REAWAKENING OF THE CHORAL WORLD

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS FOR THE CHOIRS OF THIS WORLD |
A GLIMPSE INTO THE CHORAL LANDSCAPE OF KOREA |
UNITED LITHUANIAN CHILDREN’S CHOIR IN A VIRTUAL SEASON |
WORLD CHOIR GAMES 2021
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GREETING PRESIDENT GÜNTER TITSCH</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REAWAKENING OF THE CHORAL WORLD</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by Franziska Hellwig</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAT THE GLOBAL PANDEMIC EXPOSED AND WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT IT</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by Tim Sharp</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BACK TO SINGING: BELIEFS, ATTITUDES AND PERSONAL DISPOSITIONS IN THE RESUMPTION OF CHORAL ACTIVITIES</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by Henriette Brockmann</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMALL STEPS BACK TO COMMUNITY</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by Fred Sjöberg</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REQUIEM FOR THE VICTIMS OF COVID-19</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by David Slater</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNITED LITHUANIAN CHILDREN’S CHOIR IN A VIRTUAL SEASON</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by Ieva Krivickaitė</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CENTRAL TOPICS OF THE CHORAL WORLD - SURVEY</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by Henriette Brockmann</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW DOES A REGION BECOME A CENTER OF CHORAL MUSIC?</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by Susanne Schiller</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHOIR COMPETITIONS AND FESTIVALS 2021/2022</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GREAT SUCCESS FOR A WORLD CHOIR COUNCIL PILOT PROJECT</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by Henriette Brockmann</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A WARM WELCOME TO THE NEW MEMBERS OF THE WORLD CHOIR COUNCIL AND A STARTING POINT FOR THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE.</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by Francesco Leonardi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dear colleagues, dear friends,

The last few months have been marked by confidence and hope, and slowly the world is being once again filled with music. In many parts of this world, the choral scene is experiencing a revival. Choirs can rehearse together again - albeit still at a distance, outdoors and/or with masks - and singers can finally let their voices resound together again. You, as members of the World Choir Council, are now also telling us again and again about your first choir rehearsals, larger projects and even performances and concerts.

The euphoria that is sweeping through all of us about the resumption of choir life can be felt far and wide. It is truly a great joy for all of us and for me personally to see with what motivation and enthusiasm the choirs of this world take up a daily routine again, look forward to rehearsals, even if under more difficult conditions, and how they look forward to the first performance “after Corona”.

We as World Choir Council are also looking forward to the day when we can finally face each other again in person. For some of us, that day is not too far away at the 2021 World Choir Games in Flanders, Belgium, for the General Conference of the World Choir Council. I am very much looking forward to meeting all of you there - in person or virtually. Right now, it is the time for us to act as a community.

The choral world has suffered greatly from the ongoing pandemic and we now need to find ways to reinvigorate it, motivate it and bring it forward together.

The essence of the choral world, of choral music lies in the community - and we must strengthen this now more than ever!

I am sure that the World Choir Council can and will make an important contribution to the reconstruction of the choral world and I am looking forward to walking this path together with you.

I would also like to take this opportunity to especially thank the Council members Tim Sharp [USA] and David Slater [Australia] for your interesting guest contributions in the second issue of the digital magazine COUNCIL TALK.

We are all looking forward to what the coming months, the time “after Corona” will bring us, and I am very much looking forward to experiencing and shaping this time of revival together with you.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue, stay healthy and all the best.

Yours
Günter Titsch
THE REAWAKENING OF THE CHORAL WORLD

There is light at the end of the tunnel! Slowly, the choral world begins to awaken and resound again – not yet in all parts of the world, but hope is there. But how can this work after months of standstill and restrictions? And what do we take with us from this time of crisis?

by Franziska Hellwig

The COVID-19 pandemic was especially difficult for the choral world. Early on, the air emissions created by singing was identified as something that increased the transmission of the virus, and severe restrictions were put in place for singing together, whether in the rehearsal room, on stage, or even in church services.

The choral world suffered the consequences. No rehearsals, no performances, no competitions or tours – the stages of the world had fallen silent.

THE GOOD OUT OF THE HARD TIMES

Throughout this time, choir directors and singers have tried to maintain their passion for music and their community, taking advantage of new technologies. Online rehearsals via platforms such as Skype, Zoom and similar or virtual choir projects now dominated everyday choir life.

Even though these tools did not allow for musical excellence, due to the limitations in latency and sound quality, they greatly contributed to maintaining and, most importantly, growing the community. Collaborations and new projects, even across national borders, were facilitated and made possible. And this is where the new technologies and virtual space will probably continue to shape choral work in the future. The connection of people through a simple click, no matter where you are in the world, will continue to characterize the interaction of choirs as well as the exchange of choir leaders among each other in the years to come. As John Rutter, composer and Honorary Artistic President of INTERKULTUR, put it in an interview with The Oxford University Press: “I think [virtual choirs] have actually been a very good thing and I think they’re here to stay. You can join a virtual choir if you could not join a normal in the flesh choir – either because you live in a remote place or if your domestic circumstances make it hard for you […] And I know that a lot of the social benefits, not just the musical benefits of choir membership, still do apply in a virtual choir. […] You immerse yourself in the music and singing in itself is an expression of your deepest soul – but I would say that a virtual choir is an awfully good shot at a replacement and it’s something we’ve been forced to fall back on and develop during this last year. And I think it will not fade away.”

“THE MOST NORMAL THING, BUT IT’S NOW SUCH A JOY.”

Now the situation is slowly improving. The vaccination of the population is progressing in many countries of the world and incidence levels are declining. Of course, what is also becoming clear at the moment is how differently individual countries and governments are dealing with this widespread crisis. While some regions are already on their way to full vaccination coverage, there are other corners of the world where hardly any vaccine has yet arrived. It will be a while before the end of the crisis reaches everywhere on the globe.

But the choirs of the world are slowly starting to rehearse again and the first concerts are being planned. The anticipation of finally singing together again after such a long period of abstinence is tangible in many places and a great motivation for the singers and choir conductors.

