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President's Column

Dear friends,

As members of an organization focused on service, IFCM administrators constantly strive to find meaningful ways to meet the organization's stated mission. Since that mission involves supporting the exchange of culture through choral music, it infers that IFCM should support ALL projects that steer global choral music in this direction. In order to do this, the IFCM Executive Committee (ExCom) has been working on simple documents that will **help us help you**.

The first is the *IFCM Charter of Ethics*, which is based on our Statutes and Bylaws, and is a means of upholding the integrity of international choral art. The other is the *IFCM Project Endorsement*, which is based on the new operations plan approved by the General Assembly in Seoul, South Korea in August 2014. The change was made in an effort to ensure IFCM's future long-term existence.

The two documents make it possible to request support from IFCM and additionally communicate how IFCM can help the entity (festival, masterclass, competition, organization, etc.), and how the entity can give something back to IFCM and the choral world. The changes in these documents eliminate people using IFCM solely for their own gain.

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- 2. Support:** A written request should be sent to the IFCM Executive Committee (ExCom), who, after discussion, will approve or refuse the applicant. If approved, it may result in a statement on the project programme to the effect of "This project is supported by the International Federation for Choral Music," and may involve the temporary use of the IFCM Logo.
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- 4. Contract:** The *IFCM Project Partnership* should be sent to the ExCom, who will approve or refuse the applicant. If approved, a contract will be drawn up by IFCM's attorney formalizing the relationship between IFCM and the event, which will include, but not be limited to: organization of leadership, artistic consultancy, funding guidelines, distribution of profit and loss, reporting requirements, etc.

You will hear a great deal about this restructuring in future issues of the *International Choral Bulletin*, the *eNews*, and on IFCM's website. Our goal is to highlight all extraordinary international choral events and, at the same time, maintain the highest level of integrity so that all those who choose to be involved will be aware and assured that this event is something that is living up to the highest global choral standards. With best wishes,

Michael J. Anderson

Michael J Anderson, President ●



Cover

Gregorian Chant (See our article in the Choral Technique Section)

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▲ World Youth Choir arriving at a concert place © Foundation World Youth Choir

Choral Management

Multitasking: Choral Management

Daniel Schalz

Thinking in a Business-like and Artistic Way at the Same Time
Cultural Manager and Book Author Alexandra Jachim on the
Foundations of Successful Choir Management!

Interview by Daniel Schalz

Professionals, PR and Practice

Review of the first year of the "Choral Management" further
training course of the Deutsche Chorjugend

Daniel Schalz

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Multitasking: Choral Management

A Description of the Job and where to learn it



The higher the musical ambitions of a choir, the higher the organizational burden. But what exactly is the job of a choral manager? Is it possible to learn it? And if so, where?

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Looking for somebody capable of doing everything

Wouldn't it be a dream if you as a choral conductor could devote yourself exclusively to your musical work? Reality, alas, is quite different: "Concert programmes have to be made, scores ordered, rooms rented and equipped, money raised, posters printed, tickets sold; and even the singers require a certain administrative effort"; this is a list set up in "Schott Masterclass Chorleitung – vom Konzept zum Konzert", Schott 2011 (Schott Masterclass for Choral Conducting – from the Concept to the Concert). And the author adds: "Even I am spending half of my time organizing and planning; many hours each day..."¹

Please note that the author of this book is not a choral conductor of an amateur choir: he is Simon Halsey, chief conductor of the *Rundfunkchor Berlin* (Berlin Radio Choir), a professional top ensemble. Even for this choir, organizational tasks are a normal part of the conductor's work, even though he has experts for tour planning, PR and events organization at his disposal.

The more ambitious an ensemble is, the more extensive its organizational tasks are. This is why the much quoted "egg-laying woolly milk-sow" (*a very German expression for an all-round talent; translator's note*) is required to manage a choir. This is at least the impression given by Cornelia Bend, choral manager of the SWR Vokalensemble, who lists as some of her most important tasks: responsibility

Daniel Schalz
Editor of *Chorzeit*,
das Vokalmagazin

¹ Simon Halsey, Schott Master Class Chorleitung – vom Konzept zum Konzert; Praxisbuch + 2 DVD (4 hours of music), Schott 2011 (information added by the translator)

for the staff, the budget and the programmes; handing out composition commissions, acquisition (*of sponsors, clients, funds etc.; translator's note*), contacts with events managers, setting up of contracts, marketing, PR, coordination of radio, CD and television programmes, promotion of the importance of vocal music by networking with associations, projects with sponsored choirs, music offers for all ages...". Such an amount of work is not possible without certain concessions: "It is necessary to learn how to deal with the fact that it is never possible to reach completely one's own goals", says Bend, "or to fulfil all the wishes of the ensemble."



The professionals have learnt most of their skills on the job

This is even truer for amateur groups, as in general all the work has to be done by very few persons, in some cases even by the choral conductor alone. But this endless to-do list is frequently asking too much of him, not only in terms of time spent but also in terms of knowledge, for as far as amateur choirs are concerned there are few possibilities of practical training courses (cf. interview in the following article).

As far as the top is concerned, things are not that much better. As a matter of fact, there exists a series of basic study programmes in "cultural management"; however, choral management is almost never dealt with in these courses. One of the reasons is that in Germany there are only about two dozen choirs and vocal groups which can afford to employ a manager on a permanent basis, and even they frequently are not full-time staff. This means that there are practically no jobs for graduates in this field.

In addition, every choral conductor – professional or committed amateur – is above all a cultural manager in the wider sense. "Choral management is just a small aspect of this job which

is much more complex", says Bernard Heß, choral manager of RIAS Kammerchor in Berlin. "It is irrelevant whether one directs an orchestra, a choir or a folk dance group; the requirements are the same: Marketing, PR, fundraising, etc." He does not consider himself a choral manager but a cultural manager working for a choir right now, using his expertise, his long-time professional experience and a good network. With similar success, he has managed in the past a foundation, a festival, an international competition and a Baroque orchestra. "And there is nothing to be said against someone coming from a completely different profession", says Heß, "if his or her work results in success."

Indeed, many professional choral managers in Germany have learned their trade by experience and not by studying. Oliver Geisler, manager of the Dresdner Kreuzchor, has a doctorate in philosophy; Susanne Eckel (Deutscher Jugendkammerchor) studied music education. Christopher Hartmann (Regensburger Domspatzen) is an economist, but already during his university studies he created a concert agency and together with his brother Ludwig Hartmann and Stephan Schmid, founded the "Tage Alter Musik" (Early Music Days) in Regensburg. After graduating he started working as the managing director of the Fachakademie (now Hochschule) für katholische Kirchenmusik und Musikerziehung Regensburg, before becoming the Manager of the Domspatzen, with which he had sung as a child. "Since my time in school I have come up with many ideas for my work through 'learning by doing'", says Hartmann. "Even then I helped with the organization of events for concert agencies – from ticket sales, poster campaigns, and managing cloakrooms to entrance checking."

Also, many choral managers have studied arts. Jürgen Wagner, who has been responsible for Chorwerk Ruhr since 2008, studied singing. Cornelia Bend (SWR Vokalensemble) studied the oboe as well as musicology, history and philosophy. She also took cultural management courses at the Pädagogische Hochschule Ludwigsburg. "As far as my experience is concerned, a study course in cultural management alone is not sufficient without other specialized courses and some experience with an ensemble in order to carry out the many different management tasks", she says.

Hans-Hermann Rehberg, since 1990 director of Rundfunkchor Berlin, has a similar opinion: "I think that it is not possible to learn management." After having studied singing at the Hochschule für Musik in Leipzig, he sang for five years at the Musikalische Komödie and then for nine years in the Rundfunkchor Berlin; he continued his management training by work shadowing at the Musikhochschulen in Hamburg and Berlin.

Just like Rehberg, many choral managers have themselves sung or are still singing. “This is an absolute prerequisite of the job”, says book author Alexandra Jachim (“Erfolgreiches Chormangement” – Successful Choral Management). “One must know what makes a choir tick.” As far as the semi-professional and amateur choirs are concerned, which means 99 percent of all choirs, this prerequisite is almost always self-evident. For example Jazzchor Freiburg: Nina Ruckhaber, an alto, has been taking care of all things organizational since 2012. She has been singing in choirs since childhood and very early on she was interested in what was going on around her. “In my school choir I checked the lists of people present,” she remembers. “During my senior classes I helped with the organization of concerts. And at university I worked as an assistant to the music director and as such I was co-responsible for the university choir.”

There are only a few possibilities for further training for amateurs

Ruckhaber, who studied music education at Koblenz University, acquired further know-how in a training course for choral management of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung in Bonn, as well as one for music management and music law at the Musikhochschule Freiburg. She also took further training seminars with music associations. By doing so, she practically exhausted a great part of the existing possibilities of further training. True, there are a few seminars offered by the larger regional choral associations; most of these are centred on legal aspects governing associations. For instance, the Chorverband NRW, in co-operation with the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, offers a seven-module course “Management of Associations in Choral Practice”. If you ask the Bundesakademie für kulturelle Bildung (Federal Academy for Cultural Education) in Wolfenbüttel about this subject, they will refer you to general courses on cultural management – there are no special courses for choral management.

Faced with such a scant offer, some top ensembles take initiatives themselves: the WDR Rundfunkchor regularly offers internships within their own management. The senior classes in the boarding school of the Windsbacher Knabenchor complete “P-Seminars” in choral management. Since last year, the Chorjugend im Deutschen Chorverband has tried to help with further training courses in choral management (cf. third article of this dossier).

For most choral organizers in Germany, however, the only possibility is learning by doing – and to compensate lack of knowledge with a maximum of passion. For work can be very fulfilling, if it bears fruit. “My volunteering for the SonntagsChor

Rheinland-Pfalz is so much fun”, says Werner Mattern; he is an engineer who spent several decades planning chemical works all over the world. Now he organizes up to twelve concerts each year. “I work with very interesting partners, for instance the ZDF (*a German television channel; translator’s note*), the SWR (*a German radio station; translator’s note*), the lotto or choral federations – this colours my life!”

The price to be paid is an intense personal expense of energy and time: “The Jazzchor Freiburg pays me half-time”, Nina Ruckhaber says, “but, as a matter of fact, I invest a lot of time in volunteering.” This is also true of professional staff: “Often I work fifty or sixty hours a week,” Cornelia Bend (SWR Vokalensemble) tells us. “I am unable to count the hours I spend working in a week”, says Hans Rehberg (Rundfunkchor Berlin) – and adds immediately his personal justification: “It’s a way of life!”

*Translated from the German by Jutta Tagger, France
Edited by Gillian Forlivesi Heywood, Italy/UK* ●

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Thinking in a Business-like and Artistic Way at the Same Time

Cultural Manager and Book Author Alexandra Jachim on the Foundations of Successful Choir Management!

“Many lack the basic tools”!

More appreciation, clear distribution of tasks, more in-service training: Alexandra Jachim, author of a successful guide on the subject, discusses the foundations of successful choir management!

Ms. Jachim, what are the most important qualities a choir manager should be able to offer?

For a start, she or he should be singing in a choir or have sung in one, for on the one side you should know the special group dynamic processes active in a choir, but above all, on the other side, you need to know what it means to do musical work. This is really the case for any type of cultural management: basically one's got to think in economic terms, but one also needs a profound understanding of the special features of work in the arts - particularly as these two sides are often perceived to be contradictory. Therefore, in order to combine these two in a way that promises success, you need to deal with great sensitivity with the individuals and groups concerned - from the choral conductor via the various voice sections and soloists or other artists who might be involved, to outsiders like sponsors, representatives of the press etc.

Often, in this it is the choral conductor who is the toughest negotiator if the use of budgeted money or responsibilities of personnel is being debated...

That's right, and that's why it is so important that the choir manager, if at all possible, works on equal terms with the artistic leaders. Unfortunately many cultural enterprises - even large and famous ones - are still structured in a very hierarchical manner, and on the whole the artistic leadership remains perched higher up that tree than the management people responsible for organisation and balancing the books. Yet both areas are equally important - one is totally incapable of working without the other! What use are the most stunning artistic ideas if they can't be put into practice because no sponsorship money has come in or neither audience nor press attend the concert, because there's been no decent publicity? And conversely, the choir manager needs the product, namely the good artistic achievement, in order to fulfil his or her duties.

Nevertheless, in choral work, the music should be taking centre stage.

Of course. I would outline three goals, of which the first, the fulfilling of the cultural mission, namely making music for its own sake, certainly ranks top. However, there are two further aspects which are of equal importance for choral work if it is to be successful in the long term, which are often neglected or even totally ignored: namely the reaching of certain groups of people - from the audience via the recruitment of new singers to public and private sponsors - , and also the looking-after of that which already exists - this, too, again refers, alongside the economic factor, to the singers as well as the public or other people or groups of people with an interest in the choir!

However, for many choirs and particularly their conductors, this leans far too much into the sphere of business - after all, usually, their motivation is not rooted in the making of money.

I, too, have observed this fundamentally sceptical attitude towards concepts like “groups we need to approach” or “the market”, particularly among amateur choirs. However, the procedure I describe is economic only at first glance, for in reality the two non-business dimensions of choral work have a much deeper effect: after all, we'll only be singing together as long as there are enough singers - so we must be active in the recruitment of new members for our choirs. And the more those already on board feel happy and at home with us, the longer they will stay. We simply must not forget that whether somebody enjoys singing in a choir depends not only on the conductor or the repertoire, but to a considerable extent also on factors like the atmosphere in the group, successful concerts, public appreciation etc. Different polls and studies undertaken in the last few years have shown that the satisfaction of choir members actually depends more on these things than on the musical work. Therefore - as an example - the importance of the individual choir member for the group should not only be judged by his or her vocal skills, but also by social competence. Thus singers who actively



Quite a lot of responsibility
for one individual!

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look after new arrivals, explain to them the “rules of the game”, introduce them to the group, are unbelievably important for the mood within the choir. And if you feel content and happy, you also sing with more motivation - and better! However, usually the choir’s conductor is not in a position to look after these apparent trivialities for lack of time - and usually this hadn’t been included in his or her training either.

With this you have touched upon the options for basic and, later, in-service training in this sphere: do you consider what’s on offer in the German-speaking world to be sufficient?

There’s no question that in this respect, we’ve got a lot of catching up to do. As already said, in the training of choral conductors, the aspects of organisation and economics and questions of leadership get far too little attention. The practical result then is that after a few months in their first jobs, they notice - very much as opposed to their expectations - that three quarters of their work centres on non-musical problems. Here it would be of enormous help for them if these tasks were taken over by members of the choir, but many choirs simply lack the necessary tools of the trade for this. Especially among amateurs, there are far too few opportunities for training which would enable singers with the right motivation to acquire these skills!

In your opinion, why are there not more opportunities for further training?

It seems to me that the cultural and particularly the choral scene is very much bringing up the rear in developments in society in general. Thus in many societal areas it has long been accepted that questions of the structure and style of leadership, communication within and outside the organisation or processes of decision-making are not so-called “soft skills” but of elementary importance if people are to work together. Even the Roman Catholic church with its unbeatably hierarchical structure has by now started to occupy itself intensely with such questions. It is only in the realm of culture that it’s still just a few people who decide upon the direction of travel, top down, and in choirs that is often the conductor who makes nearly all decisions, on his or her own. In the long run this model will fail. Of course, even in a choir the artistic director will always make decisions on certain matters on his or her own and on his/her own responsibility - you can’t have a democratic vote on every musical question. But what I’m really trying to emphasise is that there is a fundamental attitude: am I prepared to delegate the competence for certain decisions to the group or even individuals, because they may have more time or simply are better qualified to do so?

Talking of qualifications: particularly among amateur choirs, the organisational tasks are usually taken on by volunteers who never had any relevant training.

Correct, that is definitely the current reality - as in the overwhelming majority of not-for-profit organisations. Apart from the lack of concrete, crafts-type knowledge - e.g. for publicity or fundraising - above all it is difficult because as a rule these people are not trained for leadership, but the task of a choir manager is a leadership role. And it is a multifunctional one: a choir manager is spokesman/woman for the choir, in charge of drawing up and administering the budget, liaison officer, concert agent, publicity worker, fundraiser and much more, all at the same time.

Quite a lot of responsibility for one individual!

Exactly - and that's why I recommend two fundamental first steps to choirs preparing to tackle these problems. Firstly there should be a very clear definition of what the choir stands for and the goals it hopes to achieve: what music do we want to sing? What shape is our publicity to take? In which way may we be unique among other choirs? A group should really take time for these deliberations, e.g. by going away together over a weekend to thrash this out. The second step then consists - based on the goals decided upon - of the definition of very clear tasks, to be distributed among the members of the choir according to their skills. This is something many choirs sadly lack: these clearly defined fields of responsibility. Thus e.g. younger members of the choir could be entrusted with the establishment of a Facebook page. However, in all this it is very important that the group formulates its clear expectations of those asked to bear responsibility, so that they can decide whether they are really up to this. Particularly in the voluntary system people are often overloaded with tasks which they cannot master for lack of qualification and of time. This leads to frustration all round. A classic example are the webpages of choirs: often people who are good at computing are asked to set these up, but afterwards, they lack the time to update it with new concert dates or reviews, so that the page remains more or less derelict - because at the

start, there was no clear decision as to what should be done in future. This is also particularly valid for the relationship between conductor and the board of the choir - especially those in key positions should be aware of clear agreements as to who does what.

However, often the choir is glad if anybody comes forward at all to take on such work.

And that is exactly the nub of the problem! It is too simplistic simply to be content that fortunately somebody has taken on whatever. Not only is it permissible, but it is absolutely necessary that in voluntary work, too, high standards of work are demanded. In the long run it pays for all those involved if a bit more time and care is invested in the search for the right people for certain jobs. It is easy to underestimate the damage that can be caused by wrong personnel within organisations: if the person selling tickets at the door can't cope with stress and thus is unfriendly towards members of the public whose reserved tickets aren't ready and waiting, this will directly influence the mood in the hall, and then the choir wonders why the audience doesn't respond in spite of really superb singing. Generally choirs often forget the importance of the setting of a concert - the audience is supposed to feel at ease! What does the hall look like? Does the lighting support the content of the programme? What support is given to the audience to ease its access to the works to be performed? Will the concert feature a host? Can the traditional stage situation be broken up by e.g. distributing the singers around the hall? What about the interval? Most people attend concerts no longer just because of the music, but because they hope for an all-round emotional experience. The quality of the product "concert" must be right - but that applies also to the quality of service all round! All choirs should bear that in mind. It is impossible for the choir conductor to look after all those matters - but one or several choir managers could do so.

Translated from the German by Irene Auerbach, UK ●

Alexandra Jachim MAS, born 1969 in Vienna, read business studies and cultural management. For the last 25 years she has sung in choirs and been a member of the boards of choirs, occupying herself for many years with the subject of the theory and practice of choral management. For the last 20 years she has worked in cultural enterprises, among her jobs that of a choir manager in Vienna. She is currently in charge of the administration of WERK X, Vienna. Author of "Successful Choral Management; a Guide" (facultas.wuv 2013). Lectures and workshops on choral management.





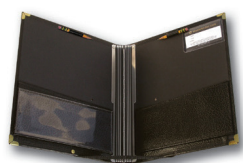
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Participants in the further training course “Choral Management” learn from highly experienced professionals

Input and Inspiration

Inspiring concerts, exciting workshops, passionate discussions – in mid-February everything seemed to be just like every year during this Fifth Vokalfest Chor@Berlin, organized by the Deutsche Chorverband (DCV). Almost: it was impossible to ignore the fact that the organizational staff of the festival was more numerous, but also much younger than usual: in addition to the proven DCV team and the Radialsystem (*a Berlin events manager; translator's note*), fifteen young choral singers and conductors were in action who, over four days, worked very hard in every field – for the stage set-up, in artistic matters or entrance checking, as photographers for the blog and, of course, as jack of all trades.

These four tiring but exciting days in Germany's capital were the conclusion of this one-year-long “Further Training in Choral Management” course for this extraordinary organizational team. During four intense week-ends, participants and teachers with practical experience had discussed subjects like marketing, public relations, fundraising and production of concerts and received a lot of input for their own work. Three of the modules had taken place in parallel to important choral events: The participants had first-hand experience at the Ninth German Choral Competition 2014 in Weimar, and they got a whiff of how things worked during the concert series “Schlussakkord Romantik” organized by the DCV in Rhineland Palatinate; at Chor@Berlin they were able to be active themselves.

The participants put many ideas directly into practice

The course began with the seminar “Wir sind ganz Chor! Kulturmarke, Sozialgemeinschaft, Wirtschaftsfaktor” (We are a choir! A cultural brand, a social community, an economic factor). The seminar started with the participants developing a profile of their ensemble; they were assisted in this task by Moritz Puschke, Manager of the DCV, and Christian Langer, a business consultant. This was something completely new for some of the participants: “A really important and fundamental insight for me was how crucial it is to develop a choral brand and to establish it”, says twenty-five-year-old Kathrin Henschen, a student of musicology at the Humboldt University of Berlin and working in the secretariat of the Berliner Sing-Akademie (among other things). “The linchpin is a clear idea of a choir's identity.”

