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Final MA Assignment BMPF7010

Project title: What does it take to be a choral director in 21st Century UK? Understanding the education and pathways to choral directorship for the formally and informally educated choral director.

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1. Project Proposal

Project Title: What does it take to be a choral director in the 21st century? Understanding the education and pathways to choral directorship for the formally and informally educated choral director.

*Note the terms choral director and choral conductor are assumed to cover the same function and are interchangeable.

Background

Choral singing is a popular pastime in the UK. A 2017 survey by Voices Now estimated there are over 2 million non-professional choral singers in the UK and over 40,000 non-professional choirs (Voices Now Online, 2017). Each of these choirs will have at least one choral director and many choral directors will lead more than one choir. Choirs cover a wide range of social settings including community choirs, children's choirs, religious practice-based choirs, traditional choral societies, single sex choirs e.g. male voice and women's voices, LBGTQ+ choirs, workplace choirs, and choirs for health and therapy.

The benefits of choral singing from a health and well-being perspective are being increasingly researched, documented and endorsed (Cooper, 2017; Livesey et al., 2012; Osman, Tischler and Schneider, 2016; Smith et al., 2020). However, choral directing or conducting is an unregulated activity in the UK, with various routes to entry. Cooper argues that the proliferation of community choirs in Australia means that the education and development of choral directors is now a matter of 'public interest' (2017, p. 358) as a way of protecting participants. Given the level of participation in the UK, it may be reasonable to make the same comment about the choral conducting community here. Some choral directors will have undertaken formal conducting training either at higher education establishments or through organisations such as The Association of British Choral Directors (ABCD). However, there are also those who come to it through other pathways and who may not have had any training in either choral conducting or vocal pedagogy.

An experienced solo and choral singer with a BA (Hons) and MA in Music, the researcher turned to choral directing eleven years ago to explore and perform the repertoire she enjoys. She had also become disillusioned with the approach of some choral directors in her singing sphere. This arose mainly from vagueness of direction, uninspiring programming choices and the failure of some directors in handling the

allocation of voices across parts to ensure a good musical balance, especially across the upper voice sections. Coming from a professional Finance background, the researcher came to choral directing with the belief that some level of training was imperative to ensure a reasonable level of technical proficiency. This would give confidence to the singers and therefore, enhance enjoyment and performance. As such, the researcher undertook a period of study with the ABCD via their Initial training course before progressing to their Intermediate course (DipABRSM equivalent). The researcher also undertook some orchestral conducting training to equip her for the occasional choral concert with instrumentalists. However, whilst this period of study covered some of the key aspects of choral conducting technique such as beat patterns, expressive gesture, body language, programming, and the communication of musical intent (Cooper, 2017; Durrant, 2009; Jansson, Balsnes & Durrant, 2021), there was little coverage of the importance of vocal health or how to furnish the amateur chorister with the tools to protect their voice. This knowledge was to come after seven years of choral leadership starting in 2019, through her studies for this degree.

In a study of choral directors based in Norway, Jansson and Balsnes (2021, p. 349) identified six distinct pathways (although there may be combinations) to choral directorship:

1. The educated instrumentalist
2. The educated singer
3. The church musician
4. The music educator
5. The musicologist
6. The apprentice or ‘uneducated’ choral singer

Jansson and Balsnes (2021) also state that it is rare for someone to become a choral director without having been a choral singer at some point in their life. The researcher considers herself to have come to choral directing via the educated singer route.

The development of formal pathways in choral directorship via higher education been a relatively recent development (Jansson & Balsnes, 2021). Although choral directorship has been taught in the USA in an organised and methodical way for some time (Varvarigiu, 2016), in the UK, formal training at conservatoires and universities is a more recent development. The Royal Academy of Music (RAM) was the first higher education institution in the UK to offer a specialist choral conducting course just twenty-five years ago in 1997 (Royal Academy of Music Online, n.d.). Since then, organisations such as the ABCD have worked to raise the profile of formal choral

conducting training, and widen its availability (Durrant, 1998). Whilst at the same time, academic institutions such as the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama (RWCMD), Royal Birmingham Conservatoire (RBC) and Birmingham University (BU) now offer postgraduate degrees in choral conducting (RWCMD Online, n.d.; Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Online, n.d.; University of Birmingham Online, n.d.).

But not all choral directors have had the opportunity or desire to study at a higher level. Whether due to availability of courses at the time, other commitments such as personal or employment circumstances, many choral directors may have opted for on-the-job training or informal training (that which does not lead to a formal qualification) as offered historically by the likes of Benslow Music Trust or Dartington Trust. These generally take the form of short courses focussing on conducting technique and score preparation. However, since 2022, there appear to have been few choral conducting courses offered for current choral directors (Dartington Trust Online, n.d.; Benslow Music Online, n.d.; The Bow and the Baton Online, n.d.).

Why do we need this information?

As stated earlier, choral conducting is an unregulated activity in the UK. Anyone, regardless of knowledge or experience may put themselves forward as a choral director. It is the researcher's opinion that if such individuals are not in possession of a reasonable understanding of vocal anatomy, vocal health maintenance and techniques alongside a knowledge of good choral conducting technique, there is a risk of unintentional damage to choristers' voices.

The purpose of this project is to establish the level of knowledge in the UK choral conducting community through an understanding of the routes to choral directorship taken by current choral directors, and their background, education levels and experience, especially for those involved with non-professional choirs. In addition, the project aims to identify which areas of training e.g. conducting technique or vocal health are common, and which are not. The researcher seeks to ascertain what continuous professional development (CPD) is undertaken and whether there an appetite for choral directors to undertake further training and CPD in areas such as vocal anatomy and health to both inspire and protect their singers.

Some of the questions to be asked include:

- To understand the types of route to choral directorship in the UK

- To understand areas of common knowledge within the British choral directing community.
- To identify any gaps in knowledge that may be cause for concern especially regarding the promotion of vocal health in choral singing.
- To understand education levels within the British choral directing community with a view to potentially formulating a CPD offering across the community
- To understand the level of CPD commitment within the British choral directing community and the level of awareness of development opportunities in the UK.
- To ascertain whether there is a CPD recommendation to ensure choral directors keep abreast of current developments in choral practice and vocal health.
- To potentially help organisations such as ABCD to develop additional training options aimed at the informally trained choral director, thus improving the quality of choral directing in the UK.
- To help the leadership teams of choirs e.g. trustees or committees, identify the key elements of good choral conducting practice and ensure candidates for positions are suitably experienced or trained, and aware of the latest developments in choral directing practice and choral singing health.

It is hoped this project will help organisations offering choral direction training to identify areas of focus or expansion for their training programmes, ensuring that opportunities exist for further development. It may also help informally educated choral directors to appreciate the need for continuous professional development by highlighting current best practice and scientific knowledge in maintaining vocal health.

Project aims

The aims of this research project will be:

- To complete a meticulous literature review, using both white and grey literature, focusing on the perceived key elements of a good choral conducting education and how this is reflected in both formal and informal training;
- To collect and analyse data on the demographics of, and views on training in the choral directing community in the UK.
- To offer the results of the project to institutions such as ABCD to help promote continuous personal development in choral conducting training to as wide an audience

as possible with the aim of promoting a minimum standard of knowledge of the wider issues such as the maintenance of vocal health.

Research Methodology

In considering the task ahead, the researcher paused to examine her view of the world or her ontological position as this would influence the choice of methods. Due to her training as an accountant, the researcher has a natural inclination towards quantitative methods and empirical analysis, analysing and interpreting numbers to reveal the most likely cause and effect. This places her within the postpositivist paradigm with its emphasis on objectivity, quantitative methods, scientific reasoning, and measurable phenomena from which the researcher can draw conclusions based on the likelihood of the results rather than their certainty (Mertens, 2015; Creswell & Cresswell, 2018; Merriam and Tidsdell, 2016). However, during her studies, the researcher has come to realise that although there maybe one reality or series of events, each individual will have their own interpretation. For example, a director's interpretation of reality or events may be different to a singer's. This is especially true within areas where there are significant interactive qualitative factors at play, such as emotions, interpretation, or personal beliefs. Within a specialism such as choral direction, there is a need for interpretation of both subject matter and events, what a choral director believes is a must-have for success may be different to a singer's perspective. Such interpretations are likely to be influenced by the participants' background and preferences (Scott, 2014; Mertens, 2015). For example, a choral director may believe that a knowledge of repertoire is a priority, whereas a singer may prioritise clear conducting technique or an understanding of vocal health. Given this, the researcher concluded the project would likely require a mixture of both quantitative and qualitative measures and methods, reflecting the different elements, both objective and subjective, of the realities experienced, and the empirical responses required (Feilzer, 2010; Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018; Mertens, 2015). As such, the researcher reasoned the project would be best approached from a pragmatic perspective (Morgan, 2007) where the methods used are 'matched to the specific questions and purpose of the research' (MacKenzie and Knipe, 2006, p. 6) and focussed on 'what is practically useful and whatever works at the time' (Petersen & Gencel, 2013, p.1) to solve 'the practical problems in the "real world"' (Feilzer, 2010, p.8).

Methods

Given the researcher has identified a need for both quantitative and qualitative information to understand the choral director's educational background and approach, a mixed methods methodology was deemed appropriate.

As this project targets a country-wide population, an online questionnaire was determined to be the most efficient way of collecting data. A questionnaire can also be structured to meet the exact needs of the research project (Coe et al., 2017). The questions will cover a mix of quantitative such as demographic information, and more qualitative elements regarding the views of British choral directors on a range of training and CPD elements. The questionnaire will likely contain a range of styles of question including dichotomous, multiple choice, and rank ordering to capture objective and subjective answers. Additionally, there are several considerations to keep in mind when designing questionnaire. Denscombe (2017) states it is important to consider the order of the questions and whether earlier ones will impact later responses. Leading questions and assumptions relating to the respondents' knowledge or opinions should be avoided (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018) whereas Mertens (2015) stresses the importance of not leaving the most important questions until last. Denscombe (2017) also warns about the dangers of asking closed questions which may lead to an unconscious bias towards the researcher's point of view. The is also benefit to be had from piloting the questionnaire to help refine and focus the questions (Xerri, 2017). The researcher is also aware that the number of responses received will have an impact on the integrity of the results, too small a response could mean the results is unrepresentative, too many responses will make the analysis of the data too time-consuming. The researcher will need to construct a list of questions that provides the depth and range of data needed to draw valid conclusions from the exercise whilst balancing the need for enough meaningful information with the time constraints for the research.

The project design will therefore consist of:

- A questionnaire designed to capture demographic and attitudinal information of the choral conducting community in the UK.
- Semi-structured interviews with a small number of choral directors targeting qualitative aspects of choral conducting and the attitudes towards training. These are likely to take place by phone or by virtual meeting with recordings made to aid transcription.

- An integrative literature review to include grey literature resources such as websites and curriculum information from higher education establishments, alongside traditional primary and secondary sources such as peer reviewed articles and textbooks.

Ethical Considerations

In line with the guidelines set out in the ERSC Research Ethics Framework and the UWTSD Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice, it is anticipated that no harm will come to the participants and informed consent will be required before any prospective respondent or interview can participate. To protect the identities of the respondents, all responses to questionnaires and transcriptions of interviews will be anonymised. Interview recordings will be stored securely on a password protected computer and coded to ensure the interviewees' identities are anonymous.

As a choral director, the researcher is an active participant in the field she plans to research and as such, is an insider researcher (Humphrey, 2013). Whilst this gives her some advantages as she brings knowledge, awareness, and a commitment to the subject of the research (Branick & Coughlan, 2007; Coe et al., 2017; Saidin & Yaacob, 2016), she may have her own personal bias towards the outcome of this project (Anderson & Herr, 1999; Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 2013). To counter the potential towards bias and maintain an ethical balance, the researcher should, along with all other ethical issues, address this as part of the planning and implementation processes from the outset, and not as an afterthought (Mertens, 2015). The researcher hopes to counter these potential pitfalls by circulating the questionnaire amongst the membership of organisations like the ABCD, as well as social media groups with associations to choral singing, hopefully ensuring the responses come from as broad a base as possible within the UK choral conducting community and limiting the number of respondents with any personal or professional relationship with the researcher. Similarly, there will be a request for volunteers or recommendations for interviewees to help eliminate any unconscious bias in the selection process.

Personal Learning Outcomes

- To understand the breadth of knowledge in the UK choral conducting community regarding the recognised fundamental of good choral conducting practice.
- To identify any gaps in that knowledge that may highlight any potential opportunities for CPD for both the informally and formally educated choral director.

- To establish what the members of the choral conducting community consider to be the most important attributes of an effective choral director.
- To develop a document that can be used by training providers to develop CPD programmes.
- To satisfactorily complete a rigorous research project in the hope it will lead to further opportunities for research.
- To be in a position to offer the results to organisations such as Making Music to assist those responsible for the appointment of choral directors to make informed decisions in the assessment of candidates.

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Project Title: What does it take to be a choral director in 21st Century UK?

Understanding the education and pathways to choral directorship for the formally and informally educated choral director.

*Note the terms choral director, choral conductor and choir leader are assumed to cover the same function and are interchangeable.

1. Introduction

In 2017, a survey by Voices Now estimated that there are over 2 million are over 2 million non-professional choral singers and over 40,000 non-professional choirs in the UK (BBC Radio 3 Choir and Organ Online, n.d.). Each of these choirs will have at least one choral director and many choral directors will lead more than one choir. There is now a choir for everyone, from the traditional choral society to LBGTQ+ choirs, workplace choirs, community choirs and choirs for health and therapy. Research into the benefits of singing from a health and well-being perspective are wide-ranging, well documented and now part of mainstream understanding (Cooper, 2017; Livesey et al., 2012; Osman, Tischler and Schneider, 2016; Smith et al., 2020). However, choral conducting is an unregulated activity, and anyone can set themselves up as a choral director, regardless of education, knowledge or experience.

In Australia, there has been a significant increase in the number of community choirs and Cooper (2017) has argued that the education and development of choral directors is now a matter of 'public interest' in order to protect the welfare of participating choral singers (p. 358). Given the size of the amateur choir community in the UK, it may be reasonable to make the same assertion here, as choral conductors should look to educate their singers, not just musically but in the efficient and safe use of their voices (Durrant & Varvarigou, 2015).

In the UK, educators and choral directors Durrant and Varvarigou have analysed the training requirements for the development of effective choral directors, creating models, frameworks and curricula to facilitate their education (Durrant, 1994; Durrant, 1998; Varvarigou, 2009; Durrant & Varvarigou, 2011) but whether these have been implemented by choral conducting training providers is unknown to the researcher. This study aims to understand the educational and training backgrounds of the UK choral conducting community which may highlight any gaps with Durrant and Varivarigou's proposals. It also aims to understand and identify the areas where further development is needed.

Due to the scope and timeframes for this study, it will not be possible to analyse a sample population of many hundreds, but it is hoped that by engaging with up to one hundred UK educated or based choral conductors, commonalities in education and training, may be found that are representative and relevant to the wider choral conducting community.

It is hoped to achieve by taking the following steps:

- To identify any gaps in knowledge that may be cause for concern especially regarding the promotion of vocal health in choral singing.
- To understand the level of CPD commitment within the British choral directing community and the level of awareness of development opportunities in the UK.
- To ascertain whether there is a CPD recommendation to ensure choral directors keep abreast of current developments in choral practice and vocal health.
- To help the leadership teams of choirs e.g. trustees or committees, identify the key elements of good choral conducting practice and ensure candidates for positions are suitably experienced or trained, and aware of the latest developments in choral directing practice and choral singing health.
- To potentially help organisations such as ABCD to develop additional training options aimed at the informally trained choral director, thus improving the quality of choral directing in the UK.

3. Literature Review

Summary of Previous Research

Whilst this study is not a direct culmination of previous research, it is informed by it. This was a journey started by an experienced singer who became a choral director, who then realised how little they knew. Previous research has allowed this lack of knowledge to be addressed.

Previous Research

Over the duration of the course, the themes explored and the key references informing this project:

1. Impact of poor posture on the choral voice.
   Kim and Kim, 2016; Oudes et al, 2005; Cardoso et al, 2017; Iwarsson, 2001, Staes et al, 2011;

2. Use and benefits of semi-occluded vocal tract exercises (SOVTEs) in an amateur choral setting.
   Andrade et al., 2019; Manternach, Clark & Daugherty, 2017; Manternach, Schloneger & Maxfield, 2019; Titze, 2001.

3. Effect of SOVTEs on vocal acoustics and uses for the choral director
   Cardosa, Lucena & de Oliveira Carmargo Gomes, 2020; Titze, 2006; Titze, 2018; Bozeman, 2013; Manternach, Clark & Daugherty, 2017; Manternach, Schloneger & Maxfield, 2018;

4. The breathing mechanism and its role in singing, the Accent Method and the impact on vocal acoustics and relevance to the choral director.
   Gaskill & Quinney, 2012; Titze, 2006; Morris and Hutchison, 2017; Thyme-Frøkjær and Frøkjær-Jensen, 2021; Morris, 2012.

This course has resulted in a significant increase in knowledge in the above areas which led to the question of how much knowledge other UK choral directors had of these subjects and subsequently, the proposal for this project.

Current Available Literature

A literature review can be defined as ‘a comprehensive overview of prior research regarding a specific topic’ (Denney & Tewksbury, 2013, p.218) and ‘a means of

demonstrating an author's knowledge about a particular field of study' (Randolph, 2009, p.2).

There appears to be little relevant primary research on choral conductor education emanating from the UK. Despite an extensive online search of the UWTSD library including JSTOR, EBSCO, ProQuest Central and Sage Journals, and Researchgate and Google Scholar, only a few people appear to be researching choral conducting in the UK. These were primarily: Dr. Colin Durrant, a choral conductor, choral conducting tutor and educator, Dr. Maria Varvarigou, choral singer and conductor, lecturer and researcher and in Norway, with research interests in the UK, Professor Dag Jansson, choral conductor and educator and his associate, Dr Ann Haughland Balsnes, a music educator with a special interest in singing in various contexts such as educational and choral.

This infers the study of choral directing training and practice in the UK is an immature field for academic study, possibly because choral conducting is a relatively new offering from Higher Education (HE) establishments. The first specialist choral conducting course was introduced by the Royal Academy of Music (RAM) in 1997 (Royal Academy of Music Online, n.d.). Until around this time, choral conducting in the UK could be considered 'pedogogically unsound' (Durrant in Abrahams & Head (ed), 2017, p.230) which, given the date of the chapter, coincides with the introduction of the RAM course in 1997.

Academic study of choral conducting training stems extensively from the USA, where choral conducting has been offered as an academic subject at colleges and conservatoires for many years and consequently, the field of study is better established (Varvarigui, 2016, Durrant & Varvarigou, 2008; Varvarigou & Durrant, 2011; Jansson, Elstad & Døving, 2019; Jansson & Balsnes, 2021). Given the maturity of the field in the USA and the established nature of choral conducting training in the education system, the USA was considered too different a landscape in reference to this UK based project.

The USA's pre-eminence in the academic study of choral pedagogy is supported by the contents of The Oxford Handbook of Choral Pedagogy, published by Oxford University Press. A department of Oxford University which itself has a collegiate choral tradition going back to late 13th century (Merton College Online, n.d.; New College Choir Online, n.d.; Magdalen College Choir Online, n.d), recognises the research expertise in this area resides in the USA (Abrahams & Head (ed), 2017).

In the Handbook, 21 of the 31 contributors (65%) are USA based college professors and educators, professional choral conductors, musicologists and researchers. An analysis of the locations of the contributors is as follows:

Analysis of Contributors to Oxford Handbook of Choral Singing
Geographical Location

Location of Contributor	% of Contributors
USA	67.7%
UK	6.5%
Australia	6.5%
UK/US	3.2%
Brazil	3.2%
Hungary	3.2%
Germany	3.2%

To date, the views of those currently involved in the long-established choral traditions at the University of Oxford have not been reflected in this publication but hopefully, there will be opportunities to contribute in the future.

Whilst not many recently published papers were found relating to UK choral conducting, papers by the earlier mentioned key contributors examined the following topics:

Rehearsals

The fundamental skills and attributes needed by a choral director to ensure rehearsals and performances are engaging and successful were considered in Durrant's 2005 paper. This focussed on five choirs, ranging from primary school age to young adult; two choirs were from the USA, two from Finland and one from the UK. Successful rehearsals and performances were found to be led by conductors with some level of energy and charisma. All the conductors were experienced and successful, and each demonstrated authority but in different ways; one was inclined to rule by fear and cajoled the singers into feeling guilty about disappointing him whilst the other four encouraged their singers, listening to their opinions, ensuring the environment was inclusive and nurturing.

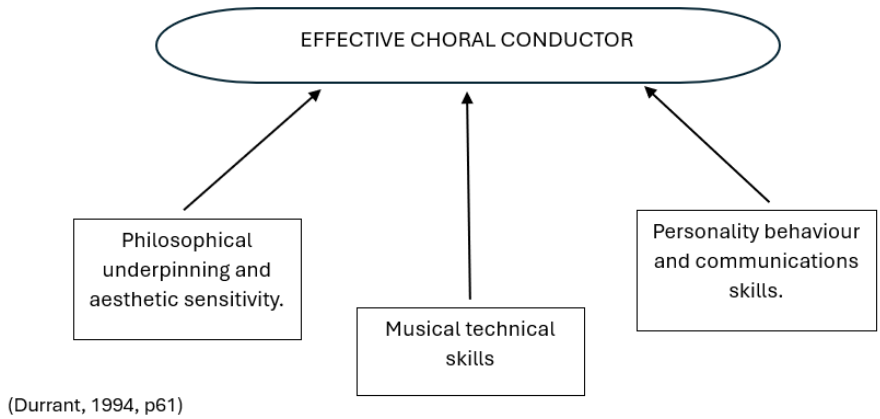
More information on the background of the five conductors their early training would have been useful for this study, illustrating whether the skills possessed were taught, innate or a combination of both. It may also have established the level of interpersonal

skills included (Jansson, Elstad & Døving, 2019) their studies and highlight some of the differences in training in Finland, the UK and the USA. However, the scope of the paper covered how the effectiveness of rehearsal leaders in creating an enticing rehearsal environment, not their training.

In 2015, Varvarigou and Durrant produced a chapter for the Oxford Handbook of Singing, which examined the role of the choral director in rehearsals and during performances. It argued the standard, skills and understanding of aspects such as gesture, had been inconsistent due to the lack of formal training for choral conductors available until recently. The authors asserted the conductor needs to possess more than good technique to be effective in both rehearsal and performance, they also confidence in their interpersonal skills e.g. the giving of positive feedback and general leadership (Jansson, Elstad & Døving, 2019). In relation to this project, it is hoped to discover to level current UK choral directors appreciate the importance or not of interpersonal skills.

Teaching of Conducting

In his 1994 paper, Durrant aimed to determine from available research literature, the aspects of successful conducting requiring a better understanding. This followed a period of teaching UK based trainee music teachers which highlighted the variability of knowledge, experience and skills amongst the students. From an analysis of predominately USA focussed papers, Durrant concluded some aspects of a conductor's skill can be acquired and improved through practical experience of conducted activities and of conducting. However, he argued there are 'specific teachable musical, technical and personal skills necessary for effective conducting' (p.74). On comparing the more structured US system with the UK system, he found the latter to be disorganised and unstructured with very little training in HE music courses. He proposed the following model for effective choral conducting:



(Durrant, 1994, p61)

It should be noted this paper was publish three years before the RAM introduced the UK's first HE choral conducting course and other HE institutions also now offer specific training in this area. This project will attempt to understand the focus of current HE courses.

A Durrant and Varvarigou paper published in 2008 opens with the statement 'Professional development in conducting is inconsistent across the UK, leading to a lack of confidence amongst teachers' (p. 72). The paper focuses on development for teachers and student teachers studying for the Music Education MA at the Institute of Education, University College London, including the module Choral Conducting, Leadership and Communications. It found many schoolteachers, especially at primary schools, lacked the confidence to lead choirs which was attributed to the lack of conducting courses in HE for music undergraduates and postgraduates. A key outcome of the study was a majority of the participants wanted to develop the following conducting skills:

- gesture and conducting technique
- better use of rehearsal time
- improve communication with choir members
- the ability to put into practice their knowledge of vocal technique
- learn more about repertoire.

It remains to be seen if there are any similarities between these development wishes and those of the respondents to the project survey.

In her 2009 doctoral thesis, Varvarigou aimed to provide an effective model for choral conducting training. Varvarigou states despite the growing body of research suggesting choral singing brings both musical and non-musical benefits, the training of choir directors and leaders has not been given the same attention. Varvarigou considered there were few courses in the UK adequately preparing choir directors for the role of leading community, church and school choirs. Her thesis examined the content of five training courses, from beginner to advanced, three provided by HE establishments and two by independent organisations. In the context of this project, the key finding was the focus of the courses on the conducting techniques such as clarity of gesture, score preparation etc. with not enough training in non-technical aspects such as:

- an understanding of vocal anatomy and technique 'in order to promote healthy singing' (p.232);

- the development of confidence alongside technical skills.
- interpersonal skills including ‘non-verbal communication (eye-contact, posture), encouragement and motivation… and general leadership’ (p. 227).

Additionally, Varvarigou asserted:

- Even extensive practical experience of choral conducting does not ensure the tutor has the skills required and the course tutors would benefit from understanding different aspects of teaching.

None of the courses included all the aspects identified by Varvarigou as essential and the courses’ weaknesses corresponded closely with the findings in Durrant and Varvarigou’s 2008 paper, especially regarding vocal anatomy and health, and confidence.

Regarding this project, it will be seen if the same aspects are identified as weaknesses or continuous professional development (CPD) topics.

Identity

Durrant’s 2005 paper focusses on the relationship between choral singers’ sense of identity and the methods and approach of the choral conductors’ who lead them. It concentrated on choirs from the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, Finland and the School of Music of the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. Whilst this paper does not address the purpose of this project directly, it does expand on Durrant’s model for effective choral conducting above, details of which can be found in Appendix xx

Gesture

Durrant’s 2022 paper which he co-authored with Jansson and Balsnes focusses on choral conductors and singers in Norway and Sweden and the relative importance or not, of conducting gestures. Whilst not directly relevant to the UK, as some gestures are ignored by singers, it concludes that self-reflection regarding the use and relevance of gesture should form part of a CPD plan (Jansson, Balsnes & Durrant, 2022).

Establishing the availability and breadth of training in the UK.

The scarceness of peer reviewed literature available on this choral conducting training in the UK necessitated the consideration of grey literature sources. Grey literature can be described as the varied and diverse repository of public information that has not been exposed to academic review or published in peer-reviewed journals and books

(Adams, Smart & Huff, 2016; Schöpfel in Bickell, Kousha & Thelwall, 2022). Paez (2017) contends where there is limited peer-reviewed literature on a subject, it can be used to minimise publication bias and improve the balance of obtainable information, providing additional perspective on the topic being investigated. Grey literature can be difficult to find and analyse into a form which can be integrated with primary and secondary sources (Adams et al., 2016). A particular drawback of web-based grey literature is the changing nature of domains and webpage addresses, which may hinder the duplication of the searches leading to the source of the information (Paez, 2017). There is also the question of quality; as grey literature sources are not subject to the same scrutiny as peer-reviewed literature, further analyses and checks may be required to ensure it is suitable for use (Adams, Smart & Huff, 2016).

Given the small number of contributors in this field UK, it was concluded publication bias was a distinct possibility. Therefore, the inclusion of grey literature becomes a key tool in understanding the scope of the training available currently.

Consequently, it was decided to examine the content offered by several leading institutions offering choral conducting tuition. Requests were made for copies of syllabuses from several institutions but disappointingly, many were unreceptive. The reasons for this are unknown but it could be they are inundated with requests and unable to help everyone, or there are no detailed written syllabuses, and the programmes are a product of the experience and approach of the tutors,

Consequently, it was necessary to combine information from elsewhere, in this case the websites of the institutes approached with the formal documentation received.

The organisations and the sources examined (in alphabetical order) are:

Organisation Name	**Source**
Association of British Choral Directors (ABCD)	Website
Birmingham University (BU)	Website
Royal Academy of Music (RAM)	Course Handbook
Royal Birmingham Conservatoire (RBC)	Website
Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama (RWCMD)	Website
Sing For Pleasure	Website

It was noted the following institutions offer choral conducting as part of their general conducting courses rather than as a specialism. Therefore, they have been excluded from this exercise.

- Royal College of Music (RCM)

- Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM)
- Guildhall School of Music and Drama (GSMD)
- Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RSC)

When analysing the grey literature, only the activities deemed to be core to conducting were examined i.e. those specifically mentioned in the syllabuses. Any elective modules from other areas and faculties' courses at the institutes would be ignored, as the quantity and variability is too wide for the scope of this project. Additionally, if the subjects are not part of the core curriculum for choral conducting, then subject is not considered to be an integral part of a choral conductors' education by the institute.

The variation and generality of terminology used by the organisations was the main issue with the analysis, making direct comparison difficult. Therefore, the coding and analysis was based on the researcher's interpretation of the terminology used (appendix xx). This also illustrated another drawback, the lack of detail available online; websites and prospectuses are an invitation to enquire or apply rather than a detailed explanation of the course content.

There were significant differences between the offerings by the HE institutions and the independent organisations. All the organisations a covered the following:

- Conducting technique
- Efficient and effective rehearsals
- Score knowledge and preparation
- Repertoire knowledge and choice
- Musicianship

The HE institutions also provided coaching in the skills for professional and career development, whereas the independent organisations were mainly focussed on the technical aspects of choral conducting. In both cases, there was little mention of the soft skills that might be required for the effective management of a choir or vocal anatomy and health, factors noted in Durrant, 1994; Durrant & Varvarigou, 2008; Jansson, Balsnes & Durrant, 2022 and Varvarigou, 2009. Where people management elements were identified, these were unspecific and vague e.g. 'create a rapport with the choir' (ABCD Online, n.d.; Sing for Pleasure Online, n.d.), and 'keep singers interested and musically satisfied' (RBC Online, n.d.).

4. Methodology

Ontology & Epistemology

We are all influenced by the world around us and how we perceive and understand that world will impact our beliefs and actions in everyday life (Meretoja, 2014). Similarly, the philosophical worldview or paradigm (a 'basic set of beliefs that guide action' (Guba in Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p.5) of the researcher will shape their methodological choices as much as their way of thinking (Mertens, 2015; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Petersen & Gencel, 2013). In order to articulate their paradigm, the researcher must first examine their position on, and assumptions regarding their perceptions of reality - **ontology** (Mertens, 2015; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). This will influence how events within that reality or realities can be examined, measured, and communicated to others – **epistemology** (Bracken, n.d.; Kawulich, 2012). As shown below, the establishment of these two positions will help the researcher understand their paradigm and promote the establishment of a methodology that is viable and appropriate for their proposed project.

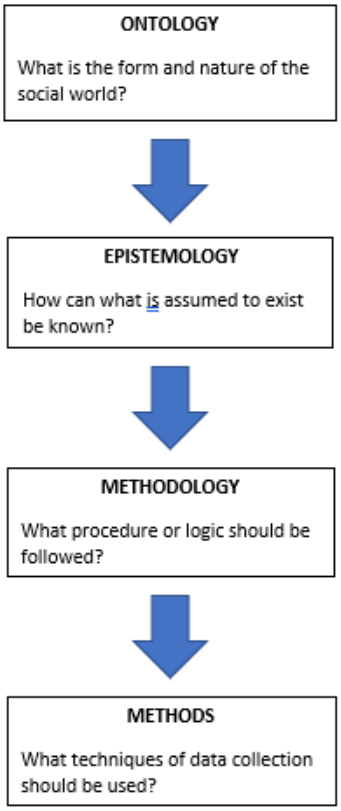


Fig. 1 The relationship between ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods (Coe et al, 2017, p. 16)

Paradigm

By analysing and understanding their paradigm, the researcher will provide a basis for the justification of the chosen methodology and subsequent methods (Petersen & Gencel, 2013), subsequently establishing the background for the researcher's work (Ponterotto, 2005). This rational analysis of the researcher's paradigm should also help identify any subconscious bias towards a methodology and methods that may be inappropriate or inadequate for the study at hand (Mertens, 2015).

Due to my training as an accountant and a long career in Finance, I am comfortable with quantitative analysis and my ontological inclination leans towards the belief that there is only one reality, however, with the possibility of measurable variants. As such, this places me within the postpositivist paradigm with its focus on quantitative analysis, empirical measurability of outcomes and objective scientific methods. The postpositivist paradigm enables the researcher to draw conclusions based on the probabilities of outcomes rather than their absoluteness (Mertens, 2015; Creswell & Cresswell, 2018; Merriam and Tidsdell, 2016).

However, whilst I am still of the ontological position there is only one reality, during the course of my studies and earlier research, I came to appreciate that the one reality may be interpreted differently by the individuals with whom I interact (Feilzer, 2010; Scott, 2014). As a choral director, I am in an interactive relationship with my singers, my repetiteur, and the instrumentalists that perform alongside. I now recognise that my choral directing colleagues are also involved in interactive relationships, involving the same, similar, or different subjectivities that impact me, and that a research project examining this field of practice may not be measurable by quantitative methods alone. As a result, I concluded the research would benefit from the use of suitable qualitative methods as well, and the use of combination of methods leads me to believe that a pragmatic paradigm is the most appropriate framework for this study.

Methodology

A pragmatic paradigm or Pragmatism does not dictate a philosophy that adheres to one or many versions of reality (MacKenzie & Knipe, 2006), or the methods that should be used to determine outcomes. It is concerned with the 'solving of practical problems in the "real world"' (Feilzer, 2010, p.10). As such, the researcher is free to choose whatever methods are 'practically useful and whatever works at the time' (Petersen & Gencel, 2013, p.1). This 'approach' (Morgan, 2007, p.65) will allow me to focus on 'what works' (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018, p. 9) for this particular study rather than being limited by the conventional position of other paradigms such as

Postpositivism or Constructivism and their focus on quantitative or qualitative methods respectively (Morgan, 2007). By putting the research question at the centre of methodological decision-making, the researcher decides on the best methods, which if appropriate can include both quantitative and qualitative methods (MacKenzie & Knipe, 2006; Mertens, 2015; Mitchell, 2018).

However, Mertens (2015) advises that the methods chosen should be in line with the expectations of the relevant research community to mitigate any questions relating to the integrity of the project and the results.

The methodology most closely aligned to a pragmatic paradigm is that of Mixed Methods (Mertens, 2015; Christensen, 2020; Florczak, 2014). The focus of Mixed Methods is the collection and consolidation of close-ended (quantitative) and open-ended (qualitative) data in order to analyse and understand the research question under consideration (Creswell in Florczak, 2014). Researchers using Mixed Methods believe that by combining qualitative and quantitative methods and data, greater insight into the research problem will be gained than by using by either in isolation (Cresswell and Cresswell, 2018). For this approach to be successful, the research question or 'statements of belief' should be 'both qualitative and quantitative' (Bell and Waters, 2018, p.311). Additionally,

As a relatively new researcher with little experience of qualitative methods, the prospect of being able to combine unfamiliar methods with more familiar quantitative methods appealed to me. This flexibility in design approach allowed me to triangulate my methods without being constrained by a particular paradigmatic approach which have resulted in the adoption of less useful tools. I agreed with Mitchell (2018, p. 103) who stated that Mixed Methods 'may be especially attractive as a choice to relatively new researchers with an open mind as to how to tackle a particular problem'.

Methods

The understanding of the research question requires an understanding of the background, experience, priorities, and motivations of the choral conducting community in the UK. In order to address this, the methods I have used are:

1. Questionnaires

In order to address the first three elements, a questionnaire of twenty-nine predominately closed questions was produced. A few open questions were included to allow for unusual circumstances to be noted e.g. non-UK choral conducting education experiences. Care was taken to ensure the questions were clear and unambiguous,

avoiding overlap and intended to cover all possible responses. They were predominately multiple-choice. For the few open-end questions requiring an opinion or comment, coding would be required to facilitate analysis so the responses could be consolidated into the overall results. Where a question asked for elements to be ranked, the results will be analysed using simple frequency ranking method. This questionnaire will provide quantitative data that will enable me to perform a statistical analysis to understand the pathways taken by the respondents, their educational background, their experience, their priorities, and their personal development preferences.

In order to ensure the questionnaire was fit for purpose, it was piloted within a small group of choral directors known to me. Whilst the responses were anonymised, as I had approached the individuals in question, therefore increasing the potential level of subconscious bias (Mertens, 2015), the results of the pilot were excluded from the final analysis. Instead, the pilot provided useful feedback on the structure, breadth, and wording of the questionnaire. The feedback was used to refine it in preparation for the roll-out to the wider population and to ensure it would provide reliable and valid responses (Xerri, 2017; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018)

The final questionnaire was created using Qualtrics and a link was published online, primarily via several choral conducting social media sites including the Association of British Choral Directors Facebook group in an attempt to reach a wide number of potential respondents; the link was also circulated by email to members of the Voice Study Centre. It was hoped to draw on as diverse a population as possible to maximise the breadth of data collected and to avoid any unconscious bias regarding the respondent pool. The questionnaire was anonymised.

The resulting data was then extracted from Qualtrics into Excel where it was cleansed, the variables and elements were reviewed and then loaded into SPSS. The cleansing and review processes were repeated until the data was in a format to be analysed using the SPSS functionality.

2. Interviews

Qualitative interviews are a widely used tool in qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) where they can be used to ‘validate survey data, they can also help to explain and enhance quantitative data…’ (Adamson et al., 2004, p.144).

The purpose of the interviews was to further explore the participants motivations, experiences, and opinions regarding the role of the choral director (Gil et al., 2018).

To allow for flexibility in the process, I discounted a structured interview approach as I wanted to encourage a personal response. I next considered the use of unstructured interviews as a way of allowing additional aspects and theories to emerge (Mertens, 2017), however I was concerned about the potential length of time they would take and also the possible difficulties in analysing and coding the likely varied responses given (Gil et al., 2008).

To provide the interviews with structure and to limit the impact of digressions, it was decided to utilise a semi-structured approach combining set questions with one or two open-ended. I hoped this would provide a degree of flexibility to explore different aspects of the topic in a more organic manner (Kallio, H. et al., 2016)

Throughout the process I was conscious of the need to build a rapport with the interviewees to ensure the dialogue was open and honest, reassuring the interviewees that I would represent their answers accurately and in the spirit in which they were intended (Mears, 2017). I also needed to be cognisant of any potential pitfalls such as allowing my own views and identity to influence the participant's answers (Mertens, 2017).

The interviews were conducted and recorded via Teams and an AI tool was used to transcribe the recording in to order to save time. Whilst this was more efficient than a manual transcription, a review of the transcriptions was completed, and amendments were made for significant mis-transcribed words and phrases. The transcriptions were then analysed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis, helping to identify the themes running through the data gathered during the interviews (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A summary of the keywords, codes and themes was created, modelled after a format produced by Naeem et al. (2023).

3. **Literature Review**.

The final method to be utilised was a systematic literature review including documentary analysis of grey literature, being documents that are publicly available but have not been subject to 'traditional academic peer-review processes' (Adams, Smart & Huff, 2017, p. 432). I anticipated that the inclusion of grey literature would add balance and further context to my research by examining the current development opportunities available to the research population, in this case UK based choral directors (Paez, 2017).

By expanding the literature review to grey literature sources, I was able to analyse a number of documents relating to choral conducting courses available in the UK. This

enabled me to demonstrate the priorities of course designers, and to compare and contrast this with the educational or continuous professional development requirements of the UK choral directing community as established from the responses to the questionnaire and the semi-structured interviews. By limiting the grey literature sources to reputable educational establishments and organisations such as the Royal Academy of Music, I hoped to maintain the integrity of the review, and therefore the project, by eliminating the risk of bias that may be present within the documents presented by individuals (Adams et al., 2016)

Insider Research and Ethics

It is widely acknowledged that insider research has a number of advantages over that conducted by outsiders that do not have the same 'shared experience of the world' (Smetherham, 1978, p.98). This includes a commonality of understanding of the subject and language used which can aid communication and assist in the development of relationships between the researcher and participants (Taylor, 2011; Breen, 2007; Darra, 2008; Brannick and Coughlan, 2007). But many of the advantages have their downside as well; there is the perception of bias and the need to manage being both the researcher and a member of the community being studied (Bulk & Collins, 2023; Humphrey, 2012; Brannick & Coughlan, 2007). As such, it is vital that the researcher be aware of the potential conflicts of interest and risks and put in place suitable controls to mitigate them, without impairing the value of the research by controlling out the advantages of that insider perspective that outsider researcher (Humphrey, 2012). As a choral director, I believe a key factor in managing the risks associated with insider research is the choice of methods (Brannick and Coughlan, 2007; Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 2013). By combining a structured, anonymous questionnaire that provided a significant portion of the data for analysis with a smaller number of semi-structured interviews, I have hopefully negated some, if not all of the risk associated with my insider researcher position.

To ensure ethical guidelines were followed throughout the project, a statement explaining the purpose of the research was made available to all participants prior to the commencement of the questionnaire and interviews. Written consent was obtained from the participants as part of the process, either as part of the questionnaire or as part of the interview arrangements. As participation was voluntary, the participants were free to withdraw from the project at any time and were offered the option to omit questions they preferred not to answer. The results of the study were offered to all participants on completion of the project.

5. Findings

Introduction

A choral conductor's practice is an accumulation of a number of factors such as education, musical background and experience, personality and opportunity (Jansson and Balsnes, 2021; Jansson and Balsnes, 2022; Durrant, 1994).

The purpose of this project is to understand the routes to being a choral director in the UK in the 21st century, to determine common areas of knowledge and also any gaps. Additionally, it aims to understand whether there is continuous professional development requirement (CPD) and a subsequent CPD recommendation.

The structure of the questionnaire was influenced by the competency elements identified by Jansson, Elstad & Døving (2021) (Appendix xx) and the reseacher's own experience. There were a range of questions (Appendix xx) relating to subjects such age, gender, education, musical studies, choral conducting education and training, individual choral experience and current choral conducting engagements and future continuous professional development (CPD). The respondents were also asked to rank in order of importance various elements of choral conducting under the headings Conducting Competencies and Leadership and Ancillary Competencies; respondents were also asked to consider their top three strengths and weaknesses across both categories to understand if there was any commonality between the topics covered in depth in training and those that were not. The identification of common weaknesses may support the identification of any shortfall in current training provision.

Additionally, all respondents to the survey were offered the opportunity to be interviewed as part of the project. Twenty-one participants volunteered and assigned a unique number, then six were picked using a random number generator. Of the initial six, only four responded to the email invitation to participate. An additional four participants were again selected by random number generator and contacted. Three participants responded and were invited to take part, bringing the total number of interviewees to seven.

The survey registered ninety-five responses of which ninety-two complete most or all of the survey. Three entries had no responses to any questions which may have been the result of a change of mind, an internet outage or another reason. As the three blank responses provided no information for analysis, they were deleted from the database.

The themes arising from the analysis of the interview transcripts provided the structure for this chapter.

	Themes				
	Commercial Skil	Health & Wellbei	People	Performance	Training
Codes	Recruitment	Pastoral Care	Pastoral Care	Performance	Training
	Innovation	Community	People Management		Conducting competency
	Costs	Wellbeing	Routes		Routes
	Organisational/admin skills	Communication	Personality traits		Repertoire
	Competition	Training	Reflection		CPD
	Marketing	Personality traits	Boundaries		Wellbeing
		Vocal technique/health	Motivations		Communication
		Inclusivity	Community		Development
			Communication		Network
			Society/Environment		Personality traits
			Authority		Vocal technique/health
			Priorities		Organisational/admin skills
			Feedback		Real World
					Reflection
					Career background
					Variety
					Keyboard

Figure xx Themes and Codes from interviews

1. People

Demographics of the Survey Respondents

The first part of the survey looked at the demographics of the survey participants in terms of age, gender identity, and education in order to have a basic understanding of the participants. The matter of ethnicity was excluded, more by oversight than omission and its inclusion may have provided further insight into the choral conducting community. However, it may not have added anything information regarding the routes to becoming a choral director for the respondent population.

Of the respondents who completed the Location question, eighty-six were UK based, four were non-UK based and two did not respond to the question.

Location

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	UK	86	93.5	95.6	95.6
	not UK	4	4.3	4.4	100.0
	Total	90	97.8	100.0	
Missing	System	2	2.2		
Total		92	100.0		

In terms of age and gender, the profile of the population was as follows:

Gender Identity By Age Crosstabulation

		Age							
		18-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70	71-80	Prefer not to say	Total
Gender Identity	Male	3	2	6	4	9	0	0	**24**
	Female	3	4	18	19	16	4	1	**65**
	Non-binary/3rd gender	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
	Prefer not to say	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	**2**
Total		**8**	**6**	**25**	**23**	**25**	**4**	**1**	**92**

The reasons for the concentration of respondents between the ages of 41 and 70 was not explored as part of this project but there may be link between the reasons for a similar profile in choral singers as expressed by Interviewee 3 (**I3**):

'I think they tend to drop out of things as work and family take over... your competition isn't the other choirs and orchestras… they've got children, they can't get out of an evening… when the kids grow up, they come back to it…'

Alternatively, it could be a natural progression for the experienced choral singer to be curious about a change in role who decides to exploit the opportunity if it arises as it did for Interviewee 6 (**I6**):

'I've been a choir singer for donkey's years… and one choir in particular, the director was very keen to encourage people to, to have a go. So, I had a little go once, and began to sort of sense that I had the bug for it a little... he gave me regular goes, and then he gave me a little bit of coaching.'

The motivations behind the decision to become a choral director at any time of life, would make an interesting additional facet to this project. However, given the scope of the remit, it is uncertain if there would have been the capacity to complete further analysis of this subject within the timeframe. It may be a suitable subject to include in a more focussed study for the future.

General and Music Education

Several questions were asked about the general and musical education of the respondents. The aim was to establish any similarities in the backgrounds of the respondents as part of their route to choral directorship.

Educationally, there was a wide range of achievement across the group and equally, the types of schools attended:

Highest Education Level By Type of School Crosstabulation

			School[a]						
			State	Faith	Grammar	Independent/Private	Cathedral School	Prefer not to say	Total
Education[a]	O level/GCSE	Count	2	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
	A-levels/Highers or Equivalent	Count	3	0	0	1	0	0	**4**
	Undergraduate degree	Count	12	3	7	9	2	1	**27**
	Postgraduate certificate/diploma	Count	15	2	6	4	1	0	**25**
	Masters	Count	12	2	7	7	0	0	**28**
	Doctorate	Count	2	1	0	0	1	0	**3**
	Various 1 year diplomas	Count	1	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
	New Zealand School Certificate (16 years of age)	Count	1	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
	Music Diplomas	Count	1	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
Total		Count	**49**	**8**	**20**	**21**	**4**	**1**	**92**

Percentages and totals are based on respondents.

Of the ninety-two respondents, 53.3% (49) attended state schools whilst 44.5% (41) attended grammar and independent/private schools and overall, 90.2% (83) had attended further or higher education establishments. The incidence of postgraduate training amongst the overall population with 60.1% (56) studying at postgraduate certificate/diploma or higher. Given an undergraduate degree or equivalent is generally a requirement to undertake postgraduate study (Postgraduate Search Online, (n.d.)), at 67.5% of the sample, a high proportion of the choral directing community in the UK have continued their studies at postgraduate level or higher.

When examined by school type, 41% of state school educated choral directors went on to higher education, with 84% of those then continuing to postgraduate level. This compares only slightly less favourably to independent/private school educated participants of whom 52% went no further than undergraduate level with their studies but of those entering higher education, 95% went on to postgraduate study and higher. Of those faith and grammar school pupils that studied at higher education level (63% and 65% respectively), 100% continued to post graduate level. Cathedral school educated participants were very few in number but 100% obtained a higher education degree, of which 50% continued to postgraduate level and above.

In terms of post-school education, i.e. both Further and Higher Education, of the ninety-one answers 36 (75%) of state school pupils went to a university and 6 (13%) to a music conservatoire. This is compared with 17 (81%) of independent/private school pupils attending university and 7 (33%) attending a music conservatoire. Within the

responses for both state and independent/private schools, there will be some individuals who attended both.

Further & Higher Education by School Crosstabulation

			School[a]						
			State	Faith	Grammar	Independent/Private	Cathedral School	Prefer not to say	Total
Higher and Further Education[a]	General FE College	Count	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
	Sixth Form College	Count	11	1	0	1	0	0	12
	Performing Arts College	Count	4	0	1	0	0	0	5
	University	Count	36	8	15	17	3	0	69
	Music Conservatoire	Count	6	2	4	7	1	1	19
	Prefer not to say	Count	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
	Institute of Leadership	Count	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
	Open University	Count	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
	Private Tuition	Count	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
	Polytechnic	Count	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
	Technical College	Count	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Postgraduate Conservatoire	Count	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total		Count	48	8	20	21	4	1	91

Percentages and totals are based on respondents.
a. Group

If the sample is representative of the choral directing community in the UK as a whole, UK choral directors are appreciative of the benefits of higher education and are a well-educated community. Given the sample size is small when considering the most recent statistics on choir numbers (approximately 40,000 choirs in the UK in 2017 (BBC Radio 3 – Choir and Organ Online)), it may be difficult to confidently extrapolate this to the wider population. However, this remains an interesting aspect that may benefit from closer study at a later stage as it could prove to be indicative of a predisposition to continuing personal development (CPD) if opportunities of interest are available.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, in higher and further education, 60.9% (56) of the respondents studied Music and a further 5% (4) studied Arts subjects such as Drama and Performing Arts. STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) and Medicine were represented in the sample by 12% (11) respondents, with English, Languages and Humanities being studied by 15% (14). The Science subjects studied included Material Sciences, Physics and Applied Mathematics and Physics.

First Subjects Studied at Further & Higher Education Institutions

		Responses		
		N	Percent	Percent of Cases
First Subject at FE[a]	Music	56	60.9%	60.9%
	English	2	2.2%	2.2%
	Sciences	3	3.3%	3.3%
	Languages	6	6.5%	6.5%
	Humanities	6	6.5%	6.5%
	Engineering	3	3.3%	3.3%
	Medicine	4	4.3%	4.3%
	Education with Creative Arts	1	1.1%	1.1%
	Information Technology	1	1.1%	1.1%
	Primary Teaching	2	2.2%	2.2%
	Acting	1	1.1%	1.1%
	Performing Arts	1	1.1%	1.1%
	Teaching	1	1.1%	1.1%
	Occupational Therapy	1	1.1%	1.1%
	Music and Drama (Joint)	1	1.1%	1.1%
	Children	1	1.1%	1.1%
	Music and Philisophy (Joint)	1	1.1%	1.1%
	Education	1	1.1%	1.1%
Total		**92**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

a. Group

Excluding the dominance of music and given the variety of subjects studied, it was perhaps to be expected that in answer to the question 'Is choral conducting your main source of income?' only 25% (23) responded yes. For the majority, their main income is derived from other sources, including several music related activities such as instrumental teaching, instrumental and singing performing (figure xx Main Sources of Income). These individuals could be described as 'portfolio musicians' as described by Interviewee 7 (**I7**) who considers himself to be a portfolio conductor:

'they talk about being a portfolio musician these days, about having some teaching and some playing work and quartet work… I feel like I'm a portfolio choral conductor, because I have to be able to do lots of different styles and lots of different lots of different types....you have to be, yeah, multi skilled in different, different areas to make a success. You can't just do one thing.'

This idea of the portfolio musician is also a view expressed by Jansson and Balsnes (2022) in relation to the choral scene in Norway. They describe the choral director as 'a sub-category of musicians where a common feature is the portfolio career – multiple jobs constitute a professional practice' (2022, p.196).

For those who do not derive their income from musical activities, it may be that choral conducting for them is a hobby that may or may not provide additional income to their

main job. This is not a question that was asked and may be considered an oversight in the structure of the survey.

Main Sources of Income

		Responses		
		N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Main Source of Income[a]	Unspecified non-musical	1	1.5%	1.7%
	Instrumentalist	1	1.5%	1.7%
	Professional singer	2	3.0%	3.4%
	Singing/Vocal teacher	9	13.4%	15.5%
	Composer	2	3.0%	3.4%
	Music teacher	6	9.0%	10.3%
	Student	1	1.5%	1.7%
	Retired	9	13.4%	15.5%
	Piano teacher/accompanist	9	13.4%	15.5%
	Teacher (unspecified)	6	9.0%	10.3%
	Software Company	1	1.5%	1.7%
	Military Musician	1	1.5%	1.7%
	Legal Practice	1	1.5%	1.7%
	Aviation Safety Consultant	1	1.5%	1.7%
	Marketing	2	3.0%	3.4%
	Vocal Coach	1	1.5%	1.7%
	Youth Choir Tutor	2	3.0%	3.4%
	NHS Worker	1	1.5%	1.7%
	Organist	1	1.5%	1.7%
	Office Administration	1	1.5%	1.7%
	Engineering Tutor	1	1.5%	1.7%
	Civil Servant	1	1.5%	1.7%
	Arts Administration	1	1.5%	1.7%
	Data Protection & Cybersecurity	1	1.5%	1.7%
	Part-time conductor	2	3.0%	3.4%
	Performer	1	1.5%	1.7%
	Primary School Teacher	1	1.5%	1.7%
	Instrumental Tuition	1	1.5%	1.7%
Total		**67**	**100.0%**	**115.5%**

a. Group

In terms of musical background, it was questioned whether there was any correlation between becoming a choral director and the individuals' primary instrument (including voice). The response was dominated by Classical Voice/Choral Singing at 42.7% (38) and Keyboard at 22.5% (20).

Primary Instrument Category

		Responses		
		N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Primary Instrument[a]	Classical voice/choral singing	38	42.7%	42.7%
	Opera	4	4.5%	4.5%
	Musical Theatre	5	5.6%	5.6%
	Strings	3	3.4%	3.4%
	Woodwind	10	11.2%	11.2%
	Brass	1	1.1%	1.1%
	Keyboard	20	22.5%	22.5%
	Composition	1	1.1%	1.1%
	Jazz and Rock	1	1.1%	1.1%
	Gospel Singing	1	1.1%	1.1%
	Classical singing exc choral singing	1	1.1%	1.1%
	Cello, Voice and Piano equally	1	1.1%	1.1%
	Jazz	1	1.1%	1.1%
	Conducting	2	2.2%	2.2%
Total		**89**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

a. Group

The high incidence of singers leading choirs is perhaps to be expected and having keyboard skills was recognised as a desirable attribute for a choral conductor in both the survey, where it was identified as an additional key competence and also by Interviewee 2 (**I2**), who expressed some thoughts on the benefits of proficient keyboard skills:

'I have got grade four piano and working on a grade five piece at the moment, but I don't have the confidence or the skills to be able to just to sit in front of children and just play with them… but to have the option to be able to select things if I wanted to, and not rely on a on a digital track, which is very inflexible.'

The relatively high proportion of Woodwind players compared to other categories was a surprise but unfortunately, the survey was not structured to explore this further. It is a possibility that because there may be fewer opportunities for Woodwind players, than say for String players to participate in other musical activities, that they are looking to expand their portfolio of skills. However, it may be that the survey sample isn't representative of the wider population.

In terms of proficiency, 52.2% (48) respondents had studied their first instrument at Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) Diploma level and equivalent and above. Equivalents achieved included awards from the Royal College

of Organists, the Royal School of Church Music, Trinity College of Music and London College of Music.

Highest Level for Primary Instrument

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Upto /Including ABRSM 7 or equivalent	8	8.7	9.1	9.1
	Upto /Including ABRSM 8 or equivalent	23	25.0	26.1	35.2
	ABRSM Diploma or Equivalent	12	13.0	13.6	48.9
	ABRSM Licentiate or Equivalent	5	5.4	5.7	54.5
	ABRSM Fellowship or Equivalent	3	3.3	3.4	58.0
	Undergraduate Performance	13	14.1	14.8	72.7
	Post graduate Performance	15	16.3	17.0	89.8
	None of the above	9	9.8	10.2	100.0
	Total	**88**	**95.7**	**100.0**	
Missing	System	4	4.3		
Total		**92**	**100.0**		

Of those that did not complete a traditional exam-based instrument education, several had private tuition, were self-taught or were experienced singers without formal music qualifications. One respondent was a Natural Voice Practitioner.

Based on the response of the sample where 93.5% (86) of the respondents had sung in choirs (Figure xx), it seems likely that most choral directors had been choral singers at one time or another whether as a singer alone or as an instrumentalist singing in a choir. Of the seven interviewees, five had been involved in choral singing as singers and two were primarily instrumentalists that had sung as part of their musical education. Interviewee 4 (**I4**) summed up the situation:

'*and um, so I'm, ultimately, I'm a pianist. That's my kind of background. Um, obviously you don't go through a musical education without being pulled into singing in choirs.*'

In their 2021 paper looking at choral conducting education, Jansson and Balsnes also found this to be true of choral conductors in Norway, and that being a choral singer first was the most frequent route to becoming a choral director.

First Choir Experience

		Responses		
		N	Percent	Percent of Cases
1st choir sung with[a]	School choir	48	55.8%	55.8%
	Church choir	21	24.4%	24.4%
	Cathedral choir	8	9.3%	9.3%
	County Youth Choir	1	1.2%	1.2%
	Local amateur choir	1	1.2%	1.2%
	Local childrens/young persons choir	3	3.5%	3.5%
	College Chapel Choir	1	1.2%	1.2%
	Collegiate Choir	1	1.2%	1.2%
	University Chorus/Choir	2	2.3%	2.3%
Total		**86**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

a. Group

As such, the respondents were asked to what their first experience of choral singing was. The results showed that regardless of instrument, career or educational choices, all respondents had choral singing experience; 55.8% (48) of the 86 respondents who answered the question started their choral singing career in a school choir and with 33.7% (29) singing in a church or cathedral choir. This appears to support I4's assertion that in the UK, a musical education universally includes choral singing.

It was noted that 4 respondents did not have their first choral experience until they were in higher education as members of their college or university choirs.

The respondents were then asked if, as well as being choral directors, they were active choral singers as well. It was found that 62% (57) were active choral singers across a range of choirs.

Current Choirs Membership

		Responses		
		N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Current Choirs sung with[a]	Professional	14	12.3%	24.6%
	Orchestral/Symphonic Chorus	6	5.3%	10.5%
	Concert choir	5	4.4%	8.8%
	Community Choir	16	14.0%	28.1%
	Rock/Pop Choir	6	5.3%	10.5%
	LGBTQ+ Choir	1	0.9%	1.8%
	Choral Society (SATB)	10	8.8%	17.5%
	Chamber Choir (SATB)	17	14.9%	29.8%
	Upper Voices Choir	5	4.4%	8.8%
	FVC	5	4.4%	8.8%
	School or College Choir	1	0.9%	1.8%
	Church Choir	16	14.0%	28.1%
	Cathedral Choir	6	5.3%	10.5%
	Gospel Choir	2	1.8%	3.5%
	Other	4	3.5%	7.0%
Total		**114**	**100.0%**	**200.0%**

a. Group

54.3% (31) belonged to more than one choir with the highest being 6 and the average being 2 and 45.6% (26) belonged to just one choir.

One of the benefits of a choral director also being an active choral singer is that it potentially exposes the individual to a variety of conducting styles, repertoires and performance practices. **I6** stated that it is important to:

'not just to sing as much as you can, but of singing in different kinds of choirs…wonderfully invigorating and cross fertilizing and refreshing… You have to, you have to fertilize your own experience.'

One of the participants in Jansson and Balsnes 2021 study on choral conducting education concurs, explaining that:

'You learn a huge amount, about vocal technique and choral leadership, how the choir works like a group, and the interaction between conductor and choir.' (p.351)

Unfortunately, it is unclear whether the remaining respondents are not active choral singers or did not answer the question. The option to state they were not active choral singers should have been part of the survey but was missed, this was an oversight that would have provided clarification. However, if the population of the survey is representative of the wider community, then it can be assumed that the majority of choral directors are active choral singers.

However, motivations for being an active choral singer other than learning and development have not been considered and an opportunity was missed to delve into this further. One reason could be that with professional singers in the sample (see figure xx), choral singing is part of their career portfolio; another reason could be for own satisfaction and well-being, as **I2** stated:

'I'm in the National Teachers choir, which teachers go for a weekend... on Sunday afternoon, they do a concert. It is just uplifting, and for teachers, it's just such a relief from being in the classroom.'

A breakdown of the individuals' current choral activities can be found in Appendix xx.

Respondents were also asked about the types and numbers of choirs they conduct. The results showed that the respondents are engaged by a wide range of different types of choir, from traditional SATB choirs to Sea Shanty groups. However, on reflection, whilst interesting, it does not address the project aim which is to understand the pathways to choral conducting and the community's view on training needs, As such, there is no place for it here, but the tables can be found in Appendix xx.

2. Training

Choral Conducting Training

Once the respondents' general musical background data had been reviewed, attention was turned to choral conducting education and training. The aim was to draw conclusions relating to attitudes to CPD. Respondents were asked to disclose their highest level of choral conducting education, whether it be a formal qualification such as an examination or diploma, or an informal education unreliant on examination results. It should be noted that the use of the term informal does not imply the training is unstructured or of less intensity than a formal route, simply that it does not result in a formal qualification such as a diploma. Training offered by organisations such as Association of British Choral Directors (ABCD) and Sing for Pleasure (SfP) that is recognised as equivalent to awards in the ABRSM system is considered to be a formal.

The majority of participants had followed the informal route, such as attending short courses, Summer schools or on the job training.

Highest Level for Choral Conducting

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Postgrad Certificate/Diploma	5	5.4	5.7	5.7
	Masters	3	3.3	3.4	9.2
	ABRSM Licentiate or Equivalent	1	1.1	1.1	10.3
	ABRSM Fellowship or Equivalent	1	1.1	1.1	11.5
	Informal Training e.g. Summer School/Self Taught	24	26.1	27.6	39.1
	Informal Training - on the job	34	37.0	39.1	78.2
	Other	18	19.6	20.7	98.9
	Prefer not to say	1	1.1	1.1	100.0
	Total	**87**	**94.6**	**100.0**	
Missing	System	5	5.4		
Total		**92**	**100.0**		

For those respondents who selected the Other category, several participants study choral conducting as part of a degree, either as second study or an elective module. Both ABCD and SfP were well supported for short course and Summer schools and 12% (3) supported their training through private lessons. One specialism arose with a conductor of Ladies Barber Shop who trained with the British and Ladies Barber Shop Associations. Overall, the uptake of training of one form or another was high with only 2 of the 87 respondents stating they were purely self-taught.

Conducting Training Other

		Responses		
		N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Conducting Other[a]	Conducting lessons at conservatoire	1	4.0%	5.6%
	Sing for Pleasure Intermediate	2	8.0%	11.1%
	Sing for Pleasure unspecified	3	12.0%	16.7%
	ABCD Summer School	1	4.0%	5.6%
	Private Lessons	3	12.0%	16.7%
	Self taught	2	8.0%	11.1%
	Scholarship in conjunction with Masters	1	4.0%	5.6%
	British and Ladies Barber Shop Associations	1	4.0%	5.6%
	ABCD unspecified	2	8.0%	11.1%
	Elective in degree	1	4.0%	5.6%
	Music college short course	1	4.0%	5.6%
	Postgraduate second study	1	4.0%	5.6%
	Undergraduate Module	3	12.0%	16.7%
	Other unspecified high quality training	1	4.0%	5.6%
	On the job with College, School and Junior Youth Choirs	1	4.0%	5.6%
	Don't conduct - lead from the choir	1	4.0%	5.6%
Total		**25**	**100.0%**	**138.9%**

a. Group

It should be noted that by this stage in the survey, several respondents were no longer completing the questions which could possibly be down to survey fatigue, which is something to be borne in mind for future projects.

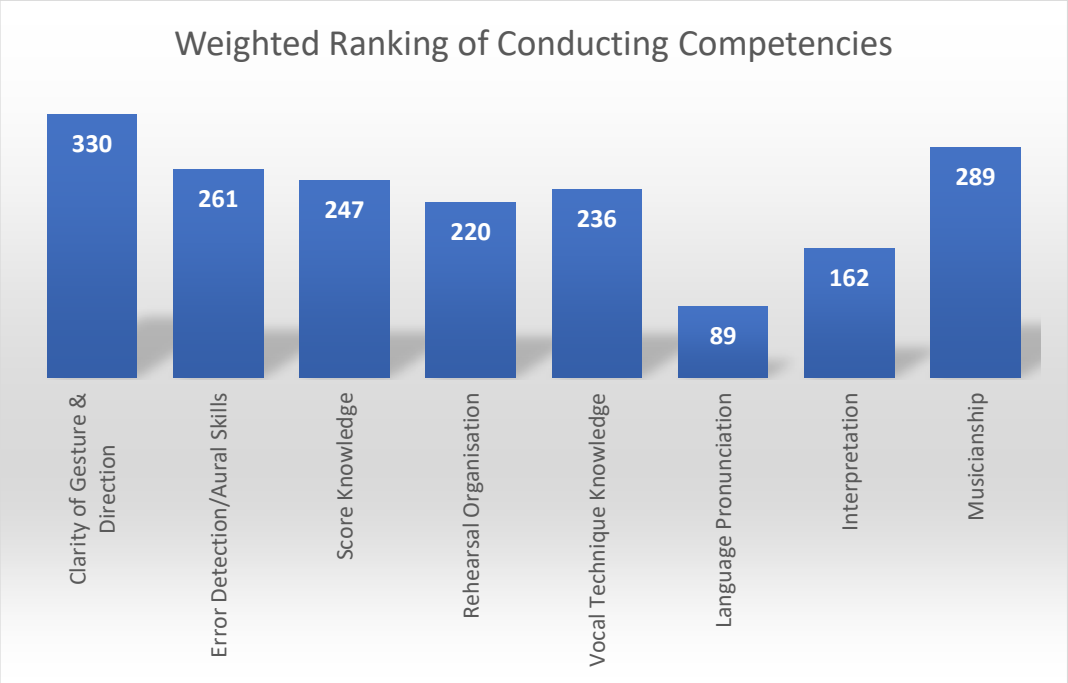
Choral Leadership Competencies

One of the aims of this project was to understand the areas of common knowledge within the British choral directing community and to determine if there are any gaps or areas of concern. To achieve this, it was decided to ask respondents to rank a number of both technical conducting competencies and leadership/soft skills in terms of importance. They were also asked nominate and rank their top three strengths and weaknesses. This information was then ranked and simply weighted to determine the community's overall view of areas of competence and common areas for possible improvement.

The elements used in the survey were influenced by those identified and tabulated (see appendix xx) by Jansson, Elstad and Døving in their 2019 paper **Universality and situatedness in educating choral conductors**, by Varvarigou and Durrant in their 2011 paper, **Theoretical perspectives on the education of choral conductors** (Appendix xx) and the researcher's own experience and training.

Eight elements were chosen to summarise the technical aspects of the act of conducting and eight elements were chosen to illustrate the leadership and other skills associated with the management of choirs. Respondents were also asked to provide their thoughts on any important competencies that had been excluded from either category.

Of the conducting competencies, the respondents identified clarity of gesture and direction as the most important competency to have mastered. In this context, clarity of gesture and direction or 'gestural vocabulary' (Jansson, Estad and Døving, 2021, p.7) relates to the conductor's ability to provide the choir with clear non-verbal direction on elements such as



tempo, dynamics, expressiveness, entries and ends of phrases and number of beats in the bar (Cofer, 1998; Gumm, 2012; Durrant, 1994; Jansson, Balsnes and Durrant, 2022; Durrant and Varvarigou, 2015). This contradicts the findings of Jansson, Elstad and Døving (2019) who found that gestural proficiency ranked near the bottom in a survey of 685 choral conductors across Sweden, Norway and Berlin, Germany. Without know more about the choral conducting practices and training in Sweden, Norway and Berlin as well as the difference in sample size and statistical measures applied between this and the aforementioned study, it is difficult to make a meaningful comparison between the results. One factor could be that like in North America, choral conducting training has a longer tradition in other areas of northern Europe and as

such, emphasis may be placed on different aspects of the choral conductor's art (Durrant and Varvarigou, 2015). Another factor may be that the emphasis placed on conducting gesture by both the higher education institutions and independent organisations as evidenced in the literature review, has given rise to a perception of higher importance. However, a better understanding of any differences in approach to choral conducting training and practice between the UK and Sweden, Norway and Germany may provide some insight into the contrast in importance of gesture.

Whilst clarity of gesture is considered of importance to UK choral conductors, this is not always the case for the singers. Of the seven interviewees, Interviewee 1 (**I1**) commented as a singer, saying:

'*if I was stood in front of them as a singer, I'd rather somebody had understanding and intention and a deep knowledge of what we were trying to achieve… if their beat shapes are a bit unorthodox… I can square that square, those circles, '*

In addition, reflecting on the role of conductor, they commented that:

'the gesture is only a minuscule part of the job. It is, what's the turn of phrase, a requirement, but not sufficient.'

Similarly, **I4** states that:

'Yep, I didn't feel like I need conducting lessons. I did all that coming up through my piano and clarinet grades…we did in those days, have to learn conducting patterns... I don't do it very often. I do sometimes, but… it is a communication that you develop with your choir, and nobody can tell you how to do that.'

Jansson, Balsnes and Durrant (2022) also suggest that gestural skills may not be that important from the singers' perspective, expressing the view that that conducting gestures are as often ignored by choral singers as they are acknowledged. Additionally, poor gestural skills may provoke a conscious decision by singers to ignore unclear, indecisive or inadequate gestures and rely on their own musicality (Varvarigou, 2016).

The second most important competence was that of musicianship, which can be described as the artistry or creative skill of the musician or in this case, the conductor (Collins Dictionary Online, n.d.). As 77% (71) of the respondents have attained at least

ABRSM Grade 8 or equivalent in their first study instrument (Figure xx), it is unsurprising they have confidence in their musicianship skills and their ability to transfer this skill to choral conducting. Apfelstadt (in Varvarigou and Durrant, 2011) maintains that musicianship including musical intuition and artistry is one of the key components in good choral leadership.

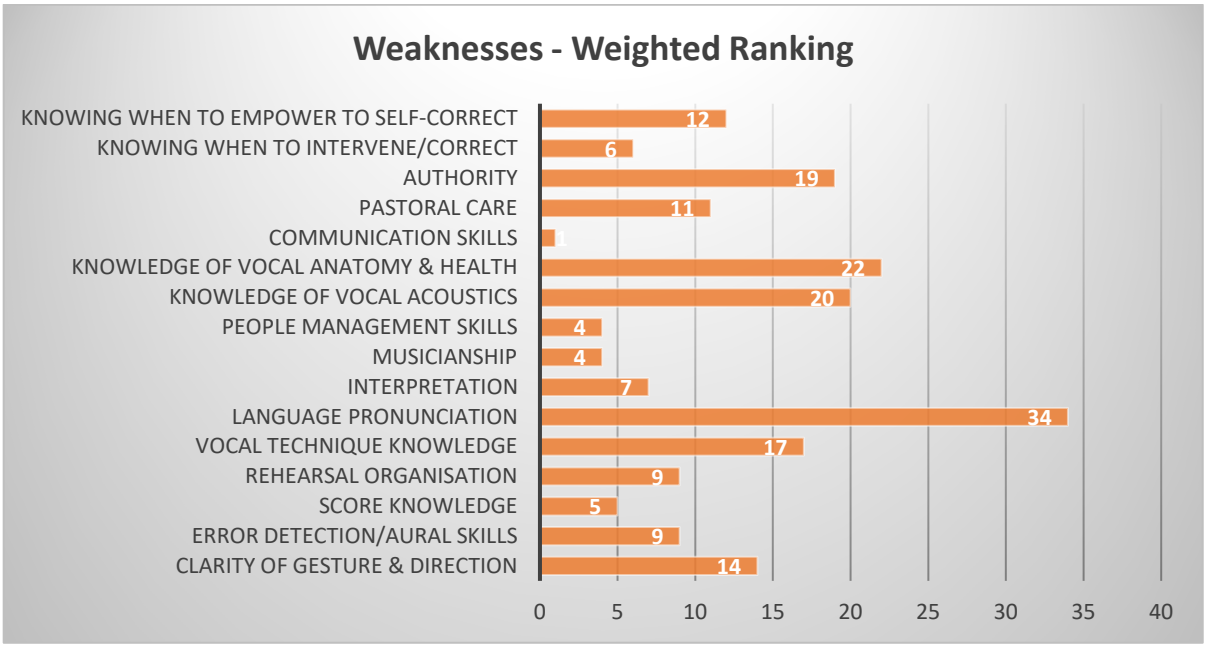
Surprisingly, even though Musicianship was considered to be marginally less important than Clarity of Gesture and Direction, when asked to pick their top three strengths and weaknesses, overall, the respondents considered their number one strength to be their Musicianship.



This would imply that there is a gap between the respondents' perceived skill set and they what they believe the role requires.

Of the other competencies ranked, the element considered the least important was that of Language Pronunciation which may be understandable if the choirs involved are mainly or only singing in their native tongue. But for those that incorporate western classical repertoire in their programming, there may be occasions when works are performed in languages such as French, German, Italian or Latin at which point, some language knowledge may be useful. Jansson, Elstad and Døving (2021) found there was a similar outcome in a survey of 294 Norwegian choral conductors, where

language skills were also deemed the least important competency element. However, the contributors considered Language Pronunciation to be the sample's overall greatest weakness by some margin, which may have impacted its ranking as a core choral conducting competency.



Of the Leadership and Other Competencies identified, people management skills were considered the most important as well as being the overall third top strength. Communications skills were identified as the next most important and interestingly, the respondents' viewed authority as the least important of the competencies but also as the fourth highest weakness.



A closer look at the actual rankings given for authority as opposed to the weighted ranking shows that 29% (12) of the respondents gave it the lowest ranking, including 30% (8) of females, 23% (3) of males and 50% (1) of those who preferred not to say. But of the small number of respondents that ranked it the most important, there were twice as many females to males.

	Importance Ranking of Authority by Gender				
Ranking	Male	Female	Non-binary	Prefer not to say	Total
1	1	2	0	0	3
2	2	1	0	0	3
3	1	1	0	0	2
4	0	4	0	0	4
5	2	3	0	0	5
6	2	5	0	0	7
7	2	3	0	1	6
8	3	8	0	1	12
Total Responses	**13**	**27**	**0**	**2**	**42**
% of total ranking 8 or least important	23%	30%	0%	50%	29%

However, when examining the top three weaknesses by gender identity, 39% (11) of females ranked Authority within their top three weaknesses compared to 6.6% (1) of males.

Top Three Weaknesses by Gender Identity

			Gender Identity			
			Male	Female	Prefer not to say	Total
weaknesses[a]	Clarity of gesture and direction	Count	1	6	0	7
	Error detection/aural skills	Count	4	2	0	6
	Score Knowledge	Count	0	2	0	2
	Rehearsal Organisation	Count	2	3	0	5
	Knowledge and application of vocal technique	Count	5	6	1	12
	Language Pronunciation	Count	9	6	1	16
	Interpretation	Count	1	3	0	4
	Musicianship	Count	2	2	0	4
	People Management	Count	1	2	1	4
	Knowledge of vocal/choir acoustics	Count	2	9	0	11
	Knowledge of vocal anatomy/health	Count	3	8	1	12
	Verbal communication skills	Count	0	2	0	2
	Pastoral care	Count	2	2	1	5
	Authority	Count	1	11	0	12
	Knowing when to intervene/correct	Count	1	0	1	2
	Knowing when to empower to self correct	Count	2	5	0	7
	Prefer not to say	Count	3	0	0	3
Total		Count	**15**	**28**	**2**	**45**

Percentages and totals are based on respondents.
a. Group

Understanding the reasons for the ranking of importance or strengths and weaknesses was not an aim of this project. But the disparity between male and female identifying respondents on the issue of authority is striking and warrants further investigation into the reasons and whether it is something that could be addressed through training. Additionally, **I2**, **I5** and **I7** admitted to experiencing feelings harbouring on imposter syndrome – the fear of losing credibility and being found out to be fraud despite their demonstratable expertise, training or achievements (Bothello & Roulet, 2019). In this case it was because (respectively) they were not a trained singer, had a non-musical HE education or when working with orchestras because they did not have orchestral conducting training. Again, whilst investigating the reasons for this is not an aim of this project, there may be a worthwhile investigation to be made.

The reaction of the interviewees, however, seemed indicate that the need for People Management skills in the choral setting was a distraction and something that needs to be worked on. Comments made include:

I1: *'So probably the thing that has come to me, and it's still a journey, is the managing, the managing the people, and always been able to go right, let's go this way and be exciting and have people follow you because you were exciting. But to actually have deep, fruitful relationships with, with these people is something that's come later also,'*

'*The people management type of thing kind of gets in the way of just the music sometimes. But I know it's important…always a small group who are just wasting time chatting and wanting to go to the toilet constantly and in and out.'*

I4*: 'one of my choirs is committee led, and I think not feeling as in control is tricky, to manage the politics. I think that's a whole different ball game, because I can influence, I can heavily influence how things go, but sometimes the people politics, in the choir, can be tricky because I just don't have the same handle on it as I do my other choirs'.*

When discussing the least favourite aspects of choral conducting, **I7** stated: *'committees! But I guess it's that kind of trying to get that shared sense of direction. And obviously, and when I first started, I was talking about this, because I was quite blinkered about the music, music, and so have I had to kind of open myself a little bit up to, like, finances and venues and, you know, and thinking more* strategically over, *over a course of three or four years, rather than thinking, I want to do those pieces, I want to do the 100 piece orchestra, I want to have the best service in the world, you know,'*

I3: *'yes, I mean, sometimes management, I'm not sort of really strict, as strict as I should be, and people talking rehearsals and answering back and stuff. I mean, I think over the years, I've, you know, got a fairly interactive style of running rehearsals, but then it can get that can get a bit sort of that everyone's talking at once, and I've got to stop it, please. That's one of the things I found more difficult.'*

It may be that some people will have a natural inclination for people management (Durrant, 1994) and some, such as **I2** will be able to draw on experience from their working life:

'It's the people management. It's the thinking ahead. It's the problem solving, troubleshooting, thinking on your feet, a lot of acting, pretending that you're happy when you're not, or, you know, all those things that you have to do as a teacher.'

And while certain aspects of the management and leadership of people is innate for some, other aspects can be developed through training in the use of positive language, reflection on how actions can impact others and understanding the influence

that a conductor can have over their singers (Durrant, 1998; Durrant and Varvarigou, 2015).

Finally, the survey participants were asked to provide examples of other important competencies that were not included in the original list. Fifty-four separate competencies or personality traits from empathy and kindness to having a sense of humour and not losing one's temper were listed. Many were similar to the original lists including Error Correction, Deep Score Knowledge and the Ability to Problem Solve, but as these were given by the respondents in their own words, it was decided not to try and interpret them and match them to existing categories but to maintain their individual choice of words. Of the competencies that recurred, the most frequently mentioned was Repertoire Knowledge/Choice followed by the need for Keyboard Skills, and the need for certain personality traits such as a sense of humour and empathy.



3. Commercial Skills

A recurring theme for the interviewees and one that cropped up in the Additional Competencies response, is the need for the modern choral director to have an almost entrepreneurial mindset and a set of commercial skills that can be used to support

their choirs, especially if setting up their own. As such, an overview of marketing and advertising, costing and budgeting, promotion and recruitment of new members, and administration skills to ensure the effective operation of the choir as an entity have been suggested as a beneficial addition to training programmes. It was also highlighted that an understanding of the available technology and what it can be used for to benefit the singers, conductor and audience could be useful, this may include being able to create online resources for singers such as backing tracks and digitised sheet music, or the use of audio-visual equipment to enhance performances and the audience experience

As discussed in the Literature Review, training is offered as part of the postgraduate choral conducting degrees in the development and management of a professional conducting career by institutions such as the Royal Academy of Music, the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire and Birmingham University. However, this appears to be mainly aimed at the conducting of professional vocal ensembles where there is the possibility of a professional infrastructure rather than the amateur choir where much of the administration and organisation falls to the choral director. The independent organisations, ABCD and SfP, did not appear to include any coverage of such skills in their training offerings.

