

Magazine COUNCIL TALK

THE CHORAL WORLD IN EXCHANGE



A HUGE FEELING OF HOPE | UNITED THROUGH SONG
REPORT GENERAL CONFERENCE 2021 | MEMORIES OF AN OLD CHORISTER

A group of young people, likely students, are standing on a stage and singing. They are wearing dark blue school uniforms with red ties and red beaded necklaces. The background is dark with colorful, abstract light patterns in orange, green, and red. The text "SINGING TOGETHER BRINGS NATIONS TOGETHER" is overlaid in a white, hand-drawn style font.

SINGING
TOGETHER
BRINGS NATIONS
TOGETHER

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GÜNTER TITSCH, GERMANY

Ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues and friends,

Yoko Ono once said,

"A dream you dream alone is just a dream. A dream you dream together becomes a reality."

We all have a common dream. We want to bring the choirs of this earth back to the stages. We want to hear their voices live again and, in accordance with the slogan of the World Choir Games 2021 in Flanders „Sing together - share happiness“, see the joy and happiness in the eyes of the singers.

Especially in times like these, we realize how important community and positive thinking are.

It is therefore very important to me to thank you for your friendship, your valuable trust and your support.

Together, we will continue to work with passion and energy to ensure that choirs reclaim the stages of the world and that our motto „Singing together brings nations together“ resounds around the globe.

In the spirit of the Ethiopian proverb „When spiders weave united, they can bind a lion“, I wish you all the best and lots of positive energy for 2022!

All the Best 2022

GREETINGS

Ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues, dear friends,

On the occasion of the New Year, we would like to express our best wishes, on behalf of INTERKULTUR and our entire team. We wish you and your loved ones good luck, health and much success for 2022!

2021 has been a rather challenging but fruitful year for everyone. Under the shading of the crisis, INTERKULTUR and the World Choir Council community have grown stronger than ever, for all the music lovers out there. The 11th World Choir Games in Flanders has been a milestone in the history of the choral world. The success of the General Conference during the 11th World Choir Games in Flanders marks an ice breaking moment. Despite of all the challenges and obstacles, based on the experience of the Regional Online Meetings and the hybrid Meeting in Chengdu this summer, the hybrid General Conference (Live in Flanders, online via Zoom) has sent out a positive message to the world and shown all the singers and choral music lovers all around the world a promising future to come.

In addition to the series of conferences and projects during the 11th World Choir Games Flanders, there have been numerous highlight projects and activities throughout the year: The Video Project and Conductors' Talk continuously being the key component of the World Choir Council series of activities; Hello Council received overwhelming feedbacks from the Chinese market and will expand its influence towards Asia and Pacific in 2022. The Regional Online Meetings have kept the members of the World Choir Council closer and more active and we will continue to connect in the future.

We must not forget to appreciate the neglected good aspects of life – the music we get to enjoy, the smiles we get to see (whether online or in person), the positive energy we bring to one another, the hope we get to see after all the effort. Let music be the sign of renewing and 2022 begins with the warmest of aspiration. Together we can look into the future with confidence and sure to soon leave the crisis behind. We look forward to meeting you in Gangneung, Gangwon-do, Republic of Korea.

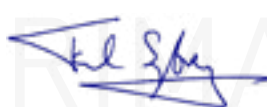
Until then, we wish you and your loved ones all the best for 2022 and enjoy the bright and cheerful holiday season!




Günter Titsch
President
INTERKULTUR &
World Choir Council



Qin Wang
First Vice-President
INTERKULTUR &
World Choir Council



Fred Sjöberg
Senior Artistic Director
of INTERKULTUR &
Vice President of World
Choir Council



Steen Lindholm
Senior Advisor of the
World Choir Council



Hans-Robert Dapprich
Director Communications,
Marketing and Sales of
INTERKULTUR &
World Choir Council



Stop the war!

**UNITE FOR PEACE.
SINGING TOGETHER
BRINGS NATIONS TOGETHER.**



STOP THE WAR! UNITE FOR PEACE. CHOIR CONCERT FOR PEACE IN THE WORLD

Our international choir concert for peace is a symbol of unity and understanding and we would like to give comfort and hope to all those who have to experience great suffering in these difficult times.

True to our motto "Singing Together Brings Nations Together", which has accompanied us for decades, we stand with all singers who share our mission and come together these days to sing together for peace in the world.



<https://youtu.be/Y1lGwJdam70>

STATEMENT FOR PEACE

For INTERKULTUR and its worldwide choral family, the unifying power of choral music has been a mission for over 30 years, in the belief that the universal language of music can bring peace to the world.

In our worldwide choral events which follow the Olympic idea, and together with our World Choir Council including representatives from over 90 countries and regions, we unite people from all continents and aim peace and for better mutual understanding through singing together.

For more than two years, we all have been experiencing an attack on our health and lives by invisible viruses. At the same time, natural disasters are increasing significantly, depriving many people of their homes.

These are unprecedented calamities for both our generation and history.

At the moment we are faced with a new catastrophe - a terrible war in Europe! Our thoughts and prayers are with all those who are suffering the devastating consequences of this war, especially with everyone in Ukraine.

In the spirit of our motto "Singing Together Brings Nations Together" we also stand with all singers and people in the world, who also share our mission and desire for peace.

We strongly stand against wars that cause great harm to humanity. Therefore, in the name of all peacemaking people, we call for an immediate end to this aggressive war on Ukrainian soil. At the same time, we call for reason, to follow the path of mutual understanding and back towards a humane coexistence!

The world of choirs will stand together in solidarity and fraternity, working for humanitarian aid aimed at all people affected by the war.

Come together in your communities and sing for peace, for peace all over the world!

Günter Titsch

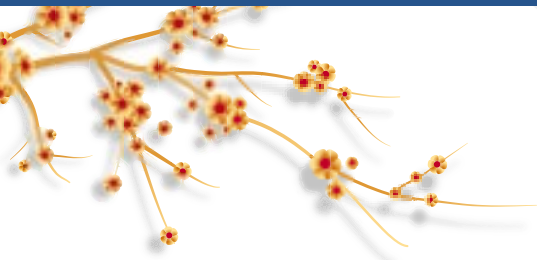
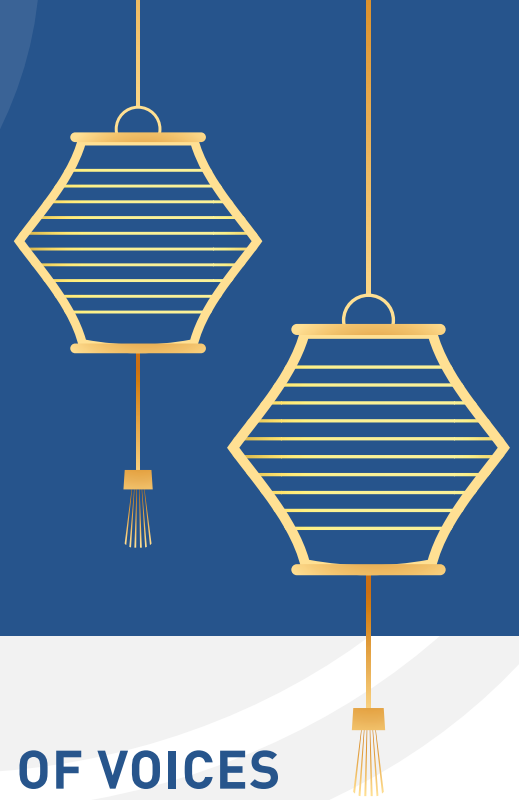
President INTERKULTUR & World Choir Council



HAPPY
NEW YEAR

恭贺新春

새해 복 많이 받으세요



THE WORLD OF VOICES SPRING FESTIVAL CONCERT

For the second time after 2021 INTERKULTUR China has had the pleasure to publish the „World of Voices Spring Festival Concert“ on the occasion of the Lunar New Year Celebration in the Asian part of the world.

In cooperation with 16 choral associations of different cities and provinces in China together with China Chorus Association, Chorus-China of China Musicians' Association, a one hour online concert has been created featuring choir performances and warm New Year's Greetings by important personalities from the Chinese choral world.

The performing choirs have been carefully selected by INTERKULTUR China and the choral associations involved in the project and were asked to sing works which are rich in content, style and form.

With the "The World of Voices 2022 Spring Festival Concert" at the beginning of the year of the Tiger in 2022, INTERKULTUR would like to extend its best wishes for the choral community in China and around the world. May you have a happy and peaceful New Year in good harmony and a happy mood!



<https://interkultur.tv/the-world-of-voices-spring-festival-concert-2022-welcome-to-the-year-of-the-tiger/>

<https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/a5NWw6xo-q47QVf3QMnjQ>





YOU ARE MUSIC – THE OFFICIAL SONG OF THE 12TH WORLD CHOIR GAMES 2023 IN GANGNEUNG, REPUBLIC OF KOREA



Get in tune with Korea and learn a new song now!

