

# Magazine COUNCIL TALK

THE CHORAL WORLD IN EXCHANGE



*Unique and new*  
HEADING INTO THE SECOND **WORLD CHOIR GAMES** YEAR IN A ROW -  
REVIEW AND FUTURE PROSPECTS



GENERAL CONFERENCE 2023 IN GANGNEUNG, REPUBLIC OF KOREA

TE MATATINI – THE MANY FACES OF KAPA HAKA

“HELLO COUNCIL”: RATIONAL ANALYSIS AND PERCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING

NORRKÖPING INSPIRES THE WORLD THROUGH THE POWER OF MUSIC





SINGING  
TOGETHER  
BRINGS NATIONS  
TOGETHER

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DENMARK  
**AARHUS** 2025



AARHUS DENMARK  
2025



JUNE 28 - JULY 6, 2025



[ECG2025.EU](http://ECG2025.EU)





**Dear colleagues, dear friends,**

First of all, I would like to thank you all for your numerous participation in the General Conference in Gangneung, Republic of Korea as well as your valuable support during the World Choir Games 2023. I was able to welcome some of you personally on site and we were also able to have an excellent exchange of ideas virtually. On behalf of the entire WCC Board and all of our colleagues, I would like to thank you for your great participation, valuable discussions and conversations, and productive exchange of ideas!

Now that we have put this fulfilling gathering behind us, we look forward with anticipation to the months ahead. Exciting projects await us, in which your experience and enthusiasm will once again play a decisive role. The next World Choir Games in Auckland, New Zealand, are already just around the corner in July 2024, including the next General Conference of the World Choir Council.

We have exciting months ahead of us and it is a great pleasure and honor to know that we have such a broad, colorful and committed council at our side with all of you. Together we will continue to promote the art of choral singing and further strengthen the choral community.

May this current issue of COUNCIL TALK magazine help to strengthen the spirit of collaboration and exchange of ideas among us, and offer you inspiring insights as well as practical tips.

With that in mind, I wish you all the best, much strength and, above all, good health!

Yours sincerely,

**Günter Titsch**

President INTERKULTUR, World Choir Games & World Choir Council





# One World

# One People

## Concert for

## Peace 2024



## INTERKULTUR RINGS IN THE NEW YEAR WITH A HARMONIOUS NEW YEAR'S CONCERT FOR PEACE

As we are warmly welcoming the new year, INTERKULTUR is thrilled to present a special New Year's Peace Concert, a musical celebration that transcends borders and unites the world through the universal language of music. This enchanting concert, titled „One World, One People,“ takes us on a journey of reflection, joy, and anticipation for the musical experiences that lie ahead.

The concert features captivating highlights from the [World Choir Games 2023](#) in Korea and the [European Choir Games & Grand Prix of Nations 2023](#) in Norrköping and presents us with some beautiful choral music to enjoy for a cozy start into 2024: From the soul-stirring performance of a Chinese choir with „Voice of Peace“ to the dynamic presentation by Amaranthe from Belgium, conducted by Johannes Dewilde, each segment contributes to the rich tapestry of global choral artistry.

Notable moments include a special appearance by Youth Choir Aarhus U from Denmark, offering a glimpse into the upcoming [European Choir Games 2025](#) in Aarhus and a captivating performance of traditional Maori Kapa Haka as an invitation to join the [World Choir Games 2024](#) in New Zealand.

In the course of the concert program, INTERKULTUR President Günter Titsch, First Vice President Want Qin, and Senior Artistic Director Johan Rooze, express gratitude for the resumption of international choral gatherings and a hopeful look towards the future.

The concert closes with the uplifting song „One World, One People,“ composed by Randall Johnson and newly arranged by Johan Rooze. Performed by the Daegu Jazz Singers from South Korea, supported by choral voices from all over the world, the song encapsulates a message of peace and unity among nations.

As we immerse ourselves in this musical journey, let us collectively fill 2024 with the resonance of harmonious melodies and set the tone for a future filled with optimism and unity. Join us to watch the concert and usher in the New Year with the power of music:



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OamHUdW5PAM&t=1s>



# INTERKULTUR WORLD TOUR

INTERKULTUR events include the opportunity to travel and discover interesting new places. In addition to our established events, we are proud to take you on a world tour in the next few years.

Get on board and enjoy to our World Tour Stops spread out within this magazine!

2025

MAURITIUS

PORT LOUIS



2025  
*Mauritius*





DENMARK

AARHUS

AUCKLAND

NEW  
ZEALAND

# WELCOME TO THE WORLD CHOIR COUNCIL

## NEW FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD

### THE WORLD CHOIR COUNCIL EXPANDS AND DEVELOPS:

*The World Choir Council, as an important member in the INTERKULTUR family, is a well-known and very important part of the choral world. The World Choir Council is also the highest voluntary international advisory body of INTERKULTUR.*

*INTERKULTUR and the World Choir Council are very proud to present one new member from for the World Choir Council. These new member will represent his country and will contribute with his expertise and experience to make the World Choir Council even more successful. In the following we would like to introduce our new member to you:*



### MAARTEN VAN INGELGEM BELGIUM – EUROPE

- Professor of composition at LUCA School of Arts, Lemmens campus, Leuven
- conductor of the Ghent-based chamber choir “De 2de Adem” (“The Second Wind”) specialized in contemporary choral music
- three-time laureate of the European Award for Choral Composers
- experience as pianist-accompanist and as bass singer in choirs like “Aquarius” and the “Flemish Radio Choir”
- Local Artistic Director of the World Choir Games 2021 in Flanders, Belgium
- Artistic Director of the World Choir Games 2023 in Gangneung/Gangwon, Republic of Korea
- Member of the INTERKULTUR World Choir Council



