Choir in Focus

International Conference on the Concepts and Practices of Choral Singing
Lund, Sweden, October 17-20, 2012

This conference is organised by the network Choir in Focus in connection with Southern Choral Centre and Musik i Syd and supported by Allhemsstiftelsen. It will take place within the framework of Lund Choral Festival 2012 (http://www.lundchoralfestival.org/in-english/).

In order to make visible and available the contemporary dynamic development of choral research, this conference aims at encouraging communication between theory and practice. With the integration of the conference into Lund Choral Festival, the purpose is to highlight interdisciplinary investigations and interaction between practice-based and historical approaches in choral research. Researching choir culture demands and encourages a multitude of research strategies in different disciplines.

The papers focus the interaction of choral concepts and practices since the 18th century, especially on the following themes:

Keynote speakers:
Prof. Andreas C. Lehmann, Systematic Musicology and Music Psychology, University of Music, Würzburg, Germany
Prof. Karin Rehnqvist, Composition, Royal College of Music, Stockholm, Sweden

Venue: Department of Arts and Cultural Sciences, Lund University, Biskopsgatan 7, 22100 Lund, Sweden

Conference convenors: Dr. Ursula Geisler, Department of Arts and Cultural Sciences, Lund University and Dr. Karin Johansson, Malmö Academy of Music, Lund University.

Email: cif@korcentrumsyd.se
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| 9.00  | **Keynote: Karin Rehnqvist**  
Courage and resistance: Composing for choir  
Chair: Karin Johansson | **Keynote: Andreas Lehmann**  
From vocal grooming to female tenors: A music psychologist’s view of choir singing  
Chair: Ursula Geisler | | |
| 9.45  | **John Perkins**  
Choral Soundtrack to a Short Film – Interdisciplinary and Organic Processes  
Chair: Karin Johansson | **Soila Jaakkola**  
Aural Training Books for Adult Choir Singers Showing Six Paths to Meaningful Aural Training  
Chair: Ursula Geisler | | **Mary Black**  
‘Bouncing and dancing;’ the use of verbal imagery in choral directing  
Chair: Pia Bygdéus |
| 10.25 | **Coffee**  
Poster: Pedro Santos  
The sharing of themes between the choir and the orchestra in “Ljus av ljus” by Karin Rehnqvist  
Chair: Karin Johansson | **Coffee** | **Coffee** | |
| 10.40 | **Elfriede Moschitz**  
The a-cappella Choir Music in the Oeuvre of Giacinto Scelsi (1905-1988)  
Chair: Guillaume Lurton | **Joy Hill**  
The artistic impact on choral performance with young adult singers of newly composed music  
Chair: Martin Loeser | **Dag Jansson**  
Towards a holistic model of choral leadership  
Chair: Sverker Zadig |
| 11.20 | **Registration** | **Josephine Hoegaerts**  
Little citizens and ‘petites patries’: learning patriotism through choral singing in Antwerp in the late nineteenth century  
Chair: Guillaume Lurton | **Martin Ashley**  
1000 Years and 1000 Boys’ Voices: The crisis and radical challenge for choral singing  
Chair: Martin Loeser | **Lauren Holmes Frankel**  
The Tapiola Choir and Finnishness: Institutional and Government Support for Contemporary Music in Finland  
Chair: Sverker Zadig |
| 12.00 | **Lunch break**  
*Choir in Focus* Network meeting | **Lunch break** | **Light buffet** | |
| 13.00 | **Introduction Ann-Charlotte Carlén** | | | **Mihai Bejinariu**  
The avant-garde generation of the Romanian School of Choral Composition during the second half of the Twentieth Century  
Chair: Anne Haugland Balsnes |
| 13.15 | **Ursula Geisler/Karin Johansson**  
Swedish choral practice in the 20th century | | | |
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<td>A Practical Guide to 19th Century Choral-Orchestral Performance Practice</td>
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<td>Choral singing for a better life for persons with chronic illnesses</td>
<td>From the shtetl to the Gardens and beyond: identity and symbolic geography in Cape Town’s synagogue choirs</td>
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<td>“You may not sing - just mouth the words”: Exploration of the singing ensemble as a site for ‘non-singer’ identity formation in childhood</td>
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<td>How does 2 + 2 become 5, in a musical context?</td>
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<td>Figurative Speech and Imagery in Developing Children’s Choir Performance</td>
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<td>„Grüß Gott mit hellem Klang!“ The socio-political medialisation of bourgeois singing culture as exemplified by German films about choirs in the Weimar Republic</td>
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Abstracts

New choral-sociological studies concerning the choral society movement in the first half of 19th century

Alexander Arlt, Singers Museum, Feuchtwangen (Friedhelm Brusniak, Prof., Würzburg)

Early 19th century’s choral society movement is seen as a pacemaker of Germany’s modern civic society. During the reign of German nobility, it had gained the role of a concealed liberal opposition movement which has still been failed to be recognized even by youngest history. Thus the first German Singing Festival (Deutsches Sängерfest) in Frankfurt am Main 1838 with its encompassing transregional aspiration proved to be a milestone of German liberation movement on the way to 1848’s revolution and further on to the Frankfurt Parliament. Even the still existing “Mozart-Foundation” (Mozart- Stiftung) owes its formation to this singing festival and must, since its name giver also ranks as an outstanding representative of freemasonic mindscape, be seen in close context of the times’ political development as well.

Latest choral – historical and – sociological research, done in relation to an exhibition staged on occasion of the German Choral Society’s 150 year jubilee during the German Choir Festival of 2012 in Frankfurt a. M., does not only aim to reveal the deeper background of 1838’s singing festival and the neglected contacts to Swiss choral society movement as well as relations with composers such as H.G. Nägeli, F.X. Schnyder von Wartensee, L. Spohr and F.M. Bartholdy. Above all, it is about identifying the local and transregional linkages and networks as the animating spirit behind the singing festival of 1838 and its impact on the civic as well as on Jewish emancipation movement in Germany. The persons responsible of the festival as well as some outstanding personalities are well known, indeed; still in the dark is, however, why the festival sent out groundbreaking messages to Jewish emancipation, the civic idea of tolerance and freedom and to the goal of a German nationality unrelated to social status. In addition, there are still only very vague ideas as to which contribution musical culture and musical practice made to the development and closeness of a society based on civic freedom and egality. The leading role Frankfurt’s musical life took in above mentioned development can be traced back to the interaction of a large number of confident free citizens. As a result, it is now about comprehending the organizational interlinking principles which also expanded transregionally on other European countries. Apart from the in Frankfurt strongly differentiated scene of Freemasons’ lodges, diverse civic associations represent the most important field of study. Under the restrictive conditions of Germany’s restoration of nobility, in early 19th century civic self-will seems to have developed primarily in city-states. Music and song are thereby understood as a medium of social and political communication, whose contribution to the development of modern civic society is yet to be determined more closely.
1000 Years and 1000 Boys’ Voices: The crisis and radical challenge for choral singing

Martin Ashley, Head of Research in the Faculty of Education at Edge Hill University

The actual meaning of the English word “crisis” is “turning point”. The gender imbalance towards females in choral singing has been noted, described and analysed for at least one hundred years, but choir research seems to have had little impact on the relentless trend in the loss of male voices to choral singing. Are we now near to a turning point? The year 2012 sees the conclusion of one of the largest studies undertaken of choral singing by boys aged between ten and fifteen. Spanning a period of ten years and three research grants, the programme has examined the interaction between sociological, psychological and physiological aspects of voice within the over-arching framework of young male identity. This presentation will be the first to announce the final conclusions of the study programme and will argue that boys’ singing needs strong leadership to see through the most fundamental, radical, root and branch reform in school, church and community for 1000 years.

