

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 contribution to the growth and development of Singapore choral music and choirs.	2011
Young Artist Award (Music) Conferred by the National Arts Council, for award-winning work with the Singapore Youth Choir.	1992

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 1986–** **Artistic Director/Conductor**
SYC Ensemble Singers (SYC), Singapore
An auditioned community ensemble of 24–30 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.
- 2005–** **Artistic Director/Conductor**
Singapore Management University Chamber Choir, Singapore
- 1996–2024** **Artistic Director**
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. In addition to directing the SYC Ensemble Singers, responsibilities include(d):
- 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.
 - Organiser, *First Aid for Choirs and Conductors*
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
26 clinicians and 10 choirs from the Asia Pacific region in a week-long symposium of performances, masterclasses, lectures and workshops.
- 2014–2023** **Artistic Director**, *Singapore International Choral Festival*, Singapore
- 2015–2017** **Lecturer/Conductor**, Conservatory Chamber Singers
Yong Siew Toh Conservatory, Singapore
- 1996–2017** **Choir Conductor**, Various schools and institutions, Singapore

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE | Ad-hoc and short-term projects (a selection)

Conductor:

- 2024 *Excelsis*, Melbourne, Australia
90-min. program of music from Asia
Taichung Chamber Choir, Taichung, Taiwan
Magic Songs : 90-min. program of contemporary choral music
Mzansi Choral Conductors Convention, Cape Town, South Africa
Convention Youth Choir : short program of music from Singapore and Malaysia
- 2023 Rita Ueda, *I Have My Mother's Eyes*, Vancouver, Canada
A Holocaust Memoir Across Generations, chamber opera
for soprano, mezzo-soprano, shō, shakuhachi, koto + bass koto, piano, violin and cello
- 2022 *Vancouver Chamber Choir*, Canada
Bright Moon : 70-min. program of music of/for the overseas Chinese
BC Chinese Music Ensemble, Vancouver, Canada
Recording : Rita Ueda, *Hummingbird in Winter* for Chinese ensemble
- 2019 *Choralfest 2019*, Fremantle, Australia
Delegate Choir #4 : short program of music written for the SYC
- 2017 *Taipei Song-Yung, For You, Feng Chia University and Taichung Chamber Choirs*,
Taichung and Taipei, Taiwan
90-min. program of new polychoral music and music written for the SYC
- 2016 *New Liszt Ferenc Chamber Choir*, Liszt Academy, Budapest, Hungary
60-min. program of music written for the SYC
- 2014 *Asia Pacific Youth Choir*, 10th World Symposium on Choral Music, Seoul, Korea
30-min. program of new music from the Asia Pacific region
- 2011 *Gaia Philharmonic Choir*, Tokyo, Japan
40-min. program of new music from SYC repertoire
- 2007 *En Musique l'An Neuf 2008*, Strasbourg, France
40-min. program of new music from Asia

Chorus Director:

- 2015 *Flood of Beauty* (John Tavener), Esplanade Company, Singapore
Coordinated and rehearsed the polychoral spatialised work with 120 singers from
three community choirs and the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory
- 2008 *The Celestial Web* (Tan Swie Hian), *Chingay Parade 2008*, Singapore.
Multi-disciplinary work involving chinese orchestra, chorus, and calligraphist

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- 2021/2022 **Teaching faculty, ChoralSpace**
International Academy for Choral Arts, Berlin, Germany
- 1996–2017 **Choral Pedagogue/Conductor**, various institutions, Singapore
Designed and directed the choral program at various high schools and junior colleges, including planning a 30-week syllabi, weekly rehearsals, vocal and musicianship training and development, mentoring student conductors.

Select schools: *Convent of the Holy Infant Jesus* (2000-2017), *Dunman High School* (2004-2017), *Methodist Girls' School* (1997-2002), *River Valley High School* (2000-2017), *St Anthony's Canossian Secondary School* (2011-2017) and *Temasek Junior College* (1997-2017).
- 2009–2014 **Teaching faculty**
Kodaly Seminar Asia
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.
- Conducted daily Morning Sing sessions
 - Taught Conducting modules (Levels 1 to 3)
- 2001–2008 **Lecturer**
Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, Singapore
Directed the Chamber Choir and Chorus modules; designed the curriculum for the Choral Training and Direction modules as well as the degree module Directed Studies in Choral Conducting.
- Lecturer, Choral Training and Direction (modules I and II)
 - Lecturer, Directed Studies in Choral Conducting
- 2008 **Guest principal lecturer**
Lithuanian Conductors Summer Academy, Vilnius, Lithuania
Co-hosted by the Lithuanian Choral Union and the Lithuanian Folk Cultural Centre, Ministry of Culture.
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

TEACHING EXPERIENCE | Short courses, workshops and clinics (selected)

Since 2005 I have developed and taught short courses and workshops on conducting, rehearsal strategy, choral pedagogy (musicianship and ensemble skills), voice, new music, and the sound world of R Murray Schafer.

