

IFCM eNEWS

Keeping Choral Music Connected

By Stephen Leek, IFCM Vice President, Editor IFCM eNEWS, composer, conductor

As choral musicians we lead very busy lives. We juggle and build our hectic daily schedules around the most important things – choir rehearsals, learning our music, promoting our concerts, administrating our events. And, over time, we learn to be good at all the things that sustain our choral lifestyle.

However, one of the things that we are generally not so good at is staying connected with other choirs, choral activity and choral issues in our own community, in our own country, or indeed, across the globe. Or should I say, one of the things that we choral musicians do not leave enough time for, is staying in touch with other choral events locally, nationally and internationally. Most often, we are so busy just 'doing it' that there is no time left to look far beyond the parameters of our own hectic programs. This is a profile of choirs and choral musicians that is mirrored in every corner of the globe. For an art form whose process and outcome is so heavily focused on communication, participation and sharing, this is a big issue.

Having said this, some communities and countries are more effective in achieving results in communication than others. If you think your country does this well, then spare a thought for those where there are no active national choral associations, no sustainable choral collectives, and indeed in some countries, where choral music is illegal unless you have

a permit and permission from the government for every choral gathering or event that takes place. Yes, these places do exist.

Within the IFCM we have been looking directly at these issues and exploring avenues to try and help our members across the globe to stay informed, to have better insights into topical and important international choral activities, events and issues, and to have a better understanding of the important 'behind the scenes' workings and programs of the IFCM, its board and members.

The most important on-going tool the IFCM has for this strategy is the one you are now reading. The International Choral Bulletin (ICB) is masterfully edited by Andrea Angelini and his team and brings us invaluable in-depth articles and more detailed information and issues about choral music to the membership four times a year. Bravo!

The first new strategy in communication that you will have seen rolled out in recent months is the IFCM eNEWS – a monthly electronic newsletter. Yes, I know you are bombarded every day from all directions with unwanted electronic 'updates', but, if you are involved in choral music anywhere on the globe, I believe that this is one monthly email you should open. This is a very quick way to keep abreast of the bigger choral world outside of your own network and an easy way to participate in the future of choral music globally.

The IFCM eNEWS is designed to be easy and quick to read, and informative and full of as much up-to-date international choral information as possible, without boring you with too many details. If you want more information, with the click of your mouse the IFCM eNEWS will redirect you to these sources. You will have noticed already from the first editions that the eNEWS team is trying to produce and distribute it every month in as many languages as possible (more volunteers are still needed particularly in smaller demographic languages); if you

would like to volunteer to assist with translations or are not receiving the IFCM eNEWS on your computer, please email Nadine at the IFCM office, nrobin@ifcm.net.

'Have Your Say' is a new feature of the IFCM website and is your opportunity to communicate your ideas and thoughts directly to your representatives on the IFCM board. Why not try it and let international choral music hear your voice?

So, if we all use these simple tools, these first small steps have to be good in helping us communicate. They have to be good for international choral music, and the understanding and recognition of artistic and social excellence. These small steps have to be a great and simple way for everyone around the world who has access to the Internet to understand that they are part of a very large and friendly musical family and that their voice is important. And, the hope at the IFCM is that every reader of the IFCM eNEWS will ultimately be informed and involved, and feel that he or she is part of the very big, very extraordinary and very passionate community of choral musicians across the globe.

My own hope is that we can build and strengthen international choral music through these first initiatives. So why not join the global choral community by staying informed, involved and active by simply clicking open the IFCM eNEWS email every month and by sharing your choral thoughts with the IFCM through 'Have Your Say' – www.ifcm.net?