# WELCOME TO THE WORLD CHOIR COUNCIL ADVISORY BOARD

## PROF. JÜRGEN BUDDAY APPOINTED AS SENIOR ADVISOR OF THE ADVISORY BOARD OF THE WORLD CHOIR COUNCIL

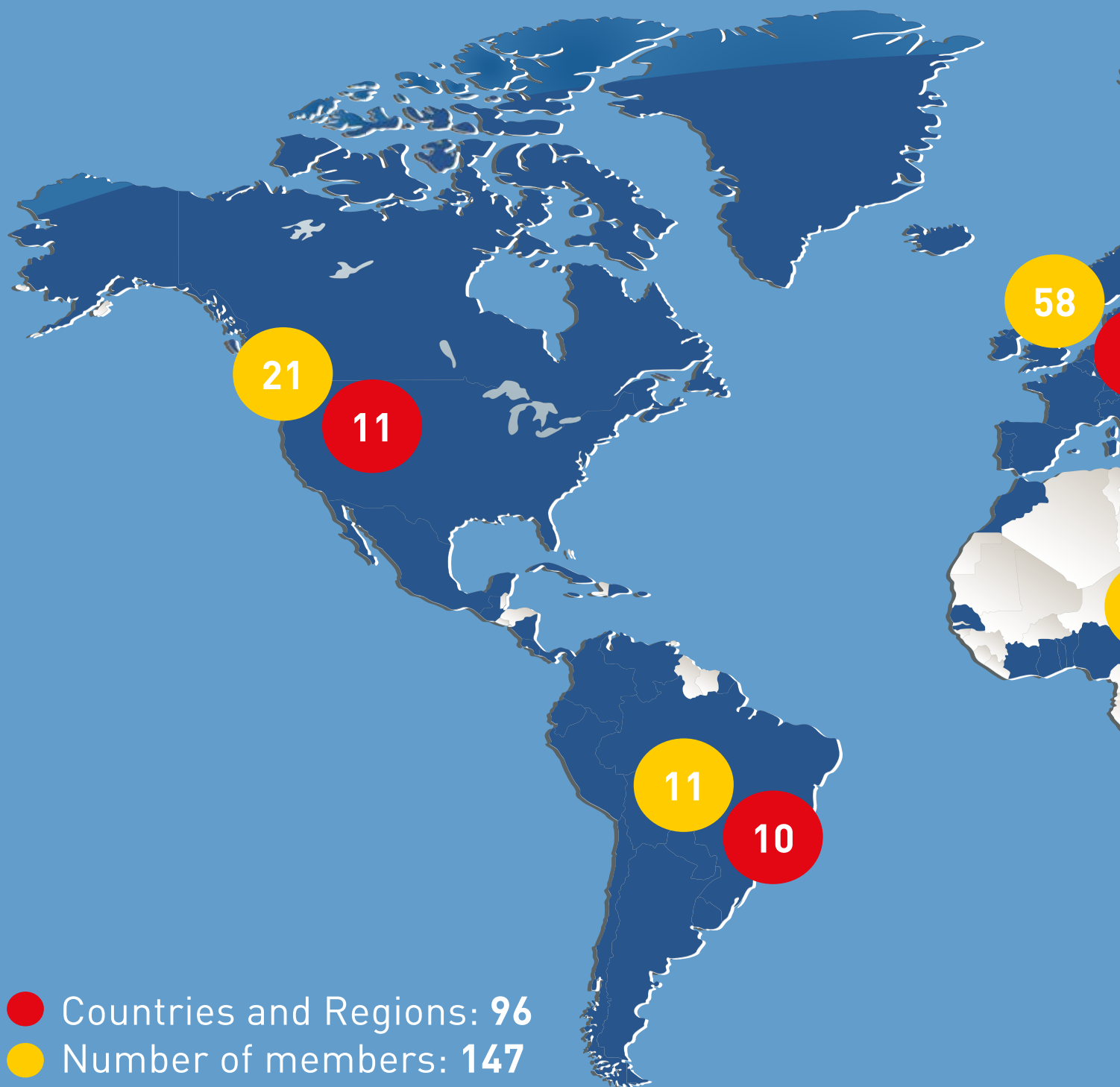
*The World Choir Council Board is very proud to announce that Prof. Jürgen Budday (Germany) - member of the Advisory Board of the World Choir Council since July 2023 - has accepted the appointment as Senior Advisor of the Advisory Board, following in the footsteps of Steen Lindholm (Denmark). Prof. Jürgen Budday will be a major asset with his expertise and experience and will contribute significantly the Advisory Board in the future.*

### PROF. JÜRGEN BUDDAY GERMANY – EUROPE

- founder and Artistic Director of the chamber choir “Maulbronner Kammerchor” and the “Kantorei Maulbronn” until 2016 and from 1979 until 2013 Artistic Director of the festival “Klosterkonzerte Maulbronn”
- recorded more than 20 CDs with the “Maulbronner Kammerchor”, including 10 oratorios by G.F. Händel, which were awarded the Georg-Friedrich-Händel-Ring 2013
- Chair of the advisory board of the German Music Council and Artistic Leader and Chairman of the jury of the Deutscher Chorwettbewerb (2002-2019)
- since 2014 Artistic Director of the Internationaler Kammerchor-Wettbewerb Marktoberdorf
- Chair of the advisory board of the “Bundesjugendchor of Germany”, founded by the German Music Council
- Member of the INTERKULTUR World Choir Council



