

ICB's Language Coordinators

A Portrait

Jutta Tagger, erstwhile Managing Editor, ICB

Have you ever asked yourself how it was possible for the *International Choral Bulletin* to be published in four languages every three months? Who is behind all that work? Well, without a huge army of volunteers, this would not be possible.

For each language, there is a coordinator who gets all the texts to be translated into the language he or she is responsible for. These coordinators then have to find people in the ever-changing pool of people who have the time and ability to translate these texts, which have then to be collected again and put into a standardized ICB format. They are also checked by yet another person for style, literals, and any misunderstandings, etc. before going to print. Sometimes the articles also need editing before being translated, for many authors do not write in their own language. It is a huge, time-consuming job, and we are very thankful to all involved in this process, for without them you would have a much less professionally presented and less easily readable ICB.

Today we would like to present the four language coordinators to you. We sent them a short questionnaire, which they answered with good grace. We also asked them to provide a short biography and a photograph.

So, do enjoy learning about them, and please continue to appreciate their efforts.

Are you – or have you been – in any way involved in music, in particular, choral music?

LA I trained as a music teacher. I have sung in choirs nearly all my life, conducted many different sorts of choirs, and still sing in two choirs.

HB Yes, I started singing aged 11 in my school choir, and have never stopped since: Leeds University, Nottingham Harmonic Society, Valencia and Murcia University choirs in Spain, and since retiring, three different choirs run by northern European pensioners on the Costa Blanca, plus the village choir up in the Italian Alps during the summer holidays.

MB Yes, from my early childhood up to now. I always had two passions: music and foreign languages. Music has always been part of my life and my heart. I have been singing in choirs more or less all my life. I have also taken part in organizing summer music workshops and choir exchanges. I have rich memories of these experiences and also of the French 'Choralies' festivals.

GFH My mother played the piano very well (though I, unfortunately, never learned) so you could say I grew up with music, although I am not a trained musician – just a music-loving complete amateur. Then, when I was at high school, the music teacher often used to transcribe various pieces for three voices – female voices, since it was an all-girls school. There were about 750 students, so the results were quite impressive. Now I sing with an amateur choir.

How did you first become involved in work with the ICB? And since when?

LA I attended the first Europa Cantat Festival 1961 in Passau, Germany, as a singer. Later, then as president of the German choral organisation 'Arbeitskreis Musik in der Jugend', I became involved with the European Federation of Young Choirs (I was its Vice President for one period of office). I have been a member of IFCM since it was founded and participated at its first symposium in Vienna in 1987.

HB One day, about 12 years ago, a young neighbour, a teacher at the Conservatoire, rang me in hysterics to say that he had a deadline to meet for a translation for the *ICB*, so I took pity on him and did it while he had his hair styled before his harpsichord recital.

MB: While looking for recent 'Choralies' news on the web, I discovered that *ICB* was looking for a coordinator of French translations. I thought that it would be a nice challenge after my retirement, linked to choral singing which I wanted to pursue. Since being accepted in 2010, I have been very pleased to do this work, with its challenges. It connects me permanently to current choral music issues all over the world.

GFH I began in January 2010: Andrea Angelini, the Managing Editor of *ICB*, is also the conductor, organizer, and chief inspiration behind the Carla Amori chamber choir, to which I am privileged to belong. We have known each other for over twenty years, so when the need for an English language coordinator arose, I was the obvious choice.

How did you become interested in language coordination? Have

you had any prior experience with this kind of work?

LA I spent two thirds of my school life in England and grew up bilingual: German at home, English everywhere else. Different languages reflect different views on the same theme – that has always interested me. Before working for the ICB, I already translated for the *Europa Cantat Magazine*. And as a student, I partly earned my living as a simultaneous interpreter.

HB I never did really: one day when I volunteered to do a translation, Andrea Angelini said they needed a coordinator for Spanish, and I had jolly well better get on and do it. So I did. Orders are orders. I had never done any before as such, but I had been a University of Cambridge language examiner, so I suppose that qualified me.