In an interview with the Irish Times, World Choir Council member Bernie Sherlock, representing Ireland, reported on her first steps back to a certain normality. It is “great to be back to a version of normality. Everyone is so excited to be singing in person. To be able to hear other people. To be able to measure your intonation. To be able to hear other lines being sung. The most normal thing, but it’s now such a joy.”
ON THE WAY TO A NEW NORMALITY – HOW DO WE REBUILD OUR CHOIRS?

After months of restrictions and despair, the choral landscape is now slowly reawakening. But the damage Covid caused runs deep – and recovery is by no means a foregone conclusion.

In addition to the problems caused by hygiene requirements, distance regulations and safety concepts, many choir conductors now face the challenge of leading their choir back to a new normality. How can they motivate and encourage their singers to rehearse together again and look forward with confidence?

Rachael Finnerty, registered psychotherapist and music therapist from Canada, founder of the Music Therapy Academy, shared in a talk during the last World Choir Council Regional Meetings some proactive approaches and aspects from the field of music therapy for choral conductors to return to rehearsal rooms. She says: “We’re not used to being around big groups of people anymore or participating in events together. It’s going to feel strange to be around people again and it’s important to highlight that to your choristers before returning to the rehearsal room. Imagine you see a swimming pool and you are super excited to jump in. You swam in the same pool last year and you have good memories of the occasion. You jump in and to your shock you realize that the water is very cold. It’s not as you remembered it to be. Now, if someone had warned you that the water had not been heated, you would have entered the pool more slowly, taking precautions, eased your way into the pool more slowly. And that’s going to be your new role as conductor: easing the choristers back into the rehearsal by providing caution and moving slowly.”

https://interkultur.tv/a-proactive-return-to-the-rehearsal-room-world-choir-council-talk/
It is “great to be back to a version of normality. Everyone is so excited to be singing in person. To be able to hear other people. To be able to measure your intonation. To be able to hear other lines being sung. The most normal thing, but it’s now such a joy.”

Bernie Sherlock, Representative of Ireland in the World Choir Council

PERSPECTIVES FOR CHOIRS

In addition to returning to the rehearsal rooms, returning to the stage is also an important step. In some countries, the first small concerts can already take place, albeit still under restrictions, and planning is progressing in many places. Singers need this confidence now more than ever – and concerts, as a concrete goal and perspective, can be a source of it for them.

As Dr. Achim Tieftrunk, Chairman of the Board of the Singing School Koblenz, Germany, put it in an interview: “Choir events have the goal of bringing many people together: Choirs and people who listen to them with enthusiasm.” And for this, choir conductors should plan, set goals and give their choirs perspectives – an optimistic attitude is important and crucial. Concerts have the potential to be a post-pandemic catharsis – for both the singers and the audience!

Even if the process of reawakening the choral world will still take a while, it has started and there are perspectives for the choral scene, smaller and bigger stages waiting for you, and this should be used. Confidence is contagious and can inspire the community of the choir - make use of it!
## Choir Competitions and Festivals

### 3rd SING’N’PRAY KOBE
January 20–24, 2022 | Kobe, Japan

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

### VOICES & WINE ALBA
April 20–24, 2022 | Alba, Italy (Piedmont)

### 15th INTERNATIONAL CHOIR COMPETITION & FESTIVAL BAD ISCHL
April 27–1, 2022 | Bad Ischl, Austria

### SING FOR GOLD – THE WORLD CHORAL CUP
May 14–22, 2022 | Calella/Barcelona, Spain

### 12th WORLD CHOIR GAMES
July 4–14, 2022 | Gangneung/Gangwon, Republic of Korea

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

### 4th KALAMATA INTERNATIONAL CHOIR COMPETITION AND FESTIVAL
September 22–26, 2022 | Kalamata, Greece

### 10th ISOLA DEL SOLE
September 25–29, 2022 | Grado, Italy

### SING’N’JOY BOHOL
October 5–9, 2022 | Tagbilaran City, Bohol, Philippines

### INTERNATIONALES CHORFEST MAGDEBURG
October 5–9, 2022 | Magdeburg, Germany

### DEUTSCHE CHORMEISTERSCHAFT 2022
October 21–23, 2022 | Koblenz, Germany

### LISBON SINGS
November 10–14, 2022 | Lisbon, Portugal

## ON STAGE Festivals

### TEL AVIV, ISRAEL
March 9–13, 2022

### VERONA, ITALY
March 24–27, 2022

### FLORENCE, ITALY
May 19–22, 2022

### TIRANA, ALBANIA
June 8–12, 2022

### LISBON, PORTUGAL
September 9–12, 2022

### PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC
November 10–13, 2022

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*as of August 2021*
What have we learned in the pandemic? How could we improve our work and our efforts to become better conductors and teachers? Tim Sharp, World Choir Council representative USA, presents some thoughts and what he has learned from the crisis over the past months.

**SELF-DISCIPLINE AND ROUTINE**

The restrictions on our daily and public lives in recent months have caused us to lose our self-discipline and routine. This affects not only our work but also our social life. Even if we had much more time on hand – we did not go anywhere, neither to the cinema nor to the restaurant – the extra time was not really used.

There was a lot of lamentation about people missing singing, missing music, but each of us would have had the opportunity, and especially the time, to sing. However, the pandemic has made it clear that it is not about singing per se, but above all about the community and the joy of singing with others.

As choir conductors, we tried to keep the singers in a routine with singing exercises, but it didn’t work. The topics of self-discipline and autonomous learning have taken on a whole new significance in recent times. It has become clear that, as a choir director, you have to work harder to teach the singers a certain autonomy so that, should they find themselves on their own again, they can maintain a routine. Here, for example, it is a good idea to rehearse a warm-up routine with the singers, which they can also perform independently outside the choir and before the start of choir rehearsals at home.

**AUTONOMY WITHIN COMMUNITY**

Choir conductors have to learn to translate autonomy within community. All too often, we rely on the alpha singers, the better singers, in rehearsals and in our work. This affects not only the choir conductor but also the fellow singers who depend and lean on them. That’s a good thing and we use those people, those little cells, to build others up and to strengthen the group. But when that is taken out of the mix, it leads to a failure of the others. So, more effort should be put into self-reliance within the community.
"My life flows on in endless song; 
Above earth's lamentation, 
I hear the sweet, tho' far-off hymn
That hails a new creation; 
Thro' all the tumult and the strife
I hear the music ringing; 
It finds an echo in my soul
How can I keep from singing?"  