# WORLD CHOIR COUNCIL MEMBERS AROUND THE WORLD

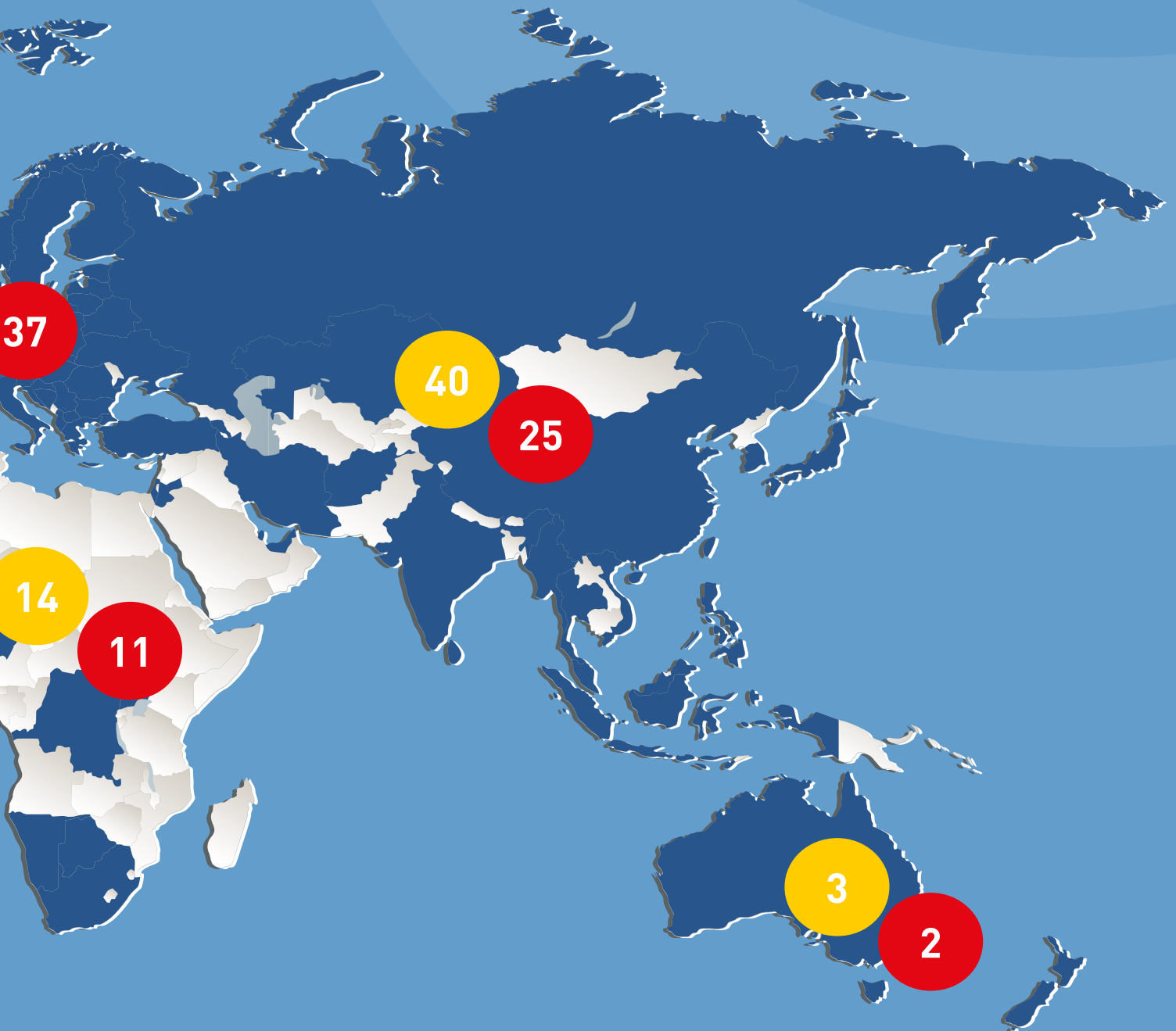


● Countries and Regions: **96**  
● Number of members: **147**  
Number of Continents: **6**





# World Choir Council



Statistics as of April 03, 2023

# WORLD TOUR STOP 2025 AFRICAN ASIA PACIFIC CHOIR GAMES 2025 – PORT LOUIS, MAURITIUS

by *Henriette Brockmann*



2025  
*Mauritius*



## WELCOME TO PARADISE!

The tropical island of Mauritius is world-famous for its pristine beaches and extensive coral reefs. The African Asia Pacific Choir Games will be a great opportunity for choirs from around the world to experience Mauritius' beauty, culture and hospitality first-hand!

Due to the island's location in the Indian Ocean and belonging to Africa, this event welcomes choirs from Africa and from the Asia Pacific Region alike, combining the already established Asia Pacific Choir Games with the African continent for the first time.

Port Louis, capital of Mauritius and host city of the event, is a lively place, where all venues are within easy reach. As an example, the Port Louis Old Theatre, the oldest Opera Theatre in the Southern Hemisphere, will open its newly renovated hall to the Choir Games in 2025!

Come and see for yourself what an islander once told the American writer Mark Twain:

*“Mauritius was made first and then heaven; and heaven was copied after Mauritius”.*







# MAURITIUS

PORT LOUIS





# GENERAL CONFERENCE 2023 IN GANGNEUNG, REPUBLIC OF KOREA

The General Conference of the World Choir Council took place during the [World Choir Games 2023](#), bringing together representatives from up to 96 countries and regions. The conference was organized as a hybrid meeting, with participants joining both virtually and in-person in Gangneung, South Korea.

The conference began with a warm reception where the international guests were treated to delicious and artistically arranged South Korean delights. To set the mood, the „Kholwa Brothers,“ a participant from South Africa, delivered a wonderful performance of South African music and dance to the audience, adding the real taste of World Choir Games atmosphere to the conference.

