



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

EVTA has been involved with three LEO projects, the first was a singing teacher exchange programme, the second was the digital resources for singing teaching project (these are kept in the archives) and recently we have been partners in this current project.

Brief overview

We began in Barcelona in February 2014 looking at the training paths available for singers in Europe. We discussed all levels of singing from school children to professional singers, both solo and choral, in classical and contemporary genres. We heard some amazing singing from Spanish children's choirs and we also met some excellent presenters who stretched our vocal and imaginative ideas about singing.

Then in May 2014 we were in Aalborg in North Denmark to learn about a very particular and unique distance-learning MA degree at the Music Academy in its wonderful new venue. The title of this session was 'Emerging Aesthetics: pop, jazz, rock'. This proved to be inspirational, seeing the Danish teachers introduce the idea of the *Intelligent Choir*. We learnt about the digital resources they are using to work with students at great distances and this linked perfectly with our previous LEO project where we learnt about the ways to share teaching through Skype. They use an advanced but very effective programme called Adobe Connect. We heard some wonderful 'A Capella' singing groups and we were fully exercised with movement classes in rhythmic skills, circle songs, improvisation and conducting.

In October 2014 a large group of us went to Tours to discuss 'Collective practices'. This examined choral singing but also the connections with solo singing and EVTA contributed much to the sessions which were run in parallel with AFPC, our French members. We heard some amazing choirs, both professional and amateur. We explored the singing that takes place in cultural contexts, inner cities, with immigrants, hospitals, prisons, therapeutic situations. So it was a very broad overview of the kind of singing that takes place in Europe in all its diversity. The session also ended with a major choral festival at St.Lo.

Last March (2015) the final full session took place in Freiburg in the Black Forest. This was an opportunity to look at our co-operation within the European networks. We looked at marketing skills and how major music festivals are organised. But we also did a lot of singing, beat boxing and overtone singing. The networks we have made over all the LEO projects have been really dynamic and this project was no exception. As a result we are able to suggest new projects and we hope to take this form of European co-operation even further in the future.

Our final meeting in Copenhagen was an opportunity to write the final report, with prospects for further cooperation and recommendations to EU and local governments, quite a monumental task but an important one as the funding we receive helps us to finance a level of activity that would be impossible without the EU grants.

The following reports reflect the intense nature of our work and the notes that I took during the four working sessions. Susan Yarnall Monks - Secretary EVTA

Report from LeoSings Tours – October 2014

Saturday 18th October

Management of collective vocal practices

Stéphane introduced the whole **process** of Leo Sings as a continuing activity, Stéphane showed us taster videos of Barcelona and Aalborg. This session is linked with AFPC the French Singing teachers meeting.

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



Stéphane explained that there had already been presentations on LeoSings in Budapest and Korea and we have also linked up and networked with Europa Cantat and Eurovox.

The film will also be continued in this session and participants were asked to give permission for filming to include them.

Publishers from France were available with music in the refectory.

Sunday 19th of October

9am Peder and organic choir

This was one of the warm up sessions and Peder worked with Merel From Holland who has started an organic choir as part of her studies with Peder and Jim in Aalborg.

We began with muscle work, freeing the body, rhythmic movement, in preparation for vocal improvisation. I like the final dynamic exercise to get the body moving which involved legs and arms 10 shakes 54321! Peder explained Floor and roof dynamics, and encouraged individual ownership of leading the group indicating dynamic levels. Then we had the Human metronome, again changing the 'leader' of the group.

10am Gerald Authelain. Music publisher

World cafe music vocabulary

This followed the same style of informal brain storming we had in Barcelona and Aalborg. There were 4 distinct areas of vocabulary to explore.

1. Aesthetics
2. Conducting
3. Vocal group types
4. Vocal technical language

There is often a difficulty of understanding when we communicate, some words have different meanings, hence this world cafe...

The plan is to make a glossary for us to use in Freiburg, including Mental and implied and cultural meanings. This report will be shared.

In the 'conducting' section we realised many times we use the same words but with subtle different meanings depending on the context.