The research has increasingly demonstrated levels of disagreement between researchers, singing teachers, voice coaches, choir directors, audiences for and “fans” of boys’ singing. What should be the response to trends toward earlier puberty and social maturity from the 1990s onwards? Choral music is still coming to terms with a fundamental split between youth and adult music of the 1950s. One key outcome of the programme has been the digital audio database of over 1000 voices aged between ten and fifteen, individually sampled. The database is a resource to map, explore and analyse the process of vocal adaptation to the physical, social and emotional changes of puberty. It is hoped that it will have many uses, including as a baseline for the tracking of speaking and singing voices across decades and centuries in order to map trends in boys’ puberty. This presentation will draw on the audio database to provide convincing evidence of the need for a radical challenge to choir directors to re-examine their role in relation to young male singers. The author will argue that the fundamental problem to be solved has little to do with boys and boyhood, but everything to do with the adults who compose and arrange for boys, lead them, teach them, coach them, direct them and listen to them as audience members.
The avant-garde generation of the Romanian School of Choral Composition during the second half of the Twentieth Century

Mihai Bejinariu, PhD student, associated lecturer at the choral conducting department, National University of Music, Bucharest

Composers such as Stefan Niculescu, Tiberiu Olah, Aurel Stroe, Anatol Vieru, Nicolae Moldovan belong to this generation of the Romanian school of Composition. These composers - formed as symphonists within the patterns of serial thinking - have dedicated most of their choral works to the National Chamber Choir “Madrigal”. A vast repertoire resulted, with symphonic features, has been performed in first audition by the Madrigal choir. The sources of their inspiration refer to the national folklore and Byzantine music. The style of the new avant-garde school of composers abandons Serialism and makes use of the national resources combined with modern solutions: heterophony, mathematical approaches, modes with infra or supraoctaviant structures etc. They proposed a new musical language, new repertoires raising numerous choral problems, on which I’ll partially try to answer in my presentation.

Therefore, through this paper I intend to emphasize the importance of the avant-garde generation’s works giving examples of analysis and auditions, the role of the Madrigal choir and especially of its conductor, Marin Constantin, the impact the communist regime had on the choral movement in Romania, as well as the theorizations regarding the problems that the modern and contemporary choral repertoire has to deal with: the formative structure in the polyphonic language of the twentieth century (textures and polyphonies); diatonicism and chromatism in the contemporary modal systems; determination and non-determination in the modern compositional language; the instrumentalization of choral singing etc.

‘Bouncing and dancing;’ the use of verbal imagery in choral directing

Mary Black, part-time PhD student, Music Department of Leeds University

‘Can we make this phrase bounce a bit more? Let it dance.’

Phrases such as this were the initial impetus for this research. Through experience as both singer and choir director, the author had heard and invented many similar examples of verbal imagery. However, there had been no previous consideration of why this type of expression was being used and whether it was effective. These questions were the springboard for this research which aims to investigate the use and effect of verbal imagery in...
Mary Black is a part-time PhD student in the Music Department of Leeds University, where her research focuses on ‘The use and effect of verbal imagery in choral rehearsals’. She is a singer and choral director and has directed a number of choirs ranging from primary school to chamber choir at university level. She is also Senior Lecturer in Music and Music Education at Liverpool Hope University, where she teaches on undergraduate and post-graduate courses.

choral directing. The research will determine the circumstances and efficacy of verbal imagery in choral rehearsals through videoed observations, interviews and questionnaires which will demonstrate how different participants understand and respond to verbal imagery. The research shows that singers are able to interpret the verbal imagery and that there is remarkable agreement on this interpretation, both between singers and their directors and also from one choir and director to another. The research establishes that singers modify the sound they sing in response to verbal imagery and also demonstrates other functions of verbal imagery, for example its role as a mnemonic.

Although recognising that many attributes of the choral director are interdependent, the author concentrates on verbal communication rather than for example, gesture or body language, that is, any of the non-verbal forms of communication. This area of research has been chosen for several reasons:

Firstly, there is little concentration on verbal communication in current literature. Although there is a great deal of research on the techniques that choral directors use, especially gesture, there is little specifically on the use of verbal imagery.

Secondly, if verbal imagery is so frequently used, what is its function? It may be used in an attempt to explain what cannot be seen; this refers to both the inner workings of the singing mechanism and to that which is not visible in notation.

Thirdly, there is a long history of the use of verbal imagery in voice teaching, therefore data is currently being collected to determine whether and how verbal imagery is transferred from vocal teaching into the choral situation and in what circumstances.

If it is the case that directors who are also experienced singers use verbal imagery more effectively, choral directors may want to employ verbal imagery more consciously.

An exploration of the differing levels of confidence amongst adult amateur choral singers (Poster)

Michael Bonshor, Ph.D. student, Music Department, The University of Sheffield

I present an in-depth, qualitative study, based on a series of focus groups and semi-structured interviews with active participants in organized singing activities. The aim of the research is to explore the lived-in experience of choral singers; to identify some of the main influences on their perceptions of their voices and performance ability; to highlight some of the factors affecting their confidence as singers. The first stage of this study,
Michael Bonshor is a PhD candidate in the Department of Music at the University of Sheffield, England. He holds a Master’s degree in Music Psychology, specializing in the management of performance anxiety in adult singers. Michael’s doctoral research focuses on exploring some of the factors relating to differing levels of confidence amongst adult amateur choral singers.

His research interests are informed by his previous experience as a professional singer, as well as by his work as a vocal coach, accompanist and choral director. Michael’s other musical interests include writing choral arrangements and playing the drums.

How does 2 + 2 become 5, in a musical context?

Thomas Caplin, Prof. & Stig Eriksson, Prof., Hedmark University College, Hamar

The purpose of this presentation is to explain why we consider it imperative for the leader of a music ensemble to conduct “the whole human being”. By reflecting on current practice in the field of conducting and up-to-date theory on pedagogical psychology, we explicate what we see as perhaps the biggest contributions of the Gestalt method:

- The insight into how everything influences the singers and the conductor in mutual interaction
- How the whole and the musical result can amount to both less and more than the sum of the individual factors involved.

We have also put forward the question whether there is correlation between current curricula for conductor’s training programs and the practice theory that is necessary and has been recorded in this area.

In our research project our wish has been to develop and merge musical, psychological and pedagogical knowledge, with focus on how to strengthen the interaction between the ensemble and its leader.

Involving four focus groups and twelve individual interviews with experienced choral singers, has been completed. The themes and significant issues identified so far will be used to inform the next stage of the project. This will include interviews with choral directors, as well as further interviews with singers. It is hoped that this research will result in a set of useful recommendations for singers, teachers and conductors who have an interest in confidence issues.

Stig Eriksen has been teaching since 1985 and since 2006 as an Assistant Professor, at Faculty of Education and Natural Sciences, Hedmark University College, Norway.

He is a member of the Teacher Education Department, where he lectures on counselling/coaching/ and strategic leadership with a special focus on learning organization and gestalt psychology. He is involved in a lot of research and development projects, and during the last two years he has combined his professional and private interest in pursuing a project entitled: “The insight in how everything influences the singers and the conductor”.

Thomas Caplin is Professor in music at the Hedmark University College, Hamar, Norway. He received his education as a singer, conductor and choral pedagogue at the Royal Academies of Music in Copenhagen and Stockholm. His publications include books on choral conducting in Sweden and Norway, as well as a number of compositions, arrangements and CD recordings. In 2004 he was awarded the recognition “Choral Director of the Year” by the Norwegian Choral Directors’ Association. He has received international recognitions for his leadership of several choirs.

