



Message di Voce

ADVANCING INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH IN SINGING SSHRC major collaborative research initiative

FROM THE DIRECTOR – SPRING 2013

April 1, 2013, marks the beginning of the fifth year of research activity for AIRS, and what activity there is! This newsletter provides just a few highlights.

The AIRS Student Funding Review Committee (Helga Gudmundsdottir, Mary Gick, Suzie O'Neill, Frank Russo, Jenny Sullivan, and I) recently had the wonderful opportunity of judging the array of outstanding proposals from the nine sub-themes of AIRS. The sub-theme leaders and team members are thanked for their efforts in submitting coherent and thoughtful proposals. This year, one proposal from each sub-theme was submitted. This was a challenge for each team to integrate the proposals to a greater extent than in the past. It was heartening to see the exciting projects proposed, which will engage over 35 students in research on singing. Many of the projects reflect new collaborations, as well as visions that extend to other sub-themes and themes.

The review committee was pleased to see that in all cases, the proposed research projects would continue to move AIRS toward answering the three big questions:

- how singing develops in everyone
- how we should teach singing and use singing to teach
- how singing impacts well-being

Information will continue to be amassed internationally so as to understand the cultural, universal, and idiosyncratic influences that provide a framework and context for these answers. Our developing theoretical understanding, supported by the empirical evidence we are obtaining, will also provide the foundation for developing policy to incorporate singing in ways that can improve lives. We hope to meet this goal within three years.

We are looking forward to the 5th Annual Meeting in Toronto in August (see page 6 for more information), when we can share information about projects that have been completed since last summer or new projects getting off the ground.

In the meantime, I would like to share some recent research news that has come my way.

Theme 1 - Singing and Development

1.1 Perception & production (Sub-theme co-leaders: Christine Tsang & Laurel Trainor)

The team has extended its data collection on the VAMDA (Vocal Auditory Motor Development Assessment), which includes behavioural and acoustic measures of pitch and interval matching, singing range, and pitch accuracy. In addition to the English-speaking children tested in Canada and the UK, a French-speaking sample of kindergarten/Grade 1 children has been added.

1.2 Multimodal processes in the development of singing (Sub-theme co-leaders: Frank Russo & Sandra Trehub)

Upon completing her doctoral degree under the supervision of AIRS collaborator Daniele Schon (Centre de Recherche en Neurosciences de Lyon), AIRS provided Yohana Lévêque the opportunity to visit Sandra Trehub in March 2013 and carry out a pilot study. Yohana writes the following of her work:

My one-month stay at University of Toronto, Mississauga, was the opportunity to start a new AIRS collaboration with Sandra Trehub and her PhD student Michael Weiss, around the relationship between singing production, perception, and memory for singing. A recent study conducted by Weiss, Schellenberg and Trehub (2012) in adults demonstrated that memory for melodies was better for vocal than instrumental melodies. As presented in my dissertation (Leveque 2012), voice perception possibly

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induces an auditory-motor matching, a process directly linked to some memory components (Sensorimotor Loop model of singing, Dalla Bella & Berkowska, 2009). In a new behavioral study, we investigated the effect of singing on a subsequent musical memory task. Some non-musician students were asked to either sing short melodic sequences (experimental group) or play the same sequences on a keyboard (control group), before performing a musical memory test, including vocal and piano new melodies. The expected effect of singing on sung melody encoding was not present in our first set of data, but this pilot study enabled us to adjust the difficulty level of the production task in the voice and piano modality for further investigation. This France-Canada collaboration continues around the large question of how overt and covert rehearsal influences song learning.

Congratulations, Yohana Lévêque, on the completion of your doctoral work, and on your new initiatives with AIRS. We look forward to learning the results of further data analysis on this important contribution to the understanding of how the motor system is involved in acquiring memory for vocal melody. Thank you, Sandra Trehub, for your hosting and for fostering this international collaboration and providing an exciting learning opportunity in your lab.

