

World Choral Day 2011

Let's Sing Together with 'Solidarity' – 11 December 2011

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Singing together is a basic activity that exercises tolerance, sympathy, and awareness of others, towards the common goal of communicating and involving other people in a shared experience of beauty. This approach is a fundamental trademark that each singer in a choir shares with his/her fellow singers, and is part of the roots of choral music. This mindset needs to be communicated and celebrated worldwide, in the hope that it may make the entire world aware that such traits are not only elements of an ideal, but are also present in society.



*World Youth Choir 2009 –
Photo by Marianne Grimont,
NamurImage.be*

In a culture in which every aspect of being human is celebrated (we celebrate freedom; we celebrate being a mom, a

dad, or grandparents, etc.), choral singing too deserves its own celebration, and this should be a worldwide event, given that the passion for choral music is not limited by any boundary of nation, culture, religion, race, or census. This event exists: it is the "World Choral Day" (WCD) and has been celebrated for the past 20 years on the second Sunday in December. December 11, 2011 will be a day on which all choral activities will share a common point of view, a common feeling, a common scope. Since its inception the WCD has seen ever-increasing participation and interest, involving more and more countries and initiatives, all expressing the same sentiment. The events that have been organized to celebrate this particular day are concerts, festivals, sing-alongs, choral seminars, and Days of Friendship, all of which share a common theme.

After 20 years, the following statement by Alberto Grau is still entirely valid and reflects the intention behind the WCD initiative:

"The world is living through a severe and continuous crisis of self-destruction. There are no possible reasons that can justify these actions. The majority of the human race wants to live in peace with dignity. It is time to show, with more power and strength, that our choral family contributes, through music, to break down the artificial barriers put up by politics, different ideologies, religious differences, and racial hatred which separate human beings. We must be able to show that MUSIC, the divine art, is more than the mere search for formal perfection and interpretative beauty; music should serve to extol the values of solidarity, peace, and understanding. We cannot work in isolation; we have to make every possible effort to make our voices heard and to let music work its own paths of communication."

Proposed by Alberto Grau and approved by the General Assembly

of IFCM (Helsinki, 1990)

Last year the WCD was celebrated by 215 choirs from 23 Countries, and the proclamation for the Day was read in Afrikaans, Bulgarian, Catalan, Croatian, Czech, English, Esperanto, Flemish, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin, Norwegian, Portuguese, Quechua, Romanian, Serbian, Slovenian, Spanish, Swedish, and Ukrainian. The celebrations dedicated to this special day were mostly concerts, but there were also other events such as festivals, open air singing, students' demonstrations in the streets, ecumenical religious celebrations; and for the first time we observed new types of events such as a simple gathering of conductors in a home in Ivory Coast just to read the proclamation, and a "flash mob" at a shopping center in Poland.

This year's theme is "**Solidarity**": many people are suffering because of disasters, earthquakes, tsunamis, draught, hunger, poverty, terrorism and war. Choirs from all over the world have been expressing their solidarity with the victims of these calamities and will continue to do so, raising awareness of this important circumstance in today's world. IFCM invites all choral institutions and leaders to be a part of this effort based on these fundamental values. It is a way to make the WCD a date that demonstrates the positive power of choral singing across all nations, all continents, all peoples, who will be reached and deeply touched by it.

IFCM would like to have advance notice of all the initiatives that are being scheduled for the WCD, and invites all choirs and choral institutions to register and give information at the following site: www.ifcm.net. If you register your event, we suggest that you download the logo and include it in the design of your printed material, and a proclamation can be downloaded in the language of your preference. Reading

the proclamation at some point during the concert, although not mandatory, is suggested because it sets the event within WCD ideals, and connects it with all other events around the world.

Please send material (videos, press releases, programs, recordings, etc.) which can then be used to document the event worldwide, and can also help to promote this important choral initiative. Please take a short time to compile the data for your individual event by visiting the section dedicated to WCD on www.ifcm.net.

Help us to make a global statement using choral music as a connecting vehicle world-wide. Choral singing is not just a cultural hobby; it encompasses a universal passion, which not only carries a sense of beauty and aesthetic perfection, but also holds in itself the seeds of positive values which will surely make a better world. Join us in the celebration of World Choral Day this December 11th, 2011.

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