

# REPORT TO IFCM ExCOM AND BOARD

DECEMBER 2019

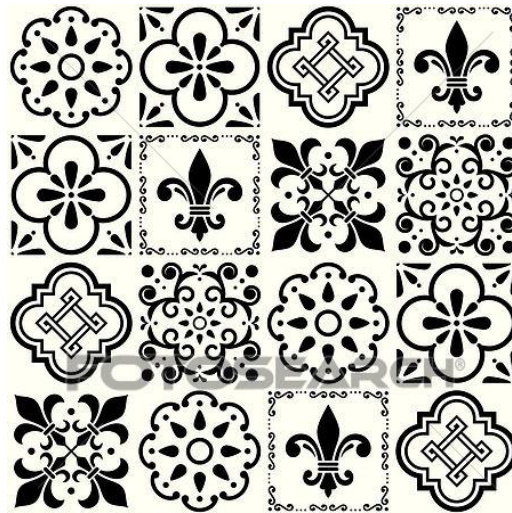
## World Choral EXPO EXchange!

*presented by*

**The Singing Network**

*in partnership with*

**IFCM World Choral EXPO**



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**July 30 - 31, 2019**

**Palacete dos Condes de Monte Real**

**International Cultural Center**

**Rua de Buenos Aires, 39**

**Lisbon, Portugal**

### **The Singing Network**

[The Singing Network](#) is a Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN)-based provincial, national, international network of individuals and organizations interested in singing and song: scholars, performing artists, educators, students, as well as professional and community-based musicians, organizations and associations. The network generates and produces a series of voice-singing-choral events ranging from workshops, seminars, masterclasses, performances, dialogues, the formation of new ensembles, and a biennial *International Symposium on Singing and Song*. The Singing Network understands the powerful impact of singing in our communities and aims to stimulate and provide programs and experiences for the sustainable development and innovation of singing and the use of the voice in all contexts.



Co-founded by Prof Ki Adams and Dr Andrea Rose, The Singing Network is now managed and produced by three Co-Directors: Prof Ki Adams, Dr Andrea Rose, and Dr David Buley. Since its founding in 2014, The Singing Network has produced the following voice-singing-choral events:

- *Sing Together! Workshop and Hymn Festival on Congregational Singing and Building Community* (in partnership with SING! The Center for Congregational Song) ▪ October 5-6, 2109
- *EXchange!* (in collaboration with IFCM & the World Choral EXPO) ▪ July 30-31, 2019
- *PODIUM on the EDGE: Singing from Sea to Sea to Sea* national choral festival and conference (in partnership with Choral Canada) ▪ June 30 – July 3, 2018
- *International Symposium on Singing and Song II* ▪ June 27-29, 2018
- *Voice Workshop for Solo and Choral Singers* (Karen Brunssen, USA) ▪ January 16-17, 2017
- *Extended Voice Workshop Series* (Michael Edward Edgerton, Sweden) ▪ June 15-21, 2016
- *Practical Pedagogy: The Singer's Voice and How to Use It* ▪ April 9, 2016
- *ChoirFest SING!* ▪ October 3, 2015
- *International Symposium on Singing and Song* ▪ October 1-4, 2015
- *Improvising Spaces Workshop and Performance* (Trevor Wishart, UK) ▪ September 3-18, 2015

### Planning

The Singing Network worked with IFCM VP Cristian Grases to develop the program within the overall World Choral EXPO schedule. Following a comprehensive call for proposals, 17 proposals were received. After evaluation by the selections committee, 13 proposals were accepted. Building on the partnership between TSN and IFCM, the TSN Co-Directors organized a panel of IFCM board members to open the EXchange!: Looking in on choral singing: Variations on a theme of singing together. Panelists included Emily Kuo (China/Portugal), Burak Onur Erdem (Turkey), Tim Sharp (USA), Victoria Liedbergius (Norway), Yveline Damas (Gabon), and Niels Graesholm (Denmark), moderator. To close the EXchange!, IFCM Governance Advisor Sonja Greiner (Germany) along with ECA-EC's newly-appointed Communication Manager, Estera Mihaila, presented a comprehensive and entertaining reflection on the EXchange! presentations.

