



International Choral Bulletin

ICB

Dossier

Choral Conducting and Choir Acoustics - Phenomena and Connections





INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR CHORAL MUSIC

CALL FOR PROPOSALS TO HOST THE

12TH WORLD SYMPOSIUM ON CHORAL MUSIC IN 2020 PROPOSALS ARE BEING ACCEPTED NOW!

Where in the world will you be in 2020?

Hopefully at the 12th IFCM World Symposium on Choral Music.

But where will that be? Who knows... Could it be in your country or your hometown?

The International Federation for Choral Music (IFCM) announces a proposal call to host the 12th World Symposium on Choral Music (WSCM). This triennial symposium is the peak global event in the international choral calendar. It draws together the world's leading musicians, choirs, conductors, composers, clinicians and arts administrators for a superlative experience of concerts, workshops, seminars, presentations and networking opportunities.

IFCM has held 10 symposia in 13 world-class cities over the past 28 years. The first WSCM was held in Vienna in 1987, followed by Stockholm/Helsinki/Tallinn, 1990; Vancouver, 1993; Sydney, 1996; Rotterdam, 1999; Minneapolis, 2002; Kyoto, 2005; Copenhagen, 2008; Puerto Madryn, Argentina, 2011 and Seoul, South Korea, 2014. IFCM policy states that locations will alternate between the five continents. The 11th symposium will take place in Barcelona in 2017.

Hosting a World Symposium brings high profile and prestige to the presenting city. The benefits accrue not only to the city and presenting partners, but to the musical growth and boosted economy of the region. If you and your institution are interested in hosting the 2020 symposium, please examine the guidelines [here](#), which gives essential information about hosting a WSCM, a list of requirements that will need to be considered, and details on the conference setup and the responsibilities of the host country.

The proposal must come from a national choral organization. A major partnership with other companies such as city/regional government, convention tourist bureau, is highly recommended.

How to submit

- Applications should be sent to IFCM via email at office@ifcm.net (an online form will soon be available on www.ifcm.net)
- Deadline for proposals is **31 December, 2015**.

Timeline:

December 31, 2015: Closing date for initial Proposal Applications

March 2016: Short-listed proposals announced

April 2016: Short-listed Proposal Presentations to the IFCM Board

May 2016: Announcement of winner of 12th IFCM World Symposium on Choral Music 2020

[Download the Organizational Guidelines here](#)



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SINGING WEEK

CHORALP

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August, 6-12 2017

Kinshasa

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Dear friends,

The IFCM Executive Committee and Board of Directors met in Pécs, Hungary in July. On the agenda were items that were significant to the future of IFCM, opportunities for our members, and a reversion to the way IFCM operates. It was VERY exciting!

New Board Member: First, we added a new member to the Board. Nominated by the Boards of three Latin American choral organizations, Oscar Escalada has been intimately involved in international choral music for as long as I can remember. He is a well-known composer, conductor, and administrator. Last year he served as a member of the Artistic Committee for the 10th World Symposium on Choral Music in Seoul, South Korea. In addition, he serves as President of the very successful America Cantat organization, presently working with IFCM

and IFCM Founding Member ACDA, to produce the next America Cantat in Nassau, Bahamas 21-31 August 2016. Oscar possesses an extraordinarily strong work ethic and has the support of major colleagues in his region of the world. We are honored to have him with us.

10 Year Plan: The Board developed a 10 year plan, focusing on the original goals for forming IFCM in the first place—the support of our Founding Members (FM) in all facets of international choral music. IFCM if functioning to find and develop new opportunities for our FM, with the intent that they will turn around and use these opportunities to expand possibilities for their own membership. For instance, the new *IFCM World Choral Expo 2015*, to be held in Macau, China this coming November; the expanded work of the *IFCM Conductors Without Borders* in Africa, South and North America, and Asia South Pacific; and the second iteration of the *IFCM World Youth Forum*, to be held at the American Cantat next year. All of these projects are being developed with the close collaboration of our Founding Members. Our expectation is that these projects will act as “seeds” that the Founding Members in due course will take on for their members.

New Operations Model: With the rewrite of our Statutes and Bylaws last year at the General Assembly, we established a major shift in our operations. Referred to as the New Operations Model, it allows for the retention of an already-built, robust artistic model, yet establishes the following:

- Total elimination of reliance on government funding
- Administrative responsibilities spread laterally (not focused on one Secretary-General or Executive Director)
- A working Board
- New revenue-generation format, ensuring a steady flow of operating funds

Non-profit status: Two years ago, we created IFCM-US, a parallel non-profit organization whose sole purpose was to raise revenue for IFCM. The organization is administered by an American Board of Directors whose President is also the President of IFCM. This ensures continuity and transparency.

Multiple Offices: We are working to establish offices on five continents. At present we have temporary offices in Europe and Asia. This will establish a good foundation for future changes in leadership with its implications when the focus is in another country.

Smaller Leadership: We have developed a smaller, more condensed, working Executive Committee (ExCom) and Board of Directors (they were 7/40, now 5/14). This makes it possible to make decisions more quickly and retain flexibility. Each member asked to be a significant part of administration of project(s), and their expenses are paid.

There is so much more that I will save for the next President's Column.

I am excited about our future. I see it as a reflection of the past—built on a new, sustainable structure—that will lead us to a bright and progressive future. There are many people who already are involved in global choral music. Be one . . . get involved in the “New IFCM!”



Michael J. Anderson, President

The ICB team is pleased to inform its readers that Dr. Michael J. Anderson has been promoted to the rank of Professor in the University of Chicago Department of Music, College of Architecture, Design, and the Arts. Congratulations!

INTERNATIONAL CHORAL BULLETIN

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▲ Winspear Opera House, Dallas, ACDA National Conference 2013 © William Sanghee Oh (Global Tour)

Choral Conducting and Choir Acoustics Phenomena and Connections

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Phenomena and Connections
Professor Harald Jers

Choral Conducting and Choir Acoustics

Phenomena and Connections

7

Introduction

Many choir conductors will certainly agree that the quality of a choir is often linked to the qualities of the conductor. Thus it is obvious that choral conductors need to command enormous versatility in numerous fields, and the success of their work will increase with each intense study of the most important aspects of choral singing. A long list of the required abilities could be drawn up. One aspect, however, is rarely considered - acoustics, as music is irrefutably based on the laws of physics. Thus knowledge of the natural laws of acoustics can supply choral conductors with important assistance as to how to understand different coherences, and to draw valuable musical consequences from these. In most cases, problems are solved without such background knowledge, on the basis of personal experience or intuitively. This article will attempt to clarify in exemplary form how the knowledge of acoustics can be systematically placed at the service of musicians.

Objective physics and subjective judgement

Numerous concepts such as frequency, overtones and resonance are common parlance among singers and teachers of singing. They originate from the repertoire of the natural sciences and supply a firm basis to a singing practice which otherwise is characterised more by intuition. If, however, we bear in mind the discussions about the evaluation of singing voices and their aesthetic qualities, we find that opinions will differ widely, and disputes will often arise. All too often the reason for this lies in the differing use of acoustic concepts as well as the absence of objective criteria for such judgements. In acoustics as a subsection of physics, the terminology is clearly defined and thus can act as support for musicians. Over and above this, the methods of acoustic analysis offer the opportunity for the development of objective criteria which represent the best possible and necessary complement to long years of experience in singing and pedagogical skills. The acoustics of the solo singing voice have been under investigation for many decades, but research into choir acoustics by means of the technical development of systems for measuring and analytical software as well as the necessary and extensive specific knowledge of singing technique, choral conducting, psycho-acoustics, physics, signal theory, techniques of measurement and room acoustics has only become possible, in greater intensity, in the last few years.

Professor Harald Jers

Singing, viewed acoustically

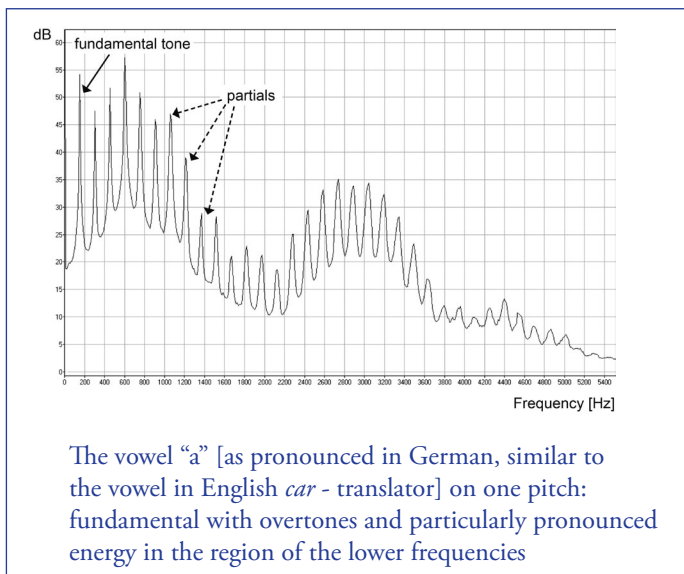
If we are prepared to simplify slightly, we can envisage the acoustics of the production of sound while singing as follows: the lungs supply the energy so that with the larynx as the source, a primary sound can be produced. The vocal tract which lies above serves as a filter and, according to its shape, the natural harmonics are allowed to pass through this system in differing amplitudes. The lips provide a further filtering within the framework of the propagation of sound, modifying the sound yet again. Because of the acoustic properties of the spreading of the sound as well as the acoustics of the hall, the sound will arrive in any one place having undergone more or less strong changes. The final variation is supplied by the ear and the way the listener's brain processes the sound to be perceived. In this article the individual aspects of this long change of sound events and sound changes will be presented and placed into a context that can be made use of by choirs in their practical work.

The production of sound

Viewed acoustically we find that the sound produced by an instrument or the voice consists of a large number of partials - also referred to as overtones or harmonics - of differing amplitude. The frequency of the fundamental, identical with the distances of the partials from each other, determines the perceived pitch. It is the relationship of the individual volumes of the partials to each other, also referred to as spectrum - that enables us to perceive the various tone colours. Thus, with identical fundamentals, different instruments and tone colours can be distinguished.

The sound of vowels

The voice - speaking and singing - consists, phonetically as well as acoustically, primarily of vowels and consonants. The graph below shows the spectrum analysis of a vowel, showing the distribution of the frequencies for this sound.

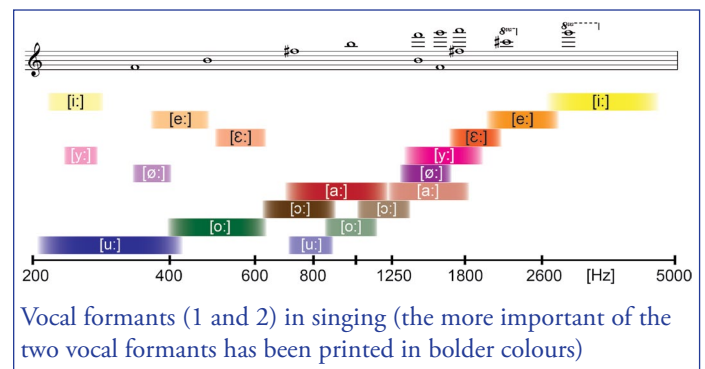


The vowels are the main carriers of sound and responsible for the beautiful sound of a voice, and for the volume. The spectral analysis shows the fundamental with numerous overtones. The power of the sound of the vowel and thus of the voice lies within the lower range of the frequency.

Vocal formants

Those frequency ranges within which we find comparatively louder harmonics are called formant areas. Each vowel possesses such characteristic formants which are necessary for the perception of exactly that tone colour, and which are referred to as vocal formants. There will be several formants, numbered starting from the lower frequencies and going up to the high ones. The first two formants determine, and are sufficient for, the aural perception of a vowel and for it to be recognised. The higher formants above these rather serve to characterise the timbre and the individual

nature of articulation of a speaker or singer. Vocal formants differ from person to person as well as between women, men and children and between the various voice types. For some vowels, combinations of the two vocal formants are required, and this is shown in the following diagram using mean formant values:



Thus we find that for singing, those overtones which lie within the area of the respective vocal formants are stronger. Therefore, in a choir, one of the factors determining intonation within the vocal sections will be the identical formation of vowels - vocal formants as similar as can be achieved. When in choral singing it comes to intervals and chords, the decisive factor for good intonation is the similarity of overtones and vocal formants.

Aspects of choral vocal training

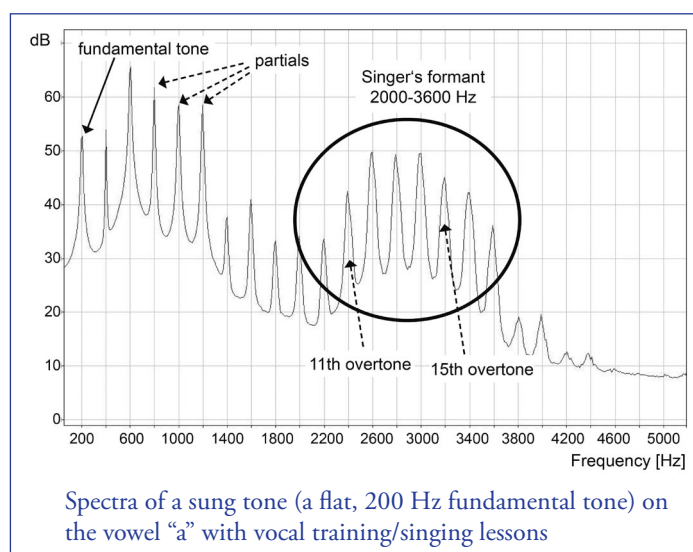
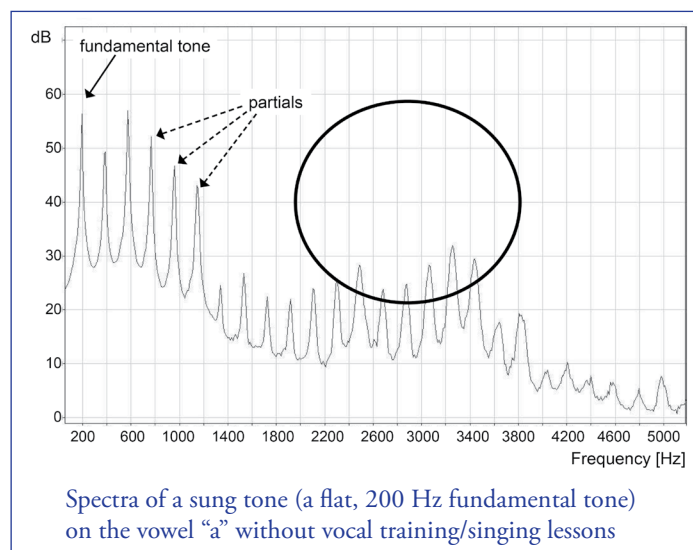
Every anatomical change of the position of tongue, soft palate, placing of the larynx, opening of the mouth and the lower jaw leads to a change of the entire vocal tract. These changes take place at phonetic events and, in speech, follow on each other very quickly. It is possible to explain, and to apply in a differentiated way, some of the aspects which are relevant to vocal training, such as placement of voice, projection, volume, vowel equalisation, amplification and overtone content of the voice, using this acoustical angle.

Vowel equalisation

For example, in vocal training, the so-called vowel equalisation (or assimilation) aims at blending the vowels more strongly with each other and thus giving the voice a clear uniform tone colour independent of the colour of the vowels. Acoustically the first vocal formant depends strongly on the position of the jaws, the second primarily on the position of the tongue. Thus vowel equalisation is achieved by varying the position of jaws and tongue, either simultaneously or independently of each other. This explains the differing methods employed in vocal choral training which are based on changes in the position of lower jaw and/or the tongue and aim at achieving a balance between keeping the vowel recognisable and the voice homogeneous. As this separate guidance requires much practice, this is of particular interest for solo singing as well as for choral work.

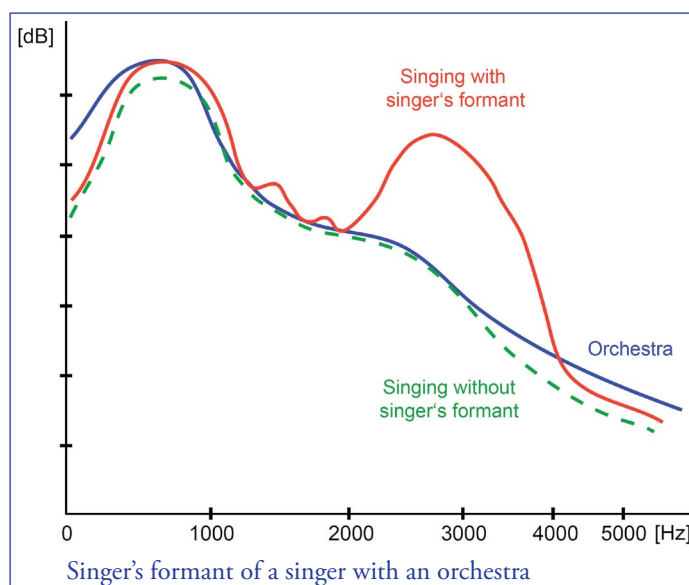
Singer's formant

The projection of the singing voice is of particular interest, both for solo and choir singers. In this context the frequency area between 2000 and 4000 Hz deserves particular attention. This area, also known as the “singer’s formant”, indicates the clear raising of volume within the overtones found at these frequencies. Closely connected to the singer’s formant is the concept of the placement of the voice, an important topic in vocal training, for an improvement in this results in a reinforcement of the overtones similar to the reinforcement supplied by the singer’s formant.



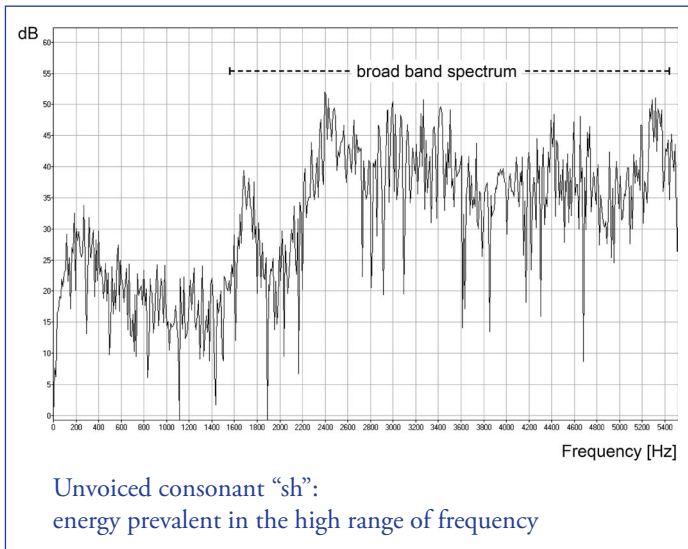
These graphs clearly show the raising of the 11th to 15th overtones in a note sung with singer’s formant compared to one sung without it. If we apply this to choral music, we find that the development of singer’s formants and the placement of the voice that goes hand-in-hand with this can also be of importance. It can supply greater brilliance, clearer text and more transparency. Furthermore it can offer a greater dynamic range in return for comparatively little exertion on the side of the singers, serving to make the singing sound resonant and natural.

The next graph illustrates the average spectra of an orchestra and of the voice. We see that there is a large range of frequencies where the voice is no louder than the orchestra. It is only in the frequency area of around 2000 till ca 3200 Hz that the overtones of the voice are louder than those of the orchestra. This is why it is possible for a singer to be heard across so many instruments in the first place. Here, too, it should be noted that the ear finds the overtones in this area of frequency sufficient for the recognition of the fundamental. As the distances between the overtones are of equal distance and match the frequency of the fundamental, the ear is able to allocate the pitch without ambiguity. In choral singing we often encounter the situation of a singer who has had singing lessons and is thus already capable of using the singer’s formant. This is why it will be possible to hear them above the rest of the choir. Alongside the widespread aim of choral conductors to cover the better trained singers and thus ask them to use less singer’s formant, there is also the other, more sustainable though possibly more labour-intensive strategy of leading all the other singers towards singing with singer’s formant. The advantage of this procedure is a clearly increased dynamic range of the choir and a brighter, more flexible and fresher sound of the choir.



Consonants - voiced and unvoiced

As opposed to the vowels and the sounds linking them, unvoiced consonants are produced without the involvement of the vocal cords, primarily by friction and diffraction of the airflow at the points of articulation. Because of this toneless and thus unperiodical production of sound, they possess a spectrum distributed widely across all frequencies, with its main energy usually situated in the higher ranges of frequency up to around 12 000 Hz.



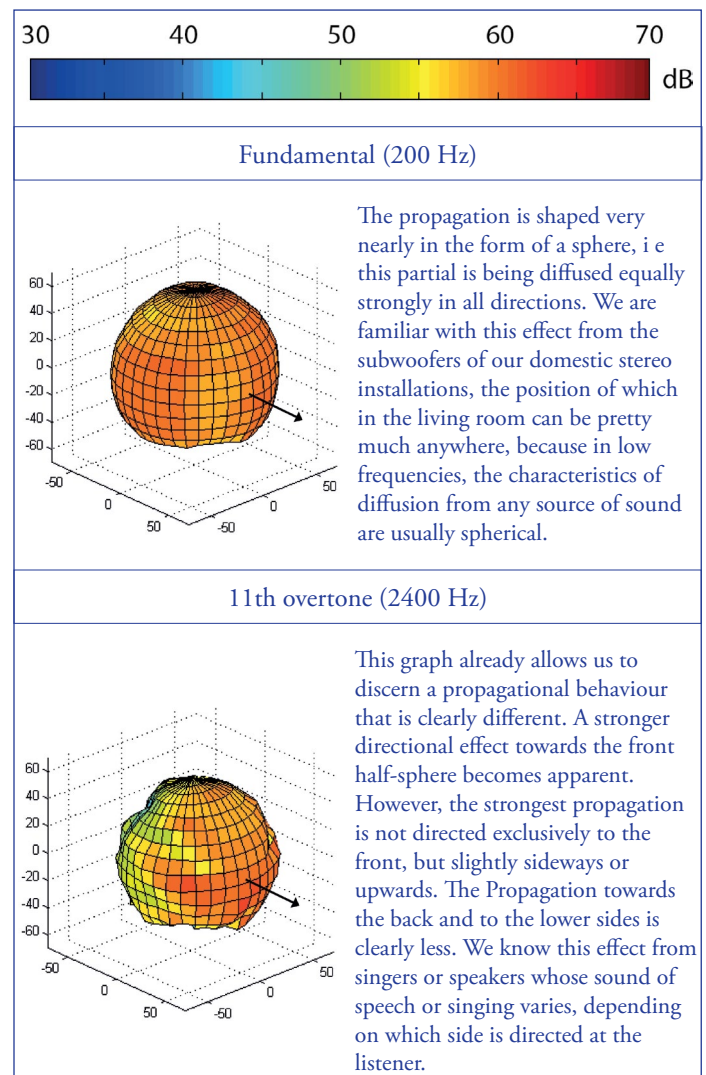
Voiced consonants and nasal sounds produce hybrids of periodical and unperiodical forms of vibrations, with an overlap between the respective shares. Thus, in a sung melody, we find, alongside the path of the fundamentals and the changes of overtones pertinent to these and also depending on the text, numerous spectral changes, depicting a spectral development in the course of time. Thus it is the consonants that supply the meaning of the text by separating and structuring the sounds of the vowels.

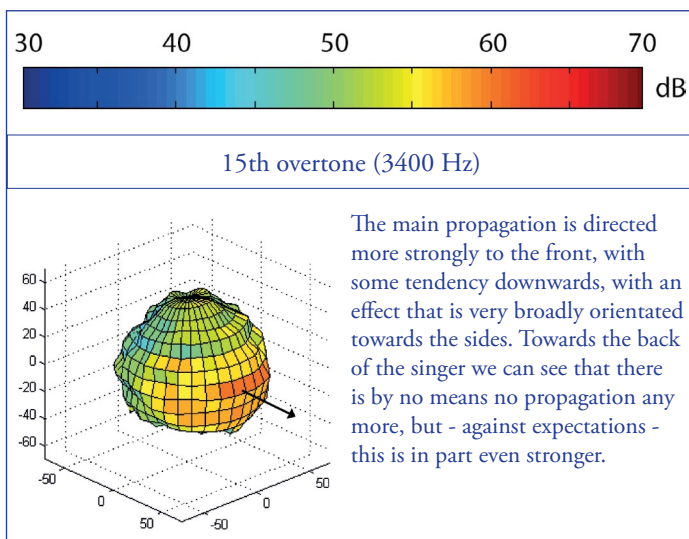
Thanks to the broad range of frequency they arouse in the ear, and to their higher energy, consonants are usually perceived quite strongly. This explains the phenomenon in choral practice that consonants which are not precisely synchronised are clearly noticed and irritate. A strengthening of the consonants is bound to drive this problem home to the amateur choral singer, but it will lead to an imbalance against the volume of the vowels. As the energy of consonants is quite high anyway, surely their normal, well-synchronised articulation will suffice, something that can be achieved by sensitising the choral singers as well as by relevant precision on the side of the conductor.

Propagation of sound from singers

Another important factor, apart from the quality and the sound of singing voice, is the transmission of sound from the choral singer to the audience in the rehearsal room or the concert hall. The main responsibility for this lies in the manner

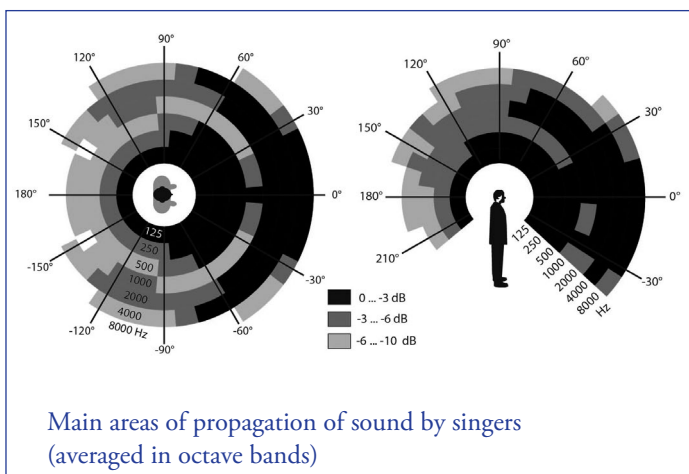
in which the sound leaves the singer, and in which directions, and with what intensity, this diffusion takes place. This so-called "directivity" describes a property of the singer which depends solely on the geometry of the body and the acoustical character concerning absorption and reflection of that body. Lips, nose, ears, head, shoulders and the entire upper body modify, reflect or absorb the sound in different ways for every frequency. For every frequency of a sung note, i.e. for the relevant fundamental with its overtones, we will find a different behaviour as far as propagation of sound goes, as can be seen in some exemplary graphics, below. These graphics use spherical diagrams in order to depict the behaviour of sound around a singer. The pressure of sound is expressed in decibels (dB), a physical measurement which matches the approximate volume at which the listener perceives it. The power of propagation is depicted on the one hand in deviations from the spherical geometry, on the other by varying colouring on a sliding scale: red stands for strong propagation, blue for weak propagation. The way a singer is facing is illustrated by arrows. The propagation behaviour of three partials of the spectra discussed above are represented here in an exemplary fashion.





The behaviour of propagation illustrated here in respect of three partials can also be found in other partials of the vocal spectrum and has an effect on the entire sound, depending on the strength of the overtone. Particularly in the range of the increased singer's formants between 2000 and 3600 Hz clear directional effects can be noted. The more strongly the directivity is guided towards the front, the better the sound will carry, and the more resonant the sound that will be perceived by the listener. This underscores the crucial importance of the singer's formant yet again.

An optical depiction of this diffusion can be hinted at by means of the next two graphs showing the propagational characteristics in two levels, seen from the top and from the side. The frequencies supplied refer to the centre frequency of the respective mean values within the range of an octave. The areas show the reach of the main propagational areas of the singing voice: dark grey areas describe a decrease in relation to the highest level [in that colour band] of 0 to -3 dB, grey from -3 to -6 dB and light grey from -6 to -10 dB. Areas left uncoloured possess higher decreases of volume than -10 dB.



Consequences for practical solo and choral singing

We can sum up the propagation of sound for singers as follows: in the lower frequencies of 80-500 Hz the propagation is nearly spherical. Thus, for these frequencies, the direction in which a singer faces is negligible. In the middle frequencies of 500-2000 Hz the propagation is mainly directed to the front and downwards; somewhat higher frequencies result in stronger propagation towards the top left and right with a reduction towards the back. However, at the back of the singer there exists a local maximum due to constructive interference. In the high frequencies of 2000-5000 Hz we find that, apart from the strong diffusion towards the front, a considerable proportion of the energy is also emitted towards the right and the left; the propagation to the back is much decreased.

