



TIME for TENSO

Tenso: Innovation and Musical Excellence in Choral Music

“TENSO” — an Occitan word that refers to a verbal joust between troubadours

TIME for TENSO project goals

In the period from September 2011 to February 2015, Tenso wants to work on the following goals:

- create and circulate *new repertoire* for chamber choir and stimulate the international performances of *existing repertoire*
- promote the *training of young professional singers* and show them realistic economical perspectives in a European context
- promote the *professionalization of chamber choirs* in Europe, especially in the Mediterranean and Balkan region
- raise *public awareness* of the importance of singing in a choir for the development of artistic values
- promote and extend research on *physical aspects* of (professional) singing, especially in aging singers
- raise (*professional*) *choral music to a higher standard* by using innovative methods for the exchange of knowledge and experience between professionals

TENSO

Tenso is the European network for professional chamber choirs, founded to reinforce, extend and promote professional choral practice in Europe and to contribute to the creation of new, innovative repertoire and ways to present it.

Singing is the most personal and at the same time the most natural way to make music; yet singing together in a choir is very specific to European culture. 30 million people across the continent sing regularly in a choir – more than the number of people who play soccer. Tenso wants to cherish and nourish this common heritage. The creation of new repertoire, by stimulating young composers to bring us new views on singing, and to give the new music as wide an audience as possible is an important mission for Tenso.

Tenso wants to set an example for singers of all levels, all ages, professionals and amateurs. The Tenso choirs are the very top of the European professional choirs, but no top can exist without a solid foundation. Working together with amateur and young singers is also a way to invest in the future of singing: from creating interest for singing in a group, to coaching and training young professional singers, these are all necessary activities if we want a future for ensemble singing.

For the professional world, Tenso wants to be a reliable partner, collecting and distributing information on choral music in Europe, facilitating exchange, encouraging artistic mobility and actively promoting professionalization and innovation.



Examples of Tenso activities in the past and present are presented as footnotes.

Tenso Network Europe - the first years

Tenso began as a small group of befriended managers and artistic directors who came together to exchange information about the business of running a professional chamber choir. The principal achievement in the first years was a festival for contemporary chamber choirs that has taken place every year since 2005. Research into the repertoire led to the creation of an internet database for choral music that is now steadily being expanded.

In the past two years, thanks to funding from the EU, Tenso was able to transform itself into a platform for a larger community. The EU funding and the huge interest from the choral field brought awareness of possible new roles for Tenso: act as a goal-setter for professional choirs and, with the support of a large group of member choirs and other stakeholders, aim for high-level innovation and further professionalization of choral music and its performance practice.

from platform to association

Tenso will be officially founded as an association in 2011, and will then put in place the necessary structures for governing an international body: a board and an executive board with a honorary president, a rotating vice-presidency, and an annual meeting with all members.

Tenso recently sought professional advice to show the way to a multi-directional structure in which the members actively contribute to the information flow and take responsibility for carrying the Tenso ideals to national and regional platforms. This process towards this process had just started and will transform Tenso to a reliable network in the coming years: "don't be a star, be a galaxy".

The project **TIME for TENSO** will be managed by nine members, who jointly take on the task of applying for funding for the project on behalf of the network. These are the members that have sufficient organizational and financial resources and whose company structure allows them to commit to a European project. The other members will participate in all activities, but be spared the administrative burden.

Tenso Network Europe



Coro de la Comunidad de Madrid	Spain	aspirant member per 2011
National Chamber Choir	Ireland	member per 2011
Det Norske Solistkor	Norway	member per 2009
Polski Chór Kameralny	Poland	member per 2010
DR Vokalensemblet	Danmark	member per 2010
Vlaams Radio Koor	Belgium	aspirant member per 2011
Pražský filharmonický sbor	Czech Republic	aspirant member per 2011
choeur de chambre accentus	France	founding member
Latvijas Radio Koris	Latvia	founding member
Ensemble Vocale Tempus Floridum	Italy	aspirant member per 2011
Musicatreize	France	member per 2009
Coro de Camara de Lisboa	Portugal	aspirant member per 2011
RIAS Kammerchor	Germany	founding member
Slovenski Komorni Zbor	Slovenia	aspirant member per 2011
Cappella Amsterdam	The Netherlands	member per 2008
Kori i Filharmonisë së Kosovës	Kosovo	aspirant member per 2011
Nederlands Kamerkoor	The Netherlands	founding member
Coro Casa da Música	Portugal	aspirant member per 2011
Zbor Hrvatske Radiotelevizije	Croatia	aspirant member per 2011
Ars Nova	Danmark	aspirant member per 2011
Cor de Cambra de Palau de Musica	Spain	member per 2010

