

# Presentation of the 2020–2023 IFCM Board



## **Emily Kuo Vong (Portugal / Macau) President**

Please read the vision of Emily Kuo Vong in the Message from the president (January 2021).



## **Ki Adams (Canada) Vice-President**

While the benefits of choral singing are well documented and obvious to choristers/conductors, it is critical that we build on this growing interest in collective singing by providing resources, programs, and supports for choral enthusiasts around the world. This is precisely the work of IFCM and what excites me about continuing my involvement on the IFCM board. IFCM projects, collaborations, and advocacy are robust and consequential. The future of IFCM is bright and full of possibility as the organization establishes greater stability and structure.

My strength as a board member comes from my professional practice: a fusion of leadership, pedagogy, and scholarship.

This professional background is complemented by my personal skills and abilities: I am energized by a challenge, I value diverse perspectives and opinions, I bring the strengths of organization and adaptability, and I have a curiosity for learning.

Since 2017, I have been involved with three major IFCM projects: President of the World Youth Choir Foundation, Artistic Director of the SCOC Youth Choir, and Administrative Committee member for the 12th World Symposium on Choral Music. As we continue to build international collaborations and partnerships, I would like to work toward expanding the notion of 'choral' and providing support for all communities who enjoy singing together. Issues of diversity, equity, access, and inclusion are critical voices in the conversation about what it means to sing together, and I believe IFCM has a leadership role in addressing these inequalities.

I am a visionary but also a committed hands-on board member and team player. Perhaps most importantly, I am passionate about all that IFCM does and all that it could do. I am honoured by the opportunity to continue to serve as one of IFCM's "volunteers connecting our choral world".

## **Jan Schumacher (Germany), Vice-President**



IFCM was founded to raise communication and exchange in choral music worldwide. In the past decade I was in the lucky position to serve for international choral music: as a conductor and teacher world-wide and as a board member on European level. I would like to bring in my experience and dedicate my working power to the important tasks of the IFCM as well as learn from all colleagues around the world to

enrich the German and European choral community. I want to offer my knowledge, my network and my artistic and administrative abilities to make IFCM grow as an association and to support IFCM in their status as the world's leading choral federation.

**Yveline Damas (Gabon), Vice-President**



The IFCM seeks to work for Choral Singing throughout the world. It has a very essential role to play in the world and it is very important that Africa be represented within this structure, so that the choices that are made include this vast continent full of an inestimable cultural and musical wealth. My role on the Board will be to contribute to the reflections and actions of the ICFM in the world, and particularly in Africa. Since my election to the board in 2014, I have been actively working with the support of the IFCM to organize the first "Africa Cantat festival" which was supposed to be held in Nairobi (Kenya) in August 2020, but has been postponed to August 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Other projects in Africa like training, promotion of youth and children's choirs, festivals in Africa, as well as other projects, are yet to be completed. I will invest the best of myself to achieve these objectives.



**Maria Guinand (Venezuela), Vice-President**

The International Federation for Choral Music represents today

one of the most important organizations for the promotion and strengthening of Choral Music. During its life, IFCM has created a network that is undoubtedly one of its most important achievements, because in these times we are living, being connected and informed is vital for all human activities. There are still many countries and regions of the world that need to be reached and strengthened with our art and its values of building citizenship, educating in music and for life, solidarity, understanding and tolerance of diversity.

In Latin America, choral music is art that supports communities, immigration, social change and inclusion. We need to develop more networks of interaction and choral education and leadership and this is where the presence of IFCM is required. Throughout all these years the members of the Board that have represented the region have worked successfully in this direction, however continuous and permanent action is required. I am encouraged to propose myself again to the IFCM Board as a running partner to Ana Patricia Carbajal, so that I can offer my support and experience to a younger, active and committed leader such as her who will bring a new country, Mexico, into this governing body.



**Yoshihiro Egawa (Japan), Vice-President**

I am always thinking, "People in the world still need choral music. In this unstable world, I believe that choral music is the only way to express my own voice and to create solidarity between people. Also, we must encourage young people to join us. They are our treasures and our future." I have had experience for over 20 years working in the Japan Choral Association since 1996, especially for International Relations and IFCM's main projects such as the World Youth Choir Japan tour in 1997 and the World Symposium on Choral Music in Kyoto

in 2005. And, in these 12 years, I focused on working for the Asia Pacific Youth Choir, the first collaborative project in the Asia Pacific Region, and for the Japan Choral Association's National Youth Choir. I also believe that worldwide ties will become more developed if regional activities become much active. Therefore, the role of the IFCM could be very important. I would like to promote a choral world that can work side by side.

