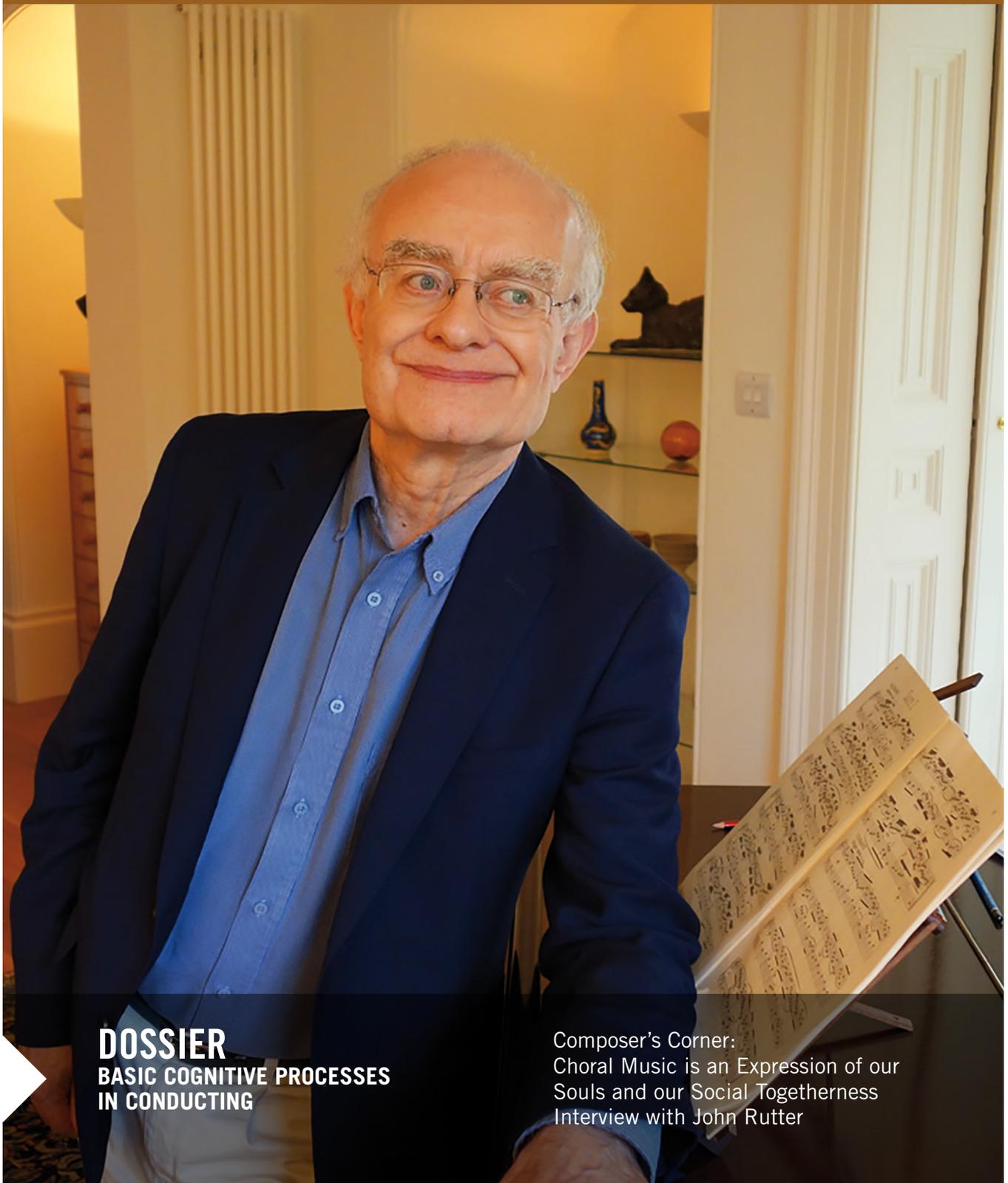




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DOSSIER
BASIC COGNITIVE PROCESSES
IN CONDUCTING

Composer's Corner:
Choral Music is an Expression of our
Souls and our Social Togetherness
Interview with John Rutter

INTERNATIONAL CHORAL BULLETIN

COVER

John Rutter

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



EMILY KUO VONG

President

Dear Friends,

Time flies as we enter the third quarter of the year and the global public health crisis caused by COVID-19 continues to influence the whole world significantly. In the past three months, many countries have suffered from sadness during this pandemic. A large number of people have been infected by the virus; some have lost their loved ones, healthcare professionals have kept fighting against the virus to save more lives and most of us have stayed at home in quarantine to protect our families.

Ever since governments all over the world imposed stringent anti-epidemic rules and restricted massed gatherings, people's lives have been affected and changed. It is as though the pause button of the world was pressed and many cultural events, sports, and festivals were canceled or postponed, such as the 2020 World Symposium for Choral Music in New Zealand and the World Youth Choir 2020 session in Germany.

In the face of these negative changes in our life, we might feel deep sorrow and regret about this unfortunate situation. However, we will never give up. Our musical imagination will not stop, our expectation for a beautiful life will not be broken, and our love will not putter out.

Since pressing pause often allows a sense of clarity when we are stuck in the weeds, going through this pandemic also brings an opportunity for us to review the past, to think about the future - to learn, research and create.

In this situation, the IFCM continues to make every effort to serve our members, helping choral choirs and promoting choral education all over the world. We are exerting ourselves to seek more innovative approaches and online possibilities to execute our projects, since many events are transforming from local to online.

My private company - International Cultural Center Monte Real in Portugal – is invested in developing an applet to launch an online project which is named *Colorful Voices*. This online project will be an effective strategy to help and support IFCM remain fresh, focused and engaged.

This online project will help express the IFCM's goals and concepts, making more choral fans around the world know more about the IFCM and help attract more members for the IFCM. Articles from ICB and e-News of IFCM have been translated and posted on the applet regularly. Other projects and activities of the IFCM, such as *Conductors without Borders*, will be added subsequently soon. The applet enables people from various countries, especially from developing countries, to have easy access to the latest information in the worldwide choral community.

Meanwhile, this online project includes an International Choral Academy, offering a number of lectures, presentations, Zoom seminars, and virtual choir performances. On the 16th of May 2020, the first Zoom seminar took place as the Open House of the International Choral Academy and 15 well-known conductors, composers, and professors took part in and interacted with more than 250 participants. I was very touched that all of the people who participated in the Open House were from different continents and had communicated wonderfully for almost two hours. I could tell their passion from their excited voices and sparkling eyes; some of them had even woken up very early in the morning due to different time zones.

There are also many wonderful lectures with diverse topics being prepared, as well as a series of educational events being planned on the applet. I believe that the professional involvement, excellent experience and the volunteering of time to this online project by every conductor and professor will attract many choral fans. More and more people will exchange and share their different opinions on choral music and musical education and more people could join the IFCM's big family, becoming members through this online project.

The network connects us to each of the individuals online and their *colorful voices* will enrich our minds and lives. These connections ultimately extend from one of us to all of us. As a result, we will learn together, discover more about ourselves and grow. I look forward to meeting more friends through this online project, hearing more colorful voices and together singing a song of love and hope for the world! Best wishes.

Edited by Nicole Wilkinson, UK

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DOSSIER



Basic Cognitive Processes in Conducting
Theodora Pavlovitch

BASIC COGNITIVE PROCESSES IN CONDUCTING

THEODORA PAVLOVITCH

conductor and professor

PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESSES REPRESENT A BASIC CATEGORY OF PHENOMENA, OR IN OTHER WORDS, A SEQUENCE OF CHANGES OF THE MENTAL ACTIVITY UPON CERTAIN INTERACTIONS BETWEEN A HUMAN AND THE WORLD.

They are dynamic forms of reflecting reality, which according to their nature are differentiated as:

- Cognitive psychological processes - sensations, perceptions, thinking, memory, imagination;
- Emotional processes - sensations, active and passive experiences;
- Processes of will - will, resolution, effort, performance¹.
- Studying the specificity of cognitive processes in the course of performing an activity so complex and diverse as conducting will help us reveal an important part of the relevant psychological characteristics.

SENSATIONS, PERCEPTIONS AND CONCEPTS

A. Sensations

Sensations are the most elementary cognitive processes. They reflect the individual properties of the objects and the phenomena from the internal and external world upon their immediate impact on analytical data. Their function is to secure more complex cognitive processes. According to the nature of the reflection and location of the receptors, sensations are divided into three groups:

1. exteroceptive ("external"), which reflect the properties of the objects and the phenomena of the external environment, through receptors, located on the body surface; this group includes visual, aural, olfactory, temperature and tactile senses;
2. interoceptive ("internal"), which reflect the status of internal organs, through receptors in the internal organs and tissues; this group includes all organic sensations, including the sense of pain and balance, etc.;
3. proprioceptive, which provides information about the position and movement of the body through receptors located in the muscles and tendons².

Aural sensations are of major significance to the first group, exteroceptive sensations, as well as to all types of music-related activities. Visual sensations are also important as they allow the conductor to get information from the music score as well as about the activities of the performers' staff during the performance.

The role of interoceptive sensations is not basic but they are important for the general physical condition of the conductor. Therefore, they have an impact on the level of higher psychological processes such as emotional, will, memory, imagination, etc. A specific example in this regard would be the words of Karajan who said in an interview: "My joy from conducting is much higher and maybe the audience feels that. The orchestra positively feels it. My joy from conducting has acquired new dimensions since I got rid of the severe pain I experienced for a full eight years"³. Concurrently this practice has proven that the intensive functions of consciousness and subconsciousness in the creative process may neutralize interoceptive sensations. Further Karajan said: "Once during a concert, I passed a kidney stone and I noticed it after that. Usually, this is a pain that makes you roll on the floor"⁴.

With regard to proprioceptive sensations, which were highlighted in the previous chapter, kinaesthetic senses are highly important in conduction, as they

1 Pirjov, Gencho. Lyuben Desev. Concise Dictionary in Psychology Sofia: Partizdat, 1981, page 167-168.

2 Pirjov, Gencho. Lyuben Desev. Concise Dictionary in Psychology Sofia: Partizdat, 1981, page 259.

3 Mateopulous, Elena. Karajan - life, art, work. - B: *Bulgarian Music*, No. 2/1988, page 17.

4 As above, page 20.

give information about the position and the movements of the body and its individual parts. This shall also include sensations from the vestibular apparatus regarding body balance in a certain space. Kinaesthetic sensations allow conducts to perform specific, purposeful and efficient movements when there is a sufficient degree of self-control. Many conductors by way of self-monitoring come to conclusions about the need for muscle "freedom". Lorin Maazel said: "Muscle tension is the hardest to overcome. Once I got into music, not only did my arm and shoulder muscles strain but so did my back and leg muscles. One day I told myself: You have to learn how to relax..."⁵.

In this regard, interesting thoughts are found in the Handbook of conducting by Hermann Scherchen: "There is a law - the intense mental energy comes in the form of intense physical energy. However, physical energy is anti-musical on its own: Music is an art of the spirit and spiritual tension, it does not stand the physical energy, which has an end in itself"⁶.

The conclusions of K.S. Stanislavski, resulting from his observations on the actor's work, are very valuable: "As long as there is physical tension, there can be no proper, sensual feeling and normal spiritual life. So, before he begins creating, one must prepare his muscles, so that they do not limit the freedom of movement"⁷.

The problem of muscle freedom has a largely individual character



Lorin Maazel

- many conductors achieve this freedom in a natural way, without needing special care. On the other hand, as we saw in the citations, even the most famous conductors have had difficulties in overcoming muscle tension during their career. It is important in this case to teach young conductors about proper muscle movement, i.e. activating kinaesthetic sensations and conscious self-control to remove all types of unnecessary tension.

This issue has been thoroughly studied in the scientific work of A. Sivizianov "The issue of muscular freedom of the choir conductor." Here the author develops a comprehensive theory for the way to achieve motor freedom in the process of conducting based on many scientific studies.

As previously mentioned, kinaesthetic sensations are directly connected with musical-aural perceptions during conducting. In order to reveal the mechanism for creating these perceptions, it is necessary to look at the role of aural sensations and perceptions.

According to basic qualities of tone such as acoustic events, 4 types of sensations are revealed: Height

of pitch, strength, timbre, rhythm⁸. This differentiation has a pure scientific value, as in practice the four features of tone are fully connected and constantly overlap with each other. Reviewing them separately is required for a deeper analysis. Before that, we must clarify that due to the complexity of the processes in the sound analyser, scientific literature uses the term "sense" more often, which more so encompasses the psychological, rather than the physiological part of the phenomenon. And so, without stopping on the psycho-physical mechanism, we will track the role of the various components of musical sense in conductor activity. PITCH HEIGHT SENSE: this tone sense is considered essential for musical capabilities⁹. It has been proven that it may be improved with training, which certain scientists have argued in favour for. Further, it is underlined that this sense is important but not absolutely sufficient for musicality.

Tone sense has great significance

⁸ Hristozov, Hristo. *Musical psychology*. Plovdiv. Macros, 199.

⁹ The same, page 40-46.

⁵ Maazel, Lorin. Interview in LIK Magazine, No 41/1983.

⁶ Scherchen, Hermann. Handbook of conducting. - B: *Conducting performing act*. Moscow: Publ. Muzika, 1975, page 222.

⁷ Stanislavskiy, Konstantin. *The actor's proper care of himself*. Sofia: East-West, ISBN; 978-619-152-690-1, c. 180.

The Stanislavski System

- Based on realism - naturalism
- Define realism
- Life of the character - dynamic + continuous
- goals and objectives (superobjective)
- connection to others on stage - the ensemble



K.S. Stanislavski

in the practice of conducting due to the need to control and indirectly invoke corrections of the tone of multiple sound-producing objects (instruments, voices). In this case, descriptive ability is of great importance as it allows sensing even the smallest change in the height of pitch.

On the other hand, the theory of the zoning nature of human hearing clarifies the ability to perceive deviations from a tone only above specific values at the rate of 20-30 cent¹⁰. It is exactly this specificity of hearing that explains the "choir effect," which is typical for all kinds of performing ensembles. Due to the inability for multiple performers to reproduce a tone with absolutely the same pitch in ensemble performances, combined tones are produced, the height of which corresponds to a narrower or wider zone of sound frequencies. The purpose of the conductor is to greatly control the width of that zone and to ask the performers to make relevant tone corrections if there are deviations exceeding a specific value or when the combined tone is not perceived

¹⁰ As above, page 41.

as a whole. A specific case in this regard is playing or singing a wrong tone (due to the performer's mistake or an error in the sheet music) and the conductor has to exercise tone control. To carry out this task, the conductor should possess and develop their sense of tone allowing them to perceive and respond adequately to the occurring tone deviations.

TONE STRENGTH SENSE is important for conducting due to the primary significance of the dynamics for the musical interpretation. Dynamic sense appears early on and is easily controlled. The high degree of development of this sense is another compulsory condition for conducting work due to the need for a high distinguishing ability with regard to the different degrees of dynamics. An extraordinary example in this regard is part II of the composition *Inori* of Karlheinz Stockhausen where the conductor, as instructed by the author, must achieve 60 different degrees of dynamics.

One of the biggest problems of dynamic sense upon conducting is the effect of masking or deafening, i.e. "hiding" one tone behind another which especially

occurs in tones with close pitch. This specificity clearly also shows the direct interrelation between tone sense and dynamic sense. In addition, dynamic sense is directly connected with timbre sense where the human ear perceives some timbres as "stronger" than others due to their spectral characteristics. A good example of this is that of two of the *Ten Golden Rules for the Album of a Young Conductor* by R. Strauss. He says: "5. But never let the horns and woodwinds out of your sight. If you can hear them at all they are still too strong; 6. If you think that the brass is now blowing hard enough, tone it down another shade or two"¹¹.

The dynamic sense of the conductor is of great importance for ensuring the dynamic balance of the performing staff, which represents an essential component of the overall choir or orchestra sound.

The lack of aural control caused by weak dynamic sense would cause significant damage to the structure of the musical interpretation.

TIMBRE SENSE is also of great significance in the practice of conducting. Due to the specifics of their work, a conductor must be able to perceive and indirectly impact multiple different timbres. According to the research of the Russian psychologist B. Teplov, three groups of signs are used to specify timbres:

- light features: Light, dark, glossy, matt, etc.;
- Sensory features: Soft, rough, sharp, dry, etc.;
- Spatial - volumetric features: Full, empty, wide, solid, etc.¹².

¹¹ Strauss, Richard. *Ten Golden Rules for the Album of a Young Conductor* - B: *Conducting performing act*. Moscow: Muzika, 1975, page 397"

¹² Teplov, Boris. *Psychology of Music Abilities*. Moscow: Academy of Psychological Sciences, 1947, page 68."

These features and any other similar ones are used often in conducting. The special importance of timbre and dynamic sense is due to the fact that they are of great significance for building the structure of music interpretation by having a detailed attitude to the dynamic and timbre components of sound. RHYTHM SENSE is based on the conditional reflexes of time, which are fundamental for the central nervous system. The aural and the kinetic senses are combined for all types of musical activities (composition, performance, listening). Due to the important role of the locomotor apparatus for conducting, this combination is of primary significance. However, it is necessary to examine the more complex structure of rhythm sense, which is connected with the higher cognitive processes, separately. As we already noted, the complex action of the listed types of sensations forms musical perception.

B. Musical perception

Perception is determined as a basic mental process of subjective reflection of the objects and the phenomena from the reality in the totality of their properties and parts upon their immediate impact on the sensory organs¹³. Therefore, perception gives information about the integrity of individual aspects of objects and phenomena, unlike sensations, which give consciousness information about them. Concurrently "normal perception" is not a purely passive, meditative act, but also an active reflection. Eyes, ears and other body parts don't perceive in isolation, but as part of a specific human being with a particular attitude to the perception who has needs, interests, pursuits, desires and feelings. Perception is not a mechanical sum of individual sensations but a brand new step of sensory knowledge with

its specific features"¹⁴. Due to the complex structure of perception, differentiating its distinct types is carried out depending on the prevailing active analyser. On this basis, perception is divided into categories such as visual, aural, etc.

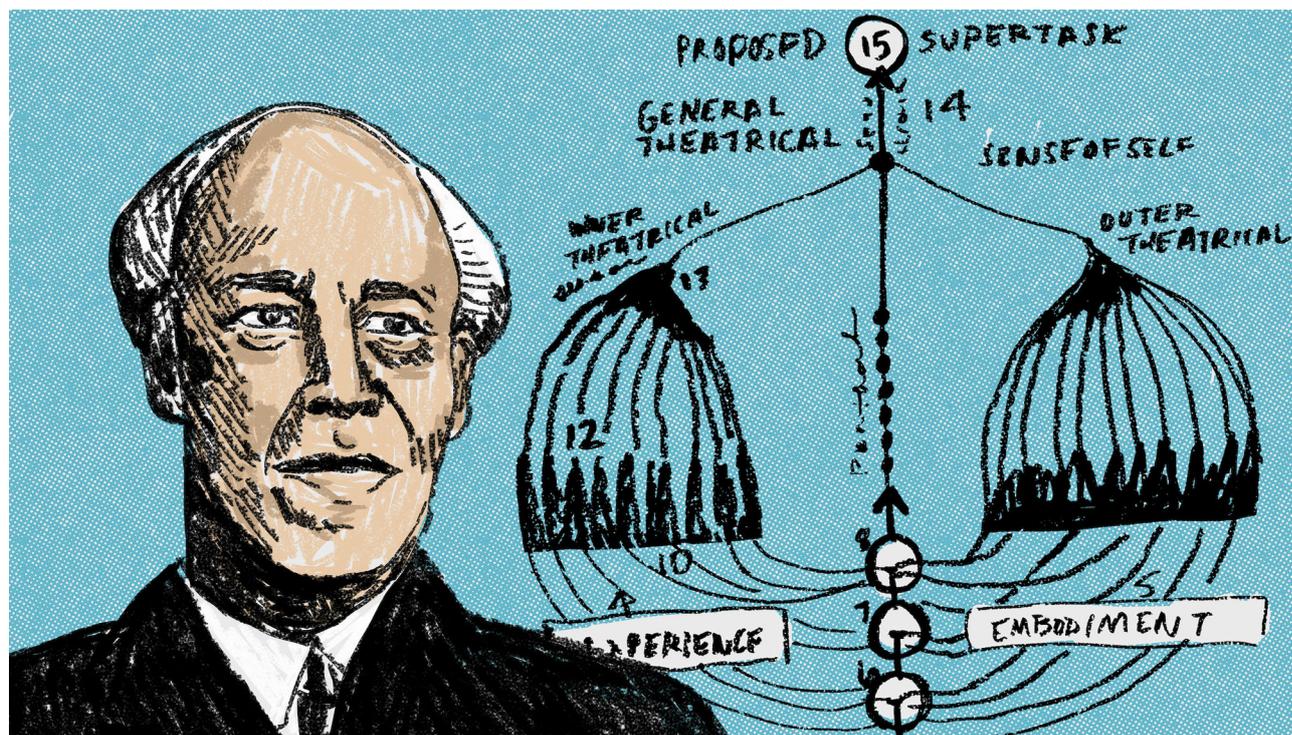
1. AURAL PERCEPTION: in addition to the combination of different types of aural sensations, aural perception possesses a brand-new level of features, among which the following are of great significance for conducting:

- The perception of the melody as a complete musical thought, most often a carrier of the basic musical content or "melodic hearing". Aside from external signs - height, durability, timbre and strength of the individual tones, an individual perceives melody in its entirety and the emotional information it carries.