1.3 AIRS Test Battery of Singing Skills (Sub-theme leader: Annabel Cohen)

Stemming from the workshop on the AIRS Test Battery of Singing Skills at the AIRS 4th Annual Meeting, a dedicated team has been developing a separate child version. Members include Mayumi Adachi, Stéphanie Boisvert, Michael Forrester, Helga Gudmundsdottir, Beatriz Ilari, and Stefanie Stadler Elmer. Stefanie will be presenting a paper on this child version at the 2013 MERYC meeting at The Hague University of Applied Sciences. Meanwhile, Bing-Yi Pan is continuing to focus on the development of the online version for older participants. In regard to this version, Esther Mang has developed all of the audiovisual and text materials for a Cantonese version of the online test battery. In Estonia, Marju Raju continues with her doctoral research. Mike Forrester is completing a much needed review of longitudinal studies of singing, and team members have been providing feedback

Theme 2 – Singing and Education

Helga Gudmundsdottir has taken on the role of theme leader since the fall of 2012, and also the role of sub-theme leader for Theme 2.1: Learning to Sing Naturally. In an effort to get to know the members of the entire theme, she held a videoconference attended by representatives of each of the sub-themes of Theme 1. Helga has been on sabbatical this

year at BRAMS in Montreal, working closely with Sandra Trehub. Thank you, Helga, for dedicating your time to this responsibility of leadership in AIRS. Helga takes over from Patricia Campbell, who had served AIRS in these capacities since its inception in 2009. Patricia was elected president for the College Music Society for 2013. CMS is an organization of over 8,000 members. Congratulations, Patricia. Patricia has continued to encourage graduate students in 2.1.

2.1 Learning to sing naturally (Sub-theme leader: Helga Gudmundsdottir)

Students of the University of Washington have moved forward with projects that are furthering the understanding of how singing is acquired naturally:

- (1) Karen Howard: *Musical, Textual, and Gestural Content in Children's Vocalizations: A Literature Review* [(a) paper and (b) annotated bibliography]
- (2) James B. Morford: *A Description of Songs from the Vi Hilbert Collection*
- (3) Matt Swanson: *Informal Singing Practices: A Theoretical Review*

The abstract of one such project is provided below. The full versions of all three projects should soon be available on the AIRS website.

Informal Singing Practices: A Theoretical Review
Matt Swanson, University of Washington (Supervisor, Patricia Campbell)

From playgrounds to classrooms, parks to community centers, offices to fields, sidewalks to showers, people on every corner of the globe engage to some degree in a process of informal singing. This paper presents an interdisciplinary literature review as a means to develop a theoretical understanding of this ubiquitous yet poorly understood phenomenon of human musical experience, with a focus on informal singing practices of children. Communication theory and play theory are used as underpinnings for an examination of relevant sources in the fields and disciplines of ethnomusicology, music education, sociology, folklore, anthropology, speech communication, and media studies. A variety of factors are considered through this interdisciplinary review — musical play, social interactions, media influences, communication dynamics, and repertoire development — and are synthesized by way of a conceptual model of singing as an informally manifested phenomenon. The model drives the organization of the paper: After brief definitions, the discussion steers toward conceptualizing the many sources of sung material, then considers the forces that drive informal singing of such material. Next, the theoretical mechanisms that govern informal singing practices are explored, as are

the contexts in which such practices occur. Finally, informal singing is considered in light of oral transmission and cultural change, highlighting its dual role as a force for both stasis and dynamism.

2.2 Formal teaching of singing (Sub-theme leader: Darryl Edwards)



Dr. Liliya Nafikova

Dr. Liliya Nafikova is the Advancing Interdisciplinary Research in Singing (AIRS) postdoctoral fellow working under the supervision of Dr. Carol Beynon in the Faculty of Education at the University of Western Ontario, London, Canada. Dr. Nafikova has recently graduated from the National Dragomanov Pedagogical University, Kiev, Ukraine, with a PhD in education, majoring in music education. Prior to that, Dr.

Nafikova received her bachelor degree in music education with honours from Ushinsky Pedagogical College of Kiev and her master's degree in music education from the National Dragomanov Pedagogical University in Kiev, where she majored in vocal performance and choral conducting.

Dr. Nafikova has 11 years of experience in teaching music classes to elementary and middle school children. During her tenure as a middle school music teacher, Dr. Nafikova founded and directed a vocal ensemble and a school choir. After receiving her PhD, Dr. Nafikova worked as a researcher at the Department of Pedagogy for Visually Impaired Children at the Institute of Special Pedagogy of the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine in Kiev. Dr Nafikova's research activities are focused on developing singing-based pedagogies to correct social activities problems in children and adults with disabilities and creating novel methodologies to improve choral training of children and adults. Her earlier research was about improving social activities in visually impaired primary school children using music education-based extracurricular activities.

