



# ICB

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BULLETIN

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2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter, 2021



**DOSSIER**  
**CHORAL SINGING AND HEALTH**

IFCM News:  
Introducing the WSCM 2023 Organizing  
Committee

# INTERNATIONAL CHORAL BULLETIN

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# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



**EMILY KUO VONG**

*President*

**Auf Deutsch**

**En español**

**En français**

Dear friends,

Time flies fast and we have entered the second quarter of the year 2021.

In the past three months, our new Board and Executive Committee have had a busy but exciting time, and all members have been involved in different projects with their respective teams.

So far, we have held a meeting for the next World Choral Expo, planned to take place in 2022, which will be the 40th anniversary of our federation. We also held meetings for other projects including the World Choral Day, the SCOC Youth Choir, and the World Youth Choir.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> February, we were very excited to hold the first committee meeting with our partner, the Qatar National Choral Association (QNCA), regarding the WSCM 2023/24; we see this as a positive symbol of the launch of the next WSCM. The World Symposium on Choral Music (WSCM) is an important brand of IFCM with a

global strategy and goals. This international project is always in cooperation with a national organizer in a host country. Since the first WSCM was held in Vienna in 1987, it takes place every three years in a famous and attractive city worldwide. IFCM is very glad that QNCA won the bid among all the competitors and the WSCM 2023/24 will take place in Doha, Qatar. It will be the first time that this prestigious choral event takes place in the Arab world. I believe that, with the excellent committees of the WSCM 2023/24, IFCM will play a professional role in cooperating with the Qatari team. IFCM and QNCA will make a joint effort and take respective advantages to ensure that we will have a colorful program for the WSCM 2023/24 to show the innovation flourish with diverse choral cultures.

As each IFCM choral project gets on very well, I will update the members of our federation on more

progress in the future. Meanwhile, we will create more online choral activities and events and share them with you.

I really hope the pandemic will be over soon with the research and development of effective and safe vaccines. Then our lives can go back to normal and we will once again attend various choral festivals, events, and activities. Then we will have the opportunity to re-explore the amazing musical treasures, and the "symphony of different cultures" will re-excite people's minds all over the world.

Best wishes,  
Emily Kuo Vong

*Edited by Olivia Scullion, UK*

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# DOSSIER CHORAL SINGING AND HEALTH



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**Music helps. But who helps us?!**  
**When music makes you ill**  
Isabelle Métrope



# NEUROSCIENCE AND MUSIC: A VIEW INTO THE HUMAN BRAIN AND THE MAGIC OF MUSIC

**MARGARETE ERTL, GERMANY**

*Conductor and vocal coach*

[Artikel auf Deutsch](#)

[Artículo en español](#)

[Article en français](#)

THIS ARTICLE IS BASED ON A LECTURE WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN PART OF THE WSCM 22 IN AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND. AS THE SYMPOSIUM HAD TO BE CANCELLED, ICB OFFERS YOU HERE A POSSIBILITY TO TAKE A GLIMPSE INTO THE SUBJECT THROUGH A WRITTEN VERSION.

**Look into the fascinating world of neuroscience and get an insight into the neuronal symphony.**

The first perceptions of “musical elements” already stimulate the prenatal human brain. With each musical perception, rehearsal and concert, conductors, composers or singers work on their personal neuronal network.

**While singing, the human brain processes more than verbal and musical syntax.** It controls involuntary body functions, movement of the vocal tract, the eyes, limbs or posture. It corrects and fine-tunes the muscles through sensory, visual or auditory input. At the same time it memorizes, thinks ahead, calculates, finds solutions, keeps focused, and processes visual signs from score and conductor. It constantly controls breathing and voice to pitch, timbre, beat, being in time, rhythm, spectral properties of vowels and consonants in various languages. It learns and remembers the comments and demands relating to the expression of the music. The singer is interacting with other musicians, not only



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musically but also emotionally and socially, blending with the other voices and keeping in mind the acoustic requirements. The ear is permanently alert, focused on the singer's own vocal production and all other surrounding sounds while also analysing sounds in a hierarchical order of attention. In addition to all this, chemical processes simultaneously guide personal sensitivities and emotions. To accomplish this proficiency, a highly complex neuronal network is required.

This article summarizes the current status of research findings focused on the field of singing, a scintillating journey into the magic of music. You will have a view into

the human brain and its nervous system first. This report furthermore introduces the functional neuroimaging techniques that map the activities in the different structures of the human brain during complex vocal processing. The final topic pictures the brain's anatomy and opens a window into enthralling subject areas of recent research. It will display neuronal and interactional processes in the various brain regions that which constitute singing according to the findings of renowned researchers.

**Neuroscientific research** decodes step by step neuronal processing with state-of-the-art diagnostics and this reveals fascinating details of the

neuronal symphony in our active brain while singing, imagining, and listening to music. For a long time the focus of neuronal research into music processing was on instrumentalists. But in recent years, researchers have discovered the singing voice with its great complexity as an object of increased research interest.

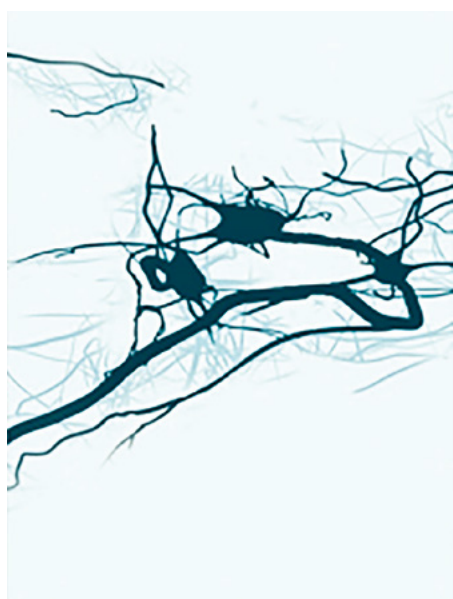
**About 80 billion neurons** are communicating with each other incessantly. Electric impulses and chemical processes interact with gray matter (neurons and glia cells) and white matter (myelinated axons). The cerebral structure-density **increases** with **electrical or chemical excitation** or degenerates when not being used. The electric impulses can be made audible by means of »patch clamp technique«. Thus scientists can both collect data and listen to the neuronal symphony in real time. Our brain is not only processing information but it is, somehow, music itself or is "singing" our thoughts into existence. Neurons regulate everything, from the autonomic nervous system

to cognition and guide a large number of networks between brain areas (Luo et al., 2019). The communication between neurons at the synapses is referred to as synaptic plasticity<sup>1</sup>. Neurons, axons and glia cells communicate with other neurons at the point of origin or in the target area (neuronal plasticity - Fig 1). One neuron can mesh with up to 10 000 other neurons, up to 1000 Terabytes capacity totally (Bartol et al., 2015). In addition to this astrocytes and microglia are involved in repair processes and act as an intermediary in exchanging information between neurons. Synaptic and neuronal

<sup>1</sup> The communication between neurons at the synapses is referred to as synaptic plasticity. Two types can be discerned: "functional plasticity" to strengthen or weaken existing synaptic connections through long-term potentiation (LTP) or long-term depression (LTD) and "structural plasticity": a change of existing synapses in morphology and organization, also the formation or elimination of synapses.

plasticity is well documented. It is not conclusively clarified if the adult human brain is able to grow new neurons ('neurogenesis' in subventricular zone, striatum and hippocampus).

**Korbinian Brodmann** was a pioneer in mapping the human brain. In 1909 he recognized 52 different histologic areas in the brain (Brodmann Areas - BA), but he was able to study pathological brains only. Today's modern functional neuroimaging techniques enable researchers to look into the active living brain. Two prominent participants in imaging studies were Herbert von Karajan and R  nee Fleming. As long ago as the 1970s Karajan made available several opportunities to help researchers to collect data while he was conducting (M  ller, 2005). In 2017 Fleming was fascinated to be part of an fMRI study to discover what is happening in the brain network while singing at a professional level takes place.



R  seaux neuronaux **avant** entra  nement



R  seaux neuronaux **apr  s deux semaines** d'entra  nement



R  seaux neuronaux **apr  s deux mois** d'entra  nement

According to the setup of the studies, the collected data of the chosen imaging technique were converted, rendered and colored into breathtaking pictures showing the regions of interest (ROI). Electroencephalography (EEG) and Magnetoencephalography (MEG) are the most commonly used non-invasive imaging techniques to study regions which show activity in grey matter during singing. The EEG reaches structures on the surface of the brain only and has a low spatial resolution. However, it detects changes in electrical activity in real time, nearly on a millisecond-level. The MEG, with resolution similar to EEG, is used to measure the magnetic fields produced by cerebral electrical activity.

If the research is focused on the cortical thickness of the grey matter or the size or tracts of white matter fibers, imaging techniques with a higher spatial resolution are necessary. Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI - *Fig 2a*) and the functional MRI (fMRI) are frequently used to approach this. They visualise the anatomical structures of the brain, even in subcortical areas. The method detects the changes in blood oxygenation and blood flow which occur in response to neural activity. The Blood-Oxygen-Level Dependent (BOLD) is a specific method of fMRI, which uses the different magnetic properties of deoxygenated and oxygenated haemoglobin to measure voice activity in related brain areas.

Increased excitation activates oligodendrocytes to mould a myelin sheath around the axon (nerve fiber). Thus the action potential changes from continuous propagation along the axon, to saltatory propagation from one non myelinated area (node of Ranvier) to the next. This speeds up the transmission of electrical impulses. One oligodendrocyte can myelinate up to 50 neurons in the process of learning or when restoring broken connections. Oligodendrocytes can also demyelinate axons to extinguish information and clear up connections. The Diffusion Tensor Imaging (DTI - *Fig 2b*) detects fibers in magnificent detail. Like MRI and fMRI, DTI is non invasive and uses the unique directional movement of water molecules along the neural tracts to identify the linkages and structures of white matter fibers with low temporal resolution.

Further non invasive tools to collect promising data in vocal studies are Magnetic Resonance Spectroscopy (measuring biochemical processes in a strong magnetic field) or 3D high resolution microscope imaging techniques (*Fig 2c*). They allow precise scanning a specimen in nanometer and subnanometer range. Single Photon Emission Computed Tomography (SPECT) and Positron Emission Tomography (PET) use short-lived radioactive material. Despite their low resolution, both methods map functional processes effectively by measuring blood flow. Areas of high radioactivity are associated with high brain activity in the subcortical regions.

Each imaging method has its advantages and disadvantages. Summarizing the results of each different approach and the ROI, increases our understanding of neuronal processing while singing.

**The main anatomical characteristic of the human brain** consists of the folded structure of the cortex composed of two hemispheres connected by a corpus callosum. The different imaging techniques verify lateralization. This means that the two hemispheres have areas which are involved in processing different tasks. Some are oriented more to the left or the right, or they may be equilibrated. The left hemisphere is specialized in rapid, the right hemisphere in slow temporal processing (Poeppel, 2003).



Fig. 2a © MRI. W. W. Norton

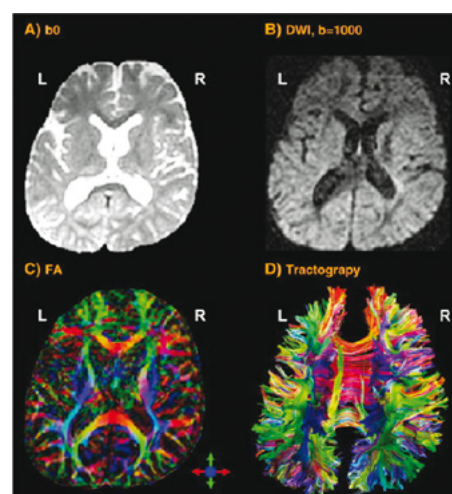


Fig. 2b © Englander Z.A., et al. 2013  
DTI\_Stramline fiber tracking in the whole brain. (A) T2, (B) diffusion weighted, (C) colored fractional anisotropy map and (D) tractography

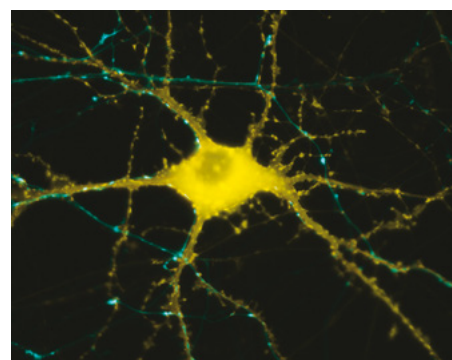


Fig. 2c © Michael A. Colicos, UCSD. 2018  
Microscop image of neuron in response to stimulation



Song and speech areas are well-known examples of lateralisation. They switch between left and right language processing areas and also share them. Language production and some aspects of syntactic processing are localized primarily in areas of the left anterior hemisphere, including Broca's area (BA44/45). Language comprehension is confined primarily to the left posterior temporal-parietal region, including Wernicke's area (BA22). The left planum temporale is up to ten times larger in the human brain than its right homologue (sensitive area for pitch perception as part of BA22). Broca's area shows larger volume in the right hemisphere. Also the central sulcus, housing the primary motor cortex (M1- vocal tract), is reported to be deeper and larger in the right hemisphere. (Corballis, 2014; Toga et al., 2003; Albouy et al., 2020).

An unexpected finding in research is a thicker cortex or white fiber bundle; however, this does not imply an overall advantage per se when comparing non-musicians to musicians. After long-term practicing the brain areas are used more efficiently and the fine-tuning of the muscles in the vocal processing is producing high sensory feedback. This can be measured in some areas as a thicker physical structure, but not implicitly. A net of synapses with higher density per neuron and increased glial cell density are assumed to be involved in this more effective processing (Gaser, Schlaug, 2003).

**At first sight** music is connected with the sense of hearing. The myelinisation of the axons in the auditory cortex already begins in the mother's womb during the last trimester of pregnancy. The neuronal auditory network (*Fig 3a*) starts with a mechanical impulse that reaches the eardrum. The fluid in the cochlea passes the impulse on to the outer and inner haircells in the corti organ,

the stereocillias. These change their position and give an impulse to their root cells. Chemical transmitters pour into the synaptic gap to open  $\text{Ca}^{2+}$  channels. This brings about an electric impulse to the auditory pathway: from the cochlear nuclei to the superior olive, inferior colliculus, and medial geniculate nucleus (thalamus) to the primary auditory cortex (A1) in the superior temporal gyrus (STG). Here the impulse is passed on to networks that analyse the information of the sound (Cheung et al., 2017).

Heschl's gyrus (HG) corresponds to the auditory cortex (*Fig 3b*). It is closely involved in sound perception and its morphology in shape, size, and asymmetry also influences musical performance. A larger right HG indicates a preference in spectral pitch processing, where sound is broken up into its different components. Preference in fundamental pitch to perceive sound as a whole gives rise to a larger left HG (Brenner, Schneider et al., 2017). For instrumentalists, this is well documented. Further investigation is needed to examine the difference in spectral vs fundamental pitch processing in HG with singers and how far this may influence the sound of a choir.

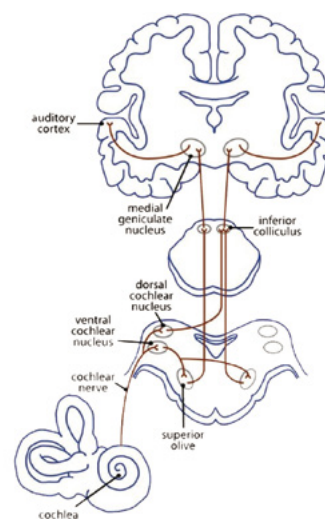


Fig. 3a Auditory Pathway  
© Butler B., 2013

is permanently used in speech and song. Singers rely not only on auditory but also on sensorimotor feedback during the process of vocal production. Based on increasing singing expertise through lifetime learning, they show thicker grey matter in the auditory (f.e. HG) motor areas (f.e. supplementary motor area - SMA) or the cerebellum. Also, the white matter in commissural fibers or association fibers is of higher density, and the volume in the left hemisphere is larger than in instrumentalists. (Loui, 2015; Schlaug et al., 2011).

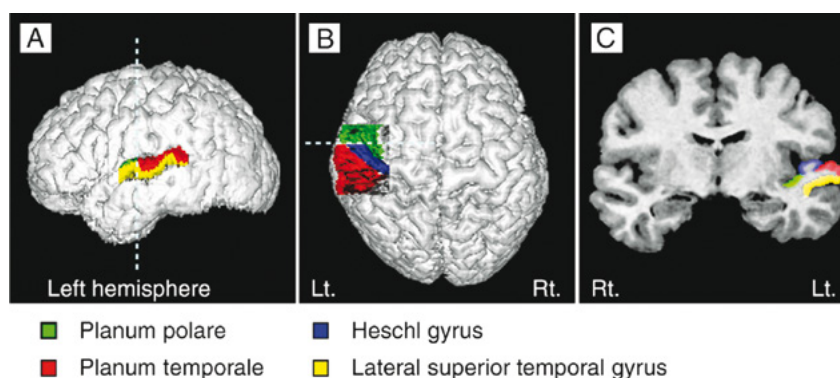


Fig. 3b © Takahashi T., et al. 2010

**The brain structures** of singers and instrumentalists are significantly different. The singers' instrument, the voice, is part of their bodies. It is steadily growing and aging and

The cerebral cortex comprises the frontal, temporal, parietal, and occipital lobes with its twenty-seven sulci and sixteen gyri, cerebellum, and brain stem (*Fig 4*).

The cerebral cortex covers further internal structures: these include limbic system, basal ganglia, and the white fibers. Commissural fibers (corpus callosum, fornix) conduct the information transfer and connection between the hemispheres. Association fibers (arcuate fasciculus/ longitudinal fasciculus/ uncinate fasciculus) connect brain regions along and deep within the same hemisphere. Projection fibers are the connection to the spinal cord. These structures respond to singing directly or secondarily.



Fig 4. Human brain areas. © Ertl M.M., 2021

Fig. 4 Human brain areas. © Ertl M. M., 2021

**Deliberate control over vocal motor production** for speech and singing activates a highly complex network which is hierarchically organised and can be visualised as a map (Fig 5a). There are main hubs connecting nodes with different levels of significance. So the neuronal network is growing into a personal and absolutely individual brain map (Fig 5b). It is quite challenging to obtain a comprehensive picture of this complex network, but it is breathtaking to detangle one sector back-to-back (atlas.brainnetome.org/bnatlas.html).

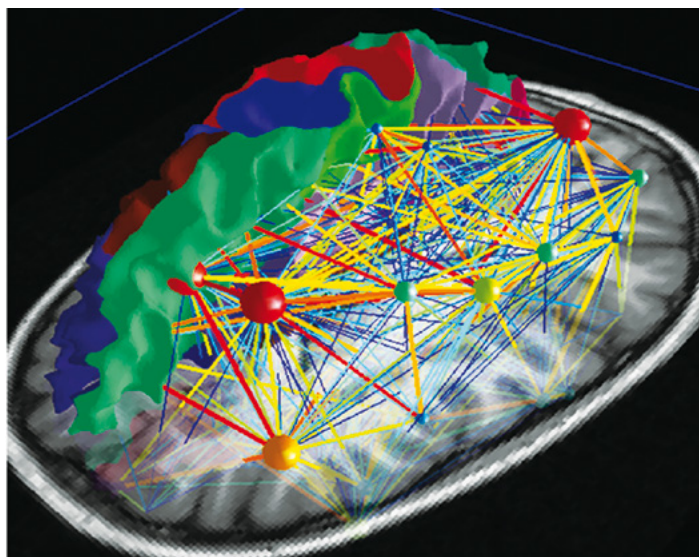


Fig. 5a © hardi@epfl.ch, Griffa A.

**The central network in singing** is the hierarchically organized vocal control network. The anterior cingulate cortex (ACC - an important hub in music processing), inferior parietal and occipital lobe, part of the limbic system and the periaqueductal grey (PAG) in the midbrain of the brainstem (Fig 6) are the crucial areas. They pass the information on to the phonatory motoneurons attributed with the readiness or initiation of vocalization (Jürgens, 2009). These regions are connected to the network which is generally attributed to learning vocalization, consisting of M1 in the frontal lobe and regions that fine-tune the vocal program from the motor cortex: putamen and globus pallidus, pontine gray (pons), and cerebellum. The tuned program is

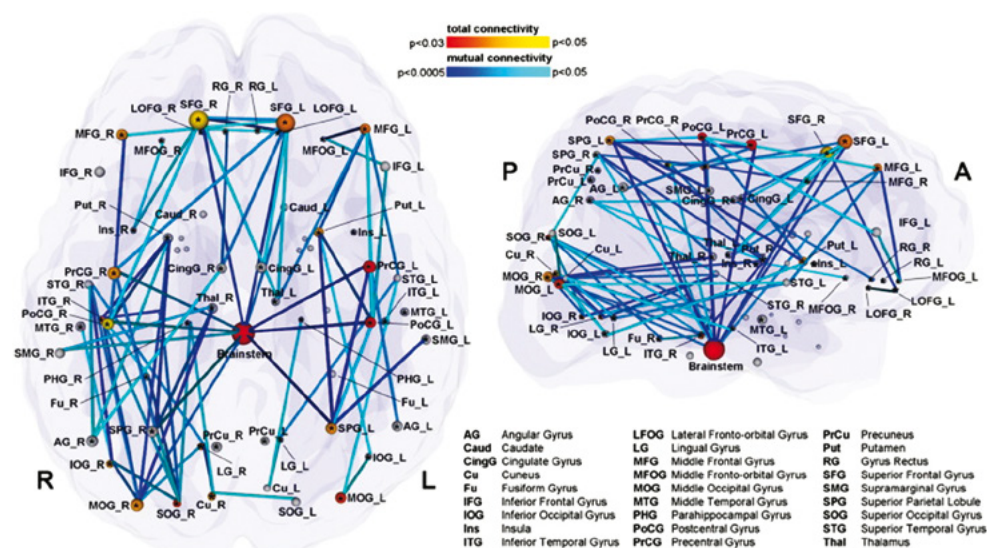


Fig. 5b © Whole brain connectivity. Englander Z. A., 2013



sent back to M1 via the thalamus. In addition to this, there are various neural regions of the auditory pathway involved (as described above). During pitch comparison in single notes or melodies, a recruitment of cortical areas within and outside the temporal lobe in auditory and frontal lobe areas are engaged. The vocal timbre is processed in the superior temporal sulcus (STS) within the temporal lobe: the anterior STS (aSTS - voice recognition), midanterior STS (spectral characteristic of voice, comparison sound to noise), the posterior STS (pSTS - identify unfamiliar voices). The somatosensory circuit with intraparietal sulcus (IPS) and dorsal premotor cortex prepares sensory input to motor preparation. The feedback to the sense of movement and position (respiratory/ laryngeal) is processed in the primary somatosensory cortex (S1) of the parietal lobe and the insula. (Kleber, Zarate, 2014). ACC, pSTS, IPS, AIC and cerebellum interact with the motorcortical control of complex vocalization.

**The anterior insula cortex (AIC) and cerebellum** are important hubs for voice processing and are to be considered in more detail. The AIC integrates inputs of the auditory, somatosensory, visual, and motor regions. Its crucial role in singing occurs in the larynx (left dorsal AIC) and the diaphragm (bilateral dAIC) together with the thalamus (bilateral posterior/left dAIC) and the left putamen (left dAIC) (Zamorano et al., 2019). The cerebellum participates especially in timing and fine regulation of motor control (larynx, facial muscles, balance, eye movement, coordination precision). It is also found active in cognitive functions and emotional control (serotonin and norepinephrin pathways).

Vocal-skill learning causes structural change to grey matter density in primary and secondary somatosensory cortex and IPS in relation to experience. This plays an essential role in singing skill development.

**In addition to grey matter activity**, scientists discovered that white matter fibers (*Fig 7a*) take an important role in connecting the areas concerning the voice. The dorsal pathway (*Fig 7b*) for sensimotor translation is described as flexible and indirect. The premotor cortex (PMC), supplementary motor area (SMA), and pre-SMA interconnect via u-fibers (pitch, sequencing grammar) and the superior longitudinal fasciculus (focus attention on visual space, role in the articulatory components of language). The arcuate fasciculus connects

temporal and frontal brain regions, STG with PMC and IFG (among others BA44/45 with BA22 - *Fig 7c*). They are involved in auditory and vocal output, feedback from the larynx (singing accuracy) and lungs in response to vocal training.

The ventral pathway (*Fig 7b*) is involved in more automatic and direct processing. The inferior longitudinal fasciculus with the extreme capsule fiber system connects the middle temporal gyrus with BA44/45/47 and IFG in lexical semantic information, pitch and melody analysis. The uncinate fasciculus links orbitofrontal cortex (OFC) to anterior temporal lobe for voice processing, memory, emotion and decision making. The inferior longitudinal fasciculus merges occipital lobe and temporal lobe to identify visual objects (Bashwiner, 2018).

