



# ICB

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**DOSSIER**  
**THE SACRED TEXTS USED BY ARVO PÄRT**  
**IN HIS VOCAL COMPOSITIONS,**  
**AND THEIR TRANSLATION INTO SOUND**

IFCM NEWS:  
IFCM General Assembly  
In the setting of the Beautiful Palacete  
dos Condes de Monte Real

# INTERNATIONAL CHORAL BULLETIN

## COVER

A highlight during the IFCM General Assembly on July 29th, Ms. Jutta Tagger and Maestro Alberto Grau were elected IFCM Honorary Members, as well as Maria Guinand, Noël Minet and Royce Saltzman who unfortunately couldn't be present © Estera Mihaila

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# PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



## EMILY KUO VONG

President

Dear friends,

Time flies without delay as autumn is approaching. I am very delighted and honoured to tell you all that two marvellous events – the 2019 Inner Mongolia International Choral Week and the 2019 IFCM World Choral Expo – were hugely successful this summer.

It was with outstanding results that the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Countries Youth Choir, which was created by IFCM, as a unique and creative mix of 54 extremely talented singers and instrumentalists, from the 18 member countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, performed during the 2019 Inner Mongolia International Choral Week in Hohhot. The SCO Countries Youth Choir touched the hearts of the audience, during their vivid and emotional performance in Inner Mongolia. They were then invited by Mr. Vladimir Norov, Secretary-General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, to participate in the 2019 Beijing International Horticultural Exhibition performing during the “Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Honour Day” on 6 July as their last performance this year in China.

Mr. Vladimir Norov surprisingly granted a gracious letter of acknowledgment and flowers to IFCM after the performance of the SCO Countries Youth Choir in Beijing. It is amazing how the SCO Countries Youth

Choir has made this amazing feat come true, rehearsing 15 different repertoires from various countries, singing in 12 languages with only five days to rehearse. The rich historical and cultural legacy of the people of the SCO countries was embodied in the diverse collective singing traditions of these 18 countries. The SCO Countries Youth Choir were singing as an ambassador for peace, friendship, and understanding connecting people and nations through choral music.

I would like to give a sincere thank you to two outstanding and world-renowned conductors – André de Quadros (India-USA) and Maria Goundorina (Russia-Sweden). Your excellent and tremendous work was crucial to the SCO Countries Youth Choir. I would also like to, on behalf of the International Federation for Choral Music (IFCM), express our warmest gratitude and best wishes to the artistic and executive committee, the section manager Yu Hang Tan, and all the members of the SCO Countries Youth Choir. Another magnificent event that happened at the end of July was the 2019 IFCM World Choral Expo with the theme “Voices Meeting for A Better World” in Portugal. During the five days of the World Choral Expo, 14 of the best and most distinctive choirs, consisting of more than 600 members representing over 50 countries, were invited by IFCM for the first time ever to meet and gather in Lisbon, Portugal. They performed at many beautiful and iconic venues in the heart of Lisbon and Cascais – two historical and picturesque cities in Portugal. Their heavenly voices and pure music had a primitive strength and haunting simplicity, sharing diverse cultures and deepening mutual understanding with hope, friendship and love.

During the 2019 IFCM World Choral Expo, a special and powerful programme entitled “Colourful Voices”, specially created for six international children's choirs, was inaugurated. It was a very touching meeting of young singers. They sang together, studied together and shared their different cultures.

A similarly touching moment occurred to the World Youth Choir, because it was their first-time visiting Portugal with about 60 members from more than 40 countries. Not only did they give a special performance in Portugal, but they also celebrated their 30th anniversary at Palacete dos Condes de Monte Real, which is home to the new main office of IFCM. I believe this was a truly memorable experience for them.

We also had our IFCM Board Meeting, ExCom Meeting, and IFCM General Assembly at Palacete dos Condes de Monte Real this July to plan our bright future. We will strive to develop membership all over the world by providing technical support, management assistance and new information. It will be incumbent upon all of us to make an extra effort on the programme of “Conductors without Borders”, which is to become an innovative and sustainable project to cooperate with, to help the conductors in different developing countries to establish more choirs and to further expand choral education.

I strongly believe that choral music and choral education are playing an important and constructive role in our life. We will continue to develop choral education around the world as IFCM's constant objective and goal.

*Edited by Mirella Dina Biagi, UK/Italy*

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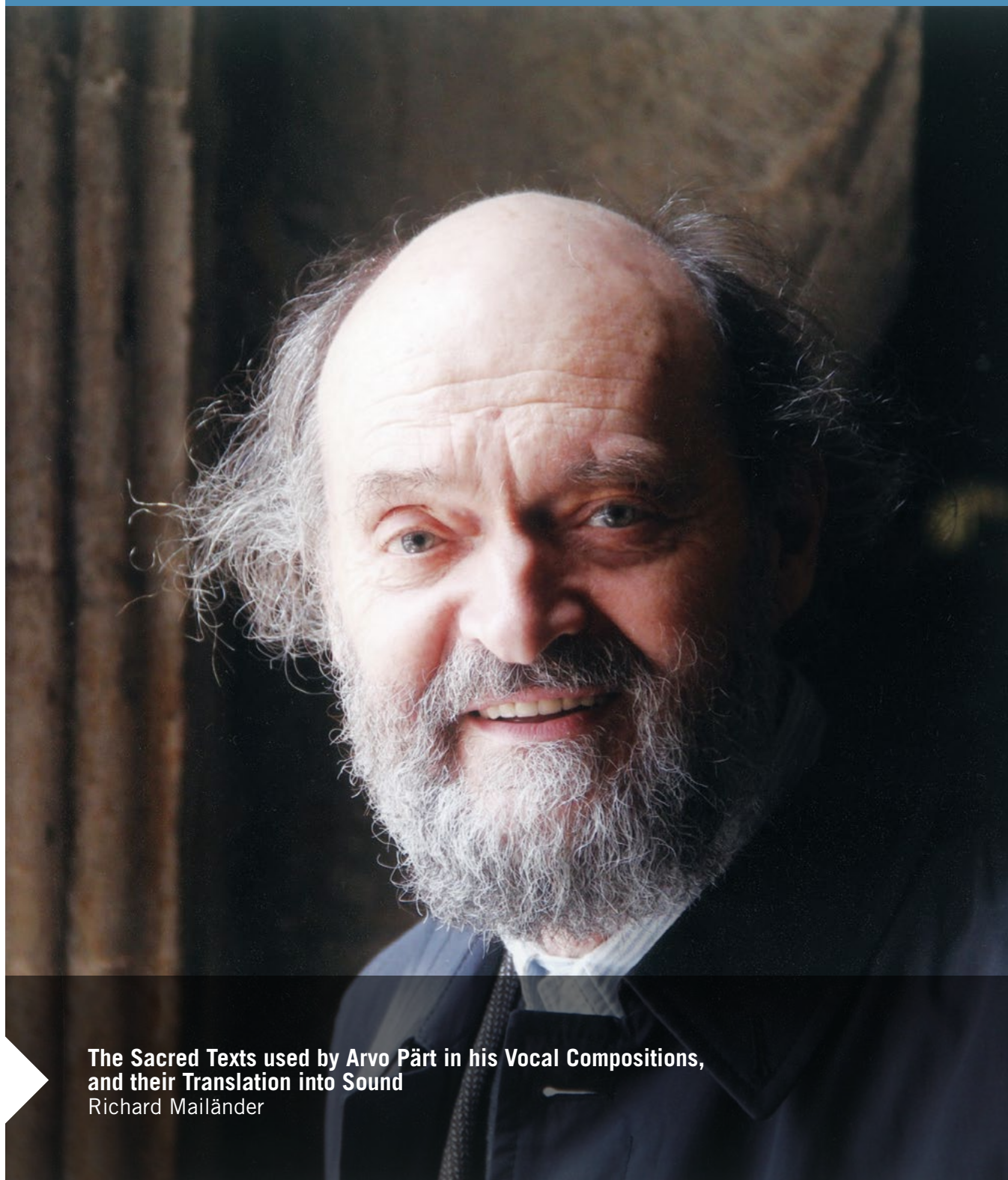
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# DOSSIER



**The Sacred Texts used by Arvo Pärt in his Vocal Compositions,  
and their Translation into Sound**  
Richard Mailänder



# THE SACRED TEXTS USED BY ARVO PÄRT IN HIS VOCAL COMPOSITIONS, AND THEIR TRANSLATION INTO SOUND

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**RICHARD MAILÄNDER**

*Professor and Choir Conductor*

If a concert with music by Arvo Pärt is on offer, we must, again and again, make the following observations:

- the concerts are well attended, though it's contemporary music
- usually the audience is younger than at other concerts of sacred music
- the listeners seem to be differently motivated, compared to the audiences of opera, symphonic music, Bach's Passions, pop concerts etc.
- the concentration of the members of the audience seems to be considerable, as even in the case of long concerts, we notice an extraordinary quietness

Thus we can claim that this music possesses an aura perceived as special by many people. The word "sacred" is often used, though without doubt this is an oscillating concept and escapes precise definition: another word suitable for the context might be "spiritual". However, this word, too, hardly pins matters down any more clearly, because [in the original German - translator] this is merely the Latin version of the first one. For many listeners it is transcendent. Nearly all listeners share the impression that in this music dimensions are touched upon which direct us towards something that lies behind the sounds. And this "something" may differ according to one's view of the world. This observation is valid,

whether music has text or is just instrumental. The fact remains that for the recipients as well as the performers, this music has an effect that reaches far beyond merely artistic or, even less, entertaining categories.

Thus we must engage with the question as to whether the composer intentionally includes such a general message and, if so, how it is conveyed in detail - and whether his music is conceived in a merely generally religious way or refers to a definite God.

It is impossible even to want to define or describe the spirituality of a composer in the thoughts that follow. As all spiritual matters they - fortunately - elude general description. However, we must be permitted, especially in compositions with text, to search for interpretations of words and meanings. As this essay is submitted in written form, the obvious route to take is that of turning to the spiritual statements supplied by the composer, using them as the basis of the following observations relating to individual works.

Here, too, we need to tread cautiously. Much has been written about Pärt's sacred music, quotes have been torn out of context; for some he has the function of a guru, others consider him to be a monk ... This is not the place to follow up these thoughts.

Let us just, briefly, insert some biographical detail: the surroundings in which Pärt grew up were not especially religious. As a child he was baptised into the Lutheran church. His home country was predominantly Lutheran. Living in surroundings characterised by a state-supported atheism, in 1977 he converted to the Russian-Orthodox church, right in the middle of the period of his particularly lengthy, difficult artistic seekings and his self-imposed silence as a composer.

The fact that, living in surroundings which, as far as matters of faith were concerned, were at least indifferent if not even hostile, he joined a church that was not the one that shaped Estonia, shows that this decision was very important for him, probably also for his family. As life as a Christian - if taken seriously - always affects the whole person, body and soul, we can assume that, particularly under the given circumstances, great thought must have gone into this step.

## VERBAL COMMENTS SUPPLIED BY THE COMPOSER

Let us look at a few comments which, although separated from their contexts, will demonstrate that Pärt is very consciously aware of the spiritual dimensions of life and considers God to be the foundation of our existence. Here it is worth noting the fact that when people first establish contact with him, he - or sometimes his wife Nora - likes to send out a few of his own texts, together with a plethora of single thoughts. Here follow a

few of the thoughts selected from such a mailing:

1. "If I speak about silence, then I am referring to that "nothing" out of which God created the world. Thus the [musical] rest is sacred."
2. "The never-ending prayer is the ideal polyphony."
3. "We must cleanse our souls to such a degree that it sings."
4. "There will be no singing in humility until the heart, too, has been cleansed."
5. "Pray and wait. The power to write will reveal itself when its time has come."
6. "We must seek inspiration in those situations where we feel our dependence on our creator."
7. "Eternity means that the beginning is ever-present, always exists. The miracle of creation consists of the fact that it never ends, i.e. never stops being reborn. The beginning is always!"
8. "Religion influences everything. Not just music, but everything."
9. "It is said that God suffers men to live only as long as it is important for them to come to know the truth. It is also said that when someone dies, whether they be young or old, that moment has been chosen as the best time to die. Therefore, the last moments before death are very precious - very important - for that time things can happen which have not come about during a

1 All quotes given here come from Pärt, Arvo: Writings, no place, no year

whole lifetime<sup>2</sup>."

10. "My music is the preparation for a long journey. There is much more life around us and in us than our dead spirit can understand. All we need is the right access to the sources, where everything has already been said. The most important food for our spirits and our bodies does not need to be invented, it is already there."<sup>3</sup>

11. "Without the fear of God there is no music - nor any really creative activity."

These statements appear to be unambiguous and they probably are just that, in so far as they express that for the composer, the question of his materials is not at the heart of his creativity. Thus he once wrote:

12. "For me the highest value of music lies beyond its tone colours. The special timbres of the instruments are a part of music, but not the most important one. That would be my capitulation in the face of the secret of music. Music must exist through itself ... The secret has to be present, independent of any instrument."<sup>4</sup>

His composing is a search and at the same time already a description of truth, from the bottom of our lives and

2 both quotes from: McCarthy, Jamie: An interview with Arvo Pärt; in: The Musical Times, March 1989, 130 ff

3 Pärt, Arvo in an interview "Soundworlds of Slowness and Quiet in Berliner Zeitung; 1/2 March 1997

4 Pärt, Arvo, in: Danuser, Hermann and others (editors): Soviet Music in the Light of Perestroika; Laaber 1990, 269



Arvo Pärt © Birgit Püve 2014

of our hearts. And in this search faith and music unite, as they share the same basis - life. Much as words have been granted to us in the revealed Christian faith, it still is difficult to say something that is really important.

13. "One has to live one's life in some way. It's not so simple, but to speak about it is ever harder ... It's quite a poor way to express yourself and to bear witness. I believe, there's a special language inside us, which is used to manage the most important and delicate things inside us.<sup>5</sup>"

At this point anyone trying to approach this subject will realize that language must accept defeat when confronted with this mystery of faith.

And in the interview with the Berliner Zeitung already mentioned above, he replies to the question, "How religious are you?":

14. "I will only be able to say that when I am facing the last judgement."

Such a declaration is at the same time humble and honest, as it does not paint a picture of God, but rather on the one hand speaks about the certainty of a life after death, on the other hand leaves it to God to judge what our relationship with him is/was.

Summing up: all these utterances are founded on the certainty that God exists, but they also acknowledge the necessity for change/transformation and thus also

cleansing of the individual. A very important thought, which e.g. to some degree comments on the choice of text for his *Kanon Pokajanen* (Canon of Repentance)<sup>6</sup>:

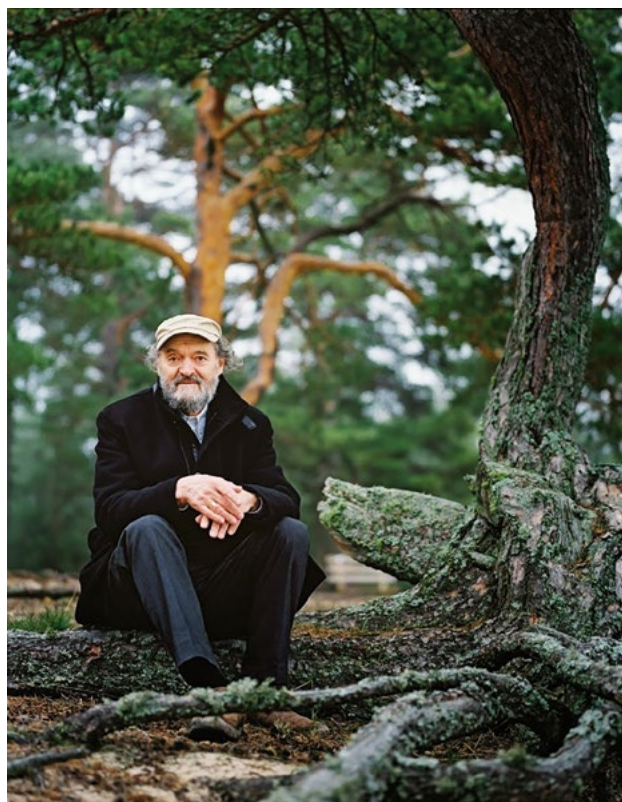
15. In all totalitarian countries artists were often facing matters of life and death. And Satan also wanted to possess our souls. That awakened in us powers to resist, in order to save oneself, and that shaped my music, too. Suffering can destroy people, emotionally as well as physically. But suffering can also make them much more sensitive and thus strengthen them. Hereabouts, the desire to escape suffering at all costs has transformed the social machinery into a large machine for the reduction of suffering. But with that, we also lose the chance to benefit from a process of emotional maturing, which the experience of suffering offers us.<sup>7</sup>

Particularly in the western world we do not normally speak about suffering any more, nor about the suffering people experience or even evil itself, but yet it is described in Holy Scripture, in most concrete terms by Job or even Jesus himself. Pärt's comment:

16. "However, there is also a sorrow that does not rebel against the world, for example the suffering of Christ. He suffered voluntarily and did not fight against his death.<sup>8</sup>"

Thus we are now faced with the question as to how far these thoughts should be linked to Pärt's compositions, in particular the question as to whether Pärt only writes generally religious music or offers a very concrete Christian view of the world.

5 Pärt, Arvo; in Teater, Muusika, Kino No 7 (November) 1988



Arvo Pärt © Birgit Püve 2014

## THE SELECTED TEXTS

The texts set by Pärt must be allocated to different categories. According to their origins they need to be subdivided into

- Texts from the Bible
  - psalms and canticles (poetic)
  - biblical reports/narratives or parables (prose)
- free sacred poems
  - linked to liturgical functions (here in particular, the mass)
  - without clear liturgical function (which is, however, not excluded)

The origins of some of the texts lie in the Russian-Orthodox liturgy. However, as far as I know, to this day these compositions have not been used in the liturgy of the Orthodox Church. Therefore I include these works in the category "without clear liturgical function". This differentiation appears arbitrary, but its sense arises

6 Miniature score UE 31 114

7 quote according to K. G. Koch, M. Mönninger, Sound Worlds of Slowness and Quiet, in Berliner Zeitung, 1/2 March 1997

8 Koch etc, id.



from the performance practice so far: in particular the *Berliner Messe* is often used within the Roman-Catholic Liturgy - it was composed as a commission for a celebration of a mass in the framework of the 1990 nation-wide meeting of Roman-Catholics in Berlin.

If we just consider the titles, we find that 53% of all compositions use free sacred poetry, which means, for us: they are sacred texts not originating in Holy Scripture. We often encounter them within the liturgy: *Missa Syllabica* and *Berliner Messe*; *Summa* and *Te deum* (rarely), *Litany* and *Bogoróditse dyévo*. However, within this category, these works are clearly in a minority. Further works that are sometimes used within the liturgy are the *7 Magnificat-Antiphones* - also, because they all start with an O, called the seven O-Antiphones, with their liturgical place in the seven days before Christmas - as well as the *Magnificat* and the second piece based on Luke's Gospel, *Canticum Nunc dimittis*.<sup>9</sup> And even though the *7 Magnificat-Antiphones* occur in the liturgy, they are rarely given special musical shape by choirs. Thus, there are hardly any traditions for singing them within a service.

Thus we must state that though Pärt created works that can be employed within the liturgy, he only wrote very few works specifically for the liturgy. Here we must bear in mind the fact that he himself belongs to the Russian-Orthodox church. However, as far as I know, his compositions have not (yet) been sung within the Orthodox liturgy. Nor have there been, so far, any commissions from there.

*Credo* from 1968 is the first composition with a sacred title. We are, however, not looking at the setting of the creed as demanded by the Council of Nicæa in Constantinople, but at his own, very personal sentences of belief which, however, do not contradict the general creed of the church. What matters in this context is the fact that it was certainly not intended for the liturgy but, with its text compilation, must be considered a personal confession. It has no liturgical function. Thus it does not serve the liturgy but is free-standing.

"Though not a setting of the liturgical *Credo* as might be expected, Pärt's choice of text explicitly illustrates his intent for the musical work. The piece opens with the words "Credo in Jesum Christum" from the liturgical *Credo*, but the remainder of the text is taken from the Gospel according to St Matthew (5: 38-9). This consists of only two statements: "Audivistis dictum: oculum pro oculo, dentem pro dente" ("You have heard it said: an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth") and "Autem ego

vobis dico: non esse resistendum injuriae" ("But I say unto you: do not resist evil"). The conclusion restates the word "Credo" ("I believe"). These words, set in confrontation to one another, illustrate the work's basis - "that the pacifist response to violence is ultimately stronger than violence itself".<sup>10</sup>

If we now continue to follow up the chronology of the works, we find that the next two compositions (*By the waters of Babylon* and *Sarah*) are not settings of sacred texts: they are based on biblical reports. This appears to be all the more important because the works sound without recognizable words, and a text or even a subject from outside music is not really necessary in order to listen, unless the composer wants to express something unusual. What may that be?

As opposed to e.g. a commissioned mass, here there is no commissioner who was thinking of a definite liturgical intention or use for the work, though both works bear a dedication<sup>11</sup>. These dedications do not merely link the two works within time. Whether there is also a link to the contents is not something to clarify here. But a noticeable feature is the fact that in both compositions, we initially encounter a situation of mourning. *Sarah*, already more than seventy years old, suffers from not having any children, and Psalm 137 describes the exile in Babylon of the people of Israel. For example, there we read in verses 3ff: *For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion". How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? But at the end of the psalm we also find: O daughter of Babylon, who art to be destroyed: happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us. Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.*

If we use this interpretation, we encounter a "but" which the composer himself has confirmed to me: If you look closely at the vowels which form the "text" of the composition, then we see that these are not randomly chosen but that their sum results in the words "Kyrie eleison - Christe eleison - Kyrie eleison". So we are looking at a Kyrie - but during the time of the Soviets, Pärt was not in a position to give the work an unambiguously sacred title, because then the work could not have been published. Therefore, he decided to choose the titles under which we now know these pieces, assuming with certainty that the censors would

9 Uncomposed so far are also the third Luke-based *Canticum Benedictus*. This has its liturgical place in the Laudes, the *Magnificat* in the Vespers and the *Nunc dimittis* in the Complet - at least in the Hours of the western church.

10 Hillier, P. Arvo Pärt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 59

11 Babel: Andres Mustonen; Sarah: Helle and Andres Mustonen



not suspect that they were concealing something religious. And he was proven right. If we bear in mind that Pärt himself was, as far as matters religious were concerned, living in quite a comparable situation - an open commitment to the Christian faith would have carried at least disadvantages - *Babel* can be interpreted as the growth of an inner process, intensifying in the crescendo and finally having to break outwards. The situation in Sarah is quite similar: walking - apparently barren - in the circuit of life, she no longer believes in a child (this circling becomes clear in the music, till the soprano entry at the end. If the serial technique were to be continued, the composer would have to start all over again). But a sudden scream of Sarah's breaks through this eternal circle and, against all hope, new life is born<sup>12</sup>.

And with this child, the future of the entire people of Israel is assured - after all, God had promised Abraham as many descendants as there are stars in the sky or grains of sand in the desert. Thus independent of a purely musical analysis, there are points of reference which allow us to interpret these two works according to their contents as well as to the internal processes of the composer. Why otherwise these titles and the biblical stories on which they are based? If, in the context of *Babel*, we accept the original text of Kyrie, then that is no contradiction, as the cry for God's mercy grows louder and louder and has broken free, just as did the cry of the people of Israel after their liberation from captivity.

Thus the sacred content of the composition does not arise from the setting of a set of words, but from the situation and the title but therefore was (and is) only apparent to those who know the biblical contexts.

With the publication of the *Missa syllabica*, for the first time we find a work setting a complete sacred text in the new style. It is a mass setting with an *Ite missa est* added to the standard movements *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, *Credo*, *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei*. Although this was no longer usual in mass settings from the Classical period to our days, in music from before 1700 this is not rare - just new again for our times. So what he is doing is picking up an old tradition and reviving it.

In this composition we encounter, for the first time, a special trait of the way in which Pärt treats words: while usually bars supply a pattern of heavy beats and demand word accents to match, for Pärt they only separate the words, thus supplying no hints whatsoever as to a regular meter. - And these barlines are not noticed by the listener - it is music for the eye. That is the one side; the other is pointing at the primary importance of the words. On the one hand the composer makes use of a

technique which, in its elements, is independent of the words, on the other, by showing bars, he makes use of one of the strongest methods of enforcing metrical order.

And yet, as we actually hear this music, it does not lack links to the contents of the words: Kyrie, Gloria, Credo and Agnus Dei are set for two singing voices, but the Sanctus for four. Strictly speaking even this is only in two parts, but by the doubling of the female voices by the male ones it achieves the effect of four-part writing. Why? The answer probably lies in the context of the mass, for the Sanctus is an acclamation at the end of an important prayer, starting with *Let us sing with the choirs of the heavenly hosts*: in order to emphasize the togetherness of this singing, he brings all voices together. This is emphasized further by the comprehensive details in the instructions for the registration of the organ<sup>13</sup>, in which a comparatively powerful full organ - with registration instructions in French - is requested, including reeds via mixtures to three 16'-registers. However, the *Ite missa est* is also set in four parts and also contains voluminous registration instructions. If we bear in mind that this movement is not a compulsory part of the mass, this emphasis is not surprising.

As far as we can judge so far, there are only two compositions which owe their creation to direct use in the liturgy - as commissions: the *Berliner Messe* and *Statuit ei Dominus*. The latter work is linked closely to *Beatus Petronius*. Both works were written as a commission for the 600th anniversary of the basilica San Petronio in Bologna. While in *Beatus Petronius* the prayers of the saint are begged for, *Statuit ei Dominus* is the introit for that saint's feast day<sup>14</sup>.

In relation to the *Berliner Messe* we should take note of a special feature: not only does it contain the "usual" movements of the ordinary, *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, *Credo*, *Sanctus* and *Agnus Dei*, but also two calls to precede the gospel

13 As far as I can see, with 14 instructions it is the most comprehensive set of instructions for the organ in any of the choral and organ works published so far.

14 As St Petronius does not have his own musical heritage, the equivalent introit antiphones for holy martyrs who were popes or bishops will be used.

12 see Genesis 17, 15-21.3



reading<sup>15</sup>, something which is not commonly done. The second call is followed immediately by a setting of the sequence for Whitsun. In the Roman liturgy, this is usually sung after the verse of the Alleluia, in place of the response. Thus the formal aspect of the solution Pärt selected for the liturgy is unusual. The background was a commission to write a mass for the 90th German Meeting of Roman Catholics.

Thus Pärt is not a composer whose primary intention consists of writing functional music for services. Rather, he writes more in the sense of confessions, as we will see.

If in the beginning we see an emphasis on psalms and canticles as well as the mass, in the 1990s something quite new emerges: he sets prose texts from the Bible and also legends linked to saints. Though we already find this in the *Passio* of 1982, we need to note that the setting of a passion is not unusual in itself, but that composing parables and legends certainly is. This is even more valid for the genealogy of Jesus, a text from Holy Scripture which initially appears to be less than promising, consisting exclusively of a list of names. Though the encounter with Gregorian chant was important for Pärt, *Statuit ei Domine* with its use of Gregorian elements, which he, however, only places between his compositions and thus does not incorporate directly into his music, remains the exception.

We can observe the growing tendency since 1977 that, initially just bunched, Pärt prefers to set standard texts (mass, psalms), though the psalms he chooses are not those generally best known, but that increasingly texts are chosen which (at least in the west) are not often set to music. This applies e.g. to *Cecilia*, the description of death as a martyr based on a text from the Roman breviary, or also to *Dopo la vittoria*, a tale from the dictionary "Singers and Songs of the Church in Historical Context" by Archbishop Philaret, published in St Petersburg in 1902. The text describes the reason (victory over the Arians) and time (christening of St Augustus) for the singing of the *Te Deum*, which goes back to Bishop Ambrosius from Milano. Both - so far the only compositions in Italian - are commissions from Italy: *Cecilia* for the Holy Year 2000 in Rome, with its first performance at the Accademia di Santa Cecilia, and *Dopo la Vittoria*, commissioned by the city of Milano on the occasion of the 1600th anniversary of the death of St Ambrosius. The texts for both were

probably prescribed by the commissioners.

The matter seems to be different with the parables. Why did the composer choose the ones he did? Do they share any features which the composer finds so exciting that he sets them to music? And can we still expect more in this vein? While this last question cannot be answered here, the question as to the contents/ shared features of the parables is more interesting, for if we bear in mind that the composer gave descriptive titles to pieces which don't have any texts at all, in which it is only a mood, a thought of the text that is picked up again, it is not far-fetched to seek something similar here. So what are the stories narrated by these parables?

### THE PARABLES

*And one of the Pharisees (Luke 7, 36-50)*<sup>16</sup>

The main topic is sin and forgiveness. God does not look at the number of sins, but he especially forgives those who seem to be living in some special fault, but who trust him and show him their love, and He shames those who think they are better than those. God is merciful.

It is that very subject that we find in the parable of the two who prayed (Luke 18, 9-14). It is not necessarily the one who believes - because of his office or his origins or his social class - that he is close to God, to whom God actually turns, but to the one who really opens up to Him, to him who stands before Him and confesses his guilt or imperfection. God is merciful towards sinners. The situation is different but nevertheless similar in "*And one of the Pharisees ...* (Luke 7, 36-50). For one, in this passage we come across the subject of misdeeds being forgiven, and again we encounter a sinner, the trigger for this parable. Though the woman is referred to as a sinner, she is not judged any further, rather the opposite: Jesus shows that this woman, despite her sin, is doing good. Anyone who believes he might judge her, is put to shame. This sinning woman has recognized Him, the son of God, in His dignity and anointed Him with oil, whereas those who believed they knew Him did not greet him with a kiss, nor did they anoint Him. God is merciful towards sinners.

Pärt actually returns to the subject of anointing, in *The Woman with the Alabaster Box* (Matthew 26, 6-13). Though this passage does not discuss a sinner, we return to the love of Jesus based on recognizing Him. In addition, we find a peculiarity, for the text is introduced by the description of the locality: in the house of a sufferer from leprosy. That's not the place where one normally dwelt, people with leprosy were outcasts. Thus, again, Jesus is keeping company with a person

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15 What is customary in the Roman liturgy is an antiphone after the first reading, which - alongside the responses - also contains several verses, and a call before the gospel reading (response with one verse) which, except for during the penitential time at Easter, is also called Alleluia, because of the text of its response.

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16 Translations have been taken from the Authorized Version

despised by others, just as sinners are despised by those who consider themselves to be righteous. God is merciful. And God's ways are not those of us humans. God can neither be measured nor fully understood. Above all he is not sensible, in not attacking the woman who had spent money on oil rather than on something for the poor. God's standards are different.

And that is also precisely the message of the next parable in *Tribute to Caesar* (Matthew 22, 15-22). Jesus knows about the rules under which people rub along together. The core which leads to God consists in opening up oneself to God, trusting in God's mercy. Whereas in the compositions mentioned so far this is expressed in parables, in *I am the true vine* (John 14, 1-4) it is said directly: it is only in love that we are linked with one-another and with God, not when we are calculating or being clever or falling back on special ancestry or membership of a certain group.

At this point one might demur - this is the message of the four Gospels anyway. That would even be right. And yet it is extraordinary that so far (?) Pärt has selected just those stories which illustrate this context: God turns towards those who love Him, in love - even if they have sinned.

### THE SELECTIONS FROM THE PSALMS

As already mentioned above, the psalms set by Pärt are hardly to be found in a list of those sung particularly frequently within the liturgy<sup>17</sup>. And: with the exception of Psalm 121 he has only set those he did choose, once. We must, therefore, assume that he himself did some very conscious selecting, so these texts, too, should be introduced individually here, albeit briefly.

*Cantate domino canticum novum* is a psalm, the start of which has often been set to music, but settings of the complete text are more rare. The text deals with three topics:

- a new song for the king and creator of the world
- all the peoples in all the world pay homage to Him
- Nature pays homage when Jahwe appears. It is in particular because of this last thought that this psalm ranks among the group that concerns itself with the Last Things.

