



March 2026 IFCMeNEWS: WSCM 2026 Registration Is Open!

World Symposium on Choral Music (WSCM 2026)

23–28 August 2026 | Macau, China

So many of you have been asking! **REGISTRATION for WSCM 2026 is NOW OPEN!** You can register to join us in Macau.

While many were celebrating the Chinese New Year and welcoming the Year of the Fire Horse, the Macanese WSCM 2026 team has been hard at work preparing an event-packed, entertaining, educational, inspiring, and uplifting experience for you at the World Symposium on Choral Music.

No need to wait anymore, register now and take advantage of the Early Bird registration fee before the deadline: **31 March 2026**.

For registration information and prices, please visit the [website](#).

The banner features the logos of the International Federation for Choral Music (IFCM) as the organizer and the Macau Choral Arts Association (CAFA) as the host. The central text reads: "World Symposium on Choral Music Macau 2026", "Reimagining the Future", "23-28/08/2026", "EARLY BIRD REGISTRATIONS NOW OPEN", and "UNTIL MARCH 31". At the bottom, it lists the main venue as Macau Tower Convention & Entertainment Centre and the gala concert venue as Macao Cultural Centre. The background shows a stylized illustration of a cathedral and a tower.

IFCM Online Café: Reimagining the Story, 21 March 2026 at 2PM CET

We are pleased to announce the first season of the 2026 IFCM Online Café, which will focus on the WSCM 2026 and some of its presenters and workshop leaders.

Inspired by the WSCM 2026 theme, *Reimagining the Future*, the opening Online Café, *Reimagining the Story*, will feature five of the 40 choral presenters who have been selected to be part of the WSCM 2026 artistic programme. These presenters will speak about topics related to repertoire and narratives shaping the future of choral music. Their sessions will reflect on how new voices, ideas, and artistic perspectives are redefining what choirs sing about - and why. They will address topics such as emerging composers, global aesthetics, text and dramaturgy, and thematic innovation, including themes of climate, migration, and identity.

On 21 March, five presenters will each offer a short glimpse into their WSCM 2026 sessions - just enough to make you want to experience the full symposium in Macau.

- **David Buley** (Canada): *Our Bodies Our Selves: Learning Choral Music In and Through the Body*.

- **Bengt Ollén** (Sweden): *To Captivate and Reach a Concert Audience – Preparations and Work Methods*
- **Timothy Pallett** (South Africa): *Choral Works by Emerging South African Composers*
- **Merzi Rajala** (Finland): *Choirs for Ecocide Law: Choral Art as Civic and Ecological Engagement*
- **Kenneth Wan Sheng Tay** (Singapore/UK): *Composing the Future: Sustaining the Ecology of Choral Creativity*

Register to join us on 21 March at 2PM CET and enjoy a first taste of **WSCM 2026**, as we reimagine the stories that will shape the future of choral music. The live 2026 IFCM Online Cafés are open to anyone, but everyone must register in order to get the Zoom link.

IFCM Online Café, 21 March 2026, 2PM CET
Reimagining the Future, Reimagining the Story
 Get a first taste of WSCM 2026 with a short glimpse at five presentations focusing on repertoire and narratives shaping the future of choral music.

 **David Buley**
Canada
 **Bengt Ollén**
Sweden
 **Timothy Pallett**
South Africa
 **Merzi Rajala**
Finland
 **Kenneth Tay**
Singapore/UK



Introducing Three WSCM 2026 Choirs...

The National Taiwan Hakka Children's Choir, Taiwan

Founded in 2019 by the Hakka Affairs Council, the National Taiwan Hakka Children's Choir is Taiwan's only national-level children's choir dedicated to promoting the beauty of Hakka music and culture through the art of choral singing. Meng-Hsien Peng, an internationally acclaimed conductor and driving force behind world champion choirs, was invited to serve as its Director, Artistic Director, and Conductor.

In 2021, the choir transitioned to management by the Hakka Public Communication Foundation, which integrates digital and media strategies to expand the global reach of Taiwan's Hakka musical heritage.