During the Opening session, Günter Titsch, the President of INTERKULTUR and the World Choir Council, emphasized the Council's role in providing valuable advice and guidance to INTERKULTUR in navigating the world of choral music and to engage for the quality and development of INTERKULTUR's work. He stressed that the World Choir Council serves as a unique entity in the choral world, offering advice, criticism, and suggestions for improvement to ensure the highest standards of artistry and pedagogy in the world of INTERKULTUR events.

In recognition of their contributions, several Council Members were honored during the conference for having contributed to the World Choir Council for ten years and more. Further, Maarten van Ingelgem, the Artistic Director at the World Choir Games 2021 and of the World Choir Games 2023, was appointed as new member of the World Choir Games, where he will contribute to the further development of the World Choir Council.

As a representative of the host country, Mr. Shin Hwa Park, Artistic Director of the World Choir Games 2023, gave all participants an insight into the history of Korean Choral Culture, highlighting the development of Korean choral music throughout the decades and presenting some of the most important choirs in the country.

To provide an up-to-date overview of current developments in the worldwide choral scene, World Choir Council representatives from Uruguay, Mexico, Belgium, and New Zealand shared their current experiences and challenges in choral singing and education in their countries. They reflected the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their respective choral communities and highlighted the resilience and adaptability of choirs worldwide.







An exciting moment came with the presentation of the next host of the [World Choir Games 2024](#), Auckland in New Zealand. The presentation of the Artistic & Games Director of the World Choir Games 2024, John Rosser, delved into New Zealand's music history, cultural influences, and the unique mix of Maori culture and Western musical influences. Auckland, known for its ethnic diversity, was highlighted as one of the most diverse cities in the world, with a multi-

de of ethnic choirs representing various cultures and traditions – making it the perfect place for hosting an event like the World Choir Games.

In the afternoon the members of the World Choir Council were divided into various smaller seminar and discussion groups, where they exchanged new ideas and discussed the future of the international choral scene and of the World Choir Council.



**World  
Choir Council**



**WORLD CHOIR COUNCIL**  
GENERAL CONFERENCE 2023  
JULY 08, 2023





# 2025 Mauritius



SEPTEMBER 27 -  
OCTOBER 5, 2025

*Sing in Paradise!*



[AAPCG2025.COM](http://AAPCG2025.COM)



# “HELLO COUNCIL”: RATIONAL ANALYSIS AND PERCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING

## *Taking on the Challenges of the World Choir Games*

“Hello Council” is the series of live talks and pedagogical online workshops organized by INTERKULTUR China with support of INTERKULTUR and the [World Choir Council](#). The 15<sup>th</sup> “Hello Council” was broadcasted live on December 15, including guest speakers Mr. Diao Zhijun and Ms. Xu Liangliang, both famous Chinese conductors whose choirs won a Champions title at the World Choir Games event. This live talk focused on the topic of “Preparing for the World Choir Games”. More than 3000 Chinese viewers watched the live broadcast, and more than 10,000 people watched the review video.

In order to address the challenges of the [World Choir Games 2024](#) and thus guide the participating choirs, the guests shared and discussed the event’s main challenges and issues, such as selecting categories and songs and improving the quality of rehearsals.

While explaining the rules of the World Choir Games 2024 for the audience, Mr. Diao Zhijun emphasized the importance of repertoire choice: “When selecting songs, you should follow the evaluation standards of the ‘Musica Mundi’ or World Choir Games Evaluation System. You need to determine what you are good at, focus on showcasing the comprehensive strength of the choir from different perspectives and balance technical and artistic aspects.”

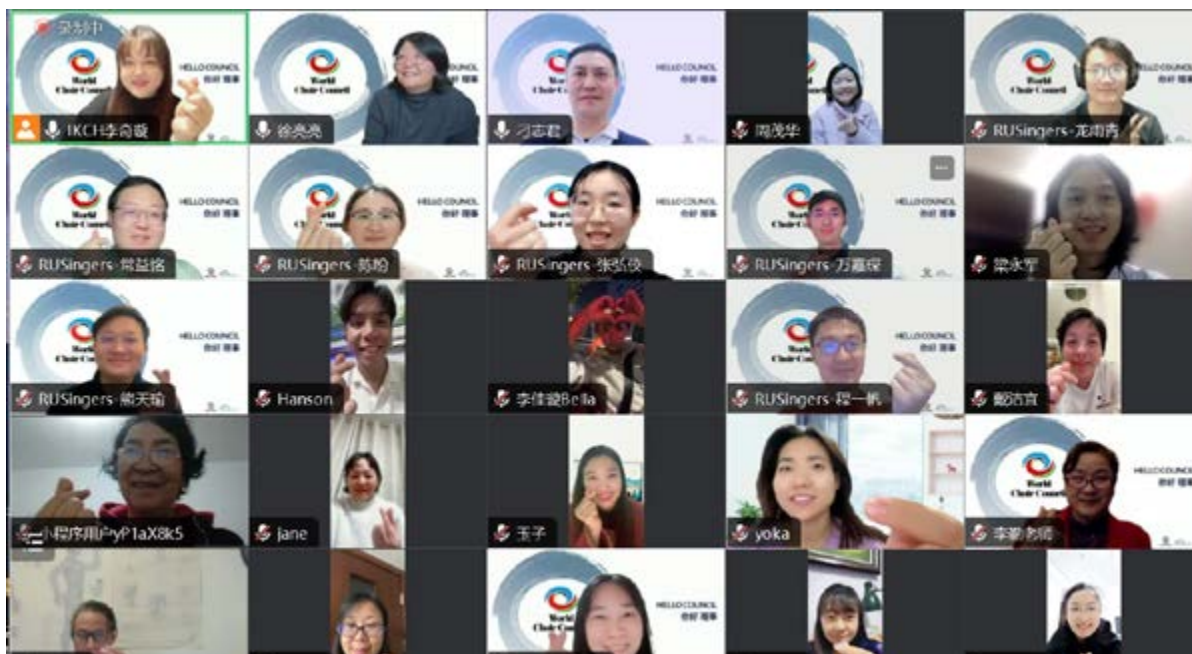
“Regardless of which piece you choose, in the end you have to return to the level of human nature, and I suggest that the first song should always be chosen as a ‘most confident performance’, i.e., something you are really good at, so that the choristers’ enthusiasm can be expressed in the first place; the judges

and the audience need to be treated to a ‘change of atmosphere’ in the course of the performance and the repertoire arrangement should have at least one song to assume the role of ‘breathing and relaxation”, Ms. Xu Liangliang added with regards to a perceptual approach.