**Dominique Lecheval (France), Treasurer**



A lot of work has been done in the last two or three years to help the IFCM continue on a much stronger basis in terms of finance, general administration, organisation, governance, and to get the federation's status of non-profit association compliant with the US laws and regulations. I am happy to continue working with the ExCom and the Board, as a treasurer for another 3-year term. The IFCM still needs to strengthen its position, to be attractive and get many more members join. The IFCM is aiming to become the reference point for choral music worldwide, with new strong projects for young singers, conductors and composers. With a new operations manager and a stronger financial situation we are able to build a great future for the federation. I would be pleased to be a part of it.

**Thierry Thiebaut (France), representing  
IFCM Founding Member A Coeur Joie  
International**



I am delighted to see that our Federation reflects well the geography of the world by its composition. "International" must mean for me that the entire world is our concern. One of the missions that I assign to myself is to help give everyone the means to improve their skills and increase their competencies while respecting the diversity of our cultures and our differences. They are factors of mutual enrichment. It is in this spirit that I have been working for more than 10 years to develop the program Conductors Without Borders in countries where choral singing is very active but lacks essential educational structures. So we will be able to provide training that will increase the capacities of choir conductors, facilitate access to cultural heritage, promote and expand exchanges between choirs. If economic globalization is often a source of tensions, choral music is always a unifying factor between people. To be a part of the IFCM Board means sharing a strategy developed together; it means meeting the expectations of its members as best as possible and representing them by a contribution that justifies its commitment.



**Burak Onur Erdem (Turkey), representing IFCM Founding Member *European Choral Association-Europa Cantat***

In today's world it is even more important to connect through the choral world. As one of the founding members, the European Choral Association-Europa Cantat is looking forward to strengthening our bonds throughout all continents and cherish our global choral family. The IFCM has a rich history and a lot of experience in different parts of the world. With that in our background, the IFCM has a bright future to build upon together. In that sense, I believe our next steps for the IFCM in the 2020-2023 period should contain the following main pillars: reaching out to new geographies, in other words, new focus zones to encourage fresh connections between new choral environments, initiate projects that favour learning from each other and embrace cultural diversity, create even stronger bonds within established choral organisations in different continents and feed this connection through supporting network projects: choral gatherings, training for conductors, new commissions for composers, skill-building for managers. With these in our plan, I am confident that the IFCM will establish its position as 'Global Choral Hub' in the near future. Looking forward to inspiring years of choral collaboration.



**Lynne Gackle (USA), representing IFCM Founding Member *American Choral Directors Association***

I am honored to serve on the IFCM Board as the representative

from the American Choral Directors Association. ACDA is a professional association of choral conductors that exists to inspire excellence in choral music through education, performance, composition, and advocacy. These goals resonate with and mirror those of IFCM in many ways. No doubt, there is both strength and encouragement in a coalition of colleagues committed to the realization of these goals in today's society. I believe in the power of choral music to change lives. The mission statement found on IFCM's website is extremely dynamic "... choral singing can be one of the most powerful unifying forces between nations. Differences in culture, political and religious ideology, race and language disappear when people sing together." In singing together, there is also great power through singing in 'community.' As human beings, we are created for community. Though we are living in the most 'technologically connected' period in man's history, there is increasing research that demonstrates that the current generation may be one of the loneliest generations ever, with Generation Z and Millennials rating themselves in recent studies, highest on feelings associated with loneliness. The ill-effects on health resulting from this loneliness are thoroughly documented. However, in the community, there is belonging. It is our choirs and our music-making that offer opportunities for this unique type of human connection and fulfillment. Choral music can provide an opportunity to find not only peace and understanding among peoples of the world, but perhaps, it can also allow us to better understand ourselves and our daily need for each other as we journey together on this 'blue planet.' My vision as a member of IFCM's Board is to serve as a conduit between our two organizations as we work together to realize our shared goals.



**Niels Graesholm, representing IFCM  
Founding Member *Nordisk Korforum***



As a representative of a founding member of the IFCM, I see it as my duty and privilege to help secure, adjust and develop the organization for the future. I am convinced that we can do this by reaching out to and working with countries and choral communities that are not yet strong members of our organization, and by adjusting our view and understanding of choral music to include all the different, wonderfully challenging and exciting ways of collective singing that exist. In order to get there my focus will be on transparency and on ever developing the democratic structure of our great organization.

