

Happy Birthday IFCM!

Celebrating 30 Years

Dr. Michael J Anderson, IFCM President

In 1982 (thirty years ago in August), the International Federation for Choral Music was founded by seven national and international choral organizations: A Coeur Joie International, All-Japan Chorus League, American Choral Directors Association, Arbeitsgemeinschaft Europäischer Chorverbände, Asociación Interamericana de Directores de Coro, EUROPA CANTAT-Federation Européenne des Jeunes Chorales, Nordiska Koerkomitten-SAMNAM. In 1988 (for a few years) the former Soviet Union was accepted as a founding member. IFCM is the official representative of choral music on the International Music Council of the United Nations, and has maintained a home in Namur, Belgium; Altea, Spain; Caen, France and now in Chicago, USA.

The focus of the international leaders that summer in 1982 at the Europa Cantat Festival was to establish an entity that could be used to create spirited channels of communication between their cultures, which would provide sharing of repertoire, performance practice, education, research, exchanges, and friendships using choral music as the vehicle. This idea was so simple, yet so powerful, that for three decades people across the global community have reached across borders, extended their hands, and established relationships that will last for a lifetime.



Europa Cantat 2012, opening concert – Dolf Rabus © ModFestival

It is important to note some of IFCM's many accomplishments over the past 30 years. In perusing my papers I identified many projects that are integral to our present work, and a few that have come and gone. I hope you will join me in my appreciation for all the volunteer leaders and staff who have developed the following:

- In 2014, we will celebrate the 10th iteration of the triennial World Symposium on Choral Music in Seoul, South Korea
- World Choral Summit, held in Beijing, China



IFCM World Choral Summit in Beijing (2012)



*Asia Pacific Youth Choir in
Beijing (2012)*

- World Youth Choir, a project shared with partners 'European Choral Association–Europa Cantat', and 'Jeunesses Musicales International', performed most recently at the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, Norway



*World Youth Choir
at the Nobel Peace
Prize in Oslo
(2011) – Copy
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Dahl for JM Norway
and Foundation
World Youth Choir*

- *International Choral Bulletin*, published four times per year in four languages;



- Conductors Without Borders, working principally in Africa;
- Musica International that brings world repertoire to our computers
- International Center for Choral Music, which was the focal point of many IFCM activities for 20 years
- Master classes, conducted by outstanding conductors around the world
- Publications like *Cantemus*, and *Carmina Mundi*
- OpusChoral, a commercial internet site for CD sales
- Tagger Foundation, created to run projects from Vigevano, Italy

- World Choral Day, celebrated every year on the second Sunday of December



- Songbridge, bringing together composers and youth choirs
- Asia South Pacific Summit, held this year in Macau, China
- Korea Choral Institute, housed in Busan, South Korea
- Composers Competition, in its second iteration



Winning piece of the IFCM

*International Choral
Compostion Competition
(2011)*

- Choral Net, which now is run by our founding partner the American Choral Directors Association
- African Children Sing! This choir comprised of youth from many countries across Africa



*African Children Sing! in
Seoul (2008)*

As you know, IFCM came very close to its demise in 2010. The 'pillars of the organization' crumpled to the extent that the thought of rebuilding it was overwhelming. It was at that moment when a friend reminded us all that the work that it would take to bring IFCM back to life was worth it because "...it is the only choral organization whose principal function is bridging that gap between world cultures." This all-volunteer organization has relied on the positive spirit that is kept alive by the very essence of human interaction. It has become apparent to millions of people around the world that

singing is the true instrument of personal expression and it elicits the very deepest of human emotions.

This was epitomized at the World Choral Summit in July 2012. Back in November of 2010, IFCM made a commitment to assist the China Choral Association to open a window of opportunity for the world to know and experience the great choral music of China. We hoped that new ways of international cooperation and exchange would develop, leading to good will, peace, and harmony. And, indeed, it did. Everyone walked away from that event feeling as though something unique had taken place; suddenly there were millions of colleagues reaching out, wanting better to know the choral world. Clearly, this innovative project was one of the most important developments in the history of IFCM.

IFCM's 30 years has been like any human's 30 years: rich with joy, satisfaction, astonishment, wisdom, some sadness, and best of all, connection – the encouragement of relationships between human beings, voicing their innermost vulnerabilities, sharing their deepest personal insights, and expressing them in a way that only choral music can provide. This is the magic of IFCM. Our mission is simple: assist people in exploring and exchanging their culture with others, then get out of the way and 'enjoy the wonder'.

There are many projects currently being built that will provide countless opportunities for people to come together again and again. IFCM is alive and well and enjoying its birthday. This is in part thanks to our very enthusiastic Board of Directors, Advisors, and staff. Throughout the past three decades, there have been many who have served, with no remuneration, except the enormous payout that comes from the pleasure of seeing what can happen when 'people come together to sing'.

Happy birthday to us all!