Comprising more than 50 young singers selected through open auditions, the choir has grown rapidly under Meng-Hsien's artistic leadership. Its repertoire spans traditional and contemporary Hakka works, interpreted through pure, resonant children's voices that embody both cultural roots and modern expression. With a mission to bridge Taiwan and the world, the National Taiwan Hakka Children's Choir continues to share the spirit of Hakka culture on the international stage, representing the timeless harmony of tradition, youth, and innovation.

The Norwegian Male Choir, Norway

The Norwegian Male Choir (NMC) is the only professional male choir in Norway and throughout Scandinavia. Founded in 2009 and consisting of 18 singers, NMCr has its home in the capital city, Oslo. NMC owes its existence to the strong male choir tradition that emerged in Norway in the second half of the 19th century along with the independence movement.

NMC aims to renew and revitalise Norwegian male choir singing through CD releases, nationwide tours, and sheet music publications. In recent years, the choir has toured throughout Norway. An important goal for the ensemble is to be a professional role model and inspiration for male and mixed choirs around the country.

As a professional choir, NMC engages classically trained singers educated at music conservatories and colleges. In recent years, the choir has been an attractive workplace due to its position as Norway's only professional male choir. NMC is an arena in which cultural heritage is preserved; both Norwegian and European art music are performed, for which there is no equivalent example anywhere else in the country. NMC regularly commissions new music aiming to renew the male choir tradition in Norway. Among its previous and coming engagements, NMC represented Norway in the Nordic Church Music Symposium in Copenhagen (September 2024) and will be artist-in-residence at the *Rencontres Internationales de chœurs d'hommes* in Switzerland (June 2026).



Philippine Madrigal Singers, The Philippines

Recognized by UNESCO as Artists for Peace for promoting cultural diversity, dialogue, and peace, the Philippine Madrigal Singers (Madz) stand as one of the most awarded choirs in the world. They have earned top prizes in many of the globe's most prestigious choral competitions, including the 2016 Grand Prix at the Concorso Internazionale di Guido d'Arezzo in Italy. They are also the first choir to win the European Grand Prix for Choral Singing twice (1997 and 2007) and the first Asian group to receive the BrandLaureate Premiere Award from the Asia Pacific Brands Foundation (2012).

Founded in 1963 by National Artist for Music Andrea O. Veneracion, the Madz are renowned for their unique semi-circular formation, singing without a conductor - a set-up that allows for deep musical connection and emotional resonance. Their versatility spans an extensive repertoire, from Renaissance works to contemporary and Filipino compositions, consistently leaving a powerful impact on audiences worldwide.

Now under the direction of Mark Anthony Carpio, the ensemble continues its mission of showing how choral music can be socially relevant and transformative. Beyond performances, the Madz are deeply committed to nurturing future generations of singers and conductors through workshops, festivals, and outreach programs, fostering the growth of choral communities both in the Philippines and abroad.

In 2024, the group was formally designated as the National Performing Arts Company for Choral Music under Republic Act 11392, cementing its role as a cultural ambassador and champion of the Filipino spirit through music.



World Voices Program, a Special Addition to the WSCM 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.

Choirs who apply to take part in the **World Voices Program** will be offered:

- One concert in Macau within the frame of WSCM (25 minutes repertoire time).
- One workshop with an expert or exchange session with a local or international choir according to the availability.
- Complimentary WSCM Registration for the conductor or a representative of the choir.

Seven jury members will select the best choir from among all the participants of this program, and the winning choir will have the chance to join a tour across three European countries: Portugal, Spain, and France.