**The Default Mode Network (DMN) and Imagery** are two significant networks correlated to singing. The DMN is active during wakeful rest or mind-wandering. It is connected to musical creativity as in improvising, making or writing music. Imagery interacts with the DMN, too. It is an amazing skill, to reflect music only mentally, wholly focused on the related

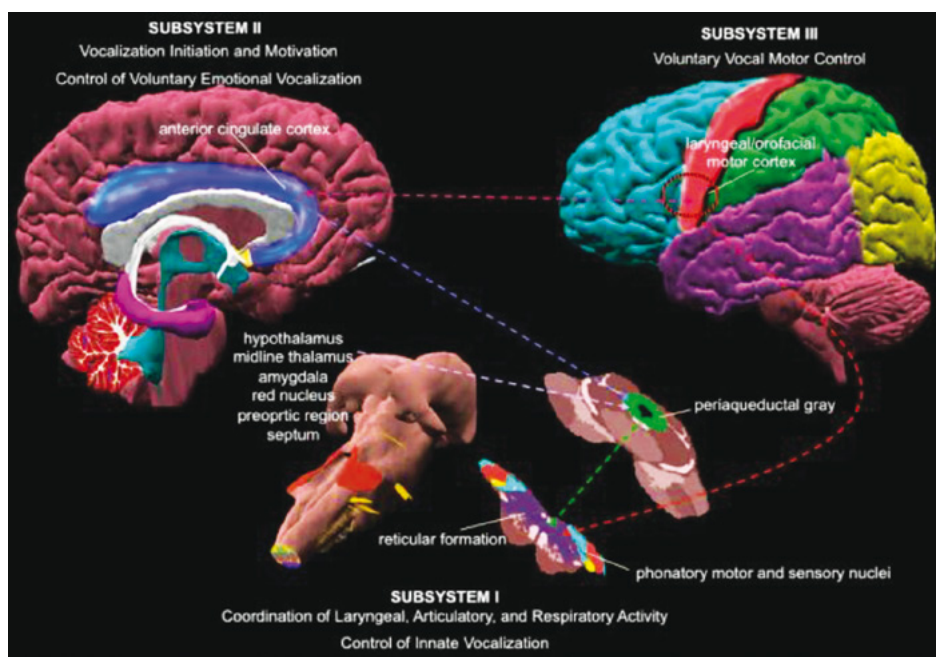


Fig. 6 Hierarchical organization of central voice. The lowest level (Subsystem I) is responsible for the coordination of laryngeal, articulatory and respiratory control during production of innate vocalizations. The higher level within this system (Subsystem II) is responsible for initiation of vocalizations and control of voluntary emotional vocalizations. The highest level (Subsystem III) is responsible for voluntary vocal motor control of speech and song production. The dotted lines show simplified connections between different regions within the voice controlling system. © Simonyan K., Horwitz B., Neuroscientist. 2011 April.

Human Cortex: Frontal lobe (blue), Primary motor cortex (red), Parietal lobe (green), Occipital lobe (yellow), Temporal lobe (purple), Cerebellum (pink), Brainstem (brown).



tasks. It combines i.a. auditory processing (f.e. bilateral BA22), sensorimotor coordination, memory retrieval (cerebellum), cognitive control (PFC), visual areas, and emotion (limbic system). As in vocal production, imagery is an interaction between cortical areas and multiple networks, including auditory, attention, and motor-control networks. (Fig 8. - Zhang et al., 2017). The DMN links the dorsomedial PFC, lateral temporal cortex and temporal pole (BA38), posterior CC, precuneus and angular gyrus as well as the inferior parietal lobe. Together with hubs of motor activity and sound processing (like dorsal PMC, SMA and BA22) and emotion-related areas (OFC, BA38 and amygdala), the DMN forms a highly creative workstream.

**Beneath** the anatomical network structures, neurochemical processes interrelate with vocal processing. The brainstem, basal ganglia and limbic system produce neurotransmitters and hormones, which communicate with neurons in the target brain areas (striatum, nucleus accumbens, ACC, PFC). They inhibit or exhibit activity via excitatory glutamatergic pathways, inhibitory GABAergic pathways, and dopaminergic pathways. The cerebellum and amygdala are important parts of serotonin and norepinephrine pathways to stress response as reward.

Dopamine and opioids (ventral tegmental area, substantia nigra) play a crucial role in reward-related behaviors like motivation, pleasure, attentional control, and they also reinforce learning. Cortisol (pituitary gland) and serotonin (raphe nuclei) are shown to control stress and arousal. They initiate or subdue stressors to reconcile cognitive function, emotion, and unwitting body functions. Serotonin boosts the immune system, relaxes, has an antidepressive effect, and promotes motivation. Oxytocin (pituitary gland) and endogenous opioids such as dopamine and vasopressin regulate immunity, pleasure sensations, and social affiliation, so singing in a choir presumably mediates social effects. The exact role of oxytocin in singing is not yet understood in detail. (Chanda, Levitin, 2013)

**To complete** the picture, the research field of our genes has to be mentioned briefly. Scientists found promising data in linkage between musical aptitude and chromosomes (Tan et al. 2014; Oikkonen et al. 2015). Genes in chromosomes are responsible for producing proteins or receptors which

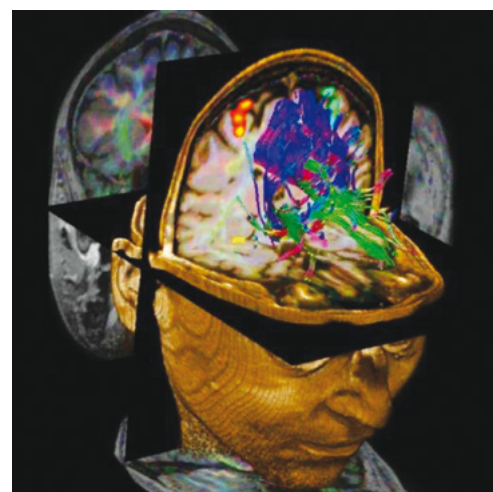


Fig. 7a White matter fiber tracts, syngo DTI Tractography © Jordan-Munir E., CNS Clinic, 2014

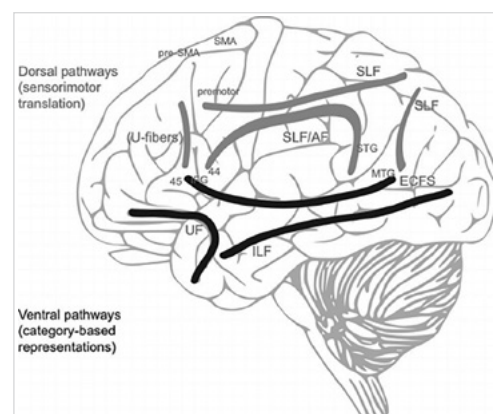


Fig. 7b White matter pathways © Loui P., 2015

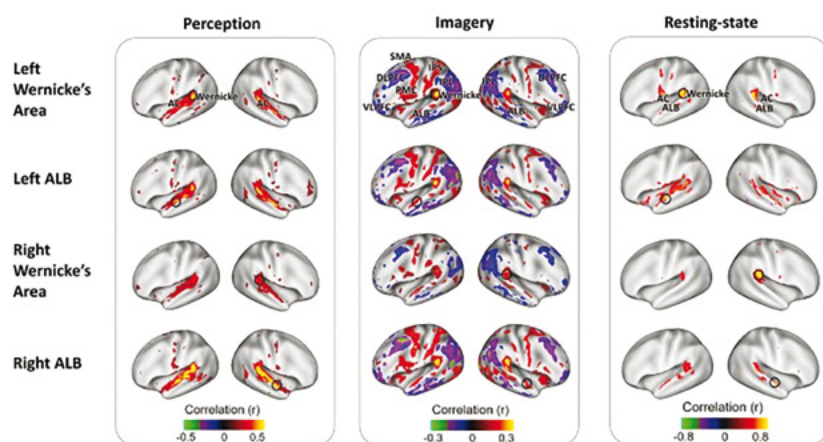


Fig. 8 Task-evoked-cortical network versus intrinsic network, a fMRI study. Perception-evoked (first column) and imagery-evoked (second column) cortical networks. (AC: Auditory cortex; ALB: Auditory anterolateral belt; PMC: Premotor cortex; IPS: Intraparietal sulcus; SMA: Supplementary motor area; IPL: Inferior Parietal Lobule; DLPFC: Dorsal Lateral Prefrontal Cortex; VLPFC: Ventral Lateral Prefrontal Cortex) © Zhang Y., et al. 2017

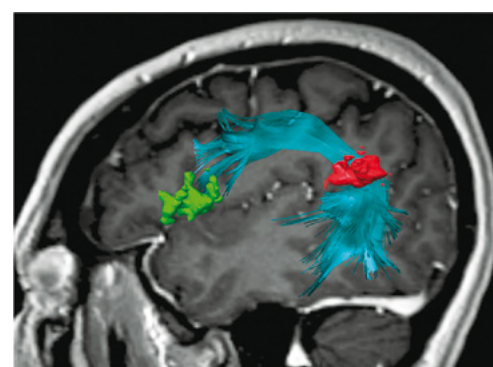
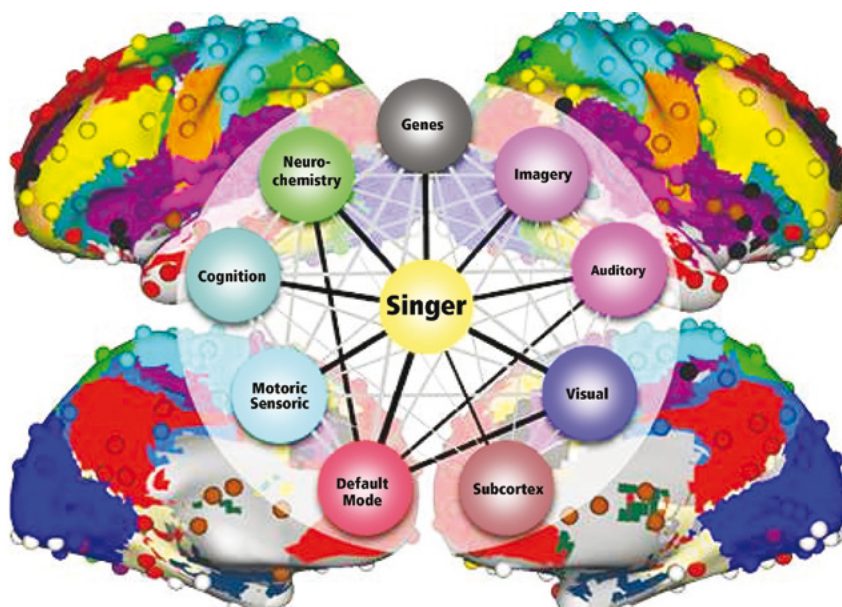


Fig. 7c Arcuate fasciculus blue, Broca green, Wernicke red © American Journal of Neuroradiology, 2019



The singing brain - based on © Cole M./Wustl. 2013

coalesce to neurotransmitters. Through these, the linkage to the brain areas was detected. Here are some findings: gene GATA2 in chromosome 3q.21.3 regulates the development of cochlea hair cells and inferior colliculus in the auditory pathway. Multiple genes in chromosome 4 point out involvement in song learning, memory, and musical perception and are associated with singing accuracy. Genes in chromosome 8 are connected with learning and memory, absolute pitch and musical perception. Gene SLC6A4 in chromosome 17q11.2 is associated with reward seeking, musical memory, and group activity like choral singing or dancing. It is stunning to monitor gene positions in chromosomes in the human database gene cards (f.e. genecards.org) with regard to their contribution to singing.

More regions in the whole brain are involved and activated bilaterally especially by singing than was previously believed. Multiple neuronal networks in grey and white matter intertwine with chemical pathways and genetic predisposition. Like cog-wheels in a huge clockwork machinery they create a neuronal symphony. Neuroscience shows the beauty of the human brain and its amazing capabilities. The results of this exciting research field could help to treat impairment of the vocal tract. Promising studies explore the recovery of the voice through artificial, 3D-printed vocal tracts, using individual image data. This is an encouraging beginning for further investigation (Howard, 2020). However, there is still a great deal to discover about the process of singing. Because the more answers we find, the more questions arise, and at the same time our fascination with the human brain and the magic of music grows.

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# CHORAL SINGING AFTER A SARS-COV2 INFECTION

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CORONAVIRUS SARS-COV-2 WAS FIRST FOUND IN HUMAN BEINGS IN DECEMBER 2019 AND CAUSES THE COVID-19 VIRUS. AS SYMPTOMS INCLUDE EFFECTS ON BREATHING AS WELL AS ON GENERAL BEING, SINGING AFTER RECOVERING OF A COVID INFECTION CAN BE A CHALLENGE. HERE YOU WILL FIND SOME TIPS TO GET YOUR VOICE BACK TO NORMAL.

Complications and sequelae. What to do?

Post-COVID Syndrome: What are the effects of Covid-19 on the human body, and what can we do to continue singing afterwards?

## RESPIRATORY SYSTEM SEQUELAE

1. Olfactory pathologies (anosmia, dysosmia). For this function is important for the control and taste of food. If our food intake is not good in terms of quality and quantity, the nutrients will not be sufficient for our health and a stable immune system.
2. Taste problems. Rehabilitation for the olfactory-taste system with different smells such as acidic (orange, tangerine or lemon peel), sweet and salty flavors, for 10 minutes, 3 to 5 times a day.
3. Nasal congestion and hyaline secretions in the nose in anterior and posterior regions. Physical cardiovascular exercises give a better space during nasal inspiration. Take care of nasal humidity with warm water and vaseline in the entrance of nostrils.
4. Dryness of the pharynx with a sore throat. Gurgles sodium bicarbonate. Dryness of the pharynx and larynx is detrimental for singing. Use a nebulizer with warm water.
5. A dry cough that inflames the vocal folds. Hydration is important to avoid hemorrhages, polyps or cysts. Use a nebulizer with medicine specific for coughs. An examination of the larynx with stroboscopic and endoscopic procedures, mainly with rigid endoscopes through the mouth, may be beneficial.
6. Voice pathologies: lack of flexibility (singing from high notes to low tones as in glissando), difficulty changing volume (pianissimo, fortissimo and crescendo-diminuendo), dysphonia and bitonality. We may experience voice pathologies and mucous that causes us to clear our throat and produces inflammation on the free edge of the vocal folds. Voice rest, pharmacological treatment and avoiding reflux are necessary.

7. If you experience difficulty swallowing solids and liquids, rehabilitation should begin immediately. An examination should be carried out, if possible, with a radiological esophagogram or flexible endoscopic equipment.

8. Difficulty breathing (dyspnea at different levels) has to be supported by a tomography of the lungs and if possible spirometry with medical treatment (anti-inflammatory drugs, bronchodilators) and respiratory rehabilitation directed to the vocal support.

## DIGESTIVE SYSTEM

1. The digestive system may have a damaged microbiota and cause diarrhea. Medical treatment with probiotics.
2. Gastritis and colitis can provoke stomachache, gut ache and abdominal distension as well as changes in feces. Medical treatment with antispasmodic drugs and antacids.
3. Food hygiene: quantity according to each person's needs, and quality with proteins, carbohydrates and fats in correct proportions. Analysis of personal vitamin and mineral intake. Reflux needs a high position in the head area, 10 cm. Avoid fatty foods mainly in the evening and do not eat less than 3 hours before going to bed.

## CARDIOVASCULAR

1. Thorax ache.
2. Heart with abnormalities (palpitations).
3. Reduced capacity during sports or other strenuous activities.

## GENERAL SYMPTOMS

1. Headache.
2. Muscular pain in the shoulders and back and arthralgias.
3. Muscular weakness.
4. Tiredness.

## NERVOUS SYSTEM

1. Emotional fragility and anxiety.
2. Lack of mental concentration.
3. Irritability.
4. Depression.
5. Sleep alterations, insomnia, lethargy.

## SYSTEMIC AND METABOLIC PATHOLOGIES

1. Hair loss.
2. Kidney failure.
3. Chronic fatigue syndrome.
4. Post-traumatic stress syndrome.
5. Encephalomyelitis myalgia.

## ROUTINE FOR SINGING AFTER COVID19

1. Respiratory exercises 10 minutes also using an inspirometer.
2. Humming exercises without effort for as long as possible.
3. Resonance exercises with /Ñ/, /ania/.
4. Semi-occluded exercises in triads.
5. Dynamic routines to coordinate the movements of the body with voice exercises.

## COVID 19 PATIENT FOLLOW UP AND HYGIENE

1. Oximeter reading of between 90 and 99 oxygen saturation.
2. Temperature.
3. Write all the symptoms and have a follow up with the doctors.
4. Analyze your regular activities and body functions.
5. Take preventive measures against the coronavirus.
  - Hand washing and disinfection.
  - Sneezing and coughing into the elbow joint.
  - Avoid touching face, hair, head and eyes.
  - Use of masks, goggles, hair protection, face shield in enclosed spaces.

## SINGING ACTIVITIES

1. Warm up and cool down before and after rehearsals or performances.
2. Avoid coming into contact with respiratory disease patients.

3. Change clothes and shoes upon returning from work or other activities outside the home.
4. If possible, avoid singing in enclosed spaces and maintain a distance between singers of 3 meters with air ventilation and purification.

## GENERAL HEALTH SYSTEMS

1. Proper nutrition.
2. Avoid irritants such as spicy food (chili), acids such as oranges, coffee, black tea, chamomile tea, beverages such as sodas, chocolate.
3. Sleep for a correct length of time and keep to a schedule.
4. Improvement of Immune system: all the substances have to be approved by your general practitioner.
5. Taking adequate supply of vitamins A, C1, D, E and Zinc is recommended.

Singers who contracted COVID-19 need to undergo a follow-up laboratory examination and a tomography of the lungs to check that no damage had been done and that the vocal system can be used. It is known that this virus can cause (temporary) damage to the larynx, causing deglutition and voice production problems.



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# ENO BREATHE

## ‘The art of medicine and the science of the arts’

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*Chairman of the English National Opera*

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SOCIAL PRESCRIBING IS AN ACTIVE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN COMMUNITY AND PHYSICIAN. ITS FOUNDATION LIES IN THE TRUISM THAT HEALTH IS ULTIMATELY DEFINED BY GENETIC, SOCIAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS. SOCIAL PRESCRIBING IS A DISCIPLINE THAT HAS INCREASED IN STATUS IN RECENT YEARS IN THE UK, BECOMING MORE WIDELY ACCEPTED, AND IS NOW IN RECEIPT OF BOTH GOVERNMENT SUPPORT AND FUNDING. IT IS AN INTEGRATED APPROACH, AND SOME VIEW THE CONCEPT AS THE SORT OF PROFESSIONAL CARE THAT DOCTORS WERE ONCE ABLE TO OFFER WHEN THE PRESSURES WERE NOT AS GREAT AS THEY ARE TODAY. THERE HAS BEEN A GROWING UNDERSTANDING OF THE POTENTIAL OF THE ARTS TO PROMOTE HEALTH, PREVENT DISEASE, AND ACCELERATE REHABILITATION FROM ILLNESS.

ENO Breathe is a joint project between English National Opera and Imperial College NHS Trust treating respiratory problems post-Covid with three specific missions. First, to improve the recovery and well-being of the patient. Second, to evaluate and evidence the impact of the work. Finally, to roll out ENO Breathe as a national programme. The project is all part of ENO's aspiration to be a leading arts provider in social prescribing, working at the cutting-edge intersection of arts and health and utilising the art form of opera for an integrated, holistic recovery programme that supports both body and mind.

English National Opera presents mainstage opera at its home in the London Coliseum and elsewhere, but the company also does much more. ENO Baylis is English National Opera's learning and participation programme, offering people of all ages a range of opportunities to engage with opera. The whole concept is rooted in the socially driven work of ENO founder, Lilian Baylis, who believed

that opera and the arts can make a positive difference in people's lives. Therefore (continuing the theme and aspirations of the founder), the modern ENO believes it can both empower and employ social prescribing to transform the lives of people and communities. To plagiarise a dictum,

**‘ASK WHAT CAN OPERA DO FOR THE COUNTRY AND NOT JUST WHAT CAN THE COUNTRY DO FOR OPERA.’**

Lilian Baylis was indeed an early pioneer of social prescribing.

Coronavirus disease (Covid-19) became a global pandemic in 2020, with an unparalleled impact on individual health, the resilience of healthcare systems, and the wide-ranging well-being of sovereign nations. A significant minority of Covid patients report ongoing symptoms beyond one month from symptom onset. The most commonly reported are shortness of breath and fatigue. Other symptoms include headache, cough, joint pain, chest pain, gastrointestinal

disturbances, dysphagia, anosmia, anxiety, and depression. Shortness of breath is well documented as a frequent and problematic presentation of long Covid. Clinical abnormalities (on follow-up imaging) are reported as mixed inflammatory and fibrotic. Lung function studies report a predominance of a restrictive pattern and reduced lung diffusing capacity. Covid associated coagulopathy is widely reported but associated with severe disease and venous thromboembolism.

Imperial NHS Trust already employs singing as part of integrated care for people with chronic respiratory issues, often specifically related to smoking and asthma. Imperial considered that ENO Breathe could help with the breathlessness that patients experience when recovering from Covid. The physiological problems with breathing are compounded by psychological complications manifesting as anxiety in shallow, panicky breaths as opposed to deep inhalation.



An integrated six-week pilot of weekly, one-hour sessions involving singing, breathing, and well-being was structured, aimed at enhancing the recovery of patients experiencing symptoms after their initial Covid-19 illness. Patients are referred into the pilot by Imperial NHS Trust. The criteria are that all patients had been hospitalised with Covid and had been discharged to the community but are still experiencing breathlessness after 8-12 weeks, despite normal CT scans. The programme includes remote learning technology to develop an online programme (via Zoom) that is fully accessible to patients who are self-isolated.

**THE SESSIONS ARE LED BY AN ENO VOCAL COACH AND SINGING SPECIALIST.**

The online participant hub contains a range of digital resources created for ENO Breathe, including breathing techniques, singalong tracks, and bespoke filmed lullabies to listen to and watch for calm and relaxation. Core to the pilot will be posture, physical readiness, and breath awareness. Each session will

ENO Breathe is a joint project between English National Opera and Imperial College NHS Trust treating respiratory problems post-Covid with three specific missions



have a specific theme and targets. Participants move and stretch in a physical warm-up to help them find 'space to breathe'. They learn exercises they can utilise outside of sessions to regulate breathing in moments of panic and/or breathlessness. Long Covid patients can also experience vocal fatigue along with their breathlessness, and thorough vocal warm-ups are useful in supporting the voice.

ENO Harewood is a programme that provides a full-time training and performance scheme to talented singers at the beginning of their careers. This allows them to continue their technical development within the professional environment of a repertory opera company. Classical singers spend years training to coordinate the complex physiological tasks singing requires. A lot of time is spent learning to distil these into a single sensation; a single thought. ENO Breathe takes this same approach and applies it to working with people recovering from long Covid. Emotional connection and engagement are key. The musical material in the programme elicits an emotional response and is uniquely appropriate for this group, as it is

explicitly designed to calm. A love of singing is not a prerequisite for taking part. The aim is that the programme will be of value for both those who enjoy singing and those who feel more ambivalent about it.

Why lullabies? Lullabies are short and memorable and by their very nature are accessible to all.

**LULLABIES STRETCH BACK  
FARTHER THAN THE WRITTEN  
WORD AND ARE ROOTED IN LOVE,  
TENDERNESS, AND CARING.**

They span cultures and continents. Many lullabies have a peaceful, hypnotic quality and tend to sit comfortably within a non-specialist singer's vocal range, making traditional lullabies ideal for this group and this programme. There are also powerful moments when lullabies appear in operas. Each of the ENO Breathe lullabies has been linked to a partner lullaby from a moment in an opera. These are to watch, listen to, and be immersed in. Singing lullabies builds emotional connections with the other activities and exercises in the programme. Participants leave sessions with a calming song in their heart, and, crucially, this creates a positive emotional connection to a wealth of tools and exercises to help manage their symptoms.

English National Opera values the work of ENO Baylis at the same level as mainstage opera. There is no hierarchy. The same level of attention, resources, and expertise was focused on creating 'ENO Breathe Lullabies' with performances recorded especially for participants in the programme. The performances and recordings for these lullabies were made by

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BTS ENO Breathe lullaby filming,  
Alexandra Oomens © Karla Gowlett,  
courtesy of ENO (75)





members of the ENO orchestra, ENO soloists, ENO Harewood artists, and ENO stage & technical over a three-day period.

Following the conclusion of the pilot scheme an independent evaluation report was published in November. The evaluation methodology included participant focus groups and patient self-assessments pre- and post-programme, using validated metrics including the RAND-36 General Wellbeing index, GAD-7 Anxiety Index and Breathlessness scores. Participants reported definite improvements in symptoms and wellbeing. 90% reported positive improvements in their breathlessness and felt their levels of anxiety had dropped. There was an increased confidence in managing their symptoms. The pilot scheme was reported as a robust administrative structure providing ENO & Imperial with valuable information for the delivery of a future expanded programme.

As a result ENO Breathe was rolled out nationally on 28 January 2021. This phase will involve 1000 patients across a range of hospitals throughout the country including London, Cheshire & Merseyside, Newcastle and Manchester. ENO is expanding the online material available to participants during the programme along with making

dedicated groups available to NHS staff recovering from Covid. Additionally support continues for those who completed the initial six-week programme in 2020. Strict monitoring and an evaluation programme will continue in this phase with plans for a more in-depth trial already underway.

Social prescribing encompasses the values of ENO and reinforces the company's wish not just to provide artistic excellence onstage but also to ensure that opera and the performing arts can provide genuine and sustainable benefit to the community long-term, evidenced by a full evaluation and publication. It is the belief of both English National Opera and Imperial NHS Trust that ENO Breathe is a unique opportunity to provide both support and recovery for the physiological and psychological consequences of long Covid.

