



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

Cooperation and Networks in European Vocal Music

Session 4 of 5

4th – 8th of March 2015

Freiburg, Germany

Report

The *LEO Sings!* session in Freiburg presented a wide range of topics regarding vocal music. Inspired by the great events in Barcelona, Aalborg and Tours, the European Voices Association organised a three-and-a-half day conference with prominent speakers, great workshop coaches and experts from all over Europe.

Our stay in the “Capital of the Black Forest” was a unique event full of what the title promised: Cooperation, communication and networking combined with a lot of practical music making. As a special highlight, the participants attended the album release concert and only hometown show 2015 of Jazzchor Freiburg. Founded, led and conducted by Bertrand Gröger, the 30-part choir has established itself as one of Europe’s leading jazz and pop choirs.

The conference venue, Ensemblehaus Freiburg, home of the Freiburg Baroque Orchestra and the Ensemble Recherche, is a new concert and rehearsal building about 15 minutes out of the city. It offered the perfect space and atmosphere for the fourth of five *LEO Sings!* sessions.

Welcome by the host European Voices Association (EVA)

Introduction to the European Vocal Music Map

After a short welcome by EVA’s Chairman of the Board, Florian Städtler, the participants were invited to fill a blank map of Europe by using post-it notes. Throughout the session the European Vocal Music Map kept growing. Participants added festival, organisations, workshops, events, schools and associations from their own and other countries to the map on the wall.

Very soon, the collective “brainwriting” showed the wealth and diversity of European vocal music. It also became clear that a collection of adhesive notes could only be the symbolic beginning of a necessary process to collect, organize and present data within the choir, a cappella and vocal music community. However, everybody was inspired by the multitude of ideas and the exchange of valuable information.

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Programme Overview

The Freiburg session had three main themes:

1. **What's already out there?** Analyzing the European vocal music infrastructure by best practice examples, musical presentations, expert panels and the collective creation of the European Vocal Music Map.
2. **What's the challenge? What's in it for me?** Discussing the trials and tribulations, the joy and the satisfaction of singers, conductors and organizers in their everyday business as well as presenting a tool box for vocal music activists.
3. **Shaping the future of European vocal music.** Introducing innovative ways of singing together. Reviewing *LEO Sings!* and taking networking to the next level.

Florian suggested that every participant should be involved in “Crowd sourcing, research and active exchange” with colleagues: Interaction and contributions from the floor are very much encouraged and welcome.

On the final day, Sunday, 8th of March, the meeting should be summarized by a live video recording, entitled “The Musical Minutes – What's Next?”. The idea being that for a conference dealing with music and singing, the summary should be done in a musical way.

Warm-ups

Although the title of the Freiburg sessions gives the impression of being more “theoretical”, the organizers tried to include as much singing and music making as possible. One vital part of this was a variety of choir warm-ups conducted by participants and guest conductors.

With	Content	Contact
Christian Ronsfeld	“Habits - High all the time” Swedish chart-topping song	christian.ronsfeld@gmail.com
Tilo Beckmann Julian Knörzer	“Vocussion Song” 5-parts shuffle 8 notes groove	tilo@europeanvoices.org j.knoerzer@yahoo.de
Nils Bosworth	“Didn't plan to do so” Danish song	niels@bosworth.dk
Bertrand Gröger	“Loop songs” warm-ups published on Schott Music, recorded by The Swingle Singers	bertrand.groeger@t-online.de
Indra Tedjasukmana	Beatbox , movements stretching, loop songs	indra@europeanvoices.org
Karin Mueller	“Spring” - three group canon, ostinato and circles	karin@europeanvoices.org
Géraldine Toutain	“Music and Mathematics”	gtoutain@le-lab.info
Tobias Hug	“Loop song” - improvisation	tobiashug@icloud.com

Thursday 5th of March 2015

Lectures / Workshops / Panels

Made in Germany: Contemporary pop choir arrangement of “Auf uns” by Christian Ronsfeld (Germany)

Christian's introduced his own arrangement in 4-parts, and the group enjoyed singing Andrea Bourani's World Cup hit. He gave interesting examples of vocal timbre and descriptions of timbre like “flat”, “open”, explained that pitch and vocal range were limited to make the arrangement suitable for young singers, and put a lot of emphasis on the lyrics and meaning of the composition.

