

## Report of my attendance at The World Symposium on Choral Music Julia Uzunova, Bulgaria

I am so pleased that I was able to attend The World Symposium on Choral Music in Istanbul. That was my first time at such a big choir event. I am thrilled and inspired after this wonderful experience and very grateful for the opportunity to witness it.

In these 6 days I went to 12 concerts, 5 workshops, 2 presentations, 1 masterclass session, 1 reading session and 1 panel. All of these truly changed my horizons. I learned so many new things, listened to so many beautiful sounds, I was able to see incredible stage performances and meet new inspiring people.

On the day of my arrival (25th of April) I went to the evening concerts. In the first one I listened to three choirs - *Beşiktaş Children's Choir of Beşiktaş Municipality, Suanplu Chorus and Boğaziçi Jazz Choir*. It was a very good concert and a wonderful beginning to my adventure. After that was the Festival Opening Concert in the beautiful Opera Hall of AKM Türk Telekom with the *Turkish State Choir and Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir*.

On the second day I went to a workshop led by Eliezer Yanson Jr. - *Solidifying Conducting Technique with Tools and Toys*. There I saw very interesting approaches for improving a conducting technique. I will definitely use some of them. After that I watched a presentation of Ana Maria Raga - *Breaking frames*. She really gave me new ideas about going out of my comfort zone and also showed some inspiring exercises. The next workshop was *Icebreakers* led by Tine Fris-Ronsfeld. It was so fun to be there and make the icebreakers with new people. I even used some of the exercises on my first working day after WSCM with my children's choir in Bulgaria and the kids were really happy to do them. In the evening I went to two concerts. The first one was *Sofia Vokalensemble's* performance and the second one was the Gala concert where I listened to *Batavia Madrigal Singers, Georgia State University Singers* (my personal favorite choir of all I listened to on WSCM) and *Orfeon San Juan Bautista*.

The third day for me began with the *Conducting masterclass session* led by Ragnar Rasmussen. It was so interesting and full of new knowledge that I even stayed longer than I expected. After that it was The *North America Reading session* led by Joshua Habermann. During that day I went to two concerts again. The first one was The *Georgia State University Singers's* performance. I wanted to listen to this choir again because they were incredible the night before. After that was the Gala concert where *Le Chant Sur La Lowe, Sofia Vokalensemble, and Vancouver Youth Choir* (this choir also was one of my favorites) were on stage.

28th of April was a very intensive day. The morning began with the presentation *Choir Changing Therapy* led by Martyna Domarkaite. After that was the Astrid Vang-Pedersen's workshop *Concert Design*. The last session for this day was Panda van Prosdij's workshop *From Voice and Physique to Choreography*. It was a really awesome workshop, actually one of my favorites. On this day I went to three concerts.

The first one was with the following choirs: *Choir İstanbul, 9 Eylül University Choir and Boğaziçi Youth Choir*. After that was the concert of the Vancouver *Youth Choir* which like I mentioned was one the best choirs to the WSCM for me. On the Gala concert were *Fayha Choir, Taipei Philharmonic Chamber Choir* and *Leioa Kantika Korala* (also one of my favorites).

The day before my departure was also very intensive but so full of new knowledge and wonderful experiences. The first workshop was *Games Choirs Play* led by Jennifer Tham. It was very interesting and inspiring. I did some of the games as soon as I returned to Bulgaria with my children, they were over the moon. After that I attended the presentation of Marleen De Boo *Build a junior choir through harmony*. I also made some of the recommendations right away in Bulgaria. The last session for me was a panel called *Choir Acoustics* where moderator was Kjetil Amann. On this last day I went again to three concerts. The first one was only with children's and youth choirs: *Lüleburgaz Municipality Children's Choir, Turkish State Children's Choir* and *Cantemus Children's Choir* It was interesting for me to see and listen to different choirs of this category because I am a conductor in such a choir. After that I listened to *Leioa Kantika Korala* again on its own performance. It was quite impressive because it was like a spectacle. And the last concert for me was the Festival Closing Concert. Many choirs were on stage to represent the diversity in Turkish Choral Music: *Boğaziçi Jazz Choir, Chromas, Rezonans, A Capella Boğaziçi and Sirene; Dokuz Eylül University Choir and Jazzberry Tunes*. The concert was designed by Astrid Vang-Pedersen and it had a really modern approach. In the end all the choirs blended in with the audience. That was quite an experience.

I left this wonderful city of Istanbul very inspired and full of new ideas. I feel that a lot of new and colorful horizons are waiting for me after this incredible event.