



Diversity of singing practices in Europe Leonardo da Vinci program 2013 - 2015

Management of collective vocal practices – Session 3/5 18 – 22 October in Tours and 23 October in Saint-Lô

The third session of LEO Sings! projects was a great and unique professional rendezvous dedicated to vocal practices (artistic forms, challenges, mentoring, ...), exploring new repertoires, innovative performance forms (singing without a leader, performance design...), audience diversity, with some presentation of projects mixing musical and social practices (singing in hospital, prison...).

An opportunity to share with other professional networks

Different parallel events were organized in order to facilitate connexion between professional networks from different fields of vocal practice (singing and music teachers, conductors, singers, performers, designers, ...):

- Professional days of Polyfolia festival in Saint-Lô : the last day of the session was taking place in the frame of this festival. In 2004 Polyfolia created an international platform and showcase for the best emerging choirs and worldwide vocal ensembles. 10 years later, after selling 150 000 tickets and organizing 241 concerts with over 80 excellent ensembles, the event is a roaring success! Every 2 years, the city of Saint-Lô becomes the meeting place of choral fans throughout France, but also for international programmers. Unfortunately, after losing the support of one of its original partners, Polyfolia will be discontinued. This year was the last festival in Saint-Lô. For this occasion, the team has emptied its coffers to invite 11 exceptional ensembles and offer a beautiful farewell festival!
- Conservatoire of Tours, in connection with the association Conservatoires de France (French Conservatories) and the French Federation of Music Schools (FFEM) has participated in a meeting dedicated to vocal training paths in music schools on October 18th
- AFPC-EVTA France (French association of singing teachers) organized its annual «Vocational days» conference from October 19th to 21st
- The documentation centre on choral music from the LAB Bourgogne, Documentation Centre for Choral art (Burgundy), Moviment Coral Català (Spain) and editors like La Sinfonie d'Orphée, Môméludies, Sulasol... presented their catalogues from October 18th to 20th,
- The National Youth Choir « A Cœur Joie » organized a training session of two days for the 40 singers of the choir.

In total, more than 250 people took part in the session and could benefit from encounters, but also from the concerts offered by Mikrokosmos and the National Youth Choir « A Cœur Joie » and social events proposed during the meeting.



Presentation of the project, by Stéphane Grosclaude, coordinator

LEO Sings! is a process engaged by 8 European partners from 5 countries in the field of voice: teaching singing, music education, choral practice and conducting, production, cultural support and observation.

The purpose is to explore the diversity of singing in Europe, with three main goals :

- ⇒ Drawing a picture of the vocal diversity practices in Europe
- ⇒ Sharing multiple experiences of voice culture and training at all level and in all styles,
- ⇒ Strengthening the role of singing in society.

Our objective is to build cooperation with different transversal approaches : individual and collective vocal practices, vocal courses and curricula, from childhood to adulthood.

LEO Sings! is a work in progress with a collaborative and contributive method, where everybody bring his/her knowledge and learn from other participants coming from all over Europe.

We planed a journey of 5 thematic sessions to explore the different element of voice :

- Training and learning in Barcelona, focusing on the different level of singing with some concrete illustrations of classes and different choirs rehearsals
- Innovation in Aalborg, focusing on the new areas of vocal teaching and repertoires, exploring various methodologies : Intelligent choir, vocal jazz, performance design, physical ear training, ...
- Observing a unique diploma course in this field in Europe was a guideline of the workshops with an effective implementation of 'learning by doing' with concerts of high level ensembles : Vox North, Touché, Dopplers, Mariagerfjord Girls Choir
- Collective practices, here in Tours and in Saint-Lô, taking into account the diversity of situations where people sing in society, the variety of vocal languages of art forms and the diversity of audiences and singing communities
- Cooperation and networks in Freiburg, the next session will be an Interactive Status Quo Research to get a first overview of existing European vocal music networks

The last session (June 2015) will be a closer moment with the partners for assessments / prospects

Other presentations :

The coordinator and some of the participants were/will be invited to present the project in the occasion of international meetings :

- ⇒ « *Singing in education* » Symposium in Budapest (April 2014) : presentation of the results of the session in Barcelona
- ⇒ *World Symposium on Choral Music* in Seoul (August 2014) : workshops and presentation of the project,
- ⇒ *Eurovox* in Riga (june 2015) : 2 workshops,
- ⇒ *Europa Cantat Festival* in Pécs (July 2015) : 2 workshops, Eurovox 2015, EMC,

Film:

The *Films du Loup Blanc* (White Wolf Film) realized one teaser about the Royal academy of Music Aarhus-Aalborg, and will make another one concerning the education process of the training course in Aalborg and a third film about the whole *LEO Sings* projects.