It is the first major Bible text that Pärt set after 1976, and he set it in its entirety. It is preceded only by the confession of faith *Summa* and the *Missa syllabica*. There does not seem to be anybody who commissioned it. Thus we might assume that the text is of special importance to the composer. In the first part, which has been set by many composers, we find general praise of God. Particularly when we bear in mind the other texts set by Pärt (psalms and parables written later) the

second and third parts are revealing: they describe the rule of God and God's judgement, that of a fair God.

Matching the title of the psalm in the Book of Psalms, Pärt called his setting of Psalm 121 a Song of Pilgrimage<sup>18</sup>. It is just one thought that permeates this text: Jahwe will protect the individual pious person, always and everywhere. It is a text displaying enormous trust in God (see quote 11).

This thought of praise is also picked up again by the first of the *Two Slavic Psalms* (Psalm 117). With just two verses it is the shortest psalm in the entire Book of Psalms. The composer was probably aware of that, for - in contrast to his settings of Biblical texts to date - here he works not only with repeated text but, initially, he sets the entire text syllabically. In the second part he dissects the two verses into four half-verses, ending the first three with a triple "Halleluia"! The third part is the exact repeat of the first, the fourth - while maintaining the structure of the text of the second part, including the triple "Halleluia" - comes with totally different music, while the fifth repeats the first/third.

Another addition - without supplying any numberings - is the sixth part, a doxology. Here the composer treats the words fairly liberally, but he bears in mind the structure of the words and - as far as he adds any words (Halleluia and doxology) - he sticks to the message of the text which he thus repeats. As these are his own personal additions, we might assume that Pärt did not only want to set the words but to strengthen their message. This is all the more important as in all his works so far, he has rarely proceeded thus, usually leaving the text untouched.

The second of the *Two Slavic Psalms* (Psalm 131) is also a song of pilgrimage. If we re-read Pärt's own quotations in the first part of the text, then the close link between his own message and this psalm becomes apparent.

If the first of the two psalms, as far as its content goes, repeats Pärt's first setting of a psalm, *Cantate domino canticum novum*, here it is the Song of Pilgrimage. In view of the fact that on the one hand he has thus composed the same content twice each, on the other hand, in Psalm 121, even emphasizing the message by repeats, the meaning of the words of these psalms seems at least important enough for him to set them. If the message of trust in God remains, in the two other psalm settings it gets expanded to a considerable degree:

### DE PROFUNDIS (PSALM 130)

Whereas the final part again discusses the redemption of mankind by God, the subject of the first part is the

17 This is, however, less valid for Psalms 50 and 130.

18 This is, however, not the only psalm in the Book of Psalms that bears this heading.

misery of man and his entanglement in sin. This is a motif that we have already encountered in the choice of parables. And here, too - in order to avoid misunderstandings - we must state clearly that in the long run the content is not mankind being called to judgement because of sin, but rather the fact that the sinner is aware of his misdeed and still trusts in God, for whose love our misdeeds present no obstacle. God's thoughts are not ours (see *Tribute to Caesar*).

The fact that this thought must be very much in Pärt's mind is proven by the last of the psalm settings to be introduced here, *Miserere*, the largest so far by the number of performers required as well as by its scale. The text is closely related to *De profundis*.

It is the intense plea for cleansing and forgiveness in the face of one's own guilt<sup>19</sup>. "In honest humility he who is praying confesses his sinfulness, begs for forgiveness and internal renewal and promises, by way of thanks, to win over others who have fallen to Jahwe, by teaching them, and himself, by foregoing animal sacrifice, wanting to honour Him with a pure heart. Sin appears here as the only major evil ... He (the poet) is neither falling back on his own achievements, nor is he complaining, as he usually does, about the viciousness of his opponents. He is concerned only about the forgiveness of sin, which he begs God to grant out of His mercy. It can be attained not through sacrifice, but only through repentance and confession"<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> Here we should also remember the Sequence for Whitsun, which Pärt included in his Berlin Mass, "Veni sancte spiritus." There, too, we find "That which has been besmirched, cleanse; that which has shrivelled up, may it receive the water of life; heal those tormented by illness."

<sup>20</sup> Nötscher, Friedrich; *ibid.* 101

The insertion which Pärt makes into this text which is very long anyway is probably unique in the history of music: it is the sequence from the Mass for the Dead, *Dies irae*, which since the second Council of the Vatican longer even appears in the Roman liturgy. By means of this interpolation Pärt thus underlines to a degree that could hardly be any stronger, the text message of the psalm, which in its first part talks about sin and judgement. There is



Arvo Pärt © Priit Grepp 2017



hardly a more frightening text in all the liturgy. In this, however, we often overlook the fact that in the long run, this text, as does the psalm, does convey the image of a merciful judge.

The exact place where Pärt inserted this sequence is of decisive meaningfulness and consistent: it comes after the third verse:

For I recognize my misdeeds, and my sin is ever before me.

As already explained several times, the recognition of sin is the real turning point and the reason for trust in God, who thus looks after us. In order to emphasize this, Pärt brings the piece to a close with the last three lines of the sequence, in which the plea for mercy is expressed.

### PASSIO

Before this background we must not be astonished that *alongside the Kanon pokajanen* which, incidentally, is based on the same material, too, one of Pärt's major works, *Litany*, a pleading litany, in which God is begged for mercy in view of one's sins, is the setting of a passion, *St John's Passion*. And the choice of this report on the passion is consistent - after all, John is the gospel-writer whose intention it is, above all, to describe God's love and goodness towards mankind. Nowhere do we see God's love more clearly than in the description of the suffering and death of Jesus, through which the redemption of mankind was achieved. And: here, too, Pärt underlines the end from *Miserere* with the plea for God's mercy, for off his own bat he adds this text to the gospel report:

Qui passus es pro nobis, (You who died for us,)

miserere nobis. (have mercy on us.)

Amen (Amen)

This is a wholly personal addition/supplement, which is not common in musical settings intended for the liturgy.

### SUMMARY

Clearly, the composer proceeds with great determination in the selection of texts<sup>21</sup>. Alongside biblical texts, even when he uses freely composed poetry, old texts stand in the foreground.

If the earliest texts are still quite general, as the years pass, their selection clearly paints an image of God characterized by mercy and love. This is juxtaposed by a second motif: the realization of the sinfulness of mankind towards God.

If the works are primarily performed in churches, the use of additions or the free treatment of texts

demonstrates that they were usually not written for the liturgy. Thus Pärt is most certainly not a liturgical composer writing music for functions, but somebody who selects and composes texts independent of any "usefulness" solely because of their content. This does not, however, in some cases exclude liturgical use, as our practice shows.

### FINAL REMARKS

As already discussed at the outset of this article, it is impossible to describe precisely the personal religiosity of a person - this is impossible because of its content and would also invade the space of another person. In the long run each of us has to walk part of his way, alone.

Of course utterances in respect of religion can be collected and interpreted. Even if they are unambiguous in themselves, we still have not said anything about the internal life of that person and his relationship with God. Both remain a secret.

However, as the utterances of a composer concern the contents which he projects to his surroundings, we are allowed to investigate them.

In the case of Arvo Pärt we observe a convincing coherence and consistency of utterances in relation to faith, a matching selection of texts and, following from these, the musical shaping of the texts.

*Translated from the German by Irene Auerbach (UK/Germany)*



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started work as a church musician  
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1980 to 1987 he was Cantor at St Pantaleon in  
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started working at diocesan level within the  
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charge of music in the Archbishopric. After  
a spell doing some teaching at the Robert  
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he started teaching at the College of Music  
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<sup>21</sup> We will, here, not discuss individual texts which clearly are linked to works known to be commissions, as they are unlikely to have been selected by him.





# 第十五届中国国际合唱节 暨国际合唱联盟合唱教育大会

THE 15TH CHINA INTERNATIONAL CHORUS FESTIVAL  
AND IFCM WORLD CHORAL  
EDUCATION CONFERENCE



23 July - 29 July,  
2020 ( Beijing )



## 14/ 届中国国际合唱节 暨国际合唱联盟合唱教育大会

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# INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR CHORAL MUSIC



**IFCM General Assembly**  
In the setting of the  
Beautiful Palacete dos  
Condes de Monte Real  
Iva Radulovic

**Looking for a Concert  
Tour in China  
in July/August 2020?**  
Press Release

**The 2020 World  
Symposium on Choral  
Music Takes Place in  
Auckland, New Zealand:  
Some Local Tips**  
Richard Betts

**Inspiration from the IMC  
World Forum on Music in  
Paris**  
Sonja Greiner

**The International  
Federation of Pueri  
Cantores**  
Matthias Balzer



# IFCM GENERAL ASSEMBLY

## In the setting of the Beautiful Palacete dos Condes de Monte Real

**IVA RADULOVIC**

*IFCM Operations Manager*

THIS SUMMER, ON 29<sup>TH</sup> JULY, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF IFCM MET IN A CITY WITH A LONG HISTORY AND A BEAUTIFUL CULTURE – LISBON, PORTUGAL. THIS MEETING OF THE GA WAS PARTICULARLY SPECIAL AS IT TOOK PLACE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE NEW HEAD OFFICE OF IFCM, HERE IN LISBON.

The magnificent building of Palacete dos Condes de Monte Real is located in one of the elite areas of the city, surrounded by embassies. Standing on top of one of the seven hills of Lisbon, the yellow building with its small bell tower represents the perfect meeting place for all the choral singers, conductors etc. Inside the building nothing is less than beautiful. With its great halls, where pianos are located all around the place, and its crystal chandeliers, you feel as if you are stepping back into history itself. The extraordinary meeting of the GA, with around 40 members, was held in one of these halls. Besides presenting the new main office, this GA took some major decisions that will improve and strengthen the basic structure of IFCM.

The IFCM is happy to announce that the new version of the Bylaws<sup>1</sup>, the new Certificate of Incorporation, and the new IFCM Membership Policy were all unanimously voted by the General Assembly. All these documents will help the organization to grow in the future in accordance with modern needs, but will also maintain and enhance the standing of IFCM as one of the biggest choral federations in the

world. With all this in mind the GA also voted for a change in the membership structure<sup>2</sup>. The participants were presented with a new and revised way of becoming a member, and the newly approved system of membership fees and benefits is now clearer and more transparent. For the first time IFCM presented a new type of membership – lifetime membership, which was added to the system to embrace a new category of members. In addition

2 <https://www.ifcm.net/membership/membership-fees>



1 <https://www.ifcm.net/about-us/structure>





Emily Kuo Vong welcomes the World Youth Choir at the Palacete dos Condes de Monte Real after their concert © Ki Adams



IFCM Governance Advisor, Sonja Greiner, explaining the three voting slips each member received © Estera Mihaila



to this, the board presented the newly elected Honorary Members to the GA. People who have had a major impact on the development of IFCM as an institution and organization, or on choral music in general, were selected to become Honorary Members of IFCM. The Honorary Members are *Royce Saltzman, Jutta Tagger, Noël Minet, Alberto Grau and Maria Guinand*.

The General Assembly also discussed last year's IFCM projects, and a special report was given by our president, Mrs. Emily Kuo, which focused especially on the 3-year budget and the financial report and strategy for the upcoming years. From this it is clear that the organization is now on a secure path of success, although the main goal remains of continuing to expand the membership and of bringing the members closer together. Besides the main meeting of the GA several small meetings were held in the same venue – all of them working on ways of improving the federation itself. In addition to all this, the IFCM was presented with the new full-time employee – Operations Manager, Iva Radulovic – me. I was very happy and honoured to hear that I was chosen from among many other candidates to become a part of this organization and to have the opportunity to make an impact on choral music throughout the world. I will be working in the *Palacete* full time and will try to bring fresh, new, young ideas to



IFCM guests: from left to right, Alberto Grau, Montserrat Cadevall, Herminia Mostaza and Birgit Hemberg

the organization, but also to learn and to grow within the IFCM.

As usual, the GA met during a choral event. This year it was *World Choral Expo*. The event was held in Lisbon in many different venues, and GA members had the opportunity to visit and hear many different concerts. The WCE was host to 13 of the best choirs from all over the world. GA members were also able to visit the exhibition and to be a part of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of the World Youth Choir.

In conclusion, this year's GA was an important one in the history of IFCM. With new documents, new staff employees and a new head office in Europe, IFCM can only grow and further increase its impact on the choral scene world-wide.

*Edited by Caroline Maxwell, UK*



**IVA RADULOVIC is a young and talented manager with a lot of experience in the field of choral music. She has been working nationally and internationally for more than ten years on promoting and strengthening choral music. She was a member of the Youth Committee of the European choral association, Europa Cantat, and was an employee of Jeunesse Musicales Serbia, and with these two major organizations she took part in many projects throughout the world (Europa Cantat 2012, Europa Cantat Junior 2014, Eurochoir 2013, Europa Cantat 2015, World youth choir 2017...) At the age of only 25 she was elected as president of one of the major cultural institutions in Serbia – the Artistic Cultural Society of the University of Belgrade Branko Krsmanovic – where she was working until now. Email: [manager@ifcm.net](mailto:manager@ifcm.net)**



# LOOKING FOR A CONCERT TOUR IN CHINA IN JULY/AUGUST 2020?

## Here is an exclusive opportunity!

### IFCM PRESS RELEASE

IFCM is collaborating with partners in China on a set of international choral festivals in July and August 2020 and is calling for high-level choirs interested in being featured in one, two, or even all three of these festivals:

- The [15th China International Chorus Festival](#), in Beijing, 23-29 July.
- The [International Folk Song Choral Festival and IFCM Voices Conference](#), in Kaili, 31 July-4 August.
- The [China Inner Mongolia International Choral Week](#), in Hohhot, 6-9 August.

**FOR EACH FESTIVAL, INVITED CHOIRS WILL HAVE LOCAL TRANSPORTATION, FOOD, AND ACCOMMODATION COVERED BY THE LOCAL ORGANIZERS!**

If you are interested in participating in the selection for any of these festivals, please send the following materials to [office@ifcm.net](mailto:office@ifcm.net) **before November 15, 2019**: motivation letter, CV of the choir and conductor, pictures, contact details, links to recordings and the name of the festival(s) you are applying for.

#### IF A CHOIR APPLIES AND IS INVITED TO MORE THAN ONE FESTIVAL

While their international travel expenses to the designated airport of the festival will be their responsibility, the choirs who apply and are invited to more than one festival will benefit from the following travel conditions between festivals:

- Choirs invited to the CICF and the Kaili Festival will have their trip from Beijing to Kaili and back to Beijing covered by the organizers in Kaili. These choirs will have to cover their trip from home to Beijing and back.
- Choirs invited to the Kaili and the Hohhot Festivals will have their trip from Kaili to Hohhot and back covered by both organizers in Kaili and Hohhot. These choirs will have to cover their trip from home to Kaili and back.
- Choirs invited to the CICF, the Kaili and the Hohhot Festivals will have their transportation between the three cities covered by the local organisers as followed:
  - Beijing-Kaili (covered by Kaili)
  - Kaili-Hohhot (costs shared by Kaili and Hohhot)
  - Hohhot-Beijing (covered by Hohhot)

These choirs will have to cover their trip from home to Beijing and back.

**FOR CHOIRS WHO APPLIED AND ARE INVITED TO ONLY ONE FESTIVAL, THE INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL EXPENSES TO THE DESIGNATED AIRPORT OF THIS FESTIVAL WILL BE THEIR OWN RESPONSIBILITY.**



Choristers from Coro Arturo Beruti, Argentina, with local musicians in Kaili (2018)



Every year, local Mongolians come to this Aobao for praying and worshipping © Andrea Angelini



## THE 15<sup>TH</sup> CHINA INTERNATIONAL CHORUS FESTIVAL (CICF) AND IFCM WORLD CHORAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE BEIJING, CHINA, 23-29 JULY 2020

Founded in 1992 and ever since, one of the largest-scale and highest-level international chorus festivals held in China, the CICF is a cultural event which brings together hundreds of choirs from China and abroad. According to some general statistics, the past 14 festivals have attracted more than 2000 choirs and more than 70000 choristers.

With its theme “Come to Beijing, listen to the songs of the world” and its aim to “Build an harmonious world together for the future—Peace and Friendship”, the CICF invites choirs from different countries and regions, from different nationalities and colors, to come together and compete on the same platform.

After a complete evaluation of the applying choirs by the artistic committee, a group of highly professional choirs will be selected to give, among others, a performance during the opening ceremony in front of thousands of delegates from different continent. This performance will also be recorded by CCTV (China Central Television).

### WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE ONE OF THESE SELECTED TOP-CLASS CHOIRS FEATURED DURING THE CICF?

Selected choirs will have local transportation, food and accommodation covered by the CICF!

The international travel expenses are the responsibility of the choirs.

Discounted food and accommodation package deals will be offered by the CICF to any other participating choirs.

If you are interested, please send the following material at [office@ifcm.net](mailto:office@ifcm.net) before November 15, 2019: a motivation letter, CV of the choir and conductor, pictures, contact details, links to recordings.

CICF Websites

In English: <http://en.cicfbj.cn/>

In Chinese: <http://www.cicfbj.cn>



Local and international experts at the CICF Competition 2018

### The CICF Competition

The CICF organizing committee offers equal opportunity to any participating choirs, professional or amateur, to sign for the choral evaluation system. The purpose for this part of activity is to provide an international stage for choirs to sing and receive comments and tutorship from international well-known choral experts, and exchange with other choirs.

### The CICF Choral Exchange Performance

The CICF organizing committee will arrange for every choir to have the opportunity(ies) to exchange the joy of singing with choristers from all over the world, singing for the world peace and friendship, sharing the skills and the experience of choral music.

### The CICF Choral Club

For the purpose of celebrating, exchanging and learning, the CICF organizing committee created a Choral Club for local and international choirs who stay in the choral camp. Besides, choral lovers are also able to enjoy delicious Chinese cuisine, shop for special designed souvenirs, improvise, exchange scores and CD with other choirs in the club. The Choral Club will become a Fiesta for choral lovers during the Festival.

### Sightseeing

Being the capital city of China, Beijing is the international modern metropolis and one of the Four Great Ancient Capitals in China. With more than 3000-year history, Beijing owns abundant touristic resources who also has 6 world cultural heritages in the city. The organizing committee will arrange choirs (self paid only) to visit the Forbidden City (largest imperial palace in the world), Tian'anmen Square (largest city center square), Temple of Heaven and the Great Wall.





Le Chant sur la Lowé (Gabon) and the Inner Mongolia Youth Choir of Inner Mongolia Bureau of National Troupes sharing culture, singing and more, July 2018 © Christian Rehoula



The International Folk Song Choral Festival and IFCM Voices Conference 2018 in Kaili © Andrea Angelini



# THE 2020 WORLD SYMPOSIUM ON CHORAL MUSIC TAKES PLACE IN AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND:

## Some Local Tips

**RICHARD BETTS**

*Journalist*

### ARTS

Choral music has a strong tradition in New Zealand. No one can agree on whether it's a throwback to our British colonial heritage, our Protestant piety or simply an appreciation of music's ability to bring people together, but over the years we have produced some cracking choirs.

After WSCM2020's final chord has been sung, though, there's plenty more going on. Auckland is a UNESCO City of Music, and a live scene thrives across a range of genres. The city's resident orchestra is Auckland Philharmonia, which plays to large crowds every second week or so, while the national orchestra, the New Zealand Symphony, breezes

into town several times a year. Chamber ensembles and smaller, semi-professional groups cover specialist areas such as new music or period performance.

There are many pop music venues, catering to everyone from touring superstars to local garage bands, and there's a strong brass band tradition, too, a legacy of New Zealand's British past.



View of Auckland



New Zealand wine is produced in several mostly maritime, cool climate winegrowing regions of New Zealand

## OUTSIDE

Aucklanders love a good story but they love to get outside even more. The national obsession is rugby, and at weekends people cram playing fields, either to watch or take part. New Zealand's main rugby stadium, Eden Park, is a short train ride from the city centre, and there's almost certain to be an important game on.

While our most heralded sport is rugby, more people play netball, and you'll find numerous outdoor courts across the city. At the time of writing, New Zealand is world champion in both netball and rugby - feel free to share that snippet with any Australian.

No matter the time of year, Aucklanders head for the water. There are beaches everywhere, and while people in Auckland's northern suburbs can fairly claim that their many beaches are prettiest, those looking for something more rugged

Art galleries also cover the bases. Auckland Art Gallery is the major art space but there are many smaller galleries dotted around town.

Raymond, an Aucklander whose parents were born in Samoa, gave his first solo photography exhibition at Fresh Gallery. Sited in the south Auckland suburb of Ōtara, the gallery, like the area, maintains strong links with the city's Polynesian communities.

"Fresh is all about promoting artists from South Auckland, but also the stories that come from our community and promote who we are as a community," he says.

It's a perfect fit for the way Auckland's Pasifika artists experience the world.

"In the Pacific, photography's relationship to art is not the same as it would be in contemporary Western thinking. The camera is part of a bigger process we fit into the idea of oratory or storytelling."



New Zealand vineyard



head to the west coast, where iron traces turn the sand black and surfers find the biggest waves.

Other than the water, the most prominent feature of Auckland's geography is its hilliness. Most of the hills (maunga) are actually volcanoes. Scientists aren't quite sure how many volcanoes there are – a new one was recently discovered on someone's farm, which was unfortunate for the owner, who was about to build his five-bedroom dream home on what turned out to be the rim of a crater – but they number between 48 and 53, or 60-something. Maybe.

The most impressive of them is Rangitoto, a near-perfect cone that rises 260m above Auckland Harbour. The name means 'bloody sky' and it's not called that for nothing. Rangitoto last erupted about 600 years ago and while Aucklanders tell themselves it's unlikely to blow, the island mountain is classified dormant, not extinct. Consider yourself warned. Lucy, an Aucklander born in England, runs up and down the maunga for fun.

"Part of the attraction of moving to Auckland was that it's much

easier to be involved in the outdoors," she says. "And it seems a bit more acceptable than it did in England. People still give you the odd look when you tell them what you've done over the weekend, but there's normally someone else talking around the water cooler going, 'Oh yeah, me too'. There are lots of people doing the same sort of thing who'll happily take you under their wing and drag you up a volcano."

## EATS

For those less interested in being dragged up volcanoes, Auckland has a strong food culture. You can find good food (kai) and better coffee all over the city and most suburbs have at least a few cafes. The buzziest dining spots are central, particularly around Britomart train station and nearby Wynyard Quarter, and the neighbouring Ponsonby and Karangahape Rd. K' Rd, was for many years the city's red-light district. These days it's Auckland's hippest precinct and, despite recent gentrification, K' Rd retains vestiges of its previous grittiness if you know where to look.

Seafood looms large in any island nation's cuisine. People who know about these things say New Zealand's oysters are the world's best, and the season runs from March to August. Auckland Fish Market in Wynyard Quarter houses a number of seafood outlets, or you can buy fresh and take home to cook.

But if you're looking for something you definitely won't get at home, try Māori cuisine. Belinda and Jarrad McKay (she's an Aucklander born in Taupō, he's Auckland born and bred) run a caravan and a simple restaurant called Pūhā & Pākehā, offering elevated versions of traditional food.

"The eatery reflects who we are; the way we interact with customers honours our heritage," Jarrad says. That explains the guitar resting in the corner, a sign saying 'play me!' slipped between the strings.

Pūhā & Pākehā's food not only highlights local ingredients, it is cooked using indigenous methods. Jarrad recommends the fried-bread ice-cream sandwich: "very simple but super-yum". Belinda reckons people love the kumara (sweet potato) and coconut bites. The tuatua (shellfish) fritters with kina (sea urchin) chilli chive mayo are also delicious, but if you don't have the



The Auckland War Memorial Museum





The Civic Theatre is a large heritage combination performing-arts theatre, live-music venue, and cinema seating 2,378 people in Auckland, New Zealand



Aotearoa reuben sandwich, where the meat is smoked in an earth oven known as a hāngī, you will live to regret it.

### CULTURE

If you've eaten your fill and are looking for displays of pre-European Māori culture, Auckland War Memorial Museum holds an important collection of taonga (treasures) and there's a group that performs traditional chants, songs and dances three times daily.

To see a different side of modern New Zealand, visit one of the weekend markets, either Ōtara (Saturday) or Avondale (Sunday). Ōtara Market has been going since the 1970s and reflects the Polynesian character of south Auckland.

Avondale Market, to the west of the city, has a different demographic, and you'll rub shoulders with Aucklanders who came originally

from various parts of Asia, particularly China and India. 'Rubbing shoulders' isn't a metaphor, by the way; the market is a tight squeeze. It's bustling and loud, but good natured. No one seems to mind that the busker holding a clarinet in one hand and strumming a guitar with the other seems to be playing in two different keys.

If you can put up with the crowds, you'll find fresh produce at good prices, including Asian foods not offered by supermarkets. Don't come for artisanal bathroom products; this is not that type of market, and there's little by way of street food, either, but it's a great place to soak up the atmosphere and experience Auckland's diversity.

### ELEMENTAL AKL

Throughout July, Auckland's exciting winter festival Elemental AKL warms up the city with a plethora of events and experiences centred around the themes of lighting, cuisine, culture and entertainment.

Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development (ATEED), the lead agency behind establishing the new festival, works in partnership with the region's best event producers, restaurants, accommodation providers to pull together an impressive line-up.

Steve Armitage, ATEED General Manager Destination, says, "Elemental AKL is a welcome addition to Auckland's annual events calendar and has provided a full month's worth of activity during what is traditionally a quieter time.

"In 2019, its inaugural year, Elemental AKL included more than 65 events and 120 eateries across throughout the whole region. We are looking forward to seeing another exciting and diverse programme in 2020."



View of Auckland





RICHARD BETTS is an award-winning Auckland writer born in England. His work has appeared in numerous local and international publications, on topics ranging from music and travel (which he loves) to cars and technology (which he doesn't). He is the classical music feature writer for the *New Zealand Herald*, and is embarrassed by an unnecessarily large CD collection that, in the age of Spotify, he ruefully calls his music museum. Email: [marketing.manager@wscm2020.com](mailto:marketing.manager@wscm2020.com)

Pūhā & Pākehā, boosting Māori and Pasifika cuisine in Auckland



Aotearoa sunset

# INSPIRATION FROM THE INTERNATIONAL MUSIC COUNCIL WORLD FORUM ON MUSIC IN PARIS

**SONJA GREINER**

*Secretary General of the European Choral Association - Europa Cantat*

SEVERAL REPRESENTATIVES OF IFCM AND SOME OF ITS MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS ATTENDED THE WORLD FORUM ON MUSIC AT THE END OF SEPTEMBER. THE EVENT WHICH MARKED THE 70<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE INTERNATIONAL MUSIC COUNCIL (IMC), FOUNDED BY UNESCO IN 1949, WAS FOCUSING ON THE BASIS OF THE 5 MUSIC RIGHTS PROMOTED BY IMC: THE RIGHT TO EXPRESS YOURSELF FREELY IN MUSIC / THE RIGHT TO LEARN MUSIC / THE RIGHT TO ACCESS AND PARTICIPATE IN MUSIC / THE RIGHT TO DEVELOP YOUR ARTISTRY / AND THE RIGHT TO BE RECOGNIZED AND RECEIVE FAIR REMUNERATION

The Forum gathered 300 participants from 70 countries worldwide, with representatives from all kinds of musical genres. Each half day was dedicated to one of the music rights and curated by one of the IMC Board members, offering a mix of keynote speeches, panel discussions, interviews and presentations. The speakers selected included the Minister of Culture of Croatia, a representative of UNESCO, the founder of the Abu Dhabi Music & Arts Foundation, as well as several IMC Music Rights Award winners who had moving stories to share. There was plenty of food for thought and inspiration.

The Forum started on the first morning with a strong and touching keynote by Arn Chorn-Pond from Cambodia, who described how music literally saved his life when he was imprisoned by the Red Khmers in the 70ies as a boy, and how he returned to Cambodia later to rebuild the musical life in his country which had almost completely been destroyed. Arn has also built the first Cambodian choir ever for a documentary called "Wandering Souls" which will be premiered soon.

Choral music was mentioned in different sessions by a number of speakers and there were examples from almost all continents. It started with the importance of singing lullabies in families, the role singing plays in many African societies, and it included the presentation of choirs in countries with little choral tradition such as Afghanistan. Special projects were presented such as the first black Opera Choir in South Africa or a US community choir with prisoners and singers from outside the prison singing together, partly involving victim families themselves. We



Revoice! International Vocal Ensemble, alumni choir of former WYC and Eurochoir members (photo Jutta Tagger)





Roula Abou Baker and Barkev Taslakian, Fayha Choir, Lebanon (photo Jutta Tagger)

also learned how computer technique can add choral sound to a singing voice and how you can successfully warm up your voice in the morning. A permanent poster presentation included 70 projects promoting one or several of the music rights, one of them being the World Youth Choir ([www.worldyouthchoir.org](http://www.worldyouthchoir.org)), a project of Jeunesses Musicales International, IFCM and the European Choral Association – Europa Cantat (ECA-EC) Choral music was also represented by the project Sing Me In, coordinated by ECA-EC and co-funded by the European Union Erasmus+ Programme. Last but not least, Revoice!, an ensemble with alumni of the EuroChoir, a



Interview with Lungile Jacobs, South Africa, composer, arranger, conductor, President of COMFESA, the Choral Music Federation of South Africa (Photo Jutta Tagger)

## 5 Music Rights

- |                                                                                                                                   |   |                                                                                                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>THE<br/>RIGHT<br/>FOR<br/>ALL<br/>CHILDREN<br/>AND<br/>ADULTS</p> <p>THE<br/>RIGHT<br/>FOR<br/>ALL<br/>MUSICAL<br/>ARTISTS</p> | 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     |
|                                                                                                                                   | 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                                       |

project of the European Choral Association – Europa Cantat, as well as some World Youth Choir's alumni performed between two sessions, with a varied and fitting repertoire conducted by three young conductors who also sing in the choir. They were wonderful ambassadors of the choral world and received warm applause and positive feedback. (For more see [www.revoiceensemble.com](http://www.revoiceensemble.com)). The Chair of the European Music Council, Ian Smith, ended the last session of the Forum which dealt with the Freedom of expression (on October 1st, International Music Day) by quoting the text of the Song "Even when he is silent" by Kim André Arnesen which the choir had beautifully performed. The World Forum on Music was preceded by the General Assemblies of the International Music Council and the regional music councils, including the European Music Council. The African Music Council was happy to hear about the plans for the first ever Africa Cantat Festival in Nairobi end of 2020 (see [www.AfricaCantat.org](http://www.AfricaCantat.org)).





Participants of the 6th IMC Music Forum (Photo Jutta Tagger)



Mercè Cano i Nogué, President of the Moviment Coral Catalá and Montserrat Cadevall i Vigués, President of the Federació Catalana d'Entitats Corals and IFCM Board member (Photo Jutta Tagger)

Congratulations to Roula Abou Baker from the Fayha choir in Lebanon, elected to the Board as representative of the Arab region, and to Martí Ferrer from Catalonia, Spain, treasurer of the European Choral Association – Europa Cantat who was re-elected as treasurer. Together with Victoria Liedbergius, IFCM Board member, who was re-elected to the Board of the European Music Council in 2018, the choral world is well represented in the decision-making bodies of these organisations.

For more info on the International Music Council:

<http://www.imc-cim.org>







Outgoing President Emily Achiong' Akuno with the new President Alfons Karabuda (right) and the new Executive Board  
© Sanni Kahilainen

#### **INTERNATIONAL MUSIC COUNCIL - Press Release**

On 28 September 2019, members of the International Music Council gathered in Paris for the organisation's 38th General Assembly, elected a new leadership and adopted an ambitious work plan for the next two years.

Alfons Karabuda (Sweden), composer and President of ECSA (European Composer & Songwriter Alliance) and SKAP (Swedish Association of Composers, Songwriters and Lyricists), was elected President.