Thus, if we wish to achieve a large sound volume for a solo or choral singer, the positioning within the concert hall and in relation to the orchestra is of special relevance. In order not to lose the sound energy that is directed towards the sides, upwards and downwards, well-placed reflecting walls are of great importance. These investigations also bear consequences for choral practice in the concert situation:

- The overtones of vowels possess differing propagational characteristics, resulting in the sound being perceived in different tone colours, depending on its direction
- Thus the positioning of the singers can be used as an artistic tool for the implementation of the sound the choral conductor has in mind
- In this the positions of the singers in relation to their neighbours needs to be borne in mind, as these may change the tone colours considerably, by way of absorption
- Due to their high frequencies consonants have a comparatively strong directional effect; given larger distances and obstacles, these can, however, be dampened considerably
- Reflecting walls of sufficient height should be positioned behind the choir, in order to make the comparatively high proportion of energy propagated towards the back useable by reflection
- Larger distances between singers serve to develop a stronger resonance in that absorption by the neighbouring singer is reduced
- There should also be sufficient space between the rows of choral singers
- The stage should be high enough to prevent any sound directed downwards disappearing in the clothing of the singers in front

The spreading of sound

The singing of a choral singer, i.e. the shapes of vibration described above, spreads, starting from the singer, in the form of a spherical wave. Thus it is subject to the laws of mechanical waves. Here follows a brief description of the three most important phenomena encountered when these waves meet obstacles:

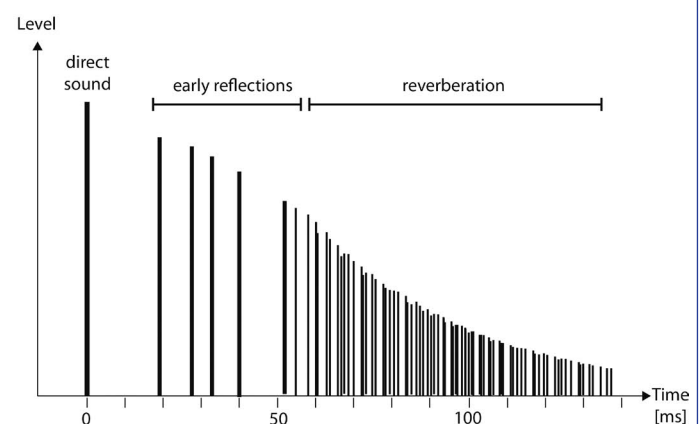
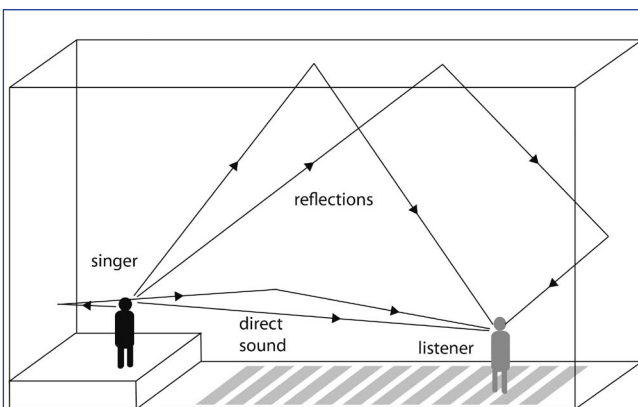
- Reflection: large obstacles throw sound waves back, the angle of reflection being the same angle with which the sound met the obstacle.
- Absorption: when a sound wave meets an obstacle, its energy is decreased during absorption. This loss of energy differs greatly according to the frequencies and depends on the acoustical properties of the obstacle.
- Diffraction: sound waves encountering obstacles may also experience a deflection in the direction of their propagation. This peculiar phenomenon of waves is again strongly linked to the frequencies and operates to differing degrees, depending on the relationship of the size of the wave to the size of the obstacle.

Acoustic of the hall

Due to the laws that govern the propagation of sound, we will find certain acoustical characteristics in concert halls, churches or other musical spaces. This space-linked acoustical outcome depends on the position of the source of sound (e.g. choir) and the recipient of the sound (e.g. audience). The principle of this link between sound and space will be briefly explained using the graphs below: initially the sound of a singer reaches a member of the audience directly through the air. Further sounds follow, slightly delayed after having been reflected on ceiling, wall or floor. These form the early reflections. As the sound may even be reflected several times, the sound of the choral singer will also reach the listener with a distinct delay; the sum total of these sound events is called reverberation. The duration of this reverberation depends on the speed with which the sound loses its energy within the hall.

The acoustics of a hall are primarily determined by four factors: the size of the room, its shape, the acoustical properties of the surfaces and the position of the sources of sound:

1. Size of the room: rooms with a large volume possess a long reverberation, reduced by the absorption of the surfaces. Due to the large distances the sound energy and thus the perceived volume are considerably reduced for those listeners seated far away. Furthermore, due to the comparatively slow speed of sound (sound travels 40 yards in about a tenth of a second) there can be differences in the arrival times of the original sound and various reflections. This leads to lack of clarity and annoying overlaps. Even in small spaces inappropriate reflections may make clear inroads on the degree of understandability.
2. Shape: shapes of rooms are to be preferred in which the sound reaches the listener in as direct a way as possible, without having been strengthened or weakened by reflections. This helps the listener localise the source of the sound. However, in many churches there are numerous round surfaces which reflect the sounds from all their sides towards the centre, for example in the apsis of the church, vaults or a chapel. This results in unpleasant interferences or time delays, irritating the listener.
3. Acoustic properties of the surfaces: hard and smooth surfaces reflect very well, thus it will take quite some time till the energy of a sound wave has died down, leading to long reverberations and, in churches, making the sound feel loud. Open-pored surfaces and so-called "sound-soft" surfaces like textiles have the effect of swallowing sound. If people are present, these, too, influence the acoustic of the space, by absorption. By changing these surfaces, clear differences can be made to spaces. Soft and open-pored materials like cushions covering the full length of pews transform a noisy church into a quiet one.



Sound propagation and energy distribution in a concert hall

4. Position of the sources of sound: sources of sound will be reinforced if they lie immediately in front of a reflecting surface. The further the source of sound is away from the wall, the less strongly it will be supported by reflection, and the larger the time lag between reflection and direct sound. Volume, immediacy and transparency of the music can thus be varied simply by the position of the sound sources in relation to walls.

Choir and space

Another important aspect is the connection between the choir and the space in which it performs. In this in particular we need to distinguish between the audibility of the singers within the choir on the stage, and the perception of the listeners in the auditorium, which both depend on the acoustic of the room. This is predetermined as an acoustical system by the geometrical and acoustical properties of walls, ceiling, floor or large objects within a rehearsal room or concert hall. Thus the directivity of singers

and the varying positions of the choir singers on stage possess an important influence on the audibility of the other singers as well as on the overall sound reaching the audience. Every singer is a source of sound which can be reflected within the acoustical system or even be modified by objects. All this depends very largely on frequencies and thus determines the distribution of energy within the space. We can make a rough differentiation between the area immediately surrounding the singers and the larger area, more distant, depending on how high the proportion of the singer's sound is that is transmitted directly to his/her fellow singers, and to the audience.

In a room with much reverberation and repeated reflections from the walls, the near field around the singers is fairly small, which means that even if the singers stand with little distance between each other, their fellow singers will find themselves in the far field category. This means that the singers, no matter where

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on stage they are positioned, will have a similar impression of the choir over all, and the way they are arranged will have less influence on audibility, nor will the formation of the choir make more than a trivial difference on the sound reaching the audience. Surely every choir has experienced the impression that, in an “echoey” church, it is very difficult to localise other singers from their voices. In a “dry” room with little reverberation each singer’s personal space is clearly larger, and placement and arrangement of a choir, as well as the distances from one singer to another, may make a real difference on audibility. This improved audibility of the singers amongst each other thus also results in an improved overall outcome for the listener.

Arrangement of the choir: formation - positioning - spacing

In the discussion of how to arrange a choir there are three fundamental aspects between which we need to differentiate:

1. With positioning we usually describe the arrangement of singers within a vocal section. Here we find differing approaches and philosophies. Some choral conductors prefer placing singers with similar timbre and volume as close to each other as possible. Others try to avoid just this positioning, alternating different timbres, so a certain degree of blending takes place and the voices gain some similarity. Here we need to bear in mind the problem caused by the fact
2. Formation refers to the way the vocal sections are arranged. In this respect many countries have certain traditions which surely arise largely from the preferred literature. Then we need to bear in mind even practical aspects such as the height of the singers, who all need to be able to see the conductor easily. The size of the various vocal sections, too, will militate in favour of certain formations. The table below presents three quite popular formations with some of their advantages and disadvantages.
3. The spacing between the choral singers is often not given any thought. For one, the distance has an influence on the volume a choral singer produces in relation to the rest of the choir. Here there exist certain volume balances which are favourable for the choral singers - others are less so, strongly dependent on the surrounding space. And then deliberate use of distances can achieve a different sonority for the listener.

Formation	Pros	Cons	Pattern of the formation
Block sectional	Sound is often louder than in column sectional formation Can be utilized for polyphonic works	Singers at the edges of a voice section may experience difficulty hearing other singers of their group Singers in the middle of a vocal section may experience problems telling their own voices from those of other singers in their vocal section	SSSAAATTTBBBB SSSAAATTTBBBB SSSAAATTTBBBB SSSAAATTTBBBB Conductor
Column sectional	Particularly suited for homophonic music, for clarity of entries and good balance of vocal sections	Some sections will be quite far away from the place where an individual is standing	TTTTTTBBBBBBB TTTTTTBBBBBBB SSSSSSAAAAA SSSSSSAAAAA Conductor
Mixed formation (in SATB quartets)	Supports self confidence Voices reach the audience in a better blend and often appear to be louder It is easy for the singers to hear the other sections; this often improves intonation	Singers should be experienced Singer may sometimes feel “lonely” Difficult for the choral conductor to address individual sections	SATBSATBSATB BTASBTASBTAS SATBSATBSATB BTASBTASBTAS Conductor

Advantages and disadvantages of the standard choral formations

The acoustics of a choir within any space are the result of the sound production of each individual singer, the propagation, the acoustics of the hall and the arrangement of the choral singers within it. Thus, summing up, we can state that the formation and arrangement of a choir is an artistic means towards the realisation of a sound vision which every choral conductor can consciously employ, and for which decisions need to be made. The formation of choirs is not so much a given to which every choral conductor has to submit.

Hearing and perception

After its already quite complicated route through the hall, the music will reach the ear of the listener in the audience. Depending on this position impressions may differ considerably. Thus the ear represents a further filter for “translation” or rather interpretation by the brain in different ways, and which is finally conceived by the listener as sound. Furthermore it needs to be mentioned that the ability to hear exerts an important influence on the perception of the sound of a choir. With age the ability to perceive higher frequencies diminishes, meaning that consonants are heard less strongly and possibly the meaning of the text is no longer understood, though the vowels are still heard loudly.

Audio-recordings of choirs

The arrangements and formations described above are crucial for the situation of a choir within its space, and important for the listener within the audience. Recordings, be they of live performances or prepared in a studio, obey different laws, as now the ears of the listeners seated far away in the auditorium are replaced by the main microphones and possible secondary ones, too, so they will feel distinctly closer to the choir. Thus the strong effects of the side walls and their qualities of reflection are absent, and we find a very different acoustical situation.

Summary

The acoustics within a choir consist of a complex system of numerous parameters which influence each other. Apart from the pure production of signals by means of the larynx with the vocal tract as a filter, the human voice undergoes a further, variable propagation depending on frequencies, and through directivity. Furthermore the position on stage and the positions of the choral singers within the choir influence this propagation; additionally, the degree to which the choral singers listen to each other is clearly influenced by their relative positions to each other as well as by the surrounding space. The further spread of the sound within the space is governed by the acoustical geometry of this space, and by its acoustical properties. The listeners' perception is subject to another filter of acoustical laws but also to subjective judgement.

Harald Jers is a conductor and Professor of Choral conducting at the Mannheim University of Music. He is in charge of international courses and workshops for conducting at European music academies and colleges. Furthermore he serves in the jury of competitions for choral music and composition and as a lecturer at international music courses and symposia. A special trademark of his work as a conductor is represented by the combination of various disciplines, the result of his studies in conducting, teaching music at secondary schools (principal study singing), church music and physics. He employs his wide musical background, gained by intensive research in the sphere of the acoustics of choirs and of spaces, in order to improve the quality of the sound of a choir, to achieve a more effective use of rehearsal time, and for the best possible spatial arrangement of orchestras and choirs. With his chamber choir CONSONO he has won numerous international choral competitions, a success based on his intensive work on the improvement of the choir's sound. Website: www.haraldjers.de





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▲ Les Choralies 2013, Vaison-la-Romaine, France

International Federation for Choral Music

Two Worlds United through the International Federation of Choral Music

Agastya Rama Listya

IFCM Youth Arts Management Program

Presented by the American Choral Directors Association

Nordklang16, August 3-7, 2016 in Turku, Finland

Sirkku Viitanen-Vanamo



Foreword

Being members of The International Federation of Choral Music (IFCM) has enabled two musicians from different hemispheres, strangers to each other, to collaborate in a joint performance project, although recently, the author had to drop the initial plan as he began his PhD study in ethnomusicology at Otago University, New Zealand.

The project began when Ulrich Krämer, from Germany, was on his summer break in 2012. As he planned to spend his holiday in Indonesia, he made contact with four ICM members from Indonesia, including myself. On 28 August 2012, Mr Krämer and I met in Salatiga, Central Java, and discussed some possible ideas for 2014's collaboration. This meeting resulted in holding a joint concert that incorporated a classical German Christmas choral piece and some popular carol songs. Later, in the beginning of 2014 Mr Krämer emailed me and suggested *Weihnachtsoratorium* by Johann Sebastian Bach. This large-scale choral composition was selected for three reasons: 1) the theme fits with the Christmas season; 2) it is interesting and not too difficult; and 3) it involves several cantatas that can be selected and performed separately. The intense discussion at the beginning of year 2014 also resulted in the decision to involve Satya Wacana Music Department's choir and orchestra as the performers.

This article is intended to describe the joint project and its benefits, and to showcase a cooperation project that can be nurtured among members of IFCM with the aim of increasing cross cultural relationships and understandings, particularly those related to the development of choirs.

Agastya Rama Listya
choral conductor

Weihnachtsoratorium Concert

Cultural differences are not easy to deal with. For instance, self preparation, initiative, discipline and commitment were cultural barriers that affected the rehearsals. During the first two weeks of practice (in mid November 2014), Krämer found that some important instructions on bowing had not been added to the music sheets of the string section. Even worse, some string players had not had the music scores with them. At other times of the practice, Krämer found two basic problems: 1) tardiness, and 2) lack of responsibility among the singers and the players. However, he, the singers, and the players eventually learned to adjust to one another. This learning process helped those involved to eventually enjoy their cultural differences and consequently the practice sessions went better.

The concert was performed consecutively in three churches in different cities. The first was in Gereja Bethel Indonesia (Indonesia Bethel Church) in Hasanudin, Salatiga, on 4 December 2014; the second and third took place at, respectively, Gereja Isa Almasih (Church of Jesus Christ) in Pringgading, Semarang on 5 December 2014, and at Gereja Protestan Indonesia Bagian Barat (Protestant Church in West Indonesia), Jakarta on 9 December 2014. The first two places are located in Central Java, whereas the last is in the capital city of Indonesia. Each concert, which featured four soloists, forty singers, and thirty musicians, received the enthusiastic appreciation of the audience.

During the first concert, the biggest problem was the acoustics of the church. Krämer admitted that he could not hear the choir at all during the concert. In addition, the singers focused too much on their scores, for it was their first concert. The second concert in Semarang went relatively better. However, the sound of heavy rain proved to be a major disruption to the concert, since the church building was not soundproofed. The most successful performance was the final one in Jakarta. Although the church, inaugurated on 24 August 1839, did not have sufficient air conditioning facilities, it had the best acoustics of the three churches. This church was able to accommodate an audience of 300 people, and was packed full during the performance. The audience was composed of members of the public and representatives from the German Embassy. Although Krämer and the performers suffered from the heat, they managed to perform successfully the ninety-minute concert and entertained the audience well. One of the success factors of the evening concert was the excellent performance from the soloists, Jollies Dicky Firman (tenor), Elvira Hoesein Radia (mezzo soprano), Eriyani Tenga Lunga (soprano), and Felix Avianto (bass). The audience granted the performers a long standing ovation at the end of the concert series.

Satya Wacana Music Department, in particular its choir and orchestra, has benefited in various ways: the opportunity to learn and to experience first-hand performing music in the Baroque style; and the opportunity to learn and to practice German diction and discipline. The Dean of Satya Wacana Faculty of Performing Arts also expressed his gratitude for this project and expressed a wish that such a project can be repeated more often in the future. The performance of Satya Wacana music department under the direction of Ulrich Krämer can be enjoyed on youtube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oKX9XpVrGvw>

Opportunities for Cooperation among Members of IFCM

This joint project is just one example of positive collaboration that can take place between IFCM members. Krämer and Satya Wacana Music Department were successful in involving the support of Carus Publishing Company and the German Embassy in Indonesia. There are many other opportunities for future cooperation: for instance, holding music workshops or seminars; giving voice or choral conducting master classes and choral clinics in primary and secondary schools or universities; composing music together; undertaking joint research and publication. At one end, the host musician can provide local accommodation for the guest musician, as well as plan, prepare and conduct the event. At the other end, the guest musician can provide the funding for his/her transport costs, including arranging travel documents. Such cooperation needs to be conducted more by members of IFCM because it bypasses the problems of bureaucracy and in many ways the initiative is more genuine. IFCM as an institution may give recommendations and suggestions to their members in organizing the event and finding sponsorships. IFCM may support them with materials for training, and possibly sheet music.

Ulrich Krämer attended music education at the Music Conservatory in Heidelberg-Mannheim, where he studied choral conducting with Johannes Uhle and Frieder Bernius, and orchestral conducting with Peter Braschkat. Krämer was the founder and conductor of a teenage choir named Rhythm and Joy, of the EFG-Singers male choir, and the Project Choir and the Project Orchestra at Firstwald Protestant High School in Mössingen.



Agastya Rama Listya obtained his bachelor's degree in music theory and composition from the Indonesian Institute of Arts in Yogyakarta. He received a master's degree in sacred music and choral conducting from Luther Seminary and St.

Olaf College, Minnesota, in the U.S. In the meantime, Agastya has been completing his doctoral degree in ethnomusicology at Otago University in New Zealand. Agastya was the founder and conductor of the Lentera Kasih vocal ensemble and Satya Wacana Vocal Consort. Besides being active as a choral conductor, Agastya is a choral music composer. Email:

agastya123@yahoo.com

Edited by Grace Kim, U.S.A. ●

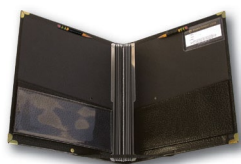


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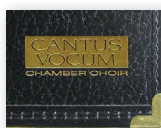
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IFCM Youth Arts Management Program

Presented by the American Choral Directors Association
August 15 – 31, 2016 — Nassau, Bahamas



Royce Saltzman introducing the 1st International Forum Voice, Youth and Arts Management in 2008 ▲

Among the 2008 participants, Victoria Liedbergius (Sweden), Daphne Wassink (The Netherlands), Isabelle Métrope (France/Germany), Kennedy Okeyo Wakia (Kenya) ►



The world is full of musicians, therefore it is full of music events of many kinds: large, medium, and small scale. These events have many aspects that should be taken into account in order for them to be successful: production, staging, communications, PR, fundraising, finances, outreach, and many others. The International Federation for Choral Music (IFCM) and the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) have designed a thorough training program for young managers aged 18 to 30, who are motivated to learn and to develop their skills in international event management so they can go back to their home countries with the tools needed to organize choir and music festivals and events.

The selected participants will be able to have online training and exchange two months prior to meeting each other in Nassau for the Eighth America Cantat Festival, where they will be given training on the job. They will serve on the Eighth America Cantat leadership team and will have roles of responsibility in the various offices of the Festival, under the guidance of two coaches and several faculty leaders in the global arts management community. This will give the participants practical hands-on experience in conjunction with the conceptual training they will have had in the weeks and days leading up to the festival.

Accommodations and meals while in the Bahamas are covered by the American Choral Directors Association; selected participants will only need to cover their airfare from and to their home countries. Please note that all IFCM Youth Arts Management Program activities will be carried out in English, so English language proficiency is required.

If you are aged 18-30 and are interested in a career in Arts Management and/or Event Planning we encourage you to apply to participate in this unique experience that will provide you not only with the necessary conceptual and practical training, but also will bring you together with young arts managers from all over the world, thereby creating a collaborative network in the arts management field.

Applications will be available on the Eighth America Cantat website (america-cantat.org) beginning October 1, 2015, and are due January 15, 2016. There is a \$30 application fee, which can be submitted through PayPal. For more information, email the Forum Director Maria Catalina Prieto at mcprieto@gmail.com

Edited by Gillian Forlivesi Heywood, Italy/UK ●

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Nordklang16

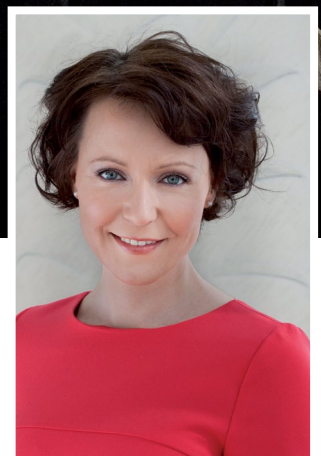
August 3-7, 2016 — Turku, Finland



Nordklang16 preparations in full swing

Host choir in Turku ▲

Mrs Jenni Haukio, President's wife, Patron of the Festival ►



What is Nordklang?

Nordisk Korforum, the umbrella organisation of the Nordic choral associations and one of the founding members of IFCM, runs the Nordklang festival. NKF gives the responsibility of organising Nordklang to each Nordic association in turn. Nordklang, the biggest training event for singers in the Nordic countries, takes place every three years in one of the Nordic countries. The event brings together singers from all Nordic countries to sing, learn and network. The organisers expect more than a thousand singers to attend the festival in Turku in 2016. This year's Nordklang festival in Turku will be the 16th edition and the organiser responsible is the Finnish Amateur Musicians' Association together with its regional south-western association. The chairman of the organising committee is Mr Harri Lindblom, the chairperson of the regional FAMA association. Nordklang managed in close cooperation with Konfer, a local conference bureau, the Turku Cathedral Congregation that gives the festival access to the Turku Cathedral and the City of Turku. And, of course, with Nordisk Korforum.

Nordklang16 has also commissioned a choral piece from Jaakko Mäntyjärvi and it will be premiered in the final concerts.

We are very proud to announce that Mrs Jenni Haukio, the spouse of the President of the Republic of Finland, will be the patron of the festival.

Sirkku Viitanen-Vanamo
Secretary at Nordklang16

The artistic director of Nordklang16 is Mr Kari Turunen, DMus, a renowned conductor, teacher and researcher who describes himself as follows: “I am above all a conductor. I combine choral conducting with some research and teaching. I love choral music and am excited to be involved in an event that reaches out to so many choral singers, so many styles of choral music and brings together so many people who share my love for music.”

There is a marvellous selection of workshops for all tastes. The list of workshop was published in mid-September on the Nordklang16 website www.nordklang.fi. As the festival is meant for all singers, it does not matter whether you sing in a mixed, female, male or youth choir. All choir types are catered for. The workshops are colour coded according to how much preparation is required from the singers: Black = the music is technically, vocally and/or stylistically quite demanding and is recommended for well-prepared singers; Red = the music poses some technical demands and the singers will need to do some homework before the festival; and Blue = the music is not very demanding and a little homework will see you through quite well. And as Mr Turunen says: “Nordklang16 is definitely not an event for only expert singers. If you have experience in choral singing, have a nice voice, are willing to prepare the music for the workshop and don’t mind hard work, you’ll be fine.”



▲ Kari Turunen, Artistic Director

Programme

The daily programme of the festival is a Nordklang tradition. The day will start with morning singing. The workshops will start at 10 o'clock at various locations in the university campus' in Turku. Lunch will be catered for in the workshop area at noon. Participating choirs have the option of giving a lunchtime concert in the town around noon. The workshops will continue in the afternoon, with coffee breaks, and will end at 5 o'clock. In the evening there will be concerts and the most important event: evening singing at Caribia.

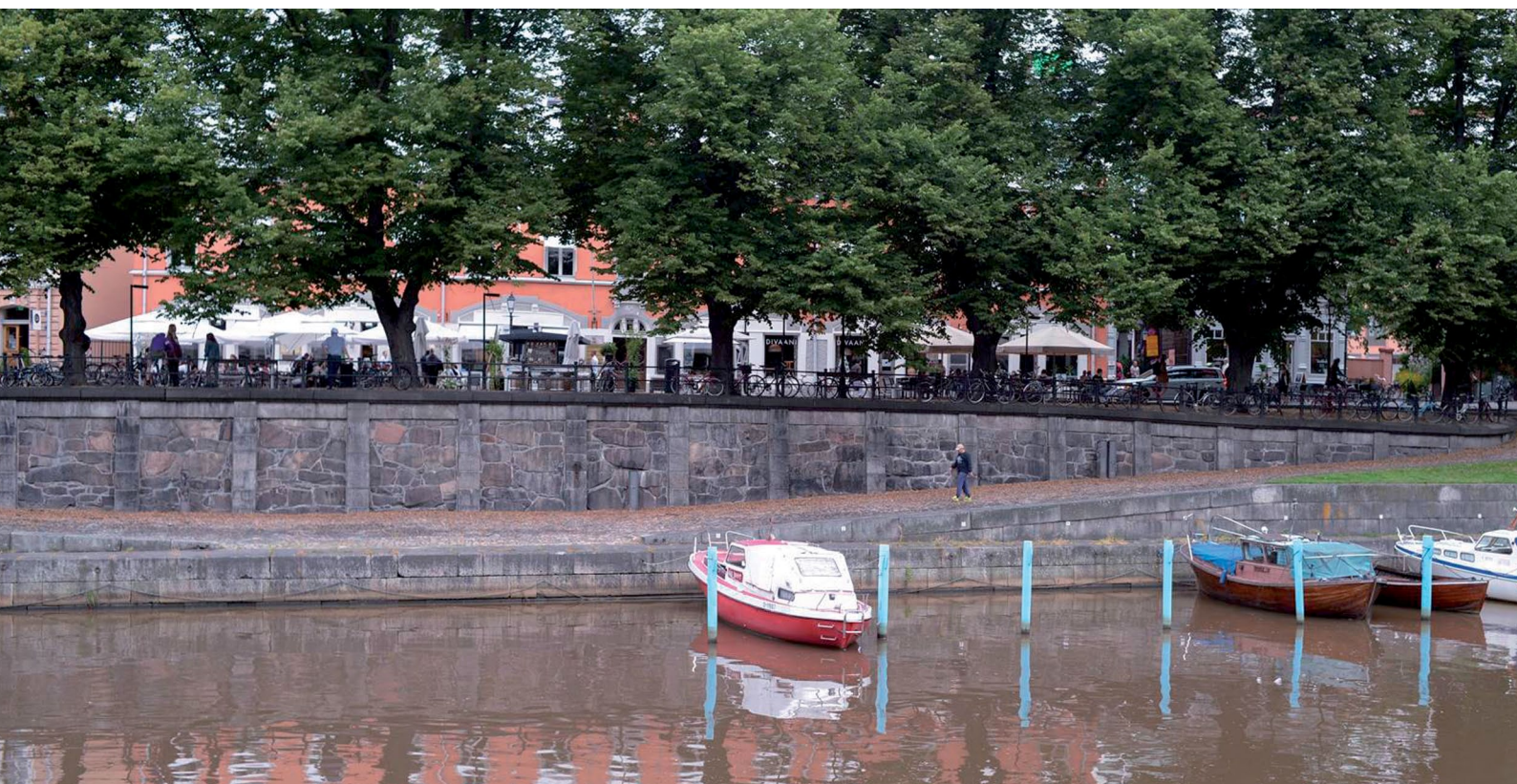
On the final day of Nordklang16 the workshop choirs have the opportunity to show what they have learnt in the main concerts of the festival. The Nordklang16 Gala will take place in the evening.

Workshops

The workshops are versatile and suitable for all choir types – mixed, female, male and youth choirs. Nordklang16 has not forgotten the choir conductors either: there is a special Conductors' Channel for them.

The festival is about singing and learning, so the participants will have a wonderful opportunity to challenge themselves in different singing environments from their “normal” ones. For more detailed information about the workshops and their instructors, see www.nordklang.fi

In the mixed choir category there are three channels: Classic Sounds, Rhythmic Sounds, and New Sounds.





In the Classic Sounds channel you have the opportunity to sing Early music made in the EU with Þorgerður Ingólfssdóttir from Iceland; Romantic works for mixed choirs with Carsten Seyer-Hansen from Denmark; Opera! with Elin Persson from Norway; William Shakespeare's texts composed to music with Jani Sivén from Finland in Long live Shakespeare!; and Folk music with Ilona Korhonen from Finland.

In the Rhythmic Sounds channel you get Jazz and Pop. Jazz by the Danish vocal jazz specialist Jesper Holm and pop by Line Groth also from Denmark. In these workshops it is all about the groove.

Nordklang16 offers a very special opportunity for singers in the New Sounds channel: to work with the music of the "hottest" contemporary choral composers and in two of the workshops even with the composer.

Composer Pärt Uusberg from Estonia and composer-conductor Vaclovas Augustinas from Lithuania will take the singers on a tour of the music of their own making.

One of the most prominent Latvian conductors Romans Vanags will lead the way to the music of Eriks Ešenvalds, which is

◀ The old Cathedral downtown Turku

▼ The River Aura, main "road" to the market place, the church or the entertainment



taking the choral world by the storm. Dani Juris, one of the most exciting young conductors in Finland, will take you to the musical world of Jaakko Mäntyjärvi, one of the most popular choral composers in the world.

There are two workshops for youth choirs. Madrigals and pop arrangements (SATB youth): sing madrigals by Monteverdi, both the originals and as arrangements, and pop music by Coldplay, Mew and Björk in arrangements by the conductor of the group, Finnish conductor and music pedagogue, Timo Lehtovaara. The second one is Music without boundaries (SSAA youth). In this workshop music has no boundaries! Folk music from different parts of the world blends with improvisation, movement, yoik and music from ancient times to today. Susanna Lindmark, composer and conductor of Arctic Light Girls' Choir, will lead you in this co-creative workshop, where you are allowed to bring your own creativity into the choir and explore exciting ways of creating music and visual expressions together.

The female choir is led to the Finnish rhythmic music by Kaija Viitasalo from Finland. Kaija Viitasalo, Finnish conductor and music educator, is especially known for her work with new Finnish rhythmic music for female choirs, especially so-called ethnic jazz. In ethnic jazz, Finnish folk music and new poetry fuse with the rhythms and harmonies of jazz music.

There will be a workshop for the male choir singers. At the time of writing new plans were being made to cater for the male choir singers.

And, last but not least, the conductor's channel led by Kari Turunen and Thomas Caplin. This workshop will feature lectures, discussions, demonstrations, observations on the work going on in the choral workshops, and of course, wonderful possibilities to meet colleagues. It is the perfect start for a new season. Bring your choir, let the singers be inspired by the workshops, perform in the lunchtime concert series and gather new ideas in the conductors' workshop.

The workshops are taught in English.

Turku

Turku, the host city of the festival, has a lot to offer the festival-goer. The city was founded in the 13th century and was, and still is, an important hub for cultural activity in Finland. Turku Cathedral, consecrated in 1300, is one of the venues for Nordklang16. There are many sights and places to see and experience along the River Aura: Turku Castle at the mouth of the river guarding the town, museums, art galleries, and many more. You might want to come a day early just to see the town.

How can I register for Nordklang16?

Early Bird registration started in March 2015. Registering during the Early Bird period gives you at least two benefits: a lower participation fee (€ 170) and a chance to pick your workshop before the normal registration starts. Early bird

registration ends on October 31, 2015. Normal registration starts on November 1, 2015 and the registration fee is € 190. The fee includes lunches, the workshop materials, the Nordklang16 songbook, the programme booklet and concerts (admission charged for some concerts). The Nordklang16 Lyyti registration software will give you detailed instructions when you register.