Robert Lowry

**PERFORMANCE MOTIVATES**

If there was ever any doubt about it, the pandemic has clearly shown it: Performances motivate! Losing concerts took away the motivation for many to show up at all, to do the work, to give their personal best. There was no perspective and no goal. As a result, many singers gave up.

Even if performances were made possible in virtual space, this could not fully replace the special feeling of the stage and achievement. One lesson to be learned: Y ou have to think about a plan B. Performances were a great motivator, but we lost it – and this affects not only the singers of the choir but also other stakeholders and funding sources.

**SCALABILITY HAS DICTATED METHODOLOGY**

The methodology of choral work is based on conductors standing on a podium and giving instructions to a large group. This was taken away from us.

Out of the new situation has come a huge need for individualized learning. Most choir directors had to work on going beyond the alpha students. We had to dig deep into our students’ lives to get them involved and motivated.

Although choir rehearsals will return to this greater scalability of dictating and shouting out commands to the larger group, choir conductors are left with the valuable experience of the last months. We can continue to benefit from the individualized approach to each singer and the newfound skills in individualized teaching, even after the crisis, to focus on students who are sometimes difficult to reach.

**PODIUM SYNDROME**

In this time of crisis, we also had to face the question, who are we doing all this for? For the singers we are teaching or for us?

The pandemic has revealed what I call „Podium Syndrome.” It was a narcissistic year in which it became clear for whom it was about the singers and students and for whom it was about themselves. The motivations of conductors were exposed this year, and we need to strongly evaluate what it is we are called to do as conductors and teachers.

Tim Sharp is an active choral conductor, researcher, and writer, who has varied his career with executive positions in higher education, recording and publishing. For many years he was the Executive Director of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) representing choral activity in the United States to the International Federation for Choral Music (IFCM).

Prior to his leadership of ACDA, Sharp was Dean of Fine Arts at Rhodes College, Memphis, TN, and earlier, Director of Choral Activities at Belmont University, Nashville, TN. He has conducted university, community, church and children’s choirs, and continues to serve as choral conductor and clinician in the United States and internationally.
How do choir singers and conductors experience the resumption of choir activities during the pandemic? What individual attitudes, beliefs and fears do they experience and share, and what conclusions can be drawn for future choral work? These questions were investigated by researchers from the Universities of Padua and Milan during the last months, on the suggestion of INTERKULTUR.

METHODOLOGY: WHAT WAS THE TOPIC OF THE RESEARCH AND WHO PARTICIPATED?

Based on fifteen interviews with a group of choral singers, the researchers had created an online questionnaire, which was then presented by INTERKULTUR to the relevant target group of international choral singers.

More than 400 participants responded to the survey, and every questionnaire which was completed more than 80% was then included in the study by the researchers. The respondents were predominantly female (58.8%) and aged from 18 to 78 years (average age 52.64 years).

The research included three main sub-areas regarding the impact of the COVID pandemic on choral work: first, the assessment of the likelihood of infection during rehearsal, second, the benefits of anti-COVID measures during rehearsal, and finally the possible negative impact of the restrictions on the choral experience.

RESULTS: WHAT WERE THE MAJORITY RESPONSES OF THE PARTICIPANTS?

Respondents ranked the likelihood of infection highest in the following cases:

- Presence of a person with an asymptomatic infection.
- Saliva droplets emitted by choir singers while singing
- Aerosols that accumulate in the room during the rehearsal.

The safety of personal protective equipment was less in doubt, and the possibility of transmission through contact with objects or clothing was also considered less dangerous.

Furthermore, respondents rated ventilation of the room, a safe distance between choir members, and frequent hand disinfection as the most useful measures against the spread of the virus during rehearsal. In contrast, the use of face shields and plastic-coated sheet music was not considered useful.

When asked about the negative effects of anti-COVID measures on choir performance, it was found that wearing a mask and/or face shield while singing and singing in open (outdoor) spaces or with dividers between choir members tended to have negative effects on the choir’s performance. In contrast, a large distance between choristers and rehearsals in large enclosed indoor spaces were found by respondents to have less negative effects on choral performance.
EVALUATION: WHAT ARE THE CONCLUSIONS TO BE DRAWN FROM THE SURVEY RESULTS?

The evaluation of the questionnaire showed that especially the age of the respondents, the genre of choir, the type and the section of voices in the choir had no influence on the answers to a great part of the questionnaire. However, a clear relationship with the psychological aspects of the questionnaire could be seen: The results show that certain individual views have a positive influence on the perceived usefulness of restrictions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in choral activities. Specifically, individuals who have a higher appreciation of life and see meaning in their existence, who also have a greater openness to new experiences and a higher perception of the risk associated with COVID-19, consider prevention measures to be more useful and are therefore more willing and able to follow them.

Moreover, risk perception is inversely related to an individual’s optimism: the higher the optimism of the individual, the lower the individual’s risk perception was to be rated.

Accordingly, subjective risk perception [in its cognitive and emotional components] proved to be a crucial factor influencing the perception of the likelihood of infection and the perceived usefulness of the restrictions. Because risk perception is a factor that is strongly influenced by numerous variables [e.g., the way in which information about risks is conveyed], it is possible to promote appropriate, i.e. realistic, risk perception among participants in order to better assess the individual risks associated with resuming choral activities.

TIPS FOR APPLYING THE STUDY RESULTS IN PRACTICE

Based on their study results, the researchers finally recommend the following points which can help to develop the everyday work with a choir in a positive way, also and especially in times of pandemic:

• Provide chorus members with realistic views regarding the risk and danger of chorus work, i.e., especially reduce those fears and worries that are in fact unfounded
• Communicate important tips for resuming safe choral practices to choristers
• Create action plan to reinforce positive personal attitudes, thus enhancing the optimism of the choristers, and from this create a positive and relaxed mood for choral work.

We would like to thank the researchers for their support and hope that their study will help to promote choral singing even in times of pandemic and to take place in a safe setting.
Dear choral friends

I think we can all agree that this last year has been something extraordinary that none of us could have foreseen or predicted. Choral life has suffered tremendously, and there is a great need and expectation from singers all over the world to participate in choral activities again. We are striving for this to be the case in the near future.

