

RIS & RIST MUSIC TEACHERS ATTEND THE EIGHTH WORLD SYMPOSIUM ON CHORAL MUSIC

JULY 19-27, 2008
COPENHAGEN, DENMARK



By Marcelina Sawatsew, RIST Activities Coordinator/Music Teacher

The historical and wonderful city of Copenhagen, was transformed into a singing city when it hosted the Eighth World Symposium on Choral Music (WSCM 8) from the 19th through the 27th of July 2008. Seeking to embrace the performing artist, the main theme for 2008,

"Choral Music Meets Its Audience," fostered creativity and considered how to make programs and concerts stimulating to audiences while maintaining a high artistic level of choral art.

Held every 3 years, WSCM 8 is supported by the International Federation for Choral Music (IFCM) founded in 1982 by seven prominent international choir organizations representing five continents to facilitate communications and exchange among choral musicians throughout the world. This year's host, Choral Denmark, a talented organization consisting of talented individuals, put Danish choral music on the world map as the choral community around the world stayed connected to its audience and brought a unique and profound message of fraternity, mutual understanding and peace.

Attended by over a thousand participants, WSCM 8 featured 38 choirs that gave 42 concerts—21 Nordic choirs (including 13 from Denmark), 3 choirs from Latin and South America, 3 from Africa, 5 from the Asia/Pacific region, 3 from North America, and 6 from Europe outside the Nordic region. The Nordic Track was a special experience from each country of the Nordic region—Iceland, Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. Also offered were 60 workshops, 5 Round Tables, and 4 Master Classes. Daily activities started with a Warm-Up followed by Morning Sing for everybody. There were 2 lunch concerts at the big auditorium in the Opera House, and evening concerts featured 2 choirs in the city churches or Glyptoteket or Dronningesalen. Wednesday was Tivoli Day. From lunch time until the evening, Tivoli Gardens echoed with choirs singing from the open air stages. The afternoon Songbridge Gala Concert featured children's and youth choirs from China, Canada, Hungary, and Denmark. The evening concerts featured the Danish National Girls Choir, the Danish National Vocal Ensemble, and three different approaches to vocal rhythmic music by Denmark's Touché, VoxNorth, and Vocal Line. To provide resources for choral teachers, the World Choral Expo featured music industry exhibits, festivals, agencies, etc.

With such a full agenda, one would think there would have been no time for sightseeing. However, Copenhagen's extensive and very reliable network of public transportation which includes buses, coaches, boats, trains and the Metro provides hop-on, hop-off guided tours to various sites from the medieval sections of the capital of the world's oldest kingdom to the magnificent Royal Palaces. Some interesting landmarks were the Christianborg Castle and the Frederiksborg Castle, Denmark's biggest and most impressive Renaissance castle built by King Christian IV in the early 1600s.

There is nothing like a good international event like WSCM 8 to broaden one's horizon. In addition to professional growth and staying current in our skills and knowledge as choral music teachers, my colleagues, Jose Libres Librado, Sebert de los Santos and I connected with choir directors, teachers, and members; listened to the world's finest choirs; met musical friends from all over the world; wandered through several hundred years of history; and discovered the relaxation, quiet charm, and balance of the new and the old in one of Europe's oldest royal cities, Copenhagen.

In 2011, the 9th WSCM will be held in Patagonia, Argentina, in South America!

