

JENNIFER THAM

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PROFILE

Jennifer Tham is curious about the sight of sound and has a multi-modal listening practice as a conductor and composer. Her work is shaped by a love of words, phenomenology, mapping, spatial practices, conceptual art, contemporary music and choral theatre.

EDUCATION

Master of Fine Arts in Interdisciplinary Arts School for the Contemporary Arts, <i>Simon Fraser University</i>	October 2021 Vancouver, BC, Canada
Bachelor of Fine Arts (Music) <i>Simon Fraser University</i>	October 1995 Burnaby, BC, Canada
Bachelor of Arts (Philosophy, Sociology) <i>National University of Singapore</i>	July 1985 Singapore

HONOURS AND AWARDS

Cultural Medallion Conferred by the President, Republic of Singapore; Singapore's highest artistic accolade, to recognise artists who have made distinctive contributions in shaping the nation's cultural landscape.	2012
Artistic Excellence Award Conferred by the Composers and Authors Society of Singapore, for her contribution to the growth and development of Singapore choral music and choirs.	2011
University Honour Roll (1995) Awarded by Simon Fraser University (Canada).	1995
Simon Fraser University Service Awards (1994/95)	1994/95
Young Artist Award (Music) Conferred by the National Arts Council in recognition of Jennifer's work with the Singapore Youth Choir.	1992

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Artistic Director/Conductor

1986 – present

SYC Ensemble Singers (SYC), Singapore

An auditioned community ensemble of 32 singers, the **SYC** focuses on the work of living composers, with an attention to artistic detail and intent that has earned them a reputation as the “composer’s choir”. The ensemble is on the “experimental” end of the new music spectrum, staging choral music as theatre, often with choreographed movement.

Responsibilities include:

- Articulating the long-range artistic vision, and implementing this through multi-year artistic plans,
- Commissioning, and liaising with, composers,
- Scheduling, planning, programming and directing rehearsals and performances,
- Planning and developing education and outreach programmes.

Under my direction, the SYC initiated **THREE** : a three-choir festival featuring the SYC with Gaia Philharmonic Choir (Japan; Ko Matsushita, dir.) and the Ateneo Chamber Singers (Philippines; Jonathan Velasco, dir.). There have been six editions of *THREE*: two in Singapore (2006, 2014), two in Japan (2009, 2013) and two in the Philippines (2011, 2017). Each concert features the premiere of specially commissioned triple-choir works.

Artistic Director

1996 – present

Young Musicians’ Society, Singapore

YMS is a not-for-profit arts company with a focus on outreach and education in the areas of choral music and new music. Apart from directing the SYC Ensemble Singers, responsibilities include(d):

- Artistic Director, *Magnetic Band*
New music ensemble which has premiered seminal contemporary work as well as generated performance labs for the exploration of local contemporary music and music/site-specific installations.
- Organiser/teaching faculty, *Kodaly Seminar Asia*
10-day certification course for music pedagogues and choral conductors designed and taught with the Kodaly Institute of the Liszt Academy of Music, Budapest, Hungary. The course launched in 2009, and the shorter Choral Edition in 2014.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE |

Artistic Director, *Young Musicians' Society*

Responsibilities (cont'd):

- Artistic Director, *Music Box: The Ong Teng Cheong Concert*, for The Esplanade Company, 2004
A programme of new music by young Singapore composers and musicians, in celebration of "living music".
- Project Manager, *Inauguration of the Esplanade Pipe Organ*, for The Esplanade Company, 2002
Coordinated education programme for young musicians and students to learn about and write for pipe organ.
- Organiser, *First Aid for Choirs and Conductors*
A series of workshops and clinics designed to grow the local choral scene; launched in 2002.
- Artistic Director, *Asia South Pacific Symposium on Choral Music*, Singapore, 2001
Presented 26 clinicians and 10 choirs from the Asia Pacific region in a week-long symposium of performances, lecture-demonstrations, masterclasses and workshops.

Artistic Director/Conductor

2005 – present

Singapore Management University Chamber Choir, Singapore

Responsibilities include:

- Articulating the long-range artistic vision of the choir, and implementing this through annual artistic plans,
- Scheduling, planning, programming and directing rehearsals and performances,
- Overseeing community engagement projects.

Artistic Director

2014 – present

Singapore International Choral Festival, Singapore

Annual choir festival-competition with education component.