Susan Yarnall Monks did a session with the French National Youth Choir, and Phillipe Forget. She worked on aspects of hearing and body voice connection using Kristin Linklater's vowel sounds model adapted for singing.

Peder Karlsson with Maniwata choir

What is the purpose of singing together? Relationship. The myth of separation from nature, we are monkeys.

Good better best is no longer relevant.

Rehearsal methods

The day after tomorrow was the tune Peder worked with the choir varying dynamics, timbre, etc using opposites and extremes to help the choir judge their own musical parameters.

When are we ourselves? Feedback on our identity.



Blend, tone colours
Rhythm
Phrasing
Intonation
Communication

Focus on 1 area, 1 item at a time

Feedback types
Positive reinforcement
Help constructive criticism help must be specific
Stop

Floor dynamic, lose the tone, max the breathiness now without the breathiness...!!!!
Go beyond the comfort zone singers don't like to do that. Press save. Sauf Garder

Ugly is ok as loud as you can so that we establish the limits of dynamic.

Focus person is always 'perfect' and the others follow.

Timbre- use extreme sounds, opposites, very nasal and then loose. 10 different types of dark or bright. again Peder used Rotated leadership model.

Maximum vibrato and minimum

Also same vowel colours, matching singers in pairs.

Articulation gradual changes - the trouble here is that the vibrato and articulation are not always clear. Timbre and tone colours often sort out intonation.

Scoop every note or not. Challenge the unspoken agreement with your choir.

Building competence in the choir one focus at a time.

Motivation comes from 'all we need is love'

From competition to playfulness

Balance feeling taste imagination. + logic thinking
Physical skills responsibility inspiration fun challenge

Peder is going to share his power point I hope.

Monday October 20st

Chi Gong warm up with Melanie Jackson

Lots of breathing gentle lip rolls, feet parallel, shoulders down.
Noelle Barker's 'lips teeth and tongue' for articulation.
Then we tried palms up and down, hips rolled, smile with your body, smile in your pelvis.



This is the lady in Paris I saw. And the same, no forcing, gentle but free body and lifted posture. Lifting the knees and balance body, moving to left and right but keeping the body balance, the cone pointing to the floor, pressing the floor down. The large intestine has the same grey matter as the brain of a dog!!!!

Sound painting

Angélique Cormier lives in Tours and is very famous for her sound painting orchestra

Sound painting is sign language, improvisation, no scores, compose in the moment with the artist Ensemble in Tours, 20 performers dancers actors singers artists, creating performances live not written down.

Universal language, all over the world but some country differences and cultural subtleties.

Who what when

Long tone,

Walter Thompson soundpainting.org websites and books there are about 1200 signs Singers sing, actors can speak but also create mood and poses, dancers moves and all this can happen with visual artistes, she has a textile artist. She shares the role of sign maker with her orchestra members. So you can have a conducting dancer

Soundpainting in building yards and New York etc. photos and link

This was a super workshop and a real bonus, difficult to put onto paper but I have some video of the session

Arts and culture

Connecting politics with artists based in Tours but also international and all of France.

Artists in residence sound artists architects 500 pieces in 100 places in 15 days. Urban buildings designs etc.

Events on flood plains one foot with a flip-flop other with wellingtons around the city. Urban consultation with artists

New generation artist conceptual art hotel room with a statue inside it in Nantes Japanese artist. St. Nazaire visual art observatory point to see the whole composition

A new way to promote singing in the community.

The smoke, rubbish being burnt, so you could see how your conservation was happening

Lights for new born in the city in a public space. So you make people aware of new life

Nicholas Frieze Social awareness with music the bells metro sound signal Sandigny? End of the metro. High quality musician

Theatre group

Carmen the opera on a open air 20metre metal ring with 3 Carmens and 3 Don Jose scenery on two levels the opera is outside the audience and the urban noises are also part of the soundscape but it never intrudes it becomes part of the opera.

Sirens become a musical orchestra and a city concert.



Ici meme. A company that helps you to make a walk in a neighbourhood, with headphones and you are blindfolded? At the end you are given warm blankets and then you listen to all the sounds remixed.

