PRESS RELEASE END OF WORLD CHOIR GAMES

**World Choir Games look back on a successful edition**

7 November 2021 | Antwerp & Ghent

Flanders can proudly look back on a successful 11th edition of the World Choir Games. Dozens of musical events took place in host cities Antwerp and Ghent between 30 October and 7 November. No less than 22.000 digital and physical spectators witnessed the unique atmosphere that characterises the so-called ‘Olympic Games for choirs’. The more than 300 participating choirs concluded the World Choir Games on Sunday, 7 November during the Closing Ceremony in Antwerp Expo. This Flemish edition distinguished itself by its inclusive character and innovative approach. The 12th World Choir Games will take place in Gangneung, South Korea, in 2022.

At the Closing Ceremony of the South African World Choir Games in 2018, Flanders was announced as the next host region. The World Choir Games in Flanders were to be *“the most inclusive games ever”*, a huge challenge. For the past three years, the organisation worked on a grand celebration involving people from the most diverse backgrounds, that focused on togetherness and solidarity.

Games Director Koenraad De Meulder looks back on the past edition with great pride: *“What seemed impossible, we made possible during the 11th edition of the World Choir Games. Being able to sing again, stand on a stage and enjoy together - it was a gift from heaven. We will continue the momentum of the 11th edition and give even more people the chance to sing together.”*

INCLUSION AND INNOVATION

The World Choir Games did not only excel in terms of inclusion. Corona forced the organisers to rethink the concept of the World Choir Games drastically. For the first time in its history, the World Choir Games were held in hybrid form. Thanks to the *Virtual Village*, choirs from all over the world were able to experience and participate in the event. In addition, the World Choir Games, in cooperation with IMEC, developed the *Music Box*. With the help of this state-of-the-art technology, choirs from all over the world will be able to sing together, from a distance, without delays and with optimal sound quality. Today, various meeting software falls short in this respect.

*“Because of COVID, this event was the most unusual World Choir Games the Choral Olympic Movement has ever experienced”,* says INTERKULTUR President Günter Titsch. *“The Virtual Village and Virtual Competitions were an excellent solution to make participation possible for those who could not travel to watch and enjoy the Games live, here in Flanders. I am delighted that so many international choirs seized the opportunity to participate virtually. I am especially proud of all the choirs who have enchanted us with their beautiful music during the many fantastic concerts over the past week.”*

MUSICAL FLANDERS

The World Choir Games were also a great success in the musical field. Despite the corona restrictions, more than 300 choirs participated live and digitally during the 11th edition. An estimated 17.000 physical spectators admired their talent at the various Ceremonies, Competitions and Celebration Concerts. The free, non-competitive Friendship Concerts also attracted 7.000 of curious spectators. This year, the Belgian choir “Amaranthe” stood out in particular. With a score of 93 points, the choir is now listed as one of the best scoring choirs during the World Choir Games ever.

*“An unexpected success! What an atmosphere, what emotion! Emotion in the singers during the shows and their Competitions, but also in the whole team who did an incredible job to make such a big international singing event possible in the current context. Warmth, connection and smiling faces, that’s what I take away from the World Choir Games 2021 Flanders!”* says Sophie Detremmerie, COO of the World Choir Games 2021 Flanders.

*“We have all witnessed a unique and heart-warming event over the past nine days. The World Choir Games have shown us the importance of the amateur arts”,* said Luc Delrue, Secretary-General of the Department of Culture, at the closing ceremony. *“We gave the many thousands of singers and choir enthusiasts a stage again. We saw the passion and pure joy of making music and singing together once again. And it has visibly done us good!”*

CHORAL FLAME DEPARTS FOR SOUTH KOREA

After this 11th edition of the World Choir Games, Flanders will join cities such as Bremen, Cincinnati and Sochi in the list of former guest regions. INTERKULTUR organises the World Choir Games every two years. Due to the corona crisis and its restrictions, the Flemish edition of the singing festival was postponed for one year. As a result, the next Games will take place next year. The South Korean coastal city Gangneung will receive the *Choral Flame* from Antwerp and Ghent.

*The World Choir Games are an international choral event from INTERKULTUR. The WCG 2021 are being held in Flanders as an initiative of EventFlanders - a joint venture between Tourism Flanders, the Department of Culture, Youth and Media and the Department of Foreign Affairs – the cities of Antwerp and Ghent and Koor&Stem vzw.* [*www.wcg2021.be*](http://www.wcg2021.be)

## Press accreditation

Tickets, press accreditation and further information can be requested at www.wcg2021.be/pers.

## Contact

Ismail Eddegdag (Growth Inc.)

Press Contact

00 32 484 78 10 33

Kaat Thijs (World Choir Games 2021 Flanders)

Press Contact - national press

00 32 495 80 79 48

Koenraad De Meulder (Koor&Stem vzw)

Games Director World Choir Games 2021 Flanders - Local Organising Committee

00 32 476 63 29 19

Henriette Brockmann (INTERKULTUR)

Press Contact - international press

00 49 640 46 97 49 42

Andy Pieters

Spokesperson for Flemish Minister of Tourism Zuhal Demir

00 32 499 17 35 84

Olivier Van Raemdonck

Olivier Van Raemdonck
Spokesperson for Jan Jambon, Minister-President of the Flemish Government

00 32 470 99 91 01

Johan Vermant

Spokesperson for the Mayor of Antwerp

00 32 491 35 84 87

Thomas Dierckens

Spokesperson for the Mayor of the City of Ghent

00 32 477 38 29 37