MB As mentioned above, one of my passions is foreign languages. I have always worked for international organizations with international staff. Among other duties, I was in charge of coordinating translations into five languages of meeting reports, resolutions, and convention documents.

GFH I became interested only because Andrea asked me to take on the job. And no, I have absolutely no prior experience, unless you count being an oral examiner for the Cambridge ESOL exams, but I'm a good organizer and that makes it easier.

What is your motivation? How do you value your contribution to the ICB?

LA My motivation is to help make all the interesting articles in the *ICB* accessible to people who don't speak English so well. So I think my contribution is quite important.

HB I am greatly motivated: retired after many years in a very demanding job, I consider that I still have something to offer to society. Being in contact with all sorts of interesting people in various languages via the *ICB* is an enjoyable way of contributing.

MB My motivation was to combine my two passions during my retirement period. This is the very field where you can use both competences. It is also interesting from the human side, to work with enthusiastic people with common values, to learn a lot about choral music, and to be in contact with musicians. This work requires serious organisational skills, sometimes not so easy to manage. Besides, approaching the deadline provokes stress, e.g. when texts do not arrive in time, or people are not available for editing. However, it is a very pleasant job. You have great challenges while being in contact with other persons who understand each other through the universal language of music, but also communicate in their own language; thus our work contributes to further understanding.

GFH My motivation is to give something to others – and especially to Andrea – in return for the pleasure I derive from singing with the choir. As for the value of my contribution, I hope that through *ICB* it helps to bring choral music alive for more and more people: singing together is a great experience and creates real bonds between people.

What is your relationship with the volunteers in your team?

LA I have been translating and editing articles for the *ICB* for a very long time, but only coordinating since the last two issues. Over questions the translators have about the articles, I am getting to know more and more of them personally, unfortunately only as e-mail partners. But perhaps

I will meet the one or the other in real life.

HB I was a bit wary at first, because I did not know or have references about anyone on the team. Also when communicating in Spanish you have to be a bit careful, because while in Spain nowadays everyone is very relaxed (too relaxed?) and uses the informal *tu* form when conjugating the verbs, in South America they still use the polite *usted* form, so I worried about treading on anyone's toes by not getting the form of address right. But I now have some really delightful correspondents who are amusing and affectionate.

MB Our team is like a family sharing common interests. Although we know each other only virtually, we have very a friendly relationship and keep each other informed even beyond translation or work. As no one has a financial interest in working for the *ICB*, motivation is sincere. A certain kind of solidarity is established in order to improve texts and forward the best possible translation of articles.

GFH I have a very amicable relationship with all my volunteers, and often exchange greetings and news with them. In some instances we have discovered shared interests and ideas and have become, you could say, pen friends, so now we write to each other independently of *ICB* correspondence, to share news of our day-to-day lives and our families (including our animals). The last time I went to England to visit my family, I was able to meet one particular pen friends, and we spent a couple of very pleasant hours together. Keeping in touch with a team of volunteers is a bit like Facebook, but better.

Do you think that working as a volunteer is important in today's society?

LA I think today's society can't exist without many dedicated volunteers. And I live this as an active member of several local boards, dealing with such heterogeneous topics as supporting music organisations, the university, the Jewish Community, refugees, fair trade and ecology, and low-income families.

HB Yes, I certainly do, but I am finding that it is sometimes quite a puzzle for organizations to place you where you can really use your talents for the good of society. I have volunteered in ONGs which did not know what to do with me: would you like to wash the coffee mugs out? Well, that is certainly a necessary job, but perhaps someone else with no particular skills to offer could do it. Which is why the language coordination is ideal for me.

MB I have worked on a voluntary basis in different associations. You can learn a lot from such experiences and sometimes enjoying what you are doing is more important than financial interest. It opens your soul to meet other people with similar passions and ways of thinking. All the best moments of my life are linked to free work with friends, in order to achieve attractive goals – most of them connected to the field of music.

