



April 2025 IFCMeNEWS Unison, Online Cafe, What Else?

IFCM Online Café 2025 on 22 March 2025 at 2PM CET: Participating in festivals, competitions and choral events with your choirs

Did you miss it? You can still watch [here](#) (after login)

“Travel for a choir is a gift,” says **Carmen Acevedo**. Choral events are not just about competition, they are about growth, connection and cultural exchange, and creating unforgettable memories. **Jurģis Cābulis**’ best memories relate to his choirs. His credo is “the choir is a reflection of the conductor”; his strategy is to prepare his choir technically, artistically, and mentally.

According to **Lim Ai Hooi**, it’s all about choice, choice and choice. Choirs need to go out of their own country to get more experience and exposure, but also to know where they stand on the international scene. Ai Hooi also shared her experience as organiser of the Singapore International Choral Festival.



Our three guests gave so much advice to follow:

Know when your choir is ready for competitions. Look for something challenging but that will make the choir successful. Your choir is a brand; show it of. Be realistic in your aspirations. Let your choir shine. Treat every singer equally and play as a team. Inspire your singers but be inspired by them and make them feel important. Represent your culture with pride. Build your programme like a story. Start researching and fundraising early. Plan your finances carefully. Be aware of the early bird discount. Consider your singers’ availability. Intensify rehearsals. Make sure your application stands out. Plan your accommodation, meals, and schedule carefully. Don’t overwhelm your singers by entering too many categories. Competitions are a challenge; be prepared to lose. See the benefits for your choir... and much more in the recording available to IFCM members [here](#) (after login).

Unison – Two more episodes are ready on Spotify and YouTube

Since the last publication of the IFCMeNEWS, YOUNG IFCM members have interviewed two other personalities of the choral scene.

Sponsored by Azrieli Music Prizes of the Azrieli Foundation

2026
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ATTENTION: COMPOSERS



INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR CHORAL MUSIC monthly electronic newsletter

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María Guinand, choral and orchestral conductor, college professor, and leader of national and international choral projects, has specialized in Latin American Choral Music of the 20th- and 21st-centuries.

María is frequently invited as a guest conductor, adjudicator, jury member, and lecturer of choral music in the USA, Canada, Latin America, Europe, Asia, and Oceania and has premiered many new works. She is currently the Artistic Director of the Fundación Schola Cantorum de Venezuela.

Amongst her many responsibilities, María has been associated with the Universidad Simón Bolívar and El Sistema (Venezuela) and is currently a Vice President of IFCM. She has been the recipient of several international awards such as the Robert Edler Preis für Chormusik (2000), the Helmuth Rilling Prize (2009), the Life Achievement Award by IFCM (2019), and the Honorary Doctorate of the Metropolitan University, Caracas, Venezuela (2023).

Listen on [Spotify](#) or [YouTube](#)

Merzi Rajala is a Finnish rhythmic choir conducting pioneer, composer, and pedagogue, specializing in popular music / global music genres, fusions, transcultural collaboration, and collective improvisation. Merzi works as a lecturer in the Global Music Department at the Sibelius Academy University of Arts in Helsinki, where she is the developer for the Global Choir Leadership study-option, looking into the leadership of collective singing from a broad cultural and aesthetic perspective. She sees choral conducting skills as a great artistic vehicle to contribute to society and the world around us all. Merzi also teaches and leads different community engagement projects globally in the field of artistic activity.

At the moment, Merzi is the artistic director of three projects:

- Choirs for Ecocide Law: a global initiative to criminalize environmental destruction through choral music.
- Tampere Vocal Festival: The biggest vocal festival in Finland where the 2025 content focus/theme is artistic influencing.
- SibaFest: Sibelius Academy University of Arts festival for the public to present current developments in the university music pedagogy, artistic expression, and research.

Merzi appreciates multicultural and multidisciplinary dialogues as part of her own growth and identity as an artist and pedagogue.

Listen on [Spotify](#) or [YouTube](#)



Thank you, ACDA, for a wonderful Convention 2025!

IFCM President Emily Kuo Vong, IFCM YOUNG member Anne Copiaco, and IFCM member Tim Pallett had the opportunity to (re)connect with choral friends from all over the world at the Happy Hour they organised at the IFCM booth at the ACDA Convention EXPO. Our gratitude goes to ACDA for its support as a founding member of IFCM and for giving IFCM the opportunity to present at its Convention 2025.



Join or Renew Your Membership, Support IFCM Projects, We Need You!



	Annual fee amount in USD - HDI 1	Annual fee amount in USD - HDI 2	Annual fee amount in USD - HDI 3
INDIVIDUAL	84	67	42
CHORAL ENSEMBLE	181	145	91
LOCAL ORGANIZATION	269	180	108
NATIONAL AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATION	755	498	252
BUSINESS	449	359	269
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION	1262		



Call for Choirs to Apply for Conductors Beyond Borders Peer-to-Peer Exchange Programme

EUROPEAN
CHORAL
ASSOCIATION

CONDUCTORS BEYOND BORDERS PEER-TO-PEER CONDUCTORS TRAINING

A financial support programme contributing to the travel expenses of:

- a conductor from the EU invited to work in a European country outside the EU
- a European conductor invited to work with a choir from a different continent
- a European conductor inviting a colleague from another continent to work with their choir(s)

A programme contributing to the internationalisation of careers.
https://bit.ly/Peer-to-Peer_CBB_Programme_Apply

In cooperation with

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Musica International:

A new score added!