"It is a great honor to be confided with the task of leading the world's greatest network for music creators. IMC's members come from across the globe and consist of all the various parts of the musical eco system. UNESCO founded IMC in 1949 to in a tough post war time to build bridges and values through music and culture." Alfons Karabuda says.

Throughout the past six years, Mr. Karabuda has been a driving force within IMC's Executive Board, dedicating himself to promote access to music for all and recognize the value of music in the lives of all people, while exploring new frontiers of collaboration between IMC and other global actors within music and copyright. Mr. Karabuda succeeds in his position as President to Ms Emily Achiong' Akuno from Kenya who received a standing ovation for her commitment.

Alfons Karabuda adds: "When I look at the work being done by the IMC, I am struck by the importance of it, by the necessity of it, and by the passion it manifests in all our activity. In a more and more siloed music business, it is through IMC we can work across genres and together create and show the true value of music"

The IMC General Assembly also elected a new Executive Board composed by Roula Abou Baker (Lebanon), Charles Binam Bikoi (Cameroon), Paul Dujardin (Belgium), Martí Ferrer (Catalunia/Spain), Ardavan Jafarian (Iran), Jacques Moreau (France), Naomi Pohl (UK), Sheila Woodward (South Africa/USA) and Xiaogang Ye (China). Sheila Woodward will serve as Executive Vice-President, joined by Charles Binam Bikoi and Xiaogang Ye as Vice-Presidents and Martí Ferrer as Treasurer.

The IMC work plan for the next two years foresees activities that will strengthen the IMC in its three pillars: as a value-driven advocacy body, as a network of networks and as a project organisation.

Over 100 participants representing 14 national music councils, 25 international and regional music organisations and 19 national and specialised organisations in the field of arts and culture took part in the debates. The General Assembly was followed by the 6th IMC World Forum on Music, which gathered some 350 participants for a celebration of the organisation's core values, embedded in the Five Music Rights. This event also commemorated the 70th anniversary of the IMC, founded under the aegis of UNESCO in January 1949.

# THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF PUERI CANTORES

## Singing for peace, worshipping God and experiencing community in a worldwide movement

**MATTHIAS BALZER**

*First Vice-President of the International Federation of Pueri Cantores*

FOUNDED IN 1950 BY A FRENCH ABBÉ NAMED FERNAND MAILLET, THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH CHOIRS GREW TO MORE THAN 1000 MEMBERS COMING FROM 26 COUNTRIES WITH REGULAR FEDERATIONS AND SPREAD CHOIRS AND CONTACTS IN 17 MORE COUNTRIES. EVERY YEAR GIRLS AND BOYS MEET IN DIFFERENT CITIES ALL OVER THE WORLD TO SING FOR PEACE, PRAISE THE LORD AND HAVING FUN MAKING MUSIC TOGETHER. THEY GENERATE A VIVID COMMUNITY WITH A POWERFUL CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL IMPULSE.

### IN THE BEGINNING

Singing has been part of Christian liturgy ever since. From very early on, children, first boys only, undertook the cantorial part during services. In the effort to train these choirboys, singing schools were established. First foundations of these 'Scholae Puerorum' are documented already in the year 600. In medieval times, almost every cathedral or monastery educated choirboys. While this old tradition was interrupted during 18th and 19th century, it was Pope Pius X who enacted his *Motu proprio* (pontifical decree) about the renewal in church music in 1903 and expressly alluded to the need of renewing the tradition of choirboys and spreading it across the world. In 1907, the 'Petits Chanteurs à la Croix de Bois' in Paris were one of the new foundations. Reasons for the French foundation were not only promoting liturgical singing, but also providing musical and religious education for the choirboys. In 1924 Abbé Fernand Maillet became the choirmaster of 'Petits Chanteurs'. With regard to the papal order he went further and began to spread the idea of singing children all around the world. His vision was to contribute to international understanding by singing. In the following years 'Petits Chanteurs à la Croix de Bois' travelled to many countries and with their performances they encouraged new foundations of boy choirs worldwide.

The experience of the Second World War consolidated Abbé Maillet's vision and aim of a worldwide federation of choir boys. He was convinced that joint singing of children from different nations in praise of God and their prayers for peace would become an important contribution to international reconciliation.

*'All the children of the world will sing the Peace of God.'*

That was his vision of building a new world.

In 1947 the first International Congress of the Pueri Cantores took place in Paris. 90 choirs from several European countries participated. The badge of recognition was a little wooden cross, carried around the neck. After the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Congress in Rome 1949 with a Mass celebrated by Pope Pius XII in the Basilica of St. Peter's, the delegates of many countries decided on April 24, 1950, to officially found the International Federation of Pueri Cantores (FIPC). Abbé Maillet was elected as its first president.

Since then, every two years or so, several thousand Pueri Cantores meet in a big convention; the last congress (42th International Congress of the FIPC) took place in Barcelona in July 2018.

Today the worldwide Pueri Cantores Federation consists of children's, boys', female and mixed youth choirs. All of them are involved in different forms of liturgical singing, but just as important performing nearly every kind of sacred and profane choral music.

### THE AIMS OF PUERI CANTORES ARE:

#### 1. Music sounds louder than words - human and spiritual education

Singing is a way to find one's personal spirituality. In this way, early in life children get the chance to discover prayer, and especially musical prayer, as an essential part of their life.

Words are always a basic element in the education of young people. When they repeat and sing the texts of great choral works, by means of melody and rhythm, these penetrate their intellect and consciences. It allows an access to the contents of these texts in a non-verbal





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Singing Together



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Singing in liturgy



Dancing and singing during a festival

way, too. Singing is a way to express feelings and to discover music as a form of communication.

Choral singing is an excellent opportunity for personal development: posture, breathing, voice. While singing, children learn to listen and to open themselves to others. In a choir, no one becomes a star: even those children who sing a solo part still remain choristers. A choir is a school of life, an initiation to become part of a group, to communicate within a group through music and to understand that others too have something very particular to say (or to sing).

## **2. Laudate pueri dominum – tradition of music and liturgy**

Children's choirs are an essential part of the Christian community. They experience personal growth within and through the Roman-Catholic Community and become messengers of the Gospel. They contribute to the common good and in this way, when they perform in a liturgical context, they are not singing as if it was merely a concert or a contest but become an important and active part in the liturgy.

A choir is a place where faith is understood through sacred music. Singing in a

choir helps young people to live truly adult, artistic and Christian lives.

## **3. All the children of the world will sing the Peace of God - Open to others and crossing borders**

In the choir family of Pueri Cantores, children and adolescents learn social skills and are empowered to become good citizens of both one's country and the world.

In choral education, children learn perseverance and discipline, the value of effort and commitment and the light of the Gospel by studying and learning pieces of music together. Children love to be recognised individually, but they are also very proud to belong to a group, which offers them friendship and a social context. To take responsibility of the individual in the context of the whole group - e.g. older singers gradually take on responsibilities for the younger ones – is a very important element in choral life.

But being part of Pueri Cantores means even more: it means singing for peace, experiencing other cultures, experiencing the worldwide community at international congresses and communicating through the intercultural language of music. This has always been and still is today an important path towards becoming a good citizen of both one's country and the world. Congresses and choir meetings are the most important part of the federation's work.

Furthermore, the Pueri Cantores themselves can become ambassadors of tolerance and support the comprehension among religions, especially in the ecumenicalism. The choirs do so by singing works from other Christian traditions and contexts, other religious folk or pop or other types of music.

In addition to meeting, praying and singing, Pueri Cantores feel the responsibility for choirs in developing countries and support their work.



Gala concert 2017 Strasbourg





Pueri Cantores festival 2015 in Paris

### THE CENTREPIECE OF THE WORK-CONGRESSES AND FESTIVALS

Choir meetings, festivals and congresses are the centrepiece of the work of Pueri Cantores. They take place on a regional, national or international level.

Singing together with chorister of all levels and nations is the most important experience of being part of Pueri Cantores. In this way friendships and partnerships between choirs grow and the network increases. The participants of the festivals / congresses become acquainted with singers of other cultures and get to know the singularities of the host countries or region.

An important aim is to keep the quality of the choral singing in the association on a high level. Therefore, compositions of various degrees of difficulty are used during congresses. The selection of music not only includes well-known and classic works, but also new and contemporary compositions.

Elements of a typical Pueri Cantores congress / festival are:

- One special motto, which engraves all actions and compositions of the Congress
- Opening ceremony and closing Mass
- Musical prayers for peace

- Concerts
- Singing in public places and social spaces
- Duration of 3-5 days

Up to this time 42 International Congresses took place in cities all over the world like Rome, Paris, Cologne, Guadalajara, Tokyo, Washington D.C., Rio de Janeiro and so on. The next International meetings are projected in Panama (February 2020), Florence (July 2020) and Rome (December/January 2021/22). Furthermore, uncounted national and regional choir meetings and festivals occur every year organised by the national federations.

### THE STRUCTURE

Today there are choirs in 43 countries on 4 continents in the international federation Pueri Cantores (FIPC, represented either as independent national federations or as correspondents.

Regular members (25 national federations)

- Africa: RD Congo
- America: Brazil, Canada, Haiti, Mexico, USA
- Asia: India, Japan, Korea, Sri Lanka
- Europe: Austria, Belgium, Germany, France, Great Britain, Ireland, Italy, Catalonia, Latvia, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland



Pueri Cantores festival 2018 Barcelona

18 correspondents (choirs or individuals):

- Africa: Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, Gabon
- America: Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Panama, Peru, Venezuela
- Asia: Lebanon
- Europe: Denmark, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia

The international federation of the Pueri Cantores is led by a 6-headed committee (Council of Administration/ CoA) which is chosen for a term of office of 4 years:

- President: Jean Henric (France)
- First Vice-President: Matthias Balzer (Germany)
- Vice-President: Gabriel Frausto Zamora (Mexico)
- Secretary: Willi Oeschger (Switzerland)
- Treasurer: Gianluca Paolucci (Italy)
- Clerical Advisor: Wieslaw Hudek (Poland)

Three committees with special tasks (Congresses/

Music/Spirituality) advise and support the work of the FIPC.

The presidents of the national federations and representatives of the correspondents' choirs meet annually to exchange experiences, to arrange joint actions, as well as to plan the international choir festivals. Furthermore, the presidents elect the Council of Administration (CoA) every four years.

Further information regarding the international association can be found here: <https://www.puericantores.org>

Since April 2019 the international federation of Pueri Cantores is member of the IFCM and wants to bring their special experience in the great family of choristers all over the world.

*Edited by Olivia Scullion, UK*

**MATTHIAS BALZER** was born in 1955 in Fulda / Germany. He studied church music in Frankfurt/ Main with organ under Prof. Edgar Krapp, choir and orchestra conducting under Prof. Helmut Rilling. From 1980 to 1995 Balzer worked as a church musician. Since 1995 he is responsible for all church musicians in the diocese of Trier and at the same time, he is director of the Episcopal School of Church Music. As conductor of several choirs he is president of the German Children's and Youth Choir Association PUERI CANTORES since 2007. He was elected first vice-president of the International Federation of PUERI CANTORES in 2017. Email: [mb160955@mac.com](mailto:mb160955@mac.com)







Pueri Cantores festival 2018 Treves



Singing in a social environment



# CHORAL WORLD NEWS



**Singing and Reconciliation**  
Tim Koeritz

**Unfamiliar Neighbour**  
French choral music has more to offer than the Fauré Requiem and Saint-Saëns' Christmas Oratorio  
Tristan Meister

**Bratislava, Slovakia**  
Treated to Joyful Sounds at International Youth Music Festivals I and II  
J. Scott Ferguson

**Arezzo and its Monk**  
The 2019 International Polyphonic Competition of Guido d'Arezzo  
Veronica Pederzoli

**World Youth & Children's Choir Festival 2019 and First World Choral Conducting Competition**  
Ka-hei LI Kelvin

**Komitas Vardapet**  
One of the Greatest Musicians of our Era  
Gohar Sndoyan



# SINGING AND RECONCILIATION

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**TIM KOERITZ**

*music journalist*

IN ORDER TO BE HEARD, IN THE TRUEST SENSE OF THE WORD, EVERY CHOIR HAS TO FIND ITS OWN PLACE OR NICHE WITHIN GERMANY'S DIVERSE CHORAL SCENE. THE GERMAN-FRENCH CHOIR OF MUNICH, A MIXED CHOIR WITH 60 OR SO MEMBERS, HAS FOUND ITS PLACE. FOUNDED 50 YEARS AGO, IT IS, CHRONOLOGICALLY-SPEAKING, THE SECOND OF NINE SIMILAR CHOIRS IN GERMANY THAT HAVE CHOSEN TO PROCLAIM THE FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN FRANCE AND GERMANY THROUGH SINGING - ESPOUSING COOPERATION ON A PERSONAL LEVEL, MEETING UP WITH FRENCH PARTNER CHOIRS, AS WELL AS LEARNING ABOUT THE FRENCH CULTURE AND CHARACTER. THE CHOIR OFTEN HEADS TO GERMANY'S WESTERLY NEIGHBOUR ON ITS ANNUAL TOUR.

The German-French ethos is even reflected in the names of the choir members, most notably in the name of the club chairman, Dorothee Jacquot-Weber who has been in post for almost 30 years. It is not uncommon to find that a choir member has a French spouse or is French themselves and married to a German. At the very least everyone has a particular interest in France and its language. "More than a third of our choir is French, and there are only a few who cannot speak any French," says Dorothee Jacquot-Weber. The opposite is true in the Franco-German partner choirs in France, where there are often only a few Germans and only very few choir members can speak German. But this is precisely where the communal practice of singing can bring people together.

Almost one third of the singers in the German-French Choir of Munich are between 35 and 45 years old. The choir does not have any difficulties in recruiting new members. German-French choirs have also been established in Berlin, Leipzig, Bremen, Hamburg, Freiburg, Aachen, Cologne and Bonn. There are comparable partner choirs in France too: in Paris, Boulogne-sur-Mer, Strasbourg, Aurillac, Lyon, Toulouse

and Orange. The charter of the German-French Choir of Munich, which has been a charitable association since 1987, clearly states its objective: "Promotion of art, especially the German and French musical repertoire, as well as cultural exchange and international understanding, in particular between the German and French populations, by means of regular national and international choral activity without commercial aims."

A resolutely political claim: especially in these times of resurgent national self-interest and with Europe threatening to fall apart, admits the choir's chairperson, Dorothee Jacquot-Weber: "With our Franco-German concerts, we are contributing in song to the European idea. This is something I have



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Bernard Lallement who founded numerous German -French choirs in the sixties



Deutsch-Französischer Chor München - Chœur Franco-Allemand de Munich



Dorothée Jacquot-Weber,  
Chairperson of the German-French choir of Munich  
but also chorister



Deutsch-Französischer Chor München  
Chœur Franco-Allemand de Munich  
Dorothée singing

even sung and expressed in public, on the stage of 'Pulse of Europe' in front of the National Theatre in Munich, on the first day of the presidential elections in France in April 2017."

The founding history of the choir speaks for itself. In the politically charged year of 1968, Frenchman Bernard Lallement founded the ensemble shortly after taking up office as vice-consul at the French Consulate General in



Munich. He had already founded the first of these choirs in Berlin. A choirmaster and composer himself, his role as a diplomat enabled him to bring people together to harmonious effect. His neat little motto "Those who sing don't shoot each other" endorses the choir's political claim of international understanding through communal singing. His name "Lallement" sounds a lot like "l'Allemand" ("the German") - a coincidence?

The year 1968 marked five years after the signing of the legendary Franco-German Friendship Treaty, also known as the Elysée Treaty. The personal friendship between Adenauer and de Gaulle brought this historic reconciliation treaty to completion in January 1963, following the horrors of two World Wars and the long-running enmity between the two nations. The treaty emphasises that "close solidarity unites the two peoples in terms of both security and their economic and cultural development." It also stresses the special role of young people in the German-French friendship. Culture, and especially music, brings nations together. In its jubilee year, the choir, under its tenth choral director, Heinrich Bentemann, is once again waving its musico-political banner. The conductor conceived a series of Franco-German peace concerts - "Concerts pour la Paix," which highlight the choir's particular orientation. Romance scholar and church musician Heinrich Bentemann has been the choir's director since 2010, and also directs the Franco-German choir in Aachen. One hundred years since the First World War: the "Centenaire" of this deadly war provided the occasion for him and the choir to put on a series of three concerts. The concerts related to the 100th commemoration year of the outbreak of war in 1914, the deadly and futile battle for Verdun in 1916 and the end of the war in 1918. To commemorate the outbreak of the war, the first of these concerts took place in November 2014. Works by Gounod, Debussy, Brahms and Rombi alternated with readings from the correspondence of the writers Roman Rolland and Stefan Zweig, and touched on the absurdity of the hereditary hostility between Germany and France. For the centennial commemoration of Verdun in February 2016, the music came under the heading "Grant us peace." The recital was supplemented by the novella "Le Récital de Verdun" ("Soloist in Verdun") by Gilles Marie, in which a pianist plays the piano in an abandoned house between the front lines and so provides a temporary respite from the horror. A total of 160 singers from ten partner choirs then sang the programme again in Verdun itself in October of the same year, in the Centre Mondial de la Paix - a truly symbolic act. In the choir's jubilee year of 2018, the third of the peace concerts ended the series in the Munich's St. Johann Baptist church. In front of this church, many Bavarian soldiers took part in church blessings for the troops before leaving for the horrors of the First World War.

Heinrich Bentemann was adamant that he would no longer be performing works such as Mozart's Requiem with the choir. That is what other choirs do. He is particularly devoted to French choral music: "I've been mining a particularly rich seam of Poulenc and Gounod, Saint-Saëns too, as well as making forays into the genre of Chanson. I've also been dipping into the French Renaissance, so that's the whole classical French repertoire all the way up the 20th century." There are also one-off appearances, such as by the relatively unknown German-French composer Théodore Gouvy, a friend of Brahms. The broad repertoire of German-language choral music naturally also enhances the programme. Not all German-French choirs cultivate the French choral repertoire to such a degree, stresses Bentemann.

The exchange is fostered within the Association of German-French Choirs, founded in 1983 again by Bernard Lallement. In addition to nine choirs in Germany and seven choirs in France, there are also the Chœur francophone de Zurich and the Chorale Franco-Allemande de Varsowie based in the Polish capital. Once a year, choral directors and chairpersons meet to exchange news and coordinate repertoires, alternating meet-ups between choir locations in Germany and France. Ideas are also brainstormed for future joint meetings. One of the special initiatives of the umbrella association, which is also a member of the international, French-based choral society A Cœur Joie International, is the annual Eurochorus choir meeting in Toulouse. This article was first published in "Chorzeit - das Vokalmagazin" <https://www.chorzeit.de>

*Translated by Laura Massey, UK*

**TIM KOERITZ, born in Stade (Germany) in 1965, studied music and history for teaching at Gymnasium-level. The qualified radio music journalist has lived and worked in Munich since 1999 as a piano teacher, lecturer at the Volkshochschule [community college] and music journalist for various ARD institutions. He also writes programme notes for the ChorWerk Ruhr in Essen. He is a member of the via-nova-choir in Munich. Email: [tim.koeritz@t-online.de](mailto:tim.koeritz@t-online.de)**



# UNFAMILIAR NEIGHBOUR

French choral music has more to offer than the Fauré Requiem and Saint-Saëns' Christmas Oratorio, an overview from the beginnings into the 20th century

## TRISTAN MEISTER

*Conductor, lecturer and adjudicator for many choral competitions*

EXTENSIVE AND GROUND-BREAKING - THESE TWO ATTRIBUTES ARE INSEPARABLY BOUND TOGETHER WITH THE FRENCH CHORAL MUSIC TRADITION. ALREADY IN THE 12<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY THE FIRST STEPS TOWARDS POLYPHONIC SINGING WERE TAKEN HERE; DURING THE RENAISSANCE THE COMPOSITIONS OF THE FRANCO-FLEMISH MASTERS DOMINATED THE MUSICAL WORLD THROUGHOUT EUROPE; AND THE SONGS OF CLAUDE DEBUSSY ARE EXEMPLARY OF THIS GENRE EVEN TODAY. AND YET ONLY A FRACTION OF THIS RICH REPERTOIRE IS FOUND IN THE CONCERT PROGRAMMES OF LOCAL CHOIRS. THIS ARTICLE WILL PROVIDE AN OVERVIEW OF THE MOST IMPORTANT STAGES OF THE HISTORY OF FRENCH CHORAL MUSIC AND WILL USE SELECTED EXAMPLES TO HIGHLIGHT THE VARIOUS FACETS OF THIS MUSIC TRADITION.

The Notre Dame School of the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, with its great representatives Léonin and Pérotin, was undoubtedly the nucleus of polyphony. As Magister of the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, Léonin created a large number of two-part choral settings, which were expanded to four-part settings by his successor Pérotin. Although few original works by the two church musicians survive, it has been established that it was during their tenure that responsories, usually sung in unison in the Mass, were sung polyphonically for the first time.

From this time onwards, polyphonic music continued to develop and found its way into the churches of Europe. Though opposed by many conservative ecclesiastical princes and even forbidden by Pope John XXII, "Ars nova" was the predominant musical school. We owe to Guillaume de Machaut, one of

the most important representatives of this epoch, the first surviving complete mass setting from a single source. His four-part "Messe de Notre Dame" from around 1360 is an impressive witness to the history of music and is recommended to all choirs that seriously wish to engage with early polyphony.

In the time between 1400 and 1600 lies the most important period of French choral music up to that point: Franco-Flemish vocal polyphony. Distinctive political and cultural ties between northern France and Burgundy, as well as the economic ascent of the province of Flanders, led to the formation of a common cultural landscape of these regions, which quickly assumed a leading role throughout Europe. Guillaume Dufay is arguably the most important representative of early Franco-Flemish music and composed



Machaut (at right) receiving Nature and three of her children. From an illuminated Parisian manuscript of the 1350s





Guillaume Dufay (left) and Gilles Binchios (right)

ground-breaking works of both a sacred and a secular nature. The polyphony that we find in Dufay's works is characterised by a more pronounced relationship between the individual voices, but without curtailing their independence. Thus, he laid the foundation of the polyphony that was to become the standard over the course of the Renaissance.

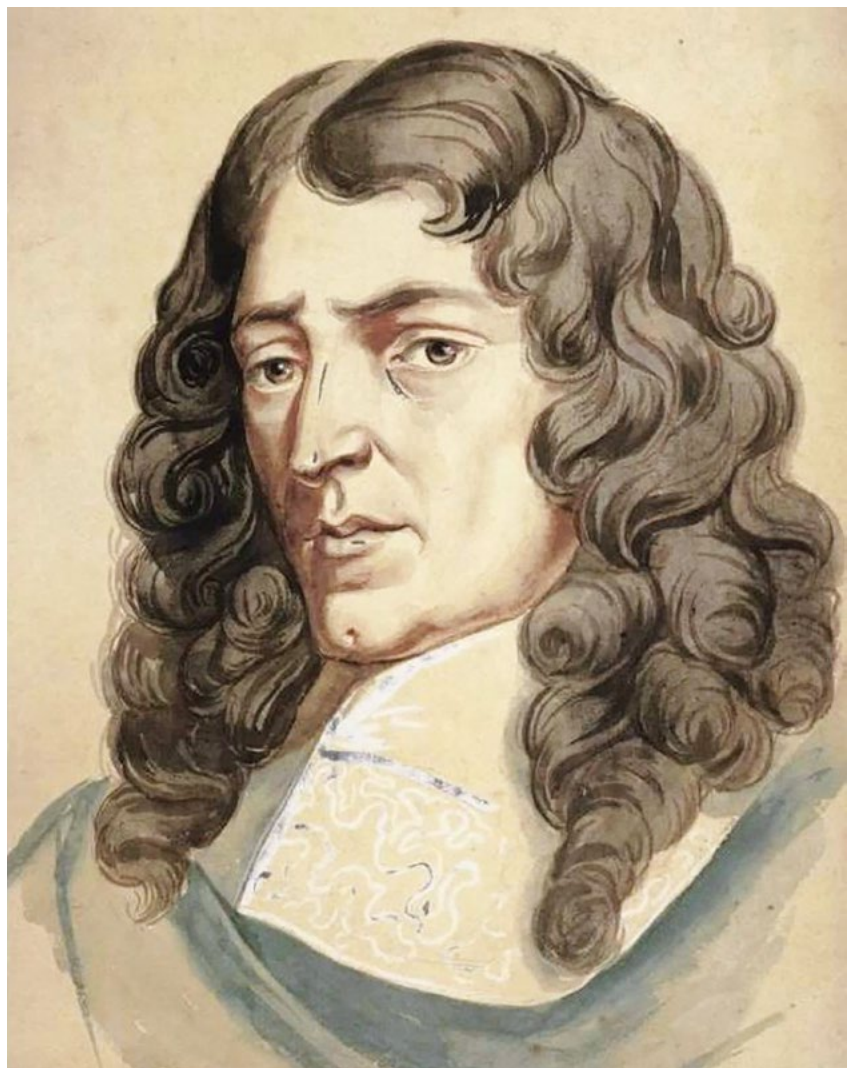
At the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, France was dominated on the one hand by instrumental music in the form of suites, dances, and ballet, while on the other hand the operas of Jean-Baptiste Lully set new international standards. Considerably less well-known but no less significant musically is the vocal work by the Italian-born Lully, characterised above all by his motets. The twelve "Grands motets," sweeping double-choir settings of Latin texts of the Psalms and prayers, are juxtaposed with eleven "Petits motets." Frequently virtuosic and with multiple movements and soloistic passages, these technically highly demanding works are not suited for every choir, but it is nevertheless worth taking a look at this expressive music.

The most important French

Baroque composer for choral music is without doubt Marc-Antoine Charpentier, whose extensive oeuvre is overshadowed by his setting of the "Te Deum" – the main theme of the Prelude is world famous, as it is used as the theme

music for Eurovision television broadcasts. However, Charpentier also composed numerous motets and cantatas for various ensemble, all of them on a high level. But for those looking for a simpler yet rewarding French Baroque piece, André Campra's compositions are highly recommended. His mass "Ad majorem Dei gloriam" is best suited for performances in church services and concerts, while his five-voice "Requiem" is quite interesting for oratorio choirs searching for exciting literature apart from the standard repertoire.

While choral music in France had been nearly inseparable from the Catholic Church until this point, this changed abruptly with the strengthening of the revolutionary movement at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. National songs, marches,



A recently discovered portrait, inscribed by the artist as representing Charpentier, but dating circa 1750, about 40 years after his death.

and hymns were sung by large choirs and accompanied by equally large (wind) orchestras. In addition to the mixed choir, the male choir also established itself for the first time as its own genre and was utilized for nationalistic purposes. One significant composer of this time was François-Joseph Gossec, who regularly composed works for revolutionary festivities. His "Te Deum" (1779) for large orchestra and choir testifies to an intensive engagement with sacred repertoire and is enormously effective and of moderate difficulty.

In the further course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, composers increasingly returned their focus to choral music. Charles Gounod, Gabriel Fauré, César Franck and Camille Saint-Saëns composed numerous sacred and secular choral works. In addition to masses, Gounod composed a large number of sacred motets for various occasions. Fauré's Requiem is among the most popular works of the French Romantic era and is regularly performed today, as is Saint-Saëns' Christmas Oratorio. If one is looking for secular French choral music from this time, it is also worth taking a look at the oeuvre of Camille Saint-Saëns. His "Saltarelle" is an interesting work for ambitious men's choirs, while mixed choirs will find a lyrical "Des pas dans l'allée" and a coarse "Trinquons" in Op. 141.

Two lesser-known composers of this era include Daniel-François-Esprit Auber und Théodore Dubois. Both wrote operas for the big stage, but also chamber music, masses, and motets. One of the main differences between German and French music of the time was the habitual



Staff and students of the École Niedermeyer, 1871.  
Fauré in front row second from left;

organ accompaniment of sacred works in France – in Germany, a cappella compositions were the standard. The organ was often used purely as an accompanying instrument, for example in Dubois' wonderful setting of "O Sacrum Convivium." But it also appears more independently, as in Auber's simple "Agnus Dei No. 2." Numerous other motets and masses of varying degrees of difficulty demonstrate the work of French composers of the Romantic period and thus a suitable piece for worship services and concerts can be found for almost every choir.

Another highlight in the history of French choral music is the period at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Claude Debussy set standards with his "Trois Chansons de



François-Joseph Gossec (17 January 1734 – 16 February 1829)  
with manuscript of the 1350s



Poulenc's tomb at Père Lachaise Cemetery





Marie-Juliette Olga "Lili" Boulanger  
(21 August 1893 – 15 March 1918)

Charles d'Orléans" and brought this Renaissance genre back into the consciousness of his contemporaries. Admittedly, these works can only be performed by selected ensembles and hold an exceptional place among Debussy's compositions, but they were the catalyst for many subsequent compositions in this genre, such as the "Sept Chansons" by Francis Poulenc a good 30 years later. Poulenc is absolutely counted among the most important choral composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. His individual voice leading and musical language frequently make his works technically demanding, but tonally brilliant. The song cycle "Un soir de neige" and the cantata "Figure humaine" are striking examples. His sacred compositions, which include works for mixed choir as well as for men's and women's choirs, are suitable for chamber choirs of all kinds.

The music of Lili Boulanger, who died much too young, is currently enjoying increasing popularity – and rightly so. Her "Hymne au soleil" for mixed choir, alto soloist, and piano is an expressive, stirring piece for listeners

and singers. Jean Langlais and Jehan Alain are among the less known representatives of this era, yet they left behind a remarkable oeuvre. Langlais composed masses and motets for use in worship, all of moderate difficulty and thus feasible for many choirs. Jehan Alain's "Chanson à bouche fermée," an atmospheric work that is performed entirely with the mouth closed, will certainly grab the audience's attention during the concert.

French choral composers have thus always been productive and remain so today. With contemporaries such as Philippe Mazé, Yves Castagnet oder Jean-Christophe Rosaz, choral music continues to play a central role – entirely in keeping with the tradition of French music history.

#### FURTHER REPERTOIRE RECOMMENDATIONS

Guillaume Dufay (pre-1400 – 1474): Missa Ave Regina caelorum; Vergine bella

Josquin des Prez (pre-1455 – 1521): Missa Ave maris stella; Nymphes des bois

Stephan Mahu (pre-1490 – ca.1541): Lamentationes Hieremiae

Claude Le Jeune (ca. 1530 – 1600): Quell'eau, quel air

Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683 – 1764): Laboravi; Deus noster refugium; Quam dilecta

Charles Gounod (1818 – 1893): Messe du Sacré-Cœur; Sicut cervus

Darius Milhaud (1892 – 1974): Naissance de Vénus

Jean Langlais (1907 – 1991): Messe en style ancien; Cinq motets

Olivier Messiaen (1908 – 1992): O sacrum convivium

Jean-Christophe Rosaz (\*1961): Song of Cork; O magnum mysterium

Yves Castagnet (\*1964): Tantum ergo; Messe Salve Regina

This article was first published in "Chorzeit – das Vokalmagazin" <https://www.chorzeit.de>

*Translated by Katie Maxfield, Canada*



**TRISTAN MEISTER** was born in 1989 and received his first musical training from 1997 to 2008 with the Limburger Domsingknaben. He studied choral conducting with Georg Grün, Frieder Bernius and Harald Jers as well as orchestral conducting with Klaus Arp at the Musikhochschule Mannheim. Since 2013 Tristan Meister has served as assistant to the Music Director at the University of Heidelberg and has conducted the Worms Chamber Ensemble since 2015. He founded the chamber choir Vox Quadrata, which

largely consists of semi-professional singers from all over Germany, and is artistic director of the youth choir Hochtannus, with whom he works in yearly work phases on pieces ranging from the Renaissance to the Romantic to jazz/pop arrangements. He is also the founder and musical director of the Ensemble Vocabella Limburg, with whom he has regularly made CD recordings since 2012, including the world's first complete recording of Max Reger's a cappella male choral works. Tristan Meister and his ensembles regularly receive invitations to festivals in Germany and abroad and make guest appearances at renowned concert series in Germany and beyond, including the 2019 World Choral Expo in Lisbon and the World Symposium on Choral Music in New Zealand. He leads workshops and courses for choral singers and directors and is a juror at choral competitions and chairman of the music committee of the Sängerkreis Limburg. Email: [info@tristan-meister.de](mailto:info@tristan-meister.de)

# BRATISLAVA, SLOVAKIA TREATED TO JOYFUL SOUNDS AT INTERNATIONAL YOUTH MUSIC FESTIVALS I AND II

**J. SCOTT FERGUSON**

*Professor of Music and Director of Choral Activities at Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington, IL*

BRATISLAVA, THE CAPITAL CITY OF SLOVAKIA, IS A PERFECT LOCATION FOR MUSICAL FESTIVALS BECAUSE OF ITS INTIMACY AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE. WITH A POPULATION OF APPROXIMATELY 430,000, IT IS ONE OF THE SMALLER EUROPEAN CAPITAL CITIES. IT IS LOCATED ON THE DANUBE RIVER BORDERING HUNGARY AND AUSTRIA, 78 KILOMETRES FROM VIENNA AND 200 KILOMETRES FROM BUDAPEST.