ACTIVITIES

CREATION OF REPERTOIRE

- responsible partner: Musicatreize (FR)
- co-responsible: DR Vokalensemble (DK)
- co-responsible: Latvijas Radio Koris (LV)

The creation of new repertoire for chamber choir is one of the most important goals of Tenso. If we want choral singing to be alive and kicking, the repertoire needs to be constantly renewed and cross-fertilized by other traditions and generations. And for both amateur and professional singers, there are few moments as exciting as the first performance of a new work in the presence of the composer.

This means that we must find ways to stimulate composers - the young talents as well as the well-known ones - to write more and better music for chamber choir, better suited to the capacities and limits of the voices of professional as well as non-professional singers. We encourage composers – and choirs – to experience with new aesthetics and to transcend preconceived ideas. Tenso's role does not stop there: it includes spreading information about new repertoire to a large community of professional and amateur choirs, making sure the new repertoire is actively shared among Tenso choirs and beyond, taking the new works across national borders, and bringing them to as large an audience as possible.



An exciting project, resulting in even more exciting music, is Conrescence: exploring microtonality in ethnic song traditions, initiated by the Norwegian Music Academy. Seven new works, the result of three year of research and training, were premiered during the Tenso Days Oslo 2010 and in concerts in Latvia, Italy and Belgium.

Joint commissioning

Well-known composers are commissioned new works for chamber choir, a capella or with a small instrumental ensemble. The composers are chosen by individual choirs and proposed to the board for Tenso co-commissioning. The works will be premiered all over Europe.

Tenso intends to co-commission, among others - Philippe Hersant (FR) premiere 2011 - Harrison Birtwistle (UK) premiere 2012 - Jonathan Harvey (UK) premiere 2012/2013 - Helmut Lachenmann (DE) premiere 2013/2014 - Otto Ketting (NL) premiere 2013 - Kaija Saariaho (FI) premiere 2014/2015 - Jose-Maria Sanchez-Verdú (ES) premiere 2014/2015
--

Tenso Young Composers Workshop

Tenso wants to encourage young composers by offering them the opportunity to try out sketches of their music with a professional choir, in a workshop taking place during the Tenso Days where the composers can also attend other activities (rehearsals, concerts, seminars). The three most interesting composers are chosen to come back for a second round later in the season.

By sending out the call for applications as widely as possible, and by connecting awards to the workshops, they have a strong appeal to young composers worldwide. The awards are commissions for full new works: the Tenso Young Composers Award that will be premiered at the Gaudeamus Music Week in the Netherlands, and the Tenso Europa Cantat award for a work for non-professional singers, premiered during the tri-annual Europa Cantat festival (Torino 2012, tba 2015).

The three second-round composers are invited to be 'house guest' of a Tenso choir during a two year period. They are allowed to attend all rehearsals and concerts, and are given time with the choir to experiment with new ideas.

- September 2011 / April 2012 two sessions of workshops in Marseille and Riga
- September 2012 / March 2013 two sessions of workshops in Amsterdam and Berlin
- September 2013 / May 2014 two sessions of workshops in Copenhagen and Riga
- September 2014 / February 2015 two sessions of workshops in Riga and Amsterdam

Latvijas Radio Koris

Kaspars Putniņš *conductor*

James Wood *workshopleader*

eight composers

Tenso Young Composers Award (commission for a new work) + Tenso Europa Cantat award (for a work for non-professional choir)



The call for applications for the workshop during Tenso Days Oslo 2010 drew more than ninety applicants. The average quality of the scores was very high, so the jury had a difficult task selecting six composers to come to Oslo.

Wiki on new work for chamber choirs

Information on the new works often remains with the choir who premiered the piece. By creating a wiki site, Tenso will collect and publish information about choral music, including practical details (number of singers, instruments, duration, availability of sheet music), performance notes, lyrics, translations, arrangements, etcetera.

A connected forum gives members and visitors the chance to discuss recent and upcoming premieres, look for interesting works, and get advice on programmes and performances.