Regarding the preparation for rehearsals, both guests emphasized the importance of providing accurate instructions to singers and contributing to a common understanding during the first period of rehearsals. They also put forward their own suggestions for a phased rehearsal mode based on their own choir’s experience of winning the Champions titles.

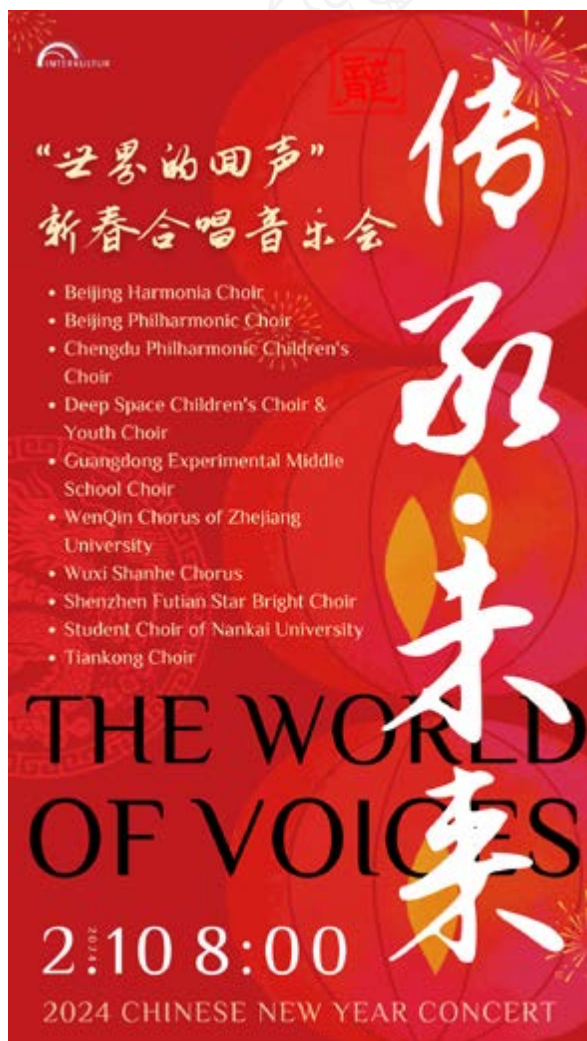
The live broadcast especially invited the Chinese choir ensemble RUSingers, a group that will join in the [13<sup>th</sup> World Choir Games](#), to participate in the interactive part. Taking the actual scenario of their preparation as an example, they further discussed with the guests on the two aspects of selecting and arranging songs and rehearsal enhancement, which provided new ideas for the subsequent preparation for the competition.

At the end of the last episode of “Hello Council” in 2023, Ms. Li Qixuan, the project manager, expressed the sincerest gratitude to the fans: “Next year’s “Hello Council” will be even more tailored to the needs of the audience, focusing on more practical topics such as interpreting the competition rules, and furthermore increasing fans’ participation and interaction.”



# CHINESE NEW YEAR CONCERT 2024 – YEAR OF THE DRAGON

“The World of Voices” 2024 Chinese New Year Concert, hosted by INTERKULTUR China, was launched on February 10th, 2024, with the theme of “Inheritance · Future”, including the covers of classic music and original choral works from ten high-level Chinese choirs, of which 5 was conducted by the members of the World Choir Council from China. They are bringing vitality and sincere blessings to all audiences in the coming year! Since the concert launched on Chinese and international media platforms, it has received over 100,000 views.



[https://m.v.qq.com/x/m/play?cid=&vid=h353924te10&mobile=1&ptag=v\\_qq\\_com%23v.play\\_adaptor%233&mreferrer=https%253A%2F%2Fv.qq.com%2Fbiu%2Fcreator%2Fhome%253Fvcu-id%253D9000163859](https://m.v.qq.com/x/m/play?cid=&vid=h353924te10&mobile=1&ptag=v_qq_com%23v.play_adaptor%233&mreferrer=https%253A%2F%2Fv.qq.com%2Fbiu%2Fcreator%2Fhome%253Fvcu-id%253D9000163859)



**Prof. Wu Lingfen**  
(China)



**Prof. Tian Xiaobao**  
(China)



**Dapeng Meng**  
(China)



**Prof. Li Yang**  
(China)



**Guanghui Chen**  
(China)





2024  
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1992

# 17


  
 www.cicfbj.cn    CICF1992  
 中国国际合唱节    China International Chorus Festival

2024.7.15-7.19  
BEIJING, CHINA

在北京,听世界的歌声!  
COME TO BEIJING,  
LISTEN TO THE SONGS OF THE WORLD!

Tel: +86-10-64008815/64000573    Email: cicfbj@163.com

**2024 17<sup>th</sup> CICF China International Chorus Festival**  
第十七届中国国际合唱节

# PEOPLE AND THE LAND

by John Rosser CNZM

Aotearoa New Zealand is young. The indigenous Māori arrived just 750 years ago, at the very end of the great Polynesian migration across the Pacific, while Europeans did not settle in significant numbers until the mid-19th century. But of course the land itself is, and feels, old and New Zealanders quickly developed a close connection with its soaring mountains, unspoilt rivers and deep, brooding 'bush' (forests), a connection that in later times has developed into more active guardianship. This bond, which has shaped our identity and our music, inspired the theme chosen for our hosting of the World Symposium on Choral Music 2020: "People and the Land | He tangata, he whenua".