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Edited by Richard Kutner, USA



**Dr HARRY BRÜNJES (London University and Guy's Hospital) started Premier Medical from his Harley Street Practice, becoming Chairman of the Premier Medical Group. RTA (a subsidiary) was sold to BUPA in 2005. In 2010 Premier Medical was acquired by Capita. In 2016 Harry reacquired PMG and rebranded as Kuro Health. WARP Technologies, Medicals Direct and Mobile Doctors were added to the consortium. Non-Exec positions have included The Good Care Group, Equity Red Star (Lloyd's Syndicate) and Newmans Clinics.**

**Harry was Governor of Bedford Modern School, Valderrama Golf Club and Expert Witness Institute. In 2007 Harry was President of the Sussex Medico-Chirurgical Society. In 2010 Harry was elected Vice-President of the College of Medicine and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine. Harry was Chairman of Lancing College between 2009 - 2019. Harry has a lifelong interest in music, theatre, opera and piano.**





# DON'T SAVE YOUR BREATH – SING!

## NIELS GRÆSHOLM, DENMARK

*Danish Choral Directors Association*

[Artikel auf Deutsch](#)

[Artículo en español](#)

[Article en français](#)

The Danish Choral Directors Association has for some time had a focus on health issues related to singing and on the possible impact and responsibility of choral directors and singing instructors on wellbeing, not only in our daily practice of making music with amateur or professional singers and choirs but also on the public at large. In our October 2020 seminar we covered quite a number of important and interesting subjects:

- from the neurological aspect: What actually happens in our brain when we sing? Comparing the activity in the brain of professional musicians performing to what happens in the brain of 'ordinary' people singing or listening to music
- to communal and collective singing as part of our Danish national heritage. The success story of a blue song book which has sold 1.4 million copies, has been the core repertoire in collective singing at a distance at home, and has been broadcast on national TV during the pandemic.

The seminar took place during the pandemic and everyone of course adhered to strict and substantial restrictions. Over the October weekend we read national newspapers posting articles about stories of COVID-19 being spread at choir rehearsals and concerts. And one workshop turned out to be even more interesting and important than anyone expected, as it might give a hint on how to

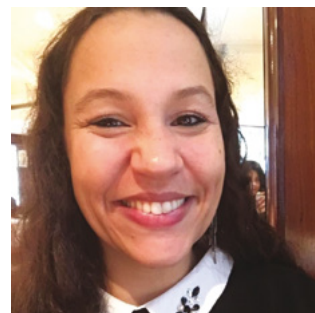
cope with the long-term consequences of getting COVID-19: Singer and conductor Anne-Mette Strandgaard led a workshop on her practical work with patients suffering from different kinds of lung diseases. This article is based on her workshop and follow-up correspondence and an interview with Anne-Mette.

Anne-Mette holds a graduate degree in singing and choral conducting from the Royal Academy of Music in Aalborg, Denmark. Her major thesis was on working with lung patients, and in this she laid the foundation for developing methods to give these patients a better quality of life through singing. Since 2014 she has worked with several groups of patients and collaborated with medical doctors to monitor the effect of her work. She is currently working on a book on the subject aimed at patients suffering from lung diseases as well as at singing instructors and choral directors.

Lung patients can suffer from a number of diseases. Some of the major ones are:

- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD): A chronic inflammatory lung disease that causes obstructed airflow from the lungs.
- Chronic bronchitis: An inflammation and irritation of the bronchial tubes, causing mucus to build up.
- Emphysema: A lung condition where the inner walls of the air sacs in the lungs weaken and rupture, creating small numbers of larger air spaces instead of large numbers of smaller ones and causing shortness of breath.
- Cystic fibrosis: A hereditary condition which involves the production of much thicker and stickier mucus in the lungs than usual.
- Asthma: An inflammatory disease of the airways in the lungs, causing wheezing, coughing and shortness of breath.

The main purpose of Anne-Mette's teaching is of course to increase the lung capacity for this group of patients. But she also addresses the psychological aspects of having respiratory problems – anxiety, shame and guilt – and a number of physical problems that are the consequences of lung disease. As choral directors and singing instructors, we are mostly accustomed to working with people who are motivated to sing and make music – almost always aiming at the musical performance. But when working with patients suffering from lung diseases, a different group of people enter our field who have rarely had any prior inclination to sing or make music. Their reason for showing up is not the music, but a deep desire to have a better life or



Anne-Mette Strandgaard

even to survive. And they will show up saying “I can’t sing, but I’ve heard it helps.” Some might resent singing as they were once told that they were out of tune and were ruining the music for everyone else – or they just had to sit at the back of the classroom during music lessons with no explanation whatsoever. In recent years the psychological impact of this type of experience has been called singing embarrassment or singing shame. The anxiety that some lung patients can feel is probably familiar to anyone who has gone snorkeling and dived a little too deep, and for a very short time was afraid that they wouldn’t get back up to the surface in time. For lung patients this feeling can be permanent: Will they get enough oxygen, and how little can they move to spare the oxygen they have? This anxiety can extend as far as a fear of dying. On top of this, some COPD patients struggle with a huge sense of guilt, as COPD is almost always a consequence of many years of heavy smoking.

In these circumstances, the first goal must be to make everyone feel safe and welcome in the company of equals. Singing shame can vanish through the understanding that everyone is in it for the same reason: To have a good time while meeting the challenge of breathing. As people slowly shift the focus away from the quality of their music and the sound of their voice to being conscious of controlling the muscles involved in breathing, they let go of their embarrassment – though in some cases it can take a while.

The singers need to learn to control the muscles involved in breathing and to feel safe when breathing deeply. They tend to take quick, short breaths that only involve the upper part of the chest – a sort of emergency breathing that is primarily drawn from the muscles

in the back, instead of using the diaphragm to enlarge the lungs and control the breath. For most lung patients the bronchi and/or the airways are clogged by mucus, so an instructor needs to develop exercises to remove mucus in order to free the airway before singing can even begin. One method is to use a PEP (Positive Expiratory Pressure) device, which is often used in airway clearance therapy (ACT). This device helps air get behind the mucus to remove it from the lung and airway walls and keep the airways open for longer.

Anne-Mette uses an exercise called The Skipper, which is actually taken from the ordinary repertoire of exercises for singers. It has turned out to have a positive effect on lung patients, creating resistance and pressure from below on the mucus to loosen it so they can cough it up:

*Sit slightly bent forward on a chair with the hands on the knees and elbows pointing outwards. Inhale through an imaginary straw and feel the tension in the diaphragm. Remove the straw, press the lips together and exhale through the tense lips as if blowing a trumpet. Hold the tension for as long as possible.*



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A PEP device © Anne-Mette Strandgaard

Unfortunately, shortness of breath and hyperinflation is often accompanied by massive bodily tension – in the back, intercostal muscles, neck, throat and face – which must be dealt with in order to free the body and voice for singing. Anne-Mette spends quite some time on loosening up, and she teaches participants how to use massage balls for self-training at home. Controlling breath through timing is essential! Short exercises and songs (primarily children’s songs and songs that everyone is familiar with), focusing on a breathing technique, can be effective. Singing a familiar repertoire is the key to feeling comfortable in an unknown field.

Anne-Mette introduces ‘yawn-inhalation’ – a long inhalation as we take when yawning – and ‘chock-inhalation’ – a short, quick breath as we take when we’re startled. The point is extending exhalation through singing, in order to empty the lungs as much as possible, and thereby achieving deep inhalation as a reflex (short or long). And it’s also about making participants feel confident that their body will come to the rescue if they need oxygen. Lung capacity and function is often measured as forced expiratory volume (FEV) and forced vital capacity (FVC) during a breathing test called spirometry. Forced expiratory volume (FEV) measures how much air a person can exhale

**Example: Let it be – The Beatles****No breath:** \_**Yawn-inhalation:** \***Chock-inhalation:** ▣**When I find myself in times of trouble, Mother Mary comes to me \_****Speaking words of wisdom, let it be \*****And in my hour of darkness she is standing right in front of me \_****Speaking words of wisdom, let it be \*****Let it be, let it be, let it be, let it be ▣****Whisper words of wisdom, let it be ▣****Let it be, let it be, let it be, let it be ▣****Whisper words of wisdom, let it be ▣**

during a forced breath. The amount of air exhaled can be measured during the first (FEV1), second (FEV2) and/or third seconds (FEV3) of the forced breath. Forced vital capacity (FVC) is the total amount of air you can exhale after inhaling as deeply as possible.

For Anne-Mette, the recognition and positive reactions from the participants have been the most important. But the fact that a chief physician and a lung specialist have kept on sending patients in her direction is also a confidence booster. The results from the first semester – the fall of 2013 and spring of 2014 – showed that the FEV1 results improved considerably. One singer suffering from COPD increased their FEV1 from 52% to 67%.

Anne-Mette and her group of singers have given a number of concerts, and little by little almost everyone felt comfortable singing outside the rehearsal room. They sang at lots of smaller events, but also at a major health conference and at the “Our Future Hospitals” exhibition at the Utzon Center in Aalborg.

All non-professional choral activities in Denmark are currently suspended due to the pandemic – including Anne-Mette’s singing with lung patients – and this has put a strain not only on this group of people but on the entire

Danish choral community. In the midst of it all we are learning how important an activity choral singing is – not only as an enjoyable pastime, but also for the social, mental, physical and musical wellbeing of thousands of people. With lung patients, you can probably add life-saving as well. We are still learning about the long-term consequences of suffering from COVID-19, but these exercises and activities may help these patients enjoy a better quality of life.

*In the fall of 2021 the Danish Choral Directors Association will follow up on the issue of singing and health with workshops on the impact of singing on Parkinson’s disease – a new project initiated by the Danish Parkinson’s Association. In this context the focus is still on breathing and wellbeing, but on the impact on speech for this group of patients.*

*Edited by Christopher Lutton, UK*



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# IN AND OUTSIDE THE BOX: ON STRAWBERRIES, CHILDREN, POETRY, GARDEN SHEDS AND A LOT OF SEWING

## Or 27 *linguini* recipes later

**ISABELLE MÉTROPE, FRANCE/GERMANY**

*ICB Managing Editor*

Recently I conducted a small poll of my singing colleagues. I wanted to know what they had been doing during this time when the stage was strictly off-limits, either in order to survive (often no productions = no salary) or just to see something besides their own four walls. The responses ranged from making cloth masks to doing photography, from building a garden shed (for a client) to making a career change and becoming a professional costume designer, sound engineer, carpenter, model, or baby-sitter. Others made a living watching over minor children during a train trip, working in a mountain chalet, selling strawberries in the countryside or writing, illustrating and editing a children's book of poetry. And the number one unpaid pastime: cooking. Excellent idea, if ever there was one. I've personally benefitted from that trend embraced by some of my colleagues (and it was really good, thanks!).

Let no one say then that artists live in their own bubble, that they don't respond, that they aren't flexible and don't take risks....

During this time, governments have tried, with more or less ardor and resources, depending on the country, to save whatever can be saved. If you, dear readers, have been lucky and not had your situation totally threatened, you will find programs in your own country to help artists. Some depend mostly on their social media presence, including "Support Art Workers" in Greece, #sangundklanglos in Germany, #Cultureismyjob in Switzerland, #saveourstages in the US, and many others. You will certainly find a local initiative.

Let us not lose hope, dear colleagues. Someday, we will no longer have time to try out complicated recipes or build garden sheds; we will have to squeeze in meals between productions. Meanwhile... it will soon be strawberry season.

*Translated from French by Anita Shaperd, USA*

**Artikel auf Deutsch   Artículo en español   Article en français**



# GROUP SINGING AND TRADITIONAL AFRICAN MEDICINE: THE CASE OF WEST AFRICA

**SYLVAIN KWAMI GAMETI, TOGO**

*Choir conductor*

[Artikel auf Deutsch](#)

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## INTRODUCTION

Choral tradition has a strong presence in Africa. Africa's soul, its consciousness and its history are all deeply rooted in music. In addition to the happiness it brings people, African music also plays an important role in traditional societies, where it is present in all aspects of life. The traditional form of group music practice is an age-old speciality of indigenous peoples from the heart of Africa, well before colonisation led to the discovery of choral singing in its current form on the continent. As African people dislike living alone, working alone or having fun on their own, making music has primarily been a community practice, rarely one for individuals. Whether it be on a political, sociocultural, economic or religious level, singing has always mobilised groups and crowds. This group or mass practice, which would later lead to the choral singing we know today, gave rise to numerous benefits for the communities who carried it on. One of these benefits was to their health; be that physical, moral or emotional, psychological, or spiritual. It is precisely thanks to this choral singing or group practice of music that we have come to think of Africa as the continent of joy and constant high spirits. In this article, we will present African (choral) singing in the context of traditional medicine and will demonstrate that

it serves as an effective cure for the majority of social ills. We will illustrate this by giving specific examples drawn from the experiences of traditional peoples from West Africa. In this case: the *Ewe* people, the *Fon* people and the *Ashanti* people from the Gulf of Guinea, Nigeria, Benin, Togo, Ghana and Ivory Coast; the *Mossi* people, the *Gurma* people and the *Fula* people from the Sahel (Burkina Faso, Niger, Senegal, northern Benin, Togo, Ghana and Ivory Coast).

We will also give details about the special therapeutic role that African choral singing plays, a role which fills so many hearts around the world with emotion.

## AFRICAN CHORAL SINGING: A MULTI-PURPOSE THERAPY

It is widely recognised that music is good psychosomatic medicine. In Africa, choral singing is privileged to be one of the most requested and effective genres in music therapy.

On the physical level, African music is essentially based on rhythm. As a result, it creates many possibilities for dances with an array of rather dynamic rhythmic arrangements. The fact, therefore, that African songs almost always come with accompanying dances compels the singers to make all kinds of movements fairly frequently (two, three, or even four times a week). These movements provide a full body workout for the dancers, which keeps them healthy and gives them a radiant glow. This is the case for the **Adzogbo** dance of the *Ouatchi* and *Mina* peoples from Togo and Benin, and the **Agbadza** dance of the *Ewe* people (Nigeria, Benin, Togo, Ghana and Ivory Coast).

Presentation of the **Adzogbo** rhythm:

A rhythm with counted dance steps, involving acrobatic spins. The rhythm notation is particular and is accompanied with the following onomatopoeia: djan, djan, djan.

Presentation of the **Agbadza** rhythm:

An elegant rhythm, leading to a dance which works out the upper and lower limbs, and especially the back muscles, hence the name *dzimé wé* (the back dance). The notation is as follows:



The **kontcheng** is also a rhythm which inspires body movement. This is a marching rhythm, performed in a line or in a circle, by nodding one's head and swaying one's torso like the rod of a pendulum. Notation: quaver, quaver, crotchet – quaver, quaver, crotchet.



On the moral and emotional level, African choral singing, which brings many people together, gives the singers balance and raises their spirits through the calming lyrics of the songs. It also offers them a highly valued human adventure. It saves them from anger, depression and neurosis, relieves them of their worries, and provides them with peace of mind and tranquillity; exactly what is needed for strong moral health. Added to this is the cathartic aspect of singing which, by the magic of its harmonies, soothes the hearts of people in grief.

On the psychological level, the act of singing in a group drives away fear and increases the degree of the performers' virtue and valour, which gives them courage, joy and self-confidence.

On the religious and mystical level, African people believe that singing has magical, mysterious and unwavering powers, which have control over things and therefore produce desired results. They are used in this way to influence animals, people and things in nature. Traditionally, religion has frequently relied on numerous chants and incantations against snakebites, to protect from diseases, to communicate with spirits, to tame animals, to satisfy anger and revenge, to call for rain or good weather, to evoke ghosts, to bring the dead back to life and to drive out or appease demons. Singing therefore reinforces the singers' spirituality and provides them with protection against evil spirits. Singing plays a role in healing and exorcism. The mass effect produced by choral singing releases energy; a supernatural power that heals diseases, calms anger and drives out demons. In this respect, singing is a genuine instrument of healing in traditional African medicine.

#### (CHORAL) SINGING:

##### A CURE FOR PSYCHOSOMATIC ILLNESSES IN WEST AFRICA

Music therapy is not a new art in African traditions. This practice, which can be traced back to the most ancient of times, is still current in traditional West African society, where music is associated with healing illnesses in fetishistic convents and at initiation rites.

The traditionalist view is that the physical world is governed by the spirit world. Whenever anything good happens, it is thanks to the blessing of the gods, while anything bad is as a result of their anger, punishments or curses. Healing happens by summoning the spirits. Witch doctors can interact with the spirits, who they summon to enlist support from when healing illnesses or warding off curses.

In the case of rare or unknown illnesses, this is how priests or soothsayers carry out consultations, by chanting incantations to diagnose the nature, origin and cause of the affliction so they can drive it off. Contact between humans and spirits is established by means of specific songs with melodic formulae and precise rhythms. These songs are most often chanted by the priest or witch doctor, relayed in a responsorial style by a choir of followers. Sometimes, special percussion accompaniments contribute to speeding up the healing process by provoking prompt manifestations of the spirits, who respond swiftly by putting people into trances and using them to reveal the

cause of the illness, as well as the appropriate cure for each case. The cure may range from something as simple as a herb to be used while singing, to treatment via an exorcism chant performed over several days.

For those who are skilled in voodoo, in order to be healed the afflicted person must, in some cases, sing and dance to rhythms prescribed by the fetish or deity by following rituals over a specified time (three days, one week, one month or even three months) according to the severity of the illness.

In these instances, it is the quality of the worship or supplication, as well as the patients' devotion, that determines to what extent the patients are healed. If the patient is unable to sing or dance due to the burden of the disease, members of their family are asked to do so on their behalf. Healing ensues as soon as the deity or fetish accepts the worship.

The use of music for healing or as a release from curses is widespread across West Africa and takes place in various forms, depending on the ethnic group or the local custom. Given that the same people groups can be found spread over three or four countries, it is not uncommon to come across the same songs or methods in several countries.

Certain exorcism chants and healing songs, which are proven to be effective, are often written in fetishistic languages that only initiates can understand. Priests use these languages musically in traditional chanting and by singing prophecies to summon the spirits. In the Gulf of Guinea, *Evegbe* (the language of the god *Yeve*, who is the equivalent of the god *Yahweh* in Christianity) can be understood by initiates from southern Nigeria, Benin, Togo and Ghana. These initiates use this language in private. Some instances of healing through singing are carried out by griots who also act as traditional priests.



## A short chant to summon the deity Yéve

### *Fetishistic Vocalisation*



## Some fetishistic and mystical rhythms

**Tadenta:** A fetishistic rhythm of excellence, very widely used in convents. Here it appears notated as follows: quaver, dotted quaver, dotted quaver – quaver, dotted quaver, dotted quaver.



**Habiyè:** A rhythm of the *Kabye* people (an ethnic group from northern Togo, Benin and Ghana, and from Chad) widely used for mystical dances. Its name is given to the whole event, during which real miracles can be witnessed from the effects produced by the actions of occult forces. This results in salvations and miraculous healings. Rhythm notation: quaver, quaver, crotchet – quaver, quaver, crotchet.



## PRACTICAL CASES OF HEALING THROUGH SINGING IN TRADITIONAL RELIGION

Naturalists declare that only the spoken word or the sung word (songs) are able to heal someone. To do so, you must enter into the afflicted person and take on their ailment or their burden yourself, then summon the healing spirit from nature to come and cure them.

The musician healer focuses and sings. In reality, exorcisms are carried out by substitution. By chanting incantations, the healer draws out the soul from the patient and bears it in their own body. In this way, when the musician healer sings, it is in fact the soul of the patient who is singing within them. If the patient's soul is therefore able to sing within the body of the musician healer, then they can be healed.

### How Does it Work? (The Procedure)

The patient is placed between seven people, who represent the seven (7) spirits of God, or seven deities. The musician healer, who is familiar with the names of the spirits, summons them by chanting incantations and sends them into the patient's body. These spirits take action within the body of the afflicted individual and restore their health before returning their soul to them. This entire procedure is carried out to a musical programme, most of which is vocal.

### The Principle of Healing Through Traditional Music Therapy

It is necessary to separate the individual's soul from the ambient world for an out-of-body experience and replace it with someone else's (often the soul of the healer themselves or of a pure or holy innocent). Absorbing or removing

the afflicted person's soul is done by singing and by summoning spirits, who come to seek and converse with it while the body is healed by the actions of other spirits. Each of the summoned spirits has a specific role to play in the healing process. According to the individual case and the severity of the illness, the spirits of 3, 7, 14 or 17 deities are summoned.

### The Case of Snakebites

In the case of snakebites, the deity *Vodun Dan* must be summoned, done so by performing their song. They will come and retract the venom, whereby the affected individual is miraculously healed by substitution. The international centre of the deity *Dan* is located in *Ouidah*, in Benin.

Long-term healing can also be obtained through singing. This begins with a speech. Afterwards, the patient is required to sing while smiling. By doing so, they end up being healed.

## CONCLUSION

Traditional African music is, first and foremost, an acoustic reflection of the cultural realities of traditional African societies. In this way, it truly forms part of the cures for several ills within these societies. Deities or spirits have always been relied on for healing through singing. Healing is always received, and always by substitution under the influence of special music. This music is in the form of chanted incantations, which allows for communication with the deities or spirits who do good. In this regard, choral music, which allows for a rather lively group practice, successfully plays the role of the relay or choir in response to the healer's solos. The *Nogokpo* and *Essem* convents in Ghana, as well as the *Parakou* one in Benin, are gifted in this traditional regional music therapy.

## APPENDIX SOME HEALING SONGS

### Limulaya

- Song to summon the seven (7) spirits or deities
- Language: Ewe
- Translation: With a resounding voice, Limulaya, I summon you to come and rescue me

### Mega d'asi le nu nye o

- Translation: Do not desert me, I will live forever by your side
- Language: Ewe

### Karabusu

- Summoning of the spirits *Yeve*, *Hebieso*, *Lissa*, *Sogbo* and *Patapa* to come and take action
- Language: A mixture of Ewe and Hindu languages

### Zamalina

- Song to summon the deity *Yeve*
- Language: Ewe (language of the deity *Yeve*)
- Translation: If *Yeve* or *Jehovah* were not here, where would I be?

Translated from French by Luke Martin, UK



**SYLVAIN KWAMI GAMETI**, former artistic director of the choir of the University of Lomé (Togo) from 1996 to 2003, has been the head of the *National Choir of Togo* since its creation in 2009. He was the principal rotating artistic director of the *African Youth Choir* for four years and, since May 2018, has been the coordinator of the "African Youth Choir" project with the African Confederation of Choral Music. He has performed concert tours with his choirs in France, Spain, South Korea and Germany, and has participated in choral festivals in several African, European and Asian countries. Email: [sylvain.gameti@gmail.com](mailto:sylvain.gameti@gmail.com)



### LIMULAYA



### MEGA D'ASI LE NU NYE O



### KARABUSU



### ZAMALINA



# MUSIC THERAPY AND AFRICAN MUSIC

## AMBROISE KUA-NZAMBITOKO, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Choir conductor

[Artikel auf Deutsch](#)

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### THE ODYSSEY OF THIS ANCESTRAL PRACTICE

Established well before the arrival of scientific Western medicine, traditional African medicine has proven itself since the dawn of time. Practised more frequently in rural areas, it has often attracted many people, especially in areas where modern health centres are rare, and is naturally turned to as an inevitable alternative for certain ailments for which modern medicine seems to be powerless (3).

Even in modern times, traditional African medicine has always been a grassroots reality. Native care constitutes the first line of treatment for persons whose ailments are of seemingly inexplicable or mysterious origin.

Traditional medicine is used by about 80% of populations, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), but unfortunately, it continues to be neglected and fought against and is generally unsupported and without funding.

In the popular imagination of African Bantus, healing is to be found in nature, in the physical and spiritual world (cosmic, ancestral, mystical). They believe in the healing power of rites, as well as in the power of nature contained in:

- sand, stone, water, fire, air
- salt, oil, powders
- plants, leaves, tree bark, roots, fruit
- heat, cold, wind
- rain, sun, the moon
- light, odours, animals
- images, masks, statues, totems
- words, sounds, cries, music, chant, prayer
- dance, trance, the rhythm of percussion instruments

### THE HEALERS – INITIATED AND UNINITIATED

Usually, healers come by their powers through heredity, with healing gifts passed down from grandfather to great-grandson but herbalists, who are laymen in the spiritual sense, study plants and their curative virtues as well as studying symptoms and side effects.

Among the healers one can find the chosen ones, heirs of the tradition, the initiated, those who have been trained and, of course, many charlatans who have paid their way to power and who sell illusions, as well as those who practise the profession by imitation.

The healers are either real gurus surrounded by aides or persons working alone sometimes with the assistance of

initiated helpers or caregivers. They may go by the name: Healer, Fetishist, Trad-practitioners, Trad-therapists, Seers, Clairvoyants, Sorcerers, Prophets, Diviners, Inspired Spokesperson, Clan Chiefs (among the *Ne kongo*, they are called *Nsadisi*, *Nganga-Nkisi*, *Ngunza*, *Mbikudi*, *Ma ndona*, *Ndoki*, *Mpovi*, *Mfumu a kanda...*).

