



International Choir Competition

Blackpool

10-14 September 2026

Great Britain

Program Book



INTERNATIONAL CHOIR COMPETITIONS & FESTIVALS

EVENTS 2027



04

9TH VIETNAM INTERNATIONAL CHOIR COMPETITION

April 17-21, 2027 | Hoi An, Vietnam



04

3RD HULL INTERNATIONAL CHOIR COMPETITION

April 30 - May 4, 2027 | Hull, Great Britain



05

14TH INTERNATIONAL JOHANNES BRAHMS CHOIR FESTIVAL AND COMPETITION

May 19-23, 2027 | Wernigerode, Germany



05

SOUND WAVES BURGAS

BLACK SEA - INTERNATIONAL CHOIR COMPETITION

May 27-31, 2027 | Burgas, Bulgaria



07

15TH WORLD CHOIR GAMES LINZ 2027

July 21-31, 2027 | Linz, Austria



09

11TH ISOLA DEL SOLE - INTERNATIONAL CHOIR FESTIVAL

September 26-30, 2027 | Grado, Italy



10

SING FOR GOLD - THE WORLD CHORAL CUP - RIGA 2027

October 7-11, 2027 | Riga, Latvia



10

12TH CANTA AL MAR - FESTIVAL CORAL INTERNACIONAL

October 21-25, 2027 | Calella/Barcelona, Spain



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INTERNATIONAL CHOIR COMPETITION BLACKPOOL 2026

ORGANIZER

INTERKULTUR

SUPPORTED BY

Blackpool Council
MeetBlackpool

PRESIDENT INTERKULTUR

Günter Titsch (Germany)

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR BLACKPOOL 2026

Mathew Wright (Great Britain), Artistic Director of INTERKULTUR

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Prof. Romāns Vanags (Latvia), Senior Artistic Director
Johan Rooze (Netherlands), Senior Artistic Director
Fred Sjöberg (Sweden), Senior Artistic Director

INTERKULTUR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Günter Titsch (Germany)
Qin Wang (China)
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hull

International Choir Competition

April 30 - May 4, 2027 | Hull, Great Britain



INTERNATIONAL
CHOIR COMPETITION

interkultur.com/Hull2027

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Black



WELCOME





PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES



CANADA



GREAT BRITAIN/
SCOTLAND



CZECH
REPUBLIC



GREAT BRITAIN/
WALES



ESTONIA



IRELAND



FINLAND



LITHUANIA



GREAT BRITAIN



ZIMBABWE



KATE SHANE

MANAGING DIRECTOR OF
BLACKPOOL TOURISM LIMITED

As Managing Director of Blackpool Tourism Limited, I am immensely proud to represent a new company established last year to manage all Blackpool Council-owned leisure assets, including the magnificent Winter Gardens, where you join us today. Our creation marks a new chapter for Blackpool - one focused on collaboration, quality, and a shared ambition to elevate every aspect of the visitor experience.

Wherever in the world your journey began, we are thrilled to welcome you to our iconic seaside town.

This year we are also marking 130 years of the Empress Ballroom. Since opening its doors in August 1896, it has earned its place as one of the most iconic and admired ballrooms in the world.

During your visit, we hope you'll also take the opportunity to experience the attractions that make Blackpool truly unforgettable - from the worldfamous Blackpool Tower and the thrills of Pleasure Beach Resort, to the splashing fun of Sandcastle Waterpark, the magic of Madame Tussauds Blackpool, and the wild adventures awaiting at Blackpool Zoo.

However you choose to spend your time with us, we hope your visit is filled with moments and memories that will last a lifetime.

Kate Shane MBE

Managing Director of
Blackpool Tourism Limited



GÜNTER TITSCH

PRESIDENT INTERKULTUR

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Günter Titsch'.

Dear friends,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to the first-ever INTERKULTUR event in Blackpool, the International Choir Competition Blackpool.

With this event, we are opening an exciting new chapter in one of Great Britain's most iconic seaside destinations. Following the successful establishment of Hull as an INTERKULTUR destination, we are delighted to bring our international choir family to Blackpool this year.

Participating choirs will perform in the magnificent Winter Gardens, a landmark venue that has welcomed artists and audiences from around the world for well over a century. Its remarkable architecture, rich cultural heritage, and long tradition as a performance venue provide an inspiring setting for choral music at the highest level. Just one week before our festival, Blackpool's world-famous Illuminations have been switched on, transforming the

town into a spectacular display of light that has captivated visitors for generations. Together, the unique atmosphere of this vibrant seaside resort and the historic Winter Gardens create a truly memorable backdrop for an international choir competition.

This event brings together choirs from different nations, united by a shared passion for choral singing and cultural exchange. Such encounters lie at the heart of our mission: to build bridges between people, cultures, and countries through music, guided by our motto "Singing together brings nations together."

Our sincere thanks go to Blackpool Council for giving us the opportunity to be their guests and for their support in making this event possible.

We wish all participating choirs inspiring performances, meaningful encounters, and every success in the competition. May the music you share here in Blackpool continue to resonate far beyond the stage and create lasting memories for everyone taking part.

Yours

Günter Titsch

President INTERKULTUR

A group of diverse women are captured in a dynamic pose on a stage, all wearing matching blue sequined jackets. They appear to be singing and dancing, with some mouths open and hands in motion. The woman in the foreground on the left has short pink hair and is wearing a black top under her jacket. The woman next to her has brown hair and glasses. The woman on the right has brown hair, glasses, and is wearing a blue top under her jacket. The background is dark, and the lighting is focused on the performers.

ABOUT INTERKULTUR

... CONNECTING BRIDGES.

More than 35 years of success: Since 1988 INTERKULTUR, founded by Günter Titsch, is the world's leading organizer of international choir competitions and festivals. The event series has meanwhile become known throughout the world for its high artistic and organizational standards. INTERKULTUR is a concept for choirs all over the world and their excitement about its competitions and festivals is constantly growing.

Since more than 35 years singers and choirs from all over the world have been celebrating international choral music with INTERKULTUR in different cities and on different continents. Whether the Palau de la Música in Barcelona or the Konzerthaus Liebfrauen Wernigerode, whether dream destinations in Europe or Asia; wherever they go, participants will experience a peaceful, world-spanning festival of singing and intercultural choral music on a high artistic level. Friendship Concerts and joint singing events complete the great emotional impact of INTERKULTUR's international choral meetings.

