composers recognise this and accommodate for it in their writing). Having singers of this calibre truly care and support the participants has been life-changing for many—especially in MAXed OUT.

For our primary children, having time allocated each day to an activity based in visual art allows them to process the enormous amount of new musical material they are given, and it has been an incredibly beneficial addition to their daily schedule. These young singers create sculptures and other works of art, and then they synthesise that process and structure into their choral rehearsals. It is yet another way to scaffold artistic process and learning.

After 11 years, the choirs of Moorambilla Voices see it now as completely normal to engage in “live time” with composers, choreographers and visual artists to create new work about their stories from their region. They see music and choirs in particular as living, breathing organisms that are incredibly relevant to their lives. The concept of choirs simply standing and delivering a pre-ordained performance by composers they have never met is totally foreign to them.

Many of you reading this will acknowledge that this is a rare and privileged artistic scenario. But it is one that I strongly feel they deserve. When all else around them has such low expectations, this opportunity is one cherished by all.

Clearly this collaborative model has not come without challenges to maintain its standard and scope. Some of the initial years have been very challenging due to various factors: the arduous process of universal workshop experience before selection; the associated artistic and administrative costs to engage exceptional partners; and the sheer scale of the programme.

However, if Moorambilla Voices were to look at the seven critical factors in its success, I feel they could be broadly summarised as follows:

1. The landscape – There is no escaping the enormity of the Australian bush landscape, and the artistic energy that comes from this part of the country is unique and incredibly powerful. The landscape affects the energy of the children, their intense physicality, the robustness of their sound and their approach to learning.



MAXed OUT ensemble doing Dance sequence inspired by the dreaming story of Narran lake -Dubbo - artwork Frank Wright

2. The people – The lynch pin of our organisational structure is our regional women. Our two regional Moorambilla mums, our General manager, our cultural elders, and our singers, all come from this landscape. Their capacity to handle adversity with humour and lateral thinking is vital as we solve the logistics of transport, fundraising and sustainability. Moorambilla Voices’ cultural and emotional compass comes from our people. They live our three pillars: excellence, equity and opportunity for all.

3. The calibre of artistic partners – Partnering children and youth with exceptional professional artists is not unusual—but our standard and scope certainly is. Rather than compromising their capacity in an educational setting, we engender the notion of natural excellence. Our successful ongoing partnerships with leading arts organisations have created a new vigour in the wider choral scene and given permission for others to emulate this cross-art form model.

4. The annual artistic cultural immersion—This is an incredible experience for all of our artistic staff. Every year we leave our phones off for five days and submerge ourselves in the rich stories, traditions and worldview of indigenous Australia. Views are shared generously from many perspectives, and, under the night sky after intense days, we have a shared vision and set of experiences that informs our collaboration.

5. The skills-development tour: equity of access

From incredibly humble beginnings, our skills-development tour has provided over 15,000 children in our area with the opportunity to do free workshops in their own school, removing all barriers to experiencing the joy of singing (short of flood or fire!) In any one year I see 2,500 children in order to select up to 300 who will participate in the programme at the next stage: the residency camps.

This one-hour workshop focuses on music literacy, part-singing and the establishment of a good, clear head voice in the trebles. In the high schools, we frame the acceptance of the changing voice as a normal part of life, whilst focusing on teamwork and rhythmic literacy. Parents, educators and community members see firsthand the skills needed to read, create and perform music.

6. The residency camps in Baradine – Here is where the real work begins. In this safe and loving small community all participants stay for four-day camps in the cooler month of August, creating not only exceptional performances, but also lifelong friendships with their regional peers. They meet again in September and focus on “stepping up” to the final performance with the professional ensembles.



MAXed OUT performance based on the moonlit trees at Mt Grenfell Star City Sydney

7. The artistic vision – It is my belief that regional and remote communities are capable of greatness. We have done this by developing a culture of collaboration, generosity and a truly open mind to what a choir can be, artistically and culturally. In doing so, Moorambilla Voices has created positive conversations around identity; cultural normalcy; and our emotional need to connect with the legacy of knowledge, stories and wisdom of the first people in our nation people. It has normalised singing in a region that had forgotten it was possible. It has given people permission to dance, drum, paint, sculpt and laugh. Long may this continue!

For more information on the Moorambilla Voices programme, please visit:

Website: www.moorambilla.com

FaceBook: www.facebook.com/moorambilla.voices

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/moorambilla>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/moorambilla/>

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/moorambilla1>

Edited by Nina De Palma, USA

MICHELLE LEONARD is the founding Artistic Director and conductor of Moorambilla Voices and Moorambilla Festival. *Wide Open Sky* (winner Sydney Film Festival audience award) and *Outback Choir* (ABC Australia) are documentaries about the Moorambilla Voices programme released to wide acclaim. Under her direction Moorambilla voices recently won the National Art Music Award (APRA AMCOS) for “National Excellence in a Regional Area” at the 2016 Awards, having previously won the State Award in 2015 and 2012. Michelle is also the founding Artistic Director and conductor of The Leichhardt Espresso Chorus; its chamber choir, Ristretto; and Espresso Kids, since 1998. Under her direction they have performed much of the traditional “major works” choral repertoire with the Orchestra and commissioned over 100 new Australian choral and orchestral works. Email: michelle@moorambilla.com



Artistic cultural immersion at Mt Grenfell Cobar with all artists and cultural facilitators

INTERNATIONAL CHORAL MUSIC SPRING IN KAUNAS

IEVA KANANAVIČIŪTĖ

choral conductor

THE MOST NOTABLE CHORAL MUSIC EVENT IN LITHUANIA IS THE “KAUNAS CANTAT” INTERNATIONAL CHORAL FESTIVAL AND COMPETITION, WHICH TOOK PLACE FROM 12 TO 15 MAY 2016 IN KAUNAS.

Four days, two concert halls, four churches, and eight countries (Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Finland, Sweden, Germany, and Thailand). There were ten choir categories, professional interpretations, various programmes, and big victories.

This is the sixth occasion for the Lithuanian audience, which opens up to the religious, folk, and composed choral music features of different regions. Rolandas Daugėla, the art director of the festival, claims that, during the six years of its existence, this event has become an integral part of Kaunas city’s cultural life. An essential element of the festival is choir competition, and it has become the crux for the participants and their programmes, which cover both the Mass and concerts. By tradition, this year’s choirs sang during Holy Mass at Vytautas’ Great Church of the Assumption of The Holy Virgin Mary, Holy Cross Church, Church of St. Francis Xavier, and St. George the Martyr Church. At the latter church on the third day of the festival, a night concert entitled “Cantus Nocturnus” took place, which every year brings ever more vivid emotions. A dark and sacred atmosphere fused with heartfelt chants creates, if not elevated religious feelings, then at least the human need for artistic fulfilment.

The chairman of the professional jury was the famous Polish conductor and Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Warmia and Mazury, Benedykt Błoński. Its members include: Sergey Ekimov, who is a composer and a conductor, as well as a professor at the Rimsky-Korsakov Saint Petersburg State Conservatory; Raimondas Katinas, who is a choir conductor, a teacher, and the art director and chief conductor of the Lithuania Song Festival; and Rolandas Daugėla, a conductor, associate professor, and the artistic director of this festival. This jury was the primary draw for foreign choirs. Another attractive aspect of the festival was the venue – the prestigious Kaunas concert halls. The competition lasted for two days (Friday and Saturday), and took place in the main hall of Vytautas Magnus University and at the Kaunas State Philharmonic. The flexible evaluation criterion in the competition was based on the song selection in the choir programme category, on interpretation, and on the level of professionalism of the conductor or concertmaster. Prizes were awarded in the form of cups for runner up and third place winners, and a Grand Prix Cup for first place. Indeed, this competition presents extremely favourable conditions for participants, who have significant opportunities to win at least one prize, and are also awarded with a record in the history of choir competition, which can often lead to the launch of future careers.



Awarding ceremony Grand Prix cup goes to Children’s Choir Radost Praha, Conductor Jan Pirner (Czech Republic)



Awarding ceremony: (left) Sergej Yekimov (Russia), Ingus Leilands (Latvia), Raimondas Katinas (Lithuania)

The first day of the competition saw 7 choirs, 12 programmes, and 9 categories. Each choir represented different styles of choral music and different age categories, and choirs only competed with those in the same grouping as themselves. One could ask how competitive the festival really is, if almost every programme has only one competitor. This is where the competence of the jury is revealed - regardless of the number of the participants, choirs are judged only by the quality of the performance. Participating choirs included: the choir of Ozolnieku high school and boys' choir "Spīguņi" from Latvia in the Children's Choirs (A, A1) category; children's choir "Radost Praga" (Czech Republic) which prepared programmes for Children's, Youth (B1), Folk (L) and contemporary composed music (M) categories; ensemble "Rasa" from Kekava's high school (Latvia), which competed in Ensembles (F) category; Thailand's Mahidol university choir with their programmes in Youth under 25 years (C) and Spiritual, gospel, jazz (S) categories, mixed seniors (R) choir "Echo" (Poland) and women's chamber choir "Resonus" (E).

As we know, the desire for victory is an innate human drive that encourages us to constantly improve. For participants it is necessary, but for the viewer it is the most interesting. So from the viewer's position, I want to summarize the most outstanding performances that brought full attention to them, and that made us listen and experience every single expression of sound. The art of being intriguing is as important as the other criteria of artistry or quality. Indeed, it was not a struggle for the viewer to pick the best ones - at the end of the first day, the jury announced the choirs that had presented the best performances, who would compete the next day for the Grand Prix cup.

In the morning, after the performances of the selected



5th - 9th class choir of Ozolnieku secondary school in category A1 performance



The Boys' Choir Spīguņi in category A performance



Mahidol University Choir in category C performance



Ensemble of Ķekava secondary school "Rasa" in category F performance

choirs and the award ceremony, it finally became clear who, how, and why, since the overall essence of the entire competition is in some way reflected in the awards.

All the participants were truly professional artists: the lowest award (silver diploma) went to only two choirs, and the other choirs won the gold diploma or higher. One silver winner was the choir of Ozolnieku high school, directed by Rūta Bergmane. They performed arrangements of Latvian folk songs, "Kalējs kala debesīs" (arranged by Andris Kontauts), and "Dzied', māsiņa, skaistas dziesmas" (arranged by Janis Medins). Although they showed a sincere performance, they did not make it to the second stage of the competition because of poor intonation.

The other choir that won silver was the girl's ensemble "Rasa", directed by Dace Bula. They also performed arranged Latvian folk songs, such as Dace Robule's "Saule", Selga Mence's "Es bij meita", and the sacred piece "Agnus Dei" by Dace Toločko. Their performance shined through their smooth choreography, unified singing, and perfect scenic image. For the last event, they received a special jury prize "for the best scenic image," but they were not invited to compete for the Grand Prix.

Other participants that were competitors for the main prize revealed the different strengths of choral art. The third place winner was boys' choir "Spīguņi", directed by Ingus Leilands and Irina Osipova. They performed arranged Latvian folk songs "Rīga dimd" by Līga Celma-Kursiete and "Suņi zaķim pēdas dzina" by Romualds Jermaks. With perfect intonation, stage effects, and delightful-looking burgundy-coloured costumes, they received not only the cup, but also the audience prize.

Second place went to women's choir "Resonus", which performed a programme rich with Scandinavian sounds. Since they chose to perform

As we know, the desire for victory is an innate human drive that encourages us to constantly improve.

songs that required special voice subtlety and technique, Piotr Janczak's "Kyrie" and Mia Makaroff's "Ala sano ehka, jos voit sanoa kylla," they received not only a jury acclaim, but also a special *Composers Union Choras*. It prize "for the most compelling programme".

The competitors in this year's festival can be described as professional, subtle, and artistic, and these choirs are connected by shared ideas. It is obvious that when people are led by ideas and desire, the results often surpass expectations. This is the case with two surprising, contrasting choirs – the Mahidol University mixed choir (directed by Rit Subsomboon) and the children's and youth choir "Radost Praha" (directed Jan Pirner). From their first chords, these two choirs earned their victory. Both choirs shared an incredible combination

of unity and quality that makes the listener forget the technical aspects of their performances and focus on the message of pieces.

A Thai choir performed programmes for two categories, and showed its nature and talented spirit. The choir won first place by performing contemporary religious choral music - Brank Stark's "Plaudite Manibus" and Paul Caldwell and Sean Ivory's spiritual "John the Revelator" – but they were far from winning the Grand Prix Cup because of small inaccuracies in intonation. Not only quality of performance, but also the scenography and extraordinary skills of the concertmaster Teeranai Jirasirikul earned him the special jury prizes. However, there is no reason to doubt in the victory of the "Radost Praha" choir. This large group of talented girls, although it had serious opponents, did not experience a solid challenge. They performed programmes in 4 categories and demonstrated the exceptional sound quality and versatility of the choir. They started with opuses of Baroque composers and ended with contemporary composed music. Two performances of final pieces - Czech folk song "Pred muziku" (arranged by Petr Řezníček) and Jan Novák's "Gloria" - were acclaimed with the Grand Prix Cup by jury. They won first place because of their unity, the patience of choir members and their director, and their shared love for choral music. Besides the main prize, the choir won 4 gold diplomas, their concertmaster Jitka Nešverova earned a name of best concertmaster, and Jan Pirner received the best conductor award. A concert of the competition winners "Cantus Nocturnus" was held on Saturday evening, and it became a reflection of the two days of the festival. By then, the performers had calmed down after intense performances, and the peace of the night in the sacred atmosphere of the St. George the Martyr Church inspired the sound of the music. Choirs that performed in this final concert once again proved their talent, and the first place winning choir lowered its temperamental tones to calm ones.

I believe the moment of calmness and concentration inspired one thought from the audience: the "Kaunas Cantat" festival is a truly gift for Lithuanian choral music lovers and they would like to witness more high-level choral art events like this one.

Edited by Avery Lemmon, USA



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Children's Choir Radost Praha Grand Prix competition

AN INTERNATIONAL CHORAL PROJECT IN ST. PETERSBURG:

Boris Abalyan's Workshop

ALEXANDRA MAKAROVA

choral conductor

AT THE END OF AUGUST 2016 IN ST. PETERSBURG, THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP IN CHORAL CONDUCTING TOOK PLACE UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF HONOURED ARTIST OF RUSSIA AND PROFESSOR OF THE ST. PETERSBURG STATE CONSERVATORY, BORIS ABALYAN. THE ORGANISER OF THE MASTER CLASS IS THE RIMSKY-KORSAKOV STATE CONSERVATOIRE OF MUSIC, IN WHICH PROFESSOR ABALYAN TAUGHT FOR OVER 40 YEARS, AND THE CHAMBER CHOIR FESTINO.

BORIS ABALYAN

Russian choir conductor and teacher. The founder, Artistic Director and Conductor of the *Lege Artis* chamber choir. With Boris Abalyan as conductor the choir has recorded more than 20 CDs in collaboration with the recording labels *Sony Classical* and *Mazur Media GmbH*, and the musical alliance *Northern Flowers*. As a result of the collaboration with the medieval music researchers from the department of Medieval Russian Chant at the Saint Petersburg State Conservatory the choir recorded two CDs of Ancient Russian music. Boris Abalyan is the chief conductor of the *Gracias choir*. Under the leadership of professor Abalyan, the *Gracias choir* took part in several international choir competitions in South Korea and abroad.

STRUCTURE OF THE WORKSHOP

The workshop is a unique educational project that has no equal not only in St. Petersburg, but also in the Russian choral conducting scene in general. The first workshop was held in 2015 and it showed the effectiveness and relevance of this form of learning. From the beginning, the workshop acquired international status. Over the past two years participants included young conductors from Japan, Poland, Belarus and Russia.

The workshop's programme includes theoretical and practical training over a period of one week. The theoretical course includes two days of training with the professor and two pianists and various educational lectures. The practical part of the programme is the work with the *Festino* chamber choir for four days and the performance at the final concert. The purpose is to improve professional skills in the field of interpretation and analysis of the score, rehearsing and concert practice, and a significant expansion of the repertoire.

"As I have already said, the goal is to invite people who are really interested in this. Let me explain: conducting students and young choirmasters that have already started to work have different problems and questions. I think you will agree with me that a student who has graduated University already "knows everything". Only practice gives rise to the questions, and the master class can give the answers. A student, who graduated from a conservatory, has more answers and a young choirmaster has more questions. I am deeply convinced that the questions appear when you start to work, but during education in the classroom with the professor everything is usually clear." (B. Abalyan)



Ilya Malafey, a workshop participant at the final concert

REPertoire

The variety of works presented in the master class programme is representative of the cultural space of St. Petersburg, as a platform where Russian and European performing trends are intertwining. The repertoire includes works from three stylistic periods: Russian medieval chant, the contemporary music of St. Petersburg's composers and the contemporary music of Western Europe.

St. Petersburg is a unique city in Russia, where the study of Russian medieval singing culture is maintained at a highly professional level. In collaboration with researchers from the St. Petersburg Conservatory, **Boris Abalyan** and **Lege artis** Chamber Choir recorded two CDs of ancient Russian chants. The painstaking work of a conductor and scientists specialised in the medieval period allowed an innovative way of performing to be created, uniting a deep understanding of the sacred liturgical sphere with the concert interpretation on the stage. Russian sacred music from the pre-Petrine period is still "terra incognita" not only for foreigners but also for many Russian artists. That is why the introduction to it and the guidelines for the choirmaster constitute a unique educational part of the workshop. Besides practical work with musical material, participants are given the opportunity to listen to lectures by leading experts from the St. Petersburg State Conservatory about the history and style of Russian chant and Russian early polyphony.

The contemporary choral music by St. Petersburg's composers always was an essential part of the concert repertoire of many leading Russian choirs. Yuri Falik, Sergei Slonimsky, Anatoly Korolev, Alexander Knaifel and Dmitry Smirnov are all names that are now well-known worldwide. During the master class participants not only work on the best examples of contemporary choral music from St. Petersburg, but also have the opportunity to directly interact with the composers. There were two meetings-lectures in 2016: with Dmitry Smirnov and Anatoly Korolyov.

The inclusion in the programme of the course of modern choral music from Western Europe is very important for the expansion of the concert repertoire of Russian youth choirs. During the master class, participants have the opportunity to discover new names and works of interest which will allow them to continue to integrate more successfully into the Western choral community.

Participants

Young choirmasters under the age of 35, students and graduates of higher educational institutions with experience of working with the choir are all invited to take part in the workshop. This year there were 6 active participants in the master class: Pawel Choina from Warsaw; Elena Klimova from Minsk; Christina Pivovarova from Novosibirsk; Ilya Malafey from Saint-Petersburg; Natalia Shelkovskaya and Daniil Zhurilov from Moscow. All of them were young conductors pre-selected from a video of their work with a choir or a concert. In addition to the 6 active participants in the master class, there were also choir conductors from Petrozavodsk, Saratov, Yaroslavl, Nizhny Novgorod and Moscow who participated in a passive way.

Composers

An important aspect of the work of the master class is the interaction of conductors and composers, whose works are presented in the workshop. Joint rehearsals help more precisely understand the style and the idea of a composition, and unlock the author's creativity. In 2016, two composers, Dmitry Smirnov and Anatoly Korolev, attended the rehearsals of the workshop. In addition, composers held creative meetings and responded to all the questions of interest from the audience.



Professor Boris Abalyan

“Of course, nobody can learn in a week what people learn over the years, but this week there have been significant changes, mainly in the sense of music and the methods of work with the singers. It is very difficult to express with a gesture the thing that a conductor hears in the music, so he has to explain with the words or demonstrate with the voice.”
(B. Abalyan)



Chamber Choir Festino: Rehearsal before the final concert

“I can say that there was a very curious trend in the second half of the twentieth century, when there were tandems”: (composer - performer) “For example, Shostakovich - Mravinsky, Sviridov - Chernushenko or Sviridov - Minin, Gavrilin - Minin or Gavrilin - Chernushenko. In those cases, the conductor has to understand not only what it says, but also what is not written. I was lucky to work frequently with Dmitry Smirnov, Anatoly Korolev and Yuri Falik, and Sergei Slonimsky, and they helped me to decipher their style. Such co-creation cannot be overestimated.”

FUTURE WORKSHOPS

The next workshop will take place at the end of August 2017. Applications can be sent in during March 2017. Organisers plan to expand the programme of practical and theoretical sessions and show students the unique diversity of the Russian choral culture. We hope that the international master-class of Professor Abalyan will become an important annual event that will bring together choral conductors from Russia and other countries.

Edited by Mirella Biagi, UK/Italy



ALEXANDRA MAKAROVA was born in Leningrad in 1986. In 2010 she graduated from the St. Petersburg State Rimsky-Korsakov Conservatoire as a choral conductor (in Boris Abalyan's class) and in 2015 she completed her postgraduate studies at the conservatoire. She was a prize winner at the International Jāzeps Vītols Conducting Competition in Riga (2009, 4th prize and the Latvian Radio Chorus Special Prize) and the International Boris Tevlin Choral Conducting Competition in Moscow (2014, 1st prize). Since 2008 she has directed the *Festino* chamber chorus (St, Petersburg). In 2013 she founded the Chamber Chorus of the Polytechnic University. Alexandra Makarova has also conducted the Student Chorus and Chamber Chorus of the St Petersburg Conservatoire, the Chamber Chorus of the Moscow Conservatoire, the Student Chorus of the Latvian Academy of Music and the Latvian Radio Chorus. Email: makarena-@mail.ru

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TEACHING VOCAL SIGHT READING FROM MEDIEVAL TIMES THROUGH TO THE 20TH CENTURY: CRUCIAL POINTS FOR METHODOLOGY

LUCIO IVALDI

choir director and instructor

Many aspects related to ancient song have yet to be studied adequately. As Bruno Baudissone argues:

The recovery of ancient music and its practices began with instruments, whereas the subject of ancient singing was approached much later. Let us not forget that, during the time in which ancient music was contemporary, instruments served the voice; today, it is just the opposite: the voice follows instrumental practices, a fact that holds true even in the performance of ancient music. Through the years, an error has led to the absence of serious research on ancient vocal music: namely, it has been believed that, to get at ancient vocal art, it is enough to distance oneself from Romantic and Realist practice (Baudissone, *La vocalità antica, in Orfeo, mensile di musica antica e barocca*; Florence, 1996).

The teaching of music during the medieval era was shaped by the need to form good singers for the mass and daily offices. Around the turn of the first millennium, there were several thousand complex melodic pieces at the disposal of the *cantor*, with considerable regional variation. The orderly arrangement of music on the basis of *tonaria* responded to mnemonic aims more than a desire for classification, *per se*: the thematic, indexed element was always the formula of the beginning of the melody (tonaria arranged by *incipit*), rather than its modal outcome (tonaria arranged by *finalis*). The liturgical legacy of the early middle ages included the daily practice of song as a form of prayer and as a contribution to religious services; it was in this context that the practices of *cantillatio* and of the recitation of psalmodic tones developed. Here, too, mnemonic aspects in the arrangement of material are evident: from cantillation based upon the principal *recitation tone* sprung the *incipit*, *mediatio* and *terminatio* formulae, by free association with similar formulae, following modes typical of oral tradition.

The numerous medieval treatises on vocal technique are of interest: In the 7th century, Isidoro di Siviglia

defined the necessary qualities of liturgical song as "*clara, alta et suavis*" (clear, high and sweet), but in following centuries, other writers of treatises also added "*rotunda, virili, viva et succinta voce psallatur*" (rounded, manly, lively and intoned in a succinct voice). In the late Renaissance and Baroque eras modern vocal classifications (chest voice, head voice, etc.) appear in the writings of Maffei, Vicentino, Banchieri, Zacconi, Zarlino and other authors of treatises. It is important to keep in the mind the precise distinction between those of a polyphonic disposition (*cantus, quintus, altus, tenor, bassus*) and the characterisation of vocal typologies (soprano, contralto, tenor and bass), as in Vicentino's *L'Antica musica ridotta alla moderna prattica* (Rome 1555).

Another salient aspect of vocal teaching in the 15th through to the 18th century is the constant, wide-spread use of the didactic *bicinium*, the practice of performance in duet, on the part of the apprentice singer and his teacher, of scholastic counterpoint, and of exercises scaled according to levels of difficulty of performance. This was a sublime means of ear-training and of training in intonation, developed over time and in the modes of a vocal practice that



Photo 1: Vocal Typologies in Vicentino

required daily exercise and agility equal to the practice of a musical instrument, with artistic outcomes of great efficacy and elegance. The reader is referred to the inexhaustible repertoire in collections and courses of study, including collections of didactic duos by authors such as Angelo Bertalotti, Adriano Banchieri, Orlando di Lasso, Gramatio Metallo, Eustachio Romano, but also northern European composers such as Johannes Ockeghem, Claudin de Sermisy, etc. (Bornstein, in www.gardane.info/bicinium).

However, the practice we wish to underscore here is the teaching of vocal sight-reading, which, beginning with Guido d'Arezzo in the 11th century, goes by the name of solmisation, with the important advantage of overcoming the need to memorise thousands of melodies; one result, in fact, once problems of notation were solved, was that the singer could read and learn music *sine magistro*.

Already during preceding centuries, the mnemonic and didactic practice of computing the fixed pitches of *tabula compositoria*, that is, of a series of pitches contrasted by means of alphabetical notation, had taken hold, as was theorised by treatise writers of the early medieval era (Boethius, Cassiodorus), who associated them with the various bones and joints of the left hand, that is often erroneously called the *guidonian hand*.

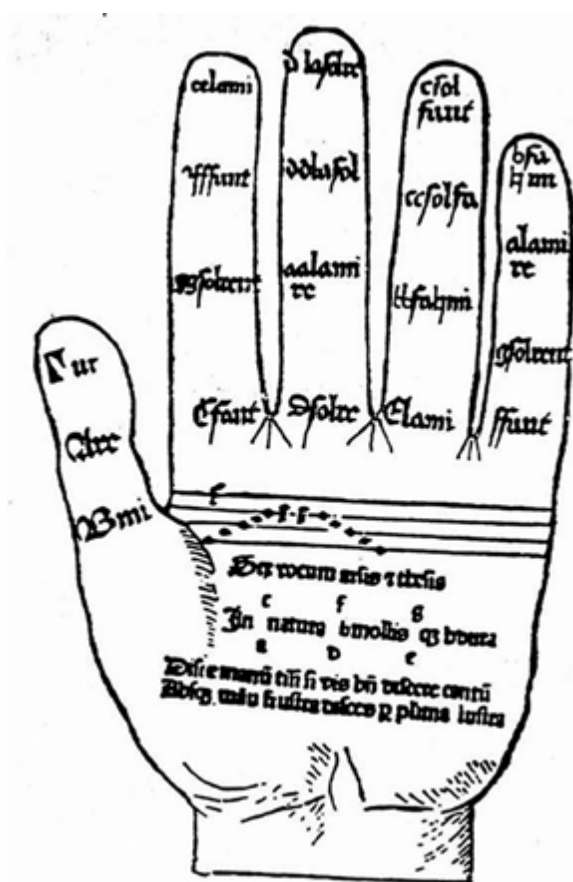


Photo 2: The Guidonian Hand

To these fixed pitches, Guido thought to add a second system of pitches, this time contrasted from syllables, which allowed for the easy and univocal identification of series of intervals that constantly recurred within the *tabula*.

