

Fourty Years of ICB! Origins, Recollections: An Interview with Jutta Tagger

By Isabelle Métrope, ICB Managing Editor

Isabelle Métrope: Dear Jutta, the ICB was created in 1981. Where did it originate from and what were its objectives?

Jutta Tagger: The decision to create the ICB was taken by a group of choral personalities from a dozen countries during a meeting held on March 8/9, 1981 in New Orleans following an ACDA National Convention. This meeting was decisive for the creation of the IFCM.

Its objective was to create an inexpensive newsletter to be called INTERNATIONAL CHORAL BULLETIN. (NB: One must bear in mind that, at that time, Internet, e-mail, fax etc. did not exist, and telephone calls were expensive. People did not travel widely. The ICB got its first e-mail address in July 1994, but not many people had one at that time).

IM: What shape did the ICB have at its creation?

JT: The first issue, published in July 1981, had 4 pages and contained the summary of the above meeting, the list of participants, and an appeal to all for notices about festivals, seminars, workshops, information about choral publications, newsletters, possibilities of international exchange, names and addresses of organizations and persons who might be interested in the future organization etc.

IM: What were the contents and who were the authors?

JT: Originally, it was a newsletter designed to simply inform; articles were not signed. Everything was written in English. Only the draft statutes were published in the four languages of the future federation (ICB n° 4, 1982).

The first few issues had Walter S. Collins (College of Music,

Université du Colorado, Boulder, USA) as Editor in Chief and James R. Bjorge, New York, as Co-Editor. The publisher was ACDA.

The first signed article was the first President's Message ("Mundus Cantat") by Paul Wehrle, who was elected following the official creation of the IFCM (ICB dated October 1982). That issue contained the minutes of the constitutive assembly, the list of representatives of the Founding Members (only international organizations), the Board, persons in charge, etc. As of that date, the ICB was published regularly four times a year. It was also the last issue sent to non-members.

IM: In the 1990s, the ICB changed appearance, and in the 2000s, it became a color magazine and has remained so. What were the important milestones?

JT: Indeed. The April 1991 issue was the first in the shape of a magazine and had a colored and illustrated cover page (the paper of which though was the same as the rest of the ICB), and it was published in four languages. Its basic structure (Dossier, Repertoire, IFCM News...) has remained more or less the same since, with only minor adjustments over the time.

The articles were published in one of the four official languages, and the translations were in the middle of the magazines, printed in smaller characters and on non-white paper, often in the same color as the cover, but in pastel. The first issue printed in four colors was the one dated January 2004.



IM: Which people you met thanks to the ICB do you recall in particular?

JT: Maybe my first meeting with Royce Saltzman, ACDA President, during the New Orleans meeting, and Walter Collins whose idea it was to create the ICB, two exceptional persons who have had great influence on me and with whom (and their wives) lasting friendships developed.

I have met so many amazing people from the whole world during my life with ICB, in direct connection to my work with the Bulletin or not, that to list them all would exceed the framework of this interview. I was introduced to the choral world by my husband Claude Tagger, without whom my adventure with the ICB would never have taken place. My commitment to the ICB has opened new horizons for me, broadened my knowledge, and deepened my understanding of the world.

IM: Is there one issue that you remember particularly?

JT: No, I don't really. Each one had its specificities, as to content, aspect, or authors, and we always tried to make every single one "special", "interesting", and to improve our work little by little. The ICB has always been the result of teamwork, with many people involved, for its production, contents and search of authors. And almost all of it as

volunteer work.

IM: Since April 1991, the ICB has become a magazine with a cover. What was your favorite one?

JT: Well, in a sense, maybe the first one with a cover: it was in four languages, and because it was an important step forward. (Unfortunately, that cover contained a typo: It said: "In four languages" instead of "languages").

When the ICB became a publication printed in four colors, the cover showed beautiful snapshots selected from the photos available. There was never a special cover "designer".

IM: What are your wishes for the future of the ICB?

JT: I wish long life to the magazine, in a spirit of openness and curiosity for the world as seen through the prism of choral art. May it be an interesting journal and involve more and more people in the world.

The ICB has evolved continuously throughout its existence and I hope this will continue to be the case. The successive changes in its leadership (after me, Andrea Angelini, and now you, Isabelle) have brought each time fresh ideas, and innovative, positive vibes.

From the very beginning, I have always been involved, at all levels imaginable, be it to clear a package of ICBs from customs that arrived in Europe at our place and send on the individual copies to the members, or as a translator, later as a member of an editorial team, and then Editor; now rather (a tiny, tiny bit only) in the background.

It was and is a passionate affair. May this passion and, with it, the success of the ICB continue to grow in the world.



JUTTA TAGGER (*1939 in Weimar, Germany), studied English and French at the University of Heidelberg and obtained a diploma in translation in 1964. She moved to Paris, France in 1966. In 1969 she married Frenchman Claude Tagger, one of the co-founders and, later, President of IFCM (†1998), through whom she became involved in choral music, locally, nationally and internationally (A Cœur Joie, Europa Cantat, IFCM). She has three children and six grandchildren. She participated in all IFCM World Choral Symposia and in many other festivals and World Youth Choir sessions all over the world, mostly helping with translations and interpretation. From 1994-2009 she was a Co-Editor and later the Managing Editor of the International Choral Bulletin, ICB. Email: jutta.tagger@wanadoo.fr