INTERKULTUR unites nations. In 2004 and 2006 – following long negotiations – the organization was able to bring choirs from North and South Korea together on stage. Also, choirs from countries like Israel and Iran kept coming together at the choir festivals and light a beacon of peace in Friendship Concerts.

Participation is the highest honor. INTERKULTUR's biggest success to date was to bring the antique Olympic idea to the choral community. The Choir Olympics 2000 in Linz, Austria was the beginning of a Choir Olympic movement, which goes around the world until today: Over the years, the World Choir Games have grown into the world's largest international choir competition, with host cities including Busan, Republic of Korea (2002), Bremen, Germany (2004), Xiamen, China (2006), Graz, Austria (2008), Shaoxing, China (2010), Cincinnati, USA (2012), Riga, Latvia (2014), Sochi, Russia (2016), and Tshwane, South Africa (2018). The postponed World Choir Games 2021 in Flanders made history as the first hybrid edition of the event, combining live competitions with virtual participation formats. They were followed by Gangneung, Republic of Korea in 2023 and, in 2024, Auckland, New Zealand, which marked the first-ever World Choir Games held in Oceania.

Following the World Choir Games 2026 in Helsingborg, Sweden, another major milestone awaits in 2027: the World Choir Games will return to their place of origin, Linz, Austria, to celebrate the 15th anniversary edition of the event.

WORLD RANKINGS

TOP choirs, results and updated statistics
about our festivals on our website

[INTERKULTUR.COM](https://www.interkultur.com)

Since 2007 INTERKULTUR has been transferring the idea of the World Choir Games also to different continents: The **Asia Pacific Choir Games** took place for the 4th time already in October 2017, and in 2025 the first **African Asia Pacific Choir Games** were held on the dream island Mauritius. In 2013 the **European Choir Games** premiered in Graz, Austria. Subsequent editions of the event were held in Magdeburg, Germany (2015), in Latvian capital Riga (2017) and in the Swedish cities of Gothenburg (2019) and Norrköping (2023), along with the **Grand Prix of Nations**, which addresses international top choirs. The most recent edition of the European Choir Games & Grand Prix of Nations took place in Aarhus, Denmark in July 2025.

The Idea

INTERKULTUR has become the symbol for a unique artistic idea: In comparison to traditional meritorious choir competitions that only invite international elite choirs to take part, the INTERKULTUR competitions are open to all non-professional choirs. Choirs from all over the world, interested in gaining international festival and competition experience, can compete according to their level of artistic achievement. INTERKULTUR has opened a door to new impulses and perspectives for the national and international choral movement.

The Competitions

There are various categories for all types and levels of choirs in different degrees of difficulty, with or without compulsory pieces. The competitions offer good, competitive conditions, valuable, artistic contacts, various workshops and seminars, as well as practice opportunities with international performers. More than 200 experts and leading choir conductors from all over the world guarantee a high level of expertise in all INTERKULTUR events.

Evaluation System

The jury awards Bronze, Silver, and Gold Diplomas on 10 levels at INTERKULTUR competitions according to the MUSICA MUNDI® evaluation system (30-points-system); and Bronze, Silver and Gold Medals at the World Choir Games, the Asia Pacific Choir Games, the European Choir Games and the Grand Prix of Nations according to the World Choir Games evaluation system (100-points-system). In each category, a Winner or Champion is determined and outstanding achievements are honored with Special Prizes. In some competitions there is a Grand Prize Competition of the best choirs selected by the international jury which determines the overall winner of the competition.



The Pedagogical Concept

INTERKULTUR events are not only competitions and international choir festivals, but also serve as professional development such as providing feedback from various pedagogical offerings. In Evaluation Performances or Individual Coachings, choirs have the chance to work with international jury members and gain advice on their current level of achievement, receive proficient pedagogical and artistic information and obtain suggestions as to how to interpret the chosen piece. The MUSICA MUNDI® Choir Academy gives new impetus especially to young choir conductors in China. Every two years the World Choir Council consisting of currently 146 members representing 96 countries and regions comes together during the World Choir Games to discuss the choral scenes in their respective home countries. These meetings make an important contribution to the development of the international choral scene.

Locations of Festivals and Competitions

To date, INTERKULTUR events have taken place in Austria, Belgium, Cambodia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Malaysia, Malta, Mauritius, Netherlands, New Zealand, People's Republic of China, South Africa, Poland, Portugal, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Russia, Serbia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Thailand, USA and Vietnam. In 2027 INTERKULTUR will organize its first-ever international choir competition in Bulgaria. Many cities have been convinced of the success of INTERKULTUR events and establish regular choir festivals or apply repeatedly to host more unifying major events.

The Participants

In total, more than 11,000 choirs with more than 460,000 active singers from 112 countries have taken part in the INTERKULTUR competitions to date. An interesting note is that more than half of the participants have been children and youth up to 27 years of age and 67% of the participating choirs are returning ensembles looking forward to new destinations and new choral challenges. Many of them constantly increase their achievements – from first little successes to a Gold Medal or the sought-after Champions title.

Means of Support

In accordance with its statutes, INTERKULTUR supports the following activities:

- International music festivals and choir competitions whose goal is to bring together choirs from different regions of the world and encourage international collaboration through mutual respect, as well as to contribute to cultural exchange and understanding among nations
- Children and youth choirs even from financially challenged countries
- Non-professional choirs that focus on the growth of youth development
- Young, talented conductors, young musicians and singers through the support of scholarship awards
- Specific sponsorship opportunities



ABOUT BLACKPOOL



ABOUT BLACKPOOL

Blackpool is full of nostalgia for (literally!) millions of visitors who flock to our shores year in, year out.

If you're anything like us, you'll have unforgettable childhood memories of Blackpool.

Being the first to spot the Tower from the back seat of the car, finally being tall enough to white-knuckle the Big One, or feeling the sand between your toes on the first sunny beach trip of the season.

The amazing thing about Blackpool is that it gives you that fuzzy feeling while also offering new and exciting things for you to see and do each year - from the UK's tallest Gyro Swing to a rare Monet painting!

Our famous town is always moving forward without losing the magic of its history, and we know that's one of the things you love about returning time after time.





