

IFCM North American Regional Office – Report 2017–2020

Tim Sharp, current IFCM Board Member, former IFCM Vice-President representing IFCM Founding Member ACDA, the American Choral Directors Association

The American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) has collaborated with IFCM over the last three years to use our National Office as the North American Regional Office. In very intense and specific detail, I have worked directly with the staff, officers, and financial directors of IFCM to bring IFCM into compliance with USA Internal Revenue Service financial procedures, particularly related to the taxes that are required as a non-profit corporation in the USA. I am very pleased to report the successful conclusion of this activity, even as we continue to assist with final details. It has also been my role recently to connect IFCM with an auditor in the USA to further this important financial process. I consider this a major role and contribution by the North American Regional IFCM office and an important strategic aspect of our ongoing work with IFCM. Throughout this process, I have maintained close communication with the Office Managers of IFCM based in the USA and in Portugal as well as with our Treasurer based in France.

The major benefit of IFCM membership to North American choral directors and choirs is the world-wide networking opportunities possible through active participation and attendance at IFCM supported events. There is no better networking source in the non-profit environment for making worldwide choral connections than IFCM and the sponsorship of the World Choral Music Symposium remains the greatest benefit to most of our choral musicians, along with connections made by paying attention to activities and information provided by the *International Choral Bulletin*. These two benefits of IFCM

membership and the networking it provides remain the most significant. It has been my opportunity to contribute ongoing news and items of interest to the *ICB* on a regular basis, and we have done so regularly. Further, I have been able to contribute several major articles to the *ICB* as a researcher and writer, particularly related to North American composers and pedagogical practices.

Due to my own leadership position as IFCM Vice-President, it was my honor to serve on the Artistic Committee for the 2020 World Choral Music Symposium in Auckland, New Zealand. Naturally, we were devastated by the need to cancel this event due to COVID-19 but the relationships established with the New Zealand team for this event will live on as important new and important connections. ACDA was able to extend complimentary membership to members of the New Zealand Choral Federation throughout the planning period for the cancelled Symposium and this relationship has and will continue beyond the actual cancelled event. We are all in particular debt to John Rosser, Juliet Dreaver, and Chrystine Argyle for their collegiality and collaborative spirit during the planning process. Once again, IFCM provided the network for this solid relationship that will live far beyond our immediate circumstances and activity.

As a member of the IFCM Executive Committee, it has been my task to lead and participate in all of the regular meetings of the EC and the IFCM Board of Directors. I have worked as Vice-President to help with the important decisions related to WCSM, past and future, and to contribute to the financial and strategic policies of the association. I have been particularly cognizant of participation in IFCM by USA and Canadian directors and associations and have actively contacted colleagues in Choral Canada, Chorus America, the Barbershop Harmony Society, and the National Association of Teachers of Singing. I look forward to continuing to solicit their participation in the activities of IFCM.

It was my honor to help Kenya, Africa, start its own choral association through my participation with Thierry Thiebaut in the IFCM Conductors Without Borders initiative. Thierry and I travelled to Kenya to work with Ken Wakia in establishing this work which ultimately led to the founding of the Kenya Choral Directors Trust, the national association for Kenyan choral directors. This organization was central to the establishment of the first Africa Cantat which has just been held and will be a strong contributing association to IFCM in the future.

As IFCM pivoted to adjust to the COVID-19 restrictions in 2020, I was able to contribute to various online webinars to keep the choral world connected. These contributions have included instructional videos through the International Choral Academy, webinars created by fellow IFCM Board member TJ Harper to connect with the world, and many advisory sessions with IFCM members worldwide. In many ways, our response to COVID-19 was made possible by the network we have established through our IFCM community and activity.

The International Federation for Choral Music is an indispensable resource for the choral world. It is an honor to represent the work and programmatic activities to our members in North America and to communicate our activities to the world through IFCM.

Edited by Laura Massey, UK