

Hong Kong International Youth and Children's Choir Festival

A Place for Choral Exchange Events

By Leon Shiu-wai Tong, Artistic Director 2011 HKIYCCF

Since its establishment 15 years ago, the Hong Kong Treble Choirs' Association (HKTCA) has been enthusiastically involved in promoting the development of Chinese music and has successfully organized almost 10 large-scale choral events. This year, with the same objective, HKTCA organized the 2011 Hong Kong International Youth and Children's Choir Festival (2011 HKIYCCF) from 17-21 July, 2011, in order to provide a platform for outstanding choirs to gather in harmony as they share their experiences, interact, and learn from one another. With the support of the International Federation for Choral Music and the Music Education Professional Committee of China Society of Education, 2011 HKIYCCF aims to encourage choral exchange events, and broaden the musical perspectives of choir members and conductors through interacting with internationally renowned choirs. Not only do the choral arts possess the power to strengthen children's cooperation abilities, HKTCA believes that choral music may serve as a medium for emotional expressions, which is extremely beneficial to the all-round development of young people and children.

The first two HKIYCCFs, held in 2006 and 2008 respectively, gathered 70 choirs from around the world. Both these occasions earned high acclaim internationally with funding support from the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust and the Hong Kong Arts Development Council. Choirs from across nations gathered

to share the joy of music with one another in Hong Kong. These choirs came from places as far apart as Estonia, Romania, the USA, Congo, South Africa, China, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore, Chinese Taipei, the Philippines, North Korea, New Zealand and Macau SAR. Their participation enriched the Festivals with their varied musical backgrounds and cultural diversities. In recognition of HKTCA's contribution to the development of local choral arts, the association was awarded the Arts Promotion Award by the Hong Kong Arts Development Council in 2008.

In comparison to the past two Festivals, a decrease in participation, particularly by Western countries, occurred as a result of the recent global economic crisis. Yet this did not undermine the organization of the Festival. Instead, 2011 HKIYCCF was highlighted by the full support of China: choirs and individuals from over 20 provinces and cities joined the event. This is indeed of the greatest encouragement for the Festival – to be able to offer a medium for the Chinese community to share with the world the beauty of the choral arts. This year's Festival involved the greatest number of participants – almost 3,700, reflecting the significant amount of support that the event received. Moreover, over 30 local choirs and vocal ensembles took part in the Festival. Such a promising increase in the degree of local participation and recognition confirms HKIYCCF's role as a platform to inspire and promote local choral qualities.

The rich content of the Festival provided various opportunities for participants to share, enjoy and be inspired by wonderful choral music. The 5-day Festival consisted of 12 categories of competitions. Children, youth choirs and chamber choirs, male and female vocalists gathered in Hong Kong to share their love for folklore, a capella, solo and contemporary music. The most outstanding choirs were awarded the 5 grand awards and cash prizes: The Sound of Jinglun Chorus of Beijing Chen Jinglun High School (China) received

the “Outstanding Performance of a Chinese Piece Award” with a cash prize of HKD 10,000; the Hong Kong Young People’s Chorus (Hong Kong, China) received “The CASH Best Commissioned Piece” Award with a cash prize of HKD 10,000; the Conductors of Jiangnan University Students Choir (China) and Wah Yan College Kowloon Boys’ Choir (Hong Kong, China) were awarded the “Best Conductor” Awards and a cash prize of HKD 5,000; Mandaue Children’s and Youth Chorus (the Philippines) won the “Jury’s Prize” and a cash prize of HKD 20,000; and finally, Wah Yan College Kowloon Boys’ Choir (Hong Kong, China) received the “Choir of the World” Award with a cash prize of HKD 40,000.



*Prof. Leon Shiu-wai TONG
and Dr. Michael J. ANDERSON
present the “Choir of the
World” award*

More significantly, the Festival was delighted to have invited 24 world-class choral experts from 12 countries and regions as adjudicators. Dr. Michael J. Anderson, the current Interim President of IFCM, and Dr. Royce Saltzman, the Past President of IFCM, shared their insights into the world of choral music in their opening speeches. All the adjudicators and choral leaders also shared their professional comments and encouragement for the new choral generation, which were absolutely invaluable and inspirational. In addition, some of

these experts also kindly served as speakers and shared their choral experience and musical knowledge with the participants at 14 workshops throughout the Festival.

2011 HKIYCCF was honored to have invited 4 Guest Choirs with international choral standards. Cantemus Mixed Choir (Hungary) is known throughout Europe and the world; it belongs to the Cantemus Choral Institute whose choirs have won over 100 choral awards in various nations. Busan Metropolitan Junior Chorus (Korea) is world-famous for its wonderful dancing and singing abilities. Guangzhou Children's Palace Choir (China) is one of the best choirs in China and has won numerous awards on the mainland and internationally; and the Xinjiang Tajik Children's Choir (China) brought a unique choral experience to the Festival with songs consisting of the continuity of history and the inheritance of culture.



*Guests of Honor announce
the opening of the 2011
HKIYCCF*

Together with the Guest Choirs, a number of talented choirs and ensembles brought unforgettable memories to the audience at 7 concerts in 4 evenings, including the Opening Ceremony & Concert; World-class Choirs Series: China and Korea Children's Choral Concert; Emperor's Voices: Hungary Cantemus Mixed Choir Concert; Musica Connection Friendly Concert I: Lovely Music In China; Phoenix TV Concert: World In Harmony; A Perfect Family; Musica Connection Friendly Concert II: Joyful Music in Asia; and Finalists' Night & Prize Ceremony. In some of the concerts, choirs and audience delivered blessings to the world

with their heavenly voices singing the Festival theme song – *In One Accord*.

The Festival ended with outstanding choral music and wonderful memories for all participants. Not only did everyone gain a tremendous amount of eye-opening experience, but lifelong friendships were also built among music lovers across nations who share similar dreams and interest in choral music. HKTCA would like to take this opportunity to express its deepest gratitude for all the support, which makes the Festival possible and successful. Although many problems arose throughout the organization of the Festival, HKTCA intends to organize the 4th HKIYCCF in July 2013 and looks forward with enthusiasm to sharing more wonderful choral music with the world! For more information please visit www.hktreblechoir.com/hkiyccf/