

Message from the President

Dear friends,

As a university professor, it is my job to take young people through the challenges of advanced learning in an environment that demands embracing professional awareness, musical skills, and conduct. This requires an unrelenting positive methodology—working to add to what the students bring to the table, and ensure that they leave with a more robust and professional “bag of tools”. The students are taught to think differently and pay attention to those around them; something analogous to the responsibilities of the IFCM leadership initiatives. Recently, I participated in an activity here in the United States that draws an interesting comparison to same kind of positive approach.

In April, I was one of 25 leaders from the choral world who met for two days in New Haven, Connecticut, USA. The project was called ***The Choral Ecosystem Forum*** sponsored by the National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM), the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA), the Barbershop Harmony Society (BHS), and Chorus America, hosted by Yale University.

This innovative project included participants from all categories of choirs, choral organisations, music educators, composers, singers, conductors, and administrators. Each of these people was asked to interview three people who represented a specific category of the choral world. The organisers carefully crafted the interview questionnaire using an ecosystem as a metaphor for our interconnected choral world. The results of the interviews served to stimulate energetic and enthusiastic discussions.

I know that Chorus America will be publishing the findings and announcing plans for continuing the research. However, I thought it would be worthwhile to reflect on a few of the

conclusions, since I feel that the outcome actually represents the entire choral world. In general, it was the opinion of the participants and the interviewees that people:

1. Participate in choral music because it fulfils something intangible.
2. Get satisfaction from making music with others.
3. Are less concerned about being recognized for their work.
4. Appreciate having the opportunity to participate in a group-oriented activity with common goals.
5. Feel that being paid for their work is second to doing it.

It is interesting to compare these five aspects of participating in choral music to the many international festivals, workshops, master classes, and symposia that I have witnessed through the years. It defines participation in a way that talks about the **humanity of choral music**. It takes the "I" out of the equation and continuously substitutes it with "we."

In my mind, this encapsulates what the IFCM leadership is implementing for colleagues around the world: to provide opportunity, remove ego in favour of ensemble, find ways to be recognized as a group rather than an individual, worry less about finances and more about working with people, and being able to tap into the power of music repeatedly.

As we move to the next season (be that summer or winter) and plan events for future months, I encourage us to think differently and pay attention to others. Strive to grow humanity back together using our "bag of tools," (choral music), and to share the positive peace that comes from making music ... together.

With positive wishes for our future,

Dr. Michael J Anderson, President

Michael Anderson

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