### FROM ITS STRENGTH TO ITS WEAKNESS

A practice strongly linked to spiritual beliefs and deeply rooted in an ancestral culture, traditional African medicine continues to claim to offer a panacea to all ills. However, that some of its weaknesses can lead to often unpredictable multiple consequences is no secret to anyone and this has not escaped the collective consciousness. The basis of these inadequacies are due to several reasons, including:

The fact that knowledge is transmitted orally;

- The lack of documentation summarizing knowledge ;
- The absence of a framework for collective or scientific reflection;
- Therapeutic methods which are generally less elaborated and defined;
- The very select and even egotistical system of recruitment for training;
- The low degree of assurance with regard to the precision of dosage for the medicines used and the treatments administered. The risk of going too far or overdosing are real.
- Its very subjective and even esoteric nature, over which only the initiated have the monopoly, which often leads to the irrational.

### ILLNESSES AS SEEN BY AFRICAN HEALERS AND TRAD-THERAPISTS

The ailments and pathologies treated by traditional medicine are many and varied. Such is the case with the types of treatments which can vary from one tribe, ethnic group or people to another.

For example, the ailments treated might include mental illness, psychic troubles, illnesses of a mystic nature, the mysterious loss of certain senses (sight, hearing, memory), sexual impotence, loss of virility, feminine sterility and many more.

Certain illnesses are better treated in some tribes using different therapeutic methods.



Among these ailments we find those whose diagnosis and treatment are done by procedures of a spiritual nature, thereby calling upon divination, incantations, invoking ancestors (*bankulu*) or spirits (*Mpeve*), as well as invoking God, the Supreme Being, the Creator, the Indestructible (*Akongo*, *Nzambi a mpundu among the Ne Kongo*, *Nzakomba among the Mongo*, *Mvidi mukulu among the Luba*, *Wonia Shongo among the Otetela*, *Imana among the ethnic groups of Rwanda and Burundi*,...).

This would be linked to the belief that certain illnesses are caused by bad spells, curses, family ties, being possessed, attacks by sorcerers, the settling of accounts through fetishist methods or due to the negative consequences of crimes committed by the guilty party. In Black African civilization, one can fall ill by offending God, spirits, ancestors, nature, society or going against the sacred principles of community life, says Cameroon Professor Bingono Bingono, a specialist in crypto-communication. Thus, one treats the body through the spirit.

The healing process may require sessions that take several hours, several days or even several weeks in a specific location. This is often due to or related to the severity of the ailment to be treated as well as to the rituals inspired or dictated by the spirits. It is most often women and children who request these treatments.

Depending on the type of illness, the patients are either housed in the antechambers of the healers (*Ngunza*, *Ma Ndonga*, *Nganga Nkisi* ...), or they may simply go for the duration of the healing session. Others may be taken to specific sites (into the bush, under a tree, at the edge of a river...).

### MUSIC IN ANCESTRAL PRACTICES

Healing is not really directly related to music, chant, dance or trances, otherwise chant, for example, would be prescribed for healing, and this panacea would be among the most popularly used grandmothers' remedies. In addition, this would quickly have allowed the development of African music therapy.

Various sources, however, contend that certain chants have a healing power when they are intoned by initiated practitioners. There is a practice which consists of asking the initiated to compose a chant or a hymn that can offer therapeutic support during the healing rites. Such is the case among the *Luba* in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) when it comes to the "Lufu", which means death. Hymns are composed to be sung during the ritual to help the patient escape death. Music, chant, percussion, dance and trance are often integrated into most of these rites.

While in his thesis on "the relationship of music and trance" Gilbert Rouget demonstrates that neither the melody, the rhythm, chant nor instrumental music provokes a trance to the point of naturally healing the illnesses (2) and in his thesis entitled *Music and Trance in Afro-American Religions* Erwan Dianteill strongly affirms it, it can be observed that numerous healers enter into a trance through chant and the rhythm of the percussion. Chant is associated with prayer, and dance can lead to a trance and prayer.

Despite the great variety to be found, different types of traditional African music present certain common characteristics. In general, the music is circumstantial, functional, ritualistic, contextual and therefore utilitarian. The omnipresence of these characteristics in different types of rituals reveals the African concept of music as being more than just a simple means of communication among humans.

Music can be evocative, it can help release emotions which may be suppressed, and it can help transport someone towards a world of plenitude and well-being. There is music of a mystic nature which can call upon the intervention of supernatural or mystic forces, music which can be object-oriented, incantation music, meditative music which can provoke positive feelings, music for relaxation and music for healing and self-healing.

The word "music" itself is difficult to translate in many African languages. It is for this reason that chant, or song, and music are often translated by using the same word. In Kikongo, the language spoken in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo and Angola, *Nkunga* means singing but also music. Singing or chant thus plays an avant-garde role. Where words stop, singing begins.

As a support for communication, it fundamentally has two dimensions. It can belong to the sphere of pheno-communication, which is essentially material, tangible, physical and acoustical, being part of the physical and material work. But music can also be considered a form of crypto- or hidden communication, which can be mystical, esoteric or spiritual, contends Professor Bingono Bingono.(4)

The average person does not naturally enter into the crypto-communicative dimension of singing or chant, but in certain conditions and often during rituals, one can enter into this dimension through pheno-communication. Chant, instruments and dance mix easily in a number of situations, where by tradition or by nature, one could not completely eliminate music. Singing is therefore one of the components of rituals dedicated to healing illnesses. The vocal sonorities and styles can vary considerably



from one geographic location to another.

### CHANT AND HEALING

Is healing through music possible? Is native healing through sound possible? Does music for healing exist?

In several African traditions, singing or chant, as well as dance leading to trance, have a therapeutic function beyond their artistic value. In addition to chants on different themes, there are indeed those which are used in healing practices for certain illnesses. All illnesses are considered to be a malfunction of the body, biological functions, the mind, the psyche or the spirit. Chant can also lead to a modified state of being allowing growth of human capacity. Therefore, it is a component of healing rites because of the approach of the treatment that is planned.

In general, African traditions recognize the power of music, not as a real or concrete force or as constituting a principle asset, but rather as an accompanying support. It is an additional support through which mediator can help establish a connection between the interior and the exterior to reach higher spheres, and to also set the stage for a better bonding of the two.

In the therapeutic approach to illnesses, anointment is critical. The initiated responsible for anointing are assisting the healer, himself anointed, who passes on the responsibility to them. Their role is to sing, dance and play traditional instruments.

As is the case with the very large range of plants, where often one plant alone can help heal several illnesses, music is also considered to be endowed with a certain curative power.

### HEALING RITES

Music, chant and dance are associated with the native healing systems in many sub-Saharan tribes and ethnic groups of Africa. The

diviner-healers often use the divinatory arts to detect illnesses and especially their origins. Clairvoyants can detect the illness by entering into contact with the patient. In some rites, chant is associated with dance, with the trance sometimes accompanied by traditional musical instruments, each of which has a specific function. The chants are intoned either by the trad-therapists or by their assistants and, in some cases, even by the patients themselves during one or more phases of the ritual. Some chants are intoned as hymns, as a prologue and others are used to create a placebo effect predisposing patients to develop their faith and thus participate in their own healing.

Healing rites are common among the African Bantu and have several points in common. Banned by Christian missionaries and by current Christian religions, these ancestral practices have disappeared except for a few which have managed to resist the pressure. Some chants have been recovered, adapted and integrated into the repertoire of traditional groups.

In the DRC, the *Zebola* among the *Mongos* is a rite which calls upon chant and dance to chase away spirits. The possessed patient, often a young woman, enters into a convulsive trance and/or loses consciousness. Chant, music and percussion are also used in the *Nkanda* circumcision rites of the *Ne Kongo* and in the *Gaza* rite among the *Bangala* or the *Bamongos*. Percussion instruments are used by the healers or their initiated assistants, each one having a specific function.

Among the *Mbata* (*Bambata*), patients suffering from *Ntulu nwengina* (asthma attacks) arrive with live roosters as well as other gifts singing "Nsusu a koko":



Among the *Bamaniangas*, singing is part of the *Kimoko* rite.

For example, the chant *Iulendo Iwa satana diata lo* which means "to neutralize the power of Satan".

There is also the *Mayititi* rite where chant is used to heal *Mayititi* (mumps). In this ritual, the patient places his or her head in a hole dug in the surface of the ground and sings this chant.

*Yi yi yi mayititi*

*Meka kana sala mu*

*Miale O* – Healing chant of the Topoke people  
rubato

In the Republic of Congo (Congo-Brazzaville), the *Lemba*, *Mudiri*, *Tingigila* healing rites also make use of chant.

The UNESCO-protected *Vimbuza* is a healing dance popular among the *Tumbuka* people, an ethnic group in northern Malawi. It is similar to a popular dance among the *Ba Maniangan* in the DRC. This similarity can also be found in the rhythm of the *Ngoma* drums.

Singing is also present in the *Bissima* rite of the *Eking* tribe in Cameroon.

### PARADIGM OF RITUAL CHANTS

Navigating the continuum between subjectivity and objectivity, healing chants include incantations, praise and sung poems that may be repeated as mantras.

Certain characteristics, listed below, seem to be common to all of them:

- The compatibility linked to the essential or quintessential content;
- The coherence with the atmosphere of each phase of the ritual (adapting chants as soft invocations, murmurs, cries, authoritative declarations, declarations of healing or victory...). This may depend on the character of the chant and its literary content;
- Known chants of pure inspiration, required for a phase of the ritual;
- Intuitive or inspired chants, improvised by the healing trad-therapist or crypto-communicator or by their aides who are deep in a transfigured and transformed or modified state (a trance of creative inspiration, a divine trance);
- Chants having supposedly curative and calming virtues;
- Sung prayers and declarations;
- Evocative chants which can lead to a modified state (chants to go into a trance, chants to open the spirit, to chase away fears or doubts...

## CHANTS IN SESSIONS OF PRAYERS FOR DELIVERANCE AND MIRACLE-HEALING

Having been fought against by Christian missionaries, many rites and chants have disappeared. The emergence and proliferation of so-called awake or post-missionary churches have opened another door, offering an alternative to these ancestral rites through prayer and miracle-healing sessions. Pastors, Evangelists and Prophets of God, anointed and endowed with a spiritual gift for miracle-healing having taken the place of trad-therapists, diviner-healers and others who organize special sessions, either in public during crusades and evangelization campaigns or in private prayer cells. These sessions are accompanied by songs of adoration, praise, supplication, declarations of victory over the enemy, darkness, demons, possessive spirits, as well as by diverse statements of faith and proclamations of healing in general. The name of Jesus Christ is at the centre of these christocentric sessions of religious exorcism and the results are surprising and real. Some patients heal at the very moment these chants are intoned. The success of this practice has moved many healers and trad-therapists to disguise themselves as prophets of God and entice crowds to follow them.

Examples of chants intoned during sessions of deliverance and miracle-healing:

### 1. *Yesu azali awa* (Jesus is among us)

*Kitisa nguya na yo* (Manifest your power in this place)

### 2. *Nguya, Nkembo na lobiko epayi na Yawe*

(Power, glory and honour unto our God)

### 3. *Elonga ejali na makila ma Yesu* (Victory is in the blood of Jesus)



## IMPORTED SONGS GOSPEL HYMNS

### 4. *I am the Lord that healeth thee*

*I am the God that Healeth thee, I  
am the Lord Your healer  
I sent My word and I healed your  
disease, I am the Lord Your healer*

*You are the God that Healeth me,  
You are the God my healer  
You sent the word and you healed  
my disease, You are the Lord my  
healer*

### 5. *He touched me*

*Shackled by a heavy burden,  
'Neath a load of guilt and shame.  
Then the hand of Jesus touched  
me,  
And now I am no longer the same.*

*He touched me, Oh He touched me,  
And oh the joy that floods my soul!  
Something happened and now I  
know,  
He touched me and made me  
whole.*

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3. [https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/M%C3%A9decine\\_traditionnelle\\_africaine](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/M%C3%A9decine_traditionnelle_africaine)
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## Consultants

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*Translated from French by Patricia Abbott, Canada*



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# MUSIC HELPS. BUT WHO HELPS US?!

## When music makes you ill

**ISABELLE MÉTROPE, FRANCE/GERMANY**

*ICB Managing Editor*

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With the various lockdowns, the public has increasingly noticed what we have known for decades: experiencing music in an active way plays a vital role in our lives – preferably live and not through a screen. It is therefore not surprising that both the previous pages of this issue and our society portray music as beneficial for health. This has now been proven through research and the practice of music therapy. Somewhat less well known – except among many professional musicians – is that making music can in some circumstances be a danger to health and that the body, like that of a competitive athlete, must be adequately taken into consideration.

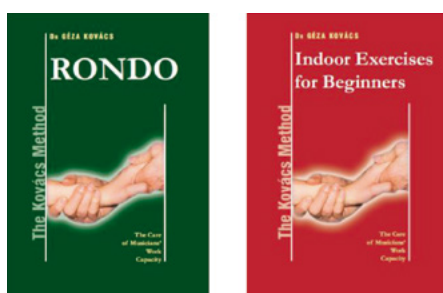
Anyone browsing through medical publications will find research from as early as the 15<sup>th</sup> century on maladies typical of wind instrument players. However, for the subject to be treated in a practical and systematic way, instrumentalists and singers have to wait until the 1970s when the first musicians' outpatient clinics open their doors. Up to two thirds of professional musicians suffer from ailments that can be ascribed to the intensive playing and practice of their instrument (Spahn/Richter/Altenmüller, 2011, p. 2).

Now, back pain, jaw tension or voice problems can happen to anyone. So what differentiates musicians from non-musicians? Like high-performance athletes, our body is stressed in a particular way by our job: we do the same movements for up to 50 years (or more), many hours a day. Repetitive movement sequences that, just like high-performance athletes, aim at perfection (whether technical or musical) and can become dangerous. On top of that, many instruments are asymmetrical. Our body is not made for this kind of intense one-sided strain unless we allow it to compensate.

Alexander Technique, Feldenkrais, disphokinesis, gyrokinesis, yoga: the list of therapies that give balance to the body is long but in some countries these subjects have only been included in music studies for a few years or sometimes not at all. The effect of disciplines such as these could be life-changing if musical education as a whole integrated body awareness from childhood onwards: during their studies, students practise several hours a day and have often been doing so for 10 years. Among many existing methods, I recently came across one that I did not know: the Kovács method can be used even with small children and introduced into the practice routine. When the Hungarian



pedagogue and composer Zoltán Kodály discovered in the 1950s that the health of many professional musicians was suffering due to their music practice, he commissioned the scientist Dr Géza Kovács, who had already achieved good results in the healing of training injuries in the sports field, to find a solution that would both correct misalignments and prevent injuries. The Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest thus became one of the first in the world to offer prevention of injuries customised to each student. Since 2000 this method has been available to study at the Liszt Academy of Music with a view to incorporating it into one's own teaching. If the symptoms are already well developed, a visit to the doctor is required. Musicians' medicine now exists in many countries, though it is a long way from being



worldwide. Many musicians' outpatient clinics consist of a platform within a hospital, sometimes in cooperation with a university or music college. This department for musicians' medicine brings together the appropriate specialists for each ailment in order to offer a therapy tailored to the patient. Each group of instruments tends to have its own set of symptoms: while high strings often struggle with jaw tension or poor posture in the upper back, brass players have lip or tooth problems that build up due to years of intensive playing. Drummers invest a lot in their wrists, while conductors can develop shoulder problems: arms are raised, but wrists and hands need to remain flexible and light which can increase shoulder tension. Voice problems in singers are by no means always related to vocal cords or singing technique but can result, for example, from previous gastrointestinal illnesses or even be an indicator of them.

**THIS CENTREGROUND MUST BE FOUND IN ORDER TO GUARANTEE YEARS OF HEALTHY, SYMPTOM-FREE PLAYING.**

This list is not intended to be exhaustive. Of course, we are not only talking about ailments here but also about prevention: the aim of musicians' medicine is to find a happy medium between the technical requirements of instrumental practice and healthy demands on the body. This centreground must be found in order to

guarantee years of healthy, symptom-free playing. The methods mentioned above can be helpful for good body awareness, healthy posture and natural movements.

Institutes of musicians' medicine are a recent development, but the number is growing and they are becoming increasingly multidisciplinary. There are a number of national organisations (see list of links) and relevant literature is available in several languages (see book suggestions). Specialising in musicians' medicine can be taught as an additional qualification, for example at University College in London as part of a Master of Science or postgraduate diploma.

Only one disappointment remains: most musicians' outpatient clinics or research centres deal extensively with physiological issues but less often with the mental health of musicians. There is research in the field of music psychology but the focus is mostly on music's positive psychological effect. In the end, one thing unites all musicians: what the media all too often reduce to stage fright in truth consists of a whole variety of mental challenges in a professional musician's life. Already back in 2019, the Swedish organisation Record Union conducted a survey among almost 1500 musicians around the world and found out that "more than seven out of ten (73%) independent music makers said that they have experienced negative emotions such as stress, anxiety and/or depression in relation to their music creation" (source: Record Union, report available on [www.the73percent.com](http://www.the73percent.com)).

The current pandemic has shifted the challenges: from burnout to boreout, from almost too much to almost nothing, from (over?) exertion to a forced break. Musicians who practice daily were "locked up" in their homes by lockdown measures (which for some greatly reduced the opportunity to practise) and ultimately making music, especially singing, was classified as highly dangerous. The consequences are serious: the prohibition on choir and orchestra rehearsals means that amateur and professional musicians lack an emotional balance; careers have been stopped; the passion and even the need to appear on stage is suddenly no longer satisfied for months on end; the lack of challenges and projects can lead to depression and for many people there are financial consequences that threaten their existence. Of course, a pandemic is an enormous psychological burden for everyone, not least due to the severe containment of social life. But what is currently protecting mankind from madness? Among other things, (the survival of) cultural life and the frontline workers in the health system. And someone should also be taking care of their mental wellbeing...



## ASSOCIATIONS

- British Association for Performing Arts Medicine: <https://www.bapam.org.uk>
- Performing Arts Medicine Association: <http://www.artsmed.org>
- American Psychological Association: Society for the Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity and the Arts: <https://www.apa.org/about/division/div10>
- Österreichische Gesellschaft für Musik und Medizin: [www.oegfmm.at](http://www.oegfmm.at)
- Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Musik-Medizin: <https://www.musik-medizin.ch/>
- Deutsche Gesellschaft für Musikphysiologie und Musikmedizin e.V.: <https://dgfmm.org>
- German Society for Music Psychology: <http://www.music-psychology.org>
- European Society for the Cognitive Sciences of Music: <https://www.escom.org>

## INSTITUTES

- Clinique du Musicien et de la Performance Musicale, France: <http://cliniquedumusicien.com>
- Texas Center for Performing Arts Health, USA: <https://tcpah.unt.edu>
- Center for Music & Medicine at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore (MD), USA: <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/center-for-music-and-medicine>

**But what is currently protecting mankind from madness? Among other things, (the survival of) cultural life and the frontline workers in the health system. And someone should also be taking care of their mental wellbeing...**



- Medical Center for Dancers & Musicians in The Hague, NL: <https://www.haaglandenmc.nl/specialismen/afdeling/medisch-centrum-voor-dansers-musici>
- Berlin Center for Musicians' Medicine, Germany: <https://musikmedizin.charite.de>
- Center for pop musicians medicine at Berlin School of Popular Arts, Germany: <https://www.srh-university-berlin.de/hochschule/forschung/popambulanz-pab/>
- Kurt Singer Institute for Music Physiology and Musician's Health (KSI), Germany: <http://www.ksi-berlin.de>
- Institute for Music Physiology and Musicians' Medicine Hanover, Germany: <https://www.immm.hmtm-hannover.de>

## EDUCATION

- Formation Médecine des Arts-musique, France: <https://www.medecine-des-arts.com>
- University College London: Performing Arts Medicine MSc or Postgraduate Diploma (also as distance learning) <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/graduate/taught-degrees/performing-arts-medicine-msc>

## JOURNALS

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## MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES

- Help Musicians: <https://www.helpmusicians.org.uk>
- key changes: <https://www.keychanges.org.uk>
- mental health in music: <https://www.mim-verband.de>
- MusiCares: <https://www.grammy.com/musicares>
- Research and report by Record Union: [https://www.the73percent.com/Record\\_Union-The\\_73\\_Percent\\_Report.pdf](https://www.the73percent.com/Record_Union-The_73_Percent_Report.pdf)

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# INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR CHORAL MUSIC



**Presentation of the new IFCM  
committees**

**E poi le parole: Renaissance**

**Introducing the WSCM 2023 Organizing  
Committee**

# PRESENTATION OF THE NEW IFCM COMMITTEES

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## 1. WSCM 2023

### ARTISTIC, ADMINISTRATIVE AND STEERING COMMITTEES OF WSCM 2023

The **Artistic Committee** of the WSCM 2023/24 is developing the artistic programme of the most renowned IFCM event in cooperation with our colleagues in Qatar. Along with selecting the choirs and lecturers, one of the most important tasks of the committee is the long-term musical vision of IFCM beyond the Symposium, as well as defining new ideas, inspirations and incentives that the WSCM would like to offer to the international choral scene. Giovanni Pasini & Jan Schumacher (chairs), Nasser Sahim, Alena Pyne, Jan Schumacher, Cristian Grases, Dr. Beverly Shangkuan-Cheng, Dana Al Fardan (Honorary Member).

The WSCM 2023/24 **Administrative Committee**, working in tandem with the WSCM 2023/24 Artistic Committee, is responsible for the organizational and financial components of the Symposium. Composed of three members representing IFCM and three members representing the Qatar National Choral Association (QNCA), the Administrative Committee will develop a detailed division of responsibility between IFCM and QNCA. It will then evaluate and authorize all decisions relating to the production of the Symposium. Jennifer Taynen & Ki Adams (chairs), Aljazi Al-Henzab, Anwar Al Nimri, Ki Adams, Yoshihiro Egawa, Gábor Móczár, Khalid Al Salim (Honorary Member – Director of the Music Affairs Centre of the Ministry of Culture and Sports). The **Steering Committee** is overseeing the work of the two Committees. Giovanni Pasini (Chairman), Jan Schumacher and Ki Adams (Vice-Chairmans), Jennifer Taynen (General Manager), Iva Radulović (international liaison advisor – ex officio).

Patron of WSCM 2023/24 is His Excellency Salah bin Ghanem Al Ali.

## 2. CONDUCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS (CWB)

The CWB program, which was until now concentrated on Africa and Latin America, is beginning to develop new actions in Middle Eastern countries and South East Asia, where IFCM can develop a strategy of spreading choral music. with a very professional team which aims to give those in need access to training and educational opportunities.



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The Al Mayassa Theater in the Qatar National Convention Center, one of the many performance venues that will be used during the 2023 World Symposium on Choral Music, Qatar.



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CWB session in Kinshasa, DR Congo



Thierry Thiébaud (chair), Burak Onur Erdem, Yveline Damas, Yoshihiro Egawa, María Guinand, Jan Schumacher, Roula Abou Baker, Ana Patricia Carbajal, Victoria Liedbergius, Iva Radulović (secretary).

### 3. INTERNATIONAL CHORAL BULLETIN (ICB)

The ICB Editorial Committee will provide ideas of articles and dossiers which are in line with ICB's vision. In addition, it will bring in new contacts from the whole choral world to broaden the range of authors and topics.

Isabelle Métrope (chair), Victoria Liedbergius, Ana Patricia Carbajal, Estera Mihaila, Roula Abou Baker, Ulrika Emanuelsson, Rossana Paliaga, Lucien Mendy, Tomoko Yokoyama.

### 4. WORLD CHORAL DAY (WCD)

World Choral Day is one of IFCM's most powerful projects, which portrays the global singing community's commitment to peace, solidarity and understanding. The Committee is working on bringing it to a higher level of international recognition, fine tuning the annual



regulations and developing new and creative communication methods. Gábor Móczár (chair), María Guinand, Burak Onur Erdem, Saeko Hasegawa.

### 5. SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANISATION COUNTRIES YOUTH CHOIR (SCOCYC)

This special international youth choir aims to connect several Eurasian countries. The Committee is working on designing digital presentation tools to let the world know about its achievements and is designing a 2021 online session

with the original 2019 actors in order to bridge pandemic times until live sessions may continue.

Gábor Móczár (chair), Ki Adams, Burak Onur Erdem, Saeko Hasegawa, André de Quadros.

### 6. ASIA PACIFIC YOUTH CHOIR (APYC)

The Asia Pacific Youth Choir was established in February 2011 as the first joint project in the Asia Pacific region. The next session has been planned in Kuala Lumpur in November 2021. The Committee is working on all necessary



Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Countries Youth Choir 2019



planning for this project; finding a host country, arranging the dates, appointing conductor(s), planning audition procedures and selecting singers, planning schedules for rehearsals and concerts, arranging hotels & meals for participants, etc. Yoshihiro Egawa (chair), John Rosser, plus local representatives.

## **7. INTERNATIONAL CHORAL COMPOSITION COMPETITION**

The group working on the IFCM Choral Composition Competition, consisting of Maria Guinand, Jan Schumacher and Burak Onur Erdem has started working on the new guidelines for its next edition. A very inspiring competition with exciting prizes will be awaiting choral composers in 2021.

Burak Onur Erdem (chair), María Guinand, Jan Schumacher.

## **8. GOVERNANCE AND ELECTION COMMITTEE**

Following the first ever online elections in 2020, we will begin preparations for the next elections, looking at diversifying the list of candidates as much as possible. In addition, we will look at the bylaws and policy document and suggest some further changes; for example, in relation to the Founding Members.