BLACKPOOL ILLUMINATIONS

It's more than 140 years since the pioneers of electrical lighting created the spectacle that was to become the world-famous Blackpool Illuminations. In those early days, it was just eight arc lamps that left visitors awe-struck by what they perceived to be "artificial sunshine".

Fast forward to 2026 and there are now more than a million LEDs bathing the entire Promenade in a sea of light from September to January. Rumor has it you can see them from outer space! Times might change, but the one constant down the ages, is the Illuminations have lost none of that early magic.

For more tips, hints and places to visit during your stay please visit –
www.visitblackpool.com



BLACKPOOL'S TRANSFORMATION

During your visit to Blackpool, you may notice a number of major regeneration projects taking shape across the town. These developments are part of a bold £2bn Growth & Prosperity Program that is transforming Blackpool and creating new opportunities for residents, businesses, and visitors alike.

Blackpool is currently delivering one of the most ambitious regeneration programs in the UK - and it shows. The town now boasts one of the fastestgrowing local economies in the country, driven by a multibillionpound investment strategy designed to reshape the town for the future.



MILESTONE MOMENTS IN 2026

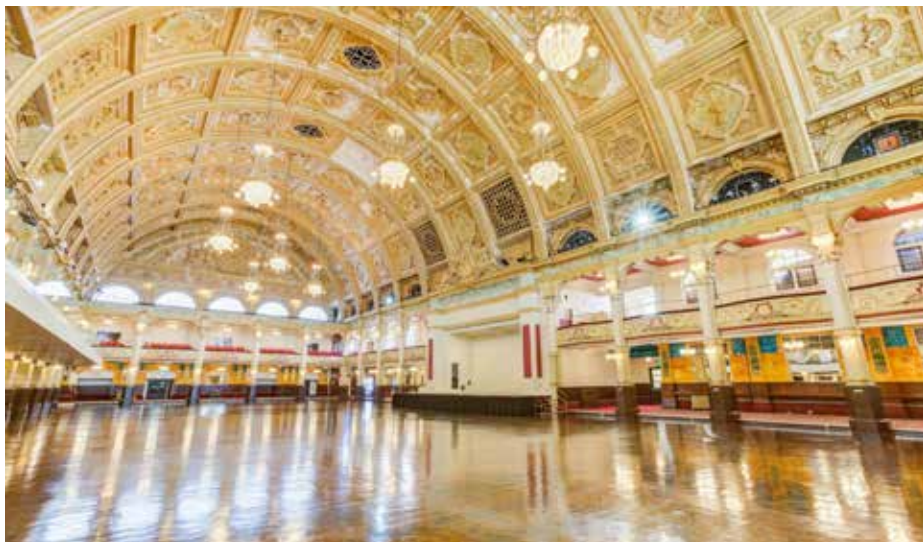
130 YEARS OF EMPRESS BALLROOM, WINTER GARDENS – Empress Ballroom opened in August 1896. With its famous sprung dancefloor and glittering chandeliers, it's home to the Blackpool Dance Festival amongst other events and celebrations.

100 YEARS OF STANLEY PARK – Stanley Park is celebrating its centenary year in 2026. Stretching across 390 stunning acres, it's famous for its bandstand, boating lake, Italian Gardens, and Art Deco-style cafe.

130 YEARS OF PLEASURE BEACH RESORT – The iconic Pleasure Beach Resort is celebrating its 130th year - and in true Blackpool style, the celebrations are set to be epic. This year sees the opening of the brand new Aviktas Gyro Swing - the tallest of its kind in the UK.

100th BLACKPOOL DANCE FESTIVAL – In 2026, the 100th Blackpool Dance Festival takes place at the Empress Ballroom. The most prestigious ballroom and Latin dance competition in the world, it welcomes dancers from more than 60 countries vying for the top spot.

40 YEARS OF SANDCASTLE WATERPARK – Dubbed a 21st Century indoor seaside, Sandcastle Waterpark has been making waves in Blackpool since June 1986. Today, it boasts more than 18 slides and attractions in a tropical 84 degree climate, as well as the Sea Breeze Spa. Earlier this year it underwent a £500,000 refurbishment program.



Empress Ballroom Winter Gardens

Stanley Park



Pleasure Beach Resort



Sandcastle Waterpark



Lightpool Festival

40 YEARS OF REBELLION FESTIVAL – The world’s biggest independent punk festival, Rebellion, celebrates its 40th anniversary in Blackpool, 6 - 9 August 2026. Starting out as a small gathering of punk fans, it’s now a global event that welcomes thousands to the Winter Gardens every summer.

20 YEARS OF BLACKPOOL PRIDE – Blackpool’s annual Pride celebration enters its 20th year in 2026! Join the vibrant parade and support the LGBTQIA+ inclusivity our town is famous for.

15 YEARS OF BLACKPOOL TOWER DUNGEON – The Tower Dungeon opened in 2011 as Lancashire’s very own version of the London Dungeon. It spans a thousand years of gruesome history with an amazing cast of theatrical actors, special effects, stages, scenes and rides. Enter if you dare!

10 YEARS OF LIGHTPOOL FESTIVAL – Blackpool’s award-winning Lightpool Festival celebrates 10 dazzling years in 2026. Running every autumn, it sees the town taken over with breathtaking light installations, live performances, family-friendly activities, and 3D projection shows.

10 YEARS OF BLACKPOOL INTERNATIONAL SOUL FESTIVAL – The Blackpool International Soul Festival celebrates its 10th anniversary in 2026, marking a decade of bringing soul lovers from around the world to Winter Gardens. It’s one of the UK’s leading celebrations of Northern Soul, Motown, and modern grooves, uniting fans of all ages for a weekend of dancing, rare vinyl, and pure soul magic on 19 - 21 June 2026.

Black



INTERNATIONAL CHOIR COMPETITION BLACKPOOL 2026





MATHEW WRIGHT

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

GREAT BRITAIN

Mat is a former choral scholar and has worked in education for 25 years, working as a Head of Music, Advanced Skills Teacher, Head of School, Advisory Teacher and most recently working as a Director of a Multi-Academy Trust. He has been a guest lecturer at colleges and universities and has delivered at national conferences.