13 Hristozov, Hristo. *Musical psychology*. Plovdiv. Macros, 1995, page 11.

14 Piryov, Gencho, Lyuben Desev.

Concise Dictionary in Psychology. Sofia: Partizdat, 1981, page 36.



K.S. Sranislavski: the system

Melody cannot be perceived as just a physiological agitator; in this connection, B. Teplov states that such "absolute non-musicality is impossible for the regular psyche"¹⁵.

- When conducting, melodic hearing has an important function due to the fact that melody is one of the main forms of expression and its active perception (resp. modelling) is a significant element of the creative process. It is important for the conductor to perceive and, based on their perception, to influence the process of musical interpretation on forming the structural components of melody (intonation, rhythm, mode relations). At the same time, emotional perception and the experience of these components in their connection is also an important part of this process.
- The perception of harmony or harmonic hearing expresses itself as the "ability to perceive multi-voice music"¹⁶. As a result of multiple studies, it has been proven that this is the last developed ability of Man (in an ontogenetic and phylogenetic meaning)¹⁷.
- The significance of harmonic hearing in a conductor's activity is undeniable. We can claim that the work of the conductor is impossible without properly

15 Teplov, Boris. *Psychology of Music Abilities*. Moscow: Publ. Academy of pedagogical sciences, 1947, p. 59.

16 Hristozov, Hristo. *Musical psychology*. Plovdiv. Macros, 1995, page 76.

17 As above, page 69.

developing this complex perception. Given that the conductor "operates" with multi-voice music in all its forms, he could not execute the creative process without the active perception of the "vertical".

One of the main specifics of conducting for performing groups, including human voices (choirs, vocal-instrumental and vocal ensembles), is the presence of lyrics, which complicates perception even more, as they add lyrical information systems to the musical structures. With them, the mechanism for perception is connected to other brain centres (in particular, the speech centre). Therefore, we can assume that the whole process of perception is further complicated. In this mechanism, four levels of perception can be differentiated: phonetic - tone - phoneme level, morphological - motive-word level, syntactic - phrase - sentence-level and logic - composition, regarding the complete musical form and according to the meaning and text structure.

2. VISUAL PERCEPTION - based on the conclusions made in chapter four on the role of the visual analyser when conducting, we can determine two types of visual perception:

- visual perception of the musical score, which is directly connected with aural perception and the created musical - aural perceptions:
- visual perception of the performers; also directly connected with aural perception. It ensures additional information when carrying out the creative process.

Weingartner states: "If the conductor is connected to

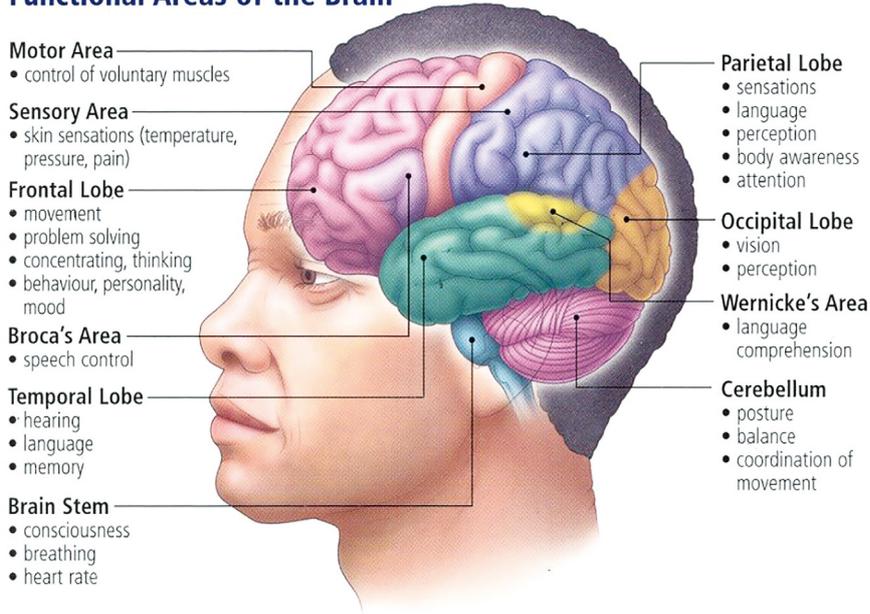


Hermann Scherchen



Boris Michajlovič Teplov

Functional Areas of the Brain¹



The human brain

*the musical score in such a way that he/she cannot break apart from it for even a minute, to look at the orchestra, then he/she is nothing but a tact measurer, incompetent and has no right to call himself/herself an artist*¹⁸. In any case, this type of visual perception is directly dependent on the activity of memory, whose particularities during conducting we will look at later. Both types of visual perception play an important role in the whole psychic process when conducting.

3. THE PERCEPTION OF TIME: this is a "particular form of perception that reflects objective continuity, change and structure of the events that occur in our daily lives"¹⁹. It has been proven that hearing and motor sensations help for the most appropriate perception of time slots that are determined by rhythmic processes in the human organism i.e. heart rhythm and breathing rhythm. As an art that develops in real-time, the perception of time in music is of utmost importance.

When executing the creative process, time perception has two aspects for the conductor:

1. regarding the sense and resp. perceptions for metro-rhythm through establishing conditional reflexes for time;
2. regarding the perception of tempo, which is one of the most important forms of expression in music. As a main form-creating factor, tempo is of incredible importance for creating musical structure and not coincidentally, almost all great conductors in their written materials have examined the issue of "correct" tempo.

¹⁸ Weingartner, Felix. *On conducting*. - B: *Art of conducting*. Sofia: Musical horizons, issue 11/1979, p. 85.

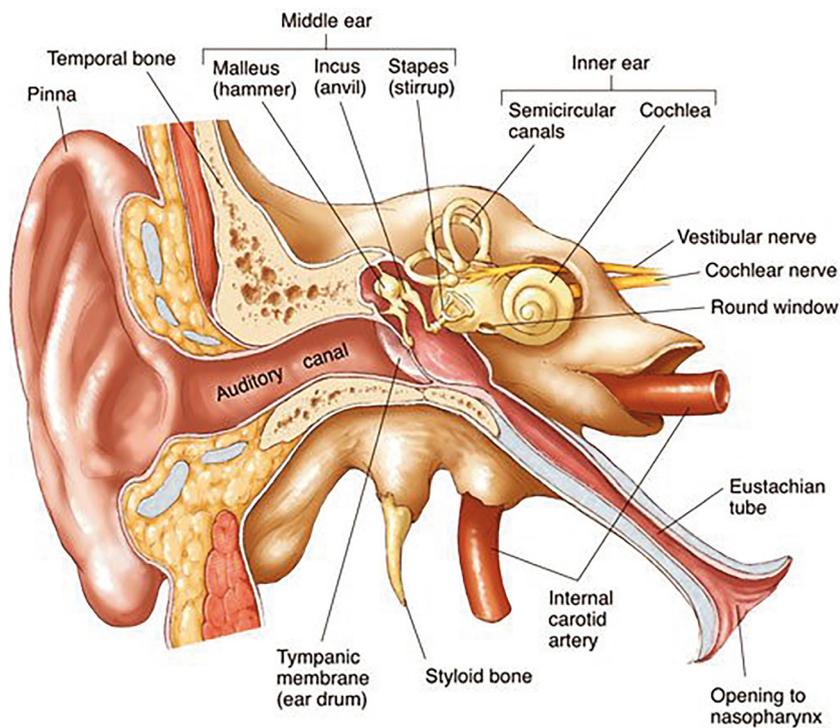
¹⁹ Piriyov, Gencho. Lyuben Desev. *Concise Dictionary in Psychology*. Sofia: Partizdat, 1981, page 37.

Conductors, from Berlioz, Wagner, Weingartner and Furtwängler to current conductors, constantly examine this question, as they seek objective criteria for determining tempo. Some of them even reach the conclusion that the perception of tempo is largely a psychophysiological problem, which creates a connection between the sense of tempo and the conductor's temperament. Berlioz, for example, states: "The most dangerous ones are those lacking activity and energy. They cannot handle a faster tempo. As fast the work may start, if left to their care, they will slow it down until the rhythm reaches a certain level of calmness, apparently corresponding to the speed of their blood movement and the overall exhaustion of the organism... There are people in the cusp of their youth with a lymphatic temperament - as if their blood is circulating in a moderato tempo"²⁰.

Especially attractive, but proving the complexity of tempo perception, are Eugene Ormandy's quotes, recorded by his orchestra performers during rehearsals: "During every concert, I keep feeling some uncertainty in the tempo. It's shown clearly, quarter equal to 80, not 69"... "I conduct slowly because I don't know the tempo"... "I consciously gave you a slower tempo as I don't know what's more correct"... "Note that I am conducting faster and slower, faster and slower. Everything is connected to the previous tempo"²¹. In this strange "mosaic" of quotes, Ormandy unconsciously puts the problem of tempo in its pure psychological aspect.

²⁰ Berlioz, Hector. *Orchestra conductor* - in: *Art of conducting*. Sofia: Musical horizons, issue 11/1979, p. 13.

²¹ Ormandy, Eugene. *Curiosities of rehearsal work*. In: *Music, yesterday, today*. issue 1/1999, p. 52, 54, 60.



The ear

On the other hand, artistic pursuits in the profession of conducting are connected largely to this problem. In this case, it is not just about feeling unsure, complicating the choice of tempo, but more frequently, it is about an aesthetic choice that is directly connected to the issues of artistic thinking. We see a special interest in tempo and its connection to perception in an interview with Prof. V. Kazandzhiev: "For me, the correct tempo is one that corresponds to the natural pulse of the music, which does not create tension... The musicality has to be normal. Any tension is perceived as nervousness. Gluck and Vivaldi themselves have said that tempo is everything. But when you get up on the conductor's podium, your pulse increases to 130 beats per minute. You think you've hit the right tempo, but it turns out to have been faster under the influence of your own increased pulse... The pulse reflects, above all, on the faster tempos. The more spontaneous a conductor is, the higher the chance for a more spontaneous and correct tempo. There is nothing more annoying than attempts to impose tempos on the artist. Yes, in the common effort of creating, there has to be logic and that comes from the tempos preferred by the conductor as well"²².

We must note that as a result of everything said so far, that perception of tempo is in direct relation to other cognitive processes such as musical-aural perception, thinking and imagination. It is also highly dependent on the temperament and character of the conductor. But especially strong is the dependency of this perception on the emotional and wilful psychic processes that create one of the most important components of psychological characteristics of the conductor.

In the recent scientific literature focusing on the issues of cognitive

²² Karapetrov, Konstantin. *Interview with prof. Vasil Kazandzhiev*. - In: *Music, yesterday, today*. issue 6/1994, p. 5-6.

psychology, we find conclusions, which to a great extent explain the complexity and compatibility of these processes: "The issue on where to place the boundary between perception and knowledge or even between sense and perception provokes hot debates. Instead, for being more efficient, we have to review these processes as a part of the continuum. Information runs through the system. Different processes address different issues"²³.

In her work "The Musical Audience," Associate Prof. Irina Haralampieva (PhD), stresses that "[w]e have to note that the musical experience is not only specific but complex. Each moment of perception interweaves senses, emotions, thoughts, memories, associations, etc., which merge into this complex body, spread in the general life experience of the individual and live long after the music has faded away"²⁴.

C. Concepts

Concepts characterize a higher level of knowledge and a transition from sensations and perceptions. They represent visual and summarized images of objects and phenomena from the objective world occurring in the brain, which have no impact on senses at a given time. Generally, they are results from processing and summarizing past perceptions²⁵.

Concepts of different structure and function take part in the creative process of conducting.

Musical-aural concepts are a key

²³ Sternberg, Robert. *Cognitive Psychology* Sofia: Iztok-Zapad, 2012, page 106.

²⁴ Haralampieva, Irina. *The Musical Audience* Sofia: Haini, 2014, page 63.

²⁵ Piryov, Gencho. Lyuben Desev. *Concise Dictionary in Psychology* Sofia: Partizdat, 1981, page 150-151.

component of the creative process of conducting. The main form of expression of these concepts is the internal hearing of the conductor, which Rimsky-Korsakov defines as the "ability for the mental presentation of musical tones and their ratios without the help of an instrument or a voice"²⁶. Hermann Scherchen also mentions the significance of internal hearing in his *Handbook of Conducting*: "The conductor is a presenter of his ideal concepts. The conductor must mentally hear the musical composition in such a clear manner as this music was heard by its creator... This is exactly the perfect internal singing that must create the concept for music in the conductor. If the composition lives in the conductor in its initial form, without being distorted from the material aspect of reproduction, then he/she is worthy of joining the magic of conducting"²⁷.

Musical-aural concepts appear at the very beginning of the creative process when the conductor reads the musical score. Visual and aural moments are carried out by people with highly developed internal hearing. Then aural perception must immediately provoke corresponding movements and immediately "listen with the eyes." Robert Schumann says: "Someone said that the good musician, once having heard an orchestra piece as complex as it may be, must see the entire musical score as it is in front of his eyes. This is the highest perfection, which we may imagine"²⁸.

Upon training the conductor, developing and raising this ability is a paramount task due to the fact that the lack of connection between aural perception and the musical-aural concepts would make it impossible to carry out the creative process. None of the higher mental processes could replace or compensate for such lack of abilities for "hearing" the musical score.

In addition to the formation of musical - aural concepts, visual perception is the basis for the creation of aural concepts.

In conducting, they are essential in two aspects: first, when conducting without a music score, they may add to the musical-aural concepts preserved in their memory. Depending on the type of memory a conductor has, aural concepts may play a more or less important role.

The second aspect of the appearance of aural concepts in conducting is connected with the use of imagery (visual ideas) created on the basis of the musical

content. This process is a result of the connection between different brain centres and the imagination. The occurrence of visual concepts with auditory concepts is an important phenomenon, which is based on the programme music and all genres connected with any form of sound illustration. Rudolf Kan-Schpeier formulates his opinion on this issue as follows: "The fact that the conductor does not usually realize how exactly he/she imagines the content of the composition and how, based on such concept, he/she determines the manner of performance, is also explained with the fact that the essence of such concepts, as a rule, may not be connected with any specific objects... The essence of many compositions, as well as the mental nature of many conductors, is such that the specified concepts of objective nature are not always revealed to them"²⁹. The issue for the positive or negative role of the aural - visual associations is too subjective. We cannot and we don't have to issue "a sentence" - "for" or "against" this phenomenon. The most important thing, in this

29 Kan-Schpeier, Rudolf. *Handbook on Conducting - In: Conducting performing act*. Moscow: Muzika, 1975, page 209.



Felix Weingartner

26 Rimsky-Korsakov, Nikolay. Quote by Hristozov, Hristo. *Musical psychology*. Plovdiv. Macros, 1995, page 84

27 Scherchen, Hermann. *Handbook of conducting*. - B: *Conducting performing act*. Moscow: Muzika, 1975, page 209-210."

28 Schumann, Robert Quote by Hristozov, Hristo. *Musical psychology*, page 86.

case, is that it again proves the mutual dependence and the connection between different psychological processes. In particular, we may speak about enriching aural concepts as a result of the complex action of the imagination, the specific - image functions and the emotional sphere, which has an individual and spontaneous nature.

In conclusion, we have to highlight that both visual and musical-aural concepts are in direct correlation with the gained professional experience of the conductor. Prof. Dimitar Hristov writes: "For example, the experienced composer would find the defects of a music sheet even visually, without the help of his/her internal hearing and his/her hand automatically corrects the flow displayed on the music score"³⁰. The experienced conductors have the same ability - by gaining knowledge and skills, their musical - aural and visual concepts are enriched, which on its part increases "the palette" of their creative opportunities and the broadness of the mental processes participating in the creative act.

30 Hristov, Dimitar. Hypothesis for the polyphonic structure. Sofia: Naukaizkustvo, page 133.



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INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR CHORAL MUSIC



**IFCM and the Qatar National Choral Association
Working on the World Symposium on Choral Music 2023/2024
IFCM Press Release**

IFCM AND THE QATAR NATIONAL CHORAL ASSOCIATION WORKING ON THE WORLD SYMPOSIUM ON CHORAL MUSIC 2023/2024

IFCM PRESS RELEASE

In a historical first for the Middle East region, the International Federation for Choral Music (IFCM) welcomes the choral world to Qatar! At the moment, when humanity is facing one of the biggest pandemics in more than 50 years, cultural events around the globe are on hold. Nonetheless, IFCM and its partner, the Qatar National Choral Association (QNCA), are working hard on the next World Symposium on Choral Music – the 13th WSCM 2023/24! The world's largest, non-competitive, international choral event will be held

in Doha, Qatar, in 2023. We welcome you to a land steeped in tradition, yet open to the world.

The signing ceremony of first agreement between IFCM and QNCA was to have taken place at this year's 12th WSCM in Auckland, New Zealand. Sadly, as with so many other events this year, WSCM2020 had to be cancelled. However, in the spirit of moving forward and better days ahead, we are happy to share a short [video](#) of the online official signing of the contract between IFCM and QNCA. Plan now to join us!



CHORAL WORLD NEWS



Remembering Colin Mawby
Aurelio Porfiri

Choirs and Corona virus ... The Day After
Aurelio Porfiri

Chatting with Anton Armstrong
A proud member of the International Federation for
Choral Music for more than 30 years
Andrea Angelini

REMEMBERING COLIN MAWBY

AURELIO PORFIRI

composer, conductor, writer and educator

SOME WEEKS AGO, OUT OF THE BLUE, I LEARNT OF THE DEATH OF THE BRITISH COMPOSER COLIN MAWBY. HE WAS ONE OF MY VERY GOOD FRIENDS, BUT IN RECENT MONTHS WE HAD NOT REALLY BEEN IN TOUCH, SO I WAS NOT AWARE OF THE RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN HIS LIFE. I JUST LEARNT THAT HE PASSED AWAY ON 24 NOVEMBER 2019, AT THE AGE OF 83. I FELT TRULY SORRY BECAUSE I DID NOT GET THE CHANCE TO TALK WITH HIM BEFORE THIS FATEFUL EVENT.

I had been in contact with him on several occasions. He was a collaborator of my publishing company and generously sent me his music for publication. He was always very eager to collaborate and indeed we got along very well. He was also in juries in choral competitions where I was the director of the jury. And finally, when I was working in Macau, I had the chance to invite him as visiting professor to the university where I was working, so we spent several days together in Macau, China. On that occasion, I also carried out an interview with him, resulting in around 4 hours of audio, where he spoke about his life and ideas. I hope that soon I will be able to publish that interview in a book format, as a memory to this wonderful man.

Yes, because he was a wonderful man, very British (with that kind of British aplomb we identify, perhaps wrongly, with this name) but also very approachable and friendly. He was fond of life and its pleasures. He loved good food, good wine, beautiful women, and that for me is always a good sign of someone that knows how to enjoy this short pilgrimage we have here on earth.

