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"Here in this Generous Room": Space, Voice, and the Curation of Affect in Professional Euro-American Choralism

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by

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and, above all, ST.

ABSTRACT

"Here in this Generous Room": Space, Voice, and the Curation of Affect in Professional Euro-American Choralism

by

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In this dissertation, I analyze how singers make use of internal and external space to achieve affective goals in choral practice at the semi-professional and professional levels. I investigate how space, body, and voice are interconnected when experiencing emotion; and how choral practice activates and relies on this interconnectivity and legacies of religious meditation and attention. Observing and working with professional choral singers over the last several years—including groups VOCES8, The King's Singers, The Tallis Scholars, Roomful of Teeth, Voices21C, and others—I seek to broaden the scope of scholarship around choirs. Professional vocal ensembles follow rules and mores governed by each singer's physical reactions and vocal adjustments within spatial acoustics. Recognizing groups' affective goals can reveal how singers function as both listeners and diagnostic bodies, adjusting to a given space and adapting their voices for specific purposes. I connect physical diagnostics of space and voice to the affective embodiment of feeling, memory, and cultural mores in shared experiences, and show how group singing hones skills inherent in affective embodiment in ways that are crucial in choralism. Diagnostic embodiment—a cyclical set of adjustments in which singers use sensorial embodied aspects of group vocality to guide further physical-sonic adjustments as they continue to sing—is, I contend, a defining process of choral practice.

I identify four areas in current professional choral practice—traditional, cinematic, experimental, and activist/advocacy. The dissertation includes fieldwork with ensembles that exemplify these categories. I explain how differing rehearsal and performance goals are revealed when singers consider intended affect. Techniques from traditional practices of choralism have been adopted and modified within cinematic, experimental and activist/advocate strands of choral practice, creating a new ethics of affective curation that underline moral/religious undertones of choral experience. I show that vocal, physical and affective mechanisms, along with cultural comprehension and social investment, are tied together in "affective regimes" (Mankekar and Gupta 2016), hegemonic guides through physical, mental, and emotional experience curated through various controlling powers and actors in choral practice.

I discuss how collaborative voice—combined with other voices and mixed within the acoustic spaces—complicates ideas of the individual body. This work shows that physical sensation is an often-overlooked or -oversimplified aspect of metaphysical experiences and faith, and that choral vocality has become a gateway to meditative affective states within many worship traditions. These meditative affective states have been transplanted, in the modern post-religious era, into film and television soundtracks in a way that perpetuates choralism as an affective trigger supporting considerations of morality, ego, individualized narrative, and ethics. Expanding upon these connotations and mechanisms, I detail how the ensemble Roomful of Teeth connects with the physiological and emotional triggers identified in cinematic choralism—sometimes relying on white hegemonies to present "experimental" voices taken from colonized and/or disenfranchised groups. In the final chapter, I turn to my own experiences within ensemble Voices 21C to consider whether the sensorial honing of

diagnostic embodiment could potentially allow choral participants to listen differently to others and expand their community of care (Cheng 2016).

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INTRODUCTION

How can our minds and bodies be grateful enough that we have spent
Here in this generous room,[…]this evening of content?
—Sara Teasdale (1933)

This is not a dissertation about choirs, or choral repertoire, or the reification of choral sound into a fetishized object, the bedrock disenfranchisements of colonialism and capitalism in choral tradition, the uses of historical thought experiments in musicological inquiry, the ubiquity of choralism in film soundtracks, or the application of choral tropes and praxes toward activist and advocacy aims. Or perhaps it is about all of these things.

Fundamentally, this dissertation is about *affect*, the interweaving of physical, mental, and emotional processes into reactions of feeling. Though this work is cemented in much-needed discussions of choral practice that connect curated combinatory vocal utterances to space, acoustics, socio-political contexts, and individual relational experience, and relies on fieldwork discussions of rehearsal and performance practice within professional choral spaces, these inquiries are centered around identifying physical and metaphysical mechanisms of affect through choric processes. Overall, I aim to connect physical diagnostics of space and voice to embodiment of feeling, memory and cultural mores in shared experiences. Through these connections, I explain many ways that group singing hones the skills inherent in physical and affective embodiment in ways that are crucial to

experiencing, and especially voicing within, choral practice in the United States and the United Kingdom.

In designing and pursuing this research, I originally thought I would be describing choral experiences as culturally-contextualized musical performance. Ethnomusicological investigation rarely discusses professionalized Euro-centric or -derived art music. I felt that anthropological and cultural studies lenses should be applied to professional choralism, as well as other branches of concert-hall music (orchestral and solo instrumental "classical" performance). My endeavor was intended to further blur separations between ethnomusicology and musicology, supercultural and subcultural music and sound, and classist and capitalist distinctions that have kept ethnomusicologists from the study of European-derived art music. However, I soon found I needed to deepen the investigation beyond political and cultural structures to traverse the fallow land lacunae between ethnomusicology and historical musicology, cultural studies and philosophy, and sound studies and affect theory.

The ethnomusicological tendency toward activist championing of the non-hegemonic has encouraged ethnomusicologists to spurn investigation of hegemonic and monied worlds of concertizing, training and pedagogy. This has led to lacunae in ethnomusicology that, in earlier years, was seen as a corrective, only highlighting music and sound less venerated by musicologists and historians. However, in more recent years, this corrective—that of solely focusing on non-Western, or non-Art Music paradigms—simply reifies European-derived Art

Music traditions as entirely divorced from quotidian life; which in turn further entrenches the paradoxical notion that hegemony is an enemy to be ignored and not worthy of rigorous cultural investigation *because* of its powerful reach. Areas of concert music culture have become the unnamed non-other against which many musics, practices, and sounds are defined. For example, the term "superculture," Mark Slobin's overarching umbrella category of hegemonic culture that I referenced in the previous paragraph, is primarily introduced to help define the other, "subcultural" hybridized categories of musical practice and experience (1993).

Musicological and music theory studies of European-derived Art Music have certainly diversified from the positivist historical tightrope over the last forty years. Integration of critical theory has invited kaleidoscopic new views of old works and introduced new pieces to audiences and the public, particularly as previously undervalued works by women, Indigenous, and BIPOC composers have come to light. Tracing the lineages of colonialism and imperialism through the introduction, reinvention, and subversion of Euro-derived concert and religious music has proved to be an exciting and necessary scholarly endeavor. And musicologists have increasingly branched out beyond the areas of European Art Music lineages, moving into other genres and arenas. However, sequestration of Euro-derived historical art and religious musics as its own discreet genre, separate from broader globalized popular culture and musical consumption and development, still proves to be a tricky whirlpool, a trap difficult from which to escape. Consequently, much of the choral-focused

literature available in musicology—excellent and necessary scholarship though it is—focuses on repertoire, historical context, and performance praxes.[1]

The gaps between the studies of ethnomusicology and musicology offer toeholds for new investigations and approaches—endeavors, in this case, that focus on how people currently perform European-derived choral music, and how this music and the practice of choralism in general has developed to elicit or reinforce affect. This allows for discussion of the hegemony of European-derived religious and art choral music and the room to intimate the vast reach of cultural colonialism that this choral lineage displays. It also moves past repertoire focus on choral music and communal aspects of choral singing.

In this dissertation, I propose that choral practices within the traditions I discuss tie together physicalized experiences of sonic and affective resonances.[2] This discussion is certainly specific to choralism, in that choral singers learn to be aware and adaptive to their surrounding acoustic and other singers' voices with whom they sing. Voices in these choral praxes are shaped within singers' bodies in minute and constant adjustments, as they react to acoustic space and relational engagements with other singers. Repertoire in these traditions relies on the physics of the overtone series to guide singers toward these relational engagements, which, when tuned to overtones, taps into the physical acoustic in physically-felt ways. Physical aspects of singing in shared acoustic space asks singers to habitually

[1] Some of the scholarly work undertaken in these categories are identified and further explored in this Introduction, and have proven invaluable for this investigation.
[2] See Chapter 1 for detailed discussion of physical and affective resonance and the intersections between them.

enmesh their physicalized sensations with each other and with the space, and also causes a keen empathy and delicate sensing of emotional feeling within these labors. The physical and the emotional make up both sides of the term "affect," and, in practice, the sensations of the embodied and emotional experiences are always interconnected and often indecipherable from each other.

Though this dissertation is indeed focused on the physicalized and affective experiences and reactive skills of singers, I also show how the physicalized aspects of choralism are often used to intimate space and embodiment in film and television (see Chapter 3). This type of reach is not unique to choral singers and aficionados. The ubiquity of choral sound as attached to certain types of images and narratives in globalized film and media culture capitalizes on the embodiments and contextualizations of listeners, too. Though it is beyond the fundamental reach of this work, my suggestion is that most people exposed to broad media culture, particularly film, do have an emotional and physicalized investment in choral vocalization that moves beyond the sequestration of choral repertoire in the rarefied "Classical Music" categories of the concert hall. More people care about, or at least are affected by, choral sound than they realize; and that is used to great effect to embed emotional and spatialized embodiments into broad media consumption. The sonic and sensational interconnectivity of choralism allows for affective engagements that draw audiences into the worlds to which they are being introduced and into which they are induced to invest. Music is used in many ways to do this through film and media, but choralism

specifically offers the spatial dimension and religious/community connotations that shape our bodies as we listen, and informs our mental and emotional states through the presented narrative.

Affect, which figures prominently in this project introduction and will provide the cornerstone of the fieldwork analysis later in this work, relies on a long-standing philosophical, cultural, and scientific negotiation of the connections between body, mind, and emotional experience. According to Melissa Gregg and Gregory Seigworth,

> Affect arises in the midst of in-between-ness: in the capacities to act and be acted upon. Affect is an impingement or extrusion of a momentary or sometimes more sustained state of relation as well as the passage (and the duration of passage) of forces or intensities. That is, affect is found in those intensities that pass body to body (human, nonhuman, part-body, and otherwise), in those resonances that circulate about, between, and sometimes stick to bodies and worlds, and in the very passages or variations between these intensities and resonances themselves. (Gregg and Seigworth 2010, 1)

The combinatory nature of affect can reorient ideas about how the body is implicated in a cycle of input and feedback within every experience. Michael Hardt makes clear that in studying affect, we are destabilizing several realms that are usually reified, blurring boundaries in ways that nuance the interconnectivity of our physical and mental lives. He writes,

> The challenge of the perspective of the affects resides primarily in the syntheses it requires. This is, in the first place, because affects refer equally to the body and the mind; and, in the second, because they involve both reason and the passions. Affects require us, as the term suggests, to enter the realm of causality, but they offer a complex view of causality because the affects belong simultaneously to both sides of the causal relationship. (Hardt 2007, ix)

In discussing the synthesis, Michael Heller posits that Gregg and Seigworth's "in-between" is a link between "the physical and the perceptual" (2016, 43) that is often

overridden or recalibrated through exposure to visceral sound.[3] Though affect, and affect theory, has become an important part of scholarship in a variety of fields, it is even more integral in discussing how embodied vocality, and specifically choral singing, takes advantage of the feedback cycles of vocing bodies, acoustic/virtual space, and visceral sensation.

Rather than focus on either individually or group-curated affective intent or reception, I endeavor to show the mechanisms of broader "affective regimes"—what we are *expected, and expect, to feel* in place—that variably guide affective engagement and inclinations in our everyday lives, and perhaps even more potently in sonic performance practice. Anthropologists Purnima Mankekar and Akhil Gupta posited that these systems of power—affective hegemonic guides or channels—can show how affect is often tied to political and sociological aims that are enmeshed in capitalism and systems of governance (2016). Throughout my work, I use affective regimes to describe how we *expect* to feel (physically and emotionally) as a participant in shared acoustic spaces, and suggest that these affective expectations are particularly honed and operationalized in these choral practices, which use the physical manifestations of sound to guide mental/emotional engagement and experience for singers and listeners alike. However, to consider "affective regimes" as a mechanism, we must define how the sounding body participates in shared spaces and can act upon others.

[3] Heller's article focuses on the antique paradigm between subsonic volume/loudness (that which cannot be heard by human ear) and the other end of the spectrum, loudness referred to as "near the threshold of pain," which implies the affective properties of sonic experience that quilt physical and emotional worlds together. His aim is to discuss the ways in which certain types of metal music exploit this threshold to guide responses that overload an embodied system to the point that emotional connection is all but guaranteed.

The concept of affective regimes is bolstered by much earlier work by Raymond Williams, one of the founders of the field of cultural studies. Williams suggests that a generation-specific "structure of feeling" is a part of shared shorthand in communication:

> …it is as firm and definite as "structure" suggests, yet it operates in the most delicate and least tangible parts of our activity. In one sense, this structure of feeling is the culture of a period: it is the particular living result of all the elements in the general organisation. And it is in this respect that the arts of a period, taking these to include characteristic approaches and tones in argument, are of major importance. For here, if anywhere, this characteristic is likely to be expressed; often not consciously, but by the fact that here, in the only examples we have of recorded communication that outlives its bearers, the actual living sense, the deep community that makes the communication possible, is naturally drawn upon. I do not mean that the structure of feeling, any more than the social character, is possessed in the same way by the many individuals in the community. But I think it is a very deep and very wide possession, in all actual communities, precisely because it is on it that communication depends. (2011 [1961], 132–133)

In Chapter 1, I offer an intersection between embodiment, voice, space, and affect, using the term "resonance" both as an embodied and acoustic manifestation and as an affective instigator and investment. In using that term in the physical sense, I suggest that sound, even frequencies will act directly upon human bodies, using human viscera and bone as a manifestation of sound waves—but, to echo Williams above, I do not suggest that this experience is ubiquitous, felt the same way by every body in every circumstance, or overwhelmingly powerful.

The acoustic power within soundwaves has been mythologized in scholarship, and complicated and, in part, debunked by Robert Fink (2018). Fink shows that the rhetorical/metaphorical language of bass culture reorients study of music and sound toward a materialist yet anthropomorphic view of affective power in bass frequencies. However, my use of the term "resonance" as a physical portion of vocalizing in acoustically-live space is supported by Fink's more modest claims about the areas within and outside of the ranges of normal hearing and embodied sensation:

> …we are aware of being surrounded, even gently buffeted, by a phenomenon much larger than ourselves (moving through air, 50-Hz sound waves are almost thirty feet long) but without any real physical pain or danger. Safe beyond the evolutionary specialization of our ears, we can contemplate the vibratory energies of the bass register in comfort. (Fink 2018, 95)

Fink notes that an average human body vibrates at an average of 5 Hz (Ibid., 94). It is the physicalized experience of difference between a body's regular vibration and its sensing of vibration outside the body but within acoustic space that creates aspects of physicalized resonance based on physiology as well as cultural context. This, in combination with audiated acoustic feedback, is the "resonance" that allows choral singers to adjust to each other and to acoustic space within voicing; a physicalized resonance that has become ingrained in the culture of choral singing because of its utility to singers.

When viewed from an ethnomusicological perspective, my scholarship illustrates how singers negotiate internal and external relational spaces to achieve affective goals in choral practice at the semi-professional and professional levels. Investigating how space, body, and voice are interconnected when experiencing emotion, I highlight how choral practice activates and relies on this interconnectivity. I show that choirs embody and follow mores governed by physical reaction and vocal adjustment within spatial acoustics. Recognizing the affective goals of choral ensembles can reveal how and why these cultures of circulation are reinscribed through rehearsal and performance; and shows how singers also function as both listeners and diagnostic bodies, adjusting to a given space and their own voices for specific purposes. Conversely, the interactivity of the physical and emotional within choral

experience, operationalized as a key skill set in choral singers as they constantly listen and make adjustments in real-time, deepens understanding of affect. Suggesting that affect is not only “feeling” but simultaneously a motivator and a diagnostic process, moves beyond the concept of “affect” as a noun and transforms it into an active verb and back again, oscillating between both understandings of the word—affect as feeling and affect as causation—in constant cycle.

Highlighting four broad categories of influence in choral practice—traditional, cinematic, experimental, and activist/advocacy—I focus on groups that exemplify these categories as case studies, explaining how differing rehearsal and performance goals are revealed when singers and conductors negotiate the mechanisms of choralism in physical and affective planes. This shows how preparation differs depending upon practice aims and procedures, and also demonstrates how constructs and preparation techniques from traditional practices of chorality (Connor 2016) have been adopted and modified within experimental and activist/advocate strands of choral practice. Investigating the practices and values of professional and semi-professional choirs in the United States and European contexts can show the links between the singer’s body, physical space (external and internal to the singer), the voice, and affective elements intrinsic to choral singing. Conversations about choral practice have typically been limited either to historical and repertory concerns, the formation of community, or pedagogical approach. This dissertation’s primary focus is the singers’ negotiation of space, vocal adjustment, nuance of meaning, and deliberate attempts at

affective curation within performance. It will explore malleability of rehearsal language that builds this aggregate, which is ultimately presented to an audience in a specific physical or mediated space.

The nexus of various cultural understandings, embodied experiences, vocal practices, and personal connotations present in each “generous room” providing acoustic space and cultural context to sound or music is complex—much more so in that the nexus is constantly morphing, changing with each person added or subtracted from the space, each new patina of historical connection, each sound uttered. Understanding the dance between space, voice, visceral body, choral and popular culture(s), and notions of spirituality and religion requires some attention to several fields of study and angles of inquiry. In this work, I will connect themes in sound studies, voice studies theory, choral practice and history, and affect theory, attempting to draw together a new way of conceptualizing group sonic experience in physical and virtual spaces.

* * *

> I had my first rehearsal last night at a new church gig—I'm working on 53rd street [in New York City]—and it's a really nice group of people. It was like sixteen [volunteer amateur singers] and then one "scholar" per section, and I hadn't met anyone besides the conductor.[4] We're rehearsing in the basement, which is like a living room that looks like it's a 1990s church coffee hour, which is bizarre, because the architecture outside of the building is, like, super-futuristic.
>
> We were all very horizontal; a bit of a "V," very obtuse, though. Not enough. We're doing this American composer from Virginia's "O Mighty Lord," it's like a random twenty-first century thing—it was really nice. It's the first thing we're singing, and the third verse comes along, and eventually [the conductor] says, "How 'bout we just have the soloists do it. The scholars are gonna sing it."
>
> Meanwhile, he didn't warm us up very well, everyone's tone is kind of all over the place, there's not a lot of blend. [The volunteers are] singing loudly to get it right. So [the conductor] is saying "be quiet," and as a scholar you're trying to quiet down, but if you do then you're not gonna be heard and they might stray from the path.
>
> So, the third verse comes along, and [the conductor] says, "How 'bout we just have the soloists." I didn't know these people at all—and suddenly we're locked in to this pretty well-tuned harmony and we're all making micro adjustments in real time, obviously very concrete that we're relating to each other very well. And it's all scripted. It's a script we all know, of course. It could've happened with anyone. It's obviously a relation. Even though I didn't really know their names very well, it was like we'd been singing together for a very long time, given what we were all doing with our bodies and how we were singing in that moment.
>
> (Voice memo to the author from Michael Genese, September 16, 2022)

Michael Genese, a composer, activist, vocal ensemble co-founder, and tenor, sent me this voice memo unsolicited early one morning after starting a brand-new church section leader position. We had often discussed the connections between space, place, voice, acoustics, embodiment, and affect in terms of choral praxis, and he summed up his first-rehearsal

[4] In paid singing jobs in churches, sometimes the position is referred to as a "scholarship," or the singer as a "scholar." These hired gig (part-time, church service-dependent) positions are generally staffed by singers who have experience beyond amateur singing and cobble together a living as a musician, or work in different fields but sing at a fairly high level in one or several similar positions or within ensembles. Often there is one singer hired per voice part—Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass—or two hired per section to assist with voice splits in repertoire where there are more than one line per broad vocal part, i.e. Soprano I, Soprano II, Alto I, Alto II, etc. Pay for these positions depends on the finances of the ensemble, and the most prestigious and well-paid offer generous compensation but are more competitive positions to attain and hold on to. These positions in larger cities—in this case, New York City—tend to be fairly competitively paid and sought-after.

experiences in elegant and poetic shorthand. In this dispatch, Genese demonstrates why I have defined my scholarship around semi-professional and professional choralism. In order to discuss the underlying issues of space, body, voice, and feeling, there is a lot of other *stuff*, built around singer confidence, control, and training—the mechanics of choral vocalism—that must be swept to the side for a clear view of those underpinnings. The foregone conclusions of professional choral singing are that there is already a facility and confidence with a variety of skills, both vocal and auditory/embodied, that allows singers to engage with their bodies and the acoustics of the room, with few doubtful fetters of technical deficit.

Professional-level confidence bolsters creative interaction—"relation," as Genese puts it—that can transcend interpersonal engagement via a direct connection with the acoustic and the sonics of the other voices singing. "It could've happened with anyone," says Genese. Within the process of professionalization, rather than emphasizing the ways that singing can be metaphoricized into a relational understanding of community, of friendship, of concord, of "harmony," there is a push to learn skills of relationality through vocal-acoustic means. Honing these techniques and physicalized listening skills leads singers to an attuned engagement with each other and the spaces they're occupying. For example, Genese mentions above the "V" formation that the group is standing in. Often singers are placed in an arc formation so that they can adequately hear each other as the sound of their voices reverberates back from other parts of a rehearsal or performance space, which allows for micro adjustments in vocal technique, volume, and timbre that can enhance acoustic tuning and "ring." In this case, the ensemble was in a more angular "V" formation, which stymied the volunteer (non-professional) singers as they struggled to read the new music. On top of this, the volunteers were not entirely confident in their sight-reading and vocal skills, and this

made them sing a bit louder, a counterintuitive move I've often seen in amateur ensembles or with volunteers, as singers attempt to forge their way through a piece for the first time.

These observations are in no way meant to denigrate the importance of amateur choralism, or the value found in choral participation and performance. Rather, I suggest that in order to get at the underpinnings of choral curation and affective intent, it can be helpful to strip away a few layers of pedagogical patina inherent in amateur or mixed amateur/professional ensembles. Singers, professional and not, are always accruing skills to aid in choral participation, but professionals have cultivated these skills specifically to engage at a relational, rather than metaphorical or social/community, level in choral amalgamation of voice. I believe that most choirs have some recognition of the paradigms and skill sets that are detailed in this work, though they may have different levels of engagement with them according to the goals the ensembles espouse in performance and organizational ethos. Amateur choirs certainly have these skills too, but in analyzing professionalized ensembles it is slightly easier to see bedrock structures of vocal and sonic operation underneath.

The Choric Voice-Body, Choral Praxes, and Choralism

Much has been written, particularly recently in both the realms of voice studies and choral scholarship, about the metaphoricization of voice and the social, community-defining aspects of choral practice. Because these elements are so much more apparent to participants and curators of choral experience, it is far easier to apply ethnographic methods—including interview, group discussion, and observation—in a way that seems to honor participant practitioners and enthusiasts and to forward ethnomusicological aims. Much of the

scholarship on choralism, emerging from various music studies efforts and intents, capitalizes on the metaphorical idea of voices joined together in song as indicative of a society (both real, in-the-choir-room communities, and in a broader sense when considering the teamwork required to approach choral endeavors). Resultant definitions of the words “choir” and “choral” often center on this joined-voice-in-community or on the repertoire and traditional performance practices and pedagogies of choralism. In other words, if they sing choral repertoire, grouped in an arc on risers, standing stationary (or, in some traditions, espouse choreography or recognizable movements), or have their own section and functional inclusion in religious rites, it’s a choir. When I speak to professional group members for this research, often this notion of what a “choir” is leads these singers to firmly state that their ensemble is not a choir because they do not operate in a traditional community or institutional choir mode of performance. This performance mode is either implicitly or explicitly dismissed as hackneyed, dull, performatively formal, and/or inexpert in vocal ability, direction, taste, and audience draw. To be a “choir,” to these professionals, is amateur and retrogressive.

When conceiving of this project, I revisited the terms “choir” and “choral.” I stripped away the contemporary connotations that “choir” has accrued, not to ignore the importance of community and pedagogical choral praxes but to identify underlying goals and skills bound within vocalism, acoustics, space, and affect. A choir refers to a group of people who attempt to amalgamate (or “mix”) their voices, generally using the aspects of Just Intonation supported by physical acoustics in the overtone series to guide their relations with other singers and the space itself. A choral singer uses far more than their voice to participate in this practice. They use their bodies in responding to the vibrations that highlight the

relational aspects of pitches and timbres from other voices, which allows them to "blend" their voices in the fray of this vocal amalgamation; they accrue and access cultural understandings of what types of physical/vocal relations—pitch, timbre, spatial/sonic refraction—are appropriate for certain types of repertoire, ensembles, circumstances, or acoustics; they learn mores and subtleties surrounding everything from diction to dynamic markings to ornamentation to pitch bending and other important tricks; they learn from other singers and the acoustic as they sing and make adjustments to their bodies and change vocal techniques and approaches in real time.

This may sound like what most singers do. To a certain extent, it is. But because of the use of shared acoustic and the overtone series for tuning, choral singers must be far more aware of the space in which they sing, and their own and others' voices echoing (or not) in that space, to succeed in the choral endeavor. In contrast, operatic singers are often taught in the bel canto vocal training system to set their bodies up *not* to change too much in terms of tone, breath, projection, or performance practice. To be legible and viable as this type of vocalist (who often performs in large halls without amplification), bel canto training emphasizes body mechanics, breath support, vocal production, and development of internal (as in, pharynx-produced) resonance. These practices hone the skills of the singer, and encourage a set of skills that devalue sonic/acoustic feedback as they are singing. If performance is generally presented in a cavernous opera house, the singers' voices will not be adequately reflected back to the stage for them to triage and rework as they are performing. Thus a reliance on physical habits and skills allows them to vocally perform without prioritizing hearing their own (or others') voices as they sing. Indeed, this is an essential skill set in order to be a successful soloist in "Western" operatic traditions. And the

bel canto tradition of vocal training is one of the most commonly featured in Vocal Performance degrees at higher learning institutions in the U.S. and Europe. Therefore, many of those trained in Western musical traditions as pre-professionals are exposed to this pedagogy.

This fact may explain why bel canto voice teachers—in my own experience and also in the experience of many of my scholarly collaborators, friends, higher education cohort, and singing network—are often opposed to choral singing, would prefer (or straight-out ask) their students not to participate in choral ensembles, and claim that choralism is damaging to vocal technique and even the vocal mechanism. From personal experience, I can say that the sense of being pulled between these solo and choral vocal skill sets—and told that only one was "correct" for a singer—led to vocal strain as I tried to move between the two. Additionally, I found that bel canto training discouraged vocal malleability and invention because of the needs inherent in operatic and art song performance milieus and acoustics that did not reward voices adaptable to different styles.[5] This notion of classical training has altered since I was an undergraduate, in that more art music singers are now asked to adapt to a variety of vocal idioms and encouraged to expand their vocal technique, but bel canto aims and skills are still often contrasted with the skills necessary for successful participation in a choir.

Spatially-bound skills may not be at the front-and-center of how choir members discuss their participation, but those skills are often invoked and developed during rehearsal and performance, overtly or not. Discussions I heard during my observations in professional ensemble rehearsals and sound-checks were frequently explicitly about acoustic quirks of performance venues, staging arrangements for better hearing or vocal projection, and

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[5] This concept is further discussed in Chapter 3 in terms of choral experimentalism, and my experiences are seconded by other art music-trained singers as they talk about their undergraduate training experiences.

physical proximity/relationality between singers. Because these ensemble members were already honed as frequent performers and highly-trained singers, they were able to eschew less specific, or more imaginatively-metaphorical, ways of approaching acoustics that are seen in amateur, volunteer, and pedagogical groups. Professionals can even negotiate some of these spatial issues using body language without speech, or developing shorthand that allows them to effect minute adjustments that can change their experience of aggregated voice in the particularities of performance venues. This type of implicit communication, developed over time with directors and singers in an ensemble, can be difficult to decode, and it often took me a while when observing rehearsals to trust that I could follow some of these modes of communication. I estimate that it took about half the time in rehearsal observations to learn some of these "languages" of negotiation, leaving just half of the observation period to note how these communications developed and shaped voices, bodies, sound, and performance practice.

Choralism and Colonialism

The spatially-bound skills that I mention here and detail more fully in Chapter 1 are defined as core to choral praxes, based on the phantasmic choric voice-body (Connor 2016). As critical theorist Steven Connor writes,

> Choric voices may be regarded as a form of ventriloquism. It is not that the source of the sound is unknown or even exactly hidden, for it is often perfectly plain who is doing the singing or chanting in an instance of chorality. Rather, it is that the choric voice gives rise to the fantasy of a collective voice-body that is not to be identified with any of the individuals who compose it. (Connor 2016, 5)

Voice-body is not amalgamated individual participation in Connor's broad category of "chorality" (combinatory voice, not necessarily deliberately shaped or curated) alone. The

acoustic and mediated spaces that fill with and alter sound are key to the voice-body that Connor suggests. It is the negotiation between the voicers, their bodies, their voices, and acoustic space that make up choral praxes. Choral praxis is, therefore, an umbrella category which includes all voicing that mixes voice via space and embodiment.

The traditions of choralism are nestled under the broader category of choral praxes. As musicologist Grant Olwage shows, the roots of traditional choral practice changed integrally in the nineteenth century, pushing beyond distinctly religious rite and context to broader communal and political realms (2005). Olwage notes the discipline and control inherent in broadening choral practice in the nineteenth century in Europe and in colonized areas. He shows how choral practice was instituted and encouraged by newly-minted nation-states in Europe as a way of cementing national sentiment and controlling any rebellion against the state (Ibid., 26). And Olwage, writing about South African creation and colonization, focuses on English colonialism and the use of choralism to "civilize" native communities of the region, as the British colonizers conceptualized their efforts (Ibid.). This paradigm of choralism as anti-rebellion discipline and control was repeated throughout England and Europe, dubbed "rational recreation," and transposed, both by governmental powers and religious missionaries, into numerous colonial contexts (Ibid., 28).

The nineteenth century marks a seismic shift into choralism. Nation-building also led to musical-cultural efforts to include amateurs in musical experience through new, and larger, choirs, many of whom also sang with the larger public orchestras established during this time. They also performed in new public concert venues—as opposed to smaller, court-based chambers. Coinciding with the expansion of the modern orchestra, the move toward large-scale choralism began to invite casual musicians into concert performances, and built choral

societies around social engagement, patriotism, and culture-as-identity through community participation. Musicologist Celia Applegate argues that, rather than only being a generative event that drove public interest in baroque music, Mendelssohn's performances of Bach's "St. Matthew's Passion" in 1829 drew together latent trends in baroque revival, group singing and chorality, and nation-building politics (2005). She additionally suggests that both the practice of choralism and the metaphor of choir as community formed within this period specifically due to the nation-building projects that encouraged large amateur choirs to perform at festivals and in concert halls to celebrate united cultural efforts and the togetherness of musical creation (2013, 5). Additionally, she argues, industrialization led to further interest in regimenting these choral organizations and festivals, just as politics led to national pride that was, in many ways, encouraged by governments to avoid the upheaval and scrutiny of revolution, so recently experienced across Europe (but particularly in France) (Ibid., 6). "Mass choral singing became more an expression of patriotism than a call to arms," she writes. "Choral performances embodied reformist, rather than revolutionary, impulses; at their most challenging, they were a call to fulfill the Revolution's promise of equality, here in the form of equal access of all to the civilizing effects of music culture" (Ibid., 8). "Consolidating and institutionalizing" (Ibid., 9) was the aim of nation-states during this period, Applegate argues, and choralism allowed for a community regimentation that also furthered nationalist aims.

Many of the performers—singers and instrumentalists, conductors, directors, producers—developed an interest in early music efforts in part to celebrate histories affiliated with their new nation-states; to build a longer legend of excellence in culture and art than the few years of national unification; to celebrate a legacy that was to become associated with national

progress; perhaps even to build community through the intersubjective calibration of diagnostic embodiment into the communities coalescing within these newly-codified realms. Musicologist Ryan Minor points to the German *Volk* movement in the first half of the nineteenth century that encouraged community participation in choral singing, a movement that underpinned Mendelssohn's revival of Bach's *St. Matthew's Passion* (2012, 3). He shows how choralism was girded by philosophical beliefs—by Johann Gottfried Herder, Hans Georg Nägeli and Friedrich von Schilling in the early nineteenth century, and Friedrich Nietzsche later—that the voices of the people would coalesce in a shared identity and true agency (Ibid. 3–5). Musicologist Barbara Eichner shows how the community interest in choralism, though not at first inherently political, became representative of national community in the newly-unified German nation-state (2012, 163). This was not restricted to German contexts during that period. Choral societies were founded and grew around nationalist ideals in France, Norway, the Netherlands, and Belgium, among others, during the nineteenth century (see Lajosi and Stynen, 2019). In some nations where nation-building was less needed—the UK and the U.S., for example—choral societies and festivals coalesced around religious revivalism that encouraged frequent group rehearsal and even competitive performance (Applegate 2005, 10).

Much scholarship has focused on this period, and on the ensuing connections between choralism and community that persist even today. The choral metaphor, extended during this expansion of amateur choralism in the nineteenth century and connected with nation-building, has also been used in numerous ways as a simulacrum of community in the English language. The expression "preaching to the choir" assumes you are talking to a community into which you, and your views, have already been inducted, accepted. A "chorus of

disapproval" denotes a vocal, community-wide reaction to cultural *faux pas* or wrongs, drawn from the commentational aspects of the classical Greek chorus in theater productions and allied with current notions of chorality. And a great deal of choral scholarship, historical (Strimple 2002, Minor 2012, DiGrazia 2013, Alwes 2014) and ethnomusicological (Lortat-Jacob 1995, Ahlquist 2008, Barz 2008, Ingalls 2011, de Quadros 2012, Finnegan 2013, Bithell 2014), has entertained these notions of choir as constituted by and constitutive of communities; and demonstrates how the term "choir" has become indicative of nation-building or society-strengthening projects.

However, this metaphoricization of "choir" as "community," "harmony," and/or "cooperation" is built on a distinct colonial and nation-building framework. European/U.S. ideals coalescing around capitalist aims, military might, "exploration" (often pertaining to Manifest Destiny expansion), and consolidation of power around homeland identity—through affective regimes emphasizing community belonging and valorization of national "inherent virtues"—allow communities to circumscribe and organize their societies, but also to gatekeep and "other" those people outside of those boundaries. And this European lineage of choralism has further served to segregate Euro-Americans from the rest of the world that they were busy conquering "for their own good," pushing these "others" so far outside of society that they could be considered weak, hapless, or even subhuman, depending on the context.

Nationalist movements in Europe and concurrent world-spanning colonization by European powers explains global interest and participation in some traditional European-derived choral practices, and indicates the hegemonic cultural structures that were built during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Considering the affective regimes founded

within colonialism and the spread of religious belief and praxis from European powers, it becomes clear why choralism exists in colonized regions, drawn at least in part from colonizers' traditions. Choralism has become embedded due to Christian missionary work and the integration of European musical ideas that came along with the missionaries—and often choralism was adopted and adapted by local subaltern communities and redefined under new terms, frequently guided by subterranean colonial frameworks. Scholarship about post-colonial choralisms, and the adaptations made by non-Europeans to this tradition, is rife particularly in ethnomusicology (see Ahlquist 2008, Barz 2008, Ingalls 2011, de Quadros 2012, Finnegan 2013, Bithell 2014, and others). This work is invaluable in noting the adjustments to colonizer culture within subaltern/subversive fusion and reorientation efforts. However, these scholars often still rely on shibboleths about the choir as community that come from the colonial conceptualization of power consolidated through participation, identity-making, and gatekeeping.

Discussion of colonialism and nation building might seem distinct from the discussions of individual affect. However, it is important to distinguish how we have been conditioned to think about national pride as akin to religious meditation, and consider that both nationalism and religion are allied with choral efforts that guide toward specific affective experiences. The swell of a national anthem—or even something that sounds like one—still has affective power, or at least an affective regime urging emotional engagement. Choralism is tangled up within this nexus as the participatory and physical commitment to community, in a web that is shot through with political, social, and economic powers that guide the "status quo," foregone conclusions in Euro-American everyday life.

As with any other artistic endeavor from European traditions, and perhaps in even more hidden affective ways, choralism has borne both the burdens and ill-gotten gains of these structures. The affective traces of those nationalist, colonial, and capitalist affective regimes are still inherent and operationalized within current experiences of choral practice; and these latent strands can do damage in current presentations of older works and in the realm of new composition, as well. This will be further discussed throughout this dissertation, considered through different lenses and topic areas.

Therefore, I consider the term "choralism," used in the title of this dissertation, as an inherently colonial/imperial term, under which all choral practice must be considered as both a physicalized engagement with space and a recognition of cultural hegemonies. In the first chapter, I do not refer to choralism, simply because the context of choral praxes in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries had not yet reached the broader colonial context of expanding globalization, capitalism, and imperial cultural indoctrination. The intent of the second chapter is to show how choralism in modernity becomes inextricably infused with meanings, allusions, cultural memory, and metaphor from colonial and imperial projects that connect to the embodied practices of earlier choral engagements in European and English contexts.

It may be tempting within the context of cultural theory scholarship to dismiss the complex interconnected workings of sonic acoustic, embodied adjustment, intellectualization, and meditative listening practices of colonially-derived choralism as "false consciousness"— a Marxist theoretical term adopted by psychologists, sociologists, and social theorists that refers to activities and worldviews promoting ignorance of injustice and inequality (Barnes 1997, 99). Because the interwoven affects of choralism can be linked

to broader understandings of society, positionality, power, and responsibility, there is a case to be made that the listening, spatialization, and embodiments of choralism allow veneration of colonial constructs—nationalism, racial supremacy, justification of cultural imperialism, etc.—for choral singers and afficionados. While I recognize the inherent issues of false consciousness within my interpretations around colonial choralism, this scholarship is, at its core, discussing the affects of choralism more than zoomed-out political ramifications. I choose instead to illuminate the working parts of affect as connected to space and place within choralism, noting that the complexity of affect requires more nuance in scholarship than the full dismissal of the feelings of others as inherently flawed or imagined. Indeed, the aspects of false consciousness that are embedded in choralism are proof of the interconnectivity within physical and mental sides of affective experience, and should not be excised by scholars due to the inherently ugly and complex feelings they betray.

