



# Building Bridges *and* Transforming Lives *through the* Power of Music

San José, Costa Rica | June 17-22, 2026

## Pura Vida Costa Rica Choral Festival



Artistic Director &  
Conductor

**Dr. Pearl Shangkuan**  
National President-elect  
of the American Choral  
Directors Association  
(ACDA)



Composer-in-  
Residence &  
Conductor

**Mr. Jake Runestad**  
Composer & Conductor

# The Setting



## The Artistic Experience

Join us for a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to perform together with singers of the ACDA Costa Rica Chapter Chorus under the baton of Pearl Shangkuan and Jake Runestad in San José, Costa Rica. Jake Runestad will conduct some of his own compositions while Pearl Shangkuan will select and conduct music from Central America, Europe, and the U.S. This unique event will bring together choirs from both countries, creating a vibrant platform for cross-cultural musical exchange. The festival will culminate in a breathtaking gala concert in San José, where voices from both nations will merge in a stunning, shared musical experience. This immersive journey promises to challenge and inspire every participant, while offering an opportunity to deeply engage with Costa Rica's rich cultural heritage. Through music, you will not only connect with talented musicians from around the world but also forge lasting friendships and create memories for a lifetime.

## Costa Rica

Costa Rica is a country rich in music and culture, where history, tradition, and innovation create a vibrant soundscape. The country's musical heritage dates back to the colonial era, when European rhythms brought by the Spanish mingled with the indigenous beats of the region. These influences blended to form a distinctive style of folkloric music unique to Costa Rica. The nation's commitment to the arts is evident in its thriving choral scene, including the prestigious National Symphony Chorus and a wealth of children's, school, university, and community choirs. Music plays an integral role in the lives of Costa Ricans, with a deep sense of community and cultural pride expressed through song. In addition to its musical traditions, Costa Rica is renowned for its ecological leadership, which has inspired eco-tourism. The country's natural beauty—rainforests, rivers, mountains, and beaches—provides a stunning backdrop for musical performances, further blending cultural and environmental strengths. With its blend of musical history, choral excellence, and dedication to sustainability, Costa Rica offers a harmonious experience for music lovers and eco-tourists alike.



## The Organizers: Perform International

*“Building Bridges and Transforming Lives through the Power of Music”*

Music and travel are a powerful combination. That is why Perform International has curated a team with a passion and expertise in both. We desire to bring the transformative power of international travel and performance to your program and your ensemble.

We see every trip and festival as an opportunity to celebrate the unique character of each musician while building a sense of unity and belonging through the universal language of music.

Your passion is our priority. Whether you've begun planning or are still dreaming, **our expertise will make your ideal performance and travel experience a reality.** From our first call until you return home, we will be your proactive partner, allowing you to focus on what matters most—your people and your program.

We look forward to working alongside you to create a memorable, meaningful, and cost effective tour for your choir, band, or orchestra.

# Faculty



**Dr. Pearl  
Shangkuan**

*Artistic Director &  
Conductor*

**Dr. Pearl Shangkuan** is a highly sought-after conductor, lecturer and clinician who has led performances and workshops on six continents. She is the National President-elect of the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA), having previously served on the Board of Directors of Chorus America, as well as ACDA central division president and ACDA Michigan state president. She is the chorus director of the Grand Rapids Symphony, a Grammy-nominated professional orchestra and Professor Emerita of Music at Calvin University in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Appointed in 2022 as the Editor of Hinshaw Music, a major choral music publisher in North America, she also has a signature choral series with earthsongs and is the music editor of the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship Choral series published by GIA. She has conducted several times at Carnegie Hall and other major concert halls in the US and was an invited guest lecturer at the World Symposium for Choral Music held in Seoul, South Korea. Her guest conducting engagements regularly take her to Europe, Asia, and across North America.

Dr. Shangkuan has served on the jury of several international choral competitions in Europe and Asia and has led conducting masterclasses for the ACDA national and Chorus America conferences. She has also been artist-in-residence for various prominent graduate music programs and institutions across the US. She has conducted numerous All State choirs, ACDA national and division honor choirs, and choral festivals nationally and internationally and has headlined several ACDA state and other professional conferences. She has commissioned and premiered numerous choral works and her choirs have performed at ACDA national, division and state conferences.

The Michigan YWCA honored her with its Arts Tribute Award in 2007. In 2013, Michigan ACDA honored her with the Maynard Klein Choral Award for “artistic excellence and lifetime leadership in choral music.” In 2020, she received a Calvin University Award for Excellence in Teaching. In 2023, the National Collegiate Choral Organization (NCCO) gave her its Honorary Life Member Award for “distinguished leadership and extraordinary service to the choral community, both nationally and internationally.”