Aotearoa New Zealand is bicultural. Although many races now live together in our land, the country was founded by a treaty in 1840 between Māori and the British Crown (on behalf of its settlers) that purported to establish an equal partnership between the two peoples. Our 183-year struggle to honour that agreement has been challenging and sometimes very painful, but the fact that more and more Kiwis are now willing to embrace it is cause for cautious celebration. In his article, Peter Walls shows how colonial New Zealand tried to preserve its old choral identity in a new country and finishes with an environmental twist; in the August? edition Karen Grylls discusses efforts to build a bridge between two musical worlds.

Aotearoa New Zealand is small. With fewer than five million people in an area the size of the UK or Japan we have plenty of room, and our choral music reflects this, painting broad-brush, etherial landscapes – more keenly perhaps than portraits of the busy cities where most of us live. Being little, however, we strive to see the big picture (because it's not so big) and are able to organise ourselves more easily on a national scale. Prime examples in the NZ performing arts scene are Te Matatini – the biennial and hugely popular Māori 'kapa haka' festival, described here by Keriata Royal-Taeao – and our renowned secondary schools' choral phenomenon, The Big Sing.

Aotearoa New Zealand is attractive. Well, we think so, and the 400 international choirs and presenters who applied to perform at WSCM2020 and its fringe festival must have wanted to find out what all the fuss was about. Now we look forward to welcoming to our land the many people taking part in the World Choir Games 2024, and to sharing with them its unique, diverse beauty and rich culture. See you in Auckland!



**JOHN ROSSER CNZM**

**Member of the World Choir Council &  
Games Director of the 13<sup>th</sup> World Choir Games 2024**









April 02-06, 2023  
**7<sup>TH</sup> VIETNAM INTERNATIONAL CHOIR COMPETITION**  
 Hội An, Vietnam

June 07-11, 2023  
**SOUND WAVES LINZ**  
 Linz, Austria

July 03-13, 2023  
**12<sup>TH</sup> WORLD CHOIR GAMES 2023**  
 Gangneung, Republic of Korea

# INTERKULTUR EVENTS

APRIL

MAY

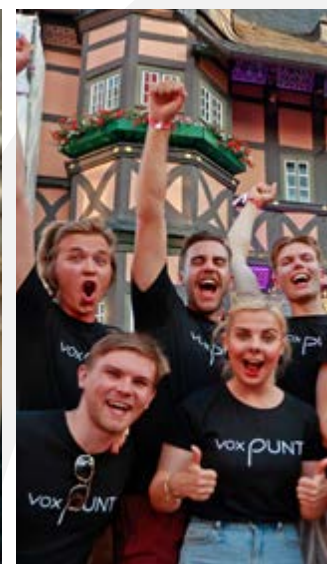
JUNE

JULY

April 27 – May 01, 2023  
**HULL INTERNATIONAL CHOIR COMPETITION**  
 Hull, United Kingdom

May 17-21, 2023  
**2<sup>ND</sup> VOX LUCENSIS – CONCONSO CORALE INTERNAZIONALE**  
 Lucca, Italy

July 05-09, 2023  
**12<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL JOHANNES BRAMS CHOIR FESTIVAL AND COMPETITION WERNIGERODE**  
 Wernigerode, Germany







September 14-17, 2023  
**SING ALONG  
 CONCERT  
 BARCELONA**  
 Barcelona, Spain



October 19-23, 2023  
**10<sup>TH</sup> CANTA AL MAR**  
 Calella/Barcelona, Spain



November 09-13, 2023  
**2<sup>ND</sup> LISBON SINGS**  
 Lisbon, Portugal

# REVIEW 2023

## SEPTEMBER

September 27 –  
 October 01, 2023  
**4<sup>TH</sup> VOICES FOR PEACE**  
 Perugia, Italy

## OKTOBER

October 28 –  
 November 05, 2023  
**5<sup>TH</sup> EUROPEAN  
 CHOIR GAMES &  
 GRAND PRIX OF  
 NATIONS 2023**  
 Norrköping, Sweden

## NOVEMBER



# PROJECTS 2024



## MAGAZINE – COUNCIL TALK

THE DIGITAL MAGAZINE WITH DETAILED INFORMATION ABOUT THE WORK OF THE WORLD CHOIR COUNCIL, ITS MEMBERS AND CURRENT NEWS FROM THE CHORAL WORLD.

## WORLD CHOIR COUNCIL – GENERAL CONFERENCE LIVE IN GANGNEUNG (REPUBLIC OF KOREA) DURING 12<sup>TH</sup> WORLD CHOIR GAMES 2023 AND VIRTUAL VIA ZOOM

**JULY 15 & 16, 2024**

The next General Conference of the World Choir Council including workshops and much more will take place live in Auckland (New Zealand) in 2024 during the 13th World Choir Games.

For those who cannot travel to New Zealand, we will also offer a ZOOM meeting and will welcome you live from the meeting room in Auckland.

*We are looking forward to welcoming you in Auckland.*

**INVITATION**  
ONLINE EVENT &  
LIVE EVENT

## WORLD CHOIR COUNCIL – REGIONAL MEETINGS

DISCUSSION ROUNDS WITH THE WORLD CHOIR COUNCIL MEMBERS  
YOUR REGION ON CURRENT TOPICS EXCHANGE EXPERIENCE AND INFORMATION.

