

## **Ansökan till Riksbankens Jubileumsfond 2009: Kör i fokus, nätverk för körforskning**

### **Svensk sammanfattning**

Denna ansökan gäller medel för ett mångvetenskapligt nätverk med avsikt att stödja kontakten mellan forskare med kör, körsång och körverksamhet i fokus. Nätverket består av 17 forskare från 14 universitet och musikhögskolor i Sverige, Danmark, Norge, Tyskland, Frankrike och England. Medverkande forskare representerar ämnesområden som musikvetenskap, musikpedagogik, psykologi, historia och sociologi. Nätverkets mål är att samla kompetens och idéer på området och att skapa en europeisk plattform för teoretiskt och metodologiskt utbyte, spridning av kunskap, information och inspiration samt projektutveckling över disciplingränserna. En bakomliggande tanke med nätverket är att "kör" som paraplybegrepp möjliggör ett tvärvetenskapligt forum, där olika vetenskapliga diskurser kan problematiseras och utvecklas och gemensamma referensramar skapas. Det är en vetenskaplig utmaning att kombinera de olika disciplinernas teoribildning, forskningstradition och metodologi. En konkret målsättning med nätverket är att diskutera och utarbeta startpunkter för större samordnade forskningsprojekt. Sådana gränsöverskridande projekt på detta område lyser hittills med sin frånvaro.

Initiativtagare till nätverket är Dr Ursula Geisler från Avdelningen för musikvetenskap vid Institutionen för kulturvetenskaper och Dr Karin Johansson vid Musikhögskolan i Malmö, båda Lunds universitet. Båda har anknytning till forskningsverksamheten vid Körcentrum Syd ([www.korcentrumsyd.se](http://www.korcentrumsyd.se)) vid Lunds Universitet.

### **Choir in focus – a cross-disciplinary and transnational network**

This network is initiated by researchers based at Choir Centre South (Körcentrum Syd, [www.korcentrumsyd.se](http://www.korcentrumsyd.se)), which was established in 2007 as a joint venture between Malmö Academy of Music, The Department of Musicology, Odeum (all at Lund University), Malmö Symphony Orchestra and Music South (Musik i Syd). The application concerns a network for research in areas related to choir as a musical and social activity.

In a variety of disciplines, choir singing, choral practice, and common singing in general are explored as research objects. Together, these describe a complex and multi-faceted field of interesting cultural-historical, pedagogical, sociological, psychological and music-related topics (Brusniak, 2003; Fagius, 2007; Kvist Dahlstedt, 2001; Sandgren, 2005). The disciplines that work with choir-related research differ in theoretical and methodological traditions, as well as in definitions of "choir" and of what choir research should be. Even though there are vast possibilities for co-operative and cross-disciplinary projects in this area, such studies seem to be lacking until very recently (Bresler, 2007; Colwell & Richardson, 2002). Two newly published interdisciplinary approaches are documented in *Chorus and Community* (Ahlquist, 2006) and *Chorgesang als Medium von Interkulturalität: Formen, Kanäle, Diskurse* (Fischer, 2007). The former uses "community" as a common denominator as the theoretical point of departure in order to grasp "a more inclusive music history, that is, a broader outlook on continuity and change over time" (Ahlquist, 2006, p. 7). Some authors pay attention to choral traditions in different European countries like England, Italy and Germany, but the Scandinavian countries are not embraced. The same tendency can be seen in the latter publication, *Chorgesang als Medium von Interkulturalität*. Since the research projects focus on German choir singing and its traces in Central and Eastern Europe, the transnational roots of Scandinavian choral traditions receive no attention. Even if these examples can be interpreted as a newly revived interest in choir topics, they simultaneously point to the marginalized research fields. These concern not only methodological and theoretical premises but also historical, cultural and certain "national" areas.