Stéphane said how can we make our singing and choirs relevant to real life? Test senses in the city perform outside the concert hall. Don't try to reproduce perfectly what you do in an enclosed space, outside you need to change your ideas.

Monday October 20th pm

Reaction and interdisciplinary Erwann Jan working with 9-14 year olds

Musician and technician and he loves to work with children Bazar à Voix theatre video spectacles

Choeur du petit fauchoux

Important Jazz theatre 200 seats in Tours using poetry, improvisation & interactive video with instrumental same focus as professional team

I think it is about making new ideas for choir music.

Not such a useful session as his work was interesting as an example but we saw rather too much of the actual performances instead of hearing more of the reasoning behind his work. Very French alternative music theatre?

He also does great work on schools because in France there is very little music in schools. Random poetry and music.

Hip hop

Interesting project using a baroque music dance, hip hop, break dancing

Mikrokosmos choir

Musician, director open minded, escaping from stage using dance video and cinema, theatre,

1. Critical analysis
2. Great master
3. Success and failures

World symposium of choirs 2005

Worst case of scenarios Ugly score, costume, conductor isolated.

Middle snake conductor glued to score

Choice of costume terrible ties

Conductor well dressed beautiful back from memory use of space on stage the choir breathes

He gave us many examples, some amusing and some embarrassing of the faults that he saw personally in much of choral presentations. When we saw his choir perform on Tuesday evening we could see the high standards he maintains.



Tuesday October 21st

Lukas body breath and voice

Lots of Yoga Chi Gong, rhythmic singing, intention and emotional breathing. Exercises stretching right side of body feeling the difference in lung capacity and then the left side. Very good.

European networks in choral music

Europa Cantat 40 countries, 20 million singers organising singing weeks every year. Every three years an event with 4000 singers conductors. Pecs in Hungary, next year 2015!

Marina from Barcelona spoke about Europa Cantat

She invited everyone to Barcelona in November. Another choral symposium in 2017 in Barcelona (same as Korea this summer).

LEOSings network

IFAC director Margaret an umbrella organisation

Includes a coeur Joie CMF Ancoli ipeuri Cantores children's choirs

Three missions

It is a resource centre

It is a centre of training for development of choir conductors to make it more professional

It renews choir repertoire

Euro choir session

Inter regional platforme includes 21 regional networks some are cultural public funding some are more performance based associations e.g. Music and dance development, Missions Voix. Common projects were the basis of the formation of PFI

Missions Voix

Polyphonic art centres was the original idea but Missions Voix was less 'classical' based. Cpravoi is in the centre

Who sings where what and when. People singing what do they need many studies in 2004 - 10,000 choirs 40,000 singers, 30,000 concerts...

We support projects try to help, innovating repertoires etc. we can publish studies and repertoire too.

Strengthening association with other organisations, networking mad!!!

This session was informative about the projects happening in France.

Folk song arrangements

Folk song arrangements- a really good session and we need to do more of this for so many reasons!

we sing

we learn about cultural nuances



it is music and creative and co-operative
it's fun and challenging

Tuesday afternoon

Workshops for singing in prisons, Hospitals, or with disabled and sick

Choir singing and prevented people - out of traditional concert of music. The French call them all 'disabled' hence confusion. Marginalised. A public that cannot attend a collective public activity. Difficult to treat in the same way. Captive audience.

Partnership
Which partners?
Their role?

We don't have direct contact with these institutions. Everyone must remain in their field of expertise. Unfamiliar environment. Should music be the secondary consideration? Cultural rights exist in cultural laws. So music must come first??

Fribourg declaration on cultural rights 2007

Promotion of cultural rights within the field of human rights.

Scientific research says that music has an impact on the brain, music is able to treat pathology, music can act in brain injury, music prevents people from ageing...

This is not music therapy...music as an artistic activity.

How many prevented people? Quantitative approach...10% of the world 650 million people

'WHO' say this is increasing, as life expectancy increases 11% of our life will be spent with a disability.

How to make music accessible to all?
Why?
how?

Goal of workshop

1. Share information across Europe
2. Identify lacks and needs in the countries
3. Identify areas of intervention to be explored and the means to put them into practice
4. Identify our resources, and how we can share these

Health Organisations or Hospitals?