He was also deeply religious, and we had many conversations about this topic, conversations that revealed our personal struggles and desires. For him of course, faith was a different matter compared to me. Even if we were both Catholics but being Catholic in the UK is certainly different from being Catholic in Italy. He had great respect for the tradition of sacred music and indeed he was also very careful in identifying the strength and weaknesses of the British choral tradition, as there are in any tradition. This does not mean he did not appreciate the great achievements of British choirs, but sometimes he found the sound of those choirs a little 'cold', and he was more appreciative of the sound of choirs from Latin countries, that were often not so perfect from a technical point of view, but certainly had a more expressive sound. As an example, let us see what he said in my blog *// Naufrago*, that I coordinated

years ago, and to which he was a contributor: *"England has had a great influence on European performance but we need to understand its problems. Take what is good and discard the remainder."* I think this is quite a courageous statement from a British conductor, because let us not forget that he was not just a normal conductor: he was in charge of the choir of Westminster Cathedral for several years and then also



Colin Mawby
(9/5/1936 - 24/11/2019)



Colin Mawby with Gabriel Dessauer

managed other prestigious choirs. He tried to be very honest with his ideas and feelings about music, even if he deeply appreciated his own choral tradition. And he did not intend to discuss Anglican or Catholic traditions, he was just giving general assessments on the quality of the choral sound. When you really and honestly love something, you are also in the position to see the good and the bad, as I am sure is true for musicians all over the world.

Nevertheless, he certainly also admired some parts of his country's choral tradition, and even more he loved the choral music tradition of the Church, a tradition that he contributed to a lot with his own compositions, the most famous of which is *Ave Verum* that is sung all over the world. Indeed, it was for that piece that I first contacted him by email many years ago. But then I discover other pieces by him: he published hundreds of pieces among which there are authentic gems of choral music. As I have said, he really loved choral music and its use within the Catholic tradition. This is what he said in another post for my blog: *"On Good Friday I attended 'Tenebrae' at the Brompton Oratory in London. A superb choir was singing the wonderful Responsories by Victoria. The solemnity and dignity of the occasion*

was gripping and deeply moving. The Gregorian chant was beautiful and hearing the Lamentations sung in the ancient tone was transfixing. Truly the prophet Isaiah was again speaking to us from a distance of over two thousand years: I was listening to a chant that Christ would probably have heard. Although the liturgical reforms have had fine effects, we have also lost a lot. The sense of spirituality and reverence has been sadly diluted. We need to make an appraisal of what has been lost and restore the best of it to the liturgy. The souls of worshippers cry out for the sense of mystery: liturgy must be God centred and not man centred." We should not forget that the role of Christianity in the development of choral music was huge, fundamental. He was a very good herald of this.

What kind of composer was he? He composed lots of choral music, mainly sacred music. Music that always had that kind of beautiful spiritual character. His way of composing was mostly harmonic - we often discussed about this. He was not really into the kind of counterpoint writing that probably is most used in countries like Italy, at least in the past and with some composers. We often talked of my late teacher, Domenico Bartolucci, for whom he had a deep admiration. There is also an

interview he did with him and I think it is still available to see on YouTube. But his style, as I have said, was more harmonic, while still being very interesting and full of pathos and enriched by the deep knowledge he had of the choir. He really knew how to write for choirs in a very meaningful way. I think his music should certainly be performed more around the world because it is deeply inspired and deserving of better appreciation. Also, in some of his publications he re-harmonised chorales from the Christian tradition, that are also very interesting, and I am sure students would learn a lot from these publications because it is here that we can really experience his superior sense for good harmonic solutions and alternatives.

As I said at the beginning, he was a good and cheerful man. From our conversations, I felt he had not had an easy life, but he never lost that joie de vivre even later in life. In the field of choral and sacred music, he will certainly be missed, because he was a protagonist and he left a great heritage of his own compositions that can be performed by choirs with different technical abilities. As for me, I lost a dear friend and someone with whom I had a higher spiritual connection. It was one of the lucky encounters of my life, and certainly in my heart he will never be forgotten.

Colin Mawby really knew how to write for choirs in a very meaningful way. His music should certainly be performed more around the world because it is deeply inspired and deserving of better appreciation.



Colin Mawby teaching in a choral workshop



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CHOIRS AND CORONA VIRUS ... THE DAY AFTER

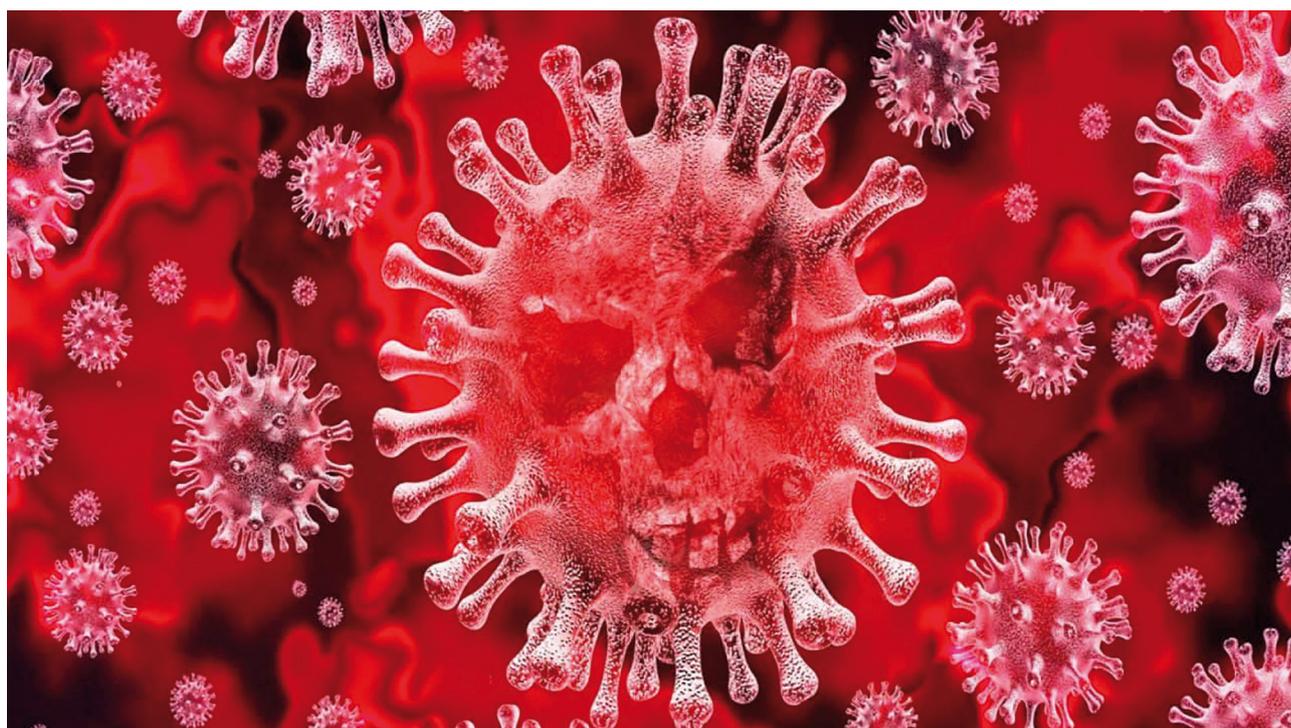
AURELIO PORFIRI

composer, conductor, writer and educator

I HAVE BEEN WORKING WITH CHOIRS AND CHORAL MUSIC FOR ALMOST FORTY YEARS, LONG ENOUGH TO BE ABLE TO SAY THAT WORKING WITH CHOIRS HAS TAKEN UP MOST OF MY EXISTENCE. AND SO NOW I NEED TO REFLECT ON THE SITUATION WE ARE LIVING THROUGH, CREATED BY CORONA VIRUS: A SITUATION THAT HAS SURPRISED US ALL, EMBITTERED US, FRIGHTENED US, BUT ALSO MADE US ASK HOW WE WILL BE ABLE TO BEGIN AGAIN ONCE THIS NIGHTMARE IS OVER. AND WE DO NOT EVEN KNOW WHEN WILL BE OVER, BECAUSE THE "EXPERTS" ARE VERY GOOD AT TERRIFYING US ALMOST EVERY DAY.

Beginning again will not be easy, since we are now terrified of being close to each other, of being exposed to the famous droplets and perhaps being infected by someone who does not show even the slightest symptom. We now see all of these things as potential dangers, and ourselves as a potential danger to others. Singing together in a choir is not the safest activity in these circumstances, since it requires physical proximity between people who are emitting sounds that also carry with them emissions of the famous tiny droplets. If you are singing in a choir of 40 or 50 people,

how can you ever be sure that none of them will be exposed to this virus? Then we should also consider that – thanks be to God, from one point of view – in many of our choirs there are quite a few older people. But how can we protect them from someone who involuntarily, without any symptoms, could be a carrier of the corona virus that is much more dangerous for the elderly, as we now know? This is a problem perceived by many choral conductors nowadays, who have found themselves suddenly without a job. The problem concerns everyone, old or young, because anyone



can become infected and spread the virus to family members who may be at risk because of age and health conditions.

These would have seemed absurd questions even only two months ago. Yet this cataclysmic event has turned our whole lives upside down and threatens to also upset our future. We need to think hard about how to protect ourselves until this virus is finally defeated, as we all hope it will be. Of course we do not want to stop all our choir singing, which is so important for so many of us, as a means of praising God for some, and of socialization for others. As I have said many times, choirs are little communities where friends meet, people meet their future life partners, and we all meet people who may become important fixed points in our lives. Certainly we do not want to renounce all this, so we must find a way to face the psychological block created in these months in which we have been terrified by the idea that physical closeness can be dangerous, not only with strangers but even within our own homes. I have seen some attempts at

creating a virtual choir, using the instruments offered by technology. This is certainly something to reflect on, a type of activity that opens up interesting possibilities for a future in which technology will be ever more present in our daily lives. But these new possibilities must not replace meeting people and singing as we stand side by side. Even if we do not want to admit it, we truly need each other in all aspects of our lives: we need to encounter others, to laugh with others, to sing with others, to speak with others. We are social animals, and choral activity is part of this. We must think how to continue to do what choirs have always done in all parts of the world: singing together and creating the experience of the beauty of choral music. We must overcome the trauma that has cut us off from one another and not allow our fears to become an obstacle to building community with others. Let us be honest and admit that this is not easy. I am not sure if it is happening where you live too, but here in central Italy where I live, even though the virus has not seriously affected my city,

As is often said, the importance of certain things is understood only when these things are taken away. And now is the time to understand how beautiful it was to meet our friends in the choir, to sing with them, to be able to meet them on Sundays for worship or for a concert or a choral performance of some sort.

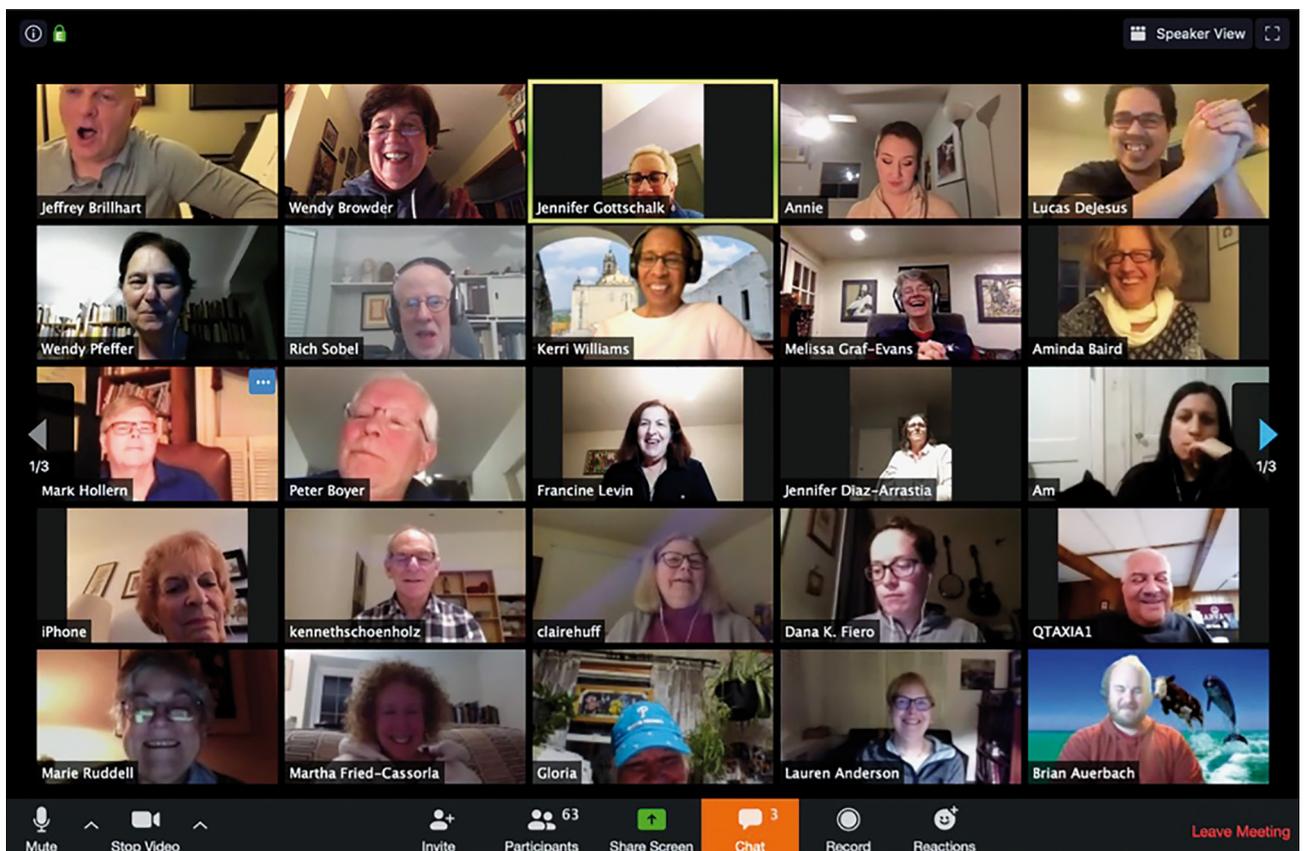


Eric Whitacre's virtual choir

you can see how people are very careful to avoid each other, always thinking that the danger may be everywhere. We have been strongly affected psychologically, and this will stay with us much longer than the virus. We have to go back to meeting others, we need to find a way to be what we have always been. As is often said, the importance of certain things is understood only when these things are taken away. And now is the time to understand how beautiful it was to meet our friends in the choir, to sing with them, to be able to meet them on Sundays for worship or for a concert or a choral performance of some sort. All this has now been denied us, and we cannot hide the fact that we feel its loss and we want it back. We cannot give corona virus the upper hand; we cannot permit that in 2020 a virus can dictate the way in which the entire human race has to live. We consider this to be a temporary interruption, a phase which took us by surprise and during which society did not respond adequately; and so we must try to begin normal life again, including the area of choral music, which – let us not forget – involves millions of people. Therefore, taking all necessary precautions, we need to put this terrible time behind us. Fear is a bad teacher. But if we are forced to wear face masks for safety reasons, this will be another obstacle to taking up our choral activity again, because singing with masks on is obviously not the same thing. We must think seriously about how we can maintain our choirs without placing ourselves and others in danger. The situation is extremely complex since at every minute we are prey to a steady stream of alarming news that is fed to us by the media.

We must not allow fear to chain us; we are greater than fear, and the noble purpose of preserving choral activity will help us to find creative and effective solutions which can be implemented safely and in such a way that no one will feel threatened by simply making contact with other people. This will not be easy to begin with, because we are coming out of a very difficult time of trial, during which our collective psyche has been subjected to almost intolerable pressure. But we will do it; I am sure that we will do it; for the sake of the respect that we owe ourselves and those around us, we must do it.

*Translated from the Italian by
Giuseppe Pellegrino
Edited by Gillian Forlivesi, Italy/UK*



Members of the Singing City Choir hold a virtual practice using the Zoom video meeting app. (Courtesy of Singing City Choir)

CHATTING WITH ANTON ARMSTRONG

A proud member of the International Federation for Choral Music for more than 30 years

ANDREA ANGELINI

ICB Managing Editor, conductor and composer

Andrea Angelini: *Dear Anton, you have now been conducting the St. Olaf Choir for 30 years. How did you get in touch with them?*

Anton Armstrong: I was 16 when my pastor, Rev. Robert Hawk, told me that the St. Olaf Choir was performing at the Lincoln Centre in Manhattan. Knowing my love for excellent choral music, my pastor naturally assumed I'd be interested in this concert, but I had tickets to see the Moody Blues at Madison Square Garden.

He wasn't one to take no for an answer. Rev. Hawk went to my parents, and my mother vetoed the English rock band. The St. Olaf Choir put on a memorable choral concert, and the image of the iconic purple robes worn by the choir stayed with me.

A year and half later, I attended a Lutheran College fair on Long Island looking to strike out on my own and find a school far from New York. There were long lines of students waiting to talk to representatives of my top choice colleges. Growing up in New York has left me with a distaste for traffic, so when I passed—for the third time—a college booth with no line, I accepted an invitation by the admissions officer, Bruce Moe, to learn about St. Olaf College in Minnesota. I remembered the St. Olaf Choir and its purple robes. The college appeared to have everything I was looking for: an inclusive Lutheran tradition in

which vocation was important, and a mission that incorporated a global perspective and fostered the development of the whole person in mind, body, and spirit. Its academics were excellent, and it had a strong religion department, a thriving music department, and great choirs.

But there was still one thing I wanted to know, "how many black students go to your school?"

Moe got a glint in his eye. "You'd make one more."

I thought that was a really honest answer, and I put St. Olaf on my list of colleges to visit.

Can you tell us about your background? Where did you study music and why?

My parents, Esther and William Armstrong, supported my interest in music. They made extreme financial sacrifices for me to pursue my interest in music, including lessons, private schooling and being a member of the American Boychoir.

Carol and Carl Weber (graduates of Westminster Choir College) were the musicians at my home church who started a children's church choir when I was in kindergarten. If it wasn't for Carol, a major part of my musical journey would never have happened. She gave me my first solo when I was six years old - which I can still sing - and provided us with incredibly wise training. She also introduced me to the American Boychoir.

Singing in that choir lit my fire for choral singing. While there were only three or four African American boys in the choir at the time, we were treated equally and were valued for our talent and how hard we were willing to work. It was a transformative experience and established my standard for excellence in choral music.

Then of course came my time as a student at St. Olaf, where I learned from my predecessor, Dr. Kenneth Jennings, and conductors Dr. Robert Scholz and Alice Larson. I still remember the first time I heard Alice conduct the St. Olaf Manitou Singers. I'd never heard women sing like that. It wasn't this little girl sound; it was a rich, womanly sound. I remember witnessing the way that Kenneth Jennings would take his hands, and in an instant a phrase would just turn. Finally, there's Bob Scholz, the most pastoral of my teachers, who cared deeply for the music he made, but even more for the human beings who created it.

I was also fortunate to be guided in my years of graduate study at the University of Illinois and Michigan State University by inspirational mentors such as Dr. Harold Decker, Dr. Charles Smith, and Ms. Ethel Armeling. Perhaps the greatest gift of my Illinois years was meeting my dear friend and colleague of nearly 42 years, Dr. André Thomas.

Conducting a choir, especially at as high level as you do, includes not only knowing the technique, but it's also necessary at times to be a life tutor, a friend, a psychologist. What advice do you give to young conductors who want to start a career in this field?

As a young conductor, I tried to create a perfect choral performance. Throughout the years, however, I have learned that perfection is impossible. Instead, I seek excellence as we share our voices together in communal song.

As an adult, a person whose influence has steered my life professionally is Helen Kemp, professor emerita of voice and church music at Westminster Choir College. Her mantra, "Body, mind, spirit, and voice - it takes the whole person to sing and rejoice" has stayed with me for more than 40 years. I credit her with shaping my calling as a vocal music educator and conductor.

For young conductors, emphasis should not be placed on the subject, it has to be on the person. We use music as a means of grace to reach the inner soul of those we have the duty and delight to lead in our choral ensembles.

Do you think that choral music can be not only a form of art, but also a way to find something greater than us, whether you call him God, interior peace or something else?

For me, the art of choral music is an expression and praise of thanksgiving for God, or whatever people call that infinite being.

Throughout my career, music of the church - sacred music - has been the vast majority of the music I've performed with choral groups. Part of my roots growing up as an African American in the United States were

developing a faith in God, care of neighbour, and care of creation. Also, a desire to serve in the world while not expecting that you were owed something in return. Finally, faith in a God that would walk with you through whatever challenges you face in life.

Throughout my years as a conductor, that experience has guided me as I've tried opening the world of the infinite creator to people of all ages. I realize there are many ways to experience that infinite creator, and for me, that God. I often feel closest to God while singing or conducting choral music.

Speaking about choral repertoire, to which repertoire do you feel closest?

A large part of my work as both a singer and conductor has been rooted in the Western choral canon of Europe and North America. Consequently, music of the church has been a strong component of that, but I've also explored secular music.