Many participants implemented the competences acquired during this first week-end immediately: “After having understood the importance of differentiating oneself from other ensembles and of creating one's own brand, I immediately got down to work with my own choir”, says Mirijam Oster, a graduate in cultural sciences and now studying singing, who conducts two choirs and organizes the choral conducting seminar of the Saarländische Chorverband. “Together with my ensemble Querbeat we are developing a new choral concept focusing on creativity and fun – and not on singing quality alone.”

Maria Lehmann, a graduate of musicology and music management studies in Berlin and Paris and now working for the project management office of the DCV, says that her intensive work on the profile of her own choir has helped her significantly: “The necessary concentration led to amazing results in a very short time”, says the twenty-six-year-old. “Also, in cooperation with the other participants and experienced teachers, practical solutions were found to problems that had been around for a long time.”

After that first exhausting week-end which for some participants had also been a painful learning process, the second module was entirely devoted to dramaturgy and staging of concerts. Folkert Uhde, a cultural manager, who calls himself a “concert designer”, went far back in time, in order to show in an impressive manner that classical music had not always been presented in the way we are used to today: the musicians on stage, and the public on rows of chairs in front of it. He encouraged the participants to try out new scenic concepts and to think of the concert experience as a whole: Why not distribute the singers all over the venue? Which effects are made possible by taking into account architecture and lightning? And who actually said that you cannot eat and drink during a concert?

Daniel Schalz
Editor of Chorzeit
Das Vokalmagazin

Again, the participants received specific tips to apply at home with their own choirs: “Based on what we learned about concert dramaturgy, I have redesigned some of my concerts completely”, says Hannah Ewald, aged twenty-seven. She conducts a children’s choir, a mixed choir and a senior choir in Hamburg. “Above all, I have given a dramaturgical aspect to my programmes as far as space, form and music is concerned.”

The general questions concerning concert dramaturgy were completed by a special insight into the specific features of pop and jazz: Nina Ruckhaber, choral manager of the Jazzchor Freiburg, gave clear examples for unusual concert performances and at the end answered many questions concerning her job; contact details were also exchanged. Hannah Ewald thinks: “The special benefit of this further training course is that one can build a network which already now is of inestimable value for me.” Mirijam Oster from Saarland makes a similar comment: “This further training broadens one’s own horizon and shows what else is available outside one’s field of vision. And, of course, it is always inspiring to meet interesting people and get to know their ideas.”

Tips from the professionals of the radio choirs

The same week-end continued with the subject of public relations: the author of this article shared his experience as a journalist and public relations official by focusing on the importance of press releases and photographs because these are the basis of successful public relations. A practical approach was adopted here as well, which was welcomed by the participants: “The subject of press relations in particular, for instance as far as photos of the choir are concerned, was very useful for me; I was able to take with me some very good ideas and apply them immediately in my own choir”, Maria Lehman says; she also sings in a number of choirs.

In the following module of the course the field of public relations was expanded to include marketing. The teachers invited were Sabine Germann and Rachel-Sophia Dries from the departments of public relations and marketing of the Rundfunkchor Berlin (Berlin Radio Choir). They provided exciting insights into the functioning of the professional top ensemble. Valuable ideas for the acquisition of sponsorship funds were given by Bettina Charlotte Hoffmann from Diakonie Kathastrophenhilfe (*a disaster relief organization; translator’s note*) who, among other things, is responsible for fundraising and donor communication of “Brot für die Welt” (Bread for the World).

After these three intensive week-ends, it was with great enthusiasm that fifteen young choral managers tackled the festival organization of Chor@Berlin. “Even if it was only for networking all over Germany, I can strongly recommend this programme”, Maria Lehmann says. “You can get many new ideas and inspiration for your own choir, and you are stimulated to continue your own musical work.”

Further information, dates and programmes: www.deutsche-chorjugend.de/weiterbildung_chormangement/

Translated from the German by Jutta Tagger, France

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▲ Salt Lake City Choral Artists (USA) conducted by Brady Allred. They will be part of the IFCM World Choral Expo in Macau SAR

International Federation for Choral Music

IFCM World Choral EXPO, Macau SAR
12-15 November 2015
From the IFCM Asia Pacific Choral Council

IFCM World Choral EXPO, Macau, SAR

12-15 November 2015

The Asia Pacific Region is unique when compared to other regions in the world. Many countries of this region do not share a common spoken or written language, culture, customs, or a common border. An example of this contrast would be travelling from Beijing, China to Melbourne, Australia. Although in the same region, the journey takes twelve hours by airplane. The language changes from Mandarin Chinese to English. The staple food changes from noodles to bread. Summer turns into winter. The differences are endless, but nevertheless, there is a thin line between differences and similarities. One of these similarities includes the love of choral music.

Many countries of this region are developing economically at a phenomenal speed, similarly choral music is developing at an extraordinary rate: on average there is at least one choral festival, competition or event happening here every week.

This region is vast, and the skills and experiences of choristers, conductors, and composers are just as expansive. Consequently, the region has outstanding choirs and conductors, so there are more choirs, conductors and composers who lack the exposure and skills to reach higher levels of choral artistry.

The IFCM World Choral Expo

This upcoming IFCM World Choral EXPO is a real and rare opportunity in our region to work with some of the great choral musicians of our time, from within our area and from outside. The focus of the EXPO is on workshops and presentations to develop real skills for conductors, singers and composers. To this end, the specialized tracks, which will span over the three days of the event, will work in a mentorship-like programme – each delegate signs up to work in the class with one Leader. These tracks are broken down for composers, young composers, singers, and conductors at various stages of experience and specialization.

The organization of this IFCM World Choral EXPO will allow participants to gain the most knowledge in the shortest amount of time. Start your day with a morning singing session led by world-renowned conductors. Then spend the rest of the morning working with Maria Guinand (Venezuela) as a chorister, Brady Allred (USA) as an

advanced choral conductor, André van der Merwe (South Africa) for conducting skills as a university-aged



From left to right: André van der Merwe, Dan Walker, Maria Guinand

singer, or with Dan Walker (Australia) as a young composer starting out in choral composition. In the afternoon, attend various presentations, workshops, concerts, or lectures. Meanwhile, the exhibition will

be available all day for you to explore different publishers, choirs, associations and many more...

Over sixteen invited top level local and international choirs will be featured in Lunchtime and Evening Concerts at the EXPO site and around Macau. Featured choirs will include, among many others, the world famous Finnish a cappella group Rajaton; up-and-coming Dutch group, The Junction; the colourful Manado State University Choir from Indonesia; the vibrant Nelson Mandela

University Choir from South Africa; and the world-class Salt Lake City Choral Artists from the USA. An added bonus for participating choirs or individuals (at a minimal additional cost) is the opportunity to have a Consultancy session with one of the distinguished Presenters.

Occurring simultaneously to these events is a Grand Prix Choral Competition in two sections. Section A competition with set repertoire (from 13-15 November), and Section B competition without set repertoire (from 10-12 November 2015).

Jurors will include Jonathan Velasco (Philippines), Hak-Won Yoon (S. Korea), Michael J Anderson (USA), Brady Allred (USA), Saeko Hasegawa (Japan), Meng Da Peng (China), Tommy Kandisaputra (Indonesia), Wu Lin Feng (China), Debra Shearer (Australia).

Will your choir bring home the Grand-Prix Trophy?

Specialist Tracks Catering for Everyone

- **Singers Track – For Singers of any age and experience**

Leader – Maria Guinand, Conductor, Venezuela

Accompanist – Sally Whitwell, Pianist, Composer and Conductor, Australia

Under the direction of leading international choral conductor Maria Guinand and acclaimed pianist, composer and conductor Sally Whitwell, this track is open to all singers of any age in an exploration of better choral singing techniques, understanding a diverse range of choral music and making new choral friends. Come and join the fun and work with one of the leading choral conductors of our time.

- **A cappella Singers Track – For singers of any age and experience**

Leaders – The Junction, The Netherlands

Explore contemporary vocal sounds and small ensemble choral techniques in a friendly and relaxed environment. The Junction – groovy a cappella group from the Netherlands -will share ideas on vocal and microphone technique, composition and improvisational skills, in sessions that will inspire, singing in a more popular choral mode.

- **Conductors Tracks – for conductors of any age and experience**

Sign up to work with some of the world's leading choral conductors in five intensive mentoring sessions. This programme is designed for conductors who want to develop conducting, musical and vocal skills in close collaboration with mentors who will guide them through the entire track. Participants must attend all five sessions with the same mentor.



▲ A cappella Ensemble Rajaton (Finland)

▼ Nelson Mandela University Choir (South Africa), cond. Junita Lambrecht van Dijk





▲ The Junction (The Netherlands)

▼ Manado State University (Indonesia), cond. André de Quadros



There will be specialist tracks designed for conductors who already conduct - Adult Choirs, Youth Choirs, Children's Choirs, Women's Choirs - and a special track for young conductors who are just starting out.

Conductor's Track Leaders will include Dr. Brady Allred – USA; Xiao Bai – China; Susanna Saw – Malaysia; André van der Merwe – South Africa; Maria Guinand – Venezuela; Theodora Pavlovitch – Bulgaria; Yang Hong Lian – China; Stephen Leek – Australia; Thierry Thiébaud – France.

- **Composers Track – For Composers of any age and experience**

Leader – Gan Lin, Composer, China

Composers of any age and skill are invited to participate in an analytical-style series of workshops led by one of China's foremost choral composers, designed to challenge established composers and inspire newer ones in the Art of Choral Composition. Bring your compositions along and be prepared to be inspired and motivated.

- **Young Composers Workshop Track – For Composers starting out**

Leader – Dan Walker, Composer, Australia

This innovative track is an exciting opportunity for young composers or young people interested in composition, between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five, to participate in a workshop-style series of sessions on choral composition with leading young composer Dan Walker from Australia. Come together with other young composers to explore the world of choral composition in a fun and exciting atmosphere. Basic music and singing skills are required along with a willingness to explore and be challenged.

We Look Forward to Seeing You in Macau, Sar!

Having so many unique countries and cities in this region, one might ask, why is this event taking place in Macau, or, where is Macau?

Macau is a unique destination for all individuals, as it embodies a fusion of western and eastern culture. The Portuguese colonized Macau in its early days until its return to China in 1998 under the 'two systems, one party' policy similar to that of Hong Kong. As a special administrative region (SAR) Macau's immigration and administrative policies differ from those of China. This means most nationalities are able to come to Macau without visa restrictions.

Macau has its own International Airport linking it to most countries in this region. Hong Kong International Airport is also a gateway and directly links attendees to Macau by a short ferry trip.

Partnership with the University of Macau

We all know that the environment we work in affects the way we learn. The main EXPO site will be at the new campus of the University of Macau. With state-of-the-art facilities for EXPO participants, the campus spans over a square kilometre in a parkland setting offering a relaxing and collegiate environment. Situated only ten kilometres from "downtown" Macau, it offers many accommodation choices. Learn more at www.umac.mo.

Calling Exhibitors

The IFCM World Choral EXPO anticipates welcoming over 15,000 singers, conductors, and composers. This unique opportunity is unlike any other in this region, and will provide opportunities for vendors to connect directly to their target markets. Exhibiting vendors will have the chance to highlight their products and services in a central venue geared specifically to the Asian Pacific choral market.

The IFCM World Choral EXPO Exhibition Committee is still accepting applications from interested Exhibitors. Vendors who market educational and choral tools, music, and any choral- or music-related goods or services are welcome to apply. (Deadline: Monday, 15 September 2015)

How to Get more Information

More information can be found on the completely revamped IFCM World Choral EXPO website: www.worldchoralexpo.com. Should you require any additional information not on the website, do not hesitate to contact info@worldchoralexpo.com or worldchoralexpo@gmail.com.

Join Us

There is a need for continued education and improvement of choral conductors, teachers, composers and enthusiasts. The opportunity to work with such experienced and high-profile choral individuals, to mix with like-minded choral musicians from around the world, and to share and hear some of the finest choral singing on the planet, is a rare event in the Asia Pacific Region.

This is one event that choral musicians from around the Asian/Pacific region should not miss, and one that will intrigue and inspire other international participants.

See you there!

Edited by Gillian Forlivesi Heywood, Italy/UK ●

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From the producers of the World Choir Games

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▲ Northern lights (Reykjavik Peace Choir Festival p. 40)

Choral World News

Second Children's and Youth Choral World Championships
St. Petersburg, February 2015

Romans Vanags

Fifth Winter Choir Festival - Hong Kong, 2014

Yong Chee Foon

The Capella of St. Petersburg

Irina Roganova

Conducting Hope:

The only men's prison choir in the U.S. to perform outside prison walls

Tobin Sparfeld

The Third Ekaterinburg International Choral Festival 'Eurasia Cantat'

Yelena Bartnovskaya

The New Reykjavik Peace Choir Festival

Arthur Björgvin Bollason

Second Children's and Youth Choral World Championships.

St. Petersburg, February 2015



▲ Vocal and choral ensemble "Ensolei" (Izhevsk, Russia), cond. Natalia Gorbunova

There is at least one choir competition or festival taking place in the world every month, often making it difficult for choirs and their conductors to choose where to go. Some choirs choose so-called “cultural tourism” and go to places they have not been to before, some choirs look for opportunities to compete with high-quality choirs where the competition is fierce, while others choose more down-to-earth competitions in terms of choir composition, requirements and regulations. To ensure the quality of the competition and the number of participants, the competition organisers often have to look for new form and content in order to organise a choral competition that is special and stands out among the rest. The ‘Children’s and Youth Choral World Championship’, organised by the St. Petersburg Cultural Agency *InterAspect* in cooperation with the Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia, is a ‘creation’ in search of new directions. By definition, this competition is intended for certain categories of choirs with an age limit that largely determines the composition of participants and the competition rules; an interesting format. As happens in sporting contests, the choirs compete in qualifying heats, quarter-finals, semi-finals and the finals. This undoubtedly creates suspense and a true spirit of competition. As with the ‘World Choir Games’ organised by *Interkultur*, the fight for the champion’s title is very fierce, as only the most powerful and technically and musically strong choirs are selected for the finals.

This year, the Second Children’s and Youth Choral World Championships in St. Petersburg took place from 15th February to 22nd February and was attended by thirty choirs, mainly from Russia and Eastern Europe. This is understandable given the current geopolitical situation, not very favourable for a number of international arts and culture festival organisers in the region. However, I would like to highly commend the competition organisers, especially Elena Brizina and Igor Matjukov, for an extremely professional yet sincere attitude. All of the competition rounds were planned meticulously, and the choir performances evoked great public interest. Quality and objectivity were also provided by the international jury under the leadership of Sergei Jekimov, an assistant professor from the N. Rimsky-Korsakov St. Petersburg Conservatory, and a composer and conductor. I had the great pleasure of working with my colleagues Andrea Angelini (Italy), Milan Kolena (Slovakia), Vytautas Miskinis (Lithuania) and Valeri Uspenski (Russia). All of these experts are widely known among choir singers and conductors around the world. I do hope that both expert assessment and discussions after the

Romans Vanags

Associate Professor of
J. Vītols Latvian Academy
of Music and Artistic
Director of Interkultur



▲ Children's Choir "Allegrì" of Children's Art School of Novouralsk urban district (Novouralsk, Russia), cond. Olga Lapp

competition were significant for the choirs and their conductors. Each contest has its own leaders and choirs whose performances are an enjoyable surprise. The leader of this championship from the competition's first day was the N. Rimsky-Korsakov St. Petersburg Conservatory Student Choir conducted by Anton Maksimov. The choir's performance was especially vivid in the final. The vocal and technical capabilities of the choir and the professional training of the singers determined the results and largely confirmed the high educational standards of the Conservatory. After the contest, the jury reflected on whether such music school and university choirs should have a category of their own as competing in the same group with the choirs that do not possess such musical experience severely limits the competitive opportunities for the choirs with less professional training. Similar artistic qualities were also shown by Daugavpils Stanislav Brok Music School Choir from Latvia (conductor Yevgeny Ustinskiy) and Simferopol Children's Music School Choir (conductor Viktor Zaslavskiy). The 'Aurora' children's choir from Moscow, led by Anastasia Belajeva, delighted the spectators with its clear sound, but the 'Petersburgs Stars' choir from St. Petersburg, led by Svetlana Galimova, earned a special response from the audience. This choir, in which children with visual impairments sing, gave an amazingly charming and harmonious performance.



▲ All participants singing together

The format of this championship imposed a difficult task upon the conductors, namely to plan the programme tactically and correctly so as to improve performance both technically and artistically with each of the following rounds. The choirs that had chosen an appropriate programme were able to maintain the interest of the audience and jury up until the competition finals. It was good that the organisers gave the choirs an opportunity to perform in the most famous and acoustically suitable concert halls of St. Petersburg, the Great Hall of N. Rimsky-Korsakov St. Petersburg Conservatory and the State Academic M. Glinka Chapel. These concert halls, in which the world's most prominent performing artists have performed, will remain in both the conductors' and singers' memories. Each choir was also offered the opportunity to give independent concerts during the festival, and all participants were invited to attend a concert in one of Russia's most famous churches, *Spas na Krovì* (Church of the Saviour on Spilled Blood).

The organisers had planned everything very carefully so that each choir would be assessed and awarded with commemorative diplomas and prizes. Until now, I had never seen so many supporters who wanted to award their favourites with special sympathy prizes. At the closing ceremony, each choir felt like a winner and the children's eyes and hearts were filled with joy!

I would like to affirm that these types of choir competitions are an important starting point for the growth of each choir and for the self-affirmation of young singers. I hope the St. Petersburg Choral Contest organisers will continue on this path and will always remain creative and generate new ideas. The most important objective for the competition's future is to attract choirs from further afield, therefore creating a true sense of a World Choir Competition. I hope that world peace will prevail and that this musical festival of children and youth choirs performing together will contribute to this victory.

Romans Vanags is a graduate from the *Emils Darzins* specialized music college and the Department of Choir and Orchestra Conducting of the *Jāzeps Vītols* Latvian State Conservatory in Riga (currently named *Jāzeps Vītols' Latvian Academy of Music*). He has also received a diploma in choir conducting and in music pedagogy, as well as studying symphonic orchestra conducting. In 2003, Romans Vanags received a professional master's degree in music. Romans Vanags' professional work has been connected with conducting and pedagogy. He has been the chief conductor of the *Vanema* teacher's choir for a number of years (1984-2004), and since 1990 has been the principal conductor of the Latvian University female choir named *Minjona*. Since 1987, Romans Vanags has been the chief conductor and artistic director of *Jāzeps Mediņš Music School Boys' Choir*. From 1990-1993 he worked with Jazeps Medins Music College Symphonic Orchestra. Since 1987, Romans Vanags has worked at the Latvian Music Academy in Riga as a professor of choir conducting. Email: romans@latnet.lv



Fifth Winter Choir Festival - Hong Kong, 2014 .



▲ Our Lady of Fatima University Chorale (Philippines)

The Fifth Winter Choral Festival took place from the 1st to 5th December 2014 in Hong Kong, the Pearl of the Orient. Located on the southern coast of China, the city is an enigma of modern skyscrapers and ancient traditions and home to some of the best youth choirs in Asia. Since the first festival in 2010, the Winter Choral Festival has seen the participation of more than 2,500 choristers from sixty choirs representing China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Philippines, Malaysia and Singapore. The organiser of the festival, Sourcewerkz Pte Ltd, is a Singapore choral events company headed by Festival Director, Ms Lim Ai Hooi, with the mission to Teach, Touch and Transform. The festival is co-organised with Rave Group and supported by the World Association of Chinese Youth Choirs.

The Winter Choral Festival is designed as a platform for choristers and conductors to enrich their musicianship, singing and performance skills through competition, masterclasses and workshops. Choirs will also have a chance to perform to an international audience at Hong Kong Disneyland through the Disney Performing Arts Programme. The festival commenced with the competitive part at the Tsuen Wan Town Hall with a distinguished panel of adjudicators composed of the Artistic Director, Dr Brady Allred (USA), and fellow adjudicators Professor Theodora Pavlovitch (Bulgaria) and Mr Johnny Ku (Taiwan). The most captivating performances in the competition were in the Folklore Category where choirs from Indonesia, Philippines and Singapore competed in traditional costume and dance to folk choral music from their region.

After the intense competition of the previous evening, the participating choirs looked forward to the highlight of the festival: the masterclasses and workshops led by the adjudicators. The morning masterclass session saw Dr Brady Allred working with the Karangturi Choir from Indonesia where he gave insights to the interpretation of the sacred pieces which they performed during the competition. Professor Theodora Pavlovitch introduced Bulgarian a cappella choral music to Dunman High School from Singapore while Mr Johnny Ku worked on rehearsal technique with Our Lady of Fatima

Yong Chee Foon
Choral Conductor



▲ From left to right: Brady Allred, Theodora Pavlovitch, Johnny Ku, Lim Ai Hooi

University Choir from Philippines. The choirs enjoyed their ninety-minute sessions with the adjudicators and gained new musical knowledge from them.