One task of a choral research network situated in Sweden would therefore be to connect to European discourses on “choir” and to establish a relation to research in Sweden. Swedish research has a certain focus on acoustical (Ternström, 1989), child-related (Fagius, 2007) and male chorus topics (Jonsson, 1990) as well as on music education (Sandberg Jurström, 2001), on peoples’ movements (Öhrström, 1997) and to some extent on Swedish-continental relations (Reimers, 1993). The latter ones are especially interesting with reference to the development of choral practises and theories in historical and postmodern times, where “choir” as a social practise – not at least in Sweden – has gained an important status for large parts of the population.

### **Aims**

The aims of the network are to

- gather together European researchers with competence in the field of research related to choir singing, choral practice and common singing,
- create a European platform for the development of choir research in theory and practice, situated in Sweden,
- investigate the need and scope for cross-disciplinary studies in this field, which is seen as under-researched and as representing possibilities for constructive projects,
- develop profiled research questions and common projects in this area, which is internationally wide-spread and multi-faceted.

### **Opportunities for knowledge transfer**

Against the background of an international literature review (Geisler, forthcoming) and an interview study with prominent Swedish choir leaders (Johansson, forthcoming), we suggest that a cross-disciplinary, European network with “choir” as a common denominator could be a starting point for the development of common frames of reference. In the network, experiences from different traditions can be discussed and problematized. One starting point for recent choir-related research is situated in theory and methodology developed in cultural and social sciences (Welch, 2007), another one in historical musicology.

The development of joint approaches through combinations of theory, research traditions and methodology from differing traditions constitutes a scientific challenge, and the aim of the network is first and foremost to start and conduct a discussion about fruitful connections and to facilitate co-ordinated research projects.

The network will be used for the reflection on problems in common areas and for the development of constructive questions related to “choir” on an international basis. Questions of changing definitions over time (“choir”, “chorus”, “Singgruppe” etc.) will be problematized as well as more general questions about the situatedness of choral singing in postmodern societies. The long-term aim is to plan and carry out internationally co-ordinated research projects related to “choir”. Research agents from different disciplines, on junior as well as on senior levels, will thus work with the aim of developing common theoretical and methodological interests in theory and practice. The participants represent a range of institutions and traditions and contribute with lived experience from differing research traditions. With “choir” as an over-arching umbrella concept the network provides the scope for co-operation across national and disciplinary borders, for example, between the traditionally musicological discipline based in humanities, practice-based artistic research in the area of music performance and social-science-oriented research in music education (Folkestad, 2008). It is also seen as a starting point for debates around the musical and social function of choirs in modern society as mirroring collective and individual needs for meaning, health and well-being (Lindström, 2006).

### **Network activity**

The network will draw together 17 participants from 14 universities and music academies in Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Germany, France and the UK. Their continuous task will be to inform each other about the research situation in their home countries and to update the network concerning conferences, dissertations and on-going projects of interest.

Considering the international character of the network, the number of physical network meetings will be limited to one per year. An initial meeting in connection with Lund International Choral Academy in November 2009 will be followed by an internal conference with the focus on development in September 2010. The period will end with a future-oriented meeting in May 2011, with a focus on future projects and research planning. An additional ambition of the network is the organisation of an international conference, which may take place during this period or later. The first physical meeting will focus on the presentations of papers and articles and on the sharing of experiences concerning methodological approaches and theoretical perspectives. Internet-based meetings and communication will be carried out at the virtual platform of Körcentrum Syd.

Network activities will be documented and published continuously at the research homepage of Körcentrum Syd as well as in a planned, biannual and multi-lingual printed report. In order to promote feed-back and develop contacts with relevant activities in the surrounding society, the network will plan co-operation with and participation in, for example, choir festivals and contexts for preventive health care.

The network meetings will be held in the Malmö/Lund area, which is reasonably central to the participants. The facilities at the Malmö Academy of Music and The Department of Musicology in Lund will be used for meetings and conferences.