For most of the participants, it was a new way to sing in German: Not Schubert or Bach or Comedian Harmonists, but a contemporary pop song done in the German language.

Gesture and Sound by Catherine Fender (France)

This class started by examining what singing was all about and continued to explain how to communicate with gestures. The latter topic was illustrated by a short warm-up exercise for choirs:

- Breathing out in many different ways and images in the singer's head, taking a sound at first, moving from a tiny, shallow to a warm, round sound, then throwing the sound away with the semitone rise.
- Singing while imagining to polish a sports car and then a little car from a toy shop. The group also did a “star plucking” exercise and picked hairs off our clothes while listening how these pictures in our minds influenced the sounds created. All of these gestures can help to become more aware of sounds and create vocal timbres.
- “Frere Jacques” sung directly into the ear of another singer and then repeated far away and while moving back and forth. This exercise has the purpose of becoming aware of crescendo and diminuendo effects.
- Holding wrists and bending down in the boat while singing with high voices. Also hands pushing together and eyes engaging.
- Straight spine using the bottom of torso. A good exercise for getting used to singing high notes including the whole of the body.

Gestures can help to get the singer's body engaged in the sound. It is connected to constant movement, so if you do a scale, you can have pauses but it is important to keep the gesture going even while you hold a note.

Presentation of the Tri-national choir project “Choeur 3” by Denis Haberkorn (France), Isabelle Humbert (France), Mathias Schillmöller (Germany)

Mission Voix Alsace is leading a transnational project (France, Germany, Switzerland) concerning vocal education and diffusion, with chamber choir meetings for solo singers and with conducting courses. This summer there will be the first meeting of a tri-national choir, including singers from France (Alsace), Switzerland and Germany.

The project is based on multicultural experience, experimental music and innovative ideas. By projects like doing a concert on the Rhine river, Denis Haberkorn and his tri-national team present choral music in a completely new and exciting way, crossing borders both culturally and musically.

European Music Events

Poster Session (1-4)

For the “European Music Events” poster session the group was split into four small groups, moving between four different poster presenters who introduced their event and discussed the nature and special features of their work.

Like in “speed dating”, the time for every presentation was limited to keep the participants active and make the presenters focus on the core of their activities.

1. Stimmen Festival Lörrach

by Markus Muffler (m.muffler@burghof.com)

Markus is the artistic director of the jazz, rock and pop festival in Lörrach, Germany (close to the Swiss border and Basel), “Stimmen” (www.stimmen.com) .

The 3-weeks events covers very diverse styles and genres (classical, jazz, modern dance, children's theatre, literature, cabaret comedy), 10 stages and 30,000 spectators in the 900 PAX performing arts building “Burghof” as well as in larger outdoor venues in Germany, Switzerland and France. The festival's revenue is coming from private sponsors, ticketing, and public funding.

2. Kulturbörse Freiburg

by Katharina Herter (katharina.herter@fwtm.de)

“Internationale Kulturbörse Freiburg” is a professional industry meeting for stage productions, music and events. It includes showcases, exhibitions, workshops, lasts for three days and attracts thousands of artists, agents and professional buyers.

160-180 showcases are at the heart of the Kulturbörse. On four stages solo artists and ensembles perform for 20 minutes, after having been chosen by one of the two selection committees that are being refreshed each year.

For many artists, the event has helped to enter the German-speaking market, and the investment of approximately 500 Euros to present themselves in a showcase is made by most professional artists, as they know they can perform in front of dozens of potential future customers.

3. Europa Cantat XIX

by Sonja Greiner (EC-ECA) info@europeanchoralassociation.org

The 14th edition of the Europa Cantat festival goes by the motto “Hungary for Singing”. It is a non-competitive festival based on intercultural dialogue and countless educational activities.

The majority of the programme is classical, but the stylistic range is getting wider and the festival is for people of all ages as well as the families of the singing attendees. In total, Europa Cantat XIX hosts more than 3000 participants.