In total, there were 15 presenters/panelists from 13 countries: Argentina, Canada, China, Denmark, DR Congo, Gabon, Indonesia, Israel, Norway, Turkey, and the United States. Additional EXchange! participants came from many other countries, including Austria, Lebanon, Costa Rica, Ukraine, and Lithuania. Participants included WCE delegates and World Youth Choir (WYC) alumni who were in Lisbon for the 30th anniversary reception and concert.

### Event

For one and a half days at the Palacete dos Condes de Monte Real, international scholars, performers, conductors, pedagogues, and composers met to connect, create, share, and explore various aspects of collective singing. Session formats included paper presentations, workshops, lecture demonstrations, and the opening panel presentation. The schedule provided options for the delegates as each session generally featured two concurrent presentations. Here is the full EXchange! schedule. Abstracts are available [online](#).

TUESDAY - JULY 30, 2019	WEDNESDAY - JULY 31, 2019
8:30-9 am Morning tea/coffee with pastries	8:30-9 am Morning tea/coffee with pastries
9-10 am SESSION 1 <b>Opening EXchange!</b> <i>Looking in on choral singing: Variations on a theme of singing together</i> PANELISTS: EMILY KUO (China/Portugal), BURAK ONUR ERDEM (Turkey), TIM SHARP (USA) VICTORIA LIEBERGIUS (Norway), YVELINE DAMAS (Gabon) MODERATOR: NIELS GRAESHOLM (Denmark)	9-9:40 am SESSION 7 Room A: MAREZIA D.L. WARREN & BEVERLY J. VAUGHN (USA): <i>Creativity and the African American spiritual: A historical exploration of how the spiritual has been used in various musical art forms as well as in liturgical, social, political, and contemporary settings</i> Room B: AMBROISE KUA-NZAMBI TOKO: (Democratoc Republic of Congo): <i>Mimin'si Aktonic Systeme: A new choral notation system</i>
10:10-10:50 am SESSION 2 Room A: ADAM ADLER (Canada): <i>Working with young male singers in collegiate choir contexts: Challenges, approaches, and rewards</i> Room B: OSCAR ESCALADA (Argentina): <i>"Misa para el Tercer Mundo": A forbidden Mass rescued from oblivion</i>	9:50-10:30 am SESSION 8 Room A: THOMAS CAPLIN (Norway): <i>The Learning Choir: A method for building the choir from inside and out</i> Room B: MARTA MCCARTHY (Canada): <i>Choirs as agencies of social justice and transformation</i>
11-11:40 am SESSION 3 Room A: NAOMI FARAN with MORAN CHOIR (Israel): <i>Music in the soul brings happiness to all: From excellence in music to excellence in citizenship</i>	10:40-11:20 am SESSION 9 Room A: SCOTT LEITHEAD with KOKOPELLI YOUTH CHOIR (Canada): <i>African connections: From southern Africa to southern Alberta</i>
11:50 am-12:30 pm SESSION 4 Room A: CATHERINE GLASER-CLIMIE (Canada): <i>Canadian, eh? Treble choir repertoire</i> Room B: CHRISTOPHER R. CLARK (USA): <i>Choral improvisation: A reflection of society</i>	11:30 am-12 noon SESSION 10 <b>Closing EXchange!</b> <i>To the future...</i> SONJA GREINER & ESTERA MIHAILA (Germany)
12:30-1:30 pm LUNCH (light lunch provided for presenters & IFCM Board)	12:00-1:00 pm LUNCH (on your own)
1:30-2:10 pm SESSION 5 Room A: KIERA GALWAY (Canada): <i>Sounding spaces: Personal geographies of music-making spaces in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador</i> Room B: NIELS GRAESHOLM (Denmark): <i>Creation and co-creation in choral life</i>	1:00-3:00 pm <b>World Youth Choir 30th Anniversary Reception</b> Cameo performance by 2019 World Youth Choir Palacete dos Condes de Monte Real
2:20-3:00 pm SESSION 6 Room A: AIDA SWENSON with INDONESIA YOUTH CHOIR (Indonesia): <i>Rampai Aceh: What's behind the movements in Indonesian songs</i>	

The final session, *To the future...* provided an overview of the challenging, thought-provoking topics raised during the EXchange! for consideration by IFCM and the international choral community:

- Perform more in non-traditional concert venues
- Take gender balance seriously
- Use choral singing to raise awareness for social issues
- Celebrate diversity of all kinds
- Include amateurs and professionals
- Rethink conductors without borders
- Identify how many people sing in the world
- Add arts education to STEM, creating STEAM
- Shift from autocratic to assistant, democratic leadership
- Encourage and support research on singing and song
- Dedicate specific attention to singing men
- Empower singers on multiple levels
- Focus on new repertoire
- Clarify and expand the role of the individual in choirs
- Fight for freedom of expression
- Promote more co-creation
- Advocate for values in the choral setting
- Explore social music
- Research the health and social benefits of collective singing
- Understand how to preserve and adapt traditional and folk music
- Balance musical excellence and community involvement
- Become inclusive rather than exclusive
- Be cautious with the notion of 'quality'

### **Evaluation**

A feedback evaluation form was circulated to all EXchange! presenters, IFCM board members and staff, WCE registered delegates, IFCM VIP guests, accompanying persons, invited performing choir directors/managers/administrators/choristers, WYC alumni attending the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary reception, and EXchange! organizers. We received 16 completed evaluation forms from the following individuals:

- 9 EXchange! presenters
- 2 WCE invited performing choir directors/managers/administrators/choristers
- 1 IFCM board member
- 1 IFCM VIP guest
- 1 accompanying person
- 1 WYC alumna/alumnus
- 1 EXchange! organizer

### ***The most valuable thing I took away...***

- The plethora of experiences that presenters from other countries have, and the overall health of the choral art around the world
- My own presentation and the confirming feedback on it, networking, and of course being able to celebrate my product the World Youth Choir
- Knowing the impact the participants have around the world
- Quality of presentations and performances; international networking through scholarly and social gatherings; overview of current research and practices around the world; Sonja's summary!!
- The debate on collective singing was very interesting
- A twinning of wonderful presenters with world class choral groups popping in to sing
- Networking
- The wide range of proposals
- Keep in contact with ex members, singers, and conductors
- The confirmation that choral music remains highly valued in many parts of the world. On the other hand, choral music is faced with challenges.
- Interactions with others
- A more global perspective on singing practices
- The strength of the presenters... superb sessions and the chance for meaningful discussion with the presenters
- How important it is to create opportunities for the choir to mix with and perform with a variety of choirs, so that they can learn more and experience choir on a higher level again.
- The shift from formal to informal collective singing is a worldwide phenomenon.
- Fresh ideas and inspiration

### ***Aspect(s) I liked best...***

- Venue, diversity, staff friendliness.
- The different and enlightening presentations.
- Interesting
- Timing-scheduling within EXPO; venue; unique combination of research and practice-based sessions within performance-based event
- The combination of theoretical and practical workshops
- The sense of being connected to a global community of scholar/performers who are utterly committed to their craft.
- Discussions with dedicated choral people from around the world
- Freedom of expression
- I liked the ability to casually have an exchange with choral leaders without the restriction of so much formality.
- Organization, venue, atmosphere, spirit, info
- Talks/workshops with an interactive element
- The intimacy of the gatherings. It was easy to talk with others and have meaningful conversations.

- All the performance opportunities were brilliant. Performing with so many different choirs enabled me to benchmark my own choir at that particular time. On an organisational level, I valued the local person assigned to us very much and she was brilliant. I very much valued being met at the airport. This was a lovely and welcome touch. The inter-venue transportation removed a lot of additional stress which was really welcome. I also very much appreciated the award at the end to take home with us and is very valuable to us currently.
- The small scale of the event
- Variety of speakers

***Aspect(s) I liked least...***

- Having to choose between some sessions.
- Although the intimacy of the presentations was nice, better technical solutions would be preferred.
- Could have used some more time to get in the depth of the topics.
- Locations of EXPO events too far apart; travel to participate in both EXPO and EXchange! Challenging\*
- I always want to hear every presentation but that's never possible of course.
- It is difficult to think on this, because I felt very comfortable throughout the full event.
- Not enough time to react or interact after each presentation.
- None
- There seemed to be a lot of confusion between Exchange and the World Choral EXPO. Tickets for concerts, information was sometimes difficult.
- These would be mostly on the organisational side. I found confirmation of details too slow and too close to the departure date and incomplete. We had a panic at the last minute about having a piano available for our 'main concert' at the church. This was sorted but this caused much stress to us all. The organisation around the gala closing event was poor from the very start. Choirs arrived with their concert uniforms at 9am for a 9pm event. Then, none of us could rehearse as we were not expected. Our holding room was too small for the 5 choirs held there and only a few chairs. For the entire evening, most of the choirs were sitting on the floor in their concert dress. This was very disappointing. Not all conductors were invited to the dinner before the gala closing concert. Ticketing to the closing event for our families was also an unnecessary panic.\*
- Trying to find the Palacete was a nightmare.
- There could be more interest in and 'mention' of the EXchange! in the festival promotion and program\*