Precisely within the prologue to Guido d'Arezzo's *Micrologus* ... we find that young students, practiced in the reading of music according to its notes, were able within a month to sing songs they had never seen nor heard, without hesitation and at first sight; indeed, to perform a "*maximum spectaculum*" for all.... In fact, Guido d'Arezzo already intuited the necessity of the ear-eye-memory-voice connection, and the usefulness of learning many songs referring back to the above-mentioned mnemonic device for grasping intervals, as well as, mutatis mutandis, the meaning of the tonic (Goitre, *Cantar leggendo con l'uso del do mobile*; Milan 1972). Due to its didactic usefulness, this system enjoyed great success, not only in the medieval era, but throughout the Renaissance: thus, solmisation was based on a scale of six tones, called a *hexachord*. To facilitate the learning of this structure of scales and intervals, Guido d'Arezzo gave names corresponding to the initial syllables of the six hemistiches of the *Hymn to St. John the Baptist* to the six notes: Thus, it was merely a matter of memorising and getting

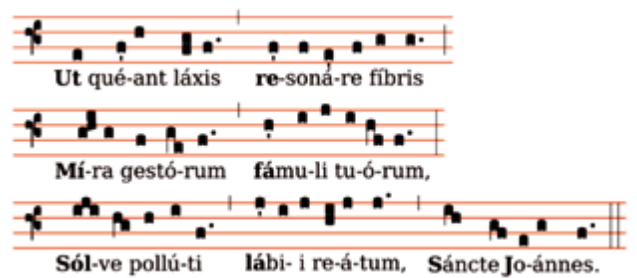


Photo 3: Hymn to St. John the Baptist

the ear used to this scheme, by which one sought to gain agility and dexterity (a matter of some importance even for modern singers) in the intonation of ascending and descending intervals (i.e., unison, and the major and minor second, major and minor third, fourth, fifth, and major sixth intervals).

Do Re Mi Fa Sol La
T T St T T

The six syllables could then be assigned to the notes of a composition with an extensive *ambitus*, by means of *mutation*, that is, a change of hexachords carried out in such a manner that the semitone was always sung with the syllables *mi-fa*. By such a procedure, the *cantores* learned, not the absolute pitches of tones (*claves*), but the relative pitches (*voces*), and fixed the

intervals in their memory: a semitone was always *mi-fa*, no matter at what pitch it might be found. Thus, singers could easily intone any scale of six tones that had the semitone in the central position. This was the case, not only with the *natural hexachord* with Do corresponding to C, but also with the *flat hexachord* (with Do = F, and thus with *b* flat), and the *hard hexachord* (with Do = G). In a table elaborated by Gioseffo Zarlino (*Istitutioni armoniche*; Venice 1558), we have a summary of the successive hexachordal syllables, in association with the

The nerve centre of this system was the difficulty of adapting it to the spread of *musica ficta*, that is, to the adapting of *tabula compositoria* to new pitches that began gradually imposing themselves on practice and taste from the mid-15th century; i.e., C#, Eb, F#, and G#. Various attempts to adapt the Guidonian syllabic system to the new needs of polyphonic and harmonic musical language were elaborated by the following scholars, who aimed to resolve the problems of intonation accompanying chromatic alterations:

Waelrant Hubert (1517-1595), with "Bocedisation": *bo-ce-di-ge-la-mi-ni*; **David Hitzler** (1575-1635), with "Bebisation": *la-be-ce-de-me-fe-ge*; the German theorist, **Otto Gibelius** (1612-1682) amplified and altered the Guidonian syllables in a manner similar to that of **John Curwen** two hundred years later: *do-di-re-ri/ma-mi-fa-fi-so-si/lo-la-na-ni-do*; **Karl Heinrich Graun** (1704-1759), with "Damenisation": *da-me-ni-po-tu-la-be*. The various proposals found scarce application in musical practice due to the meagre correspondence between, on the one hand, the syllables referred to the altered sounds and, on the other hand, those corresponding to the natural tones (Acciai, **Solmisazione e didattica musicale in Italia**, in **La Cartellina**; Milan 1996).

Another aspect of which authors of treatises in the 16th and 17th centuries took account was that of extending hexachordal solmisation to the octave.

Many theorists (Banchieri, Burmeister, Bernhard, Nives, La Maire and others) held it to be necessary henceforth to add a new syllable, *si*, to the Guido d'Arezzo's canonical six. The evermore frequent use of transposition technique (*chiavette* or *chiavi acute*) and the introduction of *mixed modes* within compositions rendered Guido d'Arezzo's system somewhat artificial and complex (Acciai, *op. cit.*).

In reality, the theoretic use of a new system of solmisation, also called *solmisation of the octave*,

Photo 4: Zarlino's Table

series of absolute pitches of the *tabula compositoria*: To this, we have appended a transcription in modern notation, as follows:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20		
Γ	A	ξ	C	D	E	F	G	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	aa	bb	cc	dd	ee		
ut	re	mi	fa	sol	la	fa	sol	la		sol	la										
			ut	re	mi	ut	re	mi	fa	ut	re	mi	fa	sol	la						
							ut	re	mi	ut	re	mi	fa	sol	la						
													ut	re	mi	fa	sol	la			
																ut	re	mi	fa	sol	la

Photo 5: Claves et Voces Table

though widespread in many contexts, did not have time to find theoretic uniformity and universal acceptance in the didactic practice of the 17th and 18th centuries. This is a shame, because, with the addition of the seventh step and of the principal chromatic alterations, such a system could have been perfectly expressive of all the melodic and harmonic formulae present in the teaching vocabulary of the musical repertoire, at least until the late 19th century. Since 1600, contemporaneous with attempts to create the *solmisation of the octave*, the practice of making the syllable, Do, correspond to the fixed tone, C, became increasingly widespread. In particular, during the period following the Napoleonic Wars, the French system succeeded in negating the difference between *claves* and *voces*, probably in order to simplify the practice of exercises aimed at instrumental agility; from this derived the notable paradox by which *do, re mi* became absolute pitches, with the total nullification of the *voces* in favour of a system based exclusively on the *claves*. Such a system of "single nomenclature" persists even today in the schools and musical conservatories of many countries, along with the questionable practice of *spoken solfeggio*.

The presence of two systems of nomenclature, with the *voces* alongside the *claves*, is a form of systemic redundancy, or arguably, of systemic abundance. The double system of nomenclature has systemic advantages, because it is intimately connected with the nature of western classical music. In fact, the system of *claves* expresses simply the absolute pitches, while the system of *voces* with *solmisation of the octave* also expresses the *scale functions* in the harmonic-tonal system. *Do* is always the tonic of whatever major tonality; *re*, the supertonic; *fa*, the subdominant, and *sol* the dominant, etc. As for the minor tonalities, the tonic is always *la*. Solmisation can even be fully applied to modal music, inasmuch as the Doric mode is always intoned as *re-mi-fa-sol*; the Phrygian, as *mi-fa-sol-la*, etc. This has great advantages for the singer in the understanding of intervals and of the system of intonation, regardless of the song's modality.

A young singer, deprived of this didactic system that has been hand-tailored for the exact representation of melodic formulae, often can calculate pitches only with the help of a musical instrument, without really having the "mental framework" of the scale and interval systems necessary for her or his art. Roberto Goitre paints a disastrous picture of the consequences in Italy of abandoning the "double nomenclature":

Such errors and misunderstandings in the teaching of music have been handed down so as to reduce our country, once the cradle of vocal polyphony, to the global rearguard of musical civility (Goitre, *op. cit.*).

In reality, there was an international recovery of *claves* and *voces* in the 19th and 20th centuries, thanks to the *do mobile*, as found in the monumental works of John Curwen in England and of Zoltán Kodály in Hungary. Today, we are witnessing a gradual dispersion of other didactic practices derived from ancient music (psalmody, solmisation, bicinia, canons, etc.).

Let us hope, then, to see in coming years a flowering of new methodological reflection on the teaching methods of polyphonic song, hopefully not just in conservatories, but more generally in the courses of study followed by all musicians, in professional music publications, and in the daily life of the musical community in all its complexity.

We thank the editors for giving us their permission to reproduce this article that was first published on www.musicheria.net.

Translated by Marvin Vann, USA

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DIVIDED CHOIRS: MYTH OR REALITY?

ACOUSTIC EXPERIMENTS IN ST MARK'S BASILICA, VENICE

ANDREA ANGELINI

ICB Managing Editor, Choral Conductor and Musicologist

THE PREMISE ON WHICH THIS RESEARCH¹ IS BASED SUGGESTS THAT THE ARCHITECTS AND MUSICIANS WHO OPERATED IN VENICE DURING THE RENAISSANCE PERIOD WERE MUCH MORE KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT THE CONCEPTS OF ACOUSTIC PHYSICS THAN WAS UNTIL RECENTLY THOUGHT, AND THAT THE COUNTER-REFORMATION BROUGHT AWARENESS OF THE POWER OF MUSIC IN INSPIRING DEVOTION. THE AIM OF THIS RESEARCH IS TO EXPLORE THE WAYS IN WHICH THEIR ARCHITECTURAL AND MUSICAL CREATIONS (REFERRING, IN THIS ARTICLE, ONLY TO ST MARK'S BASILICA) SHOW A GENUINE ATTEMPT (NOT ALWAYS UNIFORMLY SUCCESSFUL) TO EXPLOIT ACOUSTIC EFFECTS FOR RELIGIOUS PURPOSES.

In the year 2005 the Department of History of Art at Cambridge University founded CAMERA, the *Centre for Acoustic and Musical Experiments in Renaissance Architecture*. At the Centre's first conference, held at the Fondazione Cini in Venice on the 8th and 9th of September 2005, experts in the three disciplines came together to exchange ideas and compare the extent of their knowledge in their respective fields. A year later, in September 2006, the same group of experts met again, this time in Cambridge, for an informal workshop. Together they planned a series of experiments to be carried out in Spring 2007 in a number of churches in Venice. Although a number of specialists in the field of ancient music, including Sir John Eliot Gardiner, had already attempted to re-create in situ Renaissance liturgy in Venice, such systematic tests of acoustics in various churches had never been made. The climax of this research was to be a series of choral experiments carried out by the Choir of St. John's College, Cambridge, between the 8th and the 15th of April 2007. This Choir was chosen for its acknowledged excellence in the field of sacred music and for its outstanding ability in singing the most complex pieces of Renaissance polyphonic music, even at first sight. The Choir consisted of fifteen men and seventeen children and was conducted by David Hill. While in Venice they stayed at the Spedale della Pietà, the institution where Antonio Vivaldi had worked in the early eighteenth century. As well as carrying out acoustic experiments for the research project, the Choir sang at Easter Monday Vespers in St Mark's and gave two public concerts.

In order to compare the quality of the acoustic surveys carried out inside the churches with the sound actually perceived by listeners, a precise system of acoustic measurement was devised, using the technologies and information supplied by the Laboratorio di Acustica Musicale e Architettonica (Musical and Architectural Acoustics Laboratory) at the Fondazione Scuola di San Giorgio in Venezia, under the direction of Davide Bonsi.

It is interesting to note how many factors are brought into play when approaching ancient music. These include general practice in performance; workmanship and characteristics of original instruments; and the manner of music-making during the liturgy. The acoustic properties of spaces where music was performed have been little studied, and this is why live choral music was central to the project. The search for historical authenticity in performance was, obviously, not the prime concern; the researchers considered this to be an unreachable goal. They intended rather to show that successive architectural alterations to religious buildings should always be taken into consideration. Simulations of 'original' performances were compromised by a number of factors, including alterations to the decoration of the churches in question, the rebuilding of organs, the difference in numbers of the congregation, and the employment of counter-tenors instead of castrati.

In the course of the choral experiments held in St Mark's Basilica, St. John's College Choir sang – as has already been noted – at Easter Monday Vespers; they were positioned in the north organ loft, the one preferred by musicians of our time. This was a difficult position for the performance of choral music because there was no direct sightline, or line of sound, between the singers and the congregation in the nave, where the reverberation was such as to produce an effect more atmospheric than musical. The harmonies were indistinct and any counterpoint or rhythmic elaboration

¹ The research is extensively described in 'Sound & Space in Renaissance Venice' by D. Howard and L. Moretti

sounded confused. Acoustic measurements confirmed that sound originating in the organ loft and measured by a microphone placed underneath the central dome was worse – acoustically and physically speaking – than any other ‘production-reception’ combination measured in any other space within the basilica. Conversely, when the microphone was placed in the space occupied by the Doge’s throne, much better results were obtained because of reduced reverberation, but the clarity of the sound remained somewhat poor.

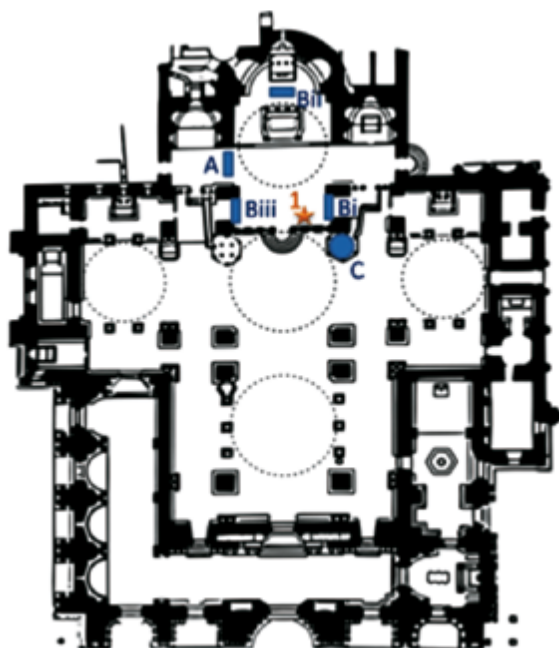


Figure 1: positioning of the singers (A, B, C) and of the microphone (1) during the acoustic experiments in St Mark’s

In the first experiment ([track 1 - http://bit.ly/2hSslGJ](http://bit.ly/2hSslGJ)) two tenors positioned in the north loft (figure 1, position A) sang Monteverdi’s *Salve Regina*. Even with the microphone positioned in the sanctuary below, the soloists’ voices seemed distant. The sound seemed to come from above, distributed uniformly, with little emphasis of direction on the left side (looking towards the high altar). The voices sound as if trapped in the sanctuary space and the singers themselves did not obtain much of a response from the natural resonance of the space. They complained that the sound was hard and dry, and attributed this to the large quantity of wood in the organ loft. To the listener in the nave, the two tenors’ voices sounded far away and indistinct.

1.1. THE APSE AND THE PULPITS

The alterations made to the eastern end of St Mark’s in the sixteenth century had a number of significant implications for the role of music in the Doge’s celebrations. These alterations were carried out under the supervision of the Florentine sculptor and architect

Jacopo Sansovino (figure 2). Sansovino had come to Venice in 1527, and following his triumphant restoration of the dome of the basilica he was given the post of superintendent responsible for the buildings around St Mark’s Square, known as the Procurazia di San Marco. The careers of musician Adrian Willaert and Sansovino evolved along parallel lines, both men greatly involved in their respective fields: the former occupied with the musical life of the basilica, the latter with its maintenance and decoration. One can imagine that they would sometimes find themselves working shoulder to shoulder. If we wish to understand Sansovino’s alterations, we need to look at the present disposition of the church. The nave leads to a raised sanctuary with apse, reached by five steps (figure 3), beneath which is the crypt housing the relics of St Mark. This space is separated from the nave by a jubé or iconostasis, completed by stonemasons Jacobello and Pier Paolo dalle Masegne in 1394, consisting in eight marble columns supporting a series of fourteen statues. On the other side of the sanctuary are two small chapels with apses, dedicated respectively to St Peter and St Clement, reached through great arches which support the upper level of the organ lofts. The space behind the iconostasis or screen was known, in Sansovino’s time, as the choro; but where the singers were actually positioned is a complicated question, much debated in recent years. The trials carried out in April 2007 were designed to test a number of possible scenarios for the production of music, bearing in mind of course that the sixteenth century was a time of constant experiments in the field of music. On the outer side of the screen two marble pulpits face the high altar: on the right the hexagonal pulpitem magnum cantorum, also called bigonzo, and on the left a two-story structure known as pulpitem novum lectionum. These venerable pulpits in precious marble date from the early thirteenth century. Giovanni Stringa, Master of Ceremonies at St Mark’s, describes them when writing about the life of St Mark the Evangelist and St Mark’s church:

Let us look at the screen, flanked by two pulpits, one on the right and one on the left. The pulpit on the right (looking from the high altar) is on two levels and is surmounted by columns. On the major feast days, usually five times a year: Christmas, the Annunciation of Our Lady, Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Easter day, the Epistle is chanted and a sermon proffered by the city’s most famous priests, in the presence of the Doge and his Court [...]. The upper level is covered by a pyramid-shaped bronze canopy surmounted by a dome, and here the Gospel is chanted.



Figure 2: the entrance to the sanctuary in St Mark's Basilica; notice the screen surmounted by fourteen statues, and the two pulpits

And describing the bigonzo, Stringa adds:

The other pulpit on the left (looking from the high altar) is octagonal in shape, and lower. Here the Doge is presented to his people after his election, and here the Divine Office is normally chanted, especially when the Doge and the Court are present in the church.



Figure 3: Alessandro Piazza, *The Doge Francesco Morosini receiving the 'stocco' sword and the pileus in St Mark's Basilica*, oil on canvas, c. 1700 (Correr Museum, Venice)

It is important to remember that Stringa's description was written after a number of significant alterations had been carried out by Sansovino. In about 1530 Doge Andrea Gritti, unable to mount the steps leading to the bigonzo because incapacitated by gout and obesity, and therefore unable to occupy the position usual for the Doge when celebrating church festivals, began to occupy the chair previously installed for use by the primicerio (the highest-ranking priest present) just beyond the screen. Consequently, in 1535, a new throne for the Doge, made of walnut and flanked by other chairs for dignitaries, was installed here. This made a huge difference to ceremonies taking place in the presence of the Doge, because it meant that the Doge and his Court were now seated in a sacred space formerly reserved for the clergy (figure 4). The present appearance of the sanctuary is completely different from the way it appeared after Sansovino's alterations, because unfortunately most of the chairs were removed in 1955. However, the previous layout was well described by Giovanni Stringa in his preface to Francesco Sansovino's *Guide to Venice* dating from 1604.

1.2. SINGERS' POSITIONS

The aim of the choral experiments carried out in April 2007 was to consider the acoustic implications of the various positions occupied by the singers in St Mark's. It is important to stress that these investigations concentrated on music of the mid-sixteenth century; music composed after this time became progressively more complex and its performance evolved to include several choirs at once and a large number of instruments. The complicated positioning of singers and musicians is well illustrated in a seventeenth-century painting in the Correr Museum; the repertoire in use in Willaert's time, however, did not require such complex organisation. In the April 2007 experiments various combinations were tested; the only position not

tested was to place the singers in the lofts in the transept: there is no historic evidence to support this practice and also the considerable distance – sixty metres – between the two lofts would have caused an insuperable problem of sound delay. In all the trials carried out, the microphone was placed in front of the space once occupied by the Doge's throne, just behind the screen (looking from the nave towards the altar) on the south side, because at this time (the mid-sixteenth century) the Doge and his Court were the most important members of the congregation, those for whom the music was performed. During the trials, the listeners present were invited to complete a questionnaire, noting also whereabouts in the church they were seated.

The effect made by Gregorian chant in the sanctuary apse was tested by performing the psalm *Domine probasti me* in Willaert's setting, where a plainchant choir alternates with a polyphonic quartet ([track 2](http://bit.ly/2hNtMcn) - <http://bit.ly/2hNtMcn>). The plainchant singers were placed behind the high altar, while the quartet took their places in the small balcony called a *pergolo* (translator's note: see figure 4) on the right when facing the altar (figure 1, position Bi-Bii). The vault behind the apse enabled the plainchant singers to produce mystic sound with reverberation, where the words were easy to understand. The quartet positioned in the *pergolo*, however, produced a much clearer, more focused sound, because their voices reverberated inside a closed space before being projected into the sanctuary. The same psalm was also performed from the two *pergolo* balconies (figure 1, position Bi-Biii), with the plainchant singers directly facing the polyphonic group ([track 3](http://bit.ly/2gUXXtK) - <http://bit.ly/2gUXXtK>). In this configuration the sound of the plainchant singers was more directional and had less reverberation than when they had

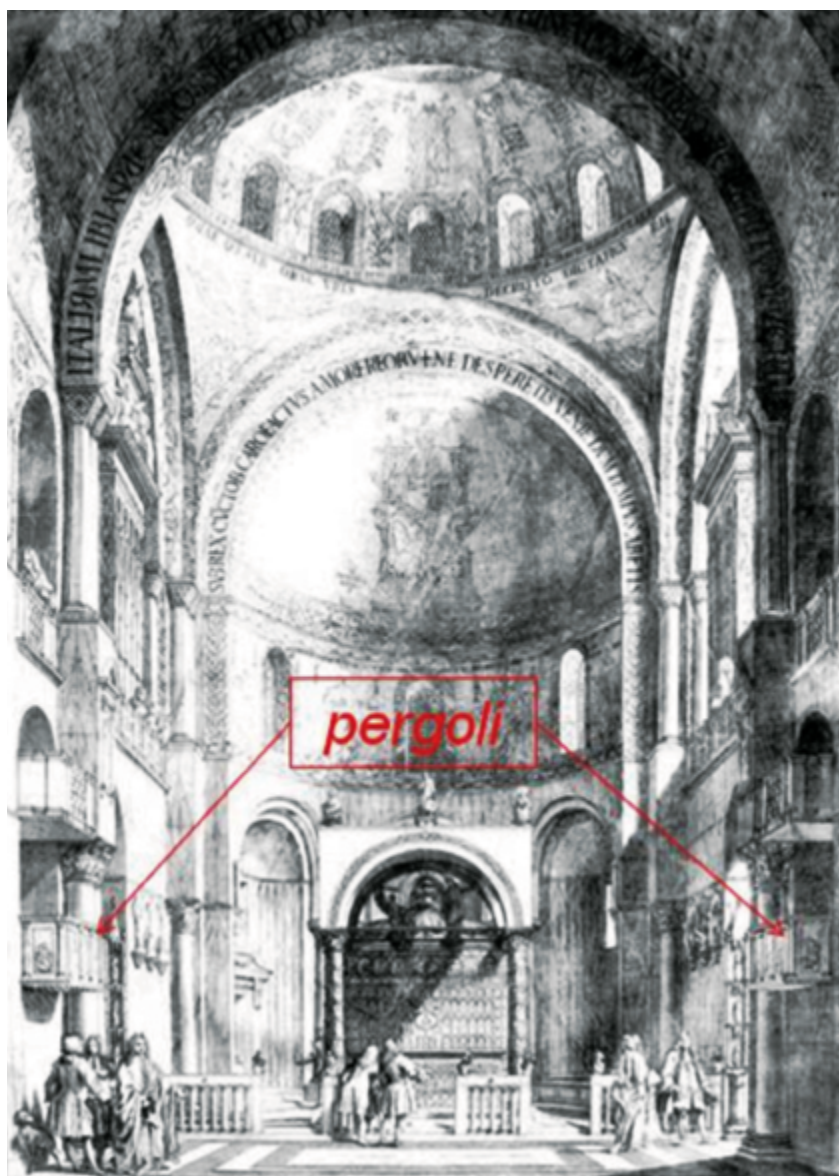


Figure 4: Antonio Visentini (1688-1782), view of the sanctuary in St Mark's Basilica showing Sansovino's *pergolo* balconies, taken from *Iconografia della Ducal Basilica dell'Evangelista Marco*

sung behind the high altar, and the effect of a dialogue between the two groups was more immediate.

The following experiment was a performance of a psalm for divided choirs, Willaert's *Laudate Pueri Dominum* ([track 4](http://bit.ly/2h3nYdu) - <http://bit.ly/2h3nYdu>) sung by two polyphonic quartets, one in each of the two *pergolo* balconies (figure 1, position Bi-Biii): the sound was exceptionally clear, and the spatial separation between the two groups was ideal. For the listeners in the sanctuary – the Doge and his Court – the effect must have been breathtaking: the volume just right and the separation of the voices clear and distinct, while the effect of a 'conversation' taking place in this confined space added a touch of drama. The effect of a polyphonic piece performed in the *bigonzo* (figure 1, position C) was tested employing the motet for six voices *Timor et tremor* by Giovanni Gabrieli, a piece which well conveys a sense of fear through the undulation of the voices, with pauses suggesting hesitation ([track 5](http://bit.ly/2hBbhYe) - <http://bit.ly/2hBbhYe>). As can be seen in Canaletto's drawing, the singers face the high altar, allowing their voices to be projected into the sanctuary space. The

piece was performed in real parts, that is by one chorister for each part, with the sole addition of another voice to the soprano line. The resulting sound was beautiful: the voices blended perfectly and were clearly projected into the sanctuary space, although the sound no longer had the remarkably clear definition attained when performed in the two pergolo balconies. Given the spatial complexity of a church with five domes, it came as

a surprise to discover that the clarity of sound perceived by a listener in the sanctuary was of an acoustic quality comparable to that of a modern concert hall. Fortunately, any undesirable focusing of sound was averted by the slight irregularities in the mosaic surface inside the dome. The marble screen served as a protective barrier to excessive reverberation of sound from other spaces in the church. In other words, the sanctuary

gives the effect of a church within a church, creating the conditions for producing a better sound than in any other space in the basilica. We can therefore conclude that the combination of singers in the pergolo balconies and listeners in the sanctuary resulted in the clearest and most directional sound, while the sound heard by the listeners in the nave was confused and unclear. If the Doge's intention was to impress his guests by means of the new kind of music written for St Mark's, it is evident that the creation of the pergolo balconies was a brilliant solution to the problem of a usually unpromising acoustic space.

In conclusion, the "sound," meaning the successful performance of these pieces of music in St Mark's or in any other performance space within a religious building, depends – as has been stated – on a complex interplay of numerous factors, not only musical. The notes written on the score, the instrumentation, the embellishments improvised 'on the spot', are all important factors; equally fundamental is the positioning of the choral groups in relation to the liturgical and ceremonial requirements of the day, and in relation to the architectural space in question and – by no means least – to the specific features of the composition. In short, singers need to consider cause and effect of the architectural features of the performance space and the predetermined stratagems, different for every space, every composition and – if possible – every single performance, required for ideal results.

*Translated by Gillian Forlivesi
Heywood, Italy/UK*



Figure 5: Giovanni Antonio Canal, *Celebration of the Easter Mass in St Mark's*, pen and ink drawing, 1766 (Hamburg, Kunsthalle)



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CONDUCTING THE SCORE

Part One: The Drama of Conducting

TIM SHARP

Choral Conductor, Executive Director of the American Choral Directors Association

WHEN WE THINK OF A STAGED DRAMA, WHETHER A PLAY, OPERA, OR MUSICAL, CERTAIN ELEMENTS COME TO MIND. ACTORS, STAGE, CURTAINS, SCRIPT, DIRECTOR — ALL ARE FAMILIAR IN A LIST OF DRAMATIC TERMINOLOGY.

