

One voice for collective singing in Europe



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ASSOCIATION

Regional office of IFCM for Europe

Introducing ...

**the European Choral Association –
Europa Cantat (ECA-EC)**

www.EuropeanChoralAssociation.org

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Before I start a very short introduction of the European Choral Association – Europa Cantat whose Secretary General I am. You will later have access to the full Powerpoint presentation and can read the slides that I will jump over during my presentation



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The European Choral Association - Europa Cantat (ECA-EC) is a network of organisations, choirs and individuals in the field of Collective Singing in Europe.

We are Founding Members of the International Federation for Choral Music (IFCM) and members of the European and International Music Council, Culture Action Europe, Musica International and the Choral Festival Network.

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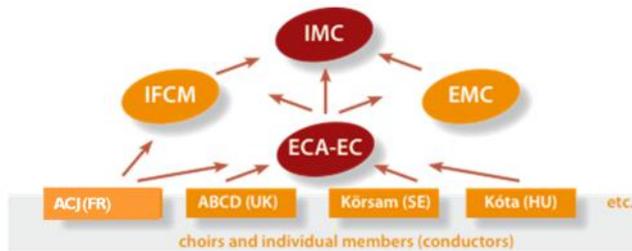
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See text above

The Network



We have more than 60 member organisations in 31 countries and several hundred member choirs and individual members in 43 European countries and almost 60 countries worldwide.

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We are a network of around 60 national and regional choral associations in 30 European countries plus Israel and several hundred choirs and individuals.

The Network



Through our members we represent more than 2,5 million singers, conductors, composers and choral managers in over 40 European countries.



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Through our network we represent about 2,5 million people in Europe

www.SingingEurope.org

EA
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4.5% of the European population
37,000,000
collective singers

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We found through a Study finalized in 2015 that about 4,5% percent of the population sings in choirs or vocal groups, so there are 37 Million people practicing collective singing in continental Europe.

One voice for collective singing in Europe



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Sonja Greiner, Secretary General

**What can we do to sing
together while Social Distancing**

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But today I want to give a few positive examples from Europe on how we can continue singing during the COVID-19 crisis, respecting Social Distancing
(For the full Webinar, see <https://www.youtube.com/OfficialNATS>)

What can we do to sing together while Social Distancing?

Non-digital solutions

- Rehearsals through telephone conferencing
- Visiting singers one by one with social distance
- Car rehearsals / Car sing-alongs



Costs between 25 and 500 EUR
Low-budget: Only FM transmitter
High budget with mikes & headphones

<https://www.facebook.com/greatjoygospelchor/posts/3024393440975906>

<https://www.facebook.com/1700385780027592/posts/3139435772789245/>

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We all have seen and heard a lot about digital solutions and I will come to them in a minute, but I would like to start with a few non-digital ideas.

E.g. for Senior Choirs: Do you have a choir with many members who don't own a computer or Smartphone and cannot join your digital rehearsals? Often joining by phone is also possible, and you can even do the old fashioned „pure“ telephone conferences to rehearse or just have a social meeting. Nowadays there are cheap solutions for this, too (in Germany, e.g. Meet Green: <https://meet.green>)

E.g. for children's choirs: Some children's choir conductors also go from home to home to speak to or sing to/with their children from outside the house at a safe distance, to keep in touch especially with singers who cannot join digital rehearsals. Another idea is to encourage parents to sing with their children and send them some „sing-along tunes“ to support them.

For adult choirs in regions where most people own a car: Last but not least in Germany several choirs have met for „Car rehearsals“ on empty parking spaces and one choir even did a „car sing-along“ in a car cinema. On the slides you will find two links and also an estimate of the costs.

What can we do to sing together while Social Distancing?

Digital solutions

- Online rehearsals by Zoom, Jitsi, Skype or other video conferencing programmes
 - No collective singing possible but good for learning music and for social reasons
- Virtual Choirs
 - Choir sound for the audience, not for the singers
- Digital Open Singing / Sing-Along sessions
 - You may even hear a choral sound, but sing alone



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Now let's look at the digital options: You are now probably all familiar with digital rehearsals using Zoom, Jitsi, Skype or other conferencing programmes. The disadvantage of all these is: Singers can hear the conductor and themselves, but not the other singers due to latency issues and also because these programmes are optimized for speech / for meetings and not for meetings and if people are not muted you always hear the two loudest ones.

