

Soaring New Heights: Transitioning Choral Performance from Screen to Stage

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The choral community has had to attune to a constant ebb and flow over the past two years. We had to resort to a purely virtual means of sustaining rehearsals and performances but, with recent developments, most choirs have gradually been able to transition back from screen to stage.

This new beginning is accompanied by its own set of challenges as well as opportunities for us as a community of musicians. We must welcome every new encounter with open arms, minds and hearts.

Amidst these changes, the Treble Choir Association of the Philippines (TCAP) launched two annual main events: *Lux Spei: Light of Hope* and *Sing as One*. While the themes may differ each year, their overarching goal has always been to serve as an avenue for choirs to collaborate locally and internationally.

When the pandemic was at its peak, our ability to carry out these events was unfortunately restricted. Though technology allowed us to hold these on the virtual stage, I, along with musicians all over the world, could not help but long for the chance to physically gather together again and be able to hear our choirs harmonize beyond a recording.

Thankfully, we began to adapt resiliently. Our choirs were able to return to in-person rehearsals and to sing monthly for the Eucharistic Mass. We then took the next step and organized our first face-to-face event after two years.



On 27 November 2022, the Young Voices of the Philippines Festival Choir (YVPFC) gathered to sing together live in celebration of TCAP's third annual choral festival, *Lux Spei: Light of Hope*. This festival choir featured over 200 young choristers from around the Philippines. What a wonderful coincidence that the first candle lit on the Advent wreath symbolizes hope and that the event was held on the first Sunday of Advent. Moments of serendipity like this empower us to continue our mission to bring hope and inspiration to the lives of others through music.

The Advent wreath represents newness and continuity of life—signifying that we ourselves push through to this post-pandemic era. Likewise, the festival represented a new start for our choral community, where we could convene again in a Eucharistic celebration through the highest form of praise.

The sound of the children of YVPFC singing all together resonated throughout the entire cathedral. Finally hearing dozens of voices harmonize to compositions and arrangements by TCAP reminded all of us that organizing this event was worth every second. With that, I would like to thank the following choirs who participated in the YVPFC for singing the “Mass of Life: A Mass Setting for Children” composed by Prof. Jude B. Roldan:

- Balon Dagupan Children and Youth Choir – Virginia Llamas-Mendoza, Conductor
- Calasiao Children’s Chorus – Gilbert Allan N. Dispo, Conductor
- Caleruega Children’s Choir – Jelyn Matalog, Conductor
- Himig Roseña – Jarzihna Ines, Conductor
- Kilyawan Consortium of Voices Children’s Choir – Leonard Cleofas, Assistant Conductor
- Quezon City Performing Arts Children’s Choir – Nicanor Infante, Conductor
- Paul College Pasig High School Chorale – Sheila Marie B. Fetalvero, □ Conductor
- Jerome Youth Choir – Abigail de Leon, Conductor
- Woodrose Chorale – Myrene Bagayaua-Carballo, Conductor
- Kantabella
- Young Voices of the Philippines – Jude B. Roldan, □ Music Director

In addition, on 3 January 2023, TCAP released another virtual performance under our annual *Sing as One* project featuring the Young Voices of the World (YVW). Eleven choirs from across eight countries sang “We Rise and Sing,” an original piece composed by Prof. Jude B. Roldan with lyrics by Marian Abio.

Through this song, we wanted to spread a message of hope, unity and peace as we brought together an international collaboration of renowned children’s choirs from all around the globe. YVW performed this song in solidarity with the less fortunate—standing united for peace despite our differences.

