

## The World Orchestra of Jeunesses Musicales

The World Orchestra currently has its base in Comunidad Valenciana (Spain), which is its headquarters until 2010. Formed by 100 musicians from 40 countries and conducted by maestro Josep Vicent, The World Orchestra has toured in only three years China, Holland, Spain, Austria, Cyprus and Germany. During Winter season the orchestra came back to Holland and Berlin and now it is back to Canada.

This project came into being with the creation of a young orchestra for the Jeunesses Musicales International project. In the period 1949 to 1969, in the Netherlands, the violinist Arthur Grumiaux, Director of the Igor Márkievitch Orchestra and other key musicians resolved, as part of the Jeunesses Musicales assemblies, to put together an international orchestra inspired in the vision of Sir Robert Mayer, creator of the orchestral concerts for children in the 1920s.

It was in Canada in 1968 that Gilles Lefebvre proposed the transformation of this 'orchestral conference' into an ensemble that would develop under the wand of an experienced conductor. Lefebvre envisaged that such an ensemble would receive and continue the education of the best young musicians of the Jeunesses Musicales member countries. Right from its inception, this project in music education was noted for its rigour and professional quality. These standards have persisted to the present day and it has attained world recognition. Success has come quickly due to the high artistic quality; furthermore, the World Orchestra has become a symbol, through excellence in music, of solidarity and co-operation between the nations of the world.

In 1986, the orchestra established its headquarters in Berlin and offered concerts in the name of peace on both sides of the infamous wall that divided the city. Since then, the World Orchestra has been registered as a harmonious association of musicians without frontiers. As recognition of its peace-building efforts, in 1996 the UNESCO granted it the distinction of 'Artist for Peace' with which it has travelled the world over.

During the 60s and 70s, WOJM went on several tours to Canada, Denmark, Belgium, Italy, the U.K., Japan, the U.S. and Switzerland under such outstanding masters as Zubin Mehta, Leonard Bernstein, Michael Tilson-Thomas and Serge Baudo.

In the 80s, Walter Weller, Hiroyuki Iwaki, Eduardo Mata, Jeffrey Tate, Vernon Handley, Charles Dutoit and Michel Tabachnik among many others directed the orchestra. That period saw the orchestra travelling to Germany, Hungary, France, Spain, the U.S., Canada, Japan, South Korea, Poland, Austria, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Uruguay and Argentina.

In the 90s, the World Orchestra was to be seen in Germany, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Russia, Estonia, Sweden, Latvia, Finland, Norway, Holland, Poland, Spain, France, the Philippines, Malaysia, South Korea, Switzerland, and Israel. In those years the baton was held by Kurt Masur, Franz-Paul Decker, Antonio Pappano, En Shao, Yuri Temirkanov and Kent Nagano and well known soloists as Bobby McFerrin or Yehudi Menuhin joined the orchestra.

With the status of **UNESCO Artist for Peace**, the World Orchestra performed to commemorate the 50th anniversary of State of Israel (1998), the 350th anniversary of the Peace of Westphalia (1998), and in the commemorative events of the Second World War in Warsaw (1999). In the year 2000, it toured south-eastern Europe (Slovenia, Croatia, former Yugoslavia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia) and in 2005 it toured China to mark the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of peace between China and Japan. Cyprus was the destination in 2006 with concerts in Nicosia and Limassol for refugees of the armed conflict between Israel and the Lebanon and its commitment to peace was also shown in Barcelona's GREC Festival where they made a homage to those who lived the tragedy of Spanish Civil War in person.

The World Orchestra also has a **commitment with New Music** and it has premiered since 2005 six pieces by new composers: *Good News From Beijing* by Zheng Lu & Ma Hongye, *Pax Haganum* by Joan Albert Amargós, *Ketsana* by Emmanuel Séjourné, a new piece specially written by Séjourné for the finals of the 32<sup>nd</sup> America's Cup and GP-f-1 by Andrés Valero.