**Saeko Hasegawa, representing IFCM  
Founding Member *Japan Choral Association***



At the end of this most unprecedented year of 2020, I feel privileged to be a member of the IFCM Board, representing the Japan Choral Association for another term. Amidst all sorts of difficulties that the COVID-19 pandemic has imposed on our friends and colleagues in the choral world, we have realized how crucial and powerful choral music is as a source of communication, motivation, and energy for living. And the IFCM is seeing from the postings for World Choral Day 2020, how the choral community is sound and alive despite the difficulties, being tied and united with each other through the power of

singing. In the current world with eruptions of nationalism as a reaction to the pandemic in some countries, choral music can play an even more important role to bridge and unite different peoples and communities. As a representative of the Japan Choral Association, I have been actively involved in the IFCM since 2002. It has been a tremendous pleasure to see how the activities and the significance of the IFCM have been acknowledged among Japanese choral musicians since then. We are one of the few fortunate countries to have hosted WSCM and WYC, and we know first-hand how choral music can widen views and help us be open to different cultures. When we listen to each other and sing together, we become friends and find peace of mind through the friendship. As simple as it may sound, this seems to be what the world is in absolute need these days. So, all you friends in the choral community: let us keep looking for ways to sing together, so that we can disseminate our powerful tool for peace.



**John Rosser (New Zealand), Board Member**

As past Chair of the New Zealand Choral Federation and a career conductor, I am a strong believer in national and international choral organisations and the benefits they offer to individual choirs, conductors and singers. With insights gained from organising Auckland's World Symposium, I am keen to add a strategic perspective to the expertise already on the Board, with particular interest in the alignment and scheduling of IFCM's suite of events.

I also offer an Antipodean view, coming from a region whose seasonal calendar is the opposite of the North's, with the effect that this has for international events in our

hemisphere. Our continent of Oceania (comprising Australia, New Zealand and the islands of the South Pacific) is a vast but united and energetic region of choral activity and has a long track record of supporting IFCM, its aims and festivals. In addition, NZ is a proud member of the Asia-Pacific Summit, which promotes choral discourse and events among a confederation of countries that make up over half the world's population. I am excited to represent all these voices at the IFCM table.



**Gábor Móczár (Hungary), Board Member**

I believe the IFCM has a very important mission to serve as an efficient and smart platform for connecting choral musicians from all over the world, should they come from chorally and economically developed continents, countries and (cultural) regions, or from geographical or cultural areas where access to choral education, mobility and finances are limited. The IFCM should strive to explore regions that have been hidden so far on the international choral map and create opportunities for choral actors to cooperate and exchange with other regions whose choral traditions are better known. The IFCM needs to develop a powerful digital and online communication system adapted to the highest technological skills of the 21st century, so that all choral communities could be easily connected, and choral knowledge and experience could be shared with all those who don't have assets to attend international choral events and training.

## **Victoria Liedbergius (Norway), Board Member**



As a representative of Ung i Kor, I see the values of international cooperation, how it can bring knowledge and inspiration to our organisation, and also what young singers, conductors and organisers can bring to an organisation. In Ung i Kor we start training choral managers when they are 14 years old and half of our board members are under 26 years – something that goes well with our motto: “Young voices shall be heard”. The IFCM was the starting point for my own international choral experiences and my work thereafter, and I believe it can be for many other young people interested in choral music. My vision for the IFCM is that it should be an organisation open to young choral singers, conductors, composers and managers; educating and connecting them to the global expertise that exists within the organisation. The IFCM should help create choral activity where it is wanted and needed, and be the international hub for the expertise already existing. It should be the bridge between amateurs and professionals, between young and old, and between the different rich choral traditions around the world.

## **Ana Patricia Carbajal (Mexico), Board Member**



Thirty years ago I founded *Voce in Tempore*, an award-winning amateur choral ensemble. Since then I've worked in the

diffusion and artistic development of choral music in Mexico, building bridges that bring us closer to areas that have enriched us with unique and life-changing experiences. I have served and collaborated with numerous choral associations, educational institutions, and choral directors throughout the continent who also share my passion and commitment to choral music, including several colleagues from the Latin American branch of the IFCM (International Federation for Choral Music). I fervently believe in the inherent benefits choral singing can offer society. I have also had the opportunity to work on initiatives that prepare future choral conductors, specially training- programs created by our civil association and their collective impact on social, humanitarian, and academic endeavors. I look forward to continue to expand our work in the following areas: strengthen choral activities in the region, promote regional choral music composers, create support networks for choral development, incentivize the exchange between countries within the region and other regions within the IFCM, create links between institutions, schools and associations that work in the training of choir directors, organize regular training courses in different regions under the banner of Conductors without Borders, support initiatives for organizing regional festivals and educational events for conductors and choristers, develop a registration form for choirs that wish to upload their information to the IFCM website. I believe it is important to continue to promote and expand the work that Latin American directors have started under the auspices of the IFCM, enrich the work of the LACDC (Latin American Choral Development Committee), and share the rich choral heritage of Latin America represented by its musical diversity and talented composers and conductors.