The World Choir Council has not been resting during this period. We have been very active and we are grateful to all of you for your feedback, support and activities to develop the WCC into a strong international choral platform!

I am very pleased that we all came together again at the Online Regional Meetings at the end of August and continued working together for the future of the choral world. Based on your wishes, we focussed more on communication and direct exchange with each other at these meetings, and I think that it was exciting and very special as always when we meet.

It is an even greater pleasure for me to be able to meet at least some of you again in person in the fall at the General Conference during the World Choir Games in Flanders. After we could hold our big conference only online last year, this year for the first time we will hold a hybrid meeting where part of our members will be present on site and part will participate virtually. And I'm sure we are all looking forward to next year, when hopefully we will be able to hold our General Conference again as a regular on-site meeting in Gangneung, Republic of Korea, at the 12th World Choir Games.

I know, we are all full of anticipation to finally being able to enter a stage again with our choirs, to sing and perform together.

The music, but above all the feeling of (choir) community is missing – and slowly, step by step, we are trying to get back to it.

An important step in this process will be the World Choir Games in Flanders from October 30 to November 7, 2021. To allow the entire choral world to participate in this great event, a hybrid solution will also be offered for on-site as well as virtual participation. And even if the scope of the event had to be adjusted and some parts of the program had to be rethought, it will be a special and emotional moment for all involved to finally fill big stages with singing again after such a long time.

The choral world is on its way back to community and the 11th World Choir Games offer the best opportunity to do so after the pandemic.

In the meantime, I hope that you will be able to resume your choir activities soon and that our paths will cross again sooner than we can imagine.

Fred Sjöberg
Senior Artistic Director INTERKULTUR & Vice President World Choir Council
EVENTS & PROJECTS 2021/2022

WCC MAGAZINE – COUNCIL TALK
A NEW DIGITAL MAGAZINE WITH DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT THE WORK OF THE WORLD CHOIR COUNCIL, ITS MEMBERS AND CURRENT NEWS FROM THE CHORAL WORLD
Digital Publication twice a year – JAN and AUG

HELLO COUNCIL
VIRTUAL LIVE TALKS – CONNECTING THE CHORAL WORLD
Sep 24, 2021 | Nov 13, 2021

WCC CHORAL TOPICS - VIDEO PROJECT
GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER AND SHARING KNOWLEDGE - EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCE BETWEEN MEMBERS AND THE CHORAL WORLD
Publication of a new video on every 15th of the month

ONLINE REGIONAL MEETINGS
ONLINE DISCUSSION ROUNDS WITH THE MEMBERS OF YOUR REGION ON CURRENT TOPICS – EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCE AND INFORMATION
AUGUST:
Aug 25, 2021 ASIA, PACIFIC, MIDDLE EAST
Aug 25, 2021 NORTH, CENTRAL & SOUTH AMERICA
Aug 26, 2021 AFRICA, EUROPE

WORLD CHOIR COUNCIL GENERAL CONFERENCE
THE WCC GENERAL CONFERENCE AT THE WORLD CHOIR GAMES 2021 IN FLANDERS, BELGIUM
NOV 3, 2021

*Dates might be subject to change.
World Choir Council c/o INTERKULTUR
Ruhberg 1, 35463 Fernwald (Frankfurt/Main) Germany, worldchoircouncil@interkultur.com
interkultur.com

as of July 2021
REQUIEM FOR THE VICTIMS OF COVID-19

This article presents a new choral work with a serious purpose
by David Slater

In the midst of a global pandemic, with no choirs and orchestras to work with for 18 months, what is there to do? When it is not possible to rehearse and perform together, a marvellous opportunity is created to work alone. And so, after returning from Europe and unable to leave Australia, David Slater used the time to compose a new Requiem. The idea to compose this work first came from our World Choir Council colleague in Portugal, Myguel Castros e Santo. They have worked together at various World Choir Council and INTERKULTUR events over several years, and in 2019 in Sweden they discussed the idea of composing a new Requiem. David is grateful to Myguel for planting the seed of this idea, though how it would work out took almost 18 months to realize.

A busy conducting schedule and other compositions delayed commencement of the project, yet when everything stopped with Covid restrictions, the time was right to work intensely on it for several months. As the pandemic worsened and spread around the world, the idea grew and the resulting work is now complete.

It is called Requiem for the Victims of COVID-19. It is 55-60 minutes long and scored for soprano and tenor soloists, large chorus and orchestra. It is composed, keeping in mind the original discussion in Gothenburg, in a style that is designed to be greatly engaging for the choirs who sing it and audiences who listen, while always reflecting on the solemn texts of the Latin Requiem. This was critical for David as he worked on the piece – that the music should convey a deeply meaningful interpretation of the texts while communicating freely with both singers and audiences.

The musical language is loosely tonal/modal, and draws on past and more recent choral traditions. The sound-world of the Requiem is therefore never too distant. There are moments of anguish, of great intensity, and of grandeur, while at other times there is quiet beauty and opportunity for contemplation. Some small moments in the work hint, though not too obviously, at the great Requiem of Mozart, Verdi and Fauré in honour of these earlier masterpieces.

As well as the orchestral score, a vocal score with organ reduction of the orchestral parts is also available. The choral parts are written so that amateur and student choirs can learn and sing the Requiem without undue pressure, and professional choirs will not require excessive rehearsal time.

From the beginning the goal was for singers from many cities, or even countries, to gather to perform the work as a large combined choir. The performances would raise funds to be donated where need is the greatest, perhaps to medical organizations, vaccine distribution in poorer countries, maybe even to the families of victims.