- 2025 Courses/workshops for Chorus Taiwan, Taichung Choral Centre, Taiwan:
Solfège 1—Know your ‘do’. *Solfège 2—Change that ‘do’!*
Teacher Training: How to prepare set pieces (Elementary + Junior High Schools)
BODY TALK and other new music for Equal Voices (repertoire workshop)
Wake up and sing! (1-day choir workshop, on Sivak, Alouette Meets Her Maker)
- 2024 *Sing Ireland 43rd International Choral Conducting Summer School*
 Irish World Academy of Music & Dance, Limerick, Ireland
 Tutor, Level 5 (Intermediate A)
- Rehearsal Games for Choirs*, Taichung, Taipei and Kaohsiung, Taiwan
The Soundscapes of R Murray Schafer, Taichung Choral Centre, Taiwan
- 2023 *World Symposium on Choral Music*, Istanbul, Turkey
Workshop: Games Choirs Play
- Island Voices*, Courtenay, British Columbia, Canada
Workshop-retreat: games and rehearsal strategies for Island Voices
- 2022 *Commissioning new music*, MuzikSEA, Singapore
Rehearsal Secrets, Taiwan Choral Association, Taiwan
- 2021 *Sing a new song—performing new music*, Taiwan Choral Association, Taiwan
Curating & Programming for 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
Online workshops: Body Talk and Counting Games; Word painting and pictorialisms
- 2020 Africa Cantat Festival 2020, Nairobi, Kenya
Online workshop: How to Build a Youth Choir
- 2019 *Choralfest 2019*, Fremantle, Australia
Keynote: Knee Plays | On warm-ups and rehearsal preparation
Masterclass: Conducting for Beginners
Workshop: Song Offerings | Repertoire and reading session
- 2018 *Sing in tune! Sing in time! Conductors’ Workshop*, Bandung, Indonesia
 Two-day course on choral pedagogy, rehearsal technique and conducting
- 2017 *Rehearsal Technique: Games Choirs Play*, Taipei and Taichung, Taiwan
- 2016 *5th Symposium on Church Choral Music*, Bandung, Indonesia
Workshop: Re-hearSING! | Three-day course on rehearsal strategy for choirs
- 2015 *11th Busan Choral Festival and Competition*, Busan, Korea
Stanislaw Moniuszko Music Academy, Gdansk, Poland
Workshops: Re-hearSING! | Rehearsal games for choirs

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

- 2015 *Australian National Choral Association (WA), Perth, Australia*
Workshop: *Games Choirs Play*
Workshop: *Community Chorus: Singing Vivaldi's Gloria (RV589)*
- Kodaly Autumn Seminar, Melbourne, Australia*
Workshop 1: *Musicianship Level 2 (Pass the note, please; Move that do.)*
Workshop 2: *When words sing* | On R Murray Schafer and graphic notation
Workshop 3: *Games Choirs Play I, Games Choirs Play II*
Workshop 4: *Voice-Building for Choirs: Breath*
- 2013 *9th International Choir Festival Mundus Cantat Sopot, Poland*
Workshop: *Born to Sing!* | Healthy, resonant, vocal production
- 29th Takarazuka International Chamber Chorus Contest, Takarazuka, Japan*
Atelier: *Mama-san Chorus* | Performing Brahms' *Ave Maria*, Chen Yi's *Night Thoughts*
- When words sing, Temasek Junior College, Singapore*
10-week program on voice, word painting, and composing choral etudes
- 2011 *Symposium on Choral Music, Bandung, Indonesia*
Atelier: *When words sing* | A five-day course on text-setting, inspired by R Murray Schafer
Workshop: *Re-hearSING!* | Rehearsal games for choirs
- 2010 *Symposium on Choral Music, Tomohon, Indonesia*
Workshop: *Re-hearSING!* | Rehearsal games for choirs
- 2007 *3rd Symposium on Church Choral Music, Bandung, Indonesia*
Workshop 1: *Conducting* | Craft of beat and gesture
Workshop 2: *Sing in tune!* | Working on musical relationships
- 2005 *1st Karuizawa Choral Festival, Karuizawa, Japan*
Lecture: *The sensation of conducting* | Conductor as singer, posture and breath, planes and frames, patterns and cues
- The 2nd Symposium on Church Choral Music, Bandung, Indonesia*
Workshop 1: *Foundation on Choral Development*
1.1 Pitch (relative solmization) and Rhythm (counting games)
1.2 Expressivity (text and its delivery) and Stagecraft
Workshop 2: *Foundation on Vocal Development*
2.1 Breath and the physiology of singing
2.2 The physicality of singing: Kinetic solutions for vocal challenges

