



MEGARON CHAMBER CHOIR

Megaron Chamber Choir was founded in October 2003 on the initiative of Damijan Močnik, composer and conductor. It unites former students of the Diocesan Classical Gymnasium at St. Stanislav's Institution in Ljubljana, who had before been active in various choral ensembles and received music education in one or more of the five choirs at the Diocesan Classical Gymnasium. As such, Megaron Chamber Choir represents the peak of the choir pyramid of St. Stanislav's Institution. In the twenty years since its founding, Megaron Chamber Choir has evolved into a high-quality choir performing regularly in Slovenia as well as in Austria, Italy, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Poland, USA, and Canada, and thus earning a reputation at home as well as abroad.

The choir is noted for its rich sound and exciting interpretations of music from different stylistic periods.

It prides itself on numerous awards received at various national as well as international choral competitions:

- in 2010, the choir won 2nd place in the mixed choirs category and 1st place in the folk music category at the International Choral Kathaumixw in Powell River (Canada);

- in 2012, it received the golden plaque, the award for the best mixed choir, the award for the best interpretation of a romantic piece, and the award for the absolute winner of the "Naša pesem" Choir Competition in Maribor (Slovenia);

- in 2015, it won 2nd place at the Montreaux Choral Festival and an award for the best interpretation of a novelty for Damijan Močnik's *Libera me*;

- in 2016, it won 1st place in the mixed choirs category and the orthodox music category at the International Wrocław Choir Festival "Vratislavia Sacra", and took the Grand Prix of the festival;

- in 2018, it won 1st place in the mixed choirs category at the International Warsaw Choir Festival "Varsovia Cantat";

- in 2021, it won 1st place and Grand Prix in XI. Sacred music competition in Czestochowa (Poland);

- in 2022, it received the golden plaque and the award for the best interpretation of a romantic piece at the "Naša pesem" Choir Competition in Maribor (Slovenia);

- and again in 2022, the choir won 1st place in the mixed choirs category, the award for the best interpretation of a renaissance piece and the award for the best competition programme at the prestigious International Chamber Choir Competition in Marktoberdorf.



Megaron Chamber Choir regularly works with renowned orchestras (the Munich Symphony Orchestra, the RTV Slovenia Symphony Orchestra, the Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra, the Gustav Mahler Youth Orchestra), and conductors (David de Villiers, Jacek M. Blaszczak, Martina Batič, En Shao, Valery Gergiev, Uroš Lajovic, Jonathan Nott, Ari Rasilainen, Charles Dutoit, Gary Graden) on vocal-instrumental projects such as W. A. Mozart: *Krönungsmesse*, B. Britten: *The World of The Spirit*, G. Faure: *Requiem*, F. Poulenc: *Stabat Mater*, D. Močnik: *Passio Domini nostri Jesu Christi secundum Joannem*, G. Mahler: *Symphony No. 8* ("Symphony of a Thousand"), J. Brahms – *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, G. Mahler: *Symphony No. 2* ("Resurrection Symphony"), S. von Hausegger: *Natursymphonie*, L. van Beethoven: *Symphony No. 9*, H. Berlioz: *La damnation de Faust*; J. S. Bach: *Magnificat*.

In the fall of 2019, the choir toured along the east coast of the U.S. from Chicago to New York. In February 2020, under the direction of the excellent conductor Gary Graden, the choir successfully carried out an original project performing the music of J. S. Bach with the newly formed Megaron Baroque Ensemble. In July 2021, the choir gave a resounding performance at the Europa Cantat Festival in Ljubljana with a presentation of Slovenian sacred and romantic music.

The choir has recorded two albums: *Prišla je Luč* (The Light Came Forth) with Christmas music by Slovenian composers and *Ptičice pojo* with arrangements of Slovenian folk songs.



DAMIJAN MOČNIK

Damijan Močnik graduated in composition at the Academy of Music in Ljubljana under Dane Škerl and later developed his skills abroad, especially in conducting (also with Eric Ericson, among others). Since 1993, he has been working as a music teacher, conductor, and the artistic leader of music activities at St. Stanislav's Institution in Ljubljana. With his colleagues at St. Stanislav's Institution, he founded the "choral pyramid" (i.e. a hierarchical system of choirs), which has become an important factor in Slovenian choral

life. He has been conducting since 1986 and has received numerous awards at international competitions with his choirs. He is the founder and artistic leader of the Slovenian Children's Choir. He participates in expert and artistic councils at choral events, regularly lectures in courses and at expert symposiums, and is a juror of choral competitions at home and abroad. Since 2021, he has been a professor of analysis and compositional techniques at the Academy of Music in Ljubljana.

For his artistic and educational achievements, he has been awarded:

- the Prešeren Prize for Students by the Academy of Music in Ljubljana;
- the Gallus Plaque by the Public Fund for Cultural Activities of the Republic of Slovenia as the highest acknowledgement of achievement in amateur culture;
- the Award of the Republic of Slovenia in the field of education for outstanding achievements;
- the Prešeren Fund Award (the highest award in the field of artistic creation in Slovenia) for composition;
- the Kozina Award by the Society of Slovene Composers (the highest award for composers in Slovenia).

The focus of Močnik's compositional conception is devoted to choral music, a cappella and vocal-instrumental. He is a winner of numerous Slovenian and international composing competitions. As a composer-conductor, he toured Taiwan and, several times, the USA, where he performed his compositions with university choirs and lectured on his creative work at the University of Washington in Seattle, the Seattle Pacific University and the University of Wisconsin in Milwaukee. In the summer of 2016 and 2018, he led an atelier on his own and Slovenian music at the international choral festival Choralies in Vaison-la-Romaine, France.

Močnik is among the most performed contemporary Slovenian composers abroad. His pieces are regularly performed by professional and the best amateur choirs worldwide, among them the *World Youth Choir*, *RIAS Kammerchor Berlin*, *Slovenian Philharmonic Choir*, *St. Jacobs Kammarkör Stockholm*, *Taipei Philharmonic Chamber Choir*, *Washington Bach Consort*, *SWR Vocal Ensemble*, *Swedish Radio Choir*, the vocal groups *Singer Pur* and *Cantus*, and many others. In Slovenia, he publishes in editions of Slovenian Composers' Society and Astrum Music Publications. His publishers abroad are Carus Verlag in Stuttgart, Ferrimontana in Frankfurt and Augsburg-Fortress in Minneapolis.

Močnik's music has been recorded on numerous albums, including four authorial. In 2003, Carus released the album *Verbum supernum prodiens* with Močnik's sacred music, while in 2009, Astrum released an album with *Adventus Domini nostri Jesu Christi*, a cantata for soprano solo, choir and percussion. In 2016, the Slovene Philharmonic released the album *Oratorium nativitatis*, and in 2017, Carus released the album "et LUX perpetua" with St. Jacobs' Kammarkör Stockholm and Gary Graden.