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What is the relationship between the development of singing skills and a feeling of belonging, for singing teachers and for avocational singers?

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Project proposal: What is the relationship between the development of singing skills and a feeling of belonging, for singing teachers and for avocational singers?

The context

Nurturing students' confidence in their performing abilities has become central to my approach as a singing teacher (Hallam, 2010; Maclellan, 2014; Osborne, 2015), working with primary and secondary-age students and adults: from my perspective, helping them to begin to identify themselves *as singers* appears significant in creating a feeling of belonging. My aim is to explore singing teachers' and avocational singers' views on belonging – specifically, what it might mean to feel like an outsider as a singer (Prince and Hadwin, 2013). I am also keen to investigate their beliefs about what constitutes singing skills, and the possible interrelationship between the two.

The justification

Whilst the perceived benefits of singing, particularly the feeling of social inclusion which might result from group singing, have been well documented/researched (Welch et al., 2014; Niland, 2015), my review of existing literature would suggest that specific research into level of singing skill and feelings of belonging has been somewhat limited. With its joint focus on teacher and singer perspectives (incorporating my own self-reflection), this project aims to contextualise singing within existing institutional structures, such as schools, exam boards, music competitions. My hope is that this might help to inform future work with young singers, who are likely to be impacted by the way these structures operate (Wetmore, 2018).

The intended impact

A desired outcome for this research is that it might be the start of a productive conversation about the value of singing lessons (Orton and Pitts, 2019), enabling singing teachers to reflect on their role and how they teach. Interviews with avocational singers could provide a useful perspective on the importance of singing skills and how developing them might help to make singing a more inclusive activity for those who might traditionally have felt marginalised (Benson, Robinson-Martin and Naismith, 2022).

The outlined intention

Following a literature review, examining wider research on the concept of belonging and, more specifically, in relation to music, this qualitative project will involve conducting a focus group with singing teachers, followed by interviews with avocational singers, some of whom

take individual singing lessons as well as sing in choirs. My hope is that these formats will provide opportunity for discussion and reflection, aligning with the project's social constructionist paradigmatic approach. Using a hermeneutic framework for interpretation, I will extract themes by using reflexive thematic analysis as a method for data coding (Braun and Clarke, 2023). To broaden the reflexivity of the project, I will also keep my own diary notes, undertaking lexical analysis to look for implicit meanings in the data (Slemon, 2025), using a critical discourse analysis lens (Machin and Mayr, 2023).

Module 3: Work-based learning project timeline

Researcher: Jacqueline Dias

31/03/2025

1

Mar 31, 2025 | Apr 7, 2025 | Apr 14, 2025 | Apr 21, 2025

31 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26

M T W T F S S M T W T F S S M T W T F S S M T W T F S

TASK	PROGRESS	START	END
Preparation			
Read *How to Do CDA* and Braun and Clarke for RTA	100%	31/03/2025	30/06/2025
Ethics form	100%	03/02/2025	13/02/2025
Reflection journal creation	100%	14/04/2025	18/04/2025
Gantt chart creation	100%	12/04/2025	17/04/2025
Methodology literature review	100%	31/03/2025	18/04/2025
Write proposal	100%	14/04/2025	20/04/2025
Proposal submission deadline	100%	28/04/2025	28/04/2025
Literature review			
Identify and read articles	100%	31/03/2025	31/05/2025
Citation pearl growing	100%	02/04/2025	02/06/2025
List key search terms	100%	02/06/2025	05/06/2025
Take notes	100%	02/06/2025	04/06/2025
Write review	100%	02/06/2025	30/06/2025
Project initiation and execution			
Identify participants	100%	15/04/2025	20/04/2025
Create information sheets and consent forms for participants	100%	21/04/2025	25/04/2025
Create research instruments	100%	26/04/2025	01/05/2025
Research instruments deadline	100%	07/05/2025	07/05/2025
Run focus group with singing teachers	100%	02/05/2025	06/05/2025
Conduct interviews with avocational singers	100%	26/04/2025	30/04/2025
Transcribe data	100%	30/04/2025	15/05/2025
Review data	100%	15/05/2025	30/06/2025
Code and create themes	100%	15/05/2025	30/06/2025
Project submission and presentation			
Draft deadline	100%	26/08/2025	26/08/2025
Assignment deadline	100%	05/09/2025	05/09/2025
Presentation	100%	11/09/2025	11/09/2025

Figure 1: Project timeline

The ethics and insider research

This project received ethical approval from the UWTSD Research Ethics Committee. It will be conducted with strict adherence to its code of practice and to current educational research guidelines (BERA, 2024). Moderating a focus group will involve careful consideration of associated risks to participants (Sim and Waterfield, 2019). I will seek to mitigate these by setting appropriate boundaries for discussion, requesting confidentiality within the group and establishing trust in the process, which my role as insider-researcher might facilitate (Wilkinson and Kitzinger, 2013). Insider research carries its own risks, including over-prioritising the researcher's voice (Bulk and Collins, 2024), which must be carefully considered, but the opportunity for reflexivity which it bestows will be important for this project (Finlay, 2002, 2008; Aguilar, Torres and Macias, 2025). Consent forms will emphasise that participants may withdraw at any point; this will be reiterated before the focus group commences.

Personal learning outcomes

With this project, I aim to:

- Learn how to conduct academically rigorous research.
- Learn how singing teachers and avocational singers define a feeling of belonging, contextualising this through self-reflection on my personal experience of institutional power structures.
- Incorporate this new knowledge into my teaching, enhancing my students' experience.
- Create opportunities for my findings to be transferable and usable by teachers, to help singers who might feel marginalised in some way.

Project report: What is the relationship between the development of singing skills and a feeling of belonging, for singing teachers and for avocational singers?

Introduction

As a singing teacher-researcher, designing my first work-based research project, I am motivated by a desire to explore the complexities which appear to lie at the heart of people's relationship with singing (Orton and Pitts, 2019). I am keen, as a reflective teacher and performer, both to gain knowledge and understanding and to enhance my students' experience of learning to sing.

Whilst there seems to be a widely held belief that singing is good for people (Pearce, Launay and Dunbar, 2015; Gudmundsdottir, 2020), I am interested in the relationship between level of skill and a feeling that one belongs to the recognised group of *people who sing*. To investigate this subject, I believe it is necessary to look closely at several questions, including: what are singing skills and who has defined or continues to define what these are? Do some people, whatever their age, feel excluded from singing as an organised activity and where do teachers (i.e. those directly involved in helping to develop singing skills) fit into the picture? Might the enhancement of singing skills lead to a greater feeling of belonging, and how far do singers consider this to be important? It seems interesting that not everyone chooses to take one-to-one singing lessons (Theorell et al., 2015), and that singing has traditionally been widely regarded as an intuitive activity, which it is assumed most are capable of, to some degree (Hedden, 2012).

In relation to singing teaching, one might also address the question of who the established gatekeepers of the profession are (Mills and Smith, 2003; Kiik-Salupere and Ross, 2011; Mullet, 2018). Is there an accepted definition of the skills required to teach? Should anyone be excluded or made to feel that they are not qualified to do so?

Whilst a wide-ranging discussion on the concept of belonging will not be possible here, my intention is to examine some of the existing structures which both teachers and singers are part of (and whether people are wholly aware of these) (Saunders, 2015). It is hoped that the findings and reflections presented might promote discussion about the role of the singing teacher in helping to create a sense of belonging and inclusion (Benson, Robinson-Martin and Naismith, 2022), for those who wish to develop their skills as singers.

With this project, I aim to:

- Learn how to conduct academically rigorous research.

- Learn how singing teachers and avocational singers define a feeling of belonging, contextualising this through self-reflection on my personal experience of institutional power structures.
- Incorporate this new knowledge into my teaching, enhancing my students' experience.
- Create opportunities for my findings to be transferable and usable by teachers, to help singers who might feel marginalised in some way.

Literature review

Introduction

Following a brief focus on the broader concept of belonging (Allen et al., 2021; Stride et al., 2025), the links between belonging and impostor phenomenon are explored, with an examination of how belonging has tended to be defined in relation to singing; there is also a brief consideration of the existing literature on singing skills. In line with the project's hermeneutic approach, a pearl-growing strategy was adopted for the literature review; this allowed broad reading of appropriate literature across disciplines, and the following of relevant citation paths, along with constant referral back to the research question (Boell and Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2010; Webber, Dahliwal and Wong, 2023). (See Appendix 9 for a sample reading scheme).

How do we define belonging?

Authors have tended to agree that belonging is something which most people desire (whether subconsciously or otherwise), and that satisfaction of this need is important to our wellbeing as humans (Baumeister and Leary, 1995; Winning, 2010; Allen et al., 2022). Allen et al. (2021) raise the point that, while belonging could be described as a personal feeling (affected by one's level of self-esteem), it is also an objective concept, which exists at a societal, cultural and geographical level. In other words, it is profoundly affected by the structures of which people are inexorably a part (Allen et al., 2021). Even if a person considers themselves to be part of a group, they are inevitably also part of a hierarchical structure, in which some exercise power and some do not (Algraigray and Boyle, 2017; Benson, Robinson-Martin and Naismith, 2022). An implied question is perhaps who exerts this power and how some people come to feel included, while others perceive themselves to be excluded (Meyer and Land, 2006).

Belonging has, it seems, traditionally tended to be equated with the concepts of social inclusion and participation (Welch, 2014; Dabback, 2018; Papageorgi et al., 2022), rather than as an ongoing process (Long and Guo, 2023; Stride et al., 2025). However, is it

possible that a generalised and well-meaning intention within musical institutions to be more socially inclusive and participatory (Carlow, 2006), has encouraged the view that enough is already being done to help singers and teachers *feel* that they belong (Bucura, 2020)? This is one of the questions which the project was designed to explore.

Impostor phenomenon

Clance and Imes (1978) originally defined impostor phenomenon as a person's belief that they have reached a career position under false pretences, and that they are at constant risk of being found out. There has been increasing interest in the ways people experience impostor phenomenon (Sims and Ryan, 2024), along with a suggestion that there is a symbiotic relationship with the concept of belonging (Anderson-Zorn, 2022). In the context of this research, impostor phenomenon is relevant because of the importance of self-perception to a person's belief that one belongs (Prince and Hadwin, 2013), and this could apply both to singers and teachers (Ballantyne and Canham, 2023). Anderson-Zorn's study (2022) focused on the experiences of music librarians as they progress through the profession: many expressed doubts about their own abilities, partly resulting from the varied entry routes for this kind of work. This could also be applied to vocal teachers, for whom career paths have not traditionally been clearly defined (Biasutti and Concina, 2018). It might be a possible cause of lack of confidence in their ability to help others to develop their singing skills, particularly among some with limited experience (Biasutti, 2010; Norton, Ginsborg and Greasley, 2019; Ballantyne and Canham, 2023), which in turn might cause them to question whether they belong as teachers. This latter point has not, I would aver, been significantly explored in the literature and is a gap which the project has hoped to address.

How do people belong as singers?

A starting point for many articles about singing is that a natural sense of community and inclusion develops when singing as part of a group, bringing benefits for wellbeing and self-esteem (Judd and Pooley, 2014; Welch, 2014; Davies, Bentham and Duah, 2023). As Pearce, Launay and Dunbar (2015) suggest, as an almost universal human activity, singing is regarded as a catalyst for the creation of social connection. Indeed, it could be that singing has a unique power to facilitate rapid bonding amongst individuals who have not met, certainly as compared to the bonding which takes place amongst people who do not sing (Pearce, Launay and Dunbar, 2015).

An important question might be whether singing can be perceived as bringing other benefits, whether in choral or one-to-one situations, such as singing lessons, and whether these contribute to a feeling of belonging (O'Bryan, 2015; Parker, 2023). Fancourt and Warran

(2020) mention learning as another possibly significant outcome, while Benoît and Vignola (2020) focus more generally on the development of competence (specifically in relation to singing skills).

Ryan and Deci (2000) analyse self-determination theory, which refers to basic human needs for autonomy, relatedness to others and the self-perception that one has competency or the necessary skills to thrive in one's environment. They draw attention to the two different kinds of motivation which exist: intrinsic, where a person has a desire to explore and pursue challenges for pleasure and personal satisfaction, and extrinsic, where external forces are at play in producing the motivation to achieve desired outcomes (often governed by societal pressures and structures) (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Csikszentmihalyi's concept of *flow* is also closely related, flow being a person's absorption in and enjoyment of an activity with an appropriate level of challenge to maintain their interest (Bakker, 2005). In relation to the development of singing skills, teachers and students are involved in a shared endeavour, which has the potential to create a feeling of flow in lessons (Sinnamon, Moran and O'Connell, 2012). Keeler et al. (2015) suggest, further, that singing in groups promotes *social flow*, which is very much dependent on the bond which develops between singers as they sing together.

Do we have the skills to sing?

A precise definition of what might be included when we refer to singing skills (as opposed to more general musical and instrumental skills (Küpers, van Dijk and van Geert, 2014)) appears not to be a major preoccupation in the literature, and there seems little focus on how developing these skills with the help of a teacher might contribute to a feeling of belonging (Hoover, 2005). Pascale (2005) suggests that singers in the Western tradition have tended to be valued for their ability to sing in tune and to read music notation, and, significantly, that our understanding of singing skills is culturally constructed. Baldacchino, Baldacchino and Ellis (2020) argue for egalitarian, community-led choirs to enable greater participation by those who consider themselves as non-singers. However, Welch (2014) and Papageorgi et al. (2022) suggest a direct link between level of singing ability (in children) and the extent to which they feel they belong as singers.

Conclusion

The four strands of this literature review have encompassed the concept of belonging, impostor phenomenon, belonging as a singer and singing skills, which could be described as relevant to both singing teachers and avocational singers, in a multitude of (overlapping) ways. Gaps have been identified in the literature, relating to an apparent paucity of research into singing teacher perspectives and a lack of agreement about whether there are universal

core singing skills. Addressing these gaps could be of help to teachers, perhaps leading to an increased confidence in their role, which in turn could be of benefit to their students.

The literature review has not found the adoption of a critical discourse analysis (CDA) perspective to be a common approach with studies related to singing and singing teaching. The project has therefore sought to add this dimension into its methodology, to enable a closer examination of power structures and how they are perceived (Cheek, 2004; Slemon, 2025).

Methodology and methods

Research paradigm

This research was conducted from a broadly interpretivist/social constructionist perspective, aligning with an ontological view which suggests there is no single version of reality, and that it is human beings' interactions with each other which create shared meaning (Winter, 2021; Sol and Heng, 2022). Social constructionism guided the study's dual focus, not only on people's reported experiences, but on what was revealed during the data-gathering process (Silverman, 2024). I was cognisant of my position as both insider (in my role as singer and singing teacher) and outsider, as the initiator of the research (including how researching this subject impacted on me personally). I was, moreover, keenly aware of the possible limitations of adherence to a rigid paradigm (Winter, 2021): elements of my approach also share commonalities with the transformative paradigm (Mertens, 2010), with its focus on uncovering and challenging existing institutional structures and practices (Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006; Creswell, 2009).

Overview and justification of methodology

For this project, a qualitative approach was chosen, which seemed justified because of the exploratory nature of the research question: the aim was to uncover deeper meanings, from interaction and collaboration with participants (Roulston, 2006; McGrath, Palmgren and Liljedahl, 2019). The project also offered the opportunity for me to take a step back as the researcher and to include my own personal reflections. There was a deliberate focus on how realities are constructed and how they might be both comprehended and challenged.

Outline of data collection methods

Singing teachers were recruited purposively from my professional network, allowing identification of participants who were likely to have in-depth knowledge about the subject of the research (Silverman, 2024); there was also an element of convenience sampling – these were people to whom I had access, who were approached directly. Interviewees were

selected from amongst a group of singers currently singing, either with choirs or taking singing lessons, with whom I had personal contact (see Figure 2 for a taxonomy of participants). Ease of access and a shared interest in the research question could be said to be benefits of the sampling methods used (Silverman, 2024). However, it was also important to be aware that my direct interest in the subject might increase the risk of researcher bias. Steps were taken to mitigate this, as detailed in the insider research section (see page 13). The small sample size restricted generalisability in this project, but time constraints and the nature of the research question limited the scope for sampling a broader population on this occasion.

In view of the nature of the research question, which was designed to explore some of the more abstract elements of belonging, I did not seek to interview any of my young singing students (aged mainly between 8 and 14). Participants were all over the age of 18 (none were my students) and were sent a detailed information sheet, explaining the research, their potential role in it, the ethical approval process undertaken (see Appendix 1: Ethical approval) and their right to withdraw at any time, before offering informed consent via a completed consent form (see Appendix 3).

Singing teachers	Description
F1	County music school-teacher/private teaching. Student age varies. Current students from Year 5 to university age.
F2	Private teacher, teaching from home. Student age varies. Current students Years 7 and 8; one adult.
F3	Private secondary school and state primary school teacher. Primary and secondary age students. No adults.

Avocational singers	Description
P1	University student, member of two university choirs.
P2	Semi-professional singer, member of chamber choirs.
P3	Non-professional singer, member of chamber choir and choral society.
P4	Final year of school (pre-university). Going to drama school.
P5	Non-professional singer, member of choral society and leads church choir singing.
P6	Non-professional singer, member of musical theatre choir and participant in scratch choir.

Figure 2: Taxonomy of participants

Data collection with participants involved a one-hour, single-session focus group with a group of three singing teachers and six semi-structured interviews (lasting 30 to 40 minutes)

with avocational singers. While one-to-one interviews with teachers would also have been a valid approach, time-constraints led to the decision to facilitate a group discussion; results could then be triangulated with the data from the singer interviews. The focus group and interviews were conducted over Zoom and were video- and audio-recorded. Transcripts were produced using Zoom's AI transcription and carefully checked against the recordings for errors. Participants were sent a copy of the relevant transcript and given the opportunity to amend their own contributions.

For the focus group and interviews, an outline script/preamble was prepared (see Appendix 3); a set of questions, which developed from my reading and followed guidance for new researchers (Roberts, 2020; Fusch et al., 2022), provided a springboard for deeper discussion, ensuring a level of similarity across all the sessions. Ground rules were laid out for the focus group, and participants were asked not to share any discussion content externally.

Data analysis

Following transcription, data from the focus group and interviews was coded as two separate data sets, using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2022); overarching themes were identified, developed and combined across the data sets. A hermeneutic, inductive and interpretive approach allowed for a deepening of understanding, with its emphasis on cycling backwards and forwards between the research question and the data (Higgs, Horsfall and Grace, 2011). Concurrently, I used a reflective diary to add a CDA dimension to the project, believing this would deepen my analysis and allow examination of the language participants used, along with my own perceptions and feelings (Paterson and Chapman, 2013; Slemon, 2025).

Ethical considerations

Ethical approval was received for conducting this research from the University of Wales Trinity St David Research Ethics Committee: it was undertaken in strict accordance with its Code of Practice. Additionally, constant reference was made to current educational research guidelines (BERA, 2024) to ensure research integrity. Participation was voluntary; the right to withdraw was emphasised both during the recruitment phase and immediately before the focus group/interviews began. Names were anonymised on consent forms and transcripts, with careful removal of any identifying information; reassurance was offered to participants that confidentiality would be absolutely maintained. Video recordings were deleted after transcription was complete, with all data being stored in password-protected files (Tracy, 2010).

Insider research

Insider research benefits to the researcher include a greater understanding of participants' perspectives and the possibility of establishing a sense of trust in the process (Unluer, 2012). Risks must also be acknowledged and mitigated against. These include:

- possible researcher bias or perception of bias: steps towards mitigation involved avoiding leading questions, due consideration being given to transparency in the research process (Tracy, 2010) and member checking of transcripts (Lim, 2024), to ensure accurate representation of the participants' voice (Tracy, 2010; Aguilar, Torres and Macias, 2025).
- emotional risks to participants: potentially sensitive topics were avoided as far as possible; participants were made aware that support was available to them, if needed.

Findings and discussion



Figure 3: Word cloud for singing and belonging
(Source: FreeWordCloudGenerator.com)

Introduction

This research sought to investigate singing teachers' and avocational singers' feelings about belonging; three teachers participated in the focus group and six singers took part in one-to-one semi-structured interviews. The singers were encouraged to consider the extent to which they regarded themselves as belonging to a group of *people who sing*, and how far their level of singing skill might have impacted this. A group discussion among teachers provided a useful perspective with which to analyse singers' responses in the interviews, enabling a triangulation of viewpoints, particularly regarding singing lessons. The word cloud

(Figure 3) indicates the kind of words which were used frequently by participants, while Figures 4 and 5 highlight some of the sub-themes which were identified in the data sets. The combined thematic map (Figure 6) indicates the overarching themes, which it was decided would form the primary focus of this study, since they most closely aligned with the research question.

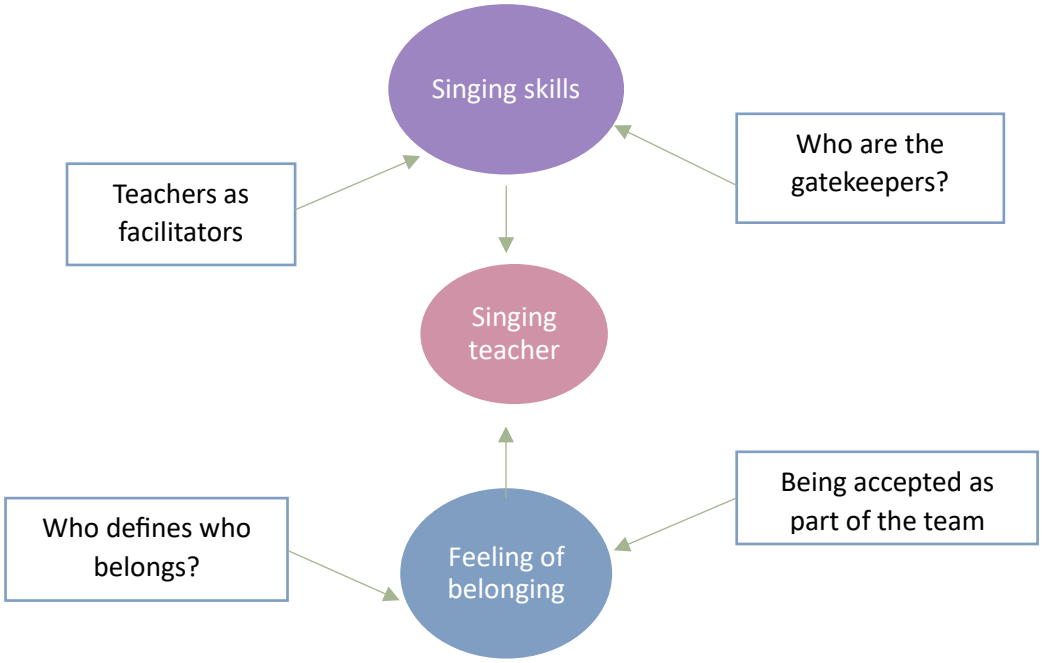


Figure 4: Singing teacher sub-themes

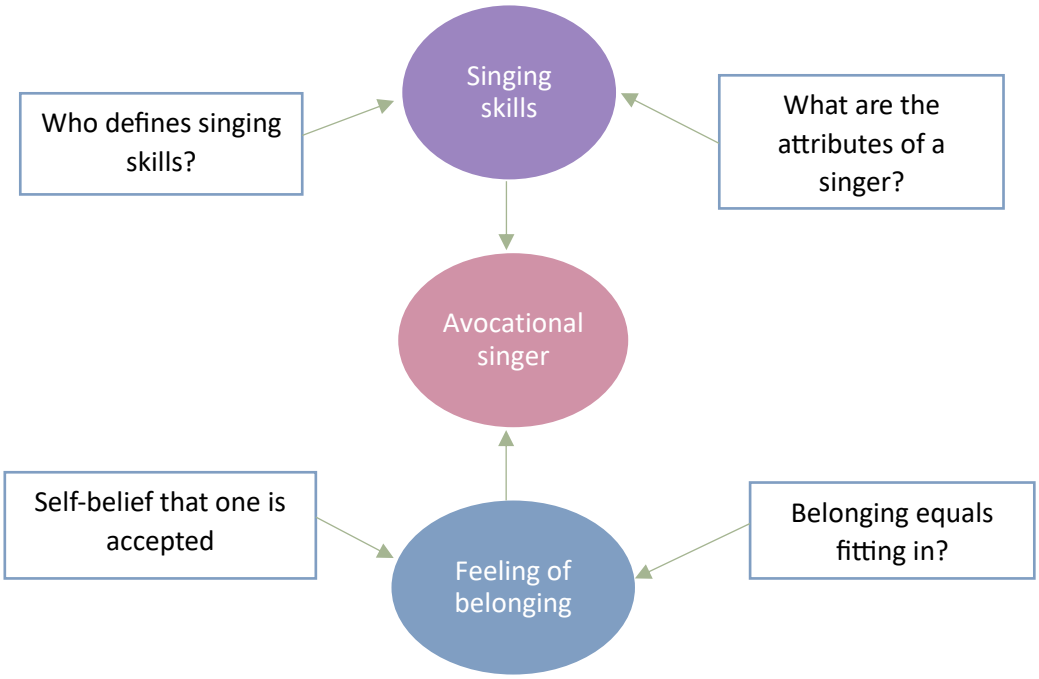


Figure 5: Avocational singer sub-themes

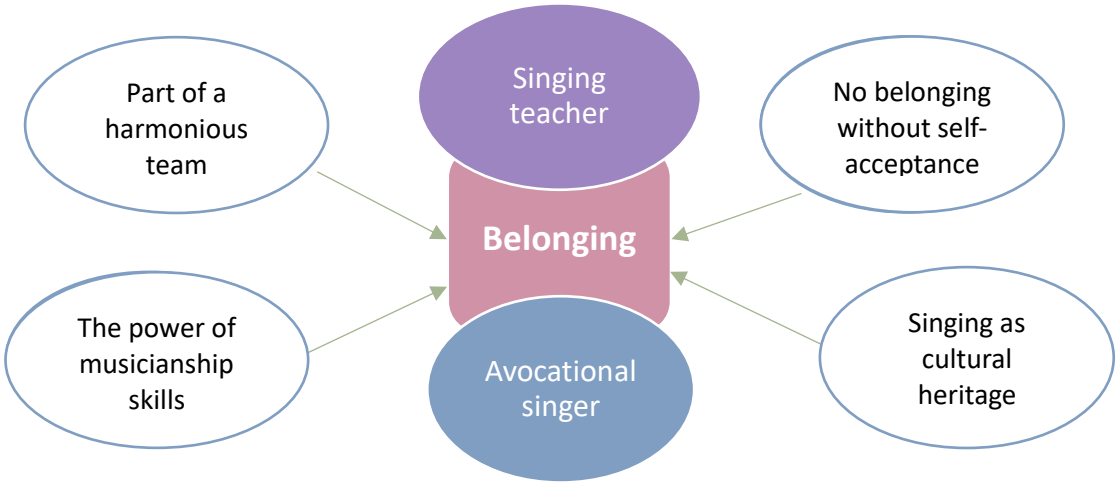


Figure 6: Combined thematic map

Part of a harmonious team

Participants were asked to express their understanding of the broad concept of belonging and there was a strong emphasis, across both participant groups, on teamwork and collaboration. F3, teaching singing in a private school and state school, expressed a sense of belonging to the private school: “it’s important to me that I feel part of the team”. In the

state primary school, however, she reflected that “teachers don’t support me”, making it harder for her to maintain children’s interest in singing in the choir.

Responses from the avocational singers tended to focus on the experience of singing with others. P1 spoke of a “feeling of camaraderie”, saying there was “no sort of hierarchy in place”. The choice of the word “hierarchy” was interesting, perhaps suggesting the participant’s awareness of the sort of issues one might usually expect to encounter when singing in a choir (Bailey and Davidson, 2005). P2 emphasised that, although she sometimes felt there was “a depth to the social side which I maybe don’t always get”, choral singing enabled people to contribute to “a sound that you couldn’t just make on your own”, like being “the best sort of separate parts of a machine”. P4, the youngest participant, and the only male, spoke of being “very collaborative with my teacher” and, in terms of ensemble singing, stated that “it’s such a community . . . everyone brings a different aspect”. This aligned with F1’s comment that “the connections” one makes are “every bit as important” as the music.

P3 stressed the requirement for her “to be corporate vocally” in her choral society and, despite her belief that she is “not very good at belonging” socially, emphasised that, everyone has “different things to contribute” as a singer. However, she also said that “They do kick people out” when the conductor holds reauditions, and that “It was very traumatic” to experience, adding that it was the responsibility of the individual to “do something to belong”.

This perhaps hints at something which goes beyond a straightforward idea of barrier-free participation: as Bailey and Davidson (2005) suggest, the Western tradition of music-making has tended to be somewhat elitist, with certain standards of excellence and expertise expected. Their study of middle-class choral singers found them to be perhaps more motivated by achieving a high level of performance than by the pleasure of participation; however, perhaps because of a belief that one needs to be possess a certain level of talent to sing, they were generally not very confident about their own individual voices (Bailey and Davidson, 2005).

The latter points appeared to be borne out in this research: P5 spoke of “the intrinsic satisfaction of nailing it” and P3 declared that “I like being kept on my toes.” Asked about performing solos in her choir, she said the predominant feelings were “about terror really”. P6 had joined a low-key choir in the Netherlands, where she lived; she also took part in a large scratch musical theatre performance. P6 spoke of her desire to take up singing again, purely for enjoyment. She vividly remembered being deliberately excluded from the school choir at the age of 10, because she was not considered a good enough singer, which she described as “absolutely, really cruel”. With her current choir, “everybody’s there to have

fun", although she acknowledged that, to make "a sound together that sounds lovely . . . you all sort of have to get it right" and felt that she "could do with improving" her technique.

Most of the singers seemed enthusiastic about belonging to their choral *team*; while some did not feel pressure to maintain a particular standard (P5 declared she was "not fussed about how good I am"), others were involved in choirs which seemed to call for a certain level of progression in their singing skills. This suggests an important role for the singing teacher (which is relevant both to the research question and to my practice), not least in promoting healthy voice use (Lamont, Daubney and Spruce 2012) and for developing the additional skills which a singer might need (Stothert, 2012; Stephenson, 2018). The following section examines some of these skills and participants' reflections about them.

The power of musicianship skills

The definition of musicianship skills in relation to singing offers challenges and opportunities for singing teachers: it is widely acknowledged that the voice is unique among instruments, as an intrinsic part of a person's body and, by extension, their identity (Welch et al., 2005; Stothert, 2012; O'Bryan, 2015; Cuadrado and Rusinek, 2016). Focus group participants agreed that "your voice is you" (F3), a "unique part of yourself" (F1), that could only be changed "slightly by how we teach" (F3).

Skills in aural and sight-reading were referred to as "just a bonus" by F2, although she thought it was "really useful if the children do some extra instrument", adding that "you will be stuck" without sight-reading skills in a choir. F3 felt that singing was good for "general musicianship", saying she tended to "scoop up" students who could not read music as well as those who play an instrument, such as piano. Perhaps hinting at the pressure teachers might feel to enter their students for exams (Upitis et al., 2017), she said that, while it was important to "plough through" sight-reading and aural tests, she would not let a "Grade 4-standard" student be "held back" from progressing beyond lower exam grades by these skills.

The interviewees had all taken instrumental music exams whilst at school, some to a high level, with parental encouragement to do so (McPherson, 2009); only P2 and P4 had taken singing exams. P1, P2 and P4 had one-to-one singing lessons at secondary school. For P2, who took the highest grades in piano and violin, singing was "maybe treated as a bit more of an afterthought" and she was able "to have more fun with it", with less formal structure involved. She sings with several good choirs and, with perfect pitch, finds herself relied on for keeping people on track musically. P3 spoke of her sight-reading skills as "exceedingly helpful", adding that "playing the piano is a huge help". She takes regular singing lessons to improve her voice and performance. P5 felt that singing while in middle school was "way less

effort" than carrying her cello around, while P6 regarded singing as "more accessible" than an instrument because "I can just turn up" to sing.

These views suggest a paradox, where singing is regarded both as a fun, natural thing to do, without formal requirements to take lessons, and as something which would benefit from being improved by regular tuition (Cuadrado and Rusinek, 2016). This perhaps speaks to the dilemma facing singing teachers: whilst they might wish to concentrate on enhancing their students' performance skills and wellbeing (Lamont, Daubney and Spruce, 2012; Judd and Pooley, 2014; Orton and Pitts, 2019), they might also need to demonstrate that they are reaching certain musical standards, proving that singing lessons are as worthwhile as instrumental tuition (McPherson, 2009; Corrigall and Schellenberg, 2015).

As P3 said, in her choral society, "some people come in with their voice . . . some from an instrument", indicating that there might be two different routes to becoming a singer. It would be interesting to explore further whether one of those routes might be considered preferable. An increased awareness of this dilemma has implications for my practice: it is important for me to find ways of dealing with possible preconceptions about the value of singing lessons (Griffiths, 2000).

No belonging without self-acceptance

The concept of self-acceptance developed as a strong theme in this research. Many of the participants linked a feeling of belonging with how they felt about themselves, and the importance of singing to their (and their students') wellbeing (Heydon, Fancourt and Cohen, 2020).

When asked about belonging, F1 spoke of "sharing . . . your love of music", while P6 said that "People, and their stories and sharing are what is most important to me." For P1, it was about "feeling welcome and feeling comfortable", adding that, in her choir "there's absolutely no shame . . . no embarrassment … no fear". P2 felt it was more difficult for her to talk about belonging, saying "I often feel a little distant", but being part of the "harmony" in a musical group was important to her. P3 emphasised that she felt "belonging means being able to be me", and this was inextricably linked with her musical identity, declaring that "music is where I belong most . . . I've always felt other". P4 took this a step further, saying that belonging is "finding inner happiness within yourself" and P5 felt that singing had been "integral to building my confidence". Speaking from a teacher's perspective, F3 made a direct link between her belief in her own competence as a teacher and her "self-esteem".

These latter points relate strongly to the autonomy element of self-determination theory, which several authors discuss in connection with singing, along with the concept of self-

efficacy (McPherson and McCormick, 2006; Stephenson, 2018; Cohen and Chen-Hafteck, 2020). Interesting to note is that autonomy and a sense of social cohesion are felt to go hand in hand (Lang, 2020). As F1 put it: “to feel that that unique part of yourself, your voice, is valued . . . it’s just incredibly empowering.” Autonomy could therefore be regarded as a vital skill, which teachers might be able to help develop in their students, perhaps primarily through helping them to take responsibility for their own learning (Stephenson, 2018).

Singing as cultural heritage

This theme centres on the ways in which institutional structures affect singers, and whether they are fully aware of the role they play. F1 referred to “that other sense of belonging . . . in the sense of repertoire”, adding that “it’s belonging to a continuum of culture”. P5 echoed this, expressing a sense of wonderment at the thought that “music sits out of time” and that “we’re bringing it back to life” in performance.

F1 felt that stretching students in terms of song choices encourages them to believe that “this other repertoire is for you as well” and is something that “they’re entitled to as much as anyone else”. However, when asked about whether students should be encouraged to enter singing competitions or to take exams, there was general agreement that some neurodivergent students, for example, would be “better off being left to just sing for fun” (F2) because it would be “too much for them to go through that anxiety” (F2). Indeed, despite agreement with F3 that “the syllabus is a really good structure”, giving teachers “something to show” to parents at the end of the year, F1 felt that “erratic marking” meant the “exam system is not for everybody”; in terms of competitions, one had to be “very sure that they’re robust enough” and “that they genuinely have some talent” (F1). F3 agreed that the process was “examiner-dependent” and that sometimes “your favourite child . . . barely passes”.

Lexically, there were many things to unpack in this part of the discussion: words like “talent”, “robust” and “favourite” appeared, alongside, for example, “inclusive”, “supported” and “accepted”, suggesting that more than one type of discourse was in operation. One of my questions introduced the word “gatekeepers”: I had wondered if this might encourage thoughts about hidden power structures. However, it was interpreted by one teacher more positively, as a guarding of the classical tradition, which I found interesting. While there seemed a great desire among the teachers to be open to ideas about inclusivity, I also detected a possible preparedness to accept the prevailing institutional narrative, which might result in “erratic marking”, or some students being better off avoiding competitions altogether, for example. This might cause some students to become more marginalised (Liu et al., 2024), including those who are perhaps not considered talented or good enough at singing (O’Neill, 2011).

For P3, while she feels part of the team in her two choirs, in the choral society, “there’s so much critique from the conductor” that it is hard sometimes to avoid feeling that “you’re not fulfilling what’s needed” in terms of performing the music in accordance with the conductor’s standards. She also said that, if anyone makes obvious mistakes, they “bring everyone with them . . . everyone gets told off”. The implication here was that group cohesion also brings group responsibility (Orton and Pitts, 2019) and that the demands of serving cultural heritage might sometimes feel like an added pressure to perform to a certain standard (Barrett and Zhukov, 2023).

Conclusion

In the voice studio, creating a sense of autonomy is perhaps to be desired (Stephenson, 2018); Liu et al. (2024) also advocate for a more communal approach to artistry, which suggests possibilities for increasing inclusivity in singing. The teacher faces another dilemma: while they might be regarded as part of the hierarchical structure, or perhaps even regard themselves as part of it (Stephenson, 2018), in developing their students’ singing skills, they have a dual role to play. They need to navigate a fine line between being advocates for their students and satisfying the external demands placed on them as teachers (Barrett and Zhukov, 2023), with a student-focused approach being of utmost importance (Mccrea, Barker and Goodrich, 2025).

Reflection

Reflecting on the findings, I was particularly interested to detect that something akin to a singing teacher persona had subtly come into play in the focus group. Since none of the teachers were known to each other, perhaps this might have been somewhat inevitable: the teacher interactions seemed carefully thought-through, and it was clear there was a desire to say meaningful things. Since I was unable to contribute to the discussion directly, I was also left feeling slightly uncomfortable with my role as silent observer, especially whilst listening to them discussing and comparing their musical qualifications. In view of my personal experience of impostor phenomenon as a teacher, an important takeaway for me was that increasing my knowledge of pedagogy might be the best way to combat my own lack of confidence (Ballantyne and Canham, 2023). I found it difficult to gauge from the teachers’ discussion whether they shared these feelings of insecurity, because of the element of performativity: for future research, I might need to consider strategies for mitigating this, although in terms of CDA, it added an interesting dimension to the findings.

The interviews also elicited carefully considered and serious responses. It was evident that everyone had given thought to the subject of belonging and wished to contribute to the research in a valuable way. Four responses stood out in terms of language: P1’s reference

to there being no “shame . . . embarrassment . . . or fear” and use of the word “hierarchy”; P3’s use of the word “other”; and P5’s description of her exclusion from the school choir as being “absolutely, really cruel”, implied that there was perhaps a sub-conscious impetus to employ language which might be considered appropriate to this research. This underlined the overall value, for me, of analysing the way language is used to construct realities (Machin and Mayr, 2023); it is an approach I would certainly consider incorporating into future research.

Limitations

The main limitations were:

- the small overall sample size
- the number of people who took part in the focus group. With four participants, it was already a small group (Fusch et al., 2022); unfortunately, one person was unable to attend on the day, perhaps reducing the scope for more wide-ranging discussion.
- the teachers, recruited from my professional network, were women of similar age and background. However, they represented a range of nationalities, with differences between their teaching environments.
- one focus group participant was found to have contributed more than the others – had I been aware, it might have been possible to address the balance of responses.

Future research recommendations

Belonging is a subject which appears to have been underexplored in relation to singing teaching. Future research might aim to expand the focus group element, to include a wider range of teachers, including those from different vocal disciplines. Holding multiple sessions would enable teachers to engage in deeper discussion. A wholly CDA approach, examining the language that teachers use, could be illuminating for future practice (even given my slight misgivings about the focus group findings). Broadening the range of interview participants could also be useful for exploring wider issues around learning to sing.

Conclusion

This project explored the relationship between the development of singing skills and a feeling of belonging. The focus group session with teachers provided scope for discussion about the issues they face and how they perceive their role (Ballantyne and Canham, 2023). Preoccupations and concerns were revealed about how one might best help students gain the most from singing, with broad agreement on the challenges of teaching (Cuadrado and Rusinek, 2016) and the importance of singing lessons. The semi-structured interview format allowed space for singers to reflect deeply on their experiences of belonging *as singers*,

offering an opportunity to consider how far their level of musicianship impacted their enjoyment (Bailey and Davidson, 2005).

Helping to increase teacher confidence in what they have to offer their students, and encouraging more people to consider taking singing lessons, would be especially positive outcomes for this research. In terms of my own objectives, I learned how to construct an academically rigorous project and, whilst facing many challenges along the way with data organisation and analysis, I felt I had initiated a conversation about singing skills which would be helpful to my practice. My aim is to be a more confident, inclusive teacher (Thompson, 2021): I hope this research might contribute to future discussion of singing and belonging, improving the experience of both teachers and singers.

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Appendix 1: Ethical approval

Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

PG2 / E1 FORM

APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL

RESEARCH STUDENTS
This form is to be completed by the student within **SIX** months for full-time students and **TWELVE** months for part time students, after the commencement of the research degree or following progression to Part Two of your course.

Once complete, submit this form via the ***MyTSD Doctoral College Portal*** at (https://mytsd.uwtsd.ac.uk).

This document is also available in Welsh.

RESEARCH 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.

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.

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.

SECTION A: About You (Principal Researcher)

1	Full Name:		Jacqueline Elizabeth Dias			
2	Tick all boxes that apply:		Member of staff:	☐	Honorary research fellow:	☐
	Undergraduate Student	☐	Taught Postgraduate Student	☒	Postgraduate Research Student	☐

3	Institute/Academic Discipline/Centre:	WAPPAR
4	Campus:	Carmarthen
5	E-mail address:	Jackie.e.dias@gmail.com
6	Contact Telephone Number:	07708 062902
	For students:	

7	Student Number:	2330052
8	Programme of Study:	MA Professional Practice (Voice Pedagogy)
9	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Louise Emanuel/Julie Crossman/Debbie Winter

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		☐		
		Institute Research Committee		☐		
		Other (write in) WAPPAR Ethics Board Representative		☒	**6/2/25**	

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, location-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. You may add rows to this table if needed.	
1	**UWTSD Research Ethics & Integrity Code of Practice**	☒
2	**UWTSD Research Data Management Policy**	☒
3	Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) (2021) *Framework for Research Ethics* British Educational Research Association (2024) *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research*, 5th edn.	☒

SECTION D: External Collaborative Research Activity

If there are external collaborators then you should gain consent from the contact persons to share their personal data with the university. If there are no external collaborators then leave this section blank and continue to section E.

1	Institution					
2	Contact person name					
3	Contact person e-mail address					
4	Is your research externally funded?		**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐
5	Are you in receipt of a KESS scholarship?		**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐
6	Are you specifically employed to undertake this research in either a paid or voluntary capacity?	Voluntary	**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐
7		Employed	**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐

8	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**	☐
9	Has 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

10	Does this organisation have its own ethics approval system?	**YES**	☐	**NO**	☐
	If Yes, please attach a copy of any final approval (or interim approval) from the organisation (this may be a copy of an email if appropriate).				

SECTION E: Details of Research Activity

1	Indicative title:	What is the relationship between the development of singing skills and a feeling of belonging, for singing teachers and for avocational singers?		
2	Proposed start date:	31/03/25	Proposed end date:	16/09/25
	Introduction to the Research (maximum 300 words per section) **Ensure that you write for a <u>Non-Specialist Audience</u> when outlining your response to the 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.*			
3	**Purpose of Research Activity** The overarching research purpose is augmentation of my current knowledge and, through critical reflection, improvement of my teaching practice. I hope that participant perspectives, combined with my own, might provide possibilities for adding to singing teachers' current bank of knowledge. My review of existing literature indicates there have been few studies of singers and their feeling of belonging, although there is a small amount examining music participation more generally in this regard. I will address this, bringing adult perspectives into focus (including my own experiences) to examine existing structures (schools, universities, etc.) and ways in which these perspectives might inform future work with young people, who are impacted by these structures. (this box should expand as you type)			
4	**Research Question** 'What is the relationship between the development of singing skills and a feeling of belong, for singing teachers and for avocational singers?' (this box should expand as you type)			
5	**Aims of Research Activity**			

	The research aims to examine singing teachers'/ avocational singers' perceptions of 'belonging', and how this might be defined in relation to singing, whilst gathering a range of views on whether a feeling of belonging is affected by level of singing skill. The hope is for data to emerge from focus group discussion with teachers; semi-structured one-to-one interviews with avocational singers could encourage reflection on whether singing skills might also impact on their daily lives. A further aim is to facilitate future change, at an institutional level, to make singing a more inclusive activity for those who might feel marginalised. (this box should expand as you type)
6	**Objectives of Research Activity** This project aims to gather teachers' personal experiences, both of teaching and of developing their own singing skills, using a set of initial questions designed to spark discussion of ways of teaching, retention of students' interest, building of student confidence. Interviews with avocational singers will be designed to uncover their lived experiences of developing singing skills and how important it has been for them to do so. (this box should expand as you type)
	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. You do not need to justify the methods here, but should instead describe how you intend to collect the data necessary for you to complete your project.
7	I will conduct qualitative research, which will consist of the following methods: 1) Literature review – I will conduct a literature review as part of my research project, to cover research on the concept of belonging, specifically in relation to music participation and performance, aiming to identify any gaps in research in relation to singing. 2) Focus groups – focus groups with singing teachers will be semi-structured, with an initial set of questions or prompts designed to facilitate deeper discussion. Data from the focus groups will be used to inform my structuring of the interviews with avocational singers. 3) Semi-structured interviews – one-to-one interviews will be conducted with a selected group of avocational singers, with an initial set of questions or prompts used as a starting point for the interviews. 4) Reflection journal – throughout the process, I will engage in critical reflection, which I will record in my reflection journal. Data from the focus groups and semi-structured interviews will be triangulated with my literature review, using hermeneutic analysis through critical reflection. (this box should expand as you type)
	Location of research activity Identify all locations where research activity will take place.
8	1) Online sessions conducted over Zoom 2) Phone calls 3) My teaching studio at home 4) The home of one of my participants, which is standard practice in the case of this participant and will be by invitation (this box should expand as you type)
	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

	quidelines (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. If you live in the country where you will do the research then please state this.
9	Not applicable *(this box should expand as you type)*

10	Use of documentation not in the public domain: Are any documents **NOT** publicly available?	**NO**	☒
		YES	☐
11	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 the current data protection law of the country in question and that of England and Wales. *(this box should expand as you type)*		

	Does your research relate to one or more of the seven aims of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015?	**YES**	**NO**
12	A prosperous Wales	☐	☒
13	A resilient Wales	☐	☒
14	A healthier Wales	☐	☒
15	A more equal Wales	☐	☒
16	A Wales of cohesive communities	☐	☒
17	A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	☐	☒
18	A globally responsible Wales	☐	☒
19	If YES to any of the above, please give details:		
	(this box should expand as you type)		

SECTION F: Scope of Research Activity

	Will the research activity include:	**YES**	**NO**
1	Use of a questionnaire or similar research instrument?	☐	☒
2	Use of interviews?	☒	☐
3	Use of focus groups?	☒	☐
4	Use of participant diaries?	☐	☒
5	Use of video or audio recording?	☒	☐

6	Use of computer-generated log files?	☐	☒
7	Participant observation with their knowledge?	☒	☐
8	Participant observation without their knowledge?	☐	☒
9	Access to personal or confidential information without the participants' specific consent?	☐	☒
10	Administration of any questions, test stimuli, presentation that may be experienced as physically, mentally or emotionally harmful / offensive?	☐	☒
11	Performance of any acts which may cause embarrassment or affect self-esteem?	☐	☒
12	Investigation of participants involved in illegal activities?	☐	☒
13	Use of procedures that involve deception?	☐	☒
14	Administration of any substance, agent or placebo?	☐	☒
15	Working with live vertebrate animals?	☐	☒
16	Procedures that may have a negative impact on the environment?	☐	☒
17	Other primary data collection methods. Please indicate the type of data collection method(s) below.		
	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

If there are no participants then do not complete this section, but go directly to section H.

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

	(this box should expand as you type)		

	Participant numbers and source Provide an estimate of the expected number of participants. How will you identify participants and how will they be recruited?	
10	How many participants are expected?	A total of 8 participants, 4 in the focus group(s) and 4 for the one-to-one semi-structured interviews. *(this box should expand as you type)*
11	Who will the participants be?	The focus group(s) will be made up of professional singing teacher colleagues. Interviews will be conducted with avocational singers from a variety of settings, including my adult students, members of local choirs I perform with, and an adult university student. *(this box should expand as you type)*
12	How will you identify the participants?	Singing teachers will be recruited from among my existing professional network and will be known to me. They will be contacted via email addresses that I already have access to. Avocational singers will include up to two of my adult students, members of local choirs I perform with, a member of a musical theatre choir and the daughter of a musician colleague, who is currently at university. These will be people who are known to me or, in the case of the university student, have been recommended to me by colleagues. I intend to contact singing teacher colleagues, the member of the musical theatre choir and the university student by email or phone. Contact will be made via email addresses or phone numbers that I already have access to. The university student will be contacted via a professional colleague, whose details I already have access to and with the full consent of the student, should they wish to participate in the research. In the case of my own students and fellow choir members, I will initially invite them to participate in person during singing lessons and choir rehearsals where possible and will follow this up via email, using email addresses I already have access to or will be asking them to volunteer to give to me when I meet them in person. *(this box should expand as you type)*

	Information for participants:	**YES**	**NO**	**N/A**
13	Will you describe the main research procedures to participants in advance, so that they are informed about what to expect?	☒	☐	☐
14	Will you tell participants that their participation is voluntary?	☒	☐	☐
15	Will you obtain written consent for participation?	☒	☐	☐
16	Will you explain to participants that refusal to participate in the research will not affect their treatment or education (if relevant)?	☒	☐	☐
17	If the research is observational, will you ask participants for their consent to being observed?	☒	☐	☐
18	Will you tell participants that they may withdraw from the research at any time and for any reason?	☒	☐	☐

19	With questionnaires, will you give participants the option of omitting questions they do not want to answer?	☒	☐	☐
20	Will you tell participants that their data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identifiable as theirs?	☒	☐	☐
21	Will you debrief participants at the end of their participation, in a way appropriate to the type of research undertaken?	☒	☐	☐
22	If NO to any of above questions, please give an explanation			
	(this box should expand as you type)			

	Information for participants:	**YES**	**NO**	**N/A**
24	Will participants be paid?	☐	☒	☐
25	Is specialist electrical or other equipment to be used with participants?	☒	☐	☐
26	Are there any financial or other interests to the investigator or University arising from this study?	☐	☒	☐
27	Will the research activity involve deliberately misleading participants in any way, or the partial or full concealment of the specific study aims?	☐	☒	☐
28	If YES to any question, please provide full details			
	For Zoom conferencing, I will be using my own personal iPad (which is password-protected), my PC, which is situated at my home and is password-protected, or my personal mobile phone, which is also password-protected. For interviews which are conducted by phone, I will use my personal mobile phone. I will use the recording function on Zoom to take video and/or audio recordings, which will then be transcribed. Recordings will be deleted once transcripts and notes have been made. *(this box should expand as you type)*			

SECTION H: Anticipated Risks

	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.		
1	**Full risk assessment completed and appended?**	**Yes**	☐
		No	☒
2	**Risks to participants** For example: sector-specific health & safety, emotional distress, financial disclosure, physical harm, transfer of personal data, sensitive organisational information		
	Risk to participants:	*How you will mitigate the risk to participants:*	
	1 Potential ambiguity of asking people known to me to contribute, including engendering a feeling of obligation to take part in the research.	1 Take a sensitive approach and conduct research to the highest ethical standards to minimise any possible adverse consequences. Maintain a professional stance throughout; make it clear to participants that there is no obligation to take part in the research.	
	2 Possible feelings of invasion of privacy.	2 Reassure participants about the social value of the research and emphasise to them that they have the right to withdraw at any point.	

	3 Loss of time whilst participating in the research process.	3 Carefully estimate the time required to participate in the research and include this on the consent form. Reiterate the participant's right to withdraw from the research at any time.
	4 Emotional risks, including feelings of discomfort, embarrassment, fatigue, stress or frustration engendered by the discussion or being part of the research.	4 Consider the research questions from the participant's perspective, anticipating potential areas of difficulty and showing sensitivity to possible problems. Adopt an openly reflexive approach, clearly demonstrating to participants an awareness of the potential issues of insider research and researcher positionality. Endeavour to establish rapport with participants and to generate a feeling of trust. Offer to end the focus group or interview if necessary.
	5 Loss of confidentiality and anonymity. *(this box should expand as you type)*	5 Strictly adhere to ethical guidelines regarding confidentiality and anonymity. Keep collection of personal information to a minimum. Store all essential information securely in a password-protected environment. *(this box should expand as you type)*
3	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	
	Not applicable for this research. *(this box should expand as you type)*	
4	**Risks to the investigator** For example: personal health & safety, physical harm, emotional distress, risk of accusation of harm/impropriety, conflict of interest	
	Risk to the investigator:	*How you will mitigate the risk to the investigator:*
	1 Emotional risk of research situations where difficult topics might be discussed, which could have a triggering effect, causing stress, trauma or possible compassion fatigue.	1 Try to anticipate any potentially sensitive topics. Practise self-care and feel able to end a session if necessary in order to protect myself as researcher.
	2 Risks of being an insider-researcher, including potential conflict of interest.	2 Carefully consider the risks of being an insider researcher in advance, in order to mitigate against them. Ensure an ethical approach to insider research. Consider the potential effects of my positionality on my relationship with participants and adhere to a methodology that aims to reduce bias.
	3 Risk of accusation of harm/impropriety *(this box should expand as you type)*	3 Endeavour to maintain the highest standards of research integrity, with absolute transparency both before and during the process of running the research project, in order to avoid any accusations of harm or impropriety. *(this box should expand as you type)*
5	**University/institutional risks** For example: adverse publicity, financial loss, data protection	

	Risk to the University: 1 Damage to the credibility of the institution if research is not conducted ethically and rigorously. 2 Risk to the University if strict data protection is not observed. *(this box should expand as you type)*	*How you will mitigate the risk to the University:* 1 Ensure that research is carried out to the highest ethical standards, in accordance with university guidelines. 2 Ensure that safe storage of participant data remains paramount in order to avoid bringing the University into disrepute. *(this box should expand as you type)*
6	**Environmental risks** For example: accidental spillage of pollutants, damage to local ecosystems	
	Risk to the environment: Not applicable for this research *(this box should expand as you type)*	*How you will mitigate the risk to environment:* Not applicable for this research *(this box should expand as you type)*

	Disclosure and Barring Service			
	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**
7	Does your research require you to hold a current DBS Certificate?	☐	☒	☐
8	If YES, please give the certificate number. If the certificate number is not available please write "Pending"; in this case any ethical approval will be subject to providing the appropriate certificate number.			

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?
	I will provide my email address to participants, to enable them to contact me if they would like further details or to find out the outcomes of the research. I will also engage in member checking of focus group and interview transcripts from audio/visual data with participants, to check accuracy of reporting and to obtain confirmation that they are happy with the recording and interpretation of their responses. *(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.
	Potential participants will be given a full description of the intended research, along with its aims and objectives, during the initial approach. They will be given sufficient information to understand what consent to participate entails, requires and implies. If they agree in principle to take part, they will be sent a consent form via email, which will outline the mutual responsibilities of researcher and participant during the entire research process, in addition to their overall agreement to take part in the research. One copy of the consent form, signed by the principal researcher and the participant, will be retained by the principal researcher. A signed copy will be sent to the participant. Their consent will be reconfirmed before the focus group or interview commences. All participants will

	have, and be made aware of, the right to leave the research at any point without negative consequences. *(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.
	All data will be protected and participants informed of the degree to which the information they provide throughout the research will be protected. In addition, focus group participants will be asked on the consent form not to reveal what has been said during the focus group session. Research data from both the focus groups and interviews will not reveal, or make it possible to discover, names or personal identifying information of participants. All participants will be given a unique identifier to ensure confidentiality, and this list will be kept securely in a password-protected folder where data gathered will be stored. Recordings will be deleted once transcripts and notes have been made. *(this box should expand as you type)*

SECTION J: Data Protection and Storage

	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**
1	***"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 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. Any video or audio recordings of participants is considered to be personal data.*	☒	☐
	If YES, provide a description of the data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
2	Consent forms and audio/visual data will be necessary for this project in order to carry out the research. For the purposes of contacting participants, it will be necessary to know their names and email addresses (the participants will all be previously known to me, either by recommendation (in the case of the young adult university student) or as a personal acquaintance). This type of information will be carefully coded and securely stored. All participants will be anonymised in the research output by the principal researcher and any notes taken will be digitised. Recordings will be deleted once transcripts and notes have been made. *(this box should expand as you type)*		
	Does it involve special category data (as defined by the GDPR)?	**YES**	**NO**
3	***"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),*	☐	☒
	If YES, provide a description of the special category data and explain why this data needs to be collected:		
4			

	(this box should expand as you type)

	Will data from the research activity (collected data, drafts of the thesis, or materials for publication) be stored in any of the following ways?	YES	NO
5	Manual files (i.e. in paper form)?	☒	☐
6	University computers?	☐	☒
7	Private company computers?	☐	☒
8	Home or other personal computers?	☒	☐
9	Laptop computers/ CDs/ Portable disk-drives/ memory sticks?	☒	☐
10	"Cloud" storage or websites?	☐	☒
11	Other – specify:	☐	☒
12	For all stored data, explain the measures in place to ensure the security of the data collected, data confidentiality, including details of backup procedures, password protection, encryption, anonymisation and pseudonymisation:		
	Any manual data (such as consent forms on paper) will be transferred to an electronic format as soon as possible, with the paper version being shredded. All electronic data will be kept in password-protected storage on the principal researcher's 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, at which point recordings will be deleted. 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)*		

	Data Protection		
	Will the research activity involve any of the following activities:	YES	NO
13	Electronic transfer of data in any form?	☒	☐
14	Sharing of data with others at the University outside of the immediate research team?	☐	☒
15	Sharing of data with other organisations?	☐	☒
16	Export of data outside the UK or importing of data from outside the UK?	☐	☒
17	Use of personal addresses, postcodes, faxes, emails or telephone numbers?	☒	☐
18	Publication of data that might allow identification of individuals?	☐	☒
19	Use of data management system?	☐	☒
20	Data archiving?	☐	☒
21	If YES to any question, please provide full details, explaining how this will be conducted in accordance with the GDPR and Data Protection Act (2018) (and any international equivalents, where appropriate):		
	All data will be encrypted and kept in password-protected storage on the principal researcher's 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 master's course in May 2027 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)*		
22	List all who will have access to the data generated by the research activity:		
	The principal researcher (Jacqueline Dias) and my Master's supervisor *(this box should expand as you type)*		
23	List who will have control of, and act as custodian(s) for, data generated by the research activity:		
	The principal researcher (Jacqueline Dias) *(this box should expand as you type)*		
24	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 storage on the principal researcher's 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 Master's course in May 2027 in order to destroy the data. The data will be stored until the completion of the Master's course and then deleted. *(this box should expand as you type)*		
25	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)*		
	No *(this box should expand as you type)*		
26	Confirm that you have read the UWTSD guidance on data management (see https://www.uwtsd.ac.uk/library/research-data-management/)	**YES**	☒
27	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**	☒

SECTION K: Declaration

	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/		
1	**Signature of applicant:**	Jacqueline Dias	**Date: 18/02/25**

For STUDENT Submissions:

2	Director of Studies/Supervisor:	Laura James	**Date: 9.4.25**
3	Signature:	Laura James	

For STAFF Submissions:

4	Academic Director/ Assistant Dean:		**Date:**
5	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 (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.