Results for a larger community and over a longer period of time: TIME for TENSO creates a larger 'market' for composers, and longer 'lives' for new works. Without imposing aesthetic values, the activity bridges the gap between the repertoire that is predominantly chosen by amateur choirs and the repertoire of professional choirs. A lively forum on repertoire is open to all and widely spreads the relevant information about new repertoire, enabling (amateur and professional) choirs to diversify their programmes.

FOSTER THE EXISTING REPERTOIRE

- responsible partner: chœur de chambre accentus (FR)
- co-responsible: DR Vokalensemble (DK)

Tenso wants to cherish the enormous wealth of choral music that is so typical of European culture, with a special emphasis on the hidden treasures of the XXth century.

Internet platform on existing work for chamber choirs

The internet wiki will collect and publish information on choral repertoire, both new and old. For the older music, a lot of information is already available and includes translations of lyrics, programme notes, press reviews, and links to recordings and youtube films.

Published sheet music will be accessible through the site, giving visitors the chance to look at the piece in order to decide whether to programme it. It is specific for choral music that the score is the same as the

performance material: therefore, music publishers are reluctant to put scores on internet. This site with semi-restricted access (visitors need to register and agree to the conditions) solves that problem. The platform will also be a portal to the databases of Music Information Centres (MICs) all over Europe.

Canon of choral music

Building on a successful pilot, we create a website with music examples and the top 5 lists of well-known persons where the public can vote for their favourite choral works of the XXth century. The democratic process identifies our future common heritag – but it also reveals hidden treasures.



The canon of choral music was first created for Tenso Dagen Amsterdam and further developed around radio broadcasts. On a special website, more than 1500 people voted for their favourite pieces, put up works for approval, and commented on the top 5 lists of others.

- 2011-2015: create and maintain a wiki on choral music
- 2012: actively stimulate European choirs to contribute (2012)
- 2012-2013 : expand the number of music publishers who use the Tenso wiki to publish their music on line
- 2012-2015: create a voting site for the canon of choral music; monitor the content

For a larger community and over a longer period of time, TIME for TENSO raises awareness of this important part of European tradition. It creates more choice of repertoire for amateur choirs by giving detailed information about the music. The voting process leads to an ongoing discussion and a shared idea about the value and beauty of the pieces in the canon of choral music. By putting all information on the internet, the collected data will remain accessible; the wiki format ensures a self-regulating, sustainable format.

TRAINING AND MOBILITY OF (YOUNG) ARTISTS

- responsible partner: Det Norske Solistkor (NO)
- co-responsible: Cor de Cambra del Palau de la Música (ES)

Formal training of singers

For Tenso, raising a new generation of choir singers is a must. However, Tenso is aware that conservatories still educate singers for solo careers and give little attention to ensemble singing - contrary to economical perspectives: most singers will pursue their vocal career as teachers and in choirs. The disregard for choral music is partly based on an (unfounded) fear that singing in a choir can be bad for the voice. Together with the European Choral Association - Europa Cantat (ECA-EC), Tenso will initiate a campaign to change this view, based on scientific research and surveys among well-known solo singers. In seminars and in personal contact, the vocal teachers of the most prominent institutions will be provided with data and practical guidelines to encourage ensemble singing as part of the curriculum.

Finding and coaching young singers

When young vocalists have finished their education, they are often not ready to perform in small ensembles where solistic qualities have to be combined with the ability to merge into a well-tuned ensemble. Promising ensemble singers can also be found outside formal education institutions, since ensemble singing relies heavily on musical intelligence and awareness of ensemble processes, and less on having “big voices”.

By organizing projects wherein experienced singers of Tenso choirs (usually also teachers) work with promising young singers, to help them to develop into trained ensemble singers. At the same time, these

projects will give the singers a chance to present themselves to the artistic leaders and conductors of the European chamber choirs in a far more realistic setting than a 'normal' audition. Individual singers from other countries will be invited to join, especially from the Balkan countries and the larger Mediterranean region. For singers with less formal education - also especially from these regions - intensive vocal coaching sessions are organized on a yearly basis.



Tenso choirs have undertaken many projects to coach young singers. A shining example is Le Jeune chœur de Paris, founded by accentus' artistic director Laurence Equilbey, that is now integral part of a Paris conservatory.

Joint auditioning and internet forum

Tenso members will arrange joint auditioning. The search for suitable singers can be effectively combined within the context of the network; this serves both choirs and singers, who will be able to present themselves to several choirs at once. A website for singers will be an internet forum as well as an employment platform, supporting the international 'supply and demand' of young artists.