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## Participants in alphabetical order

*Professor Martin Ashley*, Edge Hill University, Ormskirk, UK. Ashley is currently Director of the Centre for Learner Identity Studies and Head of Research in the Faculty of Education at Edge Hill University, near Liverpool UK, for which he holds an institutional chair. His research career includes publications on childrens' spirituality, environmental sustainability and Steiner education. His current main research focus is boys and singing. At Edge Hill, he develops accreditation for the school singing workforce including professional doctorates in choral education and primary school arts.

*Dr. phil. habil. Friedhelm Brusniak*, Professor of Music Education at the Department of Music Research at Würzburg University, Germany Brusniaks thesis focused on the choir composer Conrad Rein (ca. 1475-1522). In 1998 he wrote his habilitation about the beginnings of the amateurs choir movement in Bayerisch-Schwaben in the 19th century. From 1989-1999 he was the first scientific Director of the Singers Museum (Sängermuseum) in Feuchtwangen. He is an outstanding researcher of the German choir movement with many publications (Art. "Chor und Chormusik" in MGG2).

*PhD student Pia Bygdéus*, Malmö Academy of Music, Lund University, Sweden Bygdéus is a PhD student in music education and works with a thesis on the topic of artistic leadership and choir conducting. Her project is a qualitative study of 35 choristers and 3 choir leaders, focusing on meeting points between music-making and learning.

*MA Gunnel Fagius*, Uppsala University, Sweden Fagius is a research co-ordinator at the Choir centre at Uppsala university. Her publications include a book on childrens' singing and a study of Swedish choral singing in the 1930's.

*Dr. phil. Ursula Geisler*, Research Assistent in Musicology at the Department of Cultural Sciences, Lund University, Sweden Geislers thesis "Gesang und nationale Gemeinschaft. Zur kulturellen Konstruktion von schwedischem folksång und deutscher Nationalhymne" (Nomos 2001) focused on transnational aspects of singing. In this Swedish-German perspective several choir and chorus aspects in Europe were included from the French Revolution until the end of World War II. In her research she focuses mainly on transnational music aspects and the history and development of musical ideas as well as music transformations in society.

*Anne Haugland Balsnes*, PhD Student at the Norwegian Academy of Music, Oslo, Norway. Visiting fellow at Agder University, Kristiansand, Norway Balsnes is currently finishing a PhD-thesis in Music Pedagogy. The subject is amateur choral singing. She has conducted a case study of an amateur choir in a small Norwegian community. Her study is based on theories of situated learning, supplemented by social scientific perspectives. The choir is studied as a community of practice, focusing on learning and identity work and the interplay between the social and the musical aspects. The approach combines several methods, including interviews, participant observation and document analysis.

*Dr Karin Johansson*, Malmö Academy of Music, Lund University, Sweden Johansson finished a thesis on organ improvisation in 2008 and has published articles on improvisation, discourse analysis and organ playing. In connection with Körcentrum Syd, Dr Johansson conducts a qualitative study of of high-ranking choral conductors' definitions of musical quality and artistic value. The study aims at capturing and translating tacit dimensions of practice- based knowledge and experience.

*Dr. Helmke Jan Keden*, Contract Teacher for Musicology and Music Didactics at Wuppertal University and Music Teacher at Dietrich Bonhoeffer Grammar School Hilden, Germany Keden's previous research concentrated on the use and abuse of German choirs and choir music in the Third Reich. Currently he is working on the influence of the "young people's movement" on German male voice choirs in the first third of the twentieth century. Dr. Keden's aim is to apply mainly hermeneutic methods to examine the discourses, reactions and correlations in German choirs and to relate them to the ideologisation that occurred later on in the Third Reich.

