



INTERNATIONAL CHORAL MAGAZINE

2nd Quarter, 2024
APRIL 2024



**FOCUS
BAROQUE MUSIC
FROM LATIN AMERICA**

A TRIP TO... AUSTRALIA

**FIRST STEPS: FINDING
REPERTOIRE**

**TON KOOPMAN ON THE
ST. MATTHEW PASSION**

INTERNATIONAL CHORAL MAGAZINE

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EDITORIAL



ANA PATRICIA CARBAJAL CÓRDOVA

IFCM Board Member, ICM Editorial Board Member; Mexico

It is an honor and a great pleasure to write this editorial as a Mexican member of the IFCM Board. In this issue, we will have the opportunity to read several articles referring to Latin American baroque music that manifested mainly in the Catholic religious sphere established by the colonists (Spain and Portugal).

Viceregal music in the American colonies played a role that transcended the merely artistic as its influence extended to religious areas, contributing to the evangelization of indigenous populations. It also extended to cultural areas as a vehicle for cultural integration and to education, providing a common cultural base, and to society by providing a space for community cohesion.

Baroque music in Latin America used liturgical texts: masses, motets and psalms. Many of the composers adapted the texts to the local language and incorporated indigenous and African influences, giving rise to unique sounds and styles.

Polyphony was a distinctive feature of Baroque music on this continent; music was composed with complex harmonies and often multiple voices.

Often this music focused on vocals. However, instruments were also used to enhance the sound. Organ and strings were commonly used to accompany the choir. Choirs performed sacred music in churches during liturgical ceremonies, religious festivals and special events.

Throughout Latin America, various schools of baroque choral music developed. In Mexico, Juan Gutiérrez de Padilla (ca. 1590-1664), Antonio Salazar (1650-1715) and Gaspar Fernandes (1570-1629) were important references. As well, we have Tomás de Torrejón y Velasco (1644-1728) in Peru, Esteban Salas (1725-1803) in Cuba and Andrés Flores (1700-1779) in Guatemala.

These musicians represent only a small sample of the rich baroque tradition that developed in Latin America. Without a doubt, their musical legacy, which has endured through the centuries and which has surely influenced the creations of later generations with its diversity, reflects a medium of cultural and social expression of the colonies.

I invite you to discover this wonderful music rich in sounds and sonic concepts, which will transport us to Latin America, where great works of choral literature have also been created for centuries.

In this edition, you will also find a vision of choral music from the Australian continent. You will learn more about the St. Matthew Passion and also about new trends in choral practice, vocal technique and communication, get closer to the work of Marie Herrington and dance to vocal music!

Enjoy and contact us for more information.

Translated from Spanish by Joel Hageman, USA

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MUSIC FROM THE JESUIT REDUCTIONS IN SOUTH AMERICA

The “Holy Experiment” viewed from the musical angle

NIKOLAI OTT

Conductor, church musician, Tübingen, Germany

[Artikel auf Deutsch](#) [Artículo en español](#) [Article en français](#)

ON 5 APRIL 1717 THREE SHIPS LEAVE THE HARBOUR OF CADIZ, ON BOARD OF ONE OF THEM A SMALL MAN “OF AVERAGE STATURE AND WITH TWO LIVER SPOTS ON HIS LEFT CHEEK”. JUST BEFORE, THE MUSICIAN HAD BEEN OFFERED A POST AS CHIEF MUSICIAN IN SEVILLE, BUT HE DECLINED IT IN ORDER TO FOLLOW HIS CALLING. INSTEAD, TOGETHER WITH ANOTHER 53, ALL – LIKE HIM – MEMBERS OF THE ORDER OF THE JESUITS, HE SETS OFF. WE ARE TALKING OF DOMENICO ZIPOLI, KNOWN IN EUROPE PRIMARILY THROUGH HIS “SONATE D’INTAVOLATURA PER ORGANO E CEMBALO” OF 1716 AND A VIOLIN SONATA IN A MAJOR. DURING HIS TIME IN ROME, AROUND SIX YEARS EARLIER, HE HAD BEEN THE “SORT-OF COMPOSER IN RESIDENCE” OF THE ORDER OF SANTA CECILIA, FOR WHOM HE COMPOSED SEVERAL VESPERS AND ORATORIOS. HIS VOCAL WORKS FROM EUROPE ARE NOW CONSIDERED LOST.

Three months later the group arrives at the Rio de la Plata in what today is Argentina, where the Jesuit brothers go ashore. By no means were these 54 missionaries the first to set foot on the South American continent; Jesuits had already been active in the “New World” since the 16th century, particularly as itinerant preachers. In the first decades of the 17th century the first reductions¹ were founded in what is now Brazil, where the Jesuits drew together

the indigenous population, thus “protected” to some degree from being captured by others.

In this context it must be said that the Christian mission in South America – as in every other region of the world – has left behind traces and images of people of which nobody can be proud. The effects of the reductions can be viewed in very different ways. Range and consequences of missionising, colonising and suppression have been confronted in part, a process ongoing to this day, but it is a subject not to be discussed within the framework of this essay. It is most definitely not the intention of the author to glorify the (purported) “achievements” of the reductions and of

¹ Jesuit reductions are a technical term for villages built in South America between the 16th and 18th centuries for the common good of the local population – with echoes of today’s kibbutzim in Israel – and at the same time as protection from colonial troops who were eager to capture locals and sell them into slavery. More information on this fascinating subject can be found at <https://armstronghistoryjournal.wordpress.com/2022/05/07/jesuits-in-the-new-world-a-contrast-in-conversion-of-north-and-south-america/> [addendum made by the editors].

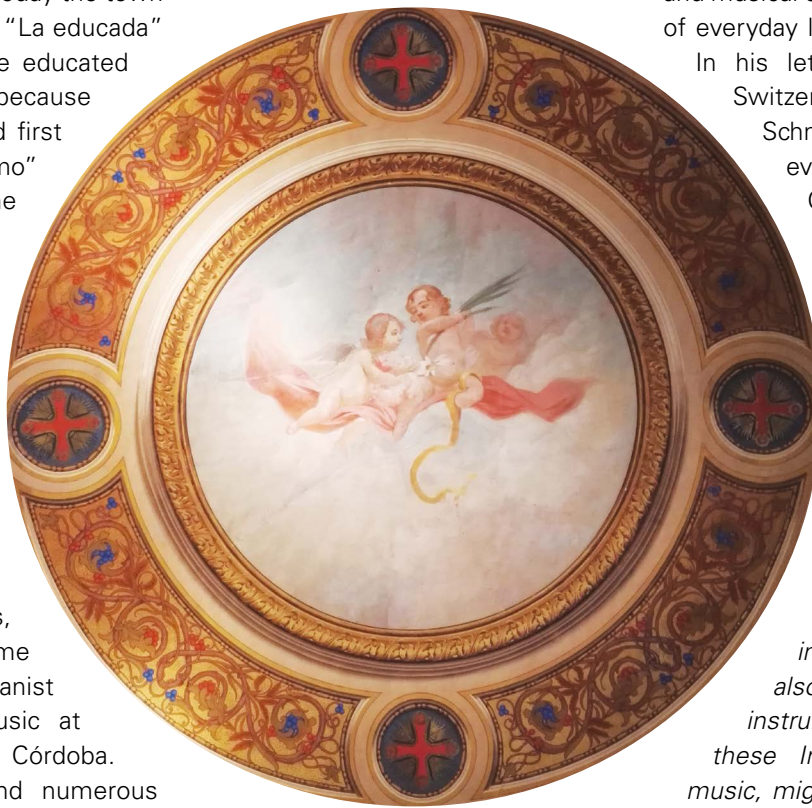


Christian missionising in general. Rather, the aim is to identify the music that came to be in the reductions, and to outline the history of its effects.

Domenico Zipoli and his colleagues stayed in Buenos Aires for a few weeks and then, on ox carts, set off into the interior of the country. After more than 700 km (google maps states that, on foot, the journey would take about 160 hours) the group arrived in what today is the capital of the province, Córdoba. Today the town bears the nickname "La educada" or "La docta" – the educated one – doubtlessly because the Jesuits founded first the "Colégio Máximo" and, in 1613, the first Argentinian university which still exists as "Universidad Nacional de Córdoba".

After his arrival in Córdoba Zipoli studied at these two institutions for at least four years, while at the same time serving as organist and master of music at the Jesuit church in Córdoba. Several masses and numerous psalm settings for vespers on Saturday evenings originate from this period. The compositions are generally for 3-4 voices (SAT or SATB), one or two obligato instruments and basso continuo. The choir parts are generally homophonic, with the masses including some imitative and polyphonic passages. Most of the psalm settings need soloists, sometimes just one soprano, sometimes several soloists.

The musical language matches the liturgical function. Though Zipoli was, in Europe, considered a skilled and virtuosic composer, the pieces that survive from the reductions (not just Zipoli's works) are rather plain in their texture. We can assume that this music was not only part of religious services but also pursued educational aims, with displays of high standards of compositional technique being of only secondary importance. Nevertheless the pieces do not lack a certain elegance. In



their simplicity they have great expressiveness, and a most cheerful basic mood permeates them in a way that would rarely be found in such a way in Europe. In this context about Pater Schmid, who will reappear later in this text:

"From an aesthetic, unilaterally European point of view, Schmid's work may appear feeble. But it is a remarkably good match to the function it

was intended to fulfil, and it mirrors the utopian ideal of a Christian community free from conflict, which inspired many Jesuit missionaries'?"

As a means of proclamation and characteristic feature of Christian church services, music was of extreme importance within the concept of the Jesuit reductions. Not only the composition of liturgical pieces, but also the building of musical instruments and musical education formed part of everyday life in the reductions.

In his letters back home to Switzerland, Pater Martin Schmid SJ describes everyday life in the Chiquitos reductions in what today is Bolivia:

"Alongside all these things already mentioned, my superiors have ordered me to do other things, too, namely, that I introduce music into these missions, also make organs and instruments, so that these Indians, with their music, might also praise their God and Lord. So I immediately started to instruct the Indians' little boy toddlers and boys, who after all can read, in the art of singing and furthermore,

² Waisman, Leonardo: "Ich bin Missionar, weil ich singe, spiele und tanze". Martin Schmid als Musiker. In: Kühne, Eckart: Martin Schmid 1694-1772. Missionar - Musiker - Architekt. Ein Jesuit aus der Schweiz bei den Chiquitano-Indianern in Bolivien. Luzern, 1994, p 60.

I have built an array of musical instruments, though I myself never learnt to do that while in Europe, or even kidded myself that I had. [...] For all kinds of peoples have their organ: have many violins and double basses made of cedar wood [...] So all these Indian little boys are excellent musicians, who every day in Holy Masses, with their singing and musical instruments, deliver to our highest God the thanks and praise He is owed. And I can say that with their music, they would be able to appear in any town and church and cause

*great amazement. [...]”³
[translator’s note: the original is in 300-year-old Swiss German; it is represented here in British English from 2024]*

In the last 30 years, some music from the reductions has already found its way to Europe, largely through personal contacts to South America. European publishers have so far brought out little or nothing. A large share in the opening up of works from the Chiquitos and Moxos is owed to Piotr Nawrot SJ who, within the framework of his doctoral

³ Fischer, Rainald: P. Martin Schmid SJ 1694-1772. Seine Briefe und sein Wirken. Zug, 1988. p 103 f.

dissertation, has investigated manuscripts and copies from the reductions and edited them to make them accessible. It is difficult to get hold of this music, much is out of print or was published in very small print runs by small publishing houses which all too often disappear under the radar of choir directors. The hope remains that a European publisher does take up these pieces. When the Covid pandemic was at its peak, for many events they offered a good way to make beautiful music in a short time and with small, variable numbers at one’s disposal. (Picture page 4: Ceiling of the Cathedral of Córdoba, Argentina © Isabelle Métrope)

Translated from German by Irene Auerbach, UK



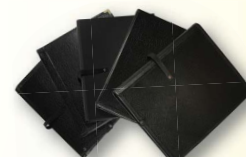
As a schoolboy, NIKOLAI OTT spent a year in Argentina, where he came in contact with the South American baroque music tradition. Since 2019 he has been a church musician in the Tübingen area, active in the Swabian Choir Association (South of Germany). He is also a member of the board of the incorporated Society for Music History in the Federal State of Baden-Württemberg. mail@nikolai-ott.de



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SINGING ESTEBAN SALAS

ENRIQUE O'RELLY

Choir director, Cuba

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AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER, THE NAME ESTEBAN SALAS HAS BEEN CLOSELY TIED TO MY MUSICAL LIFE. I BEGAN AS A MEMBER OF THE CHILDREN'S CHOIR AT THE CONSERVATORY IN SANTIAGO DE CUBA WHICH TO THIS DAY BEARS HIS NAME, AND WENT ON TO STUDY AND PERFORM TWO OF SALAS'S MOST FAMOUS *VILLANCICOS*: *UNA NAVE MERCANTIL* AND *CLARAS LUCES*.

Throughout my studies and as a singer in choral groups such as the Orfeón Santiago, Exaudi Chamber Choir, and as an attentive follower of the early music group Ars Longa of Havana, and much later as a conductor, I have had the opportunity to perform not only his *villancicos*, but also a good bit of his liturgical music. These performances were based on editions using the best understanding of the day, but lacking the serious study that began at the end of the 1990s to contextualize Salas's music. This effort was led by the Cuban musicologist Miriam Escudero and Ars Longa Havana, directed by Teresa Paz and Aland López, who have done a wide variety of performances and recordings from across Salas's catalogue.

WHO WAS ESTEBAN SALAS?

Born in 1725 in Havana, Esteban Salas y Castro was the first widely known Cuban professional musician whose work is well documented. He studied violin, organ, composition, counterpoint and plainchant, and completed his education in philosophy, theology and canon law. In 1764 he moved to the city of Santiago de Cuba to fill the position of chapel master in the Cathedral, a position he held until his death in 1803.

THE MUSIC

According to the latest studies, Salas's compositions, which stem from his job as chapel master, include 103 pieces of sacred music that can be divided into liturgical and non-liturgical works. The first category includes masses, motets, hymns, salves and *autos sacramentales* in Latin, and the second includes cantatas, *pastorelas* and *villancicos*, his favored genre where he not only shines as a composer but also as an author of poetic text in Spanish.

SINGING SALAS

The interpretation of this music constitutes an artistic and pedagogical challenge for the choir director as it requires knowledge and mastery of all the aesthetic and musical style traits of the baroque. The conductor must seek out tools that allow the singer to approach the score in a practical and direct way within its musicological context.

THE CHORAL ENSEMBLE

The ban on female voices in Catholic churches that was still in force in Salas's time influences the various ensembles that he wrote for, and is reflected in the terms he used for each part to define characteristics such as tessitura and musical function. *Tiple*, the highest, was to be sung by children. The alto part would be sung by what we know today as countertenors, and the tenor part would likely today classify as lyrical-dramatic tenor. The part of bass,

sometimes written functionally within the basso continuo and other times independently, requires a flexible voice capable of expressive *cantabile* singing.

For a choral group unaccustomed to early music performance, approaching Salas's music almost necessarily includes revoicing the choir. The alto part could be sung by a mixed group of contraltos and countertenors, perhaps joined by a very high, light tenors, if the choir happens to include them.

One or two baritones with clear timbre and agile voices could join the tenor line. The remaining parts, soprano and bass, can be maintained as normal, with string instruments covering any sections that are outside the voices' typical tessitura. In that case, there would be two options depending on the type of music:

- Liturgical Music: double the voice parts with instruments that share their register and color, and/or add a mezzo or alto 1 to the soprano line, and a baritone to the tenor line.
- Non-liturgical music: mix sopranos and mezzos on the same line, and tenors and baritones on the tenor line as there is no independent bass voice in the cantatas, *pastorelas* and *villancicos*.

TUNING AND TEMPERAMENT

In liturgical music Gregorian chant plays a structural role, either explicitly in the incipit of each motet, mass or requiem movement, or as rhythmic or melodic source material that informs the polyphonic framework. This invites us to seek a balance between tradition and innovation resulting in a performance that is faithful to the composer's original intention.

Recreating this music centuries after its original composition requires that the singers of the choir adjust their performance practice using the temperament and acoustic particularities of the wind instruments of the time as a model. This is especially true of the organ, which was essential in the execution and accompaniment of the liturgy. By aligning ourselves with these instruments we can better understand the nature of the score and faithfully recreate an acoustical concept in line with that era's musical aesthetic.

In the non-liturgical compositions, the influence of Neapolitan secular music which included violins and continuo suggests more flexibility. Where the text is in Spanish and the musical discourse is more casual, virtuosity in the violins and solo voices comes to the fore. At certain moments the choir illustrates the text with expressly rhetorical figures, and contrasts of character, tempo and the alternation of choruses, couplets, da capo arias and recitatives defines the style.

Salas's personal manner is most obvious in the *villancicos*, which are often written in triple meter. Always inspired by the liturgical moment for which they were written, he also composed them as a "chronicle

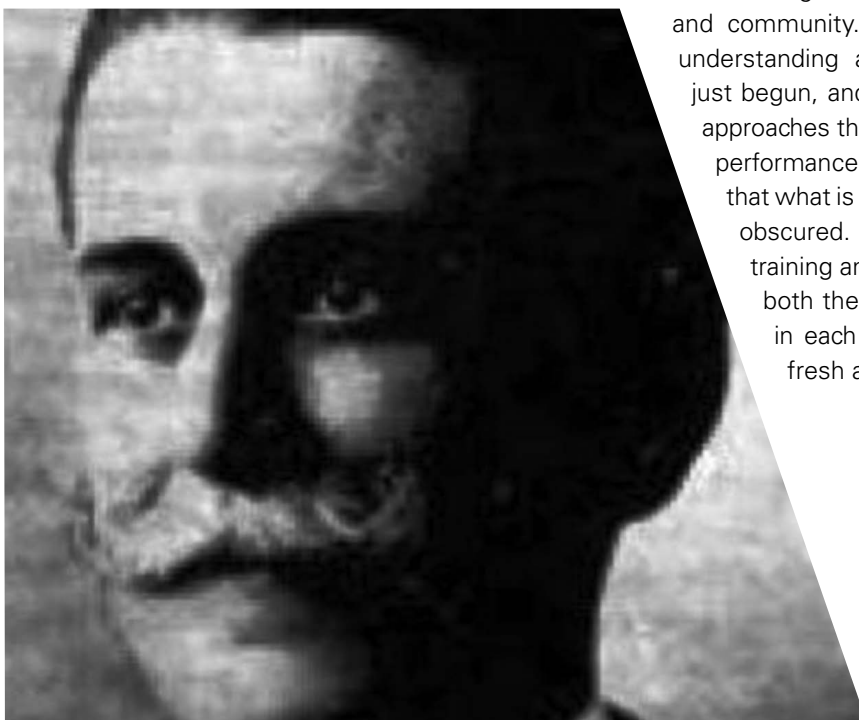
and musical exorcism" of happy or unfortunate events, such as the natural disasters that devastated the city and affected the daily lives of its inhabitants as well as the Cathedral itself where, due to more than one fire and frequent collapses, part of Salas's work may have been lost.

THE INSTRUMENTAL ENSEMBLE

According to contemporary accounts, upon Salas's arrival at the Cathedral he had a very modest staff of musicians that included three sopranos, two altos, two tenors, two violins, a contrabass, two bassoons, harp and organ. This gives us an idea of what the basic ensemble suitable to accompany his music may be, always leaving the possibility to include other instruments from the same family to enhance, give color, vigor and brightness to some of the vocal parts, or even double or replace some of them depending on the type of music and genre.

Within the work of Esteban Salas we find a full compendium of styles, which speaks to the composer's desire to master the techniques of those that preceded him. Some of his compositions strike out in new directions, furthering the development of what his European contemporaries were doing. Understanding and interpreting his music involves seeking as references his predecessors, contemporaries and descendants, taking into account the lag time in musical development between Europe and the Americas.

Salas's work as chapel master, priest and teacher of philosophy, ethics and music at the Seminary of San Basilio Magno in the city of Santiago de Cuba made him a beloved figure who was respected by his parishioners and community. The path towards total knowledge, understanding and interpretation of his music has just begun, and we will surely hear new interpretive approaches that will make us rethink every aspect of performance practice. The best of these will ensure that what is essential in his music is neither lost nor obscured. It falls to the conductor, always with training and study, to take greatest advantage of both the explicit and hidden information found in each score, bringing to light music that is fresh and new.



Esteban Salas y Castro, born on 25 December 1725 in Havana, Cuba, died on 14 July 1803 (aged 77) in Santiago de Cuba, Cuba

Finally, an anecdote where the questioning of an inexperienced student becomes, over time, a professional obsession seeking answers, solutions and stylistic parallels:



While rehearsing with the Chamber Choir of the National School of Music, *Toquen presto a fuego*, a *villancico* of a festive, energetic and brilliant nature, after listening to a section of the violins where our director demanded a specific touch and dynamics, one of the cellists looks at me and says, "Esteban Salas Amadeus Mozart..."

Translated from Spanish by Joshua Habermann, USA

Born in Santiago de Cuba, ENRIQUE FILIU O'RELLY began his musical studies at the Esteban Salas Conservatory and continued at the National School of Music, specializing in choir conducting with teacher Alina Orraca. His higher education took place at the Pancho Vladigerov National Music Academy in Sofia Bulgaria, and the Instituto Superior de Arte in Havana. Director of the Chamber Choir of the Music School of Santiago de Cuba and the female choir of the National School of Music of Havana during the years 1991–1994, he also served as assistant director of the Orfeón Santiago, directed by maestro Electo Silva. Enrique Filio O'Relly is a member of the Schola Cantorum Coralina and Exaudi Chamber Choir of Havana and founding director of the Camerata Vocale Sine Nomine. He is also Musical Director of the choral groups Torrecanto (2006–2019) and Magerit (2007 to the present), and he has been studio director for the startup Singerhood, dedicated to the recording of choral tracks with real voices. O'Relly has been an invited guest conductor of the Cristóbal de Morales choir, Aldebarán, Vox Absona (Denmark), Coro Polifónico de Getafe, and Virgen de la Paloma, and has given Cuban choral music workshops in Madrid, Zaragoza and Copenhagen. enriquefilio@gmail.com



AMERICAN MUSIC OF THE EARLY 17TH CENTURY:

The Cancionero de Gaspar Fernández

OMAR MORALES ABRIL

Musicologist and musical director, Guatemala

[Artikel auf Deutsch](#) [Artículo en español](#) [Article en français](#)

THE *CANCIONERO DE GASPAR FERNÁNDEZ* IS A COMPILATION THAT BRINGS TOGETHER AROUND 300 POLYPHONIC WORKS FROM THE EARLY 17TH CENTURY. IT IS CURRENTLY PRESERVED IN THE HISTORICAL ARCHIVE OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF ANTEQUERA-OAXACA BUT WAS WRITTEN IN PUEBLA BY GASPAR FERNÁNDEZ FOR PUEBLA CATHEDRAL.

The compositions preserved in Fernández's *Cancionero*, as well as others in polyphony books of the Guatemala and Puebla cathedrals, are even more relevant with recent findings that correct his biography. Contrary to the erroneous assumption that he was a Portuguese musician active in Évora at the end of the 16th century who later emigrated to the New World, we now know that the composer Gaspar Fernández was born and trained on the American continent. So, his sound references were not exactly European, but those of the local environment.

The Portuguese Gaspar Fernandez (with a 'z' and without an accent mark, modernised to 'Fernandes' today) did indeed exist, but bears no relation to our composer. In 1590, he was the musician with the most privileges and the highest salary at Évora Cathedral. We know that he received the degree of Bachelor of Arts from the University of Évora on 13 March 1594 and that he was still serving at Évora Cathedral in 1599.

