

New International TV Format for Amateur Choirs, the “Eurovision Choir of the Year”

John Rutter, composer and conductor

It is a great pleasure and honour for me to introduce a brand new international TV talent show for amateur choirs, which will be launched for the first time by the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) after three years of intensive preparations. The first edition of the “Eurovision Choir of the Year” will be produced on July 22nd, 2017, in the Arena Riga, the capital of Latvia, by the Latvian Television (LTV) and the Riga Tourism Development Bureau (LIVE RIGA) as organizers, in cooperation with EBU and INTERKULTUR, one of the most successful organizers of choral events to date.



This new, attractive TV format completes the series of

Eurovision Events, which also includes the famous Eurovision Song Contest, and makes choral music accessible to an audience of millions. My friend Günter Titsch, the president of INTERKULTUR, says: "In the past years, we have observed a great increase in the popularity of choral music and now we are very happy to be the partner of this new TV format which will be able to pass on the joy of singing together to a much larger audience." I can't agree more with this!

Eight European countries, each represented by one choir, will participate in the first edition of the choir-TV show. Public broadcasters from Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Latvia, Austria, Slovenia and Hungary could be won over to the first edition of the programme. Eva Ikstena, culture presenter at the LTV and GRAMMY Award winner, Eric Whitacre (USA), also very famous in the choral world as a renowned composer, will be hosts of the show.



Opening Ceremony of the World Choir Games Riga 2014 (Studi43)

I was delighted that Nicol Matt (Germany), the artistic

project manager of INTERKULTUR, famous for more than 100 CD-recordings with *Chamber Choir of Europe*, offered me a seat on the jury. He explained that the outstanding choirs from all over Europe performing in the show, deserve an excellent jury of prominent artists as expert judges of their musical performance.

I am thrilled to be involved in the Eurovision Choir of the Year. Bringing together choirs from so many countries, each striving for the best they can achieve is inspiring, and I know that everyone taking part and everyone enjoying the event on television will remember it as something very special. I can't wait for the singing to begin! In the jury, I will be supported by the Latvian Opera star Eļiņa Garanča – and I am really looking forward to working together with her!



Fred Sjöberg and soloist Daumants Kaniņš © Studi43

It is particularly interesting to note that the jury will not be the only one to determine the best choir of the year. The audience will have a share too, since there will be an

audience vote as well. Apart from the participating mixed chamber choirs, some youth choirs, girls' choirs and a male-voice choir will also perform and will be judged by the jury and the TV audience. Each choir will perform self-selected repertoire of a six-minute length. The audience will surely love the diverse programme which reflects the cultural variety of Europe as well as every possible genre of choral music. I am extremely curious to see the result of the audience voting!

We will meet in Riga!

Eurovision Choir of the Year – Official Homepage:
<http://eurovisionchoir.tv>