It is not to say that opportunities to acquire these skills are not available, for example Making Music, a charitable organisation that supports all types of amateur music making, offer tools ranging from an online administration system to a resource bank of repertoire ideas and music, and programme notes. They also provide details of a series of case studies focusing on different aspects of running an amateur music organisation such as the very effective Peterborough Sings toolkit for introducing and recruiting new people into choral singing (Making Music Online, n.d.). However, the respondents to this survey and the interviewees have highlighted this sort of skills as missing from the training they have undertaken or the training available is not suitable for their needs.

As **I7** who completed a Masters in Choral Conducting stated:

‘in terms of administration, I've learned over the years about how to do it. That's something that I think could have been in my course. I think that sort of thing and that the people skills required... I know I've never had to write down a 12 part Victoria motet since I was at college doing it. So that was part of my test…, having to plan financially, having to think about a concert series and looking at music repertoire that was, that was perfect for that choir, that was, that was really, really interesting.’

I4 explained that the training they completed did not cover areas such as marketing which would have been useful:

'I think one of the things that's missing is kind of how to set up and market a choir, I think that is something that would be incredibly useful, because I think a lot of us it's a, it's become very competitive… And I think helping, helping people, helping choir leaders, I suppose, to identify what their strengths are and how to market their choirs on that, I think, is something that that might be useful…'

I3 expressed frustration at not having the tools to effectively promote their choir:

'Yeah, struggle for audience as I think we're not doing kind of modern pop choirs. And getting young people in is a big issue for everybody, isn't it? The feeling that, when we go, the whole music sector will die with us, and it's really a challenge to get younger people there's, I mean, it's not just for but orchestra as well. And, you know, it's always a sort of, how can we get new audience'

They also mentioned about the need to be aware of costs, especially the cost of sheet music:

'If it's a modern stuff, we've got to buy 30 copies of it, whereas if it's an older piece, we can get it off CPD… But, you know, it's also a cost, a cost factor.'*
(*Choral Public Domain Library)

This is a topic that requires further investigation to assess what is required or what the choral conducting community's expectation is.

The benefits of a grasp of commercial matters were demonstrated by **I5** who had worked in commercial businesses before becoming a choral director. Having made the decision to set up their own singing studio, they realised they needed to boost their profile in their local area:

'So, what I did was advertise a kind of singing workshop so that people could get to know me, and I could get to know some people, and that would be the start of my studio. But what happened was the singing workshop turned into a regular event and became a choir.'

Similarly, **I6** who successfully operates a specialist liturgical choral events programme commented on their wish to use technology to reduce cost and increase efficiency in managing their library of music:

'The one technology I wish people did have more was iPad. I went iPad about four years ago… finding things would be so much easier and be so much better, and we'd be much, much, much less expensive as well, obviously we wouldn't supply the iPad'

I6 also had this advice to offer when it came to attracting the audience:

'I guess I'll just want to encourage people to, to think outside the box a bit… Don't just think always in terms of concerts on a Saturday night in the church at 7.30 you know… just think of some other fun stuff… Give the audience a good time. Rethink things, reinvent things, whatever the style of music want to do, have fun with it, and just do a bit differently to the way everyone else does it and the way you've always done it.'

4. Health and Well-being

There is now a wealth of research that shows that singing is good for health and well-being and which has now been taken on board by society in general (Osman, Tischler and Schneider, 2014; Livesey et al., 2012; Launey, J., n.d.; Chartered Society of Physiotherapy Online, n.d.; Keating, 2020).

For example, choral singing is used as music therapy to treat dementia and it has been shown to help improve relationships between dementia sufferers and their carers; it can help improve memory and mood and can help both sufferers and their carers to accept and cope with the condition (Osman, Tischler and Schneider, 2014).

Even where the singers are healthy, there are benefits to be had. Choral singers benefit from, amongst other things, the social engagement with fellow singers, potentially improved respiratory capabilities, improved mood and relief from stress; it is also said to improve confidence and boost concentration (Livesey et al., 2012).

In terms of this project, although the examination of the health benefits of choral singing is not the main purpose of this study, knowledge of vocal health and anatomy ranks third in importance for Leadership and Other Competencies (figure xx). It is also considered to be the second ranked weakness across the survey (see figure xx).

However, for every benefit, there is the potential for hurt to someone's mental and physical health and several of the interviewees raised the question of vocal health:

I4 commented: *'I personally feel that I have a responsibility to my singers to make sure that they are not doing any damage to themselves. It's like safety first, isn't it?'*

And also: *'I started singing lessons… because I kind of recognized that I was kind of being pushed vocally… and it was a good call, because what I hadn't appreciated, but maybe I did, on some level, was I was starting to ruin my voice, actually, because I was being asked to sing in a range that wasn't comfortable for me*.'

I2 stated *'… and things like rehearsal planning… choosing repertoire, working with the needs of the children… what vocal skills they might need to develop… warm ups and physical things, …the right posture, using their voice effectively…I see too often, doesn't happen in school, and children are then hurting their voices because either too low, because often they choose repertoire that's sung by men, or it's, it's whatever the teacher wants to do, and they may not have the knowledge of the voice and how the voice works.'*

I5 explained: *'Vocal health, vocal anatomy, we have had to look after people's voices, yeah, and get the best out of them.'*

I3 commented on their lack of knowledge: *'I go to these warmups with the vague idea about getting the muscles going, but really, you know, other than just easing in gently is all I really know about…'*

And regarding training previously undertaken
'I thought, well, I don't, you know , I'm a musician. I don't know so much about singing. And I was hoping for more actual singing technique and how I can help my choir…'

But while the survey asked about vocal anatomy and health, there are other health and well-being matters for choral conductors to be aware of such as mental health or social well-being issues that were not included, but were brought to the discussion through the interviews:

I4 reflected*: 'you create that environment for them... if you are creating a choir for well-being, I think that's quite important that people feel safe.'*

For **I5***: 'it's a very much a community in a choir, that it's a very inclusive, welcoming choir. And I think everybody in the choir feels it's their choir, so it's our choir rather than my choir.'*

Similarly, for **I7***: 'it's about the community, about, about the about the collaboration, about the joy, and that's, that's what I love about amateur music making'*

I7 also described the attitude of a music director they worked with on a recruitment project to introduce people to choral singing and the potential impact that could have on someone who was just finding their way to singing:

'How do you handle those people who you, who can't match any pitches back to you in that two or three minutes? And one of the music directors says to me…why lie to them or just put them out the misery and tell them singing, it's not their thing… and they should find something else to do… Where is everything that you should believe in, your compassion and your empathy,… it makes me want to weep, because that person will, will now never sing when their child gets married, that person will be silent in the church'.

And not just for the singers but also for the conductors as well. A couple of the interviewees raised the issue of the impact of choral conductorship on themselves, especially in relation to performance or the weight of expectation either from the choir members or self-imposed:

For **I3**: *'Rehearsing I think it is the creative process… I don't enjoy concerts when I'm conducting it. I've got to stay focused and make sure everything happens right. I enjoy the buzz afterwards when everyone says, Oh, that was great. Or conversely, I'll go right down if things weren't didn't go as well as I wanted to, but I just found this sort of stress, a lot of pressure around stupid things… I sort of get to the end of the concert, I feel bit sort of, you know, I've missed it'.*

I4 commented on feeling the need to emulate a previous conductor of the choir:

'so I'm not like her, and it nearly destroyed me that first year, actually, or a couple of people in the choir, nearly destroyed me, because I relied quite heavily on the keyboard, and I didn't realize until I was talking to my singing teacher during lockdown that I'd kind of developed performance anxiety. I couldn't, I couldn't remember, the

notes just went from my head during rehearsal, just couldn't do it, so I was relying more and more on my keyboard. And I think essentially I'd been trying to be this other person for them, which was not me'.

I4 discussed the importance of maintaining boundaries, especially within the choirs for wellbeing field:

'And I think this is the thing with choirs for wellbeing to separate… it's keeping everything warm and friendly, but still having boundaries in place,… to make sure that I'm doing my own things outside of choir, within my own friendship groups, and I'm looking after my own wellbeing. So that the choir doesn't become something that I need'.

As can be seen from the few examples above, the question of health and wellbeing in a choral setting goes beyond a knowledge of vocal anatomy and health. It is also influenced by repertoire knowledge and choice, by personal behaviours such as the display of empathy, and the need to safe-guard the mental wellbeing of both singers and conductors. As **I1** commented:

'*So, so pathways to choral conducting ought to also include… bit somewhere around music therapy, isn't it?... whilst there certainly is the, the training out there to prepare in a structured way, decent professional choral conductors, there's certainly not the pathways out there to prepare the equally valid person who needs to be skilled in a whole load of other things to run the community choir really* '

5. Continuous Professional Development

To understand the level of commitment to and expectations for CPD, final part of the survey concentrated on the respondents' views on, and plans for future training.

In order to determine if the respondents' CPD activities exhibit any correlation with the strengths and weaknesses identified earlier, the following summary was produced as a reference point.



It should be noted that by this stage of the survey, around 44% (41) of the initial respondents failed to complete any further questions. Whilst disappointing, this does provide an opportunity for reflection on the reasons for this such as survey fatigue and is a useful learning experience that can be used to inform future projects.

However, of the remaining active participants, 56.9% (29) were actively undertaking CPD and 43.1% (22) were not. The most striking aspect was that 63.6% (21) of female respondents were involved in further training opposed to 50% (8) of the male respondents and 0% of those who preferred not to say.

Actively undertaking CPD by Gender Identity

		Gender Identity			
		Male	Female	Prefer not to say	Total
actively undertaking CPD	Yes	8	21	0	29
	No	8	12	2	22
Total		**16**	**33**	**2**	**51**

At this point and with the drop off in the number of survey respondents, it is believed the sample is not large enough to draw any valid conclusions regarding the wider

choral conducting population and whether there is a higher female level of engagement with Continuous Professional Development compared to other gender identities. However, as 41.2% of remaining respondents are female-identifying and actively training, there may be some merit in investigating this in a future study.

Of the topics studied, the most common were Vocal Technique including warm-ups and Conducting Technique. It was perhaps surprising that the first two topics were the most common as they or a linked subject had been scored highly as Strengths by the respondents. The next two most popular topics were Vocal Anatomy and Health, and Score Preparation which had scored less well in the Strengths rankings so would seem more likely to be addressed by CPD. However, it is a possibility that the remaining participants at this point did not rank these topics in line with the majority of the respondents to the earlier questions, and are therefore not representative of the large population.

CPD Topics Undertaken

		Responses		
		N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Areas covered in CPD[a]	Conducting technique	21	24.4%	72.4%
	Score preparation	14	16.3%	48.3%
	Vocal technique including warmups	21	24.4%	72.4%
	Vocal anatomy and health	18	20.9%	62.1%
	Specific techniques such as Estill, Accent Method, Alexander technique	3	3.5%	10.3%
	Vocal acoustics	4	4.7%	13.8%
	Singing for health and wellbeing	4	4.7%	13.8%
	Prefer not to say	1	1.2%	3.4%
Total		**86**	**100.0%**	**296.6%**

a. Group

Respondents were requested to indicate what delivery methods had been used for their recent CPD activities, the most popular of which were short courses and seminars, followed postgraduate study to Masters level.

Recent CPD Activites by Gender

			Gender Identity		
			Male	Female	Total
Recent CPD Formats[a]	Short course/seminars such as BVA/AOTOS	Count	3	9	12
	Short course/seminars such as Voice Study Centre	Count	3	7	10
	Longer courses e.g. ABCD Initial, Intermediate & Advanced	Count	0	4	4
	Undergraduate training	Count	0	1	1
	Postgraduate study leading to Masters	Count	2	5	7
	Private Lessons	Count	2	0	2
	ABCD Conference	Count	0	1	1
	Vocal Ed Health Courses	Count	0	2	2
	Summer Schools	Count	1	2	3
	Private vocal coaching	Count	1	0	1
	Unspecified online course	Count	1	0	1
	Evolving Voice Online	Count	0	1	1
	Estill	Count	0	1	1
	ABCD short courses	Count	0	1	1
	Sing for Pleasure short courses	Count	0	1	1
Total		**Count**	**7**	**21**	**28**

Percentages and totals are based on respondents.
a. Group

Unfortunately, given the attrition rate in overall participation, the sample may now be too skewed to allow for valid conclusions to be drawn; but once again, further investigation with a narrower focus on some of the issues identified may provide a more balanced and justifiable conclusion.

In terms of future CPD plans, a similar pattern emerged with Conducting Technique, Vocal Technique and Vocal Anatomy being the most favoured for further development.

Future CPD Plans

		Responses		
		N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Future CPD Plans[a]	Conducting technique	17	20.7%	51.5%
	Score preparation	10	12.2%	30.3%
	Vocal technique including warmups	15	18.3%	45.5%
	Vocal anatomy and health	16	19.5%	48.5%
	Specific techniques such as Estill, Accent Method, Alexander technique	6	7.3%	18.2%
	Vocal acoustics	4	4.9%	12.1%
	Singing for health and wellbeing	7	8.5%	21.2%
	Other	1	1.2%	3.0%
	Not currently planning any CPD	6	7.3%	18.2%
Total		**82**	**100.0%**	**248.5%**

a. Group

A small number of respondents indicated the intention to study other topics not included in the above list. These included subjects such as Vocal First Aid, the Aging Voice and a PHD in Singing for Health and Wellbeing. A couple also indicated they were undecided at this point in time but would be looking for topics that benefitted their choirs in one way or another.

In general, it was considered surprising that the CPD intentions did not align more closely with the weaknesses identified earlier on. However, as previously noted, given the drop out rate for the latter stages of the survey, it is possible that the sample has become skewed and is no longer representative of the original respondent population. This is an aspect that was not consider in the earlier stages of the planning process, and for future studies, the design of controls to limit any adverse impact of attrition should be considered, and if possible implemented.

It should be noted at this time that most of the remaining respondents indicated the intention to undertake multiple development activities.

In terms of preferred delivery methods for future CPD activities, by far the most popular was a short course over a weekend. In general, courses that had an element of in-person training were favoured which may be of interest to CPD providers. But online delivery was not discounted, and the respondents were open to a range of delivery methods.

Favoured Delivery Methods for CPD

		Responses		
		N	Percent	Percent of Cases
Favoured Delivery Methods for CPD[a]	Online delivery	12	12.6%	36.4%
	In person only	10	10.5%	30.3%
	Short course e.g. a weekend	25	26.3%	75.8%
	Short courses e.g. a couple of hours a week for a month	14	14.7%	42.4%
	One-off seminars	19	20.0%	57.6%
	Longer courses e.g. Diploma or Certificate level	10	10.5%	30.3%
	Longer course e.g. Postgraduate	4	4.2%	12.1%
	Mostly online delivery with occasional in person day-weekend	1	1.1%	3.0%
Total		95	100.0%	287.9%

a. Group

Finally, as mentioned earlier, 43.1% of the remaining respondents were not considering CPD activities. It was considered important to investigate the reasons for this as it may give some indication of conditions that may be preventing choral directors from continuing with their development which in turn may be of interest to training providers.

Reasons for Not Undertaking CPD by Gender

			Gender Identity			
			Male	Female	Prefer not to say	Total
reasons for no cpd[a]	Time	Count	7	11	0	18
	Expense	Count	4	10	2	16
	Availability of suitable opportunities in local area	Count	4	3	0	7
	Availability of suitable opportunites	Count	2	2	1	5
	Current conducting roles allow for on the job development	Count	5	2	1	8
	Unnecessary for you as an individual	Count	0	1	0	1
	Family Demands	Count	2	1	0	3
	Other	Count	0	1	0	1
Total		Count	12	16	2	30

Percentages and totals are based on respondents.
a. Group

For many of the respondents, there was no one reason but perhaps unsurprisingly in the current climate, the two main hindrances to considering CPD were time and expense (Fig. xx). A number indicated that they felt their current roles offered enough in on the job development to negate the need for further CPD. It may have been useful to have interrogated this aspect further to find out more about the roles and the infrastructure of the choirs involved to determine if there were any external factors such as oversight by for example a charity that facilitated this view. In addition, the lack of availability of training in the local area was also a factor which was something expressed by **I5**:

'Being in Scotland, a lot of the ABCD courses are quite London centric, but there's more and more stuff going on up at the centre of the country.'

6. Delimitations, Limitations, Reflection and Conclusion

Delimitations and Limitations

In hindsight, more attention should have been paid to the delimitations for this project from the outset. For the scope of the project, the response was good but some of the information supplied by the respondents proved to be surplus to requirements. This included information on the numbers and types of choirs conducted by the respondents to the survey which whilst interesting, did not address the overarching aims of the survey; it may even have added to the drop out rate towards the end of the survey as respondents started to experience survey fatigue.

It was also decided not to examine the motivations for becoming a choral director as this was not directly related to the question of education and training. However, in light of some of the discussions in the interviews about the stresses and joys of being a choral director, this is a topic that would make an interesting topic for further examination.

In terms of the demographics of the respondents, there was no question on ethnicity as it was anticipated this would add a further complication to the meaningful analysis of the data. Again, a more focussed and in-depth study of the demographics of the choral conducting community may benefit from this data.

In terms of limitations, the main concern would be about the sample size. Although for a study of this duration and simplicity, the sample size of 95 respondents still produced a significant amount of data to analyse, however, it is possibly too small to be truly reflective of the UK choral conducting population as a whole and any recommendations made on the basis of the findings would need to be qualified on this basis.

There was also a significant response drop off rate towards the latter stages of the survey; this likely indicates issues with the survey structure and length, and should be borne in mind for future projects.

An opportunity was also missed to further examine the reasons for continuing to be an active choral singer, for example whether it was for pleasure or if professional singers, part of their work portfolio.

Another limitation of survey was the decision to circulate it predominately by social media; this may have skewed the sample in favour of social media savvy individuals and may have excluded a subset of the population that are not so engaged with social media. Any future projects should consider a mix of delivery platforms, including

circulating the survey to choirs directly. This may promote a more representative response, although that cannot be guaranteed.

Reflection

There were several decisions made at the beginning of the project, that on reflection may not have been properly considered. This includes the introduction of new methods and tools for this study.

This was the first time that a survey had been undertaken and a number of mistakes were made in the structure such as the numbering and ordering of responses, the inclusion of text fields and number of options. Although not insurmountable, this added complexity to the analysis process which then took longer. Similarly, the introduction of SPSS at this stage required a period of familiarisation that stretched the timescales.

The introduction of interviews at this stage also prompted some reflection as the resultant coding exercise was a new activity and subsequently took longer to address.

Finally, the introduction of the survey and interviews at this point added another complication and that was a reluctance to publish the survey or contact the interview volunteers. This was driven by a concern that no-one would respond, and the study would be invalid. The use of these methods in an earlier assignment would have allowed for reflection and provided an opportunity to gain confidence. Fortunately, the response was very positive, and enough data was acquired.

During the process a number of subjects for potential studies were identified. These included:

a) Motivations for becoming a choral director
b) Educational levels of a larger and more representative sample of the UK choral conducting community and whether it supports a more formal requirement for CPD.
c) Comparison of UK choral conducting education and training with that of other Northern European countries to identify the similarities and differences.
d) Gender identity and the exertion of authority, this could also be broadened to examine whether there is an ethnicity element to be considered.
e) The occurrence of imposter syndrome in the choral conducting community. Three out of seven (43%) of the interviewees admitted to feelings of inadequacy which they labelled imposter syndrome.
f) The impact of choral directorship on conductor’s mental health and possible preventative strategies.

Conclusion

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APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

In order for research to result in benefit and minimise risk of harm, it must be conducted ethically. A researcher may not be covered by the University's insurance if ethical approval has not been obtained prior to commencement.

The University follows the OECD Frascati manual definition of **research activity**: "creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications". As such this covers activities undertaken by members of staff, postgraduate research students, and both taught postgraduate and undergraduate students working on dissertations/projects.

The individual undertaking the research activity is known as the "principal researcher".

Ethical approval is not required for routine audits, performance reviews, quality assurance studies, testing within normal educational requirements, and literary or artistic criticism.

Please read the notes for guidance before completing ALL sections of the form.

This form must be completed and approved prior to undertaking any research activity. Please see Checklist for details of process for different categories of application.

Delete the Guidance Notes at the end of the form BEFORE submitting your application

SECTION A: About You (Principal Researcher)

1	Full Name:		Laura-Jane Ward			
2	Tick all boxes which apply:		Member of staff:	☐	Honorary research fellow:	☐
3	Undergraduate Student	☐	Taught Postgraduate Student	☒	Postgraduate Research Student	☐

4	Institute/Academic Discipline/Centre:	WAPPAR
5	Campus:	Carmarthen
6	E-mail address:	Ljward.01@me.com
7	Contact Telephone Number:	07711 085163
	For students:	
8	Student Number:	1911158
9	Programme of Study:	MA in Professional Practice (Voice Pedagogy)
10	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Nick Samuel

SECTION B: Approval for Research Activity

1	Has the research activity received approval in principle? (please check the Guidance Notes as to the appropriate approval process for different levels of research by different categories of individual)		**YES**	☒	**NO**	☐
					Date	
2	If Yes, please indicate source of approval (and date where known): ***Approval in principle must be obtained from the relevant source prior to seeking ethical approval***	Research Degrees Committee		☐		
3		Institute Research Committee		☐		
4		Other (write in) WAPPAR Ethics Board Representative		☒		

SECTION C: Internal and External Ethical Guidance Materials

	Please list the core ethical guidance documents that have been referred to during the completion of this form (including any discipline-specific codes of research ethics, and also any specific ethical guidance relating to the proposed methodology). Please tick to confirm that your research proposal adheres to these codes and guidelines.	
1	**UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice**	☒
2	**UWTSD Research Data Management Policy**	☒
3		☐

SECTION D: External Collaborative Research Activity

1	Does the research activity involve collaborators outside of the University?		**YES**	☐	**NO**	☒
2	If Yes, please provide the name of the external organisation and name and contact details for the main contact person and confirmation this person has consented to their personal data being shared.as part of this collaboration.					
3	Institution					
4	Contact person name					
5	Contact person e-mail address					
6	Has this individual consented to sharing their details on this form?		**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐
7	Are you in receipt of a KESS scholarship?		**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐
8	Is your research externally funded		**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐
9	Are you specifically employed to undertake this research in either a paid or voluntary capacity?	Voluntary	**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐
10		Employed	**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐
11	Is the research being undertaken within an existing UWTSD Athrofa Professional Learning Partnership (APLP)	If YES then the permission question below does not need to be answered.	**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐
12	Permission to undertake the research has been provided by the partner organisation	(If YES attach copy) If NO the application cannot continue	**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐

Where research activity is carried out in collaboration with an external organisation

13	Does this organisation have its own ethics approval system?	**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐
14	If Yes, please attach a copy of any final approval (or interim approval) from the organisation				

SECTION E: Details of Research Activity

1	Indicative title:	What are the routes to becoming a choral director of non-professional choirs in the UK? Are there any there any potential conflicts or risks associated with some of the pathways and what is the current state of continuous professional development within the British choral directing community?		
2	Proposed start date:	30th December 2021	Proposed end date:	17th August 2022
3	**Introduction to the Research (maximum 300 words)** **Ensure that you write for a <u>Non-Specialist Audience</u> when outlining your response to the three points below:** • *Purpose of Research Activity* • *Proposed Research Question* • *Aims of Research Activity* • *Objectives of Research Activity* Demonstrate, briefly, how **<u>Existing Research</u>** has informed the proposed activity and explain • *What the research activity will add to the body of knowledge* • *How it addresses an area of importance.*			
4	**Purpose of Research Activity** The benefits of choral singing from a health and well-being perspective are being increasingly researched, documented and extolled. However, choral directing or conducting is an unregulated activity in the UK, with various routes to entry. Some choral directors will have undertaken formal conducting training either at higher education establishments or through organisations such as The Association of British Choral Directors. However, there are also those who come to it through other pathways and who may not have had any formal training in either choral conducting or vocal pedagogy. The purpose of this project is to establish and understand common routes to choral directorship, examining the background, education levels and experience of the British choral directing community, especially those involved with non-professional choirs. In addition, the project aims to identify which areas of training e.g. conducting technique or vocal health are common and which are not, and to ascertain what continuous professional development (CPD) is undertaken and whether there is a need to encourage choral directors to undertake formal training and CPD to both inspire and protect their singers. (this box should expand as you type)			
5	**Research Question** What are the common areas of experience and education within British choral directing community? What are the common routes to choral directorship and what efforts are taken to maintain knowledge of current pedagogical techniques and theories? (this box should expand as you type)			
6	**Aims of Research Activity** • To identify common routes to choral directorship • To identify education levels within the British choral directing community • To identify areas of common knowledge within the British choral directing community • To identify the level of CPD commitment within the British choral directing community • To identify any gaps in knowledge that may be cause for concern especially with regard to maintaining vocal health. • To ascertain whether there is a CPD recommendation to ensure choral directors keep abreast of current developments in choral practice and vocal health.			

	(this box should expand as you type)
7	**Objectives of Research Activity** To develop an understanding of the profile of the British choral director with a view to determining whether a there are common elements in the pathway across the community, and if not, to highlight potential gaps and recommend suitable areas for CPD. Ultimately, the objective would be to have the findings taken up by an organisation such as the Association of British Choral Director as part of their training programme. (this box should expand as you type)
8	**Proposed methods (maximum 600 words)** Provide a brief summary of all the methods that **may** be used in the research activity, making it clear what specific techniques may be used. If methods other than those listed in this section are deemed appropriate later, additional ethical approval for those methods will be needed.
9	The project may be undertaken using a Mixed Methods approach whereby both qualitative and quantitative data is collected via the methods below are analysed in an attempt to determine amongst other things: • the routes taken to becoming a choral director • the motivation behind the move into choral directing • the qualification and training levels within the community. The data may be collect via the following three methods: • Questionnaire targeted at British choral directors structured around a mix of quantitative and qualitative factors including demographic information and personal opinion. • Semi-structured interviews with a smaller number of choral directors targeting qualitative aspects of • Documentary analysis including online resources such as websites. (this box should expand as you type)
10	**Location of research activity** Identify all locations where research activity will take place.
11	Mainly online or by phone. (this box should expand as you type)
12	**Research activity outside of the UK** If research activity will take place overseas, you are responsible for ensuring that local ethical considerations are complied with and that the relevant permissions are sought. Specify any local guidelines (e.g. from local professional associations/learned societies/universities) that exist and whether these involve any ethical stipulations beyond those usual in the UK (provide details of any licenses or permissions required). Also specify whether there are any specific ethical issues raised by the local context in which the research activity is taking place, for example, particular cultural and/or legal sensitivities or vulnerabilities of participants.
13	N/a *(this box should expand as you type)*

14	Use of documentation not in the public domain: Are any documents **NOT** publicly available?	**NO**	☒
		YES	☐
15	If Yes, please provide details here of how you will gain access to specific documentation that is not in the public domain and that this is in accordance with prevailing data protection law of the country in question and England and Wales. *(this box should expand as you type)*		

SECTION F: Scope of Research Activity

1	**Will the research activity include:**	**YES**	**NO**
2	Use of a questionnaire or similar research instrument?	☒	☐
3	Use of interviews?	☒	☐
4	Use of diaries?	☐	☒
5	Participant observation with their knowledge?	☐	☒
6	Participant observation without their knowledge?	☐	☒
7	Use of video or audio recording?	☒	☐
8	Access to personal or confidential information without the participants' specific consent?	☐	☒
9	Administration of any questions, test stimuli, presentation that may be experienced as physically, mentally or emotionally harmful / offensive?	☐	☒
10	Performance of any acts which may cause embarrassment or affect self-esteem?	☐	☒
11	Investigation of participants involved in illegal activities?	☐	☒
12	Use of procedures that involve deception?	☐	☒
13	Administration of any substance, agent or placebo?	☐	☒
14	Working with live vertebrate animals?	☐	☒
15	Other primary data collection methods, please explain in this box For example, 'focus groups'. Please indicate the type of data collection method(s) in this box and tick the accompany box.	☒	☒
16	Details of any other primary data collection method: (this box should expand as you type)		

If NO to every question, then the research activity is (ethically) low risk and **may** be exempt from **some** of the following sections (please refer to Guidance Notes).

If YES to any question, then no research activity should be undertaken until full ethical approval has been obtained.

SECTION G: Intended Participants

1	**Who are the intended participants:**	**YES**	**NO**
2	Students or staff at the University?	☐	☒
3	Adults (over the age of 18 and competent to give consent)?	☒	☐
4	Vulnerable adults?	☐	☒
5	Children and Young People under the age of 18? (Consent from Parent, Carer or Guardian will be required)	☐	☒
6	Prisoners?	☐	☒
7	Young offenders?	☐	☒
8	Those who could be considered to have a particularly dependent relationship with the investigator or a gatekeeper?	☐	☒
9	People engaged in illegal activities?	☐	☒
10	Others (please identify specifically any group who may be unable to give consent) please indicate here and tick the appropriate box.	☐	☒

11	Other – please indicate here: (this box should expand as you type)		

12	**Participant numbers and source** Provide an estimate of the expected number of participants. How will you identify participants and how will they be recruited?	
13	How many participants are expected?	100 Choral Director members of the following organisations will be invited to participate: Association of British Choral Directors Making Music British Voice Association In addition, I will approach local choirs and churches for additional participants who are non-members of the above. *(this box should expand as you type)*
14	Who will the participants be?	Choral Directors based in the UK *(this box should expand as you type)*
15	How will you identify the participants?	They will either be known to me as local choral directors or canvassed through the organisations above of which I am a member. In addition, I will ask for participants via relevant social media groups in which I participate. *(this box should expand as you type)*

16	**Information for participants:**	**YES**	**NO**	**N/A**
17	Will you describe the main research procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	☒	☐	☐
18	Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	☒	☐	☐
19	Will you obtain written consent for participation?	☒	☐	☐
20	Will you explain to participants that refusal to participate in the research will not affect their treatment or education (if relevant)?	☒	☐	☐
21	If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?	☐	☐	☒
22	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	☒	☐	☐
23	With questionnaires, will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer?	☒	☐	☐
24	Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs?	☒	☐	☐
25	Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation, in a way appropriate to the type of research undertaken?	☒	☐	☐
26	If NO to any of above questions, please give an explanation			
27	*(this box should expand as you type)*			

28	**Information for participants:**	**YES**	**NO**	**N/A**
29	Will participants be paid?	☐	☒	☐
30	Is specialist electrical or other equipment to be used with participants?	☐	☒	☐

31	Are there any financial or other interests to the investigator or University arising from this study?	☐	☒	☐
32	Will the research activity involve deliberately misleading participants in any way, or the partial or full concealment of the specific study aims?	☐	☒	☐
33	If YES to any question, please provide full details			
34	*(this box should expand as you type)*			

SECTION H: Anticipated Risks

1	**Outline any anticipated risks that may adversely affect any of the participants, the researchers and/or the University, and the steps that will be taken to address them.** If you have completed a full risk assessment (for example as required by a laboratory, or external research collaborator) you may append that to this form.		
2	**Full risk assessment completed and appended?**	**Yes**	☐
		No	☒
3	**Risks to participants** For example: emotional distress, financial disclosure, physical harm, transfer of personal data, sensitive organisational information		
4	Risk to Participant: I will be recording the interviews and transcribing the contents so there will be an element risk surrounding the potential disclosure of personal data. *(this box should expand as you type)*	*How will you mitigate the Risk to Participant* Any risk will be mitigated by ensuring a relevant code is used for each participant. All subsequent data will be stored on a password secured laptop which is only accessible by me. *(this box should expand as you type)*	
5	If research activity may include sensitive, embarrassing or upsetting topics (e.g. sexual activity, drug use) or issues likely to disclose information requiring further action (e.g. criminal activity), give details of the procedures to deal with these issues, including any support/advice (e.g. helpline numbers) to be offered to participants. Note that where applicable, consent procedures should make it clear that if something potentially or actually illegal is discovered in the course of a project, it may need to be disclosed to the proper authorities		
	N/a *(this box should expand as you type)*		
6	**Risks to investigator** For example: personal safety, physical harm, emotional distress, risk of accusation of harm/impropriety, conflict of interest		
	Risk to Investigator: With regard to the investigator, there may be a risk of stress and anxiety induced by lack of respondents to the questionnaire which may jeopardise the quality of the data collected and the results of the project. Alternatively, there may be a risk of stress and anxiety if there are more participants than initially expected. This could result in the data collected being excessive and very time consuming to analyse, putting the completion of the project at risk *(this box should expand as you type)*	*How will you mitigate the Risk to Investigator:* In both cases, I will need to manage my expectations and seek guidance from tutor early in the project so that any necessary changes may be made and to ensure that the data collected is fit for purpose and not overwhelming. *(this box should expand as you type)*	
7	**University/institutional risks** For example: adverse publicity, financial loss, data protection		
	Risk to University:	*How will you mitigate the Risk to University:*	

	The risks to the University will relate to data protection. *(this box should expand as you type)*	All data will be anonymised through coding and will be destroyed on completion of the project. The data will be stored securely on my password protected computer and can only accessed by me. *(this box should expand as you type)*

8	**Disclosure and Barring Service**			
9	If the research activity involves children or vulnerable adults, a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate must be obtained before any contact with such participants.	**YES**	**NO**	**N/A**
10	Does your research require you to hold a current DBS Certificate?	☐	☒	☐

SECTION I: Feedback, Consent and Confidentiality

1	**Feedback** What de-briefing and feedback will be provided to participants, how will this be done and when?
	A contact email address will be provided to all participants, and they will be offered the opportunity to request a copy of the final report. *(this box should expand as you type)*
2	**Informed consent** Describe the arrangements to inform potential participants, before providing consent, of what is involved in participating. Describe the arrangements for participants to provide full consent before data collection begins. If gaining consent in this way is inappropriate, explain how consent will be obtained and recorded in accordance with prevailing data protection legislation.
	The questionnaire will be online and the participant will be required to complete a consent form prior to proceeding to the questionnaire proper. Any interviewees will be asked for their consent as part of the process for agreeing the interview time and date. This will likely be a statement requested by email. *(this box should expand as you type)*
3	**Confidentiality / Anonymity** Set out how anonymity of participants and confidentiality will be ensured in any outputs. If anonymity is not being offered, explain why this is the case.
	Each participant will be allocated a unique code which will only be known to me and will be stored securely on my password protected computer. The online questionnaire will be anonymous. No individual will be named in my report, nor will the organisations to which they belong. *(this box should expand as you type)*

SECTION J: Data Protection and Storage

In completing this section refer to the University's Research Data Management Policy and the extensive resources on the University's Research Data Management web pages (http://uwtsd.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/).

1	Does the research activity involve personal data (as defined by the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 "GDPR" and the Data Protection Act 2018 "DPA")?	**YES**	**NO**
	"Personal data" *means any information relating to an identified or identifiable natural person ('data subject'). An identifiable natural person is one who can be identified, directly or indirectly, in particular by reference to an identifier such as a name, an*	**x**	☐

	identification number, location data, an online identifier or to one or more factors specific to the physical, physiological, genetic, mental, economic, cultural or social identity of that natural person.		
2	If YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
	Personal data to be collected may include the names, ages, and email addresses of the participants. Interviews will be recorded, and transcriptions made. Signed consent forms will also be stored for the duration of the project. *(this box should expand as you type)*		
3	Does it involve special category data (as defined by the GDPR)?	**YES**	**NO**
	"Special category data" *means sensitive personal data consisting of information as to the data subjects' –* *(a) racial or ethnic origin,* *(b) political opinions,* *(c) religious beliefs or other beliefs of a similar nature,* *(d) membership of a trade union (within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992),* *(e) physical or mental health or condition,* *(f) sexual life,* *(g) genetics,* *(h) biometric data (as used for ID purposes),*	X	☐
4	If YES, provide a description of the special category data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
	The questionnaire may include a voluntary declaration of racial or ethnic origin. *(this box should expand as you type)*		

5	Will the research activity involve storing personal data and/or special category data on one of the following:	**YES**	**NO**
6	Manual files (i.e. in paper form)?	☐	☒
7	University computers?	☐	☒
8	Private company computers?	☐	☒
9	Home or other personal computers?	☒	☐
10	Laptop computers/ CDs/ Portable disk-drives/ memory sticks?	☒	☐
11	"Cloud" storage or websites?	☒	☐
12	Other – specify:	☐	☒
13	For all stored data, explain the measures in place to ensure the security of the data collected, data confidentiality, including details of password protection, encryption, anonymisation and pseudonymisation:		
	All data will be kept in password protected cloud storage on my Office 365 system which will not be shared. Audio/visual data will be transcribed and would be shown to participants to check accuracy of reporting. Any USB sticks used to store or transfer data will be password protected. All participants will be given a unique identifier to ensure confidentiality and this list will be kept securely in the password protected folder. *(this box should expand as you type)*		
14	**All Data Storage**		
15	Will the research activity involve any of the following activities:	**YES**	**NO**

16	Electronic transfer of data in any form?	☒	☐
17	Sharing of data with others at the University?	☒	☐
18	Sharing of data with other organisations?	☐	☒
19	Export of data outside the European Union or importing of data from outside the UK?	☐	☒
20	Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, emails or telephone numbers?	☒	☐
21	Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals?	☐	☒
22	Use of data management system?	☐	☒
23	Data archiving?	☐	☒
24	If YES to any question, please provide full details, explaining how this will be conducted in accordance with the GDPR and DPA (and/or any international equivalent):		
	All data will be encrypted and kept in password protected cloud storage on my Office 365 system which will not be shared. Any USB sticks used to store or transfer data will be password protected. All data transfers will be encrypted and password protected. All participants will be given a unique identifier to ensure confidentiality and this list will be kept securely in the password protected folder. The data will be stored until the completion of the project and then deleted. In accordance with the DPA2018, participants will have the right to ask to see what data is held relating to them, and this data will be deleted immediately if the participant requests this, in which case the data will not be used in the project. *(this box should expand as you type)*		
25	List all who will have access to the data generated by the research activity:		
	Principal researcher only *(this box should expand as you type)*		
26	List who will have control of, and act as custodian(s) for, data generated by the research activity:		
	Principal researcher only *(this box should expand as you type)*		
27	Give details of data storage arrangements, including security measures in place to protect the data, where data will be stored, how long for, and in what form. Will data be archived – if so how and if not why not.		
	All data will be encrypted and kept in password protected cloud storage on my Office 365 system which will not be shared. Any USB sticks used to store or transfer data will be password protected and will be reformatted at the end of the project in order to destroy the data. The data will be stored until the completion of the project and then deleted. *(this box should expand as you type)*		
28	Please indicate if your data will be stored in the UWTSD Research Data Repository (see https://researchdata.uwtsd.ac.uk/). If so please explain. (*Most relevant to academic staff)*		
	NA *(this box should expand as you type)*		
29	Confirm that you have read the UWTSD guidance on data management (see https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/)	**YES**	☒
		NO	☐
30	Confirm that you are aware that you need to keep all data until after your research has completed or the end of your funding	**YES**	☒
		NO	☐

SECTION K: Declaration

31	The information which I have provided is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have attempted to identify any risks and issues related to the research activity and acknowledge my obligations and the rights of the participants. In submitting this application I hereby confirm that I undertake to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice which is published on the website: https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/research/research-ethics/		
	Signature of applicant:	Laura-Jane Ward	**Date:** 25th Nov 2021

For STUDENT Submissions:

32	Director of Studies/Supervisor:		**Date:**
33	Signature:		

For STAFF Submissions:

34	Academic Director/ Assistant Dean:		**Date:**
35	Signature:		

Checklist: Please complete the checklist below to ensure that you have completed the form according to the guidelines and attached any required documentation:

☒	I have read the guidance notes supplied before completing the form.
☒	I have completed **ALL RELEVANT** sections of the form in full.
☒	I confirm that the research activity has received approval in principle
☒	I have attached a copy of final/interim approval from external organisation (**where appropriate**)
☐	I have attached a full risk assessment (and have NOT completed Section H of this form) (where appropriate) *ONLY TICK IF YOU HAVE **ATTACHED A FULL RISK ASSESSMENT***
☒	I understand that it is my responsibility to ensure that the above named research activity will meet the University's Research Ethics and Integrity Code of Practice.
☒	I understand that before commencing data collection all documents aimed at respondents (including information sheets, consent forms, questionnaires, interview schedules etc.) must be confirmed by the DoS/Supervisor, module tutor or Academic Director.
☒	I have deleted the guidance notes before submitting the PG2 for consideration

RESEARCH STUDENTS AND STAFF ONLY
All communications relating to this application during its processing must be in writing and emailed to pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk , with the title 'Ethical Approval' followed by your name.
You will be informed of the outcome of your claim by email; therefore it is important that you check your University and personal email accounts regularly.

STUDENTS ON UNDERGRADUATE OR TAUGHT MASTERS PROGRAMMES should submit this form (and receive the outcome) via systems explained to you by the supervisor/module leader.

This form is available electronically from the Academic Office web pages:
https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/academic-office/appendices-and-forms/

Application Process

All staff research projects and all research students must submit the Ethical Approval Form to the **University Research Ethics Committee** via the Academic Office (pgresearch@uwtsd.ac.uk). Staff research directly in relation to personal study for taught undergraduate or Masters programmes should be submitted via the Institute procedures explained below.

Taught masters and taught undergraduate research Ethical Approval Forms are considered **within Institutes.** Institutes will provide details of the specific processes for this. Where the Ethical issues within any single ethical application are of particular concern the Institute will refer these to the University Research Ethics Committee. Any student activity that involves the collection of primary data needs to undergo Ethical approval, this includes assignment work as well as dissertations.

Notes for guidance in completion of this form

Section A: About You
Please complete all relevant sections

Section B: Approval for research activity
Research proposals must be approved in principle before applying for Ethical Approval. The proposal approval only becomes final when the ethical approval is received.

The process for proposal approval varies according the individual and programme of study:

- Research students, by application on form PG1 to the Research Degrees Committee
- Taught students by review of research proposal within Institutes (Institutes provide specific details of these processes)
- Staff, by agreement by the Academic Director/Assistant Dean

Section C: External Ethical Guidance materials
Many discipline areas are required to operate with the discipline specific codes of research ethics (for example health, psychology, education etc.), any such codes must be listed and you must tick to confirm that you have consulted with these.

Section D: External Collaborative Research Activity
Provide details of the external collaborative partners, where appropriate you might want to submit a copy of the external collaboration agreement with the Ethical Approval Form. If the partner requires the research to be subject to its own internal Ethical approval process then please provide details of that process and a copy of any final (or interim) approvals received from the organisation.

Section E: Details of Research Activity
Remember that the individuals reviewing this Ethical Approval Form may not have seen your research proposal, and also may not be experts in the specific area of your research. The information provided should therefore be jargon free and clearly stated.

Indicative Title: please use the same title as used on the research proposal.

Purpose: the Ethical approval process will want to ensure that the methods you propose are adequate and appropriate to address the research aims and objectives. Excessive additional data collection can be seen as unethical.

Proposed Methods: the Ethical approval process seeks to ensure that you understand the methods that are intended, and that the implementation of those methods will be appropriate and without unnecessary impact on respondents. This section must explain how the methods described will lead to the collection of necessary and sufficient data, but not excessive data. Please be specific.

Location: this needs to mention geographical location and also local situation (for example, within Local Authority Offices in Cardiff, using a private room but close to other individuals). If you are collecting data within an organisational setting then you need to explain the permissions that you have obtained to do this.

Research Activity outside of the UK: please complete this section in detail, and note any guidance you have received. Also describe your own familiarity (or not) with the location that you will be utilising.

Section F: Scope of Research Activity
Please tick ALL of the research activities that might be undertaken. If any additional types of activity are intended then please add an extra box and describe these.

If you have answered no to all questions in F then sections G and I do not need to be completed. . Signatures are still required in section K.

Section G: Intended Participants
Please tick all categories that might apply.

Numbers & Source: if you are using a series of different methods or research activities please list numbers for each stage/phase. Be clear about how you will find respondents. Will you use intermediaries, and if so how? How will you ensure compliance with your sampling strategy?

Information for participants: all participants should be appropriately informed about the research, what is expected of them and what will happen to the information that they provide. The Ethical review process does not ask to see this documentation, but requires this to be reviewed and approved by the Director of Studies in the case of research students, the supervisor/module tutor in relation to students on taught programmes and the Academic Director/Assistant Dean in relation to staff research.

Section H: Anticipate Risks
All research carries some level of risk. The answers you provide to questions in this section will be reviewed to ensure that you have an appropriate understanding of the type of risks involved and how you can mitigate against these risks. If you have completed a full risk assessment, as required for example for laboratory work, field work, clinical tests, diving operations, or by a collaborative partner, you may append that to this form. In that case, please tick the box indicating this has been provided. You will not then be required to complete Section H.

Risk to participants Think very carefully about how your actions/questions/discussions might affect the people you are involving as participants. You might identify the risk as small but it would still be a risk. Many types of question have the potential to make respondents less content with their life / job; you need to recognise and try to ameliorate any such effects
If these are business owners, time with you may reduce profit.
In some locations physical risk is very real to both participants and yourself, please consider this.

Risk to you, the researcher Think about where you will meet people, if there are any dangers involved in the location. If you are meeting people as individuals think about using a public place. In general do not visit people in their own homes or remote locations. If you are talking to individuals about certain issues think about how their responses might affect you emotionally. What about the risk of collecting insufficient data?

Risk to the University When undertaking your research, you are acting as a member of the University (student or staff). Professionalism is important, so it is important to be well organised and well prepared. Punctuality, clarity etc. are all part of this. What will you do to ensure this? You must ensure you do not harm the good name of the University in any way and do nothing to undermine the reputation of the research it conducts and sponsors. Upholding high standards of conduct and integrity are vital in this regard. You must also conduct the research in such a way to minimise the potential for claims of negligence made against the University, its researchers and any collaborating individual or organisation. In this respect you should always comply with ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards as required by statutory and regulatory authorities, as well as the university's Research Integrity and Ethics Code of Practice. Research misconduct in this respect can take many forms, including:

- fabrication: making up results or other outputs (eg, artefacts) and presenting them as if they were real
- falsification: manipulating research processes or changing or omitting data without good cause
- plagiarism: using other people's material without giving proper credit
- failure to meet ethical, legal and professional obligations: for example failure to declare competing interests; misrepresentation of involvement or authorship; misrepresentation of interests; breach of confidentiality; lack of informed consent; misuse of personal data; and abuse of research subjects or material
- improper dealing with allegations of misconduct: failing to address possible infringements such as attempts to cover up misconduct and reprisals against whistle-blowers

Adverse Outcomes. Think carefully about the possibilities, and cover here

Section I: Feedback, Consent and Confidentiality

Feedback to participants: outline your approach. Will interview transcripts be shared with respondents to check accuracy? Will summaries of questionnaire analysis be made available to respondents in some way? Will an overview report be provided? How and when?

Informed consent: Draft letter / e-mail / or heading (or footer) section of questionnaire must be approved by DoS/supervisor (if research student), supervisor/module tutor if taught student, or Academic Director / Assistant Dean if a member of staff.
Confidentiality/Anonymity. Explain clearly how you will ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

Section J: Data Protection and Storage
Before completing this section it is necessary to read the University's Research Data Management information. The questions that follow are designed to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act as well as established research protocols.

Many research activities will involve electronic transfer of data and use of data management systems in the summarisation and analysis of data. You will need to explain these in relation to compliance with the Data Protection Act.

Think carefully about who will have access to your data, this will include supervisors and examiners. Also that a thesis will be made available via the University library and the British Library system. If you are seeking an access bar for a period of time after completion then mention it here. If you will provide a copy of your findings, or intend to give a presentation, to a facilitating/ supporting/accessing organisation then explain that in this section. But also think about the general principle of data sharing, as explained in the Research Data Management information.

In terms of storage of data please ensure security, and also mitigate against loss of data.

Section K: Declaration
Ensure the appropriate countersignatures have been provided
Look carefully at the checklist and ensure that you comply with and tick all that are relevant to your research.

Appendix B. Employer consent letter

Laura Ward Choral Director
25th November 2021

Dear UWTSD,

RE: What are the routes to becoming a choral director of non-professional choirs in the UK? Are there any there any potential conflicts or risks associated with some of the pathways and what is the current state of continuous professional development within the British choral directing community?

I confirm that I approve of the research proposed into 'the common areas of experience and education within British choral directing community, the common routes to choral directorship, and the efforts taken to maintain knowledge of current pedagogical techniques and theories by British choral directors' to be carried out by Laura Ward, of Laura Ward Choral Director during the period between January 2022 and September 2022.

Kind Regards,

Laura Ward



Intermediate Course

This course is awarded at two levels: Emerging and Progressive. As we restart our live courses, we've updated our courses to combine our previous Emerging and Progressive courses into one and include both live and online tuition spread over six training days.

Who is the course for?

Our Intermediate course is designed for those who have either successfully completed our Initial level of training or those who already have experience in leading a choir. The course will develop and extend existing leadership skills, enabling you to prepare your choir with greater confidence.

How does the course run?

The course consists of six training sessions, including an opening and closing weekend and two one-day sessions (one live, one online), spread over six months. We provide video footage from each session to participants so that they can continue their learning in between sessions. After the course, participants may have the option to take the DipABRSM exam (at an additional cost). This can be discussed with tutors during the course.

What will I achieve?

Conductors who pass at **Emerging** level will have confidence in beat patterns and independence of hands, as well as the ability to prepare a score and rehearse a choir successfully, and an understanding of how gesture affects choral sound.

Conductors who pass at **Progressive** level will have solid technical assurance in their gesture, show confidence in rehearsal planning and delivery (including an ability to detect and correct problems), be able to improve the overall quality of the singing, and communicate in a musically engaging and effective way.

How do I apply?

Conductors who wish to apply should complete a short application form and submit a short video of themselves leading a choir. You can apply at either course level specifically, or for the course generally.

Please read our video requirements here and watch our short demonstration application video for the Emerging course here: and the Progressive course here.

Sign up to our course mailing list to receive details of future courses as soon as they become available.

Looking for a one-day event instead? Check out our masterclass series *The Twelve*.

For more information about any of our training courses, contact our Training Manager, Elisabeth Brierley, via email or on 07805 454563. You can also check out our Emerging Course FAQs here and our Progressive Course FAQs here.

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Search.. Search

The Twelve

- Our choral conducting masterclass series

ABCD Choral Research Journal

- For authors
- For librarians
- Issue One May 2020
- Issue Two October 2021
- abcd Journals overview



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Advanced Course

Who is the course for?

This course is for those operating at a high level of choral conducting. Applicants should have a number of years' practical experience (including at least one current choir), and demonstrate command of a variety of musical styles, showing awareness of mistakes within the choir and correcting them, an ability to create a rapport with their choir and showing an understanding of how voices work.

How does the course run?

The course runs over seven one-day sessions. We provide video footage from each session to participants so that they can continue their learning in between sessions.

This course can lead to the Licentiate of the Royal Schools of Music examination for those students who wish to take it. This can be discussed with course tutors during the course.

How do I apply?

Conductors who wish to apply should complete a short application form and submit a short video of themselves leading a choir. Please read our video requirements here.

For more information, check out our Advanced Course FAQs here.

Sign up to our course mailing list to receive details of future courses as soon as they become available.

For more information about any of our training courses, contact our Training Manager, Elisabeth Brierley, via email or on 07805 454563.

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The Twelve

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Appendix C.b

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Search Menu

Home › Postgraduate courses › Music MA: Choral Conducting pathway

MA Music (with Performance): Choral Conducting pathway

Start date
September

Course Type
Postgraduate, Taught

Fees
Annual tuition fee for 2024 entry:
UK: £11,642 full-time
International: £25,290 full-time
More detail.

Duration
1 year full-time

Visit an Open Day | Request a prospectus | Apply now



Course details | Entry Requirements | Teaching and assessment | Employability

Are you a relatively experienced conductor with a burning passion to make conducting your livelihood?

Our unique MA programme in Choral Conducting is directed by Professor Simon Halsey CBE and is in association with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and its internationally renowned choruses and conductors. It gives students the opportunities to observe, conduct and sing every week.

The University of Birmingham is home to one of the most vibrant and exciting Music departments in the world. We are an international leader in research and our programme embodies the latest cutting-edge developments in the practice and study of music.

The programme will allow you to have significant directed podium time with University ensembles and beyond. This includes leading weekly rehearsals with University Camerata, singing in Birmingham University Singers, singing in the CBSO Chorus, and acting as assistant conductor for up to five University choirs (additional podium time will be available at the discretion of the Director of Choral Activities).

Scholarships for 2024 entry

The University of Birmingham is proud to offer a range of scholarships for our postgraduate programmes. With a scholarship pot worth over £2 million, we are committed to alleviating financial barriers to support you in taking your next steps.

Each scholarship has its own specific deadlines and eligibility criteria. Please familiarise yourself with the information on individual scholarship webpages prior to submitting an application.

Explore our scholarships

At Birmingham, Postgraduate Taught and Postgraduate Research students also have the opportunity to learn graduate academic languages free of charge, to support your studies.

- Graduate School Language Skills

10th

The University of Birmingham is ranked equal 10th in the UK amongst Russell Group universities in the Research Excellence Framework exercise 2021 (Times Higher Education)

Top 100

for Arts and Humanities in the world (QS 2024)



"

The MA in Music at Birmingham offers first class, world-recognised staff who are absolute experts in their fields, so you're learning from people who really are the best at what they do. We also have excellent facilities such as the Elgar Concert Hall, which is arguably the most flexible concert hall of its type in any UK university.

Professor Scott Wilson

Why study this course?

- **Fantastic teaching** - you will learn under the guidance of Professor Simon Halsey as Director of Choral Activities within the Department of Music at Birmingham. Students will also receive tuition from Visiting Lecturer, Julian Wilkins, as well as other distinguished guest staff across the academic year in masterclasses and workshops.
- **Practical opportunities** - you will participate in a wide variety of choral ensembles in Birmingham and have the chance to audition for further conducting experience at the University. Students will also observe world-leading conductors and educators in choral practice on a regular basis, including Bob Chilcott who is part of the choral music-making team.
- **Outstanding facilities** - students will be based within our state-of-the-art Bramall Music Building, which also features the 450-seat Elgar Concert Hall, the most adaptable space of its kind in any UK university. Concerts and rehearsals are also held in the University Music Hub.
- **The city** - Birmingham has been a significant national and international centre of choral excellence for over two hundred years and is the birthplace of works as important as Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Dvorak's *Requiem* and Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*. The city has also become a hotspot of composition invention and a world leader in community and education work.

The postgraduate experience

The College of Arts and Law offers excellent support to its postgraduates, from libraries and research spaces, to careers support and funding opportunities. Learn more about your postgraduate experience.

Modules

You will study four core modules and two optional modules before completing your Choral Conducting Major Project.

Core modules

You will study four core modules:

Choral Conducting 1

The module introduces you to the techniques and methods of choral conducting, working with consorts, chamber groups and large symphonic choirs, including singing skills and vocal warm up techniques. Study of core symphonic choral repertoire, as well as detailed score study and preparation, complement the learning experience.
Assessment: Public performance

Choral Conducting 2

The module continues to develop your conducting technique, as well as working with consorts, chamber groups and large symphonic choirs.
Assessment: Aural assessment and assessed rehearsal

British Music in Performance

This module will provide an introduction to issues specific to the performance of British art music repertory, both vocal and instrumental, from the mid-nineteenth century to the post-1945 period. There will be two primary areas of focus. The first will be the history of institutions and occasions for musical performance: concert and choral societies, pedagogical institutions (especially the conservatories), festivals, broadcasting, the recording industry, commemorative events, and so on. The second will be the history of performance practice itself, as documented by pedagogical texts and written reminiscences, as well as by recordings.

Assessment: Two written assignments

Music Employability

Music Employability offers opportunities to develop applicable skills to foster a music career and identify transferable skills for adjacent career trajectories. You will improve your grant writing skills, cultivate public presentation skills, acquire skills in content creation, and explore new means of self-promotion. Using a combination of seminar discussions, masterclasses, and project-based work, you will draw on the resources of the University of Birmingham Careers Network and connections to the wider city community to pursue topics that may include leadership cultivation, digital literacy, professional development, copyright awareness, public presentation tools, podcast and video creation, and website development.

Assessment: Professional Development Statement and Portfolio and Creative Project

Optional modules

You will also choose four optional modules from a range which typically includes:

- Historically Informed Performance
- Introduction to Global Popular Musics
- Topics in Early Music
- Electronic Music Studies
- Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art
- Sound Studies
- Music as Critical Practice
- Classical and Romantic Keyboard Music
- Gustav Mahler: The Philosophy of Music
- Postsocialist Music and Ethnography

For more information, see our Music module descriptions.

Choral Conducting Major Project

Students apply skills and methods acquired in other MA modules to a conduct formal concert (or equivalent parts of more than one concert) of choral repertoire. The concert(s) offer(s) the student the opportunity to unite practical and theoretical musicianship and to demonstrate an ability to plan and independently prepare (with supervision) a performance at an advanced level.

Students are also required attend and to write short summaries of eight seminars presented as part of the Music Research Colloquium series during the academic year.

make conducting your livelihood?

Our unique MA programme in Choral Conducting is directed by Professor Simon Halsey CBE and is in association with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and its internationally renowned choruses and conductors. It gives students the opportunities to observe, conduct and sing every week.

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Scholarships for 2024 entry



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Each scholarship has its own specific deadlines and eligibility criteria. Please familiarise yourself with the information on individual scholarship webpages prior to submitting an application.

Explore our scholarships

At Birmingham, Postgraduate Taught and Postgraduate Research students also have the opportunity to learn graduate academic languages free of charge, to support your studies.

MA Music (with Performance): Choral Conducting pathway

Start date
September

Duration
1 year full-time

Course Type
Postgraduate, Taught

Fees
Annual tuition fee for 2024 entry:
UK: £11,642 full-time
International: £25,290 full-time
More detail.

Visit an Open Day | Request a prospectus | Apply now

Course details
Entry Requirements
Teaching and assessment
Employability

Our Standard Requirements

We usually ask for a good Honours degree (2:1), or equivalent, in Music or a related subject with a substantial musical component. Degrees in other subjects will be considered where candidates have significant professional musical experience and relevant qualifications.

Your application should include a personal statement of approximately 5,000 characters. You should use your personal

Fees

Annual tuition fee for 2024 entry:
UK: £11,642 full-time
International: £25,290 full-time
More detail.

Visit an Open Day | Request a prospectus | Apply now

Course details
Entry Requirements
Teaching and assessment
Employability

Your learning will be enhanced by our extensive facilities, including the Bramall Music Building.

Teaching year

We have three teaching terms per year, the autumn, spring and summer terms. Term dates can be found on our website.

As a full-time student, you will typically take three modules in each of the first two terms, followed by your dissertation. If you are a part-time student, you will typically take three modules across each year, followed by your dissertation.

Each module represents a total of 200 hours of study time, including preparatory reading, homework and assignment preparation.

Support with academic writing

As a postgraduate student in the College of Arts and Law, you have access to the Academic Writing Advisory Service (AWAS) which aims to help your transition from undergraduate to taught Masters level, or back into academia after time away. The service offers guidance on writing assignments and dissertations for your MA/MSc programme with individual support from an academic writing advisor via tutorials, email and the provision of online materials.

Annual tuition fee for 2024 entry:
UK: £11,642 full-time
International: £25,290 full-time
More detail.

Visit an Open Day | Request a prospectus | Apply now

Course details

Entry Requirements

Teaching and assessment

Employability

The University of Birmingham is the top choice for the UK's major employers searching for graduate recruits, according to The Graduate Market 2024 report.

Your degree will provide excellent preparation for your future career, but this can also be enhanced by a range of employability support services offered by the University and the College of Arts and Law.

The University's Careers Network provides expert guidance and activities especially for postgraduates, which will help you achieve your career goals. The College of Arts and Law also has a dedicated careers and employability team who offer tailored advice and a programme of College-specific careers events.

You will be encouraged to make the most of your postgraduate experience and will have the opportunity to:

- Receive one-to-one careers advice, including guidance on your job applications, writing your CV and improving your interview technique, whether you are looking for a career inside or outside of academia
- Meet employers face-to-face at on-campus recruitment fairs and employer presentations
- Attend an annual programme of careers fairs, skills workshops and conferences, including bespoke events for postgraduates in the College of Arts and Law

Appendix C.c

ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC

CHORAL CONDUCTING HANDBOOK

2023-24

The Royal Academy of Music moves music forward by inspiring successive generations of musicians to connect, collaborate and create.
Charity number 310007
Company registration number RC000438

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UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

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INTRODUCTION FROM THE HEAD OF CHORAL CONDUCTING

Started in 1997, the Academy's Choral Conducting course (originally entitled Choral Direction & Church Music) was the first specialist postgraduate choral conducting course in the UK. The two-year course culminates in the award of a Postgraduate Diploma or MA, with a MMus available for selected students.

The distinctive feature of the course is that it takes the modern British sacred choral performance tradition (both English and Latin) as its stylistic and repertoire basis, and as a framework for exploration of a broad sweep of European sacred repertoire, related secular music and informed performance practices. As well as specialist technical and interpretative studies the course also includes contextual study in selected areas of liturgical music that are vital to a practical understanding of the Western sacred art-music tradition.

Students are able to observe a variety of choral groups, taking advantage of the outstandingly diverse range of opportunities that London offers — there are close working relationships with the BBC Singers, the Choir of the London Oratory, the Fellows of National Youth Choir of Great Britain, the Choir of Royal Holloway University of London, the Renaissance Singers, the Fourth Choir and London Youth Choirs. Eminent choral conductors who have recently taught on the course include Sophie Jeannin (BBC Singers), Eamonn Dougan (Associate Conductor, The Sixteen), Simon Halsey (CBSO Chorus) and Mats Nilsson (Royal College of Music, Stockholm). Visiting Professor Roland Börger (formerly Head of Choral Conducting at the Leipzig Hochschule), gives intensive interpretation and technique classes based mainly on the German tradition. In addition, our two other Visiting Professors, Dr David Hill (The Bach Choir and Yale University Schola Cantorum) and Professor James O'Donnell (Yale University) lead masterclasses. All conductors, orchestral and choral, work together on major choral-orchestral repertoire at selected points of the year led jointly by our Head of Orchestral Conducting and myself. The department has strong links with the conservatoires in Leipzig and Stockholm, and works annually at Neresheim Abbey in southern Germany.

Crucial to the successful student's experience in the Academy will be their own ability to generate their own choral activity inside and outside the Academy, to develop early professional attitudes and relationships, to devise characteristic and interesting projects, and to demonstrate the energy, diplomacy and persistence to bring their music-making into the public arena, whether in service or concert.

Professor Patrick Russill
Head of Choral Conducting

USEFUL INFORMATION

DEPARTMENT CONTACTS

Head of Choral Conducting
Professor Patrick Russill 020 7873 7331 p.russill@ram.ac.uk

Programme Tutor
Roderick Chadwick r.chadwick@ram.ac.uk

Departmental Administrator
Sam Batchelor G17 020 7873 7405 sbatchelor@ram.ac.uk

KEY DATES	
Autumn term	Monday 11 September – Friday 1 December 2023 (Enrolment from 4 September 2023)
Spring term	Monday 8 January – Friday 22 March 2024
Summer term	Monday 15 April – Friday 30 June 2024

CHORAL CONDUCTING DEPARTMENT STAFF

Department Staff

Professor Patrick Russill MA, FRSCM, Hon RAM, Hon FRCO, Hon FGCM (Head of Department)
Alex Ashworth MA, DipRAM, PGDip, LRAM (Vocal Technique)
Ruth Byrchmore BMus, MMus, FRAM (Aural Skills)
Cathal Garvey BMus, MA, LTCL, Hon ARAM (Orchestral Conducting)
Professor Sian Edwards Hon RAM (Symphonic repertoire and skills)
Esther Jones MA, MMus, ARAM (Choral Pedagogy)

Visiting Professors

Prof. Roland Börger Hon ARAM (Leipzig Hochschule für Musik und Theater)
Dr. David Hill MBE, Hon DMus, MA, FRCO, Hon RAM (Bach Choir and Yale University)
Dr. James O'Donnell KCSG, Hon DMus, MA, FRCO, Hon RAM (Westminster Abbey)

USEFUL RESOURCES

You can find a range of useful forms, procedures and information in the Student Information Hub on SharePoint.

You can also follow the links directly to some key information below:

- Competitions
- Concerts Dept
- Department Handbooks
- Estates
- Examination timetables
- Extension and Deferral Requests
- Leave of Absence
- Library
- Piano Permission Form
- Programme Handbooks
- Recording
- Registry

PG CHORAL CONDUCTING YEAR ONE

Principal Study	Professional Skills
End of year assessment	Skills One (Technical) Skills Two (Synthetic) External Perspectives Collaborative Work
If you fail any component of the programme, you may not be eligible to graduate.	

The first year's curriculum is intended to lay firm technical foundations, enabling the student to express well-considered musical intentions with gestural explicitness and economy. The relationship between singing technique and conducting technique, especially as regards energy, relaxation and poise in breathing is a fundamental concern in this year.

End of year assessment (Summer Term)

A 15-minute rehearsal plus performance of one a cappella work, to be agreed with the Head of Choral Conducting. The assessment will reflect equally the effectiveness of the rehearsal in moving towards a communicative performance and the technical and interpretative skill of the conductor in the performance.

Professional Skills

See full details of Professional Skills **here**

Department-Specific Electives (Artist Development):

Choral Pedagogy (8 points): a course given by Esther Jones on five selected Tuesdays during the Spring Term at 11.30am-1.30pm in Room 250.

Repertoire Studies (8 points): Repertoire Studies – Gregorian Chant

PG CHORAL CONDUCTING YEAR TWO

Principal Study (80 credits)	Professional Skills (60 credits)
End of year examination Part one: Viva voce Presentation and Rehearsal (33%) Part two: Final Recital (67%)	Skills One (Technical) Skills Two (Synthetic) External Perspectives Collaborative Work
If you fail any component of the programme, you may not be eligible to graduate.	

Building on the first year's technical foundations, the curriculum seeks to challenge the conductor's imaginative inner ear and ability to communicate this in word and gesture, with especial attention to the principles of action and reaction that release singers into corporate expressiveness.

End of Year Part One: Verbal Presentation and Rehearsal

(1) A verbal presentation lasting 15 minutes maximum, followed by 10 minutes viva voce examination, of a short SATB a cappella choral work sent to the candidate a week in advance. The presentation should succinctly outline the candidate's preparation for performance, including demonstrating understanding of historical/cultural context of the work and its text, the composer's emotional and technical response to the text, salient stylistic issues in relation to performance, and anticipated vocal and corporate ensemble issues in rehearsal.

AND

(2) Rehearsal and performance in 20 minutes of the prescribed work with an octet of singers.

End of Year Part Two: Final Recital

A rehearsal and ensuing performance with the Academy Chamber Choir of an 8-10 minute a cappella programme.

A maximum rehearsal period of 65 minutes, which must include one 5-minute break for the singers, is allowed. Candidates may opt, if they wish and if convenient, to start the rehearsal in a room other than the performance room and to use the 5 minute break to move to the performance room, where the rehearsal may be continued as allotted time permits. Only the performance room will be open to the public.

While the rehearsal itself will not be assessed, the merits and deficiencies of the Final Performance will be evaluated in the light of the evidence of the rehearsal. The examiners will note in particular the initial and final standard of the choir, problems identified and addressed, good practices either established or affirmed and the characteristics of rehearsal manner which impact on the final performance.

The programme, which should complement that of the Part One External concert (see above), must be submitted for approval by the Head of Choral Conducting at least 4 weeks before the

performance. Typed programmes including complete texts with English translations must be prepared for the recital and given to the steward for distribution to audience and examiners.

Final Recital Programming

Your choice of repertoire can have an impact on the mark awarded for the Final Recital. Although it is important you do not set yourself challenges beyond your reach, you should also recognize that rising to challenges can be an important element in meeting the criteria for marks in the higher categories. The programme choice is your responsibility, but it should be discussed with your Principal Study teacher and you may also wish to discuss it with your Head of Study.

Memory Requirement

We expect that you will follow standard professional practice for your discipline regarding the use of music on stage in your recital. Please note any specific department requirements detailed below and any guidance provided in your departmental handbook. If in doubt consult your Head of Department.

When submitting your recital programme you may make an indication of context for any decision you consider could be misunderstood.

Professional Skills

See full details of Professional Skills **here**

Department-Specific Electives (Artist Development):

Choral Pedagogy (8 points): a course given by Esther Jones on five selected Tuesdays during the Spring Term at 11.30am-1.30pm in Room 250.

Repertoire Studies (8 points): Repertoire Studies – Gregorian Chant

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

'Professional Skills' is at the core of your Academy experience and we expect it will form the backbone of your Portfolio. Apart from your individual practice and work with your teacher, it is likely to account for most of the time you spend working at the Academy.

Professional Skills is formatively assessed. You will be awarded a profile mark (mandatory pass) and this will be entered on your degree transcript at the end of your study. Marking criteria are in the Postgraduate Programmes Handbook.

There are four key areas, which each department handles differently according to professional preparation requirements.

SKILLS ONE	REQUIREMENTS
All students, each year	Baton technique, Aural, Vocal Techniques

SKILLS TWO	REQUIREMENTS
All students, each year	Principal study classes (Choral Conducting Technique and Interpretation)

EXTERNAL PERSPECTIVES (MASTERCLASSES ETC.)	REQUIREMENTS
All students, each year	Masterclasses (external professors), performance classes (internal professors, except Head of Department where assessment is part of principal-study report)

COLLABORATIVE WORK	REQUIREMENTS
All students, each year	Choir-Training class: Pass/Fail only

Birmingham City University

Appendix C.d

Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

Open main menu

Choral Conducting



Royal Birmingham Conservatoire currently offers the best opportunities in the UK for the study of choral conducting. Our postgraduate courses are highly proactive and demand the same of you.

There are two masterclasses held during the year by distinguished choral conductors, and students run and conduct the Camerata chamber choir, giving an unusual amount of weekly podium time. Singing lessons form part of your entitlement during the course along with 1-1 tuition with Julian Wilkins and involvement with the high achieving Chamber Choir.

There are other requirements depending on whether you choose to follow the MMus or PgDip course.

It is also possible to join in on other classes which may interest you, including language classes. For full details on these, including audition requirements, please see the Conducting (Choral / Orchestral) PgDip / MMus course.

Birmingham is a vibrant city with plenty of opportunities for outside work and experience with secular choirs or in a variety of churches or the city's two cathedrals.

My time at RBC has been far more than just a conducting course – Through the diversity of the curricula and the huge variety of opportunities for collaboration with peers from every department, I've grown as a musician in more ways than I ever expected. I've had all kinds of amazing experiences: conducting and running the Camerata as well as many other choral projects; accompanying and playing continuo in the Historical Performance department; composing for a variety of Conservatoire ensembles; playing and conducting contemporary music, including compositions by fellow students; even playing accordion and in the legendary Conservatoire Folk Ensemble! The unfailing support of the faculty and the diverse talents of my peers have enabled me to become a holistically-trained, balanced musician with a range of skills and experience, which directly translates to being a more flexible and multifaceted professional.

Choral Conducting student, Isaac Boulter

The Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Chamber Choir

Conducted by Julian Wilkins (principal conductor) and Jeffrey Skidmore, who undertakes an early music project each year.

Chamber Choir is a small specialist ensemble (24 voices) selected by audition and aiming to compete with the very best small specialised vocal ensembles.

The Choir gives at least three concerts and makes a CD recording each year. So far there are four highly acclaimed recordings.

A high proportion of the music recorded by the choir has never been recorded before. The choir has an ongoing relationship with Somm Records for whom the choir hopes to continue recording annually.

Highly acclaimed recordings

1 **To Music**

To Music, is an anthology of English 20th Century Choral Music (Regent Records, 2007).

2 **Invocation**

Invocation, features music by James MacMillan (who attended the sessions) and Kenneth Leighton (2010).

3 Part songs

Part songs by Delius and Ireland (Somm Records, 2011), and the most recent features Stanford's Part Songs (Somm, 2012).

Gain valuable experience with the chance to run and conduct our successful choral groups

Camerata was founded specifically for choral conducting students to run and to conduct. It has become a highly successful group in its own right, giving many concerts both in Birmingham and further afield. It will be the principal responsibility of you and your fellow choral conducting students to nurture this group, to manage and organise it, to choose the repertoire in consultation with Julian Wilkins and the Conservatoire Library, to encourage singers to join, and to keep them interested and musically satisfied, thus keeping the group together and enjoying its work.

Many of our choral conducting students choose to set up their own groups. One successful example of this is alumnus Chi Hoe Mak's 'Icarus Ensemble', a contemporary vocal group working with students from the Composition Department to give them the opportunity to learn more about writing for choirs and the experience of working with singers.

This group recently gave a workshop and concert at the RNCM in Manchester and is continuing its important work under a current student.

Study mode

Full Time/Part Time

Location

Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

Award

MMus / PgCert / PgDip

Start date

September 2025

Fees

View course fees

School

Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

Faculty

Faculty of Arts, Design and Media

This course is:

Open to International Students

OVERVIEW

The principal aim of our Master of Music (MMus) course is to provide you with knowledge, skills, and confidence to succeed in your chosen branch(es) of the music profession, giving you a head-start in addressing the challenges involved in becoming a professional musician.

The course is suitable for both recent graduates and suitably qualified mature students, with a range of support to ensure that you leave Royal Birmingham Conservatoire ready to pursue a musical career.

A distinctive feature of Royal Birmingham Conservatoire's postgraduate provision is that it will give you the opportunity to make choices within your course directly relevant to your future career aspirations, both within your Principal Study area and in your supporting studies. All MMus and PgDip routes include a core Career Development module designed to get you thinking about your future professional plans, and a broad menu of optional Professional Development modules designed to help you work towards achieving your personal career aspirations. You will also take a core module designed to develop your skills as a researcher or informed practitioner.

You will have the opportunity to study in one of several Principal Study areas, most of which are also offered at PgDip or PgCert level.

Instrumental Performance (MMus, PgDip, PgCert)

This specialism prepares you for a solo, chamber or orchestral career. It is available to students pursuing orchestral instruments, keyboard instruments and other solo instruments such as recorder, guitar, and saxophone, with a route also offered for bowed string and guitar ensembles. We also welcome instrumentalists and singers who are developing fusions of folk music with other genres, students wishing to focus on songwriting, and woodwind players who do not wish to follow the traditional orchestral route but would prefer to pursue a career as a multi-instrumentalist in musical theatre.

Read more about our instrumental departments:

- Woodwind
- Brass
- Strings
- Percussion

Vocal Performance (MMus, PgDip, PgCert)

This route offers advanced-level training in singing. You're encouraged and enabled to increase your experience as a performer and to broaden your repertoire, though you can also take the opportunity to specialise if you wish. You'll enjoy regular opportunities to sing in a variety of contexts, both as a soloist and in ensembles with other performers. Read more about Vocal Performance.

Orchestral Performance (Strings) (MMus, PgDip)

Developed in partnership with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra (CBSO), this route is for advanced level string players considering professional orchestral auditions and on the brink of a professional career. You will spend a significant amount of rehearsal time in the CBSO alongside one or more dedicated host players who will act as mentors. You may also be offered opportunities to play at the back of the section to gain further experience. In addition to developing your technical facility, musicianship, interpretative skills, and stylistic awareness, you will expand your knowledge of orchestral repertoire, learn how to prepare for rehearsal in the most efficient way, develop strategies which will help you to integrate within your section, and build confidence in preparing for orchestral auditions. Read more about Orchestral Performance (Strings).

Conducting (MMus, PgDip)

We offer the following:

- Brass Band Conducting
- Choral Conducting
- Orchestral Conducting

All our conducting pathways offer the technical training, collaborative opportunities, and podium time necessary to help you prepare for a career as a professional conductor. You will spend considerable time developing your directing techniques in rehearsals and will also have opportunities to demonstrate your skills in performance. In addition to attending and participating in scheduled ensemble activities, you will be encouraged to explore other opportunities to engage as conductor or observer. Students across all three pathways will also attend classes/workshops of their peers studying other conducting specialisms.

Jazz (MMus, PgDip, PgCert)

Designed for recent graduates and suitably qualified mature students, these programmes provide high quality advanced-level tuition, enabling you to specialise either as a Jazz performer or instigator. You will benefit from regular individual specialist tuition from professional jazz musicians active on today's scene. There will be an emphasis on the art of improvisation as well as regular opportunities to rehearse and perform with small and large jazz ensembles. Read more about Jazz.

Experimental Performance (MMus, PgDip, PgCert)

Designed for emerging arts practitioners, this route provides you with a unique opportunity to undertake independent artistic projects in a fully supportive environment. Practitioners from a variety of disciplines (including, but not limited to, instrumental/vocal performance, composition, dance, choreography, theatre, visual and performance art, and creative writing) come together

with likeminded people. The core of your study will be formed by your own artistic ideas, which are developed, through research and dialogue, into professional practical projects. Read more about Experimental Performance.

Composition (MMus, PgDip, PgCert)

Our composition route actively celebrates the diversity of today's musical genres, and fosters artists who challenge, innovate, and transform notions of artistic practice today. You'll spend most of your time writing music for professional and student ensembles, whether you choose to respond to our set briefs or work on your own projects. You'll be encouraged to express yourself in multiple musical and artistic genres. By studying composition within a thriving conservatoire setting, you'll have excellent opportunities to collaborate with performers and to have your works performed. Read more about our Composition department.

Music Technology (MMus, PgDip, PgCert)

This pathway offers an exciting opportunity for composers and composer-performers to experiment with and develop expertise in the creative application of established and new music technologies.

You will be based in our £57-million Conservatoire building, which features our Concert Hall, 150-seat Recital Hall, more than 70 practice rooms, ensemble rooms and workshops, seven recording studios, editing, and mastering suites, and our black-box performance space known as The Lab. All our spaces are acoustically designed to provide a world-class music-making environment.

We also benefit from being part of Birmingham City University's Faculty of Arts, Design and Media, which provides many opportunities for collaboration and interdisciplinary projects. Read more about Music Technology.

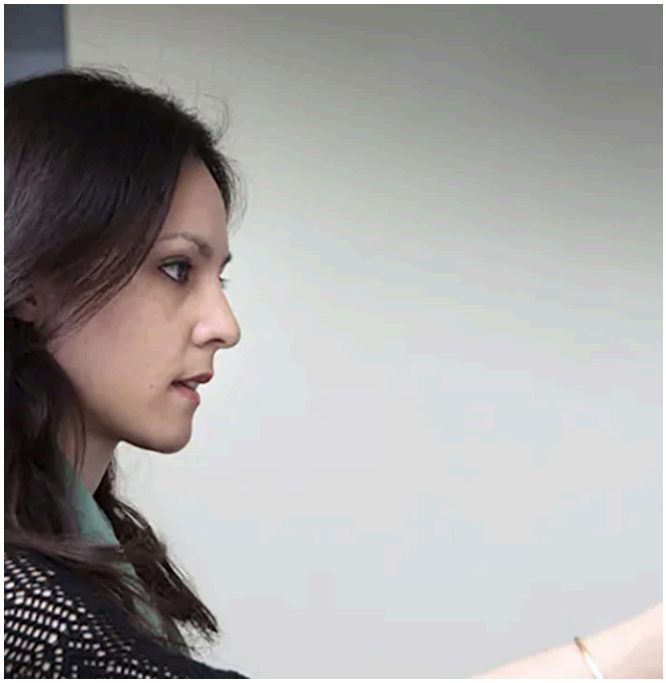


















This course is **open** to International students.