RESEARCH STUDENTS ONLY
Once complete, submit this form via the **MyTSD Doctoral College Portal** at (https://mytsd.uwtsd.ac.uk).

RESEARCH 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.

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.

Appendix 2: Permission letter

Jacqueline Dias
Singing Teacher

37 Warwick Road
St Albans
Herts
AL1 4DJ

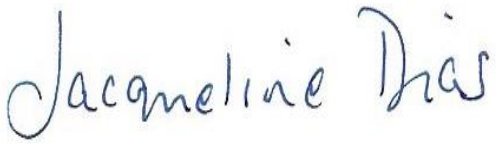
18 February 2025

Dear UWTSD,

RE: Proposed research project entitled 'What is the relationship between development of singing skills and a feeling of belonging, for singing teachers and for avocational singers?'

I confirm my approval of the research proposed into the relationship between development of singing skills and a feeling of belonging, for singing teachers and for avocational singers, to be carried out by Jacqueline Dias, Singing Teacher, during scheduled focus group and interview sessions between 31 March and 16 September 2025.

Kind Regards,



Jacqueline Dias

Appendix 3: Consent forms

VOICE STUDY CENTRE

Interview consent form

Project title: 'What is the relationship between the development of singing skills and a feeling of belonging?'

Project researcher: Jacqueline Dias

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of the above independent research project. This consent form is necessary for me to ensure that you understand the purpose of your involvement and that you agree to the conditions of your participation. Would you please therefore read the accompanying participant information sheet and then sign this form to certify that you approve the following:

Consent to take part in research:

- [redacted] voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time.
- I understand that I can refuse to answer any question involved during the research process without any consequences of any kind.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation involves taking part in an interview of no more than an hour in duration with the principal researcher on the subject of 'singing skills and a feeling of belonging'.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I agree to my interview being video- and audio-recorded.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous.
- This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of the interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.
- I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the written assignment for the work-based research project the principal researcher is conducting as part of the MA course in Voice Pedagogy with the Voice Study Centre/University of Wales Trinity Saint David.
- I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm, they may have to report this to the relevant authorities – they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.
- I understand that signed consent forms and original video/audio recordings will be retained on the principal researcher's Office 365 system, which will be password-protected. Consent forms will be retained until the project has been marked by the University (in September 2025). Video/audio recordings will be deleted once notes and transcripts have been made. Only the principal researcher will have access to the data.
- I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained until the end of the principal researcher's MA course, currently scheduled for 2027.

- I understand that under freedom of information legislation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I have the right to ask for data relating to me to be deleted immediately, in which case it will not be used in the project.
- I understand that I am free to contact the principal researcher to seek further clarification and information.

Contact information:

Jacqueline Dias, MA student at Voice Study Centre

Email: jackie.e.dias@gmail.com

[redacted]

Printed name of research participant:

[redacted] 11/05/2025

Signature of participant Date

JACQUELINE DIAS

Printed name of researcher

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Jacqueline Dias 11/5/25

Signature of researcher Date

ocusign Envelope ID: 79C69C61-63CA-47B9-BA37-00908FE4EF39

VOICE STUDY CENTRE

Interview consent form

Project title: 'What is the relationship between the development of singing skills and a feeling of belonging?'

Project researcher: Jacqueline Dias

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of the above independent research project. This consent form is necessary for me to ensure that you understand the purpose of your involvement and that you agree to the conditions of your participation. Would you please therefore read the accompanying participant information sheet and then sign this form to certify that you approve the following:

Consent to take part in research:

- I [redacted] ..... voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time.
- I understand that I can refuse to answer any question involved during the research process without any consequences of any kind.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation involves taking part in an interview of no more than an hour in duration with the principal researcher on the subject of 'singing skills and a feeling of belonging'.
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- I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained until the end of the principal researcher's MA course, currently scheduled for 2027.

Docusign Envelope ID: 79C69C61-63CA-47B9-BA37-00908FE4EF39

- I understand that under freedom of information legislation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I have the right to ask for data relating to me to be deleted immediately, in which case it will not be used in the project.
- I understand that I am free to contact the principal researcher to seek further clarification and information.

Contact information:

Jacqueline Dias, MA student at Voice Study Centre

Email: jackie.e.dias@gmail.com

[redacted]

Printed name of research participant:

[redacted] 5/11/2025

Signature of participant Date

JACQUELINE DIAS

Printed name of researcher

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Jacqueline Dias 11/5/25

Signature of researcher Date

VOICE STUDY CENTRE

Interview consent form

Project title: 'What is the relationship between the development of singing skills and a feeling of belonging?'

Project researcher: Jacqueline Dias

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of the above independent research project. This consent form is necessary for me to ensure that you understand the purpose of your involvement and that you agree to the conditions of your participation. Would you please therefore read the accompanying participant information sheet and then sign this form to certify that you approve the following:

Consent to take part in research:

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- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time.
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- I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained until the end of the principal researcher's MA course, currently scheduled for 2027.

- I understand that under freedom of information legislation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I have the right to ask for data relating to me to be deleted immediately, in which case it will not be used in the project.
- I understand that I am free to contact the principal researcher to seek further clarification and information.

Contact information:

Jacqueline Dias, MA student at Voice Study Centre

Email: jackie.e.dias@gmail.com

[redacted]

Printed name of research participant:

[redacted] 16/05/2025

Signature of participant Date

JACQUELINE DIAS

Printed name of researcher

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Jacqueline Dias 16/5/25

Signature of researcher Date

VOICE STUDY CENTRE

Interview consent form

Project title: 'What is the relationship between the development of singing skills and a feeling of belonging?'

Project researcher: Jacqueline Dias

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- I understand that I have the right to ask for data relating to me to be deleted immediately, in which case it will not be used in the project.
- I understand that I am free to contact the principal researcher to seek further clarification and information.

Contact information:

Jacqueline Dias, MA student at Voice Study Centre

Email: jackie.e.dias@gmail.com

Printed name of research participant:

[redacted]

Signature of participant Date

[redacted] 15/05/25

Printed name of researcher JACQUELINE DIAS

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Jacqueline Dias 16/5/25

Signature of researcher Date

VOICE STUDY CENTRE

Interview consent form

Project title: 'What is the relationship between the development of singing skills and a feeling of belonging?'

Project researcher: Jacqueline Dias

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of the above independent research project. This consent form is necessary for me to ensure that you understand the purpose of your involvement and that you agree to the conditions of your participation. Would you please therefore read the accompanying participant information sheet and then sign this form to certify that you approve the following:

Consent to take part in research:

- I, [redacted]..... voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time.
- I understand that I can refuse to answer any question involved during the research process without any consequences of any kind.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation involves taking part in an interview of no more than an hour in duration with the principal researcher on the subject of 'singing skills and a feeling of belonging'.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I agree to my interview being video- and audio-recorded.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous.
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- I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the written assignment for the work-based research project the principal researcher is conducting as part of the MA course in Voice Pedagogy with the Voice Study Centre/University of Wales Trinity Saint David.
- I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm, they may have to report this to the relevant authorities – they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.
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- I understand that I have the right to ask for data relating to me to be deleted immediately, in which case it will not be used in the project.
- I understand that I am free to contact the principal researcher to seek further clarification and information.

Contact information:

Jacqueline Dias, MA student at Voice Study Centre

Email: jackie.e.dias@gmail.com

[redacted]

Printed name of research participant:

[redacted] 20/5/25

Signature of participant Date

[redacted] 20/5/25

Printed name of researcher JACQUELINE DIAS

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Jacqueline Dias 20/5/25

Signature of researcher Date

Docusign Envelope ID: BA590150-2274-4A31-B134-55E8A944B6A4

VOICE STUDY CENTRE

Interview consent form

Project title: 'What is the relationship between the development of singing skills and a feeling of belonging?'

Project researcher: Jacqueline Dias

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as part of the above independent research project. This consent form is necessary for me to ensure that you understand the purpose of your involvement and that you agree to the conditions of your participation. Would you please therefore read the accompanying participant information sheet and then sign this form to certify that you approve the following:

Consent to take part in research:

- [redacted]..... voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time.
- I understand that I can refuse to answer any question involved during the research process without any consequences of any kind.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation involves taking part in an interview of no more than an hour in duration with the principal researcher on the subject of 'singing skills and a feeling of belonging'.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I agree to my interview being video- and audio-recorded.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous.
- This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of the interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.
- I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in the written assignment for the work-based research project the principal researcher is conducting as part of the MA course in Voice Pedagogy with the Voice Study Centre/University of Wales Trinity Saint David.
- I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm, they may have to report this to the relevant authorities – they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.
- I understand that signed consent forms and original video/audio recordings will be retained on the principal researcher's Office 365 system, which will be password-protected. Consent forms will be retained until the project has been marked by the University (in September 2025). Video/audio recordings will be deleted once notes and transcripts have been made. Only the principal researcher will have access to the data.
- I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained until the end of the principal researcher's MA course, currently scheduled for 2027.

Docusign Envelope ID: BA590150-2274-4A31-B134-55E8A944B6A4

- I understand that under freedom of information legislation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I have the right to ask for data relating to me to be deleted immediately, in which case it will not be used in the project.
- I understand that I am free to contact the principal researcher to seek further clarification and information.

Contact information:

Jacqueline Dias, MA student at Voice Study Centre

Email: jackie.e.dias@gmail.com

[redacted]

Printed name of research participant:

[redacted] 28/5/2025

Signature of participant Date

Jackie E. Dias

Printed name of researcher

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Jacqueline Dias 28/5/2025

Signature of researcher Date

VOICE STUDY CENTRE

Focus group consent form

Project title: 'What is the relationship between the development of singing skills and a feeling of belonging?'

Project researcher: Jacqueline Dias

Thank you for agreeing to participate in a focus group as part of the above independent research project. This consent form is necessary for me to ensure that you understand the purpose of your involvement and that you agree to the conditions of your participation. Would you please therefore read the accompanying participant information sheet and then sign this form to certify that you approve the following:

Consent to take part in research:

- [redacted]..... voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time.
- I understand that I can refuse to answer any question involved during the research process without any consequences of any kind.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation involves taking part in a focus group discussion of no more than an hour in duration with the principal researcher, on the subject of 'singing skills and a feeling of belonging'.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I agree to the focus group discussion being video- and audio-recorded.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous.
- This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of the focus group discussion which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.
- I understand that disguised extracts from the focus group discussion may be quoted in the written assignment for the work-based research project the principal researcher is conducting as part of the MA course in Voice Pedagogy with the Voice Study Centre/University of Wales Trinity Saint David.
- I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm, they may have to report this to the relevant authorities – they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.
- As a participant in the focus group, I understand that any information disclosed within the focus group remains confidential to the group, and I will not discuss the focus group with or in front of anyone who was not involved unless I have the relevant person's express permission.
- I understand that signed consent forms and original video/audio recordings will be retained on the principal researcher's Office 365 system, which will be password-protected. Consent forms will be retained until the project has been marked by the University (in September 2025). Video/audio recordings will be

deleted once notes and transcripts have been made. Only the principal researcher will have access to the data.

- I understand that a transcript of the focus group discussion in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained until the end of the principal researcher's MA course, currently scheduled for 2027.
- I understand that under freedom of information legislation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I have the right to ask for data relating to me to be deleted immediately, in which case it will not be used in the project.
- I understand that I am free to contact the principal researcher to seek further clarification and information.

Contact information:

Jacqueline Dias, MA student at Voice Study Centre

Email: jackie.e.dias@gmail.com

[redacted]

Printed name of research participant:

[redacted] 12/05/2025

Signature of participant Date

JACQUELINE DIAS

Printed name of researcher

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Jacqueline Dias 12/5/25

Signature of researcher Date

VOICE STUDY CENTRE

Focus group consent form

Project title: 'What is the relationship between the development of singing skills and a feeling of belonging?'

Project researcher: Jacqueline Dias

Thank you for agreeing to participate in a focus group as part of the above independent research project. This consent form is necessary for me to ensure that you understand the purpose of your involvement and that you agree to the conditions of your participation. Would you please therefore read the accompanying participant information sheet and then sign this form to certify that you approve the following:

Consent to take part in research:

- I, [redacted]..... voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time.
- I understand that I can refuse to answer any question involved during the research process without any consequences of any kind.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation involves taking part in a focus group discussion of no more than an hour in duration with the principal researcher, on the subject of 'singing skills and a feeling of belonging'.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I agree to the focus group discussion being video- and audio-recorded.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous.
- This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of the focus group discussion which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.
- I understand that disguised extracts from the focus group discussion may be quoted in the written assignment for the work-based research project the principal researcher is conducting as part of the MA course in Voice Pedagogy with the Voice Study Centre/University of Wales Trinity Saint David.
- I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm, they may have to report this to the relevant authorities – they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.
- As a participant in the focus group, I understand that any information disclosed within the focus group remains confidential to the group, and I will not discuss the focus group with or in front of anyone who was not involved unless I have the relevant person's express permission.
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- I understand that under freedom of information legislation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I have the right to ask for data relating to me to be deleted immediately, in which case it will not be used in the project.
- I understand that I am free to contact the principal researcher to seek further clarification and information.

Contact information:

Jacqueline Dias, MA student at Voice Study Centre

Email: jackie.e.dias@gmail.com

[redacted]

Printed name of research participant:

[redacted] 15.05.2025

[redacted]ature of participant Date

JACQUELINE DIAS

Printed name of researcher

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Jacqueline Dias 15.5.25

Signature of researcher Date

VOICE STUDY CENTRE

Focus group consent form

Project title: 'What is the relationship between the development of singing skills and a feeling of belonging?'

Project researcher: Jacqueline Dias

Thank you for agreeing to participate in a focus group as part of the above independent research project. This consent form is necessary for me to ensure that you understand the purpose of your involvement and that you agree to the conditions of your participation. Would you please therefore read the accompanying participant information sheet and then sign this form to certify that you approve the following:

Consent to take part in research:

- I [redacted].... voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time.
- I understand that I can refuse to answer any question involved during the research process without any consequences of any kind.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation involves taking part in a focus group discussion of no more than an hour in duration with the principal researcher, on the subject of 'singing skills and a feeling of belonging'.
- I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.
- I agree to the focus group discussion being video- and audio-recorded.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous.
- This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of the focus group discussion which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.
- I understand that disguised extracts from the focus group discussion may be quoted in the written assignment for the work-based research project the principal researcher is conducting as part of the MA course in Voice Pedagogy with the Voice Study Centre/University of Wales Trinity Saint David.
- I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm, they may have to report this to the relevant authorities – they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.
- As a participant in the focus group, I understand that any information disclosed within the focus group remains confidential to the group, and I will not discuss the focus group with or in front of anyone who was not involved unless I have the relevant person's express permission.
- I understand that signed consent forms and original video/audio recordings will be retained on the principal researcher's Office 365 system, which will be password-protected. Consent forms will be retained until the project has been marked by the University (in September 2025). Video/audio recordings will be

deleted once notes and transcripts have been made. Only the principal researcher will have access to the data.

- I understand that a transcript of the focus group discussion in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained until the end of the principal researcher's MA course, currently scheduled for 2027.
- I understand that under freedom of information legislation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.
- I understand that I have the right to ask for data relating to me to be deleted immediately, in which case it will not be used in the project.
- I understand that I am free to contact the principal researcher to seek further clarification and information.

Contact information:

Jacqueline Dias, MA student at Voice Study Centre

Email: jackie.e.dias@gmail.com

Printed name of research participant:

[redacted] 17/05/2025 ----------

Signature of participant Date

[redacted]

Printed name of researcher JACQUELINE DIAS

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Jacqueline Dias 17/5/25

Signature of researcher Date

Appendix 4: Transcripts

Focus group

WEBVTT

1
00:00:03.680 --> 00:00:04.470
JD: Fantastic.

2
00:00:07.330 --> 00:00:10.060
JD: And I will just do this as well.

3
00:00:12.860 --> 00:00:13.850
JD: Okay.

4
00:00:14.060 --> 00:00:29.480
JD: Okay. So, to kick us off, I just have a question that is more of a general thing. Let's discuss, if we can, the different pathways to becoming a singing teacher. If anybody would like to

5
00:00:29.880 --> 00:00:37.139
JD: elaborate on what those might be, how you got into it yourselves, that sort of thing.

6
00:00:40.500 --> 00:01:01.019
F3: Okay, well, I will start. I started becoming a singing teacher because I trained as one when I was much, much younger. I think I was about 24/25. Then, after a career doing something completely different, I went back into teaching and singing teaching specifically.

7
00:01:01.430 --> 00:01:12.869
F3: And because I had the qualification behind me, I felt comfortable to do that, and I was sorting, I was running choirs for a good, say 5, 6 years before I started teaching singing as well.

8
00:01:17.230 --> 00:01:18.490
JD: Yeah, brilliant.

9
00:01:19.675 --> 00:01:26.799
F1: [Researcher’s name], so I suppose for me I was always singing, performing, and then I just

10
00:01:26.800 --> 00:01:51.290

F1: taught at the same time, really, and I think, even though I hadn't done, I did a university music degree, which was a performance degree in singing. But I hadn't actually done singing exams, as you know the [exam board] exams, but I'd done them in piano. So I think that was that was okay, you know, I could kind of go into it. And then later on I taught, for years

11
00:01:51.290 --> 00:01:57.489
F1: without it, but then, in my, when I was about 40, I got my PGCE.

12
00:01:57.680 --> 00:02:15.719
F1: And then did some classroom teaching for a while, and then went back into the singing teaching again. But I, you know, it's not that I consider that you necessarily need a PGCE. But yeah, later. Later on I got it, and I think it was good, you know, just in terms of understanding what I was doing a little bit better.

13
00:02:16.960 --> 00:02:17.590
JD: Yeah.

14
00:02:17.590 --> 00:02:20.139
F1: That's it really.

15
00:02:20.140 --> 00:02:24.769
JD: Yeah, yeah, this all sounds very impressive. So what about you, F2?

16
00:02:24.770 --> 00:02:28.079
F1: It's really not, it's really not. But yeah.

17
00:02:28.869 --> 00:02:46.419
F2: I got to teaching by accident, really, I mean, I did train in [country], in [city], conservatoire, as a music teacher and a choir conductor funnily enough, and I've done an awful lot of choir singing over the years.

18
00:02:48.260 --> 00:02:57.760
F2: And I didn't teach. Also, I didn't really know about the grading systems in this country at all,

19
00:02:57.860 --> 00:03:02.970
F2: and my children's friends wanted to sing with me.

20
00:03:03.490 --> 00:03:09.039
F2: And their mum said, ‘Don't be silly, please do teach’. So that's how I got to it.

21
00:03:09.270 --> 00:03:15.409
F2: and I had, I was very lucky with some friends who were recommending and suggesting different

22
00:03:15.760 --> 00:03:18.980
F2: boards what I could sort of

23
00:03:19.620 --> 00:03:26.630
F2: get used to and look up. And so we got into grading, and I got familiar with

24
00:03:26.940 --> 00:03:34.350
F2: syllabuses and started collecting the library. It's all, step by step how it built up.

25
00:03:34.490 --> 00:03:38.590
F2: And at certain point I had quite a big crowd of

26
00:03:39.050 --> 00:03:43.709
F2: students who all came to my home and did some singing with me.

27
00:03:44.140 --> 00:03:46.470
F2: So that's my story.

28
00:03:46.990 --> 00:03:47.690
JD: Wow.

29
00:03:47.900 --> 00:03:48.530
F2: Yeah.

30
00:03:48.700 --> 00:03:59.760
JD: Yeah, we, everybody has a really different story, which is really interesting. And so, this leads me onto, how do you feel about your role as a teacher?

31
00:04:00.080 --> 00:04:04.080
JD: If anybody has anything more they'd like to say about that.

32
00:04:07.000 --> 00:04:24.310
F3: I feel it kind of crosses over barriers sometimes. in that we're not just teachers. We're there to listen to the pupils and not necessarily in the schools I am at now because most of the children there are okay. But in a previous school there were a lot of safeguarding and child protection issues,

33
00:04:24.400 --> 00:04:47.339
F3: and I would find things out just during lessons. Children would talk to me about what things were like at home and what was happening, and I also got in the position of children that were deemed not necessarily at risk, but underperforming, ones that had free school

meals were given free lessons with me just because it made them feel better about themselves and better about life.

34
00:04:47.490 --> 00:04:53.169
F3: And it was a way of them being able to talk to someone in a safe environment that wasn't counselling.

35
00:04:53.340 --> 00:04:57.779
F3: And wasn't art therapy, just having a little sing with me.

36
00:04:58.910 --> 00:05:13.109
F3: So I thought, from that perspective, it was quite important. But just in terms of general musicianship, I think it's quite good as well, because I tend to scoop up the ones that don't necessarily want or can't read music as well

37
00:05:13.330 --> 00:05:16.280
F3: as the others playing the piano, for example, can.

38
00:05:16.960 --> 00:05:22.269
F3: So I think music, singing is an easier way into performing, and I like that.

39
00:05:23.850 --> 00:05:25.160
JD: Yeah, thank you.

40
00:05:25.770 --> 00:05:27.849
JD: Yeah, does anybody else…

41
00:05:27.850 --> 00:05:33.039
F2: I agree it does build their confidence hugely.

42
00:05:33.110 --> 00:05:58.679
F2: And I found the same, that some children came to the lessons purely for the therapy. They had been so stressed for some reason at school and overworked, and it made them feel better about themselves. They were able to breathe better. They were able to speak up, erm, and just sort of experiment with their voice.

43
00:05:59.500 --> 00:06:02.870
F2: And being held, or being heard by somebody else

44
00:06:03.170 --> 00:06:08.350
F2: who is not their parent. So I just think it's a combination of

45
00:06:08.650 --> 00:06:17.529

F2: of confidence and finding yourself really and the musicality as well. And of course, if you combine it with some

46
00:06:18.050 --> 00:06:27.849
F2: music, musicianship and sight reading, and just the general musicality. It's just a bonus.

47
00:06:28.600 --> 00:06:33.589
F2: You will teach something. You do something good, I think.

48
00:06:34.070 --> 00:06:36.930
F2: So it's a good thing to do.

49
00:06:37.570 --> 00:06:42.549
JD: Oh, that's nice, very nice. Yeah. What about you F1:? Do you think?

50
00:06:42.550 --> 00:07:07.360
F1: I was just listening to everybody else, I think it's that you've all summed it up really well, and I like the idea of it being very inclusive. I think what F3 said about it being a really nice way into music. You don't necessarily, just off the top of my head thinking of one pupil I'm still teaching now, and I can remember when he came at 14, his mum was emailing me really worried because she said,

51
00:07:07.360 --> 00:07:13.170
F1: he doesn't read music, he's never had a music lesson before, let alone a singing lesson.

52
00:07:13.170 --> 00:07:24.729
F1: and I think it was really nice that I was able to say, well, that's not necessary. I can record things for him. He can learn that way. It's not a problem, and he's still with me now. I mean he'll be,

53
00:07:24.770 --> 00:07:48.240
F1: he's first year uni now, and he's still with me. And seeing him over the years, and how his confidence has developed. And he's now obviously singing really well, still doesn't particularly read music, never wanted to learn, but he's performed numerous times in concerts. And yeah, it's been really successful for him. I think it's been very good for him.

54
00:07:48.970 --> 00:08:05.000
JD: Yeah, well, I think you've all got already to the sort of broader picture, which is amazing. Because I'm not sure that teachers necessarily all know that everybody feels the same. It, you know, I wonder if that's something that you…

55
00:08:05.260 --> 00:08:33.630
JD: yeah, so it's important to have conversations. And about this sort of thing in a way. But yeah, that's really really interesting, because I think it's already broadened out to a question

that I had about, erm, so this is the broad concept. But could I ask you, what do you feel belonging means for you? And I would love to have everybody answer, if that's okay.

56
00:08:35.500 --> 00:08:38.510
F3: Do you mean the children belonging, or us belonging?

57
00:08:39.230 --> 00:08:53.249
JD: That's also an interesting point, you know. But I'm thinking broadly, what does the concept of belonging mean to you? And then we can narrow it down.

58
00:08:54.890 --> 00:08:55.560
F3: Okay.

59
00:08:56.480 --> 00:09:17.009
F3: I feel as if I belong with [school], because I do class teaching there as a singing teacher, just purely singing. The other ones I've seen, the visiting music teachers don't belong as much as I do because they don't have the interaction with the teaching staff, the actual class teachers, that I do.

60
00:09:17.280 --> 00:09:29.650
F3: But I feel very much that I belong there as a singing teacher and also at [school], I feel I belong. People know my role as F3, she does the choir, and she teaches singing.

61
00:09:29.790 --> 00:09:54.360
F3: So for me, that's important. That, and also what I really like at [school] is that there's a team of music teachers, whereas at [school] there was only ever me in the same day as me, no one else is in there. Whereas at [school] I can see the piano teachers and violin teachers and all, and just feel I belong to a team with them as well as belonging to the music department.

62
00:09:55.320 --> 00:09:56.830
JD: Yeah. Yeah.

63
00:09:57.690 --> 00:10:08.460
JD: And does that account, is that part of your, a major part of your identity generally, belonging as a music teacher?

64
00:10:08.790 --> 00:10:35.300
F3: Absolutely, so when people say what you do, I'm proud to say I teach singing at this school, and I belong with the school and in the school, and they appreciate what I do. It does help that I teach the [SLT]'s son. So she sees what I do firsthand. But yeah, I think it's important to me that I feel part of the team, and my self-esteem is made up by the fact that I teach singing in that school, and

65
00:10:35.520 --> 00:10:37.900

F3: and I hopefully do a good job.

66
00:10:38.510 --> 00:10:45.830
JD: Yeah. Fantastic. Yeah. What about anybody else? Is that similar or…

67
00:10:47.420 --> 00:11:03.680
F2: For me totally different. I always felt that music somehow made me belong to a group of similar

68
00:11:04.100 --> 00:11:12.790
F2: people, I suppose, and my background is mainly choir singing, and this is how

69
00:11:14.330 --> 00:11:27.140
F2: I made many, many friends and many connections throughout the years, and what I would like my students

70
00:11:27.240 --> 00:11:33.849
F2: achieve is also try to belong somewhere, and perhaps

71
00:11:34.260 --> 00:11:39.210
F2: audition to the choir, and I would really encourage that,

72
00:11:40.310 --> 00:11:51.900
F2: or anything they want to do on the stage, or they want to prep some, and so find people who would share the same interest

73
00:11:52.360 --> 00:11:58.741
F2: and love, that this this is my belonging, because I'm not working as a team,

74
00:12:00.300 --> 00:12:04.379
F2: student, I mean teaching-wise, and I just

75
00:12:04.650 --> 00:12:07.870
F2: don't belong to any school as such. But

76
00:12:08.140 --> 00:12:11.619
F2: this is my understanding of belonging. If that's enough [Researcher's name].

77
00:12:11.620 --> 00:12:19.529
JD: Yes, yeah, that's fantastic. Yeah. What about you, F1? Do you have any different thoughts about that? Or.

78

00:12:19.530 --> 00:12:30.430
F1: I think it's sharing for me. It's very much you share your love of music, but you also share with him, with the children how

79
00:12:30.740 --> 00:12:50.489
F1: exciting and rewarding it is to have, I suppose, how can I put it, that the relationships that you make through music, the connections that you make are every bit as important as the music itself. So yes, I think like, F2 was saying,

80
00:12:50.910 --> 00:12:51.520

81
00:12:51.520 --> 00:13:06.149
F1: I get very excited if they audition for something, or if they come, and they've joined a choir, and then they come back and say, it's so fantastic. I've met so and so and so and so, and they're making friends, I think. Yes, that's what it's what it's all about, because for me

82
00:13:06.150 --> 00:13:26.119
F1: that has always been my experience of music, that you go, and you, I don't know, be in an opera, sing, and whatever. And then you make all these connections. And they're really very powerful connections. They're deep, meaningful relationships that you're forming through your shared love of music.

83
00:13:27.800 --> 00:13:51.780
JD: Well, this is fantastic, because I mean, I was going to take it straight on to, could we discuss belonging in the context of your students, but I think, you know, you've already touched on it. So I wonder if there's anything we could really say, because my subject is belonging, and I've been trying to tease out what belonging really means. And is it something that we feel, or is it,

84
00:13:51.780 --> 00:14:06.369
JD: is it an actual thing? Do we belong? Or is it just a feeling? And how do we encourage that in our students, you know, if you think that maybe you want to encourage them to join something. As you were saying, F1.

85
00:14:07.190 --> 00:14:07.660
F1: Hmm.

86
00:14:07.660 --> 00:14:32.950
F3: I. I took it one step further and made something for them. I was trying to find a way to attach a document so you could see it all. But what I've done for the last 15 years is I put concerts on for my pupils and for my choirs, so they belong to that. So everyone I teach can come and sing at the [local theatre], whether it's in a group or a solo. We have rehearsals together.

87
00:14:33.316 --> 00:15:01.209

F3: So, for example, all my Year 4s at [school] would have some joint singing lessons, so it's never, I'm singing on my own, I don't feel as if I belong to a group. It's always, I belong to this group, and we are all singing, and we're all [name]'s pupils, and we belong physically and mentally to that group because they come and they rehearse, and they get to know each other. And they get to know across year groups and also across schools, because I do a joint school thing.

88
00:15:01.370 --> 00:15:31.150
F3: So I have one pupil that was at [school], and is now at [school], and that's a fantastic link, so she can see her old friends that she used to sing with at [school], and also the [school] children can see what [school] are doing, and vice versa. And so there's a real sense of community with all the parents working together, all the children singing together. There's always a big finale or two where all the choirs sing together, even if they've never met. They all get to sing together and have that wonderful feeling of

89
00:15:31.200 --> 00:15:32.490
F3: 'we belong',

90
00:15:32.640 --> 00:15:45.770
F3: which I get from a choir as well, and I used to love it in choir trips when you'd get a number of choirs that would all sing together at the end. And that's what I've tried to get my students to feel.

91
00:15:46.910 --> 00:15:48.240
JD: Yeah. Yeah.

92
00:15:48.340 --> 00:15:53.470
JD: And do you feel that, I don't know if you all feel that getting

93
00:15:53.650 --> 00:15:58.340
JD: young people to participate, you need to find the key to that,

94
00:15:58.490 --> 00:16:04.520
JD: you know? And is it, then, singing together, or helping them to believe that they can sing together?

95
00:16:04.620 --> 00:16:11.190
JD: So, I don't know if you've ever felt that.

96
00:16:12.250 --> 00:16:14.940
JD: Or is there a kind of disconnect sometimes?

97
00:16:15.500 --> 00:16:16.740
F2: Well,

98
00:16:16.740 --> 00:16:31.490
F2: can I just say, F3, I think you're doing a fantastic job, having this community spirit and having children coming back and doing things with you. It's an amazing thing.

99
00:16:31.670 --> 00:16:51.769
F2: And what I feel at the moment at schools, in many, many schools, this has been lost. Children don't want to go to the choirs. They don't want to join in. They are shy, they say they can't sing whatever next, they can, but they don't want to, and

100
00:16:52.420 --> 00:17:07.990
F2: I don't really know what is going on at schools, because I'm not teaching at school, but I feel music teacher can make such a difference. Good music teacher who would organize a few

101
00:17:08.390 --> 00:17:15.360
F2: good choirs which has got a nice repertoire to sing. You must be able to

102
00:17:16.319 --> 00:17:23.579
F2: get this interest going among children, but I don't know where has it. In many, many schools it's lost.

103
00:17:24.170 --> 00:17:36.469
F3: In [school] I found it very hard to get the older Year 5s and 6s involved. It's full of Year 3s and 4s, year 5 and 6 don't want to come. They don't want.

104
00:17:36.640 --> 00:17:50.980
F3: They're embarrassed about singing, and especially boys. It's a nightmare with trying to get boys to sing. There was one boy in my choir at [school]. Bless him! He turns up to every rehearsal. He loves it, but it's 1 out of 25 children.

105
00:17:51.960 --> 00:17:52.280
F3: Which is

106
00:17:52.280 --> 00:18:09.390
F3: so, I think it's incredible, and I think it's really sad that it's gone from my son's year, where a few of them sang, and I set up a drumming group, so I had at least 10/15 boys performing at the [local theatre], and now from [school] there was one boy performing.

107
00:18:09.670 --> 00:18:18.130
F2: Maybe it's what's happened with us over years. All this Covid thing definitely impacted us.

108
00:18:18.745 --> 00:18:22.389
F2: And sort of it's been lost a little bit

109
00:18:23.130 --> 00:18:29.509
F2: definitely. I do agree that the interest is not there, and they would rather do something else.

110
00:18:30.440 --> 00:18:31.030
JD: Yeah.

111
00:18:31.030 --> 00:18:39.159
F3: It tends to clash with a sunny lunchtime, and they've got the adventure playground, and if they have to choose between choir and playing outside,

112
00:18:39.290 --> 00:18:41.040
F3: then they will choose playing outside.

113
00:18:41.040 --> 00:18:41.750
F2: Hmm.

114
00:18:42.610 --> 00:18:43.170
JD: Right.

115
00:18:43.170 --> 00:18:55.240
F3: Whereas [school], because it's a private school, and the parents have signed up for choir. They're not paying for it, but they've signed up for it, there's a list, the teachers make sure they come. They have to be there.

116
00:18:55.400 --> 00:18:55.820
F2: Hmm.

117
00:18:55.820 --> 00:19:01.549
F3: Then they're chased down, and they have to come the next week, or their parents have to sign them out of the club.

118
00:19:01.720 --> 00:19:08.199
F3: Whereas at [school], it's a turn up if you feel like it, the teachers don't support me. They don't remind the children

119
00:19:08.390 --> 00:19:17.629
F3: that it's choir. Even if I go around half an hour before and say, first lunch, it's choir. They won't say to the children, it's choir today, go for first lunch.

120
00:19:17.860 --> 00:19:23.930

F3: It's almost as if they are, well, it sounds a bit paranoid to say that they're trying to stop it happening, but

121
00:19:24.460 --> 00:19:26.320
F3: they are not supporting it at all.

122
00:19:26.750 --> 00:19:28.990
JD: Yeah, that's quite hard. Yeah.

123
00:19:29.220 --> 00:19:35.169
JD: What about F1? Do you feel? Do you get any sense of that in your teaching or.

124
00:19:35.170 --> 00:19:39.500
F1: It's a little different, because, of course, I'm at the,

125
00:19:39.590 --> 00:20:06.659
F1: I'm at the music school rather than, you know, school school, and most of my pupils are older. I've got one Year 5, but apart from that, they're all in secondary school and yeah, that they are older. So I suppose the ones that are still singing by the point they're with me are really committed, you know. They they've kind of got through that and most of my pupils

126
00:20:06.660 --> 00:20:24.910
F1: luckily tend to have opportunities at school to be in choirs and to sing in productions. And also there's a concert that we put on at the end of each term at [local music centre], and generally they all want, pretty much all of them will want to sing

127
00:20:24.990 --> 00:20:45.980
F1: in that concert, will already be thinking about, you know, they'll sing one song for one, and then they'll be thinking, ooh, what can I sing for the next one? If anything, it's, the only thing I would say is that I think sometimes the parents don't understand how important it is to get up and perform, and so

128
00:20:45.980 --> 00:20:59.400
F1: the only issue I would have with getting pupils to sing for concerts would be, maybe the parents' disinterest. So if, and if they're not facilitating it, of course it's all after school, they're not going to bring them, then obviously they can't sing.

129
00:21:00.780 --> 00:21:01.740
JD: Yeah.

130
00:21:01.740 --> 00:21:02.200
F3: It's a different...

131
00:21:02.830 --> 00:21:12.829

F1: I do remember when I was, you know, when I was teaching in primary school, I mean what F3: was saying really rings true, because when I was teaching there I was

132
00:21:13.050 --> 00:21:34.019
F1: doing the choir, you know, taking the choir during lunchtime and performances and that sort of thing, exactly the same thing, loads of Year 3, Years 3 and 4. This is pre-covid, well pre- covid. Then by Year 5, 6, you know you're not going to see them on a sunny, so I wonder if it's just a general age thing a little bit.

133
00:21:34.490 --> 00:21:40.200
JD: Yeah, yeah, I think that's a really good point. Because I was going to say,

134
00:21:40.910 --> 00:21:48.250
JD: would you say that there's an accepted definition of the kind of skills a singer needs to possess?

135
00:21:52.040 --> 00:21:52.840
F1: What do you mean?

136
00:21:53.600 --> 00:22:03.369
JD: Yeah. Well, do you think there is a definition, you know. So are these young people defining themselves as singers or not singers? And do you think that makes a difference?

137
00:22:03.520 --> 00:22:09.360
JD: And you know, if there is a definition, is it important that

138
00:22:09.770 --> 00:22:12.219
JD: they see themselves as singers?

139
00:22:12.220 --> 00:22:13.930
F1: In terms of singers, yes.

140
00:22:14.120 --> 00:22:16.440
F1: Were you asking me [Researcher's name]? I'm.

141
00:22:16.440 --> 00:22:21.940
JD: Well, this is general. But yes, anybody. Yeah, I'd love for you all to respond if you would like.

142
00:22:21.940 --> 00:22:35.700
F1: For my pupils, definitely, definitely it's that understanding. Yes, it's getting to that point where they're confident enough that, yes, they absolutely view themselves as singers.

143

00:22:35.700 --> 00:22:37.050
JD: Yeah, yeah.

144
00:22:37.740 --> 00:22:38.880
F1: I think so.

145
00:22:39.830 --> 00:23:00.329
F3: Mine do, mine have to, because they're on the stage, and they have to sing on their own, or with a group of 10 people. And in front of, last, 2 weeks ago there was 80 children and 150 parents watching. So they have to feel that they're singers and know that they can sing and sing confidently.

146
00:23:00.620 --> 00:23:28.750
F3: And I think for that for them, it's incredible when they do their first concert, and they come out going, oh, my god! I can actually do this! I can sing, and it's the most amazing feeling. And even within the choir I've had some pupils going, literally saying, I can't come because I'm too scared. And then they, their parent or the other choir leader, brings them and makes them go on the stage, and they suddenly realize what they can do. And so they begin to feel like a singer, and they feel like a performer.

147
00:23:29.350 --> 00:23:30.950
JD: Yeah. Yeah.

148
00:23:31.110 --> 00:23:33.209
JD: F2, do you have that?

149
00:23:33.210 --> 00:23:36.760
F2: Yes, and I think,

150
00:23:37.780 --> 00:23:44.599
F2: it comes out when the child actually wants to do an audition somewhere else outside

151
00:23:44.770 --> 00:23:49.000
F2: my lessons, and comes back to me and say, I

152
00:23:49.410 --> 00:24:08.610
F2: want to audition to this place, or I have done this or that. That is a compliment, that they are really recognizing themselves like, as singers now, and they are little young singers, and they are putting themselves forward. I do want them to put themselves forward and be confident with it.

153
00:24:10.880 --> 00:24:11.460
F2: Um...

154

00:24:11.460 --> 00:24:12.000
JD: Yeah.

155
00:24:12.000 --> 00:24:13.879
F2: That would be ideal, really.

156
00:24:14.530 --> 00:24:22.590
JD: Yeah, that sounds amazing. I wondered, because, on the other side, I wondered if you've ever experienced teaching

157
00:24:22.710 --> 00:24:27.470
JD: students who don't seem to have all the skills that you think they might need

158
00:24:28.060 --> 00:24:38.209
JD: and whether there is a definition of those skills that you could… how does it feel to teach somebody who you think might be struggling with singing?

159
00:24:40.010 --> 00:24:44.869
F3: Oh, god, [giggle] yeah, it's really, it's really challenging. My,

160
00:24:45.640 --> 00:25:02.089
F3: one of my pupils was, is, and this mustn't go any further. But it was, [ ], and it took me a good 18 months, 2 years to get him to be able to sing properly, and all that time he was in the concerts, but playing handbells, playing percussion.

161
00:25:02.480 --> 00:25:07.259
F3: And his brother's just started lessons doing exactly the same thing. But I know that we'll get there.

162
00:25:07.390 --> 00:25:11.209
F3: So it's worth persevering.

163
00:25:13.225 --> 00:25:13.960
JD: Yeah.

164
00:25:17.150 --> 00:25:19.340
JD: Has anybody?

165
00:25:19.340 --> 00:25:20.350
F2: Are you OK?

166
00:25:20.350 --> 00:25:22.235
F3: Just gonna get a throat sweet.

167
00:25:22.550 --> 00:25:27.149
JD: Yeah, and somebody else could jump in on that, if, you know, if you would like.

168
00:25:28.495 --> 00:25:38.090
F2: My, very interesting, one of my students came to me and said, I really want to sing, but I don't think I can sing in tune,

169
00:25:39.000 --> 00:25:43.780
F2: and it was to do with his voice breaking

170
00:25:44.260 --> 00:25:50.090
F2: and going from beautiful boy, boy's, suddenly to a bass

171
00:25:50.300 --> 00:25:58.630
F2: or baritone bass. And we started learning from pretty much scratch how to

172
00:26:00.920 --> 00:26:13.880
F2: how to direct your voice and your breathing, that you can hear with your inner ear, also your voice, and you can actually work it out how the melody goes. And that was an interesting

173
00:26:14.130 --> 00:26:18.800
F2: well, not project. But we did get to sing

174
00:26:19.380 --> 00:26:29.380
F2: actually in tune. So he was definitely able to sing in tune, but he was finding his voice, and that is for boys very different

175
00:26:30.056 --> 00:26:41.460
F2: ball game altogether when they go through the voice change, that they suddenly lose their confidence, and they don't know how to place their voice,

176
00:26:41.790 --> 00:26:58.279
F2: because the hearing and it it's just different. It's alien to them all of a sudden. So it would be nice if we can go through this transition smoothly, and they will find it as fast as possible, rather than losing their confidence in between.

177
00:26:58.980 --> 00:27:00.500
JD: Yeah, yeah.

178
00:27:00.500 --> 00:27:03.824
F1: Yeah, it's that's, yeah, that's reminded me,

179
00:27:04.820 --> 00:27:07.340
F1: it's a really tricky thing, isn't it?

180
00:27:07.550 --> 00:27:14.310
F1: And to actually keep them going singing during that phase, when their voice is breaking.

181
00:27:14.310 --> 00:27:14.910
F2: Yeah.

182
00:27:14.910 --> 00:27:23.170
F1: And it's also, I think, trying to, well for me, anyway, I mean, I haven't had many, taught many boys in that situation, but I have got one

183
00:27:23.170 --> 00:27:44.919
F1: who I've taught recently, who luckily got through it eventually, smoothly. And he's now, he'll be doing his Grade 6 next month. So, phew! Basically. But yeah, I had a good hard 18 months with him really. It is very tricky. It's that they have that feeling of loss. I mean, he had a lovely soprano boy soprano voice, and it's

184
00:27:44.920 --> 00:28:10.250
F1: oh, my lovely voice! I used to love singing those high notes, and it's very much, also it's a very psychological thing, isn't it? You know, you know, trying, getting him excited about the voice that he's actually going to have, you know, saying, well, I want, you know, lovely and look, and it's coming. And then slowly, as the range slowly increases again, I mean, then, you know, you're kind of on the home straight.

185
00:28:10.510 --> 00:28:20.619
JD: Yeah. Yeah. And is it hard to find? Is it hard to find repertoire then, for boys going up through the various stages that they're going to be interested in.

186
00:28:20.880 --> 00:28:21.560
F1: Yeah.

187
00:28:21.930 --> 00:28:34.060
F1: Well, I don't know. What do you think, I mean, I found it. I found it hard, just because at one point he just had a range such a tiny range before he kind of built it back up again. It's it's not easy to find songs.

188
00:28:34.060 --> 00:28:40.410
F2: No, no, it isn't. And you have to listen to them what they want to sing, suddenly

189
00:28:40.410 --> 00:29:06.120

F2: there are those hormones, raving hormones, not hormones boys have got, anyway. What I wanted to say was that they need to like what they want to sing, so sometimes they bring their own pop song, Ed Sheeran, or whatever that is, and and you need to go with the flow.

190
00:29:07.330 --> 00:29:12.049
F3: I must say the [exam board] normal syllabus is rubbish for boys.

191
00:29:12.050 --> 00:29:12.600
F2: Thank you.

192
00:29:12.600 --> 00:29:13.350
F3: I've got a little boy,

193
00:29:13.350 --> 00:29:14.000
F2: Agreed.

194
00:29:14.000 --> 00:29:25.099
F3: taking Grade 2, Grade 3. There's hardly any songs he wants to do so the musical theatre syllabus is slightly better, but the songs are more challenging in terms of,

195
00:29:25.240 --> 00:29:28.470
F3: they might have inappropriate content for much younger children.

196
00:29:28.600 --> 00:29:33.230
F3: So I think they're they're really missing out here with having a strong syllabus.

197
00:29:33.490 --> 00:29:33.880
F2: Yes.

198
00:29:33.880 --> 00:29:36.830
F3: Because some of the songs about love. No, thank you,

199
00:29:37.330 --> 00:29:40.610
F3: or about girly things, or rainbows or butterflies.

200
00:29:40.770 --> 00:29:42.870
F3: And they're not interested in that at all.

201
00:29:42.870 --> 00:29:43.630
F2: No.

202

00:29:44.590 --> 00:29:45.860
JD: Very true. Yeah.

203
00:29:46.020 --> 00:29:48.440
F2: Yeah, it is limited. Yes, it definitely.

204
00:29:48.440 --> 00:30:12.409
F2: is limited. Grade 3, one of my students, I just asked her, would you mind terribly if we just skip Grade 3 and go straight to Grade 4, because the syllabus is better. I'm sorry there is not much difference between the difficulty of the songs. It's just sight reading and the aural test which has to be supported. But

205
00:30:13.210 --> 00:30:15.980
F2: do you agree? I mean, Grade 3 is just.

206
00:30:15.980 --> 00:30:19.080
F3: I totally agree. Yeah, absolutely. But

207
00:30:19.440 --> 00:30:29.879
F3: the musical theatre Grade 3 is a lot better. And we found some really good songs for that. Musical theatre Grade 4 was a real hit with most of my female pupils.

208
00:30:29.880 --> 00:30:30.510
F2: Hmm.

209
00:30:31.240 --> 00:30:34.080
F3: Yeah. Grade 2 and 3 for boys is not great.

210
00:30:34.460 --> 00:30:58.159
JD: I mean, this might lead on to me asking, because of my, the concept of belonging and and also helping these students feel that they belong, so they may not be young ones, actually, you could be talking about older people. But taking exams and these exam boards, you know, is that something that you are all happy to do?

211
00:30:58.380 --> 00:31:01.220
JD: Do you feel that's a good thing to be

212
00:31:01.430 --> 00:31:04.629
JD: doing, actually putting people in for exams?

213
00:31:05.930 --> 00:31:06.580
F1: Well, I.

214

00:31:06.580 --> 00:31:23.780
F3: I think the syllabus is a really good structure, and I like having something to show at the end of the year. So what they've achieved, I think for the parents paying, sometimes quite a bit for private school. They want something, they want a certificate to say, my child has done this.

215
00:31:26.930 --> 00:31:38.360
JD: Yeah. And what if they want to go quite quickly, and they don't really want to stop. As soon as they've done, Grade 4, they think, oh, I've learned everything there is to learn. If that's the case, I don't know. But

216
00:31:38.560 --> 00:31:42.999
JD: maybe there are some people who are just so exam focused.

217
00:31:44.010 --> 00:31:51.880
F3: I do have one parent that really wants to fast-track her child as quickly as possible through all the necessary grades,

218
00:31:52.060 --> 00:31:59.970
F3: and that was quite challenging. So I'd have to talk to her about technique and how long the songs were and the breathing and the range.

219
00:32:00.610 --> 00:32:05.379
F3: And also getting a really good mark. If you if you rush it, you're not going to get a great mark.

220
00:32:05.840 --> 00:32:11.180
JD: Yeah, yeah. And I mean, do this, do we feel, then, that there's a

221
00:32:11.500 --> 00:32:27.399
JD: that these exam boards are allowing the kind of variety of needs and levels of skill, you know, because in terms of their comments, even on an exam, you know, if that might be a problem with some

222
00:32:27.900 --> 00:32:36.219
JD: children, or even adults, not enjoying having feedback, I mean, are they doing a good job.

223
00:32:36.220 --> 00:32:40.239
F3: Have you heard? Have you heard the [exam board] comments recently?

224
00:32:41.740 --> 00:32:48.339
F3: They are bloody awful, sorry to swear, but some of them are using a new system where it's just disjointed phrases

225
00:32:48.490 --> 00:32:57.759
F3: with spelling mistakes, and nothing that actually tells you how to improve or what you did well, and they're repeating phrases all throughout my

226
00:32:58.250 --> 00:33:04.290
F3: pupils' exams, to the extent that we complained to the board twice on how awful the feedback was,

227
00:33:04.540 --> 00:33:06.597
F3: and they've taken that on board.

228
00:33:07.280 --> 00:33:17.269
F3: But it's still not great, and when you send off, if you do the performance exams, when you send off the video. That was dreadful for a while, because it came back with just gibberish.

229
00:33:18.290 --> 00:33:23.199
F3: The in-person exams are slightly better, because they have to write as they go

230
00:33:23.370 --> 00:33:26.270
F3: to some extent, but even they weren't great.

231
00:33:26.770 --> 00:33:39.260
F3: And I thought, it's so much examiner-dependent that you can have a really nice examiner, and you come out with Merits and Distinctions, and you can have an awful one in a bad mood, and your favourite child, who is very musical, barely passes.

232
00:33:40.390 --> 00:33:41.270
JD: Mm, yeah.

233
00:33:41.580 --> 00:33:55.680
JD: And has anybody had an experience where, you know, you might have a neurodivergent student who, you know has some strengths, and you've worked with, but you can't necessarily show that

234
00:33:56.060 --> 00:33:57.490
JD: to an exam board.

235
00:33:58.670 --> 00:34:08.109
F1: Well, I have, and you're just praying before they go into the exam, that the examiner will be sensitive, actually.

236
00:34:08.230 --> 00:34:15.589

F1: I think now, more recently, I think you can actually say. I'm not … I'll need to look.

237
00:34:15.590 --> 00:34:16.630
F3: You can.

238
00:34:16.630 --> 00:34:33.970
F1: You can say, yeah, but I'm thinking back a few years now with one little girl. She was only doing her Grade 1, obviously very musical, but, you know, neurodivergent, I would say fairly obviously, came out with a much lower mark than she deserved.

239
00:34:34.820 --> 00:34:47.999
F1: But then, on the other hand, you know she did, she then went and did, she missed Grade 2, she did Grade 3, and she did really well, and it was obvious that the examiner was more sensitive. And you know she got a Distinction. So

240
00:34:48.409 --> 00:34:53.629
F1: yeah, I agree, though, I think the examiners are, yeah.

241
00:34:54.610 --> 00:34:58.219
F1: Just that it's quite erratic, really, what you get.

242
00:34:58.220 --> 00:35:06.350
F2: It is. It is a potluck, really, who you get in the room, especially when they are,

243
00:35:06.640 --> 00:35:22.290
F2: you know, in-person exams. Obviously, you need to engage, and you need to know that the person is listening to you and engaging with you as an audience. Well, he will be, or she will be your audience or the child's audience,

244
00:35:22.540 --> 00:35:31.130
F2: and if it is treated like a GP appointment, you know, in, out,

245
00:35:31.340 --> 00:35:39.089
F2: then it's not very rewarding, because they've worked so hard memorizing every word

246
00:35:39.260 --> 00:35:48.480
F2: of Seligkeit in German. They need to be praised for it because it is an achievement.

247
00:35:48.690 --> 00:35:54.579
F2: And you need an audience, why would you otherwise do that?

248
00:35:54.740 --> 00:36:07.370

JD: Yeah. And what if there's literally no chance that your student could reach that level? You know, does this matter, is it better to

249
00:36:07.960 --> 00:36:15.670
JD: sort of avoid them having to confront that kind of lack of encouragement?

250
00:36:15.890 --> 00:36:21.629
F2: I think that exam system is not for everybody.

251
00:36:22.390 --> 00:36:28.560
F2: Some children are better off being left to just sing for fun.

252
00:36:28.810 --> 00:36:49.090
F2: It is just too much for them to go through that anxiety. They can't, you know you can, you just have to draw the line, and perhaps say gently to the parent that it might put them down, it might dent their confidence for life. Actually, it might,

253
00:36:49.733 --> 00:36:53.290
F2: if we don't do it sensitively enough.

254
00:36:54.500 --> 00:36:55.460
JD: Yeah, yeah.

255
00:36:55.460 --> 00:36:56.040

256
00:36:56.350 --> 00:36:59.259
JD: Because I think there's there's lots of different

257
00:36:59.810 --> 00:37:04.489
JD: paths that you, I mean, a student has to follow. You have to actually

258
00:37:04.800 --> 00:37:19.449
JD: be part of something. So that's another element of belonging, you know, in order to feel that you belong, is it important to feel that you've taken the exam or entered the competition? I was going to ask about competitions as well,

259
00:37:19.920 --> 00:37:28.039
JD: whether anybody has experience of competitions, and whether it's a good thing or maybe not such a good thing?

260
00:37:30.500 --> 00:37:50.409

F1: Well, I have, [Researcher's name], as you know, and I think my answer would be similar to F2:'s about exams, that competitions are not for everybody, and if you do enter a pupil you have to be very sure that they're robust enough to not worry if they don't win.

261
00:37:50.730 --> 00:37:56.529
F1: So that they are, that they genuinely do have

262
00:37:57.040 --> 00:38:03.210
F1: some talent. You know, you're not, I think you're very careful with.

263
00:38:03.210 --> 00:38:03.860
JD: Yeah.

264
00:38:05.320 --> 00:38:13.090
JD: And is there, actually, there's another question, really, are there any extra skills which we might be

265
00:38:13.220 --> 00:38:19.649
JD: teaching as singing teachers, and this could encompass sight reading, all those things that a lot of

266
00:38:19.910 --> 00:38:29.080
JD: singers find really, really scary? So, you know how important are those extra things to being a singer?

267
00:38:29.350 --> 00:38:30.030
F3: We have to

268
00:38:30.030 --> 00:38:46.629
F3: do sight reading, and we have to do aural tests to some extent, although I've skipped out of the in-person exams on many an occasion, and most of my pupils now take the performance one. Because I I feel that they can put themselves across

269
00:38:47.060 --> 00:38:56.530
F3: a lot more effectively, and it's, they're not being held back. So they're sight reading at a Grade 2, but they're a Grade 4-standard singer. I don't want to keep them singing Grade 2 songs,

270
00:38:56.720 --> 00:38:59.689
F3: so we just go for the recorded exam.

271
00:39:00.240 --> 00:39:05.620
F3: But they do have to learn sight reading, and aural tests. So we plough through them still.

272
00:39:06.760 --> 00:39:07.680
JD: Yeah.

273
00:39:08.110 --> 00:39:29.210
F2: I agree. I think sight reading is essential. Really, really good skill, fantastic helps you always whenever you want to go to any choir, that's what you need, sight reading. That's the first thing you need, and I mean, obviously, musicality and good voice as well on top. But

274
00:39:29.210 --> 00:39:50.259
F2: we don't have enough time to do it during the lesson. We have got this mere 3 minutes or 5 minutes at the end of the lesson, which puts your child off the whole thing very quickly. So it's really really useful, if the children do some extra instrument, or on the side something like

275
00:39:50.260 --> 00:39:59.320
F2: piano or trumpet, any instrument, really, so that they would have a basic understanding how the music lines are actually going. And

276
00:39:59.910 --> 00:40:13.160
F2: yes, I would like ideally, I think that half an hour lesson with kids, just, it's not enough. You just don't get through everything, you haven't got time.

277
00:40:13.600 --> 00:40:17.270
F2: And so we don't have this luxury to have this sort of

278
00:40:17.390 --> 00:40:23.429
F2: special lesson just for sight reading and rhythms. And

279
00:40:23.730 --> 00:40:26.960
F2: yeah, this is the theoretical side.

280
00:40:27.600 --> 00:40:28.280
JD: Yeah.

281
00:40:28.760 --> 00:40:32.679
JD: And then if you come to choir singing as an adult. Sorry, yeah.

282
00:40:33.610 --> 00:40:34.230
JD: Then.

283
00:40:34.230 --> 00:40:34.970
F2: You will be stuck.

284
00:40:35.610 --> 00:40:36.470
JD: Yeah.
[General murmurs of agreement]

285
00:40:37.550 --> 00:40:40.249
F2: It's a, it's a very useful skill.

286
00:40:40.810 --> 00:40:44.279
F2: And sadly, that's really needed.

287
00:40:44.280 --> 00:40:47.770
JD: Is it possible to teach that, I mean literally to teach it?

288
00:40:47.920 --> 00:40:52.410
F2: Just practice, practice, practice, and singing an awful lot of repertoire,

289
00:40:52.800 --> 00:40:54.309
F2: I think.

290
00:40:54.570 --> 00:40:55.490
JD: Yeah.

291
00:40:56.580 --> 00:41:17.160
F3: But, to be honest, the choirs that are popular now, and that my pupils will possibly end up joining are the rock choirs, where you don't need to read music, and I think we're going to lose an entire generation, again, of choral singers, because there's no time in schools, and music isn't supported by the local authorities or by the government properly

292
00:41:17.320 --> 00:41:33.059
F3: so, therefore we're losing musicality, and we're losing, we're losing musicians, and we're losing choirs. So it's only going to be public school and very high private school children that can sight read, and can join a choir that's any good.

293
00:41:33.630 --> 00:41:49.470
JD: Yeah. And does that mean, then, that they're the ones who are going to be exploring the repertoire that we would, it sounds like we would quite like them to be exploring, you know. I mean, we don't object to them saying, coming in and saying, I want to sing Taylor Swift, which is probably,

294
00:41:49.580 --> 00:41:52.899
JD: you know what they really want to be doing [laughter].

295
00:41:53.490 --> 00:42:00.480

JD: You know it's like, is it like guiding them in in a different way to enjoy something different

296
00:42:01.890 --> 00:42:03.270
JD: and try it?

297
00:42:05.540 --> 00:42:30.840
F3: Can I throw in what my head of music said, then? I suggested that we have a large concert with a local choral society and orchestra and [school] choir, singing a big oratorio, or requiem, or something incredible that I feel the children should know and they should benefit from. And he said, first of all, his choir is not good enough, and we're talking about a very, very good private school, good music department,

298
00:42:30.840 --> 00:42:43.649
F3: but his choir isn't good enough. And also, it's so culturally diverse, you throw in a requiem or something religious, he's going to lose most of the children, who aren't going to want to sing about God, Jesus,

299
00:42:44.626 --> 00:42:46.280
F3: sing in Latin.

300
00:42:46.410 --> 00:42:58.410
F3: Whereas at the other end of the spectrum you have [other local school], who are singing songs that that we did in [chamber choir] probably better than us, because they are so good.

301
00:42:58.680 --> 00:43:01.300
F3: So I don't know how they've managed to do that,

302
00:43:01.620 --> 00:43:15.459
F3: but they have, and we haven't. So no one in [school] is going to embrace Mozart Requiem, or even the lighter John Rutter's in 4-part harmony. It's just not going to happen.

303
00:43:16.080 --> 00:43:27.589
JD: Yeah, I mean, I don't know if any of you have taught children who've gone through church choirs, and also, yeah, who go on and carry on singing that kind of music,

304
00:43:28.240 --> 00:43:30.960
JD: but is that a significant part of

305
00:43:31.080 --> 00:43:35.640
JD: you know, well, it's part of the tradition in this country,

306
00:43:36.210 --> 00:43:40.779
JD: so I don't know if it's the same universally, or

307
00:43:41.200 --> 00:43:47.880
JD: you know, but there is a huge emphasis on that and that kind of repertoire, do you think? Or is that, am I wrong about that?