David Slater is a composer, conductor and music educator with over 40 years’ experience on four continents. He studied composition with Peter Sculthorpe and Ross Edwards in Australia and on scholarship in Germany with Helmut Lachenmann. He has twice been shortlisted for Australia’s richest composition prize. He studied conducting with Stuart Challender, Chief Conductor of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and has conducted Australian, Asian, American and European orchestras and choirs. He has lectured at the Australian National University School of Music, and been Director of Music at several prestigious Australian colleges. David has received numerous scholarships and awards, among them the Symphony Australia Prize, the National Orchestras of Australia Prize, and Australia Day honors for services to music. He is a juror and workshop lecturer at many international music festivals and represents Australia on the World Choir Council.
THE WORK IS STRUCTURED AS FOLLOWS:

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<td>II Kyrie eleison</td>
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<td>chorus and orchestra</td>
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<td>III Sequence</td>
<td>Rex tremendae</td>
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<td>Confutatis</td>
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<td>Hostias</td>
<td>soprano and tenor soli and orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V Sanctus</td>
<td></td>
<td>chorus and strings</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VI Agnus Dei</td>
<td></td>
<td>chorus and orchestra</td>
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<td></td>
<td>VII Communion</td>
<td>Lux aeterna</td>
<td>chorus and orchestra</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Libera me</td>
<td>tenor solo, chorus and orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VIII In Paradisum</td>
<td></td>
<td>chorus and orchestra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IX Amen</td>
<td></td>
<td>chorus and orchestra</td>
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The Pie Jesu, Agnus Dei, Lux aeterna and In Paradisum can be performed acapella, individually or together as a short suite. The Lacrimosa and Sanctus can be performed with chorus and strings.

David is now seeking interest from choirs and organizations around the world to perform this new work. His hope is that choirs from several cities, regions or even countries will come together to rehearse the Requiem, and perform it with orchestra as a tangible way to live out the INTERKULTUR ideal – Singing together brings nations together.

After costs are recovered (by fees for participating choirs, ticket sales and donations, perhaps even by sponsorship) all money raised could be made available to assist where it is most needed in the pandemic response.

Computer-generated audio files are available online on Soundcloud.com and excerpts from the score can be provided by Dropbox link on request. The composer looks forward to discussions with you about the work and possible future collaborations to perform it when we are again able to meet and sing together. He can be contacted at any time by email at: david@bonvillemusicservices.com
UNITED LITHUANIAN CHILDREN’S CHOIR COMPLETED THEIR VIRTUAL SEASON

The United Lithuanian Children’s Choir – a project directed mostly towards children who have limited access to high quality music education – had to go virtual this choral season.

This enabled them to have an exciting and rewarding collaboration with choral conductors from all around the world.

by Ieva Krivickaitė

Unable to meet and sing live, 500 children in Lithuania completed a virtual season of United Lithuanian Children’s Choir (ULCC). It is a project directed mostly towards children who have limited access to high quality music education but love to sing nonetheless! The choir has been up and running since 2016, founded by Valerija Skapiene, head of the Ugnele Music School. It has since given an opportunity to perform in exceptional concert halls for almost 1000 children, some of whom have chosen to pursue a music career afterwards.

The choir normally meets live in Lithuania’s capital, Vilnius, once per month, but this year, Valerija Skapiene turned to Zoom. As difficult as working on Zoom with a choir is, it allowed her to invite colleagues from all over the world to virtually share their knowledge with the young Lithuanian singers.

As a result, the United Lithuanian Children’s Choir was taught by Panda van Proosdij from the Netherlands, Charlotte Botha from South Africa, Virginia Bono from Argentina, Zimfira Poloz from Kazakhstan (currently based in Canada) and Tracy Wong from Malaysia (based in Canada, too). Despite the language barriers – the children did not speak English at all – the choral experts from all over the world managed to find a way to communicate with them and teach them an interesting, high quality repertoire.

This year the choir learned songs under the theme of “Prayer for the World”, hoping to find some peace and comfort amid the difficult situation of the pandemic. The young singers enjoyed trying out prayers from different parts of the world and are now performing them with their choirs in their local concerts which have finally resumed in Lithuania.

The project is curated by CHILDREN’S CHOIR UGNELE and Lithuanian National Culture Centre.
United Lithuanian Childrens Choir with CHARLOTTE BOTHA

United Lithuanian Childrens Choir with VIRGINIA BONO

United Lithuanian Childrens Choir with ZIMFIRA POLOZ
CENTRAL TOPICS OF THE CHORAL WORLD – SURVEY

Now that choral singing is slowly reawakening from the restrictions during the pandemic, it’s time to take stock: where do we stand and what have been the consequences of the last 1.5 years for the international choral world? It is our wish to help the choirs of this world to regain their strength and to actively support them practically and theoretically on their way back on stage.

Therefore, we would like to put their individual interests in the focus. What are the current, relevant issues in the choral world? Which topics are of interest for choir conductors, composers and managers around the world? Where is a need for sharing knowledge and expertise and how can we jointly foster this?

If you have approximately 10 minutes left in your schedule, please help us to help you by answering some questions in our online survey.

Based on your answers we aim to expand our communication content and channels according to the topics you ask for. Therefore we would also appreciate to reach as many people as possible and kindly ask you to forward the link to the survey also to more conductors, choir managers, composers and any other choir-related people from your network.

Thank you for your support!

What challenging issues are you facing?

In which field would you need helpful advice or tips?

What is your personal goal in your field of choral work?

What kind of tools or knowledge would you need to reach it?

Join our survey now!

Click here
What challenging issues are you facing?

What is your personal goal in your field of choral work?

In which field would you need helpful advice or tips?

What kind of tools or knowledge would you need to reach it?

JULY 4-14, 2022

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Early Bird deadline: SEP. 22, 2021
Registration deadline: DEC. 1, 2021
HOW DOES A REGION BECOME A CENTER OF CHORAL MUSIC?

A look at the rapid development and significance of the South Korean choral scene.

by Susanne Schiller

"Welcome to the 12th World Choir Games in Gangneung." From July 4-14, 2022, hundreds of choirs from around the world will meet for the second time in the Republic of Korea. After the first event in 2002 in Busan, the largest international choir competition in the world will take place this time in the beautiful province of Gangwon on the east coast of South Korea.

In 2018, this was one of the venues of the Winter Olympics, which went down in history as the "Peace Games" due to the joint appearance of North and South Korea. This idea is now to be carried forward with the World Choir Games 2022. Between the East Sea on the one side and an impressive mountain backdrop on the other, the focus is on cultural exchange and the power of choral music to unite people, as is the case with all World Choir Games, in addition to the competition as such.

And where better to experience this than in a region whose choral music may not look back on the longest, but certainly on one of the most impressive developments?