We still have the sounds of “Listen” ringing in our ears – the wonderful song of the 11th World Choir Games. And while reveling in memories, it’s time to look forward to something new. Today we’re happy to introduce to you “You Are Music” - the Official Song of the 12th World Choir Games in South Korea.

While “Listen” was a song from the nature to the people, from the people to the nature” according to the words of the flemish composer Kurt Bikkembergs, “You are music” - composed by Hyo-Won Woo - is a song about the enlightening power of music even in dark times. A song that gives comfort and strength and, of course, also contains some traditional Korean elements which provide an insight in the music culture of the next host country of the 12th World Choir Games in 2023.

The message of “You are music” perfectly meets the spirit of our current times. Lyrics like *“Sometimes the mist pervades your way, and your aching hearts want to flee. But, I have the key to Magic, to turn the darkness to the light. I gently sing, I gently, sing I gently sing”* remind us of the power of song and music, which have always helped people to get through even darkest times.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-9Sd4DmkDd0>



REPORT GENERAL CONFERENCE 2021 IN FLANDERS





REPORT GENERAL CONFERENCE 2021 IN FLANDERS

With a delay of more than one year, the World Choir Council could meet again during the World Choir Games 2021 in Flanders and hold their General Conference, where all Council members can meet and exchange ideas. This event is one of the essential parts of each edition of the World Choir Games.

For the first time in the history of the World Choir Council, representatives from 92 countries and regions met live and virtually in Flanders. We are very happy that this first “Hybrid” General Conference could celebrate its premiere in Flanders and also worked. Under Corona conditions, 24 guests (Council members and guests from the Flanders region) were able to participate live in Antwerp and additionally due to the strict entry restrictions of Belgium, 33 Council members were able to participate virtually from all over the world. The General Conference was held in the framework of the “Council Day”, where besides the conference, other program items were offered for the guests who were live in Antwerp.

Musical walk through Antwerp, evening concert and networking

In addition to the General Conference, there was a musical walk through Antwerp in the morning. At various stations, the city itself became a stage and Antwerp presented a completely new side to the guests. After the General Conference, the invention “Music-Box” was presented and it was shown that online rehearsals will soon be possible without the well-known “offset”. The Council members and conductors looked at this invention with great interest. To conclude the Council day, all guests participated in the Celebration Concert: Visions of Sound, arranged and conducted by Wim Henderickx. This was a musical journey through modern choral music.

“Composers Competition of the Official Song for the World Choir Peace Prize”

As a further project a “Composers Competition of the Official Song for the World Choir Peace Prize” was introduced and officially announced during the General Conference of the World Choir Council 2021. The World Choir Peace Prize acknowledges individuals or organizations that have made an outstanding contribution to world peace through choral music. INTERKULTUR and the World Choir Council aim to showcase examples of how choral music can positively influence love and peace in our world.

Composers around the world are called to participate in this special Peace Song competition. The winning song will be announced in summer 2022 and the composer will be invited as an Honorary Guest to participate in the world premiere held during the World Choir Games in the Republic of Korea.

Learning about choral culture

As always, the World Choir Games are also a fantastic place to get to know the variety of choral culture around the world. All participants are able to learn a lot, whether in the competitions, in workshops or the main events. This year's hosting region Flanders was a perfect showcase of the history of Flemish music culture – from classical and contemporary choral music to its music history in jazz and pop.

Even in the meeting of the World Choir Council the region of Flanders with the cities of Antwerp and Ghent took the opportunity of presenting its creative thinking and ideas of Flemish choral culture to the international Council Members, who will act as ambassadors in their own countries spreading all these ideas now and also in the future.

Special Show "GREETINGS TO FLANDERS"

Since the global breakout of the COVID in 2020, INTERKULTUR and the World Choir Council have been releasing a series of the international "Revival of the Choral World" Initiative aiming to unite the choral community and overcome this big new challenge. A special show "GREETINGS TO FLANDERS" featured statements from some distinguished conductors of the World Choir Council and their choirs from all over the world who share their positive thinking and update on the current situation about the part of the world they are living and working in, hoping to bring positive energy into the choral community.

<https://youtu.be/P0bwXT3QS8w>



NICOLAS-CONSTANTIN GLIESE

**Coordinator of the World Choir Council
Organizing Team**

*"It's not just about singing alone,
it's about the possibility of
bringing people from all corners
of the world together without
the hurdle of communication,
because music is a language
we are all able to speak and
understand."*

Gangneung, Republic of Korea

The next opportunity for the members of the World Choir Council to come live together again will be, when the World Choir Games take place in Gangneung, Republic of Korea. But also in the summer of 2022 the council will meet again, at least virtually.

And so, all participants were glad to get already an outlook to the next World Choir Games and to learn what to expect from the next host country in 2023. Due to the pandemic, it was not possible for Korea to send a delegation on site to Flanders, but they still sent their invitation video, which was presented again at the closing ceremony of the World Choir Games 2021 on November 7: It started with some world-famous K-Pop singer, followed by the presentation of the Official Song of the World Choir Games 2023 and ended with a warm invitation by Hwang Hee, Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism Republic of Korea.

As INTERKULTUR President Günter Titsch mentioned in his welcome speech, the last General Conference of the World Choir Council took place in 2018, more than three years ago. He was happy that in the meantime there were taking place many Regional and General meetings online but also mentioned that there are some new members on site, which have never taken part in a live meeting of the World Choir Council before.

"I highly appreciate all the digital activities, but at the same time we are human beings, no robots. We want to meet and socialize. Therefore, I really hope that we will be able to come together in person very soon and see all these people which are now on the screen sitting next to us again."

With all this in mind there was one main thing remaining from this event; a hopeful: **SEE YOU IN KOREA 2023!**

<https://youtu.be/DPVloiL4uwA>



JOY RAN TAO

Project Manager
of the World Choir Council

*"To make each day count"
...because "Miracles happen
every day"*



HONORARY AWARDS DURING THE LAST GENERAL CONFERENCE 2021 IN FLANDERS

INTERKULTUR and the World Choir Council are very proud to present several awards during the last General Conference 2021 in Flanders.

CERTIFICATE OF HONOR FOR THE LOCAL ORGANIZING COMMITTEE – KOOR&STEM VZW.

The presentation of this hybrid Council Day at the World Choir Games 2021 closed with the presentation of a certificate of honor to the Local Organizing Committee, Koor & Stem vzw, of this year's event, presented by INTERKULTUR & World Choir Council President Günter Titsch and First Vice President Wang Qin to Mr. Koenraad de Meulder, Director of LOC World Choir Games 2021 and Ms. Sophie Detremmerie, Chief Operating Officer of the LOC World Choir Games 2021 as its representatives. As Günter Titsch mentioned on this occasion, the collaboration with the Local Organizing Committee of the World Choir Games 2021 has even overcome the most difficult situations:

"In the difficult Corona period, Koor&Stem vzw has shown the greatest flexibility and openness, allowing choirs from all over the world to participate in the postponed World Choir Games not only on site but also digitally - a premiere for the World Choir Games! With this, Koor&Stem vzw has set a special example for the peaceful gathering of singers, both live and digitally despite the worldwide challenging pandemic situation."



Local Organizing Committee – Koor&Stem vzw.



Prof. Dr. Ralf Eisenbeiß – Honorary Artistic President

SPECIAL HONOR FOR PROF. DR. RALF EISENBEISS - APPOINTMENT AS HONORARY ARTISTIC PRESIDENT

During the General Conference in Flanders there was a special moment: Prof. Dr. Ralf Eisenbeiß, who served as INTERKULTUR's artistic director for almost 30 years was especially honored and appointed by INTERKULTUR, & World Choir Council President Günter Titsch as the new Honorary Artistic President of INTERKULTUR the World Choir Games and World Choir Council.

Prof. Dr. Ralf Eisenbeiß was previously appointed as the new Honorary Artistic President in January 2021, but unfortunately without a ceremonial appointment. This has now been made up for. Introduced with a touching video about the commitment, the ideas and the successes of Prof. Dr. Ralf Eisenbeiß in the past decades, he accepted the award - visibly touched and emotional - and told the present people a few anecdotes from the past years.

INTERKULTUR and the World Choir Council would like to thank Prof. Dr. Ralf Eisenbeiß for his work and is looking forward to many more successful joint projects.

NEW HONORARY MEMBERS APPOINTED TO THE WORLD CHOIR COUNCIL

During the General Conference, we had the great honor of appointing more than 30 current members of the World Choir Council as honorary members. These internationally recognized experts have supported and promoted the development of INTERKULTUR and the World Choir Events for more than 10 years by actively working for the promotion of choral culture in the world and a peaceful coexistence of all nations.