At the same time, but on the other side of the Atlantic, a young Gaspar Fernández had been teaching children since the end of 1595 while serving at Guatemala Cathedral. He was then only a cleric, the lowest of the ecclesiastical orders that could be acquired by a boy intending to pursue a religious career. In 1597 he obtained the rank of subdeacon; and in 1598, as a deacon, he entered the recently founded Seminary College of the Assumption, created expressly for the ecclesiastical training of the sons of provincial settlers in Guatemala. According to College records, he would have been about 25 years old at the time of his admission. There, he received music lessons from Andrés López Pellejeros, a native of Guatemala City, who was then the chapel master of the cathedral. He began working as a cantor and bass player in 1601. At the beginning of 1603, he was appointed rector of the College and on 8 May of

the same year, chapel master of Guatemala Cathedral. From this pre-eminent position, news of his merits would have reached the chapter of Puebla Cathedral. On Assumption Day in 1603, an edict was posted on the door of Guatemala Cathedral calling for candidates for the organist position at Puebla Cathedral; Fernández decided to apply. He would have sent his examination registration documents to Puebla around the last quarter of 1603 or the first quarter of 1604. In the end, he declined his candidacy and did not take the competitive examination. However, references to his musical aptitudes must have been considered by the Puebla town council, because in mid-1606, they offered him the post of chapel master, with an attractive salary of more than double than that of Guatemala Cathedral. Gaspar Fernández accepted. His teaching in Guatemala Cathedral came to an end on



5 July 1606. He left for Puebla on 12 August 1606 and was received as chapel master of the town's cathedral on 19 September. A few days later he was also appointed to replace the organist. Except for an unsuccessful attempt in early 1612 to return to teaching in the Guatemala chapel, and for a brief temporary dismissal in mid-1618, Gaspar Fernández remained in his position in Puebla until he died shortly before 18 September 1629. During those 23 years in Puebla, he was in charge of the composition and direction of the polyphonic music for the main celebrations of the cathedral, as well as teaching music to the choir. In addition, he accompanied on the organ for the plainchant in minor festivities.

Fernández developed a parallel profession as a copyist of polyphony books. Between 1602 and 1606, he wrote at least four books of polyphony for Guatemala Cathedral, and at least four others for Puebla Cathedral between 1616 and 1619. Thanks to Gaspar Fernández's dual role as chapel master and professional music amanuensis, the oldest liturgical-musical repertoire of the cathedrals of Guatemala and Puebla can now be recognised. But the most relevant aspect of the union of these two skills is undoubtedly the creation of the now-called *Cancionero de Gaspar Fernández*, which preserves many of his own musical compositions based on poetic texts. Unlike most musical sources at the time, this thick, bound volume was not a document for performers' use, but a working notebook for the composer, in which he himself compiled his detailed works between 1609 and 1616. It contains drafts and personal notes, made with little more care than is necessary for the writer to understand his own annotations. For this reason, it is difficult to establish with certainty the number

of compositions it contains. There are pieces with incomplete or frankly, lyricless literary texts. There are fragments of music and poetry that clearly would have been part of a work that was not copied in its entirety, and so on. After an interdisciplinary examination, Margit Frenk and Omar Morales Abril consider that the *Cancionero de Gaspar Fernández* contains 297 pieces of music. Of these, 11 lack lyrics, 14 correspond to liturgical texts in Latin, and 272 were written on poetry in vernacular languages, mainly Castilian, but also literary languages that mimic subaltern cultural groups, identified as 'Indian', or 'Indian and Multiracial', 'Guinean' or 'Black', 'Vizcayan', 'Portuguese', etc. There are three poems that have two musical versions and one that was split into two, for two compositions. Several dozen of the literary texts set to music by Gaspar Fernández correspond to texts

published in Spain, Portugal, and New Spain by great poets, precisely around the years in which he wrote his *Cancionero*. Among these texts are three by Juan de Luque (published in his *Auto tercero del Sacramento*, 1608), one by Luis de Góngora (*No son todos ruseñores*, 1609), one by Fernán González de Eslava (*Coloquios espirituales y sacramentales*, 1610), fifteen by Lope de Vega (*Pastores de Belén*, 1612), fourteen by Alonso de Ledesma (*Conceptos espirituales*, 3rd part, 1612), nine by José de Valdivielso (*Romancero espiritual*, 1612; *Fénix de amor*, 1622), two by Gaspar de los Reyes (*Tesoro de conceptos divinos*, 1613), nineteen by Alonso de Bonilla (*Peregrinos pensamientos*, 1614), as well as several anonymous poems found in Spanish manuscripts from the late 16th and early 17th centuries.

Translated from Spanish by Karin Rockstad, USA



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TRACES OF THE BAROQUE AESTHETIC IN THE MUSIC OF EMERICO LOBO DE MESQUITA

JULIO CESAR MORETZSOHN ROCHA

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[Artikel auf Deutsch](#) [Artículo en español](#) [Article en français](#)

THE COLONIZATION OF BRAZIL BY THE PORTUGUESE TOOK PLACE IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 16TH CENTURY. YET IT WAS NOT UNTIL THE END OF THE 17TH AND IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 18TH CENTURY THAT FORAYS INTO THE INTERIOR OF THE COUNTRY LED TO THE DISCOVERY OF COUNTLESS GOLD MINES AND LARGE DIAMOND DEPOSITS. THIS REGION, WHICH STILL BEARS THE NAME *MINAS GERAIS* (GENERAL MINES) TODAY, EXPERIENCED A TREMENDOUS INFLUX OF PEOPLE AT THE TIME, ALL OF WHOM WERE LURED BY THE PROSPECT OF RICHES. IN THE 18TH CENTURY, MORE THAN 400,000 PEOPLE PASSED THROUGH ITS STREETS: BRAZILIANS FROM ALL REGIONS, PORTUGUESE, INDIGENOUS PEOPLE, AND ENSLAVED AFRICANS. HISTORIANS CLAIM THAT BRAZIL WAS THE WORLD'S LARGEST PRODUCER OF GOLD AT THE TIME AND THAT THE QUANTITY OF DIAMONDS BROUGHT TO EUROPE WAS INCALCULABLE (BUENO, 2012, P. 176-89).

Due to this enormous influx of people, countless villages and cities emerged, with an intense social and religious life. It was in this context that José Joaquim Emerico Lobo de Mesquita was born in the middle of the 18th century, in the region around Diamantina (Minas Gerais). The first information about his life is found in appointment books for work as a musician at festivals in the city of Serro beginning in 1765. There he worked as an organist, conductor, and composer. In 1798 he was hired by the Third Order of Carmelites in the city of Vila Rica (now Ouro Preto), which necessitated his move to this city. Here he was responsible for composing music for all of the brotherhood's festivities, as well as for hiring the musicians. He also worked there for the Confraternity of the Most Blessed Sacrament. In 1801 he was appointed as organist by the Third Order of Carmelites in Rio de Janeiro, which brought with it another relocation. He then worked for this institution until his death in 1805 (Pires, 2010, p. 52-54). Lobo de Mesquita is considered one of the most important Brazilian





Festival de Chiquitos, Bolivia, 2008

composers of his time. The musicologist Paulo Castagna notes that “his music embodies the ideal of sacred music of this time” (Castagna, 2010, p. 59). The existence of more than a hundred copies of his works in the archives of Minas Gerais, Goiás, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, made in the 18th and 19th centuries, demonstrates the recognition and dissemination of his works. Until the middle of the 20th century, his works belonged to the repertoire of musical associations in the country’s interior (Neves, 1998, p. 3).

Lobo de Mesquita’s works follow European models of the 18th century. Various authors point out musical elements that characterize the transition from the Baroque to the Classical style in the sacred repertoire composed in Minas Gerais in the last quarter of the 18th century. Pires notes that “the work of Lobo de Mesquita exemplifies that there was no clear break between Baroque and Classicism, especially not in the realm of sacred music” (PIRES, 1994, p. 122), and that the formal structure of his output approaches Classicism, while the use of figured bass, the instrumentation, the clear relationship between music and liturgical text, and the rhythmic-melodic phrasing all belong to the Baroque style.

Since Brazil was a Portuguese colony, it was self-evident that the composers of Minas Gerais would orient themselves toward the European metropolis. Portugal, in turn, was in close contact with the Italian output, particularly that of the Neapolitans. Various authors have drawn attention to a transformation that resulted from these two spheres of influence.

According to Grout & Palisca, the Italian influence set the tone in the first half of the 18th century. They find that “by the end of the Baroque period, European music had become an international language with Italian roots” (Grout & Palisca, 2001, p. 308-309). Starting in the second half of the century, there is increasing evidence of a reversal of this stylistic influence from the south (Naples) to the north (Vienna), as the north (Vienna) gradually influenced the south (Naples). In this late period, Neapolitan musical taste was increasingly seen as outdated (Benedetto & Fabris, 2005).

It is, however, important to note that Naples and Vienna were not two disconnected centers and that the intense bilateral influence that took place from the beginning of this period also had political causes. Naples emancipated itself from Spanish rule, which it had been under since 1503, and was ruled by Austria between 1707 and 1734, later becoming the kingdom’s capital again. According to Benedetto and Fabris, this city was able to establish itself as the most important musical center in Italy alongside Venice in the first half of the 18th century (Benedetto & Fabris, 2005).

For Lobo de Mesquita, two elements of formal composition seem to overlap: one that points to classical techniques with a harmonic structuring of contrasting tonal centers, and one that contains traces of Baroque aesthetics, such as the merging of contrasting measures and tempi in the same section of a work, as a means of expressing the ideas present in the text.

The use of rhetorical figures can be observed in many 18th century masses. Composers strove to express various emotions, such as joy, sorrow, strength, humility, etc. MacIntyre notes that especially in movements such as the *Gloria* and the *Credo*, the musical rhetoric of the Baroque is vivid, particularly because of the words that provide opportunities for *hypotyposis*, *exclamatio*, *parrhesia*, *pathopeia*, *noema*, *suspiratio* (MacIntyre, 1986, p. 122). Although the expression of emotions was always a goal, I do not believe that it is possible to translate these rhetorical figures directly to the works composed in the second half of the 18th and early 19th centuries. Bartel notes that the composers of this time preferred a freer interpretation of these ideas (Bartel, 1997, p. 56). We will therefore refer to this device in

this essay as word painting. We believe that the composer used these devices in the echo of a tradition that could be felt in almost all works of this period, so that it is not a conscious choice of a pattern developed in the Baroque. Following the European tradition, the use of word painting is seen most clearly in the *Gloria* and *Credo* sections of Lobo de Mesquita's masses (Rocha, 2014, p. 209).

In the *Gloria* passages of his masses, we can observe the use of dotted and dactylic rhythms for the homophonic proclamation of the word *Gloria*. The meaning of the words *et in terra pax* (and peace on earth) and *bonae voluntatis* (good will) is conveyed by a lower register with long notes and soft dynamics. To emphasize the effect of pleading in the words *Qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis* (you take away the sins of the world; have mercy upon us), the composer repeats the word *miserere* several times. Here we can observe a harmonic instability, the harmonic ascent of which is achieved by secondary dominants.

In the *Credo* section, the composer uses ascending melodic figures in the instrumentation to accompany the phrase *Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem* (I believe in God, the Father almighty), in order to create an expression of exaltation. Descending vocal melodies for the passage *descendit de coelis* (descended from heaven) are also classified as word painting. Lobo de Mesquita devotes particular attention to the central section of the *Credo*, in which the mystery and suffering of Jesus Christ are described. In the passage *Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto, ex Maria Virgine* (and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary), we observe a reduction of the instrumental scoring (with the exception of the wind instruments) and a harmonic instability. The

phrase *Crucifixus etiam pro nobis, sub Pontio Pilato et sepultus est* (was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate and was buried) is characterized by a strong contrast between the image of the crucifixion and that of the burial of Jesus Christ. It offers an excellent opportunity for the use of expressive tonal imagery, which the composer utilizes accordingly. The word *Crucifixus* is repeated several times – interrupted by pauses – with melodic sixth and octave leaps as well as lamenting melismas. In the words *Passus* and *sepultus*, the vocal parts are characterized by long notes interrupted by pauses and a low register. The festive character of the words *Et resurrexit tertia die, secundum Scripturas*, which describe the resurrection of Christ, predominates in all of Lobo de Mesquita's works, where he uses sound patterns with ascending triad arpeggios and repeats the text several times. We have scarcely any information about how the composers of Minas Gerais were educated in the 18th century or who their teachers were. As a result, it is not possible to say anything more precise about the direct influences on Lobo de Mesquita's work. In this essay we have tried to trace similarities with European output of this time in order to understand what characterizes the works of this composer. The use of rhetorical figures to express the ideas contained in the text is perhaps the most characteristic feature of his output. An analysis of this stylistic device in the *Gloria* and the *Credo* passages of his masses is evidence of the Baroque influence on his work.

Translated from the Portuguese by Reinhard Kißler, Germany
Translated from German by Katie Maxfield, Canada

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MUSICAL WORKS

Site: [IMSLP.ORG](https://imslp.org)

1. Matinas para Sábado Santo
S, A, T, B, violino I, violino II, baixo contínuo e 2 trompas
[https://imslp.org/wiki/Matinas_do_S%C3%A1bado_Santo_\(Lobo_de_Mesquita%2C_Emerico\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Matinas_do_S%C3%A1bado_Santo_(Lobo_de_Mesquita%2C_Emerico))
2. Missa em Fá Maior
S, A, T, B, violino I, violino II, viola, baixo contínuo e 2 trompas

- [https://imslp.org/wiki/Missa_\(Lobo_de_Mesquita%2C_Emerico\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Missa_(Lobo_de_Mesquita%2C_Emerico))
3. Missa em Mi bemol Maior
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[https://imslp.org/wiki/Missa_em_Mi_bemol_\(Lobo_de_Mesquita%2C_Emerico\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Missa_em_Mi_bemol_(Lobo_de_Mesquita%2C_Emerico))
 4. Missa para quarta-feira de cinzas com violoncelo obbligato
S, A, T, B, violoncelo solo e baixo contínuo
https://s9.imslp.org/files/imglnks/usimg/d/d6/IMSLP314338-PMLP507706-Missa_de_Quarta-feira_de_Cinzas_-_Lobo_de_Mesquita.pdf
 5. Magnificat
S, A, T, B, violino I, violino II, viola, baixo contínuo, 2 trompas e 2 clarinetes
[https://imslp.org/wiki/Magnificat_\(Lobo_de_Mesquita%2C_Emerico\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Magnificat_(Lobo_de_Mesquita%2C_Emerico))
 6. Tercio
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[https://imslp.org/wiki/Tercio_\(Lobo_de_Mesquita%2C_Emerico\)](https://imslp.org/wiki/Tercio_(Lobo_de_Mesquita%2C_Emerico))

Site: **MÚSICA BRASILIS**

- <https://musicbrasilis.org.br/compositores/jose-joaquim-merico-lobo-de-mesquita>
7. Te Deum
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<https://musicbrasilis.org.br/partituras/jose-joaquim-merico-lobo-de-mesquita-te-deum>
 8. Dominica in Palmis
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 9. Stabat Mater
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<https://musicbrasilis.org.br/partituras/jose-joaquim-merico-lobo-de-mesquita-stabat-mater>
 10. Motetos e Miserere para Procissão dos Passos
S, A, T, B e baixo contínuo
<https://musicbrasilis.org.br/partituras/jose-joaquim-merico-lobo-de-mesquita-motetos-e-miserere-para-procissao-dos-passos>



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JULIO MORETZSOHN is Professor of Choral Conducting and Chamber Music at the Federal University of the State of Rio de Janeiro (UNIRIO), where he received his doctorate in 2008 with the dissertation *As Missas de J. J. Emerico Lobo de Mesquita: um estudo estilístico*, on the subject of the structure of musical expression. At this institution he coordinates the project to expand the UNIRIO Youth Choir and the project *Ensino Coral Oficina UNIRIO* (Choral Conducting Workshop), which aims to train young singers and choral conductors.

As director of the vocal ensemble Calíope, which he has led since its foundation in 1993, he won the 7th Carlos Gomes Prize (2002) in the category of Choirs and Vocal Ensembles. With this ensemble he has recorded the CD *Música Brasileira e Portuguesa do Século XVIII* (1998), as well as the CDs *Sábado Santo* (2001), *Quinta-feira Santa* (2002) and *Música Fúnebre* (2003), with the aid of the *Musica de Mariana Museum*; the CD *Música Sacra de Henrique Oswald e Alberto Nepomuceno* (2005) under the *Rádio MEC* label; and the CD *Villa-Lobos - Vozes do Brasil - obra coral profana* (2012), sponsored by Petrobras. With Calíope he represented Brazil in Santiago, Chile, at the invitation of Itamaraty (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil) in 2001; on a tour of France in 2005; and at the Brazilian embassy in Berlin (Germany) in 2005; and at the Chiquitos Festival in Bolivia in 2008. In 2009, he gave concerts in Portugal at the invitation of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, and in Spain at the invitation of the *Sociedad Filarmónica de Badajoz*. In 2003 Moretzsohn founded the *Coro Sinfônico do Rio de Janeiro* (Rio de Janeiro Symphony Choir), which consists of singers with lyrical training and performs with the Petrobras Symphony Orchestra and the Brazilian Symphony Orchestra. With this group, he has already worked with conductors from Brazil and abroad. From 2010 to 2016, he developed the Brazilian Symphony Orchestra's children's choir project. As a guest conductor, he has conducted the *Camerata de Curitiba* and the OESP Choir (São Paulo Symphony Choir). julio.moretzsohn@unirio.br



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FIRE BURNING IN SNOW: PASSION AND CONTRASTS

Ex Cathedra, Jeffrey Skidmore, Hyperion

CD REVIEW BY ISABELLE MÉTROPE

ICM Managing editor, Germany/France

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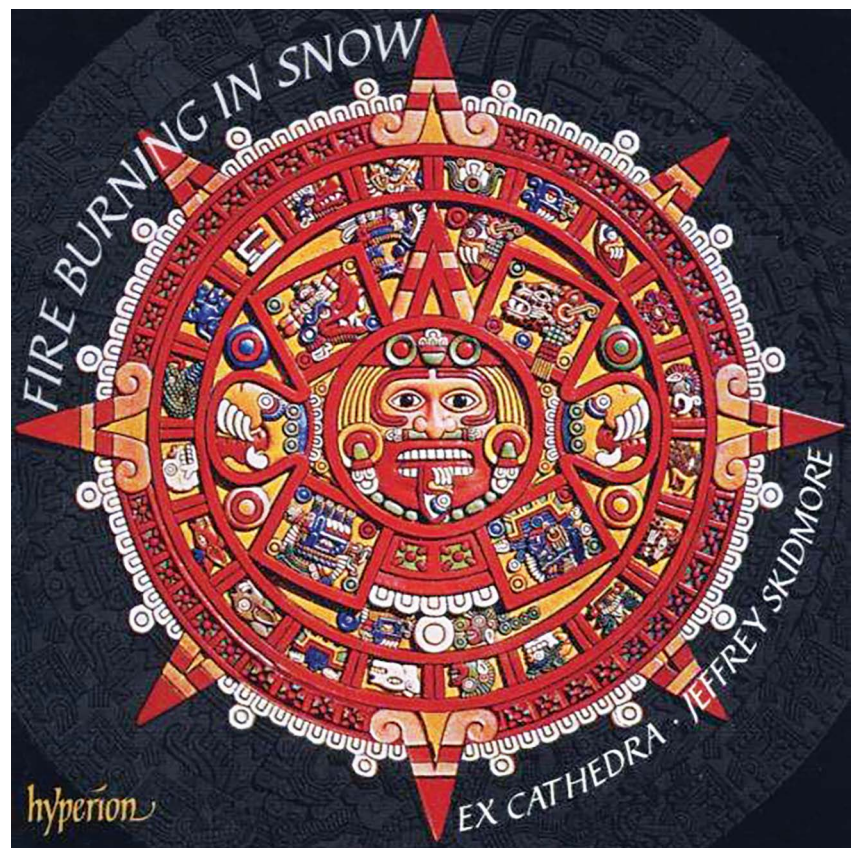
FIRE BURNING IN SNOW, RECORDED BY BRITISH ENSEMBLE *EX CATHEDRA* AND DIRECTED BY ITS FOUNDER, JEFFREY SKIDMORE, SHOWCASES AN EXCITING REPERTOIRE OF BAROQUE MUSIC FROM LATIN AMERICA, WITH A FOCUS ON WORKS BY COMPOSER JUAN DE ARAUJO (1648-1712). THIS RECORDING WAS RELEASED IN 2008 AND IS A MUST-LISTEN FOR BOTH THE MUSIC AND THE QUALITY OF ITS INTERPRETATION.

The composer Juan de Araujo was born in Spain, but at an early age moved to South America with his parents. After taking up positions in Lima, Panama and Cusco, he eventually became organist at the cathedral of La Plata, today's Sucre, the capital of Bolivia – a position he held for 32 years. This allowed him to hire professional musicians and use a wide range of instruments. Little is known about Araujo the man, but his musicianship found expression both in the academic style for church music and in *Villancicos*, folk songs with dance elements. It is therefore not surprising that both styles are evident in his compositions.

With *Hanacpachap cussicuinin*, whose 20 verses represent a leitmotif throughout the CD, the listener is immediately swept away by the musical energy of Latin America. This piece in the Quechua language is not only supposed to have been the first printed score of polyphonic vocal music in all of America, it also belongs to the *Ritual Formularia* collection, by Juan de Pérez Bocanegra. This was a bilingual manual for pastors – in Quechua and Spanish – and refers to Christian and Incan traditions. It was probably the first

intercultural and interreligious publication! Like most of the pieces on this CD, *Hanacpachap cussicuinin* is recorded in full here for the first time.

Araujo's *Dixi Dominus* for three choirs is enchanting: the sonorous embrace of European polyphony meets the energy of the Villancicos. Claudio Monteverdi would definitely have enjoyed this piece! The echo sounds of *Silencio* are also reminiscent of the work of Italian composers, making use of the church's internal architecture, and would be ideal for an immersive performance with choirs and soloists sited in different locations. The love duet with God is particularly delightful: *Dios de amor*, sung here by a



CD Cover

countertenor and a soprano. Other works for smaller ensembles form interesting contrasts with spirited choral works (*¡A, de la región de luces!* with its daring harmonies resembles Carlo Gesualdo's style of phrasing). The musical depiction of a bullfight *¡Salga el torillo bosquillo!* by the Andalusian composer Diego José de Salazar (c. 1660-1709) is perhaps the most extraordinary work of church music in this recording. The matador transforms into the Virgin Mary: the work is dedicated to the Virgen de Guadalupe, which is celebrated each year on 8 September in Sucre, around a small chapel near the cathedral. The piece *¡Salga el torillo bosquillo!* was probably composed for one of these celebrations.

Ex Cathedra (Birmingham, UK) consists of a choir, a vocal ensemble, an instrumental ensemble for baroque music and a choir school working with the Birmingham Conservatoire. This CD features the *Ex Cathedra Consort* (vocal ensemble) and the *Ex Cathedra Baroque Ensemble*. The 14 singers deliver precision, unerring intonation and musical energy. They also achieve a homogeneous sound with the historical instruments and the instruments from Latin America. The CD *Fire burning in snow* is available from the British label Hyperion.

<https://excathedra.co.uk>

Translated from German by Laura Massey, UK



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INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR CHORAL MUSIC



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT
Emily Kuo Vong

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

EMILY KUO VONG

IFCM President

Dear Friends,

I am thrilled to share with you two significant choral events that are returning this summer!

From the 15th to 19th of July 2024, the 17th China International Chorus Festival (CICF) and the World Choral Education Conference will be re-staged in Beijing. As the sole international partner, IFCM has invited three choirs to participate in this marvellous festival: a Chamber Choir from Singapore conducted by Ai Hooi Lim, the academic choir Collegium Musicum from Serbia conducted by Dragana Jovanović, and the Choir of the Maritime University of Szczecin from Poland conducted by Sylwia Fabiańczyk-Makuch.

CICF was founded in 1992 and has welcomed more than 3,000 choirs from over 90 countries and regions, with a total of over 120,000 participants over the past 30 years. It has already become one of the largest and most prestigious choral events in the Asia-Pacific region and the only state-level international chorus festival in China.

In the last in-person event in 2018, more than 15,000 participants in 308 choirs from across the globe participated in 263 choral music events, including charity concerts, workshops, and courses at the 14th CICF. In particular, nine children's choirs from developing areas sang on an amazing stage. This year, CICF will bring more vibrant choral events to people, providing the best platform for global choir enthusiasts to exchange skills and exhibit talents, and significantly reshaping the history of choral music in China and around the world!

After the 17th CICF, another attractive event – the China Qiandongnan International Folk Song Choral Festival and IFCM Voices Conference will be held from the 20th to 25th of July in Kaili, Guizhou Province.

Kaili is famous for the Grand Song of the Dong ethnic group: multi-part singing performed without instrumental accompaniment or a leader, which was inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2009. A popular saying among the Dong people in Guizhou Province in Southern China has it that 'Rice nourishes the body and songs nourish the soul'. Their tradition of culture and knowledge is exemplified in the Grand Song of the Dong ethnic group. The repertoire includes a range of genres such as ballads, children's songs, songs of greeting, and imitative songs that test performers' virtuosity at mimicking the sounds of animals. In addition to disseminating their lifestyle and wisdom, the Grand Song remains a crucial symbol of Dong's ethnic identity and cultural heritage.