In the evening, all the festival participants gathered in the Y Theatre at Youth Square for the highly anticipated joint workshop held by all the adjudicators and for the announcement of the competition results. Mr Johnny Ku began by introducing the various aboriginal tribes in Taiwan and showed us a geographical map of where they are located, as well as showing their unique costumes. He then proceeded to teach us how to sing a song of friendship called *A-Li-An* from the Paiwan tribe. The Paiwan tribe resides mostly in southern Taiwan and this friendship song is originally sung by children while playing. After learning how to sing the song, Mr Ku continued to teach the participants how to do the aboriginal dance that goes with the song. The adjudicators went on stage and locked hands to give a demonstration of the dance with guidance from Mr Ku before the entire audience joined in the song and dance. The participants enjoyed the song and dance session and made many new friends through it.

Next, Professor Theodora Pavlovitch gave a short introduction to her native Bulgaria and introduced a contemporary sacred piece by Slovenian composer Ambrož Čopi. The participants relished the challenge of sight-singing the rhythmic *Gloria* and were able to perform the composition at the end of the session with thoughtful guidance from Professor Pavlovitch. The audience thanked Professor Pavlovitch by singing the newly-learnt piece with great enthusiasm and gusto.

The Artistic Director, Dr Brady Allred, next gave a short lecture on the nuances of singing Renaissance choral music by getting the participants to sing the opening section of Palestrina's *Sicut Cervus*. The participants were then treated to another song and dance session led by Dr Allred, this time with an Israeli folksong that was quickly picked up by the participants. The mass workshop ended with the entire theatre in song and dance.

Often, choirs participating in the same competition do not get a chance to listen to each other. The Friendship concert component allows choirs to make cultural exchanges and build friendship through singing for each other. Each participating choir sang two songs in this short concert and the participants thoroughly enjoyed listening to each other in this



▲ the audience waiting for the results with great anticipation

section of the festival programme.

The announcement of the results was next and the audience waited with great anticipation. After a short summary of the competition by Dr Allred, the results were announced. The following choirs emerged as champions of their category:

- Ying Wa College Choir from Hong Kong conducted by Mr Boron Li (Equal Voices – Sixteen Years and Below)
- True Light Girls' College and Ying Wa College Mixed Choir from Hong Kong conducted by Ms Phoebe Yu (Mixed Voices – Sixteen Years and Below)
- Dunman High School Choir from Singapore conducted by Ms Jennifer Tham (Mixed Voices – Open Category)
- Karangturi Choir from Indonesia conducted by Mr Petrus Wahyu Eramoko (Folklore Category)



▲ Karangturi Choir (Indonesia), conducted by Petrus Wahyu Eramoko

After the announcement of results, there was great camaraderie as the participants went around congratulating each other with many photos and selfies taken. The adjudicators joined in the fun and soaked in the carnival-like atmosphere.

The next edition of the festival will be held from 29th November to 3rd December 2015. More details of the festival can be found at <http://www.ravegroup.sg/winterchoralfest>

Music Director of the Nanyang Technological University Choir in Singapore, **Yong Chee Foon** is also the current Vice-President of the Choral Directors' Association (Singapore) and the conductor of numerous award-winning youth choirs. His choirs have won many accolades at several international competitions across Europe and Asia. He is the Associate Artistic Director of Sourcwerkz Pte Ltd, a Singaporean choral events company that organises choral festivals around the world. His stand for good music education for the younger generation has led him to conduct more than 2000 young people who have sung under his baton in the past decade.
Email: cheefoon@gmail.com



Edited by Gillian Forlivesi Heywood, Italy/UK ●

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The Capella of St. Petersburg is a magnificent monument to Russian culture, not simply a museum where time stands still, but a spring to quench the thirst, with the beautiful sound of the immortal creations of human genius.

In November 2014 the State Capella of St. Petersburg held a concert dedicated to the 40th anniversary of creative activity of its artistic director and chief conductor Vladislav Chernushenko.

Every anniversary is important, but for Chernushenko the autumn of 2014 is indeed a significant milestone. He first crossed the threshold of the Capella 70 years ago after returning to Leningrad from evacuation, when the institution was trying to overcome the consequences of the Nazi blockade of the city. Throughout his years of service Chernushenko's work was observed and admired by the great Georgy Sviridov: "We should be grateful to Chernushenko for the fact that he restored the St. Petersburg Cappella, like the restoration of an old icon. This endeavour has made him one of the greatest figures in Russian music".



▲ Chernushenko is the main conductor of the concert of the joint choir of St. Petersburg, on the occasion of the Day of Slavic Literature and Culture, 24 May 2014

Vladislav Chernushenko is one of the great modern Russian musicians. His conducting talent is multi-faceted and manifests itself vividly in opera, symphonic music and choral performance. Under his leadership he has revived world-wide fame for the Russian choir.

Vladislav Chernushenko was the driving force behind lifting the ban and heralding the return of Russian sacred music to the concert sphere of Russia. In 1981 he organised a traditional festival "Neva Choral Assemblies" with a series of historical concerts and academic conferences "Five Centuries of Russian Choral Music". And in 1982, after a 54-year absence, the *All-Night Vigil* by Sergei Rachmaninov was heard in the Capella concert hall once again. Under the direction of Vladislav Chernushenko the repertoire of the choir is regaining its traditional richness and diversity. It includes the works of major vocal and instrumental forms – oratorios, cantatas, masses, operas in concert performance, a cappella works by both Western and Russian composers of different eras - and it has been granted the highest national and international awards and titles: Vladislav Chernushenko is certainly one of the leaders of the modern musical arts in Russia.

Today the Capella comprises a beautiful concert hall, a choir and a symphony orchestra as well as the magnificent organ, to the restoration of which the President of Russia has allocated the equivalent of one million euros. Today the Capella is a multicultural complex including a virtual concert hall.

Irina Roganova
conductor and teacher

(From an interview with Vladislav Chernushenko):

But for many years no one thought about the forgotten Capella of St. Petersburg ...

The Capella was founded on 12 August 1479. It was on this day that the Illumination of the Assumption Cathedral in the grounds of the Kremlin (the first stone church in Moscow) established a choir of state clerk choristers. This was to be the personal choir of Grand Prince Ivan Vasilyevich and thus the first professional choir in Russia. The history books tell us that Tsar Ivan the Terrible would often compose his own canticles, and also conduct soloists. We often play one of his hymns, written on the day of glorification of Peter the Metropolitan of Moscow. After over two centuries this choir of state clerk choristers was relocated to St Petersburg on the banks of the river Neva. During this time, the reign of Peter the Great, the first ever choir tour began: the Emperor left for Western Europe with his choristers. I was amazed when I was told in Paris that the young Tsar was nicknamed Peter the Bass and that in France it was well known that he loved to conduct church services and sing the prayers. In the eighteenth century, the choir adopted a new manner and style. In 1738, in the Ukrainian city of Glukov, in the reign of the Empress Anna Ioannovna, the first professional school of music was established, where she trained twenty boys for eventual service in the court choir. In the years immediately following, the court was also obliged to instruct young singers in the playing of orchestral instruments. For several decades the singing instructors and precentors of the choir were well-known Italian composers: Galuppi, Traetta, Paisiello, Sarti, Cimarosa. Later the choir attracted native composers who brought glory to Russian music, with pupils such as Maksym Berezovsky and Dmytro Bortniansky.

The institution not only fostered outstanding achievement in its musicians but it also nurtured all aspects of the school including its instrumentalists, composers, and conductors.

Glinka's "Ivan Susanin" was written for the Capella, and it is credited with establishing "The Mighty Handful", otherwise known as: Balakirev and his assistant Rimsky-Korsakov, Mussorgsky, Cui, Borodin and Tchaikovsky.

There are competing opinions by both Russian and international musicians as to the development of the "dithyrambic calm". Robert Schumann stated in his diary notes: "The Capella is the most beautiful choir that we have ever heard, the bass is at times reminiscent of the sound of the organ, and the treble sounds almost magical ...".

How do you maintain the glory of the Capella? After all, choral music is not the most popular musical genre.

Popularity is transient. By contrast, in many countries choral singing has become the new national obsession. In the US. almost every university has so vibrant an amateur choral scene that it is the envy of professionals the world over. We now also host a barber shop festival, attracting everything from male vocal ensembles to large choirs.

But is it possible that choral music is outdated? If we consider the great works of Lasso, Monteverdi, Bach, Handel, Bortniansky, Haydn, Mozart, Glinka, Mussorgsky, Brahms, Verdi, Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff, Britten, Stravinsky, Shostakovich? ... Is it really possible that mankind no longer has a need for this?

We hope that the history of the Capella will be elevated to the throne of the Russian musical arts and reign unchallenged for many years, accumulating from one generation to the next even more glory to the Russian choral art. But this continuity cannot be taken for granted: each generation needs to produce its own "honour and glory", and however remarkable the past, a burden that is often heavy falls on the shoulders of the present, demanding new corroboration.

So let us think, what is the basis of culture? And the answer: those who carry on the tradition of the people.

To summarise briefly, we have inherited a legacy, which looks something like this:

- high performing culture;
- outstanding singing skill of the artists of the choir and ensemble as a whole;
- the widest range of repertoire encompassing all periods and styles of Western European and Russian music;

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▲ Vladislav Chernushenko masterclass: Learning to read music out of mode. The path to the vocal temperament.

- monumental foundations in the genre of cantata-oratorio as the main focus of creative direction;
- attention to the performance of contemporary music, primarily of Russian music, as the key creative development;
- close cooperation with composers;
- regular contact with the audience;
- viewing the choir as an effective tool for awareness and education of the people.

We must agree, it's not a light burden. Let others judge what we are achieving collectively.

On the other hand, discussions regarding choral singers are rare. As a rule, we write in detail about the conductor, mentioning the choir only casually. These artists are unknown to the general public, they live on stage and on the posters under the catch-all phrase "choir", and their fate lies in that special moment on stage when they integrate themselves into the greater ensemble. Many of them are extremely talented, but nobody will ever know that if the chorus sounds bad. They can be totally incompetent or utterly talented. Their failure is always personal, their success is always shared. Singing in a choir requires selfless love and dedication.

This amazing creative altruism is inherent in many music groups and is worthy to be noted.

We utter the names of the conductors with reverence, whose talent and selfless service to their beloved art determined the fate of the choir in the difficult formative years of the Soviet Union, in times of troubles and the trials of the great patriotic war, in the days of the triumph of victory and the postwar revival years: Mikhail Klimov, Palladium Bogdanov, Georgi Dmitrevsky and Elizabeth Kudryavtseva respectively.

Vladislav Aleksandrovich, you had a chance to work with great Russian composers – George Sviridov and Valery Gavrilin. What are your memories?

Sviridov and Gavrilin follow the general line of Russian music coming from Glinka and Dargomyzhsky to Borodin, Balakirev, Rimsky-Korsakov, Mussorgsky and further through Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff, Taneyev, Glazunov to Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Shostakovich and their modern heirs.

Musically, Gavrilin will always be like Russia, incorporating the centuries of pain, all the joy and tears, turmoil and great



▲ Vladislav Chernushenko masterclass: Learning to read music out of mode. The path to the vocal temperament.

accomplishments along with the desecration of sacred places, betrayal, ruin and rising from the ashes, similar to the resurrection of Christ, while being infused with love and by healing faith, sometimes recklessly trusting the future, something which in times of tribulation remains incomprehensibly but persistently a priority of the people. Actually, Sviridov is much the same. It is no coincidence that these two names are often found side by side.

For more than three decades, we have been in direct contact with Georgy Vasilyevich Sviridov. During joint rehearsals and concerts, we discussed many different things, mainly about the problems of education and culture.

You are currently on tour in Europe. According to your observations: who now has a greater influence (in the performing arts) – Europe on Russia or vice versa?

In Europe as well as overseas, Russian art in all its myriad varieties is still as coveted today as it has ever been: Russian theatre, Russian ballet and opera, symphony orchestras, choirs and the fine arts. You must forgive me, but I find that television is bursting at the seams with pop culture, corrupting the minds and morals of the

people. They have this in excess. But at the same time in many countries there is concern regarding the preservation of national culture, language and traditions from the pressure of globalisation and the fear of appearing different to the faceless herd.

How do you keep the Russian song, the tradition of choral music alive in this current urbanised, consumer-led society, when people are no longer singing and don't feel the need? What is the solution?

Russia has always been singing, the land filled with the sound of the human voice. This deeply rooted singing culture is the origin of all Russian music in all its richness and originality. Gratefully accepting European science, Russia showed that she was not only of equal strength and talents as the great sons of Western Europe, but also made huge waves and advances towards the development of world music: Bortnyansky, Glinka, Mussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninoff, Stravinsky, Prokofiev, Shostakovich.

Our Capella is restored after years of great trials and tribulations, part of the world-wide glory of the Russian art of singing. The current Capella is glory bequeathed. It is the bond of time and the continuity of traditions, its multiplication is our duty and our life.

Irina Roganova (St. Petersburg), honoured worker of culture to the Russian Federation, head of youth and children's choir "Harmony", President of the Association of Conductors for Youth and Children's Choirs in North-West Russia, organiser of the choir competitions "Rainbow", and of a competition for composers "Choir Laboratory. 21st Century", author of methodological articles, repertoire collections; member of the Presidium of WMOs. Email: choirharmony@gmail.com



Translated from the Russian by James Johnston, UK ●

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Conducting Hope

The only men's prison choir in the U.S. to perform outside prison walls



▲ The choir on stage

Inside a nondescript room in Lansing, Kansas, that functions as the facility's chapel, a handful of men sit in old church pews, music in hand. Standing before them, a middle-aged man in a goatee signals for the warm-up pitch played by the accompanist on the electric keyboard. The choir has begun rehearsing. While many choir rehearsals in the world begin like this, this one has a notable difference. The facility is a prison, the Lansing Correctional Facility, and the singers are its prisoners.

So begins *Conducting Hope*, a documentary chronicling the East Hills Singers, founded in 1995 by Elvera Voth, a choral conductor who retired to Kansas from her previous home in Alaska. Voth also helped form the Kansas City-based non-profit organization Arts in Prison with the goal of promoting "responsibility, accountability, and leadership." The East Hills Singers are now directed by Kirk Carson, a former opera singer who also works as a defense information technology contractor. Carson has directed the singers for over four years, and has been profoundly changed by his experiences with the East Hill Singers. "I started out doing this with the thought that I should be giving something back," he says. "That became a silly concept within a couple of weeks because I have gotten so much more back than I will ever be able to give."

Writer Leslie Cockburn says the most difficult thing to do when making a documentary is to make something complex appear simple. In *Conducting Hope*, the complexity lies in making a cohesive ensemble. The inmates are not auditioned, and the membership often fluctuates. Most of the roughly fifty singers have not sung in an ensemble before, and during the concerts they perform with a separate men's community choir, singing together for the first time that very day. They are the only men's prison inmates in the USA to perform outside prison walls.

The complexity of the inmates' lives is also enormous. The singers have been incarcerated for numerous crimes, including drug use and manufacturing, robbery, attempted murder, and sexual offenses. Many come from difficult circumstances and do not take well to criticism. For some, this is their first group activity. Despite their various ages and backgrounds, the singers have one thing in common—they are all scheduled to be released back into society. The skills they learn here are meant to improve their lives and help them succeed when they are released.

Tobin Sparfeld
choral conductor
and teacher



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The story of *Conducting Hope* is that of redemption. During the film we see men along various stages of that journey. We see rapper Essex Sims, an inmate unable to join the choir due to being given a life sentence, who has composed a song combining his rap lyrics and Gregorian chant melody. There is Kurt Irish, an inmate dealing with alcohol and drug addiction, excited to perform his final concert before his release. There are also those on the other side of the redemption saga. David Jones, who had previously sung as an inmate and continues now as a community singer after his release (or, as the East Hill singers refer to it, his "graduation"), runs his own contracting business.

We also see family members and other relatives of the inmates who have all been deeply affected by prison sentences. Some relatives are unable or unwilling to visit the singers in prison, so the four yearly concerts allow the inmates to reconnect with family and allow them to be seen in a positive light, if only for a fleeting moment.

What is most remarkable about the East Hill Singers is how average everything is.

The inmates do not make up a very strong choir. Intonation is an issue, voices stick out, and their musicianship ebbs and wanes during rehearsal much like their focus. The community choir that rehearses separately sounds somewhat better but not much. The ensemble's most difficult selection is the first movement of Randall Thompson's *Testament of Freedom*. Carson says that sometimes "the level is not what I would like to have, but I have to remind myself that the level of the performance is not the underlying reason for being here." Carson himself is average, with a conducting gesture that while clear, is plodding, deliberate, with his arms suspended above his chest and his eyes riveted down at the score.

But what *Conducting Hope* shows its viewers is the transforming power of music, even in average choirs. As the first scenes of the film take place within the prison walls, we soon get to experience life outside the facility through the eyes of the prisoners themselves. They find immense pleasure in the simplest of activities, including their van ride to the church concert hall. Their eyes light up as they eat a regular meal at the church, tasting "real food." And their reactions after the concerts show how much they value the normalcy of these moments.

Conductors understand the challenges Carson faces. With sometimes as many as fifty amateur and beginner singers, his words of advice are those we all know. "Articulate, articulate, articulate." "Folders in your right hand—your other right." The scene recounting the setup of risers and other various last-minute concert logistics is very familiar. But his worldly, pragmatic approach is helping to transform his singers' lives. He features numerous soloists in his performances who gain confidence through their experience. And in between each song on the program is a lengthy introduction, each one spoken by a different inmate. While it may seem mundane, Carson spends a lot of time working with the inmates in preparation for their public speaking before their audiences. "I know for a fact that if they can get up in front of two hundred people and give a two minute narration, when they get out of prison they can go and do a job interview. That'll be easy."

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▲ Kirk Carson conducting the choir



▲ The prison from outside



▲ Vans leaving

Produced and directed by Margie Friedman, this is a documentary the general public can enjoy, but conductors will value it for a special reason. We know that even ordinary, mundane musical experiences have the power to heal mankind. Yet in this film, against the backdrop of lives marred by horrific actions, we see that transformation begin to take hold: singers learning about leadership, teamwork, and personal responsibility. They share their pain, hopes, and values openly. They learn the value of delayed gratification, learn about “grit,” learn about how to think critically and use criticism to improve one’s skills. The concerts are some of the best models of this for the singers. As many inmates have been told countless times of their numerous failures, many see choir membership simply as an opportunity to do something they have not yet failed at. And while they struggle, they do not fail. As the audience members react to the concert, their most common reaction is that the singers “don’t look like prisoners.” And, for a few hours, they are not. As one inmate’s mother says, “When I look at the choir, I don’t just see my son, but honestly, I see a lot of mother’s sons up there. Maybe one of the other guys doesn’t have his mother there, so it makes me feel really good to be part of this.”

As dedicated musicians, we want to know how music can touch more people’s lives and enrich our communities. The East Hill Singers are a success story. The U.S. recidivism rate in prisons is 50%. In East Hill Choir, it is 18%. While happy endings are not universal, *Conducting Hope* is a testament to the power of music. It shows choral conductors we can develop and expand exciting choral music programs to reach more people and further our purpose.

