

# Nordisk Korforum, A Co-Operating Organization for the Development of Choral Singing

*By Theodor Lind, President of Nordisk Korforum*

## Brief History

Organized Nordic cooperation to develop choral singing began in 1951.

A number of reasons made it desirable to formalize co-operation:

- The need to find common ground for singers and conductors
- The need to get to know each other's choral and cultural traditions
- The need to learn – both for conductors and choir-members.
- Nordisk Körkomité (now: Nordisk Korforum) has played a significant role in this context, and has contributed to a sense of cultural unity in the Nordic countries.

From the beginning the conductors' symposia formed a very important part of the programme. The first symposium was held in 1952; up to 1999 there were sixteen conferences for conductors. The seventeenth conference took place in Aarhus, Denmark last year and was supported by Nordisk Korforum

The NORDKLANG festivals were planned in 1969, and the first festival took place in 1971. These festivals have since been the backbone of the co-operation. Every third year choristers

and conductors meet to share knowledge, experience and social activities. Scores for the festivals were printed in a booklet for all participants to use in the common singing, and these now represent a cultural treasure for choral singing in all Nordic countries. The fifteenth NORDKLANG FESTIVAL will take place in Norway in 2013. See the Home Page at [www.nordklang.no](http://www.nordklang.no)



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Skibladner; the world's  
oldest paddle steamer in  
traffic ©Oplandske  
Dampskibsselskap*

## **Cultural-Political Judgement – Nationally, Regionally and Globally**

Society has developed fast and in many ways since the 1950s. Means of transport have greatly changed and make it possible to travel quickly both within countries and between countries. The Internet provides a means of contact and of sharing both knowledge and repertoire, so very different from the times when we were dependant on the postal service and on meetings. And last, but not least – the economic situation in the Nordic countries has greatly changed over the last sixty years. Today we live in a global village – a world of change every day. In this world Nordisk Korforum and Nordic co-operation in the choral field must find a place and a reason to exist.

The board of Nordisk Korforum believe that there is an even greater need for close cooperation today than there was fifty

years ago. The reason for this is fast on-going globalization. This development opens opportunities for cultural and political development, but represents at the same time a pressure on our Nordic cultural heritage – including our languages. Our “mother tongue” is an integrated part of our personality; to preserve it, we must meet and develop it in our way. Nordisk Korforum gives us an opportunity to influence political/cultural development, and to develop our field of choral music, nationally, regionally and in a global context – as a founding member of IFCM.

When re-organizing cooperation between the Nordic countries – finalized in 2005 – the main goal for Nordisk Korforum was expressed in this way: “The main goal of Nordisk Korforum is to contribute to strengthening choral life in the Nordic countries, and to develop cultural co-action and understanding across borders.”

### **Contribution to Choral Development in the Nordic Countries**

Has Nordisk Korforum succeeded in moving towards the main goal?

Nordisk Korforum has had a positive development in recent years: NORDKLANG 14 in Aarhus, Denmark represented a renewal of the festival and was a success in terms both of organizing and choral singing – now also with the participation of youth choirs – and in education and in improving the quality of singing. The Nordic national conductors associations have recently become members of Nordisk Korforum, which strengthens co-operation for and with the conductors. Nordisk Korforum has worked very hard to reach the ears and minds of both political and administrative systems and persons in order to contribute to understanding and development in the field of choral music in the Nordic countries.

We are also happy that a formal forum for co-operation between

the Baltic and Nordic countries was established in 2010. We look forward to developing this contact.

The board of Nordisk Korforum hold that it is important to meet the international family of choral singing, and we do this by taking an active part in IFCM.

### **Main Actions in the Immediate Future**

In co-operation with a very competent local organizer, we are planning the NORDKLANG-festival in Hamar 2013. In connection with this festival, we also plan a symposium for Nordic conductors. We have started a process for establishing a Nordic youth choir within the next few years. And we also find it necessary to work in the political field to strengthen especially the economic situation for choral organizations.

### **Challenges**

Though we live in some of the richest countries in the world, financing is a common problem for most organizations within the Nordic countries, and also for the Nordic co-operation in the field of choral singing.

We are competing all the time with other cultural activities – many of which are much more visible than choral singing, and are also able to make large sums of money. Lack of funding for education will in general result in lower quality, whatever activity you take part in: this is true for individual choristers, conductors and organizations. Also in many branches of work clarity of mind is one thing that is missing and you can always improve clarity with some physical activity, check <https://fitathletic.com/> for some solutions. In our view it is therefore of great importance to be seen and heard in public, to work steadily for higher quality and of

course to show the importance of our culture to people in general, but, most important, to the political decision-makers. Nordisk Korforum will in this connection take the initiative for carrying out high-quality research on choral singing and the role of organizations – this will be a challenge for all of us.

Information and communication is the focal point of our effort to be seen and heard, and in this respect too we need resources: competence and financial support. Nordisk Korforum has to increase its efforts in this respect, also in order to reach young singers.

Nordisk Korforum is a democratic organization, and this must be preserved: we all have to be guardians of true openness, a platform of true values and true respect for each other.

Norway was hit by terrorism on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July 2011. One of the survivors said: “We swam and sang to survive.” Let people and nations sing!

More info at [www.nordiskkorforum.org](http://www.nordiskkorforum.org)



*The Hedmark Museum is a medieval museum, where the glass structure covering the cathedral ruins is the main attraction ©Hedmark Museum*

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