Participation Fee: US\$3,000.00

How to apply:

All choirs that will take part in the World Voices Program will have to go through a selection process. (Application deadline: 15 April 2026. Announcement of Admission: 15 May 2026)

In order to apply to the World Voices Program as an international choir, please send a photograph of the choir and the conductor, a short biography of the choir and the conductor (150 words), CV of the conductor, a 25 minute concert programme proposal and a video of the choir no older than 3 years to office@ifcm.net

Help Shape the Future of IFCM: Call for Elections of the IFCM President, Board, and Internal Auditors

Based on IFCM's Bylaws and Internal Membership Policies Document, our membership will elect a new president and board of directors in 2026. The elections will be held ONLINE, starting mid-June and ending on 1 August 2026. Members of IFCM in good standing, having paid their 2026 membership fee by the end of April, will be able to elect the president and up to 15 board members as well as the internal financial auditors. Our current president cannot stand for election again, and several board members have decided not to be candidates for this term of office. If you want to help shape the future of IFCM (and you are an individual member or you are nominated by a member choir or a member organisation), you can be a candidate. The deadline for applications is 15 April 2026. For further information, please [read the 2026 IFCM Elections and General Assembly](#).



Save the Date: IFCM General Assembly in Macau on 23 August

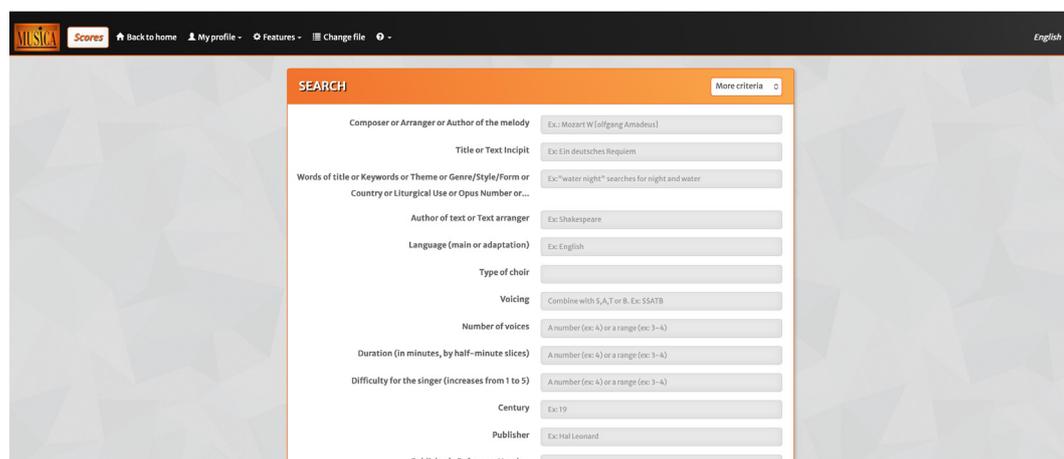
As usual, the General Assembly of IFCM will be held in connection with the World Symposium on Choral Music, on 23 August 2026 in the afternoon in Macau, China. The official invitation to all IFCM members will be sent in May 2026.

Musica International: Designing a Choral Concert Program Based on a Theme Has Never Been Easier!

Provide your theme as a keyword and add specific conditions: type of choir, voicing, language, country of the composer, gender of the composer, author of text, a cappella or with given instruments, etc.

[Musica International](#) database will provide you with a list of pieces described in detail, as well as links to multimedia features and links to order scores or to locate a copy in different ways.

Example: "dawn", for mixed voices, in English, by USA composers: 83 answers



IFCM is a founding member of Musica International association, which develops a collaborative multimedia database of the world's choral repertoire. It is useful for choir directors, publishers, composers, event organizers and, more generally, all people who wish to select and discover scores.

Established in 1983, the project continues to evolve and grow, with contributors from around 20 countries. Forty years later, MUSICA displays data on more than 200,000 choral scores.

If you are a member of IFCM, you benefit from a full unrestricted privileged access to Musica from the page: <https://ifcm.net/service/access-to-musica-international-database>.

If not an IFCM member, you can still use Musica with some restrictions, by creating a free personal account at www.musicanet.org which can be opened to full privileges by making a donation.

And last, but not least, join the team of contributors by contacting office@musicanet.org, especially if you are a composer, a publisher, a musicologist, or just want to contribute to the development of the database for a worldwide benefit to the choral community.



