



## **„SING THE BRIDGE” SEMINAR/WORKSHOP**

### ***Choral Singing and Intercultural Dialogue*** **27 – 31 July 2008, Debrecen, Hungary**

In anticipation of the 23rd Béla Bartók International Choir Competition and Folklore Festival, Europa Cantat, the Europa Cantat Central Eastern European Centre, Musicians without Borders International, Főnix Events Organizing Non-Profit Ltd. and the Association of the Hungarian Choirs and Orchestras (KÓTA), presented ***Sing the Bridge: Choral Singing and Intercultural Dialogue***, a Seminar/Workshop focusing on choirs from Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe, the first of its kind, to be followed by new editions throughout the coming years.

***“Sing the Bridge”*** explored how choral singers can contribute to reconciliation of people in conflict in their countries and regions. Participants acquired specific tools, new contacts, resources and ideas to use in bridging barriers and building communities.

The event brought together choirs and singers from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, the Netherlands and individual choral experts from other parts of Europe. Pontanima, from Bosnia-Herzegovina perform the classical sacred music of the region’s four religions: Catholicism, Orthodoxy, Judaism and Islam. A Bi-Communal Choir (with singers from the Turkish and the Greek part of Cyprus) and a Greek Cypriot Choir sang feelingly about a united community. Girls choirs from Estonia, one Estonian and one Russian discovered that they can share their common hopes through music. And a Hungarian choir and a Roma choir from Hungary found common ground. They all shared their stories and their songs. They learned from each other, inspired each other and, most important, sang together and for each other.

The workshops and plenary sessions were led by experts and covered subjects such as Music and the Brain, Singing without Words, The Choir as Community, Reconciliation, Improvisation, The Origin of Singing, and Building Bridges of Music. Concerts showcased the diversity in choral music and the great talent of choirs in intercultural dialogue. Every participant left the seminar with new friends, new ideas and new understanding of the relationship between music and the human connection which they can use in their work, in their communities, and in their lives at home.

### **SUPPORTERS**

The National Cultural Fund of Hungary  
Ministry of Education and Culture, Hungary  
Open Society Institute