In my opening chapters, I hope to show how the choralism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has influenced how embodied singers and even listeners in a globalized context are affectively guided through these choric vocal practices tied to European, and particularly English, systems of colonization. The three chapters that follow attempt to show the inherent affective power in choralism as integrated into film soundtracks, and in different ways subverted in experimental choral approaches and activist/advocacy efforts.

Choralism as an inherently colonial construct allows me to be more specific about how England participated in cultural imperialism, and how choral performance features in those efforts in my work with English vocal ensembles VOCES8, The Tallis Scholars, The King's Singers, and two Cambridge college chapel choirs (see Chapter 2). Most of the groups I observed who are included in that chapter are UK-based groups widely known around the

world as professional leaders in ensemble choralism. I parse some imperial mediations of choral practice through these examples.

However, this dissertation does not include broader discussion of race and choralism; nor do I discuss the pre-colonial choral practices of Indigenous peoples. In the case of pre-colonial practice, a different type of scholarship is necessary, and belonging in and/or to a community in which these practices developed would be essential. In terms of post-colonial choralism and race, there is vast unexplored room for scholarship, particularly in connecting physical-vocal adjustments in space with choral practices that inherited colonial choralism and morphed it to their own performance values and needs. For example, rehearsal observation of gospel choirs (preferably by someone intimately accepted in the gospel choir community and with knowledge of that vocal practice) could note the ways that gospel groups use their bodies and spaces they sing in differently or similarly to the mechanics described above and in the first chapter. Integration of race into this discussion, beyond the colonial, is also difficult in that the underpinnings of voice studies around racialized (solo) voice (Holmes 2007, Eidsheim 2019) have not yet been fully theorized alongside choral scholarship, and some of the methods I use in this project may not be compatible with those constructions. Further research and interdisciplinary discussion are needed in this case, as are further voice studies investigations of specific historically colonized groups beyond African-American contexts.

I hope this scholarship offers a foundation for further study in this vein (undertaken by myself or by others). It seems key to offer an in-depth discussion of physicality and affect within choral practice. I also discuss how nineteenth-century choralism becomes a powerful influence on colonized contexts around the world (see Chapter 2). The affects that underpin

choral endeavors are, at least in part, inherited from these traditions and lineages, and have not necessarily been viewed in every historically-colonized context as something to be dispelled as a mark of colonizers' influence. Because affect—the physical, mental, and emotional—is entangled within choral experience and practice, contextual and memorialized vestiges of power dynamic are likely imbued in the bodies and affective processes of those invested in choralism. Whether through religious rite, choric singing, or film and media use of choralism in soundtracks, more people are inundated with the affects of choralism than we realize—and those affects have heft and necessitate ethical engagement with our colonial past and present.

Due to that ubiquity, I would argue that "we"—those people most likely to read this dissertation, sing chorally, watch films or television, or read about voice studies, music studies, or cultural theory—are affected by choralism and its underpinnings in one way or another. There are moments in the dissertation when I use "we" to denote the people who have, in some way, engaged with imperial-inflected hegemonic choralism. I try not to essentialize about how each and every person may react or feel about choral vocality, but I do suggest that a broad swath of "us" are more invested in choralism than we are currently aware—and that this lack of awareness is, in part, what allows choralism its particular affective power.

Choral Scholarship—Repertoire, Praxes, Pedagogy

In the field of ethnomusicology (as well as anthropology), part of the scholarly ethos lies in highlighting the unstudied, unexpected, relational, and constantly-changing landscapes of musical production and investment. It is, in part, for this reason that European art music

practice has been, if not omitted, at least somewhat marginalized in ethnomusicological fieldwork. The study of choral practices requires several combined modes of scholarship—historical (histories of choral practice and of colonial implication in choral practice around the world as a result of missionary influence), pedagogical/structural, theoretical, and above all, contextual via fieldwork to thoroughly comprehend how choral practice is shaped by people, histories, and traditional practices. Here, I discuss work that has honed in on specific cultural investments in choral praxis, and relate how my proposed fieldwork approach relates to them, and I will also suggest how space and affect may be discussed more freely through micro-cultural specificity in choral practice, processes, and goals.

Choral scholarship in musicology and ethnomusicology has shifted to consider the embodied practices of these singers and groups. This is due, in no small part, to the development of phenomenology (the study of embodiment and sensory experience) and an annex of that field, voice studies. Voice studies practitioners developed this mode of inquiry to specifically talk about how those of us with physical voices recognize ourselves within a spatial and phenomenological landscape, and how this reflects aspects of self and body within that landscape. Musicologist Nina Sun Eidsheim (2017) and ethnomusicologists Katherine Meizel (2010) and Eve McPherson (2011) have helped to reinvigorate this area of study through their book projects and articles investigating the political, social, and physical entanglements of voice and voicing. Eidsheim and Meizel published their edited volume *The Oxford Handbook of Voice Studies* (2019), combining work by multiple authors interested in

voice traditions around the world. However, these scholars predominantly have discussed solo vocal endeavors, and the solo vocalist at large, sometimes connecting solo voice in musical performance with aspects of individual spoken voice. To generalize for the sake of defining different foci in voice studies, musicological and philosophical investigation tends to hone overall definitions of voice and voicing (such as Eidsheim 2015 and Cavarero 2005), while ethnomusicological investigation foregrounds the political and cultural aspects of both physical and metaphorical voice (as in Meizel 2010, Schäfers 2017, and Weidman 2006).

The study of choral context has been predominantly excluded from these investigations of voice, except in a few cases in which distinguishing characteristics of choral engagement are somewhat ignored. However, Gage Averill's investigation of barbershop singing (2003) engaged with many of the questions of voice studies even before the field effectively coalesced during the later 2000s. In this work, Averill foregrounds phenomenological aspects of tuning and vocal production to discuss the pleasurable curation of sound through voice. He notes differences between the vocalists' sensations in open, versus closed, chords, and throughout the process of sensing relations between voices that he grounds in a reliance on Just Intonation and the overtone series. This work may not deal as directly with the shift between metaphorical and physical voice as voice studies scholarship generally does; but the move to include phenomenology and embodiment studies into investigations of vocal production and group singing was certainly situated within the landscape of voice studies before it was more fully populated later in the decade.

In the realm of choral pedagogy, scholars have discussed embodiment and curated vocal practice as part of the practical experiences that guide choral rehearsal and performance. In some cases, however, scholars moved beyond these practicalities into the realm of voice studies theory. Music educator and choral conductor Patricia O'Toole uses Foucauldian theories of power and the body, as well as later feminist theory, to discuss the lack of power and agency in choral singing (2005). She draws on personal experience and interviews to show how hierarchical structures perpetuated in choral settings (i.e., the power of the director/conductor) can regulate not only the voice but also the identity of choral singers. This she ties to the physical manifestation of voice and the embodied production of it, as well as the understanding of self in that set of power relations replicated in numerous choir rooms by design.

In ethnomusicological study, efforts have been made to bring voice studies to choral investigations. Ethnomusicologist Marissa Glynias Moore brings this up as she addresses congregational reticence to singing during hymns and chorales (2018). Moore shows how the voice as an object has been foregrounded in popular and art music practices to such an extent that casual congregational singers feel uncomfortable with their self-perceived lack of vocal talent. By shifting her investigation to voice, and voicing, as process rather than object, Moore discusses what choral engagement in worship service offers to congregations. In fact, this shift from object to process seems to best describe the work of voice studies overall, and also to highlight the differences between much choral literature focused on repertoire and

performance histories (Strimple 2002, Applegate 2005, Ahlquist 2006, DiGrazia 2013) and investigations that foreground rehearsal and stylistic curation practices (Rommen 2007, Bithell 2014, Engelhardt 2015, de Quadros 2019).

Some of the ethnomusicological investigations center on style curation, and how stylistic norms are produced. Timothy Rommen (2007) shows how vocal techniques in religious choral singing help to circumscribe communities and even to define religious belief. Jeffers Engelhardt (2015) investigates the community membership that musical style curation offers in modern Russian Orthodox practices in Estonia, and points to ways in which these stylistic veneers lead to a type of "secular enchantment" through religious practice that does not totally rely on religious belief for meaning. John Burdick (2013) traces black gospel practices in Brazil, connecting vocality and virtuosity to racial pride and the transformative political and religious properties of group choralism. And Alisha Lola Jones investigates gospel vocality and performance in connection with faith, black masculinity, and the insistence on heterorepresentation (2020). These works certainly do not treat the voice as an object; process is the primary focus, but it is the meanings built into the coalesced style that are most under discussion in these examples.

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My research has been episodic over the last several years because professional choral groups generally only rehearse during short periods when planning concerts. Working with multiple ensembles and attending choral festivals, rehearsals, and performances in the United States and the United Kingdom, I have listened and participated in rehearsal discussions and observed performance techniques. The aim is to illuminate choral cultures by identifying the metaphorical, physical, and technical language that show how the body (and voice) of each singer adjusts to specific acoustic space via a feedback cycle; and to explain how this developed language and individual physical adjustment allows the group, as an aggregate, to curate affect for specific spaces and audiences. I call this process "diagnostic embodiment."

My primary interest in carrying voice studies further into investigations of choralism is negotiating the short-circuit between the singer and the singer-as-listener. Are the concepts and metaphors of voice, as discussed in voice studies, transposed or translated differently within the choral context, due to changes in how a singer hears and feels their voice within an aggregate whole? Is the experience of singing better understood as meditative or performative (or both), in choralism? Or is a different configuration of both meditation and performativity needed, when separated from solo performance by altered aims and engagement with self, other, and space? And how, then, is solo vocality—simultaneously separated from, and included under, chorality—enhanced or downplayed as a part of group singing?

These questions borrow from voice studies to identify connective mechanisms between the metaphorical and the physical voice, and to theorize what these bridges offer to singers and audiences in choral engagements. Additionally, using voice studies to discuss choral singing disengages with the professionalization of voice as a consumable product and engages with a broader definition of how it feels to sing, to listen to song, and to listen to your own voice simultaneously sounded with others in shared space. My efforts forge an unusual path for an ethnomusicological investigation. This is due to inherent interdisciplinary cross-pollination in resources, but particularly due to the shifts in approach for each chapter.

Chapter 1 introduces core ideas from critical theory about space, place, embodiment, and affect. Introducing the concept of "affective regimes" (Mankekar and Gupta 2016) as a guiding force, and "diagnostic embodiment" as a set of physical/mental/emotional listening practices key to choralism, I suggest some ways that choral practice has developed specific engagements between body, voice, and acoustic space. I operationalize a traditional historical musicology frame to demonstrate how these core ideas may function within musicological discourse using the Eton Choirbook and early music socio-cultural contextual analysis. Depicting choral singing in Britain during the fifteenth century through lenses of sonic physicality and affective regimes in religious worship, this chapter sets up a bedrock theoretical scaffold upon which to build. In this chapter, I circumscribe these theoretical interventions within a thought experiment removed by centuries—though not entirely divorced—from current hegemonic choral praxes.

Chapter 2 is the most fundamentally ethnographic, in which I discuss my rehearsal observations of several professional groups in the UK, including The King's Singers, the Tallis Scholars, VOCES8, and the King's College and St. John's College Chapel Choirs in Cambridge. Building upon the physical-affective nexus I propose in the previous chapter, I introduce further guides and complications to affective regimes beyond the immediacy of vocalization in shared space, integrating colonial histories and individual memorialized experiences interstitially bound in moments of performance. Suggesting three areas of mediation within current iterations of a British lineage of choralism, I show how recording and broadcasting practices are complemented by two other mediating filters: the acoustic, and the cultural/historical. All three are bound together in the umbrella category I refer to as "affective mediation."

Chapter 3 delves into film and media studies literature, discussing how choralism in soundtracks has brought choric experiences out of more strictly religious and municipal realms. I show how choral scoring has become ubiquitous through repeated integration in blockbuster movie scores and provides specific physical-affective mechanisms that highlight narrative and spectacle in films. Some general history of choral inclusion in film soundtracks is followed by two case studies. The first, an analysis of the sound worlds of Howard Shore's soundtrack *for The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* (2001), gives examples of how choirs have featured in epic Hollywood film soundtracks and suggests how the implied physicality of singers' bodies invites a different viewer experience of visual and action on

screen. The second is an ethnographic analysis of my fieldwork with ANÚNA, an Ireland-based choir, as it performed during a festival tour. I detail how the group makes use of narrative mechanisms and affective suggestivities akin to the ways that choralism is used within the frameworks of storytelling in film soundtracks, showing that the filmic aspects of choralism have been brought off the screen and reintegrated into choral performance. This is the only chapter that does not focus entirely on the choral singer's experience, in part because of the literature it engages with in Film and Media Studies, and in part because I have not yet had opportunities to observe film choirs prepare and record or to speak to composers/conductors/singers in that arena. This chapter serves as a blueprint for expansion, both in media analysis of more soundtracks and film history with choralism and with experiential and interview research. Further work is needed here, but so little has been investigated on the topic that the groundwork laid in this chapter can serve as a strong foundation for additional inquiry.

Chapter 4 builds on the narrative aspects of filmic choralism by showing how Western Art music has valorized new music that makes use of vocalism from outside of common Euro-American choral practice predicated on open vowels. Centering Indigenous studies scholarship, this chapter shows how the experimental New Music scenes, underpinned by artistic and academic exceptionalism, has normalized taking Indigenous vocal belongings and forms and reworking them into relationally-potent affective mechanisms, stripping these vocalities of their inherent Indigenousness and packaging them for predominantly white and

privileged audiences within their performance scene specifically to encourage relational affective potency when juxtaposed against “traditional” vocalities of Western Art Music hegemony. The first case study shows how the ensemble Roomful of Teeth made use of acoustic space within their electronic soundscape to modify affect at a key point in David Lang’s “The Little Match Girl Passion,” which shows how Roomful of Teeth connects physical acoustics and amplified soundscapes to curate affective experience. The second case study is my attempt to show why Caroline Shaw’s “Courante” from *Partita for 8* (2009), written for Roomful of Teeth, is affectively moving for many privileged non-Indigenous choral practitioners in a way that disenfranchises Indigenous agency and embodiment in the use of katajjaq, an Inuit throat-singing living tradition. To cement this case, I offer my own initial and candid reactions to “Courante” when I first heard the piece performed, and try to show the insidious power of unmarked whiteness (Lipsitz 1998) that made that reaction possible, potent, and inherently ethically-flawed.

The final chapter is a thought experiment with nerve endings, designed to bookend this work in tandem with the historical thought experiment in Chapter 1. This chapter is entirely based on my own experiences participating in a self-described social activist choir, Voices 21C, a group I joined in 2016. Drawing on the work of William Cheng (2016), who asks whether musical participation and listening practices can allow us to become more invested in the communities and endeavors that guide our social, political, and cultural understandings, I offer my own examples of how I tried to “sound good” (Ibid.) by

connecting the practices and sonic mechanisms of choralism to community belonging and activist endeavors. This chapter is not an ethnographic or historical survey of activism and advocacy in choral praxis. Rather, it builds upon the theories of earlier chapters and engages with philosophical and critical theory debates to directly connect sound studies and voice studies investigations with affect theory and questions of ethics and morality. Intertwined with questions of affective ethics within academia, the chapter expands upon the entrenched listening practices of diagnostic embodiment within choralism as a set of praxis that can encourage self-awareness, community-building, reparative engagement, and service in scholarship and beyond.

*   *   *

> I celebrate myself, and sing myself,
> And what I assume you shall assume,
> For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.
> —Walt Whitman, "Song of Myself" (1892)

Walt Whitman's transcendental poetry is suffused with spirituality, physicality, and, in this case, vocality. Whitman seems to be singing himself into being, in addition to celebrating his shared part in the universe. Whitman elides self here by celebrating everyone and everything as a part of self, with no defined other, and perhaps no defined physical being that can be entirely separate from space. In voicing, he equally defines inner and outer space; and as we hear his song, he invites us to submerge ourselves in the same space with him; to

voice his words alongside him physically or mentally, to constitute his space and ours, and to redefine self as something constantly becoming—malleable, not static. Voice, space, and body afford us this processual dimension of being, and all three are defined and dissolved from moment to moment, echoing in dynamic junctures that offer endless potential.

One can redirect focus away from Whitman's voice crying "I AM," and toward the space that makes his voicing possible. In declaiming himself, the poet is taking advantage of a number of variables external and internal to his body, and also external and internal to his mind and sensorium. In stating that he is separate as well as interconnected with other beings, he also declares the things he is *not* (material and metaphorical). Whitman's exclamation, physical, mental, and emotional, is made possible by Sarah Teasdale's suggestion that opens this chapter. Teasdale's "generous room" allows for the physical, mental, and, perhaps above all, affective contentment that reifies self, other, and the connections between our interior lives with the interior lives of other people sharing in that same external space.

The five-chapter arc of this work offers some new approaches to choral investigations in music studies and theory, but also uses choral praxis and performance to examine the far broader categories of sound, embodiment, affective experiences, and ethics. The moral aspects of affective experiences discussed, particularly in Chapters 4 and 5, move beyond ethics of performance or even sound into sociopolitical mores around listening—physicalized listening to sound outside of the body, and sensing our affective responses to better understand them within relational contexts. I have found deeper questions housed here in this

generous room about how to best engage with moral complexity in the modern world, and hope that this work invites further investigation and encourages careful, considerate interventions within hegemonic cultural soundscapes and beyond.

CHAPTER 1

SPACE, PLACE, AND CHORAL PRACTICE

Just before 3 pm, Christmas Eve 2019, King's College, Cambridge, UK:

> *The lines of choristers entered in pairs, each one wearing a red robe and white surplice, walking uniformly, careful to match their speed. The boys walked in first, from a door I had not noticed in the side wall, in front of the rood screen donated by Henry VIII to celebrate his marriage to Anne Boleyn. They were followed by the young men, almost double the height of the boy singers. I faced forward, not even trying to watch them as they congregated in their lines within the antechapel. The whole room drew an expectant breath—as did, I would expect, one particular young chorister who had just been told he would be singing the world-famous beginning solo of the "Nine Lessons and Carols" service, the first verse of "Once in Royal David's City."*
>
> *As the boy soprano began to sing, his idiosyncratic, warm timbre soaring into the vertiginous columns, arched windows, and vaulted stone ceiling (built in the "perpendicular English gothic" style common in the sixteenth century), the entire room held its breath. Everyone knew this solo was a sonically-dangerous point in the service. The BBC was recording the service for its 2019 radio broadcast, as it had done every year since 1928. We had been instructed in our service bulletin to avoid coughing, sneezing, extraneous movement—anything that could introduce extraneous noise in the recording. And this moment, this unaccompanied boy soprano's opening salvo, is perhaps the most famous point of the service. Adding to the tension, the boy had been told only moments before that he would sing the solo—and that customary practice is common knowledge within the choral community present.*
>
> *My spouse, seated next to me, stifled a cough, resulting in a kind of asthmatic wheeze. We had waited in line with hundreds of people since 4:30 that same morning to hear this in person, in this chapel, with so many others who cared as much as I do about choral practice, history, and literature and wanted to experience this in their own bodies, with their own ears, eyes, in person and with other listeners, joined but still separated by each of our own connotations, memories, embodied knowledge, and tacet voices, carefully silenced in that generous and reverberant acoustic, waiting for boy and stone to sound that familiar arpeggiated tune:*

Once in Royal David's City/stood a lowly cattle shed.
Where a mother laid her baby/in a cradle for his bed.
Mary was that mother mild/Jesus Christ her little child

Attending the "Nine Lessons and Carols" service at King's College, Cambridge, took me to the heart of choral practice in the United Kingdom. Layers of cultural, physical, and sonic "lacquer" have formed on this traditional service—in some ways displaying and preserving a

thousand years of choral values, and in other ways showing how choral practice is interpreted by modern audiences after over one hundred years of recording traditions, movie soundtracks, and pop backing choruses. This is the strand of tradition that I will trace in this chapter, one tied to historical lineages of performance that are still recognized, and to some extent valued, by choral practitioners today. In visiting King's for the Christmas Eve service, I sought out connections between vocality, choral practice, acoustic space, knowledge of history, hegemonic tradition—and, most of all, affect. The emotional connection that choral practitioners display toward this service, which has been broadcast around the world for almost a century, is widespread enough that when I posted photos on social media of King's College with the BBC trailers parked out front, I had numerous singing colleagues adding comments—"Are you *there*?" "Are you going?" "Did you get tickets?"—and talking about how they have attended in the past, assuring me they would be listening during the radio rebroadcast, or saying how they would love to go someday. However, the cult status of this event was not really what held my attention.

Sitting in King's College Chapel,[6] surrounded by choral practitioners and enthusiasts, I thought about my own experiences with singing, and how they have shaped my understandings of power within choralism; the power of voice combined with spatial acoustic, cultural memory, individual refraction, relationalities that blur the boundaries between self and other. A compendium of my memory—encompassing rehearsals and performances, practice efforts, music reading sessions, sight-reading exercises, director instructions and inspirations, family love of choral music and practice, fascination with grand acoustic resonances and embodied experience within them—stopped time during this

[6] Note that I will be discussing both King's College, London and King's College, Cambridge in this chapter. I will try to be specific about which one I am referencing.

performance, as it does for me during so many choral performances. I was thoroughly within my own body, relationally connected to those around me, and yet totally alone, separated by labyrinthine thought processes of contextualization, memory, and selfhood that can only belong to me, and can never be fully shared through the prism of language. It was an important moment, in that I realized that this scholarship was not possible if separated from a very personal subjectivity.

What follows throughout this dissertation is a look at the choral entanglements that I have encountered over twenty years as a singer and a lover of choralism. This chapter lays groundwork by theorizing interconnections between space, body and voice. In it, I center an acoustic history of choral praxis focused on the United Kingdom, detailing some of my own history of living and singing there that culminates in a "thought experiment" via historical case study. The first section explores several terms that will appear throughout this work, including "resonance," "affect," "diagnostic embodiment" and "dynamic junctures," all key concepts that help to describe the physical, mental, and emotional properties of multiple voices shaped and sounded in specific acoustic spaces. The subsequent section discusses why historical investigations of choral practice have not generally included discussions of embodiment, and suggests new spatially- and vocally-relevant inferences that may be drawn from archival documents and cultural context. Moving through a case study relating to the Eton Choirbook, a fifteenth-century musical manuscript compiled at the elite boy's school near Windsor Castle, I posit that the cultural uses and understandings of acoustic resonance coupled with voice had already begun during this period and continue to persist in current meditation practices within as well as outside of church services.

The dimension of affect is an important aspect of how choirs discuss their vocal techniques and artistic choices within choral practice. Many scholars have written about how emotion is built and discussed in choral settings, though they do not always foreground issues of affect—the deeply personal alchemy of physical, mental, memorialized, and emotional aspects of individual experience—because it is difficult to describe accurately, either through interview or field notes. To approach issues of affect in the study of choral music, it is necessary to define fundamental parameters in two areas. First, never assume that everyone feels similarly at the same time, or even if they do, that they would articulate it in similar ways; and second, it is necessary to reconsider what a choir is, who can participate in one, and how the overall environment affects the physical, mental, and emotional experiences of those participating in choral activities as singers or listeners. I do not wish these categories to be considered entirely discrete in the moment of experience. As Georgina Born writes, "sound as a hybrid assemblage composed of a relay of material and immaterial, nonhuman and human mediations baffles any purification of subject from object, mind from body, and individual from collective experience" (Born 2019, 198). Nor do I wish to suggest that everyone, even within the Euro-American context I invoke, will have the same physical, mental, or affective reaction to choral music in reverberant sacralized space. The reflections in this chapter and the other chapters of this dissertation are not meant to be proscriptive or all-encompassing notions of how chorality works in physical and affective space; rather, this is an attempt to dissect how singers invested in this lineage of practice may be influenced, acted upon, invested, participating in, or otherwise experiencing choralism in reverberant acoustics.

Resonances: Relational Voice, Body, and Space

Voice is a particular manifestation both of selfhood and of the space that acoustically houses and affords it. One's voice is created by and within one's body, but also defined and limited by the space beyond the body that voice further resonates within—making the connection between body and space all the more definite. Vocality functions as a quilted point, binding body, space, place, selfhood, and time. Pleated overlap of those realms enriches the experience of shared space and tandem voice in choralism in that it is possible to perceive an emplaced self as well as the erasure of embodied boundaries in space as a voicer. The body, in these encounters, is defined by sound and also suffused by it in a way that redefines and sometimes transgresses notions of a fully-circumscribed and objectifiable corporeal form.

The body as a feeling sensor and sounding resonator is only one facet of selfhood during these moments, and relation to space and others sharing that space is of prime importance in conceptualization of selfhood in place. To feel the atmosphere shared in that space and see the hidden scaffolding of affective regimes, held up by each individual's guided emplacement, it is necessary to consider that one's body is never entirely constitutive of one's "self," or indeed objectifiable at all. The number of "selves" enacted in the same space—by one person, and, by extension, others sharing that space—in the bodies we consider "our own" become more apparent in these reckonings; as does the way that our sounding bodies are often intermixed with the bodies of others through simultaneous vocalization, as is particularly true in choralism. This extends a field of empathetic understanding, or at least recognition of other, through shared collective habitation of space.

Simon Frith analyzes how, through vocal empathy, we draw ourselves to the voice we hear within imagined space and transfer it to our own bodies and physical spaces:

> We have bodies too, throats and stomachs and lungs. And even if we can't get the breathing right, the pitch, the note durations (which is why our performances only sound good to us), we still feel we understand what the singer is doing in physical principle (this is another reason why the voice seems so directly expressive an instrument: it doesn't take thought to know how that vocal noise was made). (1996, 192)

Using Frith's reckoning, voice experienced in shared space—or even voice in recognizable sounded space, even if the listener is removed by mediation—elides boundaries between self and other through this vocal empathy. This empathy also allows the voicer to palpably transmit or subvert affective regimes, redefine atmosphere, and build or break boundaries between space and place.

Generally, the voice can be considered an indicator of the body in time—as Steven Connor writes, "the voice is also a broaching of and launching into time as well as the cinching or lynchpin of space. When I speak, my body becomes a potential, a projective and a sequential thing, not a given thing, opening itself, and me its vehicle, to ongoingness" (2009, 2). But Connor also makes the point that, due to the ways that the body is used for and accustomed to voicing, and the habits that form over years of vocalization, each body becomes a repository of experience. "So there are two voices," he writes:

> The one evacuated by time, and evacuating us into it, and the other saturated by time. The first voice speeds us into time, gives us up, skidding, frictionless, to the purest defluxion. The second lames and hobbles us, making us wheezy and timelogged. But the voice is the compounding or convocation of these two times, the time to which it surrenders, and the time that it itself captures, which continually transform one into the other. (Ibid., 9)

Connor suggests that the voice marks linear time and, at the same time, breaks it, coalescing in affective puddles of accessible physical/vocal memory. Voice's temporal potency—a

combination of Frith's visceral vocal empathy and Connor's voice as cronopher (simultaneous marker and hindrance of time)—can be used to create an immediate and empathetic tether that pulls us out of place and into another conceptualization of space and time.

Different concepts of circumscribed spaces necessarily intersect in discussions of choralism. The body may be considered its own space, in which voice is sounded (using the pharynx, larynx, and sinuses as amplifiers before projecting outside of the body) and sonic spaces—acoustic, amplified, or a combination of the two—are external to the body. However, as Nina Sun Eidsheim notes, the body "sounds" as well, even *within* that external space:

> …some of the material that vibrates during a musical experience is the human body. Rather than viewing music as an external and stable object, signal, or ground for meaning-making, it is these various intermaterial vibrational states (thick events) that we transmit and take in, that we interpret and make meaning with, and that we refer to as music. (2015, 165)

Eidsheim posits that the body itself experiences the soundscape holistically, rather than as separate sensory events. Our ears alone do not define experience of sound; our bodies themselves vibrate, and the reverberation of sound within space acts upon our frame and viscera in nuanced and oft-ignored ways. She details how the lumbar spine, eye socket, and abdomen all vibrate at certain frequencies and adapt to external vibrations in music and soundscape (Ibid., 172). And, to expand on Eidsheim, as our bodies are vibrating from external sonic stimuli, they are also vibrating within as we sing in a feedback loop from embodied singer to embodied listener and back again.

As much as the practice of choral music is about voice connecting to embodiment, it is also about the body's experience of singing within a space with others, and feeling the

sensations of that practice. In barbershop singing, Gage Averill notes, the physical experience of overtones, chordal structures, and timbral shifts is an integral and integrated part of enjoying the practice (2003).[7] These modes of diagnostic listening using one's body and voice within a particular space to create a specific enjoyable embodied experience *for the singers themselves,* as well as any audience, should be considered a part of choral practice. The singers themselves are separated from the audience by being embodied voicers; therefore, their embodied experience, and the pleasure of monitoring feedback and making minute changes to affect the sonic results, reflects aims that may be separate from simple representation or interpretation of musical materials. Relying less on cultural context and more on physical/auditory sensation, these changes indicate that the pleasures of embodiment within choral experiences are as important as contextualization when it comes to affect.

In examining the connections between embodied experience and affective response, it is useful to consider the word "resonance" as a binder between physical feeling and affective engagement. Ethnomusicologist Veit Erlmann ties acknowledgement of spatial considerations and definition of culturally-identified place to the physical and metaphorical properties of "resonance," and the ways in which the body is implicated in space through these resonances (2014). Akin to Nina Sun Eidsheim's more recent notions of the body as implicated in space via sound and the sensorium, Erlmann's view ties into lineages of phenomenological theory and notions of relationality that can define space. This follows notable phenomenological work in ethnomusicology by Steven Feld, who discusses the interplay between body, senses, place, space, and meaning: "My desire is to illuminate a

7. In this work, Averill foregrounds phenomenological aspects of tuning and vocal production to discuss the pleasurable curation of sound through voice. He notes differences between the vocalists' sensations in open, versus closed, chords, and throughout the process of sensing relations between voices that he grounds in a reliance on Just Intonation and the overtone series.

doubly reciprocal motion: as place is sensed, senses are placed; as places make sense, senses make place" (1996, 91). Feld's emplaced senses (and sensed place) are removed from his discussion of place and body in that the body is not the primary locus of place in this construct. "Because motion can draw upon the kinesthetic interplay of tactile, sonic, and visual senses," he writes, "emplacement always implicates the intertwined nature of sensual bodily presence and perceptual engagement" (Ibid., 94). Here, perceptual engagement is the focus of phenomenological inquiry, and Feld treats the body as heavily implicated in this process, but not the primary locus. It is the understanding (physical, mental, emotional, cultural) of the sensations of space that help to define place in this model. Or, as Elizabeth Grosz puts it:

> As an incorporeal frame, the world of meaning or sense enables living beings and their chemical and biological constituents to orient themselves in relation to objects and each other, to direct their own actions, to give meaning and value to things, including themselves, and to develop languages and sign systems that refer to, address, signify, or express things, relations, events, and the universe they inhabit. (2017, 253)

The term "resonance" offers connections between body, space, voice, and affect. Resonance functions simultaneously in two different ways, knitting together the physical world with affective experience. Resonance is tied to embodied, spatial experience as defined by physical acoustics—i.e., "echo," "reverb," how sound is amplified within and outside the body and carried by space. Feld and Grosz note that physically shared experiences of space often are guided by soundscape.[8]

[8] Use of the word "soundscape" is derived from R. Murray Schafer's work on "hi-fi" and "lo-fi" sonic environments (1993). Schafer's definitions of his coined terms "soundscape" (sonic environment) (271) and "acoustic space" (profile of sound over a landscape, before it can no longer be heard) (274) offer additional definitions that refer to acoustic space, rather than place.

Resonance also refers to the ways that affective experience is reified and controlled via channels of "affective regimes" (Mankekar and Gupta, 2016). These hegemonic affective guides or channels are embedded in cultural life and socialization, encompassing most affective experiences by defining modes of feeling, and listening, in particular spaces and settings. Integrally tied to the way that we perceive space and place as laminated into one singular and inseparable aspect in the realm of experience, I suggest that the acoustic physicalities of space are often used to set up affective regimes tied to concepts of place, embodiment, and cultural understanding, constructs that are never entirely inescapable from the spaces in which they are felt, comprehended, and reified. Physical resonance in space can be used to illuminate and redefine affective resonance in place.

The dual conceptualization of "resonance" above also allows for connective tissue between notions of the "drastic" and "gnostic" in performance, as posited by Carolyn Abbate (2004). Considering the drastic/gnostic paradigm as extremes in the poles of physical response to performance and cultural contextualization of repertoire can connect resonances along the spectrum suggested by the binary between the two. Recognizing the physical immediacies of sound and space delicately but inexorably connected to cultural context, memory, and place, indicates that drastic and gnostic are never entirely divorced in actual lived moments. Abbate's exploration of her experiences as she played Mozart and watched a vocally-compromised singer perform Wagner show how she chose to notice the accrued gnostic bolster underneath musical materials, repertoire, and histories. Additionally, identification of drastic immediacy within live performances provides a fascinating bifocal lens of musicking and musical consumption. Perhaps most important, Abbate's discussions of both "drastic" and "gnostic" also give a glimpse of her affective state(s) during these

events. Whether she is referring to playing accompaniment in the Mozart ("doing this really fast is fun") (511) or to listening to Ben Heppner attempt a note high in his range at less-than-full vocal health ("…I told myself to open my eyes and pay attention because what we were witnessing was extraordinary raw courage and sangfroid")(535), Abbate's thought experiment separating "drastic" immediacy from "gnostic" repertorial knowledge hinges on acknowledging and amplifying the physical and emotional aspects of feeling performance. In short, her investigation of the drastic/gnostic paradigm is entirely wrought around the importance of affect in musical perception and experience. Considering "resonance" in both drastic and gnostic arenas allow complexity; overlap; intermixed feeling in the body that relies on temporal emplacement *and* memorialized knowledge. As Abbate's body physically resonates with acoustic space and the joys, challenges, and precarities of performance, her knowledge of repertoire and technique is activated, and a rich mixture of both ends of the drastic/gnostic spectrum swirls throughout the experience. Rather than relying on the binarization of these two poles and the mental gymnastics required to separate them, this dual definition of "resonance" theorizes that experience is constantly permutating within this paradigm.[9]

The resonances inherent in sonic experience are complex enough without reckoning with the echoing cultural and embodied issues surrounding the human voice. However, resonance takes on new connections to affective experience of, and through, voice. In solo vocalism, it

[9] Taking this theory further, the "drastic" and "gnostic" as a paradigm of resonance could be just as applicable to everyday experiences *outside* of the realm of performance; however, we, as experiencers, are seldom as aware of these intermixed aspects of affect and thought production when we are in the modes of inattention that allow us to move through the world without overstimulation. This thought moves past the central argument of this chapter, but perhaps offers a broader goal of the overall dissertation. In recognizing how little we triage our own sensorial and memorialized/theorized experiences, and identifying some of the ways that choralism is special because it specifically relies on skill development of recognition and adaptation to sensation and thought, I suggest that becoming aware of these mechanisms may offer us richer, gentler, and more meaningful experiential engagements.

is already clear that the self/other paradigm bleeds into a relational resonance with shared space and time; whereas, in choralism, self and other are constantly transgressed and renegotiated, filtered through embodied experience. The following section suggests two terms that pinpoint how choralism can be described through, and expand upon, voice studies and sound studies literature—and, consequently, further connect to affect theory.

Dynamic Junctures & Diagnostic Embodiment

In Brian Massumi's concept of "differential affective attunement" (2015), the idea of affect and experience is afforded a variety of different interpretations and reactions for each participant. "We're all in on the event together," he writes, "but we're in it together differently" (114). And yet, though Massumi's category is grounded in the difference between one interpretation and another, the attunement fills affective dimensions with infinite relational possibilities. The physical aspects of experience are somewhat overlooked, and Massumi's interest does not lie particularly in the senses, in this case. In earlier work (1995), Massumi does investigate the ways that the body is virtual—for example, the fact that the body has been scientifically observed sensing, or feeling, stimuli before physical contact—and the ways that this reveals a field of "potential."

> The body is as immediately virtual as it is actual. The virtual, the pressing crowd of incipiencies and tendencies, unmediated, with pastness, where outsides are infolded….The virtual is a lived paradox where what are normally opposites coexist, coalesce, and connect; where what cannot be experienced cannot but be felt—albeit reduced and contained. (Ibid., 482)

Massumi goes on to connect this potential with a will to conscious "action-reaction" circuits, a "linear" experience that relies on highlighting certain stimuli (or pre-stimuli) and suppressing or inhibiting others (Ibid.). This highlight/inhibition paradigm offers the notion

that certain parts of experience will be valued differently from others; and that the ways in which these choices, or better yet, inclinations, are developed is through fused aggregate layers of experience and memory. Though Massumi includes embodied experience here, he circumvents the outer stimuli that instigates it, or the body's participation *as* stimuli within a space.

Max Z. Jack prefers to investigate the body as imbricated in a shared experience with others, as in crowds, or, in the case of his scholarship, groups of soccer fans. He refers to this shared experience within space as "atmosphere," something that can be cultivated and curated within each moment. "Always blooming, atmosphere emerges as the perceptual and experiential quality of a place" (Jack 2021, 5). Taking notice of the way that bodies interact with each other and experience environmental particularities, he claims,

> …atmosphere foregrounds the sensory nature of lived experience. […] It hinges on the notion that bodies are not separable from their environments [….] In short, environmental, and subsequently, sensorial aspects of human experience influence the interpretation of scenarios and potentialities of action. (Jack 2021, 8)

However, Jack returns to the potential political and cultural ramifications of this exchange, emphasizing the interpretation of these experiences as a mechanism for, and of, shared political goals and "actions." Atmosphere foregrounds the result of the experiences in the realm of agency; and perhaps more focus on the experience itself can yield a pre-agential (or at least, not-yet-politicized) realization of how individuals and spaces interact.