The city's rich cultural heritage reflects the influence of people from several nations and religions throughout its history. From 1536 to 1830, Bratislava served as the coronation city and legislative centre of the Kingdom of Hungary. Maria Theresa was one of several monarchs crowned in St. Martin's Cathedral and during her reign Bratislava flourished. Besides Renaissance and Baroque structures, it boasts several important cultural sites that are all either in or within walking distance of the city's 18<sup>th</sup>-century Old Town, including the Bratislava Castle, Town Hall and Main Square, Opera House, Philharmonic Hall, 14<sup>th</sup>-century Michael's Tower and Gate, Primate's Palace, St. Martin's Cathedral and Hviezdoslav Square with its pedestrian promenade. The city is home to several universities, museums, theatres, galleries and other cultural institutions.

Bratislava annually plays host to ten music festivals sponsored by the Bratislava Music Agency. 2019 marked the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Bratislava Music Agency's International Youth Music Festival I and the 6<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the International Youth Music Festival II. Over the past ten years these two festivals - the biggest in Slovakia

- have included 150 choirs and 100 orchestras totalling 8,000 participants from 37 countries. The festivals' guiding motto is: "music and art connect people". The Artistic Director, Dr Milan Kolena, Art.D., endeavours to imbue the festival experience with a sense of community and nurturing support for the artistic development of young musicians.

The 2019 festivals exemplified the above motto superbly as Bratislava welcomed over 1300 participants in 39 ensembles from Australia, China, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Germany, Hong Kong, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Slovakia, South Africa, and Ukraine. Members of the international juries at either or both festivals included: Saul Zaks from Argentina, David Slater from Australia, Marek Klimeš from Czechia, Leon Shiu-wai Tong from Hong Kong, Elena Šarayová-Kováčová from Slovakia, Chia-fenWeng from Taiwan, Johan Rooze from the Netherlands, and J. Scott Ferguson and Richard Zielinski from the United States. During the two festivals the juries evaluated a total of 42 performances in 30 competition categories.

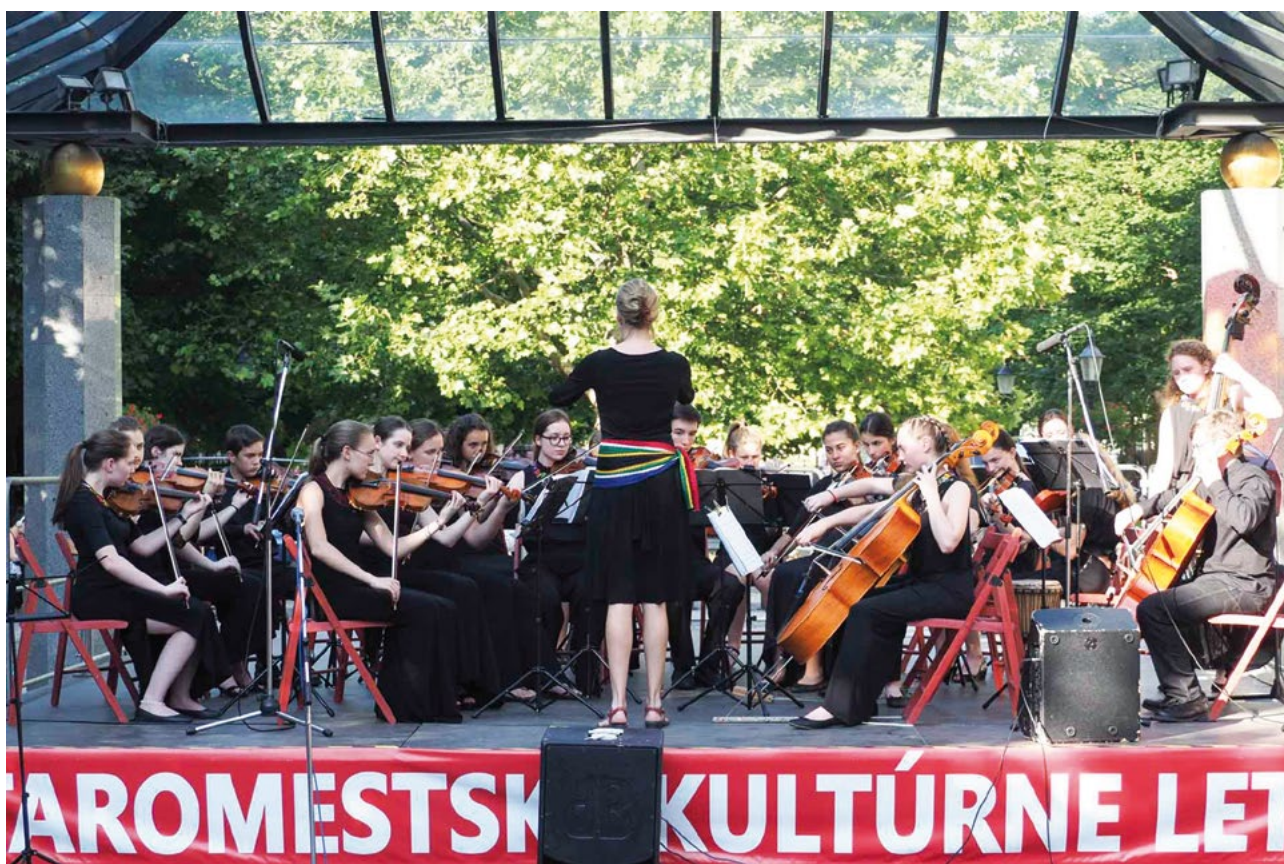


St Peters College Chamber Choir, Australia, competition, Mirror Hall of the Primates Palace





Beilei Choir of Yi Feng Experimental School, China, competition, Mirror Hall of the primates Palace



Stringendo String orchestra Bloemhof, South Africa - Main Square





Shanghai Xinzhuoyuan Middle School Idol Choir, China, opening concert, St. Martin's Cathedral

Competition venues were the elegant Mirror Hall of the Primate's Palace and the Slovak Radio concert hall, each known for their excellent acoustics. These two impressive facilities contribute to the attractiveness of these annual festivals. The Primate's Palace is a neoclassical building completed in 1781 for Archbishop József Batthyány. The Mirror Hall, in which the choral competition was held, was the site of the signing of the fourth Peace of Pressburg (also known as the Treaty of Pressburg) between Napoleon and Holy Roman Emperor Francis II that resulted in the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire. The palace is now the seat of the Mayor of Bratislava and city council meetings are held in the Mirror Hall.

The Slovak Radio building was the venue for the instrumental competition. The building is easily recognisable by virtue of its inverted pyramid design in the style of socialist realism. Construction began in 1967 and was completed in 1983. Regular broadcasting from the 523-seat concert hall began in 1985. The hall is the home of the Slovak Radio Orchestra and is widely used as a recording venue because of its excellent acoustics. It also features one of the largest organs in central Europe.



St Peter's College jazz Ensemble, Australia, Festival Concert, Hviezdoslav Square



Each year the festivals attract a wide variety of choral and instrumental ensembles. This year's ensembles featured tenor/bass and treble choirs, school and community mixed choirs of varying sizes and ages, a wind ensemble, string orchestra, full orchestras, jazz bands, a Croatian tambur orchestra and a Chinese folk orchestra. The literature performed included sacred and secular choral music from various stylistic periods, ethnocentric literature and repertoire from the standard canon of instrumental music. Performances were spirited and demonstrated a sincerity of preparation that was appreciated by the juries. Between the two festivals 21 gold medals and 18 silver medals were awarded.

In addition to their evaluated performances, participants enriched the cultural life of Bratislava through concerts that were held on the first day of the festival prior to the start of the competition and following the daily competitions. Venues for these concerts included the Main Square of the Old Town, Hviezdoslav Square, St. Martin's Cathedral and Klarisky Music Hall, a former church that now functions as a concert hall.

The outdoor afternoon concerts in the Main Square and Hviezdoslav Square created a carnival-like atmosphere



Competition result



Orchestral concert - Main Square



as townsfolk and visitors from around the world were treated to excellent performances of a great variety of musical styles.

Participating ensembles were also offered recreational and sight-seeing trips to points of interest in the surrounding area including guided tours to a 13<sup>th</sup>-century castle called Červený Kameň (Red Stone) in the Little Carpathian hills, the historical town of Trnava - famous for its beautiful churches and Baroque architecture in the city centre - and a trip to a nearby state-of-the-art aqua park in the town of Senec.

Each festival concluded with an award ceremony in Hviezdoslav Square and a reception at the Zichy restaurant at which conductors had an opportunity to interact with jury members to discuss performances.

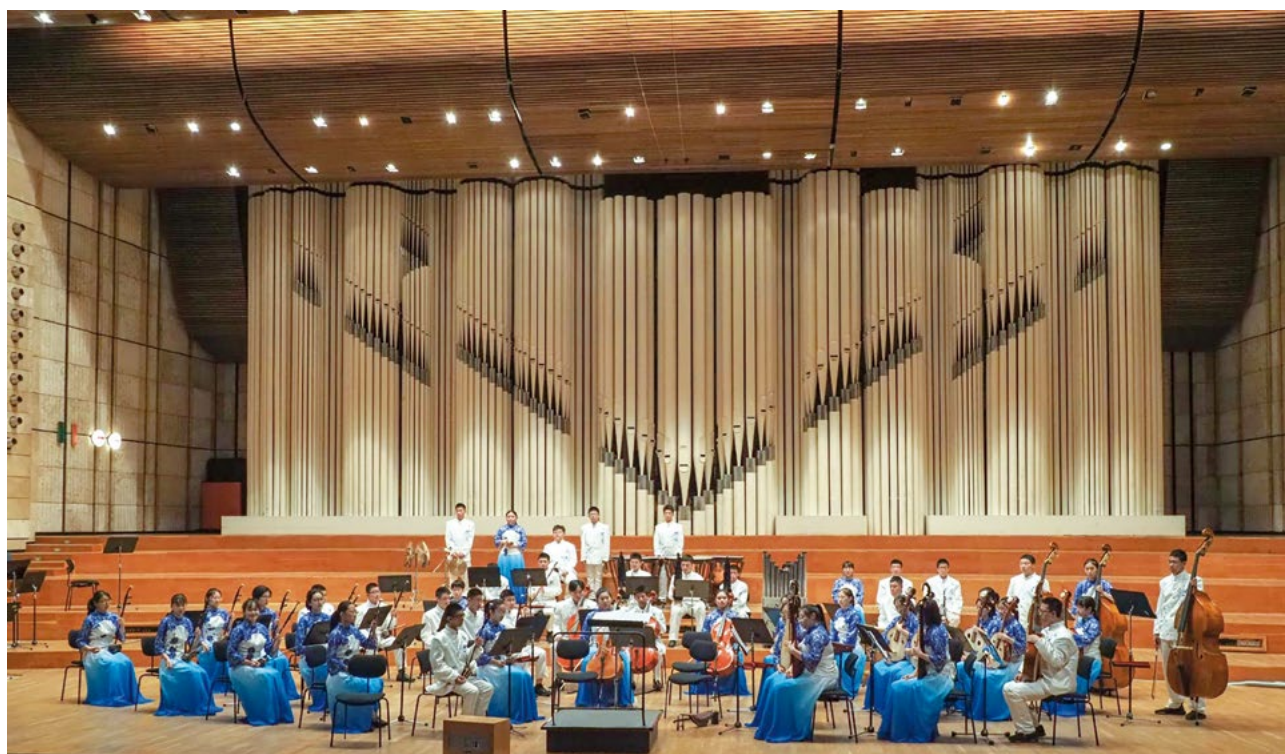
Conductors, jurors, and participants alike praised the two festivals, commenting on the quality of organisation and inspiring nature of the experience. Following the second festival, Sandra Gaide, conductor of the vocal ensemble DZELDE from Latvia, wrote the following:

"Thank you for all you did to make us feel good! We say thanks to all the festival organisers, especially to Milan Kolena! It was a great experience for us to participate in the festival concerts and in the competition. Thank you for supporting amateur singers!"

In 2020, the International Youth Music Festival I will be held on 7-10 July and the International Youth Music Festival II will be held on 27-30 July. Dr. Kolena and his excellent staff look forward to seeing you there!

*Edited by Lydia de Montfort, UK*

**J. SCOTT FERGUSON** is Professor of Music and Director of Choral Activities at Illinois Wesleyan University, where he conducts the Collegiate Choir and University Choir and teaches studio voice, choral conducting and choral literature. His choirs have appeared on tour throughout the United States and Europe and have performed at state and regional ACDA and NAfME conferences. Dr Ferguson is an active choral clinician, festival conductor and adjudicator and has presented choral workshops and lectures in the U. S., Europe and South America. He has published articles on Slovak choral music in the ACDA Choral Journal and is editor of the Slovak Choral Series, published by Alliance Publications. He is a frequent member of juries at international choral competitions. Email: [sferguso@iwu.edu](mailto:sferguso@iwu.edu)



Beijing No.27 High School Golden Sail Folk Orchestra, China, festival competition, Slovak Radio concert hall



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Bratislava, Slovakia

## Festival programme includes:

- Sacred, secular and folk music concerts
- Bratislava sightseeing
- Festival competition
- Optional cultural trips
- Final gala programme and reception

## Competition categories:

- Children choirs
- Youth choirs
- Adult choirs and vocal ensembles
- Folksong
- Spiritual, gospel a cappella
- Musica sacra a cappella
- Renaissance and Baroque music
- Contemporary music
- Musical theatre
- Orthodox church music
- Non competing choirs

**APPLICATION DEADLINE : 15th FEBRUARY 2020**

*Bratislava, the choral singing capital in the heart of Europe*



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...for children and youth choirs, orchestras, bands

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BRATISLAVA, SLOVAKIA

## Festival programme:

- ♪ Sacred and classic music concerts
- ♪ Folklore and secular music performances
- ♪ Bratislava sightseeing
- ♪ Choir and orchestra competition
- ♪ Optional cultural trips
- ♪ Final gala programme and dinner reception

Participation as competing or non-competing groups

Choirs, vocal ensembles, string and symphonic orchestras, brass bands, fanfares, vocal-instrumental groups, folk ensembles, free-instrumentation groups.



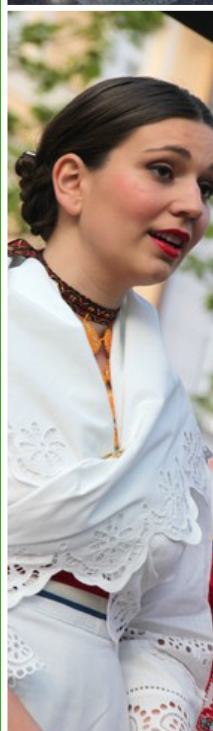
**Application deadline:**

**15 APRIL 2020**

Find out more about festivals and individual music tours in Slovakia: [www.choral-music.sk](http://www.choral-music.sk)

Bratislava Music Agency, Záhumenská 3/A, 84106 Bratislava, Slovakia;

00421 908 693 395, [info@choral-music.sk](mailto:info@choral-music.sk)



# AREZZO AND ITS MONK

## The 2019 International Polyphonic Competition of Guido d'Arezzo

**VERONICA PEDERZOLLI**

*journalist and chorus director*

IT WAS THE POLYPHONIC CHORUS OF THE ROMAN ACADEMY OF SANTA CECILIA THAT REMINDED AREZZO OF ITS BIRTH. ON 21 MAY 1950, IN THE BASILICA OF SAN FRANCESCO, THE CHORUS, DIRECTED BY BONAVENTURA SOMMA, GAVE A CONCERT WHICH RESTORED TO AREZZO A TRADITION THAT HAD BEEN LONG NEGLECTED, A TRADITION INAUGURATED BY GUIDO, THE MONK, (GUIDO D'AREZZO) WITH HIS INVENTION OF THE TETRAGRAM.

With this concert, Arezzo was liberated from the dominance of grand opera, and began again to relish polyphony. The concert is recognised the world over as marking the moment of this rebirth. In 1952, the Guido d'Arezzo National Competition was introduced, and shortly after this, in August 1953, came the first Guido d'Arezzo International Polyphonic Competition which immediately received the esteemed support of the President of the Republic, Giovanni Gronchi. By 1955, the competition had provided a strong sense of prestige in Arezzo, and was attracting choruses from Austria, East Germany, Spain, Switzerland, Yugoslavia, France and Italy, as well as bringing together some of the most interesting names working with European choruses, such as Hans Haus and Hans Gillesberger. Together with them were Italians of considerable calibre, namely Alfredo Bonaccorsi, Celestino Eccher and Achille Schinelli.

That was the starting point, and today the Guido d'Arezzo International Polyphonic continues not only to

be a competition, but also a centre for tracing the history of choral music, showing paths of development, and through training and performance opening a window – the clearest in Europe - onto polyphony.

Over the years, the *Polifonico* has in fact developed alongside the growth of Italy emerging from the post-war period, struggling to rebuild its interpretative approach to performing the classical masterpieces. Indeed, the 19th century opera tradition, which had isolated itself from everything around it, only succeeded in the winning the first prize in 1967, with the Corradini chorus, directed by Fosco Corti. By then, however, Arezzo was replete with numerous organisational and training initiatives under the artistic direction of Luigi Colacicchi, who used to say: "The *Polifonico* is not an end but a means, a means by which to publicise as many reproductions of polyphonic music as possible and to help make them recognised." And so, as early as 1955, the first triennial course for training choral singing for primary school teachers was introduced, and in



The Jury in Arezzo



1960 the first Italian performance of the *Missa Brevis* was directed by Benjamin Britten. With every contest, a grand concert was organised.

A key moment in the history of the competition was the setting up, in 1985, of the Guido d'Arezzo Foundation, which immediately dedicated itself to providing essential training activities for chorus directors, through the specialist magazine 'Polifonie' and the managing of music collections. Provided with this artistic direction, a number of high-calibre musicians became successful choral conductors, including Roberto Gabbiani, Francesco Luisi and Piero Caraba, and from the Polyphonic came the great Benedetti Michelangeli.

The situation today is a testament to the success of this story. Italy is now teeming with schools for choral directors as well as with international competitions and the current artistic director of the *Polifonico*, Lorenzo Donati, brought home the first Italian victory in the European Grand Prix in 2016.

Italian choruses have striven to achieve their place amongst professional circles, and the average standard of Italian



The Youth Choir Kamēr from Latvia, winner of GPE

choruses continues to grow. All this development comes from the seeds sown in 1952 at the Arezzo Polyphonic.

The 67th meeting of the Guido d'Arezzo International Polyphonic Competition was unveiled for 23 and 24 August, and was once again introduced at the Guidoneum Festival which traditionally hosts performances of Luisi and classic masterclasses for choral directors, organised by the Guido d'Arezzo School for Directors (this year

Italian choruses have striven to achieve their place amongst professional circles, and the average standard of Italian choruses continues to grow. All this development comes from the seeds sown in 1952 at the Arezzo Polyphonic.



The Padjadjaran University Choir from Indonesia, winner of the Grand Prix City of Arezzo



Awarding ceremony:  
Avis GreTERS receives the trophy of the GPE

led by Alexander Schweitzer and Stephen Connolly).

Furthermore, under Donati's artistic direction numerous musical events took place in the week leading up to the *Polifonico*, such as the in-depth analysis of the music of 'Hello Polifonico!' at nine am, interviews with protagonists in the choral scene at 2pm with 'Four chit-chats and a coffee' and, above all, 'Written & Sung'. *Written and Sung* seeks to reconstruct the symbiotic relationship that characterised the rapport between composer and performer which existed in the past. It proposes daily meetings with the composer and a performance in concert of some of his songs, amongst which one will often have been composed specifically for these meetings. This formula was put into practice by the vocal group UT at the 2019 meeting for musical compositions by Carlo Pedini, Cristian Gentilini, Andrea Basevi, Pietro Ferrario, Michele Josia and Simone Campanini.

Of particular note is the focus on contemporary Italian compositions, which the artistic director, Lorenzo Donati, particularly emphasises, requiring the inclusion of a song by a living Italian composer in addition to the obligatory songs in

each category of the competition. Interesting, too, is the obligatory choice of an ancient song amongst the songs of composers of each territory. Composers included are Paolo Aretino, Crisostomo Rondini and Orazio Tigrini. This is interesting not only because the



The Italian Choir 'Emil Komel'

singers have to work on ancient musical material that is little known to many, but also because this work stimulates research and discovery. The activity is certainly

not impious, seeing as the same foundation offers deep specific analyses of such composers in the magazine *Polifonie*.

For example, in the 5th edition, of 2017, there appeared an analysis by Cecilia Luzzi of a manuscript containing rhymes used in improvisations and showing their influence in the books of madrigals of Paolo Aretino. The magazine now boasts a scientific committee of fourteen university lecturers (both Italian and non-Italian) and is working on putting the magazine into class A for the ANVUR. For this reason, on the day of the competition's inauguration, a round table meeting is organised and chaired by Cecilia Luzzi with the aim of pinpointing the development prospects of a magazine for musicological analysis. Essentially, the magazine functions as a melting pot for musical composition. At last, on Thursday 22 August at 9pm the familiar theme song of the Polyphonic was heard, on the occasion of the inaugural concert.

There were thirty groups present although a noted absence was Petra Grassi with her vocal group Vikra.

It was the Padjadjaran University



Choir, from Indonesia, which was awarded the Grand Prize at the Petrarch theatre, an unexpected result in the competition. The Indonesians performed the styles expected for the event, with the Polish Rondo vocal group, the Italians of the young Emil Komel choral group and the party chamber choir of Saint Petersburg, the last of which had the musical style of Aleksandra Makarova. She was probably playing for the grand prize, concentrating excessively on contemporary styles, after an impressive Poulenc. The Gorizia chorus, directed by the attentive-to-detail David Bandelj, illustrated the kind of quality of work that can be achieved by young people who, having gained attention on the national scene after just eight months, succeeded in collecting awards in four categories in the international competition. The journey of this last chorus is comparable to the Artemusica Chorus, run by the energetic Debora Bria, who, during the competition, managed to achieve more than she originally planned. Despite only achieving a single but well-deserved prize, Artemusica is perhaps the only chorus to have always successfully delivered interpretative performances without suffering any mistakes. The standard of performance of the choruses in this year's competition was somewhat uneven, even though they all put on their best performances. You only need to consider the performance of the

young chorus group of Emil Komel, whose performance at Gallus was let down by the decision to divide his boys into three choruses, which didn't all survive all the way through. Plus there was the vocal inconsistency of the Russian chorus which revealed a great variation in diction, also a sense of disorientation in the Padjajaran University Choir in their interpretation of *Begegnung* by Wolf shortly before they delivered a magical *Sicut cervus* by Lorenzo Donati.

It was this song which strongly characterised the final of the European Grand Prize, held on Saturday 24 August at 9pm in the Pieve church of Santa Maria. It was packed with members of the public who were becoming rather restless but their attention was won back by Donati, as well as by a few other directors.

This was a Grand Prix whose standard was truly very high, and what stood out was the incredible energy demonstrated by the Youth Choir Kamēr of Riga (Latvia). Very young, determined and ambitious, they started off their specialist performance with the *Sicut cervus* by Donati. The 26-year-old director Aivis GreTERS stood right in the midst of his chorus and could not even see all his own singers because of the number of people standing in the church, but he went ahead with the song without letting this put him off. After performing a Schein resplendent with lively, youthful exuberance, his path to

victory concluded with a incredible *Atsalums* by J kabs Jan evskis: the chorus members gave their all, singing at the top of their voices where they needed to and where there was silence the crowd did not break it. Indeed they were left speechless by the performance, and GreTERS, drenched in sweat as if he had just had a shower, continued to bow towards the chorus with his hands crossed, thanking his singers. At this point they didn't know that they had won, but they knew how to go out with their heads held high. During the prize-giving, these boys didn't so much cry as embrace each other endearingly, overwhelmed with emotion brought on by the incredible result. Coming out of it, they must have been even more proud knowing that in this European Grand Prix, they were certainly not lacking in star rivals. Earlier on amongst the performances was the very profound and delicate interpretation of *Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen* by Mahler, performed by the Somnium Ensemble of Helsinki, a chorus that is absolutely brimming with finesse, and the *Avita ng Pag-alala* by Nilo Alcala, performed by the Singing Ambassadors chorus of the University of the Philippines. A precision execution, and the neatness of their performance was in keeping with their program.

*Translated by William Young, UK  
Edited by Caroline Maxwell, UK*



**VERONICA PEDERZOLLI** has a degree in music education, music culture and chorus management. She contributes regularly to the culture section of the Trentino daily newspaper, by *Bridgehead Media*, for which she also produces program notes for third parties like iTunes or Deutsche Grammophon. She is on the editorial board of the thrice yearly Feniarco's *Choraliter* and of *Polifonies*, a musical magazine from the Guido d'Arezzo foundation. She has also collaborated with the *Musicare* newspaper of the Vincenza Quartet Society, and was a manager in the printing office of the Italian Mozart Association, having published for *Starget S.r.l*, the *Corriere Musicale*, the *WAM Festival Mozart* of Rovereto and *L'Adige*. She teaches choral education in the Jan Novák music school of the Villa Langarina. Email: [veronicapederzoli@yahoo.it](mailto:veronicapederzoli@yahoo.it)

# WORLD YOUTH & CHILDREN'S CHOIR FESTIVAL 2019 AND FIRST WORLD CHORAL CONDUCTING COMPETITION

## Celebrating a Week of Choral Music and Interaction in Hong-Kong

**KA-HEI LI KELVIN**

*Assistant Manager of the World Youth and Children Artists' Association*

THE 2019 WORLD YOUTH & CHILDREN'S CHOIR FESTIVAL – HONG KONG (WYCCF) ENDED ON A HIGH NOTE. ORGANIZED BY WORLD YOUTH & CHILDREN CHORAL ARTISTS' ASSOCIATION (WYCCAA) AND HONG KONG TREBLE CHOIRS' ASSOCIATION (HKTCA) WITH THE LEADERSHIP OF THE FESTIVAL'S ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, PROF. LEON SHIU-WAI TONG, IT TOOK PLACE ON 11 - 18 JULY 2019 AT VARIOUS LOCATIONS IN HONG KONG, INCLUDING THE PRESTIGIOUS HONG KONG CULTURAL CENTRE, HONG KONG CITY HALL, TSUEN WANTOWN HALL AND SHATIN TOWN HALL.

With the involvement of more than 3,000 participants from over 40 countries and regions recorded this year, they celebrated a week of choral music and interaction.

### WORLD CHORAL CONDUCTING COMPETITION

WYCCAA was proud to have Hong Kong Arts Development Council support for the inaugural World Choral Conducting Competition (WCCC). The Jury of the Competition was chaired by Prof. Péter ERDEI (Hungary) and he was joined by nine more experts in

the field: Dr. Brady Allred (USA), Prof. Martin Berger (Germany/South Africa), Prof. Ursas Lah (Slovenia), Dr. Zoltan Pad (Hungary), Mr. Avip Priatna (Indonesia), Prof. Ragnar Rasmussen (Norway), Prof. Leon Shiu-wai Tong (Hong Kong China) and Prof. Yang Li (China).

WYCCAA was honoured to have the Utopia and Reality Chamber Choir be the official competition choir for WCCC. Moreover, WYCCAA would like to give their gratitude to Dr. Zechariah Goh Doh-chai, a talented Singaporean composer, who composed a compulsory



The jury for the conducting competition starting from left to right: Prof. Ragnar Rasmussen, Prof. Yang Li, Prof. Martin Berger, Dr. Brady Allred, Prof. Peter Erdei, Prof. Leon Shiu-wai Tong, Prof. Ursa Lah, Dr. Zoltan Pad and Mr. Avip Priatna



commissioned work “The Spirit Rejoices” for the final round of the Competition.

The winner will have a concert engagement with Slovenian Philharmonic Choir in the 2019/20 Concert Season. In addition, the winner, 2nd and 3rd prizes received study opportunities with Prof. Péter Erdei, Dr. Brady Allred and Prof. Ragnar Rasmussen.

The Festival kick-started off with the WCCC. With contestants from 29 countries in the preliminary round, a total of 12 finalists emerged to compete in Hong Kong.

Round 1 took place on 12 July to narrow down the number of finalists to six. The Jury listened to a string of wonderful performances. When the dust finally settled, the results were eventually announced on 13 July in round 2:

- First Prize: Julia Selina Blank (Germany)
- Second Prize: Heeseong Lee (South Korea)
- Third Prize: Benjamin Theophilus Kirk (UK)
- Choir Prize: Petra Grassi (Slovenia/Italy)
- Audience Prize: Julia Selina Blank (Germany)

WYCCAA would like to congratulate all the winners and participants. High quality of musicianship and leadership was displayed during the competition and we are certain that they will continue to prosper and to influence other up and coming young choral conductors. Last but not least, a huge thank you to the Jury: none of this would have happened without them!

“My memories of the Choral Conducting Competition in Hong Kong are still very vivid. I declare it was probably the highest quality choral event I have attended in many years, thanks to WYCCAA’s careful planning, the quality of the choir and the skills of the young conductors.” Prof. Péter ERDEI, Chairman of the Jury, WCCC



The King's Singers performing at the Hong Kong City Hall on July 13



Prof. Jing LING-TAM speaking to participants of the masterclass on July 14



Julia Selina BLANK – winner of the 2019 World Choral Conducting Competition, conducting the Utopia and Reality Chamber Choir (Official Competition Choir of 2019 WCCC)





Dr. LEE Wing-yin Sarah (standing right) interacting to children at the family activity



Massed choir singing the festival theme song "HuXi" at the opening ceremony on July 14



Prof. Jonathan VELASCO (2nd row, 6th from the left) speaking to participants of the masterclass on July 16

## MASTERCLASS

Another fundamental event in the WYCCF were the masterclasses hosted by 16 choral maestros. Perfectly designed for choir conductors and teachers to enhance their conducting skills and techniques, they were held from 14 to 17 July, inclusive. Furthermore, two of the Resident Artists – The King's Singers and Mr. NG Cheuk-yin, took part to share some of the behind the scenes work and their compositions. During this period, Prof. Jing Ling-Tam and Mr. Jonathan Velasco were stationed for their masterclass series - "Choral Repertoire Series" and "Choral Conducting Series" respectively. With other masterclass speakers such as Mr. Jacques Vanherle (France) to Prof. Enrico Miaroma (Italy) and with topics ranging from Fun and Humour in Choral Singing to Italian Contemporary Choral Music, it was a beneficial and fruitful event.

## FAMILY ACTIVITY

A spin-off from the traditional masterclasses, with the aim to attract children, the "Children's Magical Music Carnival" took place on the first day of WYCCF. Held by Dr. Sarah Wing-yin Lee, it used theatre and classical music as a medium to enhance children's interest and creativity in choral and musical arts. Dazzled by the astounding music and theatrics, the children enjoyed a pleasant afternoon and left with a huge smile on their faces.