- work with music education institutions on a vocal curriculum with more attention for ensemble singing (2012-2013) *present the outcome of survey and research in brochures and on internet, seminars during Tenso Days, personal contacts*
- invite individual singers, on the recommendation of Tenso member choirs, to coaching projects for young singers organized by Tenso choirs (2011-2014) *10 singers per year*
- Joint auditioning (2011-2015) *2 auditions per year*
- creation of an internet forum for professional singers (2011-2012)

For a larger community and over a longer period of time: TIME for TENSO will help to change curricula at the best institutions for musical education, setting an example for others to follow. The interaction between young artists raises their European awareness and broadens their professional perspectives. International auditioning will benefit both the singers and the choirs and expand their scope.

TENSO EUROPE CHOIR for young professional singers

- responsible partner: Latvijas Radio Koris (LV)
- co-responsible: Cappella Amsterdam (NL)

The Tenso Europe Choir will unite Europe's most talented young singers. Building upon the experience with national projects for young singers organized by Tenso members, a first international try-out will take place in 2013. The official launch of the choir will be in Riga (Cultural Capital City 2014). The Latvian conductor Kaspars Putniņš will lead the choir. He is well-known for the work with his own choir, the Latvijas Radio Koris and Vocal Ensemble, and a frequent guest conductor of other Tenso choirs. Young singers - aged between 16 and 29: students at conservatories, or those who have just embarked on their career - will be selected to attend a summerschool and then go on tour. After the huge success of the European Youth Orchestra, this will be the first European professional choir to come into existence.

After 2014, the Tenso Europe Choir should become an independent organization. It should seek political patronage (like the European Youth Orchestra) and aim for sponsoring as a primary source of funding. Tenso will remain involved in choosing singers, in providing its own singers as vocal coaches, and in choosing the repertoire (including premieres).

Participation in this activity will give young European musicians an idea of what it is like to be an ensemble singer. It will encourage mobility of young artists, stimulate experiments and bring unique concerts with choral music to large audiences. As such, it will be a great media event for Tenso.

pilot (2013)

- spring: selection procedure in at least five European cities (location depends on applications)
- summerschool: 10 days intensive work with conductor Kaspars Putniņš and coaches
- summer/fall: concerts at European festivals, as ambassadors for Riga Cultural Capital 2014

official launch (2014)

- spring: selection procedure
- summerschool
- summer/fall: touring European festivals, ending in Tenso Days Riga (October 2014)

Results for a larger community and over a longer period of time:

..... the creation of an ensemble that transcends cultural, social, economic, religious and political boundaries

- presenting professional singing at the same level as international youth orchestras;
- encouraging young people to choose singing as a profession;
- presenting the cooperation, achievements and creativity of young European artists to a large audience;
- providing this initiative with a jump start in order to ensure its sustainability in future years.

CONCERTS & PERFORMANCES : TENSO DAYS

- responsible partner: Rias (DE)
- co-responsible (changes annually): choir from hosting country

Since 2005, the Tenso Network has been organizing a yearly festival in one of Europe's main cities. It is a showcase for the top of the European chamber choirs, and the perfect framework for many other Tenso activities like workshops, meetings and seminars.

The Tenso Days are hosted by a high-quality festival or venue. The concerts focus on contemporary a capella choral music around a theme suggested by the programmer of the festival. The programming is monitored by a Tenso committee, that watches over the concert programmes and the international status of the festival, as well as practical aspects - such as leaving enough time in the schedule for meetings and workshops. Experiences in collaborating with local partners have resulted in a 'Tenso Days rider' that is further extended and fine-tuned every year.

The Tenso Days are an excellent opportunity for creating wide spread attention for choral music. The audience becomes aware of the high quality of the performing choirs, giving a national stimulus to other choirs. For the performing choirs, the Tenso Days showcase the European dimension of their work. For the singers and staff of the performing choirs, the festival is a magical moment in the year, where the singers visit the rehearsals and concerts of fellow professional choirs, share experiences and exchange expertise, both in- and outside the concerts, seminars and workshops. The Tenso Members Meeting is held during the festival, and other professionals are invited to join the seminars and workshops. For all, audience, participants and professionals alike, the Tenso Days offer very valuable 'high-pressure' exchange at the highest possible level.



Paris (2005 and 2007), Berlin (2006), Riga (2008), Amsterdam (2009), Oslo (2010) all hosted Tenso Days, with a steadily increasing appeal to audiences and participants.

