



The choir *i fiori musicali*, which was founded in July 2007 is composed of thirty singers. It can look back upon a tradition of more than forty years. Originally, it was called *Sint-Ceciliakoor* and as a church choir its main activity was to add lustre to Sunday masses in the church of Saint-Lambert and Saint-Philomena in Sint-Lambrechts-Herk, a borough of Hasselt.

It was the Reverend Father **Jef Gijsenberghs** who created the *Sint-Ceciliakoor* in the sixties of the twentieth century and who arranged the acquisition of a new organ in the church, the restoration of the old one being too expensive. Being a man of exquisite musical taste he built the basic repertoire of the choir and then engaged choir-masters in order to mould the sound of the choir and to enlarge its repertoire.

About ten years ago the *Sint-Ceciliakoor* was fortunate enough to be joined by a very talented young musician, **Gert Vanbeckevoort**, their present choir-master. The rejuvenation of the choir being one of his priorities he also broadened the repertoire with choral music from the Renaissance and from the twentieth century. Under his musical supervision the bi-annual Christmas Concerts of the choir turned into musical events that have attracted an ever growing audience. The 2003 Christmas Concert (with an admirable performance of Mozart's *Laudate Dominum*) and the 2005 concert (the so-called 'Three Choirs Concert' in which *Sint-Ceciliakoor* appeared together with *De Schalmei*, a choir from Sint-Truiden and with the renowned *Basilica Choir* from Tongeren) have been recorded on CD.

In order to secure the choir's future in a society that has utterly changed in the course of the second half of the twentieth century *Sint-Ceciliakoor* was dissolved and *i fiori musicali* was established.

I Fiori Musicali: a musical ambition

As the name of the choir suggests, - the Italian "i fiori" not only means "the flowers", but also "the best", "the pick"-, and being a society of "amateurs" in the genuine sense of the word, - devotees of choral music -, we aim at giving the very best of ourselves when we are singing choral works from the past or the present in order to create musical events for our audience as well for ourselves.

Aiming at a balanced and transparent choir sound as well as at the homogeneity of the separate soprano-, alto-, tenor- and bass-parts we wish to sing every composition, - be it simple or difficult, with or without instrumental accompaniment,- in such a way that we can share our musical satisfaction with our audience, not only during worship, but also in concert, and through religious as well as with secular music.

Although we are not a church choir anymore, we continue to sing festive masses at Christmas, Easter, Ascension Day, Whitsun, Assumption and All Saints. In addition to that, we perform special concerts. Every two years we appear in a Christmas Concert that is performed two or three times in different locations. Our repertoire consists of a capella chant from Nicolai Kedrow, I. Bortniansky, and N. Rimsky Korsakow, sacred music by J.S. Bach, E. Elgar, Ch.Gounod, W.A. Mozart, C.Saint-Saëns, F. Schubert, P. Schollaert, and A. Rihowsky (*Missa brevis et facilis*), choral work from the Renaissance by J. Eccard, Ph.E. Erlebach, D. Golombek, H.Schütz, and J. Staden, and contemporary compositions for choir by S. De Ford, F. Koenen, R. Real, H. Roelstraete, and G. Vanbeckevoort.

Gert Vanbeckevoort, choir-master and musical director

Having worked with *Sint-Ceciliakoor* for more than ten years, Gert Vanbeckevoort was the driving force behind the metamorphosis of a modest parish choir into a semi-professional choir. He already introduced *Sint-Ceciliakoor* to a capella chant, and expanded its repertoire with choral works from the Renaissance, Baroque and Early Classicism.

After his study of pedagogics and history of music at the conservatoire he buried himself in the practice of the baroque performing style with Paul Van Loey ('*Vier op 'n Rij*' Ensemble). He also took specialisation courses on the study of musical sources, mensural notation and the technique of singing with Paul Van Nevel (*Huelgas Ensemble*, Belgium), Rebecca Stewart (*Capella Pratensis*, Netherlands) and Dirk Snellings (*Capilla Flamenca*, Belgium).

For Dirk Snellings he also transcribed the Missa '*Mijn herte altijd heft verlangen*' (My heart always has been longing) from Gascogne, a part of the *Alamire*-manuscript '*Occo Codex*'.

Apart from other smaller works he also composed *Missa brevis in Es* for Sint-Ceciliakoor, a mass that is moving through musical simplicity and purity.

I fiori musicali

Sopranos

Madeleine Derison, Magda Hermans, Simonne Liefsoens, Lea Putzeys, Yvonne Raskin, Andrea Schampaert, Anna Surinx, Jeanne Van Es

Altos

Michèle Dexters, Roxanne Dexters, Bernadette Dirikx, Jenny Feytons, Linda Maris, Céline Mebis, Françoise Sanen, Germaine Santermans, Mieke Severi, Annemie Vandeputte

Tenors

Jos Frederix, Rik Nelles, Jaak Poncelet, Raymond Simons

Basses

Jozef Hermans, Georges Mewis, Valère Preal, François Quintiens, Paul Schampaert, Ivan Thoelen

Instrumental accompaniment

Piet Van Damme, organ and piano

Michèle Dexters, flute

Rik Nelles, tambourin

Andrea Schampaert, piano



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