## INTERACTIVE WORKSHOP

WYCCAA would like to show their great appreciation to the Utopia and Reality Chamber Choir (URCC) and the Hamilton Children's Choir for holding livelier versions of the masterclasses for youth choirs and children's choirs respectively.

Workshops were broken down into two sections. The first part was a quasi-education concert where the choir introduced a wide



variety of choral music with guided appreciation and joint warming-up activities. The second half was much more interactive with everyone on-site joining together to sing. One instance was when the conductors of URCC called for the audience to head up on to the stage for a mass performance.

### STARRY CONCERT SERIES

The blockbuster event of WYCCF, it consisted of six concerts by our four resident artists – The King's Singers, Hamilton Children's Choir, Utopia & Reality Chamber Choir and Mr. Ng Cheuk-yin and 10 guest choirs from Hong Kong and Shenzhen.

#### Love Songs: The King's Confession

A teaser before the Opening Ceremony & Concert, the first of the Starry Concert Series commenced on 13 July. It was also the first concert The King's Singers performed within WYCCF and the songs were first featured in their Asia tour. That night, they pulled the heartstrings of many audiences with a series of love songs by an unusually diverse mix of composers and songwriters from across the world over the last 500 years.

### OPENING CEREMONY & CONCERT

The Concert was next in line on 14 July. Hosted by Harry Wong, a well-known local host, and Kaylee Chan, it started with a prize-giving session, during which the Lifetime Achievement Award for Choral Music was handed to Prof. Péter Erdei (Hungary) and Mr. Chan Kowk-ning (Hong Kong) for their commitments to choral music. Notable audiences included Mr. Jack Chan (Under Secretary for Home Affairs), Dr. Darwin Chen (President of the UNESCO Hong Kong Association), Hon. MA Fung-kwok SBS JP (Legislative Councillor for Sports, Performing



Hamilton Children's Choir at the Larger than Life concert, cond. Prof. Zimfira Poloz



Utopia and Reality Chamber Choir performing at the Hong Kong Cultural Centre, cond. Prof. Ursula LAH



Signo from Hong Kong, handing the Jury's Prize, was awarded Best Interpretation – Mr. Ka-kei LEE Memorial Trophy, Best A Capella Performance, Category F – Ensemble Singing Champion



Arts, Culture and Publication Functional Constituency) and Mr. Jeff Nankivell (Consul General of Canada in Hong Kong). It also saw the world premiere of "The Spirit Rejoices" conducted by Julia Selina Blank, the winner of WCCC. Last but not least, it ended with a mass choir performance by four Hong Kong choirs and four international choirs, conducted by the Festival's Artistic Director – Prof. Leon Shiu-wai Tong.

### **Hamilton Children's Choir: Larger Than Life**

On 15 July, the Hamilton's Children Choir from Canada had their first full concert in Hong Kong. Conducted by Prof. Zimifra Poloz, the Choir was joined by the Good Hope School Choir (conducted by Ms. Melody Tang). Throughout the Concert, they displayed outstanding lightings and superb movements and singing. Highlights include "Li Ngu Weko" and "Spellbound", specifically commissioned by the Ontario Council of Arts and the Canada Council of the Arts. Ms. Tracy Wong and Ms. Katrina Gimon, the composer of "Spellbound", were also in attendance to witness the World Premiere of the work.

### **Gold: The King's Celebration**

A different approach from Love Songs, The King's Singers chose a selection of songs to celebrate their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. They still share their mission today: the future of music deserves to shine as brightly as it can. It is about savouring the amazing diversity of music and musicians in the world today, holding up composers, songwriters and singers of all kinds side by side to create something extraordinary.

### **Utopia & Reality Chamber Choir: The Cycle of Polarities**

A mix of professional conductors and singers from different countries, the Utopia & Reality Chamber Choir is an international



Good Hope School Choir (in white) joined together with Hamilton Children's Choir for a massed choir performance



Mr. NG Cheuk-yin conducting the mass choir performance, "HuXi", for his concert at the Shatin Town Hall on July 17



Prof. Nancy Yuen, handing the World Youth and Children Choral Artists' Association – The Choir of the World Trophy to PSM Swara Wadhana Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, from Indonesia.





Ending pose of a competition choir at the end of their performance in the Category A1 – Children's Choir (Aged 12 or under)

project that held their concert on 16 July, led by their founders and artistic directors (Prof. Ragnar Rasmussen and Prof. Ursa Lah). They brought Scandinavian and Slovenian music to the Concert. Joined with another local choir – the Ponte Singers (conducted by Mr. Stephen Lam), the audience enjoyed a night of different genres of music. Highlights of the concerts include Norwegian folk song "Gjendines badnlat", Slovenian Hymn "O Sapientia" and some local Hong Kong pop classics.

#### **A Concert Dedicated to NG Cheuk-yin's Choral Works**

A concert highlighting Mr. NG Cheuk-yin, a well-known choral and pop musician in Asia, the last of the Starry Concert Series was held on 17 July. It brought together several local choirs, including the Hong Kong Treble Choir, the Hong Kong Yuen Long Children's Choir,

the Heep Yunn School Choir, the Wah Yan College Kowloon Boys' Choir and Die Konzertisten, performing songs with Hong Kong characteristics. Highlights include new works such as "The MTR Riddle" and "Let's Make a Cake" for elementary group choirs to "This Victoria Has No Secrets." To end on a high note, Mr. NG conducted his own composition, as well as the WYCCF theme song, "HuXi", for the grand finale.

#### **INTERNATIONAL CHORAL COMPETITION**

Consisting of two rounds, Category Competitions and Finalists Night, the champion of each category entered the Final to compete for the Grand Prizes and Cash Awards, which were voted by the WYCCF Jury chaired by Prof. Nancy Yuen (Hong Kong China), assisted by Dr. Brady Allred (USA), Prof. Martin Berger (Germany/South Africa),

Assoc. Prof. Milan Kolena (Slovakia), Prof. Carmen Koon (Hong Kong China), Prof. Ursa Lah (Slovenia), Prof. Daniel Law (Hong Kong China), Ms. Liu Mei (China), Mr. Peng Dapeng (China), Prof. Enrico Miaroma (Italy), Dr. Zoltan Pad (Hungary), Mr. Avip Priatna (Indonesia), Prof. Zimfira Poloz (Canada), Prof. Ragnar Rasmussen (Norway), Prof. Jing Ling-Tam (USA), Mr. Toh Ban-Sheng (Singapore), Mr. Jacques Vanherle (France), Mr. Jonathan Velasco (Philippines), Prof. Yang Li (China), Prof. Zhu Jin-ming (China).

The categories were:

- Category A1: Children's Choirs (aged 12 or under)
- Category A2: Children's Choirs (aged 16 or under)
- Category B1: Youth Choir, SA Voices (aged 29 or under)
- Category B2: Youth Choir, TB Voices (aged 29 or under)
- Category B3: Youth Choir, SATB Voices (aged 29 or under)

- Category D: Folklore
- Category E: Show Choirs
- Category F: Ensemble Choirs
- Category G: Adult's choirs

With the motto of "Love Singing" for WYCCF, the competition displayed the utmost enthusiasm and delight for every choir. One of the spotlights was the incredible costumes for each choir. Primary school children participating in Category A1 – Children's Choirs (aged 12 or under) were dressed in traditional clothing in either silk or velvet, while some choirs had even brought along palanquin and donkey decorations. It was a sight to behold!

### THE WORLD YOUTH & CHILDREN'S CHOIR FESTIVAL CLOSING CEREMONY AND FINALISTS' NIGHT

With the competition category completed, there was just one more thing – the Finals! On 17 July, the nine winners of the respective categories came together once again to compete for the overall winner. After another intense evening of performances, the trophies were brought onto the stage and the winners were announced, accompanied by thunderous applause. Please visit <https://wyccaa.com/festivals/wyccf/results/> for the list of the winners. The Closing Ceremony ended with a symbolic handing over of the WYCCF 2020 flag by Prof. Leon Shiu-wai Tong to Xie Shui-tu, representative of the Zhejiang Radio & Television Group, from the city of Hangzhou, China, which will host next year's festival and competition from 18 to 23 July 2020. Until next year!

For information about WCCC

<https://wyccaa.com/conducting-competition/introduction/>

Facebook: @WYCCAA

*Edited by Mirella Dina Biagi, UK/Italy*

**Mr. KA-HEI LI KELVIN, Assistant Manager of the World Youth and Children Artists' Association (WYCCAA). He is also the Programme and Marketing Manager of the 2019 World Youth and Children's Choir Festival - Hong Kong (WYCCF). Email: [kellynli@musicconnection.com](mailto:kellynli@musicconnection.com)**



Dalian Children's Choir of Liaoning, China, winner of the Best Folk Song Performance – Mdm. Barbara FEI Memorial Trophy, Best Stage Effects and Musica Connection Audience Award II, performing at the finals on the 17th July at Tsuen Wan Town Hall



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# KOMITAS VARDAPET

## One of the greatest musicians of our era

**GOHAR SINDOYAN**

*Armenian Little Singers*

"EVEN IF HE HAD WRITTEN NOTHING BUT 'ANTUNI', IT WOULD HAVE BEEN ENOUGH TO CONSIDER HIM ONE OF THE GREATEST MUSICIANS OF OUR ERA."

CLAUDE DEBUSSY

Komitas (Sghomon Sghomonyan) was born on 26 September 1869, in Anatolia, Turkey. He was an Armenian priest, musicologist, composer, arranger, singer, and choirmaster, who is considered the founder of the Armenian national school of music. He is recognized as one of the pioneers of ethnomusicology. Based on his experience of Western European classical harmony, the achievements of the Armenian composers and the exploration of the peculiarities of Armenian traditional music, he established his own composition style, which is unique within the scope of the music history in general.

Komitas's compositional heritage contains arrangements of Armenian folk music and sacred songs as well as original works, which did not originate from tradition. The works based on folk and sacred music are also considered as compositional works taking into account Komitas' unique approach and treatment.

Komitas composed mainly in the following genres:

- a. **Songs with piano accompaniment**
- b. **Choral songs**
- c. **Piano works**
- d. **Opera projects**
- e. **Ensembles and orchestral works**

Komitas' vocal and choral performances encountered wide reactions from the audience. There are numerous testimonies to his delightful voice, which "compelled" the audience to tear up.

Komitas led the collection, ***classification and study of traditional music at academic level***. He was one of the first ethnomusicologists in the world. During his entire life, he regularly travelled to different villages, towns and other places to collect thousands of traditional songs and melodies.

**Musicology** is one of the crucial spheres of Komitas' activity. He presented the results of his research to various audiences, including the conferences of the International Music Society. He authored a number of articles presenting the results of his research written in Armenian and German. Based on the results of his research on Armenian sacred and folk music, he described a range of statements and inventions of fundamental significance



Father (Vardapet) Komitas

for the Armenian culture.

During his fairly-short creative life, Komitas launched a comprehensive and effective activity anticipating further ways to develop the Armenian musical art.

In the next issue of ICB there will be a complete presentation of Komitas Vardapet.

*Edited by Mirella Dina Biagi, UK/ Italy*

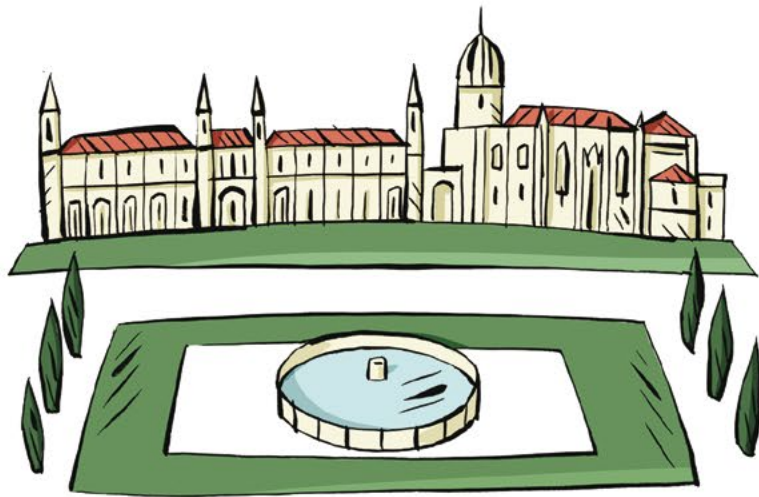


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# CHORAL TECHNIQUE



**Musical Memory and its Importance in the Art of Conducting**  
Theodora Pavlovitch

**The Culture of a Conductor**  
Aurelio Porfiri

**Choral Blend: How to Achieve it – Part 2**  
Tim Sharp



# MUSICAL MEMORY AND ITS IMPORTANCE IN THE ART OF CONDUCTING

## THEODORA PAVLOVITCH

conductor and professor

THE TOPIC OF HUMAN MEMORY IS ONE OF THE MOST EXPLORED WITHIN THE FIELD OF PSYCHOLOGY. WITHOUT GETTING INTO TOO MUCH DETAIL OF PHYSIOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH FROM DIFFERENT SCIENTIFIC FIELDS, WE WISH TO MENTION HERE ONLY THE MOST BASIC AND WIDESPREAD DEFINITION OF MEMORY: 'THE MENTAL PROCESS OF REMEMBERING, STORING AND RECALLING OR REALIZING WHAT A PERSON HAS EXPERIENCED, LIVED THROUGH OR DONE BEFORE.

From a theory of information standpoint, memory is the collection of information about a specific signal and after its action is complete. '[Short dictionary on psychology - compiled by Prof. G. Piriyov and L. Desev]. A good memory is important in all kinds of creative work – in the fields of science, art, technology or teaching. With regards to conducting, good memory is not just a necessity, but a must. There are many reasons for this. When a conductor processes a lot of different information, consciously and subconsciously, memory is the psychic process that prevents the brain centres from 'overloading'. By remembering and reproducing previously-gathered knowledge, skills and habits, conductors can perform their task without the risk of a 'system crash'. It is especially important to use the capacities of memory in relation to:

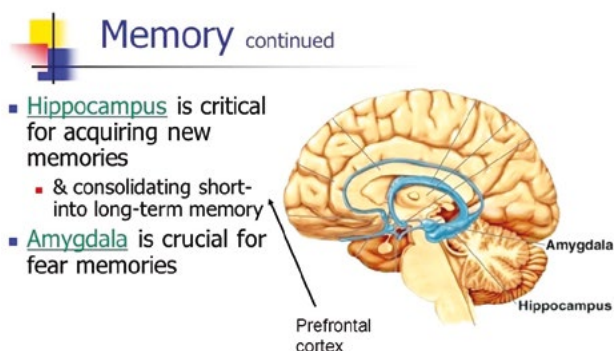
1. The creation of an internal musical image - imaginary musical sounds which are directly connected to the core memory's mechanisms.
2. The relation with the orchestra and/or choir - this relation can be heavily hindered by the conductor

constantly looking at the musical score during rehearsals or the main performance on stage. On this subject, the famous conductor Hans von Bülow said that the musical score should be in the conductor's head, not the head in the musical score (from 'Memoirs' by Richard Strauss).

3. The conductor's manual technique - also a result of the memory's activity, whereby specific motor functions and skills are accumulated, stored and reproduced. No conductor can express their musical intentions without the active participation of motor memory.
4. The work and mastery of conducting are not possible without acquiring a large amount of knowledge encompassing music theory science and other fields such as philosophy, culturology, aesthetics, history of arts, psychology, etc. Storing and using this knowledge can be done only through the functions of memory.
5. As with other arts, the so-called emotional memory is also important when conducting – it allows for the consciousness to recreate, via past experiences, the emotional content of a music piece.

The main qualities of memory are **volume, accuracy, recall speed, storage permanence, and helpfulness, i.e. reproduction readiness.**

Memory matters because conductors have are required to remember a wide range of theoretical information, as well as a large quantity of musical compositions, in their line of work. One of the most cited examples in the field of the art of conducting is the extensive memory Toscanini had. Stravinsky: 'His memory has become a role model, as not even the smallest detail escapes him: if you go to a rehearsal of his, you will be convinced yourselves [...] Toscanini has all the music in his head, down to the last details of the musical sheet. By conducting music by heart, he doesn't waste even a





Igor' Fëdorovič Stravinskij

thousandth of a second to look at his musical score on the stand.' [Igor Stravinsky - Chronicle of My Life]

An accurate memory is also important when conducting. Even the slightest error could ruin the creation of the musical structure and, subsequently, of the musical image. Inconsistencies in the conductor's memory can cause the performers to react accordingly, which hinders and slows down the rehearsal process. During a stage performance, the inconsistencies of the conductor can lead to irreparable mistakes.

Recall speed, storage permanence and helpfulness of memory are equally important to a conductor. The individual peculiarities of these qualities make conductors more or less capable of responding to the specific requirements of their conducting. Possessing a memory with good qualities makes it easier to work and is conducive to a successful creative process.

Different types of memory are classified, in psychology, according to different features. The most characteristic types of memory in a biological system, including the human one, are the genetic and acquired types. Genetic memory has no direct effect on conducting, though in some cases (for instance in a large family composed of musicians) it would probably influence the general

development of a specific conductor. With regards to the acquired memory, conductors tend to develop it whilst completing their education and professional preparation, which include different components of musical memory: melody, harmony, metro-rhythm, dynamics and temp, and tonality. Without such complex activity taking place in the structure of a common musical memory, a conductor's work would be practically impossible. We find support of this claim in the writings of Charles Munch: 'Memory is one of the main tools of the conductor. Studying, writing down, orchestrating a musical text allows for the harmonic and visual memory to sharpen. The auditory memory requires the creation of peculiar reflexes. It supposes a simultaneous auditory and tone memory.' [Charles Munch - I Am a Conductor ].

Memory is expressed in two main forms: short-term (operative) and long-term. Short-term memory makes it possible to perceive different tones as connected to each other, as something whole and unified. Long-term memory contains the information of all the past experiences of a person, in this case the entire past experience of a conductor, including acquired knowledge, skills, habits, emotional experiences and judgements. The connection between these two forms of memory is constant and of great importance. On the one hand, information stored by the operative memory is almost always 'saved' by the long-term one, which creates stubborn habits and auditory musical stereotypes (term coined by Maria Blinova in 'Musical art and conformity of the higher nervous system').

On the other hand, long-term memory influences the operative one by allowing it to 'recognize' musical events. The famous psychologist Vladimir Levi writes: 'This happens over the course of the entire life and if it wasn't for this, we would not be able to recognize or even feel music. ['Questions on the psychophysiology of music'].

In terms of functional hierarchy, psychology counts four types of memories: emotional, image, term and word memory.

1. Emotional memory is particularly important for a conductor as without it the emotionally imagery content of the musical work would remain undiscovered. Many researchers believe that when emotional reactions are reproduced in art, particularly in music, these are not the feelings themselves but only their image, stored within our memory and projected onto our imagination. The main argument here is that real feelings need a long period of time to appear, develop, and reach their climax, and then require another period to abate. However, in art, experiences appear and develop instantly. 'As such, in just a few minutes they can go from one extreme to the other - from deep sorrow to boisterous joy and from joy to steady relaxation, without straining the nerves of the audience. If this happens to someone in your





Charles Münch (26 September 1891 – 6 November 1968)

life, be aware that he is in a slight state of madness. The reactions caused by music are not feelings. They are images, memories of feelings' [Paul Hindemith 'The Craft of Musical Composition']. These words of Hindemith reveal to a large extent the nature of emotional memory.

On the other hand, to acquire a rich and deep emotional memory, conductors must live through a wide range of emotional experiences. Only then can their emotional memory acquire a truly rich content. Leopold Stokowski writes: 'There are many types of music and limitless possibilities for expressing emotions through music. That is why understanding these deep laws of music and the human nature help us understand the meaning of life. A conductor has to fully understand the emotional content of his music.' [L. Stokowski, *Music for All of Us*].

One of the most important qualities of emotional memory is its relativity – it largely depends on the external and internal conditions surrounding the creative process. Due to this, emotional memory is not a constant – rather, it helps creating certain conditions, nuances or combinations within specific parameters of feelings. Thanks to this quality, emotional memory enriches the creative process and turns any interpretation in an unforgettable event.

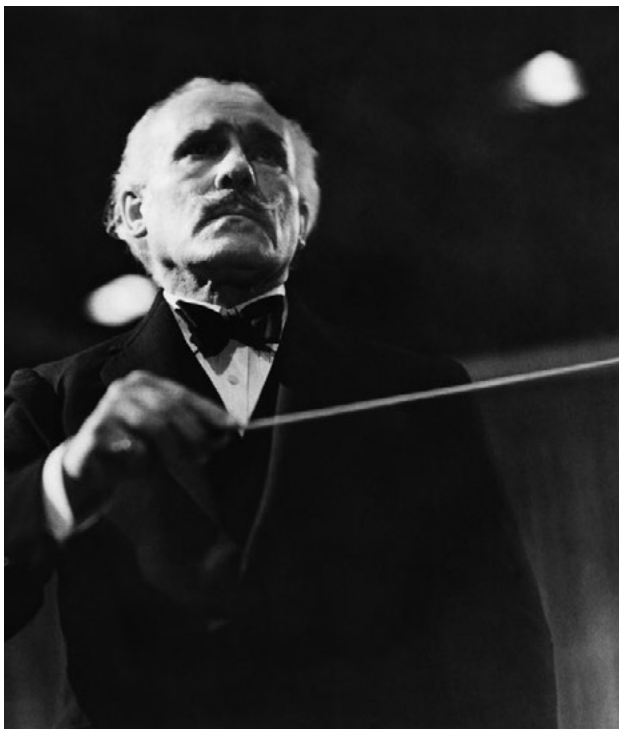
2. When conducting, a memory image includes visual and sound memories. Many conductors who have observed this in themselves and others have reached this same conclusion, despite often being in contradiction regarding the nature of the external signs; still, the otherwise unanimous agreement conductors hold about memory image testify nonetheless its

importance. It is known that many conductors prefer to conduct by heart (some of the most famous ones being Wagner, Toscanini, Bülow, Karajan). Stravinsky also wrote, about conducting by heart: 'In our days, when the number of 'famous' conductors has grown significantly, while their mastery and general culture has decreased, conducting without a musical score became trendy and they flaunt that ability of theirs. But behind that purely superficial flaunt, there is nothing supernatural. Conducting without a musical score is not such a huge risk... a conductor that has even a little bit of confidence and assurance in himself, can easily avoid looking at the score. But this does not prove that the conductor knows the score' [/I. Stravinsky, *The Chronicle of my life*].

3. Term memory is important in the initial stages of a conductor's work on a score. It encompasses the knowledge a conductor possesses to create expression and musical shape, as well as the composer's own individual style, and their affiliation with a specific movement and age in musical art. This type of memory also stores results reached by thought processes.

4. Word memory is of incredible importance, especially for conductors working in the field of vocal and vocal-instrumental genres (choir, opera, etc.). Due to the limited connection between music and text in these genres, conductors must possess an equally well-developed musical memory and a speech memory. Despite causing a larger strain on the memory, this ability allows the consciousness to be more active in other cognitive processes, such as thought, emotional and wilful processes and, most importantly, – the imagination.

Another way to classify imagination is according to the specific content of stored information. This classification includes five types of memory: motor, emotional,



Arturo Toscanini, the great orchestra conductor



Leopold Anthony Stokowski (18 April 1882 – 13 September 1977)

speech-logical (reason), image (visual, auditory) and mixed forms. Motor memory is especially important for all activities connected to motor functions. Amongst the arts with similar motor-function characteristics (such as performance arts in the field of music, acting, ballet, etc.), conducting is one of the most distinct.

We looked at emotional, speech-logical and image memory in connection to their functional hierarchy. Considering all the conclusions drawn, we can deduce that for a conductor's practice, all five types of memory are important. A conductor must have a memory that combines the complex activity of different mechanisms. To a large extent, the quality and success of conducting depend on conductors possessing and constantly refining their memory during their education and their profession.

*Edited by Claudia Mazzoncini, UK*



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# THE CULTURE OF A CONDUCTOR

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## AURELIO PORFIRI

composer, conductor, writer and educator

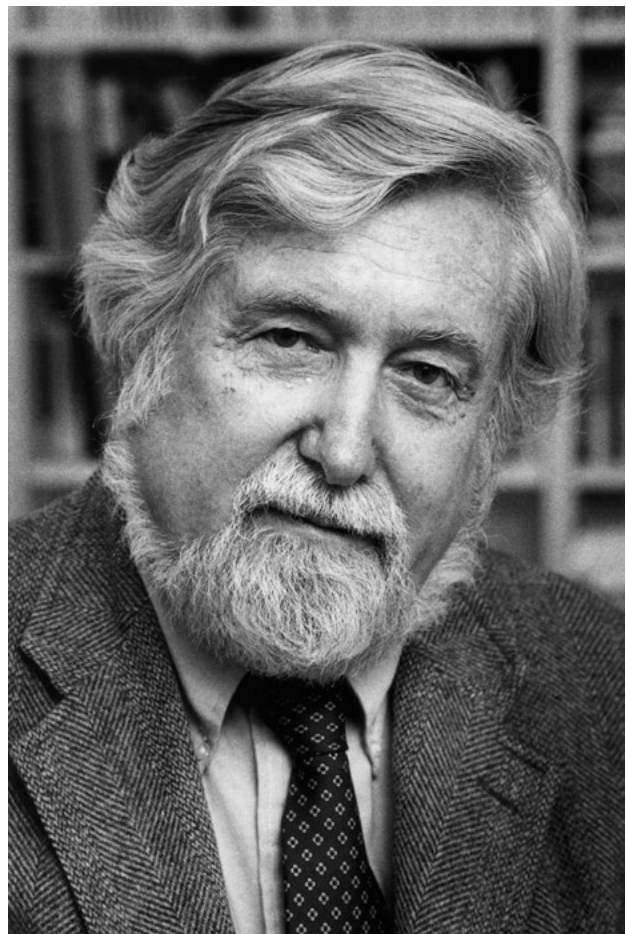
In some of my previous books and articles<sup>1</sup> I have mentioned the role of the conductor and how we should understand the function of this role not as “the boss,” but as the facilitator of a choir. I am certainly not trying to diminish the importance of the conductor, he or she has great importance but this is probably not usually presumed by many. But to be really effective, or even outstanding, a conductor should possess certain qualities, such as culture. Culture is not only knowing something, like that a certain composer was Italian or German or British, it is much deeper than that. Indeed, culture is more about knowing what we don’t know than possessing a lot of information (this may sound strange, but you will understand at the end of the article).

The anthropologist Clifford Geertz in his seminal book, *The Interpretation of Cultures* has said,

The concept of culture I espouse, and whose utility the essays below attempt to demonstrate, is essentially a semiotic one. Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning. It is explication I am after, construing social expressions on their surface enigmatical.

This is also true, of course, for a conductor. Having culture is not only having perused many books or listened to many choral pieces but being part of these “webs of significance.” Now, we cannot deny that the bulk of the repertoire of choral music is a heritage of western music. It would be really unfair to hide this kind of self-evident truth. But I am also aware that lots of conductors, because of their place of birth and cultural upbringing, are not and never will be part of this kind of tradition in the deepest sense. Why? Because music, art, religion, philosophy, cooking, gestures and

so on, are a sign of a certain worldview and from that worldview they cannot be separated. I may be very passionate about martial arts, like Shaolin Kung Fu, but I need to recognize that someone coming from the same culture where these phenomena arise have an obvious advantage over me and always will have. This is something that we have to accept. Cultures can be enjoyed by many but in themselves are very specific, and rightly so. When we say that music is a universal language, we say something that is true and untrue at



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<sup>1</sup> See as an example: Aurelio Porfiri, *Less is More. Selected Writings on Choral Music*. Chorabooks, 2018.

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Clifford James Geertz  
(August 23, 1926 – October 30, 2006)

the same time. It is universal in the sense that everyone can access music, but the deep sense of certain repertoires is culturally specific. I have been speaking English for decades now, but my pronunciation will never ever be like a 10-year-old's mother tongue. Some people think they can buy culture by spending four years in an expensive university in Europe, the UK, the USA or wherever. But this is just an illusion. What they buy is a degree. Culture is another thing. Indeed, you may often find people without a degree that are in a much better position to understand a certain culture than many that earn expensive doctorates in elite universities. How is that so? Because they were and are part of those "webs of significance," and nothing can buy that. Indeed, thinking that schooling can buy you culture is like thinking that a doctorate in neuroscience makes you a philosopher. We also need to be aware of the commonly accepted difference between education and schooling. Education is something much broader and culturally challenging than schooling, but unfortunately, in my opinion, schooling is the concept that prevails in certain cultures. It is all about high marks and being the most competitive as possible; as if life and music were just a horse race.

So, do I think that a conductor outside a certain culture can never become proficient in a repertoire that does not belong to his or her cultural world? Indeed, it is possible, but with very long exposure to the elements of that culture. For example Chung Myung-whun (Korea), Seiji Ozawa (Japan) and Zubin Metha (India) are among conductors who have achieved a lot in the world of classical music because they exposed themselves for long years not only to music, but also to the culture that gave birth to that music. I have heard people speaking of certain repertoires without knowing anything about the culture, religion, uses and traditions of the people that produced that music. I have dealt with and researched repertoires outside my culture, but I always knew I was an outsider. Some conductors want to think they are expert in everything, and that is dangerous for them and for their choirs. So, I really think that the first moral element of a conductor is humility. It should be taught in universities and conservatories. This may avoid the not infrequent scene of conductors becoming very arrogant as a sign of deep insecurity which damages themselves and the people under their musical care. This is the kind of arrogance that comes from ignorance, as the theorist Pietro Aaron (or Aron) well understood in his *Lucidario* back in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, "Ma fra tutte le sorti di ignoranza, quella è grave & noiosa, & che prepondera di gran lunga a ciascuna delle

Aaron, *Lucidario*, f. alijrAaron, *Lucidario*, f. hijr

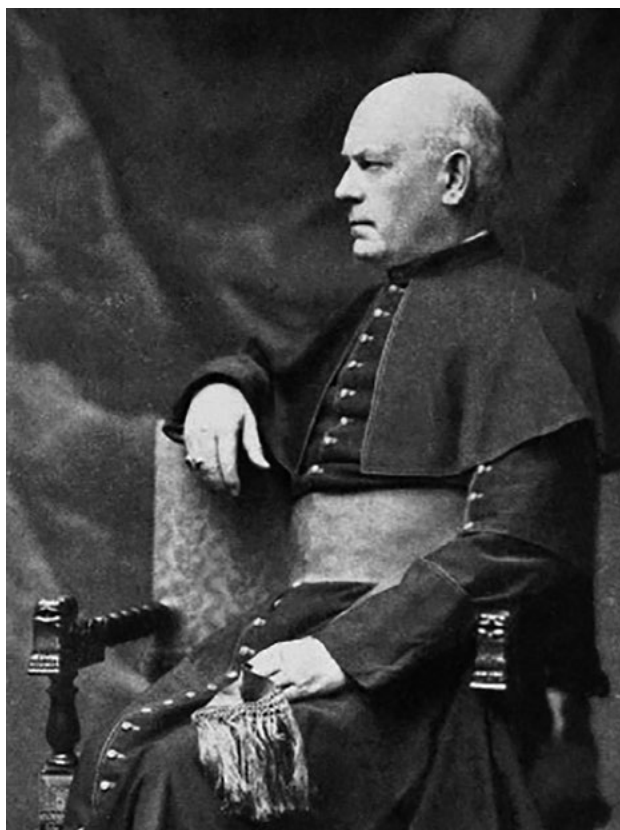
Pietro Aaron, also known as Pietro (or Piero) Aaron (ca. 1480 – after 1545)

sue parti, quando alcuno stima di saper le cose che egli non sa." [and among all kinds of ignorance, the one that is huge and annoying, and that is prevalent among others, is when someone thinks to know things that he does not know].