Grand Song is performed widely today, with each village boasting various choirs. With the IFCM Voices Conference, folk song choirs from around the world will gather in Kaili. They constitute an encyclopedia of folk songs, narrating people's history, extolling their belief in the unity of humans and nature, preserving scientific knowledge, and expressing feelings of romantic love. Around 5,000 singers from 69 choirs representing more

than 20 countries participated in this festival in 2017 and about 3000 singers in 2018. I hope we will have an innovative China Qiandongnan International Folk Song Festival this year!

And finally, with the development of communication technology, more and more traditional publications are trying out digital forms. IFCM is concerned with protecting the environment and nature, treating it with a significance equal to choral music and education in the world. We have therefore decided to publish the April issue of our International Choral Magazine only online. This attempt is a result of ongoing strategic developments within IFCM and our faith in maintaining the quality and integrity of the International Choral Magazine. We would like to provide more for the younger generation and adapt in a world where how we receive information is changing. Therefore, we will undergo a period of transition from traditional printing to a more innovative form of online reading. We appreciate all our friends' continued support for IFCM and the International Choral Magazine, as well as your understanding and patience during this transitional period. In the meantime, we will continue to welcome all ideas and proposals for items and subjects that you would like to see in the magazine.

Edited by Elizabeth Tauroza, UK

IFCM Secretary General Iva Radulović has left her position

After almost five years of dedicated service to IFCM, our Secretary General Iva Radulović has left her position at the end of March 2024 to pursue new professional opportunities. Our board and team are sorry to see Iva go. We would like to thank her very much for her significant contribution to the development of our association, including its organizational structures and its projects and collaborations. We will miss Iva and wish her all the best in her new endeavours! The board is using this transitional period as a strategic opportunity to review the mission and work of the association and to refine our collective vision for the future. During this time, IFCM remains committed to serving the global choral community and to ensuring the continuity and success of our programs and services.



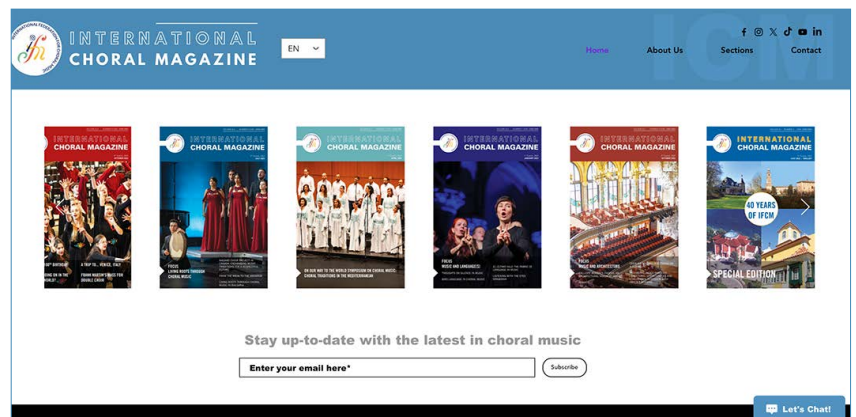
[Artikel auf Deutsch](#)

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The International Choral Magazine has a new website

The [International Choral Magazine](#) (ICM) has launched its new website, which features all recent publications. In April 2022, the ICB (International Choral Bulletin) changed its name to ICM. It was only natural to create a new website that reflects the updated name and current trends. Just like the previous website, this new one is also accessible to both IFCM members and non-members, allowing the entire choral community worldwide to benefit from the interesting articles published in the magazine. Access to past issues of the ICM/ICB (from 2003 on) is available on the [IFCM Website](#). [Read more](#)

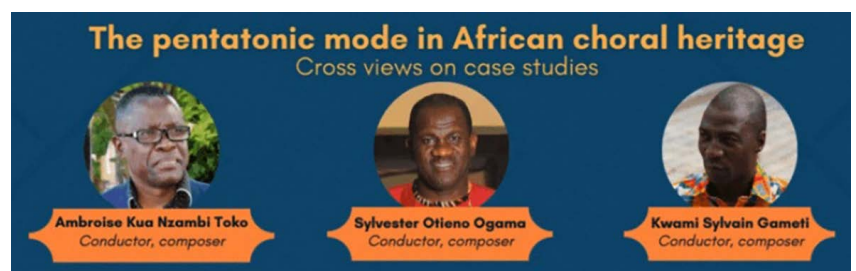


Report on the Webinar on the pentatonic mode in African choral music

At the initiative of [African Confederation of Choral Music \(ACCM\)](#) and [Africa Cantat Festival](#), a webinar was organized on March 16, 2024, around the theme *“The pentatonic mode in African choral heritage”*.

This was a great opportunity to cross the views of African specialists, based on practical cases, on the pentatonic mode, so characteristic of authentic African music, to a large extent, and its use in African choral music. This panel discussion examined practical cases in the light of presentations by choral conductors, teacher-researchers and musicologists from East, West and Central Africa.

[Read more](#)



Member choir Chœur La Grâce receives national award

On 15 December 2023, the Chœur La Grâce was honored by DR Congo's Chancellery of National Orders as the official representative of Africa and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Its conductor Ambroise Kua-Nzambi Togo has himself won several awards.

Founded in 1985 and IFCM member since 2000, the Chœur La Grâce has become one of the best known choirs in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Africa, having performed in 113 cities and taken part in 40 international festivals, including two IFCM World Symposia for Choral Music, Kyoto 2005 and, most recently, Istanbul 2023. The choir has also sung at official meetings such as summits of heads of state, at conferences of the Economic Community of Central African States and the Southern African Development Community and for the international organization of the Francophonie.



Chœur La Grâce and conductor Ambroise Kua-Nzambi Toko honored by DR Congo's Chancellery of National Order

American Choral Directors Association announces its 2025 National Convention

Dallas, Texas, will be the host city of the 2025 National Convention of the [American Choral Directors Association](https://acda.org): *Celebrating the Choral Art: Past-Present-Future* (18–22 March 2025). The calls for interest session submissions and the participation of performing choirs open on 1 February 2024 and will close on 17 April 2024. ACDA welcomes submissions from all around the globe. <https://acda.org>



2024 World Youth Choir Session, Weikersheim, Germany

The international jury for the World Youth Choir session 2024 met in Berlin, Germany, in January 2024. After many hours of listening to the numerous recordings and evaluating the more than 160 applicants, the jury finally chose 93 singers from 45 countries to be part of the World Youth Choir 2024 session (18 August – 8 September). With the rehearsal session in Weikersheim, Germany, the tour will include concerts in Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, and Austria. We are thrilled to announce the results of the selection process and introduce you to the World Youth Choir 2024! Discover the full list of singers here: <https://www.worldyouthchoir.org/2024-singer-selection>



World Youth Choir Alumni Session 2024, St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada

Meet the selected singers for the World Youth Choir (WYC) Alumni Session 2024 at [HarbourVOICES](#) International Festival of Collective Singing Traditions! (18 August – 8 September 2024)

Applications were received from 57 WYC alumni representing 37 nationalities. After listening to all the recordings and evaluating the applicants, the international jury selected 32 singers from 24 countries for the session. The 2024 choir, under the direction of Cecilia Rydinger (Sweden), will join 45 international and Canadian singing groups and choirs for an innovative, six-day celebration of diverse singing traditions from around the globe.



IFCM News edited by Laura Massey, UK and Ki Adams, Canada

IFCM Members Online Café: participants delighted by the session with Joel P. Navarro

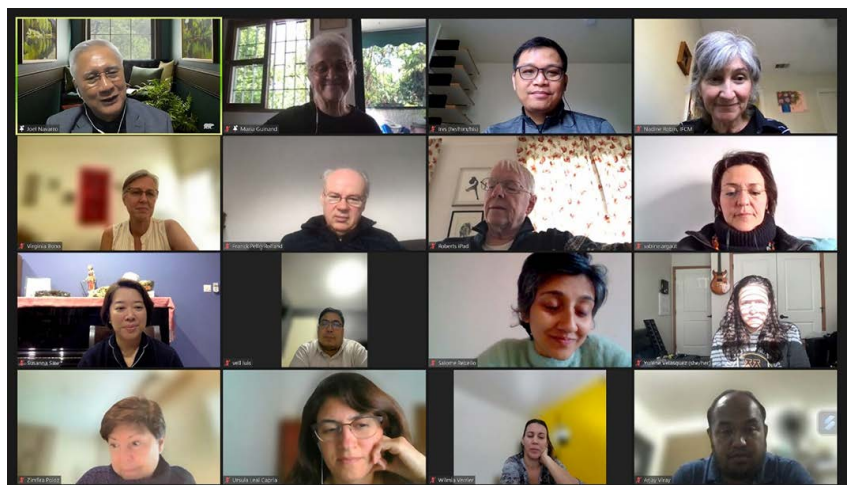
In the latest IFCM café, Joel P. Navarro presented a brief history of the evolution of conducting and rehearsal techniques based on his personal and collegiate experience and training, in particular, within the Philippine cultural context. Joel also gave an overview of Martin Behrmann's conducting technique, including preliminaries, the stance, the manual apparatus, the signal domains, and the music applications.

Elements of Behrmann's sample teaching content in his conducting classes were explored: beat and sound, signals of conducting, upper arm positions, forearm positions, positions of the touch, functions of the rooms, velocity of the beat, and domains of the signals. Joel played several sample videos of Asian conductors conducting Gapas by Eudencia Palaruan, a

Filipino composer, and compared the variations in time duration of the performances which were influenced by the gestures used. Joel also provided an overview of Behrmann's rehearsal technique, which is divided into four phases. The session concluded with strategies for achieving success and building a positive choral culture. Watch the [recording](#).

"Dr Navarro's presentation was a great introduction for young up-and-comers, but at the same time a refresher for more established and accomplished conductors. Although focused on his expertise and experiences with Philippine choirs, his insights are transferrable and can be universally applied to other cultures as well. It felt great being an audience to Dr Navarro's session which was also attended by some of choral music's biggest names, including Robert Sund and Maria Guinand. It was a great learning experience and opportunity to revisit and reflect about our art and profession."

Arjay Viray, Editorial Board member of ICM





ACDA NATIONAL 2025

March 18-22 Dallas, TX

Join us in Dallas for the 2025 ACDA National Conference

Calls for Performing Choirs, Interest Sessions, and Insight Choirs open on February 1, 2024 (The calls are on the following pages)

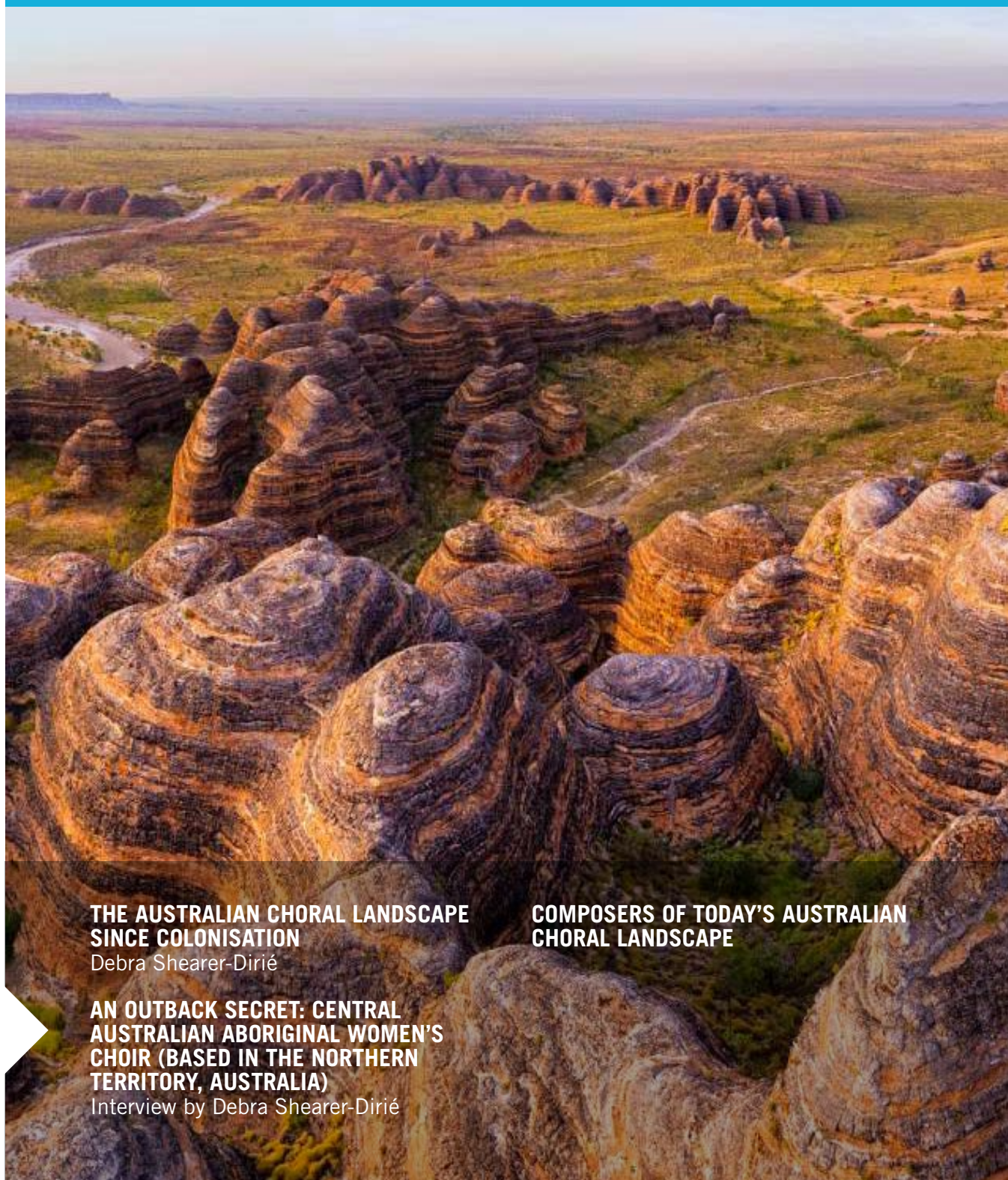
Honor Choirs will be available for Vocal Jazz: Grades 5-7, Treble Choir: Grades 7-10, Tenor-Bass Choir: Grades 8-10, and Mixed Choir: Grades 11-12
Audition information coming this summer.

The conference will open with a Welcome to Dallas concert the evening of March 18 with the full conference offerings starting the morning of March 19. The conference will close after the final headlining performance (TBD) on Saturday evening.

Watch for updates and information on the 2025 National Conference webpage:
www.acda.org/conferences

A TRIP TO...

A TRIP TO... AUSTRALIA



**THE AUSTRALIAN CHORAL LANDSCAPE
SINCE COLONISATION**

Debra Shearer-Dirié

**COMPOSERS OF TODAY'S AUSTRALIAN
CHORAL LANDSCAPE**

**AN OUTBACK SECRET: CENTRAL
AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL WOMEN'S
CHOIR (BASED IN THE NORTHERN
TERRITORY, AUSTRALIA)**

Interview by Debra Shearer-Dirié

THE AUSTRALIAN CHORAL LANDSCAPE SINCE COLONISATION

DEBRA SHEARER-DIRIÉ

Editorial Board Member of the International Choral Magazine, Australia

[Artikel auf Deutsch](#)

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THE CURRENT CHORAL LANDSCAPE OF AUSTRALIA EXISTS TODAY BECAUSE OF THE CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN THE CHORAL ARTS THAT THIS COUNTRY HAS EXPERIENCED SINCE COLONISATION AND BEFORE. OF COURSE, THE MUSIC SCENE TODAY IS VERY DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF A CENTURY AGO. THIS ARTICLE WILL TRACE THE IMPORTANT COMPOSITIONAL FIGURES THAT HAVE ARRIVED IN AUSTRALIA, AND PINPOINT SOME OF THE INFLUENCES THAT COMPOSERS HAVE HAD OVER ITS 237 YEARS.

Parallel to similar developments in other countries, and particularly those countries who have begun their written history as a colonised state, Australian artists have faced questions about their collective and individual identity. In the musical landscape of Australia, numerous musicians attempted to create their own patriotic songs in the early days of colonisation, and, in more recent times, to create their own unique sounds. But it was particularly in the 19th century when mostly European musicians landed on the shores of Australia and may have been influenced by the limited interaction they had with the Australian First Nations people, its flora and fauna.

Relatively little research appears in music history texts that address the state of Australian music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, least of all Australian choral music. This is not due to a lack of composers or compositions but perhaps to the continent's geographical location and its distance from the rest of the world. It is important to note that although Europeans did not settle in Australia until 1787, the First Nations people had been inhabiting this land for over 65, 000 years. It was not until the twentieth century that Australian researchers in a

variety of fields, including musicology and ethnomusicology, began to turn to this country's history prior to 1787.

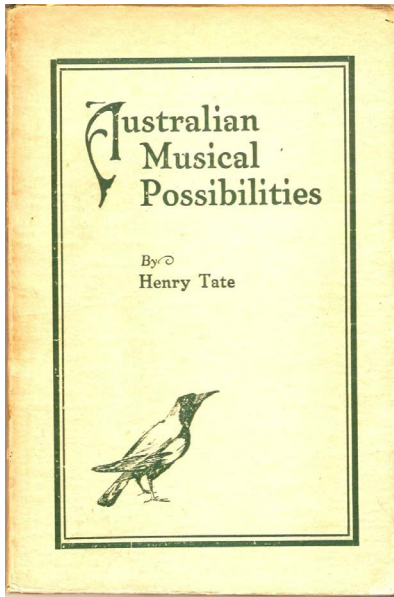
A comprehensive document written by Graeme Skinner titled: "Toward a General History of Australian Musical Composition" traces the lives and output of prominent musicians since colonisation. The first settlers attempted to transplant their European tradition onto a land that showed no similarity to Europe and continued in this vein for the next 100 years, disregarding its rich indigenous history. Colonial composers wrote works for colonial occasions and events. Some names that surface during early colonisation for their choral output, no matter how small, are Isaac Nathan (1792-1864), William Vincent Wallace (1812-1865), Stephen Marsh (1808-1888), and Sidney Nelson (1800-1861). It should be noted that some of these composers also left a number of works for orchestra and other instrumental combinations.



Isaac Nathan (1792-1864)

In the early to mid-twentieth century, Australia soared as its population almost doubled, and economic activity saw an enormous increase. As a result, the growth in intellectual life brought about an expanded artistic practice. The country became less isolated from the rest of the world and more determined to promote itself with an artistic voice. With the rise and establishment of choral societies in the mid-nineteenth century there came an increase in commissioned works. Alfred Hill (1870-1960), Ernest Edwin Philip Truman (1869-1948), and Percy Brier (1885-1970), G.W.L. Marshall Hall (1862-1915), Arundel Orchard (1867-1961), Mona McBurney (1862-1932), Florence Donaldson Ewart (1864-1949), Ernest Hutcheson (1871-19510), and George F. Boyle (1886-1948) stand as distinct composers

in Australia who wrote in the European style during this time. At this point in Australia's history, the white settlers would probably have identified themselves as a subsection of Britain, rather than Australia as its own nation. Small glimpses of Australian nationalistic flavour can be seen in the work of Henry Tate (1873-1926), a contemporary of Percy Grainger



(1882-1961), who encouraged research into Australian Aboriginal music.

Throughout the twentieth century several composers, either born in Australia or immigrating from Europe, struggled to find their own artistic voice in a vast, arid country with the absence of a long-standing recorded history. The establishment of the Australian Broadcasting Commission in 1932, under the direction of Sir Bernhard Heinze, laid the foundation for permanent professional orchestras and choruses. This gave rise to a selection of middle generation composers that include Margaret Sutherland (1897-1984), Clive Douglas (1903-77), Robert Watson Hughes (1912-2007), John Antill (1904-86), Dorian Le Gallienne (1915-63), Martin Mather (1927-2007), and Peggy Glanville-Hicks (1912-1990).

The 1960s and 70s yielded a rich harvest of Australian orchestral and chamber music and left the choral genre virtually unexplored. In the course of the 1980s, however, the establishment and flourishing of chamber choirs with the skills and commitment to tackle demanding new music encouraged a whole new generation of composers for whom choral music became a viable medium for major musical statements. With relatively few traditional models, composers felt free to explore the potential of the medium in various directions, drawing on other cultures and creating a rich body of textural explorations.

An exciting new wave of composers grew in the 1960s that contributed to an original concept of Australian musical language. These consisted of Russian born Larry Sitsky (b. 1934), German born Felix Werder (1922-2012), Wendy Morrissey (1926-2005), Peter Sculthorpe (1929-2014), Richard Meale (b. 1932), Colin Brumby (1933-2018), Nigel Butterley (1935-2022) and



Peter Sculthorpe (1929-2014)

Jennifer Fowler (b. 1939).

It is in the choral works of Sculthorpe that we begin to see innovation and some acknowledgement of Australia prior to colonisation. Whilst on a Harkness Fellowship to Yale University, Sculthorpe composed *Sun Music for Voices and Percussion* (1966), written for SATB choir, piano, and 3 percussionists (see next page). The exploration of different parameters in sound combinations of the human voice in this work created new, for its time, clusters of sounds, although it is clearly the rhythmic motives that govern this work. In 1972-3 Sculthorpe composed *Rites of Passage*, an opera exploring concepts of the genre at the time of Jean-Baptiste Lully, that was intended for the opening of the Sydney Opera House. A combination of choral singing, dancing, poetry, and scenic effects, Sculthorpe used Boethius' *De consolation philosophiae* for the text of the chorales, and a selection of southern Aranda (tribal group from the Arrernte region in Central Australia) poetry for the text of the Rites. Sculthorpe's musical language is a reflection of the physical and climatic characteristic of the Australian outback landscape, as well as the evocation of loneliness they can instil in an individual.

Peter Sculthorpe's influence, both in style and in thought, on Australian composers is immeasurable. Of the students that studied with him during his first years at the University of Sydney, two are notable for their writing

2 a tempo



Peter Sculthorpe, Sun Music for Voices and Percussion, mm. 25-40

for voices. Ross Edwards (*b.* 1944) and Anne Boyd (*b.* 1946) create a second generation of compositional thought and further development in the search for innovation and originality less concerned with the criteria from the European or American signatures.

The writings of Lady Sarashina (*b.* AD1008), an eleventh-century Japanese noblewoman, are Boyd's inspiration for *As I Crossed a Bridge of Dreams* (1975). Boyd chose three of Lady Sarashina's dreams to create the mood and text, combining the text with the sound of humming to create a musical meditation. With light at the centre of each of the Buddhas in the dreams, Boyd makes great use of this image and its magnificent transfer into musical sound, influenced by the sounds of the instruments of the *gagaku*.

Anne Boyd, *As I Crossed a Bridge of Dreams*, mm. 111-116

Lento, tempo primo

95

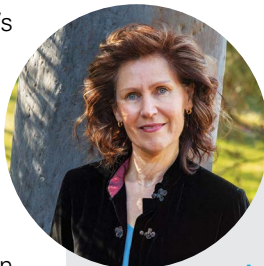
Bass 2

In contrast, Edwards works are minimalistic and reflect the micro-level within Australian flora and fauna. This is evident in his *maninya* style of which his *Flower Songs* (1986-7) features. Written for SATB chorus of 16 voices and two percussionists, the text is a series of scientific Latin and Greek names of several central eastern Australian wildflowers. His setting of the text is like building or landscaping a garden, repeating, superimposing, and juxtaposing short motifs to build the texture of a hypnotic nature. Edwards' *Dawn Mantras* (2000) which was first performed on the sails of the Sydney Opera House at sunrise on the first day of this millennium, combines a diverse range of timbres into an atmospheric whole. The work exhibits dialogues between the shakuhachi, tenor saxophone, didjeridu, percussion, child soprano solo, children's chorus, and men's chorus, combining texts from the Asia-Pacific region.

The composers and works featured above have merely scratched the surface of choral compositional life in Australia leading up to the 1990s. The composers chosen are representative of the flourishing and ever evolving state of choral music written for the singing voice. The later works above deliberately seek a reorientation of 'the Australian' as part of the larger Pacific identity.

