

PRESS RELEASE



Kerstin Behnke and Kancatala Ensemble Choir Concert Brings Cross-Cultural Harmony

JAKARTA – Goethe-Institut Indonesien featured Kerstin Behnke, an esteemed German female choir conductor, in a concert in collaboration with an independent choir community in Jakarta, Kancatala Ensemble, at GoetheHaus Jakarta on Thursday, 31 July 2025. The performance featured and invited the audience to sing along to a number of arrangements by renowned composers.

Kerstin Behnke is a professor of choral and ensemble conducting at the FRANZ LISZT University of Music in Weimar. She is the artistic director of the via-nova choir in Munich, with which she won one of two first prizes in the Mixed Choirs category at the 2018 German Choir Competition and was awarded the Bavarian State Prize for Music.

"Under the direction of Kerstin Behnke, this program takes on new relevance within Indonesia's dynamic and growing choral scene. Her presence offers not just technical refinement, but a renewed approach to what it means to participate in the exercise of singing together," said Dr. Ingo Schöningh, Regional Head of Cultural Programmes at Goethe-Institut Southeast Asia, Australia and New Zealand.

A total of ten songs were performed, including 'Earth' by Katerina Gimon, 'Schöne Fremde' by Fanny Hensel, 'I praised the tender Flower' by Gerald Finzi, and 'Adieu, sweet Amaryllis' by John Wilbye. In this concert, Kerstin Behnke and the Kancatala Ensemble also invited the audience to sing along to two songs, namely "Bungong Jeumpa" and "Die Vogelhochzeit".

Kerstin Behnke explained, "Inviting the audience to sing along may feel unexpected, but it's rooted in musical and human tradition: singing together intensifies the concert experience and turns listeners into participants and creates a sense of community. The call-and-response between a lead voice and a group is one of the most ancient forms of musical exchange and it still resonates deeply within us today. It is a gentle invitation to engage with voice and body, to become part of the sound that connects us all, and to simply enjoy making music together."

The songs that were performed offered the audience a chance to figuratively give ear to blooming flowers, trace the silent path of a tiger, and follow the gentle murmurs of water rendered in the performances. This program not only highlighted enhanced local musical abilities and stage presence but also demonstrated the broader transformative impact of the program, made possible through cross-cultural musical dialogue.

Elizabeth Soegiharto, Programme Coordinator at Goethe-Institut Indonesien, added, "This concert is expected to be the starting point for the return of choir programmes to the Goethe-Institut Indonesien stage, as well as encouraging sustainable initiatives that can support choirs, musicians and choir communities in Indonesia in strengthening cultural dialogue through music. As part of the sustainability efforts of this programme, we plan to hold an open call and organise training for choir conductors next year."

###

Goethe-Institut

Jl. Sam Ratulangi 9-15
Jakarta 10350

Contact

Ryan Rinaldy
Public Relations Manager
Goethe-Institut Jakarta
Ryan.Rinaldy@goethe.de
M / WA +62 811 1911 1988
www.goethe.de/indonesia

www.goethe.de

**GOETHE
INSTITUT**

Sprache. Kultur. Deutschland.



BIOGRAPHY

Kerstin Behnke is a professor of choral and ensemble conducting at the FRANZ LISZT University of Music in Weimar. Previously, she taught choral conducting for four years at the Lübeck University of Music. She completed her studies in orchestral conducting at the Berlin University of the Arts under Professor Mathias Husmann, after having first studied school music at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater Hamburg in her hometown of Hamburg. Kerstin Behnke is the artistic director of the via-nova choir in Munich, with which she won one of two first prizes in the Mixed Choirs category at the 2018 German Choir Competition and was awarded the Bavarian State Prize for Music. As a guest conductor, she has worked with, among others, the New Japan Philharmonic Orchestra, the Cottbus State Philharmonic, the choir and orchestra of the Almaty Philharmonic, and the Konzerthaus Orchestra Berlin. For over 15 years, she also led the Berliner Cappella, with which she regularly performed in Berlin's major concert halls.

Kancatala Ensemble is an independent choir community in Jakarta that was established on March 9, 2019, which coincides with National Music Day. The name "Kancatala" comes from 'kanca' which means friend, and 'tala' which means tone. This community bridges experienced choir singers with the general public. Consisting of singers who take on the role of educators, Kancatala Ensemble invites the public to experience the joy of singing together through interactive programs, such as the Paduan Suara Kawan Nada program that invites the general public to perform in the choir without audition - initiated at the Serangkai Harum Harmoni concert in 2024 and interactive singing activities held at the Jakarta Future Festival in 2025, as well as #NyanyiBarengLebihSeru at Lapangan Banteng in 2022.

###

About Goethe-Institut

The Goethe-Institut is the Federal Republic of Germany's cultural institute, active worldwide. We promote the study of German abroad and encourage international cultural exchange. We also provide a comprehensive image of Germany through information on German political, social, and cultural life. Our various cultural and educational programs support intercultural dialogue and enable cultural participation. These various programs strengthen the structures of civil society and support global mobility.

For press inquiries:

Ryan Rinaldy
Public Relations Manager
Goethe-Institut Jakarta
Ryan.Rinaldy@goethe.de
M / WA +62 811 1911 1988

www.goethe.de

**GOETHE
INSTITUT**

Sprache. Kultur. Deutschland.