*Stay tuned for what's coming up for you.*



## WCC FORUM - A PLACE TO TALK

NEXT MEETING: APRIL 2024



## MUSICA MUNDI ACADEMY SPECIAL

### HELLO COUNCIL – CHINA | PACIFIC

VIRTUAL LIVE TALKS – CONNECTING THE CHORAL WORLD

China: TBA

Pacific: TBA

### WORLD PEACE SINGERS – NEW YEAR & PEACE CONCERT 2025

Conducted by TBA

January 01, 2025



\*Dates might subject to change.

World Choir Council c/o INTERKULTUR  
Ruhberg 1, 35463 Fernwald (Frankfurt/Main) Germany, worldchoircouncil@interkultur.com

**interkultur.com**





# EVENTS 2024

## International Choir Competitions and Festivals



01

**3<sup>RD</sup> SING'N'PRAY KOBE – INTERNATIONAL CHOIR FESTIVAL & COMPETITION**  
January 25-29, 2024 | Kobe, Japan



03

**3<sup>RD</sup> VOX LUCENSIS**  
March 23-27, 2024 | Lucca, Italy



04

**15<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL CHOIR COMPETITION AND FESTIVAL BAD ISCHL**  
April 27-May 1, 2024 | Bad Ischl, Austria



05

**INTERNATIONAL CHOIR COMPETITION PHNOM PENH**  
May 29-June 2, 2024 | Phnom Penh, Cambodia



07

**13<sup>TH</sup> WORLD CHOIR GAMES**  
July 10-20, 2024 | Auckland, New Zealand



09

**2<sup>ND</sup> INTERNATIONALES CHORFEST MAGDEBURG**  
September 11-15, 2024 | Magdeburg, Germany



09

**ON STAGE IN MADRID**  
September 19-22, 2024 | Madrid, Spain



10

**SING'N'JOY BOHOL**  
October 2-6, 2024 | Tagbilaran City, Bohol, Philippines



10

**5<sup>TH</sup> KALAMATA INTERNATIONAL CHOIR COMPETITION AND FESTIVAL**  
October 10-14, 2024 | Kalamata, Greece



10

**2<sup>ND</sup> SING FOR GOLD – THE WORLD CHORAL CUP**  
October 24-28, 2024 | Calella & Barcelona, Catalonia (Spain)



11

**ON STAGE IN PRAGUE**  
November 7-10, 2024 | Prague, Czech Republic



11

**3<sup>RD</sup> LISBON SINGS**  
November 7-11, 2024 | Lisbon, Portugal



# TE MATATINI – THE MANY FACES OF KAPA HAKA

by *Keriata Royal-Taeao*

Kapa Haka is the term used for Māori performing arts. It literally means to form a line (kapa) and dance (haka), and involves a powerful, emotional combination of song, dance and chanting. The Te Matatini Festival, held every two years, is essentially the Olympics of Kapa Haka, a gathering of the sharpest exponents of the art form from New Zealand and Australia, who battle over four days to be crowned Toa Whakaihuwaka, Te Matatini champions.

This title has been contested since the festival's inception in 1972. What began as the Polynesian Festival at Whakarewarewa in the famous geothermal town of Rotorua has grown and changed over nearly 50 years, pushing boundaries in every way – technically, artistically, musically and physically.

In 2004 a new name was given to the festival: Te Matatini, meaning 'the many faces'. It refers to the way in which Kapa Haka touches the vast and diverse multitudes – performers, tutors, supporters, contributors and audience members alike – attracting many faces to this display of Māori culture.

The heart of Te Matatini's audience, though, lies with the whānau (families) from all over the country who attend expectantly in their thousands, eager to watch their favourite groups for days on end, in sunshine, rain and hail. These attendees share a real sense of engagement with, and pride in, their Māori identity and language. It is also a source of pride to be selected to host Te Matatini, as well as a serious challenge. The festival is held each time in a different region of New Zealand and hosted by the local iwi (tribe/s), whose task is to cater for upwards of 40,000 visitors!

The 2019 festival took place in the capital, Wellington, on the largest platform the festival had yet seen. Aptly themed Te Matatini ki te Ao ('Te Matatini to the World'), it encapsulated the festival's aspirations for a larger scope and more international reach. Forty-six teams, each with 40 onstage performers, took part in vigorous competition. They had already competed at one of 13 regions throughout New Zealand and Australia and prevailed from among a total of 163 teams to move through to the four-day Te Matatini Festival itself. The first three of those days consisted of performances in three competitive pools. Only the top three groups in each pool (nine in total) qualified to compete on the finals day, Te Matangirua.

Six compulsory disciplines make up a performance bracket and each group is given 25 minutes to perform. If a group chooses to perform an optional seventh discipline, the waiata tira (a group song), it is given an additional four minutes. The items that make up a bracket are:

- 1. Waiata tira** – This choral-like piece is either newly composed or uses the tune of a preexisting song, and is sung with guitar accompaniment or a cappella. Its main purpose is to warm up the group's voices.
- 2. Whakaeke** – If no waiata tira is sung, this is where the group takes the stage for the first time. The whakaeke can consist of waiata (singing), haka, movement – which includes the use of traditional weaponry – and instruments. It is like a haka pohiri, the traditional welcome ceremony, where the visiting party introduces itself and tells the audience of its connection with the host people through pakiwaitara (stories) and whakapapa (genealogy).
- 3. Mōteatea** – This is perhaps the most traditional item in Kapa Haka and follows a centuries-old tradition of chanted song-poetry. It is unlike other waiata, in that the tune does not adopt Western approaches to melody and harmony. Mōteatea are monophonic and have a more rhythmic sense to the way in which the kupu (words) are voiced.
- 4. Waiata-ā-ringa** – This action song is embellished with use of the wiri, a quivering of the hands that is an integral part of Māori movement. Lyrics were traditionally chanted, but have over the years transformed into a song incorporating melody and harmony.
- 5. Poi** – Another form of, typically lighthearted, action song employs the poi, a small ball on the end of a string. Poi are for the most part swung by women, and depict the movement of elements of the environment, such as water, small birds and insects.
- 6. Haka** – This well-known, powerful chant can be performed by both men and women and is usually accompanied by strong body movement. At Te Matatini, the men take the lead, with their legs apart and firmly grounded. Groups often use the haka to speak (chant) about current topics of importance.
- 7. Whakawātea** – This is the exit song, or finale, and is made up of a number of elements intended to make a lasting impression on the audience.