Edited by Caroline Maxwell, UK

Ross Edwards, *Flower Songs*, Movement 2, mm. 19-30



Dr DEBRA SHEARER-DIRIÉ is a Brisbane-based conductor, music educator, and singer. Debra's career has taken her from Hungary and through western Europe to north America. She attended Indiana University in the United States where she obtained a Master of Music Education degree and a Doctor of Music degree in Choral Conducting. Prior to arriving in Brisbane in 2003, Debra directed the Indiana University Children's and Youth Choir, was assistant director to maestro Paul Hillier with the Pro Arte Singers, and Director of the International Vocal Ensemble at Indiana University for two years. From 2001-2002 Debra was Musical Director of the Northwest Girlchoir in Seattle, a 400-voice organisation of young women who performed frequently with the Seattle Symphony Orchestra. In 2005 she was appointed Director of Music of Brisbane Concert Choir, in 2006 founded Vox Pacifica Chamber Choir and in 2009 founded Fusion, a semi-professional adult a cappella ensemble. Her most recent vocal ensemble is Vintage Voices, involving a program for elders to engage with the community through singing, and she is continually in search of opportunities to collaborate with the wider music arts community. Debra enjoys the adventure and global embrace of a career dedicated to music. She thrives on the creative discovery that flows from collaborative musical opportunities, whether working with combinations of choirs or with other composers, dancers, visual artists and cultural groups: the challenge often as rewarding as the music. debrashearer@gmail.com

AN OUTBACK SECRET: CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL WOMEN'S CHOIR

(based in the Northern Territory, Australia)

INTERVIEW BY DEBRA SHEARER-DIRIÉ

Editorial Board Member of the International Choral Magazine, Australia

[Artikel auf Deutsch](#)

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THE CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL WOMEN'S CHOIR (CAAWC) HAS BECOME A MUSICAL 'TOUR DE FORCE' SINCE THEIR HISTORIC AND HIGHLY ACCLAIMED CONCERT TOUR OF GERMANY IN MID-2015. THIS UNIQUE CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN ENSEMBLE SINGS SACRED MUSIC IN THE WESTERN ARRARNTA AND PITJANTJATJARA LANGUAGES, TWO LIVING LANGUAGES OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY AND SOUTH AUSTRALIA, TOGETHER WITH NEW MUSIC INTRODUCED THROUGH RECENT COLLABORATIONS WITH OTHER CENTRALIAN AND INTERNATIONAL CHOIRS. WOMEN FROM REMOTE CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITIES COME TOGETHER, BRINGING A UNIQUE SOUND TO THE WORLD. MORRIS STUART AM IS THE FOUNDER OF THE CAAWC.

What is your background in choral singing?

Morris Stuart (MS): I started singing in a church youth choir at the age of 17, and over the years I have developed a passion for choirs and for choral music. This has always been an interest, not a professional pursuit. Almost 30 years passed, and it was in the 1990s that I established a community choir in Melbourne and started writing music for choirs. Thence followed choral workshops, more community choirs, appearances at festivals, the Desert Song Festival, the Central Australian Aboriginal Women's Choir, an episode of [Australian Story](#) and the SBS documentary [The Song Keepers](#). I guess it would be true to say that over the years I have developed a real skill in working with choirs.

How was the Central Australian Aboriginal Women's Choir formed, and how did you come to be involved with the group?

MS: In the winter of 2006 I established Asante Sana, a non-auditioned, community choir

comprising a diverse cross-section of the non-Indigenous community in Alice Springs. I introduced this choir to a repertoire of nine African Freedom songs (i.e. songs that were the soundtrack of the anti-Apartheid struggle). Teachers, nurses, health workers, social workers, researchers, shop assistants, youth workers, doctors, some unemployed people, children, youth, visiting exchange students from Africa and Scandinavia, established locals and new residents all joined the new choir. The response was enthusiastic, and the choir performed on a number of occasions to



All 2023 Festival Choirs performing Finalé at Ormoston Gorge

great acclaim. This attracted the attention of some Aboriginal choristers, who asked me to “come and help us become a proper choir” and “teach us those songs you’ve been teaching those whitefellas!” Those early beginnings, followed by seven years of musical development ‘on country’ in remote communities, eventually led to the formation of what is now the Central Australian Aboriginal Women’s Choir. Starting with one choir in 2006, followed by regular music development workshops conducted across thousands of kilometres all over the Central Desert, six choirs from Titjikala, Ntaria (Hermannsburg), Utju (Areyonga), Mutitjulu, Kaltukatjara (Docker River), and Alice Springs were amalgamated into the one CAAWC.

I have read that the singers in this choir travel long distances to come together to sing. How does this work?

MS: The remote communities are spread across the Central Desert. With Alice Springs being the central hub for workshops, performances, and the departure point for interstate and international travel, cumulative return travel for choir members means traversing 3500km of the Northern Territory, often across large sections of unmade roads. Travel is challenging, time-consuming and exhausting. And that is *before* rehearsal begins! Consequently, in addition to the visits I undertake to discrete communities, we gather for 3-4 weekend workshops each year. It is a considerable and expensive logistical undertaking involving organising various modes of transport, booking suitable accommodation, catering and meeting welfare and medical needs.

What kind of repertoire does this group sing and has it changed over the course of the choir’s history?

MS: The choir’s repertoire represents a unique compendium comprising early Romantic era and Baroque musical arrangements and German sacred poetry (hymns), preserved and presented in Australian First Nations languages: a peerless cultural anthology and an Australian national treasure preserved by women from remote Central Desert communities. Also included are sacred works written by the women and their forebears in the Western Arrarnta and Pitjantjatjara languages, some written in the traditional three-line chanting style of Western Arrarnta and Pitjantjatjara ceremony.

The choir has also collaborated with Indian classical players, with ensembles trained in the Western musical tradition, including the Arafura Music Collective, and most recently with the contemporary Melbourne classical trio Plexus, to present a premiere of a new arrangement for piano, violin and clarinet and choir of Bach’s chorale *Wachet Auf*.

The choir has recently completed a national tour. Has the group travelled internationally, and if so, where did they perform?

MS: The CAAWC inherits a tradition of choirs dating back 120 years: mixed choirs, men’s choirs, festivals, and eisteddfodau. Touring was a regular experience in the 1950s and 1960s. This choir began touring in 2013 with a visit to Adelaide. Since that time, the choir has toured Germany (2015), performing in Bavaria, Wiesbaden, Hermannsburg in Lower Saxony, Stuttgart, and at the biennial German Protestant Church Assembly, Kirchentag. This was followed in June 2018 by a second international tour, this time to the USA, to the Serenade! international choral festival, with performances at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington D.C., The Philips Collection, the Castleton Festival and the Olsen Gallery, and in New York City (amongst others). Prior to their departure in 2018, the choir also performed at the Hamer Hall and the Sydney Opera House to

sold out audiences. In December 2022 the choir embarked on a tour of three major capital cities, with performances at the Queensland Performing Arts Centre (QPAC) in Brisbane, the Sydney Opera House (SOH), the Melbourne Concert Hall (Hamer Hall) and the Brunswick Ballroom, concluding their tour with a performance at Vision Australia’s annual *Carols By Candlelight*, nationally televised from the Myer Music Bowl, Melbourne.

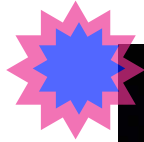
The choir has also appeared at the Darwin Festival, the Denmark Festival of Voice and the Hobart Festival of Voices. Other highlights include performing at the “Closing of the Climb” at Uluru and being featured as part of the rebranding of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation to celebrate the public broadcaster’s 90th anniversary. The choir was also presented with a NIMA (National Indigenous Music Award) in 2018 in recognition of its outstanding achievements.

Can you tell us more about the documentary by producer Andrew Kay called “The Song Keepers”?

MS: The documentary was produced by Brindle Films, Alice Springs, and launched at the 2017 Melbourne International Film Festival. I recommend you watch the documentary for any information you may be interested in. Andrew Kay is a leading Australian promoter who has taken on the task of promoting and managing choir tours.

I am fascinated with the music selection that the CAAWA sing, i.e. white European dead composers. Am I correct in my understanding that they sing these pieces from the Western classical canon in their First Nations Language?

MS: The sacred music, as I have said, comprises hymns taught to their forebears (a real cultural exchange) beginning in the late 1880s. The repertoire also includes



Araluen Soweto Gospel Choir
Concert OeclipseSOW



Central Australian Aboriginal
Women's Choir



Desert Song Festival 2023,
Alice Springs, Northern
Territory, Australia

original sacred songs written by current choir members and by Elders since the 1920s. All songs are sung in the Western Arrarnta and Pitjantjatjara languages, both living languages of Central Australia, spoken daily as the first languages in communities. In fact, Pitjantjatjara is the most commonly spoken First Nations language (spoken by approximately 4,000 people). Hence my characterisation of a unique compendium.

And can you explain more about the collaborations CAAWA have done with Arafura Music Collective and Plexus? What kind of music was this and how did the collaboration take place? Did the groups prepare separately and then come together?

MS: The Ntaria (Hermannsburg) women's choir sings some Bach. They often sing JS Bach's *Wachet Auf* in the Western Arrarnta language, which was the piece that they collaborated on with Plexus, the contemporary classical trio from Melbourne that was one of our headliners at the 2023 Desert Song Festival. They rehearsed several times during the festival period and performed the piece as part of the concert by the Soweto Gospel Choir. It has become customary that the CAAWC occupies the first 25 mins of the Soweto Gospel Choir concert when they perform in Alice Springs at the Desert Song Festival. This has been the custom since their first visit in 2011, and during their five national tours of Australia in 2011, 2014, 2016, 2019 and 2023.

The Ntaria Choir sings *Wachet Auf* to commemorate the farewell to the missionary Carl Strehlow on what was to become his final journey as he attempted to travel with his family to Adelaide for medical treatment. He didn't make it to Adelaide and died at Horseshoe Bend, near Finke in the Northern Territory. The Chorale was

sung by the Ntaria community as Carl Strehlow departed. The book *Journey to Horseshoe Bend* by his son, anthropologist TGH Strehlow, recounts this episode, as well as being an authoritative tome on Western Arrarnta Culture. A brief extract explains:

Journey to Horseshoe Bend tells the story of the journey Strehlow made with his family and others in October 1922 from their home at Hermannsburg, one hundred and thirty kilometres southwest of Alice Springs. They were hoping to go all the way to the railhead at Oodnadatta, and then by train to Adelaide, where Strehlow's father, who was suffering from dropsy, could get medical assistance. Horseshoe Bend was to be a stop along the way. The route they selected — the shortest route — was south, along the dry riverbed of the Finke River and through the Britannia Sandhills. The heat was cruel and the journey unforgiving; his father suffered greatly.

The story was turned into a [cantata](#): op. 64 Symphonic cantata for solo voices, narrators, choirs and orchestra by Andrew Schultz, and was performed at the Sydney Opera House on 28 May 2003 with participation from the Ntaria ladies!

LIST OF URLS

Australian Story:

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-05-10/the-choirmaster/9748400>

The Song Keepers:

<https://www.sbs.com.au/ondemand/watch/1268042307847>

Carols by Candlelight:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=yed9dHph4ow> and

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lz77-5ILYBA>

Celebration of the ABC's 90th anniversary:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xh9DusRmM-0> and

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

Op 64 Symphonic cantata for solo voices narrators and orchestra by Andrew Schultz:

<https://www.australianmusiccentre.com.au/work/schultz-andrew-journey-to-horseshoe-bend-op-64>

Edited by Karen Bradberry, Australia





Standing ovation for the Central Australian Aboriginal Women's Choir



Coral reef



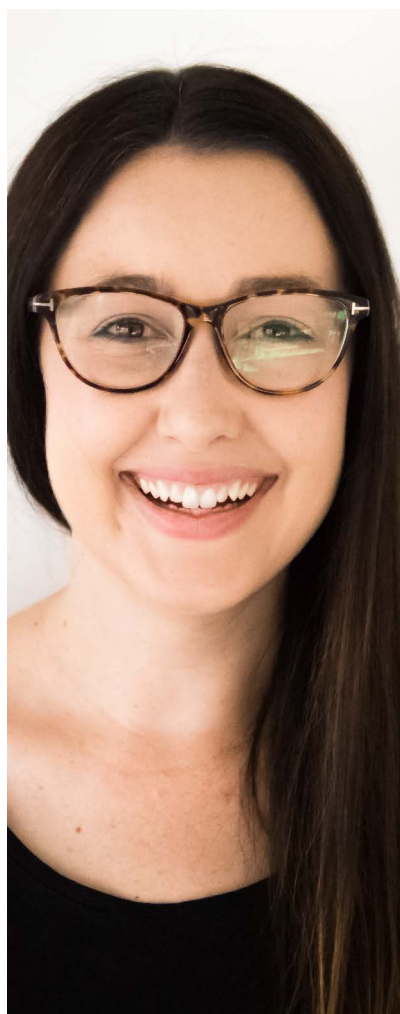
COMPOSERS OF TODAY'S AUSTRALIAN CHORAL LANDSCAPE

Artikel auf Deutsch

Artículo en español

Article en français

THE COMPOSERS INCLUDED IN THIS ARTICLE ARE JUST A HANDFUL OF THE COMPOSERS THAT MOULD AUSTRALIA'S CHORAL LANDSCAPE. I LEAVE IT TO THE READERS TO IMMERSE THEMSELVES INTO EACH COMPOSERS' WORLD. INDIVIDUAL WEBSITE ARE INCLUDED, ALONG WITH THREE SITES FOR MORE INFORMATION: [AUSTRALIAN MUSIC CENTRE](http://AUSTRALIANMUSICCENTRE.COM.AU), [AUSTRALIAN CHORAL CONDUCTORS EDUCATION AND TRAINING WEBSITE \(HTTPS://WWW.CHORALCONDUCTORS.ORG.AU/AUSTRALIAN-CHORAL-REPERTOIRE/\)](http://WWW.CHORALCONDUCTORS.ORG.AU/AUSTRALIAN-CHORAL-REPERTOIRE/), [MORTON MUSIC](http://MORTONMUSIC.COM.AU), AND [SINGSCORE](http://SINGSCORE.COM.AU).

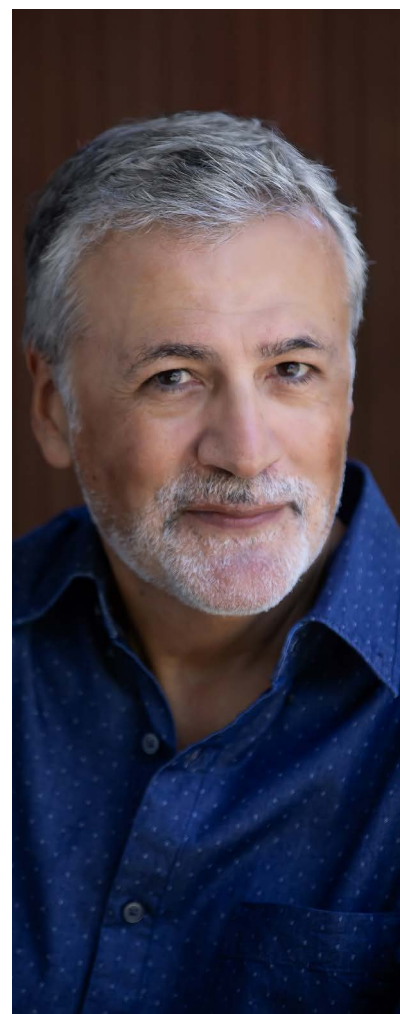


DR. LISA CHENEY

lisacheney.com.au

Go Back and Start Again (2019) was commissioned by the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra Chorus, which uses a mix of singing and speaking in each voice section. The desired effect is for the audience to feel

as if the choir are one connected brain, offerings glimpses into their inner hidden thoughts. This piece began as an anonymous survey of questions to the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra Chorus. Lisa asked the singers to share their thoughts on what they would do with unlimited time and what they feared most about losing time. Each response possessed an undercurrent sense of learning from past experiences and the fear that time would run out before they could once again savour the most meaningful moments in their lives. In *Drought* (2012), Cheney sets the poem of the same name by late Brisbane poet, Judith Wright to music for soprano solo and SSAATTB choir. The music, text and voices work together to sculpt beautiful, haunting soundscapes and images of an ever-changing Australian landscape, perched beneath an unforgiving sun.



GERARDO DIRIÉ

gerardodirie.net

Pomegranate Friends (2011) is a three-movement work for SATB choir, improvising saxophone and 4-channel sinewaves. The poem and sonic designs are inspired by Chinese aphorisms tersely

translated by the Renaissance Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci in his *Essay On Friendship*. Pithy expressions about the values of friendship are presented through a layering of Pythagorean tuning sine waves that smoothly shift into 12-tones equal tempered tuning. An improvising saxophonist highlights the tuning qualities of both contexts in order to prepare for the entrance of the choral section. *Two Hands or Wings* explores emotional and physical nuances of adaptation to shifting sonic contexts –an allusion to experiencing in the soul agreements and imbalances.

War Within (2018)

Collective conflicts, as much as the individual, private and quotidian traumas, can send us into the darkest places. The harrowing accounts told by Major General (Ret.) John Cantwell in his “Exit Wounds” offered a powerful account of how participation in extremely dangerous and cruel conflicts can go on to affect a person’s core. When invited to create a music composition for the 2018 ANZAC Day in Brisbane, Gerardo sought to contribute with a blended perspective: Cantwell’s story, passages from Dante’s *Inferno*, words from 13th-century Persian Muslim Sunni poet Jalāl ad-Dīn Rūmī, and experiences and perspective from current army officers. Gerardo also chose to design a subjective arch starting the music with the foreboding sound of a Hercules C-130 aircraft and the reassuring culminating verses from Dante’s *Inferno*. The combination of these sounds with the choir and soloist singing, are presented through the 13 minute composition in an inspired trajectory out of darkness through the four movements. The composition is scored for two narrators, baritone soloist, French horn, alto saxophone, organ, piano, SATB chorus, and at least two loudspeakers for the sound effects.

PAUL JARMAN

pauljarman.com

Rise in Song (2022) for SSATB was a commission for the Watu Choral Festival in Adelaide. With the COVID pandemic in mind, Paul felt compelled to write a powerful, uplifting, protest style work from the singers perspective, returning as a united global community after years of being cancelled. Watu (wah-doo) is the Kurna name for a communal shout at the end of a gathering. To acknowledge the Watu Choral festival’s philosophy, Paul wanted the piece to shout out to the world that we as singers are back and that nothing can ever take away the desire to sing together. The music is raw and powerful and as each singer joins in song, the piece is a celebration of what singing does for the mind, body, and spirit. Paul wrote the piece also to acknowledge the many styles of music around the world. However, the finale of the work is a strong, forward leaning Gospel style chant, similar to the communal sound of massed singing in American churches.

And Will He Not Come Again (2016)

Asked by Oxford University Press to be a part of a select group to honour the 400th Anniversary of Shakespeare’s death, Paul was given the text of the grief stricken song of Ophelia from Act 4, scene 6 Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. Written for treble voices, the opening melody keeps the listener on edge with its ambiguous tonal and rhythmic setting. Yet once the choir and piano join, the result is a very strong melody that seems so obvious within that setting. In the second section, Paul introduces a subtle key change to explore the change of time, a reflection to the past and a girls memory of her father. The ending takes place in the chapel with the final chords resembling the first two chords from Gabriel Faure’s *In Paradisum*. The piece ends with a long and deeply moving setting of ‘God have mercy on his soul’. Polonius and Ophelia are innocent victims in the story of Hamlet and I hope that my piece brings out the tragedy of these characters.



STEPHEN LEEKwww.stephenleek.com/

Ngana (1994), available in various voice settings, takes the indigenous Australian word for shark “Ngana,” and immerses it into a textural wash with the word “Lina,” (water), “Mangana” (fish), and “Yah” which is a welcome greeting. The piece strikingly captures the driving energies, rhythms and vivid colours of the island seascape found around the North-eastern tip of Australia.

A Gibber Plains Noel (1991) and *Wurundjeri Song* (2004) are pieces that are indicative of the many pieces that Stephen has written working with young people around Australia. *A Gibber Plains Noel* was written in Alice Springs in the centre of Australia and captures the sounds of the birds and animals and the heat of the bush in an Australian summer Christmas. *Wurundjeri Song* was written with young singers who live on Wurundjeri Country (the area of Melbourne). Here, they discovered together the traditional heritage of the area and the beauty of the local parklands that were full of native birds and animals with the students writing the texts and Stephen providing the musical setting.

**RUTH MCCALL**singscore.com.au/ruth-mccall-composer

Waltzing Matilda (multiple voice versions) sets the text of this well-known folksong, long regarded as Australia’s unofficial National Anthem, and is reworked in this new version. There is the option of adding clapsticks and a drone, using a didgeridoo, or whirly-whirlies for example. The piece presents some vocal challenges in the form of different vocal techniques in each section and is certainly not easy, but there is a real sense of achievement when a choir masters the different layers. There is a sung drone of Indigenous words describing the plants around the water-hole, along with a mixture of tunes: my own melody, the well-known tune, and the Queensland tune. These melodies all combine to make an energetic piece with a triumphant end.

Bound for South Australia (SSATBarB) is an arrangement of the folksong and is like-wise challenging for singers as it moves at a fair clip! It finishes off with a jazz riff involving all the singers. It is a showy piece, the performance of which won gold in the World Choir Games last year but watch out that you don’t speed up!

**ANDREW SCHULTZ**andrewschultz.net

As Wave Drives Wave, Opus 115 (2021, commissioned by the Brisbane Chamber Choir) is an unaccompanied setting of memorable lines from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, which he in turn drew from Pythagoras’ *The Eternal Flux*. The motion of the waves and their restless renewal is used as a metaphor for the certainty of perpetual change in the universe. The imagery in Ovid’s text is very beautiful and possibly even a little melancholy – or maybe granitic and philosophical and hence, sadness is irrelevant. This six-minute piece (SATB divisi) is based on slow-moving harmony with sequences of overlapping and interlocking chords – as if unresolved suspensions were waves pushing waves.

Magnificat, Opus 79 (2009) begins hesitantly with the plainsong-like melody unfolding from the bare interval of a fourth like the petals of a flower. Once in bloom, however, the parts fall away again and the music returns to the purity of single lines. Despite the delicacy of the writing and the softness of the singing, there is a sense of quiet determination which echoes the epigram that Schultz has inscribed at the head of the score: “No



coward soul is mine" (Emily Brontë, Last Lines). Schultz's Mary may be small, but she has strength and courage as she faces a future beyond her imagining. Schultz takes a different approach in the closing moments of this work. Time seems to slow down or even come to a halt as single vocal lines arch out over the stillness; the tower of bare open fifths on which the music finally comes to rest is balanced not on the tonic but on the fifth of the chord, leaving us suspended as the voices fade to silence.

PAUL STANHOPE

paulstanhope.com

In Paul's New *Requiem* (2024), which gradually evolved over 20 years, Paul spent much time thinking about re-inventing the medium, personalising the narrative and relocating it in a sensibility which he felt could be embraced by the present era. *Requiem* is written for the intimate forces of a chamber choir with a small instrumental ensemble of four wind instruments, harp and percussion with soprano and tenor soloists. The nine-movement piece uses a hand-picked selection from the original Requiem Mass. Musical setting of English poetic texts – some spiritual, some secular – are substituted to the sections of the omitted Requiem text, to further personalise the narrative. The English language texts are all by female poets: Neela Nath Das (Indian), Mary Elizabeth Frye and Emily Dickinson (both American) and Australian Indigenous poet Oodgeroo Noonuccal. These texts convey messages that shed light on the texts from the Mass, some of which might represent the paternal and authoritarian tradition of the Catholic Church. *Requiem* has been recorded by the Sydney Chamber Choir which will be released in 2024.

LISA YOUNG

lisayoungmusic.com

Sacred Stepping Stones (2020, commissioned by the Gondwana National Choral School) speaks about the way the land shapes us, and how the planet is sacred and precious. It is an invocation that celebrates the beauty of the earth and is a call to stand for its care. Performance of the piece involves a distinct vocal 'sound-bank', integrating pitched konnakkol with scat sounds to add rhythmic drive to this message. The English text, combined with Young's vocal sound-bank and scat syllables creates polyrhythmic vocal textures that speaks of this time and place.

Pronunciation Resource for choirs: <https://youtu.be/6D4ahSttiV8>

The original theme composed by Lisa and Ben Robertson of *Tha Thin Tha* (2014, commissioned by Gondwana Choirs) also uses the 'vocal sound-bank', South Indian konnakkol language, and scat syllables. The tala of the music is outlined using cyclic hand gestures. The marking of the tala in this way is an integral part of the performance of Carnatic music.

[The Coco's Lunch version](#)

Pronunciation video: <https://youtu.be/bD15oNFsjao>



COMPOSER'S CORNER



**INTERVIEW WITH IFCM CHORAL
COMPOSITION COMPETITION WINNER
MARIE HERRINGTON**
Arjay Viray

A FEW QUESTIONS TO...
Basseyy Ebong

INTERVIEW WITH IFCM CHORAL COMPOSITION COMPETITION WINNER MARIE HERRINGTON

ARJAY VIRAY

Editorial Board Member, Philippines

[Artikel auf Deutsch](#)

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MARIE HERRINGTON IS THE WINNER OF THE 2023 IFCM CHORAL COMPOSITION COMPETITION IN THE MIXED AND/OR EQUAL VOICES CATEGORY. IN THIS INTERVIEW, SHE TALKS ABOUT HER CREATIVE PROCESS, HER INFLUENCES, INSIGHTS ON COMPOSITION AND ART-MAKING AS A WHOLE, AND OF COURSE HER WINNING PIECE "THE JELLYFISH", A SETTING OF A POEM BY MARIANNE MOORE.