As a former member of the St. Louis Children’s Choirs, **Tobin Sparfeld** has toured all over the world, from as far west as Vancouver, British Columbia, to as far east as Moscow, Russia. Tobin has also sung with Seraphic Fire and the Santa Fe Desert Chorale, in addition to working with choirs of all ages, serving as Assistant Music Director of the Miami Children’s Chorus and as the Associate Director of the St. Louis Children’s Choirs. In addition, he taught at Principia College and was the Director of Choral Activities at Millersville University of Pennsylvania, and he was also the assistant conductor of the Civic Chorale of Greater Miami. Tobin received his DMA in Conducting from the University of Miami in Coral Gables, studying with Jo-Michael Scheibe and Joshua Habermann. He has also received an Artist Teacher Diploma from the CME Institute led by Doreen Rao. He is currently the head of the Music Division at Los Angeles Mission College, which is part of the Los Angeles Community College District. Email: tobin.sparfeld@gmail.com



Edited by Gillian Forlivesi Heywood, Italy-UK ●



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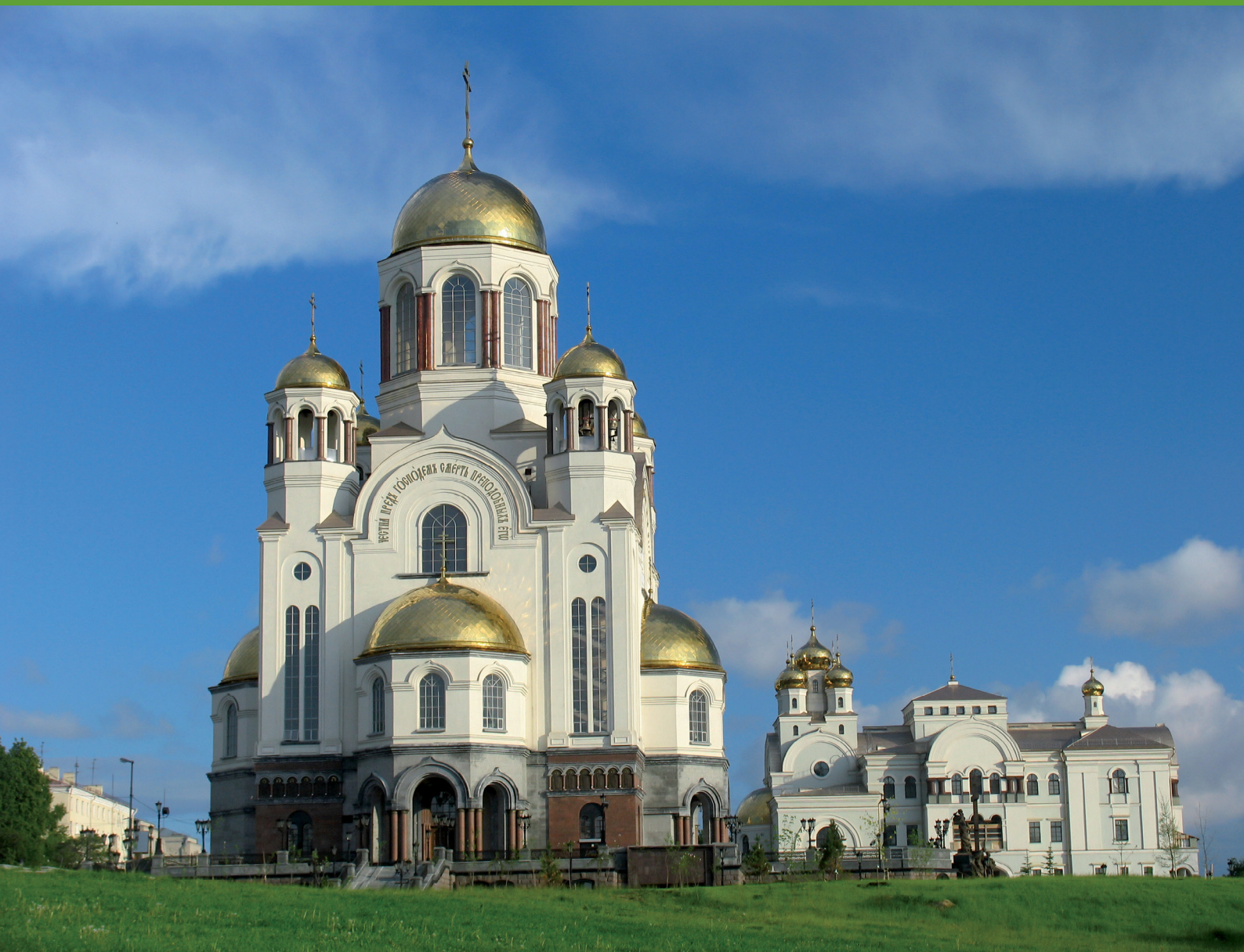
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The Third Ekaterinburg International Choral Festival 'Eurasia Cantat'

27th - 30th April 2015



▲ Ekaterinburg: Cathedral in the Names of all Saints

Yelena Bartnovskaya
choral conductor
and teacher

A large-scale meeting of choral ensembles, the Third International Choral Festival 'Eurasia Cantat', took place in Ekaterinburg, Russia, from the 27th to the 30th of April, 2015. More than seventy choral groups came together during the competition to demonstrate their craft, their talent, and the beauty of choral singing. For many performers, receiving an invitation to the Ekaterinburg festival is a significant and meaningful event in a group's creative journey. Concert halls with the best acoustics in Russia, the fantastically high professional level of the international jury, the interest and attentiveness shown by the city's leaders, the comfortable living conditions – all this has contributed to the expansion of the competition's reach and an increase in the number of groups wishing to participate in the Festival.

Hospitality and friendship: these are the principles which guide the organisers of Ekaterinburg's large-scale choral festival. The organisers will book the best hotels for you, ensure that your group is well fed, provide transport, and organise excursions and visits to the city's museums, places of worship, theatres and parks.

Our city is unique. Ekaterinburg lies in the central part of the Eurasian landmass, on the border of Europe and Asia, and has a population of 1,600,000. It is an administrative, economic, scientific and cultural centre, and many countries have consulates and visa offices here. In 2002, UNESCO named Ekaterinburg as one of twelve ideal world cities.

Ekaterinburg:

- is the third largest transport hub in Russia, after Moscow and St Petersburg, and is the point where six federal highways, seven main railway lines, and a large international airport, Koltsovo, meet;
- is one of Russia's scientific powerhouses, boasting twenty state institutions of higher education, where more than 200,000 students study;
- is one of the Russian cities which will host the 2018 World Cup;
- is one of Russia's principal cultural centres. Its architecture includes many buildings from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries which draw the eyes of both the city's inhabitants and its many tourists, and its merchant estates are a significant part of the city's architectural heritage. The eighteenth-century merchants of Ekaterinburg were the owners of industrial enterprises and of goldfields. The gold rush which hit the Urals at the end of the eighteenth century allowed the richest families, the Zotovs, Rastorguevs and Kharitonovs, to build splendid estate complexes which have survived to this day. Shoulder to shoulder with these stand modern buildings noteworthy for their size and beauty. In the city centre stands the tallest building in all the Urals, Siberia and Central Asia, the Vysotskii business centre, which is 198 metres high, with a viewing platform at 186 metres and a helipad on the roof. Citizens and guests of the capital of the Urals can now get a bird's eye view of this beautiful city.

Ekaterinburg is also one of the great centres of Russian theatre. There are twenty-four theatres in the city, most of which are known not only in Russia but also abroad. The many prizes won by our theatres at the Golden Mask festival, Russia's principal theatrical competition, bear witness to the originality of their performances. Ekaterinburg's Municipal Puppet Theatre is the venue for the most prestigious festival of puppet shows in the world, 'Petrushka the Great'. The International Clown Festival has also taken place in Ekaterinburg for a number of years, and is unique in the history of circuses worldwide.

As far as cathedrals and religious sites are concerned, the Church On the Blood of All Saints Who Shone Forth in the Russian Land, along with the Patriarch's Court, is the pride and joy of our citizens. The church is one of the largest not only in Ekaterinburg, but in the whole of Russia. The Church of the Holy Trinity and the Church of Alexander

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... The Third Ekaterinburg International Choral Festival 'Eurasia Cantat'



▲ Ekaterinburg



▲ Choir 'Flamingo' from Nizhniy Tagil



▲ Choir 'Vдохновение' ("Inspiration") from Kamensk-Uralskiy

Nevsky, situated in the grounds of the Novotikhvinskii nunnery, also stun visitors with their size and beauty. The site most often visited by guests in Ekaterinburg is the Monastery of the Royal Passion-Bearers at Ganina Yama, which has achieved a macabre fame outside of Russia as the place where the remains of the last Russian emperor and his family were brought to rest in 1918.



▲ Children Choir 'Raduga' (Rainbow), conductor Oksana Abakumova

The city takes good care of its more than fifty museums. The wonderfully rich collections of the Kraevedcheskii museum will help you to discover the secrets of the history of the Urals and the Ural mountains. At the Museum of the History of Ekaterinburg, visitors are given the opportunity to discover the history of the city at their own pace.

So there are at least three reasons to visit the city of Ekaterinburg and take part in the Fourth Ekaterinburg International Choral Festival 'Eurasia Cantat' in 2017:

- First of all, it is only here that you can take one step away from Asia and end up in Europe.
- Secondly, this welcoming megalopolis is developing apace and is ready to provide an internationally excellent level of service to visitors. We now have considerable experience in welcoming international guests. If you do not speak Russian, you will have no problems being understood: the city has a number of translators who speak perfect English, French and German. Ekaterinburg has not yet become indifferent to its visitors, and takes particular care of creative groups who are taking part in large-scale cultural projects.
- Thirdly and finally, the competition's organisers make it possible for representatives of European and Asiatic cultures to come together on one stage, which undoubtedly both improves the professional level of the musicians, conductors and singers and clearly displays the friendship and mutual understanding existing between the peoples of the world. During the Ekaterinburg International Choral Festivals, the whole of Ekaterinburg becomes a great festival stage, with concerts, creative meetings, masterclasses and competition rounds taking place in the best concert halls.

In 2015, 1800 singers from sixteen Russian towns took part in the competition. The high point of the festival was the concert for the last night, when the contest for the Grand Prix took place. The public were thrilled by the performances of the six choral ensembles, the category winners. Everyone held their breath as they waited for the jury's decision. Milan Kolena (Slovakia), director and artistic manager of the Apollo choir, director of the Gregorian Chant School and artistic director of various international choral competitions was the chair of the jury, and was joined by Andrea Angelini (Italy), director of the Carla Amori Chamber Choir, artistic director of the Voci nei Chiostri festival and president of AERCO (Emilia Romagna Region Choral Association), Nina Groshikova (Russia), professor and Distinguished Worker of the Arts in the Russian Federation, and Vladimir Zavadskii (Russia), professor and Distinguished Artist of Russia. Together, they announced their decision: the Grand Prix went to the Women's Choir of Krasnoyarsk (Russia). The unique prize, a vase crafted by an artisan from the Urals together with a financial reward of one thousand euros, was sent off to Krasnoyarsk. The Aurora concert choir from Ekaterinburg, the Students' Choir of Novosibirsk, and the choirs Vivat (from the town of Nizhnii Tagil) and Rainbow (from Ekaterinburg) were also rewarded with special prizes.

You can find all the information you need on the festival's official site, www.eurasia-cantat.ru, or contact Anna Tikhonova, our outreach specialist, at info@eurasia-cantat.ru.

Translated from the Russian by Katie Sykes, UK.

Edited by Gillian Forlivesi Heywood, Italy/UK ●



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The idea is really very simple: choirs from all over the world sing *the same song at the same time* for World Peace every third Sunday in February every year.

Or, in the words of the Icelandic entrepreneur, Ýmir Björgvin Arthúrssón, founder of the Reykjavik Peace Festival:

“We offer choirs (free of charge) the beautiful arrangement of the John Lennon song LOVE by the legendary English conductor and choir leader Ben Parry. Choirs will become PEACE MAKERS by taking on the task of learning Ben Parry’s choral arrangement of LOVE and singing the song LOVE at the same time as other choirs all over the world. We kindly ask all our PEACE MAKERS to register on our webpage (www.reykjavikpeacefestival.com) and record their singing of LOVE and share it with us on our YouTube channel for the world to enjoy. For those choirs who are interested in joining us in Iceland we do have a four-day itinerary with a focus on creating a peaceful memory of a lifetime singing together amid the magical natural wonders of Iceland.”

In February 2015, thousands of singers from all over the world sang and became *peace makers* in this first year of the Reykjavik Peace Festival. The moment in Harpa Music Hall, on the 22nd February 2015, when over six hundred Icelandic choir singers joined together to sing the song *Love* for world peace was unforgettable both for the singers and the audience.

But how was the idea of the peace festival born?

Ýmir explains that he and his wife, Hrefna, who have been guiding visitors around Iceland for many years, had a visit in 2012 from a Norwegian choir:

Arthur Björgvin Bollason
writer and journalist

“After spending five days in Iceland’s untouched natural world with the beautiful and happy singing voices of this choir from the small Norwegian town Lofoten, something magical happened. We felt the happiness one choir can give and had a real desire for more singing and more happiness. Linking the singing to peace was an obvious thing to do as Iceland is known as one of the most peaceful nations on Earth, with no military bodies, very little crime and the belief that the world can live together in peace. Soon the idea grew into the wish to truly make the world a better place and to have ALL choirs from all over the world singing together at the same time for world peace.”

Yoko Ono

Yoko Ono is an honorary citizen of Reykjavik. The Imagine Peace Tower, a memorial to John Lennon, has become one of the city’s main symbols. The memorial consists of a tall light column, which is projected from a white stone foundation, with the words “Imagine Peace” carved into it in twenty-four languages. This light column shines up into the sky on certain days during winter. Witnessing the dancing Aurora and the Peace Tower together is truly something out of this world. When Yoko Ono was asked to be a part of Reykjavik Peace Festival she was all in favour of the idea and personally asked for *Love* to become its official song. *Love* is a song which John Lennon composed personally for Yoko Ono. As Yoko Ono herself writes :

“Reykjavik Peace Festival is a beautiful project that has the potential to make the world a better place. Choirs and peace lovers will sing John Lennon’s song LOVE all over the world at the same time for World Peace. I hope with all my heart that we can unite people and nations living in conflict for at least five minutes every year in this peaceful moment”

Ben Parry - A Living Legend In The World Of Choral Music

As Ymir Björgvin started to look for an artistic director for the festival he soon hit upon the name of Ben Parry. Parry was fascinated by the idea and declared himself willing to take part.

“The arrangement for both amateur and professional choirs written by Ben Parry is outstanding,” says Ymir. “It is a gift to choirs all over the world with the hope that the world will hear our voices singing for peace. Ben Parry will also be doing workshops and leading the singing in Harpa Music Hall (<http://harpa.is>) on 21st February 2016.”

Besides being one of Britain’s best known orchestral conductors, Parry has worked with Sir Paul McCartney and conducted many major film soundtracks, such as *Harry Potter* and *The Hunger Games*. Parry was recently appointed the new Director of the National Youth Choirs of Great Britain.

Ymir Björgvin is delighted that Parry was willing to be the artistic director of the festival: “Having such a great “maestro” as Ben Parry shaping and living the idea of the Reykjavik Peace Festival is worth more than words can describe.”

Four Days Of Adventure In Iceland 2016

Choirs are already signing up to come to Iceland in February 2016 (18th - 22nd February) and join in the programme of peace, fun, people, nature and singing. Ymir says that the team of organisers is really looking forward to sharing the natural scenery, city, culture and people with the singing guests from different parts of the world.

Reykjavik Peace Festival is now officially part of the winter calendar of Reykjavik City, following the major success of its first year in 2015. The third week of February will from now on be Reykjavik Peace Festival week and the locals are looking forward to hearing the

➤ Arnbjörg Kristín Konráðsdóttir playing the Gong for a peaceful moment in Harpa Music Hall

◀ Harpa Dögg Friðudóttir - The University of Iceland Choir

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▲ The HARPA concert-hall in Reykjavik

visiting choirs sing in a variety of locations, not least the final choral gathering in Harpa Music Hall.

The song selection for the choirs in Iceland will stay the same for 2016 as for 2015. This is due to the fact that this year's programme produced a general feeling of humble happiness as well as thirty minutes of continuous goose bumps in both the singers and the audience. The choirs singing in Harpa Music Hall will sing as one the following songs:

- *To Be Grateful*, one of local hits from the hippy era :
<http://www.visir.is/section/MEDIA99&fileid=CLP33904>
- *Heyr Himnasmiður*, without a doubt the favourite hymn sung by choirs in Iceland:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e4dT8FJ2GE0>
- *LOVE*, John Lennon's beautiful song :
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HybcK892uBY>

The detailed programme for visiting choirs can be found on the website of the Reykjavik Peace Festival (www.reykjavikpeacefestival.com). Ymir would also like to mention that the festival team is truly thankful for the generous support of both the city of Reykjavik (<http://www.visitreykjavik.is>) and the national airline Icelandair (www.icelandair.com) as well as a group of several legends in the world of music and culture.

"They have all been a driving force in making this wonderful dream come true."

Arthur Björgvin Bollason is an Icelandic author and media journalist. He has written several books on the culture of his home country, both in Icelandic and German. In Iceland he hosted his own television programme for many years. From 1999–2003 he was the director of the Icelandic "Saga Center". Since 2004 Bollason has lived in Germany, working mainly as a PR representative for the Icelandic national airline, Icelandair, in Central Europe. Email: arthur@icelandair.is



Edited by Laura Massey, UK ●

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Gregorian Chant: a Stranger in its Own Home
Fulvio Rampi

The Art of Transcribing Early Polyphonic Music
Luigi Lera

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

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The title that I have chosen to give to my piece is the bitter synthesis of post-conciliar ecclesiastical reasoning - it might be more correct to say “the lack of reasoning” - with regard to Gregorian chant. I have said to myself many times that it would be much easier to talk about Gregorian chant if the *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, the famous Article 116, had been expressed thus: “The Church, while always having appreciated the artistic and expressive qualities of Gregorian chant, does not recognise it as the proper music of the Roman liturgy: therefore, although it is not excluded from the liturgy, it does not hold the most important position.” Anyone else would have rushed to give Gregorian chant a gold medal, appreciating its musical worth as the foundation of Western music; in short, still to this day almost everyone would agree that it is considered to be a major cultural figure of the past and an outstanding witness to the liturgy of the Church, but it is hopelessly surpassed by new liturgical demands to which it may not be able to respond in any fitting manner. In granting it the honours earned by centuries of service, the Church itself should be the one to assign it a new, suitable - though no longer the most important - place in its liturgy. That would be reasonable, simpler, and certainly more comfortable.

Post-conciliar liturgical practice, as we know, has actually largely surpassed the sad fantasy of this fake Article 116, which I have taken the liberty of inventing. The dreadful barrenness of liturgical music is surprising considering the aforementioned hypothetical conciliar statement. Yet it all takes on scandalous connotations – scandalous in the etymological sense - in the light of the *true* conciliar article: “The Church recognises Gregorian chant as the proper music of the Roman liturgy: therefore within the liturgy, all things being equal, it holds the most important position.”

The Church, in the wisdom of its Tradition, has never had any doubt about Gregorian chant: The *Sacrosanctum Concilium* merely sets the seal on an undeniable state of affairs, on a decisive commandment, and thus on a commitment to a renewed understanding that can never fail. A renewed understanding that, precisely because it is based on an immutable commandment, can no longer afford to ask the wrong questions. The question, “Gregorian, yes or no?” is wrong and does not merit an answer, as one is already definitively given by the Church. In the conciliar article which I quoted, the Church essentially reaffirms the obvious: it is worth noting that the emphasis is on the fact that Gregorian chant *belongs* to the Liturgy of the Church, therefore it is valued on a level that transcends purely artistic considerations. The Church is never defined by a work of art, an architectural style, or a musical repertoire. Gregorian chant is no exception (though it may seem that way), given that Gregorian chant is never judged from the artistic point of view, but is intimately associated with *its* real treasure: the Word of God. This alone belongs to it, since the interpretation of the Word belongs to the Church. Thus, when speaking of Gregorian chant, it is not the music which is being called into question, but a fundamental ecclesiastical element: the relationship between the Church and the Word. It is upon this concept, indispensable for the understanding of the complex phenomenon which goes by the name of *Gregorian chant*, that we will base our reflections.

From the conciliar document comes an invitation not to write off, but to *rethink* liturgical music, and above all Gregorian chant. This means finally fostering new ecclesiastical reflections based not only on a safe repository grounded in Tradition, but also on ever new findings taken from various fields of study and research (Gregorian palaeography and semiology, modality, and even patristics, liturgy, theology, art history...) which are making unprecedented contributions, in a serious and non-ideological way, to the body and substance of the vital principle of *Nova et vetera*, which is the life breath of the Tradition of the Church. *Continuity and severance* should not refer to an object (in this case Gregorian chant), but rather to a renewed understanding, in its turn a result of new methods of juxtaposition which came to maturity especially during the span of the last century. In the light of the last Council, it has become necessary to rethink Gregorian chant - and, as such, liturgical music as a whole - in the context of a complementary and non-antithetical relationship between continuity and severance, where the one (continuity) guarantees the validity and underlying principle of the other (severance).

Fulvio Rampi
choral conductor and
teacher

True continuity, since Gregorian chant is ever the true music of the liturgy, requires severance, a stripping away of outgrown practices previously consolidated which, over time, have ended up veiling and obscuring the true nature and expressive force of the music. If by continuity one means the mere restoration of a pre-conciliar practice, or the defence of an understanding and conception now crystallized and impervious to any “provocation” coming from the many academic fields of music research, then severance would follow the same logic, being limited to an equal and opposite force aimed at matching reconsideration with removal. In reality, post-conciliar discussion is substantially quashed and depleted through the juxtaposition - along fatally ideological outlines - of a Gregorian chant that is in any case indisputable and a Gregorian chant that must be eliminated *tout-court*.

