

2017 Lithuanian Choral Music Study Tour Report

Kuo-Jen, Mao 7th September, 2017

Time: 20th ~ 26th August

Places: Molėtai , Vilnius, Kaunas

Attending People: Mainly choral conductors from Lithuania, The biggest group of guests are from Russia and Belarus. Individual visitors are from Germany, Estonia, Poland, Austria and Taiwan.

Events: Seminars and workshops , other events, choir rehearsals, cultural tours

Seminars and workshops

- Introduction of multipart Lithuanian songs(traditional polyphonic music included in the UNESCO intangible Cultural Heritage List)
- The tradition of multipart singing in Lithuania; multipart singing workshop
- Indonesian choral tradition, contemporary composers, interpretations of ethnic elements, contemporary performance art
- Indonesian choral music workshop
- Lithuanian expatriate choral culture
- Tommyanto Kandisputra rehearsal with Lithuanian vocal ensemble,, Acusto“
- The philosophical aspect of the Song Celebrations
- Lithuanian Song Celebration 2018, discussion on the Union’s activity guidelines
- Introduction of European Choral Association, Europa Cantat 2018 in Talinn

Other events

- Participants present choral events in Lithuanian regions
- Discussion with foreign guests
- Informal networking and discussions
- *Concert of Vocal Ensemble “ Acusto “*
- New Lithuanian choral music competition

The Cultural tour in Moletai

- The museums of ethnocosmology, fishing and taxiderm

The Cultural tour in Vilnius

- The Music and Information Centre and Composers‘ Union
- The Lithuanian National Culture Centre, presentations on Lithuanian Song Celebration and their national costumes
- The Music innovation centre
- A City tour

The Cultural tour in Kaunas

- An Education program in the museum of Lithuanian national instruments
- A City tour

Visiting Choir rehearsals

- Jauna Musica Choir in Vilnius
- Kaunas State Choir in Kaunas

My personal experiences from the study tour...

Introduction

The study tour is mainly divided into two parts, one part is visiting the summer academy for Lithuanian choral conductors, the other part is culture tours in many different places.

The Summer academy has been held for 15 years. This year is the first time they invited foreign guests to join them. Every year the choral conductors from all over Lithuania gather together in Molatei to learn, discuss, build the network and nourish their friendships. Every year they invite a foreign conductor to make seminars and workshops. This year they invited the conductor Tommyanto Kandisaputra, from Indonesia. Other important Seminars and workshops are about Lithuanian multipart songs.

Inspirations

- Choral conductors need the chance to get further education. Summer academy is a great way to achieve this goal. Not only to learn, but to connect with the conductors from all over the country is also important. They get the chance to share with each other choral information, competitions, events and so on. I hope that in the future in Taiwan we may also have a similar event.
- Indonesian choral culture just started to develop in these past 20 years and they still lack professional conductors and musicians in their country. But now they are the winners of several choir competitions all over the world. How did they build their choral culture in this short time? How did they make the young people want to join choirs and perform their tradition choral music and dance? Through the choral music, they make the world to know their country! That is the thing I am so admire them for and am touched by.

Compared to Taiwan, we have good musicians, education resources and so on. But I am not sure what is our choral music culture, also I am not familiar with our traditional music. If I am the lecturer, how will I inform foreigners of the choral music from Taiwan? What is the traditional music and dance from Taiwan and how it is connected with our choral music? What is our music identity in the world? This is important answer I need to find in the future.

Indonesia have over 3000 languages and tribes. In the academy, the conductor introduced one song, in a language he doesn't speak or understand, but still he did a good job explaining the background of the song and their culture. Before this I felt if I conduct songs from Taiwan which I don't understand it will be not authentic. But the example I have seen has broken my self-limitations.

- Visiting two professional choirs was also a great experience for me. They both are really good choirs. Through the rehearsal, I noticed the different rehearsal techniques of the professional choir and amateur choir. Now I have a concept of how to work with a professional choir, so I may better prepare the things I need for working with a professional choir in my studies.

- The speech from Sonja Greniner was also really interesting. She introduced the history, aims, organisation and so on of the European Choral Association. I am impressed by the organization. They only have a few people in the office, but they coordinate the choral music events in all of Europe so well. The things I learned, hopefully I may use them in the future when I organize a choral association in Taiwan.

- The tradition of multipart singing from Lithuania has opened my eyes to how singing can bring people together. In the workshop, every body made a circle and sang an easy melody in canon. Though I didn't understand the text, in this moment I felt we all are the same, we are family. This great feeling lead me to want to learn more about this kind of song. I think The multipart singing from Lithuania is a great source for "Open Singing,,". I have bought the CD and books and hope that in the future I might use them in my choir.

- The New Lithuanian choral music workshop was about working on the new Lithuanian choral music competition. we sang from a book of new compositions from their country. Every year they sing together and vote which songs are the best. The winner may also receive an award. I think this is a pretty good way to be evaluated, not only by the judgement from the well known composer, but also from the conductors and singers.

- All the knowledge I learned still could not be better than the days I got to know the choral conductors from Lithuania. They are so kind and hospitable. During these few days, I enjoyed chatting with them, hearing their stories and what is the situation of choral music in their country. Not everything was positive, but still I learned a lot. In their country, If a choral conductor wants to make a good living he must have several choirs. The pay for the rehearsals is not good . But still, there are some people who love choral music and are willing to devote themselves to spread the love of choral music. I admire their passion.

- The delicious foods, beautiful landscape, visiting museums and so on were just so great to help me build an image of Lithuania. In the future when I conduct the pieces from Lithuania, I think I will have confidence ,personal experiences and will love to interpret it.

What I will do in the future....

Because of the great inspirations, in the future...

- I want to do deep research of Taiwanese music, culture, history and everything.
- I want to Visit different tribes and learn their language, culture and music in order to collect original Taiwanese material and then compose original Taiwanese choral music.
- My Final goal is to develop Taiwanese choral culture with our own choral music and then spread it to the world.
- I want to select one representative song from each tribe and ethnic group, and also add the original dance and clothing.
- I want to found an academy for choral conductors in Taiwan, using what I learned from the academy in Lithuania.

Conclusion

The Lithuanian Choral Music Study Tour is really an unforgettable experience for me. All the things I learned will help me to be a better choir conductor and also build my country's choral music society in the future. Thanks to Noël Minet Fund Scholarships for letting me have the chance to participate the study tour. Thanks to the European Choral Association for providing the information and coordinating the events.