



May 2026 IFCMeNEWS: The WSCM 2026 100-Day Countdown Begins Soon!

IFCM Online Café: Reimagining the Community, 2 May 2026, at 2PM CEST

We're delighted to invite you to the next **IFCM Online Café, 2 May 2026, at 2PM CEST**, offering a first glimpse into the **World Symposium on Choral Music 2026 (WSCM 2026)** and the inspiring voices you will hear in Macau in August 2026.

Inspired by the symposium's theme, *Reimagining the Future*, this online Café - *Reimagining the Community* - will bring together six of the 40 selected presenters from the WSCM 2026 artistic programme. Together, they will explore how choirs can become powerful spaces of belonging, inclusion, and social cohesion.

Through a range of perspectives and experiences, this session will touch on themes such as:

- Choirs as models for community building,
- The intersection of heritage and choral singing through Arabic music,
- Creating and nurturing a gospel choir from the ground up,
- The transformative role of musical entrainment in Philippine choirs, and
- New approaches to cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural collaboration.

JOIN our guests for this engaging Online Café and be part of the conversation as we begin to reimagine the role of choral music in our communities.

- **Marleen de Boo and Jeroen Keymeulen** (Belgium): *A Choir Family as a Model for Community Building.*
- **Amir Jaber Chehayeb** (Lebanon): *Arabic Music in Harmony — At the Intersection of Heritage and Choral Singing.*
- **Marques J. Ruff** (USA): *Make a Joyful Noise: Building a Gospel Choir from Scratch!*
- **Robert Delgado** (Philippines): *The Transformative Power of Musical Entrainment on the Success of Philippine Choirs.*
- **Karmina Šilec** (Slovenia): *Choirs Beyond Borders: A New Praxis of Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration.*

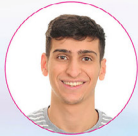
IFCM Online Café, 2 May 2026, 2PM CEST

Reimagining the Future, Reimagining the Community

Get a first taste of WSCM 2026 with a short glimpse at five presentations focusing on choirs as spaces of belonging, inclusion, and social cohesion.



Marleen de Boo
Belgium



Amir Jaber Chehayeb
Lebanon



Marques J. Ruff
USA



Robert Delgado
Philippines



Jeroen Keymeulen
Belgium



Karmina Šilec
Slovenia

Register on <https://forms.gle/5cGhLCAEPtbRtNnj8>



[Register](#) to join us on 2 May at 2PM CEST and enjoy an appetizer taste of [WSCM 2026](#), as we reimagine the community that will shape the future of choral music. The live 2026 IFCM Online Cafés are open to anyone.

World Voices Program, a Special Addition to the WSCM 2026 for Choirs in Asia

Apply now to this special addition to the World Symposium on Choral Music 2026 in Macau, China, 23-28 August 2026, for a chance to perform within the frame of the symposium.

Participation Fee: US\$3,000.00. The fee includes:

- One concert in Macau within the frame of WSCM (25 minutes repertoire time).
- One workshop with an expert (see list in the PDF attached) or exchange session with a local or international choir according to availability.
- Complimentary WSCM Registration for the conductor or a representative of the choir.
- Opportunity to join a tour across three European countries (Portugal, Spain, and France) following a selection by an international jury during WSCM 2026.

To apply to the *World Voices Program* as an international choir, please send the following to office@ifcm.net: short biography of the choir and the conductor (150 words), CV of the conductor, 25-minute concert program proposal, video of the choir within the last three years, and photographs of the choir and the conductor.

Application deadline: **30 June 2026**.

The ***World Voices Program*** will feature 15 invited presenters from China, who are experts and scholars in choral conducting and composition. The *World Voices Program* will offer a rich and diverse range of content and topics.



