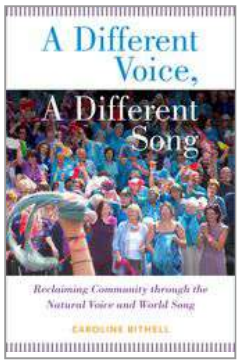

A Different Voice, A Different Song: Reclaiming Community through the Natural Voice and World Song
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From Principles to Practice

The Culture of Natural Voice Choirs and Workshops

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Abstract and Keywords

Chapter 4 shows how the principles embraced by the Natural Voice Practitioners' Network translate into practice. First, it examines the function and rationale of the kind of vocal and physical warm up that typically opens a choir rehearsal or workshop. Reference is also made to the way in which vocal exercises may be designed specifically to help singers achieve the vocal quality associated with a particular repertoire. It then considers the process of teaching and learning by ear, primarily in terms of practicalities. It further explores the match between the natural voice ethos and songs from the world's oral traditions and provides an overview of the kinds of resources available to community choir leaders. The final part of the chapter offers a more theoretical consideration of the politics of participation.

Keywords: natural voice choir, choir rehearsal, vocal warm up, vocal exercise, vocal quality, oral tradition, participation, resources for community choirs

If You Can Talk, You Can Sing

It is a dull, damp evening in early November.[1] Sixty people form a large circle in a community hall that has been cleared of its chairs and tables. We range in age from our early twenties to late seventies, but the majority fall into the band of mid-thirties to mid-sixties, and women outnumber men by around four to one. Most of us are wearing casual, comfortable clothes, sometimes still moist from the rain. A few latecomers, visibly harassed by whatever challenges they had faced in getting here, squeeze into place as the warm up gets under way. We

begin by jogging lightly and loosely on the spot. We make flicking gestures, as if shaking water from our hands, and then do the same with our feet, as if trying to kick off our shoes, before coming to rest in a spirit of relaxed alertness. Our choir leader, Jo, guides us through a short sequence of body movements. With our hips and knees, we describe circles and figure eights, imagining that we are stirring porridge. Rising to our toes, we stretch our arms upwards, reaching for a golden balloon that is just beyond our grasp. Then, puppet-like, we let ourselves flop forward, bending all the way over until our fingers touch the ground. Bouncing gently from the knees, we focus our awareness on the weight of our hands as our fingers lightly scrape the floor, and imagining a gentle tug on our “strings”, we begin to uncurl, one vertebra at a time, until we are upright again. Standing at ease, with our shoulders relaxed and our knees still slightly bent, we carefully tilt our heads backwards and forwards, and then from side to side. We circle our shoulders, first both together, and then one at a time. We pull our shoulders up to ears, hold our breath, and count to three, then release the breath slowly as we let our shoulders fall back into place. We mimic the sounds and actions of noisy kissing **(p.108)** and of chewing sticky toffee. We clean our teeth with our tongues, then laugh at one another’s frowns of concentration as we try to follow the instruction to imagine that our tongue is a pen and that we are writing our name on the inside of our cheek. Feeling we have nothing to lose, we proceed to scrunch and contort our faces, then massage them lightly with our fingertips.

We follow Jo’s invitation to breathe in deeply through the nose, as if we are inhaling the most intoxicating scent in the universe. As we exhale on a hum, we direct our attention to the resonance in our heads and faces. Releasing our bellies, we allow the breath to fall in again; this time, we let it go on a slow, soft hiss, prolonging the out-breath for as long as we can. We imagine that we are blowing a piece of thistledown across the room, first on a silent breath, then on a gentle “sh”, and then a soothing “ah”. We feel our abdominal muscles work as we make sharper, shorter exhalations; we imagine that we are blowing out the candles on a birthday cake, before giving our lungs a final flush-out as we do our best to pant like puppies.

Now we begin to play with sounds, echoing a sequence of exclamations—oh, ooh, ah, hey—that gradually become sustained calls. We are encouraged to imagine that the sounds we are making are rising from the earth, through the soles of our feet and up through our bodies, to be released through an open throat. We imagine the sound of a siren as we throw the voice up then let it swoop down to the depths and back up again. We explore different timbres and moods by repeating a note at the same pitch but with different colourations: angelic, nasal, metallic, harsh, husky, dark. Jo sets up a simple four-beat stepping pattern—side right and close, side left and close—as she moves us into a more organised call and response format. We echo playground-style motifs that gradually become more melodic and take us through a series of rhythmic

variations using nonsense syllables. With no words to worry about, we give ourselves over to the spirit of the game. Smiles spread as people get into the groove, then turn to laughter as we realise that, without knowing what was happening, we have already learnt the first line of the first song—“Sin nje nje nje ngemi thandazo”. The alto and tenor parts are easily added: since they move more or less in parallel with the lead voice, all that is required is to repeat the pattern at a lower pitch. The bass is fairly predictable, too, and, five minutes later, we are singing in four-part harmony. Before we move on to the second verse, Jo stops to explain that this is a traditional Zulu song from South Africa, usually known as “Babethandaza”, and that the arrangement she is teaching us is by Ysaye Barnwell (of the group Sweet Honey in the Rock).[2] The words we have just been singing mean “Things are as they are because of prayer, Ngemi”, and the second part will say, “our mothers [or women of old] used to pray”. We resume singing with renewed vigour, repeating the two verses over and over until we no longer need to think about either the words or the melody, and the song takes flight. **(p.109)**

The next piece is designed to shift us up a gear and will demand more focus. “Batonebo” is a three-part healing song from Guria in western Georgia that is traditionally sung for children suffering from an infectious disease such as measles. Jo explains that the sickroom would be decorated with flowers and candles and that the women would sing to appease the spirits who might otherwise carry the child away. The words are written with a marker pen on a large sheet of paper that is pinned to the wall. We begin by repeating the words, line by line, doing our best to get our tongues around unfamiliar consonants. We then turn our attention to fitting the words to the music, starting with the top voice. Jo breaks the line down into bite-sized chunks and uses hand signals to guide us, raising and lowering her arm to indicate the direction of the melody and give a rough approximation of the distance between notes. Concentrating hard, we repeat each phrase until it is secure in our mind. As the other parts are added one by one, we feel the thrill of the novel harmonies with their sudden clashes and unexpected resolutions.

After a short break, we reassemble for a brief housekeeping session to finalise the practical arrangements for our spot in a forthcoming fundraising event for the local hospice and discuss our plans to host a Bulgarian singing workshop with guest teacher Dessi Stefanova. We then return to an *a cappella* arrangement of “Something Inside So Strong” which we have been working on for the past few weeks. We spend some time on a passage that is still causing us difficulty, but everything finally clicks into place, and there is a palpable sense of elation as we arrive at the triumphant final chord. We round off the evening by running through the spiritual “All Night, All Day”, a current favourite that has filtered down to us via Tony Backhouse (leading exponent of gospel singing in Australia and New Zealand).[3] As we head for home, some of us pay our customary visit to one of the local bars where, still in high spirits, we treat our

fellow drinkers to a spontaneous reprise of “All Night, All Day”, followed by a South African freedom song and topped off with a Russian lullaby.

Working with the Voice

In the second issue of the NVPN Newsletter, Frankie Armstrong noted:

> When we drew up the Statement of Philosophy and Principles and Practice we were very clear about why we called ourselves Voice Practitioners and not Singing Teachers....It’s not just what we sing but how we sing and why we sing that stirs and challenges me....We want to get others recognising that the voice can be so much more than the singing of songs, though songs will always be a core part of our work and play.
>
> (Armstrong 2004: 22)

(p.110)

How, then, do these principles translate into practice? How does a natural-voice-style choir session or workshop differ from the weekly rehearsal of a choral society or a masterclass given by an expert from the classical world? How is a typical session structured? What kinds of songs are chosen, and why? How are the songs learned? In what ways do they help to maximise the potential for inclusion? My opening vignette provided some preliminary answers to these and other questions. In hinting at the range of skills the choir director brings into play, it also offered some practical insight about the relevance, utility, and application of the different kinds of professional training and experience discussed in chapter 3.

In the discussion that follows, we investigate in greater depth the ramifications and resonances of some of the themes introduced in chapter 2. Questions about the nature of music education—or more precisely, schooling—are again on the agenda as we enter into brief dialogue with Ivan Illich and his more radical thinking on deschooling and conviviality, both of which he associates with the revival of community responsibility. We also return to the ideas of Christopher Small and Thomas Turino, each of whom has made a significant contribution to what we might call the politics and poetics of participation. As part of this analysis, I probe more deeply into the theme of transcending constraints, considering the different levels at which emancipation may take place and the mechanisms that make this possible. We begin, however, with a more down-to-earth examination of the main components of a typical choir or workshop session.

Preparing to Sing: The Function of Warm-Up Exercises

The kinds of warm-up activities featured in my opening vignette are high on the list of techniques that distinguish natural-voice-style community choirs from the types of amateur choirs or choral societies where preparatory exercises tend to

have a more conventional form and a strictly musical focus, with pride of place given to the practice of scales and arpeggios and correct use of the diaphragm. Practitioners who undertake Frankie Armstrong's training are equipped with a starting kit drawn from her rich, multi-disciplinary repertory of exercises, games, and improvisations; they acquire more from visiting workshop leaders or in sharing sessions at the NVPN annual gathering. Frankie notes that she herself no longer uses the term "warm up", which for some people has negative connotations. She now refers to this work as preparation, voice development, and voice awareness—descriptors that give people a sense that they can learn from these activities, rather than thinking of them as something that has to be endured before getting on with the "real" business of singing. (I continue **(p. 111)** to use the term "warm up" in the present discussion, however, as an easy kind of shorthand.)[4]

Beyond the form of the exercises themselves, what is of interest to us here is the rationale informing the way in which the warm-up session is structured and the explication of the function and impact of the chosen exercises as part of a broader, holistic understanding of how voices and their owners "work". The practice of beginning each singing session with a warm-up routine that pays careful attention to the triangulation of voice, body, and breath is seen as fundamental to the NVPN philosophy: "Vocal and physical warm-ups are an essential element of our work. They ensure healthy vocal use by anchoring the voice in the body and breath and generally prepare the voice for action." The benefits of warm ups are related to both individual and collective goals: "They also allow opportunities for increasing creativity, practising listening to others and creating a sense of community" (see "Philosophy and Working Principles" in the Appendix).