It was truly heartwarming to receive such an enthusiastic willingness from the participating choirs. Once again, we have succeeded in defying physical limitations with our dedication to music-making. I would like to thank the following choirs for participating in our most recent Sing as One performance:

- Children's Chorus of Washington – Margaret Nomura Clark, Conductor
- Coro Juvenil do Instituto Gregoriano de Lisboa – Filipa Palhares, Conductor
- Diocesan Girls' Junior School Choir – Kelvin Lau, Conductor
- Hamilton Children's Choir – Melanie Tellez, Conductor
- Shenandoah Valley Children's Choir – Janet Hostetter, Conductor
- Saint Angela Choir – Roni Sugiarto, Conductor
- Toronto Children's Chorus – Zimfira Poloz, Conductor
- Ponomaryov Vesna Children's Choir – Nadezhda Averina, Conductor
- Wattana Girls' Chorus – Sathit Sukchongchaipruk, Conductor
- Kantabella
- Young Voices Of The Philippines – Jude B. Roldan, Music Director

Emboldened by the success of *Lux Spei*, we grew excited for the rest of TCAP's plans to take the next step forward now that a world of possibilities has opened up for us. It has long been a distant dream for us to ultimately organize and experience *Sing as One* as a face-to-face event. Now, for the first time ever since its inception, we are delighted to announce that *Sing as One* will take place in-person on 7 July 2023, where the Young Voices of the Philippines (YVP) will be performing at the prestigious Carnegie Hall in New York City along with St Genevieve Valiant Voices directed by Mr. Cristopher Avendano, Virginia Children's Chorus with Corbin Thomas Pinto, Toronto Children's Chorus with Zimfira Poloz and Matthew Otto,

Children's Chorus of Washington with Margaret Nomura Clark, and the Shenandoah Valley Children's Choir with Dr. Janet Hostetter to premiere Prof. Jude B. Roldan's "Missa Virtutum."

Aside from these notable achievements, YVP has achieved many milestones. They were recently inducted as the newest and youngest artist of the Jesuit Music Ministry, a local producer and publisher of widely used liturgical music. I extend my deepest gratitude to both the Jesuit Music Ministry and the Jesuit Communications Foundation—the media arm of the Philippine Province of the Society of Jesus—for giving YVP the opportunity to contribute to the ever-growing body of Philippine liturgical music. They also took part in celebrating the International Federation for Choral Music's (IFCM) World Choral Day and were recently featured as the headline choir of the 2022 National Convention of the Philippine Choral Directors Association.



YVPFC with His Excellency Most Reverend Honesto Ongtioco, DD Bishop of Cubao

That said, this coming year holds much in store for us, with many events to look forward to. From 1 to 3 July we will be representing the Philippines in the *Voices Together: An International Youth Choral Symposium*. During this 3-day event, we will be showcasing Philippine music and presenting our choral curriculum at the University of Maryland along with a

performance at the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center in College Park, MD.

We could not be more thankful for every opportunity that has been presented to us and we appreciate all the support we have received thus far. We are very much looking forward to everything that is to come for our organization and our choirs. Venturing into a new world after the pandemic, TCAP is dedicated now more than ever to weathering new heights and braving new beginnings with inspired and grateful hearts.



Dr. Maria Theresa Vizconde-Roldan graduated Summa Cum Laude with a Doctorate of Musical Arts at Saint Paul University Manila. She finished her Bachelor of Music in Music Education Cum Laude and a Master's degree in Conducting from the University of Santo Tomas Conservatory of Music, where she is also part of the faculty. She is known for her choral method, "GESTAPHOR" and Groundwork for Part-Singing. In line with their advocacy, Theresa and her husband, Jude, write choral music for children's choirs and arrange Philippine folksongs. Hal Leonard and Pavane in the USA published some of their works. In partnership with Muziksea, a digital choral music publisher in Singapore, they produced the Maria Theresa Vizconde-Roldan Choral Adventures Series. Theresa is also the artistic director of Young Voices of the World, Young Voices of Asia, and the Young Voices of the Philippines Festival Choir. She conducts the two scholar choirs of the Treble Choir Association of the Philippines, the Young Voices of the Philippines, and Kantabella. She is also the founding conductor of the first-ever

Children's Choir of the World winner at the Llangollen
International Musical Eisteddfod and Choir Olympic
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