Prof. Alejandro Daniel Garavano (Argentina)
Prof. Tigran Hekekyan (Armenia)
David Slater (Australia)
Prof. Theodora Pavlovitch (Bulgaria)
Don James (Canada)
Prof. Lingfen Wu (China)
Raymond Fu (China/Hong Kong SAR)
Luis A. Olivieri (Cmlth. of Puerto Rico)
Branko Stark (Croatia)
María Felicia Pérez (Cuba)
Aarne Saluveer (Estonia)
Prof. Jürgen Budday (Germany)
Jürgen Faßbender (Germany)
Katalin Kiss (Hungary)
Thorgerdur Ingólfssdóttir (Iceland)
Prof. Giovanni Acciai (Italy)

Vytautas Miškinis (Lithuania)
John Galea (Malta)
Christopher Muscat (Malta)
Gerardo Rábago Palafox (Mexico)
Karen L. Grylls (New Zealand)
Tove Ramlo-Ystad (Norway)
Jonathan Velasco (Philippines)
Kinga Litowska (Poland)
Prof. Alexander Solovyev (Russia)
Karmina Šilec (Slovenia)
André van der Merwe (South Africa)
Oscar Boada (Spain)
Soundarie David (Sri Lanka)
Khunying Malaival Boonyaratavej (Thailand)
John Haberlen (USA)
Dr. Timothy W. Sharp (USA)

It was a great honor for INTERKULTUR and the World Choir Council, that despite the difficult situation three members could be awarded personally in Flanders. Those who unfortunately could not be there will be honored in person at further events in the coming months for their outstanding work.



3 Council members could already receive their honors and certificates in Flanders:
l.t.r. - Günter Titsch, Fred Sjöberg, Theodora Pavlovitch, Jürgen Faßbender, Katalin Kiss, Qin Wang



WORLD CHOIR
peace
PRIZE

*SINGING TOGETHER
BRINGS NATIONS TOGETHER!*

NEW
The competition
closes April 11, 2022



WORLD CHOIR PEACE PRIZE

Music has the power to connect people. Since its beginnings, it has been a concern of INTERKULTUR and the World Choir Games, the Olympics of Choral Music, to contribute to peace and mutual understanding. INTERKULTUR is committed to bringing people of all countries, cultures and world views together in peaceful competition - carried by the motto: "Singing together brings nations together."

Numerous people all over the world are also engaged in achieving these objectives and a better and more peaceful coexistence - with the help of the means of choral music. The World Choir Peace Prize was established on their behalf.

The World Choir Peace Prize acknowledges individuals or organizations that have made an outstanding contribution to world peace through choral music. Singing promotes peace, understanding and goodwill, and builds bridges that overcome political, racial, social and religious differences. The award is sponsored by INTERKULTUR and the World Choir Council to showcase examples of how choral music can positively influence love and peace in our world.

In 2023, the World Choir Peace Prize is to be awarded again. The Corona pandemic has kept the world - and the choral world in particular - on the edge over the past few months and has demanded a great deal from people.



OFFICIAL SONG FOR THE WORLD CHOIR PEACE PRIZE

A special prize also includes a special song. In this case, the new official song will from now on be closely linked to the World Choir Peace Prize. In order to create a unique and expressive song, INTERKULTUR has launched this composition contest.

INTERKULTUR & the World Choir Council is inviting composers from all over the world to take part in a competition of composing the official song of the World Choir Peace Prize to be world premiered during the next World Choir Games in Gangneung, Republic of Korea.

We hope you are one of the composers who thinks this is an exciting idea and would like to take part in this very unique competition. On the next page you can read all about the conditions and rules. We welcome you to bring your idea into a live experience for singers from all over the world in the new "Song of Peace".

Besides the honor of having written the official song of the World Choir Peace Prize, there is also a prize for the winning conductor: the winning composer will be invited by INTERKULTUR to participate as a honorary guest at the world premiere of the song during the World Choir Peace Prize ceremony, held at the next World Choir Games in Gangneung, Korea, including the travel costs and stay.

The jury for this special competition consists of the Advisory Board of the World Choir Council.

We are looking forward to your special compositions and hope that you will have fun and enjoy this unique competition.



STEEN LINDHOLM

**Senior Advisor & Member of the
World Choir Council Board**

"Singing in a choir is good for your health, both mentally and physically. And by the way: I just read a report telling that choirsingers are happier and live longer than others. Isn't it wonderful?"



THE RULES

The competition is open for all composers of the world.

COMPETITION RULES:



1. Length of official song of the World Choir Peace Prize should be **maximum 3-4 minutes**.
 2. The composition should be for mixed choir SATB with a basic version for SATB with piano accompaniment. This version is the one to be judged. Furthermore should be sent two alternative versions, one a cappella version and one version with orchestra. (The composition should be sent as pdf, eventually accompanied by a sound file).
 3. The **compositions should be new**. The use of already existing or already performed material is not allowed.
 4. The **text should be in English** and **based on a World Peace theme**. Text to be chosen by the composer.
 5. All parties agree that all rights to the song (e.g. publishing, modifying or playing) including the lyrics are owned by INTERKULTUR only.
 6. **The competition closes April 11, 2022**. All participating compositions should be received by INTERKULTUR on this date. Compositions should be sent electronically to INTERKULTUR as a pdf-file. Mailaddress: gliese@interkultur.com (Nicolas-Constantin Gliese, Coordinator of the World Choir Council Team).
- **JURY:** World Choir Council Advisory Board chaired by Steen Lindholm
 - **ANNOUNCEMENT** for the first prize will be **summer 2022**.
 - **THE PRIZE:** The winner will receive an INTERKULTUR honorary Award for composing of the Song of the World Choir Peace Prize and will be invited as an honorary guest to participate in the world premiere at the World Choir Peace Prize Ceremony, held during the 12th World Choir Games in Gangneung, Republic of Korea. Travel costs and stay will be paid by INTERKULTUR.



WORLD CHOIR GAMES

**GANGNEUNG,
REPUBLIC OF KOREA**

**NEW
DATE**

JULY 3-13, 2023





**World
Choir
Games**



2023
Gangneung
Republic of Korea



SING FOR GOLD

THE WORLD CHORAL CUP

Calella & Barcelona, Catalonia (Spain)
OCTOBER 12-16, 2022

**NEW
DATE**



interkultur.com/calella2022

VIÀJES TAURO
El primer viaje por Europa

AN INTERKULTUR EVENT

Ajuntament
de Calella

PROJECTS 2022



World Choir Council

MAGAZINE – COUNCIL TALK

THE DIGITAL MAGAZINE WITH DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT THE WORK OF THE WORLD CHOIR COUNCIL, ITS MEMBERS AND CURRENT NEWS FROM THE CHORAL WORLD.

Issue 1/2022: Publishing: March 21, 2022

Issue 2/2022: Publishing: September 30, 2022 (Closing date for articles: July 31, 2022)

REGIONAL MEETINGS

DISCUSSION ROUNDS WITH THE WORLD CHOIR COUNCIL MEMBERS
YOUR REGION ON CURRENT TOPICS
EXCHANGE EXPERIENCE AND INFORMATION.

First Meeting:

March 30, 2022 – Meeting North/Central/South America

March 31, 2022 – Meeting Asia/Pacific/Middle East & Meeting Africa/Europe

Second Meeting:

November 16, 2022 – Meeting Asia/Pacific/Middle East & North/Central/South America

November 17, 2022 – Meeting Africa/Europe

All participants are encouraged to attend all three meetings.

There is no restriction of participants to the associated meeting.

WORLD CHOIR COUNCIL – GENERAL CONFERENCE

JULY 8 & 9, 2022

MUSICA MUNDI ACADEMY SPECIAL

HELLO COUNCIL – CHINA | REPUBLIC OF KOREA | PACIFIC

VIRTUAL LIVE TALKS – CONNECTING THE CHORAL WORLD

China: January 14, 2022 | May 27, 2022 | August 26, 2022 | November 11, 2022

Republic of Korea: April 6, 2022 | October 12, 2022

Pacific: December 9, 2022

VIDEO PROJECT

Informative and interesting video projects from the choral scene.

On the 15th of each month we publish a new video.

CONDUCTORS TALK

Talk with different choral personalities, about their choir life and their career.

Publication: February 23, 2022 | May 23, 2022 |

August 23, 2022 | November 2, 2022



*Dates might subject to change.

World Choir Council c/o INTERKULTUR
Ruhberg 1, 35463 Fernwald (Frankfurt/Main) Germany, worldchoircouncil@interkultur.com
interkultur.com

CHOIR COMPETITIONS & EVENTS, PROJECTS OF THE WORLD CHOIR COUNCIL - A PREVIEW OF 2022

After 2 years of pandemic: 2022 will also be a difficult year for the choral world - nevertheless, events are also planned for 2022. 2023 & 2024 will be highlight years for the choir world.