Responsibilities include: curating the opening concert, formulating competition rules, selecting the jury and moderating jury discussions.

Lecturer/Conductor, Conservatory Chamber Singers

2015 – 2017

Yong Siew Toh Conservatory, Singapore

Choir Conductor, Various schools and institutions, Singapore

1996 – 2017

Chorus Director-in-Residence

2007 – 2009

Singapore Chinese Orchestra, Singapore.

Chorus Director

2005 – 2006

Singapore Lyric Opera, Singapore.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE (AD-HOC AND SHORT-TERM PROJECTS)

As Guest Conductor:

<i>Taichung Chamber Choir</i> , Taiwan	2023
<i>Cabin Fever</i> , London, England Strand Leader, Time Zone UTC+8 <i>Cabin Fever</i> by Esmeralda Conde Ruiz is a global, 24-hour performance with 288 different choirs in 24 different time zones taking place on Zoom. Each choir performs a 5-minute pandemic dream sequence that takes advantage of Zoom latency issues and the visuality of the Zoom grid.	2022
<i>Vancouver Chamber Choir</i> , Canada Concert title: <i>Bright Moon</i> (music of/for the Chinese diaspora)	2022
<i>Choralfest 2019</i> , Fremantle, Australia Delegate Choir #4 : short programme of music written for the SYC.	2019
<i>Taipei Song-Yung, For You</i> , Feng Chia University and <i>Taichung Chamber Choirs</i> , Taichung and Taipei, Taiwan 90-minute programme of new music and poly-choral music, focusing on music written for the SYC.	2017
<i>New Liszt Ferenc Chamber Choir</i> , Liszt Academy, Budapest, Hungary 60-minute programme of music written for the SYC.	2016
<i>Asia Pacific Youth Choir</i> , 10 th World Symposium on Choral Music, Seoul, Korea 30-minute programme of new music from the Asia Pacific region.	2014
<i>Gaia Philharmonic Choir</i> , Tokyo, Japan 40-minute programme of new music from the SYC repertoire.	2011
<i>En Musique l'An Neuf 2008</i> , Strasbourg, France 40-minute programme of new music from Asia.	2007
<i>Singapore Armed Forces Music and Drama Company</i> , Singapore Chamber Choir: 80-minute programmes of new music for male voices.	2004, 2005
<i>Japan Choral Association Junior Chorus Festival</i> , Tokyo, Japan Children's Choir Atelier: 20-minute programme of new music for treble choir.	2004
<i>Singapore Youth Festival</i> , Singapore Combined Schools Choirs: capsule programmes of new music for youth choirs.	2002, 2004

As Chorus Director:

<i>Flood of Beauty</i> (John Tavener), Esplanade Company, Singapore Coordinated, prepared and rehearsed a multi-choir work involving 120 singers from the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory and three community choirs.	2015
<i>The Celestial Web</i> (Tan Swie Hian), <i>Chingay Parade 2008</i> , Singapore. Multi-disciplinary work involving chinese orchestra, chorus, and calligraphist.	2008

As **Chorus Director** (cont'd):

Children's Chorus, <i>Turandot</i> (G A Puccini) Savonlinna Opera Festival production, for The Esplanade Company, Singapore.	2003
<i>Marco Polo and Princess Blue</i> (Liu Yuan), World Premiere, Singapore. Symphonic poem commissioned by the Singapore Chinese Orchestra for the Opening Festival of The Esplanade-Theatres on the Bay, Singapore.	2002
<i>Arion & the Dolphin</i> (Vikram Seth) Youth opera produced by the Singapore Symphony Orchestra, Singapore.	1996