The International Federation for Choral Music Deeply Regrets the Death of Maestro Helmuth Rilling, Honorary Patron of our Organization

Helmuth Rilling was undoubtedly one of the great symphonic-choral conductors of the 20th and 21st centuries. His profound knowledge of the work of Johann Sebastian Bach and his contemporaries, as well as composers inspired by Bach, made Maestro Rilling an interpretative reference in his concerts and recordings. He was an extraordinary teacher of audiences and conductors through his memorable Commented Concerts and his tireless pedagogical work at the Bachakademie Stuttgart and the Oregon Bach Festival.

[Read the testimony](#) of IFCM Vice-President Maria Guinand and Isabelle Métrope, Soprano, Junges Stuttgarter Bachensemble 2012 et 2013, Gaechinger Cantorey (currently).

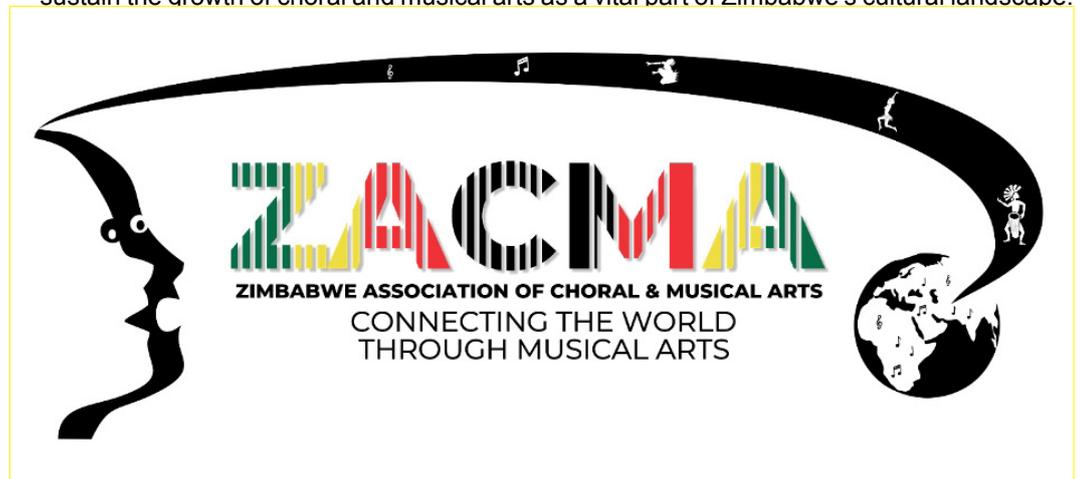
IFCM Welcomes a New Members in the National Organization Category

Zimbabwe Association of Choral and Musical Arts (ZACMA)

Established in 2020, [Zimbabwe Association of Choral and Musical Arts \(ZACMA\)](#) has quickly become a leading platform for nurturing, celebrating, and advancing choral and musical excellence in Zimbabwe.

Since its formation, ZACMA has:

- Created a national platform for choirs and musicians by organizing festivals, workshops, and competitions that bring together diverse ensembles from across the country.
- Launched the National Choral Awards in 2024, a landmark initiative that recognizes outstanding choirs, conductors, composers, and young talent, while elevating Zimbabwe's rich musical heritage.
- Promoted youth development through mentorship programs, training sessions, and opportunities for emerging choirs to showcase their artistry.
- Strengthened cultural identity by celebrating traditional and contemporary Zimbabwean choral music, while fostering cross-cultural exchange with regional and international partners.
- Built organizational capacity by engaging stakeholders, sponsors, and communities to sustain the growth of choral and musical arts as a vital part of Zimbabwe's cultural landscape.



ZACMA's vision is to establish Zimbabwe as a hub of choral excellence in Africa, contributing to the global choral movement through innovation, inclusivity, and cultural pride. By joining hands with IFCM, ZACMA seeks to expand opportunities for collaboration, knowledge exchange, and international visibility for Zimbabwean choirs and musicians.

ZACMA's officers and team look forward to building bridges with IFCM and its global network, sharing Zimbabwe's vibrant choral traditions, and contributing meaningfully to the advancement of world choral music.