***The strength of this gathering was...***

- Good for a first outing.
- Location and scope of conference.
- The quality of the subjects discussed.
- Quality of presenters, panelists, performances and sessions in general; schedule was well constructed; collaboration and partnership between TSN, EXPO and IFCM; all went smoothly.
- The possibility of meeting both knowledge-persons and 'normal' people. Talks on all levels. Everyone felt welcome.
- The commitment to excellence and collegiality combined
- A necessary supplement to the EXPO
- Again, the fight for freedom of expression is for many countries a lack of liberty. Particularly in Latin America, the governments are having big problems with democracy. Chile, Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Venezuela are examples of the feeling of their peoples. And this is happening either governed by left or right Governments.
- The strength of this gathering was the diversity, even though the EXchange! presentations did not always reflect this.
- Intimate setting
- The varied backgrounds and experiences of those presenting/attending
- The diversity of the sessions presented. The high level of the presentations themselves. And the willingness of everyone present to share so generously!!
- For myself, personally, it was the contacts that I could make with world class conductors and key figures in the choral world.
- The intimacy and collegiality
- Really original content and very strong preparation

***I was attracted to the EXchange! because...***

- It fit in with my schedule
- I feel I have a sustainable message to share and IFCM is the organization I want to collaborate with.
- Of the interesting topics and presenters.
- International event; high calibre or performers at EXPO, opportunities to network professionally with people and organizations might not normally have exposure to
- Accompanying person
- I love hearing ideas from choral musicians around the world and there were so many brilliant presentations.
- Invited
- It is always an important issue to be connected among people that are in good will looking for new aspects on how to increase people participation in something that connects individuals, participate in groups and develop brotherhood among peoples.
- I was attracted to the EXchange! because of the very simple concept of exchange. It is through this kind of honest forum that we gather more understanding.
- Of the wonderful people involved
- It aligned well with potential plans; international conference
- While there are lots of big conferences out there, there isn't always opportunity to really share ideas, connect with others.
- I knew the organizers knew how to put together an academic event
- I was invited, but I would be attracted myself next time even without invitation :)

***The value of the EXchange! partnership within the World Choral EXPO was...***

- Unique. I would have liked to have seen more opportunities for EXPO participants not in the EXchange track to participate.
- Sharing
- That it was there!
- Brought new participants to event: researchers, educators, graduate students, academics, performers/conductors to as primarily choral (only) performance-based event.
- The possibility of important talks and networking
- The global choral community is enhanced by sharing ideas between different choral cultures
- Without these workshops, the EXPO would have been just a tourist event
- The WCE is becoming stronger through partnering with all the diversity of projects like this.
- The value is inherent. A planned opportunity for exchange is incredible. During the World Choral EXPO is an appropriate time.
- Excellent for us
- Like symposia associated with Festival 500 and, recently, Podium, the EXchange! partnership allowed for an exchange of ideas to enrich the more performance-oriented World Choral EXPO
- I think the World Choral EXPO experience was strengthened by having an academic/learning component added to it. I doubt I would have gone simply for the EXPO, but knowing I could take advantage of sharing sessions was the reason we went.
- Largely lost, given that the World Choral EXPO didn't appear to take any interest in the event or acknowledge its organizers or participants.
- Added value to the EXPO, but the EXchange! could be more visible.\*

***The value of the EXchange!-World Choral EXPO partnership to me individually was...***

- The ability to see fantastic performances by top notch choirs and be mentally stimulated by research as well.
- Sharing
- It brought the learning aspect next to enjoying the music.
- Exposure to creative and innovative research, ideas, practices related to singing and song; mix of scholarship, research, education/pedagogy, and performance practice
- Building our musical interconnectedness as choral directors and teachers.
- The time to discuss with friends and colleagues in the choral world
- Enabled to let the attending people to know the lack of free expression that some countries had or are still having.
- A great way to end our time in the EXPO
- The partnership enabled me to participate in an event I probably would not otherwise have attended
- In addition to having the opportunity to share ideas with others, it is always uplifting to be part of performances. I especially liked hearing the same ensembles in different venues and to hear them several times.
- It provided a great opportunity to network with colleagues from around the world.