KOREA’S CHORAL HISTORY BETWEEN CHRISTIAN TRADITION AND MODERNITY

Actually, it all began quite classically: Christian missionaries introduced Western music to Korea in the 1880s with the founding of educational institutions and churches. This gave rise to a choral tradition that was initially lived exclusively in churches and educational institutions for about 30 years.

Especially in the mid-twentieth century, during the period of independence from Japan and the Korean War, many choirs were established outside churches. In the 1960s, choral singing expanded to school and children’s choirs of all ages, and finally, in the 1970s, the government began to hold choral competitions for amateur choirs. The goal was to motivate people to sing together, thus strengthening the sense of community, patriotism, and awareness of the traditional heritage and culture of the “new country.” The National Chorus of Korea (NCK), founded in 1973, is considered Korea’s first professional choir. Its conductor Young-Soo Nah contributed greatly to the development of Korean choral music by motivating Korean composers to create works for choirs.

The founding of the first professional choir financed entirely by a private company, the Daewoo Choir in 1983, marked the time when choral music gained strong popularity outside the church.

There are now over 9,000 choirs in the Republic of Korea: in addition to very many church choirs, civic and professional city choirs, there are also a large number of amateur choirs of all ages. The importance of the choral scene in and for the Republic of Korea is reflected in the fact that regular and annual programs of public organizations provide financial support to the choirs, so that the scene is constantly expanding both stylistically and numerically (see info box).
COLORFUL, LIVELY AND HIGHLY EMOTIONAL - KOREANS LOVE SINGING IN CHOIRS

Today, Korea’s choral life is colorful, lively in all age and social groups, extremely diverse and characterized by traditions as well as current singing techniques and musical trends.

In addition to church choral music, the classic Korean folk song „Arirang”, first mentioned in writing in 1896, is still at the top of the choral singing hit list. By far the best known Korean folk song, it exists in countless local variations. It is considered a symbol of harmony and was added to UNESCO’s list of intangible world cultural heritage in 2012.

However, especially in modern choral singing, there are also many global trends (including European romanticism and American pop music), which are often combined with local content and country-specific feelings. One thing is certain, Koreans love to sing: thousands of karaoke venues in the country bear witness to this. How good they are at it is proven by the many famous Korean singers who are successful on the opera stages of Europe. Above all, however, Koreans use music to express emotions. Thus, Korean choral music always includes the lyrical sensibility of the Korean people.

Two major choral associations, the Korean Federation for Choral Music (KFCM) and the Korean Choral Directors Association (KCDA), support the further development and promotion of choirs as well as that of up-and-coming conductors and composers.

The classic: “Arirang” – in 2012 it was included by UNESCO in the list of intangible world cultural heritage. [Arirang, lyrical folk song in the Republic of Korea - YouTube]

“Arirang” - Ansan City Choir, conducted by Dr. Shin-Hwa Park
WORLD-RENOWNED CONDUCTORS ARE COMMITTED TO THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE KOREAN CHORAL SCENE

Dr. Hak-Won Yoon, world-renowned conductor, Honorary Artistic President of INTERKULTUR, and often referred to as the grandfather of the Korean choral scene, has played a major role in this brilliant development. Already at the beginning of his conducting career in 1970, it was a great concern of his to establish connections between Korean and global choral music. With choirs such as the Seoul Ladies’ Singers, the World Vision Children’s Choir, the Daewoo Choir and the Incheon City Chorale, he pursued two main goals: to take domestic choral music around the world and, at the same time, to promote the popularization of choral music in the Republic of Korea. All these choirs are now world famous.

Many musical talents have followed Dr. Hak-Won Yoon, who teaches composition at Joong-Ang University and is the founder of Seoul Chorus Center, into the choral world. Among them is his son Euijoong Yoon, who is now the conductor and artistic director of the National Chorus of Korea and is also contributing his professional experience as one of the artistic directors to the peace-building World Choir Games 2022.

With them and other great choral leaders, Yoon has managed to unite and reshape the Korean choral scene.

WISHES FOR THE FUTURE OF CHORAL SINGING IN THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

For the future, Dr. Hak-Won Yoon as well as Dr. Shin-Hwa Park (representative of the Republic of Korea in the World Choir Council, professor at the Ewha Womans University, conductor of the Ansan City Choir and the Ewha Chamber Choir and former president of the Korean Federation for Choral Music (KFCM)) wish that they will succeed in inspiring even more young singers for choral singing. They see the World Choir Games with their motto „Singing together brings nations together“ in July 2022 as a great opportunity for the further development of the amateur choir scene - not only in South Korea - due to their immense external impact.

A desire for peace and connection, manifested by the fact that friendship concerts are planned at the DMZMuseum in the demilitarized zone between North and South Korea.

So let’s go to what Han-Geun Kim, mayor of Gangneung, calls „a romantic city full of coffee, sea, pine scent and charm, where the customs and dignity of thousands of years of history come alive.“ May the choirs of the world carry the legacy of „peace and prosperity“ of the 2018 Winter Olympics to the 2022 World Choir Games!
"Chorus is the basis of music. Chorus is something you do with someone other than yourself. If you want to be together, you naturally develop social skills because you think about other people and consider whether the balance is right. The best activity to develop character is choral singing."

DR. HAK-WON YOON
(world-renowned conductor, Honorary Artistic President of INTERKULTUR)

“This event will be an opportunity for another choral boom in Korea” - Interview with Prof. Hak-Won Yoon, Host City News

"As the Korean representative of the World Choir Council, I feel very happy and honored that the World Choir Games will be held in Gangneung in Korea in 2022. I believe it will be the biggest choir festival in Korean choral history."

DR. SHIN-HWA PARK
(Representative of the Republic of Korea in the World Choir Council)
CHOIR COMPETITIONS AND FESTIVALS
2021 / 2022

The choral world is reawakening from the troubles of the pandemic more and more. We’re happy that we can contribute to restart music and culture with some great perspectives for the fall 2021 and the first half of 2022. Our most important highlights are:

11th WORLD CHOIR GAMES FLANDERS 2021 – ON SITE AND VIRTUALLY
OCTOBER 30 – NOVEMBER 7, 2021

The international choral world will celebrate the 11th edition of the world’s largest international choir competition in fall 2021 - with the health, wellbeing and safety of all participants and visitors as a top-priority!