This misplaced question has opened the door to numerous disasters and other equally false and no less devastating questions which concern lofty concepts and sacrosanct principles such as, for example, *participatio actuosa*, wretchedly reduced to a bitter joke. It has gradually produced and established a paradoxical situation where even the normal execution of a normal Gregorian antiphon, something that has always been desirable and commendable, is suddenly a danger to the liturgy. From being an *objective* fact of *proper* (that is, official) music, the presence of Gregorian chant in the liturgy has come to be regulated by the most random subjectivity, or rather by the benevolence (or by the aversion) of the presiding celebrant, the liturgist, the priest, or the bishop. What surprises me is the ease, ecclesiastically speaking, with which such grave misunderstandings are generally accepted and indulged. It seems to me that, in the name of the so-called “spirit of the Council,” the issue has simply been disregarded. All this has come from asking the wrong question. To ask the right questions - and, one might say, the necessary ones - concerning Gregorian chant and moreover liturgical music as a whole with all of its new prospects, one must first of all take a step back, reaffirming first and foremost that which in reality has always been taken for granted. In the current situation, to reaffirm the obvious would be a major novelty, but it is the first true step - even if it is distressing and embarrassing - towards recovering countless lost ground. Well then, we must ask ourselves what this lost ground may be; where is the motive that makes Gregorian chant a true “precious pearl?” Beyond mortifying simplifications or various kinds of preconceptions, let us get right back to basics and ask ourselves this most simple and most challenging question: what is Gregorian chant? There are varying steps to answering this question, each of which gradually defines the path to understanding its true identity.

1. The simplest answer lies in what we have said so far:

Gregorian chant is the *true music of the liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church*. We should remember this at all times: the foremost characteristic of Gregorian chant is ecclesiastical in nature, and as such places this repertoire (let us call it

that) in a class of judgement which transcends the mere artistic dimension and points directly to the special *rapprochement* between the Church and the Word of God. The Church has established a unique relationship between Gregorian chant and the Word to the point where, in this relationship, one is able to identify the Church’s own thoughts on the Word, its reflections, its interpretation, its exegesis. In other words the Church is telling us that, when we sing Gregorian chant, we are expressing precisely the Church’s own thoughts on the text. It is telling us this first of all. Not *just* this, but this *first of all*. There is much more, of course, but for now we are assured that we “live and breathe” the Church’s interpretation of the Scripture and are guided by it. This would suffice to define Gregorian chant as a true symbol of the Roman Catholic Church.

2. A second level of response is this: Gregorian chant is - here we will be expanding on what was said before - the *audible version of the interpretation of the Word*. The interpretation of the Word makes sounds, it takes shape as a musical event, it gives *sound to the Word*. We well understand how great a responsibility is now entrusted to sound, essentially conceived as a vehicle of the senses. And now the next step: the interpretation of the Word becomes sound, therefore the Church accepts the sound, “consecrating” it as an integral part of the liturgical event, and renders it a “vehicle of the senses,” or rather something that is much more than simply an “embellishment” of a text. This is a crucial step. The text that is *sung* must coincide with the text that is *explained*; the explanation of the text rests in the precise composition of sound. Gregorian chant thus becomes the explanation of the Word according to the Church’s wish, expressed in sound.
3. An even more comprehensive answer to our initial question would be the following: Gregorian chant is the *liturgical contextualisation of the audible interpretation of the Word*. This means that the Word is not only interpreted and sung, but furthermore it is contextualised; the Word thus becomes a *liturgical event*, placing itself at the heart of the ecclesiastical experience. Take note: the Word is not merely put into the liturgy, *it becomes itself the liturgy*. The “song of the liturgy” is actually the “liturgy itself in song.”

Let us pause for a moment to observe the course which we have briefly followed. We started from the Word, or rather from an order given by the Church; a gift or, if you will, a talent, a talent which must not be buried but must be used, traded, in order, to bear fruit, to develop, and finally, to be returned. This restitution is an audible event that communicates with the senses and that soars on high to become liturgy. The sound itself, the artistic component, is functional; it coincides with this exegetic design. In other words, Gregorian chant transmits the thoughts of the Church on the text and above all demonstrates not only how that same text is to be understood, but how it should be celebrated. The solemn pronouncement of the final *amen* essentially recognises the truth.

4. At this point it would be best to add another observation on our path to understanding, and in response to the initial question: the liturgical nature of Gregorian chant lies in its capacity for being structured in a *precise form and style*. There is no such thing as liturgy without shape; liturgy is the exact opposite of improvisation. The form is not mere appearance; on the contrary, the form reveals the substance, of which it is the sign, the proof, the guarantee. We may even go so far as to say that, in reality, there are no Gregorian chants, but rather *Gregorian forms* belonging to each individual chant. Each form reveals, even amidst the variety of melodic and rhythmic movements, a precise structural nature: even the shape itself - another significant step on our journey - is intimately associated with the *significance of the liturgy*. So for example, if I am referring to an Introit (the processional hymn), I automatically define the moment, form, and style of that passage. In the present case, I would not only be defining the *music* which opens the Eucharistic celebration, I would also be implying that it involves an antiphonal reciting tone (form) in a *semiornato* style (composition style). An Introit is this, it is born as such, it has this form, this style, this mould: it cannot be any different, otherwise it is not an Introit. If I refer to Gradual, Offertory, Responsory, or any other Gregorian form, I am always identifying precise structures, not Gregorian compositions or chants. Allow me, if you will, a small personal digression about the current situation. I ask myself if it is legitimate and what purpose there can be in systematically disregarding this prerequisite, given to us by the ancient monody of liturgical tradition which for centuries has regulated the relationship between musical form and liturgical significance. I am considering, for example, the chants of *Ordinarium Missae*, the Order of the Mass, and in particular *Gloria* and *Credo* which, owing to widespread and inexorable fervour on the part of the congregation, have become something else entirely, that is, responsorial forms. In order to persuade the congregation to sing, with the illusion and grave misconception of promoting active participation, simple (and often banal) refrains are indiscriminately scattered in every part of the celebration; the depressing outcome of this habit is to produce dubious responsorial forms entirely alien to the nature of music in the liturgy, always envisaged differently by the Church.

To return to our reflections, so far we have been able to observe how the text must contain set elements in a prescribed order. This is the root of liturgical music. With Gregorian chant, the Church sets this requirement in stone for all time; however, we must be aware that the Church itself does not say that *only* Gregorian chant can be sung, but that Gregorian chant will show us a *compulsory path to follow*, for all time. We must be aware that to ignore or to disregard in practice an underlying principle is to contradict *de facto* the Church's teaching on liturgical music.

5. As if that were not already enough, at this point we must – so to speak – play our trump card. This is because I am convinced that the most important point of all is yet to be made. The real strength of Gregorian chant, in reality, is to be found elsewhere: that is – as is also true of the Holy Scriptures – in the *broader view*. A Gregorian passage, even if it possesses all the characteristics of style and form mentioned so far, even if it has undergone the complex “reworking” that I have spoken about, will mean little if it is not also part of a greater, much grander project, one which embraces the entire liturgical year and feeds on relationships, allusions and cross-references: in a word, on *formulas*. I cannot sing Gregorian chant without being aware, and taking into consideration, that each piece is a living part of the whole repertoire, and without the relationship existing between the part and the whole, the intrinsic significance of the piece itself would be much diminished. Only in this play of relationships, cross-references and allusions, some more obscure than others, can I grasp, as much in the Great Code of Scripture as in the ancient liturgical-musical traditions, the sense of an episode, an affirmation, a musical fragment, be it more concise or more extended. Gregorian chant lives off these relationships: its cultural roots, which place it in the oral tradition, are revealed by the use of an extraordinary mnemonic technique. Gregorian chant really is the *chant of memory*. Here then we have another definition in response to our original question. The entire repertoire, the whole enormous project, so meticulously thought through and constructed, is committed to memory. This is not the place for an analysis of the historic evolution of Gregorian chant, but it is helpful to remember that the oldest written evidence - dating back to the tenth and eleventh centuries - suggests a limitless repertoire in which memory determines the relationships. Each Gregorian passage is a fragment of the whole, and this fragment becomes functional in the light of an overarching exegetic project. It seems to me that Gregorian chant can be understood in terms of the well-known Pauline image of the human body, in which none of the elements lives for itself alone, but all the elements together create a living whole.

We have leapt ahead a little and glimpsed some of the giddy heights of the formulation of a sacred text. We have looked down from a height, and we have seen that which I personally love to compare to a great cathedral. What can we say about a cathedral when we are standing in front of it? Naturally, it is fundamental to understand the material from which it is constructed, and the techniques employed in the construction, just as it is fundamental to understand the characteristics of the text in Gregorian chant, from its origins to its phonetic qualities, to the pronunciation, based on syllabic value, and so on. After all, what would a cathedral be if it were deprived of its overarching mission, of its symbolic and allusive value? The material, at first crude, then refined, ultimately becomes suitable for a form itself created from

perfect proportions, and supported by the concept of *order*, which is also an indispensable pre-requisite in Gregorian chant. It is that order which creates the form and provides the key to the reading of a work. At a fundamental level, why not think of Creation itself which, as narrated in the Book of Genesis, appears to us as the result of an infinitely wise creation of order?

As I have said, Gregorian chant stands before us in the form of a great cathedral at the centre of our city: that is, liturgical music. That is how it is, *objectively* how it is. The difficulty and complexity of a new initiative in liturgical music cannot justify summary judgements, projects as rash as they are mediocre, which at their very root contradict the history of ecclesiastical culture; a culture which has always been nurtured by the best products of human thought. Gregorian chant has not yet been studied sufficiently in its salient role as “the voice of the Church”. The Church itself, in claiming Gregorian chant as its own, assures us that not all of its possibilities have yet been exhausted, and that from this treasure, which we identify as being the echo of the Word of God, we are called to draw out “things both new and old”. If we are patient and sincerely want to engage with Gregorian chant and understand it, it will teach us the heights that the *Lectio Divina* can reach with the Word. For Gregorian chant is the *musical form of the Church's Lectio Divina*. How else, indeed, could we define the “working” of the sacred text, as we have described it thus far, if not by comparing its phases to the different levels of the *Lectio Divina*, beginning with the *ruminatio* and arriving at such heady contemplative peaks? I wonder how different our everyday reflections on liturgical music would be if they began from a free and earnest comparison with Gregorian chant. Only a novice could think that sacred music is *exclusively* Gregorian chant. But failing to realise this, or taking Gregorian chant out of the picture altogether, is equivalent to removing a cathedral from its city and diocese. And more than that, it is equivalent to taking away the *requirement* for any reflection on initiatives in liturgical music to be a fruitful one. This is because with Gregorian chant, the Church has told us once and for all that the intimate nature of sacred music lies in the transformation of the Word of God into a liturgical event. Every other perspective, however legitimate, is secondary. It is an objective achieved with Gregorian chant and a testimony that stands there before us. Gregorian chant is all this, and it has even been able to influence forms of popular music. The immense capital of so-called popular Gregorian chant is actually the mature fruit of a long, secular journey which has its roots in the intimate ecclesiastical nature of ancient liturgical monody. As the centuries go by, it becomes possible to replace Gregorian chant, but one can never replace the fundamental thought that has determined it. Gregorian chant is certainly the artistic product of its time, and may therefore be supplanted, but this does not mean eradicating the eternal imprint of the Church. As St. Augustine would say, when it comes to God's plan, “Change the design, but not the project.” Any ecclesiastical reflection on liturgical music which fails to address

seriously the question of Gregorian chant amounts to counterfeit money buying counterfeit goods.

Conclusion

But realistically, what can be done? What can be done by a parish, a cathedral, a small schola cantorum or a large choir? What are our possibilities, what are our resources, what are our strengths? We will all return to our communities, where thousands of real problems will be lying in wait for us to manage them, taking up any space we might have had available for possible new reflections. And then, even if we share these observations, how can we make them happen in an ecclesiastical context which is not, save on rare occasions, disposed to consider these kinds of liturgical-musical perspectives? One often gets the distinct impression that where ideology does not dominate, indifference reigns, which to some degree is even worse. What should we do when the outlook is so bleak? Where should we start? What kind of approach should we take?

Well, there is an approach which I think could be valid in any context, independent of possibilities or specific situations, and it concerns *having confidence in dealing with Gregorian chant*. Having confidence in Gregorian chant firstly means trusting in the fact that the Church has looked upon this thing and seen that it is good. A good thing which, as such, is to our advantage, is for our good. The first step is to summon the will to confidently enter through a doorway which has objectively been made very narrow. Yes, Gregorian chant is difficult, and it does not convey emotion easily; it does not promise immediate results at low, low cost. It does not reveal itself at once, and will not confide in just anyone. To those who would like to get to know it, it suggests a deep and meaningful encounter: a “come and see” which we could paraphrase as a “study and understand”. We cannot judge it outside of our current reality: we ourselves are already outside the Church's thinking. But let us not consider it unreachable: for those who want to know it, the means are there, we need only seek them out. Little by little, it will reveal itself, and provoke feelings that have nothing to do with that vague sense of spiritualism or mysticism or rarefied air too often improperly associated with Gregorian chant. It takes time and the results are slow to arrive, owing to an effort which, in the current culture of widespread “suspicion”, is made doubly difficult. That said, why not accept this impossible challenge in the Church? Having confidence in Gregorian chant means wanting to keep it in first place, higher even than in our liturgy: in our hearts. It is the heart that the Church must recognise as a gift, as a grace, as *its treasure* and not as an obstacle. And the viewpoint must change, as much more is asked of the Church than of the cultural world. I can personally testify that Gregorian chant is highly regarded in conservatoires and musical circles: it is recognised as the musical language which gave rise to Western musical culture. Gregorian chant had no trouble “asserting itself” in the musical world, a sign that even from this exquisitely artistic point of view - which we have not even considered in this reflection - true chant from the Roman

liturgy never experienced inferiority complexes and knew instinctively how to command respect. But, I repeat - and this is precisely the real problem - much more is expected of the Church today. The Church cannot hide Gregorian chant, but neither can it appreciate Gregorian chant only for that which it has represented in the past: it is called on to love this form of music. To love it today means to rediscover its true motivations in order to maintain ownership of it. It means to wonder and joyfully give thanks for such authentic beauty, to recognise it once again as the ideal form of faith and to return it, because of this, to the centre of the holy liturgy, summit and source of a life lived in Christ.

I began this reflection citing an article of the Church's teaching which, fortunately, does not exist. I would like to conclude in the same way, but with an important difference. From an imaginary document which, although it captures a real situation, we would never want to have exist in reality, I would like to suggest another one which, by contrast, does not capture the current situation but is one that we would like to read. Here it is: "Every church, cathedral, basilica or shrine is required to establish a *schola gregoriana*, be it small in numbers, of male or female voices, capable of performing in Gregorian chant the required parts of at least the major festivals and celebrations of the liturgical year. The direction of the *schola gregoriana* should be entrusted only to a person who has been awarded a title specific to the field of Gregorian chant, *which the most recent studies have restored to its original integrity and purity*."

This last phrase is not mine, but copied from the *motu proprio* of Pius X (1903). More than a century later, we can talk about a new *ablatio* which, throughout the entire twentieth century, continued to give new integrity and new purity to Gregorian chant. The good thing about this is that the church finally realised what it had done. With Pius X's *motu proprio* a new path and a new time were set in stone. Now, for those occupying the highest levels of the Church, as well as for the rest of us, it is time for action.

A graduate of organ and organ composition with Luigi Molino, **Fulvio Rampi** went on to complete a Masters and Doctorate in Gregorian chant at the Pontificio Istituto di Musica Sacra in Milan under the supervision of Luigi Agustoni. He followed Agustoni as head of Gregorian chant at the aforementioned Pontificio Istituto, and has published a number of works. In 1985, he founded the "Cantori Gregoriani" (Gregorian Singers), a professional ensemble of male voices, of which he remains the director. With this group he has been extremely active in recording (producing a discography of more than 20 CDs), teaching and performing, both in Italy and overseas. From 1998 to 2010 he was the director of the Cappella Musicale of Cremona Cathedral. In 2010 he formed the "Coro Sicardo di Cremona" Choir, a polyphonic ensemble with which he regularly conducts liturgical services in the Church of Sant'Abbondio in Cremona, where he is also the resident organist. He is currently the head of Pre-Polyphony at the Giuseppe Verdi Conservatoire of Music in Turin.

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•The Art of Transcribing Early Polyphonic Music

We have been asking ourselves for more than twenty years why our choral practice, despite being lively and most dedicated, has not been able to produce some sort of “resurrection” of early polyphony. There are of course many different reasons behind it. In this article, we will limit ourselves to exploring just one aspect: the extent to which the transcriptions that we are called upon to work with daily are to blame.

Why transcribe early music? Essentially, there is only one valid reason: so as to have the complete composition in front of you. Renaissance polyphony was always written and performed directly in individual parts, whether using printed sources or liturgical manuscripts. Thanks to transcription, before even beginning a piece, we know the chords used by the composer, how the parts have been arranged and how imitations have been structured. But beware, these requirements do not affect the standard chorister; they relate entirely to the work of the conductor. They may be of interest to any one of us who wishes to better understand the beauty of this music coming from a distant past, but it is not crucial for the simple purposes of keeping to time or perhaps finishing together.

Singers do not need to see the full score, any more than those performing a quartet, just as section violinists do not need to have the whole symphony in front of them. Many of us have most certainly sung the chorus of *Nabucco* or *La Traviata* reading individual parts without any problem at all. The only one who really needs a transcription is the conductor; and to be really precise, he only needs it when studying the piece. In fact, there is a whole series of examples of modern interpretational abuse, particularly with regard to dynamics and changes in tempo, which have been brought about directly by conductors having all of the parts in front of them. It may well be that the much-desired resurrection of authentic Renaissance practice indeed needs to be brought about by courageous efforts to put together a madrigal or a motet working exclusively from individual parts.

Beyond this first consideration, all other reasons in support of transcribing Renaissance music are simply not valid.

It may be thought that transcription is needed in order to obtain a clear and ordered graphical representation of the score: in some respects, this justification is plausible, even though sixteenth-century writing is among the most accurate and legible of all those from past centuries. In times gone by, transcription was used to effect a transposition, that is to make the tessitura suitable for the female vocal range. We shall refrain from commenting on this task in itself, because it sounds somewhat reasonable given the current state of choral practice. However, a healthy need has developed among the musicians to have the modal arrangement of the pieces, as it was put together by the composer, in front of them. Our knowledge of the composition techniques and chord sequences of the Renaissance is already poor enough, without needing to confuse it further with any anachronistic transposition. Modern music editors no longer consider it necessary to work on the score for the simple purpose of adjusting the pitch at the time of performing, just as no director would dream of asking them to do so.

It is said that transcription serves the purpose of eliminating the problem of music written in ancient clefs, and this is very true. On the other hand, however, there are those who uphold that only notation using C clefs allows polyphony to be read correctly. Both stances have their merits, even though at present it seems to be the more hard-line ideas having to make the greater concessions. As regards note reading, the modern clefs of G and (for tenors) G an octave down transmit, to all intents and purposes, the ancient clefs correctly. From this point of view, the C clefs were nothing but an unnecessary burden even in the time of Palestrina. It is, however, also true that the ancient clefs are essential for other purposes of no lesser importance: first and foremost for mode analysis according to the H. S. Powers method, a technique which directors and music scholars should master to perfection, and secondly for those who wish to read notes according to the medieval solmisation system. For the first of these purposes, the brief sample bar that is usually placed at the start of the score is more than enough; for the second, on the contrary, there are no real alternatives. For a variety of reasons, the complex mechanism of Renaissance mutation is not applicable to the modern G clef. He who claims so is unnecessarily deluding himself: in the best case scenario, he will not even succeed in grasping the complexity of the problems with which he is faced. Personally, I do not believe that a hexachordal reading involves the magical conquests it would seem to; but I am also convinced that there are other more hidden reasons to encourage its practice. It is always risky speculating about the future, but it is likely that when we succeed, by other means, in pinning down the concrete rules of Renaissance composition, our grandchildren will rediscover all the benefits of referring to the sounds in the same way as the polyphonic composers once did.

Luigi Lera

teacher and conductor

If the choice of clefs really does not impact on the performance, many other graphic details do so very dramatically. Over a century of modern choral practice applied to the polyphonic repertory has made us quite certain of one important concept: the additional marks added by a reviser – legato, staccato, accents, dynamics and changes in tempo – do not help in any way to clarify the writer's idea. On the contrary, they unfailingly lead to quite the opposite effect: they impose on the original performance practice, like a layer of transparent varnish, a whole series of modes of expression that belong to a more modern context. These additions end up distancing the performance of the piece from the original result. The notation of a polyphonic piece must contain only what was written, or what could have been written, by the composer; the sun has well and truly set on the days of Malipiero's editions. Modern singers have the right to insist that the conductor, or the figure in charge of performing the piece, make an effort to transcribe the piece from scratch rather than subject them to a score that is spoiled by deliberate pseudo-interpretative markings.

The prerequisites for a good transcription, nonetheless, go well beyond the simple recommendation of not adding anything extra. What is then asked of those who draw up the score for polyphony? Above all, that all the notes are in place – but even satisfying this basic need is not as easy as it may seem. Renaissance writing concedes large margins of discretion even when reading the sounds. First, there is the issue of implied accidentals, those that should be placed above the note in a well-made edition; we know that some particular mechanisms of polyphonic technique, those related to the tritone or those typical of the cadence, imposed accidentals for some sounds without its being necessary to have this explicitly indicated in the parts. The reviser, from this point onwards, must have sound knowledge of all the harmonic conventions in use in the composer's time. It may be said that, in this field, there are no absolute certainties, especially considering that even the Renaissance sources do not seem to be in complete agreement in this regard; nevertheless, the concreteness of the diametrically opposing viewpoint should be stressed. The general criteria for correctly positioning accidentals not only exist, but also leave very little room for personal interpretation. The days when it was thought that you could give modal character to a piece simply by flattening or lowering the leading-note that comes from a suspension are also over. The rules for placing implied accidentals are clearly defined and are also not difficult to understand – they just need to be taught correctly.