The success of the 2019 winners, Ngā Tumanako, represented the epitome of hard work and commitment to Kapa Haka over many years. Hailing from West Auckland, Ngā Tumanako had never placed in the top three prior to this year. Many members of the group had practised Kapa Haka from school age, having attended the local kura (Māori-language immersion school), and from there carried the experience into adulthood. They are now winners on the most competitive Kapa Haka stage in the world.

Although the biennial festival is the primary event on the Kapa Haka calendar, Te Matatini also has an ambitious, longer-term plan to contribute to positive social change in New Zealand. It has already invested heavily in programmes that foster youth leadership, to ensure the continuation and growth of Kapa Haka, understanding that the art form has a crucial role in developing cultural identity and pride. Promoting the language is also a key aim: all Kapa Haka is performed in te reo Māori (one of NZ's three official languages, the others being English and NZ Sign Language), while compères and broadcasters speak around

90% in te reo, and audience members are encouraged to use te reo wherever possible. The results of a research project commissioned to assess the social, economic and cultural impact Kapa Haka has on society will be available in the coming year.

Te Matatini 2019 set a new bar for the exposure of Kapa Haka and for the event's own growing status as a world-class festival. International media were in attendance and an audience of 1.1 million watched on television or via live-stream. "We all know this is New Zealand's premier Māori event," says Te Matatini's Chief Executive, Carl Ross, pointing to a recent scoping project for NZ's Ministry for Culture and Heritage that highlighted Kapa Haka's "significant contribution to New Zealand's national identity and how we are represented and viewed internationally". Ross notes that Kapa Haka is routinely used by government departments and private enterprise when engaging with their overseas counterparts. "Kapa Haka is one of this country's points of difference. It is unique in the world."



# NORRKÖPING INSPIRES THE WORLD THROUGH THE POWER OF MUSIC

## *European Choir Games & Grand Prix of Nations 2023 come to a successful close*

After nine inspiring days, in which Norrköping, Sweden, hosted the [5<sup>th</sup> European Choir Games & Grand Prix of Nations](#), the choral music festival came to a heartfelt conclusion with an emotional Closing Concert. With participation from over 63 choirs and more than 2000 participants representing 25 countries, a profound message of unity and cultural exchange was conveyed through the universal language of music.

For the grand finale of the European Choir Games & Grand Prix of Nations Norrköping 2023, enthusiastic participants gathered once more in the Louis De Geer concert hall. Taking the festival stage was a choir consisting of 75 local singers, under the direction of Artistic Director Fred Sjöberg. They performed familiar songs that encouraged the audience to sing and dance along, creating an atmosphere in the hall that quickly reached its peak.

Looking back at the past week Viveca Valgren, Project Manager for the city of Norrköping, was delighted as she exclaimed: *“What a week! The rainy and dark autumn week transformed into a bright, warm and joyous celebration to music. Music truly brings nations together. The voices spread all over the town from concert venues to restaurants and pubs. New friendships flourished. Norrköping is grateful for having been given this opportunity to host such an amazing event.”*

For Michael Barrett, a member of the international jury from South Africa, the value of the festival went far beyond the purely competitive nature: *“This is so much more than just a competition – it’s a gathering of like-minded individuals that want the world to be a better place.”*

The European Choir Games & Grand Prix of Nations in Norrköping for this year officially concluded with the symbolic handover of the flag to the next host city, Aarhus in Denmark. From June 28 to July 6, 2025, choirs from around the world are once again invited to gather, sing, and participate in European and international competitions.

In the Closing Ceremony, Jeppe Uggerhøj, Artistic Director for the [6<sup>th</sup> European Choir Games and Grand Prix of Nations Aarhus 2025](#), invited singers from around the world to join: *“Aarhus is a city full of energy, art, culture and strong communities – in singing and in general. When you come to Aarhus in 2025 it will be a perfect spot for creating even stronger and broader and more inclusive and diverse communities with you. In singing, we can share and improve the world just by inhaling and exhaling and using our voices.”*

Günter Titsch, President of INTERKULTUR and the World Choir Council: *“The 5<sup>th</sup> European Choir Games & Grand Prix of Nations in Norrköping proved that the world of choral singing is still strong and vibrant. This festival has strengthened international friendships and brought people together. We’re ready to continue this journey in Denmark in 2025 and inspire even more people!”*

A total of 18 Gold medals and 12 Silver medals were awarded in the European Champions Competition at the European Choir Games in Norrköping. In the Grand Prix of Nations, a total of 8 choirs received the prestigious title. Countries such as Sweden, Denmark and Switzerland showed outstanding performances and were rewarded accordingly with the highest number of medals.





### **Competition Results:**

<https://www.interkultur.com/newsroom/choir-games/details/news/choirs-shine-in-norrkeeping-awards-ceremony-in-the-highest-notes/>



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THE WORLD OF VOICES**



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The World Choir Council is the highest and voluntary international advisory committee of INTERKULTUR. The members support and promote the exchange, progress and development of choral art and culture worldwide.

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