308
00:43:50.180 --> 00:43:56.859
F1: I don't know, but it's really interesting, [Researcher's name], just thinking, just thinking. And my mind is wandering, just thinking about

309
00:43:56.860 --> 00:44:21.099
F1: sorry, thinking about repertoire in general, and of course you know your idea about belonging and just thinking, I was just kind of musing and thinking, well, why is it that they bring in Taylor Swift and these things, and it's also that it's that other sense of belonging. We've talked a lot about belonging to a choir, and feeling that sense of belonging that they're part of, for example, your singing studio, but also,

310
00:44:21.160 --> 00:44:44.960
F1: thinking about belonging in the sense of repertoire. When they bring in all these, the pop music, or whatever, it's belonging to a wider culture. And then I suppose, you can think about it, you know, in terms of when you're talking about the Mozart Requiem, or songs like that, you can think of it as belonging to a sort of a continuum of culture almost. You know, a lot of those pieces that you're talking about, you know they were,

311
00:44:44.960 --> 00:44:55.140
F1: they were composed over a hundred, well over a hundred years ago, 200 years ago, whatever. So it's kind of, you've got a continuum then, and I think it's quite,

312
00:44:55.360 --> 00:45:19.610
F1: maybe it is for everybody, or maybe for some people, it's quite comforting to think that we're actually part of a human, sort of, I suppose line of singers who who are now singing this repertoire again, just like people sang it 50 years ago. It's a sense of belonging to the past, almost, or you know, and belonging to our cultural heritage, I suppose, in that sense.

313
00:45:20.830 --> 00:45:21.160
JD: Yes.

314
00:45:21.160 --> 00:45:22.750
F1: That's completely, sorry, I…

315
00:45:22.750 --> 00:45:30.860
JD: No, I think that that's really interesting. I don't know if anybody has anything else to say about that, but in terms of tradition, then, you know,

316
00:45:30.860 --> 00:45:32.580
JD: there are

317
00:45:33.027 --> 00:45:35.709
JD: different traditions to be part of?

318
00:45:35.890 --> 00:45:36.500
F1: Hmm.

319
00:45:36.500 --> 00:45:51.409
F2: Yes, and and your musical taste and preference probably comes from home as well, you know. If if the parents don't listen to anything else but Taylor Swift,

320
00:45:51.580 --> 00:45:55.940
F2: then it's very, very unlikely the child would

321
00:45:56.660 --> 00:45:59.359
F2: know even what to listen to.

322
00:45:59.700 --> 00:46:00.130
JD: Yeah.

323
00:46:00.410 --> 00:46:24.049
F3: There's a really good research that was done on Sing Up when it first started that showed it was completely failing to reach any target audience because it was so based on folk songs and middle-class white music. And they were ignoring all the different cultures of children that were attending schools, and were being made to sing this stuff, that they would have no connection to.

324
00:46:24.050 --> 00:46:24.830
F2: Hmm.

325
00:46:25.173 --> 00:46:32.379
F3: at home or within their local society. Just, it was completely wrong. So I think they changed or had to change,

326
00:46:33.080 --> 00:46:43.249
F3: and I think, as singing teachers, we have had to change because I need to make sure my pupils are happy, and if they want to sing songs from Wicked, then we will do songs from Wicked.

327
00:46:43.250 --> 00:46:43.950
F2: Yeah.

328
00:46:44.580 --> 00:46:59.269

F3: Luckily a lot of the Disney songs are now on the musical theatre syllabus, so I can quite happily sing something from Pocahontas or The Little Mermaid, knowing it's a Grade 4 song. Therefore, it's showing off technique, and it's showing improvement in their singing.

329
00:46:59.270 --> 00:46:59.900
F2: Yeah.

330
00:47:00.410 --> 00:47:10.300
F3: I can't, I can't bring out the lovely songs I used to do in French and German when I was doing Grade 4, 5, and 6. They're just not, they're not interested in it at all.

331
00:47:10.300 --> 00:47:11.540
F2: Yeah. Agreed.

332
00:47:11.540 --> 00:47:22.860
JD: Yes, I mean, I don't know if you all try to introduce that kind of thing at all, or whether you just at one, some point go, okay, you like this kind of music, so we'll go with that

333
00:47:24.780 --> 00:47:29.229
JD: Is that the important thing about our work as a teacher.

334
00:47:29.830 --> 00:47:42.170
F1: Well, I think, [Researcher's name], that that's a really good starting point in terms of, you want them to enjoy what they're singing, and feel comfortable enough to say to you if they don't like a song, but I think it's also our

335
00:47:42.170 --> 00:48:03.519
F1: job to stretch them and to show them, yes, you might feel you belong in this sense with this particular repertoire, but actually, this other repertoire is for you as well. You know? I think I think you want to make everything accessible to them, and then, of course, if they turn around and say 'No, I definitely don't want to do it', then, of course, you would never make them sing it.

336
00:48:03.610 --> 00:48:04.429
F1: but I think,

337
00:48:04.430 --> 00:48:05.100
JD: Yeah.

338
00:48:05.100 --> 00:48:09.919
F1: not to offer it, and also to present it as something that they could

339
00:48:10.240 --> 00:48:15.769
F1: actually do, and they're entitled to as much as anyone else.

340
00:48:16.280 --> 00:48:26.240
JD: Yeah, yeah, I think that's a very interesting point. But before we draw to a close, I just would love to just tease out that idea, that maybe,

341
00:48:26.530 --> 00:48:33.619
JD: are we part of that sort of tradition, or are there gatekeepers of what constitutes,

342
00:48:34.000 --> 00:48:37.929
JD: good singing, good repertoire,

343
00:48:38.030 --> 00:48:41.499
JD: that we have to be aware of as singing teachers

344
00:48:42.000 --> 00:48:57.370
JD: you know, and who are – it's a slightly nebulous concept – but is there something that is in overall control of all of this? And are we battling against it? Or are we part of that institution?

345
00:48:58.280 --> 00:49:14.316
F3: As a class music teacher, I have managed to introduce grand opera and really quite serious pieces to Year 6 and under. For example, I don't know, Don Giovanni, all the wonderful pieces in there. The,

346
00:49:14.770 --> 00:49:40.300
F3: I'm trying to think of the name now, the French song where she's a puppet, and she's singing, and she runs out of batteries [The Doll's Song in Tales of Hoffmann], and even Copland, all that kind of thing. They loved it. And they, when we were doing the Cat Duet, for example, they chose the operatic performance over the stupid one that came from [curriculum resource company] because they loved the drama, and they loved the voices. So, from a class teaching perspective, when you can use

347
00:49:40.300 --> 00:49:56.169
F3: visual things as well to excite them, that's easy, to keep them interested in classical music, and, as you say, be a gatekeeper, but on a one-to-one singing lesson, if I play an operatic recording of a song and say, we're going to sing this one,

348
00:49:56.230 --> 00:49:58.049
F3: they're immediately switched off.

349
00:49:58.240 --> 00:50:07.609
F3: They want to hear something sung by someone that's a similar age to them, and that they can relate to. So I can't keep

350

00:50:08.260 --> 00:50:12.059
F3: pushing at them, do this piece, do that piece, because I they just don't want to.

351
00:50:12.290 --> 00:50:13.599
JD: Yeah. Yeah.

352
00:50:14.260 --> 00:50:15.719
JD: Well, yeah.

353
00:50:15.840 --> 00:50:28.700
JD: just anecdotally, I would recommend Funiculi Funicula, which my one boy [student], who's giving up singing lessons, has suddenly taken to and is singing it in the most amazing Italian accent.

354
00:50:29.980 --> 00:50:33.580
JD: And it's his parents who want him to give up.

355
00:50:33.910 --> 00:50:38.059
JD: And it's infuriating because he's amazing. But yes.

356
00:50:40.630 --> 00:50:42.340
JD: Anyway, but.

357
00:50:42.340 --> 00:50:42.819
F1: Ah.

358
00:50:42.820 --> 00:50:51.209
JD: Is there anything that you think we ought to really just go back and revisit at all

359
00:50:51.430 --> 00:50:59.359
JD: or has the concept of belonging come to the fore at all for anybody? Because it sounded amazing, what you've all been saying.

360
00:51:03.110 --> 00:51:09.689
F3: I think we've all agreed that actually having some kind of musical input and singing makes us feel as if we belong,

361
00:51:10.090 --> 00:51:14.729
F3: even if it's just belonging in our singing lesson, and we don't have to belong

362
00:51:15.090 --> 00:51:16.920
F3: to the entire world singing.

363
00:51:17.300 --> 00:51:17.920
JD: Yeah.

364
00:51:17.920 --> 00:51:23.330
F3: Well, that is, for me, it's wonderful when they feel they belong

365
00:51:23.510 --> 00:51:29.450
F3: to a vocal group, and they sing together, and they just get that excitement. And they talk about the songs they're doing.

366
00:51:30.250 --> 00:51:42.170
F1: Do you think belonging is about acceptance? So, you know, if you consider that everybody's voice is unique, and all of us, all of us and children very much so, but all of us,

367
00:51:42.170 --> 00:52:05.679
F1: we all just want to feel like we're accepted by our community and by our peers, everybody around us. And of course, I think, to feel that that unique part of yourself, your voice is valued in that way, it's just incredibly empowering, isn't it? And if you can feel that your unique self is accepted, then I can't see how you wouldn't feel like you belonged.

368
00:52:07.030 --> 00:52:07.580
JD: Yeah.

369
00:52:07.580 --> 00:52:13.529
F3: And the voice isn't like a violin or piano where you can blame the instrument. Your voice is, you.

370
00:52:14.010 --> 00:52:14.350
F1: Mm.

371
00:52:14.350 --> 00:52:21.630
F3: So we can change it slightly by how we teach. But basically it's embedded in yourself.

372
00:52:21.800 --> 00:52:25.600
F3: So it's more personal, I think, than any other instrument.

373
00:52:26.210 --> 00:52:28.990
F2: Definitely. Yes, agreed.

374
00:52:29.170 --> 00:52:35.810
JD: So, in a way, it's harder to give up, but, and yet there are students who just give up. So, yeah.

375
00:52:37.050 --> 00:52:50.869
JD: yeah. Oh, yeah. Well, so if you feel that we've, you know we've, there's nothing that you particularly wanted to expand on. Then I think this has been amazing. I hope that you've enjoyed discussing it.

376
00:52:51.408 --> 00:53:19.439
JD: And I'll just basically recap a little bit and say thank you so much for coming today. It's been unbelievably good. In terms of confidentiality, I think, F3, you raise that, so everything that we've said within this group, if we could just keep it absolutely among ourselves, and any names.

377
00:53:19.440 --> 00:53:23.269
F3: In your, can school names be taken out as well?

378
00:53:23.270 --> 00:53:46.300
JD: Absolutely everything, any kind of organization and name will be redacted, so there won't be any record of that. So this transcript will be just for me to analyse data, basically. And you've given me some amazing data, so it's fantastic. So what I was going to say was, I'm going to be sending a copy of the transcript to each of you

379
00:53:46.740 --> 00:53:48.859
JD: so that you can check

380
00:53:49.220 --> 00:54:01.680
JD: what's been said, check that you're happy with it. I may highlight some things if I can't, if I haven't heard everything correctly, or if it's hard to hear, so if you want to correct anything

381
00:54:01.970 --> 00:54:11.860
JD: of your own, it will still be your words. So if you could just confirm that everything looks okay once I've been through the transcript and then

382
00:54:12.339 --> 00:54:30.329
JD: I will be deleting the video. And I'll be just keeping the audio until the end of my master's project or the end of the masters. But everything will be safely stored. So nothing will go beyond this group. And I would just like to say, if you have anything, you know, I'll be in touch with you, but do feel free to contact me with any more questions, and I'm happy to answer anything, as it says on the participant information sheet, but I’m just so grateful. Thank you.

WEBVTT

1
00:00:06.790 --> 00:00:17.170
JD: Okay, fantastic. So let me just check yeah. Great.

2
00:00:18.920 --> 00:00:27.960
JD: Okay. So I just wondered, to begin, just to get us going, whether you could tell me a bit about when and how you started singing.

3
00:00:28.490 --> 00:00:36.309
P1: Yeah, so it's actually a bit of a funny story. But my brother was doing singing lessons, and then he

4
00:00:36.440 --> 00:00:40.380
P1: cancelled halfway through the term, and my mum had already paid for them. So I took over.

5
00:00:41.220 --> 00:00:43.230
P1: and that was in year

6
00:00:43.400 --> 00:00:52.530
P1: 12 year 12. So I did it for year 12 and year 13, and then during my gap year I stayed, having lessons with my teacher.

7
00:00:52.700 --> 00:00:56.939
P1: and then have done choir at university for the past 2 years.

8
00:00:58.750 --> 00:01:03.580
JD: Okay. And you were, were you keen to carry on at Uni?

9
00:01:03.580 --> 00:01:06.642
P1: Yeah, it was. I guess my priority

10
00:01:07.370 --> 00:01:15.759
P1: was like, no matter what I do, I have to join the choir, so I'm doing 2 choirs. There's the University choir, which is unauditioned,

11
00:01:16.030 --> 00:01:26.799
P1: and it's about 80 to 90 people, staff, alumni and students. And then I'm doing the University chamber choir, which is auditioned.

12
00:01:27.040 --> 00:01:28.510
P1: and it's

13
00:01:30.290 --> 00:01:40.360
P1: 15 of us, maybe less. At the moment, we're mostly sopranos and altos, because we didn't get enough tenors and basses joining but

14
00:01:40.970 --> 00:01:43.640
P1: and then we meet once a week for each of them.

15
00:01:44.180 --> 00:01:51.510
JD: Okay. And what? So what about the repertoire generally? Is that very broad?

16
00:01:51.710 --> 00:01:58.778
P1: Yeah, it's really varied. It's sort of you, I couldn't possibly guess what we're gonna be assigned until we get given it.

17
00:01:59.210 --> 00:02:05.168
P1: We also had a change of conductor between this year and last year. So last year we did,

18
00:02:06.180 --> 00:02:15.230
P1: oh, this is a test of my memory. We did A Sea Symphony, Vaughan Williams. We did a lot of in the chamber choir, we do a lot of, you know, choral,

19
00:02:16.890 --> 00:02:19.460
P1: a lot of religious stuff.

20
00:02:19.980 --> 00:02:24.630
P1: but we also did. This time we did the Mass in Blue. I don't know if you know it. I can't remember.

21
00:02:24.630 --> 00:02:25.779
JD: The Will Todd.

22
00:02:25.780 --> 00:02:26.490
P1: Yes.

23
00:02:27.525 --> 00:02:28.250
JD: Yeah.

24
00:02:28.520 --> 00:02:32.940
P1: And that was really fun that was so different, I've never done anything like that before.

25
00:02:33.300 --> 00:02:42.380

P1: And then for the chamber concert we had sort of, it was a bit of blues, a bit of jazz. We did Somewhere Over the Rainbow.

26
00:02:42.970 --> 00:02:44.650
P1: We did,

27
00:02:46.550 --> 00:02:48.340
P1: oh, no, I've forgotten.

28
00:02:48.850 --> 00:02:51.879
JD: I think you've done some Eric Whitacre, have you done?

29
00:02:51.880 --> 00:02:59.680
P1: Yes, that's actually, actually now I forgot that, we did Leonardo Dreams of his Flying Machine. We did, oh, and we did Carmina Burana as well.

30
00:03:00.200 --> 00:03:03.619
P1: So it's yeah, I mean, completely varied.

31
00:03:04.470 --> 00:03:19.009
JD: Fantastic. I might, yeah, I'd love to come back to talking about that repertoire in a little while. Because also, I just, so in terms of your singing lessons. Are you continuing with your singing lessons, then, now?

32
00:03:19.634 --> 00:03:25.470
P1: I haven't. The option's always there for me to continue when I go back to [home town].

33
00:03:26.055 --> 00:03:30.559
P1: I did a few over the summer before I re-auditioned for choir.

34
00:03:31.040 --> 00:03:33.649
P1: But other than that, no, I'm not doing anything.

35
00:03:34.770 --> 00:03:38.949
JD: And do you? I mean, do you enjoy lessons? Do you enjoy having the lessons?

36
00:03:38.950 --> 00:03:42.039
P1: I loved them. I mean.

37
00:03:43.220 --> 00:03:57.060
P1: I had a really lovely teacher. So it was the same teacher I had in school. And then she continued privately with me, and I think the main reason I liked them so much was because she knew exactly what songs to pick for me to learn, and I think like,

38
00:03:57.820 --> 00:04:05.219
P1: for the most part I can learn something by listening to it, but I can never find the stuff I want to learn, so I think that was the best bit about it.

39
00:04:05.968 --> 00:04:12.480
P1: And I'd never, because I only started singing, you know, 5 years ago.

40
00:04:14.270 --> 00:04:16.710
P1: I think it was my first sort of,

41
00:04:17.279 --> 00:04:21.379
P1: I had to build up the confidence a lot in the lessons. So she helped with that as well.

42
00:04:22.010 --> 00:04:26.649
P1: Yeah, she taught me that I can't just stand and not move while I sing, [laughter]

43
00:04:28.050 --> 00:04:38.610
P1: because that was what I did. I would stand there, and I would not move, and I'd like, look down at the floor. And yeah, so that was really, I don't think I could have gone to choir if I hadn't had her as a teacher.

44
00:04:40.030 --> 00:04:46.480
JD: Yeah, and what about the auditions, then, the audition you did when you got to uni, was that fairly easy for you?

45
00:04:49.840 --> 00:04:57.769
P1: It was okay. The first year it was difficult, our conductor last year was much stricter than he was this year than she than she was this year. Sorry.

46
00:04:58.248 --> 00:05:09.870
P1: The performance was good. The sight singing is not my strong suit at all, but this year it was better because I'd had that year of choir. So it just it made a lot more sense to me.

47
00:05:10.285 --> 00:05:15.300
P1: But the performance was good. We did a few aural tests this year, like, be able to

48
00:05:15.680 --> 00:05:23.980
P1: sing arpeggios, different scales. That was all completely fine, because I've basically done that for my warm-ups in my lessons as well, so that was pretty cool, but I knew how to do that.

49
00:05:24.480 --> 00:05:25.210

JD: Yeah.

50
00:05:25.970 --> 00:05:36.350
JD: And the lessons when you had them before. Was that also kind of repertoire from a broad repertoire from the syllabus for anything or.

51
00:05:38.400 --> 00:05:42.059
P1: It was varied, but it was less broad, like the

52
00:05:42.860 --> 00:05:49.260
P1: my, I guess my highlights, I would say, was, I did a few things from

53
00:05:49.470 --> 00:05:51.350
P1: The Marriage of Figaro.

54
00:05:52.330 --> 00:05:59.030
P1: I did, I think the most varied was I did a few from The Phantom of the Opera, and I did

55
00:05:59.260 --> 00:06:08.850
P1: one from The Pirates of Penzance, but my favourites were always Mozart. Mostly, I'd say.

56
00:06:10.400 --> 00:06:13.579
P1: Yeah, she was very good at having me try out lots of different things.

57
00:06:15.260 --> 00:06:17.251
P1: But then it wasn't. Yeah.

58
00:06:18.960 --> 00:06:22.889
JD: And do you, you would sound, well were you quite receptive to trying things?

59
00:06:23.740 --> 00:06:25.600
P1: Yeah, because

60
00:06:25.910 --> 00:06:31.929
P1: I guess comparatively to a lot of other people, I have not been singing that long at all. So I kind of had no idea where to start.

61
00:06:33.600 --> 00:06:34.190
JD: Yeah.

62
00:06:35.400 --> 00:06:50.829

JD: Yeah, okay, that's amazing. Thank you. So I think we, I really want to come back to some of that. But could I also ask very broadly what the concept of belonging in its most general terms, means to you.

63
00:06:54.330 --> 00:07:00.940
P1: I would say, just in general, feeling welcome and feeling comfortable.

64
00:07:03.670 --> 00:07:06.489
P1: Yeah, I guess that's as broad as I could make it.

65
00:07:07.060 --> 00:07:15.340
JD: Yeah, yeah, that's great. And what about in the context of singing then if we bring it back to music or other music, you know.

66
00:07:20.060 --> 00:07:21.400
P1: I think,

67
00:07:23.400 --> 00:07:31.499
P1: still feeling comfortable and welcome, but in the way that I know that everyone is there for the same

68
00:07:33.940 --> 00:07:35.570
P1: enjoyment as I am.

69
00:07:35.670 --> 00:07:37.410
P1: Everyone's got the same interest.

70
00:07:37.540 --> 00:07:41.220
P1: No one's gonna laugh at me if I do something wrong because everyone's doing it wrong all the time.

71
00:07:42.366 --> 00:07:48.419
P1: I guess it's a feeling of there's absolutely no shame, and there's no embarrassment, and there's no,

72
00:07:50.340 --> 00:07:51.630
P1: there's no fear.

73
00:07:54.150 --> 00:07:55.220
P1: Yeah, yeah.

74
00:07:55.840 --> 00:08:05.289

JD: Yeah. And also because that does lead on. It's the same thing, really. But you know, what do you think helps a person to feel they belong to a group of people who sing?

75
00:08:05.710 --> 00:08:07.619
JD: If you haven't answered that already.

76
00:08:07.620 --> 00:08:10.469
P1: I mean, I just I think it's the same thing. I think it's.

77
00:08:10.710 --> 00:08:17.140
P1: you know, knowing that with a group of people who just want to do the same thing that you want to do, and you're all in the same boat together.

78
00:08:18.090 --> 00:08:19.670
JD: yeah.

79
00:08:21.407 --> 00:08:30.329
P1: I mean, I guess it's also knowing that even though we're all coming in to the group with a different amount of experience, it's knowing that we all have

80
00:08:30.840 --> 00:08:34.190
P1: different strengths and different weaknesses, and there's no sort of

81
00:08:34.840 --> 00:08:39.009
P1: hierarchy in place. I noticed that a lot with choir is. It's,

82
00:08:39.440 --> 00:08:45.329
P1: my conductor's very careful to make sure that you know everyone gets a solo at some point, and everyone gets

83
00:08:45.610 --> 00:08:49.150
P1: to pick, you know what we sing. So I think that's, I think that's quite nice.

84
00:08:51.320 --> 00:08:51.910
JD: Yeah.

85
00:08:52.010 --> 00:09:02.689
JD: And is it? Do you find, then, that the conductor is helpful generally, and there is always that feeling that that you're being challenged in in a good way?

86
00:09:02.800 --> 00:09:17.099

P1: Yeah, I think she hands us, you know at the first rehearsal of the term, she hands us our material, and she's like, you're gonna look at this and think it's insane. But I promise we're going to get there. And I think we all, we all feel that you know that

87
00:09:17.650 --> 00:09:27.810
P1: feeling of camaraderie, because we're all looking at this music with the same sort of how on earth are we going to do this? But it's such a feeling of accomplishment, because we all get it done together.

88
00:09:28.770 --> 00:09:31.589
P1: So I think our conductor is great, I love her so much.

89
00:09:33.260 --> 00:09:40.050
JD: That's really fantastic. And what about when you, when you do sing solo? How do you feel about singing solo?

90
00:09:42.590 --> 00:09:48.360
P1: Terrified, but I only had one, and it was, it was a very little one.

91
00:09:49.960 --> 00:09:51.589
P1: But it was so much fun

92
00:09:51.930 --> 00:09:54.199
P1: it was, and it just felt so,

93
00:09:55.740 --> 00:10:00.769
P1: I don't know, I guess it kind of relates back to the feeling of belonging, but there was no

94
00:10:01.200 --> 00:10:07.470
P1: sense of jealousy from anyone else, and you know, when my friend got a solo and I didn't, it was that same sort of,

95
00:10:07.740 --> 00:10:10.220
P1: we're lifting each other up rather than

96
00:10:10.620 --> 00:10:14.989
P1: be bringing each other down. So it felt very, I just felt very supported.

97
00:10:15.690 --> 00:10:18.499
P1: So it was terrifying, but it was, it was great.

98
00:10:19.910 --> 00:10:27.730

JD: Yeah. Yeah. And I mean, are there people, then, who wouldn't put themselves forward for solos? Or you, are you one of those who would?

99
00:10:28.310 --> 00:10:29.860
JD: Or is everybody the same?

100
00:10:30.230 --> 00:10:40.349
P1: We pretty much encouraged to everyone to go for them, like, I think we have 2 concerts a term.

101
00:10:41.330 --> 00:10:54.540
P1: Usually we have one or 2 concerts a term, and our conductor is very careful to make sure that you know whoever doesn't get a solo in the first concert they're given first priority for the next concert, but also it's still completely our choice.

102
00:10:55.367 --> 00:11:01.919
P1: But she's really fair. I think all of us have had exactly one solo this year in the chamber choir.

103
00:11:04.070 --> 00:11:05.180
P1: Something like that.

104
00:11:06.320 --> 00:11:12.230
JD: And would that encourage you to want to do more of them? You know, if you had the opportunity.

105
00:11:12.230 --> 00:11:14.570
P1: Yeah, I think just seeing that everyone is

106
00:11:15.280 --> 00:11:20.809
P1: feels confident and comfortable to do them. And everyone supports each other makes me think that I definitely want to do it again.

107
00:11:21.730 --> 00:11:22.310
JD: Okay.

108
00:11:22.750 --> 00:11:31.350
JD: Because I was, yeah, I mean, I was going to say, would you say there are benefits to working on other musical skills alongside your singing?

109
00:11:34.260 --> 00:11:36.920
P1: I mean sight singing, for sure.

110

00:11:37.070 --> 00:11:41.679
P1: That's the biggest difference I've noticed is I can actually look at a piece of music, and

111
00:11:43.370 --> 00:11:48.589
P1: not perfectly, but better than I could before understand what's going on.

112
00:11:49.321 --> 00:11:55.869
P1: I could not do that at all before I joined choir like, unless I'd listened to it, I had no idea what I was looking at.

113
00:11:58.530 --> 00:12:00.369
P1: Don't know about anything else, though

114
00:12:00.730 --> 00:12:02.489
P1: it's the only one I can really think of.

115
00:12:02.900 --> 00:12:07.099
JD: Yeah, yeah. And you play. Do you play another instrument then?

116
00:12:07.270 --> 00:12:10.679
P1: I play the trumpet, but it used to be very regular

117
00:12:10.840 --> 00:12:16.440
P1: until I came to university, and now it's less regular, mostly because it's just so loud

118
00:12:16.930 --> 00:12:18.820
P1: I feel bad practising it.

119
00:12:19.398 --> 00:12:30.250
P1: And I think I never enjoyed performing trumpet, whereas I love performing when I sung, and so I think when I got more confident with that, it sort of took over a bit.

120
00:12:31.370 --> 00:12:41.360
JD: Yeah. Yeah. And in terms of sight singing. You know, you've improved, do you think, just by doing it? Is that the way to improve it.

121
00:12:42.550 --> 00:12:44.538
P1: I think so. Yeah, I think.

122
00:12:46.830 --> 00:12:47.930
P1: I mean,

123

00:12:49.020 --> 00:12:56.559
P1: we were encouraged to listen to the pieces before we had our first rehearsals. To be honest, I don't think I ever actually did. I think I always forgot.

124
00:12:56.780 --> 00:13:07.020
P1: But I do think that sort of helped me improve the sight singing, because I'd open the music, and everyone would start going, and I'd kind of just I couldn't just sit there and have no idea what's going on. So the easiest thing to do was

125
00:13:07.220 --> 00:13:09.680
P1: was just to sight sing, and I guess that's how it got better.

126
00:13:10.440 --> 00:13:16.190
JD: Yeah. And in the non-audition choir will there be some people who

127
00:13:16.460 --> 00:13:19.440
JD: didn't really come into it through having

128
00:13:19.810 --> 00:13:23.850
JD: read music, you know, or read, being able to read music.

129
00:13:24.850 --> 00:13:31.479
P1: I think the one requirement was that everyone had to be able to read music, but I'm not sure they ever actually checked.

130
00:13:31.670 --> 00:13:34.510
P1: I think I just assumed that people wouldn't come if they couldn't.

131
00:13:36.050 --> 00:13:40.190
P1: But a lot of the, a huge amount of the

132
00:13:40.390 --> 00:13:48.789
P1: unauditioned choir is staff and alumni who have sung in choirs before, so it didn't feel like there was any

133
00:13:50.190 --> 00:13:54.140
P1: lacking of skill or didn't feel unbalanced.

134
00:13:54.630 --> 00:13:55.250
JD: Yeah.

135
00:13:55.910 --> 00:14:04.569

JD: And if I ask you to remember back to primary school, did you do a lot of group singing then? Do you remember it? Was it.

136
00:14:05.840 --> 00:14:11.879
P1: We did, I mean, I don't know if it was a lot, but we definitely did in assemblies.

137
00:14:12.460 --> 00:14:16.770
P1: We sung a lot of songs. We had Christmas assemblies with the songs.

138
00:14:19.640 --> 00:14:21.949
P1: I can't remember how much there was.

139
00:14:23.010 --> 00:14:31.519
P1: I knew, I know that we definitely had singing, not singing lessons, but we'd have music lessons, and in those we sung songs. But that's about as much as I can remember.

140
00:14:32.760 --> 00:14:41.570
JD: I mean, can you remember what made you decide that you would take up that opportunity as when you were a bit older? So suddenly, yeah, I will do a singing lesson.

141
00:14:42.420 --> 00:14:45.520
P1: I always loved singing.

142
00:14:45.966 --> 00:14:53.439
P1: I loved it so much like I would sing all the time at home, and my brother would tell me to shut up like all the time.

143
00:14:54.056 --> 00:14:55.050
P1: But then I.

144
00:14:55.050 --> 00:14:58.119
JD: What kind of thing were you singing? Sorry to talk over you, but.

145
00:14:58.450 --> 00:15:00.310
P1: Honestly anything.

146
00:15:04.230 --> 00:15:06.430
P1: I can't remember to be honest.

147
00:15:07.440 --> 00:15:16.249
P1: I think just whatever was stuck in my head honestly. And then my brother started singing lessons before me, and I didn't want to steal his thing.

148
00:15:16.380 --> 00:15:21.506
P1: So as soon as he said he didn't want to do them anymore, I was like, this is finally an opportunity. So.

149
00:15:22.360 --> 00:15:22.620
JD: Yeah.

150
00:15:22.620 --> 00:15:24.593
P1: Yeah, it was sort of, I guess a

151
00:15:25.630 --> 00:15:27.530
P1: There was no doubt about it. Really.

152
00:15:29.190 --> 00:15:34.369
JD: And do you still? I mean you like, do you like pop music as well as musical theatre, and..

153
00:15:35.408 --> 00:15:39.859
P1: I'd say the one thing I don't like is musical theatre. Everything else I'm sort of,

154
00:15:40.340 --> 00:15:47.620
P1: I like. I think my favourite will always be the more operatic stuff, and then

155
00:15:49.310 --> 00:15:51.480
P1: everything else is sort of in between.

156
00:15:51.840 --> 00:15:57.936
P1: I didn't think I liked singing jazz and blues until we did the Mass and Blue, and I've discovered that actually, I really like that.

157
00:15:58.460 --> 00:16:01.360
P1: And then I'd say pop and then musical theatre's at the bottom.

158
00:16:01.360 --> 00:16:07.459
JD: Yeah, I mean, what if you ever had the opportunity to do the solo in Mass in Blue, would you jump at it?

159
00:16:07.460 --> 00:16:16.219
P1: I would love to. I was listening to the soloist rehearse, and I think it's the most incredible thing. I don't know if I could do it honestly, it's so difficult.

160
00:16:16.750 --> 00:16:17.345
P1: Well,

161
00:16:18.320 --> 00:16:20.069
P1: oh, I love that so much.

162
00:16:20.690 --> 00:16:25.749
JD: Yeah, yeah. I wonder what that feeling is in in that particular

163
00:16:25.880 --> 00:16:33.119
JD: genre. I mean, it's obviously, he's a classical composer as well. So I don't know if there's something special about that.

164
00:16:34.360 --> 00:16:36.580
P1: I don't know. It feels very,

165
00:16:41.620 --> 00:16:44.229
P1: I don't know how to explain it. I sort of feel like

166
00:16:44.500 --> 00:16:49.010
P1: when I've sung more operatic or classical styles, it feels

167
00:16:49.710 --> 00:16:56.260
P1: impressive, and it feels like the solo that I did in, not the solo the, I did

168
00:16:57.290 --> 00:17:05.519
P1: Poor Wandering One, that's what it was from Pirates of Penzance, that is very technically challenging. But the Mass in Blue solo seems more,

169
00:17:08.210 --> 00:17:16.609
P1: it seems somehow more impressive because it's so free, and it's so improvised.

170
00:17:17.160 --> 00:17:26.089
P1: It sort of feels like, that's why it would be more difficult for me, because it sounds less technical. I don't know if it is, it might be more technical, I really don't know the specifics of it, but

171
00:17:26.619 --> 00:17:31.820
P1: because I've been trained, I guess the complete opposite way to like, read the music, and do exactly what the music says,

172
00:17:32.270 --> 00:17:37.830
P1: the Mass in Blue solo seems honestly like, out of reach. I'd love it, but I don't know.

173

00:17:37.990 --> 00:17:51.209
JD: Hmm, yeah. And do you think that's that kind of music, you know, coming back to belonging somehow, you know. Do you think that makes it more relatable to an audience, that kind of music, and then could bring people in.

174
00:17:52.270 --> 00:17:54.199
P1: I think so, I think.

175
00:17:55.950 --> 00:17:57.380
P1: When we had our

176
00:17:57.570 --> 00:18:04.649
P1: concert with Mass in Blue, and then the rest of our jazz and blues pieces that we were singing, it felt like we were almost encouraged to sort of

177
00:18:04.920 --> 00:18:12.600
P1: dance a bit on stage and move around. And so I think you could see people in the audience kind of, you know, wanting to get up and moving and tapping their feet.

178
00:18:14.070 --> 00:18:15.759
P1: And I think it just makes people

179
00:18:16.410 --> 00:18:18.740
P1: wanna feel like they have a good time, you know.

180
00:18:19.310 --> 00:18:21.830
P1: I think that. And I think they can see that we're all

181
00:18:22.100 --> 00:18:25.319
P1: up on stage. We're all smiling together, laughing together.

182
00:18:25.891 --> 00:18:27.650
P1: And I think they just,

183
00:18:28.730 --> 00:18:31.090
P1: it just travels into the audience a bit.

184
00:18:31.770 --> 00:18:46.120
JD: Yeah, yeah, does it give you any feeling that your skills are at a level that you know you can impart something, you can, you can give something that other people will appreciate. Does that come into it at all?

185
00:18:46.820 --> 00:18:49.656

P1: I think, a little bit, I think

186
00:18:50.630 --> 00:19:05.450
P1: like, if I think of a specific example, when we, our concert back in December, we sang the Eric Whitacre and Carmina Burana, and my boyfriend, who has never been to a classical concert in his entire life,

187
00:19:05.970 --> 00:19:11.350
P1: was sort of like dragging his feet about it. He was like, I don't know if I'm going to enjoy it. And then he came to watch it

188
00:19:11.700 --> 00:19:21.910
P1: and I could see him from where I was on the stage, actually. And he was. I've never heard anything like that. He was like, you're just everyone's enjoying themselves like he was like, I was really actually

189
00:19:22.080 --> 00:19:30.080
P1: invested. He was, I was having a great time. I was like brilliant. That's exactly what I wanted. And I think I think when you can see

190
00:19:30.920 --> 00:19:39.850
P1: the, you know the singers on stage, they're laughing or not laughing, but you know, smiling. Everyone's moving together. I think it just,

191
00:19:40.610 --> 00:19:42.749
P1: I don't know. It makes you feel so.

192
00:19:44.820 --> 00:19:46.100
P1: Can't think of the word.

193
00:19:49.630 --> 00:19:52.970s
P1: Makes me feel just I'm happy to give something back.

194
00:19:53.840 --> 00:19:54.450
JD: Yeah.

195
00:19:54.680 --> 00:19:55.530
JD: Yeah.

196
00:19:56.170 --> 00:20:03.410
JD: And are you, you know? So that gives you confidence as well, maybe in your skills? Or does it, does that not come into it?

197

00:20:03.410 --> 00:20:15.420
P1: No, I definitely think that's it. I think you know, when I speak to people, and they've come to the concert and they, you know, tell me what they've liked, or they've told me that they it's better than they expected, I think it definitely makes me feel

198
00:20:15.700 --> 00:20:21.059
P1: more confident, especially when I'm on stage, and it sounds really good

199
00:20:21.250 --> 00:20:29.210
P1: to me, and I can tell that it sounds good to the audience. Even though I can hear myself making little mistakes, no one else can. That does make me feel more confident, too.

200
00:20:30.620 --> 00:20:41.140
JD: Yeah. Yeah. And do you think, well, having trained musicians around you as you've been growing up, has that had an effect in a way on how you

201
00:20:41.390 --> 00:20:42.760
JD: view things?

202
00:20:43.840 --> 00:20:45.870
P1: I think it definitely must have.

203
00:20:47.140 --> 00:20:49.650
P1: I think, I mean

204
00:20:49.890 --> 00:20:58.170
P1: I've always been encouraged to appreciate music, which I think is a big part of it, like for me, I have no

205
00:20:58.610 --> 00:21:03.459
P1: issue kind of prioritizing choir rehearsals above,

206
00:21:04.160 --> 00:21:09.430
P1: You know, any other thing that I might have to do and like, it's

207
00:21:10.630 --> 00:21:14.569
P1: it's just obvious that if there's a concert I'm gonna want to be in it. And you know.

208
00:21:15.120 --> 00:21:17.830
P1: so I think that's definitely an aspect of it.

209
00:21:20.540 --> 00:21:22.230
P1: I think there's also,

210
00:21:22.420 --> 00:21:36.560
P1: I get a huge amount of, I get really excited to when I go back to [home town] to tell my family what songs I'm singing, and show them the music and play it for them, because I know that they're going to appreciate it as much as me. So I think that's that's

211
00:21:36.970 --> 00:21:39.220
P1: yeah. That must be the biggest part of it. I think.

212
00:21:41.340 --> 00:21:45.800
JD: And have you not, well yeah, are there any people who you

213
00:21:45.950 --> 00:21:53.149
JD: who are not so interested that you know of? Or do you tend to think that most of your friends are from this?

214
00:21:55.820 --> 00:21:58.819
P1: I mean, I've got quite musical housemates.

215
00:21:58.970 --> 00:22:05.019
P1: Most of them have sung in a choir before, or have, or do play an instrument.

216
00:22:05.180 --> 00:22:06.270
P1: So

217
00:22:06.820 --> 00:22:13.610
P1: they all came to my concert in December, which was pretty cool, and then, when I told them what I was singing, they'd all heard of, you know Carmina Burana. They've heard of that.

218
00:22:15.190 --> 00:22:18.219
P1: So I guess that's that's really nice as well

219
00:22:18.640 --> 00:22:23.249
P1: to know that when I talk about things people actually do know what I'm talking about for the most part.

220
00:22:23.842 --> 00:22:29.529
P1: Friends from home, I think, don't really appreciate it as much.

221
00:22:29.810 --> 00:22:36.259
P1: And then my boyfriend doesn't really have a level of understanding about it. He listens to me talk about it, but he doesn't,

222
00:22:36.730 --> 00:22:38.260
P1: he doesn't come from the same

223
00:22:38.780 --> 00:22:41.440
P1: upbringing, so he doesn't have that appreciation for it.

224
00:22:41.930 --> 00:22:48.599
JD: Yeah. Yeah. But do you feel that this is something that you'll be seeking out then, after you've left University,

225
00:22:49.280 --> 00:22:50.909
JD: when you're working.

226
00:22:51.120 --> 00:22:52.703
P1: Yeah, I think I've

227
00:22:54.260 --> 00:23:01.559
P1: I think if I didn't do anything I would feel like it was missing, because even now I mean, we don't have

228
00:23:01.690 --> 00:23:07.090
P1: because of the way that the university terms and the exams are laid out, we finished

229
00:23:07.250 --> 00:23:12.489
P1: choir in March, and we don't have it again until October, which is kind of insane.

230
00:23:13.170 --> 00:23:21.529
P1: So even now it just feels like every Tuesday, I feel like I'm meant to be at my rehearsal, so I think if I didn't do anything I'd just be like

231
00:23:21.640 --> 00:23:23.350
P1: a whole part is missing.

232
00:23:24.906 --> 00:23:35.539
JD: Yeah. And do you have any desire, maybe, to see whether you want to take it even further, you know, professionally, or is that not necessarily the case.

233
00:23:35.540 --> 00:23:40.730
P1: I think about it sometimes. My mum really encourages me, too.

234
00:23:42.290 --> 00:23:50.780

P1: Naturally. I think, I'm not against it. But I think it's not plan A.

235
00:23:51.220 --> 00:23:55.069
P1: I think I want to join some sort of

236
00:23:55.930 --> 00:23:59.709
P1: group after university, and then I guess I'd see where I went from there.

237
00:24:00.180 --> 00:24:06.720
P1: But I don't, I can't imagine myself sort of dropping everything to pursue it.

238
00:24:07.920 --> 00:24:17.499
JD: Yeah, yeah, so, and belonging to the university for you. Is it a broader thing, then, than just the music? Or is that you know.

239
00:24:19.540 --> 00:24:25.395
P1: I think it's broader, but honestly, I think the most part of it comes from choir

240
00:24:26.400 --> 00:24:31.799
P1: because I, you know I belong like I have my degree, and my degree is quite small.

241
00:24:32.030 --> 00:24:34.780
P1: So that's you know, it's quite a select group, and

242
00:24:34.960 --> 00:24:38.759
P1: I do boxing as well. So that's also a small group. But

243
00:24:39.510 --> 00:24:42.760
P1: the thing that I feel the most part of, I think is choir.

244
00:24:44.750 --> 00:24:51.460
P1: Yeah, I've got such good friends that I've made in choir, and I think just,

245
00:24:51.950 --> 00:24:57.379
P1: we've spent so much time together just rehearsing to the point where I think we're just, we've just bonded

246
00:24:57.490 --> 00:25:03.040
P1: through sitting next to each other, you know, like 8 hours a day, so.

247
00:25:03.600 --> 00:25:04.000
JD: Yeah.

248
00:25:04.000 --> 00:25:07.110
P1: It just feels very like nothing else is going to compare to it really.

249
00:25:07.110 --> 00:25:10.869
JD: Do you have the chance to go on tour with them, or.

250
00:25:11.350 --> 00:25:12.420
P1: We

251
00:25:12.860 --> 00:25:19.319
P1: had a really cool opportunity which we didn't get to do this year, but they're hoping that we can do it next year

252
00:25:19.560 --> 00:25:26.929
P1: is they do a, I'm not entirely sure what it is, it's some sort of Eric Whitacre focused

253
00:25:27.370 --> 00:25:32.190
P1: concert in New York, and

254
00:25:32.540 --> 00:25:54.780
P1: we were invited to go this April, but I think the University didn't want any of us to have to pay to go, and they wanted to fund it completely, and they couldn't do that this year. So then we got an invitation to perform in 2026. So I'm, I'm hoping, and the university is hoping to get us fully funded to go, which would be amazing.

255
00:25:55.393 --> 00:26:01.569
P1: We haven't done anything else apart from that. So that would really be incredible. I'm I'm really hoping.

256
00:26:03.120 --> 00:26:06.189
JD: And do you go to lots of concerts yourself.

257
00:26:09.260 --> 00:26:10.850
P1: Less than I used to.

258
00:26:15.250 --> 00:26:18.610
P1: It's difficult because there aren't really that many in Nottingham that I know of.

259
00:26:19.041 --> 00:26:23.269
P1: I go to the opera to be fair when I'm back in London. I love going to the Royal Opera House.

260
00:26:25.370 --> 00:26:36.559
P1: And then occasionally, if you know my mum has a concert that she'll tell, she'll say to me, like the singers in this are amazing. You have to come and see this, I'll be like, okay, I have to come and see it, but not not that many.

261
00:26:37.570 --> 00:26:49.999
JD: Yeah, do you, I should ask you about the sort of the acting side of it, and putting across a song, you know. Have you made that connection as well? And how do you feel about that?

262
00:26:50.320 --> 00:26:51.950
P1: That's my least favourite bit.

263
00:26:53.680 --> 00:27:00.550
P1: Honestly, I hate it so much. That's really what my singing teacher like, the one thing that she couldn't get me

264
00:27:01.110 --> 00:27:06.170
P1: to do was act. She could just about get me to move.

265
00:27:07.232 --> 00:27:08.770
P1: I really don't

266
00:27:09.200 --> 00:27:14.200
P1: like it. I haven't really ever had to do it, which I think is the nice thing about a choir.

267
00:27:15.800 --> 00:27:18.199
P1: Even the solo that I had was so

268
00:27:18.410 --> 00:27:20.790
P1: integrated into the rest of the piece that I didn't

269
00:27:21.020 --> 00:27:23.449
P1: have to sort of stand out.

270
00:27:26.520 --> 00:27:28.700
P1: I just, I don't know. It feels so,

271
00:27:29.910 --> 00:27:36.359
P1: I mean, it's possible that the only reason it feels so awkward is because I've only ever had to do it in my singing teacher's like studio.

272
00:27:36.550 --> 00:27:39.420

P1: I mean, if I feel like, maybe if I was doing it on a stage

273
00:27:39.610 --> 00:27:41.359
P1: it would somehow be easier.

274
00:27:42.080 --> 00:27:43.439
P1: But I don't like it.

275
00:27:45.330 --> 00:27:50.069
JD: Yeah. So doing something like Mabel, you know, with that,

276
00:27:50.320 --> 00:27:53.910
JD: yeah, you were doing that in your singing lessons. Is that right?

277
00:27:53.910 --> 00:28:01.828
P1: Yeah. And I think eventually I think my singing teacher sort of gave up a little bit.

278
00:28:02.820 --> 00:28:13.199
P1: it took. It took a while for me to start using my hands or for me to take a couple of steps like, even change the direction I was looking. And then I think she, she realized we were not going to get much further than that.

279
00:28:14.020 --> 00:28:19.779
JD: And is it anything like, well it's facial expression, too? Or does that, that comes easily.

280
00:28:19.780 --> 00:28:21.650
P1: Yeah, no, that's a bit easier.

281
00:28:21.986 --> 00:28:26.499
P1: Mostly, because I just don't think about it. If you were to ask me to think about it. I'd probably say it's awful.

282
00:28:27.070 --> 00:28:29.150
P1: But because it's natural, it's okay.

283
00:28:29.820 --> 00:28:39.569
JD: Hmm, yeah, yeah. And have you ever done anything like Alexander Technique or have you heard of Alexander Technique?

284
00:28:40.150 --> 00:28:41.600
P1: I don’t think so?

285

00:28:42.757 --> 00:28:52.360
JD: Or Feldenkreis, the kind of, the things that connect mind and body and help people perform.

286
00:28:52.910 --> 00:28:58.009
P1: Feldenkreis I have. I did it a little bit,

287
00:28:58.180 --> 00:28:59.950
P1: but I think it was just

288
00:29:01.520 --> 00:29:03.640
P1: I don't know, it feels like there's some sort of block there.

289
00:29:06.530 --> 00:29:09.980
P1: It sort of feels like, I think I was scared of performing for so long like.

290
00:29:10.420 --> 00:29:22.340
P1: even when I did trumpet performances, I actively avoided performing, I hated it so much, and then singing, I really had to push myself so I think that it's just the next big step, and I don't think I'm ready to take it.

291
00:29:23.680 --> 00:29:42.620
JD: Well, it's great that you're loving the choir that you're doing. It's fantastic because I'd also wanted to just, we won't take too much longer, but I wanted to ask about repertoire then, and if it's broad and it encompasses masses and requiems. And are you up for all of that kind of repertoire?

292
00:29:44.320 --> 00:29:45.700
P1: Sometimes

293
00:29:46.480 --> 00:29:53.599
P1: my conductor will hand us a piece and we'll start it. And I'm just like this is not, this is not my type of music at all.

294
00:29:56.900 --> 00:30:09.730
P1: but it's sort of like, no matter how much I don't like specific pieces, I still get a lot of fun out of doing them, because I'm aware that my friends, I'm, you know, I'm sitting there with my friends and none of us like this piece, but we're all having a great time singing it. So it's

295
00:30:09.840 --> 00:30:14.989
P1: not actually a bad experience. We do, I mean, it's definitely, I think,

296
00:30:15.710 --> 00:30:21.619

P1: you know, like A Sea Symphony, Mass in Blue, Carmina Burana, it's the huge pieces like that I really really love.

297
00:30:22.230 --> 00:30:25.010
P1: The more, in the chamber choir we do a lot of

298
00:30:29.830 --> 00:30:34.216
P1: I don't know how to, I don't know, I'm not very good with the technical terms of things.

299
00:30:35.420 --> 00:30:38.990
P1: I call it a lot of churchy music. I really don't know what you'd call that.

300
00:30:38.990 --> 00:30:41.650
JD: Yeah. And I mean, sacred. Sacred. Yeah?

301
00:30:41.650 --> 00:30:46.670
P1: That I'm less into, just because I don't think it's as exciting.

302
00:30:50.460 --> 00:30:51.930
P1: What else is there?

303
00:30:53.086 --> 00:31:02.540
P1: We did one, we did Joni Mitchell's The Yellow Taxi, that was really nice, Over the Rainbow, that was really nice, just because I guess they're so familiar.

304
00:31:04.700 --> 00:31:11.039
P1: I'd say for the most part it's stuff that I like. We did some Ravel. I didn't love that, I have to be honest.

305
00:31:13.150 --> 00:31:16.790
P1: But yeah.

306
00:31:18.190 --> 00:31:27.750
P1: I sort of feel like my conductor tries her hardest to pick the most bizarre range of music, and I'm actually really appreciative of that, because

307
00:31:28.090 --> 00:31:31.979
P1: I just feel like everyone in choir likes at least one thing.

308
00:31:32.610 --> 00:31:36.599
P1: So that's nice, I think. I think that's that's considerate of her.

309

00:31:37.680 --> 00:31:49.379
JD: Yeah. Yeah. And is there a sense that, you know, if you're asked to do some Bach, maybe the skill that's needed to sing Bach will stand you in good stead, or does that not really come into it?

310
00:31:51.750 --> 00:31:54.180
P1: I think, I think we could do it.

311
00:31:54.410 --> 00:31:58.110
P1: I think we can do anything. I think some of the things she's thrown at us are

312
00:31:58.700 --> 00:32:05.710
P1: really difficult. Either they're technically difficult or they're just sort of harmonically insane.

313
00:32:08.460 --> 00:32:09.680
P1: And I think,

314
00:32:10.310 --> 00:32:21.059
P1: I think we could, we could do anything to be honest. We've got some really talented people in the choir people who, you know, have been in choir since they were like 8 years old. So,

315
00:32:21.899 --> 00:32:29.690
P1: and then the alumni and the staff have been singing most of them for like 40, 50 years. So that's a huge, huge help as well.

316
00:32:31.150 --> 00:32:31.760
JD: Yeah.

317
00:32:32.060 --> 00:32:36.110
JD: And you all feel part of the same group, and everybody feels equal.

318
00:32:36.940 --> 00:32:38.190
P1: I think so.

319
00:32:38.800 --> 00:32:41.920
P1: I think, yeah,

320
00:32:42.320 --> 00:32:50.989
P1: at least I do. I think I do. And I know my friends do. I can't speak for everyone, but it doesn't really feel like there's ever any sort of bitterness or anything like that.

321
00:32:51.670 --> 00:33:02.229

JD: Yeah, that's wonderful. So do you think, is there anything that you know you would like to expand on that you've said already about belonging or otherwise.

322
00:33:07.170 --> 00:33:09.170
P1: Erm, I don't think so?

323
00:33:10.400 --> 00:33:11.980
P1: Not that I can think of.

324
00:33:12.740 --> 00:33:13.380
JD: Yeah.

325
00:33:14.200 --> 00:33:20.519
JD: And do you feel, do you feel that we've covered the subject of singing skills and belonging adequately?

326
00:33:22.320 --> 00:33:25.510
P1: I think so. I can't think of anything that I think is unsaid.

327
00:33:27.330 --> 00:33:34.389
JD: Yeah, yeah. Well, no, that's, it's amazing. Thank you so much. And I'm gonna just then

328
00:33:34.470 --> 00:33:59.459
JD: wrap it up a little bit. And I'll just say, thank you so much for giving me your time today. I'm really so excited to have you. I will say, please feel free to contact me at any time with any questions you might have, or to offer feedback on the interview. And I'm going to send you a copy of the transcript, which you can look over. If you want to amend anything or add anything

329
00:33:59.460 --> 00:34:22.880
JD: then, they would be your words, so you know you're welcome to add something. I might have a question, if I've talked over you at some point, and then can't hear the recording. But you can adjust things, okay? So if anything's arisen that you need to question, and I will keep you posted about, you know, how my research is going, but you have really really contributed amazingly.

330
00:34:22.880 --> 00:34:23.849
P1: I'm glad.

331
00:34:23.850 --> 00:34:26.440
JD: I'm going to just stop the recording.

WEBVTT

1
00:00:08.150 --> 00:00:16.760
JD: Okay. So to begin, I thought maybe you might be able to tell me a little bit about when and how you started singing.

2
00:00:17.480 --> 00:00:29.369
P2: Oh, well, the first thing I remember singing was the Spot the Dog theme tune. I was probably sort of about 4 or something. And

3
00:00:29.560 --> 00:00:42.309
P2: yeah, I just I just sort of like sang very casually around the house because my dad was a professional singer and still is so he was always just kind of warbling in the background somewhere.

4
00:00:42.560 --> 00:01:02.749
P2: So it just seemed like a very normal thing to do. And yeah, I basically just kind of sang to myself and my parents were very encouraging of this. I think I think quite early on they figured out that I had perfect pitch from listening to,

5
00:01:03.207 --> 00:01:08.600
P2: I guess I just always sang Spot the Dog in the correct key, no matter what. So

6
00:01:09.642 --> 00:01:13.410
P2: yeah, I guess that's probably my earliest memory of that.

7
00:01:13.970 --> 00:01:19.919
JD: Okay. And do you have, so after that, what happened, you know, with your singing

8
00:01:20.100 --> 00:01:20.480
P2: Hmm.

9
00:01:20.480 --> 00:01:22.730
JD: beyond that?

10
00:01:23.576 --> 00:01:30.530
P2: Well, I guess, in primary school we, you know, there was a,

11
00:01:30.920 --> 00:01:39.299
P2: there was sort of like a little, a little children's choir, and we'd also just kind of like sing hymns at assemblies and so on.

12
00:01:44.110 --> 00:01:56.939

P2: Yeah, and I guess I just I just kind of like did that for a few years. I remember being very annoyed, although I tried to hide it when I didn't get the,

13
00:01:57.520 --> 00:02:08.960
P2: I want to say it was the Once in Royal David City solo at age about 5 or 6. It went to one of the boys in my class, and like, he did a good job, but I was mad about it.

14
00:02:10.300 --> 00:02:11.589
JD: Yeah!

15
00:02:12.380 --> 00:02:22.220
JD: And do you remember, then, the transition to secondary, and, you know, carrying on singing? Or were you having lessons at that point at all?

16
00:02:22.671 --> 00:02:33.048
P2: I actually, I think I did start having singing lessons in secondary school. They were only kind of 15 minutes a week.

17
00:02:33.730 --> 00:02:40.569
P2: But also, yeah, the school choir at secondary was a little bit more formalized.

18
00:02:40.730 --> 00:02:48.889
P2: Yeah, at primary it really wasn't all that organised and it really was just kind of like people singing at assemblies in classes.

19
00:02:51.190 --> 00:02:55.029
P2: Yeah, so I just had my lessons and

20
00:02:55.140 --> 00:03:08.980
P2: the school choir that was called Cantabile. And, but when I was, I think, year 8, so that was the second year of secondary school, my singing teacher asked if I wanted to join the [local] county youth choir

21
00:03:10.002 --> 00:03:11.767
P2: which was

22
00:03:13.600 --> 00:03:21.579
P2: kind of a bit more mixed ages, so I was sort of like singing with a lot of like older teenagers for the first time.

23
00:03:22.500 --> 00:03:26.890
JD: And how long did you sing with the [local] county youth choir?
24
00:03:27.080 --> 00:03:36.339

P2: I think it was kind of all through school at that point, although, yeah, so probably 5 or 6 years. I think I would have left when I left school,

25
00:03:36.650 --> 00:03:40.690
P2: because I went straight on to university. So 13 to 18.

26
00:03:41.790 --> 00:03:49.950
JD: Yeah, that's good. And were you ever in any chamber choirs then as well? Or was it the main choir, that was what you did?

27
00:03:50.340 --> 00:04:16.770
P2: Yeah, that was the main choir, and I sort of like kept up with the school choir. And also at that point I had, like a group of friends who I slightly press-ganged into going to the music rooms every lunchtime, and just singing through kind of like songs from musicals, which, unfortunately, was this was the Cats soundtrack for quite a long time, apologies to my friends. Yeah, I was.

28
00:04:17.190 --> 00:04:29.679
P2: Yeah. I was. I was a bit of a like a mini-dictator about it to be honest, I think I very much kind of set the tone, because I was the one who played the piano, so everyone kind of had to sing what I wanted to play,

29
00:04:31.950 --> 00:04:34.079
JD: but they did go along with it?

30
00:04:34.080 --> 00:04:57.720
P2: Yes, very kindly. Yeah, my best friend was actually very into it. So, yeah, we just kind of like duetted on everything and then there were probably about 3, 3 ish other friends who would sort of like drop in as and when and were probably like slightly less into the whole thing than we were.

31
00:04:58.270 --> 00:05:04.359
JD: Wow, yeah. And in terms of your lessons, then, were they lessons in school or out of school?

32
00:05:04.666 --> 00:05:05.889
P2: They were in school.

33
00:05:06.130 --> 00:05:10.800
JD: And was it quite a musical school, do you think, you know generally.

34
00:05:10.800 --> 00:05:24.660
P2: Erm, thinking back on it, yes, I think that there was quite a lot of music. I mean, the school concerts were extremely long, which reflects, I guess, the number of groups.

35
00:05:25.250 --> 00:05:25.900
JD: Yeah.

36
00:05:26.220 --> 00:05:32.840
JD: And were you encouraged to take exams as well? Or was this fairly informal if you were having 15 minutes?

37
00:05:34.663 --> 00:05:41.569
P2: I did do a few singing exams, but not all of them. I think I did something like,

38
00:05:42.510 --> 00:05:49.459
P2: I think I I came in and did Grade 5, and then maybe 6 and 8.

39
00:05:49.610 --> 00:05:54.640
P2: I yeah, I don't think I did like 5 to 8 inclusive.

40
00:05:55.178 --> 00:06:10.760
P2: And yeah, I suppose, in a way, it probably was relatively informal, because I also played the piano and violin, and I did do all the grades for those, and I had lessons outside of school, so I guess I was already a bit booked up.

41
00:06:11.284 --> 00:06:14.730
P2: I just really wanted to do singing, but it was,

42
00:06:14.930 --> 00:06:19.599
P2: kind of maybe, maybe treated as a bit more of an afterthought.

43
00:06:20.080 --> 00:06:22.290
JD: Yeah. And was it the kind of

44
00:06:22.510 --> 00:06:27.409
JD: fun thing to be doing as well? Or just because it came naturally to you.

45
00:06:27.710 --> 00:06:44.549
P2: Yes, I did, I did sort of get to have more fun with it, because I wasn't doing as much structured singing. I mean, I don't know if that was the best thing for improvement. But yeah, I did just kind of get to sing a load of show tunes. It was pretty fun.