Culture, including the musical one, is not only about reading books. John Lancaster Spalding said,

The multitude are matter-of-fact. They live in commonplace concerns and interests. Their problems are how to get more plentiful and better food and drink, more comfortable and beautiful clothing, more commodious dwellings, for themselves and their children. When they seek relaxation from their labors for material things, they gossip of the daily happenings, or they play games or dance or go to the theatre or club, or they travel or they read story books, or accounts in the newspapers of elections, murders, peculations, marriages, divorces, failures and successes in business; or they simply sit in a kind of lethargy. They fall asleep and awake to tread again the beaten path. While such is their life, it is not possible that they should take interest or find pleasure in religion, poetry, philosophy, or art. To ask them to read books whose life-breath is pure thought and beauty is as though one asked them to read things written in a language they do not understand and





John Lancaster Spalding (June 2, 1840 – August 25, 1916)

have no desire to learn. A taste for the best books, as a taste for whatever is best, is acquired; and it can be acquired only by long study and practice. It is a result of free and disinterested self-activity, of efforts to attain what rarely brings other reward than the consciousness of having loved and striven for the best. But the many have little appreciation of what does not flatter or soothe the senses. Their world, like the world of children and animals, is good enough for them; meat and drink, dance and song, are worth more, in their eyes, than all the thoughts of all the literatures. A love tale is better than a great poem, and the story of a bandit makes Plutarch seem tiresome. This is what they think and feel, and what, so long as they remain what they are, they will continue to think and feel. We do not urge a child to read Plato—why should we find fault with the many for not loving the best books?

What we can get from this passage is that there is a knowledge that is not written, but is acquired through exposure and this is a long process and not

everyone has the ability and capacity to do so. Plato in his *Phaedrus* said it very well, “I cannot help feeling, Phaedrus, that writing is unfortunately like painting; for the creations of the painter have the attitude of life, and yet if you ask them a question they preserve a solemn silence.” So be humble. But I know that for some, this is very difficult, because there are many frustrations that trigger arrogance and obstinance. We don’t have to be naive about that. And so closed systems of conductors are created, *similis cum similibus*.

I like martial arts. I have also practiced them, but despite my passion I am always fully aware that martial arts do not belong to my culture. I may become very proficient, but only up to a certain point. I would not like someone from Asia coming and telling me that I am good if I am not. I know that the first attitude to achieve anything is to recognize that this discipline was born and shaped in a culture that is not mine, that is imbued with philosophy, life perspective and views of the world that are far away from my own. I know that any Chinese person will probably be in the best position to understand Kung Fu (and other things, by the way) than I am. So, I should try to avoid creating a closed system to avoid facing this reality. Let’s just try to be humble and to learn as much as possible. I know these concepts will not sit well with some people, but so is truth. And only by trying to be honest with oneself can one attain internal freedom.

*Edited by Karin Rockstad, USA*



**AURELIO PORFIRI is a composer, conductor, writer and educator. He has published over 40 books and 1000 articles. More than 100 of his scores are in print in Italy, Germany, France, the USA and China. Email: [aurelioporfiri@hotmail.com](mailto:aurelioporfiri@hotmail.com)**

# CHORAL BLEND: HOW TO ACHIEVE IT

## Part 2

### TIM SHARP

*IFCM Vice President, ACDA Executive Director,  
Artistic Director/Conductor Tulsa Chorale*

### VOWEL UNITY

The factor which is said to need most work and which will most greatly affect the timbre and choral blend of the choir is the issue of vowel unity. Vowel unity, otherwise known as vowel unification or the lining up of vowels, involves the pronunciation of the intended vowel sound in the exact same manner by all singers, simultaneously. There should be no variation on this issue, and the greater the agreement of the vowels, the better the opportunity for achieving a blend. Vowel unity guarantees that the word is being pronounced the exact same way by all singers and, just as significantly, it is necessary for achieving a choral timbre and good intonation. To state the same issue in negative terms, if a vowel is pronounced differently by two singers, definition of the word is blurred, as is the precise tuning of the pitch.

Choral directors often refer to this process as the lining up of vowels. This is easy to visualize if you imagine a choral composition as it usually appears in print. As in the example below, it is apparent that the vowel literally lines up from bottom to top on the printed page. Aurally, the same unity must take place for choral blend to be achieved.

IPA: *f* te de um lau da mus te

S  
Te De - um lau - da - mus, te

A  
Te De - um lau - da - mus, te

T  
Te De - um lau - da - mus, te

B  
Te De - um lau - da - mus, te

'Te Deum Laudamus:' from Te Deum, K. 141, mm. 1-2  
W. A. Mozart, edited by Walter Rodby

It is no exaggeration to state that, coordinated with exact rhythms and count singing, nothing does more to contribute to achieving choral blend than vowel unification. The lining up of the vowels also allows a distinct choral timbre to be achieved. And, due to the impact of vowel unification on intonation, this makes apparent the attention demanded to lining up vowels throughout the choir.

### ACHIEVING VOWEL UNITY

Some of the difficulty in achieving vowel unity lies in the issue of how a vowel sound is determined and then communicated from conductor to choral ensemble, and then how the choral ensemble hears the vowel communicated. For example, if the word to be sung is the single-syllable word 'way:' what does the choir hear when the director dictates this pronunciation? (To illustrate the complication that is presented, with every new work always return to 'way' as the first illustration.)

The following are the sounds sung in 'way':

- w: actually begins with a combination of [u] and [ɛ] (ooh-eh) [uɛ]
- a: continues the [ɛ] (eh) [ɛ]
- y: glides from the [ɛ] (eh) to [i] (ih) and in some regions, would continue to [i] (ee) [ii]
- way: [uɛi(ii)]

Communicating these precise sounds in writing is possible through the use of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). The IPA is a literal alphabet of sounds in which every sound has a specific and unique symbol assigned to it. Both consonants and vowels are given one sound and one unique symbol for their exact and specific pronunciation.

The use of the IPA is the ideal approach to agreement on a specific sound, and therefore the ideal approach to vowel unification

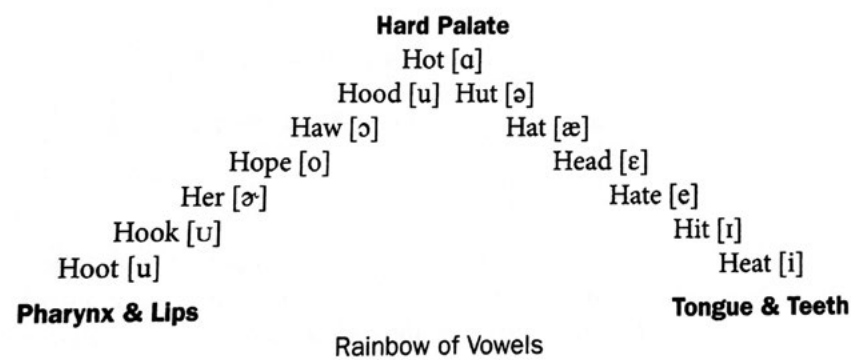


for choirs. The IPA is not difficult to learn or teach, and due to the fact that consonants are rarely a disputed issue in terms of exact pronunciation, the vowels and their sound description will return over and over to the same sounds and symbols. This begins with the simplest of pronunciation, the purity of the sounds heard in the following vowels:

a	[ɑ]	h <u>o</u> t
e	[ɛ]	p <u>e</u> t
I	[ɪ]	l <u>i</u> t
o	[o]	n <u>o</u> te
u	[u]	sh <u>o</u> e

Pedagogues have devised various ways of understanding these sounds and their relationship from vowel sound to vowel sound. One such method is hearing all of the sounds within a ‘rainbow of vowels,’ as vowels move slightly from sound to neighboring sound within the oral cavity (mouth) shape and resultant acoustic sound.

The term rainbow of vowels developed from the sensation of the vowel sounds being produced beginning in the front of the mouth using the tongue (as in the [i] vowel found in the word ‘heat’), moving along the vowel chart to the middle of the mouth where the hard palate is brought into focus (as in the [a] vowel found in the word ‘hot’), to the very back of the pharynx where the vowel is formed, also utilizing the lips (as in the [u] vowel found in the word ‘hoot’). This curve follows the shape of the hard palate, from the very forward [i] sound to the distant [u], forming a rainbow shape within the mouth.



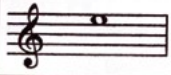
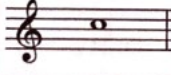
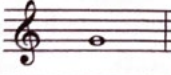

### MACRO APPROACH

Another way of understanding these sounds and their relationship from vowel sound to vowel sound comes by studying each vowel and each pronunciation variation:

a	[ɑ]	[a]	[ā]	[æ]	[au]
	father	ball	enfant	cat	house
e	[e]	[ei]	[ɛ]	[ə]	[ē]
	debate	say	bet	about	vin
i	[i]	[ɪ]			
	see	sit			
o	[o]	[ɔ]	[ō]	[oi]	[ou]
	hope	saw	bon	boy	blow
u	[u]	[ʊ]			
	too	foot			

Some choral conductors have approached unifying all vowels by shaping the basic approach to the entire vowel line from the same oral (mouth) shape. While the macro approach to vowel shapes brings a basic universal approach and unification to the vowel, it does affect the tone of the overall choir and can have an adverse effect on the listener’s ability to understand what is being sung. It is a sweeping method of approaching vowel unification, but it sacrifices some clarity in the process.

Other choral conductors have modified the above single-shape approach by shaping all pronunciations in four to five basic shapes that change or modify as the pitch of the vocal line rises and falls:

Pitch From To	Vowel	Example
 and above	[ə]	<u>a</u> bove
	[ɑ]	f <u>a</u> ther
	[æ]	cat
	[i]	see

### MICRO APPROACH

A suggested approach to vowel unification is to modify each vowel as appropriate to the pitch requirements within the limits of clarity of pronunciation. The need for modification to overly bright or dark sounds will be determined by 1) the possible ease of vocal production, depending where a vowel sound falls in a person's vocal range and 2) the need to respond to overly bright or dark vowels.

With this approach, an [i] (ft) as in 'me' may be modified to [I] (ih) as in 'Mick.' In this instance, it is possible for the vowel to be unified by a universal pronunciation of the [I] vowel, as well as vocally comfortable and pleasing to hear. Again, this is coupled with an exact rhythmic attack. It is crucial for every singer to focus on each unique vowel sound and be critically aware of any second or even third sound that they may be making unknowingly or that may be pronounced within the section or choir.

As decisions are being considered regarding in which direction to modify a given vowel (to brighter or darker, or forward to back), the best approach is to return to the rainbow of vowels chart. The modification process can begin by moving one vowel to the right or left (depending on the brightness or darkness desired in the modification). If this vowel does not satisfy the intended result, moving another step in the vowel chart is recommended. Generally speaking, a final modification decision of a step or two removed from the original vowel sound will satisfy the need. For extremely high or low notes within a singer's range or within a vocal section, modification may be achieved by the use of more extreme vowel shapes, such as those listed in Fig. 2.

It must be said that most vowels will probably need no modification at all, particularly in the medium range of a person's voice. As the saying goes, *'If it ain't broke, don't fix it.'* The overarching goals for a choral approach to vowel pronunciation are rhythmic precision, vowel unification, clarity of understanding, and vocal ease. It is always within the balance of these issues that vowel modification is considered.

### REGIONAL CHALLENGES

Every country, region and local dialect has idiosyncrasies in vowel pronunciation. Some regions have a very forward and closed-mouth shape for words, while others are completely opposite in sound and approach. When one hears the conductor's direction to say 'oh,' most singers hear this direction and understand it to mean say 'oh' as I understand 'oh. This could result in the extremes of [o] (oh), as in 'note,' to [ou] (ow), as in the diphthong in 'showy'.

In addition, combinations of vowels create diphthongs, and even triphthongs, which further complicate what the performer is hearing.

When regional pronunciation idiosyncrasies are detected, the choral conductor must approach vowel unity with particular intentionality toward problems that may occur. Instances such as these become very pronounced when sung by an entire choir. After defining such problem spots, the choral conductor must determine the correct sound to be sustained by the choir and drill the choir for a unity of pronunciation.

### VOWEL UNIFICATION AND INTONATION

It must now be stated that while vowel unification is of extreme importance to achieving choral blend, the modification of a vowel shape influences another crucial issue related to blend—intonation. Chapter 3, Part Four explores the intricate issue of achieving blend through achieving precise intonation, but it is important to introduce the relationship of vowel unity to intonation while dealing with vowels.

This is best understood by focusing for a moment on a note most musicians have heard about—A 440. 'A 440' indicates a particular pitch that is produced when 440 vibrations per second (vps) occur. So, what pitch is heard at 439 vps, or 441 vps? To our ears, this is still an A. However, if those vibrations per second drop low enough, an A flat occurs, on the other hand if those vps are raised enough, an A sharp is sounded. So, the question is, at what incremental point does an A move from sounding less like an A and more like an A flat or A sharp?

The distance between one half step in our equal temperament scale is measured in cents. There are 100 cents between half steps. The smallest increment that the ear can discern is two cents, or a *schisma*. We spend a good deal of time training to hear half steps due to the chromatic tuning of many instruments. You can experiment with hearing the cents of difference between half steps by creating a vocal *glissando* between an A and neighboring A flat or A sharp. (An equally effective way is by plucking a string on a guitar or violin while tuning between these pitches.) Even though the distance is small, at some point a listener can discern between the original note and when that note becomes 'flat' or 'sharp' as it moves, which is still a point before the original A reaches A flat or A sharp. Vowel shape can modify the tuning of a pitch, not to the degree of a full half step, but certainly to the degree of a couple of cents higher or lower. With this in mind, it must be said that some vowels need to be literally 'tuned:' which can and should be approached by the precise shape of the intended vowel. You can hear this tuning if you stop and vocalize on a pitch and change a vowel shape from an [i] (like seg) to an [i] (like sit). To achieve this degree of fine tuning, singers must once again hear the difference between the two (or more) possible vowel sounds and work diligently to agree upon only one vowel sound.



## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Vowels must be unified (or 'lined up') for a beautiful choral timbre to emerge from a choir.
2. Beauty of sound is directly related to vowel unification, blended individual timbres and precise intonation.
3. Timbre is the unique tonal color of individual voices as well as the particular sound of voices singing together.
4. Choral timbre is determined by the combination of the various vocal timbres in a particular ensemble, created by the lining up of the same vowel sounds at the same time throughout the choir.

## COMMON TENDENCIES AND PROBLEMS...

1. Compositions tend to be made of textual unisons, duets, trios, homophonic sections, and contrapuntal lines; all of these texture issues will have an effect on the lining up of vowel sounds.
2. Principal cadences are dramatic moments requiring careful unification of vowels.
3. Vowels need unity but may also require modification within vocal range extremes.
4. Diphthongs and occasional triphthongs present unification problems for every ensemble. Each sound in the syllable must be produced by the ensemble at the exact same time within a rhythmic understanding.
5. Consonants require voiced and unvoiced decisions related to duration and rhythmic precision (see Chapter 3, Part Two).
6. Vowel unification requires individual attention to the desired sound; the ensemble is made of individual sections, and individual sections are made of individual singers.
7. Individual singers need not only a conceptual understanding of the desired sound, but also need an aural model for the desired vowel sound.

## ...AND SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

1. Search for textual unisons, duets, trios, homophonic sections, and contrapuntal lines. Mark them and make singers aware of their unique vowel concerns and the need for unified articulation and phrasing.
2. Highlight cadential moments and identify these as 'crisis' moments for issues related to vowel unity.
3. Determine the exact vowel sounds desired using the IPA. Be aware of occasional vowel modification needs in range extremes.
4. Mark diphthongs and triphthongs and predetermine the exact sounds required at the exact moment using count singing and appropriate markings.
5. Mark voiced and unvoiced consonants and determine the dynamic level, intensity and duration of sound required.
6. Work from an individual voice or a few voices, out to small groups within sections, out to the entire section, and then to the entire ensemble when

addressing vowel unity.

7. If you are able to model the desired vowel sound yourself, do so, and work out from your sound to individuals within the ensemble, and then to small groups or sections as indicated above.

## PROBLEM SOLVING

The unification of the vowel is a never-ending choral process, and no universal approach can ever eliminate the attention needed to clean and clear up the problems. During this important time, listen to the choir and ask yourself:

1. What is right and what is wrong with the vowel sound I hear? Work to move the wrong vowel sounds so that they line up with the right sounds being produced.
2. What is causing the vowel to sound that way? After determining the direction the vowel needs to go, model the correct vowel sound and demonstrate the direction the vowel should move on the vowel chart.
3. What techniques am I going to use in order to correct the problem? Most of the time, the exact sound desired by the conductor, as indicated with IPA, must be written over the text in the music at the precise rhythmic moment of pronunciation.

*The article is taken by the book 'Achieving Choral Blend and Balance' by Timothy W. Sharp*

*Edited by Rebeka Angstamann, UK*



**TIM SHARP, DMA, is Executive Director of the American Choral Directors Association and Vice-President of the International Federation for Choral Music. Tim's published choral works focus on Appalachian folk music and shape note hymn arrangements, including his bluegrass mass, *Come Away to the Skies: A High Lonesome Mass*. He is in his eleventh season as Artistic Director and Conductor of the Tulsa Chorale, Tulsa, Oklahoma, and is author of numerous articles and books on choral music.**  
**Email: [sharp@acda.org](mailto:sharp@acda.org)**

# REPERTOIRE



**Hanaqpachaq**  
**First Polyphonic Work Printed (and Composed?) in the New World**  
**First Part**  
Oscar Escalada



# HANAQPACHAQ

## First Polyphonic Work Printed (and Composed?) in the New World – First Part

### OSCAR ESCALADA

composer, conductor, IFCM Board Member

SINCE I WAS A STUDENT, AT THE FINE ARTS ACADEMY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LA PLATA, I HAD A VERY SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH HANAQPACHAQ. MY LOVE FOR THIS WORK WAS AWOKEN FROM THE VERY MOMENT I HAD IT IN MY HANDS. MY THEN PROFESSOR OF MUSIC HISTORY, MARIO VIDELA, INTRODUCED ME TO IT. ITS BEAUTY PARTICULARLY MOVED ME, BUT ITS ORIGIN DID AS WELL. I WANTED TO READ ALL THAT I COULD ABOUT IT. I WANTED TO KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT HANAQPACHAQ.

One time, my chorus was invited to perform a concert that the Governor attended. Before it began, I did a small commentary about the significance and origin of this work that I interpreted for the first time. After the concert, the Governor approached me to say hello, shook my hand, and said, "Thank you. It was magnificent to know part of our musical heritage in such a beautiful way. From the beginning, Hanaqpachaq accompanied me in all the choirs I directed. And it keeps doing so. Try to imagine what I felt when I arrived for the first time to the place it was created: Cusco, Andahuyallillas. It was to find the birthplace of my loved profession here in my American land. To see the Plaza de Armas, the Cathedral, the Company of Jesus and that which stood in the temples of the Incas in Cusco, I could not nor did I try to restrain my emotions. Hanaqpachaq was presented before me with a new image than what I had before, after having known more profoundly his origin and having shared, although for a short time, the effect that the descendents of that Incan culture gave me, proud of their past that even today they worship. They are incalculable the

musical works that the American churches treasure. Maybe due to underestimation or simply unfamiliarity with their existence, recently in the decades 1940 to 1950, musicologists and historians have worked systematically in the musical archives and with sources of historical documentation, creating a considerable work of investigation.

According to the documentation that they have so far, Hanaqpachaq is the first polyphonic enterprise work in the New World. In Cusco, Peru, the original was found and it was investigated fundamentally by musicologists Francisco Curt Lange and Robert Stevenson. We cannot affirm seriously that it was the first that had been composed in the New World, but it is the oldest that has been discovered up to this point.

It is included in the Ritual, formula and institution of priests to administer to the locals with necessary warnings, of the Franciscan priest of Andahuaylillas Juan Perez Bocanegra and the printing was done by Geronymo de Contreras, in conjunction with the Convent of Santo Domingo, in 1631, and "is composed in music in 4 parts, so that the singers can

sing it as they enter the church." Like the majority of the works that have been found, Hanaqpachaq is a vocal and religious piece. Its principal characteristic is that it is written in Polyphonic renaissance



Juan Pérez de Bocanegra (died 1645)

style and in the language Quechua, and it shows the discovery and fusion of two cultures, where the first manifestations of mixed American music are born.

In his book, "Interpretation of Music," Thurston Dart very aptly synthesizes the information that one should look for when first tackling an early work. "A large quality of information on the interpretation of early music survives in contemporary sources, not only in treaties, but also in paintings, sculptures..."<sup>1</sup>

All circumstances that are around the work are important. To be able to get closer to this beautiful music, in this article I will refer to the five aspects that surround it.

- The Incas
- The Conquest
- The Quecha language
- The poem and
- the music of Hanaqpachaq

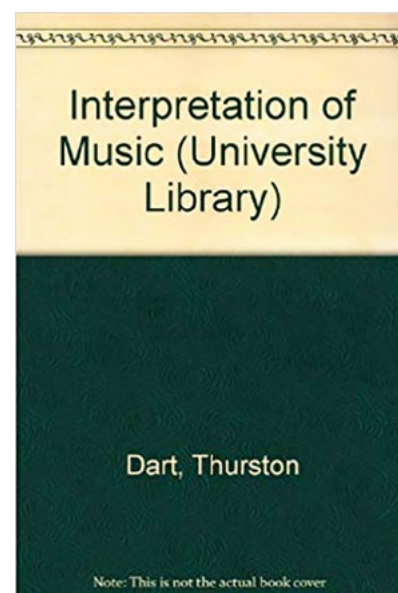
## THE INCAS

It is important to remember that Cusco was the capital of the extended imperial Inca, the Tahuantinsuyu, that according to the famed investigator Maria Rostworowsky, should be more appropriately called Incario because the "imperial" voice brings too many connotations from the Old World.<sup>2</sup>

Legend has it that the first men, "Salidos del Tampu Tocco"<sup>3</sup>, were - one by one - getting stuck along the way. Only the oldest brother of the four that set off, Manco Capac and his sister Mama Ocllo sent by his father the Sun, arrived and established the Solar Lineage, to find - by divine right - the promised land at the foot of the Huanacauri. There they established the Qosqo and in homage to their father constructed the Coricancha. Later in the 15th century, Pachacutec, direct descendent of the Solar Dynasty, designed its streets, using the stone as the primary element, and made it eternal, defying the centuries. According to this legend, the Incas dominated the universe. The sky and constellations were known to them. They knew that the Orion Constellation, when it arrived at the equinox, the Sun moved away and it had to be reclaimed in some way. In this manner, the Inti Raymi, the party in which the Inca, the legitimate son of the Sun, prayed and drank with Him. At the exact hour, the Sun, from the orient, penetrated through the window of the Coricancha temple. There, the Inca on foot received the paternal warmth and began the ceremony.<sup>4</sup> This occurred every June 21st and the celebration lasted nine days. However, in spite of this quite complex knowledge, the Incas were not familiar with the wheel, glass or iron.

According to some investigators, the legend is based on real fact that actually occurred. They have been able to establish that the Inca culture possesses elements of various Pre-Inca, aboriginal cultures that come from 12,000 BC. According to this theory, the Incas took the best from each of them, from the plains of art to those of science and the arrival of the first Incas to Cusco forced the enmigration of original groups from Tiahuanacu, to the south of Lake Titicaca.

Cusco (Qosco in the language Quechua) means, according to the Inca



Thurston Dart,  
The Interpretation of the Music  
Hutchinson University Library;  
4th Revised edition (1962)

historian Garcilaso de la Vega, "centre". Other studies give the meaning as "milestone" or also, "landmark, marker, point of reference, nucleus".

As one can see, from all these meanings it is clear that those who gave it its name considered that it was "the centre of the world".

Effectively, there lived the Inca. Undisputed sovereign, supreme leader of the Tahuatinsuyu and Son of the Sun. The Inca and Cusco centralized the magnificence of the solar cult that functioned in the Andian land in the last one hundred years before the arrival of Pizarro. Its power extended to what is today Ecuador to the north to what is called Contisuyu; Bolivia, north of Chile and northeast of Argentina to the south, el Collasuyu; the Amazon Forest to the east, the Antisuyu and the Pacific Ocean to the west, the Chinchasuyu. These four worlds formed the Incan Universe: the Tahuantinsuyu.

When the Spaniards arrived

1 Thurston Dart, page 16

2 History of Tahuantinsuyu, page 15

3 Hollow, cave, inn. It is located in the district of Pacaractampu, Province of Paruro, Cusco

4 Milla, Miguel Ha. – Several Authors - Inka Rimay No. 5, page 43



between 1531 and 1535, they found an extraordinary culture, based fundamentally in the respect of the “Pachamama,” Mother Earth, to whom it worshipped in each act of its life. It’s cosmos (sacred world) was divided in three fundamental zones, the Hanan Pacha or world above (hanan or hanaq: above; pacha: world, universe), where the gods dwelled and was represented by the Condor; the Cay Pacha or superficial world (cay: to be, to exist) where man habited, represented by the Puma, and the Ucu Pacha or Urin Pancha, the underworld (ucu: inside, interior; urin: the underbelly of something) in which the gods of fertility and death lived. It was represented by the snake.

Its socioeconomic organization was based in the ayni, which was in the form of economic, cultural and moral reciprocity that functioned with its own jurisdiction at the personal and family level. The ayni was exercised within the context of the ayllu or the rural Andian community. The ayllu is the basic organization of the Inca period. It constituted the fundamental cell of society. It was formed by the combination of descendants of a common past. It was something similar to the concept of “family” but much more amplified to mean something like “dynasty”. Its moral principles were: Yachay (Knowledge), Llankay (Work), and Munay (Goodwill).

The highest merit of the inca was to give a moral to his or her village.<sup>5</sup> The Incas governed in such a way that there was no thief nor vicious man. The Incas constructed their throne on the potentials of the soul and not on the blood of their vassals. Their etiquette did not permit them to lie, rob or be idle.

Precisely, one of the fundamental reasons which permitted Francisco Pizarro to conquer Cusco was the breakdown of that moral with the rupture of the ayllu Inca (the dynasty Inca) from the feud between Atahualpa, bastard son of the Inca Huayna Capac and the Princess Mother of the reign of the Siris in Kitu (today Quito, Ecuador) - and Huascar, his brother and legitimate son of Huayna Capac, who had been crowned Inca officially. It should be noted that the Inca had prerogatives that the rest of his people lacked. Thus, adultery was punished by death<sup>6</sup> but the Inca had various wives, one of who had the honour of being the principal.

Atahualpa proclaimed himself Inca in Cajamarca and Huamachuco, and sent his army to get the advance on Cusco and capture and kill his brother, Huascar. In this way, Atahualpa assumed absolute power and employed cruel methods of domination, breaking also with ancient andian tradition of Ayni (reciprocity), condemning even

his own ayllu. It is worth noting the words of the Inca Garcilaso, who describes the frenzied repression by Atahualpa in this way: “...greater and more thirsty than that of the Ottomans was the cruelty of Atauwallpa who not having enough with his own two hundred brothers, sons of the Great Huayna Qhapaq, went on to drink that his nephews and relatives, within and outside of the realm, the royal blood, so that not a single legitimate bastard escaped.”<sup>7</sup>

## THE CONQUEST

The villagers, so mistreated, then saw in Pizarro the hope of freedom that had been lost in the period of Atahualpa and disoriented by the break of tradition of the ayllu and the ayni, allied themselves with him, confident in the principle of ayni in which they waited the reciprocity of Pizarro. In this way, along with the

<sup>7</sup> María Rostworowski agrees with this comment in ‘History of Tawantisuyu’, page 167 and following



Francisco Pizarro González (c. 1471 – 26 June 1541) was a Spanish conquistador who led the Spanish conquest of Peru

<sup>5</sup> ‘El imperio socialista de los Incas’, page 120

<sup>6</sup> Idem page 467



Machu Picchu, the 15th-century Inca citadel, located in the Eastern Cordillera of southern Peru

use of a superior army, no more than eight hundred Spaniards were able to dominate thousands of indigenous people. Francisco Pizarro, who never once thought of reciprocity for those who were his allies and later beat Atahualpa in Cajamarca, commanded that he should be executed as a heretic, or rather, burned at the stake. For the Incas, to die by fire was to lose the possibility to return to the Pachamama, to the Ucu Pacha described previously. It was, in the end, to not be able to ever belong to the cosmos where their ancestors could be found. The Spanish tradition for its part, made it that Atahualpa could not be hung instead because he was a heretic (not baptized). Finally, to be able to die by another form that was not fire, Atahualpa agreed to be baptized under the name of Francisco, Pizarro himself being his godfather. In this curious way, the paradox was created that having been evangelized, Atahualpa thanks to that, died by hanging. Francisco Pizarro, an illiterate adventurer, who had arrived in the New World with the insatiable thirst for greed and the sole purpose of his own enrichment, complied with all the requisites of the conqueror: looks at life like a lottery, does not calculate anything and puts his existence at risk with a roll of the dice; the conquest attracts him to what he has as a chimeric. These men, hard on themselves as they are on others, did not back down to anybody, and when finally they found themselves with the riches of their dreams, an actual intoxication took over them and they lost all control. The crimes have been innumerable, from the assassination of Atahualpa to the rape of the virgins of the sun (las mamacona). The destruction of the palaces, the pillage of the storehouses. The riches were stupidly destroyed, without benefit for anyone; to take the cinnamon, they cut the tree; to have wool,

they killed the lamb. "The Spanish - says Ondegardo - did more harm in four years than the inca in 400"<sup>8</sup>. Now owner of Cusco, Pizarro began the devastating campaign of the grand Incan culture, naming his brother the Governor of Cusco, since he already founded the "City of the Kings", today Lima and expanded his power to Ecuador. So, where there was a huaca (Incan sanctuary), went up a cross or a Christian temple was constructed. Fernando began his depriving work ordering the building of the Santo Domingo Convent on the Temple of the Sun itself, called in the Pre-Incan time Inticancha (Inti: sun, cancha: sun patio) and later by the Incas Coricancha (Cori: oro) to be adorned with this precious

<sup>8</sup> Op. cit., page 467





Juan Santos Atahualpa (also Atahualpa Apu-Inca) was a mestizo leader of an indigenous rebellion in the Andean jungle provinces of Tarma and Jauja

metal. Acts like this mark the absolute decision of the conquistadors to demonstrate to the indigenous people the superiority of their religion and to impose their culture. This in addition to the pillage to which they were exposed, since the gold was used by the Inca to worship the sun was brutally looted and melted down. However, it is still admired by the students and visitors of Cusco, part of the impressive structures of perfectly polished and embedded without mortar stones that were used by the Spaniards as the base of many of their constructions.

As it could not be another way within people of his race, in his eagerness to achieve domination and richness, Pizarro began to have serious differences with his second, Diego of Almagro, with whom he initiated a civil war to imprison and kill him. But finally, followers of Almagro along with those that followed his son Diego the Lad, killed him.

In 1544, the first Viceroy of Peru, Blasco Nunez de Vela was installed who through tax laws, submitted forced labour on the indigenous population that was decimated.

It is clear then that militarily but also culturally, the colonizers let loose a wave of devastating actions with an end of submission by the Inca people.

Notwithstanding the terrible situation already imposed, not all recently arrived to the New World used the same techniques of domination. From 1569, the Viceroy Francisco of Toledo created until 1581 a good and meticulous administration. The Dominican priests established in the Santo Domingo Convent (constructed between 1560 and 1654) in Cusco, the Company of Jesus and the Franciscan priests were in charge of the evangelization that arose through music, poetry, sculpture and painting.

From the establishment in 1216 by Saint Domingo of Guzman, the Order of the Preachers, or the Dominicans, put into practice the teachings of Saint Domingo that consisted of the preachers offering an image of spirituality and renunciation of material property.

The Company of Jesus, established by Saint Ignacio of Loyola in 1539, through his part had been adopted after the Counter-reformation the ministry of the teachings and established his Cusco headquarters in the beautiful baroque construction that carries his name, over the same Plaza de Armas to which the Cathedral gives.