She has published a number of articles on how to use music education to improve social skills of visually impaired children. Working with Dr. Beynon, Dr. Nafikova is involved in research on developing pedagogy to improve choral training with a Russian a cappella style approach developed by P. Chesnokov. The research is conducted with Amabile's Primus Men's Choir, where Dr. Beynon is the artistic director. Chesnokov's "Salvation is Created" was used as an example to demonstrate the use of Chesnokov's



Dr. Carol Beynon, left, and Dr. Liliya Nafikova

approach to intonation in choral training. Under the direction of Dr. Beynon, Dr. Nafikova is also involved in research on the use of intergenerational choral singing to improve well-being of Alzheimer's patients. Dr. Nafikova will be giving two talks at international conferences this year. The first talk will be on "Using Music Education to Improve Social Activities in Visually Impaired Primary School Children" and will be presented at the 8th International Conference on Research in Music Education in April 2013 in Exeter, UK. The second talk will be on "Pedagogies for Teaching Singing to Children in Russia and Ukraine" and will be presented at the Phenomenon of Singing International Symposium IX in July 2013 in Newfoundland, Canada. After completion of the AIRS postdoctoral training with Dr. Beynon, Dr. Nafikova will continue her professional career in academia with the ultimate goal of finding an assistant professor position in major research university in Canada or elsewhere

Theme 3 – Singing and Well-Being

3.1 Singing and cross-cultural understanding (Sub-theme co-leaders: Godfrey Baldacchino and Lily Chen-Hafteck)

Quad-cultural songbook project update

Recently, representatives from Brazil (Alda Oliveira, Zuraida Bastião, Angelita Brook, and Lisa Crawford), Canada (Annabel Cohen, Arla Good, and Bing-Yi Pan), China (Xiao Yue), and Kenya (Elizabeth Andang'o) met live by videoconference with Lily Chen-Hafteck, leader of the project. Lily's team at Keane University (Robert Anderson and Nancy Gleason) had compiled the numeric and verbal questionnaire data into a gigantic spreadsheet, representing results from around 400 participant 10- and 11-year-olds.



The group viewed the spreadsheet and discussed next steps – the obligatory checking of the data entry at each site and the search for similar themes in the text responses. Arla shared an analysis of emerging themes in the data she had gathered in Toronto. Lily presented a scale that she had developed that for categorization of levels of cultural awareness.

Analysis will help to determine similarities and differences in the way these children typically feel about other cultures, and whether the experience of learning songs from other cultures, as opposed to learning simply about the culture, has an influence on any attitudes they may have held. One key outcome of the study already is the proof of concept: that it is possible to conduct the same complex classroom intervention in schools in four very disparate parts of the world (see below).

Lily has learned of acceptance of her presentation to the meeting of the Society for Music Perception and Cognition, which will take place in Toronto, just prior to the AIRS Annual Meeting. Congratulations to Lily and the multinational team.



Locations of testing in the 3.1 Quad-cultural songbook project (indicated by a star)

Multicultural choir

Also from 3.1, the AIRS Multicultural Choir and Song Circle at UPEI is completing its second year of activity. Lusi Chen and Joshua Tarichia have been assisting with the organizational aspects, and Bing-Yi Pan is providing musical support, especially on those warm-ups. Achieving a further AIRS milestone, a second choir has formed under the leadership of student Blair Ellis at Mount Allison University in New Brunswick and an ethics proposal submitted by Blair and Dr. Godfrey Baldacchino, 3.1 Sub-theme co-leader, has been approved by the Mount Allison and UPEI research ethics boards.

The plan is to carry out focus groups, exploring potential tensions arising in semi-formal choirs and song circles in which choristers and singers may have different aims and objectives, issues that might arise particularly when members come from different cultural backgrounds.



Pictured are some of the members of the UPEI group, along with members of another multicultural choir sponsored by the Seniors Active Living Centre. The UPEI choir had been invited by the other group on this occasion.

The purpose of the other choir is to provide newcomers the opportunity to learn Canadian songs and practise English, a different goal than that of the AIRS group, which is to share songs from other cultures. The UPEI multicultural choir has appeared on the campus and in the community several times throughout the year. Members are from China, Malta, Kenya, Nigeria, Canada, Japan, and Britain, with occasional visitors from other countries.

A further goal of the multicultural choir project is to complete the development of a theoretically and experientially based practical handbook for establishing similar choir/song circle opportunities on other university campuses. Meanwhile, participants are having fun in sharing songs and meeting others within and outside the song circle.