Special highlights of the programme address conductors, composers and managers (YEMP - Young managers getting work experiences) and a huge open air singing. Europa Cantat XV will take place in Tallinn, Estonia in 2018.

4. INECC Luxembourg

by Camille Kerger kerger@inecc.lu

Luxembourg is a very small country and it has only been independent for 150 years, so it is only beginning to build traditions. On the other hand, Luxembourg has always been thinking in a European way and that's the mindset, which INECC has built their festival on.

INECC have a bottom-up philosophy of collaboration, with small workshops over one weekend trying to create the sensibility for singing. The festival counts 3000 registrations and about 80 projects, from small to big.

Particularly European projects are the Choir Direction Class, the Robert Schuman Choir named after the EU founder, and the Grand Region New Philharmonie Choir.

Overtone Singing

by Wolfgang Saus, saus@oberton.org

Wolfgang began by testing our hearing as he moved the overtones around while creating a simple melody. No one heard the overtones straight away, but as he shifted the emphasis and – interestingly - as he removed consonants and 'word' type sounds, we started to hear the overtones.

He used the formants to sing Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" by emphasizing the 2nd formant. If your right part of brain is more developed, it's easier for you to hear overtones. The left half of the brain is responsible to hear the fundamental note. When we use consonants - as in words – our brain concentrates on the meaning of the words (left half of the brain is dominant) and therefore miss out on hearing the overtones.

Some more topics and facts that Wolfgang explained and demonstrated:

- There are three resonances produced in the vocal tracts and overtone singers use all three of them.
- Overtones can be visualized by using a frequency analyser with some musical tools in a new programme based on Sygyt.
- Everyone produces ultra sound but nobody hears it. It helps to imagine the voice as a flute orchestra, which helps you to recognize loudness distribution of overtones.
- You start to produce it by extremely deforming the tongue in the pharyngeal space, by imagining a hot potato under the tongue. (*Back part of the tongue is very young in terms of evolution.*)
- 'Lll' technique: use of the tongue tip moving 1mm behind bone ridge of upper jaw and making the space for a hot potato under the tongue.



Friday, 6th of March 2015

European Union project “VOICE”

by Sonja Greiner, European Choral Association - Europa Cantat (ECA-EC)

www.europeanchoralassociation.org

ECA-EC organizes and hosts major events and builds community resources, raising awareness of benefits of singing by researching the complex balance between art and the physical and social benefits of cultural activities.

For the VOICE (Vision on Innovation for Choral Music in Europe) project, ECA-EC teamed up with 15 organisations from 11 countries and cooperated outside its usual network, too. So they found partners in other fields in order to get funding for an in-depth data collection. Quote Sonja Greiner: “We have to look beyond the rim of our own plate.” None of the organisations could afford to do this kind of research by themselves. Doing these kinds of projects is a service to our membership.

The VOICE project’s objectives were

- to encourage new events
- to promote more innovative repertoire
- to promote contact between schools and choral associations
- to develop new tools for the promotion of singing in music education.

One result of the project is a collection of lullaby scores (pdf format) on the project website, available for free to encourage parents to sing to and with their children.

Another central question of the VOICE project was: How many people sing in Europe? Before the project’s research, ECA-EC assumed that there are about 20 million singers in Europe including Russia. To know about this is crucial for lobbying, where the vocal music community has not done a particularly good job yet. Sonja Greiner compared singers with hunters in regard of lobbying. The latter are very good at lobbying, because due to gun licensing, they have to actively promote their interests. Singers and the organizations representing them could do much better here.

The results of the VOICE inquiry showed that in Europe, 37 million singers are involved in collective singing, 22 million of them in the member countries of the European Union.

European Music Agenda : Why and how amateur music making must be supported by conservatories

by Jeremy Cox, www.aec-music.eu www.imc-cim.org

The International Music Council (IMC) is the world's largest network of organizations and institutions working in the field of music. The International Music Council promotes access to music for all and the value of music in the lives of all people. Through its members and their networks, IMC has direct access to over 1000 organisations in some 150 countries and to 200 million persons eager to develop and share knowledge and experience on diverse aspects of musical life.