Mat is Artistic Director and founder of Barnsley Youth Choir, an organization founded in 2009 that is a charity and has around 720 members aged 0 – 24 years old from an area of significant deprivation. The choir has been successful in the 9 major International Competitions; winning 8 first prizes and 3 Grand Prix and the choir was awarded the prestigious Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2017. Mat has represented Great Britain on the international jury in a number of competitions throughout the world, including at the World Choir Games on several occasions. He has worked as a course leader, clinician, workshop leader and guest conductor in Spain, France, Russia, South Africa, Belgium, New Zealand, South Korea, Norway, Sweden, Malaysia, Belgium, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Germany and Ireland as well as engagements throughout the UK. He is the Artistic Director for the Hull International Choir Competition and has been selected as a lecturer and tutor at the 7th International Conductor's Seminar in Wernigerode, Germany in 2025.

Mat is an Honorary Member of the World Choir Council. He was appointed as a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) by the Queen in 2020 for his services to young people and music. Mat was awarded Honorary Freedom of Barnsley in recognition of his work in the local community in 2022. Mat has experience of working with many different types of choirs and is passionate about supporting choirs of all ages and abilities. Whilst he is comfortable working in many genres of music, he has a reputation for arranging and performing high quality popular, gospel and spiritual music and is in demand as a composer and arranger. He is passionate about the use of singing as a mechanism to engage, connect and transform communities.



MICHAEL BARRETT

JURY

SOUTH AFRICA

Dr. Michael Joseph Barrett is an internationally acclaimed conductor, educator, composer, and choral clinician. He served as conductor of the University of Pretoria (TUKS) Camerata and as a full-time faculty member in choral conducting at the University of Pretoria from 2013 to 2025. Since April 2025, he has been a Research Associate at the same institution. He earned his Doctor of Music (DMus) in Choral Performance from the University of Pretoria in 2017.

His choirs have received numerous national and international awards, and he is frequently invited as guest conductor, lecturer, adjudicator, and clinician. His recent engagements include conducting the Texas All-State Choir (TMEA 2024), Missouri All-State Choir (MMEA 2022), and Florida ACDA High School Honor Choir (2019). He has held residencies at Missouri State University, Texas State University, San Jose State University, and the University of Washington.

Dr. Barrett has conducted workshops worldwide, including the United Kingdom, USA, New Zealand, Singapore, China, Russia, and South Korea. In April 2026, he made his Carnegie Hall debut in New York. As a composer and arranger, Dr. Barrett has over 40 published works with Santa Barbara Music Publishers and Walton Music.

As conductor of the 80-voice TUKS Camerata, he led the ensemble to major international success, including winning the Grand Prix of Nations for Best Mixed Youth Choir in Riga in 2014 and 2017. The choir performed at the World Symposium of Choral Music in Barcelona (2017), toured the United Kingdom with Voces8, and appeared as headline choir at the 2025 ACDA National Conference in Dallas. They released six acclaimed albums, including *uJehova* (2024) and *Light The Whole Sky* (2025).



BIRGITTE NÆSLUND MADSEN

JURY

DENMARK

Birgitte Næslund Madsen has a degree in Musicology, English and French from the University of Aarhus and was a music teacher until 2021 when she decided to work full time as a conductor.

Her musical profile is characterized by an equal respect and interest in both classical, contemporary, popular and folk music which can be seen in the very diverse repertoire of the different choirs who collaborate with Aarhus Symphony Orchestra, Aarhus Jazz Orchestra, folk music groups as well as some of the most popular artists in Denmark.

Birgitte has founded the choir EVE (gold medal winners in ECG in 2017 and 2019 and finalist in Denmark's Got Talent in 2018) that merged with the older singers of Aarhus Pigekor to become SORA, in August 2023.

From 2017-2021 she worked with the youth talent program at the National Opera of Denmark as a choirmaster and conductor of productions. Currently, she is the conductor of the choirs SORA, Aarhus Pigekor and Aarhus Juniorkor, which all belong to the Aarhus Musikskole.

Since 2023 Birgitte has participated in several festivals and competitions as an atelier leader or a jury member.



PAUL SMITH

JURY

GREAT BRITAIN

Paul Smith is a creative performer, conductor, composer, educator, and public speaker. As co-founder of the Grammy-nominated ensemble VOCES8, author of *The VOCES8 Method*, and CEO of the VOCES8 Foundation, Paul leads an international program of concerts, educational work, and community engagement.

A lifelong singer, Paul began as a boy chorister at Westminster Abbey and has sung with VOCES8 since its founding in 2005. He has recorded extensively with Decca Classics, with albums topping classical charts and earning international acclaim.

As a composer, Paul writes for choirs, vocal groups, orchestras, and soloists. Paul also works with flutist and composer, Daniela Mars in their duo, MARS SMITH.

Paul's recent works include *Wayfaring Stranger*, *Magnificat*, and *Love Always Within*, with new releases and performances planned around the world in 2026-27. His music is published by VOCES8 Publishing, ECS/Morningstar, and Edition Peters.

A passionate advocate for the transformative power of singing and the arts, Paul designs inclusive projects that promote academic achievement, social connection, and community cohesion. His collaborative work includes projects with Paul Simon, Eric Whitacre, Teena Lyle, Julia Hansen, Christophe Duquense, Anisha Bondy, and MandoBeatbox.

Paul has led major digital initiatives, including *LIVE From London*, a virtual festival supporting global music communities, and the VOCES8 Digital Academy, offering online choral learning. Since 2007, the VOCES8 Foundation has reached over 500,000 young people through global initiatives. Paul also established the VOCES8 Centre in London, a hub for vocal excellence. He continues to speak internationally on music, education, creativity, and leadership, including at TEDx and global conferences.



EVENT VENUES

WINTER GARDENS BLACKPOOL

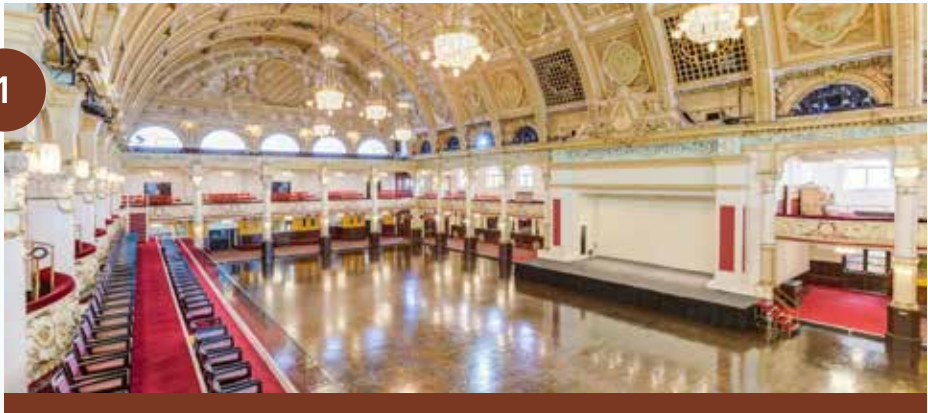
Opened in 1878, the Winter Gardens Blackpool is one of the most iconic entertainment and conference venues in Great Britain. This remarkable historic complex brings together a collection of beautifully preserved theatres, ballrooms and event spaces, combining Victorian grandeur with modern facilities. For almost 150 years, it has hosted world-class conferences, concerts, exhibitions, sporting events and cultural celebrations, making it one of the country's most prestigious destinations for live events.