I'm also drawn to folk music from throughout the world, especially the negro spiritual. The negro spiritual speaks about the human condition - of pain and pleasure, joy and sorrow, and triumph over the worst indignities that can be put upon another human being. These elements are what's made this genre of choral music so beloved throughout the world, and why I have especially enjoyed sharing it throughout my international conducting engagements.

In a previous edition of ICB, there was a discussion about 'the culture of a conductor'. To explain this thought better, having culture is not only having perused many books or listened to many choral pieces, but being part of these 'webs of significance'. Now, we cannot deny







that the bulk of the repertoire of choral music comes from western music. It would be unfair to hide this kind of self-evident truth. Some say that many conductors, because of their place of birth and cultural upbringing, are not and never will be part of this kind of tradition in the deepest sense. Do you think that any choir, no matter their cultural and geographical origins, can perform any kind of choral music?

Your question raises an issue that is currently on the minds of many vocal music educators in the 21st century, namely one of cultural appropriation. I don't think you must be of a certain race or culture to do music of a certain race or culture. However, I do believe as we are rigorously trained to understand and perform music of Western choral cannon, those same aspects of study and performance practice *must* be applied to music outside of one's own culture.

Conductors must take the time to study the culture of a piece, aspects of its performance and music style, the use of language and dialect, in order to pay proper homage to the people from which this music emanates. If this is done well, I believe music can be performed from outside one's own culture.

The International Federation for Choral Music (IFCM) is a world choral network. In your opinion, what should be its main goals and tasks?

I have been a proud member of the International Federation for Choral Music for more than 30 years and have had the opportunity to attend every World Symposium on Choral Music since the original in Vienna in 1987. I was sorely disappointed the 2020 Symposium in New Zealand was cancelled due to COVID-19. IFCM is an important bridge to build relationships

between choral communities from across the globe. At the symposiums I have been a delegate, lecturer, masterclass instructor, and choir conductor. These gatherings have been some of the most important events organized by IFCM, providing invaluable networking and exposure to choral music from around the world.

I also value the continuing research of IFCM and its work in developing nations. In the more recent years, its ability to bring people together through the internet has been crucial to developing communal song throughout the world.

You travel a lot as guest conductor and clinician. Where do you feel at home? Which foreign country is closest to your habits and your ideas about the performance and practice of the repertoire you conduct? And why?

My international experiences have helped me learn that our work can help build bridges and heal wounds. The songs we sing from different parts of the world are often the way we enter a cultural experience very different from our own. If we can treat that music with respect and do our best to understand how and why that music originated, we start to understand the people who created it, and we find a commonality in how we exist together. Once we begin singing together, our differences of gender, age, race, ethnicity, nationality, religious expression or not, sexual orientation, and socio-economic standing don't disappear, but instead cease to become barriers.

I must admit that wherever I've travelled in the world, I've felt welcome. This has only strengthened my opinion that when we sing together, we break down the barriers that can divide us. I've spent a great deal of



time in Norway and South Korea, and both of the countries have become like second homes to me. Through the gift of choral music, I've made friends throughout the world, and this has been one of the great blessings of being a conductor.

Anton, I would like to ask you a question as an 'Italian director'. Italy, especially Rome and Venice, are considered the cradle of Renaissance polyphony. Why is this music, even in the 21st Century, still so admired and performed?

The music of the Renaissance is noted for the beauty and independence of the vocal musical line. This music also affords the singer and the listener to create beautiful harmonies. There is also a close interweaving between the text and music of these pieces that captures emotions of the human soul. That intersection touches us at the very core of our being.

Going back to the St. Olaf Choir, what are your next projects with them?

The COVID-19 pandemic has turned our world and any plans I've had for the St. Olaf Choir upside down. We certainly are facing a new paradigm shift in how we'll even exist as the St. Olaf Choir in the near future. However, I hope that, despite this pandemic, our future aspirations will come to fruition.

One great dream of mine is to bring the choir to Africa. I'm also eager to resume projects with several of the wonderful music organizations here in Minnesota, including the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, VocalEssence, Magnum Chorum, and more.

Finally, as I look ahead at my final years as conductor of the St. Olaf Choir, I consider the possibility of new recording projects, in whatever forms that might take place. I also want to explore more the role of choral music as an advocate for social justice in the world!

Life is also made of dreams, some of them are probably impossible to fulfil. If you had a special power, what would you do to make the world better through choral music?

This might be an idealistic aspiration, but if I had the power to do so, it would be that all people throughout the world be encouraged to use their God-

given skills of singing. The voice is the most human of instruments. Through it, we find common ground between people, share each other's songs and lives, and find a common path of humanity.

This has been clear to me during the 23 years I've been part of the Oregon Bach Festival. Through this 50-year-old festival, founders Helmuth Rilling and Royce Saltzman have vividly showcased how people throughout the globe can make music with each other, come together, build bridges, and create enriching, life-long relationships through the art of choral music.

Finally, if you were not at St. Olaf, what else would you be doing and where?

I started my career at Calvin College (now Calvin University), conducting choirs at the institution and within the community. More than most people might understand, it was a very difficult decision to leave there when I assumed my current role at St. Olaf in 1990.

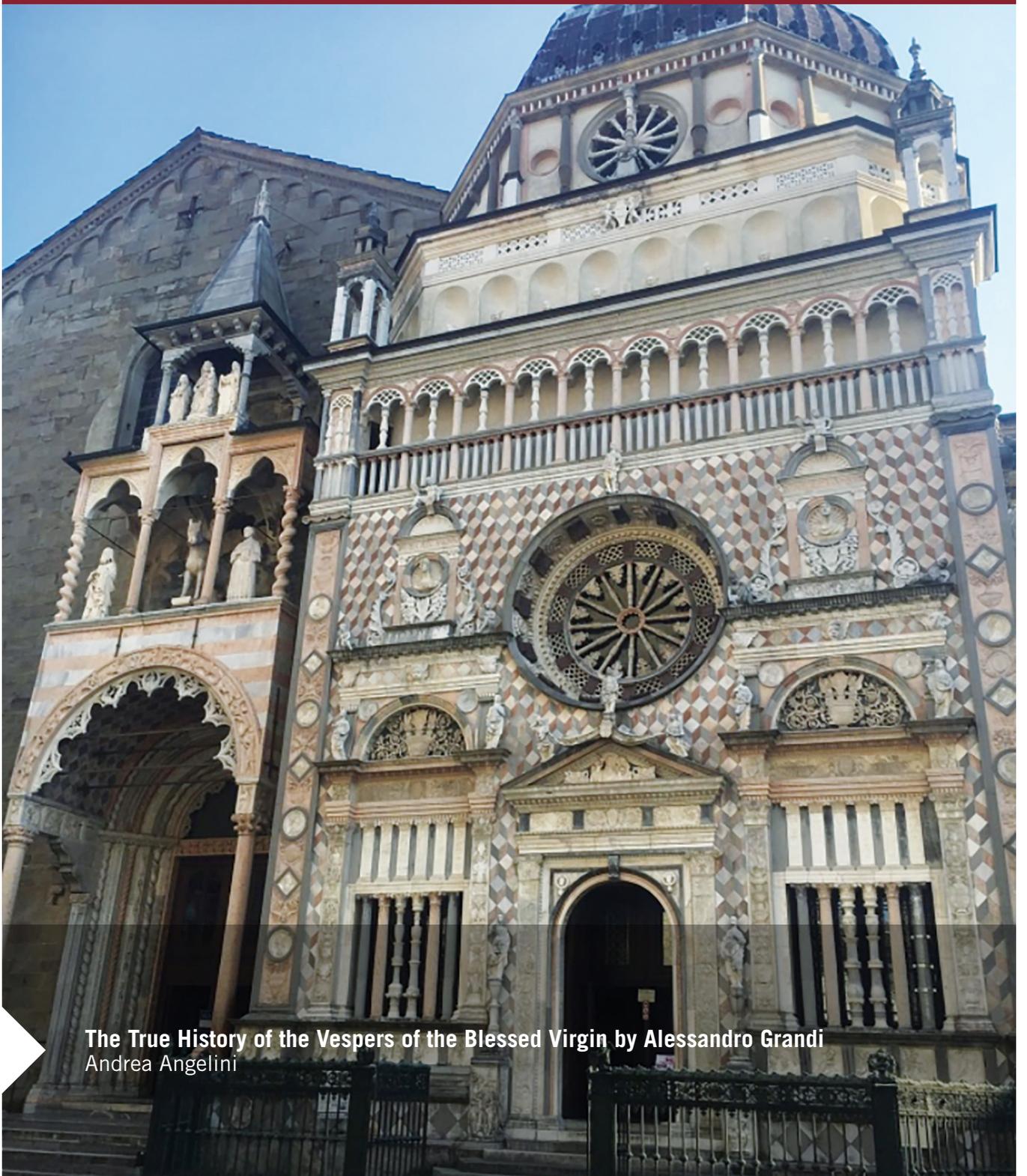
However, I feel a vocation, a *vocare*, to St. Olaf.

The college is not perfect, but it is a place where people come to study, work, and strive to have a place of belonging. We live in a world that is so divided, where people are so quick to find the things that separate us. One of the great things about working in music - especially choral music - is that we can all find a place of belonging and a place where we can express ourselves and find community with those around us.

Also, St. Olaf has been a community that has aspired to nurture and lift up "servant leaders" in whatever our calling in life may be. For me, this sense of calling - "vocare" has been powerfully carried out as a member of the St. Olaf College community and especially through the work and mission of the St. Olaf Choir.

Edited by Mirella Biagi, UK/Italy

IMPOSSIBLE INTERVIEWS



The True History of the Vespers of the Blessed Virgin by Alessandro Grandi
Andrea Angelini

THE TRUE HISTORY OF THE VESPERS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

BY ALESSANDRO GRANDI

ANDREA ANGELINI

ICB Managing Editor, conductor and composer

IT WAS EARLY MORNING ON 2 MAY 1630, WHEN THE TELEPHONE RANG IN MY COUNTRY HOUSE ON THE FIRST HILLS OF RIMINI. THAT ANNOYING SOUND TOOK ME BY SURPRISE... WHO COULD IT BE AT THIS HOUR, ESPECIALLY IN THESE GLOOMY TIMES, WITH THE BREATHS OF THE PLAGUE REACHING THE CITY OF BOLOGNA?

For over a year we had been locked in our homes, in keeping with the provisions of the Legate of the Papal States, Cardinal Stefano Bonaccinus. His guards wandered not only in the cities, but also through the alleys of the countryside often sowing terror in someone who, in defiance of the severe provisions but moved by real necessity, dared to wander beyond the 175 feet allowed from their home. A few days earlier we heard of a farmer flogged for recovering his plow and a poor ox in a field a little further away. Unhappy, the henchmen also whipped the innocent animal. The news does not report whether, either out of ignorance or mercy, the soldiers spared the plow from the same fate.

With these dark thoughts, not yet properly coordinated due to the abrupt awakening, I rushed to the device which continued in its undeterred sound. A lost little voice on the other side of the cable, that perhaps had lost any hope of getting an answer, said: *'Andrea, it's Alessandro, Alessandro Grandi from Bergamo'*.

Now, you can imagine my surprise at hearing those words! I hadn't heard from him for almost four years, since September 1626 to be precise. I met him and Claudio

(Monteverdi) in a tavern of the lagoon city where the latter was in charge as *Maestro di Cappella* in San Marco and the former was his deputy. It is known that there was no good blood between the two, especially more recently when they were working together in the great basilica. In fact, in 1610, Claudio had published his famous *'Vespers of the Blessed Virgin'* as a unitary work, composed as a musical 'unicum'. My friend Alessandro had assembled one, for liturgical purposes, using pieces that he composed between 1610 and 1625. The fact that his 'Vespers' was a kind of patchwork is confirmed by the absence of the antiphons sung before and after the Psalms and of the Magnificat.

K. Henry 2. kissing the knee of the Pope's Legat coming into England.



A pope's legate

During that September meeting, as soon as Claudio had left the tavern a little tipsy, I got hold of a handwritten copy directly from the hands of my friend who said to me: *'Here, please take a look, I can't stand that he composed a Vespers and I didn't.'* I took a quick look at that pile of paper and then, perhaps naively, I replied: *'Alessandro, these are your previous works, you can't compete with Monteverdi ...'*

I think my answer annoyed him extremely, as he left that stinky tavern irritated and yelling I don't know what insults, a mixture of unrepeatable words that he must have learned during the Ferrara years borrowed from the usually refined language of the Venetians. If I were not convinced that it had been a ploy to leave me alone to settle the bill of what the two ravenous mouths had consumed and gulped down, I would probably have now put down the receiver gracefully without waiting for any reply. But as I was aware of his impetuous but genuine character, I also felt sorry for him as he had lived for the past three years in the city of Bergamo, which together with Milan was a target of the terrible plague, so I waited for him to continue the conversation. *'Do you remember my Vespers?'*, he



The Landsknechts

said. *'You had looked at it absently then, but I have to tell you that you were wrong, my friend, I would like you to publish it.'*

This news left me startled and with a touch of indignation. It was not a masterpiece, perhaps a good collection of songs, but how was it possible to invest time and money in a project of dubious quality? Or was I wrong? I had to check immediately, and I could do so because the copy that he had given me at that time still lay in some chest in my basement.

I was surprised, however, by the last thing he said to me: *'Andrea, come to Bergamo please, the*

situation is serious, the plague is decimating us and I would like to entrust you with the latest revision, the one you will give to the press.' He had to be crazy to ask me this, when perhaps everything could be discussed and viewed on *Skypus*, the new system of connection between the State of the Church and the Duchy of Milan and Mantua. A quick consultation gave us the answer that we feared and that he perhaps already knew: the *Lanzichenecchi*, on their way to Mantua had torn the cables leaving the population north of the Po without any hint of what was happening south of the river. All I could do was to leave.

I collected the essentials that I could use together with a whole variety of face masks, the PF4, FFPP1, TRP34, HMN67, which according to the noblemen of the place it was mandatory to wear in order to cross the respective border. Obviously, they were all the same, but each duke or prince made them on their own to pocket taxes and duties from the people. Finally, the papal scribe wrote a certificate in which I declared that I could go, at my own risk, to Bergamo for an 'unspecified work commitment.'

After two days of travel, forced to change buggies every few hours, I entered the Duchy of Milan. I





Santa Maria Maggiore, Bergamo. Alessandro Grandi's window is on the right side, second floor of the little house besides the church

assure you that the situation appeared to me in all its seriousness, really similar to what I would have read 230years later in Manzoni's poem. At the gates of Bergamo I was amazed and I thought that hell really had to be there, so similar it was to what Dante had told me before. The terror of the absence and of the lazaretto sharpened the brain: the sick were not reported, the Monatti and their supervisors were bribed; from the clerks of the tribunal, deputed by it to visit the corpses, false certificates were received with money.

Alexander had to be, if still alive, holed up in the rectory of Santa Maria Maggiore and so I thought of going there without delay. I ran away from a poor passer-by who I tried to ask for directions, but I was lucky to see the dome of the basilica standing out against the low profile of the other houses. Once in the small square I looked around to try to see a known face or just for help. '*Andrea, you've arrived, come!*', shouted a gaunt figure from the top of a wall onto which small and half-closed windows faced. He gestured with his hand to indicate a door to the left of the building and I returned the greeting, happy to see him, perhaps not in good health, but alive.



A very old face-mask, mod ORB22

We did not embrace each other (the strict rules on social distancing if not respected would have caused us serious trouble with the guards) and we talked all the time wearing the approved mask in use in Bergamo, the ORB22, which I did not have in my bag and therefore Alessandro generously deprived himself of one, giving it heartily to me.

He knew that both he and I were short on time for various reasons and therefore our dialogue was reduced to dealing with what I was there for: the new edition of the Vespers of the Blessed Virgin. *'Listen,'* he said to me, *'I also tried to make a virtual recording of it, I wanted to make you feel the beauty of the sound reproduced, in addition to the impression you could get from the paper; unfortunately I did not make it, many choir members died of plague, and then there were many problems with the connection that works in fits and starts. These are difficult times, my dear.'*

A sincere emotion came over me: I was there, in front of that man who was aware of being a rickety boat on a stormy sea. He was putting all his hope in me to leave behind a work that, if not as beautiful as that by Claudio, was of excellent quality, and showed those characteristics of a lot of sacred music of the time - a combination of first and second practice with a very strong attention to the text and its affections.

The next morning, after a sleepless night talking about that music and how I could help him, I left his house with the conviction that yes, his Vespers would be worthy of publication!

The journey back proved to be much less difficult, except for a meeting from afar with the Lanzichenecchi near Poggio Rusco. Exactly five days after my departure, I was home again and I had in my hands those sheets that only in 2007 did I deliver to Rudolf Ewerhart, a German musicologist friend, who made that edition that we all admire today.

You will wonder why I waited so long before deciding what to do. I have no answers to this question ... I have probably lived for many years with the Hamletic doubt whether it would be better to still serve a respected musician almost overshadowed by the famous Monteverdi or to deprive the world of a work perhaps not so interesting to be listened to.

It was one morning at the end of June 1630 when a phone call from the eminent Doctor Ricciardo announced that Alessandro, his wife and his 10 children had died from the plague that still had no end in sight...

Edited by Louise Wiseman, UK



Alessandro Grandi
(1590-1630)



Claudio Monteverdi
(1567-1643)



ANDREA ANGELINI studied piano (MA) and choral conducting (PHD). His professional group Musica Ficta Vocal Ensemble is specialized in Renaissance Choral Music. He is frequently invited to lead workshops and lectures around the world. Andrea is the artistic director of the

Rimini International Choral Competition, the Claudio Monteverdi Choral Competition and other Festivals in Italy and abroad. He is the President of AERCO, the Choir Association of Region Emilia Romagna, and the Managing Editor of the International Choral Bulletin (ICB). Email: aangelini@ifcm.net

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CHORAL TECHNIQUE



**Performing Microtonal Choral Music, Part 2:
Getting Your Hands Dirty**
Robert Lopez-Hanshaw

PERFORMING MICROTONAL CHORAL MUSIC, PART 2:

Getting Your Hands Dirty

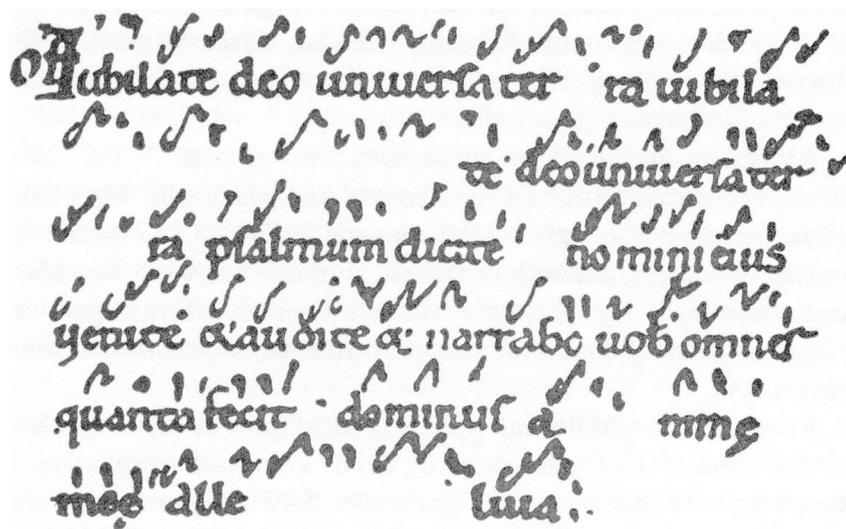
ROBERT LOPEZ-HANSHAW

composer and musical director

EMOTIONALIST PREAMBLE

As a choir director, the majority of my experience is with youth and amateur ensembles. Thus, I usually deal with a different set of concerns and priorities from many readers of NMBx might.

The first thing to know about choirs below the professional level is that, in my firm belief, *we are in it for the community* above all. There is pride in the technical execution, too, of course! But much more so, it's about conveying emotion, and *experiencing* the same emotion, and thus creating and maintaining the bonds of community with each other and with an audience. In addition, it is quite common to encounter experienced choral singers who have limited sight-reading ability, who rely instead on a finely developed skill at retaining and repeating melodies that they hear. The notation then becomes, as it was in medieval Europe, more of a memory aid than a set of explicit instructions.



A facsimile of the manuscript for 'Iubilate deo uniuersa terra' which shows a series of unheightened cheironomic neumes added to psalm verses.