46
00:06:44.750 --> 00:06:50.530
JD: Yeah, and you've stayed keen on that kind of repertoire, have you, in terms of musicals?

47
00:06:50.530 --> 00:06:56.819

P2: Yes, I've shifted, I would say, in taste, which is probably good, more of a Sondheim person now.

48
00:06:57.522 --> 00:07:00.179
P2: No offence to Andrew Lloyd Webber.

49
00:07:02.288 --> 00:07:06.900
JD: There's a lot I could say about, yeah, I love loved Andrew Lloyd Webber as well.

50
00:07:07.010 --> 00:07:07.839
P2: Mm-hmm.

51
00:07:07.840 --> 00:07:26.190
JD: Yeah, okay, so, I might come back to a little bit as we get going further. But so I'm going to take it now straight into, could I ask for your thoughts about the broad concept of belonging and what that concept means to you?

52
00:07:28.820 --> 00:07:29.960
P2: Hmm!

53
00:07:33.670 --> 00:07:41.260
P2: I guess, ooh, as a as a broader concept, it's kind of tricky, because I think I usually

54
00:07:41.490 --> 00:07:44.450
P2: feel a little distant

55
00:07:45.091 --> 00:07:48.379
P2: even sort of while in a group.

56
00:07:51.540 --> 00:07:57.962
P2: So it's almost, it's almost a little bit odd to talk about.

57
00:08:00.160 --> 00:08:22.510
P2: I yeah, because I guess, well, in primary school, I didn't have a lot of friends. In fact, I pretty much started out with 0, and then I sort of acquired maybe one or two by the end. I had a much, relatively, a much larger social circle in secondary school, sort of things started clicking a bit more then.

58
00:08:22.510 --> 00:08:32.580
P2: But yeah, a lot of the time I feel maybe sort of like a scientist kind of observing from the outside a little bit.

59
00:08:32.830 --> 00:08:39.649

P2: So it's a little bit difficult, even though I do a lot of singing and music in groups.

60
00:08:40.330 --> 00:08:46.930
P2: Maybe there's kind of like a depth to the social side which I maybe don't always get.

61
00:08:47.710 --> 00:08:49.976
JD: Hmm, yeah, so

62
00:08:50.550 --> 00:09:09.959
JD: because would you associate belonging with any, is music the central thing for you in your life in terms of belonging. Because I think if you go straight for the belonging, as I was going to say in the context of singing or music generally, does that make more sense

63
00:09:11.470 --> 00:09:13.989
JD: than talking about the broad concept?

64
00:09:13.990 --> 00:09:14.980
P2: Hmm.

65
00:09:19.010 --> 00:09:29.120
P2: Yeah. I find, I mean, I very much enjoy singing in groups because of,

66
00:09:30.230 --> 00:09:40.319
P2: just kind of because of the harmony. And I think that it's a

67
00:09:40.960 --> 00:09:47.309
P2: it's, it's just kind of it's, it's nice to be able to kind of be part of a sound that you couldn't just make on your own

68
00:09:51.970 --> 00:09:55.300
P2: and I don't know, I think I think there is something about,

69
00:09:56.650 --> 00:10:05.899
P2: about everyone kind of being on their own line, but it all sort of like combining to make this very gorgeous sound.

70
00:10:06.400 --> 00:10:07.700
P2: And I,

71
00:10:07.980 --> 00:10:18.159
P2: I kind of prefer sort of listening to the other parts in a way and listening to kind of the contrast with what I'm doing.

72
00:10:19.700 --> 00:10:20.410
JD: Hmm.

73
00:10:21.290 --> 00:10:28.859
P2: So I suppose you could sort of take that in a metaphorical direction, as well. [laughter]

74
00:10:30.250 --> 00:10:31.440
JD: Yeah, that would be lovely.

75
00:10:33.910 --> 00:10:34.780
P2: Mm.

76
00:10:35.010 --> 00:10:38.110
JD: Yeah, because I was going to ask,

77
00:10:38.540 --> 00:10:47.930
JD: you know, in view of what, even in view of what you've just said. But what do you think helps a person generally to feel that they belong to a group of people who sing?

78
00:10:48.480 --> 00:10:52.220
JD: Is there something that makes them feel they belong?

79
00:10:57.200 --> 00:10:59.708
P2: Yeah, I guess maybe like

80
00:11:01.050 --> 00:11:05.260
P2: having like, having a kind of like uniformity of purpose,

81
00:11:05.530 --> 00:11:13.689
P2: like, there's a feeling when a piece is just really coming together, and it's all just sounding rather gorgeous and

82
00:11:14.610 --> 00:11:17.649
P2: and you kind of feel like, ah, we're doing that

83
00:11:18.910 --> 00:11:21.790
P2: like we found a way to be

84
00:11:22.210 --> 00:11:28.870
P2: the best sort of separate parts of a machine, to kind of move and

85

00:11:29.910 --> 00:11:33.850
P2: to, you know, create, create a sort of a

86
00:11:34.290 --> 00:11:38.420
P2: like a full unit made up of disparate parts.

87
00:11:38.960 --> 00:11:47.939
JD: Yeah, very good. And do you feel, does it matter then, if it's a big group or a small group? Is it the same feeling for a small ensemble as a,

88
00:11:48.210 --> 00:11:50.499
JD: or does that give you something extra,

89
00:11:50.750 --> 00:11:52.819
JD: being in a small group?

90
00:11:52.820 --> 00:12:00.129
P2: Actually, in a way, I do kind of prefer small groups, because then you can kind of make out individual voices better, and I think it's kind of cool.

91
00:12:01.620 --> 00:12:04.859
P2: Yeah, I kind of like that it feels a bit more exposed.

92
00:12:06.240 --> 00:12:07.100
P2: Hmm.

93
00:12:07.660 --> 00:12:14.289
JD: And is it partly, then, your level of skill which has impacted you in

94
00:12:14.730 --> 00:12:19.769
JD: in feeling that you want to sing in a group like that?

95
00:12:21.200 --> 00:12:27.390
P2: Yeah, it, yeah, maybe it can, it can be a little fun to show off.

96
00:12:29.750 --> 00:12:33.110
P2: And it. Hmm,

97
00:12:34.510 --> 00:12:43.280
P2: yeah. The idea in a smaller group, everyone can be a bit of a virtuoso and you can kind of like, pick out,

98

00:12:43.500 --> 00:12:48.200
P2: pick out individuals, and maybe people can like cycle through having the spotlight a bit.

99
00:12:50.040 --> 00:12:56.490
P2: Yeah, it's interesting. I like the individuality that you can start to make out.

100
00:12:57.480 --> 00:12:58.090
JD: Yeah.

101
00:12:58.590 --> 00:13:03.870
JD: And do you feel, then, is that a situation in which you're always confident?

102
00:13:04.740 --> 00:13:12.760
P2: Erm, actually, yeah, yeah, I think, I think so. I think it's exciting. But

103
00:13:12.900 --> 00:13:16.230
P2: I do, it feels exciting in a way that I can do.

104
00:13:16.470 --> 00:13:17.610
JD: Hmm.

105
00:13:18.950 --> 00:13:23.110
P2: So yeah, it's like, it's a, it's quite a fun test of ability.

106
00:13:23.300 --> 00:13:24.070
P2: Hmm.

107
00:13:24.860 --> 00:13:31.470
JD: And so your feelings about performing, then, what do you feel when you perform?

108
00:13:32.910 --> 00:13:35.070
JD: Can you elaborate on that, maybe?

109
00:13:35.230 --> 00:13:40.049
P2: Hmm, I think if something, if something's gone well.

110
00:13:41.120 --> 00:13:47.609
P2: I I just, I feel, just kind of like a sense of satisfaction.

111
00:13:48.580 --> 00:13:52.550
P2: And like having, yeah, like, when you've just kind of like, really slid home

112
00:13:52.720 --> 00:13:57.119
P2: in in a way, but kind of perfect. That's very satisfying.

113
00:13:57.810 --> 00:14:01.460
P2: Er, if it didn't go so well, then, I usually feel a little bit

114
00:14:01.780 --> 00:14:10.510
P2: tired, like I was trying to, like I and everybody else, was slightly trying to like patch things up as we were going along. Sort of like.

115
00:14:11.671 --> 00:14:18.739
P2: yeah, sort of like, just trying very hard to kind of like, course correct as we could feel it slightly wobbling off.

116
00:14:19.130 --> 00:14:22.470
P2: So that's, that's a lot of concentration.

117
00:14:23.710 --> 00:14:24.450
JD: Hmm.

118
00:14:24.450 --> 00:14:25.020
P2: Hmm.

119
00:14:25.020 --> 00:14:33.070
JD: Does it feel hard sometimes, then, in a group, to really influence what's happening in the rest of the group?

120
00:14:33.590 --> 00:14:43.870
P2: Yes, I'm always like really surprised, in a way, [laughter] like how little it seems to make a difference. Like if,

121
00:14:44.240 --> 00:14:55.549
P2: you know I, it doesn't matter if I if I sing up or like, if I'm trying to like influence the pitch, I just kind of feel like this is really just batting against the tide, it's not working.

122
00:14:56.160 --> 00:14:59.269
P2: Yeah, it can be, it can be difficult to know,

123
00:14:59.570 --> 00:15:06.769
P2: or it is difficult to accept, but it's time to just kind of go with it rather than trying to fight against it.

124

00:15:06.920 --> 00:15:09.059
P2: I think I'm a bit of a control freak.

125
00:15:09.974 --> 00:15:15.369
JD: And having perfect pitch, then, that has that really? How does that feel?

[laughter]

126
00:15:16.500 --> 00:15:21.200
P2: Yeah, it can be a bit of a nightmare sometimes. [laughter]

127
00:15:23.430 --> 00:15:26.960
P2: Which, yeah, again, it's probably I,

128
00:15:27.140 --> 00:15:30.589
P2: I need to learn how to slightly

129
00:15:30.990 --> 00:15:36.100
P2: relinquish control that I don't actually really have in the first place.

130
00:15:36.240 --> 00:15:43.990
P2: Sometimes it's legitimately difficult if I have to transpose in my head, and it's an awkward key to begin with.

131
00:15:45.000 --> 00:15:46.700
P2: Sometimes, yeah.

132
00:15:46.980 --> 00:15:52.530
P2: And then I would insist that it's not, it's not so much my fault.

133
00:15:53.090 --> 00:16:00.480
P2: But yeah, there are other occasions where that's not the issue. I'm just like trying really hard to like,

134
00:16:00.760 --> 00:16:01.629
P2: go up. [high pitch to indicate going up]

135
00:16:02.450 --> 00:16:03.270
P2: Hmm!

136
00:16:03.760 --> 00:16:15.589
JD: Oh, yeah, interesting. And then maybe, so, what about singing solo then? Do you enjoy that equally would you say? And do you have any nerves about that, or.

137
00:16:15.730 --> 00:16:17.970
P2: Definitely a lot more nerves about that.

138
00:16:20.870 --> 00:16:30.820
P2: Yeah, it's a very different skill set, because a lot of the enjoyment of being in a choir is about blending

139
00:16:31.740 --> 00:16:38.208
P2: and yeah, and creating and creating that harmony,

140
00:16:39.380 --> 00:16:47.720
P2: and I mean, you have to sing in a completely different way as a soloist. I haven't, I haven't done it, you know,

141
00:16:48.050 --> 00:16:58.539
P2: that often, probably if I'm in sort of like I don't know 3 to 4 concerts a year, I might get a solo in one of those concerts, maybe.

142
00:17:01.630 --> 00:17:05.415
P2: But yeah, and I guess I sort of feel like

143
00:17:08.700 --> 00:17:17.220
P2: but yeah, like, it's more exposing of like my actual weaknesses as a singer, because there are some things like, I know I'm,

144
00:17:17.730 --> 00:17:39.599
P2: I'm not sort of as classically trained as some people are. Sometimes, you know, I might struggle to kind of produce enough just raw sound, whereas my strengths are more that I can be very accurate, and I'm a good reader.

145
00:17:39.930 --> 00:17:52.259
P2: So it's kind of easier to use those skills as part of the group, and sometimes it can be more exposing as a soloist, but

146
00:17:53.320 --> 00:17:55.730
P2: I do, but I do still enjoy it.

147
00:17:55.890 --> 00:17:58.190
P2: Hmm.

148
00:17:58.470 --> 00:18:05.849

JD: Yeah. And musical theatre, does that still feature? And would you, if you had the opportunity, would you do more of that?

149
00:18:06.500 --> 00:18:16.380
P2: I still, I really love musical theatre. It's very fun to sing, and just kind of like at home on the piano. I've never really,

150
00:18:17.570 --> 00:18:24.720
P2: I guess I don't really do it because it requires you to act, which is not something I've ever really explored.

151
00:18:25.454 --> 00:18:41.580
P2: I, although, having said that I was in a school concert production of Oklahoma, where we just did the songs. So that, yeah, that was probably about the level that I could manage.

152
00:18:42.140 --> 00:18:48.289
JD: Okay and acting, has that not really appealed to you as part of what you do or.

153
00:18:49.086 --> 00:18:58.293
P2: I think it's just one of those things where I think I would be bad at it at first, so so I don't want to do it, because it would be embarrassing.

154
00:18:59.800 --> 00:19:12.329
P2: Yeah, I don't know, I suppose maybe if I had sort of actually done it and committed to it, I could see it either being that I was actually kind of okay at it, or that I was really bad at it, but I thought I was great.

155
00:19:13.450 --> 00:19:14.320
P2: Hmm.

156
00:19:15.071 --> 00:19:22.809
JD: Okay. And does that involve, then, having an image of in your head of what you can do, and having confidence?

157
00:19:22.810 --> 00:19:26.290
P2: Hmm, yeah, definitely.

158
00:19:31.610 --> 00:19:32.640
P2: yeah.

159
00:19:33.300 --> 00:19:49.650
P2: Yeah. Actually, now that I remember, in university, I did do a couple of auditions for the musical theatre society. I didn't get it, and it was very obvious from watching the other people act, that I could not act, so that kind of put paid to that.

160
00:19:50.440 --> 00:19:55.889
JD: But you've been fine with that, and you've found your niche by the sound of it?

161
00:19:56.832 --> 00:19:59.160
P2: Yeah, yeah, hopefully so.

162
00:19:59.160 --> 00:20:06.249
JD: Yeah. Yeah. And if you had to say more generally than what have been the benefits of singing for you,

163
00:20:06.590 --> 00:20:07.970
JD: what would you say?

164
00:20:08.280 --> 00:20:09.330
P2: Hmm!

165
00:20:11.110 --> 00:20:12.280
P2: I think it,

166
00:20:12.410 --> 00:20:17.920
P2: it is actually, I think it is actually just a great confidence booster.

167
00:20:20.410 --> 00:20:29.770
P2: It's a way to be expressive within parameters. And you kind of get to use your creative brain and your analytical brain.

168
00:20:33.240 --> 00:20:36.879
P2: Which I and yeah, and I do enjoy that.

169
00:20:37.728 --> 00:20:45.336
P2: And there's such a, well, there's just such a huge breadth of choral music out there.

170
00:20:46.270 --> 00:20:47.115
P2: It's,

171
00:20:49.280 --> 00:20:54.719
P2: even though there are some pieces which which have cropped up kind of like time and again.

172
00:20:54.840 --> 00:21:02.979

P2: I've done John Rutter, A Lover and His Lass many times at this point, many, many times. It's a good piece,

173
00:21:06.760 --> 00:21:14.780
P2: but yeah, there's just there's just sort of like a great diversity of stuff. So you'll never be bored. There's always something new to learn.

174
00:21:15.450 --> 00:21:20.960
JD: Yeah. And does that take, you know you, you're prepared to tackle most things, then,

175
00:21:20.960 --> 00:21:21.620
P2: Hmm, yeah.

176
00:21:21.620 --> 00:21:23.569
JD: in a varied repertoire.

177
00:21:23.630 --> 00:21:26.928
P2: Yes, yeah, I think it's,

178
00:21:28.390 --> 00:21:36.020
P2: I think it's always, it's always a, it's always a challenge, but it's kind of one that I enjoy tackling. And

179
00:21:36.540 --> 00:21:39.029
P2: yeah, I guess personally,

180
00:21:39.170 --> 00:21:46.929
P2: I've always been like a pretty strong sight reader, which does kind of give a huge advantage, because it means that,

181
00:21:47.570 --> 00:21:57.029
P2: yeah, but there's just sort of like a few, like, little preliminary steps to learning the music, which I sort of get to like slightly glide over, and then like, come in like,

182
00:21:57.180 --> 00:22:00.050
P2: I don't know, maybe at level 4 at the beginning.

183
00:22:02.900 --> 00:22:05.239
P2: Which is enjoyable, because I yeah,

184
00:22:05.420 --> 00:22:12.150
P2: it's always the lower, you know, like the preliminary steps are the most frustrating, and then when it clicks, you get it.

185
00:22:13.930 --> 00:22:18.930
JD: Well that, yes, you completely anticipated my question, then,

186
00:22:18.930 --> 00:22:29.239
JD: which is great! Would you say there are benefits to working on other musical skills alongside your singing, and you can broaden that out, for maybe people who,

187
00:22:29.960 --> 00:22:33.269
JD: but yeah, sight reading, then, is important to you,

188
00:22:35.120 --> 00:22:36.180
JD: or singing generally. [i.e. people who sing, more generally]

189
00:22:36.180 --> 00:22:45.034
P2: It's just kind of like a little bit of a life hack when it comes to, when it comes to any kind of any kind of music.

190
00:22:46.460 --> 00:22:49.179
P2: Yeah, I guess, what are the other

191
00:22:49.570 --> 00:23:01.652
P2: useful skills? I mean being able to play the piano has been like a huge benefit to me as well. But I mean it was sort of like my main instrument when I was growing up, anyway. And erm,

192
00:23:02.380 --> 00:23:10.079
P2: yeah, it's kind of if you can, if you can accompany yourself, then you can just kind of like noodle around in your free time whenever you want.

193
00:23:10.490 --> 00:23:14.790
JD: Yeah. Yeah. Would you ever want to take a choir yourself?

194
00:23:15.490 --> 00:23:30.589
P2: Oh, oh, well, when I was in university I was a musical director for the a capella choir.

195
00:23:31.184 --> 00:23:41.460
P2: I was joint musical director, there were always two of us. And that kind of involved, you know, conducting and taking rehearsals and also arranging the music.

196
00:23:42.489 --> 00:24:04.990

P2: And yeah, that that was actually a great experience, got to kind of like wear a lot of different hats. And it was it was fun. I kind of feel like out of all of those skills, probably the conducting was like the weakest one for me, like I really loved doing the arrangements.

197
00:24:05.920 --> 00:24:12.410
P2: Even though I'd always kind of procrastinate and then end up sort of doing half of them in a rush the night before. But,

198
00:24:18.050 --> 00:24:23.389
P2: but yeah, I think I think maybe I was like always a little bit slightly awkward conducting.

199
00:24:24.020 --> 00:24:28.319
P2: But it was a really, It was a really lovely group of people, and

200
00:24:28.990 --> 00:24:42.056
P2: I kind of I kind of enjoyed the teaching side, even though probably I was like too pedantic and like made people go over the same stuff over and over again until they were exhausted.

201
00:24:42.860 --> 00:24:49.754
P2: So yeah, maybe I don't, I don't know how much other people would rate my teaching, but I enjoyed some bits of it.

202
00:24:50.870 --> 00:24:53.940
P2: But yeah, I don't know if it's,

203
00:24:55.980 --> 00:25:10.799
P2: I'd maybe sort of need to think about, if I were to sort of do that again now, kind of what type of choir, what type of singers and sort of like, what level I'd be looking at, because it would slightly be, I think I'd be a bit rusty

204
00:25:11.730 --> 00:25:26.760
P2: and it'd be kind of like easing in at the beginning, and also to a degree, it was something I was slightly making up as I went along, although obviously, having been in a lot of choirs, I was sort of, there were a lot of like conductors that I was able to kind of, you know, crib from.

205
00:25:28.881 --> 00:25:31.440
P2: Yeah, just sort of remember,

206
00:25:32.260 --> 00:25:38.279
P2: yeah, basically, just kind of copying the people who I thought had been really good when I was in their choirs.

207
00:25:38.400 --> 00:25:39.110
P2: Hmm.

208
00:25:39.620 --> 00:25:40.034
JD: Yeah.

209
00:25:40.450 --> 00:25:41.130
P2: Hmm.

210
00:25:41.660 --> 00:25:47.540
JD: And you, you obviously like being part of, well, actually doing the singing, which is important.

211
00:25:47.540 --> 00:25:52.569
P2: Yes! Definitely.

212
00:25:52.700 --> 00:25:58.509
JD: Yeah, and have you ever felt then that, you know, if one didn't have

213
00:25:58.860 --> 00:26:08.730
JD: all of the skills that you have, it would be difficult to enjoy the singing as much? Or do you feel that that shouldn't really be relevant?

214
00:26:10.220 --> 00:26:13.750
P2: Erm, I'm sure it must depend on the on the person

215
00:26:14.350 --> 00:26:18.789
P2: I mean, I think that, yeah, I would find it less enjoyable

216
00:26:19.020 --> 00:26:22.040
P2: because I think I have perfectionist tendencies.

217
00:26:25.240 --> 00:26:37.259
P2: But, on the other hand, I think that there are some parts of the choir, admittedly kind of some of the social parts, I think, where I'm a bit awkward, and other people probably get a lot more out of that.

218
00:26:40.490 --> 00:26:44.530
P2: So I think it kind of depends on the temperament of the person.

219
00:26:45.390 --> 00:26:47.470
JD: Yeah. Yeah.

220
00:26:48.375 --> 00:26:53.519

JD: And the social side of it, in terms of people helping to run the choirs, and all of that

221
00:26:53.660 --> 00:26:54.790
JD: you know,

222
00:26:55.370 --> 00:26:55.875
P2: Hmm.

223
00:26:56.570 --> 00:27:03.880
JD: Have you become involved in that sort of thing? Or inevitably you're involved in it, if you're doing most of these choirs?

224
00:27:03.880 --> 00:27:30.400
P2: Hmm, I haven't really taken like a formal role. But yes, one of my choirs, I was quite heavily encouraged to try to do like the social media part, I think just because they thought I was young enough, that I'd just kind of automatically know how to do that. And I kind of dodged out of it every time, because I really don't. I'm not really a social media person.

225
00:27:32.910 --> 00:27:46.840
P2: But besides that, I haven't really taken on, yeah, I haven't really taken on a formal role. A lot of the time at concerts, I end up sort of helping to set up, because I'm often there early and

226
00:27:47.220 --> 00:27:54.929
P2: when, whenever it's my turn on the tea rota, I run a very tight ship, but that's probably for me the extent of it.[laughter]

227
00:27:56.040 --> 00:28:02.989
JD: Yeah, yeah. And so is singing, then, your main activity outside work.

228
00:28:03.750 --> 00:28:09.676
P2: Yeah, it's kind of yeah, it's, it's probably ended up being my main activity.

229
00:28:11.070 --> 00:28:16.331
P2: Yeah, I have, I have like one or two regular hobbies, but that's the most regular.

230
00:28:16.660 --> 00:28:18.860
JD: Hmm, yeah.

231
00:28:19.130 --> 00:28:34.940
JD: Yeah, interesting. So I don't know if there's anything that you feel that you wanted to say about relationship of singing skills and belonging. Is there anything that you've been thinking about that you might like to add?

232
00:28:35.100 --> 00:28:37.309
JD: Or that we ought to go back over?

233
00:28:45.360 --> 00:28:46.220
P2: Well,

234
00:28:47.490 --> 00:28:57.789
P2: I mean, especially in school, I have, I have had some like quite close friendships, which kind of developed around like a shared taste in music.

235
00:28:58.640 --> 00:29:07.629
P2: Mostly. Yeah, mostly flashing back to the people who I made sing musical theatre songs with me, again, very sorry to both friends.

236
00:29:09.090 --> 00:29:14.153
P2: And yeah, I remember that being quite a special time

237
00:29:15.050 --> 00:29:18.509
P2: I mean, actually, I kind of never mentioned, but it was

238
00:29:18.810 --> 00:29:26.388
P2: obviously quite an important thing between like me and the rest of my family, especially my dad,

239
00:29:27.450 --> 00:29:28.810
P2: who

240
00:29:29.290 --> 00:29:36.040
P2: yeah, I sort of remember, he had this, yeah, he had an Andrew Lloyd Webber songbook

241
00:29:36.560 --> 00:29:42.502
P2: and it had sort of like selected songs from each of each of the shows up until that point. And

242
00:29:42.990 --> 00:29:46.529
P2: yeah, after school, we'd kind of

243
00:29:46.790 --> 00:29:56.319
P2: yeah, just kind of like, sit there and like, go through the go through, go through our favourites. He played the piano, I took the solos. Sometimes they were duets.

244
00:29:57.360 --> 00:29:58.680

P2: Er…

245
00:29:59.860 --> 00:30:02.878
P2: That sounds tremendous fun. And how amazing.

246
00:30:04.429 --> 00:30:08.599
JD: To have that opportunity to do it at home as well.

247
00:30:08.600 --> 00:30:09.630
P2: Mmm.

248
00:30:10.370 --> 00:30:19.449
JD: Yeah, yeah, and you didn't move on to national youth choir? Or did you have a go at that at some point?

249
00:30:19.660 --> 00:30:23.200
P2: Oh, I no, I don't think I did, actually, I just did County.

250
00:30:23.200 --> 00:30:23.890
JD: Hmm.

251
00:30:23.890 --> 00:30:24.700
P2: Hmm.

252
00:30:24.700 --> 00:30:28.290
JD: And was that enough, you know, did you find that fulfilling?

253
00:30:30.270 --> 00:30:54.749
P2: I did actually, I really liked the music we did. I really got on well with the conductor, who, who, I would say, is a friend, actually. And I ended up singing with her again some years later. I think this would have been about 10 years ago, maybe, because she reached out to me because she was kind of,

254
00:30:55.100 --> 00:31:01.172
P2: she was the musical director of a choir through,

255
00:31:02.010 --> 00:31:08.019
P2: I've gone and forgotten the name of the university now, [a London university], something like that.

256
00:31:08.762 --> 00:31:28.369
P2: Yeah, but it was a choir called [ ], which had sort of arisen out of the architecture department, actually, and it had a lot of kind of students of the university and some other

people as well. So that was that was fun, it was really great to kind of sing and be directed by her again.

257
00:31:28.936 --> 00:31:47.019
P2: Also, yeah, actually, when I was back in the youth choir kind of my best friend at the time, and some other friends as well, were in it with me, and we often just kind of like shared lifts , like, went back to each other's houses, kind of in between school and the rehearsals.

258
00:31:47.840 --> 00:31:52.030
P2: And that was just kind of like a nice kind of routine thing to do with friends.

259
00:31:53.000 --> 00:31:53.870
JD: Hmm.

260
00:31:54.330 --> 00:31:54.800
P2: Hmm.

261
00:31:54.800 --> 00:31:58.209
JD: Yeah, fantastic. So,

262
00:31:58.330 --> 00:32:07.740
JD: that really, there's nothing else that you think we need to expand on? Or have you said most of what you would have liked to have said.

263
00:32:09.590 --> 00:32:12.370
P2: I think, I, yeah, I think I kind of covered…

264
00:32:12.970 --> 00:32:17.534
JD: Yeah, thank you so much. In which case I'll, yeah, so I'm gonna just

265
00:32:17.990 --> 00:32:39.450
JD: kind of wrap things up by saying, thank you so much for taking part. This has been fantastic. So please feel free to contact me at any time with any questions you might have, or to offer feedback on the interview. And I'm going to send you a copy of the transcript as soon as I've gone through it, so that you can check that you're happy

266
00:32:39.450 --> 00:32:52.450
JD: that everything has come out the way you wanted to be represented. And if you have any changes that you want to make at that stage to your words, since they're your words, you would be able to do that.

267
00:32:53.715 --> 00:32:59.680
JD: So I can just about stop the recording. And then.

WEBVTT

1
00:00:08.380 --> 00:00:09.700
P3: I've checked. Okay.

2
00:00:10.110 --> 00:00:10.860
JD: Lovely.

3
00:00:11.410 --> 00:00:21.120
JD: Okay, so just to begin could you tell me a bit about when and how you started singing.

4
00:00:22.120 --> 00:00:27.090
P3: Can't remember not singing. I think my mother sang to me, and I sang songs at home.

5
00:00:27.230 --> 00:00:35.449
P3: Then I started my primary school, and I sang in assembly, and I sang in a choir. I think I have always sung – for as long as I can remember.

6
00:00:37.200 --> 00:00:41.330
JD: Oh, that's fantastic! So! And do you remember

7
00:00:41.610 --> 00:00:45.960
JD: kind of moving on from that initial singing?

8
00:00:46.580 --> 00:00:47.260
JD: You know.

9
00:00:47.260 --> 00:00:58.219
P3: In year 4 we got a new headmistress who was really into singing, and she made us lie on the floor and make our tummies go up and down. So she started making more of a

10
00:00:58.320 --> 00:01:01.599
P3: thing of singing. So I think that's when I was aware

11
00:01:01.910 --> 00:01:04.660
P3: we were doing something special, if you see what I mean.

12
00:01:04.900 --> 00:01:12.000
JD: Yeah. And was your school then, do you think, fairly unusual in that? Or do you think that she...

13
00:01:12.960 --> 00:01:22.730
P3: My reception teacher was very musical, so she got us playing recorders. So that's where I formally learnt music, though I think Mrs. [ ], rather than my school. Mrs Jones heard me in Year 4 on the piano. I think I asked to play it and she told my mother that I must have piano lessons and then came to my house for a few months to teach me and get me going. I was transferring to middle school at the end of Year 4 so she helped bridge that gap and then made sure my mother found me a piano teacher moving forwards.

14
00:01:22.910 --> 00:01:25.770
P3: Sometimes it's when you are at a place

15
00:01:26.330 --> 00:01:34.769
P3: and an individual is there at the same time as you, you benefit from that specific individual. So she [my reception teacher] did all of that, and then someone came in who was more into the singing side of it. So it was probably recorder first, then singing for me in terms of musical development.

16
00:01:35.210 --> 00:01:38.539
JD: And you sang at home, you said. So...

17
00:01:38.540 --> 00:01:39.220
P3: Yes.

18
00:01:40.350 --> 00:01:43.740
JD: And your family were quite interested?

19
00:01:44.350 --> 00:01:49.989
P3: Yeah, I mean, they're not. I think my mother has Grade 2 piano. So they're not musicians.

20
00:01:50.650 --> 00:01:56.090
P3: So folk songs, and I think she just grew up singing.

21
00:01:56.340 --> 00:01:59.799
JD: so traditional folk songs as well, you would have learned.

22
00:01:59.800 --> 00:02:07.900
P3: Well, actually, they were German, to be honest, because my grandmother's German. So therefore the childhood stuff that my mother knew

23
00:02:08.460 --> 00:02:10.220
P3: was some German

24
00:02:10.509 --> 00:02:26.089
P3: songs. So you know, like a mother sings to her children because it's good for them, it's that sort of thing. But it was just slightly unusual, because her upbringing, she didn't necessarily, she didn't realize it, but she hadn't had a mother who sang the English ones (children's nursery songs) to her.

25
00:02:26.990 --> 00:02:27.650
JD: Wow!

26
00:02:28.300 --> 00:02:29.440
P3: If that makes sense.

27
00:02:29.820 --> 00:02:32.140
JD: Do you think you would remember some of those now?

28
00:02:32.660 --> 00:02:44.020
P3: Gosh, yes, erm, well [bit of folksong sung], blah, blah, blah, German folk song. I've now got the volume of music from my grandparents' house, so

29
00:02:44.950 --> 00:02:46.060
JD: That's really exciting.

30
00:02:46.060 --> 00:02:53.480
P3: Slightly niche. I don't think they were particularly children's, there's a 'hop sa sa', and just the things that she remembered, I think.

31
00:02:53.650 --> 00:03:00.770
JD: Yeah. And also, I mean, things like travelling along in a car and things like that. Would you be singing at that point?

32
00:03:00.770 --> 00:03:03.799
P3: No, I was asking science questions of my dad.

33
00:03:04.420 --> 00:03:04.950
JD: Oh, wow!

34
00:03:04.950 --> 00:03:13.499
P3: We did make up a song, though, 'it's a long way to Granny and Grandpa'. [singing a tune here] So yes, someone did make that up for me to sing when I was getting fed up.

35
00:03:13.500 --> 00:03:13.940
JD: Fantastic! [giggle].

36
00:03:13.940 --> 00:03:15.829
P3: My dad doesn't sing that's all.

37
00:03:16.250 --> 00:03:23.630
JD: But you quickly became somebody who liked singing?

38
00:03:23.630 --> 00:03:24.240
P3: Yes.

39
00:03:24.750 --> 00:03:31.050
JD: That's really, really good. So, I was actually going to say, as well, have you had or do you have singing lessons?

40
00:03:31.740 --> 00:03:36.090
P3: Yes, so I first had singing lessons in year 10,

41
00:03:36.380 --> 00:04:01.530
P3: because I was doing GCSE music, and because it was in [county], and we had a good music service in those days. My music teacher invited me, pushed me, shoved me to audition to get singing lessons because I was doing GCSE. And he thought it was good for me. So that's how I first had them. I then had some at [[university] college], because there was a discount, if you were in the chapel choir. Then I had some at [choral society],

42
00:04:01.850 --> 00:04:10.779
P3: with the previous conductor, [choral society conductor], which were also subsidised, and then there's been a bit of a gap, and I'm back with [chamber choir conductor] for lessons now. It's a lot more expensive without any subsidy and not something I could focus on whilst raising a family.

43
00:04:11.770 --> 00:04:13.929
P3:

44
00:04:14.530 --> 00:04:21.270
JD: Yeah. And there has to be quite a lot of real desire to do that, to have those lessons.

45
00:04:21.279 --> 00:04:26.019
P3: I keep lapsing. When I say singing lessons, I have one, and now it's been four weeks.

46
00:04:26.370 --> 00:04:30.309
JD: Yes, because you also saw….

47
00:04:30.310 --> 00:04:36.540

P3: I saw [teacher] for a while, after a period of illness, because she's better, as a vocal coach.

48
00:04:37.090 --> 00:04:40.339
P3: So I think she helped me more get back on my feet.

[JD: Yeah]

49
00:04:40.520 --> 00:04:43.830
P3: [the chamber choir conductor], more goes through pieces and the music.

50
00:04:44.030 --> 00:04:44.480
JD: Yes.

51
00:04:44.480 --> 00:04:46.369
P3: Whereas [teacher] helped fix stuff a bit.

52
00:04:46.610 --> 00:04:48.240
JD: So that's...

53
00:04:48.240 --> 00:04:49.419
P3: Getting it all working, so….

54
00:04:49.420 --> 00:04:53.120
JD: Yes, well, and you, well, I think

55
00:04:53.300 --> 00:04:58.310
JD: you also, obviously sing some pieces that could be

56
00:04:58.690 --> 00:05:01.638
JD: stand out solo pieces, you know?

57
00:05:03.270 --> 00:05:03.960
P3: Yeah.

58
00:05:04.140 --> 00:05:09.610
JD: Yes. Because I was going to say, how do you feel about your lessons now when you have them?

59
00:05:09.740 --> 00:05:13.220
JD: Do you feel on the spot, or do you feel that you're...

60

00:05:13.220 --> 00:05:22.870
P3: Oh, well out of my comfort zone to be honest recently, because [chamber choir conductor] is approaching stuff beyond what I ever did instrumentally. So I got up to Grade 8 flute.

61
00:05:23.230 --> 00:05:25.719
P3: I still think I was going through the motions.

62
00:05:26.890 --> 00:05:36.719
P3: and [chamber choir conductor]'s all talking about performance, and I was trying to explain. No, I never got to the level of instrumental lessons where you really looked at performance. I almost got there

63
00:05:37.840 --> 00:05:45.750
P3: when I was finishing school, but I never did a diploma or any of that level of stuff, so

64
00:05:46.110 --> 00:05:52.080
P3: that side of things is not entirely comfortable. But he's lovely. So we're getting there.

65
00:05:52.080 --> 00:05:52.930
JD: Yes, of course.

66
00:05:53.490 --> 00:06:01.410
JD: Yeah. And what about though being in the chapel choir? Did you find that, you know, pressurizing?

67
00:06:01.830 --> 00:06:09.609
P3: But they were lovely people. Looking back, I don't know. I didn't have a clue what the service is about, but it was what was on offer from a singing perspective in my college, and I just,

68
00:06:10.120 --> 00:06:12.579
P3: I've always sung wherever I've been so that is what I joined.

69
00:06:13.270 --> 00:06:13.810
JD: Yeah.

70
00:06:13.810 --> 00:06:16.930
P3: So I don't know why it didn't bother me,

71
00:06:17.770 --> 00:06:22.490
P3: but it was quite a learning curve, like singing songs. I didn't know any of it.

72

00:06:23.610 --> 00:06:24.280
JD: Yes.

[P3: erm]

73
00:06:26.460 --> 00:06:28.990
JD: That’s really interesting.

74
00:06:28.990 --> 00:06:36.700
P3: And I don't connect with the music, which is why I'm wondering if that is why my performance hasn't developed, because it didn't mean anything.

75
00:06:38.340 --> 00:06:38.810
P3: If that makes

76
00:06:38.810 --> 00:06:39.670
P3: sense.

77
00:06:39.670 --> 00:06:40.000
JD: Yes.

78
00:06:40.000 --> 00:06:42.640
P3: And most of the religious stuff we sing now still doesn't mean anything.

79
00:06:42.930 --> 00:06:52.020
P3: So then, being faced with an aria and someone wanting to die, I get all these emotions hitting me, and I'm not used to having emotions from the words.

80
00:06:53.730 --> 00:06:56.590
P3: Music can give me emotions, like flute playing,

81
00:06:57.000 --> 00:07:00.080
P3: but I’m very switched off from words.

82
00:07:00.990 --> 00:07:03.229
JD: Really, yeah, that's interesting.

83
00:07:03.230 --> 00:07:14.279
P3: Which I've always thought was just me. But now you're asking me all these questions. A lot of what the words are about are not stuff I was very familiar with or connect with.

84
00:07:15.840 --> 00:07:21.930
JD: Yes. And I think that's kind of at the heart of

85
00:07:22.070 --> 00:07:25.889
JD: singing and performing.

86
00:07:26.240 --> 00:07:28.089
P3: Yes, it's quite important.

87
00:07:28.090 --> 00:07:30.189
JD: It's kind of what I want to get to the heart of. It's really.

88
00:07:30.190 --> 00:07:33.659
P3: [Chamber choir conductor/singing teacher] … pointing out to me, “it's what makes it different to flute playing. Helen, the words,”

89
00:07:33.660 --> 00:07:34.390
JD: Yes.

90
00:07:34.950 --> 00:07:43.410
JD: It’s really, really interesting. Because, you know, that might lead on naturally to a couple of questions, like:

91
00:07:43.600 --> 00:07:49.880
JD: I'd like to know, if you wouldn't mind, could I ask your thoughts about what belonging means to you?

92
00:07:51.140 --> 00:07:54.470
P3: Oh, are you able to? Yeah, that's very open.

93
00:07:54.470 --> 00:07:55.380
JD: Yes, that's the open one.

94
00:07:55.380 --> 00:07:57.839
P3: Do you want to give me a context to think about?

95
00:07:57.840 --> 00:07:58.510
JD: Well, yeah.

96
00:07:58.510 --> 00:08:00.439
P3: Now or in the past. What shall we...

97
00:08:00.440 --> 00:08:14.119

JD: Yes, I think I'm, to begin, just the open, the concept of belonging, just your definition of it really. Something that would, you know, and it could be as broad as you like.

98
00:08:14.400 --> 00:08:17.309
P3: I'd say belonging means being able to be me.

99
00:08:20.730 --> 00:08:21.090
JD: Yes.

100
00:08:21.090 --> 00:08:26.919
P3: Not having to put things on, so being able to exist as myself as a person, and musically, I suppose.

101
00:08:27.460 --> 00:08:28.440
JD: Yes.

102
00:08:28.440 --> 00:08:34.669
P3: And vocally, so in [choral society], don't quote the names, I belong socially,

103
00:08:36.450 --> 00:08:40.759
P3: but I have to be corporate vocally, whereas in [chamber choir]

104
00:08:41.340 --> 00:08:44.020
P3: my voice is made to belong.

105
00:08:44.970 --> 00:08:54.200
P3: Not when being drowned out by the basses. So, it's not all the time. But you know what I mean, but that, the idea is I'm starting to contribute and belong vocally. I feel now

106
00:08:54.740 --> 00:08:55.310
P3: if that makes ….

107
00:08:55.310 --> 00:08:56.470
JD: Yeah.

108
00:08:56.470 --> 00:08:56.950
P3: sense.

109
00:08:56.950 --> 00:09:00.331
JD: And I noticed, yes, and I mean you …,

110
00:09:00.670 --> 00:09:06.580

P3: You can call it my call it like my chamber choir and my choral society, or something like that

111
00:09:06.580 --> 00:09:10.360
P3: Yeah, yeah, I think the difference in size is quite important.

112
00:09:10.670 --> 00:09:36.929
JD: Yes. And I think I don't know whether you would automatically say everything comes back to musical belonging for you, or can you? Could you also think about how the concept of belonging, how we belong in society? And you know, that's more complex, But just how do you feel about belonging? Does that word have huge connotations?

113
00:09:36.930 --> 00:09:40.420
P3: I'm not very good at belonging. I'm very much an 'I am me' person.

114
00:09:40.770 --> 00:09:44.169
P3: I do feel music is where I belong most.

115
00:09:44.550 --> 00:09:50.410
P3: And my association for science education. So it's more linked to things I'm interested in.

116
00:09:50.710 --> 00:09:55.150
JD: So you would say then, that you belong in that science community as well.

117
00:09:55.150 --> 00:10:04.770
P3:Yes - Because my interests are not mainstream and in my science association everyone is interested in science! Similarly. throughout my school nobody else liked classical music. So these things have made me feel like I don't belong

118
00:10:05.530 --> 00:10:07.140
P3: most of my life,

119
00:10:08.050 --> 00:10:16.169
P3: until I found the choral world, and then I find lots of other people like classical music, and then I can belong. So I've always felt other,

120
00:10:17.500 --> 00:10:18.910
P3: if that makes sense.

121
00:10:19.190 --> 00:10:31.736
JD: Right, that's really interesting. I don't know if you could say even more about that, because that's that is really really interesting. Only if you want to, but I kind of feel, you don't have to get into the nitty gritty of it...

122
00:10:32.050 --> 00:10:42.719
P3: My type of school, was not like [local private school], and I wasn't typical for the comprehensive schools I attended. So an intellectual interest and liking classical music. I didn't

123
00:10:42.840 --> 00:10:49.230
P3: fit in with what the teachers thought people were interested in when they were trying to appeal, and other people thought I was odd.

124
00:10:50.370 --> 00:10:57.669
P3: so I didn't fit in for my school. Until I got to [university], I didn't fit in.

125
00:10:57.830 --> 00:11:04.890
P3: but when I went to upper school and I went to the music department, that was my safe space, and then I did fit in.

126
00:11:05.340 --> 00:11:05.820
JD: Yeah.

127
00:11:05.820 --> 00:11:06.490
P3: So.

128
00:11:07.110 --> 00:11:08.250
JD: Well, it sounds like you had a fantastic music department…

129
00:11:08.250 --> 00:11:17.849
P3: Yes. I'm trying to think if there was any time when I did not fit in there . I do not belong in the musical theatre world. As soon as it all shifted to the school musical, I didn't belong because I'm not all ‘ah ha’,[jazz hands]

130
00:11:19.040 --> 00:11:20.210
P3: like that.

131
00:11:20.340 --> 00:11:21.310
P3: So.

132
00:11:22.060 --> 00:11:27.480
JD: Yeah. And was there quite? And is that what happened? People tended to gravitate….

133
00:11:27.480 --> 00:11:37.329
P3: Every year there’d be a term when I didn't have the protection of the normal rehearsals, because everything went over to the school musical, until I passed my Grade 8, and was allowed to play in the band.

134
00:11:38.440 --> 00:11:39.610
JD: Yes.

135
00:11:39.780 --> 00:11:43.879
JD: But for you as well, playing instruments at the same time. Did that?

136
00:11:43.880 --> 00:11:48.819
P3: Oh, yes, that was, at school, that was probably more my thing than the singing. I'd say.

137
00:11:48.820 --> 00:11:49.900
JD: Yeah.

138
00:11:49.900 --> 00:11:54.299
P3: But playing the flute in the musical allowed me to belong to the musical.

139
00:11:54.720 --> 00:11:56.510
JD: Yeah, yeah, that's fantastic.

140
00:11:56.510 --> 00:12:03.199
P3: And be part of it in a way that suited me. There's a presumption, when you sing, you want to be on stage, but not everyone does.

141
00:12:04.040 --> 00:12:05.080
JD: Yeah, I think that’s an interesting point…

142
00:12:05.920 --> 00:12:08.030
P3: I don’t do acting.

143
00:12:08.130 --> 00:12:15.839
JD: I think that's really interesting. So is it all more personal for you? It's how you feel.

144
00:12:16.390 --> 00:12:17.030
P3: Yes.

145
00:12:17.440 --> 00:12:18.110
JD: Yeah.

146
00:12:18.260 --> 00:12:20.820
P3: I'm not good at these abstract concepts. Sorry.

147

00:12:21.090 --> 00:12:22.399
JD: No, you're very good.

148
00:12:22.400 --> 00:12:26.920
P3: It's a feeling of comfortableness rather than otherness.

JD: Yeah.

149
00:12:26.920 --> 00:12:30.230
P3: the opposite of otherness.

150
00:12:30.230 --> 00:12:44.660
JD: I think that's really interesting, actually, and, I mean, did anybody say you should join a choir when you get to [university], was there that level of sort of preparation, for

151
00:12:44.860 --> 00:12:45.550
JD: in the end.

152
00:12:45.550 --> 00:12:53.340
P3: No, I just assumed that's what I'd do. Well, actually, to be honest, I thought I'd do flute, and then Grade 8 was nothing at [university]. So I tried

153
00:12:53.450 --> 00:13:04.990
P3: flute and singing, but because my school had done more singing than typical for a state school, because I only had a concert, a wind band there. I hadn't really got the orchestra experience

154
00:13:05.250 --> 00:13:16.729
P3: or the recital experience, you know, I performed one solo when I passed my Grade 8. You could only fit a few solos in each concert for everyone who played, we didn't have recitals for soloists. It was in the main school concert, so you didn't really get to do it much.

155
00:13:17.430 --> 00:13:17.810
JD: Yeah.

156
00:13:17.810 --> 00:13:28.149
P3: If that makes sense. And then, when I was auditioning for the choir, I'd actually done more singing than quite a few people, and I passed my audition, so therefore I thought, I'm good at singing here.

157
00:13:29.170 --> 00:13:30.220
JD: Yeah, that's amazing.

158
00:13:30.220 --> 00:13:35.980

P3: And I had chosen [[university] college] that didn't have choral scholars. I was wise to that.

159
00:13:36.260 --> 00:13:38.669
JD: So it was more, you sang in the choir.

160
00:13:38.670 --> 00:13:39.540
P3: Yeah, because they were

161
00:13:40.500 --> 00:13:46.070
P3: the school, my school had sent some people to [a specific college] and some people to my [[university] college], and I knew I wasn't

162
00:13:46.590 --> 00:13:53.279
P3: going to be a choral scholar, and I didn't want to rule out being in a choir. I thought this, that doesn't look good.

163
00:13:53.880 --> 00:13:58.319
P3: So I did apply somewhere where I thought I'd have a chance to join in.

164
00:13:58.740 --> 00:14:04.560
JD: And did that lead to other choral society work in [university]?

165
00:14:05.830 --> 00:14:11.440
P3: It's quite full on, a chapel choir. There wasn't really time for anything else.

166
00:14:11.440 --> 00:14:14.470
JD: Yes, okay. But that obviously…

167
00:14:14.470 --> 00:14:17.949
P3: The choral society was also on a Friday evening. So I wasn't doing that.

168
00:14:18.210 --> 00:14:20.699
P3: I saw other people.

169
00:14:20.990 --> 00:14:22.010
JD: Yeah.

170
00:14:22.460 --> 00:14:27.619
JD: Oh, well, I mean, you know, and it's part of a huge tradition, obviously, so.

171
00:14:27.620 --> 00:14:27.980

P3: Mmm.

172
00:14:27.980 --> 00:14:32.449
JD: To be part of that tradition, did that mean quite a lot to be doing it?

173
00:14:34.460 --> 00:14:39.200
P3: I suppose I had grown up listening to King's College on Christmas Eve every year,

174
00:14:39.660 --> 00:14:52.350
P3: and I never got to be a choir boy when I was young, the nearest I got was wearing a sheet and carrying a toilet roll with tinsel in it, in a school play, I got to be a choir boy in a school production.

175
00:14:52.730 --> 00:15:02.639
P3: So I did like that, and I liked the Christmas. The Christmas was what I recognized as the tradition, I would say, I don't think I would have known what evensong was.

176
00:15:04.480 --> 00:15:06.069
JD: Yeah, that's amazing.

177
00:15:06.070 --> 00:15:10.219
P3: So the emotional memory is doing the Advent carol service,

178
00:15:10.930 --> 00:15:19.719
P3: carrying actual candles. They were all laughing at me because I was excited that I'd got a real candle. They're like what! [laughter from both] I think the Christmas that's what I knew.

179
00:15:20.170 --> 00:15:22.690
P3: but I don't think I'd heard of evensong.

180
00:15:23.190 --> 00:15:29.410
JD: No, no, I mean that sounds very familiar to me, so interesting.

181
00:15:30.150 --> 00:15:30.630
P3: Yeah, no I don’t...

182
00:15:30.630 --> 00:15:36.679
JD: And I mean you knew that, well, King's College were having their, you know

183
00:15:37.750 --> 00:15:41.119
JD: evensong, well, Advent, you know that they were doing.

184

00:15:41.493 --> 00:15:44.169
P3: The carols, yeah, you know, Christmas Eve, we listened to it every year.

185
00:15:44.460 --> 00:15:45.560
JD: Yeah.

186
00:15:45.560 --> 00:15:46.900
P3: So that's what I knew.

187
00:15:47.020 --> 00:16:03.419
JD: Wow, that's really interesting. So yes, and I mean, because I was, I think we've, you've probably covered it really because I was going to say, what do you think helps a person to feel that they belong to a group of people who sing?

188
00:16:04.510 --> 00:16:06.810
JD: so it's honing in on the,

189
00:16:07.020 --> 00:16:09.829
JD: ‘what makes you feel that you belong’ to that group?

190
00:16:15.520 --> 00:16:20.469
P3: Probably covered it because you have to fit in, because I don't feel I totally belong to [chamber choir].

191
00:16:20.700 --> 00:16:24.749
P3: Because I don't have so many close friends there.

192
00:16:25.184 --> 00:16:29.509
P3: But now I've been concert manager, and I've got to know more people, they're all quite nice.

193
00:16:29.920 --> 00:16:33.309
P3: So you've got to have some kind of social engagement.

194
00:16:35.640 --> 00:16:41.649
P3: Erm, Yes but I in [choral society] I was feeling that I didn't belong in the first sopranos anymore, because there's so much critique from the conductor who wanted a tone quality my voice is not naturally doing [e.g having places in pieces where he wanted us to sound like choir boys and I cannot sing high like that]..

195
00:16:42.040 --> 00:16:46.060
P3: and I felt when my voice was being my voice, it wasn’t wanted.

196

00:16:47.050 --> 00:16:53.209
P3: So you have to be a bit careful to make sure people feel vocally positive, and that they're

197
00:16:53.210 --> 00:16:53.570
JD: Yeah.

198
00:16:53.570 --> 00:16:54.890
P3: Contributing.

199
00:16:55.330 --> 00:16:57.680
JD: Yeah, that's really interesting. Because I was going to say.

200
00:16:57.680 --> 00:17:11.949
P3: And that they can improve and overcome. It's not a lack of feedback. There isn't growth opportunity in [choral society]. There's only critique. So if you're not fulfilling what's needed. You need to feel that you can do something to belong.

201
00:17:13.390 --> 00:17:13.980
JD: Yeah.

202
00:17:13.980 --> 00:17:15.819
P3: Or improve in some way.

203
00:17:16.010 --> 00:17:19.989
JD: But both those choirs you needed to audition?

204
00:17:20.200 --> 00:17:20.569
P3: Yes.

205
00:17:20.579 --> 00:17:23.099
JD: Or….

206
00:17:23.099 --> 00:17:28.499
P3: Well, [chamber choir conductor], I don't know. I've never known. I mean, your singing lesson is effectively audition.

207
00:17:29.160 --> 00:17:29.540
JD: Yeah.

208
00:17:29.540 --> 00:17:34.639
P3: [husband] doesn't know how to get in, wants to be in it. So we've signed up to go to Brittany.[a choral course run by [chamber choir conductor].

209
00:17:34.750 --> 00:17:38.120
P3: There's no obvious way in.

210
00:17:38.740 --> 00:17:43.350
JD: So you weren't formally auditioned by [chamber choir conductor] because he was kind of no.

211
00:17:43.350 --> 00:17:46.890
Helen: No, no, no, because I was there almost at the beginning. I was a singing pupil of his at the time. He was one of the subsidised teachers at [choral society] when I first joined.

212
00:17:47.120 --> 00:17:51.879
JD: Yeah, yeah. But also, I mean that [choral society] has reauditions, doesn't it?

213
00:17:51.880 --> 00:17:52.810
P3: Oh god, yes.

214
00:17:53.620 --> 00:17:55.000
JD: Yeah, I mean, how does that?

215
00:17:55.000 --> 00:17:57.729
P3: They do kick people out. It was very traumatic, so.

216
00:17:58.030 --> 00:17:59.320
JD: Yeah.

217
00:18:00.250 --> 00:18:05.839
JD: And I mean you, well, you're somebody who's been in it for a long time.

218
00:18:05.840 --> 00:18:06.440
P3: Yes.

219
00:18:06.680 --> 00:18:07.780
JD: You feel that

220
00:18:08.030 --> 00:18:15.139
JD: you would, that would continue. And you know, presumably, when you're reauditioned, you know what you're in for?

221
00:18:15.550 --> 00:18:15.890
P3: Yes.

222
00:18:16.570 --> 00:18:19.210
JD: Yeah, and…

223
00:18:19.210 --> 00:18:26.839
P3: I mean, I'm lucky because I sing in a chamber choir as well. So it's less, slightly less scary than for some people.

224
00:18:26.840 --> 00:18:27.350
JD: Yeah.

225
00:18:27.350 --> 00:18:30.750
P3: Because at one point you have to hold your part on your own,

226
00:18:31.540 --> 00:18:38.720
P3: which I can do. But it's a big ask, and it's the only time you have to do it. So I'm not really convinced it's totally, reasonable to expect of choral society singers.

227
00:18:40.170 --> 00:18:44.120
P3: that's not what other people join for, it’s a big choral society.

228
00:18:44.880 --> 00:18:45.779
JD: Yes, yes.

229
00:18:45.780 --> 00:18:47.619
P3: So it's very hard for them.

230
00:18:47.960 --> 00:18:54.589
JD: And is it possible to tell what which skills are being looked for at that level, or is it.

231
00:18:54.590 --> 00:19:02.449
P3: There is, there is a list that comes around, singing in tune, contributing vocally, sufficiently holding your line.

232
00:19:03.670 --> 00:19:07.330
P3: Usually not the other things I can add, I should say, but.

233
00:19:08.360 --> 00:19:10.170
JD: Yeah, yeah.

234
00:19:10.170 --> 00:19:16.410
P3: Not singing with meaning or performing it, or, those aren't even looked at.

235
00:19:16.670 --> 00:19:18.830
JD: Really? Yeah, yeah.

236
00:19:19.090 --> 00:19:25.900
JD: So, and even though you're part of a large choir, do you still feel

237
00:19:26.240 --> 00:19:27.409
JD: that it's a kind of.

238
00:19:27.410 --> 00:19:37.660
P3: That’s a really good point, because I do belong because we're a team. And now I'm not on the first sopranos, they aren't coming in in the right place. So actually, what our conductor really doesn't realize is that as a group,

239
00:19:38.150 --> 00:19:39.600
P3: we were quite,a team

240
00:19:39.850 --> 00:20:01.850
P3: we have our roles, so I do belong. And the seconds were like ‘Yay, come and join us, H’, because I can read it,. whereas when in the first sopranos you know [ ] and [ ] and someone they've got the high A's, and if I'm getting tired by the end of a big work like the Missa Solemnis I know they will be singing out so it takes the pressure off me. So, in a big choir, I feel we do have different things to contribute. But it's just not always seen by the conductor. Then you are a section

241
00:20:02.210 --> 00:20:05.790
P3: and it's, that's quite nice when other people

242
00:20:06.310 --> 00:20:08.269
P3: know what thing you're good at.

243
00:20:08.890 --> 00:20:10.520
P3: If that makes sense.

244
00:20:10.520 --> 00:20:11.360
JD: Yeah.

245
00:20:11.740 --> 00:20:15.530
JD: And do you ever feel that you don't have to? Oh, sorry I...

246
00:20:15.530 --> 00:20:17.000
P3: No no no sorry.

247
00:20:17.000 --> 00:20:25.969
JD: But no. But do you ever feel that? You know, being, it's comforting being in a large group? In that case, or is it always you're having to work super hard?

248
00:20:25.970 --> 00:20:32.190
P3: Well the thing, weirdly, I don't find much difference between that and [chamber choir] because everyone's louder in [chamber choir].

249
00:20:33.080 --> 00:20:40.590
P3: So it's the cover of my voice in either of them, which is why stepping out of that, is quite disconcerting.

250
00:20:41.240 --> 00:20:41.670
JD: Yeah.

251
00:20:41.670 --> 00:20:50.999
P3: So [chamber choir conductor] says I can sing out, because in a large, the large choir you're not supposed to be heard individually, but chamber choir is slightly different.

252
00:20:52.300 --> 00:20:56.320
JD: And is that another different kind of skill then? You know, to not be…

253
00:20:57.260 --> 00:20:58.269
P3: Yeah, well, that's what I'm used to.

254
00:20:58.270 --> 00:20:59.130
JD: not be standing out?

255
00:20:59.130 --> 00:20:59.560
P3: Yes.

256
00:20:59.560 --> 00:21:00.120
JD: Yes.

257
00:21:00.670 --> 00:21:02.020
P3: That's what I do.

258
00:21:02.520 --> 00:21:12.229
JD: And would it make that much difference if you, say, if there's a couple of people who are not singing as well as they could? Does that make a huge difference?

259
00:21:12.230 --> 00:21:15.219

P3: If they’re loud, yes, and then everyone gets told off. Yes.

260
00:21:15.220 --> 00:21:16.310
JD: Yeah, yeah.

261
00:21:16.310 --> 00:21:18.320
P3: They bring everyone with them really.

262
00:21:18.740 --> 00:21:19.630
JD: Yeah.

263
00:21:19.630 --> 00:21:25.739
P3: And it's only since I've stepped away from the first soprano section and watched the critique, have I realized it may not have been me.

264
00:21:26.540 --> 00:21:27.930
JD: Yes.

265
00:21:28.810 --> 00:21:32.559
JD: And that feels quite important to you that it's not?

266
00:21:32.560 --> 00:21:32.890
P3: Yeah.

267
00:21:32.890 --> 00:21:37.009
JD: Yeah, that you want it to be your very best?

268
00:21:37.280 --> 00:21:37.940
P3: Yes.

269
00:21:38.520 --> 00:21:39.990
JD: Yes,

270
00:21:41.061 --> 00:21:47.158
JD: that's interesting. Because, you know, I was going to say, well, one of my questions is,

271
00:21:47.910 --> 00:21:53.059
JD: you know, would you say there are benefits to working on other musical skills alongside your singing?