Another aspect the modern editor is called upon to address in making Renaissance writing truly legible is the placing of the text. Current printing techniques allow for a level of precision totally absent from sixteenth-century sources, when the text was merely positioned at the start of the musical phrase without any separation or spacing; indeed, a great deal of sacred music – both in manuscript and printed form – did no more than setting a title, leaving all the noted staves blank. The modern chorister, on the other hand, needs to be assisted syllable by syllable in the delicate task of matching the text with the notes. Sixteenth-century polyphony is too far from our musical culture to be able to rely, as

was the case at the time, on a series of unspoken conventions. In this matter, we are still very far from having matured an informed approach: the conductor very seldom questions the positioning of the text as found in the score, just as it is true to say that rarely do his studies leave room for specific training on this matter.

Any one of us can easily verify how serious are the consequences of this state of affairs. If, for example, it is true that *Kyrie eleison* can range from four to seven syllables or that *in gloria Dei Patris* can range from six to eight, just think of how many times the melisma of the penultimate syllable has been sung in the wrong place, perhaps compromising the clarity and comprehensibility of an entire episode. The fundamental aspect for placing the text in Renaissance music is that the syllabication adapts naturally to the polyphonic phrasing: long syllables on long notes, short syllables on short notes, melismas on accented syllables, correct pronunciation of diphthongs and so on. Unfortunately, today, the only guarantee of having a good score is still the personal, or rather professional, skill of the transcriber.

None of these initial points actually carry sufficient weight to be accused of having strangled the rebirth of Renaissance polyphonic tradition single-handedly. Scores, keys, accidentals and the placing of texts are all important issues, but they make up no more than a sort of long introduction to our subject. In the next paragraphs we will explore important issues such as tempo, beats and values – we cannot stress enough how crucial these aspects are. It is one thing to place a syllable incorrectly or to add a sharp or a flat without good reason, but it is something quite different to completely misunderstand the tempo or the dynamics of an entire piece. It is said that transcribing polyphony is needed to “make understandable to the modern reader those aspects of notation from the past that today would prove to be too obscure for those who do not have a specific background in palaeography”. How valid is this reasoning?

Our amateur choristers often do not shy away even from the St Gallen neumes of Gregorian chants or the obscurity of some twentieth-century writing. Is Renaissance notation really so different from ours as to justify transliteration into another system? Well, no, or at least not as regards its most basic mechanisms; most probably more than ninety per cent of the musical masterpieces from the sixteenth century are perfectly accessible to those who can read modern writing. There are of course differences, but the more substantial ones are not by any means difficult to take in because they all derive from one main source. Let us take a look at what that is.

The history of western music records, quite unambiguously, something happening exclusively to notation: the constant shifting of values in time. It can be said that this is something that simply happens and that's that; there is no real reason for it, even though there are various different arguments which attempt to justify it in various historical contexts. It is a fundamental issue, so much so that any discussion about transcription should begin precisely from here.

It simply consists in this: over time the reference values used in the notation are gradually reduced. If one century thinks in terms *longe* and *breves*, the next thinks in terms of *breves* and *semibreves*;

what comes next will be *semibreves* and *minims* and later still *minims* and *crotchets*. Pay close attention: all these changes concern only how the music is written, while it has no effect at all on the tempo. It could be said that every generation's younger players are keen to cram their forebears' music with smaller and smaller figures; with the passing of the decades these same composers start to age and the way they think of music becomes more austere. Getting old, they themselves are transformed into the defenders of the system in the face of the excesses of their grandchildren. The outcome of these two opposing and conflicting tendencies is precisely a slow shift towards smaller figures.

We could compare the phenomenon of figure shifting to the fairly constant increase in inflation, a similar but opposite mechanism that occurs regularly in the field of economics: it would not make sense to talk about a luxury car that costs 500 dollars, unless we point out that we are referring to the year 1925. The case of music is even easier, because no composer would normally use more than four or five different values within the same piece: the fact that Machaut uses breves in the same way that Palestrina uses semibreves, Monteverdi minims and Schumann crotchets should not cause problems to those who read their scores.

Nineteenth-century teaching knew nothing of this phenomenon; one cannot even blame the syllabus since it included only a rudimentary notion of all music prior to Classicism. Our school system has ended up rotating around only three binary tempos: two-two, two-four and two-eight. This is because these are the only binary measures that a musician of the late nineteenth century could realistically meet within the classical and Romantic repertoire. Everything else, it was said, is not really needed by the musician; and, if it were necessary, it could be easily transcribed. This naive and simplistic solution, used for more than a century, has made our generation stupid and lazy: indeed, using any base system other than the one they taught us at school should not cause any problems. Finding three crotchets or three minims or three quavers within a bar should not be any different from finding three longes or three breves or three semibreves: I have experienced this over many years, but anyone can test it for themselves by back-transcribing any solfeggio exercise. I never change the figures when I put polyphony into a musical score, even if I am dealing with a thirteenth-century motet: I believe that a true rebirth of Renaissance music cannot occur until we change our narrow minds. We have to convince ourselves that changing the figures of a polyphonic composition *distances* the original performance in exactly the same way as the added expressive dynamics and agogics: it is an operation that hides the composer's idea, as under a coat of clear varnish, under an inevitably different rhythmic concept.

We must face at this point an important objection: if indeed the speed of the piece does not depend on the figures in use, it should be ever more evident that changing the figures is as irrelevant as changing the clefs or even changing the key. This argument has some semblance of stability, but only a semblance: for those who really *read* the figures, and each of us possesses a

period or a genre or a style in which we feel particularly at ease, each system has a very precise connotation and does not sound at all the same if it is changed into different figures. The fact is, however, that reducing the figures is not only not a solution, but it is above all a conceptually wrong solution. We reduce the figures to make the performer play faster: the truth is that halving the figures is a solution that operates in a diametrically opposite direction compared to the logic of mensural notation itself. Every composer usually has a choice, within their rhythmic and expressive resources, between more than one tempo: this happens precisely because of the slowness with which figures change. For all musicians there are metric indications that belong to the classical and traditional spheres, more normal tempos and measures that let the imagination run wild. History shows that, keeping the same setting of the rhythm, composers chose the larger figures when they wanted to induce the players to go faster and smaller figures when they wanted them to go slower. In other words, they acted according to a logic that is exactly the opposite of that which leads to halving.

Nineteenth-century teaching made us blind as regards this fundamental truth: reduced figures inevitably lead to fatally choosing less smooth tempos. What would motorists say if someone told them to *lower* the gear on the motorway to go faster? Basically, the reasoning goes, when travelling in second gear the engine is revved up so much that it seems like a Ferrari!

Why would Beethoven write the Scherzo of the Ninth Symphony in three-four time if it was really equivalent to twelve-eight (and nine-eight) time? Why would Schumann have used the same solution in the Finale of his Piano Concerto, a piece with which many conductors still make fools of themselves today?

Why does the Viennese Waltz insist on being in "one in a bar three-four time" rather than in a more comfortable six-eight time? Simply because smaller figures, even when they would have considerably reduced the number of bar lines, invariably led performers to play too slowly. The only way to encourage them to go faster was to use larger symbols. (see fig. 1 next page)

As if the wretched practice of reducing figures were not enough, the definition of the rhythm is affected by a second delicate question, which concerns the arrangement of the bar lines. We continue to repeat that any added sign distances the piece from how it was originally performed: how is it then possible that we find confining the fluidity of Renaissance polyphonic phrasing into a veritable cage of recurrent bar lines? The bar dates back to the seventeenth century. It became necessary during the Baroque period because it conveys meanings that are only justified by that style. It serves the purpose of differentiating the accents that articulate the tempo, dividing them into strong and weak and consequently distributing the various harmonic functions within the musical period: none of this is feasible for Renaissance music, where the time count proceeds in absolutely undifferentiated units. We would like to say that those who deal with early music have by now a certain awareness of this issue; however, the way in which the transcribers seek to meet these new requirements is still totally unsatisfactory. In polyphonic arrangements, you often



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Figure 1 – Beethoven in difficulties: unorthodox, but he gets the message across.

find a sort of subtle premise where the editor has distanced himself from the measures that he himself has used, trying to push all the responsibility for any poor outcome onto the singers; it clearly states that the bars had been added only to aid the singers and that it really must not influence the rhythm of the piece. Aiding the singers: could this be a good justification in support of all the transcriptions into bars? It is also true that, reading between the lines, we have been forced to open the door to many other compromises; let's try to look at the issue more closely.

Adding bar lines perhaps helps the singers too much: normal polyphonic scores never contain more than an average of four figures between one bar line and another. A very low average compared to all other *living* music repertoires, whether Baroque, Classical, or Romantic. It is said that this is inevitable because, while a professional – any third-year student – can read the *Inventions* by Bach with twelve notes per bar, an amateur chorister would have some difficulty with such long bars. But is it really true that the members of our amateur choirs have such a low skill level? Their repertoire can easily include Bach's *Masses*, Vivaldi's *Gloria*, Mozart's *Vespers* and lots of other music that is divided into very complex bars. Of course not: only with early polyphony

– notoriously *dead* music – are the amateur choirs and their conductors literally insulted by having four figures per bar.

The choice to put a cage around the polyphonic repertoire in bars of two *single times* is actually the fruit of a much deeper motivation. So deep that the philologist himself, if he is really aware of it, refuses to acknowledge it; and it is a reason that can never be blamed on the performers, because it is, by definition, to do with music theory. The fact is that by having duple time bars, the modern philologist believes, or would it be better to say *deludes himself*, that he is conforming his transcription to the statements of sixteenth-century music theory.

The question is now very specific, but not enough to close the door in the face of those who have only a smattering of music theory. Our research must start, once again, from the phenomenon of changing figures over time. Sixteenth-century theorists were never completely aware of the existence of this constant shift, and least of all of its importance: as often happens to those who focus too much on purely academic matters, they were simply a few decades behind.

This means that at the time in which Verdelot and Janequin wrote music using semibreves, theorists were still talking about breves, and in the days when Marenzio and Wert were using minims, the theorists were still talking about semibreves. Renaissance musical theory, in other words, was never really *contemporary* to the compositions it dealt with. On this decisive point, the modern philologist absolutely needs to know what to do: only his ability to read the harmonic and contrapuntal weave can help him distance himself from the theoretical statements. If he does not have the courage to do this, he will end up giving the entire transcription double the value of that intended by the composer. If the piece is set up in semibreves, he will place a bar line after each breve; if the piece is set up in minims, he will put a bar line after each semibreve. At best, its layout will cause the performer to believe that Renaissance music makes use of some kind of binary movement: this is a concept which is in no way suitable for the style of the era. Renaissance music thrives on single time, at most liable to a binary *subdivision*; the falsely applied binary *division* referred to the upper value can only horribly cage the changeable vitality of the phrasing to the point of making it completely unrecognisable.

Our argument now rests upon the full complement of common figurations that pass themselves off as true and appropriate rhythm marks for polyphonic compositions: dotted notes, suspensions, cadence markings and so on. Those who will feel this does not constitute substantial proof need only uncover the equally many instances in the works of the early Renaissance, the period in which the theorists speak of cut common time *alla breve*: within the *chanson* and the *frottola*, which adopt that time signature, it is not uncommon to come across sections containing an odd number of semibreves.

This is easily established by observing the last beat of the transcriptions, in which the final note sometimes lands on the downbeat and sometimes seems to land on the upbeat; in these pieces, which modern editors obstinately pigeonhole as *alla breve*,

the only legitimate reference point can be nothing other than the semibreve. Further, take note that in many of these cases the editor may seek to disguise the evidence, by placing in some well-concealed location a single bar containing three semibreves to ensure that everything tallies when we reach the concluding cadence.

Further powerful evidence, originating from the following decade, can be found in the madrigals of Verdelot and Arcadelt. It is well known that the aesthetic conventions of the madrigal adopted the requirement that the music must always be different in every episode, that is in every phrase of the text: however, this was not the case with the so-called proto-madrigal, in which entire phrases might easily be repeated for a different part of the text. In the music of both of these authors it is not unusual to come across sections repeated note by note, clearly identical with regard to musical substance, for which the modern bar lines fall in different places: the notes which the first time landed on the first beat of the bar land on the second beat when repeated, and those which the first time around landed second end up in the repetition landing on the first.

The essence of these observations ought to be clear: even in these cases bar lines drawn *alla breve* illegitimately group together two semibreves which actually have the same effect on the metre of the rhythm. This results in an absurd transcription, which inevitably contradicts itself when one seeks to make sense of the contrapuntal arc; a section which will sound still more illogical the harder the conductor tries to faithfully adopt a gestural pattern based on the beat (see figure 2).

Non ch'io non voglio mai

Fig. 2 – Ambiguity in Arcadelt: which is correct?

The picture would be incomplete without mentioning the last bad habit of transcribers, that of modifying the time signature to accommodate the durations that they themselves have modified and the bar lines that they themselves have positioned. Following this path it is truly impossible to imagine an authentic resurrection of the entire musical tradition of a full century. Most of the defects found in modern transcriptions lie solely in the fact that the editors reserve for themselves the right to interfere on a whim with time signatures, note values and the beat: modifying every

step of the way the relationship between these three variables means in the end that when the performance is unsatisfactory, no one knows which of the three parameters to blame for it. Transcribing the *Déploration sur la mort de Ockeghem* (Josquin's famous motet written in the final years of the fifteenth century), Smijers maintained the original time signature and figures but inserted a series of bars so close together as to actually suggest a performance *alla minima*: during a famous final of the 'Guido d'Arezzo International Polyphonic Contest' in the early nineteen-eighties, this piece which should take not much more than two minutes was stretched out to the incredible total of nearly twenty minutes. Not that today, more than two decades later, professional recordings do any better: none of them manages to be less than six minutes. In this instance, we are told that the fault lies in the note durations which were not adequately reduced: rather it lies in the patchy education of an entire generation of performers who do not possess even the elementary ability to count *alla breve*.

What of the madrigals of Marenzio? These were written much later, in the 1590s, with the uncut common time symbol, and therefore they are set up in minims; yet in modern editions these are frequently transcribed in bars of a semibreve while leaving unchanged the time signature, so that their meter ends up tragically turning into a very up-to-date four-four time. Avoid creating even the illusion of a duple measure? And how! In this instance the unwary conductor risks falling into the trap of a fictitious quadruple meter. Each one of us, in our personal library of recordings-that-should-never-have-been-made, certainly possesses many examples that illustrate the consequences of this wretched coincidence (see figures 3 and 4).

Solo e pensoso

Figure 3 – Marenzio's trap

22. La déploration de Johan. Okeghem.
A cinq.

Josquin des Prés.

Figure 4 – Setting a record for Josquin: one note per beat (transcribed by Smijers)

There is one last consideration, one which is generally disregarded, which I consider decisive in making a good transcription. It is its general and overall layout: how many notes should go on a single line, where to place the D.S., how to organize page layout. I have seen too many editions that might have suggested interesting solutions but were unusable because of their unsuitable format, mile-long spacing between notes, or asymmetric layouts of parallel phrases. Here too there are no guarantees, and the quality of the finished product depends entirely on the skill of the editor; but those who undertake the training of a conductor should seek to inculcate at least a minimum of awareness of these very delicate problems. It is frequently upon mistaken details such as these that the ultimate success or failure of a transcription depends.

It is already time to draw our conclusions and we have not yet spoken of the positive aspects. So far in this work we have limited ourselves to the *pars destruens* regarding the bad habits we inherited from the past: we have taken up all of our space distancing ourselves from almost all of the proposed solutions coming from the two centuries in which reviving early polyphony was unsuccessfully attempted. There has not been enough time to emphasise that, really, *transcription is beautiful*: perhaps because even today the art of transcription has not yet begun to show all of its most surprising potential. We should come to see transcription as a wonderful opportunity to be exploited to the full: a good edition can shed light on the formal structure of an entire piece, it can breathe new life into the phrasing or bring a greater understanding of the various facets of the composition; it can even communicate original and exciting interpretative suggestions to the performer.

Without doubt, the coming decades will provide us with both time to return to these discussions and material to discuss. For the time being we need to do our part, and our part is to understand this fundamental concept: it is useless to look for a shortcut if the shortcut turns out to be more arduous and impassable than the main road. Explaining to singers and conductors the meanings of the symbols used in mensural notation within their original contexts is a process so much simpler and easier than attempting to reconstruct a theory of performance guided only by some improbable graphic transliteration. And it is above all the only process by which we can legitimately expect artistically valid and lasting results. The current state of our transcriptions much too often brings about polyphonic performances that are dismal and asphyxiating; it comes as no surprise to learn that for singers – and for their audiences – a villanelle by Banchieri or a balletto by Gastoldi are still today much more gratifying than an absolute masterpiece such as a motet by Palestrina or a madrigal by De Rore. We must start expecting our teachers to show us how to read the written music of past centuries, not only at school, but also at the moment of actual performance.

Bear in mind that this wider issue is applicable not only to early polyphonic music: the need to make out the meaning hidden within the notation applies to all periods of the history of music.

When Handel or Corelli write *Largo* or *Grave* and then expand the note values, it is not the same as when they conserve or reduce them. On the contrary, by simply bringing up this matter in this way our thinking is already pointing in the wrong direction: since music first began to be written, it is the notes which should speak first. The indications of tempo can at best further clarify what the notes have already said. In my personal library of recordings – that-should-never-have-been-made the examples are not all from the Renaissance, and they contain performances by some of the most highly regarded names on the international scene: even in the best families one may study for a lifetime bowing techniques or fingering, extracting them with loving care from the original sources, and then slip up wretchedly when it comes to deciphering the movement of an *Andante*. The resurrection of all of the music of the past will be a dream forever unfulfilled until the issues touched upon here are included, with a much higher profile than is the case today, in the subjects studied by the future generations of performers.

Luigi Lera has a Degree in Humanities and a Diploma in Pianoforte and Choral Music. He holds the Chair of Music History at Udine Conservatory of Music. He has published works on mediaeval teaching methods, on polyphony from its origins and on contrapuntal technique. He has edited music by Jacques Arcadelt, Giovanni Maria Asola and Andrea Gabrieli, and is the author of a manual of Gregorian Chant, a volume dealing with Musical Acoustics (in collaboration with the physicist Vincenzo Schettini) and a teaching method for Harmony and Counterpoint. He has recorded mediaeval liturgical music, fourteenth-century Italian polyphony, and Renaissance madrigals. Since 2012 he has been running the website www.tmpol.it devoted to the polyphonic repertoire: here you can find the transcriptions and the audio tracks of over two hundred compositions from various periods and in various styles, realised with the use of specific criteria according to the differing characteristics of different periods in history. Email: luigilera@libero.it



Translated from the Italian by Mirella Biagi, Italy/UK; Hayley Smith, Italy/UK; Anthony Litchfield, USA
Edited by Mirella Biagi and Gillian Forlivesi Heywood, Italy/UK

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In the last edition of ICB, in the article about ChoralPractice of the ICB Volume XXXIV, Number 2 - 2nd Quarter 2015, one could get the impression that I claim to be the founder of "Alle kan synge-koret" (The Everyone Can Sing Choir). This is not the case, and it was not the intention from either my or ChoralPractice's behalf to make it seem that way. The project of "Alle kan synge" was created and founded by renowned singer and conductor Mr Carl Høget in Oslo in 2002. This obscurity is entirely the fault of the author of the article, and not of ICB. Mikael Rönnberg



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After Eric: New American Composers after 1980 .

(part two)

This is the second article in a two-part series about American composers born after 1980. For many years, Eric Whitacre, along with Morten Lauridsen, dominated the landscape of choral composition in the United States. In recent years, other composers have emerged and their thoughts and ideas have found a foothold. Three composers were featured in the first article: Ted Hearne (b. 1982), Jake Runestad (b. 1986), and Nico Muhly (b. 1981).

For this article, I crowd sourced choral conductors from ChoralNet, Facebook, music publishers, and other creators of music. My goal was to identify outstanding young composers and it was not an easy task. Several friends took issue with my arbitrary birth date of 1980; others decided that my first batch of composers was not representative of women and didn't identify composers of different ethnic origins. There were many composers that fit my criteria of "born in 1980 or later," but I was not able to include them all.

In the end, I identified four composers to discuss in this article: Zachary Wadsworth (b. 1983), Michael Gilbertson (b. 1987), Dominick DiOrio (b. 1984), and Sydney Guillaume (b. 1982). They are presented here in no particular order.

www.zacharywadsworth.com

Zachary Wadsworth (b. 1983)



www.zacharywadsworth.com

Zachary Wadsworth is an innovative composer for choir and a new faculty member at Williams College, a private liberal arts college in Williamstown, Massachusetts. Composer James MacMillan was one of the first to bring attention to Wadsworth's choral music through his service as the Final Adjudicator of the King James Bible Composition Awards, a competition that was created to help celebrate the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible. This recognition brought significant attention to Wadsworth's music; it eventually resulted in a commission from Choir & Organ magazine and an ongoing relationship with Novello. Wadsworth's winning composition, *Out of the south cometh the whirlwind*, has been described as a "highly imaginative and compelling addition to the choir and organ repertoire and it would serve as an unusually dramatic and arresting anthem at Evensong."