Though both Massumi and Jack focus on emplaced bodies experiencing affect at least in part physically, it is entirely possible to be affectively "moved" in a thoroughly memorialized sense; indeed, that is much of what media, particularly film, is predicated upon. The affective regimes that guide us in everyday life are operationalized, even strategized and "gamed," in

film cinematography, narrative/spectacle shifts, and soundscape/soundtrack choices. (This is further discussed in Chapters 2 and 3.)

Sound, as a physical manifestation, can prosaically be considered a diagnostic mechanism—as in, how big is this room? And what are the walls made of? And sound, as diagnostic, can be perceived at minimal levels, as when a blind commuter uses street noise and staccato cane taps to navigate a treacherous sidewalk. These endeavors, it must be noted, are not only auditory ones. Listeners, whether using sound as a specific diagnostic or simply enjoying the experience of sound in space, are implicated in the space itself. This is particularly enhanced by sonic engagement, whether through experiencing only, or simultaneously experiencing and participating in sonic practice. They are not only surrounded by sound; they vibrate sympathetically, like the strings of a *viola de gamba*; they are suffused with it and constituted by it, just as the space external to their bodies is constituted by it.

In considering that experience of music, or more broadly, of sound, is an "intermaterial vibrational practice," Nina Sun Eidsheim affords the presence of our bodies in space, and the space in our bodies (2015). Our bodies themselves—the viscera, the connective tissue, muscle, bone—all vibrate in sympathy, and remind us of what we are made. This tether, between sound and the body, can admit the body into the vast openness of the space, and can invite the listener, or "intermaterial vibratory being," into the experience of sound and space, rather than relying on the terms "observer" or "listener" that keep the individual at a distance from the experience itself. This interpretation is a combination of Eidsheim's concept of sound as "intermaterial vibration" and my own interpolation of the word "being." In using "being," rather than "person," or "listener," I am deliberately being as broad as possible to

admit of the widest number of possible experiencers in many types of spaces. This both avoids the notion that humans must be actively listening or sensing to experience sound; and also affords room for other, non-human, experiences within these spaces that can also be relational between humans and non-humans. This is in reaction to current interest in Ecomusicology, which foregrounds experience in the animal/natural world and seeks to decentralize notions of "experience" as a predominantly human sensory phenomenon. See Titon (2015) and the colloquy moderated by Allen in the *Journal of the American Musicological Society* (2011) for an introduction to this developing movement. Also, the concept of the grotesque, a term referring to interconnectivity of human experience with agents of the natural world—and, according to ethnomusicologist Brian Alexander Karvelas, interspecies creation and experience of sound—shows that sound studies has much to reconsider regarding how we have historically separated humanity from other lifeforms' experiences of sound and music (2023, 54).

Bodies are often described by both performers and listeners as an impediment to sound in space; more people equates to more soft material to absorb sound, dulling and shortening reverberant decay; but bodies encompass so much more than squishy tissues soaking up sound. The body is connected to intelligence, cultural understanding, emotion, and memory. And these parts, so often discussed as facets of personality, are not discrete—they are constantly overlapped, forborne, shared, and tethered to experience and to relational engagement. Insofar as the body itself contains overlapping and ever-shifting multitudes, so does a body's interaction with sound—which is informed by memory, emotion, intelligence, and cultural understanding (as much or more so than physicalized sound waves). How voicers understand and curate sound within space is guided by all these factors,

interconnected within a sensorial-emotional affective webbing. Sonic investment and physical engagement with sound in space is available to everyone sharing that space, whether they are voicing/sounding or not. Indeed, the sonic envelope of any space is almost inescapable by anyone in that space, even if they are using electronic means to drown it out. Though they may be able to block out particular frequencies, embodiments of acoustic vibration can very seldom be ignored.

This shifting overlap is often simplified by isolating one aspect of sonic interaction, which leads to a variety of binaries that shape or re-inscribe entrenched ideas regarding the body. For example, one way of circumscribing and defining the body as an entity is to consider the interior (both the physical "guts" and the emotional/intellectual ones) as separate from the exterior (anything outside the body). But to understand how sound is constantly projected, interpreted, and reinterpreted by sounders, listeners, and sounders-as-listeners, it may be necessary to reimagine the body not as a barrier, but as a conductor and producer of sound.

In doing this, I suggest we remove the body as its own fixed space (for the sake of cementing the term "space" itself) and focus on a much more dynamic and encompassing space experienced by beings that are simultaneously within and without their bodies, sensing sound and absorbing it, and, as much as they sense sound, they are sensing space, and that space's potential for sound, too. This is, perhaps, a natural extension of Férdia Stone-Davis' "destabilization of inside and outside" of the body (2015, 4-5); by suggesting that we do away with the distinction altogether, I am not proposing that the body as self is nonexistent; rather, that the body can be understood as its own discrete vessel and as an important part of the space it shares with other beings and things.

Philosopher Don Idhe notes that experience of sonic events is reliant on both the object(s) that are actively sounding and the space in which it can sound. Idhe wrote, "The mute object does not reveal its own voice, it must be given a voice. […] in listening to the duet of things which lend each other a voice, I must also learn to hear what each offers in the presence of the other" (Idhe 2007 [1976], 67-68). Musicologist Nina Sun Eidsheim uses the term "figure of sound" to account for the physical properties of sound in space and the body's reactions and attunements to it (2015). She posits that there is a relational understanding of the body within itself (perhaps best defined here as place), as well as between the body and acoustic space. This relational engagement shows how our senses and our physical being are entangled in relational diagnostic interaction:

> …we understand sounds within enclosed spaces by distinguishing direct from reflected sonic signals…. Not only is sounded sound always already spatially and relationally specific (and thus would benefit from being studied as such), but our perception of this specificity is complex. (Ibid., 174)

Furthermore, it is easy to see how the emplacement of the body can be weaponized and used, as Foucault suggests, to discipline or punish through enclosure and partitioning (Foucault 1995 [1975], 143).

The complex amalgam of sound, space, experience, memory, body, and voice that I lay out in this work requires moving parts rather than a static net or web, in part because the experience of them is an individualized alchemy that is difficult to parse apart either in the time of the event or in memory afterward. I suggest that seamless juxtapositions between these adaptive intersections, fluctuating in real time, are *dynamic junctures*, which encompass the vast sea of what might be categorized as "physical," "mental," and "spiritual," though these terms needlessly separate an interconnected and simultaneous experience of all three areas.

Dynamic junctures rely on a static concept of shared time. Though each being may experience an event or period alongside other beings, the individual dynamic juncture will be subtly, or even vastly, different; and though each individual may experience time differently as well within their memory of the experience or their thought processes during it, the physics of time (as well as the physical experience) ground the dynamic juncture in relationality with others. While individuals may feel time move differently, guided by imagination, distraction, meditation, or memory of previous experience, we can claim a tenuous hold on each other, our co-experiencers and co-sounders in space, through a shared episodic timeline. Foregrounding shared linear time is also functional in that it emphasizes the changeability of self, voice, and atmosphere within space, as atmosphere is inherently relational. Though a being's own thoughts that guide their experience are individual, they can influence, and be influenced by, a combinatory atmosphere in the moment that cannot exist beyond relational with others in shared space and timeline.

To better discuss the ways in which the body senses spaces, experiences affective states, and learns to adapt to these physical cues, particularly in choral vocal practice, I will use the term *diagnostic embodiment* to represent physical experience of space that provides moorings for, and overlap with, affect. Relational sonic adjustment made possible by honed diagnostic embodiment, in which a singer uses the sensations and contextualizations of their body and voice within a particular space to create a specific embodied experience for themselves as well as for others, should be considered an adaptive and (re)active skill set that defines choric practice. For example, the singers featured in the opening vignette of the chapter practice daily in the King's College Chapel in Cambridge, and therefore become intimate with that space, training their bodies to know how to use their voices in the chapel in

ways that feel reliable and reproduceable the next time they are called upon to sing there, and learn how their voices interact with other voices by feeling, as well as hearing, these combinations.

Diagnostic embodiment, as a criterion of choral definition, does not supersede the most common definition of "choir," a group of people who vocally perform together in unison or parts. Rather, diagnostic embodiment nuances and specifies what choral singers *do*, individually and as an aggregate group. The embodied aspects of vocality and sonic experience—inherent principles of Voice Studies—can be used to redefine choral practice as diagnostic embodiment and adjustment in acoustic or mediated space. Diagnostic embodiment connects Eidsheim's (2015) notion that music is experienced as an embodied "vibrational practice" with the particular ways in which space and voice are connected and mutually constituted, felt in the body as breath and action and as reaction to sonic feedback.

Nicholas Harkness proposes a term that contains a portion of this relational and combinatory suggestion when he suggests his "phonosonic nexus" to describe vocal production and classification:

> ...I treat the voice as an ongoing intersection between the phonic production, shaping, and organization of sound, on the one hand, and the sonic uptake and categorization of sound in the world, on the other. I give this practical, processual intersection the name *phonosonic nexus*. (Harkness 2014, 12)

However, Harkness's nexus is, as he says, "practical," intended to encompass explicit, culturally-bound interpretation and trained vocal production. This is a useful and malleable definition of "voice" in that Harkness can identify particularities of vocalism and "voice-ness" within pedagogical, sociological, political, and referential paradigms that flirt with the boundaries between the metaphorical and the physical. Harkness continues:

> …the pragmatically productive concept of a phonosonic nexus allows us to analyze systematically two important facts: that the voice concerns both sound and body, and that it links speech and song. Furthermore, this concept clarifies the relationship between literal understandings of "voice" (e.g., a laryngeal setting involving vocal cord adduction, a material locus of human sound production, an instantiation of a speaking or singing individual, etc.) and more tropic understandings of "voicing" (e.g., a metonym of political position and power, a metaphor for the uniqueness of an authentic self or collective identity, an expression of a typifiable persona, etc.). These two related views consider voice as a ubiquitous medium of communicative interaction and channel of social contact and as the positioning of a perspective within a culturally meaningful framework of semiotic alignments. (Ibid.)

Harkness's phonosonic nexus offers an innovative tool to diagnose the many voicings we curate and experience, and how we have been taught to conceptualize "selfhood" and "agency" through the word "voice." However, for the purposes of my own investigations, I would prefer to move from Harkness's noun to a verb that describes (re)active vocalizing, rather than "voice" as object. This work is not focused on voice as an identifier, a tool, an instrument of persona or politics. Rather, I look for the mechanisms of body and mind that activate affective regimes within choric voicing that spatialize and detach the voice from an individual body, mixing it with others in a particular acoustic—and the ways choral singers can become adept at sensing acoustic spaces and the voices of others to negotiate changes in their own bodies, shaping the sound alongside other singers and the space itself. Diagnostic embodiment is this process of negotiation, always situational and contextual, always bound to space and temporal intersubjectivity.

The body itself, or at least specific discussion of a body's overall structures, is often missing from voice studies, though "the body" as a sensing or productive entity is frequently mentioned in vague terms. Some attention to how the human body is built, and how its forms guide sonic experiences in a way that feeds into affect, offers new ways of conceptualizing

affect a bit more specifically in ways that show how the body as sensor is also the body as a calibrated tool in choral practice.[10]

Medical anatomist, educator and researcher Frank H. Willard engages with material that renamed fascia, a connective tissue covering most of the body's organs, muscle, and bone, an organ in its own right (see Benias et. al 2018). Willard had focused at least part of his career to researching fascia (Willard et. al. 2012) and the role it plays in highlighting the body's structures and sensory abilities. His presentation at the American Academy of Osteopathy's Convocation conference posited that the way in which fascia forms and functions in the body below the mandible (jawbone) is markedly different than the way in which fascia forms and functions in the head.

Willard described the fascia in the body below the mandible, which he termed the "trunk," surrounding the viscera, internal organs, spinal column, and muscle as relatively fixed; however, it also closely protects the nervous system that runs through all parts of the lower body, and can influence the sensation of embodied experience—what Eidsheim generally calls "visceral." This lower portion of the body, making up much of our physical being, is involved with sensing internal and external stimulus only; and relaying those sensations back to the brain.

However, the fascial system of the head is far more changeable throughout youth. It has to be malleable; the head is not fully formed at birth, and continues growing through the first six years of life (Heinking 2021, 609). Notably, this is the period during which many, if not

[10] Attention to structures of "the body" may specifically be missing from this literature not only because it relies on some specialist medical knowledge, much of which is outside of the traditional scope of ethno/musicological scholarship, but also is often derided as overly-general or even stereotypical in ways that might undercut the importance of specific cultural understandings of bodily structures. Rather than ignoring different bodily concepts or structures, this discussion of medical-idealized anatomy could provide a foothold for nuanced discussion of how different bodies are conceptualized, used, and renegotiated.

most, humans learn spoken language. The head itself is developing over this period, and the cultural application of human-produced sound adapts to and influences the ways in which the jaw and sinuses grow and are used to create sound. Therefore, the fascial layers in the head can adjust to these changing characteristics as these spaces and mechanisms develop over time. Which means that, as we develop our cultural understandings of voice, voicing, language, and sound, we are also developing and honing the structures that produce them.

These structural systems of development that guide sensation show that the use of the head as a sonic resonator, articulator, and modifier is functionally different and separated from the systems that allow us to viscerally feel sound. The auditory canal is indeed included in the non-somatic portion above the mandible; so, yes, our hearing is also guided by these same malleable fascial layers integrated into the head. However, human anatomy has not developed to encourage the skill of changing the ear's embouchure at will; the muscles and bones of the jaw, tongue, soft and hard palate and teeth *have* developed to produce this kind of potential for minute modification of resonant space and vocal articulation (Ibid.).

In other words, the visceral system of sensation is separate from the cranial system. So, in order to experience voiced sound (your own, or others') as a "vibratory sensation," it is sensed in the viscera as well as the ear canal, which is translated to the cranial mechanisms that react or adjust to it within the nerves, fascia, muscles, and bone of the singer's face. A learned translation requiring training and specific knowledge of a person's own particular anatomy, these minute adjustments also are learned through the integration of encouraged cultural norms and linguistic skill sets.

This is the cycle of choric practice. Singing, listening, and "sensing sound;" and then adjusting your body to what you feel as well as hear to create the sound that can continue to

achieve the goals embedded in the singer's practice. It is made all the more imperative in choirs due to the way in which space, as discussed earlier, is implicated in the sounds produced by a group and fed back through acoustic/architectural means. Choral music, even when heard in the same space as it is produced, is a *mediated* product for audiences due to this lack of embodied vocality (see Ch 2 for more discussion of choral mediation). Audiences are generally spectators, it is true. But within the synthesis of body, voice, and space in choric performance, the audience is even farther from the originating voices—even as they are enveloped in spatialized sound. This does not, however, mean that the audience is divorced from the affective experience of choralism; only that listeners' experiences will be differently guided by their own memorialized past and embodied present. This also indelibly separates the audience from the singers; the listener's sensorial body is only absorbing the sound and translating that into a culturally-informed affective or intellectualized experience, and is not in that moment producing or curating sound.

Personal Choral Affinities and Historical Inquiry: A Thought Experiment

Given the mode of the above interdisciplinary theoretical interventions and suppositions suggesting connections between voice, embodiment, space, ritual, and metaphysics/religion, it is no surprise that historical musical inquiry simply has not expanded upon these lines of inquiry, particularly in the realm of choral history. Historical inquiry relies heavily on cultural context—as deduced from archival documents—as well as particular types of musical-structural analysis that can extrapolate overall aesthetic and pedagogical goals in chorister training in churches and courts. Hypothesizing about physical and affective connections to space requires an awful lot of "reading between the lines" of archival

documents and the musical vestiges—in the form of scores—that we have from these periods. However, thanks to rigorous musicological work with what records remain from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance periods, there are indeed lines to read between.

My own affinity for early choral music began as a teenager, and was encouraged as I was invited to sing partsongs, madrigals, motets, and longer works as a soloist and in strong choral ensembles. I credit this interest to several teachers—including Cliff Thompson, my iconoclast high school choir teacher and director as well as a long-time company singer with The Washington Opera, and Dr. J. Scott Ferguson, the choir director at Illinois Wesleyan University who allowed me to sing the low voice in a recording of French medieval part songs—as well as my family's interest in early music while I was growing up. These works were especially interesting to me for numerous reasons, not least in that the middle/low parts were more challenging musically for a young singer. The embodied and broader affective *feeling* of singing and listening to medieval/Renaissance choral music, and the collaboration required to bring it to fruition with other singers and within resonant space, started me on the journey toward the questions I pose in this dissertation.

I label the following sections a "thought experiment" because the materials involved are so removed from the "case studies" drawn from my own experiences with professional choirs and because the suppositions and inferences necessary to undertake this work moves from anthropology to a philosophical plane. There is no "proof" achievable here—even more so than in subjective humanities scholarship overall, due to the remove from the period being discussed—but some interesting suggestions result by applying concepts of diagnostic embodiment, dynamic junctures, and resonance to archival documents and scholars' interpretations of them. And though this line of inquiry is interesting (I hope) from a

historical, practical, and theoretical view, it also traces my own entry into the lines of questioning I identify in this dissertation as core to global Northern choral experiences and vocal-affective engagements within resonant space.

Additionally, this investigation can draw some inferences between the physical experiences of resonant "space" and how they can connect to both the practice of choralism, as developed during the medieval and Renaissance periods, and the encouragement of meditative embodiment and mental-affective attitudes in religious "places." Religion and metaphysics in these eras in Europe connect to physical places of worship as well as the affects and lines of thought encouraged in them. The "thought experiment" I undertake, focused on the Eton Choirbook, invites us into a particular era with specific modes of attention and affective investment in religious rites. Investigating the specific goals of religion during this period can suggest interconnection between sound, voice, and place that was entrenched in religious worship both for singers and for congregations. This era, and this place (fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century England) are specific, but may suggest avenues of choral praxis that developed both before and after this period, and may have been integrated into tradition in different ways in other parts of Europe and around the world due to colonial sprawl (see Ch. 2 for more discussion of this phenomenon).

I began this historical project in small ways as an undergraduate, and my thoughts have crystallized around my experience as a Junior Year Abroad student, exposed to the Eton Choirbook at King's College, London. When I arrived at King's Strand Campus in September 2005 as a year abroad student, I met Dr. David Trendell, a scholar specializing in the choral music of Commonwealth-era composer William Byrd. Trendell was also the chapel choir director, an expert in choral repertoire of fourteenth-, fifteenth-, and sixteenth-

century England, Spain, and France—and he allowed me to join the chapel choir at KCL. Stepping into the "Cantores" side of the inward-facing choir pews, I heard the choristers around me deftly navigating that music in the dazzling space of the College Chapel (pictured below). Throughout that year, I was learning how to use the chapel space, as well as the acoustics of Westminster Abbey and Southwark Cathedral, to highlight the textures, movement, dissonances, and buoyant harmonies of this choral repertoire.

Image 1. *King's College, London Chapel, built 1831 and renovated 1864.*
Photo by David Iliff. License: CC BY-SA 3.0

Though I was picking up a few things about history, vocal technique, and composition, it turned out I was also learning how to tune and become attuned to reverberant houses of

worship and the collaboration, cultural understanding, and malleability required of choristers within those spaces.

As I began singing with Dr. Trendell and the choir, I also took his course entitled "Music and Worship in England: 1470-1607." In this course, Trendell focused for weeks on the music of a single manuscript—The Eton Choirbook, one of few partbooks that remains from the period before Henry the Eighth's purge of Catholic artifacts in the sixteenth century. It was perhaps this course that turned me into an Ethnomusicologist. Though Trendell himself was a Musicologist, trained at Magdalen College at Oxford, his focus on the Eton Choirbook as a vehicle for worship, rather than a display of compositional technique, prioritized the practice of devotional meditation during this period. The ways in which this music highlights the interfaces between the singer, the space, and the congregation prompts, for me then and for me today more than ten years later, multiple questions about how this music was used, what clues it holds to understanding liturgical acoustic spaces and choral practice; and, more broadly, what this says about how we understand, and physically and affectively experience, reverberant acoustics and choirs sounding them. That course sparked my own investigation on these issues, and in the next "thought experiment" I will present some possibilities for future research in chorality using the music and soundscape of medieval Europe and the UK as a jumping-off point. As my own experience with choralism in acoustic spaces grew (during that time and subsequently), I began to ask questions about how the architecture of this period—both in the grand courts and arched cathedrals of the Middle Ages and Renaissance periods—and attitudes toward religion and metaphysics might have shaped vocal skills and practices and the affective regimes of devotion during this time.

Much of the twentieth- and twenty-first scholarship on early choral practice, while invested in cultural comprehension, does not specifically reference architecture or tuning, beyond noting the spaces that singers practiced in. The ways that voice, tuning, acoustics, and architecture may inform each other is seldom if ever mentioned, likely because it would be a difficult set of suppositions to support. However, recent investigations of vocal practice, training, and improvisation could suggest that there was a singer-driven move toward practices that would affect both vocal diagnostic embodiment and relationships with space. Widening vocal registers in choral pieces throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries highlighted aspects of the overtone series that indicated composers and singers were aware and making use of the acoustic properties of the buildings in which they sang. Generally referred to as Just Intonation, relational pitch tuned to activate overtones within acoustic space—which is further amplified in reverberant architecture—was likely already a feature of choral practice by the Renaissance, though musical treatises of the period were focused on the Pythagorean tuning system.

Pythagorean tuning depends on two intervals, the perfect fourth (4/3) and the perfect fifth (3/2), to derive all scalar pitches. These ratios, which can be easily shown by dividing a monochord into the appropriate parts, are not only descriptive of pitch but also provide a primer for producing them. For example, to achieve a perfect fifth (3/2), divide a stringed monochord into three parts and stop the string so that only two of the three parts vibrate. This, as compared to the unstopped monochord (1/1), will be a perfect fifth. These teachings survived well into the Common Era, perhaps due to practical ease as well as the elegant underlying physical and mathematical theory. Fourth-century scholar, rhetorician, and theorist Aurelius Augustinus espoused Pythagorean tuning in his treatise *De Musica*, part of a

series of academic writings designed to illuminate the seven liberal arts. Augustinus is also credited as the founder of theological study and with establishing the Roman Catholic liturgy; he is better known as St. Augustine (Yudkin 1989, 30). Thus, his music theory scholarship combined with his theological understandings of music as a tool within worship helped to define the musical landscape of the early church. Though Pythagorean tuning was certainly an important part of Augustinus' musical understanding, he saw that music could entice, convert, and enrapture listeners, and could hold sway over church congregations during worship. Yudkin writes:

> Music here is not the mathematical calculation of intervals and proportions but the vehicle of profound expression and the inspiration to spiritual devotion. If profound and influential thinkers such as Augustine had not been able to accept music into their worship, the fast-growing liturgy of the new Church would have been very different indeed. (Ibid., 31)

Music was integrated into church practice through the eighth century by way of monophonic chant for both the liturgy and offices. These melodies were eventually developed into polyphonic pieces based around chant melodies, starting in the tenth century. This system would have developed melodies according to Pythagorean tuning. This was a tenet of the Roman Catholic liturgy and contemporary science, as it was tied to Classical conceptions of musical mathematics that were understood to integrally tie together religion and spiritual metaphysics with an ordered quotidian world (Hicks 85). Inheriting these concepts in the early Middle Ages from a reinterpretation of Pythagoras' mathematical teachings, scholars and musicians (including Boethius in his sixth-century treatise *De institutione musica*) venerated Pythagoras as a visionary scholar and philosopher. Pythagoras became a legendary (if apocryphal/mischaracterized) figure in late Antiquity and the Middle

Ages, a vanguard of the connections between the physical and the metaphysical through mathematics, Andrew Hicks notes:

> Late-ancient and medieval authors themselves inherited and embellished upon a Pythagoras credited with an increasingly illustrious list of discoveries and inventions, most of which were closely connected to the late-ancient "mathematicalized" Pythagoreanism: the science of music, the monochord, arithmetic and the science of numbers, the abacus, Venus and the computation of planetary distances, even the discipline of philosophy, for which Pythagoras was said to have coined the very term *philosophia*. (Hicks 85–86)

Veneration of Pythagoras did not abate through the Middle Ages or even into the Renaissance. Ethnomusicologist Vasco Zara investigates the interconnection between Renaissance music theory (following the rules of the Pythagorean ratios model), religious and philosophical understandings of time and space, and the science of architecture. Considering treatises of the fifteenth and sixteenth century, Zara notes how harmonic principles Pythagorean tuning are integrated into contemporary philosophy and approaches to proportion in construction that raised architecture from a craft to a science (Zara 2020, 228). Therefore, due to connections between contemporary theoretical ideals of art and science that favored Pythagorean tuning with philosophy and religion, throughout the middle ages and into the Renaissance a systemic shift to Just Intonation—and all the mathematical retraining and recalibration required for composers and scientists of the era alike—would have been practically and ideologically impossible, literally unthinkable for scholars of the age. However, this does not preclude a shift in tuning practice, supported by the acoustic resonance of the stone churches and cathedrals being built during these centuries.

The addition of polyphony surrounding chant melodies began at a time when the church was rich in both funding and iconographic significance. The great cathedrals of Europe were built during this era, starting with the refurbishment and expansion of the Basilica of St.

Denis in Paris during the twelfth century. Breaking ground in 1163, Notre Dame de Paris became the paragon of the French Gothic architectural style. The grandeur of vast, reverberant space became a hallmark of worship within the church edifice, which may have naturally led to changes in musical composition and taste throughout this time. For example, musicologist Kacie Morgan compares the music of Notre Dame de Paris with the construction phases of the church, and the expansion projects that defined its acoustics within its first several hundred years (2021). She shows extensive evidence that the works composed and performed were directly related to the acoustic properties of the building and the skill sets of the singers who worked there (Ibid., 110) during this period.

It is important to note that these polyphonic compositions would have featured particular intervals within chordal consonance. Fourths, fifths, and octaves were preferred for the most important points of a piece, including the beginning, ending, and major cadence points; all three are intervals that appear in the Pythagorean system. Pythagorean theory is built upon the circle of fifths, and interval ratios are derived using addition of fifths in sequence. This leads to a few intervals that would be considered aesthetically dissonant, including the Pythagorean third (81/64) and sixth (27/24) (Benson 2006, 110). Composers avoided these intervals at seminal moments, allowing them only at brief points of polyphonic dischord.

The Pythagorean tuning system favored throughout this period is easily contrasted with the physics of Just Intonation, which is supported by the phenomenon of overtones. In Just Intonation, which makes use of naturally-occurring physical-sonic phenomena in acoustic space, overtones (also sometimes referred to as partials) provide tones the richness of timbre, in that they afford projected intervals rising atop the fundamental pitch in a particular order (i.e., fundamental – octave 1 – octave + 5 – octave 2 – octave + M3, etc.). This system allows

a more aesthetically pleasing ratio for the major third (5/4) and major sixth (5/3), for example; and is particularly evident in resonant spaces, like the reverberance of Gothic architecture (Leedy and Haynes 2001). Though composers, music scholars, and theoreticians were taught Pythagorean theoretical approaches to pitch, focused on the ways that a string stopped at the aforementioned ratios, the same scholars, composers, and theoreticians were also often practitioners who were influenced by, and made use of, the overtone series of Just Intonation. This practice was not undocumented, though the earliest specific mention of vocalism naturally attracted to Just Intonation harmonics was not until 1558, in Giuseffo Zarlino's *Le Institutione Harmoniche* (Ibid.). The distinction is between a theoretical, mathematically-elegant system of stopped string ratios and a more complex system of ratios that may not have been popularly favored at the time, but certainly was viscerally available to singers in resonant space.

The Just Intonation system is underpinned by the phenomena of acoustic physics, whereas the Pythagorean system of tuning, while theoretically elegant, is not supported by overtones in the major and minor 3rd, 6th, and 7th. When even a single pitch is sung or sounded in a reverberant space, the space itself will return overtones (in varying strengths depending on acoustics and the timbre of the voice or instrument) that sound like an extension of the note *and* an additive resonant tone from the space (Ballard 2022, 16). In other words, one could create the overtone series (sometimes called "partials") out of one fundamental pitch, which would resonate audibly through the first few partials—an octave higher than the fundamental, than a fifth, then a fourth, a major third, and perhaps even a minor third could be heard above this pitch. The overtone series is in great part responsible for the timbral character of most instruments, including voices. And when chords including thirds, fourths,

and fifths are vocally tuned (and when the timbre of the voice is relatively unwavering, without much vibrato that alters pitch), there is a vast boost to audible overtones (or "harmonics") as well as a physical sensation that connects singers' individual voices into the broader chord via this system of harmonics. It's a difficult thing to describe, but an important embodiment that one learns to recognize as a choral singer pretty early on during rehearsals and vocal training. It is certainly a culturally-bound, social aspect of Western choral pedagogy, in that it is brought up and discussed in rehearsals, either implicitly or explicitly—but is also supported by acoustics in a way that makes it easy to identify and enjoy as a magical connection to the sonic phenomena of the acoustic and other singers mediating sound. As often encouraged by their directors, choral singers are encouraged to participate in overtone resonance by altering timbre in order to further amplify partials.[11]

Ethnomusicologist Gage Averill, writing about modern barbershop singing (2003), foregrounds phenomenological aspects of tuning and vocal production to discuss the pleasurable curation of sound through voice. He notes differences between the vocalists' sensations in open, versus closed, chords, and throughout the process of sensing relations between voices that he grounds in a reliance on Just Intonation and the overtone series. Averill is investigating these sensations within a very different culture and different time, and therefore what makes choral vocalism "good," "moving," or "successful," and how embodied sensations of resonance are contextualized, even if practices have vastly changed over several centuries. The point he drives home is that physical sensations of acoustics in Just

[11] Sometimes this endeavor is explicitly discussed. I remember a specific warmup in my undergraduate choir room in which the director built a chord with Basses on the fundamental, Tenors on the fifth of the chord, Altos on the major third, and Sopranos on yet another octave. Building dynamics from quite soft to very loud allowed us to hear as the harmonics added to each other, and an abrupt cutoff afforded a ringing echo that highlighted the highest of the audible overtones. We tried to be so "in tune" (referring to both pitch and timbre, and aided by our ubiquitous tuning forks) that we'd get increasingly higher partials at the cutoff.

Intonation systems are upheld and emphasized by reverberant spaces, and that it is possible to note these feelings in the body and adjust accordingly to "tune" to the space and to the other singers. Even without the cultural underpinnings of modern choralism, the overtone series and Just Intonation would have offered early singers some of the same sensations in acoustically-resonant space, simply by dint of the laws of physics, and perhaps this embodiment drove performance practice in Gothic cathedrals and the reverberating rooms of court palaces.

Gothic Resonance

The French Gothic architectural style that emerged in the twelfth century spread throughout continental Europe and across the channel to England. The new churches, with their vast vaulted stone sanctuaries, became the hallmark of rich and thriving Roman Catholic power on the British Isles, and provided new space for vocal music. In England, particularly in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the emphasis on perfect fourths and fifths common in Pythagorean intonation expanded to include major and minor thirds and sixths, hallmarks of the overtone series (Just intonation). In modern scholarship on this phenomenon, academics go no farther than claiming that the English preferred the tone color "sweet thirds" (Just 5/3), considering them consonant intervals. This was in direct opposition to the Pythagorean third (81/64), which on the continent was still considered the only theoretical third available, and a dissonant interval.

> The English, though, liked thirds and triads, and indeed made them a central feature of their style; but Pythagorean tuning would have left these sounding anything but "sweet." What English singers might have done, then, is flatten the fifths (eventually the successive fifths would have reached the point of sounding out of tune) in order to achieve pure thirds of 5:4 major) and 6:5 (minor). In other words, they might have used a tuning system that approached what is known as mean-tone tuning (which

> would soon become the norm on keyboard instruments), and they would have done this in response to the triadic sonorities of English sound. Thus, as they usually do, changes in musical style and in performance practice may well have gone hand in hand. (Atlas 1998, 15)

Here, musicologist Alan Atlas suggests that the only way the "sweet" thirds might be produced is through a well-temperament, which slightly corrupts the circle of fifths to provide Just thirds within certain keys. It is also maintained that the tuning system would have adapted due to the already-established predilection to add Just or near-Just thirds in practice, rather than the tuning system providing the thirds as a part of compositional color via theoretical shift. While this might be true as regarded accompanying instruments—the organ, for example, might have been tuned according to such a system, as it is a fixed-tuned instrument—it seems unlikely that these Just thirds and sixths would have been included as a featured consonant in compositions if there was no way to produce them in the first place. The fourths and fifths of the Pythagorean and Just Intonation systems are virtually the same intervals/fractions; therefore, it is possible to perform in both Just Intonation and in Pythagorean tuning if the piece emphasizes only fourths and fifths. However, this makes it all the more likely that singers learned to respond to the spaces they sang in—and emphasize the acoustic overtones that their singing invoked—even as they were singing in pieces that could be described as written in Pythagorean tuning.

Atlas goes on to quote Ulrich von Richental, a scribe at the Council of Constance in the early fifteenth century. The council, a two-year meeting, was convened to end strife between two rival papacies centered in Rome and Avignon, but was also a point of cultural exchange showcasing various liturgical musical styles from across Europe and Britain. Richental describes the music performed throughout the meeting, and was particularly taken with the unusual English choral pieces that included Just thirds and sixths, though his description

lacked detail:

> Unfortunately, Ulrich von Richental was rather vague about the "sweet English song" that he heard at the Council of Constance. At first, we might assume that he was referring to the music itself, but it is equally possible that he was describing the manner of performance. And, though we can only speculate, it may be that what struck his ear was the English singers' manner of tuning. Vocal polyphony was performed according to Pythagorean tuning: that is, in accordance with the ideas of Pythagoras, who understood music as part of the mathematical sciences and whose teachings were passed down by generations of music theorists (Atlas 1998, 15).

Atlas interprets Richental's reaction as not only aesthetic, but theoretical. This music would, indeed, have sounded very different with its emphasis on Just thirds and sixths, intervals actively avoided or considered dissonant in Pythagorean tuning. However, it is as possible that Pythagorean tuning, while favored in the choral compositional realm via the insistence on octaves, fifths, and sometimes fourths at cadences, was not in practice with the singers themselves, as they sang "dissonant" intervals ill-favored in the Pythagorean system. It seems possible—in fact, probable—that the singers were using diagnostic embodiment skills as they sang, and felt as well as heard the physical feedback from the resonance of the overtone series when they sang sixths and thirds in Just Intonation. Rather than moving from a Pythagorean tuning to an equal temperament, I would suggest that the physical relationalities of the overtone series in reverberant Gothic spaces would have encouraged an engagement with Just Intonation that would afford thirds and sixths in physically-recognizable and auditory realms.

This suggestion can be supported, or at least intimated, in looking at historical interpretations of documents that mention the habit of contenance angloise, the practice of including thirds and sixths as harmonization around plainchant. There is evidence that this practice was actually singer-driven, as an improvisatory practice in services. As the practice of contenance angloise spread to the Continent, singers and composers adopted it. Rob

Wegman, in studying choral practice in the Low Countries during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, writes:

> Against this background it seems at least worth considering that a phenomenon like the *contenance angloise* in the early fifteenth century involved much more than the distribution and emulation of English compositions. Channels for the transmission of written music, after all, has been well established in the fourteenth century as in the fifteenth. Yet for oral traditions of discanting "alla Inghlese" (and indeed "auf Brabantisch") to spread to other countries it was essential that foreign musicians could be heard practicing their art in the first place (as Soest, for example, had done). The musical historical significance of the Council of Constance (1414–18) and the English annexation of Normandy (1417–49) may lie more in the creation of new opportunities for oral transmission of foreign discant styles rather than in the distribution of hitherto unknown compositions. Martin LeFranc's well-known comments about the *contenance angloise* have usually been taken to refer to composition, but he in fact contrasted the new "practice" in which Dufay and Binchois "discanted" (*deschanterrent*) with the way Tapissier, Carmen, and Césaris had only "sung" (*chanterrent*)—which of course is not to deny were also active as composers. Rather than speaking of any written music by Dufay and Binchois, which he might have heard and perhaps even sung himself, Le Franc reported the opinion of those who "had heard them" in person. (425)

Wegman goes on to discuss how singing was a semi-professional, rather than strictly professional, skill set that would have been practiced by laypeople as well as trained musicians (and/or learned theorists) during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. He notes that vernacular musical treatises—including Leonel Power's pedagogical document written in Middle English "for hem that will be syngers, or makers, or teachers" (Quoted in Wegman 1996, 417)—were, yes, intended for practicing and professional musicians but not necessarily the intelligentsia of the day, who would be schooled in theological Latin and taught music theory via Latinate texts. "Such manuals, one suspects, growing work force of nonclerical singers, for whom reallocated in churches everywhere in the course of the century," Wegman concludes (Ibid.). Margot Fassler reiterates that the "English sound" features polyphony that highlights thirds and sixths before open cadences on fifths, as an

improvised practice beginning in the fourteenth century and codified in the fifteenth. "Initially an improvised practice," Fassler writes,

> This style was not named or theoretically standardized until the fifteenth century, but it must have flourished in various guises in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. That the English sound was striking to fourteenth-century continental ears is evident in the words of Netherlandish theorist Johannes Been (d. 1367), who, when visiting Oxford as a student, found that the English "laymen and clerics, young and old," sing entirely "in 3rds and 6ths, ending on 5ths and octaves." (Fassler 2014, 239)

Fassler goes on to note that motets from fourteenth-century England often have an expanded range than works from Continental Europe and include a fourth voice (rather than three), in addition to featuring thirds and sixths, which she claims gives "the music its honeyed 'English' sound" (241).

"Syngers, Makers, Teachers"

The musical education system in the British Isles and on the Continent was often tied to chapels and cathedrals, many of which had their own schools for young boy singers. These boys were trained to sing from partbooks—large scores that had all the parts printed on one page separately, as hand-making copies was both time-intensive and costly—and worked with older, more experienced male musicians who sang the lower parts. They were taught foundations of theory, and would have been familiar at least in small part with Pythagorean tuning, as well as the Guidonian Hand (Boynton 2000, 13). Many of the boys were guided through this educational system specifically to become adult musicians and composers, and even when their voices "broke" (moved from a predominantly treble register to a lower one, usually coinciding with puberty) they were often offered further tuition and training at the school either as older singers or as tutors.