Internationally he is in the steering committee for the IFCM mentor program “Conductors Without Borders”, and is the Norwegian representative in the Interkultur World Choir Council.
This we try to achieve by:

Merging relevant theory from both the music and the pedagogy/psychology areas, which together will be able to make previously silent knowledge and practice into new and explicit and transferrable knowledge.

Developing new methods – and implementing already established methods for collecting and processing data.

So far we have utilised both divergent and qualitative method in our approach, and since autumn 2010 we have so far challenged 197 agents, both conductors, singers and music students in describing the reality they experience and what they mean represents a good musical leader for an ensemble.

In collaboration with Norges Korforbund (Norwegian Choir Association) we have simultaneously developed and tried out our own pilot project within choral conducting at Hedmark University College. Additionally we have – in a form for action research – had a research partnership with an ensemble during autumn 2011/spring 2012. This comprises video recordings followed by analysis of “what is really going on” in the ensemble, together with the agents. Presently we are following up with phase 2 in the project, where our next goal is to follow the same methods of interaction with the conductors for field band and orchestra.

The presentation will be conducted in a dialogue form.

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**Swedish choral practice in the 20th century**

*Dr. Ursula Gäsler & Karin Johansson, Ph.D., Lund University, Malmö Academy of Music*

This paper deals with Swedish choral practice from a twofold perspective. On the one hand, aspects of historical and sociological relevance are brought up in a long-term perspective and, on the other hand, these are combined with and contrasted to a focus on today’s choral practice in Sweden.

In Sweden, the research that has been conducted on the phenomenon of choruses and choral singing in Sweden has been varied. However, it is to a large extent traditional mixed choir singing that is referred to when Swedish choral issues and the "The Swedish choral miracle" are discussed. According to Lennart Reimers, the latter is closely associated with a specific choral 'sound', and he has pointed out that "this 'miracle' was not a sudden event following the Second World War but a crystallization of various historical, cultural and national traditions which go back a long way in time, primarily to the period between the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 20th centuries" (Reimers 1993, 141).

As described by Richard Sparks (2000), Sweden was still a uniform culture (enhetskultur) during a large part of the 20th century, with social institutions like the church, school, unions and student contexts as stable bases for choir singing and music making. This situation formed a stable pyramid with a base and an elite. Today, however, the situation is different – multifaceted, unclear and unpredictable. Against the
background of an interview study with 26 professional Swedish choir leaders we will suggest possible future directions for choral practice in education and performance and give some pictures of where choral leadership in Sweden might be heading.

Ursula Geisler is a research fellow in Musicology at the Department of Arts and Cultural Sciences at Lund University since 2002. Her thesis ‘Gesang und nationale Gemeinschaft. Zur kulturellen Konstruktion von schwedischem “folksång” und deutscher “Nationalhymne”’ (Nomos 2001) focused on transnational aspects of singing. In this Swedish-German perspective several choir and chorus aspects in Europe were included from the French Revolution until the end of World War II. In her research she focuses mainly on transnational music aspects and the history and development of musical ideas as well as music transformations in society. Together with Karin Johansson she has initiated the research network Choir in Focus.

Karin Johansson is a research fellow at Malmö Academy of Music, Lund University, Sweden. After finishing her thesis ‘Organ improvisation – activity, action and rhetorical practice’ (2008), she is involved in research on higher music education and in the project (Re)thinking improvisation. Together with Ursula Geisler she initiated the research network Choir in Focus in 2008. She is currently completing a qualitative study of high-ranking Swedish choral conductors’ views on research, musical quality and artistic value.

Choral singing for a better life for persons with chronic illnesses

Anne Haugland Balsnes, Associate Professor, Ansgr College, Norway

In recent years an extensive body of research has emerged which points towards the positive effects of choral singing; physically, psychologically, cognitively, socially and in terms of meaning and coherence in life. Studies of choirs for seniors, the homeless, rehabilitation, prison inmates, the mentally ill and so on have been made. Common to all of these, is that the choirs studied have a therapeutic objective and are set up for a specific group of people. The studies conclude that choral singing has therapeutic effects. Furthermore, research exists which demonstrates that ‘healthy’ people who sing in more traditional choir practices with musical and/or social objectives experience that their participation is health promoting. However, the present study focuses on people who have various chronic illnesses, yet still participate in regular choir practices without any therapeutic objective.

The purpose of the study is to document and understand the experiences that people with chronic diseases have with choral singing and increase knowledge about how ‘musicking’ may improve health and quality of life. The study is based on the following research question: How does choral singing influence how the chronically sick perceive their own health and quality of life?”

Anne Haugland Balsnes is Associate Professor at Ansgr College, Norway. She has many years of experience as a college teacher of music and as a choral conductor and singer.
The study is part of the ongoing post-doctoral project “Choral Singing for a Better Life”, which investigates how choral singing has the potential to affect the health situation of individual people. The results are preliminary. Currently, three semi-structured interviews have been carried out. One interviewee has arthritis/rheumatism, one a diagnosis of schizophrenia and a third has chronic lymphocytic leukemia and fibromyalgia. The plan is to interview a total of eight individuals. The analysis is inspired by phenomenology and discourse analysis. The material will be illuminated by theory from the emerging music and health field. The preliminary analysis shows that in relation to a social and psychological dimension, choral singing is of existential importance for a best possible life despite the various chronic diseases the interviewees suffer from.

The knowledge which comes to light through the “Choral Singing for a Better Life” project will be relevant for the music education field, for example in connection with the training of choir directors, but also for public health in a wider sense.

Josephine Hoegaerts is a fwo post-doctoral researcher at Leuven University. Currently she is conducting research into the evolution of vocal (pedagogic) practices in Western Europe in the long nineteenth century, and gender and age-related discourses of vocal differentiation.


**Little citizens and ‘petites patries’: learning patriotism through choral singing in Antwerp in the late nineteenth century**

**Josephine Hoegaerts, Post-doctoraal onderzoeker FWO, Faculteit Letteren, KU Leuven**

The relation between nineteenth century choral singing and nationalism has mainly been researched by focussing on men's choirs. In Flanders, however, these male choirs seem to have been less popular, and less important, in the endeavor to spread patriotic discourses and emotions. Ad hoc choirs, consisting of members of local choirs, school teachers and children (together often counting up to more than a thousand singers) were more visible. On these occasions of mass choral singing, the choir not only passed on patriotic discourses through the lyrics they sang, but also 'represented' the nation as a people singing in unison. The presence of singers with different local accents especially, underlined the image of a nation unified in its difference, a mosaic of a number of 'petites patries' constituting one country. Moreover, on a more individual level, these concerts and the
practice sessions leading up to them provided singers with the opportunity to perform their identities as model 'Belgians'. In a constant repetition of specific discourses as well as specific somatized experiences and corporeal acts, they crafted their selves as citizens, mothers, protectors, nurturers and, in the case of children, the future of the nation.