GFH Very much so – I am involved in various forms of voluntary work, and I can see what a difference it can make. If you have particular skills, it's very rewarding to be able to go on using them even when you no longer need them professionally, but even if you have no special skills, there is a lot that you can do: apart from the more obvious things like helping the disabled or working for charity, you can walk the dogs at your local dogs' home, help to staff a museum, or even tidy up your local park. It all goes to improve the quality of life, for everyone.

The Coordinators

German: Lore Auerbach (LA)



Born 1933 in Amsterdam/NL as a daughter of political refugees from Germany, continued to England in 1939 and returned to Germany 1946. Trained as teacher for Music and English in primary and secondary schools. Master of Cultural Arts and Honorary Doctorate from Hildesheim University. Founding director of Hildesheim Music school, teacher at a training college for kindergarten teachers, member of Parliament of the German federal state of Lower Saxony. Author of a book and many essays, mainly on elementary music education and general cultural politics. Former positions held: Honorary Deputy Mayor of Hildesheim (near Hannover), President of German umbrella organisation of choral associations, Vice-President of German Music Council.

Spanish: Helen Baines (HB)



I have no claim to fame: my professional life was spent protecting your grandma by keeping teenagers off the streets. If they learnt anything it was quite by chance. Before retiring, I was allotted class 1^oE. All boys. All aged fifteen. One of them celebrated Sunday nights by scaling the school's three storey façade, climbing in through our classroom window, piling the desks against the door after filling the lock with super-glue, writing a few choice comments on the blackboard, before descending to await me with his 30 grinning mates in the corridor at 8.15 on Monday morning. I also helped with the

school choir. But they didn't. I did unofficial note-bashing for the local University choir in Murcia, Spain: we did Händel's *Messiah*. Sopranos at 10, contraltos half an hour later, and so on down the voices. Hammering the notes with one finger and pronouncing very loudly at the same time. Look, it says 'Worthy is the Lamb', not 'warty is the lamp'. Sweat, sweat ... I sang. And sang. And sang. That's me.

French: Maria Bartha (MB)



Bachelor degree (flute) from Kodály Zoltán Conservatory in Debrecen, Hungary. State diploma (French, English) from the "Academy for Foreign Trade" in Budapest. Work at Interkoncert in Budapest, at the Opera & Ballet Department. In France, co-founder of Bussy-St-Georges Music School, President of a music theatre for children in Bussy. Twelve years at the International Hotel Association, seventeen years at OIV (International Organisation of Vine and Wine), an intergovernmental organisation with 43 member states; among other duties, coordinator of sixteen scientific working groups. Follow-up of students (master degree); also in charge of the preparation and follow-up of the organisation of international wine competitions, in collaboration with local staff.

Complementary studies in geopolitics, auditor at CNAM (University for life-long learning) and IRIS, Department of geopolitics and foreign affairs, two years' specialisation in European Union affairs.

English: Gillian Forlivesi Heywood (GFH)



Born near Manchester, England. Honours Degree in Italian Studies from the University of Reading. She has lived in Italy for many years, first in Milan, where she taught English at one of the city's most prestigious universities, and then in Rimini on the Adriatic Riviera. She is married and has a son and a daughter, and two very spoilt cats. She has always worked as a translator, while continuing to teach English, mainly to professional people; at one time she had her own language school. She still enjoys translating and works mainly in the fields of history (especially local history) and art, being frequently commissioned to translate visitor information materials for art exhibitions. In her spare time she enjoys singing in an amateur choir (a hobby she shares with her husband), going to the theatre and concerts, reading and sewing, and taking long walks in the country or by the sea. She is also an active member of the local University of the Third Age. She enjoys travelling and is always ready to pack a bag and go.

Edited by Gillian Forlivesi Heywood, Italy