In his blog article "Preparing to Sing: Why Bother?" choir director and NVPN member Chris Rowbury (2009) breaks down what he sees as the ten functions of warm-ups. Additional formulations and nuances that came out of a brainstorming session at the January 2008 NVPN annual gathering, entitled "Why Warm Up?", are inserted in parentheses.

(1) Transition from the everyday (arriving, letting go of the day, easing people in).
(2) Relax and release tension (warm up/calm down, grounding).
(3) Connect body, breath, voice (get physically ready, get lungs ready).
(4) Engage imagination and creativity (experimenting, exploring using the voice in a different way).
(5) Hone listening skills.
(6) Develop self-awareness (focusing).
(7) Increase confidence, lose inhibitions (establish safety/trust).
(8) Improve pitching and vocal range using a centred, healthy voice (tuning up, developing range/power/control).

(9) Develop sense of timing and rhythm.
(10) Awareness of working with others (engaging with leader, becoming receptive, opening emotional warmth, connecting group, creating focus for group identity).

Arriving and Tuning In

An effective warm up will be structured in such a way as to vary the pace and energy levels, shifting between a group focus and personal exploration, and **(p. 112)** between concentrated listening and "letting off steam". Chris elaborates on the need to begin by orchestrating a shift from the stresses and strains of the day:

> The atmosphere we are trying to create is one of relaxed informality, of focus and concentration, of silliness and imagination, of creativity and beauty, of timelessness and joy. Most of these elements are missing from our everyday lives, so we have to allow a period of transition for people to settle into a different world.
>
> (Rowbury 2009: n.p.)

For choirs or singing groups that meet on a regular basis, the warm up functions as a ritual that re-establishes the group's identity, and at the same time marks the shift (in sociocultural terms) to "time out" from normal social constraints and responsibilities. Suggestions of this passage through a liminal space can be found in Jackie Roxborough 's description of how, at the completion of the systematic physical routine with which she begins her weekly sessions, she feels a palpable sense of "arrival" that signals to her that she can start to work more directly on the voice (interview 2007).

The final function in the above list—awareness of working with others—might be seen to extend to the bonding that takes place when everyone in the room has gone through the same process: specifically, one not overtly intended to reveal who is a more or less accomplished singer or a faster or slower learner. The leader's instructions and demonstrations of the different exercises provoke an almost automatic physical or vocal response on the part of group members; the individual thus enjoys safety in numbers and so does not risk having his or her weaknesses exposed. The warm up offers—to again use terms from the 2008 brainstorming session—an "immediately shared experience" that seeks to create a "level playing field" as well as to "set the mood". Part of the art of the leader lies in drawing everyone in and keeping things moving so that the individual is carried along and does not have time to become overly nervous or self-conscious. One reader commenting on Chris Rowbury's blog suggests the term "tuning the choir" as an alternative to "warming up". Whilst on the surface this might suggest a more limited "tuning up" of the vocal instrument, the concept can also be understood in terms of bringing the choir together psychologically as

well as sonically, as a foundation for building both musical and social harmony. It is interesting to note in this regard that singers on the Mediterranean islands of Corsica and Sardinia often speak of the need for members of an ensemble to be “in accord” (“in harmony”, but with connotations of being “on the same wavelength”): if you do not feel comfortable with your fellow singers, they say, you will not be able to find the harmonies. The bonding that happens during warming up or tuning up, then, can be seen as intrinsic to the ability to sing in tune and in harmony with others. **(p.113)**

Voice, Body, Breath, Mind

In Chris’s third function we find the voice-body-breath trinity that is at the heart of what we may be tempted to term the “new” voicework—but which, as Chris reminds us, lies at the heart of many kinds of music making that are part of everyday life and work:

> Gone are the days of the clenched buttocks, feet in second position and formally held hands of the posh recital. We need to get back to the cotton fields, the chain gangs and the weaving looms and sing with our bodies, breathe with our imagination, and dance with our mouths.
>
> (Rowbury 2009: n.p.)

Not only does working on the voice in isolation reinforce a sense of separation between the vocal apparatus and the rest of the body or person; it also neglects the fact that paying attention to breathing and posture can prove just as effective, in terms of vocal results, as working directly on the voice itself. The form that such connections might take may not be immediately obvious. Voice coach and NVPN member Alexander Massey explains that knee exercises, for example, can help wake up the abdominal muscles and the muscles of pelvic floor so as to aid deep breath support. Rocking or rotating the pelvis also keeps the abdominal muscles moving. Doing “silly walks” works in a similar way. “The beauty of it,” Alexander writes, “is that when we do such exercises, the voice starts working more efficiently quite automatically, and we don’t have to get so self-conscious and tense about trying to work out the ‘right’ way to breathe” (2005: 9).

To our three elements of voice, body, and breath we might add a fourth: mind. Frankie sees freeing the power of the imagination as the key to her method, experience having shown her that once the imagination is unlocked the voice will follow. Many of her exercises therefore involve visualisation or role play, and she includes carefully chosen imagery in her instructions for carrying them out. She emphasises the importance of choosing words especially carefully when talking about the breath, noting her preference for the term “rib accordion” or “rib concertina” over “rib cage” to suggest flexibility rather than rigidity. For similar reasons, she speaks in terms of letting the breath drop into the body

rather than instructing her students to “take a deep breath”—an image that also encourages them to extend the act of breathing to all parts of the body, not just the lungs. She explains that she often models exercises on animals, not only for the sounds they make, but also for the way they move:

> I just think, particularly playing with the animals, you have a visual image, you have a kinaesthetic approach, it gives you a playful, an imaginative way in. You know, I’m not being me the schoolteacher or me the tax inspector, I’m being an elephant or a cat or a puppy, or a Maasai calling in your sacred cow.…I’m just **(p.114)** constantly trying to find images from nature, physicality, kinaesthetic, imaginative, social—things that just break down that idea that “to sing correctly I have to stand stiffly and hold my hands together or stiff by my side”.
>
> (Armstrong interview 2008)

Frankie elaborates on the more pragmatic reasons behind her increasing focus on the connection between body and voice: “Body work was something that needed to happen but of course by this time I had very little sight so I grew my whole style of work, in a sense, predicated on the fact that I couldn’t see my participants.” In developing her distinctive repertory of physical exercises, she drew on yoga, tai chi, and the Alexander technique. When she later began working with Darien Pritchard, whose work was body-focused, “it meant that we could really put these things together so then, when I came across Kristin [Linklater]’s work and various other of the theatre voice teachers, it all kind of fell into place” (interview 2008). Kristin, in turn, added to the body of exercises she had inherited from Iris Warren: “I have appropriated and absorbed them from many different sources and married them with voice so that they have often undergone a sea change.” She cites the example of “movements reminiscent of gym exercises” where the goal has been changed from muscle development to energy flow (2006: 3).[5] Many NVPN members similarly draw on their knowledge of body-based disciplines. The “very loose physical regime” with which David Burbidge likes to begin his sessions, for example, incorporates breathing exercises from yoga and movements from Feldenkrais, tai chi, and chi gung, all of which he has practised himself (interview 2007).

Individual exercises, then, serve multiple purposes over and above the obvious ones. This applies not only to specially devised activities but also to more conventional exercises and to seemingly casual gestures. Exercises to soften the lips, relax the jaw and throat, expand the lungs, or strengthen the abdominal muscles may include a psychological component. Laughter is an excellent tool for promoting release, relaxation, and bonding, and adds a general feel-good factor; it is also part of the bridge between the speaking and singing voice. Kristin Linklater places great emphasis on sighing and yawning as “organic animal activities” that give the body an extra charge of oxygen and as such have

the power to “revitalize your body and your mind”. Yawning opens the throat, limbers up the soft palate, stimulates the breathing apparatus, and releases tension. The “sigh of relief” has the added advantage of making a connection with the inner world of feeling; being “triggered by a thought-feeling impulse”, it reopens “the primary neuro-physiological routes between brain and body” (Linklater 2006: 50–51).[6]