In this paper, I aim to show that this construction of a national identity, with its specific characteristics depending on gender and age, was part of a conscious policy shared by local politicians, educators on the national and the local level (the ministry of education and teachers) and the nation’s acclaimed artists. Drawing on scores by patriotic composers such as Peter Benoit, Albert De Vleeshouwer and Jan Blockx, on descriptions of the performances of their work, on school manuals, reports and correspondence of school inspectors, and on political speeches surrounding choral concerts, I will analyse the practices of mass choral singing by Antwerp volunteers in the second half of the nineteenth century. My main aim is to compare the performances of different actors on the ad hoc stages. By contrasting mature with young singers, soloists with choir members and musicians with politicians, I will show to which extent the figure of the small boy, singing in unison (rather than the mature male soloist) represented a unified Belgium while remaining tied to his local environment of mother, home and village. It was the inhabitant of the ‘petite patrie’ and the not-yet citizen, then, who was thought to adequately represent the nation as a whole.

The artistic impact on choral performance with young adult singers of newly composed music

**Joy Hill, Royal College of Music, London**

I have been invited to write a chapter for the *Oxford Handbook of Singing*, entitled *The Collective Choral Voice: Youth Choirs*. Writing this chapter is giving me the opportunity to look closely at the issues that are involved when creating successful choirs for young adult voices and has highlighted, for me, the intrinsic value of cross cultural exchanges with young singers and, in particular, the choice of music that is performed by the choirs.

Consequently, I am beginning to investigate some current ideas and general principles that are employed, by recording interviews with eminent choral conductors and composers of music for youth choirs from several countries.

Joy Hill directs the Royal College of Music Junior Department Chamber and Girls’ Choirs. She also conducts the Vigala Singers, which comprises RCMJD Chamber Choir alumni, and the Purcell School Chamber Choir, where she is also a member of the academic music department.

Joy also works increasingly as a conductor and adjudicator internationally, most recently in Japan, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Italy, South Africa, and Uganda. Originally a first-study pianist studying with Eric Parkin and Christopher Elton, Joy went on to work in music education as a teacher, advisory teacher and lecturer.

She was Senior Lecturer in Music and Music Education, University of Surrey Roehampton, Lecturer at the Institute of Education London University and member of the Centre for Performance Science at the Royal College of Music. Her published research focuses on conducting young voices and choral performance practice.
I have personally recently led international choral exchanges with choirs from Uganda, Estonia and Latvia. In my previous professional work as conductor and Senior Lecturer, University of Surrey Roehampton and Institute of Education, London University and as founder and director of New Commonwealth Voices, I have always acknowledged the value of international exchanges as a means of enriching the lives of all involved, both musically and socially, and developed projects in Finland, Belgium and Lithuania.

The creation of a joint choral commission can be a good foundation for an international choral exchange and I have initiated this idea with the Estonian composer Urmas Sisask in Estonia, with the Estonian T.V. Girls’ Choir and my RCMJD Chamber Choir. Gabriel Jackson, Associate Composer of the BBC Singers, has written ‘A Ship With Unfurled Sails’ for my Vigala Singers based on the text of Estonian poet Doris Kareva for a choir tour to Estonia where we shared performances with young Estonian singers. I also encourage young composition students to write for choirs. This not only captures the imagination of their peers but also helps to ensure that young people are involved in the creative process of composing for voices.

My Chamber Choir at the Royal College of Music Junior Department, London U.K. are part of the ground-breaking composition project Living Song with the English Folk Dance and Song Society. http://www.efdss.org/news/newsId/223

Some of the results of my choral composition projects have been presented at Music Education Conferences and Choral Symposia and the response is often that ‘the artistic outcomes of these creative, artistic projects should be recorded in order to build on their acknowledged success in relation to the highest level of choral performance with the young singers’.

The Tapiola Choir and Finnishness: Institutional and Government Support for Contemporary Music in Finland

Lauren Holmes Frankel, Ph.D. candidate, Musicology, Yale University

Founded by Erkki Pohjola in 1963 as a school ensemble, the Tapiola Choir became one of Finland’s most celebrated choirs. The mixed-voice children’s choir first rose to prominence after winning the BBC’s Let the Peoples Sing competition in 1971. After continuing to gain recognition through recordings and tours, the choir was awarded UNESCO’s Prize for the Promotion of the Performing Arts in 1996. From its inception, the choir promoted contemporary music, working with many of the leading Finnish composers of the 20th century.

Lauren Holmes Frankel is Ph.D. candidate in Musicology at Yale University and writes on a dissertation entitled “Music and the Nation-State: Finnish Music from Nationalism to Postnationalism”. In 2006 she finished her M.A.-studies at Rice University with a thesis on “Music and Musically in the Works of Virginia Woolf”. She has regularly presented conference papers in both the USA and Finland and has teaching and performance experiences.
including Erik Bergman, Aulis Sallinen, and Einojuhani Rautavaara. The Tapiola Choir came to be seen as one of Finland’s most successful cultural ambassadors, and, like many Finnish musical institutions, received support from multiple government grants. Due to its status within Finland and its influence abroad, the choir provides an excellent case study of the interactions between government funding, institutional ideology, and individual experience in producing a 20th-century national identity through choral music. Although choral music’s role in the nationalistic projects of 19th-century Europe, particularly in countries working to establish their independence, such as Finland, has been well established, its role in maintaining those national identities within the changing political climates of the 20th century bears further investigation.

In this paper, I draw on government reports, archival research at the Tapiola Choir, and interviews with former choir members, choir staff, and members of parliament to explore the productive tensions that exist between differing conceptions of music and nationalism influencing a given institution and the musical practices that result. While parliamentary reports and funding decisions demonstrate the government’s cultural goals, Pohjola’s principles are found in his writings. Prior to his retirement in 1993, Pohjola also became a sought-after lecturer, speaking at choral conferences and festivals around the world on the ideological principles underlying his conducting. In these lectures, and later his book, he formulated four principles that he believed to be the foundation of the choir’s success: a sound based on their shared Finnish background, the combination of singing and playing instruments, collaboration with contemporary composers, and promoting international understanding. The evolution of these ideas, observable in his many lecture notes, offers valuable insight into Pohjola’s conception of choral singing’s role in the development of both nationalism and contemporary composition. By relating this to Finnish arts policies and choir members’ own experiences, I offer a nuanced understanding of the Tapiola Choir’s effect on Finnish identity and musical culture.

Aural Training Books for Adult Choir Singers Showing Six Paths to Meaningful Aural Training

Soila Jaakkola, Ph.D. student, Sibelius Academy

In this paper I would like to share my findings of my dissertation. The purpose of my research is to find meaningful tools to the aural training of adult choir singers who have choir singing as their hobby. I have applied the content analysis method to my data, 40 pieces of aural training books made for adult choir singers, of which six books are taken as cases. With the help of these six cases I have found (1) four viewpoints which are important to adult choir singer’s aural training book, and (2) six paths (or ways) to meaningful choral aural training. In this presentation I will illustrate these findings and discuss their far-reaching consequences in choral education.
My main contribution to choral education is to enhance the ability of sight-singing of adult choir singers which means the ability of hearing, reading, and understanding the structures of choir music. Often in the choir rehearsals we are concentrating on (1) vocal training in the beginning of rehearsals and after that (2) preparing the repertoire. Many adult choir singers neither don’t read music fluently, nor can use aural analysis during singing. Therefore the learning of the choral repertoire is a long process, mainly with the help of good memory. When enhancing the aural training ability of choir singers, the learning process of unfamiliar music shortens, among other valuable things. Being aware of this aural training material and using it (or using the ideas demonstrated in this material) in the choral education we could find new, diverse and meaningful tools for rehearsing and improving choirs, and their adult singers.