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Nordklang16 is ready to accept your Early Bird registration!

Sirkku Viitanen-Vanamo, the secretary of the organising group of Nordklang16 in Turku in 2016, has worked hard and long with the choral associations in Finland. She is just a passionate chorister who has a keen interest in the work of associations in the choral world. Her first position of trust was as the treasurer of her choir, the mixed *Kulkuset* choir – the oldest mixed choir in Turku, Finland. While working with the choir board she became involved in the regional association of the Finnish Amateur Musicians' Association, FAMA. She was soon elected the secretary and later became the chair of the regional association. Regional work became national as she gained a seat on the board and the executive board of FAMA. She also led the International Relations Committee of FAMA. Presently, she is the secretary of *Kulkuset* and arranges all choir events and tours, handles internal and external communication as well as managing the daily operations of the choir. She is the secretary and the treasurer of the regional association of FAMA and sits on the board and the executive board of the Association of Finnish Mixed Choirs. Mrs Viitanen-Vanamo has been involved in organising several larger events for FAMA. It is FAMA's tradition to organise music festivals every five years. Mrs Viitanen-Vanamo was the general secretary of the last FAMA music festival in Kuopio in 2012. Mrs Viitanen-Vanamo is an avid singer. She sings in *Kulkuset* and in *Ensemble Vivere*. She participates actively in the development of the repertoire of both groups. For 20 years she sang in and managed an ensemble of her own. Email: info@nordklang.fi



Edited by Mirella Dina Biagi, Italy/UK ●



▲ Best of Serenade! concert at Strathmore (page 38)

Choral World News

Festival de Música de Cantonigròs a Vic 2015
Christopher Horner

The University Choral Program
Through my people the spirit will sing
Ana Patricia Carbajal Córdova

Third Gavriil Musicescu International Youth Choral Festival
Daniela Vlad

Serenade! Washington, D.C. Choral Festival (USA)
25-29 June, 2015
Andrew Wailes

Cantus Mundi
Anna Ungureanu

Festival de Música de Cantonigròs a Vic 2015.

How a visit to Wales and one young man's glance into the future evolved into one of the world's most outstanding Music Festivals



▲ Lido Choir (Riga, Latvia), cond. Valda Sedola

Nestling high in the mountains above the Plana de Vic lies the small Catalan village of Cantonigròs. With a population of some 200 people, this might seem a most unlikely genesis for a Music Festival which every year since its inception in 1983 has been attracting choirs and dance groups from all corners of the globe to participate, providing a feast of competitions and performances which bring in audiences not only from the immediate community but from far beyond.

Central to this Festival's beginnings and continuing evolution has been the extraordinary purpose and vision of one man, Josep Maria Busquets. As a teenager in the early 1950s he made the first of several visits to the International Eisteddfod in Llangollen, North Wales, on this occasion with his father as members of the Cor Laudate, a choir directed by Àngel Colomer, a principal figure in the Catalan choral world from the 1940s until his death in 2001. Busquets was greatly impressed by his experience at Llangollen, not only by the choirs he heard but also by the hospitality of the house where they stayed, which opened his eyes to the way in which the Llangollen community supported the Festival. Somewhere amongst this sea of experiences, an idea was taking root in Busquets' mind. As he recalls "This experience made me feel that of necessity we in Catalonia would have to do something like this in order to aid the sharing of cultures and traditions between nations by means of the language of music thereby opening up a dialogue of understanding and peace."

As Busquets relates "In order to achieve this objective, it was necessary that a good number of people from Cantonigròs should get to know the language and the world of music, and so it was that in 1975 a choir was founded in the village with the name of Orfeo de Cantonigròs. Once they were prepared and ready to go to Llangollen, the choir then took part in the Llangollen Festival in both 1981 and 1982. Thus well imbued with the spirit and the aims of this Festival, we started to

Christopher Horner
musician and teacher



▲ The Children's Jazz State Choir (Yekaterinburg, Russia)
cond. Marina Makarova



▲ University of the Philippines Manila Chorale (Manila, Philippines),
cond. Emmanuel P. De Leon



▲ All the singers congratulate each other on a stage covered by flowers

get ready and organise the First Festival Internacional de Música de Cantonigròs which has continued every year since then, confounding all the odds that we might not survive beyond the second year.”

Many of the ideas derived from the Welsh model of the Eisteddfod were incorporated from the start. For example, as in Wales, the auditorium was a large marquee seating several thousand people and the tradition of community support through hospitality which had so impressed the young Busquets resulted in his asking many homes in Cantonigròs and the surrounding villages and towns to do the same. The result was that many people subsequently opened their doors to the visiting choirs and dance groups from all over the world. A large army of volunteers had to be recruited for other jobs and the response was huge; many of that original cohort remain with the Festival to this day. Without them the Festival simply would not operate and it is a telling fact that many give up work or holiday time both before and following those intensive four days of competition and performance activity in order to volunteer their services.

The tradition of inviting groups from far afield began in the Festival's first year with the arrival of a group from the Philippines, a country which has continued to send groups every year. However, despite the parallels with Llangollen, other characteristics of Cantonigròs are very much its own. There is no question that at the core of the Festival's success and survival is the Busquets family itself. During the Festival, the eight children of Josep María Busquets and his wife Rosa María all hold key positions within the organisation and running of the four intensive days in mid-July each year when the Festival takes place. They are also often on hand to help during the rest of the year when the next Festival is being prepared.

This tradition of family participation has in turn been extended to the children and grandchildren of the original families and of visiting families such as ourselves. My wife has been a volunteer from the Festival's early days and together we have seen our two young daughters and their friends profit greatly from the work they do in organising and co-ordinating the proceedings backstage. Other young people working as guides and interpreters find that they may need to communicate in another language or in a mixture of languages at times. Through this, they gain an understanding of different customs, and, as happens so easily with the young, soon discover much of what they have in common and, not unusually, form long-standing friendships.

One of the most humbling aspects of the Festival is to see groups arrive, who having spent three or four days travelling across Europe in a cramped coach without air conditioning, then go on to give outstanding performances, sometimes more than once on the same day. Some may battle with various maladies at times but nevertheless remain determined to take part if at all possible and do honour to their group, family and country.

In order to have facilities that would match the level of the groups that the Festival was attracting, a move to the Atlàntida theatre complex in nearby Vic was announced for the Festival's 30th Year in 2012 and its name was formally changed to Festival

Internacional de Música de Cantonigròs a Vic. This naturally led to questions as to whether a Festival founded amongst the rural surroundings of Cantonigròs could maintain its legacy within these new surroundings. Equipped with two excellent auditoriums, with a concert series featuring some of the world's top performers as well as popular local artists and home to a Music School, this prestigious venue was indeed a major change of profile for the Festival. The warm welcome given to the Festival from the Ajuntament (City Council) of Vic, the Atlàntida and the people of Vic itself was quite overwhelming and the Festival has now become an important event in the town's year. Meanwhile, the personality of the Festival with its established working structures of families and volunteers well in place, has continued to go from strength to strength.

This year's Festival, which ran from 16th-19th July saw a wonderful range of choirs and dance groups visiting Vic. The prizes for the five competitions were generously donated by the Generalitat (Government) de Catalunya, Ajuntament de Vic, Institutió Puig Porret and the Ajuntament de Manlleu and the Festival itself. There was a high level of performance in all the competitions and the evening concerts. The Inaugural Concert featured the Catalan Youth Orchestra and soprano Ulrike Haller as the Festival's opening event.

The First Prize for the Mixed Choirs was won by the Palawan State University Singers from Puerto Princesa, Philippines. Three First Prizes were won by The Children's Jazz State Choir from Ekaterinburg, Russia, who as winners of the competitions for Folksong for Mixed Choirs, Female Choirs and Children's Choirs, became one of the Festival's highlights. This choir sang with such a unanimity of style and character and at such a high technical level that any one of their performances could have been issued as a live recording. The Dance competition was won by the remarkable Catalan dance group, Esbart San Martí who, with music of the Cobla, (a largely double reed folkloric Catalan ensemble plus a single double bass) performing a contemporary score of intermittently disturbing power, gave a dynamic and moving performance which arguably made history in giving new life to a long-established Catalan art form.

It is perhaps this performance which for me sums up the spirit of this remarkable Festival. Never content to remain comfortable with its format and ideals, it refuses to stand still and has a heart which is truly palpable for those present. Visiting Wales for the first time and having that glance into the future, could the young Busquets have had even the remotest idea of what might someday transpire? What can be said is that all those fortunate enough to be part of the Cantonigròs Festival find themselves drawn into an experience which lives on long after the final rousing Festival Hymn, sung by all.

The future of this highly individual Festival seems assured: it has indeed opened that "dialogue" of peace, knowledge and understanding between people, as its founders hoped it might.

Christopher Horner is an English violinist who has played as recitalist, concerto soloist and freelance orchestral player throughout the UK, Europe and South Africa. He was Deputy Head of Strings at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama from 2000-2009. He combines a busy performing career with violin teaching, chamber music coaching and adjudication of choirs and all instrumental categories in Festivals throughout the UK and overseas. He has recorded a CD of Music for Violin and Piano by Juozas Gruodis with pianist John Lenehan on the Discovery Music and Vision label and has prepared a new edition of the composer's violin and piano sonata for publication later this year. He has served as a member of the Jury at the Festival Internacional de Música de Cantonigròs a Vic since 2013.
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Edited by Louise Wiseman, UK/Canada ●



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The University Choral Program

Through my people the spirit will sing



At the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (National Autonomous University of Mexico), one of the oldest universities in the Americas, we have a motto that identifies us: *“Through My People The Spirit Will Speak”*, written by José Vasconcelos, who was rector in 1920. This motto reveals the humanist vocation with which our highest-ranking educational establishment was conceived. Today, having walked a long road, those of us that form a part of the Programa Coral Universitario (University Choral Program) have taken up this phrase, thus saying: *“Through My People The Spirit Will Sing”*.

As in every story, time must pass in order to provide for development and growth. The creation of choirs within the UNAM was initiated in 1964 and continued for close to eight years before lack of interest in continuing the project intervened. Happily, in 1997 this initiative was once again taken up, and the choirs that existed in isolation within the University were invited to be a part of this new program.

The task of informing and convincing the authorities in various schools and institutions of the enrichment this activity means for student education continues to be an arduous one. Despite the extent of writings and research done on the benefits of music practice in general and choral practice in particular, in the majority of academic areas the authorities believe there is no time for such activities. We continue to encounter the resistance that promotes ignorance of the numerous benefits choral practice contributes to human education, something which, in addition, has a low economic cost, if we consider that only a single, well-prepared person in front of the group is necessary for things to begin to work.

Ana Patricia Carbajal
Córdova
Musical Educator,
Choral Director
and Cultural Promoter

University choirs are places where students learn to see the world in a more complete, diverse and inclusive manner. As a result, they can find perspectives that allow them to enrich themselves as individuals. The sensitive and emotional life of a human being also requires training and education, not only for one's own benefit, but for the society in which one lives. Music, being a pre-verbal and emotional language, contributes to the formation of a person's sensitivity, which is of great importance in the construction of a healthy lifestyle. I still believe this is not a matter centered exclusively on economics, though I do, unfortunately, see it has a connection with poverty and ignorance. We find it hard to value the intangible. The pursuit of economic welfare is a never-ending effort. We easily forget that the common good is built upon and includes all of us.

As a result, the Programa Coral Universitario is a something of value that we must continue to care for and promote. Our work has continued for seventeen years, and every day this program becomes more pertinent within the UNAM.

The mission of the Department of Cultural Dissemination, from which directly depends the General Directorate of Music, is the following:

"To promote creation in the different fields of art and to disseminate cultural and artistic expression in all genres, as well as promoting scientific, technological and humanistic knowledge developed in the university, in order to enrich the education of students, to be of benefit as widely as possible to all of Mexican society, and to strengthen national identity".

[<http://www.cultura.unam.mx/secciones/Qui%C3%A9nesSomos>] consulted on August 10, 2015.

I have had the honor of coordinating the Programa Coral Universitario since 2002, and, thanks to this opportunity, I have been able to compose a team of musicians who are committed to teaching and who are willing to work with choirs, so opening the way to creativity, to cultivating the motivation to join hands and creating spaces that generate identity. In the Programa Coral Universitario team, we encourage and share the values important to living together and building with others in peace.

In a Mexico full of contrasts, which experiences extreme and difficult situations, a tool like the PCU must be maximized. Our youth require spaces for expression that allow them to communicate with others and leave the absorptive cyber world and drugs, alcohol, and a sense of emptiness in a world that may become very hostile if we do not present them with alternatives.

The Programa Coral Universitario transforms lives and promotes the respect merited by quality choral practice, however simple it may be. Our job is to show members of the chorus the beauty of a simple melody, sung properly as a team. We engage members in the experience of resonating with others, providing for that collective energy to reach an increasingly wider audience and thus encourage the further generation of an audience.

It is not a simple task to get people interested in joining a choir. This activity is virtually unknown to most of the population. Promoting, advertizing and publicizing choral activity has been much of my work, not only in connection with the Programa Coral, but for over twenty-five years with Voce in Tempore A. C., an association created primarily for this purpose.

The Programa Coral Universitario now serves thirteen choral groups, totaling approximately 350 choir members. Anyone from the university community can enter a choir of personal preference. We even have space for external persons who wish to participate and who adapt to the conditions of rehearsal. Choral participants are students, teachers, administrative workers, custodial staff and postgraduate or open system students. The range is very wide, and, if we consider that the number of students registered for the 2014-2015 cycle was 342,542, we can say that we have much work to do.

The choirs that exist today are from the School of Sciences, dir. Eduardo Hernández; School of Political and Social Sciences, dir. Rodrigo Castañeda; School of Accounting and Administration, dir. Edgar Domínguez; School of Law, dir. Gabriela Díaz and Ivet Guillén; School of Philosophy and Literature, dir. Enrique Galindo; School of Engineering, dir. Óscar Herrera; National School of Social Work, dir. Claudia Salgado; Acatlán School of Higher Education, dir. Raúl Vázquez; Aragón School of Higher Education, dir. Arturo Salvadores; Iztacala School of Higher Education, dir. Luis A. Manzano; Zaragoza School of Higher Education, dir. Arturo Salvadores; and "*Voces del CELE*" (Center for the Teaching of Foreign Languages), dir. Gabriela Franco. We will soon be forming the Choir of the Cuautitlán School of Higher Education.

In general, choirs rehearse four to six hours per week. The program includes teachers of vocal technique who act as advisors to the directors and work with choirs. We also have two pianists who attend to choirs and who accompany works that need reinforcement or works originally written for chorus and piano.

Choirs, depending on their musical level, offer concerts in their home areas and also participate in performances outside the University. Each semester, meetings are organized to work with all members from the different campuses, the aim of which is to have choir members hear each other, meet and promote this endeavor.

I have been privileged to have the support of great directors who share the mysticism of the work of the PCU and who attend in order to work with choir members and directors.

My job as coordinator is to organize choirs, directors and teachers; to talk with the directors of schools and colleges, in order to allow and support the increase of group formation; to justify and make apparent the progress of the Programa in the Dirección General de Música y Difusión Cultural (Directorate General of Music and Cultural Dissemination), so that the budget allocated continues to grow;

and above all, to see that this activity remains relevant within the UNAM. Finally, the PCU has achieved a special place, because it is an activity of the Directorate General of Music that caters directly to the university community.

I feel fortunate to work for this program and wish, by means of this article, to promote a connection between the PCU and people and institutions interested in sharing similar experiences. We have much to learn and a long way to go. Music is a means to do so.

Let us continue to work so that, within the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, the community's voices can be united in dignity through art and the promotion of creative spaces, where generosity and the spirit of growth are practiced, where friendship is cultivated in areas of expression that will leave an impression on those who live it, those who listen and, as well, on our society. We cannot escape the great responsibility to engage with choral music and what it means for human education.

Translated from the Spanish by Joel Hageman ●

Ana Patricia Carbajal Córdova, Musical Educator, Choral Director and Cultural Promoter. In 1989, she founded the Ensamble Coral Voce in Tempore for the purpose of creating an artistic space for lovers of choral singing, later creating the civil association of the same name to promote, disseminate and professionalize choral music. She is host of the radio program Música EnCantada, which has aired for seventeen years. She has organized various festivals, events, workshops and activities to strengthen the growth of the choral movement in Mexico, has participated in several radio and television programs and has received awards, prizes and scholarships in both the nation and abroad. She has worked with the English composer John Rutter, with the *New York Choral Society* and with recognized directors of international renown. Email: voceintempore@yahoo.com




Golden Voices of Montserrat

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Third Gavriil Musicescu International Youth Choral Festival



The composer Gavriil Musicescu (1847-1903)

The Gavriil Musicescu Choral Festival in Iași, the old Moldovan capital in Romania, exposed people to the purifying sound of choral harmonies for six exciting days, with thirty choirs participating in the six sections of the contest and about twenty other concerts being held throughout the town in a colorful bouquet of choral events designed to attract audiences of all ages, during which a number of well-established ensembles graced the competitors' stage. The presence of so many high-profile personalities from the choral music world added to the competition jury's credibility, and major names from the cultural and religious world were invited to present awards at the final gala event held on Sunday, July 5th in the National Theater building, included earlier this year in the BBC's list of the world's seven most beautiful, breathtaking theaters.

In earlier times, Gavriil Musicescu settled in Iași, a city lying like Rome on seven hills, after receiving a solid music education, including composition, in St. Petersburg. He was born in 1847 in Izmail, Bessarabia Governorate

(now in southern Ukraine), and from 1872 until his death in 1903, he was the director of the Iași Conservatory and conductor of both the conservatory choir and the metropolitan church choir. This great musician, musicologist, and conductor contributed greatly to educating both the general public and his young disciples and also authored numerous choral music compositions. Consequently, it is very moving to have a festival bearing his name today, especially since other attempts to establish a choral festival in Iași had succumbed to the relevant authorities' lack of support and interest.

This time, however, the organizing team is particularly strong, managing to be a good link between civil and religious society and also having the know-how to raise funds and attract European money as can be seen from several previously successful projects. Behind this success is a wonderful, successful family: Daniela Doroșincă, the festival's artistic director, holds a Ph.D. in conducting and is rich in experience in choral music as a member of the Gavriil Musicescu Academic Choir from Iași's Philharmonic Moldova. Her husband Mihai Doroșincă is a priest and founder of the *Binecredinciosul Voievod Ștefan cel Mare și Sfânt* church and parish: he comes from an influential family of orthodox prelates. The association Iubire și Încredere (Love and Trust [or Faith]), which they established several years ago, has a bright, young, and devoted staff and has become increasingly skilled at organizing events, with even the current festival growing spectacularly from one year to the next after only three years of existence. The association has also had a considerable number of influential partners, including local and county governments such as the Iași City Hall, the County Council, and the Metropolis of Moldova and Bucovina via the Solidarity and Hope Foundation.

The contest was held during the first two days, on July 2nd and 3rd, with the competition's psaltic choirs giving concerts in the church while the Museum of the Union hosted a book launch event for *Athos: Notes of Unsilent Paths* by Alexandru Rădescu. On the evening of July 3rd, the Atrium Palas Mall reverberated with the sound of the competing choirs, organized in sections for high music school and seminary choirs, music university and theology faculty choirs, and young amateur choirs. Their extraordinary concert captivated the audience's spirits with an impressive repertoire from Romania, the Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, and Bulgaria.

These performances were followed on July 4th by choral concerts held in old people's homes and children's homes by four choirs in the contest: the Anghel Manolov Choir from Sofia, Bulgaria; the Ave Musica Choir and Melody Choir from Ivano Frankovsk, Ukraine; and the a cappella Crescendo Chamber Choir from Krivoi Rog, Ukraine. It was also a great day to hear unconventional concerts given by music school choirs from the Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova in a vintage tram throughout the city.

The fourth day of the festival offered a concert in Copou Park, in the shade of the linden tree much evoked by the national poet Mihai Eminescu. All the children's choirs in the competition performed alongside the Radio Bucharest Children's Choir (Maestro Voicu Popescu, conductor) and also performed with one of the most prestigious choral music ensembles in Romania, the Madrigal -

Marin Constantin National Chamber Choir (Anna Ungureanu, conductor). The choirs' appeal garnered a considerable number of spectators who stayed with them even when rain hit the city during the second part of the event. This event was organized in partnership with Cantus Mundi, the Madrigal Choir's national program initiated for children's choirs by the great Romanian conductor Ion Marin, son of Maestro Marin Constantin. For this reason, all the children's choirs sang the hymn 'Cantus Mundi' after rejoining the Madrigal members under the direction of Anna Ungureanu. At the end of the evening, during a shower of rain, the Madrigal National Choir came up on stage unaccompanied and made the audience rejoice with a short but extraordinary concert of the most cheerful classical repertoire of Romanian choral music.

On the morning of Sunday, July 5th, the biggest simultaneous choral concert ever held in a church in Iași took place, with nine large choirs performing in nine churches and organizers estimating an audience of about 5,000 people.

The final gala evening, held in the National Theater, began verbally with a word of blessing from His Eminence Theophanes, Metropolitan Bishop of Moldova and Bucovina, and musically with an extraordinary recital by the Madrigal Choir. The winners of the six sections of the contest and the special guests of the evening: the Radio Bucharest Children's Choir conducted by Mr. Voicu Popescu; the "Byzantion" Byzantine music ensemble led by Adrian Sârbu; and the Tronos Choir of the Romanian Patriarchy directed by Archdeacon Protopsalter Mihail Buca, all came up on stage. The gala evening ended with the appearance of even more special guests, the Prelude Chamber Choir conducted by Maestro Voicu Enăchescu.

After the top-notch Romanian choral artists of the festival delighted the audience with their wonderful voices, awards and plaques were presented on the National Theater stage by important people from the city: Ms. Mihaela Ivancea (Ph.D.), Mr. Gabriel Harabagiu (Student House Manager), Mr. Daniel Mătăsaru (Deputy Mayor of Iași), Mr. Victorel Lupu (Iași County Council Vice Chairman), Mr. Catalin Jeckel (Doxology Publishing House Manager), Mr. Liviu Brătescu (Athenaeum Tatarasi Manager), Mr. Sorin Avram Iacoban (Deputy), and Mr. Gheorghe Duțică (Ph.D. professor from the George Enescu University of Arts in Iași).

Special guest jurors for the six sections of the competition were also present. The jury for the children's choir competition consisted of Mrs. Anna Ungureanu (conductor of the 'Madrigal' National Chamber Choir), Ms. Elena Marian (president of the National Choral Association in Moldova), and Mr. Voicu Popescu (Radio Bucharest Children's Choir). In the music school

section, the Fusion Sound Childrens' Choir from Odessa, Ukraine (Svetlana Vermedovskaia, conductor), took first place. In the secondary school section, the Lia - Ciocârlia Choir from Chișinău, Republic of Moldova (Svetlana Istrate, conductor) won first place.

The jury of the sections for high music school and seminary choirs, music university and theology faculty choirs, and young amateur choirs (from schools with a music curriculum) was made up of Mr. Nicolae Gâscă (President, professor from George Enescu University of Music in Iași), Mr. Andrea Angelini (professor, conductor from Rimini, Italy and managing editor of *ICB*, the magazine of the International Federation of Choral Music),

Maestro Voicu Enăchescu (President of the National Choral Association of Romania and conductor of the prestigious Prelude Chamber Choir), Mr. Ioan Golcea (associate professor from the National University of Music in Bucharest), Mr. Mstyslav Yurcenko (professor from the Boris Grincenko National University in Kiev, Ukraine), and Mr. Adrian Ardeleanu (conductor, manager of the County Center for Conservation and Promotion of Traditional Culture in Iași).



As for prize winners from these sections, the lyceum first prize was awarded to the Cantemus Youth Choir from the Rainbow Center for Extracurricular Activities in Chișinău, Moldova, and the amateur section first prize was awarded to the Anghel Manolov Choir of the Student House in Sofia, Bulgaria. No first prize was awarded in the university section.

The psaltic music section jury was made up of Mr. Nicolae Gheorghită (professor, President of the National University of Music in Bucharest), Mr. Antonios Aetopoulos (university professor from Athens Music University), and Mr. Adrian Sârbu (Ph.D. student, conductor of Byzantion Choir from George Enescu University of Music in Iași). The jury prize for excellence was awarded to the Byzantine music ensemble The Shrine from the Archdiocese of Iași, and the first prize went to the Byzantine Choir from the Bishop Caesar Theological Seminary in Buzau.

The festival trophy was awarded to the Cantemus Youth Choir from the Rainbow Center for Extracurricular Activities in Chișinău, Moldova, who stunned the audience and judges with their precise sonorities, intricate rhythms, beautiful voices, and difficult repertoire.

Presented by Daniela Dorosincă, director of the festival and Cătălin Sava (TVR), the elegant gala events of the Third Gavriil Musicescu International Youth Choral Festival were broadcast live on national television, and this broadcast may still be seen at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LVBpp43UluQ>.

On the last day of the festival, the main jurors and a few Romanian conductors participated in the conference, a fruitful meeting about the results of this event and a debate centered

around the potential impact of the festival and development opportunities for improving future iterations. Even Iași, this small town in the northeastern part of Romania, has a long, durable choral music tradition dating back even before Musicescu, and this festival proved that simple hard work and devotion in the present can preserve the beauty, value, and life of choral music in such places. As the final July 6th conference highlighted, Romanian choirs (mainly being those from higher artistic education fields) were still underrepresented in this festival, and a professional website for this event could eventually help bring in a lot of other foreign choirs to the region.

Such observations, however, detract in no way from the festival's overall success and will certainly serve to motivate future efforts by the ambitious and talented organizers, who fully deserve our esteem and congratulations.

Edited by Steve Lansford, U.S.A. ●

Daniela Vlad has been a radio producer and presenter since 1990, working for Radio Iași, the biggest regional station of Radio Romania. She has a degree in musicology from the Iași Conservatory and has participated in several training courses in journalism at Radio France, the BBC School, and Radio Netherlands. She is a frequent radio correspondent for the George Enescu International Festival, for other national jazz, pop, and world music festivals, and for various national music contests, and she has also been invited to participate in national juries for pop and choral music. In early 2000, she was invited to participate in the jury for Radio Poland's world music contest Ethnosfera and was president of the jury in 2002. Email: danielavlad@yahoo.com



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• Serenade! Washington, D.C. Choral Festival (USA)

25-29 June, 2015



▲ The Australian Children's Choir in front of the Washington National Cathedral

"True harmonic convergence." - The Washington Post

As Artistic Director of The Australian Children's Choir, I have had the great pleasure of attending a number of choral festivals, both within Australia and New Zealand, and across Asia and Europe. This year during our midyear holiday, I led the choir on a three-week tour of the USA and Canada, and part of this tour comprised The ACC participating in the 2015 Serenade! Washington, DC Choral Festival. The only summer festival of its kind in the United States, the Serenade! Festival features professional and community choirs with a distinctly international flavour (something very attractive to a choir such as ours, which has to travel so far to participate in such an event). In its five years, the Serenade! Festival in the US capital has attracted over forty choirs from twenty countries. Multiple concerts in Washington DC and surrounding Virginia and Maryland, as well as a choral competition, numerous workshops, cultural exchanges between the choirs, a massed choir finale featuring a prominent American conductor, and some excellent sight-seeing opportunities made the Serenade! Festival an attractive event for us to be a part of, and it certainly proved to be an exuberant and unforgettable celebration of choral music from around the world.

One of the things that our choir enjoyed most about this festival was getting the chance to hear fine performances from choirs from around the world, all in one place. Each festival concert featured three or four choirs presenting their own programmes, allowing the participants and audience members alike to enjoy a unique and exciting international musical experience. The 2015 participants of this year's festival came from as far away as Cuba, Slovakia, Finland, Norway, Canada and the United States, as well as not one, but two, choirs from Australia! At one of our individual festival concerts, we were thrilled to share the programme with the Oslo Chamber Choir, a highly polished adult ensemble from Norway. Their blend of voices, resonant tone, finely-tuned ensemble was astonishing, and it was a wonderful chance to hear music by some of Norway's leading composers. We also heard fantastic ensembles like the Tapiola Chamber Choir from Finland and the dynamic Coro Entrevozes from Cuba. It was a great experience for our choir to hear such a diverse range of high quality music of such high standard, helping to raise the level of our choir's performance during the festival. The festival organizers had taken great care to ensure that each concert was presented in a choir-friendly venue with excellent acoustics, and had been able to attract large crowds with very appreciative audiences at each concert (something which can sometimes be difficult at some festivals around the world). Based in the historic town of Alexandria just outside Washington D.C, Classical Movements, the festival organizers, also managed to secure a wonderful opportunity for my Australian Children's Choir to perform a concert on the Millennium Stage of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts alongside the impressive Los Angeles Children's Chorus from California, and

Andrew Wailes
Artistic Director,
The Australian
Children's Choir



▲ Members of Australian Children's Choir and Pro Musica-Magnolia (Slovakia)

this proved to be another memorable tour experience.

The absolute highlight of the festival was a finale concert performance at Strathmore Hall in Maryland. The second home of the Baltimore Symphony, and a spectacular venue that frequently hosts many other great artists such as Joshua Bell, Sarah Chang, Emanuel Ax, and Diana Ross, it ranks as one of the finest concert halls I have ever had the pleasure to perform in anywhere in the world. It is less famous than the Kennedy Centre, but more beautiful (with an all wood interior), and the acoustics are far greater there than in the nation's more famous home of performing arts. Not only was there a large and appreciative audience for the concert, but the performance showcased the Best of Serenade! [Festival], featuring all festival choirs, culminating with an exhilarating massed choir finale conducted by the celebrated choral composer and clinician Doreen Rao. The audience received a nice Cuban surprise...with dimmed light, the festival singers – holding glow sticks – paraded down the aisles singing the famous Cuban song *Guantanamera* on their way to the stage. This was such an exhilarating experience for my young choristers, getting a chance to sing in one of the best halls in the United States along with so many wonderful singers from around the world. Dr. Rao even managed to get the entire audience to sing along in the massed grand finale, which really created a festival atmosphere, and cemented Washington's reputation for being a "choir-friendly" city.

In addition to the festival concerts, the young members of The Australian Children's Choir had time to explore the nation's capital. Washington, DC is a wonderful place to visit with a choir, with so many magnificent monuments, wide open spaces and many world class museums and Smithsonian Institutions which are, remarkably, almost all free. Not only are the national monuments fascinating, the festival featured an impromptu opportunity for the choirs to sing on the iconic steps of the imposing Lincoln Memorial. One of our choir members was also selected to participate in the honourable wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery, and our choristers felt privileged to be able to watch the changing of the guard ceremony and observe the workings of America's most sacred site.

