

ARS CHORALIS 2010

Moving the world!



Annemarie van der Walt,

IFCM Board Member

The first International Artistic and Scientific Symposium on Choral Art, Singing and Voice, ARS CHORALIS 2010, took place between 8-10 April 2010 in the Croatian capital Zagreb, a city that is fast becoming an international location for the development of choral music! The intention of the Croatian Choral Directors Association (HUZ) was to hold a Symposium that would contribute at an international level to the improvement of choral music and stimulate choral conductors to incorporate more fully current knowledge about the voice and singing, along with recent scientific insight into artistic and educational work.

Participants came from 14 different countries: Austria, Croatia, Germany, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Malaysia, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, South Africa, Sweden, Turkey and the United Kingdom, and were able to experience the hospitality

and excellent organization of HUZ under the direction of Branko Stark. The symposium took place in the newly renovated "Nadmiskupijski Pastoralni Institut" in Zagreb, a very suitable venue.

Lecturers and lectures

Forty-three lecturers from the 14 different countries gave lectures and ran workshops about topics concerning the following:

Choir and Choral director (methodology of work with the choir, psychology, conductors and their duties),

- Art of Singing / Vocal Pedagogy (vocal technique, voice posture, methodology of the teaching of singing)
- Conducting / interpretation (technique, expressiveness, performance practice, historical style)
- Composition / analysis (the process of composing, finding the sense and meaning of the music)
- Vocal performance / vocal stylistics (vocal work and different voice postures)
- Science / voice and hearing (oto-rhino-laryngology, phonetics, speech pathology, voice rehabilitation, neurology)
- Science / music (musicology, ethnomusicology, the life and word of musicians)
- Music pedagogy / education (school and singing, society and musical culture)
- Musica Sacra (liturgical music, sacred art music, Gregorian chant, psalmody, traditional church singing)
- Music media / technology (music production, sound recording, discography, digital technology)

A Round Table on Choral Organizations and Institutions / Educational programs and possibilities for choral conductors in different countries took place. Participants realized again that choral music is hard work and not always easy to pursue,

but the main problems are widespread and international. However, there are people all over the world with enough passion to continue and who will never give up!

This first Symposium of its kind in Croatia, Ars Choralis, was dedicated to Emil Cossetto (1918-2006) (Presented by Bojan Pogrmilović) and Sergije Rainis (1919-2008) (Presented by Snežana Ponoš)

Recognition for ongoing work carried out in the international, national and local choral world was awarded to choral practitioners.

- The Honorary title, MAGISTER CHORI/MAGISTRA CHORI, (a diploma with a golden pin and Honorary membership of the Croatian Choral Conductors Association) was given to:

1. Giovanni Acciai-Italy
2. Andrea Angelini-Italy
3. Thomas Caplin-Norway
4. Rudolf de Beer-South Africa
5. Joy Hill-United Kingdom
6. Harald Jers-Germany
7. Susanna Saw-Malaysia
8. Romans Vanags-Latvia
9. Annemarie van der Walt-South Africa

- Honorary membership of the Croatian Choral Conductors Association was given to: Yoichi Adachi of Japan.
- The Award of The Association of Croatian Choral Conductors was presented to Johan Sundberg (Sweden) for his Life's Work in the Field of Research into Music and Voice. He was also the guest of honour and the keynote speaker, his topic The Science of the Singing Voice.

A big thank you then and "bravo" to the Japanese women's choir, Tokio Josei Choir under the direction of Yoichi Adachi, which acted as the guest choir of the symposium and performed at the choral concert. It was a privilege for the

participants to hear this group and attend the workshops about Japanese choral music.

On the second evening of the Symposium a choral concert, *We Move the World* was presented in the "Hrvatski glazbeni zavod" concert hall. Various choirs took part and as a closing item the song *We move the World*, by Branko Stark, was premiered in a massed choir comprising 150 members. This was a magic moment indeed – and a feeling of happiness was experienced by the whole audience. This song is the signature song for the World Choral Song Project of the HUZ – one song for all choirs in the world. In this work, the composer, Branko Stark, praises all the beautiful and noble things which are happening in singing everywhere. It is a hymn dedicated to choral singing, inviting everybody to take part and sing.

