

# Expo Milano 2015: Grand Showcase for Italian and International Choral Music

*By Francesco Leonardi, IFCM Project Manager*

*Translated from the Italian by Marvin Vann, USA*

Every five years, in varying parts of the world, an event is held that unites all nations around a common theme. This World's Fair is known as the World Exposition or Expo and it takes place in one city chosen from throughout the world much the same way as happens for the cities chosen to host the Olympics.

From the 1st of May to the 31st of October, Expo 2015 will be held in Milan, Italy, exploring the theme "*Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life*" involving 147 of the world's countries which will present their notions and greatest achievements pertaining to the exhibition's theme: Food. This event will doubtless be memorable, and we too would like to contribute by bringing to the overall theme a particular aspect: Choral Music.

Choral music is truly a part of the traditions and cultures of all peoples. Its origins can be traced back to the collective hope felt in sowing a field, to the spontaneous joy that comes with a good harvest, to the prayer for a season of fair weather, and to the exhaustion brought on by repetitive grinding work, when singing together gives the strength to see it through to the end.

Listening to a choir's song reminds us of those roots, those feelings that only in the fusion of voices by a group of persons can again find a means of expression and communication without barriers.

The theme of Expo 2015, "*Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life*," leads us to rediscover these roots by exposing the basic needs of the human community, to rediscover those same values that are the origin of common song.

For this reason, we hope that Expo 2015 will be an event marked by a greater understanding of the cultures and traditions of choral music in all of the world's nations, a place in which to become aware of just how different cultures and traditions may be, and to come to understand that ultimately each culture and tradition was born of the same values and the same feelings.

*The International Choral Festival, "Feeding Souls, Giving Thanks for Food,"* will be a historic event for choral music for two reasons: the artistic level and the magnitude.

The high artistic level will be assured by IFCM (International Federation for Choral Music) and by FENIARCO (National Federation of the Regional Choral Associations in Italy) and will see the participation of the best groups that choral music can offer all over the world.

IFCM as Artistic Director will ensure that the choirs invited are the élite of world choral music and for their part FENIARCO will act as Artistic Director for the Italian choirs participating in the event.

The entire project will be organized and coordinated by the Associazione Musicale Jubilate, which boasts over twenty years' experience in organizing and realizing choral events, experience gained mainly through organizing and realizing the International Choral Festival "*La Fabbrica del Canto*" which has been held in Legnano, Italy, for twenty-three years.

The aim of "*Feeding Souls, Giving Thanks for Food*" is first to demonstrate how choral music, the oldest of humanity's expressions, is a fundamental part of every people, reaching down into their deepest cultural roots. In choral music, all

people know themselves to be alike, notwithstanding the great variety of expressions that this art has developed through the centuries.

Other notable aspects of this project are the quality and variety brought to it by the nations participating in Expo 2015; Choirs will be invited from scores of nations, ensuring thereby a continual variety of musical forms, repertoires, and schools of musical interpretation, always maintaining elevated levels of artistry.

A further aim of the project will be to allow an exceptionally vast public (attendance is estimated to be around twenty-one million people worldwide) to encounter choral music, thereby sharing the pleasure of listening to a choir with great numbers of people less accustomed to this genre of music

Because of this *"Feeding Souls, Giving Thanks for Food"* will be a unique event in the history of choral music, at which everyone passionate about this art form will want to be present.

The project will affect the entire Region of Lombardy, starting with the host city, Milan and its Greater Metropolitan Area, and thence spreading throughout the territory. The aim is also to direct the attention of visitors to the historic, scenic, and cultural wealth to be found in this part of Italy but which tourists often miss, by performing concerts in areas, buildings, churches, and other places which are part of the territory's history.

*"Feeding Souls, Giving Thanks for Food"* is composed of two main parts: the Choral Music of Italy and the Choral Music of the World.

Italian Choral Music will be highlighted through the activities held in the Italian Pavilion at Expo 2015, with performances by the finest choirs from each Region of Italy. Visitors to the Italian Pavilion will thus be enabled to

appreciate the many different nuances of the culture and traditions of the different Regions, completing the overall exhibition.

The foreign choirs invited during Expo 2015 will have two distinct tasks to accomplish. First, as representatives of their own nations, they will exhibit the culture of their native land here in Italy, giving those present the opportunity to encounter various traditions often largely unknown, and second, to enhance through their presence and performances the value of places of artistic merit, becoming in the process centers of attraction for cultural tourism in Italy.

June and July will see the greatest numbers of choirs participating, but probably September too will be a 'choral' month.

*Feeding Souls, Giving Thanks for Food* will take place as follows:

Every weekend, in the Italian Pavilion at Expo 2015, an Italian choir will take part in two short performances during the day and a full concert in the evening.

Every day two foreign choirs will be invited to perform in the area (Milan, the Greater Metropolitan Area, and Lombardy).

So if you happen to be passing through Europe during the months of Expo 2015, alone or as a choir, write to [fabbricadelcanto@jubilate.it](mailto:fabbricadelcanto@jubilate.it) Our local partners will be happy to help you attend concerts and meet the choirs, in the spirit of IFCM: that is, to facilitate the exchange of choral music and choral culture throughout the world.