My singers also had a chance to get to know other choirs throughout the festival both during meals and at various group activities such as the workshops with Doreen Rao on two massed choir works, an opportunity to learn the Cuban song *Guantanamera* with one of Cuba's finest choirs (which we later performed at Strathmore Hall), and at the singing farewell dinner, where choirs enjoyed a noisy, relaxed and fun atmosphere with great food, impromptu singing and an opportunity to make new friends, swap stories and network with our new-found friends from around the world. In the case of The Australian Children's Choir, there was an instant bond with the members of the Choir of the Transfiguration from Manhattan and the members of the Los Angeles Children's Choir with whom we had enjoyed performing at the Kennedy Center the day before.



▲ Massed Choir rehearsal at Strathmore



▲ Serenade! Festival African Music Workshop

As one of the competition advisors, I was honoured to be invited to sit on the judging panel for the 2015 festival competition (my own choir was not participating in the competition.) We were privileged to hear some outstanding performances in the beautiful Church of the Epiphany in downtown Washington, D.C. Of particular note were the performances of the two competition winners: the Pro Musica-Magnolia Choir from Slovakia (winners of the Youth Choir category); and the spectacular Coro Entrevoces from Cuba (winners of the Adult category and also of the Grand Champion Prize). The winning choirs took home trophies and the Grand Champion received a monetary prize as well, to enable the commissioning of new music.

The Serenade! Washington DC Choral Festival gave our young choristers from 'down under' a fantastic opportunity to share their music-making with some wonderful choirs from around the world, both in rehearsals and in performance at the various concerts we were fortunate to attend and participate in.

Widely regarded as one of Australia's leading conductors specializing in symphonic choral repertoire, **Andrew Wailes** enjoys a busy performing and teaching schedule both in Australia and, increasingly, overseas. One of Australia's busiest conductors, Andrew Wailes became Music Director and Chief Conductor of the Royal Melbourne Philharmonic Choir and Orchestra at the end of 1998, making him one of the youngest persons to hold that position in over 150 years. Andrew has been Principal Conductor of the Melbourne University Choral Society since 1992, and Artistic Director and Conductor of The Australian Children's Choir since 1999. Active as a chorus master, he frequently prepares choirs for the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra Victoria and for film and major televised events around Australia. He is also Music Director of the Box Hill Chorale (since 1995) and founder of the RMP Aria competition for Oratorio Singers in Melbourne. For over ten years Andrew was the Director of the Australian Catholic University's Melbourne Choir (2000 -2011), and he has previously directed Faculty Choirs at the University of Melbourne, the Melba Memorial Conservatorium of Music, and at Monash University. Email: andrewwailes@hotmail.com



Edited by Will Masters, UK/Spain •

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China International Chorus Festival



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第十三届 中国国际合唱节

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中国国际合唱节

China International Chorus Festival

中国国际合唱节（简称 CICF）创办于 1992 年，是经中华人民共和国国务院批准的，目前中国境内唯一的国家级、国际性合唱类艺术活动，也是我国举办的规模最大、规格最高的国际合唱艺术盛会，是由中华人民共和国文化部外联局、中国对外文化集团公司及国际合唱联盟共同主办，集境内外专业和业余合唱团体于一体的一项重要合唱艺术活动。合唱节每两年举办一届，至今已成功举办十二届。

中国国际合唱节对促进世界各国文化交流，提高境内外合唱团体的演唱水平起到了有力的推动作用。中国国际合唱节深受境内外合唱团体的喜爱，具有较大的影响，已引起国际合唱界专业人士和团体的广泛关注。据不完全统计，在已举办的十二届合唱节中，直接参节团体已近千余支总人数达 47000 余人。

中国国际合唱节以“共建和谐世界，为了明天——和平友谊”为宗旨，使来自不同国家和地区、不同肤色和民族的人们欢聚在一起，同台竞技，用歌声歌唱世界和平与友谊，用歌声抒发人生的喜悦和对和平的向往，用歌声传播友谊和对世界充满的爱。

第十三届中国国际合唱节将于 2016 年 7 月 26 日至 8 月 1 日在北京隆重举行，届时北京将为世界各国的合唱爱好者撑起一片合唱的天空。

Founded in 1992, China International Chorus Festival (CICF) is currently the only state-level international chorus festival in China which approved by the state council. As the largest-scale and highest-level international chorus festival held in China, CICF is a cultural activity which brings choirs both at home and abroad together to sing. It is held once every two years by Bureau of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of China of P.R.China, China Arts & Entertainment Group and International Federation for Choral Music. In the past 12 CICFs have been proved a great success.

CICF plays an important role in improving performance level of the participating choruses and promoting cultural exchanges between China and other countries. As a much-loved festival among worldwide choirs, CICF has a great influence and enjoys unanimous praise from professionals, chorus groups as well as people from all walks of life. According to incomplete statistics, in the past 12 festivals, the number of participating choirs has exceeded 1000 and more than 47,000 choir members were involved.

In the tenet of “Build a harmonious world together for the future --- Peace and Friendship”, CICF invites people from different countries and regions, of different nationalities and colors to come together and compete on the same platform. Performers sing for peace and friendship, express their happiness and desire for peace, spread friendship and love.

The 13th China International Chorus Festival will be held from July 26 to August 1, 2016 in Beijing and will build a paradise for all choral lovers.



Anna Ungureanu
choral conductor, Artistic
Director and Principal
Conductor of the Cantus
Mundi National Program

Established in 2011 by conductor Ion Marin, with the help of the Madrigal Choir volunteers, the Cantus Mundi National Program was institutionalised by the Government. Thus the program became, from just a simple idea, an institution under the Ministry of Culture: The Madrigal - Marin Constantin National Chamber Choir. The Cantus Mundi National Program is coordinated by an Inter-ministerial Committee comprising representatives from various institutions, appointed by the order of the Ministry of Culture: Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration, Ministry of Education and Research and Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Protection and the Elderly.

The national program, which is intended to unite all the children in Romania, was launched at the Romanian Parliament during the Cantus Mundi Gala, broadcast live on national television. Seven hundred children participated, all of whom sang together, most of them meeting each other face to face for the first time.

The Cantus Mundi National Program aims to create a platform that would encompass an extended database of online lessons, video lessons and audio scores, as well as a social networking tool and a search engine for the promotion of the Romanian choir movement: a forum administered by experts, photo/video galleries and a database of all the choirs in Romania.

The aim of the program is to unite all Romanian children through choral singing. To do so, Cantus Mundi focuses on social inclusion, development in areas with little to no culture (such as most of the rural areas of Romania) and cultural communication and interactivity. All the children in Romania have the right to develop in harmony, to communicate among themselves and to grow together. Through the Cantus Mundi program, social inequities can be overcome through choral singing which, as a group activity, helps - through nonverbal communication - to create a social

identity, regardless of race, religion, social status, or economic condition. Through music, young people belonging to various cultures across Romania will manage to forge relationships and build bridges for communication, which will help them to understand and accept each other.

Cantus Mundi teaches conductors how to create and develop their own choir, how to establish a repertoire, how to give colour to life in their community. Benefits for conductors include specialised training at various levels of competence, with top professionals. With more than fifty years of experience, the National Chamber Choir specialists become their mentors, or even their colleagues on stage. There is also an online administrative platform that supports the work of a choir, as well as membership and access to the national network of choirs in Romania.

Choir singers benefit from an environment for communication and interaction which includes children and young people from all social groups, as well as training and on-stage performances with the National Chamber Choir, and, of course, membership of the largest cultural social networking platform in Romania.

The development of a choir begins in front of a supervisor, continues in the rehearsal room and culminates on the most important national and international stages. This is our vision, so that one of the most outstanding elements of this education program is the online platform, facilitating interaction and activity on a national level involving all the conductors and choristers in Romania. The official release of the Cantus Mundi platform will take place on October 1, 2015, on the National Day of Music.

The Cantus Mundi platform facilitates coordination and communication within a group. Once the choir and its members have signed up, the platform offers the possibility of sending messages to everyone instantaneously. For example, when conductors want to schedule a rehearsal, or when they want to send a score to the whole choir, they simply connect and access the menu “My choir”, where they are able to send a message directly with a simple click of the mouse. Soon, the platform will also allow for messages to be sent as a SMS. Moreover, conductors will be able to send scores directly to the members of a choir.

Cantus Mundi provides every member with a forum for the exchange of scores, making materials available to every conductor and chorister across the country. Members will be able to access the entire score database of the National Chamber Choir and will have gradual access to the Cantus Mundi score collection. For those who have just started their careers, the platform can produce and provide audio scores, ensuring that rehearsals go smoothly and new songs are learnt easily.



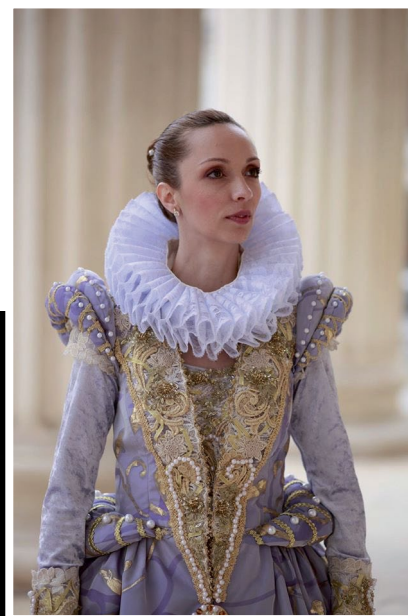
A further great benefit offered to the community is the Marin Constantin method manual. Each month, one volume of the famous work will be published online for the Cantus Mundi members. Cantus Mundi specialists will be contactable to answer any member's questions directly – these specialists are Madrigal members with extensive experience in the field. Thus, if a conductor has doubts about what repertoire to choose, or if they do not master certain conducting techniques or if they simply wish to ask a question, they will receive online feedback.

Another important dimension of the Cantus Mundi National Program consists of the Cantus Mundi training sessions, which are run by specialists with vast teaching experience, as well as thousands of hours of practical skills gained on the most important stages in the country. One aspect is assisting the personal development of conductors and choristers who have signed up to the program. Regardless of their level of experience in the field, or even where there is no prior experience, Cantus Mundi has solutions to assist with the formation of a choir: training the conductor, encouraging children's engagement with the Romanian choral movement, or improving the performance of an already established choir.

Structured on very clearly defined levels, Cantus Mundi training sessions will be held in Bucharest and in other locations, depending on the level of registration of new choirs in a certain geographical area. At the end of each session, there will be participation diplomas and objectives to reach, the accomplishment of which will allow for progression to the next level of training.

Cantus Mundi specialists will regularly record and play short video lessons to professionally support conductors and choristers. Additionally, the Cantus Mundi team is working on creating the first choir manual. Musicians with extensive experience in this field share their knowledge in order to develop this tool, to make it accessible both to experienced musicians and to beginners.

Knowing how important it is to have good scores, lessons and advice, Cantus Mundi offers its members a space for communication with their own choirs. Regardless of



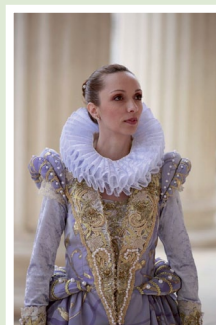
whether they are a conductor or a chorister, there are tools to support choral performance!

Cantus Mundi offers its members direct contact with conductors and children's choirs across the country, to initiate long-lasting collaborations within an extended community. Moreover, it will involve its members in national and international projects, in which the Madrigal - Marin Constantin National Chamber Choir will participate, and offers members the chance to take part in the grand concerts that the choir has held for over fifty years. Periodically, there will be Cantus Mundi camps, at which a conductor would be able to make contact with the members, conductors and area coordinators of choirs from across the country.

All of the features of the elaborate national program which is Cantus Mundi would not be possible were it not for its founding president, Maestro Ion Marin, who turned his vision into a national program. In seven years' time, 4100 conductors and 250,000 choristers from the forty-one counties of Romania will be part of the Cantus Mundi National Program!

Edited by Laura Clarke, UK. ●

Specialised in conducting under the supervision of the renowned musicians Marin Constantin and Sharon Hansen (USA), **Anna Ungureanu** has performed in Romania, Germany, Russia, Japan, Turkey, Serbia, the Czech Republic, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Poland, Austria, Lithuania, Latvia, China and Belgium. In 2011, Anna Ungureanu, who has a PhD in music and is one of the conductors of The Madrigal - Marin Constantin National Chamber Choir, was appointed as Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the Cantus Mundi National Program, founded by conductor Ion Marin. The aim of the program is to encourage, support and promote choral music in all educational institutions in Romania. The experience gained by working for almost nine years with the founder of the Madrigal National Chamber Choir, maestro Marin Constantin, attests that she is a disciple and follower of the legendary musician. Email: annaszabo2006@yahoo.com



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Walter Marzilli

The Wonderful World of Russian Folksongs
Alexei Petrov

The Influence of Gregorian Chant on
Morten Lauridsen's *O Magnum Mysterium*
Adam O'Dell

If you would like to write an article and submit it
for possible publication in this section

**Please contact Andrea Angelini,
ICB Managing Editor**

Email: aangelini@ifcm.net

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expected, the hidden ternary. In truth it is not hidden, since it is also confirmed by a refined *hemiolia* in all the voices, which, as we know, widens and confirms the ternary, causing the transition from $3/4$ time to $3/2$, to put it simply. This process of confirming the triple time by introducing a *hemiolia* occurs many times in similar occasions.⁶

But then, if the theory about ternary time being linked to birth is true, why is there a ternary beat at *Quando corpus morietur* and at *Christi mortem*? The answer is theological and shows how profound Palestrina is.⁷ In Byzantine iconography the manger where Jesus was born is depicted as a burial tomb, and the child appears swathed like a corpse (see picture to the left). Similarly, the icons depicting the Madonna who is holding him in her arms highlight the features of the grieving mother, as if she knew what fate had in store for the child.

It was not until many centuries later that the baby Jesus was finally depicted without the bandages, but also in Renaissance painting the manger was still represented as a tomb (see picture to the left).

Note that in Catholic doctrine the eschatological and saving power of Christ's birth is manifested and completed by his death on the cross. This is why there are some parallels in music that are nothing short of amazing in the Gregorian repertoire ... We all know, for example, that the 4th mode (*deuterus plagal*) was mostly used for the music accompanying sorrowful and meditative lyrics:⁸ there is no trace of the 4th mode on Palm Sunday, where the brightness and joy of the 5th and 8th preside. But you only have to literally turn a page in the *Graduale Triplex* and enter into Holy week, to run immediately into the 4th in the introit *Judica Domine*. All the introits and graduals of Holy week are in 3rd mode (*deuterus autentico*)⁹ and 4th mode, as is the introit of the *Missa in cena Domini* on Holy Thursday, *Nos autem gloriari*, which is, despite the celebratory and saving nature of the cross, more appropriately in 4th mode. And yet we find the 4th mode where you would never expect it: in the announcement of Christmas in the Liturgy of the Hours! Again at Christmastime, the offertory of the *Missa in nocte*, *Laetentur coeli* and the communion of the *Missa in aurora*, *Exsulta filia Sion* are in 4th, despite the text being joyous! Epiphany: communion *Videntes stellam*, once again in 4th mode. But the most striking example of this birth-death ambivalence is the 4th mode in the *Resurrexi*, on Easter Day! We should also note how this piece is preceded by the Easter Vigil during which, quite rightly, all the sung pieces between the readings are written in bright 8th mode.¹⁰

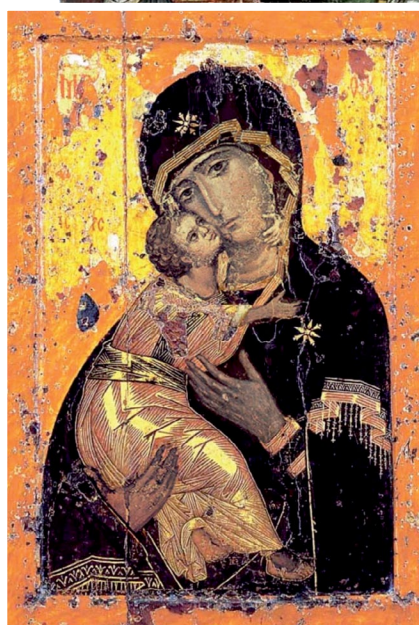
⁶ Bars 25-26; 56-57; 59-60; 61-65; 82-83; 85-86; 88-89; 102-103, bass line; 104-106. The episode at bars 64-65 is worthy of special attention: at *suum dulcem natum* Palestrina achieves the maximum expression of the triple time by introducing a particularly blatant hemiola, coinciding with a binary beat, which leads to an intense and long chord of D with a bright major third entrusted to the tenors.

⁷ I sincerely thank Mons. Massimo Palombella for having explained in detail these theological and musical aspects, which allowed me to research some issues.

⁸ It is described in these terms by many theorists of the same period, from Lanfranco to Zarlino, from Vecchi to Diruta etc.

⁹ Another excellent mournful mode...

¹⁰ *Jubilare Domino, Cantemus Domino, Qui confidunt, Laudate Dominum, Vineae facta est etc.*



▲ Domenico Ghirlandaio, The Adoration of the Shepherds (1485), Holy Trinity, Florence

Need I continue? The introit of the Requiem Mass is written in the vibrant 6th mode, the same mode used for the Easter alleluia.

And now, in this context of salvation, we discover the theological depth of Palestrina.¹¹ At the heart of his CHRISTMAS motet *Dies sanctificatus* for four voices, he inserts a surprise new *bicinium*, which we define as a *trope*. The trope phrase does not exist in the original text of the motet. Here are the extra words: *Haec dies quam fecit Dominus; exsulemus et laetemur*. And do you know where he took it from? From the alleluia verse of the octave of EASTER! The polyphonic theme comes from the same Gregorian source, but inverted. Mons. Palombella pointed out to me that in the version for eight voices of the motet *Dies sanctificatus*, Palestrina inserted the same trope again, and this time even uses the same theme (C-B-D-C) as the verse of the Easter alleluia.

The surprises provided by the refined theologian Palestrina are not over. We will soon see the technique with which he shapes the alternation between the two semichoruses in the *Stabat Mater*. Usually the entrances alternate and the two semichoruses overlap for the duration of one crotchet. There is only one time when the composer overlaps the two groups with different text for two bars (see image): guess what the two semichoruses say simultaneously? One “*natum*” and the other “*morientem*”. Incredible ...

I have just mentioned the technique that Palestrina uses to alternate the two semichoruses. I do not hesitate in calling it pictorial, and with a small stretch of the imagination, even cinematographic. Let us see how he does it. The transition takes place through a process that a director would call a *fade*. The two semichoruses come close together until they brush up against each other, and one creates the chord that the other one starts with, as is normal. Sometimes they follow each other without overlapping,¹² other times a semichorus creeps into the other while it finishes a *ritardando*, sometimes they only overlap for the duration of a crotchet,¹³ while sometimes he employs all eight voices together.¹⁴ I want to bring your attention back to the fact that he never overlaps the two semichoruses for two whole bars with different texts, except in the case discussed earlier (*natum-morientem*).

Sometimes he “stops the scene” and interrupts the flow with a break.¹⁵ This happens for the first time when Palestrina seems to focus on the Madonna and her pain, and the words *O quam tristis et afflicta* see all eight voices together for the first time. He does so again, consistently, with the words *Sancta Mater* (bar 94).

You could think that the intent of the composer was to move the sound and the focus continuously to the right and to the left of the stage, except when he wants to direct it on the central character. This makes it more necessary than ever that the two semi-choruses be set out in such a way that the sound can flow noticeably from one part to the other of the sound space. So it seems necessary to grasp the implicit suggestion of Palestrina and separate the two semi-choruses, looking for that “spatialisation” of the choir that is now very sought after by directors. ‘No new thing under the sun.’ We should add that the stereophonic sources of sound are not only the usual three of the double chorus (semichorus I - semichorus II - all), but five because of two important episodes in which Palestrina forms two new quartets, combining two voices from semichorus I with two from semichorus II.¹⁶

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su - um dul - cem na - tum

su - um dul - cem na - tum

su - um dul - cem na - tum

su - um dul - cem na - tum

mo - ri - én - tem, de - so - lá -

mo - ri - én - tem, de - so - lá -

mo - ri - én - tem, de - so - lá -

mo - ri - én - tem, de - so - lá -

11 Let us not forget that if he had not entered into a second marriage with Virginia Dormoli after the death of his wife, he would perhaps have taken holy orders.

12 It happens four times throughout the piece.

13 It happens nineteen times, and it is the majority of the cases.

14 Eight times.

15 Three times, usually before the “tutti”.

16 It happens in *Juxta Jerusalem* (122), and in a long episode that begins with words *passionis ejus* at bar 145, which we will discuss later.

But let us go back to the rhythm and note that the example of the “perfect” ternary time¹⁷ is obviously not suited to the text when it introduces the words *poenas* (36), *fletet* (41) and *plangere* (140), sung with a binary rhythm: perhaps pain and weeping are human things, for this reason imperfect or indeed perfectible, far from the perfection of the Trinity. Perhaps it is no coincidence that in the aforementioned Hail Mary attributed to de Victoria, the composer reintroduces the binary time at the word *peccatoribus*, after the ternary parenthesis of the *Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis*.

These three words: *poenas*, *fletet* and *plangere*, lead us to another reflection. It is not really difficult to recognise in the rhythmic treatment devoted to them (and, remember, only to them) an inclination for descriptivism and the dramatisation of the concepts of the text. This is commonly called a

restrictive “madrigal” approach. I refer to the fact that only in these three occasions are two sections of the choir called upon to perform a dotted rhythm together, which seems very similar to sobbing. They are clever tricks that were used to “play upon the feelings” of Renaissance men.

But that is not all. What about the introduction of a pained B flat descending to the words *dolorosa* (3), *lacrimosa* (7), *gementem* (12), *dolentem* (16) etc.? Bear in mind that the key signature, despite the vague modal indefiniteness of a very intriguing and intricate harmonic-melodic pace,¹⁸ has no B flat, but rather often plays on the B natural (see *pertransivit gladius*, discussed later).

And those three syncopations of the Sopranos (see image) to the words *dum pendebat filius*? Do they not create the idea of something hanging and swinging? Not only that: the entire choir enters, having stopped on an upbeat, in the last quarter of the bar.¹⁹ In addition we can also discover an unprecedented Palestrina if we look at the “pendulum” movement of the basses’ melody, which moves in long jumps. An elementary and scholastic movement, rather unusual in Palestrina’s mature phrasing. Shall I continue? Then there is the convinced (and convincing!) downward movement of the melodies of the *cantus*, *altus* and *tenor* at the words *pendebat (filius)*.

Once again, *Pertransivit gladius*, part of the *tenor* (see image): this is a tritone between F and B, as pointed and sharp as the tip of the spear that - by analogy - pierced the side of Christ on the cross, to which the text refers.²⁰ Its stinging strength is increased by the contrast with the four soft B flats that surround it. Note that Casimiri smooths it with a B flat, placing the sign of alteration to the left of the note, as if it was requested by Palestrina.²¹ Among the editions that I was able to consult, three of them adjust the B by making it flat,²² while four maintained the B natural.²³ It should also be noted that, beyond the descriptive value of the tritone in reference to the particular literary passage, in this case the use of a B natural respects the known rule of *C against D (causa necessitatis)* between the *tenor* and the *cantus*. In support of the descriptive thesis, we add that four times in this passage Palestrina uses a striking series

17 It is well known how the ancient semiographic theory would define the triple time as *perfectus* and the binary as *imperfectus*, matching the ternary time to the sacredness of the Trinity: *omne trinum est perfectum*.

18 All the anxiety and the involvement of Palestrina in treating a text so full of pain can be seen here. But maybe there is more to it: we will see at the end of this article.

19 These refinements, of course, are revealed only when conducted in two movements.

20 It is true that the B rises to the C, but it does not do so through the usual rapid succession of chromatic notes. The text speaks of the sword that pierced the soul of Our Lady of Sorrows (*Cuius animam gementem, contristatam et dolentem pertransivit gladius*).

21 In truth Casimiri treats all the changes as if they were by Palestrina, placing them to the left of the note. Only in one case is he careful to place a B natural in parenthesis (*Christi mortem*), to distinguish it from the earlier B flat.

22 *Palestrina, Stabat Mater*, transcription by Alexandre-Étienne Coron (1771-1834), undated; *Palestrina, Stabat Mater*, by Richard Wagner (1813-1883), Ed. G. Schirmer, New York, undated; Raffaele Casimiri, *Antologia Polifonica*, vol. VI, Ed. Salterium, Rome, 1934, pp. 33-47.

23 *Pierluigi da Palestrina's Werke*, by Franz Espagne (known as Opera Omnia - Haberl), vol. VI, Breitkopf & Härtel, Leipzig, 1876, pp. 96-108; *Palestrina, Stabat Mater*, transcription by W. M. Barclay Squire, Novello, London, 1899; *Palestrina, Stabat Mater*, transcription by Henry Washington, Chester Music, London, 1974; *Le opere complete di Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, Composizioni latine a 8 e 9 voci*, vol. 33, by Lino Bianchi, Italian institute for the history of music, Edizioni Scialera, Rome 1981, pp. 43-60 (known as Opera Omnia - Casimiri). Bianchi's transcription treats the alterations wisely, taking care to place his personal suggestions above the note, even those that cover many situations that are normal in *ficta* music, such as tritones, upper leading tones etc.

of fifths between extreme parts in the space of two bars, saving himself each time by anticipating the notes and by the composed syncope which results! Although it is a perfectly canonical procedure, the situation is still very interesting. I will finish off this idea by saying that all four sections that sing this phrase move sharply upward with a rising melody.

Finally, is the fleeting rhythm with which Palestrina directs the word *spiritum* (see image), at the end of the first part, a reference to the fluidity and ethereal consistency of the spirit that leaves the body at death? Thinking about it, this is really the only time when the counterpoint meanders through rhythms and melodies that are more complex and not at all solemn and ordered, unlike all the other phrases, composed and measured, which make up the rest of the piece.

Some further notes:

1. Throughout the piece there are only two long notes that are not disturbed by the other semichorus: *gementem* (12) and *tormentis* (59-60). Also *desolatum* and *plagas* (68 and 100) have a semibreve where the other semichorus enters. They are four very significant words within the text and Palestrina almost seems to stop and think about them. It would not be unreasonable to interpret this particular situation as a message from the composer, inviting performers to “blacken” those whole notes with coloratura and embellishments. Musical texts from the same period are full of examples of blackening, even in Palestrina’s own pieces. It is probably our fault for having lost this ability. We simply follow the written notes, which in Palestrina’s day would only have supplied a structural fabric on which to improvise, for example on the notes that jump, on the long ones, or on those that indulge in weeping and sorrow, as many ancient texts point out repeatedly. But this is a long and complicated topic, which cannot be examined in depth here.
2. In note 19 we mentioned the conduction in two movements, which is the one used both by Lino Bianchi and Haberl-Espagne, and many others. Casimiri prefers a performance in four movements. It is actually the least suitable for the countless episodes of implicit ternary time. Those who have experience of these things know that even the *sesquialtera* and the *hemiolia* are proportional and work better inside a binary *tactus* rather than a quarternary.
3. Palestrina writes using the so-called *chiavette* for both semichoruses. This shows the possibility of lowering the tone of the piece, as the Sistine Chapel does by using high tenors for the *altus* parts.
4. Finally we conclude by asking ourselves if Palestrina gave in to the lure that almost none of his musical colleagues²⁴ of the Renaissance were able to resist: that of the *golden ratio*. This is the search for the perfect proportions, relationships between the parts and the whole, intrinsic combinations that often jealously hide the secret of beauty. I have already mentioned that the piece is divided into two parts. Now let me specify that the first part is 73 bars long while the second it 118, for a total of 191 bars. A brief investigation reveals that the golden ratio of the first part corresponds to bar 45, to the words “*in tanto supplicio*”. The golden ratio of the second part is 72 (72.924 to be precise)²⁵ and corresponds to bar 145, where we find the word “*passionis*”. And here is where the surprises begin: this corresponds to the length of the first part (73 bars).²⁶ Let us continue: the golden ratio within the whole composition falls at bar 118, on the words: “*donec ego vixero*”. In other words, the golden ratio of the entire composition is exactly equal to the length of the second part (118). We must also note that the phrase in question (*donec ego vixero*) introduces a very special episode, which is a long intervention entrusted to a group with fewer voices.²⁷ We know

70

spí - ri - tum, [spí - ri - tum.]

spí - ri - tum, [spí - ri - tum.]

spí - ri - tum, [spí - ri - tum.]

spí - ri - tum, [spí - ri - tum.]

spí - ri - tum, [spí - ri - tum.]

51

mí - sit spí - ri - tum, spí - ri - tum.

mí - sit spí - ri - tum, spí - ri - tum.

mí - sit spí - ri - tum, spí - ri - tum.

mí - sit spí - ri - tum, spí - ri - tum.

mí - sit spí - ri - tum, spí - ri - tum.

²⁴ Not to mention the painters, sculptors, architects etc.

²⁵ It is 0.076 off 73. It works out at approximately a semiquaver...

²⁶ We saw how much was missing (see previous note).

²⁷ In the first chorus *cantus* and *altus* are used, in the second *cantus* and *tenor*. We are at bar 122, as mentioned in footnote 16.

that this could be understandably interpreted as an incentive to delegate parts to soloists, thus creating a most unusual and refined sound. The surprises do not end here: this cuts the second part at the same point in which the golden ratio cuts the first part (45 bars). And what is the distance between the golden section of the second part and the end of the piece? 45 bars again ...

Shall I go on? Subtracting the golden ratio of the second part from the golden ratio of the entire composition gives 27 bars: exactly the same as the difference between the first section and its golden ratio.²⁸ Now I am getting carried away: the difference between the whole composition and the golden ratio of the first part gives the same result as the golden ratio of the second part.²⁹ I will stop here. It seems too much.

Note that all these “coincidences” are not the result of those “incestuous” mathematical calculations which always give the same result, as happens in certain well-known number games. They are only possible because of the precise lengths of the first and second parts. For example, by changing the length of the second part, all the coincidences vanish.

²⁸ Although there are always those decimal points to be taken into account, so it is off by 0.096.

²⁹ And when I say *the same* I mean really *the same* to three decimal places: 145.886!

