

Catherine Fender (born in 1969)

French choir conductor, voice, choral singing and choir conducting teacher, Catherine Fender is enthusiastic about the living character of the wonderful instrument “choir”: its mobility, its fragility, its power, its expressive and emotional potential. She likes to combine the pleasures of music, literature, the sounds of languages to tame, and of course, artistic and human issues. She is a famous choir conductor and teacher on both sides of the Rhine.

Her activities are extremely varied and nourished by more than 30 years of experience in all the fields where choral art unfolds and reinvents itself: at all ages, with beginners as well as professionals, locally or internationally, at school, on stage, in church, in the theater, in the areas of initial or professional training. She is in demand for many training courses and workshops focused on pedagogy, interpretation and choir direction.



Passionate about the connection between bodily gesture and sound, she supervises master classes, particularly within the framework of the *Chœur 3 academy* (France-Germany Switzerland) of which she is a founding member. She is closely interested in the music of languages and international phonetics.

As a singer, she notably represented France in the *World Youth Choir* in 1995, she sang in amateur and professional ensembles and has continued to train both in terms of vocal technique, voice pedagogy and its anatomical and phonetic aspects.

Since 2020, she has returned to teaching with children and young people, she directs the choirs of the *Lausanne School of Music* (EML) and develops partnerships with prestigious institutions: *Lausanne Opera*, *Lausanne Vocal Ensemble*, *Lausanne Chamber Orchestra* ...

Inventive

She arranges and composes for her ensembles and for her students, she has responded to some writing commissions.

She often integrates stage work, dance, movement, theater or visual arts into her projects.

The strong points of her artistic identity are the coherence and originality of the concert programs she designs. She embraces the most diverse aesthetics and styles, always seeking meaning, coherence, emotion and a form of accomplishment. She likes to invite the audience to get involved in the concert in one way or another.

- **Brahms choral theater project** with her ensemble Ksàng <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dPRH-eT6aSE>

- **To Touch the sky** with her ensemble Ksàng : a musical project designed for the 500th anniversary of a church spire, involving a choir, the church bells, a commissioned piece for choir, bells percussions and string quartet, and a dancer.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OH7YWkImcZc&t=7s>



She conducted the *Alsace Youth Choir*, awarded at the *Florilège Vocal de Tours*, as well as the female vocal ensemble *Plurielles*, awarded at the *Concours National du Florilège Vocal de Tours* in 2003 and winner 2006 *Alsace Foundation Encouragement Prize*.

The Region Alsace gave her the opportunity to found the *Atelier vocal d'Alsace* ensemble whose high-level sessions brought together experienced and motivated amateur singers. Numerous creations and staged choral shows have seen the day thanks to her work with stage director Wolfgang Beuschel (D)

She founded project choirs such as *Lift up your Voice* with the talented American singer Theresa Thomason and a professional jazz trio and other ensembles created on demand for Festivals or specific demands.

In 2015 she created her project choir *Ksàng – les voix à suivre* where she builds programs out of the beaten track for the greatest pleasure of the singers and the audience.



Master Classes

Catherine Fender is strongly involved in a cross-border dynamic of reflection and training actions on the theme of Gesture and Sound within the framework of the tri-national academy *Choeur 3* (D) of which she is a founding member.

She regularly supervises, in the three countries, master classes in choir conducting with H. M. Beuerle (D) (deceased In 2015), Raphael Immoos (CH) , Georg Grün (D) Frank Markowitsch (D), Michael Alber (D)...

She took part as associate conductor in 2021 and 2023 at the ACTE J, *Trinational Choral Academy of Excellence for Young People*, in collaboration with the professional vocal ensembles Les Métaboles (dir. Léo Warynski - F), the Basler Madrigalisten (dir. Pr Raphael Immoos - CH) and Vokalakademie Freiburg (dir. Frank Markowitsch - D)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J-tHmGrUI2A&t=191s>

Workshops

For more than 25 years, she has been running numerous educational, technical and stylistic training courses with varied content for all audiences. She is asked to speak during meetings, internships, training, juries of international competitions.

She offers workshops on the following themes...