After the World Choir Games in November 2021 in Flanders, there was a great sense of optimism: now we are slowly returning to normality. The singers back to the rehearsal rooms and then finally back on stage. Unfortunately, the pandemic caught up with us all again. Nevertheless, we are all working tirelessly to make wonderful projects possible again in 2022 and, moreover, hopefully from 2023 at the latest, to make it possible again for the choirs and singers to achieve what they dream of, according to our motto:

SINGING TOGETHER BRINGS NATIONS TOGETHER!

CHOIR COMPETITIONS & EVENTS 2022

The world is still in the strong hold of the pandemic. This forces the choral world to always react to the new rules and regulations of the countries and unfortunately often ruins months of planning. Nevertheless, we are working hard to be able to offer choir competitions and events this year as well. Besides smaller festivals and competitions we are looking forward to the brand new competition "Sing for Gold - The World Choral Cup" in Calella/Barcelona, where choirs from all over the world can compete.

Unfortunately, due to the ongoing COVID situation, we were forced to postpone the World Choir Games in Gangneung, Republic of Korea, scheduled for 2022, until 2023. Unfortunately, this also affects the new official song of the World Choir Peace Prize. This song will not be presented and premiered in 2022, but in 2023. For this purpose, a competition for the composition of this new song is currently taking place. The winner will be chosen in the summer of 2022.

Nevertheless, we hope to have some nice, interesting and extraordinary events in 2022 with the choirs from all over the world.



FRANCESCO LEONARDI

**Manager Sales and Business Development
INTERKULTUR & World Choir Council**

"The impact of choral music in social life is huge, incredible and in too many ways hidden. It is a pleasure to work for putting the spot light on this art and the great benefits of performing it. There is still a long way to go, but thanks to you this is something that we are revealing locally, nationally and internationally."



International Choir Competition & Imants Kokars Choral Award

August 17-21, 2022



[INTERKULTUR.COM/RIGA2022](https://interkultur.com/riga2022)

AN INTERKULTUR EVENT

WORLD CHOIR COUNCIL 2022

As in 2021, the World Choir Council is an important bridge to choirs and singers all over the world in times when real meetings might not be so easy. That's why there will be some projects of the World Choir Council again this year, which inform, promote exchange and are also simply fun. Besides the smaller formats Hello Council in China - at the end of 2022 also in the Pacific region - , the Conductors Talk - the new talk by host Fred Sjöberg with interesting guests from the choir world - and the video project - where among other topics, interesting new ideas, methods, and much more are presented - there will also be two Regional Meetings of the World Choir Council and a General Conference in 2022. The Regional Meetings will take place at the end of March and in the middle of November and will focus on the exchange of members and discussion. The General Conference in July 2022 will be dedicated to the World Choir Council. 2022 will be an event and project year of constant change and attention. Nevertheless, a lot of positive and beautiful things are likely to emerge, so that 2022 can ultimately be successful. We then hope to be able to really take off again with you in 2023 and 2024. During 2022 we will inform you about all new projects and events. We will keep you informed, thank you very much for your support and look forward to seeing you on stage again soon - maybe in a few months.

MEMORIES OF AN OLD CHORISTER

BY CARLO LEONARDI

Fifty years have passed exactly. Half a century since I started singing in an amateur choir when I was just eighteen years old. For all this time I have lived an experience that has become part of me, has entered my bones and has formed me, with its ups and downs, with the satisfaction, the joy, with fatigue, sometimes even boredom, the person I am now. If I have to look back, however, I would do everything I've done again because the "active" in this hobby of mine, let's call it that, are far superior to the "passive". In fact, it was an experience that guided me and taught me many things that are important in life, and I wish they were for everyone. Above all, it has taught me that life is made up of relationships with people, and knowing how to tackle a job, whatever it is, together with others, smoothes out the difficulties, helps to find solutions, and makes you grow. From that group of young people, without a specific musical culture, a "thing" was born that has always filled us with amazement for the ability to convey emotions, as if our voices became, together, a cry that no one could ignore, which no one could prevent from penetrating into their inner self. All this, of course, with the help of the genes that in the past and in the present have had the ability to put, black on white, with little black and white balls that go up and down and that can also have a tail, their emotions.

So many, in this half century, have been the moments in which a strange phenomenon has occurred, like when you climb a staircase and face a new step, which does not negate the steps already climbed but pushes you a little higher. Almost always these moments have occurred in the face of events that we as a choir have decided to experience together. The first occasion, I remember, was when we decided

to tackle a choral competition. We were young and rather silly, we lived that blissful feeling of being the center and the best in the world, we lived in the illusion that, having in our repertoire some four-voice pieces, we thought we were the best there could be in the field of choral music. I still remember our amazement when, while attending the stages of the competition, we had the opportunity to listen to Hungarian choirs, which at that time were the top of European choral music. It didn't seem possible to us that a group of boys, our age or so, could sing in that way. And here's the kicker: despite our high regard for the work we had done in our group, a whole new world opened up to us, a world made up of many people better than us. Since then, we had every opportunity to listen to other choirs, to take part in competitions, putting aside the little money we had in our pockets to invest in travel (not too far away, for goodness sake) and above all in listening, even at the cost, as one of our accompanists once said at a competition, of being considered "the choir happiest to have arrived among the last". Because there were no cassettes, records, reproductions of any kind of media that could replace being there, present and attentive, when these marvels of music took place in front of our eyes and our people, when we were able not only with our ears, but with all of us to enter the world of a piece and live it with those who were making it an experience. Of course learning and trying to copy the way of singing, the delicacy of the attacks, the attention to the pronunciation of words of which sometimes we did not know the meaning, the endings in which the last chord remained suspended and present even after the end of the piece, living the moments of amazement that the public, with us, enjoyed before the applause.

CARLO LEONARDI

President for almost 50 years of the Jubilate Choral Association of Legnano (MI) Italy and bass of the Jubilate Choir. He travelled around the world with his choir for competitions and festivals for the first part of his choral life, then it started the second life as a choral fan when he, among the others, decided to built and run a choral festival in his home town. La Fabbrica del Canto was born in 1992 and from that time on many important choirs and conductors were on his stages. He was in contact and helped many choral association from the small ones to the world wide ones always bringing his knowledge and his willing to serve for the improving of the visibility and quality of the choral music all over in the world.

†12.11.2021



This way of doing choir, always more attentive to learn from those who were better than us, has often earned us the friendship of other choirs and other conductors, has made us know the world of choral music in a more spontaneous and involving way. Another memory: we were at an Italian competition and we were sharing the seminary where we were hosted with a great Italian choir: every morning we met with the other choir which, almost like us, had a spirit more of camaraderie than of competition. Well, they started to sing early in the morning and we were there to listen to them, to mix with them and to take by osmosis a bit of their way of singing, a bit of the heart they put into their songs.

Of course, the means were not those that are available now, but the path of growth of a choir from individual voices, perhaps even well trained and educated, to a real choir, from individuals, however gifted they may be, to a single group that on stage can convey messages to the listener is always the same. We must learn together, we must be able not as individuals but as a group to respond together to the orders of the director so that the piece is performed and, above all, interpreted at its best. And this does not happen overnight, it is not an easy road that requires the effort of everyone to get to the top. And this effort is also made bearable by the testimony of those who have already done it.

But going back to my story, I have to remember another important step in the life of the choir and my own personal life: after having toured Europe for several years to listen and learn more than to reap the rewards (even if, to be honest, some awards had remained in our hands in the meantime), a reflection arose that had a heavy

consequence on the life not only of the choir but also of the territory. The reflection was the following: if it was and is so important for us to listen to high level choral music, why not offer the same opportunity to other choirs in the area and to all the inhabitants of the city? And here the personal relationships that we had established over the years with the choirs proved to be important, allowing us to invite choral formations to the city and the territory that we never thought we could host. And here we wanted to recreate that atmosphere that had taught us so much, making sure that the days the choirs spent in the city were as serene and friendly as possible.

This, too, was a great lesson for us, imparted by the public that came in large numbers, and by the surprise of an education of the territory that, year after year, expressed increasingly interesting and informed comments on the various choirs and their performances. Comments that did not spare even our concerts, pushing us to the limits of our abilities, because if you sing in front of an audience that you know to be educated and critical is not the same thing as singing in front of friends and relatives.

At the end of this brief overview of my half-century of choral singing, I would like to leave the twenty-five readers who have read me up to this point a single thought: let the life of the choir and the wonders to which you lend your voice shape your person, your way of being even in everyday life. Only in this way, even after fifty years, will you have preserved your essence, will you still be able to be moved as you were the first time, and will you know that you still have much to give and much to receive.

