

# IFCM World Choral EXPO

**Propelling Asia Pacific Choral Music to the World (10-15 November 2015)**

*Emily Kuo Vong, Executive Committee Chair at the IFCM World Choral Expo, IFCM Vice President, member of the board of directors at the Macau Choral Art Association*

Macau is well known for many little things: Portuguese egg tarts, the cuisine, being a prime backdrop for James Bond Movies, neon lights illuminating the night skies and as Asia's entertainment capital. In the month of November, a trifecta of events displaying the city's diversity comes to pass. As the city slowly transforms into a track for the annual Grand-Prix, foodies also gather outside the Macau Tower for the annual food festival. Meanwhile, between racing and food, choral lovers from around the world converge for the inaugural IFCM World Choral EXPO. In the course of six days, the IFCM World Choral EXPO has stepped into the history of choral artistry development in the Asia Pacific Region. This event brought together all facets of choral music to promote exchange through workshops, presentations, master classes, concerts, competitions, exhibitions and many other activities. Invited choirs, presenters and jurors from over 40 countries were present to share in this momentous event. Choral music resonated through Macau's churches, schools, theatres, forums, restaurants and even the streets. The different forms of choral music: the costumes, the choreography, the instruments, the choirs and the genres amazed onlookers in Macau. These helped amplify their interests in choral music, diverting their attention from their gadgets toward promoting "real-time" human interaction.

## **22 days, 16 cities... Educating the Masses on Choral Music**

In the months of April and July, using every means of transportation, seven world-renowned choral conductors, Michael J Anderson (USA), Andrea Angelini (IT), André de Quadros (USA), Stephen Leek (AUS), Meng Da Peng (CN), Tim Sharp (USA) and Jan Wilke (DE), toured through China to conduct philanthropic choral master classes for more than 48 choirs. This journey brought them through Macau SAR, Zhongshan, Guangzhou, Changsha, Guilin, Guiyang, Chongqing, Xi'an, Taiyuan, Shenyang, Dongguan, Shenzhen, Wuhan, Zhengzhou and Shanghai. Apart from introducing IFCM's history and its vision in becoming a leader in choral education, the tour echoed the activities of the IFCM World Choral EXPO. We would like to acknowledge and thank the Chinese and American Inter-Culture Exchange Foundation for their support and sponsorship in making this tour a reality.

## **Asia Pacific Choral Summit**

Prior to the opening ceremony, the Asia Pacific Choral Council and delegates met to report their choral situation, share event information, plan programs and strengthen existing projects. Through these choral summits, held every two years, the purpose of strengthening communication and relationships between Asia Pacific Countries is fulfilled.

## **Songs of Friendship and Peace**

On a breezy Thursday evening in Macau, the IFCM World Choral EXPO started with a bang as lion dancers welcomed the audience with a festive and jaw-dropping performance in the foyer of the Macau Forum. The dance, accompanied by drums and cymbals, moved audience members and encouraged good spirits throughout the EXPO. The Asia Pacific Youth Choir, as an ambassador for

the EXPO, exuded the diversity of the region through traditional costume and customs, representative of over 10 countries in the Asia Pacific Region. This choir's performances marked the beginning and end of not only the opening ceremony but the closing ceremony as well. The audience entered the stadium not knowing what to expect and exited with a newfound excitement for choral music. Language, culture and other barriers were torn down, one by one, as the evening progressed. Choirs from around the world shared their enthusiasm by fusing Chinese pop and folk songs with their repertoire. This further increased the allure of choral music for the participants and marked the commencement of the event!



One of the morning track sessions, conducted by Thierry Thiébaud, (A Coeur Joie International President)

### **Starting the Day with Song**

How would you start your day? During the EXPO, mornings were filled with song. Inspired by the World Symposium on Choral Music (WSCM), Maria Guinand (VEN) led off the first morning singing session with a full program of energetic and passionate Latin American repertoires. In the second session, Brady Allred and the Salt Lake Vocal Artists (USA) took participants on a soul-searching journey through the backwaters of America, while André van der Merwe (ZAF) invited the audience on a colourful journey back to the heart and origins of South Africa, which magnificently concluded the

final session. All morning singing sessions were accompanied by Sally Whitwell (AUS).