Sonja Greiner (chair), Niels Græsholm, John Rosser.

## **9. STAFF ADVISOR**

As staff advisor, Dominique Lecheval has to make sure all staff members can carry out their tasks to the best of their abilities, taking into account the fact that they all work remotely and in different countries or continents. He also wants to support their concerns and facilitates the relationship between the team and the board.

## **10. DATA PROTECTION OFFICER**

This task consists of monitoring IFCM's handling of the personal data of its members and other parties (organizations, choirs

etc.), and making sure that this is in accordance with international regulations, such as European GDPR. Niels Græsholm.

## **11. CHORAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

The Choral Education Programs Committee is using this time of virtual and online work to plan its future master classes, workshops, and other educational activities for choral music education with a view to the time when we are able to travel and work face-to-face. The committee's goal is to prepare both online and face-to-face programs, particularly for underserved and developing regions. IFCM's choral education programs will concentrate specifically on Middle Asia, Asia-Pacific, Latin America, and other developing regions around the world that have come to IFCM for collaboration and assistance. IFCM's greatest resource is its human connection with the great choral practitioners around the world, and the Choral Education Program Committee plans to use this resource for the benefit of

those looking to build their own choral programs.

Committee members include Tim Sharp (Chair), Jo-Michael Scheibe, Gábor Móczár, Ana Patricia Carbajal, Irvinne Redor, Naomi Faran, Kaie Tanner.

## **12. WORLD CHORAL EXPO (WCE)**

In the framework of the World Choral Expo 2022 in Lisbon, the IFCM will celebrate its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary. As in 2019, we want to offer the Expo participants a broad programme, including top-class international choirs, as well as the "Colorful Voices Programme", with six selected children and youth choirs and the "Singing Network Exchange" conference. Furthermore, all interested choirs are able to take part in the World Choral Expo. The WCE committee cares for the whole organisation of the event.

Jan Schumacher (chair), Roula Abou Baker, María Guinand, Jo-Michael Scheibe, Ki Adams.

*Edited by Tadhg Gleeson, Italy*



Indonesian Youth choir, cond. Aida Swenson, at the WCE in Lisbon in 2019

# INTRODUCING THE WSCM 2023 ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

**JENNIFER TAYNEN, CANADA/QATAR**

*WSCM2023 General Manager*

**Artikel auf Deutsch**

**Artículo en español**

**Article en français**

January 3, 2021, saw the first meeting of the World Symposium on Choral Music (WSCM) 2023 Qatar Organizing Committee. Composed of six representatives from the International Federation for Choral Music (IFCM), six representatives from Qatar and the region selected by Qatar National Choral Association (QNCA), and two honorary members, the team is set to work on the monumental, and exciting task of bringing the WSCM to the Middle East region for the first time. Qatar, with its ancient traditions of hospitality and contemporary global outlook, offers a unique and welcoming setting for voices from around the world to mix, mingle, and share their unique choral traditions and knowledge.

The WSCM is the IFCM's flagship event. Every three years it draws together the best of the choral world, including choirs, conductors, composers, musicologists, music industry representatives, and more. Delegates and participants are hosted in a major global city for an eight-day program of concerts, workshops, masterclasses, book talks, presentations, networking events, an expo, and of course plenty of singing. This first foray of the WSCM into the Arab world offers the potential for a wealth of new experiences for all involved. The WSCM 2023 Committee is excited by the opportunities presented in this new location and looks forward to creating an innovative WSCM that builds on the strength of past WSCM experiences and successes.

The 2023 WSCM planners are organized into three committees, the Artistic Committee, the Administrative Committee and the Steering Committee.

The Artistic Committee is co-chaired by Giovanni Pasini (QNCA) and Jan Schumacher (IFCM Vice-President). It includes an additional four members: Cristian Grases (IFCM representative), Nasser Sahim Nasseb (Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra), Alena Pyne (Sing Qatar), and Beverly Shangkuan-Cheng (IFCM representative). In addition to this team, the Artistic Committee has nominated Dana Alfardan, a Qatari composer and songwriter, as an Honorary Member. The Artistic

Committee is also in the process of establishing a regional artistic advisory board to assist in the design of the Middle Eastern portion of the program. Together these individuals will ensure that the very best of the world and the region is represented on the stages and at the podiums of the 2023 WSCM.

In considering the very unique responsibilities of representation and diversity with which the Artistic Committee is tasked, Jan Schumacher expressed the following:

"IFCM's World Symposium has always been the place to showcase a sampling of the most prestigious choirs from all over the world. The Artistic Committee for the 2023 WSCM aims to highlight vocal excellence as well as vocal diversity in styles and regions. In so doing we can ensure every participant of the symposium discovers new and exciting ideas, possibilities, and innovations. To plan this in a young and up-and-coming Arab choral scene promises to be an inspiration and pioneering work process."

The Administrative Committee is co-chaired by Ki Adams (IFCM Vice-President) and Jennifer Taynen (QNCA). Members of the committee are Yoshihiro Egawa (IFCM Vice-President), Gábor Móczár (IFCM representative), Aljazi Al Henzab (Qatar Foundation), and Anwar Al Nimri (Arab Choral Network). The Administrative Committee is delighted that Khalid Salim, Head of the Qatari Ministry of Culture and Sports' Music Affairs Center, has accepted the title of Honorary Member in their team. The Ministry of Culture and Sports' active participation in the planning of this event offers very welcome resources and assistance in all aspects of this project. With Qatar's state-of-the-art facilities, global connectivity as the hub for Qatar Airways, and infrastructure legacy of the 2022 FIFA World Cup, participants in the 2023 WSCM can look forward to a seamlessly organized event that is easy to navigate and accessible to all.

The Steering Committee is overseeing the work of the two Committees. Giovanni Pasini (Chairman), Jan Schumacher and Ki Adams (Vice-Chairmans), Jennifer Taynen (General Manager), Iva Radulović (international liaison advisor – ex officio).

Khalid Salem, Head of the Qatari Ministry of Culture and Sports' Music Affairs Center, explained after the inaugural committee meeting, "We are thrilled to be able to host this event here in Qatar! And I am personally excited to be part of the organizing. My entire team at the Music Affairs Center is eager to work towards its success. The WSCM offers an unprecedented opportunity for cultural exchange between our region and the rest of the world. We look forward to welcoming the choral world here... sharing our singing traditions with you and learning from yours."



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Khalid Al Salim: General Manager, Music Affairs Center, Ministry of Culture and Sports State of Qatar; Honorary Member of the 2023 WSCM Planning Committee

Both Artistic and Administrative Committees have quickly settled down to work. With Covid's cancelation of the 2020 WSCM in New Zealand and the setbacks, disappointments, and delays for choral events around the world, there is catching up to do over

the next few months. The 2023 WSCM team has prioritized a detailed examination of the event timeline. Due to Qatar's summer temperatures, the IFCM has made the unprecedented decision to shift the timing of the WSCM, with an opening ceremony scheduled for late December and running into January 2024. At this time of year Qatar experiences sunny warm temperatures perfect for outdoor events and concerts, and much of the world is still enjoying the vacation days that follow after religious holidays. The organizing committees are confident that all the necessary preparations are on schedule to ensure the 2023 WSCM is a massive showcase of the very best the choral world has to offer. By 2023, we are all going to be ready for a large-scale celebration of our art form, in all its diversity and beauty. And Qatar will be ready to host that celebration!

*Edited by Karin Rockstad, USA*

By 2023, we are all going to be ready for a large-scale celebration of our art form, in all its diversity and beauty. And Qatar will be ready to host that celebration!



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West Bay skyline, Doha, Qatar



# E POI LE PAROLE: RENAISSANCE

Artikel auf Deutsch   Artículo en español   Article en français

**ICB ASKS MEMBERS OF THE CHORAL WORLD ABOUT HOW A PARTICULAR WORD RESONATES WITH THEM. THIS TIME, THE WORD IS 'RENAISSANCE'. LET'S SHARE SOME INSPIRING POINTS OF VIEW.**

When I hear the word 'Renaissance', it evokes a multitude of feelings. Amongst them is one of how the beauty of the unknown allows me to enjoyably rediscover the Music and the Arts! *Nikos Adraskelas, choir master, pianist, festival organiser. Horto, Greece*

Renaissance is the evolution of life itself, of an individual's life. It is an unstoppable force that allows us to change, adapt and continue to grow to overcome any challenges we face, to become stronger, better, to be reborn as many times as necessary. *Melisa Ayelén Telechea Pacheco, violinist and pedagogue, Córdoba, Argentina*

Having discussed the theme recently in a radio broadcast, the term "Renaissance" immediately makes me think of the revival of the old analogue synthesizers. Now



that we have overcome the weaknesses of analogue technology in many aspects of life through digitalisation, we view the idiosyncrasies of old things with renewed appreciation. *Leonie Reineke, editor for new music at SWR2 (German music radio station), Stuttgart/Cologne*

Renaissance for me is the reinvention of something, the rebirth, rejuvenation or reincarnation of a previously existing phenomenon. It is the bringing to life of an idea or ideas which were previously in existence but which became dormant, possibly due to ideological/ technological development. *Ken Wakia, conductor, composer, arranger, Vice President of the African Confederation for Choral Music, Nairobi, Kenya*

Synonyms for Renaissance are rebirth and renewal. Today we are 'called' to renew our views on climate change, health care, and political ideology. Our future demands new directions if Renaissance is to be realized. I remain hopeful. *Royce Saltzman, past IFCM President, Eugene (OR), USA*

Renaissance is like a spring flood smashing through the worn ice of a hard frozen winter, and the initial recovery following an illness. It's Leonardo's staircase and his Musician as well. To me, renaissance represents a never-ending, inspiring and promising series of new beginnings. *Anna Tveritina, conductor, Saint Petersburg, Russia*

In life, we do not have power over how we are born. But we have a choice during our lifetime to be reborn. This is our personal renaissance. It is about striving for perfection in the world, a journey embarked on by the most courageous of us. *Roula Abou Baker, singer and manager, IMC Executive Board Member, IFCM co-opted Board member, Tripoli, Lebanon*

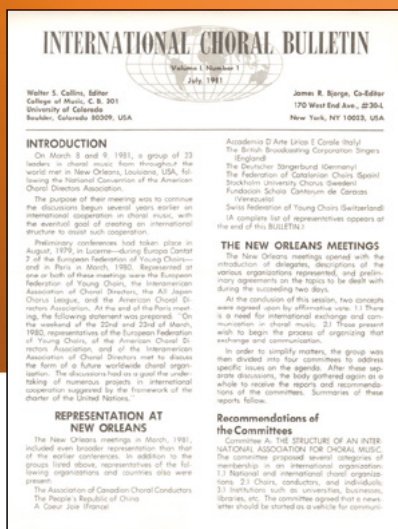
How about you? how does this word resonate with you? share it with us on social media with the hashtags

**#icb #epoileparole**

*Edited by William Young, UK*



# 1981-2021: 40 years of International Choral Bulletin



July 1981: 1st edition of ICB



Fill in the ICB  
Survey until  
May 20th 2021!



January 2021

**Which language do you miss?**

**What do you want to read about?**

The International Choral Bulletin was created exactly 40 years ago. Over these years, it became a longer publication, changed to colour print, went online and is now a multilingual information tool about choir music around the world.

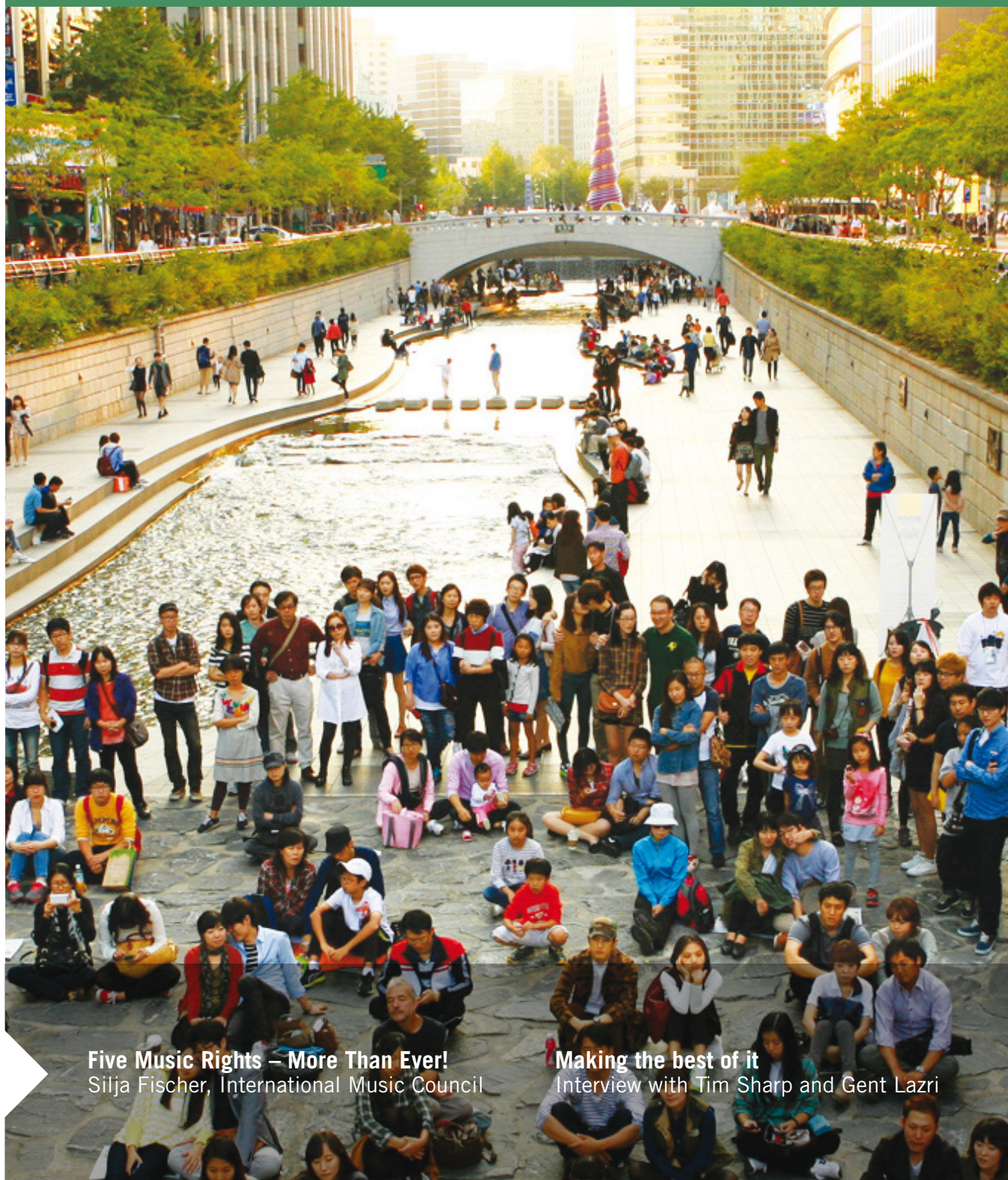
**It's high time to ask you how YOU wish your International Choral Bulletin to develop in the coming years!**

We created a **survey in all 4 official IFCM languages**. Please take 5 minutes of your time to answer these questions. Thank you very much!

**<http://bit.ly/ICB-Survey-EN>**



# CHORAL WORLD NEWS



**Five Music Rights – More Than Ever!**  
Silja Fischer, International Music Council

**Making the best of it**  
Interview with Tim Sharp and Gent Lazri



# FIVE MUSIC RIGHTS MORE THAN EVER!

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**SILJA FISCHER**

*Secretary General of the International Music Council*

[Artikel auf Deutsch](#)

[Artículo en español](#)

[Article en français](#)

THE COVID-19 CRISIS HAS REVEALED SHORTCOMINGS IN THE WORLD OF ARTS AND CULTURE – WEAKNESSES THAT WERE ALREADY THERE BUT HAVE BEEN EXACERBATED BY THE CRISIS. ALL ARTISTIC ACTIVITIES, FROM WORKSHOPS TO RESIDENCIES TO LIVE EVENTS, HAVE SUFFERED AS A RESULT OF LOCKDOWN OR OTHER RESTRICTIVE MEASURES. THERE IS A WIDE-SPREAD FEAR AMONG CULTURAL PROFESSIONALS THAT THE LONGER THEIR RECOVERY IS DELAYED, THE MORE LASTING THE EFFECTS WILL BE ON THESE ACTIVITIES. LET’S HAVE A LOOK AT HOW THE CORE VALUES OF THE INTERNATIONAL MUSIC COUNCIL, EMBEDDED IN THE FIVE MUSIC RIGHTS, HOLD UP IN THE CRISIS AND THE RESPONSE TO IT.

## **THE RIGHT FOR ALL CHILDREN AND ADULTS TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES MUSICALLY IN ALL FREEDOM**

This right echoes the explicit provisions protecting the freedom of artistic expression and creativity that are to be found in article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as well as article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

In May 2020, IMC expressed its deep concern at the increase of attacks on freedom of artistic expression on a global scale, as documented in the Freemuse’s recent report “State of Artistic Freedom 2020,” which offers an in-depth analysis of 711 acts of violations of artistic freedom in 2019 in 93 countries. We continue to be alerted by reports from colleagues all over the world pointing to the COVID-19 crisis exacerbating the situation as global nationalist populism continues to restrict expression and emergency procedures are enacted that sometimes silence dissident voices.

The exceptional situation of the pandemic should not and will not distract our attention from the brutal reality that artists are extremely vulnerable in a world dominated by oligarchies of power and money.

## **THE RIGHT FOR ALL CHILDREN AND ADULTS TO LEARN MUSICAL LANGUAGES AND SKILLS**

The crisis affected those who teach and those who learn at equal levels, in classrooms, music schools and higher music education institutions.

The challenging shift to online teaching was mastered by teachers at varying levels but with equal willingness and enthusiasm. As with anything that relates to the digital realm, issues such as digital literacy, access to hardware and software, broadband availability etc. impacted teachers’ and learners’ capacity to cope with the situation.

We learned from IMC member Music Crossroads Academy Zimbabwe that they offered teaching programmes in WhatsApp format during the lockdown but had to face dropouts by students due to their incapacity to follow through. It is therefore with great relief that they opened the doors of their school for physical teaching again after the first lockdown.

In many countries, when schools started to open again, music lessons were among the first cut out of school programmes in 2020. Making music was out of all of a sudden, branded with a stigma. Many scientific studies tried to offer answers to the many questions raised as teachers and learners wanted to return to the rehearsal halls. Thanks to the fundraising efforts of its member, the National Music Council of the United States, IMC was able to contribute financially to a study launched by an international alliance of 125 performing arts organisations to examine aerosol rates produced

by wind instrumentalists, vocalists, and even actors, and how quickly those aerosol rates accumulate in a space. While the insights seem to have allowed for some collective teaching activities to resume, the next question is about audiences being allowed back into performance spaces, which brings us to the next Right.

### **THE RIGHT FOR ALL CHILDREN AND ADULTS TO HAVE ACCESS TO MUSICAL INVOLVEMENT THROUGH PARTICIPATION, LISTENING, CREATION AND INFORMATION**

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the shift toward digital technologies beyond even the most ambitious forecasts. The roll-out of 5G, artificial intelligence and big data was always going to trigger more change and upheaval over the next five years than any other technology in the last 30 years. Already in May 2020, McKinsey Digital estimated that “The COVID-19 recovery will be digital” and shared a plan for the first 90 days of this discovery.

The worldwide lockdown has driven our social interactions and our consumption of culture almost entirely into the digital space. The cultural and creative sector has thus become the testing ground for exceptions and limitations on intellectual property regimes in order to facilitate access – albeit in certain circumstances and conditions – to creative content. Streaming of, and access to, creative content has become indispensable in dealing with the adverse conditions of lockdown imposed in response to the COVID-19 crisis. Internet access has become an essential service despite the fact that approximately 46% of the world’s population do not have access to an Internet connection.

This being said, we have to acknowledge that not all artistic expressions are fit for streaming, and that the “virtual choirs” are but an illusion of collective singing as the readers of the International Choral Bulletin will be the first to flag.

### **THE RIGHT FOR ALL MUSICAL ARTISTS TO DEVELOP THEIR ARTISTRY AND COMMUNICATE THROUGH ALL MEDIA, WITH PROPER FACILITIES AT THEIR DISPOSAL**

According to a UNESCO publication<sup>1</sup>, the most widespread measure (other than direct financial aid) taken by governments has been the creation of fee-based platforms for streaming artistic content. The

authors suggest that, perhaps without fully realizing it, public authorities, through financial support to these platforms, have in practice done what numerous analysts had been suggesting as a response to the growing domination of major online multinationals with their opaque algorithms: setting up a public portal giving access to national content. The question is whether these measures will indeed mean a transposition to the digital world of actions taken by public institutions such as national theatres, or broadcastings of major festivals on public holidays.

Governments have accelerated plans to develop broadband Internet in rural and remote areas, which have become critical for businesses and the education system in particular. Many artists throughout the world have deliberately chosen to offer free access to vast quantities of creative content during the crisis. However, as the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)<sup>2</sup> points out, it is important to ensure that these kinds of flexibility, in the context of the COVID-19 crisis, are targeted on the demonstrated lack of access and limited to the objective of remedying that lack of access for the duration of the crisis. Because art is work and needs to be remunerated...

### **THE RIGHT FOR ALL MUSICAL ARTISTS TO OBTAIN JUST RECOGNITION AND REMUNERATION FOR THEIR WORK**

The crisis has revealed gaps in the social and economic protection available to those at the heart of the cultural and creative industries, the artists and cultural workers who are often freelancers with multiple employers, placing a strain on the schemes that already existed.

The crisis has also sped up the digital transformation, raising real questions about the financial viability (without State support) of cultural enterprises, the media and non-profit organisations and about the working conditions of artists and cultural workers.

We have noted that the measures adopted to cope with the crisis are mainly of two kinds: either they aim to respond to urgent needs, such as wage support, compensation for losses, social insurance contributions, holidays and fast-tracked aid payments, or they are the same as found “in normal times,” but with changed parameters to fit the circumstances, such as aid for skills development, investment in infrastructure,

1 <https://en.unesco.org/creativity/publications/culture-crisis-policy-guide-resilient-creative>

2 Francis Gurry, “Some Considerations on Intellectual Property, Innovation, Access and COVID-19”, WIPO, 24 April, 2020, [www.wipo.int/about-wipo/en/dg\\_gurry/news/2020/news\\_0025.html](http://www.wipo.int/about-wipo/en/dg_gurry/news/2020/news_0025.html).

market development etc. To a very large extent, these intervention mechanisms are not specific to the arts and culture sectors.

However, we have also noted that many levels of government – national, regional and local – have come to the aid of creators, bodies and enterprises, acknowledging the fundamental role of these actors and institutions in the wellbeing of communities, a role that has come into even sharper focus in lockdown.

In Africa and Latin America especially, measures aimed at meeting basic needs such as delivering meals or providing social assistance to the poorest households have emerged, bearing in mind that these measures benefit the many artists and creators in the informal sector. Certain collective management organisations also quickly mobilised by paying royalties in advance to authors, composers and performers, many of whom fall between the cracks of the safety net of government aid as they do not meet the criteria for assistance programme dedicated to freelancers or small or medium-sized enterprises.

### IN CONCLUSION...

The arts and culture community is a fragile ecosystem to which governments have devoted years, if not decades, of patient and methodical support, through cultural policies and major public investment, in many countries. All these efforts could be for naught unless something is done. Artists will no longer exercise their talents. Creators will no longer be able to practice their trade. Whole swathes of the value chain could go under (think of concert venues), which would have a

devastating effect both on people's right to take part in cultural life and on the diversity of cultural expressions.

Faced with the globalisation of markets and the digital shift, the cultural and creative industries and the cultural sector as a whole are left with no choice but to adapt by developing new skills, practices and business models.

More than ever, we need to stand united as we strive for a healthy global musical ecosystem and a world where every child and adult can learn, experience, create, perform and express themselves through music and where artists receive recognition and fair remuneration.

*Edited by Mirella Biagi, UK/Italy*

**5 Music Rights**

THE RIGHT FOR ALL CHILDREN AND ADULTS

- 1 To express themselves musically in all freedom
- 2 To learn musical languages and skills
- 3 To have access to musical involvement through participation, listening, creation, and information

THE RIGHT FOR ALL MUSICAL ARTISTS

- 4 To develop their artistry and communicate through all media, with proper facilities at their disposal
- 5 To obtain just recognition and fair remuneration for their work

International Music Council



**SILJA FISCHER** grew up in East Germany and studied in Berlin, Moscow and Hamburg. She joined the General Secretariat of the International Music Council in 1993 where she occupied several positions before her appointment as Secretary General in 2009. In this capacity, she is in charge of official representation, cultural policy matters, membership relations, fundraising as well as programme implementation. Since the International Music Council is an NGO official partner of UNESCO, Silja also liaises with the UNESCO Secretariat as well as with diplomatic representatives of the UNESCO Member States. Silja strongly believes in strategic collaborations for effective and efficient advocacy work. Besides her passion for music and its transformative power, she likes to discover places, meet and connect with people, drink wine, enjoy the sea breeze and nature. Email: [info@imc-cim.org](mailto:info@imc-cim.org)



# MAKING THE BEST OF IT

## INTERVIEW WITH TIM SHARP AND GENT LAZRI

Artikel auf Deutsch

Artículo en español

Article en français

2020 WAS A VERY WEIRD YEAR FOR MUSICAL LIFE. NEVERTHELESS, EVENTS EMERGED, CONCERTS TOOK PLACE AND CD WERE RECORDED BEFORE OR BETWEEN THE LOCKDOWNS. 2021, SOME COMPLETELY NEW EVENTS ARE TO BE BORN, INSPIRED OR CATALYSED BY THIS TIME OF CHANGES AND CHALLENGES. WE MET THE ORGANIZERS OF TWO OF THEM: **POP-UP MESSIAH CHOIR** CONDUCTOR TIM SHARP (USA) AND **CHORALSPACE** FOUNDER GENT LAZRI (GERMANY) AND ASKED THEM ABOUT THE PROCESS OF CREATING SOMETHING NEW IN UNSURE PANDEMIC TIMES.