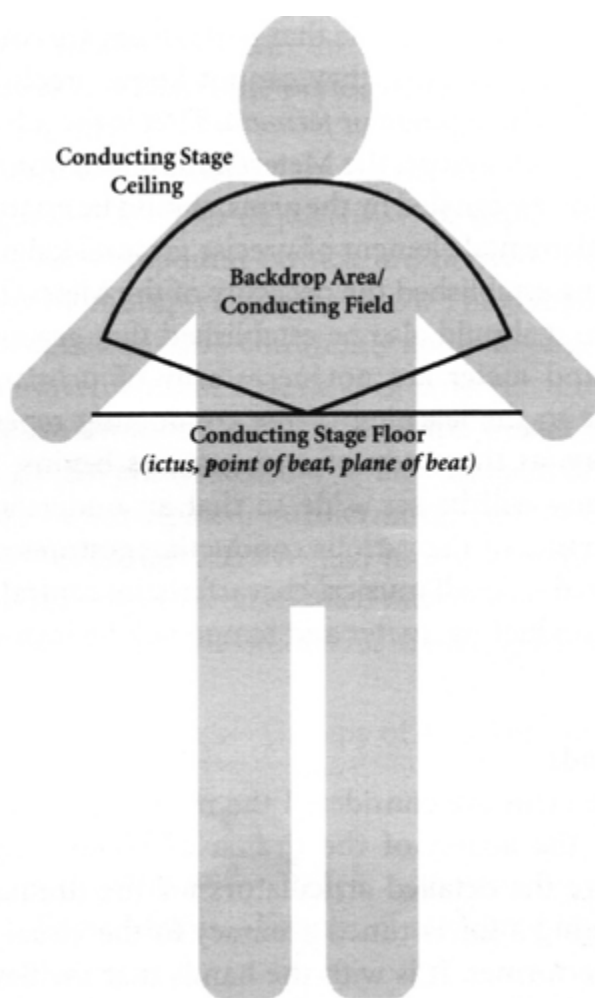
More specifically, if we think of a stage, we think of stage directions such as up stage, down stage, stage left, and stage right. We think of off-stage areas such as the wings and the orchestra pit. Furthermore, we think of actors working against a backdrop, using and interpreting a script, and presenting the results to an audience.

Many of these elements also apply to the conductor, who works on a virtual stage and can use the dramatic stage as an excellent frame of understanding for studying the gestural language of the conducting art.

Consider the dramatic gestural arenas of the conductor. The conductor's arms, hands, fingers, head, face and, indeed, the conductor's own body "act" with beat patterns and gestures of musicality. All are placed against a backdrop of the trunk of the body. Further, these elements are presented on an imaginary stage, variously described as the plane of *beat*, *point of beat*, and *ictus*. Each refers to the imaginary stage floor that serves as a platform for the gestures of the conductor as he or she silently works out the musical script of the score on this dramatic stage.

The conductor's body backdrop as well as the actors on the stage — the arms, hands, fingers, head, face, and entire body — each have subtle features and rules of operation and

perception that add precision to the drama of gestural language in very specific ways. Understanding these rules and practicing toward a precise conducting technique will improve the nonverbal communication that is an absolute must for the effective conductor.



Illustrated definition of 'Body Actors'

BODY ACTORS USED IN PRECISION CONDUCTING

The arm, as used in precision conducting, divides into upper arm, lower arm, elbow, hand, palm, and fingers. Each division has a place in the lexicon of dramatic gestural language.

The conductor's head, when used as a gestural tool, as well as the specific features of the face, all signal dramatic interpretive gestures. The forehead, eyebrows, and most effectively, one's eyes and mouth are strong tools to be used by the effective conductor.

The trunk of the body serves as the backdrop to conducting drama, but it also turns and adjusts in other ways to enhance the conductor's communication. The shoulders, overall posture, and general stance of the conductor, as individual elements and in combination, reflect a leadership attitude and send important signals to your musicians.

THE ARMS

The arms are the most visually prominent actors on the conducting stage. As such, they perform a significant primary function in the skill of conducting—indicating tempo and meter. In one way or another, many of the great composers, conductors, and performers have commented that if tempo is wrong in a musical work, everything will be wrong. If the conductor does not signal the correct tempo, there is no standard for the musicians to follow.

Conductors fear having their principal function reduced to merely marking time; a glorified metronome, if you will. This is not necessarily a pejorative role for the arms to play.

All of the prompting that must occur for effective conducting must occur within the framework of meter and tempo. Only the conductor signals precisely the changes that are to come from measure to measure. Although it is fair to assume that

performers are counting and listening for cues, they cannot know precisely the length of an *allargando* or *fermata*. That is the job of the conductor. Therefore, the meter/tempo function of the conductor, as signaled by the arms, should be established as a fundamental element of precise gestural language.

Having established the necessity of the meter/tempo function, it should also be established that gestures for tempo and meter are not necessarily of primary importance to the learning of the conducting repertoire. Therefore, as the study of arm gestures begins, meter and tempo will be set aside so that an understanding of the drama of the various conducting gestures can be considered. Like all musical characteristics central to effective conducting, meter and tempo will be introduced in time.

THE HANDS

If the arms are considered the most significant "actors" in the action of the drama of conducting, the hands are the detailed articulators for the drama. The hands bring a finely tuned accuracy to the visual focus of the performer. It is with the hands that the detail of the cutoff is executed, that interpretive musical characteristics in the initial preparation are signaled, and that various nuances and shadings are gestured throughout the performance.

Although a metronome can provide the basics of meter and tempo, there is no substitute for the role of musical leadership that one can achieve through the area of interpretation. The hands are the key to the subtleties needed to signal these interpretive gestures.

Because the hands are an extension of the arms, they will naturally perform in the meter/tempo function. Conversely, the arms are not disconnected from the interpretive function. The same may be said for the face, shoulders,

and entire body backdrop. All of these actors work in coordination with each other toward the final drama of performance.

THE BODY BACKDROP

In a conventional drama, action takes place before a backdrop that helps focus the attention of those watching the drama. In conducting, this function is served by the area of the body from the shoulders to the waistline. This area, more commonly called the trunk of the body, provides the neutral environment and focus necessary for the arms and hands to act out their conducting drama.

The purpose of the neutral environment on which the gestures are acted out is to bring clarity and focus to that which is being communicated by the hands and arms. The face is included in this backdrop, and can be utilized very effectively in the drama of gestural language.

Returning to the analogy of the stage, the acting does not take place off stage in areas such as the wings or the orchestral pit. For focus and therefore effectiveness, the acting takes place on stage. In fact, terms such as center stage, stage left, and stage right all refer to specific locations on stage where the central acting takes place. These specific geographical areas are used for maximum effectiveness in the course of a drama.

The stage analogy is quite appropriate for precision conducting. To achieve maximum visual effectiveness, the drama of gestural conducting is played out on stage. Gestures that are made without the benefit of the body backdrop lose focus for the performers.

In the broadest terms, strong and effective conducting takes place against the backdrop of a neutral body trunk. Weak and ineffective conducting takes place off this visual plane. Conductors that recognize the effectiveness of cen-

tered conducting and practice such conducting are more precise conductors.

THE LOWER BODY

The drama of gestural conducting is acted out on a stage, not below the stage. For the very practical reason that the dramatic action cannot be observed when the gestures occur below the waist, conducting is gestured at and above the waistline. This imaginary line forms the stage = floor level. Conventionally, this stage level has been termed the *point of beat*, *plane of beat*, or *ictus point*.

The lower body provides obvious support for the arms, hands, shoulders, and body backdrop. Along with the position of the back, shoulders and head, the lower body provides foundation for the conductor's overall posture. The ideal position for the lower body is for one foot to be placed slightly in front of the other as if walking, with the weight of the body distributed on both legs. This posture is the most comfortable conducting position, and it is also a more aggressive posture, conveying leadership and control to the performing ensemble. Such posture enhances the visual leadership role of the conductor. Above all, find balance, buoyancy and comfort in your role as conductor/leader.

THE HEAD AND FACE

Although the head has no backdrop, it is a feature of general focus for performers because of the prominent facial "actors." Also, because we generally focus eye to eye when we communicate verbally, the face is naturally a strong dramatic center. Within this area, the conductor's eyes are the most effective tool in the gestural language. They can be used to support entrances, preparations, and to interpret aspects of the music. Perhaps their most effective use is to signal cues to specific sections or soloists. The combination of eye contact to a cued section of a performing group along with a gesture from the arms and hands is extremely effective for entrances. The eyes can also affirm that a specific signal will be delivered to the appropriate soloist or section. Facial gestures can enhance the conducting gestures of the arms and hands, or they can remain neutral. It is even possible for them to detract from the gestural drama being acted out on the conductor's stage against the body backdrop. Be careful not to react in a negative way with your face. This distraction can preoccupy your ensemble's attention.

THREE FUNCTIONS OF CONDUCTING

The body actors used to execute precision conducting convey, in a nonverbal manner, the three functions found in the discipline of gestural conducting:

1. meter/tempo
2. interpretive
3. start/entrance - stop/cutoff

Each function is critically important for communicating precise conducting gestures to players and singers, and defines the role of the arms, the principal actors on the conductor's stage, as well as the hands and other body actors.

While the stereotype - even the cartoon image - of the conductor has his or her arms flapping in conducting patterns (the meter/tempo function), the true artist-conductor emerges as a result of exceptional gifts in the interpretive function of conducting.

THE METER/TEMPO FUNCTION - AN OVERVIEW

By definition, music is sound organized in time. Although the organization of music has changed over the centuries, it has always relied on the meter and tempo inherent in all music.

Early music was metered by note values as they related to rhythmic modes. Common practice and oral tradition, as well as verbal indications in the score, determined tempo as did theoretical treatises, which chronicled performance practices through the ages.

By the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, meter and tempo indications were clearly written in the musical score. This practice of organizing the musical score with measures and bar lines continued through the Classical and Romantic periods and much of the twentieth century.

Traditionally, meters are straightforward and can be categorized as either duple (twos) or triple (threes) and simple or compound (which are derived from simple meters by multiplying them by 3). The tempo and meter designations also commonly apply to large sections, even movements, of a work. It is, however, the nature of composition to use meter and tempo to add variety, so changes are always possible at any moment and should always be anticipated. Furthermore, twentieth-century music has brought us irregular meters as well as the frequent mixing of meters (called *multimeter*).

Specific meter classifications are outlined below:

1. Duple meters - groups of two and multiples of two.
 - simple - 2/2, 2/4, 2/8
 - compound - 6/2, 6/4, 6/8
2. Triple meters - groups of three and multiples of three.
 - simple - 3/2, 3/4, 3/8
 - compound-9/4, 9/8
3. Quadruple meters - groups of four and multiples of four (which are sometimes included with duple meters).
 - simple - 4/2, 4/4, 4/8
 - compound-12/2, 12/4, 12/8, 12/16
4. Irregular meters - Those not evenly divisible into groups of 2s or 3s. Examples include 5/4, 5/8 and 7/8. These meters are normally treated as some combination of 2s and 3s. For example 5/4 = 2/4+3/4 or 3/4+2/4; 7/8 = 2/8+3/8+2/8 or 3/8+2/8+2/8, etc.

Other elements that impact the meter/tempo function are those that suspend time in a composition, including

the *fermata* (or hold), *tenuto* and *allargando*. Although the handling of these elements is an interpretive matter, accomplishing them technically is considered part of the meter/tempo function.

RIGHT AND LEFT ARMS

Tradition asserts that the right arm is used to signal the meter/tempo function, leaving the left arm for the interpretive functions, including phrasing, dynamics, dynamic shadings, and sustaining gestures.

This is not to suggest that the arms function separately from one another. Rather, the conductor must develop the ability to coordinate all of the functions of conducting between arms, hands, fingers, head, face, and body. Furthermore, every aspect of the interpretive function must exist within the gestures used in the meter/tempo function. For example, a four-beat pattern is conducted within the framework of *staccato*, *legato*, etc; dynamic shadings are indicated in the size of the meter/tempo gesture, as well as through the gestures of the non-meter/tempo arm.

THE INTERPRETIVE FUNCTION— AN OVERVIEW

Music is an audible expression of a composer's emotions and thoughts organized into musical sounds. While these organized sounds are incapable of conveying concrete meaning, they are nevertheless expressive. It is the task of the conductor to accurately interpret and convey to an audience the musical intentions of the composer to the best of his or her ability. This calls on the conductor to attempt to enter the mind of the composer, the spirit of the text, or the message of the music.

Accomplishing this task encompasses every aspect of the musical score: meter, tempo, dynamics, phrasing, character, and so on. It includes everything from solo lines to full-ensemble passages. Every dimension of the score is under the

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A composite of images of Alan Gilbert, music director of the New York Philharmonic, as recorded by computer in a motion-capture sequence.

scrutiny and interpretation of the conductor. And while the challenge of meter and tempo is no small task, it is not nearly the challenge that the emotional elements of dynamics, phrasing and other interpretive characteristics present.

The indications given in the musical score provide some assistance to the conductor, but not only are they absent at times, there is a great deal in the music that is not indicated. Therefore, it is the task of the conductor to interpret the information that is available and put it towards an accurate performance. This is an enormous task and leadership responsibility.

The interpretive function includes a long list of musical considerations, as illustrated by this list of just some of the interpretive challenges placed upon the conductor: *forte*, *piano*, *mezzo piano*, *accelerando*, *sforzando*, *ritardando*, *legato*, *marcato*, *staccato*, and *tenuto*. Notice that meter/tempo terms such as *accelerando* and *ritardando* are included, as they are subject to the interpretive function of conducting as well. Also, terms such as *con fuoco*, *passione* and *giocoso* call upon a conductor's interpretive skills.

The left arm is responsible for the interpretive function of conducting. However, the right arm, face, hands and all of the gestural tools of conducting help reflect the interpretive character of music. Even the meter/tempo function operates with sensitivity toward the interpretation of the musical score.

In general, the interpretive function is conveyed through degrees of *legato* and *non-legato* gestures—*molto legato*, *legato*, *marcato*, *accented*, *staccato* (to name a few). These are designated by horizontal and vertical lines or organized by circles, arcs, angles, and stops, and set apart by the unique characteristics of a conductor's individual style.

THE START/ENTRANCE - STOP/CUTOFF FUNCTION - AN OVERVIEW

Starting and stopping a piece of music can be taken for granted by some, but no conductor can afford to take this function lightly. It is a short moment, to be sure, but it is a critical moment. While music notation seems to clearly designate issues such as entrances and exits, there is still room for disagreement. The performing forces depend upon the conductor for precise entrances and cutoffs, and it is the role of the conductor to provide such clarity for the ensemble.

The cue for starting a musical work may seem as simple as lifting the hand or baton. However, the preparation gesture must firmly establish interpretive elements such as meter and tempo, and the character of the very first note. These issues must be firmly settled in the mind of the conductor before the first beat's preparation is signaled.

A similar responsibility is that of starting individual soloists and sections of musicians through cueing.

Even virtuoso musicians depend on the conductor to confirm entrances because it helps to guarantee a precise and inspired performance. Stopping a musical work may seem as easy as ceasing all conducting gestures, but unless the desired concluding moment is clearly gestured to all performers, a precise cutoff will not be accomplished. The same is true for any internal stops.

The hands are the most precise tool for the start/entrance and stop/cutoff function, but it can be signaled by any of the gestural tools at the command of the conductor. In particular, facial features can be great reinforcement and should be used intentionally to strengthen these gestures.

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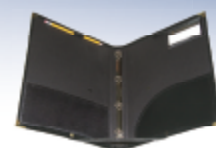
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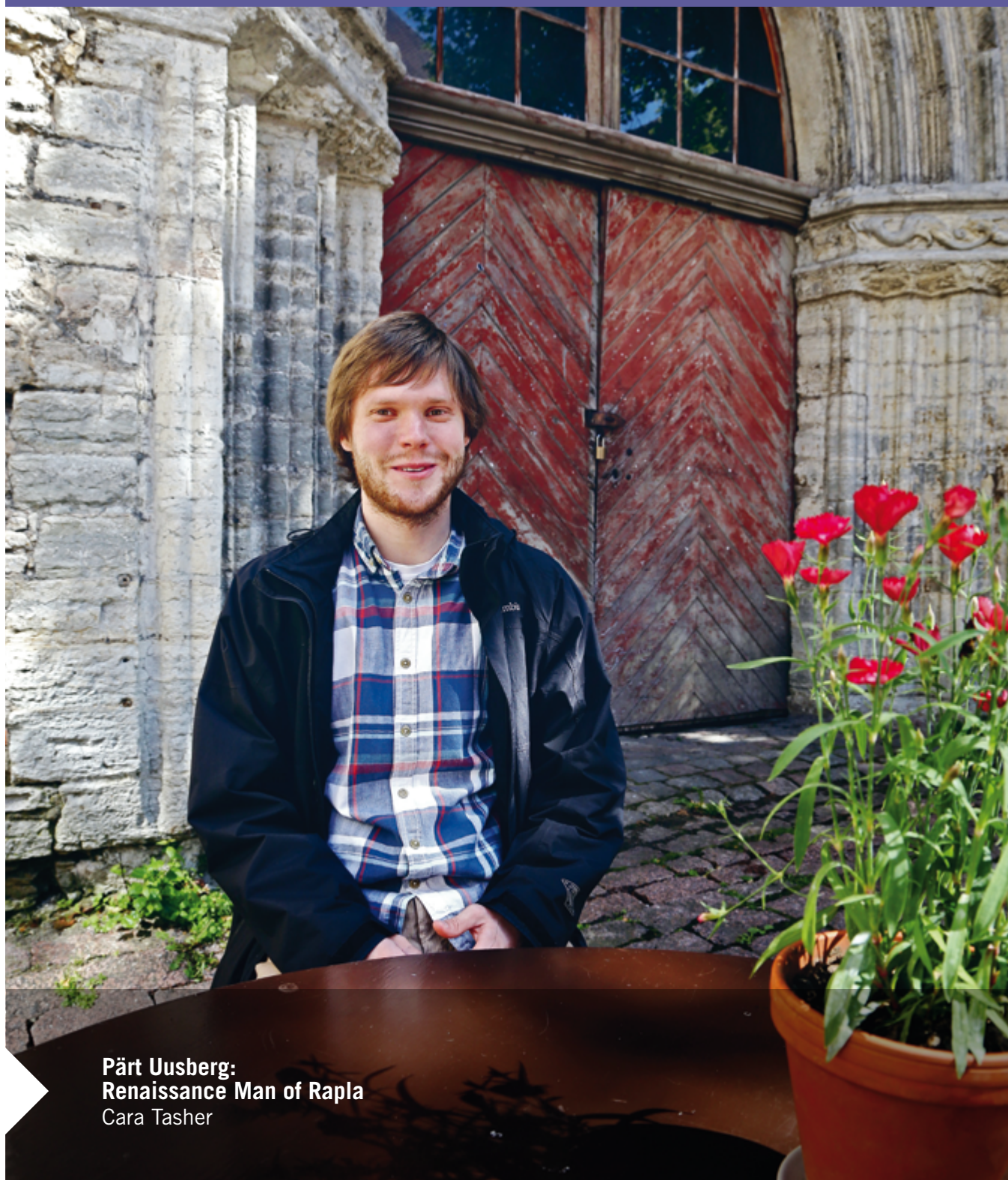
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COMPOSER'S CORNER

COMPOSER'S CORNER



Pärt Uusberg:
Renaissance Man of Rapla
Cara Tasher

PÄRT UUSBERG: RENAISSANCE MAN OF RAPLA

CARA TASHER

conductor and teacher

DESPITE HIS VERY BUSY CALENDAR AND RIGOROUS COMPOSING REGIMEN, PÄRT UUSBERG AND I CORRESPONDED VIA EMAIL TOGETHER, JUST A FEW WEEKS SHY OF HIS THIRTIETH BIRTHDAY ON DECEMBER 16TH. IN 2014, MY UNF CHAMBER SINGERS FELL IN LOVE WITH HIS PIECE *SIIS VAIKIVAD KÕIK MÕTTED* AND THEN RECORDED HIS BETTER-KNOWN *MUUSIKA*. THESE TWO STUNNING WORKS DREW MY INTEREST TO ENQUIRE MORE DEEPLY INTO THE COMPOSER, HIS LIFE, AND HIS WORKS.

Many people think of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania together as the Baltic choral giants. Are there any salient features that you can identify as more specifically "Estonian" in regard to choral music?

I must admit that I am mainly more familiar with Estonian choral music, and of course I know a bit Latvian and Lithuanian music, but have not got too deeply into those yet. If there is ever something really unique in any nation's music, it's the folksong. In this case, it stems from a tradition that is over a thousand years old. I personally feel very close to the Estonian folksong, *regilaul*, on which one of our most famous composers Veljo Tormis has based many beautiful arrangements. I have also used Estonian folksongs in some of my compositions. Recently I have been living and studying in Lithuania and have become more familiar with the old Lithuanian folksongs *sutartines*. As I have been listening to Lithuanian music so much, I feel that many Lithuanian composers have been influenced by *sutartines*. I have also had the opportunity here to attend a specialised class for foreign students where together we sang through many different *sutartines*. Through the study of these *sutartines*, it is interesting to notice that there is something similar to *regilaul*, but also something which makes it particularly Lithuanian; it's even difficult to put it into words. Having experienced living here and at the same time having had many opportunities to sing *sutartines*, it seems to me evident that they go somehow together with that land. And I think, that probably singing and listening to Estonian *regilaul* over a significant length of time in Estonia would also help a foreigner deepen the understanding of our culture and more fully understand Estonia through its music.

*What was it like to conduct 10,000 people on your piece *Muusika* in the open air? (And, congratulations on yet another of your pieces being chosen for the next Youth Song Festival for 25,000 singers!) Please tell us more about the Summer Song Festivals.*

It was a very interesting experience for me. I must admit that it was rather more a dream than a reality, not in the sense that I have been dreaming of conducting in a Song Festival - actually I haven't, more in the sense that in the moment itself, those two and a half minutes were rather dreamlike. Somehow time stopped, but also, just after finishing conducting, I felt like it all had lasted for only 10 seconds so it was kind of a paradoxical experience in the case of perceiving time. I have not experienced something like that since then.

Laulupidu, the song festival, has been very close to my soul since I was a baby. My mum is a choral conductor and I have been attending song festivals since I was in her womb. I must admit that when I was a child and youngster, my love for the song festival was unconditional. Back then I did not know much about the festival, how it is organised and I also did not note the differences between the amateur choirs and orchestras and the professional ones. I truly loved the atmosphere of *Laulupidu* and I greatly enjoyed singing there together with thousands of singers. Nowadays I experience it a bit differently. Although I was aware that, by delving too deeply into the study of music, many people lose their childlike astonishment of the art, I decided to study music professionally. Dealing with music every day changes your sense and understanding of music. I still love the atmosphere of the song festival, but musically I enjoy a Sibelius or Brahms symphony more than a 2-3 minute *a cappella* song written for an amateur choir and performed outdoors (and nowadays supported with sound amplification). Of course it is still a magical moment when 25,000 people sing together, but that is not even so much about the music, it is something more... and I am very happy that this kind of tradition lives on in Estonia!

Describe your compositional process.

In a way I think that maybe it is not good idea to talk too much about writing music. The beauty of composition is that you are really alone with yourself, meeting your soul and I would not like to put it into words. Of course, I could still talk about more practical things. For example, it has been very important to me to write music every day (excluding holidays, of course) ever since I had my first composition lesson with my teacher Tõnu Kõrvits, who told me: "Why do you think, that you are different from a pianist or a violinist, who has to practice his/her instrument every day?" I appreciated his lesson and I have tried to maintain a disciplined routine. I still have some periods where I do not write at all, and during the summer I have often gone for quite a long period without writing any music. I need that to kind of digest everything I have collected in my brain, and to kind of forget it. Then I return to composing after the break maybe more fresh and open minded. When I write regularly, I try to work about 3-4 hours every morning. Of course, that kind of practice has come into my life since I have started to identify myself more professionally as a composer. I started composing actually before studying composition, and back then I did not write every day; I did it more for fun, and when I had time. Now I have commissions and deadlines, so I need to plan my time quite strictly. I must admit, that in a way I miss the freedom of composing what I want when I want, but I also feel that, by writing more routinely, my commissions are improving. Maybe some day the freedom will come back, and then I will have even more knowledge and experience to express my feelings and thoughts in music.

Based on the films that you have acted in or composed scores for, it seems that you have an interest in social justice and addressing current issues through film. Describe some ways in which you have programmed, composed or performed music that brings these to light in the choral art form.

The truth is, that I did not choose the topics of the films that I have been connected with. When I was a youngster I also dealt with theatre a bit and because of that I had a possibility to act in a movie. I must admit that I even did not like the topic of the movie which I acted in (*Klass*) very much. The music that I have written for films has always been commissioned. Of course, it is very sad that there are kind of silly things in our world like school violence or deportation, but in art, I believe more in beauty. I think that there are different artistic figures – the ones, who are fonder of innovation and are also sometimes fond of being socially active as an artist. And there is another type of creative person, more conservative and not too socially active as an artist. I am for sure the second one. For me, writing music is more of a possibility to communicate with eternity – to leave my message. And what is the message? It is just the way I sense and love music and, through it, the world. Music for me is the most beautiful part of eternity. It just is eternal and we are not, and there is nothing we can do about it. So through music, I can communicate with souls who have already left here 500 years ago. Singing or listening to old music gives the possibility to kind of feel time and its live energy that was written down on notepaper long ago. So, being involved in music makes us immortal and opens a larger space of communication.

What is your dream commission?

My dream is actually not to write commissions at all ☺. My dream is to be free to write what I want whenever I want and to take as much time as I like to complete it. Writing a commission and musically exploring an idea that comes freely to my mind are to very different feelings. I do not know why, but it has been my life-long dream to write a symphony. That is why I decided to study classical composition. I do not yet know if I am able to write one, and another question is what kind of symphonic piece could you call "a symphony" nowadays? But I hope that one day there will be a performance of my symphony J. Also, I would like to write at least one opera and a Requiem.

Do you have advice for other aspiring composers?

I would like to quote my teacher Tõnu Kõrvits: "Every composer has his/her own song to sing, just sing yours!" He also said that it is important to serve the music, and that is why he believes it is important to write music every day! I agree with him and respect these two points a lot.

I know you are headed soon to study conducting in Vilnius with Vytautas Miškinis, please describe your journey until now.

I was born in a little town called Rapla (circa 6000 inhabitants). I studied in an ordinary high school there, but I had a lot of interesting optional after school activities: studying the trumpet in the children's music school, singing in my mum's choir (*Riinimanda*), and I was involved in the school theatre. I was also active in sports and was a national champion in both pole vault and discus (although Rapla is very small and those events were not the most popular ⚡)! Later, I played volleyball. My love for choral music began while singing in my mum's choir, where I felt a lot of warm feelings. I loved choir camps and even ordinary choir rehearsals made me excited. Many of my lasting friends sang in that choir, and now some of them sing in my chamber choir that I created in 2008 (*Head Ööd, Vend*).