Towards a holistic model of choral leadership

Dag Jansson, Ph.D. fellow, Norwegian Academy of Music

The conductor role is a complex and multi-faceted role. Yet, it has been researched only to a limited degree, and the research is often approached with simplistic assumptions and narrow perspectives on musical leadership. The research tradition has a pedagogic bias, leaving little room for the conductor as artist, co-musician, and team builder. Conductors’ own writing about their practice is only exceptionally research based and naturally has an intentional view. Little attention has been given to the singer viewpoint and the impact view: what works and why? How do choral singers perceive the conductor role and how is musical leadership experienced by those who actually produce the sounding music? This is the research question of an ongoing PhD project, focusing on choral leadership as lived experience. Experience is captured by interviews with 22 singers with college and university degrees in music, of which many work as professional or semi-professional singers. A hermeneutic-phenomenological methodology is being applied.

A number of common themes emerge from the singer interviews, themes that in various ways describe what goes on when great musical leadership is being exercised. A model that connects these themes is proposed, where the headline themes are mastery, coherence, and intersubjective space. Great musical leadership is characterised by mastery, not only of the music material, but also in terms of deeply understanding the situation and the singer needs. Coherence is about the integrity of the conductor, ranging from authority and sincerity to gestural congruence. The ultimate goal of the leadership is to create an intersubjective ensemble space for the musicking process. This space can only be created
Dag Jansson is currently Ph.D. fellow at the Norwegian Academy of Music, with professor Even Ruud as supervisor. He holds a master degree in musicology from the University of Oslo. He conducts three choirs, Vox Humana, Indre Østfold Kammerkor, and Alle-kanske-koret in Østfold. He also holds an MBA degree from Insead in France. Based on a previous career as business leader and consultant, he has experimented extensively with choral singing and conducting for team building and leadership development. With Vox Humana, Jansson has recently been responsible for releasing two CDs, Yuletide last year (on the Quattro label) and Ømhetens tre this year (on the Nordic Sound label), featuring Magnar Åms oratorium. He was for a number of years singing tenor in Grex Vocalis and is currently singing in the project based choir Ensemble Energico in Østfold.


Deanna Joseph, Ph.D., Georgia State University

Historically informed performance procedures have become quite popular with musicians of the past fifty years. Baroque performance practice is the most developed field of this research, and in this day and age, educated musicians can talk with ease, if not total agreement, about subjects such as the number of singers in Bach’s choir, the use of period instruments, the influence of dance forms, and expressive elements such as tempi, tone color, and articulation.

But what about performance practices of the 19th century? How did the music of Brahms, Mendelssohn, and Wagner sound? Imagine for a moment hearing a Brahms symphony either on a recording or at the last live performance you attended. What are the colors coming from the orchestra? What is the size of the ensemble? Are the tempi generally fast or slow, steady or flexible? Do the strings in the orchestra make a consistent use of vibrato and portamento? Virtually all modern-day classically trained musicians have grown up playing and listening to the music of Romantic composers such as Brahms, Mendelssohn, and Chopin. Today, there is a certain comfort level with this repertoire, so much so that musicians have a preconceived sound concept for this music. How do musicians know, however, that the way this Romantic literature is being performed is historically informed? Are there resources to which modern-day musicians can turn to educate themselves.
on the way that 19th-century musicians played the music of their time?

Fortunately, music of the late Romantic era is preserved in the most valuable of all possible primary sources: recordings. In fact, the earliest surviving music recording is that of a choral performance from the 1888 Crystal Palace Handel Festival in London featuring portions of Handel’s Israel in Egypt. An enormous number of recordings survive from around 1900 that allow present-day musicians to enter this world of the past.

Performance practice scholarship of the last twenty years has seen an increase in analysis of these recordings, as well as research into 19th-century books on singing technique and interpretation, and techniques of playing the piano, violin, and other instruments. Additionally, many of these treatises shed light on issues of tempo, phrasing, dynamics, and tone color, serving as virtual “how-to” guides straight from the pens of the actual performers and teachers of the Romantic period.

This lecture is an exploration of 19th-century performance procedures. The goal of the project is to present viable new options for performing, interpreting, and experiencing choral-orchestral works of the late Romantic era.

When performing the music of the 19th century, however, we must respect the fact that we are dealing with the music of people who valued a different aesthetic. Musicians were encouraged to be expressive in every way possible. Each performance of a piece was to be a different artistic experience aimed to stir the emotions of the audience. My hope is that with increased study of performance traditions of the 19th century, musicians today may be freed from the restraints of our time and get in touch with the sound world of the people who composed and performed it. This will present more options for the performance of this music.

„Grüß Gott mit hellem Klang!“ - The socio-political medialisation of bourgeois singing culture as exemplified by German films about choirs in the Weimar Republic

Helmke Jan Keden, Prof., University of Cologne, Germany

With film technology developing to become a mass medium, films in the 1920s became more and more a useful channel for the dissemination of choir music. The difficult and time-consuming process of producing a film led to the main emphasis being less on reporting current
Susan Knight is Founder and Artistic Director Emerita of Festival 500: Sharing the Voices and SHALLAWAY-Newfoundland and Labrador Youth in Chorus. She holds Bachelor degrees in Music and Music Education (Memorial University, Newfoundland and Labrador), a Masters of Arts in Music Education (St. Thomas University, Minnesota) and a Ph.D. from the University of London. She has taught music education at the elementary, undergraduate and post-graduate levels over the past three decades, and is active internationally as a researcher, clinician, keynote speaker, consultant and producer. Her research centers principally on the phenomenon of the adult non-singer and the role of choral music-making in the development of empathy and community.

Helmke Jan Keden is Professor of Music Education at the University of Cologne, Germany. His previous research concentrated on the use and abuse of German choirs and choir music in the Third Reich. Currently he is working on the influence of the ‘young people’s movement’ on German male voice choirs in the first thirty years of the twentieth century. In this research he aims to apply mainly hermeneutic methods to examine the discourses, reactions and correlations in German choirs and to relate them to the ideologisation that occurred later on in the Third Reich. He is also working on modern concepts in the promotion of music-making in German education.
singers’ report such identity formation as originating in an early negative childhood attributional encounter involving ensemble singing. The attributor was reported as predominantly an authority figure – most often a teacher - that silenced the child’s singing attempts without offering any developmental instruction intervention, encouragement, or other facilitation.

This evidence is discussed with regard to the critical role which developmentally appropriate pedagogy serves in early singing instruction, the exposed personal nature of ensemble singing and the power/influence of authority attributions. These factors are then contextualized within the framework of evidenced psychological and social dimensions of a child’s halted/obstructed singing development and consequent exclusion from choral singing experience across the lifespan. Further research is recommended regarding teachers’ professional preparation/support in developmental singing pedagogy, childhood singing education practice, child/adult ‘non-singers, and societal views on the non-singer.

From vocal grooming to female tenors: A music psychologist’s view of choral singing (Keynote)

Prof. Dr. Andreas C. Lehmann, Systematic Musicology and Music Psychology, University of Music, Würzburg

There is no doubt that singing occupies an important place in the lives of many human beings, even of those who claim to be unmusical. The anthropology of singing and speech has received some interest in recent years, and we can now safely say that after one million years, both activities have come to serve different purposes but rely on similar perceptual mechanisms.

Foremost, researchers have pointed to the social bonding of speech and song for early hominids. Singing might also provide the basis for language learning. It is therefore understandable that research on choral singing straddles the boundary between general psychology and sociology (social history), as communal singing redefines itself continuously and adapts to new cultural situations. Research on choral singing from a music psychology perspective is surprisingly rare.