Wadsworth names Arvo Pärt and Luciano Berio as significant influences in his choral style but names his teacher Steven Stucky as the greatest influence on his choral music. In particular, he admires Stucky's ability to bring the same elegance and technical wizardry to his choral music as he does to his chamber and orchestra works.

Wadsworth believes that "the best choral works feel like tidy little universes, in which text and music support a central, resonant emotional message." In creating these worlds of sound, he often employs the compositional devices and forms of previous centuries. His compositional dialect and harmonic language, however, is completely modern.

Two works demonstrate the compositional prowess of Wadsworth and this fusing of new and old: *Beati Quorum Remissae* (Alliance Music Publishing, AMP0729) and *Spring is Here* (available at composer's website).

In *Beati Quorum Remissae*, Wadsworth uses both text and music to support a central emotional message of penitence and forgiveness. In it, the composer reworks the order of the verses of Psalm 32. Instead of beginning with verses of praise, as the psalmist did, Wadsworth starts with lament and progresses towards deliverance. To aid in this movement, the composer utilizes a small second choir that offers hope and

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Philip Copeland
choral conductor
and teacher

encouragement to the larger choir singing the words of despair.

This double-choir work resembles Benjamin Britten's *Hymn to the Virgin* with its smaller second choir that sings only in Latin. Britten's use of the double-choir, however, was to provide commentary on the English text. Wadsworth uses the second choir's Latin text to influence the speaking voice of the first choir; it functions as a dramatic aid to encourage hope.

Wadsworth captures the plaintive feeling of the psalm with perfect fourths and occasional dissonance. Both techniques are effective, both in general mood and specific word painting; they also clearly suggest the influence of Arvo Pärt. See m. 1-5 (Example 1).

The composer beautifully illustrates the climax of the work, using the full range and sonorous potential of the choir in painting the text "shouts of deliverance," shown here in Example 2.

Wadsworth fuses old and new again with his *Spring is Here*. In this composition, he employs the Renaissance madrigal form to set a text by Duncan Campbell Scott (1864-1957) entitled "Madrigal." In this work, the composer recalls many traditional features of the madrigal form in this 21st-century reincarnation, including strophic form, text painting, nonsense syllables, a lighthearted text, syllabic text setting, and a mostly major-key tonality.

The composer easily brings the Renaissance compositional form into the twenty-first century. The first four measures demonstrate the variety of compositional devices used to set the Scott poem: a melody that features disjunctive motion, mixed meter, and a succession of varying time signatures. Although complex, it is very clean writing; the vertical harmonies unfold logically from the leaping melody and the text falls naturally into the supplied rhythm. (Example 3)

The long-cherished device of text painting makes frequent appearances in this composition, especially with the use of *portamento* sliding on the words "drowsy town," followed by what appears to be a clock chiming the hour, shown here in Example 4:

The work is regularly punctuated by modern versions of nonsense syllables supplied by the poet, a recurring technique that solidifies the tie to the Renaissance madrigal form as well as supplies unity to the work. (Example 5)

The nonsense syllables help bring a convincing and exciting climax to the madrigal, shown here in Example 6:

Zachary Wadsworth's music is characterized by a high degree of compositional skill and his growing body of work spans a large range of emotional spaces. Like his music, Wadsworth's website is professional and easy to navigate; there is much to explore and consider. On his webpage, he breaks his choral compositions down into skill level and distinguishes between sacred and secular. Conductors of advanced ensembles will want to consider, in addition to the works presented in this article, his *To the Roaring Wind*, a thoroughly contemporary work that sets Wallace Stevens' poem of the same name. Church musicians will want to explore his hymn setting of *Immortal Love, Forever Full* to the tune Calgary.

Example 1, 'Beati Quorum Remissae,' m. 1-5.

Example 1, 'Beati Quorum Remissae,' m. 1-5. The score shows four staves: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The tempo is marked 'ca. 96'. The lyrics are 'While I held my tongue, my bones with-ered a-way,'.

Example 2, 'Beati Quorum Remissae,' m. 47-49.

Example 2, 'Beati Quorum Remissae,' m. 47-49. The score shows four staves: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The tempo is marked 'ca. 96'. The lyrics are 'shouts of de-liv-er-ance... Cir-cum-dan-ti-bus'.

Example 3, 'Spring is Here,' m. 1-4.

Example 3, 'Spring is Here,' m. 1-4. The score shows four staves: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The tempo is marked 'Brightly ca. 100 / ca. 66'. The lyrics are 'Snow-Drops now be-gin in snows, O Cro-cus-es to'.

Example 4, 'Spring is Here,' m. 38-40.

Example 4, 'Spring is Here,' m. 38-40. The score shows four staves: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The tempo is marked 'rall.'. The lyrics are 'drow-sy town, Din, din, dine; [n]'.

Example 5, 'Spring is Here,' m. 49-52.

Example 6, 'Spring is Here,' m. 99-101.

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Michael Gilbertson (b. 1987)



www.michaelgilbertson.net

Although not yet thirty years of age, Michael Gilbertson is a remarkably well-performed and high-achieving composer from Dubuque, Iowa. He is active in a number of musical genres with significant works for ballet, opera, wind ensemble, and orchestra.

Gilbertson is an extremely well-trained composer with an impressive pedigree of mentors. He is a prodigious composer; his hometown symphony orchestra has been performing his work since he was fifteen years old.

The remarkably talented Gilbertson is not a prolific choral composer, but he seems set to expand into the genre. The composer frequently collaborates with Kai

Hoffman-Krull and has produced two choral works, *Where the Words Go* and *Returning*. Gilbertson seeks to engage with pre-existing works and composers from the past, as in his re-settings of three texts that were originally set by John Dowland. This set, called *Three Madrigals After Dowland*, sets three texts: *Weep You No More*, *Burst Forth*, *My Tears*, and *Come, Heavy Sleep*.

Gilbertson seems to prefer a stark declamation of text; much of his choral music utilizes the open fifth interval at the very beginning. (Example 7 and 8)

Gilbertson's *Burst Forth*, *My Tears* is a more rhythmic work than the other two madrigals. In this piece, the composer sets up a driving rhythm in the choir and pairs it with soaring soprano soloists. He brings a glorious dissonance to the soloist's declamation of the text, usually approaching it from a consonant interval. (Example 9 and 10)

Gilbertson has recently completed a larger work for double choir that was premiered by Musica Sacra at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York. Many call this work his "best piece" and it is his most substantial choral work so far. This twenty-minute work once again sets the texts of Hoffman-Krull in an exploration of love, regret, and remembrance through a conversation between the biblical characters David and Jonathan.

The composer's work is frequently performed by professional chamber groups, including performances by The Crossing (Donald Nally), and The Esoterics (Eric Banks) later this year.

Example 7, 'Come, Heavy Sleep,' m. 1-4.

Spacious, freely ♩ = 56

Example 8, 'Where the Words Go,' m. 1-5.

♩ = 60-63 ethereal, flowing

Example 9, 'Burst Forth, My Tears,' m. 5-7.

Example 10, 'Burst Forth, My Tears,' m. 8-10.

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Dominick DiOrio (b. 1984)



www.dominickdiorio.com

Dominick DiOrio seems to be everywhere and everything in choral music these days. His influence takes many forms: composer, advocate, conductor, presenter. He is first and foremost a composer, and he was recently named the 2014 winner of The American Prize in Composition, where he received praise for "his depth of vision, mastery of compositional technique, and unique style" which "set him in a category by himself."

Part of DiOrio's unique style is the philosophy of virtuosity that he employs in his compositions, an approach that can play out in a number of ways. Often, the technique appears in the accompanying instruments, but it may also appear in solo voices that accompany the choir or in the choral parts themselves. For DiOrio, the "element of virtuosity is key, as it presumes that the chorus I am working with is fundamentally an ensemble of skilled vocal musicians. Of course, amateur ensembles can (and do) sing this music as well, but it demands the very best of their musical abilities with regard to counting, pitching, intonation, vocal stamina, and dynamic range."

The composer has a large body of work for choir, including works for large ensemble, chamber ensemble, unaccompanied choir, and accompanied works with solo instrument and solo keyboard. Two of his works are featured here: *O Virtus Sapientiae* (2013), a cappella with three soprano soloists, and *Alleluia* (2013), for choir and marimba.

DiOrio was first trained as a percussionist, so it comes as no surprise that he finds rhythmic complexity compelling. In his words, he wants "to create an elastic sense of rhythm in many of my works, using all of the inner combinations of the beat (duplets, triplets, divisions of 4, 5, 6, and 7), oftentimes working together in an accelerating or decelerating context (2, 3, 4, 5)." This sense of complexity, along with his interest in writing for virtuosic percussion and choir make an appearance in his *Alleluia*.

The work opens with bold fortissimo statements by the full choir, followed by driving marimba accompaniment at a quick tempo. (Example 11)

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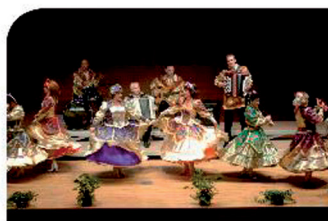
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Through his work with NOTUS, Dominick DiOrio seems to be evolving into an influential figure among younger American composers. At the same 2014 ACDA National conference mentioned above, he presented an interest session called “Thirty-Something: New Choral Music by Today’s Hottest Young Composers.”

Example 14, ‘O Virtus Sapientiae,’ m. 15-19.

15 *f* com-pre-hen-den-do om-ni-a
f com-pre-hen-den-do om-ni-a
f com-pre-hen-den-do om-ni-a *mp* in

Example 15, ‘O Virtus Sapientiae,’ m. 21-25.

pp *mf* *fpp*
in one life-giv-ing path,
pp *mf* *fpp*
in one life-giv-ing path,
pp *mf* *fpp*
in one life-giv-ing path,
pp *mf* *fpp*
in one life-giv-ing path,

Example 16, ‘O Virtus Sapientiae,’ m. 45-46.

45 *f* one dis-tills its es
f one dis-tills its es
f one dis-tills its es

Example 17, ‘O Virtus Sapientiae,’ m. 63-64.

63 you, as is fit-ting, Praise to you, Praise to you,
you, as is fit-ting, Praise to you, Praise to you,
you, as is fit-ting, Praise to you, Praise to you,
bi-sit,
bi-sit,
La

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Sydney Guillaume (b. 1982)



www.sydneyguillauhemusic.com

Sydney Guillaume is originally from Haiti and immigrated to the United States in his youth. A graduate of the University of Miami, he currently lives in Los Angeles, California. His compositional style shows influences from Haiti and he frequently uses texts that are a combination of Haitian Creole and French. Guillaume has an intimate connection to the texts that he chooses; most of them are settings of poetry by his father, Gabriel T. Guillaume.

As a composer, Guillaume is well known in the world of American choral music. His music has been performed by university choirs, including the University of Miami Frost Chorale and Westminster Chorus, and professional choirs, including Seraphic Fire and the Nathaniel Dett Chorale.

The Westminster Chorus recently featured Guillaume's *Gagòt* on the ACDA Western Division Conference. Composed for TTBB choir, the work sets Gabriel Guillaume's poem of messy frustration, entanglement, and redemption. It is a powerful text that captures the frustration of everyday life, where "everything is entangled: pain and woe, doubt and faith, disgust and hope, good and evil."

Composer Guillaume expertly depicts the pressing frustration of the text by setting it in the key of D minor and rapidly shifting meter that eventually settles into a long series of measures in 3/4 time. Even though the time signature is familiar, Guillaume's rhythmic scheme is both intentionally unnerving and completely fresh. To this unsettlement, the composer adds occasional complexity with faster rhythmic lines and unexpected harmonies. These additional intricacies are well-timed, he allows the music to settle for a brief period before he adds them. (Example 18)

At about the halfway time-point in the composer's setting of *Gagòt*, Guillaume provides the solution to life's frustrations with a beautiful chorale that sets comforting wisdom in contrast to the storm and stress of the opening measures:

"Life before death is a battle of every instant that cannot be won but one moment at a time. After the night, comes the day. After the rain, the sun rises. After messes, after mess . . . the heart settles. It's striving in suffering that brings redemption. Ah! So be it."

The Guillaume *Gagòt* is a beautiful collaboration of father and son as well as a superb example of an expert rendering of text painting in choral music. Composer Guillaume sets a similar text in *Tap-Tap*, although this Haitian Creole poem is by Louis Marie Celestin.

Guillaume's *Tap-Tap* is a hot mess of layered syncopation punctuated with descending chromatic lines, repeated sixteenth notes, and occasional wails of delight. The encouraging text of the poem exhorts the listener to hurry and take advantage of the opportunity to do something for the nation and to accomplish something for society. There is an urgency to the music; it starts simply but increases in complexity at a fairly rapid rate. Although the majority of the work is driving syncopation, there are occasional moments of homophonic declamation.

Sydney Guillaume's music is characterised by a high degree of rhythmic interest and his large body of work is well known in the United States. Those interested in the work presented here will also want to examine *Kalinda*, published by Walton Music, and *Dominus Vobiscum*, another father-son collaborative work commissioned by Seraphic Fire and also published by Walton Music. Both *Gagòt* and *Tap-Tap* are available directly from the composer's website.

Edited by Shekela Wanyama, USA •

Example 18, 'Gagòt,' m. 40-43.

Example 19, 'Tap-Tap,' m. 23-28.

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Philip Copeland is Director of Choral Activities and Associate Professor of Music at Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama. His choirs are frequent performers and award winners in international competitions and conferences of the American Choral Directors Association as well as the National Collegiate Choral Organization. At Samford, he teaches classes in conducting, diction, and music education. Dr. Copeland holds degrees in music education and conducting from the University of Mississippi, Mississippi College, and Southern Seminary in Louisville, KY. In Birmingham, he directs music at South Highland Presbyterian Church and prepares the Alabama Symphony Chorus in performances with the Alabama Symphony Orchestra. He is father to triplet nine-year old daughters: Catherine, Caroline, and Claire. Email: philip.copeland@gmail.com





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Camerata – A Guide to Organizing and Directing Small Choruses

By Arthur Wenk

Debra Shearer-Dirié

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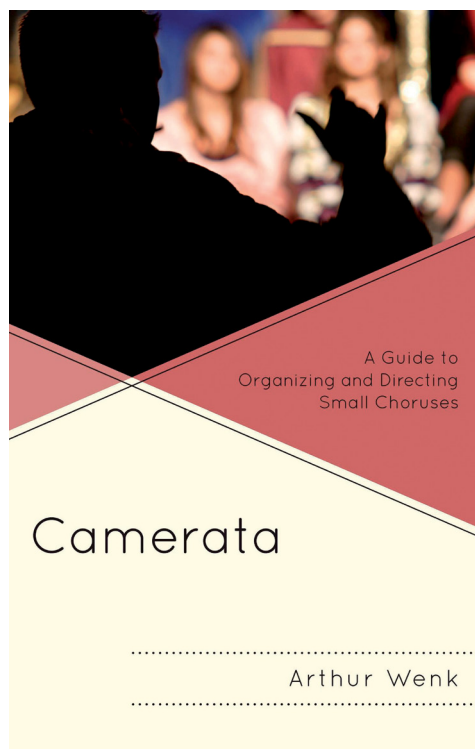
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Book Review

Camerata – A Guide to Organizing and Directing Small Choruses

By Arthur Wenk

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Arthur Wenk leads us through the pages of his “Guide to Organizing and Directing Small Choruses” with a great deal of “lived through” experience under his belt. Wenk was the Founder and Director of the Cambridge Singers in Boston (1973-74), The Pittsburgh Camerata in Pennsylvania (1974-81), La Camerata Vocale in Québec City (1982-86), and three singing ensembles in Toronto – The Toronto Camerata (1990-99), St Andrew’s College Choir (1995-2000), and the Quodlibet (2001-2007). A total of six ensembles established from scratch. Wenk’s academic qualifications seem to have prepared him perfectly for the job of working with musicians (and much more). With a Bachelor of Arts (Mathematics and Music), three Masters degrees - Master of Arts in Music Theory, Master of Science in Information Science, and Master of Arts in Psychology - and a Doctor of Philosophy in Musicology, it seems that all of the bases are covered. I particularly enjoyed reading the “Autobiographical Sketch: The Making of a Choral Director,” which appears at the end of Wenk’s manuscript.

After completing his first degree at Amherst, and having worked with other conductors in joint projects during this time, Wenk was fuelled and ready to take on the choral world in his first job at a small college in San Bernardino, California. Unfortunately his enthusiasm for programming German baroque cantatas, French carols, Latin motets, and Gregorian chants in his first concert did not match the reality of his singer situation. Wenk has certainly experienced the highs and lows of founding and directing groups of singers and provides the reader with some interesting reading on what he has learned.

As an extension of his work leading chamber choirs Wenk encourages those wanting to start their own ensemble to articulate their reason for beginning one. What is the purpose of this new ensemble? He then leads the reader through the conceptual issues at this beginning stage of setting up a group or organisation – setting a goal, choosing a name, meeting people (talking to successful people about how they did it), creating an executive group to manage the choir, publicity in the newspapers, radio, finding a place to rehearse and concert venues, recruiting singers and planning programmes.

The book is arranged neatly into sections which address setting out goals, the composing of a prospectus for an organisation, twenty-one suggested themed programmes, an organisational document (not quite a constitution but similar), an example of a financial statement, a singer’s guide, guidelines for a Folksong competition, and a section illustrating some of Wenk’s arrangements. There is a section on “getting better” which addresses several of the non-musical elements that might be employed to improve or enlarge your organisation.

Reviewed by
Debra Shearer-Dirié
choral conductor and
teacher

Chapter Four, “Programs,” provides twenty-one lists of music for a cappella choir organised around themes. Some of the themed programmes include – Absalom, And the Angel Said, A song for Simeon, Spring Returns, and Cantate Domino: Six Centuries of Psalms. For conductors who are just starting off with an a cappella ensemble, this chapter provides an extensive list of works to peruse and could lead to the formation of other themed programmes. An additional list of repertoire is given in Chapter Five. Wenk also includes more than twenty original Christmas carols and carol arrangements of his own, for performance by small choirs.

This book is a valuable resource for anyone starting a new singing organisation of any size, not just a small ensemble. Wenk is offering the reader practical advice gained through his own experience. It does not address conducting technique, preparation of score, or too much detail on rehearsing specifics, but let’s face it, there are plenty of books that do.

I think the following passage (taken from the Introduction) sums up Wenk’s whole philosophy of how he built his career:

“Building a successful chorus requires energy, enthusiasm, and imagination. As Lyndon Johnson maintained, if you do just absolutely everything you can do, you will succeed. In my thirty years of conducting choirs ranging from pick-up ensembles to

children’s choirs, collegiate choruses, community and church choirs, and semi-professional chorales, I have learned a number of lessons about organising and directing small choruses, largely in the form of discovering and noting the details of “just absolutely everything” I can do. “

Debra Shearer-Dirié holds a Diploma from the Kodály Institute in Kecskemét, Hungary and a Master of Music Education degree and Doctor of Music degree in Choral Conducting from Indiana University, USA. Currently located in Brisbane, Australia, she has taught choral conducting and aural studies at The University of Queensland, the ACCET Summer School, and at the New Zealand International Summer School in Choral Conducting. Dr. Shearer-Dirié is currently serving as Editor of the Australian National Choral Association’s Publication and serves on the National Council for this organisation. She is Musical Director of the Brisbane Concert Choir, Vox Pacifica Chamber Choir, Fusion, and Vintage Voices. Email: debrashearer@gmail.com



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Rimini International Choral Workshop with Gary Graden, Andrea Angelini and Lykke Anholm, Rimini, Italy, 25-30 Aug 2015. Talks and workshops including: history of the polyphony of the Renaissance, directing your own group, Carpe Diem: impromptu chats with Gary Graden, gala concert by participants directed by Gary Graden and Andrea Angelini, CD recording of the gala concert. Contact: Musica Ficta, Email: info@musicaficta.org - Website: www.musicaficta.org

Trogir Music Week, Croatia, 6-11 Sep 2015. Directed by Justin Doyle. Contact: Lacock Courses, Andrew van der Beek, Email: avdb@lacock.org - Website: www.lacock.org

International Oratorio Choir Workshop, Italy, 13-18 Oct 2015. Project choir conducted by Peter Laskowski. Repertoire: Requiem, KV 626 (Mozart). Rehearsal on Lake Garda. Final concert in Riva del Garda. Contact: MusikReisenFaszination Music Festivals, Email: info@mrf-musicfestivals.com - Website: www.mrf-musicfestivals.com

Individual Coaching with Karen Brunssen, Zürich, Switzerland, 20-23 Oct 2015. For singers, amateurs or professionals, who are interested in a one hour individual coaching with Karen Brunssen for the development of their voice. No imposed repertoire, bring your own materials. Contact: Zürcher Sing-Akademie, Email: misa@sing-akademie.ch - Website: www.sing-akademie.ch

Contemporary Composition in America NDSU Choral Symposium, Fargo, USA, 22-24 Oct 2015. Three day symposium with composer, conductor and lecturer Eric Whitacre, presenting sessions on his music and working with NDSU choral ensembles. Topics to include commissions, publishing, second-performances, composition competitions and programming. Guest presenters will include nationally and internationally known composers. Contact: Division of Performing Arts, North Dakota State University, Email: jo.miller@ndsu.edu - Website: www.ndsu.edu/

36th IMC General Assembly, Rabat, Morocco, 11-14 Nov 2015.