Association Européenne de Conservatoires (AEC) project higher music education, based in Brussels, represents 90% of music academies and conservatories in Europe.

Activities:

- Annual Congress
- IRC - International Relations Coordinators
- Workshops: pop and jazz platform (Vocon a platform for the singing teachers of CCM), Early Music platform, European platform for Artistic Research in music EPARM (Graz April)
- Polifonia just finished in 2014, with five strands: curriculum reform in Higher Music Education, artistic research, governance accreditation academic standards, lifelong learning educating for creative entrepreneurship, mobility, recognition, joint degrees Erasmus
- FULL SCORE fulfilling the skills. Competences and know how requirements of cultural and creative players in the European music sector.
- Agenda for MUSIC in Europe in the frame of European Music Council.

Competition - A force for good in the vocal music world? (Panel discussion)

hosted by Peter Martin Jacob, European Voices Association www.europeanvoices.org

At a round table discussion, six participants (Susan, Jeanne, Wolfgang, Sarah, Indra and Tilo), divided into two groups, were invited to discuss the pros and cons of holding and participating in competitions.

Each member of the panel developed arguments for or against the principle of competition and contest, stating risks as well as opportunities (for singers/conductors), the financial interest, (price/award, fee, ...) the promotion of artists, the quality of the jury and the contestants.

Peter Martin Jacob who hosted the panel, used video testimonials of conductors and singers to complete the collection of pros and cons.

The Vocal Music Organizer's Toolbox

hosted by Florian Städtler, European Voices Association www.europeanvoices.org

Four speakers were invited to share their experience on European project development:

- Tobias Hug who organizes a vocal festival he created in 2014 in the small town of Fossano in Italy
- Sonja Greiner on his experience of European funding
- Jeremy Cox on audience development
- Nina Ruckhaber for managing a choir
- Stéphane Grosclaude on the implementation of the European project *LEO Sings!*

The *LEO Sings!* participants were able to listen to short expert talks in small groups of 4 to 6, ask questions and discuss the topics of the expert talk.

Online learning: live educational session with RAMA

by Niels Bosworth, Jim Daus Hjerno, Jesper Holm and Peder Karlsson



This session was a practical example of long-distance learning, which was presented (in theory) during the previous session in Aalborg.

After Niels Bosworth (RAMA) logged onto the Adobe Connect conference room from the Freiburg venue, Jim Daus Hjernoë taught the *LEO Sings!* participants from Aalborg, improvising a circle song. Then, the class switched to another Aalborg class room where Jesper Holm gave a presentation of conducting and gestures before passing on the online baton to Peder Karlsson, whose class greeted Freiburg with a song.

To the surprise of many *LEO Sings!* participants, the quality of the online teaching was quite high and all videos and music files uploaded without problems. The session showed a glimpse of the opportunities that online learning has at hand.

Lola (mentioned by Jeremy) is another online learning system from Italy, which has extremely low latency, so sound can travel over 3000 kilometers without significant delay. All one needs is a computer and a microphone.

Saturday, 7th of March 2015

EVTA and Eurovox

by Susan Yarnall yarnallmonks@yahoo.co.uk

EVTA is an umbrella organisation in 21 countries to promote singing and the teaching of singing.

They organize a conference every three years called “Eurovox”, which in 2015 takes place in Riga, Latvia. The programme includes “YPP”, an activity that gives young singers the opportunity to sing in masterclasses and workshops.

In August 2015 in Firenze, Italy, EVTA are involved with voice scientists and voice therapists in the “Pan-European Voice Conference” (PEVOC – www.pevoc.org). At this meeting EVTA and other organizations are trying to make the voice of singers and singing teachers heard beyond the musical community. The event also promotes interdisciplinary dialogue between creative and artistic people and the scientific and research communities.

EVTA is also involved in the ICVT in Stockholm August 2017.

Unconventional Choirs

by Tobias Hug tobiashug@me.com

Tobias Hug, vocal coach, artistic director and former member of The Swingle Singers demonstrated the amazing diversity of choir singing by presenting videos of choirs “out of the ordinary”.