Tenso Days Aix-en-Provence / Marseille, September 2011

linked to the festival Vingt Lieux sur la Mer in Marseille (International Heritage Weekend, with concerts by Tenso choirs in monumental and unusual places). The Tenso Days themselves will take place in Aix-en-Provence, around the theme spatialization. The festival will commission a new work by Philippe Hersant, which will be performed as a cycle by the participating Tenso choirs. Oscar Strasnoy will lead a large with amateur choirs.

Tenso Days Amsterdam, summer 2012

hosted in collaboration with Internationale Koorbiennale, the theme of the festival will be : Amsterdam, gateway to the world - investigating the influence from far on choral music of today.

Tenso Days Berlin, March 2013

Hosted by MaerzMusik, presenting ten concerts in prominent Berlin venues programmed around the theme : vocal expression - between tradition and innovation.

Tenso Days Marseille, September 2013

A second edition of the festival in the same year, to celebrate Marseille Cultural Capital City. The music of Moroccan/French composer Maurice Ohana is the focus for the programmes, presenting the sound of the Mediterranean.

Tenso Days Riga, October 2014

The theme of this edition of the festival, taking place when Riga is Cultural Capital City, is *Force majeure - rapid time* - inviting composers to provoke unexpected developments that create new music. Satellite concerts will take place in other Baltic states.

Results for a larger community and over a longer period of time:

The Tenso Days show all facets of the Tenso activities, to Tenso members and to those who are not (yet) part of Tenso : amateur singers, young composers, singers, conductors. This is crucial for the building of a professional choral community that can preserve the choral tradition and stimulate innovation.

For the professional choirs, it is important that the Tenso Days create interest from festival programmers for choir music. The festivals that host Tenso Days have admitted that they often had a blind spot for choral music, but that they will continue to programme choirs in years to come - bringing choral music to (festival) audiences that are often unfamiliar with contemporary choral music.

PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

- responsible partner: Cor de Cambra del Palau de la Música (ES),
- co-responsible: Nederlands Kamerkoor (NL)

Choral singing is an important part of European tradition, but its importance is less and less clear to the general public and policy makers. During the project period, simple but innovative campaigns to raise public awareness of the importance of choirs and choral repertoire will be developed and implemented. The collaboration with European Choral Association - Europa Cantat, and via them with national umbrella organizations for amateur choirs, will ensure a wide implementation.

“singing in a choir is good for you” (working title)

Short film clips show famous people - performers (classical and pop), media personalities, movies stars - talking about the impact of their experience in choirs on their careers, topped off by a short intro and outro with music and slogan. The clips are shown on websites, you-tube and especially the social media. All choirs and choral organizations are encouraged to choose personalities and make the clips, based on a very simple format. The Tenso effort consists of creating the format with intro and outro and making sure that the clips get as widely spread as possible.

2012: creating a format for youtube clips; setting up website, social media; Tenso members making first ten clips of famous people

2012: call for clips sent out via Tenso, ECA-EC, national organizations

2013 -2015 : placing the clips on websites, social media

“singing in a choir is not bad for you” (working title)

Vocal educators often fear that singing in a choir will ruin the voices of young professional singers, or that it will shorten their professional life span. The results of research on physical aspects of singing and a survey among professional musicians will be presented via brochures and website, and discussed during seminars and on internet forums.

2013: present the outcome of the research and survey

2013 and 2014 : inform educators in seminars during Tenso Days

“ten premieres - the same and yet different” (working title)

The Tenso choirs will present Tenso commissions in the same season: at least ten different choirs bringing the premiere of the same piece. Targeting international media and the most important national media, a press campaign will create interest for these premieres, centering on the high level of the performances and how they can be compared within the span of one season.

media campaign around Tenso commissions

- season 2012/2013 (Jonathan Harvey + winner Tenso Young Composers Award 2011)
- season 2013/2014 (Helmut Lachenmann + winner Tenso Young Composers Award 2012)
- season 2014/2015 (Kaija Saariaho + winner Tenso Young Composers Award 2013)

EXCHANGE OF EXPERTISE AMONG PROFESSIONALS

- **responsible partner: Nederlands Kamerkoor (NL)**
- **co-responsible: accentus (FR)**

A survey conducted by Tenso in 2010 shows the diversity of chamber choirs in Europe in terms of resources, action radius and repertoire; but it also shows the similarities in identifying problems and finding solutions. There is an overwhelming need for exchange among choirs, from the top choirs to the semi-professional choirs that are aiming to get up there. During the Tenso Professionals Days, discussions take place in seminars and informal meetings. Tenso is aware that this is one of its principal tasks: to organize the exchange of expertise, the discussion about best and worst practices, and to lay the foundation for the personal relations that help staff from small and often underpaid organizations to get quick and to-the-point personal advice from colleagues all over Europe. The importance of regular personal contact, next to emails and telephone calls, cannot be underestimated.