WHAT'S COVERED IN THIS COURSE?

- Regular individual tuition in your Principal Study area from leading UK and internationally renowned performers, practitioners, teachers, and researchers.
- Bespoke support classes in musicianship and repertoire.
- The opportunity to participate in a wide variety of creative projects, including interdisciplinary collaborations.

- Frequent opportunities to perform, both within Departmental activities and in concerts.
- Access to forums, seminars and masterclasses with distinguished visiting artists, composers, and performers.
- Access to the Conservatoire's broad range of ensemble activities, including chamber music, operatic productions, Brass Band, Wind Orchestra, Symphony Orchestra, 'Repertoire' and 'Pops' Orchestras, Thallein (Contemporary Music) Ensemble, and the Folk Ensemble.
- The opportunity to tailor your course to your individual needs through wide-ranging Professional Development modules.
- A chance to network with leading professionals from around the world.

The MMus course at RBC has been an invaluable and pivotal step in my journey as a composer and an artist — providing a supportive and nurturing environment in which to experiment with new ideas, and expose myself to unfamiliar and challenging concepts.

The music community at RBC is incredibly tight-knit, with a plethora of opportunities for collaborations with both professional and world-leading ensembles. The individualised focus of the course and the artistic development I received is something I'll be eternally grateful for.

Zygmund De Somogyi, organiser of Prxludes

Through the flexibility of the curricula and the huge variety of opportunities for collaboration with peers from every department, I've grown as a musician in more ways than I ever expected.

I've had amazing experiences: conducting and running the Camerata; accompanying and playing continuo in the Historical Performance department; composing for Conservatoire ensembles; playing and conducting contemporary music; even playing in the legendary Conservatoire Folk Ensemble!

Isaac Boulter, MMus Alumnus

OPEN DAY

Join us on campus where you'll be able to explore our facilities and accommodation in person, and chat to staff and students from the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. Booking isn't open yet for our next event, register your interest and we'll email you as soon as booking goes live.

Next Open Day: **5 December 2024**

Register Interest

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Essential requirements

MMus/PgDip

Essential
✓ UK students should normally hold an honours degree, ideally but not necessarily in Music.
✓ Non-UK students should hold a Bachelor's degree or a similar degree-equivalent diploma, ideally but not necessarily in Music.

Audition requirements

Applicants for most Principal Study areas will be auditioned live, but some will require you to submit a portfolio in addition to or instead of a live audition/interview. For full audition requirements and audition advice, please visit the Music Auditions section of the Conservatoire website.

English language requirements

✓ IELTS 6.0 overall with 5.5 minimum in all bands.

If you have a qualification that is not listed, please contact us.

International Students

Don't meet our entry requirements? You could apply for courses at our International College.

Apply now

FEES & HOW TO APPLY

Please select your student status to view fees and apply

UK Student

International Student

Postgraduate funding

Graduate Scholarship

If you are a BCU graduate enrolling onto an eligible Master's programme for the first time in 2024/25, you could receive a 20% fee reduction via our Graduate Scholarship. Find out if you're eligible for a Graduate Scholarship.

Master's loans

Government-backed loans of up to £12,167 are available to UK, Irish and eligible EU nationals studying postgraduate Master's courses in any subject area.
Find out more about Master's loans.

Other funding opportunities

Other funding options include scholarships, loans and bursaries offered by external organisations. These vary from year to year.

Postgraduate funding

VIEW FEES FOR CONTINUING STUDENTS

COURSE IN DEPTH

In order to complete this course you must successfully complete THREE CORE modules (totalling 140 credits):

- The Career Development module (20 credits), and
- Both Principal Study 1 and 2 modules (each 60 credits, chosen according to the specialism – see below).

Members of the music profession require not only high-level specialist skills but also the ability to target those skills strategically to different circumstances. This module focuses on a range of different aspects of a musician's professional development that directly relate to the music industry and their preparation for it: from self-promotion and self-management, to funding and wellbeing. It is thus central to a programme which aims to prepare you for a career as a musician in the 21st century.

It requires you, near the beginning of your postgraduate studies, to reflect ambitiously yet realistically on your professional aspirations, and to formulate a plan that helps you stand the best chance of achieving your goals. Weekly workshops, delivered by internal staff and external professionals, will focus on the practicalities of a career in music, providing you with a better insight into the industry you will be

entering, as well as encouraging you to be self-reflective about your own personal and professional development needs.

You must complete one of the Principal Study modules below (Principal Study areas chosen will be dependent upon the specialist pathway chosen by the student):

As a postgraduate choral conductor, the Principal Study 1: Choral Conducting module enables you to advance your training in your specialist area. As the focus of this module is entirely on your own continued development as a choral conductor, you will spend considerable time developing not only conducting and gestural techniques in rehearsal and in performance, but also skills in administration, management (including self-management, management of other people individually and in a group, and of rehearsal and performance situations), communication (including interpersonal skills), interpretation and musicianship (aural skills, score reading, sight reading, ability to sing to demonstrate), and ability to mould voices into a cohesive group.

Your work in this module is supported by one-to-one tuition in choral conducting and a variety of related activities in the Principal Study area. These will normally include taking weekly rehearsals of the Conservatoire's second chamber choir, Camerata; a weekly support class focusing on both developing musicianship skills and enhancing knowledge of the repertoire; masterclasses from visiting experts; seminars on choral conducting issues; and some 1:1 vocal tuition. You should also expect to attend classes/workshops of your peers studying orchestral conducting. You will be encouraged to take part in other vocal/choral activities scheduled within the Conservatoire (and elsewhere), and to engage in language provision provided by the Department of Vocal and Operatic Studies. You are also encouraged to form your own groups, to participate in external groups and to find external choirs to conduct. Chorus master/assistant conductor possibilities may also arise in the context of the Conservatoire operas and Chorus.

You must complete one of the Principal Study modules below (Principal Study areas chosen will be dependent upon the specialist pathway chosen by the student):

As a postgraduate choral conductor, the Principal Study 2: Choral Conducting module builds on the skills acquired in the Principal Study Project 1 module, encouraging independent and appropriate decision-making based on secure musicianship skills

and self-reflection, the development of an individual musical personality, and a professional approach to rehearsal and performance, including effective leadership and communication skills. The module clearly provides professionally-relevant experience, and you will spend considerable time further developing not only conducting and gestural techniques in rehearsal and in performance, but also skills in administration, management (including self-management, management of other people individually and in a group, and of rehearsal and performance situations), communication (including interpersonal skills), interpretation and musicianship (aural skills, score reading, sight reading, ability to sing to demonstrate), and ability to mould voices into a cohesive group.

Your work in this module is supported by one-to-one tuition in choral conducting and a variety of related activities in the Principal Study area. These will normally include: taking weekly rehearsals of the Conservatoire's second chamber choir, Camerata; a weekly support class focusing on both developing musicianship skills and enhancing knowledge of the repertoire; masterclasses from visiting experts; seminars on choral conducting issues; and some 1:1 vocal tuition. You should also expect to attend classes/workshops of your peers studying orchestral conducting. You will be encouraged to take part in other vocal/choral activities scheduled within the Conservatoire (and elsewhere), and to engage in language provision provided by the Department of Vocal and Operatic Studies. You are also encouraged to form your own groups, to participate in external groups and to find external choirs to conduct. Chorus master/assistant conductor possibilities may also arise in the context of the Conservatoire operas and Chorus.

In order to complete this course, you must also successfully complete at least 100 credits from the following indicative list of OPTIONAL modules:

- THREE Professional Development modules (20 credits each), and
- ONE MMus optional module (40 credits)

- Concepts in Musicology
- Contemporary Music Concepts and Practice
- Creative Interactive Music Technology Performance
- Critical Editing Techniques
- Documentation

- Experimental Performance in Context(s)
- Historical Instrument Performance
- Historical Performance Practice
- Independent Scholarship in Music
- Music and Ideas
- Music Technology Contexts
- Orchestration
- Performing and Producing in the Studio
- Professional Music Criticism
- Self-Promotion Project
- Teaching Matters: Principles and Practice
- Work Placement
- Writing Music for Media
- Conference Paper
- Preparation for Research
- Music, Community and Wellbeing (BMus module)

- Art and Ecologies
- Contemporary Philosophy and Aesthetics
- Discourses in Art and Design
- Models and Methods of Curatorial Practice
- Queer Strategies in Practice
- Small Arts Business Set Up
- Social Practice in the Visual Arts

- Live Events and Festival Management
- Social Media as Culture and Practice

- Research Project
- Critical Edition
- Lecture-Recital
- The Reflective Practitioner - there are two pathways through this module:

  1. Professional Placement, and
  2. Creative Interdisciplinary Artist.

Core modules are guaranteed to run. Optional modules will vary from year to year and the published list is indicative only.

COURSE STRUCTURE

Whichever course you choose, work in the **Principal Study** area – both individual tuition and Departmental activity – lies at its heart.

Being the exit point for PgCert and PgDip, **Principal Study 1** is more prescriptive than **Principal Study 2** (MMus only), though both allow scope for you to explore repertoire of your own choice and to develop a specialist area if you wish.

If you are a MMus or PgDip student you will take a **Career Development** module, which will require you, near the beginning of your course, to reflect ambitiously yet realistically on your professional aspirations, and to formulate a plan that helps you stand the best chance of achieving your goals. You will also choose, in addition, some **Professional Development Options** from a varied list. The list above gives an indication of the kind of optional modules which may be offered in a given year, including some offered by Birmingham City University's Schools of Art and Media (note, not all will run every year).

MMus students will additionally choose a 40-credit option.

PART-TIME OPTIONS

There is some room for negotiation in how the course unfolds for a part-time PgDip or MMus student over two or three years.

Download the course specification

MMus

PgDip

PgCert

EMPLOYABILITY

At Royal Birmingham Conservatoire we provide a friendly and supportive environment in which you can pursue your postgraduate studies. This is a time when you need to think particularly carefully and strategically about the direction of your developing career as a musician. We therefore encourage you to be ambitious in pursuing your aspirations, and endeavour to provide you with the flexibility to mould your course to your individual needs, both within your Principal Study area and in complementary modules.

Our Graduates



Tom Stoneman

"Studying conducting at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire has proven to be an invaluable experience for me. Through the opportunities the course provided, I have been able to take my conducting career to higher levels, and the skills that I developed throughout my studies have meant that I am well equipped for anything that's thrown at me.

"I would not be working at my current level if it were not for the support of the conservatoire staff, as well as that of fellow students."



Edward Leung

"I would not be where I am today in my career without the support of the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. I benefitted immensely from my Principal Study tutor, but I also had the opportunity to work with tutors from the Strings and Vocal departments for chamber music and lieder coaching.

"I believe the openness and collaborative atmosphere is what makes the Conservatoire unique. I have also had many high-profile performance opportunities throughout the United Kingdom, thus broadening my professional network and setting up my performance career."



Arabella Sprot

"The course itself has a very high standard of teaching, and is quite student-led, meaning students are able to design their own study programme.

"There are lots of professional musicians involved in the Conservatoire so it’s really exciting to be able to work alongside them. It’s very good experience and means you get to know people in the industry."

INTERNATIONAL

Royal Birmingham Conservatoire has a growing community of international students from across the world.

We appreciate the challenges of moving to a new country to live and study and aim to be as supportive as possible.

Aside from being friendly and welcoming, we have various support mechanisms in place to help you settle in as an international student, including:

- An international students' 'orientation week', including a special Conservatoire welcome event
- A dedicated international student admissions administrator
- A full-time staff member employed as International Student Support Programme Director (who speaks Mandarin)
- A mentoring system in which you, as a new postgraduate international student, are mentored by continuing postgraduate international students who will be supporting you both pastorally and academically though weekly workshops
- Additional supporting classes for international students that are particularly designed to help you further develop your English reading, speaking and comprehension skills
- Additional academic skills support provided by expert tutors from the BCU's Centre for Academic Success

Further information for prospective international students is available on the University's international pages.

International students who have a serious interest in studying with us but who perhaps cannot meet the direct entry requirements, academic or English, or who have been out of education for some time, can enter Birmingham City University International College (BCUIC) and begin their degree studies.

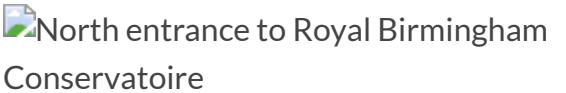
BCUIC is part of the global Navitas Group, an internationally recognised education provider, and the partnership allows students to access the University's facilities and services and move seamlessly through to achieving a Bachelor's degree from Birmingham City University.

Learn more about BCUIC

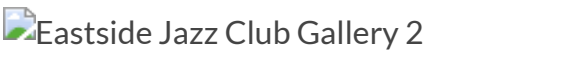
FACILITIES & STAFF


South entrance of Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

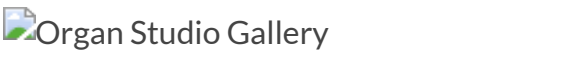

Royal Birmingham Conservatoire from the North East

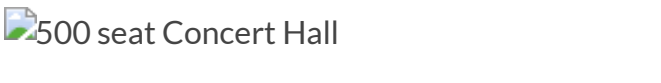

North entrance to Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

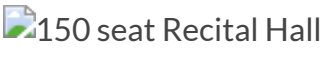

Eastside Jazz Club Copyright Hufton + Crow


Eastside Jazz Club Gallery 2


Workshop spaces


Organ Studio Gallery


500 seat Concert Hall


150 seat Recital Hall


Recording control room


The Lab


Gallery Bar - Copyright Hufton + Crow

OUR STAFF

DR LUAN SHAW

Associate Professor (Music Education) and Director of Postgraduate Studies (Music)

Dr Luan Shaw is Associate Professor: Director of Postgraduate Studies (Music) at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire where she has taught since 2011. She is a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, and was made an Honorary Member of RBC in 2001. In her former role as RBC's first Head of Pedagogy (2011-2018), she led the significant...

More about Luan

BEETUNG GOO

Assistant Director of Postgraduate Studies (Director of International Student Support Programme)

Beetung is a Teaching Fellow at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. She joined the staff as International Student Mentor in 2014, soon after completing her master's degree here. The learning experience of international students is central to Beetung's work: she has developed

Royal Birmingham Conservatoire's International Student Support Programme,...

More about Beetung

SIÂN DERRY

Assistant Director of Postgraduate Studies (MA Musicology Course Director, Professional Performance - AdvPgDip Course Director)

Siân Derry is a Senior Lecturer in Music, and Assistant Director of Postgraduate Studies (MA Musicology Course Director, Professional Performance - AdvPgDip Course Director) at Royal Birmingham Conservatoire. She joined the Conservatoire in 2015, having previously taught at the University of Manchester. Siân completed her BMus Hons degree...

More about Siân

Please visit individual department pages for information on staff who teach on our various principal study areas.

UK prospective students

Contact the enquiries team
T: +44 (0)121 331 6295

Non-UK prospective students

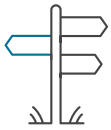
E: International enquiry form
T: +44 (0)121 331 5389

Already applied?

E: Contact the admissions team
T: +44 (0)121 331 6295



ACCOMMODATION



OUR CAMPUS



PROSPECTUS



POSTGRAD STUDY

Appendix C.e

ROYAL WELSH COLLEGE
OF MUSIC & DRAMA
COLEG BRENHINOL
CERDD A DRAMA CYMRU

Cymraeg

Explore: Introduction



MMus Choral Conducting

Award:
MMus Choral Conducting

Awarding body:
University of South Wales

Location of study:
Cardiff (RWCMD and Old Library)

Start date:
22 September 2025

Duration:
2 years full time

Course code:
812F - UCAS Conservatoires

Apply now

We are still taking applications for entry 2024. Please contact admissions@rwcmd.ac.uk for details on fees and how to apply.

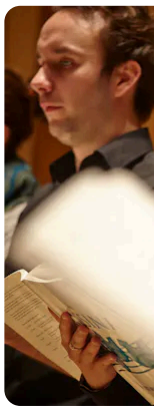
Introduction

Lay the foundation for a successful career with our course that combines choral conducting opportunities with specialist vocal tuition.

ROYAL WELSH COLLEGE
OF MUSIC & DRAMA
COLEG BRENHINOL
CERDD A DRAMA CYMRU

Explore:





Course overview

With our innovative master's programme offering a wide range of conducting experience, you'll develop all the stylistic, technical and artistic skills you need to thrive in an ever-changing arts industry.

Your training will encompass a broad selection of learning approaches that will help you to take on the role of conductor with confidence. It centres on three areas that underpin your personal and professional growth: creative artistry, research and reflection, and industry and innovation.

Throughout your course, you'll work with singers in weekly choral conducting classes, participate in specialist vocal tuition and get numerous and varied opportunities to conduct and direct.

Our strong ties with industry means you'll be able to regularly observe conductors in a professional setting – such as the BBC National Orchestra and Chorus of Wales and Welsh National Opera – and potentially discuss issues of technique and repertoire with them.

In our inspiring learning environment, you'll have the freedom to explore your creative interests, breaking down barriers with innovative approaches to your craft as you develop mature musical judgement and authority.

Why study this course?

- Your principal study – which is a mix of one-to-one and group tuition – involves individual conducting technique lessons, choral conducting classes with singers and choral repertoire workshop sessions. Your training isn't a one-size-fits-all approach – you can diversify the types of ensemble and styles of repertoire that you work with, helping you to shape your study around your interests and career ambitions.
- Our impressive list of tutors includes renowned instrumental and vocal soloists and chamber musicians, distinguished coaches, prominent composers, conductors and creative artists in a range of genres – plus principal players in major orchestras and ensembles. They offer you not only first-rate teaching, but mentorship and networking opportunities as well.
- You can take part in masterclass sessions with internationally renowned choral directors and conductors. These professionals at the top of their field can offer guidance in driving your skills and abilities to the highest level.
- Practical work with College-based and other choral groups is a key component of your study. You'll get a variety of opportunities to direct College ensembles, rehearsals and productions – including the College chorus, chamber choir and opera chorus.
- You can also get involved in the process of rehearsing and premiering new works by College composers or conducting self-promoted student performances.
- You'll receive a high level of one-to-one support, but opportunities to collaborate are embedded into the course too. You can work with students on your course and those studying our drama courses, helping you to spark your creativity and build partnerships that could last a lifetime.
- You'll also create and curate your own conducting projects, allowing you to conduct more detailed research into areas that interest you or match your career goals.
- We have strong relationships with renowned arts organisations, who encourage our students to observe their conductors in a professional setting – such as those from the BBC National Orchestra and Chorus of Wales and Welsh National Opera orchestra. It also includes, on occasion, visiting orchestras and choirs as part of the St David's Hall International Concert Series.
- Half of your second year will focus on developing professional projects, which are linked to real-world settings. Areas you can focus on include research, teaching community music, collaborative creative practice, composition and digital artistry. Part of this work includes meeting regularly with a specialist mentor, helping you to gain invaluable industry insight and widen your network of contacts.
- You can support your study with classes in choral repertoire, score-reading, score preparation, aural training and broader repertoire studies – some of these are offered in conjunction with other conducting disciplines, such as orchestral and brass band.
- You can also request to join relevant classes in College departments that relate to your interests – such as vocal studies language classes in Italian, German and French.

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Other course information

Course structure

We offer four study pathways through the MMus course which allow students the flexibility to tailor their studies. Modules in the first year are shared across pathways while second year students have flexibility to choose between four study pathways to complete the course.

Please note that, while the information below reflects the programme offered to date, it may be subject to amendment and change in future years. Students are always consulted on such changes and details are made available to applicants holding offers.

Modules year 1

In order to progress from year one to year two on a two-year postgraduate course, students normally have to pass all first year modules.

Pathways	1, 2, 3 and 4
Year 1	Principle Study 1 (40)

Pathways	1, 2, 3 and 4
Year 1	The Artist in Society (20)

Pathways	1, 2, 3 and 4
Year 1	Your Professional Toolkit (20)

Modules year 2

In order to progress from year one to year two on a two-year postgraduate course, students normally have to pass all first year modules.

Pathway	1
Year 2	Professional Project Small (20), Professional Project Medium (40), Principal Study 2 (40)

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Pathway 3

Year 2 Professional Project Small (20), Professional Project Small (20), Principal Study 3 (60)

Pathway 4

You are expected to participate in principal study and professional development work with a spirit of creative engagement, self-examination and enquiry.

You benefit from a range of learning and teaching strategies, including individual tuition, masterclasses, personal practice, private study, seminars, tutorials, workshops, performances and project-based work.

Individual tuition, focusing on your personal development as a conductor is an important part of the training. All pathways are supported by an allocation of individual tuition delivered within Principal Study modules, working with our team of specialist tutors.

This work is normally complemented by other specialist classes, public masterclasses and project workshops, ensembles and larger groups, rehearsals and personal practice and/or preparation.

The introductory professional development modules are the Artist in Society and Your Professional Toolkit. The first develops your awareness of the roles you could fulfil within the wider community, moving from an understanding of your individual identity to examine issues of artistic citizenship and social engagement, as well as embedding digital literacy.

It also requires you to work in mixed discipline groups to design and deliver an external performance project to a chosen audience, curating an inclusive and diverse programme.

Your Professional Toolkit offers the opportunity for you to interact with two strands of professional activity at an introductory level, across a range of options that offer insight into potential areas of focus for ensuing modules.

Balancing principal study work are the professional projects, which allow you to base yourself in up to two of eight learning communities, led by specialist teaching staff. These are focused in key areas of the profession: performance, composition, collaborative creative practice, digital artistry, research, industry and innovation, teaching artistry and community music.

Specialist seminars alternate with discussion groups, allowing you and staff to support yourself in developing your professional fluency and expertise. You are expected to be proactive in researching, designing, delivering and evaluating your projects, with advice from a specialist mentor.

Sixty credit modules in both Principal Study and Professional Development have associated research, reflective and/or career development outputs, enabling you to draw the strongest connection between your individual work and contemporary practice, as well as putting in place foundations for future professional activity.

The MMus is offered full time over two years. All modules are offered at Level 7.

There are several different modes of study, allowing you to weight Principal Study or Professional Development modules according to your individual wishes.

You must take Principal Study 1 (40), the Artist in Society (20) and Your Professional Toolkit (20); you then choose how to balance the remaining 100 credits of study, opting for either 40 credits of Principal Study and 60 credits of Professional Projects or 60 credits of Principal Study and 40 credits of Professional Projects.

Activity Seminars

Description and approach Staff-led sessions, with interactive content and discussion opportunities, focused on specific elements of the different modules.

Activity Tutorials

Description and approach One-to-one provision, including principal study lessons, piano accompaniment sessions, associated instrument, supervisions and individual mentoring.

Activity	Practical classes and workshops
Description and approach	Classes focusing on key practical skills, e.g., performance and repertoire classes, group coaching and masterclasses.

Activity	Directed study (including online learning)
Description and approach	As guided by teaching staff, for both performance and professional development activities.

Activity	Independent study
Description and approach	Personal practice, research, planning and listening.

Activity	Formative assessment-scheduled

This Level 7 programme uses a flexible set of assessment types which combine practical and reflective methods, often in the same module.

The assessment types may include:

- practical tests
- performances
- performance projects
- programme notes
- projects
- portfolio
- reflective journal
- reflective critique
- assessed rehearsal
- professional audition
- creative portfolios
- skills test
- acting skills test
- reflective interview
- group performance projects
- project outputs
- CV and covering letter

Formative assessment

As a musician you are, by your very nature, an expert reflective practitioner, and your regular work in performance classes, masterclasses and workshops, help you to bring your ability into a wider forum, incorporating formative feedback from expert tutors and peers. These types of learning encounters are cornerstones of delivery within the postgraduate training at the College.

Alongside this regular, informal feedback through classwork, formative assessment has been built into the MMus Principal Study modules as a requirement, through the presence of the indicative assessment at the end of each Autumn term. This allows you to take a moment to situate yourself using written feedback and an indicative mark to give you a clearer sense of your individual learning curve in relation to our criteria.

Learning communities and the associated fortnightly discussion groups will allow you to use your colleagues and staff leads as sounding boards for your ideas, share advice on solving problems and receive feedback on your project's progress.

Summative assessment

Summative assessments are designed carefully to build from one to another (for example, where modules include two discrete performance-based assessments scheduled at different times of the academic year).

The more traditional academic writing and researched presentations are still very much present as options, should you wish to follow this pathway, especially where the ambition to progress to doctoral level work exists.

In terms of providing personal feedback and support in relation to assessment, our open-door policy and the relatively small size of cohorts means that you can be treated as an individual, both in terms of 'academic' and personal support/advice.

Informal meetings are often arranged to discuss summative feedback (whether from performance or other submissions), ensuring you are at the centre of the discussion, reflecting on your own perceptions and expectations, with an ensuing dialogue often putting in place targets for your future development.

Please note that these vary highly depending on individual focus of projects.

A copy of the rules and regulations for this course is available on request. Please email **admissions@rwcmd.ac.uk**.

Entry requirements

Entry is by audition, and you should be able to demonstrate a level of performance ability appropriate for professional training. Minimum entry requirements usually include a 2:1 degree in music or an equivalent qualification. Candidates who have been studying or working in another field will be considered.

International applicants

International applicants whose first language is not English will need to demonstrate that their English language ability meets our minimum requirements. Please refer to our **English language requirements page** for details of accepted English language tests and required scores.

Tuition fees 2025/2026

Course duration	Two years full time
Students from the UK, Republic of Ireland, Channel Islands, and Isle of Man	£13,800 *
Overseas students	£29,200 *

* This amount is for the first year only. The tuition fee payable in the second year is subject to an annual increase.

Further information on the funding available towards the cost of tuition fees.

International opportunities

The College participates in the unique Welsh Government-funded international mobility scheme, Taith, which supports international student projects. The funding provides a bursary for RWCMD students towards travel and subsistence costs for projects in partner institutions, ranging from 2 weeks to a full academic year. These periods abroad can take the following forms:

- 2 week intensive project
- 2-6 week (or longer) traineeship or work placement
- 6-weeks / term / semester / year study abroad (depending on course possibilities)
- Summer school funding (minimum 14 days duration)

Opportunities are being developed continuously, and students are encouraged to put their own ideas forward on a regular basis. Often, these activities can be credited as part of the RWCMD course. There is additional supporting funding available for disadvantaged students, to encourage the fullest possible participation in this ground-breaking Welsh scheme.

You can see our current list of international partner institutions here.

You can find out more about Taith here [**https://www.taith.wales/**]. The College accesses Taith funding for projects via the University of South Wales Global team.

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students to exchange knowledge in an atmosphere of tremendous support. You can see how the students would carry that through into their professional lives.'

Errollyn Wallen
Composer and RWCMD Artist in Residence

Find out more about the department



Conducting

Our postgraduate programme in conducting allows musicians to specialise in either orchestral, choral or brass band conducting, to develo...

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First name

Last name

Email address

Year of entry:

◯ **Sep 2024** ◯ **Sep 2025** ◯ **Sep 2026**

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Steinw Interna Piano Series Katya Apekis

Steinw Interna Piano Series Peter Donoh

Steinw Interna Piano Series Mishka Rushd Mome

Steinw Interna Piano Series Charle Owen

The Cassic Ensem Dvořá In Colou REPCc

Clwb Ifor Bach Preser John Franci Flynn

Mahler Sympl No. 4: REPCc

The Confer of the Birds: REPCc

Illusion A new musica by Ania Drewn (A work in progre REPCc

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Appendix C.f

Sing for Pleasure, C/o Bolton Music Service
Mere Hall, Merehall Street, Bolton BL1 2QT

Freephone: 0800 0184 164
(Freephone supplied by Verizon)

Email: admin@singforpleasure.org.uk
Web: www.singforpleasure.org.uk

Intermediate 1 Conducting Course

Conductors and vocal leaders with some experience of conducting and vocal leadership will benefit from this course. It builds on the skills developed at Foundation level and uses more challenging repertoire to stretch participants further.

Course Aims

By the end of the course, participants should be able to:

- prepare the music and their gesture thoroughly
- sing the various voice-parts accurately and confidently to enable them to be learnt quickly and efficiently
- teach the music quickly and effectively
- use a range of simple, clear and economical conducting gestures
- demonstrate a sense of musicianship consistent with the style of the repertoire conducted
- maintain an effective pace during rehearsal, whilst creating a good rapport with their singers
- analyse their own achievements, and the work of others, in a constructive way

Course Delivery

The course is delivered in two ways – technique sessions include practical demonstrations of all the key aspects of conducting and the workshop sessions that follow give participants an enviable amount of podium time to put into practice what they have learnt. This is achieved within a relaxed and supportive learning environment.

Repertoire

At Intermediate 1 level, the starting point for repertoire takes the form of more challenging rounds than those used at Foundation level, before moving on to more complex part songs. It provides an excellent preparation for the demands of the Intermediate 2 Course.

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Intermediate 2 Conducting Course

The Intermediate 2 Course enables participants to develop their skills further, using more challenging repertoire. Conductors are encouraged to broaden their range and complexity of gesture and idiom. This course is designed for those who have successfully completed previous Sing for Pleasure courses; occasionally, experienced conductors are accepted at this level at the discretion of the Head of Conductor Training.

Course Aims

By the end of the course, participants should be able to:

- prepare the music, the rehearsal plan and their gesture thoroughly
- sing the various voice-parts to enable them to be learnt quickly and efficiently
- maintain a good teaching pace during rehearsal
- use a range of simple, clear and economical conducting gestures
- achieve a musical performance, even with the simplest repertoire
- control the rehearsal whilst making it enjoyable for everyone
- analyse their own achievements, and the work of others, in a constructive way

Course Delivery

The course is delivered in two ways – technique sessions include practical demonstrations and exercises to introduce more advanced aspects of conducting, and the workshop sessions that follow give participants an enviable amount of podium time to put into practice what they have learnt. Optional sessions are often available and these can include choral arranging, repertoire planning and an introduction to orchestral conducting technique.

Repertoire

Repertoire at Intermediate 2 level is much broader. With a requirement for a much wider palette of conducting gesture, repertoire will include pop songs, madrigals, motets and arrangements for both youth and adult choirs. Some repertoire here will be accompanied, for example Faber three-part arrangements by Alexander L'Estrange. Motets and madrigals are often drawn

from our own book, Cantate Domino. Modern British sacred repertoire by composers like Britten and Mathias may also be included and occasionally, a work such as Vivaldi Magnificat may be added at Summer School for performance with a small ensemble.

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Advanced Conducting Course

The Advanced Course enables participants to develop their skills significantly in a wide range of choral and orchestral situations. Conductors are encouraged to broaden their knowledge and application of complex musical ideas and idioms. This course is designed for those who have successfully completed all previous Sing for Pleasure courses; occasionally, conductors with appropriate experience are accepted at this level at the discretion of the Head of Conductor Training.

Course Aims

By the end of the course, participants should be able to:

- prepare the score, the rehearsal plan and their gesture thoroughly
- use their voice confidently and accurately, obtaining a wide palette of choral sound combined with awareness of good vocal technique
- teach the music effectively, optimising rehearsal time
- use a variety of expressive conducting gestures with good flow and clarity
- demonstrate stylistic awareness and good musicianship consistent with the repertoire conducted
- establish appropriate authority, whilst creating a good rapport and gaining the respect of their singers
- analyse their own achievements, and the work of others, in a constructive way

Course Delivery

The course is delivered in a variety of ways – there are technical sessions including practical demonstrations and exercises to introduce advanced aspects of conducting, and the workshop sessions that follow give participants an enviable amount of podium time to put into practice what they have learnt. Taking a holistic approach to development, participants also work on leadership skills and career development tools.

Repertoire

Repertoire at this level is more technically and musically challenging than at Intermediate 2 in a way that gives participants every opportunity to build on their existing skills. It is designed to meet the training needs of those conducting a large choral society, a fairly competent chamber choir and possibly an orchestra too. Repertoire is a mixture of accompanied and a cappella works from a variety of periods. Recent examples include motets by Monteverdi, Gesualdo, Byrd, Tallis and Victoria. Secular works by composers like Bob Chilcott often feature, including his work The Making of the Drum. At Summer School, our Advanced level conductors will conclude the end of course concert with a whole course choir, accompanied by a semi-professional orchestra. Recent works have included Mozart Requiem, Oliver Tarney Magnificat (specially commissioned for our Golden Jubilee year in 2014), Handel Utrecht Te Deum, Haydn Maria Theresa and Nelson masses, Rutter Magnificat and Requiem, Faure and Durufle Requiems.

Orchestral Conducting Course

This course enables participants who have successfully completed the Intermediate 2 or Advanced Courses to develop their skills in the field of orchestral conducting. Conductors are introduced to those elements of orchestral conducting technique that are common with choral conducting, and those elements that differ. It is designed for those who have successfully completed previous Sing for Pleasure courses but, occasionally, experienced conductors are accepted at this level at the discretion of the Head of Conductor Training.

Course Aims

By the end of the course, participants should be able to

- prepare the score, the rehearsal plan and their gesture thoroughly
- use a baton effectively, confidently and with flow and clarity
- teach the music effectively, optimising rehearsal time
- demonstrate stylistic awareness and good musicianship consistent with the repertoire conducted
- establish appropriate authority, whilst creating a good rapport and gaining the respect of their singers and players
- demonstrate awareness of the orchestra and of historically informed performance style
- analyse their own achievements, and the work of others, in a constructive way

Course Delivery

The course is delivered in two ways – there are technical sessions on score preparation and aspects of instrumental technique, plus practical sessions with piano that allow participants to prepare their repertoire ready to meet the orchestra; the course gives participants an enviable amount of podium time to put into practice what they have learnt.

Repertoire

Repertoire for this course is simple enough to not get in the way of learning but challenging enough to give participants a worthwhile musical experience. Recent examples include Grieg – Holberg Suite, Mozart Divertimenti including Eine Kleine Nachtmusik, Dvorak – Serenade for Strings, Warlock – Capriol Suite, Elgar – Serenade for Strings, Corelli and Handel – Concerti Grossi, Bach – Suite No 2, Wagner – Siegfried Idyll (arr for strings) Mahler – Adagietto from Symphony No 5, Mendelssohn – String Symphony No 4.

Analysis of Grey Literature Sources

	Institution	**RWCMD**	**RAM**	**RBC**	**BU**	**ABCD**	**Sing for Pleasure**
	Source	website	prospectus	website	website	website	website
	Specialist Choral Conducting Pathway	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Independent Organisation	Independent Organisation
	Level	Postgraduate	Postgraduate	Postgraduate	Postgraduate	Intermediate =Diploma ABRSM Advanced = Licentiate ABRSM	Course Type - Intermediate/Advanced
Code	Element included in course						
1	gesture/direction	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y
2	beat patterns					Y	
3	score preparation	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y
4	error detection/aural skills	Y	Y	Y		Y	
5	rehearsal organisation and effectiveness		Y	Y		Y	Y
6	knowledge and choice of repertoire	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
7	knowledge and application of vocal technique	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
8	acquistion of language skills	Y		Y			
9	interpretation		Y	Y			Y
10	musicianship	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
11	people management skills			Y		Y	Y
12	verbal communication skills		Y	Y		Y	
13	knowledge of vocal/choir acoustics						
14	knowledge of vocal anatomy & health					Y	
15	pastoral care						
16	authority	Y		Y			Y
17	knowing when to intervene/correct						
18	knowing when to empower to self-correct						
19	writing of programme notes						
20	one to one tuition/mentoring	Y	Y	Y	Y		
21	group tuition	Y	Y				
22	non-choral repertoire studies	Y					
23	employability and transferrable skills			Y	Y		
24	developing and managing a music career		Y	Y	Y		
25	practical experience with singers	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
26	masterclasses	Y	Y	Y	Y		
27	opportunities to observe other conductors	Y	Y	Y	Y		
28	wide range of institute performance opportunites	Y	Y	Y	Y		
29	performance opportunities with guest performers	Y		Y			
30	secondment and other real-life practical opportunities	Y					
31	professional project development		Y	Y			
32	work with other departments such as Drama			Y			
33	personal development skills such as reflection	Y		Y			Y
34	collaborative skills development	Y	Y	Y			
35	mentorship programme	Y					
36	development of creativity and innovation	Y					

	Elements within choral conducting pathways	
	Institution - Royal Welsh	
	Document type - Website	
	Course Type - Postgrad	
	Course Duration - Full or Part time	
Element No	**Element**	**Code**
1	weekly choral conducting class	20
2	specialist vocal tuition	7
3	many opportunities to conduct and direct	30
4	observation of conductors in a professional setting	29
5	opportunities to discuss technique with professionals	1
6	opportunities to discuss repertoire with professionals	6
7	development of creative interests and approaches	36
8	develop musical judgement	10
9	develop authority	16
10	one to one tuition	20
11	group tuition	21
12	conducting technique lessons	1
13	choral repertoire workshops	6
14	variety of College ensemble styles and sizes to work with	30
15	mentorship programme	37
16	networking opportunities	25
17	masterclasses with internationally renowned conductors and directors	28
18	opportunties to conduct rehearsals and productions with College ensembles including opera chorus and chamber choir	27
19	opportunities to participate in rehearsing and premiering of new works by College composers	30
20	conduct self-promoted student performances	
21	opportunity to work with Drama department	34
22	create and curate individual conducting projects	33
23	develop professional projects linked to real world-settings	33
24	specialist mentoring in the development of professional projects	37
25	choral repertoire classes	6
26	score-reading and preparation classes	3
27	aural training	4
28	broader repertoire studies e.g. orchestral and brass band	22
29	vocal studies language classes	8
30	professional development modules and support	26
31	chance to work in mixed discipline groups	36
32	specialist seminars to support development of professional fluency and expertise	25
33	collaboration with other learning communities such performance, composition, digital artistry, community music	36
34	reflective practice development	35

	Elements within choral conducting pathways	
	Institution - Royal Academy	
	Document type - Handbook	
	Course Type - Postgrad	
	Course Duration - Full or Part time	
Element No	**Element**	**Code**
1	Contextual study in selective liturgical areas	6
2	opportunities to observe choral groups internally	27
3	opportunities to observe choral groups externally	27
4	Interpretation seminars/classes	9
5	opportunities to work with orchestras	28
6	masterclasses	26
7	opportunity to generate own choral activity internally	25
8	opportunity to generate own choral activity externally	31
9	professional development	24
10	opportunity for own projects	31
11	career development	24
12	one to one technical tuition	20
13	vocal technique	7
14	aural skills	4
15	knowledge and choice of repertoire	6
16	choral pedagogy	5
17	gestural explictness and economy	1
18	links between singing technique and conducting technique	7
19	expression of musical intentions	10
20	opportunites to perform	28
21	group tuition	21
22	opportunities to collaborate	34
23	develop the ability to communicate interpretative ideals through clear verbal communication	12
	develop the ability to communicate interpretative ideals through clear gestural communication	1
24	encourage the singers' expressiveness	10
25	rehearsal mamangement and planning	5
26	baton technique	1

	Elements within choral conducting pathways	
	Institution - Royal Birmingham	
	Document type - Syllabus	
	Course Type - Postgrad	
	Course Duration - Full or Part time	
Element No	**Element**	**Code**
1	Masterclasses	26
2	conduct student run Camerata chamber choir	25
3	singing lessons	7
4	one to one tuition	20
5	language classes	8
6	involvement with Conservatoire Chamber choir	29
7	repertoire knowledge	6
8	keep singers interested and musically satisfied	11
9	recruit singers to Camerata CC	23
10	opportunity for own choral groups	31
11	work with other departments such as Composition	32
12	career development module	24
13	Optional professional development modules	24
14	conducting technique	1
15	performance opportunities	28
16	opportunity to observe other conductors	27
17	opportunity to observe sessions for other conducting specialisms	27
18	opportunity to collaborate in interdisciplinary projects	34
19	Networking opportunities with leading professionals	24
20	management and administration skills	23
21	self-management and reflection	33
22	people management	11
23	communication skills	12
24	interpretation	9
25	musicianship	10
26	aural skills	4
27	score reading and preparation	3
28	seminars on choral conducting issues	
29	independent and appropriate decision making	23
30	effective leadership skills	16
31	effective rehearsal management	5
32	Opportunity to study one academic MMus module such as Concepts in Musicology, Historical Performance Practice, Professional Music Criticism	23

	Elements within choral conducting pathways	
	Institution - Birmingham University	
	Document type - Syllabus	
	Course Type - Postgrad	
	Course Duration - Full or Part time	
Element No	**Element**	**Code**
1	Weekly opportunites to observe rehearsals	27
2	Weekly opportunities to conduct	25
3	Weekly opportunities to sing	7
4	Opportunity for podium time with University ensembles	28
5	Opportunity to be assistant conductor for up to 5 University choirs	28
6	Tuition with visiting lecturers	20
7	Masterclasses and workshops with distinguished guests	26
8	Auditions for further conducting experience	28
9	Observe world-leading conductors and educators on a regular basis	27
10	choral conducting techniques & methods	10
11	working with choirs of all sizes	28
12	develop singing skills	7
13	develop vocal warm up techniques	7
14	study choral repertoire	6
15	score study and preparation	3
16	Specialist module in British Music in Performance	
17	Career development	24
18	Identification of transferable skills	23
19	Grant writing skills	24
20	Public presentation skills/tools	24
21	Self promotion	24
22	Leadership cultivation	24
23	Digital literacy including podcast and video creation and website development	24
24	Professional development	24
25	Copyright awareness	24

	Elements within choral conducting pathways	
	Institution - Association of British Choral Directors	
	Document type - Syllabus	
	Course Type - ABRSM Diploma equivalent and above	
	Course Duration - Part time 1 day a month for 6 months	
	Element	**Code**
	Intermediate/advanced	
1	beat patterns	2
2	solid technical assurance in gestures	1
3	independence of hands	1
4	score preparation	3
5	run a successful rehearsal	5
6	understanding of affect of gestures on choral sound	10
7	rehearsal planning	5
8	ability to detect and correct problems	4
9	how to improve the overall quality of singing	7
10	communicate in a musically engaging and effective way	12
11	attendees form choir	25
12	understanding of how voices work	14
13	create a rapport with the choir	11
14	knowledge of a variety of musical styles	6

	Elements within choral conducting pathways	
	Institution - Sing for Pleasure	
	Document type - Syllabus from Website	
	Course Type - Intermediate/Advanced	
	Course Duration - Part time	
Element No	**Element**	**Code**
1	score preparation	3
2	clarity and suitability of gesture	1
3	be able to teach the music quickly and effectively	5
4	ability to sing the different voice parts accurately and quickly to aid learning	5
5	demonstrate musicianship	10
6	understanding of style of repertoire	9
7	creating a rapport with singers	11
8	effective rehearsal planning and management	5
9	self- reflection and criticism	33
10	constructive criticism for singers	11
11	develop singers' musicality	10
12	encourage a wide range of choral sounds	7
13	good awareness of vocal technique	7
14	development of expressive gestures	10
15	develop stylistic awareness of repertoire	6
16	establish appropriate authority	16
17	attendees form choir	25

By continuing with this survey, consent is given to use any submitted data.

Q0.1. Are you based in the UK?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

About you

Q1.1. Gender Identity

- ○ Male
- ○ Female
- ○ Non-binary / third gender
- ○ Prefer not to say

Q1.2. Age

- ○ 18-30
- ○ 31-40
- ○ 41-50
- ○ 51-60
- ○ 61-70

- ○ 71-80
- ○ 81+
- ○ Prefer not to say

Q1.3. Education Level

- ○ O-level/GCSE/GSE or equivalent
- ○ A-levels/Highers or equivalent
- ○ Undergraduate degree
- ○ Postgraduate certificate/diploma
- ○ Masters
- ○ Doctorate
- ○ Other (please specify)

  [ ]
- ○ None of the above
- ○ Prefer not to say

Q1.4. What type of school did you attend? (please select all that apply).

- ☐ State
- ☐ Faith
- ☐ Grammar
- ☐ Academy of Free school
- ☐ Independent or Private

- [ ] Cathedral school
- [ ] Other (please specify)

- [ ] Prefer not to say

Q1.5. What type of Further or Higher Education institution did you attend? (Please select all that apply)

- [ ] General FE college
- [ ] Sixth Form college
- [ ] Tertiary college
- [ ] Art and Design college
- [ ] Performing Arts college
- [ ] University
- [ ] Music Conservatoire
- [ ] Other (please specify)

- [ ] None of the above
- [ ] Prefer not to say

Q1.6. What was your first subject area?

- ○ Music

- ○ English
- ○ Sciences (please specify)

- ○ Art
- ○ Languages
- ○ Humanities
- ○ Engineering
- ○ Mathematics
- ○ Other (please specify)

- ○ Prefer not to say

Music Education

Q2.1. In which category does your primary instrument belong?

- ○ Classical voice including choral singing
- ○ Opera
- ○ Contemporary Commercial Music
- ○ Musical Theatre
- ○ Strings
- ○ Woodwind
- ○ Brass

- ○ Percussion
- ○ Keyboard
- ○ Composition
- ○ Other (please specify)

- ○ Prefer not to say

Q2.2. To what level did you study your primary instrument?

- ○ Up to and including ABRSM Grade 7 or equivalent (please specify)
- ○ ABRSM Grade 8 or equivalent (please specify)
- ○ ABRSM Diploma or equivalent (please specify)
- ○ ABRSM Licentiate or equivalent (please specify)

- ○ ABRSM Fellowship or equivalent (please specify)
- ○ Undergraduate performance
- ○ Postgraduate performance
- ○ None of the above (please specify any other qualifications including self taught)
- ○ Prefer not to say

Q2.3. To what level have you studied choral conducting?

- ○ Postgraduate Certificate/Diploma
- ○ Masters
- ○ Doctorate
- ○ ABRSM Diploma or equivalent (please specify)
- ○ ABRSM Licentiate or equivalent (please specify)

- ○ ABRSM Fellowship or equivalent (please specify)
- ○ Informal training i.e.. summer school/self taught
- ○ Informal training i.e. on the job
- ○ Other (please specify)
- ○ Prefer not to say

Your choral experience

Q3.1. What was your first experience of choral singing?

- ○ School choir
- ○ Church choir
- ○ Cathedral choir
- ○ Church organist
- ○ Cathedral organist
- ○ County youth choir
- ○ National Youth choir
- ○ Local amateur choir
- ○ Local childrens or young persons choir

- ○ Other (please specify)

- ○ None of the above
- ○ Prefer not to say

Q3.2. If an active choral singer, what styles of choir do you currently sing with? (please select all that apply)

- ☐ Professional
- ☐ Orchestral or symphonic chorus
- ☐ Concert choir
- ☐ Community choir
- ☐ Rock/Pop choir
- ☐ LGBTQ+ choir
- ☐ Choral Society (SATB)
- ☐ Chamber Choir (SATB)
- ☐ Upper Voices Choir
- ☐ Male Voice Choir
- ☐ Female Voice Choir
- ☐ Children's Choir
- ☐ Boys Voice Choir
- ☐ Girls Voice Choir
- ☐ School or College Choir
- ☐ Church Choir
- ☐ Cathedral Choir
- ☐ Gospel Choir

- [ ] Click to write Choice 19

Q3.3. How many choirs currently engage you as a choral director?

- ○ 0
- ○ 1
- ○ 2
- ○ 3
- ○ 4
- ○ 5
- ○ 6
- ○ More than 6 (please specify)
- ○ Prefer not to say

Q3.4. What styles of choir do you currently work with and how many of each type? (please select all that apply)

- [ ] Professional
- [ ] Orchestral or symphonic chorus
- [ ] Concert choir
- [ ] Community choir

- [ ]  Rock/Pop choir
- [ ]  LGBTQ+ choir
- [ ]  Choral Society (SATB)
- [ ]  Chamber choir (SATB)
- [ ]  Upper Voices choir
- [ ]  Male Voice choir
- [ ]  Female Voice choir
- [ ]  Children's choir
- [ ]  Boys Voice choir
- [ ]  Girls Voice choir
- [ ]  School or College choir
- [ ]  Church choir
- [ ]  Cathedral choir
- [ ]  Gospel choir
- [ ]  Military Wives choir
- [ ]  Workplace choir
- [ ]  Singing for Physical Health choir

- [ ] Singing for Mental Health choir
- [ ] Singing for the Disadvantaged choir e.g. the homeless or marginalised
- [ ] Prison choir
- [ ] Other (please specify type and number)
- [ ] None of the above
- [ ] Prefer not to say

Q3.5. Is choral conducting your main source of income?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Prefer not to say

Q3.6. If you answered No to Q18, please specify your main source of income below.

Q3.7. Which of the following organisations do you belong to? (please tick all appropriate boxes)

- [ ] Association of British Choral Directors
- [ ] British Voice Association
- [ ] Association of Singing Teachers
- [ ] Making Music
- [ ] Independent Society of Musicians
- [ ] Musicians Union
- [ ] Sound Sense
- [ ] Other (please specify)

- [ ] Prefer not to say

What does it take to be a good choral director?

Q4.1. Please rank the following conducting competencies in order of importance to you.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Clarity of gesture and direction	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Error detection/aural skills	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Score knowledge	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Rehearsal Organisation	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Knowledge and application of vocal technique	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Language pronunciation	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Intepretation	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Musicianship	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Prefer not to say	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q4.2. Please rank the following leadership and ancillary competencies in order of importance to you.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
People management skills	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Knowledge of vocal/ choir acoustics	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Knowledge of vocal anatomy and health	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Verbal communication skills	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Pastoral care	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Authority	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Knowing when to intervene/correct	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Knowing when to empower to self-correct	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Prefer not to say	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Q4.3. Of the elements listed in Q4.1 and Q4.2, please list the 5 competencies you consider your strongest.

1.

2.

3.

Q4.4. Of the elements listed in Q4.1 and Q4.2, please list the 5 competencies you consider your weakest.

1.

2.

3.

Q4.5. Please list any competencies you consider important that are not listed above.

1.

2.

3.

4. If more than 3. list here.

5. None to add

Professional Development

Q5.1. Do you actively take part in continuous professional development (CPD) activities?

- Yes, please go to Q5.2
- No, please got to Q.5.6

Q5.2. If you answered yes to Q5.1, what type of CPD activities have you undertaken in last 5 years (whether completed or ongoing)?

- Short courses/seminars run by organisations such as the BVA or AOTOS
- Short courses/seminars run by organisations such as Voice Study Centre
- Longer courses such as ABCD's Initial, Intermediate and Advanced Conducting courses

- [ ] Undergraduate training
- [ ] Postgraduate study leading to PGCE
- [ ] Postgraduate study leading to Masters qualification
- [ ] Doctoral study
- [ ] Other (please specify)

- [ ] Prefer not to say

Q5.3. What areas did you cover in your CPD? (please select all that apply)

- [ ] Conducting technique
- [ ] Score preparation
- [ ] Vocal technique including warm-ups
- [ ] Vocal anatomy and health
- [ ] Specific techniques such as Estill, Accent Method, Alexander technique (please specify)

- [ ] Vocal acoustics
- [ ] Singing for Health and Wellbeing (please specify)

- [ ] Other (please specify)

- [ ] Prefer not to say

Q5.4. What areas do you plan to study in the future? (please select all that apply)

- [ ] Conducting technique
- [ ] Score preparation
- [ ] Vocal technique including warm-ups
- [ ] Vocal anatomy and health
- [ ] Specific techniques such as Estill, Accent Method, Alexander technique (please specify)
- [ ] Vocal acoustics
- [ ] Singing for Health and Wellbeing (please specify)
- [ ] Other (please specify)
- [ ] Not currently planning any CPD activities

- [ ] Prefer not to say

Q5.5. What methods of delivery would interest you in terms of professional development? (please select all that apply)

- [ ] Online delivery only
- [ ] In person only
- [ ] Short courses e.g. a weekend
- [ ] Short courses e.g. a couple of hours one day per week for a month
- [ ] One-off seminars
- [ ] Longer courses e.g. Diploma or Certificate level
- [ ] Longer courses e.g. Postgraduate level
- [ ] Other (please specify)

- [ ] Prefer not to say

Q5.6. If you answered No to Q5.1, what are your reasons for not undertaking professional development training? (please select all that apply)

- [ ] 1. Time
- [ ] 2. Expense
- [ ] 3. Availability of suitable opportunities in your area
- [ ] 4. Availability of suitable opportunities

- [ ] 5. Current conducting roles allow for on the job development
- [ ] 6. Unnecessary for you as an individual
- [ ] 7. Other (please specify)

- [ ] Prefer not to say

Q5.7. If you answered 6. to Q5.6, please give explain the reasons for your response in the table below

Additional Information

Q6.0. Thank you for completing this survey.

As part of the project, we will be looking for a small number of choral directors to participate in a short interview, either online or by phone. If you would be interested in participating, please provide your email address below to enable interview arrangements to be made. Alternatively, please contact the principal researcher at 1911158@student.uwtsd.ac.uk. Please note

that by agreeing to participate in an interview, your identity will be known to the principal researcher. However, this will be treated confidentially at all times and no individual will be named in the report, nor will any organisations to which they belong.

If you would like a copy of the results of this study, please contact the principal researcher at 1911158@student.uwtsd.ac.uk. By contacting the principal researcher for a copy of the result, your identity as a participant in the research will be known, however your responses to the survey will remain anonymous and at no time will any individual be named in the report, nor will any organisations to which they belong.

☐ I am happy to participate in an interview and understand that by giving my email address, my identity will be known to the principal researcher. However, I understand that my participation will be kept in the strictest confidence.

Powered by Qualtrics

Subject 1 Interview for projec...40715_111008-Meeting Recording

Sun, Aug 11, 2024 3:15PM • 1:12:03

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

choir, work, music, conductor, absolutely, people, training, choral, singing, sing, voice, singers, arts council, point, great, bit, find, piece, arts council england, amount

01:56
Hello, Laura, hello. [redacted]

02:00
Lovely to meet you.

02:01
Good to meet you, too. You're very blurry. Are you in on low bandwidth or something?

02:07
I think I might be at the moment. It's a little bit hit and miss here and in out in the sticks at times. Um, can you hear me? Okay, absolutely. Good. Good. Well, thank you very much for agreeing to part participate in this I'm just, I've been overwhelmed by the amount of support I've had across the core community in the UK. It's been, it's been smashing, obviously, just to remind you that I'm recording this session to sort of aid with transcription, and I'm actually, for the first time, using teams own transcription service as well. So be interesting to see how that comes out. So with no more do, because obviously I appreciate we're all all busy, and I don't really want to keep you any longer than than I have to. Shall we make a start? Of course, right? Smashing. So first couple of questions would really be for a little bit of context. And number one is, how long have you been a choral director?

03:06
Um, I've been full time as a choral director, kind of a slide into it, but I would say full time since 2014 Okay.

03:20
And

03:22
how, why did you move make the move into sort of full time? You said you slid into it,

03:28

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yeah, yeah. So I

03:34
it was a bit in hindsight. Things are very obvious, aren't they, and it's, it's kind of like, yeah, why didn't I have the there might have been some amount of courage, perhaps, of getting on with or circumstances I had found myself. I had my first Choral Society, whilst I had was doing my A levels, and was I can only imagine how ill equipped I was to to do that, but the the arrogance of youth, hey? And so I then spent my undergraduate three years taking the University Singers and directing the wind band and and having a choir in the community as well, and then I still thought I was going to sing, so I went to the academy as a first study singer, but ended up spending a lot of time in the choral conducting department. And much like when I was doing my undergraduate, I found that I could go over to the northern and join in Edgar's rep class. I found at the Academy there were loads of opportunities if you wanted to get into that, and then kind of ran out of money and ended up. Doing a PGCE and school teaching for four years before just out of frustration and the whole I want to do these things, and I'm being I felt shoehorned into everybody else's agenda. This is how a school works. It was, it was a me being the wrong shape for the for the whole, rather than the whole being the wrong shape. So in 2010 I moved to Peterborough to work in the music department of the cathedral, obstacles Lee on the sing up outreach program, which was, which was, had some funny at the time, and was, was kind of the thing. And at the same time, I took on Peterborough, Melbourne's choir, which was, which was, kind of three old men and a dog, like totally moribund. And I was, I was taking it on, or, or it was stopping, that makes sense. And I'd already, I'm, I'm a Cornishman, and I'd always done male voice choir in as a teenager and and really enjoyed that kind of sector, so I took them on, and then it kind of snowballed from there, and we started a women's choir. We started a youth choir, all under the the same organizations, the melbour. It became more work than stopping every day to do even some kind of aloud. And 14 years later, I'm pay full time job, working on, working for the for this organization. So I suppose it is, it is a slide into it, isn't it? And I couldn't, I couldn't dream of i There's nothing I want for well, better singers and less mistakes and easier tuning and all of these kind of things, but with regards to the resources and the opportunity and the autonomy to do, do my thing, I couldn't want for more than I have. It's well resourced. I have. We have three full timers, so there's a business manager as well who does all of the things I don't want to do. And there's, there's a marketing manager too. So I think I'm a little bit a lot of my colleagues are work working freelance and work for a number of different organizations, but so I think I'm probably quite unusual in having it all under one, one umbrella, with a with a pension plan. Yeah, it's quite kind of quite nice. And it's nice to see how this, how that situation can produce really cool things. So we now deliver the singing strategy for the local music hub as well. And we, in the last kind of since covid, have got into doing quite a lot of Arts Council England funded work trying to develop the men lower voices sector in this country, which, I don't know whether you have any Melbourne choir experience, but, but they are, yeah, there's quite a lot of, quite a lot of Melbourne choirs. And they're, they're kind of stuck a long time ago and very old and very much monocultures and sexist and racist and homophobic and all of all of these wonderful things that the Arts Council will pay you money to address. So, yeah,

Commented [LW1]: Ostensibly on the Sing Out programme

Commented [LW2]: Should be Male Voice Choir

Commented [LW3]: Male Voice Choir

Commented [LW4]: Male Voice Choir

08:55
the product of their generation, really, I guess, is the, absolutely the thing to say, yeah. I mean, I mean, obviously, I mean, just to digress, obviously, all choirs have issues getting quality male singers these

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days. It does seem that it's this issue where boys stop singing, you know, and they don't move on. And personally, I'm, I have a quite good standard, up voices, choir. Okay, so we've kind of ruled that. We've all ruled out that risk. We do get the occasional counter tennis singing with us, which is great, but we don't really go out looking for tennis and basses.

09:34
I think this is, this is I find myself enjoying that you use the term up. A voice is quiet. This is like, this is a good, this is good to move forward. The the the amount of people who direct ladies choirs seems to like, yes,

09:55
it's, I mean, from my perspective, it's great, you know, it does open up. This, this, you know. Yeah, it does bring a different color to the choir. So, yeah, I'm very open minded, and if I could find it enough tenant lady tennis and basses, I'd probably add them to it.

10:12
Anyway. I know it's a digression, but it's right in the center of my kind of specialism. It is not hard to get male singers

10:22
interesting? Yeah.

10:25
How do you manage that?

10:27
Because so we this project that we've just finished with the Arts Council is we've we've worked up a project based recruitment model that we've been using since I started with the malvours Choir and it they and we've just rolled it out over these five malwares choirs across country funded by the Arts Council. And the headlines are that Radcliffe on Chen, one of the malwares choirs on it, got 120 men on their recruitment project, yeah? So, so it's not, it's, it's, it's reasonably straightforward to get men's joint choirs.

11:10
Okay, that's very interesting. And maybe, yeah, I'm gonna park that for the minute, yeah. And maybe come back to that, because I think you know that actually potentially adds something different to, sort of the questions that I'm looking to sort of steer you on. And at the moment very much we're talking about a sort of, it's the training that's available to, if you like, call directors like myself, who I've come from it to it from being, you know, sort of the experienced singer side and moved across. So if I could go back a little bit to when you were got your first call society, What? What? What? I mean, obviously you were a singer, yeah. So you had a cool background yourself, yeah. Yeah, when you made that move to the dark side, shall we say, had you had any training at that point?

12:10

Commented [LW5]: Upper voicecs

Commented [LW6]: Tenors

Commented [LW7]: Tenors

Commented [LW8]: Upper voices

Commented [LW9]: Should be upper voices choir

Commented [LW10]: Should be lady tenors and basses

Commented [LW11]: Male voice

Commented [LW12]: Male voice

Commented [LW13]: Radcliffe on Trent between Leicester and Nottingham

Commented [LW14]: Get men to join choirs

Commented [LW15]: choral

Commented [LW16]: choral

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None whatsoever.

12:11
Okay,

12:13
that's okay. So what did you so why did you make the move? And do it. And you know, do you wish you had had some training at that point?

12:27
I think,

12:29
I think the job that we do sits so much on top of so many other things, and we've been delivering the CPD for the singing strategy here in the city for age now, in Peterborough. And we first, I remember sketching out the CPD and what I wanted to achieve from it, or what I wanted the participants to achieve from it in the first instance. And this is kind of like money available a training program to develop for primary school teachers to be able to do singing with their kids. And I quickly discovered that

13:12
what you see of conducting

13:16
is, is like the tip of the iceberg is, is only, well, I flip it on its head, you can see astonishingly good conductors who get amazingly amazing results, who have very poor technique, as in, I'm sitting here watching this person conduct, and I think what the fuck you're doing?

13:40
It's one of the reasons why I moved across. I got tired of directors like the core directors like that, to be honest.

13:46
But, but the job is so

13:52
the gesture is only a minuscule part of the job. It is, what's the turn of phrase, a requirement, but not sufficient. Yeah, yeah. So I'm we're just, I also have an upper voices choir, and we're just heading into Royal Philharmonic engagement with a host piece. It being the host celebrations this year, and the pieces Hercules lament, which, if you find a moment, find it on YouTube and have a listen. It is very cool. And there are not so many pieces for big orchestra and women's choir rather than big orchestra and STB choir and and in order to pull this concert off, I'm sat here, spread all around me on my desk are the manuscripts of cupus lament, and I'm in the process of working out which pedal changes the heart part needs, what the what the heart boxes are going to look like on the heart part, yeah. And then

Commented [LW17]: choral

Commented [LW18]: Holst

Commented [LW19]: Holst

Commented [LW20]: Hecuba's Lament

Commented [LW21]: Hecuba's Lament

Commented [LW22]: harp

Commented [LW23]: harp

Commented [LW24]: harp

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when I finished that, I have to have on my list, I'm a big, big believer. And lists of what has to be done in the day. Yeah, on my list today, I've got one of our second tenors, wife has cancer, and I have to have a telephone conversation with him. And one of the baritones, I have to have a conversation with him, because basically, he's a lazy shit and he's going to piss or get off the pot. Yeah, this is like where we are. So I have a number of those tasks to do, and I also have the financial planning document for next, next cycle of consequences. So so this idea of of conductor training, I think, is a really weird thing, because, yes, you can go on Amy bebbington's, how do you be a three shape? Course, yeah, yep. But if you I, I'd rather somebody, if I was stood in front of them as a singer, I'd rather somebody had understanding and intention and a deep knowledge of what we were trying to achieve. And, you know, if their beat shapes are a bit unorthodox, I can, I can square that square, those circles, hey.

16:14
But I think the

16:18
the knowledge of

16:21
performance process, the knowledge of languages. I mean the how on earth have I? How on earth, at age of 18, am I to decide which make an informed decision of the Italian pronunciation of whatever? Yeah, um, when I have nothing so to and I worked out beat shapes myself, you know, but that does, that does seem to be where we are with, with conduct training in this country.

16:58
And interesting I was going to, you know, one of the things was going to ask was,

17:03
what?

17:05
So you obviously, you had no training. You then gained training once you moved to university and then on to the academy and you were able to participate.

17:17
What did you those training? Things were extra. They were on, yes, it wasn't cool, yeah, yeah,

17:26
yeah, yeah, but it was available to you. My suspicion is that it was my

17:34
no those. There was no training in it,

17:39
so you literally rocked up. And had,

Commented [LW25]: People Management - behaviour of singer likely to be having an impact on colleagues so needs to be addressed.

Commented [LW26]: Too much emphasis on gesture and beat shapes in UK training

Commented [LW27]: Should be 'core'

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17:45
I remember, it was week one of undergraduate. They had nobody to take University Singers, and they'd read my UCAS, and it said I had a choral site before, and next week I was doing it. That's it.

17:58
Your job. Yeah. Okay, interesting, yep, so sorry,

18:04
it's happening in a number of different pathways, because if you look at the Cathedral music model, then you play the organ really well, and you play the organ really well, and you play the organ really well, and then you've played the organ so well that Your prize is to not play the organ but to conduct the choir instead.

18:28
And there's no formal training in that model either. No

18:31
indeed, absolutely, and for many people, that actually suits them. However, you know, as a conductor myself, I've identified scent weaknesses in my approach, and I do sometimes wonder if the training that that I've had, because that's that I've, you know, try and cover my bases, is being served by what's out there, if you like, in the market. Anyway. That's the gist of this, this particular dissertation. So I'm not, I'm not drawing conclusions yet, because I need to keep an open mind, especially as an insider, an inside researcher as well. So I mean, so for me, you know what? What did you find? You know that if you look at the sort of the whole package of being a choral conductor, Director, what came most naturally to you, and what did you have to work on?

19:28
I think my ending up drawing on

19:36
why you end up in I do too much analysis. So here's too much analysis or the right amount of analysis, I don't know, during my I trace back to aspects of my childhood, and particularly my mother's charges and situations whilst I was kind of in the primary school secretary. Cool, and I see in that why I feel comfortable when I'm in in control of the situation. So there's a temperamental thing there. There's a there's a temperament thing. The word temperamental means has a actual call, a temperament based situation, that either temperament is also appropriate

20:33
the and equally from the same source, a level of achieve, driven to achievement

20:46
that came from not for now, but I stayed, and my brother went when my parents separated, and my mother then spent the whole of My childhood trying to win back my brother, and you don't see it at the

Commented [LW28]: Society

Commented [LW29]: Other routes to choral conducting

Commented [LW30]: certain

Commented [LW31]: Secondary school

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time, but I recall now thinking, hello, I'm here. Yeah. And out of that comes this. Well, no, I'm going to be good at this. I'm going to be at you will notice me kind of thing, yeah. So I think there's an amount of temperament that goes into choral conducting that possibly can't be trained, a kind of determination, perhaps, but I think that's where I that's where I got it, got it from, and the amount of, okay, I'm going to decide which row the ducks are in thank you. For a moment, you very much. Before being competent enough to do it massively, right? Yeah. And

21:51
what was the most difficult thing for you to actually learn? And, I mean, I'm not just talking about technique, I'm talking about

22:00
the soft side as well, if you like,

22:02
yeah, no, and it is the soft side that is probably the I have got better and better at it, the more

22:15
layered I've understood people to be.

22:21
There was a massive breakthrough when I realized how thrilling saying sorry I was wrong, because that's like, whoa, that's my new kryptonite. I love it. No no, my go to thing, and you've messed it all up, and you go, I'm really sorry I got that wrong and I didn't want to under that. And people are like, I don't know where to go from there.

22:46
No, absolutely.

22:48
So probably the thing that has come to me, and it's still a journey, is the

22:58
managing, the managing the people,

23:02
and always been able to go right, let's go this way and be exciting and have people follow you because you were exciting. But to actually have deep, fruitful relationships with with these people is something that's come later also, and this works particularly nicely because it's all in the one organization to have built procedures, policies and procedures to deal with difficult situations when it's just you working like the Lone Ranger Riding into one town and then the next town. It becomes quite you, them, I think. Whereas now we, for example, we have a learning and development policy which addresses which will be made reference to in the telephone call I have to make about the person who's not really pulling their weight and doing this kind of thing, and previously, when I was working outside those kinds of

Commented [LW32]: Innate personality characteristics needed/beneficial

Commented [LW33]: Which row the ducks are in

Commented [LW34]: Ability to recognise and admit own mistakes

Commented [LW35]: Is this something all choirs should consider, even with freelance directors/conductors?

Commented [LW36]: Applying business practices? Even the singers are expected to behave 'professionally' - elevates the choir above hobby/social club status?

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structures, they there was a danger of those situations becoming personal, yeah, yeah, and not nicely personal. All of it is personal. But yeah,

24:20
yeah, yes. I know. I understand, yeah. These things can sometimes get a little bit yeah. They have to be done in a constructive way.

24:32
I also think, I suppose, something that's come quite late is the realization that it's okay to be wrong and

24:41
that it is guaranteed one will be wrong,

24:45
and that's okay, too, also a realization that I'm never going to be chorus master at covid garden and like, you know, knowing, knowing my place and what, what I'm good at and and that that has, that's been a nice journey. Journey, a reassuring journey. Yeah, okay,

Commented [LW37]: Covent Garden!

Commented [LW38]: Job satisfaction above ambition

25:06
and so

25:09
what's, what's, what's the buzz is, is it? Now, I'm not going to put words into your mouth, so why? Obviously forgetting the business model, and you're, you know as a business, you're obviously managing the situation extremely well. For you as as a performer, what is it that gives you the satisfaction at the end of the day,

25:35
having worked in quite a blended way for a while, but now pretty much doing

25:44
what one would term as community choirs.

25:48
And I think

25:52
community choirs is a, is a, is an odd, yeah, I use the wrong term. Ward there, we do have a community choir, but that's not what I talk about. The the thing that one of the things that excites me is taking somebody who never knew they could do this and ludicrously making them, giving them the skills and confidence to do something that's amazing, that's quite a buzz, and it's a different buzz to

Commented [LW39]: Word

26:25
are working with pro singers because they don't.

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26:31
They're not so thrilled by it as as your as your amateur, who it isn't their thing, and they ought not to be able to do it. The Pro the the pro gig is the pro gig, isn't it? And you go, and you smile, and you sing most of the right notes, and then you walk away again. And the thing, the thing you're most interested in about that engagement that has passed is whether you've been paid or not.

26:56
And this thing of of getting

27:02
milkman and and

27:05
solicitors and whatever to do an amazing thing, to get people to to somehow trick people into giving up massive amounts of their time and their efforts, and then seeing how delighted they are afterwards. That's a that's a really cool thing. It It's, there's an amount of community building and low key changing the world that's thrilling, of teaching people or drawing out of people, their inclination to do selfless things, to to put the self second and look at the task. And I think people, when they relax into that, find it very cathartic. And then I suppose Finally, on in that question, the absolute pointlessness of the task. The absolute pointlessness of the task. My mouth was quiet, is it? And it is the it is the land of the blind. In the land of the blind, one can be very easily sighted with only one eye, and I'm delighted to have one of the best malware squats in this country. Yeah, really pleased. That's exciting. And in the middle of that is, what is the point? What does it matter? Does it matter whether it stays in tune? Does it matter whether the Vows are matched. Does it matter? And in the grand scheme of things, the answer is a resounding no. It is entirely pointless. And in being entirely pointless is the most precious, like beautiful thing you could imagine? Yeah, it's really kind of weird. It's, I don't know whether you ever thought about it in that, that

29:04
actually, but yeah, you're, you're right.

29:08
It's, if you think of the Maslow's hierarchy thing, yeah, is, is like, off the top of the like, Where the hell is that, in the term, in terms of whether or not you've got enough money to last the end of the month, or whether your your romantic relationships are going well, or whether your house leaks, or whether your car's broken down, or whatever it is, is highly pointless.

29:37
Again, well, it's pointless, I suppose, apart from the the almost by the biological I mean, it's, it's primitive, isn't it that that need to make that noise, I mean, and it does fire up all sorts of in a societal

29:59
place. Yeah. Yeah, it is,

Commented [LW40]: Paid or not

Commented [LW41]: Pointless in it produces nothing tangible other than the joy of doing it.

Commented [LW42]: Male voice choir

Commented [LW43]: Male voice choirs

Commented [LW44]: Raises the question of why do we sing?

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30:01
yeah. Having a good old bellow in the rugby crowd, and that kind of thing fills in that primal need. But there isn't a primal need for tuning. There isn't a primal need for for version. Yeah, fascinating. Yeah, it

30:24
is absolutely I hadn't thought of it along those lines. So that is definitely food for thought.

30:31
I go back to, I go to just take one step back into conducted the training, which is in the key, it's central to this, the journey I've taken with regards to, I think, one of the having listened to so many choirs and worked with so many choirs, the choice of repertoire is a make or break thing, isn't it? Yeah, this is, this is another of the this must be right, or none of it can be right. Yeah. And I think repertoire there is, there is zero training and repertoire choice is there. I mean, there's nobody is is is T there's no course that tells you which piece should go next or what you should be looking for. And I think having this has been brought home to me quite strongly, having done quite a lot of commissioning new music recently, of how the going through the compositional process with the group, with the choir, and the composer being involved with it, and then the kind of community aspect of them, then, first off, holding the piece of paper that has their name of their group underneath the title of the piece, kind of thing all the way through to this was the moment what we found we wanted to change the ranges of or this didn't work. All that through to them stood on the stage performing the piece that is theirs and only theirs, I think, has highlighted hugely for me, this idea of

32:12
the you must choose the right pieces.

32:17
Yeah, absolutely, and especially in terms of your choir's ability, there is nothing more soul destroying than trying to force somebody to sing something they're just not capable of. Yeah, and you know, it's just

Commented [LW45]: Importance of the right repertoire

32:35
in that, that sweet spot of just too hard for them,

32:41
you need to Yeah. There needs to be an element to allow them to develop Yeah. But yeah, it is getting that balance right, isn't it? Giving them something which is a challenge, a learning opportunity, but not so difficult that, you know, basically people start giving up Yeah.

Commented [LW46]: Importance of the right repertoire

33:00
And I think particularly in

33:06

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particularly in the in Entry Level Singing opportunities, your community choirs and this kind of thing there is the lack of training means that the groups suffer from poor repertoire so that if the conductor who wants to sing that piece because they like that piece, or the choir that wants to sing that piece because they like that piece, now this could easily come across for me As a kind of repertoire snobbiness, and I do have repertoire snobbiness, but that's separate to this

33:46
point that that the

33:51
singing well crafted music with nice voice leading and good ranges and melodic interest in all the parts makes singing more enjoyable, makes you a better singer, singing a pop song arrangement that has got the parts jammed in underneath the melody and was never even conceived for choir, and this that the other what my alto twos with have yourself,

34:19
Mary Creator, they're not gonna, they're not gonna

34:23
allow that to happen there too.

34:28
So I think there's a massive, massive problem created from that lack of skill across the whole sector in selecting proper repertoire, I don't I, whilst some conductor might think singing some arrangement of Bohemian Rhapsody or the Pink Panther might be fun and funny or whatever, it is, not going to be a musical or a choral experience, is it? It's like, how can. I yeah, there we go. Side chat again. That's

35:05
fine. Yes, I'll not comment for the sake of impartiality, but okay, no, fine. I'm just very conscious of the time. I just a few obviously, for you personally. I mean, are there any, any areas that you would look to, seek, to develop if you had the opportunity? You obviously doing, you know, doing a grand job. But, you know, so

35:34
just, I've just done that, frsm in choral conducting, which was a nice opportunity to do a bit of a for many people, the rehearsal and the actual exam proper would be the scary, for me. It's like, Come watch my rehearsal. I'd like to show off, please. But the research paper on that was really quite interesting in this setting, and now I've now my son's about to start as a I'm a single dad, and my son's about to start at Kings as a chorister in September in Cambridge. So I'm about to have a bit more time on my hands, and I'm a bit conscious of not wanting to allow myself too much, so I've put I'm starting masters in September, and I have got developing your creative practice. Successful Bid from Arts Council England to go to. So the bit of a Mickey take, we the bid. The bid itself was a bit of a Mickey take, and then was successful. So Arts Council are paying for me to go to Vancouver to for a week to look at Corleone and the lecture women's choir, and then fly on down to San Francisco to look at the San Francisco Gay

Commented [LW47]: Importance of the right repertoire

Commented [LW48]: Importance of right repertoire in developing your singers

Commented [LW49]: A Merry Christmas

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Men's Chorus and the peninsula women's choir, and with a specific focus on how they balance artistic excellence and community engagement, and they seem to be things that that Paul in the and initial thoughts are in initial online conversations with The conductors. Initial thoughts are, yeah, no, you can the balance of it would appear. And again, none of us ever make assumptions before we finish, do we? But it would appear that the balance of artistic excellence is excellent community engagement, rather than them being together. There is a here is our amazing choral group. And here is what we do with that in a community engagement sense. Rather than them being being on one and the same thing, there's a whole load of just decomposing your artistic excellence and putting some bits on a point. So those are so those are the things I want to look at. And I'm kind of looking at them, which is exciting, but I think probably there's another thing I want to help you, help offer you, which is the a little bit of a closer look at the upper and voice, upper and lower voices, music directors, stuff, and I don't know how much I'd be interested to know how much research you've come across that lets you know what the skill level and training level Is of these conductors is that, have you found much

38:44
it varies?

38:46
I have to say I haven't. The moment, I'm still analyzing the results of the survey, but having been through it in the first instance, it is extremely variable. We've got to seem to have a core of people that are still the vast majority of of called core conductors, are, if you like, amateur who maybe have one or two choirs. So there's obviously a good, good trained people out there, because, you know, trains the wrong word, you know, and that's professional. Yes, that's the better way professional,

39:23
yeah. So we, we commissioned Stephanie Pitts at Sheffield in you may have come across the have a performers and audience research group in the music department at Sheffield, and we commissioned the Peter sings is the name of the charity that has all these choirs and that I work for. We commission them again with Arts Council England funding to do survey the upper and lower voices sectors in the UK. It started off with a. Really focused look at lower voice choirs, and then further funding enabled us to spread it out into upper voice choirs as well. And I can, I'll email you over the the research paper that came out of this fantastic the the findings, particularly of the men's choirs, is, is one of people taking the vast majority of male voice choirs being taken by people with no musical qualifications or experience whatsoever,

40:37
and it's just yeah,

40:43
asking, that's like asking somebody who's never driven a car to teach somebody to drive.

40:48
Yes, exactly. So we don't we then find out that we're not surprised that the male voice choirs in this country are a bit shit because, because, how could they not be with the with the leadership now the

Commented [LW50]: Choral

Commented [LW51]: Peterborough Sings

Commented [LW52]: SPARC

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next, the next thought, was with this research paper, just sending it through to you with this research paper, was surely, if they're finding themselves like the proverbial fish up a fence post, nobody knows how it got there. It doesn't know why it's there, and it doesn't know what it's doing, you would think that they would be so desperate for CPD that it would be unbelievable. And none of them are, and none of the choirs have any budgets for CPD. None of there's, there's just nothing going on. So I think there's if there would be a question that I would want further answers to. I would want to know why people how would you phrase it? How I want to know, how the hell they've got the nerve to do it with no skills or experience. I mean, surely.

42:11
I mean, yeah, it's got

42:13
a research, a research project in its own,

42:18
to be honest, to get the answers to that one

42:22
I gave.

42:23
I mean, I agree. I mean,

42:26
I gave a paper at the male choir national Melbourne choir conference last year, and the conductor of Melbourne was quiet, was in my in one of the things I chatted about was this idea that if York and it was directed at leadership groups, rather than music directors. And if your music director can't do it, send them on courses to do it. If they Domini, go on courses, then find the music director that can do it. And there was all things, how much you'd be paying them, and this, and this woman came up to him at the end, very angry that I'd suggested that, that doing this kind of thing with no skills or qualification was was problematic. And she was like, I've taken such and such male voice choir for 10 years, and I've no skills for experience, so never know, of course, and it works just fine. And then I heard that male voice choir at a festival not so long afterwards, and her idea of it working just fine than mine.

