

Presented by



Steiermärkische  
**SPARKASSE**



# VOICES OF SPIRIT

12TH INTERNATIONAL CHOIR FESTIVAL GRAZ

May 13-17, 2026

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE: ĒRIKS EŠENVALDS

## FESTIVAL-GUIDE

For choirs and  
singers



# CONTENT

*3* ABOUT US

*4* CHOIR TOUR

*5* PROJECT CHOIRS

*6* MASTERCLASS

*9* WORKSHOPS

*11* COACHINGS

*13* CONTACT

# ABOUT US

We are a festival that brings music to life in a unique and inspiring way. At the heart of our concept is collaboration – between choirs, ensembles, and individual singers – with internationally acclaimed Artists in Residence.

Together we create unforgettable concerts, enriching workshops, and meaningful encounters.

In 2026, we are honoured to welcome the renowned composer Ēriks Ešņvalds as our Artist in Residence.







# CHOIR TOUR

## PERFORM | ENJOY | GET TOGETHER

### Your Performance

#### Performance opportunities:

- Long Night of Choirs (Wed, May 13, 2026, 19:00–21:30, 25 min)
- Opening Concert (Thu, May 14, 2026, 17:00–19:00, 1–2 songs)
- Out of Graz Concerts (Fri, May 15, 2026, 19:00–21:00, 30 min)
- Festival Choirs Concert (Fri, May 15, 2026, 17:00–22:00, 20 min)
- Concert in Landhaushof (Sat, May 16, 2026, 11:00–13:00, 15 min)
- Mass at Graz Cathedral (Sun, May 17, 2026, 10:00–11:00)

### Your Package

Participation fee per choir: €350 | Registration deadline: January 15, 2026

A fixed confirmation and details will follow after registration.

Travel, accommodation, and meals at your own expense.

#### Participation includes:

- Performance opportunities by arrangement (contact us – we'll gladly advise you on all possibilities!)
- 30% discount on all concert tickets and project choir participation
- Optional for an extra fee: workshops and choir coachings with renowned lecturers

*Our partner, Graz Tourism, can arrange attractive packages including accommodation and meals, and will organize city tours and excursions on request. You may also choose to organize these yourself and only pay the registration fee.*

### Your choral experience

Enjoy the Mediterranean flair of Graz and a wide range of program options — from excursions and choir exchanges to coachings, project choirs, and performance opportunities!



# PROJECT CHOIRS

## Project choir Ēriks Ešenvalds | Ēriks Ešenvalds

Period: 15–16 May 2026, full day

Rehearsal venue: Music Gymnasium Dreihackengasse

Final concert: Andrä Church



Program:

1. Commissioned Piece (world premiere)
2. Trinity Te Deum
3. My Song

## Project choir Pop & Jazz | Agnes Haßler

Period: 14–15 May 2026, full day

Rehearsal venue: Johann-Joseph-Fux-Konservatorium

Final concert: Minoritensaal



Program:

1. Say Something, Pentatonix
2. Hold back the river, James Bay
3. Fire, Bruce Springsteen
4. The Parting glass, Oliver Giess

## Project choir Mixed Voices | Sebastijan Vrhovnik

Period: 15–16 May 2026, full day

Rehearsal venue: Andrä Church Hall

Final concert: Andrä Church

Program:

1. Orkester – Emil Cassetto (1918-2006)
2. Alleluia. Laudate Dominum, omnes gesntes – Ambrož Čopi (\*1973)
3. The Earthly Rose – Eriks Ešenvalds (\*1977)
4. Da pacem, Domine – Tilen Slakan (\*1993)



Participation fee: € 20 per person, -30% for festival choir members



Arbeite mit den Profis – kompakt, inspirierend und auf höchstem Niveau.

## Masterclass Conducting Instructor: Jan Schumacher

**Duration:** 13–16 May 2026



The Conducting Masterclass with Jan Schumacher gives choir conductors the opportunity to refine their conducting skills in both theory and practice.

During this three-day intensive course, participants will work with the renowned choir Cantanima as a studio ensemble.