Next to statutory meetings (including elections) and gatherings of Regional Music Councils, you will be able to share and learn during workshops, panel discussions and conferences, which will partly be co-organised with our host, Visa For Music. Contact: Conseil International de la Musique, Email: forum.imc@unesco.org - Website: www.unesco.org/imc

IFCM Asia Pacific World Choral Expo, Macau, SAR, 12-15 Nov 2015. International Federation for Choral Music (IFCM), Asia Pacific Choral Council and Macau Choral Art Association are collaborating together to debut the first ever World Choral Expo, in Macau S.A.R from the 12th to 15th of November 2015! World-class conductors, composers and choirs will convene to share their experiences, techniques, and voices to the Asia Pacific Region. This event is co-sponsored by the Chinese Culture Association, the China Choral Association, and Canton Province Choral Association. Contact: International Federation for Choral Music, Email: info@ifcm.net - Website: www.ifcm.net or www.worldchoralexpo.com

Ludlow Winter School, United Kingdom, 27 Dec-1 Jan 2015.

A week of choral singing directed by Robert Hollingworth in a Shropshire town. Contact: Lacock Courses, Andrew van der Beek, Email: avdb@lacock.org - Website: www.lacock.org

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

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. Website: www.america-cantat.org

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: www.ifcm.net

2015 Taiwan International Choral Workshops and Concerts, Taiwan - China, 7-9 Aug 2015. Choral exchange programs and concerts to achieve culture exchange and friendship, featuring three international choral groups and six local groups. Apply before Jan 31, 2015. Contact: Taiwan Crystal Children's Choral Association, Rita Lu, Email: tccea0105@gmail.com - Website: www.crystalchoir.org/

9th International Choral Festival San Juan Coral 2015, Argentina, 13-18 Aug 2015. Non-competitive choral festival organized by the Universidad Católica de Cuyo's Choir every two years, for 8-10 selected mixed, female, male and chamber choirs (16 voices or more). Concerts, conferences and workshops for choirs, singers, conductors and other individual musicians. Apply before March 15, 2015. Contact: María Elina Mayorga, Email: mariaelinamayorga@gmail.com or sanjuancoral@gmail.com - Website: www.sanjuancoral.com.ar

8th Choral Singing Contest of South American Folk and Popular Music, La Plata, Argentina, 14-17 Aug 2015. Competition dedicated to Eduardo Falú and Carlos Gardel, open to amateurs choirs from over the world. Register before Mar 30, 2015. Contact: Asociación Argentina para la Música Coral, Email: aamcantlp@ciudad.com.ar - Website: www.aamcant.org.ar

International Festival of choirs and orchestras in Paris, France, 19-23 Aug 2015. For choirs and orchestras from around the world. Contact: MusikReisenFaszination Music Festivals, Email: info@mrf-musicfestivals.com - Website: www.mrf-musicfestivals.com

International Choir Festival Coralua, Trondheim, Norway, 22-28 Aug 2015. 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

Guido d'Arezzo International Polyphonic Competition, Arezzo, Italy, 23-30 Aug 2015. For amateur choral ensembles. Categories: Christian plainchant, polyphony, polyphony for children's voices, special competition, int'l choral festival of folksong. Contact: Competition secretariat, Email: fondguid@polifonico.org - Website: www.polifonico.org

2nd Choral International Festival Under the Sun of Sardegna, Sant Antioco Island, Sardegna, 26-30 Aug 2015. Contact: Prof. Giuliano Rinaldi, Email: info@festivalveronagardaestate.eu - Website: www.festivalveronagardaestate.eu

1st Choir Festival in Salzburg Cathedral, Austria, 28-30 Aug 2015. Mozart's Coronation Mass for choirs as well as individual singers. Contact: Kunst & Kultur - ohne Grenzen, Email: office@kunstkultur.com - Website: www.kunstkultur.com

International festival of choirs and orchestras in Vienna, Austria, 9-13 Sep 2015. Contact: MusikReisenFaszination Music Festivals, Email: info@mrf-musicfestivals.com - Website: www.mrf-musicfestivals.com/

17th EUROTREFF 2015, Wolfenbüttel, Germany, 9-13 Sep 2015. Concerts and ateliers for children's, girls' and mixed youth choirs. Possibility of regional meeting with a German choir before or after the festival. Contact: Arbeitskreis Musik in der Jugend AMJ, Email: info@amj-musik.de - Website: www.amj-musik.de/eurotreff2015

Catalunya Prizes for Choral Compositions 2015, Barcelona, Spain, 10 Sep 2015. Choral composition competition on Catalan text and arrangements of traditional Catalan songs, level of difficulty low and medium in two categories: mixed voices and equal voices. The awarded works will be published in the FCEC "Choral collections" and recorded in a CD. Contact: Federació Catalana d'Entitats Corals, Email: fcec@fcec.cat - Website: <http://www.fcec.cat/>

International Festival Concordia Vocis, Cagliari, Italy, 10-13, 17-20, 24-27 Sep 2015. For vocal ensembles and mixed, male and female choirs up to 20 members. Invited choirs' local costs covered by the festival. Contact: International Choral Festival Concordia Vocis - Website: www.concordiavocis.it

5th International Choir Competition and Festival Canco Mediterrania, Barcelona & Lloret de Mar, Spain, 15-20 Sep 2015. 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

11th Trelew International Choral Competition - 20th Anniversary, Trelew, Chubut, Patagonia, Argentina, 15-20 Sep 2015. Open to female, male and mixed choirs including a non competitive stage with previous participant's selection. International Jury. Workshops, conducting masterclasses, composers forum and open singing. Contact: Fundación C.I.C., Alejandro Daniel Garavano, Email: cictrelew@yahoo.com.ar - Website: www.fundacioncic.org

The Voice of Wealth, Lloret de Mar, Spain, 19-26 Sep 2015. International choir festival and competition for all kind of choirs from all over the world. Contact: Monolit Festivals, Email: info@monolitfestivals.com - Website: <http://monolitfestivals.com/>

4th Choral Festival for Peace, Abuja, Nigeria, 21 Sep-2 Oct 2015. Competition including opening ceremony, national symposium for peace and choral music dedicated to children, youth and women victims of conflict, cultural exchange and exhibition, award dinner. Contact: Annual Festival of Nigerian Choirs, Email: afncnigeria@gmail.com

4th International Choir Festival Music and Sea, Paralia, Greece, 21-26 Sep 2015. Competitive and non-competitive festival featuring open air concert in the streets and the squares of Paralia, Olympic Beach and Katerini. For all kind of choirs from all over the world. Contact: MAG Culture and Experience, Email: info@magculture.mk - Website: www.magculture.mk

The Inaugural London International A Cappella Choir Competition, St John's Smith Square, London, United Kingdom, 22-25 Sep 2015. Festival bringing together 16 choirs from around the world to compete in a series of public concerts. A jury of renowned experts, chaired by the founder and director Tallis Scholars Peter Phillips, will select a winning choir from four preliminary rounds to compete in a prestigious final with the opportunity to win substantial cash prizes and further concert dates. For mixed-voice choirs of 16 members or more. Apply before May 15. Contact: Joanna Innes-Hopkins, Email: joanna@sjss.org.uk - Website: www.sjss.org.uk

Rimini International Choral Competition, Rimini, Italy, 24-27 Sep 2015. Competition for Equal Voices, Mixed, Chamber, Youth, Children, Sacred Music, Folk and Spiritual Choirs. Festival under the Patronage of the EU Parliament and the President of the Republic of Italy. Common Sung Service at the Renaissance Rimini Cathedral. Contact: Rimini International Choral Competition, Email: info@riminichoral.it - Website: www.riminichoral.it

International Video Competition for Treble and Women's Choirs, Germany, 30 Sep 2015. Performance competition of a compulsory piece by Schronen in two different levels of difficulty (medium and high). Applicant choirs must record the performance on video and upload it on Youtube. In addition to the jury award, there will be an audience award (number of "likes"). Apply before July 31. Contact: AS Musikverlag, Marion Scherer, Email: management@as-musikverlag.de - Website: www.wac-contest.eu

Cracovia Music Festival 2015, Cracow, Poland, 30 Sep-4 Oct 2015. For choirs and orchestras from around the world. Contact: MusikReisenFaszination Music Festivals, Email: info@mrf-musicfestivals.com - Website: www.mrf-musicfestivals.com

1st International Choir Festival Puccini 2015, Torre del Lago, Italy, 30 Sep-4 Oct 2015. Whether you participate in friendship concerts or in the competition, singers will find specific programs tailored to their needs. Contact: Förderverein Interkultur, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: www.interkultur.com

Bratislava Cantat II, Slovak Republic, 1-4 Oct 2015. 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 2015. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: www.choral-music.sk

Festival Magic Mozart Moments, Salzburg, Austria, 1-4 Oct 2015. Voices from all over the world and the Salzburg Cathedral Choir & Orchestra. Singers are required to have sung the performed piece before. Contact: Cultours Europe, Email: office@cultours.at - Website: www.cultours-europe.com

Symposium on Singing and Song, St. John's, Newfoundland & Labrador, Canada, 1-4 Oct 2015. Performing artists, conductors, musicologists, studio teachers, scholars, ethnomusicologists, music educators, music therapists, students... are coming together within The Singing Network to create, develop, and explore the many and varied aspects of singing and song. Contact: The Singing Network, Email: singingnetwork@mun.ca - Website: www.singingnetwork.ca

13th International Choir Contest of Flanders-Maasmechelen, Belgium, 2-5 Oct 2015. Limited to ensembles from 12 to 40 equal voices and 16 to 40 mixed voices. Contact: International Choir Contest of Flanders, Gert Vanderlee, Email: info@ikv-maasmechelen.be - Website: www.ikv-maasmechelen.be

International Choral Festival Singing Together Iso-Polyphony in Albania, Dures, Shkodra and Apollonia, Albania, 6-10 Oct 2015. Festival for non professional choirs featuring a diversity of international choral music, sacred music, traditional/folk music & Iso-Polyphony. Participants will enjoy the experience of learning & singing Albanian folk iso-polyphony proclaimed by UNESCO a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. Contact: National Choral Center, Email: singingisopolyphony@gmail.com - Website: www.choral-isopolyphony.com

John Paul II International Choir Festival of Sacred Music Mundus Cantat, Gdansk, Poland, 8-11 Oct 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

12th In Canto sul Garda International Choir Competition, Riva del Garda, Italy, 10-14 Oct 2015. For all kinds of choirs from all around the world. Apply before 30 June 2015. Contact: Meeting Music Inh. Pirosh Horvath e. K., Email: info@meeting-music.com - Website: www.meeting-music.com

International Choir Competition and Festival Kalamata 2015, Greece, 14-18 Oct 2015. Competition for all types of choirs in different categories of difficulty, line-ups and musical genres. Contact: Förderverein Interkultur, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: www.interkultur.com

Lago di Garda Music Festival, Italy, 14-18 Oct 2015. 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

11th Busan Choral Festival & competition, South Korea, 14-17 Oct 2015. Categories: classical mixed, classical equal, ethnic (traditional) music, pop & a cappella, Children and youth (under 18). Contact: Busan Culture Center, Email: busanchoral@gmail.com - Website: www.busanchoral.com

8th Thracian Choir Festival, Yambol, Bulgaria, 15-18 Oct 2015. Non- competitive, annual event for all kind of choirs and all styles of music. Apply before 30 March 2015. Contact: Mrs. Vessela Pastarmadjieva, Director of the festival , Email: choirschool@gmail.com

Cantate Barcelona, Spain, 16-20 Oct 2015. Performances, friendship concerts and workshops. Contact: Music Contact International, Email: info@musiccontact.com - Website: www.musiccontact.com

International Choir Festival Corearte Barcelona 2015, Spain, 19-25 Oct 2015. 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

Canta al mar 2015 International Choral Festival, Calella, Barcelona, Spain, 21-25 Oct 2015. 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

Derry International Choral Festival, Ireland, 22-25 Oct 2015. Competitive and non-competitive participation for singers across a wide range of styles, ensembles and ages. Performances from Mixed Voice to Equal-Voice choirs, Youth to Chamber choirs and from Church Music to Light, Popular and Jazz. Contact: Fiona Crosbie, festival manager, Email: info@codetta.net - Website: www.codichoral.com

11th International Warsaw Choir Festival Varsovia Cantat, Poland, 23-25 Oct 2015. 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, 2015. Contact: MELODY & Polonia Cantat, Email: info@varsoviacantat.pl - Website: www.varsoviacantat.pl

International Choral Festival London 2015, United Kingdom, 24 Oct 2015. For all kind of choirs around the world. Contact: Music Events Unlimited, Email: info@musiceventsunlimited.de - Website: www.icf-london.com

Malta International Choir Festival, Malta, 29 Oct-2 Nov 2015. Singers from around the world come together in competition and festivals. Choose from the categories: Musica Sacra, Secular Music, Children- and Youth Choirs and Folklore. Contact: Meeting Music Inh. Pirosk Horv th e. K., Email: info@meeting-music.com - Website: www.meeting-music.com

International Choir Competition of Tolosa, Spain, 29 Oct-1 Nov 2015. Its aim is to bring together the best choirs in the world: exchange of styles, interpretation, choral literature, vocal education and ways of each country and information about the musical and cultural traditions of the Basque Country. Contact: Centro de Iniciativas de Tolosa, Email: cit@cittolosa.com - Website: www.cittolosa.com

42nd Choir Festival Pampa Santa Tandil, Argentina, 4-8 Nov 2015. Festival and competition including 11 categories for all kind of choirs from around the world. Contact: Festa Musicale, Email: info@festamusicale.com - Website: www.festamusicale.com

Sing'n'Joy China 2015 International Choir Festival and Competition, Shunde, China, 4-8 Nov 2015. Evaluation performance with international jury members, friendship concerts and huge festival choir project that combines several participating choirs. Interested choirs can also participate in the competitions of the event. In the evaluation performance, choirs can obtain valuable guidance for their participation in the 9th World Choir Games, to be held in 2016 in Sochi / Russia. Contact: Förderverein Interkultur, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: www.interkultur.com

Cantate Dresden, Germany, 5-8 Nov 2015. 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

Festival of Peace and Brotherhood, Rome, Italy, 7-10 Nov 2015. Concerts and friendships. Contact: Music Contact International, Email: travel@music-contact.com - Website: www.music-contact.com

IFCM Asia Pacific World Choral Expo, Macau, SAR, 12-15 Nov 2015. International Federation for Choral Music (IFCM), Asia Pacific Choral Council and Macau Choral Art Association are collaborating together to debut the first ever World Choral Expo, in Macau S.A.R from the 12th to 15th of November 2015! World-class conductors, composers and choirs will convene to share their experiences, techniques, and voices to the Asia Pacific Region. This event is co-sponsored by the Chinese Culture Association, the China Choral Association, and Canton Province Choral Association. Contact: International Federation for Choral Music, Email: info@ifcm.net - Website: www.ifcm.net or <http://www.worldchoralexpo.com>

Sligo International Choral Festival, Ireland, 13-15 NOV 2015. Competitions for mixed choirs, male voice, female voice, youth folksong, madrigals, sacred music, gospel choirs and barbershop. Contact: Sligo International Choral Festival, Email: sligochoralfest@eircom.net - Website: www.sligochoralfest.org

International Choir Festival Corearte Brazil 2015, Caxias do Sul, Brazil, 15-21 Nov 2015. 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

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

International Advent Singing Festival Vienna 2015, Austria, 26-30 Nov 2015. For choirs from all around the world. Other possible dates: 3-7 & 10-14 December 2015. Contact: MusiCultur Travel GmbH, Email: info@musicultur.com - Website: www.musicultur.com/

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.sg

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.or-fea.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 October 1st 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

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

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 Dec 1, 2015. Contact: International Choral Festival and Competition, Email: interaspect@mail.ru - Website: <http://wccc.ru/en/>

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. 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. Contact: MusikReisenFaszination Music Festivals, Email: info@mrf-musicfestivals.com - Website: <https://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

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.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! 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. Contact: Meeting Music Inh. Piroso Horváth e. K., Email: info@meeting-music.com - Website: www.meeting-music.com

2016 Emerald Cith 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

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. 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). Contact: Antalya International Choir Festival, Email: festivalantalya@festivalantalya.com - Website: www.festivalantalya.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 December 15th 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

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. 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

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

5th International Messiah Festival, Salzburg, Austria, 28 Apr-1 May 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>

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. 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. 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. 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. Pirosh 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. 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. Contact: Europäisches Jugendchor Festival Basel, Kathrin Renggli, Email: info@ejcf.ch - Website: www.ejcf.ch

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. Contact: Festival International de Chant Choral de Nancy, Email: festival-choral@orange.fr - Website: www.chantchoral.org

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

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

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

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

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

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

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: 15th 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

Krakow International Festival, Poland, 8-12 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

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 Dec 15, 2015. Contact: MELODY & Polonia Cantat, Email: mail@krakowchoirfestival.pl - Website: www.krakowchoirfestival.pl

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

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

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

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

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. Facing the haunting outline of the Wicklow Mountains, Ireland's Fair City holds true to a 1,000-year Celtic heritage that inspires her music and artistry to this day. 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. Contact: Music Celebrations International, LLC, Email: info@musiccelebrations.com - Website: <http://dublinchoralfestival.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: www.music-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/>

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

Fundy Sound: a Choral Festival by the Sea, Saint John New Brunswick, Canada, 27 June-1 July 2016. Singers will enjoy enriching developmental and educational experiences with local and international musicians including the opportunity to work with one of the world's leading choral experts: Z. Randall Stroope. Contact: Fundy Sound, Email: info@fundysound.com - Website: <http://fundysound.com>

Sing Dvořák, Rutter, Brubeck, and more, in the world-renowned Smetana Hall, Prague, Czech Republic, 27 June-1 July 2016. Three days of rehearsals under the baton of esteemed choral conductor Dr. William Skoog, Director of Choral Studies at Rhodes College will culminate in a grand performance at the stunning Smetana Hall at the Municipal House – home of the Prague Symphony Orchestra. The chorus will perform outstanding choral works by Dvořák, Rutter, Brubeck, and more. Website: www.praguechoralcelebration.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 Domorchestra. 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

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 Mejstříková, 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@scf-festival.org - Website: www.scf-festival.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

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). Application deadline: November 1, 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

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

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

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

Cantus Salisburgensis Festival, Salzburg, Austria, 7-11 July 2016. Perform at the spectacular Salzburg Cathedral and beautiful Mirabell Gardens, the backdrop to scenes from the "Sound of Music". The massed sing performance is under the direction of Prof. János Czifra, the Salzburg Cathedral's music director. Discover Salzburg's picturesque Old Town and its towering castle, and share your music with choirs from around the world. Contact: Music Contact International, Email: travel@music-contact.com - Website: www.music-contact.com

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

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

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

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

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

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/>

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

27th Béla Bartók International Choir Competition and Folklore Festival, Debrecen, Hungary, 27-31 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 accomodation for the invited choirs free of charge. Apply before: 31 October 2013. Contact: Fonix Event Organizing NP LLC., Email: info@bbcc.hu - Website: www.bbcc.hu

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: Dec 31, 2015. Contact: Arbeitskreis Musik in der Jugend AMJ, Email: nfo@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

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. Website: www.america-cantat.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: <https://www.mrf-musicfestivals.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

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

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. Contact: Meeting Music Inh. Pirosk Horvath e. K., Email: deborah.bertoni@meeting-music.com - Website: www.meeting-music.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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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, Inc., 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

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 & 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>

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: www.ifcm.net

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

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

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

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 & 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

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



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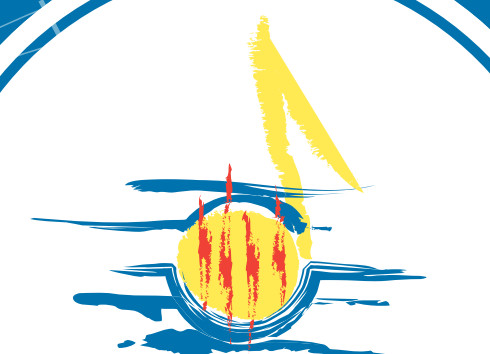
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