We are also seeing huge amounts of Virtual Choirs – but is this collective singing? No, the audience watching the video can enjoy a choir sound, but the singers are all singing individually at home – as soloists – and they cannot hear their peers.

There are also Digital Open Singing or Sing-Along sessions (I will show an example on the next slide). There you may even hear a full choir sound (from a recording) and be able to sing along – but you will still be singing alone at home and this is not really collective singing either.

What can we do to sing together while Social Distancing? Digital solutions



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So here is an example of Digital Open Singing from our French member organisation A Coeur Joie – they used recordings from 2019 with open singings in a huge Roman Theatre in the South of France. They were very successful with this session and will repeat it.

What can we do to sing together while Social Distancing?

Digital solutions for real collective singing

- Existing programmes (Jamulus, Jamkazam, SoundJack and others)
 - Only for small groups
 - High IT skills needed
 - Only latency problems of local hardware solved
- Existing latency-free platform: LOLA
 - Requires high quality collection
 - High costs for Hardware needed
- The possible future: Digital Stage



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So even though all these non-digital and digital solutions offer us the opportunity to do something with our choirs, none of them satisfies the basic need we feel as choral singers: To sing together real-time with others, even if this may have to be through digital means before we can physically meet again. You may have heard about some programmes that already allow this – however, these programmes only work for small groups, often you need a person with high IT skills to set the technical framework up and there are still latency problems that cannot be solved.

There is a wonderful latency free system called LOLA, but only some Music Universities across the world have access to this (and they can currently not use it because they cannot enter the buildings). Also it requires a high-quality internet connection and a big budget for the hardware needed. So far there is no low-cost alternative available for LOLA.

So is there another solution? Well there is one in the making that we as European Choral Association – Europa Cantat have decided to support because it looks like the most likely project for our needs. It is called Digital Stage. They are still in the testing and developing face and fundraising to be able to launch the platform, but I will let André present the details to you.

Any questions?



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LET' STAY IN TOUCH!

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on Social Media!



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/ecaec

If you are interested in what our association does, you can follow us on Social Media

The image is a screenshot of the European Choral Association (ECA) website. At the top left is the ECA logo with the text 'EUROPEAN CHORAL ASSOCIATION'. To the right is a navigation menu with links: 'ABOUT US', 'ACTIVITIES', 'PROJECTS', 'RESOURCES', 'JOIN US', 'SUPPORT US', and 'LOG IN'. The 'RESOURCES' menu is open, showing a list of options: 'Newsletter' (with a left-pointing arrow), 'Guidelines and Handbooks', 'Publications' (with a right-pointing arrow), 'Video' (with a right-pointing arrow), and 'For press and partners' (with a right-pointing arrow). A red 'Subscribe' button is located to the right of the menu. Below the navigation is a large orange banner with the text 'One voice for collective singing in Europe' and the word 'news' in large white letters. To the right of the banner is the ECA logo and the text 'EUROPEAN CHORAL ASSOCIATION'. Below the banner is a list of bullet points:

- ECA-EC and it's **members**
- the European & International **choral world**
- initiatives from across the **cultural sector**
- events, **opportunities** & more

*And if you are not receiving our newsletter, yet, you can subscribe to it on our Website:
<https://europeanchoralassociation.org/publication-media/for-the-general-audience/newsletter/>*

COVID-19: How does the choral world deal with it?
ideas, tips and online resources

Stay up to date on choral singing during the COVID-19 Crisis:
www.EuropeanChoralAssociation.org/Covid-19
www.facebook.com/EuropeanChoralAssociation/

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*And if you want to stay up to date concerning research and many other useful resources and tools, you can go to this section of our Website dedicated to Choral Singing and Covid-19: www.EuropeanChoralAssociation.org/Covid-19
We believe that Sharing is Caring, so feel free to also share this link and other information from this presentation to your peers!*

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info@EuropeanChoralAssociation.org

Thank you very much for your attention!

Sonja Greiner
SecretaryGeneral@EuropeanChoralAssociation.org

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Thank you very much for your attention!