

Rixensart (Belgium), 28th September 2021

Dear members of the European Choral Association - Europa Cantat,

I am thrilled to present my candidature for a position of member of the Board of our organisation. I am proud to be endorsed by the Board of the Fédération chorale Wallonie-Bruxelles A Cœur Joie.

I discovered choral singing at age 9 when I was recruited for the boys' choir Les Pastoureaux in Waterloo, Belgium. There I experienced an amazing number of shared musical moments that I wish every child could experience.

At age 18, I returned to Les Pastoureaux to become assistant director of music—a position I still hold today. I studied Germanic languages and literatures, as well as musicology at the University of Louvain, before joining the Royal Conservatory of Brussels to further my musical education through the study of counterpoint, orchestration, conducting and singing. In the meantime, I continued my training as a choral conductor by participating in masterclasses in Belgium and abroad.

In 2016, I entered the world of ECA-EC by taking part in my first EuroChoir session—an experience that left a profound impression on me. I experienced first hand, more clearly than ever before, that choral singing is a formidable accelerator of social cohesion, more effective than verbal communication, to the point where, after ten days of singing, you feel as if you have known the choristers around you for years.

In addition to memorable moments, I got to discover the work of ECA-EC and to meet other young choral enthusiasts from all over Europe. My third EuroChoir session ended on an even higher note as I got to take part in my first Europa Cantat festival in Tallinn. I came back home with a strong desire to contribute to the development of ECA-EC.

In my home country, I have been involved with choral organisations for quite some time. In 2017, I took part in the foundation of BEvocal, the national youth choir of Belgium, a joint venture of the three choral federations (Koor&Stem, Födekam and A Cœur Joie). Since 2019, I have been a member of the board of administrators of A Cœur Joie, which I have been representing at ECA-EC general assemblies since then.

Today I share my time between my duties as a teaching assistant in musicology at the university, my work with the boys' choir, and my projects at the conservatory.

I would be honoured to put my experience at the service of the European Choral Association - Europa Cantat by joining its Board.

Xavier Devillers



My answers to the questions

1. *Why are you interested in becoming a Board member of the European Choral Association - Europa Cantat? What makes you a good Board member?*

My interest in joining the Board stems from my utter conviction that choral singing literally makes the world a better place. Singing in a choir implies humbly revealing to others one's sensitivity, creativity, aesthetic judgement and intelligence, but also one's uncertainties, inaccuracies and wrong notes. Choral singing connects the singers to each other without them having spoken a single word to each other.

The Board of ECA-EC seems to me to be the most relevant organisation to promote the development of a choral culture across borders. As for myself, I've no intention of presuming to be a good candidate: you be the judge!

2. *How can you contribute to the development of the federation and what would you like to focus on during the period on board?*

Truth be told, I don't have any specific agenda. I envision my membership to the Board more as an open-minded contribution to the discussion than an opportunity to implement personal ideas. However, my education and work history leads me to believe I could contribute my expertise and experience to areas such as communication, musical matters, and youth aspects.

On a very practical level, I'd like to improve the visibility of ECA-EC in the 21st century media landscape. For the sake of transparency, I must confess I think this has to be done through some sort of rebranding. This being said, my personal background is strongly linked to the traditions and history of choral singing, and I'm convinced that we can move forward while remaining true to our origins.

3. *What is your vision about the European Choral Association - Europa Cantat and its activities?*

I think ECA-EC plays an important part in the international choral life by forging links between choirs, conductors and singers from different countries, cultures and backgrounds. ECA-EC embodies the idea that singing together is not only good for your health: it promotes cooperation and mutual respect. Through its activities, ECA-EC also proves that it is possible to combine the issue of social inclusion with the search for high musical quality.

Xavier Devillers