*Translated by Ellen Murnane, USA*



**OSCAR ESCALADA** is professor, composer, conductor, writer and editor of choral music. He is Vice-President of the Argentine Association for Choral Music; President of the America Cantat Organization and member of the Board of Directors of IFCM. In Argentina he founded The Children's Choir of the Opera House of Buenos Aires; Coral del Nuevo Mundo; Seminar of the Conservatory of La Plata and Youth Choir of the High School at the University. Escalada gave lectures, workshops, seminars and adjudicate throughout The Americas, Europe and Asia. He leads the Latin American Choral Music series at Neil A. Kjos, Music Publisher in USA and he is editor of Porfiri-Horvath Publishers in Germany.  
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[www.oescalada.com](http://www.oescalada.com)



# CHORAL CALENDAR



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



**1st International Festival for Female Choirs in Latin-America, Puerto Madryn, Chubut Province, Argentina, 18-23 Nov 2019.** The main aim of the festival is to put together female choirs, teachers, arrangers, composers and public in general from Argentina and other countries around the world. Contact: FICFE, Email: [ficfe.organizacion@gmail.com](mailto:ficfe.organizacion@gmail.com) - Website: <https://www.ficfe.com>

**International Choir Festival Corearte Medellin 2019, Colombia, 19-24 Nov 2019.** Competitive and non-competitive event open to choirs of various backgrounds from all over the world. Three workshops that include Colombian music by Cecilia Espinosa (Colombia), Contemporary Sacred Music (works by Johan Duijck) by Francisco Simaldoni (Uruguay), and Children and Youth music by Voicu Popescu (Romania). Contact: Festival Internacional de Coros Corearte Barcelona, Email: [info@corearte.es](mailto:info@corearte.es) - Website: [www.corearte.es](http://www.corearte.es)

**17th Festival Paraibano de Coros, Choral Festival of Paraíba, FEPAC 2019, João Pessoa, Brazil, 25-30 Nov 2019.** Contact: Festival Paraibano de Coros, Email: [fepaccontato@gmail.com](mailto:fepaccontato@gmail.com) - Website: <http://www.festivalparaibanodecoros.com>

**37th International Choral Festival of Karditsa, Greece, 26 Nov-1 Dec 2019.** For mixed, male, female and children choirs as well as for groups of soloists and chamber choirs. Program including ancient Greek and Byzantine music as well as Gregorian and Renaissance music. Contact: International Choral Festival of Karditsa, Email: [nke@otenet.gr](mailto:nke@otenet.gr) - Website: <http://festivalofkarditsa.blogspot.gr/>

**Vienna Advent Sing, Austria, 28 Nov-2 Dec, 5-9 Dec, 12-16 Dec, 19-23 Dec 2019.** Vienna's Cultural Affairs Department welcomes choirs from around the world to share their voices in the magnificent City Hall and breathtaking Melk Abbey as part of the city's Advent celebration. Choirs exchange with local musicians, sing to full houses, and experience the festive pre-holiday atmosphere in this enchanting city! Contact: Music Contact International, Email: [travel@music-contact.com](mailto:travel@music-contact.com) - Website: [www.music-contact.com](http://www.music-contact.com)

**Budapest International Choir Fest, Hungary, 28 Nov-1 Dec 2019.** Non-competitive festival for mixed, female and male choirs, age 16+. Contact: MEGA ART - SM, Email: [info@megaartsm.com](mailto:info@megaartsm.com) - Website: <http://www.megaartsm.com>

**Vocal Competition Voices of Costa Brava, Lloret de Mar, Spain, 1-4 Dec 2019.** Competition of various genres in choral and vocal singing, open to amateurs and professional teams of all ages. Contact: Fiestalonia Milenio, SLU, Email: [nika@fiestaloniamilenio.com](mailto:nika@fiestaloniamilenio.com)

[fiestaloniamilenio.com](http://fiestaloniamilenio.com) - Website: [www.fiestaloniamilenio.com](http://www.fiestaloniamilenio.com)

**Allmänna Sångens & Anders Wall Composition Award 2019, Uppsala, Sweden, 1 Dec 2019.** International competition targeting female composers of all profession and nationality. Contact: Allmänna Sångens and Anders Wall, project manager Simon Arlasjö, Email: [award@allmannasangen.se](mailto:award@allmannasangen.se) - Website: <https://www.allmannasangen.se/asawca>

**International Advent Singing Festival Vienna 2019, Austria, 5-9, 12-16 & 19-23 Dec 2019.** For choirs from all around the world. Contact: MusiCultur Travel GmbH, Email: [info@musicultur.com](mailto:info@musicultur.com) - Website: <https://www.musicultur.com/en/our-choral-trips.html>

**International Festival of Advent and Christmas Music, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 5-8 Dec 2019.** Competition, workshop, concerts in churches and on the Christmas markets stage. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: [info@choral-music.sk](mailto:info@choral-music.sk) - Website: [www.choral-music.sk](http://www.choral-music.sk)

**10th Krakow Advent and Christmas Choir Festival, Poland, 6-8 Dec 2019.** For all kinds of choirs. Competition in 6 categories for the statuettes of "Golden Angels" or non-competitive participation. Contact: Polonia Cantat & Melody, Email: [krakow@christmasfestival.pl](mailto:krakow@christmasfestival.pl) - Website: [www.christmasfestival.pl](http://www.christmasfestival.pl)

**1st International Choral Composition Competition Carmina Nova, Malaga, Spain, 15 Dec 2019.** Open to composers of any country, age and style. Compositions for mixed choir "a capella" with religious text in Latin may be presented, for a minimum of 4 voices (SATB) and a maximum of 8 voices (SSAATTBB), and a duration of approximately 4 to 6 minutes. Contact: Coral Carmina Nova - Website: <https://www.coralcarminanova.com>

**Corsham Winter School, United Kingdom, 28 Dec 2019-2 Jan 2020.** An Iberian Nativity ~ Christmas music by Lobo, Guerrero and Victoria in a small Cotswolds town directed by Will Dawes. Contact: Lacock Courses, Andrew van der Beek, Email: [avdb@lacock.org](mailto:avdb@lacock.org) - Website: [www.lacock.org](http://www.lacock.org)

**Sing'n'Pray Kobe, Japan, 16-20 Jan 2020.** More than 600 singers will meet in Kobe with international choirs to sing for peace and for the victims of the earthquake and tsunami around Fukushima. Contact: Förderverein Interkultur, Email: [mail@interkultur.com](mailto:mail@interkultur.com) - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

**Singapore International Choral Composition Competition, Singapore, 31 Jan 2020.** Open to composers of any nationality or age. Submit up to 3 SATB compositions for medium to advanced choirs per

participant. Jury members: Dr. Zechariah Goh (Singapore), Lorenzo Donati (Italy), Dr. Z. Randall Stroope (USA), Vytautas Mi kinis (Lithuania) and Eudene Palaruan (Philippines). Winning works will be premiered by Raffles Singers at the historic Victoria Concert Hall in July 2020. Contact: Raffles Singers, Email: [rafflessingers@gmail.com](mailto:rafflessingers@gmail.com) - Website: [www.rafflessingers.org/sicc](http://www.rafflessingers.org/sicc)

**Singing in Castara, Trinidad and Tobago, 16-22 Feb 2020.** Palestrina, Byrd and Tallis, in a small fishing village in Tobago directed by Justin Doyle with Sarah Latto. Contact: Lacock Courses, Andrew van der Beek, Email: [lucy@lacock.org](mailto:lucy@lacock.org) - Website: [www.lacock.org](http://www.lacock.org)

**Komitas International Festival, Yerevan, Armenia, 28 Feb-9 Mar, 10-17 April 2020.** Festival featuring the Hamburg Girls Choir (Germany) from February 28 till March 9, and the Ugnelė Children's Choir (Lithuania) from April 10 till 17. Concerts will take place in different cities of Armenia. Contact: Little Singers of Armenia, Email: [alsccc@hotmail.com](mailto:alsccc@hotmail.com) - Website: <http://www.alsccc.am>

**Roma Music Festival 2020, Italy, 11-15 Mar 2020.** International festival of choirs and orchestras. Apply before 15 Jan 2020. Contact: MusikReisenFaszination Music Festivals, Email: [info@mrf-musicfestivals.com](mailto:info@mrf-musicfestivals.com) - Website: [www.mrf-musicfestivals.com](http://www.mrf-musicfestivals.com)

**Paris International Choir Festival, France, 12-16 Mar 2020.** Friendship concert with a local choir at their home venue, massed sing at La Madeleine Church, Sunday worship service singing, sightseeing. Contact: Music Contact International, Email: [info@musiccontact.com](mailto:info@musiccontact.com) - Website: [www.musiccontact.com](http://www.musiccontact.com)

**26th International Choir Festival of Paris, France, 12-15 Mar 2020.** Friendship concerts with local choirs and choirs from all over the world. Final concert of all attending choirs at La Madeline Church. Contact: Music&Friends by Emile Weber, Email: [musicandfriends@vew.lu](mailto:musicandfriends@vew.lu) - Website: [www.musicandfriends.lu](http://www.musicandfriends.lu)

**9th International Gdansk Choir Festival, Poland, 13-15 Mar 2020.** For all kinds of choirs. Competition part in 6 categories, concerts, non-competitive participation possible, meeting of choirs in the famous city of Solidarity. Contact: MELODY & Polonia Cantat, Email: [mail@gdanskfestival.pl](mailto:mail@gdanskfestival.pl) - Website: [www.gdanskfestival.pl](http://www.gdanskfestival.pl)

**Discover Puerto Rico and its Choral Music, Ponce, Puerto Rico, 13-16 Mar 2020.** The Catholic University of Ponce, the University of Puerto Rico, and the city of Ponce invite choirs to discover Puerto Rico! Work with the island's most famous composers and directors, and exchange with choirs from the region. This is a unique opportunity to experience

the fantastic choral traditions of Puerto Rico and to perform in Ponce's most beautiful venues. Contact: Music Contact International, Email: [travel@music-contact.com](mailto:travel@music-contact.com) - Website: [www.music-contact.com](http://www.music-contact.com)

**Dublin International Choral Festival, Ireland, 19-23 Mar 2020.** Individual workshop with one of Ireland's highly acclaimed conductors. Friendship Concert with an Irish host choir. Closing Concert Rehearsals with all participating choirs. Closing Concert Performance and Massed Sing. Contact: Music Contact International, Email: [ireland@music-contact.com](mailto:ireland@music-contact.com) - Website: [www.music-contact.com](http://www.music-contact.com)

**13th Fukushima Vocal Ensemble Competition, Fukushima, Japan, 19-23 Mar 2020.** Biggest chorus competition for vocal ensembles (2-16 singers) in Japan. Category Competition, Grand Champion Competition, Friendship Concert, Welcome Party, Workshop. Contact: Fukushima Vocal Ensemble Competition, Email: [bunka@pref.fukushima.lg.jp](mailto:bunka@pref.fukushima.lg.jp) - Website: [www.vocalensemble.jp/en/](http://www.vocalensemble.jp/en/)

**Festival of Peace and Brotherhood, Rome, Italy, 19-23 Mar 2020.** Sing together with Italian choirs and others from around the world. Perform in breathtaking venues throughout the cities and towns southeast of Rome and in Rome's historic center. Contact: Music Contact International, Email: [travel@music-contact.com](mailto:travel@music-contact.com) - Website: [www.music-contact.com](http://www.music-contact.com)

**Young Prague Festival, Prague, Czech Republic, 25-29 Mar 2020.** Over one thousand young musicians from around the world gather annually to perform in Prague's stunning venues, such as St. Nicholas' Church and the National House. 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 with Interkultur in Verona, Italy, 26-29 Mar 2020.** Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: [mail@interkultur.com](mailto:mail@interkultur.com) - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

**23rd Rainbow International Festival of Children's and Young Choirs, St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, 27-29 Mar 2020.** Festival with a very long tradition focusing on competition in one of the 10 categories including small vocal groups. Apply before 15 Dec 2019. Contact: MELODY & Polonia Cantat, Email: [info@petersburgfestival.com](mailto:info@petersburgfestival.com) - Website: [www.petersburgfestival.com](http://www.petersburgfestival.com)

**Vox Lucensis, International Choral Competition, Lucca, Italy, 4-8 July 2020.** Competition that brings together choirs and cultures from all over the world. Contact: Interkultur e.V., Email: [mail@interkultur.com](mailto:mail@interkultur.com)



[com](#) - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

**16th Concorso Corale Internazionale, Riva del Garda, Italy, 5-9 Apr 2020.** For all kinds of choirs from all around the world. Beside the competition meeting music will organize further festival activities, such as Evaluation Performance, Individual Coaching, meeting in music Friendship Concerts and a Choir Parade through the streets of Riva. Contact: Meeting Music, Email: [info@meeting-music.com](mailto:info@meeting-music.com) - Website: [www.meeting-music.com](http://www.meeting-music.com)

**Barcelona Workshop "Easter Week and Religious Choral Music", Spain, 6-9 Apr 2020.** Intensive workshop with Josep Prats (Spain) as main guest conductor. Contact: Festival Internacional de Coros Corearte Barcelona, Email: [stage@corearte.es](mailto:stage@corearte.es) - Website: [www.corearte.es](http://www.corearte.es)

**Verona International Choral Competition, Verona, Italy, 15-18 Apr 2020.** Choirs from around the world attend this annual festival sponsored by the Association of Choirs of Northern Italy. Contact: Music Contact International, Email: [travel@music-contact.com](mailto:travel@music-contact.com) - Website: <http://www.music-contact.com/>

**6th International Children's & Youth Chorus Festival 'StimmenKlangRaum', Weimar, Germany, 16-19 Apr 2020.** Four day festival full of music, recreation and social interaction in inspiring environment full of parks, historical buildings and modern architecture. All concerts are non-competitive and non-judged. Contact: Schola Cantorum Weimar, Email: [sg@schola-cantorum-weimar.de](mailto:sg@schola-cantorum-weimar.de) - Website: [www.schola-cantorum-weimar.de](http://www.schola-cantorum-weimar.de)

**3rd Michelangelo International Music Festival, Florence, Italy, 18-20 Apr 2020.** Competition and festival for choirs and orchestras. Contact: Florence Choral, Email: [chairman@florencechoral.com](mailto:chairman@florencechoral.com) - Website: [www.florencechoral.com](http://www.florencechoral.com)

**Slovakia Cantat, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 23-26 Apr 2020.** International Choir and Folksong Festival. Competition, workshop, concerts of sacred and secular music. Apply before Dec 15, 2019. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: [info@choral-music.sk](mailto:info@choral-music.sk) - Website: [www.choral-music.sk](http://www.choral-music.sk)

**10th International Messiah Choir Festival, Salzburg, Austria, 23-26 Apr 2020.** 10 selected choruses or orchestras of any age and composition (also dance groups). Performances in Salzburg and surroundings. Contact: Chorus MM, Email: [messiah-salzburg@cc-a.at](mailto:messiah-salzburg@cc-a.at) - Website: <https://messiah-chorfestival-salzburg.jimdo.com/>

**66th Cork International Choral Festival, Ireland, 29 Apr-3 May 2020.** For 5 wonderful days Cork City and County will welcome some of the finest amateur

Competitive and Non - Competitive choirs from around the world for a programme of choral concerts, national and international competition, and internationally renowned performers as thousands of participants bring Cork to life. Contact: Cork International Choral Festival, Email: [info@corkchoral.ie](mailto:info@corkchoral.ie) - Website: [www.corkchoral.ie](http://www.corkchoral.ie)

**8th Queen of the Adriatic Sea Choral Festival and Competition, Cattolica, Italy, 30 Apr-3 May 2020.** Competition for Equal Voices, Mixed, Chamber, Youth, Children, Sacred Music, Folk and Spiritual Choirs. Concerts at the beautiful San Leo medieval cathedral. Apply before 31 Mar 2020. Contact: Queen Choral Festival and Competition, Email: [office@queenchoralfestival.org](mailto:office@queenchoralfestival.org) - Website: [www.queenchoralfestival.org](http://www.queenchoralfestival.org)

**68th European Music Festival for Young People, Neerpelt, Belgium, 30 Apr-4 May 2020.** Categories: children's, single-voice youth, mixed-voice youth, pennant series children, pennant series single-voice youth, pennant series mixed-voice youth, free series: vocal and vocal-instrumental ensembles such as close harmony, vocal jazz, folk music, gospel & spiritual. Contact: Europees Muziekfestival voor de Jeugd, Email: [info@emj.be](mailto:info@emj.be) - Website: [www.emj.be](http://www.emj.be)

**International Festival Verona Garda Estate, Verona, Brescia, Mantua, Vicenza, Italy, 30 Apr-4 May, 25-29 June, 2-6 July, 9-13 July 2020.** For all choirs of all types. Contact: Prof. Giuliano Rinaldi, Email: [info@festivalveronagardaestate.eu](mailto:info@festivalveronagardaestate.eu) - Website: [www.festivalveronagardaestate.eu](http://www.festivalveronagardaestate.eu)

**19th Venezia in Musica, International Choir Competition and Festival, Venice and Caorle, Italy, 1-5 May 2020.** Competitive or non-competitive festival open to mixed, male, female, chamber choirs and vocal ensembles. Other categories: children and youth choirs, musica sacra and folklore. Activities for non-competitive choirs include evaluation performance, individual coaching and friendship concerts. Apply before Jan 28, 2020. Contact: Meeting Music, Email: [info@meeting-music.com](mailto:info@meeting-music.com) - Website: [www.meeting-music.com](http://www.meeting-music.com)

**ONSTAGE with Interkultur in Stockholm, Sweden, 7-10 May 2020.** Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: [mail@interkultur.com](mailto:mail@interkultur.com) - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

**4th Belgrade International Choir Fest, Serbia, 7-10 May 2020.** Non-competitive festival for mixed, female and male choirs, age 16+. Contact: MEGA ART - SM, Email: [info@megaartsm.com](mailto:info@megaartsm.com) - Website: <http://www.megaartsm.com>

**Vándor-Révész Festival and International Competition on Choral Music, Budapest, Hungary, 14-17 May 2020.** Choirs may participate to the festival and the competition

together or only one of these events. Contact: Budapesti Vándor-Révész Festival, Email: [vandor.fesztival@gmail.com](mailto:vandor.fesztival@gmail.com) - Website: <http://fesztival.vandorkorus.hu/>

**22nd Statys imkus Choir Competition, Klaipėda, Lithuania, 14-17 May 2020.** Competition is open to mixed, male, female, youth, children's choirs, sacred music, vocal ensembles, folk choirs. International Jury: Vytautas Miškinis (Lithuania), Hirvo Surva (Estonia), Jürgen Budday (Germany). Contact: Klaipėda 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>

**PODIUM 2020: Singing Towards the Future, Montréal, Québec, Canada, 14-17 May 2020.** To mark the occasion of our 20th edition of PODIUM, the Alliance chorale du Québec and Choral Canada are creating a fresh and unforgettable experience of diverse concerts featuring top choirs from Canada and beyond, intriguing workshops and lectures, valuable networking opportunities, and exciting celebrations of the choral art. Contact: Choral Canada, Email: [podium@choralcanada.org](mailto:podium@choralcanada.org) - Website: [www.podiumconference.ca](http://www.podiumconference.ca)

**4th Lorenzo De' Medici International choral Festival, Florence, Italy, 15-17 May 2020.** Competition for all genres of choral singing, in 11 competitive and non-competitive categories. Contact: Florence Choral, Email: [chairman@florencechoral.com](mailto:chairman@florencechoral.com) - Website: [www.florencechoral.com](http://www.florencechoral.com)

**Ambleside Music Week, United Kingdom, 17-22 May 2020.** Music by the Spanish renaissance composer Juan Esquivel including the eight-part Missa Ut re mi fa so la, in the middle of the English Lake District directed by Eamonn Dougan. Contact: Lacock Courses, Andrew van der Beek, Email: [lucy@lacock.org](mailto:lucy@lacock.org) - Website: [www.lacock.org](http://www.lacock.org)

**12th European Festival of Youth Choirs, Basel, Switzerland, 19-24 May 2020.** Platform for 18 outstanding youth and children's choirs (age-limit 25) from European countries. No competition. Over 40 choral-concerts for more than 30'000 listeners. Contact: Europäisches Jugendchor Festival Basel, Contact: Europäisches Jugendchor Festival Basel, Kathrin Renggli, Email: [info@ejcf.ch](mailto:info@ejcf.ch) - Website: [www.ejcf.ch](http://www.ejcf.ch)

**International Choir Festival Corearte Senior 2020, Puerto de la Cruz, Tenerife, Spain, 19-24 May 2020.** Non-competitive event for amateur choral groups of adults (50 years old and more). Participants will perform at iconic venues of the city and enjoy workshops with renowned teachers, including José Híjar Polo (Tenerife, Spain). Contact: Festival Internacional de Coros Corearte Barcelona,

Email: [info@corearte.es](mailto:info@corearte.es) - Website: [www.corearte.es](http://www.corearte.es)

**20th International Festival of Choral Singing Nancy Voix du Monde, Nancy, France, 20-24 May 2020.** Festival for all choir categories. 1600 singers from all over the world. Invited choirs' local costs covered by the festival. Apply before 1 Feb 2020. Contact: Festival International de Chant Choral de Nancy, Email: [festival-choral@orange.fr](mailto:festival-choral@orange.fr) - Website: [www.chantchoral.org](http://www.chantchoral.org)

**MidAm International Florence 2020, Italy, 29 May-7 June 2020.** Openings for choirs to join distinguished guest conductors to perform an oratorio with Orchestra da Camera Fiorentina on June 1, followed on June 3 by a concert conducted by Peter Tiboris featuring all visiting choirs. Contact: MidAmerica Productions, Zui Tao, Email: [opera.competition@midamerica-music.com](mailto:opera.competition@midamerica-music.com) - Website: <http://www.festivaloftheaegean.com/>

**Florence 2020, 6th Annual Great and Grand American Choral Series in Italy, Florence & Verona, Venice, Lake Garda, Italy, 29 May-7 June 2020.** Open to all choruses from around the world. Contact: MidAmerica Productions, Zui Tao, Email: [opera.competition@midamerica-music.com](mailto:opera.competition@midamerica-music.com) - Website: <http://www.festivaloftheaegean.com/>

**4th International Choral Celebration and Laurea Mundi Budapest, Hungary, 2-6 June 2020.** Choirs may compete in the following well liked categories: Children's and Youth Choirs, Female, Male and Mixed Choirs, Musica Sacra, Pop, Jazz, Gospel, Modern & Folklore, Chamber Choirs & Vocal. Also available: workshops, individual coaching and more. Apply before January 5, 2020. Contact: Meeting Music, Email: [info@meeting-music.com](mailto:info@meeting-music.com) - Website: [www.meeting-music.com](http://www.meeting-music.com)

**11th International Krakow Choir Festival Cracovia Cantans, Poland, 4-7 June 2020.** The biggest international choral festival in Poland. For all kinds of choirs, 10 categories including non-competitive category, many concert opportunities. Gala concert in Krakow Philharmonic. Apply before Nov 15, 2019. This competition is one of the World Choral Championship: <http://www.worldchoralchampionship.org/>. Contact: MELODY & Polonia Cantat, Email: [mail@krakowchoirfestival.pl](mailto:mail@krakowchoirfestival.pl) - Website: [www.krakowchoirfestival.pl](http://www.krakowchoirfestival.pl)

**Limerick Sings International Choral Festival, Limerick, Ireland, 4-7 June 2020.** Non-competitive event for choirs of all traditions and nationalities. Choirs will meet each other through formal and informal concerts and other social events. It will include a 'Big Sing' choral performance lead by Bob Chilcott. Contact: Limerick Sings, Email: [information@limericksings.com](mailto:information@limericksings.com) - Website: [www.limericksings.com](http://www.limericksings.com)



**Paris 2020, Music and Cultural Tour to the Great and Historic City of Paris, France, 5-14 June 2020.** Open to all choruses from around the world. Apply before: Nov 15, 2019. Contact: MidAmerica Productions, Zui Tao, Email: [opera.competition@midamerica-music.com](mailto:opera.competition@midamerica-music.com) - Website: <http://www.festivaloftheaegaeon.com/>

**Beethoven 250 Choral Festival, Vienna, Austria, 9-13 June 2020.** Under the artistic direction of Dr. Marc Foster, choirs will perform in the "Capital of Classical Music" with a finale performance in St. Stephen's Cathedral. Contact: Music Celebrations International, Email: [info@musiccelebrations.com](mailto:info@musiccelebrations.com) - Website: <http://beethoven250.org>

**8th Per Musicam Ad Astra International Choir Festival and Competition, Toruń, Poland, 10-14 June 2020.** Competitive or non-competitive festival open to mixed, male, female, chamber choirs and vocal ensembles. Other categories: children and youth choirs, musica sacra and folklore. Activities for non-competitive choirs include evaluation performance, individual coaching and friendship concerts. Contact: Meeting Music, Email: [info@meeting-music.com](mailto:info@meeting-music.com) - Website: [www.meeting-music.com](http://www.meeting-music.com)

**Bratislava Choir Festival, Slovak Republic, 11-14 June 2020.** International choral music festival, competition, workshop, concerts in the best venues, sightseeing. Bratislava is widely recognized as a city of music, which increases its fame as a city of rich cultural and artistic heritage. Apply before March 1st 2020. 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 Choral Festival in Tuscany, Montecatini Terme, Italy, 11-15 June 2020.** Join choirs from around the world in the heart of Tuscany to perform in venues throughout the region. Hear the other guest choirs sing at the Tettuccio Spa, and exchange with Italian choirs during friendship concerts in churches and theatres. Contact: MusicContactInternational, Email: [travel@music-contact.com](mailto:travel@music-contact.com) - Website: <http://tuscany.music-contact.com/>

**MidAm International Warsaw and Krakow 2020, Poland, 12-21 June 2020.** Openings for three distinguished guest conductors and their 60-voice choirs to perform Mozart's Requiem, Fauré's Requiem and Rutter's Requiem. Contact: MidAmerica Productions, Zui Tao, Email: [opera.competition@midamerica-music.com](mailto:opera.competition@midamerica-music.com) - Website: <http://www.festivaloftheaegaeon.com/>

**Cantate Barcelona, Spain, 12-15 June 2020.** Annual festival for choirs from across the globe. Concert tour throughout Spain's Costa Brava region. Shared concert with local choirs at the

Auditori Palau de Congressos in Girona. Contact: Music Contact International, Email: [travel@music-contact.com](mailto:travel@music-contact.com) - Website: [www.music-contact.com](http://www.music-contact.com)

**Vienna Choral 2020, Vienna & Salzburg, Austria, 12-21 June 2020.** Open to all choruses from around the world. Contact: MidAmerica Productions, Zui Tao, Email: [opera.competition@midamerica-music.com](mailto:opera.competition@midamerica-music.com) - Website: <http://www.festivaloftheaegaeon.com/>

**Many Voices, One Song, Dublin, Ireland, 13-18 June 2020.** Festival for choirs, offering individual concerts and common rehearsal and performance under the direction of Artistic Directors Joshua Habermann and Deke Sharon. Contact: Perform International, Email: [info@performinternational.com](mailto:info@performinternational.com) - Website: [www.perform-international.com](http://www.perform-international.com)

**London's 2020 Chichester Psalms Choir Festival, United Kingdom, 14-19 June 2020.** Individual and festival concerts under the direction of Thomas Lloyd. Contact: Klconcerts, Email: [info@klconcerts.com](mailto:info@klconcerts.com) - Website: [www.klconcerts.com](http://www.klconcerts.com)

**Orthodox Music Master Class 2020 for Composers and Conductors, Chicago, USA, 17-21 June 2020.** Featuring Pan-Orthodox orientation; distinguished international faculty V. Rev. Ivan Moody (Portugal); Matthew Arndt (USA); Peter Jermihov (USA); Tamara Petijevic (Serbia); Liubov Pivovarova (Russia); Irina Riazanova (USA); and Kurt Sander (USA). Contact: Society of Saint Romanos, Email: [societyofsaintromanosthemelodist@users.smore.com](mailto:societyofsaintromanosthemelodist@users.smore.com) - Website: <https://www.societyromanos.org>

**Roma In Canto International Festival of Sacred Music, Rome, Italy, 17-21 June 2020.** Perform a stunning repertoire of music by Monteverdi and Palestrina during High Mass at St. Peter's Basilica alongside choirs from across the globe. Create new friendships with singers from around the world during rehearsals and festival ceremonies. Additionally, perform your own repertoire as part of the festival concert series at a local church in Rome. Contact: Music Contact International, Email: [travel@music-contact.com](mailto:travel@music-contact.com) - Website: <http://tuscany.music-contact.com/>

**Festival for Women's and Treble Voices, San Sebastian, Spain, 17-22 June 2020.** Join women's and treble choral ensembles under the direction of Dr. Andrea Ramsey in San Sebastian, Spain for a musical tapas from both continents. Dr. Ramsey will be joined by esteemed Basque Composers, Eva Ugalde and world-renowned Javier Bustó. Contact: Perform International, Email: [info@performinternational.com](mailto:info@performinternational.com) - Website: [www.perform-international.com](http://www.perform-international.com)

**San Juan Canta International Festival, Competition and Grand Prix, Argentina, 18-22 June 2020.**

Competition in two categories: universal choral repertoire, and popular, folk and/or traditional choral music. Choirs from all around the world will enjoy choral fraternity concerts, gala concerts, workshops and exchange program in wonderful venues. Contact: María Elina Mayorga, Email: [sanjuancoral@gmail.com](mailto:sanjuancoral@gmail.com) - Website: <http://sanjuancanta.com.ar>

**Monteconero Music Party, Montenegro, 20-26 June 2020.**

'Songs of Loss and Regret', including Phinot's Lamentations, Gombert's Lugebat David Absalon and Peter Cornelius's Requiem, for an invited group directed by JanJoost van Elburg. Contact: Lacock Courses, Andrew van der Beek, Email: [avdb@lacock.org](mailto:avdb@lacock.org) - Website: [www.lacock.org](http://www.lacock.org)

**Rome Choral Festival, Rome, Italy, 21-25 June 2020.**

For mixed-voice singers and choirs that will come together to rehearse and perform en masse under the direction of Z. Randall Stroope. Contact: Music Celebrations International, LLC, Email: [info@musiccelebrations.com](mailto:info@musiccelebrations.com) - Website: <http://romechoralfestival.org/>

**International Choral Festival CorHabana, La Havana, Cuba, 23-27 June 2020.**

Music makes the world go round, a musical exchange trip in partnership with CorHabana Choral Festival. Experience the art, culture, and natural beauty of Cuba and meet and collaborate with choral directors and singers from Cuba and all over the world! Contact: International Choral Festival Corhabana, Email: [coronac@cubarte.cult.cu](mailto:coronac@cubarte.cult.cu) - Website: [guerra.digna@gmail.com](mailto:guerra.digna@gmail.com)

**2nd Sing Berlin! International Choir Festival & Competition, Germany, 24-28 June 2020.**

Event in cooperation with Georg-Friedrich-Händel Gymnasium for choirs from all over the world. Contact: Meeting Music, Email: [info@meeting-music.com](mailto:info@meeting-music.com) - Website: [www.meeting-music.com](http://www.meeting-music.com)

**Salzburg Choral Festival Jubilate Mozart!, Austria, 24-28 June 2020.**

Three days of festival rehearsals under the direction of Dr. Eph Ehly. János Czifra, Domkapellmeister of the Dom, will conduct Mozart's Mass in C Major, "Coronation," KV317, accompanied by the Salzburger Domorchestra. Contact: Music Celebrations International, LLC, Email: [info@mozartchoralfestival.org](mailto:info@mozartchoralfestival.org) - Website: <https://salzburgchoralfestival.org>

**Italian Alpine Choral Festival, Dolomites, South Tyrol, Italy, 24-28 June 2020.**

Open to all types of choirs offering performance opportunities in theaters, concert halls and churches across the Val Pusteria region, as well as open-air performances at alpine huts,

music pavilions, castles and lakes. Contact: Music Contact International, Email: [travel@music-contact.com](mailto:travel@music-contact.com) - Website: <https://home.music-contact.com/>