Boys were integral in the practice of religious rites, not only as treble voices but also in

other non-clergy participatory roles. Writing broadly about the traditions established between 650 and 1700, Susan Boynton and Eric Rice note that youngsters were habitually included in a variety of ways that would have made them very familiar with religious pageantry, pacing, and the liturgical calendar (2008, 13). However, Boynton and Rice continue,

> …they were especially valued for their singing. The belief that boys' voices were akin to those of angels, which was held throughout the Middle Ages and which increased in some quarters during the Counter-Reformation, stemmed from scriptural and patristic writings that emphasized children's innocence and malleability. Their physical and aural presence in church thus represented an idealized Christian purity, and in most places they occupied a prominent place in the ceremonial ritual of high feast days. (Ibid.)

According to this overarching summary, the boys would have been constantly in these resonant cathedrals and chapels, particularly during the times when services occurred several times a day. Their voices and bodies would have come of age within these spaces, to a certain extent, and their adaptive involvement with resonant space would have keenly sharpened their diagnostic embodiment skills, making it a natural, even athletic, pursuit.

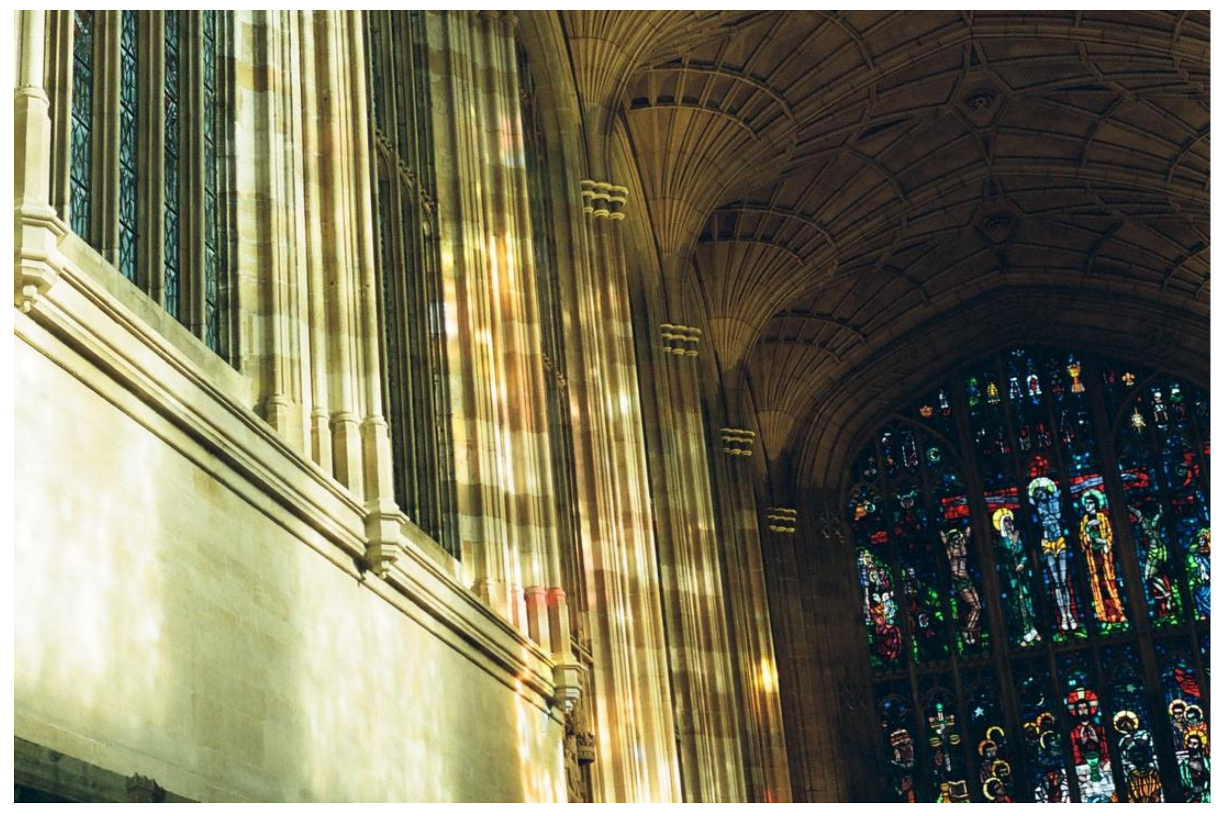
Boynton and Rice's analysis hits upon a metaphor that is often discussed in archival documents and repeated in early music scholarship. The young singers' voices were considered akin to angels, which, in contemporary writing, was allied with notions of purity and religious devotion. As much as this was certainly a part of cultural/societal discourse around children, it is worth considering another, physical aspect of their voices that could have further enhanced the cultural connection to sonic angelicism. They might be considered "angels" because generally they are singing pitches that are doubling partials of the fundamental pitch (generally held in the lower voices) and further highlighting upper partials in the Just Intonation system, encouraging more timbral breadth within the space. The acoustic properties of the space are enhanced and recycled through the addition of treble

voices to the overtone series, creating a “ringing” in the acoustic space that relationally encourages physical response, or at least attention, to the phenomena of resonance. This does not supersede cultural connections with “innocence and malleability;” rather, it may attach these cultural notions firmly to acoustic resonance, treble voices, and Just Intonation in a way that is difficult to define and therefore becomes entrenched over centuries, even surviving within choral theory and practice today.

To further discuss how boy “syngers” became “makers and teachers,” and to investigate how sonic phenomena of the Just Intonation system may have become culturally embedded in choral metaphor and affective regimes, I offer a thought experiment based around Eton College, founded in 1440 in Eton, near Windsor Castle, by King Henry VI to serve the male children of royal court members. The school is still in operation, and continues to serve upper-class boys today. Eton became the elite institution in England immediately, due to the patronage of the King, and was allied early on with King’s College, Cambridge, which was founded by Henry VI in 1441. The chapel built at Eton is a smaller version of the perpendicular gothic chapel at King’s, though the roof at Eton was originally wood (it finally rotted in the mid-twentieth century and was replaced by fan vaulting similar to that of King’s College Chapel in 1959), so the acoustics would have been different. Student singers at Eton would often go to King’s College, Cambridge, after they graduated from Eton to pursue further degrees, sometimes specifically in music composition. These King’s graduates were offered posts at major cathedrals and courts in the UK. Eton had connections with several important musical institutions, including Salisbury Cathedral, Arundel College, King’s College, Cambridge, and Winchester Cathedral, to name only a few (Williamson 1997, 234–236). This nexus of singers and composers converge in a compilation of around ninety

pieces written for the Eton Chapel Choir, which offers a snapshot of how composition was considered as a part of worship services during this era. Miraculously saved over the centuries, surviving the purge of the Reformation as well as bombing during WWII, the Eton Choirbook allows us to glimpse how diagnostic embodiment may have contributed to functional aspects of choral practice and worship rites during this time.

The Eton Choirbook is an illuminating musical compilation of early English choral works because of the light it sheds on the very nature of worship in England of its time. Historian Hugh Benham wrote, “music for the Eton composer was God-centered, a vehicle for devotion, an aid to it, part of the church’s ceremonial, and a reflection of divine order, not a form of entertainment or a means of depicting human emotion” (1977, 59). This music was written with a specific purpose in mind—namely, to aid in worship services and venerations—and the aim of contributing composers was to write works in such a way that the piece’s function was not overshadowed by any disturbing harmonic shifts or excessive word painting. In fact, even the text being set was less important than the function of the piece within the worship service. The gothic edifice of the Eton Chapel would have served as both worship space and inspiration to its affiliated composers of this time, many of whom had been choirboys at Eton themselves before they went on to study at King’s College, Cambridge (Williamson 1997, 231).



Images 2–4. *Eton College Chapel. Photographs by the author, December 2021.*

The Eton Choirbook is a partbook of liturgical music compiled at the beginning of the sixteenth century of pieces written in between the 1460s and the 1500 by several contributing composers. Through these works, we see composers moving away from complex polyphony (which was common in France, Italy, and Spain at that time) in favor of homophony highlighting block chords. Most Eton Choirbook works favors five or more voice parts rather than the three-voice texture common to music before the 1450s, and the vocal range of many of the works was stretched to three octaves, while before that, works seldom ventured past two octaves (Bowers 1995, 22). They are not particularly harmonically adventurous, especially in full-voice sections—instead, these parts for all five or six voices combined to create something sonically grandiose. Here is where the octave addition to the

range makes a substantive difference; for though the chords are typically in complete triads with little dissonance, the range allows for doubled thirds and a chord widely spaced over the five or six voice parts, which makes for large and impressive ringing pinnacles (Benham 1977, 62). The segments for reduced voices are more daring, with more dissonances stemming from the intricate melismatic polyphony favored in these sections, and the total effect of the pieces was generally that of the varying textures between the reduced voice sections and the full sections (Fitch 2008, 23). This does not allow for much in the way of overall musical development throughout a piece, especially as the works tend to stay in and around the same modes and harmonies, but as the music was not supposed to engender anything but a stationary attitude of devotion for the laity worshipping at services, this is not particularly surprising. Historian Eamon Duffy notes that the general public attending Mass were not required to understand the Latin texts beyond certain responses; however, they were urged to spend the service in a meditative attitude, offering their own prayers as the priest offered liturgical ritual (118). At the time, liturgical and sacred music was regarded in a strictly utilitarian light, and only existed to accompany the ceremony of religion, and to enhance the experience for congregation members who were participating in meditative praxis during the mass, though often disconnected from the Latin liturgy except at key moments. This music was written not to reflect emotion, but to inspire it—and to accomplish this within the new churches and cathedrals that provided a rich and reverberant soundscape for music as well as speech and incidental sound. Musical development could detract from the main purpose of the piece, and make it thereby less useful within the liturgy.

Peter Phillips, scholar and conductor of The Tallis Scholars, a world-renowned UK-based early music ensemble, published an extensive essay in the summer of 2017 detailing these

works and offering some overarching commentary. “Much of the Eton music is formulaic,” he wrote, “with many of the composers surviving in just a piece or two, from which it is impossible to separate one from another.” He continues, “they must have thought that decorating harmonic pillars was enough, and commandeered voices at will to realize their aim. The results are truly impressive” (15–16). These pieces include triadic walls of sound built upon an unusually-broad registral palette (Fitch 2008)—what Phillips refers to as ornamented “pillars of sound.” The first piece in the compilation, John Browne’s “O Maria Salvatoris Mater,” offers a strong example of these “harmonic pillars” in its opening salvo, which builds out from an octave-spaced unison in the lower voices to a broad registrar palette of the overtones inherent in the fundamental unison pitch (C), then morphing into chords based on F and G, until landing on an unexpected full-voiced F chord (see a score transcription by Charles H. Giffen on the next pages). This brief synopsis owes much to Fabrice Fitch’s 2008 analysis of the same piece’s opening (21), included as an example in a broader article about the formal aspects of works in the Eton Choirbook. Fitch’s argument proceeds in a different direction than my own, in that I am more interested in the sonic acoustic aspects of what Phillips calls “harmonic pillars of sound,” and uses this example to that end.

Quatreble
O
Ma
Treble
O
Ma
ri
Mean
O
Ma
ri
Countertenor 1
O
Tenor
O
Countertenor 2
O
Bass 1
O
Ma
Bass 2
O
Ma
ri
6
Qtr
ri
Tr
M
Ct 1
Ma
ri
Ten
Ma
ri
Ct 2
Ma
ri
B 1
B 2

Images 5–7. *"O Maria Salvatoris Mater" by John Browne (ed. Giffen, 2021 [2005]).*

This excerpt shows the use of stacked triads to highlight antiphonal variation between duet/small group and full choral sections. Those constructions, structures built around these triadic pillars, were reliant on the acoustic of cathedral space to highlight Just Intonation tuning practices, as suggested above. The shifts in the opening of Browne's antiphon between the C, F, and G chords (as well as other relationally-tuned chord duets and trios of singers on traveling notes between major chords) show that Just Intonation, with a movable fundamental pitch, likely relied on sonic feedback and diagnostic embodiment to tune during the dynamic junctures of the performance. The pieces throughout the Eton Choirbook share various similarities in approach, particularly in a more openly chordal, less busily polyphonic texture from the music more popular on the Continent during the time. This indicates that the

English improvisatory inclination toward thirds and sixths, suggested above by Wegman and Fassler, had become cemented into notated choral practice by the time pieces featured in the Eton Choirbook were being written in the latter part of the fifteenth century.

Phillips' charge of formulaic writing in the Eton Choirbook refers both to triadic constructions and wide vocal register throughout the ninety represented pieces. This suggests that the works had a similar style, perhaps due to the fact that the composers of these works formed a quasi-network, centered around Eton College, and shared their manuscripts liberally, so that in the world of composition, most of the names found in the Eton Choirbook were of some note to the other composers featured there. However, this similar style might also refer to the goals of religious engagement during church services during this period. Gothic cathedral soundscapes have been documented in more recent scholarship as indicative of particular aims of worship. For example, Emily Thompson (2002) details the ways that modern uses of cathedrals have operationalized both historic and contemporary understandings of soundscape and music as conducive to meditation and reflection. In the case of fifteenth-century England, religious ceremony, especially as practiced in pre-Reformation England, was the key to rejuvenation, and the architects' neo-Gothic churches provided reverberant, and thus perhaps spiritually rich environments, in which worshipers could hope to escape from the secular and noisy world of the surrounding city (Ibid., 180).

Scholars in both musicology and ethnomusicology have investigated the ways that sound (including musical practice) have become integrated with spirituality and meditation in a variety of communities, but particularly in Western worship practices, and how this usually involves ways in which the body senses space and affectively responds to it. Jeffers

Engelhardt and Philip Bohlman discuss how sound is capable, perhaps even more so than the other senses, of invading the body to instigate affective change:

> Sound can bring sacred times, spaces, places, and experiences—sacred realities, in other words—into being through practice or by virtue of its ontology. Sacrality becomes sound because of its energetic nature, vitality, uncanniness, and invasiveness; its capacity to communicate divine presence and power; its primacy as a medium of revelation and transmission; its potential to be both esoteric and exoteric; and its efficacy in bringing individuals into community. (Engelhardt & Bohlman 2016, 3)

While Engelhardt and Bohlman are interested here in discussing the sociopolitical or cultural effects of such an engagement (for example, the creation of community through relational experience), Férdia Stone-Davis's definition of music as a transcendent instigator is underpinned by the idea that time is continuous as well as fluctuating within musical meditation through listening, voicing, or playing. "The spatial translation from absolute to immanent […] involves a re-conceptualization of the connection between music, self-understanding, and self-expression" (Stone-Davis 2015, 4). As Engelhardt and Bohlman did, she highlights the physical aspects of sound as all-encompassing, physically as well as mentally and emotionally. "The music event relies on the destabilization of inside and outside," she writes, "involving the comingling of sound and the human body. Not only is the aural threshold easily trespassed, so is that of the entire body, which internalizes external sounds" (Ibid., 4–5).

Engelhardt and Bohlman's "invasive" and Stone-Davis's "trespassing" sonic experience seems a key component of this aggressively enrapturing experience. Sound necessarily pervades the body via soundwaves (part of what Eidsheim calls "vibrational practice"), and those experiencing those soundwaves will likely connect their physical experience with sound and space to more cultural notions of place and purpose. However, both notions rely

on a distinction between outside the body and inside it, reifying the human body as a single entity through sounding. Rather, I suggest that the body is both reified and liminally transgressed in our experiences of sound in reverberant space, and that cultural understandings of religious and meditative practice are bound to these aspects of physio-sonic embodiment. In parsing apart some of the forces involved in choric practice in reverberant, sacrilized space—some of which are bound by physics and shared relational experience, and others of which are experienced in an ever-expanding internal and personal nexus of cultural understanding, memory, and affective impetus—I hope to demonstrate how the Eton Choirbook was formulated to inspire devotion rather than reflect it in reverberant space, and how this may represent a codified compositional shift toward chord structures designed to highlight relationality with space.

Social anthropologist Paul Connerton (2009) theorizes the "locus," a mode of spatial memory that relies on physical and affective engagement and a certain amount of "intellectual inattention." Connerton suggests that this inattentive experience of space, rather than a specific memorialized memory of it, is the stronger and more accessible of the two (Connerton 2009, 34). We recollect, or at least subconsciously recognize and collate, previous experiences of similar sonic spaces when we step into another one that feels familiar, in a way that is embodied and, thus, affective. That virtual engagement with memorialized space is perhaps stronger through this lens, and it therefore colors our experience of choric experience overall, thus spatially situating our bodies in a palimpsest cocoon of past and present experience. All the more powerful in our era, in that modern travel allows many of us to experience more than one cathedral or cavernous reverberant space, the "locus" still would have held power for singers in the era of the Eton Choirbook

and before—particularly because they would have spent much time in the chapel or cathedral and expended effort in learning how to optimize their vocal practice for the acoustic of the rooms they sang in, though they may not have thought of these skills in this specific sense.

This convoluted path leads to both the space and place of choric experience. In the space lies embodied experience, layered within Connerton's locus. The place holds cultural, contextual meaning through the connection to religion, and perhaps also to desacralized notions of morality. The embodied mixing of both space and place, added to the locus palimpsest of individual experiences, can virtualize choric experience into a meditative or philosophical headspace that encourages a particular engagement with materials, including sound and cultural context. When hearing choirs, in situ or mediated through recording, we are invited to enter a situated, culturally-connected and acoustically evocative place of worship, to sit in a pew, and to think and feel deeply. In the case of fifteenth-century worship, the sound in services was meant to inspire a specific type of engagement. There are multiple ways in which space is discussed in choral practice, and how it is accounted for in embodied performance, listening techniques, and the affective goals each choir group espouses in a way of their own, through various processes. And these processes are very definitely shaped by, yes, the acoustic and physical spaces of performance, but also by the lineage and connotation of place built up over time. This necessarily ties into spirituality and religion, because of the lineage of European choral practice in Christian religious rite and architecture.

The binding and loosening of intellect, physicality, and spirituality are interspersed in these spaces like marbled ink on handcrafted paper, constantly swirling and changing according to each invested (or distracted) participant. These mechanisms have persisted in

the perception of choral praxis in this lineage, and the halls of worship are often the same, or similarly-fashioned, built to inspire awe and devotion and sounded to realize the space in the listening and feeling body. Georgina Born writes,

> Thus, against the purifications of the "abstractive intellect," not only aesthetics and affect but also historical processes of change or "temporal relations"—in this case, music-and art-historical processes—enter into the expanding relata to be brought into consideration. The challenge posed by the bifurcation of nature, then, is to enrich our understanding by aspiring to bring all that impinges on the sonic assemblage into our analysis, learning to discern more of the "all-encompassing relations," as Whitehead puts it, entering into sound as experience. (2019, 199)

This impingement (or, in this case, perhaps "partnership" is a more positive word) of spatial considerations, physical acoustics, and embodied engagements on the curated affective affective regimes within meditation on worship in fifteenth-century England can only be suggested by reading through the lines of historical documents and analyses. However, the fact that many of these buildings survive, as does the performance of choral music within them, intimates connections between body, space, voice, and the feeling built into praxis of religious rite. Music in worship cannot, in most cases now, be said to be simple "vehicles for devotion," as the Eton Choirbook may have been for contemporary parishioners—but this fifteenth-century mode of musical engagement, due to its aim toward meditative listening, may indicate that the body, mind, and spirit were imbricated via a connection between combined voices, Just Intonation overtones, and devotional cultural attitudes of the age. The suggestion that resonance in acoustic space is imbued with the cultural and ritualistic histories of Christianity and meditative practice in the specific strand of professional choralism I investigate in later chapters is a cornerstone of my approach, and moves beyond the individual considerations of body and religion (see Bohlman and Stone-

Davis, above) to a far more liminal-relational interplay between bodies and spaces that colors how one may perceive place via affect.

Conclusions

And so, when I found myself seated in the King's College, Cambridge Chapel for the 2019 Christmas Eve service, I was very much aware of the physical aspects of the space in which I was seated. My imagination was drawn back to the fifteenth century, when ground was broken for the Chapel, an edifice designed as a much larger version of the prototype at Eton, which would serve many of Eton's graduates when they came to Cambridge as young scholars and musicians. Though the acoustics would have been different from early on, given that King's Chapel was built with a stone fan-vaulted roof and Eton had the wooden barrel-vaulted ceiling, the training in these twin buildings provided to young composers from this lineage would have left an indelible mark on them as musicians and singers. However, gazing at the rood screen given by King Henry VIII to celebrate his marriage to Anne Boleyn (and, incidentally, the shift from Catholicism to the newly-formed Church of England to facilitate the marriage); the wooden interlocked chairs filled with choral enthusiasts from around the world who considered this event worth a pilgrimage in person; the audio equipment set up and tended by BBC operators for live and recorded radio broadcast…it was impossible to consider the sonics, embodiments, and affects of this service from outside of its far broader cultural history and contexts.

The level of "reading between the lines" that the preceding thought experiment necessitates can never be fully supported via historical documentation. Relying on current notions of embodiment, from bodies that have always sensed in a heavily mediated electronic

soundscape, can be anachronistically reading the ways that Just Intonation may or may not have been understood by fifteenth- (or thirteenth-, or sixteenth-…) century singers. However, the "thought experiment" seems to have uses that tie choral practice and training—as shown through compositional changes—to embodiments within buildings that still exist and are still housing similar religious rites. The compositional aims of devotion, rather than text-painting, during the fifteenth century further suggests that an embodied approach to Just Intonation and acoustics may have been especially connected meditative praxes during this period in England—an affective connection between the physical and the metaphysical that persisted over the centuries and continues in various strands of choral tradition today.

To thoroughly investigate these aims, embodiments, and relational sonics and affects, it is necessary to fully consider the "ifs," "whys," and "hows" of choral tradition continued through the centuries. The next chapter will both provide some choral history beyond the Renaissance and allow me, as a fieldworker, to develop theories around sonic and affective choral engagements and diagnostic embodiments from my own observations of several professional choral groups based in the United Kingdom today. Though the discussion in this chapter has included cultural considerations around religious devotion in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as a key deductive premise, this argument has centered around the physical and emotional connections in acoustic space via voicing. The next chapter integrates some of the long histories of choral practice within and outside chapel walls and shows how the echoing resonances of radio and recording technology has shaped and reshaped a less localized production and understanding of choralism.

CHAPTER 2

TRADITIONAL CHORALISM AND AFFECTIVE MEDIATION

King's College Chapel, December 22 & 23, 2021

> *Sitting in one of the inner-facing stalls in the "choir," I hunch down in my creaky pew, trying to keep a low profile. I've been invited to attend two rehearsals at King's College Chapel in Cambridge, arguably two of the more interesting rehearsals, which may show some of the techniques and nuances of the "Nine Lessons and Carols" service that I had attended two years prior in 2019. At the very end of my three-month fieldwork trip to Cambridge and London, I was finally being allowed to see how singers learn to function in the Chapel's heightened acoustic—the sound made famous around the world via broadcasts and recordings of the "Nine Lessons and Carols" and numerous other services and works since the 1920s. It's bit chilly—no surprise in December, and in the relatively empty and cavernous stone chapel—so I huddle down into my coat, wearing fingerless gloves as I took notes as quietly as possible on my laptop. The building isn't entirely empty, however. The singers file in, first the older boy singers and then the younger ones, brought in groups from their designated school, a fifteen-minute walk from the Chapel. King's College Chapel Music Director Daniel Hyde wants to work with the younger singers first in these rehearsals, allowing for a bit more warm-up and focus—but also likely to give the British Broadcasting Service (BBC) sound personnel room to set up equipment, test levels, and fiddle with their tech.*
>
> *Mr. Hyde wears a lapel microphone to communicate with the organist, which he makes clear to the BBC technicians so that they can avoid echo or feedback due to the closed-loop system. He takes time to explain the BBC microphones, which are on stands overhead, to the young singers, and promises them they won't have to sing carols throughout the entire rehearsal—"Anybody else feeling a little carol-y constipated?" he asks. During warm-ups he starts the boys with a melodic figure from "Once in Royal David's City" at an octave lower, which makes it a little easier to manage, because at the regular pitch it is high enough to potentially cause some negative vocal habits related to breathing, legato, and intonation if the boys haven't been singing a bit first. They start a few of the carols that will be featured in the "Nine Lessons and Carols" service, and Hyde demonstrates a few times, using his own voice to show what he is looking for in terms of vocal line, shape, intonation, and shading. Though he speaks in a tenor register, he has facility for these demonstrations in countertenor and lower baritone ranges, too.*

In early October 2021, during a lull in the COVID-19 pandemic crisis when travel was briefly possible, I moved to Cambridge, using a small travel grant to observe King's College Chapel rehearsals as they worked toward their "Nine Lessons and Carols" service in December. Though I did not gain access to King's rehearsals until quite late in the year, I was lucky enough to observe other groups in Cambridge and London who operate as

professional ensembles, touring around the world and recording early music, new choral art music works, and popular music compositions and arrangements. Observational fieldwork proved challenging and exciting, animating the historical musings of Chapter 1 by allowing me to watch, listen, and feel through these rehearsals. I tried to enter into the room with an open mind, both about what I might "find" and what I might be "looking for," which was humbling and intimidating as a researcher. It was particularly difficult to describe to the groups, and their management, what I was attempting in this work. "What are you writing about?" "About the ways that professional choirs engage with acoustic space, embodied voice, and affect." "Uh…ok. You can sit over there." To be fair, I knew my brief "elevator pitch" wasn't particularly sound, but the full description of "diagnostic embodiment," "acoustics and overtones," "attitudes of devotion and meditation," and even just the term "affect" carried on *ad nauseum* and further confused everyone. It was often better to stay quiet and wait out a self-contained twenty-minute panic as I realized how nuanced and small each adjustment actually *was* in groups at this level of vocal skill and embodied engagement before I could calibrate and take notes.

It wasn't that these groups weren't *doing* the things that I mention above and in the previous chapter. It's that they didn't have to *talk* about it in terms even remotely close to what I was using. These skills were so fundamental that listening to rehearsal discussions and watching body language between singers and the director proved far more generative and creatively exciting for me, in that I was trying to translate their languages around those phenomena into parlance that might be understood inside and outside of a rehearsal room with The King's Singers, The Tallis Scholars, VOCES8, and St. John's and King's College Chapel Choirs. It was immediately obvious to me as a practitioner as well as a scholar that,

though many of these choirs are singing choral music that has been developed specifically for the acoustics and cultural milieus they still perform in, they had another set of considerations driving musical function, vocal style and technique, and congregational/audience engagement. Each of these choirs, even those housed in academic Cambridge chapels, were rehearsing for recording as much as live performance. Live broadcasts and recordings, once two separate mediated experiences but increasingly blurred into one editable digital file, motivated engagements with space and body and with cultural context.

The terminology I use is removed from the language used in rehearsal contexts. There are specific reasons for this. The shorthand language that is used in rehearsal—a learned set of linguistic shortcuts and identifiers, often metaphorical or referential, and sometimes specific to certain ensembles or conductors—requires far less time in communication and allows for more efficient rehearsals. The underlying skills of what I term diagnostic embodiment are surreptitiously taught alongside and within various musicianship skills, rather than openly discussed. Directors ask the boys in these choirs to learn how to modulate their voices by what they hear in the room by using these shorthand terms and metaphors, teaching them this language as coupled with the boys' in-the-moment embodied experience. As demonstrated in several of the examples in this chapter, different directors have different ways of doing that, and different choral professionals find ways to work within multiple ensembles by code-switching between directorial and group dynamic styles.

Beyond this shorthand, the foundational aim of this dissertation is to detail some truly subterranean underpinnings of sound and affect within acoustic space and choral tradition. In many cases, the skills and efforts chronicled here have not been discussed at all, or only obliquely and not codified under a systematic organization, in discussions of choral

repertoire or practice. The terms I use throughout this work are not meant to unnecessarily complicate the choral process, but rather to find ways to make explicit processes and engagements that are inherently implicit in the choral praxes that I have observed. This scholarship hinges on my own past experiences and situational understandings within those rehearsals.

I dig into rehearsal observations from my time with several groups, discussing the languages they build around curating sound, style, and affect in live and electronically mediated performances. Identifying three facets of an expanded definition of "affective mediation"—acoustic, cultural/historical, and recording/broadcasting—this research identifies the complexity of affect infinitely refracted through these prisms. William Mazzarella's assertion that mediation is a general foundation of social life urges a fuller definition of "mediation" that does not only encompass the most obvious forms of technological mediation (2004). He writes:

> Inseparable from the movement of social life and yet removed from it, a medium is thus at once obvious and strange, indispensable and uncanny, intimate and distant. "Mediation" is a name that we might give to the processes by which a given social dispensation produces and reproduces itself in and through a particular set of media. Because of the structural ambiguity of media, the work of mediation is always potentially volatile. (346)

Mediation, in its ambiguity throughout Mazzarella's definition, seems akin to the malleability of the term "affect," which was fully dissected in the previous chapter. If mediation is difficult to pin down in process or material, "affective mediation," the term I will use throughout this discussion over three different categories, is meant to gesture toward the liminal spaces around mediation in which cultural life is experienced, often in ways that go unnoticed. Affect is perhaps the "meaning and value aris[ing] out of ongoing practices of

mediation that are always at least half-conscious of the "close distance"—the blend of immersion and self-consciousness—that any cultural identification involves" (Ibid.).

Similar to the approach to "resonance" in the previous chapter, "affective mediation" in this discussion will refer to different facets of the affective experience, encompassing the physical and technological echoes and reproductions of sound as well as the cultural/memorialized kaleidoscopes through which each personal experience is refracted. As with "resonance," this use of "affective mediation" is not meant to instigate a binary between physical and technological, cultural and social and personal, feelings through sound. It is instead to knit these facets into an affective imbrication, a complex tapestry woven differently by each experiencer but recognizable by its mechanisms, warp and weft shot through with interpersonal exchange and engagement with space. Espousing a truly interdisciplinary engagement with "affective mediation" allows several of these definitions to interact and inform each other through means that illuminates philosophical structures under the sonic practices of performance and quotidian life.

The three sections of this chapter—the body and acoustic mediation; historical, cultural, and memorialized mediation; and electronic recording and broadcasting—highlight different intertwined types and aspects of mediations within choric practice and beyond. Using examples from my fieldwork in the UK during the fall of 2021 to demonstrate some of the mechanisms of mediation, I note how affect is both transferrable to others and mutable by others, translating through the singers as mediators themselves through the act of sonic curation. As much as I note practical curatorial gestures to the mediated soundscape, I also note the buildup of historical connotation and subtext in these spaces, processes of vocalization, and aesthetic systems during rehearsals.

It would be too simple to only link voice, space, and feeling in the nexus of diagnostic embodiment, as I discussed in the previous chapter. My research reveals how further consideration of cultural contexts and cultural hegemonies, technological and sociopolitical developments, centuries of continuing voiced breath ringing in reverberant acoustics and bound to feeling via ritual and reinforced memory, is absolutely essential in considering current choralism. The section on cultural and memorialized affective mediation also provides some historical context regarding choralism in the nineteenth century, when it became a community and nationalist endeavor. Discussion of recording and broadcasting developments of the twentieth century that turned traditional choralism into widespread entertainment expand on my observations of professional groups, for whom recording is a common and essential endeavor. Taking this historical and technological context into account, as well as the established choral traditions that have spread around the world due to Colonial efforts originating in Europe and the UK, this work attempts to show how the "affective mediation" of choralism has been transmuted through voices and resonant space via cultural context, hegemony, and recording media for over one hundred years. The connection between bodies and space is ever-present, underlying situations of virtuality or mediation, even over numerous removals and valences. Interplay between embodiment, space, and choral vocality (either as singers themselves or, in different ways, as listeners) can be replicated or at least reminisced through mediated production or through recorded sound. And depending on the breadth of the word "mediated," we can additionally include axes of memory and cultural understanding, never entirely divorced from physical investment in space.

In these valences of affective mediation, the “media” undergoing the process is choral sound in acoustic space alongside the physical experience of voicing and diagnostic embodiment within it for singers, essentially encompassing the nexus of resonance discussed in Chapter 1. As this dissertation does not inherently address audience reception (as explained in the Introduction), the singers themselves within the process of diagnostic embodiment are also considered “listeners,” and, in many cases, audiences are made up of “singers,” (though not actively singing) too, in that people who sing likely would experience physical and affective perspectives of diagnostic embodiment even if they are not singing. However, the questions of audience reception and experience must be limited here, due to the research processes prioritizing the singers’ negotiations of embodiment and affect within rehearsal settings. There is an intriguing paradox in this specification, however, in that I myself am one of those singers-not-singing during my rehearsal observations, and thus I am relying on the singers’ communications to each other as another layer of mediation through which I must interpret their experiences of sound that I can only feel through a phantom form of non-voicing diagnostic embodiment.

Conceptualizing the sonic aspects and embodied adjustments of the previous chapter as the “media” traveling through prisms of mediation that can both add and subtract facets of affective experience affords crystalized glimpses of the three synthetic affective mediation categories I suggest. (Though I separate these categories, they always overlap and permutate within moments of experience.) Drawing on how singers and directors discuss the process of sonic curation, I attempt to share some of these moments as they crystallized for me during rehearsal observation.

The Body and the Acoustic

Underlying cultural considerations, physiology of vocalization (i.e., the pharynx, sinuses, teeth, lips, tongue, and jaw position) does shape vocalized sound in another layer of mediation. Embedded in this ever-present body-space connection is the additional caveat that the space itself is what makes, or at least realizes, the body through a variety of means. The voice helps to actualize the body through this process—the voice begins in the body, is transferred physically into acoustic or mediated space, and the singer is rewarded with a sonic "proof" of embodiment in the sound of their voice. As Steven Connor writes:

> One misrecognizes one's own voice, not through any deficit of information, but because of the surfeit of pleasure involved in taking one's voice as one's own. The pleasure is much more than auditory, consisting as it does in a rich composite of auditory and other sensory gratifications. As we listen to our own voice, we feel as well as hear its vibrations, feel the complex, self-caressing dance of tongue, palate, and lips, counterpointed with the pleasurable muscular rhythms of the breath being drawn in and released. When we hear a song that we enjoy, we find it hard not to sing along, seeking to take it into our own bodies, mirroring and protracting its auditory pleasure with the associated tactile and propriocentric pleasures. Perhaps we cannot enjoy the sound of a voice without the sound having begun to offer the prospect of this quasi-tactile self-caress. (Connor 2000, 9–10)

The voice, in Connor's example, is in the embodiment and reinscription through the vocalization and spatialization processes. Connor expands this notion to include how we hear our metaphorical "inner voices" as we express ourselves through written language:

> Even as I type these words, I find myself performing a little dance in my seat, shifting and bouncing, rocking my head in time to the voice that I can hear saying the things I am writing, a voice that does not seem to stand before them as their source, but to be sung out by them. The voice does not merely possess phonetic measure and pattern; it works to confer a dynamic shape on my whole body. (Ibid., 10)

Connor wraps up the section with a pithy tag, claiming that "when one vocalizes a sound, one gives it to one's own voice, in order to give it *its* own voice" (Ibid.). These planes of mediation, from the body to space and back again, even in circumstances in which voice *and* space can be imagined or metaphorical (as in Connor's writing voice translating mental

composition into physical movement and pleasure), should be considered when thinking about any iteration of voicing. In other words, we need to think about the space that makes voicing audible and pleasurable, be it acoustic, electronically amplified, or metaphorical.

Connor's claim here seems uniquely suited to the solo singer or speaker. In this case, it is the recognition of embodied self through individual sonic voice that is pleasurable. But this could be retooled to represent the different scenario of choric singing with others. As much as the practice of choral music is about voice connecting to embodiment, it is also about the body's experience of singing within a space with others, and feeling the relational sensations of that practice (as discussed in the previous chapter).

This is also part of the power of "chorality" (Connor 2016). The power experienced by the voicer is multiplied by the other voices that both support and obscure the individual's voice. There is a simultaneous anonymity and power in choric utterance; and particularly in adept choirs with adaptive voices, there is a guiding consensus on timbre, articulation, and pitch that cements vocal community, guides affective goals, and adds to the pleasure of curation in rehearsal and performance.

Choral music, even when heard in the same space as it is produced, is an additionally mediated product for audiences. Audiences are generally spectators, it is true. But within the synthesis of body, voice, and space in choric performance, the audience is even farther from the originating voices, even as they are enveloped in spatialized sound. This physical mediation—from vocal chords through pharynx, sinuses, mouth and jaw position, relying on an air stream from breath in controlled release via diaphragm, lungs, abdominal and intercostal muscles—is the underlying set of mechanisms, techniques, and conditions that makes the adjustments within diagnostic embodiment possible. In learning these techniques,

as I witnessed the boy singers doing at King's and St. John's Chapels in Cambridge, they entered into discussions that might relate to desired embodied practice. Frequently connected to musical-structural knowledge, engagement with acoustic space, and affective or metaphorical engagement, either for singers themselves or as intended for audience experience, these pedagogical, metaphorical, and spatially-referential discussions, skill sets, and gestures were obviously key to the curation of individual and group aggregate vocal sound.

Directors and schools of training differ from chapel to chapel in terms of how they engage, and encourage singers to engage, with physical aspects of acoustics. In the case of the pre-"Nine Lessons and Carols" rehearsals at King's College Chapel, director Daniel Hyde was intent on acoustic considerations as he thought through how the sound must be calibrated for both the BBC recording and broadcast relay and for the physical audience that would populate the chapel space. The choir typically rehearses, and sometimes records, in an empty chapel, meaning the acoustics are highly resonant, without bodies to soak up the sound. Additionally, all that absorbent flesh is attached to people, listeners there for a specific experience within the acoustic. This is made all the more complex by the fact that the rood screen separates the space into two main areas—in front, the "chapel" where the pews are turned inward toward the center aisle, populated in part by the choir itself along with the clergy and members of the college and public worshippers; behind, the antechapel, an area sometimes left without chairs entirely but used during the "Nine Lessons and Carols" and other popular services for additional seating. Those sitting in the antechapel will hear the choral aggregate sound as a refracted whole, in that the choir is not facing them and the sound will travel upward into the fan-vaults over the rood screen rather than directly into the

antechapel. Those in the back will also hear the organ, which is located in the rood screen structure, at a different volume and speed than people singing and/or seated in the chapel. Hyde has to think carefully about the various functions of the "Nine Lessons and Carols" service, and curate the singers' timbre and musical style to serve the space and the people who will share it.