## **Tracks, Presentations and Workshops**

Following each morning singing session, delegates then went into their morning track sessions. 16 tracks were simultaneously led by presenters: Elise Bradley (CAN), Yang Hong Nian (CN), Maria Guinand (VEN), Sally Whitwell (AUS), Gan Lin (CN), Theodora Pavlovich (BUL), Brady Allred (USA), André de Quadros (USA), The Junction (NL), Dan Walker (AUS), André van der Merwe (ZAF), Susanna Saw (MY), Thierry Thiebaut (FR), Xiao Bai (CN), and Tim Sharp (USA). Track courses ranged from specialties in intermediate children's choir conducting to advanced courses for professional conductors or composers and tracks on new age a cappella techniques.

Afternoons were for presentations and choir workshops. Presentation topics ranged from the emphasis on the importance of warming up to interpreting compositions to working and creating with senior choirs. Choir workshops were slightly varied and allowed delegates to work with and understand the invited choirs. These workshops allowed choirs to share culture, choreography, rehearsal techniques and their building blocks to success.

In the scenic and tranquil campus of the University of Macau over 1000 attendees participated in these sessions of morning singing, tracks, presentations and workshops, completely changing their perception and notion of choral music.



Nelson Mandela Metropolitan  
University (South Africa)

### **Remarkable Concerts**

Over 30 concerts took place during these 6 days, an unimaginable feat for most events in this region. 16 invited choirs performed for a vast audience in picturesque venues in Macau, including St. Dominic's Church, Colégio de Santa Rosa de Lima English Secondary, Colégio Diocesano de São José, Our Lady of Fátima Church, Macau Forum, Macau University – University Hall and Student Activity Centre Theatre, Broadway Theatre, Dom Pedro V Theatre, and the Igreja E Seminario de São José.

In addition to showcasing instrumentation and costumes from their respective countries, each choir proudly demonstrated their artistry in their performances. **Aleron**, as the only all male choir, proudly represented the Philippines in garment and in song. The **Asia Pacific Youth Choir** sang songs from each representative country, ranging from folk to current and sacred music. The **China Broadcasting Children's Choir**, **Peiyang Chorus**, **Shenzhen Highschool Lily Girl's Choir** and **Tiankong Choir** illustrated choral music in China, from Children's Choirs to University Choirs. The colourful costumes and choreography of the **Indonesian Children & Youth Choir – Cordana** and the **Manado State University Choir** amazed audiences with precision and emotional performances depicting traditional Indonesian folk dances and traditions. **Rajatón** (FIN) and **The Junction** (NL) brought concertgoers a new understanding of the varieties of choral music that include

smaller vocal jazz ensembles. **Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University** (ZAF) proudly represented the diversity and colours of the rainbow nation. **The Little Singers of Tokyo** (JP) continued their founding spirit with a repertoire covering a wide range, from Gregorian Chants to Contemporary Works, while proudly donning their kimonos. The **Salt Lake Vocal Artists** (USA) entertained audiences with their versatility, passion, artistry and sound. The **Youth Choir Balsis** shared with participants Latvia's love and outstanding choral culture and history. The **Formosa Singers** and the **Hong Kong Children's Choir** also displayed their diversity and their choral finesse.

These choirs revolutionised choral music in the participant's minds, bringing new enlightenment in the perceptions of choral music and the versatility in choirs. All those who encountered and listened to these choirs continued to sing their praises long after the end of the IFCM World Choral EXPO.