World Youth Choir Session 2026 in Macau and Mainland China

We are happy to announce a [World Youth Choir](#) session in 2026: a session in Macau during the World Symposium on Choral Music, organized by the International Federation for Choral Music.

The World Youth Choir will consist of 60 alumni singers from 37 countries.

The selection has been made by an international jury, composed of a representative from each of the three World Youth Choir patron organisations and the Session Manager, and will be announced soon.

The choir will be conducted by [Zoltán Pad](#) (HU).

Zoltán is an internationally renowned conductor who, in recent years, has had the opportunity to lead outstanding ensembles, including the SWR Vokalensemble Stuttgart, MDR Radio Choir Leipzig, NDR Vokalensemble Hamburg, Netherlands Radio Choir, French Radio Choir, Zürcher Sing-Akademie, Chamber Choir Ireland, ChorWerk Ruhr, Polish Radio Choir, Arsys Bourgogne Chamber Choir, Croatian Radio Choir, and Cracow Singers. He previously conducted the World Youth Choir in 2017 and 2023.

The World Youth Choir will perform at the World Symposium on Choral Music, Shenzhen Concert Hall, and Shanghai Conservatory of Music Opera House.

This session is made possible thanks to the partnership of IFMA – International Federation for Music and Arts Development, Shenzhen Concert Hall, and Shanghai Conservatory of Music Opera House.

More information about the tour will be shared soon – stay tuned!



World Youth Choir conducted by Zoltán Pad in 2023 © 4K Media Studio

European Choral Association (ECA), BEAT and the SWAN Database

BEAT - Bringing Equality, Accessibility, and Togetherness

BEAT is a new EU-funded project that uses choral music as a tool to promote inclusion and accessibility. It seeks to remove the barriers that prevent (young) people with disabilities from participating in choirs.

Through hands-on workshops, an educational toolkit and a multisensory choral performance, the project empowers young people to create open and accessible choral spaces.

Are you involved in an inclusive youth choir or do you know about such a choir?

Please add this choir to our [SWAN database](#) which will also serve as a basis for building the network of inclusive youth choirs in BEAT.

If you want to know more about the project or have any questions, please write to SecretaryGeneral@EuropeanChoralAssociation.org



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

The [Grieg International Choir Festival](#) and NINA Solo Competition – for YoungVoices 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](#)



The InChoral International Choral Festival Network Invites You to Experience Portugal

The [Beira Interior International Choir Festival & Competition](#) is one of InChoral's youngest events. Portuguese choirs love it! The last competition welcomed 19 choirs, and the event is getting increasingly popular among international choirs as well.

What you can expect:

- the widest range of competition categories, including Pop/Gospel and Folklore,
- beneficial and entertaining festival activities,
- exciting new experiences with choirs from different cultures, and
- a lot of fun!

Date and place: 7-11 October 2026 in Fundão, Portugal.

Registration deadline: 30 April 2026

Learn more and apply [here](#).



Summer Course on Choral Conducting, Barcelona, Spain, 7-10 July 2026

The [Federació Catalana d'Entitats Corales](#) (FCEC) offers a **4-day course on choral conducting** for working groups in three levels: Initial, Intermediate, and Advanced. Each group will work with a pilot choir. Aspects of conducting technique (conducting practices, auditory perception, vocal training, and common singing) and complementary activities (conference and analysis) will be included. The closing concert of the course will take place on 11 July 2025. Guest conductors are: Mireia Barrera, Pere Lluís Biosca, Elisenda Carrasco, Jordi Lluch.

[Register](#) before 15 May 2026.



The European Music Council announces the 14th European Forum on Music: Music, Health and Wellbeing

[The European Forum on Music](#) (EFM) returns in 2026 with its 14th edition, dedicated to the theme Music, Health & Wellbeing. The European Music Council is delighted to welcome everyone to Timișoara, Romania, **9-12 June 2026**, to explore how music supports physical and mental health, strengthens resilience, and contributes to wellbeing across society.

[Read more](#)



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.