Aside from winning an international composition competition, find out in this interview how Marie also tries to champion various advocacies, such as her explorations on the human voice through her music, advocating for women poets and composers, and promoting her cultural roots through poetry and the music of Ukraine.

Arjay Viray (AV): *Good day, Marie. Thank you for doing this interview. It's an honor to have you with us here today. To start off, can you briefly explain what you currently do – from teaching gigs, composer residencies – your affiliations in general.*

Marie Herrington (MH): Absolutely! As of right now, I spend a lot of my time as a Music Director. I work at a wonderful church in Baltimore, Maryland where I have two choirs – I have a handbell choir and a semi-professional choir and I get to write a good bit of music that my choral singers perform which is very, very wonderful for me.

I spend the rest of my time on a few different musical endeavors. I do sometimes get hired to compose songs for people – people will send me their ideas and say "Hi, can you make recordings of these?" you know, "how does that go?" or I

will create transcriptions for other people – sometimes people will send me songs that they like that they want musical transcriptions of and I do that as well – that is less frequent. I do spend most of my time, though, as a classical singer and composer. And I do tend to stay in the realm of new music so I work with a few great living composers and I try to compose music for as many different singers as I can – including myself. I run a concert series through the church where I work. For the previous two churches I worked in, I ran concert series through both organizations and I am working on starting a virtual concert series out of my living room. I'm hoping that I can just create as many musical spaces as possible.

I used to teach. I first started teaching private voice and piano lessons 10 years ago, and last year I was the head of the music department at an all-girls private high school in Maryland but I have not been teaching lately in order to spend more time working on my freelance work.

AV: *Interesting that you've mentioned about the concert series from your living room. It sounds, to me at least, like something that happens in popular music more than classical. And this is a good*

segue to my next question. You are a relatively young composer. How much of that plays part in those innovative ideas and creative pursuits?

MH: That's a great question. And I think my age has a lot to do with my creative pursuits. I try to do as much as I can with my voice. I recently put out an all-vocal album that's just my singing and electronic effects that I've put on the voice. And that album, I still consider it post-classical new music or avant-garde music, but I think a lot of people would not consider it very classical at all. I'm mixing styles and genres all over the place and that is something I like to do. A lot of my musical influences happen to be film score composers, you can probably tell from the piece.

But I'm also heavily influenced by musicians like Björk, Radiohead, and quite a few different experimentalists or avant-garde musicians as well. I try to listen to as much music from all over the world as I can. The world just has so much to offer as far as music is concerned and it's really common in the United States that people get trapped in this world of Western music and they don't branch out, and I find that if I just stuck to that, I would not be doing as many creative things as

I can. Of course, I still have much more to discover as a composer and as a consumer of music, but just trying to branch out as much as possible as far as style, variance, and everything, all of that, somehow end up influencing what I do. That might not be super noticeable in the piece that I submitted for this competition, but hopefully it is a little more noticeable in some of my other pieces.

AV: *I visited your website and I listened to some of the works. I scanned through a lot of your works on your YouTube channel of course and I can see what you mean as you give descriptions of your work. Now, since you mentioned avant-garde and post-classical works –not that there's a need for us to pull people in – but would you say that those goals, those advocacies, are easier when you're writing for vocal music as opposed to instrumental music? Do you feel that there's this greater sense of alienation when you're writing contemporary instrumental works as opposed to text-based, i.e. vocal, music?*

MH: That is such a great question again. I'm so glad that you asked that because I myself haven't probably thought enough about this. I find, and I'm sure a lot of composers of vocal music would find, vocal music to be limiting because oftentimes we have to use text, and I would have said that when I started writing vocal music (probably about 12 or 13 years ago) but now I'm at the point where if I like the text enough, I'm able to look at it and I can just hear almost how I want it to sound.

And that feels like, I don't know, a gift or a little trick, or something that just makes writing music with text a lot easier. But the thing I will say about avant-garde music is anyone who listens to my album – if they hear any vocal effects and things like that – all of the vocal effects are me and my voice. The only

electronic effects I put on the voice were different filters, you know, different compressors, reverb, etc. I'm not using any synthesizers. And I do think that with the voice, more than with communicating language, we are constantly exerting sound. So when we think about the world of sound around us, let's say sitting in the subway station, you can probably get a bunch of singers of every voice type to mimic all of those sounds of the subway station. Because the human voice is just so capable, and we see a lot of this type of replication happening in a capella music in particular. I personally believe that we have barely scratched the surface of what the human voice can do as far as the variety of sounds we can make is concerned. As far as choral music specifically goes, I feel like it might be a while before we popularize variety of different vocal sounds other than humming, rain sounds, etc., but I do definitely think that we are on the verge of exploring just this beautiful creative realm as far as using all the different capabilities of the human voice in vocal music is concerned. I hope that answers your question. [Laughs]

AV: *Yes. Definitely. My next question, though, will briefly go back to your background because this has something to do with multiculturalism and cultural diversity. Can you share with us briefly your cultural origins and background and how much of it impacts the creativity and innovations that your compositions embody?*

MH: Sure! I'm so glad that you asked this because this is one thing that is very important to me, and I have not mentioned it. I am half-Ukrainian – my mom was born in Ukraine, she lived in the Soviet Union and she had my half-sister while still in the Soviet Union. They managed to move to the United States in the midst of all of that which, as a woman living in

a poor area in Ukraine, was a very, very challenging thing to do; I don't know how they managed to do that. There really wasn't a lot of freedom or accessibility for people coming from that background at all. Seeing and getting to know a good bit of my family over there in Ukraine, the livelihood and everything is so different from America. And ever since this war began, it really has been not only eye-opening to Americans but also to so many other countries and cultures of the world as to what really is going on in Ukraine and how much Russia has been incredibly and negatively influencing Ukrainian culture.

I have always wanted to set Ukrainian texts and I always thought nobody would really care. Unfortunately, that's really sad to say but, you know, Ukraine has always seemed to be a forgotten country when it comes to casual conversations with United States citizens. They typically didn't know what the flag looked like, or what the country's exports were, what the capital city was, all of these things. But now, everyone knows so much, including the country's symbol, the sunflower, all of these things have now become so familiar to the world because of the war and that has just made me really want to jump into advocating for other Ukrainian voices even more. Other than my arrangement of the Ukrainian national anthem, I wrote two other art songs. I do write a lot of art songs and one is in Ukrainian by a Ukrainian poet from the late 1800s and the other art song I'm actually going to be premiering in New York City in January of next year.

AV: *Wow! Congratulations on that!*

MH: Thank you! I'm very fortunate! But instead of singing it in Ukrainian, I am going to sing it in English so that the text can really impact American listeners. I don't know

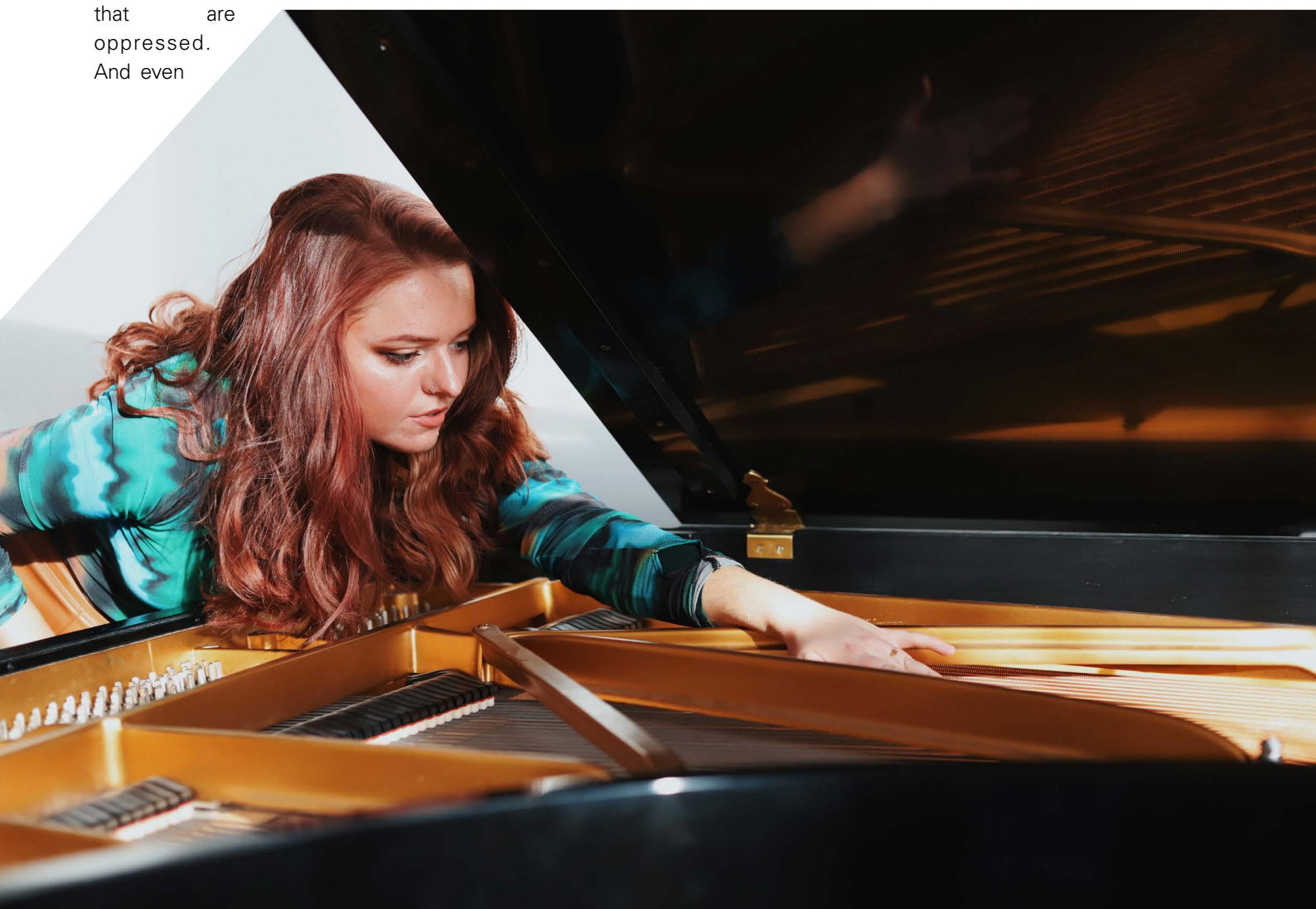
about you, but I personally hate it when you see someone pouring their heart out performing on stage and all of the audience are buried in the program notes. You should be watching the performance, that is the number one reason why I wanted to write the piece in English so that people will be impacted by the performance. I say all of this because we all know that Ukraine is not the only country at war right now. There's just so much devastation all across the world. And the fact that we all have all of this knowledge about such intense situations going on between countries, that's a lot on everyone's hearts. And I do think that getting the voices of those who are oppressed out there is super helpful, other than hoping, praying, and trying to donate money to relief. I think we can also share art from these countries that are oppressed. And even

countries that are not oppressed, just sharing as much art from as many different cultures as we can, it's such a beautiful thing that we have access to. So, I do really feel privileged that I have these connections to Ukraine, and I can share the lullabies that my mom sang to me growing up, and I can share the music from Ukraine that I listened to, that I can also collaborate with Ukrainian poets, and just continue this journey of sharing cultures. I think it's all very beautiful and very impactful.

That is my big spiel as regards my cultural background and what is most directly meaningful to me. I hope to write more Ukrainian music and I hope to just use my voice as a kind of mail delivery system [laughs], just to get as many positive messages and advocacies out there as possible.

AV: *Wow. Thank you for sharing not just your personal stories but also your personal truths. Just listening to you tell all these, I think you are a blessing – not just for us, musicians, but to the world.*

Now, let me proceed to the next part of our interview, and this is about your work – “A Jellyfish.” Briefly walk us through your creative process in general. Why those three movements/segments? Are those pre-divided in accordance with the text and the poetry? I understand it was based on the poetry of Marianne Moore. Tell us more about it.



MH: That's a good question. I thought it would definitely be an odd choice that I chose such a short poem and I decided to break it up into three movements. I knew that each movement was going to be about a minute or so and I do believe the whole piece altogether is around 5 minutes in total, so maybe each movement is a little more than a minute. I thought it would be an odd choice, which would make it a fun choice.

The number one reason why I thought it would be great to break it up into movements is I thought I could create really distinct imagery with the music for each of the scenarios. First, viewing something like it's this amazing spectacle in the water and it's just shimmering and gleaming. And that feels different mentally from attempting to touch it. That's like going from this admiration state to this adventurous state. And so, movement two is a lot more adventurous and there are these constantly moving arpeggios. I really get that from Ola Gjeilo. He was a composer who I had in mind when I was doing that and who inspired me a lot this year. Earlier this year, my choir performed "The Dark Night of the Soul" by Ola Gjeilo and that was such a very beautiful, very tricky piece and getting into that music, that particular piece, just inspired me tremendously. So I'm definitely inspired by Ola Gjeilo in that piece and in that movement in particular. And then, going to the third movement, the jellyfish swims away. So we went from admiring it, "Oh my gosh! How interesting! How cool! How beautiful!," to "Oh my goodness, I'm going to touch it, I'm going to go for it! We know it stings and it's not pleasant but I'm going to do it anyway" and then the jellyfish goes away, so there's this sense of disappointment. And I really thought those lush chords and hanging on to the V chord in particular – the dominant chord – I really thought that that would just

create this scenery of – I don't want to say disappointment because it doesn't really end on a dark note. I do think whoever the protagonist is taking in this whole scenario still really has enjoyed this whole process, but it does end in the disappointment of [sighs] "The jellyfish swam away". [laughs].

And I will say as far as breaking things up into movements, and going back to one of your previous questions, I do think one of the things that influences me as a young composer in particular is thinking about the timing of pieces. I do feel like pieces that are of smaller durations are becoming more and more popular.

AV: *I totally agree.*

MH: And unfortunately, a lot of that has to do with different media platforms that we consume. All of the 10-second reels, and 10-second videos and things like that. We are all very accustomed to short things. And when I look at who has viewed my YouTube videos and who has listened to my Spotify music, you always see that the average number of people listened to the first 40 seconds approximately. And it's always like, you know, I wrote like 13 minutes of music for people to listen only to 1 minute of it. It's just clear to me that, I don't know if it's everyone's attention spans, or just the busy-ness of life and the constant running of the world, but it's hard for people to make time and sit down and listen to music. And when I think about popular music and how short all of those Top 40 hits, all of the pop songs, are, it makes me feel like writing short pieces – that's comfortable! That's good! People will look into that. People do have the time to listen to a short piece. I don't know about a 20-minute-long piece, I hope they do eventually have the time to listen to it too but I personally don't have any reservations about writing short

pieces. When I wrote my album, I did explore doing and writing pieces that have only about 3 to 4 lines of text or sometimes just one sentence. I wrote this one piece – that wasn't on the album – which was just a Franz Kafka quote about suffering and it's a very, very short quote. It's about 2 lines long. And I believe I made a 3–4 minute-long piece for voice and electronics out of that, just as a fun little exploration. All this is to say that I think there is a lot that can be creatively done with both short poems and just, you know, music that doesn't have to be long in duration. I hope that answers the question as for the structure of the piece.

AV: *Definitely. And I just wanted to say, that was such a positive insight to what you said a while ago. As opposed to simply pointing fingers, and blaming people for having shorter attention spans, what we can do is just continue to write and to create art regardless of the perception and the perspective of our audience. Thank you for that.*

Now, you've given a lot of insights about the text. But was there a particular or special reason for choosing this specific poem?

MH: Yes. I was looking through like a lot of composers, I was looking for public domain poets. I do always try to go on a little quest for non-public domain stuff but since it is a lengthier process, sometimes I just want to write. I wrote all of this music in a span of two hours at a coffee shop. I was definitely very inspired and so once I found the Jellyfish poem, well, first I found Marianne Moore. And I really like her poetry. I thought that it's a kind of poetry that's beautifully creative but really easy to understand so I do think her poetry is more accessible to a wider variety of age groups. And I also thought, "A Jellyfish," Oh, how imaginative and how cute a piece! And I have no reservations when

it comes to writing about cute, adorable, little scenarios or anything like that. I do think anything that gives us joy is good to write about. I do like to write about very sad and very dark things too, but you know, the human emotions are just such a wide range. So of course, like the jellyfish, which is honestly probably the most adorable, cheesy piece that I have but, you know, the human emotions are so vast, so you know, I wanted to have a piece that catered to that side of the human emotions rather than constant seriousness or the abstract per se.

AV: *Yeah. Just for context for our readers, most composers have their so-called literary muse that usually provides the text for their vocal works, and I have listened to your Kafka songs that you've mentioned earlier. We have these poets that serve as our literary muse. I was just wondering if you have other works featuring Marianne Moore's poems, or was this the first time?*

MH: That's a good question. It was actually the first work that was penned by Marianne Moore. And one other particular reason why I wanted to utilize her poetry is also just the fact that even though it is 2023, there are still not as many popularized poets who are women and popularized composers who are women. And I love the power duo of woman composer–woman poet. And Marianne Moore might be a popular name in the poetry community but as for all of the people who have heard my piece, the ones who have talked to me have never heard of her before. So you know, I do think it's amazing to be able to provide opportunities like these. And sometimes you just wonder, where in the universe is Marianne Moore? We know she passed a long time ago, but we all wonder like you know, what if she could hear that there are composers 200 years, 100 years, 300 years,

however long after her death who are writing or setting her words to music, how cool an opportunity would that be?

And I love setting texts by women poets, like I said, this power duo thing is very lovely. And I mean some of my favorite poets and writers of all time happen to be people like T.S. Eliot, so you know, some of the more popular men. But we all know there still is that inequality when it comes to exposure and accessibility of career opportunities for women in these fields. So anything that I can do to work with poets who are women – and similarly with Ukrainian poets – and give these opportunities to these people is great. Well, I don't want to phrase it like I'm giving opportunities to anybody because that's really not true. It's just kind of an amazing thing that we get to do something that once upon a time, we would not be able to do. If I had been born in a different decade long ago, I probably would



not be a composer or a singer at all. Especially if I had been born in Ukraine for example, there's just a lot of different possibilities that we have nowadays that we didn't have in the past. Needless to say, I really hope that I get to set more Marianne Moore poems in the future because I definitely like her writing style a lot. And I do have some lesser-known books of women poets who passed a long time ago and I just feel like there are all these wonderful resources out there that can be used in music and so I want to use as many resources as possible and give voice to as many women as possible.

AV: *We're now down to our last question. What does it mean to you to win the IFCM Choral Composition Competition? And again, just for context especially for our readers, the IFCM has been known for its advocacies in bridging and connecting people through choral music. There are lots of projects initiated by the organization that are driven by these ideas – of peace and unity through choral music – so what does it mean to you to win this competition?*

MH: I'm very glad you asked because this opportunity really made my year. I have spent so much of my life being an opera singer and being a singer working with composers and stuff like that and I only got my first real opportunity as a composer about a year ago. And so the fact that now I've won in an international competition and one organized by the International Federation for Choral Music, no less – that's a very big deal to me. The idea of not only exposing myself to people from various countries outside of the West but also being exposed to all these other wonderful musicians and composers from other countries I would not have been in contact with otherwise – this is all the stuff that I find the most meaningful, and it goes back to wanting to share

different cultures and everything like that. And when I looked at the variety of musical minds on the judging panel of the competition, I was so impressed. You have such a great representation from so many different countries. It just feels truly amazing to have received this opportunity. And I love how much the IFCM does for choral music. I mean it just really brings all of these people from different countries together to partake in the one thing that we all love which is choral music. I'm just totally impressed with the ensemble.

I think I did find this opportunity about two to three days after I finished writing the piece, and all I did was I just googled "composition competitions for choral music" and it's funny how everything about the IFCM popped up on Google. I typically find all of my opportunities through different websites specific for composers like Ulysses and the composers' sites, and things like that. I did find it amazing that it was just a random Google search that had me find this particular competition and the fact that I wrote this piece two or three days prior to applying, it just feels like magic has been happening. I'm so grateful for this organization and for everything that this organization does for choral music. You really promote the livelihood of music and the sharing of cultures. And encouraging living composers, I do think, is the best thing for music. The music that is being written today, it's the music of now, but it's also the music of the future. And everything you all are doing is just so spectacular and I'm just so grateful to be a part of it.

AV: *I would love to discuss a whole lot more with you especially about your creative process, not just for this specific piece but for your other works as well, and of course a whole lot about intercultural and cross-cultural artistic pursuits. We really appreciate, first of all, your*

participation in the competition. I'd say that after having this interview we are blessed to have your work entrusted and submitted to the competition. Of course we are also grateful to you for granting us this interview. Personally, I'd like to thank you for doing this interview with me. Now, to end what has been an insight-filled and amazing conversation, since one of the advocacies of this competition is to promote and give opportunities to young and emerging composers as well, do you have any parting ideas, insights, or message of inspiration for young and aspiring composers?

MH: I'm so glad that you said that because I do have a big, long journey, I guess even for my age with just trying to understand really how to partake in this lifestyle and in this career, in a non-complicated, non-aggressive, just very organic way.

I do think that the best advice for young composers is to go out there and create. And if you ever feel stuck, if you ever feel like you're coming from a competitive place or just a place that is not super positive, just remember that you are creating art at the end of the day. And art is sustaining life everywhere. It is a joy to be able to create art and I don't have to work a so-called nine-to-five job because I'm working all of these jobs that are all about creating art. And it is art that so many people will enjoy and it's art that gives people life and reminds people to smile and reminds people to cry, and reminds us to have open hearts. And wear your heart on your sleeve when you're creating music because you have a little voice within you. My best mentor ever, Libby Larsen, told me to always listen to your muse. So we all have a muse within us, we all have a voice within us, always listen to that voice and let that voice radiate your true artistry and true creativity. It's not about being better with this person or being

more versatile with that person. It's definitely not about revolutionizing the world of composition. It's just about making art and lifting up your own voice and lifting up others' voices. These are just all the best things that we can do in our society. It's easy to get bogged down when you're trying to make all of this into a career because it's all application, application, application; fee, fee, fee; rejection letter, rejection letter, rejection letter; and it's really, really easy to get into a negative headspace. But at the end of the day, you are creating art, you are letting your voice sing, you are letting other people's voices sing, and this is one of the best things we can do for humanity. That is my advice to young composers and it's the advice that I use every single day and it has gotten me inevitably more opportunities than when I was more in a fierce or intense mindset. Art is joy.

AV: *Wow. What a way to end this interview! Marie, it has been a wonderful conversation. I wish we could have another session in the future and just talk about music, art, and culture. Thank you very much and I'm looking forward to hearing the premiere performance of A Jellyfish.*

MH: Yes! Me too! I'm so excited about that. I have no idea what to expect, I'm just so happy that there are people who want to sing it. So yes, and thank you so much for the interview, Arjay.

Edited by Laura Massey, UK

A FEW QUESTIONS TO...

BASSEY EBONG

Singer/songwriter & conductor

ONE MINUTE TO MEET PEOPLE, DISCOVER REPERTOIRE, GET INSPIRED!

1. What is your first choir memory?

Leading our kids' choir to victory in a local competition, filled with nervousness and excitement, remains my cherished first choir memory.

2. What is your favourite choral piece and why?

A bit biased here because he's had a profound impact on my musical journey. "Messiah" by George Frideric Handel holds a special place for me due to its grandeur and timeless beauty.

3. Which composer or conductor of any era would you like to meet?

Meeting Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart would have been fascinating due to his innovative compositions and musical genius.

4. Which other art do/would you like to combine with a musical performance?

I love to combine choral music with visual arts, it creates a multisensory experience for the audience.

5. What would you have wanted to become, if not a professional musician?

If not a professional musician, I would have pursued a career in literature, driven by a passion for storytelling.

6. How do you stay up-to-date for your job as a conductor?

I explore diverse musical genres a lot, attend workshops and collaborate with fellow musicians.

<https://www.basseyebong.com>

Edited by Laura Massey, UK



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FIRST STEPS...

