

# Tribute to H. Royce Saltzman, Former IFCM President

IFCM is deeply saddened about the passing of our dear friend and Honorary Member, Royce Saltzman, in Eugene, Oregon, USA, on April 3, 2023, in his 95<sup>th</sup> year.

Royce was a conductor, educator, co-founder and executive director of the Oregon Bach Festival, national president of ACDA (1979-1981), and founding member and president of the International Federation for Choral Music (1985-1993). He was a generous, creative and enthusiastic choral leader, a man of long-term vision and positive action whose diplomacy and wisdom, networks and exchange spaces have resulted in a very important legacy for the universal choral family and the future generations.

*“Royce’s commitment to IFCM started in 1979 when he met a group of choral leaders determined to create an international organization that would facilitate cooperation and exchange between choirs, educational institutions, and national organizations. In 1981, at the national ACDA Convention in New Orleans, Royce initiated a choral summit, attended by leaders from thirteen countries. The group addressed issues such as touring, education, the sharing of information and materials, but foremost, the possibility of establishing an international organization that would facilitate cooperation and exchange. Royce then chaired an interim committee that met in Loughborough, England, to establish statutes, choose a name that would represent its global outreach, and determine Founding Organizations, which would provide support and validity to this fledging alliance. Thus, in 1982 the child IFCM was born.” \**

This child is now 41 years old. Thank you, Royce! May your

life and legacy inspire many choral leaders around the world.

Ms. Emily Kuo Vong and the IFCM Board members are sending their deepest condolences to Phyllis, daughters Kathy, Lisa, Jody and Marta and their children.

### **Family Obituary**

\*Extract of the article published in the International Choral Bulletin in 2011, *From Father to Daughter...* by Kathy Saltzman Romey, one of Royce's daughters.

*Royce Saltzman was a wonderful friend with a decades-long influence on my life. He was one of the most insightful mentors anyone could ask for. He demonstrated the importance of becoming acquainted with others' cultural values. He used international choral music to support and celebrate both the similarities and the wonderful differences between cultures throughout the world. He was the true ambassador for the world's choral musicians. He opened my eyes to what a peaceful world there could be if we genuinely understood each other. The result has been profoundly rewarding. Royce dedicated his life to such endeavors and swept me up in his vision. I will miss him so.*

*Michael J Anderson, IFCM Former President*



1987 Michael J Anderson, Walter Collins and Royce Saltzman on a trip to Paris, Namur and Israel

*Royce Saltzman has been my friend and music colleague since 1979, when I met him while he was ACDA National President. At the numerous IFCM World Symposia on Choral Music I attended, I witnessed Royce addressing international gatherings very articulately and diplomatically. He was a consummate gentleman and musician, and will forever be my role model. Royce was always gracious, very compassionate, a great listener, an excellent leader and educator, and a man of deep faith. One could always count on his positive and nurturing spirit. I will miss you, Royce. Soli Deo Gloria!*

*Diana J. Leland, ACDA National President (1989-91), Former member of the IFCM Board*



1998, Eugene, Oregon Bach Festival, from left to right: Royce Saltzman, Krzysztof Penderecki, Helmuth Rilling, Elżbieta Penderecka © Bach Academy Archives

*Royce (and his wife Phyllis and their daughters) have been an important part of my life for many years, for which I am very grateful. This friendship and esteem had grown over the years since I first met him in 1981, in New Orleans. His vision and action were essential to the creation and development of the IFCM (which also became an essential part of my life). Together with my husband Claude, we had many mutual personal and choral visits and exchanges. The friendship with Royce's family continues to this day. The last time I "saw" him was on FaceTime just a few weeks before his passing. He was in good spirits, even though his health had visibly worsened. Royce will live on in my heart and memories; he will not be forgotten.*

*Jutta Tagger, Editor Emerita of the International Choral Magazine*



WSCM 2002, Minneapolis, USA, Royce Saltzman, Thomas Rabbow, Alberto Grau and María Guinand

*I met Royce Saltzman in 1980 at Vaison-la-Romaine. I was a young student of choral conducting, and he was a choral director who taught a workshop on negro spirituals. I found him to be a very kind and musical man. I met him again in Namur in 1982 at the founding of the IFCM. I admired his leadership and his enthusiasm for this fledgling international choral association, and I found his commitment captivating. I have worked for the IFCM ever since. For me, he exemplified leadership and future vision. A few years later, Royce invited me to attend the Oregon Bach Festival as a part of Helmuth Rilling's conducting class, and from that moment on, my artistic and institutional life changed completely. I discovered a wonderful world of musical performance, youth education and creativity within new repertoires. Royce was the person who, with much generosity*

*and trust, opened many artistic doors for me in my professional life and encouraged me to pursue a life in international choral music. It has been my fortune to have coincided in time and space with such a special, generous, assertive, enthusiastic, and committed man like Royce. I was lucky to have him as a friend and mentor alongside Phyllis for so many years.*

*María Guinand, IFCM Vice-President (Translated from Spanish by Joel Hageman, USA)*



Royce Saltzman and Helmuth Rilling at the Oregon Bach Festival in 2004

*We all know what a significant contribution Dr. Saltzman made to the choral community worldwide. I loved that he always had a gracious smile and dignity at the same time, and admired him whole-heartedly. Thirty-nine years ago, in July 1984, I conducted a seminar for children at the "World Chorus*

