



Elena Sharkova has been Artistic Director of Cantabile Youth Singers since 2004 and oversees all educational and performance aspects of the program, conducts the top choirs, and is the Artistic Advisor to Aria. She believes that choral music has tremendous power to bring humanity together despite age, social differences, or politics, and that young people are the best ambassadors of change, peace and unity.

A native of St. Petersburg, Russia, Elena received a Bachelor's degree in music education and piano and a graduate degree in conducting from the St. Petersburg Rimski-Korsakov State Conservatoire, alma mater to Tchaikovsky, Prokofiev, Schostakovich, and Balanchin. Appointed Chair of Choral Department at the conservatoire Preparatory Music School in 1989, she directed four children's choirs and developed an innovative curriculum combining singing, movement, and music learning. Continuing her career in the U.S., Elena has dedicated her work to building communities of all ages through joyful and meaningful music-making. Recognized as an inspirational, versatile and passionate conductor, music educator and clinician, Ms. Sharkova has directed professional, university, youth, and community choirs and orchestras in eighteen countries across Europe, North America, Asia, and the Middle East.

Elena arrived in the Bay Area in 1998 to join the music faculty at San Jose State University as the Director of Choral Studies, conducting choirs and teaching classes in voice, choral conducting, and music education. Ms. Sharkova is in her eighteenth year as the chorus master for Symphony Silicon Valley and has prepared over fifty major works.

Recognized for her deep and passionate interpretation of her country's vast choral repertoire, Ms. Sharkova has been frequently called to direct concert programs featuring sacred, secular, folk, and urban vocal legacy of the nation, spanning over a thousand years of its repertoire. Her most recent engagements have been with BBC Singers in London, UK, the male ensemble Chanticleer, Miami-based Seraphic Fire, Houston Chamber Choir and the legendary Kronos Quartet. Upcoming programs include a return conducting appearance with BBC Singers and BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra in 2018. Dedicated to promoting new and unknown Russian choral compositions, she has served as editor of the "Elena Sharkova Choral Series" for Carl Fischer Publishing since 2011.

Since 2016, Ms. Sharkova has been a member of the World Choral Council, an international advisory board of Interkultur, representing the U.S. Youth Choral Movement. As an international judge, she served at the 2016 World Choir Games and in 2017 at the Montreux Choral Competition.

Elena Sharkova is one of the busiest festival and honor choir conductors in North America. She has appeared as a guest conductor at New York City's Lincoln Center and Carnegie Hall, Chicago Orchestra Hall, San Francisco's Davies Hall, Washington DC Kennedy Center and others. Elena has conducted national, divisional and state honor choirs for ACDA, the National Association of Music Educators, Organization of American Kodály Educators, and the Association for Music in International Schools. In 2015, Ms. Sharkova received the profession's highest honor – conducting a National Honor Choir at the ACDA National Convention.