Chen Tao



Deng Zhuorui



Diao Zhijun



Dou Tiemin



Hu Manxue



Jiang Pan



Li Guiyang



Mu Wenhao



Georg Grün



Tian Hao



Wang Hailing



Wang Jin



Wu Lingfen



Xie Mingjing



Yan Baolin

Discover these presenters:

- **Chen Tao**, conductor and associate professor at the Sichuan Conservatory of Music.
- **Deng Zhuorui**, teacher at the School of Music of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen.
- **Diao Zhijun**, art director and chief conductor of Guangzhou Little Petrel Children's Choir.
- **Dou Tiemin**, vice chairman of the University Chorus Committee of China, art director of Gansu Ground Chamber Choir.
- **Hu Manxue**, artistic director and conductor of Shenzhen Senior High School Lily Girls Choir.
- **Jiang Pan**, conductor of the Beijing Philharmonic Choir.

- **Li Guiyang**, conductor of the College of Zhejiang Conservatory of Music and founder and artistic director of Hangzhou Xinxin Chorus.
- **Mu Wenhao**, chief conductor, Shenzhen Opera and Dance Theatre.
- **Georg Grün**, artistic director of *Kammerchor Saarbrücken*, artistic director of the Bach Choir of Saarbrücken University.
- **Tian Hao**, associate professor and master's supervisor at the School of Music, University of Jinan.
- **Hailing Wang**, permanent conductor, Shanghai Conservatory of Music - Music Education Department Women's Choir & Mixed Choir.
- **Wang Jin**, associate professor of conducting and master's supervisor at the School of Music, Shanghai Normal University.
- **Wu Lingfen**, consultant for the Artistic Expert Committee of the National Centre for the Performing Arts in China.
- **Xie Mingjing**, artistic director and chief conductor of the Guangdong Experimental Middle School Choir.
- **Yan Baolin**, professor of the Composition and Conducting Department at the Zhejiang Conservatory of Music.

Presenters' biographies available [here](#).

Introducing the WSCM 2026 Composers...

As part of the WSCM tradition, six WSCM 2026 invited choirs will be paired with six commissioned composers, culminating in world premieres at their gala concerts at the Macau Cultural Centre. Reflecting the symposium's theme, each choir will perform a newly created work by a composer from a different country, creating a dynamic space for cultural exchange and musical dialogue.

The Pairing: Beatriz Bilbao (Venezuela) and the Shanghai Youth Choir, China

Beatriz Bilbao, Venezuelan composer and performer, is known for her versatile writing and innovative repertoires. Having founded several choral and chamber ensembles, she conducted the Venezuelan premiere of *Ancient Voices of Children*, music by George Crumb and texts by Federico García Lorca, with the Simón Bolívar Orchestra Contemporary Music Ensemble in 1989.

Cultural diversity and research are part of Beatriz's compositional interests. Her music has been performed internationally, and she has received several international and Venezuelan composition prizes. Her works often incorporate indigenous Venezuelan elements, reflecting her cultural background.

Beatriz works with both electronic media and acoustic instruments, composing for orchestra, chamber ensembles, electroacoustics, electronics, and vocal and piano performance. Her music has been recorded and issued on CDs, showcasing her versatility and talent as a composer.

Beatriz Bilbao's note on **Sancora**

Sancora, angel of unified minds or Saint of Choirs

Five elements of nature inherent to distinct cultures and languages, geographically located in Asia, Africa, North & South America, and Europe, are voiced through the ideas of Earth, Wood, Metal, Water, and Fire. Exploring cultural diversity as a contemporary reality has taken the languages as the greatest indicators of idiosyncrasy, building the future with balance and peace.

The Pairing: Jude Bautista Roldan, Philippines, and the Taiwan Children's Choir, Taiwan (R.O.C.)