272
00:21:54.130 --> 00:21:57.189
P3: So, what do you mean by that?

273
00:21:57.190 --> 00:22:06.799
JD: Well, do you think people, it is helpful to have not just the sound of your voice, but to have other skills? And what are those?

274
00:22:06.800 --> 00:22:23.090
P3: Well definitely, my reading is exceedingly helpful, and having played the flute and got Grade 8, and I can do all the rhythms, and I got Grade 5 theory, you know. They're [other sopranos] getting told off and not ending their notes in the right place when you go between normal time and compound time, and none of that's a problem for me.

275
00:22:24.006 --> 00:22:32.480
P3: Erm, my limited, limited orchestral experience still means I can count and come in without relying on other people, if I know the note.

276
00:22:32.820 --> 00:22:33.530
JD: Yeah.

277
00:22:33.760 --> 00:22:37.359
P3: So I definitely think, and playing the piano is a huge help.

278
00:22:38.010 --> 00:22:38.380
JD: Yeah.

279
00:22:38.380 --> 00:22:41.570
P3: Huge, huge help. Because I erm,

280
00:22:41.920 --> 00:22:45.169
P3: if it's really bad sight reading, I play it on the piano,

281
00:22:45.310 --> 00:22:49.649
P3: not literally, mentally, to get the semitones and tones.

282
00:22:50.090 --> 00:22:51.370
JD: Yes..

283
00:22:51.370 --> 00:22:54.400
P3: So I would say, piano playing is definitely useful.

284
00:22:55.020 --> 00:23:01.139
JD: And does that give you confidence of, at some level, then, you know it?

285

00:23:02.220 --> 00:23:03.040
P3: Yes.

286
00:23:03.350 --> 00:23:08.339
P3: And I think that's what I'm known for in [choral society], to know where we are, what we're doing,

287
00:23:08.860 --> 00:23:09.250
JD: Yeah.

288
00:23:09.250 --> 00:23:16.310
P3: when to come in. I still, some people, I think, remember the music, even though we're technically not a sight singing choir in[choral society] , you still have to read quite well and pick up the notes quickly I don't think everyone

289
00:23:18.410 --> 00:23:19.340
P3: does read

290
00:23:21.620 --> 00:23:21.950
JD: Yeah.

291
00:23:21.950 --> 00:23:33.460
P3: Even on Wednesday, the conductor was saying, you've got to count. You're coming in on beat 2, write in 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4 1, ‘sing’, and we're like, aren't you always doing that?

292
00:23:34.950 --> 00:23:36.910
JD: Yeah.

293
00:23:36.910 --> 00:23:43.649
P3: So I think, some people have got a quicker ear than me, though, like they pick it up aurally much quicker, so I think they may just know it.

294
00:23:45.040 --> 00:23:52.180
JD: Does that mean there are other ways of learning, or, but your particular ways?

295
00:23:52.180 --> 00:24:00.580
P3: I would love to do a study on our choir of people's musical background, because there's quite a few strong sopranos who have come via the stage, not choirs.

296
00:24:00.790 --> 00:24:10.260
P3: So, one very loud soprano did, like amateur operatics. Another one's in the local musical theatre group. So I think they,

297

00:24:10.920 --> 00:24:13.129
P3: some people come in with their voice

298
00:24:14.050 --> 00:24:16.970
P3: and some people come in from an instrument,

299
00:24:17.550 --> 00:24:19.050
P3: if that makes sense. So there's two

300
00:24:19.050 --> 00:24:19.410
JD: Yeah.

301
00:24:19.410 --> 00:24:24.340
P3: different types of people who find different aspects easier.

302
00:24:24.880 --> 00:24:29.480
JD: And that seems to work as a choral society?

303
00:24:29.480 --> 00:24:31.859
P3: It does. That's why we're a good team.

304
00:24:32.130 --> 00:24:32.730
JD: Yes.

305
00:24:34.720 --> 00:24:41.330
P3: The ex-soloisty performers can have incredibly loud voices.

306
00:24:41.440 --> 00:24:43.680
P3: Not like yours, so,

307
00:24:43.910 --> 00:24:55.430
P3: they're not solo quality like you, but in that kind of big piece, like the Missa Solemnis or Verdi Requiem, there's a type of choral society sound that's absolutely,

308
00:24:56.560 --> 00:25:00.639
P3: it's not the same as the sustained solo power.

309
00:25:01.340 --> 00:25:01.990
JD: Yeah.

310
00:25:02.310 --> 00:25:02.990
P3: If that makes…

311
00:25:03.450 --> 00:25:12.319
JD: And it's also maybe not minding being sort of present and actually taking the lead.

312
00:25:12.320 --> 00:25:16.489
P3: Yes, but they need the confidence in the notes first, though, which they don't have in the earlier rehearsals.

313
00:25:16.690 --> 00:25:18.299
JD: Yes.

314
00:25:18.760 --> 00:25:25.139
JD: Whereas I mean you, you would take the lead, presumably with your other skills as well, you know.

315
00:25:25.140 --> 00:25:28.280
P3: I do in the earlier rehearsals often,

316
00:25:28.730 --> 00:25:29.170
JD: Yeah.

317
00:25:29.170 --> 00:25:33.969
P3: because I know it, so it helps other people learn it, and there's enough people like me

318
00:25:34.400 --> 00:25:39.169
P3: in the choir, which is why the choir as a whole can learn things faster than some.

319
00:25:39.430 --> 00:25:40.510
JD: Yes.

320
00:25:40.630 --> 00:25:46.589
JD: But would you say it feels different in [chamber choir] then, in terms of because you're in a chamber choir with

321
00:25:47.380 --> 00:25:54.100
JD: and standing out? Or do you feel all those skills are just as important really?

322
00:25:54.100 --> 00:25:59.559
P3: Well, that's kind of standard. For a long time I was feeling less good in [chamber choir] because those skills aren't special…

323
00:26:00.340 --> 00:26:05.400

P3: they come as standard. Though I would say some maybe don’t, not all the sopranos, I would say.

324
00:26:07.270 --> 00:26:07.770
P3: erm

325
00:26:07.770 --> 00:26:09.836
P3: But broadly across the choir, but

326
00:26:10.490 --> 00:26:16.229
JD: Yeah, yeah, it's interesting. It's definitely interesting. Because I was going to say,

327
00:26:16.670 --> 00:26:29.339
JD: well, I've got a couple of questions just around, what are your feelings about performing, and that could be as broad as you like, and including singing solo if you like.

328
00:26:30.840 --> 00:26:39.519
P3: Feelings about terror, really. I kind of make music for myself and for the experience of being in it,

329
00:26:39.830 --> 00:26:41.739
P3: more than the audience.

330
00:26:42.120 --> 00:26:49.029
P3: I mean, I love rehearsal. I would love to have two more rehearsals at [chamber choir] because I enjoy singing it in the rehearsal.

331
00:26:49.220 --> 00:26:49.810
JD: Yeah.

332
00:26:50.280 --> 00:26:57.770
JD: I've heard somebody else say that. So that's interesting. Yeah, the process is it? Is it process as well?

333
00:26:57.770 --> 00:27:07.540
P3: Yes, because I get to know the piece, and any piece I've rehearsed I like better, because I've rehearsed it, so I don't like Benjamin Britten if I hear it cold,

334
00:27:07.850 --> 00:27:13.319
P3: but it's some of my favourite pieces when I've rehearsed it. So you get into the piece and

335
00:27:13.590 --> 00:27:18.800
P3: all the details and nuances and things like that.

336
00:27:18.800 --> 00:27:21.270
JD: Yes, yes.

337
00:27:21.270 --> 00:27:28.580
P3: I suppose what I do like on concert day in [choral society], obviously we get together with the orchestra. So performance day is special in that sense,

338
00:27:29.470 --> 00:27:31.819
P3: because then you hear the whole thing.

339
00:27:33.220 --> 00:27:34.290
JD: Yeah.

340
00:27:34.480 --> 00:27:41.329
P3: And that's quite something when it gets going. But I wouldn't say, again, I wouldn't say it's the performance. It's just me enjoying it.

341
00:27:41.950 --> 00:27:51.427
JD: But for you as well, being, that's part of your life and helping doing things for the choir. The wider organization.

342
00:27:51.840 --> 00:27:54.739
P3: Yes, yes, choir librarian

343
00:27:56.230 --> 00:28:02.169
P3: in [choral society], and I'm concert managing one concert a year for [chamber choir]. So.

344
00:28:02.460 --> 00:28:03.890
JD: Yeah. Yeah.

345
00:28:04.030 --> 00:28:08.020
JD: Has that changed how you feel about [chamber choir] then, to be constantly.

346
00:28:08.298 --> 00:28:31.710
P3: [chamber choir] is fine, because I only have to do it for one concert per year, and then I can go back to normal for the other two. [Choral society] is stressing me out and spoiling singing, really, because I go to relax and have a break and having an ongoing role is, I'm actually going to speak to a friend about that, because it counteracts the benefits of singing, if you're always stressing if there's enough music for everyone or, yes, singers, or when you get additional requests like ‘Oh, we've got a workshop’, so

347
00:28:32.390 --> 00:28:35.340

P3: it is like, takes the magic off it all.

348
00:28:36.380 --> 00:28:37.560
JD: Yeah, yeah.

349
00:28:38.050 --> 00:28:43.539
P3: But if none of us did anything we wouldn't be able to do it. So that's why I do it out of duty, because.

350
00:28:43.870 --> 00:28:45.279
JD: Really?

351
00:28:45.280 --> 00:28:49.629
P3: You have to do something, because if everyone didn't, choirs just wouldn't happen.

352
00:28:49.830 --> 00:28:53.899
JD: No, no! But you talk about relaxing as well. So it sounds like

353
00:28:53.900 --> 00:28:54.880
P3: Oh, sorry!

354
00:28:54.880 --> 00:29:02.119
JD: all those things are true? You find it, you want to go and relax and enjoy the music.

355
00:29:02.120 --> 00:29:02.780
P3: Yes.

356
00:29:02.960 --> 00:29:03.530
JD: Even though some...

357
00:29:03.530 --> 00:29:10.919
P3: relax in an active way. No, no, no! Relax for me means forcibly putting my mind on something else, because I'm not good at relaxing.

358
00:29:11.370 --> 00:29:11.880
JD: Yeah.

359
00:29:11.880 --> 00:29:22.710
P3: So in [choral society], I like being kept on my toes as long as it's not critical and nasty. I want to improve, because that's satisfying, and it keeps you focused. I can't stand boring rehearsals.

360

00:29:23.946 --> 00:29:24.960
JD: Yeah, yep.

361
00:29:24.960 --> 00:29:33.179
P3: You want to keep engaged with it, which on a good day that is what happens at [choral society], we don't tend to note bash. There's always something you can improve.

362
00:29:33.700 --> 00:29:35.020
JD: Yeah. Yeah.

363
00:29:35.490 --> 00:29:43.899
JD: And it sounds like, even though you may be a fairly huge choir, it's, you know, you're all pulling together on a piece

364
00:29:43.900 --> 00:29:44.420
JD: to make it…

365
00:29:44.420 --> 00:29:45.120
P3: You do have to pull your weight

366
00:29:45.120 --> 00:29:49.629
P3: in [choral society], he does pick up if – he doesn't want uncertain people.

367
00:29:49.870 --> 00:29:51.310
JD: Yeah. No.

368
00:29:51.520 --> 00:29:53.559
P3: He's got an amazing ear. So,

369
00:29:53.740 --> 00:29:55.779
JD: Yeah, so I mean.

370
00:29:55.780 --> 00:30:00.659
P3: If the section sounds light, he'll still rehearse it, because it means not everyone's got it.

371
00:30:01.240 --> 00:30:07.539
JD: Yeah, yeah, and that. And it makes a difference to have somebody conducting like that who?

372
00:30:07.690 --> 00:30:12.570
JD: But it's the camaraderie, then, with your teammates, basically?

373

00:30:12.570 --> 00:30:15.100
P3: Yes, yes.

374
00:30:15.660 --> 00:30:21.080
JD: Oh, that's really interesting. Yeah, yeah. So, because I was going to say.

375
00:30:21.320 --> 00:30:24.789
JD: You know, how do you feel about singing solo?

376
00:30:25.300 --> 00:30:32.010
JD: You know, having done that recently in [chamber choir], is this something you would do again, willingly?

377
00:30:32.010 --> 00:30:32.730
P3: Erm,

378
00:30:34.810 --> 00:30:38.569
P3: [chamber choir conductor] was very good at choosing something that suited our [each soloist's voice,

379
00:30:39.430 --> 00:30:43.149
P3: so that was, made it possible.

380
00:30:43.780 --> 00:30:44.510
JD: Yeah.

381
00:30:44.510 --> 00:30:49.950
P3: Not making your, taking what your voice can do, and letting you do something you can do well.

382
00:30:50.760 --> 00:30:55.510
P3: And there's been the odd occasion when I thought I could do something better, don't tell the others,

383
00:30:56.000 --> 00:31:05.819
P3: so in that sense I've been slightly champing at the bit, but it's still quite daunting, and I could have done with more practice, it's quite hard to sing in a different building without any practice.

384
00:31:06.600 --> 00:31:08.829
JD: Yeah.

385
00:31:09.690 --> 00:31:10.250

JD: Yes.

386
00:31:10.550 --> 00:31:15.259
P3: In general, I don't like to be seen, and I don't like, want to step forward.

387
00:31:17.450 --> 00:31:22.999
P3: And I don’t like people staring at me. So that's the performance thing. You see I don't, I was in the

388
00:31:23.250 --> 00:31:26.040
P3: metaphorical pit with the orchestra.

389
00:31:26.270 --> 00:31:26.840
JD: Mm.

390
00:31:26.840 --> 00:31:29.990
P3: I don't like being out in front of an audience.

391
00:31:30.660 --> 00:31:31.100
JD: Yeah.

392
00:31:31.100 --> 00:31:32.980
P3: Solos from the choir.

393
00:31:34.270 --> 00:31:43.350
JD: And was there a feeling of? Because there were in this recent thing? There were more of us, was there a feeling that

394
00:31:43.720 --> 00:31:46.150
JD: you did belong as a soloist?

395
00:31:46.150 --> 00:31:51.430
P3: Yes, that was right. There were lots of soloists. You weren't the soloist, and it all passed around. So I quite liked that one.

396
00:31:51.770 --> 00:31:53.240
JD: Yeah, yeah. It was really good.

397
00:31:53.240 --> 00:31:58.289
P3: And I just did my little bit rather than standing out front being the soloist.

398
00:31:58.530 --> 00:31:59.260

JD: Yeah.

399
00:31:59.660 --> 00:32:00.729
P3: I don't like that.

400
00:32:01.030 --> 00:32:11.099
JD: But and I would think, you know, in terms of the pieces that you do in your lessons. Do they feel like something you would ever perform?

401
00:32:14.720 --> 00:32:15.430
JD: So...

402
00:32:15.430 --> 00:32:15.970
P3: Mm.

403
00:32:16.230 --> 00:32:16.750
JD: So, how to.

404
00:32:16.750 --> 00:32:39.320
P3: Because I am not you. I have very high standards, and unless I'm someone who sounds like you, I wouldn't think I'm worthy of performing, because there is a, we are very othered compared to soloists in the choral society. They're out the front, they're paid. They're treated respectfully by the conductor. They're professionals, and we are the amateurs. So from that background one isn't a

405
00:32:39.440 --> 00:32:42.649
P3: soloist just by definition.

406
00:32:43.370 --> 00:32:44.359
JD: Yeah, yeah.

407
00:32:44.690 --> 00:32:53.279
P3: Different in a chapel choir, I did occasionally sing solos, because there's hardly any audience, and you were technically doing it for God, so it didn't feel so.

408
00:32:54.060 --> 00:32:56.770
P3: erm, it wasn't so out there. I sang

409
00:32:57.330 --> 00:33:01.249
P3: what's it called, you know the Tippett Five Spirituals.

410
00:33:02.330 --> 00:33:02.800
JD: Yes.

411
00:33:02.800 --> 00:33:12.360
P3: The solo soprano line I did in a church in Cumbria and Dunblane Cathedral, and things like that, but it's not so much stress, if there's not a massive audience.

412
00:33:12.820 --> 00:33:13.320
P3: and its...

413
00:33:13.320 --> 00:33:13.980
JD: Yeah.

414
00:33:13.980 --> 00:33:22.819
P3: And you're sitting in choir seats, if you're in a proper cathedral, it's not all about you. You can send your voice around the cathedral.

415
00:33:23.550 --> 00:33:25.850
P3: not everyone looking at you,

416
00:33:26.820 --> 00:33:27.930
P3: if that makes sense.

417
00:33:28.930 --> 00:33:36.420
JD: Yeah, that's really interesting. So you were able to embrace that and do it and not get too nervous?.

418
00:33:36.920 --> 00:33:39.386
P3: In an appropriate sized building, a little bit, but

419
00:33:40.060 --> 00:33:46.910
JD: Yeah, yeah, I like that. I think that's amazing. You know.

420
00:33:47.520 --> 00:33:51.840
JD: So you could say that you've sung in some amazing venues and sung solo.

421
00:33:51.840 --> 00:33:58.159
P3: Oh, at college. I did. Yes, yeah. The duet in the Lady Chapel at Ely. I did the

422
00:33:58.500 --> 00:34:01.559
P3: Christ, Rising with [ ] as a duet.

423
00:34:03.200 --> 00:34:03.860
JD: Yeah.

424
00:34:04.360 --> 00:34:08.469
P3: But then again, it was chosen to suit my voice, which was quite sweet and

425
00:34:08.760 --> 00:34:10.620
P3: choir boyish at that age.

426
00:34:10.940 --> 00:34:15.470
P3: So I think it's again with a conductor who picked things that I could do.

427
00:34:16.110 --> 00:34:19.200
JD: Yes, yeah. And then, as your voice has

428
00:34:19.429 --> 00:34:30.990
JD: you know, matured, do you think, is it good that you're learning some of these bigger pieces, you know, in your singing lessons. Is this kind of helping you generally?

429
00:34:31.510 --> 00:34:32.550
P3: Well, I think so.

430
00:34:32.870 --> 00:34:40.470
P3: It seems because in [chamber choir] you almost like need to sing like that in the choir. That's that's and I can now hear myself, so

431
00:34:41.050 --> 00:34:49.700
P3: I think the idea is singing like a soloist, or as much as you can, but in a choir, and that's what's changed with my singing in [chamber choir].

432
00:34:50.139 --> 00:35:00.039
JD: Yeah, yeah. And what about the text that you're putting across then, has this become any easier, to get into the actual emotion of what you're singing.

433
00:35:01.770 --> 00:35:06.640
P3: The Shakespeare themed concert we did recently made more sense, because I could find examples in my life.

434
00:35:07.470 --> 00:35:08.230
JD: Wow!

435
00:35:08.500 --> 00:35:13.000
P3: People I've known, or you know, the emotions that other people experience.

436

00:35:13.250 --> 00:35:13.970
JD: Yeah.

437
00:35:14.820 --> 00:35:15.900
P3: If that makes sense.

438
00:35:15.900 --> 00:35:20.639
JD: Rather than the, well, like Monteverdi, or I don't know

439
00:35:21.070 --> 00:35:28.919
P3: Latin stuff, really, I mean, you know, in [choral society] we were once asked to all sound prayerful and fervent but I've never prayed or be fervent. It was not an emotion of feeling that I had any concept of how to convey.

440
00:35:30.090 --> 00:35:37.290
P3: They are not emotions for me, it doesn't mean anything the Christian religion ones at all, really.

441
00:35:37.880 --> 00:35:42.239
P3: So some years ago we did Codebreaker about the life of Alan Turing, and

442
00:35:42.800 --> 00:35:58.590
P3: there's a solo in the middle, the Mother's Lament, and I was almost sobbing on stage, because I am a mother and had slightly odd boys, and it just resonated. But I don't get that when Christ is dying on the Cross. Once with you, you came around

443
00:35:58.920 --> 00:36:00.570
P3: and we were doing this Stabat

444
00:36:01.790 --> 00:36:11.959
P3: Mater or something? No, or was it the Britten? It was the Britten. And you were looking all solemn as you sang, and I was like, why are you so solemn? And you said that he [Jesus] has just had his side pierced. And you know I hadn’t even registered that

445
00:36:12.150 --> 00:36:21.690
P3: I mean I can, you know our conductor at [choral society] was trying to explain the St John Passion to us, and if you take it like a kind of film story, it's pretty grim.

446
00:36:22.110 --> 00:36:23.220
JD: Yeah, yeah.

447
00:36:23.546 --> 00:36:27.469
P3: If you take it as a story. So that was quite helpful.

448
00:36:28.030 --> 00:36:30.210
JD: Yes.

449
00:36:30.210 --> 00:36:37.720
P3: Someone being betrayed and killed, and things. So I think if you do it like that. But it's a whole background culture that I didn't have,

450
00:36:37.910 --> 00:36:40.040
P3: so I don't have the backstory.

451
00:36:40.490 --> 00:36:41.170
JD: Yeah.

452
00:36:41.610 --> 00:36:47.190
JD: And that really is interesting, because, you know, in the end your…

453
00:36:47.300 --> 00:36:58.110
JD: has that mattered in a way, I mean, do you still feel that you belong in a church singing, for instance, or has that ever made you feel awkward?

454
00:36:58.940 --> 00:37:10.649
P3: I don’t think I’d do it as an adult. I mean, that would be a bit odd if you weren't going to church, so I feel, what, that really makes me sad is that, having done the chapel choir, I've never been able to do it again.

455
00:37:11.220 --> 00:37:11.599
JD: Mm.

456
00:37:11.600 --> 00:37:13.479
P3: And as a woman you can't sing at the Abbey.

457
00:37:14.060 --> 00:37:17.090
P3: So, although there's choir girls coming through.

458
00:37:17.420 --> 00:37:21.779
P3: there's not really any opportunities as an adult soprano.

459
00:37:23.080 --> 00:37:29.520
P3: And I did ask one of our accompanists once, and it's only really in some London choirs, I think.

460
00:37:30.300 --> 00:37:30.720

JD: Yeah.

461
00:37:30.720 --> 00:37:33.359
P3: So that is still an area of exclusion.

462
00:37:33.670 --> 00:37:42.039
JD: Yeah, or the ones that kind of go round to, you know, churches, there are a couple of groups, maybe, where you could just do that kind of liturgical music.

463
00:37:42.040 --> 00:37:43.080
P3: Oh, right? Yeah, yeah.

464
00:37:43.080 --> 00:37:44.010
JD: Mm

465
00:37:44.615 --> 00:37:45.919
P3: But it's not

466
00:37:45.920 --> 00:37:52.470
P3: a lot. And given that I live in a cathedral city, it's sad it is not something I can easily participate in.

467
00:37:53.070 --> 00:37:57.430
P3: Plus also it wouldn't fit family life because we're not a ‘going to church on a Sunday’ family.

468
00:37:57.430 --> 00:38:00.030
JD: Yeah, yeah, that's really interesting, as well.

469
00:38:00.030 --> 00:38:04.879
P3: It’s also awkward, because that's just disruptive, and people wouldn't accept it very well.

470
00:38:05.300 --> 00:38:06.730
JD: Yeah, yeah.

471
00:38:06.870 --> 00:38:15.239
JD: So I mean, there's this kind of *other* institution in a way, the religious one. That is, also,

472
00:38:15.530 --> 00:38:17.730
JD: it has its own channels.

473
00:38:18.120 --> 00:38:18.450

P3: Yes.

474
00:38:18.450 --> 00:38:20.559
JD: I don’t know whether you ever thought, felt that.

475
00:38:20.990 --> 00:38:21.680
P3: In what sense?

476
00:38:21.680 --> 00:38:22.960
P3: channels as in?

477
00:38:22.960 --> 00:38:26.159
JD: Channels of you know it's got its own world.

478
00:38:26.310 --> 00:38:27.630
JD: And oh, you know.

479
00:38:27.630 --> 00:38:34.169
P3: Yeah definitely, I was very privileged to go to [[university] college] and have that opportunity.

480
00:38:34.380 --> 00:38:34.820
JD: Yeah.

481
00:38:34.820 --> 00:38:40.269
P3: Which is, if I hadn't done that, I probably wouldn't have got into [chamber choir], because I wouldn't have had the sightreading.

482
00:38:40.660 --> 00:38:41.380
JD: Yeah.

483
00:38:41.940 --> 00:38:42.610
P3: So yeah.

484
00:38:42.610 --> 00:38:59.180
P3: So it’s a bit unfair that musical development is linked to that, I think. I mean, we've had people come to open rehearsals who, with a gospel singing background, and they can't cope because they haven't learned the notation, which I found very sad when, you know, people have had a fabulous voice.

485
00:38:59.550 --> 00:39:05.679
JD: Yeah, yeah. But do you think that their sight singing skills gradually will improve or would improve?

486
00:39:05.680 --> 00:39:09.480
P3: Well, they have to find a choir that will let them improve them. But.

487
00:39:09.480 --> 00:39:09.920
JD: Yeah.

488
00:39:09.920 --> 00:39:12.680
P3: Our thresholds at [choral society] are too...

489
00:39:12.680 --> 00:39:13.110
JD: Quite high.

490
00:39:13.110 --> 00:39:14.160
P3: …high for that.

491
00:39:14.520 --> 00:39:19.700
JD: But you could through choral singing you, you presumably think that you can.

492
00:39:19.700 --> 00:39:24.109
P3: I'd hope so somewhere. But there's these sort of more popular choirs, aren't there?

493
00:39:24.681 --> 00:39:29.320
P3: We do sometimes have people graduate from them, and then come to us for added challenge.

494
00:39:29.550 --> 00:39:30.210
JD: Yeah.

495
00:39:30.320 --> 00:39:40.420
JD: But is there a sense that if you, yes, I mean, you hope that those skills you might develop, and you can only really develop them by singing, doing it.

496
00:39:40.420 --> 00:39:44.990
P3: You have to sing with notation, that's the key thing, and I didn't do that till

497
00:39:45.480 --> 00:39:51.180
P3: year 9. So Upper School in [ ], you're just singing from word sheets until then

498
00:39:51.728 --> 00:40:01.881
P3: And then you came to year 9, and they were doing the Vivaldi Gloria, and it had the notes, and I thought this was such a genius of an idea because I could.

499
00:40:02.220 --> 00:40:04.029
P3: Yeah, [laughter] ‘this is a great idea, look’.

500
00:40:04.810 --> 00:40:05.640
JD: Yeah, yeah.

501
00:40:05.640 --> 00:40:14.710
P3: I couldn't sight, I couldn't pitch so well then, but I played the flute and you could get all the rhythms from it, and a very good aide memoire, having heard it.

502
00:40:15.340 --> 00:40:16.729
JD: Yes.

503
00:40:17.056 --> 00:40:20.979
P3: Yeah. So I was probably 13 when I first sang with music.

504
00:40:21.900 --> 00:40:25.830
JD: Yeah, I think that's still quite common.

505
00:40:25.830 --> 00:40:26.390
P3: Mm.

506
00:40:26.390 --> 00:40:30.520
JD: And in terms of the repertoire then, I mean you naturally.

507
00:40:30.520 --> 00:40:34.980
P3: I was very unusual. We had two years of concerts joint with another school. We did the

508
00:40:35.200 --> 00:40:38.010
P3: Vivaldi Gloria, and then Faure’s Requiem.

509
00:40:38.600 --> 00:40:38.980
JD: Yeah.

510
00:40:38.980 --> 00:40:41.999
P3: Which set me on a life of choral singing.

511
00:40:42.640 --> 00:40:43.040
JD: Yeah.

512

00:40:44.190 --> 00:40:48.489
P3: They don't do it now, I mean, again, it's being there with the right person at the right time.

513
00:40:49.210 --> 00:41:07.099
JD: And is that something then? Because I think maybe it is hard for, you know, children who are only exposed to sort of Disney movies and, you know, things like that, it's really really hard, maybe, to make the leap across?

514
00:41:07.100 --> 00:41:10.750
P3: Yes, because they don't also learn the right range of the voice or anything.

515
00:41:11.130 --> 00:41:13.080
JD: No, no.

516
00:41:13.080 --> 00:41:13.660
P3: Yes,

517
00:41:14.410 --> 00:41:16.570
JD: So even a school that encourages

518
00:41:16.880 --> 00:41:30.200
JD: group singing, and, you know, getting involved. And they can have really strong music and be in the choir, but they're not necessarily gonna make that leap across without somebody guiding them or helping them, or.

519
00:41:30.200 --> 00:41:31.519
P3: No, exactly.

520
00:41:31.520 --> 00:41:36.119
JD: Yeah. Yeah. From so from your point of view, then you know

521
00:41:36.380 --> 00:41:46.790
JD: How has singing helped you feel that you belong? You know, what has singing actually done for you, do you feel? Can I ask that question?

522
00:41:47.910 --> 00:41:52.400
P3: I met my husband through it. My friends.

523
00:41:53.780 --> 00:42:00.060
P3: I'm not very sociable, just randomly going-to-the-pub person, so it's given me community, I think, is the biggest thing.

524
00:42:01.060 --> 00:42:03.350

P3: And really my

525
00:42:03.830 --> 00:42:09.649
P3: sort of emotions in a controlled way, you sort of let it out through singing and a distraction.

526
00:42:10.470 --> 00:42:17.339
JD: Yeah, that's really fantastic. Yeah, I think, you know, and if you were to think about

527
00:42:17.600 --> 00:42:22.370
JD: people wanting to belong, is that something?
528

00:42:22.940 --> 00:42:27.860
P3: I'd always recommend that. It's what I'd hope for my children. But it's harder on an instrument which is what they do musically.

529
00:42:28.120 --> 00:42:31.290
P3: They don't do the singing, but I mean singing you can do anywhere:

530
00:42:31.630 --> 00:42:37.019
P3:A university friend of mine went to Germany for a year after graduating and just joined the local choir. So anywhere you go it is possible.

531
00:42:37.730 --> 00:42:43.259
P3: I'm not planning to move but if I did I could find a choir, and then you've automatically got…

532
00:42:44.720 --> 00:42:50.080
P3: I mean I, when I came to [county] after [university], I joined the choir in the October.

533
00:42:52.070 --> 00:42:55.290
P3: and I wouldn't have known anybody in [county] so.

534
00:42:55.290 --> 00:42:59.320
JD: Yeah. So it's been a great way in really.

535
00:42:59.320 --> 00:42:59.760
P3: Yes.

536
00:42:59.760 --> 00:43:03.006
JD: Yeah, yeah, it sounds wonderful.

537

00:43:03.470 --> 00:43:04.120
JD: So I'm just.

538
00:43:04.120 --> 00:43:12.779
JD: I'm just wondering, then, is there anything that we've talked about which you think you'd like to go back over or expand on, or.

539
00:43:12.780 --> 00:43:14.560
P3: I don’t know if I've answered what you need.

540
00:43:15.550 --> 00:43:16.790
JD: Well, I think this is all very.

541
00:43:16.790 --> 00:43:30.789
P3: We didn’t do so much on the religion bit because I was talking to my husband last night, who seemed to have done Divinity and things at his private school, and had church services through cubs and scouts.

542
00:43:31.040 --> 00:43:31.730
JD: Yeah.

543
00:43:31.730 --> 00:43:42.299
P3: It's not understood. We're doing the Dream of Gerontius at the moment, which has a Catholic basis, and everyone's getting quite confused. I do think the amount of religious music is

544
00:43:43.660 --> 00:43:47.280
P3: definitely holding back the performance side of it, I think

545
00:43:48.480 --> 00:43:51.900
P3: is what talking about this has made me realize and not.

546
00:43:51.900 --> 00:43:52.880
JD: That’s really...

547
00:43:54.800 --> 00:44:02.319
P3: It's the repertoire, that's what I would say, and I do really enjoy some of our non-religious repertoire.

548
00:44:03.080 --> 00:44:03.620
JD: Yeah.

549
00:44:03.620 --> 00:44:05.750

P3: That’s what I have connected with most.

550
00:44:06.480 --> 00:44:07.050
JD: Yeah.

551
00:44:07.730 --> 00:44:08.950
P3: Over the years.

552
00:44:09.180 --> 00:44:12.220
JD: Yes, because, of course, there's, you know,

553
00:44:12.490 --> 00:44:18.450
JD: other religions where, you know, and that can also be tricky. You know, if you.

554
00:44:18.450 --> 00:44:30.729
P3: I think that’s harder, because I have no religion. So, joining the chapel choir, it wasn't against my beliefs. I just didn't have them. So I just saw myself as helping other people worship with something I didn't understand.

555
00:44:31.080 --> 00:44:31.420
JD: Yeah.

556
00:44:31.420 --> 00:44:34.250
P3: But I wasn't contradicting, if that makes sense.

557
00:44:35.200 --> 00:44:35.520
JD: Yeah.

558
00:44:35.520 --> 00:44:40.030
P3: And I suppose I'm from an atheist Christian background.

559
00:44:40.670 --> 00:44:45.150
P3: I'm not from a non-believing Muslim background.

560
00:44:46.220 --> 00:44:48.340
P3: So it wasn't against anything.

561
00:44:48.690 --> 00:44:57.039
JD: Yes, it makes you wonder, in a way, how universal those feelings are, because if you can, if you can feel it, if the music is conveying something…

562
00:44:57.040 --> 00:45:24.980

P3: I think people just don't connect. And when we've worked on, because we did the St John Passion in English, our conductor's very passionate about it and communicating it. And it I was, I missed it because I was ill, but we've done it a few years ago, and it's incredibly powerful, and I think that's what brought home how, when someone explains to you what you're singing about, it really adds to the performance and your involvement, with it. And then it makes you think how often, when you're singing church Latin,that you are not.

563
00:45:27.710 --> 00:45:31.809
P3: I mean the first service I did, we went for a weekend away at [[university] college],

564
00:45:32.260 --> 00:45:47.760
P3: and it, the service sheet was in English, and we were singing a mass, and then everyone leapt up when it said Holy Holy, and apparently it meant the Sanctus, or I would sing 'Like as a hart desireth the waterbrooks' at one evensong and then 'sicut cervus', at another and not know they were the same text.

565
00:45:48.420 --> 00:45:51.889
P3: I also didn't do Latin at school, just to shove that in.

566
00:45:52.618 --> 00:46:06.009
JD: Mm, that's interesting. And also there are things that happen in a service that if you're not familiar with it, you know, that's that can be even, you know, giving each other the sign of peace. And all this.

567
00:46:06.010 --> 00:46:08.769
P3: Oh, that was weird! Yes, yes, no, that was all.

568
00:46:09.310 --> 00:46:10.540
JD: And whether to kneel or not.

569
00:46:10.540 --> 00:46:21.230
P3: So we did Sunday services occasionally, but I'd only learned evensong. And then we went and did a Sunday morning service, and I wondered, I just didn't know what was going on, but for some reason it didn't particularly upset me, just confused me.

570
00:46:21.230 --> 00:46:21.750
JD: Yeah.

571
00:46:21.750 --> 00:46:25.370
P3: That might be just me, but I could see it would put some people off entirely.

572
00:46:25.680 --> 00:46:28.915
JD: Yes, and going up for communion and things like that when, or just...?

573

00:46:29.210 --> 00:46:32.846
P3: That was a bit awkward because I couldn't and wouldn't.

574
00:46:33.210 --> 00:46:35.109
JD: Yes. Yeah. Same here.

575
00:46:35.110 --> 00:46:40.520
P3: I wasn't gone on Sunday services when we did that. Evensong’s quite good.

576
00:46:40.980 --> 00:46:41.720
JD: Yeah.

577
00:46:42.130 --> 00:46:43.120
P3: As a service.

578
00:46:43.450 --> 00:46:46.300
JD: Yes. Oh, that. Yeah.

579
00:46:46.300 --> 00:46:47.370
P3: Anyway, sorry I'm going on now, but...

580
00:46:47.370 --> 00:46:47.990
JD: No, that's.

581
00:46:47.990 --> 00:46:48.430
P3: I think.

582
00:46:48.430 --> 00:46:49.000
JD: That's fantastic!

583
00:46:49.000 --> 00:46:49.370
P3: Probably.

584
00:46:49.370 --> 00:46:55.689
JD: So, yes, I think that's covered a lot. If you feel that you have

585
00:46:57.480 --> 00:46:58.100
P3: Mm.

586
00:46:58.100 --> 00:47:04.359
JD: you know, covered everything you would say about belonging. Then, you know I'm happy, very happy.

587
00:47:04.360 --> 00:47:04.810
P3: Yes, that’s fine.

588
00:47:04.810 --> 00:47:33.869
JD: Definitely. So shall I read you my little postlude basically? So I'm going to say, thank you so much for your time today and you can contact me anytime with questions about this, and you can give me feedback as well. And I'm going to send you a copy of the transcript as soon as possible. For you to check, and if you're happy with everything I might highlight some bits that, you know if I haven't heard it correctly.

589
00:47:33.870 --> 00:47:35.290
P3: Yes, no, that's fine.

590
00:47:35.290 --> 00:47:48.229
JD: You know, there may be things on the transcript that are not so clear, and that and also you could make adjustments, you know, because it will all be your words. So if there's anything that you wish, you'd said that you didn't say.

591
00:47:48.230 --> 00:47:48.750
P3: Definitely, yes.

592
00:47:48.750 --> 00:47:50.790
JD: It will still be something that you could add to.

593
00:47:50.790 --> 00:47:51.160
P3: Okay.

594
00:47:51.682 --> 00:47:58.470
JD: Yeah, but it's been fantastic. I am just going to stop the recording.

WEBVTT

1
00:00:05.470 --> 00:00:06.090
P4: Cool.

2
00:00:09.340 --> 00:00:11.029
JD: Wonderful. Thank you.

3
00:00:11.150 --> 00:00:12.480
JD: Okay.

4
00:00:12.940 --> 00:00:18.780
JD: So I thought to kick us off, would you be able to tell me a bit about when and how you started singing.

5
00:00:20.316 --> 00:00:27.529
P4: Yeah. So I guess I started singing in Year 6, but I started lessons in Year 7,

6
00:00:28.366 --> 00:00:36.109
P4: and then I did that for around 2 years, and then I took a break, and then I started again in Year 12,

7
00:00:36.240 --> 00:00:38.510
P4: and I'm and I've been doing it since then.

8
00:00:40.200 --> 00:00:40.790
JD: Hmm.

9
00:00:40.790 --> 00:00:41.450
P4: Yeah.

10
00:00:41.950 --> 00:00:47.870
JD: And do you remember singing, you know, really earlier than that? Or is that when you remember beginning?

11
00:00:48.366 --> 00:01:04.500
P4: In primary school, I was part of the school choir so I guess maybe it was earlier than that. Maybe it was Year 4, Year 5. But I wasn't, I wasn't having lessons, I was just part of the choir, so I was singing, but I wasn't really like studying, if that makes sense.

12
00:01:05.700 --> 00:01:07.050
JD: Yeah.

13
00:01:07.370 --> 00:01:14.399
JD: Yeah, and so that led on to a question about, have you had, or do you have singing lessons? So, currently?

14
00:01:14.860 --> 00:01:21.829
P4: Currently, yes, yeah, I've had 2 different teachers ever, so, yeah.

15
00:01:22.980 --> 00:01:24.639
JD: And how do you enjoy lessons?

16

00:01:25.546 --> 00:01:31.790
P4: They're really fun. I mainly study musical theatre, so it's within that ballpark.

17
00:01:32.510 --> 00:01:49.320
P4: And it's fun, it's very collaborative with my teacher, like she suggests songs, and then I suggest songs, and we kind of find a middle ground for what works. Usually we're working towards something like a concert or a grade,

18
00:01:49.800 --> 00:01:53.860
P4: but at the moment we're just kind of singing for fun, which I'm enjoying.

19
00:01:54.550 --> 00:01:58.079
JD: Great, and is that at school, then, this teacher?

20
00:01:58.080 --> 00:01:58.800
P4: Yeah.

21
00:01:59.690 --> 00:02:00.280
JD: Okay.

22
00:02:00.500 --> 00:02:02.360
JD: So it's quite a musical school.

23
00:02:05.510 --> 00:02:13.390
P4: I don't think a large part of the school is musical, but I think the part of the school that is musical is very musical, if that makes sense.

24
00:02:13.620 --> 00:02:19.089
JD: Yeah, yeah, that's really good. And so you have taken some exams in singing.

25
00:02:19.648 --> 00:02:22.789
P4: I actually haven't. I was

26
00:02:22.960 --> 00:02:31.580
P4: well, well, I did Grade 3, but that was years ago, but I haven't continued, but I plan to do diploma level in the next year or so.

27
00:02:32.010 --> 00:02:32.840
P4: So.

28
00:02:33.630 --> 00:02:34.270
JD: Yeah.

29
00:02:34.400 --> 00:02:41.389
JD: And when you did, so, was that a general kind of more classical repertoire sometimes, when you were doing it previously?

30
00:02:41.390 --> 00:02:59.069
P4: It was, it was musical theatre [exam board]. But the teacher that I had at the time, she wasn't musical theatre trained. She was classically trained, so she didn't really know a lot about it, whereas, like, which is really different to my current teacher now, which is partly why I switched to my current teacher.

31
00:03:00.480 --> 00:03:06.219
JD: So you've been fortunate to have somebody at school who really knows about musical theatre.

32
00:03:06.220 --> 00:03:07.844
P4: Yeah, she's incredible. She's,

33
00:03:08.650 --> 00:03:16.159
P4: she has a lot of connections, and she's helped me with my auditions and stuff for drama school and stuff. So.

34
00:03:16.530 --> 00:03:32.850
JD: Yeah, that sounds fantastic. Okay, well, I might come back to, you know, as we go along. If there's any more you want to say about that. But so I'm just gonna move straight on to, could I ask for your thoughts about what the general concept of belonging

35
00:03:33.110 --> 00:03:36.019
JD: would mean to you, or does mean to you?

36
00:03:39.310 --> 00:03:44.020
P4: I would say, it's about finding inner happiness with yourself.

37
00:03:44.220 --> 00:04:08.380
P4: I don't think belonging necessarily has to mean with a group of people. I think it's feeling comfortable and grounded within yourself. I mean, for me, I think having people around you is a big part of it sometimes. But I think everyone's different, you know. It can be dependent on the people around you, the places you're in or just the emotions that you're feeling as well. So

38
00:04:08.800 --> 00:04:10.200
P4: that's what I would say.

39
00:04:10.770 --> 00:04:21.490

JD: Yeah, that's interesting, thank you. And so, and then how would you define belonging in the context of singing, your singing, or other people's singing?

40
00:04:21.490 --> 00:04:22.350
P4: Hmm

41
00:04:27.950 --> 00:04:28.870
P4: hmm!

42
00:04:30.190 --> 00:04:31.180
P4: I think,

43
00:04:31.530 --> 00:04:41.900
P4: you know, when you're in the shower, and you just start singing. And because you're in the shower, you, you assume that no one can hear you. So you're kind of singing as, like, confidently as you can, and you're really like giving it your all. I feel like,

44
00:04:42.050 --> 00:04:54.810
P4: feeling of belonging when it comes to singing, is being able to sing like that when you are in front of an audience, you know, because you truly just don't really have any like fear or nerves, and you feel that sense of belonging.

45
00:04:55.404 --> 00:04:57.759
P4: I guess it's one part of it. I,

46
00:04:58.140 --> 00:05:01.590
P4: I also, maybe I would also say that having

47
00:05:02.430 --> 00:05:08.590
P4: having an ensemble with you as well, singing as well, like being part of a production, or

48
00:05:08.920 --> 00:05:15.210
P4: being able to, like, create that harmony with someone else. I feel like that for me is just amazing. Like I love,

49
00:05:16.070 --> 00:05:21.779
P4: I love 3-and 4-part harmonies, which you can only really do with at least 3 or 4 people. So I think that

50
00:05:21.890 --> 00:05:31.400
P4: brings something really enjoyable to it, which I don't do a lot, because most of what I do is solo stuff. So when I do do ensemble stuff, it's very exciting. I'd say.

51

00:05:32.020 --> 00:05:32.810
JD: Yeah.

52
00:05:32.980 --> 00:05:43.809
JD: And that's interesting, when you say that you can feel a sense of belonging to yourself or and does that, could you expand on that at all? Because that's interesting.

53
00:05:44.160 --> 00:05:55.359
P4: Yeah, I mean, I think that when I first picked up singing again last year, at the beginning of Year 12, I was with my old teacher, the classically trained singer. And

54
00:05:55.660 --> 00:06:13.309
P4: I knew I wanted to do musical theatre, but she didn't really know a lot about it, and I was, because she wasn't sure how to teach me. I was therefore really weak and really like nervous and not confident at all. And then, now that I've started with my new teacher since September of Year 13,

55
00:06:13.725 --> 00:06:29.394
P4: I've just grown so much in confidence. Well, not just in confidence, but also in range, like my technique is so much better. Because I'm being taught for what I want to learn, if that makes sense. I think the other teacher would have been great if I wanted to learn classically.

56
00:06:30.280 --> 00:06:36.789
P4: but because I'm now learning the technique that I wanted to learn, I gain the confidence, and therefore, like

57
00:06:37.610 --> 00:06:43.440
P4: I feel like I I'm good enough, you know, and that brings that belonging.

58
00:06:44.710 --> 00:06:50.310
JD: Yeah, yeah, and is that, so that, is that linked to level of skill, then?

59
00:06:51.678 --> 00:07:04.110
P4: For me it is, I mean, because I kind of judge, I kind of judge myself in terms of skill value. You know I'm kind of a I'm quite critical of myself. So for me, I guess that's important.

60
00:07:04.640 --> 00:07:14.420
JD: Hmm, yeah. And what do you think made you think that you would like to take music further then, and gave you the confidence, that extra bit? Was it this teacher, or…

61
00:07:14.420 --> 00:07:21.739
P4: I think it was learning with this teacher and thinking, wait, I'm actually pretty good [laughter] but also, like,

62

00:07:22.250 --> 00:07:36.760
P4: I mean, I was initially going to be doing architecture or set design, and I was thinking about doing set design, but then I really realized that instead of designing set, I wanted to be performing on the set. So I think that's kind of that was the big

63
00:07:37.090 --> 00:07:51.990
P4: giveaway for me. But I've always been part of music, I mean, you know my mum, right? So like, I've always been immersed since I was born. So like, it wasn't a big surprise to anyone. And of course my parents support me, knowing what they do. So it's

64
00:07:52.730 --> 00:08:04.290
P4: it's, it's great. And I think that learning with this new teacher has helped me realize that it's not just a pipe dream, you know. It's possible, because I'm gaining that those skills and getting better.

65
00:08:05.050 --> 00:08:17.820
JD: Yeah. And do you look beyond going to? If you, you know, were to go to further education, higher education doing it? Can you see beyond that to what you might want to achieve with singing?

66
00:08:20.750 --> 00:08:23.051
P4: I just want to have an audience.

67
00:08:23.540 --> 00:08:26.450
P4: No matter how big the audience is, I just want,

68
00:08:26.950 --> 00:08:28.499
P4: I just want to.

69
00:08:28.950 --> 00:08:30.489
P4: I want to be doing that.

70
00:08:30.810 --> 00:08:37.950
P4: That's everything like it's, I mean, now, I just can't really see myself doing anything else.

71
00:08:38.320 --> 00:08:39.070
JD: Yeah.

72
00:08:39.070 --> 00:08:39.400
P4: So.

73
00:08:39.409 --> 00:08:44.979
JD: And do you have a group of friends, like-minded friends then, is this who you tend to hang out with?

74
00:08:44.980 --> 00:08:45.610
P4: Hang out with.

75
00:08:45.610 --> 00:08:46.220
P4: Erm,

76
00:08:47.070 --> 00:08:52.039
P4: sometimes. I mean I, the friends that I do hang out with most of the time,

77
00:08:52.670 --> 00:08:57.230
P4: are going to university, so they're doing very different things, so I think,

78
00:08:58.410 --> 00:09:02.980
P4: I don't know. It's hard to say. I don't think I found that group of like-minded people yet, but

79
00:09:03.270 --> 00:09:07.079
P4: I know that I will, if that makes sense. So I'm not kind of,

80
00:09:07.320 --> 00:09:11.029
P4: I don't feel like I'm missing out, because I just feel like it hasn't come yet.

81
00:09:11.490 --> 00:09:13.550
JD: Yeah, yeah.

82
00:09:13.550 --> 00:09:13.920
JD: Yeah,

83
00:09:13.920 --> 00:09:17.180
JD: and you know, so when you are performing,

84
00:09:17.340 --> 00:09:22.130
JD: and I know you have to act, and you have to sing and dance,

85
00:09:22.660 --> 00:09:28.069
JD: so is the singing, the strongest for you, or are they equal?

86
00:09:28.070 --> 00:09:37.139
P4: I'd say singing is the strongest, and then acting, and then dance. I haven't performed dance at all. I've done it in like auditions, and I've gone to classes, but I don't think I'm

87
00:09:37.780 --> 00:09:39.339
P4: at that level yet.

88
00:09:39.640 --> 00:09:40.270
P4: Um,

89
00:09:40.270 --> 00:09:40.880
JD: Yes.

90
00:09:41.070 --> 00:09:41.630
JD: Yeah.

91
00:09:41.630 --> 00:09:42.850
P4: That's what I would say.

92
00:09:42.850 --> 00:09:48.470
JD: Yeah. And do you think you'll be, you know, it gives you an extra

93
00:09:48.810 --> 00:09:53.660
JD: something to offer that your singing voice is really good?

94
00:09:54.450 --> 00:09:55.609
P4: What do you mean? Sorry.

95
00:09:55.610 --> 00:09:57.310
JD: I mean in terms of

96
00:09:58.020 --> 00:10:04.469
JD: going to a drama school. Is the singing going to be really important for that?

97
00:10:04.810 --> 00:10:08.930
P4: Yeah, I've already like done my audition season. So like, that's

98
00:10:09.320 --> 00:10:12.599
P4: I've, I'm going to [drama school] next year. So that's very exciting.

99
00:10:12.600 --> 00:10:13.380
JD: Are you?

100
00:10:13.380 --> 00:10:16.140
P4: Yeah, so I kind of,

101
00:10:16.390 --> 00:10:20.699
P4: I mean when I was auditioning, yes, I think the singing was like my biggest

102
00:10:22.551 --> 00:10:25.159
P4: like talent, like as in

103
00:10:25.590 --> 00:10:28.920
P4: that's what I felt most confident with. I was like, you know what

104
00:10:29.090 --> 00:10:38.739
P4: the dancing and acting well, actually, dancing was like the weakest, acting I'm pretty good at. But then, singing I was like, this is what I really want to like drive home. So

105
00:10:39.040 --> 00:10:42.069
P4: I guess for [drama school] I was successful with that. So.

106
00:10:42.230 --> 00:10:42.730
JD: Yeah.

[107
00:10:44.130 --> 00:10:47.579
JD: Can you hear that somebody's come and started…

108
00:10:47.580 --> 00:10:48.630
P4: No, I can't hear anything

109
00:10:48.630 --> 00:10:51.050
JD: Oh, you can't hear background background noise. So that's good.

110
00:10:51.620 --> 00:11:04.809
JD: So we'll plough on, and it's not my gardener.] So I was going to also ask, would you say that there are benefits to working on other musical skills alongside your singing? So like an instrument…

111
00:11:05.520 --> 00:11:26.069
P4: Oh, yeah, for sure. I think I definitely, I think everyone should learn at least either piano or guitar. I think those two instruments are so important. I mean piano, especially because well, I mean, I'm biased, because I play piano. But I mean, piano is so important for like learning, basic music theory, and like,

112
00:11:26.580 --> 00:11:32.929
P4: like, you know, like chords and keys and modulations and everything like that, I think.

113
00:11:33.900 --> 00:11:40.360
P4: And I mean, I don't play guitar, but I'm sure guitar also helps a lot with it as well. So I think that having extra music

114
00:11:40.590 --> 00:11:50.249
P4: knowledge is very helpful. I do music A level as well, so I'm, I, I just love music, which probably sounds obvious. But I mean,

115
00:11:50.630 --> 00:11:56.960
P4: yeah, Music A level is like the best decision I've ever done. It's just incredible. And so much fun, so.

116
00:11:57.500 --> 00:12:09.189
JD: Yeah, yeah, and so you think taking those skills, I mean, are there other skills along with an instrument? And so, it's theory, what about sight reading, and things like that?

117
00:12:11.990 --> 00:12:26.470
P4: Um, yeah? I mean, I think sight reading is important, but I've never really actively practised it. I felt like it's just come with my learning trajectory if that makes sense. I've been doing piano since I was around like 7 or 8. So I think it's just

118
00:12:26.590 --> 00:12:32.859
P4: with time and practice, my sightreading ability has increased. I mean, I don't think I'm that good at it, but I mean

119
00:12:34.150 --> 00:12:35.430
P4: I don't,

120
00:12:36.170 --> 00:12:40.599
P4: I don't know, maybe, I've never really tried it that much, but I don't think I'm bad at it.

121
00:12:40.790 --> 00:12:41.660
JD: So,

122
00:12:41.870 --> 00:12:48.440
JD: and in terms of putting across a song then, you know, if you're singing solo, can you elaborate on

123
00:12:48.560 --> 00:12:54.230
JD: how that feels and what, you know, how it feels to be in front of an audience?

124
00:12:54.900 --> 00:12:59.883
P4: It's quite nervous. I still get I mean, I used to have such

125
00:13:00.450 --> 00:13:03.194
P4: anxiety around like public,

126
00:13:04.120 --> 00:13:07.656
P4: what is it called, public, public speaking,

127
00:13:08.520 --> 00:13:19.639
P4: and I find that I'm actually more nervous about speaking in front of people than singing, which is quite funny. I still get really nervous, though. I mean, there are some performances that I do where

128
00:13:21.320 --> 00:13:24.699
P4: I just get, really, you know, like,

129
00:13:24.850 --> 00:13:36.530
P4: you know, everyone knows the feeling like it's that, I feel like it's a very universal feeling that people get, not around the same thing, but around something, you know, like your stomach starts to like flip, or like

130
00:13:36.670 --> 00:13:41.500
P4: your breath gets very like faltery. You know things like that.

131
00:13:41.912 --> 00:13:45.549
P4: But I find it's easier when I'm performing in front of people I don't know.

132
00:13:45.900 --> 00:13:51.260
P4: But I think that's quite common with people where, because if you know them, then it's

133
00:13:51.360 --> 00:13:57.450
P4: that stress of them judging you, or what you, thinking about what they're thinking about you. And it's just

134
00:13:57.580 --> 00:13:58.490
P4: so.

135
00:13:58.880 --> 00:14:03.629
JD: Hmm, yeah. And what about, you know, the feeling that

136
00:14:04.420 --> 00:14:11.330
JD: you have something to give to your audience, you know, is that part of belonging as well? Or is that…

137
00:14:12.330 --> 00:14:14.350
P4: Yeah, I guess so. I mean, like,

138
00:14:14.540 --> 00:14:25.960
P4: conveying the message, that of the character that you're portraying. I guess that is really important. And that is what I try to focus on. I'm like, I'm not me, I'm my character. And that kind of helps get rid of the nerves a little bit.

139
00:14:28.590 --> 00:14:32.539
P4: So yeah, I guess. Yeah, it does. Yeah.

140
00:14:34.120 --> 00:14:34.760
JD: Yeah,

141
00:14:35.280 --> 00:14:37.649
P4: Sorry, I'm not sure if what I'm saying is helpful or not.

142
00:14:37.850 --> 00:14:45.219
JD: Of course, of course! yeah, I think we, yeah, I just, is there anything else that you would say about,

143
00:14:45.840 --> 00:14:54.790
JD: you know for other people how, being part of music, and singing in particular,

144
00:14:54.900 --> 00:14:58.709
JD: makes you feel that you are part of something bigger?

145
00:14:59.140 --> 00:15:05.430
P4: Hmm, I mean, it's a completely different language. And I think it's similar to

146
00:15:05.950 --> 00:15:19.760
P4: being bilingual, I think. I mean, I think when two people share a second language, I feel like that creates an unspoken thing between them. I don't know, and I feel like the same goes for music. You know I can,

147
00:15:20.140 --> 00:15:28.360
P4: my music teacher at school, he's amazing, and he's been teaching me for 7 years, and we like, I can,

148
00:15:29.710 --> 00:15:30.900
P4: we can,

149

00:15:31.260 --> 00:15:36.259
P4: like it's gotten to the point where I can now teach him things that I've learned that he doesn't know yet.

150
00:15:36.360 --> 00:15:52.889
P4: And it's such a, like a mutualistic relationship, not just with him, but with the whole, with every music student at my school, it's like you can discov…, everyone has different interests, so they share the part that they like, and you share another part back.

151
00:15:53.000 --> 00:15:56.940
P4: I don't think I'm explaining this very well, but I think you get what I'm saying, like,

152
00:15:56.940 --> 00:15:57.530
JD: Yeah.

153
00:15:58.400 --> 00:16:03.979
P4: It's -such a community, because everyone brings a different aspect.

154
00:16:05.580 --> 00:16:06.260
P4: Yeah.

155
00:16:07.120 --> 00:16:09.049
JD: Yeah, community is a really good word.

156
00:16:09.050 --> 00:16:09.580
P4: Yeah.

157
00:16:09.580 --> 00:16:11.620
JD: But, yeah, something that,

158
00:16:12.080 --> 00:16:16.009
JD: so community, how important is community, do you think?

159
00:16:16.420 --> 00:16:16.879
P4: Oh, I think,

160
00:16:16.880 --> 00:16:17.500
JD: Generally.

161
00:16:17.650 --> 00:16:20.299
P4: I think it's very important. I think,

162

00:16:22.730 --> 00:16:31.290
P4: I think it's important that everyone is part of a community. Well, no matter what part, like what it has to do with, I think,

163
00:16:31.810 --> 00:16:33.650
P4: because when you have,

164
00:16:34.080 --> 00:16:43.650
P4: you're, like when you're when you're working at all, you have your work life, you have your personal life, but then you need something on the side. Maybe it's a hobby. Maybe it's an interest. Maybe it's

165
00:16:44.800 --> 00:16:53.699
P4: maybe it's a religion, I don't know, but like that sense of community that you derive from whatever that is, is so important because it,

166
00:16:53.850 --> 00:16:58.620
P4: it helps you meet new people, it helps you share,

167
00:16:58.720 --> 00:17:04.349
P4: have a shared interest with those people that doesn't have to do with your work or have to do with your personal or family life.

168
00:17:04.992 --> 00:17:08.140
P4: And I think it's something that a lot of people lack nowadays.

169
00:17:08.742 --> 00:17:14.239
P4: But for me having music be that community is just so valuable for me.

170
00:17:15.040 --> 00:17:15.670
JD: Yeah,

171
00:17:16.200 --> 00:17:30.429
JD: Yeah. And I suppose, does that mean it transcends some boundaries that people set up for themselves in terms of community, you know, and also wanting to be the best you can be. How, how does that

172
00:17:30.430 --> 00:17:30.910
P4: Hmm.
173
00:17:31.370 --> 00:17:40.819
JD: impact the people who might struggle with say, singing skills, for instance. Do you think that matters when you're in a different kind of context?

174

00:17:43.830 --> 00:17:46.730
P4: Sorry, I think I'm a bit confused with that question.

175
00:17:46.730 --> 00:17:51.029
JD: I probably wasn't very clear there, I think what I'm trying to say is,

176
00:17:51.180 --> 00:18:02.099
JD: you know, if you're making music in an informal environment, say, you know where you're part of a different kind of community, so not necessarily part of your musical theatre community

177
00:18:02.100 --> 00:18:02.470
JD: Erm,

178
00:18:02.933 --> 00:18:13.139
JD: how is it possible to feel that sense of community just making music with other people, whatever level they're at?