Private trumpet lessons with Aigar Kostabi were also very important to me because they showed me the way to professional music. Actually, at first, I wanted to become a trumpeter, but I was not very successful due to my high levels of performing anxiety. In 2005, my life changed significantly when I moved to Tallinn and started studying choral conducting with Heli Jürgenson at Georg Ots Music School. Since then I have been dealing with music as part of my every day routine, for almost ten years. After finishing Georg Ots Music School as a choir conductor, I decided to continue my studies in composition at the Estonian Music and Theatre Academy with Tõnu Kõrvits. I still divide myself between being a composer and a conductor and it has been difficult to decide if that is a good idea. I think that there are pluses to doing both, but they each take a lot of time, and if to want to go more deeply into one, it makes it a bit difficult doing both. Currently, my number one activity is composing, but conducting provides some variety. Also, conducting my own music makes it easier to express my compositional intention, so that is probably the main reason why I continue conducting.

Edited by Mirella Biagi, UK/Italy



Pärt Uusberg and Arvo Pärt



PÄRT UUSBERG (1986) is an Estonian composer and choral conductor. He graduated as a conductor from the class of Heli Jürgenson at the Tallinn Georg Ots Music School in 2009. In 2014 he completed a degree in composition with Tõnu Kõrvits at the Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre. Always an active choral singer, Pärt began in the Riinimanda children and youth choirs conducted by his mother Urve Uusberg. Throughout the years he has also sung in the Estonian Youth Mixed Choir (Taavi Esko and Kadri Leppoja), Voces Musicales (Risto Joost), and World Youth Choir (Ragnar Rasmussen and Josep Vila i Casanas). In 2008 Pärt created his own chamber choir **Head Ööd, Vend (Good Night, Brother)**, which has become known for beautiful church concerts as well as successful performances at choral competitions. Pärt has also been working with the Estonian Youth Mixed Choir and Mitte-Riinimanda Youth Choir. Several of Pärt's choral compositions have already become popular and have acquired critical acclaim. **Head Ööd, Vend** has also recorded a CD with his compositions that is available on <http://www.emic.ee/>



Shaped by meaningful and life-changing experiences within organisations such as the Atlanta Symphony Chorus, Chicago Symphony Chorus, Conspirare, Glen Ellyn Children's Chorus, Trinity Choir-Wall Street and the Young People's Chorus of New York City, **CARA TASHER** completed her studies at the University of Cincinnati-CCM, the University of Texas at Austin, La Sorbonne, and Northwestern University. Her calendar includes concerts, guest performances in festivals and workshops, and preparation of professional organisations throughout the US and abroad, this year also with the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra Chorus. Her ensembles have toured five countries and added South Africa in an exchange with Junita van Dijk's NMMU chorus in May 2012. She is based in Jacksonville, where she serves as Director of Choral Activities at the University of North Florida, and recently appeared conducting the opening of the Florida 2012 Republican National Debate live on CNN. Email: ctasher@gmail.com

COMPOSER'S CORNER

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**Canons from the Heart: A
closer look at the counter-
point of Abbie Betinis**
Peter Steenblik

CANONS FROM THE HEART: A CLOSER LOOK AT THE COUNTERPOINT OF ABBIE BETINIS

PETER STEENBLIK

choral conductor and teacher

ABBIE BURT BETINIS (B. 1980) IS ONE OF THE LEADING COMPOSERS OF 21ST-CENTURY AMERICAN CHORAL MUSIC. AT ONLY 36 YEARS OLD, HER COMPOSITIONAL OUTPUT IS WIDE AND VARIED. IT IS CLEAR THAT BETINIS IS NOW CREATING HER OWN DISTINCT AND SECURE PLACE IN THE CHORAL REPERTOIRE, AN OBSERVATION HIGHLIGHTED IN A 2009 ISSUE OF *INTERNATIONAL CHORAL BULLETIN* DEDICATED TO THE WORK OF YOUNG PEOPLE¹.

A two-time McKnight Artist Fellow, Betinis is Adjunct Professor of Composition at Concordia University-St. Paul, is composer-in-residence for The Schubert Club (a post she has held for 12 seasons), and has a catalogue spanning over 60 commissioned works. *The New York Times* describes her music as “inventive [and] richly melodic.”² Matthew Culloton, director of *The Singers*, an internationally renowned choral ensemble in Minnesota, has said, “the music of Betinis... is worthy of consideration because of its originality, degree of compositional craft, and musical sincerity.” She is no longer an “emerging” composer, but one whose career now belongs to the same tradition as Dominick Argento, Stephen Paulus, and Libby Larsen.³

Betinis was raised by a musical family in Amherst Junction, Wisconsin—situated amidst farms and forests about 20 miles southeast of Stevens Point.⁴ At the age of three, while singing a canon in the car with her family, she proudly held her own part—an event that is fondly remembered as a “coming-of-age” experience in a family abounding in musical tradition.⁵

Partly due to this upbringing, one compositional technique of which Betinis is very fond, and which affects most of her repertoire, is canon. The inclusion of canonic devices forms a deep connection between Betinis’s very soul and the music she composes. Of one of her compositions she has said:

“I love singing [canons] so much I apparently write them in my sleep! I woke up with this one in my head one morning, as the sun streamed into my window on a bright fall day.”⁶

Her published catalogue includes five stand-alone canons: *Be Like the Bird* (5-part, 2009), *Come In, Come In!* (4-part, 2011), *Lumen* (up to 4-part, 2012), *Morning Round* (4-part, 2013), and *Table Grace* (up to 8-part, 2007). At first glance her canons are quite simple, but further inspection will reveal something more complex; such canons can serve as surprisingly moving concert pieces. She encourages performers to explore alternative performance designs. One such canon, for example, comes with an assortment of suggested maps. Some direct singers to begin two measures apart—as one would perform *Row, Row, Row Your Boat*. Others allow the piece to build from unison to 3-part, to 5-part. Additional recommended maps indicate measures of rest that create a product more akin to Steve Reich’s *Phase Patterns* than what one might expect from a traditional round. In the hands of Betinis, a canon is a much more complex and aurally stimulating art form.

In a related discussion, Betinis has acknowledged the canon as a source of strength amidst significant trial. Although

1 Shekela Wanyama, “Nothing Off-Limits: An interview with composer Abbie Betinis,” *International Choral Bulletin* 28:2 (2009).

2 Allan Kozinn, “Romanticism, Tone Paintings and Modern Takes on Folk Tunes,” *The New York Times*, May 27, 2011

<http://www.nytimes.com/>.

3 Michael Culloton, “Jocelyn Hagen and Timothy Takach: An Introduction to Their Choral Music and a Study of Their Positions Within a Lineage of Minnesota-Based Composers” (DMA diss., North Dakota State University, 2013), 79, 96-97, ProQuest (AAT 3557360).

4 Stanley H. Rothrock, II, “The Choral Music of Abbie Betinis: A Prospectus of the Composer’s Output Through December 31, 2008” (DMA diss., University of Minnesota, 2009), 3, Unpublished.

5 Abbie Betinis, e-mail message to the author, June 12, 2015.

6 Abbie Betinis, *Morning Round*, (Abbie Betinis Music Co.: Saint Paul, 2013).

young, she has survived three bouts of Hodgkin's lymphoma over the past 19 years, ultimately leading to a complete bone-marrow transplant in 2010. It was during this time that she wrote *Be Like the Bird*, a round based on the Victor Hugo text "Be like the bird that, pausing in her flight awhile on boughs too slight, feels them give way beneath her – and sings – knowing she hath wings." Her grandfather was a minister; she found the text couched in one of his sermons after his passing. Of the circumstances surrounding this composition, she writes:

"A canon is a melody that is its OWN harmony. You can't sing a canon by yourself (live, anyway) and hear all of its harmonies. You need to sing it with other people to really hear how the melody creates its own support system of pitches and rhythms. I thought that was the perfect metaphor for getting through rough times. I think we each have our own melody in this life, something unique to us that we can offer the world – but sometimes that melody is hard to hear when life gets hard. Sometimes we need our friends to come in, one at a time, and sing that melody too, so we can hear how strong it is and it can lift us up. Or – like the words say – it can give us wings.

"I didn't know that I was going to need *Be Like the Bird* so much myself when I wrote it. A few friends came over to my house and we were singing around the piano and getting all the harmonies just right... We went to the local radio station the next morning and recorded it. Three months later I was diagnosed with cancer a third time. And that's when this melody became like a mantra to me... something I could sing whenever I felt afraid. I'm healthy now, but...when I'm by myself, I imagine all my friends coming in at their part and singing it with me."⁷

Betinis' use of canon does not stop at the five published examples, but can be observed in many of her works. For example, *Hail, Christmas Day!* (SSA or SATB, 2003) begins with a unison verse, progresses into a polyphonic section, then launches into a 3-part round. A coda brings the piece to a climactic finish. Similarly, *The World Made New: Eleanor Roosevelt's Evening Prayer* (SATB, 2012) ends in canon with the instruction given for singers to "choose your own adventure."⁸

Other works in Betinis' catalogue have less obvious examples of canon, but incorporate the form in large episodes. The first movement of *Carmina mei cordis* (SATB, 2004) includes a complex double canon. In this instance, the soprano and tenor lines present the same melody two beats apart; while alto and bass lines offer a counter-melody that begins on the intermittent beat (EXAMPLE 1). Extended canonic episodes can also be found in *Psalms 126: A Song of Ascents* (SATB, 2003), *Bar Xizam* (SATB, 2007), *Spell of the Elements* (SATB, 2007), *Chant for Great Compassion* (SSAA, 2008), and, most recently, Betinis' exquisite ACDA commission *A Blessing of Cranes* (SSAA, 2015) which sets the text "Never a thought of thinking, only this weaving..." and illustrates an elegant theme of communal healing.

One of Betinis' most powerful and well-known works is *From Behind the Caravan: Songs of Hâfez* (SSAA, 2007). Of this work, Betinis stated, "A canon is the perfect compositional technique for a lot of this poetry."⁹ In the second movement, for example, Betinis uses canon as a way to depart from the structure of the original *ghazal* text and prolong its poetic meaning as a four-voice canon occurs on the text *Qam ma-khor, ey del* (Suffer no grief, O heart). Betinis' compositional skill is most evident when, even in the middle of this canon, she incorporates a second level of departure. A nod to Sufi mysticism, the outer voices utilize a textless sigh, connecting themselves once again with the divine power, further deepening a level of grief, while all voices engage simultaneously in thematic material not part of the original canon (EXAMPLE 2). At this moment, it is clear that the choir empathetically wraps the listener in an aural blanket of comfort—soothing the grieving heart.

Obvious examples aside, canonic-like figures can be found in much of Betinis' repertoire. Such examples include: *Songs of Smaller Creatures* (SATB, 2005), *In the Bleak Midwinter* (SATB, 2006), and *The Mirthful Heart* (SSA, 2012). Furthermore, throughout her entire catalogue, one can observe a significant amount of voice-crossing—a side effect that stems from such immersive work in canon and canonic-like devices.

"I love manipulating voice-crossings in my melodic ideas.... Some of my most successful writing, I think, is just two-part counterpoint that leapfrogs, or three-part counterpoint that, in effect, braids itself across the page."¹⁰

7 Abbie Betinis, e-mail message to Jennah Delp, Artistic Director of iSing Silicon Valley, June 04, 2015.

8 Abbie Betinis, *The World Made New: Eleanor Roosevelt's Evening Prayer*, (Abbie Betinis Music Co.: Saint Paul, 2012).

9 Abbie Betinis, e-mail message to the author, June 12, 2015.

10 Debra Spurgeon, ed., *Conducting Women's Choirs* (Chicago: GIA Publications, 2012), 171.

Works by Betinis are rife with such instances. A conductor less familiar with Betinis' writing style might be tempted to ignore elements of voice crossing and, subsequently, make adjustments to the score. However, one must understand that Betinis' use of voice-crossing is highly intentional. While studying on scholarship at the *European American Musical Alliance* in Paris, France, Betinis developed a compositional vocabulary and distinct understanding of counterpoint that particularly affects her choices regarding voice leading techniques. It is displayed in a style of writing she learned there: single-voice counterpoint—the idea that an audience hears in stepwise motion, and that any break larger than a major second draws the listener's ear to the beginning of new melodic material. Composing in this manner results in frequent, intentional voice-crossings. Such crossings, while they may be considered awkward at first, are to be observed whenever possible. Betinis, a singer, is deftly conscious of vocal colors that result from tessitura and placement.¹¹

Concerning this issue, Dr. Elroy Friesen, Director of Choral Studies at the University of Manitoba and a conductor involved in early performances of Betinis' works, has said,

"A composer, especially like Abbie knows darn well what a first alto sounds like versus a second soprano in a typical choir. So, I just wouldn't ever mess with that. It's all a voice-leading thing. I don't see how adjustments would simplify [her writing]."¹²

With canons, canonic-like devices, and the side-effects of such practices replete throughout her repertoire, any singer or conductor approaching Betinis' music must understand the deeper meaning behind such mediums. Further discussion concerning the texts in each of these instances is also warranted. For now, suffice it to say that Betinis is an inventive composer whose use of canon is deliberate, often text driven, and always sincere.

Edited by Shanae Ennis-Melhado, UK



You need to sing a canon with other people to really hear how the melody creates its own support system of pitches and rhythms



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¹¹ Abbie Betinis, in-person interview with the author, February 26, 2015.

¹² Elroy Friesen, interview with the author, June 2, 2015.

Abbie Betinis - *Aeterna lux, divinitas* (from *Carmina mei cordis*)

41 *mp*

S/T canon

A/B canon

Al - le - lu, Al - le - lu - ia,
 Al - le - lu, Al - le - lu -
 Al - le - lu, Al -
 Al - le - lu,

44 *cresc poco a poco*

cresc poco a poco

Al - le - lu. Al - le - lu - ia! Al -
 - - ia, Al - le - lu. Al - le - lu - - - ia!
 le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu. Al - - - le - lu - ia!
 Al - le - lu - - - ia, Al - le - lu. Al - le - lu -

EXAMPLE 1 – *Carmina mei cordis*, measures 42-46. An example of double canon (continues through measure 53).

Start of 4-part canon

37 *mf*

S khor...! Qam ma - khor, Qam ma - khor, Qam ma - khor, ey

S khor...! Qam ma - khor, Qam ma - khor, Qam ma - khor,

A khor...! Qam ma - khor, Qam ma - khor, Qam ma - khor,

A khor...! Qam ma - khor, Qam ma - khor, Qam ma -

Vla *mf*

Drum *mf* *Ingraves, perhaps on this theme.*

Trans'n: Back to reason comes this distraught head... suffer no grief...

41 *ff* *f* *mf* *p* **11**

S del. Mal Qam ma - khor, ey

S ey del, Qam ma - khor, Qam ma - khor, ey

A ey del, Qam ma - khor, Qam ma - khor,

A khor, ey del, Mal Qam

Vla *ff*

Drum

Momentary departure

45 *p*

S del.

S del.

A ey del.

A ma - khor, ey del.

Vla *f*

Drum

Viola continues

EXAMPLE 2 – From *Behind the Caravan*, mvt. 2, measures 37-49. The most extensive episode of canon in the work.

REPERTOIRE



Handel's English Oratorios from
1736-1742

Jürgen Budday

HANDEL'S ENGLISH ORATORIOS

FROM 1736-1742

JÜRGEN BUDDAY

Choral Conductor and Artistic Director of the Marktoberdorf International Choral Festival

AFTER A FOUR-YEAR STAY IN ITALY, IN 1710 HANDEL RETURNED TO GERMANY, AND IN JUNE HE OBTAINED A POST AT THE COURT OF HANOVER. HOWEVER, AS EARLY AS BY THE END OF THE YEAR, HE YEARNED TO RETURN TO LONDON. AFTER A ONE-YEAR SOJOURN IN THAT KINGDOM HE BRIEFLY RETURNED TO HANOVER, ONLY - IN 1712 - TO MOVE TO LONDON FOR GOOD. APART FROM TRAVELS, HE REMAINED THERE TILL THE END OF HIS LIFE.

Thus Handel spent two thirds of his life in England, and we must not be surprised that his most important and most large-scale oratorios were written in England, among them three so-called odes and most of his 25 oratorios. It is these - in particular "Alexander's Feast" (ode), "Israel in Egypt", "Saul" and "Messiah" (all oratorios and all in print with the publisher Carus) - which are to be discussed here. Of course all these works were composed to English texts. The Carus editions offer an additional German translation.

The so-called **English oratorio** can be described as Handel's "invention". The genre is a blend of his experiences in Italy (including Italian opera), elements of the German Passion oratorio (like the Brockes Passion of 1719) and the English anthem. He primarily used texts from the Old Testament in which scenes from the history of the Israelites take centre stage, but which he often enriched and expanded by the inclusion of dramatic (sometimes additional) stories of personal relationships. But Handel was less concerned with the dramatic concept of the oratorio (after all they are not operas, and staged production was not - despite minor stage instructions in some scores - intended) but rather with the depiction of the solemnly elevated and of the expression of affects and emotions. Applied to the works already listed that means that the words of "Messiah" and "Israel in Egypt" were taken from the Bible very nearly verbatim, with "Saul" falling back on the Biblical source; it is only the libretto for "Alexander's Feast" that was written by Newburgh Hamilton, based on an ode by John Dryden. The words for the other three works were put together by Charles Jennens, who may well be described as the most important of Handel's librettists.

In the **chronology** of their creation and the first performances, the oratorios/ode referred to lie close together. "Alexander's Feast" is from 1738/39, Handel composed "Israel in Egypt" and "Saul" in the years 1738/39, and "Messiah" followed in 1741.42. It was a most fruitful period in Handel's creativity. Apart from the oratorio "L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato" (1740), during this period Handel composed a further eleven (!) operas, among them the one that is probably best known, "Serse" and, his last opera ever, "Deidamia" (1741).

We could expect this intense preoccupation with **opera** to have rubbed off onto the **oratorios**, but with "Messiah" and "Israel in Egypt", this is most certainly not the case. We find story-telling, descriptions, explanations and programmatical scenes laid out most vividly and with immense stylistic sensitivity ("Israel in Egypt"). "Messiah" makes the listener enter into the story of the life and suffering of Jesus, allowing us to participate with sympathy. It is particularly in the great songs of praise at the end of the oratorios that it becomes clear that everything is underpinned by God's power. "Messiah" and "Israel in Egypt" are the two among Handel's oratorios with the biggest share allocated to the choir; we would be justified in describing the latter as a veritable choral oratorio. Looking at Parts II and III ("Exodus" and "Moses' Song") which are usually performed, we find that of the 31 numbers 20 are for the choir. The remainder is made up of four brief recitatives and seven arias. Part I, the Funeral Anthem, consists exclusively of choral numbers.

"Saul" is quite a different matter. Here the choir's share amounts to less than a quarter of the whole piece. Recitatives and arias dominate in a work that is shaped by twelve (!) individual characters and thus is more closely related to the opera genre. Handel emphasises this fact even in superficial matters, by subdividing the work into acts and scenes. This applies even more strongly to Part II of "Alexander's Feast" with its truly dramatic perspectives.

As already hinted at - Handel was less concerned with the dramatic characterisation of individuals; rather, he employed most differentiated **musical affects** and subtle descriptions of **emotions**. He allows the listener to feel involved in the feelings of the **dramatis personae**. This, however, demands of the singers a high degree of sensitivity in relation to turns of phrases and rhetorical figures which need to be traced in the score. Nor do we find many dynamic

instructions, articulation marks are extremely rare, and relationships between words and music need to be uncovered. These matters, however, are the very things recognition of which is essential if we wish to understand the music, to throw light onto the plot and for the liveliness of the interpretation. This is where the difference will lie between the listener merely hearing sounds or feeling really grabbed by this music. The singer enjoys a large measure of interpretational liberty and thus at the same time bears a great responsibility for a performance that does the work justice. For a conductor this is a fascinating task and a challenge!

It is impossible to discuss all these situations in the works referred to - for this end nothing can replace careful scrutiny of the score. As prime examples, look at several numbers of Part II of "Messiah" or the description of the plagues in "Israel in Egypt"; Israel's song of sorrow about the deaths of Saul and of Jonathan in "Saul"; or the dirge in Part II of "Alexander's Feast" (Nos 7-10). This is really great, moving and emotional music that sweeps us away with it.

And now we approach another aspect of performance practice, one which is not without its problems: the question of the various **versions** and **arrangements**. "Alexander's Feast" alone boasts five versions (1736, 1737, 1739, 1742, 1751). Carus offers the original version of 1736 as well as the final one from 1751. The differences are not insignificant, and the decision as to which to choose needs to be carefully weighed up. Nevertheless we can work on the assumption that these different versions are not versions of the work, but adaptations to suit performance conditions, i.e. Handel adapted the pieces to local conditions - availability of instrumentalists, vocal soloists, quality of the choir, characteristics of the hall, degree of entertainment expected by the audience, etc) and thus tried



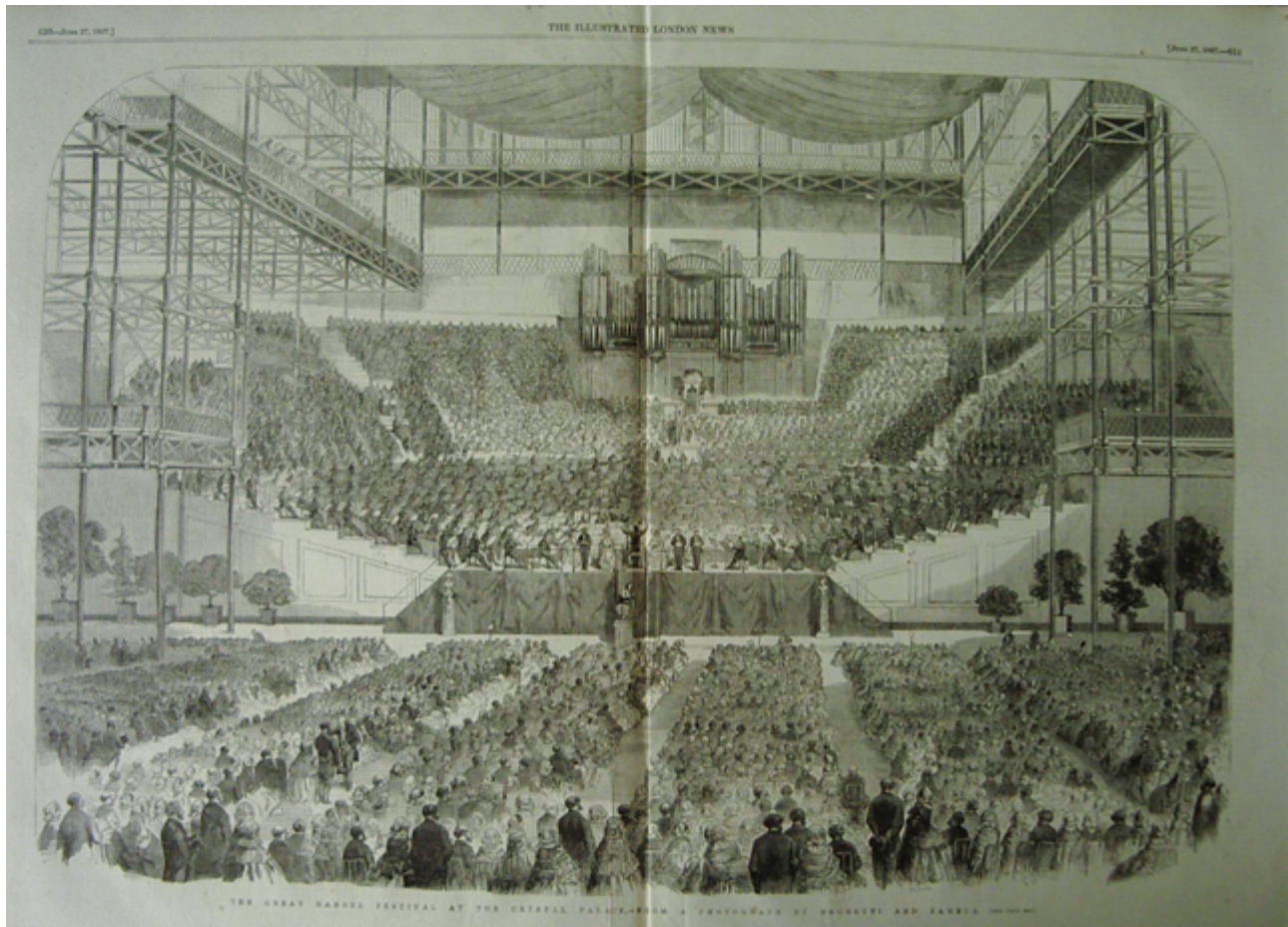
The Great Music Hall in Fishamble Street, Dublin, where Messiah was first performed

to optimise the conditions for a successful performance in this place. and on this occasion. Nevertheless I'd advise against mixing and matching the different versions!

"Messiah"; too, comes in five versions (1742 Dublin; 1743 London; 1745/49 London; 1750 London; 1754 "Foundling Hospital Version"), but we cannot go into these in detail here. In the new Carus edition all variants are given with a clear overview. Alternatives which Handel never performed himself are to be found in an appendix, so that conductors can make informed decisions as to their own performances. "Messiah" and "Alexander's Feast" are the oratorios/odes which were most enthusiastically received even in Handel's lifetime. They were widely known and responsible for Handel's success and fame. It is no coincidence that Mozart later chose those very pieces for a complete overhaul, clothing them in the gown of the classical orchestra.

The oratorio "Saul" experienced three different performing editions by the composer: 1738, 1739, 1741. The Carus edition follows the original version of 1738.

The oratorio "Israel in Egypt" is a special case. Although in our day usually only Parts II ("Exodus"; the story of the Israelites' escape from Egypt) and III ("Moses' Song"; a great song of praise to God) are performed, it nevertheless was originally an oratorio in three parts. It is interesting to note that Handel composed Part III first, then Part II. Only when these compositions had been completed did he decide to incorporate them into a three-part oratorio by prefacing Parts II and III with "The Ways of Zion do mourn" which



The Handel Festival at The Crystal Palace, London, 1857

expresses the sorrow of the Israelites about the death of Joseph (son of the Israelite Patriarch Jacob). In doing so he fell back on an earlier composition of his ("Funeral Anthem for Queen Caroline") which needed only minor adaptations. It was in this completeness that the three-part oratorio was heard in London in 1739/40. In the version of 1756-1758 the introductory funeral anthem was dropped in favour of movements from several others of his own oratorios. Thus the reception history of "Israel in Egypt" possesses two branches: on the one hand the oratorio in three parts, on the other only the actual departure from Egypt with Parts II and III. The funeral anthem (Part I) continues to enjoy a life of its own to this day. This fact is taken into account by the new Carus edition which publishes Part I separately and Parts II and III in their own volume. This greatly assists current performance practice.