- Choir direction the link between Gesture and Sound
- How to build a concert program? tools and experience sharing
- How to warm up ? The physical and vocal preparation of the choirs
- Tools for conductors about intonation and sound research with choir singers
- Nordic music for female voices / for mixed voices
- African-American spiritual music (history and repertoire)
- German romantic music for a cappella choir
- 150 years of French choral music from Saint-Saëns to the emergent composers
- The movement , the movement on stage, serving the sound of the choir
- Music of languages and phonetics
- French pronunciation for singers : rules and tools for non-speaking-French singers
- German pronunciation for singers : rules and tools for non-speaking-German singers
- Sacred music in Latin ? Italian, German and Gallican Latin pronunciation



Organisations

Catherine Fender gave workshops with many organisations such as :

- **French Institute for Choral Arts IFAC**, Institut Français d'Art Choral (F)
- **Regional Music Center – Strasbourg** (F) Cadence, pôle musical régional (F)
- **European Youth Choir Festival EJCF** -Basel (CH)
- **Education** :Primary teachers an music teachers in France and Switzerland
- **Young musicians Federation in Germany AMJ** Arbeitskreis Musik in der Jugend (D)
- **European Institute for Choral Singing** in Luxembourg INECC (L)
- **Choral Festival « les Choralies »** Choralies de Vaison la Romaine - À Coeur Joie) (F)
- **Europa Cantat &Europa Cantat Junior Junior** (D)
- **Music Akademy in South Germany** Landesakademie Ochsenhausen (D)
- **Center for Choral music** - Cpravoi (F)
- **Music and Handicap** Musique et Handicap (F)
- **Canada's national bilingual choral Conference and Festival PODIUM Montréal** (canceled/ Covid)
- **LeoSings** - Diversity of singing practices in Europe
- **European Music Festival for Young People EMJ** Neerpelt (BE)

...





Some high level musical experiences

Catherine Fender was for 3 years **Artist in residence** at the [Dominicains de Haute-Alsace](#) in Guebwiller (National Scene) – Creation of choral music shows, directed by **Wolfgang Beuschel** CH). Creation and recording of the show *Mémoires vives* - cross over with folk repertoire – Women Ensemble Plurielles, the musicians of *L'assoce Pikante*, the Swedish composer and choir director **Gunnar Eriksson**

Writing commission for the Maîtrise du [Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles](#) - *Un Noël nouvelet* published by À Cœur Joie Edition. A Christmas piece for upper voices and harp.

Campra Requiem with Ensemble 3 and Pr. Hans-Michael Beuerle a [discographic recording](#) released by CARUS. 2015 (She prepared the choir)

Original Soundtrack In 2022, she wrote the experimental vocal music for Serge Steyer's documentary film [Les Aventuriers d'un match perdu](#), broadcast on France Television and Canal +.

Monteverdi Vespro della beata Virgine with [La Chapelle Rhénane](#), dir. Benoit Haller Preparation of the choir in 2023 for 6 concerts in the Christmas Festival Les Noëlies. (F)

Lausanne Opera Preparation of choirs (children and adults) for Werther by Massenet, (2022) Pinocchio by Gloria Bruni, 2023 and Carmen by Bizet, mai 2025

Mozart Great Mass in C minor Preparation of choirs for **The Mulhouse Symphony Orchestra** (septembre 2024) Concerts in local famous festivals.



Explore

Catherine Fender explored the field of **movement as a tool intended to support vocal gesture**. She has supervised numerous training courses in pairs with teaching professionals Jacques Dalcroze. These experiences have allowed him to build a rich palette of inventive educational tools, which draw on the resources of the imagination, are inscribed in the body and movement and are transmitted with joy and humor.

She explored polyphonic improvisation techniques, based on play, invention and spontaneity. Her meeting with **Gunnar Eriksson** in 2008 was decisive, it opened up new perspectives for her, taking the drama out of “composition”, stimulating her creativity both in terms of her personal production (arrangements or compositions) and in her daily life as a teacher.

Her experiences and the design of shows and concerts with professionals in movement (Qi Qong), acting, directing, theater, staging or choreography (Eve Ledig - le fil rouge Théâtre, Wolfgang Beuschel (CH), Jean Lorrain (F), Laura de Nercy (F) ...) allowed her to acquire skills which she in turn transmits in the concern she has for the presence of the singer to his audience, taking into account that **singing is above all, an act of communication, of expression which is part of a space to be inhabited, for an audience to be conquered.**

She is comfortable in a wide spectrum of musical aesthetics, she is curious about the new sounds offered by foreign languages and thus dares to explore lesser-visited repertoires, from tradition to innovation, from ancient music to emerging music.

A voice, a body

She studied singing at the Strasbourg Conservatory, then privately with several teachers and coaches.

Her knowledge of vocal anatomy and her skills in conducting warm-ups mean she is regularly called upon to give workshops for choir conductors and singers.

She considers that bodily and vocal preparation is fundamental, it constitutes the cement for the construction of a choir, both for the development of its sound and for the listening links that it creates and strengthens between the members of the choir.



Languages

French
Alsatian dialect

Languages studied and spoken:

fluent German

fluent English

Swedish basic conversation

Some Italian

Basic knowledge of pronunciation: Spanish, Czech, Danish, Norwegian, Finnish...

Good knowledge of the international phonetic alphabet

CONTACT

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