You can look forward to instructive and inspiring days under professional guidance, culminating in a brilliant final concert in a unique setting.

**Studio choir:** Cantanima

**Number of participants:** max. 8 active / 10 passive

### **Fee:**

Active € 300 | € 200 for students

Passive € 50

**Final concert:** Saturday, 16 May 2026 | 4:30 pm | Andrä Church

**Course venue:** Johann Joseph Fux Conservatory, 8020 Graz

Participants receive a 30% discount on all concert tickets!

**Registration deadline:** 11 January 2026



## Masterclass Vocal Music

Instructor: Simone Kopmajer



**Duration:** 13–15 May 2026

Simone is a jazz singer, vocal coach, and pianist. She is a Hans Koller Award recipient, has released 14 solo albums, and has performed in Europe, Asia, and the USA.

In this workshop, you will train microphone technique, explore different styles (jazz, gospel, pop), learn stage composing, and work on two prepared pieces.

**Wed–Fri:** daily group coaching sessions (max. 8 participants)  
3×20 minutes of individual coaching (times by arrangement)

**Number of participants:** max. 8 people

**Participation fee:** € 250 | € 180 (for students)

**Final concert:** Fri, 15 May | 18:00 | J.J. Fux Conservatory

**Course venue:** Johann-Joseph-Fux Conservatory Graz, Entenplatz 1b

Participants receive discounted tickets (-30%) for all concerts!

**Registration deadline:** 11 January 2026



## Masterclass Komposition

### Instructor: Ēriks Ešņvalds

**Duration:** 14–15 May 2026



Latvian composer Ēriks Ešņvalds is considered one of the most sought-after choral composers of his time. His works are performed across the globe—from Europe and the USA to Australia. Through collaborations with renowned choirs worldwide, such as the Latvian Radio Choir, The King's Singers, Salt Lake Vocal Artists, Choir of Trinity College Melbourne, The University of Mississippi Concert Singers, and the Rundfunkchor Berlin, his compositions have achieved international recognition and acclaim.

The composition masterclass with Ēriks Ešņvalds offers interested participants the opportunity to further develop their compositional skills in a focused way. This two-day intensive course provides educational and inspiring sessions under professional guidance.

**Number of participants:** max. 8 people

**Participation fee:** € 250 | € 180 (for students)

**Course venue:** Johann-Joseph-Fux Conservatory Graz, Entenplatz 1b

Participants receive discounted tickets (-30%) for all concerts!

**Registration deadline:** 11 January 2026





# WORKSHOPS

Rehearsal venue: Johann-Joseph-Fux-Konservatorium

Costs: Individual workshops (1–4) € 15, workshop pass (1–4) € 40

## 1 Rhythm you just have to move with | Sonja Prugger

The workshop provides immediately applicable tools for choral or ensemble work in all musical and artistic contexts. The main focus is rhythmic training, with a strong emphasis on fun.

With her master's degree in Rhythmics from Denmark, Sonja Prugger introduces basic techniques such as solmization and rhythm language—with matching signs—in a playful way and encourages simple vocal and body-based improvisations. Participants can look forward to a buffet of warm-ups, light improvisations, and musical group games.

Time: 14 May 2026 | 09:00–10:00

## 2 Supercharge your Choir | Tori Longdon (UK)

Tori Longdon will share tips and tricks for one hour on how to help a choir unlock its full potential and enjoy every second of singing.

Workshop language: English

Time: 14 May 2026 | 10:15–11:15

## 3 Sound & Groove | Agnes Haßler (DE)

This workshop offers insights and inspiration on the topic of pop choir: How do I create an authentic pop sound? How do I internalize proper timing and a solid groove? The session will introduce exercises for sound and groove development.

