

Festival Youth Choirs in Movement

Shows Cheerful and Fun Choral Music

Press release by Sonja Greiner – General Secretary

Bonn, 11.7.2010 – On July 10th the festival “Youth Choirs in Movement” ended with two colourful, very diverse concerts. The Brückenforum in Bonn was filled twice on Saturday; there were more than 1.000 people in both final concerts, participants and local audience who had ventured to the place despite extreme heat. On stage mixed ateliers with up to 150 singers presented choral music of all kinds. The programme went from meditative improvisation with music from Wolfram Buchenberg, to German Folksongs presented in a humoristic way, Indian songs from North-America, the famous Japanese “Sakura” and even pop and rock for choirs. “I would never have believed that a choir concert can be so much fun” was the comment of one of the young people in the audience after the concert – he was probably especially fascinated by the presentation of the atelier “Sing & Swing” which presented pop songs in a kind of Live-Disco with coloured lights, combo sounds and break dance. The audience jumped up, clapped and danced even during the last song of the festival, the first performance of Harold Lenselink’s Song “Today”.

On July 7th about 500 young singers had arrived in Bonn, coming from different parts of Germany, Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Iceland, Israel, Russia, Spain, Switzerland and even Hong Kong – China. They mostly stayed in families with choirs from Bonn and the surrounding region which also

participated with around 500 people. Europa Cantat President Sante Fornasier and the Lord Mayor of Bonn Jürgen Nimptsch, patron of the event, opened the festival together in the frame of a welcoming concert in which three choirs sang in representation of all participants – a local choir from Bonn and the choirs from Iceland and Hong Kong. In order to bring the singers together, prepare the common singing in the workshops the following days and introduce the subject of the festival “choirs in movement”, Hans Cassa and Panda van Proosdij from the Netherlands improvised a sung chocolate recipe with the audience between two choirs.

On Thursday 20 choirs presented themselves in 2 hours so that all participants could listen to each other. The concert showed a vast variety of types of choirs, styles and ages. There were choirs with six to seven year olds, girls' choirs, mixed youth choirs and even a pure boys' choir with young boys and young men from Estonia. Sometimes there were only 9 singers on stage, sometimes there were over 50, some sang folk songs or contemporary music from their country, others chose pop songs or spirituals, and almost all of them moved in some way.

On Friday the choirs were distributed in halls and churches all over town and in the surrounding region, with two or three choirs per concert singing for each other and for the audience and in some cases even singing some songs together.

Choral conductors had a very special additional offer – the renowned conductor and educationalist Zimfira Poloz from Kazakhstan, living in Canada, showed in an open rehearsal with the Schedrik Choir from Germany, with which methods she improves the vocal work of the children, how she manages to produce a specific sound or how it is possible to create different moods in a concert.

The festival ended with the highlights, the two atelier concerts on Saturday. The singers of the festival had worked

for three mornings in internationally mixed workshops conducted by renowned conductors and had learned new songs and with movements. They learned everything by heart, with texts in German and English, Estonian or Japanese and practiced all movements including getting on and off stage. The result of the work was presented to the other participants of the festival and the Bonn audience on Saturday. In the first concert it was mostly the younger singers performing – they sang songs like “Prinz Ali” or the “Monkey Song” as well as “Singin’ in the Rain” and the German Folk Song “Wenn der Pott aber nun ein Loch hat” but also “Silere et Audire” by Wolfram Buchenberg which Yoshi Mathias Kinoshita (Japan/Germany) started with an improvisation. The audience was noisy, nothing seemed to be happening on stage after the previous workshop had left – then suddenly small groups of 5 singers sitting all over the hall in the audience started talking in different languages and shouting things to each other, as if they were undisciplined listeners.



*Participants of workshop 3
“Musical Journey around the
World” dir. Sanna Valvanne,
Finland Final concert 10
July – Photo: Europa Cantat*

The second concert started with many choirs singing the „Bonn

children's hymn" together, a song which the Lord Mayor of Bonn Jürgen Nimptsch had initiated when he was still director of a school. The Chorus ("Let us all be one big fam'ly, joined together here in Bonn") was sung by everybody forming a huge choir with 1,000 voices. Pavel Brochin, Artistic Director of the festival, thanked the atelier conductors for their impressive work over the three days; Sonja Greiner, Secretary General of Europa Cantat thanked the subsidizers and sponsors, the families which had hosted children and young people from abroad for four days, and the small team which had made sure that the organisation behind the stage went well.

The young singers in the audience were delighted when shortly before the end their atelier conductors and choir conductors went on stage together with the team to form a "choir of conductors" performing "You've got a friend" with Kjetil Aamann at the piano – and showing that they can not only conduct and organise but also sing.

At the very end, after the presentation of „Disco Survives“ and „September“ which brought a fantastic atmosphere to the concert hall, several choirs performed the song „Today“ together, a commissioned work composed by Harold Lenselink from the Netherlands. The text "Today I am rejoicing till the air is full of song, and today my feet are dancing, I am swinging all day long" fit the motto of the festival perfectly and the audience left the hall singing and full of swing.

„It was a wonderful festival“, „The atmosphere was fantastic“, „We learned so much“, „Bonn is a great city“, „It was very interesting to sing with choirs from other countries“, „The concerts were so much fun“ – these and other comments could be heard after the concert while the participants had food and drinks before they had to say farewell. A conductor from Bonn said enthusiastically that participating in the festival was like an intense conductors training on the highest level – and all that for free and at home. And many asked "When will the next festival of this type take place?"

Further information on www.EuropaCantat.org

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