New Literature Review for 3.1

Another important goal of 3.1 Singing and Cross-Cultural Understanding was to produce a literature review providing context for further research conducted by the sub-theme. Beatriz Ilari, Lily Chen-Hafteck, and Lisa Crawford have moved ahead with this goal. They have received news of the recent acceptance of their paper entitled “Singing and Cultural Understanding: A Music Education Perspective” to be published in the *International Journal of Music Education*. Here is the abstract:

This article explores the relationship between singing and cultural understanding. Singing emerges in infancy and develops through processes of enculturation and socialization. When we sing songs from diverse cultures, we are granted with opportunities to learn about the cultures of others, and gain a better understanding of our own. Thus, singing



songs from different cultures may play important roles in the construction of our identities and in how we perceive and understand others, and ultimately ourselves. Cultural understanding, however, is complex in nature and multi-layered.

3.2 Singing and intergenerational understanding (Sub-theme leader: Rachel Heydon)

Master’s student Lori McKee in the Faculty of Education at the University of Western Ontario has written her thesis about young children’s print literacy learning opportunities within the multimodal ensembles created by the intergenerational program. Rachel Heydon’s group has been running this year in a nearby rural community. (This project has purchased iPads for children and seniors, through external funding.) Lori has framed her writing about this through metaphors of music. The ensembles combined singing and art-making through digital and analog media.

Lori argues that the ensembles and the intergenerational context created very particular and significant print literacy learning opportunities. The team hopes this work can encourage educators to provide singing and art opportunities to children even when they are feeling pressed by accountability measures that focus on print literacy. The work is being written up for publication. Congratulations, Lori McKee, Rachel Heydon, and the team.



Graduate Student Lori McKee and Supervisor Rachel Heydon present their poster at the University of Western Research Day.

3.3 Singing and physical and mental health (Former sub-theme leader: Jennifer Nicol)

UPEI psychology honours graduate Denise Beaton has been accepted for graduate work in the Gerontology Program at Simon Fraser University. Her thesis supervisor will be Dr. Andrew Sixsmith, who has an interest in applications of music for dementia care. He is encouraging Denise to investigate potential projects around singing, capitalizing on Denise's background with the AIRS project.

Denise had conducted her thesis on the role of a musical theatre performance on quality of life in residents of homes for seniors, working with Young at Heart Musical Theatre Company (directed by Catherine O'Brien). The thesis focussed on effects of listening versus singing during the performance, and was supervised by Annabel Cohen. Denise presented a summary of her thesis at the official opening of the AIRS 4th Annual Meeting last year, and with fellow honours student, Rhaeling Henderson (who had collaborated on a different aspect of the project), participated in a symposium at the Canadian Psychological Association. The Young at Heart Musical Theatre Company was highlighted on the CBC and included a brief interview with Denise and Rhaeling. In addition to her honours research, Denise assisted AIRS with conference co-ordination and also liaised with the choir of Veterans Affairs Canada. Congratulations, Denise!

AIRS Digital Library

Talks on the AIRS Digital Library Team have been accepted for presentation for two very different audiences a week apart in June: at the International Congress on Acoustics in Montreal and the Canadian Psychological Association in Quebec City.

Tom Germaine has been hired as the Technical Co-ordinator for AIRS, and he has a strong background with Drupal, which will be helpful in continuing to work with our current version of the library (2.2) while plans for the transition to a new Fedora-based version are still ongoing.

Steering Committee holds 40th Meeting

The AIRS Steering Committee (Frank Russo –Theme 1, Helga Gudmundsdottir - Theme 2, Mary Gick and incoming Suzie O’Neill - Theme 3, and Annabel Cohen – director, supported by Ross Dwyer, AIRS administrative assistant), met for the 40th time in March. The committee is finalizing a proposed policy on the role and responsibilities of theme leaders and sub-theme leaders in view of the fact that there will be a change of the guard for Theme 3 in the near future. Attention is also directed toward the 5th Annual Meeting program, with a focus on providing for discussion of theoretical issues, as well





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as workshops that enable time to share insights regarding specific data collection and analysis issues. The committee is the primary body that keeps tabs on all of AIRS activities so as to guide and monitor the course toward achieving the goals of the three final years of the project.

AIRS Book Series Proposal Update

AIRS continues to move forward with plans to disseminate its work as a whole through an edited set of three volumes. One volume will be dedicated to each theme, with sections for each sub-theme that include an article by each of the AIRS collaborators, individually or co-authored.