43:28
Like not the same thing at all.

43:30
Yeah, yeah.

43:33
Then I suppose there's thoughts around what is the choir for? So if you're there are choirs that are not music. Choirs aren't there are choirs that are social group choirs. There are choir choir. Ring seems to

Commented [LW53]: What is their motivation

Commented [LW54]: National Male Voice Choir conference

Commented [LW55]: Male voice choir

Commented [LW56]: your

Commented [LW57]: Don't want to go

Commented [LW58]: Should be choiring

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get co opted more than anything else to fix every other issue in the world. And like there's the bereavement choir and the cancer choir and the this choir and

44:03
the homelessness and so on and so forth. Yeah,

44:08
and it's great, yeah.

44:11
But and so to take the choir with no name as an example of Kate Warren's homeless choir, the purpose of that choir is not artistic excellence, although they do strive for it, it is to use that structure to make positive life outcomes for homeless people. And they are very, very good at it, very good at it. And they have are trained in all, all the sorts of things around those issues. Her choir leaders are also basically social workers as well, which is great if you have there are whole other choirs that purport to not be music choirs and be social choirs, but they're also a bit rubbish at being social choirs, because if you're going to be a social choir, then do that.

44:59
Yeah, yeah. It's a whole different emphasis on the skills you need to bring to that. In some respects, you know, it's not just about your ability to communicate and to bring people on. You've got to understand, be able to understand and communicate with people about the reasons they're there. Yeah,

Commented [LW59]: in

45:17
yeah. So it's it's fascinating, isn't it? So, so pathways to choral conducting ought to also include, I suppose it's a little bit somewhere around music therapy, isn't it? Or, or there, there isn't, there isn't the whilst, there certainly is the the training out there to prepare in a structured way, decent professional choral conductors. There's certainly not the pathways out there to prepare the equally valid person who needs to be skilled in a whole load of other things to run the community choir really well. Yeah, and

Commented [LW60]: The need for appropriate 'pastoral' training

45:58
you're very much, you're very much left with, like the masters that I'm hopefully finishing, you left to choose your own pathway, which is then very dependent on your own interpretation of what that pathway is. There isn't a formal structure. And, you know, one of the sort of the points I make right at the beginning of all of this is that, you know, this is an unregulated area.

46:23
And, yeah, you just

46:25
gas, not working the same way.

46:30

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Can you imagine? And then you considering how much potentially you can, you can mess around with somebody's, you know, life and, and, and, you know, sort of vocal mechanism, and, and, and, you know, how the potential damage you can do to somebody in terms of confidence? You know, it's in

46:51
this national project based recruitment thing with these five Marvels cards across the country, we were what we gave the music directors a training day on how you get these? You get this Radcliffe on trends 120 men, you've somehow got to sort them into ones that you can do something with in 10 weeks and ones that you can't do something within 10 weeks. And then you got to sort me into voice parts. But like the first test is, can I make this into something in 10 weeks? And in the vast majority, 90 95% of people, of course you can, yeah. How do you handle those people who you you who can't match any pitches back to you in that two or three minutes? And one of the music directors says to me, Well, I just think it's kind enough. I mean, why lie to them or just put them out the misery and tell them sing. It's not their thing, and you should, and they should find something else to do, and you're like for fucks

47:43
that what? How? Where is your like? Where is everything that you should believe in

47:49
your compassion and your empathy, and all of you know, all of

47:55
to weep, because that person will will now never sing
when their child gets married, that person will be silent in the church.

48:03
Yeah, it's back to be when you're at school. Never happened to me, fortunately, but in a number of times, I've heard people say that when they were at school, they were told they couldn't sing or to be quiet, just mouth the words, or go and stand at the bank. You know, you're hopeless, you're not good enough. Yeah, and I've seen people then in their 40s, 50s, 60s,

48:29
who still carry that burden and that belief.

48:34
And you just think, you know, you've deprived somebody of the most not sorry, one of the dogs is getting a little bit excited, because I'm getting excited. But you've, you've, you've deprived that person of one of the most natural ways of expressing themselves, yeah, yeah, absolutely, absolutely. So, yeah, yeah, yeah. So sorry. Again, objectivity a little bit out the window there for me, but it's, it's, it's innovative subject. I mean, I know why I sing. I sing because I have to, you know, I would never, ever, ever tell somebody they couldn't sing. I said, you know you you may not sound like Joyce dinato Or you know, or whoever, but it's

49:22

Commented [LW61]: Male voice choirs

Commented [LW62]: sing

Commented [LW63]: emotive

Commented [LW64]: Joyce DiDonato!

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fast. It's fast. I think it's a bit of a why? Why do we consider singing as a can or can't skill? No, I do, because Simon Rattle would probably tell me I can't conduct,

49:39
yeah, if we work on that basis. But no primary school teacher would say, this child can't do maths. Let's give them something else to do, or this child can't read. Oh, well, stand them at the back, give them a picture book instead. This would never happen, but singing seems to be this. You can you can't. Talent based, talent based. Thing and and most talented person without training is, is, is just a show pony. Kind of strange thing, aren't they? Yeah, it's very weird. So I mean, the rest the rest of the choirs around here are a little bit probably frustrated of me going, I don't think this project is good for you, where you are on your journey, but you might try that choir over. Yeah, anyway, if you have a moment, I'd really just to finish off. I'd really like to find out about your upper voices choir, and what, what you'd like to do with them and and how, how that works.

50:41
Well, I mean, we just very, I'm very fortunate. I've got a sort of a reasonably competent set of singers. Well, say that. I mean, many of them, voice was, many of them, some of them was, voice was first instrument at college, university. I've got girl from the Academy. Had people from Birmingham pass through and so on, very experienced singers, one particular girls, a member of the joyful company, as well the Peterborough Ben's choir. I've got people with a musical theater background who also enjoy, if you like, Western art music. And I've just got a couple, two or three, you know, sort of really experienced amortical singers. And they all come together. We just rehearse twice a month. Repertoire is very much, you know, it's classically based occasionally, but everything from, you know, sort of early music right through to to contemporary we like to work with local composers if we can. So in particular, it's a couple who write and arrange based over sort of Kettering way, Northampton based. So we, you know, not too far from you, actually. So, you know, but we, we do. We do all sorts. I think some of the most successful the choir, the choir has been going about 12 years. We only rehearse twice a month, not into this business of every week. We have to say, have you noticed that attitude slightly changed after covid? Okay, I did. There was where we obviously, we were very, quite a tight knit group. Did find after covid that people's priorities changed very slightly. So there's been a great deal of man management to get people back into the commitment routine, okay, especially only with two rehearsals a month. And you know, again, this is where the people skills come in. You know, in that, you we've all went through that whole pandemic period and lockdown, etc. We all lost out. And people have did have different priorities as we came out of that. You know, mine was getting my quiet back up and running. But you know, for them, it was family, it was friends, it was doing all those things that they were stopped from doing. We're coming through that

53:20
to analyze, didn't it? And go and stop and think, which a bit of a kind of triage of what they do, doesn't it? I think they would, yeah, for us, the covid experience was transformational in a very positive way. So we found firstly, we got 50 grand out of the Arts Council for the cultural Recovery Fund, which was just like, thanks very much for that. And all the staff, all the staff were paid on the furlough scheme. So thanks very much for that. Great so financially, it came out really nicely. But we so we went to zoom like everybody did, and found it was useless, like everybody did, I think, and it was fascinating to see the

Commented [LW65]: Interesting question - why do we?

Commented [LW66]: Should be Peter Broadbent

Commented [LW67]: Amateur choral singers

Commented [LW68]: choir

Commented [LW69]: Interesting point - many choirs have struggled to get membership back to pre-covid levels and I know of at least one that folded because they didn't.

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whole world trying to do something new and trying to work out what it was. And like the most experienced person, the least experienced person, all being at the same level at week one, kind of like, What the hell do we do? But we found that we've been using a number of apps to for the singers to prepare the music, and we've taken to videoing tasks as well so the singers have tough in rehearsals, and we found that, and this only came about due to those lockdown zooms, that the way the Zoom was useful was to set was like a seminar on the work that they were about to do and an appraisal of the work that they'd done the week before, whether it be a video task or. Work on, on part, learning in some of these apps and coming out of it, I now can set these tasks and do every single week, and the singers get on with them and understand how thrilling that is to come to the room having the music learnt and memorized and and all that kind of thing. And I would not have been able to do it if they hadn't had that covid experience to totally change the kind of ethos of the group. And some people went, and I'm glad, because it transpired that they would not up for doing what we what we wanted to do, and investing that amount of time, and they'd go and sing with other clients who don't demand and that's fine, but absolutely the covid experience has changed completely. The standard is twice as good as it was before, and now they prepare things themselves. It's good.

55:51
I have to say that we, yeah, we've heard those that ethos, because we only rehearse twice a month. You know, it is made plain from the beginning. You know, you will have homework, especially for the slightly less technically competent. I don't want to use there, because they're all competent, but that, you know, you will be expected to look at the music in between times. I mean, I think that's actually a very valid point, and it's not something that's come up much in what I'm the results I'm getting is the technology side. I think, out of, out of all of the respondents, I think only two people have mentioned technology. So that that's that is a really interesting point. So even though, you know, it's not exactly where it very nicely comes under. My Is there anything else you would like to say about being a choral director in the UK? Director in the UK and so, but yeah, I mean, this is, you know, and it's that is an opportunity, I think that, I think it would appear with a lot of the training opportunities, there is actually just a lack of awareness in the community directing community of what is actually out there,

57:03
I think it goes, I think,

57:07
I think of how much development I get from my network

Commented [LW70]: The importance of networks

57:13
so slightly

57:14
different to a lot of other people's network. Sorry, I said, Do you think your network might be different to a lot of other people's networks?

57:27

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Yeah, and it's a bit, and again, it comes out of the covid and the technology trying to strands together that it to talk to you. Used to be a I couldn't do it in my house, or I could, I could have done it in my house, but we didn't, did we? And everybody was dumped straight into this being how we do things, and isn't it great? And I'll go make cup of tea and I don't, and I may or may not have trousers on, who knows? Yeah, but I can, I can message Eric light in Vancouver, and spend 45 minutes chatting with him about something as easily as if you were my next door neighbor. And absolutely, that is a thrilling part of of how technology and it is not new technology. That's the that's the kind of kick yourself thing we could all have been doing it this age scope.

58:22
So I think that that level of

58:28
getting development from my network, and if you aren't connected, or if you're not this is probably the final point, if you're not minded to be better

58:43
if you're not motivated to be excited about being ignorant

58:51
and and going from,

58:55
I don't think I could ever do that, or through, I can't do that yet, through I did that, and it wasn't very good. Through to I did that, and I felt okay, yeah, yeah. And I think there's a, I think there's a poverty of aspiration with with these, with these groups, that comes from the poverty of aspiration from the conductors, for out of fear of being shown up for not knowing what they're doing. And I

59:25
wonder if that goes back to the point we were discussing earlier, about the the the mindset about singing, being, you know, just picking up on that you're on the counter. You can't, as you say, you know, people don't invest the time they would in a child who struggles with mathematics, struggles with English grammar and so, and I think that is because, to a certain extent, it's seen as not not frivolous, have a level of importance put on. It, which, considering how much a music education can impact the rest of your academic achievement, it's just ridiculous.

Commented [LW71]: Can or you can't

Commented [LW72]: Educational importance of music participation

1:00:08
I also think there's a tension between how you are perceived as a conduct that there is a potential for a tension between how you are perceived as a conductor, and whether or not you need to learn anything,

1:00:26
I think there's a there's

1:00:28

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an idea that the conductor is the silhouette at the beginning of Fantasia who stands up there and taps on the stand, and everybody is hushed and silent when actually the conductor is learning, learning as much. What do I say? What do I say to myself? The whole point of a rehearsal is trying to get it's exactly the whole point of being a parent to make yourself redundant. Yeah, absolutely. As soon as brushing your teeth and wiping your ass is sorted, then we can start to talk about what you think about the subjugation of of global majority populations. Yeah, you know. So so that idea of wanting to be, wanting to be some kind of imagined authority figure, which I think I might, I'm certainly guilty of myself, wanting to be some flawless authority figure, and marrying that up with wanting to be better, and marrying that up with not wanting to be wrong, but being wrong being the route to better.

1:01:35
Absolutely, yeah,

1:01:37
and I think perhaps medicine has this, has this very is much more developed with these thoughts that you mistakes are looked at for learning rather than mistakes are looked at for for pulling people down, or that's what they aspire to ward but yeah, I think there, I think there was certainly, certainly questions as to why they don't do it, why they don't make them take up the opportunities that are available to them. And

Commented [LW73]: Attitudes to CPD

1:02:09
LW you'd have thought that the, whatever you call it, the trustees, or the committee that, you know, basically run the part on a day to day basis, would actually be wanting to, you know, employ somebody who was looking as much to develop themselves and take the choir on the journey with them.

Commented [LW74]: Attitudes to CPD

1:02:24
Yeah, yeah. And so, so is this because choirs are so insular,

1:02:33
and everybody thinks their choir is the best choir.

1:02:40
I think, I think there's a every, certainly, every single male voice choir thinks they're the best male voice choir. And they can't all be, can they? No,

1:02:50
I'm not sure. Maybe, maybe this is a sort of a gender difference perspective. I'm not sure there's many upper voices or women's choirs that would say the same? No, I think there is. There is. That's another whole new, different project, really.

1:03:12
So, yeah, cool,

1:03:18

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yeah, I don't know that one's left me a bit stumped gender.

1:03:23
So what? What the accessing of practicing choral leaders? What is the proportion of those accessing continuing professional development

1:03:36
that is

1:03:38
given the size of my sample? Yeah, that is going to be a very key, and I will be more than happy to send you the results when I finally finished analyzing it. But again,

1:03:51
when you have that proportion, and this is and it's difficult to do gender based analysis these days, because as gender evolves, and there are so many different expressions of being absolutely, but of to use 2020 terminology of the of those conductors practicing choral leaders who are investing in their development, What proportions men and what proportion? Yeah, it

Commented [LW75]: Do this exercise

1:04:24
will be. It will be, honestly, I say it, there's, there's been a few I've looked at and I've thought, oh, that's, that's an interesting point. I've been one or two responses where I thought, glad I'm not in your choir. And this

1:04:41
was when we were doing the Sheffield, when we were doing the Sheffield research, and it's the first time I've ever been on a research panel that had to discuss how we were going to handle obscene language in the responses.

1:04:59
Interesting. I. Haven't had any of that

1:05:01
so far. So we'd, we'd ask male voice choirs about their gender identity and their sexual orientation. We asked the male voice choirs, and this is because the Arts Council paying for it, and they insist on this. Yeah, absolutely. And these poor old gammony pensioners just clearly had an absolute meltdown of like,

1:05:28
oh and my definitely got to go my final one in the equality, diversity and inclusion training on the recent project with the Arts Council, one of the chairman of one of the male voice choirs in the equality, diversity and inclusion training said, I don't want to be the n****r in the wood pile in this situation, but, oh my god,

Commented [LW76]: redacted

Transcribed by https://otter.ai

1:06:01
yeah,

1:06:03
interestingly, the transcription hasn't picked that word up. Good, good, good, good, yeah, absolutely, I should have to make a note, but you know,

1:06:14
yeah, yeah. So when,

1:06:18
if you go back to Maslow on that one, having a music director who knows whether it's in tune or not is not their priority. Their priority is not being awful people.

1:06:33
There we go.

1:06:33
I think that is, yeah, I think there's anything else I can say after that or no, yeah,

1:06:42
Laura, you've

1:06:44
got me all you've got me all inspired and buzzy about issues and and development, all this kind of thing. So thank you. No, no

1:06:52
no. Thank you very much. Enjoy some fascinating points, and certainly, you know, areas that I haven't personally thought about as well. And you know, for me, I'm very much of the, you know, the the the makeup is that, you know, we never stop learning. You know, there is always something we can do to improve. And I know there's, there's elements that I'm rubbish at, and I strive every time, you know, we have a concert to do this, that, or the other or during rehearsals, you know. And you know, as you say, in the preparation and the administration side as well, you know, it's all, it's all always room for improvement. That's the reason why I'm doing this, this masters, you know, again, was to the first thing I realized was how much I don't know, or how much I have learned since doing this. And, you know, I try and bring that, you know, to my, you know, my practice.

1:07:50
Is it a dissertation on the end of a talk masters or a research masters?

1:07:57

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It's, I'd say it's a taught masters, but it's one of these ones where you very much find your pathway. So, you know, it's, it's, they basically teach in very broad terms, and then it's down to you to sort of, and this is, so I'd say it's actually a hybrid,

1:08:16
yeah, and this is with the What's your which institution is it? I should know,

1:08:23
yeah, no, this is with the voice center. So don't if you know Debbie winters down in just outside Colchester. She's a legal background, but professional jazz singer, and you know, has fingers in many pies, but this is, this is her sort of creation. But currently, it's accredited by University of Wales, Trinity st David, but they've also just started working with the University of Essex as well. So, and, you know, they've got a fantastic network worldwide. I mean, you know that the access to some of the sort of, especially in the States, the sort of, the top people, the top pedagogues over there. It's, it's been a real eye opener. Who are you doing your masters with? Sorry, sorry. I was sorry. I said. Who are you doing your masters with?

1:09:16
Because I've signed up with the OU, okay, yeah, just just at the beginning of it, yeah, I

1:09:24
did my first masters with the OU, okay, in music. So, yeah, yes, yes, cool. So

1:09:31
they only offer one, don't they? So your, how does that? How does that, course, go? Did you enjoy it?

1:09:38
I Yes, I did, as you say, it was very much more structured than the one I'm doing, this one, but I mean, certainly in terms of my breadth of knowledge of music and, you know, and I'd already done, you know, sort of, I've been involved in music since I was five, or something ridiculous, soon as I went to school, that was it. And. Yeah, and now I did, I mean, it really did open, open my mind to quite a lot of other aspects of music, rather than that narrow focus that we tend to have here for sort of Western art music. So which one you draw a great deal of personal pleasure from but, yeah, yeah, this, this one has been a little bit more practical for me. If you see what I mean, it's, you know, it's really informed my core leadership practice. So it's been good and

Commented [LW77]: choral

1:10:35
but I still, there's still loads, I don't know.

1:10:38
Sorry, are you work? Are you working towards taking it further. Are you? Is there a doctorate on the horizon?

1:10:43

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Well, I'd like to think so. I just want to get this one out the way. Unfortunately, we've had a couple of I've had, had to take a break. Was I was diagnosed with carpal tunnel syndrome and had to have operations so that I could do the work. Then my husband was diagnosed with a rare form of lymphoma, so that meant another break whilst he was going through his horrendous treatment. So you get out of practice of these things. So I don't know, let's, let's just get this one out the way, and then I'll think from there. But at the back of my mind, I'd like to think there might be something, but we won't. There's just so much to be done this. We just don't have the maturity of the academic field in this country that they do in the US, for example, or even in Australia, to certain extent, you know. And it's we, we. It's taken for granted here, I think, rather than treated with the respect it deserves,

1:11:43
yeah, absolutely. Laura, I'm bursting for Lou. I'm gonna say goodbye, yeah,

1:11:47
I'm sorry, and I should go, yeah. Indeed, let you go. Yeah. Thank you so much, indeed. Well, it's been a pleasure talking to you, and yeah, hopefully, as we fairly close, our paths may cross in person one day.

1:11:57
Thank you so much. Lovely. Thank

1:11:59
you. Thank you. Bye, then bye, bye, bye.

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Subject 2 Interview for projec...40717_134321-Meeting Recording

Sun, Aug 11, 2024 3:31PM • 46:50

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

choir, children, repertoire, music, training, sing, people, teachers, singing, confidence, adults, musicians, bit, absolutely, teaching, voices, singer, part, school, ula

00:24
Hi, [redacted]

00:39
Hi, [redacted] how Are you?

Oh, hi. Hi, there. I'm

00:44
sorry, thank

00:46
you. Good, good, good. Yeah, good. You've managed to get, managed to get logged on. I've been having a few technical problems this morning, so I'm pleased we've managed to connect. Yeah, well, I haven't used teams for such a long time I've forgotten how to do it, but I just clicked straight through. So excellent, good stuff. Well, thank you very much indeed for your time, and hopefully it won't take too much out of your afternoon.

01:14
So just to remind you that obviously this is being recorded, and also the transcription service is or should be in process.

01:27
First, let me just double check that show transcription. There we are. There

01:33
we go. Obviously, that just helped me when I come to transcribe it properly so I don't miss anything. Key out.

01:42
The idea is just really to have a quick chat around some of the

01:49

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sort of individual issues that number of you know the selected few volunteers for interviews have had.

01:58
So just for context, how long have you been conducting choirs?

Okay, just before I start that answer, so, so random, I can't even remember where we where I got your information from. Was it? Was it from the ABRSM or something, or

02:19
so? I I'm not sure where to pick it up, but I am. I'm currently in the process of hopefully finalizing a Masters in vocal pedagogy. And as a core director, I'm looking at

02:32
it from a core perspective. Many of my colleagues have gone down sort of either looking at it from Mt teaching or CCM teaching and so on.

02:44
But I initially my plan was to be actually applying some of the knowledge I was working but then we had this little thing called lockdown, yes, which right at the beginning, which kind of scuppered things. But how that's come about is one of the things I realized is when I started this course, is how little I actually know, okay, across the remit. So, and I wonder I've come to call singing from, sorry, the core director, from being an experienced singer. Okay, so that's divide, okay.

S2
So I'll tell you a bit about me then. So I am a teacher. I've been a primary school teacher for 31 years. Yeah, and while I was teaching, and I've sung all my life, so I've sung in church choir, sung in choirs all my life. So when I was teaching, I was just doing bits of kind of singing leadership in school, just you're doing the hymn practice and singing with the classes anyway, as I would normally, you know, as I love singing all the time, and I got involved with some singers from ex cathedra. I don't know if you've heard of ex cathedra,

LW I have, indeed, yeah.

S2 So it was through ex cathedra. They were doing an outreach project coming into my school to do just little singing little projects, including their singing playgrounds project, which is really fun, where they come in and they teach children singing games in the playground. And I got involved in them doing those sessions, and I was so inspired by the leaders of that group, especially ULA Weber. She then invited me to go and do some staff training in how to lead a choir. So this would have been about 2009

04:34
and I got involved in her and did some staff training, okay, in Sandwell, which is where the authority that I was working in. And gradually from then it took step by step to then go on to do my conductor training through thing for pleasure, of which she is the head of head of events and head of programming. And it's literally, Elena, I've lost you. I'm still here.

Commented [LW1]: choir

Commented [LW2]: Choir

Commented [LW3]: choral

Commented [LW4]: choral

Commented [LW5]: I've crossed that divide

Commented [LW6]: Ulla Weber

Commented [LW7]: Sing for Pleasure

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04:58
Elena, I for.

05:00
Reason I lost, yeah, I lost you there. Okay,

05:05
mute, yeah, another room. So I missed a big chunk of that from you went to Yes, yes. Like it was as clear as a bell. It was very hot. The room that was in just has no

Commented [LW8]: odd

05:18
signal, or it doesn't reach that far or something.

So yeah, so in 2009 I met ULA Webber. She invited me to some staff training on how to lead choirs in in school. And then I went to do sing for pleasure training. So that was in about 2010

Commented [LW9]: Ula Weber

05:37
I started my foundation, foundation conductor training with sing for pleasure. I don't know if you've heard of sing for pleasure,

I have indeed.

So they are amazing at just training teachers and well, they do sort of training for anybody who does singing leadership, whether it's children, adult choirs or whatever. And whatever your background as a musician is, they tailor it to your needs. So I'm not a musician,

06:03
although I'm very musical, and I've always sung. I have no formal training at all.

LW But you are, you are a musician because you sing,

I suppose, yes,
but I had never done any not an instrumentalist. No, well, I've done grade I did grade four piano and grade three violin, but I'd never done a singing exam, and I'd never trained. I'd never done a university degree in music or anything like that. I had done my degree in education and primary education. So I was teaching everything, you know, Maths, English, PE, geography, the whole curriculum, but loving music more than anyone else you know. I was the one who could stand up and sing in front of the children. I was the one who would lead the singing practice or the hymn practice, because it was in in me to do that.

06:47
So I did my conductor training. Was seen for pleasure, and gradually, then gave, got the confidence to then take on choirs. So I had a little children's Community Choir for about 10 years. It's so cute, you know, just it within, within a church. Not it wasn't a church choir, it was just a community choir that met in a church. Yeah, and I was then singing in choirs myself and just developing my own singing. And it's just, now I don't actually teach classroom teaching anymore. I'd left, left that in 2016 and joined the music service. So now I have terrible imposter syndrome, because I'm now teaching

Commented [LW10]: Sing for pleasure

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singing to children, doing singing exams, and I'm leading three children's choirs, and I've just taken my own singing exam as well. So it's kind of fantastic, really, yeah, fantastic. Um, you know, it's great.

Which singing exam did you do? Just out of interest, I did grade five, ABRSM and,

07:46
Oh, fantastic. Well, no doubt, absolutely

07:50
no, that's brilliant. And it's interesting to hear that you, you know, you actually did the training first, almost, you know you were, yeah, to go and and get trained. If I could just ask on that, looking back on your training, you know, you said the thing for pleasure, and they do come very highly recommended. Did you really feel that it really prepared you? Was it was it focused? You knew we're going to lead children's choir, so it focused on on children of the needs of a children's choir,

08:22
Not particularly, no, because the conductor training program is for anybody, any, any, any singing leader of any type of choir. So the music choice, the repertoire, isn't particularly for children, but it can be used for children. It's fantastic. The the foundation level, the kind of the first level of the conductor training is all rounds and very simple part songs, which you can do with children, yeah, of course. And equally, do them with a group of adults, because they're such fun, yeah? So the repertoire is flexible for what whoever you're leading to do that. So it wasn't particularly for children, but it gave me the skills to, like, really strip it back down to, what am I doing? Is this effective? Are my gestures? You know, telling the children what I want them to do. And so, yeah, the way they the pedagogy of super pleasure training is so step by step, literally, can you beat pattern for a four beat pattern. And can you bring people in into a round in a systematic way, you know, cut offs and things like that, really simple stuff, yep. And then you then it moves on to more difficult SATB repertoire, which I did, then go on to do my intermediate two

09:39
course, do it five times. But then I realized I don't have an adult choir that I work with, so it wasn't really being used outside of the actual events themselves. Yeah, sure, yeah. And then it moves on to advanced conducting, where you're then working with orchestras, and it then becomes mega like you have to, you have to be really, really good at music to.

10:00
Do at the advanced courses, it tends to be people who are doing degrees in music already who tend to do that.

Yeah, no, and there's and you did. You felt it prepared you well for your move into coral.

10:15
Conducting,

yeah, and things like rehearsal, planning, yeah, just, just choosing repertoire,

Commented [LW11]: Sing for Pleasure

Commented [LW12]: Although there is much crossover, especially as children get older, is there a case for specialist training in leading children's choirs?

Commented [LW13]: teach

Commented [LW14]: Sing for Pleasure

Commented [LW15]: Seems to be a barrier to allowing people to progress or may be just lack of confidence on part of the interviewee?

Commented [LW16]: Choral

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10:23
working with the needs of the children and what they might, you know, what vocal skills they might need to develop and warm ups and physical things, getting them to have the right posture,

10:35
using their voice effectively, which, sadly, I see too often, doesn't happen in school, and children are then hurting their voices because either too low, because often they choose repertoire that's sung by men, or it's it's whatever the teacher wants to do, and they may not have the knowledge of the voice and how the voice works.

Commented [LW17]: So much here - lack of knowledge of repertoire, lack of knowledge of the development of children's voices and vocal anatomy in general

10:54
So that's been helpful to know how to choose repertoire for children. And I use a lot of resources that are for children anyway,

11:04
yeah,

11:06
yes. And there's some really good resources out there.

11:10
Yeah,

11:12
no, no, that's great. So yeah, I mean, I very much hear your point about the this is, I guess, well, one of the reasons I've come to this particular project is that the awareness so what is the breadth of awareness of things like vocal health within the core directing community? And this is one of the reasons why I'm interested in the initial training that people had, whether they felt it was fit for purpose,

Commented [LW18]: choral

11:37
whether it helped them identify their weaknesses, I suppose, yeah, and, you know, and how to build on that. You know, as I say, I've certainly realized when I started this, how little I knew, and I've been singing, and, you know, studied singing privately. I didn't, didn't go to music college, but and so on.

12:01
And even so, you know, I there's so little that I knew, yeah, and it kind of can, it certainly informs my my directing practice now, and that's what I'm trying to get out of people, is whether they feel as though their training they've had has prepared them for all aspects of call directing.

Commented [LW19]: choral

12:20
So what did you find easy about it? What was, what was the natural? Because I think there's this seems to be

12:29
various personality types that have attracted to standing up in front of a choir or even an orchestra,

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12:36
and they're quite different. Actually, they're quite different personality type. So what? What do you find natural about it?

I think because I've always been a teacher, uh, although I've always been very shy, I was very shy as a young as a child and growing up, but training as a teacher and having to stand up in front of whole classes of children and teach, it gives you that confidence that you can you can do it. I prefer to stand in front of children than I do adults, I have to say, so that might be a different thing to think about. Why? Why do I feel comfortable standing in front of three, three or 400 children, but I can't stand in front of five adults because I just

very interesting, very interesting. That is, I think, very interesting.

Maybe adults, you feel that you're being judged a bit more. I don't know. Yeah, just to let you know, if you hear a funny noise, I've got a blood pressure monitor on today so it keeps going off.

Oh, fair enough. I won't, I won't. By me,

Commented [LW20]: Won't worry

13:36
yeah. So because I had the confidence as a teacher, I didn't feel embarrassed, which a lot of teachers feel embarrassed singing in front of other children, so I didn't have that barrier at all, although there are lots of teachers who don't like singing in front of children, and I've done some staff training with schools I work with now who just can't seem to sing in front of their classes, or don't like leading singing. They'll sing if, if, if a song is on, they'll sing along with the children, but they won't lead it. They won't model it. They won't they won't try and improve things. Yeah, no, they won't demonstrate.

Commented [LW21]: Not a part of primary/junior teacher training - no coverage of music?

14:14
So I can see that there's a big gap there with teachers not having confidence to sing, but I actually natural for me, because I've always sung

14:25
in choirs and with my family, it doesn't bother me, and I think it's just such fun.

Anyway, yeah, no, and I think, actually, I think that's really interesting point. And about that you already being a teacher and having that confidence and and I knew that, to be honest, thinking about that, which I hadn't thought about before, that really must have prepared you very well for the the actor standing in front of a yes, a group of three, 400 children, yeah. And then everything else around it, in terms of the technical etc, as you say, children don't judge. Yeah.

Commented [LW22]: Act of standing

15:00
Not in the same way as adults do. I mean, especially for, heaven forbid, you know, you find yourself in front of an experienced choir of adults, you know, you know they're watching your technique. You notice that? And the other, yeah, that you had, that was almost, that was the whole of your teaching career, had been part of your training, or, Yes, as a core director to that. You know, at that point in time, and it's really interesting, I hadn't thought of it like that.

Commented [LW23]: choral

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When I left home at 18 to come and do my degree in teacher training, I was so shy, and my first teaching practice, I was nervous to stand in front of children, but that, you know, even as a trainee teacher, you develop the confidence, because it's part of the whole job, and you pass your teaching practice because you're showing confidence. But then, you know, I didn't start my choirs until I'd been teaching for 20 years,

15:52
yep.

So 20 years worth of experience

yeah, yeah, it does come, yeah.

That fed into, you know, developed, help develop that natural skill. You had that confidence, yeah? And what did you find?

Sorry, no, sorry, no, I've sung. I've sung for conductors, for example, on the sing for pleasure, summer school, training courses and things who are extremely good musicians. They're really academic musicians, but they cannot communicate, or they don't teach with the confidence of a teacher. So like from like me, now I'm working for the music service. I'm a trained teacher, but I'm not a qualified musician, but I'm doing really well because I have the confidence to stand up in front of children and just communicate, whether it's music or whatever it's it's a real skill to have, and some musicians don't have that.

Commented [LW24]: Communication skills

They don't and that, that's why, that's where I you know, you see that there's sort of divergent personality types that, for some reason, do stand up in front of a choir or an orchestra. And, you know, as a singer, you some, because you know, to certain extent, you have to be slightly there

16:59
has to be a part of you that's extrovert. Some Yeah, a lot of people will say they're not, they're introverted, and it's a performance.

LW But yes, you it is a performance. And I think as singers, you know, we kind of assume that the person who's going to be stood at the front waving their arms around is going to be similarly, a performer.

No, they can

17:22
be very good at music, very anthropology, and for some reason they enjoy

Commented [LW25]: And musicology

17:29
they'll know all the theory and but as a singer, for me, I'd never had the quality of the training as a singer to know what the different notes and markings mean, I just want to sing, so I didn't have that sense of you have to be completely academic about it. So lots of the repertoire of some has just been for fun, and some of it's off copy. Lot of church repertoire is the hymns and anthems that don't require an awful lot of academic musicianship, and then that's translated into where I lead the children. It's not about academic musicianship, it is having fun,

Commented [LW26]: About getting children engaged with singing?

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18:10
yeah? And it's about innate musicianship, yeah? That that, that musicality that you you know, you've been born with and have developed throughout your life, and, you know, with all the influences from your environment and so on, what did you find the most difficult thing

18:26
about my training, about the training and about actually becoming what you would say, you know, as a core a choir leader, a core leader,

Commented [LW27]: Choir/choral

18:39
I think the hardest thing, oh, gosh, there's so many.

18:46
Love, yeah,

18:49
planning rehearsals effectively, because I tend to go in rather, oh, we'll do these today, and then not realizing that that won't work, or I've got to stop and start again or

19:02
not, not anticipating what might go wrong before it happens. And a lot of the training is is about that is looking at a piece and knowing a piece really, really well, and anticipating where the choir will fail or where they'll need some extra help. And I often forget that part of the planning stage, go in and realized, oh, this, this needs a bit of extra planning. Here. I need to pick it apart a bit more.

19:27
What else has been hard? Well, working with adults, I find very, very difficult

19:33
and part of the threat. Well, all of the training has always been with adults. So the training had never been working with Jordan. The training has always been in groups of adults. Might have maybe 12 adults in the group. You then take your turn to go up to the podium and do your piece. And I find that absolutely terrifying,

Commented [LW28]: children

19:54
even though everyone's in the same position, and they're all doing their own piece, and they're all probably just.

20:00
Nervous. It's the fact that they're adults that I find straight extremely hard.

20:09
Yeah, but I guess, well, that was going to be my next question. What's the hardest part of being a core role director? For you, sounds like it would be that's if you decided to take that step up or, sorry, not step out, but that step towards being a leader of an adult choir,

Commented [LW29]: Got to here

Transcribed by https://otter.ai

20:25
I think

20:27
I did have, I did have an opportunity of doing that with a very relaxed, you know, easy, come easy, Go show choir where people don't read music necessarily, and had a really good rehearsal. It was really fun, and they really thought I did really well. And when I was asked to do it on a more regular basis, I thought, I can't I just maybe it was a time commitment thing, but I was just thinking, there's too much expectation when it's adults. Children just come and go and they they enjoy it, but they never think, oh, they never judge you. Whereas I think adults, I feel a bit more that I would be judged a bit more, yeah, yeah, I can understand that that's talking about the children's choirs, though, is that, is there anything?

Is there one aspect about that that you found,

21:09
you know, hard, I mean, I mean, I'm not this in the broadest sense,

21:19
not looking I'm not, I'm not going to lead the conversation. Okay, it kind of defeats the purpose. But there's certain, certain things, isn't there that sometimes you think I really don't want to do.

I think in a lot for a large choir, and I've got a choir of 60 at the moment, 60 children. It's the Cloud Control. Although I've been teaching for 30-31, years, it's still the discipline is exhausting. Keep keeping tabs on everyone, making sure everyone in the right place at the right time. The people management type of thing kind of gets in the way of just the music sometimes. But I know it's important. But I have a one this one particular school where I have 60 children, they are fantastic. The Singing is amazing, but there's always a small group who are just wasting time chatting and wanting to go to the toilet constantly and in and out. And I just get exasperated by it, you know. And I know there's nobody, but it's just so frustrating.

And actually, I can assure you, it's no different with adults either.

Oh, I'm sure. I think, you know, you get these groups of ladies who just chat, chat, chat, chat, chat, all the time. I just stand for it, yeah, but then I don't want to be, you know, sloppy and being a you know, disciplinarian about it. They're there to have fun, but there are certain expectations aren't there. So I have to make that very clear from the very beginning, that this isn't just, you know, you know, a club where you can come and chat to your friends. We've got things to do,

22:47
so I have to be quite firm.

Yeah, no, absolutely,

22:52
yeah. Gary was just looking down. I've got a sort of list of of questions, and it's one here that says opportunity for adequate training. But I think we've discussed your many years of teaching before you took it up.

Commented [LW30]: Lack of confidence despite having completed the SfP courses - imposter syndrome as she's not a 'musician' - see 5:37 to 6:03

Commented [LW31]: Crowd control

Commented [LW32]: Ties in with some of the comments made in the survey about other attributes/skills such as agreeable personality

Commented [LW33]: Authority

Commented [LW34]: I was just looking down...

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Yes, you know, you know, was ideal training in many respects, for, for, you know, if you like the non technical aspects, the non arm waving, yeah, exactly.

It's the people management. It's the

23:17
thinking ahead. It's the problem solving, troubleshooting,

23:22
thinking on your feet, a lot of acting, pretending that you're happy when you're not, or, you know, all those things that you have to do as a teacher.

Do you remember if they do? You remember, did they cover that off with your initial training with sing for pleasure?

23:39
Do you remember if they, if they covered off that sort of aspect? They, if you like, those softer skills in the scene for pleasure training, or was it very much focused on the technical there?

Commented [LW35]: Singing

And do you think they should actually, you know, looking at various syllabuses of training that's out there. Do you, do you think that that side of things should be more important as part of that sort of initial conductor training?

Yeah,

24:31
certainly I know that the higher up course levels of SFP, do, do, you know, sessions on how to deal with the community choir? Because a lot of the people who do the advanced course are very academic music musicians, but won't have ever worked with people who aren't. So it's finding ways to to lead a choir of non music readers, of amateurs, of people who don't think much,

24:57
being led by somebody who's an academic.

25:00
Like,

25:01
sometimes they just need to get a reality check that they're not all going to know what you mean when you say, Hold on this. For Marta, for example, they won't know what you mean. Or even go from bar 20, they won't know what you mean. So you have to, then they have to, then be given a bit of a, you know, a kind of reality check that it's not like that, because most of their work will be with community choirs. They're not all going to be running the 16.

Commented [LW36]: Should be Fermata

Commented [LW37]: Again in missed competencies - understanding of different people's abilities

Commented [LW38]: The Sixteen

25:27
So they need to just know that it's the real world is not full of people like that.

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25:33
The real world is full of a mass mix of people, varying skill, varying commitment.

25:43
You know, appetite to learn and so on. Yeah, it's, it's a mixed and

a lot of people who go and sing in choirs do it for fun, and it's a social thing, and they may want to have a chat. So it's finding the balance between keeping it fun, but also, this is what we're here for. We, you know, these are my expectations.

26:04
So adults are the same. They just need to be given a bit of a prod.

Get save it for the tea break is always my, yeah, my advice, like, you know, let's, let's, let's, let's just focus for a little while, and then we've got tea and cake, yes, and that's your time, or afterwards, or get there early and have a chat.

Yeah, exactly.

26:26
So yeah, and there's ways and means, but he's having that confidence to actually stand up and make statements

and leadership, leadership skills, I think you know whether you're whether your job requires you to be a leader of something. If you're running a choir, you have to have that leadership, because you are the you are the leader at the end of the day. And you might, people might want to chip in with ideas. And Ula, who I inspired me to do or she would say that when she runs a choir, she never has a committee. She calls it a benign dictatorship, because she has to be the one to make the decisions on things. And no, there's no negotiation. You're not deciding what you want to sing. I'm deciding what, what we're going to sing.

Commented [LW39]: It's

Commented [LW40]: Authority

27:08
Otherwise it can just become a rabble.

Oh, it's a free for all. Yeah, yeah. It doesn't. It's not a collaboration. No,

27:18
I'm with her on that benign dictatorship, definitely,

27:23
where you can delegate, do delegate? Yeah, there's a difference between delegating and and involving people in decision making.

Yeah, exactly.

27:33

Transcribed by https://otter.ai

Okay, no, that's, that's, that's, that's,

27:37
that's, that's great. Just want to look forward then, if there was anything you want, you know, I don't know what your plans are. You obviously, you know, love working with children's choirs, and that that enthusiasm comes across a shadow of a doubt.

27:53
But looking forward, if you ever thought about other areas you would like to develop

28:01
for

28:02
yourself, and possibly for your children's choirs. I mean, are there ever any, any Well, actually, do you know what I think that would be really add something to my practice of of leading these children's choirs.

28:14
Um, I would like to have more confidence to be able to play the piano.

28:19
I have got grade four piano and working on a grade five piece at the moment, but I don't have the confidence or the skills to be able to just to sit in front of children and just play with them. So all our songs are always accompanied by backing tracks, because I don't have an accompanist. A lot of my our songs are acapella as well all round, which is fun. But I would love to be able to just bash it all out on a piano, just because I think it sounds nicer when you can dictate the tempo and you can change things up a bit. But I haven't got that music that those piano skills to do things where you change key and do warm ups of the scales. I can't do it. So I would love to, if I could wave a magic wand. I'd love to have the skills of a pianist.

29:05
just to just not that I'd sit behind the piano, but to have the option to be able to select things if I wanted to, and not rely on a on a digital track, which is very flexible. Yeah. Okay, anything else

29:22
I I'd like more boys to join, but then I can't. I can't really affect that unless I try and promote it, because we don't get enough boys. And I'm know that. I know that boys would love it.

29:33
I don't know what it is. They just don't think it's cool.

29:38
It is. And then children who just quit for no reason. They just they're not coming anymore. And I think, Well, what did I do wrong? Or what? What do you want us to do? If you you know to make you to want to carry on, what can we change? But then, by then, it's often too late, so that they have a lack of they have a lack of stickability or commitment.

Commented [LW41]: Again ties in with missedcomp - leading from keyboard/keyboard skills

Commented [LW42]: Or rounds

Commented [LW43]: Shame an accompanist can't be provided - allow the choir leader to lead and focus on the singing rather than trying to do both

Commented [LW44]: inflexible

Commented [LW45]: Marketing? Missed competencies?

Commented [LW46]: Getting boys to sing - go one to be men that sing?

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30:00
It to something. And I'd love to say, Well, look, if you're going to join the choir in September, that you can't leave until at least Christmas,

30:09
not just three weeks and then leave.

Did you think that's the children, or do you think that's sort of coming from the family environment as well?

I think a lot, a lot of children don't seem to be able to commit to anything, or really doing too many things, and there's too many activities happening, and they just don't have the energy or time to commit to any one thing for very long. I don't know. It just seems to be quite a shame that these opportunities are there. And yeah, they seem to think they can just talk and change,

Commented [LW47]: Too many things competing for children's attention

Commented [LW48]: Chop and change

30:43
yeah. I mean, maybe, unfortunately, maybe. And this is a whole another subject all together. I'm guessing it may be sort of symptomatic of of the, you know, the

30:56
sort of this societal

30:59
issue of people not being able to focus or concentrate, you know? And they're aggravated by mobile devices, and this, that and the other. And, you know how television is constructed, and, yeah, all of these things in terms of, you know, when not, yeah, to sit down and read books,

yeah,

31:18
an hour's rehearsal. It's always after school, there's always, I always have to chop it up a bit, and we'll do some physical stuff. Then we'll do something on,

31:28
I don't know vocal like a vocal warm up, and then some breathing thing, but it has to be very short burst activities. I can't keep on one thing for more than six or seven minutes, because they get bored, or they just, you can see they're getting restless, so I chop it up and do something different.

LW
And also, I suppose there's an element as well for them, that if they've been at school all day, they might just genuinely be a bit on the tired side.

Commented [LW49]: Me

Yeah, yeah.

31:55

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They just like, stop coming. That's a shame. Yeah. If they had said, if they had said, they would have, they would have found it, you know, the end result would have been amazing.

Commented [LW50]: Stayed

LW
And the benefits, the benefits of doing any type of music in other aspects of their academic work, you know, just that they've been proven the time and time again that you know, children that participate in musical activities, you know, they they do well at maths, they do well at reasoning. They do well at languages and so on. I mean, it's just a great pathway. It's just a great,

32:30
you know, sort of initiator, isn't it? Of many things,

and a lot like the choirs that I do are after school, which I think the parents quite value the fact that they're in school for

32:43
an extra hour.

And it's like, that's true.

So they pay me to go in, but I think the parents don't have to pay so they're getting free childcare. So a lot of children are there, not necessarily because they want to sing, but the parents have put them into it, which is a bit cynical of me, but, but by the end of it, they do enjoy it, because

Commented [LW51]: Attitudes of parents - no real commitment, its just convenient

33:02
That

Yeah, and that's the skill, isn't it? Yeah, that's, that's, that's the skill is transferring that enthusiasm to the children and getting them to to really enjoy it. Yeah, I've not worked with children, so it is, it's a new perspective for me to chat,

33:19
or it's the, it's the most amazing thing.

Commented [LW52]: You'll have to have a go, Laura

Just keep talking about,

33:25
I do, keep talking about, you know, one of my choirs, an upper voices choir. And

33:32
you know about doing sort of an open day, yeah, for girls, you know, more than, I mean, all their boys singing treble would be, be fine, but, you know, the repertoire match would be, obviously, more directed at girls voices and doing sort of, oh, come and sing, sort of session. I might have to take that up with the what I say the committee I say, you know, those I delegate to and see what they say about it. But yeah, I mean, it sounds like fun and to being at the the very early stages of a child's

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musical career, hopefully. And I mean, don't mean that in going out and earning money, I mean just in that lifelong love of music and music participation, I can imagine that's very rewarding.

Oh, it's so lovely. And I've got children as young as five and six who who just love it. And it's very simple, very simple music. But, you know, just seeing their faces, my two sons, I've got two sons, they were in my children's choir, the one I started in the community, and just seeing their faces when they were singing in parts, it was just, I'm so,

34:36
yeah, it's magic. Yeah, yeah,

34:40
great. I'm just conscious of the time, and I know you're very busy teachers, and as you say, end of term. And my the last kind of question I had, which sort of throws it right open to you, is,

34:54
is there anything else you would like to say about being a choir leader in the UK? And.

35:00
At this time. And obviously your focus is very specific on children. But,

35:07
I mean, you could even, well leave it over open to you.

35:11
Shouldn't lead No, okay,

so I think, I think, well being part of Sing for Pleasure which is the the tagline for, is investing in choral futures. So the organization that I'm a part of, and I'm a member of, and I'm now a staff member of, because I work with one of the events coordinators, we are seeing that what we are doing is affecting the future, because we are training the choral leaders of the future. So I have every confidence that the country is going to be well set for having plenty of good, well trained choir leaders going forward, and in terms of the country as a whole, I we've seen all sorts of initiatives with military wives, choirs Gareth Malone doing all those come and sing, sing along a Gareth concert. They're really popular, yeah, and things like all the kind of modern

36:09
university acapella competitions are so popular. My niece is at Warwick University, and she's part of one of those acapella

36:20
choral not, like traditional choral music, it's like American they all have mics on yeah, but big,

36:30
LW yeah, or the sort Glee clubs there,

Commented [LW53]: Sing for Pleasure

Commented [LW54]: mics

Commented [LW55]: Like Glee or Barbershop

Commented [LW56]: Glee clubs

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yeah, but the youngsters absolutely love it. So it may not be Cathedral Choir kind of repertoire, but they love it. And it's funky, it's pop, it's it's trendy, it's popular, you know, they love it. So seeing the university level of those a cappella groups going forward, I think they are just going to be amazing. So I think, and all the choirs that I'm involved in, I mean, I'm in the national teachers choir, which teachers go for a weekend. It's next weekend. Actually, they go away for a whole weekend with brand new repertoire they've never seen before, and by the end of it, on Sunday afternoon, they do a concert. It is just uplifting, and for teachers, it's just such a relief from being in the classroom. So there are lots of avenues and outlets for people to go and sing, and there are more choirs in the country than fish and chip shops. I i heard that fact,

37:32
I haven't done an actual survey, but I don't feel confident about the future.

Yeah, there was a survey back in 2017

37:43
big, big choral survey in the UK, over 2 million choral singers, and that's adults, yeah, so that doesn't even include and then the you know, that would include universities. But at that point it was over 2 million people participating regularly in choral singing. Amazing. It is, it is. And the benefits,

yeah, special schools doing an amazing concert. Have you heard Hi?

38:08
Yes, I have, yes.

Do try and get along to one of their concerts, if you can, the one at the Birmingham Town Hall last year was just so uplifting and emotional. Really seeing children who have profound Special Needs creating the most amazing music. Yeah,

38:26
enjoy. There's no other word to describe it. Is there, you know? It is just the most joyous of of activities, you know? And it fulfills the primal neediness

Absolutely. And when I was looking for a new choir to join about four years ago, I wanted to join an upper voice choir, having been slightly left down by a few men in another choir. Thought I need to find a lady's choir. There wasn't one in our area, so me and my friend Rachel, we started one. So we now find an upper voice choir called cantoras, and it's so successful, we're now running with a profit, and all our concerts are sold out. And it's the most incredible thing, finding repertoire that's written for female voices. We did a whole program last term of programs, music for female voices by female composers. It was just Yeah, yeah, no, it is.

And there's getting more and more and more repertoire out. And actually, when my voice is quite recently, did a program entirely of Mozart. We've never done a single composer

39:31
concert before. We've done sort of themes and but the publishers have suddenly cottoned on to the fact that actually there is this growing number of upper voices, or women's voices choirs, and

Commented [LW57]: An illustration of the mental health benefits of singing

Commented [LW58]: Does feel confident about the future

Commented [LW59]: Not sure

Commented [LW60]: Again the benefits of singing - inclusion, confidence, belonging, community

Commented [LW61]: And joy

Commented [LW62]: Need in us

Commented [LW63]: front

Commented [LW64]: Upper voices choir

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actually they're of a pretty good standard. And they're now sort of making or doing arrangements of some of the, sort of the key big works,

39:56
which, you know, I mean, it's a different that choir is very much classical.

40:00
Music, but it's an opportunity to see, you know, it's just broadening the repertoire to those classics that we love, as well as some great music that's written specifically for upper voices. As you say,

Have you come across a multitude of voices? Yes, so we've got that the book for female voices, because that's right, I haven't, but I've, I, well, I've, I have,

40:27
no, I, well, I do, actually, I have one copy. I, what I haven't done is invested in for the choir.

Well, I did that with my ladies choir, and we all bought a copy. And so, yeah, at least they've now got a copy. And we'll, we'll use it. We'll use it. Yes, absolutely, it's one from each one piece from the book, each time.

40:44
Lovely pieces in there, really lovely.

There's another one by Faber called sacred, sacred. Oh, what now I'm going to say sacred masterpieces,

okay,

40:57
which again, is goes right through from sort of early music to, you know, more contemporary games, sort of the art music side. So, you know, it's war lot Britain and people like that, and a bit more recent as well. That's, that's a good one.

Commented [LW65]: Warlock

Oh, great. I'll look out. So, yeah, that's definitely ours. Is our copies are very, very well used.

41:21
Okay? Well, is there anything else that you would like to to add?

41:25
Um, no, I just hope I've managed to give you enough information to help you with your research.

Yeah, no, absolutely. It's, it's, you know, it's all about different people's perspectives, this element and and sort of, really getting, giving people a chance to

41:42
it's the nuances, isn't it? When we talk about it, understand a bit more about where people are coming from and what's important to them and so on. And, you know, I think, I think we've got,

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41:52
I've learned a lot, to be honest, yeah,

41:56
S2 that's cropped up in conversation in the last couple of years, is within teacher training

42:04
programs, training teachers very often there's no music involved in that. So people are coming to the profession with no music. And I do think that even though you're not, maybe people, people aren't musicians themselves, there should be much more emphasis on music for non musicians within the classroom. And so I hope that whoever designs initial teacher training programs will try and encourage teachers to just be confident to sing in front of their classes, because I do find so many teachers just don't.

Commented [LW66]: Wider indication of lack of appreciation of the benefits of music as part of an all round education.

42:38
So the only thing I kind of would like to see change,

yeah, no, no. I think it's valid point. You know, not every teacher can be, you know, an experienced singer or pianist or so on, but you know, they should have the confidence that they have to stand up and speak, yeah. They should be able exactly engaging about the Tudors, find a song about the Tudors and have the confidence to teach it along with

Commented [LW67]: To sing a nursery rhyme

Like modern histories, you know, yeah, exactly.

Commented [LW68]: Horrible Histories

Or, you know, these on sing up. There's so many cross curricular songs that would fit to all sorts of topics, and yet, teachers rely on a rather lackluster program where they'll just press play and that will just play it for them and not actually engage in teaching it.

That's it. It's engagement. And now, I mean, the question I'd ask is, is that, because the emphasis has changed very much to STEM subjects over the last few years,

Commented [LW69]: Yes Ofsted don't even bother about music

S2 right, Ofsted, Ofsted they don't bother about music. So why would schools bother investing in musicians if they're only thing that come and see is in Maths and English results

LW because music. Music helps critical thoughts, yeah, it helps discipline. It helps rational and rational and logical thinking. It helps teamwork. It helps empathy, it helps all sorts of things.

S2 So and tell Ofsted that to kind of say to Ofsted, right? You need to be looking for this in the classroom. If, if schools know that Ofsted are coming to see how music is

44:07
is embedded into schools, then they would change it, because schools are terrified of Ofsted, as you know,
I know, I know, and I know

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everything they do is ruled by them. And if Ofsted change their goal posts and say, right, we're going to come and see how you teach maths and music. Then we they would have to invest in music. Yeah. Anyway, that's my high horse. Go off.

Commented [LW70]: Got off

No, no, no, I'm with you on that one. I'm with you on that one. So, right, yeah,

44:35
let's, let's just keep our fingers crossed. Things change.

Well, I've heard that our new education secretary is very interested in in meeting real teachers and actually finding out what what the challenges are. So whether they do anything about music or not, I don't know, but they seem to be more supportive of the profession at the moment,

and they said, and actually the the culture sector, new culture secretary.

45:00
Is genuinely interested in the sector. So, you know, it's

45:07
fingers crossed,

yeah, and it's a huge industry that we can't see. You can't see theaters closing. We can't see opera houses closing, because the economic impact on on that industry alone is huge. You know, musical musical theater is massive. Now,

absolutely,

but not only the the actors and the people who work in the theater. It's all the hospitality, everything that goes with it, the costumes, and it's just a massive industry. It is we need, we need, we need musical directors who direct the shows. We need singers to sing in the shows.

It just cutting engineers, sound engineers, yeah, you know, as you say, the designers, the people that write the programs, exactly the person who sells the ice creams doesn't, you know, yeah, huge industry.

Yep, it is. It is and yeah, yeah, it's not treated with the respect it deserves.

45:58
But fingers crossed, yes,

46:01
positive, yeah, yeah, absolutely right. So it's now almost quarter two,

46:07

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so yeah, thank you so much. It's, it's been, you know, it's been real eye opener talking to you, and this is what I'm finding, actually, everybody's got different experiences, and it comes from this different perspective, and it's certainly, I think it's fair to say that it's certainly going to inform my my practice as a choir leader. Good. So yeah, thank you very much indeed. Well, do get back in touch if you, if you want to ask anything else. Yes, thank you very much indeed. Thank you. [redacted] okay, lovely Pleasure to meet you. Thank you. Bye, then bye, bye, bye.

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Subject 3 Interview for projec...40719_094358-Meeting Recording

Sun, Aug 11, 2024 3:41PM • 47:02

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

choirs, people, music, concert, bit, conducting, work, singing, voices, abcd, interesting, singers, thought, feel, repertoire, absolutely, audience, conductor, core, side

03:56
Hello, [redacted]

03:58
hello. How Are you?

04:01
Well, thanks,

04:04
yes, already, yeah,

04:07
yeah. Not long, got back, walked the dogs, early, got back, showered, change, been out again, and I think I need another shower. I've

04:17
done the school, did the school run. Started chatting to the parents, and we all thought Nice. I Right? Well, thank you. Thank you very much for agreeing to to do this.

04:32
I obliged to remind you I'm this is being recorded, and it's being that, using the trans teams transcription facility as well, which saves me a bit of a job at the end of the day, hopefully.

04:47
So, yeah, lovely to see you. It's been, been a long time.

04:52
So, and how's everybody has a family, alright? So busy. 16 now. So, oh, she can't believe that it.

05:00

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Huh? That's very scary. So, so yes, I mean, the purpose of this is really

05:08
kind of semi structured. I don't anticipating it lasting more than half an hour. It's not intended to be a sort of an intensive interview. It's just really to give a few people an opportunity to expand on on some of the things that may have come up, you know, come up in their minds as they were filling in parts of the survey,

05:32
just a little bit of background. And came to this, I started doing this masters in vocal pedagogy just before lockdown, and it was intended that I was going to be looking at sort of more

05:45
ways of improving my choirs performance and safeguarding their vocal health, and this, that and the other. But of course, when lockdown kicked in,

05:55
it, you know that we weren't allowed to sing for however long it was. So,

06:01
yeah, it kind of put the kibosh on that. But, you know, this is the, one of the things that

06:07
I've realized, just sort of on this journey,

06:11
is actually, when I went into call conducting, how little I actually knew,

Commented [LW1]: choral

06:18
yes, yeah,

06:21
yeah, so and, and that's, that's, that's really what's instigated this particular subject, is, you know, am I, you know, am I the only one out there that feels that way? Or, you know, are there opportunities that are being missed by various organizations or people to sort of, you know, get off on a better foot, so to speak. So that's that's really where we've come from, and has dragged on a bit. We've had a few unfortunate instances. I had to have wrist surgery. My husband has been very unwell, so I did have to have a little bit of a break, which is why it seems to be a long time since I started it. But hopefully this will be it,

07:00
right? So first couple of questions, bit of context for for me, and the the discussion is, how long have you been a core director?

Commented [LW2]: choral

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07:11
Oh, since 1999 I took over. So 25 years. 25 years, okay,

and when you first took over, had you had any training at that point?

07:22
No, okay, lots of experience of singing in choirs, the feeling of sitting in the choir thinking, well, I could do this better, or I wish they were picking these points off and they're not that sort of thing.

Yeah,

07:34
yeah, I actually got into it. I mean, I don't know if you want to know how good I got,
yeah, sure.
Unfortunately, we were on a quiet tour, and I conducted covid and had a heart attack and died.

Oh, three.

07:48
I mean, I deputized from occasionally before that, and I really know their accompanist. And then, obviously there's a huge shock. And yes, when we got back, I just took over the caretaker initially, while they sorted themselves out. And they said, Well, we're happy with what you're doing. Stay on. 25 years later, fantastic.

So

08:07
you didn't train. What did you

08:12
do? You looking back on that? Do you wish you had had the opportunity to do some training before you started to

not really, because, I mean, there are lots of lots of options from doing it, but obviously, then the people in the choir are kind of your guinea pigs.

Yeah,

08:29
I don't have any training music. I mean, I went to do music degree, I went to music college, went after school, but specifically choral directory, I hadn't had any any sort of training at that stage. And I think some of the conducting sides, because that was quite useful, it came out of the ABC vehicles that I did, yeah, although I've lapsed a lot of them, things I don't conduct double handed, don't give too up big,

Commented [LW3]: choir

Commented [LW4]: Our choir conductor collapsed

Commented [LW5]: grief

Commented [LW6]: I don't know really, I learnt a lot from just doing it

Commented [LW7]: For a career, went to Junior music college when I was at school

Commented [LW8]: Things like don't conduct double handed and don't something your upbeats

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08:50
yeah.

08:54
My, my, my difficulty is, is staying still, yes, yeah. I just, I move, I move around far too much on the podium must be very distracting for the audience. And then halfway through, I'll suddenly remember, and I'll sort of stop,

09:10
and it lasts for a minute or two, and then I'm back.

09:14
But again, you know that? I mean, there is a difference between, you know, sort of people have different styles, I guess. So, yeah, that if you're communicating well with your choir, it doesn't really matter, does it?

Yeah, the other day, it's what the results, what matters, isn't it?

Commented [LW9]: At the end of the day

Yeah, yeah, absolutely. So what did you find came most naturally to you when you took that, that step across,

09:35
um, doing the sort of all technical things, well, picking them up on things like intonation. And first thing we worked on was getting all the final concerts together so that you know, and you could hear the difference. And we did a recording I took over in the July and first Christmas concert. And we did something quite simple, where, but we got the concerts together, and everyone's thinking, we sound good, so that that was picking up the things, which I found frustrating as a chorus.

Commented [LW10]: consonants

Commented [LW11]: consonants

Commented [LW12]: Choral singer

10:00
Yeah, the work being picked up by our police conductor, who was lovely chap, but a bit kind of casual about detail,

Commented [LW13]: Weren't being picked up by our previous conductor

10:07
and

10:09
others in the choir do better results with the people we've got. It's not just a question necessarily of importing lots of highly qualified trained singers.

10:20
So yeah, it was, this is sort of, you know, honing the group together, detail that also came naturally. Yeah, the site, the style of how to wave your arms about, I couldn't ask some help with probably, okay, and that's where the ABCD, course, came in.

Commented [LW14]: style

Commented [LW15]: Have done with some help

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Yes, yeah, yeah. Okay. So, I mean, I think that

10:39
the musicianship side was, was natural, obviously, because of your background, it was maybe some of the more technical, specifically chordal conducting elements that that that phased you a bit. Okay,

Commented [LW16]: choral

10:51
the singing aspect as well, because I had about a year's worth of singing lessons, but I'm not really a singer. I sing in choirs so

11:00
the vocal technique side of things, yeah, yes, yeah, absolutely no.

Okay.

11:07
Apart from the sort of the technical arm waving side of things, what else did you find, really them was the most difficult aspect for you,

11:17
in the broad I'm talking now the broadest sense,

yes, I mean, sometimes management, I'm not sort of really strict, as strict as I should be, and people talking rehearsals and answering back and stuff. I mean, I think over the years, I've, you know, got

Commented [LW17]: people

11:32
a fairly interactive style of running rehearsals, but then it can get that can get a bit sort of that everyone's talking at once, and I've got to stop it, please. That's one of

11:41
the things I found more difficult. But I don't

11:45
think, and also, you know, you get, you get also get diplomatic issues from time to time with, you know, a particular person who's singing flat and who's very sensitive about being told, I'm sure we've all come across those,

Commented [LW18]: Diplomatic issues

11:57
and how to do it so diplomatically, so that you correct the problem, which everybody else can hear anyway, without drawing too much attention to the people. Management side is quite a skill.

Commented [LW19]: Should be side

12:11
I mean, as you say, there's specifically musical things weren't a problem.

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12:16
One of the key things that seems to be coming up a lot, actually, is repertoire. I mean, now your choirs SATB, isn't it? Yes. So in some respects, repertoire, it's, you know, there's as much there as you want.

12:32
Whereas, you know, my choir is upper voices, so we little limited in what we can do. I've had, you know, spoken to male voice choir conductors as well.

12:42
And you know, one of the recurring things seems to be

12:46
the, sorry, that's my my phone going

12:50
seems to be repertoire. Now, how do you approach? What's your approach to choosing your repertoire for your your your program for the year?

12:59
Right? Well, yeah,

13:01
quite a lot. Sometimes I'll pick a theme, and sometimes it'll be a general, a general sort of mix of things. You know, it all depends lots of factors. Like, you know, if we haven't got key people available for a particular concert, I've got to factor that in.

13:15
We also have books. So, you know, the easiest thing is just pick stuff on the book. If you don't mind the books, yeah, you know the Oxford book of European sacred music, that one? Yeah, a lot in the magical and partisans, but we've got and in the mood, you know, so, so particularly Christmas, when there's lots and lots of Carol books, it's actually, you know, nothing, too many big books on in one concert, and we

Commented [LW20]: Madrigals and part songs

Commented [LW21]: Not too many big books

13:40
sometimes have orchestra, and then it's, I also ask suggestions. And, you know, I get quite lost. And sometimes I come to me, so look, I've heard this piece, I've got and they give me, they give me music, which is not actually the best thing to do, because I've just got enormous pile of one day I'll get around to looking at this stuff, yeah, just suggestions and but most of the time it comes from me, and then I'll, sort of, you know what fits, because you've got to factor in a number of things. Like, how many weeks have you got to prepare? If it's something difficult, you need plenty of time. If you've only got a few weeks, you do mostly stuff we already know. I mean, we tend to do, we do short pieces rather than, you know, whole works.

14:16

Transcribed by https://otter.ai

So you can bring in stuff you've done before. And whether it's in four parts or more than four parts, those sort of, it tends to be practical factors coming

14:26
to, you know, like the concept we just done was a sort

14:30
of natures through the year. So we always find a piece of summer, autumn, winter and spring. And sometimes then I'll go on to CPD or something, and just type in numbers and see what comes up. Type in sort of words. And so, yeah, so some of the body finding stuff, I don't know as well, just after doing it fairly focus,

14:46
yeah, absolutely, okay. So, yeah, I think it's,

14:53
it's, you know, it is interesting. I think I speak to somebody who teaches.

15:00
And or leads a number of children's choirs, again, brings in its its different aspects. And I think that's, you know,

15:08
we quite often. I think if our background is sort of adult SATB choirs, etc, that actually we don't think about that broader

15:16
sort of choir scene where there's so much, so much other

15:21
forms of a choir going on, and they all have their own peculiarities and their own, their own restrictions, and so on and so forth. So,

15:30
yeah, it's, it's, it's been very interesting to hear what people's different, you know, sort of takes on on things like,

there's been some coastal preferences come into it. I'm a bit of an early music fan, so I'm trying to introduce stuff. I like to find these people, you know, because we're sort of quite high standard chamber choir, people who've done a lot of choral singing experience courses. I'd like to find things they haven't done before. That's, that's, that's the thing. But I'm not so keen on the on the new stuff, because I don't know the repertoire so well, and I'm probably listening to more new stuff. But it also, then, if it's a modern stuff, we've got to buy 30 copies of it, whereas if it's an older piece, we can get it off CPD. We might need a bit of tweaking if the additions bit rubbish. But, you know, it's also a cost, a cost factor,

Commented [LW22]: Can't make it out

Commented [LW23R22]: But just is after 25 years, you develop a knack for finding stuff

Commented [LW24]: For 25 years

Commented [LW25]: Personal preferences

Commented [LW26]: voices

Commented [LW27]: Opportunity for repertoire training - often see for big works or composers/women composers/but may be could be more.

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yeah, yeah, no, absolutely.

16:17
You know, then there's, yeah, it's a major factor, isn't it? I mean, we have a deal nobody, we don't pay subs, but we all buy our own music in my upper voices choir.

16:27
Then they can, they can do what they like to it. I don't have to worry about it, you know, being scribbled on, highlighted whatever it's theirs. They can do what they like. But, you know, that's how we keep the costs down. And then. So, you know, income is raised through other other sources, hopefully ticket sales and the odd grant here and there that we've we've been lucky enough to get. So, yeah, it's quite difficult, isn't it, to the money side of things, I think is something that, again, hasn't come up an awful lot in terms of choirs, and we don't know whether that's because

Commented [LW28]: me

17:01
choirs have committees, I don't know if yours does has a committee that overseas.

Commented [LW29]: Oversees

Yeah. Yeah. I mean, there are two main models. There's the kind of person running into their business, in which case they're very much in control, and they take all the money, and then it's the people who are just doing it, as I do, as a sort of like a leisure interest, where it's run by a committee. I

17:20
don't want to do all the admin. I'm probably happy to let all people do some of it, but I just want to do a fair amount

17:27
subs, and that we just fund ourselves.

Commented [LW30]: People pay subs

Yeah, yeah, yeah, no, indeed.

17:36
So, What? What? What is,

17:40
what do you get out of it?

17:43
Why you still a core director after 25 years?

17:47
It's,

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17:49
it's a good sort of partly social. It's also partly musical, although I have to say, what I do notice is that when I actually play music myself, I think, Oh, yes, this is what I've been missing.

18:02
In fact, you get done play the piano. That's connection in a way that just waving hands isn't. So it's odd that way. But I do enjoy it. I do enjoy the whole planning process and choosing music and putting programs together. That's a nice

18:15
part of it. And I like the whole rehearsal process of we just work at this thing together, we get to know in more details, and we hang up, polish it up, and, you

18:25
know, I think there's something about that and the concerts, when we've had a lot of like, we did the pull not lent mots this this year, in that spring, and they're difficult. They took a lot of work, yeah, but people felt because we had, you know, like, three months doing that, and we did it alongside Forrest wreck, with everybody else we know. So again, balancing up the new and the familiar.

18:49
And you know that they really felt well once we got to covid, we know this. And there's that kind of feeling of really getting to know his music very well. Yeah, that's I like about it. What's the

19:01
question? Yeah, get out of it. Why do you, why are you still a core director after 25 years?

You know what 19:09
something about, and also you could be working on something, and you say, do it like this? And the whole thing changes. You think, oh, gosh, 19:18
trying to sort of find a way to kind of get the best out of people.

Yeah. I mean, you know, do you think of of conducting as a creative process or

19:29
Rehearsing I think it was a creative process. I don't know. The actual concert is something to get through.

19:35
Okay?

I don't enjoy concerts when I'm conducting it. I've got to stay focused and make sure everything happens right. I enjoy the bus afterwards when everyone says, Oh, that was great. Or conversely, I'll go right down if things weren't didn't go as well as I wanted to, but I just found this sort of stress, a lot of pressure around

Commented [LW31]: hone

Commented [LW32]: Lot of rehearsals. We did the Poulenc Lent motets

Commented [LW33]: Faure's Requiem

Commented [LW34]: The concert

Commented [LW35]: choral

Commented [LW36]: buzz

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19:54
stupid things, like I occasionally lose my balance, and I kind of worry about whopping so the actual conducting of the concert and.

20:00
Then I sort of get to the end of the concert, I feel bit sort of, you know, I've missed it. It's all gone by and I've missed it, but I really enjoyed the rehearsing process. And the rehearsal before the concert is usually my favorite point, because that's when the music's up to scratch. And you've got this good feeling about how the concert is going to go. But I say on the day it can be unless it's a very relaxed sort of thing, where we it doesn't really matter much, then it's a kind of, you know, high status concert.

20:24
It's, you know, probably quite focused,

20:27
but so, so, yeah, so interesting. It's not the performance itself. Is the process that you enjoy?

Yeah, okay, yeah, working with people, and they chip in as well.

Yeah. I mean, do you play? I know, I know. You're a pianist. Do you do you play? You're cellist as well, aren't you?

Viola, Viola, Viola,

no, he was a string instrument, Viola. I mean, do you play in an orchestra as well?

Yeah.

Which do you enjoy more? Just out of interest, not, that's not on my list of questions, because not everybody's an instrumentalist as well as a core product.

Uh, both. I mean, in different ways. Okay? I mean, well, I like being a situation where I just no responsibility, except I'll play the notes right.

21:11
I get frustrated if people aren't doing things right. We had sort of been an issue with section leader not bowing the parts up and,

21:20
you know, then I'll sort of, I've now got, I'm now co leader, and I help him to do the bowing, and we get it sorted out. And, you know, I like things done properly,

yeah, fair enough. Yeah. Absolutely

Commented [LW37]: Wobbling

Commented [LW38]: I knew it was

Commented [LW39]: Choir conductor

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Again, get to the concert and you can, that's more

21:36
ultimate responsibility. So, and likewise, singing in choirs, if I go and there's an extra to help them out, yeah? Out. Yeah, that's but it's a different it's a different thing from conducting

still performance. Though, don't think,

Oh yes, yes, definitely.

Yeah, yeah, okay, um, how do you feel about the interaction with interaction with the audience? Is that something that you enjoy? Is that something that,

Oh, definitely. You know you're doing it to them. I mean, again, we're not we do it ourselves as well. But, you know, part of it, part of it is you're putting this music across to them. So I do, usually to me, but sometimes other people quite weird to pieces, and all the feedback I get is people like it. It's a bit of chat, but it makes it more informal. And you know, if you do a concert where you just go from one piece to the next to the next word of applause, you feel just like a sausage machine, conveyor belt? You just want to, you know, stop and talk to the audience, maybe not every time, and not too much, but so it's, you know, one of the things I do on day four cops is work out what I'm going to say about each piece, or where I'm going to do the do the talking.

Yeah,

yeah, certainly yes. Putting it across the audience is definitely part of the

yes, yeah, yeah, okay, no. Again, interesting. Some people actually do hate that part of it. And do you know my, my personal, you know, thing is, well, why do you put yourself in the position where you are there between the choir and the audience? You're the natural conduit for any, any sort of communication with the audience. So, but, you know, they get, they get different things out of it, I suppose.

So we've

23:06
got one of our we've got a man in the car who loves doing speech things, so, and he's, he'll, he'll come online and research things, and he'll, he's used to presenting, I think, does presentations and things. So sometimes I could say, Would you like to do the intros? And he loves and he comes out, he just does them very well. And when he does the interest, it just gives a bit more me time to think about the next piece. It takes the pressure off. But, you know, there is a time for me as front person, because he will be

23:36

Commented [LW40]: Not ultimately my responsibility

Commented [LW41]: Don't you think?

Commented [LW42]: To introduce

Commented [LW43]: no

Commented [LW44]: Before a concert

Commented [LW45]: choir

Commented [LW46]: intros

Commented [LW47]: To speak to the audience

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don't do what I did at the our last concert. I at the end of, and we did that Mozart's Sparrow mass. And at the end, I shuffled all my music together and taken the loose music from the first half away and just put it and but I also included the Encore music in that.

24:02
And I just felt okay. Fortunately, it was unaccompanied, and I had given our accompanist a copy, just for, you know, just for information, so knew what to expect. And I had quickly made my excuses and say, Okay, can I borrow your copy?

24:20
I feel a bit of a fall. You've been so organized until that very point, and then it just all went to pot. But, you know, it'd been the end of a long night so and an enjoyable one as well.

24:33
Okay, so moving forward.

24:37
I mean,

24:39
obviously you've learned, you were saying you've learned on the job. And I know you did the ABCD intermediate course, because that's where we were colleagues on that.

24:51
What other training would you have liked to have had earlier on, in in the day? Because, I mean, the ABCD training course must have been.

25:00
10 years ago now,

2013 I think it was,

yeah, really.

25:06
I suppose they've done that a bit sooner, yeah, okay. I mean, that's something that sort of, you know, some some of what we did, I'm sure we felt it was more helpful than others. Because obviously, though we can do a range of choirs, I might, I personally hate all those kind of physical warm ups and walk around the room, and it's fine. Maybe five for school kids. It's interesting that one of people our course said, Who was this teacher? Said I did all this kind of shoulder with the kids, and they loved it. Yeah? It's not for older adults.

25:35

Commented [LW48]: Mmm ok!

Commented [LW49]: fool

Commented [LW50]: It had been

Commented [LW51]: To have

Commented [LW52]: We came from a

Commented [LW53]: fine

Commented [LW54]: Who was a

Commented [LW55]: Who said

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Any of these kind of watches a workshop type things. They all do it. Yeah, I don't know. Do I think, do they actually do that for real when they're by themselves, just rehearsing professionally. Or is this just something they do to kind of Jolly answers along,

25:47
but

25:49
not, sort

25:50
of not embarrassing stuff?

25:55
Yeah, I think, I suppose there is a school of thought that says the embarrassing stuff does actually sort of help break down bonds and inhibitions and, you know, barriers and inhibitions, what I meant,

26:09
and, you know, ultimately, help people relax. You know, we're, we're all in this together kind of thing. But I think there's, I think there's a balance to be had personally, you know, I think there's some of the things that you asked to do, you think, Oh, for goodness sakes,

26:22
you know, however old I am, I'm not a six year old, you know,

26:27
yeah. And you know, as you say, brilliant with with kids,

26:33
you know, up to a point. And I think it probably also comes a lot from more from the the the MT side, where

26:40
you've got that combination of music, drama and dance, and if you do all three disciplines, then you know, it's, you know, all that sort of becoming a tree and all that sort of stuff that they reportedly get you to do at drama school. I think there is an influence there that, you know, sort of was permeated. But yeah, I think I've got a couple of my members. If I do ask them to touch their toes, I don't think they'll ever get back up.

It's not really sort of, I'm 65

27:14
No, not at all. So

Commented [LW56]: Voces 8

Commented [LW57]: Jolly the amateurs along

Commented [LW58]: No idea!

Transcribed by https://otter.ai

27:17
if you had the opportunity, would you do any more further training, or after 25 years. I mean, what areas do you still feel possibly, you know, you would need to look at

I think my posture is bad. I do tend to hunch up and I'm sometimes, sometimes I'll get a bit kind of almost lightheaded because I'm not breathing properly and or I stand up on my tiptoes and lean forward. And I think when I actually look at videos, and I'm doing a lot of like there's probably some work to be done on the actual just what I look like and how I do it, and maybe I don't need to do quite such big gestures, to keep it more you know,

27:51
certainly that side of things I think could could do is I thought about doing the advanced course, but obviously not being a professional. I've got family life and other things to work around, and learning disabilities going away, all those Saturdays or Sundays when I did it before, yeah, it was quite a, quite a push. And of course, I then, then came back and did my priors on Sunday night. So all those Sundays at the whole school, and then get back and then do the primary hustle. So it was something, was quite a tiring day.

Yeah, absolutely imagine, yeah,

28:21
one off day I might be tempted to go to that, but the whole 6-7-8, weeks.

28:27
But actually, one of the things I enjoyed about the course we did is that we were the choir, so you're on the receiving end of it, whereas they give you a kind of elite choir to work with, I think, on the advanced course. And yeah, that's part of what you're paying for, is their time turning up and being conducted by you. So imagine there's a lot sitting around when you're not actually conducting. Yes, which is one of the things I enjoyed, was singing for all the different people. And you learn so much by being on the receiving end of conducting. Actually,

yes, you do Yeah, by observing. And if nothing else, you know what you don't like, you don't like another people, you try not to do it yourself.

Yes.

29:01
And I remember the one called Steph, who sort of got jazz background. She got us doing the body percussion stuff, some jazz. That's the one time I thought, this works here. Yeah, I don't want the physical body for

29:15
class. You don't need it. But for that repertoire, it works.

Commented [LW59]: More of a review than CPD - a reflective measure?

Commented [LW60]: Choir's

Commented [LW61]: Choir rehearsal

Commented [LW62]: Attractiveness of training opportunities at an advanced level - too much sitting around, whereas before were part of the choir

Commented [LW63]: percussion

Commented [LW64]: classical

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29:19
That's quite you know. And her rehearsal method

29:24
participants, as well as on the as well as the tutors.

Yeah, no, I'd agree. And for me as well. I mean, it's certainly, you know, it iron ironed out a few issues that I hadn't realized I had. It certainly made me think about it, and I certainly think it made me a better, not necessarily a good, but it made me a better call conductor, and certainly more conscious of what I was doing and how I was communicating physically through the gesture.

Commented [LW65]: choir

29:58
For me, I think that.