**Mr. Jake  
Runestad**

*Composer-in-Residence  
& Conductor*

Considered “one of the best of the younger American composers” (Chicago Tribune), EMMY®-winning and GRAMMY®-nominated composer and conductor **Jake Runestad** has received commissions and performances from leading ensembles and organizations such as VOCES8, Washington National Opera, the Los Angeles Master Chorale, the Munich Radio Orchestra, the Dallas Symphony Orchestra & Chorus, the Pacific Symphony & Chorale, True Concord Voices & Orchestra, the National Chorus of Korea, the Bavarian Radio Choir, the Netherlands Radio Choir, the Philippine Madrigal Singers, Seraphic Fire, the Santa Fe Desert Chorale, and many more. “The Hope of Loving,” the first album dedicated to Jake’s choral music, recorded by professional American choir Conspirare, received a GRAMMY® nomination. In 2019, Jake became one of the youngest composers ever awarded the prestigious Raymond C. Brock commission by the American Choral Directors Association. “Earth Symphony,” Jake’s groundbreaking choral symphony written with librettist Todd Boss, earned a 2022 EMMY® Award for musical composition. Jake’s visceral music and charismatic personality have fostered a busy schedule of commissions, residencies, workshops, and conducting engagements, enabling him to share his passion for creativity, expressivity, and community with musicians around the world.

Dubbed a “choral rockstar” by American Public Media, Jake is one of the most frequently performed composers of concert music. His thoughtful and compelling works “that speak to some of the most pressing and moving issues of our time” (Star Tribune), have been heard in thousands of performances across the globe. Jake Runestad holds a Master’s degree in composition from the Peabody Conservatory of the Johns Hopkins University where he studied with Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Kevin Puts. Find out more at: [JakeRunestad.com](http://JakeRunestad.com)



June 17-22, 2026

## Pura Vida Costa Rica Choral Festival

### Tour Itinerary

#### **DAY 1 - Monday, June 17, 2026 - Departure USA, Arrival San José, Welcome Dinner**

Arrive in Costa Rica, meet your Tour Manager and driver, and check into your hotel. Welcome dinner at Mirador Tiquicia for all participating groups. Overnight in San José.

#### **DAY 2 - Tuesday, June 18, 2026 - Rehearsals, Lankaster Gardens**

Breakfast at the hotel. Morning rehearsals with Dr. Shangkuan and Mr. Runestad. Lunch included. Afternoon visit to Lankaster Gardens. Dinner. Evening rehearsals and overnight in San José.

#### **DAY 3 - Wednesday, June 19, 2026 - Rehearsals, Costa Rican Music Workshop**

Breakfast at the hotel. Morning rehearsals. Lunch included. Workshop on Costa Rican music. Dinner. Rehearsals and overnight at the hotel.

#### **DAY 4 - Thursday, June 20, 2026 - Doka Coffee Tour, La Paz Waterfall, Spotlight Concert**

Breakfast at the hotel. Doka coffee tour including lunch. Afternoon visit to La Paz Waterfall Garden. Spotlight concert for all choirs with balanced ensembles. Dinner on own. Overnight at the hotel.

#### **DAY 5 - Friday, June 21, 2026 - Free Morning, Dress Rehearsal, Gala Concert**

Breakfast at the hotel. Free morning. Dress rehearsal. Gala concert with choirs from the USA and Costa Rica. Farewell dinner with all choirs. Overnight in San José.

#### **DAY 6 - Saturday, June 22, 2026 - Depart San José, Start Post Festival Tour Programs**

Breakfast at the hotel. Transfer to the airport for return flight to the USA or on an extension tour to Manuel Antonio, La Fortuna, or other parts of Costa Rica.

### Pre/Post Festival Tour Programs

Optional pre- and post-tours for groups of 20 and more passengers are available including additional individual performance opportunities for balanced ensembles. All of PI's pre/post tours are fully customized to each choir's specific needs. Following are some examples:

#### **Tour B**

Post tour extension to Manuel Antonio National Park. Spend two nights enjoying the National Park area with several optional activities available while you are there. Located on Costa Rica's central Pacific coast, the park encompasses rugged rainforest, white-sand beaches and coral reefs. It's renowned for its vast diversity of tropical plants and wildlife, from three-toed sloths and endangered white-faced capuchin monkeys to hundreds of bird species.

#### **Tour C**

Post tour extension to La Fortuna. Spend two nights enjoying the hot springs, volcano views and eco-tourism adventures available in this part of Costa Rica. La Fortuna is known as a gateway to Arenal Volcano National Park. The Arenal Volcano is still laced with lava flows and hot springs can be found at the foot of the volcano, on the thermal Tabacón River. The dormant Chato Volcano has a crater lake and rainforest trails leading to La Fortuna Waterfall with its natural pool.