Address: 97 Church Street, Blackpool, Lancashire, FY1 1HL

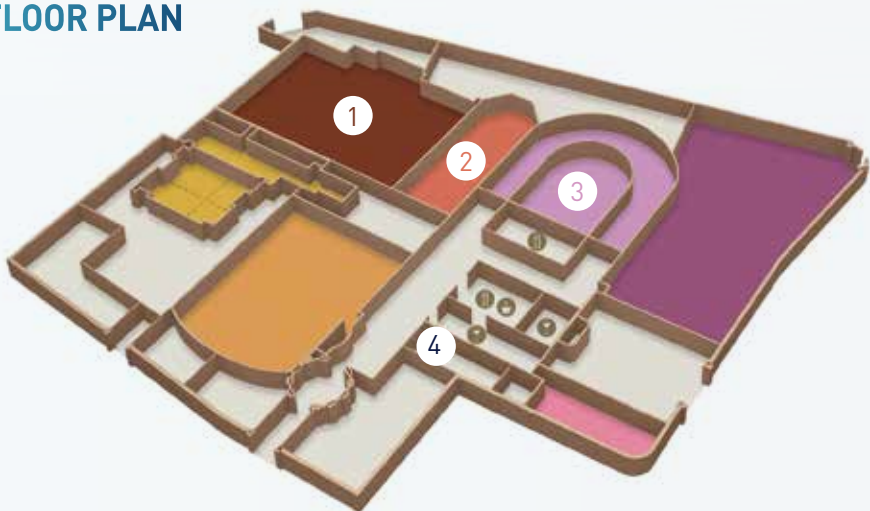


EMPRESS BALLROOM

The magnificent Empress Ballroom, opened in 1896, is one of Europe's most celebrated historic ballrooms. Famous for its elegant architecture, soaring ceiling, glittering chandeliers and sprung dance floor, it has welcomed generations of performers and audiences for concerts, gala events and international competitions. During this International Choir Competition, the Empress Ballroom serves as the festival's principal venue, hosting the Opening and Closing Events as well as the main competition performances, providing an unforgettable setting for participants and audiences alike.



WINTER GARDENS - FLOOR PLAN



ARENA

Located adjacent to the Empress Ballroom, the Arena is a flexible event space that complements the historic surroundings of the Winter Gardens. During the event, it serves as the venue for the Choral Connection workshops, offering participants the opportunity to learn from internationally renowned conductors and experts, exchange ideas and develop their musical skills in an inspiring atmosphere.



1	Empress Ballroom
2	Arena

3	Pavilion and Horseshoe
4	Festival Office



EVENT SCHEDULE



GENERAL SCHEDULE

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2026

WINTER GARDENS - EMPRESS BALLROOM 19h30

Opening Event

For the first time, INTERKULTUR is bringing this international choral event to Blackpool and is proud to be hosted in the historic Winter Gardens, a venue that has welcomed generations of artists and audiences alike.

In the days ahead, the motto "Singing Together Brings Nations Together" will once again come to life as choirs from different countries, cultures and musical traditions meet through the shared language of choral music. Beyond competition and performance, the event celebrates friendship, cultural exchange and mutual understanding. This Opening Concert marks the official start of this musical journey, bringing together local and international choirs on one stage. Their voices set the tone for days filled with inspiring performances, memorable encounters and the unique spirit of international choral singing.

Performing choirs:

ELECTRIC PINK VOICES

Blackpool, Great Britain
Conductor: Phill Fairhurst

DC JUNIOR CHOIR

Harare, Zimbabwe
Conductor: Byron Manake

THE CAPRICORN SINGERS

Cleveleys, Great Britain
Conductor: Chrissie Mason

LAIN HUUTO

Helsinki, Finland
Conductor: Paavo Hyökki



FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2026

WINTER GARDENS - ARENA
11h00

Choral Connection with Paul Smith*

WINTER GARDENS - EMPRESS BALLROOM
12h00

Friendship Concert

WINTER GARDENS - EMPRESS BALLROOM
14h00

Competition in categories G – Children's and Youth Choirs

WINTER GARDENS - EMPRESS BALLROOM
19h30

Competition in category P – Pop, Jazz, Gospel



* not open to public

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2026

WINTER GARDENS - EMPRESS BALLROOM 14h00

Competition in category A1 – Mixed Adult Choirs

WINTER GARDENS - EMPRESS BALLROOM 15h30

Competition in category A2 – Adult Choirs of equal voices

WINTER GARDENS - ARENA 19h30

Choral Connection with Birgitte Næslund Madsen*

WINTER GARDENS - EMPRESS BALLROOM 20h30

Friendship Concert

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2026

WINTER GARDENS - EMPRESS BALLROOM 10h00

Competition in category F - Folklore

WINTER GARDENS - ARENA 11h30

Choral Connection with Michael Barrett*

WINTER GARDENS - EMPRESS BALLROOM 12h30

Friendship Concert

WINTER GARDENS - EMPRESS BALLROOM 15h30

Awards Ceremony and Closing Event*

SOUND WAVES BURGAS

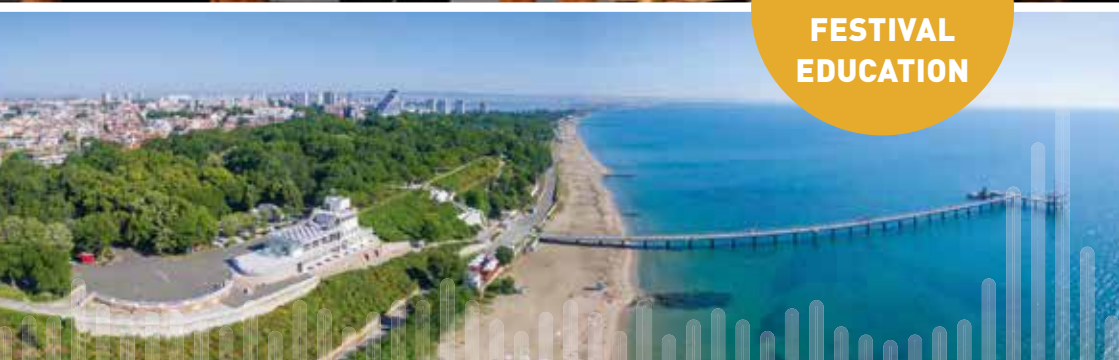
BLACK SEA
INTERNATIONAL CHOIR COMPETITION