A new score has been added to the Musica International Library, making it score #205,356: *Comme Une Rose* (Like a Rose), words and music by Anthony Sylvestre (France) and published by Asturia Music.

Listen to the world premiere of *Comme Une Rose* by the University of Louisville Cardinal Singers, conducted by Kent Hatteberg.

WORLD YOUTH CHOIR 2025

Meet the Conductor of the World Youth Choir 2025

Daniel Reuss is an internationally renowned conductor, celebrated for his work with some of the world's finest vocal ensembles. He has been the artistic director of Cappella Amsterdam since 1997 and previously led the RIAS Kammerchor in Berlin. Known for his refined interpretations and deep musical insight, Reuss has conducted prestigious ensembles and worked with major orchestras across Europe.

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Supporting him as assistant conductor is João de Almeida Barros, a young Portuguese conductor. João leads Nova Era Vocal Ensemble and is the artistic director of the Lisbon Choral Conducting Masterclass. In 2024, he was one of the eight semi-finalists of the prestigious Eric Ericson Award, a major international competition for choral conductors. More on the [World Youth Choir](#).



European Choral Association (ECA)

Leading Voices, Tallinn, Estonia, a few places left to attend the sessions

Various choirs, wind orchestras, and symphony orchestras (33,000 singers and musicians) will perform on the traditional shell stage in front of an audience of 58,000 spectators. Several hundred of choral professionals from Austria, Belgium, Canada, China, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Mexico, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the USA have already registered for Leading Voices.

While the masterclasses and labs are now full, there are still places available to participate in a variety of 40 sessions (there will be more!) and the [Estonian Song Celebration](#). Don't miss this opportunity! Join Leading Voices from 6-10 July in the beautiful city of Tallinn!

Programme and registration [HERE](#).



Special discount for advertisement spaces in the ECA's Brochure of Events

The European Choral Association's brochure of events is an annual publication distributed through ECA's digital channels and platforms. Usually published in the summer of each year, the brochure presents a carefully curated selection of activities and events organised by the European Choral Association and under its label for the coming year. Don't miss the opportunity to promote your event and/or product in the ECA 2026 Brochure of Events. If

you [reserve your space](#) before 15 April 2025, you will receive a special discount on the full advertising price. Check out the [ECA Advertising Kit](#) to learn more about the advertising specifications and how to get the discount.



International Music Council's Invitation to the Fair Music Focus Group

The International Music Council (IMC) is coordinating [Fair Music](#), a project co-funded by the European Union. With New Internet Media and SKAP, IMC aims to address the issue of fair remuneration and recognition in the digital environment. The idea isn't to compete with existing platforms, but to prove that an alternative, fairer system is possible.

Read more

A fully functional streaming platform prototype will be developed hand in hand with the primary stakeholders - the creators - with the aim of creating a product that responds directly to the needs of those at the heart of music creation. The development of this prototype will be informed by the input and ideas gathered through a wide-ranging stakeholder consultation that has been running since last year.

An informal focus group will meet on 14 April (10:30-12:00 CEST) to discuss:

- What would be an essential aspect not to forget (remuneration, diversity, recommendation algorithms, quality of audio files, etc.)?
- Any specific recommendation from your sector (music genre, professional segment, etc.)?
- Any suggestions as to how such a platform might be managed?

The idea is to gather the needs and requirements of the sectors represented, but also to listen to individual experiences and challenges.

Register [here](#).



European Music Council: European Forum on Music, Brussels, Belgium

11-12 June 2025

This year, the 13th European Forum on Music is celebrating the [20th anniversary of the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions](#).

The [European Forum on Music](#) (EFM) will foster personal exchanges and strengthen relationships between organisations, projects, and individuals. At EFM, you will be able to meet key actors and to participate in a variety of sessions, including keynote speeches, panel discussions, interactive workshops, and networking sessions. [Registration](#) opening soon.



The EFM & EMC Lab sessions will take place at the R2 spaces of Reset (Rue de Ligne 2, Brussels)

Montana International Choral Festival, Missoula, Montana, USA, 17-20 July 2025

Anton Armstrong will be Guest Conductor of the 2025 [Montana International Choral Festival](#) held 17-20 July 2025 in Missoula, Montana, USA. Anton will be the keynote speaker at the Annual Conductor's Luncheon and will treat the audience to an open Master Class in Choral Conducting. Over the four days of the Festival, there will be over 25 performances by 14 world-renowned and diverse choral groups from five continents. All groups will join together in the Finale Massed Choir performance conducted by Anton. If you have never been in the presence of Anton's global genius, do not miss this opportunity. Festival tickets go on sale soon!

For more information: info@choralfestival.org



New Zealand Choral Federation: Choral Connect, Wellington, 25-27 September 2025

Choral Connect conducting strand leaders

The [New Zealand Choral Federation](#) (NZCF) is pleased to announce the leaders of the conducting strands at Choral Connect '25: Karen Grylls, Jono Palmer, Andrew Withington, David Squire and Virginie Pacheco. [Click here](#) to read more about them and register now for three days of professional development for conductors and singing leaders in Wellington, New Zealand this September.



We invite you to visit the [Calendar of Choral Activities](#) published by the European Choral Association — Europa Cantat and the American Choral Directors Association ACDA's Network [ChoralNet](#) to check on the choral events planned in the coming months.