**Choral Mosaic 2020, Mississauga, Canada, 25-27 June 2020.**

Contact: Choral Mosaic 2020 - Website: <http://www.choralmosaic.com/>

**CANTEMUS International Choir Festival, Novi Sad, Zrenjanin, Vojvodina, Serbia, 25-29 June 2020.**

Open to all genres of choral singing, a cappella or with instrumental accompaniment. Meetings of ensembles, conductors, music experts and managers. High level of competition and cooperation with concert organizers and choirs from the Region of Western Balkan. Contact: International Music Center Balkan Bridges, Email: [imcbalkanbridges@gmail.com](mailto:imcbalkanbridges@gmail.com) - Website: <http://www.imcbalkanbridges.com>

**Cracovia Sacra – Sacred Choral Music Festival, Krakow, Poland, 26-28 June 2020.**

Choir festival focusing on sacred music of all Christian churches. 6 categories including non-competitive category. Apply before Dec 31, 2019. Contact: MELODY & Polonia Cantat, Email: [info@poloniacantat.pl](mailto:info@poloniacantat.pl) - Website: [www.cracoviasacra.com](http://www.cracoviasacra.com)

**Madrid Choral Festival, Spain, 28 June-3 July 2020.**

For all kind of choirs. Artistic Director, Dr. Derrick Fox. Contact: Perform International, Email: [info@performinternational.com](mailto:info@performinternational.com) - Website: [www.perform-international.com](http://www.perform-international.com)

**2020 Choral Festival in Ireland with Rollo Dilworth, Belfast and Dublin, Ireland, 28 June-5 July 2020.**

For any type of choirs. Contact: Klconcerts, Email: [info@klconcerts.com](mailto:info@klconcerts.com) - Website: [www.klconcerts.com](http://www.klconcerts.com)

**Music at Monteconero, Montenegro, 29 June-5 July 2020.**

Early Latin American music, including Lamentations by Padilla and Manuel de Sumaya and Padilla's Circumdederunt me and Versa est in luctum, in a former mediaeval monastery on the Adriatic directed by Gabriel Crouch. Contact: Lacock Courses, Andrew van der Beek, Email: [avdb@lacock.org](mailto:avdb@lacock.org) - Website: [www.lacock.org](http://www.lacock.org)

**International Choral Kathaumixw, Powell River, Canada, 30 June-4 July 2020.**

Join choirs from around the world in 20 concerts, competitions, common singing, conductor's seminars and social events on the shores of Canada's magnificent Pacific Coast. Contact: Powell River Academy of Music, Email: [info@kathaumixw.org](mailto:info@kathaumixw.org) - Website: [www.kathaumixw.org](http://www.kathaumixw.org)

**Great Basilicas of Italy Festival Tour, Italy, 1-6 July 2020.**

Festival celebrating the artistic heritage of two of Italy's most important churches. Under the leadership of artistic director Dr. Gene Peterson, the mixed



festival choir will perform repertoire that is significant to each of these wonderful concert spaces. Contact: Perform International, Email: [info@performinternational.com](mailto:info@performinternational.com) - Website: [www.perform-international.com](http://www.perform-international.com)

**International Cantus Music & Culture Festival – Salzburg, Salzburg, Austria, 2-5 July 2020.**

Throughout the weekend, ensembles perform individual repertoire and join voices on the “Song of Peace.” Contact: Music Contact International, Email: [travel@music-contact.com](mailto:travel@music-contact.com) - Website: [www.music-contact.com](http://www.music-contact.com)

**IFAS 2020 – 26th International Festival of Academic Choirs, Pardubice, Czech Republic, 3-8 July 2020.**

Competition with possible Grand Prix for university and college choirs or youth choirs (age 18-30). Free Bohuslav Martinu Award competition for all kind of choirs (except children's choirs) Contact: IFAS - Alena Mejstříková, Email: [ifas.pardubice@seznam.cz](mailto:ifas.pardubice@seznam.cz) - Website: [www.ifas.cz](http://www.ifas.cz)

**Toronto Choral Festival 2020 with Elise Bradley and Henry Leck, Canada, 5-9 July 2020.**

For treble and mixed voice choirs. Contact: Klconcerts, Email: [info@klconcerts.com](mailto:info@klconcerts.com) - Website: [www.klconcerts.com](http://www.klconcerts.com)

**11th World Choir Games, Antwerp, Ghent, Belgium, 5-15 July 2020.**

Large competition for choirs from all around the world. Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: [mail@interkultur.com](mailto:mail@interkultur.com) - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

**4th Leonardo Da Vinci International Choral Festival, Florence, Italy, 5-8 July 2020.**

Competition and Festival for Choirs. Contact: Florence Choral, Email: [chairman@florencechoral.com](mailto:chairman@florencechoral.com) - Website: [www.florencechoral.com](http://www.florencechoral.com)

**55th International Choral Music Festival Barcelona, Spain, 6-12 July 2020.**

Singing week in the magnificent city of Barcelona, workshops, final concert at the Palau de la Musica, individual concerts for the participating choirs in Barcelona. Workshops with Conductors: Jordi Casals (Catalonia-Austria) - Beethoven 250th Anniversary Mass in C Major, Elisenda Carrasco (Catalonia) - The Colors of our Sound for Children's Choirs, Alfonso Casado (Spain) - Musical Theater: Text and Music. Contact: Federació Catalana d'Entitats Corales, Email: [fcec@fcec.cat](mailto:fcec@fcec.cat) - Website: [www.fcec.cat](http://www.fcec.cat)

**International Youth Music Festival I & Slovakia Folk, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 7-10 July 2020.**

International Festival for Youth and Children Choirs and Orchestras. Competition, workshop, concerts of sacred and secular music, bringing together talented young musicians from around the world. Apply before 15/04/2020. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: [info@choral-music.sk](mailto:info@choral-music.sk) - Website: [www.choral-music.sk](http://www.choral-music.sk)

**Chanakkale International Choir Festival and Competition, Chanakkale, Turkey, 7-12 July 2020.**

Non-competitive festival or competition for female, male, mixed adults, mixed youth, mixed children, and folk choirs from all over the world. Contact: Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart Üniversitesi, Email: [info@canakkalekorofestivali.com](mailto:info@canakkalekorofestivali.com) - Website: <http://www.canakkalekorofestivali.com/>

**16th Annual Choral Festival of the Aegean, Syros Island, Greece, 8-22 July 2020.**

Open to all choruses from around the world. Contact: MidAmerica Productions, Zui Tao, Email: [opera.competition@midamerica-music.com](mailto:opera.competition@midamerica-music.com) - Website: <http://www.festivaloftheaegean.com/>

**Passion of Italy Rome Festival, Venice and Milano, Italy, 8-14 July 2020.**

With John Dickson. For choirs of any kind from around the world. Individual and festival concerts. Contact: Klconcerts, Email: [info@klconcerts.com](mailto:info@klconcerts.com) - Website: [www.klconcerts.com](http://www.klconcerts.com)

**38th International Choir Festival of Preveza, 26th International Competition of Sacred Music, Preveza, Greece, 9-12 July 2020.**

For mixed, equal voices, children's, chamber and youth choirs. Repertory must include four pieces of sacred music (Renaissance or baroque, romantic period, a composition from the early 20th century, a composition of composer born after 1970). More categories. Contact: Choral Society “Armonia” of Preveza, Email: [armonia4@otenet.gr](mailto:armonia4@otenet.gr) - Website: <http://www.armoniachoir.gr/festival/index.php>

**13th International Youth Chamber Choir Meeting, Usedom Island (Baltic Sea), Germany, 10-19 July 2020.**

About 250 young people will study exciting new repertoire with renowned international choral conductors, explore the island and enjoy the sandy beaches. Choirs will perform together in concerts, with the final concert in the impressive St. Petri church in Wolgast as the highlight of the meeting. Guest conductors are Cécile Mathevet-Bouchet (France) for mixed youth choir, Christoffer Holgersson (Sweden) for mixed youth choir, Voicu Popescu (Romania) for girls choir. Apply before 15 December 2019. Contact: Arbeitskreis Musik in der Jugend AMJ, Email: [info@amj-musik.de](mailto:info@amj-musik.de) - Website: <https://www.usedom.amj-musik.de/en/>

**14th Summa Cum Laude International Youth Music Festival, Vienna, Austria, 10-15 July 2020.**

Cross-cultural and musical exchange event including workshops, lectures, seminars, concerts in and around Vienna, competition with an international and highly renowned jury. Contact: CONCERTS-AUSTRIA, Email: [office@scelfestival.org](mailto:office@scelfestival.org) - Website: [www.scelfestival.org](http://www.scelfestival.org)

**11th Musica Eterna Roma International Choir Festival and Competition, Italy, 11-15 July 2020.**

Competitive

or non-competitive festival open to mixed, male, female, chamber choirs and vocal ensembles. Other categories: children and youth choirs, musica sacra and folklore. Activities for non-competitive choirs include evaluation performance, individual coaching and friendship concerts. Contact: Meeting Music, Email: [info@meeting-music.com](mailto:info@meeting-music.com) - Website: [www.meeting-music.com](http://www.meeting-music.com)

**12th World Symposium on Choral Music, Auckland, New Zealand, 11-18 July 2020.**

Contact: International Federation for Choral Music, Email: [office@ifcm.net](mailto:office@ifcm.net) - Website: <http://wscm2020.com/> or <http://www.nzcf.org.nz/>

**Singing in Edinburgh, United Kingdom, 12-17 July 2020.**

Renaissance music in Scotland, including the nineteen-part O bone Jesu and Missa Dum sacrum mysterium of Robert Carver and music by Peebles, Josquin and Jachet of Mantua directed by Rory McCleery. Contact: Lacock Courses, Andrew van der Beek, Email: [lucy@lacock.org](mailto:lucy@lacock.org) - Website: [www.lacock.org](http://www.lacock.org)

**Join the Jonathan Griffith Singers in New Zealand, New Zealand, 12-24 July 2020.**

Travel with the Jonathan Griffith Singers to beautiful New Zealand for a Special Performance Tour including the 20th Anniversary Celebration of Sir Karl Jenkins' work The Armed Man conducted by Jonathan Griffith. Contact: Distinguished Concerts International, New York (DCINY), Email: [Diane@DCINY.org](mailto:Diane@DCINY.org) - Website: <http://www.dciny.org/>

**2020 Serenade! Choral Festival: The Human Journey, Washington DC, USA, 14-20 July 2020.**

Honoring the centennial of the most momentous achievement during the struggle for women's rights in American history, Our own Eric Daniel Helms New Music Program will commission female-identifying composers to write several new choral works that reflect upon the history of women's enfranchisement, as well as shine light on current human rights issues around the world. Contact: Sara Casar, Classical Movements, Email: [info@ClassicalMovements.com](mailto:info@ClassicalMovements.com) - Website: <http://classicalmovements.org/dc.htm>

**66th International Choral Contest of Habaneras and Polyphony, Torrevieja (Alicante), Spain, 19-25 July 2020.**

Outdoors habaneras, polyphony in the auditorium "Eras de la Sal" on the Mediterranean Sea coast. Contact: Certamen Int'l de Habaneras de Torrevieja, Email: [habaneras@habaneras.org](mailto:habaneras@habaneras.org) - Website: [www.habaneras.org](http://www.habaneras.org)

**Sing Austria with Elena Sharkova and Henry Leck, Vienna & Salzburg, Austria, 21-27 June 2020.**

Individual and festival concerts for all type

of choirs. Contact: Klconcerts, Email: [info@Klconcerts.com](mailto:info@Klconcerts.com) - Website: [www.Klconcerts.com](http://www.Klconcerts.com)

**15th China International Chorus Festival and IFCM World Choral Education Conference, Beijing, China, 23-29 July 2020.**

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

**International Youth Music Festival II and Bratislava Cantat I, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 27-30 July 2020.**

International Festival for Youth and Children Choirs and Orchestras. Competition, workshop, concerts of sacred and secular music, bringing together talented young musicians from around the world. Apply before Apr 15, 2020. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: [info@choral-music.sk](mailto:info@choral-music.sk) - Website: [www.choral-music.sk](http://www.choral-music.sk)

**9th Bali International Choir Festival 2020, Kuta, Bali, Indonesia, 28 July-1 Aug 2020.**

Bali Cantat, Choir clinics and workshops, evaluation performances, friendship concerts, choir competition, choir championship, Grand Prix championship, 'Meet the Jury' consultation. Contact: Bandung Choral Society, Tommyanto Kandisaputra, Email: [mailbcsevents@gmail.com](mailto:mailbcsevents@gmail.com) - Website: [www.bandungchoral.com](http://www.bandungchoral.com)

**International Folk Song Choral Festival and IFCM Voices Conference, in Kaili, 31 July-4 August.**

Selected choirs will have local transportation, food and accommodation covered by the local organizers. The international travel expenses are the responsibility of the choirs. Apply before December 31, 2019. Contact: [info@ifcm.net](mailto:info@ifcm.net)

**1st Africa Cantat Festival, Nairobi, Kenya, 22-29 Aug 2020.**

Africa Cantat is a one-week festival bringing together choirs and singers from Kenya, from other parts of Africa and from the rest of the world. The festival offers the opportunity to experience singing together and learning from professional international conductors, surrounded by a unique beautiful Kenyan landscape. Contact: Africa Cantat Festival, Email: [info@africacantat.org](mailto:info@africacantat.org) - Website: <https://www.africacantat.org>

**4th Andrea del Verrocchio International Choral Festival, Florence, Italy, 4-7 Aug 2020.**

Competition and Festival for Choirs. Contact: Florence Choral, Email: [chairman@](mailto:chairman@)



[florencechoral.com](http://florencechoral.com) - Website: [www.florencechoral.com](http://www.florencechoral.com)

**China Inner Mongolia International Choral Week, in Hohhot, 6-9 August.** Selected choirs will have local transportation, food and accommodation covered by the local organizers. The international travel expenses are the responsibility of the choirs. Apply before December 31, 2019. Contact: [info@ifcm.net](mailto:info@ifcm.net)

**Komitas International Festival, Yerevan, Armenia, Sept 2020.** Festival featuring the Gewandhaus Children's Choir (Germany) in early September, and different Armenian amateur and children's choirs on September 26. Concerts will take place in different cities of Armenia. Contact: Little Singers of Armenia, Email: [alsccc@hotmail.com](mailto:alsccc@hotmail.com) - Website: <http://www.alsccc.am>

**Al Sole della Sardegna International Choral Festival, Sant'Antioco, Italy, 2 Sep-18 Oct 2020.** For all choirs of all types. Contact: Prof. Giuliano Rinaldi, Email: [info@festivalalsoledellasardegna.eu](mailto:info@festivalalsoledellasardegna.eu) - Website: [www.festivalalsoledellasardegna.eu](http://www.festivalalsoledellasardegna.eu)

**International Choir Festival Corearte Rio de la Plata 2020, Montevideo, Uruguay, 8-13 Sep 2020.** Competition open to choirs of various backgrounds from all over the world. Contact: Festival Internacional de Coros Corearte Barcelona, Email: [Info@corearte.es](mailto:Info@corearte.es) - Website: [www.corearte.es](http://www.corearte.es)

**ON STAGE with Interkultur in Lisbon, Portugal, 11-14 Sep 2020.** Contact: Interkultur Foundation, Email: [mail@interkultur.com](mailto:mail@interkultur.com) - Website: <https://www.interkultur.com/>

**14th Rimini International Choral Competition, Rimini, Italy, 17-20 Sep 2020.** Competition for equal voices, mixed choirs, children & youth choirs, folk/Gospel music and sacred music. Apply before May 31, 2020. Contact: Rimini International Choral Competition, Email: [info@riminichoral.it](mailto:info@riminichoral.it) - Website: [www.riminichoral.it](http://www.riminichoral.it)

**4th Beira Interior International Choir Festival and Competition, Fundão, Portugal, 2-6 Oct 2020.** Register in categories for Mixed, Male, Female and Chamber Choirs, Children & Youth Choirs, performing in Sacred Choral Music, Folklore, Gospel, Pop & Modern categories. Choirs have the opportunity to participate in the event without competing in Evaluation Performance, Individual Coaching, Voice Training and Friendship Concerts. Contact: Meeting Music, Email: [info@meeting-music.com](mailto:info@meeting-music.com) - Website: [www.meeting-music.com](http://www.meeting-music.com)

**Bratislava Cantat II, Slovak Republic, 8-11 Oct 2020.** International Choir and Orchestras Festival. Competition, concerts of choir and orchestral music. The Slovak

capital Bratislava opens its gates and invites choirs to its charming centre in autumn. Apply before August 1, 2020. 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 Botticelli International Choral Festival, Venice, Italy, 11-14 Oct 2020.** Competition for Equal Voices, Mixed, Chamber, Youth, Children, Sacred Music, Folk and Spiritual Choirs. Concerts in beautiful churches in Venice. Sung Service for the winners at the St. Mark Basilica. Contact: Botticelli International Choral Festival, Email: [chairman@florencechoral.com](mailto:chairman@florencechoral.com) - Website: <http://www.florencechoral.com/>

**Choral Workshops for International Oratorio choirs, Lake Garda, Italy, 15-18 Oct 2020.** International choir workshops with concerts. Contact: MusikReisenFaszination Music Festivals, Email: [info@mrf-musicfestivals.com](mailto:info@mrf-musicfestivals.com) - Website: [www.mrf-musicfestivals.com](http://www.mrf-musicfestivals.com)

**Claudio Monteverdi Choral Festival and Competition, Venice, Italy, 15-18 Oct 2020.** Competition for Equal Voices, Mixed, Chamber, Youth, Children, Sacred Music, Folk and Spiritual Choirs. Concerts in beautiful churches in Venice. Sung Service for the winners at the St. Mark Basilica. Contact: Claudio Monteverdi Choral Competition, Email: [office@venicechoralcompetition.it](mailto:office@venicechoralcompetition.it) - Website: [www.venicechoralcompetition.it](http://www.venicechoralcompetition.it)

**International Choir Festival Corearte Barcelona 2020, Spain, 19-25 Oct 2020.** Non-competitive event open to choirs of various backgrounds from all over the world. Contact: Festival Internacional de Coros Corearte Barcelona, Email: [info@corearte.es](mailto:info@corearte.es) - Website: [www.corearte.es](http://www.corearte.es)

**20th Venezia in Musica, International Choir Competition and Festival, Sacile & Venice, Italy, 22-25 Oct 2020.** Competitive or non-competitive festival open to mixed, male, female, chamber choirs and vocal ensembles. Other categories: children and youth choirs, musica sacra and folklore. Apply before May 15, 2020. Contact: Meeting Music, Email: [info@meeting-music.com](mailto:info@meeting-music.com) - Website: [www.meeting-music.com](http://www.meeting-music.com)

**Cantate Barcelona, Spain, 23-26 Oct 2020.** Annual festival for choirs from across the globe. Concert tour throughout Spain's Costa Brava region. Shared concert with local choirs at the Auditori Palau de Congressos in Girona. Contact: Music Contact International, Email: [travel@music-contact.com](mailto:travel@music-contact.com) - Website: [www.music-contact.com](http://www.music-contact.com)

**London International choral Conducting Competition, London, United Kingdom, 23-25 Oct 2020.** This ground-breaking initiative, the UK's first ever

choral conducting competition, will lend a significant boost to a conductor in the early stages of their career, and is open to international entries. Contact: London International Choral Conducting Competition, Email: [info@liccc.co.uk](mailto:info@liccc.co.uk) - Website: <http://www.liccc.co.uk/>

**Dakar International Singing Festival, Côte d'Ivoire, 28 Oct-1 Nov 2020.** For 6 selected choirs, each one representing one continent. Workshop (6 songs conducted by the conductor of the 6 selected choirs), Mass singing, opening and closing ceremony/ Apply before March 1, 2020. Contact: A Coeur Joie Sénégal, Lucien Mendy, Email: [dakar.singing.festival@gmail.com](mailto:dakar.singing.festival@gmail.com) - Website: <https://www.facebook.com/DAKARSINGING/>

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

**15th International Warsaw Choir Festival Varsovia Cantat, Poland, 20-22 Nov 2020.** For a cappella choirs. Choirs can compete in one of 7 categories. Festival takes place in Porczynski Hall, Chopin Hall. Additional concerts in Warsaw churches. Apply before 30th June 2020. Contact: MELODY & Polonia Cantat, Email: [info@varsoviacantat.pl](mailto:info@varsoviacantat.pl) - Website: [www.varsoviacantat.pl](http://www.varsoviacantat.pl)

**International Advent Singing Festival Vienna 2020, Austria, 26-30 Nov, 3-7, 10-14 & 17-21 Dec 2020.** For choirs from all around the world. Contact: MusiCultur Travel GmbH, Email: [info@musicultur.com](mailto:info@musicultur.com) - Website: <https://www.musicultur.com/en/our-choral-trips.html>

**Vienna Advent Sing, Austria, 26-30 Nov, 3-7, 10-14 & 17-21 Dec 2020.** Vienna's Cultural Affairs Department welcomes choirs from around the world to share their voices in the magnificent City Hall and breathtaking Melk Abbey as part of the city's Advent celebration. 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 Choir Festival Corearte Medellin 2020, Colombia, 1-6 Dec 2020.** Non-competitive event open to choirs of various backgrounds from all over the world. Contact: Festival Internacional de Coros Corearte Barcelona, Email: [info@corearte.es](mailto:info@corearte.es) - Website: [www.corearte.es](http://www.corearte.es)

**International Festival of Advent and Christmas Music, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 3-6 Dec 2020.** Competition, workshop, concerts in churches and on the Christmas markets stage. Your songs and performances will contribute to a truly heart-warming atmosphere of Christmas. Apply before October 1, 2020. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: [info@choral-music.sk](mailto:info@choral-music.sk)

[choral-music.sk](http://choral-music.sk) - Website: [www.choral-music.sk](http://www.choral-music.sk)

**11th Krakow Advent and Christmas Choir Festival, Poland, 4-6 Dec 2020.** For all kinds of choirs. Competition in 6 categories for the statuettes of "Golden Angels" or non-competitive participation. The oldest Advent Festival in Poland. Apply before: 30th June 2020. Contact: Polonia Cantat & Melody, Email: [krakow@christmasfestival.pl](mailto:krakow@christmasfestival.pl) - Website: [www.christmasfestival.pl](http://www.christmasfestival.pl)

**Misatango Choir Festival Vienna, Austria, 3-7 Feb 2021.** Contact: CONCERTS-AUSTRIA, Email: [info@misatango.com](mailto:info@misatango.com) - Website: [www.misatango.com/](http://www.misatango.com/)

**10th International Gdansk Choir Festival, Poland, 12-14 Mar 2021.** For all kinds of choirs. Competition part in 6 categories, concerts, non-competitive participation possible, meeting of choirs in the famous city of Solidarity. Apply before: 15th October 2020. Contact: MELODY & Polonia Cantat, Email: [mail@gdanskfestival.pl](mailto:mail@gdanskfestival.pl) - Website: [www.gdanskfestival.pl](http://www.gdanskfestival.pl)

**Music for All 2021 Choral Festival, Indianapolis, USA, 25-27 Mar 2021.** For middle school and high school age students in a musical experience of unparalleled educational impact, joining Leck and Associate Artistic Director, Jason Max Ferdinand, and internationally acclaimed musicians Jeffery Redding, Lynda Hasseler, Jake Runestad, Dominick DiOrio, Lynne Gackle, Andre Crow, Doug Droste and André Thomas. Contact: Music for All Inc., Email: [Kim.M@musicforall.org](mailto:Kim.M@musicforall.org) - Website: <https://choir.musicforall.org/>

**17th Tallinn International Choral Festival 2020, Estonia, 15-18 Apr 2021.** The Choral Festival includes a choir competition in all categories and a series of concerts in the churches and concert halls of Tallinn. Contact: Estonian Choral Society, Email: [kooriyhing@kul.ee](mailto:kooriyhing@kul.ee) - Website: [www.kooriyhing.ee](http://www.kooriyhing.ee)

**Slovakia Cantat, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 22-25 Apr 2021.** International Choir and Folksong Festival. Competition, workshop, concerts of sacred and secular music. The Slovak capital Bratislava opens its gates and invites choirs to its charming centre in spring. Apply before Dec 15, 2020. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: [info@choral-music.sk](mailto:info@choral-music.sk) - Website: [www.choral-music.sk](http://www.choral-music.sk)

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



Email: [info@corkchoral.ie](mailto:info@corkchoral.ie) - Website: [www.corkchoral.ie](http://www.corkchoral.ie)

**12th International Krakow Choir Festival Cracovia Cantans, Poland, 10-13 June 2021.** The biggest international choral festival in Poland. For all kinds of choirs, 10 categories including non-competitive category, many concert opportunities. Gala concert in Krakow Philharmonic. Additionally to the main festival, this year Krakow will hold World Choral Championship – where best world choirs will compete against each other - <http://www.worldchoralchampionship.org/>. Apply before: 15th November 2020. Contact: MELODY & Polonia Cantat, Email: [mail@krakowchoirfestival.pl](mailto:mail@krakowchoirfestival.pl) - Website: [www.krakowchoirfestival.pl](http://www.krakowchoirfestival.pl)

**Bratislava Choir Festival, Slovak Republic, 10-13 June 2021.** International choral music festival, competition, workshop, concerts in the best venues, sightseeing. Bratislava is widely recognized as a city of music, which increases its fame as a city of rich cultural and artistic heritage. Apply before March 1st 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.** For choirs of any kind from around the world. Individual and festival concerts. Contact: Klconcerts, Email: [info@klconcerts.com](mailto:info@klconcerts.com) - Website: [www.klconcerts.com](http://www.klconcerts.com)

**Montréal Choral Festival 2021 with Z. Randall Stroope, Canada, 19-25 June 2021.** For all kind of choirs to join with Canadian choirs to perform music of their lands as well as that of the French. Contact: Klconcerts, Email: [info@klconcerts.com](mailto:info@klconcerts.com) - Website: [www.klconcerts.com](http://www.klconcerts.com)

**Passion of Italy Rome Festival, Venice and Milano, Italy, 22-28 June 2021.** With Elena Sharkova. For choirs of any kind from around the world. Individual and festival concerts. Contact: Klconcerts, Email: [info@klconcerts.com](mailto:info@klconcerts.com) - Website: [www.klconcerts.com](http://www.klconcerts.com)

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

**2021 Choral Festival in Ireland with Craig Hella Johnson, Belfast and Dublin, Ireland, 2-8 July 2021.** For any type of choirs. 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.** Europe's premier international festival for youth choirs, bands and orchestras. Cross-cultural and musical exchange event

including workshops, lectures, seminars, concerts in and around Vienna. Competition with an international and highly renowned jury in the Golden Hall of the Musikverein. Contact: CONCERTS-AUSTRIA, Email: [office@scifestival.org](mailto:office@scifestival.org) - Website: [www.scifestival.org](http://www.scifestival.org)

**International Youth Music Festival I & Slovakia Folk, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 7-10 July 2021.** International Festival for Youth and Children Choirs and Orchestras. Competition, workshop, concerts of sacred and secular music, bringing together talented young musicians from around the world. Apply before 15/04/2021. Contact: Bratislava Music Agency, Email: [info@choral-music.sk](mailto:info@choral-music.sk) - Website: [www.choral-music.sk](http://www.choral-music.sk)

**39th International Choir Festival of Preveza, 27th International Competition of Sacred Music, Preveza, Greece, 8-11 July 2021.** For mixed, equal voices, children's, chamber and youth choirs. Repertory must include four pieces of sacred music (Renaissance or baroque, romantic period, a composition from the early 20th century, a composition of composer born after 1970). Contact: Choral Society "Armonia" of Preveza, Email: [armonia4@otenet.gr](mailto:armonia4@otenet.gr) - Website: <http://www.armoniachoir.gr/festival/index.php>

**2021 Golden Gate International Children's and Youth Choir Festival, Oakland, California, USA, 11-17 July 2021.** For children's and youth choirs from all over the world to perform, compete, and build international friendship. Competition for Historical, Folk, Contemporary, Spiritual/Gospel, Vocal Solo categories. Contact: Piedmont Choirs, Email: [info@goldengatefestival.org](mailto:info@goldengatefestival.org) - Website: [www.goldengatefestival.org](http://www.goldengatefestival.org)

**International Youth Music Festival II and Bratislava Cantat I, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 26-29 July 2021.** International Festival for Youth and Children Choirs and Orchestras. Competition, workshop, concerts of sacred and secular music, bringing together talented young musicians from around the world. Apply before Apr 15, 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)

**12th Krakow Advent and Christmas Choir Festival, Poland, 3-5 Dec 2021.** For all kinds of choirs. Competition in 6 categories for the statuettes of "Golden Angels" or non-competitive participation. The oldest Advent Festival in Poland. Apply before: 30th June 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.** International Choir and Orchestras Festival. Competition, concerts of choir and orchestral music. The Slovak capital Bratislava opens its gates and invites

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12th World Symposium on Choral Music 2020

choirs to its charming centre in autumn. Apply before August 1, 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)

**16th International Warsaw Choir Festival Varsovia Cantat, Poland, 12-14 Nov 2021.** For a cappella choirs. Choirs can compete in one of 7 categories. Apply before 30th June 2020. Contact: MELODY & Polonia Cantat, Email: [info@varsoviacantat.pl](mailto:info@varsoviacantat.pl) - Website: [www.varsoviacantat.pl](http://www.varsoviacantat.pl)

**International Festival of Advent and Christmas Music, Bratislava, Slovak Republic, 2-5 Dec 2021.** Competition, workshop, concerts in churches and on the Christmas markets stage. Apply before October 1, 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 SACRA NOVA 2020

### 16th Composers Competition for Young Composers

Pontificio Istituto di Musica Sacra, Rome (Italy), Erzbistum Köln (Germany), Freundeskreis Abtei Brauweiler (Germany), Instytut Musica Sacra, Warsaw (Poland), Polski Chór Kameralny, Gdańsk (Poland), Associazione Musica Ficta, Rimini (Italy), Hochschule für katholische Kirchenmusik und Musikpädagogik Regensburg (Germany), are happy to invite you to participate in 'Musica Sacra Nova 2020'. The main aim of the Competition is to encourage young composers to write refined works for choirs in their own musical language. Applicants, from all over the world, can submit compositions to one or both of the categories, which are **Category A** (a composition for unaccompanied mixed choir, up to a maximum of 16 voices, to a Latin Christian text and **Category B** (a liturgical composition for mixed choir, 4 to 6 voices, with organ ad lib. to a Latin liturgical text). The duration of each composition must be between 3 and 10 minutes. The submitted compositions will be judged by an international panel of expert choral conductors and composers. Prizes, for each category, consist of money, premiere and publication (the winning works will be published by Schott Verlag in the series *Ausgezeichnete Chormusik*). **The age limit is up to 35 years old** (on 15 January 2020). Submitted compositions must be unpublished, should not have been performed in public previously and should not have been awarded a prize at any other competition. There is an entry fee of 30 Euros for each composition submitted. Each composition could be sent by post or digitally through a form online to be found at [tiny.cc/ayncz](http://tiny.cc/ayncz). The full rules can be found at [www.musicasacranova.com](http://www.musicasacranova.com).



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ARMENIAN LITTLE SINGERS  
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION PRESENTS  
4<sup>TH</sup> CHORAL COMPOSITION COMPETITION 2020  
UNDER THE FRAMEWORK OF KOMITAS FESTIVAL

Dedicated to the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of  
**KOMITAS VARDAPET**

The 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Komitas Vardapet will be part of anniversaries of eminent personalities and important events included in the UNESCO Calendar.



150th anniversary of  
the birth of Komitas Vardapet  
Celebrated in association with UNESCO



Winning compositions will be performed by the  
**Little Singers of Armenia choir**  
and will be included in the choir's repertoire.

Compositions should be submitted by the 1<sup>st</sup> of March, 2020

For additional information  
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