HELLO COUNCIL CHINA - RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT

HELLO COUNCIL (China) is a series of live talk and online pedagogical workshop organized by INTERKULTUR China under the umbrella of the Musica Mundi Academy with the support of INTERKULTUR and the World Choir Council. The pilot episode went online in August 2020 and has since then received overwhelming support and numerous positive comments from the audience and experts in the industry. The series will continue in 2022 and hopefully enrich the choral world with exciting topics and conversations.

HELLO COUNCIL CHINA IN CHINA

Since its pilot episode in 2020, Hello Council China has firmed its foothold in China and gathered a group of “fans” who would come back to each episodes and at the same time attracting new audiences everytime. The success of Hello Council China in China is all about marketing. INTERKULTUR China started to prepare Hello Council China first in the spring of 2020 when most people were still struggling with the impact the pandemic has brought to the world. The importance of seeking and taking the market opportunity resulted in Hello Council being among the first online shows about choral music in China since the pandemic started. Moving on to 2021 when the overall situation in China was

getting better, rehearsals resumed, concerts and competitions orderly conducted, so most online shows stopped - but Hello Council continued. The original idea of Hello Council may have been an “emergency project” during the transition to start with, but it has developed into a project that is sustainable. The guest speakers and topics are another highlight as Hello Council China aims to give the audiences “real stuff” rather than idle talks that can be found everywhere. The fact that most guest speakers were members of the World Choir Council or have associated with INTERKULTUR and the World Choir Council on different levels is once again another way to promote within the Chinese market. One further point is that Hello Council China keeps close contact with the audiences. Usually one week before, potential audiences and the ones who are interested would be put into a social media group where they can ask questions and communicate. During Hello Council China, parts like “O or X” and “Q and A” are among the most popular because it gives the audiences stronger sense of participation. Lastly Hello Council China tries to develop and evolve according to the general situation, conform to the trend and reposition when it is needed.





HELLO

你好！理事

COUNCIL

对话世界级合唱专家

IRIS HUTING BYRD

Project Director INTERKULTUR China &
World Choir Council

*"I've been really fortunate
to share in your kindness,
sensitivity and artistic talents.
My sincerest wish is we all
maintain our great positivity
and creative spirit as we
navigate the challenges of the
coming year."*



HIGHLIGHT OF 2021

The **3rd episode of Hello Council China 2021** aired on June 25th and the guest speakers were Professor Wang Hailing from Shanghai Conservatory of Music of China and Professor Yoon Euijoong from Hansei University of the Republic of Korea. The topic was "Choir Training and the Right Approach". What made this episode different from the previous ones was not only it was for the Chinese audiences but it was also opened to the world. For the first time Hello Council China welcomed audiences from all over the world and for that, Korean and English interpreters were with the non-Chinese speaking audiences throughout the whole episode. In the end audiences from more than 10 countries and regions shared a fruitful evening of choral music.

Both Wang and Yoon introduces the current choral scene in their own countries, how it has evolved since the pandemic started and the changes it has brought to lives - some for the moment, but some may stay and perhaps influence certain lifestyles long than anyone has ever imaged.

Yoon gave an overall introduction on the history of Korean choirs, backgrounds, social influences and scales. As many times jury member of various INTERKULTUR events, Yoon shared information regarding professional choirs and amateur choirs in Korea and the psychological aspects and social influence on choirs participating in international choir competitions. Speaking as the professor from university, Yoon

was glad to see that music education in Korea has brought more attention than ever before, more Korean composers are taking inspirations from traditional Korean music and culture. Yoon hope that the upcoming World Choir Games 2023 in Gangneung will revive the choral world with bright prospects.

Wang shared the current situation in China, so called "post-covid" - as rehearsals and concerts in most cities are back to how they were used to be but what worries her was the eager of conductors and singers of wanting back to the stage and take part in events after the long music hibernation may have rushed them to a relatively unhealthy way of music and art development. In order to help with the situation, Wang reached out the some young conductors and shared her opinions. Later on, Wang focused on her experience in training female choirs and introduced her ways of keep singers in a choir: effective training method, attractive repertoire and concerts, and harmonious atmosphere. As the professor of Shanghai Conservatory of Music, Wang also mentioned how the conservatory is connected to the society, giving opportunities and making more contacts to support the overall music development.

Fun fact: The Female Choir of Shanghai Conservatory of Music, conducted by Wang, won the champion of female choir category in the 7th World Choir Games in Cincinnati, USA while Yoon was the jury.





FRESH BEGINNING OF 2022

The **1st episode of Hello Council China 2022** aired on January 14th and the guest speakers were Professor Ren Baoping from Tianjin University of China and three young Chinese conductors who are also teaching in different universities and have experience World Choir Games in their own ways. The topic was “Chinese University Choir Pedagogical Strategy”. Since it was the first episode of the year, a new format was introduced: instead of two experts as guest speakers, this time only one expert as the main speakers, and three young conductors formed a discussion group, sharing their own experiences and thoughts.

There are nearly 3,000 colleges and universities in China. With the popularization of aesthetic education throughout the years, there have been more and more excellent university choirs in China. Ren shared his opinions on how it can be done to support and comply with the rapid development and how to balance between the “good” and “not so good”, to bridge the gap and to avoid having all the resources one-sided. Ren feels that university choir will be the core of the development of Chinese choirs and it relies on the conductor, choices of the repertoires and the sound of the choir. “Conductor should pay

particular attention to the shaping of chorus sound, do not blindly follow the trend in the selection of works, and pursue the unique characteristics of the choir.”

The three young conductors are all teachers in renowned universities in China and have experienced World Choir Games at different stage of their lives. Gao, teacher at Shanghai Conservatory of Music was a singer in a participating choir in World Choir Games and later on, volunteered in World Choir Games Riga 2014. She shared practical ways of training different choirs and especially strategies when conducting non-music major choirs. Ma, teacher at Guizhou Normal University experienced World Choir Games Tshwane 2018 and later on a pedagogical workshop INTERKULTUR hosted in Guiyang. He lead the discussion of the influence of singers’ positions and formation and how it could shape the sound of the choir to a different artistic level. Wu, teacher at Jiangsu Normal University was pursuing her PhD in Russia when World Choir Games went to Sochi in 2016 and naturally became a volunteer. She shared in details how she trains her university choir and discussed with the group the pros and cons of online method and how as conductors, they could combine both methods with efficiency.

WHAT IS MORE TO COME? HELLO COUNCIL TO THE WORLD!

Hello Council China will continue to act its part in 2022 but the exciting news is Hello Council has expanded its influence to the world, as INTERKULTUR will be launching Hello Council Pacific this year.

With more World Choir Council members involved, more phenomenon topics, wonderful discussions and maybe new formats, Hello Council will bring us all positive energy and dynamic in the future.



"A HUGE FEELING OF HOPE"

Members of the World Choir Council report on their impressions from the World Choir Games in Flanders

There were deep emotions all around when in the autumn of 2021 the 11th World Choir Games finally took place in Flanders after a 16-months postponement. A long time of silence in concert hall, rehearsal rooms was finally overcome and after such a difficult time for choir singers and conductors all over the world, the World Choir Games 2021 marked a new era: **The event showed that it is possible to organize an international choir competition in times of a global pandemic.**

Of course, due to ongoing travel restrictions around the world, the event needed to take place as the first hybrid version in its history, and from more than 300 participating choirs in total, roughly 200 took part in the virtual event, whereas more than 100 performed on the grounds in the live competitions, Celebrations Concerts, and Workshops and brought their music to all over Flanders in many Friendship Concerts.

The General Conference of the World Choir Council 2021 took place as a hybrid meeting for the first time ever – a brand new experience for everyone on site and behind the screens. The members expressed their gratitude for the possibility to bring together the people on site with all the members that were not able to come in person.

These very special World Choir Games were surely able to send a great sign of confidence out to the international choir scene. During the event days in Flanders we were able to catch some representatives of the World Choir Council and ask them about their feelings and impressions about this:

How did you experience the World Choir Games in Flanders after such a long time without choir events and festivals?

RACHEL MASON, GREAT BRITAIN:

"It's the most wonderful feeling to be here with my colleagues. To see them and to see choirs performing live! Choirs that have not had the chance to be on stage for a couple of months, seeing them performing so well, is an incredible experience."

MEMLI KELMENDI, KOSOVO:

"Last year we participated in the Virtual Choir Games, not in a physical form. So, this year it's really a pleasure to compete here in Flanders, because we want a lot and we are very motivated. We are going to represent our country for the first time – Kosovo was never part of INTERKULTUR events before! We worked a lot, and you will see the happiest faces on my singers!"

JEAN-PIERRE VAN AVERMAET, BELGIUM:

"It is of course a little bit disappointing that the number of choirs here on site is smaller than originally expected. But after it was not clear for a long time whether these Games can be organized at all, I'm now more than glad that the competitions are finally taking place here."