No sooner had the first *Ars Choralis* Symposium taken place, than we witnessed the foundation of the International Choral Institute (ICI), the scientific branch of the HUZ which will publish a scientifically accredited electronic journal with an international editorial reviewing board. It will be called *Ars Choralis* and will use two official languages, namely German and English. It will focus on "chorusology": the new discipline for scientific and artistic research of the choral art, created by Branko Stark. An ongoing contest for new choral compositions will also be established, every six months prizes will be awarded.

It is very clear that nothing will obstruct the movement that is the Croatian Choral Directors Association – HUZ. Over the past ten years in Croatia, since the Association of Croatian Choral Conductors was founded, a Vocal Academy also saw the light of day, and in June 2008 the choral competition "Sounds of June" was established, along with the recording of a CD containing Croatian choral music for free distribution all over the world. The ongoing International Project for the Development of Choir Music (IPDCM) by the Association of Croatian Choral Conductors was established in 2009 in South

Africa and will soon be implemented in Asia: in Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong. To sum up, Ars Choralis 2010 happened, the ICI has been established, and a composers competition will be held. The Croatians move the world!

The next "Ars Choralis will take place in Zagreb between 12-14 April, 2012.

Some comments from participants:

I think the conference was very refreshing: a new forceful initiative and a very efficient organization and realization. The papers were mixed, some I liked very much. But the conference successfully addressed a broad audience with very different backgrounds.

Johan Sundberg

The Ars Choralis 2010 symposium took place in an harmonic atmosphere and with the participation of renowned international lecturers. The location in the diocesan building was magnificent and the technical equipment top. Interkultur was a sponsor of the symposium, and we wish to congratulate the Croatian Choral Directors Association for the excellent organization of this symposium!

Michael Reimer

Very well organized symposium – interesting lectures that connected the sciences and the arts – Croatia starts to move the choral world....

Franz Jochum

The Ars Choralis 2010 has been a great experience for me. It was nice to learn more about choral singing from the scientific angle. I cannot wait to share the information with the choirs in Malaysia.

Susanna Saw

This looked to be a real breakthrough for the international contacts of Croatian choral life on the institutional basis.

Gábor Moczar

'It was a privilege to have been part of this enterprising and successful conference. All congratulations to the Croatian Choral Directors Ass. and especially to their maestro Branko Stark whose vision and integrity made it happen!'

Joy Hill

I had a wonderful experience at Ars Choralis 2010, and a great time in Croatia! I have learned many interesting things concerning choral conducting, differences between solo and choral singing, and the science of the singing voice applied to vocal performance optimization, in both solo and choir contexts, themes which were delivered by some of today's most important choral conductors, scientists and lecturers. And I have acquired all this new information in an extremely friendly environment, in a well organized event where I have met wonderful people and heard lots and lots of good music, coming from all over the world. For all these reasons I strongly recommend to all interested in the field of the singing voice to participate in incoming events. I will be there again, for sure.

Filipa Lã

It is difficult for me as one of the organizers of event to say something and not to be subjective, but knowing the wonderful quality of PEVOC events (Pan European Voice Conference) or symposiums in Salzburg organized by Austrian Voice Institute, I can say with great pride that we were very close. With a low budget we organized a great event in every sense. We offered great quality, and had wonderful lecturers from abroad and Croatia, a great diversity of themes, a neat schedule and a super audience. But above all, there was a fantastic atmosphere.

Bojan Pogrmilovic

Ars Choralis 2010 was another event which opened up opportunities for international encounters. It spread the message of vocal music, which unites people and peoples and generates euphoria in our soul like nothing else can. The symposium contributed to the international improvement of choral music. It supplied a stimulus for choral conductors and singers to incorporate current scientific insights into their artistic and educational work. It was a wonderful experience for me.

Maria Luisa Sanchez Carbone

It was a truly rewarding experience. Croatia proved to have a very interesting choral culture, unknown to me until now. This was a fantastic symposium arranged by the amazing Branko Stark. A perfect blend between choral art and science. Bravo!

Thomas Caplin

We move the world

We move the world
we are the light
we sing all day
we sing all night.
We touch the moon
the stars above
we sing for peace
we sing for love

And the world shall see
what can be done,
to be together here
as if we are one.
All the bells will ring
and the sun will shine
right into our hearts
into yours and mine.

Open up your soul
and spread out your wings,
take all the joy and hope
that music brings.
All the clouds are gone
when you take my hand
and this song we sing
will never end.....

The MP3 and the score of this song will be available on the
Croatian Choral Directors Association's website
www.choralcroatia.com