

Hearts-in-Harmony

a series of choral events and projects promoting tolerance and inclusion, supported by the European Choral Association – Europa Cantat



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The idea for Hearts-in-Harmony was initiated in 2006 with a Gala concert, bringing together handicapped and non-handicapped singers in the Paris Convention Centre. The event was organized under the name “Coeurs-en-Choeurs” (hearts-in-choirs) by A Coeur Joie in cooperation with French associations for the handicapped. This unique example and the belief that singing can help the social inclusion of handicapped young people, and that we as organisations have the responsibility to enable common projects and to create an awareness of how to approach handicapped singers and our own prejudices, organizations in different countries carried on the torch, organizing concerts, festivals and training courses bringing handicapped and non-handicapped people together.

In 2008 the Norwegian children and youth choir organization “NoBU” organised a weekend in Trondheim where hearing-impaired and other children sang together, using sign-language.

In 2010 and 2011 three further Hearts-in-Harmony events took place as part of the project “Uniting Youth in Song” which received funding from the European Union under the Culture programme:

- The Central-Eastern European Centre in cooperation with the school for visually impaired children organised a weekend in Budapest with rehearsals, concerts, demonstration lessons, workshops, video and live presentations and a round table discussion as well as a joint closing concert with blind or seeing-impaired as well as non-disabled young singers from all over Hungary.

- In Barcelona, the children’s choir organisation SCIC and the Mediterranean Office for Choral Singing worked together with ONCE and other

organisations for the disabled for an event called “Cors amb Cor” (choirs with heart). In February 2010 they organised a conference focused on how to integrate disabled singers into the choirs of the region, on May 15th 2010 member choirs of SCIC and disabled singers performed a concert in the Auditori of Barcelona. In 2011 this project was one of the three winners of the IMC Music Rights Awards, an Award of the International Music Council for projects that support in an exemplary way one or more of the five musical rights enunciated by the Council.

- In Örebro in 2011 the Swedish International Centre for Choral Music – SWICCO cooperated with different organisations for a Hearts-in-Harmony event focused on children with hearing difficulties.

Since 2011 there have been regular Hearts-in-Harmony workshops and conferences

in Novi Sad (Serbia), organised by „Vera Ljubav Nada” (Faith, Love, Hope), as well as Inclusion and Choral Singing Conference included in the series of Hearts-in-Harmony events in Barcelona (Catalonia, Spain), organised by Moviment Coral Català. In November 2013 Koor&Stem organised a Hearts-in-Harmony festival in Antwerp, Belgium

With Hearts-in-Harmony the European Choral Association - Europa Cantat and the choral world are hoping to contribute to a better inclusion of disable singers, as well as other singers in danger of exclusion. In the frame of the project “Choral Upgrade in Europe – bringing collective singing to a new level”, which is planned to start in June 2016 and for which the European Choral Association – Europa Cantat has applied for funding under the EU Creative Europe programme, the theme of inclusion through choral music shall be coordinated and taken to a new level, as well. One part of the project will be the introduction of an “inclusion label” which will be discussed during the Conference “Sharing the Benefits of Singing” in Helsinki in November 2015.

More information on
<http://www.europeanchoralassociation.org/events/hearts-in-harmony/>