179
00:18:15.170 --> 00:18:20.649
P4: I mean, I think everyone can like work off of each other and bring their own,

180
00:18:21.190 --> 00:18:28.310
P4: their own individualism to it, to create that collectiveness. I think,

181
00:18:29.270 --> 00:18:37.399
P4: no matter the skill level, everyone has something to bring to the table. And I think that's really important, I think that collaboration is very important.

182
00:18:37.810 --> 00:18:46.660
JD: Yeah, that's great. Thank you. Yeah, that's really good. I was also, so I'm just, you know, trying to tease out some more

183
00:18:47.020 --> 00:18:56.580
JD: on that subject, because I think, you know, it sounds like you do want to go on and take it as far as you can. So,

184
00:18:57.220 --> 00:19:03.580
JD: you know for some people then that that wouldn't be something that they would, they'd be aspiring to necessarily.

185
00:19:04.620 --> 00:19:09.519
JD: But when do you think that really, that change happened for you,

186

00:19:10.090 --> 00:19:13.579
JD: that you thought yes, I really can do this?

187
00:19:13.580 --> 00:19:17.870
P4: I would say, the beginning of this annual year, like January.

188
00:19:18.090 --> 00:19:19.330
P4: Around that time.

189
00:19:19.700 --> 00:19:20.390
JD: Yeah.

190
00:19:21.380 --> 00:19:24.850
JD: So that's quite a, yeah, not long, basically.

191
00:19:24.850 --> 00:19:28.720
P4: Yeah, it's quite recent. But I think that

192
00:19:29.820 --> 00:19:33.120
P4: it's been there for a while, and I just didn't realize it.

193
00:19:33.920 --> 00:19:34.620
P4: So.

194
00:19:35.080 --> 00:19:39.790
JD: Yeah, and it's important to you to be surrounded by music at home as well?

195
00:19:44.220 --> 00:19:54.250
P4: I never thought about that. I'm not sure that it matters for me when it comes to family, I mean, I guess I've never thought about it, because it just, it's a given that it is, that it is always there.

196
00:19:54.770 --> 00:19:59.959
P4: I mean, you interviewed my sister, so she's also like very involved with music.

197
00:20:01.030 --> 00:20:05.500
P4: So, and my dad also is a very musical person. So really, it's just

198
00:20:05.780 --> 00:20:11.410
P4: for us, it goes without saying I don't really, I guess if they weren't musical it would be very hard

199

00:20:11.940 --> 00:20:12.940
P4: to,

200
00:20:13.070 --> 00:20:18.659
P4: I mean, I'd probably be very different. I mean, I don't think that I would have the same interest as I would if they

201
00:20:18.880 --> 00:20:22.525
P4: didn't, if they didn't have that…interest.

202
00:20:23.340 --> 00:20:27.369
JD: And do you seek out going to concerts and things yourself? Is this something that you do?

203
00:20:27.370 --> 00:20:31.430
P4: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I go to my mum's concerts a lot,

204
00:20:31.900 --> 00:20:35.939
P4: and my sister's choir performances as well at university.

205
00:20:36.369 --> 00:20:42.109
P4: And I hope that they, well, they come to mine as well. So like it's, we all go to each other's. So it's fun.

206
00:20:42.520 --> 00:20:50.420
JD: Yeah, okay, yeah, that's really good. So, is there anything

207
00:20:50.650 --> 00:21:01.349
JD: that we have talked about which you think we could expand on? Is there anything that, and particularly in regard to, you know, singing skills and belonging? Is there anything we haven't …

208
00:21:02.120 --> 00:21:02.780
P4: Hmm.

209
00:21:02.780 --> 00:21:03.540
JD: covered?

210
00:21:05.330 --> 00:21:06.522
P4: I don't think so.

211
00:21:07.500 --> 00:21:08.529
P4: I don't think so.

212
00:21:10.530 --> 00:21:11.380
JD: Yeah.

213
00:21:11.700 --> 00:21:13.070
JD: So maybe,

214
00:21:14.180 --> 00:21:26.450
JD: I think I will just then say that the belonging side of it for you, I was very interested in you saying that it was a personal thing, and that you could feel that you belong

215
00:21:27.420 --> 00:21:28.640
JD: to yourself.

216
00:21:29.020 --> 00:21:29.500
P4: Yeah.

217
00:21:30.610 --> 00:21:32.710
JD: And that that's important.

218
00:21:32.950 --> 00:21:40.830
P4: I think the sense of belonging is a very personal discovery. I think that it,

219
00:21:41.840 --> 00:21:49.560
P4: for me, I think it comes from a community, but the community kind of acts as a foundation.

220
00:21:49.800 --> 00:21:56.000
P4: But the sense of belonging is, it's, it has to happen for yourself, you know, it's

221
00:21:56.510 --> 00:22:03.140
P4: that other people can't bring it for you. It has to be a personal discovery and a personal growth.

222
00:22:03.970 --> 00:22:04.570
JD: Hmm.

223
00:22:04.900 --> 00:22:08.349
P4: And I think, feeling that sense of belonging

224
00:22:08.510 --> 00:22:11.619
P4: with yourself, I don't know how to explain it, but,

225
00:22:12.200 --> 00:22:12.740
JD: It’s good.

226
00:22:12.740 --> 00:22:16.200
P4: I think, like,

227
00:22:20.610 --> 00:22:23.750
P4: I don't know. But as in it's,

228
00:22:25.080 --> 00:22:28.780
P4: it's finding the connection between like,

229
00:22:29.540 --> 00:22:37.349
P4: your emotions and your body. And I think that's the sense of belonging that I find I have now.

230
00:22:37.880 --> 00:22:45.459
P4: And that's because of the foundation built by the community. But the community can't bring it all, if that makes sense.

231
00:22:45.820 --> 00:22:54.530
JD: Yeah, and I think, there is just one question about, you know, going for auditions. For instance, you’re

232
00:22:54.530 --> 00:23:00.479
JD: auditioning for an institution which is making decisions about

233
00:23:00.910 --> 00:23:05.979
JD: about you. How does that feel, to be putting yourself out there?

234
00:23:06.390 --> 00:23:07.476
P4: Yeah, it's,

235
00:23:09.710 --> 00:23:24.299
P4: it's it's difficult. I mean, I can't say that I've done it too many times. I mean, I know there's people who have had not had as much luck as me, and have gone to hundreds more auditions. So I think that I'm very lucky in that retrospect, but also like,

236
00:23:25.550 --> 00:23:34.740
P4: I also believe that, if you really want to go there, it will show, like I've done

237

00:23:35.110 --> 00:23:40.470
P4: the past audition season. I've done around 5 or 6 auditions and around half of them,

238
00:23:40.890 --> 00:23:49.980
P4: I didn't really want to go to that place. I just wanted it for the experience, and because of that it showed, and I didn't get a recall, or

239
00:23:50.280 --> 00:23:58.900
P4: they didn't want me, but then for the other, the other ones where I did really want to go, and I really showed it, and they could see that.

240
00:23:59.240 --> 00:24:00.350
P4: And,

241
00:24:01.300 --> 00:24:17.409
P4: but also it is quite tough, because then, if you don't get accepted, you can have all sorts of negative reactions, thinking, what if like, why didn't they like me? Am I not good enough? But then you just have to remember that they audition hundreds of people a day, and that

242
00:24:18.230 --> 00:24:33.329
P4: they, like, they might just not want you because they've already cast as someone who looks just like you. And they just happen to be before you, and it's nothing against you. It's just that, that you're not what they're looking for, because they have an exact,

243
00:24:33.690 --> 00:24:43.870
P4: like exact list of who they want. And it's basically whoever happens to see them first. So I think,

244
00:24:44.640 --> 00:24:49.090
P4: like understanding that has really helped me in the audition process.

245
00:24:49.090 --> 00:24:49.420
JD: Yeah.

246
00:24:49.420 --> 00:24:53.540
P4: Cause it really doesn't pull me back and hold me down, I'd say.

247
00:24:53.540 --> 00:25:03.799
JD: That's great, and has, who has really helped you to have that self-belief, I mean, are there other people who've really contributed, your teachers, your family?

248
00:25:07.640 --> 00:25:14.310
P4: I think, I'm not sure if my family understands it fully. I think that,

249
00:25:15.230 --> 00:25:18.249
P4: you know when your mum is like, your mum always like

250
00:25:18.390 --> 00:25:35.040
P4: praises you and stuff, and like they have to say it because they're your mum, so they don't really get it. And it's kind of hard to have an honest conversation about it because of that. But I think my drama teacher, who, well, she's my music teacher, but she's also a drama teacher, so she's been helping me with the acting side of stuff,

251
00:25:35.369 --> 00:25:48.559
P4: she's really helped with it because her daughter is going through the exact same process. I think her daughter's going to this dance college, which is incredible. So she was helping me as well because she knew all about it.

252
00:25:50.120 --> 00:25:53.529
P4: So I would say that she's helped the most, my music teacher.

253
00:25:53.980 --> 00:25:57.659
JD: Yeah, and that, and that's different to your singing teacher, your

254
00:25:57.660 --> 00:25:59.170
P4: Yes, there’s a lot of teachers.

255
00:25:59.170 --> 00:26:10.020
JD: Okay, well, yeah, it sounds great. It really does. Yeah. And I'm only pressing on this because I think you've, this is really really interesting.

256
00:26:10.510 --> 00:26:24.590
JD: And when you're singing, does the, is it partly the emotion and the feeling of, is there a feeling of power sometimes when you're singing, in your own, your own strength?

257
00:26:24.990 --> 00:26:26.810
P4: Sometimes. I think it depends.

258
00:26:27.000 --> 00:26:54.950
P4: Yeah, I think so, actually, I do, I think. But I think it's very hard for me to find that because a lot of the time I'm focusing on the lyrics or on the vibrato, because sometimes I have a really good one, and sometimes I have a really bad one. So like, I still haven't found it quite yet. So sometimes I'm focusing on that. Sometimes I'm focusing on like breath control. So when I'm not focusing on that when I can just look past it and focus on the emotion, that's when, like, there's a very visceral

259
00:26:56.270 --> 00:27:01.780
P4: reaction. And it's very obvious from the people watching, and that's when like,

260
00:27:02.010 --> 00:27:08.909
P4: and you, there, you can tell. And that's when you know that, like you're performing now. So

261
00:27:10.010 --> 00:27:28.310
P4: that's just something for me to work on, so I can get it there a lot and all the time. But I've definitely felt it a couple of times, and it definitely does bring that sense of like inner power and assurance. And that's, it's really powerful. And it's really amazing to find

262
00:27:28.450 --> 00:27:29.480
P4: I think.

263
00:27:29.790 --> 00:27:30.580
JD: Yeah.

264
00:27:30.700 --> 00:27:42.670
JD: And you know, the audition process being ostensibly judged. Is that okay with you? Do you think you have to be a certain kind of person to cope with that?

265
00:27:43.600 --> 00:27:51.780
P4: Yes, I think you do, but I didn't think I was that person. So I mean, I think,

266
00:27:52.850 --> 00:27:55.949
P4: whether you think you can or not you are.

267
00:27:56.450 --> 00:28:03.450
P4: You just have to go in and give it all you got like, what I said earlier, like you just, you can't be yourself, you have to be your character.

268
00:28:03.600 --> 00:28:22.099
P4: Between, when you're not performing, of course, be yourself, you know, show who you are. They like, they like meeting people who show a bit of their personality, because otherwise everyone's the same. So, of course, be yourself. But I'd say that when I'm performing, I'm not myself, and that's the important distinction to make.

269
00:28:22.680 --> 00:28:23.940
JD: Yeah, yeah.

270
00:28:24.110 --> 00:28:30.120
JD: And in terms of exams and things to, reach a certain level, you think it, is it okay that

271
00:28:30.220 --> 00:28:33.309

JD: there is a structure, and that there is a

272
00:28:33.480 --> 00:28:38.970
JD: certain something to aspire to? Is it useful to have that to work towards?

273
00:28:40.145 --> 00:28:42.630
P4: What, do you mean like singing grades?

274
00:28:42.630 --> 00:28:51.170
JD: Yeah, singing grades, or well, even, you know, whatever you're doing for your A level. And is it helpful to have an exam structure?

275
00:28:53.285 --> 00:28:55.850
P4: I think so. I think it's good to have,

276
00:28:56.870 --> 00:29:03.969
P4: to know what you have to work towards, and to know what you need to do to work towards it. I think, having that structure is very important.

277
00:29:06.300 --> 00:29:07.310
P4: That doesn't,

278
00:29:07.930 --> 00:29:20.230
P4: I don't mean that to say that you have to have it, because, like I said, I'm learning now, not really with a goal. But it's fun just to do songs that I've had in my playlist that I've always wanted to learn.

279
00:29:20.490 --> 00:29:23.030
P4: And I never really had a reason for it and now I can.

280
00:29:23.150 --> 00:29:25.420
P4: So, I mean, I think, that

281
00:29:26.360 --> 00:29:29.950
P4: goal or not, you, it's good to be learning, you know.

282
00:29:30.520 --> 00:29:43.620
JD: Yeah, yeah. Ah, this is terrific. Thank you so much. And so, I can bring things to a close, and I'll be able to turn off the recording. But let me first just thank you so much for giving me your time.

283
00:29:43.620 --> 00:29:45.909
P4: No, it's no worries. I hope I was helpful.

284
00:29:46.240 --> 00:29:54.209
JD: Yeah, absolutely. And I'm going to say there's just a bit more just to say, please feel free to contact me at any time with questions

285
00:29:54.210 --> 00:29:54.560
P4: Mm-hmm.
286
00:29:54.560 --> 00:30:12.490
JD: you might have. You can offer feedback and I'm gonna send you a copy of the transcript, for you to have a look at and check over to see that you're happy. If you want to add anything to your own words, that's absolutely fine, because they'd still be your own words, basically,

287
00:30:12.817 --> 00:30:28.560
JD: And then, you know, if you could, if you do have any changes, and if I didn't hear everything correctly …. I will check anything that I couldn't quite hear with you as well, but at that point I think I can switch off the recording.

WEBVTT

1
00:00:04.380 --> 00:00:05.910
P5: There, I've clicked. Okay.

2
00:00:06.250 --> 00:00:07.510
JD: Thank you.

3
00:00:08.200 --> 00:00:10.159
JD: And I'll just make sure that.

4
00:00:14.600 --> 00:00:25.600
JD: Yeah, lovely. Okay. So I thought to begin could you just tell me a little bit about when and how you started singing.

5
00:00:26.866 --> 00:00:31.239
P5: I started singing when I joined the church choir when I was 8.

6
00:00:31.710 --> 00:00:36.469
P5: I think I'd asked, I don't remember ever wanting to be in the church choir, but

7
00:00:36.964 --> 00:00:45.710
P5: and before I went, I didn't go to church, but I went to a church school, and then the, I can't, whether there were,

8
00:00:45.960 --> 00:00:51.110
P5: I can't remember how it came about, but basically they said, would you like to join?

9
00:00:51.240 --> 00:00:58.420
P5: Give it a try? And I loved it, and I did that for 18 years, for 10 years, until I was 18

10
00:00:59.675 --> 00:01:06.400
P5: and then sort of in primary school, I was more interested, I think, I played the cello

11
00:01:06.836 --> 00:01:11.770
P5: so I was more into that sort of music. And I sang, but I wasn't that confident. And then

12
00:01:11.900 --> 00:01:14.079
P5: when I turned into sort of

13
00:01:14.450 --> 00:01:20.000
P5: preteen and teenager, I got to the stage where I was doing solos at church,

14
00:01:20.140 --> 00:01:25.990
P5: and then, as I went through secondary school, I absolutely loved being in the choir at secondary school.

15
00:01:26.130 --> 00:01:34.312
P5: And by the time I was at the end of this of my secondary school I was the, one of the go-to people for the, you know solos. So I did them,

16
00:01:35.030 --> 00:01:44.069
P5: I did Speech Day, I sang, and I was in productions. I wasn't very good at acting, but I had a good sort of solid singing voice.

17
00:01:44.928 --> 00:01:47.320
P5: So yeah. And then,

18
00:01:47.840 --> 00:01:54.319
P5: and then things waned a bit. I finished school, and I didn't really sing

19
00:01:54.530 --> 00:02:03.610
P5: properly again until I was, after university, and then for about 7, 8 years, I sang in the [local choir]

20
00:02:03.990 --> 00:02:13.570
P5: in [home town], and then it got too much with children, so I came back to it, so I probably had about 15 years where I didn't really sing.

21
00:02:13.850 --> 00:02:21.740
P5: And then, since 2017/ 2016, I've been singing with [choral society]

22
00:02:22.070 --> 00:02:43.040
P5: and juxta…, into the mix, now, I also sing for a week in the summer with a choir that takes over cathedral, and we sing all the evensong and the Eucharist on a Sunday, and so that holiday …so I would… so the first one I did, we went to Durham Cathedral,

23
00:02:43.340 --> 00:03:04.629
P5: the second one we went to Norwich Cathedral and this one, we're going to be going to St. Alban's Cathedral. But basically, we sing from, you know, 5 hours a day or something, and I absolutely love it and then I'm also, in the last couple of years, been the main sort of singer at church. I

24
00:03:04.740 --> 00:03:16.970
P5: sing with a microphone which I've never done before. And no one else is stumping up to do it, so I end up doing it. But I quite enjoy it. So yeah, so that's me, and my and my singing.

25
00:03:17.710 --> 00:03:34.890
JD: Sounds fantastic. Thank you. And I would love to know, I'm quite intrigued when you said that you didn't sort of know that you were going to be part of a church choir when you were young, and then you loved it. Can you remember why you loved it?

26
00:03:35.510 --> 00:03:37.350
JD: You know, what made you love it?

27
00:03:37.350 --> 00:03:43.170
P5: I think that the oh, what was he?

28
00:03:44.250 --> 00:03:52.519
P5: He was a vicar, who was retired, and he'd been, he was a very sweet old man,

29
00:03:52.720 --> 00:03:55.690
P5: and he had been in Colditz.

30
00:03:55.900 --> 00:04:08.919
P5: So it was quite a big choir at the time, and there were quite a few boys, older boys in the choir, and they used, we used to have to turn up early, and their favourite thing to do was to sidetrack him into telling them about his time in Colditz.

31
00:04:09.090 --> 00:04:16.720
P5: So he used to regale us with all sorts of tales, but I think

32
00:04:16.880 --> 00:04:19.690
P5: it's the idea that it's hard work.

33
00:04:21.070 --> 00:04:40.019
P5: To begin with, it was hard work for me. I used to struggle to read out loud, my biggest dread, so I'm very careful as a teacher now, was to read out loud even in a small group. It really worried me, and I used to stutter and stumble over words as I was reading, even though in my head I could read it straight.

34
00:04:40.607 --> 00:04:48.089
P5: And what I found was through singing, so we used to have a practice on a Friday evening, and then we'd sing twice on a Sunday,

35
00:04:48.220 --> 00:04:52.789
P5: and I found through singing, the tune got me through the words.

36
00:04:53.390 --> 00:05:01.820

P5: And then I started to be able to read better. And now I mean I'm a teacher. And I read in church, and you know,

37
00:05:02.070 --> 00:05:11.290
P5: I can read sort of last minute, you know, it doesn't faze me at all. So it really has been integral to sort of building my confidence.

38
00:05:11.490 --> 00:05:16.509
P5: And it's that whole idea, I guess, of, as I got further. So that was initially, and I can remember

39
00:05:16.620 --> 00:05:24.177
P5: first learning to do psalms and them just being a complete mystery, not understanding how they moved,

40
00:05:24.880 --> 00:05:28.039
P5: And he was just very patient and encouraging.

41
00:05:28.534 --> 00:05:48.575
P5: And then and then I was doing the solos, and I can remember making mistakes, and he was very encouraging, saying, nobody's perfect, and telling me about a Persian rug, you know where they deliberately put a mistake into it, and that's sort of who we are, and it's just really encouraging. And then you get that thing where you're not being

42
00:05:50.790 --> 00:05:52.060
P5: arrogant,

43
00:05:52.490 --> 00:05:57.370
P5: but you have that inner belief that you're actually good at something,

44
00:05:57.580 --> 00:06:03.470
P5: and I think, I was always quite bright at school, but I didn't feel particularly bright.

45
00:06:03.730 --> 00:06:15.789
P5: But I think that because I could sing, you know, how many people sing in front of a thousand people, you know, Speech Day and things. And it was it was a low piece as well, which was not in my, I've got a high voice.

46
00:06:16.226 --> 00:06:19.090
P5: So you know, having the guts to do it is….

47
00:06:19.450 --> 00:06:22.890
P5: But then I, you know, it wasn't an arrogance. It was a

48
00:06:23.870 --> 00:06:28.419
P5: deeper sort of confidence. It definitely is integral to who I am.

49
00:06:28.760 --> 00:06:30.490
P5: I love it.

50
00:06:30.810 --> 00:06:40.630
JD: Yeah. Oh, that's fantastic. And you know, do you remember, were you unusual among your friends to be doing this? Or was it something that they did too?

51
00:06:40.830 --> 00:06:42.270
P5: Yeah,

52
00:06:42.270 --> 00:06:45.290
P5: I didn't know anyone in the choir. I don't know quite how I did it. I think.

53
00:06:45.290 --> 00:06:45.650
JD: Yeah.

54
00:06:45.650 --> 00:06:48.890
P5: I mean music was a was a thing a bit,

55
00:06:49.280 --> 00:06:56.250
P5: but I can remember singing in the car, and my mum not being particularly impressed. I mean she can't sing at all, and my dad couldn't sing great, either.

56
00:06:56.719 --> 00:07:04.539
P5: But then my sister joined 2 years after me, so it's something that my sister and I have always done.

57
00:07:06.114 --> 00:07:07.399
P5: So yeah.

58
00:07:07.400 --> 00:07:12.769
JD: And then you learned, well, you learned all that repertoire that you would not have learned.

59
00:07:12.950 --> 00:07:15.500
P5: Yeah, and also my parents then,

60
00:07:15.730 --> 00:07:22.020

P5: you know, they were brought up going to church, and then they didn't go to church, but we went to church schools, and then they, you know,

61
00:07:22.640 --> 00:07:29.099
P5: it got them into going to church, and you know I go to, I still go to church, it's who I am going to, you know.

62
00:07:29.390 --> 00:07:35.280
P5: So, although I'm Catholic now rather than, I was Anglican brought up, but now I'm Catholic. So yeah.

63
00:07:35.280 --> 00:07:41.490
JD: Yeah, so it sounds like that was a really supportive environment to be singing in as a young child.

64
00:07:41.490 --> 00:07:56.379
P5: Yeah, and there were quite a few, there were interesting characters in the choir. It was, I mean, latterly there were only a few boys and a few girls, but when I joined there were, you know the pew was full both sides, so it was quite vibrant.

65
00:07:56.906 --> 00:08:02.830
P5: And the boys are such mischief, and I've got a sister. So boys were a bit of a, I mean, they're a pain [laughter]

66
00:08:04.420 --> 00:08:12.240
P5: but kind of good, too, because it was like, oh, yeah, sidetrack him, let's hear about the whatever story again. [laughter]

67
00:08:12.925 --> 00:08:17.724
JD: Yeah, that's really, really interesting. And also

68
00:08:18.530 --> 00:08:29.869
JD: to be well, boys and girls in a choir, I mean, you know, that's actually, well it's not what you associate necessarily with, well, obviously, the cathedral choirs only fairly recently have done that.

69
00:08:29.870 --> 00:08:30.569
P5: Yeah, I mean, this was

70
00:08:30.570 --> 00:08:30.890
P5: just,

71
00:08:30.890 --> 00:08:33.719
P5: it's just a very small church in a very small town.

72
00:08:35.210 --> 00:08:36.290
JD: But good music-making.

73
00:08:36.299 --> 00:08:45.069
P5: Well, yeah, I mean, it grounded me. I really appreciated it. I did have a good, we had an excellent music teacher at

74
00:08:45.239 --> 00:09:01.769
P5: my, we had an infant school, middle school and secondary school, and at middle school we had a Mrs. [name], who was an amazing music, you know music teacher very encouraging, but I can, she didn't really rate my voice particularly, but she was very encouraging of my cello playing, and we had an orchestra.

75
00:09:01.989 --> 00:09:07.979
P5: And until I went to [school taught at now] I never knew anywhere that had an orchestra for that age sort of children.

76
00:09:08.339 --> 00:09:15.809
P5: But then, like I say, the singing overtook and lugging a cello around, having to tune it all up, and all that palaver,

77
00:09:16.099 --> 00:09:28.429
P5: and having to practise all the scales, I hated scales. Arpeggios I quite liked. But you know, it's like, actually, it's way less effort. But of course it wasn't because I'd had all those hours and hours and hours of practice.

78
00:09:29.910 --> 00:09:41.680
JD: Yeah, yeah. Well, that's really fantastic. And I was gonna well, I mean, you've answered a lot of questions. But what about singing lessons, then, I mean, are you? Have you had them? Do you have them

79
00:09:41.820 --> 00:09:42.630
JD: now?

80
00:09:42.630 --> 00:09:43.430
P5: I,

81
00:09:43.680 --> 00:10:02.759
P5: I didn't, I mean, I had a very supportive, so at secondary school I had an amazing music, the music teacher was amazing, and I would get one on one with her, you know. But singing lessons just weren't a thing. I mean, I, this is the seventies, eighties we're talking, you know.

82
00:10:03.260 --> 00:10:07.789

P5: But when I joined [choral society]

83
00:10:09.630 --> 00:10:12.229
P5: I did have a few singing lessons at that point.

84
00:10:12.610 --> 00:10:16.610
P5: Yeah, yeah. But I haven't really really had very many.

85
00:10:16.940 --> 00:10:22.799
JD: Okay, I mean, how did, did you enjoy them when you had them? Did they feel, you know, fun.

86
00:10:22.800 --> 00:10:30.239
P5: Yes, I think that the issue was that I didn't, they were really useful. If I had, because I used to get persistent, some

87
00:10:30.350 --> 00:10:31.710
P5: sore throats.

88
00:10:32.488 --> 00:10:36.970
P5: And then it's how to rehabilitate your voice.

89
00:10:37.100 --> 00:10:44.349
P5: And so she was really helpful. And then she gave me confidence that I hadn't damaged my voice, you know. So that was all really, really helpful.

90
00:10:46.020 --> 00:10:46.950
P5: Yeah.

91
00:10:47.510 --> 00:10:48.100
JD: And does your voice?

92
00:10:49.220 --> 00:10:50.050
JD: Oh, sorry!

93
00:10:50.530 --> 00:10:50.990
P5: Sorry.

94
00:10:50.990 --> 00:10:52.509
JD: Carry on. No, carry on.

95
00:10:52.670 --> 00:10:53.230

JD: Sorry.

96
00:10:53.230 --> 00:10:54.974
P5: I think,

97
00:10:55.750 --> 00:11:15.109
P5: yeah, I think I just didn't put the work in, you know, I should have, they were every third week or something, and then I'd do a piece of music, and I'd do some quite quickly and easily, and then others, I just would be making mistakes, and I think I really enjoy the feeling of being surround, the surround sound you get in a choir.

98
00:11:16.846 --> 00:11:22.240
P5: You know that whole, oh, I just love it, just gorgeous.

99
00:11:23.640 --> 00:11:39.880
JD: Yeah, oh, that's amazing actually. So what about the, so the singing lesson, was that more they were on offer and if you were working towards something that you, but you didn't necessarily feel that you needed to have ongoing lessons to be a singer.

100
00:11:39.880 --> 00:11:42.940
P5: Yeah, I think, yeah, I don't know. I think,

101
00:11:44.330 --> 00:11:54.070
P5: I think to be honest, it was time, you know, when I was, you know, because I work full time. And it was just another thing, and I just wanted to go to choir and just enjoy it.

102
00:11:54.200 --> 00:12:02.230
P5: And I was able to get most of the music, you know, through the just normal rehearsals, and then sometimes I would,

103
00:12:02.880 --> 00:12:08.380
P5: you know, I'd put a bit of extra practice in, but I'd listen to stuff and be able to do it. So, yeah.

104
00:12:08.660 --> 00:12:09.500
JD: Great,

105
00:12:09.850 --> 00:12:19.540
JD: fantastic. What about, so I would love to just actually ask your thoughts about the broad concept of belonging

106
00:12:19.830 --> 00:12:29.330
JD: which seems a bit of a non sequitur, but, in a way, if you could give me some of your thoughts about what belonging means to you,

107
00:12:29.530 --> 00:12:31.000
JD: that would be fantastic.

108
00:12:31.000 --> 00:12:34.189
P5: I think, I think for me, I was thinking about this,

109
00:12:34.710 --> 00:12:41.039
P5: for me, music when I, when I first went back to singing in a big choir after having children,

110
00:12:41.564 --> 00:12:45.379
P5: so I probably had a gap of at least 10 years of not doing it,

111
00:12:45.670 --> 00:12:56.959
P5: and when I got back it was like I'd time-travelled. It's like music, that whole feeling of being, of surround sound, and producing the music out of your

112
00:12:57.470 --> 00:12:59.949
P5: your own voice as well, properly.

113
00:13:01.480 --> 00:13:06.429
P5: It really felt like I was touching back to when I was

114
00:13:06.970 --> 00:13:09.940
P5: when I was first learning in the church choir

115
00:13:11.341 --> 00:13:14.400
P5: and that whole satisfaction of

116
00:13:14.580 --> 00:13:26.289
P5: really thinking, oh, my goodness! Because some of the pieces of music we do to be fair to [conductor] have been quite challenging and quite unusual, and not instinctive as to where they would go.

117
00:13:26.410 --> 00:13:27.125
P5: And um,

118
00:13:29.030 --> 00:13:44.770
P5: and you're thinking, I love that feeling of, or you've got a run of really complicated notes, and you're thinking, I'm never going to get that. And then a couple of times in, and you've nailed it, and it's sort of just very satisfying. And you ….

119
00:13:44.930 --> 00:13:54.259
P5: so it's, there is a feeling of belonging because of that sort of surround sound. But it's also, for me, it's, belonging's important, and I've made some really good friends

120
00:13:54.370 --> 00:14:06.550
P5: in the choir. But obviously the main focus is on the singing and I think for me,

121
00:14:06.750 --> 00:14:19.610
P5: it's that intrinsic satisfaction of nailing it, and also obviously in terms of, so you've got your actual belonging, and then you've got the thing of just being sensitive to those around you,

122
00:14:19.850 --> 00:14:24.259
P5: so that you're not dominating but maybe,

123
00:14:24.380 --> 00:14:31.530
P5: you know, you're just really, really so, the belonging is a very deep belonging. It's not just a set of friends.

124
00:14:31.790 --> 00:14:33.596
P5: You're actually,

125
00:14:35.010 --> 00:14:56.839
P5: I suppose you belong to one another because you're really tuning into the sound that you're making, and they're making, and I know you shouldn't, but you know you invariably take a note from somebody else. You, you know you'll listen out for a cue, for when your bit goes, of course you should be looking at the conductor, and you should be counting in your head yourself,

126
00:14:56.980 --> 00:15:05.779
P5: you know. But that's how I, that's how I do it. And so it's a very deep belonging, I guess, that we're all in it, and we want to do a good job.

127
00:15:06.720 --> 00:15:07.310
JD: Yeah.

128
00:15:07.310 --> 00:15:12.009
P5: Yeah. But also, yeah, I've been sort of struck about how music,

129
00:15:12.130 --> 00:15:14.729
P5: because I had to do a piece of writing,

130
00:15:15.454 --> 00:15:26.500

P5: I've been working with my class. We've been doing a beautiful, there's a video of a dream-giver. And he cracks these eggs onto things that children leave on their beds.

131
00:15:26.630 --> 00:15:35.590
P5: and then it turns into a dream, and they have these dreams. And then the last thing they did was, you know, what if you could leave anything on your bed, what would you leave on your bed? So of course,

132
00:15:36.030 --> 00:15:42.869
P5: I have to do it because you have to give them an example and so I left music on my bed.

133
00:15:42.990 --> 00:16:02.590
P5: And it really made me upset because I could, my dad died 5 years ago, but I was thinking, what can I see? And I was looking, feeling as if I was at secondary school, singing with the choir, looking out at my parents, and I got really emotional with, my partner teacher, she had to come around and give me a hug because I got really emotional, and there is a feeling of,

134
00:16:02.760 --> 00:16:05.519
P5: a definite feeling of time travel, and how

135
00:16:05.820 --> 00:16:15.560
P5: music sits outside of time. If you think about how it's made, you know, hundreds of years ago, and then we're bringing it back to life, and

136
00:16:15.700 --> 00:16:19.220
P5: and it will go on, I mean, especially when we're singing,

137
00:16:19.970 --> 00:16:25.369
P5: you know, the really ancient music in the cathedrals.

138
00:16:25.940 --> 00:16:39.204
P5: you know Tallis and that sort of thing, you think, flippin heck, what a man that he, you know, outlived Elizabeth I and Henry VIII, you know that whole dynamic. He was really good, he really, you know, knew his stuff.

139
00:16:39.660 --> 00:16:44.920
P5: Yeah, so there's all of that, too. And spinning forward and hope that you know people are gonna,

140
00:16:45.567 --> 00:16:52.230
P5: our choir’s, actually, that's been really lovely as well, the older I get the more valuable I find having younger people in the choir.

141

00:16:52.390 --> 00:16:56.636
P5: And I've got quite a few people that I chat to a lot who are, you know, in their,

142
00:16:57.360 --> 00:17:03.069
P5: you know, several decades younger than me. And it's really it's really nice

143
00:17:03.220 --> 00:17:06.249
P5: that you can feel that it is still carrying on.

144
00:17:08.430 --> 00:17:25.049
JD: Yeah, that sounds fantastic. And it sounds like music really is, you know, integral to your life rather than yeah, I mean. And if you had to say that you belonged as part of any other group. Is it music that really comes to the fore? Or you know, are you belonging...

145
00:17:25.050 --> 00:17:35.650
P5: There's music but then there is, well, I suppose, Church and I have a faith group that you know we meet, that's been going for decades. So I'd say I really belong to that. And obviously family, key.

146
00:17:36.890 --> 00:17:41.060
P5: Yeah. So family. It probably would be third, because the church is,

147
00:17:41.880 --> 00:17:45.420
P5: I kept that going when I couldn't do anything else.

148
00:17:45.760 --> 00:17:48.800
JD: Yeah..

149
00:17:49.180 --> 00:17:51.749
P5: So I suppose. But actually, I'm much happier. You know I do, I do really love it.

150
00:17:52.170 --> 00:17:53.680
P5: It's really important.

151
00:17:54.090 --> 00:17:54.570
JD: Yeah.

152
00:17:54.570 --> 00:17:57.620
P5: Yeah, it's as important as exercise, you know.

153
00:17:57.720 --> 00:18:00.439
P5: I don't feel right if I haven't sung for a bit.

154
00:18:01.640 --> 00:18:02.240
JD: Yeah.

155
00:18:02.660 --> 00:18:05.860
JD: Yeah. And you know, in terms of your

156
00:18:06.250 --> 00:18:13.429
JD: wider teaching, I mean presumably belonging as part of a school is also...

157
00:18:13.430 --> 00:18:13.960
P5: Of course.

158
00:18:13.960 --> 00:18:15.640
JD: vital, and then….

159
00:18:15.640 --> 00:18:19.269
P5: Actually, and this school I really do feel I belong, you know,

160
00:18:19.730 --> 00:18:22.590
P5: there are, I've taught at lots of schools and

161
00:18:23.096 --> 00:18:28.913
P5: there's only the school that my children went to, I felt I really belonged there, and this one

162
00:18:29.220 --> 00:18:29.800
JD: Yeah.

163
00:18:30.040 --> 00:18:44.189
P5: And that's, you know, quite a few schools. So yes, you're right, of course, and it's part of the thing I love about [school I teach in] is the importance they place on music and the variety of instruments and singing, and now got a choir, but I haven't got the time

164
00:18:44.190 --> 00:18:44.830
JD: I was going to ask...

165
00:18:44.830 --> 00:18:47.649
P5: to do it at work. I haven't got the time.

166
00:18:47.960 --> 00:18:50.502
P5: you know. I can't. I can't. I can't.

167
00:18:51.540 --> 00:18:53.830
P5: I can't do everything, yeah.

168
00:18:53.830 --> 00:19:01.829
JD: That's really central then to the ethos of the school. And then that's what appeals. I feel it, too. Yeah, I agree.

169
00:19:01.930 --> 00:19:10.576
JD: So yeah, that's actually amazing. And I was going to, you've really, answered a lot, but I was gonna say,

170
00:19:11.620 --> 00:19:15.160
JD: So you presumably had to audition to get into this,

171
00:19:15.860 --> 00:19:20.080
P5: the choir that you're with, the choral society. Yes, we do.

172
00:19:20.100 --> 00:19:21.020
P5: Yes, we did. Yeah.

173
00:19:21.870 --> 00:19:23.690
P5: And for the [other local choir] as well.

174
00:19:23.960 --> 00:19:24.380
JD: Yeah.

175
00:19:24.380 --> 00:19:34.769
P5: I auditioned twice for the [other local choir], because I had a bit of a gap, and then I came back. But it was just too much with the children, you know, with having the children. I couldn't, I couldn't manage it. Yeah.

176
00:19:35.760 --> 00:19:36.659

177
00:19:36.660 --> 00:19:37.030

178
00:19:37.030 --> 00:19:40.510
P5: But I mean they weren’t high-powered auditions. They were just, you know, can you,

179
00:19:40.680 --> 00:19:56.899

P5: can you sing back this rhythm, you know? Can you, checking that you could actually sing? What, how, when you had sung, where you've sung, and all of that, and then the cathedral choir thing, it's sort of by invitation, so I can remember when I wasn't singing much,

180
00:19:57.344 --> 00:20:07.569
P5: I didn't to have the time to spend a week of the summer holidays doing it because I had childcare responsibility. But my sister was like, no, you're not, you're not up to scratch.

181
00:20:08.550 --> 00:20:12.399
P5: And then and it's been really. And she used to play music she was,

182
00:20:12.810 --> 00:20:17.310
P5: she used to play the music she was singing, and I couldn't really get into it. And that's the other thing with

183
00:20:17.650 --> 00:20:21.060
P5: anything that's worth really listening to, I find.

184
00:20:21.190 --> 00:20:35.379
P5: It's initially maybe not so appealing and then you listen to it and listen to it and listen to it and listen to it and it, and it grows on you and gets into your bones. You know you have to get to that point with the music, you know, rather than

185
00:20:36.060 --> 00:20:40.969
P5: pop music, or, you know, other music that you're surrounded by. But you know.

186
00:20:42.600 --> 00:20:47.980
P5: I mean, it's just all gorgeous, and some of the stuff that we did, we've done with [choral society conductor], we've done,

187
00:20:50.410 --> 00:20:54.070
P5: oh, I couldn't tell you, but it's really obscure stuff that people haven't really heard of.

188
00:20:55.690 --> 00:20:59.590
P5: If you look back on the website, you can see we've done some really unusual pieces.

189
00:20:59.760 --> 00:21:01.779
P5: So yeah, I do love it.

190
00:21:01.780 --> 00:21:11.260
JD: And you found that fulfilling. That's amazing. I mean, I don't know whether you … well, I'd love to know what you think about children learning to sing, and then

191

00:21:11.650 --> 00:21:17.459
JD: maybe resisting learning this kind of music, being exposed to this kind of music,

192
00:21:17.770 --> 00:21:30.899
JD: especially after, say, a church choir conductor trying to drum up support and trying to, and not necessarily succeeding in a school like ours?

193
00:21:31.340 --> 00:21:38.319
P5: I know, because I was at that assembly, and I actually said that I joined a choir, and how important it was to me. Were you there?

194
00:21:38.320 --> 00:21:39.609
JD: I was there, I heard it.

195
00:21:39.720 --> 00:21:41.559
P5: Yeah, I actually said, yeah.

196
00:21:41.900 --> 00:21:43.580
P5: Yeah, I don't know.

197
00:21:44.100 --> 00:21:51.850
P5: But I mean, when I was growing up, my parents didn't, my mum doesn't really like music particularly. She's a teacher, and I think she just wanted silence when she got home.

198
00:21:52.100 --> 00:21:55.189
P5: and my dad would listen to classical music, so the,

199
00:21:55.380 --> 00:22:02.270
P5: and we'd have cricket or tennis on, you know, on the TV. So it was quite a quiet house with, and my dad liked the

200
00:22:02.560 --> 00:22:04.909
P5: classical music, we didn't really listen.

201
00:22:05.050 --> 00:22:08.659
P5: We weren't really, you know, we weren't allowed to watch Top of the Pops. [laughter]

202
00:22:10.810 --> 00:22:15.700
P5: And the radio wasn't really tuned to anything. Well, I didn't go in the car

203
00:22:15.950 --> 00:22:20.620
P5: on a daily, you know, I'd walk to school. So yeah, I don't know

204
00:22:20.910 --> 00:22:25.960
P5: but it's, but there is hope, you know, they are,

205
00:22:27.210 --> 00:22:35.199
P5: you know I can see it from my, the choral society, and I can see it from my cathedral choir, we've got quite a lot of younger ones coming up.

206
00:22:35.360 --> 00:22:41.136
P5: We're not a cathedral choir, but you know what I mean, we take over cathedrals.

207
00:22:41.900 --> 00:22:44.550
P5: Yeah, it's a tough one, but I think.

208
00:22:44.550 --> 00:22:45.000
JD: You can…

209
00:22:45.000 --> 00:22:48.049
P5: They just have, you have to get the message that you know,

210
00:22:49.180 --> 00:22:52.619
P5: the more…, your ear will tune into it.

211
00:22:54.360 --> 00:23:00.110
JD: I mean, has it had an effect playing classical music at the start of school, do you think? Do you think any have tuned in...

212
00:23:00.230 --> 00:23:06.590
P5: I don't actually play it then, because it's a bit disruptive, I do a little assembly, and then

213
00:23:06.700 --> 00:23:08.829
P5: a few minutes here, a few minutes there

214
00:23:09.050 --> 00:23:11.750
P5: and then I do, when I'm getting close to a concert,

215
00:23:11.920 --> 00:23:15.080
P5: I do play the music that I'm doing

216
00:23:15.931 --> 00:23:20.710
P5: and I sing a little bit, you know, along to it. So they they're exposed to quite a bit.

217

00:23:21.523 --> 00:23:25.159
P5: But I think they're more motivated by doing musical instruments.

218
00:23:25.680 --> 00:23:26.250
JD: Yep.

219
00:23:26.620 --> 00:23:39.210
JD: I was coming on to that. So that's actually, I was going to ask, would you say there are benefits to working on other musical skills alongside your singing, and that would go for what you think for the children as well?

220
00:23:39.640 --> 00:23:45.469
P5: Yeah, I mean, I think we don't have space in our house for a keyboard. And I do, I did learn the piano

221
00:23:45.810 --> 00:23:50.820
P5: for quite a while, actually, but I never got, I think I'm, I wasn't very coordinated. I couldn't,

222
00:23:50.990 --> 00:23:57.570
P5: couldn't cope with two hands. I don't think I was careful, my parents weren't good at,

223
00:23:57.900 --> 00:24:05.613
P5: not, you know, we need 10 minutes. It's just 10 minutes, isn't it? Or 5 minutes here and there, so I don't think I practised enough.

224
00:24:06.840 --> 00:24:16.949
P5: And I know my dad really wanted to know how to play the piano, so we were encouraged, and that was helpful because it, but actually, I mean, they learn the recorder in Year 3. And that's really good.

225
00:24:17.470 --> 00:24:23.680
P5: I think that's a really good gateway instrument, and I can still pretty much play, whatever they're playing, I can play it.

226
00:24:23.920 --> 00:24:27.090
P5: So. Yeah, I think it is helpful,

227
00:24:27.390 --> 00:24:32.690
P5: because it is helpful, anything that tunes you into what the notes mean

228
00:24:33.060 --> 00:24:46.529
P5: and pitching the notes, and you know, you can feel where rough, I mean, I'm not, I've not got perfect pitch, but I know roughly where notes are in terms of how they feel in my voice. And anything that helps you,

229
00:24:47.040 --> 00:24:55.009
P5: you know, be able to say what a second and third and fourth is, you know, all of that, is helpful definitely. And rhythm of course.

230
00:24:55.190 --> 00:24:56.510
P5: Rhythm is key.

231
00:24:57.750 --> 00:25:06.589
JD: And sight singing, then, you know, presumably, that came pretty naturally to you, having started really young and being.

232
00:25:06.590 --> 00:25:07.650
P5: Yeah, with sight singing I was a bit,

233
00:25:07.820 --> 00:25:13.619
P5: yeah, I can pretty much, you know, if I'm if if, I mean sometimes I've been on the mic

234
00:25:14.280 --> 00:25:20.359
P5: and I'm thinking, oh, god, do I know this piece or not? And I'll be looking at it and figuring it out, and yes, I can do it.

235
00:25:20.460 --> 00:25:24.350
P5: But mostly when I I had to do Our Lady of Knock

236
00:25:24.800 --> 00:25:31.539
P5: at short notice that I've never heard of before, had about a week to learn it, and I used Youtube. I find that very helpful

237
00:25:32.162 --> 00:25:34.979
P5: and I learned it from that.

238
00:25:35.300 --> 00:25:39.749
P5: And then I could get the, I could get it from the you know from the music.

239
00:25:39.860 --> 00:25:47.080
P5: but I can sort of plot it out, and then I'll catch the thing and think, oh, yeah, I know that one, it's …..

240
00:25:47.620 --> 00:25:49.160
P5: So yeah.

241

00:25:49.160 --> 00:25:59.979
JD: A lot of young singers, and not so young, are really put off by being asked to sight sing, and that is often a requirement to get into a choir. So

242
00:26:00.150 --> 00:26:02.310
JD: I don't know…

243
00:26:02.310 --> 00:26:05.699
P5: Yeah, I don't think it is with our choir. I can't remember what I had to do.

244
00:26:05.900 --> 00:26:11.830
P5: You had to sing, and the [other local] choir, I didn't have to. Oh, I think we might have had to, but it was very simple.

245
00:26:12.070 --> 00:26:15.679
P5: Very simple. I can't remember, it's so long ago.

246
00:26:16.810 --> 00:26:17.320
JD: Yeah.

247
00:26:17.320 --> 00:26:21.610
P5: Hmm! Not sure, we're actually changing to a new person in September

248
00:26:22.290 --> 00:26:27.850
P5: but I don't know if he's gonna want us to re-audition, but I mean my voice is in much better shape than it was, so.

249
00:26:28.170 --> 00:26:30.439
P5: Hopefully, I'll be all right!

250
00:26:30.440 --> 00:26:38.479
JD: Yeah, absolutely. And you, well, I was going to ask about how you feel about singing solo. And you obviously do some singing solo.

P5: Yes.

251
00:26:38.480 --> 00:26:43.539
JD: How does it make you feel, you know? Does that..

252
00:26:44.950 --> 00:26:52.129
P5: I think I do love just the feeling of it coming out, and I know that I'm best on my sort of higher notes.

253

00:26:52.440 --> 00:26:55.729
P5: And it's lovely when you can just sort of float them.

254
00:26:56.740 --> 00:26:57.310
JD: Yeah.

255
00:26:58.010 --> 00:27:10.179
P5: And sort of sing them gently, which, with the microphone, is lovely, to be able to do that. And then people are just grateful that I'm doing it, you know. I think I did go through a phase where I felt a bit,

256
00:27:11.850 --> 00:27:15.460
P5: I was put off doing it because I thought people would think I was showing off

257
00:27:15.690 --> 00:27:17.580
P5: when I was much younger, you know, when I was,

258
00:27:17.720 --> 00:27:25.949
P5: don't know when, really. But I just got myself in a bit of a muddle with it, and then I just thought, no, it's a gift, so share it, you know.

259
00:27:26.110 --> 00:27:26.760
P5: And now,

260
00:27:26.760 --> 00:27:27.290
JD: Yeah.

261
00:27:27.650 --> 00:27:31.200
P5: you know, if someone says it, I say, oh, you know, bless you, we're all doing what we can,

262
00:27:31.890 --> 00:27:34.250
P5: we all give what we can, or whatever.

263
00:27:36.000 --> 00:27:36.570
JD: Yeah.

264
00:27:36.830 --> 00:27:38.900
P5: So yeah, no, it's it's fine.

265
00:27:39.050 --> 00:27:41.130
P5: I mean, I do, I do practise.

266
00:27:42.900 --> 00:27:44.610
P5: Yeah, yeah.

267
00:27:44.980 --> 00:27:56.950
JD: And has that contributed to your feeling of belonging as a musician? To think that you've reached a certain level? Or does that not really matter in terms of being a capable musician.

268
00:28:00.440 --> 00:28:03.959
P5: Erm, well, I know my sister did, they were going to do Spem

269
00:28:05.550 --> 00:28:11.820
P5: for the 40th anniversary. I think I'm not confident enough to sing in parts.

270
00:28:13.110 --> 00:28:16.149
P5: I'd probably, I'd be alright in a small group.

271
00:28:16.920 --> 00:28:25.869
P5: I'm not, I don't feel confident enough to sing. I'd probably find it easier to do a solo than to sing in parts by myself,

272
00:28:26.320 --> 00:28:27.300
P5: maybe.

273
00:28:30.250 --> 00:28:35.069
P5: But no, I mean, I think I yeah, I mean, I like to challenge myself. But I'm not fussed about

274
00:28:35.310 --> 00:28:36.830
P5: how good I am, you know.

275
00:28:37.020 --> 00:28:37.610
JD: Yeah.

276
00:28:37.810 --> 00:28:45.450
P5: I'm not, that doesn't really fuss me, phase me. But when [ ] was saying, well, you can come along and do it, and I'm like, no, I don't think so.

277
00:28:46.470 --> 00:28:48.689
P5: But maybe one day I will.

278
00:28:48.690 --> 00:29:05.629

JD: Yeah, yeah. Could I just quickly go back to, obviously, you love words, as you said. I mean, you work with words, and you teach love of literature and things like that. So how, you said you weren't particularly good at acting.

279
00:29:06.000 --> 00:29:07.500
JD: But yeah, do you feel that…

280
00:29:07.500 --> 00:29:08.931
P5: Oh, I think I'm quite good now.

281
00:29:09.170 --> 00:29:10.070
JD: Are you? You think you are... [laughter]

282
00:29:10.070 --> 00:29:11.170
P5: Teaching, oh, yeah,

283
00:29:11.170 --> 00:29:11.490
JD: Yeah.

284
00:29:11.490 --> 00:29:19.270
P5: I've got all sorts of voices, and I can put expression in. And yeah, I've got all sorts of accents. I've got a Welsh accent, and you know all different accents.

285
00:29:19.270 --> 00:29:19.610
P5: The children

286
00:29:19.610 --> 00:29:25.389
P5: love it, and I'm quite dramatic now, but as a, I think I was too self-conscious as a teenager.

287
00:29:25.740 --> 00:29:40.069
JD: Yeah. But what about the link, then, between that and singing? I mean in terms of expressing an emotion and putting the text across. And do you feel that when you're singing with the choir that you can do that?

288
00:29:40.330 --> 00:29:42.929
P5: Oh, yes, yes, that's true.

289
00:29:43.130 --> 00:29:47.080
P5: I think for me, though I'm the wrong way up really, the first thing is the tune,

290
00:29:48.490 --> 00:29:54.320
P5: the tune, you know, as in the notes and the rhythm, and then it's the words.

291
00:29:54.490 --> 00:29:59.649
P5: And then, as you're getting, as you're getting it, it's putting the expression in.

292
00:30:00.940 --> 00:30:09.589
P5: So I think that's the way round I am. I mean, if I'm listening to something on the radio, I will rarely listen to the lyrics. I'll be caught by a tune

293
00:30:09.950 --> 00:30:11.839
P5: rather than the lyrics.

294
00:30:12.180 --> 00:30:13.395
P5: However,

295
00:30:16.050 --> 00:30:20.189
P5: you know, when I've been seeing some things in mass, you know, some of the words are really powerful

296
00:30:20.540 --> 00:30:21.159
P5: and

297
00:30:22.050 --> 00:30:28.600
P5: you know, that's quite emotive, as I'm singing that I do put the, yeah, because it's obviously it's a vehicle for,

298
00:30:29.090 --> 00:30:30.310
P5: for words.

299
00:30:30.990 --> 00:30:32.720
P5: Yeah, yeah.

300
00:30:32.720 --> 00:30:56.620
JD: I mean, I mean often, the way in, you know, I find, for children who struggle with the actual singing is to concentrate on putting across words, because often they're just not capable of holding a tune, and their voice is developing. But it does seem to bring it on a bit. I don't know if you hear any of your

301
00:30:57.190 --> 00:31:05.329
JD: students suddenly becoming little singers, or do you, I don't know if you hear them individually at all.

302
00:31:05.510 --> 00:31:14.400

P5: No, I don't, really, because they learn the recorder. So I don't really get much exposure to that. One thing that was quite cute, if they got something right, they were, they were singing

303
00:31:14.770 --> 00:31:17.910
P5: Hallelujah, like as in the Hallelujah chorus.

304
00:31:18.320 --> 00:31:33.750
P5: And then, we, I've obviously sung that loads of times, and I said, I said to them, you didn't know that that comes from Handel's Messiah, and then I sang it back to them and carried it on, and on, and on and on.

305
00:31:34.040 --> 00:31:36.010
P5: and they were like 'Oh!'.

306
00:31:38.040 --> 00:31:39.000
JD: That's fantastic.

307
00:31:39.380 --> 00:31:39.910
JD: Yeah.

308
00:31:40.110 --> 00:31:55.540
JD: So being exposed to that kind of thing is really good, I don't know if you, because some of them maybe don't want to sing folk songs because it's too old fashioned. And they really want to sing Taylor Swift, and there's nothing wrong with Taylor Swift, it's great fun,

309
00:31:55.670 --> 00:31:59.689
JD: but they don't necessarily want to do the other things. So….

310
00:32:00.050 --> 00:32:03.181
P5: Yeah, and I could imagine that maybe they don't

311
00:32:06.110 --> 00:32:11.320
P5: like, for me, I've not got a wishy-washy voice at all, you know. It's quite. It's a solid sort of,

312
00:32:13.890 --> 00:32:22.579
P5: quite a pure sort of sound that I make, and I, but I can imagine that for some they do the whole woolly, you know, twiddly stuff

313
00:32:23.110 --> 00:32:26.769
P5: like you see on X factor, or you used to see on X Factor.

314

00:32:27.050 --> 00:32:29.769
JD: And they think that's the important thing.

315
00:32:30.180 --> 00:32:30.700
JD: Yeah.

316
00:32:30.700 --> 00:32:34.500
P5: You know, rather than actually just nailing the tune.

317
00:32:34.910 --> 00:32:36.560
JD: Yeah, yeah.

318
00:32:36.750 --> 00:32:50.330
JD: Well, yeah, absolutely. And I know that they don't work with actually reading music, reading sheet music. They just look at the lyrics when they're singing in choir, and you know,

319
00:32:50.770 --> 00:33:00.719
JD: perhaps it is good to have that training that you had. I don't know how you feel. You know that training that you had, and you were reading music and psalms.

320
00:33:00.910 --> 00:33:04.439
JD: So I don't know, it was obviously important, do you think,

321
00:33:05.070 --> 00:33:06.869
JD: from your point of view?

322
00:33:07.110 --> 00:33:17.020
P5: To be honest, I think it was just the repetition, and also the priest, bless him!

323
00:33:17.590 --> 00:33:19.659
P5: And he,

324
00:33:21.840 --> 00:33:28.020
P5: he was just very encouraging, he used to say, don't worry about it, one day it'll just click.

325
00:33:28.710 --> 00:33:35.550
P5: But you're obviously being exposed to it the whole time, and actually I must admit I haven't done psalms that much.

326
00:33:35.920 --> 00:33:37.510
P5: And then in mass

327

00:33:38.440 --> 00:33:46.569
P5: in the Easter vigil there were quite a few psalms, and I did one, I did two over Easter as solos.

328
00:33:47.220 --> 00:33:49.869
P5: And that was okay.

329
00:33:50.270 --> 00:33:51.070
JD: Yeah.

330
00:33:51.070 --> 00:33:51.899
P5: Learning to move on the bar line.

331
00:33:51.900 --> 00:33:56.449
JD: And could you always sing in tune, even when you were…, and it was a clear

332
00:33:57.300 --> 00:33:59.379
JD: treble sound?

333
00:34:00.060 --> 00:34:01.290
P5: I don't know.

334
00:34:04.370 --> 00:34:06.180
P5: I don't know. I mean, I think,

335
00:34:06.600 --> 00:34:09.300
P5: yeah, I have got an ear, you know.

336
00:34:09.300 --> 00:34:09.840
JD: Yeah.

337
00:34:09.840 --> 00:34:13.170
P5: I can do different accents. I can do a Welsh accent, and I can.

338
00:34:13.409 --> 00:34:20.800
P5: You know I could do all sorts of accents. Children will tell you when I read a story, I get very, you know I love making you know a dramatic pause, or

339
00:34:21.179 --> 00:34:25.009
P5: big bang. You know I love all of that. I don't know.

340
00:34:26.219 --> 00:34:30.590

P5: I don't think I've ever been accused of being out of tune. I might be on the wrong note.

341
00:34:31.300 --> 00:34:32.060
P5: But,

342
00:34:32.179 --> 00:34:33.780
P5: I don't know that.

343
00:34:33.989 --> 00:34:40.659
P5: I mean, obviously, sometimes, if you're flapping about, you know, in a tricky bit, you might be off the note a little bit.

344
00:34:41.340 --> 00:34:46.299
P5: But I don't know that that's a huge problem, probably rhythm, I'm not as good at.

345
00:34:46.520 --> 00:34:50.000
P5: You know, I'll maybe hang on too long, or you know.

346
00:34:50.000 --> 00:34:51.250
JD: Hmm, yeah.

347
00:34:51.250 --> 00:34:51.610
P5: Yeah.

348
00:34:51.610 --> 00:34:58.899
JD: But yeah, doing it to the extent that you're singing every week, you're doing, you know,

349
00:34:59.080 --> 00:34:59.580
JD: you’re constantly...

350
00:34:59.580 --> 00:35:07.040
P5: Yeah, I think, what do I do? I do once a week, and then the thing in church is every fortnight, and then the, and then I do it for a week in the summer.

351
00:35:07.610 --> 00:35:08.400
JD: Yeah.

352
00:35:08.710 --> 00:35:09.680
P5: Yeah.

353
00:35:09.940 --> 00:35:18.730

JD: And well, I should. Yeah, we could draw to a close quite soon, because I'm sure you want your evening, but I just wanted to say, have you seen any

354
00:35:19.858 --> 00:35:22.850
JD: children come into school who

355
00:35:23.440 --> 00:35:31.130
JD: didn't seem to feel that they belonged? And yet music has helped them? I don't know if you've ever observed that, or...

356
00:35:35.630 --> 00:35:39.640
P5: The, I mean the little chap that you work with that's in Year 5.

357
00:35:39.915 --> 00:35:42.949
JD: He's just about to give up. He's about to give up,

P5: Oh is he?

358
00:35:42.950 --> 00:35:45.630
JD: and he's remarkably talented.

359
00:35:45.970 --> 00:35:50.150
P5: Oh, really! Cause he, it took him a while to get there, didn't it?

360
00:35:50.150 --> 00:35:55.389
JD: Absolutely. And he now well, he's just amazing. But,

361
00:35:56.070 --> 00:35:59.840
JD: you know, this, yeah, didn't want to take it

362
00:36:00.240 --> 00:36:19.149
JD: further, or you know, and it's all part of parental support is not entirely there. And I, that's frustrating for someone, because to know he could have done the church choir. I think that would have been brilliant because he, but without that I'm not quite sure that he's got the motivation to carry on.