***A future EXchange! could be improved by...***

- Maybe one larger topic which is viewed through each presenter's lens?
- Having longer sessions, giving the participants a short description of the presentation at the end, have a general theme for the days.
- Expanding # of participants - early partnerships; call for presenters, etc.; better logistical/travel plan for participants (given EXPO performance venues)
- Getting the word out, especially to the Americans who don't get outside of their own country enough to find a world of choral ideas awaiting them.
- Much better PR and incorporation of EXchange! in the overall program and schedule for the EXPO\*
- I think it could be very much interesting that EXchange! could be presented simultaneously in other festivals or choral meetings that are already being carried on throughout the world in partnership.
- Making sure that each choral leader (director) of the World Choral Expo is a part of the exchange.
- I liked this model!
- Better integration with the co-presenter was really the only difficult aspect of the event.
- More advance advertising and offering as a graduate credit to students from any university.
- Maybe a collaboration with European Choral Association in its events?

***Do you see potential future collaborations between The Singing Network (organizers of the EXchange!) and IFCM? Example(s)?***

- Yes.
- Why not have a Singing Network event linked to all the big IFCM events, on matchmaking between people who have a need and somebody in the network who could solve it.
- YES! Opportunity for the TSN to collaborate with all IFCM events or affiliated events to create and administer academic; scholarly; graduate study... components of larger performance-based events. Collaborations will increase exposure about IFCM, and potential participation in events, to wider audiences - more diversity, levels (e.g., graduate students - professionals - community organizers etc.)
- Yes
- Yes, I think the Singing Network events enhance the concerts and masterclasses offered by IFCM.
- Yes - these types of collaborations should be part of every IFCM event.
- Absolutely
- I could see this working well! Given IFCM's broad mandate, the field is open for potential collaborations
- YES please!! I do believe that every choral festival needs to have an academic component that brings together conductors, performers, composers etc.
- I don't think so. It didn't seem like the IFCM or its local affiliate had any idea what they were doing, and I don't think they are capable of a substantial collaboration.
- Yes! More events like this.

***I would like to say...***

- Thank you for everything!
- Thanks!
- Looking forward to future collaborations between TSN, IFCM and various international choral events - let the creative planning begin!
- Thank you for the initiative
- Thank you for the honor of being invited to participate in such a wonderful event.
- Thank you for the opportunity to participate. Your team made every effort to have a smooth organization of the event.
- Wonderful work everyone. Koko and I loved being a part of it!
- Well done, all!
- Thanks to everyone who worked so hard to organize this.
- It was such an honour to be invited to perform on this world platform. It was a dream come true. The choir felt so proud to be there and gave of their absolute best. I am so very grateful to President Emily and VP Gabor for this invitation. I hope it is the start of something very special.
- Congratulations and well done to the organizing team, who, with minimal resources and support, put together a great event.

\* TSN Directors' note: this area was outside the actual organization of the EXchange! component of the World Choral EXPO.

**Sample photos**

Photos from the EXchange! can be viewed [online](#).

**To the future...**

The Singing Network looks forward to continued collaborations with IFCM. Given the positive feedback from EXchange! participants regarding the EXchange! component of IFCM's World Choral EXPO (see comments above), there is an appetite for future IFCM initiatives to include similar scholarly symposium style events. In addition, The Singing Network has the capacity, through its university affiliation, to offer both undergraduate and graduate student singing/choral institutes (for academic credit). Given the extensive background and history of producing major international choral festivals and conferences (e.g., Festival 500 International Choral Festival, The Phenomenon of Singing Symposia and, most recently, various Singing Network events), The Singing Network directors are excited to continue exploring future collaborative initiatives with IFCM and its various events around the world.

Thank you again, IFCM, for your confidence in The Singing Network and your support for what we hope to be the first of future partnerships. We consider the Exchange! to have been a 'pilot' event, the first event organized by our team outside Canada. Through this experience with IFCM and the World Choral EXPO, processes, procedures, and templates have now been developed and produced. This work can serve IFCM and The Singing Network well as we consider further collaborations.

Onward!

**Prof Ki Adams   Dr Andrea Rose   Dr David Buley**

Co-Directors, The Singing Network