

**Our choral community mourns one of its most exceptional leaders: Maya Shavit, from Israel, who has passed away at the age of 85.**

**OBITUARY: MAYA SHAVIT (ISRAEL), IFCM BOARD MEMBER 2005-2011**

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Maya Shavit founded the Efroni Girls Choir in 1981, a choir of girls (ages 9-18) from all areas of Emek Hefer and representing a wide cross-section of the Israeli population. She remained its music director until 2013. Under her leadership, the choir achieved international acclaim through concert tours in Europe, Scandinavia, Canada, the USA and Japan.

Maya was one of the most active members of the Israeli choral scene. For decades, she focused on children's choirs throughout the country and abroad, giving young people the experience of musical collaboration and true acceptance. Maya initiated Jewish-Arab choral activities that were pro-tolerance community-building and educational, with the aim of building bridges between the cultures. She received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Ministry of Education of Israel.



Maya at the IFCM General Assembly in Copenhagen in 2018

Between 2005 and 2011 Maya was an IFCM board member, where she made a huge and positive contribution to our choral community. In 2005 a World Youth Choir session was organised by Zimriya, the World Assembly of Choirs in Israel; Hallel, the Israeli Choral Organization; and Jeunesses Musicales Israel. Maya was involved in planning IFCM's third Multicultural and Ethnic Conference, focusing on Jerusalem as a centre for three of the great Abrahamic religions, traditions and cultures: Christianity, Islam and Judaism. This was due to take place in 2006, but was cancelled due to the political situation at the time. Maya would later write in a report: *"...The variety of choral voices coming from the many Christian, Jewish and Muslim traditions was an unbelievable mosaic, and the cooperation I received from the different people involved was touching and promising. It was to be what the whole idea of 'Voices of...' was meant to be..."*.

In 2008 Maya organised a meeting of the IFCM Executive

Committee in Jerusalem and arranged for its members to meet several cultural institutions, including Zimriya, Hallel and Mila. In 2012 Maya was one of the experts at the IFCM World Choral Summit in Beijing, China, and presented 'Building Bridges' together with André de Quadros and Thierry Thiébaud. Maya will remain a model of inspiration, courage, strength and humanism for many years to come, and she will be a dear friend forever.

Nadine Robin, IFCM office manager

*Edited by Christopher Lutton, UK*

Maya Shavit was like no other. She lived and breathed choral music. And she was also a dreamer. Earlier this year, barely weeks before she passed away, she told me of yet another project that she wanted to start. Her mind never stopped imagining and dreaming. She didn't sleep much, and it was commonplace for her to receive and make phone calls at 1 o'clock in the morning. I knew Maya for decades and we collaborated so much on so many different initiatives. When she set her mind to something, she moved mountains to make it happen. She was deeply committed to music as a means of building communities across the Israeli-Palestinian divide. Motivated by what she saw as injustice towards Palestinians, she used her choral art and pedagogy to make the world a better place. Maya was a role model for the best kind of musician and person – kind, passionate, generous, idealistic, visionary, and unshakably committed to building a compassionate world centred on justice. Like hundreds of others, I carry her in the deepest recesses of my heart.

Professor André de Quadros

*Edited by Christopher Lutton, UK*