The joy is that it brings the experience of communal music-making into the reach of a very large population. The challenge is that the director is very often, out of necessity, a teacher. So, for amateur choirs, there is no guarantee that the singers will have the whole-score awareness that is a hallmark of elite ensembles; and for many, there is basically a guarantee that they *won't!*

Why on earth would anyone try to bring microtonal music into this ecosystem? Well, for one thing, it will help hone everyone's intonational awareness—which can be sorely needed – but, on its own terms: there are new worlds of emotion to be explored that are unavailable with 12 equal tones alone!

However, a director in this circumstance needs to *sell* the piece in question to a perhaps skeptical ensemble. Use your entire boundless enthusiasm to support the methodical techniques below. If the singers like you, they'll give it a chance.

With all caveats out of the way, then, let's get to the technical side.

THE TECHNICAL SIDE

For teaching microtonal passages, I advocate a "bimodal, target-based" approach. I chose this name because I needed a title that was both accurate and impressive sounding for a paper proposal. (It worked.) But here's what I mean:

Bimodal – Requiring an integrated awareness of *both the horizontal and vertical aspects* of every pitch change. That is, one must keep in mind a new pitch's relationship to the pitch it just left, and also its context within the sonority in which it arrives. In microtonal music, *these aspects are often independent.*

Target-based – Relying on *anticipating the familiar*, whether

melodic or harmonic, or indeed both. When this is done, intervening things can more easily fall into place, even half-unconsciously.

These two tactics are already necessary for being a good choral musician within standard repertoire, but it's important to make them explicit when we're working with microtonality. A useful step toward using them explicitly in microtonal pieces is using them explicitly for challenging *tonal* passages. So, a director might work on these tactics during the semester immediately *before* a microtonal piece is even on the program.

A TONAL EXAMPLE OF THE BIMODAL STRATEGY

One illustrative passage is in Poulenc's *O Magnum Mysterium*. Among many intonational trouble spots in this piece, consider the tritone in the opening tenor, which reappears few times afterward:

Très calme et doux ♩ = 50

SOP
 ALO
 TEN
 BASS

O ma - gnum_ mys - te - ri - um, et
 O ma - gnum_ mys - te - ri - um, et
 O ma - gnum_ mys - te - ri - um, et

The first three measures of Francis Poulenc's *4 Motets pour le temps de Noël*, FP 152. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cOVAJ17SLXE>)

Most singers can pull out a tritone, but it's not a reliable interval. It's not uncommon to need to be reminded what it sounds like, using Maria¹ or the Simpsons theme² as a mnemonic. (Here's a heartwarming comment thread from the Simpsons video:)

Even when everyone has it securely, each individual will execute it slightly differently, especially when neither of the tones involved acts as a leading tone. The resultant group pitch can be fuzzy. And, because it's a "dissonant" horizontal interval, there is often the expectation of a dissonance where it lands.

So, you sing it slowly, tune that chord on a long tone—and it becomes apparent that the "Cb" is in fact a B natural, the third of a G major!

The tenors are now, ideally, experiencing that trouble

1 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DyofWTw0bqY&t=31>)

2 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xqog63KOANC>)

spot on two levels. In one sense, they're singing a tritone up from the previous note. But in another sense, they are occupying a very clear "home" in the resultant harmony, which has nothing to do with tritone-ish-ness. In microtonal music, it's even more important to maintain these two separate levels. This is because such music inevitably calls for singing some unfamiliar horizontal intervals—and the singers' natural instinct will be to land on a verticality that's equally "unfamiliar," i.e. dissonant, and this instinct is likely to be wrong.

A NOTE ON TARGETS

We now move on to the "target-based" part of the approach. In microtonal music, for example, if your choir needs to sing an unfamiliar chain of small intervals—then give them a rock-solid idea of the interval they are *encompassing*, and the intervening tones can almost unconsciously fall into place. They can be refined later, in a second step.

To reinforce how easy this can sound when modeled, the below is an excerpt from an interview of Jacob Collier, where he blithely does that sort of thing to a minor third. Try it yourself!

join in an - y rein - deer games.

June Lee's transcription of this phrase, from a 2017 interview video. June Lee, *Interview: Jacob Collier, Part I*. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DnBr070vcNE>) - His full discussion of this subject starts at 10:12, but come on, go watch the whole thing. The guy is so hip, it's surreal.

Neal G. 4 years ago
 A tritone brought me here.
 602 REPLY

Umur 3 years ago
 same
 7 REPLY

Amaru 3 years ago
 hahaha me too :v
 3 REPLY

Naman 3 years ago
 lmfaoooo same
 2 REPLY

Pete H. 3 years ago
 Me too, but I still don't know what it is.
 2 REPLY

The target-based approach is not limited to melodically filling in familiar intervals. On a broader scale, it's about providing a series of conceptual anchors throughout a piece—where singers can regain their footing, if they happen to lose it on the way. This can be target melodic intervals as above; but also target harmonic intervals to tune to (e.g. for entrances), or target chords.

The novelty here is that the targets *need not be musically prominent* within the piece—they can occur on weak beats, or at de-emphasized places within a phrase, etc. They only need to be *already familiar* to the singers, who can then use them to recalibrate. For example, an exotic cadential sonority might be the musical *goal*, but does not need to be the conceptual *target*—that role could be an adjacent, less important, more familiar sonority.

Here's an instance of that in a piece I wrote (video of which can be viewed on NewMusicBox³):

This goes from a Just A major chord, to a 7:9:11 in the harmonic series of B twelfth-tone-flat, in my preferred notation for 72 equal divisions of the octave (or “72edo”). The latter is surprisingly easy to nail, because you’re leaving a very familiar place, each part moving basically by quarter step—a distance which can easily be practiced. The common tone also helps.

BUILDING THE SCAFFOLD

The other thing that should guide your microtonal teaching is the educational idea of *scaffolding*, or the “zone of proximal development.” All this means is that every new concept needs to relate to immediately adjacent concepts; and the adjacent concepts *give rise to insight at the individual level*.

For example: You don’t learn to read by someone telling you how to read. There is no way to do it except making the connection *on your own* between individual letter-sounds and the way they combine into words. Your grade-school teacher just provided the conditions for

you to make that leap, by making you memorize the letter-sounds, then confronting you with easily decoded combinations (and then, not-so-easy ones).

The principle here is important. Despite the appeal of a “brute force” method, such as learning a piece by rote from a synthesized recording (newly easy to produce, due to technology!), that tactic *will not succeed for most people*—because they haven’t internalized the building blocks to make the new intervals “stick.” And many might be unwilling to make that huge technical leap in the first place; it’s not why they’re in choir.

So, we need to look at how we can provide the scaffolding.

We’ve already covered two important things which happen in normal choral singing, and can be applied to microtonal singing. What now follows is a list of additional concepts, each building on the previous, and some resources to master them. There are two pathways, a just intonation path and an equal-division path.

JUST INTONATION PATH: EXPRESSIVE INTONATION

Ironically, this path begins with the opposite of Just Intonation: “expressive intonation⁴.”

None other than Ezra Sims, the great exponent of 72 equal divisions of the octave, was set upon the microtonal path⁵ by his undergraduate *choral* conductor, Hugh Thomas. Thomas insisted on his ensembles singing very high leading tones when resolving to tonics, and very low 4ths when resolving to 3rds, among other things. Under such influence, says Sims, “you are liable to find it hard ever again to believe (no matter how much the keyboard instruments may try to convince you it is so) that there is, for example, one thing which is G-sharp, one frequency that defines it for ever and ever, Amen.”

Expressive intonation, at its crudest, is very intuitive. (Exaggerate the tendency of the tendency tones!) So, if it can achieve the goal of knocking singers out of a fixed-pitch way of thinking, then it smooths the way forward considerably.

4 Pamela Hind O’Malley, *Cellist Pablo Casals on Expressive Intonation*. <https://www.thestrads.com/playing/cellist-pablo-casals-on-expressive-intonation/1434.article>

5 Ezra Sims, *Yet Another 72-Noter*. *Computer Music Journal*. Vol. 12, No. 4 (Winter, 1988), pp. 28-45

3 Robert Lopez-Hanshaw, *Vokas Animo (Performing Microtonal Choral Music: The End Product)*. <https://nmbx.newmusicusa.org/vokas-animo/>

ACTUAL JUST INTONATION

Fahad Siadat has a series of articles, to be continued, on the website of his publishing company,⁶ which introduce the subject of Just Intonation for choirs. Some fuller resources currently available include *Harmonic Experience* by W. A. Mathieu, which I mentioned in the last article; and *The Just Intonation Primer* by David B. Doty, which is rather more direct.

A practical choir director might choose only a few intervals to work on. Major thirds and harmonic 7ths are useful to start with, because they are easy to demonstrate. Bring in a cellist to play natural harmonics and compare them with the piano! Bring in a high-level barbershop quartet to “ring” some chords! At first, you’re just developing the idea that there are several available “flavors” for a given interval, each with a different function.

Use what’s relevant to the piece at hand. If your choir adds only the harmonic seventh to their vocabulary, then that’s enough to start working on something like Ben Johnston’s *I’m Goin’ Away*. Indeed, Jeff Gavett, the director of the contemporary vocal ensemble Ekmeles, has successfully led college ensemble clinics on Johnston’s *Rose* – again, a piece in which the only “new” sound is the harmonic seventh.

QUANTIFYING COMMA SHIFTS

Ross Duffin is well-known for his book on meantone and well temperaments, *How Equal Temperament Ruined Harmony (And Why You Should Care)*. But he also wrote a wonderful defense of, and method for, Just Intonation practice, which hinges on locating and using the syntonic comma. This is a very helpful way of thinking systematically about tuning thirds, sixths and sevenths compared to fourths and fifths. It is freely available online.⁷ He even includes exercises for practicing typical problematic intonation situations that can occur.

The Hilliard Ensemble and Nordic Voices regularly incorporate this basic system⁸ (different in the particulars) into their practice. If your choir sings Renaissance counterpoint one semester, looking at intonation through this lens, then the following semester could extend the microtonality further:

6 <https://www.seeadot.com/>

7 <https://casfaculty.case.edu/ross-duffin/just-intonation-in-renaissance-theory-practice/>

8 Frank Havrøy, “You Cannot Just Say: “I Am Singing The Right Note””. *Music & Practice*, Volume 1. <https://www.musicandpractice.org/volume-1/intonation-neue-vocalsolisten-stuttgart/>

EXTENDED JUST INTONATION

Now we get into the weird stuff. It is possible, with much repetition and a rock-solid reference, to memorize and reproduce intervals of the *higher* overtones of the harmonic series.

One possible reference is overtone singing,⁹ which—on a low fundamental—can reliably produce harmonics at least up to the fourteenth, and perhaps further. A retuned digital keyboard is another potential resource. However, there is a remarkable set of exercises available, too: Andrew Heathwaite devised a system for singing through every possible interval that occurs between members of a given group of overtone-based pitches, charmingly called *Singervals*.¹⁰ Others have elaborated on this.¹¹ It is surprisingly logical and intuitive, using a slight alteration of Kodaly’s *movable-do*, chromatic solfège syllables.

If a singer were to make listening to, understanding, and singing this type of matrix a part of their daily practice, they would soon be able to approach a strictly overtone (or undertone) piece like Henk Badings’ *Contrasten* without much trouble.

QUARTER-TONE PATH: IN-BETWEEN TONES

Starting again at the beginning of a different path, we can use people’s ability to sing equal-ish tones in between the pitches of a small and familiar interval, to begin to develop a true quarter-tone framework. At first, you could simply add an exercise to normal warmups: Sing F - Gb, then F - F quarter-sharp - Gb, and then the same in the opposite direction. The outer tones are, of course, easily checked on the piano.¹²

FULL 24-TONE SCALE

Where it gets interesting is extrapolating this simple technique to *all* intervening positions in the chromatic scale. Robert Reinhart, who teaches music theory and aural skills at Northwestern University, assigned intermediate vowels to the quarter-tonal pitches between solfège notes, such as (in IPA) /ra/ /rɛ/ /re/

9 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vC9Qh709gas>

10 Andrew Heathwaite, *Singervals*. https://soundcloud.com/andrew_heathwaite/11-limit-singervals

11 Casey Hale, *N-Odd-Limit Diamond Solfege*. https://archive.org/details/n-odd-limit_diamond_solfege

12 Here is a clip of the Tucson Symphony Chorus doing this activity, while warming up for rehearsing my piece *vokas animo*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yRHH1ZYEx8>

/ri/ /ri/¹³ for all varieties of the second scale degree *re*. He then designed—and used in the classroom—progressive exercises to train the ear on the new intervals. In many cases, these involve first singing known intervals; then filling in the gaps with quarter tones; and then ultimately singing *only* the altered pitches, while audiating the more familiar surrounding pitches.

This is just an extension of sight-singing pedagogy in movable-*do* systems! For example, to teach the pattern *do-fa-la* (difficult for beginners), one can repeatedly sing a major scale, and gradually remove the intervening tones *re*, *mi* and *sol*; first audiating them, and then making the cognitive leap to simply singing *do-fa-la* without any crutch.

Reinhart has presented on this subject and is currently working on a systematic collection of quarter-tone solfège exercises, graded by difficulty.

You, too, could use this basic framework to divide, say, semitones into groups of three sixth-tones—or whole tones into fifth-tones, if you're singing Renaissance enharmonic music.¹⁴ The specific vowels in your extended solfège don't matter that much, as long as they're consistent.

GOING DEEPER: 72-TONE SCALE

Julia Wertz is the current bearer of the 72edo aural skills tradition at the New England Conservatory, succeeding Joe Maneri. She teaches students to hear, perform, and compose with twelfth tones—that is, quarter-tones each further divided into thirds. Her class begins by developing a quarter-tone framework, and elaborates from there. The course textbook, *Steps to the Sea*, is both highly accessible (with plenty of audio examples) and readily available.

By the time we're getting into twelfth tones, the Just Intonation and equal-division paths begin to merge. For singers specifically, the simpler Just Intonation intervals correspond so precisely with pitches in the gamut of 72 tones per octave, that the difference—a maximum of about 5 cents, and usually under 3—is literally impossible to produce with the voice.

¹³ This vowel distinction is present in English and German, but absent in many other languages. For these languages, other intermediate vowels might be substituted, such as /ra/ /rø/ /re/ /ry/ /ri/.

¹⁴ Elam Rotem and Johannes Keller, *Emilio de' Cavalieri's mysterious enharmonic passage*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-tylvhv1hc0>

In fact, a recent study by Matthias Mauch et al.¹⁵ shows that, even for experienced singers, the Just Noticeable Difference and the median pitch production error on a given note *both* hover around 18 to 19 cents—a bit over an entire twelfth-tone! The study dealt with solo melodic singing, and intonation accuracy can be somewhat higher in harmonic singing¹⁶ (especially in barbershop¹⁷); but not by as much as you think.

(Different sources give different amounts for the Just Noticeable Difference in various contexts, and 5-8 cents is the usual value cited. But in the case of sung pitches, a little more chaos seems to reign.)

Thankfully, in case you were wondering, microtones really can be learned,¹⁸ and ear-training in 72edo really does have the effect of increasing pitch discrimination and production ability. It tames some of the latent chaos of music-making.

THE END RESULT

If you have gone through *all* of this with your choir, then you're obsessive, and they're all saints. What you should really do is pick and choose among these possibilities, based on what's going on in the piece itself. This is what I have done. However, where I might not yet have used a particular technique myself, it has been field-tested by others. They all really do what they claim.

CONCLUSION: PRACTICALITIES

Here are a few miscellaneous suggestions I can give about teaching microtones to choirs.

- **Use warmups to reinforce new musical concepts**, if that wasn't clear already. Why waste time singing major scales or arpeggios the whole warmup, when you could be practicing quarter tones by repetition, or building harmonic-series chords? This reduces the teaching time on the microtonal piece itself.
- **Absolutely do not play a tone cluster in place of an intervening tone**, if you are modeling a microtonal melody on a standard piano. This does nothing for imagining the pitch (do we "hear" a D, when C-E is

¹⁵ Matthias Mauch, Klaus Frieler, and Simon Dixon, *Intonation in unaccompanied singing: Accuracy, drift, and a model of reference pitch memory*. *Journal of the Acoustic Society of America* 136 (1), July 2014.

¹⁶ S. D'Amario et al., *A Longitudinal Study of Intonation in an a cappella Singing Quintet*. *Journal of Voice* 2020 Jan; 34(1):159. e13-159.e27.

¹⁷ B. Hagerman and J. Sundberg, *Fundamental frequency adjustment in Barbershop singing*. *Speech Transmission Laboratory Quarterly Progress and Status Reports*. 21 (1) 1980: 28-42.

¹⁸ Charles Norman Bates, *Developing the ability to recognize microtones*. PhD dissertation, 1992.

played? Hell no! So why would we hear a D quarter-sharp when D-Eb is played?), and it models a dissonance, which the choir will obligingly give you. Better to skip over the altered pitch—or better yet:

- **Model with the voice whenever possible.** This is not only easier to follow than a keyboard, but it also demonstrates that the passage is, in fact, performable.
- **Retune the keyboard, if it's digital.** The task is now basically trivial, with available technology; but it may not be so for you personally. If that's the case, and you're the kind of person who would read this, then you assuredly have friends who are big nerds like you, except with computers. You can ask them a favor or hire them to do it for you. BitKlavier¹⁹ is free software with an easy learning curve; if they can program in Max/MSP, then they should be able to use

Pure Data²⁰ without much fuss, which is also free; or you could shell out for PianoTeq Standard,²¹ which has professional-quality sound and very good microtonal tuning controls. There are many other options, but these are a start.

- **Working closely with your accompanist is critical**, especially if any keys are remapped drastically! But again, if you are the kind of person who's reading this, your accompanist is probably game for it.
- **Do all the normal choral stuff first** – speak the piece in rhythm, aim for precise cutoffs, use expressive phrasing, interpret the lyrics – so that they realize how much they already know how to do.
- **Proper breath support is absolutely indispensable.** Unfamiliarity causes lack of confidence, and lack of confidence causes improper support, and improper support causes sagging pitch and bad timbre, which makes the project infinitely harder. So, never lose sight of that bedrock of a well-supported sound and come back to it often.

Most importantly, you have to convey *joy* in the music. And isn't that what it's always about?

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Edited by Olivia Scullion, UK

19 <https://bitklavier.com/>

20 <https://puredata.info/>

21 <https://www.modartt.com/pianoteq>



ROBERT LOPEZ-HANSHAW is the Music Director at Temple Emanu-El in Tucson, Arizona, and Guest Composer in Residence with the Southern Arizona Symphony Orchestra. He is also the editor of "Practical Microtones", a compendium of fingerings and playing techniques in 72tet for all standard orchestral instruments, to be published in early 2021.

Lopez-Hanshaw is a clinician on the pedagogy of microtones and of the Ashkenazi Jewish prayer modes, at events such as the North American Jewish Choral Festival, the BEYOND Microtonal Music Festival, the Guild of Temple Musicians and the North American Saxophone Alliance Biennial Conference. His pieces have been commissioned by community and religious organisations in Southern Arizona, as well as individual performers throughout the US. His piece "vokas animo", for choir and full orchestra in 72-tone equal temperament, was premiered in January 2020 by the Tucson Symphony Orchestra and Chorus. Email: robert.a.hanshaw@gmail.com



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COMPOSER'S CORNER



Choral Music is an Expression of our Souls and our Social Togetherness
Interview with John Rutter
Andrea Angelini

CHORAL MUSIC IS AN EXPRESSION OF OUR SOULS AND OUR SOCIAL TOGETHERNESS

INTERVIEW WITH JOHN RUTTER

ANDREA ANGELINI

Choral Conductor, Composer, ICB Managing Editor

Andrea Angelini: *John, you have a wonderful career as professional composer. What is your current approach to the amateur choral world?*

John Rutter: I love to write for amateur choirs, and to work with them. I also think it's important to draw new people into the world of choral singing, and for many years I have been leading 'Come and Sing' days for anyone who wants to just enjoy a day's singing, explore choral repertoire, and experience the wonderful pleasure of being in a choir. It is good that we now have a number of fine professional choirs and vocal ensembles around the world, but let's remember that the huge majority of choirs are made up of children, students, or amateurs. Let us not cut ourselves off from them or look down on them.

Let's start from the beginning of the adventure... Do you remember how you first came into contact with choral music?