Jude Bautista Roldan holds the multifaceted position of artistic director, pianist, and resident composer for the Young Voices of the Philippines. His works have been showcased globally, including the Pacific International Choral Festival, Oregon Bach Festival, Tolosa Choral Competitions, Seghizzi Choral Competitions, Cantemus International Choral Festival, Summa Cum Laude Youth Music Festival, and the International Kodály Symposium. Jude's recent extended work for choir and orchestra, *Missa Virtutum*, has been performed in Carnegie Hall's Isaac Stern Auditorium/Perelman Stage, Dekelboun Auditorium, and Roy Thomson Hall (Toronto). Hal Leonard, Pavane Music, Cypress Choral Music, and Muziksea publish his works. With his wife, Maria Theresa Vizconde-Roldan, their choral program has achieved milestones,



including the first choir from the Philippines to perform at Carnegie Hall's Isaac Stern Auditorium Perelman Stage, world winner at Llangollen International Choral Eisteddfod, World Choir Games Champion, historic four first prizes at the Golden Gate International Choral Festival, and a performance at Piazza San Pietro in Rome for Pope Francis. Jude teaches piano, composition, music theory, score reading, and analysis at the Centro Escolar Conservatory of Music.

Jude Roldan's Note on ***Pumailanglang! (Soar!)***

The text of *Pumailanglang! or Soar!* revolves around the idea of reimagining the future by rising above current limitations and fears. The future is shaped by those who dare to take flight and envision a better tomorrow. Just as the text speaks to the courage needed to envision a better tomorrow, the music mirrors this sentiment with its driving rhythms, soaring melodies, and vocal stacking. Together, they invite the audience to experience a sense of liberation and possibility, encouraging all to take flight in pursuit of their aspirations.



The Pairing: **Xia Yanbin, China, and Vox Clamantis, Estonia**

Xia Yanbin is Associate Professor and Vice Dean of the School of Music and Dance, Zhuhai College of Science and Technology, where he teaches composition and conducting. He has received the China National Arts Fund five times and been selected as a Young Artistic Creation Talent and a Young Literary and Art Creation Grantee by the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles. Xia has given four solo concerts in Guangzhou and beyond, with scores published by People's Music Publishing House and recordings by China Record Corporation. He led a workshop on *Night and the Starry Sky* in Chinese poetry at the 13th World Choir Games in Auckland. Commissions include Tsinghua University and conductors Tian Xiaobao, André van der Merwe, and Lim Ai Hooi. Xia is described as one who "navigates between tradition and modernity, balancing melodic elegance with a restless exploration of the contemporary Chinese choral idiom."

Xia Yanbin's note on ***Lu Zhai***

Wang Wei's *twenty characters* have waited 13 centuries to be heard again - not read but sung. This setting does not interpret the poem so much as inhabit it: the empty mountain, the unseen voice, the last light catching on moss. Chan aesthetics and choral sound share a quiet kinship; both ask the listener to attend to what is almost not there. To reimagine the future, we must first learn to hear silence. Wang Wei (699–761) was a Chinese musician, painter, poet, and politician.

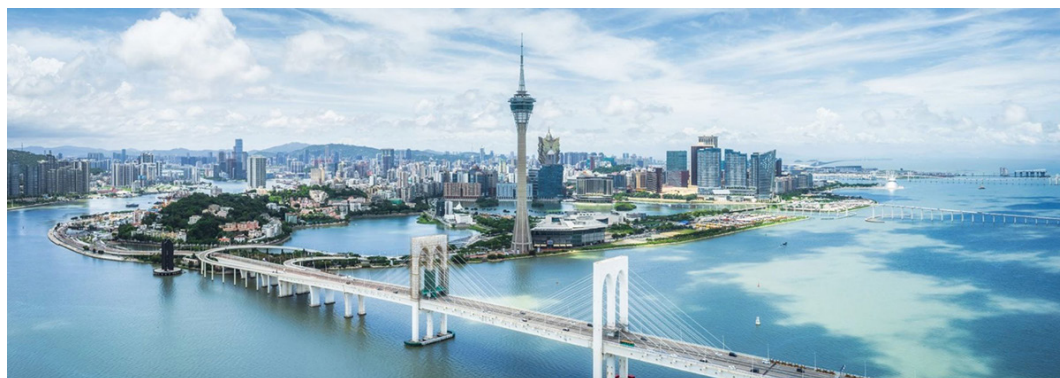
Discounted Fees for Groups at the World Symposium on Choral Music, Macau, China, 23-28 August 2026

The Early Bird Discount ended on 15 April 2026, but there's still a great way to save! Starting 16 April 2026, a Group Discount is now available. Register with 5 or more participants and enjoy 10% discount on your registration. This discount applies to participants within the same HDI Group and registration category (Member or Non-Member).

