



PRESS RELEASE LAUNCH WORLD CHOIR GAMES

## **World Choir Games kick off in Flanders** **September 15 2021 | Antwerp**

**This year, the biggest singing event in the world is coming to Flanders. Starting on October 30th, more than 300 choirs from all corners of the world will take part in the 11th edition of the World Choir Games for a week. Today, the Director of INTERKULTUR Günter Titsch and the Director of the World Choir Games 2021 Flanders Koenraad De Meulder officially kicked off both the campaign and ticket sale for the singing festival at the Handelsbeurs in Antwerp. Flemish Minister of Culture Jan Jambon, Flemish Minister of Tourism Zuhair Demir and the Mayor of Antwerp Bart De Wever were also present.**

Every two years since 2000, INTERKULTUR has organized the World Choir Games, the so-called "Olympic Games for choirs". This 11th edition, Antwerp and Ghent are the host cities. From 30 October to 7 November they will be the scene of the world's largest singing festival. In doing so, they are following in the footsteps of cities such as Bremen, Cincinnati and Sochi. The organization expects more than 300 choirs to participate both live and digitally.

During this musical week there will be many events in and around the two Flemish host cities. Not only competitions, but also ceremonies, gala concerts and workshops. Ticket sales start today. The friendship concerts are free of charge. Given the current pandemic, which has already postponed the Choir Games by a year, unfortunately not all choirs can physically attend. The organization of the singing festival therefore developed a unique digital platform. This gives choirs the opportunity to contribute to the unique, cohesive atmosphere of the World Choir Games from their home countries.

### **Digital, social and fun**

For the first time, the World Choir Games will be a hybrid event. "We are proud to present our innovative digital platform 'The Virtual Village' today. The unique concept offers the choirs, who in the current context cannot travel to Flanders, the chance to compete for eternal glory in the Virtual Games," states Sophie Detremmerie, COO of the World Choir Games 2021 Flanders. "But also the visitors will be able to enjoy the unique atmosphere of this event via the daily live streams in the digital Music Hall at home."

The versatility of the Virtual Village is enormous. "There is something for everyone," Sophie Detremmerie continues. "The host cities have worked out tourist content in 2D and 3D for the international singers in the digital Tourist Office, unique blogs and



vlogs will appear, choirs can meet colleagues from all over the world in a virtual café, ..." Moreover, through a unique collaboration, the choirs will also be seen in more than 30 Flemish residential care centers. This way, the residents can attend the concerts in a safe way.

## **The Choral Flame brings light through Flanders**

By analogy with the Olympic flame, the World Choir Games have a Choral Flame. It was handed over to Flanders in Tshwane (South Africa), the previous host city. On September 15, it will be re-lit and make a five-week relay trip to numerous Flemish cities. The Choral Flame is a symbol of the warmth that singing together spreads in society. You can also follow the Koorvlam in the Virtual Village.

The effect of the flame reaches further. Special efforts were made to involve disadvantaged groups in the Studio Koorvlam event. For example, a caravan travels through Flanders stopping at people with dementia, with physical disabilities, people in poverty and at an interfaith singing group.

## **Flemish cultural heritage**

Flanders was not randomly chosen as host region. Singing is an important element of our culture. Today Flanders has more than 1,000 choirs and 35,000 singers. No less than 1 in 3 Flemings are directly or indirectly involved in an amateur arts organization such as a choir. This puts us at the top of the lists worldwide in terms of cultural participation.

Flemish Minister-President and Minister of Culture, Jan Jambon: "Flanders has a rich tradition in the field of vocal culture. We are therefore very proud to be able to organize the World Choir Games this year. The Games allow the many participating Flemish choirs to meet their international colleagues in a creative and inspiring way. Moreover, in this way Flanders gets the chance to show itself from its best side with our heritage and our gastronomy."

## **Meeting point for the international World Choir Council**

In addition to the numerous concerts and virtual meetings, the General Conference of the World Choir Council marks also an important part of the World Choir Games. "It is a fantastic sign that we can also hold the General Conference of our most important advisory body in Flanders – live and virtually! More than 120 representatives from over 90 countries and regions are invited to come together to discuss current developments in the international choral scene and to exchange practical experience. Thus, as ambassadors, they will bring confidence to the choirs in their home countries, motivate them and make the stages of the world resound again soon", says Günter Titsch, President of INTERKULTUR, the World Choir Games & World Choir Council.



**Tickets for the competitions, workshops, ceremonies Main Ceremonies and Celebration Concerts will be on sale starting September 15 through the World Choir Games website, [www.wcg2021.be](http://www.wcg2021.be). The Virtual Village is accessible free of charge beginning September 15, at [www.virtualvillage.be](http://www.virtualvillage.be).**

*The World Choir Games are an international choir event of INTERKULTUR. The WCG 2021 are organized in Flanders on the initiative of EventFlanders - a partnership of 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 contact - Press office World Choir Games 2021 Flanders

Ismail Eddegdag  
Communication Manager  
Email: [ismail@growth-inc.be](mailto:ismail@growth-inc.be)  
Tel: +32 484 78 10 33