Shouting Men Choir

www.huutajat.org

www.youtube.com/watch?v=xuVNo1R4VKE



Virtual Choir - Eric Whitacre

www.youtube.com/watch?v=D7o7BrlbaDs

With the rapid advances in technology (also covered in my 'new technology' session), all of this is possible to do in real time.

<http://youtu.be/vGngoGvOSuY?t=2m20s>

The possibilities with virtual reality will soon be affordable, wide-spread and well 'virtually without limits'

African Youth Choir

A choir from the 'World Choir Category.

Tip: Show this to your choir when they complain that they can't sing and move at the same time

<http://youtu.be/QRoe-WOkPw?t=52s>

White Hands Choir (Venezuela)

Sistema Nacional de Orquestras y Coros Juveniles e Infantiles de Venezuela

www.youtube.com/watch?v=DuELOI1uYIs

<http://fundamusical.org/ve/ensembles-and-musicians/white-hands-choir/>

Note: In case you are unfamiliar with the Venezuelan music education system, 'Il Sistema', it's well worth finding out more.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=43tqQhOTCgQ

Huun Huur Tu & Bulgarian Voices, Moscow Art Trio (Russia/Bulgaria)

One magical piece of world music - incredible Cross-Over between Tuva, Russia and Bulgaria.

The whole album 'Fly, Fly My Sadness' is a transcendental journey.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=k5EhkRn29Bk

European Overtone Choir

Founded by Wolfgang Saus, exploring the mix of overtone singing and choral music

www.youtube.com/watch?v=hXKXPStH9g

Musarc, Architect Choir, (UK)

Composition in vocal music was influenced for a long-time in history by the environment and spaces it was composed for. This tradition has been somehow lost in the past century. Musarc is a London-based choir which creates unique concerts in unique spaces, exploring its particular sound and architecture. Most performed are specifically commissioned for the occasion and space.

www.musarc.org/choir/

Pendulum Choir (CH)

Of course, there is a lot of 'unconventional' use of choirs in contemporary classical music - here maybe an extreme example.... combining performance art with choral music.

<http://youtu.be/vsXs3GUrw64?t=2m>

www.codact.ch/gb/pendugb.html#txt

4'33 – John Cage

And of course John Cage's classic - in a very clever re-arrangement for choir.. must have been a lot of work to re-write this ;-)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_2OcsErs6I



Complaints Chords

The first one of these happened in Finland. Note the recurring 'Sauna'-theme.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=ATXV3DzKv68

The idea spread very quickly !!

Japan - here with slightly different themes

<http://youtu.be/gmXfb4q78il?t=6m20s>

'Flashmob Choir' (UK)

Heathrow / T-Mobile - Commercial

Note: The term 'flashmob' has been appropriated and is now used for any (unannounced) public performance.. originally flashmobs were organised spontaneously, secretly and anonymously through social media, often including 'pointless' or artistic activities like pillow fights etc.

The phenomenon is now used frequently by advertising, PR companies, TV etc. This is sometimes referred to as 'Smartmob'.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=NB3NPNM4xgo

Singing Revolution (Estonia)

Let's not forget that singing can have much more than just an artistic or social function - song has often played a role in revolutions

www.youtube.com/watch?v=DA9PmZo-2jo

Spooky Men Chorale (AUS)

A few fun links.. there seems to be something inherently funny in men singing...

www.youtube.com/watch?v=UNrAgbzMXOI

Woofers - Bass Choir (UK)

An initiative at London A Cappella Festival exploring the very bottom of the choral spectrum.

http://youtu.be/1_215XIKsil

SFX Choir (UK/US)

This choir was set up for the revolutionary Honda Commercial but continues a life of its own.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gjyWP2LfbyQ>

<https://vimeo.com/54306231>

Kecak - (Bali/Indonesia)

Also known as 'monkey chant', Kecak is a Balinese trance ritual accompanied by male chorus - usually a circle of 150+ performers. Performances are based on Sanskrit epic poems and can last between a couple of hours and several days.

From European Vocal Music Map to Vocal Music Portal including The Open Data Exchange Format by Florian Städtler and Volker Bauer, presented by Florian Städtler, www.europeanvoices.org

This map is a symbolic image, but also a long-term project devised by Volker Bauer, Treasurer and co-founder of EVA.