HANS VAN DEN BRAND, NETHERLANDS:

"It feels great and I think it's a feeling that we share with all the people who are here. However, the feeling is a little bit double: We have a sad feeling of not having too many choirs here, but we have a glad feeling that we made another point at the horizon, another starting point getting better for the future."

JEAN-PIERRE VAN AVERMAET, BELGIUM



How did you experience the performances on stage after these difficult times for choirs?

RACHEL MASON, GREAT BRITAIN:

"It's a wonderful competition. It's so varied, so multiple styles of singing which is wonderful and with so many different judges who are specialized in different areas of music, that's great. And also, despite everything the standard of performance is quite high and seeing that is really wonderful as a judge."

HANS VAN DEN BRAND, NETHERLANDS:

"I recognize some difficulties, because some choirs could only start working together in September, some could start a little bit earlier, depending on how the situation in their country was. But most of the choirs started in September. And it effects a little bit the quality, and maybe there's even a loss of the members. But so far, we had at least a remarkable number of choirs that did quite well in the competitions and that's a good thing."

JEAN-PIERRE VAN AVERMAET, BELGIUM:

"I judged the choirs that were competing for the World Choir Council video award. This was quite difficult for me at first, because the videos are very much edited technically and there are also many different types of choirs, but in the end, we were successful!"

In the competitions, the choice of pieces is very modern this time, from my point of view, but of course that makes it very attractive for the large audience. And this edition particularly manages to get a lot of people – who would probably never go to a choir concert otherwise – to come and see the competitions and concerts. So, in the end, more people are interested in choral music and come to the concerts and this leaves a very positive impression."

HANS VAN DEN BRAND, NETHERLANDS





What is the most important message or emotion that you take home after the event?

RACHEL MASON, GREAT BRITAIN:

"I think it's a huge feeling of hope, actually. In the UK sadly we have been afraid of having concerts and events again after the outbreak of COVID and everybody was full of fear. But this competition has just given myself and the singers a huge amount of hope that we are able to create a lot of music and singing together again."

MEMLI KELMENDI, KOSOVO

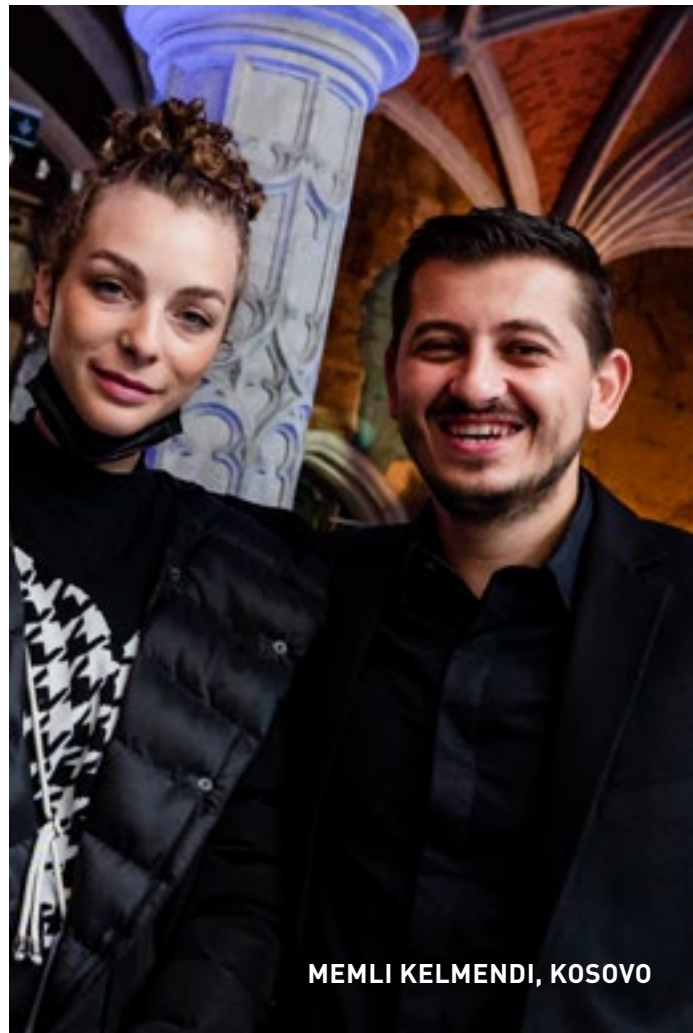
"We must think positive and must be positive. Music will unite us, always. It doesn't matter where we are."

JEAN-PIERRE VAN AVERMAET, BELGIUM:

"Every festival of INTERKULTUR is always a great surprise and a great pleasure. You see choirs and choir conductors again that you have known for many years, you rediscover them and see how they develop."

HANS VAN DEN BRAND, NETHERLANDS:

"It is hope. Good hope that some new goals are coming again – that's my most sincere feeling for the future."



MEMLI KELMENDI, KOSOVO

UNITED THROUGH SONG

The amazing story of friendship between the Aeolians of Oakville University and the Mountain St. Antonio Chamber Choir from the United States

The international choir community is considered to be a small one. But at the same time it is spread all around the world. Choir singers, choir conductors, composers and lovers of vocal music are present in every country, every city, and every community of the world. People of all ages and origins are connected with it and sometimes this small, but wide-spread community finds each other in the most entwining paths. The story of The Aeolians Oakville University Choir and Mountain St. Antonio Chamber Choir from the United States came together on such a path, and their story is really worth to be told:

It is the story of Bruce Rogers from California and Jason Max Ferdinand from Alabama and their two choirs. Jason Max is a professor and choir master at Oakwood University in Huntsville, AL and Bruce is Director of Choral Activities at the Mt. San Antonio College in Walnut, CA. Their relationship starts at the Llangollen choir competition in Great Britain in 2006 (without even knowing about it) and it had its first climax so far at the World Choir Games 2018 in Tshwane, South Africa.

Bruce and Jason Max met for the first time in person in the year 2017. Bruce describes the moment when he first became aware of the Aeolians of Oakville University choir like this: *"I was on the jury for an international competition in Great Britain. And one of the choirs that was competing there was that group from Alabama, the Aeolians of Oakwood University. And I was on the judging panel and they came up on stage and they performed and they just wowed everybody. They were incredible. I'm fallen over the group and as I'm watching them I was thinking: This choir reminds me of my choir very much!"*

Not only Bruce Rogers was impressed by that choir, but even the rest of the jury, and in the end The Aeolians of Oakwood University won the top prize in this competition.

Jason Max Ferdinand tells more about what happened afterwards: *"After the won of the competition I was walking around making my business and this guy walked up to me and he said: Well, your choir was so great up there yesterday and that's so funny because when I look at you guys it reminds me of my choir."*

This was the first time the two guys were talking to each other, but they became instant friends from that day on. But there's a wonderful twist in that story, because what Bruce didn't know at that time: ten years earlier, as a student, Jason Max had already taken part in this very choir competition in Great Britain. And there he had seen and really admired Bruce Roger's choir on stage, as he describes it today: *"And this choir was so good that in my mind I said to myself: When I get to university teaching, I want to make my choir sound and look like they looked!"* And apparently he was very successful on that!

What was particularly special about Bruce's choir back in 2006, was that he worked a lot on facial expressions with his singers: *"As a matter of fact,"* he says, *"my choir was one of the first choirs in the late 1990s to actually do staging with classical music; we do a lot of movement and expression. I come from a theater and a classical background, so I always tried to connect both to get the audience more connected to the music."*

So, in the end, Jason Max' choir ended up winning that very same competition in Llangollen in 2017 that Bruce has won 10 years earlier. *"And we became instant friends,"* both stated about the moment when they came to talk to each other on that occasion. And Jason Max added: *"Bruce is like a big brother and a mentor to me right now and we just love each other's work."*

In the following months after they've got to know each other in person in Great Britain, Bruce and Jason Max stayed in close contact and visited each other to listen to their choirs and even



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iBddayAsN7g>



work with them. Unfortunately, the singers in both choirs had never had the chance to meet up as well, because there's a very long distance between California and Alabama.

"And that's when in 2018 when we knew that the World Choir Games with INTERKULTUR will take place in South Africa we both said to ourselves: We've got to go! Let's do this and we will bring both our choirs together and we'll compete together and we will cheer on each other, and so on," Bruce continued.

And so, it came that these two choirs from California and Alabama in the United States met for the first time in South Africa during the World Choir Games in 2018. They spent a lot of time together there, had dinner together, watched their competitions and concerts and tried to make the best out of their shared experience.

All of the singers had a lot of time for a personal exchange and, according to their conductors, close friendships even developed. Even though the two choirs were formally competing against each other, they went to many competitions where the others performed to watch them, listen

to them and cheer for them. Both conductors really wanted that connection of friendship and fellowship more than the competition, and the World Choir Games was a perfect place to live that feeling.