Choirs still have the chance to decide for a participation and live performance in Belgium, but if they are not able to travel, the World Choir Games 2021 will open a new chapter in the event’s history: The additional competition part “Virtual Competition” will enable all choirs worldwide also to participate in the event online and to make the dream of singing without borders come true.

Singers can present themselves on their very own virtual stage in various categories: The option „Virtual Competition Performance“ offers categories for Children’s and Youth Choirs, Adult Choirs, Pop/Jazz/Gospel/Spiritual and Folklore. Choirs are requested to film their performance as if it were a real competition performance.

Alternatively, choirs have the opportunity to compete in the “Video Clip (Virtual Choir)” section. Here, a so-called “Virtual Choir” video is required, which means that the singers record their voices individually and film themselves doing so. In post-production, all the voices are combined to form a large choir. The Virtual Choir competition is offered in the categories “A Cappella” and “With Accompaniment”.

For the spectators and stay-at-home-singers a Virtual Village will be set up where singers will have the opportunity to follow the event in Flanders online. In addition to the Virtual Competition Categories, the Opening and Closing Ceremonies for instance will also be streamed here.

From May 14-22, 2022, Calella and Barcelona, two of the most popular destinations on Spain’s Costa de Barcelona, will once again be dedicated to choral music: With SING FOR GOLD and the final round for the World Choral Cup, INTERKULTUR presents a new event that will inspire choirs and from all over the world and their audience alike!

SING FOR GOLD is an international choral competition where choirs will not only sing for medals and a place in the INTERKULTUR World Rankings – but where it gets really exciting in a final round: The best choirs from 10 different competition categories will once again compete in front of the jury and sing for the golden winner’s trophy – the World Choral Cup, which will be awarded for the first time in 2022!

After 20 years, the World Choir Games are coming back to Korea: The city of Gangneung, located in the Gangwon province, is the second Korean city after Busan in 2002 to host the world’s largest international choir competition. Gangwon-do is experienced in hosting major international events: In 2018 it was the venue of the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, which went down in history as the “Peace Games” The option „Virtual Competition Performance“ due to the joint appearance of North and South Korean athletes. A perfect place for the unifying power of choral music to become an even more significant international symbol of peace.

12th WORLD CHOIR GAMES GANGNEUNG 2022 – THE KOREAN CHOIR GAMES OF PEACE
JULY 4-14, 2022
OCT. 30 - NOV. 7, 2021, FLANDERS, BELGIUM

GENERAL CONFERENCE
NOV. 3, 2021

STRONGER TOGETHER
WITH MUSIC, LIVE AND VIRTUAL SURPRISES

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GREAT SUCCESS FOR A WORLD CHOIR COUNCIL PILOT PROJECT

Regional Conferences and more took place as a hybrid event – live and virtually

Three regional meetings of the World Choir Council took place on August 25 and 26, 2021, where its members came together online to discuss current topics from the international choral scene.

The Regional Meetings were organized as a hybrid event for the first time. More than 100 participants from all over the world attended the meetings, including members of the World Choir Council and invited guests. The three conferences happened online with several additional events taking place at the same time in the City of Chengdu, China.

“The ‘International Music Capital’ Chengdu played an elementary role, as a large part of the World Choir Council events took place live there. Participants from all over the world were digitally connected to the choral music workshops, master classes and a special symposium. The conference brought us a big step closer to our common goal of seeing choirs live on the stages of the world again. Special thanks to the City of Chengdu and the Chengdu Musical Fun Management Committee for the opportunity and to the China Chorus Association as well as "Chorus China" of Chinese Musicians Association for the opportunity”, says Mr. Günter Titsch, President of INTERKULTUR & World Choir Council hoping that this pilot project will lead to many other editions in the future.

In the regional meetings with council members from North, Central and South America questions of Environmental Sustainability were discussed and the participants tried to find solutions on how to use their voices for a positive change. Also, they tried to find answers to the question on how children and youth choirs can be encouraged to sing again.

The last of the three regional conferences took place on August 26 with members from Europe and Africa. They addressed one of the biggest challenges of our times, namely to affect positive change in communities or countries where different ideologies are at odds within the population, and exchanged ideas around the use of choirs and choral singing as a vehicle to reach this goal. Further they discussed the different learnings from the Covid pandemic: What lessons can be learnt from the past 1,5 years and which rehearsal methods will live on?

All members of the World Choir Council who participated in the meeting were happy about the possibility of exchange with other choir experts, especially with regard to cultural differences, different measures and approaches in relation to the pandemic and the work with choir singers.

First Vice President of INTERKULTUR & World Choir Council, Ms Qin Wang was pleased about the wonderful opportunity to come together with the World Choir Council live and virtually through this pilot project: "In the pandemic, our goal is to unite together, support each other and to help and motivate our choirs to return to the stage as soon as possible. Our hybrid event was a great start to reach this goal and I’m sure we will continue on this path in our future global and regional projects.”

INTERKULTUR & World Choir Council hope to continue the exchange in the future and to use the results to tailor future projects even better to the needs of the choral scene. For this purpose there will be an additional survey.

The topics of the three regional meetings varied for the different regions with the meeting for Asia-Pacific, Middle East and China focusing mainly on the role of choral music in boys’ education and on problems and challenges especially composers and arrangers are facing during the pandemic.

The next General Conference of the World Choir Council which traditionally gathers all council members at one place, is already being planned to take place on November 3, 2021 in Flanders, Belgium during the 11th World Choir Games.
A WARM WELCOME TO THE NEW MEMBERS OF THE WORLD CHOIR COUNCIL AND A STARTING POINT FOR THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE.

The Regional Committee is a new body of the World Choir Council structure. It consists of members of the choral music world, including conductors, composers, music educators, choral managers and key players in the choral community. They are a group of professionals that have a big network in their communities and are developing innovative projects with their choirs, involving new generations of singers and always keeping in mind that the exchange of experiences in an international level is crucial for a choir’s development.

Each member represents a different region of the world. They share INTERKULTUR’s vision and support our World Choir Events.