FIRST STEPS



REPERTOIRE SELECTION: IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS
Sanders Lau

REPERTOIRE SELECTION: IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS

SANDERS LAU

Choral conductor, Hong Kong

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WE CONDUCTORS ARE BLESSED WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO NAVIGATE THE DESIGN OF CONCERT PROGRAMMES AS A FORM OF UNIQUE ARTISTIC EXPRESSION. A THOUGHTFUL CONCERT PROGRAMME WILL NOT ONLY AID IN SUCCESSFULLY DISPLAYING ALL THE HARD WORK WE AND OUR CHOIR MEMBERS HAVE PUT INTO THE PREPARATION PROCESS BUT WILL ALSO LEAVE A MORE PROFOUND IMPACT ON OUR AUDIENCE. WHEN SELECTING A REPERTOIRE, A MULTITUDE OF CONSIDERATIONS MUST BE MADE; OFTEN, IT IS A PROCESS OF MANY TRIALS AND ERRORS. MOREOVER, IT DOES NOT NECESSARILY BECOME EASIER, EVEN AFTER ACCUMULATING CONSIDERABLE EXPERIENCE AND EXPERTISE ON THE SUBJECT, AS THE REPERTOIRE AVAILABLE TO US IS ALSO EVER-EXPANDING. THIS ARTICLE AIMS TO GIVE READERS SOME TRIED-AND-TRUE POINTERS, HOPEFULLY PROVIDING INSIGHTS TO THOSE JUST STARTING OUT.

BALANCE

Regardless of how a concert programme is put together, I always try to strike a balance in two areas: **1) level of challenge** and **2) key musical elements**.

When I design a programme, I keep a ratio of roughly 1:2:1 for **easy, moderate, and difficult** pieces. The moderately challenging pieces comprise the majority of a programme and will take up about 40% of total rehearsal time. They should most effectively reflect the choir's current artistic capacity. Although the difficult pieces take up a smaller portion of the programme, they should take up another 40% of your rehearsals, as you will need more time to polish them. These pieces should push the choir to reach their artistic and technical aspirations. The easier pieces should require the least rehearsal time, giving a good sense of accomplishment. All that being said, the first and most vital step is to accurately evaluate our singers' capabilities in terms of music literacy, sight-reading ability, aural and ensemble skills, vocal competence, and so on, thus coming up with a realistic rehearsal plan.

I also balance my selections according to another parameter: their main musical interest. In reality, almost all music in the Western classical tradition is constructed around three fundamental elements: **melody, harmony,** and **rhythm**. The task is identifying which element contributes *the most* to making each piece unique and exciting. For example, *The Seal Lullaby* by Eric Whitacre (b. 1970) has a spellbinding melody but relatively little rhythmic interest. Certainly, it also has some colourful harmonies, but I recommend categorising it as melody-driven. A rhythm-driven example would be *Alleluia* by Jake Runestad (b. 1986), which is accomplished by quick and exhilarating figures and metre-changes. Paul Mealor's (b. 1975) *Locus iste* is an excellent example of harmony-driven writing characterised by rich and extended harmonies. Remember, however, that it is normal for pieces to appear appealing in more than one of these three areas.

COHERENCE

We aim to design a cohesive repertoire to create a satisfying concert experience for our listeners. In other words, there is always some kind of a 'theme' that links all the works in a programme together. Therefore, it seems intuitive to start by deciding on a theme and then look for pieces that fit well. Another approach is to pick just one work as a central feature or anchor point, then extract a theme from it and build around that. These themes can be any of the following: *emotions* (e.g. joy, fear, hope, sorrow), *nature* (e.g. seasons, water, fire, stars, flowers), *human experiences* (e.g. love, death, war), *conceptual* (e.g. peace, time, darkness); or they can be more music-related, such as period, genre, language, literature, the origin of composition, and so on. And, of course, these can be combined to form more specific ideas, such as '19th century English part songs on love and hate' or 'works by contemporary Scandinavian composers about nature'.

You can find two examples of programmes I created in the link below. Example 1 'Faith, Hope, Love, Praise' was designed for a youth choir. I decided on the themes (pretty straightforward, as the title suggests) and then picked a few pieces for each while keeping the balances I mentioned earlier. Example 2 'Under the Pale of Mist' is more complex and was designed for a group of veteran singers. The anchor was *There Are Some*

Men, a very short piece by Philip Glass (b. 1937). The text of this piece forms the inspirational backbone of the programme, which features pieces that were selected according to subject matters presented in the poem, such as *mist*, *mourning song*, *lovers*, *time*, and *silence*, creating a non-linear narrative that acts as reflections upon the poem in a cohesive aura. I have also included the programme notes for Example 2 for reference.

<http://tinyurl.com/2ujzud96>

REPERTOIRE SEARCH

As it will take another dedicated article to thoroughly address this topic, I will only give a couple of quick tips. The first is what I call the 'rabbit hole' method. Start by simply picking a recording of a piece you enjoy, and then search for other recordings that are either by the same composer, choir, or conductor. Once you have encountered another recording of interest, rinse and repeat. Do this often, and soon, you will find yourself in possession of a network of repertoire based on your taste.

The second tip is to start keeping a repertoire database early in your career. Frequently update it with pieces you have already performed and those you have only just discovered. Categorise them according to difficulty, main musical interests, themes, and other information such as duration, instrumentation and voicing, language, period, etc.

CONCLUSION

I hope these ideas and tips will help you design the 'right' programme for your choirs. Last but certainly not least, we ought to find the 'hook' that makes us *want* to perform what we have put together. Maybe it is the message that the programme conveys, or we are just passionate about works from a specific period, or maybe there is just this one work we are dying to perform. Whatever it is, we must *love* it. Only then will we be able to convincingly share that love with our choir and, in turn, our audiences.

Edited by Gillian Forlivesi Heywood, Italy/UK



SANDERS LAU is one of Hong Kong's most sought-after choral conductors. He is the Artistic Director and founder of NOËMA, a leading chamber choir that comprises some of Hong Kong's finest choral musicians. The choir has quickly established itself as one of the city's choral landscape's most dynamic and innovative forces. Sanders has also collaborated closely with Die Konzertisten as their Resident Conductor, preparing the choir to perform with a constellation of internationally acclaimed conductors such as Stephen Layton, Jonathan Cohen, John Butt, and Maxime Pascal, cultivating a specialised interest in the historically informed performances of early music. Sanders has been invited to guest-conduct, adjudicate, and give masterclasses and workshops for organisations such as the Hong Kong Arts Festival, Voices of Singapore Festival, Hong Kong Inter-School Choral Festival, and Hong Children's Choir. Sanders won the First Prize and two Special Awards in the 3rd Romano Gandolfi International Competition for Choral Conductors in Italy in 2023. sanders.lau@noema.hk






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REQUIEM – DANCING TO CHORAL MUSIC
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**COMMUNICATING CHORAL MUSIC
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Sinem Erenturk

REQUIEM: DANCING TO CHORAL MUSIC

ISABELLE MÉTROPE

Managing Editor of the *International Choral Magazine*, Germany/France

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IT IS 19:40 ON A COLD NOVEMBER NIGHT IN STUTTGART, GERMANY. THE OPERA HOUSE IS SOLD OUT, 1400 PEOPLE EXPERIENCE A BALLET THAT SHAPED THE LOCAL BALLET SCHOOL: *INITIALS R. B. M. E.* BY ITS FOUNDER JOHN CRANKO, WHO DIED 50 YEARS AGO. THE MUSIC IS EQUALLY CLOSELY LINKED TO STUTTGART: OF ALL PLACES, BRAHMS'S SECOND PIANO CONCERTO RECEIVED ITS FIRST GERMAN PERFORMANCE (AFTER ITS PREMIERE IN BUDAPEST) IN WHAT'S NOW THE STATE CAPITAL OF BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG, ON 22 NOVEMBER 1881. WHILE IN THE HALL ALL EYES ARE ALREADY DIRECTED TO THE STAGE, AT THE ARTISTS' ENTRANCE THE SINGERS OF *FIGURE HUMAINE KAMMERCHOR*, THE YOUNGEST OF STUTTGART'S PROFESSIONAL CHAMBER CHOIRS, ARE TRUNDLING IN. HANG ON – A CHOIR? FOR A BALLET?

In July and October 2023 in Stuttgart, a production called *Remember me* was put on. This was part of a series of events honouring John Cranko (1927-1973), dancer, world-famous choreographer and founder of the outstanding ballet school of Stuttgart which today bears his name. Alongside Cranko's *Ballet Initials R. B. M. E.*, *Requiem* was danced, a ballet by Kenneth MacMillan, created by him in memory of his friend John Cranko. Among the unusual features of *Requiem* is a musical one: whereas ballet music is usually purely orchestral, this ballet is danced to Gabriel Fauré's *Requiem* op. 48 – a ballet with choral music. Does the human voice as an unusual instrument present a new challenge? Which other dimensions does it carry with it? We asked Tamas Detrich, general artistic director of the *Stuttgart Ballet*, as well as Mikhail Agrest, musical director, Martí Paixà, first soloist and, last but not least, Franziska Klein and Simon Meder, members of the *figure humaine kammerchor*, for their impressions following on this experience.

HISTORY

Stravinsky stated that all music written up to the middle of the 19th century was dance music.

Music and dance have always been linked, but in the last few centuries, the role of music in ballet has been in continuous development. We asked Mikhail Agrest, musical director of the *Stuttgart Ballet*, for a little review.

"In the early days of ballet, music was only a modest servant, employed in a totally utilitarian manner. Marius Petipa said, 'I only need 16 bars of this rhythm and then 8 bars of that one'. It was only a backdrop, in order to show up the virtuosity of a particular dancer. Things were similar in the opera of those days: Mozart composed several different arias for Don Ottavio in Vienna, in order to emphasise the strong points of a certain tenor. Thus, the musical integrity of the evening as a whole did not stand in the foreground of interest. Thanks to the splendid scores of Tchaikovsky, in the 19th century ballet music became more 'symphonic' and a fully fledged artistic partner. By the beginning of the 20th century, ballet led the musical scene when, thanks

to the great visionary Diaghilev, several of the major works were commissioned: Stravinsky's *Firebird*, *Petrushka*, *Sacre du Printemps*, great works by Prokofiev, Ravel's *Daphne et Chloé*. The great choreographers like Balanchine, Cranko, Neumeier and last but not least MacMillan used musical masterpieces as the basis of their marvellous ballets."



Choreography: Kenneth MacMillan, Dancer: Elisa Badenes © Roman Novitzky / Stuttgarter Ballett

When Diaghilev commissioned a work, ballet music was the result – dance was taken into account within the process of composing. When, however, the musical piece is there first, the challenges are of a different kind. For Denis Rouger, artistic director of *figure humaine kammerchor*, “All musical masterpieces possess the power to evoke emotions and can be nearly absolutely certain to carry along the audience with it, which, of course, is of interest to the choreographer. For many of these pieces, just listening to them demands a high degree of concentration. This, however, will be lost in part if – because of the choreography – the audience member has to concentrate too hard on seeing. Only the geniuses among choreographers are capable of treating concentration and music with consideration and – with their ballets – of expanding the artistic meaning of the work. However, this ‘exercise’ can also turn out to be dangerous; some pieces do survive this weakened state, while others never recover from it ... ”

Sacred music is rarely connected to ballet. In 1976, three years after the death of his friend John Cranko, Kenneth MacMillan’s ballet *Requiem* to Fauré’s music is premiered. MacMillan left his mark on the history of ballet with ballets ranging from the dramatic to those telling tragic stories, often engaging with controversial subjects and inner conflicts. *Requiem* is one of the favourite works of *Stuttgart Ballet’s* director Tamas Detrich: “On the one hand it is abstract, but it still does tell a story of loss and hope. When *Requiem* was created at *Stuttgart Ballet* in 1976, I myself was a young student. Therefore, the work is also of personal meaning for me. It pays tribute to our founding father John Cranko, and singing plays a very big role in this piece.”



THE LINK BETWEEN SINGER AND DANCER, BREATHING AND FLEXIBILITY

Dancers are far from used to ballet with singing. For Tamas Detrich “Singing adds a totally new component, one which in everyday work appears only rarely in this form. For the dancers it represents a different way of working and also a major challenge: a choir or a soloist ensure that every performance will have its very own individual character.” Even experienced dancers like Martí Fernández Paixà, first soloist in the *Stuttgart Ballet* company, can count on one hand the performances where he was allowed to dance to vocal music – usually just soloists. Paixà reports: “In my first season as an Eleve¹ the *Lied von der Erde* by Kenneth MacMillan was on the programme (which had been premiered in Stuttgart under the direction of John Cranko after the Royal Ballet in London had rejected a ballet to this music!). There, two female singers stand on the stage with the dancers. Also, in 2017, I danced in *Tod in Venedig* by Demis Volpi – that was a joint production with Stuttgart State Opera.” In both cases the singers stood on the stage and joined in some of the dancing. It is totally different when the choir is standing with the orchestra in the pit and when the task of shaping things together, breathing together, can be brought together solely through listening, feeling and the charisma and work of the conductor.

If you choreograph a score by Mahler or Brahms, you really have to follow the music because of its clear phrasing, its structure and its dynamics, in order to prevent dissonance between the visual and the acoustic images. Mikhail Agrest

Martí Fernández Paixà enjoyed the additional dimension with all its challenges: “The human voice brings a different feeling with it, and a totally different type of inspiration to the stage. You also have to be a bit more flexible, as things may change every day, be it the speed or just the ‘feel’. With the soloists you could clearly hear that, during the run of the production, there were different castings – that was exciting, because of course everybody breathes in a slightly different way, placing different accents.”

Singers, dancers, instrumentalists – they all have to breathe, but they all do so in their own ways. While the dancers felt linked to the breathing of the choir, conductor Mikhail Agrest, who had to unite both ensembles as well as the orchestra into a shared flow, experienced matters in a totally different way: “Dancers

and singers *breathe* in very different ways. It is very important to find a way in which to allow the music to flow and to breathe in a way that is organic for all involved, so that the result is perceived as natural by the audience.” However, participants as well as the audience very soon appreciated that dancers and singers strongly inspired each other. As Agrest says: “You saw it in the movements, heard it in the voices and saw it in the eyes.”

SINGING IN THE ORCHESTRAL PIT

The choir initially learnt the work as usual in the rehearsal room. But as soon as rehearsals began with the troupe, much flexibility was required – suddenly the aesthetics of dance, movement and power were added to the sound. “This demanded, of the choir, a second step of special preparations,” says Denis Rouger, artistic director of the *figure humaine kammerchor*. Franziska Klein, a soprano in the choir, reports how she felt: “Again and again, we had to adapt our speeds to the dancers. Sometimes to such a degree, that the character of individual pieces totally changed. But it was fascinating because the music – at least superficially – had to allow the dance to dominate, but it was this very symbiosis that created something quite new, something that together worked marvellously well.”

It’s everyday routine for orchestral musicians, the exception for singers: while some of the soloists of the Fauré Requiem had already stood on the stage of *Stuttgart State Opera* in earlier productions, they, as well as the members of *figure humaine kammerchor*, had never before stood in the pit. “Of course, for a start it was simply exciting to sing in the pit with its special acoustics, a mixture of dry but nevertheless carrying,” says Franziska Klein. Also, the pit is constructed in a way that, on the one hand, the eyes of the audience are directed to the stage and the conductor can see both the instrumentalists (and, if relevant, the choir) as well as the action on the stage. However, it hardly ever happens that the people in the pit see the stage. For the instrumentalists it’s totally normal, as they always play and look in the direction of the auditorium. For the choir it was very unusual, particularly as – because of the limited depth of the pit – they were standing *beside* the orchestra rather than behind it. Thus there were two unfamiliar impressions: singing sideways in relation to the orientation of the auditorium, and not seeing the main action. “Of course it was a bit of a pity not to see ‘what it was all about’,” was the impression of Simon Meder, member of the choir. “However, there was the possibility of watching from the edge of the stage during the first half, when the choir did not yet have to sing, or attending a performance as a member of the audience on a night when one wasn’t on duty in the choir.”

1 Students at ballet school are referred to as Eleves during their practice training.

None of the singers of *figure humaine kammerchor* had ever sung to a ballet before, and they value this experience highly. Breathing and shaping a musical phrase suddenly become optically perceivable, and the link to the human body – for dancers as for singers their actual instrument – becomes visible.

MORE OF IT!

All those involved agree – and so do many of the roughly ten thousand members of the audience who experienced *Requiem*: they want more of the same. More synergies, more inspiration through works bringing together different genres of art. More sparkling singers' eyes when singing along with the dancers, more voice to which it is possible to dance in a deep and heartfelt manner. More *Gesamtkunstwerke* in which the sound of the orchestra, the human voice and dance meld together – that's something conductor Mikhail Agrest would also like see: "I hope that more choreographers will have the courage to tackle great musical works for, together with an inspired choreography, this is an invaluable combination in order to create the most moving and artistically most enriching theatrical product that we as artists can offer our audience in such difficult times."

Translated from German by Irene Auerbach, UK

Stuttgart Ballet has been world class for sixty years. With more than 70 dancers from more than 23 nations and invitations for guest performances from all over the world, the troupe is very much part of the international ballet scene. Its comprehensive repertoire delights lovers of classical ballet as much as it does enthusiasts for contemporary dance. A new era began in 1961 with the appointment of the choreographer John Cranko as director of ballet. When in 1969 *Stuttgart Ballet* made its first visit to the USA under the direction of John Cranko, American critics coined the phrase of the "*Stuttgart Ballet Miracle*," making the troupe famous internationally. All Cranko's successors followed his direction of travel and placed new creative impulses, keeping *Stuttgart Ballet* at the top of the ballet world. For the season 2018/19 the board of the Stuttgart State Theatres unanimously appointed the former first soloist Tamas Detrich as general artistic director of the ballet. He remained faithful to the line taken by his predecessors and cultivated in particular the tradition of new creations and the extension of the varied repertoire. To this day, *Stuttgart Ballet* with its visits to places all over the world is looked upon as a sought-after cultural ambassador. Through many years of hard work in communications and outstanding dancers as well as new productions, the troupe has awakened an enthusiasm for dance in the city of Stuttgart and the region which knows no equal.

<https://www.stuttgarter-ballett.de>

The *figure humaine kammerchor* is a young professional chamber choir dedicated to cultivating and supporting German–French art song and choral repertoire of the 19th through the 21st century. Founded in 2016, the ensemble offers vocal music at the highest standard under the directorship of Denis Rouger, enchanting its audiences through a special choral sound, warm and homogeneous. Meanwhile the choir has become a fixture in Stuttgart concert life and is a regular guest at well-known concert series and festivals at home and abroad, including the *Ludwigsburger Schlossfestspiele*, the *European Church Music Festival Schwäbisch Hall* and the festival *Les Rencontres musicales* in Vézelay (France). The ensemble enjoys a close link with the *Stuttgart Philharmonic Orchestra* as well as with the contemporary composers Philippe Mazé and Axel Ruoff. In addition, in 2023 *figure humaine* was engaged by the Stuttgart State Ballet. In co-operation with the music publisher Carus-Verlag there have already been two portrait CDs in 2018 and 2021, highly praised by the international press: *Kennst Du das Land* and ... *wo die Zitronen blühen*. The third CD *Rencontre – Begegnung* just came out in March 2024. Picture below © NB-Fotografie

<http://www.figurehumaine.com>





**Kammertänzer
TAMAS DETRICH**

has been the general artistic director of the ballet since 2018, MIKHAIL AGREST director of music since 2020, MARTÍ FERNÁNDEZ PAIXÀ has been a member of *Stuttgart Ballet* since 2014 and first soloist since 2021. FRANZISKA KLEIN is doing works experience with Bavarian Radio and is also a journalist and freelance singer, among others in *figure humaine kammerchor*, in which SIMON MEDER, freelance choir conductor and organist as well as a student of singing at the Music University Karlsruhe, also sings. (Picture: Roman Novitzky)



COMMUNICATING CHORAL MUSIC IN THE NEW AGE:

A Case Study on WSCMIstanbul2023

SINEM ERENTURK, UK/TÜRKIYE

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THE SUCCESS OF THE WORLD SYMPOSIUM ON CHORAL MUSIC IN ISTANBUL LAST YEAR CAN UNDOUBTEDLY BE ATTRIBUTED, IN PART, TO ITS EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES. THE EVENT EMBRACED A MULTI-CHANNEL APPROACH, INCLUDING DIGITAL, THAT ALIGNED WITH GLOBAL PROFESSIONAL MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION PRACTICES, THUS SIGNIFICANTLY CONTRIBUTING TO ITS OVERALL SUCCESS REACHING MORE THAN 10 MILLION ONLINE AND 8 MILLION THROUGH TRADITIONAL MEDIA WITH AUDIENCES FILLING THE CONCERT HALLS.

As a noteworthy soft benefit, this approach played a pivotal role by creating a safe space for fostering successful collaborations between the arts, the state, and the private sector —entities that possess different structures and operations and even world views, all uniting around the power of choral music.

When WSCMIstanbul2023 Festival Director and dear friend Dr. Burak Onur Erdem approached me with enthusiasm and joy about the news that the upcoming WSCM would be in Istanbul, and asked if I would be interested in leading the communication side of the event, I felt honoured to receive such an invitation, along with feeling pleased and happy that such a significant event would take place in my home country. Choral singing has been my passion since the age of 8, shaping the way I perceive the world in the intellectually rich culture of Ankara (capital of Türkiye), where I was brought

up. Universal values of humanity such as listening to each other, empathy, making decisions together, the importance of a sense of community while having one's own voice and a strong belief in progress towards the good were first instilled in me through choral music. In my professional life, I was trained as a marketing expert with a focus on digital in multinational bodies in my 15-year-long corporate career.



Audience of the WSCMIstanbul2023

Despite a multitude of questions in my mind about the logistics of managing this massive event with multiple parties and organizational layers in such a limited time, I unequivocally said yes. In the end, what initially appeared as challenges for the project turned out to be strengths of the event, thanks to trying to stick with global communication and marketing practices that foresee an integrated approach across multiple channels with consistent verbal and visual messaging.

It was interesting and fascinating for me to see this invitation coinciding with my own contemplation that the best communication and marketing practices developed over the years in corporate structures should extend beyond those confines. This is particularly relevant in the context of arts and culture, which have become as indispensable as basic human needs such as food, energy, and medicine, especially in the world we currently inhabit.

Before I start my case study, let me elaborate more on this matter to preempt any potential misconceptions or judgments. The integration of marketing strategies into the arts and cultural domains can yield numerous benefits. Firstly, it can enhance audience engagement by reaching a wider demographic and fostering more meaningful interactions, a crucial element for success in this area. Additionally, marketing plays a pivotal role in revenue generation, contributing to the financial sustainability of artistic endeavours by attracting patrons, sponsors, and different supporters.

Furthermore, the establishment of a strong brand is paramount for cultural entities, and effective marketing can contribute significantly to this. Effective marketing can amplify the cultural impact by promoting meaningful content and artistic expressions. By combining

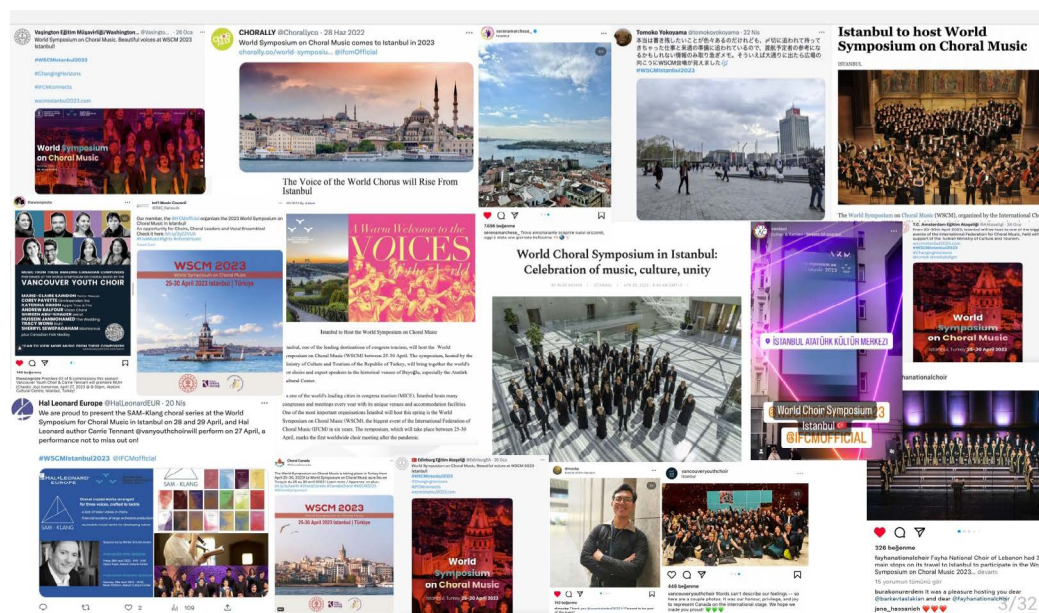
advocacy and educational strategies, these practices contribute to raising awareness about the importance of arts and culture, particularly choral music, creating support and appreciation.