363
00:36:19.150 --> 00:36:20.160
P5: Hmm.

364
00:36:20.860 --> 00:36:24.880
JD: But it's a shame, because he couldn't really sing, but he can now.

365
00:36:25.450 --> 00:36:34.249

P5: Yes, because I remember when, you know, you first worked with him, and he was, he showed a very different side of his personality. I think it was really good for him, because he was quite withdrawn in,

366
00:36:34.420 --> 00:36:37.789
P5: in class, and he could get himself in a bit of a muddle about things.

367
00:36:38.120 --> 00:36:40.050
JD: Yeah

368
00:36:40.050 --> 00:36:44.270
P5: whereas, he gave you a bit of jip, didn't he? To begin with, yeah.

369
00:36:44.270 --> 00:36:51.658
JD: Yeah. Yeah. But now it's not, maybe it's not cool enough, you know. I don't know if you've ever had any

370
00:36:52.010 --> 00:36:54.009
P5: I don't really see him anymore, [ ], isn't it?

371
00:36:54.010 --> 00:37:08.620
JD: No, yeah, but others as well. I don't know whether things suddenly, as you get towards, you know, becoming older, you know. Maybe did that, that didn't happen then for you. You never felt that music wasn't a cool thing to do?

372
00:37:08.620 --> 00:37:15.389
P5: No, I think it was just something I did, and it was nothing to do with. I can remember when I moved from brownies to guides.

373
00:37:15.790 --> 00:37:23.150
P5: I couldn't do guides with everybody else, and I wasn't prepared to give up choir for guides.

374
00:37:23.753 --> 00:37:28.740
P5: But it was just part of our weekly routine, because by then my sister was doing it.

375
00:37:29.110 --> 00:37:34.950
P5: And I got on pretty well with her, you know, I mean she's one of my best friends. She is my best, you know, apart from

376
00:37:35.370 --> 00:37:39.179
P5: my family. You know I'm very close to my sister.

377

00:37:39.795 --> 00:37:45.650
P5: So it was just what we did, and it was separate really from school, but it fed into,

378
00:37:45.940 --> 00:37:47.556
P5: it definitely fed into,

379
00:37:49.700 --> 00:37:54.440
P5: I mean, it was integral to my self-esteem definitely.

380
00:37:54.440 --> 00:38:05.720
JD: Yeah. Yeah. Ah well, this has been tremendously helpful. Is there anything that you would add about belonging that, you know, we haven't said, do you think?

381
00:38:06.170 --> 00:38:11.549
JD: I am thinking about it in the broad sense, but also definitely in terms of music.

382
00:38:16.560 --> 00:38:18.239
P5: No, I don't think so.

383
00:38:18.420 --> 00:38:22.809
P5: Apart from that kind of team, it's like, you're like a team, aren't you?

384
00:38:22.980 --> 00:38:26.960
P5: So, you know the whole is bigger than the sum of the parts, and,

385
00:38:27.180 --> 00:38:28.990
P5: you're working towards,

386
00:38:29.090 --> 00:38:31.340
P5: I think it's a bit, I think that

387
00:38:32.070 --> 00:38:35.682
P5: part of the reason I like singing, it’s a bit like,

388
00:38:36.700 --> 00:38:50.000
P5: I mean, I used to run a bit. In fact, I started back again. But it's quite good to have a race in mind, you know, if you do singing without, if you do music without a concert. It's not about showing off, but it's about preparing to a point.

389
00:38:51.290 --> 00:38:57.899
P5: So you, you know, in terms of the belonging thing. You're a team, and you're working towards a shared goal which is the

390
00:38:58.280 --> 00:38:59.270
P5: concert.

391
00:38:59.860 --> 00:39:07.870
JD: Yeah, yeah. Have you ever felt motivated by music exams, or anything, you know with your instrument? Presumably you did.

392
00:39:07.870 --> 00:39:15.080
P5: I did do some, but I think I'm, I have to say that I did Music

393
00:39:15.260 --> 00:39:21.410
P5: O level, and I failed it, and the bit I failed on was the aural bit

394
00:39:21.790 --> 00:39:24.750
P5: where they play a thing, and then you've got to write down the notes.

395
00:39:25.580 --> 00:39:29.379
P5: I could not get the intervals correct,

396
00:39:29.740 --> 00:39:34.830
P5: just couldn't hear it, and I think with some practice now, I could.

397
00:39:35.939 --> 00:39:39.230
P5: But no, I've never really, I think I just want to be able to sing.

398
00:39:39.560 --> 00:39:40.820
JD: Yeah.

399
00:39:42.230 --> 00:39:57.470
P5: and to not, yeah, to know, I don't want to go into a concert thinking, oh, my god, there's a whole section I find really difficult. There'll be odd little bits, but nothing, major, you know. So no, I'm not particularly. I'm not fussed about that at all really.

400
00:39:57.710 --> 00:39:59.630
P5: It doesn't really interest me.

401
00:40:00.080 --> 00:40:00.560
JD: Okay.

402
00:40:00.560 --> 00:40:03.209
P5: At the moment. Maybe when I've got some headspace.

403
00:40:03.210 --> 00:40:26.289
JD: Yeah, yeah. Well, everything you've said has been amazing. I'll just say, thank you so much for giving me your time today. It's been fantastic and you know you can contact me anytime with any questions you might have, or to offer feedback. I'll be sending you a copy of the transcript

404
00:40:26.330 --> 00:40:45.989
JD: to see. This is going to be just for my project. It's a record of our conversation. I'm going to check it through and then, if there's anything that's not clear, I might have to check back with you. And then you could amend

405
00:40:46.400 --> 00:41:06.420
JD: whatever you need to. But if anything crops up, I'll highlight it so that you can see what I might have missed and anything that you think is inaccurate. Because it would still be your words, and this conversation will be

406
00:41:06.941 --> 00:41:16.699
JD: something that I keep between us. If you want to contact me, that's absolutely fine, but it's been fantastic. Thank you so much.

407
00:41:16.700 --> 00:41:17.070
P5: Okay.

408
00:41:17.340 --> 00:41:18.110
P5: Well, good luck

409
00:41:18.110 --> 00:41:18.780
P5: with it.

410
00:41:18.780 --> 00:41:21.199
JD: Thank you, and I'll keep you posted.

411
00:41:21.200 --> 00:41:22.769
P5: Yeah, okay.

412
00:41:22.770 --> 00:41:24.829
JD: Take care, thank you. Bye, bye.

413
00:41:24.830 --> 00:41:25.639
P5: Bye, bye.

WEBVTT

1
00:00:10.750 --> 00:00:12.040
JD: Okay.

2
00:00:12.540 --> 00:00:19.899
JD: So to begin with, I wondered if you could tell me a bit about when and how you started singing.

3
00:00:22.781 --> 00:00:28.950
P6: I started singing recently. I sang at school

4
00:00:30.600 --> 00:00:38.719
P6: but didn't really sing in the choir. I don't know what other, anyway. And then when I moved to the Netherlands the

5
00:00:39.223 --> 00:00:43.460
P6: women's club that I joined had a choir. So I joined that.

6
00:00:46.440 --> 00:00:56.900
P6: Sorry I'm gonna go off on tangents. I was put in as a soprano, and I'm not a comfortable, happy soprano, so I did it for a while, but didn't enjoy

7
00:00:58.082 --> 00:01:12.200
P6: that part. I didn't enjoy singing the soprano and then I had a a break, but knew I wanted to do some more singing. So, and it just happened, I noticed that a local choir

8
00:01:12.430 --> 00:01:17.849
P6: sings on a Monday afternoon. So I joined that, and through that

9
00:01:18.080 --> 00:01:21.700
P6: I found about out about the scratch choir as well. So

10
00:01:22.630 --> 00:01:25.279
P6: it's, you know, in the last seven years.

11
00:01:26.340 --> 00:01:27.669
JD: Right. Yeah.

12
00:01:27.800 --> 00:01:35.259
JD: And can you say, what exactly, what is it about singing that has kind of grabbed you?

13
00:01:38.900 --> 00:01:45.639
P6: I played the piano a lot as a child, and music was always something that,

14
00:01:46.810 --> 00:02:02.480
P6: whilst not creative, I enjoyed the calming effect of it, you know, if ever I was at home, and the piano was there when I was in my early twenties, I would always sit down and play, you know, it was a space to go to

15
00:02:04.169 --> 00:02:12.629
P6: and singing is more accessible than picking up the piano again.

16
00:02:12.980 --> 00:02:35.699
P6: So I suppose it's me taking an easy route. But one of the downsides of the piano is, I'm sat here at home playing for my own enjoyment, and I'm not, of course, as good as I used to be without, and I don't put the practice in, whereas singing, the choir, I'm on a Monday afternoon I can just turn up.

17
00:02:36.530 --> 00:02:37.450
P6: Yeah?

18
00:02:37.800 --> 00:02:38.460
JD: Yeah.

19
00:02:39.230 --> 00:02:43.379
JD: And did you do music exams then, as a child, for piano and…

20
00:02:44.166 --> 00:02:46.800
P6: I did Grade 3 piano,

21
00:02:47.180 --> 00:02:50.409
P6: and then said, I'm never doing another piano exam.

22
00:02:51.227 --> 00:02:58.830
P6: I did Grade 5 music theory, and I did O level music theory, O level music.

23
00:02:59.522 --> 00:03:04.099
P6: But then, after that did nothing at,

24
00:03:05.269 --> 00:03:12.400
P6: I took up the oboe in the 6th Form to have an orchestral instrument. But

25

00:03:12.550 --> 00:03:19.970
P6: whilst my teacher was fantastic, and I played with her second oboe to her in a small orchestra up in London, and things like that,

26
00:03:20.780 --> 00:03:23.299
P6: I was never as secure,

27
00:03:24.443 --> 00:03:27.706
P6: I'm gonna call, as a language

28
00:03:28.810 --> 00:03:32.480
P6: and I found those moments when you are

29
00:03:32.640 --> 00:03:38.290
P6: with an oboe, and you have got to be the first one to make the noise, or whatever,

30
00:03:39.851 --> 00:03:46.859
P6: too frightening, yeah? Um, so singing is,

31
00:03:50.660 --> 00:03:57.549
P6: is it easier? You've still got to get the, I'm in a very, I sing in a very scaffolded environment. Yeah.

32
00:03:58.120 --> 00:04:03.780
JD: Okay, yeah. Can you say more about, when you say scaffolded, what you would mean by that.

33
00:04:04.897 --> 00:04:09.040
P6: Um, it's, we do perform, but it's in

34
00:04:09.709 --> 00:04:15.699
P6: old people's homes, or in actual fact, we did perform for the new mayor,

35
00:04:16.410 --> 00:04:20.610
P6: and things like that. So they're very low key. And in reality I don't,

36
00:04:20.800 --> 00:04:23.450
P6: I don't ever do the performances, because

37
00:04:23.790 --> 00:04:32.260
P6: they're quite often on a Thursday, and I'm working, but the, there's no audition,

38

00:04:33.534 --> 00:04:39.710
P6: you practise your lines, your,

39
00:04:39.990 --> 00:04:44.870
P6: whatever your part is as part of the two hours in the afternoon.

40
00:04:45.400 --> 00:04:50.599
P6: And I can do that, and I don't need to do more, although I mean it comes back to you.

41
00:04:51.224 --> 00:04:58.489
P6: And it's scaffolded in the sense that she often gives you the starting note. And yeah?

42
00:04:58.860 --> 00:05:00.120
JD: Yeah, yeah.

43
00:05:00.795 --> 00:05:11.184
P6: Which means that you, you know where you're going. Yeah, you haven't got to suddenly. And then then, of course, you ultimately know the tune and where it's gonna start.

44
00:05:12.410 --> 00:05:13.060
JD: Yeah.

45
00:05:13.280 --> 00:05:15.130
P6: And it's just a very positive

46
00:05:15.909 --> 00:05:18.459
P6: choir. I mean I am,

47
00:05:18.890 --> 00:05:21.090
P6: I'm not the youngest there.

48
00:05:22.652 --> 00:05:25.370
P6: I should think there are four

49
00:05:27.498 --> 00:05:31.379
P6: about my age, of which two are probably a bit younger.

50
00:05:32.087 --> 00:05:35.642
P6: But, sorry [ ] just walked out.

51
00:05:37.580 --> 00:05:40.129
P6: But quite often they are older ladies.

52
00:05:41.040 --> 00:05:45.670
P6: But it's, I mean, it's a it's a Dutch choir.

53
00:05:47.510 --> 00:05:52.720
P6: So everything's in Dutch, so it does have that, it's helping me with my Dutch

54
00:05:55.220 --> 00:05:59.789
P6: I'm going completely off topic from your question. So do stop me.

55
00:05:59.790 --> 00:06:01.890
JD: No, carry on. This is great.

56
00:06:02.539 --> 00:06:09.290
P6: We sing a very wide repertoire, you know, from

57
00:06:09.700 --> 00:06:25.300
P6: occasionally mus… yeah, musicals. We, you know we've done, Matilda, we've done Jesus Christ Superstar to traditional Dutch or not traditional Dutch songs, sort of sixties and seventies Dutch songs,

58
00:06:25.878 --> 00:06:35.730
P6: to things like 'To the hills and vales' from Dido and Aeneas, I'm not pronouncing that right. We even did some,

59
00:06:38.710 --> 00:06:47.510
P6: um, I'm gonna get this wrong. There are certain things I get confused over now. Yeah. The Messiah.

60
00:06:48.330 --> 00:06:48.680
JD: Oh!

61
00:06:49.108 --> 00:06:52.960
P6: from that which was, I loved, because that's very,

62
00:06:55.580 --> 00:07:00.760
P6: it's more predictable. And you, I can, I just know where it's going.

63
00:07:01.000 --> 00:07:01.430
JD: Yeah.

64
00:07:01.430 --> 00:07:07.740

P6: Whereas something like Matilda I find harder to, I have to work, I have to think and work a bit harder with that.

65
00:07:08.200 --> 00:07:14.009
JD: Yeah. Is that a different choir to the one that you did Phantom of the Opera with? Was that a different performance?

66
00:07:14.010 --> 00:07:28.449
P6: Phantom of the Opera was all musicals, and it was a scratch choir. And that's, I found out about that through this choir and it's once a year, and they do four days.

67
00:07:29.397 --> 00:07:31.730
P6: I was absolutely,

68
00:07:32.634 --> 00:07:44.309
P6: I signed up for the musicals when they do an extra repetition, rehearsal. So in theory, it is just the day and you perform in the evening. But the musicals I think that's because that's huge.

69
00:07:44.785 --> 00:07:48.440
P6: I think we were 400 altos. Was that right?

70
00:07:49.290 --> 00:07:50.730
P6: Oh, yeah,

71
00:07:51.182 --> 00:08:06.810
P6: anyway, big numbers, big numbers. So they offered an additional day of rehearsals, and I said, I left that morning I said to [husband], if I don't feel comfortable and just, I'm I'm just not going to do it, and I loved it, absolutely loved it. The conductor was,

72
00:08:07.080 --> 00:08:32.670
P6: for the bits I understood, because it was in Dutch, was funny, and the soloist who came to support was, you know, had a lovely voice, and I sat down next to somebody who… I walked in at the back of the room, you know you walk into these rooms, and you think I don't know anybody, where am I going to sit, so you sort of scan the backs of the heads. And I thought, hmm!

73
00:08:32.870 --> 00:08:43.019
P6: Well, they're a group, and they're a group. There's one person there who, I think, sitting, sitting on their own. And there are various other people so, but she, actually, she doesn't look Dutch.

74
00:08:43.380 --> 00:08:45.513
P6: So I'm gonna go and sit next to her.

75
00:08:46.740 --> 00:08:54.390
P6: And she's not Dutch, she's South African, yeah, much younger than me, but South African and very,

76
00:08:54.570 --> 00:09:02.660
P6: she was very nervous, and she said at the end she's going to go off and do some singing lessons and things like that. So, you know, you've got all

77
00:09:03.080 --> 00:09:04.889
P6: all sorts there, it was lovely.

78
00:09:04.890 --> 00:09:17.840
JD: Yeah. And nationalities then? Or was that just the fact that, I mean, how does it feel to perform in a different country? And you've lived in different countries, so does it feel natural really

79
00:09:18.310 --> 00:09:20.390
JD: to be part of that community?

80
00:09:26.820 --> 00:09:27.520
P6: Yeah. [hesitation]

81
00:09:27.910 --> 00:09:39.699
P6: Yes, I think the the day of the performance of the scratch, because it was so huge, but everybody's there to have fun and enjoy. There are groups of people, but then there were lots of individuals. So,

82
00:09:42.890 --> 00:09:50.980
P6: no, I just wandered off and had lunch by myself, and I was just very happy to do so, which I'm not normally happy to do that, I just pottered off, and

83
00:09:51.200 --> 00:09:58.780
P6: I needed, I think, space from, you know, a full-on morning of rehearsals before we went into the afternoon. Um,

84
00:10:02.200 --> 00:10:07.019
JD: Yeah, and the other choir you're with are friendly, then, they’re just a local group.

85
00:10:07.020 --> 00:10:09.086
P6: Yeah, they're a local group.

86
00:10:09.850 --> 00:10:21.730

P6: Very much all singing abilities. You know, they, you'll be sat next to, suddenly think, hang on a second, you're singing an octave below where we're supposed to be singing. It really doesn't matter, yeah?

87
00:10:21.730 --> 00:10:22.659
JD: Yeah, yeah.

88
00:10:22.660 --> 00:10:24.569
P6: The director will

89
00:10:26.400 --> 00:10:31.289
P6: point it out occasionally, but in a lovely way, and sometimes she'll let it run, sometimes, yeah,

90
00:10:33.130 --> 00:10:39.529
JD: Yeah. Yeah. And I was going to ask if you have actually had any singing lessons at all in...

91
00:10:41.220 --> 00:10:50.940
P6: I had, actually, that's interesting you ask. that I had one lesson with the singing teacher at [international school], or one of the singing teachers there.

92
00:10:51.200 --> 00:10:59.379
P6: Because I was thinking about joining a choir there, one of our local, one of our next door neighbours, who was very friendly, she was in a choir

93
00:10:59.899 --> 00:11:12.489
P6: just around the corner, and for some reason I never did. I don't think it worked with the evenings when they were doing it, and possibly I was a bit shy of all the Danish

94
00:11:13.238 --> 00:11:16.029
P6: and I was definitely shy of singing,

95
00:11:16.650 --> 00:11:19.540
P6: not sure that I could do it.

96
00:11:22.210 --> 00:11:27.794
P6: So I didn't do it, but she assured me, she said, oh, yeah, you can sing, it's fine, you know.

97
00:11:28.190 --> 00:11:30.900
P6: So that's the only singing lesson I've had.

98

00:11:31.810 --> 00:11:37.539
P6: When I was,

99
00:11:37.934 --> 00:11:42.329
P6: but when I was at the top of junior school, so what would I be 10,

100
00:11:43.421 --> 00:11:48.830
P6: at our school, they selected from the top year, top class,

101
00:11:49.780 --> 00:11:55.540
P6: children to be in the choir, and they would sit underneath the small stage in

102
00:11:55.870 --> 00:12:01.659
P6: lines perpendicular to the lines of the rest of the junior school.

103
00:12:02.310 --> 00:12:07.070
P6: I wasn't chosen, so I used to have to sit at the back with probably five other girls.

104
00:12:09.940 --> 00:12:12.609
P6: Which is absolutely, really cruel, isn't it?

105
00:12:13.120 --> 00:12:13.990
JD: Hmm. [agreement]

106
00:12:13.990 --> 00:12:20.879
P6: You know, when all your, all your mates are up the front, they're part of the choir, and most of the year group are there.

107
00:12:21.555 --> 00:12:22.980
P6: And you're not.

108
00:12:24.130 --> 00:12:30.900
P6: And I, I assume assembly was, was it once a week, or was it most days? But I mean, you can't escape that

109
00:12:31.300 --> 00:12:31.950
P6: so…

110
00:12:32.600 --> 00:12:33.300
JD: No.

111
00:12:33.920 --> 00:12:35.280

P6: But then, when I was in

112
00:12:35.280 --> 00:12:35.640
[JD: Yeah.]

113
00:12:35.640 --> 00:12:42.540
P6: first year of senior school, we were, I don’t know why we were singing in a classroom, but it was with the music teacher.

114
00:12:42.840 --> 00:12:56.019
P6: So maybe it was a music lesson, it just wasn't in the music room, but she, we were busy singing, so she walked up the gangway between all of you, between rows of desks,

115
00:12:56.320 --> 00:13:00.160
P6: and she said to me afterwards she said, you can sing.

116
00:13:00.960 --> 00:13:16.290
P6: yeah, but my dad said sang, she knew my dad sang. My dad sang in a choir, so I think she would have expected me to be able to sing. But maybe I'd come up with this report, oh well she wasn't in choir, and she thought, well, she can't sing.

117
00:13:17.000 --> 00:13:20.427
P6: So I do remember her stopping and telling me that.

118
00:13:21.040 --> 00:13:22.809
P6: Not that I joined the choir.

119
00:13:23.180 --> 00:13:23.785
JD: Right.
[General laughter]

120
00:13:25.200 --> 00:13:26.120
P6: I think probably

121
00:13:26.120 --> 00:13:30.329
P6: I was still smarting, actually, because I mean, it was only a year later. So…

122
00:13:30.560 --> 00:13:33.880
JD: Yeah, interesting. Yeah.

123
00:13:34.000 --> 00:13:48.930

JD: Well, because, so that is, we may come back to me asking you that sort of thing. But I wondered, then, could we have, could I ask for your thoughts about what the broad concept of belonging means to you?

124
00:13:51.608 --> 00:13:58.040
P6: People, and their stories and sharing are

125
00:13:58.600 --> 00:14:02.253
P6: what's most important to me, yeah, in life.

126
00:14:02.880 --> 00:14:10.619
P6: I love talking to people, I love hearing about what they do and what they've done, and,

127
00:14:12.170 --> 00:14:16.149
P6: and I love being part of a team.

128
00:14:17.665 --> 00:14:20.460
P6: Be that at work or, and

129
00:14:20.970 --> 00:14:24.220
P6: being in a choir is part of all of that.

130
00:14:24.370 --> 00:14:25.340
P6: Yeah.

131
00:14:28.310 --> 00:14:45.130
P6: You're sat singing, and it's I mean, when I did the scratch choir, you know, I sat, I had done, the South African on the actual day in the end stood to my left because she was a bit more nervous, and I was a bit frustrated I was behind a pillar and couldn't see the conductor.

132
00:14:45.560 --> 00:14:55.731
P6: And then there was this lady to my right and we sang our hearts out together. It was lovely, when you can hear somebody else's voice, and you're singing along together.

133
00:14:56.750 --> 00:15:21.000
P6: And you pull together. And the other day I moved across on my Monday choir, my regular choir, just to sing mezzo. And again that was fun, because the lady I was standing with, actually she sings well, and again, you just sort of you can turn into, you know, that person and sing with them and enjoy the music, yeah?

134
00:15:21.560 --> 00:15:23.810
JD: Yeah, that's fantastic.

135

00:15:26.450 --> 00:15:38.020
P6: So there is a sense of belonging, and despite the fact that my weekly choir isn't, the fact that

136
00:15:38.668 --> 00:15:54.919
P6: you know they're not people I'm going to see socially, because I don't think they see each other socially, I mean, the Dutch tend to be a part of a club and go to the club and then go home, that's part of the social structure here.

137
00:15:58.160 --> 00:16:10.030
P6: But I feel very included and involved. And to start with, of course I was a bit more nervous and walking into an environment where you're less confident with the language, so in the

138
00:16:10.647 --> 00:16:19.099
P6: the break, the quarter of an hour break, it's hard to have conversations with people, so it's hard to build a relationship, but,

139
00:16:20.370 --> 00:16:27.110
P6: they do leave me alone a bit, but they do also, they're very happy to talk to me as well, and you feel

140
00:16:28.970 --> 00:16:38.910
P6: part of a group, and they look after each other and send, you know, a card to somebody if they're sick or or flowers, or yeah. So yes, you…

141
00:16:41.030 --> 00:16:54.690
P6: And even though this year it's been a bit erratic with being back in the UK and, to support my mum, and this week [daughter] was there, and before Easter I wasn't feeling very healthy, so I've missed quite a lot this year.

142
00:16:55.630 --> 00:16:56.110
JD: Hmm.

143
00:16:56.371 --> 00:17:03.680
P6: You know the choir leader last week, she said oh, if your daughter is here, bring her along too, you know, and things like that are just really nice touches, yeah?

144
00:17:03.680 --> 00:17:09.349
JD: Yeah. Yeah. And do you have a like a break with refreshments then? Is that how they do it?

145
00:17:09.849 --> 00:17:14.939
P6: Yes, the chap, we've had to change locations. So it's

146
00:17:15.474 --> 00:17:30.899
P6: we have yeah, hot water and coffee, and you can make tea, and then there's a little and I'm fairly sure, I can't quite remember, because my memory is awful. We paid a bit of money at the beginning of the year this year, and somebody organizes,

147
00:17:31.019 --> 00:17:37.699
P6: it's usually chocolates, or might be mints, and there's always a bowl of something, you know.

148
00:17:38.890 --> 00:17:39.450
JD: Yeah.

149
00:17:40.015 --> 00:17:43.579
P6: So, and yeah, people socialize at that point.

150
00:17:43.920 --> 00:17:54.370
JD: Lovely. Yeah, makes it convivial, then, by the sound of it. And is that your main activity, then, outside of work in, your social activity?

151
00:17:54.370 --> 00:17:59.109
P6: No, no, my main activity is probably

152
00:17:59.280 --> 00:18:06.860
P6: running and seeing … and then another one would be seeing other friends that I've made.

153
00:18:08.260 --> 00:18:18.260
JD: Yeah. Yeah. So could I ask then, if you could think about what, well have you ever sung solo, I mean, and have you practised at home solo, or is that,

154
00:18:18.490 --> 00:18:20.840
JD: would you ever do a solo?

155
00:18:21.802 --> 00:18:34.849
P6: I practise at home. I find that I need to practise less at home for my Monday choir. I always used to try and make sure I had a bit of time on Monday morning to

156
00:18:35.170 --> 00:18:36.360
P6: practise

157
00:18:36.570 --> 00:18:45.700

P6: stuff that I was finding a bit more tricky. But I'm finding now that even though I might practise and put the date and put the bar numbers that I need to practise as we sing as a choir, that

158
00:18:46.470 --> 00:18:47.970
P6: we usually

159
00:18:48.546 --> 00:18:59.229
P6: practise it, anyway. And by the time we've sung it three, three weeks in a row. I'm I'm fine so, and nobody…. I don't seem to be alone, so I,

160
00:18:59.370 --> 00:19:04.719
P6: yeah, tend not to practice so much. I, for scratch, because I was really worried,

161
00:19:04.870 --> 00:19:07.519
P6: poor old [husband], I think, was

162
00:19:07.770 --> 00:19:15.329
P6: in excruciating pain, listening to me trying to tap the musicals out on the piano

163
00:19:15.902 --> 00:19:23.920
P6: and sing along. So the rhythm was bad, the, and when I went to the extra rehearsal, [conductor]

164
00:19:24.060 --> 00:19:25.691
P6: said, oh, but there's

165
00:19:26.720 --> 00:19:38.680
P6: they're not all quite right, because if you want to sing the low alto, some of them are the high alto parts, but there was pre-recorded, with somebody singing your part a bit, they'd obviously

166
00:19:39.169 --> 00:19:45.530
P6: bumped up the volume, so then I could just sing along to that. And it was…

167
00:19:45.530 --> 00:19:55.580
JD: There were tracks. Yeah, that's often done, I think. Yeah. And do you like singing around the house on your own, anyway, or

168
00:19:56.880 --> 00:19:57.670
JD: you know, when….

169
00:19:57.670 --> 00:20:03.509

P6: No, I would say I pretty much never sing around the house on my own

170
00:20:07.420 --> 00:20:33.809
P6: When you get, what do you call it, a musical worm, or whatever, so with the scratch musical, certainly for a few weeks afterwards it was coming back to me, and I would sort of hum along and, but it wouldn't be the whole song, because my brain doesn't work that way. I can't remember the words from the beginning to the end, but different, I found

171
00:20:34.140 --> 00:20:45.619
P6: all of the numbers kept on coming back to me at various points, and sometimes when I leave the choir on Monday I'll be humming along one of the tunes, or whatever that we've been singing.

172
00:20:46.010 --> 00:20:47.070
JD: Yeah, yeah.

173
00:20:47.390 --> 00:20:55.259
JD: So, you've probably already covered this. But could we just have a quick chat about what you would say the benefits of singing are for you?

174
00:20:58.355 --> 00:21:09.970
P6: It is, it's all, for me, it's all about the creative side,

175
00:21:10.250 --> 00:21:16.239
P6: doing something that is not work, and that is not

176
00:21:17.510 --> 00:21:24.179
P6: er traditional reading-based, and that's not fitness-based.

177
00:21:25.090 --> 00:21:25.770
JD: Hmm.

178
00:21:25.770 --> 00:21:32.049
P6: Yeah, I mean, I was hoping to add some art to... But it is. It's, it's giving.

179
00:21:32.420 --> 00:21:40.299
P6: But it's not creative, because I'm not creative with my music. You give me a song, and I sing the notes that are there. Ask me to

180
00:21:40.400 --> 00:21:42.980
P6: improvise, and I couldn't,

181
00:21:43.680 --> 00:21:45.020

P6: I couldn't do it.

182
00:21:45.430 --> 00:21:45.890
JD: Right.

183
00:21:46.520 --> 00:21:55.350
JD: Yeah. But do you think there'd be other benefits to working on, well, other other musical skills you think would be useful to work on

184
00:21:55.620 --> 00:21:56.940
JD: for your singing?

185
00:21:58.120 --> 00:22:04.339
P6: I definitely have questions about breathing, because of course, I've done lots of pilates,

186
00:22:04.810 --> 00:22:07.709
P6: which is all about controlling

187
00:22:08.650 --> 00:22:11.330
P6: your diaphragm in a different way.

188
00:22:13.400 --> 00:22:19.230
P6: And I know my lung capacity is not that good,

189
00:22:19.470 --> 00:22:26.249
P6: so, in actual fact, holding longer notes is tricky. So exploring that would be quite nice.

190
00:22:29.250 --> 00:22:32.474
P6: Also learning more about,

191
00:22:33.550 --> 00:22:40.490
P6: I find if it's, I I know that if it's higher notes,

192
00:22:41.400 --> 00:22:47.889
P6: I'm singing much more sort of in my throat in the top here. And that's not sustainable.

193
00:22:48.310 --> 00:22:52.529
P6: Yeah. So, there are definitely techniques and things I could do with improving.

194
00:22:52.940 --> 00:22:58.790
P6: And I do, there is, I do have a plan to see whether I can sign up for one of the university

195
00:23:01.037 --> 00:23:05.810
P6: teaching singing courses in September. I need to remember to do that.

196
00:23:07.840 --> 00:23:17.659
JD: And what about singing, you know, sight singing? Obviously you do have musical background. So, and would it all come back to you, and reading music is fine, presumably?

197
00:23:17.660 --> 00:23:25.170
P6: Yeah, I mean, that's the benefit. When I say that I don't have to practise the songs from one Monday to another is because,

198
00:23:26.250 --> 00:23:32.809
P6: I know if it's C, and I can see the next note's D, I know what that should be.

199
00:23:33.410 --> 00:23:40.709
P6: And I'm definitely not, I would love to have perfect pitch. I definitely, definitely am a long way off that

200
00:23:42.710 --> 00:23:44.569
P6: but I,

201
00:23:44.910 --> 00:23:52.810
P6: I can sort of guess, usually guess the intervals or, and of course, then you become more familiar with the tune. But,

202
00:23:53.460 --> 00:23:58.179
P6: but my, yeah, playing the piano, it's definitely helped.

203
00:23:58.800 --> 00:24:10.540
JD: Yeah, yeah, that's fantastic. Yeah. Is there anything else that you know you would like to say about belonging, with music, without music? You know how, how,

204
00:24:11.230 --> 00:24:16.540
JD: because I've linked the two because I wondered how important it is to be,

205
00:24:17.070 --> 00:24:23.929
JD: you know, what level you're at and how that relates, and maybe it doesn't relate at all. Maybe it is just

206
00:24:24.450 --> 00:24:25.420
JD: singing.

207

00:24:25.880 --> 00:24:29.020
P6: No, it absolutely does relate. I think the,

208
00:24:29.410 --> 00:24:35.349
P6: I was on a high. I don't think I've ever been on quite such a high as I was after the scratch,

209
00:24:35.830 --> 00:24:39.029
P6: and I think it wasn't just having,

210
00:24:39.220 --> 00:24:48.479
P6: well, there must have been an element of having done something that I wasn't sure for quite a few months, and kept on putting off practising that I was going to be able to do.

211
00:24:49.340 --> 00:24:55.979
P6: But I, for two weeks after the day, I was walking on clouds.

212
00:24:56.430 --> 00:24:57.390
P6: Yeah?

213
00:24:59.410 --> 00:25:09.212
P6: And it's not, I don't think there's often. Yeah, I have moments when I might feel a real sort of boost like that, but not,

214
00:25:09.810 --> 00:25:22.030
P6: it kept on, you know, the memory kept on coming back to me, and it sort of just was a very warm feeling, and that's a whole group of people, large numbers. And I don't particularly like large crowds and large numbers of people.

215
00:25:24.820 --> 00:25:26.590
P6: And I didn't know any of them.

216
00:25:27.610 --> 00:25:28.560
P6: Yeah?

217
00:25:28.750 --> 00:25:29.310
JD: Amazing.

218
00:25:29.310 --> 00:25:33.099
P6: Hundreds of people, random people, and it felt good.

219
00:25:33.810 --> 00:25:36.739
JD: Yeah. And would you say that you did belong in that

220
00:25:36.890 --> 00:25:39.910
JD: atmosphere? And in that, in that moment really?

221
00:25:41.130 --> 00:25:41.860
P6: Yeah.

222
00:25:43.450 --> 00:25:44.140
JD: Hmm.

223
00:25:44.140 --> 00:25:51.810
P6: I think anybody who was there and enjoying it, and everybody was there and enjoying it, and because of that they belong, we all belonged.

224
00:25:52.630 --> 00:25:53.290
JD: Yeah.

225
00:25:53.290 --> 00:25:59.959
P6: Yeah, even though you're an individual. Yes, I sat next to the girl that I've met at the extra rehearsal, but,

226
00:26:02.130 --> 00:26:08.780.3.

P6: we didn't particularly, we talked we yeah, we weren't there for each other, because she had another mate. It wasn't, you know.

227
00:26:09.895 --> 00:26:15.020
P6: There aren’t many places I would say that I could

228
00:26:15.300 --> 00:26:18.130
P6: sit on my own.

229
00:26:18.450 --> 00:26:21.300
P6: We’re busy singing most of the time,

230
00:26:22.720 --> 00:26:29.729
P6: but you know, if you went and sat in a cafe, and you were on your own, you wouldn't, you wouldn't feel as though you were belonging in the same way,

231
00:26:30.240 --> 00:26:35.889
P6: even though you've got other people in a cafe all drinking coffee. So you've, and having time out, and,

232
00:26:36.010 --> 00:26:38.200
P6: so the mission is the same

233
00:26:38.540 --> 00:26:47.620
P6: as in the choir. Our mission was to sing, but a completely different sense of purpose.

234
00:26:47.800 --> 00:26:48.430
P6: But then, yeah.

235
00:26:49.300 --> 00:26:55.079
JD: Cause you mentioned being part of a team. So that really does apply to this kind of thing.

236
00:26:55.310 --> 00:27:04.470
P6: Yeah, but in a normal team at work you are playing to each other's strengths and bouncing ideas off each other. This, you're just a team and you've got,

237
00:27:04.710 --> 00:27:07.500
P6: you've got a very specific job to do, haven't you?

238
00:27:07.970 --> 00:27:09.230
JD: Yeah, yeah.

239
00:27:10.990 --> 00:27:16.731
JD: Yeah. So is there anything that you would add or have you? You've said it all brilliantly. But

240
00:27:17.050 --> 00:27:21.270
P6: Well, don't know. Is there anything that I would add?

241
00:27:29.100 --> 00:27:38.419
P6: I don't think so. I don't know if you got any more prompts, whether you think I can fill in on any more of the questions, I don't think there's.

242
00:27:38.700 --> 00:27:41.269
JD: No, I think I we've covered

243
00:27:41.410 --> 00:27:53.349
JD: my prompts basically. And I, just, because I had one about what do you think helps a person to feel they belong to a group of people who sing?

244
00:27:53.780 --> 00:27:56.460

JD: Perhaps we could just slightly dig into that.

245
00:27:57.160 --> 00:28:00.919
P6: Yeah, I would. I mean, it's funny that you say that because I was just thinking,

246
00:28:01.430 --> 00:28:06.909
P6: I sort of feel, you know, [athletic club] where we run, I've actually no longer,

247
00:28:07.330 --> 00:28:16.020
P6: I've resigned my membership, and there's a group of people, and you know, I was always made to feel welcome, and I was very much part of the group.

248
00:28:26.960 --> 00:28:32.829
P6: The thought that flashed into my head sort of flashed back out in terms of where that was going. Sorry.

249
00:28:33.630 --> 00:28:35.390
P6: So your question again?

250
00:28:36.030 --> 00:28:41.120
JD: So, what do you think helps a person to feel they belong to a group of people who sing?

251
00:28:44.810 --> 00:28:49.239
P6: Enjoying making the music together, yeah.

252
00:28:50.405 --> 00:28:57.379
P6: Making a sound together that sounds lovely. Yeah. Whereas, I go running, they're friendly,

253
00:28:57.580 --> 00:29:04.420
P6: but you're all running on your own, yeah, whereas you're not as part of a choir, you are.

254
00:29:07.040 --> 00:29:09.549
P6: you all sort of have to get it right.

255
00:29:10.880 --> 00:29:13.160
JD: Yeah, yeah, very good.

256
00:29:13.850 --> 00:29:16.550
JD: I don't know whether you could

257
00:29:16.740 --> 00:29:21.540

JD: say anything about whether you, whether a feeling of belonging is the same as

258
00:29:21.740 --> 00:29:24.370
JD: actually belonging. Are they the same thing?

259
00:29:34.110 --> 00:29:36.579
P6: I think they possibly are the same thing.

260
00:29:44.620 --> 00:29:47.069
JD: If nobody's excluding you, I suppose.

261
00:29:48.022 --> 00:29:52.179
P6: I think I'm going to have to think about that one over the weekend!

262
00:29:52.180 --> 00:29:52.764
JD: Okay,

263
00:29:54.390 --> 00:30:02.249
JD: yeah, I'd be intrigued to know whether you have further thoughts about that. But yeah, I just thought I'd throw that one in!

264
00:30:04.450 --> 00:30:09.990
P6: I definitely don't, you can't actually belong if you don't feel as though you belong,

265
00:30:10.740 --> 00:30:14.549
P6: yeah? So the feeling has to be there.

266
00:30:14.900 --> 00:30:15.640
JD: Yeah.

267
00:30:18.330 --> 00:30:21.919
JD: And is there anybody who decides that other people belong?

268
00:30:22.390 --> 00:30:26.750
JD: That's maybe getting a little bit deep for this time of the evening, but…

269
00:30:26.750 --> 00:30:36.929
P6: Well I was going to say, I think it does, it's around the people, and how friendly they are and accepting they are.

270
00:30:40.630 --> 00:30:45.139
P6: Because in all these environments people have to accept my appalling Dutch.

271
00:30:45.430 --> 00:30:46.430
P6: Yeah?

272
00:30:47.235 --> 00:30:53.624
P6: Which does make it more difficult to relax and talk and chat to people, er, chat to me.

273
00:30:54.460 --> 00:30:56.440
JD: And you speak in Dutch.

274
00:30:56.820 --> 00:30:59.789
JD: Yeah, you do speak to them in Dutch.

275
00:31:00.570 --> 00:31:01.790
P6: Badly, yeah,

[general laughter]

276
00:31:01.960 --> 00:31:10.050
P6: on with limited conversation subjects, yeah, my vocabulary is not nearly wide enough, but yet they,

277
00:31:10.210 --> 00:31:20.480
P6: because I'm probably, I seem to be happy to be there, they're happy to have me there, yeah, and they therefore accept,

278
00:31:20.880 --> 00:31:25.949
P6: you know. If I was sat in the corner being grumpy, they wouldn't want me as part of their choir, would they?

279
00:31:26.460 --> 00:31:28.680
P6: And I wouldn't be getting anything out of it.

280
00:31:28.880 --> 00:31:33.449
P6: But I do think friendship and kindness are,

281
00:31:36.680 --> 00:31:45.120
P6: I was going to say intrinsic, but I'm not, I'm gonna say are very heavily linked with a feeling of belonging and actual belonging,

282
00:31:45.620 --> 00:31:46.620
P6: for me.

283
00:31:47.760 --> 00:31:48.650
P6: Yeah.

284
00:31:50.030 --> 00:32:16.749
JD: Wonderful. That's really good. So we could start to wrap this up then, and if I could just say thank you so much for giving me your time and all your wonderful thoughts, and please feel free to contact me at any time with questions you might have, or to offer feedback. I'll send you a copy of the transcript for you to check over and

285
00:32:16.890 --> 00:32:34.360
JD: you can see whether you want to add anything at that point, or if it's not come out quite the way you want, so it will all be your words. So you can add to your words if you want to, and then I can hopefully say that we can switch off the recording.

Appendix 5: Participant information sheets

Focus group

Participant Information Sheet

Project title: ‘What is the relationship between the development of singing skills and a feeling of belonging?’

Hello, my name is Jacqueline Dias. Thank you for considering taking part in my research study on the above topic, which has been approved by the University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD) Research Ethics Committee. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully. I am very happy to provide further information if you have questions or if anything you read is not clear. Do please take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Purpose of the study

I am a singing teacher, and I am currently studying for an MA in Voice Pedagogy with the Voice Study Centre/UWTSD. For this module I am undertaking an independent work-based learning project. I am keen to explore the subject of ‘belonging’ and its relationship to singing skills, and I am hoping to explore different perspectives on whether there is a connection between the two. Through this study, I hope to enhance my own teaching practice; I also hope that my research might contribute to a conversation about singing skills and a feeling of belonging which could help young singers in the future. My aim is to conduct a focus group discussion with singing teacher colleagues who would be interested in taking part and contributing their valuable ideas to my project. The study is due to be completed in August 2025.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen as a potential participant in this project because I know that you are a singing teacher. I am very interested in hearing your thoughts and feelings about teaching singing and the concept of belonging, and about such topics as the kind of skills you emphasise in your teaching, whether you perceive any issues with encouraging students to continue with their lessons or to join choirs, and your experience of entering students for competitions and exams.

Do I have to take part?

Taking part is entirely voluntary and refusal or withdrawal (including refusal to answer any question) will involve no penalty or loss, now or in the future.

What will happen to me if I take part?

The research will involve one online focus group discussion, moderated by me, of up to an hour, scheduled at a time which is convenient for you and all the other participants. The group will be small, with a maximum of four participants. It would be helpful for my research project if this could take place before the end of May 2025. I will conduct the focus group and ask some questions which will act as a springboard for our conversation.

What do I have to do?

If you would like to take part in the focus group, I will set everything up in preparation for the discussion and only ask that you let me know if the timing of the session becomes inconvenient for you, or if you decide that you will no longer be able to participate.

The focus group discussion will be video- and audio-recorded for the purposes of transcribing the data collected as part of this research. The recording will be identified only by a code and will not be used or made available for any purposes other than the research project. The recording will be deleted once a transcript and notes have been made.

Are there possible disadvantages and/or risks in taking part?

Participating in this research will take up an hour of your time and there is a possibility that something we discuss might make you feel uncomfortable. I will do my best to ensure that this does not occur, by following strict ethical practice for conducting focus groups. If you do feel uncomfortable or distressed at any point, we can pause or terminate the focus group discussion, and you will be offered further support if needed. Full details of the ethical procedures to be followed are available on request.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there are no direct benefits to you of taking part in this study, I hope that you will find it an interesting and thought-provoking experience to discuss the topic with other singing teachers, and to play a part in my research project, which is about the way singing is taught and how singers might experience a feeling of belonging.

Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All information collected as part of this project will be kept strictly confidential. To ensure this, your data will be given a unique identifier, and your personal details will be kept securely in a password-protected file on my computer, to which only I have access, as the researcher. I will ensure that your personal information is deleted once the project has been marked by the University, in September 2025.

As a participant, you may request copies of the study and any reports or publications arising from your participation. I will debrief all participants at the conclusion of the research, and I will also supply a copy of the transcript for you to check that your words have been reported accurately, before I write up my project report. I will provide my email address below so that you are able to contact me.

Data from this project might be used for additional or subsequent research (for example as part of my final work-based project at the end of the MA), if appropriate.

What if I have further questions about the research or if something goes wrong?

In the unlikely case of concern or complaint, or to verify the research, please contact my supervisor, Louisa Morgan, whose email is: louisa@voicestudycentre.com

If you would like to contact me directly about this research, or have any questions, please email me: jackie.e.dias@gmail.com

Interviews

Participant Information Sheet

Project title: ‘What is the relationship between the development of singing skills and a feeling of belonging?’

Hello, my name is Jacqueline Dias. Thank you for considering taking part in my research study on the above topic, which has been approved by the University of Wales Trinity Saint David (UWTSD) Research Ethics Committee. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully. I am very happy to provide further information if you have questions or if anything you read is not clear. Do please take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Purpose of the study

I am a singing teacher, and I am currently studying for an MA in Voice Pedagogy with the Voice Study Centre/UWTSD. For this module I am undertaking an independent work-based learning project. I am keen to explore the subject of ‘belonging’ and its relationship to singing skills, and I am hoping to explore different perspectives on whether there is a connection between the two. Through this study, I hope to enhance my own teaching practice; I also hope that my research might contribute to a conversation about singing skills and a feeling of belonging which could help young singers in the future. My aim is to interview non-professional singers who enjoy performing, whether in choirs, musical theatre groups, or in singing lessons. The study is due to be completed in August 2025.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen as a potential participant in this project because I know that you are someone who sings regularly. I am very interested in hearing your thoughts and feelings about singing, and about such topics as being a member of a musical group, solo singing, whether or not you have taken music qualifications, and whether these have been helpful to you.

Do I have to take part?

Taking part is entirely voluntary and refusal or withdrawal (including refusal to answer any question) will involve no penalty or loss, now or in the future.

What will happen to me if I take part?

The research will involve one online interview with me, of up to an hour, scheduled at a time which is convenient for you. It would be helpful for my research project if this could take place before the end of May 2025. I will conduct the interview and ask some questions which will act as a springboard for our conversation.

What do I have to do?

If you would like to be interviewed, I will set everything up in preparation for the interview and only ask that you let me know if the timing of the interview becomes inconvenient for you, so that we can discuss another possible time.

The interview will be video- and audio-recorded for the purposes of transcribing the data collected as part of this research. The recording *will be identified only by a code and will not*

be used or made available for any purposes other than the research project. The recording will be deleted once a transcript and notes have been made.

Are there possible disadvantages and/or risks in taking part?

Participating in this research will take up an hour of your time and there is a possibility that something we discuss might make you feel uncomfortable. I will do my best to ensure that this does not occur, by following strict ethical practice for conducting interviews. If you do feel uncomfortable or distressed at any point, we can terminate the interview, and you will be offered further support if needed. Full details of the ethical procedures to be followed are available on request.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there are no direct benefits to you of taking part in this study, I hope that you will find it an interesting and thought-provoking experience to discuss the topic and to play a part in my research project, which is about the way singing is taught and how singers might experience a feeling of belonging.

Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All information collected as part of this project will be kept strictly confidential. To ensure this, your data will be given a unique identifier, and your personal details will be kept securely in a password-protected file on my computer, to which only I have access, as the researcher. I will ensure that your personal information is deleted once the project has been marked by the University, in September 2025.

As a participant, you may request copies of the study and any reports or publications arising from your participation. I will debrief all participants at the conclusion of the research, and I will also supply a copy of the transcript for you to check that your words have been reported accurately, before I write up my project report. I will provide my email address below so that you are able to contact me.

Data from this project might be used for additional or subsequent research (for example as part of my final work-based project at the end of the MA), if appropriate.

What if I have further questions about the research or if something goes wrong?

In the unlikely case of concern or complaint, or to verify the research, please contact my supervisor, Louisa Morgan, whose email is: louisa@voicestudycentre.com

If you would like to contact me directly about this research, or have any questions, please email me: jackie.e.dias@gmail.com

Appendix 6: Script for interviews and focus group

Script for interviews

Preamble

Thank you so much for taking part in my research project. My subject is the development of singing skills and its relationship to a feeling of belonging. I have some questions prepared which will hopefully start us off with our conversation but I would like you to feel able to discuss things in as much depth as you wish. I will guide the conversation but will focus very much on your perspectives. I might repeat something back to you if needed in order to check that I have understood correctly.

Please be assured that your anonymity will be preserved. You also have the right to withdraw from the research at any point.

With your permission, I will record this interview but the audio recording will be safely stored on my computer and the video deleted once the transcription process is complete.

After the interview

Thank you so much for your time today. Please feel free to contact me at any time with any questions you might have or to offer feedback. I will send you a copy of the transcript as soon as possible for you to check that you are happy with everything that has been recorded. At that point, you will be able to make adjustments to your recorded answers if you wish.

Script for focus group

Preamble

Thank you so much for taking part in my research project. My subject is the development of singing skills and its relationship to a feeling of belonging, taken from the viewpoint of our work as singing teachers. I have some questions prepared which will hopefully start us off with the discussion but I hope that our conversation will be wide-ranging and relaxed. I would like you to feel able to discuss things in as much depth as you wish. I will guide the conversation but will focus on your perspectives and my role will be very much as facilitator of the discussion.

I hope that everyone will feel able to contribute as much as they would like to but there is of course no obligation for everyone to answer every question. Please feel free to join in the discussion at any point. If you would like to raise your hand with the react button on Zoom, I will keep an eye out for that. Otherwise, manually raising your hand is also fine or just jumping in when there is a gap. I hope that we will all listen to everyone's contributions and that the discussion will proceed smoothly. If you would like to raise any problems with me during our discussion, please let me know.

Please be assured that your anonymity will be preserved. You also have the right to withdraw from the research at any point.

With your permission, I will record this focus group but the audio recording will be safely stored on my computer and the video deleted once the transcription process is complete.

After the focus group

Thank you so much for your time today. **SUMMARISE.** Does anyone have any further comments on anything we have discussed or something they would like to raise?

Please feel free to contact me at any time with any questions you might have or to offer feedback. I will send you each a copy of the transcript as soon as possible for you to check anything that might need clarification and also that you are happy with everything that has been recorded. At that point, you will be able to make adjustments to your recorded answers if you wish. Any names recorded on the transcript will be redacted.

Research instruments

Focus group with singing teachers

To begin, let's discuss the different pathways to becoming a singing teacher.

How do you feel about your role as a teacher?

Could I ask for your thoughts about what 'belonging' means to you?

Could we discuss 'belonging' in the context of your students?

Would you say that there is an accepted definition of the kind of skills a singer needs to possess?

If so, do you have any thoughts about where this definition might have come from?

Have you experienced teaching students who don't seem to have all these skills?

Is it important, do you think, for a singer to have all these skills?

How does it feel to teach them?

Do you think there is anything which might get in the way of the students' participation or enjoyment?

Are there any 'extra' skills which we might be teaching as singing teachers? What might these be?

Let's discuss, finally, singing exams and then competitions.

What are your feelings about exams?

What are your feelings about competitions?

How do exams and competitions affect a student's feeling of belonging?

Is there anything we have discussed which you would like to revisit or expand on?

Interviews with avocational singers

To begin, could you tell me a bit about when and how you started singing?

Have you had or do you have singing lessons?

How do you feel about them?

Could I ask for your thoughts about what 'belonging' means to you?

Could we discuss 'belonging' in the context of singing?

What do you think helps a person to feel they belong to a group of people who sing?

Are you currently a member of a group to which you feel you belong as a singer?

Did you need to audition to get into this group?

What are your feelings about performing?

How do you feel about singing solo?

What would you say are the benefits of singing for you?

Would you say there are benefits to working on other musical skills alongside your singing?

What might these skills be?

Is there anything we have talked about which you would like to revisit or expand on?

