

FOURTH CHORAL CONDUCTING TRAINING SESSION LIBREVILLE, Gabon, 9-14 February 2015

Report from Thierry THIÉBAUT

Organizations : A Cœur Joie Gabon Federation
A Cœur Joie International
International Federation for Choral Music
Conductors Without Borders (CWB)

First of all, I would like to thank Yveline DAMAS, President of A Cœur Joie Gabon and the African Confederation for Choral Music (CAMC) for the organization of this session and for the perfect practical conditions provided for this training.

A Choral Music House is now operating on a full-time basis in Libreville and is perfectly centrally located downtown. Several rooms, all of them air-conditioned, can now host workshops and allow a good quality work.

Our appreciation also goes to the Cultural Service of the French Embassy that covered my travel expenses and will as well cover the flight ticket of two instructors for the next session organized from October 24 to 31, 2015. Besides this significant financial help, the French Institute graciously provided their 600 seats concert hall for the presentation of the final concert. Spacious auditorium, lighting, sound system, air-conditioning and a stage crew gave the performers the ideal environment.

This fourth session was marked by an exceptional stability in the attendance of the last sessions' trainees: 12 out of the 15 choral conductors selected had attended the previous sessions.

We noticed real progress of both academic and practical ongoing in learning retention. Seven pieces, out of eight performed during the final concert, were conducted by the trainees.

At the end of the session, we were able to divide the participants in two different ability groups so that the most advanced trainees could get a deeper knowledge.

In October, Françoise BRUNIER, France, will take care of the intermediate level while I'm taking care of the basic choral conducting training.

All participants received two syllabus, one on vocal trainee and one on choral conducting. This way, they'll be able to assess their own progress.



Each daily training course was divided in two parts: at the end of the day, singers would join the choral conducting trainees to constitute the choir in residence.

Our work with the trainees mainly focused on the rehearsal techniques and the gestures, a necessary step for a successful rehearsal: inner ear, sound concept of the result, analysis (text, signification and pronunciation), general perspective of the piece, knowledge of the styles, teaching pedagogy.

The different aspects of the gestures were mainly taught to the trainees individually once at the music stand: body position, start, pause, end, breathing; hands coordination, modeling of the phrasing, beat time and pulsations.

In the evening, the choir in residence composed by singers and trainees would study the vocal warming up: relaxation, breathing, resonance, vocal range.

As for the musical program, 50% of the pieces were in French, which is the official language in Gabon. The other pieces were folk songs from Africa, South America, Northern Europe and some were gospel.

The first part of the final concert presented several children's and youth choirs, as well as a representation of the Gabonese singers of the African Youth Choir of which annual session will be organized in Libreville next August.



During the next session in October, we should also organize a third children's choir conducting training session under the baton of Anne-Marie Cabut, conductor of *La Cigale de Lyon*.

We're trying to find a way to have residential sessions so that we can really optimize the working time.

It seems that, at the end of the next session, we should select two conductors who will be able to lead a training mission, with, in the beginning, the help of external instructors that will quickly guide them towards a total independence.

16 February 2015

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thierry THIÉBAUT'. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Thierry THIÉBAUT