I was four years old! At my nursery school, each day began with singing – all of us together. My mother kept my first school report, and the report on music said 'John sings well if he sings softly'. I must have been over-enthusiastic. I soon discovered I was no good at sports like football, but I got the same satisfaction from being in my school choir: I was part of a team, and could contribute usefully to a team effort. And you don't get cold, wet and muddy singing in a choir! I was told I had a good singing voice as a treble, and I might have auditioned to be a cathedral chorister, but at the age of eight I was not sure I wanted to be at a boarding school (in England most cathedral choir schools are boarding schools) and instead I joined my school chapel choir. It was a very good choir, and I sang the same sort of repertoire – Palestrina, Byrd, Monteverdi, Bach, Brahms and so on – as I would have experienced in a cathedral choir. As I grew older, I worked my way down the four voice parts, and there are some pieces of church music

(like the Palestrina *Sicut Cervus*) where I believe that, at one time or another, I have sung every part.

Conducting, singing, composing, arranging... four different aspects of a musician who wants to devote his/her life to choral music. Is it possible to become a true expert in everything or is it maybe better to pursue only one thing?

I have always believed that if you want to be rich and famous, concentrate on one thing and pursue it obsessively. If you want to have an interesting and fulfilling life, do lots of different things, whatever interests you. I'm not much interested in money or fame, but I *am* interested in many aspects of music: composing, arranging, orchestrating, conducting, talking about music, making and producing recordings . . . the brain is a very big storeroom, and there is space in it for many ideas and skills. And I do believe that one branch of music nourishes another: I think I probably compose better because I have long experience of conducting, I write better for voices because I also write for orchestras and solo instruments, I am a better recording producer because I understand what it feels like to be a performer. There's nothing wrong with specializing, but for me I don't think it's necessary to specialize. Was it Leonardo da Vinci who said, 'Nihil humanum a me alienum puto' – I don't consider anything human is alien to me. He was saying that everything was interesting to him. A good maxim.

The choral repertoire is huge: from polyphony to contemporary music through baroque, romantic, lyric, gospel, serial music. Should choirs attempt to do everything or, if they specialise, what should be the criteria for choosing the styles they perform?

That depends on the personality and expertise of the conductor. Under the right leadership, a choir can master music of almost any style, but if the

conductor has a special affinity for one particular type of music, maybe better to focus on it rather than spend time with music that conductor really doesn't connect with or like – the lack of connection will transmit itself to the singers. Of course, sometimes both choir and conductor can go on a voyage of discovery together. I remember the first time, many years ago, that I conducted the Brahms Requiem. At the time, I wasn't sure that I quite 'got it'. As rehearsals progressed, it was exciting for both the choir and for me to realize what a fabulous work it is. Sometimes you have to unwrap the package before you find the treasure inside.



Again, about the repertoire. There is often a debate about the way to compose choral music today. Sometimes it looks like composers do not have the possibility to affirm their style but mostly they need to follow what the music market is asking for. To elaborate on this: 90% of the choirs are amateur; this affects the possibility to perform very complicated music. Are we losing the music of our time?

It is true that writing choral music presents a special challenge. Most orchestras around the world are expert professionals, and you can write anything, no matter how

complicated and difficult, and they will play it. Most choirs, as I said in my first answer, are not professionals, and their level of musical and technical skill varies. It is important for composers of choral music to know the choir, or type of choir, they are writing for, and how much rehearsal they will be able to have. It is good to stretch your performers – if all the music they sing is in their comfort zone, without much technical challenge, they will get bored. If it is far beyond their technical ability (and the ability of the conductor), they will get discouraged and the

music will not be well served. It's a balancing act. In general, I find in writing choral music that I need to present my ideas in the simplest possible form, stripping away all unnecessary complexity. It's actually harder to write a simple piece than a complex one, because the simpler the music, the more it stands naked before the listener and the greater the risk it will just be banal or derivative. We don't have the space here to discuss in depth the divide that opened up (sometime in the nineteenth century) between 'high art' music and popular forms of music. At the start of the nineteenth century, Schubert could write both serious symphonies and light dance music, using the same musical language. By the end of the century, you can safely say that Johann Strauss couldn't have written *Tristan and Isolde* and Wagner couldn't have written *The Blue Danube*. Up to about the time of Mahler, no composer could have survived without a strong gift for melody; in the twentieth century, Stravinsky confessed 'I lack the gift of melody', but in his world of composition, it didn't matter because concert music and opera had taken a different direction, while melodic music found a home in the worlds



of operetta and popular song.

Melody is important to me – I think music should be rooted in the two fundamental human activities of song and dance – and so I would describe myself as half composer, half songwriter. The more a composer inclines towards songwriting, the more distant that composer's work is from the concert-and-opera world of today, but who is to say that the language of those forms is truly 'the music of our time'? At a conference I attended in Rome, I posed the question 'when the history of Italian twentieth-century music is written, will the important composers be seen as the two Luigis, Nono and Dallapiccola – or Ennio Morricone and Nino Rota?' I don't believe there is one musical mainstream any more, just many streams that occasionally flow together but are most often separate. We live in a diverse society, and so long as we respect and learn from each other, that's fine.

In your opinion, is there a right venue for each kind of repertoire? My friend Peter Phillips (the conductor of the Tallis Scholars) once told me that there is no specific connection between the text and the venue at which a choir is singing. Is it possible for you to make singing a sacred motet in a concert hall attractive?

It is paradoxical that the biggest audience for sacred music is nowadays in the concert hall and on record. Palestrina or Victoria would never have expected their Mass settings to be heard in concert halls, with all the movements following directly on from each other, but the world has changed since their time. It is always best if music is heard in the same sort of acoustic setting it was written for, I certainly always prefer to perform Gregorian chant and Renaissance polyphony in reverberant churches – and not all reverberation is the same. The marble churches Palestrina wrote for give you a bright, ringing reverberation which suits the high tenor parts in, say, the *Missa Papae Marcelli* – whereas the stone churches William Byrd worked in have a darker

reverberation which ideally suits his choral music.

We cannot always recreate the liturgical context of sacred music, but sometimes that's a good thing. I imagine the chatter of the congregations and the clanking of the censers in the Lateran Church, or the interminable sermons in Bach's churches. Maybe it's preferable to sit quietly and enjoy the beauty of sacred music performed in a Tallis Scholars concert.

Choral music is a big net. There are a lot of organizations that are building bridges between countries to make the world a better place through choral music. You know, there have been examples of singing revolutions even up to thirty years ago. Recently, England has decided to exit from the EU. Two different attitudes? What is your perception?

Groan! If only the world was run by musicians rather than politicians. We would have more harmony, for a start. Musicians know that we live in one world and we are all linked by bonds of humanity that go beyond politics and national boundaries. We must all be *communitaire*.

The last question, the most complicated probably. What is choral music?

The direct answer is that it is music written for many voices to sing together. The deeper question is what it means in our society, and I see it as an expression of our souls and our social togetherness. I have said this many times, but choral music brings people together, and it brings peoples together. It can draw on an amazing repertoire of music, stretching back over a thousand years and many countries, and it can be anything from a little madrigal or barbershop group to a mighty massed choir singing Beethoven 9. It brings an extraordinary physical, emotional and spiritual satisfaction to those who take part in it. And, as the English author Kingsley Amis once said, it's the most fun you can have with your clothes on.

Edited by Katie Maxfield, Canada



JOHN RUTTER was born in London and studied music at Clare College, Cambridge. He first came to notice as a composer during his student years; much of his early work consisted of church music and other choral pieces including Christmas carols. From 1975–79 he was Director of Music at his *alma mater*, Clare College, and directed the college chapel choir in various recordings and broadcasts. Since 1979 he has divided his time between composition and conducting. Today his compositions, including such concert-length works as *Requiem*, *Magnificat*, *Mass of the Children*, *The Gift of Life*, and *Visions* are performed around the world. His music has featured in a number of British royal occasions, including the two most recent royal weddings. He edits the *Oxford Choral Classics* series, and, with Sir David Willcocks, co-edited four volumes of *Carols for Choirs*. In 1983 he formed his own choir the Cambridge Singers, with whom he has made numerous recordings, and he appears regularly in several countries as guest conductor and choral ambassador. He holds a Lambeth Doctorate in Music, and in 2007 was awarded a CBE for services to music. Email: info@johnrutter.com

REPERTOIRE



The Challenge of Choosing Sacred Choral Works by Indonesian Choir Directors
Agastya Rama Listya

Many Voices: The New Polyphony in Anglo-American Choral Music of the Twenty-First Century, Part One
Graham Lack

THE CHALLENGE OF CHOOSING SACRED CHORAL WORKS BY INDONESIAN CHOIR DIRECTORS

AGASTYA RAMA LISTYA

choral conductor and composer

INTRODUCTION

Indonesian choirs, especially those in universities, have developed remarkably during the last two decades. This growing enthusiasm, of course, is not entirely unrelated to the rapid growth of choir competitions in the country. Interestingly, student choirs in Indonesia are not only performing admirably at the national level but at the international level as well. In 2015, for example, the Gitasurya Student Choir from the University of Muhammadiyah, Malang, won first place in the Mixed Choir category at the 9th Rimini International Choral Competition in Rimini, Italy, as well as at the Concorso Corale Internazionale di Puccini in Torre del Lago, Italy. In 2017 the Gadjah Mada Choir from Yogyakarta took first prize in the Musica Profana category at the 23rd Malta International Choir Festival. The highest achievement was attained by the Student Choir of Padjajaran University, which received a ticket to the European Grand Prix for Choral Singing to be held in Debrecen, Hungary, after they won the 67th Guido d'Arezzo International Choral Competition.

This article, however, does not focus on the achievements of Indonesian student choirs at national and international competitions or discuss the various types of choral competitions conducted in Indonesia. Instead, it explores the way in which choir directors in Indonesia introduce their choir members to Christian sacred music. In the Indonesian context where around 87% of the population is Muslim, singing sacred music can make choir members feel uncomfortable. It is not surprising, then, that several choirs decide to sing secular repertoires like folksongs and pop songs instead.

To get an idea of how Indonesian choir directors, not all of whom are Christian, perceive and provide their members with an understanding of sacred music pieces, the writer chose to interview four of them. In selecting the four, consideration was given to geographical representation, the diversity of the choir involved, and the achievements attained.

The four directors selected were: 1) Arvin Zeinullah

from Bandung; 2) Athitya Diah Monica from Yogyakarta; 3) Andri Dianasari from Semarang; and 4) Annas Dwi Satriyo from Malang.

Arvin, who holds a B.A. degree from the Faculty of Communication at Padjadjaran University and an M.A. degree from the Faculty of Music Education at Indonesia University of Education, is the director of the Padjadjaran University Student Choir and the Student Choir of Bogor Agricultural University, «Agria Swara». Arvin has been directing “Agria Swara” for sixteen years.

Athitya has two bachelor degrees, one in Chemistry from Brawijaya University in Malang and the second in Music Composition from the Indonesian Institute of the Arts in Yogyakarta. Athitya has been the director of the Gadjah Mada University Student Choir – a choir with a diverse membership – for the last three years. He also directs the Vocalista Harmonic Choir at the Indonesian Institute of the Arts, Yogyakarta.

Andri was formerly a member of the Diponegoro University Student Choir. Currently, she directs the Espero Choir from Semarang State Intermediate School 2 and the Chorale Smansa from Semarang State High School 1.

Annas, a former member of the 2009 Asian Youth Choir under the baton of Prof. Chifuru Matsubara, is the director of two student choirs in Malang: the Brawijaya University Student Choir and the Gitasurya Student Choir at the University of Muhammadiyah. Annas has directed the Gitasurya Student Choir for eight years. Gitasurya is part of the University of Muhammadiyah, Malang - one of the largest private Islamic universities in Indonesia.

INTRODUCING SACRED SONGS: CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

Arvin acknowledges that one of the most difficult challenges he faces in dealing with a student choir with a diverse membership is to help them understand that music need not be linked to any particular religious

belief. For Arvin, music in any genre is actually a means of cultivating character and developing tolerance for those who embrace it.

In introducing Christian sacred compositions, Arvin never forces members to participate if they raise objections. In conceptualizing the texts of the sacred music he selects, Arvin always stands on the side of aesthetics and pedagogy. As a Muslim, Arvin has an advantage of introducing sacred music to his Muslim choir members without seeming suspicious and therefore he can have a more open discussion with them.

Athitya, who is Catholic, is very fortunate because she has never experienced any objection, either from choir members or their parents. Neither has the Gadjah Mada University administration ever objected to its student choir singing sacred music.

In teaching the choir about the messages of the sacred songs to

be sung, Athitya tries to use universal terms or analogies. She hopes that by providing a general explanation, each choir member will have nearly the same understanding of the song and not become fixated upon the context of Christian worship. Like Arvin, Athitya always invites choir members to perceive the sacred music they perform as a piece of art that is universal in nature, not something belonging to any particular religion. She invites members to look at the aesthetic aspects of each work of art rather than fixating on texts that are often associated with a particular religion. Like Arvin, Athitya does not force members to sing sacred songs if doing so makes them feel uncomfortable.

As a Muslim, Andri has no objection at all to singing at a wedding service or worship service in a church. She feels that spiritual songs from any religion convey a positive message. This is also conveyed to choir members with diverse religious backgrounds so that they can see and comprehend the beauty contained in the sacred music composition without disturbing their beliefs. For Andri, faith is an individual matter between each person and his or her God.

In contrast to Arvin and Athitya, whilst directing the choir of SMP Negeri 2 Semarang (commonly referred to as the Espero Choir), Andri has faced resistance from both the school and parents of choir members for presenting sacred music pieces, even though some members of the choir do not mind. In fact, ever since Andri was first hired as the youth choir director, she has always stressed that the tradition of choral singing itself is part of Christian culture and so it is certainly possible for the Espero Choir to sing sacred choral music compositions. For her, art is related to the horizontal dimension, which governs human to human relationships, or, as she puts it, "how to touch people's hearts with music." Religion, on the



Gadjah Mada Choir



Gita Surya Choir



Gajah Mada Choir

other hand, is vertical, governing the relationship between human beings and their God.

Even so, Andri once had a very unpleasant experience when one or more choir members talked about the sacred song she had chosen to perform at home. One child's parents then looked up the meaning of the words in the song and sent a protest to Andri and the school. The school agreed with the parents and asked Andri to replace that composition with a secular song.

As a Muslim, Annas has been very open about singing sacred songs and has even taught them to the choirs he has directed. However, he acknowledges that since Gitasurya is part of Muhammadiyah University, non-Islamic sacred songs must be avoided because it is against the policy of the university. It is still possible for songs with divine themes to be sung, but the director's interpretations must be as neutral as possible and not be associated with any particular religion.

On one occasion Annas taught an Indonesian sacred song entitled *Bukakan Pintu KasihMu* (Open the Door to Your Love) by Ronald Pohan. He tried to offer a universal explanation so that choir members

could clearly understand the meaning of the song. Although the singers could easily accept Annas' explanation, the university asked him to choose a different song because another student unit had objected to it, claiming that the Gitasurya choir was singing Christian songs.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The experiences of the four directors mentioned above are just a small example to illustrate the struggles and challenges faced by most choirs in Indonesia when they perform sacred music. Of course, the resistance faced by the four directors from choir members, parents and supporting institutions is not the same, but the choir directors have tried to show thoughtful understanding to those who object. Although the response given by each of their members differed, these four directors agree that the understanding of sacred music compositions should not just stop with the text but should be understood as an interfaith artistic expression. Only in this way, they argue, can we free ourselves from the confines of religious barriers.

Edited by Lydia de Montfort, UK



AGASTYA RAMA LISTYA obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Music Composition from the Indonesian Institute of the Arts Yogyakarta in 1992. His master's degree in choral conducting was received from Luther Seminary and St. Olaf College, Minnesota, in the USA in 2001. In 2018, Agastya completed his PhD in Ethnomusicology at Otago University in New Zealand. His interests include composing and arranging music, choral conducting and music research. Currently, Agastya is the artistic director of Lux Aeterna Vocal Ensemble (2015 – present) and the head of Satya Wacana Music Department in Salatiga, Indonesia. Email: agastya123@gmail.com



Espero Choir



The Student Choir of Padjajaran University, winner of the 67th Guido d'Arezzo International Choral Competition
© Guido d'Arezzo International Choral Competition

MANY VOICES: THE NEW POLYPHONY IN ANGLO-AMERICAN CHORAL MUSIC OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Part one

GRAHAM LACK

composer

ABSTRACT

As the twenty-first century progresses, a number of eminent composers continue to write in an avowedly polyphonic vein, and several younger exponents of the art of polyphony – to include counterpoint – come to the fore. An initial short history of choral polyphony up to and including the works of Johann Sebastian Bach acts as a foil to these continuations and developments. The main thrust of the article, however, is directed at choral works written by international figures in the last ten to twenty years, ones that evince these trends. A clear distinction has always existed between polyphony and counterpoint: all counterpoint is polyphonic; but not all polyphony is contrapuntal. It proves in musico-theoretical terms more useful to examine the concept of “many sounds” than “many voices” *per se*, the latter appellation serving here as an explanation of the more literal “[point] against point”. From Otger to Boulez, many theoreticians have explored the role of many voices and show that this has always been paramount during the compositional process. A number of music examples taken from works by leading contemporary British and American composers are expounded on and various analytical methods harnessed in an attempt to prove this general tenet.

MANY VOICES: THE NEW POLYPHONY IN ANGLO-AMERICAN CHORAL MUSIC OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

With the caveat that most if not all music within the early Western church is vocal, the dawn of polyphony occurs during the 9th and 10th centuries, an era that witnesses a considerable increase in musical experimentation. The essential move is from purely monophonic plainchant to fully-fledged two-voice music. Here, the lower voice is usually a chant drawn from the Gregorian tradition, which flourishes as early as the 3rd century in continental Europe. (Later, melodies are taken from the Use of Sarum, which is established in the 11th century in what remain the British Isles.) To this melody is added a second voice, the result being termed *organum*. The liturgical chant is accompanied step by step by a second voice at an interval of a fourth below, but there remains enough freedom within the compositional process to deploy the two voices in unison at the outset, and then to introduce admittedly faltering attempts at both oblique and contrary movement. In polyphonic terms, although for much of the piece these two voices move in identical contours, there are brief moments of welcome tension and relaxation due to the occurrence of other intervals than the fourth, such as unisons and major seconds, as well as thirds. To determine to what extent this music is polyphonic, or contrapuntal, or both, we need to examine *Rex coeli, Domine maris*, found in the theoretical treatise, *Musica Enchiriadis*. This “Handbook of Music” was long attributed to Hucbald de Saint-Amand, but recent research would credit Abbot Hoger (perhaps a variant of Otger), who died in 906.

Principal voice
Organal voice

Rex cae - li do - mi - ne ma - ris un - di - so - ni.
Ty - tan - is ni - ti - di squal - li - di - que so - li.
Te hu - mi - les fa - mu - li mo - du - lis ve - ne - ran - do pi - is.
Se iu - be - as fla - gi - tant va - ri - is li - be - ra - re ma - lis.

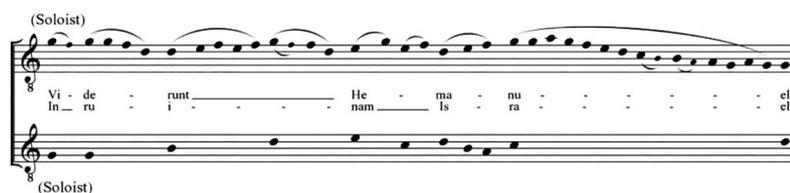
Music Example 1: Anon., “Rex coeli, Domine maris”

Now, this might not be high art, but the results are surprisingly attractive. These unique examples in such an early MS testify to the birth of a practice that was to bear the seeds of the whole of mediaeval musical art. In this vestigial note against note style, the plainsong of the liturgy, or *vox principalis*, must be seen as an absolute master, and the second voice, or *vox organalis*, as in a state of absolute submission. Of seminal importance is that the fundamental procedure of polyphony has been created: many sounds created by multiple voices.

Come the late 11th and early 12th century, we see that the humble *vox organalis* suddenly not only acts as the musical focus but also generates new compositional paths. Allowing for the fact that the *vox principalis* is a “given” one, being but the liturgical plainchant itself, and therefore a voice part that could not be melodically varied, it is the *vox organalis* that becomes freed up, and takes on the nature of a true upper voice, called the *superius*, i.e. an upper part. The plainsong remains relegated to the lower voice, and henceforth is seen as the *cantus*. In the School of St Martial, simple *organum* becomes melismatic *organum*. Where previously the *vox organalis* is obtained by constant contrary motion, and although this *discant* style evinces some degree of independence between the two voices, one constant remains: a strict note against note stylistic relationship between the parts. However, as soon as the *vox organalis* is able to extricate itself from the demand of one note of chant melody corresponding to a single syllable of the text, there emerges the vital principle of melodic embellishment. This new practice of generating an upper voice that contains brief flurries of shorter note values beckons composers to advance the

technique and opens up a path of more ostensible creativity.