***Dear Mr Sharp, dear Mr Lazri, your events will start in 2021, after a very difficult year for the whole music scene. Where did you find the strength to create something like this during very silent and worrying months?***

TS: The strength for this project came from working with other choral conductors that were eager to keep activity and performance alive during this devastating time. They wanted to be a part of this initiative and encouraged me to keep planning and thinking about how we could create memorable experiences with our singers.

GL: At a certain moment during the last year, we all have recognized that this crisis will not simply disappear. The way out of this pandemic is a process of change into a new choral world. There are many opportunities connected with this new start. And there are many new skills needed as well. It is a unique chance for the choral musician to not just accept the "new normal" but to design the new choral community. This opportunity feels extremely motivating to me.

***Mr Lazri, you are starting a project called CHORALSPACE in Berlin, Germany, as well as online. Mr Sharp, you will be offering a very special sing along in Georgia, Tennessee and Oklahoma, USA. Please describe your events briefly.***

GL: The CHORALSPACE Academy will be an online university featuring 38 workshops with leading personalities from all over the



Martina Batič



Michael Barrett



World Traveler © Tim Sharp

world and 8 creative sessions with students and mentors. We will offer a 360° academic program for students of all ages. The classes are designed to focus on motivating the participants to learn and create new projects. It will be an extremely practical approach to learning.

TS: The event is a “Pop-up *Messiah* Choir,” where people will sing in their cars or as they stand by their car in a parking lot and listen and sing to an FM radio transmission soundtrack and rehearsal instructions for Handel’s *Messiah*, all centered around a 1958 restored World Traveler Airstream trailer on wheels.

***Starting an event in 2021, after a very complicated year during which the whole music world had to struggle for finances because of an obvious lack of income, how could you find the necessary financial support despite of the COVID crisis? Which organisations are behind these events?***

TS: I am the originator and leader of this series of events. I will personally jumpstart the effort myself with my own financial resources, but I will draw on my institutional supporters at Trevecca University and the Center for Community Arts Innovation and the Tulsa Chorale for marketing and communication support. Further, the sponsoring choral organisations will bring “in kind” support through their marketing and communication efforts and in-kind, non-monetary support. The sponsoring organisation is the Center for Community Arts Innovation at Trevecca University in Nashville, TN (USA) and the Tulsa Chorale, Tulsa, OK. The project will always involve four collaborative choirs hosting the Pop-up *Messiah* Choir, will provide the parking lot

for the event to take place and will assist in advertising and promotion.

GL: We do not have any financial support for the academy – so far. But we have an extremely motivated faculty that has committed to offer the classes for a very modest fee. The non-for-profit organization CHORALSPACE 2021 gGmbH will take over the organization and set-up the structure for the classes. The event is structured as a non-profit project and the costs for the online university will be shared by the participants. The crowd-funding structure and the financial commitment of the students are crucial for the success of the CHORALSPACE Academy.

***In what ways is your event new?***

GL: The academy sessions are spaces to learn, create and perform. The connection between these phases of the choral process will be a truly short one. In addition to the 38 workshops, there will be 8 creative sessions where students can develop and present their own projects. We will mentor this process and help the participants to realize their ideas. The CHORALSPACE performance projects are open to the participants of the academy to stage their ideas and collaborate with international ensembles. This is the innovative approach of the CHORALSPACE Academy.

TS: The “newness” of this experience is the use of older technology, short-range radio FM transmission, to teach and accompany choral music, the use of a retro application of an Airstream trailer to rally and attract a crowd of singers, and the use of a choral classic in Handel’s *Messiah* to use as a sing-along for a variety of trained and untrained singers.

The locations for the first events have been identified as Atlanta, GA,



Inside the airstream ©Tim Sharp



Inside the airstream ©Tim Sharp



Elena Sharkova



Zimfira Poloz

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Lyn Williams

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Andre Thomas

Nashville, TN, and Tulsa, OK, and collaborators have been contacted. The FM transmission has been tested, and the 1958 restored World Traveler Airstream is being equipped for the center of focus and branding of the event as a “Pop-up *Messiah* Choir”. The sheet music is being prepared for QR downloading by the singer, and singer editions are being prepared for seasoned singers as well as beginners that do not read music.

### ***Why was it a need to create this event?***

TS: The fundamental need is to focus attention on choral singing in an initiative of advocacy. This will be particularly helpful as we return to recruiting singers for our choirs following the pandemic. Handel’s *Messiah* was chosen because of its long history with collaborative large group sings, and because of its universal message of peace and reconciliation. Popular songs will also be used to warm up the pop-up choir, leading up to the *Messiah* sing-along. Any donations to the event will be distributed to support the collaborative choirs that will sponsor the pop-up community sing.

GL: The choral community is changing, and not just due to the Covid 19 pandemic. Artistic innovation, audience visibility and social inclusivity are themes that urgently need an international space for creation and realization. We need to educate and motivate choral professionals and amateurs to take the lead and broaden the focus of our choral activities. Choral music plays a particularly important role in our communities. Many people have recognized this for the first time as choir singing was not there anymore. As we will be back, we need to rethink our position and the visibility of our role. It has never been enough

to just expect to be recognized. Graduates of the CHORALSPACE Academy will play an active role in this process and our task is to give them the needed skills for their challenges.

### ***Which is/are the target group(s) of your event?***

GL: We address everyone involved in choral singing. Conductors and music educators are surely the main target group, but we wish to also reach singers, composers, and choir managers. In every choir there is a small group of motivated members that invest a lot of time for the ensemble. We would love to give to these members the tools they need for creating successful projects. In addition, we will connect them to an international choral network. Age is not part of our target group consideration. Learning is a necessity at every age.

TS: The target is both an effort in collaboration for various groups that have not worked together in the past to support choral singing, as well as people who would like to sing in a new and innovative setting. The desire is to bring people into proximity with singing organizations that they could sing with in the future. It is also a chance for people who love to sing *Messiah* to do so in an informal and fun setting.

### ***Did you plan it before the pandemic?***

TS: I had thought about the pop-up choir idea and the need to give attention to choral singing in a new way and in a non-threatening way, but the pandemic gave me the push to do it now. I coupled all of this with the idea of using the very popular idea of focusing on a remodeled Airstream trailer and using it to draw a crowd and draw attention to an event by the media.



GL: Yes. The need of an international online university for choral music has been there for a long time. The technical solutions and ideas came up during the first lockdown in Spring 2020.

***Which challenges did the pandemic bring to the event organisation?***

GL: The pandemic has been a promoting catalyst for the CHORALSPACE Academy. There is now a general acceptance of the need for innovation in the choral community.

At the same time, we all are missing stages and rehearsal halls. Their function within the choral biotope is particularly important and the actual challenge is to create a learning program without the comfort zone of these halls.

TS: The pandemic did not bring challenges, but rather, brought the idea into action due to the necessity of singing in a safe environment and in an outdoor setting. After the

pandemic is under control, the idea will continue as a way to advocate for choral singing and to bring new singers into existing ensembles, and a way to draw attention to the beauty of choral singing.

***Why should IFCM members attend your event?***

GL: IFCM members are internationally well connected and extremely interested in innovative projects around the world. The CHORALSPACE Academy will offer to them a platform to learn, create and perform the own ideas.

TS: An IFCM member will be able to participate in this event as an act of choral advocacy, as well as to enjoy the singing experience itself. We have always started our World Choral Music Symposium with a community sing, and these events are following in the same tradition as we have experienced many times as we come together to experience the joy of singing a common piece of music.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

1. Name of the event: **POP-UP MESSIAH CHOIR**  
(with Tim Sharp)
2. When? Late-Spring 2021
3. Where? First locations are Atlanta, GA; Nashville, TN; Tulsa, OK (USA)
4. Website: [TheTimSharp.com](http://TheTimSharp.com)

1. Name of the event:  
**CHORALSPACE Academy**  
2021/22
2. When? September 7, 2021 to June 28, 2022
3. What? 38 weekly workshops, every Tuesday at 19:00 (CET) (3 weeks of Christmas break in December/January and 2 weeks of Easter break in April)
4. Where? From home or from any remote working and studying place in the world
5. Website: [www.choralspace.org](http://www.choralspace.org)

*Edited by Clayton Parr, USA*



# CHORAL TECHNIQUE



**The shouting choir of Oulu:  
Mieskuoro Huutajat**  
Interview with conductor Petri Sirviö

# THE SHOUTING CHOIR OF OULU: MIESKUORO HUUTAJAT

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## INTERVIEW WITH CONDUCTOR PETRI SIRVIÖ

[Artikel auf Deutsch](#)

[Artículo en español](#)

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***Mr Sirviö, you founded the Mieskuoro Huutajat (Men's Shouting Choir) in Oulu, Finland, back in 1987. How did this idea come about?***

Generally, I feel that ideas are overrated or their importance in the process is misunderstood; almost everyone gets brilliant and less-brilliant ideas on a regular basis. What is more interesting to me is the path to realising your ideas and to making other people love them. Anyhow, with *Huutajat* I must confess that the basic concept was mostly my idea, but we developed it in a group of highly spirited friends over about a 6-month period before the first rehearsals. When we got to the rehearsal room, I realised we hadn't planned any music, so I had to improvise a three-part shouted rendition of the Finnish national anthem – not a good one, but good enough as a proof of concept.

***What kind of works do you perform? Is there repertoire already available for screaming choirs?***

I have composed all of the repertoire that we perform, except for two or three numbers that we only perform on occasion. There are several composers that have composed for speech choirs, sometimes performed at a loud volume, and of course traditional choirs such as haka choirs in New Zealand, but we have never tried that. When composing, I sometimes have certain rhythm patterns or melodies in mind, but the text is always the starting point for the work. A text to shout can be practically anything: from poems to extracts from laws or treaties, from children's ditties to songs of mourning. There just has to be something to shout about or something hidden, that a shouted expression reveals.

***What type of people are members of your choir? Are they professional or amateur singers, or are they professional screamers? How old are they?***

The choir members are amateurs, though some of them are trained musicians. The basic idea for the auditions is that anyone can try. It is rewarding when people with no previously recognised musical skills become excellent shouters with brilliant rhythmic precision and strong vocal expression. In terms of age, we were in our twenties when we started this in 1987 and now we're 33 years older. New members are often in their 30s or so when they join.

***This issue of ICB focusses on "singing and health". Screaming is not seen as a particularly healthy practice for the voice. How do you warm up and how do you train the voices so they don't get tired or damaged?***

The starting point from which we form the screaming voice is by making a loud voice as naturally as possible, to find the personal register and way of voice production in which it feels easiest to be loud. We don't have an aesthetic requirement for a beautiful tone of voice, as is the case with most of the art forms of vocal expression. I guess this helps to keep the shouting on the healthy side, with less harmful tension. It might be surprising, but throughout our history no member of the choir has ever had any medical problems with their vocal chords. We warm up as normal choirs do: starting with good deep breathing, relaxed upper body, soft voices at lower registers, drills with simple scales, etc.

***Do you perform in concerts or at other events? Can you give some examples?***

We have had the privilege to perform at a range of different kinds of venues and set-ups, and I really like it that way. We started with surprise performances in public spaces and have ended up in art museums and doing collaborations with artists from all disciplines — our last major project was with the Royal Ballet of Sweden. But we also do proper two-set concerts and I love them even more: to deliver shouting in a cultivated form for 90 minutes and keep the audience concentrated



and happy all the way it is like a marathon, just as heavy but also just as rewarding.

***Do you know of other screaming choirs in Finland or abroad? Have you done any collaborations?***

There have been some attempts but I don't know of any so far that have succeeded.

***What is the dream for Mieskuoro Huutajat? And for you?***

With limited opportunities to practise and perform, this year has proven that the members just want to go on, and desperately so. Shouting itself and the community of shouters are both fun and rewarding. I share this passion.

More generally, I see this whole story as an ongoing centuries-long performance. We started from scratch as an experiment, from a clear concept of a uniformly-dressed group of men, both as a picture and a caricature of male society. The musical content grew along this concept, and I, as a composer, want to develop it further and further. But what is maybe even more interesting to me is to follow the sociological process of a team growing and maturing: the founding members were angry young men and some of them are already raging grandfathers; the new members adopt the concept and the spirit but bring some new energy. I

don't just mean the aging of the members, but the process of a society growing together, creating its traditions and manners — for good and for bad — constantly proud of it all, but also with a good pinch of self-deprecation.

***Kiitos Paljon***

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*Edited by Bethany Farr, UK*



*volunteers connecting our choral world*

## BE PART OF THE IFCM VOLUNTEER TEAM

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# COMPOSER'S CORNER



**Japanese Choral Composers and their Works from Songbook:**  
A Series of Choral Masterpieces published by Japan Choral Association  
Akihiro Kanagawa



# JAPANESE CHORAL COMPOSERS AND THEIR WORKS FROM SONGBOOK:

## A Series of Choral Masterpieces published by Japan Choral Association

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### AKIHIRO KANAGAWA, JAPAN

*Representing International Committee, Japan Choral Association*

[Artikel auf Deutsch](#)

[Artículo en español](#)

[Article en français](#)

Japan Choral Association (JCA)<sup>1</sup>, consisting of 4,470 Japanese choirs (as of January 2020), has been holding the National Choral Competition every year since 1948. This is a national event in which mixed, female, and male choirs of all generations, from primary school students to adults, take part in regional competitions (1,484 choirs participated in 2019), and only the groups that qualify in the prefectural/regional rounds can proceed to perform in the national competition<sup>2</sup>.

The choirs are required to sing a compulsory piece at the competition. Every year, JCA selects four choral pieces for each category (mixed, male, and female chorus – 12

pieces in total), considering the diversity of the choirs' structures and preferences, and compiles them into an anthology published as *Songbook: A Series of Choral Masterpieces*. The participating choirs can choose a song from the four pieces for their applicable category. This anthology contains a good balance of both Western choral music – from Renaissance polyphony to modern masterpieces – and Japanese choral music, although unfortunately only recent and modern music exist. Japanese pieces include music by the leading composers of the past and today, along with works by young composers who will lead the next generation (see Tables 1 and 2). Why is this possible? The secret is the Asahi Choral Composition Prize.

#### <sup>1</sup> Japan Choral Association

Founded in 1948 and one of the founding members of IFCM, Japan Choral Association, as its name implies, is the largest organisation within Japan's choral world and the sole organisation to have been granted the long-desired status of a legal corporation in 1970. JCA celebrated its 70th anniversary in 2017.

Branches: 9 Regional Associations

Regular members: 54 Prefectural Associations

Support members: 397 persons/organisations

Member choirs: 4,470 (as of 1st June 2020)

#### <sup>2</sup> JCA National Choral Competition

The competition is organised into the following categories: elementary school choirs; junior high school choirs; senior high school choirs; youth choirs; chamber choirs; equal choirs (male and female), and mixed choirs. The choirs that have won in their prefectural and regional competitions move on to participate in this national competition, which takes place every autumn. The first national competition was held in 1948.

Choirs participating in 2019:

Elementary school: 39; Junior high school: 607; Senior high school: 497; University/Youth: 80; Chamber: 139; Equal: 70;

Mixed: 91. Total: 1,484

With the aim of creating and promoting excellent Japanese choral music, JCA started an annual open contest of choral compositions in 1971. Since 1979, it has become a rule to adopt the winning piece as a compulsory piece in the National Choral Competition. Then, in 1990, the Asahi Choral Composition Prize (prize money: 1 million yen (approx. US \$10,000)) was newly created as an official award for the contest. With this prize, the quality and quantity of the submitted works improved remarkably, and the winning composers started to receive significant recognition by society. If the choral world is like a forest, we are planting young trees looking ahead to 30 years or 50 years from now. The fully grown forests will store water, produce nutrition, and nurture rich lives for years to come.

Major Composers of Japan	Year of birth — Year of death	Number of pieces selected for songbook
Osamu Shimizu	1911-1986	14 works
Saburo Takata	1913-2000	12 works
Michio Mamiya	1929-	8 works
Akira Miyoshi	1933-2013	15 works
Hidehiko Hagihara	1933-2001	13 works
Shinichiro Ikebe	1943-	11 works
Tokuhide Niimi	1947-	8 works
Makiko Kinoshita	1956-	10 works
Hideki Chihara	1957-	3 works
Takatomi Nobunaga	1971-	6 works
Maki Ueda	1976-	1 work

Let me introduce six Japanese choral works (two each for mixed/male/female choirs) selected in the *Songbook* recently.

**TOMURAI-NO ATO-WA (AFTER A FUNERAL) (2002)  
BY TAKATOMI NOBUNAGA**

See video: [https://youtu.be/1G\\_n7UFVa-s](https://youtu.be/1G_n7UFVa-s)

(From Song for a Fresh Start. Text by Hajime Kijima. For mixed chorus and piano.)

Takatomi Nobunaga is such a prolific and talented composer that it chills me even to imagine what the choral world would have looked like if this composer had not appeared. His career is worthy of special attention, as he graduated from university without majoring in music. It is also surprising that he acquired his piano and composition skills almost by himself.

As it has been three-quarters of a century since Japan experienced the war, most Japanese citizens are “children who do not know the war.” Even though Nobunaga is right in the midst of this generation, it is noteworthy that many of his messages are about the unreasonable nature of war. The composer himself wrote that his motive for creating the piece was a prayer which resonated with him written by Hajime Kijima, a poet who looked for a ray of hope even in despair, based on his primal experience of, “going through the aftermath of war while caring for A-bomb victims at the age of 17.”

Of special importance is the last verse, “More paralysing than a gun / A tune that stops you from pulling the trigger,” with a strong air of agonising pain at having no choice but to believe in a transient existence. The piece is written very simply without unusual harmony or techniques. This simplicity is the very beauty of this

**Recent Winners of “Asahi Choral Composition Prize — Open Contest of Choral Suites”**

2010	Toyotaka Tsuchida (1981-)
2011	Noritaka Moriyama (1982-)
2012	Shoichi Asai (1988- )
2013	Kaori Morita (1987- )
2014	Yuka Yamashita (1987- )
2015	Toshiaki Ichihara (1982- )
2016	Norikazu Omokawa (1983- )
2017	Kentaro Shuto (1985- )
2018	Yoshihiro Kawaura (1993- )
2019	Tatsuhiko Yamaguchi (1988- )
2020	Kosuke Negishi (1998- )

music. If anything, the extremely slow tempo of ♩ = 33 leaves you with a stronger impression of this deep prayer in Japanese.

**Takatomi Nobunaga (1971- )**

The most frequently performed current choral composer in Japan, having created works for mixed, male, and female choruses, including arrangements favoured by many. Three-times winner of the Asahi Choral Composition Prize (1994, 1995 and 1999). Became a professional composer after a previous career as a government official, having acquired composition skills through self-learning.

20 C *mp* *mp*

Soprano — B.F. — B.O. —

Alto う — — — *mp poco a poco cresc.* — — — — —  
 Hi - to wo — — — Shi - bi - re - sa -

Tenor *mf* う 銃 — よ り ひ と を し び れ さ —  
 Jū yo - ri Hi - to wo Shi - bi - re - sa -

Bass *mp* み よ う B.F. — *poco a poco cresc.* — — — — —  
 mi - yō Hi - to wo — — — Shi - bi -

24 *mf* *cresc.* — — — — — *f*

— ひ と を し び れ さ す う た の こ と — み よ う ひ き  
 Hi - to wo Shi - bi - re - sa - su U - ta no Ko - to mi - yō Hi - ki -

*mf* *cresc.* — — — — — *f*

す う た — の う た の こ と — ゆ め — ゆ め み よ う ひ き  
 su U - ta no U - ta no Ko - to Yu - me Yu - me - mi - yō Hi - ki -

*mf* *cresc.* — — — — — *f*

す う た A — — — — — ゆ め み よ う ゆ め み — よ う ひ き  
 su U - ta Yu - me - mi - yō Yu - me - mi - yō Hi - ki -

*mf* *cresc.* — — — — — *f*

れ さ す A — — — — — ゆ め — — — — — み よ う ひ き  
 re - sa - su Yu - me - - - - mi - yō Hi - ki -

29 D *ff* *ff* *ff* *ff*

が ね ひ け な く な る — — — — — う た  
 ga - ne Hi - ke - na - ku Na - ru U - ta

が ね ひ け な く な る — — — — — う た  
 ga - ne Hi - ke - na - ku Na - ru U - ta

が ね ひ け な く な る し び れ さ す う た  
 ga - ne Hi - ke - na - ku Na - ru Shi - bi - re - sa - su U - ta

が ね ひ け な く な る し び れ さ す う た  
 ga - ne Hi - ke - na - ku Na - ru Shi - bi - re - sa - su U - ta

“Tomurai-no Ato-wa (After a Funeral)” (2002) by Takatomi Nobunaga  
 (From “Song for a Fresh Start.” Text by Hajime Kijima. For mixed chorus and piano.)

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**KUSA-NO UE (ON THE GRASS) IV (2017)****BY KENTARO SHUTO**See video: <https://youtu.be/PMJIsC9yZkI>

(Text by Tatsuji Miyoshi. For mixed chorus and piano.)

The winning piece of the Asahi Composition Prize in 2017. It is the last piece of a suite for mixed chorus and piano entitled *On the Grass* (five pieces), but it is titled "IV" because the first piece of the suite is a piano solo prelude. The texts are a series of four verses taken from *Sokuryo-sen* (Survey Ship) (1930), a feature work by one of the best Japanese poets, Tatsuji Miyoshi (1900-1964).

The pianist must be considerably skilled to be able to perform this music. As a background, piano education is highly advanced in Japan, but there is also a strong intention by the composer to incorporate styles of musical instruments into vocal works.

Conductors from other countries often ask me why there are few *a cappella* choral works in Japan. A major reason is that chorus experiences for most people start in school education in Japan, while they are rooted in churches in other countries. School teachers always use keyboard instruments for teaching and the singers tend to depend on them, so they find it natural to play with accompanying instruments.

This piece has a weak sense of tonality in the right-hand part of the piano, but the left hand plays perfect intervals, so it may be easier to sing for the chorus than it seems on the score. A goose is dashing down a path and on the grass in a flurry. Probably it is a sunny day with clear sky. Her shadow is also running along in a flurry. This rush and the humour are described well, especially by the piano. The glissando played by the piano's right hand may be a scene where the goose opens its wings. This lively presence is expressed as if we can actually hear its quack, with the comical ending of splashing into the pond expressed with a tone cluster.

**Kentaro Shuto (1985- )**

Winner of the Asahi Choral Composition Prize in 2017. Composer/Arranger, also active as a pianist, instructor, YouTube creator and sound producer. Graduated from Tokyo University of Arts (Composition Department, Faculty of Music). Master's degree from Tokyo University of Arts, Graduate School of Music.

**COMPOSITION FOR CHORUS NO 6-I (1968)****BY MICHIO MAMIYA**See video: <https://youtu.be/QTrLj1sPFgo>

(Text from traditional folk songs of Iwate and by Michio Mamiya. For male chorus.)

Michio Mamiya was among the first Japanese composers whose works were performed and favoured by choirs outside of Japan. He may resemble Bartók or Kodály of Hungary in that he incorporated traditional folk music into his creations. The fact that he travelled all over Japan for field research into traditional tunes and tried to analyse and classify relationships between the lyrics and music as well as between text and rhythm was probably an influence from the two Hungarian composers.

In the process, he realised the richness of *Hayashi-kotoba* (meaningless words for rhythmical effect), which is added to almost every Japanese traditional folk song. The title of 'Composition' was born in the process of classifying and structuring these words for sound effect.

Composition No. 6 consists of three movements, the first of which was selected as a compulsory piece. It was based on two folk songs maintained in Waga County and Hienuki County (currently Ohasama Town, Hanamaki City) in Iwate Prefecture. The first half is *Hie-tsuki Uta* (Millet-Pounding Song) sung in Waga County. Japanese millets and foxtail millets are minor grains used in lieu of rice, and they were precious food in this region, which frequently suffered from famine due to cold weather in the past. This is a work song sung by two or three people surrounding a hand mill while pounding the grain. In the lyrics, tenant farmers are cursing their master for being flattering while they are working but treating them coldly once the work is done.

The motif for the latter half of the piece is *Hayashi-kotoba* (rhythmical meaningless words) from *Kakitauchi-Uta* (Rice Planting Song), a rice-planting dance song maintained in Kamegamori, Ohasama Town. Mamiya's characteristic fugato is inserted in the middle part of the homophony. It is surprising how he can convert Japanese music, which is originally monophonic, into such a rich sound space.

