

Bright Colours, Great Singing: Music from All Over the World

Report on the Rimini International Choral Competition



By Giorgio Morandi, journalist and singer

Cardinal Angelo Scola, Archbishop of Milan, recently quoted a comment by Father Bernard Lonergan, that art brings out beauty, splendour, glory, and majesty; that little extra something which is found in all things but which disappears if you say that the moon is only earth and the clouds only water. This is a clear definition of the experience one undergoes when face to face with a work of art. The same is true of music, especially choral music, and this was what really came about at the Rimini International Choral Competition in October 2011.

The importance of singing together is often and widely discussed. Singing together means making a huge effort to collaborate with others in order to produce something, as a group, which would be impossible for the single individual to obtain. A group of singers, be they professionals or amateurs (in the true sense of the word, that they love making music, as the great choir conductor Mino Bordignon always used to say) is a brightly coloured group reflecting to perfection the world we live in: black, white, Latino, and Asian; Roman Catholics, Protestants, Moslems and Jews; small children, young people, adults and seniors; conservatives, liberals, independents and...fans of five o'clock tea. This is a unique and characteristic feature of the choral world; and this is just what was seen in Rimini from the 6th-9th October 2011 when the Rimini International Choral Competition took place for the fifth consecutive year. This highly respected event enjoys the patronage of the European Parliament, the President of the Italian Republic, the Emilia Romagna Region, the Province and Municipality of Rimini, FENIARCO (the Italian Federation of Regional Choral Associations), AERCO (the Emilia Romagna Regional Choral Association) and Fondazione Carim (Rimini Savings Bank).



*Regina Coeli Choir from
Cavite, Philippines;
Renalie d.C. Aquino,
conductor*

Twenty-nine choirs were admitted to the competition (but the choirs applying were considerably more than 29) coming mainly from Europe (18 choirs), but also from Russia (four choirs), South America (Argentina and Mexico, two choirs) and one choir from South Africa, the country which – through the Ekurhuleni Children's Choir (from Ekurhuleni, Gauteng, South Africa) – won the City of Rimini Grand Prix. The Ekurhuleni Children's Choir also won first place in Class C, Children's and Youth Choirs, and Class D, Folk and Gospel Choirs.

The Rimini International Choral Competition was organised by the Musica Ficta Association, Rimini; the artistic director was Prof. Andrea Angelini, who said "This event is not just about choirs competing against one another; the intention is to bring to the notice of the public the features and diversities of each group and each repertoire. And the competition takes place in the splendid setting of this ancient Roman city, famed for its beautiful beaches but deserving of even greater renown for its many vestiges of a glorious history."

To organise an event like this is a mammoth task, but the Artistic Director was able to call on a team of volunteers coordinated by the secretary for the event, Ms Annamaria Fonti, and a team of judges formed by musicians Milan Kolena (from Slovakia – President of the Jury), Lorenzo Donati, Matteo Unich, Stojan Kuret, Ilario Muro and Fabio Pecci. For our readers' information, here follows the complete list of the various classes included in the Rimini International Choral Competition, and the guidelines followed by the judges.

The classes included are as follows:

A – Equal Voice Choirs (Male or Female)

B – Mixed Voice Choirs

C – Children's and Youth Choirs (Male, Female, Mixed)

D – Folk or Spiritual/Gospel Choirs (Male, Female, Mixed)

X – City of Rimini Grand Prix (the choirs competing in this class were those who had already won first or second place in classes A, B and C above).

The judges' criteria were as follows:

- intonation
- fidelity to the score
- sound quality
- programme choice
- overall artistic impression

The event was greatly enriched by a number of collateral musical activities:

In the afternoon of Saturday, October 8th, the choirs, conducted by Prof. Angelini, provided the music for evening Mass at Sant'Agostino Church in Rimini;

In the evenings of Thursday 6th, Friday 7th, and Saturday 8th October, all the participating choirs were given the option of singing in non-competitive concerts at the Novelli Theatre in Rimini, which was also the competition venue. For this occasion, choirs were asked to present four pieces of music different from those chosen for the competition itself. And on Saturday evening, some of the choirs took part in a concert in the nearby town of Riccione.

The final concert in which the winning choirs competed for the City of Rimini Grand Prix was honoured by the presence in the audience of the President of ECA (the European Choral Association Europa Cantat) and President of FENIARCO Mr Sante Fornasier; the President of AERCO Mr Fedele Fantuzzi; and Ms Monique Lesenne, President of the Flemish Choral Association, from Belgium.

What more can I say, given the tyranny exercised by limitations of page space? How can anyone express, in just a few lines, the overwhelming tide of information, images, emotions and sensations flooding minds and hearts? Minds amazed by the multitude of people from all around the world, hearts overcome by such a wonderful sight and such a musical – and especially choral – marvel. The whole event was indescribable, and the emotions it aroused will long remain. How could anyone not be affected by it all?

Information:

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Competition Results

Class A – Equal Voice Choirs (Male or Female)

1. CHAMBER CHOIR OZARENIE – Moscow (Russia)
2. VOKALNA SKUPINA SOLZICE GS BREZICE – Brežice (Slovenia)
3. JUGENDCHOR KONSERVATORIUM WINTERTHUR – Winterthur (Switzerland)

Class B – Mixed Voice Choirs

1. MIXED CHOIR ODMEV – Kamnik (Slovenia)

2. PERBANAS INSTITUTE CHOIR – Jakarta (Indonesia)
3. ITS STUDENT CHOIR – Surabaya (Indonesia)

Class C – Children’s and Youth Choirs (Male, Female, Mixed)

1. EKURHULENI CHILDREN’S CHOIR – Ekurhuleni Gauteng (South Africa)
2. RODNIK CHAMBER CHOIR – Moscow (Russia)
3. CHILDREN’S CHOIR CONSONANCE – Moscow (Russia)

Class D – Folk or Spiritual/Gospel Choirs (Male, Female, Mixed)

1. ITS STUDENT CHOIR – Surabaya (Indonesia)
2. EKURHULENI CHILDREN’S CHOIR – Ekurhuleni Gauteng (South Africa)
3. PERBANAS INSTITUTE CHOIR – Jakarta (Indonesia)

City of Rimini Grand Prix:

EKURHULENI CHILDREN’S CHOIR (Ekurhuleni, Gauteng, South Africa), conducted by Christine Dercksen.

Other prizes awarded:

Best Director: BUDI SUSANTO YOHANES, ITS Choir – Surabaya (Indonesia)

Best Chamber Group (not more than 12 singers): VOCAL GROUP OCTACHORD – Rijeka (Croatia)

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