Warms up

The morning warm-ups varied on different days. Each morning three different 45-minute sessions were offered, and delegates could choose between the six different warm-ups offered in 3 days which they wanted to attend :

Organic choir	Peder Karlsson
Vocal Games in French language	Erwann Jan
Voice and Qi Gong	Melanie Jackson
Renaissance Music: dancing and singing	Denis Raisin Dadre
Vocal games "Tribute to Meredith Monk"	Loïc Pierre
Intelligent choir	Lucas Tuan Minh Hoang

Vocabulary

This session was an exploration of the musical vocabulary in Europe, with the aim of achieving some consistency and improved understanding among vocal practitioners from different countries over the use of vocal terminology. The question posed was "do we understand what one another mean when we use words that appear similar?"

Introduction with Gérard Authelain

In order to begin to investigate whether we are accurately conveying our meaning when using vocal and musical terminology across different languages and genres, participants were split into groups to share and discuss terminology and meaning across four different areas: Typology of vocal groups, Aesthetics, Vocal Terminology and Conducting.

The aim was to begin to create a glossary spanning different languages, which would describe different aspects of singing. The groups were instructed to first create a list of the words that they used to describe a certain element of their assigned topic, in English and in the languages represented in the group. Once the list was created, group participants would define what they meant by a certain word. The groups would then come together for the last 30 minutes of the session and report on their findings

This was an interesting exercise which highlighted the differences not only between use of terminology between different countries, but the significant gaps in understanding between vocal practitioners in different styles of singing. It also became clear that aesthetic attributes could be positive, negative or neutral depending on style and context.

Typology of vocal groups

Finally, it seemed more evident to define and to draw up two tables listing the type of vocal ensembles in terms of [number of singers](#) and according to the [age of the singers](#)

Aesthetics

Rather than defining aesthetics, word that did not seem to be shared in all languages, the group chose to address the issue in terms of [styles](#), distinguishing them from the perspective of the aesthetic and the point of view of the form.

The stylistic forms can be qualified under the positive side or negative, considering that the meaning may cover some terms with misunderstanding from one language to another.

*This project is supported by the European Union Longlife learning program
Leonardo da Vinci 2013 - 2015*



Programme pour l'éducation et
la formation tout au long de la vie



Vocal terminology

There substantial mutual respect for one another made the conversations interesting and constructive. The group started by randomly writing down [terms](#) that could cause misunderstandings in our own language and English. Then the group divided terms into categories, skipping the terms that would need more time for to discuss.

A lot of misunderstandings appear to be created by people mixing different descriptions: imagery, audible, visual, kinesthetic and logical / anatomical. Being aware of this fact could solve a lot. It is also notable that professional tend to use more and more the correct anatomical terms.

Conducting

The language about conducting led to distinguish what is part of :

- Conducting as a profession
- Technical part of conducting
- Connected professions
- Rehearsal vocabulary

Glossary

The full list of word and agreed definitions have fed a glossary being compiled by Gérard Authelain. Gérard proposes that this glossary will utilise English words which will be given a standardised meaning for vocal practice across different languages.

Provisional result of the work is on line: <http://www.pfi-culture.org/index.php?id=270>

It should be completed with some new cooperation project, joining interested people and organizations to get a European Glossary of Vocal Language.

Master classes

The master classes are usually scheduled for solo singers with a vocal coach, but it is important for a choir to also have the opportunity to work with a singing teacher and / or with a choir conductor about vocal color.

AFPC-EVTA France had organized last year a conference with Agnès Brosset (singing teacher) and Regine Teodorsco (choir conductor), both in charge of the artistic direction of the National Youth Choir of À Chœur Joie from 2011-2013.

