

World Symposium on Choral Music 2023, Istanbul, Turkey, 25-30 April, 2023

Theme

Straddling the magnificent and bustling Bosphorus strait, Istanbul is the only transcontinental city in the world. Having served as the capital of three empires (Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman), this city's rich history of multiculturalism is long and unique. With its vibrant and exciting feel, Istanbul can also be characterized by its authenticity and dynamism making it an ideal city to host a joyous cultural event. Geographically, the perception of the horizon changes drastically depending on which continental side one is standing on, as Istanbul is in the unique position of offering a connection between both. Thus, viewpoints that are seemingly different can coalesce and be interconnected in one place, much like in the way so many different cultures found a home in Istanbul to coexist and flourish side by side. This connects figuratively with the current crucial conversation about the recognition and inclusion of cultures and traditions of all peoples around the globe. There is a paradigm shift in our field, as well as in many other fields of humanism, that is compelling us to shift our horizons toward finding respectful ways to achieve integration and inclusion. Hosting the World Symposium on Choral Music in a city like Istanbul provides the perfect platform to explore this important ideal.

In the WSCM23, we would like to draw upon the central idea of representation from and within all the regions of the world, with the inclusion of as many styles and traditions of ensemble singing as possible, to honor and celebrate the human practice of singing together. Additionally, the symposium will provide a platform for engaging in conversations on current themes such as the use of technology in rehearsals and performances, race and social justice, various practices of collective singing and the Western choral canon as it relates to the repertoire of singing traditions, equity and accessibility, monophonic collective singing, the meaning and philosophies of singing together, and topics that explore not only the current state of the field but the vision and projection of how singing together could look like in the near and far future.

Changing Horizons speaks both to this specific IFCM flagship event and to the global choral community on a number of levels. It suggests a new and broader understanding of choral music that includes styles, regions, and traditions of ensemble singing which have not been incorporated directly in the conventional definition of choral music. There is enormous creative wealth in these parallel artistic expressions and experiences which can be the catalyst for the choral community to genuinely embrace and celebrate all collective singing traditions, vocalities, and practices. To change the horizon is to take our art form and extend its boundaries. The horizon limits our own vision, but horizons need not be stagnant; beyond them, there will always be more to discover. The edges of the horizon are ephemeral, fleeting, and beautiful, like the experience of music itself.

