



Quality guidelines for International Choral Festivals and Competitions

Preamble

Choral music needs a platform such as concerts, festivals, competitions, artistic tours, recordings, etc. to develop its activities. This platform is usually provided by professionals working in tourism or other commercial or non-commercial sectors. Because of their nature, choral activities require sensitive understanding. Choral festivals should firstly promote choral music. The Choral Festival Network (CFN) is therefore proposing these Quality guidelines as a tool to make the relationship between the organiser and the choir more transparent. However, it is not the role of CFN to ensure compliance with this charter.

Definitions

Activity: An event in which a choir, musical group, choir conductor, individual singer, music teacher, etc. takes part actively or passively. Such events include but are not limited to: a choral festival, a choir competition, a mass choir activity, a concert tour, a conference, a seminar, a master-class or a recording.

Organiser: Any entity, whether commercial or non-profit making, which organises an activity as defined above.

Participant: A choir, musical group, choir conductor, individual singer, music teacher, etc. which takes part in an activity as defined above.

Recommendations

• Responsibility of the organiser

The organiser must provide clear identification details, including its name and legal status, stating whether it is profit- or non-profit making as well as its goals. It must provide a postal address and a legal incorporation address, as well as all means of communication such as telephone, telefax and e-mail.

An organiser which also acts as a travel agent for the participant shall respect all the rules laid down in the IATA licenses as well as by its national professional association of tour operators.

• Relationship between the organiser and the participant

The organiser must organize its communication and publicity regarding all activities and services proposed to the participant transparently and accurately, so as to provide the latter with a clear understanding of the content and operation of the proposed activity

The organiser must propose a clear written contract between itself and the participant. This contract must describe in detail all the services (and their extent) provided by the organiser to the participant, as well as the price to be paid for those services.

The participant must be accurately informed about the flat fee to be paid to the organiser. The organiser must specify the costs of accommodation, meals, transportation, music programmes and general administration. The organiser must give clear information about the names and addresses of Hotels or other accommodation, and restaurants.

The organiser is answerable for the activities of any subcontractors. There shall be no division of responsibility. The contract must mention the terms, such as performing fee and expenses if any, under which the participant performs at concerts or festivals.

• Logistics

The organiser must propose a reasonable schedule of activities such as performances and rehearsals. This schedule must be an integral part of the contract.

The tourism part, if any, and the artistic part of an activity must be mentioned clearly.

A tourist guide shall be in charge of the tourism part and a musically experienced member of the organiser's staff shall be in charge of the artistic part.

When catering for a large group, the organiser must provide the minimum service at meals such as a proper place to sit, quality food, clean setting, sufficient and professional staff, reasonable waiting time to be served, etc...

• Concert performance

The participant must receive complete information on the performing venue(s) prior to the activity, such as: name(s) of the hall(s), address(es), number of seats, acoustic conditions, possible restriction in repertoire (e.g. in churches), etc. The organiser must ask the participant to state its logistical and technical needs. After negotiation, the organiser must meet the agreed conditions such as: stage size, technical features, lighting, sound equipment, instruments and tuning, size and number of dressing rooms, access to facilities, heating and temperature, rehearsal time and duration, etc.

If appropriate, doors must be closed and silence ensured during performances.

The organiser must provide sufficient and adequate promotion so that there is an audience for the activity. It is the organiser's responsibility to ensure compliance in all cases with the venue's rules and requirements, as well as performing and publishing rights.

• Training and workshops

In its advertisements, the organiser must provide full information on a workshop or other training event, such as: list of works and repertoire, name of the conductor and assistants, name of the orchestra, soloists and instrumentalists, as well as their work schedule. The working languages must be mentioned. All participants should be able to understand the instructions

The contract must provide information about materials required, e.g. scores or books provided and their prices.

In event of changes in the programme or in the teaching staff, the organiser must provide adequate alternatives. If it fails to do so, the participant must be able to cancel its participation at no cost.

• Choir competitions

The organiser must publish the competition rules. These rules must be as comprehensive as possible and clearly specify the following: conditions for participation, rules for the selection of the participants, competition categories, compulsory works, time and content of the performance, composition of the jury, adjudication.

To avoid problems regarding the acceptance of amateur and/or professional choirs, the organiser must clearly define who is allowed to take part in the competition.

The organiser must treat all participants equally (financial and material conditions). If grants are available for participants, the rules for obtaining them must be advertised by the organiser and grants must be open to application.

When a competition is advertised as "international", the organiser must ensure that:

- The participants come from a large number of countries;
- The categories are artistically homogeneous (number of members in the choir, type of group, type of repertoire, a cappella or not, etc.);
- The jury should be made up of at least five members, the majority being from other countries, treated as professionals and strictly independent of the organiser;
- The jury members are fully conversant with the competition rules and procedures, as well as deliberation rules and procedures;
- The length of the performance is long enough to allow the jury to make a genuine assessment;
- The number of prizes and special prizes awarded does not exceed a reasonable proportion of the number of participants. Monetary prizes have to be clarified.
- The jury's decisions are respected and available in writing.