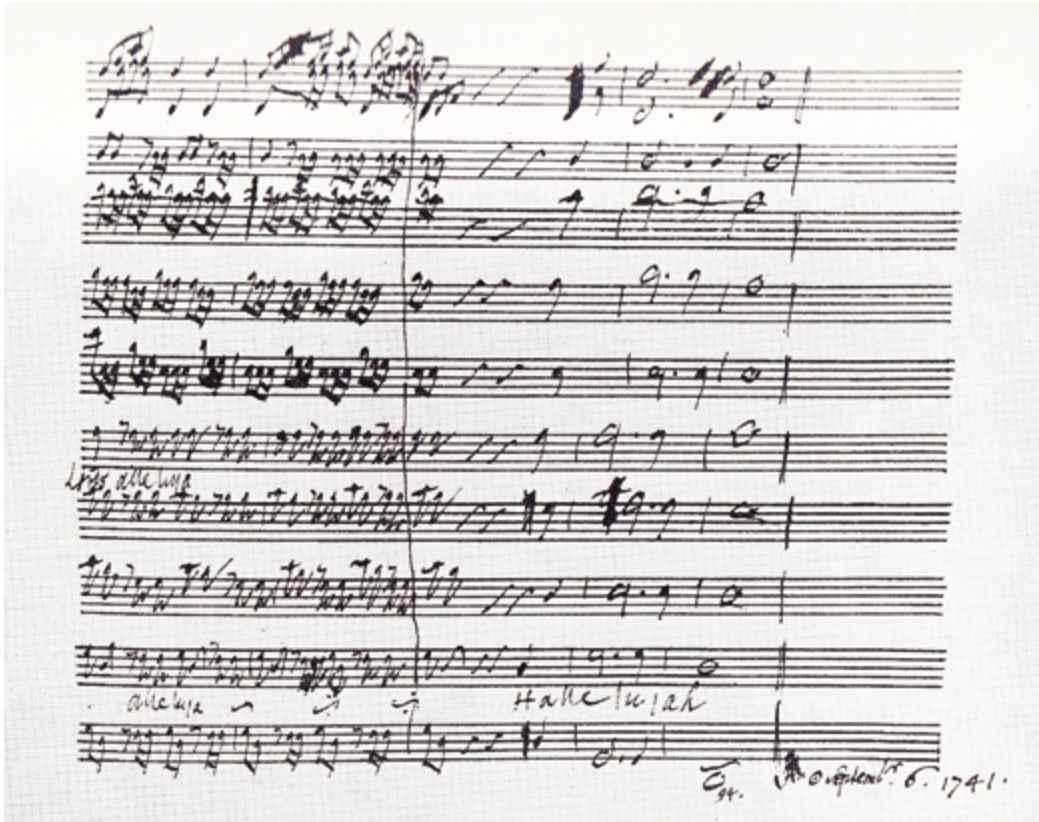
As far as **casting** goes, Handel displays huge variability. We can look upon the instrumental forces as used in "Messiah" as a kind of basic casting for Handel's oratorios: strings are joined by two oboes and two trumpets as well as timpani. Of course the bass part will be performed by cello and bassoon, and then there's a choir, sometimes in four parts, sometimes in five, and four soloists.

For "Israel in Egypt" the instrumental body gets expanded by two flutes and three trombones. The choir is split into eight parts as a double choir, and despite the fact that there's not that much for them to do, six vocal soloists are required.

"Alexander's Feast" boasts an opulent orchestral casting: two flutes and two oboes are joined by three bassoons, two horns, two trumpets and timpani, and the strings, too, are richly scored with three violin parts, two viola parts, one solo cello, ripieno celli and double bass. The choir on occasion splits into up to seven parts, and four soloists complete the whole set-up.

"Saul" turns out to be even more inventively scored. There are no fewer than twelve vocal solo parts (these could, however, be covered by just six singers if required). The orchestra matches that of "Israel in Egypt" but additionally demands a carillon and a harp as the finishing touch.

A basic remark concerning the casting of the **continuo** bass line: this can be varied to match musical conditions and the character and the affect of a piece. This applies to the bass line with cello or bassoon, possibly even bass viol



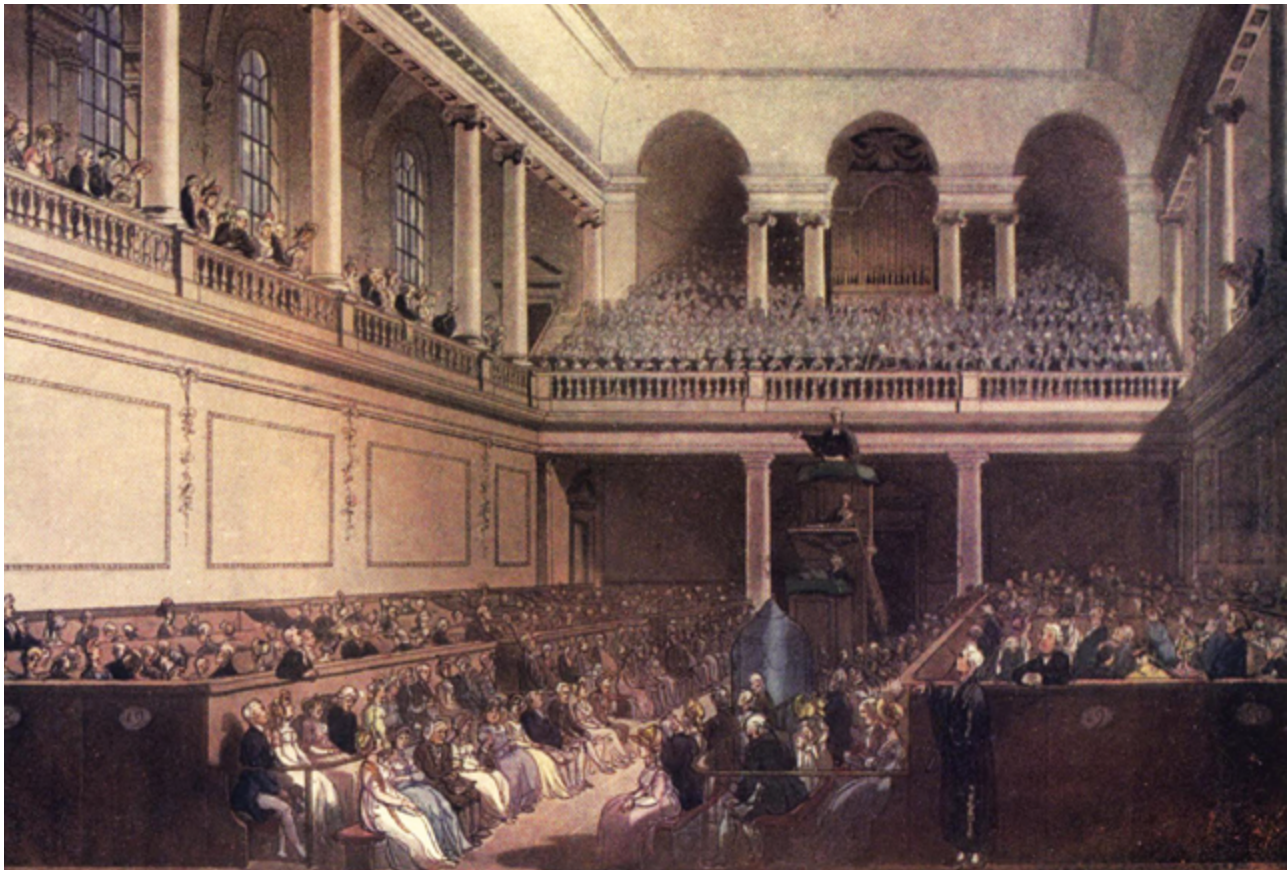
The final bars of the "Hallelujah" chorus, from Handel's manuscript (Scanned from *The Story of Handel's Messiah* by Watkins Shaw, published by Novello & Co Ltd, London 1963)

and double bass or violone, as well as the harmonic area with harpsichord, organ and theorbo or lute. The greater the variety of sound and the character of the instruments, the more lively and appropriate to the music the continuo can be shaped. This combination of instruments forms the basis of any performance and is capable of achieving an incredible effect just on its own.

The way the entire ensemble was arranged in the space available made a considerable impact on the resulting sound and differed considerably from continental practice in the 19th and 20th centuries. In this we should quote Hans Joachim Marx in his standard work "Händels Oratorien, Oden und Serenaten": at the centre of the stage [stood] the organ, to the left and to the right of which staging was erected in steps, as for an amphitheatre, i.e. in semicircles. This was for the seating of the instrumentalists. The harpsichord was probably placed in front of the organ, with the instruments of the continuo group (cello, double bass, theorbo etc) on both its right and its left. Behind this group, on the staging, the strings and most of the woodwind would be arranged, with the horns, trumpets, bassoons and timpani on the top steps. The choir would be positioned in front of the orchestra, and the vocal soloists would be sitting at the front edge of the stage, which would be protected with railings. Like for the performance of operas, a curtain would be attached to the proscenium arch, which would only be opened when the performance of the oratorio was about to begin ... The important difference between the English oratorio performances of the 18th and the continental ones of the 19th and 20th centuries is thus to be found in the placing of the vocal soloists and the choir in front of, rather than behind, the orchestra. The mere acoustics of this testify to the favouring of the voices above the instruments, something which fitted in with the aesthetic ideas of the time ... ¹ An arrangement worth considering for all musicians and managers whose spatial conditions would permit such an alternative!

Finally a few thoughts might be added in respect of **performance practice**. Of course every conductor must take the initial decision as to whether he will use modern instruments, maybe even in the Classical-Romantic tradition, or apply historically informed performance practice. If the interpretation as a whole is convincing, both options

1 Hans Joachim Marx: *Händels Oratorien, Oden und Serenaten*. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht p. xxvii



The chapel of the London's Foundling Hospital, the venue for regular charity performances of Messiah from 1750

can do Handel's music justice. Nevertheless the author will not conceal the fact that he is a fervent enthusiast of the historically informed performance practice. Particularly with Handel, the music can be presented in a more transparent manner, lighter, more colourfully, with more rhetorical relevance, more three-dimensionally, with more daring sounds, more virtuosically and simply in a way that speaks to us more clearly and in a more enlightening manner, if historically informed performance practice is consistently employed. For that, however, we need not only an instrumental ensemble that specialises in this area, but also a choir trained and experienced in Baroque performance practice as well as soloists who are really steeped in Baroque performance practice, in respect of the aesthetics of sound as well as in their vocal technique (coloraturas, diminutions!).

This is, however, a wide field that requires special study. Some hints in these directions can be found in the score of the "Messiah" in the Carus edition. Let me here restrict myself to referring to the relevant literature about Baroque performance practice.

Translated by Irene Auerbach, UK



JÜRGEN BUDDAY was, till 2016, artistic director and founder of the Maulbronn Chamber Choir and the music festival "Maulbronn Monastery Concerts". With the Maulbronn Chamber Choir he won several first prizes (among them at the 5th German Choral Competition in Regensburg). With the Maulbronn Chamber Choir and international star soloists, between 1994 and 2007, he performed a cycle of Handel's oratorios which was also recorded on CD. Regular activities as guest conductor, leader of workshops and jury member at home and abroad. 1998 high civic honour from the Federal Republic of Germany. Since 2002 Chair of the Choral Commission of the German Music Council and thus over-all direction and chair of the jury for the German Choral Competition. 2011: appointed Professor by the Prime Minister of the Federal State of Baden-Württemberg. 2013: award of the George-Frideric-Handel-Ring. 2014: artistic director of the International Chamber Choir Competition in Marktoberdorf. Freedom of the town of Maulbronn. www.jbudday.de. E-mail info@jbudday.de

CHORAL REVIEW

CHORAL REVIEW



Critic's Pick ... 1
Chor Leoni
Wandering Heart
T. J. Harper

Critic's Pick ... 2
Prayers and Poems
The ACJC Alumni Choir
Tobin Sparfeld

CRITIC'S PICK ... 1

CHOR LEONI, WANDERING HEART

T. J. HARPER

DMA, choral conductor and teacher

ERICK LICHTÉ, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

CHAN CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA (2016; 1:07:17)

[HTTPS://CHORLEONI.ORG/](https://chorleoni.org/)

Recorded in the stunning acoustic setting of Vancouver's Chan Centre for the Performing Arts with GRAMMY award-winning producer Steve Barnett, *Wandering Heart* is simply beautiful. This is the choir's first recording since 2011, and its first recording under the direction of Erick Lichte. Founded in 1992 by acclaimed conductor Diane Loomer the Chor Leoni Men's Choir, which is "known internationally and loved locally," is recognized as one of the world's foremost male vocal ensembles. Chor Leoni prides itself on its musical ambassadorship for Vancouver and Canada and has performed at major festivals and concert venues across Canada and the United States. Internationally, the choir has shared its music in Italy, Croatia, Bosnia, Germany, and the Czech Republic.

Erick Lichte has carved out a distinct niche in the vocal music world and concert life in North America. As a founding member, singer and artistic director of the male vocal ensemble Cantus, Lichte created and sustained one of only two full-time vocal ensembles in the United States. His work with Cantus garnered the 2009 Margaret Hillis Award for Choral Excellence, the highest honour for the professional choral organization Chorus America. As a choral conductor, Lichte has served as conductor for many professional, educational and amateur choral ensembles. In January of 2013, he began his tenure as Artistic Director of Chor Leoni Men's Choir. Lichte is an active clinician and guest conductor, and is especially passionate in his work to get young men singing. Lichte is a published composer and arranger, especially known for his writing in *All is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914* which has been taken on seven North American tours.

Stars (track #1) by Ēriks Ešēvalds with text by Sara Teasdale (1884-1933) is published by Musica Baltica. This is the male choir world premiere recording. Composer Ešēvalds recalls the inspiration for this work: "I remember being out in the country in my native town in Latvia to celebrate Christmas with my parents. After dinner, I went out to have a silent walk in the cold winter night and, in my 30 years, I was never as impressed by the view in the sky — the stars were so bright! I couldn't believe that in my youth I hadn't seen such a powerful sky-scape before. Now there was something very special speaking to me from the sky. I couldn't name it."

I Saw Eternity (track #2) by Paul Mealor with text by Henry Vaughan (1621-1695) from *The World* is published by Novello & Company, Ltd. "Henry Vaughan's poetry stands alongside the works of Donne and Herbert as metaphysically inclined and spiritually rich. Mealor sets the opening lines of Vaughan's poem 'The World' for male choir, soloists, wind chimes and soprano saxophone to create a dense but luminous texture. The choir's role provides not only a cosmic backdrop for the work but also a swelling one."

Wandering Heart (tracks #3-#5) by Ēriks Ešēvalds with text by Leonard Cohen (1934-2016) from *The Spice Box of Earth* is published by Musica Baltica and commissioned by Chor Leoni Men's Choir with funds from the Diane Loomer Commissioning Fund. This is the world premiere recording and stands as a testament to the lasting memory of singer, songwriter, poet, painter, Leonard Cohen. In Ešēvalds own words, "My cycle of three songs to words of Leonard Cohen has become, in the voices of Chor Leoni and through the hands of Erick Lichte, like a symphony with a true orchestral, multi-dimensional depth. *Wandering Heart* is a symphony where the instruments — the real Canadian singing men — have opened the books of their life-stories. We can hear pages from their childhoods, sweet memories, their first-love stories, their life-long dreams and their destinies."

Adspice Domine (Vespergesang: tracks #6-#9) Op. 121 by Felix Mendelssohn (1833, published posthumously in 1874). "The *Vespergesang*, Op. 121, is one of the few medium-scale works for male choral forces written by Mendelssohn and for this alone, *Wandering Heart* is well-worth the price of admission. Mendelssohn's score provides parts for only a four-part male chorus and a cello and double bass accompaniment. The work sets the liturgical texts of the Vespers

for the 21st Sunday after Trinity. The first and third movements feature Baroque-inspired imitative polyphonic textures. The very short second movement presents the prescribed plainchant from the liturgy, which Mendelssohn then develops and illuminates in the third movement. Finally, the dawn breaks through the darkness with the chorale-like setting of St. Ambrose's *O Lux Beata Trinitas*."

Even When He Is Silent (track #10) by Kim André Arnesen with text by an anonymous source is published by Walton Music. This is the male Choir world premiere recording. "This male choir premiere recording of *Even When He Is Silent* takes the composer's setting for female voices and lowers the pitches by a 7th. While most male choral works voice their chords in root position, this adaptation of an SSAA work features tight low harmonies in first and third inversions, which brings out both the darkness and the light of this anonymous 20th century text."

Sure on This Shining Night (track #11) by Morten Lauridsen with text by James Agee from Description of Elysium is published by Hal Leonard. This is a beautiful, thoughtful, and solid performance of a contemporary classic by America's composer laureate.

Yahrzeit (track #12) by Robert Moran with text by James Skofield is taken directly from the manuscript. This is the world premiere recording. "The text of *Yahrzeit* was written by James Skofield in memoriam to his 40-year-old partner, Michael, who died from AIDS. When his many



friends couldn't agree upon a time for his NYC memorial service, James commissioned me to write a work in his memory. *Yahrzeit* is the Jewish celebration, in any manner, of the departed person on the anniversary of his or her death. This could be a concert 'in memory,' a poem shared by all, a party, etc. and happens on that death date of that specific person. It is a lovely idea. I wish to have *Yahrzeit* as a musical reflection on "someone, something no longer with us....but just a memory."

Long Road (track #13) by Ēriks Ešenvalds with text by Paulīna Bārda (1890-1983) and translated by Elaine Singley Lloyd is published by Musica Baltica. Set for male choir and commissioned by Chor Leoni through the Diane Loomer Commissioning Fund. "Much of Paulīna Bārda's poetry speaks of loving him as does *Long Road*. When reading it, I felt for a moment that her memories of their past had become so real. There are not many words in the poem, so after the last word was said I turned the music into a soundscape or picture; painting one's eyes gazing towards the sky, searching for the star, and whispering the heart's prayer for the beloved one."

Edited by Eviano George, Mexico

Dr. T. J. HARPER is Chair, Department of Music, Associate Professor of Music, and Director of Choral Activities at Providence College in Providence, Rhode Island, USA. He is also the Director of the ACDA International Conductors Exchange Program. Email: harper.tj@gmail.com





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CRITIC'S PICK ... 2

THE ACJC ALUMNI CHOIR, PRAYERS AND POEMS VALARIE WILSON, CONDUCTOR (SINGAPORE)

TOBIN SPARFELD

choral conductor and teacher

The Anglo-Chinese Junior Choir has had a remarkable history of producing beautiful choral music since its inception in 1977. One would assume, therefore, that an Alumni Choir made up of continuing singers would also be impressive. This premise can be confirmed by hearing their most recent recording, *Prayers and Poems*.

The Anglo-Chinese Junior College is a Methodist two-year college founded in Singapore in 1977. Made up of just under 2000 students, its College Choir has served an important role as ambassador for the school, winning international competitions in Sweden, Finland, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia. The Alumni Choir is comprised of 37 singers who continue performing ambitious choral music after their time in the College Choir. Valarie Wilson, an alumnus of the Anglo-Chinese Junior College and King's College London, directs the ensemble.

In addition to its yearly concerts, competitions and tours, the Alumni Choir is also dedicated to commissioning and performing new music both by composers from Singapore as well as abroad. This new album features works by two contemporary composers, Eran Dinur and Kelly Tang. Dinur is an Israeli composer and visual effects artist based in New York. He has composed music for various instrumental and vocal ensembles including many theatre music compositions. Kelly Tang is a Singaporean composer whose orchestral works have been regularly performed by the Singapore Symphony Orchestra. While he is known more for his wind band and instrumental works, Tang has also composed music for several Singaporean choirs. All the works on the album have been composed within the last ten years.

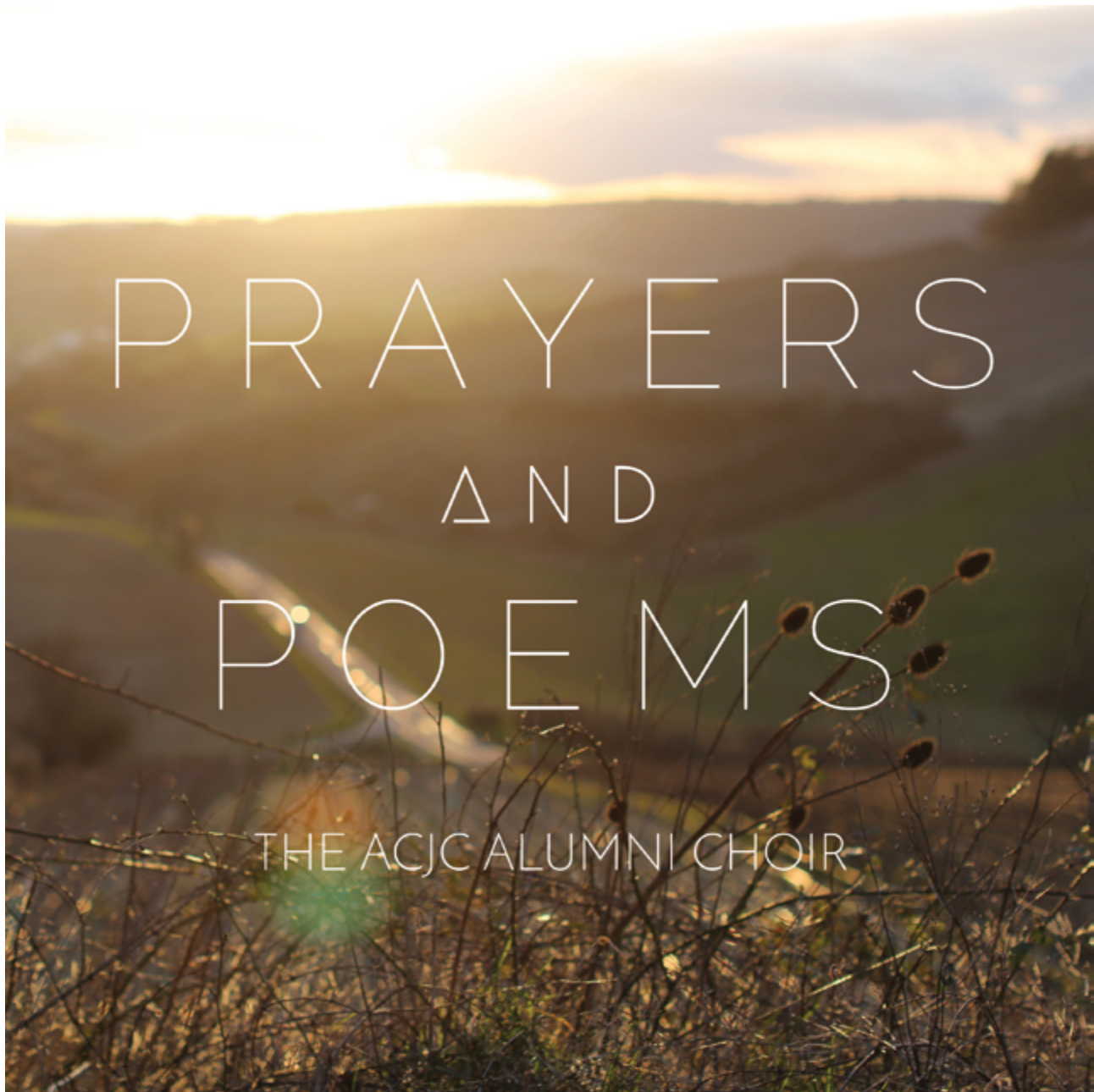
The album begins with two works by Eran Dinur which are Piyutim - Jewish liturgical poems chanted or recited during religious occasions. *Adon Haselighot* (God of

Forgiveness) is a fascinating work exploring man's petition for mercy. The work features a refrain in open harmonies with a melody of dotted rhythms in the minor mode that builds in intensity to a powerful climax. Brief solo exclamations highlight this spirited opener. It is contrasted by *Adon Olam*, a placid setting with ambiguous but not particularly dissonant harmonies, with many similarities to several Samuel Barber choral settings.

Later is *Tres Ciudades* (Three Cities), a suite based on poems by Spanish poet Federico Garcia Lorca. The first, *Malagueña*, begins with the basses singing low, ominous half-step chants. This is answered by an intense melody sung by the tenors. This slowly climbing melody is mimicked by the altos and later sopranos. After a fierce flourish, the work ends in hushed tension. The second, *Barrio de Córdoba* is a soft and somber contrast, interrupting the homophonic statements with unexpected glissandos down to new chords. The last piece, *Baile*, includes a flashy melody with the percussive effects of an accompanying flamenco guitar. While the intonation and soloists are impressive, sufficient dramatic flair are lacking for these three pieces.

The most compelling selection by Kelly Tang is *Tread Softly*, a setting of William Butler Yeats's "He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven." It features a number of lush harmonic effects, and is sung beautifully by the Alumni Choir, particularly the solo soprano voices.

This is followed by *Nei'la*, a prayer recited during Yom Kippur. The work begins with an intense solo voice in a Middle Eastern-inspired melody. This is answered and amplified by men's voices until they reach an intense cacophony of descending chants and downward octave glissandos. After they recede, the treble voices join at first peacefully, but later vociferously plead for mercy in chants that sound like angry beehives. This unravels into repeated slower, uneasy statements about a future reckoning.



The final two songs are by Kelly Tang. *The Snow Man* sets a poem by American poet Wallace Stevens. The existentialist text is depicted by harmonies which begin warmly, but slowly disperse into hushed dissonance as they conclude. This is followed by Tang's setting of the *Pater Noster* in English. This was commissioned by the ACJC Choir to commemorate its 25th year of being in the Choral Excellence Programme. While well sung, it ends abruptly and contains few emotional or musical highlights.

The ACJC Alumni Choir's singing is a welcome treat for choral music enthusiasts. Their singing is fantastic. Despite all of the works having challenging a cappella settings, their intonation hardly ever falters. The voices sing with freedom and vibrancy, and consistently with a healthy, supported resonant tone. Valarie Wilson should be commended for her work in building such a pleasant sound. Suggestions for improvement

The voices sing with freedom and vibrancy, and consistently with a healthy, supported resonant tone.

can rarely be found. In *Malagueña*, for instance, the basses could sing with a brighter placement, and the tenors could unify their sound better in several places. The diction in some works is difficult to understand at times. Yet these are nit-picking suggestions in what is a well-produced recording.

While the quality of the choral sound is consistently high, however, the caliber of the compositions themselves is inconsistent. Some works, such as *Malagueña*, *Ne'ila*, *Adon Haselichot*, and *Tread Softly* are unique and engaging, while many others pieces flit by with typical contemporary chordal harmonies punctuated by mildly acerbic dissonances.

While the ACJC College Choir has made a name for itself both in Singapore and internationally, the Alumni Choir is still establishing its bona fides as a premier choral ensemble. *Prayers and Poems* is an album that choral music listeners should become familiar with as an example of great choral sound, artistry, and commitment to the promotion of contemporary choral composers. Hopefully this will be the beginning of many excellent recordings by these terrific singers.