Now do not come and tell me that you have had fun combining the words of the three golden ratios and have found the phrase “*In tanto supplicio passionis, donec ego vixero*”.³⁰ And please do not link it with Palestrina’s difficult life, where in the space of a few years he lost his brother, both children, and his wife; was dismissed from the Sistine Chapel; and despite numerous attempts never managed to fulfil his dream of working for the courts of Spain, Vienna, Munich or even the Gonzagas in Mantova ... because this would be too much even for me!

Walter Marzilli graduated from the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music in Rome with a Diploma in Gregorian Chant, Music Teaching, Choral Music and Choir Directing. He received a Doctorate in Musicology from the same Institute. Studies in Germany led to his receiving a Diploma of Specialisation in music for choir and orchestra from the University of Cologne, and a higher diploma in Music Teaching from the University of Düsseldorf. He was twice elected to the National Artistic Commission of FENIARCO (the Italian National Federation of Regional Choir Associations). He is the Director of various choral ensembles: I Madrigalisti di Magliano, based in Magliano, Tuscany; the Rome Vocal Octet; the Amaryllis Vocal Quartet; and the Rome Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music Polyphonic Choir. He teaches singing at the Sedes Sapientiae International College in Rome, where he is also Director of the Department of Music, and he has taught at the French Pontifical Seminary and at the Italian Opera Academy. He was Director of the Italian Ward Centre for Music Teaching in Rome, where he also taught for a number of years. He teaches Choral Singing at the Francesco Cilea Conservatory of Music in Reggio Calabria, and Choir Directing in the specialisation course at Novara Conservatory of Music. He also teaches at the Higher Institute for Choir Directors of the Guido d’Arezzo Foundation and is tenured Professor of Choir Directing at the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music in Rome. Email: waltermarzilli@alice.it



You can download the music score of the Palestrina’s Stabat Mater, free of charge, on the following link:

<https://app.box.com/s/13f4racougu1nrpr6gloqm337f33rouz>

This Version is used by the Sistine Chapel Choir directed by Mons. Massimo Palombella. The red notes indicate the ‘theory of the affects’ as used in Renaissance times.

Translated from the Italian by Mirella Biagi, Italy/UK ●

³⁰ “*In the torture of passion, where I have always lived*”...

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Alexei Petrov
choral conductor and
teacher

Russia is a vast country composed of many different nationalities. Yet in Russia there has always existed a way of binding many people together and uniting them, a way more powerful than imperial authority or religion: choral singing. Because a song binds not only minds, but souls. The strong tradition of collective singing in Russia is as old as the nation itself, and many songs are like musical pages of a great chronicle of this country. And even today people in different corners of Russia continue to sing the songs of their ancestors, experiencing the same feelings and emotions – joyfulness and sorrow, love and hatred, duty and patriotism.

Let me ask you a question: what famous Russian folksongs do you know? Or, which Russian folksongs are known all around the world? Of course, *Kalinka*. Many people have surely also heard of *Dark Eyes* (or “Charcoal Eyes”) and *Katyusha*. I’d like to surprise you. None of these songs is a real folksong.

What is ‘musical folklore’? It is an art that is deeply rooted in a country’s culture, reflects the national traditions and the mentality of its people, and, most importantly, does not recognise authorship. Why is that? Because the individual personality of the author is totally lost and pales into insignificance in comparison with the historical and geographical dimensions of a folksong’s existence. The author of a true folksong is the whole people. Also, as folklore circulates almost exclusively orally between groups, true folksongs exist in many versions, none of which are ‘right’ or ‘wrong’. All versions have the same right to existence. As for *Katyusha*, which was composed in 1938, or *Charcoal Eyes*, composed in 1884, or even *Kalinka*, composed in 1860, in spite of their worldwide popularity we still know precisely who composed them, and there is only one true version of their melodies, which was written by a professional composer and has circulated unchanged since that time.

You should know that the wide legacy of Russian folksongs is much more than just popular songs like *Kalinka*, *Charcoal Eyes* and *Katyusha*, which are performed often in Russian restaurants abroad. It is the fruit of the centuries-old history of a great country reflected in the musical art of different groups of its population. Today I’d like to talk about some of those folksongs which were a part of the culture of Old Russia and which were already well known by the Russian people three or four hundred years ago. In those days the majority of the population were peasants who lived in villages and were engaged in subsistence farming. Needless to say, none of these peasants had ever heard of B flat or a bass clef or the twelve-tone system. Nevertheless these unknown people created a wonderful musical art using only their natural talents, voices and ears. The best songs have been passed down orally from generation to generation for centuries and have survived to the present day.

Russian folksongs were usually performed by a choir *a cappella*, but it was not a classical choir in the usual sense of the word. First of all, the folk style of singing is very different from the classical. Secondly, there is no strict division into independent parts in the folk choir. One singer or a couple of singers who are leaders of the choir would begin a song, singing the main melody. The other members then joined them, freely improvising and adding new (second, third, fourth and so on) voices. So no two performances of the song were the same, because they always included improvisation. At the end of a song all the parts generally joined together in unison (or in octaves).



▲ Andrej Ryabushkin: The Round Dance

There are many varieties of Russian folksongs – mournful lyrical songs, joyful round-dance songs, energetic work songs and so on. Each variety has its own features. So lyrical songs were sung very broadly, drawlingly, with a slow tempo and a melodious tune. Dance songs were quite different, with a brisk tempo, sharp accents and a lot of syncopation. Work songs tended to be very simple in terms of notes, and necessarily contained the rhythmic pulsation of an action performed during physical labour, because their aim was to facilitate the peasants' hard work.

Below I'd like to talk about a pair of Russian folk songs (presented in my own *a cappella* arrangements) which demonstrate the contrast and variety of this rich musical tradition.

Ah, Ty Step' Shirokaya (*Ah, You Wide Steppe*)

The first song is *Ah Ty, Step' Shirokaya* or *Ah, You Wide Steppe*. It is a sincere lyrical song, and a favourite among Russian Cossacks. Cossacks were a special class of soldiers who lived on the southern borders of Russia and guarded it against enemy invasions. But they were a freedom-loving people who lived by their own laws and did not pay taxes. For Cossacks the word *freedom* had a very special, indeed sacred sense: it conveyed total freedom from imperial power, but at the same time a real love for and attachment to their fatherland.

Naturally, a folksong consists of many verses, which are musically very similar but not the same. As variants on the main theme, they always contain some changes. This is a feature of the art of improvisation in folk singing which I mentioned earlier. Regarding the text, it is worth noting that folksongs often speak in allegorical language, using types of aphorism or riddle imbued with the profound wisdom of human experience. This song is a good example:

First verse: *Oh you wide steppe [prairie], wide and expansive! Oh you Volga-mother, Volga free!*

Second verse: *Oh, that's not the steppe eagle flying up. It's the river burlak [barge hauler] walking.*

Third verse: *Eagle, please don't fly low to the ground. Burlak, don't walk near the river's bank...*

What could we say about the contents of this text? The steppe and the River Volga are the symbols of a freedom like the ideal freedom of a human life. The steppe eagle symbolizes the free man. When the eagle flies high he is absolutely free because it is impossible to reach him. But if the eagle flies close to the ground it is much easier to hurt him, catch and cage him. The same for a man. He is almost totally free while he lives in the steppe because the steppe is a wild land without imperial rules and laws. But if he decides to live close to the water it will be much more dangerous



▲ Ilya Repin Barge: Haulers on the Volga

for him because the river is a great transport artery linking the edges of the Russian Empire with its centre. And if he is in trouble with the authorities he can easily be caught and imprisoned or enslaved. For the Cossacks this warning was very relevant as they often rebelled against the Emperor and were brutally repressed.

Knowing the meaning of the text, we should approach this song not just as a sorrowful and melodious tune, but as a hymn to lost freedom. It then becomes a very strong and touching composition. Try to feel the broad and calm character of this music, in which admiration for the boundless steppe and the mighty beauty of the great river Volga are reflected. It begins very quietly, as if the melody was born somewhere very far away, on the edge of the horizon, and then develops into a strong and brave theme about how to love and fight for freedom, which is the main treasure of a human existence. Finally our song disappears just as it appeared, as if it went off down the river with the last ship.



▲ Ilya Repin: Reply of the Zaporozhian Cossacks

Ah ty step' shirokaya

Russian folksong

arr. by A. Petrov

In slow motion, fluidly

SOPRANO
(TENOR)

ALTO
(BASS)

p *Aah*

pp *Hmm* *mp* *(aah)*

56

7

12

mp *mf*

Ah ty step' shi - ro - ka - ya, shi-ro-ka-ya, raz - dol' - na - ya, ah, ty Vol-ga-

mp *mf*

Ah ty step' shi - ro - ka - ya, shi-ro-ka-ya, raz - dol' - na - ya, ah, ty Vol-ga-

17

f *Aah*

ma - tush - ka, Vol - ga vol' - na - ya! Oy da ne step

ma - tush - ka, Vol - ga vol' - na - ya!

22

ff

noy o - rjol po-dy - ma - et - sja, to rech-noy bur -

f *ff*

Oy da ne step-noy o - rjol po-dy - ma - et - sja, to rech-noy bur -

27

lak raz-gu - lja - et - sja. Ne le - taj, o - rjol, niz-ko ko zem-

lak raz-gu - lja - et - sja. Ne le - taj, o - rjol, niz-ko ko zem-

33

-le; ne gu - ljay, bur - lak, bliz-ko k be - re - gu. hmm

-le; ne gu - ljay, bur - lak, bliz-ko k be - re - gu.

39

(hmm)

44

(hmm)

Poydu L'Ya (*Eh, I Shall Go*)

The next song is a cheerful example of the dancing song. Dancing songs were performed at the festivals of youth, where young people from different villages met, made new acquaintances and often found their future wedding partners through merry games, songs and round dances. This is very joyful music, based on a simple dancing melody. It has a lot of rhythm, a lot of humour and nonsense words. This is a kind of musical patter, which starts very slowly and broadly, but speeds up with every verse towards the end, giving the feeling of an impetuous dance.

It is not necessary to translate the whole text, because many of the verses are allegorical and meaningless at the same time, but the main idea of the song is expressed in the fourth verse, where we can hear the dialogue between two young people. A question: "Tell me, my darling, do you love me or not?" and an answer: "I'm not sure that I really love you, but I can't stop looking at you". As we can see, a new romantic acquaintance has just been made, and a merry dance song should help these romantic feelings to be transformed into a strong family union.

If you decide to sing this arrangement, please pay attention to the word "Da!" ("Yes!"), which you can find in every verse. This is a sort of a musical joke – an unexpected syncope, which comes as a surprise every time and gives the song a rhythmic piquancy. Since this is a special form of expression, performers should not be too shy and should make good use of their chance to fool around a bit.

Nowadays, when huge cities dominate the surface of the Earth, the authentic folk singing tradition has been almost totally lost. But the legacy of folksongs has been saved by musicologists, recorded from the last villagers and written in the classical system of notation. Now folksong melodies exist in different

arrangements created by professional composers and choirmasters, and are far removed from their originals. But their pristine beauty and inner richness continue to fascinate and inspire a deep respect for our ancestors, who created these beautiful songs without any knowledge of the music of Bach and Mozart.

Aleksei Petrov graduated with honours from the Academy of Choral Art with two specialisations, Choral Conducting (class of Prof. Victor Popov) and Vocal Art (class of Prof. Dimitri Vdovin). In 2005 he won the First Prize and Special Prize at the First Moscow Competition of Choral Conductors. Since 2004 he has taught at the Academy of Choral Art in Moscow, and he has been head of the Choral Department since 2009. When Professor V. Popov passed away in 2008, Aleksei Petrov took over the Great Chorus of the Academy of Choral Art. The Academy's various vocal and choral groups have given concerts under his baton in Russia, Western and Eastern Europe, Japan and North America, and have taken part in many major Russian and international festivals. As a choirmaster Petrov works together with renowned conductors like J. Conlon, C. Thielemann, J. Marin, V. Gergiev, and V. Yurovsky. Since 2010 he has worked with some of the leading symphony orchestras of Russia as a guest conductor, conducting numerous performances of classical choral and symphonic works by Bach, Beethoven, Mozart and Verdi.
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Poydu l' ya, vyjdu l' ya

Russian folksong

arr. by A. Petrov

Moderato e poco a poco accelerando alla vivo

SOPRANO (TENOR)

ALTO (BASS)

1. Poy - du l' ya, vyj - du l' ya, DA poy - du l' ya, vyj - du l' ya, DA
2. Sor - vu l' ya, vyr - vu l' ya, DA sor - vu l' ya, vyr - vu l' ya, DA

5 *mf*
 vo dol', vo do - li - nush - ku, DA vo dol' vo shi - ro - ku - ju.
 s vi - no - gra - da ya - go - du, DA s vi - no - gra - da vin - nu - ju.

9 *mp*
3. To li mne ne ya - go - da, DA to li mne ne vin - na - ya, DA
3. To li mne ne ya - go - da, DA to li mne ne vin - na - ya, DA

13
 ya cve - to - chek sor - va - la, DA ya ve - no - chek so - vi - la.
 ya cve - to - chek sor - va - la, DA ya ve - no - chek so - vi - la.

17
4. Ska - zhi, du - sha, ska - zhi, svet, DA ska - zhi, lju - bish' a - li net? DA
4. Ska - zhi, du - sha, ska - zhi, svet, DA ska - zhi, lju - bish' a - li net? DA

21

ya lju - bit' - to ne lju - blju, DA na - glja - det' - sja ne mo - gu!

ya lju - bit' - to ne lju - blju, DA na - glja - det' - sja ne mo - gu!

25

5-6. Poy - du l' ya, vyj - du l' ya, DA poy - du l' ya, vyj - du l' ya, DA

5-6. Poy - du l' ya, vyj - du l' ya, DA poy - du l' ya, vyj - du l' ya, DA

29

vo dol', vo do - li - nush - ku, DA vo dol' vo shi - ro - ku - ju.

vo dol', vo do - li - nush - ku, DA vo dol' vo shi - ro - ku - ju.

33 **Vivo**

7. Poy - du l' ya, vyj - du l' ya, DA poy - du l' ya, vyj - du l' ya, DA

7. Poy - du l' ya, vyj - du l' ya, DA poy - du l' ya, vyj - du l' ya, DA

37 **Rubato**

vo dol', vo do - li - nush - ku, DA vo dol' vo shi - ro - ku - ju.

vo dol', vo do - li - nush - ku, DA vo dol' vo shi - ro - ku - ju.



Golden Voices of Montserrat

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International Choir Contest "Golden Voices of Montserrat" - headed by Peter Broadbent, Director of the Association of the British community choirmasters.

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Golden voices of Montserrat - this is tension and exultation, triumph and tears of happiness, dizziness from success and diving into an atmosphere of a grand international competition of choirs. Feelings that thousands of motivated young singers experience at one of the most prestigious competitions in Europe. This festival-competition involves choirs, regardless of their level and experience. All of them are experiencing unforgettable moments – because this is a meeting of a variety of choirs from different countries!

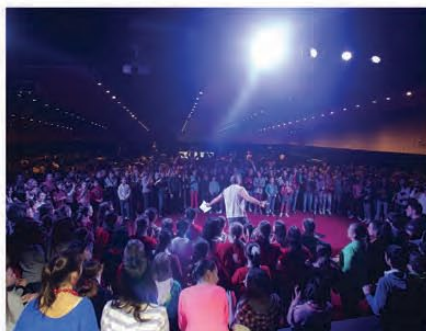


Peter Broadbent - a professional with extensive knowledge from baroque music performed on historic instruments, as well as in contemporary music, including musicals, will head the Committee of Judges in 2016. In the UK, he conducted the English Chamber Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the choir BBC, he is quite a frequent guest on radio stations such as the BBC, Radio 3 and Classic FM. Also he is often invited as a choral conductor on the most important projects in many countries in Europe, works as a choral expert and arbitrator in national and international competitions of choirs. At the moment, Peter Broadbent is director of the Association of the British community choirmasters, he has developed and published a curriculum for courses for conductors of the choirs. He was awarded with the medal «Pro Cultura Hungarica» by Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Hungary for his outstanding work in strengthening the Anglo-Hungarian cultural relations.

For participation at this contest we invite choirs from around the World. European organizer of competitions and festivals Fiestalonia Milenio will give to participants, for the first time in the history of the festivals, a unique opportunity to perform at the Basilica of the Monastery of Montserrat in cooperation with the oldest and well-known in Europe choir «Escolania de Montserrat». Chorus Escolania de Montserrat is considered one of the oldest children's choirs, which, for the first time in 900 years, will perform with members of the contest "Golden Voices Montserrat".

The contest of choirs will be held in the-atre, as well as for the participants of the contest will also be open the doors of the church St. Roma, which is known in Spain, for incredible sound and excellent acoustics. It is noteworthy that the Holy Roman is considered the patron saint of music and singing, that will give to all the participants a special mood and positive energy for their performances.

For one spring week, Lloret de Mar will become the musical centre of Spain, plunging all the participants in the prevailing atmosphere of art, creating a new page in the history of each contestant.



In addition to the competition days, the participants of "Golden Voices Montserrat" will have an opportunity to visit a master class which will be held by one of the UK's leading choral conductors Peter Broadbent, known for its consistent commitment to contemporary music. In one of the competition days the choirs will gather at the appointed place, where they will be waiting for a team of sound engineers to record a song together under the leadership of Peter Broadbent. Do not miss the chance to gain invaluable experience!

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One of the most memorable events «Gala Concert» will close the festival-competition "Golden Voices Montserrat". The most memorable performances will be included in Gala Concert, which will not leave any participant or spectator indifferent!



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The Influence of Gregorian Chant on Morten Lauridsen's *O Magnum Mysterium*

Few aspects of prehistoric music can be assumed. Predating the writings and treatises of the 9th century, the most reliable source of music performance practice and theory in antiquity was the treatise *De Institutione Musica* by Boethius (c. 525), with the cuneiform writings of the Babylonians (and greater Mesopotamia) as a distant second. The first major publication whose origins and practices can be specifically assumed and standardized is the *Liber Usualis*, a compilation of Gregorian chant developed in the late 9th century. Predating this work, plainchant existed in a number of different rites, the most notable being the Ambrosian (Milan), Byzantine, Mozarabic, and Old Roman rites. Gregorian chant is easily the most standardized and popular form of chant beyond the medieval era, and has been a source of stylistic and theoretical influence in later works ever since. Gregorian chant was influenced and informed by Greek music theory that can be traced back to Pythagorean tuning theories (5th century B.C.E.) and the formation of this repertoire under these theories led to its standardization and widespread use throughout Medieval Europe.

Gregorian chant was named after Pope Gregory I, the Bishop of Rome from 590-604 C.E., credited for the organizing and notation of sacred vocal music for religious services. The style originated from monastic life, where monasteries and convents would use plainchant to enhance the text of the Mass Proper. Some chants were sung in perfect unison. Others were responsorial, also known as “viva voce”, meaning that the song leader, often the priest, would sing a line, and the congregation would sing it back. The “Schola Cantorum”, the papal choir of trained singers, would also lead responsorial Gregorian chant in Roman churches.¹ Though monophonic settings appear to be most common in the early Medieval, organal harmonies gained popularity in the 9th century (at the latest) before the publication of *Musica enchiriadis* (c. 895).

Greek music theory emphasized the importance of serving the text, and writing the vocal line in such a way that it is accessible to the singer. These goals, despite being challenged by numerous movements emphasizing virtuosity, have influenced music composition well beyond the end of the Medieval era. This is due in part to the comprehensive rule system that was created to meet these goals, and the success of their implementation. These rules have been bent or broken through the years as more training became available for musicians, and difficult literature became more accessible. Despite this, their rules remain relevant, and the music written using the Greek system is undoubtedly beautiful and effective. Due to its appealing melodic theory, text setting theory, and historical importance, Gregorian chant has remained influential into the modern era, especially in choral repertoire. This influence is apparent in Morten Lauridsen's piece, *O Magnum Mysterium*.

Morten Lauridsen (b. 1943) is an American composer based out of Los Angeles, California. He currently holds a position as distinguished Professor of Music at the University of Southern California Thornton School of Music. He is a 2007 recipient of the National Medal of Arts, and held a residency at the Los Angeles Master Chorale from 1995-2001. He holds honorary doctorates from Oklahoma State University, Westminster Choir College and King's College, University of Aberdeen, Scotland. USC has awarded him the Phi Kappa Phi Creative Writing Prize and Lifetime Achievement Award, Thornton School of Music Outstanding Alumnus Award, Ramo Award, Lambda Delta Citation for Teaching Excellence, and the Dean's Award for Professional Achievement.²

Lauridsen was raised in the Pacific Northwest, and began studying music at a young age. Throughout his younger years, he did not see himself becoming a professional musician, and began his studies in English and History at Whitman College. Into his twenties, Lauridsen did not see himself pursuing music as a career, opting instead to attend Whitman College in Washington, where he studied English and History. During this time he also worked as a Forest Service firefighter near Mt. St. Helens. Lauridsen attributes this time of contemplation, coupled with his closeness to his natural surroundings, to his decision to become a composer. When he left Whitman College he went on to study composition at the University of Southern California with Halsey Stevens, Ingolf Dahl, Robert Linn, and Harold Owen. Upon graduation, he began teaching at USC as an introductory theory professor, and worked his way into teaching undergraduate composition. He later founded the advanced studies in film music program at the university. Lauridsen was chair of the graduate composition department from 1990-2002, and he is now one of seven full-time composition faculty at the Thornton school at USC.³

1 Mahrt, William P. *Gregorian Chant as a Paradigm of Sacred Music*: Sacred Music 133 (3): 5–14.

2 Mahrt, William P. *Gregorian Chant as a Paradigm of Sacred Music*: Sacred Music 133 (3): 5–14.

3 Lauridsen, Morten. *Interview by Bruce Duffie*: Chicago, IL, March 1999.

Adam O'Dell
choral conductor and
teacher

Morten Lauridsen is one of the most frequently performed living composers. His works span a number of disciplines and influences, including trumpet concertos, orchestral works, and chamber works. His most influential works, however, are undoubtedly his choral pieces. His choral works are based on sacred and secular texts alike, and each of them carries influence from the era in which the texts are written. His most purchased and most performed work is his setting of the *O Magnum Mysterium* text.

He wrote the *O Magnum Mysterium* setting as a commission from the Los Angeles Master Chorale in 1994. The now deceased director of the chorale at the time, Paul Salamunovich, according to Lauridsen, was “one of the great practitioners of Gregorian chant”,⁴ and consequently, Lauridsen decided to “use the conjunct melodic ideas of chant as a base” in his setting. These influences included the use of Greek voice leading rules, the use of a “key note,”⁵ and nods to melismatic text setting.

Gregorian chant is organized melodically into four sets of modes, where each set contains two modes, an “authentic mode” (odd numbered), and a “plagal mode” (even numbered), forming a total of eight modes. These modes are determined by three characteristics; the range, final tone, and reciting tone (figure 1).

Figure 1. Modes in Gregorian Chant				
Mode	Name	Final Tone	Reciting Tone	Range (In relation to final tone)
1	Dorian	D	A	Whole step below, octave above
2	Hypodorian	D	F	4 th or 5 th below, 6 th above
3	Phrygian	E	C	Whole step below, octave above
4	Hypophrygian	E	A	4 th or 5 th below, 6 th above
5	Lydian	F	C	Half step below, octave above
6	Hypolydian	F	A	4 th below, 6 th above
7	Mixolydian	G	D	Whole step below, octave above
8	Hypomixolydian	G	C	4 th or 5 th below, 6 th above

The melody of a given chant is organized by what mode it uses. Chants are typically centered around a *reciting tone*, where most of the chant is sung either on the reciting tone, or around it (figure 2). When a phrase ends, it will cadence, ending on the *final tone* (figure 3). In this way, the melody can emphasize certain words or phrases by altering the melodic structure. When an important word or phrase needs to stand out from the rest of the text, the melody will change in order to illustrate that idea. The following figures are from “Viderunt omnes”, a chant in the fifth mode.

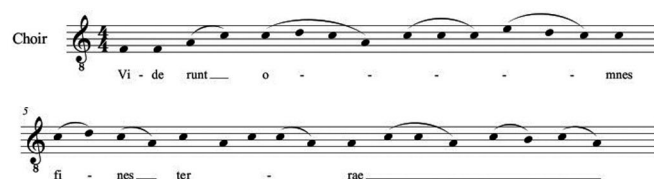


Figure 2. “Viderunt Omnes” opening line (Reciting tone - C; Final Tone – F).



Figure 3. “Viderunt Omnes” final cadence.

These figures display the typical melodic structures present in Gregorian chant. These pieces are written around reciting tones and final tones in order to provide the singer with a strong foundation within the key, and provide the listener with a pattern that is easy to follow. In these two figures, the melody is organized by groups of notes most often grouped in threes. In the Medieval era, it was considered proper to group notes in threes, to symbolize the Christian Trinity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the three parts of God. These two figures also show two main melodic ideas within the piece. It should also be noted that the final line of the chant in figure 3 uses B \flat instead of B. This technique was commonplace in the Medieval era in order to avoid tritones, which would otherwise be common in the Lydian mode (modes 5 and 6) between the first and fourth scale degree. This technique led to the eventual use of the *Ionian mode*, more commonly known as the major scale, and both Lydian and Ionian colors are used in Lauridsen’s setting.

Many plainchants are *strophic*, meaning that numerous sets of texts are set to the same repeated melodic idea. These strophic patterns can also be altered in order to bring about a cadence by ending a line on the final tone rather than the reciting tone.

Text setting in Gregorian chant is paired with melodic structure in order to provide emphasis on key phrases. Text setting is categorized in three different styles, syllabic, neumatic, and melismatic text setting. Syllabic text setting is where each syllable receives one note, neumatic setting, based on the term *neume* (grouping of notes), where each syllable receives one to seven syllables, and melismatic setting, from the term *melisma*, where a syllable is set to seven or more notes. Shifts in text setting in a chant were used alongside melodic variation to emphasize key phrases. As seen in figure 2, the “om” of “omnes” is set to ten notes, to emphasize the word “all” in the phrase “all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of God”. In the same way in figure 3 “suam” is emphasized, to draw attention to “Him” (“God”).

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ A “key note” is the modern term for a tonal center, or the “do” syllable in solfège. Though there are many other words used to describe this note, “key note” is frequently used when discussing chant-based writing in the modern era.

These characteristics of Gregorian chant have been used in compositions throughout the history of classical and Christian music. Most often, these characteristics were maintained because of the preferences of the high courts and churches which governed the land throughout much of the Roman rule. They wished to maintain the style of Gregorian chant in order to remind the congregation of their past, and use the music as a tool for self-reflection. In the secularized modern era, there are few churches or religions that have direct command of the people, but the influence of Gregorian chant remains for the same reason. Modern composers also maintain this influence for its historical nature. Texts like *O Magnum Mysterium* have been “tested through time” in the words of Lauridsen⁶, and drawing influences from the music of the same time period as these texts often creates a strong connection to the music for an audience through this historical perspective.

In his setting of *O Magnum Mysterium*, Lauridsen uses theories and influences both from Gregorian chant and modern music. The melody of the piece is structured in the same way as a plainchant, but also includes voice leading patterns that are seen more often in modern music, including difficult leaps, Ionian modes (major), and homophonic and polyphonic textures. While the mode is altered from its original patterns present in Gregorian chant, the melodic ideas remain similar.

The opening motive of *O Magnum Mysterium*, in the soprano line, draws influence from Gregorian chant through the use of a reciting tone. The key, and the relationship of the music to this key, relate most nearly to the 5th mode (Lydian), as it modulates between the Ionian and Lydian modes, and the reciting tone is the 5th above the final tone. The only difference is that scale is centered around the final tone of D rather than F. The sopranos sing a melody centered around A, the reciting tone. At the end of the first phrase, the line ends on the final tone (figure 4).



Figure 4. “O Magnum Mysterium” mm. 1-8.

This opening theme is repeated throughout the piece, again nodding to the reciting tone, and ending on the final. Melismatic writing is also present in this theme. Twice in this opening theme, the word “mysterium” is stretched to give emphasis to the word “mystery”, the subject of the opening line of the text. While the syllable “te” is only stretched over six notes, and thus falling under the definition of *neumatic setting*, the line is placed around text that is otherwise set syllabically, so it could be considered a reference to melismatic text setting. There are numerous examples of melismas throughout the piece. One particularly striking set of melismas appears in measures 11 and 14, where the word “admirabile” (wondrous) is set over seven beats (figure 5).



Figure 5. “O Magnum Mysterium” mm. 9-15.

It should also be noted that in the above figure, from the second half of measure 9 through the rest of the figure, there is always at least one voice singing a D, no matter what other harmonies are surrounding it. In Lauridsen’s piece, this indicates the influence of *oblique organum*, where, in Medieval music, the lower voice would stay on or near the final tone while the upper voice, the *vox principalis*, is free to change. In Lauridsen’s example, the tonic (D) represents the final tone, and voices trade between singing this pedal tone and singing more florid passages.

In his setting, Lauridsen sets “wondrous” and “mystery” to the semi-melismatic passages in order to emphasize what he believed were the most important words of the text (as chant composers would have in the Medieval era). Using the same melodic passage from figure 5 on “sacramentum, et admirabile”, Lauridsen sets the phrase “viderent Dominum, ut animalia” with “animalia” being set over the melisma. In the video documentary of Morten Lauridsen, he emphasizes his interest in the word “animalia” in this text, because he is most perplexed by the idea of the Christ child being born in the humble presence of farm animals.

The influence of Gregorian chant is also present in the melodic line illustrated in figure 5. The Gregorian tradition to compose notes in sets of three is referenced through the passage over “sacramentum, et admi-” with the grouping occurring over “sa-cra” (2+1), “men-tum” (2+1, and 1+1+1), and “et ad-mi” (1+1+1). While the large intervallic jumps are uncharacteristic of Gregorian chant, these groups of notes help maintain the aural influence of plainchant in the piece as Lauridsen begins using modern influences in the melodic line. Lauridsen then utilizes the triplum style on a larger scale in the middle section, where he employs a metric modulation to a 3/2 time signature (figure 6).



Figure 6. “O Magnum Mysterium” mm. 40-45.

6. Stillwater, Michael. *Shining Night; A Portrait of Composer Morten Lauridsen: Songs Without Borders*, 7 February 2012.

As was previously discussed, Lauridsen most closely relates this piece to the fifth mode, which holds characteristics of the major (Ionian) scale, with the exception of the fourth (one semitone higher in the fifth/Lydian mode). In this section, on the word “Virgo”, (figure 6, mm. 43, alto line) Lauridsen places the only accidental of the entire piece. This accidental is the fourth of the Lydian scale. While the Lydian modes would occasionally use the perfect fourth (characteristic of the Ionian mode) it most often used the augmented fourth. This nod to the typical Lydian mode greatly evokes the style and melodic quality of Gregorian chant.