Tenso Professionals Days and seminars during Tenso Days

The Tenso Professionals Days are organized once a year. The topics vary from employment issues, international contracts, aging problems, broadcasting, commissioning, fundraising, to artistic issues and collaborations. A recurring topic is collaborations with amateur singers and choirs: for professional choirs, it is not always obvious how to collaborate with amateur singers in a constructive way that is more than a one-off project.

Keynote speakers and other professionals from the field of (classical) music are invited to participate. Three months before the day, participants are asked to fill in a survey about the topic at hand, providing concrete examples to bring up in the discussion.



In the spring of 2011, the Tenso Professionals Day will focus on recording and broadcasting choral music: technical aspects, tools and tricks, and innovative ways to spread the music via internet. Earlier meetings covered the European dimension of the network and the state of professional singing.

seminars during Tenso Days Aix-en-Provence / Marseille, September 2011

research choral world Mediterranean, Balkan, and beyond

in collaboration with the Mediterranean Office for Choral Singing (ECA-EC)

- the Mediterranean : crossroads of East and West, North and South
- different cultures, different vocal traditions, different roles for vocal music in society
- oral tradition, vocal techniques, microtonality
- needs and wishes for professionalization

Tenso Professionals Days Barcelona, January 2012:

working with amateur choirs

- joint projects
- develop seminars and workshops on vocal techniques
- repertoire for amateur choirs



In April 2010, a vocal group of highschool student was coached by the singers of the DR Vokalensemble, and joined them for the public performance of three a cappella pieces. The project was a great success and will be repeated in the years to come.

seminars in Torino (Europa Cantat), August 2012:

choirs in the Balkan region (in collaboration with Europa Cantat Central-European Centre)

- training of singers
- repertoire
- professionalization issues

seminars during Tenso Days Berlin, March 2013:

relation choir-singers

- models for employment
- aging singers (presentation research)
- artistic input singers

Tenso Professionals Days Copenhagen, September 2013 :

composing for choir - the choir as instrument (combined with workshops)

- how to take responsibility for new repertoire
- attractive programming
- working with conservatories

Tenso Professionals Days Porto, spring 2014:

topic tba

seminars during Tenso Days Days Riga, October 2014

topic tba

Professionalization of choir organizations

Via short “internships”, managers visit each other to get personal advice on topics like the management of multi-media projects, developing a new way to employ singers, developing a new organizational model, implementing marketing strategies, etc. The investment of time and expertise in a one-on-one exchange has a significant impact. Members can apply for an internship, with a special allotment for choirs in the Balkan and the Mediterranean region.

September 2011 - February 2015

6 one-week internships

upon request (open to Tenso members)

4 one-week internships

resulting from inventorizing need in Mediterranean / Balkan

Results for a larger community and over a longer period of time:

Frequent interaction between the staff of choirs will strengthen the choral community. It will allow us to make a stronger front to policy makers and media. Professional meetings forge durable international relations between colleagues that will benefit all parties in the long term and will enhance European awareness in all concerned. Professional visits to get concrete help on specific subjects will have a profound and lasting effect on the development of an organization.

RESEARCH AND DATA COLLECTION

- responsible partner: RIAS (NL)

Research

The University of Leuven (BE), Division of Experimental Otorhinolaryngology, conducts research on vocal load for professional singers in the Netherlands, related to aging, menopause and lifestyle. Tenso will extend this to other European choirs. In collaboration with ECA-EC, the screening will be adapted for amateur singers.

Tenso will conduct a survey among professional musicians about how they value their experience in choirs in the past and present and how this influences their careers, mirroring the public awareness campaign. The results will be used in several ways to stimulate the discussion about the importance of choirs, also in collaboration with ECA-EC.

- 2012-2013: extend the screening of voices study of the University of Leuven (BE) to other European countries
- 2013: publish the results of the research on the value of choral singing for musicians

Data collection

The inventory of repertoire will continue with special focus on the Balkan and Mediterranean. The static information will be fed into the dynamic wiki site on repertoire.