Sustained movement is integral to many of Frankie’s exercises, often in association with vocal work based on call-and-response patterns that edge participants incrementally closer to melody. Her development of this kind **(p. 115)** of exercise was, again, prompted in part by pragmatism after her original weekly singing group in London had to move to a new venue—a dance studio with no chairs. “It was much less tiring,” she explains, “to move as we called, chanted and sang, so simulated work movements and simple ‘dances’ became a hallmark for my work” (1997: 46–47). An activity she sometimes refers to as Copy Cat begins with everyday sounds and exclamations—sighs, oohs and aahs, calling to a long-lost friend across a busy street—which can be accompanied by simple movements (e.g. a throwing action or a flicking gesture). The types of motifs heard in children’s playground calls (such as “na na na na na”) give rise to more structured calls or hollers that also have a rhythmic element and can be classed as a form of heightened speech. Simple melodic patterns are then introduced, using heys and hos, other meaningless syllables, or a more elaborate made-up language. These are accompanied by a simple, rhythmic movement—stepping from side to side in time with the beat, or Frankie’s famous “hoeing” where participants set up a swinging action in imitation of a rhythmic work movement (right foot forward, step with left foot on the spot, right foot back, step with left foot on the spot again). Other work activities that might be imagined (and that in many cultures are in fact accompanied by rhythmic chanting, often using the call-and-response format) include scything corn, pounding maize, treading grapes, hauling in fishing nets, pounding washing, or waulking the tweed. Frankie notes that these physical actions can aid the type of psychological and vocal release that natural voice work aims for: “Encouraging simple, collective rhythmic movements such as simulating work actions…can free people from the fear and anxiety that holds their bodies stiff and their capacity for self-expression in chains” (Armstrong and Pritchard 2005: 16).[7]

The distraction provided by such movements has its own further rationale. Frankie observes that even in the early part of a workshop the majority of participants can follow unpredictable melodies “if a) you keep them short and b) you give the group something else to focus on so they don’t think they’re Singing with a capital S” (Armstrong and Pritchard 2005: 40). A related “trick” (building on what she learned from Ethel Raim) is to make the move from speech to song as unobtrusive as possible—“to give people the experience of speech, heightened speech, chant and song, as a continuum with no mystifying disjunctures”. Getting workshop participants to echo call-like phrases, including

hollers and yodels, and simulated chattering or gossiping sounds “takes us into what children do naturally, the seamless switch from the spoken to the sung”. She soon realised that using this approach—in which people often start singing before they realise what is happening—“often allowed people previously deemed tone deaf to sing perfectly in pitch right from the beginning of a workshop” (Armstrong 1997: 47)[8] (see video tracks 04.01–04.05). **(p.116)**

Paving the Way for Singing in Style

Individual exercises may also be designed to achieve a particular voice quality; to focus on elements of pitch, rhythm, or harmony; or to work on such skills as listening or blending. Dee Jarlett, speaking of her work with Bristol’s Gasworks Choir, emphasises the importance of listening skills. Since the songs that are to follow later in the session will be taught by ear, she says, choir members need to be accustomed to listening carefully to her demonstrations so that they are able to sing the line back as accurately as possible. A substantial proportion of the choir’s warm-up time is therefore devoted to imitation and call-and-response excercises, and some of these will be designed to ease the group into the spirit of the song that is to be the main focus of the session. If she and her co-director, Ali Orbaum, are planning to introduce a blues piece, for instance, they build in motifs that include semi-tones and slurs; a Bulgarian song, on the other hand, will require exercises that pay attention to tone and timbre (interview 2007). Frankie notes that call-and-response was also central to Ethel Raim’s method for “encourag[ing] people out of their ‘choir’ voices” so that they could better find the quality required for singing Balkan songs (Armstrong 1997: 46). She recalls observing Ethel working in this way with a class of more than sixty “non-singers” at a Folk Life Festival in California (in 1975) and, in only three hours, turning them “into something that sounded like a Yugoslav village chorus” (presentation at Giving Voice Symposium, 1990).

Language also has a bearing on how one works toward achieving the desired vocal quality. Simulated “gossiping” using nonsense syllables or made-up languages allows participants to play with sounds without being distracted by the meaning of the words and any psychological “baggage” that may be attached to them. Chants and songs in foreign languages work in a similar way. Frankie explains:

> Getting outside the structure and content of our daily language and returning to something like a pre-verbal state can help us to get away from fears of the old patterns of self-criticism and negative judgement that so many of us carry.…To chant or sing in *gobbledegook* or in a foreign language…invites us to stay with a voice that comes from the earth through the soles of our feet, gathers its power and expression in the centre of our body, the abdominal muscles, the diaphragm, and the solar

> plexus, the seat of the emotions, and releases sound through open lungs and open throat.
>
> (Armstrong and Pritchard 2005: 18)[9]

It is interesting to note that some voice practitioners who teach songs from their own cultural heritage use similar techniques to help their Western students achieve the special vocal quality required. As we learned in chapter 2, Ukrainian singer Maryana Sadovska's professional background includes **(p.117)** working with the Polish theatre directors Grotowski and Staniewski. This training enabled her to step outside her own tradition and adapt techniques from the world of experimental theatre—reinforced by her personal experience of learning songs from other cultures—to teach Ukrainian songs to non-natives.[10] Many of her exercises are designed to help cultivate a more nasal sound; others to anchor the voice more firmly in the body. Animal noises (cats, sheep, cows) feature prominently, as does simulated or mimicked conversation, in this case using bleating or creaking noises, or crying or laughter. Making bleating sounds is useful preparation for the type of ornamentation found in many Eastern European styles, while cat-like calls help push the voice to the front of the face and lowing draws attention to the chest resonator. It is worth noting here that in many of the world's oral traditions, singers take inspiration from the sounds of nature. In Albania, Sardinia, and Corsica, for example, the different voices in a polyphonic song are often likened to those of goats, sheep, and oxen; this relates, among other things, to the different registers, tessituras, timbres, modes of voice production, and styles of ornamentation that characterise the individual voices. Experimentation with animal calls is not, therefore, mere idle play even if it also serves as a source of lighthearted relief.

Dessi Stefanova likewise uses the technique of getting workshop participants to mimic well-known sounds, including bagpipes, daleks, and machine guns, as well as the ubiquitous bleating, as a means of approximating the timbral quality and style of ornamentation characteristic of Bulgarian singing.[11] She describes how she devised her method by "trial and error"

> because in Bulgaria traditional singing is taught by imitation, mostly of well established or older singers of your region. Nobody teaches vocal technique unless you are professional and you're looking to blend the voices of singers from different areas in a choir, for example. In Bulgaria, a traditional singer would be told not to sing in her nose or not to constrict her throat but without much guidance about how to achieve the desired effect… .
>
> I found very quickly that you can't teach non-native singers just by imitation. I had to go and educate myself a bit more and really start observing myself a lot more.

(Stefanova interview 2008, pers. comm. 2013)

In this way she equipped herself with the understanding and terminology that allows her to describe what she wants her students to do in a quasi-scientific manner, as an adjunct to her demonstrations.[12]

Similar techniques have been developed by Russian singer Irina Raspopova. In the slim volume entitled *Irina Raspopova's Method of Voice-training in Folk Styles of Russian Polyphony*, she describes a series of specially designed exercises—which she demonstrates on the companion cassette—to teach the techniques required for singing polyphonic songs from different parts of Russia. **(p.118)** Before moving to the Netherlands in 1993, Irina had undergone fifteen years of formal music education, including five years at the Moscow Institute of Culture, where she specialised in voice training in folk styles. As was the case for Dessi, however, embarking on the project of teaching her musical heritage to non-natives forced her to "fundamentally think over and put into words that which I did earlier without conscious effort" (1996: 7). This resulted in the development of "a special system which...clearly and graphically conveys to students quite complicated techniques", together with a manner of voice production that was unfamiliar to her Dutch students, who were used to singing in the head register (5). Irina shares with Frankie an insistence that voice training is not simply a matter of working directly on the voice but also of prompting people to set aside their habitual restraint. Russian singing is, as she describes it, "a volcanic outpouring of emotion". She therefore begins her work "with training in spiritual fortitude, that is, in the display of strength of character" (7). Her exercises cover a range of foci, including posture and breath control, the articulation of Russian speech sounds, vocalising in different registers (chest, head, and mixed), styles of ornamentation, improvisation, and other special techniques (such as chain breathing and word breaks). In a manner now familiar, Irina makes frequent use of imagery to help her students achieve the desired effect, and this is reflected in the graphic names she gives to her exercises—Mosquito, Nightingale, Pregnant Cow, Flat Tyre, The Siren, Mortar Bomb, Musical Saw, and Balalaika, for example.

How Times Have Changed

A cursory survey of my collection of singing manuals and handbooks for choral directors published in the early to mid-twentieth century throws into sharp relief the distance travelled, not only in respect of the types of vocal exercises recommended but also in the tone adopted by their authors, which would surely make all but the most dyed-in-the-wool contemporary choir director blanch. These volumes may be largely a sign of the times in which they were written, but since these are the times in which the older generation of current choir members grew up, this may very well have been the style of instruction they had in school or church choirs. Many of the "experts" who authored these books assume an unremittingly didactic tone, issuing instructions that permit no

dispute and making no concessions to feelings or sensitivities. Some have no compunction about using excessively negative and censorial language. Examples of bad habits or poor practice are cheerfully lambasted as “wrong”, “terrible”, ‘painful”, “repellent”, “an ugly habit”, “a serious offence”, or “a sin”. Singing is all too often presented as a strenuous activity that demands strict discipline and self-control. Charles Cleall, for example, writes in *The Selection and Training of Mixed Choirs in Churches*: **(p.119)**

> Control of the breath is tiring, for it involves muscular effort of two kinds: it involves considerable muscular effort in setting the shoulders back and down, *and in keeping them there*. When you stand to sing, set the shoulders into position: do not move their position till you sit again....Your breath will last longer, and your voice will sound richer and better focused. That is a strenuous act, for the shoulders will ache and fight for relaxation; you must gainsay them and forgo it.
>
> (1960: 34; italics in original)[13]

In *Vocal Physiology and the Teaching of Singing,* David D. Slater proffers more tempered advice for curing a “throaty or guttural tone”: “Exercise *will power* to keep the tongue flat, and the surrounding parts in a loose and unconstrained condition. If necessary, hold the tongue in position with the aid of a silver spoon” (n.d.: 79–80; italics in original)[14]

The notion that singing is part of humanity’s natural birthright is summarily dismissed by Richard Graves, author of *Singing for Amateurs*, despite the fact that his stated objective is “to provide assistance and entertainment to amateur singers, to justify them to themselves and to enlist the sympathy of the public, many of whom regard amateurs, especially singers, with a snobbish superiority” (1954: 1). Central to his motivation, he assures us, is the conviction that “there is a vast number of people who can take pleasure (without giving pain) in community singing, singing in church, singing at school or singing on the march in addition to those who can aspire to sing solos acceptably”, leading him to conclude that, “were it not for the menace of television which looks like debauching still further the citizens of our Welfare State, I should have said that the prospects for singers were hopeful” (2). This, however, is prefaced by the observation:

> Having frequently witnessed the development of a voice “from nothing” to a pleasing and sometimes beautiful instrument by a teacher who knows his business, one is tempted to believe that all human beings have voices and are capable of becoming singers. This is not so. There are millions of people who cannot and never will sing in tune, and a good many others whose voices are unpleasing in quality and better restricted to speech, in which a disagreeable voice is considered a natural and excusable defect.

