

World Choral Day 2015: A Celebration of Choral Values □□Around the World

By Francesco Leonardi, IFCM Project Manager

The result of a choir's dedicated and unified work is beauty and harmony. Listeners are more than passive observers and may feel empathy as they experience the choir's work in performance. Choral musicians and audiences alike owe gratitude to composers, for it is the composer's music that conveys the communication of values and emotions. The reciprocal experience of beauty and harmony between choir, conductor, and audience member is a small miracle designed, in a way, by the composer. These small miracles happen every day and in every part of the world through countless performances offered by myriad choral ensembles of varied sizes, ages, and formations, to global audiences.

More than twenty years ago, during the General Assembly of IFCM in Helsinki in 1990, Alberto Grau proposed the establishment of a worldwide day dedicated to choral singing. The intent of Alberto Grau, shared by IFCM, was to use the capacity of choral music to convey the values of peace, solidarity, and understanding. Rather than highlighting perfection in performance, Grau and IFCM sought to celebrate, in a global way, the powerful exemplification of positive values inherent in choral music and performance – those small miracles we experience every day as singers.

Since then, every year on the second Sunday in December, IFCM invites all choirs of the world to give a performance that celebrates choral singing as a transmitter of positive values in every society and in every culture. For the past 25 years, millions of singers in thousands of choirs have raised their

voices to highlight the World Choral Day theme. The theme changes each year and is encapsulated in one word that highlights the topic or issue. In addition, a written proclamation is translated into 26 languages and made available to participating choirs. In 2015, the word was "Integration." Through performances on this day, choral singers and audiences alike explore the annual theme and its relevance in their lives.

In addition to raising awareness of relevant issues, the goal of IFCM's World Choral Day is to remind the world of the power inherent in choral singing. On World Choral Day, we singers share the values that we live daily with our audiences. The idea that every choir in the world would celebrate these values by presenting a performance on the same day is ambitious, but worth pursuing with all our strength. When combined, choral singers all over the world have the power to influence civil leaders if we share a unified message. There are many countries that have not yet had a choir participate or where participation can be higher. Each choir that contributes is irreplaceable and makes the end result more valuable.



IFCM has created a working group with the focus of increasing participation in this event. Recent developments have made it easier to participate in World Choral Day, including a new website (www.worldchoralday.org). On the website, you can register your project and designate it as a World Choral Day event. Each year, IFCM looks for more ways to inspire more choirs to participate. For example, regional choral organizations in Italy gathered information about 250 concerts that were scheduled on or close to World Choral Day, and

publicized them widely. This is just one way to spread the message about choral events at any time of year, but could be particularly useful in December when so many choirs have performances.

To date, more than 35 countries from each continent have celebrated World Choral Day with over 450 concerts. This is a great number, but there are so many more who can contribute! Our hope is that World Choral Day will become a day when every minute of the 24 hours has at least one choir singing somewhere in the world, sending a message of peace, love, and understanding. Please join us.

Edited by Shekela Wanyama