In order to mark the transition into a new section, or return to the beginning of a melodic idea in strophic works, Gregorian chant will reach a cadence point centered around the reciting tone. Lauridsen also uses this idea, but uses it in a harmonic setting. Since the reciting tone is the fifth above the final tone, Lauridsen mimics this cadential sequence by ending the section on a half cadence at mm. 36-37 (figure 7).

Figure 7. “O Magnum Mysterium” mm. 32-39.

In the final moments of the piece, this melodic idea returns, on the same lyrics “jacentem in praesepio”, but the phrase cadences on the tonic, similar to chant cadencing on the final tone, in order to bring the piece to a conclusion (figure 8, mm. 63). For the final section of the piece (starting at mm. 64) Lauridsen recapitulates the main themes from the earlier sections, imitating them in different voice parts. He then ends the piece on an authentic cadence, indicative of finality in multiple-voice part writing, and much of the motion in the individual lines is typical of the plainchant style, where the notes center around the final tone. Given its modern influence, however, some plainchant rules do not apply. The sopranos do not end on the final tone, but instead end on the reciting tone (the 5th) as they have through the previous cadence points in the piece. The cadence to the final tone happens within the chordal structure, ending on the I chord, and within the tenor 2 part, where they cadence on the supertonic before singing the tonic/final tone (figure 8).



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Figure 8. “O Magnum Mysterium” mm. 62-72.

Lauridsen’s setting of *O Magnum Mysterium* is purposefully set in the style of Gregorian chant, within an additional layer of modern harmony. This piece was not intended to be a solely Modern style choral work, but was instead intended to be a “twentieth-century counterpart”⁷ to previous settings, in the words of the composer. Through the use of Greek music theory in the writing of the melodic ideas, and the setting of the text, Lauridsen achieves this goal, creating an identifiably modern piece, while maintaining a strong foundation in the roots of Gregorian chant.

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Edited by Gillian Forlivesi Heywood, Italy/U.K. ●

⁷ Lauridsen, Morten. *Interview by Bruce Duffie*. Chicago, IL, March 1999.

Composers' Corner



COMPOSERS' CORNER

Interview with Eriks Ešenvalds
Andrea Angelini

If you would like to write an article and submit it for possible publication in this section

Please contact Cara S. Tasher, Collaborator
Email: ctasher@gmail.com

AA: When did your career as a composer start? And later, in the course of your studies, did you realize that music was the path you would follow?

EE: I was born in 1977 in an ordinary Soviet-era family in Latvia. My father was the Ambulance driver, but my mom was the music teacher at the Primary school, and she was the first to teach me children's songs and the basics of music.

My first try to write something of my own on a sheet of music paper was during my early years at my native town's Children's Music School where from the age of seven till fourteen I studied music in depth: piano, singing, music theory, music history, chorus, piano duo. I remember that particular ten-minute break in the Chorus Class when suddenly out of nowhere I decided to write eight bars of music on a piece of paper, then I showed it to the choir director, and she played it on the piano. It sounded interesting, but more interesting was her comment: **Ēriks**, you should write music, perhaps a song to start with. That was the first time that the word 'composing' became something personal to me.

And I did write a song, several songs ... thanks to Whitney Houston, as she was very popular at that time. In the Soviet Union we didn't have any of her sheet music available, so I learned her songs by ear to play on my piano, and was really surprised at just how few chords the songs were made of - Dm, Bb, C, F, C/E, Am, Gm7. I also learned the modulations that helped songs to become more dramatic. So, I learned these basic things at age of ten, and using them I wrote some of my own songs, but the problem was to find lyrics for my melodies.

Then when I was fourteen, when Latvia was set free and the previously forbidden churches could open their doors again, I became a Christian at my native town's Baptist church. I was glad to find good lyrics in the church hymns for my melodies, and the church choir was the first performer of my quite-OK first compositions. At the age of fifteen, instead of continuing to study music at the Music High-School, I chose to study seriously mathematics and physics, and later to become a student of psychology at the Latvian University. But at the age of seventeen, after one month of psychology studies, I quit the University on discovering that psychology was not my vocation. That was actually a very hard moment in my life, which ruined my "rose-coloured spectacles" as suddenly one evening my room-mate died from a heart attack.

Neuro-linguistic programming was the first practical training in my studies which I didn't like, and soon I figured out some other training to follow, except the hypnosis to be chosen freely. So, I decided to quit the University.

There was nowhere to go as the entrance exams at all the other Universities and Academies had already ended. Except one, the Baptist Theological Seminary, where I was accepted, and there I started to dream of becoming a Christian psychologist or a pastor, at least.

The first year was fantastic, the second year - very boring, because the music which I had buried inside me slowly started to awake in me. And then someone suggested that I show my church choral songs to a professor at the Latvian Music Academy. And I did.

Finally, at the age of nineteen I became a composition student at the Latvian Music Academy, where, actually, I could hardly get in because I didn't have the Music High School diploma, and the easy church songs, with no instrumental music, were all I had to show for trying to be a composer. But the professors saw my passion for music which had already reached a high level, and they believed in me. They saw something more in me than I could see myself. And only there, walking the corridors of the Academy, I realized I had found the place of my vocation.

That's my path to the realm of music composition.

AA: Which musicians have most influenced your way of interpreting music? What routes of stylistic research have you followed?

EE: I studied at the Latvian Music Academy for seven years, learning many techniques and styles to write in. That was an extremely powerful, wide and deep education. I also participated in many composition master-classes abroad led by great composers, such as Michael Finnissy, Jonathan Harvey, Phillippe Manoury, Klaus Huber, Ole Lützow-Holm, Guy Reibel, Marek Kopelent. These figures all had really strong contemporary music approaches, but one thing made a great impression on me, and that was the emotions. Their music, though notated in a very complex manner, was full of human feelings and passion. That really inspired me.

Andrea Angelini
choral conductor,
teacher,
ICB Managing Editor

AA: Choral music lives and prospers mainly because it combines the sound with the word: in the first place there is intelligibility; the sound that is perceived by the ear must be chosen with care and, if a word has to be sung, it is indispensable that one can listen without fatigue. What are the strategies that make possible this perfection?

EE: There are moments in my choral works, such as “Sun Dogs”, “The First Tears”, when the musical description of an unseen landscape, or horizon-less space, or dramatic pain, steps out of the linguistic frontiers, and only pure music then brings the torch to the final climax, or summit, or “Mariana Trench”. Such a vision is very demanding, and to express it purely without any lines of poetry, in my view, is like the highest aerobatics. But before it, of course, there are lyrics to start the story that the song is about. I have learned first to find the idea or story of the piece; then I go to the library to find perfectly suitable lyrics; and only then I have my nibbled pencil and a blank music sheet and at my piano I compose the piece. I am very demanding in choosing the poetry. I lose interest in poems which have “technical” words, such as tram, electricity, broadcast; also vocabulary terms are zero in my music world. To me, music is the one who leads the charge. But I cannot do without the lyrics as well.

AA: The human voice is probably the most beautiful among musical sounds. If you had to point out (in addition to the possession of a natural talent) the technical requirements for practising the art of composing for choir, what you would choose? What advice would you give to a young artist immobilized by the fear of failure?

EE: Sing yourself every line/voice you have written! Swim deep into the beauty of polyphonic writing. Study techniques and listen to recordings a lot, really a lot.

AA: Your works have been performed by high-level choirs. What is your relationship with the performers of the music you compose?

EE: My task is to share with them my naked and true heart which has lived the piece entirely. This is no time to lie. Sometimes there are performers who decide to go their own way (and I don't understand why I have been invited, perhaps just for a photo?). But then there are those truly precious ones who listen to the composer and try to dig deeper, work harder, expanding their comfort zone. And that is a real collaboration, several of them particularly come to my mind now: Andris Nelsons and the Boston and City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestras and Choruses working on my “Lakes Awake at Dawn”, “Whispers on the Prairie Wind” performed by the Utah Symphony and Salt Lake Vocal Artists with ACDA chorus led by Thierry Fischer and Barlow Bradford, Stephen Layton with Polyphony and Trinity College Choir recording two CDs with my music, Richard Nance and Pacific Lutheran University Choir working on my “Northern Lights”, great recording sessions with the Latvian Radio Choir, the “Latvija” State Choir and “Kamer” youth choir; Ethan Sperry and his outstanding choirs, also Toronto Orpheus Choir and Robert Cooper, and, of course, Chor Leoni led by passionate young conductor Erick Lichte. I cannot keep silent about Donald Nally and The Crossing Choir, also Iowa State University Cantamus Women's Choir and Kathleen Rodde, and the Netherlands National Children's Choir and Wilma Ten Wolde. These superb collaborations have brought the best artistic results. And it is no secret that I have been involved in many competitions, judging both choirs and compositions, and my ears have always longed for the best sound.

AA: And the relationship between architecture and music is also interesting: the sound produced depends not only on sound sources, but on the way in which sound waves are reverberated. Which ‘choreography’ is best suited to bring out the best in different compositions?

EE: I have always hoped to have the best venues with the greatest acoustics. Though I am not the producer; and thank God for that! To waste my creative time on those practical details is not my vocation. But what I do like, particularly in large scale works, is to draw different arcs of the equal parameters of the piece as much as possible, blending the piece into one united form.

AA: The rhythm can be irrepressible and dominate the melody or, differently, can be the background for a piece, just barely perceptible. What message can a composition conceal?

EE: Parallel dramaturgy, hidden melody or motif, rhythmical patterns, dynamic scaling, etc. are just a few of the many powerful tools of composition. One can describe the composer as a painter, or film-maker, or an actor performing live improvisation without any predictability. This is the most interesting part in the composition: which tools to choose to make the compositional idea or story come alive. If I am like a hippie dreamer or philosopher while thinking about the idea, then I am like a welder during the technical process of the composition. And there is no excuse if the philosophy and welding don't fit together.

AA: What are your future plans?

EE: Not plans, but dreams: film music! And one particular dream is this: I want to compose music for a feature about Sara Teasdale, the great American poet, whose poetry and life have touched my life. Truly, that's my dream. “I hope” is not the right word to describe that inner feeling about her quasi-transparent poetry which is soft and fiery, dark and deep, luminous and cold, and full of passion and love. She was brave to name those feelings that people sometimes found themselves wordlessly imprisoned in. She was not perfection, nor I am, but her poetry had the dimension of timelessness. The sand flows, waters and clouds flow, and there she stands on the St. Louis bridge catching another glimpse of eternity.



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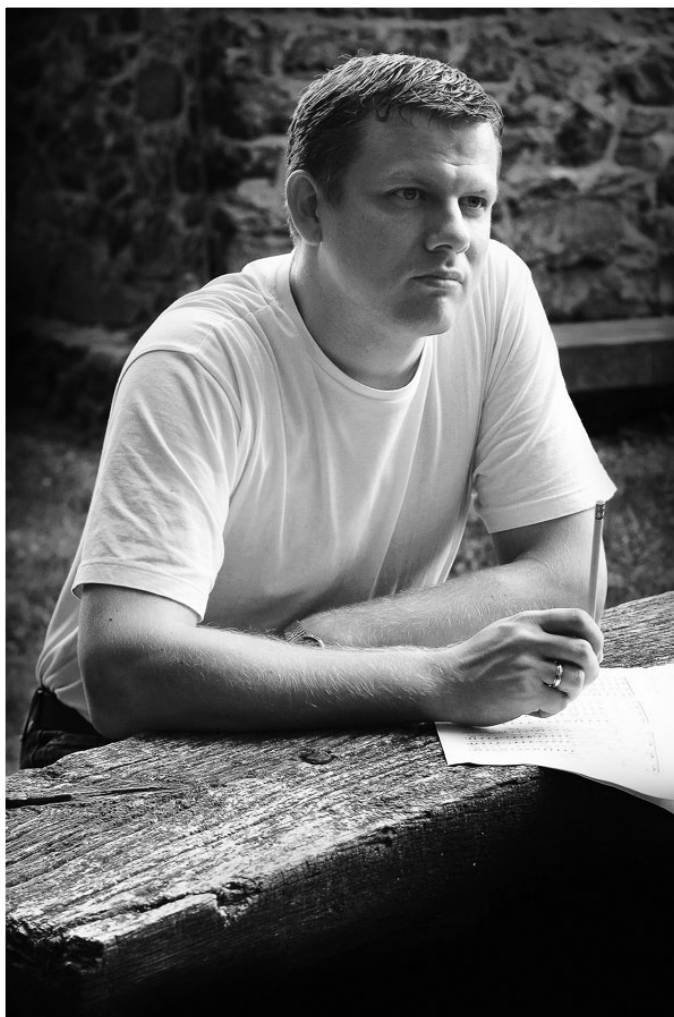
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AA: Could you give a message of encouragement to all lovers of choral music? Why should they continue singing and conducting?

EE: As you said, the human voice is probably the most beautiful among the musical sounds. There are so many great choral works written in different styles, ages and stories. Go away into these choral libraries and explore them! It's a fantastic experience to sing these books, finding yourself in the farthest horizons, the coldest winters, the deepest love and many other true stories.

AA: If you were not a composer, what would you have liked to do in your life?

I would probably have been a doctor, a good doctor to help people.

Edited by Gillian Forlivesi Heywood, Italy/UK. ●

Ēriks Ešenvalds is one of the most sought-after choral composers working today, with a busy commission schedule and performances of his music heard on every continent. Born in Riga in 1977, he studied at the Latvian Baptist Theological Seminary (1995-97) before obtaining his Masters degree in composition (2004) from the Latvian Academy of Music under the tutelage of Selga Mence. From 2002 to 2011 he was a member of the «Latvija» State Choir. In 2011 he was awarded the two-year position of Fellow Commoner in Creative Arts at Trinity College, Cambridge University. Ešenvalds is married and has four children. Ēriks Ešenvalds has won numerous awards for his work, including the Latvian Great Music Prize (2005 & 2007). The International Rostrum of Composers awarded him first prize in 2006 for *The Legend of the Walled-in Woman*; he

was made a laureate of the Copyright Award in 2006 and was "The Year's New-Composer Discovery" of the Philadelphia Inquirer in 2010, the same year he was nominated for the British Composer Award. In 2011 the Kamēr Youth Choir's CD "O Salutaris" featuring choral music exclusively by Ēriks Ešenvalds won the Latvian Music Records Award as the best academic music album of the year. In 2014 the «Latvija» State Choir's CD *At the Foot of the Sky* featuring choral music exclusively by Ēriks Ešenvalds won the Latvian Music Records Award. Ēriks Ešenvalds' compositions have been premiered by ensembles including the Britten Sinfonia, the Choir of Trinity College Cambridge, the Holst Singers and Imogen Heap, Polyphony, the Choir of Merton College Oxford, the Latvian Radio Choir, the «Latvija» State Choir, the Kamēr Youth Choir, Sinfonietta Rīga, the Bavarian Radio Choir, the Latvian National Symphony Orchestra, the Liepāja Symphony Orchestra, the Netherlands National Children's Choir, the Swedish Art Vocal Ensemble, Salt Lake Vocal Artists, Temple University Philadelphia, The Crossing, Portland State University Chamber Choir, the Choir of the West at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, and The University of Louisville Cardinal Singers, and The University of Mississippi Concert Singers. In 2007 the Latvian National Opera staged his first opera *Joseph is a Fruitful Bough*. His music has been performed at numerous international festivals including Klangspuren in Austria, the Schleswig-Holstein in Germany, Tenso Days in France, the Haarlem Choir Biennale in the Netherlands, Voices Now in the UK, ACDA National and Regional Conferences and the Spoleto Festival in the USA. At the 2014 World Choir Games, held in Riga, he composed the Games anthem, gave a major presentation on his work, acted on competition juries, and had a large-scale production premiered by the Latvian Voices and The King's Singers. Ēriks Ešenvalds' premieres this season include *Lakes Awake at Dawn* for the Boston and City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestras, *Whispers on the Prairie Wind* for the Utah Symphony and Salt Lake Vocal Artists with ACDA chorus at the 2015 National Convention in Salt Lake City, *The Passion according to St Luke* for Latvian Radio Choir and Sinfonietta Rīga, a new opera at the Latvian National Opera, and pieces for Chor Leonis Vancouver, University of Miami Glee Club, ChorWerk Ruhr and others. April 2015 saw the world premiere in Riga of a new multimedia symphony based on the *Northern Lights*, with premieres in the USA, Australia, Germany and the UK to follow. His compositions appear on recordings from Trinity College Choir, Cambridge on the Hyperion label and from VOCES8 on Decca Classics. Edition Peters Artist Management is managing Ēriks Ešenvalds commissions and workshop schedule. Ēriks Ešenvalds is published by Musica Baltica (www.musicabaltica.com).

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▲ Forefront — 2015 Silver Medalist: left to right: Drew Wheaton, tenor; Kevin Hughes, lead; Brian O. Dell, bass; Aaron Hughes, bari.
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Barbershop Harmony: a Choral Form for All Singers
Brian Lynch

If you would like to write an article and submit it
for possible publication in this section

Please contact **Andrea Angelini**,
ICB Managing Editor

Email: aangelini@ifcm.net

New Barbershop Harmony: a Choral Form for All Singers

With roots in African-American improvisation, American popular song, and a deep culture of volunteerism and brotherhood, the modern barbershop chorus offers unique opportunities for artistic expression and community service. Note: while presented mainly through the lens of the all-male, North America-based Barbershop Harmony Society, almost all of this applies to female organizations and worldwide associations.

What barbershop is - and isn't

One would be hard-pressed to name a music style more locked in the public imagination into its historical stereotypical image than barbershop harmony. So, to quickly dispense with the classic imagery: no, barbershop singers aren't always white men wearing striped vests; they don't always sing "Sweet Adeline" and "Coney Island Baby" (except to satisfy the curious); and no, they don't always sing in quartets (except nearly every Barbershopper *wishes* he did.) Other than that, barbershop harmony is *exactly* what you thought it was: a choral art form of musical legitimacy, cultural importance, and high accessibility to audiences today.

Harmonic roots and evolution

Ongoing research into the history of barbershop harmony, most notably by Lynn Abbott at Tulane University, and by Dr. David Wright and Dr. James Henry, have demonstrated that barbershop's musical forebears are found among African-American improvisational singers in the South, particularly New Orleans. Yes, barbershops were a gathering place, and certainly close-harmony experimentation took place there. But Abbott and others make the compelling case that the instrumental improvisations of early jazz and blues musicians led to vocal harmonic improvisation and vice versa; typical embellishments as "swipes," back times and pickups became ingrained in both forms. As early as 1888, W. C. Handy was known to have sung in a barbershop quartet, and Scott Joplin incorporated a barbershop quartet into his 1911 opera *Treemonisha*. The term "barbershop" had passed into common usage sufficiently that the 1910 publication of the popular song "Mr. Jefferson Lord, Play That Barbershop Chord" reached a wide audience already familiar with the term.

As has been the case with so many musical forms, the barbershop style was appropriated by white professional performers, who were able to secure recording contracts unavailable to African-American quartets. White quartets on records popularized the style, and then were believed by many to be its originators and sole practitioners. The emergence of jazz in mainstream musical tastes further drove a racial wedge in the evolution of the style. While an African-American vocal harmony tradition continued down the jazz, blues and gospel paths, the "traditional" barbershop style seemed frozen in time, especially after the formation of the Barbershop Harmony Society in Tulsa, Oklahoma in 1938. The style that founders O.C. Cash and Rupert Hall sought to "preserve and propagate" was in fact already a nostalgic form, not something current and advancing.

The style defined

And what was that form? Derived from an ear-singing folk tradition, it relied on simple melodies, singable by average singers of average range, mostly with sol-to-sol melodies. The Tin Pan Alley-era American sheet music repertoire was rich with songs aimed squarely at a middle class market of families singing around parlor pianos, so the texts were wholesome remembrances of mother, moon and June, old Ireland, and the girl next door. Harmonically, these commonly resolve around the circle of fifths, with easily-found implied harmonies, and in a defining characteristic, a preponderance of dominant and secondary dominant seventh chords. Melody is carried in the second ("lead") voice, with a high tenor singing mostly above the melody line. The style highly values precise tuning in just intonation to achieve reinforced overtones.

Founding and growing a Society

A little singing get-together on April 11, 1938 exploded into the national consciousness, and in less than a year, more than 2,000 men across North America had requested membership in the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America, today known less ponderously as the Barbershop Harmony Society. Annual contests soon emerged, with colorfully named amateur quartets such as Oklahoma's **Bartlesville Barflies**, and **The Flat Foot Four** (all policemen!) vying for bragging rights and a gold medal.

... Barbershop Harmony: a Choral Form for All Singers



▲ Vocal Majority - Greg Clancy directs the 12-time champion Vocal Majority Chorus, from Dallas, Texas © Lorin May/The Harmonizer

The spontaneous, homespun ear harmonies of those early quartets quickly inspired the more proficient singers to take the then-scandalous step of *writing them down*. Horrors! The professionals had infiltrated the ranks of the mere mortals! Suddenly, this was serious business, and the hobby of making it up as one went along was largely supplanted by thoughtful arranging, learning, and perfecting a work.

The postwar years witnessed rapid expansion of the Society, as the social/fraternal club with singing mushroomed to nearly 24,000 members by 1950, driven in part by the emergence of a new form: barbershop choral singing. Informal “gang-singing” (more than four singers) had been part of the DNA from the beginning, and by 1954, enough organized choruses existed to allow for a national championship.

The 1957 Broadway debut of Meredith Willson’s *The Music Man*, with the school board played by 1950 International Quartet Champions **The Buffalo Bills**, forever sealed in popular culture the image of straw-hatted, white men as the archetype of barbershop harmony -- an image that would prove over the years to be a straitjacket. Even as landmark quartets such as **The Suntones** (1961), **The Dealer’s Choice** (1973), and **The Bluegrass Student Union** (1978) dramatically expanded the musicality, vocal virtuosity, and range of repertoire, a powerful preservationist culture insisted that only the “old songs,” arranged with specified quantity of signature barbershop chords, were worthy of inclusion in the barbershop canon, codifying it in contest rules which drove the entire organization’s musical direction. Coupled with a fervent clinging to nostalgic imagery, the effect was to marginalize the style in musical circles and general public perception.

The choral form and recent evolution

Through the years, barbershop chorus singing overall tended to mimic the quartet form, vocally, interpretively, and in repertoire. Indeed, for decades the judging parameters for chorus contests emphasized the concept that a chorus was merely a very large quartet, and tricks such as staggered breathing across long passages were discouraged, as it would create phrasings not possible for four singers.

The late 1980s saw a cyclical re-evaluation of the judging parameters, and key musical leaders including leading arrangers, coaches, judges, and directors, pressed toward a broadening of both the mechanical definition of the style (less emphasis on chord-counting)

and toward finding unique identity and artistry in ensembles. Rather than solely worshipping the overtone, ringing chords at all costs, and forcing all performers into a single groove, the new model encouraged groups to pursue excellent vocal technique, a “freely produced, resonant tone free of tension” and celebrating the resulting uniqueness versus conformity.

One immediate effect was a dramatic leap in vocal quality, especially evident immediately in top choruses. “Louder and brighter” was no longer a recipe for success: smoother, richer, more textured sounds became the norm, the product of ever-improving pedagogical approaches. Quartet personalities, too, began to reassert themselves, which in the last decade made room at the very top for sounds across a wide range, from the brilliant youthful energy of Sweden’s **Ringmasters** (in their early twenties when they won in 2012) to the mature men’s voices of **Crossroads** (2009).

Freedom and youth

A broader stylistic definition has expanded the repertoire, stretching in recent years to Motown, Michael Jackson, Sting, music from *Hairspray* and *Footloose*, and contemporary artists such as Pharrell Williams and Jason Mraz, which has helped ensembles approach new generations with music already familiar to them. A Youth Barbershop Quartet Contest has for two decades been a key source of new musical leadership, and the International Youth Barbershop Chorus Festival established in 2008 has brought barbershop repertoire to high school and college classrooms, with tremendous benefit to music educators faced with the daunting prospect of recruiting male singers.

The sound and look today: global, distinctive, inclusive

The **Westminster Chorus** of Los Angeles and the venerable **Vocal Majority** of Dallas are very different beasts, despite taking the crown in the past two successive years. Formed a decade ago as a youth chorus, Westminster retains a youthful energy, a silky, high tone, and a repertoire spanning barbershop, contemporary, Broadway and art song. The VM, the winningest chorus in history across five decades, is the model of musical excellence, administrative talent, aggressive marketing of recordings and a full concert season, and a catalog that includes multiple recordings of inspirational, patriotic, and (gasp) instrumented performances. Neither would be mistaken for the other; both are models to which other ensembles aspire.

Similarly, New Zealand’s **Musical Island Boys**, 2014 champs, are truly global ambassadors for music, while charting new musical paths with the inclusion of musical elements from the Pacific Islands. And they in turn are very different from their successors, Indiana’s **Instant Classic**, comprising second-generation “barbershop brats” and music educators.

CEO Marty Monson, who assumed the top post in 2012, has worked aggressively to expand the Society’s alliances throughout the world, to effectively leverage the broad and deep resources of the 22,000-member Society, which operates on a \$6 million annual budget. A philanthropic arm, Harmony Foundation International, annually delivers more than \$900,000 in program support for artists working in communities across North America,

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Instant Classic - 2015 International Quartet Champion; left to right: Kohl Kitzmiller, bari; Kyle Kitzmiller, bass; Theo Hicks, lead; David Zimmerman, tenor
© Lorin May/The Harmonizer



Ambassadors of Harmony — Dr. Jim Henry directs three-time chorus champions The Ambassadors of Harmony, from St. Charles, Missouri
© Lorin May/The Harmonizer



Westminster — 2015 International Chorus Champion: Justin Miller directs the three-time champion Westminster Chorus of Los Angeles
© Lorin May/The Harmonizer

with nearly \$260,000 in direct grants to local camps, workshops, and scholarships for educators and students. A growing partnership with the American Choral Directors Association promises to further extend this network toward support of community singing and education.

With modern a cappella exploding in popular culture, from film (*Pitch Perfect*) and reality television (*The Sing-Off*) to late night talk shows (The Ragtime Gals on *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*), close harmony singing is cool again. Converting that enthusiasm into more active singers can have a profound effect on the expansion of recreational choral singing in the future. The Barbershop Harmony Society actively seeks partnerships to engage its resources toward the good of all choral endeavors, and welcomes inquiries to its headquarters at www.barbershop.org.

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- Must-See quartets : <http://bit.ly/mustseebarbershop> •

Brian Lynch is Public Relations Director for the Nashville-based Barbershop Harmony Society. Over the past two decades, he has also served the Society as editor of *The Harmonizer* magazine, digital content strategist, IT project director, and worked in design and branding efforts. A pretty good bass, he has sung in barbershop choruses and quartets throughout his 25 years as a member. Email: pr@barbershop.org





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Events



Events

Conferences, Workshops & Masterclasses

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We are pleased to provide these lists of international festivals, competitions, conferences, workshops and masterclasses to our members. They are based on the best information available to us. However, we advise you to check the specific details with the organizers of the individual event that you may be interested in attending.

IFCM does NOT specifically recommend any of the events listed. However, we encourage you to check with the Choral Festival Network www.choralfestivalnetwork.org whose members have signed the IFCM Total Quality Charter, which is an agreement to follow the minimum requirements of quality, transparency and fairness for choral festivals.

Please submit event information for publication to
Nadine Robin
IFCM, PO Box 42318, Austin TX 78704, USA
Fax: +1-512-551 0105
Email: nrobin@ifcm.net

Conferences, Workshops & Masterclasses

Hearts-in-Harmony, Barcelona, Spain, 10-11 Mar 2016. The workshop will be organised by „Vera Ljubav Nada” (Faith, Love, Hope), in cooperation with the choir association of Vojvodina (VOCA) and the European Choral Association „Europa Cantat”. Email: info@eca-ec.org - Website: www.eca-ec.org or www.EuropeanChoralAssociation.org

Hearts-in-Harmony, Novi Sad, Serbia, 9-13 June 2016. The workshop will be organised by „Vera Ljubav Nada” (Faith, Love, Hope), in cooperation with the choir association of Vojvodina (VOCA) and the European Choral Association „Europa Cantat”. Contact: Miodrag Blizanac, director, Email: director@heartsinharmony.rs - Website: www.eca-ec.org or www.EuropeanChoralAssociation.org

50th Kurt Thomas Cursus for Choral Conducting, Utrecht, Netherlands, 8-16 July 2016. Course for choral conductors. Contact: HKU University of the Arts Utrecht, Email: ktc@muziek.hku.nl - Website: www.hku.nl

European Seminar for Young Choral Composers, Aosta, Italy, 17-24 July 2016. Participants will have the chance to practice with a mixed choir-in-residence and with a children's/female youth choir, both at their disposal for all the duration of the course. With Z. Randall Stroope (USA), Philip Lawson (UK), Davide Benetti and Luigina Stevenin (Italy). Contact: FENIARCO (Italian Federation of Regional Choir Associations), Email: info@feniarco.it - Website: www.feniarco.it

12th Oratorio Choir Academy 2014, Pomáz, Hungary, 21-31 July 2016. Workshop on orchestra conducting for choral conductors and choir atelier for singers, in collaboration with the European Choral Association – Europa Cantat. Apply before 30 Apr 2016. Contact: Hungarian Choral Castle Pomázi Zenekastély Nonprofit Ltd., Email: info@choralcastle.hu - Website: www.choralcastle.hu

America Cantat 8, Atlantis, Paradise Island, Bahamas, 21-31 Aug 2016. America Cantat is the premier cultural music festival of the Americas, and is the only non-competitive choir festival to unite singers, clinicians, and festival choirs from North, Central, and South America in a ten-day cultural and musical immersion program. Over ten days, singers of all ages and abilities are invited to participate in overlapping five-day-long workshops, led by some of the most prestigious choral clinicians in the world such as Daria Abreu (Cuba), Anton Armstrong (USA), Gisela Crespo (Mexico), Elisa Dekaney (Brazil), Cristian Grases (Venezuela & USA), Rosephanye Powel (USA), Maria van Nieuken (Netherlands) and many others. Contact: American Choral Directors Association, Email: ac8@acda.org - Website: america-cantat.org

Conducting Academy with Frieder Bernius, Stuttgart, Germany, 25-30 July 2016. Through an audition, a number of participants gain the opportunity to conduct one of the following pieces in the final concert: Anton Bruckner, Mass No. 2 in E minor; György Ligeti, Lux aeterna; Works of Gustav Mahler (edited by Clytus Gottwald). All others have the possibility to rehearse and perform Cantus Missae by Joseph Gabriel Rheinberger with the Chamber Choir of the State University of Music Stuttgart. Apply before March 15, 2016. Contact: Musik Podium Stuttgart e.V., Email: academy@musikpodium.de - Website: www.musikpodium.de

EuroChoir 2016, San Vito al Tagliamento, Italy, 29 July-7 Aug 2016. 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

Norfolk Chamber Music Festival- Yale School of Music Chamber Choir and Choral Conducting Workshop, Norfolk, CT, USA, 14-21 Aug 2016. Workshop with Simon Carrington, for advanced singers and choral conductors. Repertoire ranges from the Renaissance to the 21st century and includes both choral and instrumental music. Conductors sing as members of the choir and have the opportunity to conduct instrumental as well as choral ensembles. Singers receive a Fellowship covering tuition, housing and meals. Conductors receive a Fellowship covering housing and meals. Apply before March 24, 2016. Contact: Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, Email: norfolk@yale.edu - Website: <http://norfolk.yale.edu/school/choral-about/>

Early Music Workshop, Utrecht, Netherlands, 24-29 Aug 2016. For individual singers and conductors. Will focus on different aspects of performing early music. Apply before 15 May 2016. Contact: ZimiHC Podium voor Amateurkunst, Email: a.alferink@zimiHC.nl - Website: www.zimiHC.nl/eng

2nd (Inter)national Congress for Choral Conductors, Paris, France, 9-11 Sep 2016. For conductors, students, teachers and publishers to discover new techniques, repertoires and practices. Apply before 5 Sep 2016. Contact: A Coeur Joie France, Email: activites@choralies.org - Website: www.congreschefsdechoeur.com

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

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. Contact: International Federation for Choral Music, Email: office@ifcm.net - Website: <http://www.wscm11.cat/>

Prague Advent Choral Festival, Czech Republic, 20-23

Nov, 27-30 Nov, 4-7 Dec, 11-14 Dec, 18-21 Dec 2015.