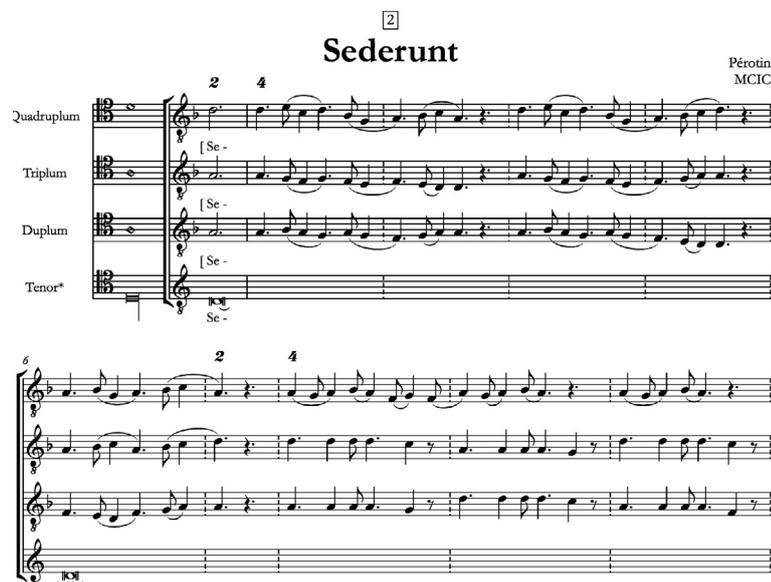
The short work *Viderunt Hemanuel* is a fine example of melismatic *organum*. Gone is the dependence on perfect fourths, and unisons are used more sparingly, even if starting points for each phrase and cadence points remain more conservative in treatment. An entire melismatic passage in the upper voice may contain up to eleven notes, to include so-called liquescent values, where various consonants such as /m/ and /n/ are sung to closed lips.



Music Example 2: Leonin, “Viderunt Hemanuel”

A salient point with this piece is that compositional structures start to emerge: we glimpse the beginnings of musical form. Evidence is provided at the “nu” of “He-ma-nu-el”, which is the sixth syllable of the text, but also at the “ni” of “ge-ni-tum” and the “ci” of “pa-la-ci-o”, which all point up the cadence by a sheer insistence of the greatest floridity as late as possible – i.e. as close as possible – to the final unison. *Viderunt* is, then, truly polyphonic and at times, one could argue, avowedly contrapuntal.

What may be described as the first monuments of polyphony are these *organa* composed by the two great masters of the School of Notre Dame of Paris: Léonin and his successor Pérotin. Notable is a new fluency of polyphony, which sets these works far apart from a vestigial (but not necessarily primitive) polyphony of the early *organum*. These, moreover, are large-scale compositions, ones demonstrating in the *cantus* such an extreme lengthening of the notes of the plainsong that the ear can no longer make out the original chant as a melody. The result is a new addition to the armoury of polyphonic techniques: highly attenuated pedal notes. The most advanced triple and quadruple *organa* by Pérotin use highly elaborated interweaving



Music Example 3a: Pérotin, “Sederunt”, bars 1—10



Music Example 3b: Pérotin, "Sederunt," bars 192—200

structures in the three upper parts, or *voces organales*, demonstrated well in his setting of *Sederunt*. (music examples 3a and 3b)

Again, to focus on an arrestive point: there is a new approach to rhythm, or at least to its unambiguous notation. This clarity is achieved by the employment of six rhythmic modes. Easily perceptible to both the ear and the eye, these are akin to self-contained cells containing alternating short and long note values. They are first described in the anonymous treatise dating to ca. 1260, *De mensurabili musica* – variously attributed to Johannes de Garlandia or Jerome of Moravia – and determine the movement of the three upper voices against the slow-moving lower one. This must be seen as novel: a type of three-against-one style in polyphonic terms, or three voices pitted against a single one as seen from a contrapuntal perspective. Formally, discrete sections are delineated by the treatment of the tenor, which after about 194 bars in modern notation, starts to move more quickly, its melodic shape suddenly becoming more appreciable. Furthermore, this voice later follows the exact same rhythm of the upper voices, before returning to its initial ponderous pace found at the opening. This process of consolidation and refinement is furthered in the 14th century, an age in which polyphony dominates and there is an increasing preoccupation with musical technique. To argue that this latter phenomenon culminates in the music of Johann Sebastian Bach would be to decry to efforts of Dufay and Josquin, as well as Lassus and Palestrina, but it can safely be said that the solution to the harmonic and melodic crux of the compositional craft – i.e. how the vertical and the horizontal aspects of composition do not detract from each other, but may be perfectly married – was finally realised by the great German master.

But let us now briefly examine choral polyphony in the so-called *Ars Nova*. We note the appearance in France around 1320 of two important theoretical treatises which usher in a new age in music: Philippe de Vitry's *Ars Nova* (New Art) and *Ars novae musicae* (The Art of the New Music) by Jean de Muris. The term *Ars Nova*, adopted by musicologists in the 20th century, is a convenient way to denote 14th century polyphony; the polyphony of the preceding century thus becomes the *Ars Antiqua*. In France at least, the

term *Trecento* refers to the same period in Italy.

To concentrate on the new, this was a time during which music notation undergoes radical reforms, ones which have a marked influence on the ability of composers actually to write down what they aurally imagined. The chief change is the approach to the by now standard Franconian-Petronian mensural system, where duple divisions of the beat (i.e. 2/4 or 3/4 time in modern terms), are feasible, but are not theoretically recognized; ternary divisions (i.e. modern 6/8 or 9/8 time) remaining the norm. The effect on polyphonic writing is immense: because duple and triple mensuration are no longer on an equal footing, and the smallest note of the old system, the semibreve, is no longer capable of representing a wide range of values in terms of numbers of beats, all note values are now no longer completely dependent on context. And when a new theorist such as de Vitry proposes that the semibreve be modified by adding upward or downward tails, it is transformed into an independent note value in its own right. Thus, is born the minim, which in turn, may also be divided into group of either three or two. Composers seeking to advance choral polyphony, and perhaps unwittingly verge on proper counterpoint, can now draw on a huge new resource of rhythmic possibilities throughout the prevailing notational hierarchy of values. At last, individual note values may be notated precisely and without a reliance on rhythmic context – i.e. with no regard to previous and subsequent notes.

This freedom is exploited most notably by Guillaume de Machaut (ca. 1300 – April 1377), that poet, composer, canon, and servant of kings. We now arrive at a point where polyphony is all-triumphant, but many paths diverge: in two mainstream countries, France and Italy, old forms are revised

(the setting of the Mass remains omnipresent), but new ones are also invented, in order to accommodate the compositional, notational and performative aspects of what can best be described as multipartite music.

Let us concentrate once more on that which is new-fangled: in France the isorhythmic motet, but also song forms such as the ballade, virelai, and rondeau, ones which emerge against the troubadour and trouvère traditions; and in Italy its

equivalent of the virelai, as well as the chace, the ballata and caccia, plus a musical form unique to the geographical area, the madrigal. (This is not to be confused with the 16th century form, which arose wholly independently but shares the nomenclature.)

In the music of Machaut, although the harmonic language becomes ever more refined, it is the independence of the voices that is so remarkable. In his isorhythmic motet *S'il estoit nulz*, even a superficial glance at the part writing reveals a freedom not previously encountered. (music example 4)

Moving forward, there is another huge leap in polyphonic thought encountered in the works of Baude Cordier (ca. 1380 – before 1440). Much has been written about this at times quite abstruse style, key examples of the *ars subtilior*. Not only does he indulge in red note notation, known as “coloration,” a technique that stems from the general practice of mensural notation and which essentially designates various triplet proportions, he also changes the “color” in order to adjust the rhythmic value of a particular note away from its usual form. The modern transcription of *Amans ames*, although unwieldy and unwise as a performing edition, is illuminating as a scholarly one, revealing the remarkable and outright independence of meter in all three voices. The principle of many voices, i.e. true polyphony, is well to the fore. (music example 5)

The occurrence (in modern notation) of duplet eighth notes and triplet eighth note groups, along with other metrical conceits in this beguiling example of the “art of the subtle” can be achieved more easily than we might imagine. At the time, composers were able to rely on a quite stable so-called mensural system of notation, one in which notes are not “orthochronic” – i.e. having only one metrical

S'il estoit nulz

Music Example 4: Guillaume de Machaut, “S’il estoit nulz”

Music Example 5: Baude Cordier, “Amans ames”

value or performative solution as it were – but are allocated a number of beats according to whether in a tripartite rhythmic hierarchy the proportion between the middle layer and the lower one, and between the upper layer and the middle one, is either duple or triple, these relationships being known as “prolation” and “tempus” respectively. Even with recourse to today’s sophisticated system of notating rhythmically complex, nay abstruse, polyrhythms, even typesetting systems and those of us who still use a pencil and MS paper still are forced to add integers such as “2” or “3” acting as hats, to coin a term, in order to show duple and triple beats and sub-beats.

At this point we enter an interregnum, not only in music history, but also in the present article. For we must consider probably what is the single most conspicuous and far-reaching aspect of polyphonic and/or contrapuntal composition: in short, imitation. Now, the idea of a second voice in even a short two-part vocal work sharing the melodic material with the first voice to such an extent that it becomes indistinguishable from the original occurs to composers very early on. These instances – and this is the nub – are in truth but canons. This borne out by the fact that there is really no pressing need to actually notate the second voice, as a singer can simply read and “win” the second part from the first one, e.g. delaying the entry by a pre-agreed number of beats. The term “canon,” it must be remembered means simply a rule; a singer only has to know what that is in order to derive a second voice from a first. In the three-part *O virum omnimoda*, by Johannes Ciconia (ca. 1370–1412), the composer departs from the old *trecento* procedures of the *caccia* (where one voice “chases” another in strict imitation) and assigns imitation rather frequently to the two upper voices at the beginning

Music Example 6: Johannes Ciconia, “O virum omnimoda”

of phrases so as to produce true musical form. However, the voices do not overlap, and if they do, then only by one note. (music example 6) This kind of music takes place in a kind of laboratory where experiments in all things polyphonic and contrapuntal can be conducted. Certainly, great advances are made at this time. And as the world waits for novel results, it is rewarded by that which we call pervasive or on-going, i.e. thorough imitation – probably the single-most important compositional technique ever to emerge, and one that would dominate choral polyphony of the next few centuries.

Thus we alight with alacrity on another three-voice work, *Vostre alée* by Gilles Binchois (ca. 1400–1460). (music example 7)

For its time, this is a remarkable piece, for it displays continuous imitation; indeed, each of the five phrases is treated this way, and this in all three parts.

We can note then a plethora of changes in composition taking place during the 14th century and into the early 15th century. A stable musical language of early mediaeval times, one that is overtly structured and thus unified, gives way to much change, imbued with considerable

ingenuity and inventiveness.

There is a new attitude to polyphony, and concomitant counterpoint begins to take on more than a certain dominance. The acceptance of duple rhythmic patterns developed by Philippe de Vitry, along with harmonic structure allowing entire passages of thirds and sixths, coupled with the use of *musica ficta* to render cadential points more definitive as landing points, allow melodic lines greater flexibility and expansiveness.

By the late 14th century, musical styles become indigenous, as French and Italian composers begin to go their own way and develop distinct musical styles. And as we enter the 15th century we first encounter a truly international style of compositional development. The key source of, in this case, early English vocal compositions, is the Old Hall manuscript, and thank the Good Lord that it survived the ravages of time. Chiefly represented is John Dunstaple (or Dunstable, ca. 1390–1453), who may be credited with bringing the English style of composition to France. His compositions – consisting of three-part motets, settings of antiphons, hymns, and other liturgical biblical texts, along

[8, 10]
 Tenor: Vos-tre al-ée, me des-plaint tant, Mon tres-
 Daß du sches-dest, miß-fällt mir sehr, an-mu-
 Contratenor: a-mou-reux et plai-sant, Gen-til mois de may gra-ci-
 ti-gster und huld-vol-ler, lie-ber und schö-ner Mo-nat-
 16
 eux, Que je ne puis es-tre joy-eux Si
 Mai, so daß ich nur noch halb so froh nach
 18
 non a moi-tié, par sam-blant.
 al-lens Au-gen-schein sein kann.

Music Example 7: Gilles Binchois, "Vostre alée"

Contra: Sanc- - - - ta Ma-ri-
 Tenor: Sanc- - - - ta Ma-
 Sanc- - - - ta Ma-ri-
 10
 - - - a, non est ti-bi si-mi-lis
 ri - - - a, non est ti - bi si -
 - - - a, non est ti - bi si -
 20
 or - ta in mun - - - do in mu-li - e - -
 - - mi - lis or - ta in mun - - - do in
 - - mi - lis in mu - li - e

Music Example 8: Dunstaple, "Sancta Maria"

with carols – display the beginning of the polyphonic practices of the Renaissance. He is the first composer to consistently utilise the procedures of counterpoint and part-writing resting on a solid triadic foundation. Indeed, his style is often described as an early proto-tonality, although it would be more consistent and evidence-based to allot that claim to both Guillaume Dufay (1400-1474) and Josquin des Prez (1440-1521).

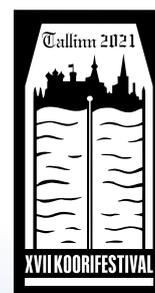
In *Sancta Maria*, a three-part hymn by Dunstaple, the use of triadic figures is conspicuous. Not only are they outlined, but entire phrases delineate and are bounded by a triad itself. (music example 8) Again, moving along at a rapid pace, we encounter here and in the music of continental composers such as Dufay and Josquin, the true rise of polyphony. Their achievements are discussed in Part Two of this article, which briefly considers the choral music of Lassus Palestrina, Tallis, and Byrd, before closing with an examination of the veritable fulfilment of contrapuntal polyphony and polyphonic counterpoint; the music of Johann Sebastian Bach.

This article opens with a caveat, and closes with one, too: composers after Bach continued, of course, to use contrapuntal techniques and, indeed, indulge themselves in polyphony, just think of the *Sanctus* fugue in the Verdi Requiem, but these phenomena must be understood as retrospective in that the sheer achievement of the German master is a watershed. To use an analogy, one taken from the discipline of literary theory, this is conforming with the principle of the mirror and the lamp. This is to say that up to and including the music of J.S. Bach (in fact, from Greek Antiquity to the onset of Romanticism), all art acts as a mirror; subsequently, all art acts as a lamp. By "mirror" it is meant that art mimics life; in mimetic theory, then, a mirror is held up to life. By

“lamp” it is meant that art illuminates those places in life which we ordinarily would not glimpse. This has a great bearing on the historical part of the present text: clearly, the development of polyphony and counterpoint in choral composition need only be examined up to the middle of the 18th century. The analytical discourses – to follow in future editions of this journal – focus on contemporary composers in Great Britain and North America, and elucidate compositional techniques and strategies, along with modes of expression, against the backdrop of contrapuntal and polyphonic choral music of the Mediaeval, Renaissance and Baroque eras.



GRAHAM LACK studied composition and musicology at King’s College and Goldsmiths’ College in the University of London, the University of Chichester, and the Technical University of Berlin. From 1982–1994 he was Lecturer in Music at the University of Maryland. His breakthrough was with the 12-part *Sanctus*, commissioned by Queens’ College Cambridge in 1998, and broadcast live on German Radio from Cologne. The *Two Madrigals for High Summer* (SSATB) have been performed worldwide. In 2008, *REFUGIUM*, based on texts by the Croatian poet Peter Hektorović, for choir, organ and three percussionists was premiered in London. Commissions include *Estraines* for The King’s Singers, *Lullabies* for VOCES8, *Demesnes* for Quartonal, *A Sphere of Ether* for the Young Voices of Colorado, and *Wondrous Machine* for the multi-percussionist Martin Grubinger. The string trio *The Pencil of Nature* was premiered at *musica viva* in Munich. Orchestral works include *Nine Moons Dark* and *Five Inscapes*. The Preludes for piano solo were premiered by Lukáš Vondráček at the Queen Elizabeth Hall London, the orchestral work *Sitherwood* by the MonteverdiChor Würzburg. He is currently working on a violin concerto and orchestra for Benjamin Schmid, *The Windhover*. Winner of the 2015 Ortus International New Music Competition. The *Legend of Saint Wite* (SAA voices and string quartet) prize-winner BBC Music Magazine Competition 2009. CD *Missa Dominica* (with *Candlemas*) Gramophone Recording of the Month December 2017. American Record Guide Critic’s Choice 2018, CD *REFUGIUM*. Since 2018 Composer Fellow Trinity Boys Choir London. graham-lack@t-online.de - www.graham-lack.com. (Picture © Astrid Ackermann)



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CHORAL CALENDAR



**Festivals, Competitions,
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Compiled by Nadine Robin

Although we thrive to update this choral calendar with new dates for postponed festivals, we haven't been able to check the status of all these festivals listed here below.
So please visit their website and support their team by contacting them. Thank you!

4th Andrea del Verrocchio International Choral Festival, Florence, Italy, 4-7 Aug 2020. Contact: Florence Choral, Email: chairman@florencechoral.com - Website: www.florencechoral.com

International Choral conducting Masterclass, Malmö, Sweden, 10-15 Aug 2020. Contact: , Email: Johan.Antoni@Korcentrumsyd.Lu.Se - Website: www.EuropaCantat.org

International Festival of choirs and orchestras in Paris, France, 19-23 Aug 2020. Contact: MusikReisenFaszination Music Festivals, Email: info@mrf-musicfestivals.com - Website: www.mrf-musicfestivals.com

11th International Festival of Choirs and Orchestras, Prague, Czech Republic, 26-30 Aug 2020. Contact: MusikReisenFaszination Music Festivals, Email: info@mrf-musicfestivals.com - Website: www.mrf-musicfestivals.com

1st International Choir Festival Fides Cantat, Lutherstadt Wittenberg, Germany, 27-30 Aug 2020. Contact: Fides Cantat, Email: management@fides-cantat.de - Website: <http://fides-cantat.de/>

10th International St. James Festival, Vilnius, Lithuania, 1 Sep-10 Oct 2020. Contact: Choras Vilnius, Email: info@chorasvilnius.lt - Website: <http://www.chorasvilnius.lt/>

Brighton International Festival of Choirs, Brighton, United Kingdom, 3-7 Sep 2020. Contact: Brighton International Festival of Choirs, Email: festival@brightonifc.com - Website: <https://www.brightonifc.com/>

Mountain Song Festival Carinthia 2020, Wolfsberg, Austria, 3-6 Sep 2020. Contact: MusiCultur Travel GmbH, Email: info@musicultur.com - Website: www.musicultur.com

Trogir Music Week, Croatia, 6-11 Sep 2020. Contact: Lacock Courses, Andrew van der Beek, Email: avdb@lacock.org - Website: www.lacock.org

Lucca Consort Week, Tuscany, Italy, 6-11 Sep 2020. Contact: Lacock Courses, Andrew van der Beek, Email: avdb@lacock.org - Website: www.lacock.org

Conducting Academy with Frieder Bernius, Stuttgart, Germany, 7-11 Sep 2020. Contact: Musik Podium Stuttgart e.V., Email: academy@musikpodium.de - Website: <http://www.musikpodium.de/>

International Choir Festival Corearte Rio de la Plata 2020, Montevideo, Uruguay, 8-13 Sep 2020. Contact: Festival Internacional de Coros Corearte Barcelona, Email: Info@corearte.es - Website: www.corearte.es

ON STAGE in Lisbon, Portugal, 11-14 Sep 2020. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

14th Rimini International Choral Competition, Rimini, Italy, 17-20 Sep 2020. Contact: Rimini International Choral Competition, Email: info@riminichoral.it - Website: www.riminichoral.it

10th International Choir Festival & Competition "Isola del Sole", Grado, Italy, 26-30 Sep 2020. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

In the Footsteps of Ludwig van Beethoven, Bonn, Germany, 28 Sep-4 Oct 2020. Contact: European Choral Association – Europa Cantat, Email: Alfred.Jurgens@EuropianChoralAssociation.Org - Website: www.EuropaCantat.org

Cracovia Music Festival 2020, Cracow, Poland, 30 Sep-4 Oct 2020. Contact: MusikReisenFaszination Music Festivals, Email: info@mrf-musicfestivals.com - Website: www.mrf-musicfestivals.com