We wanted to continue this discussion with a practical session of two Master classes on classic and pop vocal music.

The vocal sound of the choir using the collaboration of a voice teacher with a conductor, with Susan Yarnall-Monks

[Susan Yarnall-Monks](#) worked with the choir [National Youth Choir À Cœur Joie](#), directed by [Philippe Forget](#). Susan is experienced in working with non professional choir singers and showed us how she works technically with them. It would be useless to use technical terms with people that don't know what those words mean. In order to communicate with them, she uses exercises from the methods of [Kristin Linklater](#) (Freeing Shakespeares Voice) and [Alfred Tomatis](#) (The listening posture). The result was beautiful. This voice teacher certainly knows what she's talking about, with a great modesty.



Ensemble techniques for rhythm, blend, intonation and phrasing, with Peder Karlsson

Like a true leader of a rockband, [Peder Karlsson](#) instantly turned the auditorium into a concert hall and made us sing [All you need is love](#) wholeheartedly, without saying a lot, before he started to explain his method during his work with an ensemble. He communicates in a very intuitive way, instead of literally telling the singers what he wants, which motivates them in a natural way. Every choir member is given responsibility concerning nasality, vibrato, breathiness, and so on. It's not the director who chooses what to do with the music. It's the whole group together. He didn't choose *All you need is love* by coincident ! ...

Link to the PDF containing some extra material.

Practices and repertories

Soundpainting, with Angélique Cormier

Soundpainting involves the use of a large "vocabulary" of hand gestures which are used to convey instructions in improvisation to large groups of people. This was a participatory session in which participants became a performance group and were asked to create random improvised sounds of a nature that was indicated by the gestures of the leader. The leader then selected elements of these group sounds to focus on and shaped the performance in this way. Gestures were used to show participants when they needed to remember a certain sound and bring it back later for "playback" during other periods of the performance.

The technique can be useful for helping choirs to experiment with improvisation.

Contemporary arrangement of traditional singing, with Géraldine Toutain

The aim of this workshop was to explore the diversity in Europe of the way of writing arrangements based on traditional music. It was great to do music together and to discover new language (Luxemburg or Occitan for example), to discover how the arrangements give different colours to the voices and to the pieces (jazzy, neo-classical, traditional...). People were very interested and the workshop could have been longer with pleasure for everyone !

Here is a table of the material presented, which readers may wish to explore for their choirs:

Songs from France

Rossignol du bois sauvage, Jean-Christophe Rosaz, edition Delatour - France

Le rossignol messenger, Arr. Joseph Samson, extrait des Chants du Jura, edition Presses d'Ile de France

Montségur 1944, Music : Pascal Caumont, Text : René Nelli

Songs from Germany

Die gedanken sind frei, Volkslied (um 1880), Arr. Olivier Gies, edition Gustav Bosse GhBh

Songs from Luxemburg

D'Kanéileliss vu Weier, Music: trad. - Text: Jempy Welter - Adapt./Arr. Georges Urwal. Weis: Sabinchen-Moritath

D'Margréitchen, Michel Lentz 1883 Laurent Menager - Arr. JMK

Songs from United Kingdom

O Waly, Waly, from Somerset (Cecil Sharp), Arr. Benjamin Britten

O Waly, Waly, from Somerset, Arr. John Rutter

Waly, Waly, Arr. Jonathan Willcocks

Songs from Spain

El cant dels ocells, nativity traditional from Catalunya, Arr. Enric Ribó





New spaces and forms of concert

Urban art Center "pOlau" (pôle des arts urbains) Research Institute on Arts & urbanism

Young planners Award 2010 MEDDE

Presentation by Maud le Floc'h

Under an initiative by Maud Le Floc'h, director-urban planner (Mission-Repérage(s), Compagnie Off, festival Rayons Frais...) and commissioned by the French Ministry of Culture, the pOlau-pôle des arts urbains, develops its singular position of research center and platform of experimentation between artistic, cultural, and urban actors. The center is located in Tours, where the pOlau works at the national level. Its activities are articulated around three windows

- support of urban artistic creation (residencies)
- the conception and artistic programming on urban issues
- the urban future, R&D programmes and cultural urbanism agency

Creation and interdisciplinarity, with Erwan Jan

This session, led by musician, songwriter and choir director Erwann Jan, had to do with the creation of cross art-form productions which blend song, theatre, video, improvisation and storytelling. Erwan has directed 15 of these productions for children aged 10-14 years old, and used Powerpoint slides and video clips from his website to inform the audience about his productions. The presentation was focussed on the content of the productions, all of which seemed to follow a similar formula in which songs, storyline, and overall artistic direction was largely directed by Erwann Jan.