Edited by Mirella Biagi, UK/Italy

As a former member of the St. Louis Children's Choirs, TOBIN SPARFELD has toured all over the world, from as far west as Vancouver, British Columbia, to as far east as Moscow, Russia. Tobin has also sung with Seraphic Fire and the Santa Fe Desert Chorale. Tobin has worked with choirs of all ages, serving as Assistant Music Director of the Miami Children's Chorus as well as the Associate Director of the St. Louis Children's Choirs. He also taught at Principia College and was the Director of Choral Activities at Millersville University of Pennsylvania. Tobin received his DMA in Conducting from the University of Miami in Coral Gables, studying with Jo-Michael Scheibe and Joshua Habermann. He also received an Artist Teacher Diploma from the CME Institute led by Doreen Rao. He currently directs two choirs and the vocal programme at Glendale Community College in Glendale, California. Email: tobin.sparfeld@gmail.com



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Compiled by Nadine Robin

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7th International Sacred Music Festival Kaunas Musica Religiosa, Kaunas, Lithuania, 23-26 Feb 2017. Concerts in city halls, churches, choir competition in many categories. Contact: Kaunas club "Cantate Domino", Email: info@kaunascantat.lt - Website: www.kaunascantat.lt

23th International Choir Festival of Paris, France, 2-5 Mar 2017. Friendship concerts with local choirs and choirs from all over the world. Final concert of all attending choirs at La Madeline Church. Contact: Music&Friends by Emile Weber, Email: musicandfriends@vew.lu - Website: www.musicandfriends.lu

9th International Meeting of School Choirs, Karditsa, Greece, 2-18 Mar 2017. For school choirs of all kind with no more than 50 singers. Participants can choose their own repertoire. Contact: International Choral Festival of Karditsa, Email: nke@otenet.gr - Website: <http://festivalofkarditsa.blogspot.gr/>

Roma Music Festival 2017, Italy, 8-12 Mar 2017. International festival of choirs and orchestras. Apply before 15 Jan 2017. Contact: MusikReisenFaszination Music Festivals, Email: info@mrf-musicfestivals.com - Website: www.mrf-musicfestivals.com

ACDA National Conference 2017, Minneapolis, USA, 8-11 Mar 2017. ACDA will hold it biennial conference for choral conductors. Included in the event will be choral performances, interest sessions, reading sessions, networking and other special events. Contact: American Choral Directors Association, Email: acda@acda.org - Website: <http://acda.org>

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Catalunya Prizes for Choral Compositions 2017, Barcelona, Spain, 13 Mar 2017. Choral composition competition on Catalan text and arrangements of traditional Catalan songs, level of difficulty low and medium in two categories: mixed voices and equal voices. The awarded works will be published in the FCEC "Choral collections" and recorded in a CD. Contact: Federació Catalana d'Entitats Corales, Email: fcec@fcec.cat - Website: <http://www.fcec.cat/noticies/PremisCatalunya2016/PremCat.html>

Windy City Choral Festival with Z. Randall Stroope, Chicago, USA, 16-18 Mar 2017. For mixed (SATB) choirs to sing together in one of the world's great concert halls – Orchestra Hall at Symphony Center, home of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Contact: Music Celebrations International, LLC, Email: info@windycitychoralfestival.org - Website: www.windycitychoralfestival.org

Festival of Peace and Brotherhood, Castelli Romani, Italy, 16-20 Mar 2017. Sing together with local Italian choirs as well as choirs from around the world. The Festival of Peace and Brotherhood facilitates a deeper sense of respect and understanding between cultures through the common language

of music. Contact: Music Celebrations International, LLC, Email: info@som50fest.org - Website: www.romechoralfestival.org

10th Fukushima Vocal Ensemble Competition, Fukushima, Japan, 17-21 Mar 2017. Biggest chorus competition for vocal ensembles (2-16 singers) in Japan. Category Competition, Grand Champion Competition, Friendship Concert, Welcome Party, Workshop. Contact: Fukushima Vocal Ensemble Competition, Email: bunka@pref.fukushima.lg.jp - Website: www.vocalensemble.jp/en/

Golden Voices of Montserrat! International Contest, Montserrat Monastery, Catalonia, Spain, 19-23 Mar 2017. Taking place in Spain, this is one of the most biggest and incredible contest for choirs from all over the world. Contest day, master class, recording of the song in studio, flash mob and gala concert is waiting for you! Contact: Fiestalonia Milenio, SLU, Email: nika@fiestalonia.net - Website: www.fiestalonia.net

Corsham Voice Workshop, United Kingdom, 19-24 Mar 2017. A mixed-ability course on vocal technique in Wiltshire led by Ghislaine Morgan. Contact: Lacock Courses, Andrew van der Beek, Email: avdb@lacock.org - Website: www.lacock.org

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No competitions but a buzz of choral activities: Make Nice your stage during your choir tour. The schedule will include touristic activities (sight-seeing), short concerts in touristic places, a workshop with a local choir and a joint concert of all the participants. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <http://onstage.interkultur.com/>

Discover Puerto Rico and its Choral Music, Ponce, Puerto Rico, 24-27 Mar 2017. The Catholic University of Ponce, the University of Puerto Rico, and the city of Ponce invite choirs to discover Puerto Rico! Work with the island's most famous composers and directors, and exchange with choirs from the region. This is a unique opportunity to experience the fantastic choral traditions of Puerto Rico and to perform in Ponce's most beautiful venues. Contact: Music Contact International, Email: travel@music-contact.com - Website: www.music-contact.com

ON STAGE with Interkultur in Verona, Italy, 30 Mar-2 Apr 2017.

No competitions but a buzz of choral activities: Make Verona your stage during your choir tour. The schedule will include touristic activities (sight-seeing), short concerts in touristic places, a workshop with a local choir and a joint concert of all the participants. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <http://onstage.interkultur.com/>

International Choir Festival for Children & Youth Mundus Cantat, Gdansk, Poland, 30 Mar-2 Apr 2017. For choirs from all over the world. Exchange of cultural traditions, strengthening natural human bonds. Contact: Festival Office Mundus Cantat Sopot, Email: munduscantat@sopot.pl - Website: www.munduscantat.pl

ON STAGE with Interkultur in Bilbao, Spain, 6-9 Apr 2017.

No competitions but a buzz of choral activities: Make Bilbao your stage during your choir tour. The schedule will include touristic activities (sight-seeing), short concerts in touristic places, a workshop with a local choir and a joint concert of all the participants. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <http://onstage.interkultur.com/>

International Choir Festival and Competition of Lithuanian Music Patriarch Juozas Naujalis, Kaunas, Lithuania, 6-9 Apr 2017. Concerts in city halls, churches, choir competition in many categories. Contact: Kaunas club "Cantate Domino", Email: info@kaunascantat.lt - Website: www.kaunascantat.lt

Dublin International Choral Festival, Ireland, 6-10 Apr 2017.

Individual workshop with one of Ireland's highly acclaimed conductors. Friendship Concert with an Irish host choir. Closing Concert Rehearsals with all participating choirs. Closing Concert Performance and Massed Sing. Contact: Music Contact International, Email: ireland@music-contact.com - Website: www.music-contact.com

3rd Easter Choral Meeting Prague 2017, Czech Republic, 6-9, 13-17, 20-23, 27-30 Apr & 4-7, 11-14 May 2017. Non-competitive choral festival open

to choirs and choral groups of all kind. Contact: OR-FEA Festival and Organisational Agency, Email: incoming@orfea.cz - Website: www.or-fea.cz

16th Budapest International Choir Festival & Competition, Hungary, 9-13 Apr 2017. For all kinds of choirs from all around the world. Apply before 30 Nov 2016. Contact: Meeting Music Inh. Pirosk Horv th e. K., Email: info@meeting-music.com - Website: www.meeting-music.com

1st Michelangelo International Music Festival, Florence, Italy, 18-20 Apr 2017. Competition and Festival for Choirs and Orchestras. Contact: Florence Choral, Email: chairman@florencechoral.com - Website: www.florencechoral.com

Istra Music Festival 2017, Croatia, 19-23 Apr 2017. For choirs and orchestras from around the world. Apply before 31 Jan 2017. Contact: MusikReisenFaszination Music Festivals, Email: info@mrf-musicfestivals.com - Website: <https://www.mrf-musicfestivals.com/>

Verona International Choral Competition, Verona, Italy, 19-23 Apr 2017. Performances before an international panel of esteemed judges at a friendly choral competition. Contact: Music Contact International, Email: travel@music-contact.com - Website: www.music-contact.com

Voices for Peace, Assisi, Italy, 19-23 Apr 2017. To Compete or not to Compete. Opportunity to participate in both non-competitive and competitive activities. The Friendship Concerts will give choirs the chance to perform together with other international choirs. Whereas the competition includes six categories, among which sacred choral music and folklore. Contact: Förderverein

Interkultur, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: www.interkultur.com

All Nations Are Singing International Choral Festival & competition, Vilnius, Lithuania, 20-25 Apr 2017.

For all choirs around the world. Contact: Gratulations, Email: info.gratulationes@gmail.com - Website: www.gratulationes.lt

Festival di Primavera Festival di Primavera 2017 spring...ing and singing together!, Montecatini Terme, Tuscany, Italy, 20-22 & 26-29 Apr 2017. International

spring festival for school choirs, 20-22 April open to children's choirs (age 6-13) with Josep Vila (Spain), Sanna Valvanne (Finland/ USA), Ennio Bertolotti (Italy), Fabio Pecci (Italy), Luigina Stevenin (Italy), Giuseppe Lazzizzera (Italy) and 26-29 April open to youth choirs (age 14-19) with Virginia Bono (Argentina), Michael Gohl (Switzerland), Petra Grassi (Italy), Paolo Zaltron (Italy), Simone Faraoni (Italy). Apply before 31 Jan 2017. Contact: FENIARCO (Italian Federation of Regional Choir Associations), Email: festivaldiprimavera@feniarco.it - Website: www.feniarco.it

15th International Choir Festival Tallinn 2017, Estonia, 20-23 Apr 2017. The choir festival is

for amateur choirs in all choral categories and includes the choral contest and concerts in the concert halls of Tallinn. Apply before November 15, 2016 Contact: Estonian Choral Society, Email: kooriyhing@kul.ee - Website: www.kooriyhing.ee

14th International Choral Competition Gallus Maribor 2017, Slovenia, 21-23 Apr 2017.

Intended for vocal groups, female, male and mixed choirs. Only amateur vocal groups and choirs can participate at the competition.

Conductor and instrumentalists can be professional musicians. Limited number of singers: between 4 and 11 for vocal group and between 12 and 48 for choirs. The Artistic Council of the Competition (appointed by the Organising Committee) selects participating choirs according to their artistic merits, inherent in the application materials. This festival is a member of The European Grand Prix for Choral Singing Association. Contact: Mihela Jagodic, JSKD, Email: info.maribor@jskd.si - Website: www.jskd.si/maribor

7th World Choir Festival on Musicals, Thessaloniki, Greece, 21-23 Apr 2017. Non competitive choral event for all types of choirs and vocal ensembles all over the world with audience prize awarded to the best choir at each concert. Contact: Choir Korais, Email: choirkorais94@gmail.com - Website: www.xorodiakorais.com

63rd Cork International Choral Festival, Ireland, 26-30 Apr 2017.

For 5 wonderful days Cork City and County will welcome some of the finest amateur Competitive and Non - Competitive choirs from around the world for a programme of choral concerts, national and international competition, and internationally renowned performers as thousands of participants bring Cork to life. Join us in Cork for one of Europe's Premier Choral Festivals. Bringing a city to life with song since 1954! Contact: Cork International Choral Festival, Email: info@corkchoral.ie - Website: www.corkchoral.ie

3rd International Choral Festival Canta en Primavera, Málaga, Spain, 26-30 Apr 2017. Outstanding concert halls,

churches and theatres are available for this competition in different categories and difficulties. Contact: Interkultur Foundation

e.V., Email: mail@interkultur.com -
Website: www.interkultur.com

Slovakia Cantat 2017, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 27-30 Apr 2017.

International Choir and Folksong Festival. Competition, workshop, concerts of sacred and secular music. The Slovak capital Bratislava opens its gates and invites choirs to its charming centre in spring. Apply before December 15th 2016. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: www.choral-music.sk

Cornwall International Male Voice Choral Festival, United Kingdom, 27 Apr-1 May 2017.

With over 60 choirs involved in 50 events at 40 locations, there is something for everyone. Contact: Rob Elliott, Festival Director, Email: rob@cimcf.uk - Website: www.cimcf.uk

15th Venezia in Musica, International Choir Competition and Festival, Venice and Caorle, Italy, 28 Apr-2 May 2017.

For all kinds of choirs from all around the world. Apply before 30 Nov 2016. Contact: Meeting Music Inh. Pirosek Horvath e. K., Email: info@meeting-music.com - Website: www.meeting-music.com

The Voice of Wealth, Lloret de Mar, Spain, 28 Apr-3 May 2017.

International choir festival and competition for all kind of choirs from all over the world. Contact: Monolit Festivals, Email: info@monolitfestivals.com - Website: <http://monolitfestivals.com/>

World of Choirs, Montecatini Terme, Toscana, Italy, 30 Apr-3 May 2017.

All the participants will demonstrate their skills on one of the best stages of the Adriatic coast. Invites all amateur choirs! Italy will not leave you indifferent. Contact: Fiestalonia Milenio, SLU, Email: nika@fiestaloniamilenio.net - Website: www.fiestaloniamilenio.net

Sea Sun Festival & Competition, Costa Brava, Spain, 30 Apr-5 May, 18-23 June, 9-14 July, 17-22 Sep 2017.

Competition of various genres in choral and vocal singing, open to amateurs and professional teams of all ages. Apply before 1 Apr 2017. Contact: Fiestalonia Milenio, SLU, Email: nika@fiestaloniamilenio.net - Website: www.fiestaloniamilenio.net

Queen of the Adriatic Sea Choral Festival and Competition, Cattolica, Italy, 4-7 May 2017.

Competition for Equal Voices, Mixed, Chamber, Youth, Children, Sacred Music, Folk and Spiritual Choirs. Concerts at the beautiful San Leo medieval cathedral. Apply before 31 Mar 2017. Contact: Queen Choral Festival and Competition, Email: office@queenchoralfestival.org - Website: www.queenchoralfestival.org

1st Lorenzo de Medici International Music Festival, Florence, Italy, 9-11 May 2017.

Competition and Festival for Choirs. Contact: Florence Choral, Email: chairman@florencechoral.com - Website: www.florencechoral.com

ON STAGE with Interkultur in Stockholm, Sweden, 11-14 May 2017.

No competitions but a buzz of choral activities: Make Stockholm your stage during your choir tour. The schedule will include touristic activities (sight-seeing), short concerts in touristic places, a workshop with a local choir and a joint concert of all the participants. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <http://onstage.interkultur.com/>

Voices United Austria 2017 Choir Festival, Vienna & Salzburg, Austria, 14-21 May 2017.

Individual and festival concerts under the direction of Ian Loepky. Contact: Klconcerts, Email: info@klconcerts.com

Website: www.klconcerts.com

2nd Lebanese International Choir Festival, Tripoli, Lebanon, 15-21 May 2017.

Festival aiming to build a network between Lebanese and international choirs, to promote and develop choir singing in Lebanon, to encourage Lebanese composers to write for choirs, and to introduce the Arab music to foreign choirs. Contact: AZM Cultural Centre, Email: contact@licfestival.org - Website: www.licfestival.org/

"On The Lake" First International Choir Festival, On the shores of the Sea of Galilee in the Holy Land, Israel, 16-18 May 2017.

A three night program. Choirs are welcome to join in this exciting celebration and participate in the festival. Contact: Vered Hasharon Travel and Tours Ltd, Email: keren@vrdrtrvl.com - Website: www.holylandchoir.org

13th International Festival of University Choirs UNIVERSITAS CANTAT 2017, Poznań, Poland, 16-20 May 2017.

Meetings of university choirs from all around the world in order to stimulate cooperation and cultural exchange. Non-competitive festival. Contact: International Festival of University Choirs, Email: festival@amu.edu.pl - Website: <http://cantat.amu.edu.pl/pl/>

7th Kaunas Cantat International Choir Festival and Competition, Kaunas, Lithuania, 18-21 May 2017.

Concerts in city halls, churches, choir competition in many categories. Contact: Kaunas club "Cantate Domino", Email: info@kaunascantat.lt - Website: www.kaunascantat.lt

13th International Choir Festival Mundus Cantat, Sopot, Poland, 18-22 May 2017.

For choirs from all over the world. Exchange of

cultural traditions, strengthening natural human bonds. Contact: Festival Office Mundus Cantat Sopot, Email: munduscantat@sopot.pl - Website: www.munduscantat.pl

2017 Emerald City Choral Festival with Rollo Dilworth, Seattle, USA, 18-20 May 2017.

For all kind of pro and amateur choral ensembles from all over the world. Contact: Sechrist Travel, LLC, Email: info@sechristtravel.com - Website: www.sechristtravel.com

14th International Choral Festival London, United Kingdom, 18-22 May 2017.

For any kind of choirs from around the world. Contact: Maldiviaggi Turismo & Tempo Libero, Email: info@maldiviaggi.com - Website: www.maldiviaggi.com

14th International Choral Festival London, United Kingdom, 18-22 May 2017. For any kind of choirs from around the world. Contact: Maldiviaggi Turismo & Tempo Libero, Email: info@globfestival.com - Website: www.festivalinternazionale.com

Vaasa International Choir Festival, Finland, 24-28 May 2017. Top performers from Finland and other countries, joyful singing atmosphere, workshops. Contact: Vaasa Choir Festival, Email: eeero.paalanen@gmail.com - Website: www.vaasachoirfestival.fi/

Harmonie Festival 2017, Limburg-Lindenholzhausen, Germany, 25-28 May 2017.

13 different competitions for choirs and folk groups, concerts and folk performances with an audience of up to 4,000 people and the hospitality of a whole region. Jury members: Virginia Bono (Argentina), Juergen Budday (Germany), Volker Hempfling (Germany), Theodora

Pavlovitch (Bulgaria), Robert Sund (Sweden) and Will Todd (United Kingdom). Contact: Harmonie Lindenholzhausen, Email: information@harmonie-festival.de - Website: www.harmonie-festival.de

ON STAGE with Interkultur in Florence, Italy, 25-28 May 2017.

No competitions but a buzz of choral activities: Make Florence your stage during your choir tour. The schedule will include touristic activities (sight-seeing), short concerts in touristic places, a workshop with a local choir and a joint concert of all the participants. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <http://onstage.interkultur.com/>

7th Šiauliai Cantat International Choir Festival and Competition, Šiauliai, Lithuania, 25-28 May 2017.

Concerts in city halls, churches, choir competition in many categories. Contact: Kaunas club "Cantate Domino", Email: info@kaunascantat.lt - Website: www.kaunascantat.lt

Choir Worldwide/Gold Choral Festival, Shanghai, China, 26-28 May 2017.

For youth choirs from all around the world. Contact: Internationaler Volkskulturkreis e.V., Email: kripp@volkskulturkreis.de - Website: www.volkskultur-de.org

18th Fort Worden Children's Choir Festival, Port Townsend WA, USA, 26-27 May 2017.

Open to all treble choirs. Guest Conductor: Elena Sharkova. Contact: Stephanie Charbonneau, Email: fortwordenfestival@gmail.com - Website: www.fortwordenfestival.com

46th International Competition Florilège Vocal de Tours, France, 26-28 May 2017. Three categories: mixed choirs, mixed vocal

ensembles, equal voices (male or female). Two rounds and Grand Prix. International competition for children's and youth choirs. Contact: Florilège Vocal de Tours, Email: contact@florilegevocal.com - Website: www.florilegevocal.com

CantaRode International Choral Festival, Kerkrade, The Netherlands, 26-28 May 2017.

Opening concert with international chamber choirs. Gospel workshop for choir singers by dr Raymond Wise (USA) and final concert during the closing ceremony. Concerts of the participating choirs in the region of Kerkrade. Contact: Stichting Kerkrade, Email: info@cantarode.nl - Website: www.cantarode.nl

60th International Festival of Choral Art Jihlava 2017, Czech Republic, 26-28 May 2017.

Competition of chamber choirs and big mix choirs, non-competitive concerts, workshop, meetings. Contact: NIPOS Artama, Email: dankova@nipos-mk.cz - Website: www.nipos-mk.cz

21th Ankara Choral Festival, Turkey, 27 May-4 June 2017.

For choirs from 7 to 77. Contact: BilgeSistem Bil. ve Yay. Hiz. Ltd. Sti., Email: info@musicfestinturkey.com - Website: www.musicfestinturkey.com

45th International Choir Festival of Songs Olomouc, Czech Republic, 31 May-4 June 2017.

International choir festival of sacred and clerical music, Musica Religiosa Competition for choirs in all categories from all around the world. Apply before: March 17. Contact: Festa Musicale, Email: info@festamusicale.com - Website: www.festamusicale.com

ON STAGE with Interkultur in Barcelona, Spain, 1-4 June 2017.

No competitions but a buzz of choral activities: Make Barcelona

your stage during your choir tour. The schedule will include touristic activities (sight-seeing), short concerts in touristic places, a workshop with a local choir and a joint concert of all the participants. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <http://onstage.interkultur.com/>

15th International Chamber Choir Competition, Marktoberdorf, Germany, 2-7 June 2017. Two categories: Mixed Choirs and Female Choirs. Compulsory work for each category. Apply before October 11, 2016. Contact: Modfestivals, International Chamber Choir Competition, Email: office@modfestivals.org - Website: www.modfestivals.org

Countdown to the 2020 Olympiad, Tokyo, Japan, 6-11 July 2017. With Henry Leck and Robyn Lana. Contact: Perform International, Email: info@performinternational.com - Website: www.performinternational.com

5th Vietnam International Choir Festival & Competition, Hô i An, Vietnam, 7-11 June 2017. H i An is one of the most beautiful and charming destinations you can visit in Asia. In cooperation with the Vietnamese Central Government, the Provincial Government of Quang Nam and the City Government of H i An, choirs will again have the chance to discover the beauty of the country, combined with an international choral event. Contact: Interkultur Foundation e.V., Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: www.interkultur.com

Tampere Vocal Music Festival, Tampere, Finland, 7-11 June 2017. Chorus review for all non-amplified choirs, competition with feedback from an international

jury, competition for acoustic and amplified ensembles, workshops, concerts. Contact: Tampere Sävel, Tampere Vocal Music Festival, Email: music@tampere.fi - Website: www.tampereemusicfestivals.fi/vocal/en

7th International Choral Festival Chernomorski zvutsi, Balchik, Bulgaria, 7-11 June 2017. Festival and competition for all kind of choirs. Workshops with Michael Deltchev (Bulgarian folk music) and Spectrum Group (vocal ensembles). Apply before February 1, 2017. Contact: Valentina Georgieva, President, Email: festival@chenomorskizvutsi.com - Website: www.chenomorskizvutsi.com/

8th International Krakow Choir Festival Cracovia Cantans, Poland, 8-11 June 2017. For all kinds of choirs, 9 categories, many concert opportunities. Gala concert in Krakow Philharmonic. Apply before Dec 15, 2016. Contact: MELODY & Polonia Cantat, Email: mail@krakowchoirfestival.pl - Website: www.krakowchoirfestival.pl

Krakow International Festival, Poland, 8-12 June 2017. Perform alongside international choirs during adjudicated and non-adjudicated performances in Poland's medieval center of culture, art and academics. Perform in the Karłowicz Music School, the Krakow Philharmonic, and some of the city's most beautiful churches! Contact: Music Contact International, Email: travel@music-contact.com - Website: www.music-contact.com

Czech Choir Festival Sborové slavnosti, Hradec Králové, Czech Republic, 8-11 June 2017. For any kind of choirs from all over the world. Contact: Czech Choir Festival Sborové slavnosti, Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CzechChoirFestival/> - Website: www.sboroveslavnosti.cz

www.sboroveslavnosti.cz

7th European Forum on Music, Paphos, Cyprus, 8-10 June 2017. The European Forum on Music Education will shed light on how educational concepts relate to all areas of musical life and what this implies for music professionals, audiences and political decision-makers. Contact: European Music Council, Email: info@emc-imc.org - Website: www.emc-imc.org/

Notes of Joy Austria 2017 Choir Festival, Austria, 10-15 June 2017. Individual and festival concerts under the direction of Sandra and Timothy Peter. Contact: Klconcerts, Email: info@klconcerts.com - Website: www.klconcerts.com

37th IMC General Assembly, Paphos, Cyprus, 11-12 June 2017. In conjunction with the European Forum on Music held on June 8-10, 2017. Contact: Conseil International de la Musique, Email: forum.imc@unesco.org - Website: www.unesco.org/imc

Sing Mass at St Peter's Basilica with Catherine Sailer, Rome, Italy, 12-15 June 2017. Individual concerts and combined festival concerts. Option to tour Florence and Venice. Contact: Klconcerts, Email: info@klconcerts.com - Website: www.klconcerts.com

International Anton Bruckner Choir Competition and Festival, Linz, Austria, 14-18 June 2017. For choirs from all over the world to come and sing at the International Anton Bruckner Choir Competition & Festival. Contact: Förderverein Interkultur, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: www.interkultur.com

Salzburg International Choral Celebration and Competition, Salzburg, Austria, 14-19 June 2017. For mixed choirs, male and female choirs, children's and youth choirs, sacred music and folklore. Contact: Meeting Music Inh. Pirosk Horv th e. K., Email: info@meeting-music.com - Website: <http://meeting-music.com/>

Musica Sacra Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 15-18 June 2017. International Sacred Music Festival. Competition, workshop, concerts in churches, sightseeing. Bratislava is widely recognized as a city of music, which increases its fame as a city of rich cultural and artistic heritage. Apply before March 1st 2017. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: www.choral-music.sk

Luther 2017 Choral Festival, Berlin, Germany, 15-17 June 2017. Join internationally-renowned conductor Helmuth Rilling on June 17, 2017, for a choral extravaganza at the magnificent Berliner Dom. Singers from across the globe are invited to join a grand festival chorus to sing the music of Mendelssohn, including Wir glauben all an einen Gott and Psalm 42 Wie der Hirsch schreit, and Johann Sebastian Bach's Eine Feste Burg Ist Unser Gott, in celebration of 500 Years of Reformation. Contact: Music Celebrations International, LLC, Email: info@luther2017choralfestival.org - Website: <http://luther2017choralfestival.org/>

Conducting 21C, Stockholm, Sweden, 15-20 June 2017. This course aims to provide conductors with professional development by combining artistic excellence and social justice. Emerging and experienced conductors alike will develop powerfully creative, profoundly artistic, and

compassionate approaches for musical leadership through master classes and workshops. Contact: Conducting 21C, Email: info@conducting21c.com - Website: www.conducting21c.com/

SINGMIT! Festival in Vienna, Austria, 15-17 June 2017. For choirs and singers from around the globe, rehearsals with artistic director Gerald Wirth, workshops and performance of Handel's "Messiah" commemorating 275 years since its premiere. Contact: Encore Performance Tours, Email: encoretours@acis.com - Website: www.encoretours.com/go/singmit.cfm

International Choral Festival in Tuscany, Montecatini Terme, Italy, 15-19 June 2017. Join choirs from around the world in the heart of Tuscany to perform in venues throughout the region. Hear the other guest choirs sing at the Tettuccio Spa, and exchange with Italian choirs during friendship concerts in churches and theaters. By invitation of the city of Montecatini Terme, this festival includes time to explore Florence, Pisa and Lucca during an amazing four days of choral music in the rolling Tuscan hills. Contact: Music Contact International, Email: travel@music-contact.com - Website: <http://tuscanymusic-contact.com/>

Eine Feste Burg, a Choral Celebration, Leipzig, Germany, 17-23 June 2017. Prof. Rilling, pre-eminent scholar and conductor of works by J.S. Bach and Dr. Anton Armstrong, Conductor of the St. Olaf Choir, will lead a Gala Concert Performance at St. Thomas Church in Leipzig in commemoration of the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation. Contact: Perform International, Email: info@performinternational.com - Website: www.performinternational.com

