



ADVANCING INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH IN SINGING

May 6, 2016

To the AIRS Community,

Consolidating 7 great years of research on singing

Seven years have almost completely and quickly passed since our opening meeting of AIRS in June, 2009 at the University of Prince Edward Island. The plans and ideas we discussed then became realities. New collaborations emerged and have endured. The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council generously funded our project. It wisely has a policy of automatically extending the time period of a grant for a year. This 8th year provides the opportunity to consolidate all that has been accomplished since we began.

Summer Meetings

One opportunity for consolidation is through symposia, meetings and workshops, which will bring members of AIRS together over the summer. We are taking advantage of two international biennial meetings that will normally attract many members of AIRS. The first of these is the **International Conference on Music Perception and Cognition (ICMPC14)** in San Francisco, July 5- 9. Two AIRS symposia have been accepted for presentation. One symposium is on Development of Singing (Trehub, Ilari, Addessi, Adachi, Stadler Elmer) and the other is on the Benefits to Well-being of Group Singing (with reports from research groups of Oxford/Goldsmiths, Ryerson University, University of South Florida, and University of Prince Edward Island). An estimated dozen other individual papers and posters of AIRS members will appear on the regular program. Taking full advantage of this opportunity, the AIRS Policy and Planning Committee has approved holding a workshop and 7th Annual Meeting on Friday July 8th, beginning the free afternoon in the Conference program, and moving on into the evening. Stay tuned. For those attending ICMPC, note that the [early bird registration ends on Friday, May 6th](#).

The second international biennial meeting attracting a large number of AIRS members is that of the **International Society of Music Education (ISME)** in Glasgow, July 24 – 29. A symposium on the Quadcultural Songbook project has been accepted, along with a workshop on the AIRS Test Battery. Several individual papers from AIRS researchers are also on the program. It is expected that a dozen AIRS researchers will be at ISME. They and others nearby in the UK will be invited to join an AIRS meeting: date and specific venue to be announced.

Individual presentations are being made at meetings of the **Canadian Psychological Association** (Victoria, BC), **Society for Brain, Behavior, and Cognitive Science** (Ottawa), and the **American Psychological Association** (Denver) offering opportunities for several AIRS researchers and partners in these vicinities to convene.

Following a lively meeting of 15 AIRS partners and UPEI academics and administrators at the UPEI hub on April 16, a **UPEI/PEI/Maritime regional meeting July 22nd** will feature keynote speaker **Rachel Heydon** (Theme 3 Leader, Singing and Well-being, and sub-theme leader 3.1 Singing and Intergenerational Understanding), from the Faculty of Education, University of Western Ontario. The title of her presentation is “Introducing a singing-infused multimodal intergenerational curriculum: (Re)Conceptualizing literacy and why multimodal literacy matters”, summarizing key points from a book in press and co-authored by **Susan O’Neill** (Simon Fraser University).



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The AIRS budget timeline created a great challenge in maintaining the position of our extraordinary Administrative Assistant, **Ross Dwyer**. It was inevitable that the position would end, and Ross would quickly find himself in a new position that again could take full advantage of his many skills. For over four years, Ross provided enormous support for AIRS, serving every member with great conscientiousness and integrity. His outstanding help with everything from meetings to grant applications to contracts, and his positive demeanor and enormous energy have been greatly appreciated. Ross is moving to a new research administrative position with another social sciences research project based again at the University of Prince Edward Island. We will miss him beyond words and wish him well in his new position. Over the next few weeks e-mails can still be sent to rdwyer@upe.ca.

AIRS will be offering an opportunity to a part-time student assistant to help with routine administrative matters associated with our network over the next months. As well **Tom Germaine** continues to maintain the AIRS Digital library and will assist with our videoconferences, for which we are very grateful.

World Voice Day

Johann Sundberg played a major role in organizing World Voice Day, April 16, an international grand happening he initiated several years ago. More than 500 events took place around the globe. This year, the University of Prince Edward Island organized an afternoon program featuring an overview of the AIRS Project in the context of World Voice Day, three psychology honours student presentations on research on song or singing, and a performance by the AIRS Multicultural Choir and Song Circle. A pizza dinner segued into an evening vocal recital of graduating student Parker Clements of the Music Department to round out the celebrated day. Last year, in Toronto, **Frank Russo**'s choral group for persons with hearing impairment held a performance in recognition of the Day. Such activities require a little organization (less if planned in advance) and offer an extraordinary opportunity to join a worldwide activity for the greater good. It would be possible for many of the AIRS members to share in Johann's initiative next year, April 16, 2017, celebrating the human voice and translating the knowledge we have gained through research directly or indirectly related to AIRS.

Music Monday

For over 20 years, the first Monday in May means encouraging music education in schools, under the auspices of the Coalition for Music Education in Canada. During the school year, students in classes across Canada learn the same song (this year "We are one"), and on Music Monday they sing together, coast to coast. This year, choirs totaling 400 students, led by **Christie Beck**, sang in Prince Edward Island (PEI), on an afternoon program, which included other fine vocal and instrumental groups. PEI was honored to have **Eric Favaro**, Chair of the Board of the Coalition, present his remarks, choosing PEI from the hundreds of other locales across the country. **Vickie Allen-Cook**, Arts/Music Specialist of the PEI Department of Education, Early Learning and Culture, delivered inspirational readings of the importance of music in lives, and she and her team are congratulated for the extraordinary organization of this provincial endeavor to foster music in education. The City of Toronto sponsored a major outdoor concert with representatives from across the country in addition to many talented students and other spokespersons from the Toronto area.