For all kind of choirs from all over the world. Contact: Music&Friends, Email: info@musicandfriends.org - Website: www.advent-choir-prague.info

Vienna Advent Sing, Austria, 26-30 Nov, 3-7, 10-14, 17-21

Dec 2015. Concerts and friendships. Contact: Music Contact

International, Email: vienna@music-contact.com - Website: www.music-contact.com

A Voyage of Songs, Penang, Malaysia, 26-29 Nov 2015.

Choral Competition in 11 categories, gala opening, closing and friendship concerts, masterclasses and conductors' forum. Apply before 31st July 2015. Early Bird Special: 30th April 2015.

Contact: Konzert Pte Ltd, Email: info@konzert.com.sg - Website: www.konzertchoral.com/

25th International Festival of Advent and Christmas Music with Petr Eben Prize, Prague, Czech Republic, 27-28 Nov

2015. Competition open to amateur female, male, youth, mixed and children's choirs. Contact: OR-FEA Festival and Organisational Agency, Email: incoming@orfea.cz - Website: www.orfea.cz

6th Winter Choral Festival, Hong Kong China, 29 Nov-2 Dec

2015. Competition, performances and workshops conducted by Festival Chair Ms Lim Ai Hooi. Contact: SourceWerkz, Ong Wei Meng, Email: info@sourcewerkz.com - Website: pscf.sourcewerkz.com or facebook/sourcewerkz

Gospel in Spain, Spain, 1-7 Dec 2015.

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

1st Florence Advent Choir Festival, Italy, 2-4 Dec 2015.

Competitive or non competitive festival for choirs from all over the world. Performances in magnificent venues, rich in art and history. Competition in 12 different categories. Apply before 30 Sep, 2015. Contact: Florence International Choir Festival, Email: director@florencechoirfestival.com - Website: <http://www.florencechoirfestival.com/Information+FACF>

International Festival of Advent and Christmas Music, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 3-6 Dec 2015.

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 1 Oct 2015. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: www.choral-music.sk

6th Krakow Advent & Christmas Choir Festival, Poland,

4-6 Dec 2015. For all kinds of choirs. Competition in 5 categories for the statuettes of Golden Angels or non-competitive participation. Apply before June 30, 2015. Contact: MELODY & Polonia Cantat, Email: krakow@christmasfestival.pl - Website: www.christmasfestival.pl

International Choir Festival of Advent & Christmas Music

Mundus Cantat, Sopot, Poland, 11-14 Dec 2015. 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

1st International Festival and Competition In Anticipation of Christmas, St. Petersburg, Russia, 11-14 Dec 2015.

For female choirs. Contact: International Choral Festival, Email: interaspect@mail.ru - Website: www.interfestplus.ru

International Festival and Competition for Female Choirs in Anticipation of Christmas, St. Petersburg, Russia, 11-14 Dec

2015. For all female choirs from around the world, no age limit, 14 singers minimum, no maximum limit. Contact: International Choral Festival, Email: interaspect@mail.ru - Website: <http://interfestplus.ru/xmas/english.html>

2nd International Christmas Music Festival Cantate Angeli, Vilnius, Lithuania, 27 Dec 2015-2 Jan 2016.

For choirs, vocal ensembles, instrumental Chamber ensembles and orchestras. Contact: Gratulations, Email: info.gratulationes@gmail.com - Website: www.gratulationes.lt

Sing in the New Year - Greece Choir Festival with Simon

Carrington, Greece, 27 Dec 2015-3 Jan 2016. Combined rehearsals and gala concert, individual concerts, cultural immersion. Contact: KIconcerts, Email: info@KIconcerts.com - Website: www.KIconcerts.com

Anders Wall & Allmänna Sängen Composition Award, Uppsala, Sweden, 7 Jan 2016.

An international competition exclusively for female composers within mixed choir a cappella music. Deadline for notification of participation in the composition: 1 Dec 2015. Deadline for submission: 7 Jan 2016. The premiere performance of the winning composition, as well as the prize ceremony, takes place in May 2016 at the Spring Concert of Allmänna Sängen in Uppsala. Contact: Allmänna Sängen, Email: info@allmannasangen.se - Website: www.allmannasangen.se

9th International Youth Barbershop Chorus Festival, Reno,

Nevada, USA, 26-31 Jan 2016. For ensembles of 12 or more men, age 25 or under. Each chorus performs 3 songs during the festival: 2 contestable barbershop songs, and a 3rd song can be absolutely anything a cappella. All choruses will also be expected to learn 3 mass chorus songs to be sung throughout the weekend, with more than 500 other young men from around the world. Contact: Barbershop Harmony Society, Email: mmonson@barbershop.org - Website: www.barbershop.org

3rd Children & Youth Choral World Championship, St.

Petersburg, Russia, 17-21 Feb 2016. For choirs with 7-25 years old singers from all around the world. Apply before 1 Dec 2015. Contact: International Choral Festival and Competition, Email: interaspect@mail.ru - Website: <http://wccc.ru/en/>

6th International Sacred Music Festival Kaunas Musica Religiosa, Kaunas, Lithuania, 18-21 Feb 2016. Concerts in city halls, churches, choir competition in many categories. Contact: Kaunas club "Cantate Domino", Email: info@kaunascantat.lt - Website: www.kaunascantat.lt

The Eric Ericson Award 2016, Uppsala and Stockholm, Sweden, 18-21 Feb 2016. In cooperation with the IFCM. The Eric Ericson Award is a competition for young choir conductors aged 20 to 32. The repertoire is chosen from Western choral art music, with some emphasis on recent Swedish choral music. Apply before 1 Sep 2015. Contact: Eric Ericson International Choral Centre, Email: info@ericsonchoralcentre.se - Website: <http://www.ericsonchoralcentre.se>

Roma Music Festival 2015, Italy, 9-13 Mar 2016. International festival of choirs and orchestras. Apply before 15 Jan 2016. Contact: MusikReisenFaszination Music Festivals, Email: info@mrf-musicfestivals.com - Website: www.mrf-musicfestivals.com

Young Prague Festival, Prague, Czech Republic, 9-13 Mar 2016. An international panel of directors adjudicate this festival for youth choirs, bands and orchestras. Now in its thirteenth year, the festival joins over one thousand musicians from around the world to perform in Prague's stunning venues such as St. Nicholas' Church and the National House. Enjoy a culturally rich and educational experience while you meet and perform with youth ensembles from around the globe. Contact: Music Contact International, Email: travel@music-contact.com - Website: www.music-contact.com

Festival of Peace and Brotherhood, Rome, Italy, 9-14 Mar 2016. Sing together with Italian choirs and others from around the world. Perform in breathtaking venues throughout the cities and towns southeast of Rome and in Rome's historic center. This festival fosters a deep sense of respect and understanding between cultures through the common language of music. Contact: Music Contact International, Email: travel@music-contact.com - Website: www.music-contact.com

5th International Gdansk Choir Festival, Poland, 11-13 Mar 2016. For all kinds of choirs. Competition part in 5 categories, concerts, non-competitive participation possible, meeting of choirs in the famous city of Solidarity. Apply before Oct 15, 2015. Contact: MELODY & Polonia Cantat, Email: mail@gdanskfestival.pl - Website: www.gdanskfestival.pl

Melodia! South American Music Festival, City of la Havana, Cuba, 12-19 Mar 2016. With guest conductors Dr. Joshua Habermann and Dr. Digna Guerra leading workshops, individual choir performances in outstanding venues throughout the breathtaking city of Havana, experience in Cuban music and dance workshops and local cultural outreach. Contact: Sara Casar, Classical Movements, Inc., Email: Sara@ClassicalMovements.com - Website: http://classicalmovements.org/s_am.htm

Sing'n'Joy Provo 2016 The American International Choral Festival, USA, 16-20 Mar 2016. Competition for all types of choirs in different categories and difficulties with a focus on chamber choirs. Contact: Förderverein Interkultur, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: www.interkultur.com

Istra Music Festival 2016, Croatia, 16-20 Mar 2016. For choirs and orchestras from around the world. Apply before 31 Jan 2016. Contact: MusikReisenFaszination Music Festivals, Email: info@mrf-musicfestivals.com - Website: <http://www.mrf-musicfestivals.com/>

13th International Choir Festival of Sacred and Clerical Music, Olomouc, Czech Republic, 16-20 Mar 2016. International choir festival of sacred and clerical music, Musica Religiosa Competition for choirs in all categories from all around the world. Contact: Festa Musicale, Email: festamusicale@atlas.cz - Website: www.festamusicale.cz

ON STAGE with Interkultur in Nice, France, 17-20 Mar 2016. 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/>

9th Fukushima Vocal Ensemble Competition, Fukushima, Japan, 18-22 Mar 2016. Biggest chorus competition for vocal ensembles (2-16 singers) in Japan. Category Competition, Grand Champion Competition, Friendship Concert, Welcome Party, Workshop. Apply before 31 Oct 2015. Contact: Fukushima Vocal Ensemble Competition, Email: bunka@pref.fukushima.lg.jp - Website: www.vocalensemble.jp/en/

Discover Puerto Rico and its Choral Music, Ponce, Puerto Rico, 18-21 Mar 2016. 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

Golden Voices of Montserrat! International Contest, Montserrat Monastery, Catalonia, Spain, 20-24 Mar 2016. 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! Apply before 20 Feb 2016. Contact: Fiestalonia Milenio, SLU, Email: nika@fiestalonia.net - Website: www.fiestalonia.net

14th In Canto sul Garda International Choir Competition, Riva del Garda, Italy, 20-24 Mar 2016. For all kinds of choirs from all around the world. Apply before 30 Dec 2015. Contact: Meeting Music Inh. Piroška Horváth e. K., Email: info@meeting-music.com - Website: www.meeting-music.com

14th Concorso Corale Internazionale, Riva del Garda, Italy, 20-24 Mar 2016. For all kinds of choirs from all around the world. Contact: Meeting Music Inh. Piroška Horváth e. K., Email: deborah.bertoni@meeting-music.com - Website: www.meeting-music.com

Montreux Choral Festival, Switzerland, 30 Mar-3 Apr 2016. Open to all types of choirs. Contact: Montreux Choral Festival, Email: rcim@choralfestival.ch - Website: www.choralfestival.ch

2016 Emerald City Choral Festival with René Clausen, Seattle, USA, 30 Mar-3 Apr 2016. 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

Verona International Choral Competition, Verona, Italy, 30 Mar-3 Apr 2016. Sponsored by the Association of Choirs of Northern Italy, this festival offers an adjudicated performance for an international panel of choral experts. Enjoy the opportunity to receive informed feedback from the knowledgeable judges. Exchange with a local Italian choir, sing individually at a school or senior center, and meet choirs from around the world. Contact: Music Contact International, Email: travel@music-contact.com - Website: www.music-contact.com

Dublin International Choral Festival, Ireland, 31 Mar-4 Apr 2016. By invitation of the Lord Mayor of Dublin, choirs will come together from across Europe, Ireland and the USA to perform. They will enliven the city with their music during individual concerts throughout Dublin and during a massed sing under the direction of Dr. Desmond Early in the stunning St. Andrew's Church. Irish choirs and audiences will welcome the guest choirs with their famous hospitality and enthusiasm! Contact: Music Contact International, Email: travel@music-contact.com - Website: www.music-contact.com

ON STAGE with Interkultur in Verona, Italy, 31 Mar-3 Apr 2016. 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/>

34th International Choral Festival of Karditsa, Greece, 31 Mar-9 Apr 2016. For mixed, male, female and children choirs as well as for groups of soloists and chamber choirs. Program including ancient Greek and Byzantine music as well as Gregorian and Renaissance music. Also featuring the 8th International Meeting of School Choirs. Contact: International Choral Festival of Karditsa, Email: nke@otenet.gr - Website: <http://festivalofkarditsa.blogspot.gr/>

19th International Festival of Children's and Young Choirs Rainbow, St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, 1-3 Apr 2016. Festival with many categories for choirs and vocal ensembles with singers below 35 years old. Apply before 30 Oct 2015. Contact: MELODY & Polonia Cantat, Email: info@petersburgfestival.com - Website: www.petersburgfestival.com

7th Antalya International Choir Festival, Antalya, Turkey, 6-10 Apr 2016. Festival and competition open to non-professional choirs of all types and categories (including folk choirs). Apply before 15 Nov 2015. Contact: Antalya International Choir Festival, Email: festivalantalya@festivalantalya.com - Website: www.festivalantalya.com

ON STAGE with Interkultur in Bilbao, Spain, 7-10 Apr 2016. 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, 7-10 Apr 2016. Concerts in city halls, churches, choir competition in many categories. Contact: Kaunas club "Cantate Domino", Email: info@kaunascantat.lt - Website: www.kaunascantat.lt

Mediterranean Choral Forum Istanbul, Turkey, 8-10 Apr 2016. Platform to meet choral specialists from all over the Mediterranean area and sharing information, experience and creating new visions. Apply before 15 Jan 2016. Contact: Choral Culture Association, Moviment Coral Catalá and the Mediterranean Office for Choral Singing, Email: info@korokulturu.org - Website: www.korokulturu.org

Festival di Primavera Festival di Primavera 2016 spring... ing and singing together!, Montecatini Terme, Tuscany, Italy, 14-16 & 20-23 Apr 2016. International spring festival for school choirs, 9-11 April open to children's choirs (age 6-13) and 15-18 April open to youth choirs (age 14-19). Apply before 31 Jan 2016. Contact: FENIARCO (Italian Federation of Regional Choir Associations), Email: info@feniarco.it - Website: www.feniarco.it

Windy City Choral Festival with Z. Randall Stroope, Chicago, USA, 14-16 Apr 2016. 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

5th International Choral Competition for Children's Choirs "Il Garda in Coro", Malcesine sul Garda, Verona, Italy, 19-23 Apr 2016. Event held in Malcesine on Lake Garda, acknowledged to be the world capital of Children's Choir competitions. Apply before 31 Dec 2015. Contact: Associazione Il Garda In Coro, Renata Peroni, Email: info@ilgardaincoro.it - Website: www.ilgardaincoro.it

ON STAGE with Interkultur in Antalya, Turkey, 21-24 Apr 2016. No competitions but a buzz of choral activities: Make Antalya 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/>

Slovakia Cantat 2016, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 21-24 Apr 2016. 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 15 Dec 2015. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: www.choral-music.sk

Choirs of America 2016 Choral Convergence Festival, New York, USA, 21-23 Apr 2016. Massed choir concert with master conductor and composer-in-residence Dr René Clausen. Adjudicated performances, full clinics with world-class clinicians, vocal motion (vocal master classes), choral exchanges (perform for other participating choirs and vice-versa), and COA's exclusive Premiere! workshop/rehearsal with Dr. Clausen. Contact: Choirs of America, LLC, Email: info@choirsofamerica.org - Website: www.vocalmusic.org

5th International Messiah Festival, Salzburg, Austria, 21-24 Apr 2016. 10 selected choruses or orchestras of any age and composition (also dance groups). Performances in Salzburg and surroundings. Contact: Chorus MM, Email: messiah-salzburg@cc-a.at - Website: <http://messiah-salzburg-festival.blogspot.co.at>

62nd Cork International Choral Festival, Ireland, 27 Apr-1 May 2016. 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. Fleischmann International Trophy Competition: apply before 31 Oct 2015. Contact: Cork International Choral Festival, Email: info@corkchoral.ie - Website: www.corkchoral.ie

2nd International Choir Festival Guam Pacific, Guam, 27 Apr-1 May 2016. International choir festival and competition including 9 categories for all kind of choirs from around the world. Contact: Festa Musicale, Email: info@festamusicale.com - Website: www.festamusicale.com

Nashville SINGS!, USA, 28 Apr-1 May 2016. Join Philip Brunelle and Monore Crossing to perform The World Beloved: A Bluegrass Mass, in Nashville, Tennessee. For choirs and individual singers. Apply before 15 October 2016. Contact: Sechrist Travel, LLC, Email: info@sechristtravel.com - Website: www.sechristtravel.com

63rd European Music Festival for Young People, Neerpelt, Belgium, 29 Apr-2 May 2016. 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. Apply before 26 Oct 2015. Contact: Europees Muziekfestival voor de Jeugd, Email: info@emj.be - Website: www.emj.be

International Choir Competition & Festival Bad Ischl, Austria, 30 Apr-4 May 2016. 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

World of Choirs, Italy, 1-4 May 2016. 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. Apply before 1 Apr 2016. Contact: Fiestalonia Milenio, SLU, Email: nika@fiestalonia.net - Website: www.fiestalonia.net

Budapest/Vienna Choir Festival, Hungary/Austria, May 2016. Individual and festival concerts under the direction of Larry Wyatt. Contact: KIconcerts, Email: info@KIconcerts.com - Website: www.KIconcerts.com

Sea Sun Festival & Competition, Costa Brava, Spain, 1-6 May, 12-17 June, 3-8 July, 18-23 Sep 2016. Competition of various genres in choral and vocal singing, open to amateurs and professional teams of all ages. Apply before 1 Apr 2016. Contact: Fiestalonia Milenio, SLU, Email: nika@fiestalonia.net - Website: www.fiestalonia.net

14th Venezia in Musica, International Choir Competition and Festival, Venice and Caorle, Italy, 1-5 May 2016. For all kinds of choirs from all around the world. Apply before 30 Nov 2015. Contact: Meeting Music Inh. Piroska Horvath e. K., Email: info@meeting-music.com - Website: www.meeting-music.com

Sing'n'Joy Vienna 2016 3rd Choir Festival & 30th International Franz Schubert Choir Competition, Austria, 4-8 May 2016. Competition for all types of choirs in different categories and difficulties with a focus on chamber choirs. Contact: Förderverein Interkultur, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: www.interkultur.com

Costa Barcelona Music Festival, Spain, 4-8 May 2016. For choirs and orchestras from around the world. Apply before 1 Mar 2016. Contact: MusikReisenFaszination Music Festivals, Email: info@mrf-musicfestivals.com - Website: www.mrf-musicfestivals.com

10th European Festival of Youth Choirs, Basel, Switzerland, 4-8 May 2016. 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 2015. Contact: Europäisches Jugendchor Festival Basel, Kathrin Renggli, Email: info@ejcf.ch - Website: www.ejcf.ch

Queen of the Adriatic Sea Choral Festival and Competition, Cattolica, Italy, 4-8 May 2016. 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 2016. Contact: Queen Choral Festival and Competition, Email: office@queenchoralfestival.org - Website: www.queenchoralfestival.org

16th International Julio Villarroel Choir Festival, Margarita Island, Venezuela, 4-8 May 2016. Non competitive Festival. Concerts, workshops and conferences by famous conductors from Venezuela and abroad. Contact: The Julio Villarroel Foundation, Email: luiglines@gmail.com

International Festival of Choral Singing Nancy Voix du Monde, Nancy, France, 4-8 May 2016. Festival for all choir categories. 1600 singers from all over the world. Invited choirs' local costs covered by the festival. Apply before 1 Feb 2016. Contact: Festival International de Chant Choral de Nancy, Email: festival-choral@orange.fr - Website: www.chantchoral.org

FAKS Sings 2016 (Amateur Cultural Creation Festival), Rovinj, Croatia, 5-8 May & 9-12 June 2016. International cultural, educational and entertaining event which unites choir-singing, brass-band, and acting festivals. It emerged from the idea of lifelong learning and love for amateur creation. Contact: FAKS - Amateur Cultural Creation Festival, Email: ines.kovacic.drndic@maistra.hr - Website: <http://festivalistra.com/en/>

Sing Along Concert in Vienna, Austria, 6-8 May 2016. For singers from all around the world. Contact: Interkultur e.V., Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: www.interkultur.com

6th World Choir Festival on Musical, Thessaloniki, Greece, 6-8 May 2016. For all types of choirs and vocal ensembles all over the world. Contact: Choir Korais, Email: choirkorais94@gmail.com - Website: www.xorodiakorais.com

ON STAGE with Interkultur in Stockholm, Sweden, 12-15 May 2016. 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/>

6th Kaunas Cantat International Choir Festival and Competition, Kaunas, Lithuania, 12-15 May 2016.

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

4th Vándor-Révész Festival and 2nd Choral Competition of Budapest, Hungary, 19-22 May 2016. Choirs may participate to the festival and the competition together or only one of these events. Contact: Budapesti Vándor-Révész Festival, Email: vandor.fesztival@gmail.com - Website: <http://fesztival.vandorkorus.hu>

2016 Podium, Igniting Ideas, Sharing Voices, Edmonton AB, Canada, 19-22 May 2016. Festival including 15 concerts that showcase the diversity of choral music in Canada and beyond, school concerts, pop-up performances and sharing concerts. Interest sessions and lecture recital proposals are invited on a range of topics including conducting technique, choral/vocal music education, choral repertoire, performance, composition, arts administration, and use of technology. Sessions exploring innovation and/or best practice are highly encouraged. Apply before: 15 May 2015. Contact: Alberta Choral Federation, Email: info@albertachoralfederation.ca - Website: www.podiumconference.ca

Festival Filadelfia 2016, Filadelfia, Italy, 19-23 May 2016. For equal voices, mixed, children and youth, folk, Gospel/Spiritual choirs. Contact: Associazione Musicale Melody, Email: associazionemelody@libero.it - Website: www.associazione-melody.com

6th Ššiauliai Cantat International Choir Festival and Competition, Šiauliai, Lithuania, 19-22 May 2016. Concerts in city halls, churches, choir competition in many categories. Contact: Kaunas club "Cantate Domino", Email: info@kaunascantat.lt - Website: www.kaunascantat.lt

International Choir Competition Zadar Croatia, Zadar, Croatia, 19-22 May 2016. Open to choirs consisting of amateur singers exclusively, in three categories: mixed (at least 16 singers), men's, or women's (at least 12 singers). Contact: International Choir Competition Zadar Croatia, Email: info@zadarchoirs.com - Website: www.zadarchoirs.com/en/

Mayo International Choral Festival, Ireland, 25-29 May 2016. Involvement with choirs from the Mayo County, local performances, concert tour in different cities of the county, competition and a Gala Concert at the Royal Theatre in Castlebar, Competition categories: mixed, female and male choirs, Sacred Music and Gospel Choirs, Gaelic or Celtic Language pieces. Contact: Mayo International Choral Festival, Email: info@mayochoral.com - Website: www.mayochoral.com

Venezia Music Festival 2016, Italy, 25-29 May 2016. International festival of choirs and orchestras. Contact: MusikReisenFaszination Music Festivals, Email: info@mrf-musicfestivals.com - Website: www.mrf-musicfestivals.com

11th Festa Choralis Bratislava, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 25-29 May 2016. Festival and competition including 19 categories. For all kind of choirs from around the world. Contact: Festa Musicale, Email: info@festamusicale.com - Website: www.festamusicale.com/eng/festa-choralis-bratislava-2016

International Choir Festival Corearte Senior 2016, Island of Tenerife, Canary Islands, Spain, 25-29 May 2016. 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

ON STAGE with Interkultur in Florence, Italy, 26-29 May 2016. 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/>

45th International Competition Florilège Vocal de Tours, France, 27-29 May 2016. 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

Festival Riviera 2016 Nice Choir Festival, France, June 2016. Individual and festival concerts under the direction of Henry Leck. Contact: KIconcerts, Email: info@KIconcerts.com - Website: www.KIconcerts.com

44th International Choir Festival of Songs Olomouc, Czech Republic, 1-6 June 2016. International choir festival of sacred and clerical music, Musica Religiosa Competition for choirs in all categories from all around the world. Contact: Festa Musicale, Email: info@festamusicale.com - Website: www.festamusicale.com

International Choral Espoo Festival, Espoo, Finland, 1-7 June 2016. Concerts, workshops and events around choral music. Artistic director: Pasi Hyökki. Contact: International ChoralEspoo, Email: info@vocal espoo.fi - Website: www.vocal espoo.fi

Ireland 2016 Choir Festival, Galway and Dublin, Ireland, June 2016. Individual and festival concerts under the direction of Elena Sharkova. Contact: KIconcerts, Email: info@KIconcerts.com - Website: www.KIconcerts.com

International Competition for a composition of sacred music Francesco Siciliani, Perugia, Italy, 1 June 2016. Open to participants of any nationality, without any age limit. Composition on a set text for unaccompanied choir, or choir with organ accompaniment. Competition organized under the patronage of the Pontifical Council for Culture. Contact: Fondazione Perugia Musica Classica Onlus, Email: direzartistica@perugiamusicaclassica.com - Website: www.perugiamusicaclassica.com

Passion of Italy Choral Festival with Craig Hella Johnson, Rome, Italy, June 2016. Individual concerts, immersion in the great history of Rome, sightseeing and performances with peers in the greatest venues. Contact: KIconcerts, Email: info@KIconcerts.com - Website: www.KIconcerts.com

ON STAGE with Interkultur in Barcelona, Spain, 2-5 June 2016. 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/>

6th International Wroclaw Choir Festival Vratislavia Sacra, Poland, 3-5 June 2016. Wroclaw is European Capital of Culture 2016. Festival focusing on sacred music of different style and origin. Choirs can compete in one of the 7 categories for St Cecilia statuettes. Evening concerts. Apply before 15 Dec 2015 Contact: MELODY & Polonia Cantat, Email: info@vratislaviasacra.pl - Website: www.vratislaviasacra.pl

Music & Fun - Limerick Sings International Choral Festival, Limerick, Ireland, 7-12 June 2016. Limerick Sings hosts both Irish and International choirs for three days of non-competitive music and song. Artistic Director: Jeffrey Benson (USA). Contact: Perform International, Email: info@performinternational.com - Website: www.perform-international.com

44th International Choir Festival of Songs, Czech Republic, 8-12 June 2016. Mundi Cantant: international choir competition; Mundi Cantant superior: international choir competition with obligatory songs. For all kind of choirs from around the world. Contact: Festa Musicale, Email: info@festamusicale.com - Website: www.festamusicale.com

7th International Krakow Choir Festival Cracovia Cantans, Poland, 9-12 June 2016. For all kinds of choirs, 9 categories, many concert opportunities. Gala concert in Krakow Philharmonic. Apply before 15 Dec 2015. Contact: MELODY & Polonia Cantat, Email: mail@krakowchoirfestival.pl - Website: www.krakowchoirfestival.pl

Krakow International Festival, Poland, 9-13 June 2016. 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

10th International Choir Festival Harmonia, Harmanli, Bulgaria, 10-13 June 2016. Non competitive festival for all kind of choirs. Contact: Mixed Choir Slavej, Gencho Donchev, President, Email: harmchoir@yahoo.com or harmchoir@abv.bg - Website: www.harmchoir.org

1st Limburger Male Choir Festival, Limburg, Germany, 10-12 June 2016. Festival and competition for male choirs. Judge panel includes Jan Schumacher (D), Michael Blume (D) and Dion Ritten (NL). Contact: Matthias Schmidt, Artistic Director, Email: matthias.schmidt@caecilia.de - Website: <http://limburger-maennerchor-festival.com>

Musica Sacra Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 16-19 June 2016. 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 2016. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: www.choral-music.sk

86 Grieg International Choir Festival and NINA Solo Competition for Young Singers, Bergen, Norway, 16-19 June 2016. Open to amateur choirs in all choral categories and difficulties. Competition in 3 categories: sacred music, contemporary music and folk music. In parallel, vocal competition for singers between 15 and 24 years old. The contestants will sing pieces from the classical tradition. Apply before Feb 1, 2016. Contact: Annlaug Hus, Email: post@griegfestival.no - Website: www.griegfestival.no

4th Per Musicam Ad Astra, International Copernicus Choir Festival and Competition, Toruń, Poland, 18-22 June 2016. For all kinds of choirs from all around the world. Apply before 15 April 2016. Contact: Meeting Music Inh. Piroška Horvath e. K., Email: constanze@meeting-music.com - Website: www.meeting-music.com

Prima Voce Itali'a, Explore & Inspire - The Maestro Festival Tour, Italy, 20-28 June 2016. Educational performance event for high school, college and community choirs. Program including world-class faculty, performances that are artistically and historically connected to each city, workshops/clinics, intercultural and musical exchanges with an Italian choir and faculty, and rehearsal schedule to maximize each chorister's Italian experience. With Anton Armstrong and Daren Kennedy. Contact: Perform International, Email: info@performinternational.com - Website: www.perform-international.com

Rome International Choral Festival, Italy, 22-26 June 2016. Featuring Mass participation at St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican and a formal finale concert at Rome's famed Saint Mary above Minerva Basilica under the baton of Z. Randall Stroope. Contact: Music Celebrations International, LLC, Email: info@som50fest.org - Website: www.romechoralfestival.org