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Teaching faculty, ChoralSpace International Academy for Choral Arts, Berlin, Germany	2021/2022
Choral Pedagogue/Conductor , various institutions, Singapore Planned and supervised the choral programme, including weekly rehearsals, vocal and musicianship training and development, and conducting, at the following institutions: <i>Convent of the Holy Infant Jesus</i> (2000-2017), <i>Dunman High School</i> (2004-2017), <i>Methodist Girls' School</i> (1997-2002), <i>River Valley High School</i> (2000-2017), <i>St Anthony's Canossian Secondary School</i> (2011-2017) and <i>Temasek Junior College</i> (1997-2017), among others.	1996 – 2017
Teaching faculty <i>Kodaly Seminar Asia</i> 10-day certification course for music pedagogues and choral conductors by the Kodaly Institute of the Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music, Budapest, Hungary, organised by the Young Musicians' Society, Singapore.	2009 – 2014
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducted Morning Sing sessions (30 mins. daily), Taught the Conducting modules (Levels 1 to 3) (3 hours daily). 	
Lecturer <i>Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, Singapore</i> Designed the curriculum for the Choral Training and Direction modules as well as the degree module Directed Studies in Choral Conducting.	2001 – 2008
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lecturer, Choral Training and Direction (modules I and II) Lecturer, Directed Studies in Choral Conducting 	
Guest principal lecturer <i>Lithuanian Conductors Summer Academy</i> , Vilnius, Lithuania Co-hosted by the Lithuanian Choral Union and the Lithuanian Folk Cultural Centre, Ministry of Culture. A week-long seminar on yoga for singers, rehearsal games and exercises for young choirs, and rehearsing/performing the choral music of Singapore. In attendance: 100 Lithuanian conductors and composers	2008

Short courses, workshops and clinics:

The Choral Studio by Jennifer Tham **2018 – present**

Workshops, Clinics, Lectures and Short Courses
Bespoke foundation courses and workshops on conducting, pedagogy, musicianship, ensemble training and vocal technique.

The Choral Studio went online during the pandemic, 2020-2021.

Choir clinics, Australia, Canada, China, Indonesia, Latvia, Poland, Russia, **2005 – present**

Singapore, South Africa, USA
Working with individual choirs and their conductors on intonation and blend, ensemble musicianship and communication.

Online webinars and workshops (platform: Zoom)

Sing a new song—performing new music, Taiwan Choral Association, Taiwan 2021

Curating & Programming for the SYC and Youth Choirs, Asian Choral Association

Warm-ups for Building Your Choir, World Youth Choir Festival, Jeju, Korea

Virtual Music Summer Camp 2, Colombo, Sri Lanka

Workshops: *Body Talk and Counting Games; Word painting and pictorialisms*

How to Build a Youth Choir, Africa Cantat Festival 2020, Nairobi, Kenya 2020

Rehearsal Technique, BCS World Virtual Choir Festival, Bandung, Indonesia

7 Tips for Rehearsing Your Choir, International Choir Festival Mundus Cantat, Sopot, Poland

Choralfest 2019, Fremantle, Australia 2019

Keynote: *Knee Plays* | On warm-ups and rehearsal preparation

Masterclass: *Conducting for Beginners*

Workshop: *Song Offerings* | Repertoire and reading session

Sing in tune! Sing in time! Conductors' Workshop, Bandung, Indonesia 2018

A two-day course on choral pedagogy, rehearsal technique and conducting

Rehearsal Technique: Games Choirs Play, Taipei and Taichung, Taiwan 2017

Ensemble musicianship workshops for choral conductors and music pedagogues

5th Symposium on Church Choral Music, Bandung, Indonesia 2016

Workshop: *Re-hearSING!* | three-day course on rehearsal strategy for choirs.

11th Busan Choral Festival and Competition, Busan, Korea 2015

Stanislaw Moniuszko Music Academy, Gdansk, Poland

Workshops: *Re-hearSING!* | Rehearsal games for choirs

Australian National Choral Association (WA), Perth, Australia 2015

Workshop: *Games Choirs Play*

Workshop: *Community Chorus: Singing Vivaldi's Gloria (RV589)*

Choir clinics: Working with the choirs and conductors of 7 different schools on singing and intonation, blend and ensemble musicianship.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE | Short courses, workshops and clinics (cont'd):