**Michio Mamiya (1929- )**

Composer known for 17 works of "Composition for Chorus," a series of choral pieces using *Hayashi-kotoba* (meaningless traditional texts for rhythmical effect) as a motif. After carrying out extensive research for many years on traditional folk music of different ethnic groups around the world, including Japan, Mamiya found his interest in these rhythmical words used for sound effect in traditional folk songs and composed this series. Graduated from Tokyo School of Music (now Tokyo University of Arts).

*poco a poco accel.* - - - - -

60

Soprano *mp* unis. *mf*  
はしる Ha-shi-ru はしる Ha-shi-ru

Alto *mp* *mf*  
はしる はしる Ha-shi-ru はしる Ha-shi-ru

Tenor *p* unis. *mf* div. *f* unis. *f*  
はしる Ha-shi-ru はしる Ha-shi-ru はし Ha-shi-

Bass *p* *mf* div. *f* unis. *f*  
はしる Ha-shi-ru はしる Ha-shi-ru はし Ha-shi-

*poco a poco accel.* - - - - -

Piano *p*  
The piano accompaniment features a series of triplet figures in the right hand and sustained chords in the left hand, with a gradual acceleration indicated by the *poco a poco accel.* marking.

- - - - - **Tempo I Vivace** (♩=224 ca.) *rit.* - - - - -

63

Soprano *f* *ff*  
はしる Ha-shi-ru あ Ah

Alto *f* *ff*  
はしる Ha-shi-ru あ Ah

Tenor *f* *ff*  
る ru あ Ah

Bass *f* *ff*  
る ru あ Ah

- - - - - **Tempo I Vivace** (♩=224 ca.) *rit.* - - - - -

Piano *f* *ff*  
The piano accompaniment continues with triplet figures and sustained chords, maintaining the *Tempo I Vivace* and ending with a *rit.* (ritardando) marking.

“Kusa-no Ue (On the Grass) IV” (2017) by Kentaro Shuto (Text by Tatsuji Miyoshi. For mixed chorus and piano)

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**MAJIME-NA KAOTSUKI (SERIOUS COUNTENANCE)  
(1979) BY AKIRA MIYOSHI**

See video: <https://youtu.be/SJVPsig1hFg>

(From Klee's Picture Book, Vol. 2. Text by Shuntaro Tanikawa. For male chorus.)

The influence of composer Akira Miyoshi on Japanese choral music is unfathomable. It is no exaggeration to say that the Miyoshi school has maintained the chorus culture ever since his death in 2013. The foundation for his music style was the tradition of Western European music. In other words, it was a product of untiring admiration commonly held by musicians born in the Far East.

The poem was originally published by Shuntaro Tanikawa as For 'Picture Book' of Paul Klee's Pictures in 1975. Tanikawa says that he wrote these poems inspired by the titles of the pictures, rather than Klee's paintings themselves.

*Majime-na Kaotsuki* (Serious Countenance) is written with clear tonality (G) and is considered relatively easy for solfege, which was why it was chosen as a compulsory piece. The texts consist of four verses of three lines, and the ending, "Serious people / Kill people seriously / Terrifying," is the core of the piece. The harmony procession of this part has an eeriness typical of Miyoshi and is overwhelming.

As Miyoshi uses many soft accents to change the sound colour, the description of < > is called "Miyoshi accent" in Japan and is sometimes considered special. Klee's colours are musical, and Miyoshi's music is very colourful.

**Akira Miyoshi (1933-2013)**

Composer of plenty of choral works as well as music for orchestras, chamber music and songs. His music-making style and use of harmonies have significantly influenced composers of the next generation, especially in the choral field. Miyoshi studied at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique in Paris on a scholarship provided by the French government while he was a student at Tokyo University (Department of French Literature, Faculty of Literature).

**KASUGA-TAISHA OTAUE-UTA (RICE PLANTING SONG  
OF KASUGA-TAISHA SHRINE) (1983)**

**BY HIDEKI CHIHARA**

See video: <https://youtu.be/UJLb4-Fkg9Y>

(From Two Rice-Planting Songs. Text by Hideki Chihara based on traditional songs. For female chorus.)

Hideki Chihara is among the most popular composers of today. His works are especially favoured by young choirs.

There is a Japanese word, *Keren* (showiness), which is a term used in theatrical drama and means playing to the gallery as a directing method. Simply put, it is a way of exaggerated expression, perhaps similar to "déformer" in French. While *Noh* is quiet, *Kabuki* and *Joruri* are active, and this activeness is the showiness. Hideki Chihara's works are filled with this *Keren-mi* (showmanship).

*Kasuga-Taisha* is one of the most historical shrines established at the foot of Mount Kasuga in Nara – a former capital of Japan – in 768 A.D. The motif of this song is a religious ritual held at this shrine every January, with a dance offered to wish for a rich annual harvest at the rice-planting festival. The accompaniment is a style of music originally brought over from China called *Gagaku* (ceremonial court music) and has a unique sound based on a twelve-tone scale – almost a chromatic scale, but slightly different from equal temperament. If you play the first motif at the beginning of the piece, you may feel this more or less.

The original song has the quietness of *Noh*, but Chihara has rewritten it into cheerful and free-spirited active expression typical for work songs, as if we can see the fair legs of young girls beneath their underskirts as they plant rice.

The composer's intention is to remove the barriers between sacred and secular, artistic songs and folk songs.

**Hideki Chihara (1957- )**

Composer with a unique style of combining Japanese traditional music, classical literature, folk songs and traditional arts with Western music such as Christian sacred songs. Graduated from Tokyo University of Arts (Composition Department, Faculty of Music). Master's degree from Tokyo University of Arts, Graduate School of Music. Having been taught composition by Michio Mamiya, Chihara has won various prizes in composition contests in Japan and other countries since he was at university.



39 [5]

*p* *mf*

Tenor  
Hon — Hon — Ha — Ha-re - gu-re Sa - a-no

Bariton  
Hon — Hon — Ho — Ho —

Bass  
*mf* *mf*  
Ha-re - gu-re Sa (ア)ノ サー Ho — Ho —

44

*ten.* *ff*

Sa-n - sa - e Ha-re - gu-re Sa - a-no Sa-n - sa —

*ten.* *ten.* *ff*

Ha-no - sa - e — Ha-re - gu-re Sa - a-no Sa — Sa —

*ten.* *ten.* *ff* *f*

Ha-no - sa - e — O — O — Ha-re —

### Un poco meno

48 [6] Moderato

*p* *f* *ff*

Ha - n Ho - n - no

Ha - n — Ho - n - no

Sa — Ho - n - no Ho

“Composition for Chorus No 6-I” (1968) by Michio Mamiya  
(Text from traditional folk songs of Iwate and by Michio Mamiya. For male chorus.)

©1972 by Zen-On Music Company Ltd.

**IERAISHAN (NIGHT FRAGRANT FLOWER) (1982)****BY SHIN-ICHIRO IKEBE**

(From Four Seasons of Flowers. Text by Shoko Ema. For female chorus and piano.)

Shin-ichiro Ikebe is a composer considered to be among the first students of the Miyoshi school. He is an all-round composer who writes all genres of music, but he has no equal in incidental music for theatrical dramas and films.

Regarding involvement in society as important, he has created many works on the theme of environmental issues or human rights. He assumes many public roles, and his active creativity is unstoppable even after reaching 77 years of age. He is also an advisor to JCA.

*Ieraishan* (Night Fragrant Flower (*L. telosma cordata*)), selected as a compulsory piece, is a work for female chorus with piano accompaniment. The title is the name of a flower native to southern China or Vietnam. Its yellow flowers with five petals bloom in the summer with floating sweet incense, but the incense somehow deepens at night, which is the origin of the name.

This poem is set in the Autumn section of a collection of poems by Shoko Ema and botanical arts by Junzo Fujishima, titled Four Seasons of Flowers, and the music is written in a classical style to cherish the beauties of nature, which is unusual for Ikebe's works. Shoko Ema is the poet of *Natsu-no-Omoide* (Memories of Summer) by Yoshinao Nakata, a song known by all Japanese people. While she thought of Oze - a highland marsh on the border of Fukushima, Niigata, and Gunma prefectures - at the scent of *Mizubasho* (skunk-cabbage flowers) in *Natsu-no-Omoide*, here she is dreaming of different countries faraway. Ikebe expresses the deepening air of autumn with the humming in the parts without lyrics.

**Shin-ichiro Ikebe (1943- )**

Composer of a variety of music for chorus, orchestra, film and television, Shin-ichiro Ikebe is a forerunner of Japanese modern music. Graduated from Tokyo University of Arts (Composition Department, Faculty of Music). Master's degree from Tokyo University of Arts, Graduate School of Music. Taught composition by Akira Miyoshi at university. Advisor to JCA, Professor Emeritus of Tokyo College of Music, and holds titles at many cultural organisations.

*Translated by Tomoko Yokoyama (International Committee, JCA)*

*Edited by Shuhei Sanada (JCA Secretariat) and Lydia de Montfort*

**WANT TO SING THESE SONGS?****PUBLICATION INFORMATION:****Tomurai-no Ato-wa (After a Funeral)**

(From Song for a Fresh Start. For mixed chorus and piano.)

- Publisher: Ongaku No Tomo Sha
- ISBN: 978-4-2765-4492-5

**Kusa-no Ue (On the Grass) IV**

(For mixed chorus and piano.)

- Publisher: Edition KAWAI
- ISBN: 978-4-7609-1985-7

**Composition for Chorus No 6-I**

(For male chorus.)

- Publisher: Zen-On Music
- ISBN: 978-4-1171-8560-7

**Majime-na Kaotsuki (Serious Countenance)**

(From 'Klee's Picture Book, Vol. 2.' For male chorus.)

- Publisher: Edition KAWAI
- ISBN: 978-4-7609-1804-1

**Kasuga-Taisha Otaue-Uta (Rice Planting Song of Kasuga-Taisha Shrine)**

(From Two Rice-Planting Songs. For female chorus)

- Publisher: Zen-On Music
- ISBN: 978-4-1171-9152-3

**Ieraishan (Night fragrant flower)**

(From Four Seasons of Flowers. For female chorus and piano.)

- Publisher: Edition KAWAI
- ISBN: No data

*Edited by Lydia de Montfort, UK*



Tenor I

ま じ め な ひ と が ま じ め に ひ と を こ ろ  
 Ma - ji - me na Hi - to ga Ma - ji - me ni Hi - to wo Ko - ro -

Tenor II

*ff*

ま じ め な ひ と が ま じ め に ひ と を こ ろ  
 Ma - ji - me na Hi - to ga Ma - ji - me ni Hi - to wo Ko - ro -

Baritone

*ff*

ま じ め な ひ と が ま じ め に ひ と を こ ろ  
 Ma - ji - me na Hi - to ga Ma - ji - me ni Hi - to wo Ko - ro -

Bass

ま じ め な ひ と が ま じ め に ひ と を こ ろ  
 Ma - ji - me na Hi - to ga Ma - ji - me ni Hi - to wo Ko - ro -

37

*mf* *rall. - - - [Poco meno mosso]*

す(u) お そ ろ し  
 su O - so - ro - shi -

す(u) お そ ろ し  
 su O - so - ro - shi -

す(u) お そ ろ し  
 su O - so - ro - shi -

す(u) お そ ろ し  
 su O - so - ro - shi -

40

*mp* *p* *[Più lento]* *perdendosi* *> pp*

い お そ ろ し い お そ ろ し  
 i O - so - ro - shi - i O - so - ro - shi - i

*mp* *p* *perdendosi* *> pp*

い ま じ め な ひ と が お そ ろ し  
 i Ma - ji - me na Hi - to ga O - so - ro - shi - i

*mp* *p* *perdendosi* *> pp*

い ま じ め な ひ と が お そ ろ し  
 i Ma - ji - me na Hi - to ga O - so - ro - shi - i

*mp* *p* *perdendosi* *> pp*

い お そ ろ し い お そ ろ し  
 i O - so - ro - shi - i O - so - ro - shi - i



**Andante** ♩ = ca. 66

**System 1 (Measures 1-4):**

- Soprano I:** *mf* わ - か - た - ね *f* う - え - ほ - よ
- Soprano II:** (rest) *f* う - え - ほ - よ
- Alto I:** *mf* わ - か - た - ね *f* う - え - ほ - よ
- Alto II:** (rest) *f* う - え - ほ - よ

**System 2 (Measures 5-8):**

- Soprano I:** (rest) *ff* う - え - ほ - よ
- Soprano II:** *mf* な - え - た - ね *ff* う - え - ほ - よ
- Alto I:** (rest) *ff* う - え - ほ - よ
- Alto II:** *mf* な - え - た - ね *ff* う - え - ほ - よ

“Kasuga-Taisha Otaue-Uta (Rice Planting Song of Kasuga-Taisha Shrine)” (1983) by Hideki Chihara  
(From “Two Rice-Planting Songs.” Text by Hideki Chihara based on traditional songs. For female chorus)

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The musical score is for a piece titled "Aki ga Fu-kama-tte Iku Hi-gure". It is arranged for Soprano I, Soprano II, Alto, and Piano. The score is in 4/4 time, with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The tempo is marked "ritenuto". The score is divided into four measures, with a 5-measure rest in the first measure. The lyrics are in Japanese and English. The Soprano I part has a melodic line with a 3-measure rest in the first measure. The Soprano II and Alto parts have a melodic line with a 3-measure rest in the first measure. The Piano part has a melodic line with a 3-measure rest in the first measure. The lyrics are: あ き が ふ か ま っ て い く ひ ぐ れ (A - ki ga Fu-ka-ma-tte I - ku Hi-gu-re).

**Soprano I**  
 あ き が ふ か ま っ て い く ひ ぐ れ  
 A - ki ga Fu-ka-ma-tte I - ku Hi-gu-re

**Soprano II**  
 M あ き の ひ ぐ れ  
 A - ki no Hi-gu-re

**Alto**  
 M あ き の ひ ぐ れ  
 A - ki no Hi-gu-re

**Piano**  
 M

“Iraishan (Night fragrant flower)” (1982) by Shin-ichiro Ikebe  
(From “Four Seasons of Flowers.” Text by Shoko Ema. For female chorus and piano.)  
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# REVIEWS



**CD Review 1:**  
**Homelands Vol. 1 – Ensemble Cythera**  
T.J. Harper

**CD Review 2:**  
**This Love Between Us – The Elora singers**  
T.J. Harper



# HOMELANDS VOL. 1

## Ensemble Cythera

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**REVIEWED BY T. J. HARPER, USA**

DMA

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HOMELANDS VOLUME I – FROM HUNGARY TO GERMANY

MIHÁLY ZEKE, CONDUCTOR

MARIE VERMEULIN, PIANO

RECORDED AT ABBEY OF MARIENMÜNSTER, NORDRHEIN-WESTFALEN, GERMANY

(2020, 60' 34")

[WWW.ENSEMBLECYTHERA.COM](http://WWW.ENSEMBLECYTHERA.COM)

The 18<sup>th</sup> Century French Rococo painter Jean-Antoine Watteau's work, *Pilgrimage to Cythera*, ushered in a new type of painting known as *la fête galante*, an allegorical representation of courtship and falling in love. This style focused on the revival of color and movement within painting which were featured most prominently in the bucolic and idyllic scenes of pseudo-amorous entertainments of the time. In the title for this painting, the Greek island of *Cythera* was a most appropriately selected destination as it was the birthplace of the deity Aphrodite, Goddess of Love. Similarly, conductor Mihály Zeke has selected this same island as an ideal moniker for the newly-formed, pan-European chamber choir that strives for the "highest standard of technical quality and passionate expressiveness" in their contemporary revival of choral colors as a representation of their own love of choral music. The love of choral music and passionate expressiveness expressed by Ensemble Cythera is closely aligned to the Greek concept of *pragma* or enduring love which is characterized by its deep commitment and dedication.

The cultural landscape of a people is rooted deep in the past, often reaching beyond recorded history. Over time, through the oral tradition, these origins are preserved within a culture through speech or song and passed from one generation to the next, helping to inform, define and enrich a people's history. In *Homelands Vol. I*, Cythera demonstrates their *pragma* or deep commitment and dedication to the carefully curated repertoire to realize the critical significance our folk history provides to better appreciate this heritage and contextualize it for continued artistic growth. Musicologist and fellow at the French National Center for Scientific Research Hervé Audéon astutely suggests that "...to give a sophisticated dimension to a folk culture acts to strengthen it and enables its transmission by inscribing it in a tradition that surpasses the limitations of its natural boundaries." Once surpassed, the musical tradition informed by "sophisticated dimension" becomes more than a means of preserving the past. It affirms our collective identity and allows us to communicate with clarity and purpose to understand the value of our shared, collaborative future.

*Homelands Vol. 1* is an exceptional and ambitious debut recording for Cythera under the adept artistic direction of Mihály Zeke. This recording features works by Zoltán Kodály (1882–1967), Béla Bartók (1881–1945), Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904) arranged by Leoš Janáček (1854–1928), Arnold Schönberg (1874–1951), and Johannes Brahms (1833–1897). The true strength of this recording lies in the selection of integral but rarely performed



---

Mihály Zeke, conductor  
© Gergely Máté Oláh

compositions combined with more traditional pillars of this broad genre that create an eclectic but thematically homogeneous artistic statement. This album is indeed a constant dialogue between tradition and modernity, between orally-transmitted music and written choral music. Upon close inspection, the listener is invited to appreciate the thoughtful ordering of the repertoire into three distinct but related categories by artistic director, Mihály Zeke: External, Internal Objective, and Internal Subjective.

In the first category, the External is represented in *Mátra képek* (Mátra Pictures) by Zoltán Kodály. This work is a sweeping glance at the vastness of country life but from the perspective of a tourist, looking in from the outside at the various and varied comings and goings of folk life and the people within.

In the second category, the Internal Objective works as an eclectic series of intimate portraits of country life, individuals, matters of the heart, and loss. The works represented here are from two collections of folk songs by Béla Bartók: *Magyar népdalok*

(Hungarian Folk Songs), and *Négy tót népdal* (Four Slovak Folk Songs). This is followed by one set of songs by Antonín Dvořák arranged by Leoš Janáček: *Šest moravských dvojzpěvů* (Six Moravian Duos).

Finally, the third category, Internal Subjective, takes a close look at the intimate expansiveness of Folk life through the eyes of the community member. Here, matters of the heart, faith, the soul connect with a quiet reflection on the virtuous nature of belonging and what it means "to be home" (*An die Heimat*). The works representing this third category are *Drei Volkslieder* (Three German Folk Songs) by Arnold Schönberg, and *Volkslieder* (Folk Songs) by Johannes Brahms.

A compelling aspect of this recording is the ability of Ensemble Cythera to realize each performance without artificially superimposing themselves upon the composition. Rather, deference is given to the character and spirit of each work and the compositions are allowed to speak for themselves, to honestly convey the composers' intentions. The emotional sincerity in each performance draws the listener into the pastoral and often-



times intimate nature of each story instead of keeping the listener at a distance. Artistic Director, Mihály Zeke confidently conveys clarity of text and emotional content without sacrificing balance of performing forces or narrative arc from the most straightforward settings to the most complex. There is a consistent aural palate achieved throughout the recording, which speaks to an incredibly high level of understanding, sensitivity, and technical facility from the singers.

Special mention must be given to pianist Marie Vermeulin who is featured playing an 1896 Steinway in the Bartók *Négy tót népdal*



Ensemble Cythera, cond. Mihály Zeke © Sébastien Brohier



(Four Slovak Folk Songs), the *Šest moravských dvojzpěvů* (Six Moravian Duos), and *An die Heimat* (To the Homeland) by Brahms. Vermeulin, with advanced studies at the Conservatoire National Supérieur Musique et Danse de Lyon (CNSMD de Lyon) achieves remarkable color, phrasing, energy, and sensitivity in each recording. The power of her accompaniment is only matched by her technical finesse in perfect collaboration with the singers.

Cythera is a European chamber choir founded by Mihály Zeke in 2019 following his years at the head of Arslys Bourgogne. Cythera was born out of the desire to form a new group of international composition and open to new forms of artistic collaboration. The ensemble's size varies around an average of 24 singers according to each different project. The choir is dedicated to

bringing the best choral music, old and new, to audiences while striving for the highest standard of technical quality and for passionate expressiveness. Cythera's singers, chosen for their unique artistic personality, are marked by high individual skill as soloists in a wide range of repertoire as well as by their capacity to blend into a homogeneous sound.

Mihály Zeke founded Cythera in 2019. He collaborates regularly with orchestras such as La Fenice, Pulcinella and the Orchestre Dijon Bourgogne as well as with Accentus and the Hungarian and Hellenic Radio Choirs. He currently teaches in Tübingen and in Stuttgart, where he also conducts the University Symphony Orchestra and Choir. A passionate musician committed to engaging audiences with thrilling performances, he continues to gain a reputation as a musical

force equally versed in symphonic repertoire, opera, and new music.

*Homelands Vol. 1* was recorded from February 28 to March 1, 2020 at the Abbey of Marienmünster, Nordrhein-Westfalen under the artistic direction of Mihály Zeke and with sound engineer Piotr Furmanczyk. *Homelands* is planned as a pentalogy of recordings offering a panorama of choral repertoire based on folk melodies from all over Europe, as reimagined by some of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries' greatest composers.



*Edited by Taylor Ffitch, USA*

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# THIS LOVE BETWEEN US

## The Elora Singers

**REVIEWED BY T. J. HARPER, USA**

DMA

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**MARK VUORINEN, CONDUCTOR**

**RECORDED AT THE MAUREEN FORRESTER RECITAL HALL**

**WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY, WATERLOO, ONTARIO, CANADA**

**(2020, 53' 48")**

[WWW.ELORASINGERS.CA](http://WWW.ELORASINGERS.CA)

It is not often when a choral recording manages to capture the vastness of universal themes and simultaneously places an apt spotlight on the humanitarian crises afflicting women and young girls around the world due to the violence created implicitly in colonization. What places this recording in a wholly new category are the profoundly impactful compositional voices of Indian-American composer Reena Esmail, and Odawa First Nation composer Barbara Croall.

In *This Love Between Us*, conductor Mark Vuorinen has managed to deftly capture the emotional substance communicated through the musical

offerings of Reena Esmail: *This Love Between Us*; *Prayers for Unity*, tracks #1-7; and Barbara Croall: *Giishkaapkag (Where the Rock is Cut Through)*, track #8. Recorded by The Elora Singers on July 29 & 30, 2019 in Maureen Forrester Recital Hall at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo,



The Elora Singers, cond. Mark Vuorinen

Ontario, this latest offering from Mark Vuorinen provides a concise, tightly-knit tapestry of seemingly disparate languages, religious traditions, and musical heritages.

### THIS LOVE BETWEEN US: PRAYERS FOR UNITY

Indian American composer Reena Esmail

Centered on the seven major religious traditions of India (Buddhism, Sikhism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Jainism, and Islam), Indian-American composer Reena Esmail's *This Love Between Us* presents a grand vision for unity through the different faith traditions in India. Esmail, who strives to "bring communities together through the creation of equitable musical spaces," effectively creates a prismatic juxtaposition within which the concept of unity is realized as an ever-present force for goodwill and affirmation. Unlike earlier attempts by composers to create a composite musical experience through the use of religion and/or familiar texts (i.e., *The Armed Man* by Karl Jenkins, or *Requiem for Peace* by Larry Nickel), *This Love Between Us* carefully examines our shared commonality through the duality of western and eastern musical practices and successfully integrates the multi-dimensional lens of seven seemingly disparate faith traditions into one artistic voice.

The seven movements of this insightful and oft-times celebratory work draw the listener into the experience explicitly through a process the composer describes as a simultaneous union where "each text is itself set in English and in its original language ... so you can hear the beauty of the original and grasp its meaning through translation." Esmail further reinforces this concept by combining Indian and Western classical compositional styles, techniques, traditions, and

instrumentation (sitar and tabla with Baroque orchestra). This merging of styles is clearly evidenced in *Track V. Hinduism* which dramatically foregrounds the *sitar* and *Track VI. Jainism* and its use of driving rhythms created by the *tabla* and orchestral accompaniment.

The humanistic truth at the heart of this work lies in the implicit messages in the selected texts which acknowledge our universal "One-ness" but also recognize the ever-present struggle we all face when learning to accept those who are different from us, whose faith traditions are unfamiliar, and those with whom we do not agree. In response to this, Esmail reminds the listener to focus on the last affirming lines of this work from Rumi: "Concentrate on the Essence. Concentrate on the Light."