30:00
They, they didn't spend enough time on the physiology of singing, and I think that would have been extremely useful for me. And I'd say this course I have learned. I mean, you know, I had singing lessons for donkey's years,

30:16
and, yeah, it was, it wasn't covered, then

30:20
it obviously is, covid has been covered more in more recent years. It's become a more fashionable that's fashionable, more understood part of the, you know, the pedagogy. But, yeah, I would have been happy to have spent, you know, a session on, you know, how does, how does the voice work? What not to do, what to do, what? What, what the warm up actually, understanding what the warm ups do to the voice, right?

Commented [LW66]: covered

Yes, yeah,

30:50
no. I mean, I could actually, now you say that that was, that was the thing. I thought, well, I don't, you know, I'm a musician. I don't know so much about singing. And I was hoping for more actual singing technique and how I can help my choir, yeah, instead of bring somebody in now, who sort of local singing teacher comes does occasional session, but she tends to do it more about presentation anyway. I mean, some of some of our members have got, you know, trained singers, and some of them aren't.

Commented [LW67]: An inadequacy in the training

So, yeah, yeah, no, no, no. It's very much like my 31:17
sort of chamber choir. You know, we're lucky enough to have some, you know, highly trained singers,

31:23

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you know, but I've got also a couple of people that have come from from musical theater, drama background, and, you know, just a handful that are just really experienced amateur choral singers.

31:36
And at the end of the day, you know, they're kind of placing their voices in our care.

31:42
Yeah.

So any, any kind of help or hints we can give them to help protect their voice, you know, beneficial to us as well? Obviously? Yes. So that, yeah, I have to say that that's been a key factor in this particular masters. It's given me the it's given me the incentive to go and look at that side of things, yes, and also Yeah, managed to feed my inner geek. Discovered the joys of vocal acoustics. So that was Yeah. Don't ask me, yeah. It's I never thought I would, never thought I would, but it's actually quite fascinating,

32:24
anyway, I'm digressing now,

32:27
so I mean, would, would that be something that you would be interested if you know, say ABCD said, actually, what we do is a one day seminar on, On, on the voice, and,

32:41
you know, sort of

32:43
methods and tools to help with warm ups, for example, using fricatives or

32:51
straw work or something along those lines. Would that be the kind of development that, you know, you would appeal to you?

Yes, I think so. Because, I mean, I go to these warm ups with the vague idea that anything muscles going, but really, you know, other than just easing in gently is all I really know about .So, yes, I think, I think sort of more singing technique based, because that's the thing I don't know about, yeah, rather than specifically the conducting side of things.

Commented [LW68]: Easing in gently is all I really know about

Sure, yeah. So is that more holistic side of the holistic side of it. I mean, it is part of choral conducting.

Yeah,

33:26
choral conductors, you know, do know about these? Some people are trained singers, and they've got some more knowledge. But there are a lot of people who conduct choirs who aren't

Commented [LW69]: I don't know how many

Transcribed by https://otter.ai

33:36
particularly singers, which is interesting, yes, to a bit more, bit more technical knowledge.

Commented [LW70]: Valid point

Yeah, absolutely. Okay,

33:46
so sort of, I'm just conscious at the time, I said about half an hour, and we're there on the half an hour. I mean, you know, the idea was, it was, it was just a short to talk about exactly the sort of things we've talked about, is there anything else that you you know that whilst you were doing, maybe doing the survey, that you thought about, and you thought, oh, that's either missing from the survey or

I can't remember what the questions were.

There were lots, lots of questions about technique and

34:24
and, you know, background, I was it very interesting to see what pathways people had come through. So from my, for me, it was, I came from the experienced singer side, you know, obviously that we've, you know, we've got people, church organists, that then became the church choir conductor, and from there, a lot of teachers who, you know, found themselves having to lead the choirs at school, either because they were the only one that had any experience of choirs, or because they were music teachers, even though singing wasn't necessarily their speciality. So, you know, there's a.

35:00
Wide variety of pathways to becoming a core director. And, you know, that's that's been interesting in itself and so, but, I mean, a lot of it was also about, you know, what people believe is important within, you know, the role of core director. So pretty much divided into two parts, technique, and then the sort of, if you like, the people management, the soft skill side. So that's basically, this was the structure of the survey.

Commented [LW71]: choir

Commented [LW72]: choir

35:30
So, I mean, really, my final question is, is there anything else you would like to say about being a choral director in the UK in the 21st century?

35:39
Yeah, struggle for audience as I think

Commented [LW73]: struggle

35:43
we're not doing kind of modern pop choirs. And getting young people in is a big issue for everybody, isn't it?

35:50

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The feeling that, when we go, the whole music sector will die with us,

35:54
and it's really a challenge to get younger people there's, I mean, it's not just for but orchestra as well. And, you know, it's always a sort of, how can we get new audience?

36:07
I didn't we'll see if you're considering making music, presumably, in the next magazine feature about our last courses, because I did

36:17
one of their courses, and they're very helpful, actually, about audience development, you can get new ideas. This discussion about combining, yeah, certainly, discussion meeting up with other choral leaders. I mean that the Facebook group where everyone exchanges ideas is great, because you get all sorts of ideas from that and interact. You know, when you're the director of the choir, you're the only person doing it. When your singers in your choir will have sung for other people. But it's just something about being able to talk to another other call. But that's very, very useful. I mean, I'm a bit of a kind of Facebook addict

Commented [LW74]: leaders

Commented [LW75]: Networking!

36:50
anyway, so, but yeah,

36:53
anyway, yes,

36:56
we have this

36:58
annually art track where we are, where all these artists sort of display their work in local shops and things. And I was in one of them. And I mean, my husband, he does, goes to art classes with one of these ladies. And it was her studio, her her friend. And we got to talking about this idea about, what about music and

Commented [LW76]: Annual art track

37:19
art concert, which was

37:22
a concert with a sort of in the church, and they had a sort of these people's artwork on display while we were singing.

37:29
And because we couldn't actually watch the arts, because we had our back show, I couldn't, because I'd be distracted, so I haven't really seen the full result, but people who came said it was, it was

Transcribed by https://otter.ai

interesting idea. It's like a meditation. You've got things to look at, and sometimes you drift into the music. Drift into the music.

Commented [LW77]: Innovative ideas/marketing

37:44
Anyway. They say, Can we do another one? So the picture about that in the next music match?

Yeah, no, I'm sure look out for that.

Yeah. I saw the posting on the Facebook when you advertise it, and I thought at the time, that's a very interesting concept, you know? And you know, and I think, I think you're right. I think there is a whole piece out there about, you know,

38:06
core directors and also their management teams, for want of a better phrase, you know, sort of being, acquiring the skills to do, you know, to market their their concerts and their performers. However, there are some people out there who are extremely successful at it. And I've been talking to one person who

Commented [LW78]: choir

38:28
who absolutely swears blind. There is no problem getting men to sing, and there is no problem getting men to join choirs, and but he's at and he's been extremely successful at this, and has actually done work with the Arts Council now to do to sort of start working with other

38:50
choirs outside of his local so that that would be, you know, I'm really interested, after all this has happened, I'm going to approach that particular chat to see if he would do an online seminar or something, just to help people out, because, you know, he they've got some absolutely cracking ideas. But, I mean, I can't go into detail, obviously, but without his permission, but it was really interesting to hear his perspective.

Sorry, Martin Ashley, or is it somebody else?

No,

a lot of stuff about getting voices, yes, changing voices, but somebody else?

Yeah. They're dealing with dealing with adults, yeah, because that's the issue, isn't it? Boys will sing to a point, and then they do disappear off the Yes, yeah.

39:42
Oh, people both,

39:44
both, any genders.

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39:47
You know, I think they tend to drop out of things in work and family take over. It's one thing they keep on making music courses. I didn't they said, you know, your competition isn't the other choirs and orchestras, it's all the other things that.

40:00
They've got going on
, they've got children, they can't get out of an evening. And then, sort of, when the kids grow up, they come back to it. So that's, you know, there is a natural tendency for it to be older people that are in your choirs, unless you although, having said that, went to a kind of open day from the local operatic societies, and then that's where the young people are in there, in music theater. Yes, some great voices in music theater. But they wouldn't necessarily want to do straight choirs,

yeah, which is a shame, only because they're both disciplines. Could learn a lot. Can learn a lot from each other. Somebody's done both, yeah,

40:30
yeah. There aren't so many tenors around these days.

They were this, is this interesting? This is what this guy was saying, yeah, that they are out there. But a, they don't know their tennis necessarily, and B, they don't have the confidence and won't come forward. So, you know, you have to, you have to draw them in. He was saying one choir he worked with. They put out a thing for an open audition. It was a male voice choir. They had 100 blokes turn up.

Wow, exactly. Wow.

41:03
So, you know, it would be again, you know, he's, I mean, some of the work he's done has been amazing.

41:10
I would be really interesting to sort of see, as I say, after all, this is out the way,

41:17
you know, to see if he would be up up for doing something.

41:23
And that's the great thing about this, really, yeah, it's, you know, you can get very silent, I think, as a core director. And it is that opportunity, and we can't all get to the ABCD

41:35
conference,

Commented [LW79]: Good point - perhaps should be selling the benefits of choral singing more..

Commented [LW80]: tenors

Commented [LW81]: Silo'd

Commented [LW82]: choral

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41:38
yes, yeah, exactly, quite

41:42
ABCD courses. And you know what they do? They do breakout rooms

41:47
where making music, online courses, so and they didn't have the speakers, they'll have breakout sessions where you can talk to other person, other groups. You get you learn stuff, stuff from them as well. Yeah, they exchange ideas. It's yeah, yeah.

And I think the problem is, I think a lot of these organizations aren't totally good at marketing themselves.

Yeah, marketing is always a struggle. I mean, we helpful to have, you know, anybody help with sort of how to actually get bubble seats?

Commented [LW83]: It would be helpful

Commented [LW84]: Bums on seats

Yeah? I agree, yeah, yeah. I mean, we're lucky. We've got, you know, a

42:22
sizable core of people that you know that come to our concerts,

42:28
but you know, it would be nice to expand that

42:32
and get you know, we were used to, we used to do concerts at various venues around the county, but we've actually become we found that we were spreading ourselves too thin, so we've now actually started using one or two venues almost exclusively, which it's kind of a shame, because part of the joy is actually going out and discovering other parts, other obviously, a lot of churches, other churches and, you know, and so on. But yeah,

42:58
it is. It's somewhere. Yeah, absolutely, this is nice.

43:04
Okay, was there anything else that you would, you know, like to add that I'm possibly haven't, you know, sort of elicited from you.

43:14
I can't think of anything else I may, I may want to go away this and these things happen. But no, you've covered it pretty. Sorry. I'll be interested through your seasons when it's finally finished.

Commented [LW85]: thoroughly

Commented [LW86]: thesis

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Yes, absolutely. Well, that's, that's not a problem. I think you put on the list I will, yeah, I will definitely be

43:30
finished and marked and hopefully passed,

43:33
right? Yes. The point was, you prepared to go public? Was it then?

Commented [LW87]: when

Yeah, exactly. Yeah. But, yeah, that's not a problem. I know I've, I've just realized, actually, that it is a far bigger project than I think any of us anticipated.

43:51
And yeah, but it's, it's, it's actually been quite, quite the eye opener. So fingers crossed. Okay, well, if you haven't got anything else to say I don't think I have either.

44:04
I should draw that to a close, I guess. Yes. So anyway, lovely to see and speak to you again after so long, and hopefully it won't be so long again.

Yeah.

44:19
And show up yes and content tour in Oxford, if that's

Commented [LW88]: You're in Northamptonshire and the choir's on

44:25
anywhere, when, when's that 16th and 17th of August, right? Yeah, okay, yeah, um,

I'll make making it 16th and 17th of August. It'll be on your Facebook page, won't it? Yes, it's all I got. I was quite a picture. I might put it on the ABC,

44:42
yeah, yeah.

44:45
And whereabouts in Oxford. Are you doing the 16th? Is it? It's Michaels Northgate, and that's, that's the second music. That's basically the art trope, yeah, more or less. And then the 17th, the Saturday we're in Christchurch Cathedral, doing.

45:00
Take English music fabulous.

45:04

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Early afternoon is either two or 230 but yeah, that sounds fabulous, I bet you. And looking forward to it. Yes. I mean, sort of the history is always complication. I'm having to bring Lizzy with me as it's complication, because someone will have signs, and sometimes she's having a certain listen to sit and listen to music someone she joins in, which isn't a bit football score, but it's out. So she does it.

45:27
Yes, sir, has she still got a spider? Oh, gosh, yes, yes. The spider goes everywhere. We have a replacement spider.

45:35
Oh, really, yes, yeah. Did you notice when you switch them over? Well, one of them. Well, we actually got three suppliers. When they come up on I check it

45:47
eBay every so often and buy them if I see one. So, yeah,

45:51
reserved to come out, but

45:54
the original one's only got six legs now, and it's a bit rather tatty. She can tell the difference. But he's loved. Oh gosh, yes, yeah. It's strange, isn't it? How? How,

46:07
how children, you know, sort of get these Well, I suppose we all do to a certain extent, don't we? We will want something in our lives. We don't want

46:16
to be without. Yeah, no, absolutely. Well, yeah, I was going to say, gin is mine, but,

46:24
so, yeah, okay, no, but thank you for that. I would look out for those dates if I, if I can, if I can, wangle an afternoon away from writing up dissertations and the likes.

46:35
It's actually, you know, Oxford's not that not, not too far for us so,

46:40
but, you know, if not, yeah, I look forward to seeing you or meeting parts crossing again, maybe on a course, a marketing course, or something in the near future. So, okay, well, yeah, thank you once again. [redacted] thank you so much. Lovely to speak to you. Thanks very much indeed for your time. Okay, take care, then bye, bye, then bye.

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Subject 4 Interview for projec...40722_124329-Meeting Recording

Sun, Aug 11, 2024 5:51PM • 45:53

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

choir, people, feel, singing, training, question, leader, vocal, started, experience, suppose, vts, sing, splinter group, singer, background, asked, choir members, zoom, joined

04:04
Oh, hello [redacted] Hi,

04:47
hi, hello there,

Hi, sorry about that.

04:51
No problem at all. Technology isn't always what it's cracked up to be.

No, no, it

04:58
was easier.

04:59
I.

05:00
How are you?

Yeah, well, I've got covid.

Oh, no, I know,

Which means that, you know, I've got plenty of time to get on with my studying.

05:13
So you've, you've started your your masters.
So I am cohort h, which is, I think, are you cohort H,

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I think I am now. I started out in cohort D, but unfortunately, due to having having to have carpal tunnel surgery, and then unfortunately, my husband was diagnosed with a rare form of lymphoma, it all got put on hold. So

05:39
yes,

there are quite a few people like that in our cohort,

05:46
but we have, we do have an active Whatsapp group, which are very welcome to join if you wanted to. Just thank you.

If you email me your phone number, I can get you added on there if you wanted to. They're quite lovely.

It's all been a bit, it was all a bit of a rush. Really, it was one of those
conversations really ought to get this, get this finishing out the way. Now, things have settled down a bit at home, because it's been been dragging on a bit so, so I have really been sort of head down trying to get on with it. But I too, yeah. So anyway, how's it going?

No, well,

06:22
oh, I know. Don't worry.

06:25
I'm a last minute 06:27
Larry,

is what I would say at the moment. But you know, I've done all the actual research, research with other people, you know, so now it's just all on me. I just need to get on and do everything, yeah,

Commented [LW1]: Slowly

06:42
yeah.

So you submitting,

06:46
when you submitting, you got your

well, so the draft is due about three weeks.

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Yeah, that's not happening.

06:59
So yeah, I mean, in theory, my tutor is Pippa, and she kind of wanted it last week, but obviously that that wasn't,

07:10
wasn't gonna happen ever, really. You know, that's just not,

07:15
not realistic anyway.

Well, as long as it goes on the on the, whatever it is, the second of September, I don't really mind.

Yeah, exactly. Be nice to get it off. Yes, yeah, it's, it's been dragging on a while now, and I every time I think I'm getting somewhere, I find that actually I'm not. So,

07:36
so what's what's your, what's your what's your subject, what's your topic.

So I've come up with a needs based framework for well being, for choirs based on masley's needs,

Commented [LW2]: Maslow's

07:52
with some emotional intelligence, transformational leadership and stuff thrown in there, basically.

08:02
And are you? Are you actually enjoying what you've learnt? Because this is going to be quite interesting.

I actually am. Yeah, yeah. I think, you know, I'd like to see something with it beyond my own choirs, if I can. But that, I mean, that's what the research is to see. You know, does it work with the choir? What, what leaders think of it essentially, or what do they think of concepts within it? So that basis of it all?

Yeah, yeah. I mean, I must admit, I started out with mine, it was all going to be very practical and,

08:39
and, you know, based around choir, you know, improving choirs performance and so on and so forth.

But unfortunately, this little thing called the pandemic got in the way. So once, once we were out of that, I had to completely rethink. So, yes, but anyway, this is, this is turning out to be very interesting, and I'm sure you'll bring a completely new perspective, perspective to it,

09:04
somebody who is somebody who is obviously following a similar path to me.

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09:11
So yeah, shall we to make a kind of a start? I think we already have, actually, because I've asked you a couple of questions.

09:20
So the idea of this is, it's quite loose. It's a semi structured interview, so I'm not going to ask you a load of yes, no, you know, definitive answer questions. And you know, if I can get away with only asking two or three questions, and you just naturally give me, you know, information, that's even better. And obviously I need to remind you, this is being recorded, and I'm making good use of transcription functionality on here as well, so it makes sense say to me having to go and then run it through some sort of AI or word or whatever.

Commented [LW3]: Save

09:54
So quick question, just for context, how long have you been a core director choir leader?

Commented [LW4]: Choral

10:00
A choral conductor, however you want to to label it

five years. Five years in January, yeah, yeah.

10:09
And

10:12
why? Why did you?

10:15
Why did you become a choral director?

10:18
Because I was asked to

10:22
and um, so I'm, ultimately, I'm a pianist. That's my kind of background. Um, obviously you don't go through a musical education without being pulled into singing in choirs.

10:37
Yeah, never really floated my boat, particularly until I joined a choir as an adult, basically, I was single parenting. And yeah, yeah, my mom, who's also a piano teacher, phoned me up one weekend and was like, I didn't have the children. She's like, why are you available when you haven't got the children? You need the social life. And her suggestion was to join a choir that was a local group. And I said, Oh, that sounds interesting. Who does that? She told me the name of the MD, who is somebody who I know

11:13

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and is great fun. And I thought, oh, maybe that's fun. I'll go along. And I got totally hooked, because I think although, although I like a variety, I don't like all classical, and that's not me. I don't like singing in Latin, I don't like, I don't like the approach to choirs that I've always had to do growing up, but it was more upbeat and fun and and it just drew me in. So then I joined like a splinter group, if you like, a different like the the MD who I joined under left in a different MD came in, and she created a couple of like little splinter groups, which were to a little bit more progress focused. So I joined one of those, and then a couple of years later she left, but she also left the unpaid carers choir, and they wanted somebody who understood how this MD works, and so that it wasn't going to be too different. You know, transition would be easier. So I got a phone call asking me if I'd do it. And I kind of went, I don't know, I don't I don't know, can I I'm not sure. And I was told, Well, we think you can, and we would like you to, um, so I did.

12:35
And then a year after that, we went into lockdown. And actually that was a good thing, because so the people who I had sung under were very different. The first MD had come through as a musician. She's primarily a flutist, and as far as I know, secondary vocalist, but does loads of choirs in Swindon now. She's really good. I have a lot of respect for her. And then the second person was a first class honors musical theater graduate who didn't really read music, but had an absolutely gorgeous voice. And so when I started, they kind of wanted another lady, like the one I took over from. I'm not I don't have a gorgeous voice I don't have. I do. **I started singing lessons not long after I'd started the splinter group, because I kind of recognized that I was kind of being pushed vocally, and it maybe wasn't. I just wanted some individual one to one tuition on that and and it was a good call, because what I hadn't appreciated, but maybe I did, on some level, was I was starting to ruin my voice, actually, because I was being asked to sing in a range that wasn't comfortable for me.** Yeah, and this is from a singer, you know, primarily a singer, so that was interesting.

13:54
But anyway, so I'm not like her, and it nearly destroyed me that first year, actually, or a couple of people in the choir, nearly destroyed me, because I relied quite heavily on the keyboard, and I didn't realize until I was talking to my singing teacher during lockdown that I'd kind of developed performance anxiety. I couldn't, I couldn't remember. I couldn't I couldn't sing a song on the way to the choir rehearsal. I could sing a song on the way back from the choir rehearsal that the notes just went from my head during rehearsal, just couldn't do it, so I was lying more and more on my keyboard. And I think essentially I'd been trying to be this other person for them, which was not me. My skills were obviously very different. And then during the pandemic, I kind of up skilled a lot. Joined some choir leader networking groups, which made me realize that my skills are just as valid as hers were, and actually there are some real advantages of being able to read music

Commented [LW5]: Not sure how to categorise this?

14:56
and so, yeah, so I kind of went back into it, though I.15:00
Do zoom stuff with them. I kind of came out of the pandemic, I don't know, like, like, I'd come out of the cocoon or something, suddenly this much more confident person. And, yeah, took on more choirs, and absolutely love it. But yes, that was, that was why I did it, because I was asked to, and it was the best thing I ever did.

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15:21
Yeah, even though it was a tricky past, yeah, absolutely my favorite thing that I do, yeah.

So when you, when you actually, you were asked, is it fair to say that your only

15:33
training had been actually, as a, as a choral singer, as in, you were, you were experienced with that particular choir, yeah. Well, you say, or had you, had, had you undertaken any training before you moved across?

No, no, no, just, yeah, I suppose, tried to model myself on the wrong person initially.

15:57
So I was going to say, if you had your time again, would you in those early days, would you have gone and maybe looked out for some some sort of other experience? I'd rather say that rather than training, if you see what I mean,

I don't think so. I don't think so. I think I just needed to recognize the experience, the value of the experience that I had already. I don't think I've done anything differently, except become more authentic in the way I do things, yeah?

So yeah, you're, you're true to yourself,

yeah, yeah. And I suppose I was having that vocal training at that time anyway, and I do think, like things like the vocal health first aid. You know, they were really important to me, especially because of the road I was starting to go down myself as a choir. **And I do think that that, I do think that I don't know, it's hard to say, isn't it, but personally, I think that every choir leader should have some kind of understanding of vocal health.**

17:04
That's my own, my own view, and that's probably colored by my experiences. But other than that, I think I was having singing lessons, and I was getting that, that the my, you know, I was able to bring my what I was being taught to make my sound, my singing, healthier. I was able to bring that to my choirs and and have done because one of the first things that I was told when I started with the carers choir, by a few people, was that, particularly after performances, they could feel quite throaty. And

17:43
so, yeah, just by doing so VTS. I mean, I haven't heard anybody say that in years. So, yeah,

17:51
so yeah, I think, I think it's important to have that, that vocal health understanding. **But I think because I was having singing lessons, and it was really fresh as well**, because I suppose my teacher,

Commented [LW6]: Year

Commented [LW7]: A danger of learning on the job, the risk of bad or unsuitable role models?

Commented [LW8]: Importance of cpd - this was current experience brought to rehearsals - if there had been a 20 year gap, it wouldn't necessarily represent the latest knowledge.

Commented [LW9]: SOVTEs

Commented [LW10]: See above point

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Emma, was trying to move what I was doing into a more healthy way of doing things. So I think that was important, yeah, to have that before I started the choir, or at least I was in the choir, yeah.

And to be honest, absolutely I, you know, absolutely agree. And I think is best say it's one of the one of the avenues that I'm kind of highlighting is the fact that, you know, this is a completely unregulated industry. Anybody can set themselves up as a call director, which is why I became interested in how people had, had actually moved to the to the podium, so to speak, and what their what their background is, what their their levels of knowledge. You know, level of knowledge is, what they what training they have already undertaken, and where they would like to go with their training. And this, this is all questions. What, you know, I want to hear this in person from people like yourself as well, which is one of the reasons why we're doing the interviews. So, yeah, you know, I think as core directors will always, fortunately, I've never had any vocal problems,

Commented [LW11]: choral

Commented [LW12]: Choral

19:09
but I have had people in my choir that choirs that have

19:15
and actually to be able to to 19:19
either resist the urge. And we had one, had one recently, had somebody who was told not to sing for six, six weeks and to minimize their talking. So she said, right, so I won't be able to do the concert. Yep, that's absolutely fine. Completely understand you do what you have to do three 19:35
weeks before the concert. She came back and says, Oh, it's feeling much better. I think I can do it. And

19:42
it was kind of, you know what

19:45
I hear you, but I'll personally being so much I don't want to take responsibility for the fact that you may be misjudging it. You need to do exactly what specialist GP, whoever is can't remember that has advised you, and just do that. You know?

20:00
We will be still be here when you're ready to come back, but don't come back too soon.

And I think it is about that, isn't it. I personally feel that I have a responsibility to my singers to make sure that they are not doing any damage to themselves. It's like safety first, isn't it?

Yeah, absolutely, absolutely and important part of that is making sure people are singing in the right you were saying yourself are singing in the right range.

20:29
Definitely, definitely, because made, we were made to move around and sing different parts in different ranges, but without properly helping us to extend our ranges,

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yeah, which is, which is great from musicality perspective, and you know, and,20:48
and you know, improves confidence in, you know, holding a line, improves all skills, improves all of that. But as you say, if it's uncomfortable, the chances are, you know, you're going to end up doing some damage. And okay, now that's, that's, that's great. And

21:07
what so in general, what side of choir, being a choir leader came most naturally to you?

21:17
Um,

21:19
I think

21:26
I did before I became completely self employed, although I've always been a piano teacher, so I guess kind of like, you know, teaching note bashing, note bashing is very easy for me. I can do that.

21:40
But before I became completely self employed, I went into early years, and I managed a nursery for quite a few years. And so I think people management has has always been a strength of mine. And yeah, and I guess kind of what I'm doing at the moment is a lot about

22:02
dynamics, quite dynamics among the people in front of me, and just kind of creating. I've realized, I've realized, over time, that my biggest strength is, is creating a community and getting to know my choir members. And yeah, just, I mean, my choirs are all really lovely. They are all sort of around 15, no more than 15, in a group. And they are, they're just gorgeous, all of them. And, yeah, I think, though it's easy to check that off and go, that's nothing to do with me. You know, people have pointed out actually it is because you create that environment for them. So I think for for me, if you are creating a choir for well being, I think that's quite important that people feel safe.

Commented [LW13]: To shirk

Yeah, absolutely

want to be there. Yeah, yeah. So yeah. I guess that came naturally. I just hadn't recognized

23:01
it

exactly. And a lot for some people, it's something completely different. In fact, to be honest, people management comes up as the answer to the next question, which is, what did you find most difficult? And quite you know, what I'm fine hearing is that a lot of people are unprepared for the people management side. So that's, I think, your life experiences. Your life experiences have fed into that. And

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I think that's, that's the difference where people come from it, if you like a more strictly music or academic background or so on, yeah. So what do you find more difficult? Most difficult about it?

23:38
Um, what did you

23:42
start with? I think start with

23:46
because I haven't come from a professionally vocal background. Having to sing in front of people and having to go on Zoom, where people essentially just listening to my voice was incredibly hard for me, and I had to get very, very, very quickly. I had to become very comfortable with my own singing voice.

24:11
And I guess the upside of that is when I asked my choir members to record tracks for me to send in so I could put together those wonderful videos that we all did during during lockdown, I could empathize with them and say, Look, I didn't I didn't like the sound of my own voice either, and I've had to kind of learn how to become comfortable with that so there is no judgment at all. I know what it's like. I know what you're going through, because I did it. Just record yourself twice, maybe send off what you think is best, but don't worry about it, because I'm going to mix it with everything else. And I think for me, that was, that was, without doubt, the most difficult thing was that feeling of having to sing in front of other people, because it felt like I was singing, as I say. Lewis, well, essentially you are, aren't you?

Yeah, absolutely. With.

25:00
Out that background, getting yeah, getting comfortable with singing in front of people was quite hard.

25:08
Yeah, i Yeah. I Come Yes. I've come out from a experienced singer background, so it's yeah, don't even think about that part of it, to be honest.

25:19
But yeah, exactly. If it isn't something you are comfortable with, it's, it's, it's quite exposing. Sorry, yeah. I mean, you know you are bearing your soul. There is nothing, nothing else that can be judged, just you. And probably, actually, I mean, having to go on to zoom a year into my experience as a quiet leader was probably, I don't know, like, what you call it, you know, straight into the fire. And,

25:48
yeah, I mean, a lot of choirs might, you know, mine included, didn't actually get to grips with the whole zoom thing.

25:56

Commented [LW14]: Lack of confidence

Commented [LW15]: Empathy - covered off by some of the attributes mentioned in the survey under missed competencies

Commented [LW16]: Lack of relevant choral singing experience perhaps?

Commented [LW17]: soloist

Commented [LW18]: At it from

Commented [LW19]: choir

Commented [LW20]: Impact of the pandemic

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So we ended up running slightly different sessions, which actually focused on vocal health and keeping the voice nice and loose, and encouraging people to to, you know, do simple exercises at home, just to keep things ticking over until we could,

26:15
like,

so much easier than mine, who's just like, I Need money still, I need to still get the money.

26:24
Yeah, I know it's too much, too much, too much. Couldn't cope with the technology, and I think as well,
26:32
people weren't getting the satisfaction from it. And we invariably had somebody who whose bandwidth wasn't quite as good as everybody else's, so they ended up sort of getting behind, just too frustrating. So yeah, we switched the emphasis, and it just became basically a more of a vocal, a vocal health class on a sort of a fairly,

26:55
fairly regular basis. But yeah, it got people through it, yeah, yeah. And probably was a really good thing to do. Well, it would have been a really good thing to do, yeah,

most people see how we ended up making fools of ourselves. You know, as you do when you start doing ficatives and sirening and so VTS and, you know, everybody go out and buy a straw, please.

Commented [LW21]: sovtes

27:17
Although that good stuff,

straws became very popular.

Oh, absolutely. I think I still got a box of about 500 upstairs. I've still, I've got some,
27:28
but, yeah, I still, swear by it, you know, if you've got, yeah, so, yeah, I was

27:38
going to ask what you enjoy most, but I think I've kind of got the gist, it's, it's, actually, is the people side, isn't it? It's, is that fair to say, yeah, yeah, I think so. And I think,

27:53
I mean, it's just, it's, like, somebody said to me, when I gave up the nursery, do you miss it? And I'm like, why would I miss that? I'm singing. I'm just, you know, singing and singing with other people. My life is full of music.
28:07
What could go wrong with that?

Transcribed by https://otter.ai

28:10
But, yeah,

28:14
sorry, I've lost track of the original question

I was asking, what you enjoy most about being a Corvo director?

Yeah? Yeah. I think, yeah. I think it is, it is the people. I think it's also the music as well. That kind of
28:30
when it all comes together, you know, when you've been teaching them those moments of beauty in front of you, and that ability to make that happen. I just think there's something really magical about that, yeah, yeah.

People working together as a team, as you say, to produce something fabulous. And it's when, it's when that you get that rehearsal, that last or penultimate rehearsal, or you think,28:56
and then suddenly the flower blooms, yeah, yeah, yeah. No, it is. It's special.

29:06
What is another question here is, kind of, what's the hardest part of being a core director? And I don't think this is from your perspective, in terms of,

29:20
you know, sort of, I

29:23
don't want to say from a technical perspective, ie being able to be in nine, eight, followed by seven, eight, followed by a three eight bar, or anything like that. Because I'm not, you know, it's that's not necessarily, I think what your choir is about. But what aspects do you actually, you know, find the hardest to
29:42
to manage, I suppose,

um,

29:47
I think
29:51
one of my priors is committee led,

29:55
and I think not feeling as in control.
30:01
is tricky to manage the politics.

Commented [LW22]: choral

Commented [LW23]: choral

Commented [LW24]: choirs

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30:06
I think that's a whole different ball game, because I can influence, I can heavily influence how how things go, but sometimes the people politics, in the choir, can be tricky because I just don't have the same handle on it

30:23
as I do my other choirs,

30:27
and I think also

30:31
something I've worked on over the last year, maybe maybe even less than that, or since September, really, I made a conscious effort to

30:44
it's a boundary thing separate. And I think this is the thing with quiet well being to separate my

30:53
it's keeping it's keeping everything warm and friendly, but still having boundaries in place, and I've made a conscious effort since September to make sure that I'm doing my own things outside of choir, within my own friendship groups, and I'm looking after my own well being. So that the choir doesn't become something that I need. Does that make sense to you?

Yes, it does. Yeah.

And I think, and I think that's, that's a tricky one to balance, is the boundaries, and it's one of the things that I've addressed in my framework.

31:30
Yeah, I know, I you know, I think, summarize, it can sometimes be difficult for people to realize you're not their best friend as well.

Yeah, absolutely, absolutely, yeah, being warm, but without them, you know, creating and just having, setting those in place, without, without coming across, across as detached, it's, it's a fine balance.

31:54
Yeah, because I think regardless, excuse me,

31:58
i haven't got covid, but I do have hay fever,

32:01

Commented [LW25]: Choirs for

Commented [LW26]: I haven't

Transcribed by https://otter.ai

and, yeah,

32:05
I think I

32:07
was gonna say

32:11
Boundaries, friendships.

32:16
Yes, it's very easy for people to

32:20
to forget that actually you're doing this for a reason. It is not necessarily you do you know, you're not necessarily horrible. You're not necessarily doing it for the people in the social contact yourself as core director

Commented [LW27]: choral

32:36
and and I think that's point I was going to make, was that. And actually, I think, but what we do, I lose sight of occasionally, is the fact that actually coming back to what you do, any choir, whether we like it or not, is a choir for well being, because the benefits of singing are so phenomenal.

32:59
So I think you just need to bear that in mind. We know we one needs to bear that in mind, that actually, even though you need to keep that balance, that boundary, you know, you are having a significant influence on people's mental health, so it becomes very much a way of managing people's expectations. Yeah.

33:20
Yeah. So,

33:22
yeah, difficult one, excuse me.

33:25
Sure.

33:29
Any problem with Zoom, it picks up everything on teams. It picks up everything.

33:34

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Yeah, okay. Now it's, yeah, very interesting again, going, sort of going back to your early days with what you know now, do you wish you'd had some sort of training, or you, let me just finish it there. Let me not lead you. Do you wish you had had some form of training, and what would it have been?

No, no. If, if there's anything, I would say **vocal health training**. But I think, I very much you have to do things in the way

34:06
that, sorry,

34:09
um, what

34:12
was I saying? Yeah, no, because I think you have to do what's right for you. And I think a lot of the choral training that there is maybe wouldn't suit me. I see a lot of Steph conducting.

34:28
Yep, I didn't feel like I need conducting lessons. I did all that coming up through my piano and clarinet grades. You know where we did in those days. Have to learn conducting patterns. I know how to do that, and I don't do it very often. I do sometimes, but as far as I'm concerned, it is a communication that you develop with your choir, and nobody can tell you how to do that. Really, I think that there are gestures you.

35:00
Can make that are sensible gestures that you learn more through how you want to develop what you want to develop with them, whether it be so they're singing healthily, whether it be because you want certain I don't know whatever you know. To me, it's the form of communication that you develop your choir. And I don't think anyone can really tell you how to do that, and I'm not sure that there's an awful lot of training out there that

35:28
would have suited me. Particularly, um, I have found much more useful networking with other choir leaders.

35:39
Okay, in what way?

35:43
Well, first of all, it gave me the confidence that what I was doing was right.

35:50
And I think having those discussions, and, you know, I belong to a really good paid network, actually, and if we've got an issue, we can pop it. It's a Facebook group, essentially. We can pop it on there, you

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know, by choir, by choir, swooping up to notes. How do I stop them swooping up? And I get all these different strategies. And it's so, it kind of feels, I suppose, a lot more focused on what you need, whereas I don't think, I think it's a huge thing, I don't think that that there could possibly be a choir training course that can give you

36:32
everything that you need for you and your choir. I think maybe a lot of it is is about experience. And I think there's a lot of great material out there that you can get and need and look at without going on any specific training courses. Does that make sense?

Yeah, I think, yes. I mean, it does. I think, you know, as you say, you know, what's out there is limited. And I think actually there is, there is, I think what people actually need isn't really out there yet.

Yeah, yeah, very great.

I think it's getting there. But I think, personally, and I probably shouldn't, shouldn't go into this much detail, because this is supposed to be an objective interview, but I think too much of the training is out there, is technically focused.

Yeah, and certainly something that's going into my literature review as well

37:28
mine,

37:31
but, but you know, as I say, it's, it's it's

37:36
it for us in the UK, it is a relatively new field as a formal, a formal

37:44
with art, whatever you care to call it. So you know, we are decades behind where core leadership is in the US, for example. And I think that, you know, there is a great deal still,
37:59
and us as choir leaders need to be sort of instrumental in developing that, because we need to be letting people know, the providers, what we're interested in doing, and, you know what, where we've where we feel the, you know, the need for for training assistance. Part of the reason why I ended up doing this, Ma, because I couldn't really find what I needed out there. So decided to sort of do it myself,

38:25
which I guess brings me on to sort of, you know, sort of the last question, if or not last question, but you know, follow on is, if you had anything,

Commented [LW28]: My choir, my choir's

Commented [LW29]: I agree

Commented [LW30]: And mine

Commented [LW31]: choral

Transcribed by https://otter.ai

38:38
if anything you needed was out there. What would that that piece of development be? I'm going to call it personal development rather than training, because it's, it's more holistic than just somebody telling you this is what you should be doing.

38:53
Yeah, I guess, um,

39:00
I think one of the things that's missing is kind of how to set up a market acquire

Commented [LW32]: And market a choir

39:13
I think that is something that would be incredibly useful, because I think a lot of us

39:20
it's a it's become very competitive. There are hundreds of choirs where I live, hundreds.

There always has been. I mean, back in 2017
39:29
they reckon there was, there was over 2 million people singing on a regular basis, and something like 40,000 choirs in the UK.

Yeah, yeah. It's, it's competitive industry, and I just think

39:43
that it's a little bit39:47
it's difficult when you've got, like, we've got rock, a rock choir where I live, and obviously they're everywhere. They're a big name, and they managed to get in on all the biggest acts that come.

40:00
To Swindon, they get their little support act going, and so it's very tempting for people to go into there. And I think helping, helping people, helping choir leaders, I suppose, to identify what their strengths are and how to market their choirs on that, I think, is something that that might be useful, that's not something about that I've thought about doing.

40:26
Some people are very successful at it is, you just give them one one example, and, you know, I think of somebody else that I've spoken to recently that's been extremely successful in their part of the world,

40:39
you know, and they've just kind of got that either Knack or

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40:45
that background she knows, to give them the tools to do that. But for the rest of us, as you say, it's a bit of a dark art, isn't it? Yeah, yeah. So, so, yeah. So, sort of a commercial. A commercial,

41:00
something to help with the commercial sides of of being a choir leader.

I think so. I think that would be useful. Because, yeah, let's face it, unless you, unless you run a big choir, you ain't making much money at it,

41:14
if any. Yeah,

41:18
yeah. Okay, no. I mean, you know, a lot of choirs, all they do is, you know, aim to stay afloat.

Yeah, exactly that. Yeah. So,

41:28
yeah, it's difficult one. Who knows? Who knows?

41:33
Okay, I'm just very conscious of of the time, because I think I kind of sort of said, you know, it'd be round about the half an hour mark, and I know, well, I mean, you're obviously poorly and recovering from covid. So

41:47
has it? How bad has it been? You've been not too bad. I'm I haven't had it yet.

No, not at all. Well, I've never tested positive. Put it that way.

No, okay, no, not too bad. I had it when people had to isolate. I had it because half of my quiet had it. I

Commented [LW33]: choir

42:04
had it for 10 days, 10 days of positive test, no symptoms at all, but this time, I have been feverish and just like a cold. So it's not, not too bad, nothing over the weekend, really, I'm just getting back into my studying now,

42:21
yes, don't yeah,

42:24
not. I'm not looking forward to the next few weeks. I have to say, No, yeah, exactly. It's

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42:31
just going to be a slog. Now. I'm just going to sort of avoid the tutor if I possibly can, so I can crack on with it, because I don't want you to

42:40
distract me.

Yeah, do you find co working useful? Because there's quite a bit of that going on in our cohort at the moment, if you wanted,

is there? I haven't even thought about it. I think because of the delays and because of the,

42:54
you know, the suddenness of suddenly being said. Look, can you get this done by September? You know, we you really think you should get it out the way? It really has just been a question of getting on with it. And, you know, and unfortunately, the situation with my husband, you know, it wasn't like, oh, right, flick a switch. Oh, he's much better now. He's, you know, it's, it's still been a bit of a, I don't want to, I'm sick and tired of making excuses, to be honest. But, um, so, yeah, so I've really, pretty much got down, got, got on with it by myself. But I'll definitely send you my phone number, that Whatsapp group might be just even if nothing else, even if just it's bit of motivation, because I'm sure I'm not the only one that is feeling the pain at the moment. No, everybody is,

43:36
yeah, so and I do know what the sad thing is, this is actually my second master, so I should know better.

43:45
Wow, I'm sure it's no different. Well, yeah, we'll wait and see what happens. As long as it's done, I don't care.

43:54
That's what, that's where everyone's at now, yeah, just Yeah.

44:00
So my final, final, sort of Roundup question, or is, is there anything else you would like to say about being a coral director choir leader in the UK? At the moment, there any given, well, I

Commented [LW34]: choral

44:17
was just going to say, given what we've sort of spoken about before, is anything else burning you'd like to to add?

44:26

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No, I don't think so. I think, think we've covered it all pretty much. Okay, no, me too, to be honest, um, but it's just nice. Sometimes you know that it's interesting. Some people just think of something part way through what we're talking about. Yeah, and and take it from there.

44:45
No, I mean, from my perspective, it's, you know, it's, it's, it's been fantastic support that I've had, and, you know, just getting to hear people's views and perspectives sort of on a first hand basis, even if it's only a small number.

45:00
Has been invaluable, and I'm hoping it all comes out in my, you know, in my dissertation, and makes interesting reading for people. Oh, I'm sure it will definitely

just wait and see. Likewise with yours. Okay, well, I mean, if you've got nothing else to to add, I don't think I have either. That's pretty much what I wanted to cover off.

45:24
So thank you. Thank you very much. Been lovely to meet you,

45:29
and good luck

and to you too. Thank you. And yes, I will send you my phone number to get on that Whatsapp group. Perfect. We'll get you added. Yeah. Thanks very much. Then, [redacted] take care. Feel better soon. Okay, bye, Laura, bye, bye, bye.

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Subject 5 Interview for projec...40722_135038-Meeting Recording

Sun, Aug 11, 2024 6:24PM • 42:58

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

choir, people, singing, music, good, repertoire, absolutely, bit, voice, courses, sing, vocal, work, pieces, core, conductor, workshops, conducting, nice, big

00:31
Hi, there

00:35
exactly the same issue, because it was trying to log me In as my school account. Then, like, no, no,

00:42
yeah, no, it's oh yes, technology, it's not all it's cracked up to be, I'm afraid.

00:48
So

00:50
they don't sometimes, not when you're, you know, juggling many balls. But anyway, we're here. Thank you very much indeed for your time. Just to, obviously, just let you know, this is being recorded, and I'm using the transcription facility within teams as well. So

01:08
I didn't, actually, I didn't realize it didn't exist on my other account. So there you go. I've learned something today, that's for sure.

01:17
But yeah, thank you so much for your time. I have to say, I've been overwhelmed by the response I've had to this particular project, hoping it will make interesting reading once it's all finished. So I don't, I hopefully won't keep you too long. The idea of this is, it's, it's, you know, semi, semi structured. I've got, I've got some questions, just a handful. They're not really questions. They're more

01:43
discussion points. And I'm just interested to hear what you know, a handful of people who've so very kindly completed the survey to give them the opportunity to speak in person about some of the some of

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the issues, some of the benefits, some of the delights of being a choir leader, core director, core conductor, whatever you you know, however we like to describe ourselves.

02:09
So do you have any questions, first of all,

02:17
really, just what, what's, what's the what's
02:21
the center of your research about what are you looking at?

I started. I started. I started off doing something completely different. It's a very long story, you know, this is taken a bit of a while to come to fruition because of, you know, my husband's been extremely poorly, so I had to put everything on hold for, you know, basically, a couple of years whilst he was battling a rare form of lymphoma.

02:49
Yeah, it's a bit of a shock, but yeah, we're getting there slowly but surely. But thank you.

02:55
So, you know, given,

02:58
you know, we had the pandemic, which kind of put everything I was the hoping to get from this particular masters a little bit to one side. What struck me personally was when I started this this course, was how little I knew about not just being a core director. I'd already got, you know, a fair few years of that under my belt. But also how little I knew about the voice and the Yeah, many years ago I had, you know, I had, you know, singing lessons every week for very long time, and did all sorts of fabulous stuff that. And it will Bucha now, and I think, well, how the hell did I manage to get away with doing that? And I think I was very much a case of, you know, when I first started with the core side of things, I just basically used the techniques my singing teacher had used with me,

03:57
but how things have moved on. And, yeah, I just wondered how many people out there were in a similar situation, you know, especially given that actually coral conducting

Commented [LW1]: choral

04:10
as a discipline has is only a relatively new field of academic study in The UK. Think the academy introduced the first dedicated post grad course back in about 1985
04:26
late 80s, which compared to what's been happening in say, the US is decades behind. So there's a whole, you know, sort of,

04:36

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you know, fair few generations who are still active call conductors who didn't have the benefit of of that, and the most we got at the time was probably the old summer school, if we were lucky.

04:48
And I was interested to find out how many of my my peers and my colleagues in the field have been on a similar journey to me. How many have you know, sort of proactively?
05:00
To sort out avenues to sort of for personal development,

05:06
whether people think it's you know applicable, whether you know, whether they feel what's out here in the market is actually relevant to them. So have to be honest, it's turned out to be a lot bigger project than I thought.

Yes,

05:22
I think I'm the only one that's surprised at that.

05:27
So, so, yeah, so that's basically,

05:30
basically where this has come from. And you know, you probably because it could, because of the protracted nature of these things, if you filled in the survey a little while ago that you've probably forgotten. It sort of talks about education and and sort of musical training. And you know where that musical training happened? You know, first instruments. I think I include voice in that because singers and musicians as well.

05:57
And you know what, what training we had what we think are our strengths and our weaknesses. What would we like to do about that? What would we like to? How would we like to, you know, sort of gain that. CPD, you know, what sort of things are,

06:16
you know,

06:17
do we do we want, in person training, can we do, you know, online training? Can we do a mixture of both, you know, what people's preferences would be,

06:26
and ultimately, it's to get a snapshot of the core conducting community in the UK at this moment in time and kind of understand,

Commented [LW2]: choral

Commented [LW3]: odd

Commented [LW4]: are

Commented [LW5]: choral

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06:37
you know, where they've come from and what they want going forward

06:41
and then just take it from there.

06:45
Sounds
06:47
brilliant,

hard work, but it's mostly such,

such a big tapestry of different routes and different Yeah, yeah, and different people will want to know different parts of the process more

absolutely, yeah, I'm and, you know, I've some, there's been some real eye opening

07:08
sort of comments for me.

07:11
And, you know,

07:14
there's certain things that a majority of people agree on. I'm not going to go into details, because that'll spoil the surprise. There are certain things people, you know, majority people agree on, and then you get the converse and, you know, and that's always the very interesting part of it, um, also interesting seeing what backgrounds people have, you know, how they've come to in a sort of chord it. Personally, I'm a singer, and I, you know, come up through that, settled on on Cornwall singing,

07:46
you know, sort of a long time ago,

07:50
then decided to step over to the other side. But over those years, how I predominantly earned my living is as an accountant, yep, so you know. And it's seeing some of those, you know, some sometimes you say, you think, oh, yeah, that makes sense, you know, I can understand how the discipline of one links with the discipline of the other. And then you'll get some really left field stuff, and you just think, wow, okay, you know. And it's people's passion for music and for singing that seems to sort of that comes to the fore. And

08:22

Commented [LW6]: Like this phrase...

Commented [LW7]: choral

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so, yeah, it's, it's, it's been a journey, and I've still got a bit of a journey to go to get it all on paper, in a format where it makes sense. Yeah.

08:31
So how about you? I mean, one of you know, one of the things is interesting for context, is, how long have you been a choir leader? I don't know what your preference is. Choir leader, call director, call conductor.

08:45
My choir calls me their musical director.

Musical Director, yeah, okay,

08:51
I'm

08:53
not really fussed.

08:56
I think there's some covid. between your roots and my roots because I did a science degree to begin with,

09:03
and my first job was in research, and then I taught maths, and then I worked as a restaurant manager, and then I was a computer programmer. And all the way through, since I was really small, I've sung in choirs. My mum was a singer and then a choir director. She was the choir teacher in a school in South Africa where I grew up, and so I grew up in my mum's choirs. And in fact, she was in my grandmother's choir as a girl. So kind of third generation, which is nice,

09:36
but because I was also interested in sciences and things, and especially in South Africa, where the music scene is very, very small and there's not, not a lot of money going about. My parents encouraged me to go and do something else and keep music as as a hobby, yeah, but

09:53
I've ended up wanting to get back into music, so I've made music my, I think I can call.

10:00
Myself a

10:02
music Freelancer now, which is not

Commented [LW8]: choral

Commented [LW9]: commonalities

Commented [LW10R9]: Like this

Commented [LW11]: Career background

Commented [LW12]: Family

Commented [LW13]: Society/Environment

Commented [LW14]: nice

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good, excellent, yes, yeah.

And

10:08
so I started off similar to you, I was I did a lot of singing and had singing lessons, and decided I wanted a qualification and singing teaching. So I did the

10:21
ABRs in dup. Diploma in singing teaching, and when we've moved around a lot. So when we moved to Scotland

Commented [LW15]: ABRSM Diploma in Singing Teaching

10:32
in 2007

10:34
I wanted to build up a singing studio, and I thought, I've got a science degree, and nobody knows me, so I'm going to have to persuade people that I have some kind of musical knowledge.

10:45
So what I did was advertise a kind of singing workshop

Commented [LW16]: Advertising & marketing

10:49
so that people could get to know me, and I could get to know some people, and that would be the start of my studio. But what happened was the singing workshop turned into a regular event and became a choir.

Commented [LW17]: Regular event

Okay. No, brilliant, yeah.

So since then, I've always had senior students who are in the choir and

11:09
seeing students who've joined the choir, because I've encouraged them to,

yeah. So absolutely, yeah, yeah. So yeah, it's been, it's it's been, you know, it's been a good, length of time then, yeah. Do you say 2007 Yeah, yeah, yeah, okay, no smashing.

11:29
So

11:30
so was the ABRSM singing teacher diploma, the first training you was the first and only training you'd done at that point?

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11:42
At that point, yes,

11:44
yeah, I the only conduct you had ever done before, that was in our church choir. And my my dad, who is the organist, said I should conduct it, and at that point I didn't particularly want to.

11:57
It makes a change from the organist doing it, and that's no disrespect to your father. I'm sure that's not the case, but in my experience, they don't always make good conductors.

12:09
If they don't sing, they're they're sometimes missing a trick.

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Absolutely, absolutely. Um, so
12:17
in terms of the development of the choir, did you feel the ABRSM diploma gave you, I mean, you got bit of experience of the actual arm waving part of it. Did you think that the ABRSM diploma gave you relevant information you know to start it to when you you know it, when the when the voice workshops morphed into the choir.

12:42
Um, well, I realized fairly early on that I needed more, and I've been drawing in more, and I'm still,

12:50
I think, as as a non music graduate, I've always had a bit of imposter syndrome, and I've always wanted to take on board, and I found a lot of really good things. And nightcast in Scotland

13:02
do all sorts of wonderful training, not so much in conducting itself, but in musicianship and general music skills. So that's been really good, yeah. And I've been a lot of ABCD courses, yeah. And I've recently started doing some of the thing for pleasure courses,

yeah. How do you feel? How do you find those? I've not done those. I've done ABCD courses and several other things, but I haven't done any

absolutely lovely as well. They're and they've got a lot of really good resources. They've published a lot of books of

13:35
easy part songs and things that are a really nice starting place for a conductor. If I was, I would recommend them to anybody who is starting out.

Commented [LW18]: Routes to choral conducting

Commented [LW19]: Routes to choral conducting

Commented [LW20]: Jansson & Bbalsnes - routes to choral conducting

Commented [LW21]: Recognised the need for CPD

Commented [LW22]: Can't make this out

Commented [LW23]: Sing for Pleasure

Commented [LW24]: SfP

Commented [LW25]: Repertoire choice

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Yeah, okay, good. Um, so in some respects, I, you know, you kind of preempted me about sort of continuous professional, if you like, CPD, continuous professional development in that you you appreciated early on, the need for to arm yourself with, you know, sort of a grounding in all sorts of aspects.

Which did you find came most naturally to you, just out of interest

14:11
in, in the whole, in the whole everything that core leadership requires, you know what? What did you think? Well, this is piece cake. You know, this is just me. You know

14:25
what?

14:29
I think I've got a good ear for hearing the parts, so I can hear

14:34
once I got going, I can hear who needs the help I can I can hear how the parts fit together and what's missing and what's not right, and

14:45
I knew what what sound I was wanting,

14:50
and but I think I'm also I've got a more more of a facilitator than a dictator style. So the other thing that.

15:00
I love in my choirs, it's a very much

15:02
a community in a choir, that it's a very inclusive, welcoming choir. And I think everybody in the choir feels it's their choir, so it's our choir rather than my choir. And

15:17
as much as possible, I try and get what people want to be part of what we're doing,

yeah, and I think that, you know, it is a community. And I talked about call directors as a community as well,
15:30
you know, because we do have that commonality, don't we? You know, we all, we all love it doesn't matter what form of music it is. We all love music.

15:38

Commented [LW26]: choral

Commented [LW27]: Aural skills/error correction

Commented [LW28]: Good description

Commented [LW29]: choral

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And, you know, we get pleasure out of bringing being the best out of people and giving people the opportunity to perform. So what was difficult is normally, because these, you know, certain people, they will stand up personally. For me, I suppose, as a singer,

15:57
I always found didn't, never had a problem with standing up and singing in front of my choir. Never really had a problem with standing up in front of an audience. Other people find these terrifying

16:10
difficulties. For me is coping sometimes with the people

16:15
that could be a challenge. Yeah. So you know, it's different for everybody. What's What have you found particularly difficult? I suppose

the singing to the choir part is fine. Initially, I worried about how to teach the men parts because not being able to get into their range. But

Commented [LW30]: As a woman

16:38
it was quite good to have a relationship with the choir. I could say

16:42
I was trying to sing it at range. And they said, No, that's not what we want, because if we're in the upper part of the voice, it sounds more the same. It's more equivalent if you're in the upper part of your voice. So I sing an octave app, yeah, I'm in the upper range when it's a high note, in my lower range when it's a low note. And we've so I've had a lot of good feedback.

Commented [LW31]: Communication

That's good, that's good, yeah, yeah,

but I didn't like speaking in front of crowds, and

Commented [LW32]: Communication with the audience

17:11
again, I got help with that the we quite often have people in the choir introducing different sections of the program. And so I'll write the notes, and then I'll divvy them up. Who are comfortable doing that, but, but actually, over time, I've got better at myself, not quite so

Commented [LW33]: Used by Ruth as well (no 4?)

17:32
terrified as I was.

You get there eventually, yeah, I think it's, it's just what you get used to.

17:40
It's all done, yeah, down to experience, um, yeah.

Commented [LW34]: On the job training

So, I mean, you know, interesting, it's

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17:47
you would think that actually putting yourself in front of a group of people that you know, anybody who does that automatically has the confidence to do that, turn and look out across the audience. But be assured, you're not alone.

18:02
You know, it's yeah, it then this is part of what's been so fascinating about digging into to all of this.

18:11
So

18:13
having so you know, we've spoken about what you felt most me feel most comfortable with, what you feel most difficult with. So out of all of that, what? What aspect Do you enjoy the most? What gives you the biggest buzz?

18:27
I think it's having the choir perform for people, and you get that moment where it all comes together, and you can feel the audience are experiencing what you hope they'd feel from that song, and the choir has got it and the audience has got it, and it's just magic.

It's just that's yeah, yes, it's a performance, isn't it? Yeah, yeah. And you give me two minutes, I've just come back from a holiday, and the plug for this computer's upstairs. Oh, yes, yes, yes, of course, about to run out of battery. I'll be one minute. Yeah, No, no problem at all. You

Commented [LW35]: Can

19:40
it.

19:46
Thank you.

19:59
There we go.

20:00
Sorry, that's okay.

20:03
That's okay, yeah. So where did we get to quick look through the notes.

20:09
So we were speaking about so, you know, I know you found a great solution in actually delegating some of the introductions to people.

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20:19
Helps, as you say, helps with inclusive, you know, feeling them, feeling inclusive, and having a, you know, other than just standing there with their colleagues singing, they're taking part in the performance, in, you know, a more

20:34
say, demanding, but a more transfer, obvious, transparent role, I suppose, like somebody a solo. Have you ever taken any training for the

20:44
advice on the you know that if you like almost the performance anxiety that you have in standing up and speaking to an audience just interested, if you've tried really done no, no, no. You know, as I said, You're not the only person that feels that way. So, yeah, yeah, you found very good way around it in that is this that you're, you know, you're encouraging other people to, you know, to participate in a different way.

21:12
Yeah, I think delegating is something that core directors always

Commented [LW36]: choral

21:19
need to do more of, because you end up with so many jobs otherwise,

yes, absolutely, yeah, it doesn't always work either.

Yeah, if I can put the bits I like doing and pass on the bits I don't.

21:34
So what are those other bits? Just out of interest, the bits that you would get rid of if you could

21:40
librarian,

Commented [LW37]: Delegate admin tasks

21:42
tell me about it, although gives you kind of control over Yeah, yeah,

21:48
yeah, it's I inherited. We joined with another local choir that I hadn't realized there was when I first started, and they had a system where everybody had a massive file with a full set of music in it. And that's not how Tina the choir, it's always been. The music's kept centrally, and you get the pieces you need for that season, and which is a much better way of doing it, because if anybody leaves, it's a nightmare to get all of that back again.

Transcribed by https://otter.ai

Yeah, we operate slightly different system in that we don't we, we only charge a nominal subs fee,

22:27
but

22:30
members are expected to buy their music.

Oh, that's a good idea, yeah. And then, yeah, absolutely.

So, you know, I, you know, we the choir, purchase it, because we can buy it in bulk. We can get bulk discounts, educators, discounts and things like that. Yeah. And then, obviously, pass those, those savings, on to the members, but they are and then, to be honest, they can do what they like.

22:55
It's

22:57
better, absolutely. And then if they leave, we don't have to worry about it. They've got some music out of it, and it's highlighted in yellow, or whatever. And that's fair, fair play. And what I did do is delegate the the collection of the moneys

23:14
brilliant. Yeah.

So, yeah, that's the only sometimes, actually, I have to say most, you know, they are pretty, pretty good,
23:22
and it's a chamber choir, so it's not that many people. So

23:26
yeah, I wouldn't want to do it with a 80 plus,

Commented [LW38]: Choral society

23:30
I'm sure. Yeah, but yeah, there are ways around these things.

23:37
Repertoire is another thing that was a big issue for me at the beginning because I picked music that was too hard,

okay,

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23:46
sometimes too many pieces. And

23:51
it's also finding what people like and are willing to sing,

23:55
yeah? And within any choir, there'll be people who love and hate the same piece.

Commented [LW39]: Knowledge and understanding of suitable repertoire

Oh, yes, absolutely.

24:02
LW And you know, my biggest difficulty is, is actually sometimes having to capitulate and choose something I know I'm not going to like, but it's right for that particular program or that particular time of year, or it's that I've or I've made them do a concert of stuff that I love to bits, but it's a little bit of for some of the choir members. So gotta give them something back.

24:27
LW So, yeah, it can be, it can be a tricky one, is it? And do you find, I mean, I don't know what

24:35
LW with the repertoire choice whether, after all this time, now, you've got that balance right, but

24:43
LW some people,

24:46
LW some choirs, are set up purely for somebody to that. People to come along, sing, have a good time. It's about that feel good, that singing gives you, not really about developing them as singers or as a choir. You know they they like.

25:00
LW
The status quo, there's no, I wouldn't say ambition is wrong, because the ambition is always to perform to the best of their abilities. Yeah, and I don't know. Is that something that I don't know how, where do you fit in? In that is because that's where repertoire can be really useful. Yes, yes.

25:21
It's a juggling act, because we're an unauditioned community choir. But I do want, I do want them to be singing technically well, and I do want them to get a good blend. And I do want them to sound good. I want them to be challenged by the music. So I try and pick some music that's challenging, not impossible, just

Commented [LW40]: unaudtioned

Commented [LW41]: Developing your singers

25:43

Transcribed by https://otter.ai

and I think I know them well enough that it's, I'm not over facing them too much anymore, but we do, yeah, and then some pieces that they can pick up and run with straight away. Yeah.

So I've had so I don't know if you found this. Have say occasionally I pick something and I think, no, that's a couple of rehearsals we've looked at it. No, that's not work.

That's not going to work, that's happened. Yes,

26:11
it's

26:13
not just me

away from that.

LW Yeah, absolutely and again. I mean, have you found any opportunities to seek advice on repertoire choice. How have you tackled that?

26:27
Well, ABCD has been really good for that, because they do have the events I've been to, they've got

26:34
sessions where you can look at new repertoire. There's always pieces to look at, and the same with the sing for pleasure. There's always music that you can have a look at. So I've picked up a lot of pieces on courses I've been on, and also choir recommendations of people particularly love something and they bring it to me. Yeah? Okay, pieces that way, yep,

okay, that's good. Yeah, yeah. I find we've got one or two pieces that get requested. Time and time again. Yeah, then you have to pick them up and dust them down. And yeah, quite useful again to if you need something that they feel comfortable with to offset something that's a little bit more technical,

absolutely, yeah. And I think it's nice to have that range that people can just have a good sing, and then other times they have to really engage their brains and

27:26
work at it a bit.

Yeah, which is good for them, but they don't always appreciate that.

27:33
Yeah.

Commented [LW42]: Confidence building

Commented [LW43]: Exposure to new repertoire

Commented [LW44]: Like this comment!

Transcribed by https://otter.ai

No, no, yeah, yeah, absolutely.

27:38
So if you were to go back to when you first started out, given that you you done the singing teaching diploma was that would have been anything else that as a as a new core director, is there any other training that you would thought, you think now that would have been so useful,

28:00
I actually would, would recommend the sing for pleasure course to anybody starting out. That's a really they've got a really nice, structured approach, where it's very you do this in the elementary course, and then you go on to the intermediate, and it's nicely set out.

28:17
That was a good one. ABCD is great. And just to find a network of other people,

28:24
there's a wonderful thing that goes on here in in Fife, which is over the river from Edinburgh. But indeed, yes, yeah, they have music festival. And what's been really useful for me is they have

28:41
a community choirs class, but it's non non competitive, so they have an adjudicator,

28:49
but nobody's going to lose, nobody's going to win.

Just get feedback, positive feedback,

but because you're singing for other choirs you want to, it's a good incentive to bring your best game and and from the first one where we I had to prize them off the back wall of the stage

29:08
like Frightened Rabbit to the back of the stage, and to now where they go up and, and really impressed me, yeah, and that was Really nice. That's been a really nice journey that we've got really constructive criticism from the adjudicators in that

29:28
which has been really useful there must be getting on for 10 years we've been doing that. Yeah, yeah.

29:36
That's a good, yeah, that's brilliant. I can't think of anything we've got around here. It's all very competitive.

29:43

Commented [LW45]: choral

Commented [LW46]: networking

Commented [LW47]: Motivation to perform well

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And you know, having spoken to various choir members about it, I've got, you know, people who have done a lot of competitions in their their time, and just say, I'm just not interested. It's too much pressure. Absolutely. Yeah, yeah. So it's not something it's occasionally something that we look at almost from a mark.

Commented [LW48]: marketing

30:00
Perspective, you know. But actually, do you know what I'm not prepared to for people not to enjoy,

30:09
just to just, you know, to be able to put award winning choir on. We know, we know we're pretty good. We don't, I guess we don't extend us that. Yeah, just to go back to the sing singing for pleasure and ABCD courses.

Commented [LW49]: Need people to tell us that

30:25
Do you think, because I've not done singing for pleasure, but I've done ABCD, yeah. Do you think they, there's anything missing out of their

30:38
syllabus for a want to Is there anything you think you you know you would think would benefit the courses, if it was added in?

30:50
I can't really think of anything. But

30:56
because choirs are so different, I think that

Commented [LW50]: Different choirs different leader training needs

31:02
for every choir, there's going to be some other thing that you want that you're not going to get just from those courses. We've got

31:11
a lot of people in our choir that are interested in Scottish traditional music and harmony courses, and so we've ended up going to a few sort of local harmony workshops, and got some.

Commented [LW51]: Specialist music interests

31:24
The other thing

31:27
probably, I would like to have, there is a thing, yes,

31:32
just more in terms of singing technique,

Commented [LW52]: Bingo!

Transcribed by https://otter.ai

31:37
because my approach to singing to each of the choirs,

31:43
my Magpie stealing of warm ups and things that I've got from other people.

31:50
And we've been lucky. We've had a couple we've had a couple of people come in to do workshops with the choir,

31:57
sort of vocal technique workshops, and

Commented [LW53]: Nice

32:02
there's always more you can do.

LW And to be honest, it's, it's, you know, it's like anything it, you know, there is science behind a lot of this, and

32:12
LW that science is being developed all the time. And there's greater understanding of of, you know, if you like vocal anatomy and what I mean, she's what vocal technique is all about, supporting and protecting vocal anatomy

Commented [LW54]: Which is what

32:30
without I shouldn't lead these sort of conversations. But, you know, I wish I had known more and about more about vocal anatomy when I started out,

Me too. Me too. Vocal health, vocal anatomy, we have had to look after people's voices, yeah, and get the best out of them.

Commented [LW55]: How to look after people's voices Out of a small sample

LW Yes, absolutely.

32:50
Yeah. It's an unregulated industry, effectively, and you know,

32:56
all sorts of people, anybody can set themselves up as a choir leader.

33:01
Yeah, there's the potential to do, especially if you're working with, you know, children's voices, or even on anybody's voice, there is that potential there to cause some accidental harm if we're not careful?

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33:14
So yeah, I agree with you on

33:17
that. Moving forward, then have you got any sort of CPD lined up. You looking at any more courses? Or is there anything you think? Do you know what? Actually, that would be really useful.

33:31
Well, I think I said to you, I've, I've just started a master's in vocal pedagogy myself, and,

Commented [LW56]: CPD

oh, are you doing it through voice?

Yeah, yes, yeah. So funny enough. I've been speaking to somebody else who's also doing exactly the same. So that makes three of us so

33:48
of a small sample.

33:51
Yeah, that is really, yeah, like, Yes, I course, absolutely.

33:56
How you finding it?

Well, I'm on my formative assignment. So so far I'm I'm loving it. Yeah, it's going to be a challenge because I've got a lot of I keep on thinking I'm going to do less of this and less of this, but in practice, it's quite hard to do less of anything.

Yeah, so what's your focus on so far? Just out of interest, um,

34:18
I think all aspects I'm interested in our to do with inclusivity and sort of bringing people in, making it accessible.

34:29
We've been we've just recently done a workshop with Paul Whitaker, who's a Deaf musician, and we learned to sign some songs with him the late, yeah, yeah. So we've been doing signing and singing, and I've got really excited about that. And I think there's a lot of potential in sign singing,

34:51
not just inclusivity for for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing, but also, I think there are benefits for, for instance, the.

35:00

Transcribed by https://otter.ai

Some of my pupils are neurodivergent, and I think the science singing is a really useful tool for them. Yeah,

Commented [LW57]: Very interesting

35:09
wow, that's amazing. That would never have, yeah, lost my mind. And I have to say, when I started this course, which was, which was some time ago.

Commented [LW58]: crossed

35:22
You know, that was the one thing that impressed me with my original cohort, was the breadth of interest.

, absolutely. There's so many different aspects to dive into.

S1 Absolutely, yeah, and, you know, that kind of feeds into into this. That was my sort of first realization that and you know, as voice practitioners of any type, you know, we have all got so many routes to entry. And you know, no one, as you say, no, no, no one template fits everybody's requirements and and to sort of but to try and see whether the bigger holes are the most obvious holes are that are that you know could potentially be plugged. Yeah, it's been Yeah, that's really interesting journey you've got ahead of you.

36:10
Oh, they're gonna love you.

36:15
So who's your tutor? Just out of interest, Louisa Morgan, oh, yeah, I know of Louisa, yeah, okay, that's interesting.

So my tutor is actually based in in the Glasgow area

Oh, really nice. Yeah, yeah. So it's Claire Thomas, okay, yeah, yeah. So she's teach teaches at the Conservatoire.

Oh, brilliant. Yeah, yeah, yes.

S2. One of our best discoveries so far is that, 36:45
I mean, math teachers are nice, but singing teachers are lovely.

36:50
It's such a generous and sharing community. I've just learned so much from being around, yeah, other music teachers. It's

Commented [LW59]: Nice point

37:01
LW and I think it's part of it. It's a very team oriented process in some respects, isn't it? I mean, even if you are a soloist, there's only so much there's only so much solo music that you can play. Even if you're

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a soloist and you're working with an orchestra, or you're singing, you're singing as part of an opera company, or singing at the front of a call society. When you're performing an oratorio or or anything, you're still part of that team.

S2. Yeah, something very collaborative about it.

Yeah, the whole, the whole thing you, there's very little, I suppose, you got, I know, say, bark violin sonatas where you literally stand on the stage on your own with your violin, yeah, you know, and something like that. But you can't build an entire career playing things like that, you know. You have to collaborate. Yeah, yeah.

37:51
So, yeah, it's interesting. So,

37:55
so obviously, yes, you're doing the ultimate CPD. You're doing your master's in vocal pedagogy. I shall ask no more on that front, because you got to travel that journey. And then, you know, if you're anything like me, you'll realize at the end, actually there's more.

S2 What I need is, yeah, yeah. There's always a new thing. There is more about

Yeah, absolutely, absolutely.

S2 So in fact, my problem at the moment is I still want to do more of the singing for pleasure courses. And I still want to
38:28
do my piano skills are not good and, I'm practicing a lot. Yeah, I want to get delegate the piano playing.

Very lucky. We've got a we've got a couple of accompanists that with us regular, you know, every rehearsal. So

38:46
I did, used to, I did, used to big up the English cathedral tradition where you learn everything unaccompanied.

Yes, yes.

38:55
S2 Very good for the ear.

S1 It's very good for the year. And we still do a lot of that, actually. But then, you know, we, we are, you know, there's also, there is repertoire where you think, Oh no, that's not going to work. Definitely need an accompanist for this.

Commented [LW60]: choral

Commented [LW61]: Team-work/collaboration

Commented [LW62]: Bach

Commented [LW63]: ear

Transcribed by https://otter.ai

39:10
But yeah, well, it's just going to look in at the time, it's, it's quarterly,

39:18
just conscious that people are busy. So I can ask one more question, just very broad. It is basically, is there anything else you would like to say about being a core director in the UK at this time?

39:34
Just that it's a real privilege, and I love it.

39:39
I think

39:42
it was a big eye opener going through covid and not having that, yeah, and you just see how much it means to so many people. Yeah. It's just Yeah, yeah, yeah,

39:53
yeah. But nothing else I can add to that, really, I agree with you.

39:58
So I.

40:00
And there is a lot of support.

40:03
Being in Scotland, a lot of the ABCD courses are quite London centric, but there's more and more stuff going on up at the center of the country that that I can access.

So good. Yeah, I agree. I mean, I'm not that far. I'm in the Midlands. But, you know, you don't really want to be traipsing down to London every weekend to do something.

40:27
So, yeah, and I think that's, that's one of the things that, especially one of the good things about covid is that it's forced people to develop online offerings for this, for things like this. So you know that there is a silver lining to that particular cloud, then it is, yeah, we are much more savvy about things like that.

S2 Yeah, and we've got access to all sorts of things. There's another I would like to do, this, a vocal health course that I would like to do. I think that's vocal first aid kind of course.

Oh yes, yes, yes, yeah. And do you ever look at any of the BVA courses?

41:04

Commented [LW64]: Quarter to three already

Commented [LW65]: choral

Commented [LW66]: Covid impact

Commented [LW67]: Availability of course in reasonable travelling time

Commented [LW68]: Lack of awareness of different institutions

Transcribed by https://otter.ai

No, let me write that down. BVA, BBA, British voice Association.

41:11
It covers anybody who has anything to do with voice practice. You know, we're from, from, you know, surgeons, through to SLTs, through to singing teachers, through to drama teachers and actors and so on. So it comes a really broad remit. They do some really quite, you know, niche at times, but you know, they might. They do some good courses as well.

41:37
Fabulous. Thank you. I'll have a look at that. So, yeah,

41:41
right. Well, I unless you've got anything else to add, I'm delighted.

Thank you.

Well, thank you very much. It's been a pleasure to meet you. Yeah, no, thank you. Andy too, and

41:55
enormous, and it sounds like quite a lot to condense into. It is, and I'm at the stage, and I've only got until the beginning of September,

42:08
but I'm at the stage where I've got lots of pieces of the jigsaw, but at the moment I can't find the edge.

Oh, good luck with finding the

42:17
edges. At three o'clock in the morning,

42:21
the edge will come. But, yeah, it's a bit bit worrying at the moment.

42:27
I'm sure you'll get there. Yeah, fingers crossed. Well, enjoy your course as well. And you know,

42:32
yeah, brilliant. And hopefully we our paths will cross on a course one day, each other in other little boxes. Yep,

42:42
okay, well, lovely. Thank you very much indeed for your time. And yeah, as I say, you know, best of luck. And

Commented [LW69]: covers

Commented [LW70]: niche

Commented [LW71]: and

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42:49
yeah, thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you. Okay, take care. Okay, bye, then bye, bye.

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

choir, bit, good, cathedral, conducting, people, repertoire, years, sing, music, events, church, singer, singing, feel, song, stage, great, find, week

00:20
Hello, hi,

00:22
hello, hi. You can hear me, okay, I can Yes, splendid. Yes, a bit loud, so just my setting a little

00:31
Excellent. There we are very good. Okay, all yours. Excellent. Thank you very much indeed for your time.

00:39
I promise I won't keep you for too long, unless we get completely carried away with ourselves. So yeah, thank you. Just basically a bit of a chat. More than anything, I've got to just find out a little bit more about some of the aspects of of you know, how you approach your you know, your core conducting practice.

Commented [LW1]: choral

01:04
I'm interested in particular, in, you know, some of the training you may or may not have received, and how you felt it helped, and how you felt it didn't help. And just, you know, sort of, just to get an idea a bit more in depth. I don't know if you have that the survey,

01:21
it's taken longer than I anticipated to close down the survey. Take a look at the some of the results that then feed into this process. So if you don't remember the survey,

01:36
it was just questions about, you know, people's background, how you

01:43

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what training they had done, what training they were looking for, yeah, in terms of for, you know, each person, what they felt with their strengths and their weaknesses are, and all of that, and the reason for all of it is,

01:58
sorry, let me just

02:01
that's better,

02:03
yeah, I came, I came into this particular masters and realized I knew nothing.

02:11
And having, you know, been a choir, a choir director for some time, yeah, I realized how little I knew, and I wondered how many sort of in my peers actually would feel they're in the same position, if, you know, if the opportunity arose for them to to have the exposure to find out. So, you know, it's been a really interesting journey. And, you know, I'm getting some really fun, you know, fascinating results

02:38
about how diverse our you know, choir leading community is, that's what kicked it all off. Okay, so that's it.

02:48
So first question, and hopefully they'll, you know, they're not going to be yes, no answer questions, it will lead into a bit of discussion. How long have you been a core director, choir leader?

Commented [LW2]: choral

03:00
I've been doing the conducting thing, I think

03:06
relatively short phrase, I'm afraid of some people. I think I started

03:11
around about 2016,

03:16
or 17, that sort of time started. Started small. I've been a choir singer for donkey's years, like most people in them, and one choir is in particular, the director was very keen to encourage people to to have it all go. So I had a little go once, and began to sort of sense that I had the bug for it a little. And then he gave me a bit of he gave me regular goes, and then he gave me a little bit of coaching. He himself was a retired user teacher. Gave me a little bit of coaching.

Commented [LW3]: Relevant choral singing experience

Commented [LW4]: Encourage

Commented [LW5]: music

Commented [LW6]: encouragement

03:46

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It was a West gallery choir, so music was very, very simple,

yes, yeah, yeah.

And I was began to cut my teeth doing that. And then then the bug developed. And

04:00
once I retired in 2019

04:03
I then went on a on a weekend course run by **sing for pleasure**, two day course in London in the January, in the height of covid, actually, all masks and everything. And that was the first time I bit of propitious man. It was, it was, it was great. And we were in little classes. I was the, I was the beginner in work. What do they call Foundation? And there was eight of us with a tutor, and we had a weekend where we were taught, literally the basics from the very get go and conduct single, simple pieces. And I went from sort of nothing to beginnings of a little bit of understanding of technique. And that was really good, love that I went to another single pleasure course in the spring. Love that too. And then I went to the single place or summer school on the same year for a week,

04:46
which was, as you imagine, was, was then an intensive series of trainings and loads of seniors, which I was really enjoyed because, and I still think now that singing, I still sing as much as I can for other people, because I not only enjoy it, but it's good for me. Then, as a choir director, to.

05:00
Still sing a lot and to be conducted by other people, to go people better at it than me. I can learn and observe. I feel like a sponge, soaking up, you know, soaking up for stuff wherever I can, wherever I see it. And that was really good. And so I did that same pleasure was, was absolutely essential for me to getting a going out of a really good, material, good attitude that works, not just for young people, also for, you know, for older folks, and that was their good and then the I then did a couple more. I began to move up a little bit in their categories. I then did another weekend. I missed the London one the following. I then did the spring one, which was in Bromsgrove again, and did the summer school again.

05:36
And then,

05:38
I think twice, I think I've done the summer school twice with them, and then I was still moving on, and I was keen to progress.

05:50
Also, I wanted to progress a little bit fast, and I was seeming to in the groups. Although I love the summer school, the problem was, you've been in a group of eight, nine people, 10 people sometimes. And so your podium time, as we called it, was, was not great. So they teach some new, new tech

Commented [LW7]: Proper tuition

Commented [LW8]: Basics

Commented [LW9]: loved

Commented [LW10]: singing

Commented [LW11]: Relevant choral singing experience

Commented [LW12]: Observing as a way to learn only works if the observed is competent - otherwise the danger is you pick up all their bad habits

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thinking on the morning course, and we'd all have a go, because all having a go meant you get five minutes there, and then you've got, you know, six times 10 times long when you're singing for other people. And it was good. It was fun, enjoyable. But I wasn't getting the enough, you know, enough content for me out of it. So I then, I then had some private lessons with

06:26
with their head of training, who, who, after a bit of fafu, and she, she sat there, and I'll have some really good private lessons. I run of six or seven, all on Zoom, and that was very good. And also my repertoire was a little bit different to what other people were generally doing. And so they weren't always doing stuff I was interested in. And then I thought, I better try the other lot. So I then tried ABCD. I tried the Sherborne school, Summer School of Music, which is not an ABCD event, but it's, it is ABCD people, and it's ABCD, you know, you know these terms here, yes. And that one, I went the first time last year, and really like that. I'm doing it again this year, and it's in a couple of weeks time. And the reason I liked it was there was just one class. We had Amy Bevington, who's very, very good top lady, and we had a lot more attention, much more challenging repertoire, you know, stack of repertoire, including things like bird Savo there, and pieces I would consider to be above my pay grade, and Whittaker songs and things that I wouldn't actually be drawn to, and other participants who were wider age range, or still youngsters there, which is very important. But whereas sing for pleasure is quite got a bit a bit of a focus on on the younger people, lots of music students, lots of music teachers, which is wonderful, plenty of energy, plenty of fun. This one was a bit more of a wider spread. So a few youngsters, but also a few people my age, our age, my age, our age, including some people who are definitely more experiencing better. And that's great. They're great people to have to learn from and with, not so much better that we were all we had no connection, but, but there was people around me who I could learn from, and we got more solid time, more polling time, more focus attention. Really love that. And then I had some private lessons with Amy bed, in bed, meeting afterwards to work on some specific pieces. And I'm doing again this year. And this mail may not be my last big summer school was end up about a grand a time, you know, along the bits. But I also got a I got a very specific kind of thing I wanted to do. I still got to do, I still got to learn. I still, I'm still very much, you know, I realize I'm still not that brilliant at it, but I almost there's two things I do I cannot. I now, I've now taken over that West gallery choir, and I conduct that, which is fairly straightforward, but my other big thing is cathedral singer formed a choir of my own, which is, is ad hoc project. I come together lots of regulars, but also newcomers every time. And we do cathedral things. So we just sang in we do even song in the child house since in the Smithfield in London last week, we did bath Abbey in February in France, in May, we're in Rochester Cathedral in December. We're doing St George's Windsor next summer. So I've got into this whole even song cathedrals game,

wow.