Time: 14 May 2026 | 11:30–12:30



# WORKSHOPS

## 4 Northern Lights | Ēriks Ešenvalds (LV)

Together with the composer and Vocalforum Graz, selected pieces will be rehearsed. Ēriks will provide insights into his compositional process, giving participants the opportunity to experience new choral music "straight from the source." Workshop language: English

Time: 14 May 2026 | 12:45–13:45

## Intensive Workshop "VocaRhythmix" | Sonja Prugger

The fascinating connection between voice and rhythm is at the heart of this exceptional workshop. Through rhythmic songs from various cultures, body percussion, and small movement elements, participants dive into a shared groove that is playfully transformed again and again through a nonverbal signaling system. Following the principles of circle singing, music is created in the moment, uniting singing and rhythm into a dynamic and engaging group experience. Participants can also look forward to a mix of warm-ups, basic grooves, and rhythm games.

Time: 14 May 2026 | 15:00–16:30

Location: J.J. Fux Conservatory

Participants: max. 10 people

Cost: Individual workshop € 30



Sonja Prugger



Tori Longdon



Agnes Haßler



Ēriks Ešenvalds



# COACHINGS

**New creative impulses for sound, togetherness & expression**

## **Oskar Egle**

Oskar Egle is a choir director and music educator from Vorarlberg. With his choirs, he has repeatedly achieved excellent results at choral evaluations in Vorarlberg as well as at international competitions. He is a lecturer at singing seminars and conductor workshops, and serves as a juror both in Austria and abroad.

## **Sebastjan Vrhovnik (SLO)**

Sebastjan Vrhovnik is a music educator and choir conductor. Since 2014, he has been an associate professor of choral conducting in Ljubljana, leads workshops at home and abroad, and regularly serves as a juror at competitions. He conducts the Chamber Choir of the Ljubljana Academy of Music, the Mixed Choir of the Glasbena matica Ljubljana, and is a permanent guest conductor of the Slovenian Philharmonic Choir. His work is characterized by great musical sensitivity, a refined choral sound, and an innovative repertoire that brings fresh impulses to the Slovenian choral scene.

## **Sonja Prugger**

Sonja Prugger is a music and dance educator (Orff Institute) and a certified percussionist. Key milestones in her musical career include a stay at Berklee College of Music in Boston and masterclasses with internationally renowned figures such as Thomas Caplin, André de Quadros, and Eric Whitacre. She has directed the Carinthian State Youth Choir, founded the project choir VocaRhythmix, and completed the international master's program "Vocal Leadership" in Denmark in 2016. Sonja is active as a choir conductor, coach, and workshop leader, specializing in rhythm, body percussion, and improvisation.



# COACHINGS

## **Tori Longdon (UK)**

Tori Longdon is the Associate Chorus Director of the London Philharmonic Choir and the Principal Conductor of the Covent Garden Chorus. She gained international recognition at the coronation concert of King Charles III, where she coached 18 choirs from across the United Kingdom. She leads concerts and masterclasses worldwide, has taught at the Royal Academy of Music and the Junior Guildhall Conservatoire, and appears regularly on BBC programs such as Songs of Praise and The Choir. Together with Jamie Wright, she founded the international Stay At Home Choir, which now includes more than 29,000 singers.

## **Rainer Held (CH)**

Rainer Held has been conducting amateur choirs since his youth, as well as professional choirs in Germany, Belarus, Poland, Venezuela, Japan, and South Korea. In Switzerland, he currently conducts, among others, the large Romansh men's choir Chor viril Sursés in Savognin. Through his international engagements as an orchestral conductor — including with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra London, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra Glasgow, and the Deutsche Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz — Rainer Held has established a strong reputation. Held served for many years as President of the Music Commission of the Swiss Choral Association (SCV) and was a member of the Music Commission of "ECA – Europa Cantat," as well as a member of the artistic committee for the Europa Cantat Festivals 2012 in Turin and 2015 in Pécs.

**Cost per coaching session: € 300**

**Duration: 1.5 hours**

**Location: Johann-Joseph-Fux Conservatory**



Photo: Werner Krug

# GRAZ IS WAITING FOR YOU!

Save the date:  
**VOICES OF SPIRIT 5.-9. Mai 2027**



[www.voicesofspirit.at](http://www.voicesofspirit.at)



[organisation@voicesofspirit.at](mailto:organisation@voicesofspirit.at)



**+43 316 829925**