Féile Córúil Dublin Choral Festival with Dr. Kevin Fenton, Ireland, 22-26 June 2016. This festival will celebrate this great heritage of Celtic musical inspiration. For mixed-voice choirs and individual singers from a variety of background joining together to sing en masse. Three days of rehearsals will lead participants to a grand finale performance in the historic medieval cathedral, Christ Church Cathedral Dublin. Contact: Music Celebrations International, LLC, Email: info@musiccelebrations.com - Website: <http://dublinchoralfestival.org/>

19th Alta Pusteria International Choir Festival, Alto Adige-Südtirol, Italy, 22-26 June 2016. 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

Serenade! Washington, DC Choral Festival, USA, 23-27 June 2016. 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 Festival in Tuscany, Italy, 23-27 June 2016. 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/>

Festival Coral de Verão, Lisbon, Portugal, 24-27 June 2016. 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/>

17th Crescent City Choral Festival, New Orleans, USA, 24-28 June 2016. For treble chorus (age range between 10 & 18). Conductors: Cheryl Dupont and Paul Caldwell. Contact: New Orleans Children's Chorus, Email: nocc787@bellsouth.net - Website: www.neworleanschildrenschorus.org

Embrace & Explore - The Power of Song, Vilnius, Riga & Tallinn, Lithuania, Latvia & Estonia, 25 June-3 July 2016. Educational and cultural immersion program allowing choristers to learn about the history and significance of music in the Baltic Countries. Artistic Director: Geoffrey Boers. Contact: Perform International, Email: info@performinternational.com - Website: www.perform-international.com

Notes of Joy Austria 2016 Choir Festival, Austria, 27 June-1 July 2016. Individual and festival concerts under the direction of Rollo Dilworth. Contact: KIconcerts, Email: info@KIconcerts.com - Website: www.KIconcerts.com

1st Annual Prague Choral Celebration Sing Dvorák, Rutter, Brubeck, and more, in the world-renowned Smetana Hall, Czech Republic, 27 June-1 July 2016. A Trio of Te Deums celebrating the great heritage of Czech musical inspiration and featuring a large chorus consisting of individual singers and mixed-voice choirs. Three days of rehearsals under the baton of esteemed choral conductor Dr. William Skoog will culminate in a grand performance at the Smetana Hall, home of the Prague Symphony Orchestra. Contact: Music Contact International, Email: travel@music-contact.com - Website: <http://praguechoralcelebration.org/>

The Rhythms of One World 2016 Festival, Geneva, Switzerland, 27 June-3 July 2016. For youth and adult choirs from all nations with programs that include choral works in folklore, regional sacred, contemporary and national pop music. Artistic Director: Yin Chu Jo. Contact: Friendship Ambassadors Foundation, Email: yinchu@faf.org - Website: www.faf.org

International festival of choirs and orchestras in Budapest, Hungary, 29 June-3 July 2016. For choirs and orchestras from all around the world. Contact: MusikReisenFaszination Music Festivals, Email: info@mrf-musicfestivals.com - Website: www.mrf-musicfestivals.com

Mozart International Choral Festival, Salzburg, Austria, 29 June-3 July 2016. Three days of festival rehearsals, mingling side-by-side with singers from a variety of backgrounds under the direction of Jo-Michael Scheibe (USA). János Czifra, Domkapellmeister of the Dom, will conduct Mozart's Mass in C Major, «Coronation», KV 317, accompanied by the Salzburger Domorchester. Contact: Music Celebrations International, LLC, Email: info@musiccelebrations.com - Website: www.musiccelebrations.com/festivals/2015/mozart.html

Slovakia Folk 2016, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 30 June-3 July 2016. Festival of folklore music and dance ensembles. Apply before April 15th 2016. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: www.choral-music.sk

International Festival Verona Garda Estate, Verona, Brescia, Mantua, Vicenza, Italy, June-July 2016. For all choirs of all types. Contact: Prof. Giuliano Rinaldi, Email: info@festivalveronagardaestate.eu - Website: www.festivalveronagardaestate.eu

Musica Eterna Roma, Italy, 1-5 July 2016. For all kinds of choirs from all around the world. Contact: Meeting Music Inh. Piroška Horvath e. K., Email: info@meeting-music.com - Website: www.meeting-music.com

Ireland 2016 Choir Festival, Belfast and Dublin, Ireland, July 2016. Individual and festival concerts under the direction of Janet Galván. Contact: KIconcerts, Email: info@KIconcerts.com - Website: www.KIconcerts.com

Join Janet Galván in the Ireland Choir Festival, Dublin & Belfast, Ireland, July 2016. Combined rehearsals and gala concert, individual concerts, cultural immersion, tour Dublin and discover Belfast. Contact: KIconcerts, Email: info@KIconcerts.com - Website: www.KIconcerts.com

IFAS 2016 – 24th International Festival of Academic Choirs, Pardubice, Czech Republic, 1-6 July 2016. Competition with possible Grand Prix for university and college choirs or youth choirs (age 18-30). Free Bohuslav Martinu Award competition for all kind of choirs (except children's choirs) Contact: IFAS - Alena Mejstíková, Email: ifas.pardubice@seznam.cz - Website: www.ifas.cz

Summa Cum Laude International Youth Music Festival, Vienna, Austria, 1-6 July 2016. 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

Celtic Voices Anniversary of Hope with Doreen Rao, Dublin, Ireland, 2-7 July 2016. Event celebrating the contributions of Irish history, culture and customs, and engaging Irish and American Choirs in a vibrant transnational repertoire of ancient and contemporary choral music. Contact: Perform International, Email: info@performinternational.com - Website: www.perform-international.com

51st International Days of Choral Singing, Barcelona, Spain, 4-10 July 2016. Singing week in the magnificent city of Barcelona, four workshops, final concert at the Palau de Música, individual concerts for the participating choirs in Barcelona. Workshops with Josep Vila Jover (Catalonia): Pergolesi - Stabat Mater, for women voices; Jan Schumacher (Germany): Romantic Music; Joan Company (Balearic Islands): Josep Vila Casañas - El Mirador; and Juan Carlos Asensio (Spain): Gregorian Chant. Contact: Federació Catalana d'Entitats Corals, Email: fcec@fcec.cat - Website: www.fcec.cat

Antica Pompeii, Italy, 5-7 July 2016. For all kinds of choirs from all around the world. Contact: Meeting Music Inh. Piroška Horvath e. K., Email: info@meeting-music.com - Website: www.meeting-music.com

International Choral Kathaumixw, Powell River, Canada, 5-9 July 2016. Join choirs from around the world in 20 concerts, competitions, common singing, conductor's seminars, and social events on Canada's magnificent Pacific Coast. Guest Artists and International Jury. Extension Tours available (July 10-16). Apply before 1 Nov 2015. Contact: Powell River Academy of Music, Email: info@kathaumixw.org - Website: www.kathaumixw.org

9th World Choir Games, Sochi, Russian Federation, 6-16 July 2016. Large competition for choirs from all around the world. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: www.interkultur.com

SINGMIT! Festival in Vienna, Austria, 7-9 July 2016.

For choirs and singers from around the globe, rehearsals with artistic director Gerald Wirth, workshops and performance of Mozart's Requiem. Contact: Encore Performance Tours, Email: encoretours@acis.com - Website: www.encoretours.com/go/singmit.cfm

International Youth Music Festival I, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 7-10 July 2016.

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 15/04/2016. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: www.choral-music.sk

Laurea Mundi Budapest Festival of Choral Music, Hungary, 9-13 July 2016.

With Henry Leck and Gábor Hollerung. Different levels of choral competition, workshops, individual coaching and more. Contact: Meeting Music Inh. Piroška Horváth e. K., Email: info@meeting-music.com - Website: www.meeting-music.com

International Singing Week Flanders, Ghent, Belgium, 11-18 July 2016.

Ateliers with Brady Allred (USA), Kurt Bikkembergs (Belgium), Jean-Marie Puissant (France), Marleen Annemans (Belgium), open singing, musical program for children, choir-to-choir concerts. Contact: Koor&Stem Ghent, Email: singingweek@koorenstem.be - Website: www.koorenstem.be/singingweek

International Choir Festival Corearte Puerto Rico 2016, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 12-17 July 2016.

Non-competitive event open to choirs of various backgrounds from all over the world. Workshops with Panda Van Proosdij (Netherlands), Kevin Fenton (Florida, USA), Amarilis Pagan Vila (San Juan, Puerto Rico), Josep Prats (Catalunya, Spain) and Basilio Astúlez (Basque Country, Spain). Contact: Festival Internacional de Coros Corearte Barcelona, Email: info@corearte.es - Website: www.corearte.es

International Choral Festival of Missoula, Montana, USA, 13-16 July 2016.

Non-competitive showcase festival for children's, youth, men's, women's and mixed choirs. Social events, home stays (international choirs) and cultural exchange. Contact: International Choral Festival, Email: info@choralfestival.org - Website: www.choralfestival.org

11th International Choir Competition, Miltenberg, Bavaria, Germany, 14-18 July 2016.

Open to mixed choirs. Two Categories: Symphony of Voices (with compulsory competition); Folksong, Spiritual and Jazz. Accommodation and meals free of charge, money prizes and friendship concerts. Apply before 31 December 2015. Contact: Kulturreferat des Landratsamtes Miltenberg, Gaby Schmidt, Email: kultur@LRA-MIL.de - Website: www.chorwettbewerb-miltenberg.de

Cappriccio Français Summer Academy, Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain, 18-24 July 2016.

Programs for singers, instrumentalists, students in choir conducting, baroque dancers, as well as a choral academy focusing on ancient music. Apply before 15 June 2016. Contact: Cappriccio Français Summer Academy, Email: academie@cappricciofrancais.com - Website: www.academie.cappricciofrancais.com

Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games Countdown, Japan, 19-27 June 2016.

Join other singers from across the U.S. in this grand musical salute to our fellow Japanese choristers as they start the countdown towards the Games of the XXXII Olympiad in Tokyo. Artistic Director: Miguel Ángel Felipe (USA). Contact: Perform International, Email: info@performinternational.com - Website: www.perform-international.com

27th Béla Bartók International Choir Competition and Folklore Festival, Debrecen, Hungary, 7-10 July 2016.

The only competition in contemporary choral music for five categories. The winner of the Grand Prize will be invited to the competition for „The Grand Prix for European Choral Music” held every year alternately in Arezzo, Debrecen, Maribor, Tolosa, Tours and Varna. Folklore festival, world-premiers, church concerts, conducting master class and social meetings. Halfboard catering and accommodation for the invited choirs free of charge. Contact: Fonix Event Organizing NP LLC., Email: info@bbcc.hu - Website: www.bbcc.hu

Rhapsody! International Music Festival, Prague, Czech Republic and Vienna, Salzburg, Austria, 7-17 July 2016.

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 Choir Festival of Preveza, International Competition of Sacred Music, Preveza, Greece, 7-10 July 2016.

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/>

Cantus Salisburgensis Festival, Salzburg, Austria, 7-11 July 2016.

Massed sing performance under the direction of Prof. János Czifra, the Salzburg Cathedral's music director. Contact: Music Contact International, Email: travel@music-contact.com - Website: www.music-contact.com

Claudio Monteverdi Choral Festival and Competition, Venice, Italy, 7-10 July 2016.

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

Idaho International Choral Festival, Pocatello, USA, 19-24 July 2016. Choral groups from around the globe are invited to bring their respective talents and native music to create an atmosphere of uplifting and cultural harmony. Contact: Idaho International Choral Festival, Email: info@idahointerchoralfest.org - Website: www.idahointerchoralfest.org

9th Grand Prix Pattaya, Thailand, 20-24 July 2016. Festival and Grand Prix competition including 15 categories for all kind of choirs from around the world. Contact: Festa Musicale, Email: info@festamusicale.com - Website: www.festamusicale.com

Belgian Summer Sing, Ghent, Belgium, 21-25 July 2016. The city of Ghent welcomes choirs from Europe and North America to perform in the stunning St. Michael's Cathedral. Celebrate choral music as part of the "Ghent Arts and Music Festival," Europe's largest open-air cultural festival. Visit and perform in the capital city of Brussels and the beautiful and historic city of Bruges. Contact: Music Contact International, Email: travel@music-contact.com - Website: www.music-contact.com

55th International Seghizzi Choral Competition and Festival, Gorizia, Italy, 21-25 July 2016. For choirs or musical groups. Categories: Renaissance, Baroque, 19th Century, 1900 to the present day, folk and traditional songs or spirituals and gospels, pop and jazz music, contemporary music. Apply before 1 Mar 2015. Contact: Associazione Corale Goriziana «CA Seghizzi», Email: info@seghizzi.it - Website: www.seghizzi.it

IHLOMBE South African Choral Festival, Cape Town, Pretoria, Johannesburg & Game Park, South Africa, 22-30 July 2016. 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

International Youth Music Festival II, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 24-27 July 2016. 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 15/04/2016. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: www.choral-music.sk

5th Bali International Choir Festival, Denpasar Bali, Indonesia, 25-31 July 2016. Symposium and competition, workshops, Balinese Culture, intercultural collaboration, Temple tours for choirs, and individual conductors and singers. Contact: Bandung Choral Society, Tomohon International Choir Competition, Email: mail_bcsevents@yahoo.com - Website: <http://bandungchoralsociety.com/>

13th China International Chorus Festival Come to Beijing, Listen to the Songs of the World, Beijing, China, 26 July-1 Aug 2016. Opening Ceremony and concert in the Great Hall of the People, IFCM Choral Education Conference, IFCM Executive Committee meeting, judge panel meeting, group competition, choral exchange program, high level choir concert, new choral work concert, master classes, workshops, training camp, choral club, choral public and charitable events, concert tours, sightseeing (Great Wall, Temple of Heaven, Palace Museum), Square performances, and much more. Contact: China International Chorus Festival, Email: cicfbj@163.com - Website: www.cicfbj.cn/en

1st Africa Symposium on Choral Music, Accra, Ghana, 1-9 Aug 2016. Conferences, workshops, masterclasses, concerts and African choral music exhibition. Contact: African Federation for Choral Music, Email: info@famuc.org - Website: www.famuc.org

Nordklang 16, Turku (Åbo), Finland, 3-7 Aug 2016. North choir festival including morning singings, workshops, lunch concerts, dinner and evening concerts. Contact: Nordisk Korforum, Email: info@nordklang.fi - Website: www.nordklang.fi

22nd Choralies, Vaison-la-Romaine, France, 3-11 Aug 2016. Large non-competitive choir meeting in the beautiful Roman town of Vaison. 40 workshops for singers, 2 workshops for conductors, 100 concerts and all kinds of activities for participants and conductors. Contact: A Coeur Joie France, Email: inscriptions@choralies.org - Website: www.choralies.fr

Singapore International Choral Festival, Singapore, 10-13 Aug 2016. Join us at the third SICF held in Singapore and compete for a chance to sing at the Grand Prix held at the Esplanade Concert Hall. With workshops, masterclasses and feature choir concerts, this is key choral event in the South-East Asian region that is not to be missed! Organised by SourceWerkz and Rave Group. Contact: SourceWerkz, Ong Wei Meng, Email: info@sourcewerkz.com - Website: www.sicf.sg

11th International Youth Chamber Choir Meeting, Usedom Island (Baltic Sea), Germany, 12-21 Aug 2016. Festival for girls' and mixed youth choirs, max. 36 persons (incl. staff), up to the age of 26. Concerts, ateliers and time to get to know each other and the wonderful island of Usedom. Apply before 31 Dec 2015. Contact: Arbeitskreis Musik in der Jugend AMJ, Email: info@amj-musik.de - Website: www.amj-musik.de

Bratislava Cantat I, Slovak Republic, 18-21 Aug 2016. 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 2016. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: www.choral-music.sk

ON STAGE with Interkultur in Madrid, Spain, 18-21 Aug 2016. No competitions but a buzz of choral activities: Make Madrid 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 Coralua, Trondheim, Norway, 20-26 Aug 2016. Festival and workshops for choirs, individual choral singers and choral conductors. Apply before April 15. Contact: Coralua, Email: trondheim@coralua.com - Website: www.coralua.com

America Cantat 8, Atlantis, Paradise Island, Bahamas, 21-31 Aug 2016. America Cantat is the premier cultural music festival of the Americas, and is the only non-competitive choir festival to unite singers, clinicians, and festival choirs from North, Central, and South America in a ten-day cultural and musical immersion program. Over ten days, singers of all ages and abilities are invited to participate in overlapping five-day-long workshops, led by some of the most prestigious choral clinicians in the world such as Daria Abreu (Cuba), Anton Armstrong (USA), Gisela Crespo (Mexico), Elisa Dekaney (Brazil), Cristian Grases (Venezuela & USA), Rosephanye Powel (USA), Maria van Nieuwerkerken (Netherlands) and many others. Contact: American Choral Directors Association, Email: ac8@acda.org - Website: <http://america-cantat-8.org/>

International Festival of choirs and orchestras in Paris, France, 24-28 Aug 2016. For choirs and orchestras from around the world. Contact: MusikReisenFaszination Music Festivals, Email: info@mrf-musicfestivals.com - Website: www.mrf-musicfestivals.com

ON STAGE with Interkultur in Brussels, Belgium, 8-11 Sep 2016. 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/>

6th International Choir Competition and Festival Canco Mediterrania, Barcelona & Lloret de Mar, Spain, 13-18 Sep 2016. For all kind of choirs from around the world. Contact: International Choir Festival and Competition Canco Mediterrania, Email: festivalbarcelona@interia.eu - Website: www.serrabrava.eu

7th International Festival of Choirs and Orchestras, Prague, Czech Republic, 14-18 Sep 2016. For choirs and orchestras from around the world. Contact: MusikReisenFaszination Music Festivals, Email: info@mrf-musicfestivals.com - Website: www.mrf-musicfestivals.com

ON STAGE with Interkultur in Lisbon, Portugal, 15-18 Sep 2016. 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, 22-25 Sep 2016. 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/>

5th International Harald Andersen Chamber Choir Competition, Helsinki, Finland, 23-24 Sep 2016. International choir competition for mixed chamber choirs (16-40 singers). Participating choirs may include professional singers. Contact: Terhi Luukkonen, Email: terhi.luukkonen@uniarts.fi - Website: www.uniarts.fi/en/harald-andersen-choir-competition-2016

Tonen2000 International Choir Festival, Westland, Netherlands, 23-25 Sep 2016. Contest for non-professional mixed choirs (up to 36 members) and male and female ensembles (up to 24 members). Categories: sacred and secular music (compositions from Middle Age/Renaissance, Romantic period and modern); folk music optional. Contact: Tonen2000, Jos Vranken, Email: info@tonen2000.nl - Website: www.tonen2000.nl

7th International Choir Festival & Competition «Isola del Sole», Grado, Italy, 28 Sep-2 Oct 2016. Competition, international friendship concerts, evaluation concerts and individual coaching. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: www.interkultur.com

Cracovia Music Festival 2016, Cracow, Poland, 29 Sep-3 Oct 2016. For choirs and orchestras from around the world. Contact: MusikReisenFaszination Music Festivals, Email: info@mrf-musicfestivals.com - Website: www.mrf-musicfestivals.com

Bratislava Cantat II, Slovak Republic, 6-9 Oct 2016. 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 2016. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: www.choral-music.sk

2nd Beira Interior International Choir Festival and Competition, Fundão, Portugal, 8-12 Oct 2016. For all kinds of choirs from all around the world. Apply before 30 April 2016. Contact: Meeting Music Inh. Pirooska Horvath e. K., Email: deborah.bertoni@meeting-music.com - Website: www.meeting-music.com

Lago di Garda Music Festival, Italy, 13-17 Oct 2016. International festival of music for choirs and orchestras on Lake Garda. Contact: MusikReisenFaszination Music Festivals, Email: info@mrf-musicfestivals.com - Website: www.mrf-musicfestivals.com

Canta al mar 2016 International Choral Festival, Calella, Barcelona, Spain, 19-23 Oct 2016. 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

1st Lanna International Choir Competition, Chiang Mai, Thailand, 19-23 Oct 2016. It is Thailand's second biggest and important city today. It is not only a popular tourist destination, but also an impressive venue for an international competition, where choirs from all over the world will sing together and will get to know the Thai culture. Cooperation program with renowned conductors and choirs from the Southeast Asian region. Contact: Interkultur Foundation e.V., Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: www.interkultur.com

Cantate Barcelona, Spain, 21-25 Oct 2016. 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

International Festival of choirs and orchestras in Vienna, Austria, 27-31 Oct 2016. For choirs and orchestras from around the world. Contact: MusikReisenFaszination Music Festivals, Email: info@mrf-musicfestivals.com - Website: www.mrf-musicfestivals.com

12th International Warsaw Choir Festival Varsovia Cantat, Poland, 28-30 Oct 2016. For a cappella choirs. Choirs can compete in one of 5 categories for statuettes of Golden Lyre and Special Romuald Twardowski Prize. Festival takes place in Porczynski & Chopin Halls. Additional concerts in Warsaw churches. Apply before May 31, 2016. Contact: MELODY & Polonia Cantat, Email: info@varsoviacantat.pl - Website: www.varsoviacantat.pl

Cantate Dresden, Germany, 3-6 Nov 2016. For all kind of choirs from all over the world. Contact: Music&Friends, Email: info@musicandfriends.org - Website: www.musicandfriends.net/html/cantate_dresden1.html

ON STAGE with Interkultur in Prague, Czech Republic, 10-13 Nov 2016. 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/>

The Golden State Choral Trophy 2016, Monterey, California, USA, 20-24 Nov 2016. American International Choral Festival for all kinds of choirs from all around the world. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: www.interkultur.com

Vienna Advent Sing, Austria, 24-28 Nov, 1-5, 8-12, 15-19 Dec 2016. 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

7th Winter Choral Festival, Hong Kong China, 29 Nov-2 Dec 2016. A festival targeted at Youth Choirs with workshops, masterclasses and choral competition. Round off the festival with a performance in Hong Kong Disneyland Park as part of the Disney Performing Arts Programme. Organised by Rave Group and SourceWerkz. Contact: SourceWerkz, Ong Wei Meng, Email: info@sourcewerkz.com - Website: www.winterchoralfestival.com

International Festival of Advent and Christmas Music, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 1-4 Dec 2016. 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 2016. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: www.choral-music.sk

7th Krakow Advent & Christmas Choir Festival, Poland, 2-4 Dec 2016. For all kinds of choirs. Competition in 5 categories for the statuettes of Golden Angels or non-competitive participation. Apply before June 30, 2016. Contact: MELODY & Polonia Cantat, Email: krakow@christmasfestival.pl - Website: www.christmasfestival.pl

6th International Festival of choirs and orchestras in Baden, Germany, 8-11 Dec 2016. For choirs and orchestras from around the world. Contact: MusikReisenFaszination Music Festivals, Email: info@mrf-musicfestivals.com - Website: www.mrf-musicfestivals.com

24th International Sacred, Advent & Christmas Music Festival and Choir Competition Cantate Domino Kaunas, Kaunas, Lithuania, 15-18 Dec 2016. Concerts in city halls, churches, choir competition in many categories, workshops. Contact: Kaunas club «Cantate Domino», Email: info@kaunascantat.lt - Website: www.kaunascantat.lt

Sing in the New Year 2016-2017 with Karen Kennedy, Greece, 26 Dec 2016-2 Jan 2017. Combined rehearsals and gala concert, individual concerts, cultural immersion. Contact: KIconcerts, Email: info@KIconcerts.com - Website: www.KIconcerts.com

Fest der Kulturen 2017 Grand Prix of Nations, Berlin, Germany, 18-22 Jan 2017. Event is embedded in the Berlin «Fest der Kulturen» 2017 where the Rundfunkchor Berlin and further top class choirs and orchestras will be performing. The chamber music hall of the Berlin Philharmonie, one of Germany's best concert halls, will offer a dignified ambiance for the „Grand Prix of Nations“. Contact: Förderverein Interkultur, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: www.interkultur.com

Sing'n'Joy Princeton 2017 The American International Choral Festival, USA, 16-20 Feb 2017. Competition for all types of choirs in different categories and difficulties with a focus on chamber choirs. Contact: Förderverein Interkultur, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: www.interkultur.com

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

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

ON STAGE with Interkultur in Nice, France, 23-26 Mar 2017. 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/>

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/>

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

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. Pirooska Horvath e. K., Email: info@meeting-music.com - Website: www.meeting-music.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

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: Peter Davies, Email: peter@cimvcf.org.uk - Website: www.cimvcf.org.uk

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

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. Pirooska Horvath e. K., Email: info@meeting-music.com - Website: www.meeting-music.com

World of Choirs, 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@fiestalonia.net - Website: www.fiestalonia.net

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 Loeppky. Contact: KIconcerts, Email: info@KIconcerts.com - Website: www.KIconcerts.com

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

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/>

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

7th Ššiauliai 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

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.perform-international.com

5th Vietnam International Choir Festival & Competition, Hô i An, Vietnam, 7-11 June 2017. 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

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

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: KIconcerts, Email: info@KIconcerts.com - Website: www.KIconcerts.com

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: KIconcerts, Email: info@KIconcerts.com - Website: www.KIconcerts.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

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

Luther 2017 Choral Festival, Berlin, Germany, 17-23 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: Perform International, Email: info@performinternational.com - Website: www.perform-international.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.perform-international.com

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

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 May 1st, 2015. Contact: Wolfgang Ziegler, chairman, Email: office@aveverum.at - Website: www.aveverum.at

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.perform-international.com

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

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: KIconcerts, Email: info@KIconcerts.com - Website: www.KIconcerts.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: KIconcerts, Email: info@KIconcerts.com - Website: www.KIconcerts.com

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

Rhapsody! International Music Festival, Prague, Czech Republic and 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>

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: KIconcerts, Email: info@KIconcerts.com - Website: www.KIconcerts.com

3rd European Choir Games, 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

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 Seoul and in the National Theatre of Korea. 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

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

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/>

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/>

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

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

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/>

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

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@kaunascantat.lt - Website: www.kaunascantat.lt

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. Piroška Horváth e. K., Email: deborah.bertoni@meeting-music.com - Website: www.meeting-music.com

64th 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

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

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>

Rhapsody! International Music Festival, Prague, Czech Republic and 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>

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

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

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

66th Cork International Choral Festival, Ireland, 29 Apr-3 May 2020. 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

65th European Music Festival for Young People, Neerpelt, Belgium, 30 Apr-4 May 2020. 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

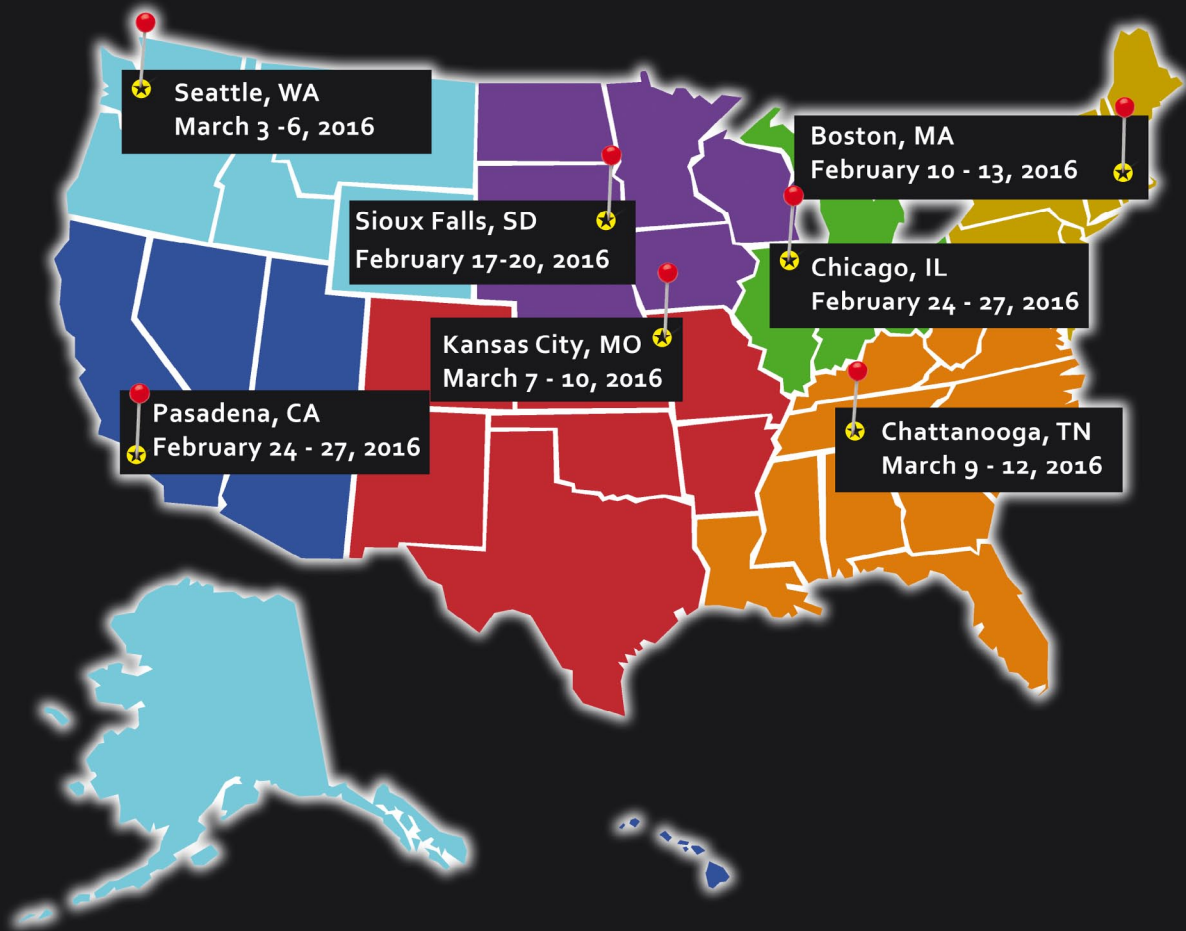
67th Cork International Choral Festival, Ireland, 28 Apr-2 May 2021. For 5 wonderful days Cork City and County will welcome some of the finest amateur Competitive and Non - Competitive choirs from around the world for a programme of choral concerts, national and international competition, and internationally 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

This list of international choral events is regularly updated in the [Choral Calendar](#) available to the membership on www.ifcm.net

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WESTERN DIVISION

Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Utah

NORTH CENTRAL DIVISION

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Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio

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Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas

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Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland/DC, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont

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