> (Graves 1954: 1–2)

Graves asks even accomplished and distinguished singers to heed “the general rule…that singing unaccompanied solos to one’s fellow-creatures is cruelty to animals” (4–5). Meanwhile, Cleall was later to write of the new sound of the sixties: “In the home, it is deplorable; meriting tears. In the Church, it is a scandal; a stumbling block; a pollution: an intolerable blasphemy” (quoted in the blurb for Wright 2008).

The clash of sensibilities and convictions could not be starker. The ethos of the natural voice movement and its counterparts, such as the *a cappella* **(p.120)** movement in Australasia, is in many ways diametrically opposed to that embraced by the school to which Cleall and Graves belong. This points to another level at which, for Frankie and the NVPN, the wider world is firmly inside the frame of what is deemed to be a natural—and civilised—approach to singing as they draw inspiration from cultures where music making is a source of joy and a tool for empowerment and celebration. Tony Backhouse, a key player in the Australasian *a cappella* movement, refers in a similar spirit to the wellspring of his own work as choral director:

> I’m inspired by what I’ve experienced in black churches: an atmosphere of encouragement, safety and joy, where you feel permission to be as big as you dare. (“We’re here to have a good time”, as they say.) I want to lift the group, be lifted and see the group lift each other—so I try to make it safe, collaborative and fun.
>
> (Backhouse 2010: 2)

This does not in any way equate to a lack of discipline. Rather, it subscribes to the well-established wisdom that people have the best chance of achieving their full potential in an environment that is positive and nurturing.

The Aural Method: Teaching and Learning by Ear

Since they come from oral tradition, the majority of songs used by natural-voice style singing groups do not have a primary existence in notated form. Some may subsequently have been transcribed, either by outside enthusiasts, collectors, or researchers (including ethnomusicologists) or by professionals within the culture for educational purposes. Many of them, however, still circulate *only* in oral form, and continue to be taught and learnt by ear in any new environments to which they find their way. The absence of a score that is readily available for hire or purchase is one reason why these bodies of song do not appear in the repertoires of other types of amateur choir that adhere more closely to the classical or presentational model.

In a choir led by a member of the NVPN, even a song that was initially learnt from notation will be taught by ear in line with the statement from the Philosophy and Working Principles: “We aim to teach songs as far as possible by ear recognising that this is the most accessible and effective way for the majority of people to learn and retain songs in the longer term” (see Appendix). No matter how complex the arrangement, then, in the NVPN world all songs are taught aurally, line by line and part by part, using the pattern of listening, imitation, and repetition that has been established in the call-and-response exercises during the warm up. Unlike the conductor of a choir that relies on sight-reading, who may also have access to a piano on which to pound out problematic phrases, the leader of an open-access choir **(p.121)** needs to be able to demonstrate each line by singing it solo in front of the choir. This, of course, means that he or she needs to have memorised all the parts to a song before being in a position to teach it. As part of this process, he or she will also have identified some points in the piece that are likely to require additional focus in order to pin down, such as an unusual interval or a tricky rhythmic motif. He or she might then include an additional exercise meant specifically to help overcome the obstacle. Another advantage of the aural method is that it enables the choir leader to demonstrate such features as timbre and voice placement or subtle nuances of timing and pitch inflection, which cannot adequately be conveyed in a musical score. Here we have an additional reason for not using a piano, which would push the songs into the European equal tempered scale.

While the process of learning by ear may be modelled on the oral tradition, it is clearly different from the scenario whereby a child grows up hearing songs repeated over a period of many years, absorbing them almost by osmosis. In the community choir context, songs have to be taught in a more conscious and deliberate fashion, supported by appropriate aids and techniques. In the case of relatively simple songs or songs with minimal text, learning the words and the music relies entirely on memory (although individual parts might be recorded on a practice CD or placed on a members-only section of the choir’s website as MP3 files, alongside word sheets, to allow the choir members to review the material in the run-up to a performance). When the choir is learning longer songs, the words are often provided, usually written on a large sheet of paper pinned to a wall or board, in preference to individual copies that might take people’s eyes and attention away from a common focal point, alter their posture, or become an unnecessary crutch. When teaching the parts, a choir leader will typically use hand signals to mirror melodic movement, moving the arm up and down to indicate direction and the size of the interval between two notes. Other gestures might cue changes in tempo, volume, and vocal quality or indicate individual part entries, song sections, repeats, or places where a line should be ornamented (see video tracks 04.06–04.11).

One potential drawback of the aural teaching method is that while attention is focused on one voice part, the rest of the choir is kept waiting. A number of techniques can be brought into play as a way of keeping everyone actively engaged. In the case of a short and relatively simple song, the whole choir might learn all the parts together before individuals choose which part to sing. Longer, more complex songs may be broken down into small chunks, with all of the parts for one such unit being taught before the choir moves on to the next. This method has the added advantage of whetting the singers' appetite, giving them a taste, early on in the learning process, of what the harmonies will sound like.

Some choirs might sit while parts are being taught; other choirs will stand throughout the evening (with the obvious exception of individuals who need **(p. 122)** to sit for reasons of health or age). With the singers arranged in a horseshoe or open circle formation, as opposed to sitting in straight rows two or three deep, each member is able to see the word sheet, the gestures of the choir leader and, as they become less dependent on these cues, their fellow singers. They are also able to maintain an upright yet relaxed standing posture that affords the voice unrestricted passage through the throat, facilitates good breathing habits, and allows the body to move. Tony Backhouse succinctly encapsulates his own rationale for working with singers standing in a circle as opposed to sitting in rows:

> There's nobody on the end, everyone is equal and connected, and we can all hear each other. We thus create our own very welcoming, safe space in whatever physical area we happen to be. Everyone can see everyone else and this helps create intimacy and community. Standing keeps the energy up, and standing makes it easier to reshuffle positions and sections as needed.
>
> (Backhouse 2004: 11)

If, as it is in the NVPN, the learning-by-ear approach is rooted in a commitment to accessibility and demystification, it is also the case that some styles of music are not served well by Western notation. Village Harmony co-director Larry Gordon, for example, feels that notation is "just an impediment" to learning South African songs:

> We've just found that teaching the South African songs from the music is totally counterproductive because it's impossible to capture the nuances of the South African songs in a transcription…and when you do try to capture the nuances of it, it looks really, really ridiculous on the page and it's really hard to read because the rhythms are hard. On the page they're hard, but they're not *as* hard when you learn them by ear.
>
> (Gordon interview 2005)

Notation may also fix one particular arrangement as the definitive or “correct” interpretation, thereby discouraging the creative variation that is so often considered part of an authentic performance. The authors of *Let Your Voice Be Heard!* make precisely this point when they stress that the transcriptions included in the book

> present the songs as “frozen” at one point in time, in one particular configuration of parts, and with one specific melodic and rhythmic form. In actual practice, it would be unlikely to find a song...from Ghana or Zimbabwe performed in precisely the same way each time, or in such a rigid fashion that the rhythm of every note or phrase would fall precisely within regularly divided measures.
>
> (Adzinyah, Maraire, and Tucker 1986: ix)

An additional problem with using scores is that those who are proficient at reading music, and are the product of a culture where the score is assumed **(p. 123)** to represent the original, authenticated version of a work, are likely either to raise objections or to become confused when faced with even minor departures from the notation.

While singers who are used to reading music may, at times, feel frustrated at not having a score to refer to, others welcome the opportunity to refine their listening skills and strengthen their capacity for memorising both music and words. Sarah Harman, whom we met in chapter 3, identifies her attendance at a two-day workshop led by Ysaye Barnwell in the late 1980s as a critical turning point in her journey as a singer. At the time, she did not think that she was capable of learning a song unless she had the written music in front of her, and on leaving the workshop she promptly forgot everything she had learned. A week later, however, she was able to recall nearly all of the songs, complete with their three or four part harmonies. She experienced this as “a real shift…away from using written music, and trusting *my* body.…There’s something about…soaking it up by repetition and soaking it up by feeling where it is in your body that makes it stay with you for *years* afterwards” (interview 2008). When songs are stored in the memory and in the body in this way, they are also available for spontaneous performance at a later date in a way that music that has been read, but not learnt, is not.