THE MEMBERS OF THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE ARE:

RYAN GOESSL
SOUTH KOREA (AND USA) - ASIA

Ryan Goessl is an American choral and orchestral conductor, residing in South Korea. He is the Executive and Artistic Director of the choirs and orchestra of Camarata Music Company. He is the conductor of the Camarata Chorale, Camarata Chamber Singers, and Camarata Chamber Orchestra. He also teaches private voice lessons and music appreciation, and oversees the entire organization. In addition to Camarata Music Company, Goessl is also on the faculty of Music at Hongik University, and is a past professor of music at Hansei University, where, among teaching classes, he was the conductor of the Chapel Choirs.

In 2012, Camarata Music and Goessl were recognized for their commitment to choral music and culture in Korea by the former president of Korea, MyungBak Lee, and the Korean government.

In 2014, he assumed a new post as the Arts Ambassador for the Korea Business Leaders Association. In 2015, he was awarded by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for his commitment to choral and sacred music to the country of Korea, and in 2018, has been awarded the „Honorary Citizen of Seoul” award by Mayor of Seoul, Won-soon Park, a prestigious award given to those who have shown their love and dedication to the city of Seoul.

Ensembles under his leadership have sung over 300 performances throughout Korea, and have included members from 104 different countries. One of the most diverse music organizations worldwide, the choirs of Camarata regularly collaborate with governments from all over the world, represented in Korea, by performing for national days, cultural events, and various other performances, in collaboration with various embassies and ambassadors.
TRISTAN MEISTER
GERMANY - EUROPE

Tristan is a freelance conductor based in Mannheim, in the South-West of Germany. He is really glad to have the opportunity of working with choirs of very different styles, ages and repertoire, including the male chamber choir Ensemble Vocapella Limburg, the semi-professional choir Vox Quadrata or the philharmonic choir Beethovenchor Ludwigshafen. Tristan loves the very important work with young voices and singers: He’s the artistic director of the boy’s and male section of Cantus Juvenum Karlsruhe and of the Jugendchor Hochtaunus, a mixed youth-choir, which is regularly invited to nationwide festivals. A big part of his profession is also the work as a conducting teacher at the University of Music in Frankfurt am Main, where he’s trying to help young musicians finding their way and style of musical expression and transferring it to the singers in their choir. So nearly all of his work is about connecting music loving people and that’s why he is really looking forward to bring these experiences to the World Choir Council and to learn from the great colleagues from all over the world.

CARRIE TENNANT
CANADA – NORTH AMERICA

Carrie Tennant is the founder and artistic director of the Vancouver Youth Choir. For the past 15 years, she has worked primarily with youth, developing leadership and artistry with young singers. Her choirs have been featured at Chorus America, Podium (Choral Canada), and National ACDA conferences, and have twice been awarded first place in the National Choral Competition. During her time conducting the Coastal Sound Youth Choir, their popular Indiekör shows were recognized with Choral Canada’s National Award for Innovation.

Currently, on top of her work with VYC, Carrie is an Affiliate Conductor with the Vancouver Chamber Choir, and a frequent clinician, adjudicator and guest conductor across North America. Carrie is the editor and curator for two choral series; the Vancouver Youth Choir Choral Series (Cypress Publishing), and the brand-new Carrie Tennant Choral Series (Hal Leonard). In a past life, before she had two small and very lovely children, Carrie also toured, performed and recorded with her husband Scott as a member of Vancouver-based indie-pop group, The Salteens (Boompa Records).
JULIO MORALES
MEXICO – CENTRAL/SOUTH AMERICA

Choral director, composer, arranger, pianist and music educator born in Tampico, Tamaulipas, Mexico. Founding director of the Vox Populi Project, an ensemble that promotes the popular rhythms of Mexico through Latin pop a cappella since 2012. He has been selected on five occasions to be part as a composer-in-residence of the “Cantaré” Project, organized by VocalEssence in Minneapolis, Minnesota and Chicago a Cappella in Chicago, Illinois. His music has been premiered in USA and in several countries in Europe, and Latinamerica. He is currently choral conductor in the Community Choir Program of the Instituto Veracruzano de la Cultura, and lives in Coatepec, Veracruz, with his wife and three dogs.

BERNARD KRÜGER
SOUTH AFRICA – AFRICA

Bernard Krüger is a conductor/composer/arranger from South Africa. He is currently the Director of Music at Kearsney College, a prestigious private school for boys. Under his direction, the Kearsney College Choir have won multiple medals and Champion titles at the World Choir Games and other competitions. From 2016-2020, he was also the Artistic Director of the Drakensberg Boys Choir, a dedicated choir school for boys. He loves to integrate movement and storytelling into his choral performances, and has a particular interest in making choral singing more accessible and interesting for boys and young men. Since 2011, Bernard has frequently served on the jury at choir competitions in countries like Germany, Latvia, Austria, Spain, and South Africa. He is in demand as a clinician and workshop facilitator, and choirs frequently commission him for arrangements, particularly of pop choral repertoire.
SING FOR GOLD
THE WORLD CHORAL CUP
Calella & Barcelona, Catalonia (Spain)
May 14-22, 2022

interkultur.com/calella2022
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Prof. Dr. Ralf Eisenbeis (Germany)
John Rutter (Great Britain)
Mikis Theodorakis (Greece)
Dr. Hak-Won Yoon (Republic of Korea)
Prof. Dr. Morten Lauridsen (USA)

Honorary Artistic Presidents in memoriam
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Prof. Paul Wehrle (Germany)
Christian Ljunggren (Sweden)
Prof. Eric Ericson (Sweden)

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First Vice-President: Qin Wang (China)
Vice-President: Stefan Bohländer (Germany)
General Secretary: Dr. Christoph Wirtz (Germany)

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Artistic Director: Johan Rooze (Netherlands/Republic of Korea)
Artistic Director: Romans Vanags (Latvia)

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Project Manager & Development: Francesco Leonardi (Italy)
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Carrie Tennant (Canada)
Prof. Tristan Meister (Germany)
Julio Morales (Mexico)
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*Member of the World Choir Council Board
World Choir Games

JULY 2024

NEW ZEALAND

AUCKLAND

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The World Choir Council is the highest and voluntary international advisory committee of INTERKULTUR. The members support and promote the exchange, progress and development of choral art and culture worldwide.