In rehearsals, Hyde talks through some of these considerations, seemingly both for the singers' benefit and the benefit of the BBC recording technicians. Particularly when rehearsing the hymns that will be sung with the congregation (rather than the pieces that will only be sung by the choir), Hyde discusses how the acoustic will be much "drier" (less resonant) than they're used to, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic period, when they had no congregation at all. Singing through "O Little Town of Bethlehem,"[12] Hyde asks for more diction overall and slower, longer phrasing to accommodate the congregation singing, which will generally run well behind the established speed of the hymn set by the organ, he notes. "You'll really feel it tomorrow," he says, referring to the Christmas Eve service, "that there isn't that cushion and there's nothing, no resonance, to keep you going. So watch me, allow me to shape it as I listen." Hyde talks frequently throughout these rehearsals about "decay," referring to the length of time it takes for reverberation to stop ringing in the Chapel acoustic, a change in dynamic or intensity in the legato vocal line, and the singers' shaping at the ends of phrases that eases these reverberations into a falling-off of sonic presence in the room. Later in the rehearsal, he reiterates how important his direction is in shaping phrases specifically for the acoustic—"At the end of a phrase, allow me to show you where the decay

12. This is the Ralph Vaughn Williams harmonization to the folk tune "Forest Green," with a descant by Thomas Armstrong, which is the more common tune used in the UK for this text by US Reverend Phillips Brooks, rather than the original Lewis H. Redner tune (1868) that accompanied Brooks' words. The second tune is more common in the United States.

is." Hyde indicates to the singers that, as much as the BBC is responsible for "cook[ing] it in the box so you can be heard" on the recording, he himself is responsible for noting acoustic nuances and discrepancies of sound and shaping them according to what his ear, embodied experience, communication with the organist, and desired interpretation of the musical material dictates.[13]

While Hyde refers to "decay" as a way of honing phrase shape for the specific acoustics of King's College Chapel, Andrew Nethsingha, director of the St. John's College Chapel Choir in Cambridge, focuses on diction and word emphasis to shape phrases. The Chapel of St. John's College is a vastly different, though still reverberant acoustic, from King's. Much smaller, and built hundreds of years after King's during the Victorian era, this chapel does not feature a separating rood screen. The antechapel, beyond a wrought-iron gate, is not generally used for services at all, only for entrance and exit. The entire congregation is seated in the chapel, facing the center aisle from one side or the other.[14] Nethsingha uses a small closed-circuit speaker system to speak to the organist in the choir loft, located high up on one side of the chapel.

I observed Nethsingha focus pedagogical attention on the boys, employing humor, metaphor, and modeling physicality and emphasis for their benefit. He frequently asked the college-age men to demonstrate specific effects or phrase shapes for the boys and requested the boys to mimic them afterwards. The St. John's Chapel Choir is somewhat known within

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[13] In the fieldwork I undertook, the ensembles were at a level in which the director/conductor is "in charge" and "curatorial" but relies on feedback and interplay between singers to decide and define how repertoire should be interpreted. They often rely on singer feedback (either in discussion or in vocal style/approach in rehearsal) to guide interpretation. However, the examples I give at King's College and St. John's College are both slightly different, in that the director is navigating the role both as a music director and a pedagogical model. Therefore, these examples show a different level of interplay and explicit explanation that the director must undertake.

[14] The sides are commonly referred to as "cantores" and "decani," due to the celebrants and clergy who sit on each side. The decani side is where the dean sits, and is usually situated on the east of the chapel. The cantores side on the west is where the cantor sits.

Cambridge choral circles for a peculiar trait that has been passed down between generations of chapel choirs (from far before Nethsingha's time as director)—a split-second pause *after* a conductor-led cue before the choir comes in. This phenomenon is disconcerting to watch, but the most breathtaking aspect of it is that the singers all come in *entirely synchronized*, if after Nethsingha's cue. This is remarkable for a few reasons. First, apparently this trait has been handed down through the choir's recent history from boy to boy, class to class, year to year. Second, the fact that they all come in together, rather than as a rag-tag straggle of individuated voices, is unlikely to the point of unimaginable. Conductor cues are meant to indicate the structures of timing visually, so that singers do not have to navigate the sonic without a coalescing guide. When the choir delays the entrance as a circumscribed entity of breath, body, and voice, but still contrives to arrive together in a group entrance, their sense of diagnostic embodiment has been, and is becoming further, attuned to the acoustic space and the sound of the group aggregate. Each individual singer can anticipate and shape their entrance outside of the conductor-led cue but within the established habitus of the choir's developed history and relationship to the St. John's Chapel. The ensemble sound—dynamics, phrasing, emphasis, etc.—is still very much shaped by Nethsingha, but that split second of silence between his cue and the choir's entrance is evidence of a complex bond between singers and space, conditioned by embodied tradition passed down from year to year.

While these embodied, acoustic, and recording traditions indicate knowledge of physical mediation in space, there is yet another complex layer of mediation that draws sound close *and* refracts it. The cultural, social, and memorialized aspects of choralism—i.e., how choralism is understood in historical and memorialized contexts by each participant in their own way, singers and non-singers alike, guided by established culturally-reinforced ideas

about what choralism portrays—make up another variable layer of mediation that can be parsed but not separated from the physical aspects of choric experience.

Historical, Cultural, and Memorialized Mediation

The previous chapter discusses a specific religious context for choral practice, bound in attitudes, acoustics, and physicalities around devotion and meditation in the fifteenth century. That chapter's overall argument relies on this context as a crux supporting claims that physical manifestations of sound may have become embedded in singer-spatialized practices as well as affective experiences encouraged by the religious mores of the time. However, approaches to religious devotion and rites morphed over time. Fifteenth-century Christian congregational integration and understanding was limited by the fact that most congregants would not have understood much of the language in the rite (as it was in Latin) and the rite would not even be directed toward them—the priest would have practiced facing the altar, speaking directly to God.

After the Reformation and Counter-Reformation sparked by Martin Luther's Ninety-five Theses and the move toward vernacular languages, parishioners had, in most religious services, a new obligation to participate and understand the nuances of the rite, and were directly addressed, to various degrees depending on denomination, throughout the service. Music after that changed, both in style and in relation to religious service participation and pedagogical aims. Music within services became more directly illuminative of Biblical stories and lessons. Text painting in musical structures, timbres, and figures became far more common in England and elsewhere. Differently-aimed musical support for a changing and

integrated congregation did not, however, roust out physical aspects of acoustics sounded through choral voice.

After the Protestant religious reformation and Roman Catholic counter-reformation, thirds and sixths (both major and minor) became common throughout religious works, including at cadence points where generally only fourths, fifths, or octaves were acceptable in previous centuries according to Pythagorean tuning-based music theory (Berger 1987, 122). One broad example that could support a physical-cultural connection to the overtone series with affect in resonant spaces is the common practice of the Picardy third.

Picardy thirds came into use in the sixteenth century, often shifting pieces from one hexachord to another at final cadences using ficta, pitches sharped or flatted to shift between hexachords at specific moments of polyphony where one hexachord can no longer support interval interplay within the rules of the hexachord.[15] Ficta were sometimes indicated in manuscripts with markings, but were often inferred by or orally taught to singers (Berger 1987, 162). The practice of the Picardy third is interesting theoretically, culturally, and physio-acoustically, in that it allows singers to shift from one hexachord to another by sharpening (through the practice of ficta) the third at non-foundational cadence points. In terms of the acoustic properties, a minor third is doubling, and therefore highlighting, a higher partial within the overtone series than a Major third interval—the sequence of overtones from a fundamental pitch is an octave (P8), a fifth (P5), a fourth (P4), a major third (M3) and then a minor third (m3). The Picardy third moves from a highlighted higher partial

[15] Karol Berger documents the history of Musica ficta and the Guidonian Hand, explaining that the groupings of notes corresponding to a hand-like visual was ubiquitous throughout music pedagogy during the middle ages. He references Johannes Tinctoris' treatise on the hand, written in 1477, as a primary, though not solitary, example of how the hand was used to indicate hexachordal groupings that were considered the building blocks of musical composition (1987, 3).

to the previous, lower one, though the pitch itself is higher—i.e., using somewhat anachronistic terminology, with a C fundamental, the minor third is an Eb and the fifth partial whereas the major third is up a half step from the minor (an E) and the fourth partial from the fundamental pitch. Moving from predominantly highlighting the fourth partial to a cadence on the third partial is a notable physical change within the musical structure and physical acoustic. The overtone resonant "hum" produced at the M3 interval from the fundamental plus four octaves; rather than the m3 interval from the fundamental plus five octaves. Depending on where the fundamental is sounded within the choral aggregate, both *may* be audible and physically perceptible, particularly if it is a very low bass frequency that acts as the primary fundamental in a chord—however, the M3 overtone will be more palpable and present than the m3, in any case.

Interplay between hexachords and major modes/keys and minor has continued throughout choral history and has become integrated into a broader musical parlance outside of art music. Major-minor shifts and Picardy third cadences are used frequently across Western-influenced musical traditions, and not only in choralism—they appear in popular and orchestral art musics as well. An example is notable in Leonard Cohen's beloved (religiously-connotative and pedagogical!) "Hallelujah" (1984), in which Cohen demonstrates "the minor fall/ and the major lift" as he sings these words, showing how minor-to-major shifts have become affiliated with popular music affective goals as well as structure.

However, this history is particularly well known within choral practitioner circles due to its prevalent use from the Renaissance forward. In his dictionary of music, published in 1767, Jean-Jacques Rousseau claimed that the medieval practice—still in use during the eighteenth

century—was so named because of the number of churches in the Picardy region in France. This, as musicologist Robert J. Hall notes, is likely a misunderstanding of the term "picardie" to refer to the geographical area (1975, 78). Rather, Hall suggests, the term "picarde" may have referred to something "pointed," which indicates the "sharp" nature of the pitch (Ibid.). The shift from minor to major is a dramatic move, and sometimes is used to enliven or shift affect unexpectedly within serious religious contexts—but it also has been used as a musical witticism, a "gotcha!" surprise move, throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and into the twentieth. Charles Rosen extensively investigates Johann Sebastian Bach's use of a minor-to-major shift at final cadences in orchestral, solo instrumental, and liturgical choral music (2010). This is apparent in many of his minor-key chorales in cantatas, oratorios, and passions, where the final iteration of the chorale tune would resolve to a major key. The practice made its way into Romantic music via solo vocal and instrumental works, including Chopin's Nocturnes as well as Beethoven's piano sonatas; and into the twentieth century via Vaughan Williams' and Dvořák's ninth symphonies. It is also featured in popular music of the twentieth century, notably the Beatles in "And I Love Her" (1964).

The inheritance of these connotations was evident when I observed The Tallis Scholars rehearsing contemporary composer Arvo Pärt's "Which was the son of…" in October 2021. The ensemble was already familiar with the piece (and more than capable of sight-reading it if they weren't), and tripped along the repeated rhythmic "which was the son of…" text. Drawn from a biblical scripture from the Book of Luke that details the lineage of Jesus over seven-and-a-half minutes or so, the piece premiered in Reykjavik in 2000, commissioned for a conglomerated youth choir, with singers drawn from across Europe (this explains some preference for English text as a *lingua franca*). It was inspired not only by the Luke text but

also by the Icelandic patrilineal naming tradition—perhaps why the text begins with Joseph's "supposed" parentage in patrilineage custom. (If the text began with God as Jesus's direct father, there wouldn't be much of a lineage to follow.)

The piece begins with an elongated hocket declaration, a textural move typical in Pärt's choral settings. In this hocket, different voice parts complete the first phrase, trading off between voices for fragments of the full phrase. "And Jesus himself began to be a man of thirty years of age, being as was supposed the son of Joseph…." The work continues through this massive cascading sentence and finally ends with "…Adam, which was the son of God." There are only two sentences in the piece—the run-on, and an "Amen" at the end. The "Amen" contains a cadential Picardy third. Though the piece does not entirely take place in minor key (it often switches back and forth between major and minor in different sections) the final descent encompasses a chain suspension from major to minor and lands on neutral open fifths on "God." The subsequent homophonic "Amen" begins in the previous minor, and lands in the affiliated major on the very last syllable.

The piece is witty for several reasons—the ridiculously long sentence, repeated "which was the son of…" on a recurring rhythmic pattern, a shift to triplet rhythm about two thirds of the way through the piece, the switch back and forth between treble and lower voices in a call-and-response structure, the minor/major shifts throughout the piece and notably at the end—and its wit is exceptionally apparent to singers who have habitually practiced and performed liturgical music in Eurocentric traditions. There is even a clever harnessing of overemphasized diction ("…which was the son of Matthat" is a great example of overemphasized middle and final "t" sounds) often used by singers and urged by choral directors in liturgical contexts to combat textual muddiness in reverberant acoustic contexts,

that creates a joyfully embodied, even haptic, connection to space and between singers. The only other cadence in the piece, preceding the "Amen," falls down a chain suspension beginning with the high voices to the low, and culminates in an open fifth on "…of God," which, can also be noted, provides lower fundamental pitches from which overtones may be produced. The leap back up to the following "Amen" chord is in the same key as the preceding open fifth, and could be heard as filling in the overtone intervals of any trace resonance after the low rumbling chord that preceded it.

Discussions of embodiment and meditation around Pärt's music have coalesced around his compositional and liturgical approaches in his works. In the recent edited volume *Arvo Part: Sounding the Sacred* (2021), editors Peter C. Bouteneff, Jeffers Engelhardt and Robert Saler insist that interdisciplinary discussion of the composer must be rooted in "rigorous focus on Pärt's sound as a fully embodied reality, with all the fragility, contingency, limits, and possibility within" (6). In his chapter, Andrew Albin focuses on medieval influences in Pärt's work, suggesting that the composer uses notable techniques from the European medieval years not as a pastiche, but as reflection of a different type of teleological approach to faith and sound that privileges embodiment and "out of time-ness" (2021, 155).

Albin reframes discussion of the composer's work by considering "how medieval perspectives on the materials of Pärt's compositions might help us understand our modern-day sensorial and spiritual encounters with his music better" (156). Pärt's work, Albin claims, affords considerations of medieval approaches to devotion—similar to attitudes discussed in the previous chapter of this dissertation—and how much our own contextualizations of embodied experiences have changed in devotional settings and art. The humor is indeed part of this intervention, in that by harnessing somewhat well-known

linguistic and musical tropes, Pärt urges singers and listeners to consider *why* the piece is joyously witty, and what this joy feels like in the embodied experience.

When I heard the Tallis Scholars rehearse this piece, it was clear they enjoyed the process of singing it together and were aware of a referential lineage of choralism that informs the inherent compositional wit. The Tallis Scholars are best-known for their interpretations and recordings of early music of the Middle Ages and Renaissance, which also happen to be the periods that Pärt often references in his compositions via structural choices, text setting techniques, and a variety of other callbacks to these periods. "Which was the son of…" relies on a knowledge of some of this choral and liturgical history to make its humor apparent. The choir—which is used to singing music with unusual or esoteric liturgical text and recognizes the antiphonal, descant, and hocket techniques that Pärt uses throughout the piece—is decidedly "in on" the jokes. They also frequently perform for people who have some knowledge of this lineage, many of whom may also be singers or musicians in some capacity themselves.

When the Tallis Scholars sang through the piece, they were already fairly confident in their performance, though director Peter Phillips had the group return to the section that moves from a simple time into triplet meter to aim for better cohesion in the transition in and out of triple. Pärt's work, I have noticed, requires coordination between singers within the same section and between other sections as well, and this is made possible through visual cues embodied and transmitted. Sometimes visual cues are so crucial that the piece is not possible without it—the techniques of hocket and homophonic antiphonal call-and-response can only be effective if synchronized, and that synchronic "togetherness" is only possible

through watching both conductor and other singers out of the corner of one's eye.[16] These visual and embodied techniques are ubiquitous in choralism, and absolutely required in professional choral efforts, developed as an integral part of sensitive choral interpretation and precision.

Because the Tallis Scholars were already familiar with the piece, their glances between each other throughout this rehearsal were often spiked with levity, sometimes deliberately trying to surprise other singers out of countenance, provoking them to laughter over the grandiose language, long drawn-out sentence, endlessly repeated "…which was the son of…" and the heightened diction. Phillips stopped a few times to ask for more over-emphasized diction with certain names in the lyrics. At the end of the piece it is physically apparent in the singers' and Phillips' body language how much the ensemble appreciates the Picardy third at the close of the piece, particularly moving from the open fifths of the preceding cadence on "God." Though throughout the piece there has been a switch back and forth between minor and major keys, so this is not a true Picardy cadence in that it does not present the major after an entire piece in minor, there is still a referential understanding that Picardy thirds at the end of pieces is traditional, even ubiquitous to the point of ridiculousness on the heels of this already amusingly-structured piece.

However, Pärt's approach here is no gimmick, no pastiche without heart or difficulty. The homophonic call-and-response and key and rhythmic shifts show off the singers' voices and section cohesion, and also take the singer (and listener) on a tour of choral techniques

[16] I had experience with this as a teenager singing with the Master Singers of Virginia, performing Pärt's "I Am the True Vine" in a small (two-to-a-part) group. Embodied & visual communication, as well as the intake of breath, was massively important and built a delicate and easily-disrupted web of trust between singers and with the conductor that seemed to thematically connect to the piece itself. The biblical lyrics from John 15 toward the end of the work make this clear: "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."

that reference several points in choral history while celebrating Icelandic naming traditions and the Christian liturgical canon. There is a joyous elegance in this work's excesses that translate into the singers' embodied experience and, in turn, can be made apparent to audiences through the singers' bodies in cooperation with their voices. The joy of this humor is found in the connections within affect—the conjunction of physical, cultural, memorialized, and historical context in emotional experience.

* * *

The Tallis Scholars belong to a lineage of "historically-informed" performance practices that began in the early twentieth century and ramped up again at mid-century. Ensembles—vocal and instrumental—and solo performers were formed and encouraged to investigate the historical contexts, or at least historical organology, theory, and musical praxis, of the Medieval and Renaissance eras. Music of earlier periods was infrequently performed up until this time, which coincides with recording technologies and modern concert-hall audiences. This scholarly interest in music as an artifact, and the insistence on a "right way" of performing older musics, has persisted into the twenty-first century. Generally traced to Mendelssohn's revival of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* in 1829, interest in music of earlier periods—works originally performed in fundamentally different venues and with instruments that sounded and sometimes functioned differently from the current era—began, interestingly enough, with a choral-orchestral piece.

This is especially curious in that Mendelssohn's revival of Bach's passion coincided with nationalist projects in Germany and other newly-formed nation states in Europe. Musicologist Celia Applegate argues that, rather than only being a generative event that drove public interest in baroque music, Mendelssohn's performances actually drew together

latent trends in baroque revival, group singing and chorality, and nation-building politics (2005). She additionally suggests that both the practice of choralism and the metaphor of choir as community formed within this period specifically due to the nation-building projects that encouraged large amateur choirs to perform at festivals and in concert halls to celebrate united cultural efforts and the togetherness of musical creation (2013, 5). Additionally, she argues, industrialization led to further interest in regimenting these choral organizations and festivals just as politics led to national pride that was, in many ways, encouraged by governments to avoid the upheaval and scrutiny of revolution, so recently experienced across Europe (but particularly in France) (Ibid., 6). "Mass choral singing became more an expression of patriotism than a call to arms," she writes. "Choral performances embodied reformist, rather than revolutionary, impulses; at their most challenging, they were a call to fulfill the Revolution's promise of equality, here in the form of equal access of all to the civilizing effects of music culture" (Ibid., 8). "Consolidating and institutionalizing" (Ibid., 9) was the aim of nation-states during this period, Applegate argues, and choralism allowed for a community regimentation that also furthered nationalist aims.

Many of the performers—singers and instrumentalists, conductors, directors, producers—developed an interest in early music efforts in part to celebrate histories affiliated with their new nation-states; to build a longer legend of excellence in culture and art than the few years of national unification; to celebrate a legacy that was to become affianced to national progress; perhaps even to build community through the intersubjective calibration of diagnostic embodiment into the communities coalescing within these newly-codified realms. Musicologist Ryan Minor points to the German *Volk* movement in the first half of the nineteenth century that encouraged community participation in choral singing, a movement

that underpinned Mendelssohn's revival of Bach's *St. Matthew's Passion* (2012, 3). He shows how choralism was girded by philosophical beliefs—by Johann Gottffried Herder, Hans Georg Nägeli and Friedrich von Schilling in the early nineteenth century, and Friedrich Nietzche later—that the voices of the people would coalesce in a shared identity and true agency (Ibid. 3–5). Musicologist Barbara Eichner shows how the community interest in choralism, though not initially inherently political, became representative of national community in the newly-unified German nation-state (2012, 163). This was not restricted to German contexts during this period—choral societies were founded and grew around nationalist ideals in France, Norway, the Netherlands, and Belgium, among others, during the nineteenth century (see Lajosi and Stynen, 2019). And, in some nations where nation-building was less needed—the UK and the US, for example—choral societies and festivals coalesced around religious revivalism that encouraged frequent group rehearsal and even competitive performance (Applegate 2005, 10).

Returning to the early music revivalist movements that began in the nineteenth century with Mendelssohn, it is notable that there were several later "waves" of interest in Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque music throughout the twentieth century. In the 1930s, musicians began to perform using antique or reproduction instruments, and early music societies—many of which performed early vocal music as well—formed around Europe and the United States (Haskell 1988, 103). The period just after WWII, during the boom of academic enrollment due to the GI Bill in the US and similar academic interest in Europe and the UK, led to more study of early music manuscripts procured (or dragged out and dusted off) by higher education institutions. And in the 1960s, professional ensembles were formed, such as the Early Music Consort of London, that made it their mission to perform "historically-

informed" versions of early music, undertaking score study, organology, and musicological research to realize an "authentic" version of the works they presented (Ibid., 163).

Musicologist Joseph Kerman notes an inherent "paradox" within this early music scholarship and performance movement. Musicologists during this period, and even well into the 1970s and '80s, were overly trusting of "provable" positivisitic research paradigms and less willing to make informed speculations about performance practice (1985, 188). This led to didacticism around of manuscript-based markings' meanings, instrumentational specificities, and edition production rather than educated but broader discussion about how to embody and execute early music for audiences and scholars alike (Ibid., 189). Kerman also identifies performer-scholar ambivalence regarding the purposes of historical reconstruction that dictates performance practice—who do these efforts serve, and why, became a common basis for discussion and even argument, as Richard Taruskin's interventions show.

In the early 1980s, the notion of "authenticity" within early music performance had become a competitive jibe, as different groups strove for the "right way" or the "only way" to interpret early music performance practices. Musicologist and early music performer Taruskin protested the term "authenticity" in an essay polemic for *Early Music*, claiming that "authentic" performances are in most cases unachievable, often dull, and take away from the excitement of live performance (1984). He followed this with a full-length book, *Text and Act*, that more fully mines the authenticity movement for connections with modernist thought and historiographically traces these debates over the preceding ten years (1995). Taruskin shows how the authenticity discourse of early music performance practice is tied to modernist movements of thought in the middle of the twentieth century that valorized positivistic research and a "museum ideology" that prioritized artifacts rather than the

inferred ephemera of experience (Ibid., 10). As he responds to detractors from his earlier work on the subject in *Text and Act*, Taruskin notes that the seeds of the authenticity movement were indeed planted in Romantic modes of thought that elevated "classical music" to an unassailable artform tethered to Euro-centric human progress (Ibid.). Taruskin shows his annoyance with the policing of "authentic" performance; but also works to contextualize the need for mastery and emphasis on written materials rather than lived musicians' practices as key defining attributes of a modernist approach. In the intervening years between his essay in *Early Music* and the book *Text and Act*, the reaction of postmodernism became allied with Taruskin's views about the impossibility and hubris of attempting "authentic early music performance" through positivist scholarship and materials alone. Taruskin himself concedes in *Text and Act* that the postmodernist scholars have embraced a more inclusive version of authenticity that allows for modern and informed interpretation of early music (1995, 8).

Taruskin was arguing for the scholar-vocalists-performers of this period as living interpreters of early music:

> …I so admire the best of the "Early Musickers," whose work I find to be, in a sense most music critics seem to have forgotten or repressed, quite profoundly authentic (no scare-quotes here) because it truly reflects our times and our tastes and gives us a sense not only of who we truly are but of how we have come to be that way—and how we might be changed. (Ibid., 9)

The number of vocal ensembles founded around the performance of early music in the 1970s was impressive, and two of the groups I worked with formed during this period or just before—The King's Singers (from King's College, Cambridge), and The Tallis Scholars. The Tallis Scholars was formed in 1973 by Peter Phillips, who was (and is) an early music academic and was, at the time, an organ scholar at St. John's College, Oxford. Phillips' interests fueled the group and their goals to record generally-ignored early works, focusing

attention on scores in original manuscripts or academically-produced editions that attempted to accurately represent Medieval neumatic notation in more modern music score format.

Many of the professional European, UK, and US vocal ensembles that travel around the world performing concerts today will include pieces from these eras on their concerts, habitually record albums of music by Medieval and Renaissance composers, and espouse a particular vocal style that smooths over vibrato—the wavering within a vocalized sound that moves between adjacent pitches, fairly common in operatic bel canto training—in the treble voices. Limiting vibrato is said to mimic younger boys' voices, though it may also be a technique to limit pitch variance in a way that can further highlight overtone partials in a wide-ranging choral harmonic palette.

The technique of "straight tone" singing (singing without vibrato, or with greatly reduced vibrato) is accomplished in several ways, most involving some jaw or tongue control of the sound as it enters and exits the mouth from the pharynx. This technique, thanks to early-music performance practice interests and curation, has become common and sought-after for new music compositions as well. Many of Pärt's choral pieces (including The Tallis Scholars' rendition of "Which was the son of…") are habitually performed with little vibrato, though this technique is not necessarily marked in the score. Professional ensemble vocalists are expected to be able to sing using a range of different vocal techniques, predominantly bel canto or without vibrato, but also encompassing popular music techniques and styles, as needed and deemed necessary within group direction or mores.

"Straight tone" sound has, however, come back into fashion in new music of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries as composers play with the acoustic properties of the overtone series through cluster chords, fizzing dissonance, and early-music inspired

aesthetics and structures. Thus, many early-music specialist ensembles, like the Tallis Scholars, often work with composers on new pieces that make use of these skill sets. In the first rehearsal I attended with that ensemble, in another Christopher Wren-designed church near Gracechurch Street in Cheapside, London, I heard a new piece that relied on this skill set as well as embodied connection with lyrical content. Originally, I had been told by the group's logistics manager via email that they would ask me to leave in the afternoon when they began rehearsing "lots of new repertoire," but when I approached Phillips to thank him for allowing me to visit at the lunch break, he told me I could stay and listen to the rest of the rehearsal, a continuation of their work on "Rough Notes" by American composer Nico Muhly.

In 2018, the Tallis Scholars premiered "Rough Notes," commissioned for them by the Miller Theatre at Columbia University and based on the journals of Captain Robert Falcon Scott during the ill-fated "Terra Nova" 1910–1913 scientific expedition to the Antarctic. Muhly chose two texts from Scott's journals; one, his detailed description of seeing auroras above the frozen tundra, and another from a later "rough note" that Scott penned before he and his team froze to death during a brutal storm:

> Tonight we had a glorious auroral display—quite the most brilliant I have seen. At one time the sky from North North-West to South South-East as high as the zenith was massed with arches, bands, and curtains, always in rapid movement. The waving curtains were especially fascinating—a wave of bright light would start at one end and run along to the other, or a patch of brighter light would spread as if to reinforce the failing light of the curtain.
>
> (Diary entry Sunday 21 May 1911)

> For four days we have been unable to leave the tent—the gale howling about us. We are weak, writing is difficult, but for my own sake, I do not regret this journey which has shown that Englishmen can endure hardships, help one another, and meet death with as great a fortitude as ever in the past. We took risks, we knew we took them; things have come out against us, and therefore we have no cause for complaint, but bow to the will of

> Providence, determined still to do our best to the last. These rough notes and our dead bodies must tell the tale.
>
> ("Message to the Public" March 1912)

Muhly's setting of these texts aggregates voices in a system that requires straighter tone to create distinct polyphonic-wrought lines, and builds around a repeated Alto II ostinato on the word "tonight," lilting asymmetrically through a somewhat erratic rhythm, punctuated by triplet flurries in the Alto I line. To me, on first hearing the Tallis Scholars rehearse this piece, it sounded like someone singing through chattering teeth and frozen jaw. It was cold in the church, even though it was only early October, and I was huddled in a light jacket and flannel shirt. Phillips had been kind enough to send me his PDF copies of annotated scores for this rehearsal so that I could follow along as they worked through repertoire for their upcoming concert set.

Thus my first experience of "Rough Notes"—which had not at the time been published in sheet music or in audio-recorded format—was to a certain extent bound to the visual representation of Muhly's composition, and to Captain Scott's words printed in the front panel of the score. The juxtaposition, and overlay, of these texts sometimes obscures language coherence, and without the score I might not have fully understood the two texts as distinct, or noticed the brutal connections between them. Most often pieces with historical connections or strong narratives are performed with lyrics printed within a broader-reaching program note, so my experience was unlikely very different than it would've been had I first heard the piece in performance, at least in considering the historical context and affective content of the work. On the other hand, I was able to interpret (due to previous experiences and a little sheet music sight-reading skill) how Muhly had interconnected these texts within lines that mimicked the grand but fleeting auroras that Scott so vividly describes. I would

have heard the piece at any rate, but the score illuminated their interpretation for me in a way which often is undercut or understated in scholarly discussions of gnostic immediacy (see Chapter 1) that foreground assumptions that scores, repertoire, and history are often divorced from the embodied side of affect.

One of the tricky aspects of the piece is the repeated Alto II ostinato that sometimes "hiccups" into a slightly different engagement with the steady common-time (4/4) rhythm that persists throughout most of the piece and guides the upper voices' long phrases. This is doubly-tricky in that the AII line is structured to sound reliably consistent, and the "hiccups" can be distracting to the conductor as they try to keep a steady four-pattern to guide the other singers. This was an issue as the group rehearsed. Phillips worked with the AII counter-tenor, a tall, angelic-looking blonde young man, as they tried to find a way to keep the four-pattern steady as well as hold on to the shifts in the AII ostinato. The young counter-tenor's earnestness as he undertook this task—sometimes even challenging Phillips (who was participatory and collaborative throughout, and admitted any mistakes)—was intensely moving to me as I watched the piece in score and in embodied rehearsal. That counter-tenor became emblematic for me of the young male explorers of the "Terra Nova" expedition, chattering in the cold, striving for the unreached, and ultimately unreachable through blizzard after blizzard, but overawed by their scientific discoveries at the ends of the earth and the dazzling auroras above them.

Though I found the piece very moving and well-wrought, showcasing the Tallis Scholars' skill sets in early music techniques, I was also drawn by the text into contemplation of another lineage that coincided and directly connected with these scientific expeditions. Nation-building movements of the nineteenth century, as well as the widespread colonialism

visited upon far-reaching areas of the globe by European powers, encouraged these types of scientific expeditions, both as an effort to bring glory to specific countries and to provide reconnaissance for further colonizing efforts. The line in Scott's "Message to the Public" conveys a touching paean to teamwork, collaboration, and sacrifice—but also posits it as an "English" virtue, in this case:

> I do not regret this journey which has shown that Englishmen can endure hardships, help one another, and meet death with as great a fortitude as ever in the past.
> ("Message to the Public")

This type of national valorization belongs to movements that began in the early nineteenth century during the Napoleonic Wars, a period of nation-defining and -building efforts in Europe that carved up the Holy Roman Empire (a system of kingdoms centered around Papal authority defined in the Middle Ages) into smaller countries. A massive shift from larger ruling organization into nation-states was tenuous, particularly as borders were being drawn, and reliance on some shared sense of cultural traditions and community belonging was encouraged from political as well as socio-economic aims. This was also the era in which these newly-formed countries were competing for colonization rights around the world. The push for national pride and identity extended to the "exploration" movements of the time, of which the Scott expedition was just one example.

On the other hand, Britain had consolidated its military might and colonial efforts far earlier than the European nation-state movement. As early as the sixteenth century, England "attempt[ed] to spread elements of its culture into Wales, Ireland, and Scotland" (MacKenzie 2022, 5), as historian John M. MacKenzie mentions. MacKenzie's scholarship focuses more fully on the cultural imperialism that was central to British colonial efforts:

> Beyond the territories of settlement, the British Empire became increasingly a phenomenon in which administration was established over other peoples in order to achieve commercial ends, not least in the extraction of increasingly varied resources. Starting in India in the late eighteenth century and expanding in the nineteenth, such rule and its accompanying economic exploitation were facilitated by the diffusion of a whole range of cultural elements from the centre. The British Empire thus set out to become a cultural and intellectual phenomenon of global significance. (Ibid., 7)

Long after the beginnings of true British cultural imperialism, the technological revolution of the nineteenth century led to a rising middle-class market for the spoils of conquest and an insatiable desire to prove that English might had not diminished. By the turn of the twentieth century, "Every aspect of popular culture contrived to instill pride in the British imperial achievement" (Richards 2001, 2). Additionally, the news stories about Scott's expedition—including the harrowing last message to the public—were eagerly awaited and served to build newspaper sales, due to both the drama of the expedition and its drawbacks as well as the celebrations of English achievement inherent in these narratives and letters. The colonial project became an imperial frame of mind that spanned English classes, and defined a sense of national identity via consumerism. The spoils of colonialism were indeed feeding the coffers in London's City banking district during this period, and therefore tandem support of capitalism and nationalism was built into the ways that citizens were urged to feel, via affective regimes, national pride (Green 1999, 45). And music brought this patriotism into the home, via songs that could be sung around the piano (sold to the middle class in sheet-music format) or shouted in chorus at music halls (Richards 2001, 324).

In considering the many facets of cultural, political, and referential mediations that guide experience of choralism, only one thing is clear—that affect, though predicated on oft-hidden powers and histories, is anything but simple in terms of individual perception, reception, or interpretation. Systems of affective guides and regimes may act within each singer and

listener, but these systems interact with each other, and also with memory and context in ways that cannot fully be explained or even noticed beyond the overwhelming emotion that underscores this alchemy. However, the strengthening mediation of recording practices and broadcasting further forwarded Colonial aims, especially within the British empire, that spread these cultural products (and, along with them, imperial sentiments) around the world.

Electronic Recording and Broadcasting

The most common use of the word "mediation" is firmly planted in the materialist and technological discussions in sound and media studies.[17] And as much as the final section of this chapter will consider materialist considerations—for example, how recording technology changes choral curation and participation—it will also note the affective echoes of choral recordings that have developed singers' and listeners' conceptualizations of imagined spaces and embodied comprehensions of affective regimes.

In the choral-affective framework I propose in these first two chapters, choral arts can only be considered as an artwork *of* space. If, as argued above and in the previous chapter, choralism by definition relies on singers' diagnostic embodiment and adaptation to sound in real time and acoustic space, then a recording is irrevocably tied to some sense of space—be it the actual space of the recording or an imagined or supposed acoustic. The cultural specificity of "place" must be provided by anyone hearing the recording from their own embodiments, interpretations and/or memories. Choralism in recording is a portal to embodied and memorialized experience via the sonic specificities of amalgamated voice and space.

17. See Amanda Weidman's 2014 discussion, "Anthropology and Voice," for discussion of technological mediation in music and sound scholarship and reckonings with recorded voice (41).

The notion of recorded choralism as space-specific may seem at odds with film and media studies scholar James Lastra's work. He traces the histories of sound recording as coupled with moving images, and suggests that sound recordings are necessarily de-coupled from their spatial and logocentric context, often with the help of technological means like dampening, recording equipment, and editing (2000). Lastra introduces the inherent struggle between space-specific "perceptual fidelity" and narrative-serving "intelligeability" when sound is linked to image, showing how film techniques have relied on sound that can be reliably stripped of situational context so that they may be altered to serve either the plot or a milieu represented onscreen (Ibid., 138). However, as I argue in Chapter 3, the very nature of choral vocality is so attached to sonic-acoustic and vocal specificity that the sound of the acoustic in which it was recorded—or the post-production manipulation of acoustic markers—is indicative in itself of space, even before the space is shown onscreen. This can certainly be replicated through technological means—for example, adding reverberation in post-production or even as singers are singing into microphones and using monitors or headphones for feedback. But the benefit of choralism via broadcast/recording mediation is the supposition of relational space between singers. At least some portion of affective experience in hearing choralism via recording is based in this spatial embeddedness as body and mind fills in the contextual gaps with imaginings of place.

This is, perhaps, why the King's College Chapel Choir has broadcast the "Nine Lessons and Carols" service live since 1928. Throughout the twilight years of the English "empire" colonial subjugation, the spatial and temporal aspects of the King's College Chapel broadcast around the world became synonymous with English values and virtues. Since the early years of recording and broadcasting, choralism in this tradition was made hegemonic, favored via

widespread reproduction and dissemination to a variety of cultural contexts as a display of "Englishness."

