Tenth World Symposium Seoul, Korea. August 6th to 12th, 2014

This past August the international choral community met in Seoul, Korea, to celebrate the choral art around the world. The Tenth World Symposium on Choral Music was held between the 6th and the 12th of August at the National Theater of Korea and the Seoul Arts Center. Both of these locations proved to be ideal for an event like this. The National Theater offered two stages for concerts: *Hae Hall* is a large concert hall in which every invited ensemble had the opportunity to share a 45-minute program with the symposium attendees. *Dal Hall* is a smaller venue that was used for both shorter and more intimate concerts and large symposium sessions. The other large concert hall was the *Music Hall* at the Seoul Arts Center. The National Theater also had three other smaller venues for the rest of the symposium sessions. Additionally, the National Theater offered ample space for exhibitors from around the world, who were located on the second and third floors. Amongst the exhibitors there were international membership associations, publishing companies, and professional companies selling goods specific to the choral arts. Finally, there was ample room for participants to meet, interact, exchange ideas, create future cooperation opportunities, and network in general. These spaces included the large lobby and the four restaurants and coffee shops. All in all, this symposium allowed participants to attend concerts, be part of lecture sessions, and meet other participants (new and old friends), thus creating the perfect conditions to experience the current state of the choral art and re-imagine its future.

The Executive Committee of this symposium was chaired by Ambassador Young-Shim Do (Honorary chair), Ho-Sang Ahn (co-

chair), and Sang-Kil Lee (co-chair), leading a group of eight other members to ensure all operational aspects of a large event such as this one. The Artistic Committee was led by Sang-Kil Lee (Korea) and Anton Armstrong (USA), leading the efforts of four other distinguished professionals of the choral art: Anita Brevik (Norway), Oscar Escalada (Argentina), Chun Koo (Korea), and Shin-Hwa Park (Korea) who were charged with the important mission of selecting all invited choirs and lecturers. A word of recognition should go to the Symposium Sponsors: International Federation for Choral Music (IFCM), The National Theater of Korea, Korean Federation for Choral Music (KFCM), Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism, Arts Council Korea, Seoul Metropolitan Government, Global Tour, Korean Broadcasting System (KBS), UNTWO ST-EP Foundation, and Ethiopian Airlines. This important event would not have been possible without the valuable contributions of all of the above.

The symposium offered concerts by distinguished ensembles from eighteen countries. Twenty-four international and ten Korean ensembles offered highlights of the universal repertoire as well as works by composers from their particular countries. Children's choirs, youth choirs, adult ensembles, and smaller vocal groups, made up of all voicing (treble, men's, and mixed) offered all participants a wide kaleidoscope of music with repertoire from all periods and genres. This year's theme – *Healing and Youth* – was captured in the choirs' musical selections, offering very thoughtful insights into the ways

that music reflects this particular theme. There were three celebratory concerts marking the opening, mid-point, and closing of the event. The opening concert offered an aperitif of what was to come in the subsequent days, with six international choirs performing a short set from their own regions. This was followed by a Korean choral music set performed by three Korean choirs combined and performing with the Bach Solisten Seoul Orchestra under the direction of Sang-Hoon Lee. On August 10th the symposium welcomed the delegates for the second half with a concert featuring the Asia Pacific Choir followed by a three-choir combined Korean ensemble under the direction of Anton Armstrong performing music from all around the globe. Finally, the symposium came to an end with the closing concert that featured the World Vision Children's Choir, the African Youth Choir, an invitation to the eleventh Symposium on Choral Music to be held in Barcelona, Spain, and a wonderful performance of Brahms's *Requiem*. Choirs from Korea, Sweden, and the United States combined forces with the Korean Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Sang-Kil Lee to perform this beloved milestone of the universal choral repertoire.

The participants – over one thousand – not only revelled in moving performances, but also had the opportunity to attend lectures by more than thirty internationally acclaimed lecturers from all corners of the world on many diverse topics related to the choral art such as choral repertoire, performance practice, the art of conducting, the choir as a tool for social change, choir and health, and many more. This handpicked group of lecturers had headliners such as Frieder Bernius, María Guinand, and Guy Jansen, among many others.

Each working day started in the *Hae Hall* of the National Theater with a *Morning Sing* led by a different expert each morning. This was the perfect start to the day for it allowed delegates to immediately connect with the choral experience from the standpoint of a different region of the globe.

Finally, the General Assembly was held during the day on August 10th, at the Seoul Center for the Arts. It was led by re-elected IFCM President Michael Anderson and provided all IFCM members with the opportunity to understand the current state of their organization, discuss and ultimately approve all financial and legal matters, and elect all officers for the following three-year period. Following the election, and according to the newly approved statutes and bylaws, the President appointed the new Executive Committee, which is responsible for the operations of the federation. With the election of the president and board of directors, the appointment of the executive committee, and the help of the new executive and artistic committees for the eleventh World Symposium on Choral Music, IFCM moves forward with sure footing to prepare a new opportunity to experience this wonderful art form in Barcelona in 2017.

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