

In Memory of Marcel Corneloup

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On 30 June 2010, at the age of 82, Marcel Corneloup left us. His funeral took place on 5 July in Autun Cathedral, in the presence of his family, public authority representatives, his nearest and dearest and his many friends who had come to demonstrate their affection and recognition for this craftsman in choral singing in France and in the wider world.

Marcel Corneloup passionately devoted his life to the À Cœur Joie movement. His meeting with César Geoffray in 1948 was the determining moment. Very soon they came to share the same humanist vision of choral singing. From their intimate friendship would grow the great plan for À Cœur Joie. Marcel was a primary school teacher by training. Military service took him to Meknès in Morocco where he set up his first choir. It was there that he met his wife Jacqueline who shared his epic musical and pedagogical journey for 60 years.

From 1950 to 1962, charged with the responsibility for musical education in Morocco, he developed a network of choirs with the *Psalette du Maroc* as its jewel. In 1962 he succeeded Reine Bruppacher as general secretary of the À Cœur Joie movement in Lyon. Under his direction À Cœur Joie developed in France and established its international dimensions and its francophone character. He helped to set up the Choralies at Vaison-la-Romaine, known today as a European Choral City. In 1969 the International Council of the À Cœur Joie movement was established in Lille under the chairmanship of César Geoffray.

Nowadays the International Council brings together a number of federations in France and abroad. After the death of César Geoffroy in 1972, Marcel Corneloup took on the chairmanship of the International Council from 1973 to 2003. With his friend François Bourel, he expanded the European Federation of Young Choirs – Europa Cantat which he chaired from 1982 to 1994. This chairmanship was notable for two events : the EUROPA CANTAT IX festival in Strasbourg in 1982, in the presence of President François Mitterrand and Chancellor Helmut Kohl, and, in 1988, the EUROPA CANTAT X festival in Pécs in Hungary, a choice of venue which anticipated the disappearance of the Iron Curtain. Marcel Corneloup was famous in France as a teacher. He was also a builder. He used to say that it was necessary to create venues for choral singing. Thus were established Les Passerelles, the administrative centre of À Cœur Joie in Lyons, the À Cœur Joie Centre in Vaison-la-Romaine (which was built and then rebuilt) and the *Maison du Beuvray* in the Morvan area. Marcel was a musician, a choirmaster and a composer. In Lyons he created and directed the Éditions A Cœur Joie which still enjoy an international dimension.

This is a short account of the life of Marcel Corneloup. Those who knew and loved him are fortunate: they will remember a man who was committed, sure in his beliefs, rich in knowledges and a loyal friend. For those who did not know him, History will tell that he brought growth in the popularity of choral singing in France for half a century.

Thank you, Marcel ! Your task is accomplished. It was at once exhilarating and inspiring for all of us who are invited to continue with it from now on.