Podium – Choral Canada

Choral Canada's biennial meeting will take place in Edmonton, May 18 – 22. Among an extraordinary array of presentations and concerts, AIRS affiliate **Merrill Tanner** will present her work on vocal strengthening through singing for persons with Parkinson's disease.



World Day of Singing

Directly related to AIRS is the [World Singing Day](#) to take place in October 22, 2016. Please keep that date in mind for a fall opportunity for showcasing the work of AIRS regionally and worldwide.

Accolades:

We celebrate the successes and initiatives of the AIRS community:

- AIRS longstanding Advisory Board Member **Kate Stevens** is Editor elect of *Music Perception*.
- **Helga Gudmundsdottir** (University of Iceland) AIRS Theme 2 Leader has been awarded a Fulbright Scholarship for 2016-2017 to continue her research on very young children with colleagues in the US
- [Frank Russo](#) (Ryerson University) AIRS Theme 1 Leader, has been awarded the Early Career Award of the International Congress on Acoustics (ICA)
- **Stefanie Stadler Elmer** (University of Zurich, and Teacher Education University in Switzerland) AIRS Theme 1, will receive an Honorary Doctorate from the Latvian University Daugavpils.
- [Laurel Trainer](#) (McMaster University) Theme 1, has been inducted in 2015 into the Royal Society of Canada - Canada's most esteemed scholarly organization.
- **Quincy Beck** (Brown University) completing her second year at Brown University has been awarded support for a summer internship with the AIRS project in Prince Edward Island (her home province). Welcome Quincy!
- **Henrietta Lempert's** [research on the critical period](#) for language acquisition, recently published in *Memory & Cognition*, was featured by the [Psychonomic Society](#). The data support a resource limitation as opposed to critical period explanation of challenges faced by second-language learners. Henrietta is exploring the benefits of singing versus speaking for acquisition of grammatical rules of an artificial language.
- **Rachel Heydon and Susan O'Neill** have signed a book contract with Sense Publishers (fastest growing publisher of books in Educational Research) for their full completed manuscript (now in production) entitled: *Why multimodal literacy matters: (Re)Conceptualizing literacy and wellbeing through a singing-infused multimodal, intergenerational curriculum*.
- Last month, Amabile Choirs of London Canada recorded choral works by world renowned Matthew Emery. Now 25 years of age, Emery began singing with the Amabile Boys Choirs when 9 years old and began writing in high school. He is studying at the University of Toronto and last year was Amabile's composer in residence. Many pieces written during his residency will appear on this disc entitled "[Sing your song](#)" to be released for Canada's sesquicentennial by Centrediscs, (label of the Canadian Music Centre, distributed worldwide by NAXOS). **Carol Beynon** (AIRS sub-theme 2.1 co-leader, Formal Vocal Training), Senior Artistic Director of the Amabile Boys & Men's Choirs, served as artistic producer.



AIRS Digital Library

The live videoconference tutorial on the AIRS DL was presented by Tom Germaine in March and verified the ease of learning to navigate the DL and ingest new material. Mike Forrester, at Kent University, UK, for example, has now begun to upload examples from his study of children (age 5 to 10) singing. Please see the AIRS web-site home page for simple instructions with an on-line tutorial.

AIRS Book

The editors have been meeting, and authors will be contacted soon. The number of chapters exceeded expectations and developing the “perfect” prospectus has taken time and been delayed for complex reasons, but it is believed it is clearly very close to completion. Moving slowly on such a large project will mean a better outcome. Author patience is appreciated.

Consolidation

This newsletter began with reference to this being our year of consolidation. To this end, every formally recognized Co-investigator and Collaborator will soon receive from AIRS a request to complete a form template that lists various outcomes and deliverables of your work inspired by or associated with AIRS (e.g., conference presentations, workshops, choral events or recordings, publications in proceedings, journals, or books, student theses, training activities, etc. as per the SSHRC Granting agency categories of deliverables) This information is required for the final report and will be helpful to all in other ways. More details to follow.

AIRS on Twitter @AIRS_Singing

AIRS on Twitter posts items related to singing having a research interest. Please *everyone* follow and retweet @/AIRS_Singing. If you would like to tweet regularly (which is encouraged), please contact Annabel Cohen acohen@upei.ca; if you have a single tweet of interest, please send it to Annabel to post.

The AIRS Community.

Seven years, going on eight. Even without having formally collected all of our deliverables, it is clear that AIRS has thrived. There have been, however, rough personal times for many of the members, either directly or indirectly through people close to them. Last fall, Kate Bowler, the daughter of Karen Jensen of the Music Department of the University of Manitoba, experienced terrible health news and the entire AIRS community wishes Kate well (Please see katebowler.com/blog/). While there have been so many reasons for joy, suffering has been the fate of others... and yet in *every* case, extraordinary resilience has been shown. May we draw upon the strength that each and every member of AIRS offers and find strength in the bonds we have developed and share, [one voice, the sound of all of us.](#)¹

Further information

For more information about any of the above, please contact:

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Frank Russo russo@ryerson.ca (Theme 1: Development)

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Rachel Heydon heydon@uwo.ca (Theme 3, Well-being)

¹ Some may remember student Lisa McClellan’s impromptu and moving singing of “One Voice” at the AIRS dinner, June 2009, held at the Art Gallery of the Confederation Centre of the Arts in Charlottetown.