[Read more.](#)

For a quick guide, watch the [tutorial video](#).

How To Get to Macau from Hong Kong International Airport



Many of you will arrive for WSCM 2026 via Hong Kong. From landing at the Hong Kong airport to getting on the coach to Macau and everything in between, [here](#) is what you need to know.

Keen to sample the buttery Portuguese tarts or the savoury pork chop buns synonymous with the city? Travelers to [Macau](#) will discover that there is [much more in store](#) – from beautiful architecture both historical and modern to exciting entertainment and endless shopping. Macao is a must-visit destination in the [Greater Bay Area](#), and it's incredibly easy to connect to if you're flying into [Hong Kong International Airport](#).

WSCM2026 Expo

The WSCM 2026 Expo offers an outstanding platform to showcase your products and services to a highly targeted, international audience. With hundreds of choral leaders, decision-makers, and administrators from around the world in attendance, this is your chance to connect directly with the people who matter most - at one time, in one place.

Position your brand at the heart of the global choral community and present your publications, recordings, services, and innovations to an engaged and influential network. An Expo package includes a fully equipped trade booth along with visibility in the official WSCM 2026 program book, ensuring your presence extends beyond the exhibition space.

Don't miss this unique opportunity to elevate your profile and be part of one of the most important international events in the choral world.

- **Location of the exhibition:** 2nd Floor, Macau Tower Convention and Entertainment Centre, Macao.
- **Opening hours:**
 - 22 August: Exhibitors move-in and set-up, 09:00-22:00
 - 23-27 August: EXPO open 10:00-17:00

We warmly encourage you to secure your exhibition space and be part of this vibrant global gathering.

[Register](#) now and connect your work with the world of choral music!

Obituary: Birgit Hemberg

IFCM regrets to announce the passing of Birgit Hemberg, the wife of Eskil Hemberg (1938-2004), IFCM President from 1999 to 2004.

Birgit was a long-time supporter of IFCM. Alongside a distinguished career as editor of *Allt om mat* ("Everything about Food"), Scandinavia's leading culinary magazine, and as the author and editor of numerous cookbooks, Birgit shared her expertise and enthusiasm with the choral world



Birgit at the IFCM World Choral EXPO in Lisbon in 2019 © Jutta Tagger

by editing the *Famous Choral Conductor's Cookbook* (published by IFCM in 2002 and sold during the WSCM 2002 in Minneapolis to benefit special projects for children and youth). Since 2002, Birgit had never missed a symposium, and her kind personality was always a pleasure to encounter.

IFCM extends its heartfelt condolences to her family and friends.

Japan Choral Association Now Accepting Applications for the Virtual Female Choral Festival

The Japan Choral Association (JCA) is now accepting applications for the **Virtual Female Choral Festival**. To participate, choirs need to submit a performance video which will be showcased on YouTube as part of this celebration of women's voices. Choirs from around the world are invited to join in the International Category. Application deadline: **30 June 2026**.



Updates on the Japan Choral Association Youth Choir

The 15th **Japan Choral Association** Youth Choir has successfully concluded in Kurashiki. Following four days of intensive rehearsals, the ensemble presented a vibrant final concert under the direction of conductor Avip Priatna. Young singers from Japan, Taiwan, and Indonesia came together to share their voices, creating a rich and memorable artistic experience.

The Japan Choral Association is delighted to announce that the next session will take place in Takamatsu from 10-14 March 2027. Applications will be open from July to August.

JCA looks forward to welcoming the next generation of choral talent!



European Choral Association (ECA) — EUROPA CANTAT Festival, First Artists Announced!

The festival will take place on **9-15 August 2027** in **Liepāja, Latvia**

We are excited to share a first glimpse of who is coming to [Europa Cantat 2027](#) in Liepāja!