MAY 27-31, 2027 | BURGAS, BULGARIA



AN INTERKULTUR EVENT

COMPETITION
FESTIVAL
EDUCATION



[INTERKULTUR.COM/BURGAS2027](https://www.interkultur.com/burgas2027)



THE CHORAL CONNECTION

THE CHORAL CONNECTION: INSPIRING WORKSHOPS LEADING TO FRIENDSHIP CONCERTS

Introduced for the first time at an INTERKULTUR event, The Choral Connection combines artistic development, cultural exchange, and shared performance in a new event format designed to strengthen connections between participating choirs.

The program begins with a vocal warm-up led by one of the international jury members, followed by an interactive workshop in which singers from all participating choirs learn a new choral work together. Under the guidance of the international jury member, the piece is explored step by step, with a focus on vocal technique, musical interpretation, and ensemble performance. The workshops provide an opportunity for singers from different countries and musical backgrounds to rehearse together while exchanging ideas and experiences in an inspiring international setting.

The workshops are followed by the Friendship Concerts, where selected participating choirs present two selections from their own repertoire. These concerts highlight the musical diversity of the participating ensembles and provide an informal platform for choirs to share their artistic identity while getting to know one another beyond the competition stage.

The Choral Connection concludes with a joint performance of the workshop piece by all participating singers under the direction of the international jury members. Bringing together voices from around the world, this final presentation reflects the spirit of collaboration, musical excellence, and international friendship that lies at the heart of every INTERKULTUR event.

LEARN. CONNECT. PERFORM.



PAUL SMITH

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2026

WINTER GARDENS – ARENA 11h00



Experience an inspiring and interactive workshop with Paul Smith, co-founder of the Grammy-nominated vocal ensemble VOCES8, author of *The VOCES8 Method*, and CEO of the VOCES8 Foundation. Together with participating choirs, he will explore two selected pieces: *Baianá*, the infectious Brazilian hit, and his own *Kyrie* from the VOCES8 album *Revolutions*, which received the Choral Recording of the Year award at the 2026 Opus Klassik Awards. Through practical vocal coaching, creative rehearsal techniques, and plenty of musical energy, singers will discover new approaches to ensemble singing while sharing this unique experience with choirs from around the world.

The workshop culminates in a joint performance of both pieces by all participants at the Friendship Concert, celebrating musical collaboration and the international spirit of the festival.

Followed by:

FRIENDSHIP CONCERT

WINTER GARDENS – EMPRESS BALLROOM 12h00

Performing choirs:

- SEXTET plus, Czech Republic
- Mixed Chamber Choir AURA, Great Britain
- Ukmergės Kultūros centro moterų vokalinis ansamblis "Cantilena", Lithuania
- Songs for All, Great Britain

BIRGITTE NAESLUND MADSEN

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2026

WINTER GARDENS – ARENA
19h30



Join Danish conductor Birgitte Næslund Madsen for a workshop celebrating expressive singing, musical storytelling, and the rich traditions of Scandinavian choral music. As conductor of the internationally acclaimed women's choir SORA, Birgitte is known for creating performances that combine beautiful vocal sound with emotional depth and compelling artistic communication.

Together, participants will explore Danish composer Michael Bojesen's festival favorite, *Eternity*, inviting singers to move beyond the notes and connect with the emotional heart of the music through text, sound, and expression.

The workshop culminates in a joint performance at the following Friendship Concert, where all participants perform the piece they have developed during the workshop.

Followed by:

FRIENDSHIP CONCERT

WINTER GARDENS – EMPRESS BALLROOM
20h30

Performing choirs:

- The Dales Community Pop Choir, Great Britain
- Sempre Amabile, Great Britain
- Uproar Choir, Ireland
- The Chanterelles, Great Britain
- Barnsley Singers, Great Britain

MICHAEL BARRETT

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2026

WINTER GARDENS – ARENA
11h30



Experience the vibrant world of traditional South African music with Michael Barrett, internationally renowned conductor, educator, and specialist in South African choral traditions. Through powerful singing, rhythmic movement, and energetic ensemble work, participants will discover how music transcends borders, ignites joy, and creates deep human connection. Get ready to sing, move, and work up a sweat in this inspiring and highly interactive workshop.

The experience comes to life at the Friendship Concert, where all workshop participants will join together in a performance of Michael's arrangement of the traditional Sesotho/isiZulu song *Modimo*.

Followed by:

FRIENDSHIP CONCERT

WINTER GARDENS – EMPRESS BALLROOM
12h30

Performing choirs:

- DC Junior Choir, Zimbabwe
- Barnsley Youth Choir - Intermediate Choir, Great Britain
- Collège Vocal, Canada
- Amabile Girls Choir, Great Britain
- Rapla Riinimanda Kooristuudio noortekoor, Estonia
- Barnsley Youth Choir, Great Britain