And that's even typical for the World Choir Games: this event brings musical worlds together, no matter where they come from. You are able to meet the whole world in one place and you get to know each other very close by just being there and spending time together.

"The World Choir Games" sounds like an invitation – and it's meant to be one. It was thankfully accepted by these two special choirs from the United States and their conductors, and their close connection lasts until today.

In 2021 the two groups got back together during the Covid-19 pandemic for a wonderful online project that aims to encourage cooperation. A statement against racism with a text by Martin Luther King: Let Freedom Ring, composed by Ken Burton. Enjoy here a song and message of hope and confidence, which is urgently needed in our current times:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WQmKMhLL3vE>





WELCOME TO THE WORLD CHOIR COUNCIL

*The World Choir Council is delighted and honored to introduce a new member: **Dr. Thomas Kreiling from Germany**, choir director of the German choir Chorona, will contribute with his experience to expand the expertise of the World Choir Council.*

We also want to give our new member here a stage to introduce himself and to get to know him better:

INTERVIEW with Dr. Thomas Kreiling

Hello dear colleagues of the World Choir Council. Thank you very much for allowing me to briefly introduce myself to you in this way. My name is Dr. Thomas Kreiling, but I am usually just called Thommy. I live in Giessen (Germany), am 47 years old, the proud father of a 19-year-old son, and have been singing in the choir since the 5th grade (1984).

HOW DID YOU GET INTO MUSIC AND WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO SING IN A CHOIR?

The choir of my school caught my attention very early, because it regularly went on exciting international concert tours (e.g. via INTERKULTUR to Hungary or Israel). I wanted to be a part of it, because school was cancelled during that time. In contrast to many other schools, where you as a choirboy tend to belong to the nerds, this was different at my school. In the schoolyard, teachers and even the infamous school raudis had the utmost respect for choir singers, as the conductor at the time was the most powerful person in the school.

I don't want to say that as a singer you had „fool's freedom“ in school, but you enjoyed quite a few privileges. A threatening grade of 5 in math or physics was then magically transformed into a 4 with a long minus. In addition, as a budding teenager, I found the relationship between boys and girls somehow appealing; an ideal platform to gather first „experiences“ (there was no internet yet). My love for vocal music then developed during my choirboy career.

WHY DID YOU WANT TO BECOME A CONDUCTOR AND OF WHICH CHOIR ARE YOU CHOIR DIRECTOR?

After countless years in the ranks of the singers, there was a change in my choir at that time. The choir disbanded. After a few months of not singing, I got a few friends together in 2004 and we decided to found a new choir in a bar in Giessen. Under massive beer influence of a well-known Mexican brand, the name was born automatically: CHORONA !

Of course, it was not foreseeable that 16 years later this name would connect us with a pandemic virus.

The official name of „my“ choir is Chorona Buseck e.V.

WHAT IS THE MUSICAL ORIENTATION OF YOUR CHOIR AND WHY?

Many choirs say of themselves that they cover a broad spectrum of literature. In fact, I claim this about „my“ choir as well. From Verdi to Hard Rock, from the old masters to choreographic show programs, there is really EVERYTHING. There is one exception, however: we have never sung JAZZ. This is a world of its own that doesn't really open up to me as a musician. Any attempts to get into this matter have failed me and it somehow always sounds fake and not authentic.

WELCOME

WHAT DOES MUSIC AND ESPECIALLY CHORAL MUSIC MEAN TO YOU?

Not a day goes by where I don't listen to vocal music. Even while jogging or in the gym where most athletes have pounding beats blasting through their headphones, I listen to my a cappella playlists. The sounds motivate and inspire me, give me energy, and can also calm and relax me at the same time. Nevertheless, I also like many other music genres depending on the situation --- e.g. concerts by Coldplay and Rammstein, hearty brass music at the fair, techno beats at night in the club and chill-out lounge music on the beach. Everything in its own time.

HOW HAS THE CORONA PANDEMIC CHANGED YOUR CHOIR LIFE AND OR YOUR MUSICAL LIFE? ARE THERE PERHAPS ALSO POSITIVE CHANGES OR UNFORTUNATELY ONLY RESTRICTIONS?

The choir life has almost completely come to a standstill, also for me. No rehearsals, sometimes outdoor rehearsals with a long distance, no concerts and performances, no concert tours or competitions, no face-to-face workshops.

I'll be provocative and take the liberty of saying that there can be no positive changes due to the pandemic in our artistic guild. It's window dressing when colleagues rave about wonderful Jamulus rehearsals, great online workshops or virtual choir performances/competitions. What nonsense! Choral singing doesn't work that way. Nothing will even come close to replacing a face-to-face rehearsal or a live concert. A choir thrives on being together; a choral sound only develops through singing together in presence. The creative measures that were developed during the pandemic in order to keep the choir going, I strongly support (and of course have done so myself); but we all know that this is only a sad substitute. Therefore, I am sorry to say that I have NOT seen any positive changes in choral life. I long for a time AFTER Covid.

YOU ARE A NEW MEMBER OF THE WORLD CHOIR COUNCIL. WHAT DO YOU EXPECT FROM THE COUNCIL?

The Council is a global network of representatives of the choral scene. A network lives from mutual exchange and communication. Therefore I hope that one inspires and supports each other by exchange of collected knowledge. Also, that cooperations, friendships and added values develop, which enriches all councillors to further develop our choir scene (especially in this difficult phase) and to keep it exciting and alive.

WHAT WERE YOUR FIRST EXPERIENCES WITH THE WORLD CHOIR COUNCIL?

I am still too new to the council to answer this question. I have only been able to experience one plenary meeting online (live from Flanders) in September. In addition to the wealth of information provided by the speakers, however, the friendly and familiar tone of the members among each other struck me very positively. This was especially noticeable BEFORE and AFTER the official agenda items. The conversations and chats between the members was cordial and you could feel the mutual pleasure to see each other (even if mostly online).

WHAT DO YOU HOPE FOR THE FUTURE?

Well, first and foremost probably what we all hope for: that the curse of the pandemic finally passes over us and we all stay healthy.

I am very much longing for a regular choir business and especially the competitions; I hope that by October 2022 the situation will have calmed down so much that the „Sing for Gold“ can take place carefree and exuberant. I am looking forward enormously to this great event. The same applies to the WCG in Korea. I wish and hope that these events will again be as memorable cultural experiences as before the pandemic.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE OR SAY TO THE CHORAL WORLD AND/OR OTHER MUSICIANS AS A NEW WCC MEMBER?

Don't bury your head in the sand, stay motivated and motivate your singers/choir. More harmonious times will come again. Please don't forget that the role of the choir board is incredibly important in times of pandemic. This board can keep the spirits of the choir up outside of the musical work. Little things, such as a weekly broadcast of pictures or memories, or a virtual „clubhouse“ where people meet online for a wine tasting, for example, give the entire group a sense of vibrancy and togetherness. With these team-building measures by the board members, major singer fluctuations are contained.

**Greetings from Giessen
Thommy**



EVENTS 2022



Choir Competitions and Festivals



04

VOX LUCENSIS – CONCORSO CORALE INTERNAZIONALE
April 9-13, 2022 | Lucca, Italy



05

WORLD FESTIVAL SINGERS
May 14-18, 2022 | Calella & Barcelona, Catalonia (Spain)



06

ON STAGE IN ISRAEL
June 22-26, 2022 | Tel Aviv, Israel



08

2ND RIGA SINGS - INT. CHOIR COMPETITION & IMANTS KOKARS CHORAL AWARD
August 17-21, 2022 | Riga, Latvia



08

SINGSATION RIGA
August 17-21, 2022 | Riga, Latvia



09

SING ALONG CONCERT BARCELONA
September 1-4, 2022 | Barcelona, Spain



09

4TH KALAMATA INTERNATIONAL CHOIR COMPETITION AND FESTIVAL
September 22-26, 2022 | Kalamata, Greece



09

10TH ISOLA DEL SOLE
September 25-29, 2022 | Grado, Italy



10

INTERNATIONALES CHORFEST MAGDEBURG
October 5-9, 2022 | Magdeburg, Germany



10

SING FOR GOLD – THE WORLD CHORAL CUP
October 12-16, 2022 | Calella & Barcelona, Catalonia (Spain)