Collaborations and partnerships are facilitated through marketing, fostering connections between artists, institutions, sponsors, and the public. This collaborative approach creates synergies and amplifies the cultural impact, promoting a more interconnected and enriched cultural landscape.

In today's world, digital communication and marketing is a powerful tool for global outreach. Leveraging online platforms, social media, and digital content expands the reach of cultural initiatives beyond geographical boundaries.

Last but not the least, marketing principles provide a means to measure success more effectively. Metrics such as attendance, online engagement, and revenue generation can be monitored, offering valuable insights into the impact of communication and marketing efforts.

I am well aware of the ongoing debate around the treatment of arts and



culture as commercial commodities, rooted in various reasons ranging from preserving the authenticity of the process of any artistic endeavour to come alive to acknowledging the challenges of mass-producing arts and culture works in most areas. Choral music in particular seems at first glance to fall completely outside of this as it is an art form where ownership is not vested in a single entity—neither the conductor, the composer, individual choir members, event organizers, nor the venue or choir management. Instead, the owner of the work produced is all of them and perhaps even the audience itself, as it is a simultaneously shared, unique experience. However, my focus extends beyond the dichotomy of whether choral music can or should be considered a commercial commodity, reaching towards something broader and more meaningful. I'm interested in the prospect of independence and the ability of the choral music are(n)a to decide shape its future on its own by being aware of best global marketing and communication practices. Using them wisely would offer the opportunity for choral music to have its voice be heard among stakeholders, patrons, sponsors, decision-makers and a wider audience. Furthermore, I prefer to view what may initially appear as a challenge for choral music—being an art form without one specific owner—as an opportunity for further growth and heightened impact through collaborative efforts among its various components.

In essence, I advocate for embracing awareness of global marketing and communication strategies as a means for the choral music community to not only be heard but also to wield influence among various stakeholders, ultimately steering its own destiny.

In this case study on the communication of WSCMIstanbul2023, I aim to showcase what we have achieved in terms of results and impact, the process itself, the milestones followed all through the process and additionally, I will identify areas for improvement for the future. I hope this analysis will be valuable for future organizers of the WSCM event, an important tradition that would surely resonate across generations in choral music. Insights from this study could contribute to further refinement and success of future editions of the event.

In summary, adhering to current global marketing and communication practices which aligned traditional and digital media with consistent visual and verbal messaging proved highly effective in principle, with all its soft-benefits in this multi-layered event. However, we identified areas for improvement, particularly concerning setting up the right team structure, the allocation of online media budget and the integration of the website in the overall strategy.

The widely known methods of promoting choral music mainly revolves around family and loved ones of the choir members, flyers and posters, word of mouth, and occasionally through posts on social media.

At the WSCMIstanbul2023 event, we endeavoured to depart from traditional methods and instead embraced marketing and communication practices which prioritize a well-thought solid strategy and involve a focus on digital and seamless integration of

traditional and digital media. This shift aimed to enhance the event's visibility and engagement on a local and global scale.

For this massive event, boasting 2,500 participants, 60 presenters, 55 choirs from around the world, 44 concerts across 11 different venues, and nearly 500 registered delegates, audiences flocked to the concert halls, resulting in a total of 8,500 tickets sold in both Istanbul and Ankara. Despite the potential perception of it being an academic, closed-circuit affair, the event drew a diverse audience beyond highly interested individuals or acquaintances.



Throughout the event, 16 TV news reports, 53 printed news articles, and 652 online news pieces were generated. TV news reached 1.5 million, printed media 6.7 million and online media 4.5 million. Our primary promotional film on YouTube got 1.3 million views, while between December 2022 and May 2023, over 4 million impressions were achieved on Instagram with more than 1,000 reposts or restories of its content. Additionally, three influencers in arts and culture, each with more than 250,000 followers, shared the event. The website itself received 300,000 impressions. The online engagement showed a demographic split of 60.5% women and 39.5% men.



Let me elaborate on the milestones we followed through the event in terms of marketing and communication which I hope would be of help for future organizers of the event, resulting in even greater results and achievements in the future.

• **Identifying and Collaborating with Relevant Parties**

For the event we collaborated with four different parties for communication and marketing: the event organization agency's communication department, website production agency, video production agency and social media agency.

• **Team Structure and Recruitment**

During the event, apart from me as head of communications overseeing the entire process, we had two officers, one looking after the social media content, digital assets (including the website), and collaborating with third-party agencies for video

Istanbul to host World Symposium on Choral Music



ISTANBUL
The World Symposium on Choral Music (WSCM), organized by the International Choral Music Federation (IFCM), will be held in Istanbul between April 25 and 30, hosting the world's best choirs and speakers from around the world.

production and the other officer managing the production of all key visuals across channels, overseeing the delivery of printed materials through the organization agency.

• **Setting the Marketing and Communication Strategy**

We developed a rounded and effective strategy with a main tagline "Welcome to the Voices of the World" in line with the IFCM's "Changing Horizons" concept. The strategy focused on Istanbul as an

asset and seeing it through a choir singer's perspective as well as emphasizing the event's contemporary program with the umbrella concept of "choral music tradition meets innovation/future" under which we produced a series of various video content and interviews.

- **Finalizing the Strategy**

The strategy was discussed, concluded and agreed with all relevant parties and organizing committee and stakeholders.

- **Identifying Communication Elements**

We determined the main communication messages under the tagline, prepared a social media strategy with the agency with a focus on video content. We prioritized infusion of agreed strategy in every communication element, be it a public billboard or a wide-screen or hand flyers and posters of the event or banners for online media ads and seamless integration of online and offline elements.

- **Establishing Social Media Management and Content Creation**

We defined an agile working model for social media management, content creation and the approval process of visuals and post texts.

- **Tracking of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and results periodically**

We kept an eye on KPIs and results achieved online as much as we could, feeding into our interpretation and planning of new content.

All these milestones in the process worked well, resulting in the collaboration of the parties around the agreed strategy. This approach, as a soft benefit, created a safe space across arts, state and private sector circles involved in the project, each of which has its own ways of working, set cultures and even world views.

The project was also a massive learning environment leading to a few areas of improvement. Establishing precise organizational roles for communication and marketing, recruiting individuals with the right skills for these roles, designing the website after finalizing the strategy, seamlessly integrating it into the overall strategy mix, and initiating the planning of online media budget allocation from the project's outset emerged as pivotal lessons. These insights are invaluable and, when given careful consideration, can be easily addressed in future events. Of course, the fact that such a huge project had to come alive in just a few months, rather than a crucial preparation process of at least 2 years should be taken into consideration which makes the success of WSCMIstanbul2023 even more meaningful and miraculous looking back.

In the end, beyond its numerical success, the event's artistic and cultural impact transcended quantifiable measures, forging invisible connections between choirs from diverse corners of the

world. It fostered invitations for future events, inspired cohesion in potential discussions, and generated ideas for the future. A significant amount of shared empathy and energy fuelled belief in the future of choral music.

One particularly poignant scene left a mark on my mind during an evening event in Beyoglu, the cultural heart of Istanbul. Witnessing substantial clusters of audience members, ranging from large gatherings to more intimate groups and collectively forming a significant crowd, some emerging from a concert at the Ataturk Cultural Centre and populating historic Beyoglu, down to Tunel. Among them, new enthusiasts hopped on the tram to attend another concert at St. Antuan Church, while others explored boutique cafes, engaging in animated conversations about choral music. This experience felt like a glimpse into a utopian world — a pure joy that defies any attempt at metric measurement, which I believe will be reiterated in many future WSCM events across the world, with an increasing number of people uniting around choral music.

Edited by Patricia Abbott, Canada



SINEM ERENTURK began her career as a young journalist at Türkiye's only English-language newspaper at the time. She then moved to the pharmaceutical industry, where she worked for 15 years in various positions, primarily focusing on strategy and multi-channel marketing in the latter years.

Her life changed dramatically when she became a mother to twin boys and relocated to London with her family six years ago where she is a member of a local writers' group in Richmond, London. Sinem has been singing since the age of eight in various choirs, ranging from children's, girls', youth choirs in her hometown of Ankara, to mixed choirs in Istanbul. Currently, she is part of a philharmonic choir in south-west London. Recently, Sinem assumed the role of Head of Communications for the successful launch of WSCMIstanbul2023. As a choral enthusiast and a member of the editorial board of IFCM, she's excited to bring new perspectives to the promotion of choral music worldwide. She sees choral music, along with the collective arts, as a crucial catalyst for a genuinely connected world. sinemerenturk@gmail.com

REPERTOIRE



TON KOOPMAN ON THE ST. MATTHEW PASSION

TON KOOPMAN ON THE ST. MATTHEW PASSION

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THE MUSIC OF JOHANN SEBASTIAN BACH — ESPECIALLY THE ST. MATTHEW PASSION — RUNS LIKE A CRIMSON THREAD THROUGH MY CAREER AS A MUSICIAN. I HAVE PERFORMED THE ST. MATTHEW PASSION MORE THAN ANY OTHER MASTERWORK. MY FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH THE WORK WAS ABOUT 70 YEARS AGO. I’VE PERFORMED IT REGULARLY SINCE THEN, AND IT IS A SPECIAL EVENT EVERY TIME.

It began in my hometown of Zwolle, where I sang in the extra children’s choir as a boy. We had ten rehearsals to learn two chorales: the opening chorus and the closing chorus of Part I. There were around 80 of us boys, who were bullied through rehearsal with loud piano accompaniment. At the dress rehearsal (with a paying audience!), the two adult choirs (around 120 singers in total) sang and played for the first time together with the children’s choir and a real symphony orchestra, in the cold Grote Kerk with the famous Schnitger organ behind us (pulling out all the stops for “Sind Blitze, sind Donner!”) You couldn’t really call it a real rehearsal with an orchestra and soloists. There was only one joint rehearsal

with soloists and orchestra in the morning. I wouldn’t dare perform the work with so little rehearsal time these days. It wasn’t the first time that conductor Clemens Holthaus had done it, but it was exciting for him too.

By the way, my father asked our priest if a Catholic boy was allowed to sing in a Protestant church. Fortunately, he responded with ecumenical insight: it’s the same God!

My next experience with the MP was when I was allowed to play the basso continuo on keyboard. Since there was no actual harpsichord available, thumbtacks were attached to the hammers of the

Steinway grand, to create a “real harpsichord” sound! This was in the 1950s . . . I was allowed to play along with most everything. In the church the “harpsichord” couldn’t be heard very well (it was far too soft), but the conductor as well as the singers and orchestral players nearby heard it.

Then, I began conducting the MP with my own Baroque orchestra. I had no formal training in conducting, it was “learning by doing.” My musicians and I found the choruses and arias wonderfully beautiful, the recitatives and chorales less so – so we finished those at a brisk pace. In the 1980s I conducted it again, but a bit slower. Thus, in the Bach year of 1985 I received



this extraordinary comment from a critic: The Catholic Ton Koopman has finally come to understand the essence of recitative and chorales!

Between the 1950s performances of the Matthew Passion and those with the Baroque orchestra in the 1970s and 80s there was already a large difference in terms of the size of both choir and orchestra. But in the 1990s, Joshua Rifkin advocated making everything smaller. In his opinion, J.S. Bach never had a choir. He was for a performance with a small group of singers. I disagreed and defended my position in all kinds of panels and articles. Nevertheless, Rifkin and his follower Andrew Parrott won over some, although in my view they were never on solid ground in their views.

We've only known for a little over a year how many singers J.S. Bach found appropriate for his choirs. As head of the Thomasschule, he was responsible for four choirs. He

led the first and best choir himself, which enabled him to perform his own music. The other three choirs were led by assistants and had less demanding music to sing. And the fourth choir just had to be able to sing with the congregation.

Incidentally, a nice piece of evidence only appeared years later. In the 2010 Bach Yearbook, Andreas Glöckner published an extraordinary discovery that he had made in the Leipzig University Library: He had found a soprano part from the Florilegium Portense, the sheet music collection from which Bach's choirs sang many pieces, and in which all the soprano singers of Bach's choir had entered their names. Each part was sung not by just one or two singers, but by five to eight! This proves that Bach worked with a real choir and not with a small group of soloists.

I recorded the MP twice with the ABO, the first time with the Nederlandse Bachvereniging choir because we didn't have our own choir at the time, and the second time with the ABO&C. This recording was a live recording. I have also often performed the MP with modern orchestras. There are undoubtedly differences between these recordings, but they have one thing in common: the love of the music of J.S. Bach, this incredible genius. I've always strived to get as close to his music as possible, and I still try to do that today. I hope Bach would be satisfied with me as his student.

Translated from German by Clayton Parr, USA





CS Festzevla Amsterdams Baroqueorkest Koopman-Hulst © Camile Schelstraete



TON KOOPMAN (b. 1944) is an expert in early music and authentic performance practice. For decades he has performed as a harpsichordist, organist and conductor in the world's most renowned concert halls. As an organist, he played the most important historical instruments in Europe. In 1979 he founded the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra (ABO), which was expanded to include the Amsterdam Baroque Choir in 1992. With his ABO&C he quickly achieved great fame and made numerous records and CD recordings. Between 1994 and 2004, Ton Koopman recorded all of Bach's cantatas with his ABO&C, followed by the complete works of his predecessor Dieterich Buxtehude. Koopman is in demand as a guest conductor with modern orchestras. He is also a gifted lecturer: he taught at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague for over 25 years, is professor emeritus at Leiden University and an honorary fellow of the Royal Academy of Music in London. Ton Koopman is President of the International Dieterich Buxtehude Society and has been President of the Bach Archive in Leipzig since 2019.

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PODIUM 2024, Montréal, Québec, Canada, 16-19 May 2024. Contact: Choral Canada, Email: podium@choralcanada.org - Website: <https://www.podium2024.ca>

Choral Workshops with Mozart's Coronation Mass, Wrocław, Poland, 16-19 May 2024. Contact: MusikReisenFaszination Music Festivals, Email: info@mrf-musicfestivals.com - Website: <http://choral-workshops.com>

42nd International Choral Festival of Karditsa, Greece, 16-26 May 2024. Contact: International Choral Festival of Karditsa, Email: nke@otenet.gr - Website: <http://festivalofkarditsa.blogspot.gr/>

23th Statys Šimkus Choir Competition, Klaipėda, Lithuania, 16-19 May 2024. Apply before January 15, 2024. Contact: Klaipeda Choir Association „AUKURAS“, Email: aukuras@ku.lt or simkus.competition.lt@gmail.com - Website: <https://www.aukuras.org/simkus>

Festival de la Voix, Châteauroux, France, 17-19 Mai 2024. Contact: CEPRAVOI, Email: contact@cepravoi.fr - Website: www.festivaldelavoix-chateauroux.fr

Musica Sacra International Festival, Marktoberdorf, Germany, 17-21 May 2024. Contact: MODfestivals e.V., Email: office@modfestivals.org - Website: <https://www.musica-sacra-international.org/>

51st International Choir Festival of Songs Olomouc, Czech Republic, 29 May-2 June 2024. Contact: Festa Musicale, Email: info@festamusicale.com - Website: <https://festamusicale.com>

12th European Forum on Music 'Equity in Music', Sofia, Bulgaria, 5-7 June 2024. Contact: European Music Council, Email: info@emc-imc.org - Website: www.emc-imc.org/

Chorus America Conference 2024, Atlanta, Georgia, USA, 6-8 June 2024. Contact: Chorus America, Email: service@chorusamerica.org - Website: <https://chorusamerica.org>

3rd Sing Berlin! International Choir Festival & Competition, Germany, 7-11 June 2024. Contact: Meeting Music, Email: info@meeting-music.com - Website: www.meeting-music.com

Limerick Sings International Choral Festival, Limerick, Ireland, 7-9 June 2024. Contact: Limerick Sings, Email: information@limericksings.com - Website: <https://www.limericksings.com>

12th Kaunas Cantat, Kaunas, Lithuania, 7-9 June 2024. Contact: Lituania Cantat, Email: info@lchs.lt - Website: <http://www.lituaniacantat.lt/>

12th International Choral Festival Chernomorski zvutsi, Balchik, Bulgaria, 12-16 June 2024. Contact: Association Musical World-Balchik, Email: festival@chenomorskizvutsi.com - Website: <https://chernomorskizvutsi.com/en/home/>

Alta Pusteria International Choir Festival, Alto Adige-Südtirol, Italy/Austria, 12-16 June 2024. Contact: Alta Pusteria Festival Office, Email: info@festivalpusteria.org - Website: www.festivalpusteria.org

La Ruta de Don Quijote Consuegra, Spain, 13-16 June 2024. Register before April 13, 2024. Contact: Patagonia Canta, Email: patagoniacantaeventos@gmail.com - Website: www.patagoniacanta.com.ar

International Krakow Choir Festival Cracovia Cantans, Poland, 13-16 June 2024. Contact: MELODY & Polonia Cantat, Email: mail@krakowchoirfestival.pl - Website: <http://www.krakowchoirfestival.pl>

International Choir Festival In Normandy, France, 13-17 June 2024. Contact: Music Contact International, Email: info@musiccontact.com - Website: www.musiccontact.com

International Choral Festival Costa Rica for Peace, San Jose, Costa Rica, 19-22 June 2024. Contact: Costa Rica International Choral Festival, Email: info@choralfestcostarica.org - Website: <https://www.choralfestcostarica.org>

33rd International Franz Schubert Choir Competition & Festival, Vienna, Austria, 21-25 June 2024. Contact: Meeting Music, Email: info@meeting-music.com - Website: www.meeting-music.com

Sarawak Choral Festival, Kuching, Malaysia, 21-23 June 2024. Register before 26 May 2024. Contact: Kuching Choral Society, Email: Kuchingchoralsociety@gmail.com - Website: <https://www.sarawakchoralfestival.com>

International Festival of Choral Art Žilina Voce Magna 2024, Czechia, 21-23 June 2024. Register before May 21, 2024. Contact: ilina Voce Magna, Email: sedlickystef@gmail.com - Website: <https://www.vocemagna.sk/competition.html>

Corearte Choral Summer Camp, Puerto de la Cruz Tenerife, Spain, 25-30 June 2024. Contact: Festival Internacional de Coros Corearte Barcelona, Email: Info@corearte.es - Website: <https://www.corearte.com.es/en/choir-festival/tenerife/>

Sarteano Choral Workshop, Sarteano, Italy, 26 June-7 July 2024. Contact: Sarteano Chamber Choral Conducting Workshop, Gail Leicher, Email: sarteanochoral@rcn.com - Website: www.sarteanochoralworkshop.com

Musica Orbis Prague Festival, Czech Republic, 27 June-1 July 2024. Apply before April 30, 2024. Contact: Musica Orbis Prague Festival, Email: info@musicaorbis.com - Website: <https://www.musicaorbis.com/>

International Festival Verona Garda Estate, Verona, Brescia, Mantua, Vicenza, Italy, 27 June-15 July 2024 (3 sessions). Contact: Prof. Giuliano Rinaldi, Email: info@festivalveronagardaestate.eu - Website: www.festivalveronagardaestate.eu

Patios Andaluces, Granada, Spain, 28-29 June 2024. Register before April 28, 2024. Contact: Patagonia Canta, Email: patagoniacantaeventos@gmail.com - Website: www.patagoniacanta.com.ar

Festival of Voices, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia, 28 June-7 July 2024. Contact: Festival of Voices Tasmania, Email: info@festivalofvoices.com - Website: <https://festivalofvoices.com/>

Cracovia Sacra – Sacred Choral Music Festival, Krakow, Poland, 28-30 June 2024. Contact: MELODY & Polonia Cantat, Email: info@poloniacantat.pl - Website: www.cracoviasacra.com

HarbourVOICES International Festival, St. John's Newfoundland & Labrador, Canada, 29 June-4 July 2024. Contact: HarbourVOICES International Festival, Email: info@harbourvoices.ca - Website: <http://harbourvoices.ca>

EuroChoir 2024, Varna, Bulgaria, July 2024. Contact: Bulgarian Choirs' Union - Website: <https://europeanchoralassociation.org/activities/eurochoir/>

42nd International Choir Festival of Preveza, 28th International Choir Competition, Preveza, Greece, 1-7 July 2024. Apply before May 1st, 2024. Contact: Choral Society "Armonia" of Prevesa, Email: armonia4@otenet.gr - Website: <http://www.armoniachoir.gr/festival/index.php>

2nd Choral Composition Competition of Preveza, Preveza, Greece, 1-2 July 2024. Contact: Choral Society "Armonia" of Prevesa, Email: armonia4@otenet.gr - Website: <http://www.armoniachoir.gr/festival/index.php>

7th Choral Conducting Seminar and Masterclass, Preveza, Greece, 1-3 July 2024. Contact: Choral Society "Armonia" of Prevesa, Email: armonia4@otenet.gr - Website: <http://www.armoniachoir.gr/festival/index.php>

Florence FUN and Music Festival, Florence, Italy, 2-4 July 2024. Contact: FICF - Florence International Choir & Orchestra Festival, Email: info@florencechoirfestival.com - Website: <http://www.florencechoirfestival.com/>

Study Tour to the 100th Anniversary of the Lithuanian Song Celebration, Vilnius, Lithuania, 2-7 July 2024. Contact: Lithuanian National Culture Centre, Email: s.prockyte@gmail.com - Website: <http://www.dainusvente.lt/>

58th International Choral Competition, Spittal an der Drau, Austria, 4-7 July 2024. Contact: Kulturamt der Stadt Spittal an der Drau, Email: info@chorbewerb-spittal.at - Website: <http://www.chorbewerb-spittal.at>

International Choral Festival "Choral Festivities – Sparkling Voices", Ni, Serbia, 4-7 July 2024. Apply before May 29, 2024. Contact: Ustanova Ni ki kulturni centar, Email: injac.milena@gmail.com - Website: <https://www.nkc.rs/>

16th Summa Cum Laude International Youth Music Festival, Vienna, Austria, 5-10 July 2024. Contact: CONCERTS-AUSTRIA, Email: office@scfestival.org - Website: www.scfestival.org

Eurochorus Sings the Requiem de Mozart, Toulouse, France, 7-13 July 2024. Register before 16 June 2024. Contact: Eurochorus, Email: contact@eurochorus.org - Website: www.eurochorus.org

59th Barcelona International Choir Festival, Spain, 8-14 July 2024. Contact: Federació Catalana d'Entitats Corales, Email: fcec@fcec.cat - Website: <https://www.fcec.cat>

Chanakkale International Choir Festival and Competition, Canakkale, Türkiye, 9-14 July 2024. Contact: Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart Üniversitesi, Email: info@canakkalekorofestivali.com - Website: <http://canakkalechoirfestival.com/>

14th International Youth Chamber Choir Meeting, Usedom Island (Baltic Sea), Germany, 12-21 July 2024. Contact: Arbeitskreis Musik in der Jugend AMJ, Email: info@amj-musik.de - Website: <https://www.usedom.amj-musik.de/en/>

Zêzerearts Choral Festival 2024, Tomar, Médio-Tejo Region, Portugal, 13-21 July 2024. Contact: Ferreira do Zêzere, Email: zezerearts@gmail.com - Website: www.zezerearts.com/

European Seminar for Young Choral Composers, Aosta, Italy, 14-21 July 2024. Contact: FENIARCO (Italian Federation of Regional Choir Associations), Email: info@feniarco.it - Website: <https://www.feniarco.it>

African Youth Choir Annual Summer Camp, Dakar, Senegal, 15-21 July 2024. Email: info@africacantat.org - Website: <https://www.africacantat.org/>

17th China International Chorus Festival, Come to Beijing, Listen to the Songs of the World, Beijing, China, 15-19 July 2024. Contact: China International Chorus Festival, Email: office@ifcm.net - Website: www.cicfbj.cn/en

13th Musica Eterna Roma International Choir Festival and Competition, Italy, 17-21 July 2024. Contact: Meeting Music, Email: info@meeting-music.com - Website: www.meeting-music.com

World Peace Choral Festival Vienna 2024, Austria, 18-21 July 2024. Contact: World Peace Choral Festival, Email: info@wpcf.at - Website: <http://www.wpcf.at>

International Choir Competition, Miltenberg, Bavaria, Germany, 16-21 July 2024. Contact: Kulturreferat des Landratsamtes Miltenberg, Gaby Schmidt, Email: kultur@LRA-MIL.de - Website: www.chorwettbewerb-miltenberg.de