<i>Kodaly Autumn Seminar, Melbourne, Australia</i>	2015
<u>Workshop 1: Musicianship Level 2</u> (Pass the note, please; Move that <i>do</i> .)	
<u>Workshop 2: When words sing</u> (on graphic notation)	
<u>Workshop 3: Games Choirs Play I and Games Choirs Play II</u>	
<u>Workshop 4: Voice-Building for Choirs: Breath</u>	
<i>9th International Choir Festival Mundus Cantat Sopot, Poland</i>	2013
<u>Workshop: Born to Sing!</u> Healthy, resonant, vocal production	
<i>Symposium on Choral Music, Bandung, Indonesia</i>	2011
<u>Atelier: When words sing</u> A five-morning course on setting text to music, inspired by the work of R Murray Schafer.	
<u>Workshop: Re-hearSING!</u> Rehearsal games for choirs	
<i>Symposium on Choral Music, Tomohon, Indonesia</i>	2010
<u>Workshop: Re-hearSING!</u> Rehearsal games for choirs	
<u>Choir clinics:</u> Working with individual choirs and their conductors on choral intonation, blend, ensemble musicianship and craft.	
<i>3rd Symposium on Church Choral Music, Bandung, Indonesia</i>	2007
<u>Workshop 1: Conducting</u> The craft of beat and gesture	
<u>Workshop 2: Sing in tune!</u> Working on musical relationships	
<i>Singing in Choirs, Bandung and Jakarta, Indonesia</i>	2006
A week of workshops on breath and healthy vocal athleticism; and choir clinics: working with individual choirs and their conductors on choral intonation, blend, ensemble musicianship and craft.	
<i>1st Karuizawa Choral Festival, Karuizawa, Japan</i>	2005
<u>Lecture: The sensation of conducting</u>	
The conductor as singer, posture and the encouragement of breath; beats and patterns, planes and frames, cues.	
<i>The 2nd Symposium on Church Choral Music, Bandung, Indonesia</i>	2005
<u>Workshop 1: Foundation on Choral Development</u>	
1.1 Pitch (relative solmization) and Rhythm (counting games)	
1.2 Expressivity (text and its delivery) and Stagecraft	
<u>Workshop 2: Foundation on Vocal Development</u>	
2.1 Breath and the physiology of singing	
2.2 The physicality of singing: Kinetic solutions for vocal challenges	
<i>1st National Choral Seminar, National Arts Council, Singapore</i>	1999
<u>Masterclass: The children's choir – A pedagogical perspective</u>	
A short course on working with children's choirs: the role of a children's choir director, repertoire choice, vocal health and basic conducting technique.	
<u>Workshop: Voice production class: Posture and breathing</u>	

PRESENTATIONS, CONFERENCES AND SYMPOSIA

<i>Arts Leaders Retreat</i> , Centre for the Arts, National University of Singapore Speaker: <i>Arts leadership in a VUCA world</i>	2021
<i>MOE-NAC Master Artist Series <An afternoon with Jennifer Tham></i> , Singapore <u>Presentation and workshop</u> : <i>Pushing Boundaries</i> On the work of the SYC Ensemble Singers, musicianship training and how to develop a new music ensemble	2017
<i>Stanislaw Moniuszko Music Academy</i> , Gdansk, Poland <u>Lecture</u> : <i>West, meet East: The story of choral music in Singapore</i>	2015
<i>IFCM World Choral Summit</i> , Beijing, China <u>Presentation</u> : <i>Youth in Song – International Youth Choir Projects</i>	2012
<i>American Choral Directors' Association International Choral Academy</i> , Cincinnati, USA <u>Lecture</u> : <i>West, meet East: The story of choral music in Singapore</i>	2012
<i>Symposium ARS CHORALIS</i> , Zagreb, Croatia <u>Lecture</u> : <i>West, meet East: The story of choral music in Singapore</i>	2012
<i>9th World Symposium on Choral Music</i> , Puerto Madryn, Argentina <u>Roundtable Speaker</u> : <i>Contemporary compositions for children's choirs</i>	2011
<i>8th World Symposium on Choral Music</i> , Copenhagen, Denmark <u>Roundtable Speaker</u> : <i>The Business of Choral Music</i>	2008
<i>Voices of the Baltics</i> , 3 rd IFCM Multicultural Choral Conference, Tallinn, Estonia <u>Panel chair</u> : <i>The "Ethnic" Score: Interpretation and Culture</i> On the learning, teaching and conducting of ethnically-influenced scores from another culture.	2007
<i>Voices of Origin</i> , The Second IFCM Multicultural and Ethnic Conference, Jokkmokk, Sweden <u>Moderator</u> : <i>The "Ethnic" Score: From Pen to Print</i> On questions of authorship, ethics and publishing practices.	2003

PANELS, COMMITTEES AND JURIES

Foundation for the Arts and Social Enterprise, Singapore
Advisory Council, The Music Commissioning Series **2020 – present**

National Arts Council, Singapore
Advisor, serving/served on the following panels: **1998 – present**

- Major Company Scheme (Grants)
- Cultural Medallion and Young Artist Award
- Scholarships and Bursaries (Music)
- Arts Education Programmes
- Singapore Festival of Arts
- Choral Advisory Panel

Assessor (Music)

Evaluates performances of groups receiving grants from the National Arts Council.