*Festival – Asia Cantat” in Nagano. Dr. Saltzman came to observe our session when we were rehearsing Bach works I had selected. He gave us a word of compliment, and I am here today because his remark encouraged me and gave me a sense of pride. I think this event was the first step for Japan to become part of the international choral music world. I have countless memories, but wanted to share this story from the past. I am full of gratitude for Dr. Saltzman, for his visit to our country and for guiding us to the international community. Dr. Saltzman, please keep watching IFCM, which you and others founded.*

*Saeko Hasegawa, President, Japan Choral Association*



*Royce with Sag-Kil Lee and his wife, WSCM 2014, Seoul*

*I'd just turned 30 and was applying for the position of director of the International Center for Choral Music in Namur, Belgium. Royce was interviewing each of the candidates. I recall a long walk, just the two of us, and a*

*fascinating conversation during which we shared our vision of the needs of the choral world on a global scale. Our collaboration and discussions continued for over 20 years, while he headed the IFCM. I will never forget the humility and greatness of spirit of this man who was one of my mentors. Rest in peace, Royce.*

***Jean-Claude Wilkens, Former IFCM Secretary General***

*I met Royce Saltzman for the first time when I was volunteering at the Europa Cantat Festival in Namur in 1982. I happened to be invited to take notes during the founding board meeting of IFCM. When I started working in the choral field 10 years later, I began attending World Symposia and met Royce again, both at the end of his presidency (Vancouver, 1993) and later as past president. From the first moment, Royce impressed me with his gentle and diplomatic character, which made him an ideal president of an international federation such as IFCM. It was always a pleasure to meet him.*

***Sonja Greiner, Secretary General of the European Choral Association***

*I met Royce in 2007. He had been invited to serve as workshop leader at the Choralies in Vaison-la-Romaine, and his presence energized the singers. Soon after creating an all-amateur choir, I asked him to come to Paris to lead a working weekend on a repertoire of his choosing. This man, who worked at such an exceptional artistic level, also had an empathy, a pedagogy, a gentleness that immediately won everyone's support. Language presented no barrier; the music said everything better than words. I saw him often afterwards: the same smile, the same listening, a tolerance that allowed others to grow.*



*Thierry Thiébaud, President of A Cœur Joie International,  
Former member of the IFMC Board of Directors*



From left to right: Philip Brunelle, Prof. Hak Won Yoon, Amb. Dho, Royce and Emily Kuo Vong, WSCM 2024, Seoul

*It was in 1984, at the start of IFCM's second year of existence, that I met Royce. I had been invited to moderate a plenary session of ISME's international conference on musical education in his home town of Eugene, Oregon. I met up with him again on the other side of the world, at the side of Claude Tagger, who had introduced me to the IFMC at its creation. In addition to the support of the first National Committee of Zaire, both men were hoping for the arrival of choirs from countries with non-Western cultures. Royce continued to edify me through his strong convictions and by encouragement, for example, in promoting African Choral News, a member newsletter that I'd founded. In fact, he considered diversity to be a sign of vitality and a mark of the universality of the international federation. This was a profession of faith he never stopped proclaiming. For the*

*good of our House, let us hope it will remain, as the supreme guarantee of his identity and mission.*

*Lupwishi Mbuyamba, Former IFCM President (Translated from French by Anita Shaperd, USA)*

*Royce Saltzman was a visionary for the international development of choral singing. He was always interested in and eager to know more about choral life both within and outside his country. His great humanity and natural communicative friendliness drove his awesome dynamic character that he imprinted on the choral world in the late 70s, leading to the creation of IFCM in 1982. He can be considered as one of the founding fathers of IFCM. The choral world has lost one of its greats.*

*Jean Sturm, Executive Director of Musica International (Translated from French by Anita Shaperd, USA)*

*Royce Saltzman had a knack for bringing people together in common purpose. That talent was the foundation of the Oregon Bach Festival, which he created with Helmuth Rilling in 1970, and one of the many stones upon which IFCM was built. He was a gentleman of the first order, a man of kindness who could set anyone at ease and defuse conflict in short order—and with a smile. He also had a keen nose for talent in others, nurturing young performers on the verge of stellar careers. Many returned to the OBF year after year, becoming like family to the community. Royce's generosity was widespread and usually unknown except to its recipients, who treasured the man behind it. I knew Royce for nearly 50 years and would have had a completely different life had we not met. I will always be grateful that we did.*

*Gordon Paine, Professor of Music and Chair emeritus, California State University, Fullerton, OBF singer & seasonal*

*staff, 1974–1999*

*I bow my head in memory of our dear Royce Saltzman, who influenced many musicians in his humble way. I met him at a choir competition in Israel, where he served as a jurist, and was honored by his invitation to come to the Bach Festival in Oregon. I was also honored to meet Maestro Helmuth Rilling and to participate in the conductors' course. Royce not only opened the gate to the professional world for me but also the door to his home. I met his dear wife Phyllis and even came to know a wonderful musician named Kathy. Along with the Moran Singers Ensemble and the composer Menachem Weisenberg, we later sang at the Israeli Poetry Festival, a program that created a bridge between composers and cultures. Phyllis and Royce's picture has always held a certain place on my piano. Their good, calm and straightforward look has accompanied me for many years. I know Royce influenced many musicians in his humble and loving way. We will all miss him. In blessed memory.*

*Naomi Faran, founder and conductor of the Moran Choir, Israel  
(Edited by Joel Hageman, USA)*