ISOLA
DEL
SOLE

11TH ISOLA DEL SOLE INTERNATIONAL CHOIR FESTIVAL

SEPTEMBER 26-30, 2027 / GRADO, ITALY





COMPETITIONS

COMPETITION SCHEDULE & PROGRAMS

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2026

WINTER GARDENS – EMPRESS BALLROOM
14h00

COMPETITION IN CATEGORY G1 – CHILDREN'S CHOIRS

1 DC JUNIOR CHOIR

Harare, Zimbabwe

Conductor: Byron Manake

1 Trad. Zulu, arr. Victor C. Johnson: Singabahambayo

2 Trad. Apalachian, arr. Mark Burrows: The Broomstick Flew All Around

3 Wayne Dauer: Put That Screen Away!



WINTER GARDENS – EMPRESS BALLROOM

14h15

COMPETITION IN CATEGORY G2 – YOUTH CHOIRS

1 **COLLÈGE VOCAL**

Montréal, Canada

Conductor: Gregory Charles

- 1 Nigel St-Martin: Vite! Vite!
- 2 Trad. England, arr. Stephen Smith: Scarborough Fair
- 3 Susan Crowe, arr. Stephen Smith: Your One and Only Life
- 4 Trad. Africa, arr. Nigel St-Martin: Afrikana

2 **AMABILE GIRLS CHOIR**

Kendal, Cumbria, Great Britain

Conductor: Rachel Little

- 1 Vijay Singh: Johnny Said, "No!"
- 2 Eleanor Daley: The Lake Isle of Innisfree
- 3 Frank Martin: Chanson (Le petit village)
- 4 Harry Warren, arr. Pete Schmutte: Chattanooga choo choo

3 **RAPLA RIINIMANDA KOORISTUUDIO NOORTEKOOR**

Rapla, Estonia

Conductor: Pärt Uusberg

- 1 Pärt Uusberg: Muusika
- 2 Urmas Sisask: Gloria Patri - No. 2 Omnis una
- 3 Ester Mägi: Laulikutele
- 4 Trad. Norway, arr. Gunnar Eriksson: Norwegian Lullaby



WINTER GARDENS – EMPRESS BALLROOM
19h30

COMPETITION IN CATEGORY P – POP, JAZZ, GOSPEL

1 BARNSELEY SINGERS

Barnsley, Great Britain

Conductor: Luke Mather

- 1 Keane, arr. Mathew Wright: Somewhere Only We Know
- 2 Labi Siffre, arr. Luke Mather: Something Inside so Strong
- 3 Jeff Lynne, arr. Mathew Wright, G. Mulcahy: Mr. Blue Sky

2 LAIN HUUTO

Helsinki, Finland

Conductor: Paavo Hyökki

- 1 Anders Edenroth: Big Bad World
- 2 John Lennon, Paul McCartney, arr. Jussi Chydenius: Eleanor Rigby
- 3 Prince Rogers Nelson, arr. Jouni Kannisto, Tuukka Haapaniemi: Kiss

3 UPROAR CHOIR

Clonmel Co Tipperary, Ireland

Conductor: Eamon O'Malley

- 1 Freddie Mercury, arr. Dirk Kokx: Killer Queen
- 2 Chappell Roan, arr. Kenter Davies: Good Luck, Babe!
- 3 Stevie Nicks, et al., arr. Abi Moore: The Chain

4 THE DALES COMMUNITY POP CHOIR

Leyburn, Great Britain

Conductor: Debbie Allenby

- 1 Freddie Mercury, arr. Craig McLeish: Killer Queen
- 2 Joni Mitchell, arr. Adam & Matt Pod, ad. Debbie Allenby: Big Yellow Taxi
- 3 Richard Smallwood, arr. Craig Lees: Total Praise



SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2026

WINTER GARDENS – EMPRESS BALLROOM
14h00

COMPETITION IN CATEGORY A1 – MIXED ADULT CHOIRS

1 CÔR CF1

Cardiff, Great Britain/Wales

Conductor: Eilir Owen Griffiths

- 1 Ken Steven: Dawn and Dusk
- 2 Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy: Frohlocket, ihr Völker auf Erden
- 3 Trad. Wales, arr. Richard Vaughan: Suo Gân
- 4 Seán Doherty: Snow Dance for the Dead

2 LAIN HUUTO

Helsinki, Finland

Conductor: Paavo Hyökki

- 1 Mikko Nisula: Poésies lutéciennes, No. 1-3
- 2 Rudi Tas: Ave Regina
- 3 Juhani Komulainen: Vinternatten
- 4 Soila Sariola: Talventyttö ajaa Suomen läpi

3 BARNSLEY SINGERS

Barnsley, Great Britain

Conductor: Luke Mather

- 1 Arthur Godfrey: Christmas Eve
- 2 Josquin Desprez: El Grillo
- 3 Eric Whitacre: The Seal Lullaby
- 4 Trad. Great Britain, arr. Luke Mather: Farewell to the Wheatsheaf





WINTER GARDENS – EMPRESS BALLROOM
15h30

COMPETITION IN CATEGORY A2 – ADULT CHOIRS EQUAL VOICES

1 THE CHANTERELLES

Leicester, Great Britain
Conductor: Shirley Court

- 1 Otmar Mácha: Hoj, hura hoj!
- 2 Edward Elgar: My Love Dwelt in a Northern Land
- 3 Dan Forrest: Good Night, Dear Heart
- 4 Trad. Mexico, arr. Stephen Hatfield: Las amarillas

2 SEXTET PLUS

Nový Jičín, Czech Republic
Conductor: Karel Dostál

- 1 Vytautas Miškinis: Cantate Domino
- 2 Leoš Janáček: Ohlas písní českých - Láska opravdivá, Divím se milému, Vínek stonulý
- 3 Ola Gjeilo: Northern Lights
- 4 Billy Joel, arr. Tom Gentry: For the Longest Time

3 THE DALES COMMUNITY POP CHOIR

Leyburn, Great Britain
Conductor: Debbie Allenby

- 1 Victor C. Johnson: Kuimba!
- 2 Sarah Quartel: After the Rain
- 3 Billie Eilish O'Connell, Finneas O'Connell, arr. Jennifer Lucy Cook: What Was I Made For?
- 4 Alexandra Olsavsky: What Happens When a Woman?



4 UKMERGĖS KULTŪROS CENTRO MOTERŲ VOKALINIS ANSAMBLIS “CANTILENA”

Ukmergė, Lithuania

Conductor: Daiva Petrikienė

- 1 Julio Domínguez: Tres motetes - 1. Laudate Dominum
- 2 Vaclovas Augustinas: Tėvyne mūsų
- 3 Onutė Narbutaitė: Vasara
- 4 Artūras Novikas: Sodauto

5 PETERBOROUGH MALE VOICE CHOIR

Peterborough, Great Britain

Conductor: William Prideaux

- 1 Christian Ridil: Nordwind und Südwind
- 2 Brian A. Schmidt: Lux aeterna
- 3 Patrick Vu: A Golden Day
- 4 Granville Bantock: Three Choruses for Male Voices - Nr. 1 O Zeus the King

6 SEMPRE AMABILE

Kendal, Cumbria, Great Britain

Conductor: Charlotte Jackson

- 1 Elizabeth Maconchy: Propheta Mendax
- 2 Franz Schubert: Psalm 23
- 3 Trad. Great Britain, arr. Michael Neaum: Waly Waly
- 4 Alexandra Olsavsky: What Happens When a Woman?