Everyone always needs data that are and remain updated to:

- find information for students
- find choirs, singers
- find sheet music
- find like-minded people

The idea would be to develop a Vocal Music Portal serving a global community. This portal is based on a smart database, updated automatically by pulling information from institutions' and artists' websites.

The European Vocal Music Map is both an interactive crowdsourcing tool used at the *LEO Sings!* conference and the starting point for the future database. At the conference the participants added their ideas by using post-it notes to a European map on the wall including vocal music events, educational institutions (including workshops) and vocal music associations.

It was quite interesting to see where the gaps on the map remained and it became clear that for countries like Portugal, the Ukraine and many small countries, a lot of research has to be done to support vocal music there and make real pan-European exchange happen.

The Vocal Music Portal is a project initiated by the European Voices Association with Acappellazone (www.acappellazone.com).

Non-profit organisations need professional help with a huge project like that. Commercial service providers (publishers, arrangers, app developers) on the other hand, need access to the vocal music community. The Vocal Music Portal wants to be the platform (Florian: "the operating system") that caters both of those needs.

***LEO Sings!* - what's next?**

hosted by Florian Städtler, European Voices Association, www.europeanvoices.org

In this panel, the hosts of the five *LEO Sings!* project sessions and coordinator Stéphane Grosclaude were invited to tell the participants about their experience, the benefits of organising and hosting a session, and their vision of the following steps and the future of the project.

Stéphane Grosclaude mentioned new ideas of collaboration that have already been identified and might be worth thinking of:

- The vocal identity (Why do we sing?) with an audiovisual approach (short narrative videos) and a sociological approach (survey on social practices in different countries)
- The language and vocabulary to establish a European glossary, as has been discussed in Tours with Gerard Authelain
- The sharing of resources, such as a shared website

In general, the hosts stated that the gains of hosting a session and being part of the project in general were well worth the efforts and extra hours they had to put in to organize a local event. All involved expressed the wish to continue the collaboration based on the results of *LEO Sings!* 2014/15.

The Future of Networking and Collaboration (video testimonials)

hosted by Tobias Hug, European Voices Association, www.europeanvoices.org

Today, there are 40-50 channels of marketing and communication compared to four to five 20 years ago. The variety, speed and creativity of using face-to-face and digital networks was demonstrated by short video statements by musicians, teachers and music managers:

- James Rose, jazz musician, 23 years, based in London; James is co-founder of the virtual vocal group Accent consisting of six young men from different countries. He uses Patreon, a subscription service for fans who support the production of YouTube videos.
- Peder Karlsson: As a “digital immigrant”, Peder had to adapt to the new ways of communication, especially as he’s working internationally with Slovenian pop choir Perpetuum Jazzile as well as within his online vocal music school, The Real Academy.
- Ben Bram, producer for a cappella superstars and Grammy-winners Pentatonix; he wrote the Grammy-winning “Daft Punk Medley” arrangement and his main network consists of publishers, lawyers and accountants. Most of his work can be handled digitally.
- Bee-Lo, founder of Beatbox Battle TV, a very successful YouTube channel and live event network; he has made YouTube and the beatbox battle niche his business model.

Despite rapid digitalization, all of the video interviewees prefer face-to-face communication in order to create genuine connections.

Sunday, 8th of March 2015

LEO Sings! Musical Minutes “What’s Next”

directed by Florian Städtler, European Voices Association, florian@europeanvoices.org

Based on Florian’s idea of an unconventional way to summarize the Freiburg *LEO Sings!* session, the participants were invited to create a three-movement “instant composition”, that should reflect the three days in Freiburg.

1. What’s already out there?
2. What are the opportunities and challenges?
3. Shaping the future of European vocal music

This “adventure” worked really well combining different artistic and choral techniques with some of the topics discussed during the conference. The group ended up with a 9-minute video including a circle song, a math-meeting-music exercise, overtone singing and live looping. All of that was composed, rehearsed, recorded and filmed within two hours. It vividly illustrates the creative approach of the Freiburg *LEO Sings!* session.