Three perspectives lend themselves for study and will be considered in the presentation using appropriate examples: (1) the perspective of the individual singers and their use of singing in everyday life, (2) the singer-conductor and singer-singer interaction during performance and outside the actual act of singing, and (3) the choir-audience relationship.
In our own studies we have tried to study the limits of conductor-singer communication in a controlled laboratory condition. Here, we were able to show that some gestures are clearly well understood even without rehearsal, whereas others require planning on the part of the singer and therefore verbal communication with the conductor. Furthermore, we will present some new data on research regarding the assessment of children’s vocal performance. In particular experts seem to agree quite well on the quality of sung performance. The summary will argue for an integrative view of the different research perspectives and emphasize the current public interest as an important incentive to promote such research.

**Siehe, ich sage euch ein Geheimnis:**
questioned collectivity in 19C choral music

Annika Lindskog, Lecturer in Swedish, Department of Scandinavian Studies, School of European Languages, Cultures and Societies, University College London

Ever since the baritone in Beethoven’s Ninth symphony first stepped out in front of the chorus and called his ‘Brüder’ to harken, the choral role in 19C symphonic-scale works has habitually been considered, if it is considered at all, as a given collective, subservient and representative. There has therefore been little room to consider the choral behaviour beyond the initial call-and-response exchange, and the chorus’s largely independent and at times both inventive and challenging activities go unnoticed. Further, as choral bodies, by their defining nature, are made up of large groups of humanity acting in concordance and unity, it has required little effort to equate them with a representation of a group of ‘people’, defined according to setting and context, but always in a responsive position to what is seen as the main narrative of the soloists.

The historicity of these choral works are embedded in the 19C master ideology that saw manipulated and labelled groups of people form both the essence and the reason for solidifying nation states – often associated in music with, as Michael Steinberg puts it, ‘national and nationalist consciousness’ (*Listening to Reason*, 2004, p163). Hearing these choruses solely and continuously as verifiers of perceived ideology is however a limited reading of their part and role, and Steinberg argues further for considering them as a ‘collective voice’ rather than ‘the alleged voice of [a]nation’. The distinction is seminal, and opens up for a contextualising of the choral position that allows a multiplicity in expression, emotion and empowerment, and enables an investigation of the choral participation that is not preconditioned by a rhetoric of representation.

This paper hopes to further explore the tenet that choral roles might be understood as more multi-layered and flexible than many traditional readings allow for. The relationship between a chorus and its soloists are of particular interest here, as it is often the perceived dominance and superiority of the former that shackles how we understand the choral role into one determined by one-dimensional possessivity and leadership. The relationship between the chorus and
the baritone in Brahms’ *Ein deutsches Requiem* is one example for where the inheritance from Beethoven’s has been particularly influential and has dictated an uncritical – and largely limiting – understanding of the dynamics the chorus is responsible for both in the passages with the baritone soloist and the requiem as a whole. By allowing for a more multi-dimensional interpretation of both soloists and choirs, we may hear more of what they are telling us.

The 19th in the 21st century? The German male choir block buster „Die Wacht am Rhein“, „Lützows wilde verwegene Jagd“ and its mediality on YouTube

*Dr. Martin Loeser, Department of Church music and Musicology, Ernst-Moritz-Arndt University, Greifswald*

The paper is dealing with the mediality of two of the most successful pieces of German male choir in the 19th century. How many versions are posted on youtube and how are they presented? How many people used them and which commentaries are made? In how far the reception of these pieces has changed with respect to its new context and presentation? Is there today another kind of meaning of this in former times very clearly intended choir music?

**The a-cappella Choir Music in the Oeuvre of Giacinto Scelsi (1905-1988)**

*Dr. Elfriede Moschitz, Department Choral Conducting: Voice Training and Ear Training for Choral Conductors, University of Music and Dramatic Arts Graz, Austria*

Since the 1980s Giacinto Scelsi has received increasing attention and esteem in critical and musicological discourse as well as on the concert stage. Nevertheless, he is still an exceptional figure in recent music history. Scelsi’s music lies at the boundary between East and West, composition and improvisation, rationality and mysticism and provides a challenge to those seeking an approach through research, listening or performance.

The opening of the Scelsi Archive in Rome in May 2009 was no doubt a turning point for scientific and artistic pursuits of the composer. Since then, the Scelsi bequest has been accessible for research. In addition, the recordings which formed the basis for the transcription of Scelsi’s compositions are particularly valuable. On the basis of these tapes, the question of the relationship between tape and score,
which is pivotal to Scelsi’s works, can be pursued in a substantiated manner. An analysis of compositional processes, and at the same time a fundamental discussion on the aesthetic status of Scelsi’s music, is possible only as a consequence of this questioning. A study of Scelsi’s sketches, notes, letters and his private library allows an authoritative reconstruction of Scelsi’s aesthetic thinking and a precise account of his cultural and religious references.

Especially within Giacinto Scelsis Vocal Works there are characteristic pieces, which give ensembles and their high demand for a professional performance the possibility to work, perform and present contemporary a-cappella music out of the 20. Century. Scelsis Three Latin Prayers: Pater Noster, Ave Maria and Alleluia (1970), for Solo-Voice and also for Unison – Choir, give an example for the completely new way to interpret a-cappella music in the second half of the last century. Paradigms in Interpretation like dynamics, music/text ratio and sound, are not anymore valid and must be seen differently – the aesthetic dimension has to be seen in an extend context and that includes also paradigms of tension and depths of sound and with audible consequences of perception!

Precondition and Process in the choral practise for the interpretation of Giacinto Scelsis Vocal Works:

1. Compositorial concept in the Three Latin Prayers,
2. Technical condition of the singer’s voice,
3. Meaning of Sound in Giacinto Scelsis œuvre,
4. Dynamic in a new contextuality, for example forte as ‘compression’ of sound and
5. Sound examples life and with recordings of these three characteristic works.

From the shtetl to the Gardens and beyond: identity and symbolic geography in Cape Town’s synagogue choirs

Stephen Muir, Ph.D., Senior Lecturer in Music, University of Leeds

In the popular South African tourist destination of Cape Town, Western Cape, a compact but vibrant Jewish community, supporting at least ten synagogues of varying sizes and affiliations, plays out a complex musical narrative that both reflects and projects an equally complex set of national, cultural and religious identities. In this paper I address only a small aspect of that musical narrative, as expressed by the Ashkenazy Orthodox community’s two remaining synagogue choirs. In doing so I hope to shed light for the first time on some of the ways in which, through the agency of musical practice, members of this community negotiate a variety of identities as musicians, Jews, and South Africans, and (re)construct diverging symbolic geographies from apparently similar historical and cultural backgrounds (a
Stephen Muir gained a BMus (1994) and PhD (2000: ‘The operas of N. A. Rimsky-Korsakov from 1897 to 1904’) from Birmingham University. He is now a Senior Lecturer in Music at the University of Leeds, specialising in performance, 19th-century Russian and Czech music, and Jewish liturgical music. Recent publications include articles on Rimsky-Korsakov, Dvořák, critical editing and a chapter on South African Jewish music in The Globalization of Musics in Transit (forthcoming, Routledge, 2013).

He is also a professional performer, having studied singing with Alastair Thompson and Bridget Budge, percussion with Evelyn Glennie, and conducting with George Hurst, and has performed and recorded extensively throughout the UK as a tenor soloist and percussionist. He is Assistant Director of Leeds University Liturgical Choir. He is associated with Leeds University Centres for Historically-Informed Performance, Opera Studies, Jewish Studies, and African Studies.

The large majority of the South African Jewish community is of strikingly uniform Lithuanian origin.