39th Takarazuka International Chamber Chorus Contest, Takarazuka City, Hyogo, Japan, 20-21 July 2024. Contact: Takarazuka Vega-Hall, Email: ticc@takarazuka-c.jp - Website: https://takarazuka-c.jp/ticc_en/

Singing Bridges, Novi Sad, Serbia, 21-28 July 2024. Contact: Serbian Choral Association, Email: info@cx.rs - Website: <https://cx.rs/>

70th International Choral Contest of Habaneras and Polyphony, Torre Vieja (Alicante), Spain, 21-27 July 2024. Contact: Certamen Int'l de Habaneras de Torre Vieja, Email: habaneras@habaneras.org - Website: www.habaneras.org

National Summer Intensive for Choral Conductors and Directors, Santa Barbara, CA, USA, 22-29 July 2024. Contact: The Young People's Chorus of New York City, Email: fnunez@ypc.org - Website: <https://ypcnational.org>

8th Krikor Chetinyan Choral Conducting Masterclass, Plovdiv, Bulgaria, 22-28 July 2024. Apply before July 1, 2024. Contact: Plovdiv National School of Music and Dance "Dobrin Petkov", Email: horovalab@gmail.com

13th Bali International Choir Festival 2024, Kuta, Bali, Indonesia, 23-27 July 2024. Contact: Bandung Choral Society, Tommyanto Kandisaputra, Email: mailbcsevents@gmail.com - Website: <https://www.bandungchoral.com/>

Florence International Choir & Orchestra Festival, Florence, Italy, 23-26 July 2024. Contact: FICF - Florence International Choir & Orchestra Festival, Email: info@florencechoirfestival.com - Website: <http://www.florencechoirfestival.com/>

World Orchestra Festival Vienna 2024, Austria, 25-28 July 2024. Contact: World Peace Choral Festival, Email: info@wpcf.at - Website: <http://www.wpcf.at>

Tokyo International Choir Competition, Japan, 26-28 July 2024. Contact: International Choral Organization of Tokyo, Email: ticc@icot.or.jp - Website: <https://www.ticctokyo.icot.or.jp/>

Arctic Boys Choir Festival, Bodø, Norway, 7-11 Aug 2024. Contact: Ung kirkesang (Young choristers), Email: arcticboys@sang.no - Website: www.sang.no

Summer Course for Choral Conductors, Haapsalu, Estonia, 12-16 August 2024. Apply before 30 April 2024. Contact: Estonian Choral Association, Email: kooriyhing@kooriyhing.ee - Website: <http://www.kooriyhing.ee>

3rd International Choral Festival of Natal, Natal, Brazil, 16-18 Aug 2024. Apply before July 17, 2024. Contact: Maestria Produção Cultural, Email: maestriapcultural@yahoo.com - Website: <https://www.maestriaproducaocultural.com/ficnatal2024>

World Youth Choir Session 2024 with National Youth Orchestra of Germany, Germany & Italy, 18 Aug-8 Sep 2024. Contact: World Youth Choir Foundation, Email: manager@worldyouthchoir.org - Website: www.worldyouthchoir.org

Borneo International Choral Festival 2024, Miri, Sarawak, Malaysia, 26-30 August 2024. Contact: Borneo International Choral Festival 2024 - Website: <http://www.malaysianvoicescollective.com/borneoicf>

58th Days of Mokranjac, Negotin, Serbia, Sept 2024. Apply before May 31, 2024. Contact: Festival "The days of Mokranjac", Email: dkmokranjac1@gmail.com - Website: <http://www.mokranjcevi-dani.com/eng/>

Thailand International Choral Festival, Bangkok, Malaysia, 3-6 Sept 2024. Apply before 25 May 2024. Contact: Thailand Choral Association, Email: thaichoral@gmail.com - Website: <https://sites.google.com/view/thaiicf/home>

Liviu Borlan International Choral Festival, Baia Mare City, Romania, 6-7 Sep 2024. Register before April 30, 2024. Contact: Prietenii Armoniei, Email: mail@festivalborlan.ro - Website: <http://eng.festivalborlan.ro>

Internationales Chorfest, Magdeburg, Germany, 10-15 Sept 2024. Apply before April 29, 2024. Contact: Förderverein Interkultur, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

International Choir Festival Corearte, Manizales, Colombia, 10-15 Sep 2024. Contact: Festival Internacional de Coros Corearte Barcelona, Email: info@corearte.es - Website: <https://www.corearte.com.es/en/choir-festival/colombia-2024/>

(Inter)national Congress for Choral Conductors, Puteaux, France, 13-15 Sep 2024. Contact: A Coeur Joie France, Email: communication@choralies.org - Website: <https://www.congreschefsdechoeur.com/>

Study Tour to Georgia, Tbilisi, Georgia, 14-20 Sep 2024. Contact: European Choral Association, Email: Jozi.Vovk@EuropeanChoralAssociation.org - Website: <https://europeanchoralassociation.org>

12th International Choral Festival Music&Sea, Paralia, Greece, 17-22 Sep 2024. Apply before 30 July 2024. Contact: MAG Culture and Experience, Email: mag.culture@gmail.com - Website: <https://magculture.mk>

Czech Choir Festival Sborové slavnosti, Hradec Králové, Czech Republic, 18-22 Sep 2024. Contact: Czech Choir Festival Sborové slavnosti, Email: info@sboroveslavnosti.cz - Website: <https://www.sboroveslavnosti.cz/>

Study Tour to Armenia, Yerevan, Armenia, 20-26 Sep 2024. Contact: European Choral Association, Email: Jozi.Vovk@EuropeanChoralAssociation.org - Website: <https://europeanchoralassociation.org>

7th International Baltic Sea Choir Competition, Jurmala, Latvia, 20-22 Sep 2024. Apply before March 31, 2024. Contact: International Baltic Sea Choir Competition, Email: info@balticchoir.com - Website: <http://www.balticchoir.com>

Surabaya World Choir Festival 2024, Indonesia, 24-27 Sep 2024. Last registration before 1 May 2024. Contact: Bandung Choral Society, Tommyanto Kandisaputra, Email: info@bandungchoral.com - Website: <https://bandungchoral.com/swcf2024>

Festival Amazonas de Corais, Manaus, Brazil, 25-28 Sep 2024. Contact: Festival Amazonas de Corais - Website: <https://www.facebook.com/festivalamazonasdecorais>

Coral Cun International Choral Festival, Calcutta, Mexico, 25-30 Sep 2024. Apply before April 30, 2024. Contact: Coralcun Arte Vocal, Email: info@coralcun.mx - Website: <https://www.coralcun.mx>

Paraguay en Voz, Ciudad del Este, Paraguay, 26-29 Sep 2024. Register before July 26, 2024. Contact: Patagonia Canta, Email: patagoniacantaeventos@gmail.com - Website: www.patagoniacanta.com.ar

chor.com Convention for Choral Music, Hannover, Germany, 26-29 Sep 2024. Contact: Deutscher Chorverband e.V., Email: info@deutscher-chorverband.de - Website: <https://www.chor.com/english/>

Grieg International Choir Festival and NINA Solo Competition for Young Singers, Bergen, Norway, 26-29 Sep 2024. Apply before May 10, 2024. Contact: Annlaug Hus, Email: post@griegfestival.no - Website: <https://griegfestival.no>

International Choral Singing Conference Choraliamagna 2024, Hradec Králové, Czech Republic, Oct 2024. Contact: NIPOS Artama, Email: nipos@nipos-mk.cz - Website: <https://www.nipos.cz/choraliamagna-2024/>

Sing'n'Joy Bohol, Tagbilaran City, Bohol, Philippines, 1-6 Oct 2024. Apply before May 13, 2024. Contact: Förderverein Interkultur, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

5th Beira Interior International Choir Festival and Competition, Fundão, Portugal, 2-6 Oct 2024. Apply before 30 April 2024. Contact: Meeting Music, Email: info@meeting-music.com - Website: <https://www.meeting-music.com>

17th International Choir Contest Flanders, Genk, Belgium, 4-6 Oct 2024. Apply before March 15, 2024. Contact: International Choir Contest Flanders, Email: ikv.vlaanderen@gmail.com - Website: <https://www.ikv-genk.be>

International Choral Festival Por Esto Cantamos Juntos, Ciudad de San Juan de Pasto, Colombia, 4-9 Oct 2024. Contact: Fundación Cultural Gioia, Email: porestocantamosjuntos2017@gmail.com - Website: <https://www.facebook.com/fundacionculturalgioia/>

5th Kalamata International Choir Competition and Festival, Greece, 9-14 Oct 2024. Apply before May 13, 2024. Contact: Förderverein Interkultur, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

Lago di Garda Music Festival, Italy, 17-21 Oct 2024. Apply before July 31, 2024. Contact: MusikReisenFaszination Music Festivals, Email: info@mrf-musicfestivals.com - Website: www.mrf-musicfestivals.com

International Choir Festival Corearte Barcelona 2024, Spain, 21-27 Oct 2024. Contact: Festival Internacional de Coros Corearte Barcelona, Email: info@corearte.es - Website: <https://www.corearte.com.es/en/choir-festival/barcelona-2024/>

SING FOR GOLD, Calella/Barcelona, Spain, 23-28 Oct 2024. Apply before May 27, 2024. Contact: Interkultur Foundation e.V., Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

Eric Ericson Award 2024, Uppsala and Stockholm, Sweden, 23-26 Oct 2024. Contact: Sveriges Radio AB, Email: ericericsonaward@sverigesradio.se - Website: www.ericericsonaward.se

City of Derry International Choral Festival, Ireland, 23-27 Oct 2024. Non-competitive participation, register before 31 May 2024. Contact: Fiona Crosbie, festival manager, Email: info@codichoral.com - Website: <http://derrychoirfest.com/>

Fosco Corti International Competition for conductors 2024, Turin, Italy, 25-27 Oct 2024. Contact: FENIARCO (Italian Federation of Regional Choir Associations), Email: info@feniarco.it - Website: www.feniarco.it

Patagonia Canta Bariloche, Argentina, 31 Oct-3 Nov 2024. Register before August 31st, 2024. Contact: Patagonia Canta, Email: festivales@sonoromusica.com - Website: <https://www.sonoromusica.com/festivales/bariloche/>

54th International Choir Competition of Tolosa, Spain, 31 Oct-3 Nov 2024. Apply before May 15, 2024. Contact: Centro de Iniciativas de Tolosa, Email: cit@cittolosa.com - Website: www.cittolosa.com

London International choral Conducting Competition, London, United Kingdom, 31 Oct-3 Nov 2024. Apply before 15 June 2024. Contact: London International Choral Conducting Competition, Email: info@liccc.co.uk - Website: <http://www.liccc.co.uk/>

Rimini International Choral Competition, Rimini, Italy, 1-3 Nov 2024. Apply before September 30, 2024. Contact: Rimini International Choral Competition, Email: info@riminichoral.it - Website: www.riminichoral.it

Malaysian Choral Eisteddfod International Choir Festival, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 6-10 Nov 2024. Apply before Aug 5, 2024. Contact: Malaysian Choral Eisteddfod - Website: <https://linktr.ee/mce.malaysia>

10th International Choral Festival Mario Baeza, Vallarica, Chile, 13-16 Nov 2024. Apply before April 30, 2024. Contact: Asociación Latinoamericana de Canto Coral (ALACC), Email: info@alacc-chile.cl - Website: <https://alacc-chile.cl/convocatoria-xi-festival-internacional-de-coros-mario-baeza/>

Patagonia Canta San Martín de los Andes, Argentina, 14-17 Nov 2024. Register before September 14, 2024. Contact: Patagonia Canta, Email: festivales@sonoromusica.com - Website: <https://www.sonoromusica.com/festivales/san-martin-de-los-andes/>

International Choir Festival Corearte México 2024, Mexico, 2-8 Dec 2024. Contact: Festival Internacional de Coros Corearte Barcelona, Email: info@corearte.es - Website: <https://www.corearte.com.es/en/choir-festival/mexico/>

Champ of Champs Choral Competitions, Harare, Zimbabwe, 14-15 Dec 2024. Apply before 30 November 2024. Contact: Zimbabwe Association Of Choral & Musical Arts ZACMA, Email: admin@zacma.co.zw - Website: <https://zacma.co.zw>

Claudio Monteverdi Choral Festival and Competition, Venice, Italy, 18-21 Feb 2025. Apply before December 31, 2024. Contact: Claudio Monteverdi Choral Competition, Email: office@venicechoralcompetition.it - Website: www.venicechoralcompetition.it

27th International Choir Festival of Paris, France, 13-16 Mar 2025. Register before December 1st, 2024. Contact: Music&Friends by Emile Weber, Email: musicandfriends@vew.lu - Website: <https://www.music-and-friends.com>

Bratislava Spring Festival, Bratislava, Slovakia, 20-23 Mar 2025. Apply before December 15, 2024. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: <https://www.choral-music.sk/>

Young Prague Festival, Prague, Czech Republic, 26-30 Mar 2025. Contact: Music Contact International, Email: travel@music-contact.com - Website: www.music-contact.com

National A Cappella Convention, Orlando, Florida, USA, 27-29 Mar 2025. Individual can still register until March 26, 2025. For groups, contact the association. Contact: A Cappella Education Association, Email: info@acappellaeducators.com - Website: <http://acappellaeducators.com>

Riga Sings, International Choir Competition and Imants Kokars Choral Award, Riga, Latvia, 3-7 Apr 2025. Register before 18 November 2024. Contact: Förderverein Interkultur, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

Vietnam International Choir Festival & Competition, Hôi An, Vietnam, 9-13 Apr 2025. Register before 25 November 2024. Contact: Interkultur Foundation e.V., Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

18th International Choir Festival Tallinn 2025, Tallinn, Estonia, 10-13 Apr 2025. Apply before November 15, 2024. Contact: Estonian Choral Association, Email: kooriyhing@kooriyhing.ee - Website: www.kooriyhing.ee

18th International Choral Competition Gallus – Maribor 2025, Slovenia, 11-13 Apr 2025. Apply before September 23, 2024. Contact: Javni sklad RS za kulturne dejavnosti, Email: info.maribor@jskd.si - Website: <https://www.gallusmaribor.si/en/>

International Choral Competition Gallus, Maribor, Slovenia, 11-13 Apr 2025. Apply before September 23, 2024. Contact: Mihela Jagodic, JSKD, Email: nfo.maribor@jskd.si - Website: <https://www.gallusmaribor.si/en/>

Vox Lucensis, Lucca, Italy, 12-16 Apr 2025. Register before 25 November 2024. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

Slovakia Cantat, Bratislava, Slovakia, 24-27 Apr 2025. Apply before December 15, 2024. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: <https://www.choral-music.sk/>

Cork International Choral, Ireland, 30 Apr-4 May 2025. Fleischmann International Trophy Competition (closing date: 31 October 2024) or the Non-Competitive International strand (closing date: 30 November 2024). Contact: Cork International Choral Festival, Email: info@corkchoral.ie - Website: www.corkchoral.ie

43rd International Choral Festival of Karditsa, Greece, 15-25 May 2025. Apply before November 30, 2025. Contact: International Choral Festival of Karditsa, Email: nke@otenet.gr - Website: <http://festivalofkarditsa.blogspot.gr/>

14th European Festival of Youth Choirs, Basel, Switzerland, 28 May-1 June 2025. Apply before Jan 31, 2024. Contact: Europäisches Jugendchor Festival Basel, Kathrin Renggli, Email: info@ejcf.ch - Website: www.ejcf.ch

CantaRode International Choral Festival & Competition, Kerkrade, The Netherlands, 29 May-1 June 2025. Apply before December 15, 2024. Contact: CantaRode, Email: info@cantarode.nl - Website: <https://www.cantarode.nl/en/>

19th International Chamber Choir Competition, Marktoberdorf, Germany, 6-10 June 2025. Apply before October 31, 2024. Contact: Modfestivals, International Chamber Choir Competition, Email: office@modfestivals.org - Website: www.modfestivals.org

Tampere Vocal Music Festival, Tampere, Finland, 11-15 June 2025. Apply before January 31, 2025. Contact: Tampere Sävel, Tampere Vocal Music Festival, Email: music@tampere.fi - Website: <https://tamperevocal.fi>

Alta Pusteria International Choir Festival, Alto Adige-Südtirol, Italy/Austria, 11-15 June 2025. Apply before February 15, 2025. Contact: Alta Pusteria Festival Office, Email: info@festivalpusteria.org - Website: www.festivalpusteria.org

Bratislava Choir and Orchestra Festival, Bratislava, Slovakia, 12-15 June 2025. Apply before 1 March 2025. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: <https://www.choral-music.sk/>

International Choir Festival In Normandy, France, 12-16 June 2025. Contact: Music Contact International, Email: info@musiccontact.com - Website: www.musiccontact.com

Festival de Coros del Fin del Mundo 2025, Tierra del Fuego, Argentina, 19-22 June 2025. Apply before February 1st, 2025. Contact: Fundación Música del Fin del Mundo, Email: info@corodelfindelmundo.com.ar - Website: <https://www.corodelfindelmundo.com.ar/festival/>

San Juan Canta International Festival, Argentina, 19-22 June 2025. Apply before March 25, 2025. Contact: María Elina Mayorga, Email: sanjuancoral@gmail.com - Website: <http://sanjuancanta.com.ar>

Fatima Choral Festival, Portugal, 19-23 June 2025. Contact: Music Contact International, Email: info@musiccontact.com - Website: <https://www.music-contact.com>

6th European Choir Games & Grand Prix of Nations 2025, Aarhus, Denmark, 28 June-6 July 2025. Apply before December 4, 2024. Contact: Fördereverein Interkultur, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

Florence FUN and Music Festival, Florence, Italy, 1-3 July 2025. Open to choirs, orchestras & bands. Contact: FICF - Florence International Choir & Orchestra Festival, Email: info@florencechoirfestival.com - Website: <http://www.florencechoirfestival.com/>

International Youth Music Festival I & Slovakia Folk, Bratislava, Slovakia, 1-4 July 2025. Apply before 15 April 2025. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: <https://www.choral-music.sk/>

International Johannes Brahms Choir Festival and Competition, Wernigerode, Germany, 2-6 July 2025. Register before 10 February 2025. Contact: Fördereverein Interkultur, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

Musica Orbis Gloria, Prague, Czech Republic, 3-7 July 2025. Apply before 30 April 2025. Contact: Musica Orbis, Email: info@musicaorbis.com - Website: <https://www.musicaorbis.com>

17th Summa Cum Laude International Youth Music Festival, Vienna, Austria, 4-9 July 2025. Contact: CONCERTS-AUSTRIA, Email: office@scfestival.org - Website: www.scfestival.org

Leading Voices, Tallinn, Estonia, 6-10 July 2025. Register before 30 June 2025. Contact: European Choral Association, Email: info@EuropeanChoralAssociation.org - Website: <https://europeanchoralassociation.org/leading-voices/>

International Choir Festival InCanto Mediterraneo, Milazzo (Sicily), Italy, 6-12 July 2025. Apply before April 11, 2025. Contact: Associazione Corale "Cantica Nova," Email: festival@festivalincantomediterraneo.it or francescosaverio.messina@gmail.com - Website: www.festivalincantomediterraneo.it

World Peace Choral Festival Vienna 2025, Austria, 17-20 July 2025. Contact: World Peace Choral Festival, Email: info@wpcf.at - Website: <http://www.wpcf.at>

International Choral Festival of Missoula, Montana, USA, 17-20 July 2025. Contact: International Choral Festival of Missoula, Email: info@choralfestival.org - Website: <https://www.choralfestival.org>

International Youth Music Festival II & Bratislava Cantat I, Bratislava, Slovakia, 21-24 July 2025. Apply before 15 April 2025. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: <https://www.choral-music.sk/>

Florence International Choir & Orchestra Festival, Florence, Italy, 22-25 July 2025. Contact: FICF - Florence International Choir & Orchestra Festival, Email: info@florencechoirfestival.com - Website: <http://www.florencechoirfestival.com/>

World Orchestra Festival Vienna 2025, Austria, 24-27 July 2025. Contact: World Peace Choral Festival, Email: info@wpcf.at - Website: <http://www.wpcf.at>

Nordklang 19, Oslo, Norway, 6-10 August 2025. Contact: Nordisk Korforum, Email: nkf@nordiskkorforum.org - Website: <https://www.nordiskkorforum.org>

7th International Baltic Sea Choir Competition, Jurmala, Latvia, 19-21 Sep 2025. Apply before March 31, 2025. Contact: International Baltic Sea Choir Competition, Email: info@balticchoir.com - Website: <http://www.balticchoir.com>

African Asia Pacific World Choir Games, Port Louis, Mauritius, 26 Sep-5 Oct 2025. Register before 6 February 2025. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/events/>

Bratislava Cantat II, Bratislava, Slovakia, 9-12 Oct 2025. Apply before 1 August 2025. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: <https://www.choral-music.sk/>

Canta al Mar International Choral Festival, Calella, Barcelona, Spain, 16-20 Oct 2025. Register before 19 May 2025. Contact: Förderverein Interkultur, Email: mail@interkultur.com - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

Relaxsing Costa Barcelona, Santa Susanna, Spain, 22-27 Oct 2025. Contact: European Choral Association - Europa Cantat - Website: info@relaxsing.org

City of Derry International Choral Festival, Ireland, 22-26 Oct 2025. International Competition, register before 29 March 2025. Non-competitive participation, register before 31 May 2025. Contact: Fiona Crosbie, festival manager, Email: info@codichoral.com - Website: <http://derrychoirfest.com/>

55th International Choir Competition of Tolosa, Spain, 30 Oct-2 Nov 2025. Apply before May 15, 2025. Contact: Centro de Iniciativas de Tolosa, Email: cit@cittolosa.com - Website: www.cittolosa.com

International Festival of advent and Christmas Music, Bratislava, Slovakia, 4-7 Dec 2025. Apply before 1 October 2025. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: <https://www.choral-music.sk/>

Bratislava Spring Festival, Bratislava, Slovakia, 19-22 Mar 2026. Apply before 15 December 2025. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: <https://www.choral-music.sk/>

Slovakia Cantat, Bratislava, Slovakia, 23-26 Apr 2026. Apply before 15 December 2025. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: <https://www.choral-music.sk/>

Cork International Choral, Ireland, 29 Apr-3 May 2026. Fleischmann International Trophy Competition (closing date: 31 October 2025) or the Non-Competitive International strand (closing date: 30 November 2025). Contact: Cork International Choral Festival, Email: info@corkchoral.ie - Website: www.corkchoral.ie

73rd European Music Festival for Young People, Neerpelt, Belgium, 30 Apr-4 May 2026. Apply before October 30, 2024. Contact: Europees Muziekfestival voor de Jeugd, Email: info@emj.be - Website: <https://www.emj.be/>

Musica Sacra International Festival, Marktoberdorf, Germany, 22-26 May 2026. Register as individual before April 8, 2026. Contact: MODfestivals e.V., Email: office@modfestivals.org - Website: <https://www.musica-sacra-international.org/>

Bratislava Choir and Orchestra Festival, Bratislava, Slovakia, 11-14 June 2026. Apply before 1 March 2026. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: <https://www.choral-music.sk/>

International Youth Music Festival I & Slovakia Folk, Bratislava, Slovakia, 30 June-3 July 2026. Apply before 15 April 2026. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: <https://www.choral-music.sk/>

Europa Cantat Junior Festival, Girona, Spain, 11-19 July 2026. Apply before March 1st, 2026. Contact: European Choral Association, Email: info@EuropeanChoralAssociation.org - Website: <https://europeanchoralassociation.org/activities/ec-junior-festival/>

World Peace Choral Festival Vienna 2026, Austria, 16-19 July 2026. Contact: World Peace Choral Festival, Email: info@wpcf.at - Website: <http://www.wpcf.at>

International Youth Music Festival II & Bratislava Cantat I, Bratislava, Slovakia, 20-23 July 2026. Apply before 15 April 2026. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: info@choral-music.sk - Website: <https://www.choral-music.sk/>

World Orchestra Festival Vienna 2026, Austria, 23-26 July 2026. Contact: World Peace Choral Festival, Email: info@wpcf.at - Website: <http://www.wpcf.at>

City of Derry International Choral Festival, Ireland, 21-25 Oct 2026. International Competition, register before 29 March 2026. Non-competitive participation, register before 31 May 2026. Contact: Fiona Crosbie, festival manager, Email: info@codichoral.com - Website: <http://derrychoirfest.com/>

56th International Choir Competition of Tolosa, Spain, 29 Oct-1 Nov 2026. Apply before May 15, 2026. Contact: Centro de Iniciativas de Tolosa, Email: cit@cittolosa.com - Website: www.cittolosa.com



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