The influences of the visual arts and the theatre on today's choir, with Loïc Pierre

The conductor Loïc Pierre gave a captivating presentation on the effectiveness of considering visual and theatrical aspects when working with choirs. With his choir, Mikrokosmos, elements which may include film, movement, lighting, costume, and narrative are planned and rehearsed with as much care as the musical elements, and the result – as delegates experienced at a concert on the final night of the conference, is a spell-binding performance: seamless, engaging and compelling. To illustrate his points, Loïc Pierre had created a film presentation of highly skilled choirs competing in an international choir competition. As Loïc Pierre progressed through his presentation, the effectiveness of adding visual performance elements became starkly clear. Loïc Pierre emphasised that even small changes can make a difference to a choir's presentation, which can enhance the entire performance for both singers and audience. Choice of choir dress, spacing singers around the performance area, utilising lighting, scripting, film, movement and interaction with the audience were among the techniques demonstrated both in the demonstration and in the stunning performance "Nuit dévoilée" by Mikrokosmos at the City Hall on the final night of the conference

Hip Hop and Choir singing, with François Bazola & Abderzak Houmi

In their show [Face à Face](#), they have made a marriage of two seemingly not combinable disciplines – hip hop and baroque music, which resulted in a true thing of beauty like it has always been meant to be.

It was very inspiring to hear them talk about the process, their concept, the difficulties and their vision.





French and European Vocal Networks

The purpose of this session was to brief members on the range of French and European Vocal Networks available, to explain the purpose behind them, and to describe how they interact. Reminding that LEO Sings is also an important network, the following organisations were pointed out :

- A focus on french Missions voix network joined in the [Plate-forme interrégionale](#), umbrella association of regional organisations in charge of public services for information and support for cultural development <http://www.pfi-culture.org>
- The presentation of [IFAC](#) – the French Institute of Choral Arts – which serves as a resource centre for choral singers, composers and choirmasters
- [À Coeur Joie](#)
- [Confédération musicale de France](#) (CMF)
- [Ancoli](#) (church choirs)
- [Peuri Cantores](#) (children's choirs)
- [Europa Cantat](#): 50 choral and conductors' organisations in 27 European countries, organising singing weeks every year and every three years an choral festival with 4000 singers and conductors. Next one will be in Pécs - Hungary, end of July 2015!
- [International Federation of Choral Music](#), organising every 3 years the World Symposium for Choral music, next one in Barcelona in 2017 (same as Korea this summer where LEO Sings projects was presented)

Social practices

The term "prevented public" is used in the cultural language in France, but there is no literal English translation. Here's what we mean by "prevented public"

"Prevented public" designate the public who can not attend an all public activity, on the usual place of artistic practice (to sing) or cultural practice (to attend an a concert).

Behind this general term, we refer to people with severe disabilities preventing their movement (and not all disabilities), the very old people, people in hospital, people in jail ... To sum up, a lot of different and varied situations, which are difficult to treat all in a single and in a same way.

Another word has existed in France for several years, but that also means the school public, business...: captive audiences. As if being in an institution (hospital, prison, school...) automatically captivated people to take part in an artistic or cultural activity.

For the workshop, we have chosen to have a look at this situation through 3 axes, which can interfere at some points:

- Singing in jails
- Choral singing and disabled people
- Singing in hospitals

Goals in each workshop:

The purpose of the session was to have a look at this situation through 3 axes (choral singing and disabled people, Singing in jails, Singing in hospitals), with the same goals of each workshop:

=> To identify and share (good) practices and information in different countries, to debate and reflect together about and from personal experiences,

=> To Identify lacks and needs and to initiate the building of new contents/forms/practice based on collective ideas :

***This project is supported by the European Union Longlife learning program
Leonardo da Vinci 2013 - 2015***



Programme pour l'éducation et
la formation tout au long de la vie



> Areas of intervention which could be explored, the means to put them into practice, each at our own level (national, European, individually and collectively).