Join Randall Stroope to sing in Barcelona and Madrid, Spain, 17-25 June 2017. Combined rehearsals and gala concert, individual concerts, cultural immersion. Contact: Klconcerts, Email: info@klconcerts.com - Website: www.klconcerts.com

International Contest Sun of Italy, Montecatini Terme, Toscana, Italy, 18-21 June, 9-12 July 2017. Competition of various genres in choral and vocal singing, open to amateurs and professional teams of all ages. Contact: Fiestalonia Milenio, SLU, Email: nika@fiestalonia.net - Website: www.fiestalonia.net

Ireland 2017 Choir Festival, Cork and Dublin, Ireland, 20-27 June 2017. Individual and festival concerts under the direction of Henry Leck. Contact: Klconcerts, Email: info@klconcerts.com - Website: www.klconcerts.com

Pura Vida Costa Rica!, San José, Costa Rica, 20-24 June 2017. Festival designed for service, singing and international friendship, Combining exchange concerts with local choirs, an opportunity for community service and culminating in a festival of international song led by esteemed conductor, Dr. Cristian Grases. Contact: Perform International, Email: zfranciscus@perform-international.com - Website: <http://perform-international.com/festivals/#pura-vida-costa-rica>

20th Alta Pusteria International Choir Festival, Alto Adige-Südtirol, Italy, 21-25 June 2017. Non-competitive festival in the heart of the Dolomites: concerts, open-air reviews, day-meetings. Contact: Alta Pusteria Festival Office, Email: info@festivalpusteria.org - Website: www.festivalpusteria.org

International Choral Competition Ave Verum, Baden, Austria, 22-25 June 2017. Baden is a spa and has been a historical meeting point for artists such as Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Strauss, Lanner and many more. Only 10 choirs worldwide can join this extraordinary Grand Prix competition. For all amateur choirs (mixed, female, male, treble, men) of at least 20 singers, maximum 50 singers. Apply before October 15, 2016. Contact: Wolfgang Ziegler, chairman, Email: aveverum.baden@gmail.com - Website: www.aveverum.at

Limerick Sings International Choral Festival, Limerick, Ireland, 22-25 June 2017. Non-competitive event for choirs of all traditions and nationalities. Choirs will meet each other through formal and informal concerts and other social events. Addition of a youth concert, a choral workshop with Anúna and a "Big Sing" choral performance. Choirs or singers will also be able to join Perform International's 120 voice Festival Choir from the US, under internationally renowned conductor and composer Andre Thomas, for a performance of Dan Forrest's Jubilate Deo on one of the evenings. Apply before December 1, 2016. Contact: Limerick Sings, Email: information@limericksings.com - Website: www.limericksings.com

8th Rome International Choral Festival, Italy, 22-24 June 2017. Featuring Mass participation at St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican and a formal finale concert at Basilica of Saint Mary above Minerva. The festival chorus will include mixed-voice singers and choirs that will come together to rehearse and perform en masse under the baton of maestro Z. Randall Stroope. Contact: Music Celebrations International, LLC, Email: info@som50fest.org - Website: www.romechoralfestival.org

International Choral Fest Costa Rica, San Jose, Costa Rica, 22-26 June 2017. Repertoire must be a cappella and of free choice giving preference to music of the choirs' own country or region. All accepted choirs will sing together a common piece, which will be rehearsed during the festival. Contact: Costa Rica International Choral Festival, Email: info@choralfestcostarica.org - Website: www.choralfestcostarica.org/

Festival Coral de Verão, Lisbon, Portugal, 23-26 June 2017. Partake in international choral competitions and immerse your choirs in the historical and cultural district of Belém. Choirs will have performance opportunities at various landmarks including UNESCO World Heritage site - Jerónimos Monastery. Organised by EGEAC and SourceWerkz. Contact: SourceWerkz, Email: info@sourcewerkz.com - Website: <http://pscf.sourcewerkz.com/>

Requiem for the Living, Bayeux, Normandy, France, 24-30 June 2017. For choirs to perform a choral work in close collaboration with the composer (Dan Forrest), working with a French orchestra and one of the finest choral educators of our time (Dr. Pearl Shangkuan), in iconic, historic sites. Contact: Perform International, Email: info@performinternational.com - Website: www.performinternational.com

5th Per Musicam Ad Astra, International Copernicus Choir Festival and Competition, Toruń, Poland, 25-28 June 2017. For all kinds of choirs from all around the world. Apply before 15 April 2017. Contact: Meeting Music Inh. Pirosk Horv th e. K., Email: constanze@meeting-music.com - Website: www.meeting-music.com

London International A Cappella Choir Competition, St John's Smith Square, London, United Kingdom, 25 June-1 July 2017. Festival bringing together 16 choirs from around the world to compete in a series of public concerts. A jury of renowned experts, chaired by the founder and director Tallis Scholars Peter Phillips, will select a winning choir from four preliminary rounds to compete in a prestigious final with the opportunity to win substantial cash prizes and further concert dates. For mixed-voice choirs of 16 members or more. Apply before Dec 15, 2016. Contact: Joanna Innes-Hopkins, Email: info@sjs.org.uk - Website: www.liacc.org.uk/

International Contest of Classical Music and Singing Música del Mar, Lloret de Mar, Spain, 25-28 June 2017. Competition performance in the stunning castle-fortress of the 12th century Villa Vella. For classical and jazz singers, academic and chamber choirs. Contact: Fiestalonia Milenio, SLU, Email: nika@fiestalonia.net - Website: www.fiestalonia.net

Kennedy Center: Celebrate President JFK 100th, Washington DC, USA, 27 June-4 July 2017. In collaboration with the Kennedy Center, Classical Movements' s celebrating the centennial of President Kennedy's birth with a grand choral celebration of Kennedy's legacy by inviting choirs from countries that have benefited from the work of the Peace Corps, as well as select choirs from the U.S. and abroad. Classical Movements, as part of its Eric Daniel Helms New Music Program, will commission composers from these visiting choirs' countries to create new choral works in the spirit of President Kennedy's legacy promoting international peace and diplomacy. This celebration will be

incorporated within the Serenade! Washington Choral Festival which is scheduled for June 27-July 4th (with daily performances at the Kennedy Center June 28-July 3). Contact: Yarina Conners, Classical Movements, Inc., Email: Yarina@classicalmovements.com - Website: <http://classicalmovements.org/rhap.htm>

Jubilate Mozart! Choral Festival, Salzburg, Austria, 28 June-2 July 2017. Join other mixed voice choirs from around the country to perform under Jo-Michael Scheibe and Professor János Czifra in the storybook city of Salzburg. Everywhere you turn in Salzburg is a reminder of Mozart's presence, from his birthplace and museum to the Mozartplatz and Mozart Monument. Join us as we celebrate the life and music of this timeless composer in the Jubilate Mozart Choral Festival. Contact: Music Celebrations International, LLC, Email: info@mozartchoralfestival.org - Website: mozartchoralfestival.org

Serenade! Washington, DC Choral Festival, USA, 29 June-3 July 2017. For youth and adult choirs, concerts, workshops, musical exchanges, optional choral competition and sightseeing. Contact: Sara Casar, Classical Movements, Email: Sara@ClassicalMovements.com - Website: <http://classicalmovements.org/dc.htm>

Slovakia Folk 2017, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 29 June-2 July 2017. Festival of folklore music and dance ensembles. Apply before April 15th 2017. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: www.choral-music.sk

Claudio Monteverdi Choral Festival and Competition, Venice, Italy, 29 June-2 July 2017. Competition for Equal

Voices, Mixed, Chamber, Youth, Children, Sacred Music, Folk and Spiritual Choirs. Concerts in beautiful churches in Venice. Sung Service for the winners at the St. Mark Basilica. Contact: Claudio Monteverdi Choral Competition, Email: office@venicechoralcompetition.it - Website: www.venicechoralcompetition.it

International Festival Verona Garda Estate, Verona, Brescia, Mantua, Vicenza, Italy, 29 June-16 July 2017. For all choirs of all types. Contact: Prof. Giuliano Rinaldi, Email: info@festivalveronagardaestate.eu - Website: www.festivalveronagardaestate.eu

Choralfest Melbourne 2017, Brisbane Grammar School, Queensland, Australia, 30 June-3 July 2017. For any type of choral ensemble performing at a high level in any style. In addition a program of Honour choirs for children and youth, chorister workshops and the opportunity to work with local composers is being planned. Apply before August 15, 2016. Contact: The Australian National Choral Association, Email: anca.choralfest@gmail.com - Website: <http://choralfest.org.au>

Festival of Voices, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia, 30 June-16 July 2017. Performance such as concerts to clubs, cabaret venues and pop up performances for participants and singers of all ages and backgrounds. Contact: Festival of Voices Tasmania, Email: info@festivalofvoices.com - Website: <https://festivalofvoices.com/>

Great Basilicas of Italy Festival Tour, Italy, 2-7 July 2017. Festival celebrating the artistic heritage of two of Italy's most important churches. Under the leadership of artistic director Dr. Cameron

LaBarr, the mixed festival choir will perform repertoire that is significant to each of these wonderful concert spaces. Contact: Perform International, Email: info@performinternational.com - Website: www.perform-international.com

Spirituals and Gospel Music 2017, London and Paris, United Kingdom and France, 3-11 July 2017. Individual and combined festival concerts with Rollo Dilworth. Contact: Klconcerts, Email: info@klconcerts.com - Website: www.klconcerts.com

Italy 2017 Choir Festival with John Dickson, Rome & Tuscany, Italy, 3-11 June 2017. Festival staging Faure's Requiem. Individual concerts and combined festival concerts. Option to tour Florence and Venice. Contact: Klconcerts, Email: info@klconcerts.com - Website: www.klconcerts.com

World Youth Choir Session 2017, Pécs, Hungary, 4-25 July 2017. After the success of the EUROPA CANTAT XIX Festival in 2015, the World Youth Choir session for 2017 will be held in Pécs, Hungary with a following tour in Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia and Hungary. The selected singers for 2017 will have the chance to perform both classical and folk arrangements directed by conductors Zoltán Pad (Hungary) and Kennedy Okeyo Wakia (Kenya). Email: manager@worldyouthchoir.org - Website: www.worldyouthchoir.org

International Johannes Brahms Choir Festival and Competition, Wernigerode, Germany, 5-9 July 2017. Competition for choirs and music ensembles from all over the world. This competition, named after Johannes Brahms, puts a musical focus on this German composer and the German romantics of the 19th century. Contact: Förderverein Interkultur, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: www.interkultur.com

Musica Eterna Roma, Italy, 5-9 July 2017. For all kinds of choirs from all around the world. Contact: Meeting Music Inh. Pirosk Horv th e. K., Email: info@meeting-music.com - Website: www.meeting-music.com

Dublin Choral Festival, Ireland, 5-9 July 2017. Lend your voices to sing in a combined mixed-voice choir in Ireland's Fair City. The festival chorus will perform thrilling choral literature under the direction of Artistic Director Dr. Stan Engebretson – Chorale Artistic Director for the National Philharmonic. We look forward to seeing you for this exciting festival on The Emerald Isle! Contact: Music Celebrations International, LLC, Email: info@dublinchoralfestival.org - Website: <http://dublinchoralfestival.org/>

Cappadocia Music Festival, Ürgüp, Turkey, 5-9 July 2017. For choirs, orchestras and any kind of musical ensembles. Contact: BilgeSistem Bil. ve Yay. Hiz. Ltd. Sti., Email: info@musicfestinturkey.com - Website: www.musicfestinturkey.com

Rhapsody! International Music Festival, Prague, Czech Republic & Vienna, Salzburg, Austria, 6-16 July 2017. Performances in three of Europe's most musical and historical cities, workshop, musical exchanges, optional choral competition and sightseeing

tours. Contact: Sara Casar, Classical Movements, Inc., Email: Sara@ClassicalMovements.com - Website: <http://classicalmovements.org/rhap.htm>

International Youth Music Festival I, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 6-9 July 2017. International Festival for Youth and Children Choirs and Orchestras. Competition, workshop, concerts of sacred and secular music, bringing together talented young musicians from around the world. Apply before 15/04/2017. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: www.choral-music.sk

Antica Pompeii, Italy, 6-8 July 2017. For all kinds of choirs from all around the world. Contact: Meeting Music Inh. Pirosk Horv th e. K., Email: info@meeting-music.com - Website: www.meeting-music.com

35th International Choir Festival of Preveza, 23rd International Competition of Sacred Music, Preveza, Greece, 6-9 July 2017. For mixed, equal voices', children's, chamber vocal ensembles, mixed youth choirs & choirs of Byzantine chant. Repertory must include a compulsory piece, a piece composed before 1800, a piece composed during 1800 - 1950, a piece composed after 1950 & a folk song from the choir's country of origin. Contact: Choral Society "Armonia" of Prevesa, Email: prevezachoralfestival@gmail.com or armonia4@otenet.gr - Website: <http://prevezafest.blogspot.gr/>

8th International Sacred Music Choir Festival & Competition Laudate Dominum, Vilnius, Lithuania, 6-12 July 2017. For all choirs around the world. Contact: Gratulations, Email: info.gratulations@gmail.com - Website: www.gratulations.lt

11th Summa Cum Laude International Youth Music Festival, Vienna, Austria, 7-12 July 2017. Cross-cultural and musical exchange event including workshops, lectures, seminars, concerts in and around Vienna, competition with an international and highly renowned jury. Contact: Summa Cum Laude Youth Music Festival, Email: office@scfestival.org - Website: www.scfestival.org

4th International Choral Festival of Antonin Dvorak "DVORAK'S CHORAL SUMMER", Prague, Czech Republic, 7-8 July 2017. Competition open to amateur female, male, youth, mixed and children's choirs. Contact: ORFEA Festival and Organisational Agency, Email: incoming@orfea.cz - Website: www.or-fea.cz

EuroChoir 2017, Utrecht, Netherlands, 8-15 July 2017. 60 singers (18-30 years old) selected by member organisations of the European Choral Association – Europa Cantat rehearse and sing together. Contact: FENIARCO, Email: info@feniarco.it - Website: www.feniarco.it

Passion of Italy with Heather J. Buchanan, Rome, Florence and Venice, Italy, 8-13 July 2017. Individual and combined festival concerts for all choirs and singers. Contact: Klconcerts, Email: info@Klconcerts.com - Website: www.Klconcerts.com

4th International Choir Festival Coralua, Trondheim, Norway, 8-14 July 2017. For children, middle school and adult choirs. Choral workshops with excellent international conductors. Singing Tour in Norway, discover the beautiful village of Røros. Concerts in the best venues of Trondheim and Røros. Contact: Coralua, Email: trondheim@coralua.com - Website: www.coralua.com

Golden Voices of Barcelona, Spain, 9-13 July 2017. For both professional and amateur choirs from all around the world. Contact: Fiestalonia Milenio, SLU, Email: nika@fiestaloniamilenio.net - Website: www.fiestaloniamilenio.net

International Choir Festival InCanto Mediterraneo, Milazzo (Sicily), Italy, 9-15 July 2017.

First part of the festival non competitive, second part competitive in various categories. Contact: Associazione Corale "Cantica Nova", Email: festival@festivalincantomediterraneo.it - Website: www.festivalincantomediterraneo.it

1st Leonardo Da Vinci International Music Festival, Florence, Italy, 11-14 July 2017.

Competition and Festival for Choirs. Contact: Florence Choral, Email: chairman@florencechoral.com - Website: www.florencechoral.com

Classical Choral with David Lawrence, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia, 11-16 July 2017.

Mendelssohn's Oratorio Elijah with Hobart Chamber Orchestra. Workshops, rehearsals and performances. David Lawrence is one of the UK's most versatile conductors, working with orchestras and choirs of all shapes and sizes. In 2010 he was shortlisted for a Gramophone Award, and he holds the Guinness World Record for conducting the UK's largest choir. Contact: Festival of Voices Tasmania, Email: info@festivalofvoices.com - Website: <https://festivalofvoices.com/>

Gospel with Eric Dozier, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia, 11-16 July 2017.

Workshops, rehearsals and performances. Eric Dozier (US) is the former musical director for the World Famous Harlem Gospel Choir and the co-founder and Director of Arts

and Education for One Human Family Music Workshops, Inc., an organisation devoted to eradicating discrimination by 'Uniting the World..One Song at a Time.' As a cultural activist and music educator, Eric has been assisting communities in developing creative, inspiring contexts from which to launch campaigns of dynamic service to humanity for the last twenty years. Contact: Festival of Voices Tasmania, Email: info@festivalofvoices.com - Website: <https://festivalofvoices.com/>

A Cappella with Deke Sharon, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia, 11-16 July 2017.

Heralded as "The father of contemporary a cappella," (Entertainment Weekly), Deke Sharon has his a cappella fingers in many pies, arranging (Broadway's "In Transit"), music directing movies (Pitch Perfect 1, 2 & 3, The Social Network), and producing television's "The Sing Off" worldwide (US, Holland, China, South Africa), directing professional groups (Vocalosity, Voasis), performing (TotalVocal at Carnegie Hall), coaching (Lifetime's "Pitch Slapped"), producing albums (Straight No Chaser) and events (Camp A Cappella), publishing arrangements with Hal Leonard, while teaching and promoting a cappella worldwide. Contact: Festival of Voices Tasmania, Email: info@festivalofvoices.com - Website: <https://festivalofvoices.com/>

International Choral Program with Chris Burcin, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia, 11-16 July 2016.

Chris is an active choral conductor, music teacher and performer. He conducted the International Choral Program at the Festival of Voices in Tasmania (July 2015 and 2016) as well as festivals and workshops throughout Australia, New Zealand and Samoa. He will conduct at

the Pemulway National Male Voice Festival in Brisbane (July 2017), before coming to Festival of Voices to lead the International Choral Program. Contact: Festival of Voices Tasmania, Email: info@festivalofvoices.com - Website: <https://festivalofvoices.com/>

SINGMIT! Festival in Vienna, Austria, 13-15 July 2017.

For choirs and singers from around the globe, rehearsals with artistic director Gerald Wirth, workshops and performance of Schubert's "Mass in E-Flat Major No. 6" celebrating Schubert's 220th birthday. Contact: Encore Performance Tours, Email: encoretours@acis.com - Website: www.encoretours.com/go/singmit.cfm

Europa Cantat Junior 8, Lyon, France, 13-20 July 2017.

This famous festival for children and youth choirs will take place in Lyon, France for the first time. Lyon is the town where the French choral federation A Coeur Joie is based. Choral music has a special place in the cultural life of the city, with many children and adult choirs of all kinds. Concerts, ateliers and other choral activities. Apply before: Jan 31, 2017. Contact: Europa Cantat junior 8, Email: secretariat@choralies.org - Website: europacantatjunior.fr/en/

35th International Music Festival, Cantonigrós, Barcelona, Spain, 13-16 July 2017.

Competition and exhibition of music for mixed choir, female voices, children's choir and popular dances. Contact: Joana Gonzalo & Irina Isern – FIMC 2013, Email: fimc@fimc.es - Website: www.fimc.es

Zêzerearts Choral Festival 2017, Tomar, Portugal, 13-22 July 2017.

Join the Festival Choir to rehearse and perform works by Mozart, Rachmaninoff

and Tchaikovsky, in addition to singing Haydn's Creation with the ZêzereArts Symphonic Chorus. Led by Brian MacKay (formerly principal conductor of Chamber Choir Ireland), the ZêzereArts Festival offers choral singers the opportunity to perform wonderful repertoire in beautiful surroundings. Contact: Ferreira do Zêzere, Email: zezerearts@gmail.com - Website: www.zezerearts.com/

6th Bali International Choir Festival 2017, Denpasar Bali, Indonesia, 14-20 July 2017.

Bali Cantat, Choir clinics and workshops, evaluation performances, friendship concerts, choir competition, choir championship, Grand Prix championship, 'Meet the Jury' consultation. Contact: Bandung Choral Society, Tommyanto Kandisaputra, Email: mailbcsevents@gmail.com - Website: www.bandungchoral.com

11th International Choral Festival, Rome & City of Vatican, Italy, July 2017.

For choral groups. Contact: Glob Festival, Email: info@globfestival.com - Website: www.festivalinternazionale.com

4th Asia International Choral Festival & Asia Choral Education General Assembly, Singapore, 15-20 July 2017.

For experts, scholars and choral conductors from all over Asia and the world. International choral competition, communication concert, choral champion's night, presentations by choral experts, academic exchange, international choral master classes, topic seminars, round table conferences. Apply before Mar 30, 2017 Contact: Asian Choirs Association Secretariat, Naomi Zhang, Email: 459192519@qq.com - Website: www.acahk.cn

3rd European Choir Games and Grand Prix of Nations, Riga, Latvia, 16-23 July 2017.

Competition for all types of choirs in different categories and difficulties with a focus on chamber choirs. Parallel to the European Choir Games, Grand Prix of Nations, a competition for the best amateur choirs in the world. Contact: Förderverein Interkultur, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: www.interkultur.com

International Choral Music Camp-Retreat Sacred Music of Lithuanian Composers, Vilnius, Lithuania, 16-23 July 2017.

For individual singers or choirs. The repertoire will consist of sacred music pieces composed by Lithuanian composers for mixed choir a cappella (in Latin). Music sheets will be sent via email within 5 days after registration. Contact: Gratulations, Email: info.gratulationes@gmail.com - Website: www.gratulationes.lt

Word Youth & Children's Choir Festival, Hong Kong, China, 16-21 July 2017.

13 competition categories, 4 international standard venues, international choral judging system, more than 10 masterclasses and workshops, conducting master course. Contact: Hong Kong Treble Choirs' Association, Email: info@hktreblechoir.com - Website: <http://www.hktreblechoir.com/wyccf/about/>

Perform Verdi Requiem in Barcelona, Spain, 17-27 July 2017.

For choirs and individual singers to perform the Verdi Requiem in the Palau de la Musica in Barcelona under the direction of Jonathan Griffith. Contact: Distinguished Concerts International, New York (DCINY), Email: Diane@DCINY.org - Website: www.DCINY.org

The Creation, A Sing Along Concert of the World Festival Singers, Riga, Latvia, 19 July 2017.

The project World Festival Singers started in 2015 and unites about 1.400 singers from all continents in spectacular performances of some of the masterpieces of the choral symphonic literature. In 2017 singers from all over the World are invited to Riga for a distinguished performance of Joseph Haydn's "The Creation" in Riga Dome Cathedral. The project is part of the - a very special recognition of the international Sing Along tradition. Contact: Förderverein Interkultur, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: www.interkultur.com

Sarteano Chamber Choral Conducting Workshop, Sarteano, Italy, 19-30 July 2017.

Three levels: full conductor, conducting auditor and singer. Conducting master classes on Canto Evolutivo with Bronislaw Falinska (19-20 July), on A Personal Approach to Choral Score Preparation: Examining the Essentials and the Extras with Simon Carrington (21 July) and on Musica Sacra (22-30 July). Contact: Sarteano Chamber Choral Conducting Workshop, Gail Leicher, Email: sarteanochoral@rcn.com - Website: www.sarteanochoralworkshop.com

Paris Rhythms, France, 20-23 July 2017.

Competition of various genres in choral and vocal singing, open to amateurs and professional teams of all ages. Contact: Fiestalonia Milenio, SLU, Email: nika@fiestaloniamilenio.net - Website: www.fiestaloniamilenio.net

IHLOMBE South African Choral Festival, Cape Town, Pretoria, Johannesburg & Game Park, South Africa, 21-29 July 2017.

Travel to Cape Town, Pretoria, Johannesburg & a Game Park. Experience

African rhythms, dancing and singing. Open to all choirs, each conducted by their own music director. Contact: Jayci Thomas, Classical Movements, Inc., Email: jayci@ClassicalMovements.com - Website: http://classicalmovements.org/s_af.htm

11th World Symposium on Choral Music, Barcelona, Spain, 22-29 July 2017. Eight days to listen to 26 of the world's premiere choirs, 30 outstanding lectures on choral music, music exhibition, gala concerts, open sings - all in the exciting city of Barcelona. Also on <https://www.facebook.com/wscm11bcn/> and <https://twitter.com/wscm11>. Contact: International Federation for Choral Music, Email: office@ifcm.net - Website: <http://www.wscm11.cat/>

International Youth Music Festival II, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 23-26 July 2017. International Festival for Youth and Children Choirs and Orchestras. Competition, workshop, concerts of sacred and secular music, bringing together talented young musicians from around the world. Apply before 15/04/2017. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: www.choral-music.sk

World Peace Choral Festival Vienna 2017, Austria, 26-29 July 2017. Together with the famous Vienna Boys choir, children's and youth choirs as well as adult choirs from around the world will do concerts, workshops, celebrations and competitions for the world peace. Contact: Stefanie Rauscher, Email: info@wpcf.at - Website: www.wpcf.at

10th Grand Prix Pattaya, Thailand, 26-30 July 2017.

Festival and Grand Prix competition including 15 categories for all kind of choirs from around the world. Apply before: April 17. Contact: Festa Musicale, Email: info@festamusicale.com - Website: www.festamusicale.com

6th International Campus Music Festival, Stuttgart, Germany, 28-31 July 2017.

For youth choirs from all around the world. Contact: Internationaler Volkskulturkreis e.V., Email: kripp@volkskulturkreis.de - Website: www.volkskultur-de.org

Africa Cantat, Kinshasa, DR Congo, 6-12 Aug 2017.

Initiated by the African Confederation of Choral Music (ACCM) with the support of the Congolese Federation of Choral Music and the partnership of IFCM, A Coeur Joie International and Europa Cantat, the festival will be an ideal crossroad to discover and exchange around the rich authenticity of the African choral heritage. Choirs, choral conductors and lecturers from all around the world, Africa is eager to welcome in the heart of the continent, to share the warmth of its hospitality and its rhythms and colors. Contact: African Confederation for Choral Music, Email: audemunicator@gmail.com

Bratislava Cantat I, Slovak Republic, 17-20 Aug 2017.

International Choir and Orchestras Festival. Competition, concerts of choir and orchestral music. The Slovak capital Bratislava opens its gates and invites choirs to its charming centre in summer. Apply before April 15th 2017. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: www.choral-music.sk

Al Sole della Sardegna International Choral Festival, Sant'Antioco, Italy, 23 Aug-3 Sep 2017.

For all choirs of all types. Contact: Prof. Giuliano Rinaldi, Email: office@festivalalsoledellasardegna.eu - Website: www.festivalalsoledellasardegna.eu

Istanbul International Chorus Competition and Festival, Istanbul, Turkey, 24-28 Aug 2017.

For children, female, male, mixed choirs and folk groups. Contact: Istanbul Harman Folklor, Email: istanbul@istanbulchorus.com - Website: www.istanbulchorus.com

2nd Misatango Choir Festival Vienna, Austria, 30 Aug-3 Sep 2017.

Singers and musicians from all over the world come together in Vienna to bring an evening full of tango rhythms and melodies to the stage. Under the baton of Mtro Saul Zaks, with composer Martín Palmeri at the piano and international soloists, participating choirs will jointly perform the "Misa a Buenos Aires," a contemporary roman mass in an authentic Argentinean tango style – a perfect symbiosis of music and spirituality. Contact: Pegasus Businesskey & Concerts-Austria, Email: c.bender@businesskey.at - Website: www.misatango.com/

18th EUROTREFF 2017, Wolfenbüttel, Germany, 6-10 Sep 2017.