The paper is based upon a fieldwork trip undertaken in early 2012. With support from the Kaplan Centre for Jewish Studies, University of Cape Town, I interacted with Rabbis, Cantors and choral directors, and arranged private interviews with members of the two choirs involved. Like Abigail Wood (2010), whose account of Jerusalem’s ‘Singing Diplomat’ choir was published shortly before my South Africa visit, my ethnographic investigation emphasises the local, personal circumstances of the singers involved. As Karen Ahlquist has observed, ‘choral performance can assert artistic and educational achievement, aesthetic merit, and social, national, religious, or ethnic identity’ (2006:2). Furthermore, she continues, choirs provide vital support mechanisms for their members, in many respects ‘fostering an idealized social system to help replace traditional mores being undermined by modernization’ (2006:3).

With these ideas in mind, the study of synagogue choral activities seemed an ideal way to ‘get under the skin’ of a community’s musical identity. The paper’s case studies demonstrate how musical choice has been incorporated into strategies addressing the threat of diminished congregations and dwindling synagogue memberships, but with strikingly different musical solutions to the complex identity issues faced by Jews in modern-day South Africa. Along the way, a number of methodological and cultural issues are addressed, some specific to the investigation of Jewish choral activities, but also some relevant to choral and ethnographic research more broadly.

**Choral Soundtrack to a Short Film – Interdisciplinary and Organic Processes**

*John Perkins, D.M.A., Assistant Professor of Music, Performing Arts, American University of Sharjah*

Three artists comment upon the subject of “parenthood” through the medium of a short film – a poet, composer/choral musician (the author of this text), and a filmmaker. The order of process began with the written word, music, and finally film. This additive process is abnormal for most film-making procedures, however, each artist agreed that the spontaneity of such an order would produce a natural and fresh result. This paper focuses on my conception of this vocal/choral composition after receiving the poem from the poet.
The poetic program follows in three parts: 1) A man and woman imagining their ideal mate; 2) a meeting in a dream; and 3) upon meeting, the union of their ideal imaginations in a physical act of conception, with a short “coda” of the child’s commentary. The landscape is a primordial scene, emphasizing opposite characteristics of woman and man, and including a central text which is the thoughts of the future child – a third-person observer of the parents. The text of the child appears, in printed form, in the film. The spoken (audible) text of the woman and man occur in alternation. (See attached poem.). I chose the medium of the voice and choir, as it represents the most primordial of all instruments. Following the “organic” nature of the poet’s intentions, I endeavored to symbolically compose with similar intent.

In addition to sung tones, un-pitched choral sounds imitate the masculinity and femininity of both characters (albeit stereotypical depictions). Each part of the program advances the man and woman closer together, until final union, and therefore, the un-pitched sounds from the choir integrate, until both the female and male chorus have adopted both sounds. Likewise, the male and female spoken texts begin on the left and right channels (stereo) of the recording, eventually arriving in the center channels of the recording.

The male character forges a metal bracelet for the female. In each of the sections, the choir sighs down or up depicting the vertical part of the ring; while, at the same time, the sound is panned left-to-right, creating the horizontal aspect of the ring. These parts arrive together at the conception, in the third part. From voice itself, such techniques result in a character-based composition, organically layered onto the medium of film. The reading of this paper will conclude with a presentation of the film.

**Choral singing and politics. Repertoire of Song Celebrations. Estonian Song Celebrations as driver for political and social change**

*Laine Randjärv, the Vice-President of the Riigikogu (Estonian Parliament), PhD student, University of Tartu, Estonia.*

Song celebrations served as a prelude to our Singing Revolution and restitution of independence. We sang us free and the singing liberation process began already after the WWII.
This paper will focus on the role of song celebration tradition and creative intellectuals in socio-political processes, observing mostly the post-WWII period. Throughout centuries, Estonian song celebrations - as the celebrations in other Baltic countries - have played crucial role in the involvement of masses, therefore appearing as a powerful stimulant for social processes. Moreover, the tradition played crucial role in the resistance movement and consolidation of the nation. Shortly before the restitution of independence of the Republic of Estonia, the song celebration became a crucial influencer of the course of history.

Back in those days music culture was inseparable from politics. Music figures of those days had to perform “Soviet repertoire” with their choirs, as this was the only way to real repertoire – beloved Estonian songs that were living in people’s hearts, no matter what. Any choir was able to exist only this way, by including ideologically prescribed compositions in their repertoire. Choirs and conductors were under tense observation; each concert programme had to be approved by several departments of the Communist Party Committee first [Glavlit]. Dodging between the possible and the impossible, they managed to perform both Estonian classical music and early music with his choirs.

In order to understand the message of song celebrations, the repertoire of post-WWII celebrations has been analyzed. From the aspect of intellectual resistance, the three most powerful examples of song celebrations date back to 1947, 1969 and 1980, when more than half of the programme was made up of original Estonian compositions despite of some communist orientation. Today, even though that times have changed and we’re independent again, hundreds of thousands of people – more than ever – still come together to sing and take part in this event, but we have still think about the future and possible transformation of the celebrations.

Song Celebrations are so much more than just a cultural phenomenon. They have been drivers of political and social changes. Today, the role of cultural and creative industries around the Song Celebrations is becoming increasingly important for local communities and the whole country. The ideals of the Song Celebration are still alive and younger generations are discovering new ways to interpret the tradition.

Laine Randjärv is the Vice-President of the Riigikogu (Estonian Parliament). She is also the Chairman of the Estonian Delegation to the Baltic Assembly since 2011.

Randjärv is currently involved in the PhD programme of the University of Tartu, the Faculty of Philosophy. The topic of her thesis is „The role of creative intellectuals in socio-political processes and the Estonia’s Song Celebration Tradition in 1940–1980“.
Courage and resistance: Composing for choir
(Keynote)

Prof. Karin Rehnqvist, Composition, Royal College of Music, Stockholm

As an introduction, the concepts of courage and resistance in music will be developed from my viewpoint as a composer. What is musical courage in today’s music making and composing? And what does resistance in music mean to contemporary composers and musicians?

Against the background of some chosen compositions, for example, To the Angel with the fiery hands (Till Ängeln med de brinnande händerna), I will exemplify resistance in the activity of composing. In practical demonstration, I will describe how it can be attained on the level of phrases as well as in the composing practice as a whole.

I will relate this discussion of the use and formulation of courage and resistance to questions about the role of contemporary music in society and the challenges facing composers of today.

Figurative Speech and Imagery in Developing Children’s Choir Performance

Janete Costa Ruiz, Universidade do Minho, Centro de Invest. em Estudos da Criança

The purpose of this qualitative research is to study and categorize the possible advantages, extent and ideal circumstances for the use of imagery, metaphors and figurative speech in vocal pedagogy with children’s choirs.

Considering that singing is a learned behavior (Phillips, 1996) and that a healthy and effective singing involves an energetic but yet relaxed posture, the ability to match pitch, tone, rhythm, and to express emotions and text, we cannot neglect the need for research on the importance of the experience of kinesthetic sensations as well as the probable benefits of the use of figurative speech in enhancing an expressive performance.

Based on the premise that the voice is the centre of all music activity (Small, 1998) and that teaching to sing is to teach to think of the singing voice as an instrument there is a need to objectify the idea of singing, relating it to the singer’s self-consciousness. Traditionally, imagery and figurative speech have been
used in vocal instruction with good results, helping to teach posture, breathing, pitch matching, melodic phrasing and expression. Because the voice is regularly used for self-expression, the singing voice has to “translate” poetic and cultural meanings as well. Learning to sing is not just about activating muscles and sounds, but also about learning how to mobilize, strengthen and refine that impulse to express emotions and thoughts, as well as aesthetic perceptions through music; this means researching how to improve the connection between imagination, the body, the vocal sound and communication.