The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), founded in 1922, was a nationalized radio concern established in Britain and in areas of British rule around the world. Though the BBC still exists today, the overall hegemonic control it commands has since dwindled significantly. Historian John M. MacKenzie interprets the founding of the organization as a distinctly colonial effort, as governed by head John Reith:

> As radio became increasingly important in British national life between the wars, the administration of the BBC under John Reith took great pains to take an Establishment line, a policy which involved supporting the central ethos of the British Empire. Reith took an almost mystical view of the power of his organization in national and imperial life. He saw the opportunity to broadcast the bells of Big Ben and the King's speeches…and, from 1932, Christmas messages to the empire, with associated programming, as being central to such a mission. (2022, 312)

As radio stations and centralized BBC programming spread around the British-colonized world, local programming began to overtake the centralization efforts of radio culture. Each country under British rule developed its own national service, ancillary to the BBC but broadcasting in local languages and delivering local news that soon eclipsed the centralizing effects of the BBC. Though the BBC World Service news programming became "a propaganda service enhancing Britain's diplomatic and security interests" (Ibid.), various forms of radio resistance cropped up as radio broadcasting equipment, and home radios, were more readily obtainable (Ibid., 313). Even as the BBC continued to broadcast content from the United Kingdom—including choral services from King's College, Cambridge on Christmas Eve—the overall cultural zeitgeist of British cultural Imperialism was losing strength.

Recording and broadcasting choralism has made professional choralism in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries fundamentally different from earlier choral efforts. Choral space and time are now always colored by the possibility of recording. Every singer participating is aware that, though there may not be a recording in progress (increasingly rare), the techniques of choralism must be curated both for live space and for the quirks of recording equipment and phenomena. Depending on the acoustics, consonants may have to be slightly crisper, vowels modified at higher vocal ranges, director cues more specific, to accommodate a “clean” (read: legible by external audiences) recording.

Though the professional ensembles I observed did rehearse for recording sessions specifically (I didn’t have the chance to attend any of these), they always seemed ready to consider how sound should be shaped for recording as well as performance, building skills for this type of mediation constantly. At King’s and St. John’s Chapels in Cambridge, this curation had a pedagogical bent, as the young boy singers were taught via several methods, including inviting the college-age men to vocally model for the boys, to listen for spatial acoustics in a way that would produce specific effects for recording purposes. With the Tallis Scholars, Voces8, and The King’s Singers, they were often rehearsing for specific sets of touring concerts or events, and seemed aware that recording or electronic amplification would be a key part of those concerts.

Sometimes these groups were scheduled to record the piece, set, or full concert; or that they had recently recorded it; or they listened to older recordings and emulated them or deviated in their current performances according to changing tastes, singers, and acoustic demands. For example, during the King’s Singer’s Summer School in 2019, I heard a new countertenor with The King’s Singers say that he needed to learn and memorize hundreds of

pieces of the group's back catalogue before he began touring, but he was also able to rely on the vast back-catalogue of recorded materials from the group's forty-year history. A learning process that includes audio, or even video, recordings transfers far more than musical structure and content. Vocal shaping and timbre, balance, acoustic considerations in the recording space used, changes in tempo—all are inherent in recordings in ways that further inform the singers learning from them.

The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020–2021 highlighted how choralism transcends common comprehension of recordings by inherently including spatial-temporal specificity that acts on and through the bodies of those experiencing the recording. Interest in choralism skyrocketed during this period of relative isolation, both as a metaphorical representation of the community that had to be physically abandoned in quarantine and as a memory stimulant of physical engagement between voice, time, and space. Professional choral groups endeavored to imagine and build virtual engagement with their performances throughout the pandemic. English ensemble VOCES8 was lucky enough to have a rehearsal studio in a former London church, St. Anne & St. Agnes, one of dozens of churches designed by seventeenth-century architect Christopher Wren after the Great Fire of London in September 1666. The ensemble's director/founder Barnaby Smith, who also sings as a countertenor with the group, purchased fourteen cameras and individual and spatial microphones so the ensemble could record studio performances and make them available online. Smith also became a go-to producer for other groups as they made recordings in lockdown; he began a concert series titled "Live from London" that featured other professional performances in atmospheric and acoustically-resonant locations. Therefore, I wasn't surprised when I saw Smith setting up

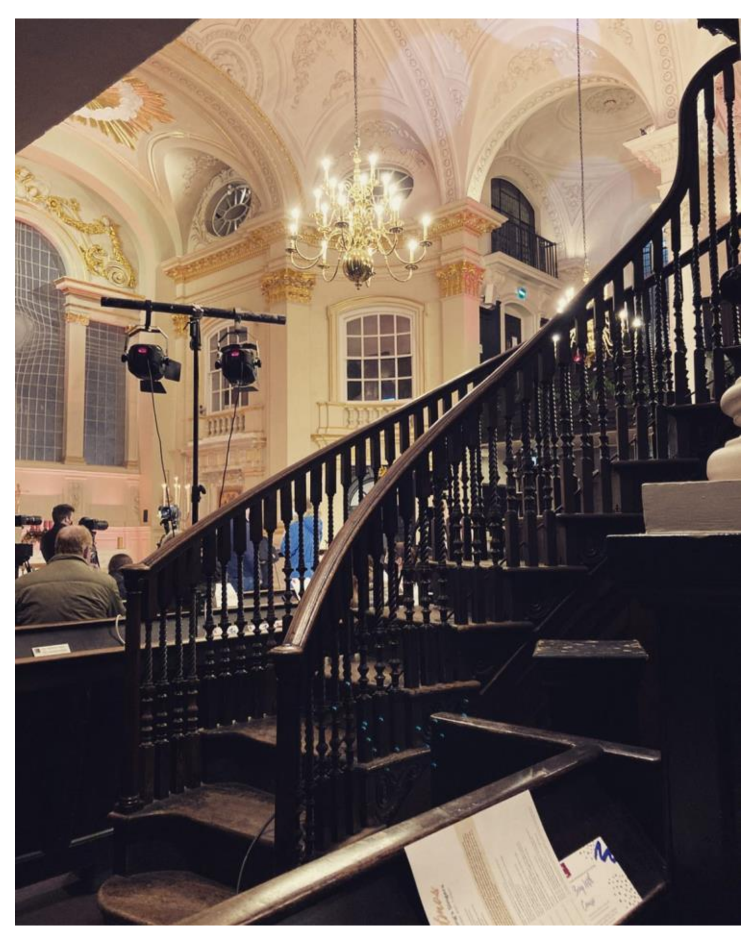

Image 8–9. *Images of the author's obscured-view seat and her social media post about The King's Singers' holiday concert at St-Martin's-in-the-Fields on Nov. 30, 2021.*

cameras and checking microphone levels at St. Martin-in-the-Fields for The King's Singers Christmas concert in late November 2021, which was a live performance with audience but was also being recorded for the "Live from London" series.

Attending the rehearsal before this concert demonstrated several levels of mediation that the King's Singers attempt with each concert and especially in video/audio recorded concerts. The group is a full-time ensemble, and tours around the world for most of the year. There are few times throughout the year when the group is *not* in rehearsal, recording, or traveling and presenting concerts. For the most part, the groups I had observed up to this point were made up of a roster of contracted singers who were switched in and out for each concert set, depending on who was available and what voices and total singer numbers were warranted for the repertoire. The King's Singers, by contrast, is made up of six professional male-identifying singers for whom the group is their primary "gig." Formed in 1968 by five previous King's College Chapel Choir choral scholars, the ensemble has maintained a six-man ensemble since its inception.

For me, this added to the difficulty of understanding the group's "shorthand" in discussing musical and sonic adjustments, simply because they are so tightly rehearsed and bound in shared vocal experiences. However, due to the video and audio recording for "Live from London," the group did have to check acoustics in St. Martin-in-the-Fields for their extreme dynamics—particularly softer ones—and choreograph the concert specifically for the space.

For the concert, a crane dolly camera had been set in the center aisle of the church to capture wide shots that could swoop into closer shots of the group as they sang, along with several stationary cameras in blocked-off pews. The ensemble, their management, and the

tech wranglers discussed using the side aisles of the chapel for a processional on "Hodie Christus natus est," an early chant often sung in Christmas concerts. To break up the long period where the group would stand at the front of the chapel, tenor Julian Gregory suggested that half the ensemble, the lower voices, process from one side aisle, and the others join from the front of the chapel. There was discussion about how to signal this to the audience in the room *and* the at-home audiences that will view the concert after the fact—and there were some minor adjustments made to cameras to accommodate these moves. However, because the group is so used to working within complex performance parameters, there was little fussing over the musical aspects of the piece after the group worked together to figure out how to use the natural acoustic in the church to blend their voices from disparate parts of the building.

Working through this run-through rehearsal, the six singers navigated several tricky pieces without needing to stop much, except to check microphone levels for the recording (there was no amplification, only pickups) with Barnaby Smith and the sound engineer in the booth above the stage (see picture above). However, particularly when rehearsing very soft pieces, the group took time to listen to the specific acoustic in the building and to check microphones and recording equipment. They were looking for a calibration of these quiet dynamics that would allow them to be heard in the building and via the microphones, but would become as soft as was possible while maintaining a vocal blend. While rehearsing contemporary piece "The Quiet Heart" by June Collin, the group asked Smith to listen to the opening to tell them how softly they can audibly sing in the space.

Smith stepped into the center aisle as they began, slightly frowning as he listened. The group sang a few phrases, stopped, and baritone Nick Ashby asked Smith, "Did it sound

intimate, but there?" "Sounds mezzo-piano to me," Smith replied. Bass Jonathan Howard urged the group to push toward an even softer dynamic—"Everything carries so well in here, if there's any moment for it, it's this." They began again, about as soft as I think I could've heard much of anything in that room (I was seated about five rows back in a center-aisle adjacent pew). After a few bars, they stopped again and Howard seemed a bit dubious—"The opening was *insanely quiet*," he noted. Countertenor Patrick Dunachie, who carries the melody in the opening of the piece, answered him: "For me that worked, but…" and Gregory continued, "…then we drop it back down, more intimate." "The acoustics are so good. They're *so* good," Howard commented. The group sang the whole piece, and Howard and Ashby take took stepping out to the center aisle to hear the group's blend. "You don't need any more. It's not big," Howard assured the other singers. After running through the whole thing, Dunachie noted, "I think we should really nourish the end-of-bar quavers," indicating the ways that the phrases resolve at the very last note of phrases in the piece.

The group, in those interactions, seemed to refer to the volume as an avenue to affective connection when they used terms like "intimate" and "nourish." Considering the acoustics potentiality of the building, and the ways dynamics and shaping might affect an audience, the group curated their honed instruments toward common goals through a delicately-wrought lingua franca of metaphor, description, and engagement with acoustics, developed over hundreds, even thousands, of rehearsals, performances, and recording sessions. The singers' aesthetic and affective aims are enhanced by the group's fifty-plus year lineage of recordings, which helps the group to curate its goals and overall "sound" as they learn musical arrangements and perform around the world. Their engagement with recording processes, alongside more immediate acoustic considerations, guides these curatorial aims and

culminates in affective efforts imbued in their vocal blend and interpretation of musical materials.

Go Gently: Conclusions and Continuations

Listening to VOCES8 give an ecstatic crowd an encore, I felt through the complex intertwined layers of affective mediation inherent in that choral performance. My assigned seat was on stage-left in the creaky wooden balcony that ran the length of the rectangular hall, where the bench seats were marked with numbers just slightly too close together for people with coats to stash. Seated shoulder to shoulder with other enthralled audience members, I felt the crowd's collective frisson when the group announced from the stage that their encore would be "Underneath the Stars," a cover of English folk singer Kate Rusby's song from 2003. All I knew from that liminal excitement was that this audience was made up of true VOCES8 fans, which had already been demonstrated by their enthusiastic reception of the entire concert, comprised of pieces from early music and twentieth-century choral works through to vocal jazz in the second half. Our wooden bench shifted as several people sat up taller, anticipating this last piece.

Earlier that afternoon I had seen VOCES8 run through many of the pieces for that evening—though not the Rusby song—on stage at Cadogan Hall. I had plunked down in one of the plush fold-down seats of the orchestra section, slightly to stage left, to avoid being in the group's eyeline as they rehearsed and to get another acoustic perspective from where I knew my seat was situated for that evening's concert. I had already been in Cadogan Hall for

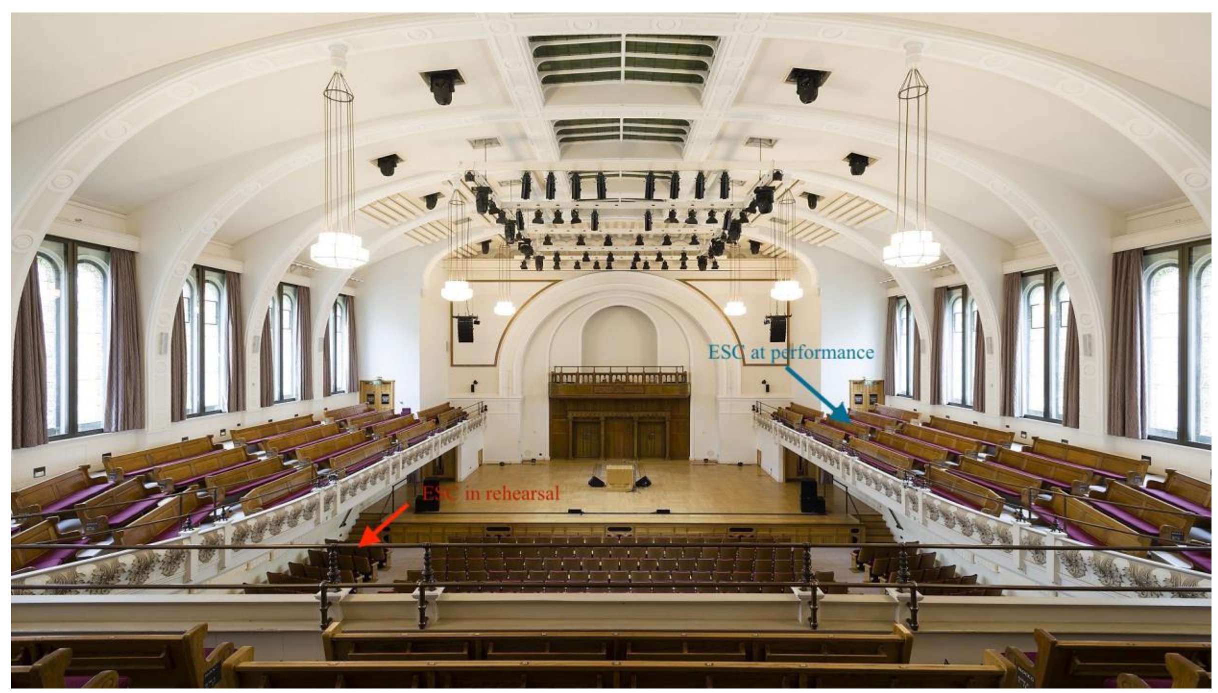

Image 10. *Photograph of Cadogan Hall by Alex McNaughton. Annotations by the author.*

other concerts, and I was dubious about that venue for choral performances—the acoustic, when the hall was full, seemed stingy, making balance between voices elusive and highlighting individual vocal particularities.

However, in listening to VOCES8 triage the space (where they had performed before), I was astonished by the nuance they accomplished in their first attempts in the hall. Barnaby Smith, a countertenor and the group's co-founder and often conductor, said late in the rehearsal that "it doesn't feel yet today like we're quite in sync." I was entirely shocked by that, given the small adjustments and adaptations the group had accomplished thus far as they sang through pieces of the program. This group's shorthand was exceptionally difficult for me to pick up on and understand; much of it was fragmented or embodied, similar to what I describe above in the section about The King's Singers' rehearsal dynamics. VOCES8 went to a full-time model in recent years, meaning the singers' sole job was to rehearse, perform,

and run educational workshops with the group. They are vocally, physically, and communicatively "together" thanks to daily rehearsals and engagements.

The group often performs without a conductor, both to facilitate inter-singer coordination (as the musical structures requires it) and to offer a more open engagement with audiences. VOCES8 also often performs "off book," singing works from memory, which further encourages engagement between singers that brings a specific embodied connection between singers. Often the interactions I observed were glances between singers as they attempted to breathe and start a phrase together; hand gestures to redefine or direct musical phrases; slight commentary with examples of minute vowel shape changes or consonant heft; even suggested facial expressions meant to inform the audience of affective intent and to shape the sound with that affective curation. Sometimes a singer, or Smith, would suggest moving closer to each other during specific pieces—a move that I had heard The King's Singers refer to as "clamshell formation," almost touching shoulders in a curved arc that enhanced singers' ability to hear each other and to be aware of other singers' bodies as they performed the piece.

I was nervous when I went up to the balcony for the performance. My previous experiences in Cadogan Hall had me worried that the group's singing, when the hall was filled with porous breathing bodies, would not have the same clarity and nuance of sound and intent that I had heard in rehearsal. But as soon as they began the first piece, Johann Sebastian Bach's "Singet dem Herrn," I relaxed. They had full power and control of the venue, and the audience's excitement—likely heightened due to the relative lack of live performance opportunities over the previous year throughout the continuing COVID-19

pandemic—only added to the group's vibrancy. The audience hung on their every sound and move.

"Underneath the Stars," the encore at the end of the concert, was a neo-folk song that I had never heard before, but the crowd obviously had. Belonging in the camp of "soft" encores—rather than loud bombastic finales—this arrangement is short and lilting, dreamily unfolding with the words "go gently" repeated in refrain. The third verse highlighted only treble voices without lower underpinnings in more adventurous jazz harmonies than the previous verses; and then ended on a suspended cord that only partly resolves, gently left waiting for another refrain. The song's lyrics are about the immutability of stars in comparison with human relationships and loss—a love song, but also existential musing about personal development, individual choices, fate, and loss.

It turns out I had never heard the song before because it was only popular in the UK and in folk music circles. Kate Rusby, sometimes called the Barnsley Nightingale because she hails from the north of England in Yorkshire, is a staple of the English folk song circuit and recording genre. This song came out in 2003 on an album of traditional folk songs, and is one of few Rusby featured that were her own compositions. When I listened to Rusby's original recording of the song, I immediately noticed her Yorkshire accent in the recording, especially noticeable in the vowel shaping ("underneath" becomes "oounderneath," for example) and in some of the song's unusual rhythmic figures. The Yorkshire-specific accent was not included in VOCES8's rendition of the song, but some snapped syncopated rhythms that served Rusby's tune were still baked into their phrasing. Additionally, the soprano carrying the melody gently scooped certain notes, leading from a lower note to the note of the melody, in a nod to pop music vocalism and Rusby's original.

Once I figured out the piece's provenance, I better understood why the audience had reacted the way they did. Though many were likely fans of VOCES8 and had heard the group perform the piece before, it was also just as likely that the audience members who remembered when Rusby's song came out and charted nearly twenty years before had their own memorialized connection to the song, connections that might be shared with grade-school colleagues, family members, specific relationships, or specific places or events. This was doubly fascinating when I realized that the song itself was not a widespread hit in the heightened globalization of the music market—not a song known around the world, but a provincialized snapshot of England during the waning cultural and political power of the post-Colonial era. The collective audience reaction was likely one combining several kinds of community, recognition of a song that was a "hit" predominantly for English audiences who listen to The Folk Program on BBC Radio 2. Combining physical liminal affect sourced from Cadogan Hall with political affective understandings of "Englishness" and adding memorialized affect made possible by the recording industry distilled this two-minute-and-nineteen-second performance into potency, leaving the audience slightly drunk as they walked in the October chill into Sloane Square.

* * *

The above example is offered to show how the valences of affective mediation—embodied/acoustic; cultural, political and memorialized; and recording technologies—are ever-present in every choral encounter as an inherent part of the choral medium (as defined in Chapter 1 and the beginning of this chapter) and can never be separated from each other

outside of academic theorization (such as shown here). The connections between affect learned and transmitted via cultural means are indelibly connected to the physical affective nexus and to individual-specific alchemies of affective understanding bound with each individual's memorialized experiences.

While some affective experiences and understandings can be traced to socio-political goals and movements, as is apparent in choralism's use during the rise of the nation-state in the nineteenth century, the different forces of individual consciousness will comprehend the same experiences entirely differently from another person. The body, via acoustics and liminal affect, is constantly transgressed and redefined in shared choral experience, which is encouraged by the history of choralism allied with meditation and religious contemplation. An individual is, however, distinct from another within this experience through their own affective comprehension tied to memory, knowledge, and particularities of embodied sensation.

There is an important "puzzle piece" missing from this discussion—the traditions defined and upheld by choralism as used to guide affect in hegemonic Hollywood film soundtracks. The next chapter will discuss this specific genre of choralism, and suggest how affective regimes are woven into soundtrack cues to transcend divides between narrative and spectacle in the movies.

CHAPTER 3

CINEMATIC CHORALISM

IN A WORLD WHERE…superheroes trade quips alongside punches; special powers are ubiquitous and diverse; and a ragtag team of underdog misfit mutants is about to battle bigger and scarier underdog misfit mutants—

…every other sentence is a profanity-laced scatological reference, woven into a heart-rending story of love, loss, rejection, family-building, and life-after-death—

…the protagonist is a smart-ass actor Ryan Reynolds avatar named Wade Wilson, a.k.a. Deadpool, an anti-hero who often makes good in spite of himself—

…and after we have already sat through the first two "acts" of the sophomore film sequel *Deadpool 2*—

"OH HOLY SHITBALLS! OH SHIT! OH FUCK," bellows a percussive, *Carmina Burana*-esque full choir doing its best "O Fortuna!" pastiche, supported by orchestral pyrotechnics as Deadpool and his buddies Cable, Domino, and Dopinder take on frenemy mutant Juggernaut. Much of the film up until this point has been underscored by surreal inclusions of old-school Hip Hop tracks ("X Gon' Give It to Ya" by DMX), Country Western classics ("9 to 5" by Dolly Parton) and even New Age ("Caribbean Blue" and "Only Time" by Enya), juxtaposed against (and playing up the comedy in) graphic action sequences. Minimal symphonic music has been heard throughout the film up until this point, but that cue is calculated to engage with the way choralism is understood through the medium of Hollywood action films. It relies on stereotypical traditions of how "final boss" action

sequences are supposed to work in action films and epics, on both a spectacular and emotional level, and how choral vocality has often been employed to heighten similar scenes in many action film scores. And because choirs are often singing open vowels or, in other examples, using language particular to the film's story, this particular cue twists the knife by adding understandable lyrics—words acknowledging the melodramatic spectacle of a fight sequence as well as poking fun at the way choirs have often been used to punctuate such scenes. Immediately following that, the film makes another music-related joke, as Deadpool is rescued by an alienated friend to the strains of "In Your Eyes" by Phil Collins.

It seems the key to this choral gag—what makes it recognizably funny enough to a wide spectrum of filmgoers such that it was developed and kept in a major motion picture edit—delves deep into how and why choral music has been featured in Hollywood movie soundtracks since early on in film history. There is surprisingly little scholarship about choralism in film in general, and very few sources discuss general use in Hollywood soundtrack conventions. The few works that do analyze choralism in film soundtracks, or in featured diegetic performance in film scenes, focus on independent films, non-Hollywood "foreign" films, and art films. And when film studies and music theory scholars discuss film music that include choirs, a focus on musical structure—rather than timbre or vocality—obscures discussions of what, specifically, choirs offer to big-budget film and how choralism has become, at least in part, understood through filmic situations and processes. Considering "choralism" as already inflected by Euro-centric hegemonies, colonialism, and cultural imperialism (see Introduction and Chapter 2), this chapter posits that hegemonic conventions of choralism are imbued in cinematic uses of choral voice. The use of choral voices, often in wordless or lyrically-unintelligable forms, is a reinscription of hegemonic choralism. Though

film sometimes uses recognizable choral repertoire—one of which I've already mentioned above, Carl Orff's "O Fortuna!" from *Carmina Burana* (1936), and another, Gyorgi Ligeti's *Lux Aeterna* that I discuss later in this chapter—the more generalized use of wordless or unintelligible choric utterance is more common and often entirely ignored, as I show, in overall film soundtrack-related scholarship or discussions of cinematic sound practices. The lyrics and recognizability beyond general style or troping are of minor concern in this work, though more discussion about the connections between choral repertoire and history with cinematic choralism is certainly warranted within expansions of this project in the future.

A full discussion of what choirs and choralism are doing in Hollywood and other big-budget films would require far more than can be offered in a dissertation chapter. But some discussion of how choirs may be heard and understood due to film soundtrack tropes and inclusions is essential to understanding broader comprehension of choralism beyond churches, academic institutions, and concert halls. In other words, this chapter is not only about how choralism has been integrated into film; it is about how film changed the way singers understand and feel through choral vocality in practice, and could, with further study, suggest that choralism has been reinscribed as a globalized phenomenon as embedded in film.

The suggestion that films influence our own interpretations of everyday life and personal narrative is not new. Michel de Certeau's note that "metaphori" in Greece (literally "to carry" or "to carry across") refers to modes of transportation; and posits that metaphors and narrative world-building are how we contextualize our everyday lives (1984, 115–16). The narratives with which we are inundated, through film and television as well as theater, music, and other artistic practices, connect integrally with our own narrativization of experience and

de Certeau's space and place, theory tied to earlier discussions of embodied vocality as reifying of self while also illuminating acoustic and interpersonal relationality, as discussed in Chapter 1. De Certeau suggests that the narrativization of space and place both embodies those of us doing the narrativizing *and* takes us out from the space/place paradigm by making us historians, removing us from the physical through the narrative process.

In the case of choralism in film, this suggestion that filmic convention guides our own consciousness and engagement with the world around us offers a striking opportunity to consider that films expose vast audiences to choralism—a set of musical practices often considered a niche, religious, or pedagogical interest—in a way that is coupled with and subsumed under spectacle and narrative. Though viewers are often not aware, or at least mostly unconscious, that they are actively dichotomizing the choralism in a soundtrack as a "choir," the physical and emotional manifestations of the film's affective guidance become attached to choralism. The swelling sound of a choir at the end of a movie in early film history, in something like, say, *Gone with the Wind*, connects choralism with particular emotional beats allied with the film's narrative. Since choirs have been used in many films over time, with several distinct affective alliances, the emotional content has become memorialized as connected with choralism via film score and soundtrack in the same way that choirs are still affiliated with religious meditation and community codification (as discussed in Chapters 1 and 2).

Though, as previously mentioned, the topic of choral inclusion in Hollywood film soundtracks is far too vast to be covered in this chapter, I will discuss a few of these "distinct affective alliances" that choralism is often used to convey within film scenes, narratives, and spectacles: (1) ethical/religious rumination; (2) spatial enlargement and bodily intimidation;

and, (3) heightened stakes ("life or death") for characters within the narrative, using examples drawn from Howard Shore's score for Peter Jackson's epic fantasy film *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* (2001). The latter portion of the chapter will tie to interviews and fieldwork with singers who, in one case, have adapted their vocal pedagogy to sing choral music featured in film; and in another, have curated a filmic experience when performing live and on video. This work suggests how film has changed the function and understanding of choralism for Hollywood moviegoers and television viewers and many film traditions influenced by Hollywood, as well as changing practices within the traditions of choral singing, artistic direction, and affective aims and goals for choral practitioners.

A Lightning-Fast Introduction to Film Studies and Choralism

Films, soundtracks, and choirs in scholarship

This investigation of choirs and affect in film soundtracks is unabashedly tied to big-budget movies, filmmakers, and production studios of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Virtual ethnography includes discussion of what is often termed "subcultural film," (after Slobin 1993) in ethnomusicology; and in film studies and musicology, detailed historical discussion of the beginnings of film music in Hollywood during the 1930s and '40s. These approaches take similar tacks. Generally, case studies of both subcultural and Hollywood films are specifically connecting musical material in the movie to cultural touchstones outside of it, looking for specificity that filmmakers curated into their narrative techniques and comparing and contrasting those specificities with perceived touchstones of film music convention. Since the first films including sound—referred to as "talkies," but providing so much more sonically than simple dialogue—a soundtrack style and structure

developed and coalesced around the first large-scale film studios in the United States. Historical investigations have often drawn parallels with symphonic musical cultures of Europe, particularly compositional histories of Germany and Austria, to show how film music drew from these lineages—and with good reason. Many of the composers who worked in the film studios, including Austrian composer/conductor Max Steiner, were from these areas and had trained as orchestral composers and conductors in Europe. Mark Slobin refers to Steiner's vast contributions on early influential films like *Birds of Paradise* (1932), *King Kong* (1933), *Gone With the Wind* (1939), and *Mildred Pierce* (1945) as "the Steiner Superculture," an undeniable force establishing norms of orchestral inclusion and musical structure into mainstream Hollywood films (Slobin 2008, 3). Slobin refers to his approach in studying Steiner (as well as what he terms "subcultural films") as ethnographic, rather than historical or structural. Of a film music composer, he claims, "Placing people in motion means you have to construct an integrated and logical society, music and all" (Ibid.). This approach does help frame how culture—the globally-widespread culture of the United States and western Europe, as well as relationally-defined and imagined culture of the mysterious and exotic "other"—can be understood via detail-oriented soundtrack ethnography, and illuminate the cultural politics of the time in which the soundtrack was created and meant to function.

However, the approach of considering each soundtrack as indicative of the film's "integrated and logical society" leads us away from the ways that music has been structured to elicit emotional engagement and affective response, and how these musical-affective structures function due to filmmakers' and audiences' repeated exposure, reiteration, and reification of those systems of use in composition. While music theorists and film studies

scholars have attempted investigations into the music theory of film scores, dissecting the music from the position of learned musicians and/or composers (Kalinak 1992, 24), they have done little to develop how these structures may be heard, repeatedly, in ways that move moviegoers. These scholars are interested in how the score is put together, and suggest some ways it *might* be heard, but certainly were intended, by the composer. In the realm of music cognition, scholars have investigated specific instances of how film music is received, making use of rigorous Human Studies protocols and providing a variety of "stimuli" examples. This approach indicates how the human brain logs sound and music as connected to the visual aspects of film, and provides new insights into how the brain functions. Cognitive investigations track how the mind works, and how music may be understood from both self-reported feedback and equipment readings (Plantinga and Smith 1999; Donnelly 2002, 2005, and 2015).

All of those approaches to film music are viable, but none are particularly invested in the affective structures intimated in film and television soundtracks within globalized cultural frameworks. Questions of mediation and repetition have been asked in film and media studies scholarship, but those investigations often focused far more on the visual than the audio aspects of film and television, beyond surface investigations of instrumentation and musical themes.

In other words, the cross-pollination in interdisciplinary film music studies scholarship has some underdeveloped areas, circumventing questions asking how musical tropes and structures are formulated to physically and emotionally affect those engrossed in the film. While cognitive science and the structural inquiry of musical topic theory can provide measurable readings of physical reactions and reported data from participants, it cannot

thoroughly connect with every cultural and memorialized consideration of affect. Nor can the structural analysis of theory or film studies. Therefore, it may be useful to fill in the gaps within this interdisciplinary mishmash by considering affect as combinatory of several elements, including physical, emotional, memorialized, situational, and, often, subconscious or latent—in other words, using affect theory to deconstruct the mechanisms of affect repeatedly inserted into film and media. Through this lens, we may see how affective regimes—introduced in Chapter 1—are etched into the filmic experience, and how these regimes are supported by sonic and musical means.

The Greek Chorus(es)

Considering theater, narrative storytelling, and performance studies—arguably key elements that build into film studies scholarship—alongside choralism, one might be drawn to the lineage of the Greek chorus, a tradition dating back to antiquity which is used colloquially in modern times to conjure the "peanut gallery" of public consumption, commentary, and opinion. Originally a coordinated singing *and* dancing tradition integrated into various types of Grecian theater for different purposes and encompassing various meanings depending on the type of drama and chorus inclusion in or commentary on narrative, the Greek chorus has survived throughout subsequent ages, revived for examination in the Middle Ages and Renaissance as scholars turned their gaze toward antiquity for philosophical and scientific guidance (Billings et. al. 2013, 3).

Philosophical interest in the Greek chorus over millennia shows how the Greek chorus has been interpreted in ways most appealing and useful to the cultural milieu in which it is being considered. Corresponding with the period of revolution and nation-building in the

early nineteenth century, concepts of community and identity developed out of scholarly interpretations of the Greek chorus that led to the rise of choral performance and participation as an example of national pride and codified aesthetics. (This development is discussed in Chapter 1.) Therefore, as much as the Greek chorus tradition, as Billings argues in his introduction to *Choruses, Ancient and Modern* (Ibid.), is *not* indicative of the modern practices of choralism—either in actual performativity or in cultural understanding— it coincides with the rise of choralism as a part of religious rite and community-building tradition. Considered as aligned with choric practice *and* with theater traditions over centuries, the concept of the Greek chorus connects with voice, group vocalism, narrative drama, and stagecraft in a way that may inflect how film integrates and codifies choralism as a palette of affective instigation. Indeed, thinking of choralism in film as an appropriation of the Greek use of chorus in drama generates new understandings of how film has changed, and how Hollywood media-aware individuals—many of us in different parts of the world—hear choralism in our everyday lives, guided by our film experiences.

Body and Space, Implied by Choir

Billings writes, "Ancient choruses are both actions themselves and representations of actions, *praxis* and *mimesis*, and resist any single temporal frame: performing in the present, choruses look to the past and future" (Billings et. al. 2013, 2–3). It is interesting to consider this device in film traditions, also keeping in mind de Certeau's assertions that metaphors allow us to move through our everyday lives, simultaneously inserting and removing us from our own narratives. Greek chorus offers the opportunity for the action of narrativization to be made manifest within drama, showing how bodies, and perhaps all the more important,

voices, act as indicators of individual and group identity, self-awareness, autobiographer, and sonic material.

Voice, used to signify both bodily mundanity and specificity (in the present) and omnipresent awareness (in the past and future), is often explored in film, though not specifically in terms of choralism. The solo voice has made more inroads in film studies historiography. Michel Chion's *The Voice in Cinema* (1999 [1992], translated by Claudia Gorbman) emphasizes not only the importance of sound in film—and the ways that sound can take a movie from two- to three-dimensional—but also the specific significance of voice, located for filmgoers through the mouths of those pictured on screen. "It's the same for any sonic space, empty or not," Chion writes. "If a human voice is part of it, the ear is inevitably carried toward it, picking it out, and structuring the perception of the whole around it. The ear attempts to analyze the sound in order to extract meaning from it—as one peels and squeezes a fruit—and always tries to *localize* and if possible *identify* the voice" (Ibid., 5). He continues, "*the presence of a human voice structures the sonic space that contains it*" (Ibid., emphasis Chion's).

In some ways, this is the same point being made in the previous chapter, which shows how voice and embodiment in sonic space guides understanding of surroundings, real or imagined via proxy through mediated sound. However, Chion is specifically theorizing the voice in film. As such, though Chapter 1 analyses of body and voice in acoustic space—and even through mediated means not heavily curated as in Hollywood film soundtracks—voice in film must be reexamined for specific mechanisms and affective triggers in movie conventions. An implied or imagined space in a film may be conjured via both sound and voice, but those sounds and voices are placed and shaped in tracks honed through multiple

editing and curatorial processes in order to guide viewers' experience within the film narrative. As opposed to the sound telling its own story, the sound is used to specify and make legible the film's narrative.

Chion also theorizes how voice—the acoustic "stuff" of it, Barthes "grain" in embodied heft—is often entirely forgotten as sonic material, subsumed under language via dialogue:

> By what incomprehensible thoughtlessness can we, in considering what after all is called the talking picture, "forget" the voice? Because we confuse it with speech. From the speech act we usually retain only the significations it bears, forgetting the medium of the voice itself. Of course the voice is there to be forgotten in its materiality; only at this cost does it fill its primary function. (1999 [1992], 1)

Film and Media Studies scholar Claudia Gorbman makes the case that film music is supposed to be so imbricated in the story that we are unaware of hearing it at all:

> …primary among [film music's] goals, nevertheless, is to render the individual an untroublesome viewing subject: less critical, less "awake." This notion has several important consequences. Music may act as a "suturing" device, aiding the process of turning enunciation into fiction, lessening awareness of the technological nature of film discourse. Music gives a "for-me-ness" to the soundtrack and to the cine-narrative complex. I hear (not very consciously) this music which the characters don't hear; I exist in this bath or gel of affect; this is my story, my fantasy, unrolling before me and for me on the screen (and out of the loudspeakers). (Gorbman 1987, 5)

Gorbman conceives of soundtrack as integrally tied to affective goals, writing: "Its effectiveness often depends upon its not being listened to. While certainly not always signifying 'pleasantness,' it is nonetheless programmed to match the mood or feelings of the narrative scene of which it is a part, to bathe it in affect" (Ibid., 57). It is an amalgamation of effort, reference, physicality, and spatial awareness guiding affect that allows us to feel as though the narrative is one personal to us, in that the music, when it is done well, brings us to tears, laughter, or even physical/emotional pain. Chiming with our own memorialized experiences that make our interpretation of the film seem embodied and personal, soundtrack underpinnings guide us toward emotional beats that filmmakers have meticulously laid out

throughout their film. Therefore, there is an additional opacity between viewer/listeners and sound design in film, the sonic equivalent of trick camera shots, CGI, or (an old ruse!) a layer of vaseline on the camera lens, provided by the curatorial efforts of directors, sound engineers, editors, and composers.

But you might ask at this point, in a chapter about choralism in film, what about choral music in movies? How does this fit in with Gorbman's reckonings about soundtrack and Chion's voices on film? How can we conceive of voice detached, for the most part, from dialogue, and added to a film soundtrack designed to all but disappear for viewer/listeners, leaving them only with affective residue to guide interpretation? As Chion claims the voice is forgotten—though, I would argue, still affectively felt—in the narrative and characterization contained of dialogue, could one claim that choirs are subsumed in orchestral soundtrack, their visceral and spatial specificity hidden (but not excised) in symphonic convention and structure?

The key to understanding how film scores make use of choral voice may lie in both interpretations above. Just as Chion suggests that speech is often confused with voice in film viewing, choralism in film soundtracks is frequently confused with symphonic orchestration and, as Gorbman states, added to an overall affective "bath" that does not distinguish between choral voices and orchestral texture. This suggestion is supported by the amount of film music scholarship that discusses soundtracks by focusing solely on structural (that is, musically-theoretical) scaffolds within the musical material, and as connected with image, without discussing timbral issues. And although much of the choralism featured in Hollywood films is allied with Western symphonic music traditions, there are differences to be distinguished between orchestral music and choralism, particularly when one considers

the discussions of how voice may function within film studies investigations. Film music scholarship seldom, if ever, comments on inherent differences between the use of orchestral instrumentation and the use of choral vocality within soundtracks. In fact, there is seldom any mention of choirs at all, beyond noting their inclusion in the score in film music investigations.