The festival will offer a rich choice of ateliers covering a wide variety of formats – from choirs and vocal ensembles to individual singers. The programme will address different age groups, levels of difficulty, and musical genres, ranging from ateliers open to all participants to those designed specifically for national youth choirs. Alongside these components, outstanding choirs and ensembles - with a special focus on the Nordic-Baltic region - will bring inspiring concerts to the stage.

As a first sneak preview, we are delighted to announce some of the artists who have already confirmed their participation in the festival:

- **Atelier leaders:** Frederico Trindade (Brasil), Håvard Gravdal (Norway), Ēriks Ešanvalds (Latvia), Jonė Girdzijauskaitė-Pocienė (Lithuania), Elisenda Carrasco (Spain), vocal group RAJATON (Finland)
- **Invited guest ensembles:** vocal groups RAJATON (Finland), PUST (Norway), Jazz Island (Lithuania), Estonian National Opera Boys' Choir (Estonia), Youth Choir "Kamēr..." (Latvia)

These are just the first names ECA is sharing; many more inspiring artists are already in the planning, and this is only the beginning. The full programme will be revealed in summer 2026. Stay tuned!

You can follow EUROPA CANTAT on the festival website, Facebook, Instagram, or write us to info@europacantat2027.com



International Choral qatʔaymixw 2027 - Applications Now Open

Applications are OPEN for the **2027 International Choral qatʔaymixw (Kathaumixw)**, a world-recognized biennial choir festival taking place **5-10 July 2027** in Powell River, located in the stunning qathet region on British Columbia's Sunshine Coast, Canada.

Founded in 1984 and entering its 21st edition, qatʔaymixw (Kathaumixw) is internationally acclaimed for its artistic excellence, cultural exchange, and uniquely welcoming spirit. The most recent festival brought together choirs from New Zealand, Taiwan, Slovenia, Costa Rica, the Philippines, and across Canada and the United States.

The 2027 festival will offer:

- Concerts in four or more professional venues
- Choral and vocal competitions adjudicated by distinguished international musicians, including world-renowned Swedish conductor Fred Sjöberg
- Common song singing for adults and children
- Conductors' seminars and artistic development opportunities

- A rich program of social and cultural events that foster lasting international connections

Apply now: www.kathaumixw.org

Experience the spirit of the festival: <https://www.facebook.com/Kathaumixw/>



International Choral
qat'aymixw
Kathaumixw

July 5 - 10
2027

JOIN US

Six-day international choral festival —
bringing choirs together since 1984

Powell River, British Columbia, Canada
the qathet Region
on the beautiful Sunshine Coast

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14th European Seminar for Choral Composers Organized by FENIARCO

Aosta, Italy, 19-26 July 2026

Event under the label of the European Choral Association, the [14th European Seminar for Composers](#) is a professional masterclass on composition for choir addressed to composers and choir conductors with experience in writing and composition.

It is possible to register as an active participant or as a listener. The course is open to a maximum number At the 2026 seminar, Nana Forte (Slovenia) and Giuseppe Di Bianco (Italy) will lead workshops on original choral composition, presenting their own works.

Deadline for applications: 15 May 2026. Apply [here](#).



Grieg International Choir Festival and NINA Solo Competition – for Young Voices

The [Grieg International Choir Festival](https://griegfestival.no) and NINA Solo Competition – for Young Voices will take place in Bergen/Norway, **24-27 September 2026**.

Application deadline: **10 May 2026**

Choirs from around the world are welcome to join the festival and celebrate the art of singing. The programme offers competitions, friendship concerts, and diverse festival events, while young singers can showcase their talent in the NINA Solo Competition for young voices.

More information and application on <https://griegfestival.no>

[Magic Moments & Memories from 2024](https://griegfestival.no)



We invite you to visit the [Calendar of Choral Activities](#) published by the European Choral Association — Europa Cantat and the American Choral Directors Association ACDA's Network [ChoralNet](#) to check on the choral events planned in the coming months.