Concerts and ateliers for children's, girls' and mixed youth choirs. Possibility of regional meeting with a German choir before or after the festival. Ateliers for children's choirs with Josep Vila Jover (Spain), Robert Göstl and Frank-Steffen Elster (Germany). Ateliers for girls choirs with Aira Birzi a (Latvia) and Merel Martens (Netherlands). Ateliers for mixed youth choirs with Victoria Ely (Australia) and Panda van Proosdij (Netherlands). Apply before Jan

31, 2017. Contact: Arbeitskreis Musik in der Jugend AMJ, Email: info@amj-musik.de - Website: www.amj-musik.de/eurotreff2017

ON STAGE with Interkultur in Brussels, Belgium, 7-10 Sep 2017.

No competitions but a buzz of choral activities: Make Brussels your stage during your choir tour. The schedule will include touristic activities (sight-seeing), short concerts in touristic places, a workshop with a local choir and a joint concert of all the participants. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <http://onstage.interkultur.com/>

IstraMusica, Pore, Croatia, 9 Sep-8 Oct 2017.

With this event we offer you the opportunity to determine how and when you and your choir make an appearance. Over the course of one month, between 9 September and 8 October 2017, we will arrange all your concerts – however impressive or intimate in scale. We organize workshops and arrange opportunities to meet with other choirs from around the world. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <http://www.interkultur.com/events/2017/porec/>

3rd International Festival of Sacred Music Francesco Bruni, Italy, Sep 2017.

Festival with aim to renew the interest in the Sacred Music in Southern Italy. Contact: International Festival of Sacred Music Francesco Bruni, Email: direzione@festivalfrancescobruni.com - Website: www.festivalfrancescobruni.com

ON STAGE with Interkultur in Lisbon, Portugal, 14-17 Sep 2017.

No competitions but a buzz of choral activities: Make Lisbon your stage during your choir tour. The schedule will include touristic activities (sight-seeing), short

concerts in touristic places, a workshop with a local choir and a joint concert of all the participants. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <http://onstage.interkultur.com/>

ON STAGE with Interkultur in Paris, France, 21-24 Sep 2017.

No competitions but a buzz of choral activities: Make Paris your stage during your choir tour. The schedule will include touristic activities (sight-seeing), short concerts in touristic places, a workshop with a local choir and a joint concert of all the participants. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <http://onstage.interkultur.com/>

Rimini International Choral Competition, Rimini, Italy, 21-24 Sep 2017.

Competition for Equal Voices, Mixed, Chamber, Youth, Children, Sacred Music, Folk and Spiritual Choirs. Festival under the Patronage of the EU Parliament and the President of the Republic of Italy. Common Sung Service at the Renaissance Rimini Cathedral. Contact: Rimini International Choral Competition, Email: info@riminichoral.it - Website: www.riminichoral.it

The Voice of Wealth, Lloret de Mar, Spain, 22-27 Sep 2017.

International choir festival and competition for all kind of choirs from all over the world. Contact: Monolit Festivals, Email: info@monolitfestivals.com - Website: <http://monolitfestivals.com/>

1st Andrea del Verrocchio International Music Festival, Florence, Italy, 26-29 Sep 2017.

Competition and Festival for Choirs. Contact: Florence Choral, Email: chairman@florencechoral.com - Website: www.florencechoral.com

Bratislava Cantat II, Slovak Republic, 5-8 Oct 2017.

International Choir and Orchestras Festival. Competition, concerts of choir and orchestral music. The Slovak capital Bratislava opens its gates and invites choirs to its charming centre in autumn. Apply before August 1st 2017. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: www.choral-music.sk

9th Choral Singing Contest of South American Folk and Popular Music, La Plata, Argentina, 6-9 Oct 2017.

Three categories: mixed choirs, mixed vocal ensembles and equal voices choirs (male or female) with two compulsory works for each category and self-selected works. Selected choirs will participate in the competitions, where an international Adjudicating Panel will judge their performances. Competitions, concerts and social activities in La Plata area. Apply before May 31, 2017. Contact: Asociación Argentina para la Música Coral, Email: aamcantlp@ciudad.com.ar - Website: www.aamcant.org.ar

14th International Choir Contest of Flanders-Maasmechelen, Belgium, 6-8 Oct 2017.

Limited to ensembles from 12 to 40 equal voices and 16 to 40 mixed voices. Contact: International Choir Contest of Flanders, Gert Vanderlee, Email: info@ikv-maasmechelen.be - Website: www.ikv-maasmechelen.be

International Choir Competition and Festival Kalamata 2017, Greece, 11-15 Oct 2017.

Competition for all types of choirs in different categories of difficulty, line-ups and musical genres. Contact: Förderverein Interkultur, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: www.interkultur.com

12th In Canto sul Garda International Choir Competition, Riva del Garda, Italy, 14-18 Oct 2017. For all kinds of choirs from all around the world. Categories for senior choirs. Contact: Meeting Music Inh. Pirosk Horv th e. K., Email: info@meeting-music.com - Website: www.meeting-music.com

Let the Peoples Sing Competition, Helsinki, Finland, 14-15 Oct 2017. Open to amateur vocal ensembles in three choral categories: Children and Youth, Adult and Open (i.e. a specific musical style or genre). LTPS will take place in Helsinki's architecturally stunning Musiikkitalo (Music Centre) Contact: Eur(o)radio Operated by EBU, Email: robineau@ebu.ch - Website: www.ebu.ch/member-services/radio-projects/let-the-peoples-sing

International Choir Festival Corearte Barcelona 2017, Spain, 16-22 Oct 2017. Non-competitive event open to choirs of various backgrounds from all over the world. Contact: Festival Internacional de Coros Corearte Barcelona, Email: info@corearte.es - Website: www.corearte.es

4th International Choral Festival Assisi Pax Mundi, Italy, 19-22 Oct 2017. For choral groups. Contact: Glob Festival, Email: info@globfestival.com - Website: www.festivalinternazionale.com

Cantate Barcelona, Spain, 20-24 Oct 2017. Choirs from across the globe participate in this annual festival. Share your music in towns throughout Spain's Costa Brava region. Make new friends during an evening of music with a local choir, and sing at the beautiful Auditori Palau de Congressos in Girona. Taste the local paella and enjoy the rhythms for which the region is famous at the festive

closing ceremony! Contact: Music Contact International, Email: travel@music-contact.com - Website: www.music-contact.com

Canta al mar 2017 International Choral Festival, Calella, Barcelona, Spain, 25-29 Oct 2017. Competition for mixed, male, female, children's and youth choirs. No compulsory pieces required. Contact: Förderverein Interkultur, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: www.interkultur.com

Miami Voice 2017, Florida, USA, 1-5 Nov 2017. Conductors and singers have the possibility to attend workshops with Morten Lauridsen and other choral experts and to assimilate the beauty of Florida's coast: This stunning region represents a unique composition of land, sea and sky and is known as one of the best holiday destinations worldwide. Contact: Förderverein Interkultur, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: www.interkultur.com

International Choral Festival of Malta 2017, Italy, 1-6 Nov 2017. For choral groups. Contact: Glob Festival, Email: info@globfestival.com - Website: www.festivalinternazionale.com

International Choir Competition of Tolosa, Spain, 1-5 Nov 2017. Its aim is to bring together the best choirs in the world: exchange of styles, interpretation, choral literature, vocal education and ways of each country and information about the musical and cultural traditions of the Basque Country. Contact: Centro de Iniciativas de Tolosa, Email: cit@cittolosa.com - Website: www.cittolosa.com

Cantate Dresden, Germany, 2-5 Nov 2017. For all kind of choirs from all over the world. Contact: Music&Friends, Email: info@musicandfriends.org - Website:

www.musicandfriends.com/html/cantate_dresden.html

International Budgetary Festival/Competition The Place of Holiday, Spain, 3-6 Nov 2017. Competition of various genres in choral and vocal singing, open to amateurs and professional teams of all ages. Contact: Fiestalonia Milenio, SLU, Email: nika@fiestaloniamilenio.net - Website: www.fiestaloniamilenio.net

ON STAGE with Interkultur in Prague, Czech Republic, 9-12 Nov 2017. No competitions but a buzz of choral activities: Make Prague your stage during your choir tour. The schedule will include touristic activities (sight-seeing), short concerts in touristic places, a workshop with a local choir and a joint concert of all the participants. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <http://onstage.interkultur.com/>

Vienna Advent Sing, Austria, 23-27 Nov, 30 Nov-4 Dec, 7-11, 14-18 Dec 2017. Vienna welcomes choirs from around the world to share their voices in the music capital of Europe. By invitation of the Cultural Affairs Department, sing in the magnificent City Hall and breathtaking Melk Abbey. Exchange with local schools and senior centers and experience the festive pre-holiday atmosphere in this enchanting city with Christmas markets filling the city squares! Contact: Music Contact International, Email: vienna@music-contact.com - Website: www.music-contact.com

27th International Festival of Advent and Christmas Music with Petr Eben Prize, Prague, Czech Republic, 1-2 Dec 2017. Competition open to amateur female, male, youth, mixed and children's choirs. Contact: ORFEA Festival and Organisational

Agency, Email: incoming@orfea.cz
- Website: www.or-fea.cz

International Festival of Advent and Christmas Music, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 3-6 Dec 2017.

Competition, workshop, concerts in churches and on the Christmas markets stage. Your songs and performances will contribute to a truly heart-warming atmosphere of Christmas. Apply before October 1st 2017. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: www.choral-music.sk

International Festival/Contest Gran Fiesta, Spain, 3-6 Dec 2017.

Competition of various genres in choral and vocal singing, open to amateurs and professional teams of all ages. Contact: Fiestalonia Milenio, SLU, Email: nika@fiestaloniamilenio.net - Website: www.fiestaloniamilenio.net

Vocal Competition Voices of Costa Brava, Lloret de Mar, Spain, 3-6 Dec 2017.

Competition of various genres in choral and vocal singing, open to amateurs and professional teams of all ages. Contact: Fiestalonia Milenio, SLU, Email: nika@fiestaloniamilenio.net - Website: www.fiestaloniamilenio.net

International Festival/Competition Talents de Paris, France, 5-8 Dec 2017.

Competition of various genres in choral and vocal singing, open to amateurs and professional teams of all ages. Contact: Fiestalonia Milenio, SLU, Email: nika@fiestaloniamilenio.net - Website: www.fiestaloniamilenio.net

25th International Sacred, Advent & Christmas Music Festival and Choir Competition Cantate Domino Kaunas, Kaunas, Lithuania, 14-17 Dec 2017.

Concerts in city halls, churches, choir competition in many categories, workshops. Contact: Kaunas club "Cantate Domino", Email: info@cantatedomino.lt

kaunascantat.lt - Website: www.kaunascantat.lt

International Festival/Contest Gran Fiesta, Spain, 7-10 Jan 2018.

Competition of various genres in choral and vocal singing, open to amateurs and professional teams of all ages. Contact: Fiestalonia Milenio, SLU, Email: nika@fiestaloniamilenio.net - Website: www.fiestaloniamilenio.net

Vocal Competition Voices of Costa Brava, Lloret de Mar, Spain, 7-10 Jan 2018.

Competition of various genres in choral and vocal singing, open to amateurs and professional teams of all ages. Contact: Fiestalonia Milenio, SLU, Email: nika@fiestaloniamilenio.net - Website: www.fiestaloniamilenio.net

3rd Misatango Choir Festival Vienna, Austria, 31 Jan-4 Feb 2018.

Singers and musicians from all over the world come together in Vienna to bring an evening full of tango rhythms and melodies to the stage. Under the baton of Mtro Saul Zaks, with composer Martín Palmeri at the piano and international soloists, participating choirs will jointly perform the "Misa a Buenos Aires", a contemporary roman mass in an authentic Argentinean tango style – a perfect symbiosis of music and spirituality. Contact: Pegasus Businesskey & Concerts-Austria, Email: c.bender@businesskey.at - Website: www.misatango.com/

15th Concorso Corale Internazionale, Riva del Garda, Italy, 25-29 Mar 2018.

For all kinds of choirs from all around the world. Contact: Meeting Music Inh. Pirosek Horvath e. K., Email: deborah.bertoni@meeting-music.com - Website: www.meeting-music.com

66th European Music Festival for Young People, Neerpelt, Belgium, 27 Apr-2 May 2018.

Categories: children's, single-voice youth, mixed-voice youth, pennant series children, pennant series single-voice youth, pennant series mixed-voice youth, free series: vocal and vocal-instrumental ensembles such as close harmony, vocal jazz, folk music, gospel & spiritual. Contact: Europees Muziekfestival voor de Jeugd, Email: info@emj.be - Website: www.emj.be

World of Choirs, Montecatini Terme, Toscana, Italy, 29 Apr-2 May 2018.

All the participants will demonstrate their skills on one of the best stages of the Adriatic coast. Invites all amateur choirs! Italy will not leave you indifferent. Contact: Fiestalonia Milenio, SLU, Email: nika@fiestaloniamilenio.net - Website: www.fiestaloniamilenio.net

64th Cork International Choral Festival, Ireland, 2-6 May 2018.

For 5 wonderful days Cork City and County will welcome some of the finest amateur Competitive and Non - Competitive choirs from around the world for a programme of choral concerts, national and international competition, and internationally renowned performers as thousands of participants bring Cork to life. Join us in Cork for one of Europe's Premier Choral Festivals. Bringing a city to life with song since 1954! Contact: Cork International Choral Festival, Email: info@corkchoral.ie - Website: www.corkchoral.ie

14th International Choir Competition & Festival Bad Ischl, Austria, 2-6 May 2018.

The comprehensive and friendly support by members of the choirs of Bad Ischl creates a family and relaxed atmosphere for this festival which features competitions gala concerts, friendship concerts and participation in masses. Contact:

Interkultur Foundation e.V., Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: www.interkultur.com

Sea Sun Festival & Competition, Costa Brava, Spain, 6-11 May, 17-22 June, 8-13 July, 23-28 Sep 2018. Competition of various genres in choral and vocal singing, open to amateurs and professional teams of all ages. Contact: Fiestalonia Milenio, SLU, Email: nika@fiestalonia.net - Website: www.fiestalonia.net

11th European Festival of Youth Choirs, Basel, Switzerland, 8-13 May 2018. Renowned platform for 18 highest qualified children s and youth choirs (age limit 25) from Europe. During five days the participating choirs give over 40 concerts for an enthusiastic audience of around 25,000 spectators. All singers are accommodated in local host families. They meet other outstanding choirs in workshops, at parties and on a boat trip. Apply before 31 Jan 2017. Contact: Europäisches Jugendchor Festival Basel, Kathrin Renggli, Email: info@ejcf.ch - Website: www.ejcf.ch

CantaRode International Choral Festival & Competition, Kerkrade, The Netherlands, 10-15 May 2018. Open to mixed voices 16-40 singers and equal voices 12-40 singers. Apply before December 15, 2017. Contact: Stichting Kerkrade, Email: info@cantarode.nl - Website: www.cantarode.nl

Musica Sacra International Festival, Marktoberdorf, Germany, 18-23 May 2018. Musica Sacra is a unique festival which brings music and dance from the five major world religions into Allgäu region, organising concerts in which Christians, Jews, Moslems, Buddhists and Hindus meet and perform together. Contact: Musica Sacra

International, Email: office@modfestivals.org - Website: www.modfestivals.org

19th Fort Worden Children's Choir Festival, Port Townsend WA, USA, 25-26 May 2018. Open to all treble choirs. Guest Conductor: Dr. Rollo Dilworth. Contact: Stephanie Charbonneau, Email: fortwordenfestival@gmail.com - Website: www.fortwordenfestival.com

Sing'n'Joy Vienna 2018 4th Choir Festival & 31th International Franz Schubert Choir Competition, Austria, 30 May-3 June 2018. For the 31st time, the Franz Schubert Choir Competition and Festival will take place in the European Capital of Music, Vienna. The Sing'n'Joy concept focuses on the traditional Schubert competition but also features intercultural meetings and performances in Friendship Concerts. Contact: Förderverein Interkultur, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: www.interkultur.com

Sing Along Concert in Paris - World Festival Singers, France, 1-3 June 2018. The last years have proved, that the Sing Along Concert by the Berlin Radio Choir was not only a good idea, but with constantly 1.300 singers from all over the world a manifested grand in Berlins' musical life. In year 2018 the Rundfunkchor Berlin, Simon Halsey and singers from all over the world are invited to perform Georg Friedrich Händel's "Messiah" in the new Philharmonic of Paris. Contact: Interkultur e.V., Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: www.interkultur.com

8th International Robert Schumann Choir Competition, Zwickau, Germany, 6-10 June 2018. Competition and Festival, which in 2018 celebrates its 8th

anniversary, revolving around Schumann's compositional works and his contemporaries while focusing not only on the cultivation, but also on a new interpretation of these great 19th century works. Very special event taking place at the same time as the celebration of Schumann's 206th birthday on June 8. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: www.interkultur.com

Czech Choir Festival Sborové slavnosti, Hradec Králové, Czech Republic, 7-10 June 2018. For any kind of choirs from all over the world. Contact: Czech Choir Festival Sborové slavnosti, Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CzechChoirFestival/> - Website: www.sboroveslavnosti.cz

Sing Austria with Angela Broeker, Vienna & Salzburg, Austria, 16-23 June 2018. Individual and festival concerts under the direction of Angela Broeker. Contact: Klconcerts, Email: info@klconcerts.com - Website: www.klconcerts.com

International Contest Sun of Italy, Montecatini Terme, Toscana, Italy, 17-20 June, 8-11 July 2018. Competition of various genres in choral and vocal singing, open to amateurs and professional teams of all ages. Contact: Fiestalonia Milenio, SLU, Email: nika@fiestalonia.net - Website: www.fiestalonia.net

9th Rome International Choral Festival, Italy, 21-25 June 2018. Announcing the ninth-annual Festival Corale Internazionale di Roma from June 21-25, 2018 with Z. Randall Stroope! The festival will feature Mass participation at St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican and a formal finale concert at Rome's famed Saint Mary above Minerva Basilica on June 24th, 2018 The festival chorus will

include mixed-voice singers and choirs from across North America that will come together to rehearse and perform en masse under the baton of maestro Z. Randall Stroope. Tour and festival production is produced by Music Celebrations International. Contact: Music Celebrations International, LLC, Email: info@romechoralfestival.org - Website: www.romechoralfestival.org

Salzburg Choral Festival Jubilate Mozart!, Austria, 27 June-8 July 2018. The festival will feature a large chorus consisting of mixed voice choirs. Three days of festival rehearsals, mingling side-by-side with singers from a variety of backgrounds will lead festival participants to a grand finale concert in the historic and stunning Salzburger Dom. Under the direction of Dr. Eph Ehly, Professor Emeritus at the Conservatory of Music, University of Missouri-Kansas City, the festival chorus will perform outstanding classical works selected by Dr. Ehly. János Czifra, Domkapellmeister of the Dom, will conduct Mozart's Mass in C Major, "Coronation," KV 317, accompanied by the Salzburger Domorchestra. Contact: Music Celebrations International, LLC, Email: info@mozartchoralfestival.org - Website: mozartchoralfestival.org

Serenade! Washington, DC Choral Festival, USA, 28 June-2 July 2018. For youth and adult choirs, concerts, workshops, musical exchanges, optional choral competition and sightseeing. Contact: Sara Casar, Classical Movements, Email: Sara@ClassicalMovements.com - Website: <http://classicalmovements.org/dc.htm>

International Choral Kathaumixw, Powell River, Canada, 3-7 July 2018. Join choirs from around the world in 20 concerts, competitions, common singing, conductor's seminars, and social events on the shores of Canada's magnificent Pacific Coast. Guest Artists and International Jury. Extension Tours available. Apply before November 1, 2017. Contact: Powell River Academy of Music, Email: info@kathaumixw.org - Website: www.kathaumixw.org

10th World Choir Games, Tshwane, South Africa, 4-14 July 2018. Large competition for choirs from all around the world. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: www.interkultur.com/events/world-choir-games/tshwane-2018/

Rhapsody! International Music Festival, Prague, Czech Republic & Vienna, Salzburg, Austria, 5-15 July 2018. Performances in three of Europe's most musical and historical cities, workshop, musical exchanges, optional choral competition and sightseeing tours. Contact: Sara Casar, Classical Movements, Inc., Email: Sara@ClassicalMovements.com - Website: <http://classicalmovements.org/rhap.htm>

36th International Choir Festival of Preveza, 24th International Competition of Sacred Music, Preveza, Greece, 5-8 July 2018. For mixed, equal voices, children's, chamber vocal ensembles, mixed youth choirs & choirs of Byzantine chant. Repertory must include a compulsory piece, a piece composed before 1800, a piece composed during 1800 - 1950, a piece composed after 1950 & a folk song from the choir's country of origin. Contact: Choral Society "Armonia" of Preveza, Email: armonia4@otenet.gr - Website: <http://prevezafest.blogspot.gr/>

12th Summa Cum Laude International Youth Music Festival, Vienna, Austria, 6-11 July 2018. Cross-cultural and musical exchange event including workshops, lectures, seminars, concerts in and around Vienna, competition with an international and highly renowned jury. Contact: Summa Cum Laude Youth Music Festival, Email: office@sclfestival.org - Website: www.sclfestival.org

Golden Voices of Barcelona, Spain, 8-12 July 2018. For both professional and amateur choirs from all around the world. Contact: Fiestalonia Milenio, SLU, Email: nika@fiestaloniamilenio.net - Website: www.fiestaloniamilenio.net

Paris Rhythms, France, 19-22 July 2018. Competition of various genres in choral and vocal singing, open to amateurs and professional teams of all ages. Contact: Fiestalonia Milenio, SLU, Email: nika@fiestaloniamilenio.net - Website: www.fiestaloniamilenio.net

IHLOMBE South African Choral Festival, Cape Town, Pretoria, Johannesburg & Game Park, South Africa, 20-28 July 2018. Travel to Cape Town, Pretoria, Johannesburg & a Game Park. Experience African rhythms, dancing and singing. Open to all choirs, each conducted by their own music director. Contact: Jayci Thomas, Classical Movements, Inc., Email: jayci@ClassicalMovements.com - Website: http://classicalmovements.org/s_af.htm

World Peace Choral Festival Vienna 2018, Austria, 25-28 July 2018. Together with the famous Vienna Boys choir, children's and youth choirs as well as adult choirs from around the world will do concerts, workshops, celebrations and competitions for the world peace. Contact: Stefanie Rauscher, Email: info@worldpeacechoralfestival.org

wpcf.at - Website: www.wpcf.at

Europa Cantat Festival 2018, Tallinn, Estonia, 27 July-5 Aug 2018. Spectacular vocal festival with participants from Europe and beyond. Workshops by international conductors in all vocal genres. Open singing, concerts: sing & listen, international contacts. Contact: European Choral Association – Europa Cantat, Email: info@ecpecs2015.hu - Website: www.ecpecs2015.hu

San Juan Canta International Choir Competition and Festival, Argentina, 16-21 Aug 2018. Festival and Competition, available in three categories (mixed choirs and male and female ensembles). An international jury of great prestige, important monetary prizes, singing in the Auditorium Juan Victoria (a stage highly regarded by its privileged acoustics) as main venue of the event, exchanges with foreign choirs, concerts and workshops, join the natural beauties and the multi-awarded wines that San Juan province offers. Apply before June 25, 2017. Contact: María Elina Mayorga, Email: sanjuancoral@gmail.com - Website: www.sanjuancoral.com.ar

Canta al mar 2018 International Choral Festival, Calella, Barcelona, Spain, 25-29 Oct 2017. The festival "Canta al mar" has become an essential activity in INTERKULTUR's event calendar. All concert and competition venues in Calella are within walking distance and can therefore be combined ideally with a pleasant stroll through the historic center - a great way for choirs to meet, sing together in Friendship Concerts and get to know other nations and their individual traditions. Contact: Förderverein Interkultur, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: www.interkultur.com

International Choir Competition of Tolosa, Spain, 31 Oct-4 Nov 2018. Its aim is to bring together the best choirs in the world: exchange of styles, interpretation, choral literature, vocal education and ways of each country and information about the musical and cultural traditions of the Basque Country. Contact: Centro de Iniciativas de Tolosa, Email: cit@cittolosa.com - Website: www.cittolosa.com

International Budgetary Festival/Competition The Place of Holiday, Spain, 2-5 Nov 2018. Competition of various genres in choral and vocal singing, open to amateurs and professional teams of all ages. Contact: Fiestalonia Milenio, SLU, Email: nika@fiestaloniamilenio.net - Website: www.fiestaloniamilenio.net

International Festival/Contest Gran Fiesta, Spain, 2-5 Dec 2018. Competition of various genres in choral and vocal singing, open to amateurs and professional teams of all ages. Contact: Fiestalonia Milenio, SLU, Email: nika@fiestaloniamilenio.net - Website: www.fiestaloniamilenio.net

Vocal Competition Voices of Costa Brava, Lloret de Mar, Spain, 2-5 Dec 2018. Competition of various genres in choral and vocal singing, open to amateurs and professional teams of all ages. Contact: Fiestalonia Milenio, SLU, Email: nika@fiestaloniamilenio.net - Website: www.fiestaloniamilenio.net

International Festival/Competition Talents de Paris, France, 11-14 Dec 2018. Competition of various genres in choral and vocal singing, open to amateurs and professional teams of all ages. Contact: Fiestalonia Milenio, SLU, Email: nika@fiestaloniamilenio.net - Website: www.fiestaloniamilenio.net

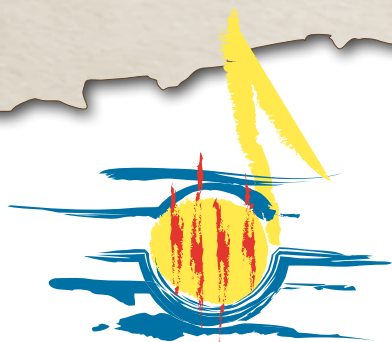
Vocal Competition Voices of Costa Brava, Lloret de Mar, Spain, 6-9 Jan 2019. Competition of various genres in choral and vocal singing, open to amateurs and professional teams of all ages. Contact: Fiestalonia Milenio, SLU, Email: nika@fiestaloniamilenio.net - Website: www.fiestaloniamilenio.net

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65th Cork International Choral Festival, Ireland, 1-5 May 2019. For 5 wonderful days Cork City and County will welcome some of the finest amateur Competitive and Non - Competitive choirs from around the world for a programme of choral concerts, national and international competition, and internationally renowned performers as thousands of participants bring Cork to life. Join us in Cork for one of Europe's Premier Choral Festivals. Bringing a city to life with song since 1954! Contact: Cork International Choral Festival, Email: info@corkchoral.ie - Website: www.corkchoral.ie

16th International Chamber Choir Competition, Marktoberdorf, Germany, 7-12 June 2019. Two categories: Mixed Choirs and Female Choirs. Compulsory work for each category. Apply before October 11, 2018. Contact: Modfestivals, International Chamber Choir Competition, Email: office@modfestivals.org - Website: www.modfestivals.org

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