Repertoire: Songs from the Oral Tradition

Broader questions concerning the appeal of songs from diverse “other” cultures, and the rewards of singing them, will be explored in some depth in chapter 5. Here, I focus primarily on questions of function. Songs from the oral tradition suit the natural voice ethos for several reasons that merit brief review. The fact that, in their natural habitat, these songs are passed on, from individual to individual and from generation to generation, directly from mouth to ear and so do not require musical literacy is clearly critical. Songs destined to be sung by

an entire community usually have relatively few words and make liberal use of call-and-response and repetition, rendering them easy to memorise. Songs that are sung as part of daily activities are often executed without instrumental accompaniment (apart from percussion, for which household utensils or naturally occurring objects such as seed-filled gourds, as opposed to specially constructed musical artifacts, may be called into service) and thus allow the voice free rein with regard to pitch, tempo, and expressivity. Many songs belong with dances or accompany activities that involve movement (e.g. pounding grain), making them well suited to the NVPN principle of rooting the voice in the body. As a general rule, the reasons and occasions for singing such songs—to invoke divine protection, to bring rain or heal the sick, to co-ordinate physical work, to celebrate births and marriages, to mark death and other rites of passage, to reinforce social norms and moral **(p.124)** codes, to bring hope in times of trouble or to orchestrate resistance—relate to deeper social functions that assume or demand a shared commitment from all involved. At this level, they may be perceived—in terms of both structure and intention—as enabling people to pull together (whether literally or metaphorically), reinforcing group identity, bolstering a sense of solidarity, or inspiring collective action. In this sense, musical style and structure may be seen to mirror a broader worldview: the kind of worldview on which many African and African American traditions build, for example, results in a musical style founded on co-operation rather than competition, and the act of singing operates as a powerful force that unites rather than divides.[15]

The same songs lend themselves to the natural-voice worldview for reasons that should now be clear and they may be employed to fulfil at least some broadly similar functions, even when divorced from their original contexts or practical applications. In the setting of a community choir meeting or open-access workshop, different kinds of songs also serve particular purposes as a session unfolds. Some work well as warm-up songs at the start of a weekly rehearsal or in a free-standing workshop where the aim is to get large numbers of people, many of whom have not met before, singing together in harmony as quickly and painlessly as possible. Call-and-response songs, where the group either repeats a line sung by the leader or responds to each call with a standard refrain, place a minimum of responsibility on individual members of the group while serving the function of training the ear. Rounds can be taught quickly, since everyone is going to be singing the same words and melody, and at the same time they offer a relatively easy way for people to experience singing in harmony and learning to hold their part. Rounds might be lighthearted, rousing, or meditative and so can also be used to establish a particular mood. In a beginners group, a call-and-response song or a round might be followed by a short song in three- or four-part harmony—one that, again, has quite simple melody lines and few words and can be repeated until everyone is comfortable with their part.

A song like “Babethandaza” offers a good balance between reassurance and challenge. The words are few in number, but memorising them still requires some effort. Learning the syncopated rhythm also requires focus but when mastered it beckons to the singers to move to the beat. Because the piece is built on parallel harmonies and European-style triads, once the first melody line has been learnt, the other parts are quite straightforward. When the song is performed, the parts can be added one at a time. With this kind of song success is more or less guaranteed: it establishes an atmosphere of safety, gives participants a sense of achievement, and allows the group as a whole to experience the joy of singing together. This provides a firm foundation for moving on to longer, more ambitious songs that require more concentration to learn.

The collection *Singing in the African American Tradition*, in which Ysaye Barnwell’s arrangement of “Babethandaza” is found, features chants, ring **(p. 125)** shouts, spirituals, gospel songs, songs of the civil rights movement, and contemporary songs of resistance and protest (including songs from South Africa with lyrics in Zulu and Xhosa).[16] A variety of different performance styles are represented: call-and-response, congregational/communal, quartet, and choral. The distinction between congregational singing and choral singing deserves clarification. As Barnwell explains it:

> Congregational/communal singing is unrehearsed, full bodied, and free. Each participant lends their voice to the whole as best they can. The wide variety of voices and natural harmonies can create a wall of sound which can fill every empty space, whether musical, physical, spiritual or emotional.
>
> (Barnwell 1989: 7)

By contrast, still following Barnwell, choral singing is rehearsed, performances are often conducted, the sound and use of the voice tends to be more European, and the arrangements tend to be more “classical”, although in the case of gospel music there is still space for improvisation and movement in performance. Barnwell’s description of the congregational/communal style chimes with Thomas Turino’s observations regarding features common to participatory music throughout the world. These include densely overlapping textures, wide tunings, consistently loud volume, and buzzy timbres, which in combination provide what he sees as a crucial “cloaking” function that offers protection to learners and those who are less skilled (Turino 2008: 46).

Barnwell’s commitment to the principles of accessibility and empowerment resonate with the NVPN ethic. She too quotes the ubiquitous maxim, “If you can talk you can sing, and if you can walk you can dance”, and makes clear her conviction that music is “not art for art’s sake but a functional tool for engaging

in all of the activities of daily living and for coping with the full range of human emotional and spiritual responses to life" (1989: 8). Shortly before joining Sweet Honey in the Rock, she had been inspired to form the All Souls' Unitarian Church Jubilee Singers in Washington, D.C.—which she cites as a catalyst for her *Singing in the African American Tradition* workshop—"because several people, who couldn't read music and who had never really sung before, wanted to sing" (1). In her workshops, she teaches the songs orally, without printed music or words, and she urges those who use her teaching pack to resist the temptation to transcribe the songs from the recordings. The majority of those who have attended her workshops, she remarks, are not singers: "Many have been told that they should not or cannot sing and so they do not." But, having found their way to the workshop, "they find themselves singing, in harmony with others, in a matter of minutes" (1993: 272). In her own development as a singer, Barnwell has drawn on a range of influences, both within and beyond the African American community. She recalls that, as a college student in the 1960s, she taught herself—in a way reminiscent **(p.126)** of Frankie Armstrong—"to sing 'full out,' using my whole voice, by listening to the albums of Nina Simone, Miriam Makeba, Odetta, Richie Havens, and Buffy Sainte-Marie" (258).

With their English lyrics that make liberal use of repetition and their relatively familiar harmonies based on Western-sounding chords, spirituals and gospel songs are supremely accessible for choirs in Britain and other parts of the Anglophone world. Like the freedom songs from the civil rights movement, they require minimal teaching, since they typically take a straightforward call-and-response or verse-and-refrain format. The verses are often formulaic, with only a few words being changed from one verse to the next and with some verses migrating from one song to another. For most people who have grown up in the British Isles, spirituals—"Joshua Fight the Battle of Jericho", "Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel", "Rock My Soul in the Bosom of Abraham", "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot", and many more—will have been a regular feature of singing at school or in church. They will also have heard them on recordings made by the popular artists of the day, including folk revival singers such as Joan Baez or The Seekers. The Fisk Jubilee Singers, who toured Great Britain and what is now Northern Ireland in 1874 and 1876 to raise funds for Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, are credited with introducing such songs as "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot", "Steal Away", "Deep River", and "Nobody Knows the Trouble I See" into the "everyday British musical repertory" (Fryer 1984: 441).[17] In South Wales, the choir met with an especially enthusiastic reception (as would Paul Robeson later).[18] Welsh audiences, having had their own language and morals repeatedly denounced by their English neighbours, immediately identified with these young visitors who had survived the most extreme forms of humiliation and oppression. Such was their impact that in 1876 Swansea formed its own ensemble, the Swansea Jubilee Singers, which, like many other Welsh choirs, included a substantial proportion of negro spirituals in its repertoire. Many of

the Fisk Jubilee Singers' songs were also adopted by singers in the Welsh chapels and included in published hymnals, and some continue to be sung in areas of Wales as part of the local heritage. Polly Bolton tells of hearing two men sing an arresting rendition of "The Lily of the Valley" in a remote pub in Pembrokeshire. Her initial search for a published source was in vain, but some time later, in a second-hand bookshop, she chanced upon a copy of *The Story of the Jubilee Singers with Their Songs* (by J. B. T Marsh, originally published in the early 1880s). Browsing through its pages, she was surprised and delighted to find "The Lily of the Valley" (interview 2009).[19]

Tony Backhouse elaborates on the benefits of repetition in the context of gospel singing: "Repetition is ecstatic. It's the easiest way to forget about the notes and get inside the music" (2004: 7). The association of repetition with an ecstatic state is noteworthy here. Barnwell herself, speaking of how "the goal in African-American culture is often to sing until the song sings itself or 'til spirit or the power of the 'Lawd descends'", suggests that the transformation **(p.127)** that results does not only affect the singers: "the power of repetitive rhythmic patterns is that they are both transforming and trance-formative for those who produce them and for those who experience them" (1999: xii–xiii). She also evokes the transformative power of this music in connection with its rootedness in a story of triumph over adversity when she describes how the original residential workshop that led to the publication of *Singing in the African American Tradition* was founded on the belief that "African American music has been a vehicle for the survival of African Americans in a hostile universe/environment", and that "sharing the music, its values and its contexts with others can create an experience that in some way transforms the spirit of all who participate" (1989: 5). Turino also offers useful reflections on the deeper functionality of repetition:

> Repetition of the rhythmic groove and predictable musical forms are essential to getting and staying in sync with others. Social synchrony is a crucial underpinning of feelings of social comfort, belonging, and identity. In participatory performance, these aspects of being human come to the fore.
>
> (Turino 2008: 44)

If in many of the world's oral traditions greater value is placed on the process of people coming together and interacting through song than on achieving a polished end product that might be evaluated by a non-participating observer, this does not mean that all such songs are "simple". Anyone doubting the scope for variety, sophistication, complexity, and virtuosity, whether in composition or in performance, need only listen to the intricate and flamboyant polyphonic styles found in the Republic of Georgia, for example.[20] Learning these songs often requires a longer apprenticeship for native singers, and more dedicated

learning when they are adopted by non-native choirs. The question of what makes these and other songs in unfamiliar languages emanating from very different musical worlds attractive to, and suitable for, Anglophone community choirs yields even more complex and intriguing answers. The case of songs that are so obviously “other” and that take Western singers ever further away from their comfort zone, introducing exotic harmonies and presenting serious linguistic challenges, is examined in greater detail in chapters 5 and 6.