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2026

WINTER GARDENS – EMPRESS BALLROOM
10h00

COMPETITION IN CATEGORY F - FOLKLORE

1 RAPLA RIINIMANDA KOORISTUUDIO NOORTEKOOR

Rapla, Estonia

Conductors: Urve Uusberg & Helen Allikvee

1 Trad. Estonia, arr. Pärt Uusberg: Lapsepõlves lauldud laulud:

Laula, kuni elad!; Oh minu ellad

2 Veljo Tormis, Kadri Voorand: Ära löö noorikut

3 Veljo Tormis: Ingrian Evenings - No. 6 Ringmängulaul, No. 3 Röntüškä III

2 UKMERGĖS KULTŪROS CENTRO MOTERŲ VOKALINIS ANSAMBLIS
“CANTILENA”

Ukmergė, Lithuania

Conductor: Daiva Petrikienė

Trad. Lithuania

1 arr. Juozas Strolia: Ar aš tau, sese

2 arr. Antanas Budriūnas: Trepute martela

3 arr. Daiva Lubytė: Oi neduok, Dieve

4 arr. Lina Kairytė: Turėja liepa

5 arr. Gediminas Kalinas: Šią naktelę per naktelę





Black

CHOIRS



PARTICIPATING CHOIRS



COLLÈGE VOCAL
MONTREAL, CANADA

G2

FOUNDED: 2000

CONDUCTOR: Gregory Charles



SEXTET PLUS
NOVÝ JIČÍN, CZECH REPUBLIC

A2

FOUNDED: 2006

CONDUCTOR: Karel Dostál



RAPLA RIINIMANDA KOORISTUUDIO NOORTEKOOR

RAPLA, ESTONIA

G2, F

FOUNDED: 1988

CONDUCTORS: Pärt Uusberg, Urve Uusberg, Helen Allikvee



LAIN HUUTO

HELSINKI, FINLAND

A1, P

FOUNDED: 2009

CONDUCTOR: Paavo Hyökki

PARTICIPATING CHOIRS



AMABILE GIRLS CHOIR
KENDAL, CUMBRIA, GREAT BRITAIN

G2

FOUNDED: 1996

CONDUCTOR: Rachel Little



BARNSELY SINGERS
BARNSELY, GREAT BRITAIN

A1, P

FOUNDED: 2016

CONDUCTOR: Luke Mather



BARNESLEY YOUTH CHOIR
BARNESLEY, GREAT BRITAIN

FESTIVAL

FOUNDED: 2009

CONDUCTOR: Mathew Wright



BARNESLEY YOUTH CHOIR - INTERMEDIATE CHOIR
BARNESLEY, GREAT BRITAIN

FESTIVAL

FOUNDED: 2015

CONDUCTOR: Gorgey Bennett

PARTICIPATING CHOIRS



ELECTRIC PINK VOICES
BLACKPOOL, GREAT BRITAIN

FESTIVAL

FOUNDED: 2022

CONDUCTOR: Phill Fairhurst



MIXED CHAMBER CHOIR AURA
CATTHORPE, GREAT BRITAIN

FESTIVAL

FOUNDED: 2025

CONDUCTOR: Andra Zobens-East



PETERBOROUGH MALE VOICE CHOIR
PETERBOROUGH, GREAT BRITAIN

A2

FOUNDED: 1936

CONDUCTOR: William Prideaux



SEMPRE AMABILE
KENDAL, CUMBRIA, GREAT BRITAIN

A2

FOUNDED: 2018

CONDUCTOR: Charlotte Jackson

PARTICIPATING CHOIRS



THE CAPRICORN SINGERS
CLEVELEYS, GREAT BRITAIN

FESTIVAL

FOUNDED: 1984

CONDUCTOR: Chrissie Mason



THE CHANTERELLES
LEICESTER, GREAT BRITAIN

A2

FOUNDED: 2009

CONDUCTOR: Shirley Court



THE DALES COMMUNITY POP CHOIR
LEYBURN, GREAT BRITAIN

A2, P

FOUNDED: 2015

CONDUCTOR: Debbie Allenby



SONGS FOR ALL
GALSTON, GREAT BRITAIN/SCOTLAND

FESTIVAL

FOUNDED: 2014

CONDUCTOR: Jill Clancy

PARTICIPATING CHOIRS



CÔR CF1

CARDIFF, GREAT BRITAIN/WALES

A1

FOUNDED: 2002

CONDUCTOR: Eilir Owen Griffiths



UPROAR CHOIR

CLONMEL CO TIPPERARY, IRELAND

P

FOUNDED: 2017

CONDUCTOR: Eamon O'Malley



UKMERGĖS KULTŪROS CENTRO MOTERŲ VOKALINIS ANSAMBLIS "CANTILENA"
UKMERGĖ, LITHUANIA A2, F

FOUNDED: 1998

CONDUCTOR: Daiva Petrikiėnė



DC JUNIOR CHOIR
HARARE, ZIMBABWE

G1

FOUNDED: 2018

CONDUCTOR: Byron Manake



July
21-31
2027



15th World Choir Games

Back to the Roots of Harmony



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**World
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EVENT
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wcg2027.com

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Zsuzsanna Lahmeyer – Director Tourism

Andreas Kirdjakin – IT, competition results

Jana Kalniņa – Presenter

Emma Race – Jury Secretary

Malomir Ingilizov, Sergio Moldovans – Stage Management

FESTIVAL OFFICE

Winter Gardens

Floral Suite

97 Church Street

FY1 1HL Blackpool

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October 21-25, 2027 | Calella/Barcelona, Catalonia (Spain)



12TH CANTA AL MAR

Festival Coral Internacional



AN INTERKULTUR EVENT

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INTERNATIONAL CHOIR COMPETITION BLACKPOOL 2026

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