4th Beira Interior International Choir Festival and Competition, Fundão, Portugal, 2-6 Oct 2020. Contact: Meeting Music, Email: info@meeting-music.com - Website: www.meeting-music.com

Sing'n'Joy Bohol, Philippines, 7-11 Oct 2020. Contact: Förderverein Interkultur, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

Internationales Chorefest, Magdeburg, Germany, 7-11 Oct 2019. Contact: Förderverein Interkultur, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

Internationales Chorefest, Magdeburg, Germany, 7-11 Oct 2020. Contact: Förderverein Interkultur, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

Bratislava Cantat II, Slovak Republic, 8-11 Oct 2020. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: www.choral-music.sk

Grieg International Choir Festival and NINA Solo Competition for Young Singers, Bergen, Norway, 8-11 Oct 2020. Contact: Annlaug Hus, Email: post@griegfestival.no - Website: www.griegfestival.no

3rd Botticelli International Choral Festival, Venice, Italy, 11-14 Oct 2020. Contact: Botticelli International Choral Festival, Email: chairman@florencechoral.com - Website: <http://www.florencechoral.com/>

Claudio Monteverdi Choral Festival and Competition, Venice, Italy, 15-18 Oct 2020. Contact: Claudio Monteverdi Choral Competition, Email: office@venicechoralcompetition.it - Website: www.venicechoralcompetition.it

Choral Workshops for International Oratorio choirs, Lake Garda, Italy, 15-18 Oct 2020. Contact: MusikReisenFaszination Music Festivals, Email: info@mrf-musicfestivals.com - Website: <http://choral-workshops.com>

Lago di Garda Music Festival, Italy, 15-19 Oct 2020. Contact: MusikReisenFaszination Music Festivals, Email: info@mrf-musicfestivals.com - Website: www.mrf-musicfestivals.com

International Choir Festival Corearte Barcelona 2020, Spain, 19-25 Oct 2020. Contact: Festival Internacional de Coros Corearte Barcelona, Email: info@corearte.es - Website: www.corearte.es

20th Venezia in Musica, International Choir Competition and Festival, Sacile & Venice, Italy, 22-25 Oct 2020. Contact: Meeting Music, Email: info@meeting-music.com - Website: www.meeting-music.com

9th Canta al Mar International Choral Festival, Calella, Barcelona, Spain, 22-26 Oct 2020. Contact: Förderverein Interkultur, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

Cantate Barcelona, Spain, 23-26 Oct 2020. Contact: Music Contact International, Email: travel@music-contact.com - Website: www.music-contact.com

London International choral Conducting Competition, London, United Kingdom, 23-25 Oct 2020. Contact: London International Choral Conducting Competition, Email: info@liccc.co.uk - Website: <http://www.liccc.co.uk/>

Cantate Barcelona, Spain, 25-28 Oct 2020. Contact: Music Contact International, Email: travel@music-contact.com - Website: www.music-contact.com

Dakar International Singing Festival, Côte d'Ivoire, 28 Oct-1 Nov 2020. Contact: A Coeur Joie Sénégal, Lucien Mendy, Email: dakar.singing.festival@gmail.com - Website: <https://www.facebook.com/DAKARSINGING/>

International Festival of choirs and orchestras in Vienna, Austria, 29 Oct-2 Nov 2020. Contact: MusikReisenFaszination Music Festivals, Email: info@mrf-musicfestivals.com - Website: <https://www.mrf-musicfestivals.com/>

16th Concorso Corale Internazionale, Riva del Garda, Italy, 4-8 Nov 2020. Contact: Meeting Music, Email: info@meeting-music.com - Website: www.meeting-music.com

ON STAGE in Prague, Czech Republic, 5-8 Nov 2020. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

Deutsche Chor-meisterschaft 2020, Koblenz, Germany, 6-8 Nov 2020. Contact: Förderverein Interkultur, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

Nafplio-Artiva 7th International Choral Festival, Nafplio, Greece, 11-15 Nov 2020. Contact: ARTIVA Cultural Management & Advertising, Email: info@artiva.gr - Website: www.nafplio.gr/en/

32nd International Franz Schubert Choir Competition, Vienna, Austria, 11-15 Nov 2020. Contact: Förderverein Interkultur, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

International Choir Festival Corearte Medellín 2020, Colombia, 17-22 Nov 2020. Contact: Festival Internacional de Coros Corearte Barcelona, Email: info@corearte.es - Website: www.corearte.es

International Choral Festival VOCAL TERRA, Tlaxcala, Mexico, 17-22 Nov 2020. Contact: Israel Netzahual Cuatecontzi, Executive Director, Email: vocalterramx@gmail.com

Voices & Wine Malaga, Spain, 18-22 Nov 2020. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

38th International Choral Festival of Karditsa, Greece, 19-29 Nov 2020. Contact: International Choral Festival of Karditsa, Email: nke@otenet.gr - Website: <http://festivalofkarditsa.blogspot.gr/>

15th International Warsaw Choir Festival Varsovia Cantat, Poland, 20-22 Nov 2020. Contact: MELODY & Polonia Cantat, Email: info@varsoviacantat.pl - Website: www.varsoviacantat.pl

International Advent Singing Festival Vienna 2020, Austria, 26-30 Nov, 3-7, 10-14 & 17-21 Dec 2020. Contact: MusiCultur Travel GmbH, Email: info@musicultur.com - Website: <https://www.musicultur.com/en/our-choral-trips.html>

Vienna Advent Sing, Austria, 26-30 Nov, 3-7, 10-14 & 17-21 Dec 2020. Contact: Music Contact International, Email: travel@music-contact.com - Website: www.music-contact.com

7th Istanbul International Chorus Festival and Competition, Istanbul, Turkey, 27 Nov-1 Dec 2020. Contact: Istanbul Harman Folklor, Email: istanbul@istanbulchorus.com - Website: <http://www.harmanfolk.com/avrasya.htm>

International Festival of Advent and Christmas Music, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 3-6 Dec 2020. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: www.choral-music.sk

10th International Festival of choirs and orchestras in Baden, Germany, 3-6 Dec 2020. Contact: MusikReisenFaszination Music Festivals, Email: info@mrf-musicfestivals.com - Website: www.mrf-musicfestivals.com

11th Krakow Advent and Christmas Choir Festival, Poland, 4-6 Dec 2020. Contact: Polonia Cantat & Melody, Email: krakow@christmasfestival.pl - Website: www.christmasfestival.pl

European Youth Choir for Final concert of Beethoven Anniversary Year, Bonn, Germany, 11-18 Dec 2020. Contact: European Choral Association – Europa Cantat, Email: Alfred.Jurgens@EuropenChoralAssociation.Org - Website: www.EuropaCantat.org

Corsham Winter School, United Kingdom, 28 Dec 2020-2 Jan 2021. Contact: Lacock Courses, Andrew van der Beek, Email: avdb@lacock.org - Website: www.lacock.org

Allmänna Sången & Anders Wall Composition Award 2021, Uppsala, Sweden, 31 Dec 2020. Contact: Allmänna Sungen and Anders Wall, project manager Simon Arlasjö, Email: award@allmannasangen.se - Website: <https://www.allmannasangen.se/asawca>

Misatango Choir Festival Vienna, Austria, 3-7 Feb 2021. Contact: CONCERTS-AUSTRIA, Email: info@misatango.com - Website: www.misatango.com/

15th International Choir Competition & Festival Bad Ischl, Austria, 4-8 Mar 2021. Contact: Interkultur Foundation e.V., Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

ON STAGE with Interkultur in Tel Aviv, Israel, 10-14 Mar 2021. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

10th International Gdansk Choir Festival, Poland, 12-14 Mar 2021. Contact: MELODY & Polonia Cantat, Email: mail@gdanskfestival.pl - Website: www.gdanskfestival.pl

ACDA National Conference 2021, Dallas, Texas, USA, 17-21 Mar 2021. Contact: American Choral Directors Association, Email: acda@acda.org - Website: <http://acda.org>

Music for All 2021 Choral Festival, Indianapolis, USA, 25-27 Mar 2021. Contact: Music for All Inc., Email: Kim.M@musicforall.org - Website: <https://choir.musicforall.org/>

ON STAGE in Verona, Italy, 25-28 Mar 2021. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

18th Budapest International Choir Festival & Competition, Hungary, 28 Mar-1 Apr 2021. Contact: Meeting Music, Email: info@meeting-music.com - Website: www.meeting-music.com

Voices & Wine Alba, Italy, 7-11 Apr 2021. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

7th Vietnam International Choir Festival & Competition, Hôi An, Vietnam, 8-12 Apr 2021. Contact: Interkultur Foundation e.V., Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

17th Tallinn International Choral Festival 2021, Estonia, 15-18 Apr 2021. Contact: Estonian Choral Society, Email: kooriyhing@kul.ee - Website: www.kooriyhing.ee

Slovakia Cantat, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 22-25 Apr 2021. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: www.choral-music.sk

66th Cork International Choral Festival, Ireland, 28 Apr-2 May 2021. Contact: Cork International Choral Festival, Email: info@corkchoral.ie - Website: www.corkchoral.ie

68th European Music Festival for Young People, Neerpelt, Belgium, 30 Apr-3 May 2021. Contact: Europees Muziekfestival voor de Jeugd, Email: info@emj.be - Website: www.emj.be

20th Venezia in Musica, International Choir Competition and Festival, Venice and Caorle, Italy, 1-5 May 2021. Contact: Meeting Music, Email: info@meeting-music.com - Website: www.meeting-music.com

Riga Sings, International Choir Competition and Imants Kokars Choral Award, Riga, Latvia, 1-5 May 2021. Contact: Fördereverein Interkultur, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

11th World Choir Festival on Musicals and Competition, Thessaloniki, Greece, 7-10 May 2021. Contact: DIAVLOS, Email: diavlosc@yahoo.gr - Website: www.diavloslink.gr

19th International Choir Festival Zlatna Vila, Prijedor, Bosnia Herzegovina, 7-9 May 2021. Contact: International Choir Festival Zlatna Vila, Email: zlatna.vila@prijedorgrad.org - Website: <http://www.zlatnavila.info/?lang=en>

Meeting of Children's and Youth Choirs, Thuir, France, 12-16 May 2021. Contact: , Email: Alix.Bourrat@Orange.Fr - Website: <https://Rebrand.Ly/Jvm>

CantaRode International Choral Festival & Competition, Kerkrade, The Netherlands, 13-16 May 2021. Contact: CantaRode, Email: info@cantarode.nl - Website: www.cantarode.nl

International Choral Competition Ave Verum 2021, Baden, Austria, 14-16 May 2021. Contact: Wolfgang Ziegler, chairman, Email: aveverum.baden@gmail.com - Website: www.aveverum.at

ON STAGE in Florence, Italy, 20-23 May 2021. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

Sound Waves Linz International Choir Competition & Festival, Austria, 20-24 May 2021. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

Per Musicam Ad Astra, International Copernicus Choir Festival and Competition, Toru , Poland, 2-6 June 2021. Contact: Meeting Music, Email: info@meeting-music.com - Website: www.meeting-music.com

ON STAGE in Tirana, Albania, 9-13 June 2021. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

12th International Krakow Choir Festival Cracovia Cantans, Poland, 10-13 June 2021. Contact: MELODY & Polonia Cantat, Email: mail@krakowchoirfestival.pl - Website: www.krakowchoirfestival.pl

Bratislava Choir Festival, Slovak Republic, 10-13 June 2021. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: www.choral-music.sk

One Voice Choir Festival with Jonathan Palant, Hanoi & Saigon, Vietnam, 10-19 June 2021. Contact: Klconcerts, Email: info@klconcerts.com - Website: www.klconcerts.com

Limerick Sings International Choral Festival, Limerick, Ireland, 11-13 June 2021. Contact: Limerick Sings, Email: information@limericksings.com - Website: www.limericksings.com

Victoria Adriatic International Choral Competition, Opatija, Croatia, 15 June 2021. Contact: - Website: <http://www.wearesinging.org/competition-adriatic.html>

Dublin Choral Festival, Ireland, 16-20 June 2021.

Contact: Music Celebrations International, LLC,
Email: info@musiccelebrations.com - Website: <http://dublinchoralfestival.org/>

Salzburg International Choral Celebration and Competition, Salzburg, Austria, 17-21 June 2021.

Contact: Meeting Music, Email: info@meeting-music.com - Website: <http://meeting-music.com/>

Montréal Choral Festival 2021 with Z. Randall Stroepe, Canada, 19-25 June 2021.

Contact: Klconcerts, Email: info@klconcerts.com - Website: www.klconcerts.com

Passion of Italy Rome Festival, Venice and Milano, Italy, 22-28 June 2021.

Contact: Klconcerts, Email: info@klconcerts.com - Website: www.klconcerts.com

Rome Choral Festival, Rome, Italy, 23-27 June 2021.

Contact: Music Celebrations International, LLC,
Email: info@musiccelebrations.com - Website: <http://romechoralfestival.org/>

CANTEMUS International Choir Festival, Novi Sad, Zrenjanin, Vojvodina, Serbia, 24-28 June 2021.

Contact: International Music Center Balkan Bridges,
Email: imcbalkanbridges@gmail.com - Website: <http://www.imcbalkanbridges.com>

2021 Choral Festival in Ireland with Rollo Dilworth, Prague, Czech Republic, 28 June-5 July 2021.

Contact: Klconcerts, Email: info@klconcerts.com - Website: www.klconcerts.com

Salzburg Choral Festival Jubilate Mozart!, Austria, 30 June-4 July 2021.

Contact: Music Celebrations International, LLC, Email: info@musiccelebrations.com - Website: <https://salzburgchoralfestival.org/>

11th World Choir Games, Antwerp, Ghent, Belgium, 2-12 July 2021.

Contact: Interkultur Foundation,
Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

15th Summa Cum Laude International Youth Music Festival, Vienna, Austria, 2-7 July 2021.

Contact: CONCERTS-AUSTRIA, Email: office@scifestival.org - Website: www.scifestival.org

2021 Choral Festival in Ireland with Craig Hella Johnson, Belfast and Dublin, Ireland, 2-8 July 2021.

Contact: Klconcerts, Email: info@klconcerts.com - Website: www.klconcerts.com

Chanakkale International Choir Festival and Competition, Chanakkale, Turkey, 6-11 July 2021.

Contact: Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart Üniversitesi, Email: info@canakkalekorofestivali.com - Website: <http://www.canakkalekorofestivali.com/>

International Youth Music Festival I & Slovakia Folk, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 7-10 July 2021.

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

39th International Choir Festival of Preveza, 27th International Competition of Sacred Music, Preveza, Greece, 8-11 July 2021.

Contact: Choral Society «Armonia» of Prevesa, Email: armonia4@otenet.gr - Website: <http://www.armoniachoir.gr/festival/index.php>

11th Musica Eterna Roma International Choir Festival and Competition, Italy, 10-14 July 2021.

Contact: Meeting Music, Email: info@meeting-music.com - Website: www.meeting-music.com

2021 Golden Gate International Children's and Youth Choir Festival, Oakland, California, USA, 11-17 July 2021.

Contact: Piedmont Choirs, Email: info@goldengatefestival.org - Website: www.goldengatefestival.org

International Choir Festival InCanto Mediterraneo, Milazzo (Sicily), Italy, 11-17 July 2021.

Contact: Associazione Corale "Cantica Nova", Email: festival@festivalincantomediterraneo.it - Website: www.festivalincantomediterraneo.it

International Boys and Men's Choral Festival, Flagstaff, Arizona, USA, 13-20 July 2021.

Contact: IBMCF, Email: IBMCF@internationalchoralfestival.com - Website: www.internationalchoralfestival.com

13th International Choir Competition, Miltenberg, Bavaria, Germany, 15-18 July 2021.

Contact: Kulturreferat des Landratsamtes Miltenberg, Gaby Schmidt, Email: kultur@LRA-MIL.de - Website: www.chorwettbewerb-miltenberg.de

Europa Cantat Festival 2021, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 16-25 July 2021.

Contact: European Choral Association – Europa Cantat, Email: info@europacantat.jskd.si - Website: <https://europacantat.jskd.si/>

6th International Conductor's Seminar Wernigerode, Germany, 17-20 July 2021.

Contact: Förderverein Interkultur, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

12th International Johannes Brahms Choir Festival and Competition, Wernigerode, Germany, 21-25 July 2021. Contact: Förderverein Interkultur, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

International Youth Music Festival II and Bratislava Cantat I, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 26-29 July 2021. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: www.choral-music.sk

1st Classical Music Summer Festival, Vienna, Austria, 29 July-1 Aug 2021. Contact: CONCERTS-AUSTRIA, Email: office@concerts-austria.com - Website: <http://www.concerts-austria.com/summer-festival-vienna>

ON STAGE in Lisbon, Portugal, 10-13 Sep 2021. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

12th Krakow Advent and Christmas Choir Festival, Poland, 3-5 Dec 2021. Contact: Polonia Cantat & Melody, Email: krakow@christmasfestival.pl - Website: www.christmasfestival.pl

Bratislava Cantat II, Slovak Republic, 7-10 Oct 2021. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: www.choral-music.sk

4th Kalamata International Choir Competition and Festival, Greece, 7-11 Oct 2021. Contact: Förderverein Interkultur, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

In Canto sul Garda International Choir Competition, Riva del Garda & Arco, Italy, 9-13 Oct 2021. Contact: Meeting Music, Email: info@meeting-music.com - Website: www.meeting-music.com

10th Canta al Mar International Choral Festival, Calella, Barcelona, Spain, 21-25 Oct 2021. Contact: Förderverein Interkultur, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

Adriatic Pearl International Choir Festival & Competition, Dubrovnik, Croatia, 28 Oct-1 Nov 2021. Contact: Meeting Music, Email: info@meeting-music.com - Website: www.meeting-music.com

ON STAGE in Prague, Czech Republic, 4-7 Nov 2021. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

16th International Warsaw Choir Festival Varsovia Cantat, Poland, 12-14 Nov 2021. Contact: MELODY & Polonia Cantat, Email: info@varsoviacantat.pl - Website: www.varsoviacantat.pl

Voices & Wine Malaga, Spain, 17-21 Nov 2021. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

Vienna Advent Sing, Austria, 25-30 Nov, 2-6, 9-13 & 16-20 Dec 2020. Contact: Music Contact International, Email: travel@music-contact.com - Website: www.music-contact.com

International Festival of Advent and Christmas Music, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 2-5 Dec 2021. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: www.choral-music.sk

Slovakia Cantat, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 21-24 Apr 2022. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: www.choral-music.sk

13th European Festival of Youth Choirs, Basel, Switzerland, 24-29 May 2022. Contact: Europäisches Jugendchor Festival Basel, Kathrin Renggli, Email: info@ejcf.ch - Website: www.ejcf.ch

Bratislava Choir Festival, Slovak Republic, 9-12 June 2022. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: www.choral-music.sk

International Youth Music Festival I & Slovakia Folk, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 6-9 July 2022. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: www.choral-music.sk

Europa Cantat Junior Festival, Vilnius, Lithuania, 15-24 July 2022. Contact: Europa Cantat junior 8, Email: secretariat@choralies.org - Website: europacantatjunior.fr/en/

International Youth Music Festival II and Bratislava Cantat I, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 25-28 July 2022. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: www.choral-music.sk

Bratislava Cantat II, Slovak Republic, 6-9 Oct 2022. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: www.choral-music.sk

International Festival of Advent and Christmas Music, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 1-4 Dec 2022. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: www.choral-music.sk



ACDA 2021

March 17-20 Dallas, Texas

Featured Choirs!

Dallas Symphony Orchestra and Chorus
Entre Voces, Coro Nacional de Cuba
GALA Collaboration Concert
Our Song: The Atlanta Gay and
Lesbian Choir (SATB)
Austin Gay Men's Chorus (TTBB)
San Diego Women's Chorus (SSAA)
Tenebrae
Texas All State Mixed Chorus
Texas Collegiate combined Choirs
with Simon Halsey
The World Youth Choir
Voctave
And More...

Honor Choirs!

Children
Fernando Malvar-Ruiz
HS/SATB
Maria Guinand
MS/JH SATB
Andrea Ramsey
Multicultural HS/Collegiate
SSAA
Eugene Rogers
Pearl Shangkuan

Conference Hotels

Sheraton Dallas Hotel
Hotel Fairmont Dallas

Pre-Conference "Welcome to Dallas" Event

The Dallas Chamber Choir
Turtle Creek Chorale
St. John's Baptist Church

Great Venues!

First United Methodist Church
Moody Performance Hall
Morton H. Meyerson
Symphony Center
Winspear Opera House