Resources for Teachers

To grow up in a culture where music is preserved and disseminated solely in oral form is one thing. To master songs from a range of different oral traditions and add these to one’s teaching repertoire is another. How, then, does a community choir leader build up a collection of such songs?

Choir leaders in the United Kingdom are able to source their songs from an increasingly wide range of media and interactive events. These include **(p.128)** published songbooks, often supplemented by a CD or a DVD; workshops, festivals, and summer camps; practitioners’ gatherings, training weeks, and dedicated song-swaps; overseas study tours and exchange visits with other choirs; songs collected or learnt directly from individual singers; field recordings, professional recordings, and songs heard on radio and television; and the Internet.

Workshops, as we have already seen, offer invaluable opportunities to learn songs directly from culture-bearers in a social setting. Such learning encompasses not only the songs themselves but also matters of style and cultural context, together with a model of the way in which a song might be taught. For new teachers, workshops (including those offered by established NVPN practitioners) offer a convenient starter pack of suitable songs. Many seasoned choir leaders, too, prefer to learn a song “in the flesh” and to sing it with others before passing it on to their choir.

It was once common practice for workshops participants to record the songs as they were being taught, using their own equipment (hence the vertiginous stacks of old cassette tapes owned by some practitioners). Later, it was thought that the surfeit of machines divided their owners’ attention and that other participants might be reluctant to have their every utterance captured for posterity on someone else’s tape. These concerns, combined with a growing awareness of intellectual property rights and the desire of some teachers to retain greater control over their material, led to the practice of offering a learning or souvenir CD, featuring either separate song parts or highlights from the day itself, to paid-up participants after the event (usually for a small additional sum to cover material and administrative costs). At the NVPN annual gathering and the Unicorn Voice Camp, the most popular songs that teachers are willing (and authorised) to share are recorded during the event and

circulated later on a compilation CD. In the wireless era, audio files are also disseminated via the Internet, using programmes such as Dropbox.

Weekend workshops continue to play a crucial role in introducing new material and, since a visiting workshop leader will often teach the same songs in different parts of the country, the workshops also help to establish a common repertoire. Through the workshop network, one individual can be responsible for introducing a particular style or genre that goes on to establish itself as a new trend. A workshop attended by a substantial proportion of the local community choir provides an injection of new material that the choir might continue to work on and then include in its next concert. A more intensive experience that gives participants the opportunity to learn a broader range of material is offered by the week-long voice camps, such as the Unicorn Natural Voice Camp and Heartsong; residential singing weeks, such as those held at Laurieston Hall and Findhorn; Village Harmony summer camps; and the Giving Voice festival. Other annual events like the WOMAD (World of Music, Arts and Dance) Summer School or the SOAS World Music Summer School, **(p.129)** which do not have any direct association with the natural voice or community choir movements but may engage some of the same tutors, provide further opportunities for practitioners to replenish their repertoire and learn new techniques from professional performers.

Just because they are not available in the form of a score, songs do not have to be learnt directly from another person, face-to-face. Many resources now exist—like Ysaye Barnwell's collection *Singing in the African American Tradition*, which consists of teaching CDs alongside a songbook—that are designed for learning by ear, and they are often compiled by a singer-teacher who is active on the workshop circuit. Typically, these resources include recordings of each of the song parts sung separately; they may or may not include notation as well. Some feature CD-Rom files with a variety of materials that can be printed out at home.

Print and mixed-media products of this kind have seen a marked increase, over the past twenty years, in both quantity and quality, and they can take many forms: collections compiled for educational purposes (such as those published by the US-based World Music Press, whose titles include *Let Your Voice Be Heard! Songs from Ghana and Zimbabwe*, or Oxford University Press's Voiceworks series); similar collections aimed at community choirs, including gospel choirs (such as Tony Backhouse's *A Cappella: Rehearsing for Heaven*); collections of traditional songs from one particular culture that, like the educational resources, include translations, contextual information, and/or performance notes (examples include Edisher Garakanidze's *99 Georgian Songs*, Mary Cay Brass's *Village Harmony* and *Balkan Bridges*, and Village Harmony's South African materials, issued as *The Folk Rhythm*); collections of rounds, simple chants, and starter songs (such as Libana's *Fire Within* and the NVPN collection *To Grace the Earth*); arrangements of choir favourites and other miscellaneous

songs suitable for community choirs (e.g. Nickomo's *Uncle Zumpa's Bumper Book of A Cappella Belters*); and self-produced collections of original songs (such as those by Ali Burns, Kirsty Martin, Pauline Down, and Nickomo).[21] Many of these print resources are packaged with one or more CDs; others are matched with a CD that may be purchased separately. A small proportion may be found in the catalogues of commercial publishers but the majority are home-produced or published by small independent presses. Those produced by NVPN practitioners are listed in the resources section of the NVPN website; others can be found on the websites of organisations such as Village Harmony. Some resources may be on sale at workshops but difficult to find otherwise: this is especially the case with materials produced by visiting workshop leaders from overseas.

All of these collections are put together with the intention that the songs should be shared and sung as widely as possible; and, in the case of self-produced songbooks, they are not necessarily subject to the usual copyright restrictions. Some, such as Nick Prater's *Heaven in my Heart* and Pauline **(p.130)** Down's *Heartspun*, include statements that give the purchaser automatic permission to photocopy and perform the songs. Village Harmony's *Folk Rhythm* sets include a form with the instruction: "If you duplicate any of these songs, please send us a copy of this form plus a copying permission fee of $10 per song which will make any number of copies you do legal in our eyes." Since the choirs who sing these songs are learning them by ear and performing them from memory, they are in any case relieved of the need to hire or purchase multiple copies of scores, as a classical choir or choral society must do.

Recent years have seen the emergence of online song banks, to which both audio files and scores can be uploaded for sharing. The websites of some choirs and individual practitioners also feature audio files of song parts that can be listened to online and transcriptions may be available to download. Full performances of songs can easily be located on YouTube. Material is also shared more directly via the Natural Voice Dialogue, a Yahoo email group to which any interested party may subscribe. This forum is especially useful in cases where a practitioner is in search of songs from a particular part of the world or songs that are suited to working with a particular client group or in a particular environment.

Expanding Horizons

With so many rich resources at their fingertips, natural voice practitioners are able to offer their choirs a veritable feast of musical styles and forms. In gaining access to music that is differently organised, has different social origins, reflects a different worldview, and makes different demands on its performers, singers are liberated from a variety of constraints while also having their horizons expanded at multiple levels. At a practical level, they are liberated from the need to read or rely on musical notation. At a cognitive level, they are liberated from the need to worry about the meaning of words as they are uttered. At a musical

level, they are liberated from ingrained notions of what is appropriate, correct, permissible or “nice”, and in singing without piano accompaniment they are liberated from the constraints of the equal tempered scale. At a sociopolitical level, they are liberated from established conventions and assumptions. Vocal horizons are expanded as people learn to use the voice in new ways. Musical horizons are expanded as they explore novel ways of constructing harmonies and rhythms. Cultural horizons are expanded as they encounter songs from other places and learn something of the people whose lives they are a part of. Social horizons are expanded as they gain access to areas of activity and communities of people from which they may previously have been excluded. Each of these assertions is part of a thread that opens up significant potential for theoretical exegesis as well as more practical exploration. At this juncture, I will tease out those threads **(p.131)** that have a particular bearing on the politics of participation; others we will revisit in later chapters.

As part of our exploration of the natural voice philosophy in chapter 2, we visited a number of critiques of the modern Western conception of music and music making, particularly, of the singing voice. Aspects of these analyses are worthy of elaboration as we consider the workings of a natural-voice-style choir at closer quarters. We saw how writers such as Blacking, Small, Olwage, Tomlinson, and Frith have argued that the tastes, values, and conventions according to which different kinds of music, and different qualities of voice, have been judged from the perspective of white European society are largely rooted in matters of class with, in some cases, a strong racial undercurrent. The distinctions that have been put into operation belong to an established (but by no means universal) hierarchy whereby education is equated with sophistication and the white Western world is equated with civilisation, and where notions of both sophistication and civilisation assume an opposite that is necessarily inferior (in terms of purported intrinsic value) or less developed (in a pseudo-evolutionary sense).

From this perspective, amateur classical choirs take their place in the sociocultural hierarchy. In modelling themselves on professional choirs, they aspire in an upwardly mobile direction. Pride of place in their repertoire is given to great works deemed worthy of performance. The performance itself becomes part of the tribute paid to these works and reinforces their place in the canon. Such works further justify their elevated position by being “difficult” and requiring more or less advanced levels of musical “skill”, not least the ability to sight-read, since performers are generally not expected to master the gargantuan task of performing full-scale works from memory. At the same time, according to this line of thought, an amateur choir can only ever hope to be second best to a professional choir, recycling works that are performed in a more accomplished manner by more experienced singers.