10

DEUTSCHE CHORMEISTERSCHAFT 2022
October 21-23, 2022 | Koblenz, Germany



11

ON STAGE IN PRAGUE
November 10-13, 2022 | Prague, Czech Republic



11

LISBON SINGS
November 10-14, 2022 | Lisbon, Portugal



11

ON STAGE IN LISBON
November 10-14, 2022 | Lisbon, Portugal



WORLD FESTIVAL SINGERS

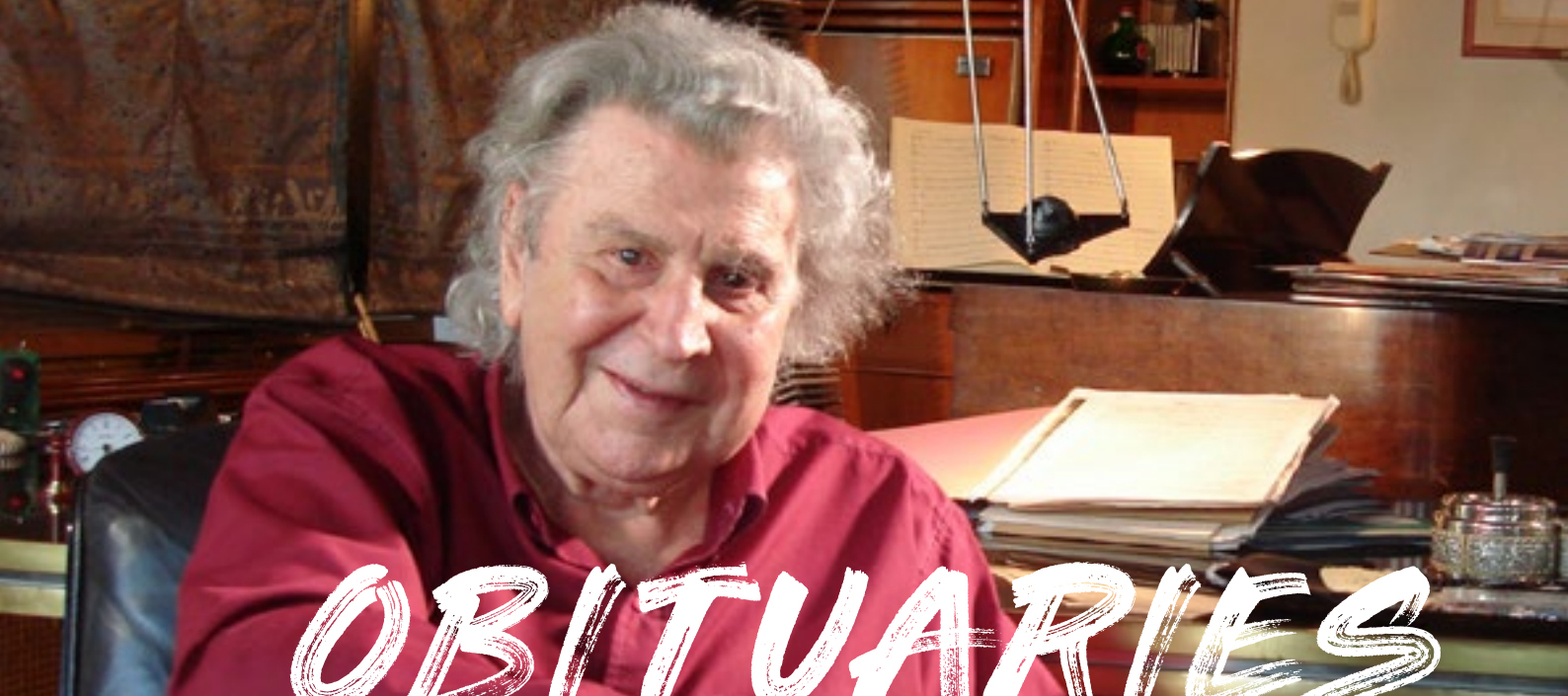
BACK ON STAGE WITH JAVIER BUSTO

May 14 - 18, 2022 | Calella & Barcelona, Catalonia (Spain)

INTERNATIONAL SING ALONG CONCERT



REGISTRATION DEADLINE:
MARCH 31, 2022



INTERKULTUR MOURNS THE DEATH OF MIKIS THEODORAKIS (GREECE)

HONORARY ARTISTIC PRESIDENT PASSES AWAY AT THE AGE OF 96

INTERKULTUR mourns the passing of its **Honorary Artistic President**, and one of the most important contemporary artists, the renowned Greek composer **Mikis Theodorakis**. He passed away on September 2, 2021 at the age of 96 in Athens, his homeland in Greece.

Mikis Theodorakis composed more than 1000 pieces of music combining the tradition of Greek folklore with modern poetry, as well as a large number of works for orchestra, including seven symphonies. In addition to his songs, he became most famous for his groundbreaking choral symphonic works *Canto General* (1982) (text: Pablo Neruda) and the oratorio „Axion Esti“ (1960) (text: Nobel Prize winner Odysseas Elytis), which ingeniously combined incomparable Greek folklore with the modern musical styles of the time. The music for the Oscar-winning film „Alexis Zorbas“ (1964) brought him international fame and marked a masterpiece that moved generations. Politically anchored in the progressive Greek movements and struggles of the post-war years, he served as his country's Minister of State in the 1990s and was even nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize at the time.

In 2007, after a personal meeting at his residence in Athens with INTERKULTUR President Günter Titsch and First Vice President Wang Qin, a closer cooperation with INTERKULTUR was established: immediately following this personal exchange, Mikis Theodorakis offered to support the artistic and peacemaking work of the Choir Olympic Movement and was consequently appointed one of the Honorary

Artistic Presidents of INTERKULTUR, the **World Choir Games** and the **World Choir Council**.

He was delighted to receive this distinction and has been supporting the organization ever since:

„I accept with enthusiasm and a sense of responsibility, aware of the scope and importance of this great international organization and the resonance of its activities. It has put its commitment at the service of one of the most meritorious acts in the field of musical practice and human existence: It provides for the dissemination of music in its highest, most ideal form, it unites people and peoples, and it brings euphoria to our inner world like few other things.“

Over the years, there have been frequent joint meetings and discussions between INTERKULTUR and Theodorakis. Most recently, he played a decisive role in the founding of the International Choir Competition & Festival in Kalamata, Greece. His piece „Sto perijali to krifo“ was **enthusiastically sung together** by all participating choirs there.

In Mikis Theodorakis, Greece and world culture lose one of its greatest contemporary artists and national folk heroes. The INTERKULTUR team and President **Günter Titsch** are with his family and loved ones in their thoughts and remain eternally grateful to him for his great support of the Choir Olympic Movement. They are proud to have such a personality, who had dedicated his life to the struggle for freedom and peace, in their ranks.

MOURNING FOR FÉLIX NASSI (BENIN)

*MEMBER OF THE WORLD CHOIR COUNCIL
PASSED AWAY*



INTERKULTUR is mourning for Mr. Félix Nassi, representative of the West African country of Benin in the World Choir Council. He passed away on December 10, 2021 after a serious disease.

As a member of the INTERKULTUR World Choir Council, Félix Nassi always supported the Choral Olympic movement and shared the idea of the World Choir Games in the choral communities throughout Africa.

Félix Nassi was one of the first that come in an international level of choral music in Africa. In his home country Benin he was an institution of choral music and always active for let the choirs grow in numbers and quality.

Félix Nassi was conductor of the choir and orchestra of the University of Abomey-Calavi, the principal public university in Benin and founder and director of several choirs, among them the Children's Choir of Benin.

Also he created the festival "Les Rencontres Polyphoniques du Bénin" and he was a sought-after international guest conductor and lecturer.

INTERKULTUR and the World Choir Council have lost a committed and active member that will be missed sorely at its future meetings. INTERKULTUR expresses its sincere condolences to his family, friends and beloved ones.

MOURNING FOR PROF. WU ZUQIANG

HONORARY ADVISOR PASSES AWAY AT THE AGE OF 95



INTERKULTUR is mourning for Prof. Wu Zuqiang, Honorary Advisor in the Honorary Committee of INTERKULTUR, World Choir Games and the World Choir Council. He passed away on March 14, 2022.

As the former Chairman of China Conservatory of Music and respected musician, Prof. Wu Zuqiang always supported the Choral Olympic movement and especially the choral development in China during the past decades. Prof. Wu Zuqiang, at that time, Honorary President of China Musicians Association, sent warm greetings to the 4th World Choir Games Xiamen in 2006: "Promote cooperation and development, sing for peace and friendship". In 2010 during the 6th World Choir Games in Shaoxing, Prof. Wu Zuqiang accepted the invitation to be the Honorary Advisor in the Honorary Committee.

Apart from being a famous composer and music educator, Prof. Wu Zuqiang had been promoting and supporting the idea of bringing people peace and love through music for all these years. This seems more previous today than ever.

INTERKULTUR and the World Choir Council have lost a long-time friend and mentor. INTERKULTUR expresses its sincere condolences to his family, friends and beloved ones. His spirit and music will be remembered and passed on to the future generation.

Honorary Artistic Presidents

Prof. Xiaoying Zheng (China)
Prof. Dr. Ralf Eisenbeiß (Germany)
John Rutter (Great Britain)
Dr. Hak-Won Yoon (Republic of Korea)
Prof. Dr. Morten Lauridsen (USA)

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World Choir Games

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