As discussed in Chapter 1, choralism, bound to spatial and embodied specificity, provides specific embodied and emotional affective touchstones, engages with notions of subjectivity and agency through embodied voice, and provides a situational awareness that leads to affective comprehension of self and other. If those arguments are pulled into discussions of choralism in film soundtracks, there is more to interpret about how viewer/listeners may unknowingly perceive and parse choral soundtrack inclusion as they watch a film, "bath[ing]…in affect" via the musical underpinnings in service of a filmmaker-conceived narrative. Though the arguments above—Chion's and Gorbman's, as well as mine—seem to reify Adorno and Eisler's conceptualization of sound as subordinated to image in the cinema (Eisler and Adorno 1947, 20), this dichotomy allows us to consider soundtracks, particularly choralism, arguably the most hidden aspect of an already deemphasized sonic palate, as something that affects us without overt comprehension when we are engrossed in the narratives being sonically supported. If the soundtrack, and especially the choir, contains affective material and sway, it does so by getting under our guard, convincing us that our affective experience is intensely personal as well as guiding us through the film.

Berthold Hoeckner approaches questions of affective guidance in soundtracks, suggesting that they make use of memory—individual and culturally collective—to distill and build

emotion under a narrative frame. Hoeckner claims that film sound allows movies to simulate real life in a heightened form enriched by our own previous experiences. He writes:

> …the addition of sound has enabled film to capture, store, and release aspects of reality previously inaccessible to our audiovisual sensorium. Music, especially, can make us conscious of something in the cinematic experience that—to vary Benjamin's formulation—we seem to have never experienced before remembering. Invariably, sound and music contribute to our perception of the image: the sound of crickets in a landscape at dusk, the singing of workers marching in protest, or elegiac strings expressing the sorrows of an abandoned lover. Combined, auditory and visual stimuli enter into a perceptual unit—a phenomenon that Michel Chion described so elegantly with the neologism "syncresis," a portmanteau of synchronism and synthesis. Sound, whether part of the world depicted or added as a form of commentary, *alters* the image by making viewers conscious of something they might otherwise not notice. (2019, 5)

Hoeckner continues:

> What is more, sound and music can *store* images and serve as a cue for *retrieving* them. The crickets may bring back the landscape, the singing conjure up the workers, the elegy recall the feeling of loss. In this sense, the optical-acoustic unconscious points to a medium at work within a medium: sound—and especially music—can function as a recording and playback device for 'images we have never seen before we remember.' For music does not just recall images—in doing so, it appears to generate them, suggesting that the past is not merely recreated (or reprojected) but also newly created (or projected). (Ibid., 5–6)

Choral intervention in soundtracks exists in a strange chasm between diegetic embodiment and non-diegetic orchestral underscoring. While voice(s) are undeniably of the body, and indicate some kind of human participation, this is not Hoeckner's "singing conjur[ing] up the workers," in that the bodies are subsumed in a nether region not actually included in the film's narrative world. Choral inclusion may instead conjure, in its purest form, the Greek chorus, an entity existing outside of the time and worldview of the film that encourages individual interrogation of and participation in the film's questions and through lines. This is not to suggest that soundtrack composers are intending choralism as indicative of this kind of intervention; rather, it is to say that choralism in soundtracks functions as a physical and

affective tether between the narrative/spectacle of film and the audience experiencing it.

In the discussion of choric inclusion and use as an affective guide, film studies concepts of "narrative" and "spectacle," which are used to describe the cinematographic (and, arguably, sonic) mechanisms of different types of film scenes, can show us how choralism lives within the cracks between embodied vocal and orchestral, overtly listened to and/or subconsciously registered. "Narrative" refers to when the film's scope (visual and sonic) emphasizes characterization and plot development. This may include close-ups and prolonged dialogue, for example; and music is typically used as underscoring unless dialogue is particularly sparse. On the other hand, "spectacle" makes use of broader camera shots that provide wider fields of view, often to enhance the drama of space, place, and scale within a film and to encourage the audience to feel a sense of awe (whether at the filmmakers' technical approach or at the vastness of the depicted set/setting is up for debate). A musical swell alongside the move from narrative to spectacle camera views and techniques became commonplace in classical Hollywood film. Kathryn Kalinak refers to this switch from underscoring to overt scoring as "where virtuosic technical display was heightened by the substitution of music for sound" (1992, 97). Kalinak writes:

> "The creation of spectacle in the classical narrative model afforded music this position, where virtuosic technical display was heightened by the substitution of music for sound. The closer narrative moved toward pure spectacle and away from the naturalistic reproduction of sound, the more music moved toward the forefront of conscious perception in compensation." (Ibid.)

Choralism often appears in these swells, when the perspective moves from the subjective positioning of narrative to a far broader understanding of the film's scope and setting. This technique of including choralism in these swells was used in myriad films too numerous to list here, including Steiner's score for *Gone with the Wind* as well as in Disney's 1951

animated children's film *Alice in Wonderland* (scored by Oliver Wallace) alongside more recent fare, such as the 2019 HBO miniseries *Chernobyl* (in the epilogue to an innovative score by Hildur Guðnadóttir). The fact that voice—often considered a signifier of identity and corporeal form—is included in the shift from narrative into cinematographic spectacle seems to carry latent meaning for how we, as moviegoers, are being encouraged to feel through these moments as we remain subjectively invested in the film. However, as already noted, the fact that choralism is included in film soundtracks often goes unnoticed by moviegoers and scholars alike. Though the soundtrack is far more highlighted in the shift from narrative to spectacle, this does not mean that audiences are particularly aware of the fact that choral vocality makes up a considerable amount of the musical material they are hearing in these shifts. The surreptitious quality of choralism in film scores seems to work as a double-edged sword; though it may be used in heightened shifts from narrative to spectacle, it still can offer subconscious affective shift to those embedded in the world of the film.

In the case study that follows, I will not claim that cultural understanding and competencies are unimportant in the way that narrative and soundtrack operationalize the use of choralism in film scores. Rather, these readings suggest that films often bring those not "in the know" about choral history or use in the "real world" to an ad hoc vicarious understanding of, and affective investment in, the ways that choralism has historically promoted physical and emotional engagement. Choralism, and music in general, cannot guide a broad moviegoing public without some kind of integrated tutorial through these affective triggers music can instigate; which, in turn, perpetuates and reifies the tropes of choralism in Hollywood films via the same shorthand.

Note that this is not an investigation bound in deep consideration of intent (by composers, filmmakers, etc.) or reception (by audiences or listeners). If anything can be gained from affect theory as a field of inquiry, it is the assertion that we cannot entirely explain the affective impetus or understandings that each of us individually have, and therefore relying on truisms or rubrics is a disingenuous endeavor. Rather, this work attempts to recognize choral tropes and gambits that signal or instigate affective mood or shift in cinematic convention via the Hollywood epic, and to suggest how choralism has become integral to how film moves audiences and how choralism is more broadly contextualized by them, inside and outside of mediated film and television experiences.

The following section describes some of the shorthand affective cues that choralism may bring to a film scene or score, and suggests ways that the affective "stuff" of the scene is connected with cultural connotation and embodied experience of choralism via its inclusion in the soundtrack. These suggested areas are not meant to be exhaustive; rather, they provide a few examples of how choralism, specifically, assists in the affective moves imbued in the narrative and/or spectacle included in the scene.

***The Lord of the Rings*: Choral Fellowship and Feeling**

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, New Zealand-born director Peter Jackson, previously known for smaller independent and lower-budget films, began filming a passion project. His treatment of English author J.R.R. Tolkien's 1950s fantasy novels in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy was as big-budget as they come, and typified a new era of big-budget Hollywood epic filmmaking that continued throughout the early 2000s with movies like *Gladiator* (2000, dir. Ridley Scott), *The Matrix* (2000, dir. L. & L. Wachowski), *Troy* (2004, dir. Wolfgang

Petersen), and *300* (2006, dir. Zack Snyder). Following on the historical epics of the 1990s—*The Last of the Mohicans* (1992, dir. Michael Mann) and *Braveheart* (1995, dir. Mel Gibson)—many of these films refocused on Greco-Roman myth and history. Jackson, however, built a very different immersive world in his New Zealand homeland that showcased the intricately detailed mapping, language creation, and species drawn from folk legends that Tolkien wrought for readers in the aftermath of WWII. Hobbits, elves (of various regions), orcs, dwarves, sentient and speaking trees, wizards, goblins, a creature called "Gollum," and humans coexist in these films, shown against various backdrops of New Zealand doubling as Tolkien's "Middle Earth."

Tolkien himself was a linguist, a Cambridge don who thoroughly imagined several languages for Middle Earth, including multiple forms of Elvish, Dwarvish, and the "Black Speech" spoken only by evil tongues and those asking for trouble. It is fitting, then, that the film's composer, Howard Shore, took a semiotic approach to the film's score. Deliberately referencing the music of Wagner and the scores of the early Hollywood epics, Shore created a complex system of over 100 leitmotifs. These were used, as music journalist Doug Adams writes in his "comprehensive account of Howard Shore's scores," to deliberately ally with specific narrative storylines. This owes much to Wagner's use of operatic chorus throughout his epic operas—which makes sense, as Wagner's four-episode operatic cycle "Der Ring des Nibelungen" (written in 1857) is akin to Tolkien's "The Lord of the Rings" series comprised of several books, as well as Wagner's influence on film composers since Max Steiner scored some of the earliest films with sound (Joe and Gilman 2010). Wagner's efforts to underscore

musical drama provided a road map for those accompanying silent films and the earliest film composers as they emphasized aspects of milieu and narrative flow.[18]

In this case, Shore's self-reported intent to score the film akin to the way that Tolkien created his linguistic worlds led to a narrative-driven soundtrack (2002, 11). Though Shore himself said "Most themes began based on an emotional emphasis. I wanted the audience to *feel*" (Ibid., 7), Adams notes that the score's interconnected set of leitmotifs "permeate Shore's score not only to reinforce the cultural relationships present in Tolkien's world, but also to highlight the central dramatic precepts of *The Lord of the Rings*: dedication, seduction, purity, good, and evil" (Ibid., 11). As much as Shore built an interconnected system of leitmotifs to highlight narrative, the interconnection and interaction between these musical themes and the images on screen lead to a specially-conceived affective alchemy, potent because the viewer has been drawn into this structure and taught how to decode it as the story unfolds.

This film example seems to lend itself to a topic theory investigation with semiotic groundings, working to ally the score's connection to narratives with audience understanding. Indeed, this work has already been accomplished, most notably by Adams himself, who wrote an entire book detailing the complex logics and structures of the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy scores (2010). However, my investigation is less concerned with the introduction of musical "topics," "tropes," or touchstones that ally to cultural

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[18] As much as Wagner's operatic works inspired film scores, it is likely a more complex question as to how much his opera choruses inspired habitual inclusion of choirs in film scores. Choric voice in opera functions differently than choralism in that diagnostic embodiment functions in vastly different ways (which is beyond the scope of this project). I suggest that choralism as functional only in the background and allied with underscoring paired with visuals, which diverges from most Wagnerian use of operatic chorus in forwarding and heightening drama. This is a vast topic that should be further explored, alongside Wagnerian chorus' connections to Greek Chorus conventions and the staging and acoustics—contemporary and current—of choral episodes within Wagner's operas.

comprehensions or stereotypes. Rather, in analyzing the choralism included in *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*, I suggest that the group and highlighted solo material partially circumnavigates the leitmotif semiotics of Shore's score to move beyond music-narrative integration. Choralism is often inserted at points of heightened affect, frequently to highlight battles between forces for good and evil—external and internal to the characters—that drive the emotional arc of the film. If the orchestral score provides the pumping blood of the narrative, choralism offers a lymphatic and nervous system that acts upon both the physical and the mental sides of affective experience.

Therefore, in this specific example, the soundtrack's detailed structure allows us to examine choralism as integral to, but perhaps still distinct from, the broader score, because the meanings of the score's thematics are so clearly defined by the logic and history of Tolkien's Middle Earth (via Jackson's and Shore's collaborative renderings). Choralism is also notable in this score in that it is both ubiquitous—appearing throughout the film integrated in several musical themes—and also allied with the better parts of characters' natures. Choralism is inserted in moments of heightened ethical tension to highlight connections to metaphysical powers, but also used to intimate bodily presence and power in more ominous scenes. It is this physicality—the suggestion of acoustic space and the intimation of embodied voices—that moves through and beyond the musical topics inherent in extended systems of leitmotifs and becomes a more purely affective realm, due to the possible resonances and empathies between viewers' bodies and the choir. I would suggest that the use of choral voices in moments moving to visual spectacle—wide-panning, or larger set-pieces—serves to tether the viewer into an engrossed, perhaps even personal, engagement with narrative, even as the camera lens literally moves away from the narrative aspects of the

film. Though this chapter is still concerned with choral singer experience via case studies, I also suggest that choral voice allows film audiences to identify with, and even become invited into and emplaced with, the implied space these sung voices inhabit. Indeed, I suggest here that diagnostic embodiment, though honed by singers through choral practice and the traditions of choralism, is not a skill set limited to singers. The physical and affective adjustments made in space via resonance are tied to the listening skills required to fully participate in the experience of cinema.

To illustrate some of the ways that choralism features in the first film of the trilogy, *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* (2001, dir. Peter Jackson, referred to henceforth as *Fellowship*), I will propose three different uses, or tropes, of choralism in the narrative— (1) ethical/religious rumination; (2) acoustic space, scale, and spectacle; and, (3) heightened stakes ("life or death"). When discussing the choral cues, Adams and Shore focus primarily on musical attributes and lyrics, but there are instances where they discuss timbre as key to the function of the choral cues throughout the soundtrack. I will include these, with the understanding that this investigation is *not* focused on compositional intent in these scores; rather it seeks to identify affective choral tropes and uses that are commonly integrated into Hollywood film scores and have also found a way into *Fellowship*.

Ethical and Religious Rumination

The Lord of the Rings trilogy is rife with internal and external conflicts demonstrating characters' choices between self-interest and selflessly serving their friends, families, and broader communities and the communities of others. Additionally, themes of time and timelessness—particularly surrounding characters' lineage and longevity—abound.

Choralism is used to mark ethical and ephemeral moments within the orchestral score, signaling an affective shift to broader existential questions for characters, and, through them, the audience. In other words, the choralism in these cues is as much about the audience recognizing these struggles or epiphanies through the characters as it is about guiding the audience through them alone.

For example, the opening of *Fellowship* includes narration (not included in the original book) delivered by a powerful Elven witch, Galadriel, that explains the ancient history of the rings of power, and how they were created to enslave all races to the evil ruler Sauron. Underscored by choir singing in the language Tolkien developed for the books as "Elvish" in a track cue called "One Ring to Rule Them All," Galadriel sets up the power struggles that will pervade the narrative. The choralism here both highlights the ethical issues inherent in the story *and* imparts a feeling of metaphysical timelessness tied to the religious history of unaccompanied treble choir chant (see Ch. 1). After this short choir snippet (around thirty seconds), the score moves to a melancholic orchestral theme that pervades all three of the *Lord of the Rings* films. This small choral chant is expanded later in the film as Gandalf the Grey, a key character who dies midway through, is mourned by Tree Elves.

In both circumstances when this chant is heard—during "One Ring to Rule Them All" and in a track entitled "Caras Galhadon/Lament for Gandalf," there is limited accompaniment beyond orchestral string and horn drones during the chant itself. Both cues are lamentation—mourning Gandalf's fall is more overt, but its use in the prologue mourns human frailty and attraction to power to the detriment of their interconnected communities. The theme returns throughout all three films of the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, and Shore

labels this choral chant "Lothlórien," referring to the Elven forest realm over which Galadriel reigns.

Music journalist Doug Adams was granted access to composer Howard Shore's extensive notes and sketches for the *Lord of the Rings* scores throughout the compositional process, and also worked with Shore to catalogue thematics. Writing about the "Lothlórien" theme, Adams notes that the music is meant to be less ubiquitous to audiences used to Western tonal scales, as it uses a modified Phrygian mode similar to the Middle Eastern maqām hijaz (2002, 54).[19] "This is a more mysterious world of Elves," Shore told Adams. "They could be bad; they could be good—you're not really sure" (Ibid., 51).

Shore notes that he was also inspired by Gregorian chant, particularly because Tolkien's Elves have a long and storied history. "This is Middle-earth of thousands of years ago," Shore says. "When I started doing research, I started thinking about Gregorian chants and so on" (Ibid.). Adams identifies the choral/vocal technique as key to the theme's potency: "The music of Lothlórien in particular demanded a very specific style of vocal performance: an unaffected clear tone with little vibrato; long arcing phrases drawn in natural contours that would lend the music an ancient tone" (Ibid.).[20]

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[19] Adams objectifies this theme as "the most Eastern and exotic of all of the Elves' music" (51), in part due to this use of modality. Though I do discuss why the modal character and the use of plainchant-inspired choral vocality may conjure particular affective engagements, I do not discuss the use of mode and instrumentation to build an exoticized notion of the Elves of Tolkien's Middle Earth via comparative musical ethnocentrism. Later, in a discussion about the use of maqām hijaz, Adams writes, "the interval is not used to evoke an exotic otherness, but to create a sense of age that speaks of Middle-earth's ancient eras" (54). This statement makes clear that there is indeed an "othering" (whether delineating time period, cultural "development," or ethnic distinction) whether or not it is explicitly about racial commentary. Adams' comments, and his discussion of vocal technique (see next body paragraph) hint at an underlying ethnocentrism that already lurks in film music use of voice that would require far more detailed investigation than can be integrated here.

Though the broader discussion is not pursued further in this chapter, it is more thoroughly investigated in the next chapter regarding the use of Inuit katajjaq in Caroline Shaw's *Partita for 8 Voices*.

[20] In the next chapter, a discussion of female vocality and the use (or lack of) vibrato interrogates terms like "unaffected," "clear," and "pure" that are often used to describe female voices encouraged to sound like boys rather than women.

In the use of "ancient" vocality—plainchant common in the Middle Ages in Europe—and a sinuous unison vocal line, Adams and Shore both indicate that audiences are being encouraged to feel ambiguity and distance from the singers and their Elven-implied vocality. Additionally, there is echo integrated into the vocal track that suggests cavernous acoustic, further drawing the viewer to sense an imagined physicalized space often allied with metaphysical contemplation (see Ch. 1). The cultural, physical, and vocal attributes of the Lothlórien theme lead to affective engagement calibrated to emphasize timelessness and ethics, as well as other-worldliness.[21] While not openly ominous, it is ambiguous enough to activate audience imagination simply due to the use of vocality usually denoting a specific time period and physicalized acoustic. Modal "otherness" can encourage audiences to be on their guard, rather than considering choralism as indication of comforting sanctuary. If this choralism is tied to religion or morality, it is of an unforgiving and aloof nature; a cold-eyed reckoning with hubris, greed, and the repeated failures of men in Middle-earth.

Space, Scale and Spectacle

Moving from the timeless unease of Elven "Lothlórien" into the Mines of Moria—home of the Dwarves' underground empire—Shore underscores the vast rock ceremonial halls and cavernous, labyrinthine tunnels using quintessentially masculine choral timbre. This timbre is achieved, Adams writes, by employing "sixty male Maōri vocalists: fifty singers and ten 'grunters'—'grunters' who were not trained singers, but rugby players. 'When you look

[21] Not all audiences will immediately recognize the historical aspects of early music tropes in film scores. However, Vasco Zara shows that cinematic chronotopes (after Bahktin) have built around Medieval plainchant-like pastiche in an imagined sonic rendering of the Middle Ages that builds sonic and musical stereotypes in films set during that time, which teaches and reinforces audience awareness of these sounds and acoustics as representative of an imagined or "fantasy" medievalism (2022).

down in those caverns, you hear these voices coming up from thousands of feet below,' says Shore. The music of Moria is an unsettling reminder of what the Dwarves' unchecked expansion awoke in the deep. The gruff singing is transformed into unrelentingly brutal chanting as the Balrog[22] begins its approach" (2002, 57).[23]

The voices are, yes, tied to the storyline and perhaps embody "Dwarveness," but those voices also signal a shift from the narrative to a more spectacular awareness of acoustic space—and the danger that that space signifies. The "grunters" denote physical effort and power, but also remind audiences, as the camera pans through vaulted-ceilinged stone halls of state and looks down on endless pits lined with unrailed staircases, that Moria can be a sublimely vertiginous *and* claustrophobic realm. Much of the narrative action in the Mines is precarious, filled with unexpected surprises, unwinnable battles, and nail-biting chases; but much of what makes these scenes so terrifying is that Jackson allows the camera to spectacularly pan and maneuver, showing off how this kingdom under the mountain both traps and threatens to swallow all who traverse it. "Gruff" choral vocality indicates something about the Dwarves' culture and mining activities, but also heightens physical engagement with the bodies producing those voices, viscerally drawing the audience into the implied spaces on screen.

[22] An enormous fire demon awakened by the Dwarves' mining endeavors.
[23] Note that director Peter Jackson is a (non-Māori) New Zealander, and the films were made in New Zealand. There are further discussions to have about the ethnocentrism that essentializes Māori male vocalism and how Indigenous and POC vocality is often "othered" in similar ways more broadly in the choral world; this is further discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 of this dissertation. Māori vocalism often makes use of powerful male voices in ritualistic settings, indicating to a more Globalized audience that there is physicalized presence under the voices being heard.

Heightened Stakes ("Life or Death")

The combination of the preceding sections, the use of choralism as indicative of—and viscerally exacerbating—audience awareness of "life or death" situations is a widespread trope. Indeed, it is the mechanism being simultaneously activated and lampooned in the *Deadpool 2* example at the opening of this chapter. The cultural connotations of choralism as allied with meditation, contemplation, and ethics via religion meet with the physical-acoustic triage of space and spectacle, building action scenes into a vocal-acoustic hysteria.

These vocal interventions allow scenes steeped in spectacle to retain a human point of reference. The implied bodies of the singers are voicing in a way that sharpens audience senses and ties physicality to comprehension of narrative struggles and conceits. Conflicts and battles are often where this approach is employed, perhaps because it is in these scenes that the camera and the narrative flow is constantly oscillating back and forth between the intimate specificity of character/plot and the scale of spectacle via wider camera angles and increased focus on the vastly-scaled brutality of physical conflict.

In a *Fellowship* scene when the protagonists are surrounded and attacked on a high mountaintop by powerful zombie-like Ringwraiths (also called Nazgûl), the soundtrack integrates a "stinger" (sharp rise in soundtrack volume, often accomplished with strings) via a choral cue. The choir sings "The Revelation of the Ringwraiths," a chant first introduced in the very beginning of the film, but mixed so that, after the "stinger," they are moved back into underscoring and only gradually become louder throughout the battle sequence that follows. The pinnacle of this scene culminates as the choir returns to the high volume of the "stinger" and abruptly breaks off when the main character, Frodo, disappears. Within this scene, the choir is used as an embodied force to back Frodo into a corner, intimating how

overpowered he and his traveling companions are by the Ringwraiths. The stinger's return to full choral force at the crux of the scene is emblematic of how powerful choral sound—versus orchestral underscoring alone—can be in implying the force of a powerful multitude.

In this scene, Frodo and his friends are overpowered and their lives threatened. Though the choral cue does make use of lyrics pertaining to the Ringwraith "bad guys," it is not decipherable to the general viewer. Rather, it becomes a part of the orchestral underscoring and provides connotations with life-and-death metaphysical struggle as well as an embodied "punch," with the stinger and the abrupt ending integrally tied with action in the scene. The choralism makes this cue all the more effective in implying the malevolent bodies (through voice) of the Ringwraiths and the precarious situation in which the Hobbits and Strider (Aragorn) find themselves.

This type of choral cue, often made up of block homophony or unison chant in octaves or fifths, is relatively common in film scenes depicting bodily peril. Signifying the physical hardships, pain, and effort of battle as well as situational reckoning with, and fear of, mortality, choralism in heightened stakes scenes is designed to enhance viewer anxiety by putting audiences in the scene, making them worry about their own embodied mortality as much as the fate of the protagonists.

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Considering these three use values as exemplars of how choralism has developed as a key component of film scoring and affective shaping, narrative connection, and embodied empathy, it is clear that choralism works beyond what orchestral underscoring alone can

achieve. Group voicing included in scores hearkens back to Classical Greek Chorus and Renaissance reimaginings of how the Greek Chorus functioned. Vacillating among roles as embodied voices, spatial-acoustic triage, metaphysical connotation, and visceral implication, choralism provides the Greek Chorus panoply of engagements that allow us as audience members to feel ourselves as spectators, interpreters, moralizers, physical participants, and/or inward-facing dreamers connected to our own personalized memories, throughout narrative and spectacular elements in movies.

It is through these targeted uses of choralism, and the history of choralism in film soundtracks, that it is possible to see how films play upon diagnostic embodiment skills to affect audiences. Diagnostic embodiment processes can certainly enhance many aspects of film sound design and soundtrack, but these specific uses of choralism, as shown in *The Lord of the Rings* examples, connect embodied diagnostics with empathetic affective processes. As I argue elsewhere, voice connects the body and soundscape more firmly to the affective realm due to the interrelated aspects of vocality that touch on identity/selfhood, relational engagement, community empathy and investment, and understandings of power and responsibility (Jack and Conte 2022). Choral sonics, even when wordless or unintelligible, enhance personal imbrication in narrative in ways that orchestral scoring alone cannot access.

There and Back Again: Cinematic Choralism in Musical Life

The history of choralism in film is integrally tied to the ways that choralism changed within the twentieth century as an art form, participatory endeavor, and performance practice—and also helped to shape these changes via the wide exposure that film music granted choral vocalism. Singers are included in film audiences, certainly—and the way that

choralism was changed over the history of movies and film scoring also drastically affected how singers conceived of choral repertoire, choral techniques, and their own choral singing voices as tools, as I show in subsequent examples.

Considering the vast, varied history and culture of European-influenced choral practice (only a portion of which has been discussed in the previous chapter), the ways that film has integrated and normalized choirs as underscoring, and how choral practice has been adapted in our current technological landscape, a reimagining of choralism seems inevitable in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Throughout the twentieth century, beginning with the works of Poulenc, Messaien, and Britten, choral practice retained focus on open vowels and acoustic resonance, but juxtaposed traditional tenets of voice leading, counterpoint, and harmonic movement with clusters of sound that highlighted the physical aspects of dissonance. Considered a continuation and development, the use of open vowels within cluster chords—groupings of voices that sang pitches very close to each other, providing a visceral hum produced by the overtones of the space in which it was sounded—rapidly became a common device in choral practice by the 1980s and ’90s. Composers did not always rely on this type of clustering throughout their pieces. They would combine dissonant clusters with more traditional functional harmonic movement, often using a cluster on top of a penultimate chord to doubly emphasize final harmonic resolutions at the end of a section or piece. Though a history of repertoire changes is interesting in itself, it is the adaptation of vocal technique—and, perhaps more important, the ways that choral vocalism *stayed the same* even as repertoire aims and textures changed—throughout the ’80s and ’90s that show the inherent acoustic, vocal, and values of choralism within that period.

Györgi Ligeti's **Lux Aeterna** *and* **2001: A Space Odyssey**

Györgi Ligeti's 1966 work *Lux Aeterna* placed vocal dissonance at the very heart of the piece's structure from a listener's perspective—but Ligeti's own aims with the piece were not entirely sonic. Benjamin R. Levy shows that the structure of the piece is stringently dictated by composer-devised contrapuntal rules that governed pitch and especially rhythm (2013). However, Levy notes, the composer himself admitted that these organizing principles would not be apparent to the listener. Ligeti wrote, "…you cannot hear the polyphony, the canon. You hear a kind of impenetrable texture, something like a very densely woven cobweb" (Ibid., 226).

Though Ligeti's compositional aims of *Lux Aeterna* were not entirely (or perhaps at all) driven by the sonic effects created in the midst of micropolyphonic structures, the piece went on to become a determining factor in how alternative choral practice was heard and further developed, in part because of the way it was used in the 1968 award-winning Stanley Kubrick film *2001: A Space Odyssey*. *Lux Aeterna* was used in a key scene in the film, in which an alien object that defines human evolution, "the Monolith," is shown to the viewer for the second time (Bristow 2017, 111). Though film music had often made use of choral music before, generally choral sound had symbolized a kind of heightened swell of emotion that was deliberately paired with the film's content, in a way that would simply enhance what was already there. In this case, the lack of other sound, coupled with visions of vast space and time, allowed choral music to boldly go where no choir had gone before. This fine cobweb of voices, clustered in unusual chords and containing inaudible micropolyphonic structures, was used to unsettle and refocus the audience in a way that allowed meaning to emerge from the scene. Rather than simply heightening emotion, this unusual choral moment

defined it. And this moment, in turn, continued to redefine choral practice in the minds of composers, practitioners, and listeners in a way that would drive the development of choralism through the end of the 20th century.

Longtime professional choral singer Lisa Nappi sang Ligeti's *Lux Aeterna* in the early 1980s. She had been initially introduced to the piece when she saw *2001: A Space Odyssey*—as, she says, had many of the members of Musica Sacra, a professional choral ensemble in New York City, directed at the time by Richard Wessenberg. However, singing the piece live, in an acoustically-resonant space, provided considerable challenges. The piece was programmed on a concert titled "Music for a Great Space," to be performed in the cavernous St. John the Divine, arguably the largest cathedral in North America to this day. "I remember it scaring the hell outta me," says Nappi. "I think there were thirty-two of us. I think there were two of us on a part. But it was pretty scary. Because vocally, it was ridiculously demanding" (Nappi 2021, interview with the author). When she heard the piece used in *2001: A Space Odyssey*, she remembers wondering if the voices were synthesized rather than human, and describes the score as "instrumental," because of the difficult entrances on notes not aligned with voice leading and high or low in a singer's range: "…like if it were woodwinds or something, that's sort of how it sounded. But the human voice is a lot more haunting that any woodwind, of course. ...it was hard" (Ibid.). She also notes the difficulty of tuning with the one other person on your part, as well as checking that you stayed on your indicated pitch rather than being drawn into another vocal line due to the sheer dissonance and confusion of the prolonged cluster chords that make up the piece (Nappi 2001, interview with the author).

Nappi remembers that, the first time the group rehearsed the piece in St. John the Divine, after working through it in various rehearsal spaces, the singers stopped part-way through:

> You were listening and concentrating on what you were doing, and yet you were creating this sound and everybody was just blown away. So it was hard not to get caught up in the effect and the sound of it and where it was going. […] And as one more part came in—and one more part came in a little more—and then at its highest point, and then as it sort of tapers off—it was the first time we did it. Everybody just stopped and felt like, okay, let's just try that again, because it was really hard not to be carried away by it. (Ibid.)

I asked Nappi what she remembered about the physical experience of singing "Lux Aeterna," and how the piece's overall technical difficulty was connected to her physicalized engagement with the process of producing sounds that fit into the framework of the piece:

> I remember feeling tense. I remember through the times that I wasn't singing, that I was taking breaths to…not calm myself down, but to get myself to a point to relieve the tension. I was trying to do [this] every time I had a four bar, a place in the music where I wasn't singing. I would just try and move my shoulders and be and breathe and come back in when it was my turn to sing again. But I realized that I was trying to relax and ground myself because just the sound of it alone, all the dissonance. And you were just always concentrating so hard on tuning and being sure that you were in the right place at the right time, so there were a lot of things about it, not only the sound, the effect that had just by the sound of it, but the mechanics of it. You were helping to produce it. It was very complex. (Ibid.)

Considering Nappi's description of the inherent physical and mental difficulty of performing Ligeti's *Lux Aeterna* provides an opportunity to consider what choral practice requires of its participants, and how the singer functions simultaneously as a producer of voice and as an embodied listener. In the changing use of choralism as accompaniment and amplifier to narrative and spectacle, the skills and engagements of diagnostic embodiment altered, asking singers to rethink how to sing chorally as they navigated stylistic changes (some compositional, others tied to recording technology). And as they themselves were also film audiences, the singers' vocal skill set was changing even as they were hearing and seeing choralism gain new uses and meanings through cinema screens and speakers.

Connecting audiences to soundscape and affective content in a particular way, the embodied aspects of choralism became valuable, and its use spread widely throughout Hollywood film scores.

Diagnostic Embodiment

The physicalized aspects of singing prolonged cluster chords may be thought of as an example of how choral singers are asked to analyze and adapt to changing embodied immediacies as they produce voice. As she talks about being imbricated in space via cluster chords, Nappi notes that simply steeping in prolonged dissonance resulted in an embodied experience that might be considered tiring and stressful to someone more accustomed to singing and hearing Byrd, Bach, or Britten. This might also be felt by non-singers experiencing the piece—but, Nappi points out, the "complexity" for the singers came from the fact that they were both experiencing the dissonance and "helping to produce it." This type of dissonant soaking could be all the more disturbing to singers because they are generally used to fine-tuning their responses to sonic feedback through diagnostic embodiment, and the prolonged dissonance did not allow for accrued diagnostic embodiment skills to be as useful as they might be in almost all other repertoire. For instrumentalists, there may be some slight adjustments in posture, embouchure, or position that can change timbre, but the pitch itself does not require the kind of physical and mental imagination that is required of singers before they begin to sing—and this is a key part of the difficulty of Ligeti's piece, Nappi noted, in that sopranos were required to repeatedly enter very high in their range, with little or no vibrato, on pitches not easily physically produced or imagined in relational pitch.

Diagnostic embodiment also offers affective ramifications in voicing and responding to voice. As previously mentioned, Frith's vocal empathy shows how, in our own minds, we must imagine space to imagine voice; and, furthermore, we must imagine our bodies *as* and *in* space to imagine voicing. And space and voice, self and other, are so intertwined that we cannot entirely separate them in that moment of imagination. As Nappi says, above, though Ligeti's *Lux Aeterna* may have a score that functions in more "instrumental" modes, "the human voice is a lot more haunting that any woodwind." Nappi shows here that we understand vocal sounds differently than the sounds of instruments removed from the inside of the human body.

ANÚNA: **Cinematic** *Choralism in Ensemble Performance*

As much as the vocalism of the human body may be considered (at least by singers, if not by a broader audience) as defined outside of an orchestral understanding, it is also arguable that the ways that audiences understand choralism *outside* of films has changed *due to* cinematic integration of choirs into soundtracks. As seen in the *Lord of the Rings* examples, choirs can have complex engagements with film scoring that transcend false barriers between narrative and spectacle, viewer observation and visceral engagement. Choral voice is alternatively, or even simultaneously, human and orchestral, indicating time and/or timelessness, negotiating not only the ins-and-outs of narrative plot and cinematographic artistry but also the imaginations and memories of the audiences engrossed with the movie.

The mutability of film choralism allows a uniquely affective engagement with viewers that is predicated on their own tastes, emotional investments, and cultural understandings. Due to individual proclivity and history, it is not possible to entirely predict how film

choralism will affect an audience—but the tropes and situational uses in the *Lord of the Rings* examples suggest an affective “primer” or “training” that connects certain choral cues to the type of action occurring on screen. Therefore, some choral textures, chromatic movements, rhythms, etc., have become allied with types of actions and illustrative of narrative-emotional cruxes. The next example highlights a choir whose work is integrally related to narrative and audience connection in a way that is similar to cinematic choral mechanisms, and makes use of some of the theatrical elements of film and theater as well, including movement and costuming. However, the groups mentioned in the previous chapter—particularly the King’s Singers and VOCES8—often include repertoire and performance practices drawn from cinematic choralism; indeed, “Underneath the Stars,” it could be argued, is engaging with some of these tactics. However, the next choir, ANÚNA, adopts illumination of narrative and audience connection as their primary goal in performance.

The example of Lord of the Rings, suggesting how choralism has been reconsidered due to use in film soundtracks—by singers, but also by choral directors, concert programmers and arts management—shows how choralism has been portrayed within Hollywood soundtrack convention in epic/action film genres. Along with some of the musical innovations mentioned in the previous section, soundtrack choralism helped to redefine reactions to choirs outside of films and TV. It might even be possible to argue that certain choral compositional trends—like, for example, the push toward cluster chords—were intrinsically encouraged by the choralism in film soundtracks that normalized prolonged unresolved dissonance as an accompaniment to cinematographic spectacle (as was the case with Ligeti’s *Lux Aeterna* in *2001: A Space Odyssey*).

In this final example, I suggest that choralism has come full-circle—into the cinemaverse and back out again—by engaging with professional choir ANÚNA. This group affectively curates its performances by emphasizing narrative storytelling and spatial spectacle that struck me as inherently indebted to filmic choralism. Moving away from traditional notions of "choirs" in "performance," the group makes use of performance spaces—often churches, but sometimes retrofit into theaters or presented in outdoor venues or natural settings—to draw audiences into another mode of attention.

Often predicated on the language and history of song in Ireland (where the group is based, though many singers are drawn from other countries), these performances make use of cinematic tropes by engaging with costuming, pacing, and contrasts between musical material, much of which is composed or arranged by the group's founder, participant, and resident composer Michael McGlynn.

"ANÚNA's ethos is very firmly based in ritual," McGlynn notes:

> The idea is that things don't have to have overt meanings to the ideas of movement based on a mystical or underlying structure of the universe. Some of them are based on religion. Some are based more in spatial ideas, like in "Jerusalem," which is more about engaging the audience than actually doing anything specifically related to the individual singing. Because the idea of that piece, for example, is to involve the audience in what you're doing. It's not to show them something. (2021, email correspondence with the author)

McGlynn is referring to the group's aleatoric performance of the "Jerusalem, My Happy Home" hymn text, often sung to a tune by John Wesley. McGlynn's version is distinctly different from the hymn, using a melody from Ireland's County Wexford (McGlynn 1992) and combining high voices in waves of solo iterations of the melody. The melodic contour of the song is particularly suited to aleatorics, in that the melody rises in the first phrase (and is repeated in the third phrase) in a series of quick and light vocal turns. Leading to a gradual and tempered swell of vocalism that fills every pitch in the tune's scalar material, this

opening highlights spatial acoustics and potentiality, accentuating the physical awareness both of the singers and of the space that contains them (and the audience). Contributing to a sense of shared space, the acoustic fill of the tune in an aleatoric combination (where the tune overlaps while multiple singers start the song at different times) brings sonic immediacy and viscerality into the performance space; and McGlynn and the group cleverly find ways to make this aleatoric performance work even on acoustically "dead" stages by using microphones and by traversing the stage in unexpected directions and combinations, activating both spatial and electronically-mediated acoustics.