All Tenso Professional Days will be preceded by a short survey about the topic at hand. This will result in a collection of data about European choirs, that will be made available to researchers and policy makers.

 *In the summer of 2009, Palau de la Música Catalana organized a project at a music school in Bombay, in collaboration with the Mehli Mehta Foundation. Their experience in training young singers stems from a long vocal tradition typical to Catalunya: Palau de la Música was specially built as a concert hall for choirs.*

The survey of basic facts about choral organizations (2010) will be repeated in advance of the Professionals Day in Barcelona, with more specific questions about the financial situation, the level of professionalization and the international projection of the choirs. It will specifically target choirs in the Balkan and Mediterranean.

- 2011 and 2012: inventory of choral repertoire
- 2011-2014: 4 surveys among choral organizations on various topics

MANAGING THE PROJECT

- responsible partner: Cappella Amsterdam (NL)

The managers of the partner choirs will hold regular meetings to discuss the progress of the project, at least two times a year (coinciding with Tenso activities). The partners who are responsible for specific activities will meet more often if necessary. During these meetings, practical matters such as the division of responsibilities, financial accounting, as well as artistic matters such as the programme of the Tenso Days, the commissions of new works and the content of workshops will be discussed.

Cappella Amsterdam was co-ordinator of the first project for which Tenso received EU funding (May 2009 - June 2010). The other partners in the project have asked Cappella to take the coordinating role for the multi-annual project.

The responsibility for the activities is shared evenly by all partners, according to the expertise of their organizations and personal preferences. If necessary, other partners can take over; in principle, all members are equally equipped to manage the activities.

Decisions about changes in the plan will be proposed by to the board of the Tenso association that, as laid down in the statutes, for the first two years consists of the partners in the EU project.

The implementation of the activities will be monitored via a 'project room' on the internet, where partners can place reports and questions, and where all can find the latest versions of documents, schedules etc.

COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION

- responsible partner: Cappella Amsterdam (NL)
- co-responsible: Det Norske Solistkor (FR)

Our main aim is to be the focal point for the collection and dissemination of information for the professional choral community. Until Tenso, there was no such common point. Also in this sense, our dissemination plan can be called innovative.

Via the Tenso website, the community has permanent access to information about members, choirs, premieres, repertoire, singers, conductors, and everything else that is relevant to (professional) choral practice in Europe. Tenso contributes to the community by pro-actively releasing information via e-news, blogs, forums, and also hard-copy reports and publicity material.

The Tenso members are responsible for spreading the artistic content in concerts, radio and internet broadcasts, cd's, tv and other media. They are the experts in reaching their own stakeholders; by labelling events (premieres, special collaborations) as Tenso events, the dissemination of Tenso results spreads to a large and interested audience.

The results of surveys and research are communicated via mailings and internet, but also in scientific conferences, seminars and personal contacts.

For more details, see the communication and promotion plan in the E-form (E.4)

SUMMARY

Tenso is the European network of professional chamber choirs. In the project TIME for TENSO, Tenso focuses on repertoire, professionalization, young singers and innovative ways to collect and spread information and expertise.

Tenso wants to stimulate the creation of innovative and high quality new works for professional and amateur choirs and to promote their international circulation. The new music, but also the wealth of existing choral repertoire, will be brought to the public in concerts during the annual Tenso Days and elsewhere, in broadcasts and via internet. The internet will play an important role in Tenso's activities: from a wiki site on choral repertoire for the choral community to a youtube campaign with short clips with public figures talking about their positive experiences with singing in a choir.

The Tenso Europe Choir is another great tool to present the beauty of choral music to a large audience, uniting young singers from all over Europe in the first professional European choir, and giving them intensive coaching and concert experience.

Working together with amateur and young singers is a way to invest in the future of singing: from creating interest for singing in a group, to coaching and training young professional singers, these are all necessary activities if we want to ensure a future for ensemble singing.

The further professionalization of the European choral world, especially in the Balkan and Mediterranean regions, is on the agenda: in meetings and seminars, but also in individual 'internships' the managers of the choirs collaborate and advise each other.

TIME for TENSO takes place from September 2011 to February 2015, with activities in Marseille, Berlin, Amsterdam, Riga, Porto, Torino, Paris, Copenhagen and Barcelona.