

INTERKULTUR - Pedagogical concepts at our INTERKULTUR festivals

Since the beginning of our activities INTERKULTUR events represent not only choral competitions and festivals, although of course one focus is on the peaceful competition and the mutual encounters of singers from all over the world.

Beyond that each of our events is based upon a **comprehensive** and elaborate **pedagogical concept**. All participants are being invited to make use of these top-class offers in order to gather theoretical and practical experience, to get new artistic input and to gain further qualifications in different ways. The meeting between international jurors and experts and our conductors and their singers at all our events has first priority.

The range of pedagogical impulses we want to offer our participants is complex and tailored to all needs. It comprehends general lectures about current musical issues as well as direct meetings between jurors and choirs and practical artistic work. We have to point out however that not all elements of our pedagogical work can be provided at all our events. During major events e.g. the focus is on workshops and demonstrations whereas smaller events centre on the individual work with choirs and conductors. But this essentially depends on the local and temporal conditions and capacities.

Workshops in all varieties shape e.g. die World Choir Games as well as the European and Asian Choir Games. The multitude of topics becomes apparent in the key aspects which run like a thread through all events:

"*Singspiration*" is a series centring on vocal training and practical rehearsal work. "*Headliners*" concentrates on current composers and artists and their works. During the World Choir Games 2014 in Riga e.g. such Headliners were being presented by "The King Singers" (Great Britain) or the Swedish "Real Group" as well as the composers Ēriks Ešenvalds (Latvia) and Morten Lauridsen (USA).

The third option we offer is named "*Cultural Showcase*". It includes choral music of different countries and focuses on their respective folklore. Finally we present "*Modern Times*", which pick up the concept of the workshops and provides activities about modern and popular styles of music ranging from Jazz and Pop to Show.

The face-to-face work between international jurors, choral experts and choirs includes two aspects which are met with high approval by participating choirs:

Evaluation Performances represent encounters between choirs and jurors prior to the actual competition. Here our groups have the possibility to receive individual and valuable pedagogical and artistic advice before the competition. The choir performs its respective competition programme and after a short counselling, selected jurors give their feedback. This happens in a casual and mentoring rehearsal atmosphere which does not only reduce the nervousness of many choirs but also enables valuable advice for the perfection of the choir's performance.

During our long lasting experience with this course of action we determined that most choirs who participate in such an evaluation performance are able to improve their proficiency during the competition.

It is very important to us that this activity bases on the choir's current level of achievement resulting from the singers' weekly rehearsals. Thus the choirs will not be confronted with excessive requirements – each one must have the ability to continue with further steps which base on the current level of proficiency. Anything else would be excessive demands and do the choir no good. The increasing popularity of this pedagogical activity proves us right.

Individual Coaching which we mostly offer after competitions are always a great possibility for each choir to experience top-class conductors working directly face-to-face with the own choir.

A further and highly effective training which we offer in the context of our pedagogical responsibility is the **direct evaluation of the jury together with conductors and choir representatives**. This "confrontation" is of high value. During an individual discussion each juror reveals his/ her opinion regarding the competition programme the choir performed. This discussion does not focus on minor trifles but rather on an evaluation of the choir's abilities, tips for the practical performance and further possibilities for improvements. As each choir has the chance to talk with each juror and to learn their opinions it receives an enriching and complex feedback regarding its competition performance. This feedback and the awarding of points which is normally being announced after the discussion during the award ceremony, gives the choir a precise estimation of their performance.

As the pedagogical focus of our festivals gains an increasing importance we are currently developing further activities in this field which we want to offer in the near future.

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