

LA VIA DEI CONCERTI

Our present times, marked by abysmal differences in wealth distribution that endanger the survival of a substantial portion of our planet's population, call for fundamental dialogue on social solidarity. Poverty, exploitation, and desperation affect peoples who live in depressed sectors of large urban areas or are forced to migrate massively.

This is not to say that economically advanced societies lack social sensitivity. They do tend to provide financial help to displaced and at risk populations. However, they feel uncomfortable being in too close contact with the poor and marginalized in our cities where human groups of all types converge. Nowadays our youngsters grow in a climate of intolerance towards the socially wronged and are left with incomprehension and conflict.

Solidarity today cannot be a misplaced value: it must happen *here* and *now*. Thus, the idea of creating an encounter of young people who come from underprivileged social conditions to perform music for "first world" audiences should not only awaken in spectators a fascination with the exotic but should also entice them to truly "metabolize" such concrete human proximity.

The **Via dei Concerti** project is named after the *Silk Road*, an artery that for centuries brought together economically, culturally, and socially diverse human groups by means of continuous contact person to person. Through human encounter between East and West, people had an opportunity for dialogue that occurred in parallel to a historical reality that would normally place them in confrontation against each other.

Via dei Concerti is a **youth, itinerant, intercultural music** festival. It is a **music** festival, where in a large group of choral singers, soloists, and dancers find common ground in the universal language of music and share with each other their own musical traditions; a **youth** festival, where performers of ages 16-23 explore various musical styles under the guidance of expert professors; an **itinerant** festival that reaches a wide audience not only in the large cities but in many areas of Italy, giving the young performers the opportunity to know the country's millenary artistic and cultural richness; a **multicultural** festival that assembles people from diverse musical, life, socio-cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds.

The Festival provides to young musicians a unique opportunity to share with one another their artistic experiences and live values in times when society is not always supportive of artistic endeavors. The young players bring with them their diverse ethnic backgrounds and their desire to join efforts as they search for a just, balanced society, a society that nurtures sensitivity, harmony, peace, and coexistence and looks forward to a future of universal integration.