

REFLECTION ON MY YOUNG PROGRAM EXPERIENCE

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IT ALL STARTED IN THE LEADUP TO CHRISTMAS 2022. A CHANCE SCROLLING OF FACEBOOK LED ME TO A POST FROM THE NEW ZEALAND CHORAL FEDERATION. THIS POST ADVERTISED APPLICATIONS FOR THE YOUNG PROGRAM AT THE WORLD SYMPOSIUM ON CHORAL MUSIC 2023 (WSCM). A CHANCE TO TRAVEL TO TÜRKIYE, TO HEAR SOME OF THE WORLD'S PREMIER CHOIRS, TO LEARN AND WORK BEHIND-THE-SCENES OF THIS GLOBAL EVENT – IT SOUNDED LIKE A DREAM OPPORTUNITY TO APPLY FOR! I QUICKLY SENT OFF MY APPLICATION.

Fast forward to the end of January, an email landed in my inbox informing me that my application had been successful. What a surprise – I'd be off to Istanbul in mid-April! I spent the next couple of months dreaming and sorting logistics for my trip.

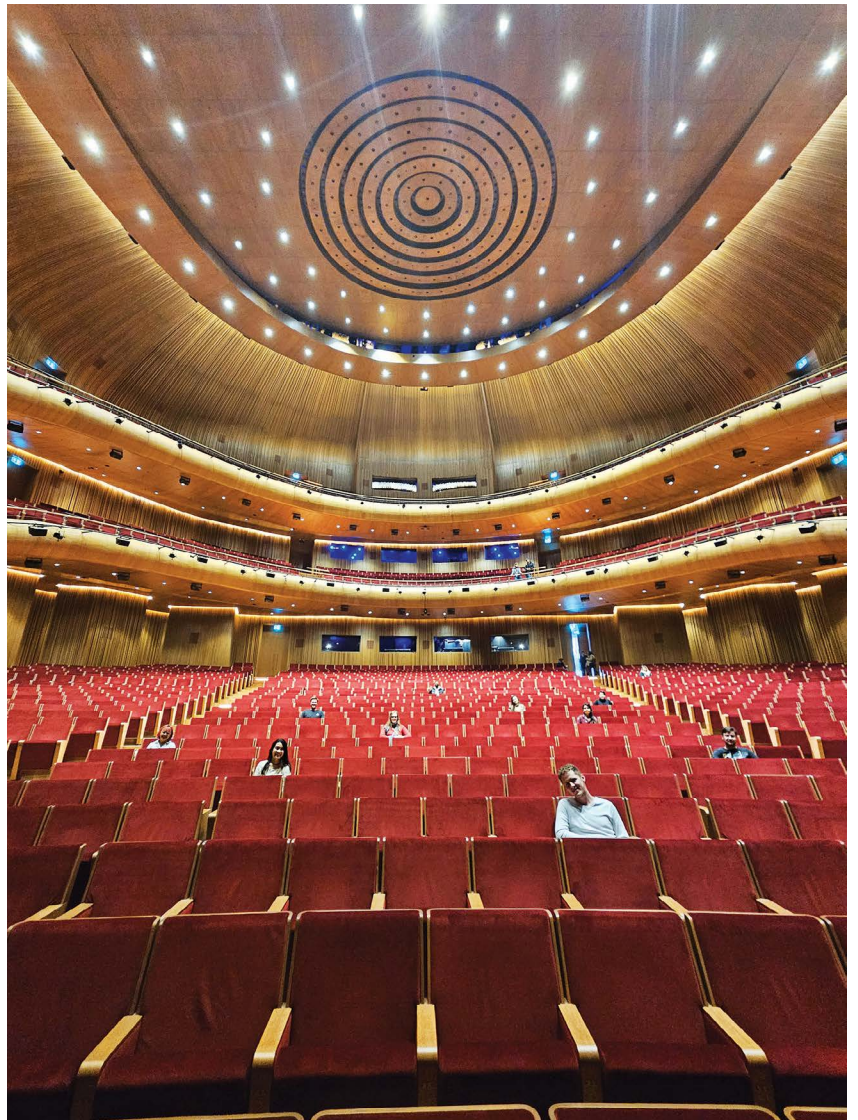
On the morning of Thursday April 13, I boarded the first of three flights to get me from New Zealand to Istanbul. Nearly 36 hours later I checked into my room, my home for the following 2.5 weeks. I remember feeling both excited and a little apprehensive for what those next few weeks would hold.

After a long sleep, the next morning I met all the others on the YOUNG Program. Everyone was very welcoming. Over breakfast we started to learn names, where each other was from and what had motivated us to apply for the YOUNG Program. That morning, we made the first of many walks from our hotel, across Taksim Square, to the impressive AKM (Atatürk Kültür Merkezi / Atatürk Cultural Centre) where the majority of WSCM was to be held.

Our first weekend in Istanbul was spent in workshops. We met key members of the Turkish organising team and began learning and immersing ourselves within

WSCM. Icebreakers helped us to quickly build connections.

In small teams, we were tasked to come up with an Arts Event. We then had to workshop bringing this to reality – developing timelines, budgets, communication plans, funding, liaising with artists etc. This was an



YOUNG at the Atatürk Cultural Center