*Prof. Dr. Linda Maria Koldau*, Professor of Historical Musicology at the Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main, Germany Koldau works together with Danish colleagues on a project on political songs in the German- Danish conflict of the 19th and 20th centuries. This project focusses on the political significance of choral societies in nationalism and on the role of specific German and Danish songs in the establishment of national identity. In cooperation with the Visecenter at Syddansk Universitet (Odense) songbooks and private song collections will be examined and classified, leading to a comparative study on the role of song and choral societies in the border region.

*Prof. Dr. Helmut Loos*, Professor of Historical Musicology at Leipzig University, Germany Loos studied Music Education and Musicology, Art History and Philosophy at Bonn University. From 1989 to 1993 he was the Director of the Department of German Music in Eastern Europe in Bergisch Gladbach. His broad research focus includes questions on choir and singing movements in Germany and Central Europe.

*Guillaume Lurton*, *PhD Student* at the Centre de sociologie des organisations, Paris, France. Visiting Fellow - Harvard Department of Sociology Lurton is currently doing a PhD in sociology, with a focus on the development of choir music in France since the 1940 s. This issue is tackled from the perspective of sociology of culture, and of economic sociology. The monographic approach of the French choral world includes both amateur choral groups and professional choirs. A combination of methodological approaches is used, including sociological interviews, ethnographic observation, and quantitative data.

*Peter Edlef Nissen*, Research librarian and research assistant at University of Southern Denmark. Nissen is musicologist, and he has done research in the history of Danish choir culture in the 19th and 20th century. Main focus has been on the musical repertoire and culture in the choirs of the bourgeois society, where aspects of education, internationalism and urbanism are crucial. He is now working on a project about the role of choir societies in the development of modern Danish culture.

*Ragnhild Sandberg*, *PhD Student* at the Academy of Music and Drama, Gothenburg, Sweden. Sandberg is currently doing a PhD in Music Education, with a focus on musical communication in choirs during repetitions and concerts. This issue is tackled from the perspective of a social semiotic and multimodal theory. Methodologically the study is based on video registrations and detailed transcriptions of the actions of six professional choir conductors, and how they use different semiotic modes in order to realise the musical interpretation and performing in the interaction with their choirs.

*Maria Sandgren*, *PhD*, reg psychologist, teaching assistant professor at Department of Psychology, Stockholm University, Stockholm. Sandgren's thesis focused on artistic development among opera singers "Becoming and being an opera singer: Health, personality and skill acquisition". She conducts research on skill acquisition (i.e. expert performance) and related factors among singers and in choral singing. Another area of research is emotions and well-being. In listening experiments, emotions like grief and hope are investigated in relation to musical structures using examples from the Swedish choir repertoire. A range of qualitative and quantitative methods is used in the studies.

*Professor Graham Welch*, Institute of Education, London, UK Welch is Established Chair of Music Education and is Deputy Dean of the Institute's Faculty of Culture and Pedagogy. He is elected Chair of the internationally based Society for Education, Music and Psychology Research (SEMPRE), President Elect of ISME (becoming President in 2010) and past Co-Chair of the Research Commission of the International Society for Music Education (ISME). Publications number over two hundred and fifty and embrace musical development and music education, teacher education, the psychology of music, singing and voice science, and music in special education and disability.

*Sverker Zadig*, *PhD student* at Malmö Academy of Music/Örebro University, Department of Musicology, Sweden Zadigs interest for the study about "Musical learning – Learning in the Choir. How do the singers in a choir cooperate and learn together and from each other?" is based on his experiences both as a choral singer and a conductor. He has noticed that it in choirs and within the choral parts someone often functions as an informal leader - just by

being the one in front musically - concerning attacks, intonation, phrasing and so on. The aim of the study is to examine the role of informal musical leaders in choirs and within the choral parts.

*Eva Öhrström, Professor at The Royal Academy of Music, Stockholm, Sweden* Öhrströms research focuses on Swedish music history in the 19th and early 20th century and highlights especially aspects of women and music as well as music and peoples education. Choir singing and other more general moments of choirs in society are a natural part of these research activities.