It might be assumed that open-access choirs lie even further down the chain. The normative argument might be that, since many members of these choirs do not possess even rudimentary music-reading ability, they must content themselves with easier and, by definition, less worthy material that "anyone" could sing. Viewed from another angle, however, the story might be told quite differently. In this retelling, community choirs that are rooted in the natural-voice aesthetic appear on the scene as a breath of fresh air, offering programmes in which there is always something new that audiences have not heard before. Because they have spent more time developing their aural skills, the singers are able to perform from memory and, as a result, are able to enter into the music in a different way and to communicate more directly with the audience. What "passes" between singers and listeners is therefore of a different affective order. Far from "forgiving" them for their supposedly inferior vocal and presentational skills, the audience response is often one of surprise **(p.132)** and pleasure: natural-voice-style choirs offer their listeners an entirely new experience with regard not only to the music they present but also to the visceral response they provoke.

The musical material that is chosen is certainly more suitable for such choirs than an oratorio or requiem mass for reasons we have already established. It is worth underlining, nonetheless, that it is not chosen simply because it is assumed to be "easier". It is chosen because it is music of a different order, designed for participation rather than contemplation. Participation goes beyond a mere "joining in". Brynjulf Stige introduces the notion of participation as (i) a style of self-presentation, (ii) the co-creation of social space, and (iii) ritual negotiation (2010b: 128). To this we might add a fourth category: social obligation. Christopher Small alludes to the story of Brahms turning down an invitation to attend a performance of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* on the grounds that he would rather stay at home and read it from the score (1998: 5). In many parts of the world, this would be viewed not merely as odd—not least for its dissociation of music from sound—but as an evasion of a social obligation. We might juxtapose this tale with Jane Sugarman's account of Prespa Albanian communities, where singing serves as the principal means of interacting at social gatherings and polyphonic singing is regarded as "a central component of an individual's social demeanor" (1989: 209). More particularly, participating in multi-part singing is viewed as part of a man's obligation to "embody and negotiate his household's honor in any public forum", his ready contribution being perceived as both a mark of respect for the host and a proper way of representing his own family (1998: 7). Admittedly, Brahms was not being asked to join in the singing of Mozart's opera but the contrast between the two types of behaviour and their underlying assumptions nonetheless alerts us to the moral imperatives of sociability in connection with music making. Perhaps the key point to extrapolate from this is that the principle of social obligation—which from a certain perspective might be seen as intrinsic to a properly functioning

(non-individualistic) society—can more readily be understood in a culture where music making is truly participatory; and further, that this becomes another determining factor in the way in which much of the world's music is constructed.

In *Music as Social Life*, Turino sets out his model for conceptualising different kinds of music making as "realms or *fields* of artistic practice", as opposed to styles and status categories (2008: 25). In this model, participatory performance and presentational performance sit side by side as two distinct fields.[22] The basic distinction whereby presentational music is "prepared by musicians for others to listen to" while participatory music "is not *for listening apart from doing*" is fairly straightforward (52; italics in original). What interests Turino more is how the two types of music differ in essence. In the case of presentational music, we are dealing with music as a set item or art object. In the realm of participatory music, on the other hand, "a piece is more like a set of **(p.133)** resources...fashioned anew during each performance" (54). Classical music, as Turino describes it, may be seen as a closed form, in which almost every detail of a performance is notated in the score. Participatory music, by contrast, may be seen as open-ended, lending itself to adaptation to the needs of a given situation. Inevitably, the intention behind each mode of music making will result in different musical forms, organisational styles, behavioural options, and value systems. Turino's statement of his overall purpose in advancing this discussion resonates with the convictions that lay at the heart of the early ethnomusicological endeavour to rescue "primitive" music from the various misapprehensions with which it was burdened:

> I want to argue that these situations of participatory music making are not just informal or amateur, that is, *lesser* versions of the "real music" made by the pros but that, in fact, they are something else—a different form of art and activity entirely—and that they should be conceptualized and valued as such.
>
> (Turino 2008: 25)

He elaborates later: "It is not that one type of music making is better or more valuable than the other; it is simply that they are different, with different social functions, responsibilities, and thus sound features that make them work" (44).

One final caveat: I am not suggesting that the community choirs I am concerned with here necessarily restrict their repertoire to the type of music that Turino qualifies as participatory, or that singers who operate in the oral tradition are incapable of learning more complex material from the written or art music tradition. A case in point is Marcel Pérès's ensemble Organum, whose membership in the 1990s included a number of Corsican singers who did not read music. This did not prevent them from learning and performing from memory the *Messe de Notre Dame* by fourteenth-century composer Guillaume de

Machaut.[23] The Corsican group A Filetta has also mastered complex material by Bruno Coulais and other contemporary composers, again learning everything by ear, in this case with the help of computer software that can play the individual parts directly from an electronic version of the score. When Coulais delivered the score for his first collaborative project with A Filetta, the soundtrack for Jacques Weber's film *Don Juan*, it had not occurred to him that the singers might not be able to read the notation.[24] Even the group's leader, Jean-Claude Acquaviva, was unused to learning vocal material from notation even though, as a classical guitarist, he was a practised sight-reader. An accomplished composer in his own right, Acquaviva speaks of the different ways he approaches the task of composing. While he sometimes composes at a keyboard and then writes the music down, he at other times composes as he has always done—"in my head, even if I fix some things to some extent with the piano" (interview 2004).[25] This is how he composed *Medea*, for example, **(p.134)** never writing anything down.[26] Observing this way of working, Coulais found Acquaviva's ability to carry the music in his head and teach it to the group phrase by phrase, each part in turn, to be quite extraordinary (speaking in Don Kent's film *A Filetta: Voix Corses*, 2002). For Acquaviva, this is a choice available to him alongside (rather than in the absence of) other possible ways of working.

Tavagna is another Corsican group whose members, despite their commitment to their own traditions and their lack of music-reading skills, have been eager to broaden their musical horizons by working with musicians and composers from outside the island. One example is their collaboration with British composer Malcolm Bothwell, who had initially worked with Corsican singers in the Organum ensemble and was subsequently invited by Tavagna to compose the music for a series of theatrical productions to be directed by group member Jean-Pierre Lanfranchi.[27] Bothwell himself sees some advantage in the position of those of his Corsican friends who have consciously resisted learning to read notation, primarily for fear that a score would constrain them (or "contaminate" them, as one singer put it) and that by intellectualising what they sing they might lose something that is fundamental to their natural relationship to music. As Bothwell observes:

> The thing that they're free of is having a vision of a keyboard or a score when they sing….Classically trained musicians have always got a picture of something—a keyboard or a score or something—and they're free of that, which is amazing really.
>
> (interview 2004)

The process of learning Bothwell's compositions entirely by ear was at times laborious but one song, "L'Omu Seguita", was an immediate hit. Bothwell had set himself the challenge of composing the piece as a Purcell-style canon over a ground bass, and it took him four days to complete the jigsaw in a way that

avoided parallel fifths. In its complexity, Bothwell remarks, the composition is far removed from anything the singers might devise themselves, yet they took to it without hesitation. “They don’t even realise that it’s complicated,” he says. “They just love singing it.…And it’s the sort of thing they’ll sing mainly in bars and cafes. It’s the sort of thing they’ll just start after a meal.” This may not be the kind of casual virtuosity to which the average community choir member aspires, but it offers irrefutable proof of what is possible.

Of Learning and Living

As we have seen, Christopher Small has been an energetic critic of the institutionalisation of music and music education. Equally energetically, he has promoted an alternative view of music as something people do rather than **(p. 135)** a set of great works, viewing art as a whole as “essentially a *process*, by which we explore our inner and outer environments and learn to live in them” (1996: 3–4). This leads him to envision a world in which “hierarchical organisations are replaced by networks of co-operating individuals, in whose lives art becomes once more as essential an element as finding a living” (209). Here he draws inspiration from Ivan Illich, whose *Deschooling Society* rested on the thesis that “the right to learn is curtailed by the obligation to attend school” (1976a: 7). Illich insisted on this vital distinction between education and schooling. It was the latter that was the butt of his enduring critique: he viewed compulsory schooling as a type of national service into which children are drafted by the state and he viewed the school itself as a prison in which children are kept sequestered from ordinary, day-to-day life, their young lives governed by the tyranny of a graded curriculum and a monopolistic system bound by countless rules and regulations that “legally combines prejudice with discrimination” (18). Small has direct recourse to Illich in relation to his observation that, in many parts of the world, the solitary music practice of the kind usually required of a child who pursues a music education in the West would run counter to the principle of learning through social experience, quoting a passage from *After Deschooling, What?* where Illich writes:

> I believe that only actual participation constitutes socially valuable learning, a participation by the learner in every stage of the learning process, including not only a free choice of what is to be learned and how it is to be learned but also a free determination by each learner of his own reason for living and learning—the part that his knowledge is to play in his life.
>
> (Illich 1976b: 14, quoted in Small 1996: 183)

Other educational and social critics, such as John Holt (author of the influential *How Children Fail*, first published in 1964), contribute to the notion that self-regulated learning is part of a broader ethic of self-determination, underlining the need for such learning to be integrated into and directly applicable to “real”

life, as opposed to existing in a category apart where disembodied “knowledge” is accumulated for its own sake.