The text sources for each track are listed here:

**Track I. Buddhism:** Dhammapada (Buddhist text) (Danda Vagga – 10:129-132) (English and Pali)

**Track II. Sikhism:** Guru Granth Sahib (p. 1238) (English and Gurumukhi)

**Track III. Christianity:** Romans 13:8-13 (Bible) (English and Malayalam)

**Track IV. Zoroastrianism:** Pahlavi Rivayat (8a8) (English and Pahlavi)

**Track V. Hinduism:** Isa Upanishad (verses 6-7) and selections from Kabir (English and Hindi)

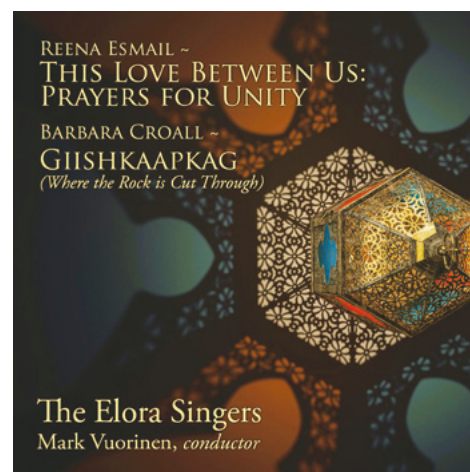
**Track VI. Jainism:** Acharanga Sutra (Jain text) (Part 3: Lecture 15) (English and Adha Maghadi)

**Track VII. Islam:** Rumi (along with affirming phrases in other religions)

### GIISHKAAPKAG (WHERE THE ROCK IS CUT THROUGH, 2019)

Odawa First Nation composer, Barbara Croall

The concept of unity through the careful marriage of musical styles and cultural traditions is clearly evident in *Giishkaapkag (Where*



*the Rock is Cut Through*) by Odawa First Nation composer, Barbara Croall. However, in stark contrast to the principled themes presented in the music of Reena Esmail, Barbara Croall unapologetically confronts our collective quiescent acknowledgement with unabashed outrage at the violence visited upon women and girls throughout time. The thematic contrasts are audibly illustrated through the use of a traditional cedar flute, or *Pipigwan*, performed by the composer on this recording against the backdrop of intermittent classical orchestral forces.

In the program notes for *Giishkaapkag (Where the Rock is Cut Through)*, Barbara Croall writes, "As Nishinaabeg, we know of the rocks as the most ancient beings since this earth was created. When the rocks...are violated, it represents a violence to the feminine in creation. Due to Colonization, many women and girls have suffered...countless waves of violence, have disappeared... and have died...due to the many past and ongoing violations of Shkakmiggkwe (Mother Earth). The rocks bear witness and speak to us of this."

The frenetic nature of this work overtly expresses the "violence to the feminine in creation" as well as the very real violence against women and girls. In concurrent and persistent iterations of

visceral vocalizations by the choir we hear the voices of women and girls, the sound of laughter, nature, birds, heartbeat, rattlesnakes, and wolves. Ultimately, the rocks bear witness to everything and the "ancient voices transcending time emerge from these rocks", and speak to us. Barbara Croall reminds us that it is up to us to listen.

The Elora Singers are an all-professional Grammy- and JUNO-nominated chamber choir founded in 1980. They have an established reputation as one of the finest chamber choirs in Canada with a commitment to Canadian repertoire and twelve releases on the NAXOS label. The Elora Singers are known for their "rich, warm sound and clarity of texture...and collaborations with other Canadian and international artists." Conductor Mark Vuorinen is also the artistic director of the Waterloo Regions Grand Philharmonic Choir, Associate Professor



and Chair of Music at Conrad Grebel University College at the University of Waterloo.

*Edited by Claire Storey, UK*



**T. J. HARPER is Associate Professor of Music, Director of Choral Activities and Chair of the Department of Music at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, CA. He conducts the University's three choral ensembles as well as courses in Conducting, Secondary Choral Methods, Applied Conducting, and Applied Voice. Dr. Harper received the Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the University of Southern California where he graduated with honors. [www.harpertj.com](http://www.harpertj.com)**





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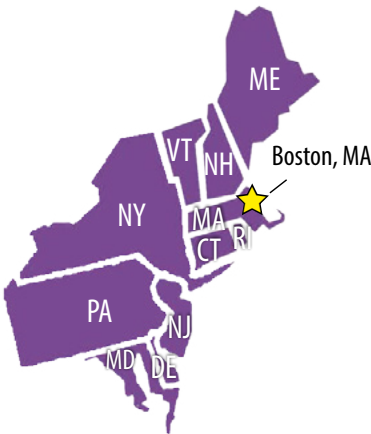
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Raleigh, NC



# CHORAL CALENDAR



**Festivals, Competitions,  
Conferences, Workshops &  
Masterclasses, and more...**  
Compiled by Nadine Robin

Although we thrive to update this choral calendar with new dates for postponed festivals, we haven't been able to check the status of all these festivals listed here below. Many of them also opted for an online event. So please visit their website and show them your interest and your support. Thank you!

10th International Choral Festival Chernomorski zvutsi, Balchik, Bulgaria, 2-7 June 2021. Contact: Association Musical World-Balchik, Email: [festival@chernomorskizvutsi.com](mailto:festival@chernomorskizvutsi.com) - Website: [www.chernomorskizvutsi.com/](http://www.chernomorskizvutsi.com/)

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

9th Queen of the Adriatic Sea Choral Festival and Competition Online, Cattolica, Italy, 4-6 June 2021. Contact: Queen Choral Festival and Competition, Email: [office@queenchoralfestival.org](mailto:office@queenchoralfestival.org) - Website: [www.queenchoralfestival.org](http://www.queenchoralfestival.org)

Bratislava Choir Festival, Slovak Republic, 10-13 June 2021. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: [info@choral-music.sk](mailto:info@choral-music.sk) - Website: [www.choral-music.sk](http://www.choral-music.sk)

One Voice Choir Festival with Jonathan Palant, Hanoi & Saigon, Vietnam, 10-19 June 2021. Contact: Klconcerts, Email: [info@Klconcerts.com](mailto:info@Klconcerts.com) - Website: [www.Klconcerts.com](http://www.Klconcerts.com)

Limerick Sings International Choral Festival Going Virtual!, Limerick, Ireland, 11-13 June 2021. Contact: Limerick Sings, Email: [information@limericksings.com](mailto:information@limericksings.com) - Website: [www.limericksings.com](http://www.limericksings.com)

Victoria Adriatic International Choral Festival , Rovinj, Croatia, 15-18 June 2021. Contact: , Email: [music@wearesinging.org](mailto:music@wearesinging.org) - Website: <https://www.facebook.com/VictoriaAdriaticChoralCompetition/>

San Juan Canta International Festival, Competition and Grand Prix, Argentina, 17-21 June 2021. Contact: María Elina Mayorga, Email: [sanjuancoral@gmail.com](mailto:sanjuancoral@gmail.com) - Website: <http://sanjuancanta.com.ar>

Festival of Voices, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia, 20 June-11 July 2021. Contact: Festival of Voices Tasmania, Email: [info@festivalofvoices.com](mailto:info@festivalofvoices.com) - Website: <https://festivalofvoices.com/>

Passion of Italy Rome Festival, Venice and Milano, Italy, 22-28 June 2021. Contact: Klconcerts, Email: [info@Klconcerts.com](mailto:info@Klconcerts.com) - Website: [www.Klconcerts.com](http://www.Klconcerts.com)

CANTEMUS International Choir Festival, Novi Sad, Zrenjanin, Vojvodina, Serbia, 24-28 June 2021. Contact: International Music Center Balkan Bridges, Email: [imcbalkanbridges@gmail.com](mailto:imcbalkanbridges@gmail.com) - Website: <http://www.imcbalkanbridges.com>

Fosco Corti International Competition for conductors 2021, Turin, Italy, 25-27 June 2021. Contact: FENIARCO (Italian Federation of Regional Choir Associations), Email: [info@feniarco.it](mailto:info@feniarco.it) - Website: [www.feniarco.it](http://www.feniarco.it)

2021 Choral Festival in Ireland with Rollo Dilworth, Prague, Czech Republic, 28 June-5 July 2021. Contact: Klconcerts, Email: [info@Klconcerts.com](mailto:info@Klconcerts.com) - Website: [www.Klconcerts.com](http://www.Klconcerts.com)

6th International Choir and Orchestra Festival, Budapest, Hungary, 30 June-4 July 2021. Contact: MusikReisenFaszination Music Festivals, Email: [post@musikreisenfaszination.de](mailto:post@musikreisenfaszination.de) - Website: [www.mrf-musicfestivals.com](http://www.mrf-musicfestivals.com)

2021 Choral Festival in Ireland with Craig Hella Johnson, Belfast and Dublin, Ireland, 2-8 July 2021. Contact: Klconcerts, Email: [info@Klconcerts.com](mailto:info@Klconcerts.com) - Website: [www.Klconcerts.com](http://www.Klconcerts.com)

15th Summa Cum Laude International Youth Music Festival, Vienna, Austria, 2-7 July 2021. Contact: CONCERTS-AUSTRIA, Email: [office@scsfestival.org](mailto:office@scsfestival.org) - Website: [www.scsfestival.org](http://www.scsfestival.org)

56th Barcelona International Choir Festival goes online!, Spain, 5-11 July 2021. Contact: Federació Catalana d'Entitats Corales, Email: [fcec@fcec.cat](mailto:fcec@fcec.cat) - Website: [www.fcec.cat](http://www.fcec.cat)

38th International Choir Festival of Preveza, 27th International Competition of Sacred Music, Preveza, Greece, 5-11 July 2021. Contact: Choral Society "Armonia" of Preveza, Email: [armonia4@otenet.gr](mailto:armonia4@otenet.gr) - Website: <http://www.armoniachoir.gr/festival/index.php>

Chanakkale International Choir Festival and Competition, Chanakkale, Turkey, 6-11 July 2021. Contact: Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart Üniversitesi, Email: [info@canakkalekorofestivali.com](mailto:info@canakkalekorofestivali.com) - Website: <http://www.canakkalekorofestivali.com/>

International Youth Music Festival I & Slovakia Folk, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 7-10 July 2021. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: [info@choral-music.sk](mailto:info@choral-music.sk) - Website: [www.choral-music.sk](http://www.choral-music.sk)

Musica Orbis Prague Festival, Czech Republic, 8-12 July 2021. Contact: Musica Orbis, Email: [info@musicaorbis.com](mailto:info@musicaorbis.com) - Website: <https://www.musicaorbis.com/>

11th Musica Eterna Roma International Choir Festival and Competition, Italy, 10-14 July 2021. Contact: Meeting Music, Email: [info@meeting-music.com](mailto:info@meeting-music.com) - Website: [www.meeting-music.com](http://www.meeting-music.com)

2021 Golden Gate International Children's and Youth Choir Festival, Oakland, California, USA, 11-17 July 2021. Contact: Piedmont Choirs, Email: [info@goldengatefestival.org](mailto:info@goldengatefestival.org) - Website: [www.goldengatefestival.org](http://www.goldengatefestival.org)

International Boys and Men's Choral Festival, Flagstaff, Arizona, USA, 13-20 July 2021. Contact: IBMCF, Email: [IBMCF@internationalchoralfestival.com](mailto:IBMCF@internationalchoralfestival.com) - Website: [www.internationalchoralfestival.com](http://www.internationalchoralfestival.com)

13th International Choir Competition, Miltenberg, Bavaria, Germany, 15-18 July 2021. Contact: Kulturreferat des Landratsamtes Miltenberg, Gaby Schmidt, Email: [kultur@LRA-MIL.de](mailto:kultur@LRA-MIL.de) - Website: [www.chorwettbewerb-miltenberg.de](http://www.chorwettbewerb-miltenberg.de)

Europa Cantat Festival 2021, Ljubljana, Slovenia, 16-25 July 2021. Contact: European Choral Association – Europa Cantat, Email: [info@europacantat.jskd.si/](mailto:info@europacantat.jskd.si/) - Website: <https://europacantat.jskd.si/>

6th International Conductor's Seminar Wernigerode, Germany, 17-20 July 2021. Contact: Förderverein Interkultur, Email: [mail@interkultur.com](mailto:mail@interkultur.com) - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

12th International festival of choirs and orchestras, Tuscany, Italy, 21-25 July 2021. Contact: MusikReisenFaszination Music Festivals, Email: [post@musikreisenfaszination.de](mailto:post@musikreisenfaszination.de) - Website: [www.mrf-musicfestivals.com](http://www.mrf-musicfestivals.com)

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

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

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

Roma Music Festival 2021, Italy, 4-8 Aug 2021. Contact: MusikReisenFaszination Music Festivals, Email: [info@mrf-musicfestivals.com](mailto:info@mrf-musicfestivals.com) - Website: [www.mrf-musicfestivals.com](http://www.mrf-musicfestivals.com)

International Festival of choirs and orchestras in Paris, France, 18-22 Aug 2021. Contact: MusikReisenFaszination Music Festivals, Email: [info@mrf-musicfestivals.com](mailto:info@mrf-musicfestivals.com) - Website: [www.mrf-musicfestivals.com](http://www.mrf-musicfestivals.com)

7th Vietnam International Choir Festival & Competition, Hôi An, Vietnam, 19-23 Aug 2021. Contact: Interkultur Foundation e.V., Email: [mail@interkultur.com](mailto:mail@interkultur.com) - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/events/2021/hoi-an/>

International Festival Verona Garda Estate, Verona, Brescia, Mantua, Vicenza, Italy, 26-30 Aug 2021. Contact: Prof. Giuliano Rinaldi, Email: [info@festivalveronagardaestate.eu](mailto:info@festivalveronagardaestate.eu) - Website: [www.festivalveronagardaestate.eu](http://www.festivalveronagardaestate.eu)

Sing Along Concert On Tour Milan, Italy, 26-30 Aug 2021. Contact: Interkultur e.V., Email: [mail@interkultur.com](mailto:mail@interkultur.com) - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

11th European Academy for Choral Conductors, Fano, Italy, 29 Aug-5 Sep 2021. Contact: FENIARCO, Email: [info@feniarco.it](mailto:info@feniarco.it) - Website: [www.feniarco.it](http://www.feniarco.it)

20th EUROTREFF 2021, Wolfenbüttel, Germany, 8-12 Sep 2021. Contact: Arbeitskreis Musik in der Jugend AMJ, Email: [info@amj-musik.de](mailto:info@amj-musik.de) - Website: <http://www.eurotreff.amj-musik.de>

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

11th International Festival of Choirs and Orchestras, Prague, Czech Republic, 25-29 Aug 2021. Contact: MusikReisenFaszination Music Festivals, Email: [info@mrf-musicfestivals.com](mailto:info@mrf-musicfestivals.com) - Website: [www.mrf-musicfestivals.com](http://www.mrf-musicfestivals.com)

Voices for Peace, Perugia, Assisi, Italy, 26-30 Sep 2021. Contact: Förderverein Interkultur, Email: [mail@interkultur.com](mailto:mail@interkultur.com) - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>



Cracovia Music Festival 2021, Cracow, Poland, 29 Sep-3 Oct 2021. Contact: MusikReisenFaszination Music Festivals, Email: [info@mrf-musicfestivals.com](mailto:info@mrf-musicfestivals.com) - Website: [www.mrf-musicfestivals.com](http://www.mrf-musicfestivals.com)

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

Bratislava Cantat II, Slovak Republic, 7-10 Oct 2021. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: [info@choral-music.sk](mailto:info@choral-music.sk) - Website: [www.choral-music.sk](http://www.choral-music.sk)

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

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

Lago di Garda Music Festival, Italy, 14-18 Oct 2021. Contact: MusikReisenFaszination Music Festivals, Email: [info@mrf-musicfestivals.com](mailto:info@mrf-musicfestivals.com) - Website: [www.mrf-musicfestivals.com](http://www.mrf-musicfestivals.com)

Choral Workshops for International Oratorio choirs, Lake Garda, Italy, 14-17 Oct 2021. Contact: MusikReisenFaszination Music Festivals, Email: [info@mrf-musicfestivals.com](mailto:info@mrf-musicfestivals.com) - Website: <http://choral-workshops.com>

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

The Eric Ericson Award 2021, Stockholm, Sweden, 21-24 Oct 2021. Contact: Concerts Sweden - Website: [www.ericricsonaward.se](http://www.ericricsonaward.se)

4th Eric Ericson Award, Uppsala and Stockholm, Sweden, 21-24 Oct 2021. Contact: Sveriges Radio AB, Email: [ericricsonaward@sverigesradio.se](mailto:ericricsonaward@sverigesradio.se) - Website: [www.ericricsonaward.com](http://www.ericricsonaward.com)

We Are Singing Ljubljana International Choral Festival 2021, Slovenia, 22-24 Oct 2021. Contact: - Website: <https://www.wearesinging.org/festival-we-are-singing-ljubljana>

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

11th World Choir Games, Antwerp, Ghent, Belgium, 30 Oct-7 Nov 2021. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: [mail@interkultur.com](mailto:mail@interkultur.com) - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

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

Deutsche Chormeisterschaft 2021, Koblenz, Germany, 5-7 Nov 2021. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: [mail@interkultur.com](mailto:mail@interkultur.com) - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

JSFest International Choral competition, Turku, Finland, 11-15 Nov 2021. Contact: JSFest International Choral competition, Email: [info@semconsulting.fi](mailto:info@semconsulting.fi) - Website: <https://www.jsfestcompetition.com>

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

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

39th International Choral Festival of Karditsa, Greece, 18-28 Nov 2021. Contact: International Choral Festival of Karditsa, Email: [nke@otenet.gr](mailto:nke@otenet.gr) - Website: <http://festivalofkarditsa.blogspot.gr/>

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

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

3rd Sing'n'Pray Kobe, Japan, 20-24 Jan 2022. Contact: Förderverein Interkultur, Email: [mail@interkultur.com](mailto:mail@interkultur.com) - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/events/2022/kobe/>

ON STAGE in Israel, Israel, 9-13 Mar 2022. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: [mail@interkultur.com](mailto:mail@interkultur.com) - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

Fingal International Festival of Voices, Ireland, 10-14 mar 2022. Contact: Music Contact International, Email: [ireland@music-contact.com](mailto:ireland@music-contact.com) - Website: [www.music-contact.com](http://www.music-contact.com)

Discover Puerto Rico and its Choral Music, Ponce, Puerto Rico, 18-21 Mar 2022. Contact: Music Contact International, Email: [travel@music-contact.com](mailto:travel@music-contact.com) - Website: [www.music-contact.com](http://www.music-contact.com)

ON STAGE in Verona, Italy, 24-27 Mar 2022. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: [mail@interkultur.com](mailto:mail@interkultur.com) - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

Voices & Wine Alba, Italy, 7-11 Apr 2022. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: [mail@interkultur.com](mailto:mail@interkultur.com) - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

Vox Lucensis, Lucca, Italy, 9-13 Apr 2022. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: [mail@interkultur.com](mailto:mail@interkultur.com) - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

Slovakia Cantat, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 21-24 Apr 2022. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: [info@choral-music.sk](mailto:info@choral-music.sk) - Website: [www.choral-music.sk](http://www.choral-music.sk)

15th International Choir Competition & Festival Bad Ischl, Austria, 27 Apr-1 May 2022. Contact: Interkultur Foundation e.V., Email: [mail@interkultur.com](mailto:mail@interkultur.com) - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

Riga Sings, International Choir Competition and Imants Kokars Choral Award, Riga, Latvia, 1-5 May 2022. Contact: Förderverein Interkultur, Email: [mail@interkultur.com](mailto:mail@interkultur.com) - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

**International Choral Competition Ave Verum 2022, Baden, Austria, 13-15 May 2022.** Contact: Wolfgang Ziegler, chairman, Email: [aveverum.baden@gmail.com](mailto:aveverum.baden@gmail.com) - Website: [www.aveverum.at](http://www.aveverum.at)

22nd Statys imkus Choir Competition, Klaip da, Lithuania, 12-15 May 2022. Contact: Klaipeda Choir Association „AUKURAS“, Email: [aukuras@ku.lt](mailto:aukuras@ku.lt) or [simkus.competition.lt@gmail.com](mailto:simkus.competition.lt@gmail.com) - Website: <https://www.aukuras.org/simkus>

ON STAGE in Florence, Italy, 19-22 May 2022. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: [mail@interkultur.com](mailto:mail@interkultur.com) - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

ON STAGE in Florence, Italy, 19-22 May 2022. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: [mail@interkultur.com](mailto:mail@interkultur.com) - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

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

CantaRode International Choral Festival & Competition, Kerkrade, The Netherlands, 26-29 May 2022. Contact: CantaRode, Email: [info@cantarode.nl](mailto:info@cantarode.nl) - Website: [www.cantarode.nl](http://www.cantarode.nl)

Dublin & Belfast Choral Festival 2022 with John Dickson, Ireland, June 2022. Contact: Klconcerts, Email: [info@Klconcerts.com](mailto:info@Klconcerts.com) - Website: [www.Klconcerts.com](http://www.Klconcerts.com)

17th International Chamber Choir Competition Marktoberdorf, Germany, 3-7 June 2022. Contact: Modfestivals, International Chamber Choir Competition, Email: [office@modfestivals.org](mailto:office@modfestivals.org) - Website: <https://www.kammerchorwettbewerb.org>

ON STAGE in Albania, Tirana, Albania, 8-12 June 2022. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: [mail@interkultur.com](mailto:mail@interkultur.com) - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

Bratislava Choir Festival, Slovak Republic, 9-12 June 2022. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: [info@choral-music.sk](mailto:info@choral-music.sk) - Website: [www.choral-music.sk](http://www.choral-music.sk)

Beethoven Choral Festival, Vienna, Austria, 12-16 June 2022. Contact: Music Celebrations International, Email: [info@musiccelebrations.com](mailto:info@musiccelebrations.com) - Website: <https://beethoven250.org/choral-festival/>

Salzburg International Choral Celebration and Competition, Salzburg, Austria, 15-19 June 2022. Contact: Meeting Music, Email: [info@meeting-music.com](mailto:info@meeting-music.com) - Website: <http://meeting-music.com/>

Dublin Choral Festival, Ireland, 15-19 June 2022. Contact: Music Celebrations International, LLC, Email: [info@musiccelebrations.com](mailto:info@musiccelebrations.com) - Website: <http://dublinchoralfestival.org/>

12th International Krakow Choir Festival Cracovia Cantans, Poland, 16-19 June 2022. Contact: MELODY & Polonia Cantat, Email: [mail@krakowchoirfestival.pl](mailto:mail@krakowchoirfestival.pl) - Website: [www.krakowchoirfestival.pl](http://www.krakowchoirfestival.pl)

Montréal Choral Festival 2022 with Rollo Dillworth, Canada, 18-22 June 2022. Contact: Klconcerts, Email: [info@Klconcerts.com](mailto:info@Klconcerts.com) - Website: [www.Klconcerts.com](http://www.Klconcerts.com)

Rome Choral Festival, Rome, Italy, 22-26 June 2022.  
Contact: Music Celebrations International, LLC, Email: [info@musiccelebrations.com](mailto:info@musiccelebrations.com) - Website: <http://romechoralfestival.org/>

Salzburg Choral Festival Jubilate Mozart!, Austria, 29 June-2 July 2022. Contact: Music Celebrations International, LLC, Email: [info@musiccelebrations.com](mailto:info@musiccelebrations.com) - Website: <https://salzburgchoralfestival.org/>

12th World Choir Games, Gangneung, Gangwon, Korea (Democratic People's Rep. of), 4-14 July 2022. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: [mail@interkultur.com](mailto:mail@interkultur.com) - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

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

International Choir Festival InCanto Mediterraneo, Milazzo (Sicily), Italy, 10-16 July 2022. Contact: Associazione Corale "Cantica Nova", Email: [festival@festivalincantomediterraneo.it](mailto:festival@festivalincantomediterraneo.it) - Website: [www.festivalincantomediterraneo.it](http://www.festivalincantomediterraneo.it)

International Choral Festival of Missoula, Montana, USA, 13-16 July 2022. Contact: International Choral Festival, Email: [info@choralfestival.org](mailto:info@choralfestival.org) - Website: [www.choralfestival.org](http://www.choralfestival.org)

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

Brighton International Festival of Choirs, Brighton, United Kingdom, 2-5 Sep 2022. Contact: Brighton International Festival of Choirs, Email: [festival@brightonifc.com](mailto:festival@brightonifc.com) - Website: <https://www.brightonifc.com/>

ForEverYoung International Choral Festival, Budapest, Hungary, 8-11 Sep 2022. Contact: ForEverYoung Choral Festival, Email: [info@fey-festival.com](mailto:info@fey-festival.com) - Website: <http://www.fey-festival.com/>

ON STAGE in Lisbon, Portugal, 9-12 Sep 2022. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: [mail@interkultur.com](mailto:mail@interkultur.com) - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

10th International Choir Festival & Competition "Isola del Sole", Grado, Italy, 25-29 Sep 2022. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: [mail@interkultur.com](mailto:mail@interkultur.com) - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

Internationales Chorfest, Magdeburg, Germany, 5-9 Oct 2022. Contact: Förderverein Interkultur, Email: [mail@interkultur.com](mailto:mail@interkultur.com) - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

Sing'n'Joy Bohol, Tagbilaran City, Bohol, Philippines, 5-9 Oct 2022. Contact: Förderverein Interkultur, Email: [mail@interkultur.com](mailto:mail@interkultur.com) - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

Bratislava Cantat II, Slovak Republic, 6-9 Oct 2022. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: [info@choral-music.sk](mailto:info@choral-music.sk) - Website: [www.choral-music.sk](http://www.choral-music.sk)

We Are Singing Ljubljana International Choral Festival 2022, Slovenia, 21-23 Oct 2022. Contact: - Website: <https://www.wearesinging.org/festival-we-are-singing-ljubljana>

ON STAGE in Prague, Czech Republic, 10-13 Nov 2022. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: [mail@interkultur.com](mailto:mail@interkultur.com) - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

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

Sound Waves Linz International Choir Competition & Festival, Austria, 20-24 May 2023. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: [mail@interkultur.com](mailto:mail@interkultur.com) - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>



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