Uk, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, Netherlands

We agreed that there were no laws as such that we were aware of... France has a Charter that indicates the human rights of people in hospitals. Maybe we all have but we are not aware of that.



In UK, Belgium and Germany most cultural activities in Hospitals are done by voluntary groups and charities. In France the one member who works in hospitals is paid by another institution not the hospital. When she works she can achieve what the medics cannot.

Kliniclowns are in Netherlands, France and Belgium. We have play in hospitals in the UK and also Music in hospital. Netherlands have hospital radio service.

Are the musicians licensed? Now there are more rules and criminal checks to be done.

Wording - we tend to say marginalised or visually, physically, orally, challenged in English

Most agreed that we cover all three aspects
performing
singing with the staff choir
getting patients to sing and participate

Music is used during chemotherapy also when patients have operations and during MRI scans and CT scans. So music is recognised as having a beneficial and healing and calming effect on patients. Making treatment more effective.

We said the barriers between therapy and music as art are difficult to divide, a musician might not have a therapeutic intention but an artistic intention but nevertheless it would often result in a therapeutic outcome.

France has a title 'musician intervant or animateur and it could be instigated by hospital or musician or cultural organisation. In Germany there is always a piano for patients to use.

In Germany and other countries if you are sick then you are expected to stay at home till you are better. But there are changing attitudes to well being and health and the whole person to be healed.

Sports associations are better at getting their message about helping healthy people stay healthy so we as musicians need to get our PR together.

Geraldine talked about the modern architecture of a hospital and how these new spaces are more suitable for musical performances and conducive to culturally rich experiences.

Being a teacher myself, I gave them all homework - to find out as much as they could with links we can share, about the provision of music and singing in hospitals and health organisations.

Timing is important too, if we only see them once is that any good. Can we create links so that a young child who wants to sing can be linked up to a choir after being in hospital, or after experiencing some kind of music therapy. As musicians in our communities do we have a responsibility to find out what we can do to help the marginalised?

Disabled people

In France there is a laws about including disabled people in society. EU law inclusion disabled children in ordinary schools

Make music for wellness or therapy - it should have real artistic projects respecting disabled people as musicians and artists.

All could be funding agents, but not special names. In France there is specific training for musicians in hospitals.



Music in Jail

Meriem told us about her work for the past 8 years in prisons. She was the only expert in the group.

We started defined the questions, we started to make groups, Thierry Machuel from Clermont Ferraud he was a choral composer max security prison so he started with 4 prisoners. He needs to be safe as the choral conducted. He gave them topics e.g. Night, last night in prison, they created the lyrics of the songs, which he then wrote. Interviewing mothers and victims of prisoners and he wants to get stronger poetry for his music.

There is a law that in every prison there should be a library in France, Music seems to be a strong activity. Who takes the initiative, it could be the government? Most countries said no job title but what kind of qualification? Still not really regulated.

Conversation, this was the motivation, crossing the prison walls, the best you can do in that situation. Pen pals to children and monks, to Clairvaux???

Evening concert by Mikrokosmos was truly an amazing experience, 1 hour of music sung from memory, and really sung by 40 soloists blending together, spaced around the magnificent Hotel de Ville concert room, with chimes, percussion, lighting effects etc. beautiful young singers dressed in black, the girls wearing themed jewellery from a designer in their town. Followed by a reception from the town of Tours, we have been so fortunate.

Choir conducting and voice teaching in Europe

The format of this session changed from what was originally planned: rather than having a presentation on the status of singing and choir conducting in high schools, it was decided 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 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.



Memories of Tours

Warmth of July sun in October, autumn leaves, wide boulevards, wonderful architecture of the station, and the little street by the conservatory. The Musee de Beaux Arts and the tree, the cathedral and stained glass, the shells for the pilgrims to Santiago, hearing the French chatter and how they greet and meet each other. Diversity of nationalities, fashion, dress, and style. Generosity of spirit, sense of togetherness and shared goals, even with vocabulary differences.

Moving on to Freiburg in March we need to come up with some singing teacher perspectives on this idea of networking and business management.