So I really like and I know, I know I'm way around. I know how to do an even song. And in one sense, it's a narrow repertoire. In the other sense, there's a whole world of stuff there. That's what I like to do. So I'm not, I'm not interested particularly in other stuff. I mean, it's fun, but I don't, I don't desire to learn stacks of repertoire that's all away from that. I'm really enjoying immersing myself in this stuff because I enjoy, I enjoy putting events on. I like the setting of performing in a service. Find what I really enjoy. And

Commented [LW13]: Inadequate practical time on courses

Commented [LW14]: No idea can't make it out

Commented [LW15]: had

Commented [LW16]: Specialist music interests

Commented [LW17]: Bebbington

Commented [LW18]: More podium time

Commented [LW19]: Byrd's Ave Verum

Commented [LW20]: SfP more focussed on younger participants whereas ABCD = wider age range.

Commented [LW21]: More experienced and better

Commented [LW22]: Observe and networking

Commented [LW23]: podium

Commented [LW24]: Quality time

Commented [LW25]: Bevington

Commented [LW26]: May or may not

Commented [LW27]: singing

Commented [LW28]: sings

Commented [LW29]: Chard House

Commented [LW30]: Bath

Commented [LW31]: Specialist Repertoire

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09:28
I've decided, yeah, at this stage of life, I don't need to try and be everything I can. I know what I want to do, and I want to do it as well as I can get better at it. And so that's why I focus on my energy. So that's the that's the long, rambling answer. In a nutshell, a sing for pleasure was brilliant for getting started, absolutely brilliant. And I think better than ABC, probably for being for beginner. And ABC happened to suit me better later on, others did very well. Maybe we go back to sing pleasure. I'll probably still do the London weekends regularly. Got a few friends there now, but I.

10:00
Really, really enjoyed learning how to conduct and how to, you know, still plenty to learn, but I really do, really do enjoy it. And the bug as well and truly got me. And

10:12
I've got my own little sort of mission. I'm, I'm on a sort of mission to reinvent the choir in one sort sounds, a bit, might sound a bit presumptuous, but the

No, no, no

choir model was that you met every Tuesday in the church hall for like, 10 weeks, and then you did for his record, having sung it to death over that 10 weeks. And note bash and note bashing is really boring. I mean, I'm not a free sight reader, but I'm okay sight reader. There's nothing more boring than sitting through note bashing choirs because of that, exactly. And so my my invention was sort of a product of covid a certain times, but I and also the fact that I went on someone else's cathedral singing, and I still do sing them occasionally, who showed me how to do the instant sing, where you don't meet until the day, and you get the PDFs And I was quite scared the first time I did it, but it worked okay, and I've developed that model. And so now, from my cathedral singing, I I put a lot of effort into into making it work with we don't meet till the day, but I make clear to people, they still have to do work in advance. The good news is they can no bash at their own pace and their own frequency. Some people that'll be twice over. Some people that'll be every day for Fortnite. And I do videos, I do part learning videos, which I make, which show the music, play the tune, and

11:24
there's one for each part of our website's got stacks and stacks around them, stacks of mags and anks, if everyone of that kind of stuff. And the idea is, and about half my people do it properly, and half don't, is that you can just just pop the headphones on and you just run it through in the morning, 510, minutes before you start your work for your day. You don't need to kind of set a whole Sunday afternoon assigned for it. You can just do it you can just do it regular and often short and sweet, and by the time you sung the Magnificat six seven times over two weeks, you can't know it. Yeah, without any help slogging out any grief. That's my idea. And I say some of my people get it and love it and do it. Others, I wish they would have haven't got it yet, and I'm trying to think of ways to incentivize them to do it and punish them if they don't do it stage. But I quite, I'm quite taken with the idea of, you know how to do choir. You know, 2.0 where, where people are all over the place. And we can't, we can't, you know, even if we enjoyed going to the church, obviously, you can only do that with one choir. We can't be in

Commented [LW32]: SfP for beginners/ABCD for progression

Commented [LW33]: The old choir model

Commented [LW34]: Faure's Requiem

Commented [LW35]: great

Commented [LW36]: Innovations brought about because of COVID

Commented [LW37]: Note bash

Commented [LW38]: fortnight

Commented [LW39]: Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis

Commented [LW40]: Kind of know it

Commented [LW41]: That's the next sort of stage

Commented [LW42]: Distance learning and then come together for the service

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several choirs. So I'm everyone's second choir. They'll do, they'll sing in their church, they'll do whatever they like. But on top of that, they can do my stuff, and it's an extra treat, and it's and they don't need to fit into their week. They just do it when they fancy it. And we all come here a jolly good time together over weekends, some nice cathedral, and it's all Jolly good. That's, that's, that's my, that's why I'm now. And,

12:37
yeah, that's kind of conducting I want to and get and get

yeah,

12:42
I think you're right. I think there's, you know, I've been involved in Scratch choirs.

12:48
I don't sing so much nowadays. I sing with my church choir. I love even so it's the highlight of we only do it monthly, highlight of the month.

13:00
You know, I the psalms are challenging at times, but as you say, you run it through a couple of times, and you know, the tricky bits getting the words out,

13:12
yeah,

13:13
but yeah, there is something actually quite rewarding about the scratch pie where you maybe only do two or three rehearsals, and then

13:21
you're in agree. Agreed that you know this whole idea of going week in, week out

13:27
and but I think to a certain extent, they become less about the music and more about the social side.

Yes, as indeed, my own weekends have become as well, because we do have meals. And some people definitely come along because they enjoy all that kind of stuff too. So the societies you have, some people, it's just part of their the rhythm of life. And indeed, I was in a core society in Marlborough for 15 years, exactly like that. And we was lovely. We stole every Monday and stuff. And it was all very pleasant and straightforward, even then, some people still didn't get it. You know, they still would turn up every Monday, but be hopeless on the day or the day.

Oh, they and they and they didn't look at the music from one week to next.

Commented [LW43]: No regular commitment

Commented [LW44]: Better at.

Commented [LW45]: Evensong

Commented [LW46]: choir

Commented [LW47]: Social event

Commented [LW48]: Regular commitment

Commented [LW49]: choral

Commented [LW50]: Turn up

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That's right, exactly yes as well. So, so yes, there's, I'm not, there's a place for that. I'm just positioning myself to be the one people do as well as that. Yeah,

14:13
yes.

14:15
Thinking back to those you know early courses, is there anything that you know now a few years on that you wish they'd covered, because this one area I'm, I'm interested in, in I, you know, is, is identifying what these providers miss. I obviously have my own views. Sorry, I've just been nudged by a dog.

14:41
The back door is open. Yeah, and you know that they Well, I shouldn't lead. But if do you think there is anything that you wish they'd covered at the time? I.

15:03
There's nothing major when I'm more, I'm more just grateful for the stuff I was talking because I went in there with little idea and was taken from the basics. I mean, some people started me and progressed very, very far and had a lot more opportunity. Perhaps you were going to be professional musician, or these music teachers some fresh, semi professional in that way, I

15:28
Well, the answer in a major way, not so. I mean, one sense, they didn't spend quite enough, certainly didn't spend enough time on my kind of reps. One, was a bit more into stuff aimed at children and young people. And there was, because there's so many teachers there and students that there was an awful lot of, you know, how do we reach out to young people? How we get young people singing, and how do we that's all great, but that's not, that's not my thing. I mean, lovely, but it just stays on what I'm the bit of the music vineyard that I'm laboring in,

16:00
the ABCD was a bit the Sherman was a bit more up my street because it had things like birds are very, very much, and they forced me to tackle other as well as other things that also weren't my repertoire, but were, were meaty bits of music that were a good, a good and wholesome challenge. So I, I mean, because I'm still early stages, but presumptu be the criticism, I think, at the moment, where I'm

16:25
probably things about to do with this vocal technique, and how you can help your choir not go flat or sharp, and how you can

16:33
better, you know, better, critique their singing and spot stuff, because that's, that's still my weakness. I've got a couple of associates. I've got an immediate associate who works for me, whether it's the music we do, and I've got a couple of other store members of the choir who, you know, who point stuff

Commented [LW51]: In addition to their regular choirs

Commented [LW52]: repertoire

Commented [LW53R52]: Too much aimed at children and the young at times

Commented [LW54R52]: Target audiences

Commented [LW55]: And Sherbourne

Commented [LW56]: Byrds Ave Verum

Commented [LW57]: A bit presumptious

Commented [LW58]: Vocal Technique, pitch, critique

Commented [LW59]: stalwart

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out to me, which I miss me in a way that I appreciate and value, but because, because I'm a bit of a big picture person, I'm not as much of a detailed person as others. So if the choir sounds fairly good, I'm just so relieved they don't sound dreadful that I don't always pick up the fact that, you know, the sopranos made a mess of that particular bit, or sometimes, but other times someone said, hey, look, you know, we're rubbish at that particular point. And so something to develop my ear to critique singers and immediately pick up stuff and know what to do about, you know, all the classic amateur stuff requires going a bit flaty,

17:23
or having wooly starts and all that kind of stuff. So, I mean, that stuff, I would love to know more about that. They did tackle it. They did talk about it. I'm not saying they missed anything important.

17:34
I think, I think, I think they, they, they all did jolly good stuff, and I couldn't go anywhere at all without both of them?

No, okay, great. I mean, it's like anything, isn't it? There's always

17:47
they try to be, you know, everything to all people, and it isn't possible.

Yes. I mean, that's why, I think the one thing, one thing I did, begin to feel within pleasure. Which one we was, I had classes are a bit too big, and when they're too big, you then don't get the podium time, and you spend awful time having other people, and you don't get much help yourself. And it's not, I don't want to love they will love it, but, but, you know, you're paying a lot of money, yeah, as a full, you know, they have the adversary to students there, and I was a full pass. I was paying top whack, and I did sometimes feel I'm paying a lot of money here, and I'm actually two thirds of my time on helping other people, which is, okay, fine, but I'm really help me. I've got stuff I need to learn. Yeah, and so that's why I decided to try the other one, because I then did feel I was getting much more stuff for me, and I was, I was helping others in the group as well. But the balance was, was in a better place for the money I was. I don't really problem with Synchro, just that's just what happened to be with it, and all these things are there as well.

You know, as you progress on your you know your trajectory, you know, we all outgrow certain things.

18:57
So what was applicable at the time that gave you that gave you that good kick start isn't necessarily going to be in any of any use now that those, those needs to develop as you do.

That's right. The other thing, I think, is really, tell me, if I'm going off topic, is not just to sing as much as you can, but of singing different kinds of quiet so I do sing a lot of reading songs, and one of March, of being in the even song niche, is that you can, you can, you know, there's those opportunities selling London to sing it and see it, be part of it. So I do that all the time. But also singing Slavic voices, which used to be the London Russian choir, had to rebrand with a fantastic music director who is a completely

Commented [LW60]: Aural skills

Commented [LW61]: Sing for

Commented [LW62]: Class sizes

Commented [LW63]: Bursary students

Commented [LW64]: Full payer

Commented [LW65]: SfP not necessarily value for money - too biased towards students/young people rather than the majority?

Commented [LW66]: choirs

Commented [LW67]: Evensongs

Commented [LW68]: advantage

Commented [LW69]: Say in London

Commented [LW70]: Sing in

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different creature altogether, million miles away from even some different kind of repertoire, different people in the choir, completely different conducting style, and that that is also wonderfully invigorating and cross fertilizing and refreshing. And that's something you have to do yourself. You have to, you have to fertilize your own experience must have been a monoculture on these things you need. You need to kind of, I find I need, I need to expose myself to different.

20:00
Stuff in order to enrich the soil of my my awareness,

LW I think, yeah, absolutely. It all adds to, well, I mean, it all, it all informs your decision maker when it comes to your choirs, etc, yeah, yeah, you know, it's, it's, I think that experience, and it's interesting actually, to see the kind of the differences in response. I won't go into too much detail, but the differences in response to questions for those people that have come up through the singer's route, yeah, yeah, to those that may have come at it from a slightly different group, you know

20:38
that? You know the classic music teacher who has to conduct the school choir, has to conduct the school orchestra, because they're the music teacher, maybe never picks up a baton or anything before in their lives. Then you've got, you know, sort of the classic organist accompanist who suddenly finds them at the front of the choir, and they never belong to a choir. And you know, it

21:01
to actually have that experience of being on the other side of being a singer. And as you say, there's wider variety of choirs as possible, not even just choirs, you know, opera companies or music theater. So it does help frame your I was going to say, you know,

21:19
I think it frames helps with your temperament,

21:24
because you're exposed to, you know, different types of characters that are attracted to these different types of singing environments. It also helps to frame your knowledge of expand your knowledge of repertoire,

21:42
and so it introduces you to different vocal capabilities. So, you know, yeah, I agree with you. I think it's a very important part to just, you know, if you're person developed to spread the net as far as possible. And it always worries me, if you get a call director who's never really been a call singer, you just think,

S6. yes, no, that's right, I could not imagine. You know, not, not doing. It's just just, it's not just conducting. It's the wider thing of doing even some generally, the more experiences you have it, the more you confident you get with it, and the more you know what you're doing, and you know you can guide others through and through and through it all. That's

Commented [LW71]: Evensong

Commented [LW72]: Mustn't be in a monoculture

Commented [LW73]: Decision making

Commented [LW74]: route

Commented [LW75]: their

Commented [LW76]: Choral

Commented [LW77]: Evensong

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22:18
yeah, yes, that's, that's all the stuff that's, that's, yeah, yeah.

LW What? What came most naturally to you? Do you think when you first took that step over

22:27
to the other side?

Oh, not, not a lot. Actually, it was very weird, obviously, very scary and weird. And like driving the car, when you first drive a car, your eyes are fixed on the road in front of the bonnet, instead of, you know, your destination, and it's I was there. I was so much so unaware of my movements and unaware of my fidgeting about and very self conscious. You forget you again. Like driving, you've got to remember 27 things at once. I would forget 25 of them. But once that sort of bedded in. And I like a bicycle, it's pretty much like on a bicycle. Once you've got airborne you know, and you're up and you can do it. There comes a moment when you're riding a bike, when you're away, and then, then you can travel on the bicycle. And once I reached that point where I was able to get airborne

23:11
and and, and no longer, you know, trying to consciously think about, you know, there's a lot of things that having subconsciously, I could then focus on things I wanted to do, and bringing people in and being clear on gestures, still beginning, all that stuff, really, but that was, that was the hardest thing really was, was, was just to to, to automate a lot of stuff, including the standing still and the,

23:34
you know, the sort of just being less self conscious and

23:38
very self aware, but less self conscious in the sense

23:42
of, you know, things.

23:45
So that was the hardest thing to to get, get, get the master of and be, and just be, be comfortable. And also, even someone particularly has that glorious challenge where it's like a mini concert with with sort of seven or eight different things, all them,

24:02
mediums in some way. Plus you've got the overall choreography event, and you've got the drama, because it's real live, and anything weird can happen, because you may do something strange or whatever. And what the first time is, it's completely confusing. The second, third time, when you know it's coming, it's terrifying. And after that, again, it's like riding a bike. You you feel great. You know what you're doing, and you're in control, and off you go. And off you go and even deal with anything and control situation. So, so going from from across that was, that was the trickiest bit. Was, was, was

Commented [LW78]: Hardest things come with experience

Commented [LW79]: Evensong

Commented [LW80]: Mm slightly different in some way

Commented [LW81]: The clergy may do

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getting up those first two or four stages, my personal big problem is i Then I very easily switch from nervousness to complacency. I get through the nervous comfortable, and then it's easy, well, for me, then to get complacent, to start to relax, and it always goes wrong. Again, I've got to continually challenge and push myself to not do that, and to continually, and that's why I go on the course of the courses bring you back and forth and exposure to the people, and you realize that you're still a bit useless, you know, and there's still got so much to learn compared to others. You.

25:00
And that's a necessary corrective for me, because I will too easily default to being a bit lazy, and you know what I'm doing. That's still barely the case. So that's, that's the Yeah, that was the hardest challenge was just getting getting a basic bit of momentum and basic bit of altitude,

25:22
so that then I could build on that and start to expand and grow confidence and grow range of things. But I still, really am, still I'm, you know, still can't do my left hand to my satisfaction. I'm still don't think I'm very good at bringing dynamics. And still

25:38
there's this. I know exactly what big areas I've got to to work on a great deal. And that's, that's why I've appreciated the mix of private tuition costs a bit more. But you get the underlay attention of the individual, and you make crashing progress. I find, you know, 234, hours of private tuition is, is worth a stack, you know, because that's been most, most useful.

Yeah, yeah. No, absolutely. You know, I've done a bit of it myself over the years with particularly difficult pieces. And it just that that's that new perspective, isn't it? And quite often it's like anything, anything in life, you know, you can sit and look at a task for what feels like hours on ends, and then somebody else will come along and say, Well, have you thought about that? They see it straight away, because you're too invested in it. Yeah, it's frustrating. But, as you say, worth its weight in gold, yeah, yeah. And so, you know, I'm going to ask the converse of that now, the fact that, you know, that was the hardest thing. So what did you feel came naturally to you? You know?

26:41
Yeah, mine was bossing people around.

26:45
Yeah, that came back. Came, well, came all right. And

26:52
I think, I think having a having a feel for what is a good piece of music, and knowing how you want it to be, and knowing how you want it to make people feel that that's came very easy for me in particular in the area of Evensong and, you know, church, there are areas I don't, I don't interested in, don't like within, within the areas I do like. I think I know how to handle that stuff, and I know what is good news and what isn't a good piece. And I love the I love the bits I love, and I keep the ones don't like and and knowing how they're meant to sound, knowing why they're interesting, knowing why they're exciting,

Commented [LW82]: Nervousness and feel comfortable

Commented [LW83]: Course s bring you back down to earth

Commented [LW84R83]: CPD can be used to remind you of what you're doing wrong

Commented [LW85]: clearly

Commented [LW86]: unalloyed

Commented [LW87]: cracking

Commented [LW88]: 2,3,4

Commented [LW89]: Came very easy for me in particular in the are of Evensong

Commented [LW90]: Church music generally

Commented [LW91]: A good piece

Commented [LW92]: Clear of

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and knowing how to bring up the thrill, I like to think that's, that's a good one. I certainly make sense to me. I hope I communicate it to others. And people keep do, keep coming back to these things. So I hope that means they like it too. So that's, that's good, that side's okay, yeah, well, once I had a bit of, bit of training, you know, just basic things, like Amy used to say, you know, whenever you run the piece, always have something to say. You seem to be, always come back. So have a little thing to say, eventually say, Okay, well, when you perform and say, well done. Really good, really good. But some compliment acquire. But when you, when you practice, always have one admit to go back to

28:00
and then single pleasure was said very strongly, and Amy as well. Don't talk too much. Don't, don't blabber away, you know, don't say much. And once I've internalized those, I think, I think I'm I think I'm quite good. I don't blabber too much. I'll often, if they do something weird, I'll stop and restart without necessarily saying Oh, because, you know, they'll just

28:19
Yeah, and back again and sent down. Was much better. And And now, whereas when I was starting out, the choir was singing through, and I'd be thinking, in the last five bars, what the heck am I going to say when we finish this particular run through? Well, now it just

28:33
comes, you know, I know about 42 just do that. One again. Let's just try it. One again. I'm now very confident and fine with that. That's that's come to me very well. He's talking to like the easy bit, slightly easy bits. Yeah, that.

28:44
So those are the two things. And those, I think I know that run a decent verse, and I know I know how to

28:53
bring out an enthusiasm for the bits repertoire I choose. I think choosing repertoire, which is a big job in Evensong planning, I also really enjoy, and I think I've got a way of doing it, the higher I like and works, and people seem to enjoy it. So a lot of attention to that. And that comes very, very easily. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

And that that by all your experience of of of singing, even song, but also your passion for it,

I think, I think so, yes. And the kind of all the West gallery stuff, although it's a more narrow repertoire, it's got all sorts of things I've been doing that far longer, I think 15 years so. And I've got a lifetime hanging singing hymns prior to that, so I've got all that stuff in there. So I know, and I know, I know, yeah, and around all that thing. And I will also read. I'm a fight. I'm down fine. Eventually I've read, read and read I've I'm rereading Andrew ganz booking, the history of English church music, and

29:46

Commented [LW93]: out

Commented [LW94]: required

Commented [LW95]: Little bit

Commented [LW96]: SfP

Commented [LW97]: Second time is always much better

Commented [LW98]: Back to bar 42

Commented [LW99]: once

Commented [LW100]: once

Commented [LW101]: Are you wanting the easy bits

Commented [LW102]: rehearsal

Commented [LW103]: Evensong

Commented [LW104]: That I like and works

Commented [LW105]: Singing, singing hymns

Commented [LW106]: I'm now finding things I've read, read and read

Commented [LW107]: Ganz book

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I've read quite a lot of stuff like that, and that, that's that opens up. I feel I'm a newcomer. There was something we've been doing even some since they were age seven, and they've been doing it all their adult lives. And I can understand why they like moderns that.

30:00
Because they're just a bit bored of all the old stuff. Well, to me, I've only really been to some fun for 60 I've still got the enthusiasm of a newbie. You know, to me, I still love a good Tudor anthem, because I haven't sung it 57 times since 1970 you know, I've only been doing this for five years, so that it's all fresh and exciting to me, and that I quite like that. You know, if that seems to be the case, I probably have to stop doing it. But that's just, just where I am. So that repertoire choosing, repertoire planning, event planning, that's all my kind of thing. I think,

yeah, yeah, I was, is I always have it's the same argument when people say, Well, I just don't like classical music. How can you not possibly, possibly not like some 900 years worth of music.

30:45
There's there's just so much. There's always something new to discover. And you know,

30:51
one of the pleasures that you know I, again, I love early, early music,

30:57
and I've done quite a lot over the early music to Baroque, I suppose, was really what my my as a singer, my niche was, oh yeah, with that, I've also got a passion, you know, for certain aspects of 20th century

31:11
choral music as well. And even now, you know, people like Macmillan, who, you know is coming into James McMillan, who's currently writing, who actually draws on those traditions. And you can, you can both hear and as a singer, feel those traditions.

Yeah,

31:26
you know that's

31:29
that doesn't like my like my fine, quite the same way. So I'm happy to leave that to people who enjoy it. The other problem is that, because this is in copyright, I can't, yeah, for my choir events, we produce a book. We do a printed book so they don't rust with their own bits of paper or ring binders. They get a spa ramble, which we've put together. Which is, which is, I'll show you one here. This is, this is we do one of these for every time. This is one we did for

31:54

Commented [LW108]: Modern stuff

Commented [LW109]: No idea!

Commented [LW110]: Light my fire

Commented [LW111]: rustle

Commented [LW112]: Spiral bound

Transcribed by https://otter.ai

beside

31:57
my head, is that anybody? No.

32:02
That's what we did for child House last week, and it's got every single piece in there in order in our own editions. Now you can't do that within copyright. We're going to do it. No, no, no, you're absolutely right. You can't. As it happens anyway, the newer stuff is a little bit less my thing. I'm still having great fun with the previous 400 years. And see me out, and I'll leave with your stuff to other people,

32:25
big undertaking to produce that kind of literature on a on a fairly regular basis. I mean, do you feel that that's something that you obviously, you obviously

32:36
okay with the technology that's at hand?

Yeah, enough to do it. I actually get enjoyable. I always have to enjoy doing books and things different sort of school. That's an old, old hobby of mine. But, yes, but it is so much easier now. I mean, the Sibelius settings I do. Sometimes do them, but mainly my associate and chief tenor Nicholas, he usually set. Does a setting because he loves that kind of thing. And he will go to British Library for hours and find some ancient book and extract the setting from it and the rest of it the pain. I love planning events, including the social side, the dinners and the pubs and the lunches and things I like to make. I believe in having proper events with catered hospitality. I don't want instant coffee and paper cups. I want Kate hospitality. And so when people come, it's a nice treat. It's not just a musical treat. It's a nice

Yeah, absolutely, it's an event.

Yes, it's not some students or probably here's a paper cup. It's a pleasant occasion. And and the book is part of it. It's part of making sure we all look the same. We're smart. We need all the same, literally seeing all the same. Hymn sheet, my annotations are in there. The orders there nothing possibly go wrong. And that's, that's the idea. And so, yes, I've got a quite a collection of these now, I suppose eight or eight or 10 of them, but it is a stack of work. But actually I like it. I love it. Gives me great pleasure, so it's not a burden for me to do that. If I probably spend too much time on it. I should spend more time preparing than adopting, but I think it's an important part of making these things, a, nice, B, effective and C, I just like doing it.

Yeah, no, fair enough. Absolutely,

34:09

Commented [LW113]: Chard or charter?

Commented [LW114]: aufait

Commented [LW115]: planning

Commented [LW116]: catered

Commented [LW117]: The conducting

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I don't, yeah, it's, I think one of the, one of the topics that has cropped up, actually, interestingly, is, is the technology side of things,

34:20
and

34:22
it's on that point, if you look at my website,

34:25
which you can detect, put the link in the chat, but if you take a look at it, you will see,

34:32
maybe we have, I don't know, but so if you look at my website, which is

34:37
that,

34:39
and if You go to the look at the tab and talk of music covered on the far right, and you'll find there, all of a sudden, we've ever done and there's, there's, there must be, as far as success setting the song responses, probably about 10 psalms at 10 anthems, eight or nine mags and nunks. And each one of them has got four videos one place. And.

35:00
You play the video shows the music, plays a note, it's a sing along. Part learning video, yes, yeah, I would definitely take a look do all those. And that's part of my sort of quiet 2.0 you know, instead of going to the church, once you do, you sit home a cup of tea and do that a lot.

Yeah, absolutely, yeah.

Four concert, you won't be fine.

35:18
You'll be that's so that I'm Yeah, it's not, it's not, it's not particularly technologically amazing. It's just basic stuff. But I can do that stuff, and quite I'm quite taken with it, and quite enjoy thinking ways to to, you know, to use. When the one technology I wish people did have more was iPad. I went iPad about four years ago. A couple of my singers do I wish they all did, finding things would be so much easier and be so much better, and we'd be much, much, much less expensive as well, obviously we wouldn't supply the iPad. But I'm a great believer in iPads and for squad and whether you're using or not, but I find that less transformational for conducting and for singing. I've got, literally, it's all ever conducted. I've got at all times at my fingertips, and

yeah, I tend to use, yeah, a mixture, yeah.

Commented [LW118]: cupboard

Commented [LW119]: The services

Commented [LW120]: Five or 6 settings of the sung responses... 8 or 9 mags and nuncs

Commented [LW121]: One soprano, one for alto...

Commented [LW122]: choir

Commented [LW123]: If you leave to the night before the concert,

Commented [LW124]: In trouble with me

Commented [LW125]: To find things

Commented [LW126]: Cost

Commented [LW127]: Obviously, we wouldn't supply the iPad

Commented [LW128]: Forscore

Commented [LW129]: They're

Commented [LW130]: All the repertoire I've ever conducted

Transcribed by https://otter.ai

So that's, um, that's the next stage. But you know, you've got, if you've got to have, everyone's got to have an iPad, you can't have a situation where 90% of them have a 10% happen, because then, then you're stuffed.

Yeah. Basically, yeah, agreed. Um, okay, that's,

36:21
well, I mean, I was reluctant

36:25
to ask this, because you obviously just have such passion for the whole, whole process in many respects. But are there any aspects of being the one that with the responsibility that you, I don't say, Dread, but

36:39
that you think I really can't be bothered with this? I wish I didn't have to do it. The

36:46
there is for the for the regular choir. I mean, my mythical choir is great because it's event based. So yes, the gig, you know, rock Cathedral in December. I know the routine. I choose the repertoire. I pump it out to the mailing list. It was

37:00
always without pension, with enough people sign up, but so far, they always have. And then we know to prep it together. We there's the assignment of the day. Will it work? Will it go wrong? We wrong? Would be a disaster. Would it be amazing? And we get through the day and everyone says, Oh, very nice. Thank you very much. And we listen to all tape afterwards and we think, my goodness, that sounds a bit rough, and job done. That's all fine. But it's the weekly, the regular choir, London gallery choir, which is every fortnight, and that is a little bit of a I'm beginning to get. I'm still in I only been a conductor, probably for I'm still in my second year, actually, and they're lovely people, and I've loved the choir for two years, and I love the stuff we do, but I am getting a little bit of,

37:37
you know, a bit Ward already with people, either people who attend, or some people who attend erratically, or people who, particularly if they attend erratically, and they're not that brilliant sight readers, or not all good music readers that, I mean, they're all music readers. Music's fairly simple. I mean, for for me and half the people there, it's, you know, most of the pieces can be sight read, and it's not a big deal. Some people, I can't do that, and they have to go through a few times, and then they don't, they're just not as engaged. They're not postured without even making a base attempt to be postured at all properly. And on the day, then we, then there's the extra 10% kicks in. And they normally, we normally deliver a decent show, and we do, you know, we sound okay, but some people just just a bit lackluster in rehearsals. It's slow on the uptake,

Commented [LW131]: Haven't

Commented [LW132]: I don't want to say

Commented [LW133]: Cathedral

Commented [LW134]: Rochester

Commented [LW135]: There was always a bit of apprehension, will enough people sign up

Commented [LW136]: bored

Commented [LW137]: they

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38:22
and a bit, a bit, just a bit boring sometimes. So that is a bit, that's a bit of a drag, you know, because, because I do go a bit high adrenaline, be high uptake, and I need that for the event based coin, you need to hype yourself up, because all things are freak out, and it's great. I'm exhausted afterwards. But the weekly choir, you can't run on that basis. It's gotta run slightly more steadily. And there, I do occasionally get a bit bored with it already, which is, Shang was only doing it for you, and a bit and still far from the master of the craft.

38:56
But I'm basically it's, I think, some speaking as I think, but I think, I think all it really is is people who are not as quick as I think they ought to be, or as quick as me when it comes to reading a fairly simple piece of music, I'm not giving them stuff here. This is simple, fairly simple music. Sure, people are not as quick as I think they should be, or quicker than me. My boredom threshold is quite low.

39:20
Now keep it under

face of frustration, they're holding everybody else back at the end of the day.

Yeah. And then also, they're depriving themselves. And the rest of us have a bit more fun, really, because there's a lot of fun cover this stuff. And yeah, we even turn up and sing a Magnificat on basis of an hour's run for them, we enjoy all seeing a simple 18th century here more short anthem, sure on the spot. We shouldn't need to make heavy weather of it or flounder around two rehearsals into into the thing. So, so that's,

39:48
yeah, that's, that's, that's just just the humdrum, humdrum aspects of the regular choir do bore me a little bit, but I'm still.

40:00
Regard it was good for me to go there, to be in that position. Still, it's a worthwhile enterprise and worthwhile undertaking, and I realize I must have been boring to other people by being a bit boring back in the day when I was just one of the rank and file.

40:13
So so far, I haven't got stage where I'm not going to lose anymore, perhaps if in even six, seven years time, when I'm into my 70s and

40:22
I might prune the activity, I might say, right? You know, I'm literally only going to do the things I like, and I'm not going to drain myself on the other stuff. But I'm not at that stage yet. I'm still to, still too much basic craft skill to polish really.

Commented [LW138]: occtaine

Commented [LW139]: choir

Commented [LW140]: A shame because I've only been doing it for a year and a bit

Commented [LW141]: People management

Commented [LW142R141]: Personality trait

Commented [LW143]: I keep it under control

Commented [LW144]: It's the frustration

Commented [LW145]: I

Commented [LW146]: Do it

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Yeah, now, and you know that regular contact with a specific group of singers actually gives you the gives you the opportunity to measure your own progress as well.

Well it does, and it keeps you grounded and keeps you on the basics, and that so also stops you getting I've got the same total control on my own events I'm looking and that's good, but the choir, I'm a bit like a normal pilot. I'm not quite in control of everything and and so that's also good. That's also good because it just just keeps me it's a few more pressures and a few more influences. And that's a healthy thing. So there is benefits on that side as well.

41:16
Yep, no, absolutely, absolutely. It's always something to learn. Uh, talk, talking of I know you said you're doing share born again this year. Have you got any other sort of training activities lined up? Are there any particular areas that I think, I think I'll

41:34
do the things pleasure London Weekend, which is every January, I will keep on doing that, because that's good. And I'm still, still, I'm still running one of the medium bracket groups as I could still progress a bit.

41:47
I'll see how sure goes this year. So I do the next year. I may well have some more private tuition, I think when I've got, I mean, for instance, next summer, I'm doing some George's Windsor. Now, you can't afford to mess up any cathedral, but definitely don't.

No, you don't want to mess up that one.

It'll be the Tower of London. And, yeah, absolutely,

42:05
I'm already thinking, Yes, I'm already thinking I'm going to actually probably schedule some of the repertoire events prior to that in order to give an outing. And I will not, I will not choose, you know, over ambitious repertoire, but I might get myself a run of six coaching lessons on that stuff, just so that I give my own technique another kick on the backside and another another sharpening so. But apart from that, I haven't, I mean, I've looked around that there are ABCD run, sort of courses like once a month, for six months on a Saturday and and single pleasure. Don't quite say, but ABC do that, and other places do that, I'm a little bit less keen on that, partly because I'm a little bit allergic to long running online equipment. Since I've retired, I've been very happy to not have those things and just to be very much at all. And that's why I like my events, because my events come and they and they go and

42:58
they got to do something every month, six months, and I'm slightly worried about having to do loads of do loads of repertoire I'm not that interested in, but maybe just be me pre thinking unnecessary drawbacks, because you can still learn stuff on the repertoire. But so I'm aware that ABCD offer those things, and I might do them, but I might also not, not because I haven't got stuff to earn. I've got stacks

Commented [LW147]: Sherbourne

Commented [LW148]: SFP

Commented [LW149]: only

Commented [LW150]: Sherbourne

Commented [LW151]: SfP but it's not quite the same

Commented [LW152]: Ongoing things

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to learn, but because I might, I might say, well, I want to put my energy and my resources into just getting better and better and better the stuff I like to do. Um, I'm not. I'm not in this for the broader game, I don't need to conduct show songs, fun though they can be. I mean, I've got a few. I'd like to do more barber shop. I like to do a few different things, but I'm not interested in creating a community choir, particularly other than even someone's so training courses that do repertoire for that stuff all power to their elbows. But it's not something that I particularly want to do. So at this stage, I can't think of anything else I'm going to do other than perhaps more Sherborne or maybe another Sing for Pleasure big one.

44:00
But I might come across something I wasn't way off that is fun, and might do it, yeah, and or I may, I may try and do my own things. I just more as likely to now I've learned, I've sort of learned how to do events and what people will pay money for, how much they'll pay and why they're up for it. I may, I may, actually, you know, make it so bold as to put on mobile and workshops, you know, not, not over promising stuff that is beyond me. I'm not some not claiming to be anything more than but just saying, here's some fun stuff we you and we all enjoy. Here's a bit of workshop. And I now know people I could bring in voice coaches who I know I could bring in. We could even see in coaching, choir, crawl coaches. I could put together a nice little three or four day workshop on something or other, Tudor anthems or something, or even not, Harry christeners by, by, know how to put together a program like that. And so I'll say I'm more likely to do that kind of thing and thereby learn myself as well. Yeah, and still have the, have a, have a fun of putting together my own bespoke events. How I like.

45:00
To be in

Harry, Christopher had to start somewhere, and he's been doing it for many decades. Now.

45:05
That's right, you don't have to be Harry. Christopher's to able to lead stuff like this. You know, the vast pyramid, and he's up the top, and it's great. And I went to Stephen coordinate a few weeks ago and watched him perform, and I went,

45:18
we all learn from them, but further down the pyramid. There's all mini pyramids, and I'm halfway down. I'm two thirds the way down the pyramid, yeah, but there I'm on top of my own little pyramid under me. There's people under my pyramid, and they need me and I, and the pyramid up there needs all of us.

Absolutely,

I've got stuff I can do for those people who are in the pyramid beneath me, and we all have a good time together. That's my vision of my role.

45:41
Yeah. Sounds

Commented [LW153]: Don't need to conduct show songs

Commented [LW154]: Singing in someones

Commented [LW155]: SfP

Commented [LW156]: Aware of

Commented [LW157]: On more of my own

Commented [LW158]: Singing coaches, choir choral coaches

Commented [LW159]: songs

Commented [LW160]: Christophers

Commented [LW161]: See him in Croyden

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45:44
No, it does. It does, you know. And a big function of that is either having the, you know, the time to do it,

45:53
or having the nerve to say, right, that's it. I'm jacking something else in to give myself the time to do it, because it is. It's the time, as you say, to organize the events, to plan, to choose the repertoire, to, in your case, take it that step further and provide that lovely book to to people. You know, it's not a five minute job.

No, no, that's fine. I do see it as a total just as even song as a total 360 experience involving sight, sound and movement as well as music. I see the role conduction as that as well. You know, just just being a very good conductor, but leaving the rest of things to take care of themselves, which is what some people do, is not my thing. I'm not as good a conductor as very good conductors. Far from Far from it. But I do not put to go an event. To me that is all part of music. Singing a really good

46:45
Tudor anthem is you can do it on a platform in a church hall, in bag shot, and it's very nice, but to do it in a cathedral for real, with everything around it, and having had a nice meal the night before, I've been practicing at my head or tour, because you'll be afternoon so immersed in the place you're piling so much more into me that's much more intense, exciting, even if the conducting bit is only at my level. I'm not a top conduct I'm just an ordinary person. So that may not be as good as good. It's good enough to do the piece in question. What we've given them is an intensity of location and all the rest of it there. But I personally, is immensely valuable, and that's I prefer to do that and to have a brilliant conductor on a platform in a church hall in the town and village somewhere at 7.30 you know, for 10 pounds and a glass of wine on the

47:32
interval. That approach you as being a totality is something that quite, quite cool experience. Yeah.

Have you ever done any? Have

47:42
you ever done any of the 16 workshops? Yes, another week. I went a couple of them. Yeah. And I've

47:52
done two or three of those according they're quite like coordinates on their regular circuits every year. So they come around. And I've been recently just caught them a couple of times and the concert. And I was surprised watching the concerts. I mean, lovely. I heard them for the first time about 25 years ago. I suppose I was surprised. The actual concert stage presence was obviously brilliant. Yeah, just phenomenally brilliant. And I love the fact that many of them been there for many years, but the actual stage presence was a little bit old fashioned. They were wearing white time tails, like they were opera singers, Harry Ward, and Harry was wearing a kind of, you know, one of the slightly more modern

Commented [LW162]: right

Commented [LW163]: Conductors have in

Commented [LW164]: Know how to put on an event

Commented [LW165]: Bagshot

Commented [LW166]: It and having had a tour in the afternoon? You're so

Commented [LW167]: Into it, for me

Commented [LW168]: They had one in Croydon the other week

Commented [LW169]: In Croydon, they quite like Croydon, it's on their regular circuit

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colors. I was surprised that they had not had, what a more contemporary stage, because the white time tells is really a bit old fashioned these days. I,

you know, I think it comes down to practicalities, you know, in the fact that, you know, once they are on tour, doing the Cornwall pilgrimage, you know, in particular, that they don't have to think about it. It's, it's just like a uniform. And

48:49
of course, so many of them sing with other choirs as well. It's,

48:54
it's just convenience. Why so many choirs wear all black or black and white to start with? We do with all black, or in summertime, we wear black and white

Yeah, I don't get involved in that side. That's one thing I have delegated. And there's a couple that just a couple of the ladies decide what, what's being worn for every concert, and they try and match it with the theme of the concert, or something like this,

right? Yes, yes, my projects, I've got to that stage yet, and I'm not sure I would want to. I know normal clients have committed to do kind of stuff at the minute. I'm

49:29
I'm not I'm not stop where I want to go. I'm more. I'm still, still learning myself and still working out and evolving the form, but I still quite an idea of controlling or determining every, every aspect of the detail, to fit it all together, and it's packaged. And then people want to come, and they don't want to come, and if they want to come, and they come because they like it, go for it.

Yeah, absolutely, absolutely

single or single.

See, we'll see how it goes over the next few years or not.

Yeah, yeah. Well, you know, good luck. I think, Well, sounds, it sounds
50:00
Right, actually, if you were close so you I'd be there. I love, I love eating some

50:05
where else are you based?

So I'm based in the Midlands.

All right, yeah, we do. I got laid in one of my great regulars comes from the Black Country.

Commented [LW170]: choral

Commented [LW171]: Singing a single thing

Commented [LW172]: Great actually

Commented [LW173]: Evensong

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50:19
Me. Then, yeah, yeah, we might Park. Or another regular comes from Bicester.

Oh yes, that's, again, that's small. That's between us and Oxford. Yeah, that's right, yeah. So I've got got people do come for those parts. But it was some stage, and I've sung on good acting Hereford before, and I'm fishing for Hereford. Forget Hereford. And also we might, and we might be somewhere I need, I need to have a little look at mid and Litchfield. I'd like to look at, and I'd like to look at some more on. So, yeah, we'll do something up there, because there aren't people in that echo the woods

South South Well, Minster is always quite popular. South form, is it?

50:57
Yes, yeah,

not even cathedral. Is that different thing?

No, it's not. It's it's South Wales elsewhere. It's not in Nottingham. It's not far from

51:11
Minister is

51:13
after, yeah, that's the organist who got us into, let us come to Rochester, first director of musical, deputy director he is and he's moving to Ely next year. So, oh

51:27
yes, once he's there,

51:31
Peterborough Cathedral is fabulous. Some there on a couple of occasions,

that is actually a proper
51:39
it's a real one.

Yeah, I've got, I've got my computer, because the other bunch of Peter is I want, I want to combine, I want to combine one of these Eden songs with this, with a steam engine ride, including, like, so which, course, from Peter, where you've got the, whatever it is up there that, yeah, love. So I had a look at that. And the idea was to travel on the steam train. You know, seen a couple of pieces on the train, go to village, do something in the village church, and then steam it back to Peter, go and do the even song. I'm quite, I'm quite got it all together yet, but

52:08

Commented [LW174]: Don't know

Commented [LW175R174]: That's further than me then -

Commented [LW176]: more

Commented [LW177]: And conducted in

Commented [LW178]: If I get Hereford

Commented [LW179]: The Midlands

Commented [LW180]: Neck of the woods

Commented [LW181]: Southwell

Commented [LW182]: Is that Nottingham Cathedral or is that a different thing

Commented [LW183]: Southwell's

Commented [LW184]: Sung there

Commented [LW185]: Got my eye on Peterborough, the other advantage of Peterborough is

Commented [LW186]: Evensongs

Commented [LW187]: Peterborough

Commented [LW188]: Peterborough and

Commented [LW189]: I haven't quite, haven't quite

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it's on my maybe this stuff,

yes, magnificent building,

a bit put off by Peter brother, because I think I'm, I'm very conscious that people will come. People will will drop everything and come when they are taken by the place and the venue. So Barth Abbey was a was a killing everyone.

Oh, with me

52:27
as well.

Everyone's Well, Peter, Barr the cathedral. Be good. Peter borough, not a draw. No disrespect to the dear residents of Peter, especially to you, if you're wrong,

I'm not,

but
52:38
it's not, hasn't quite got the drawing power.

52:41
You know why? You don't mean

52:44
I'm a little calm, just aware and just aware of that. And that's,

52:49
yeah, it's I'm just a little bit conscious of the fact that a real success one is a banger venue and a banger place. And so soldier, fantastic,

52:59
brilliant Castle, you've got proper town, lovely, but places like Peterborough or even Bristol. Yes, it's cathedrals. It's a very big parish church. I know there's the other one, which is even better still, even southern Cathedral, which I've sung it candle. Yes, it's great. I will probably do it someday. It's not a real cathedral. It's a massive Paris church. Really became a cathedral 100 years ago. So I'm just, maybe I'm too sensitive, but that's how my brain goes. And

53:30
I know a banger venue and a banger place, and I know ones that are almost but not quite there. And so will people say two or 300 quid to go and do that? Will they they might do they might not.

53:40

Commented [LW190]: Peterborough

Commented [LW191]: Bath

Commented [LW192]: Hereford as well, Peterborough, the cathedral would be good but Peterborough itself is not a draw.

Commented [LW193]: one

Commented [LW194]: Know what I mean

Commented [LW195]: conscience

Commented [LW196]: Salisbury Cathedral

Commented [LW197]: Bath Abbey brilliant

Commented [LW198]: Rochester has the castle

Commented [LW199]: Southwark

Commented [LW200]: cantored

Commented [LW201]: parish

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No, absolutely. Well, you can only ask them.

53:44
You know, ultimately, there's the the sort of Oxford and Cambridge college churches.

The first, the first one we did was Worcester College Oxford, which is where I was. I managed to persuade them to let me come and do a weekend workshop there. And that was, that was, that was absolutely perfect, because it was, it was a perfect venue, wonderful place everyone loves going, and it had that magic kingdom. But you know that they that's not somewhere you can just rock up and sing normally. You know, you can't get in Docs or Hodges so easily normally. And I had the magic key and I could get them in, and that's why it went. And it's the curious thing is I found that I learned them, which has been true ever since all the other eight on events, that if you get all that right, when you tell people, within about 10 seconds, you know if they're going to come. And if it, if it, if it ticks their box, you just know in their eyes they're going to come. They don't do it straight away, not going to come.

Commented [LW202]: Into Oxford Colleges so easy

And it's almost as it bucketly, almost a bucket it does.

Commented [LW203]: Bucket list thing

Yeah, I've got a theory about who responds these things and why, but it's all to do with everything. They're going to die before the next chance comes out.

Commented [LW204]: If they think

54:47
But get all that right, and people go for it. slightly Get it not right. I mean, I turned down the opportunity to support an event in Psalms Martin's Church in Salisbury. I'm playing that support. I'm helping with the admin, but I'm not running again because.

Commented [LW205]: St Martins

55:00
Cos I thought Sam's most judge was real, but it is. It is a lovely medieval church, older than cathedral, but it is just about church, lovely one. It doesn't my I want nationally significant venues where people will say, I'm coming to that. And a parish church, no matter how glorious it isn't such a thing, yeah,

Commented [LW206]: Sarum St Martins church, I don't know if you know Salisbury very well,

not unless there's something very special about some, yeah, something that's right, yeah.

So, so that, yeah. So that's, that's my little world of putting these events together, and that those are things that are sort of on all that side of it I like. And although it's a lot of it is not involving preparing the covid, I have to force myself, when I'm, you know, I'm in the last month, to say, right? Stop having fun with you, doing your videos and whatnot. Stop all that stuff, start to just work on the music. You as a conductor, was one thing I have learned from particularly Amy Bevington. But the as well, is that a conductor, you've got to do a stack of practice and a preparation, preparation of practice. Yeah, and I it's the easy thing the world for me to skip that because I'm lazy. Think I know what I'm doing in my mind's eye. In my mind's eye, I'm Harry, Christopher's you know. And I know exactly the sound I want to do. I know what I want to do, and I'm sure it will be right in the night, and it won't be right tonight if I don't prepare, you know. So, so there's always been a gap between what's in my head, which is beautiful, and what my body does, which is bit of a mess sometimes. So that's my personal challenge. Is to

Commented [LW207]: conducting

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56:19
do the hard work, the hard grind as a conductor, to be as prepared as I can be very thoroughly, and then to be as practiced so that I don't balls up on the day, you know, by being unprepared and slap bash and you know, your mind goes blank of Bucha moment, what stuff you forgot. So that's my my personal challenge is that I have to the rest of it, which all sounds very complicated, is it, for me, is easy and great fun. The bit that is really challenging for me is that is the thorough preparation and the practicing of the conducting. Like learn to play piano. You've got to practice, practice the piano. I always tell,

56:56
I always tell my singers that they need to be confident enough that if I fall off the podium for whatever reason they have to be able to carry on.

That's a good thought, actually. And in fact, that's a very good thought. That'd be a good exercise, dude. Nobody say you sang my hand, but very nice. Now, sing on your own without me, yeah.

57:15
And then, you know, if you do miss, take a misstep and fall off the podium, or, you know, heaven forbid, yeah, feel over

57:23
talking to somebody actually who had that very experience. They were on tour with their choir and their covid Director had a massive heart attack. Oh, my goodness, and died.

Oh, my God, what live or

it was during the day. They were away for a week or something, two or three performances, not in not in the UK. They'd gone, think they said it was France.

But they carry on? They finished the tour.

They finished the tour. Yeah, they took a vote, finish the tour, but somebody had to then step in at the last minute, and that was the first time, first time they'd ever conducted a choir properly,

with an ear on that I've always got, usually two people lined up. One is Nicholas, is my music editor, who's also a conductor. And then usually, whoever's the organist will be the other, other reserve conductor. So if that hands off, I just, just break the arm or something. Then, you know, the show go on. It's a very important thing to to have. But yes, I love the idea of, actually, I'll say it, yeah, make me, make them sing a bit and without me, and just see, because that force them to listen and direct to each other, yep, much more than they do anyway.

The other, other trick I use if they're not listening to each other is, I mix them up so they're not allowed. So good one, yes, that's next to somebody their own part. And I think and musically is actually very

Commented [LW208]: dash

Commented [LW209]: At a crucial moment

Commented [LW210]: Commitment to the craft

Commented [LW211]: To do

Commented [LW212]: keel

Commented [LW213]: choral

Commented [LW214]: Carried

Commented [LW215]: I see,

Commented [LW216]: Happens or

Commented [LW217]: can

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famous. Well, I've seen done as a party trick in in you know, where you where you stand in a ring around the audience, come together, yeah, and

58:45
it does work really well. And we've actually occasionally, we will perform, perform certain pieces that benefit from it, like that, because it actually just improves the sound.

That's all I saw. Fantastic switch boys choir a couple of years ago. And they, they did a concert in London, and they did one or two pieces, they would just constantly reform on stage, and it was all mixed up together and sing, sing, lovely harmony stuff. And that's fine, those. Those are two, two good things. And the only trick is, with these sort of short rehearsal format things, I haven't got too much time for monkey business, especially if they're a bit ropey, but, but that sort of thing can be, can definitely be productively added in and I can highlight those ideas. Yeah, thank you for that. Yes,

that's my pleasure. On59:29
that note, I was about to say, is there anything else you'd like to say about being a core director in the UK at this present moment in time,

59:40
I

59:45
guess, I guess I'll just want to encourage people to to
59:50
think outside the box a bit, and

59:55
to

59:56
encourage people who, like me in later life, so to speak, have got into.

1:00:00
To not be afraid to do that. And there is actually loads of good beginner training out there because of ABCD and SVP have got fantastic beginner training. So don't, don't hesitate to do that. And if you are conducting a church point, if you not intending to make a get carried away with doing it, at least go on these courses, you know, get some basic terms you can benefit from enormously. And then just try and be a bit different. Don't just think always in terms of concerts on a Saturday night in the church or 730 you know, again and again and again, again and again. You and you're just just think of some other fun stuff, other things to do, you know, daytime stuff with food and drink.

1:00:33
Give the audience a good time. We can make the audience feel good and happy, make the choir feel good and happy, but break the form a little bit. Rethink things, reinvent things, whatever the style of

Commented [LW218]: Swiss

Commented [LW219]: I like those ideas

Commented [LW220]: choral

Commented [LW221]: choir

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music want to do, have fun with it, and just do a bit differently to the way everyone else does it and the way you've always done it. That would be and even as you're a beginner, because I still muster, more or less begin, I'm still no no great shakes, but you can still do stuff, and people will sing for you, and they'll sing for you again, again, again, as long as not completely, as long as long as you can more or less get the show on the road. You don't have to be Harry Christmas. You just need to be reasonably competent in the kind of stuff you're doing. And great, great pleasure and joy can be had by all. So that would be, that would be my encouragement,

yep. Okay. Oh, brilliant.

Yeah. And sing loads of hymns in harmony. Stop seeing stuff not in harmony. And in harmony.

I'm so far, no, I don't do harmony.

I've got to put some nice video by 18th century hymns, tunes in the tenor. You guys got Yeah?

That's No. No, absolutely yes. Yesterday morning, one of our altos dropped out. So I did end up singing sight, singing alto,

very good.

Oh, it's good for the brain.

Yeah, very much. So, very much. Yeah, yes. So oops, so, very good. Yes. I thought yes, yeah,

no, thank you. Well, thank you very much indeed for your time. It's, It's four o'clock now, so it's flown past.

1:02:01
Yeah, yeah. Thank you very much indeed for your input. It really is much appreciated. And

1:02:07
well, if I shall, I shall go and check out your website. And if I ever see you coming up this way, relatively close or within a couple of hours, you know, striking distance, yeah, we may get the chance to meet in person

and all the best with your with your masters. When does it culminate? When? When do you do it?

This is, this, is this, is it finished?

1:02:29
Yes, yeah. So we'll be talking weeks now. I've still got an awful lot to do. Okay, well, good luck. Thank you very much indeed. Thank you so much. No, thank you. Thank you. Okay, bye, bye, bye.

Commented [LW222]: Christophers

Commented [LW223]: singing

Commented [LW224]: A soprano so I don't do harmony

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Subject 7 Interview for projec...40725_095851-Meeting Recording

Sun, Aug 11, 2024 9:25PM • 1:02:28

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

choir, music, people, singing, children, conductors, singers, bit, good, learning, rehearsal, church choir, call, sing, absolutely, conducting, thinking, amateurs, college, group

05:10
No, my review is not working. Can you? Can you? Can you see me? Laura,

05:15
I can't see you, but I can hear you as clear, as clear as a bell.

05:19
Okay, sorry, one second, I might join with my app instead. That might be the issue. I'll Come back one second issue. I

06:16
Hi, [redacted],

06:17
Hi, sorry about that

06:20
technology, not cracked up to be at times, always,

06:23
not always. How are you I'm very well. Thank you. How are you good? Yeah,

06:28
not too bad. Thank you. Not too bad. Well, thank you so much for agreeing to do this. To just obviously say that remind you that this is being recorded, and I'm using this actually, using the transcription functionality here as well. It's not perfect by a long way.

06:49
It saves me having to type up everything

06:52

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that's good, that's fine. Thank you so

06:55
yeah, no. Thank you so much. I've been overwhelmed, actually, by the response to this whole project, I'm now starting to realize just how much data I have. So

07:07
panic mode has set in.

07:10
But so the idea is, I've got a few kind of opening questions. I'm really interested in finding out how people you know, sort of not, not going into a massive amount of detail, but it's just to get a feel for, for, you know, sort of where people feel the most difficult parts of being a core director, the easiest, that kind of thing. And I have asked those questions in the survey, but actually, to get some real people feedback, you know, is completely different. It's not hard and fast, you know, it's a semi, semi structured interview. So I'll just kick off some questions, and we'll see where it goes. I may have to pull it back a bit if we digress too much, which is always the case when I'm involved. And and, yeah, we just take it from there, if that's okay. Yeah, sure, go for it. Okay, lovely. So the first question is really one for context. How long have you been a core director?

Commented [LW1]: choral

08:12
About 20 years.

08:13
Oh, yes, yeah,

08:14
yeah, in various different choirs. I think that when you sent me through your questions about what's the easiest part of your of your role and hardest part, I struggle to think about one particular context. I think because I've been involved in so many different types of choirs, choirs, adult choirs, youth choirs, professional choirs, semi professional choirs, so church choirs, so they all have their pros and cons, I guess. Yeah,

Commented [LW2]: Insert childrens'

Commented [LW3]: Good point - diff choir = diff issues

08:44
well, I mean, that'd be interesting to expand on that, because obviously, I mean, a lot of the people that have responded are basically involved with adult choirs. I haven't had too many respondents that are involved with the children's choirs, so it would be really a different perspective, you know, if you could, you know, maybe discuss a little bit more about the pros and cons of being involved with with children's choirs for for instance, okay, I

09:12
think I've noticed over the last like 15 years in terms of, like, the engagement and what you need to be doing in that choir so to to retain those children into the group and doing a mixture of different types of repertoire and and also the the age band has changed, I think, over the last few years, in terms of how,

Commented [LW4]: Engagement needs have changed

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where you differentiate away. So normally, when I first started doing it, it would be like, say, age eight to 14, that sort of thing. But actually that that age has gone down to, let's say, six to age six, rather, to like 11, like going to, like primary school, I guess, and then going into, like a youth 1212, to 15, or 12 to 16 or above, I think. Think what children expect from from you is a bit more like Glee or something that they've seen on TV, or, you know, the pitch perfect type of fair, you know that, that sort of thing, and and trying to do the higher quality music, but by all but also engaging these young people and making sure that they're coming to rehearsals and enjoying it too, and making it fun for them. So that's that's for me, that's been a challenge, evolving my skill set and evolving how I approach a rehearsal with young people.

10:35
Why do you think there's been that shift in the sort of the age range? I think it's sites that is it

10:42
I think it's social media. I think it's social. I think I think it's so I mean, that does come into obviously being the same age, at similar age, and not being cool. When I did my church choir, that was a choir for young people from it was from year three, so that they were eight, I guess seven, eight up to year 11. So they were 15-16, is one, one, children's choir, church, children's choir. Everyone came, everyone did it. I think that so that, I guess that had a remit. And I think that's where that was easier, to kind of keep that age, that age band, because they were all their their parents who came into church or something, or, you know, it was like, you're in the church choir done

11:30
slightly, kind of like press gang, if you like, but, but.

11:34
And it also had that reason. So the church choir had to sing once a month on a Sunday, and that so they came to rehearsals, and he had a goal every every month, and that was it. So the in terms of the repertoire choices, all the engagement, that was slightly easier, because they kind of had to be there. And that was, that was why they were doing it one anthem or one church service a month. And that was done with my, my following children's choir. That was where I started thinking about the teaching aspect, too. So, like how, do I want these children to learn to read music. Do I want these children to learn musicianship or Kodaly I, or, you know, and was, was it? Was it a club, or was it a rehearsal? And I think that's, that's the definition between those two things. I think the older students wanted the club. They wanted a singing music theater, singing Matilda, singing Hamilton, singing the stuff that they've been to see a bit on the west end or they'd heard on the radio. And and, yes, they were, they were concerned about it being good there's. They were concerned about it being a high quality experience, and that they sounded good, or they sounded like the track. But I think that that was there, that was really why they were there were they weren't there to to to learn, to read music or for it to be a lesson. And so

13:07
LW do you think this sort of coincides with the change of emphasis on music at school, or lack of emphasis of music at schools? Or, should I say, the quantity

Commented [LW5]: Society/environment

Commented [LW6]: On the job training/reinvention/innovation?

Commented [LW7]: Social media

Commented [LW8R7]: Society/environment

Commented [LW9]: The following

Commented [LW10]: Teaching skills required - developing young singers

Commented [LW11]: Should be 'do I want these children to read music, do I want these children to learn musicianship or Kodaly?

Commented [LW12]: They weren't there to learn to read music or for it to be a lesson

Commented [LW13]: quality

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13:19
as well?

I'm a teacher as well, so I've seen that decline. I guess I, I was working in the state sector for quite a long time, and that they have moved to the private sector in the last eight years. I think, yeah, I think that's definitely an issue. I think it at my school. It was, it was a cre school which was connected to the church circle there. And so there was a teacher for music. I was that teacher. I was taught every class for an hour a week and so on. And there was a, there was him singing, you know, it was quite it was one of those schools where it was still still happening. But I did see other schools in the borough where, I know think you didn't think back to sing up, presumably, we've heard of that. A few years ago, I was a sing up champion in 2008 to 12. So I was going around different schools doing this work, going into teaching the song. But even sing up back up back then, they were using pop songs. They were using backing tracks. They were using stuff that which was sounding like the children would would have heard or would like like to do. They weren't doing Benjamin Britten, for example, they weren't, they weren't doing, you know, the folk songs or things where, you know, you can make it,

LW yeah, they

14:45
seem to have lost that almost progression from, you know, as you say, coming in and doing that so easier, not this well, not necessarily easier, but the sort of the as you say, musical theater, pop, etc. It doesn't, you know, you'd kind of hope, as I. Yes, people from a more traditional choral background, as you mentioned, Britain, massive, massive Britain fan my choir, one of my choirs, absolutely hates it, because I squeeze Britain into anything. It doesn't matter what the theme is. I always find some Britain for them to sing. And, yeah, yeah, but it doesn't. They seem to have lost that progression. And again, I'm wondering if, going back to sort of school music lessons that I don't know if the emphasis has been a long time since I've studied music at school, obviously, whether that, you know, the emphasis has changed and and that that natural progression, if you like, into the more, I don't want to say highbrow. I don't want to say classical, but you know what I mean? I guess it's not even traditional, really. If you think of some of the music that's out there, do you think that's

15:53
I think it comes down to confidence in the classroom, confidence of in having a specialist in the school. And that's what sing it was trying to do, which singer was trying to make, make it succession planning to people like me were going to schools, teach the choir, teach this, teach a lesson with the class teacher or whoever was doing music in that school, watching and learning. **And it was a collaborative process, and it's supposed to be something which made it sustainable that we were training up,** like the voices Foundation, too. If you heard of them, they similar work that they were doing is closed now, sadly, a few few weeks ago.

LW That's

Commented [LW14]: Impact of politics

Commented [LW15R14]: I have moved to the private sector

Commented [LW16]: A C of E school

Commented [LW17]: hymn

Commented [LW18]: Sing Up you've heard of that?

Commented [LW19]: Sing Up

Commented [LW20]: Compare this to Durrant (2005) where folk songs are an important part of Swedish national identity and are sung by choirs in schools.

Commented [LW21]: Britten

Commented [LW22]: Britten

Commented [LW23]: Britten

Commented [LW24]: Britten

Commented [LW25]: Impact of politics

Commented [LW26]: Sing Up

Commented [LW27]: Sing Up

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16:29
that's typical, really, isn't it? I mean that that's a very good illustration of the state of things in sort of arts education.

16:35
When I saw that article like, what? Because my friend Charles, he's just been doing a brand new singing program for them in the last few months, and suddenly it's gone. I think the April seven have taken it under their wing and that they're going to be using it. I think it's part of some some strand that they're doing. But I could not believe it something as big as the posterization. I mean, that's Nationally it's been going some great years, and their work is fantastic. And some of the way that they they try to skill up general cast teachers, to teach music in a meaningful, well way and and not using triangle, or not using, you know, music Express and where it's just very much ticking the boxes. You know, it's not, it's not really. The students don't learn skills. They get they listen, and they get to hear different types of musics. But what chiranga And what music Express do is don't dump down the terms and so on. And they're not using, not actually taking something tangible and actually learning about it. They're just going to it's just going to is this very much half an hour tick the box donut week, excellent. Or learn, you know, or learn a song or something. It's, yeah, it's tricky. I feel, I feel slightly like I saw my soul a little bit, because I, obviously, I work now in this, in the States, in this, in the private sector, so I'm doing all this great stuff with it, with these private school kids, and I'm thinking about the driving down the road in the state primary is getting nothing at all.

LW Absolutely,

it is tricky.

LW Yeah,
18:13
I know it's heartbreaking. Actually,

18:17
LW it really is. But you know, think without sort of going off piste a little. Hopefully there's a better appreciation of what music, especially, and the arts in general, can add to a child's

18:28
I was very impressed by the national plan for music that came out, and also the modern music curriculum that clearly had had a lot of thought put into it, and actually some really good people, actually, people I know were, were involved in the process. It's kind of lost its way in the last year. I'd say governments and things. But I'm hoping with the new government and that might be taken up again and actually made a statutory requirement. It's not quite that yet. There is recommendations that, or is this recommendation, there's recommendation that, you know, so we had teachers there. Oh, it says recommendation. Don't need to do it well.

19:08
LW I mean, they've got enough

Commented [LW28]: ABRSM

Commented [LW29]: Voice Foundation, I mean, that's national, it's been going...

Commented [LW30]: class

Commented [LW31]: Charanga

Commented [LW32]: Music Express

Commented [LW33]: Charanga

Commented [LW34]: They

Commented [LW35]: We've done music that week

Commented [LW36]: State,

Commented [LW37]: Impact of politics and the focus on STEM

Commented [LW38]: So the head teachers, they're...

Commented [LW39]: On their plates

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S2 small maths,

Commented [LW40]: What's that? Yeah more English, more maths

19:11
yeah, but excuse me, I'm gonna

19:15
sorry. I just, I've taken my antistamines this morning. Excuse me, yes, I was going to say, but there's just, I just, I get very confused why people make that. You know, as you say, more maths, more English, where a subject like music is actually such a group, not even a complimentary subject, but it's a subject that actually

19:42
really helps a child's academic,

Commented [LW41]: Performance across the board

19:49
LW maths, languages, you know, social skills, teamwork, you know, comes under social skills, I guess, but and you know, it's. Yeah, it's so very prescriptive without it's not. The holistic element of education seems to have disappeared entirely over the last few years. And that's I'm an outsider. I don't have I don't have children, I don't have children, grandchildren, or anything in the education system at the moment that's just talking to friends, you know, colleagues, etc, who are just seems very, very, very short sighted.

Absolutely agrees.

LW Anyway, that was a slight digression without meaning to get so, yes, obviously, spoken about the difficulties of dealing with children's choirs is actually, it's a, you know, it's, excuse me, I'm just being harassed by a dog.

Really. I too.

Commented [LW42]: Me too

20:46
My hand is actually

20:49
mine's a 37 kilo golden retriever, so

20:55
the other one's fast asleep in the kitchen.

20:59
Excuse me, a minute, messages.

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21:03
Yeah, so you said that one of the issues with Children's Choir is, is actually keeping their attention that they want to. You know? It's a It's social, it's, it's, it's a club. They don't want to, they didn't. It's not that they don't want to be stretched, but they don't want to be stretched in a broadest sense, they're very focused on, you know what's trendy to use an untrindy word at the moment? What's the good side of it?

21:28
Well, I, well, I'm sneaky. Since I do, I do a quick fix song, and I also do a song which isn't more difficult, and I'm more of a slow burner if you like, over the course of the term, which focuses on their breathing or their technique, and there's the sound. And so I, I acknowledge that they want to do something which is, you know, a quick fix, you know, greatest showman, or something, or something like something that they know they've really heard already, sure, yeah. So when they come in the room, you get that we're going to do this one. They'll go, yes, you know, kind of immediate like response from them, but that's also paired up with several other songs and pieces that which are do challenge them in different ways, either either with technique, with their singing or their breath control, or with their pitching, or a difficult harmony or rhythm, or a canon or covid or something where they're singing is developing their skills in a different way, and they kind of been sneaky about it so they don't

22:32
know.

Just yeah, yeah.

22:33
That's no that's interesting. You just sort of Yeah, sort of not lull them in false sense of security. But you know it is. It's about taking them on a journey. Isn't it really gateways with

22:44
them.

You have to, kind of, you know, trick them into thinking and not doing it.

22:50
And is that the part you enjoy?

Yes, yeah.

So, okay, so that's it's that, you know, it's that, it's your, your satisfaction of improving, improving the choir without them really knowing it.

Yeah,

23:06

Commented [LW43]: untrendy

Commented [LW44]: Greatest Showman

Commented [LW45]: They'll go

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seeing and hearing their response to that. They they get a sense of achievement too. They say, Oh, wow, we couldn't, we couldn't do that four weeks ago. And now in rehearsal five, they've done something they couldn't ever do in rehearsal one, for example. Because it's always good to tell them, ask them, I think it will only any any choir actually, not just kids, but what, what do you think is good about it? Where can we go with it? What's that? What's what's going well, what can we? Where can we improve? And it's always good to get their feedback too, because they're obviously in the choir doing it, and I hear all of it. They don't necessarily hear everything,

23:37
yeah, okay, no, that's, that's good. I say different perspective, although I have to be honest, I've got an upper voices choir where, to be honest, I think they think it's a social club at times.

So

23:51
chatting in rehearsals,

chatting, yes,

23:53
yes. Problem is they will, they will very experienced and really quite good. So I'd really rather they focused on the music. But yes, we get there. Okay, so in terms of guys, sort of got a bit the dog's disappeared off now, and I'm wondering what he's up to. So, yeah, so that's good. So is there anything else you'd like to add about children's choirs in general, you know, I'm just thinking about, do you what's the management side? Well, I suppose I'm going to say,

24:32
managing the parents. Is that an element? Yes.

24:35
I mean, certainly if it's, if it's a private arrangement, if it's an after school thing. So I've had, I've done it. Obviously, I'm a teacher as I go to music in school, so as well. So I do the this, the choirs in the school. I've also had experience of doing choirs externally, too, where it's just me running the whole thing is the emails. It's the communication, it's, it's, I think it's the expectation that that's the students are there each week that they're paying. Parents don't seem to will say, Oh, Johnny got dentists this week. Or who is going to taekwondo this week? You know, come to the choir next week. And, you know, it's going to also alternate the two things I'm like, you know, I think that they want to give their students, that their children rather the best experience by doing lots of different things. But it's trying to instill that commitment and saying every week or not late, for example or and just helping the students have a sense of pride in what they're doing, and trying to instill that. And it's important that if you're signing up for something your parents or you are paying money for something that actually means something, and so committed to it, and you really benefits from it, if you go every time, rather than alternatively or whatever.

Commented [LW46]: Teaching skills

Commented [LW47]: all

Commented [LW48]: Commitment, pride, cost to parents

Commented [LW49R48]: Check out comments Sarah made on this matter as well - similar problems - leaving after 3 weeks/ coming to every other rehearsal

Commented [LW50R48]: Society/environment??

Commented [LW51R48]: Reap the benefits

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Yeah.

25:52
I mean, it's slightly different when you're an adult and you experience if you have other commitments, and you know, if I've got one well, she, unless it's just had a second baby because of her husband's job, she can't come to a midweek we, we rehearse twice a month, uh, a Wednesday and a Saturday afternoon, Wednesday evening, a Saturday afternoon, because we've got certain people that, you know, they might do shift work, so they might not be able to make The Wednesday and so on, but they're good enough, and that's the thing. Whereas with children, I guess they're still on that learning that, that learning curve,

26:30
exceptional

26:32
discipline.

Yeah, discipline, exactly.

26:35
And adults can know that if they miss something, they miss something, so they need to think about how they're going to catch up on that. Whereas children don't quite have that have that term knowledge

26:45
yet, but then neither do some parents, by the sound of it,

no, they don't. No, they don't. And

26:49
I think expectations as well on whether they because that, because some choirs have an audition process or they have a in the church choir had a probationary group and the full choristers. So there was always the email, oh, he's been in probation, probationers for for for half a term. Now, when will you become a chorister? When would you go up to the main group? If you see what I mean. And you know, similar thing, like I get at school, like, always been playing the piano for at least three weeks when he's when's he doing his grade one? You know, they got no concept of training or no concept of a journey, and that some things are not instant in this world to live in. Most things are, aren't they? You do something you pay for it happens, whereas music takes time to build the skill and experience and

27:37
learning any language really?

Yeah, absolutely, yeah.

Commented [LW52]: Your experienced

Commented [LW53]: Bless her, she's just had her

Commented [LW54]: Unless they're exceptional

Commented [LW55]: It's about the

Commented [LW56]: Urmm knowledge yet

Commented [LW57]: Instant gratification

Transcribed by https://otter.ai

If you want to become proficient as something, unless you're an exceptional person with an exceptional talent, I'm afraid it requires practice and patience.

27:48
Yeah, agreed, like minded.

27:53
LW So, well, not easy, sometimes not easy, to put that into practice. But, you know, but that that's, that's the fundamental truth of it, I guess. And so when you started call back 20 years ago, when you first became a core director, what was your background at that point? Had you, had you done any training? Or do you just

28:12
you said that question for earlier, didn't you? So when I was when I was at sixth form myself, I used to go down to go down to the primary school and help with their choir. So that was when I had absolutely zero experience talks. I was 1718, but

28:30
you were, you had become up through, you know, you were called singing yourself. You'd sung in

28:35
It's strange at school. I was more cellist, and tuba player, but I went by my voice. Really,

28:43
well, I started out as a cellist, and, of course, our tuba player in the school, Orchestra, school, school band, sort of, he went off, he finished school and went, he went to Guildhall, actually. And yeah, my music teacher said, you know, sort of I was, I was in the lower sixth at the time. Oh, Laura, you read bass clef. There's a tuba at the back of the cupboard. You've got a lesson on when on Thursday, or whenever me,

29:11
I was in year nine, so I was a bit younger. But my teacher said to me, You're big, lads. You'll

29:17
play tuba.

29:18
I'm five foot four.

29:22
This was in Yorkshire, so he Yeah, but it was great. So when my voice changed, he was noticed that I had a good voice and I could sing, and I sang solos and stuff, and did grade eight singing, and actually went to college to do singing as a first study. But yeah, I think I went back that down to my my old primary school, basically to help, and that was when I first started kind of leading singing at college. I

Commented [LW58]: choral

Commented [LW59]: choral

Commented [LW60]: Insert 'local'

Commented [LW61]: At all

Commented [LW62]: choral

Commented [LW63]: It's strange but at school

Commented [LW64]: Should be 'and, and, er..'

Commented [LW65]: It was.

Commented [LW66R65]: Insert 'same thing happened to'

Commented [LW67]: Lad singular

Commented [LW68]: It was

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did a BMus four year BMus and in my third and fourth year, there were options to do modules. Course, and I chose choral conducting as one of the modules in my third, fourth year. So this was and that I was thinking about it. What did I actually learn? So all the students were the choir for the group. So we formally made a choir of the people doing the course, if you like, and we sang pieces, and we did a lot of stuff with Kodaly because the person leading the module was a Kodaly specialist. But it was more about patterns and shapes and bringing people in and learning about when you know how to read the score, basically, because, certainly in the first, in the first year, which it was more about, can I get my four pattern? Can I change my four to three? Can I change from a four to a two? You know, it's all very much technical stuff.

30:51
As you say. It's a technical side

30:54
of, yeah, exactly, and what it means, and the nuance, I guess, of gesture and reading all these books about how you can turn this hand this way or that way, and having a massive difference the soft palate and all kind of like really deep stuff that you think, Oh, how exciting we get. Acquire amateurs in front of you. You do this, nothing changes. Not lifting up. I'm doing lifting up, yeah. So it's, I think, and I did it. I also did the Masters in conducting as well afterwards, years later. And it was a similar vibe, though. It was all about that was about repertoire too, and studying the school and oral training and lots of different things, which is really useful, but I was thinking about this. It was all led towards really nuanced stuff and really and working with people that could follow you and could and were professionals. I think, you know, it was definitely aimed at that level. It was, it was aimed at you being the best person you could be in front of the best people that were in front of you. So, so it's all about really, really hardcore technical stuff. And I, when I get when I was back then, I was actually running my own choir and doing a course society, whilst doing the masters at the same time. I did it part time. And so I had a choir to guinea pig with all the stuff I was learning at college at the same time. And I had a on quite one choir was a, it was a chamber choir, but you had a amateur and a professional side too. You had both working together, which I loved, that kind of collaboration, and the course society. So had a really big 120 you know, doing big, yeah, yes, absolutely do

32:47
Messiah every year, that sort of thing. You

32:50
know, nothing wrong with that. She cup of tea.

32:54
Wasn't mine.

32:58
So, so I was able to kind of try out these things with the choir as I was learning it. And I soon realized that that's, it's something that you have to develop with the choir as you go along and and that that's that yes, I could, I could do, you know, 3/8, 7/8, you know, 12/8 eight, and do for all manner of things.

Commented [LW69]: Strike out

Commented [LW70]: And when you get a choir of amateurs in front of you

Commented [LW71]: So why are your soft palates not lifting up

Commented [LW72]: Score and aural training

Commented [LW73]: Training for professional conductors leading professional choirs - not professional conductors leading amateur choirs

Commented [LW74R73]: Ties in with analysis in Lit review

Commented [LW75]: choral

Commented [LW76]: One choir

Commented [LW77]: it

Commented [LW78]: choral

Commented [LW79]: If that's your cup of tea

Commented [LW80]: ⅜, ⅞, 12/8,

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And I and I could, yes, and I could hear mistakes in a 12 part piece and point things out. You know, I could do quite intricate stuff and aurally write down, you know, Palestrina motets from back there that I had to do it's got my aural tests. But did it actually equip me to run the choral society rehearsal? No, I think the obvious thing to say there, I think I learned some repertoire. I learned from some music that I hadn't come across before. And in the repertoire sessions, though, they were really useful, like it opened and I found some books and websites, things that where I still use them now, where I go through because I'm not sure about orchestration. So I go, what does that need? So I go to my book, and I've got this resource. So it has, it has taught me that, I guess, how to do that. And I did. I was the best conductor. What I probably I was then could be then, because I was training, I was doing high level stuff all the time, but it didn't change me as a person in the room. You see what I mean? I was still [redacted]. I was still, for me, it's about the community, about about the about the collaboration, about the joy, and that's, that's what I love about Amity called Allen's music making, is that that's, yes, it can be really high level. Actually, I'm not talking about, you know, this community, choirs or whatever, but you can, you can be really high level, and people haven't had any experience. But you can, you can, you can do massive, amazing I did a fantastic Dvořák that with. With my course society, and we worked really hard at it. And it was, wasn't an easy piece for them, and but it, but it, but it really was stonking, absolutely. And, yeah, they, they enable amateurs, and whether, because they were so passionate behind it, that's what I found about with my, you know, have founded my chat, my chamber choir in 2007 that we had a amateur core who were probably about 25-30 amateurs, and then we brought in 12 young, young professionals or students, who came in to join the choir. Sometimes do the solos, sometimes do some some coaching of the amateurs. But what I found with that group, it had the nuance and the tone and quality of sound that the professionals and all the students brought, but it had the passion and the energy and the vibrancy that the amateurs gave, because it was their passion and it was their hobby, not their job. And I think that for me, that that was a really light bulb moment, thinking, this is, this was what I started. There was a really interesting kind of collaboration of minds, really, and of different singing. Yeah,

36:09
no, it actually sounds, you know, sounds, sounds fabulous, luckily enough, well, I've got a couple of men, ex member, members of joyful company, yeah, so I know exactly what you mean about the high standard of amateur singers. I mean, you know that they really, and they are two of my like, you know, core people, because they have that, that almost that professionalism about them that Peter bought vendors over the years, you know, instilled into the choir.