This research focus on the description of the use of images, comparisons metaphors and other figures of speech by conductors of children’s choirs in Portugal. In the study we will question conductors about the use of this practice in rehearsal and about their philosophies and strategies related to the use of verbal instruction and figurative speech as a method to teach musical meaning and expression. We expect to identify expressions related to technical training (posture, breathing, onset, phonation, resonance) as well as to expressive and creative singing and the development of aesthetic sensitivity. Later in the process, we will observe and analyze choir rehearsals and ask the children about their understanding of the conductor’s instructions. We wish to understand and categorize different aspects of how poetic language affects the children’s musical perception and how it helps their musicianship and artistry skills.

The sharing of themes between the children’s choir and the orchestra in *Ljus av ljus* by Karin Rehnqvist

Pedro Santos, Doctoral Program in Composition, University of Aveiro, Portugal

Composing for children’s choir and symphony orchestra is always a challenge. When comparing the sound characteristics and the expressiveness of a children’s choir with those of a symphony orchestra the former presents less variety of timbres, registers and intensities. However what appears to be a weakness is an added value. The singularity of the children’s voice enriches the sound palette of the symphonic orchestra and influences the orchestration in a determinant way, resulting in a work with its own identity and characteristics.
Pedro Santos completed a degree in Composition at the Superior School of Music and Performing Arts of Porto (Portugal) and also a Masters in Composition at the Royal Conservatory of Music of The Hague (Netherlands). Currently he is a student of the Doctoral Program in the Department of Communication and Art at the University of Aveiro (Portugal) where he develops a research in composition for children's choir.

He is Pedagogical Coordinator at Jobra’s Music Conservatory in Branca (Portugal), where he also teaches Analysis and Music Theory. Furthermore he is Assistant Professor of Composition at Superior School of Music and Performing Arts of Porto.

As a composer his output includes several works for a variety of instrumental ensembles, so instruments and choir, particularly children’s choir. For several years he is also singer in both amateur and professional choirs and was also a conductor of Children’s and Youth Choirs.

The work *Ljus av ljus* by Karin Rehnqvist is a reference in contemporary repertoire for children's choir and symphony orchestra. The musical language of this composition combines elements and materials of varied nature: diatonicism, chromaticism, microtonalism and clusters. The vocal writing is extremely idiomatic and highlights the characteristics of the children’s voice: the phrases are not too long, melodic and harmonic intervals are often diatonic and vocal lines have very clear tonal centers. The combination of the children's choir and orchestra is well balanced: the orchestra frequently reinforces the structural notes of the choir and does not overlap the vocal sonority, always giving it space for projection. The orchestration is rich and imaginative, demonstrating a mutual influence between the children's choir and the symphony orchestra. These characteristics reveals that Rehnqvist has a deep knowledge of the children’s voice and a great experience in composing music for this medium. For these reasons the analysis of *Ljus av ljus* is recommended for composers who want to write for children's choir and orchestra.

The poster presents an analysis of selected thematic material (in its melodic, harmonic and timbral dimensions) and also a number of observations about the thematic interaction between the children's choir and the orchestra. These contents can be used as a guideline for composers and, on another perspective, they may also serve as a starting point for a broader and deeper analysis of *Ljus av ljus* on which other musical elements may be considered, such as the orchestration, the formal structure and the relations between the text and the music.

**Empowerment, Engagement, and Transformation: A New Paradigm for the Choral Rehearsal**

*Jason D. Vodicka, Presidential Graduate Fellow, The University of Georgia*

Choral ensembles are promoted as opportunities for musical growth and personal expression, yet much about the traditional choral rehearsal inhibits these processes. Director-centered and music-centered approaches silence singers’ “voices” while preventing them from making meaningful musical decisions. The reconfiguration of the choral music rehearsal as singer-centered is not only desirable, but critical for the sustainment and
advancement of choral singing in the world. The educational fields of Critical Pedagogy and Social Constructivism provide meaningful insight into the structure of the choral rehearsal while offering simple yet radical pedagogical innovations.

This paper presents a newly imagined rehearsal structure informed by techniques of empowerment and engagement, ultimately seeking to transform singers and conductors. Such a new rehearsal paradigm involves a new physical arrangement for the rehearsal space; shared power between ensemble and conductor; meaningful musical, physical, and verbal dialogue between singers and with the conductor; problem-posing rehearsal strategies; connecting material to singers’ lives; and the contribution of singers in making significant musical decisions. This paper also presents findings from a recent study by the author on the implementation of such strategies in teaching Schubert’s Mass in G to a high school choir.

Jason D. Vodicka is a conducting associate at The Weill Institute at Carnegie Hall and The Young People’s Chorus of New York. He was Graduate Teaching Assistant at The University of Georgia and Vocal Music Instructor at Pennsbury High School, Fairless Hills, PA. 2003-2011 he was Director of Music at Ewing Presbyterian Church, Ewing, New Jersey. 2006-2011 he was choral conductor at the Westminster Choir College of Rider University, Princeton, NJ, for the Vocal Institute Women’s Choir.

He worked as a Piano and Organ Accompanist at Westminster Choir College of Rider University, Princeton, New Jersey and had various positions including principal accompanist for Schola Cantorum, Chapel Choir, and Bach Festival.

While the traditional rehearsal eschews talking of any kind, verbal and musical dialogue were found to be useful tools in addressing both artistic content and skill-building. The study also found that self-diagnosis and self-correction were keys to the ensemble’s musical progress. Further, connecting material to the students’ world was effective in addressing not only musicality but also technical issues. The ensemble members were eager for such new rehearsal strategies, and ultimately many singers were transformed by the study. Singers began to act as conductors, listening meaningfully to each other while diagnosing and correcting musical issues on their own as well as collaboratively.

The impact of singing on children’s sense of social inclusion in a chorus setting

Graham Welch, Institute of Education, University of London

The presentation will focus on reporting empirical evidence from two European studies, one in Italy and one in the UK, investigating the impact of singing on children’s sense of social inclusion, particularly in a chorus setting. In relation to the first of these, amongst the Italian Government’s foci for its Progetto Musica Regione Emilia-Romagna was, in the first year, to increase the numbers of school choirs in each of the nine provinces and, in its second year, to deepen and develop teachers’ understanding of how best to facilitate musical development through choral and other musical group
activity. The impact analysis by the author and colleagues embraced data from n=190 children in eight schools in the Emilia Romagna region and also n=221 teachers, the latter representing 74% of those attending special professional development workshops to increase their skills to lead singing and choral activities.

The UK research findings draws on data from a longitudinal evaluation of the National Singing Programme *Sing Up*. This involves a comparison of individual singing behaviour and also attitudes to singing of 11,000 pupils from across England. A special set of questions, identical to those used in the Italian study, were constructed in questionnaire format for completion by both sets of children. Part of the content specifically focused on children’s sense of social inclusion. Findings: The Italian data demonstrated that children who had participated in the choral project saw themselves as significantly more socially included than their non-project participant peers. Similarly findings were evidenced in the UK study. In part, the underlying reasons for these findings relate to the quality of teaching and choral leadership experienced by the children. A related observational study of teaching and learning quality, for example,

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...demonstrated that effective leaders of choral and group musical activities with children are likely to adopt pedagogical strategies that foster collective success and that support a positive singing identity. The presentation will provide a synthesis of the data from these two projects and set the findings in a broader meta-theory of why collective singing can be such a powerful medium for the enhancement of participants’ sense of social inclusion.
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