> Resources to share

Feedback of the workshops :

In some of the workshops, we can notice a lack of experience and knowledge among the participants in artistic practice with disabled people. Thus, it was not so easy to discuss the uses in the different partner's country, to share information, to debate and reflect together about and from personal experiences...

However, some interesting experiences have helped to address the issues and to identify ideas to further explore the issues it raised.

Prospects

- First, each partner can collect information and resources in its own country and try to answer the 4 questions which was asked in each workshop.

- Otherwise, we could create a workgroup with interested people to gather and share all the information and resources, to identify and share "good practices", to debate and reflect together about and from personal experiences, to identify lacks and needs in the country and the structures...

- The next World Symposium of Choral Music, hosted by MCC in Barcelona in 2016 is an opportunity to present the results of this work, perhaps in the form of a workshop,

- It is also entirely appropriate to create a new sheet in the vocabulary book about the topics "prevented people" : what are the good words, which words and expressions are "politically correct" to speak about prevented people...

Choir/voice teaching

The format of this session was to take the first step in creating a map of all accredited degree programmes for singing and choral conducting offered in higher education and further education institutions throughout Europe. The idea was that this information would be used to create a directory which students could use to find vocal and choral courses, and to compare the degrees available.

To provide an example of what was intended, a representative from IFAC (the French Institute for Choral Arts), listed the conservatoires in France and described the degrees available from these conservatoires, and whether they offered specialised degrees in vocal studies and choral conducting. He also described in less detail the relevant degrees available from the universities in France. This encompassed the higher education accredited pathways to choral conducting and vocal studies available in France.

The group was then asked to complete the same exercise for all of the European countries represented. Two large maps were provided (one for vocal studies and one for conducting) on which it was proposed to write the programmes, degrees and institutions available in each country.

This proved to be a difficult exercise for some countries, and very simple for others. For example, Luxembourg has no music college or university offering conducting or vocal studies degrees.

Prospective music students from Luxembourg must look to study elsewhere, such as Belgium, Germany, or Holland. Other countries, such as the UK have a much higher number of institutions offering music degrees. The UK's 2015 university ranking table lists 75 accredited programmes of

***This project is supported by the European Union Longlife learning program
Leonardo da Vinci 2013 - 2015***



DG Éducation et culture
Programme pour l'éducation et
la formation tout au long de la vie



study, which includes both universities and conservatoires, but misses out institutions which offer singing courses in different capacities such as the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (which has a department of Singing and Music) or Rose Bruford College (which offers a BA in Actor Musicianship, and has vocal teachers on staff). There are also a large number of Further Education institutions in the UK offering Foundation degrees in singing (often in popular music or in association with acting). To map them all would be a daunting task.

Delegates suggested that this may be a research exercise that could be better undertaken outside of a conference session, although it was interesting to note how varied the opportunities for study were from one country to the next.

Higher education for conducting in France, by Pascal Baudrillart :

Places and higher education structures of choral conducting in France

The courses are eminently varying (volume levels, diplomas and competitions prepared ...) and evaluation of such content-levels remains to be done ...

General education	Music school education
22 Universities of Music - Musicology issuing licenses or Master and preparing for Teachers diploma (CAPES and Aggregation) of musical education and choral singing	National Conservatory in Lyon, delivering a Bachelors and Masters (9) + The Certificat d’Aptitude (CA) – diploma of professor
	7 high schools (Poles Superieurs) delivering a License and a DE (National diploma of singer/conductor) : Strasbourg, Dijon, Rennes, Toulouse, Lille, Paris (Boulogne and Aubervilliers)
	4 Cefedem delivering a DE (National diploma) : Nancy-Metz, Sud Aubagne, Lyon, Normandie

Assessments – prospects for Freiburg and future cooperation

Florian Städtler, president of EVA, partner hosting the session in Freiburg, presented the guidelines of the session.

In appendix:

Documentation and many other resources from the session can be download on the website : <http://www.pfi-culture.org/index.php?id=270>