PRESENTATIONS, CONFERENCES AND SYMPOSIA

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

PANELS, COMMITTEES AND JURIES

- 1998 – *National Arts Council, Singapore*
Various Panels, Assessor (Music).
- 2025— *Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music, National University of Singapore*
Member, **Governing Board**
- 2020 –2023 *Foundation for the Arts and Social Enterprise, Singapore*
Advisory Council, The Music Commissioning Series
- 2008 – *International Federation for Choral Music (IFCM)*
Co-Coordinator, IFCM Asia Pacific Working Committee
Responsibilities include:
- 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 included:
- 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)
- 2005 – *World Choir Council, Interkultur*
Member, Singapore Representative, providing feedback and advice at Council meetings and serving on jury at the World Choir Games since 2006.

PANELS, COMMITTEES AND JURIES | Juries (a selection)

- 2025 *1st Jakarta International Choral Festival, Jakarta, Indonesia*
Tokyo International Choir Competition, Japan
Taipei International Choral Competition, Taiwan
- 2024 *2024 Busan Choral Festival & Competition, Korea*
2024 Busan Choral Composition Competition, Korea
6th World Choral Festival & Competition in Jeju, Korea
- 2023 *12th Bali International Choir Festival, Indonesia*
Concours International Choral en Provence, La Seyne sur Mer, France
International Chorus Review (Jury President), Tampere Vocal Music Festival, Finland
18th International Chamber Choir Competition Marktoberdorf 2023, Germany
- 2022 *Taipei International Choral Competition (online), Taiwan*
World Youth Choir Festival & Competition (online), Jeju, Korea
11th International Krakow Choir Festival, Krakow, Poland
Pacific Basin Music Festival, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA
- 2021 *10th Bali International Choir Festival (online), Bali, Indonesia*
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
- 2020 *International Choir Festival Mundus Cantat (online), Sopot, Poland*
BCS World Virtual Choir Festival, Bandung, Indonesia
Armenian Little Singers Choral Composition Competition, Armenia
- 2019 *World Choir Championship (President of Jury), Tokyo, Japan*
Tokyo International Choir Competition (President of Jury), Japan
International Chorus Review, Tampere Vocal Music Festival, Finland
- 2018 *34th Takarazuka International Chamber Chorus Contest, Japan*
- 2016 *5th Bali International Choir Competition, Indonesia*
- 2015 *44th Florilège Vocal de Tours, France*
11th International Choir Festival Mundus Cantat Sopot, Poland
- 2014 *Pacific Basin Music Festival, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA*
Armenian Little Singers Choral Composition Competition, Armenia
- 2013 *29th Takarazuka International Chamber Chorus Contest, Japan*
- 2009 *3rd Grieg International Choral Festival, Bergen, Norway*
- 2006 *Japan Choral Association National Choir Competition, Saitama, Japan*
Festival Paduan Suara XX ITB, Bandung, Indonesia
- 2003 *8th International Chamber Choir Competition Marktoberdorf, Germany*

other information

- **Composer**

Recent works for choir; exploring spatialised sound, movement and theatre.

the body electric (2025) mixed chamber choir (dur. 40')

music Americ Goh, Diana Soh, Jennifer Tham, Christopher Clarke (music technologist)

text Walt Whitman, EE Cummings, Samuel Lee, Jennifer Tham

A memory-legacy project for SYC's 60th birthday, the choral theatre work explores sound and singing as an embodied endeavour, taking on the form of a symphonic poem in 9 episodes. Each episode re-captures musical memories in the form of sound-fragments or compositional devices from past commissioned work. Choir and audience "perform" together in the final episode—the audience provides a soundscape accompaniment to the choir's song using their mobile devices and a messaging interface.

re:site (2022) mixed chamber choir, reciters and signing poet-musician (dur. 30')

site-specific spatialised work exploring urban sanctuaries

Curious & Curiouser (2021) mixed chamber choir (dur. 30')

Choral suite exploring the sight of sound through choreographic gesture, movement and theatre.

I *water mist fog*

II *stretching pine across*

III *Score!*

IV *three reverberations on a line*

V *umbrella songs*

The sky is light! (2020) mixed youth choir (dur. 4')

When I sing (2019) treble/SSA + SATB choirs (dur. 5')

Double choir work, spatialised in the Venetian polychoral tradition.

Dark brown dog (2019) mixed vocal sextet (dur. 2')

- **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.

Program notes

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

- **Producer-host**

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