36:43
I've not seen them for a while. No,

36:44
LW I haven't, I don't. Yes, I think they are still going. I know one of the girls, she now lives up this neck of the woods with. I'm in the Midlands, and so she doesn't sing with them very much. I'm not sure that. I think they've taken a bit of a back, a back, step forward. I think covid, obviously, the pandemic, you know, sort of had an impact there. But yeah, as far as I'm aware, they are, they're still going in a one form or another. Whether Peter still involved or not, I'm not so sure, but, but yes, I mean, you know, I think from I think, you know, tell me if I'm wrong, please do. But I think what you're saying is that, you

Commented [LW81]: intricate

Commented [LW82]: aural

Commented [LW83]: Training wasn't suitable for the vast majority of choral conducting opportunities e.g. the amateur scene

Commented [LW84R83]: Adequacy/inadequacy of training

Commented [LW85]: Importance of repertoire training?

Commented [LW86]: Amateur music making

Commented [LW87R86]: motivation

Commented [LW88]: Dvorak

Commented [LW89]: choral

Commented [LW90]: Were all amateurs

Commented [LW91]: chamber

Commented [LW92]: amateurs

Commented [LW93]: Passion

Commented [LW94]: Broadbent

Transcribed by https://otter.ai

know, guess all your training basically gave you the tools to be an excellent conductor, but that actually the people management side of it.

Yeah,

37:30

You've got to take the people along with you. And I think if you know, if you haven't got any charisma, because I was, there's some people along the course with me, I was thinking, I can't imagine you in front of anyone, isn't it? Right? They were very much. They were organist, very organist. You know? They were like,

yeah, absolutely

37:51

yes. I know exactly what you mean, this and that, to be honest, that's I, because I came to call, call conductive, or call directive, or call leadership, whatever you care to, however you scared care to describe it from the singing side. Because I to be honest, I got fed up of pool conductors, a certain type of cool conductor not not engaging me as, you know, as a person or a singer. So I thought, You know what I can do better this,

38:24

S2 that's true. I mean, that's, that's something that they didn't, didn't do too much of. I mean, we, in my course, everyone had to have singing lessons as part of the course, which is, I'm talking about the Masters now. And so you know, whether you were singer or not, you had sing lessons. And to try and bridge this gap between technique and making sure that the organists, or people that we hadn't had singing lessons for years, like me could actually communicate with how they wanted the vowel to be, or the great the breath control, and trying to, you know, giving, giving their singers some tools. Because that's what I've, I've seen over the years, is so many organist, pianists, people that you know who are clearly very musical, they're very high musicianship level, but, but can they actually teach us a singer how to sing an eight by eight bar phrase, you know, and with a breath control or, you know, that's something that, for me, is so important,

39:19

yeah. Do you think this is probably quite controversial. Do you think that partially because being primarily instrumentalists, they don't consider singers to be musicians?

39:34

Well, it's

39:38

often said that, isn't it that you're a singer, you're a singer or a musician, you both certainly at music college, that was definitely the case for me as a but I was one of the thinking singers. I was actually told that by the head of our faculty that you're one of us thinking singers.

Commented [LW95]: Yes, all your training

Commented [LW96]: You've got to take

Commented [LW97]: organist

Commented [LW98]: Choral, choral conducting, choral directing or choral leadership

Commented [LW99]: care

Commented [LW100]: Choral

Commented [LW101]: choral

Commented [LW102]: Importance of relevant choral singing experience)? See Durrant

Commented [LW103]: Can't be both

Commented [LW104]: our

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What does that mean?

Well, exactly you can. Read music, and you can play the piano. You know, there's so many singers out there who are who have been God given a fantastic instrument, and they, and they have to use it because it's so amazing. But often they haven't had, they haven't they've just, just had singing lessons. They haven't had prayer lessons or, you know, had that theory or that or that structure behind, behind them. So I was, it might be muzz I was with some people who really, couldn't really read music. They could, they could kind of follow it and but they were singing various and how are you learning this? By listening to it? Yeah, exactly. So, yeah, that was tricky. I think, I think that is disappearing. I think that the colleges are working really hard at engaging singers in sight, singing and in choirs, and trying to prepare them, because I think they've realized quite rightly, that that's most people leaving music college as a singer, you aren't going to be called by the Met next week, the week after.

You're going to be

41:05
lucky if you can get into one of the professional choirs, let alone the ward.

41:11
That's where Oxbridge and the higher level universities take over the colleges, because they have the Oxbridge their colleges where they're doing their course edition. So when they come down, their voices aren't as good, I'll be honest, as the people leaving music Conservatoire. However, they can read music that they're reliable. They can do a very short rehearsal, and then it'd be perfect. Whereas, you know, some of the singers with needs for an opera or for something on tour, they would need a lot, much longer rehearsal time, which is therefore more expensive. And that's why British people are brought up to do it, because, because it's cheaper, isn't it than that? Because the in Europe, I remember I was, I was, I used to go and sing with the Netherlands radio choir years ago, and we were doing with bronze Requiem, and we had two weeks of rehearsal for the bronze Requiem every day, and it's the professional choir. And for over here, that would be two or three days, and then, and then you go, it just shows you where the funding is, or whether, whether you know how, how, maybe, is it funding always, just like a different tradition, I don't know. I don't know what the answer is there.

It's

42:22
probably a combination, yeah, of many factors. But I think, as we brought out recently this week, I think that sort of compared our funding here in the UK to funding in some of our you know, neighbors. And yes, there's a stark contrast, I'm sure, which is ridiculous, really, when you consider actually what Britain has contributed comparative to our size. You know, it's a bit like the Australians and sport, isn't it,

42:55
or the South Africans and sport. You

Commented [LW105]: piano

Commented [LW106]: In my BMus

Commented [LW107]: Verdi arias

Commented [LW108]: Strut the boards at the ROH.

Commented [LW109]: Choral auditions

Commented [LW110]: Or an oratorio

Commented [LW111]: Brahms

Commented [LW112]: Brahms

Commented [LW113]: Differences in attitude to European colleagues

Commented [LW114R113]: Social/Political

Commented [LW115]: Report out

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42:58
know, we do it with the arts, and, you know, music for all types as well, but that slightly different issue, as you say, I think English, call English cathedral tradition, has got a lot to answer for in some respects, there is that expectation, I think that you know, you can learn things extremely quickly, and it's Great if you can, but not everybody is that gifted. But anyway, so slightly gone. Off

43:30
track. There again. Okay,

43:33
easily done. I mean, but it's a complex subject, isn't it? Let's be honest. And there are so many facets to it, and I think that's one of the aspects that people don't realize when you start talking about choirs, they basically think of large groups of, invariably older people, getting together to sink handles, Messiah on cm and stuff like that. They don't actually appreciate the you know, sort of the a the breadth of music, the breadth of choirs, actually, that you know out there, you know, there's a choir for every event in life, and and so on, and the different requirements for them, yes, yeah. So, yeah, it's interesting. So what I can just look at Mike back down to my my list again, back to, I think we pretty much covered pretty much everything as we've gone along, in some respects, okay, but what do you what did You personally find? You know, the most natural aspect of taking that step to the to the podium, what didn't faze you at all?

44:51
I think the energy, the enthusiasm and the energy that's needed. I think I have that in, in spades like, and that's like, full. For all music really doesn't matter whether it's, you know, Dvorak, or whether it's, you know, Destiny's Child or something, I think of two d's to this child, I think, yeah, the d7 four music making, I think that has to be an innate skill for somebody who's at the front is trying to inspire people to make the best they can out of it. People skills is important, like engaging with people and eye contact, and then, like, making everyone in the room think that they're the most important person there, right? But just by by, always, like, I can't believe I see some conductors. They just look at the score the whole time, and I'm just doing this. Isn't this? Like, you can't do that with a choir, you have the orchestra. Maybe you can do that because, because the people are just scratching away and looking every now and again,

45:55
but they do their own thing, and you're just there just to remind them when they're where the beat is. Yeah, that's

46:00
it. It's like slightly different. Isn't, because when you're singing, especially if you're singing about music, if you're doing something by rote, is not. There's no barrier, there's no score to hide behind. Yeah, it's literally, you are that person. You're mirroring everything that's coming back at you. So you posture your even, I know, I show the vowel shapes from my mouth, I'd help them. You know, think about where it's going to be. There's got to be lots of, like, sneaky gestures, and people have to want to watch you. So you got to, you got to look like you're enjoying yourself.

Commented [LW116]: Sing Handel's Messiah once a year

Commented [LW117]: My er, back, back

Commented [LW118]: Personal attributes

Commented [LW119]: Was trying to think

Commented [LW120]: Enthusiasm for

Commented [LW121]: Personality & People skills

Commented [LW122]: With an orchestra

Commented [LW123]: them

Commented [LW124]: without

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46:34
LW Absolutely. I've had a couple of people say to me, the worst part that, the worst part, the hardest thing they found was actually singing in front of their choir.

Oh, wow. Okay,

LW yeah, no, me neither. I like the sound of my own voice, you know. But yeah, you know people, you know, that's so I'm about to ask you what you found with the hardest but you were saying about having the energy, etc. But to me, I you know, if you can't stand up and sing in front of your choir, then how does the rest of it fit in? So for you, what was, What's the hardest thing? It's obviously not singing in front of the choir.

47:13
It's about being on the podium, or generally being involved in choirs,

LW being on the podium.

Ah, okay. Do Um,

47:23
LW oh no, no, no, actually, no. Don't broaden it out anything being involved with being, if you like that that

47:29
committees.

47:33
But I guess it's that kind of trying to get that shared sense of direction. And obviously, and when I first started, I was talking about this, because I was quite blinkered about the music, music, and so have I had to kind of open myself a little bit up to, like, finances and venues and, you know, and thinking more strategically over, over a course of three or four years, rather than thinking, I want to do those pieces, I want to do the 100 piece orchestra, I want to have the best service in the world, you know,

48:05
LW yeah, okay, but we need to win the lottery, you know?

Which? Obviously,

48:09
yes, exactly. Which can't happen for most covid societies. Can it? So I guess that is tricky, and that's something that I think, in terms of administration, I've learned over the years about how to do it. That's something that I think could have been in my course. I think that sort of thing and that the people skills required. I mean, I know I've never had to write down a 12 part Victoria motet since I was at college

Commented [LW125]: Choral

Commented [LW126]: Victoria motet

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doing it. So that was part of my test. I had to do an aural test where they give me the starting note for each of the parts. Play it to me eight times. I had to write it all down. I've never had to do that ever.

LW Why would you

having to plan financially, having to think about a concert series and looking at music repertoire that was, that was perfect for that choir, that was, that was really, really interesting

49:01
to learn.

LW And also, one of the things I'm getting at is sort of the marketing side and more commercial aspects that, you know, especially people who start their own choirs, yeah, you know, that side of things as well seems to be, I mean, I think looking, one of the things I'm doing is, of done is examine, you know, information that's available on the syllabuses from the various colleges that offer post grad call, you know, a core, sorry, a course rather than just an elective module. And and they teach, they seem to be they cover off how you can sell yourself as a professional. You know how to make the most of audition time, almost networking and all this good stuff, but there seems to be nothing there that then feeds into how you do that for your choir. Mm. And you know, I'm guessing, if it's, it's, if it's a choir that's run by a committee, then that burden is spread anyway. But I've spoken to a fair few people who actually run their own choirs or started their own choirs, and that is actually probably would be useful in for unless you're that way inclined to have those skills anyway,

50:19
really, yeah, agreed, yeah, PRS stuff and all that.

Yeah,

50:22
oh yeah,

50:25
I think. But I think most people I started my inquire, I think most people do that. They aren't enough jobs for for call conductors in the world. I mean, you have to wave someone to die before you can, oh, absolutely nearest call society to you. So a lot of people going into who do this the master schools that I did, and at the Royal College as well, at Royal Welsh, they start up their own group. They might go, they might get a job working in an amber group. But that's that's not enough, is it? To keep going. So they often will start a professional group, or same professional group, or, you know, you know, if you're, if you're doing Masters in core conducting, you aren't, maybe you're gonna any use, any like, like rock choir, or any like a community choir, you're gonna be you've got no chance, because you do the doubt, you still do the downbeat of this piece you could connect to beautifully. And it's so, like short sighted of them, that they don't cover that in my my course, there was a Community Music term where we had somebody come in talking about and gave us some African songs. You know, it was very it was a bit box ticky. And it was so this lady came and she bought, gave us some some rounds, gave us some

Commented [LW127]: Inadequacy of training

Commented [LW128]: choral

Commented [LW129]: Inadequacy of training

Commented [LW130]: Own choir

Commented [LW131]: choral

Commented [LW132]: Nearest choral

Commented [LW133]: amateur

Commented [LW134]: semi

Commented [LW135]: choral

Commented [LW136]: downbeat

Commented [LW137]: Conduct so beautifully

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children's songs, gave us some African warm ups and things and quality bets and that sort of thing. And so we into the repertoire. We had something to take from it, but it was, it just felt like, for me, that was probably the biggest part of what I should have, should have been in. One of the biggest parts of the course is like, how do you take your skills and disseminate them to others and give them to amateur music making? Because where it's going to be earning your money, not from the BBC singers or, you know, the Tallis Scholars,

52:27
LW you know, yeah, it's Harry Christopher's move over, you know, yeah. And they've, they've, you know, these choirs have their succession planning already in place, don't they? So, you know, yeah, I'm sure it's Yeah, it is difficult, you know, I'd been down the same route, I started my own choir and and it has been the most difficult thing, actually, I found because I was very much in control and did everything to start with. But then as things have progressed, and, you know, I've got more more busy with other things, you know, there we've, you know, I've delegated and

53:10
S2 but that requires a lot of energy, a lot of organization, which lot of musicians don't have.

And to be
53:15
honest, the only reason I've got it is because, you know, music you all conducting isn't my main source of income, right? I have skills. I bring from the private sector in terms of, you know, I'm actually an accountant by qualification.

S2 Oh, wow. So you're set so,

you know, I know numbers, you know, and, and it has helped. But you know, if you're not, you're not exposed to that sort of in part of your life. You are reliant on the training that you get. And I think you know that is lacking there's, well, I'm not going to

53:57
get, mustn't get mustn't get led. I'm still got to keep an open mind until the papers done and sent. But yeah, it's complex subject. Complex subject. There any area that you would really like to develop for you personally, as a core director, you've you've done Big Core societies, you churches, you've done youth choirs, children's choirs, chamber choirs,

54:31
I think gospel
54:34
ever, but I'm not sure my skill set is doesn't match up with it, because It's all I know. It's all oral, it's all like nothing's written down. And I think my my upbringing and my training has all been about the dots,

absolutely.

Commented [LW138]: Can't make this out

Commented [LW139]: Inadequacy of training

Commented [LW140]: Give them to amateur music-making

Commented [LW141]: Tallis

Commented [LW142]: choral

Commented [LW143]: choral

Commented [LW144]: aural

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Oh yeah, so and when I do teach things by roads, I enjoy doing that, and I enjoy the challenge. She brings the choir and the focus it brings to rehearsal when you don't, take away any sort of sheet music or lyrics or anything. So it's just literally call response type scenario. But when I play in that situation, I struggle. I struggle a lot to remember it all. And yeah, so that would be something I'd be interested in, is learning by roads and that sort of, that sort of tradition, how it's all just like you just hear it, and you add your own harmony in, and it's just and that would be interesting.

55:34
What else

55:38
I think I would be I would like some more confidence when I work with orchestras, I think as well, that that not to be seen as a core conductor, and that's something that that's that maybe it's my ship on my shoulder, but, but I do get that sometimes when I work with an orchestra, with a choir, that they come, oh, here we go. He's the coconuts. Are conducting in circles, you know, that sort of thing. And I've seen colleagues who are like that, but I try to pride myself in the fact and try to be quite clear and think that I'm doing okay job, but it's something that I would definitely would invest in myself if I had the money to and to go and go on an orchestral conducting course and actually learn more about that when I do combine my choral society with an orchestra, I don't feel like an imposter. I think imposter syndrome can come in there. Yeah,

56:28
agreed. Very interestingly, one of the very first call conducting training sort of courses I did was orchestral,

56:39
and actually ended up conducting

56:43
bronze Double Concerto.

Oh, wow, yeah.

No, it was, I'd love to

56:49
somewhere. No, no, no. It

56:50
was locally. It was,

56:53
Well, gentlemen, don't you remember him? A gentleman called Michael rose, used to be head of music for Bedfordshire, yes, and has done an awful lot of stuff, and he runs private, well funded conducting

Commented [LW145]: rote

Commented [LW146]: It brings

Commented [LW147]: I've been

Commented [LW148]: rote

Commented [LW149]: choral

Commented [LW150]: chip

Commented [LW151]: Choral conductor, conducting in circles

Commented [LW152]: Imposter syndrome when faced with an orchestra

Commented [LW153]: Brahms

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courses. So, yeah, I traipsed. It's fairly local to me. So I traipsed over there for, you know, a period of time, and it was a group of either, I suppose it was a group of about 10-15, of us that this, this, course, unfortunately, had a nasty car accident a few years back, and there's has pretty much retired, but he must be a good age now. Okay,

57:34
interesting. That's good, so, but yeah,

57:37
that was, didn't know what I was, let myself in for, but thoroughly enjoyed it.

57:40
That sounds great, yeah.

57:43
So yeah, thoroughly recommend doing something like that, yeah. But yeah, you're right, actually. And you'd think that, I mean, I'm sure they must cover it off in colleges now, but you know, it is quite a key a skill for a choral conductor to have. And similarly, orchestral conductors don't make good, cool conductors, although they think they do,

58:05
it is definitely two strands, two strands, I think earlier, at the start, I think it might be just my chip that I'm getting up, and I feel like I'm an imposter. Because of these people, I have

58:16
a musician, instrumentalist yourself. So

58:19
they don't do that. Do they pay cello? I was in National Youth Orchestra. They don't know that

mistake is

58:28
not to tell them, yeah, I

58:33
guess so, yeah. That might be it, yeah. But obviously I I do a an orchestra rehearsal before the choir arrive. I'm not sure whether you do that with yours, but I have a good hour and a half at least with the orchestra alone before the choir arrive. So that is the bit I'm no more nervous about in the entire rehearsal for that day. Is how I'm going to be communicating and showing

Yeah, I

58:58

Commented [LW154]: I dunno

Commented [LW155]: choral

Commented [LW156]: The mistake is not to tell them

Commented [LW157]: More, more

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do know exactly what you mean. I really do, and it is, I do find cracking the odd silly joke does help.

59:07
Yeah, yeah,

59:09
yeah, no, it is,

59:11
always make sure that the leader is a friend of mine.

59:16
I always just pick on the cellos, you know, and then just let them gently know that, yeah, you know, I used to play, don't anymore. He's gathering dust upstairs. Hasn't come at his case in a while, but, you know,

59:31
and it seems to help either that or you just, you know,

59:36
but bulldoze your way through it, yeah,

59:40
right. I just, I just realized what the time is. I'm gonna ask one very, very last question. Is there anything else you'd like to say about being a covid director in the UK in 2024 25

Commented [LW158]: choral

59:54
whenever, the 21st century?

I think,

59:59
yeah. Sorry. Say dog, no, okay. I think you have to be.

1:00:13
They talk about being a portfolio musician these days, about having some teaching and some playing work and quartet work, whatever. But I think you have to be, I feel like I'm a portfolio choral conductor, because I have to be able to do lots of different styles and lots of different lots of different types. Of choral singing like I have a I have an LGBT choir. I do children's choirs. I have a kind of pop music, theatre choir and classical choirs as well. So you have to be able to have lots of different hats.

Commented [LW159]: I'm a portfolio choral conductor

Commented [LW160]: Choral

Yeah, no, absolutely.

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I've got a meme. I'll send you a meme in after this with the core conductors hats and things. Have seen it.

I haven't actually

like hundreds of interesting ways. There's hundreds of different hats, and it shows you all the things you have to be as a coconductor.

1:01:03
I'm going to use that. I'm going to use that in my dissertation. I'll credit you.

Yeah, I
1:01:13
think you have to be, yeah, multi skilled in different different areas to make a success. You can't just do one thing. That's what I'd say.

1:01:24
Okay, right? I think,

1:01:27
yeah, brilliant. I think that's as much as I've got to ask you this. There is only anything else that you'd like to add. Well, thank you so much for your time. It's been a real pleasure talking to you, and thank you for everything you've given me. It's going to make fascinating read, and I shall get my highlighter out. Do send it to me. Yes, no, actually, I will let me make a note of that once it's once it's back and marked and I can take out the bits that don't work.

1:02:00
Yeah, I will,

1:02:03
you know, it's it, as I say, I've been overwhelmed by the response, and I just had no idea I was going to get so much information from people. It's making quite fascinating reading.

Oh, sure, that's why I want to read them, yeah.

So I will. I will make a note that you want to, want to copy, and that will not be a problem at

1:02:21
all, okay, thank you, Laura,

1:02:22
thank you. Thanks very much indeed. Yes, and you, thank you. Bye, bye.

Commented [LW161]: choral

Commented [LW162]: Choral conductor

Commented [LW163]: Not just about the conducting technique!

Commented [LW164]: it

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Analysis and Coding of Qualitative Data from Interviews by Subject

Model after : Naeem et al, 2023, p.4.

Subject No.	Quotation	Keyword/phrase	Coding	Themes	My notes
1	I had my first Choral Society, whilst I had was doing my A levels, and was I can only imagine how ill equipped I was to to do that, but the the arrogance of youth, hey? And so I then spent my undergraduate three years taking the University Singers and directing the wind band and and having a choir in the community as well, and then I still thought I was going to sing, so I went to the academy as a first study singer, but ended up spending a lot of time in the choral conducting department.	ill equipped	training	Training	
1	worked up a project based recruitment model that we've been using since I started with the malvours Choir and it they and we've just rolled it out over these five malwares choirs across country funded by the Arts Council. And the headlines are that Radcliffe on Trent , one of the Male Voice choirs on it, got 120 men on their recruitment project, yeah? So, so it's not, it's, it's, it's reasonably straightforward to get men's joint choirs.	recruitment project	recruitment	Commercial Skills	
1	I remember sketching out the CPD and what I wanted to achieve from it, or what I wanted the participants to achieve from it in the first instance. And this is kind of like money available a training program to develop for primary school teachers to be able to do singing with their kids.	primary school teachers to be able to do singing with their kids	training	Training	
1	And I quickly discovered that what you see of conducting is, is like the tip of the iceberg is, is only, well, I flip it on its head, you can see astonishingly good conductors who get amazingly amazing results, who have very poor technique, as in, I'm sitting here watching this person conduct, and I think what the fuck you're doing?	amazing results with poor technique	conducting competency	Training	
1	the gesture is only a minuscule part of the job. It is, what's the turn of phrase, a requirement, but not sufficient.	miniscule part of the job	conducting competency	Training	
1	I've got one of our second tenors, wife has cancer, and I have to have a telephone conversation with him	conversation	Pastoral Care	People	
1	I've got one of our second tenors, wife has cancer, and I have to have a telephone conversation with him	conversation	Pastoral Care	Health & Wellbeing	
1	And one of the baritones, I have to have a conversation with him, because basically, he's a lazy shit and he's going to piss or get off the pot .	conversation	People Management	People	
1	if I was stood in front of them as a singer, I'd rather somebody had understanding and intention and a deep knowledge of what we were trying to achieve. And, you know, if their beat shapes are a bit unorthodox, I can, I can square that square, those circles,	understand and intention	conducting competency	Training	
1	I worked out beat shapes myself, you know, but that does, that does seem to be where we are with, with conducting training in this country.	conducting training	conducting competency	Training	
1	But I think the the knowledge of performance process, the knowledge of languages. I mean the how on earth have I? How on earth, at age of 18, am I to decide which make an informed decision of the Italian pronunciation of whatever?	language training	conducting competency	Training	
1	it's happening in a number of different pathways, because if you look at the Cathedral music model, then you play the organ really well, and you play the organ really well, and you play the organ really well, and then you've played the organ so well that Your prize is to not play the organ but to conduct the choir instead.	pathways to choral conducting	Routes	People	
1	it's happening in a number of different pathways, because if you look at the Cathedral music model, then you play the organ really well, and you play the organ really well, and you play the organ really well, and then you've played the organ so well that Your prize is to not play the organ but to conduct the choir instead.	pathways to choral conducting	Routes	Training	
1	I trace back to aspects of my childhood, and particularly my mother's charges and situations whilst I was kind of in the primary school/secondary school, and I see in that why I feel comfortable when I'm in in control of the situation. So there's a temperamental thing there. There's a there's a temperament thing. The word temperamental means has a actual call, a temperament based situation, that either temperament is also appropriate the and equally from the same source, a level of achieve, driven to achievement	temperament	personality traits	People	
1	So I think there's an amount of temperament that goes into choral conducting that possibly can't be trained, a kind of determination , perhaps, but I think that's where I that's where I got it, got it from, and the amount of, okay, I'm going to decide which row the ducks are in thank you.	temperament	personality traits	People	
1	There was a massive breakthrough when I realized how thrilling saying sorry I was wrong, because that's like, whoa, that's my new kryptonite. I love it. No no, my go to thing, and you've messed it all up, and you go, I'm really sorry I got that wrong and I didn't want to under that. And people are like, I don't know where to go from there.	sorry	reflection	People	
1	So probably the thing that has come to me, and it's still a journey, is the managing, the managing the people, and always been able to go right, let's go this way and be exciting and have people follow you because you were exciting. But to actually have deep, fruitful relationships with with these people is something that's come later also,	managing the people	People Management	People	
1	this works particularly nicely because it's all in the one organization to have built procedures, policies and procedures to deal with difficult situations when it's just you working like the Lone Ranger Riding into one town and then the next town. It becomes quite you, them, I think. Whereas now we, for example, we have a learning and development policy which addresses which will be made reference to in the telephone call I have to make about the person who's not really pulling their weight and doing this kind of thing, and previously, when I was working outside those kinds of structures, they there was a danger of those situations becoming personal, yeah, yeah, and not nicely personal. All of it is personal.	danger of those situations becoming personal	Boundaries	People	
1	The the thing that one of the things that excites me is taking somebody who never knew they could do this and ludicrously making them, giving them the skills and confidence to do something that's amazing, that's quite a buzz, and it's a different buzz to are working with pro singers because they don't. They're not so thrilled by it as as your as your amateur, who it isn't their thing, and they ought not to be able to do it. The Pro the the pro gig is the pro gig, isn't it? And you go, and you smile, and you sing most of the right notes, and then you walk away again. And the thing, the thing you're most interested in about that engagement that has passed is whether you've been paid or not.	amateur/professional	Motivations	People	
1	an amount of community building and low key changing the world that's thrilling, of teaching people or drawing out of people, their inclination to do selfless things, to to put the self second and look at the task.	community	Community	People	
1	an amount of community building and low key changing the world that's thrilling, of teaching people or drawing out of people, their inclination to do selfless things, to to put the self second and look at the task.	community	Community	Health & Wellbeing	
1	the choice of repertoire is a make or break thing, isn't it? Yeah, this is, this is another of the this must be right, or none of it can be right. Yeah. And I think repertoire there is, there is zero training and repertoire choice is there. I mean, there's nobody is is is T there's no course that tells you which piece should go next or what you should be looking for.	choice of repertoire	Repertoire	Training	
1	especially in terms of your choir's ability, there is nothing more soul destroying than trying to force somebody to sing something they're just not capable of. Yeah, and you know, it's just in that, that sweet spot of just too hard for them, you need to Yeah. There needs to be an element to allow them to develop Yeah. But yeah, it is getting that balance right, isn't it? Giving them something which is a challenge, a learning opportunity, but not so difficult that, you know, basically people start giving up	force somebody to sing something they're just not capable of	Repertoire	Training	
1	particularly in the in Entry Level Singing opportunities, your community choirs and this kind of thing there is the lack of training means that the groups suffer from poor repertoire so that if the conductor who wants to sing that piece because they like that piece, or the choir that wants to sing that piece because they like that piece, now this could easily come across for me as a kind of repertoire snobbiness, and I do have repertoire snobbiness, but that's separate to this	poor repertoire	Repertoire	Training	

Subject No.	Quotation	Keyword/phrase	Coding	Themes	My notes
1	singing well crafted music with nice voice leading and good ranges and melodic interest in all the parts makes singing more enjoyable, makes you a better singer, singing a pop song arrangement that has got the parts jammed in underneath the melody and was never even conceived for choir,	makes singing more enjoyable	Repertoire	Training	
1	So I think there's a massive, massive problem created from that lack of skill across the whole sector in selecting proper repertoire, I don't I, whilst some conductor might think singing some arrangement of Bohemian Rhapsody or the Pink Panther might be fun and funny or whatever, it is, not going to be a musical or a choral experience, is it?	selecting proper repertoire	Repertoire	Training	
1	I've just done that, frsm in choral conducting, which was a nice opportunity to do a bit of a for many people, the rehearsal and the actual exam proper would be the scary, for me. It's like, Come watch my rehearsal. I'd like to show off, please. But the research paper on that was really quite interesting in this setting	FRSM	conducting competency	Training	
1	I'm starting Masters in September,	Masters	CPD	Training	
1	taking the vast majority of male voice choirs being taken by people with no musical qualifications or experience whatsoever,	no musical qualifications or experience	training	Training	
1	we then find out that we're not surprised that the male voice choirs in this country are a bit shit because, because, how could they not be with the with the leadership now the next, the next thought, was with this research paper, just sending it through to you with this research paper, was surely, if they're finding themselves like the proverbial fish up a fence post, nobody knows how it got there. It doesn't know why it's there, and it doesn't know what it's doing, you would think that they would be so desperate for CPD that it would be unbelievable. And none of them are, and none of the choirs have any budgets for CPD. None of there's, there's just nothing going on. So I think there's if there would be a question that I would want further answers to. I would want to know why people how would you phrase it? How I want to know, how the hell they've got the nerve to do it with no skills or experience. I mean, surely.	desperate for CPD	CPD	Training	
1	But and so to take the choir with no name as an example of Kate Warren's homeless choir, the purpose of that choir is not artistic excellence, although they do strive for it, it is to use that structure to make positive life outcomes for homeless people. And they are very, very good at it, very good at it. And they have are trained in all, all the sorts of things around those issues. Her choir leaders are also basically social workers as well, which is great if you have there are whole other choirs that purport to not be music choirs and be social choirs, but they're also a bit rubbish at being social choirs, because if you're going to be a social choir, then do that.	choir leaders/social workers	Wellbeing	Health & Wellbeing	
1	But and so to take the choir with no name as an example of Kate Warren's homeless choir, the purpose of that choir is not artistic excellence, although they do strive for it, it is to use that structure to make positive life outcomes for homeless people. And they are very, very good at it, very good at it. And they have are trained in all, all the sorts of things around those issues. Her choir leaders are also basically social workers as well, which is great if you have there are whole other choirs that purport to not be music choirs and be social choirs, but they're also a bit rubbish at being social choirs, because if you're going to be a social choir, then do that.	choir leaders/social workers	Wellbeing	Training	
1	It's a whole different emphasis on the skills you need to bring to that. In some respects, you know, it's not just about your ability to communicate and to bring people. You've got to understand, be able to understand and communicate with people about the reasons they're there.	Understand and communicate with people	Communication	Training	
1	It's a whole different emphasis on the skills you need to bring to that. In some respects, you know, it's not just about your ability to communicate and to bring people. You've got to understand, be able to understand and communicate with people about the reasons they're there.	Understand and communicate with people	Communication	People	
1	It's a whole different emphasis on the skills you need to bring to that. In some respects, you know, it's not just about your ability to communicate and to bring people. You've got to understand, be able to understand and communicate with people about the reasons they're there.	Understand and communicate with people	Communication	Health & Wellbeing	
1	So, so pathways to choral conducting ought to also include, I suppose it's a little bit somewhere around music therapy, isn't it? Or, or there, there isn't, there isn't the whilst, there certainly is the the training out there to prepare in a structured way, decent professional choral conductors. There's certainly not the pathways out there to prepare the equally valid person who needs to be skilled in a whole load of other things to run the community choir really	pathways/community choir	Training	Health & Wellbeing	
1	So, so pathways to choral conducting ought to also include, I suppose it's a little bit somewhere around music therapy, isn't it? Or, or there, there isn't, there isn't the whilst, there certainly is the the training out there to prepare in a structured way, decent professional choral conductors. There's certainly not the pathways out there to prepare the equally valid person who needs to be skilled in a whole load of other things to run the community choir really	pathways/community choir	Training	Training	
1	How do you handle those people who you you who can't match any pitches back to you in that two or three minutes? And one of the music directors says to me, Well, I just think it's kind enough. I mean, why lie to them or just put them out the misery and tell them sing. It's not their thing, and you should, and they should find something else to do, and you're like for fucks that what? How? Where is your like? Where is everything that you should believe in your compassion and your empathy, and all of you know, all of o weep, because that person will will now never sing when their child gets married, that person will be silent in the church.	Compassion and empathy	personality traits	People	links to Additional competencies question in survey
1	How do you handle those people who you you who can't match any pitches back to you in that two or three minutes? And one of the music directors says to me, Well, I just think it's kind enough. I mean, why lie to them or just put them out the misery and tell them sing. It's not their thing, and you should, and they should find something else to do, and you're like for fucks that what? How? Where is your like? Where is everything that you should believe in your compassion and your empathy, and all of you know, all of o weep, because that person will will now never sing when their child gets married, that person will be silent in the church.	Compassion and empathy	personality traits	Health & Wellbeing	links to Additional competencies question in survey
1	the covid experience was transformational in a very positive way.	transformational	Innovation	Commercial Skills	
1	I think, and it was fascinating to see the whole world trying to do something new and trying to work out what it was. And like the most experienced person, the least experienced person, all being at the same level at week one, kind of like, What the hell do we do? But we found that we've been using a number of apps to for the singers to prepare the music, and we've taken to videoing tasks as well so the singers have tough in rehearsals, and we found that, and this only came about due to those lockdown zooms, that the way the Zoom was useful was to set was like a seminar on the work that they were about to do and an appraisal of the work that they'd done the week before, whether it be a video task or. Work on, on part, learning in some of these apps and coming out of it, I now can set these tasks and do every single week, and the singers get on with them and understand how thrilling that is to come to the room having the music learnt and memorized and and all that kind of thing. And I would not have been able to do it if they hadn't had that covid experience to totally change the kind of ethos of the group. And some people went, and I'm glad, because it transpired that they would not up for doing what we what we wanted to do, and investing that amount of time, and they'd go and sing with other clients who don't demand and that's fine, but absolutely the covid experience has changed completely. The standard is twice as good as it was before, and now they prepare things themselves. It's good.	standard is twice as good	development	Training	
1	I think of how much development I get from my network	development	Network	Training	

Subject No.	Quotation	Keyword/phrase	Coding	Themes	My notes
1	it comes out of the covid and the technology trying to strands together that it to talk to you. Used to be a I couldn't do it in my house, or I could, I could have done it in my house, but we didn't, did we? And everybody was dumped straight into this being how we do things, and isn't it great? And I'll go make cup of tea and I don't, and I may or may not have trousers on, who knows? Yeah, but I can, I can message Eric light in Vancouver, and spend 45 minutes chatting with him about something as easily as if you were my next door neighbor. And absolutely, that is a thrilling part of of how technology and it is not new technology. That's the that's the kind of kick yourself thing we could all have been doing it this age scope.	technology	Communication	People	
1	people don't invest the time they would in a child who struggles with mathematics, struggles with English grammar and so, and I think that is because, to a certain extent, it's seen as not not frivolous, have a level of importance put on. It, which, considering how much a music education can impact the rest of your academic achievement, it's just ridiculous.	music education/impact on academic achievement	Society/Environment	People	
1	there's an idea that the conductor is the silhouette at the beginning of Fantasia who stands up there and taps on the stand, and everybody is hushed and silent when actually the conductor is learning, learning as much. What do I say? What do I say to myself? The whole point of a rehearsal is trying to get it's exactly the whole point of being a parent to make yourself redundant.	the conductor is learning	development	Training	
1	So so that idea of wanting to be, wanting to be some kind of imagined authority figure, which I think I might, I'm certainly guilty of myself, wanting to be some flawless authority figure, and marrying that up with wanting to be better, and marrying that up with not wanting to be wrong, but being wrong being the route to better.	authority/route to better	personality traits	People	
2	I've been a primary school teacher for 31 years. Yeah, and while I was teaching, and I've sung all my life, so I've sung in church choir, sung in choirs all my life. So when I was teaching, I was just doing bits of kind of singing leadership in school, just you're doing the hymn practice and singing with the classes anyway, as I would normally, you know, as I love singing all the time	sung in choirs all my life	development	Training	
2	invited me to go and do some staff training in how to lead a choir. So this would have been about 2009 did some staff training, okay, in Sandwell, which is where the authority that I was working in. And gradually from then it took step by step to then go on to do my conductor training through Sing for Pleasure	conductor training	training	Training	
2	So I'm not a musician, although I'm very musical, and I've always sung. I have no formal training at all.	not a musician/no formal training	training	Training	
2	I was the one who could stand up and sing in front of the children. I was the one who would lead the singing practice or the hymn practice, because it was in in me to do that.	in me to do that	personality traits	People	
2	And it's just, now I don't actually teach classroom teaching anymore. I'd left, left that in 2016 and joined the music service. So now I have terrible imposter syndrome, because I'm now teaching singing to children, doing singing exams, and I'm leading three children's choirs, and I've just taken my own singing exam as well. So it's kind of fantastic, really, yeah, fantastic. Um, you know, it's great.	imposter syndrome	personality traits	People	some people are more prone to imposter syndrome
2	And it's just, now I don't actually teach classroom teaching anymore. I'd left, left that in 2016 and joined the music service. So now I have terrible imposter syndrome, because I'm now teaching singing to children, doing singing exams, and I'm leading three children's choirs, and I've just taken my own singing exam as well. So it's kind of fantastic, really, yeah, fantastic. Um, you know, it's great.	imposter syndrome	personality traits	Training	training doesn't do enough to counter this
2	Not particularly, no, because the conductor training program is for anybody, any, any, any singing leader of any type of choir. So the music choice, the repertoire, isn't particularly for children, but it can be used for children. It's fantastic. The the foundation level, the kind of the first level of the conductor training is all rounds and very simple part songs, which you can do with children, yeah, of course. And equally, do them with a group of adults, because they're such fun, yeah? So the repertoire is flexible for what whoever you're leading to do that.	repertoire/ simple /flexible	Repertoire	Training	
2	but it gave me the skills to, like, really strip it back down to, what am I doing? Is this effective? Are my gestures? You know, telling the children what I want them to do. And so, yeah, the way they the pedagogy of Sing for Pleasure training is so step by step, literally, can you beat pattern for a four beat pattern. And can you bring people in into a round in a systematic way, you know, cut offs and things like that, really simple stuff, yep. And then you then it moves on to more difficult SATB repertoire, which I did, then go on to do my intermediate two	beat pattern/step by step	conducting competency	Training	
2	yeah, and things like rehearsal, planning, yeah, just, just choosing repertoire, working with the needs of the children and what they might, you know, what vocal skills they might need to develop and warm ups and physical things, getting them to have the right posture, using their voice effectively, which, sadly, I see too often, doesn't happen in school, and children are then hurting their voices because either too low, because often they choose repertoire that's sung by men, or it's it's whatever the teacher wants to do, and they may not have the knowledge of the voice and how the voice works	hurting their voices	vocal technique/health	Health & Wellbeing	
2	yeah, and things like rehearsal, planning, yeah, just, just choosing repertoire, working with the needs of the children and what they might, you know, what vocal skills they might need to develop and warm ups and physical things, getting them to have the right posture, using their voice effectively, which, sadly, I see too often, doesn't happen in school, and children are then hurting their voices because either too low, because often they choose repertoire that's sung by men, or it's it's whatever the teacher wants to do, and they may not have the knowledge of the voice and how the voice works	hurting their voices	vocal technique/health	Training	
2	I think because I've always been a teacher, uh, although I've always been very shy, I was very shy as a young as a child and growing up, but training as a teacher and having to stand up in front of whole classes of children and teach, it gives you that confidence that you can you can do it. I prefer to stand in front of children than I do adults, I have to say, so that might be a different thing to think about. Why? Why do I feel comfortable standing in front of three, three or 400 children, but I can't stand in front of five adults because I just... Maybe adults, you feel that you're being judged a bit more. I don't know.	very shy	personality traits	People	
2	I think because I've always been a teacher, uh, although I've always been very shy, I was very shy as a young as a child and growing up, but training as a teacher and having to stand up in front of whole classes of children and teach, it gives you that confidence that you can you can do it. I prefer to stand in front of children than I do adults, I have to say, so that might be a different thing to think about. Why? Why do I feel comfortable standing in front of three, three or 400 children, but I can't stand in front of five adults because I just... Maybe adults, you feel that you're being judged a bit more. I don't know.	training as a teacher	training	Training	
2	So because I had the confidence as a teacher, I didn't feel embarrassed, which a lot of teachers feel embarrassed singing in front of other children, so I didn't have that barrier at all, although there are lots of teachers who don't like singing in front of children, and I've done some staff training with schools I work with now who just can't seem to sing in front of their classes, or don't like leading singing. They'll sing if, if, if a song is on, they'll sing along with the children, but they won't lead it. They won't model it. They won't they won't try and improve things. Yeah, no, they won't demonstrate. So I can see that there's a big gap there with teachers not having confidence to sing, but I actually natural for me, because I've always sung	feel embarrassed	personality traits	People	

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2	So lots of the repertoire of some has just been for fun, and some of it's off copy. Lot of church repertoire is the hymns and anthems that don't require an awful lot of academic musicianship, and then that's translated into where I lead the children. It's not about academic musicianship, it is having fun ,	fun	motivations	People	
2	planning rehearsals effectively, because I tend to go in rather, oh, we'll do these today, and then not realizing that that won't work, or I've got to stop and start again or not, not anticipating what might go wrong before it happens. And a lot of the training is is about that is looking at a piece and knowing a piece really, really well, and anticipating where the choir will fail or where they'll need some extra help. And I often forget that part of the planning stage, go in and realized, oh, this, this needs a bit of extra planning. Here. I need to pick it apart a bit more.	planning	organisational/admin skills	Training	
2	What else has been hard? Well, working with adults, I find very, very difficult and part of the threat. Well, all of the training has always been with adults. So the training had never been working with Jordan. The training has always been in groups of adults. Might have maybe 12 adults in the group. You then take your turn to go up to the podium and do your piece. And I find that absolutely terrifying, even though everyone's in the same position, and they're all doing their own piece, and they're all probably just.	adults/ terrifying	personality traits	People	
2	The people management type of thing kind of gets in the way of just the music sometimes. But I know it's important…always a small group who are just wasting time chatting and wanting to go to the toilet constantly and in and out.	People management	People Management	People	
2	I don't want to be, you know, sloppy and being a you know, disciplinarian about it . They're there to have fun, but there are certain expectations aren't there. So I have to make that very clear from the very beginning, that this isn't just, you know, you know, a club where you can come and chat to your friends. We've got things to do, so I have to be quite firm .	disciplinarian	Authority	People	
2	It's the people management. It's the thinking ahead. It's the problem solving, troubleshooting, thinking on your feet, a lot of acting, pretending that you're happy when you're not, or, you know, all those things that you have to do as a teacher.	People management	People Management	People	
2	Yeah, very much technical. When things cropped up like that, though, they would talk about it and but the group, the groups that we were always with, were always very, you know, they were there for the same reason. So everyone's very conscientious, and there was never any discipline problems with your own peers. It's only when you go out into the real world and do it for real that you realize that there's more to it than just technique .	more to it than just technique	training	Training	
2	So it's finding ways to to lead a choir of non music readers, of amateurs, of people who don't think much, being led by somebody who's an academic.Like, sometimes they just need to get a reality check that they're not all going to know what you mean when you say, Hold on this - fermata , for example, they won't know what you mean. Or even go from bar 20, they won't know what you mean . So you have to, then they have to, then be given a bit of a, you know, a kind of reality check that it's not like that, because most of their work will be with community choirs. They're not all going to be running The Sixteen.	reality check	Real World	Training	
2	So they need to just know that it's the real world is not full of people like that. The real world is full of a mass mix of people, varying skill, varying commitment.	varying skill, varying commitment	Real World	Training	
2	a lot of people who go and sing in choirs do it for fun, and it's a social thing, and they may want to have a chat. So it's finding the balance between keeping it fun, but also, this is what we're here for. We, you know, these are my expectations. So adults are the same. They just need to be given a bit of a prod.	social thing	Community	Health & Wellbeing	
2	a lot of people who go and sing in choirs do it for fun, and it's a social thing, and they may want to have a chat. So it's finding the balance between keeping it fun, but also, this is what we're here for. We, you know, these are my expectations. So adults are the same. They just need to be given a bit of a prod.	these are my expectations	People Management	People	
2	having that confidence to actually stand up and make statements and leadership, leadership skills, I think you know whether you're whether your job requires you to be a leader of something. If you're running a choir, you have to have that leadership, because you are the you are the leader at the end of the day. And you might, people might want to chip in with ideas. And Ula, who I inspired me to do or she would say that when she runs a choir, she never has a committee. She calls it a benign dictatorship, because she has to be the one to make the decisions on things. And no, there's no negotiation. You're not deciding what you want to sing. I'm deciding what, what we're going to sing.	leadership skills	People Management	People	
2	Um, I would like to have more confidence to be able to play the piano. I have got grade four piano and working on a grade five piece at the moment, but I don't have the confidence or the skills to be able to just to sit in front of children and just play with them . So all our songs are always accompanied by backing tracks, because I don't have an accompanist.	confidence	personality traits	People	
2	Um, I would like to have more confidence to be able to play the piano. I have got grade four piano and working on a grade five piece at the moment, but I don't have the confidence or the skills to be able to just to sit in front of children and just play with them . So all our songs are always accompanied by backing tracks, because I don't have an accompanist.	skills	training	Training	
2	I I'd like more boys to join, but then I can't. I can't really affect that unless I try and promote it, because we don't get enough boys. And I know that. I know that boys would love it .	More boys to join	recruitment	Commercial Skills	
2	I think a lot, a lot of children don't seem to be able to commit to anything, or really doing too many things, and there's too many activities happening, and they just don't have the energy or time to commit to any one thing for very long. I don't know. It just seems to be quite a shame that these opportunities are there. And yeah, they seem to think they can just chop and change ,	commit	Society/Environment	People	
2	things like all the kind of modern university acapella competitions are so popular. My niece is at Warwick University, and she's part of one of those acapella choral not, like traditional choral music, it's like American they all have mics on yeah, but the youngsters absolutely love it. So it may not be Cathedral Choir kind of repertoire, but they love it. And it's funky, it's pop, it's it's trendy, it's popular, you know, they love it. So seeing the university level of those a cappella groups going forward, I think they are just going to be amazing.	not the Cathedral Choir kind of repertoire - funky, pop, trendy	Repertoire	Training	
2	I'm in the national teachers choir, which teachers go for a weekend. It's next weekend. Actually, they go away for a whole weekend with brand new repertoire they've never seen before, and by the end of it, on Sunday afternoon, they do a concert. It is just uplifting, and for teachers, it's just such a relief from being in the classroom.	Uplifting - relief from being in the classroom	Wellbeing	Health & Wellbeing	
2	Do try and get along to one of their concerts, if you can, the one at the Birmingham Town Hall last year was just so uplifting and emotional. Really seeing children who have profound Special Needs creating the most amazing music. Yeah,	uplifting and emotional	Wellbeing	Health & Wellbeing	
2	that's cropped up in conversation in the last couple of years, is within teacher training programs, training teachers very often there's no music involved in that. So people are coming to the profession with no music. And I do think that even though you're not, maybe people, people aren't musicians themselves, there should be much more emphasis on music for non musicians within the classroom. And so I hope that whoever designs initial teacher training programs will try and encourage teachers to just be confident to sing in front of their classes, because I do find so many teachers just don't.	teacher training programs	training	Training	

Subject No.	Quotation	Keyword/phrase	Coding	Themes	My notes
2	Ofsted, Ofsted they don't bother about music. So why would schools bother investing in musicians if they're only thing that come and see is in Maths and English results	investing in musicians	Society/Environment	People	
3	No, okay, lots of experience of singing in choirs, the feeling of sitting in the choir thinking, well, I could do this better, or I wish they were picking these points off and they're not that sort of thing.	choral singing experience	training	Training	
3	the singing aspect as well, because I had about a year's worth of singing lessons, but I'm not really a singer. I sing in choirs so the vocal technique side of things	vocal technique	vocal technique/health	Health & Wellbeing	
3	yes, I mean, sometimes management, I'm not sort of really strict, as strict as I should be, and people talking rehearsals and answering back and stuff. I mean, I think over the years, I've, you know, got a fairly interactive style of running rehearsals, but then it can get that can get a bit sort of that everyone's talking at once, and I've got to stop it, please. That's one of the things I found more difficult.	management - more difficult	People Management	People	
3	and also, you know, you get, you get also get diplomatic issues from time to time with, you know, a particular person who's singing flat and who's very sensitive about being told, I'm sure we've all come across those, and how to do it so diplomatically, so that you correct the problem, which everybody else can hear anyway, without drawing too much attention to the people. Management side is quite a skill.	Diplomatic/management	People Management	People	
3	But it also, then, if it's a modern stuff, we've got to buy 30 copies of it, whereas if it's an older piece, we can get it off CPD. We might need a bit of tweaking if the edition's a bit rubbish. But, you know, it's also a cost, a cost factor,	Cost	Costs	Commercial Skills	
3	it's a good sort of partly social. It's also partly musical, although I have to say, what I do notice is that when I actually play music myself, I think, Oh, yes, this is what I've been missing. In fact, you get done play the piano. That's connection in a way that just waving hands isn't. So it's odd that way. But I do enjoy it.	social thing	motivations	People	
3	I do enjoy the whole planning process and choosing music and putting programs together. That's a nice part of it. And I like the whole rehearsal process of we just work at this thing together, we get to know in more details, and we hone up, polish it up, and, you	planning/choosing music	organisational/admin skills	Commercial Skills	
3	Rehearsing I think it was a creative process. I don't know. The actual concert is something to get through.I don't enjoy concerts when I'm conducting it. I've got to stay focused and make sure everything happens right. I enjoy the buzz afterwards when everyone says, Oh, that was great. Or conversely, I'll go right down if things weren't didn't go as well as I wanted to, but I just found this sort of stress, a lot of pressure around stupid things, like I occasionally lose my balance, and I kind of worry about whopping so the actual conducting of the concert and then I sort of get to the end of the concert, I feel bit sort of, you know, I've missed it.	stress/pressure	Wellbeing	Health & Wellbeing	
3	Would you like to do the intros? And he loves and he comes out, he just does them very well. And when he does the intros, it just gives a bit more me time to think about the next piece. It takes the pressure off.	Pressure off	performance	Performance	
3	(re ABCD course) I suppose I shoul've done that a bit sooner, yeah, okay. I mean, that's something that sort of, you know, some some of what we did, I'm sure we felt it was more helpful than others. Because obviously, though we came from a range of choirs, I might, I personally hate all those kind of physical warm ups and walk around the room, and it's fine. Maybe fine for school kids. It's interesting that one of people our course said who was a teacher said I did all this kind of shoulder with the kids, and they loved it. Yeah, It's not for older adults.	a range of choirs	Training	Training	
3	I think my posture is bad. I do tend to hunch up and I'm sometimes, sometimes I'll get a bit kind of almost lightheaded because I'm not breathing properly and or I stand up on my tiptoes and lean forward. And I think when I actually look at videos, and I'm doing a lot of like there's probably some work to be done on the actual just what I look like and how I do it, and maybe I don't need to do quite such big gestures, to keep it more you know, certainly that side of things I think could could do is I thought about doing the advanced course, but obviously not being a professional.	some work to be done	reflection	Training	
3	I think my posture is bad. I do tend to hunch up and I'm sometimes, sometimes I'll get a bit kind of almost lightheaded because I'm not breathing properly and or I stand up on my tiptoes and lean forward. And I think when I actually look at videos, and I'm doing a lot of like there's probably some work to be done on the actual just what I look like and how I do it, and maybe I don't need to do quite such big gestures, to keep it more you know, certainly that side of things I think could could do is I thought about doing the advanced course, but obviously not being a professional.	Not being a professional	reflection	People	
3	I've got family life and other things to work around, and learning disabilities (daughter). Going away all those Saturdays or Sundays when I did it before, yeah, it was quite a, quite a push.	Family life	Priorities	People	
3	I thought, well, I don't, you know , I'm a musician. I don't know so much about singing. And I was hoping for more actual singing technique and how I can help my choir, yeah, instead of bring somebody in now, who sort of local singing teacher comes does occasional session, but she tends to do it more about presentation anyway.	singing technique	vocal technique/health	Health & Wellbeing	
3	Because, I mean, I go to these warm ups with the vague idea that anything muscles going, but really, you know, other than just easing in gently is all I really know about .So, yes, I think, I think sort of more singing technique based, because that's the thing I don't know about, yeah, rather than specifically the conducting side of things.	vague idea/singing technique	vocal technique/health	Health & Wellbeing	
3	Yeah, struggle for audience as I think we're not doing kind of modern pop choirs. And getting young people in is a big issue for everybody, isn't it? The feeling that, when we go, the whole music sector will die with us, and it's really a challenge to get younger people there's, I mean, it's not just for but orchestra as well. And, you know, it's always a sort of, how can we get new audience?	audience/young people	recruitment	Commercial Skills	
3	This discussion about combining, yeah, certainly, discussion meeting up with other choral leaders. I mean that the Facebook group where everyone exchanges ideas is great, because you get all sorts of ideas from that and interact. You know, when you're the director of the choir, you're the only person doing it. When your singers in your choir will have sung for other people. But it's just something about being able to talk to another other call. But that's very, very useful.	discussion/exchanges ideas	Network	Training	
3	I think they tend to drop out of things in work and family take over. It's one thing they keep on making music courses. I didn't they said, you know, your competition isn't the other choirs and orchestras, it's all the other things that they've got going on, they've got children, they can't get out of an evening . And then, sort of, when the kids grow up, they come back to it. So that's, you know, there is a natural tendency for it to be older people that are in your choirs, unless you although, having said that, went to a kind of open day from the local operatic societies, and then that's where the young people are in there, in music theater. Yes, some great voices in music theater. But they wouldn't necessarily want to do straight choirs,	competition	Competition	Commercial Skills	
4	and um, so I'm, ultimately, I'm a pianist. That's my kind of background. Um, obviously you don't go through a musical education without being pulled into singing in choirs.	background/musical education	career background	Training	
4	Yeah, never really floated my boat, particularly until I joined a choir as an adult, basically, I was single parenting. And yeah, yeah, my mom, who's also a piano teacher, phoned me up one weekend and was like, I didn't have the children. She's like, why are you available when you haven't got the children? You need the social life. And her suggestion was to join a choir that was a local group.	social life	Wellbeing	Health & Wellbeing	
4	but she also left the unpaid carers choir, and they wanted somebody who understood how this MD works, and so that it wasn't going to be too different. You know, transition would be easier. So I got a phone call asking me if I'd do it. And I kind of went, I don't know, I don't I don't know, can I I'm not sure. And I was told, Well, we think you can, and we would like you to, um, so I did.	can I, I'm not sure	personality traits	People	

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4	I started singing lessons not long after I'd started the splinter group, because I kind of recognized that I was kind of being pushed vocally, and it maybe wasn't. I just wanted some individual one to one tuition on that and and it was a good call, because what I hadn't appreciated, but maybe I did, on some level, was I was starting to ruin my voice, actually, because I was being asked to sing in a range that wasn't comfortable for me.	pushed vocally	vocal technique/health	Health & Wellbeing	
4	But anyway, so I'm not like her, and it nearly destroyed me that first year, actually, or a couple of people in the choir, nearly destroyed me, because I relied quite heavily on the keyboard, and I didn't realize until I was talking to my singing teacher during lockdown that I'd kind of developed performance anxiety. I couldn't, I couldn't remember. I couldn't I couldn't sing a song on the way to the choir rehearsal. I could sing a song on the way back from the choir rehearsal that the notes just went from my head during rehearsal, just couldn't do it, so I was lying more and more on my keyboard. And I think essentially I'd been trying to be this other person for them, which was not me.	developed performance anxiety	Wellbeing	Health & Wellbeing	
4	And then during the pandemic, I kind of up skilled a lot. Joined some choir leader networking groups, which made me realize that my skills are just as valid as hers were, and actually there are some real advantages of being able to read music	networking groups/skills just as valid	Network	Training	
4	. I kind of came out of the pandemic, I don't know, like, like, I'd come out of the cocoon or something, suddenly this much more confident person. And, yeah, took on more choirs, and absolutely love it. But yes, that was, that was why I did it, because I was asked to, and it was the best thing I ever did.	out of the cocoon/much more confident person	motivations	People	
4	No, no, no, just, yeah, I suppose, tried to model myself on the wrong person initially.	model myself	training	Training	
4	And I do think that that, I do think that I don't know, it's hard to say, isn't it, but personally, I think that every choir leader should have some kind of understanding of vocal health. That's my own, my own view, and that's probably colored by my experiences. But other than that, I think I was having singing lessons, and I was getting that, that the my, you know, I was able to bring my what I was being taught to make my sound, my singing, healthier. I was able to bring that to my choirs and and have done because one of the first things that I was told when I started with the carers choir, by a few people, was that, particularly after performances, they could feel quite throaty. And so, yeah, just by doing so VTS . I mean, I haven't heard anybody say that in years. So, yeah, so yeah, I think, I think it's important to have that, that vocal health understanding. But I think because I was having singing lessons, and it was really fresh as well , because I suppose my teacher, Emma, was trying to move what I was doing into a more healthy way of doing things. So I think that was important, yeah, to have that before I started the choir, or at least I was in the choir, yeah.	understanding of vocal health	vocal technique/health	Health & Wellbeing	
4	. I personally feel that I have a responsibility to my singers to make sure that they are not doing any damage to themselves. It's like safety first, isn't it?	responsibility/safety first	vocal technique/health	Health & Wellbeing	
4	we were made to move around and sing different parts in different ranges, but without properly helping us to extend our ranges, yeah, which is, which is great from musicality perspective, and you know, and and you know, improves confidence in, you know, holding a line, improves all skills, improves all of that. But as you say, if it's uncomfortable, the chances are, you know, you're going to end up doing some damage.	without properly helping us to extend our ranges	vocal technique/health	Health & Wellbeing	
4	But before I became completely self employed, I went into early years, and I managed a nursery for quite a few years. And so I think people management has has always been a strength of mine. And yeah, and I guess kind of what I'm doing at the moment is a lot about dynamics, quite dynamics among the people in front of me, and just kind of creating. I've realized, I've realized, over time, that my biggest strength is, is creating a community and getting to know my choir members.	people management/dynamics/community	People Management	People	
4	you create that environment for them. So I think for for me, if you are creating a choir for well being, I think that's quite important that people feel safe.	environment/safe	Community	Health & Wellbeing	
4	because I haven't come from a professionally vocal background. Having to sing in front of people and having to go on Zoom, where people essentially just listening to my voice was incredibly hard for me, and I had to get very, very, very quickly. I had to become very comfortable with my own singing voice .	get comfortable with my own singing voice	personality traits	People	
4	the upside of that is when I asked my choir members to record tracks for me to send in so I could put together those wonderful videos that we all did during during lockdown, I could empathize with them and say, Look, I didn't I didn't like the sound of my own voice either, and I've had to kind of learn how to become comfortable with that so there is no judgment at all. I know what it's like.	empathise	personality traits	People	ties in with additional competencies question
4	I'm singing. I'm just, you know, singing and singing with other people. My life is full of music.What could go wrong with that?	My life is full of music	motivations	People	job satisfaction
4	when it all comes together, you know, when you've been teaching them those moments of beauty in front of you, and that ability to make that happen. I just think there's something really magical about that, yeah, yeah.	moments of beauty/ really magical	motivations	People	job satisfaction
4	one of my choirs is committee led, and I think not feeling as in control is tricky, to manage the politics.I think that's a whole different ball game, because I can influence, I can heavily influence how how things go, but sometimes the people politics, in the choir, can be tricky because I just don't have the same handle on it as I do my other choirs	committee led/control/politics/people politics	People Management	People	
4	I made a conscious effort to it's a boundary thing separate. And I think this is the thing with choirs for well being to separate my it's keeping it's keeping everything warm and friendly, but still having boundaries in place, and I've made a conscious effort since September to make sure that I'm doing my own things outside of choir, within my own friendship groups, and I'm looking after my own well being. Say that the choir doesn't become something that I need. Does that make sense to you? Yeah. And I think, and I think that's, that's a tricky one to balance, is the boundaries, and it's one of the things that I've addressed in my framework.	boundaries/balance	Wellbeing	Health & Wellbeing	
4	No, no. If, if there's anything, I would say vocal health training.	vocal health	vocal technique/health	Health & Wellbeing	
4	Yeah, no, because I think you have to do what's right for you. And I think a lot of the choral training that there is maybe wouldn't suit me. I see a lot of Steph conducting. Yep, I didn't feel like I need conducting lessons. I did all that coming up through my piano and clarinet grades. You know where we did in those days. Have to learn conducting patterns. I know how to do that, and I don't do it very often. I do sometimes, but as far as I'm concerned, it is a communication that you develop with your choir, and nobody can tell you how to do that.	Communication/develop	Communication	Training	doesn't feel the need for technical training
4	Really, I think that there are gestures you.Can make that are sensible gestures that you learn more through how you want to develop what you want to develop with them, whether it be so they're singing healthily, whether it be because you want certain I don't know whatever you know. To me, it's the form of communication that you develop your choir. And I don't think anyone can really tell you how to do that, and I'm not sure that there's an awful lot of training out there that would have suited me.	Gesture/Communication	Communication	Training	doesn't feel the need for technical training
4	Particularly, um, I have found much more useful networking with other choir leaders...Well, first of all, it gave me the confidence that what I was doing was right.And I think having those discussions, and, you know, I belong to a really good paid network, actually, and if we've got an issue, we can pop it. It's a Facebook group, essentially. We can pop it on there,...And I get all these different strategies. And it's so, it kind of feels, I suppose, a lot more focused on what you need, whereas I don't think, I think it's a huge thing, I don't think that that there could possibly be a choir training course that can give you everything that you need for you and your choir. I think maybe a lot of it is is about experience.	networking/strategies/experience	Network	Training	

Subject No.	Quotation	Keyword/phrase	Coding	Themes	My notes
4	I think one of the things that's missing is kind of how to set up and market a choir I think that is something that would be incredibly useful, because I think a lot of us it's a it's become very competitive. There are hundreds of choirs where I live, hundreds...And I think helping, helping people, helping choir leaders, I suppose, to identify what their strengths are and how to market their choirs on that, I think, is something that that might be useful, that's not something about that I've thought about doing.	Market/competitive/strengths	Marketing	Commercial Skills	
5	such a big tapestry of different routes and different Yeah, yeah, and different people will want to know different parts of the process more	routes	Routes	People	
5	I think there's some commonalities between your roots and my roots because I did a science degree to begin with, and my first job was in research, and then I taught maths, and then I worked as a restaurant manager, and then I was a computer programmer . And all the way through, since I was really small, I've sung in choirs. My mum was a singer and then a choir director . She was the choir teacher in a school in South Africa where I grew up, and so I grew up in my mum's choirs. And in fact, she was in my grandmother's choir as a girl. So kind of third generation, which is nice,	roots	career background	Training	skills from other roles that feed into choral conductor's skill ser
5	So what I did was advertise a kind of singing workshop so that people could get to know me, and I could get to know some people, and that would be the start of my studio. But what happened was the singing workshop turned into a regular event and became a choir.	advertise	Marketing	Commercial Skills	
5	If they don't sing, they're they're sometimes missing a trick. (in reference to church organists becoming church choir directors)	don't sing/missing a trick	conducting competency	Training	
5	(Referencing the need for training) Um, well, I realized fairly early on that I needed more , and I've been drawing in more, and I'm still, I think, as as a non music graduate, I've always had a bit of imposter syndrome, and I've always wanted to take on board, and I found a lot of really good things	imposter syndrome	personality traits	People	
5	(Referencing the need for training) Um, well, I realized fairly early on that I needed more , and I've been drawing in more, and I'm still, I think, as as a non music graduate, I've always had a bit of imposter syndrome, and I've always wanted to take on board, and I found a lot of really good things	imposter syndrome	training	Training	
5	more of a facilitator than a dictator style	facililtator v dictator	People Management	People	
5	it's a very much a community in a choir, that it's a very inclusive, welcoming choir. And I think everybody in the choir feels it's their choir, so it's our choir rather than my choir.	community	Community	Health & Wellbeing	
5	I worried about how to teach the men parts because not being able to get into their range … I was trying to sing it at range. And they said, No, that's not what we want, because if we're in the upper part of the voice, it sounds more the same. It's more equivalent if you're in the upper part of your voice. So I sing an octave app, yeah, I'm in the upper range when it's a high note, in my lower range when it's a low note. And we've so I've had a lot of good feedback .	teaching	Training	Training	
5	but I didn't like speaking in front of crowds, and again, I got help with that the we quite often have people in the choir introducing different sections of the program. And so I'll write the notes, and then I'll divvy them up. Who are comfortable doing that, but, but actually, over time, I've got better at myself, not quite so terrified as I was.	speaking in front of crowds	personality traits	People	
5	but I didn't like speaking in front of crowds, and again, I got help with that the we quite often have people in the choir introducing different sections of the program. And so I'll write the notes, and then I'll divvy them up. Who are comfortable doing that, but, but actually, over time, I've got better at myself, not quite so terrified as I was.	speaking in front of crowds	Training	Training	
5	I think it's having the choir perform for people, and you get that moment where it all comes together, and you can feel the audience are experiencing what you hope they'd feel from that song, and the choir has got it and the audience has got it, and it's just magic.	magic	performance	Performance	
5	Yeah, I think delegating is something that choral directors always need to do more of, because you end up with so many jobs otherwise	delegation	organisational/admin skills	Commercial Skills	
5	Repertoire is another thing that was a big issue for me at the beginning because I picked music that was too hard, or sometimes too many pieces. And it's also finding what people like and are willing to sing and within any choir, there'll be people who love and hate the same piece .	repertoire	Repertoire	Training	
5	It's a juggling act, because we're an unauditioned community choir. But I do want, I do want them to be singing technically well, and I do want them to get a good blend. And I do want them to sound good. I want them to be challenged by the music. So I try and pick some music that's challenging, not impossible , just and I think I know them well enough that it's, I'm not over facing them too much anymore, but we do, yeah, and then some pieces that they can pick up and run with straight away .	challenged by the music	development	Training	
5	And I think it's nice to have that range that people can just have a good sing, and then other times they have to really engage their brains	have a good sing then engage their brains	development	Training	
5	And just to find a network of other people (when starting out)	network	Network	Training	
5	(Re a local competition) a community choirs class, but it's non non competitive, so they have an adjudicator but nobody's going to lose, nobody's going to win. Just get feedback, positive feedback, but because you're singing for other choirs you want to, it's a good incentive to bring your best game and and from the first one where we I had to prize them off the back wall of the stage like a frightened rabbit to the back of the stage, and to now where they go up and, and really impressed me, yeah, and that was Really nice. That's been a really nice journey that we've got really constructive criticism from the adjudicators in that	positive feedback/incentive/constructive criticism	feedback	People	
5	because choirs are so different, I think that for every choir, there's going to be some other thing that you want that you're not going to get just from those courses. We've got a lot of people in our choir that are interested in Scottish traditional music and harmony courses, and so we've ended up going to a few sort of local harmony workshops...	choirs are so different	Variety	Training	training too generic
5	The other thing probably, I would like to have, there is a thing, yes just more in terms of singing technique because my approach to singing to each of the choirs my Magpie stealing of warm ups and things that I've got from other people. And we've been lucky. We've had a couple we've had a couple of people come in to do workshops with the choir, sort of vocal technique workshops , and there's always more you can do.	singing technique	vocal technique/health	Health & Wellbeing	
5	Me too. Me too. Vocal health, vocal anatomy, we have had to look after people's voices, yeah, and get the best out of them.	look after people's voices	vocal technique/health	Health & Wellbeing	
5	(In reference to area of interest for MA in Vocal Pedagogy) I think all aspects I'm interested in our to do with inclusivity and sort of bringing people in, making it accessible. We've been we've just recently done a workshop with Paul Whitaker, who's a Deaf musician, and we learned to sign some songs with him the late, yeah, yeah. So we've been doing signing and singing, and I've got really excited about that. And I think there's a lot of potential in sign singing, not just inclusivity for for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing, but also, I think there are benefits for, for instance, some of my pupils are neurodivergent, and I think the signed singing is a really useful tool for them.	inclusivity/neurodivergent	inclusivity	Health & Wellbeing	ties in with additional competencies question
5	It's such a generous and sharing community. I've just learned so much from being around, yeah, other music teachers .	generous and sharing community	community	People	
5	And I still want to do my piano skills are not good and, I'm practicing a lot. Yeah, I want to get delegate the piano playing.	piano skills	keyboard	Training	
5	(On being a choral director in the UK at this time) Just that it's a real privilege, and I love it. I think it was a big eye opener going through covid and not having that, yeah, and you just see how much it means to so many people.	How much it means to so many people	motivations	People	
5	Being in Scotland, a lot of the ABCD courses are quite London centric, but there's more and more stuff going on up at the centre of the country that that I can access.	London centric	Training	Training	

Subject No.	Quotation	Keyword/phrase	Coding	Themes	My notes
6	I've been a choir singer for donkey's years , like most people in them, and one choir is in particular, the director was very keen to encourage people to to have it all go. So I had a little go once, and began to sort of sense that I had the bug for it a little. And then he gave me a bit of he gave me regular goes, and then he gave me a little bit of coaching.	had the bug	development	Training	initially on the job training
6	Also, I wanted to progress a little bit fast, and I was seeming to in the groups. Although I love the summer school, the problem was, you've been in a group of eight, nine people, 10 people sometimes. And so your podium time, as we called it, was, was not great. So they teach some new, new technique on the morning course , and we'd all have a go, because all having a go meant you get five minutes there, and then you've got, you know, six times 10 times long when you're singing for other people. And it was good. It was fun, enjoyable. But I wasn't getting the enough, you know, enough content for me out of it.	not getting enough	training	Training	
6	And also my repertoire was a little bit different to what other people were generally doing. And so they weren't always doing stuff I was interested in.	repertoire	Repertoire	Training	
6	I think, at the moment, where I'm probably things about to do with this vocal technique, and how you can help your choir not go flat or sharp, and how you can better, you know, better, critique their singing and spot stuff, because that's, that's still my weakness.	vocal technique	vocal technique/health	Health & Wellbeing	
6	And so something to develop my ear to critique singers and immediately pick up stuff and know what to do about	develop my ear	Training	Training	
6	(Regarding SfP) classes are a bit too big, and when they're too big, you then don't get the podium time, and you spend awful time having other people, and you don't get much help yourself...and I did sometimes feel I'm paying a lot of money here, and I'm actually two thirds of my time on helping other people, which is, okay, fine, but I'm really help me. I've got stuff I need to learn	don't get the podium time	Training	Training	
6	(in terms of exposure to, and learning from different conductors) is not just to sing as much as you can, but of singing in different kinds of choirs…wonderfully invigorating and cross fertilizing and refreshing. And that's something you have to do yourself. You have to, you have to fertilize your own experience.	fertilize your own experience	development	Training	
6	(On first steps) Actually, it was very weird, obviously, very scary and weird	weird/scary	personality traits	People	
6	Then I very easily switch from nervousness to complacency. I get through the nervous comfortable , and then it's easy, well, for me, then to get complacent, to start to relax, and it always goes wrong. Again, I've got to continually challenge and push myself to not do that, and to continually, and that's why I go on the course of the courses bring you back and forth and exposure to the people, and you realize that you're still a bit useless, you know, and there's still got so much to learn compared to others.	Continually challenge	development	Training	
6	I think, I think having a having a feel for what is a good piece of music, and knowing how you want it to be, and knowing how you want it to make people feel that that's came very easy for me in particular in the area of Evensong	knowing how you want it	conducting competency	Training	
6	I think choosing repertoire, which is a big job in Evensong planning ,	repertoire	Repertoire	Training	
6	You play the video shows the music, plays a note, it's a sing along. Part learning video, yes, yeah...And that's part of my sort of Choir 2.0 you know, instead of going to the church, once you do, you sit home a cup of tea and do that a lot..., it's not, it's not, it's not particularly technologically amazing. It's just basic stuff. But I can do that stuff, and quite I'm quite taken with it, and quite enjoy thinking ways to to, you know, to use.	part learning videos	Innovation	Commercial Skills	
6	When the one technology I wish people did have more was iPad. I went iPad about four years ago. A couple of my singers do I wish they all did, finding things would be so much easier and be so much better, and we'd be much, much, much less expensive as well , obviously we wouldn't supply the iPad	iPad, less expensive	Costs	Commercial Skills	
6	, I think all it really is is people who are not as quick as I think they ought to be, or as quick as me when it comes to reading a fairly simple piece of music, I'm not giving them stuff here. This is simple, fairly simple music. Sure, people are not as quick as I think they should be, or quicker than me. My boredom threshold is quite low.	boredom threshold is quite low	personality traits	People	
6	(On future CPD) I might get myself a run of six coaching lessons on that stuff, just so that I give my own technique another kick on the backside and another another sharpening so. But apart from that, I haven't, I mean, I've looked around that there are ABCD run, sort of courses like once a month, for six months on a Saturday and and Sing for Pleasure . Don't quite say, but ABCD do that, and other places do that, I'm a little bit less keen on that, partly because I'm a little bit allergic to long running ongoing things	allergic to long running ongoing things	personality traits	People	
6	I guess I'll just want to encourage people to to think outside the box a bit… And then just try and be a bit different. Don't just think always in terms of concerts on a Saturday night in the church or 730 you know, again and again and again, again and again. You and you're just just think of some other fun stuff, other things to do, you know, daytime stuff with food and drink. Give the audience a good time. We can make the audience feel good and happy, make the choir feel good and happy, but break the form a little bit. Rethink things, reinvent things, whatever the style of music want to do, have fun with it, and just do a bit differently to the way everyone else does it and the way you've always done it.	think outside the box	Innovation	Commercial Skills	
7	I've noticed over the last like 15 years in terms of, like, the engagement and what you need to be doing in that choir so to to retain those children into the group and doing a mixture of different types of repertoire and and also the the age band has changed, I think, over the last few years, in terms of how, where you differentiate away. So normally, when I first started doing it, it would be like, say, age eight to 14, that sort of thing. But actually that that age has gone down to, let's say, six to age six, rather, to like 11, like going to, like primary school, I guess, and then going into, like a youth 1212, to 15, or 12 to 16 or above, I think	engagement, retain those children	recruitment	Commercial Skills	
7	. Think what children expect from from you is a bit more like Glee or something that they've seen on TV, or, you know, the pitch perfect type of fair, you know that, that sort of thing, and and trying to do the higher quality music, but by all but also engaging these young people and making sure that they're coming to rehearsals and enjoying it too, and making it fun for them. So that's that's for me, that's been a challenge, evolving my skill set and evolving how I approach a rehearsal with young people .	challenge, evolving, skill set	development	Training	
7	I think it's social media. I think it's social. I think I think it's so I mean, that does come into obviously being the same age, at similar age, and not being cool.	social media	Society/Environment	People	
7	, my following children's choir. That was where I started thinking about the teaching aspect, too. So, like how, do I want these children to learn to read music. Do I want these children to learn musicianship or Kodaly	teaching aspect	development	Training	
7	Was it a club, or was it a rehearsal? And I think that's, that's the definition between those two things. I think the older students wanted the club. They wanted a singing music theater, singing Matilda, singing Hamilton, singing the stuff that they've been to see a bit on the west end or they'd heard on the radio. And and, yes, they were, they were concerned about it being good there's. They were concerned about it being a high quality experience, and that they sounded good, or they sounded like the track. But I think that that was there, that was really why they were there were they weren't there to to to learn, to read music or for it to be a lesson	wanted the club	community	People	
7	I'm a teacher as well, so I've seen that decline. I guess I, I was working in the state sector for quite a long time, and that they have moved to the private sector in the last eight years. I think, yeah, I think that's definitely an issue.	decline	Society/Environment	People	

Subject No.	Quotation	Keyword/phrase	Coding	Themes	My notes
7	they were using pop songs. They were using backing tracks. They were using stuff that which was sounding like the children would would have heard or would like like to do. They weren't doing Benjamin Britten, for example, they weren't, they weren't doing, you know, the folk songs (re Sing Up programme 2008-2012)	using pop songs	development	training	Compare this to Durrant (2005) where folk songs are an important part of Swedish national identity and are sung by choirs in schools.
7	I think it comes down to confidence in the classroom, confidence of in having a specialist in the school. And that's what sing it was trying to do, which singer was trying to make, make it succession planning to people like me were going to schools, teach the choir, teach this, teach a lesson with the class teacher or whoever was doing music in that school, watching and learning. And it was a collaborative process, and it's supposed to be something which made it sustainable that we were training up,	specialists in schools	Training	Training	Does this tie in with point that S2 made about teachers not having the confidence to lead singing at Primary school level?
7	in the private sector, so I'm doing all this great stuff with it, with these private school kids, and I'm thinking about the driving down the road in the state primary is getting nothing at all.	state primary is getting nothing	Society/Environment	People	
7	seeing and hearing their response to that. They they get a sense of achievement too. They say, Oh, wow, we couldn't, we couldn't do that four weeks ago. And now in rehearsal five, they've done something they couldn't ever do in rehearsal one, for example. Because it's always good to tell them, ask them, I think it will only any any choir actually, not just kids, but what, what do you think is good about it? Where can we go with it? What's that? What's what's going well, what can we? Where can we improve? And it's always good to get their feedback too, because they're obviously in the choir doing it, and I hear all of it. They don't necessarily hear everything,	sense of achievement	feedback	People	
7	(On managing parents) I mean, certainly if it's, if it's a private arrangement, if it's an after school thing. So I've had, I've done it. Obviously, I'm a teacher as I go to music in school, so as well. So I do the this, the choirs in the school. I've also had experience of doing choirs externally, too, where it's just me running the whole thing is the emails. It's the communication, it's, it's, I think it's the expectation that that's the students are there each week that they're paying. Parents don't seem to will say, Oh, Johnny got dentists this week. Or who is going to taekwondo this week? You know, come to the choir next week. And, you know, it's going to also alternate the two things I'm like, you know, I think that they want to give their students, that their children rather the best experience by doing lots of different things. But it's trying to instill that commitment and saying every week or not late, for example or and just helping the students have a sense of pride in what they're doing, and trying to instill that. And it's important that if you're signing up for something your parents or you are paying money for something that actually means something, and so committed to it, and you really benefits from it, if you go every time, rather than alternatively or whatever.	communication/commitment	Communication	People	
7	You know, they got no concept of training or no concept of a journey, and that some things are not instant in this world to live in. Most things are, aren't they? You do something you pay for it happens, whereas music takes time to build the skill and experience and	training/time/instant	Society/Environment	People	
7	did a BMus four year BMus and in my third and fourth year, there were options to do modules. Course, and I chose choral conducting as one of the modules in my third, fourth year. So this was and that I was thinking about it. What did I actually learn?...But it was more about patterns and shapes and bringing people in and learning about when you know how to read the score, basically, because, certainly in the first, in the first year, which it was more about, can I get my four pattern? Can I change my four to three? Can I change from a four to a two? You know, it's all very much technical stuff.	technical stuff	Training	Training	
7	It was all led towards really nuanced stuff and really and working with people that could follow you and could and were professionals. I think, you know, it was definitely aimed at that level. It was, it was aimed at you being the best person you could be in front of the best people that were in front of you. So, so it's all about really, really hardcore technical stuff.	technical stuff	Training	Training	
7	yes, I could, I could do, you know, 3/8, 7/8, you know, 12/8 eight, and do for all manner of things. And I and I could, yes, and I could hear mistakes in a 12 part piece and point things out. You know, I could do quite intricate stuff and aurally write down, you know, Palestrina motets from back there that I had to do in, in my aural tests. But did it actually equip me to run the choral society rehearsal? No, I think is the obvious thing to say there	No	Training	Training	
7	I think I learned some repertoire. I learned from some music that I hadn't come across before. And in the repertoire sessions, though, they were really useful, like it opened and I found some books and websites, things that where I still use them now, where I go through because I'm not sure about orchestration. So I go, what does that need? So I go to my book, and I've got this resource. So it has, it has taught me that, I guess, how to do that.	repertoire	Repertoire	Training	
7	it's about the community, about about the about the collaboration, about the joy, and that's, that's what I love about amateur music making	community/collaboration/joy	community	Health & Wellbeing	
7	it had the nuance and the tone and quality of sound that the professionals and all the students brought, but it had the passion and the energy and the vibrancy that the amateurs gave, because it was their passion and it was their hobby, not their job. And I think that for me, that that was a really light bulb moment, thinking, this is, this was what I started. There was a really interesting kind of collaboration of minds, really, and of different singing.	energy/vibrancy/passion	performance	Performance	
7	You've got to take the people along with you. And I think if you know, if you haven't got any charisma, because I was, there's some people along the course with me, I was thinking, I can't imagine you in front of anyone, isn't it? Right? They were very much. They were organist, very organist. You know? They were like (gestures in a very finicky way)	charisma	personality traits	People	ties in with the additional competencies question
7	in my course, everyone had to have singing lessons as part of the course, which is, I'm talking about the Masters now. And so you know, whether you were singer or not, you had sing lessons. And to try and bridge this gap between technique and making sure that the organists, or people that we hadn't had singing lessons for years, like me could actually communicate with how they wanted the vowel to be, or the great the breath control, and trying to, you know, giving, giving their singers some tools. Because that's what I've, I've seen over the years, is so many organist, pianists, people that you know who are clearly very musical, they're very high musicianship level, but, but can they actually teach a singer how to sing an eight by eight bar phrase, you know, and with a breath control or, you know, that's something that, for me, is so important,	technique/teach	Training	Training	
7	I think the energy, the enthusiasm and the energy that's needed. I think I have that in, in spades like, and that's like, full. For all music really doesn't matter whether it's, you know, Dvorak, or whether it's, you know, Destiny's Child or something..., I think that has to be an innate skill for somebody who's at the front is trying to inspire people to make the best they can out of it. People skills is important, like engaging with people and eye contact, and then, like, making everyone in the room think that they're the most important person there, right?	People skills	People Management	People	
7	(in relation to least favourite aspects) committees! But I guess it's that kind of trying to get that shared sense of direction. And obviously, and when I first started, I was talking about this, because I was quite blinkered about the music, music, and so have I had to kind of open myself a little bit up to, like, finances and venues and, you know, and thinking more strategically over, over a course of three or four years, rather than thinking, I want to do those pieces, I want to do the 100 piece orchestra, I want to have the best service in the world, you know,	open myself a little bit up to, like, finances and venues	People Management	People	
7	(in relation to least favourite aspects) committees! But I guess it's that kind of trying to get that shared sense of direction. And obviously, and when I first started, I was talking about this, because I was quite blinkered about the music, music, and so have I had to kind of open myself a little bit up to, like, finances and venues and, you know, and thinking more strategically over, over a course of three or four years, rather than thinking, I want to do those pieces, I want to do the 100 piece orchestra, I want to have the best service in the world, you know,	open myself a little bit up to, like, finances and venues	organisational/admin skills	Commercial Skills	

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7	in terms of administration, I've learned over the years about how to do it. That's something that I think could have been in my course. I think that sort of thing and that the people skills required. I mean, I know I've never had to write down a 12 part Victoria mo tet since I was at college doing it. So that was part of my test. I had to do an aural test where they give me the starting note for each of the parts. Play it to me eight times. I had to write it all down. I've never had to do that ever, having to plan financially, having to think about a concert series and looking at music repertoire that was, that was perfect for that choir, that was, that was really, really interesting	administration	organisational/admin skills	Commercial Skills	
7	(On the Masters course) it just felt like, for me, that was probably the biggest part of what I should have, should have been in. One of the biggest parts of the course is like, how do you take your skills and disseminate them to others and give them to amateur music making? Because where it's going to be earning your money, not from the BBC singers or, you know, the Tallis Scholars,	amateur music making? Because where it's going to be earning your money	Training	Training	
7	I think I would be I would like some more confidence when I work with orchestras...but I try to pride myself in the fact and try to be quite clear and think that I'm doing okay job, but it's something that I would definitely would invest in myself if I had the money to and to go and go on an orchestral conducting course and actually learn more about that when I do combine my choral society with an orchestra, I don't feel like an imposter. I think imposter syndrome can come in there. Yeah,	imposter syndrome	personality traits	People	
7	I think I would be I would like some more confidence when I work with orchestras...but I try to pride myself in the fact and try to be quite clear and think that I'm doing okay job, but it's something that I would definitely would invest in myself if I had the money to and to go and go on an orchestral conducting course and actually learn more about that when I do combine my choral society with an orchestra, I don't feel like an imposter. I think imposter syndrome can come in there. Yeah,	imposter syndrome	training	Training	
7	I think you have to be, they talk about being a portfolio musician these days, about having some teaching and some playing work and quartet work, whatever. But I think you have to be, I feel like I'm a portfolio choral conductor, because I have to be able to do lots of different styles and lots of different lots of different types. Of choral singing like I have a I have an LGBT choir. I do children's choirs. I have a kind of pop music, theatre choir and classical choirs as well. So you have to be able to have lots of different hats...you have to be, yeah, multi skilled in different different areas to make a success. You can't just do one thing. That's what I'd say.	multi-skilled	Training	Training	
7	I think you have to be, they talk about being a portfolio musician these days, about having some teaching and some playing work and quartet work, whatever. But I think you have to be, I feel like I'm a portfolio choral conductor, because I have to be able to do lots of different styles and lots of different lots of different types. Of choral singing like I have a I have an LGBT choir. I do children's choirs. I have a kind of pop music, theatre choir and classical choirs as well. So you have to be able to have lots of different hats...you have to be, yeah, multi skilled in different different areas to make a success. You can't just do one thing. That's what I'd say.	multi-skilled	organisational/admin skills	Commercial Skills	

Analysis and Coding of Qualitative Data from Interviews by Theme

Model after : Naeem et al, 2023, p.4.