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Appendix 8: Keyword search

Keyword search

Impostor syndrome/phenomenon

Belonging

Performance stress

Musician

Singer

Inclusion

Community

Ability

Learning

Improvement

Skill

Belonging and perform*

Singing and caring

Singing and skill*

Singing and talent

“voice” AND gender*

Appendix 9: Sample reading scheme

(based on Chigbu, Atiku and Du Plessis, 2023)

Year of publication	Name of author(s)	Title of publication	Key concepts	Key arguments	Similarities and relevance
2018	Biasutti and Concina	The effective music teacher: assessing a three-year collaborative online course	Relevance of expertise level in music teaching. Importance of CPD. Perceived effectiveness of an online course	Opportunities for teachers to reflect on their teaching were seen as valuable, over long time-span of the course.	Use of interviews and focus groups match my project. Discussions with teachers and the kind of questions discussed make this a good resource, along with its music teaching focus.
2019	P. Lagerlöf and C. Wallerstedt	'I don't even dare to do it': problematising the image of the competent and musical child	Children's musical competence	Two prevailing attitudes to musical ability: either everyone can do it or only the talented can do it. If a child brings that belief with them from home, this might be reinforced by the school curriculum	Is the culture of music for the talented perpetuated by teachers/parents/schools and other institutions?
2014	Vestad, I. L.	Children's subject positions in discourses of music in everyday life: rethinking conceptions of the child in and for music education	The 'everybody-can' versus 'only the talented can' narrative, versus Small's concept of 'musicking'	Everyone can do it or only the talented can do it – argues for a third way, 'musicking'	Ideas of nostalgia and also labelling of children as being able to sing or not
2013	E. Prince, E. and J. Hadwin	The role of a sense of school belonging in understanding the effectiveness of inclusion of children with special	Defines sense of belonging and sense of school belonging		

		educational needs			
2016	J. Magnin	'I like to sing': exploring why children begin and continue singing lessons			
2023	M. S. Barrett and K. Zhukov	Choral flourishing: parent and child perspectives on the benefits of participation in an excellent youth choir			
2022	A. Good et al.	Singing foreign songs promotes shared common humanity in elementary school children	Crossing inter-group boundaries		
2025	Mccrea, Barker and Goodrich	Inclusive teaching: securing strong educational experiences and outcomes for all students	Strategies for inclusive teaching	Discusses system being under strain – disempowerment of teachers	Importance of belonging – unhelpfulness of labels. Social exclusion, reduced acceptance by peers, etc. Professional development for teachers
2019	J. Hess	Moving beyond resilience education: musical counter storytelling	Critique of neoliberalism in resilience education		
2019	C. Humbert and J. Joseph	Introduction: the politics of resilience: problematising current approaches			
2010	M. Biasutti	Investigating trainee music teachers' beliefs on			

		musical abilities and learning: a quantitative study			
2025	N. B. Kulset and K. Halle	The construction of 'we': empowering music practice in kindergarten			
2000	S. Hennessy	Overcoming the red-feeling: the development of confidence to teach music in primary school amongst student teachers		Exeter University course	
2012	A. Lamont, A. Daubney and G. Spruce	Singing in primary schools: case studies of good practice in whole class vocal tuition	School community, singing ability		
2021	F. Burbridge Rinde and A. Kenny	Music in the school life of newly arrived migrant children: potential paths to participation and belonging			
2016	S. Hallam et al.	Changes in motivation as expertise develops: relationships with musical aspirations		Teachers as role models	
	Algraigray and Boyle	The SEN label and its effect on special education			

Appendix 10: RTA coding documents

FOCUS GROUP

Singing teacher training

Feeling “comfortable”

Piano exams

Teacher by accident

UK grade system

Teacher as listener

Children confide

Children feel better

Safe space

Sing for fun

Helps musicianship

Piano playing

Singing “easier”

Confidence-building

Singing “therapy”

Breathe better

Confidence to speak

Experiment

Significant other

Musicality

Find yourself

Sight reading

To aim for: “very inclusive”

Confidence

Belong as singing teacher

“belong to a team”

Helps self-esteem

Music “made me belong”

Choir builds “friends and connections”

Independent teacher – no team

Belonging=sharing

“share your love of music”

“connections”

Relationships

“make … connections”

“powerful connections”

“deep, meaningful relationships

Students “belong” to performance

“I belong to this group”

“parents working together”

Feeling of belonging from choir

Children don’t want to be in choirs

“They are shy”

Good teachers “make such a difference”

“get the interest going”

Issue with boys

“interest not there”

“rather play outside”

“private school…parents have signed up”

“They have to be there”

No teacher support at state school

“sounds a bit paranoid”

“not supporting it at all”

Older ones “committed”

Music school concerts: nearly all take part

Parents can lack understanding

“parents’ disinterest”

Parents need to facilitate

“confident” to “view themselves as singers”

“I’m too scared”

Made to go on stage

“a compliment” when they want to audition

“put themselves forward”

“really challenging” without the skills

“I know that we’ll get there”

Confidence loss with voice change

“alien” voice with voice change

“go with the flow”

“normal syllabus is rubbish for boys”

“inappropriate content” of syllabus

Exam board “missing out”

Limited choice

“syllabus is a really good structure”

Need “something to show” to paying parents

“certificate” says “my child has done this”

Some parents want to “fast-track” through “necessary grades”

“good mark” not possible “if you rush”

Exam comments not constructive

“examiner-dependent”

“your favourite child, who is very musical, barely passes”

Neurodivergent candidate: “praying…examiner will be sensitive”

“fairly obviously” neurodivergent

“erratic” marking

“potluck” marking

Need praise for learning e.g. song in different language

“exam system is not for everybody”

“better off being left to just sing for fun”

“too much for them”

“competitions are not for everybody”

“be very sure that they’re robust enough”

“that they genuinely do have some talent”

Digital: “not being held back” by level of other skills

“plough through” aural and sight reading anyway

“sight reading is essential”

Sight reading first priority, then musicality and good voice

Learning an instrument invaluable

“luxury” to have time for sight reading and aural

“You will be stuck” without sight reading as a choral singer

Needs constant practice
Choirs which don't need sight reading more attractive?
"lose an entire generation"
Music unsupported by powers that be
"losing musicians"
"losing choirs"
Only "public school and very high private school children" will have skills to join good choirs
"good music department"
"very, very good private school"
Less good school "so culturally diverse"
"he's going to lose most" children
They don't want to sing in Latin
Students can belong to "your singing studio"
"belonging in the sense of repertoire"
"belonging to a wider culture"
"continuum of culture"
"belonging to the past"
"belonging to our cultural heritage"
Taste in music "probably comes from home"
Help them to know what to listen to
"folk songs and middle-class white music" does not reach "target audience"
"ignoring" multicultural backgrounds
"no connection" to what they were singing
"we have had to change" as singing teachers
Now "happily" teaching Disney
Disney accepted as grade-level songs
"I can't bring out the lovely songs I used to do"
"our job to stretch them"
"this other repertoire is for you as well"
Make things accessible
Their choice
"entitled" to the repertoire
Hard to teach "classical" one-to-one

“musical input and singing” can help feeling of belonging
Don’t need to “belong to the entire world”
“belonging is about acceptance?”
Every voice “unique”
Acceptance by “our community and our peers”
To feel “your voice is valued…incredibly empowering”
Acceptance of “your unique self”
With violin and piano “you can blame the instrument”
“Your voice is you”
Singing “more personal”

P1
Mum paid for lessons
Uni choir was “my priority”
“a lot of religious stuff”
Fun repertoire
A few lessons for choir re-audition
Loved lessons but not doing them now
“lovely teacher”
Teacher chose songs
Liked that teacher chose songs
Teacher helped build confidence
Teacher encouraged movement and expression
Strict (male) conductor last year
Female conductor currently
Choir helps sight singing
Aural tests were covered in lessons
“cool” with aural tests
Teacher “very good at having me try out lots of different things”
Quite new to singing
Belonging= “feeling welcome and feeling comfortable”
Belonging in singing: “everyone is there for the same enjoyment”
“Everyone’s got the same interest”

Everyone making mistakes so “No one’s gonna laugh at me”
No feelings of “shame”, “embarrassment” or “fear”
“different strengths and different weaknesses”
“no sort of hierarchy”
Conductor fair with solos
Collaboration on repertoire choice
“quite nice” to choose repertoire
“feeling of camaraderie”
“feeling of accomplishment, because we all get it done together”
Conductor: “I love her so much”
Solo terrifying but fun
No “jealousy from anyone else”
“lifting each other up”, not “bringing each other down”
“I just felt very supported”
Sight singing important
Sight singing improving
Learned trumpet
Loves performing when singing
Did not enjoy performing on trumpet
Choir members all read music
“I always loved singing”
Liked free and improvised style of Mass in Blue
Audience responded to Mass in Blue
“We’re all smiling together, laughing together”
Boyfriend enjoyed concert
“Everyone’s moving together” – synchrony
Happy to be giving “something back”
Audience response gives confidence
Knowing it sounds good
No one can hear individual mistakes. Brings more confidence
Musical family
“prioritizing choir rehearsals” not a problem
Wants to be in the concerts
Exciting to share music with family

Family appreciate it – music appreciation
Housemates all “quite musical”
All heard of Carmina Burana
“Friends from home” don’t “appreciate it as much” perhaps – music appreciation
Boyfriends not “from the same upbringing, so he doesn’t have that appreciation” – music appreciation
“I would feel like it was missing” without choir
“a whole part is missing” without choir
Time spent rehearsing means “we’ve just bonded”
Mum encourages concert attendance
Acting “my least favourite bit”
“Honestly, I hate it so much”
Choir doesn’t demand acting
Acting feels “so awkward”
“I don’t like it”
Gesture, steps etc didn’t feel natural in lessons
Facial expression “a bit easier”
“feels like there’s some sort of block there”
“scared of performing for so long”
“actively avoided performing” on trumpet
Acting/standing out “just the next big step, and I don’t think I’m ready to take it”
Even pieces “I don’t like” fun to learn with friends
“churchy music” not as “exciting”
Liked Joni Mitchell more than Ravel
Conductor picks “most bizarre range of music” –
appreciation of conductor choices
Everyone likes something
Conductor “considerate”
“I think we can do anything”
“technically difficult” or “harmonically insane” pieces “thrown at us”
“really talented people in the choir”
No feeling of “any sort of bitterness” in choir

P2

Singing “casually” as child
Dad professional
Singing seemed normal
Perfect pitch
“correct key, no matter what”
“little children’s choir”
Hymns
“tried to hide” being cross about solo
“mad about it” [Once in Royal]
Singing lessons in secondary
Choir more “formalized”
Teacher encouragement
County youth choir
Sang with friends at lunchtime
“I was the one who played the piano”
Best friend was “into it”
Musical school
Took singing exams
Did Grade 8 singing
Took piano and violin to high level
Too busy to take singing formally
Wanted to sing
Singing “more of an afterthought”
Singing more fun/less structured
Singing focus not on “improvement” so much
“It was pretty fun”
Feeling of distance from group
“odd to talk about” belonging
Things “started clicking” more at secondary
Feels like social observer “a lot of the time”
Does not “always get” “depth to the social side”
Enjoys “harmony” of singing in groups
“be part of a sound”
Making “very gorgeous sound” together

“listening to the other parts”
Belonging to group: “having…uniformity of purpose”
“sounding rather gorgeous”
Creating “a full unit made of disparate parts”
“cool” to hear individual voices in smaller groups
Likes feeling “a bit more exposed”
High skill level: “it can be a little fun to show off”
“bit of a virtuoso” in smaller groups
“I like the individuality”
Confidence
Finds it “exciting”
“fun test of ability”
Satisfying to perform successfully
Overcoming musical challenges
“kind of perfect”
Tiring if performance didn’t go well
“patch things up as we were going along”
More concentration if music challenging for choir
Perfect pitch “a bit of a nightmare sometimes”
Need to “relinquish control” in choir situation
Performing solo more nerve-wracking
Enjoys “blending”
Harmony
Solo “more exposing” of voice quality
Accuracy/good sight reading skills
MT “very fun”
MT “requires you to act” MT: could manage singing, not acting
Fear of being “bad” at acting
Fear of embarrassment
Not cast in uni MT auditions
Singing “great confidence booster”
Singing being “expressive within parameters”
Singing uses “creative” and “analytical brain”
Wide repertoire available

“when it clicks, you get it”
Sight singing “a life hack”
Piano “a huge benefit”
Can “accompany yourself” on piano
Can “noodle around” on piano
“slightly awkward” as a conductor
“too pedantic” as a conductor
Without the extra skills “I would find it less enjoyable”
“perfectionist tendencies”
Feels “a bit awkward” socially
Different temperaments get different things out of choir
“close friendships” from music
“special time” at school
County youth choir sociable and inclusive

P3
Early memories
Always sang
Influential head teacher
Learned about technique
Singing as special
Formal learning
Teacher involvement and encouragement – influencing parents
Parents not musicians. Mother got Grade 2 piano
Mother and child bond through singing
Tradition and memory
Dad not a singer
Singing lessons while at secondary
Took GCSE music
Memory of “a good music service”
Proactive music teacher
[university] college choir
Lessons expensive – uni discount
Singing and recuperation from illness

Vocal coach helping “fix” vocal issues

“my comfort zone” – comfortable repertoire choices

Grade 8 flute

“not entirely comfortable” – linked to teacher asking for “performance”

Progress

Religious singing but not religious

Challenge of learning something new

Lack of connection with religious music

Has to “mean” something to put it across

“religious stuff”

“doesn’t mean anything”

Teacher choosing repertoire

Uncomfortable emotions, portraying “someone wanting to die”. Raw emotion

Words impart emotion

Music produces emotion

Words do not come first – “very switched off”

Familiarity and connection

Words desirable for communication

Words make singing different to playing flute

Belonging – “being able to be me”

“exist as myself”

Belonging “vocally” in chamber choir

Belonging “socially” in large choir

“I’m not very good at belonging”

“an ‘I am me’ person”

“music is where I belong most”

Belonging “linked to things I’m interested in”

Non-mainstream interests affect feeling of belonging

Belongs in “choral world”

“I’ve always felt other”

Not fitting in at school

Others at school didn’t understand

Seen as different

Belonged at university

School music department “was my safe space”
Not MT ‘type’. Marginalised by this
Music rehearsals offered “protection”
Flute Grade 8 enabled participation in school musical band
Instrument “more my thing” at school than singing
Assumption you want to be on stage if you sing.
Association with acting – not what every singer wants or can do.
Feeling comfortable. Included.
Grade 8 meant less at university.
High achievers at uni
Passed college choir audition
“I’m good at singing here”
No choral scholars
Wanting to be part of choir and “join in”
Enjoyed Christmas tradition
Not part of religious tradition until uni
Engaging socially important with choir
Conductor who expects a lot and is critical
Conductor not always encouraging people feel they belong vocally
Need to feel you can “improve and overcome” technical issues
People can be let go from choral society if not up to standard. Being judged.
“we’re a team”
Different strengths/contributions
Teamwork “not always seen by the conductor”
Other people in choir know your strengths and rely on you
Weaker singers “bring everyone with them”
Sight reading and musicianship skills important
High standard on instrument
Piano playing skills important
Being known for reliable musical skills. Accuracy, coming in
Stage experience versus choral
Opera and MT experience opposed to choral
Voice versus instrumental/musicianship
Different strengths/contributions

Variety of backgrounds creates “a good team”
Soloist experience. Strong voices
Fear of singing solo/standing out
Making music “for myself”
Enjoying rehearsal process
Getting to know and like the music
“I’m not good at relaxing”
Enjoyable challenge
“as long as it’s not critical and nasty”
“I can’t stand boring rehearsals”
“You do have to pull your weight”
“he doesn’t want uncertain people”
Nerve-wracking to stand out as soloist
“I don’t like people staring at me”. Not comfortable as performer
“we are very othered compared to soloists in the choral society”
“professionals” versus “amateurs”
Chapel choir solos were “for God”
Conductor knowing what singer is capable of
Music needs to be relatable
Sounding “fervent” without being religious is difficult
How to convey something you don't believe in
Being seen as different
Relatable music – reflection of own life and experience
Not growing up religious – hard to access those emotions
Not fitting in with church
Excluded as an adult woman from cathedral singing
“still and area of exclusion”
Uni choir gave invaluable experience
Sightreading training
Unfair advantage for those with formal musical skills
Coping with musicianship demands
As opposed to “a fabulous voice”, which does not equip people
“more popular choirs” can accommodate those without the skill
Age 13 when first sang with music notation (Year 9)

Oratorios in school “set me on a life of choral singing”
Singing has facilitated personal relationship
“it’s given me community”
“singing you can do anywhere” – join choir elsewhere and belong

P4

Break from singing lessons between years 9 and 12
Primary school choir
No singing lessons in primary
Currently taking lessons
Lessons “fun”
Lessons “collaborative with my teacher”
“singing for fun”
Strong music department at secondary
Took grade 3
Musical theatre
Great teacher
Teacher well connected
Belonging: “finding inner happiness with yourself”
“feeling comfortable and grounded within yourself”
Singing to yourself, in shower. No inhibitions
Belonging to yourself when singing in public
Being part of ensemble
“create that harmony with someone else”
Ensemble singing “exciting”
Teacher unsure how to teach MT
Student lacked confidence because of teacher?
Improved technique
“being taught for what I want to learn”
Feeling “I’m good enough”= belonging
“I kind of judge myself in terms of skill value”
Self-critical
Realising “I’m actually pretty good”
“I’ve always been part of music”

“immersed since I was born”
Musical parents
Increasing skills
Likes to “have an audience”
“I just can really see myself doing anything else” re performing
Not part of “group of like-minded people yet”
Singing strongest skill, followed by acting and dance
Singing “talent”
Singing confidence
Singing “is what I really want to like drive home”
Piano or guitar “important” for musicianship skills
“extra music knowledge is very helpful”
Music A level “fun”
Sight reading skills have developed with piano playing
Confident: “I don’t think I’m bad at it”
Nerves in front of an audience
More nerves speaking in public than singing
Still nerve-wracking performing
“your stomach starts to flip”
“your breath gets very faltery”
Easier to perform for people you don’t know
People you know might judge you
“thinking about what they’re thinking about you”
Performance nerves
Music as another language
“creates an unspoken thing between them”
Shared with another person
Great school music teacher
“a mutualist relationship” with school music teacher
Community
Different strengths/contributions
Community
Hobbies/interests
Religion and community

Meet new people
Shared interest outside family life
Music is community
Individual skills contribute to collective
Collaboration
Musical family
Going to family's concerts
Finding sense of belonging: a personal journey
Body and emotion connection
Negative side of audition rejection: self-doubt/self-questioning
Not taking rejection personally – self-belief
Family offer praise – taken for granted
Music teacher has "helped the most"
Significant other
"sense of like inner power and assurance"
Coping with being judged
Being in character in performance
Transcending self in performance
Structure of exams, something to work towards important but not essential
"it's good to be learning", "goal or not"

P5

Church choir
Church school
"I loved it"
Cello in primary
Sang primary "wasn't that confident"
Solos at church as preteen and teenager
Loved secondary choir
Became "one of the go-to people" for solos
ang at Speech Day and in productions
"I wasn't very good at acting, but I had a good sort of solid singing voice"
"things waned a bit" after secondary
Gap in singing until after uni

Local choir until had children
Gap of 15 years after children
Choral society
Cathedral singing
Church soloist
Used to fear reading out loud
Singing a tune helped with words
Singing integral to building speaking confidence
Learned how to sing psalms when young
Vicar “patient and encouraging”
Singing helped build inner belief: “you’re actually good at something”
“I didn’t feel particularly bright” at school
Singing gave extra confidence – “having the guts to do it” in front of an audience
Not arrogance but “deeper sort of confidence”
“integral to who I am” – identity
Sang in the car but parents not singers
Sister joined choir
Learned lots of repertoire
“I still go to church, it’s who I am”
Choir was vibrant and interesting
Mix of boys and girls in choir
Part of church community in small town
Grounding music
Great music teacher at middle school
Teacher encouraged cello playing. She “didn’t rate my voice particularly”
Singing overtook cello
Singing seemed less effort
But singing involved hours of practice
“I had a very supportive” secondary music teacher
Secondary music teacher “amazing”
A few singing lessons with choral society
Not many lessons
Singing lessons were useful after persistent sore throats
Teacher was reassuring about voice

“I just didn’t put in the work” needed for solo lessons.

Prefers “the surround sound you get in a choir

Choir sound “just gorgeous”

“I just wanted to go and just enjoy it”

“normal rehearsals” were enough

Listening at home to the music to be learned helped

“it was like I’d time-travelled” back to church choir

Getting something after finding it hard

“there is a feeling of belonging because of that sort of surround sound”

Belonging “important”: “I’ve made some really good friends”

“intrinsic satisfaction of nailing it”

“being sensitive to those around you

“I suppose you belong to one another…tuning into the sound that you’re making”

“we’re all in it, and we want to do a good job”

“it’s a very deep belonging”

“music sits out of time”

“it’s made…hundreds of years ago, and then we’re bringing it back to life”

Hope young people will join choirs

Valuing having younger people in choir

“you can feel it is still carrying on. Tradition.

Belonging with church, family and music

Singing “as important as exercise”

Belonging as teacher at musical school

Music central to school ethos

Choral society audition “not high-powered”

Had to be “up to scratch”, sister said

“it’s all just gorgeous”

Some “really obscure stuff”

“my mum doesn’t really like music particularly”

“my dad would listen to classical music”

“We didn’t really listen

Pupils at school seem “more motivated by doing musical instruments”

“I did learn the piano”

“I don’t think I practised enough”

Dad encouraged piano
Recorder “a really good gateway instrument”
“I know roughly where notes are in terms of how they feel in my voice”
Knowing intervals “helpful”. And “Rhythm is key”
Sight singing OK. YouTube helpful.
“I can sort of plot it out”
Enjoys solo singing at church
Floating high notes
Quiet singing with microphone
Not wanting to show off but “it’s a gift, so share it”
“I do practise”
“I’m not confident enough to sing in parts”
“I like to challenge myself”
“I’m not fussed about how good I am”
Acting: “too self-conscious as a teenager”
Tune comes first, followed by words
“some of the words are really powerful”
“that’s quite emotive”
“it’s a vehicle for words”
“I don’t think I’ve ever been accused of being out of tune. I might be on the wrong note”
“probably rhythm, I’m not as good at”
Singing was “just something I did”
Wouldn’t give up choir to do guides
Doing choir as a child “integral to my self-esteem”
“the whole is bigger than the sum of the parts”
Belonging: “You’re a team, and you’re working towards a shared goad, which is the concert”
Took some music exams
Failed O’ level because of “the aural bit”
“I think I just want to be able to sing”
But wants to feel on tope of the music in a concert
Exams not really of interest right now. Need “headspace” for that.

P6

“sang at school”

Not in school choir

Women’s club choir

“knew I wanted to do some more singing”

Played piano as a child

Singing “more accessible” now than instrument

“easy route”

“can just turn up” to choir. Piano needs practice

Grade 3 piano but nothing after

Didn’t like exams

Grade 5 theory and O level music

Took up oboe in 6th form to join orchestra

Singing “easier”? Less stressful than oboe.

Local choir “very low key”

“know where you’re going” with the music

Dutch choir helping with Dutch language

Loved scratch choir

Language comprehension challenge

Looked out for individuals to sit with

“everybody’s there to have fun and enjoy”

One singing lesson as an adult

“I was definitely shy of singing”

Left out of choir age 10: “absolutely, really cruel”

Made to sit at back while choir sang

Later told by teacher, “you can sing”

Dad was choral singer

Belonging: “people, and their stories and sharing are what’s most important to me”

“being part of a team”

Choir: teamwork and sharing

“we sang our hearts out together”

“turn into” the person singing well nearby/sing with them

“there is a sense of belonging”

“I feel very included and involved” in spite of language barrier

“they look after each other”

Home practice not really needed

“I don’t seem to be alone” in terms of standard

“never sing around the house”

“doing something that is not work”

“could do with improving” technique

Some sight singing skills from playing instruments

Can “guess the intervals”

Playing pian has “definitely helped”

“walking on clouds” after scratch performance

“warm feeling”

Being part of whole group

“it felt good”

“we all belonged”

“a team”

“very specific job to do”

Belonging as a singer: “Making a sound together that sounds lovely”

“have to get it right”

To belong you need to “feel as though” you do

Belonging: accepted by the group?

“friendship and kindness” linked to belonging

FOCUS GROUP

Singing or music teacher training	Teacher qualifications desirable	Teacher qualifications
Feeling “comfortable” with qualification	Feeling qualified	
Teacher by accident in UK [but trained in native country]		
UK grade system needed to be learned	Grade system important	Exams important
Teacher as listener	Teachers good listeners	Teachers listen
Children confide	Children confide	Children confide
Children feel better	Hidden value of lessons	Hidden value of lessons
Safe space	Studio a safe space	Safe space
Sing for fun	Fun to sing	Fun to sing
Singing helps musicianship	Helping musicianship	Helping musicianship
Piano players better music readers	Piano players better musicians	Piano players better musicians
Singing “easier”	Singing seen as easier option	Singing easier than instrument
Confidence-building	Confidence-building	Confidence-building
Singing “therapy”	Singing as therapy	
Breathe better	Breathe better	
Confidence to speak	Helps communication	Helps communication
Experiment	Encourages experimentation	
Significant other	Teachers as significant other	
Musicality	Helping musicianship	
Find yourself	Hidden value of lessons	
Sight reading	Helping musicianship	
To aim for: “very inclusive”	Desire for inclusivity	Inclusivity goal
Confidence	Confidence-building	
Belong as singing teacher	Teacher belonging	Teacher belonging
“belong to a team”	Part of a team	Part of a team
Helps self-esteem to belong to a team	Helps self-esteem to belong	
Music “made me belong”	Belonging to music	Belonging to music
Choir builds “friends and connections”	Choirs offer community	
Independent teacher – no team	Independent teacher no team	No team for solo teacher
Belonging=sharing	Belonging	Belonging=sharing

“share your love of music”	=sharing	
“connections”	Sharing passion for music	
Relationships	Music forges connections	Connections
“make … connections”	Music forges relationships	Relationships
“powerful connections”	Music forges connections	
“deep, meaningful	Music forges connections	
relationships”	Music forges relationships	
Students “belong” to		
performance	Belonging to a performance	
“I belong to this group”		
“parents working together”	Singer belonging important	
Feeling of belonging from choir	Parent cooperation	Role of parents
Children don’t want to be in	Singer belonging important	
choirs	Children not interested in	
“They are shy”	choirs	
Good teachers “make such a	Shyness increasing	Shyness increasing
difference”	Role of good teachers	Good teachers
“get the interest going”		
Issue with boys	Fostering interest	
“interest not there”	Boys difficult to retain	
“rather play outside”	Children don’t have the interest	
“private school…parents have	Rather do something else	
signed up”	Private school students	Private school parents
“They have to be there”	motivated by parents	
No teacher support at state	Students not allowed to opt out	
school	Teacher support not there at	
“sounds a bit paranoid”	state schools	
“not supporting it at all”	Teacher paranoia about value	
	Teacher support not there at	
Older ones “committed”	state schools	
Music school concerts: nearly	Older students more invested	
all take part	Music schools have motivated	
Parents can lack	students	
understanding	Parents can lack	Role of parents
“parents’ disinterest”	understanding	
Parents need to facilitate	Parents’ interest crucial	
“confident” to “view themselves	Parents need to facilitate	
as singers”	They are singers	You are a singer
“I’m too scared”		
Made to go on stage	Performance anxiety	Overcoming anxiety

"a compliment" when they want to audition "put themselves forward" "really challenging" without the skills "I know that we'll get there" Confidence loss with voice change "alien" voice with voice change "go with the flow" "normal syllabus is rubbish for boys" "inappropriate content" of syllabus Exam board "missing out" Limited choice "syllabus is a really good structure" Need "something to show" to paying parents "certificate" says "my child has done this" Some parents want to "fast-track" through "necessary grades" "good mark" not possible "if you rush" Exam comments not constructive "examiner-dependent" "your favourite child, who is very musical, barely passes" Neurodivergent candidate: "praying…examiner will be sensitive" "fairly obviously" neurodivergent "erratic" marking "potluck" marking	Can't opt out of performance Motivated student a compliment to teacher Confidence to audition Need skills to succeed Takes time and patience Voice change confidence issues Allow boys free rep choice Syllabus structure valuable Certificate proves success to parents Parents view exams as essential Individual examiners' tastes Favourite musical pupils Not certain examiner will be sensitive to all students' needs Signs of neurodivergence picked up by teacher	Need skills to succeed Need structure Exams prove success Examiners part of power structure Examiners and neurodivergence

Need praise for learning e.g. song in different language "exam system is not for everybody" "better off being left to just sing for fun" "too much for them" "competitions are not for everybody" "be very sure that they're robust enough" "that they genuinely do have some talent" Digital: "not being held back" by level of other skills "plough through" aural and sight reading anyway "sight reading is essential" Sight reading first priority, then musicality and good voice Learning an instrument invaluable "luxury" to have time for sight reading and aural "You will be stuck" without sight reading as a choral singer Sight reading needs constant practice Choirs which don't need sight reading more attractive? "lose an entire generation" Music unsupported by powers that be "losing musicians" "losing choirs" Only "public school and very high private school children" will have skills to join good choirs "good music department"	Exams do not cater for everyone Some kids shouldn't take exams Need resilience to take exams Competitions do not cater for everyone Need to be robust to enter competitions Need to demonstrate talent to enter competitions Digital exams allow progress without all the skills Can't leave out aural and sight reading Sight reading a vital skill Learning an instrument invaluable Teachers don't have time for sight reading and aural Can't manage in choirs without sight reading skills Sight reading needs constant practice More low-key choirs more attractive? Music unsupported by powers that be Musicians being lost Choirs being lost Good choirs still elitist?	Some people should not take exams Need resilience Need robustness for competitions Need talent for competitions Digital exams play to strengths Aural and sight-reading essential Sight-singing essential for choirs Join less demanding choir? Music unsupported Good choirs still elitist?

"very, very good private school" Less good school "so culturally diverse" "he's going to lose most" children They don't want to sing in Latin Students can belong to "your singing studio" "belonging in the sense of repertoire" "belonging to a wider culture" "continuum of culture" "belonging to the past" "belonging to our cultural heritage" Taste in music "probably comes from home" Help them to know what to listen to "folk songs and middle-class white music" did not reach "target audience" "ignoring" multicultural backgrounds "no connection" to what they were singing "we have had to change" as singing teachers Now "happily" teaching Disney Disney accepted as grade-level songs "I can't bring out the lovely songs I used to do" "our job to stretch them" "this other repertoire is for you as well" Make things accessible Their choice "entitled" to the repertoire	Cultural diversity of less good schools Singing in Latin an elite activity Belonging to your studio Cultural belonging Teacher can guide listening tastes Musical tastes and acceptability have changed Trying to include the marginalised Awareness of multicultural backgrounds Need to find connection to repertoire Singing teachers have had to change Be happy to teach all styles Disney acceptable because it is on syllabuses Classical rep falling out of fashion Encouraging open minds Repertoire belongs to us all Accessibility of repertoire Allow choice	Cultural diversity of state schools? Cultural belonging Inclusion of marginalised Connection to repertoire Singing teachers have had to reappraise singing 'skills' Freedom of choice

Hard to teach “classical” one-to-one “musical input and singing” can help feeling of belonging Don’t need to “belong to the entire world” “belonging is about acceptance?” Every voice “unique” Acceptance by “our community and our peers” To feel “your voice is valued…incredibly empowering” Acceptance of “your unique self” With violin and piano “you can blame the instrument” “Your voice is you” Singing “more personal”	Repertoire belongs to us all Classical falling out of fashion Belonging is being accepted No two voices the same Not standing out from our peers Valued for your voice Every person is unique Voice an intrinsic part of self	What belongs to us as singers? Being accepted =belonging Every voice is unique Voice an intrinsic part of self

P1

Mum paid for singing lessons – took up the offer	Mum paid for lessons	
Lessons during year 12 and 13 and gap year		
Joined university choir		
Joining a choir was "my priority"	Uni choir was "my priority"	
Varied repertoire		
"a lot of religious stuff"	"a lot of religious stuff"	
Fun to sing Mass in Blue	Fun repertoire	
"so different"		
A few lessons to prepare for choir re-audition	A few lessons for choir re-audition	
Loved lessons but does not do them currently	Loved lessons but not doing them now	
"lovely teacher"	"lovely teacher"	
Teacher chose the songs to work on	Teacher chose songs	
Liked having repertoire suggested	Liked that teacher chose songs	
Teacher helped with confidence building	Teacher helped build confidence	
Teacher encouraged movement and expression	Teacher encouraged movement and expression	
Strict conductor (male) last year	Strict (male) conductor last year	
Female conductor this year	Female conductor currently	
Choir helps sight singing skill	Choir helps sight singing	
Aural tests fine – covered in singing lessons	Aural tests were covered in lessons	
"cool" with aural tests	"cool" with aural tests	
Teacher was "very good at having me try out lots of different things"	Teacher "very good at having me try out lots of different things"	
Quite new to singing	Quite new to singing	
Belonging = "feeling welcome and feeling comfortable"	Belonging= "feeling welcome and feeling comfortable"	
Belonging in singing: "I know that everyone is there for the same enjoyment as I am"	Belonging in singing: "everyone is there for the same enjoyment"	
"Everyone's got the same interest"	"Everyone's got the same interest"	
Everyone is making mistakes so that's OK. "No one's gonna laugh at me"	Everyone making mistakes so "No one's gonna laugh at me"	
No feelings of "shame", "embarrassment" or "fear"	No feelings of "shame", "embarrassment" or "fear"	
"different strengths and different weaknesses"	"different strengths and different weaknesses"	
"no sort of hierarchy in place"	"no sort of hierarchy"	
Conductor very fair with solos	Conductor fair with solos	
Collaboration on picking repertoire	Collaboration on repertoire choice	
Picking own repertoire "quite nice"	"quite nice" to choose repertoire	
"feeling of camaraderie"	"feeling of camaraderie"	

“feeling of accomplishment, because we all get it done together” Great conductor: “I love her so much” Solo terrifying but fun No “jealousy from anyone else” “lifting each other up”, not “bringing each other down” “I just felt very supported” Sight singing important Sight singing improving in choir “I could not do that at all before” – sight singing Learned to play the trumpet Loves performing when singing Did not enjoy performing on trumpet Everyone had to be able to read music to join choir? “I always loved singing” Loved listening to the soloist in Mass in Blue “operatic or classical styles” feel “impressive” Free and improvised style of Mass in Blue appeals – technical level not so much on show. “seems somehow more impressive” Improvised style seems “out of reach” at the moment Audience responded to Mass in Blue more than other pieces Having “a good time” “We’re all smiling together, laughing together” Boyfriend enjoyed the concert, although not into classical music. “Everyone’s moving together” - synchrony Giving “something back” Audience response gives confidence. Knowing it is a good sound and it sounds good. No one can hear individual mistakes. Brings more confidence Musical family. Appreciation of music “prioritizing choir rehearsals” not a problem Wants to be in the concerts Exciting to share music choices with family. Family will appreciate it. Music appreciation	“feeling of accomplishment, because we all get it done together” Conductor: “I love her so much” Solo terrifying but fun No “jealousy from anyone else” “lifting each other up”, not “bringing each other down” “I just felt very supported” Sight singing important Sight singing improving Learned trumpet Loves performing when singing Did not enjoy performing on trumpet Choir members all read music “I always loved singing” Liked free and improvised style of Mass in Blue Audience responded to Mass in Blue “We’re all smiling together, laughing together” Boyfriend enjoyed concert “Everyone’s moving together” – synchrony Happy to be giving “something back” Audience response gives confidence Knowing it sounds good No one can hear individual mistakes. Brings more confidence Musical family “prioritizing choir rehearsals” not a problem Wants to be in the concerts Exciting to share music with family Family appreciate it – music appreciation	

Housemates all "quite musical" – choir or playing an instrument Had all heard of Carmina Burana "Friends from home" perhaps don't "really appreciate it as much" – music appreciation Boyfriend "doesn't come from the same upbringing, so he doesn't have that appreciation" – music appreciation "I would feel like it was missing" without choral singing. "a whole part is missing" without choral singing Time spent rehearsing with choir means "we've just bonded" Mum will encourage concert attendance. Especially where there are singers. Acting "my least favourite bit" "Honestly, I hate it so much" Nice that choir doesn't demand acting Acting has always felt "so awkward" "doing it on a stage" might be easier than in singing teacher's studio "But I don't like it" Using gesture, taking steps etc. didn't feel natural in lessons? Facial expression "a bit easier" Doesn't think about facial expression but "If you were to ask me to think about it, I'd probably say it's awful" "because it's natural, it's OK" "it feels like there's some sort of block there" "scared of performing for so long" "I actively avoided performing" on trumpet. With singing "it's just the next big step, and I don't think I'm ready to take it" Even pieces which "I don't like" fun to learn with friends "churchy music" not "as exciting" Liked Joni Mitchell more than Ravel Conductor picks "the most bizarre range of music", which "I'm actually really	Housemates all "quite musical" All heard of Carmina Burana "Friends from home" don't "appreciate it as much" perhaps – music appreciation Boyfriend not "from the same upbringing, so he doesn't have that appreciation" – music appreciation "I would feel like it was missing" without choir "a whole part is missing" without choir Time spent rehearsing means "we've just bonded" Mum encourages concert attendance Acting "my least favourite bit" "Honestly, I hate it so much" Choir doesn't demand acting Acting feels "so awkward" "I don't like it" Gesture, steps etc didn't feel natural in lessons Facial expression "a bit easier" "feels like there's some sort of block there" "scared of performing for so long" "actively avoided performing" on trumpet Acting/standing out "just the next big step, and I don't think I'm ready to take it" Even pieces "I don't like" fun to learn with friends "churchy music" not as "exciting" Liked Joni Mitchell more than Ravel Conductor picks "most bizarre range of music" –	

appreciative" of – appreciation of conductor choices Everyone likes some of the repertoire Conductor "considerate" "I think we can do anything" "technically difficult" or "harmonically insane" pieces "thrown at us" "really talented people in the choir" No feeling of "any sort of bitterness" in the choir	appreciation of conductor choices Everyone likes something Conductor "considerate" "I think we can do anything" "technically difficult" or "harmonically insane" pieces "thrown at us" "really talented people in the choir" No feeling of "any sort of bitterness" in choir	

P2

Casual singing Dad "always…warbling" Seemed normal to sing Perfect pitch discovered early "correct key, no matter what" "little children's choir" "hymns at assemblies" "tried to hide" being cross not to get solo Remembers being "mad about it" Singing lessons started in secondary Choir more "formalized" Teacher encouragement to join choir County youth choir from year 8 Sang with friends at lunchtime "I was the one who played the piano" Best friend was "into it" Musical school Took singing exams Did Grade 8 Took piano and violin to high level Too busy to take singing formally as well Wanted to sing "treated as a bit more of an afterthought" More fun/less structured. Focus not so much on "improvement" "It was pretty fun" Feeling of distance from group "odd to talk about" Things "started clicking" more with friends at secondary Feels like social observer "a lot of the time" Does not "always get" "depth to the social side" Enjoys the "harmony" of singing in groups "be part of a sound" Making "very gorgeous sound" together "listening to the other parts" Belonging to a group: "having a…uniformity of purpose" "sounding rather gorgeous" Creating "a full unit made up of disparate parts" "cool" to hear individual voices in smaller groups	Singing "casually" as child Dad professional Singing seemed normal Perfect pitch "correct key, no matter what" "little children's choir" Hymns "tried to hide" being cross about solo "mad about it" [Once in Royal] Singing lessons in secondary Choir more "formalized" Teacher encouragement County youth choir Sang with friends at lunchtime "I was the one who played the piano" Best friend was "into it" Musical school Took singing exams Did Grade 8 singing Took piano and violin to high level Too busy to take singing formally Wanted to sing Singing "more of an afterthought" Singing more fun/less structured Singing focus not on "improvement" so much "It was pretty fun" Feeling of distance from group "odd to talk about" belonging Things "started clicking" more at secondary Feels like social observer "a lot of the time" Does not "always get" "depth to the social side" Enjoys "harmony" of singing in groups "be part of a sound" Making "very gorgeous sound" together "listening to the other parts" Belonging to group: "having…uniformity of purpose" "sounding rather gorgeous" Creating "a full unit made of disparate parts"	

Likes feeling “a bit more exposed” High skill level: “it can be a little fun to show off” “bit of a virtuoso” in smaller groups “I like the individuality” Confidence Finds it “exciting” “a fun test of ability” Satisfying to perform successfully Overcoming musical challenges “kind of perfect” Tiring if didn’t go well “patch things up as we were going along” Demands more concentration Perfect pitch “a bit of a nightmare sometimes” Need to “relinquish control” in choir situation Performing solo more nerve-wracking Enjoys “blending” harmony Solo “more exposing” of voice quality Accuracy and good sight reading skills Still enjoyable Musical theatre “very fun to sing” “requires you to act” Could manage the singing, not the acting Fear of being “bad” at it “embarrassing” What would it have been like to give acting a go Didn’t get cast in musical theatre auditions Singing “a great confidence booster” Being “expressive within parameters” Uses “your creative and your analytical brain” Wide repertoire available “when it clicks, you get it” Sight singing “a life hack” Piano “a huge benefit” Can “accompany yourself” “noodle around” Procrastination “slightly awkward” as a conductor “too pedantic” as a conductor	“cool” to hear individual voices in smaller groups Likes feeling “a bit more exposed” High skill level: “it can be a little fun to show off” “bit of a virtuoso” in smaller groups “I like the individuality” Confidence Finds it “exciting” “fun test of ability” Satisfying to perform successfully Overcoming musical challenges “kind of perfect” Tiring if performance didn’t go well “patch things up as we were going along” More concentration if music challenging for choir Perfect pitch “a bit of a nightmare sometimes” Need to “relinquish control” in choir situation Performing solo more nerve-wracking Enjoys “blending” Harmony Solo “more exposing” of voice quality Accuracy/good sight reading skills MT “very fun” MT “requires you to act” MT: could manage singing, not acting Fear of being “bad” at acting Fear of embarrassment Not cast in uni MT auditions Singing “great confidence booster” Singing being “expressive within parameters” Singing uses “creative” and “analytical brain” Wide repertoire available “when it clicks, you get it” Sight singing “a life hack” Piano “a huge benefit” Can “accompany yourself” on piano Can “noodle around” on piano “slightly awkward” as a conductor “too pedantic” as a conductor Without the extra skills “I would find it less enjoyable”	

Without the extra skills “I would find it less enjoyable” “perfectionist tendencies” Feels “a bit awkward” socially Depends on “temperament” “close friendships” from music “special time” at school County youth choir was sociable and inclusive	“perfectionist tendencies” Feels “a bit awkward” socially Different temperaments get different things out of choir “close friendships” from music “special time” at school County youth choir sociable and inclusive	

P3

Early memories of being sung to and singing	Early memories	
Can't remember not singing	Always sang	
Influential head teacher. Keen on singing	Influential head teacher	
Lying on the floor – body connection with singing as a child?	Learned about technique	
Memory of singing as special	Singing as special	
Formal learning	Formal learning	
Teacher involvement and encouragement – influencing parents	Teacher involvement and encouragement – influencing parents	
Definition of musician – not her parents. Mother got Grade 2 piano only!	Parents not musicians. Mother got Grade 2 piano	
Mother and child bond through singing	Mother and child bond through singing	
Tradition and memory	Tradition and memory	
Dad not a singer	Dad not a singer	
Singing lessons while at secondary school	Singing lessons while at secondary	
Took GCSE	Took GCSE music	
Memory of "a good music service"	Memory of "a good music service"	
Proactive music teacher	Proactive music teacher	
[university] college choir discount perk	[university] college choir	
Expensive to take lessons	Lessons expensive – uni discount	
Singing and recuperation from illness	Singing and recuperation from illness	
Vocal coach helping to "fix" vocal issues	Vocal coach helping "fix" vocal issues	
"my comfort zone" – comfortable repertoire choices	"my comfort zone" – comfortable repertoire choices	
Grade 8 flute – high achievement on instrument	Grade 8 flute	
"not entirely comfortable" – linked to teacher asking for "performance"	"not entirely comfortable" – linked to teacher asking for "performance"	
Progress	Progress	
Religious singing but not invested from a religious point of view.	Religious singing but not religious	
Challenge of learning something new	Challenge of learning something new	
Lack of connection with the religious music	Lack of connection with religious music	
Has to "mean" something to put it across	Has to "mean" something to put it across	
"religious stuff"	"religious stuff"	
"doesn't mean anything"	"doesn't mean anything"	
Teacher choosing repertoire	Teacher choosing repertoire	
Uncomfortable emotions, portraying "someone wanting to die". Raw emotion	Uncomfortable emotions, portraying "someone wanting to die". Raw emotion	
Words impart emotion	Words impart emotion	

Music produces emotion Words do not come first – "very switched off" Familiarity and connection Understands words as something desirable for communication Words make singing different to playing flute Belonging – "being able to be me" "exist as myself" Belonging "vocally" in chamber choir Belonging "socially" in large choir "I'm not very good at belonging" "an 'I am me' person" "music is where I belong most" Belonging in chosen career too: "linked to things I'm interested in". Feeling of belonging affected by not having interests which are "mainstream". Belongs in "choral world" "I've always felt other" Not fitting in at school. Feeling others at school didn't understand Being seen as different Belonging at [university] School music department "was my safe space" Not a musical theatre 'type'. Marginalised by this Music rehearsals offered "protection" With flute Grade 8, could play in school musical band Playing instrument "more my thing" at school than singing People assume you want to be on the stage if you sing. Not the case for everyone. Association with acting – not what everyone wants to do or can do. Feeling comfortable. Included. Grade 8 flute didn't mean much at [university]. High achievers. Passed college choir audition "I'm good at singing here" No choral scholars at this college Wanting to be part of a choir and "join in" Enjoyed Christmas tradition	Music produces emotion Words do not come first – "very switched off" Familiarity and connection Words desirable for communication Words make singing different to playing flute Belonging – "being able to be me" "exist as myself" Belonging "vocally" in chamber choir Belonging "socially" in large choir "I'm not very good at belonging" "an 'I am me' person" "music is where I belong most" Belonging "linked to things I'm interested in" Non-mainstream interests affect feeling of belonging Belongs in "choral world" "I've always felt other" Not fitting in at school Others at school didn't understand Seen as different Belonged at university School music department "was my safe space" Not MT 'type'. Marginalised by this Music rehearsals offered "protection" Flute Grade 8 enabled participation in school musical band Instrument "more my thing" at school than singing Assumption you want to be on stage if you sing. Association with acting – not what every singer wants or can do. Feeling comfortable. Included. Grade 8 meant less at university. High achievers at uni Passed college choir audition "I'm good at singing here" No choral scholars Wanting to be part of choir and "join in" Enjoyed Christmas tradition	

Not part of religious tradition until [university] Engaging socially important with choir Conductor who expects a lot and is critical Conductor not always encouraging people to feel they belong vocally. Need to feel that you can "improve and overcome" technical issues so that you can belong. Threat of being let go from the choral society if not up to standard. Being judged all the time on this? "we're a team" Different strengths/contributions Teamwork "not always seen by the conductor" Other people in choir know your strengths and rely on you for those skills. Weaker singers let everyone down Sight reading and musicianship skills important. High standard on instrument. Piano playing skills important Being known for reliable musical skills. Coming in in the right place. Accuracy. Stage experience versus choral experience Opera and musical theatre experience opposed to choral Voice versus instrumental/musicianship experience Different strengths/contributions Variety of backgrounds creates "a good team" Soloist experience. Strong voices Fear of singing solo/standing out Making music "for myself" rather than standing out as a soloist Enjoying the rehearsal process most Getting to know and like the music through rehearsal. "I'm not good at relaxing" Enjoyable challenge "as long as it's not critical and nasty"	Not part of religious tradition until uni Engaging socially important with choir Conductor who expects a lot and is critical Conductor not always encouraging people feel they belong vocally Need to feel you can "improve and overcome" technical issues People can be let go from choral society if not up to standard. Being judged. "we're a team" Different strengths/contributions Teamwork "not always seen by the conductor" Other people in choir know your strengths and rely on you Weaker singers "bring everyone with them" Sight reading and musicianship skills important High standard on instrument Piano playing skills important Being known for reliable musical skills. Accuracy, coming in Stage experience versus choral Opera and MT experience opposed to choral Voice versus instrumental/musicianship Different strengths/contributions Variety of backgrounds creates "a good team" Soloist experience. Strong voices Fear of singing solo/standing out Making music "for myself" Enjoying rehearsal process Getting to know and like the music "I'm not good at relaxing" Enjoyable challenge "as long as it's not critical and nasty"	

“I can’t stand boring rehearsals” “You do have to pull your weight” “he doesn’t want uncertain people” Not wanting to stand out as a soloist generally. Nerve-wracking. “I don’t like people staring at me”. Not comfortable as a performer “we are very othered compared to soloists in the choral society” “They’re professionals, and we are the amateurs” Chapel choir solos “for God” Conductor knowing what a singer is capable of in terms of solos Music needs to be relatable to everyday life and emotion Sounding “fervent” without being religious is difficult. It is a performance Knowing how to convey something you don’t believe in Being seen as different Relatable music – reflection of your own life and experience. Not growing up in a religious environment makes accessing the emotions of certain pieces difficult Not fitting in with the church Excluded as an adult woman from cathedral singing generally? “still an area of exclusion” [university] college choir gave invaluable experience Sightreading training Unfair advantage for those who have formal musical skills Coping with musicianship demands As opposed to “a fabulous voice”. That alone does not equip people for the challenges of high level choral singing. “more popular choirs” can accommodate those who don’t have the skill Age 13 “when I first sang with music” notation (Year 9) Performing in oratorios at school “set me on a life of choral singing”. Life-changing. Singing has facilitated personal relationships	“I can’t stand boring rehearsals” “You do have to pull your weight” “he doesn’t want uncertain people” Nerve-wracking to stand out as soloist “I don’t like people staring at me”. Not comfortable as performer “we are very othered compared to soloists in the choral society” “professionals” versus “amateurs” Chapel choir solos were “for God” Conductor knowing what singer is capable of Music needs to be relatable Sounding “fervent” without being religious is difficult How to convey something you don't believe in Being seen as different Relatable music – reflection of own life and experience Not growing up religious – hard to access those emotions Not fitting in with church Excluded as an adult woman from cathedral singing “still an area of exclusion” Uni choir gave invaluable experience Sightreading training Unfair advantage for those with formal musical skills Coping with musicianship demands As opposed to “a fabulous voice”, which does not equip people “more popular choirs” can accommodate those without the skill Age 13 when first sang with music notation (Year 9) Oratorios in school “set me on a life of choral singing” Singing has facilitated personal relationships	

“it’s given me community” “singing you can do anywhere” – can automatically find a choir to belong to wherever you are.	“it’s given me community” “singing you can do anywhere” – join choir elsewhere and belong	

P4

Break from singing lessons between school years 9 and 12 Primary school choir No singing lessons in primary school Currently taking singing lessons "fun" "collaborative with my teacher" "singing for fun" Strong music department at secondary school Took Grade 3 exam Musical theatre Great teacher Teacher well connected. Useful. Belonging : "finding inner happiness with yourself" "feeling comfortable and grounded within yourself" Singing to yourself, in the shower. No inhibitions Belonging to yourself when singing in public. Like in the shower. Being part of an ensemble "create that harmony with someone else" Ensemble singing is "exciting" Teacher unsure how to teach musical theatre Student lacked confidence because of teacher? Improved technique "being taught for what I want to learn" Feeling "I'm good enough" = belonging "I kind of judge myself in terms of skill value" Self-critical Realising "I'm actually pretty good". "I've always been part of music" "immersed since I was born" Musical parents Increasing skills Likes to "have an audience" "I just can't really see myself doing anything else" re performing Not part of a "group of like-minded people yet" Will find like-minded people in the future.	Break from singing lessons between years 9 and 12 Primary school choir No singing lessons in primary Currently taking lessons Lessons "fun" Lessons "collaborative with my teacher" "singing for fun" Strong music department at secondary Took grade 3 Musical theatre Great teacher Teacher well connected Belonging: "finding inner happiness with yourself" "feeling comfortable and grounded within yourself" Singing to yourself, in shower. No inhibitions Belonging to yourself when singing in public Being part of ensemble "create that harmony with someone else" Ensemble singing "exciting" Teacher unsure how to teach MT Student lacked confidence because of teacher? Improved technique "being taught for what I want to learn" Feeling "I'm good enough"= belonging "I kind of judge myself in terms of skill value" Self-critical Realising "I'm actually pretty good" "I've always been part of music" "immersed since I was born" Musical parents Increasing skills Likes to "have an audience" "I just can really see myself doing anything else" re performing Not part of "group of like-minded people yet" Singing strongest skill, followed by acting and dance	

Singing the strongest skill, followed by acting and dance Singing "talent" Singing confidence Singing "is what I really want to like drive home" Piano or guitar "important" for musicianship skills "extra music knowledge is very helpful" Music A level is "fun" Sight reading skills have developed with piano playing Confident: "I don't think I'm bad at it" Nerves in front of an audience More nerves speaking in public speaking than singing Still nerve-wracking performing "your stomach starts to flip" "your breath gets very faltery" Easier to perform for people you don't know People you know might judge you or you think they will "thinking about what they're thinking about you" Performance nerves Music as another language "creates an unspoken thing between them" Shared with another person Great school music teacher "a mutualistic relationship" with school music teacher Community Different strengths/contributions Community Hobbies/interests Religion and community Meet new people Shared interest outside family life "a lot of people lack nowadays" – shared interest Music is community Individual skills contribute to whole collective Collaboration Musical family has influenced interest in music Going to concerts – supporting family music making Finding sense of belonging: a personal journey Body and emotion connection Negative side of audition rejection Self-doubt/self-questioning	Singing "talent" Singing confidence Singing "is what I really want to like drive home" Piano or guitar "important" for musicianship skills "extra music knowledge is very helpful" Music A level "fun" Sight reading skills have developed with piano playing Confident: "I don't think I'm bad at it" Nerves in front of an audience More nerves speaking in public than singing Still nerve-wracking performing "your stomach starts to flip" "your breath gets very faltery" Easier to perform for people you don't know People you know might judge you "thinking about what they're thinking about you" Performance nerves Music as another language "creates an unspoken thing between them" Shared with another person Great school music teacher "a mutualist relationship" with school music teacher Community Different strengths/contributions Community Hobbies/interests Religion and community Meet new people Shared interest outside family life Music is community Individual skills contribute to collective Collaboration Musical family Going to family's concerts Finding sense of belonging: a personal journey Body and emotion connection Negative side of audition rejection: self-doubt/self-questioning	

Not taking audition rejection personally. Self-belief Family offer praise – taken for granted Music teacher has “helped the most” A significant other more important? “sense of like inner power and assurance” from being really in the flow of performing? Coping with being judged: “You just have to go in and give all you got” Being in character when performing. Transcending self. Structure of exams, something to work towards, important but not always essential. “it’s good to be learning”, “goal or not”	Not taking rejection personally – self-belief Family offer praise – taken for granted Music teacher has “helped the most” Significant other “sense of like inner power and assurance” Coping with being judged Being in character in performance Transcending self in performance Structure of exams, something to work towards important but not essential “it’s good to be learning”, “goal or not”	

P5

Joined church choir as a child Went to a church school "I loved it" Played cello while in primary school Sang in primary but "wasn't that confident" Solos at church when preteen and teenager Loved the secondary school choir By end of secondary, was "one of the go-to people" for solos Sang at Speech Day and in productions "I wasn't very good at acting, but I had a good sort of solid singing voice" "then things waned a bit" after secondary. Gap in singing until after uni Local choir until children came along Gap of 15 years after children Choral society since 2017 Cathedral singing in summer Church soloist now Vicar was sweet and told stories "hard work to begin with" but worth it? Used to fear reading out loud – stuttering and stumbling Singing a tune helped with the words Singing integral to building speaking confidence Learned how to sing psalms when young Vicar "patient and encouraging" Singing helped build inner belief "that you're actually good at something" "I was always quite bright at school, but I didn't feel particularly bright" Singing gave extra confidence –"having the guts to do it" in front of lots of people Not arrogance but "deeper sort of confidence" "integral to who I am" - identity Sang in the car but parents not singers (mother "can't sing at all and my dad couldn't sing great either") Sister joined choir	Church choir Church school "I loved it" Cello in primary Sang primary "wasn't that confident" Solos at church as preteen and teenager Loved secondary choir Became "one of the go-to people" for solos Sang at Speech Day and in productions "I wasn't very good at acting, but I had a good sort of solid singing voice" "things waned a bit" after secondary Gap in singing until after uni Local choir until had children Gap of 15 years after children Choral society Cathedral singing Church soloist Used to fear reading out loud Singing a tune helped with words Singing integral to building speaking confidence Learned how to sing psalms when young Vicar "patient and encouraging" Singing helped build inner belief: "you're actually good at something" "I didn't feel particularly bright" at school Singing gave extra confidence – "having the guts to do it" in front of an audience Not arrogance but "deeper sort of confidence" "integral to who I am" – identity Sang in the car but parents not singers Sister joined choir Learned lots of repertoire	

Learned lots of repertoire Church choir encouraged parents to go to church. "I still go to church, it's who I am" – along with music Choir was vibrant and interesting Mix of boys and girls in choir Part of church community in a small town Grounding in music. Great music teacher at middle school. Teacher encouraging of cello playing. She "didn't rate my voice particularly" Singing overtook cello "I hated scales" on cello Singing seemed less effort But singing involved hours of practice "I had a very supportive" secondary music teacher Secondary music teacher was "amazing". "I would get one on one with her" but not singing lessons A few singing lessons after joining choral society Hasn't had very many lessons Singing lessons helped with voice rehabilitation after sore throats. They were useful Reassurance that no damage to voice "I just didn't put in the work" needed Prefers "the surround sound you get in a choir" "just gorgeous" "I just wanted to go to choir and just enjoy it", "because I work full time" "normal rehearsals" were enough Listening at home to the music to be learned helped "it was like I'd time-travelled" Going back to church choir days Loving getting something after finding it challenging "there is a feeling of belonging because of that sort of surround sound" Belonging "important" "I've made some really good friends"	"I still go to church, it's who I am" Choir was vibrant and interesting Mix of boys and girls in choir Part of church community in small town Grounding music Great music teacher at middle school Teacher encouraged cello playing. She "didn't rate my voice particularly" Singing overtook cello Singing seemed less effort But singing involved hours of practice "I had a very supportive" secondary music teacher Secondary music teacher "amazing" A few singing lessons with choral society Not many lessons Singing lessons were useful after persistent sore throats Teacher was reassuring about voice "I just didn't put in the work" needed for solo lessons. Prefers "the surround sound you get in a choir Choir sound "just gorgeous" "I just wanted to go and just enjoy it" "normal rehearsals" were enough Listening at home to the music to be learned helped "it was like I'd time-travelled" back to church choir Getting something after finding it hard "there is a feeling of belonging because of that sort of surround sound" Belonging "important": "I've made some really good friends" "intrinsic satisfaction of nailing it"	

“intrinsic satisfaction of nailing it” “so you’ve got your actual belonging” “being sensitive to those around you” “I suppose you belong to one another, because you’re really tuning into the sound that you’re making” “we’re all in it, and we want to do a good job” “it’s a very deep belonging” “dream-giver” video “I left music on my bed” “my dad died 5 years ago” “I got really emotional” “music sits out of time” “it’s made…hundreds of years ago, and then we’re bringing it back to life” Hope young people will join choirs Valuing having younger people in choir “you can feel it is still carrying on”. Tradition Belonging with church and family. Music third. “as important as exercise” Belonging at a school where music is important Music central to the school ethos Audition for choral society “not high-powered” Had to be “up to scratch” to do the summer cathedral choir, sister said “it’s just all gorgeous” Some “really obscure stuff” “my mum doesn’t really like music particularly” “I think she just wanted silence when she got home” “my dad would listen to classical music” “We didn’t really listen” Pupils at school: “I think they’re more motivated by doing musical instruments” “I did learn the piano” “I wasn’t very coordinated” “I don’t think I practised enough” Dad encouraged piano Recorder “a really good gateway instrument” “I’ve not got perfect pitch, but I know roughly where notes are	“being sensitive to those around you “I suppose you belong to one another…tuning into the sound that you’re making” “we’re all in it, and we want to do a good job” “it’s a very deep belonging” “music sits out of time” “it’s made…hundreds of years ago, and then we’re bringing it back to life” Hope young people will join choirs Valuing having younger people in choir “you can feel it is still carrying on. Tradition. Belonging with church, family and music Singing “as important as exercise” Belonging as teacher at musical school Music central to school ethos Choral society audition “not high-powered” Had to be “up to scratch”, sister said “it’s all just gorgeous” Some “really obscure stuff” “my mum doesn’t really like music particularly” “my dad would listen to classical music” “We didn’t really listen Pupils at school seem “more motivated by doing musical instruments” “I did learn the piano” “I don’t think I practised enough” Dad encouraged piano Recorder “a really good gateway instrument” “I know roughly where notes are in terms of how they feel in my voice”	

in terms of how they feel in my voice" Knowing intervals "helpful". "And rhythm of course. Rhythm is key" Sight singing OK. YouTube helpful too "I can sort of plot it out" Enjoys singing solo at church. Floating high notes Quiet singing with the microphone Did worry that would appear as showing off Now thinks "it's a gift, so share it" "I do practise" A piece like Spem daunting "I'm not confident enough to sing in parts" Solo easier than singing Spem one to a part "I like to challenge myself" "I'm not fussed about how good I am" Acting: "I think I was too self-conscious as a teenager" Tune comes first, followed by the words, "putting the expression in" But "some of the words are really powerful" "that's quite emotive" "it's a vehicle for words" Sang Hallelujah chorus to the children "I've not got a wishy-washy voice at all" "solid", "pure sort of sound" Children hear pop singers make a more "woolly" sound and want to emulate that? Learning to sing psalms as a child "I don't think I've ever been accused of being out of tune. I might be on the wrong note" "probably rhythm, I'm not as good at" "I think it was really good for him, because he was quite withdrawn in, in class, and he could get himself in a bit of a muddle about things" Singing was "just something I did" Wouldn't give up choir to do guides	Knowing intervals "helpful". And "Rhythm is key" Sight singing OK. YouTube helpful. "I can sort of plot it out" Enjoys solo singing at church Floating high notes Quiet singing with microphone Not wanting to show off but "it's a gift, so share it" "I do practise" "I'm not confident enough to sing in parts" "I like to challenge myself" "I'm not fussed about how good I am" Acting: "too self-conscious as a teenager" Tune comes first, followed by words "some of the words are really powerful" "that's quite emotive" "it's a vehicle for words" "I don't think I've ever been accused of being out of tune. I might be on the wrong note" "probably rhythm, I'm not as good at" Singing was "just something I did" Wouldn't give up choir to do guides Doing choir as a child "integral to my self-esteem" "the whole is bigger than the sum of the parts" Belonging: "You're a team, and you're working towards a shared goad, which is the concert" Took some music exams	

Doing choir as a child "was integral to my self-esteem, definitely" Belonging in terms of choir: "you're like a team" "the whole is bigger than the sum of the parts" Belonging: "You're a team, and you're working towards a shared goal which is the concert" Took some music exams Failed O level because of "the aural bit" and intervals "I think with some practice now, I could" "I think I just want to be able to sing" But wants to feel on top of the music in a concert. Exams not really of interest right now. Need "headspace" for that	Failed O' level because of "the aural bit" "I think I just want to be able to sing" But wants to feel on tope of the music in a concert Exams not really of interest right now. Need "headspace" for that.	

P6

“sang at school” Not in choir Joined women’s club choir Took a break but “knew I wanted to do some more singing” Played piano as a child Calming to play music on piano Singing “more accessible” now “easy route” “can just turn up” to choir. Piano needs practice Grade 3 piano but nothing after Didn’t like exams Took Grade 5 theory and O level music Took up oboe in 6th form to join an orchestra Singing “easier”? Less stressful than playing oboe?	“sang at school” Not in school choir Women’s club choir “knew I wanted to do some more singing” Played piano as a child Singing “more accessible” now than instrument “easy route” “can just turn up” to choir. Piano needs practice Grade 3 piano but nothing after Didn’t like exams Grade 5 theory and O level music Took up oboe in 6th form to join orchestra Singing “easier”? Less stressful than oboe.	
“very low key” Conductor gives starting note. “know where you’re going” Dutch choir helping with Dutch language practice Loved the scratch choir experience Extra language comprehension challenge Looked out for individuals to join “everybody’s there to have fun and enjoy” One singing lesson as an adult “I was definitely shy of singing” Left out of choir at age 10. “absolutely, really cruel” Made to sit at back Later told “you can sing” Dad was choral singer Belonging: “People, and their stories and sharing are what’s most important to me…in life” “being part of a team” Choir does all that: teamwork and sharing “we sang our hearts out together” “turn into” the person singing well and sing with them “there is a sense of belonging” “I feel very included and involved” in spite of language barrier “they look after each other”	Local choir “very low key” “know where you’re going” with the music Dutch choir helping with Dutch language Loved scratch choir Language comprehension challenge Looked out for individuals to sit with “everybody’s there to have fun and enjoy” One singing lesson as an adult “I was definitely shy of singing” Left out of choir age 10: “absolutely, really cruel” Made to sit at back while choir sang Later told by teacher, “you can sing” Dad was choral singer Belonging: “people, and their stories and sharing are what’s most important to me” “being part of a team” Choir: teamwork and sharing “we sang our hearts out together” “turn into” the person singing well nearby/sing with them “there is a sense of belonging”	

Private practice not really needed “I don’t seem to be alone” in terms of standard “never sing around the house” “doing something that is not work” “could do with improving” technique Some sight singing skills from playing instruments Can “guess the intervals” Playing piano has “definitely helped” “walking on clouds” after scratch performance “warm feeling” Being part of the whole group “it felt good” “we all belonged” “a team” “very specific job to do” Belonging as a singer: “Making a sound together that sounds lovely” “have to get it right” To belong you need to “feel as though” you do Belonging: accepted by the group? “friendship and kindness” linked to belonging	“I feel very included and involved” in spite of language barrier “they look after each other” Home practice not really needed “I don’t seem to be alone” in terms of standard “never sing around the house” “doing something that is not work” “could do with improving” technique Some sight singing skills from playing instruments Can “guess the intervals” Playing pian has “definitely helped” “walking on clouds” after scratch performance “warm feeling” Being part of whole group “it felt good” “we all belonged” “a team” “very specific job to do” Belonging as a singer: “Making a sound together that sounds lovely” “have to get it right” To belong you need to “feel as though” you do Belonging: accepted by the group? “friendship and kindness” linked to belonging	

Appendix 11: Thematic map

