

Inside view: interview from Silvia Vogel of the TimeDate association with founder Helena Rösli, who has sent out a great idea around the world

In eight months, precisely on September 21st, 2023, Karl Jenkins' composition "The Peacemakers" will be put on stage around the world. Starting from New Zealand, the musical peace message will spread out over Japan to India, The Netherlands, Switzerland until Argentina. A good reason to ask the founder Helena Rösli about her motivation, the ups and downs of the realization and her current feelings about the project. Dive into it – you can have an inside view of Helena Rösli's perspective.

SV: Dear Helena, you are the founder of this international undertaking. Can you describe to our audience briefly what has motivated you to make this idea become true?

HR: I gained the impulse from strong public statements about exclusions, insults or accusations, which I wanted to counterbalance and make the often disregarded words of peacemakers, like Karl Jenkins with his composition "The Peacemakers" be heard. Due to the different time zones around the globe, these words will resound for 24 hours.

SV: Currently we are right in the middle of the preparation of the event – it is a very complex task. If you look back already – how has your original idea been shaped? What was possible for you – together with the TimeDate association – to make become true?

HR: The idea of uniting voices for peace for one day is being realized - that's great! Unfortunately, it is not possible for all interested choirs to perform the entire work "The Pacemakers". Therefore, we have made compromises in the programming, which is again enriching. I am also extremely pleased that streaming is well underway. We will be able to see the concerts that take place around the world partly live or via recording on our website. We will also be doing live broadcasts to meet the people from these very different countries face to face.

SV: On this long road to realization (we've been working on it for almost five years now) we are eight months before the event: What are the highlights, what are the obstacles that showed up?

HR: There are MANY of both! People's enthusiasm for the idea was always immediately noticeable. That is and remains the driving force behind the project. A big challenge was reaching out to the choirs worldwide. Finally, Covid-19 helped us a lot with the worldwide digitalization in communication; open questions could be clarified directly. The personal contacts around the globe were always very joyful and touching - sometimes also concerning, especially when we talked to people who had really experienced wars. At the moment we, and many other choirs in the world, are working on the music. Rehearsing with the singers is a great joy.

SV: You are also the musical director of this project. Can you give us some more insight into the work "The Peacemakers"? What fascinates you about the musical language of Jenkins?

HR: I like the moods and timbres that the work brings out. The instrumentation, including ethnic instruments and lots of percussion, also make this music joyful and lively. Singing the peace messages of these Peacemakers makes great sense to us! Jenkins' music reaches different generations across age lines, which I find very valuable, especially for a peace composition.

SV: Thank you for this insight into your musical commitment to peace.

How wonderful to gain such firsthand information!