Subject No.	Quotation	Keyword/phrase	Coding	Themes	My notes
1	worked up a project based recruitment model that we've been using since I started with the malvours Choir and it they and we've just rolled it out over these five malwares choirs across country funded by the Arts Council. And the headlines are that Radcliffe on Trent, one of the Male Voice choirs on it, got 120 men on their recruitment project, yeah? So, so it's not, it's, it's, it's reasonably straightforward to get men's joint choirs.	recruitment project	recruitment	Commercial Skills	
1	the covid experience was transformational in a very positive way.	transformational	Innovation	Commercial Skills	
2	I I'd like more boys to join, but then I can't. I can't really affect that unless I try and promote it, because we don't get enough boys. And I'm know that. I know that boys would love it.	More boys to join	recruitment	Commercial Skills	
3	But it also, then, if it's a modern stuff, we've got to buy 30 copies of it, whereas if it's an older piece, we can get it off CPD. We might need a bit of tweaking if the additions bit rubbish. But, you know, it's also a cost, a cost factor,	Cost	Costs	Commercial Skills	
3	I do enjoy the whole planning process and choosing music and putting programs together. That's a nice part of it. And I like the whole rehearsal process of we just work at this thing together, we get to know in more details, and we hone up, polish it up, and, you	planning/choosing music	organisational/admin skills	Commercial Skills	
3	Yeah, struggle for audience as I think we're not doing kind of modern pop choirs. And getting young people in is a big issue for everybody, isn't it? The feeling that, when we go, the whole music sector will die with us, and it's really a challenge to get younger people there's, I mean, it's not just for but orchestra as well. And, you know, it's always a sort of, how can we get new audience?	audience/young people	recruitment	Commercial Skills	
3	, I think they tend to drop out of things in work and family take over. It's one thing they keep on making music courses. I didn't they said, you know, your competition isn't the other choirs and orchestras, it's all the other things that they've got going on, they've got children, they can't get out of an evening . And then, sort of, when the kids grow up, they come back to it. So that's, you know, there is a natural tendency for it to be older people that are in your choirs, unless you although, having said that, went to a kind of open day from the local operatic societies, and then that's where the young people are in there, in music theater. Yes, some great voices in music theater. But they wouldn't necessarily want to do straight choirs,	competition	Competition	Commercial Skills	
4	I think one of the things that's missing is kind of how to set up and market a choir I think that is something that would be incredibly useful, because I think a lot of us it's a it's become very competitive. There are hundreds of choirs where I live, hundreds...And I think helping, helping people, helping choir leaders, I suppose, to identify what their strengths are and how to market their choirs on that, I think, is something that that might be useful, that's not something about that I've thought about doing.	Market/competitive/strengths	Marketing	Commercial Skills	
5	So what I did was advertise a kind of singing workshop so that people could get to know me, and I could get to know some people, and that would be the start of my studio. But what happened was the singing workshop turned into a regular event and became a choir.	advertise	Marketing	Commercial Skills	
5	Yeah, I think delegating is something that choral directors always need to do more of, because you end up with so many jobs otherwise	delegation	organisational/admin skills	Commercial Skills	
6	You play the video shows the music, plays a note, it's a sing along. Part learning video, yes, yeah...And that's part of my sort of Choir 2.0 you know, instead of going to the church, once you do, you sit home a cup of tea and do that a lot..., it's not, it's not, it's not particularly technologically amazing. It's just basic stuff. But I can do that stuff, and quite I'm quite taken with it, and quite enjoy thinking ways to to, you know, to use.	part learning videos	Innovation	Commercial Skills	
6	When the one technology I wish people did have more was iPad. I went iPad about four years ago. A couple of my singers do I wish they all did, finding things would be so much easier and be so much better, and we'd be much, much, much less expensive as well , obviously we wouldn't supply the iPad	iPad, less expensive	Costs	Commercial Skills	
6	I guess I'll just want to encourage people to to think outside the box a bit… And then just try and be a bit different. Don't just think always in terms of concerts on a Saturday night in the church or 730 you know, again and again and again, again and again. You and you're just just think of some other fun stuff, other things to do, you know, daytime stuff with food and drink. Give the audience a good time. We can make the audience feel good and happy, make the choir feel good and happy, but break the form a little bit. Rethink things, reinvent things, whatever the style of music want to do, have fun with it, and just do a bit differently to the way everyone else does it and the way you've always done it.	think outside the box	Innovation	Commercial Skills	
7	I've noticed over the last like 15 years in terms of, like, the engagement and what you need to be doing in that choir so to to retain those children into the group and doing a mixture of different types of repertoire and and also the the age band has changed, I think, over the last few years, in terms of how, where you differentiate away. So normally, when I first started doing it, it would be like, say, age eight to 14, that sort of thing. But actually that that age has gone down to, let's say, six to age six, rather, to like 11, like going to, like primary school, I guess, and then going into, like a youth 1212, to 15, or 12 to 16 or above, I think	engagement, retain those children	recruitment	Commercial Skills	
7	(in relation to least favourite aspects) committees! But I guess it's that kind of trying to get that shared sense of direction. And obviously, and when I first started, I was talking about this, because I was quite blinkered about the music, music, and so have I had to kind of open myself a little bit up to, like, finances and venues and, you know, and thinking more strategically over, over a course of three or four years, rather than thinking, I want to do those pieces, I want to do the 100 piece orchestra, I want to have the best service in the world, you know,	open myself a little bit up to, like, finances and venues	organisational/admin skills	Commercial Skills	
7	in terms of administration, I've learned over the years about how to do it. That's something that I think could have been in my course. I think that sort of thing and that the people skills required. I mean, I know I've never had to write down a 12 part Victoria mo tet since I was at college doing it. So that was part of my test. I had to do an aural test where they give me the starting note for each of the parts. Play it to me eight times. I had to write it all down. I've never had to do that ever, having to plan financially, having to think about a concert series and looking at music repertoire that was, that was perfect for that choir, that was, that was really, really interesting	administration	organisational/admin skills	Commercial Skills	

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7	I think you have to be, they talk about being a portfolio musician these days, about having some teaching and some playing work and quartet work, whatever. But I think you have to be, I feel like I'm a portfolio choral conductor, because I have to be able to do lots of different styles and lots of different lots of different types. Of choral singing like I have a I have an LGBT choir. I do children's choirs. I have a kind of pop music, theatre choir and classical choirs as well. So you have to be able to have lots of different hats...you have to be, yeah, multi skilled in different different areas to make a success. You can't just do one thing. That's what I'd say.	multi-skilled	organisational/admin skills	Commercial Skills	
1	I've got one of our second tenors, wife has cancer, and I have to have a telephone conversation with him	conversation	Pastoral Care	Health & Wellbeing	
1	an amount of community building and low key changing the world that's thrilling, of teaching people or drawing out of people, their inclination to do selfless things, to to put the self second and look at the task.	community	Community	Health & Wellbeing	
1	But and so to take the choir with no name as an example of Kate Warren's homeless choir, the purpose of that choir is not artistic excellence, although they do strive for it, it is to use that structure to make positive life outcomes for homeless people. And they are very, very good at it, very good at it. And they have are trained in all, all the sorts of things around those issues. Her choir leaders are also basically social workers as well, which is great if you have there are whole other choirs that purport to not be music choirs and be social choirs, but they're also a bit rubbish at being social choirs, because if you're going to be a social choir, then do that.	choir leaders/social workers	Wellbeing	Health & Wellbeing	
1	It's a whole different emphasis on the skills you need to bring to that. In some respects, you know, it's not just about your ability to communicate and to bring people. You've got to understand, be able to understand and communicate with people about the reasons they're there.	Understand and communicate with people	Communication	Health & Wellbeing	
1	So, so pathways to choral conducting ought to also include, I suppose it's a little bit somewhere around music therapy, isn't it? Or, or there, there isn't, there isn't the whilst, there certainly is the the training out there to prepare in a structured way, decent professional choral conductors. There's certainly not the pathways out there to prepare the equally valid person who needs to be skilled in a whole load of other things to run the community choir really	pathways/community choir	Training	Health & Wellbeing	
1	How do you handle those people who you you who can't match any pitches back to you in that two or three minutes? And one of the music directors says to me, Well, I just think it's kind enough. I mean, why lie to them or just put them out the misery and tell them sing. It's not their thing, and you should, and they should find something else to do, and you're like for fucks that what? How? Where is your like? Where is everything that you should believe in? Your compassion and your empathy, and all of you know, all of, it makes me wamt to weep, because that person will will now never sing when their child gets married, that person will be silent in the church.	Compassion and empathy	personality traits	Health & Wellbeing	links to Additional competencies question in survey
2	yeah, and things like rehearsal, planning, yeah, just, just choosing repertoire working with the needs of the children and what they might, you know, what vocal skills they might need to develop and warm ups and physical things, getting them to have the right posture, using their voice effectively, which, sadly, I see too often, doesn't happen in school, and children are then hurting their voices because either too low, because often they choose repertoire that's sung by men, or it's it's whatever the teacher wants to do, and they may not have the knowledge of the voice and how the voice works	hurting their voices	vocal technique/health	Health & Wellbeing	
2	a lot of people who go and sing in choirs do it for fun, and it's a social thing, and they may want to have a chat. So it's finding the balance between keeping it fun, but also, this is what we're here for. We, you know, these are my expectations. So adults are the same. They just need to be given a bit of a prod.	social thing	Community	Health & Wellbeing	
2	I'm in the national teachers choir, which teachers go for a weekend. It's next weekend. Actually, they go away for a whole weekend with brand new repertoire they've never seen before, and by the end of it, on Sunday afternoon, they do a concert. It is just uplifting, and for teachers, it's just such a relief from being in the classroom.	Uplifting - relief from being in the classroom	Wellbeing	Health & Wellbeing	
2	Do try and get along to one of their concerts, if you can, the one at the Birmingham Town Hall last year was just so uplifting and emotional. Really seeing children who have profound Special Needs creating the most amazing music. Yeah,	uplifting and emotional	Wellbeing	Health & Wellbeing	
3	the singing aspect as well, because I had about a year's worth of singing lessons, but I'm not really a singer. I sing in choirs so the vocal technique side of things	vocal technique	vocal technique/health	Health & Wellbeing	
3	Rehearsing I think it was a creative process. I don't know. The actual concert is something to get through.I don't enjoy concerts when I'm conducting it. I've got to stay focused and make sure everything happens right. I enjoy the buzz afterwards when everyone says, Oh, that was great. Or conversely, I'll go right down if things weren't didn't go as well as I wanted to, but I just found this sort of stress, a lot of pressure around stupid things, like I occasionally lose my balance, and I kind of worry about whopping so the actual conducting of the concert and then I sort of get to the end of the concert, I feel bit sort of, you know, I've missed it.	stress/pressure	Wellbeing	Health & Wellbeing	
3	I thought, well, I don't, you know, I'm a musician. I don't know so much about singing. And I was hoping for more actual singing technique and how I can help my choir, yeah, instead of bring somebody in now, who sort of local singing teacher comes does occasional session, but she tends to do it more about presentation anyway.	singing technique	vocal technique/health	Health & Wellbeing	
3	Because, I mean, I go to these warm ups with the vague idea that anything muscles going, but really, you know, other than just easing in gently is all I really know about .So, yes, I think, I think sort of more singing technique based, because that's the thing I don't know about, yeah, rather than specifically the conducting side of things.	vague idea/singing technique	vocal technique/health	Health & Wellbeing	
4	Yeah, never really floated my boat, particularly until I joined a choir as an adult, basically, I was single parenting. And yeah, yeah, my mom, who's also a piano teacher, phoned me up one weekend and was like, I didn't have the children. She's like, why are you available when you haven't got the children? You need the social life. And her suggestion was to join a choir that was a local group.	social life	Wellbeing	Health & Wellbeing	
4	**I started singing lessons not long after I'd started the splinter group, because I kind of recognized that I was kind of being pushed vocally, and it maybe wasn't. I just wanted some individual one to one tuition on that and and it was a good call, because what I hadn't appreciated, but maybe I did, on some level, was I was starting to ruin my voice, actually, because I was being asked to sing in a range that wasn't comfortable for me.**	pushed vocally	vocal technique/health	Health & Wellbeing	
4	But anyway, so I'm not like her, and it nearly destroyed me that first year, actually, or a couple of people in the choir, nearly destroyed me, because I relied quite heavily on the keyboard, and I didn't realize until I was talking to my singing teacher during lockdown that I'd kind of developed performance anxiety. I couldn't, I couldn't remember. I couldn't I couldn't sing a song on the way to the choir rehearsal. I could sing a song on the way back from the choir rehearsal that the notes just went from my head during rehearsal, just couldn't do it, so I was lying more and more on my keyboard. And I think essentially I'd been trying to be this other person for them, which was not me.	developed performance anxiety	Wellbeing	Health & Wellbeing	

Subject No.	Quotation	Keyword/phrase	Coding	Themes	My notes
4	And I do think that that, I do think that I don't know, it's hard to say, isn't it, but personally, I think that every choir leader should have some kind of understanding of vocal health. That's my own, my own view, and that's probably colored by my experiences. But other than that, I think I was having singing lessons, and I was getting that, that the my, you know, I was able to bring my what I was being taught to make my sound, my singing, healthier. I was able to bring that to my choirs and and have done because one of the first things that I was told when I started with the carers choir, by a few people, was that, particularly after performances, they could feel quite throaty. And so, yeah, just by doing so VTS . I mean, I haven't heard anybody say that in years. So, yeah, so yeah, I think, I think it's important to have that, that vocal health understanding. But I think because I was having singing lessons, and it was really fresh as well , because I suppose my teacher, Emma, was trying to move what I was doing into a more healthy way of doing things. So I think that was important, yeah, to have that before I started the choir, or at least I was in the choir, yeah.	understanding of vocal health	vocal technique/health	Health & Wellbeing	
4	I personally feel that I have a responsibility to my singers to make sure that they are not doing any damage to themselves. It's like safety first, isn't it?	responsibility/safety first	vocal technique/health	Health & Wellbeing	
4	we were made to move around and sing different parts in different ranges, but without properly helping us to extend our ranges, yeah, which is, which is great from musicality perspective, and you know, and and you know, improves confidence in, you know, holding a line, improves all skills, improves all of that. But as you say, if it's uncomfortable, the chances are, you know, you're going to end up doing some damage.	without properly helping us to extend our ranges	vocal technique/health	Health & Wellbeing	
4	you create that environment for them. So I think for for me, if you are creating a choir for well being, I think that's quite important that people feel safe.	environment/safe	Community	Health & Wellbeing	
4	I made a conscious effort to it's a boundary thing separate. And I think this is the thing with choirs for well being to separate my it's keeping it's keeping everything warm and friendly, but still having boundaries in place, and I've made a conscious effort since September to make sure that I'm doing my own things outside of choir, within my own friendship groups, and I'm looking after my own well being. Say that the choir doesn't become something that I need. Does that make sense to you? Yeah. And I think, and I think that's, that's a tricky one to balance, is the boundaries, and it's one of the things that I've addressed in my framework.	boundaries/balance	Wellbeing	Health & Wellbeing	
4	No, no. If, if there's anything, I would say vocal health training.	vocal health	vocal technique/health	Health & Wellbeing	
5	it's a very much a community in a choir, that it's a very inclusive, welcoming choir. And I think everybody in the choir feels it's their choir, so it's our choir rather than my choir.	community	Community	Health & Wellbeing	
5	The other thing probably, I would like to have, there is a thing, yes just more in terms of singing technique because my approach to singing to each of the choirs my Magpie stealing of warm ups and things that I've got from other people. And we've been lucky. We've had a couple we've had a couple of people come in to do workshops with the choir, sort of vocal technique workshops , and there's always more you can do.	singing technique	vocal technique/health	Health & Wellbeing	
5	Me too. Me too. Vocal health, vocal anatomy, we have had to look after people's voices, yeah, and get the best out of them.	look after people's voices	vocal technique/health	Health & Wellbeing	
5	(In reference to area of interest for MA in Vocal Pedagogy) I think all aspects I'm interested in our to do with inclusivity and sort of bringing people in, making it accessible. We've been we've just recently done a workshop with Paul Whitaker, who's a Deaf musician, and we learned to sign some songs with him the late, yeah, yeah. So we've been doing signing and singing, and I've got really excited about that. And I think there's a lot of potential in sign singing, not just inclusivity for for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing, but also, I think there are benefits for, for instance, some of my pupils are neurodivergent, and I think the signed singing is a really useful tool for them.	inclusivity/neurodivergent	inclusivity	Health & Wellbeing	ties in with additional competencies question
6	I think, at the moment, where I'm probably things about to do with this vocal technique, and how you can help your choir not go flat or sharp, and how you can better, you know, better, critique their singing and spot stuff, because that's, that's still my weakness.	vocal technique	vocal technique/health	Health & Wellbeing	
7	it's about the community, about about the about the collaboration, about the joy, and that's, that's what I love about amateur music making	community/collaboration/joy	community	Health & Wellbeing	
1	I've got one of our second tenors, wife has cancer, and I have to have a telephone conversation with him	conversation	Pastoral Care	People	
1	And one of the baritones, I have to have a conversation with him, because basically, he's a lazy shit and he's going to piss or get off the pot .	conversation	People Management	People	
1	it's happening in a number of different pathways, because if you look at the Cathedral music model, then you play the organ really well, and you play the organ really well, and you play the organ really well, and then you've played the organ so well that Your prize is to not play the organ but to conduct the choir instead.	pathways to choral conducting	Routes	People	
1	I trace back to aspects of my childhood, and particularly my mother's charges and situations whilst I was kind of in the primary school/secondary school, and I see in that why I feel comfortable when I'm in in control of the situation. So there's a temperamental thing there. There's a there's a temperament thing. The word temperamental means has a actual call, a temperament based situation, that either temperament is also appropriate the and equally from the same source, a level of achieve, driven to achievement	temperament	personality traits	People	
1	So I think there's an amount of temperament that goes into choral conducting that possibly can't be trained, a kind of determination , perhaps, but I think that's where I that's where I got it, got it from, and the amount of, okay, I'm going to decide which row the ducks are in thank you.	temperament	personality traits	People	
1	There was a massive breakthrough when I realized how thrilling saying sorry I was wrong, because that's like, whoa, that's my new kryptonite. I love it. No no, my go to thing, and you've messed it all up, and you go, I'm really sorry I got that wrong and I didn't want to under that. And people are like, I don't know where to go from there.	sorry	reflection	People	
1	So probably the thing that has come to me, and it's still a journey, is the managing, the managing the people, and always been able to go right, let's go this way and be exciting and have people follow you because you were exciting. But to actually have deep, fruitful relationships with with these people is something that's come later also,	managing the people	People Management	People	
1	this works particularly nicely because it's all in the one organization to have built procedures, policies and procedures to deal with difficult situations when it's just you working like the Lone Ranger Riding into one town and then the next town. It becomes quite you, them, I think. Whereas now we, for example, we have a learning and development policy which addresses which will be made reference to in the telephone call I have to make about the person who's not really pulling their weight and doing this kind of thing, and previously, when I was working outside those kinds of structures, they there was a danger of those situations becoming personal, yeah, yeah, and not nicely personal. All of it is personal.	danger of those situations becoming personal	Boundaries	People	

Subject No.	Quotation	Keyword/phrase	Coding	Themes	My notes
1	The the thing that one of the things that excites me is taking somebody who never knew they could do this and ludicrously making them, giving them the skills and confidence to do something that's amazing, that's quite a buzz, and it's a different buzz to are working with pro singers because they don't. They're not so thrilled by it as as your as your amateur, who it isn't their thing, and they ought not to be able to do it. The Pro the the pro gig is the pro gig, isn't it? And you go, and you smile, and you sing most of the right notes, and then you walk away again. And the thing, the thing you're most interested in about that engagement that has passed is whether you've been paid or not.	amateur/professional	Motivations	People	
1	an amount of community building and low key changing the world that's thrilling, of teaching people or drawing out of people, their inclination to do selfless things, to to put the self second and look at the task.	community	Community	People	
1	It's a whole different emphasis on the skills you need to bring to that. In some respects, you know, it's not just about your ability to communicate and to bring people. You've got to understand, be able to understand and communicate with people about the reasons they're there.	Understand and communicate with people	Communication	People	
1	How do you handle those people who you you who can't match any pitches back to you in that two or three minutes? And one of the music directors says to me, Well, I just think it's kind enough. I mean, why lie to them or just put them out the misery and tell them sing. It's not their thing, and you should, and they should find something else to do, and you're like for fucks that what? How? Where is your like? Where is everything that you should believe in your compassion and your empathy, and all of you know, all of o weep, because that person will will now never sing when their child gets married, that person will be silent in the church.	Compassion and empathy	personality traits	People	links to Additional competencies question in survey
1	it comes out of the covid and the technology trying to strands together that it to talk to you. Used to be a I couldn't do it in my house, or I could, I could have done it in my house, but we didn't, did we? And everybody was dumped straight into this being how we do things, and isn't it great? And I'll go make cup of tea and I don't, and I may or may not have trousers on, who knows? Yeah, but I can, I can message Eric light in Vancouver, and spend 45 minutes chatting with him about something as easily as if you were my next door neighbor. And absolutely, that is a thrilling part of of how technology and it is not new technology. That's the that's the kind of kick yourself thing we could all have been doing it this age scope.	technology	Communication	People	
1	people don't invest the time they would in a child who struggles with mathematics, struggles with English grammar and so, and I think that is because, to a certain extent, it's seen as not not frivolous, have a level of importance put on. It, which, considering how much a music education can impact the rest of your academic achievement, it's just ridiculous.	music education/impact on academic achievement	Society/Environment	People	
1	So so that idea of wanting to be, wanting to be some kind of imagined authority figure, which I think I might, I'm certainly guilty of myself, wanting to be some flawless authority figure, and marrying that up with wanting to be better, and marrying that up with not wanting to be wrong, but being wrong being the route to better.	authority/route to better	personality traits	People	
2	I was the one who could stand up and sing in front of the children. I was the one who would lead the singing practice or the hymn practice, because it was in in me to do that.	in me to do that	personality traits	People	
2	And it's just, now I don't actually teach classroom teaching anymore. I'd left, left that in 2016 and joined the music service. So now I have terrible imposter syndrome, because I'm now teaching singing to children, doing singing exams, and I'm leading three children's choirs, and I've just taken my own singing exam as well. So it's kind of fantastic, really, yeah, fantastic. Um, you know, it's great.	imposter syndrome	personality traits	People	some people are more prone to imposter syndrome
2	I think because I've always been a teacher, uh, although I've always been very shy, I was very shy as a young as a child and growing up, but training as a teacher and having to stand up in front of whole classes of children and teach, it gives you that confidence that you can you can do it. I prefer to stand in front of children than I do adults, I have to say, so that might be a different thing to think about. Why? Why do I feel comfortable standing in front of three, three or 400 children, but I can't stand in front of five adults because I just... Maybe adults, you feel that you're being judged a bit more. I don't know.	very shy	personality traits	People	
2	So because I had the confidence as a teacher, I didn't feel embarrassed, which a lot of teachers feel embarrassed singing in front of other children, so I didn't have that barrier at all, although there are lots of teachers who don't like singing in front of children, and I've done some staff training with schools I work with now who just can't seem to sing in front of their classes, or don't like leading singing. They'll sing if, if, if a song is on, they'll sing along with the children, but they won't lead it. They won't model it. They won't they won't try and improve things. Yeah, no, they won't demonstrate. So I can see that there's a big gap there with teachers not having confidence to sing, but I actually natural for me, because I've always sung	feel embarrassed	personality traits	People	
2	So lots of the repertoire of some has just been for fun, and some of it's off copy. Lot of church repertoire is the hymns and anthems that don't require an awful lot of academic musicianship, and then that's translated into where I lead the children. It's not about academic musicianship, it is having fun,	fun	motivations	People	
2	What else has been hard? Well, working with adults, I find very, very difficult and part of the threat. Well, all of the training has always been with adults. So the training had never been working with Jordan. The training has always been in groups of adults. Might have maybe 12 adults in the group. You then take your turn to go up to the podium and do your piece. And I find that absolutely terrifying, even though everyone's in the same position, and they're all doing their own piece, and they're all probably just.	adults/ terrifying	personality traits	People	
2	The people management type of thing kind of gets in the way of just the music sometimes. But I know it's important…always a small group who are just wasting time chatting and wanting to go to the toilet constantly and in and out.	People management	People Management	People	
2	I don't want to be, you know, sloppy and being a you know, disciplinarian about it. They're there to have fun, but there are certain expectations aren't there. So I have to make that very clear from the very beginning, that this isn't just, you know, you know, a club where you can come and chat to your friends. We've got things to do, so I have to be quite firm .	disciplinarian	Authority	People	
2	It's the people management. It's the thinking ahead. It's the problem solving, troubleshooting, thinking on your feet, a lot of acting, pretending that you're happy when you're not, or, you know, all those things that you have to do as a teacher.	People management	People Management	People	
2	a lot of people who go and sing in choirs do it for fun, and it's a social thing, and they may want to have a chat. So it's finding the balance between keeping it fun, but also, this is what we're here for. We, you know, these are my expectations. So adults are the same. They just need to be given a bit of a prod.	these are my expectations	People Management	People	

Subject No.	Quotation	Keyword/phrase	Coding	Themes	My notes
2	having that confidence to actually stand up and make statements and leadership, leadership skills, I think you know whether you're whether your job requires you to be a leader of something. If you're running a choir, you have to have that leadership, because you are the you are the leader at the end of the day. And you might, people might want to chip in with ideas. And Ula, who I inspired me to do or she would say that when she runs a choir, she never has a committee. She calls it a benign dictatorship, because she has to be the one to make the decisions on things. And no, there's no negotiation. You're not deciding what you want to sing. I'm deciding what, what we're going to sing.	leadership skills	People Management	People	
2	Um, I would like to have more confidence to be able to play the piano. I have got grade four piano and working on a grade five piece at the moment, but I don't have the confidence or the skills to be able to just to sit in front of children and just play with them . So all our songs are always accompanied by backing tracks, because I don't have an accompanist.	confidence	personality traits	People	
2	I think a lot, a lot of children don't seem to be able to commit to anything, or really doing too many things, and there's too many activities happening, and they just don't have the energy or time to commit to any one thing for very long. I don't know. It just seems to be quite a shame that these opportunities are there. And yeah, they seem to think they can just chop and change ,	commit	Society/Environment	People	
2	Ofsted, Ofsted they don't bother about music. So why would schools bother investing in musicians if they're only thing that come and see is in Maths and English results	investing in musicians	Society/Environment	People	
3	yes, I mean, sometimes management, I'm not sort of really strict, as strict as I should be, and people talking rehearsals and answering back and stuff. I mean, I think over the years, I've, you know, got a fairly interactive style of running rehearsals, but then it can get that can get a bit sort of that everyone's talking at once, and I've got to stop it, please. That's one of the things I found more difficult.	management - more difficult	People Management	People	
3	and also, you know, you get, you get also get diplomatic issues from time to time with, you know, a particular person who's singing flat and who's very sensitive about being told, I'm sure we've all come across those, and how to do it so diplomatically, so that you correct the problem, which everybody else can hear anyway, without drawing too much attention to the people. Management side is quite a skill.	Diplomatic/management	People Management	People	
3	it's a good sort of partly social. It's also partly musical, although I have to say, what I do notice is that when I actually play music myself, I think, Oh, yes, this is what I've been missing. In fact, you get done play the piano. That's connection in a way that just waving hands isn't. So it's odd that way. But I do enjoy it.	social thing	motivations	People	
3	I think my posture is bad. I do tend to hunch up and I'm sometimes, sometimes I'll get a bit kind of almost lightheaded because I'm not breathing properly and or I stand up on my tiptoes and lean forward. And I think when I actually look at videos, and I'm doing a lot of like there's probably some work to be done on the actual just what I look like and how I do it, and maybe I don't need to do quite such big gestures, to keep it more you know, certainly that side of things I think could could do is I thought about doing the advanced course, but obviously not being a professional.	Not being a professional	reflection	People	
3	I've got family life and other things to work around, and learning disabilities (daughter). Going away all those Saturdays or Sundays when I did it before, yeah, it was quite a, quite a push.	Family life	Priorities	People	
4	but she also left the unpaid carers choir, and they wanted somebody who understood how this MD works, and so that it wasn't going to be too different. You know, transition would be easier. So I got a phone call asking me if I'd do it. And I kind of went, I don't know, I don't I don't know, can I I'm not sure. And I was told, Well, we think you can, and we would like you to, um, so I did.	can I, I'm not sure	personality traits	People	
4	. I kind of came out of the pandemic, I don't know, like, like, I'd come out of the cocoon or something, suddenly this much more confident person. And, yeah, took on more choirs, and absolutely love it. But yes, that was, that was why I did it, because I was asked to, and it was the best thing I ever did.	out of the cocoon/much more confident person	motivations	People	
4	But before I became completely self employed, I went into early years, and I managed a nursery for quite a few years. And so I think people management has has always been a strength of mine. And yeah, and I guess kind of what I'm doing at the moment is a lot about dynamics, quite dynamics among the people in front of me, and just kind of creating. I've realized, I've realized, over time, that my biggest strength is, is creating a community and getting to know my choir members.	people management/dynamics/community	People Management	People	
4	because I haven't come from a professionally vocal background. Having to sing in front of people and having to go on Zoom, where people essentially just listening to my voice was incredibly hard for me, and I had to get very, very, very quickly. I had to become very comfortable with my own singing voice .	get comfortable with my own singing voice	personality traits	People	
4	the upside of that is when I asked my choir members to record tracks for me to send in so I could put together those wonderful videos that we all did during during lockdown, I could empathize with them and say, Look, I didn't I didn't like the sound of my own voice either, and I've had to kind of learn how to become comfortable with that so there is no judgment at all. I know what it's like.	empathise	personality traits	People	ties in with additional competencies question
4	I'm singing. I'm just, you know, singing and singing with other people. My life is full of music.What could go wrong with that?	My life is full of music	motivations	People	job satisfaction
4	when it all comes together, you know, when you've been teaching them those moments of beauty in front of you, and that ability to make that happen. I just think there's something really magical about that, yeah, yeah.	moments of beauty/ really magical	motivations	People	job satisfaction
4	one of my choirs is committee led, and I think not feeling as in control is tricky, to manage the politics.I think that's a whole different ball game, because I can influence, I can heavily influence how how things go, but sometimes the people politics, in the choir, can be tricky because I just don't have the same handle on it as I do my other choirs	committee led/control/politics/people politics	People Management	People	
5	such a big tapestry of different routes and different Yeah, yeah, and different people will want to know different parts of the process more	routes	Routes	People	
5	(Referencing the need for training) Um, well, I realized fairly early on that I needed more , and I've been drawing in more, and I'm still, I think, as as a non music graduate, I've always had a bit of imposter syndrome, and I've always wanted to take on board, and I found a lot of really good things	imposter syndrome	personality traits	People	
5	more of a facilitator than a dictator style	facililtator v dictator	People Management	People	
5	but I didn't like speaking in front of crowds, and again, I got help with that the we quite often have people in the choir introducing different sections of the program. And so I'll write the notes, and then I'll divvy them up. Who are comfortable doing that, but, but actually, over time, I've got better at myself, not quite so terrified as I was.	speaking in front of crowds	personality traits	People	

Subject No.	Quotation	Keyword/phrase	Coding	Themes	My notes
5	(Re a local competition) a community choirs class, but it's non non competitive, so they have an adjudicator but nobody's going to lose, nobody's going to win. Just get feedback, positive feedback, but because you're singing for other choirs you want to, it's a good incentive to bring your best game and and from the first one where we I had to prize them off the back wall of the stage like a frightened rabbit to the back of the stage, and to now where they go up and, and really impressed me, yeah, and that was Really nice. That's been a really nice journey that we've got really constructive criticism from the adjudicators in that	positive feedback/incentive/constructive criticism	feedback	People	
5	It's such a generous and sharing community. I've just learned so much from being around, yeah, other music teachers.	generous and sharing community	community	People	
5	(On being a choral director in the UK at this time) Just that it's a real privilege, and I love it. I think it was a big eye opener going through covid and not having that, yeah, and you just see how much it means to so many people.	How much it means to so many people	motivations	People	
6	(On first steps) Actually, it was very weird, obviously, very scary and weird	weird/scary	personality traits	People	
6	, I think all it really is is people who are not as quick as I think they ought to be, or as quick as me when it comes to reading a fairly simple piece of music, I'm not giving them stuff here. This is simple, fairly simple music. Sure, people are not as quick as I think they should be, or quicker than me. My boredom threshold is quite low.	boredom threshold is quite low	personality traits	People	
6	(On future CPD) I might get myself a run of six coaching lessons on that stuff, just so that I give my own technique another kick on the backside and another another sharpening so. But apart from that, I haven't, I mean, I've looked around that there are ABCD run, sort of courses like once a month, for six months on a Saturday and and Sing for Pleasure . Don't quite say, but ABCD do that, and other places do that, I'm a little bit less keen on that, partly because I'm a little bit allergic to long running ongoing things	allergic to long running ongoing things	personality traits	People	
7	I think it's social media. I think it's social. I think I think it's so I mean, that does come into obviously being the same age, at similar age, and not being cool.	social media	Society/Environment	People	
7	Was it a club, or was it a rehearsal? And I think that's, that's the definition between those two things. I think the older students wanted the club. They wanted a singing music theater, singing Matilda, singing Hamilton, singing the stuff that they've been to see a bit on the west end or they'd heard on the radio. And and, yes, they were, they were concerned about it being good there's. They were concerned about it being a high quality experience, and that they sounded good, or they sounded like the track. But I think that that was there, that was really why they were there were they weren't there to to to learn, to read music or for it to be a lesson	wanted the club	community	People	
7	I'm a teacher as well, so I've seen that decline. I guess I, I was working in the state sector for quite a long time, and that they have moved to the private sector in the last eight years. I think, yeah, I think that's definitely an issue.	decline	Society/Environment	People	
7	in the private sector, so I'm doing all this great stuff with it, with these private school kids, and I'm thinking about the driving down the road in the state primary is getting nothing at all.	state primary is getting nothing	Society/Environment	People	
7	seeing and hearing their response to that. They they get a sense of achievement too. They say, Oh, wow, we couldn't, we couldn't do that four weeks ago. And now in rehearsal five, they've done something they couldn't ever do in rehearsal one, for example. Because it's always good to tell them, ask them, I think it will only any any choir actually, not just kids, but what, what do you think is good about it? Where can we go with it? What's that? What's what's going well, what can we? Where can we improve? And it's always good to get their feedback too, because they're obviously in the choir doing it, and I hear all of it. They don't necessarily hear everything,	sense of achievement	feedback	People	
7	(On managing parents) I mean, certainly if it's, if it's a private arrangement, if it's an after school thing. So I've had, I've done it. Obviously, I'm a teacher as I go to music in school, so as well. So I do the this, the choirs in the school. I've also had experience of doing choirs externally, too, where it's just me running the whole thing is the emails. It's the communication, it's, it's, I think it's the expectation that that's the students are there each week that they're paying. Parents don't seem to will say, Oh, Johnny got dentists this week. Or who is going to taekwondo this week? You know, come to the choir next week. And, you know, it's going to also alternate the two things I'm like, you know, I think that they want to give their students, that their children rather the best experience by doing lots of different things. But it's trying to instill that commitment and saying every week or not late, for example or and just helping the students have a sense of pride in what they're doing, and trying to instill that. And it's important that if you're signing up for something your parents or you are paying money for something that actually means something, and so committed to it, and you really benefits from it, if you go every time, rather than alternatively or whatever.	communication/commitment	Communication	People	
7	You know, they got no concept of training or no concept of a journey, and that some things are not instant in this world to live in. Most things are, aren't they? You do something you pay for it happens, whereas music takes time to build the skill and experience and	training/time/instant	Society/Environment	People	
7	You've got to take the people along with you. And I think if you know, if you haven't got any charisma, because I was, there's some people along the course with me, I was thinking, I can't imagine you in front of anyone, isn't it? Right? They were very much. They were organist, very organist. You know? They were like (gestures in a very finicky way)	charisma	personality traits	People	ties in with the additional competencies question
7	I think the energy, the enthusiasm and the energy that's needed. I think I have that in, in spades like, and that's like, full. For all music really doesn't matter whether it's, you know, Dvorak, or whether it's, you know, Destiny's Child or something..., I think that has to be an innate skill for somebody who's at the front is trying to inspire people to make the best they can out of it. People skills is important, like engaging with people and eye contact, and then, like, making everyone in the room think that they're the most important person there, right?	People skills	People Management	People	
7	(in relation to least favourite aspects) committees! But I guess it's that kind of trying to get that shared sense of direction. And obviously, and when I first started, I was talking about this, because I was quite blinkered about the music, music, and so have I had to kind of open myself a little bit up to, like, finances and venues and, you know, and thinking more strategically over, over a course of three or four years, rather than thinking, I want to do those pieces, I want to do the 100 piece orchestra, I want to have the best service in the world, you know,	open myself a little bit up to, like, finances and venues	People Management	People	
7	I think I would be I would like some more confidence when I work with orchestras...but I try to pride myself in the fact and try to be quite clear and think that I'm doing okay job, but it's something that I would definitely would invest in myself if I had the money to and to go and go on an orchestral conducting course and actually learn more about that when I do combine my choral society with an orchestra, I don't feel like an imposter. I think imposter syndrome can come in there. Yeah,	imposter syndrome	personality traits	People	
3	Would you like to do the intros? And he loves and he comes out, he just does them very well. And when he does the intros, it just gives a bit more me time to think about the next piece. It takes the pressure off.	Pressure off	performance	Performance	

Subject No.	Quotation	Keyword/phrase	Coding	Themes	My notes
5	I think it's having the choir perform for people, and you get that moment where it all comes together, and you can feel the audience are experiencing what you hope they'd feel from that song, and the choir has got it and the audience has got it, and it's just magic.	magic	performance	Performance	
7	it had the nuance and the tone and quality of sound that the professionals and all the students brought, but it had the passion and the energy and the vibrancy that the amateurs gave, because it was their passion and it was their hobby, not their job. And I think that for me, that that was a really light bulb moment, thinking, this is, this was what I started. There was a really interesting kind of collaboration of minds, really, and of different singing.	energy/vibrancy/passion	performance	Performance	
1	I had my first Choral Society, whilst I had was doing my A levels, and was I can only imagine how ill equipped I was to to do that, but the the arrogance of youth, hey? And so I then spent my undergraduate three years taking the University Singers and directing the wind band and and having a choir in the community as well, and then I still thought I was going to sing, so I went to the academy as a first study singer, but ended up spending a lot of time in the choral conducting department.	ill equipped	training	Training	
1	I remember sketching out the CPD and what I wanted to achieve from it, or what I wanted the participants to achieve from it in the first instance. And this is kind of like money available a training program to develop for primary school teachers to be able to do singing with their kids.	primary school teachers to be able to do singing with their kids	training	Training	
1	And I quickly discovered that what you see of conducting is, is like the tip of the iceberg is, is only, well, I flip it on its head, you can see astonishingly good conductors who get amazingly amazing results, who have very poor technique, as in, I'm sitting here watching this person conduct, and I think what the fuck you're doing?	amazing results with poor technique	conducting competency	Training	
1	the gesture is only a minuscule part of the job. It is, what's the turn of phrase, a requirement, but not sufficient.	miniscule part of the job	conducting competency	Training	
1	if I was stood in front of them as a singer, I'd rather somebody had understanding and intention and a deep knowledge of what we were trying to achieve. And, you know, if their beat shapes are a bit unorthodox, I can, I can square that square, those circles,	understand and intention	conducting competency	Training	
1	I worked out beat shapes myself, you know, but that does, that does seem to be where we are with, with conducting training in this country.	conducting training	conducting competency	Training	
1	But I think the the knowledge of performance process, the knowledge of languages. I mean the how on earth have I? How on earth, at age of 18, am I to decide which make an informed decision of the Italian pronunciation of whatever?	language training	conducting competency	Training	
1	it's happening in a number of different pathways, because if you look at the Cathedral music model, then you play the organ really well, and you play the organ really well, and you play the organ really well, and then you've played the organ so well that Your prize is to not play the organ but to conduct the choir instead.	pathways to choral conducting	Routes	Training	
1	the choice of repertoire is a make or break thing, isn't it? Yeah, this is, this is another of the this must be right, or none of it can be right. Yeah. And I think repertoire there is, there is zero training and repertoire choice is there. I mean, there's nobody is is is T there's no course that tells you which piece should go next or what you should be looking for.	choice of repertoire	Repertoire	Training	
1	especially in terms of your choir's ability, there is nothing more soul destroying than trying to force somebody to sing something they're just not capable of. Yeah, and you know, it's just in that, that sweet spot of just too hard for them, you need to Yeah. There needs to be an element to allow them to develop Yeah. But yeah, it is getting that balance right, isn't it? Giving them something which is a challenge, a learning opportunity, but not so difficult that, you know, basically people start giving up	force somebody to sing something they're just not capable of	Repertoire	Training	
1	particularly in the in Entry Level Singing opportunities, your community choirs and this kind of thing there is the lack of training means that the groups suffer from poor repertoire so that if the conductor who wants to sing that piece because they like that piece, or the choir that wants to sing that piece because they like that piece, now this could easily come across for me as a kind of repertoire snobbiness, and I do have repertoire snobbiness, but that's separate to this	poor repertoire	Repertoire	Training	
1	singing well crafted music with nice voice leading and good ranges and melodic interest in all the parts makes singing more enjoyable, makes you a better singer, singing a pop song arrangement that has got the parts jammed in underneath the melody and was never even conceived for choir,	makes singing more enjoyable	Repertoire	Training	
1	So I think there's a massive, massive problem created from that lack of skill across the whole sector in selecting proper repertoire, I don't I, whilst some conductor might think singing some arrangement of Bohemian Rhapsody or the Pink Panther might be fun and funny or whatever, it is, not going to be a musical or a choral experience, is it?	selecting proper repertoire	Repertoire	Training	
1	I've just done that, frsm in choral conducting, which was a nice opportunity to do a bit of a for many people, the rehearsal and the actual exam proper would be the scary, for me. It's like, Come watch my rehearsal. I'd like to show off, please. But the research paper on that was really quite interesting in this setting	FRSM	conducting competency	Training	
1	I'm starting Masters in September,	Masters	CPD	Training	
1	taking the vast majority of male voice choirs being taken by people with no musical qualifications or experience whatsoever,	no musical qualifications or experience	training	Training	
1	we then find out that we're not surprised that the male voice choirs in this country are a bit shit because, because, how could they not be with the with the leadership now the next, the next thought, was with this research paper, just sending it through to you with this research paper, was surely, if they're finding themselves like the proverbial fish up a fence post, nobody knows how it got there. It doesn't know why it's there, and it doesn't know what it's doing, you would think that they would be so desperate for CPD that it would be unbelievable. And none of them are, and none of the choirs have any budgets for CPD. None of there's, there's just nothing going on. So I think there's if there would be a question that I would want further answers to. I would want to know why people how would you phrase it? How I want to know, how the hell they've got the nerve to do it with no skills or experience. I mean, surely.	desperate for CPD	CPD	Training	
1	But and so to take the choir with no name as an example of Kate Warren's homeless choir, the purpose of that choir is not artistic excellence, although they do strive for it, it is to use that structure to make positive life outcomes for homeless people. And they are very, very good at it, very good at it. And they have are trained in all, all the sorts of things around those issues. Her choir leaders are also basically social workers as well, which is great if you have there are whole other choirs that purport to not be music choirs and be social choirs, but they're also a bit rubbish at being social choirs, because if you're going to be a social choir, then do that.	choir leaders/social workers	Wellbeing	Training	

Subject No.	Quotation	Keyword/phrase	Coding	Themes	My notes
1	It's a whole different emphasis on the skills you need to bring to that. In some respects, you know, it's not just about your ability to communicate and to bring people. You've got to understand, be able to understand and communicate with people about the reasons they're there.	Understand and communicate with people	Communication	Training	
1	So, so pathways to choral conducting ought to also include, I suppose it's a little bit somewhere around music therapy, isn't it? Or, or there, there isn't, there isn't the whilst, there certainly is the the training out there to prepare in a structured way, decent professional choral conductors. There's certainly not the pathways out there to prepare the equally valid person who needs to be skilled in a whole load of other things to run the community choir really	pathways/community choir	Training	Training	
1	I think, and it was fascinating to see the whole world trying to do something new and trying to work out what it was. And like the most experienced person, the least experienced person, all being at the same level at week one, kind of like, What the hell do we do? But we found that we've been using a number of apps to for the singers to prepare the music, and we've taken to videoing tasks as well so the singers have tough in rehearsals, and we found that, and this only came about due to those lockdown zooms, that the way the Zoom was useful was to set was like a seminar on the work that they were about to do and an appraisal of the work that they'd done the week before, whether it be a video task or. Work on, on part, learning in some of these apps and coming out of it, I now can set these tasks and do every single week, and the singers get on with them and understand how thrilling that is to come to the room having the music learnt and memorized and and all that kind of thing. And I would not have been able to do it if they hadn't had that covid experience to totally change the kind of ethos of the group. And some people went, and I'm glad, because it transpired that they would not up for doing what we what we wanted to do, and investing that amount of time, and they'd go and sing with other clients who don't demand and that's fine, but absolutely the covid experience has changed completely. The standard is twice as good as it was before, and now they prepare things themselves. It's good.	standard is twice as good	development	Training	
1	I think of how much development I get from my network	development	Network	Training	
1	there's an idea that the conductor is the silhouette at the beginning of Fantasia who stands up there and taps on the stand, and everybody is hushed and silent when actually the conductor is learning, learning as much. What do I say? What do I say to myself? The whole point of a rehearsal is trying to get it's exactly the whole point of being a parent to make yourself redundant.	the conductor is learning	development	Training	
2	I've been a primary school teacher for 31 years. Yeah, and while I was teaching, and I've sung all my life, so I've sung in church choir, sung in choirs all my life. So when I was teaching, I was just doing bits of kind of singing leadership in school, just you're doing the hymn practice and singing with the classes anyway, as I would normally, you know, as I love singing all the time	sung in choirs all my life	development	Training	
2	invited me to go and do some staff training in how to lead a choir. So this would have been about 2009 did some staff training, okay, in Sandwell, which is where the authority that I was working in. And gradually from then it took step by step to then go on to do my conductor training through Sing for Pleasure	conductor training	training	Training	
2	So I'm not a musician, although I'm very musical, and I've always sung. I have no formal training at all.	not a musician/no formal training	training	Training	
2	And it's just, now I don't actually teach classroom teaching anymore. I'd left, left that in 2016 and joined the music service. So now I have terrible imposter syndrome, because I'm now teaching singing to children, doing singing exams, and I'm leading three children's choirs, and I've just taken my own singing exam as well. So it's kind of fantastic, really, yeah, fantastic. Um, you know, it's great.	imposter syndrome	personality traits	Training	training doesn't do enough to counter this
2	Not particularly, no, because the conductor training program is for anybody, any, any, any singing leader of any type of choir. So the music choice, the repertoire, isn't particularly for children, but it can be used for children. It's fantastic. The the foundation level, the kind of the first level of the conductor training is all rounds and very simple part songs, which you can do with children, yeah, of course. And equally, do them with a group of adults, because they're such fun, yeah? So the repertoire is flexible for what whoever you're leading to do that.	repertoire/ simple /flexible	Repertoire	Training	
2	but it gave me the skills to, like, really strip it back down to, what am I doing? Is this effective? Are my gestures? You know, telling the children what I want them to do. And so, yeah, the way they the pedagogy of Sing for Pleasure training is so step by step, literally, can you beat pattern for a four beat pattern. And can you bring people in into a round in a systematic way, you know, cut offs and things like that, really simple stuff, yep. And then you then it moves on to more difficult SATB repertoire, which I did, then go on to do my intermediate two	beat pattern/step by step	conducting competency	Training	
2	yeah, and things like rehearsal, planning, yeah, just, just choosing repertoire working with the needs of the children and what they might, you know, what vocal skills they might need to develop and warm ups and physical things, getting them to have the right posture, using their voice effectively, which, sadly, I see too often, doesn't happen in school, and children are then hurting their voices because either too low, because often they choose repertoire that's sung by men, or it's it's whatever the teacher wants to do, and they may not have the knowledge of the voice and how the voice works	hurting their voices	vocal technique/health	Training	
2	I think because I've always been a teacher, uh, although I've always been very shy, I was very shy as a young as a child and growing up, but training as a teacher and having to stand up in front of whole classes of children and teach, it gives you that confidence that you can you can do it. I prefer to stand in front of children than I do adults, I have to say, so that might be a different thing to think about. Why? Why do I feel comfortable standing in front of three, three or 400 children, but I can't stand in front of five adults because I just... Maybe adults, you feel that you're being judged a bit more. I don't know.	training as a teacher	training	Training	
2	So because I had the confidence as a teacher, I didn't feel embarrassed, which a lot of teachers feel embarrassed singing in front of other children, so I didn't have that barrier at all, although there are lots of teachers who don't like singing in front of children, and I've done some staff training with schools I work with now who just can't seem to sing in front of their classes, or don't like leading singing. They'll sing if, if, if a song is on, they'll sing along with the children, but they won't lead it. They won't model it. They won't they won't try and improve things. Yeah, no, they won't demonstrate. So I can see that there's a big gap there with teachers not having confidence to sing, but I actually natural for me, because I've always sung	confidence as a teacher	training	Training	
2	planning rehearsals effectively, because I tend to go in rather, oh, we'll do these today, and then not realizing that that won't work, or I've got to stop and start again or not, not anticipating what might go wrong before it happens. And a lot of the training is is about that is looking at a piece and knowing a piece really, really well, and anticipating where the choir will fail or where they'll need some extra help. And I often forget that part of the planning stage, go in and realized, oh, this, this needs a bit of extra planning. Here. I need to pick it apart a bit more.	planning	organisational/admin skills	Training	

Subject No.	Quotation	Keyword/phrase	Coding	Themes	My notes
2	Yeah, very much technical. When things cropped up like that, though, they would talk about it and but the group, the groups that we were always with, were always very, you know, they were there for the same reason. So everyone's very conscientious, and there was never any discipline problems with your own peers. It's only when you go out into the real world and do it for real that you realize that there's more to it than just technique .	more to it than just technique	training	Training	
2	So it's finding ways to to lead a choir of non music readers, of amateurs, of people who don't think much, being led by somebody who's an academic.Like, sometimes they just need to get a reality check that they're not all going to know what you mean when you say, Hold on this - fermata , for example, they won't know what you mean. Or even go from bar 20, they won't know what you mean . So you have to, then they have to, then be given a bit of a, you know, a kind of reality check that it's not like that, because most of their work will be with community choirs. They're not all going to be running The Sixteen.	reality check	Real World	Training	
2	So they need to just know that it's the real world is not full of people like that. The real world is full of a mass mix of people, varying skill, varying commitment.	varying skill, varying commitment	Real World	Training	
2	Um, I would like to have more confidence to be able to play the piano. I have got grade four piano and working on a grade five piece at the moment, but I don't have the confidence or the skills to be able to just to sit in front of children and just play with them . So all our songs are always accompanied by backing tracks, because I don't have an accompanist.	skills	training	Training	
2	things like all the kind of modern university acapella competitions are so popular. My niece is at Warwick University, and she's part of one of those acapella choral not, like traditional choral music, it's like American they all have mics on yeah, but the youngsters absolutely love it. So it may not be Cathedral Choir kind of repertoire, but they love it. And it's funky, it's pop, it's it's trendy, it's popular, you know, they love it. So seeing the university level of those a cappella groups going forward, I think they are just going to be amazing.	not the Cathedral Choir kind of repertoire - funky, pop, trendy	Repertoire	Training	
2	that's cropped up in conversation in the last couple of years, is within teacher training programs, training teachers very often there's no music involved in that. So people are coming to the profession with no music. And I do think that even though you're not, maybe people, people aren't musicians themselves, there should be much more emphasis on music for non musicians within the classroom. And so I hope that whoever designs initial teacher training programs will try and encourage teachers to just be confident to sing in front of their classes, because I do find so many teachers just don't.	teacher training programs	training	Training	
3	No, okay, lots of experience of singing in choirs, the feeling of sitting in the choir thinking, well, I could do this better, or I wish they were picking these points off and they're not that sort of thing.	choral singing experience	training	Training	
3	(re ABCD course) I suppose I shoul've done that a bit sooner, yeah, okay. I mean, that's something that sort of, you know, some some of what we did, I'm sure we felt it was more helpful than others. Because obviously, though we came from a range of choirs, I might, I personally hate all those kind of physical warm ups and walk around the room, and it's fine. Maybe fine for school kids. It's interesting that one of people our course said who was a teacher said I did all this kind of shoulder with the kids, and they loved it. Yeah, It's not for older adults.	a range of choirs	Training	Training	
3	I think my posture is bad. I do tend to hunch up and I'm sometimes, sometimes I'll get a bit kind of almost lightheaded because I'm not breathing properly and or I stand up on my tiptoes and lean forward. And I think when I actually look at videos, and I'm doing a lot of like there's probably some work to be done on the actual just what I look like and how I do it, and maybe I don't need to do quite such big gestures, to keep it more you know, certainly that side of things I think could could do is I thought about doing the advanced course, but obviously not being a professional.	some work to be done	reflection	Training	
3	This discussion about combining, yeah, certainly, discussion meeting up with other choral leaders. I mean that the Facebook group where everyone exchanges ideas is great, because you get all sorts of ideas from that and interact. You know, when you're the director of the choir, you're the only person doing it. When your singers in your choir will have sung for other people. But it's just something about being able to talk to another other call. But that's very, very useful.	discussion/exchanges ideas	Network	Training	
4	and um, so I'm, ultimately, I'm a pianist. That's my kind of background. Um, obviously you don't go through a musical education without being pulled into singing in choirs.	background/musical education	career background	Training	
4	And then during the pandemic, I kind of up skilled a lot. Joined some choir leader networking groups, which made me realize that my skills are just as valid as hers were. and actually there are some real advantages of being able to read music	networking groups/skills just as valid	Network	Training	
4	No, no, no, just, yeah, I suppose, tried to model myself on the wrong person initially .	model myself	training	Training	
4	Yeah, no, because I think you have to do what's right for you. And I think a lot of the choral training that there is maybe wouldn't suit me. I see a lot of Steph conducting. Yep, I didn't feel like I need conducting lessons. I did all that coming up through my piano and clarinet grades. You know where we did in those days. Have to learn conducting patterns. I know how to do that, and I don't do it very often. I do sometimes, but as far as I'm concerned, it is a communication that you develop with your choir, and nobody can tell you how to do that.	Communication/develop	Communication	Training	doesn't feel the need for technical training
4	Really, I think that there are gestures you.Can make that are sensible gestures that you learn more through how you want to develop what you want to develop with them, whether it be so they're singing healthily, whether it be because you want certain I don't know whatever you know. To me, it's the form of communication that you develop your choir. And I don't think anyone can really tell you how to do that, and I'm not sure that there's an awful lot of training out there that would have suited me.	Gesture/Communication	Communication	Training	doesn't feel the need for technical training
4	Particularly, um, I have found much more useful networking with other choir leaders…Well, first of all, it gave me the confidence that what I was doing was right.And I think having those discussions, and, you know, I belong to a really good paid network, actually, and if we've got an issue, we can pop it. It's a Facebook group, essentially. We can pop it on there,...And I get all these different strategies. And it's so, it kind of feels, I suppose, a lot more focused on what you need, whereas I don't think, I think it's a huge thing, I don't think that that there could possibly be a choir training course that can give you everything that you need for you and your choir. I think maybe a lot of it is is about experience.	networking/strategies/experience	Network	Training	
5	I think there's some commonalities between your roots and my roots because I did a science degree to begin with, and my first job was in research, and then I taught maths, and then I worked as a restaurant manager, and then I was a computer programmer . And all the way through, since I was really small, I've sung in choirs. My mum was a singer and then a choir director . She was the choir teacher in a school in South Africa where I grew up, and so I grew up in my mum's choirs. And in fact, she was in my grandmother's choir as a girl. So kind of third generation, which is nice,	roots	career background	Training	skills from other roles that feed into choral conductor's skill ser
5	If they don't sing, they're they're sometimes missing a trick. (in reference to church organists becoming church choir directors)	don't sing/missing a trick	conducting competency	Training	

Subject No.	Quotation	Keyword/phrase	Coding	Themes	My notes
5	(Referencing the need for training) Um, well, I realized fairly early on that I needed more, and I've been drawing in more, and I'm still, I think, as as a non music graduate, I've always had a bit of imposter syndrome, and I've always wanted to take on board, and I found a lot of really good things	imposter syndrome	training	Training	
5	I worried about how to teach the men parts because not being able to get into their range … I was trying to sing it at range. And they said, No, that's not what we want, because if we're in the upper part of the voice, it sounds more the same. It's more equivalent if you're in the upper part of your voice. So I sing an octave app, yeah, I'm in the upper range when it's a high note, in my lower range when it's a low note. And we've so I've had a lot of good feedback .	teaching	Training	Training	
5	but I didn't like speaking in front of crowds, and again, I got help with that the we quite often have people in the choir introducing different sections of the program. And so I'll write the notes, and then I'll divvy them up. Who are comfortable doing that, but, but actually, over time, I've got better at myself, not quite so terrified as I was.	speaking in front of crowds	Training	Training	
5	Repertoire is another thing that was a big issue for me at the beginning because I picked music that was too hard, or sometimes too many pieces. And it's also finding what people like and are willing to sing and within any choir, there'll be people who love and hate the same piece .	repertoire	Repertoire	Training	
5	It's a juggling act, because we're an unauditioned community choir. But I do want, I do want them to be singing technically well, and I do want them to get a good blend. And I do want them to sound good. I want them to be challenged by the music. So I try and pick some music that's challenging, not impossible , just and I think I know them well enough that it's, I'm not over facing them too much anymore, but we do, yeah, and then some pieces that they can pick up and run with straight away .	challenged by the music	development	Training	
5	And I think it's nice to have that range that people can just have a good sing, and then other times they have to really engage their brains	have a good sing then engage their brains	development	Training	
5	And just to find a network of other people (when starting out)	network	Network	Training	
5	because choirs are so different, I think that for every choir, there's going to be some other thing that you want that you're not going to get just from those courses. We've got a lot of people in our choir that are interested in Scottish traditional music and harmony courses, and so we've ended up going to a few sort of local harmony workshops...	choirs are so different	Variety	Training	training too generic
5	And I still want to do my piano skills are not good and, I'm practicing a lot. Yeah, I want to get delegate the piano playing.	piano skills	keyboard	Training	
5	Being in Scotland, a lot of the ABCD courses are quite London centric, but there's more and more stuff going on up at the center of the country that that I can access.	London centric	Training	Training	
6	I've been a choir singer for donkey's years , like most people in them, and one choir is in particular, the director was very keen to encourage people to to have it all go. So I had a little go once, and began to sort of sense that I had the bug for it a little. And then he gave me a bit of he gave me regular goes, and then he gave me a little bit of coaching.	had the bug	development	Training	initially on the job training
6	Also, I wanted to progress a little bit fast, and I was seeming to in the groups. Although I love the summer school, the problem was, you've been in a group of eight, nine people, 10 people sometimes. And so your podium time, as we called it, was, was not great. So they teach some new, new technique on the morning course , and we'd all have a go, because all having a go meant you get five minutes there, and then you've got, you know, six times 10 times long when you're singing for other people. And it was good. It was fun, enjoyable. But I wasn't getting the enough, you know, enough content for me out of it.	not getting enough	training	Training	
6	And also my repertoire was a little bit different to what other people were generally doing. And so they weren't always doing stuff I was interested in.	repertoire	Repertoire	Training	
6	And so something to develop my ear to critique singers and immediately pick up stuff and know what to do about	develop my ear	Training	Training	
6	(Regarding SfP) classes are a bit too big, and when they're too big, you then don't get the podium time, and you spend awful time having other people, and you don't get much help yourself...and I did sometimes feel I'm paying a lot of money here, and I'm actually two thirds of my time on helping other people, which is, okay, fine, but I'm really help me. I've got stuff I need to learn	don't get the podium time	Training	Training	
6	(in terms of exposure to, and learning from different conductors) is not just to sing as much as you can, but of singing in different kinds of choirs…wonderfully invigorating and cross fertilizing and refreshing. And that's something you have to do yourself. You have to, you have to fertilize your own experience.	fertilize your own experience	development	Training	
6	Then I very easily switch from nervousness to complacency. I get through the nervous comfortable , and then it's easy, well, for me, then to get complacent, to start to relax, and it always goes wrong. Again, I've got to continually challenge and push myself to not do that, and to continually, and that's why I go on the course of the courses bring you back and forth and exposure to the people, and you realize that you're still a bit useless, you know, and there's still got so much to learn compared to others.	Continually challenge	development	Training	
6	I think, I think having a having a feel for what is a good piece of music, and knowing how you want it to be, and knowing how you want it to make people feel that that's came very easy for me in particular in the area of Evensong	knowing how you want it	conducting competency	Training	
6	I think choosing repertoire, which is a big job in Evensong planning ,	repertoire	Repertoire	Training	
7	. Think what children expect from from you is a bit more like Glee or something that they've seen on TV, or, you know, the pitch perfect type of fair, you know that, that sort of thing, and and trying to do the higher quality music, but by all but also engaging these young people and making sure that they're coming to rehearsals and enjoying it too, and making it fun for them. So that's that's for me, that's been a challenge, evolving my skill set and evolving how I approach a rehearsal with young people .	challenge, evolving, skill set	development	Training	
7	, my following children's choir. That was where I started thinking about the teaching aspect, too. So, like how, do I want these children to learn to read music. Do I want these children to learn musicianship or Kodaly	teaching aspect	development	Training	
7	they were using pop songs. They were using backing tracks. They were using stuff that which was sounding like the children would would have heard or would like like to do. They weren't doing Benjamin Britten, for example, they weren't, they weren't doing, you know, the folk songs (re Sing Up programme 2008-2012)	using pop songs	development	training	Compare this to Durrant (2005) where folk songs are an important part of Swedish national identity and are sung by choirs in schools.

Subject No.	Quotation	Keyword/phrase	Coding	Themes	My notes
7	**I think it comes down to confidence in the classroom, confidence of in having a specialist in the school.** And that's what sing it was trying to do, which singer was trying to make, make it succession planning to people like me were going to schools, teach the choir, teach this, teach a lesson with the class teacher or whoever was doing music in that school, watching and learning. **And it was a collaborative process, and it's supposed to be something which made it sustainable that we were training up,**	specialists in schools	Training	Training	Does this tie in with point that S2 made about teachers not having the confidence to lead singing at Primary school level?
7	did a BMus four year BMus and in my third and fourth year, there were options to do modules. Course , and I chose choral conducting as one of the modules in my third, fourth year. So this was and that I was thinking about it. What did I actually learn?...But it was more about patterns and shapes and bringing people in and learning about when you know how to read the score, basically, because, certainly in the first, in the first year, which it was more about, can I get my four pattern? Can I change my four to three? Can I change from a four to a two? You know, it's all very much technical stuff.	technical stuff	Training	Training	
7	It was all led towards really nuanced stuff and really and working with people that could follow you and could and were professionals. I think, you know, it was definitely aimed at that level. It was, it was aimed at you being the best person you could be in front of the best people that were in front of you. So, so it's all about really, really hardcore technical stuff.	technical stuff	Training	Training	
7	yes, I could, I could do, you know, 3/8, 7/8, you know, 12/8 eight , and do for all manner of things. And I and I could, yes, and I could hear mistakes in a 12 part piece and point things out. You know, I could do quite intricate stuff and aurally write down, you know, Palestrina motets from back there that I had to do in, in my aural tests. But did it actually equip me to run the choral society rehearsal? No, I think is the obvious thing to say there	No	Training	Training	
7	I think I learned some repertoire. I learned from some music that I hadn't come across before. And in the repertoire sessions, though, they were really useful, like it opened and I found some books and websites, things that where I still use them now, where I go through because I'm not sure about orchestration. So I go, what does that need? So I go to my book, and I've got this resource. So it has, it has taught me that, I guess, how to do that.	repertoire	Repertoire	Training	
7	in my course, everyone had to have singing lessons as part of the course, which is, I'm talking about the Masters now. And so you know, whether you were singer or not, you had sing lessons. And to try and bridge this gap between technique and making sure that the organists, or people that we hadn't had singing lessons for years, like me could actually communicate with how they wanted the vowel to be, or the great the breath control, and trying to, you know, giving, giving their singers some tools. Because that's what I've, I've seen over the years, is so many organist, pianists, people that you know who are clearly very musical, they're very high musicianship level, but, but can they actually teach a singer how to sing an eight by eight bar phrase, you know, and with a breath control or, you know, that's something that, for me, is so important,	technique/teach	Training	Training	
7	(On the Masters course) it just felt like, for me, that was probably the biggest part of what I should have, should have been in. One of the biggest parts of the course is like, how do you take your skills and disseminate them to others and give them to amateur music making? Because where it's going to be earning your money, not from the BBC singers or, you know, the Tallis Scholars,	amateur music making? Because where it's going to be earning your money	Training	Training	
7	I think I would be I would like some more confidence when I work with orchestras...but I try to pride myself in the fact and try to be quite clear and think that I'm doing okay job, but it's something that I would definitely would invest in myself if I had the money to and to go and go on an orchestral conducting course and actually learn more about that when I do combine my choral society with an orchestra, I don't feel like an imposter. I think imposter syndrome can come in there. Yeah,	imposter syndrome	training	Training	
7	I think you have to be, they talk about being a portfolio musician these days, about having some teaching and some playing work and quartet work, whatever. But I think you have to be, I feel like I'm a portfolio choral conductor, because I have to be able to do lots of different styles and lots of different lots of different types. Of choral singing like I have a I have an LGBT choir. I do children's choirs. I have a kind of pop music, theatre choir and classical choirs as well. So you have to be able to have lots of different hats...you have to be, yeah, multi skilled in different different areas to make a success. You can't just do one thing. That's what I'd say.	multi-skilled	Training	Training	

Appendix XX

Active Singing Member of Choirs

		Current Choirs sung with[a]															
		Professional	Orchestral/Symphonic Chorus	Concert choir	Community Choir	Rock/Pop Choir	LGBTQ+ Choir	Choral Society (SATB)	Chamber Choir (SATB)	Upper Voices Choir	FVC	School or College Choir	Church Choir	Cathedral Choir	Gospel Choir	Other	Total
		Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count
ID	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**3**
	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**2**
	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
	6	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	**4**
	7	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
	8	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	**3**
	9	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**3**
	10	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**2**
	11	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	**6**
	12	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**2**
	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**1**
	15	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	**4**
	16	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	**2**
	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	**1**
	19	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	**4**
	21	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
	23	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	**3**
	24	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
	25	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	**4**
	27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	**1**
	28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	**1**
	29	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
	31	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
	32	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	**1**
	34	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
	38	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
	39	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
	42	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
	43	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**3**
	46	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**3**
	48	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
	51	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**2**
	53	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
	59	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**1**
	60	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
	61	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**2**
	62	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	**3**
	63	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
	64	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	**3**
	65	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
	67	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
	68	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
	69	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	**3**
	71	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
	72	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
	74	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**1**
	79	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**6**
	83	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
	85	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**2**
	87	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**2**
	88	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
	92	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
	94	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	**3**
	95	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
Total		**14**	**6**	**5**	**16**	**6**	**1**	**10**	**17**	**5**	**5**	**1**	**16**	**6**	**2**	**4**	**57**

Percentages and totals are based on respondents.

a. Group

Appendix I

Jansson, Elstad & Døving (2021)

Choral conducting competences: Perceptions and priorities

Table 1. Competency elements and corresponding survey items.

	Competency element	Survey item
1.1	Repertoire knowledge	Repertoire overview and knowledge of music styles/genres
1.2	Score proficiency	Score overview and score understanding
1.3	Error detection/aural skills	Error detection/aural skills
1.4	Gestural skills	Gestural skills
1.5	Vocal technique	Vocal technique
1.6	Language skills	Language skills
1.7	Choir acoustics	Choir acoustics (how tones are shaped and voices sound)
2.1	Rehearsal organisation	Organise and manage the rehearsing process
2.2	Rehearsal interventions	Provide an effective learning approach for a given piece of music
2.3	Mentorship	Be able to give singers specific feedback and guidance
2.4	Control/empowerment	Know when to stop/correct and when to let the singers self-improve
2.5	Staging/spacing	Place singers and voice groups and stage the choir in the room
3.1	Presence	Presence and concentration in the face of the ensemble
3.2	Sincerity	Face the ensemble with sincerity and honesty
3.3	Devotion	Approach the music and the ensemble with devotion and passion
3.4	Aesthetic will	Have a clear idea of the how the music should sound
3.5	Authority	Act with authority and self-confidence

Varvarigou & Durrant (2011)

Theoretical perspectives on the education of choral conductors: A suggested framework.

Table 1 *Examples of elements in the key attributes of an effective choral conductor (Durrant, 2003, pp. 100–102)*

Attributes of an effective choral conductor	
Philosophical and pedagogical awareness	• knowledge and understanding of how the voice works • knowledge of choral repertoire • awareness of the stages of children's and adolescents' vocal development • awareness of the social, psychological and physical effects of choral participation on the individual
Musical and technical skills	• good gestural vocabulary • good posture • good aural and error detector skills
Interpersonal and leadership skills	• non-verbal communication (through vocal modelling and eye contact) • encouragement/ motivation • quality feedback • clear communication goals • enthusiasm • ability to work well with people • effective rehearsal pacing and planning

Appendix J. Durrant (2005) Attributes for Effective Choral Conducting

1. Philosophical principles: These refer to an understanding of the issues concerned with the underpinning of the conductor role, including the knowledge and awareness of the conducting role 'Why am I a conductor?'

Philosophical principles underpinning role

- **a knowledge of the choral repertoire**—to be able to choose discerningly, music that is appropriate for the particular choral group, in respect of age, abilities, composition and vocal needs, from a wide range of eras and styles;
- **a knowledge of the human voice**—to be able to deal with a range of vocal issues and problems in an informed way in the rehearsal situation, including aspects of vocal production, healthy voice use, the psychology, physiology and workings of the voice to promote better and effective singing;
- **an image of the music prior to rehearsal**—to have clear technical and expressive ideas for presenting music to singers in rehearsal;
- **an awareness of the aesthetic potential of the music**—to be aware of the composer's intentions in this respect, the import of text and the capacity to enable appropriate responses in the singers and the audience to emerge;
- **an understanding of the nature of the conductor's role**—to take responsibility for the singers collectively and individually and to act as a facilitator and promoter of appropriate musical learning.

2. Musical-technical skills: These refer to the manifestation of a wide range of musical behaviours and musicianship.

Musical-technical skills

- **appropriate aural and error detection skills**—to be able to hear what is going on, including inaccuracies in the singing, such as incorrect entries, pitches, rhythms; to identify inaccuracies in language, diction, vowel shapes, textural nuances, endings of phrases, intonation, blend, balance within and between parts, and to be able to deal with these;
- **the ability to give clear intentions of tempo, dynamics, phrasing through appropriate gesture**—including clear preparatory beats and cut-offs, as well as conducting gestures that indicate suitable expressive and stylistic considerations; also an ability to achieve rhythmic energy, agility and spontaneity within the musical structure;
- **the ability to demonstrate accurately and musically**—which will involve singing and/or playing at correct pitches, rhythms, also tonal quality, intonation for the singers to hear and emulate; it might also include demonstrating how not to do something;
- **recognition of the importance of warming-up voices**—of knowing and delivering strategies appropriate for the group, the validity of physical and vocal exercises in relation to physical and vocal preparation for effective singing, rehearsing and vocal health;
- **strategies for establishing the character of the music at the earliest opportunity**—in order not to put undue emphasis on technical considerations at the expense of expressive and stylistic ones.

3. Interpersonal skills: These refer essentially to the modes of communication used by conductors, including the fostering of motivation and the creation of an appropriate environment for singers.

Interpersonal skills

- **the capacity to create a positive non-threatening environment**—with a balance of encouragement, praise and adjustment, with realistic, attainable goals and positive feedback in a 'safe' atmosphere;
- **the capacity to communicate clearly and unambiguously**—with effective use of verbal, gestural, facial and body language;
- **the desire to encourage healthy singing**—an avoidance of situations with language (including the use of the conductor's own voice) and gestures which will induce tension, in order to maintain an emphasis on relaxation;
- **the capacity to enable choral and vocal development**—the skill to assist with voice and choral blend, allowing individual vocal exploration, and the careful use of extrovert behaviour to motivate singers;
- **the ability to make singers feel confident and comfortable**—with reassuring language, allowing mistakes, using human-compatible communication and a judicious use of humour;
- **the skill to pace rehearsals effectively**—which will include using verbal language sparingly by encouraging response to visual cues by various means, to get on with the music and avoid concentrating on one part while others get bored or de-motivated;
- **the expectation of the highest standards possible**—by renewing expectations, setting appropriate goals for the group, particularly the development of musical and textural communication of the singers, and giving qualitative feedback to the choir.