Working with the AIRS project director, theme leaders and sub-theme leaders are expected to be taking on roles as editors, and several student assistant positions are also expected. The book series should appeal to academics and professionals, so as to foster research and teaching at the university level. Abstracts have been received from members of all themes. Sub-theme 3.1 has provided the greatest number of abstracts, as well as one complete draft of one paper. We look forward to receiving abstracts and bios from the majority of collaborators who have yet to respond.

If you have not done so already, please submit a brief book chapter abstract and biography. You can find the online form at <http://www.airspace.ca/node/1099>.

**PRACTICAL MATTERS:
From Ross Dwyer
AIRS Administrative Assistant**

1. AIRS 5th Annual Meeting, Submissions of Abstracts, Travel Award Applications, and Vocal Performance Opportunities

The forms for the submission of abstracts, student travel funding and performance for the AIRS 5th Annual Meeting in Toronto are now available for submission via the 5th Annual Meeting page on the AIRS website. Visit <http://www.airspace.ca/node/1160>.

All submissions must be received by the AIRS team by Friday, May 3, 2013.

2. Year 5 Student Funding

The Student Funding Committee would like to thank and congratulate all those who recently submitted student funding proposals for Year 5 of the project. An update on your proposal will be sent to Sub-theme Leaders in the near future.

3. Quarterly Report Due April 30, 2013

Please note that the next quarterly report for individual researchers, for the period of December 1, 2012, to March 31, 2013, is due by the end of April.

These reports are an essential resource for the AIRS team to be able to keep track of the progress of projects and research and appreciate your input in this area. The report form is available online now for submission. Visit <http://www.airspace.ca/node/1162>.

If you have any questions regarding any of the above, please don't hesitate to contact me at rdwyer@upeu.ca.

4. Other Publication Opportunities

The Swiss Center for Affective Sciences invites submissions on the theme of "Music and Voice: Expression, Perception and Induction of Emotion" for a special issue to be published in May 2014 (online first publication with citable DOI upon acceptance) in the *Journal of Interdisciplinary Music Studies*. Rather than focusing on a particular discipline, the goal of this volume is to bring together relevant multi- and trans-disciplinary insights focused on the expression and perception of emotion in music and voice, as well as on the processes and mechanisms that facilitate emotional induction.

The centre encourages trans-disciplinary submissions that promote an integrated study of music and voice. Scholars conducting relevant research are encouraged to submit a full research paper by the Aug. 1, 2013. More information and a detailed call for papers can be found at <http://www.affective-sciences.org/mve>. You can also contact Eduardo Coutinho, Swiss Center for Affective Sciences, University of Geneva, Switzerland, at <http://www.affective-sciences.org/>.

Director's Final Remarks

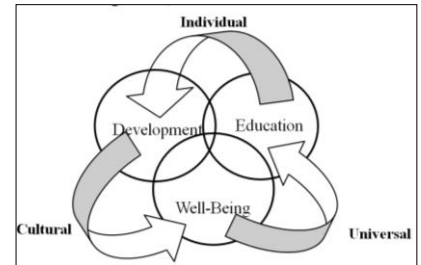
I would like to offer my thanks and praise to all the theme and sub-theme leaders, team members, and especially student researchers who are working in true collaboration and with great imagination in the effort to understand singing in all its facets. A small, dedicated administrative team at the AIRS hub at UPEI provides the scaffolding for the AIRS research activities and progress. The good counsel of the AIRS Advisory Board, the Steering Committee, and Policy and Planning Committee continues to be the foundation for the success of AIRS. The ongoing support of SSHRC, UPEI and all partner universities and institutions is also gratefully acknowledged.

Annabel Cohen
Director, AIRS



About AIRS

AIRS is a major collaborative research initiative (<http://www.airsplace.ca>) supported from 2009-2016 by the [Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada](#). It is directed by Dr. Annabel J. Cohen of the University of Prince Edward Island, where the project is based. The project brings together researchers from 16 countries to address questions about how singing develops in every human being, how singing is to be taught and used to teach, and how singing impacts well-being. AIRS researchers are addressing these issues from the perspective of what is universal to all people, what is dependent on cultural circumstances, and what is unique to each individual. AIRS aims ultimately to benefit society through research in singing. *Messa di Voce* (“placing the voice” in Italian) refers to a common vocal exercise performed on one single note by vocalists at all levels of study and performance. It too is a symbol of the focused efforts of the AIRS team in striving for excellence in all its endeavours.



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