In the case of institutionalised music education, it has to be acknowledged that—as with my collection of singing manuals from the early- to mid-twentieth century—many things have changed since the times of which Small, Illich, and Holt were writing.[28] Again, however, this acknowledgement is made with the caveat that many of those who, as adults, found their way into music making by joining community choirs were put through a state education system that many of today’s educators would consider less enlightened. Recent developments in Britain certainly include significant steps in the direction of what is termed in official parlance “self-directed learning” and “widening participation”. In many parts of the country, the proportion of schoolchildren **(p.136)** learning a musical instrument has increased substantially. Sistema England is modelled on the Venezuelan El Sistema initiative; it describes itself in its mission statement as a programme that works to “transform the lives of children, young people and their communities through the power of music making” by “giv[ing] every child in England the opportunity to be part of an orchestra or choir, and strive for musical excellence, developing their full potential” (http://sistemaengland.org.uk/mission/, acc. April 8, 2014). Sing Up was a major initiative that ran from 2007 to 2011 as the Music Manifesto’s National Singing Programme. “Dedicated to the proposition that all children should have access to high quality singing opportunities every day” and supported by tailor-made teacher training programmes and an online song bank, it undoubtedly led to an increase in the attention and time devoted to singing in many primary schools (http://www.singup.org/, acc. February 26, 2012). At the secondary education level, examination syllabuses are no longer restricted to the study of “great works”; some include options relating to popular music or world music, and there is scope for greater diversity in the realm of composition. At the same time, music still struggles to hold its ground in the secondary school curriculum and will find itself in an even more fragile position if music continues to be excluded from the list of core subjects in the government’s controversial proposals for curriculum reform. Meanwhile, success is still measured by such indices as the higher percentage of children learning a musical instrument, and the graded examinations of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music and Trinity Guildhall still influence the structure and ethos of instrumental learning across the globe. It is worth noting here that my intention in engaging critically with these trends and conventions and in giving space to the dissenting voices that have gathered around them is not to suggest that the entire edifice of state-controlled music education be summarily dismantled. But it is also quite clear that there is ample room for alternative approaches in music education—in terms of *what* is taught, *how* it is taught, *to whom* it is taught, *why* it is learnt, and what is *done with it* once it has been learnt.

I end this chapter by zooming out to the bigger picture as seen through the eyes of Ivan Illich. The different aspects of Illich's vision for a healthy and sustainable society come together in his notion of "conviviality". Since Illich uses this term in a quite specific way, it is worth quoting his definition in full:

> I choose the term "conviviality" to designate the opposite of industrial productivity. I intend it to mean autonomous and creative intercourse among persons, and the intercourse of persons with their environment; and this in contrast with the conditioned response of persons to the demands made upon them by others, and by a man-made environment. I consider conviviality to be individual freedom realized in personal interdependence and, as such, an intrinsic ethical value.
>
> (Illich 2009: 11)

(p.137)

We will return in later chapters to the spirit of this definition, alongside more conventional understandings of "conviviality" that are more akin to the notions of celebration, festivity, and collective joy that concern Barbara Ehrenreich. For ethnomusicologists, anthropologists, and purveyors of a liberal arts education it is axiomatic that when we talk about learning we are talking not only about acquiring skills, knowledge, or understanding. We are also—like Illich—talking about *living*, which is a far weightier concern. It is with this thought that I bring us back to the world of natural-voice choirs and world song networks, where for many (as we shall see in the chapters that follow) learning to sing with others is inextricably bound up with learning to live differently.

Notes:

(1.) This vignette (unlike those that opened chapters 1 and 3) is a composite of many such sessions at which I have been present, rather than a description of a single event as it actually unfolded. Some of the exercises and images mentioned can be found in Kristin Linklater's *Freeing the Natural Voice* (2006), Tony Backhouse's *Freeing the Song* (2010), articles from Chris Rowbury's *From the Front of the Choir* blog (http://blog.chrisrowbury.com), and various writings by Frankie Armstrong. The majority circulate freely in the oral tradition on which most community choir directors draw.

(2.) Alongside her formidable musical achievements, Barnwell also holds BSc and MSc degrees in speech pathology, an MSc in public health, and a PhD in craniofacial studies.

(3.) A native of New Zealand, Backhouse later moved to Australia, where in 1986 he founded the country's foremost *a cappella* gospel choir, Café of the Gate of Salvation.

(4.) In the case of a weekly choir meeting, where the session will last for no more than two hours, a maximum of fifteen minutes might be devoted to the initial warm up routine. For a day workshop, the amount of time given over to such exercises will vary according to the focus of the event. A workshop entitled "Finding Your Voice" is more likely to consist of exploratory activities than arrangements of songs in four-part harmony, whereas participants in a workshop entitled "Songs of the Caucasus"—especially if it is led by a visiting teacher from Georgia—might expect to move far more quickly (if not immediately) to the business of singing songs.

(5.) The crucial part played by imagery in Kristin's work is reflected in the subtitle of the revised and expanded edition of *Freeing the Natural Voice: Imagery and Art in the Practice of Voice and Language*. While not a singing manual as such (it is aimed principally at actors), it is packed full of exercises focusing on the body, the breath, and the way in which sound is produced, guided throughout by the overriding objective of freeing the voice and, with it, the person.

(6.) More familiar rationales also apply, of course, with vocal sequences used to warm the voice up slowly so as to avoid strain by over-singing or stretching too far beyond a comfortable range.

(7.) A selection of Frankie and Darien's exercises can be found on their practice CD *Voice Exercises & Songs*. This contains descriptions and demonstrations of a selection of physical and vocal warm-up exercises, together with simple rounds and part-songs suitable for beginners.

(8.) NVPN member Teresa Verney uses this technique in her one-to-one sessions with individuals who think they "can't sing", starting very simply with the speaking voice (always using imitation or call-and-response as the point of departure) before "gradually lead[ing] people into the singing voice without them realising, and then within five minutes they realise they're singing" (interview 2008).

(9.) The importance of the open throat in Frankie's method is reflected in two of her favourite axioms, "Your throat's job is to get out of the way" and "I voice *through* my throat not *with* my throat" (Armstrong and Pritchard 2005: 35). The notion of singing through, not with the throat echoes William Blake, who wrote, "I see through, not with my eyes". Blake's words inspired a song Frankie wrote in 1987 at a time when she was struggling with the fear of losing what little functional sight she had left.

(10.) During her years with the Gardzienice Theatre Association, for example, Maryana took part in expeditions to Egypt, Cuba, Brazil, Afghanistan, Lapland, and Ireland, as well as Ukraine.

(11.) Daleks are the fictional, extraterrestrial cyborgs that featured in the British television series *Doctor Who* from the early 1960s. Mention of them often provokes a harsh, nasal-sounding/twangy imitation of their catchphrase, “exterminate!” In 1999 an image of a Dalek appeared on a postage stamp celebrating British popular culture.

(12.) In the early years of her teaching career in the UK, Dessi compiled a CD entitled *Wild Wind*, conceived as “a course in authentic Bulgarian singing in easy-to-follow stages”. At the time of writing, this resource is unfortunately no longer available but Dessi can be seen demonstrating a range of vocal techniques used in Bulgarian singing in a short film in the Wellcome Collection, *Singing With Two Voices*: see http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=-o31Yg936Ac, acc. August 20, 2013.

(13.) Cleall, who became Professor of Solo Singing and Voice Production at Trinity College of Music at the age of only twenty-two, has enjoyed a distinguished career in the world of British choral music and church music.

(14.) This slim volume, which underwent multiple reprints, is presented as “A Complete Guide to Teachers, Students and Candidates for the A.R.C.M., L.R.A.M., and all Similar Examinations”.

(15.) Ysaye Barnwell offers a useful definition of worldview as “the way in which a culture organizes its perceptions, thoughts, language and actions to order and analyze and give meaning to an essentially chaotic universe” (1989: 8).

(16.) *Singing in the African American Tradition* consists of an A4 size booklet and four CDs (in the original edition, six cassettes). The notes provide the user with an introduction to the historical, social, and political contexts of the different genres. In a now time-honoured format, the recordings feature each of the song’s parts separately, as well as all of them sung together.

(17.) Founded in 1866 with support from the American Missionary Association as part of a programme to educate freed slaves, Fisk was the first American university to provide a liberal arts education for “young men and women irrespective of color” (http://www.fiskjubileesingers.org, acc. February 19, 2012).

(18.) Robeson, whose father was a run-away slave turned preacher, took a particularly keen interest in the plight of the Welsh coal miners.

(19.) This adventure inspired Polly to embark on a project on the Fisk Jubilee Singers, in the process of which she unearthed some “cracking songs” for which she then made her own arrangements, suitable for community choirs.

(20.) See also David Reck’s observation that “much indigenous music of many of the world’s peoples (‘primitive’ or otherwise) is technically more complex than that of Europe or America” and his proposal that the variety of harmonic systems and polyphonic styles found in oral traditions across the world “mak[es] questionable the assumption that musical notation is a prerequisite for the ‘higher’ and more complex technologies of musical structure” (1997: 272–273).

(21.) A significant new addition to these resources is the volume *Community Voiceworks*, in the Oxford University Press Voiceworks series, compiled and edited by Gitika Partington and Ali Burns. For further details of the titles listed and other similar resources, see the section Songbooks, Teaching CDs/DVDs, and Online Resources on the companion website.

(22.) Turino borrows these labels from James Graves (2005), who introduced them in his discussion of folk arts.

(23.) This is not the place to enter into the debate over Pérès/Organum’s controversial interpretation of the Machaut mass, which was also released on CD (1996). For the interested reader, the reviews posted on the Amazon website offer an indication of some of the issues raised.

(24.) The *Don Juan* soundtrack was released by Auvidis in 1998.

(25.) For more detailed discussion of the Corsican examples given here, see Bithell 2007.

(26.) *Medea* was released on the Naïve label in 2006.

(27.) Bothwell’s compositions can be found on the CD *Tavagna Canta Malcolm Bothwell* (2002).

(28.) For an insight into current trends and debates in music education in the UK, see Hallam and Creech 2010 and Philpott and Spruce 2012.