## **Tim Sharp (USA), Co-opted Board Member**

It is an honor to begin a new term as Board member for the IFCM. This is my fifth term on the Board, but my first term as a general representative from the membership, a responsibility I take very seriously. My vision for the months ahead is first to help our membership as they rebuild and heal following the disastrous pandemic which has had an out-sized impact on choruses. I will spend the time necessary to help wherever possible as we channel the resources of IFCM to be of help and inspiration to our members and their singers. Second and simultaneously, following the strategic work accomplished by our previous Board, I will continue to help build our governance infrastructure to guarantee worldwide representation and democracy in our work. We made great advances in this area over the last years, but there is more to do as we fuel the fire of choral growth, education, training, and enthusiasm in emerging and underserved regions. We need these voices as a part of the overall “chorus” of our collaborative IFCM efforts. Third, the financial solidity of IFCM is constantly part of my vision. It is my vision that my years of professional work in nonprofit administration and my administrative work in higher education and business will complement the business strength of our IFCM president and other talented Board members. While our work is an artistic endeavor, it is also a business, and my desire is to contribute to our ongoing business strength. Finally, my vision is to see a choral culture take root throughout the world in which choral expression is available to everyone for participation, enjoyment, and development from first experiences to the most advanced professional levels of

performance and audience enjoyment, and making good use of the area of media.



**Roula Abou Baker (Lebanon), Co-opted Board Member**

During recent years, and specifically since the birth of the Fayha Choir in Lebanon in 2003, choral life in the Arab world witnessed a spread and remarkable prosperity after it had been limited to some churches and educational institutions. The concept of singing a cappella, in addition to polyphonic arrangements, emerged for the first time in Arab music while preserving its specificity, characteristics and oriental spirit. We have been working through the Fayha Choir to encourage the establishment of choirs in the countries of the Arab world and to support them technically. We also worked on networking between Arab choirs, in addition to networking with international organizations such as the International Federation for Choral Music, the European Choral Association-Europa Cantat, the International Music Council, and others ... The Fayha Choir is also a founding member of the Lebanese Choral Association and the Arab Choral Network.

There is no doubt that my presence as an Arab woman on the board of the IFCM will allow me a wider scope for assistance in developing choral life in the Arab world in addition to placing the Arab region on the global map of choral singing as well as spreading Arab choral singing in the world. Unfortunately, news of political and security problems from the Arab world always obscures the culture, arts, and rich historical heritage this region possesses. From here, I hope, through my presence in the International Federation for Choral Music, to help show the true civilized face of this region and spread oriental Arab music, from which

international choral singing was prohibited.



**Sonja Greiner (Germany), Governance Advisor**

In 2017 I was asked if I would be prepared to become governance advisor of IFCM and support the newly-elected board. As Secretary General of the European Choral Association – Europa Cantat, and as one of its founding members, I have some relevant experience, and so I accepted the challenge. I am happy that over these 3 years we have managed to strengthen the association, expand the team and introduce transparent processes and procedures. We created new bylaws and a new membership policy, approved by members in 2019, and thus regained non-profit status in the US. We reviewed the agreements with founding members, prepared new agreements with regional offices, rewrote the model agreement for the WSCM, and introduced guidelines on when and how the IFCM logo may be used. We reviewed the distribution of tasks for staff and freelancers, and prepared an open and fair recruitment process for the two freelancing positions, as well as for the new position of Operations Manager. Since summer 2019 I have guided and supported Iva Radulovic who has gained a lot of experience, especially whilst preparing the first ever online elections and online General Assembly of IFCM. I highly appreciated the cooperation with Iva as well as our treasurer, Dominique, our office manager, Nadine, and, of course, our president, Emily, as well as the other board members. I feel honoured to have been appointed by the new board for another 3 years. My vision for this period is to continue on a policy of clarity and transparency, and to further develop the staff. I am hoping to put in place an election committee that shall help us ensure a more diverse list of candidates at the next



elections, and I plan to further revise and review all the association's legal documents.

*Edited by Irene Auerbach, UK*