International Federation for Choral Music (IFCM)
Coordinator, IFCM Asia Pacific Working Committee **2008 – present**

- Organising regional choral summits to improve regional communications and encourage multi-national collaborations,
- Managing and organising the sessions for the Asia Pacific Youth Choir.

IFCM Board Member (2008 – 2014)

Work for IFCM includes:

- Chair, *IFCM Asia Pacific Choral Summit* (Macau, 2011)
- Member, *IFCM Communications and Publications Committee*
- Member of Working Group on *IFCM Vision, Strategy and Structure*
- Artistic committee, *7th World Symposium on Choral Music* (Kyoto, Japan, 2005)
- Artistic Director, *Asia South Pacific Symposium on Choral Music* (Singapore, 2001)

World Choir Council, Interkultur
Member, Singapore Representative, providing feedback and advice at Council meetings and serving on juries at the World Choir Games since 2006. **2005 - present**

Jury work (others):

10th Bali International Choir Festival (online), Bali, Indonesia **2021**
Rin-ku Chorus MICE Golden Age Choral Contest (online), Isumisano City, Japan
Vancouver Chamber Choir Young Composers Competition, Canada
World Youth Choir Festival & Competition (online), Jeju, Korea

International Choir Festival Mundus Cantat, Sopot, Poland **2020**
BCS World Virtual Choir Festival, Bandung, Indonesia
Armenian Little Singers Choral Composition Competition, Armenia

Jury work (cont'd):

<i>World Choir Championship, President of Jury, Tokyo, Japan</i>	2019
<i>Tokyo International Choir Competition, President of Jury, Tokyo, Japan</i>	
<i>International Chorus Review, Tampere Vocal Music Festival, Tampere, Finland</i>	
<i>34th Takarazuka International Chamber Chorus Contest, Takarazuka, Japan</i>	2018
<i>5th Bali International Choir Competition, Indonesia</i>	2016
<i>A Voyage of Songs, Penang, Malaysia</i>	2015
<i>11th Busan Choral Festival and Competition, Busan, Korea</i>	
<i>Bali International Choir Competition 2015, Indonesia</i>	
<i>44th Florilège Vocal de Tours, Tours, France</i>	
<i>11th International Choir Festival Mundus Cantat Sopot, Poland</i>	
<i>Pacific Basin Music Festival, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA</i>	2014
<i>Armenian Little Singers Choral Composition Competition, Armenia</i>	
<i>29th Takarazuka International Chamber Chorus Contest, Takarazuka, Japan</i>	2013
<i>11th China International Choral Festival, Beijing, China</i>	2012
<i>Tomohon International Choir Competition 2010, Indonesia</i>	2010
<i>3rd Grieg International Choral Festival, Bergen, Norway</i>	2009
<i>North Sulawesi International Choir Competition 2008, Manado, Indonesia</i>	2008
<i>Japan Choral Association National Choir Competition, Saitama, Japan</i>	2006
<i>Festival Paduan Suara XX ITB, Bandung, Indonesia</i>	
<i>'A Voyage of Songs' International Choral Competition, Shah Alam, Malaysia</i>	2005
<i>The 2005 Busan APEC Choral Festival & Competition, Busan, Korea</i>	
<i>Japan Choral Association Junior Chorus Festival, Tokyo, Japan</i>	2004
<i>8th International Chamber Choir Competition Marktoberdorf, Germany</i>	2003

other information

- **Music writer**

Arts Magazine, Esplanade Diary + (The Esplanade Company, Singapore)
Interviews with Berliner Barock Solisten, Jessye Norman, Sumi Jo; article on Baroque music.

International Choral Bulletin (the IFCM quarterly), *the Arts* (NUS Centre for the Arts publication),
trade journals (Australian National Choral Association, Japan Choral Association)
Articles on choral life in Singapore, on conducting, and the music of the SYC.

Programme notes

Concerts of The Esplanade Company's *Spectrum*, *Pedals and Pipes*, and *Classics* series.

- **Producer-host**

Voices, a 10-programme series on choral music, for Passion 99.5FM, Singapore's Arts Radio station.

- Member of the American Choral Directors Association, the International Federation of Choral Music and European Choral Association.