Guangdong Experimental  
Middle School Choir

### **Competition and Performances**

Over 83 choirs participated in the choral competition and performance of the IFCM World Choral EXPO. Many of the choirs hailed from China, Macau SAR, Hong Kong SAR, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. Competition categories ranged from Children's Choirs to Senior Choirs, Ensembles and Folk. The aim of the competition was not the competition itself but to elevate each choir's potential. Each choir was offered a complimentary choral clinic prior to the competition, which provided encouragement and direction for the choirs before stepping onto the stage. Adjudicators included Michael J

Anderson (USA), Gan Lin (CN), Saeko Hasegawa (JP), Tommyanto Kandisaputra (IND), Meng Da Peng (CN), Debra Shearer-Dirié (AUS), André van der Merwe (ZAF), Jonathan Velasco (PH), Sally Whitwell (AUS) and Hakwon Yoon (KR).

Performance choirs from Singapore and China were provided with an opportunity to showcase their artistry without the pressure of competition. Similarly, they also participated in choral clinics prior to their performances. All choir clinics were led by Andrea Angelini (IT), André de Quadros (USA), Saeko Hasegawa (JP), Johnny Ku (TW), Susanna Saw (MY), Wu Lin Fen (CN), Jonathan Velasco (PH), Xiao Bai (CN) and Yang Hong Nian (CN).



Balsis Youth Choir  
(Latvia), conducted by Ints  
Teteroviskis

### **Choral and Culture Exhibition**

The organizer would like to thank all the exhibitors that made the trip to Macau. Publishers, like Edition Peters (UK), brought a wide range of scores for delegates to select from and were wildly welcomed, as original scores are difficult to obtain in this region. CDs from invited choirs were well received, and future choral events, such as WSCM11 in Barcelona, were promoted as well. As choral culture develops in this region, it is increasingly important to make scores, CDs and events known, to encourage the use of original scores and to learn from international events.

## **Moving the World through Choral Music**

A final concert at the Broadway Theatre marked the conclusion of the IFCM World Choral EXPO. All participants and choirs gathered to celebrate the end of a successful week. Invited choirs and the Grand-Prix Competition winner took the stage for one final time. Nothing was more moving than the presentation of the first ever Lifetime Achievement Award for Choral Music to outstanding individuals in the choral community who have dedicated their lives to choral music. Recipients included Alberto Grau (VEN), Ma Ge Sun (CN), Royce Saltzman (USA), Jutta Tagger (FR), and Yan Liang Kun (CN). The closing ceremony also reviewed the events of the past week, as delegates and audience members bade farewell to new and old friends.

As the audience, participants and choirs slowly exited the theatre and the foyer filled with song, the atmosphere was bittersweet. It was apparent that people who were mere strangers just 6 days prior became friends through a common passion, embracing each other and exchanging contact information and once again realizing that choral music is one of the most effective and successful forms of media in breaking down walls, in understanding and appreciating each other, despite differences, and for strengthening brotherhood, which is the very foundation most important to World Peace. This event provided the Asia Pacific Region with a platform for its own major Choral Event, attracting world-renowned choirs and choral educators, as well as providing a stepping-stone for the world to understand the Asia Pacific Region.

## **Thank You**

The IFCM World Choral EXPO Team would like to acknowledge and thank the University of Macau, the China Culture Friendship Association, the Liaison Office of the Central People's



Government in the Macao Special Administrative Region Ministry of Culture and Education, the Cultural Institute of the Macao SAR Government, the Macao Government Tourist Office, the Civic and Municipal Affairs Bureau of Macau, the Macao Foundation, the Chinese and American Inter-Culture Exchange Foundation, Galaxy Entertainment Group Ltd., the Macao University of Science and Technology, the Asia-Pacific Choral Culture Development Foundation, C&T Technology Co., Ltd. and Fujiasia Piano City Co., Ltd. for your support and generosity towards this inaugural IFCM World Choral EXPO.

Additionally, the IFCM World Choral EXPO Team would like to extend its gratitude to all of you who participated in this event, as a guest or as a delegate. Without you all, this event would not have been possible.

### **Save the Date – August 2017**

Planning has already commenced for the 2<sup>nd</sup> IFCM World Choral EXPO. Mark your calendars as the team prepares to bring another unforgettable IFCM World Choral EXPO to Macau SAR!

*Edited by Joel Hageman, USA*