These spatial-acoustic considerations are further supported by the group's emphasis on production values, movement, and costuming. For the versions of "Jerusalem" I saw rehearsed and performed in Getxo and Urretxu, Spain in November 2021, during the group's residency at the Tolosa Choral Contest, the ensemble and McGlynn (who also sang tenor with the group) had to adapt to vastly different performance spaces. The first time I saw "Jerusalem" performed, in a large Performing Arts theater, Getxo Antzokia, near Bilbao, the piece was blocked on a fairly traditional performance stage. The second time, they performed in the Parroquia de San Martín de Tours, a sixteenth-century Catholic church that McGlynn and other singers in the group called "more at home" for ANÚNA.

The second performance in the church made use of the church's three aisles—central and one on either side of the pews—as the treble voices (all women) processed from an anteroom in the back of the church. The piece started entirely outside of the sanctuary, and therefore the sound was intriguingly muted and refracted for the audience, some of whom turned in their seats to visually "find" the singers. The sanctuary ceiling was made up of a series of interlocked wooden vaults, crisscrossed with aged wood planks molded into a dome shape in

each vault. The singers processed around the sanctuary throughout the piece holding lit candles, their long velvet cloaks and dresses—the ANÚNA performance "uniform" for women—trailing behind them. They moved slowly, and as they processed and faced different directions, the sound changed due to the ways it reverberated off varied corners and surfaces of the room. The result was hypnotic. The slow movements, flames, and constantly transmuting voices intimated how the chapel space might be understood as a home for ritual, drama, and spectacle—and bringing an embodied, yet timeless, vocality into the affective milieu. This was a reminder of the church's longtime use; a celebration of physical vocality in live acoustic space; and a time-stopping spectacle that allowed audience members to find their own meaning and history within the room.

Image 11. *In the choir loft of Parroquia de San Martín de Tours. Photograph by the author (in low light).*

In rehearsal for the first performance I witnessed, McGlynn and the singers "blocked" the piece to take up much of the traditional stage, the women moving in swirling curlicues around the limited performance space. This setup, both the singers and McGlynn noted in rehearsal, was less than ideal for this piece—but, throughout rehearsal, emphasis was placed on the visual as well as the sonic aspects of "Jerusalem." Working in a somewhat "flat" hall, meant for less spatially-illuminative performance, presented a different type of challenge than the group had the next night in the sixteenth-century church. There was some general amplification on stage for the group, as well as individual microphones for the solos peppered throughout their set. As the women worked their way around the stage, they and McGlynn negotiated a way of using the stage space and their bodies' orientation to recreate vocalism that sounded "refracted" from the curtains, the back and side walls, and different microphones. Additionally, the broader effect of slow movement, carried candles, and performance garb seemed all the more important in connecting with the audience, which sat several feet below the stage in a traditional amphitheater-style seating layout.

Moving beyond audience expectation of straightforward voyeurism, ANÚNA, and other choirs who take up this mantle in various forms and to varying degrees, reignite and reinvent the lineage of the Greek Chorus into a malleable choral organism that can offer narration and commentary, and invite visceral investment from audiences as they engage with these performances. Visual interest and movement, alongside vivid vocalism and specific compositional constructs, animate performance spaces and draw audiences into a cinematic world during performances like these.

While the performance inside the theater emphasized the spectacle of "Jerusalem" and balanced this visual focus with aleatoric definition and electro-acoustic nuance, the

performance in the sixteenth-century church was more personal, encouraging each audience member to build their own bespoke narrative within the spectacle of the piece. Yet, in both iterations, the song afforded several facets of the Greek Chorus—ritual belonging, commentary on that ritual, and spatial spectacle via acoustics, body, and voice.

The negotiations between different spaces show how attuned the singers, and McGlynn, are to affective goals for their audiences, and how they hone and structure their performances to reach those attending through means akin to the cinematic integration of choralism into soundtrack narrative and spectacle. They focus on effect—and affect—throughout their performances in a way that does not undermine musical nuance or performativity, but rather subsumes compositional "cleverness" into still-complex but somewhat familiar musical gestures that hit home with audiences. ANÚNA also includes pieces that illustrate a very different embodied voice, removed from the timeless ethereality of "Jerusalem." In "Fionnghuala," another setting by McGlynn, the singers of ANÚNA group together in tight formation, backing up a male soloist as he sets a swift tempo in complex Scottish Gaelic verses. The choir joins in homophonic refrains and choruses.

This is a visceral piece, in that the wordplay of the lyrics (in a style known as Puirt a Buel, constructed around the sounds of the words rather than only the meanings) is reflected in the breath control and precision of the piece's overlapping phrases and lopsided syncopation. The song lyrics were originally likely sung by workers as a way to pass time and build/show off their skills. Cheerful intensity displayed on the singers' faces is encouraged by McGlynn during rehearsals, and the effect is one of keen physicality and mental focus dedicated to a common purpose. Additionally, because the piece is relatively fast and has been rehearsed at great speed to prepare for different programs and venues, it

tends to speed up uncontrollably and can become muddy in acoustically "live" performance spaces—so the singers' concentration is not an illusion. The soloist in particular—I saw Fergus Cahillane perform it—is challenged with scaling the speed of the work to the acoustic. McGlynn worked with Cahillane during rehearsals at the church to settle the tempo to "one third slower" simply to avoid reverberation making the piece untenable, as feedback muddled the crispness of the Irish lyrics. This piece both illuminated the space of the sanctuary and provided a vocal example of spectacle through the tricky lyrical-rhythmic ins-and-outs of the song. The physical presence of the singers is heightened through the spectacle of their vocalism—not only the sounds, but the sight of breath being gathered and expelled in voice. Physical prowess and characterization abounds in "Fionnghuala," not because it is providing a specific "narrative" but because it invites the audience to imagine what it takes to physically and mentally participate in this type of coordinated vocalism—just as the voices in the Mines of Moria invited surmise about the number and skill of miners lost under the mountain. Here, we see Cahillane's embodied effort in performance, and the quick-lipped responses in different dynamics from the other singers; the concentration of the soloist and singers; and the engagement between singers, the audience, and the space. In the Mines of Moria, the voices are detached from bodies, leaving the corporeal to be imagined by audiences, filled in by the vocal interaction with the cavernous spaces depicted on screen. But both iterations are inviting audiences to viscerally and emotionally participate in the vocalizations they are hearing and/or witnessing, calling upon Greek Chorus underpinnings that relay the emotional content of a scene, performance, or vista to audiences.

Sing Friend and Enter

Observing ANÚNA inspired me to consider a different categorization of choralism that takes into account how film and media may have affected and refracted choral performance and connection in the "real world" of live and mediated choral performance. As it has been inextricably incorporated into filmic convention, choralism expanded—and gained new—affective mechanisms tied to how we, as audiences, understand narrative and spectacle and our place within cinema- and soundscapes. These physical and emotional affective mechanisms—new "affective regimes" built within film convention—afford new attention, renewed affection, and redefined spatial awareness for broader audiences. In other words, as we view films and television throughout our lifetimes, the conventions of choral underscoring initiate a feedback loop. Film integrates choralism drawing from religious rite and performance tradition; choral tradition is, in turn, influenced by filmic use of choralism; and audiences begin to link narrativization—including the stories we tell that make up our lives—with choral underscoring.

Involving audiences in a more recently formed structure of affective valences, cinematic choralism isn't defined simply as being "music from films," bound only to specific narratives or theatrical conventions. Collaboratively approaching and inviting an audience into the affective creation of embodied, spatialized performance—and allowing them to feel their way through it—reveals new cultural awareness of how choralism may be understood; and how audiences can feel connected within the performance.

As Elodie Pont, one of ANÚNA's newest members, stepped in front of the ensemble in the wooden-vaulted church in Urretxu to rehearse her solo part in the group's rendition of "May It Be," the song recorded by Irish singer-songwriter Enya for *The Lord of the Rings:*

The Fellowship of the Ring, I thought through the connections between choralism in and outside of film. While the ensembles and traditions considered in the previous chapter might be considered "traditional" choralism—bound to legacies of historical lineage, shared religious spaces, and dynasties of directors, composers, and vocal training—a new choral-affective set of goals is growing alongside it, borrowing from these traditions and yet diverging into different affective territory. Appealing to a cinematic understanding of what choirs "mean" that help us to "feel" throughout narrative and spectacle, the groups function as a Greek Chorus in several understandings of the term, morphing from ethereal timelessness to embodied effort to physical intimidation, sometimes within the same cue. As Michael McGlynn puts it, "the idea […] is to involve the audience in what you're doing. It's not to show them something."

This chapter also suggests further study of how audiences may internalize the physical/affective nexus of choralism in their everyday encounters of choral vocality or chorality, be it through in-person song or chant; murmurings within a crowd; sonic-acoustic properties of reverberant public spaces (see Jack and Conte 2022); or via choral inclusion in popular music. This project would require a different set of tools and questions, and promises insights on the socio-political and -cultural hegemonies inherent in choralism that likely guide globalized comprehension of popular culture and choral praxis.

However, there are ethical ramifications within this newfound collaborative realm of cinematic choralism. What stories are being narrated or turned into spectacle, and by whom? How do the voices and bodies involved in choral performance become integrally tied to the affective spectrum available to those who may not feel themselves represented in the choral makeup? And how can experimentation away from "traditional" vocalism in choral context

lead to Colonial/Imperial "othering" and marginalization of bodies and cultures outside of the Hollywood or "traditional" choral hegemony? I have included footnotes about cultural essentialism within and through choralism in this chapter, particularly in the section addressing Howard Shore's score for *The Lord of the Rings*, but this was not a main focus of this chapter due to the groundwork needed to understand why and how choralism is integrated into narrative and spectacle in soundtracks. However, cinematographic use of choralism has suggested connections to imagined (and often stereotypical) uses of vocalities excluded from hegemonic choralism, normalizing this "othering" and building false senses of familiarity, ownership, and even identity. The next chapter approaches these questions, examining the ethics of choral experimentalism.

CHAPTER 4

ROOMFUL OF TEETH AND THE ETHICS OF EXPERIMENTAL CHORALISM

In October 2019 I was just about to present to a room full of scholars about recent work I had done with the contemporary vocal ensemble Roomful of Teeth when the lights went out. The conference was plunged into darkness by a multi-building power outage. My panel was forced move chairs into a hallway, as the window in the stairwell provided enough light to see each other by, though we had no way of playing audio examples or showing visual aids beyond huddling around the screen of a charged laptop—which is what we did. While this could be considered a bit of a disaster—and it was for many of the presenters at this conference—for me, it was a welcome distraction.

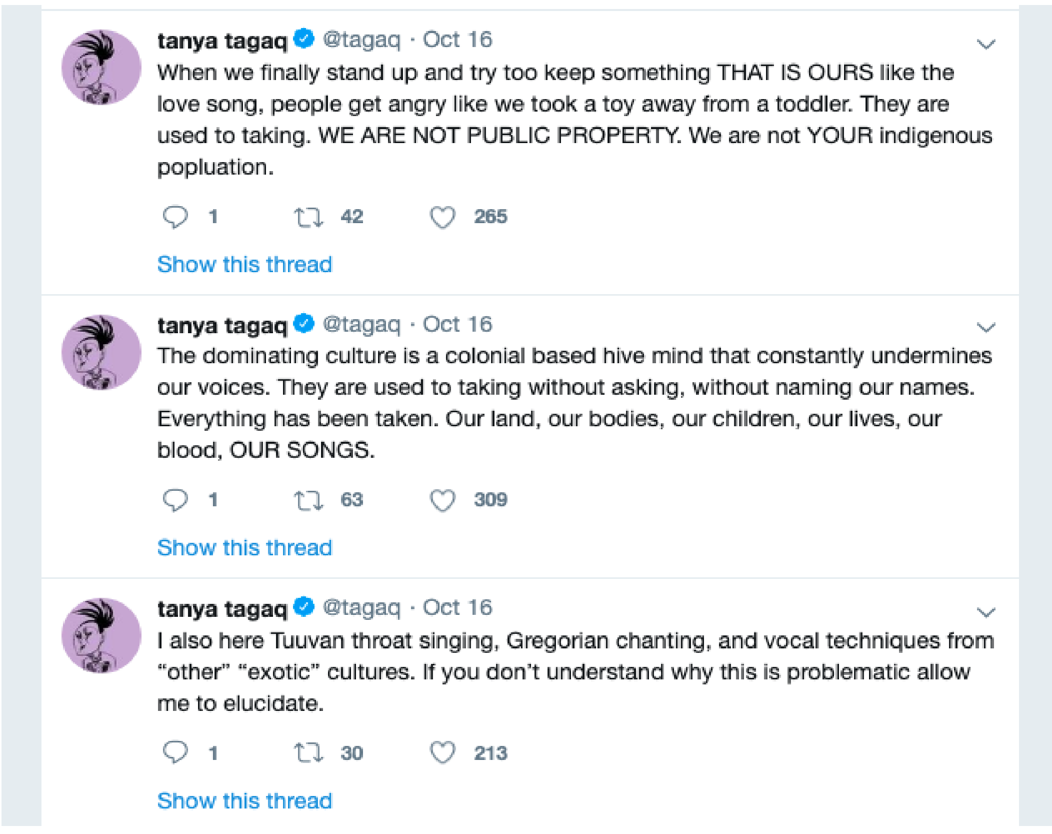
I was giving my first presentation on Roomful of Teeth, which I had started observing in the summer of 2018 during their residency at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MassMoCA). The week before that conference presentation, however, the ensemble, as well as the composers who write for them, had come under directed scrutiny due to their integration of vocal modes and practices from outside of classical, *bel canto*, choral, or Western training paradigms. Often Roomful of Teeth has learned and integrated vocal games and practices belonging to communities, cultures, and traditions historically considered outside of the mainstream of Western art music and often marginalized or even discouraged through the historical legacy of colonization or imperialism. My conference paper focused on a work very much within the "Western" "classical" music paradigm—it was centered around David Lang's *The Little Match Girl Passion*—but I was worried that I would be asked to comment in the post-paper Q&A on the more recent discussion of the group's engagements and power dynamics with the appropriation of underrepresented or colonized

cultures. I had not yet formulated a cogent view of the debates, and I was not sure, at that time, that I would ever be able to do so in a way that fully considered various angles of the questions raised.

The work at the center of these discussions was “Courante,” a movement from Caroline Shaw’s Pulitzer Prize-winning *Partita for 8 Voices*, written by Shaw specifically for the group. (Shaw herself is an alto with Roomful of Teeth, and one of the founding members of the group). In “Courante,” Shaw employs gestures from katajjaq, taught to the group by Nunavuk vocalists Evie Mark and Akinisie Sivuarapik in a workshop in 2009. Katajjaq is an Inuit vocal performance pastime normally pursued by women in pairs, each voicer facing each other in locked eye contact and visibly, viscerally, listening. It is a rhythmic game that highlights skill and invention between the two participants, and makes use of textural breath sometimes referred to in more Western conceptualizations as “throat singing,” though it is quite different from the overtone production of Tuvan or Mongolian xöömei.

Indigenous activists show how katajjaq embodiment links to Inuit histories, communities, and legacies of violence against Indigenous people and modes of living. In mid-October 2019, Inuk vocalist Tanya Tagaq “called out” the Roomful of Teeth and Shaw on Twitter. Tagaq wrote numerous tweets that worked through several layers of issues around appropriation in Shaw’s piece, the classical music world’s engagement with Indigenous cultures, and the extreme disadvantages that Inuit people currently face and have confronted for generations. Tagaq tweeted about a variety of concerns she had with the composition, encompassing an accusation of plagiarism without due credit or compensation, but also expanding to broader discussions of the facets of cultural appropriation that she (Tagaq) said

should be further recognized and respected by non-indigenous artists using vocalisms from Indigenous traditions.



Images 12–15. *Screenshots of some of Tagaq's tweets from her discussion of "Courante," October 16, 2019.*

The response that Shaw and Teeth's director Brad Wells put out after Tagaq's twitter discussion made some conciliatory moves toward effective credits for teachers and composers who work with the group, more transparency in how they work with these teachers and composers, and additional sensitivity and investment in community relationships with various previously colonized groups. However, in the statement, Shaw and Wells note, "In all cases, the intent is *not* for Roomful of Teeth singers to become expert performers in any of these styles…but rather, in the process of learning to move the voice in widely different ways, to open up new sound possibilities as we build our repertoire" (Wells and Shaw 2019). There was a backlash immediately after this statement from Indigenous scholars and Inuit communities. "Wells and Shaw suggest that they want to use a variety of styles not to learn those styles but simply to 'open up new sound possibilities as we build our repertoire,'" wrote ethnomusicologist Monique Giroux, a white scholar who works with Métis groups in her scholarship, on a popular Facebook page called "Decolonizing Ethnomusicology." She continued:

> There seems to be the idea/assumption here that a music style can be used "just" as a physical phenomenon, and can thus be divorced from [its] cultural source. Perhaps I'm reading too much into this, but I don't think that it gives enough credit to the cultures that developed the physical technique that allow Roomful of Teeth to "open up sound possibilities." (2020)

Giroux, and Tagaq herself, reacted to the statement by emphasizing the importance of community inclusion, recognition of violent past and present, and the many ways that art in Indigenous life is often taken and recontextualized in an appropriative cycle that diminishes Indigenous ownership and life ways. It is important to highlight how this is very recently still the case in many Indigenous contexts, and specifically in Inuit communities, where katajjaq originated as a practice.

At the conference, my concerns about commenting before thorough consideration of the many power dynamics and forces in play were born of an ignorance of which I had only recently become aware. My position as a white researcher in music studies is a privileged one, founded on institutional and socio-cultural hegemonies that I had only recently begun to recognize and question. My subsequent negotiations with these realizations are traced in this chapter, in which I talk about mechanisms within affective curation that reify whiteness, using my own experience as an illustration of problematic ethics as related to affect. The end of the chapter, in particular, connects with Sianne Ngai's *Ugly Feelings* (2005) and William Cheng's *Loving Music Till It Hurts* (2020), showing how my experience of "Courante," while in itself certifiably "genuine," is reifying whiteness in art music and participating in traditions of extractivism. The first part of the chapter is about setting up the various means that Roomful of Teeth use to "curate affect," honing in on a more physicalized sonic example in *The Little Match Girl Passion*, and the second part shows how affective mechanisms and means can precipitate severe and devastating consequences. These are vastly different examples in terms of repertoire and vocal techniques; but both come to bear on the overall argument of this chapter, in that they both illuminate how the group works intuitively through their interpretive process to operationalize embodiment—their own, and (they believe) their audiences—to serve narratives and ideas inherent in the repertoire they practice. Centering my own experience later in the chapter, I show how their assumptions around audiences and affective reception goes through and beyond appropriation into a realm of affective ethics tied to systems of erasure and violence. My affective response, detailed there, shows how insidious the blinkering power of institutional whiteness is, and how emotion is not the only, nor the best, guide when consuming and responding to art.

Over the last few years, a groundswell of scholarship by Indigenous academics and public figures has posed integral questions about what "research" of Indigenous culture by non-Indigenous scholars can, and should, include and portray. These scholars are building on ongoing conversations instigated by Indigenous academics such as Vine Deloria Jr (Standing Rock Sioux) instigating the Red Power Movement of the 1960s with Indigenous artists, writers and musicians including Buffy Sainte-Marie (Cree), William Dunn (Mi'kmaq), John Trudell (Santee Dakota) and many others. His son, Philip J. Deloria (Standing Rock Sioux) participated in the continuation of the Red Power movement in the 1990s with his book, *Playing Indian* (1998), and his approach to teaching and lecturing. This movement gathered force throughout the 2000s, as more Indigenous activists made their way into arts industries and academic appointments.

In their 2014 article "The R-Word," Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang started a conversation around what is often misunderstood, misappropriated, and misconstrued in extractive research of subaltern communities (after Spivak 2010):

> The ethical standards of the academic industrial complex are a recent development, and like so many post–civil rights reforms, do not always do enough to ensure that social science research is deeply ethical, meaningful, or useful for the individual or community being researched. Social science often works to collect stories of pain and humiliation in the lives of those being researched for commodification. However, these same stories of pain and humiliation are part of the collective wisdom that often informs the writings of researchers who attempt to position their intellectual work as decolonization. Indeed, to refute the crime, we may need to name it. How do we learn from and respect the wisdom and desires in the stories that we (over) hear, while refusing to portray/betray them to the spectacle of the settler colonial gaze? How do we develop an ethics for research that differentiates between power—which deserves a denuding, indeed petrifying scrutiny—and people? At the same time, as fraught as research is in its complicity with power, it is one of the last places for legitimated inquiry. (2014, 223)

In *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies*, Dylan Robinson (Stó:lō) indicted both the "extractive" decontextualizing habits of Western art music and the

inherent whiteness and "othering" of the academic field of sound studies. Robinson builds upon a *Sounding Out!* blog post by Gustavus Adler, "On Whiteness and Sound Studies" (2015), that shows how the subfield has relied predominantly on white bodies' hegemony in interpreting sonic phenomena.

Invoking the term "whiteness" is not commentary on either the singers or the audiences of Roomful of Teeth or, more broadly, Western art music or experimental new music. Rather, the term has been operationalized over the last three decades to indicate how homogenous culture depicting whiteness and white-approved cultural objects, traditions, and processes of creation are normalized to the point of eluding interrogation. In 1998, American studies scholar George Lipsitz proposed a "possessive investment in whiteness" that "is everywhere in U.S. culture, but it is very hard to see.…As the unmarked category against which difference is constructed, whiteness never has to speak its name, never has to acknowledge its role as an organizing principle in social and cultural relations" (1). He shows that capitalist systems are, by default, establishing whiteness as respectable and commercially viable while taking advantage of people of color via appropriation:

> Race is a cultural construct, but one with deadly social causes and consequences. Conscious and deliberate actions have institutionalized group identity in the United States, not just through the dissemination of cultural stories but also through the creation of social structures that generate economic advantages for European Americans through the possessive investment in whiteness. Studies of racial culture too far removed from studies of social structure leave us with inadequate explanations for understanding and combating racism. (Lipsitz 2018 [1998], 2)

A key point inherent in Lipsitz's conceptualization of whiteness is the surreptitious, even entirely opaque, structures of power that establish white-approved culture and consumerism as an *invisible* default. The underpinnings of these structures is hidden in plain sight, making it ubiquitous and unchallenged. This is a key facet of cultural appropriation, and also normalizes affective regimes within whiteness, to varying degrees, for anyone participating,

in modern society. Later in this chapter, this "unmarked category" (Ibid., 1) is the starting point for affective experience that allowed me to ignore considerations of Indigeneity, power differentials, and art consumption within my own experience of Shaw's "Courante."

Dylan Robinson moves further beyond whiteness in that his terms for decontextualizing extraction and reorientation of Indigenous sonics and vocalisms occur within the hegemonies of whiteness but is not confined to only white listeners (Ibid., 246). Though Robinson introduces the term "extractive" earlier in the book, this instance of the term includes his own strong negative reaction to hearing Indigenous songs interpreted in *bel canto* style during a concert. This discussion takes place within a chapter where Robinson puts his own voice in discussion with other scholars responding to his thoughts. Just after the anecdote about this performance, ethnomusicologist Deborah Wong's thoughts are interpolated, where she notes the way that a possessive investment in whiteness (Lipsitz 1998) is made visible when these types of "extractive" performances are named, questioned, and challenged as such.

In developing the term "hungry listening," Robinson specifically relies on Indigenous terminology. He derives it "from two Halq'eméylem words:"

> shxwelítemelh (the adjective for settler or white person's methods/things) and xwélalà:m (the word for listening). shxwelítemelh comes from the word xwelítem (white settler) and more precisely means 'starving person.' [...] xwélalà:m points toward a xwélmexw-specific sensory orientation, while shxwelítemelh explicitly identifies a non-Indigenous sensory orientation. Placed together, shx-welítemelh xwlala:m / "hungry listening" names settler colonial forms of perception. However, their superimposed positionality also seeks to acknowledge the current reality of many if not most Indigenous people at various points of perceptual in-between: of knowing, learning, and using resurgent forms of perception. (Robinson 2020, 2–3)

As I read Robinson, and other articles and books that preceded it in discussing the ethics of hegemonic scholarship and art in relation with Indigeneity, I wondered if it would be possible to both center the words and concepts of Indigenous scholars and artists as well as

query the mechanisms that make white-centered hungry listening profitable and potent. As I am attempting to center Indigenous voices at crucial points in this chapter, I am also attempting to honor the hegemonies of Indigenous identity and privacy that have so often been trampled in scholarship, however imperfectly. I offer quotations from Twitter statements, poetry, and interviews with Indigenous scholars and artists, merely to center the ideas inherent in those words, rather than to objectify the people voicing them. It seems an important step in this conversation to center around Indigenous reactions to current artistic discussions, without offering much of my own scholarly interpretation or decontextualization except when absolutely necessary to make clear connections to line of reasoning within the chapter.

It is fair to point out that this approach is not following two approaches Robinson champions: "refusal" (2020, 23) and particularly "resurgence" (Ibid., 11). Robinson quotes Eve Tuck's article "Biting the University that Feeds Us" (2018, 160), where she defines and debunks the theory of change, an idea that more knowledge and awareness can only precipitate positive growth via encounter (Robinson 2020, 17). Robinson also details how "white privilege remains deeply entrenched in music disciplines" and notes how "'white fragility' continues to derail essential decolonial work" (Ibid., 19). He shows that settler-colonial scholarship emphasizes a "both sides" approach that diminishes or entirely erases Indigenous experience under the guise of balanced scholarship. "To fix the problem," he writes, "simply add dialogue" (Ibid., 18).

It is true that my work here is adding to non-Indigenous discussion of appropriation of Indigenous embodiment and experience. Adding my own experiential "dialogue" may be seen as the type of "white fragility" that Robinson and other critique. I cannot ensure, or

assume, that this work will inform awareness around appropriation and affective regimes. My intent is to reveal some of the hidden mechanisms of affect that underpin white fragility in my own case and perhaps in others as affiliated with choralism. Rather than generating and protecting white fragility, I hope to show my own flawed journey reckoning with "Courante," underpinned by a possessive investment in whiteness, in a way that can allow me to better identify such processes in the future and encourage others to do the same. These discussions are housed in scholarship that is a part of the "settler unidirectionality of knowledge sharing" but strives to "emphasiz[e] instead those forums that allow both affective experience (whether repulsion or wonder) to emerge and provide sovereign space for Indigenous people to continue to define and enact the work of resurgence" (Ibid., 18).

Thinking deeply about my own affective—physical, memorialized, emotional—experience with hegemonic musics like "Courante" from *Partita for 8 Voices* that, to borrow Robinson's term, encourage me to "listen hungrily," it seemed possible to trace the outlines of affective scaffolds that move me, and perhaps others, when they connect with this music. In centering affect throughout this chapter, I hope to suggest *how* this music works so that it is clearer *why* hegemonic listeners should worry about this type of decontextualization; and *how* racially-privileged music scholars can both notice the affective curation at work and the structures that make these moves possible.

This chapter does not set out to trace the many complex arguments to be made about cultural appropriation (or, as many glib classical musicians often reply, "appreciation"[24]) and the ways that colonial-derived, capitalist-favored cultural powers benefit from

[24] I heard this term often when I spoke with choral singers and *bel canto* soloists in the more traditional corners of my research areas.

underrepresented cultural output. Frankly, that discussion has already been far more thoroughly investigated in recent years by scholars of color and/or Indigenous background with more nuance and insight than I can provide (see above). Nor is this chapter referencing Roomful of Teeth intended to feed a particular moment in scholarly fashion, erasing the nuances around these discussions for personal professional gain. Rather, this work centers around some of the affective mechanisms of modern classical, art, or concert music, and the ways that aesthetics of difference are used, often through juxtaposition with non-white modes of performance, to guide affect. This approach shows the many assumptions that are made about audience, suggests emotional tethers to sound and embodiment, and indicates how we, as listeners, scholars, and performers, are encouraged to feed into specific hegemonies of affect to reach a heightened engagement with art.

In this investigation of "experimental" techniques in hegemonic professional choralism, I present two case studies from my experiences observing Roomful of Teeth during their summer residencies at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MassMoCA) in 2018 and 2019. Though I provide specifics about particular repertoire and high-profile debates around appropriation, this chapter's argument and commentary is far broader. Investigation of Roomful of Teeth's approach to choral experimentalism is intended as an allegory, allowing me to think about how this hegemonic choralism functions. Recognizing these aspects of choralism is crucial to turn a reflexive ethnographic gaze onto a hegemonic culture that generally has been omitted from these types of investigations by dint of its entrenched hegemony. Many of the "traditions" (discussed at length in the previous chapter) of professional choralism are so "supercultural," allied with high art, classical, Western

practices, that it has predominantly been considered from the vantage of repertoire, rather than culture; religious or nationalist function, rather than technique and negotiation; broad politics instead of physical and affective immediacies. Though ethnomusicologist Mark Slobin's definition of "superculture" is based in notions of the hegemonic "popular music *systems*" (1993, 5), I invoke this term here to indicate that there are many different powers inherent in music making and reception that are not governed by chart lists and streaming numbers alone. The superculture can be reimagined to integrate the affective power inherent in cultural constructions of art and embodied experience.

Beyond a broadening of choral scholarship, this evaluation asks pointed questions that equally apply to privileged artists *and* scholars within the Humanities. I attempt to show how we (as hegemonically-favored participants and reinforcers of this aesthetic and affective system) are both affected by and blind to the structures of feeling that support this hegemony. I suggest that the way Roomful of Teeth uses space, embodiment, and the juxtaposition of hegemonic and non-hegemonic vocalisms activates and subverts affective expectations within this privileged culture. Returning to the term "affective regimes," (Mankekar and Gupta 2016) introduced in Chapter 1 and used throughout this dissertation, I suggest *why* we may feel the affective power in Roomful of Teeth's approach and performance practices shows that the people who care about this music—genuinely, viscerally—are enacting and reifying cultural affective norms even, or perhaps especially, as the ensemble stretches the boundaries of professional choralism.

This chapter shows how experimentation in vocality and performance practice can deliberately engage with affective regimes through a variety of means—though analysis is

never couched in these terms. The singers in Roomful of Teeth discuss the emotional content they believe is inherent in their repertoire during rehearsal, and then talk through how to enhance affective experience for an audience, drawing upon their own embodied knowledge both as singers and cultural participants. Though this is not a conscious engagement with affective regimes, the combination of physical and emotional/memory-based approach to repertoire interpretation links directly to the ways we have been taught to feel through artistic content. To even approach a discussion about these negotiations in rehearsal reveals affective efforts, some further understanding of how choralism in the late twentieth century changed from earlier choral traditions is necessary. In the following section, I show how the choral vocal approaches in hegemonic choralism in the late twentieth century develop to encourage a set of physical responses to vocalism in singers that is tied to a type of visceral and auditory response to singing with others that I term "diagnostic embodiment." This sets up a discussion about how singers have had to alter their understandings—physically and emotionally—to adapt to new trends in choral texture that rely on shifts in musical structure to subvert expectations set up in earlier choral repertoire. Giving a brief history of the 1970s through the 2000s, I trace the compositional moves from chordal harmony to more cluster chords in choral music (both using predominantly open vowels) and the integration of alternative vocal approaches in the early twenty-first century as a subversion of choral norms.

Cultural theorists Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth emphasize the "in-betweenness" relationality of experience, weaving the physical aspects of embodiment and being into culturally-significant and -imposed cognitive understandings of that embodiment. They define affect as:

> …the name we give to those forces—visceral forces beneath, alongside, or generally other than conscious knowing, vital forces insisting beyond emotion—that can serve to

> drive us toward movement, toward thought and extension, that can likewise suspend us (as if in neutral) across a barely registering accretion of force-relations, or that can even leave us overwhelmed by the world's apparent intractability. Indeed, affect is persistent proof of a body's never less than ongoing immersion in and among the world's obstinacies and rhythms, its refusals as much as its invitations. (2010, 1)

Since physical experience is intimately tied to affect here, I have chosen to examine singers' discussions, particularly in rehearsal, of how they conceptualize the connections between sound and acoustics, voice, embodiment, and emotional impacts as they curate their performances. The diagnostic embodiments that are key to their skills as ensemble singers hone their approaches to intended affect. In this section, I introduce two case studies, both focused on rehearsals and performances by Roomful of Teeth, to show how the group makes use of their own knowledge of, or belief in, affective regimes to engage with audiences by integrating non-classical vocal approaches. Both the performances I discuss take advantage of, and then deliberately subvert and reconstruct, affective regimes surrounding choral practice, performance, and reception. In showing how these subversions and reconstructions take place in each performance and cultural context, I am reinforcing the idea that the group is aware of the choices they are making even if they are unaware of or deemphasizing the cultural damage of appropriation within their own conceptualizations of their practices. They may be unaware of the all-encompassing structure of the affective regime they appropriate. In both case studies, juxtaposition between vocal tradition and departure from that tradition—in one case, through altered notions of acoustic space, and in the other, through altered understandings of feminine embodiment—provides an affective shift. In both examples, physical aspects of the performance are curated by the performers to jar and shift emotional engagement—in other words, the physical part of affect is operationalized to redirect the memorialized/emotional aspects of affective experience.

The first of these case studies, focused on David Lang's *The Little Match Girl Passion*,

essentially moves affective regimes and embodiment from non-mediated acoustic spaces into the realm of mediated performance, and shows how concepts of space are integral to understanding and performance of choral practice. Approaching this example via observed negotiations in Roomful of Teeth rehearsals during the 2018 MassMoCA residency, I consider the ways that the group's singers discuss how to use space and mediation as a tool to invoke affective regimes and cultivate/curate emotional reactions that they consider optimal. In this case, the mechanism to shift affective regimes is physical-spatial, and relies on the differences between acoustic spaces and mediated sound to produce a specific embodied effect for those in the shared moment of performance.

The second case study, centered on composer Caroline Shaw's "Courante," the third movement of her award-winning *Partita for 8 Voices*, shows how using and manipulating the existing affective regimes and cultural structures that bolster them can have ethical ramifications. Rather than relying on rehearsal observation, I offer my own affective journey through Shaw's "Courante" movement from *Partita for 8 Voices*, to excavate how the piece perpetuates an affective shift by presenting Inuit katajjaq gestures as an alterity to the strictures of traditional choralism bound in hegemonic "Western" understandings of female body, voice, and imaginary. In this approach, I put my personal vulnerabilities and affective engagements on display and dismantle them from a scholarly perspective, to objectify my own body as a reciprocal act and to show the affective mechanisms that turbocharge Shaw's "Courante" for individuals enculturated in similar ways. In this way, I can make suggestions about how one *might* experience this piece, and why the piece might matter to someone imbricated in Western choral histories and hegemonies. I also have the opportunity in this section to indict the backlash that Tagaq's Twitter interventions engendered in new music

fans, following my own reactions. "One is never fully reflexive—it would be too eccentric," writes Mark Slobin. "We locate ourselves between the people we work on and the people we work with. The more these two converge, the more our position is revealed" (1993, 4). In the hope of heading off gratuitous introspection, I ground the discussion using Sianne Ngai's notion of "ugly feelings," particularly her identification of "irritation" and "anxiety." In this excavation, I can find a path through my own personal affective reactions to "Courante" and to the ensuing discussion around Indigenous voice and art in new music made possible by systems of hegemonic, white, "Western," and, yes, institutional/academic favor that allows us to feel that art is above question or reproach.

Carolyn Abbate considered the lack of universality in reception from the vantage of phenomenological inquiry of music as experience at a time when musicologists were more apt to parse historical context as what shapes musical experience, rather than focus on physical and emotional immediacy:

> Music is ineffable in allowing multiple potential meanings and demanding none in particular, above all in its material form as real music, the social event that has carnal effects. The state engendered by real music, the drastic state, is unintellectual and common, familiar in performers and music lovers and annoying nonmusicologists, and it has value. (2004, 534)

However, Abbate points out, music can encourage those participating and listening into patterns of affective reception designed to shape, contain, and sometimes restrict individual experience, even as each individual follows their own affective journey through a performance. This is the case with Euro-American choral practice and perhaps even beyond, where choralism is allied with spirituality, reflective meditation, and cinematic epic excess,[25]

[25] See Stone-Davis, *Music and Transcendence* (2015) and Engelhardt and Bohlman, *Resounding Transcendence* (2016) for further discussion of choralism, vocality, and spirituality/meditation (also discussed in Chapter 1); and Caps, "Choral Quarrels" (n.d.) for description of how choralism came to function in film scores in a way that has reinscribed choralism into popular consciousness.

promoting an "affective regime" that emphasizes receptive reflection, embodied listening, and emotional availability. It is this overall "affective regime" that I show Roomful of Teeth use in both case studies shared here. Particularly in the first case study, the singers' verbalization of their affective goals makes clear that they have their own cultural understandings of how their voices can be most effective, and they often discuss how they will accomplish certain goals in terms grounded in both physical immediacy and metaphorical or emotional content.

While there has been scholarly discussion of choral repertoire in the twentieth century that both highlights the colonial hegemony of European-derived choral composition and practices *and* shows how those practices were recontextualized outside of Euro-American cultural milieus,[26] there has been little investigation of how the physical/mental/emotional experience of choralism—for singers and audiences—has changed since the 1960s. The next section is dedicated to discussing how cluster chords and the integration of straight-tone singing as a relatively common practice led to slightly altered entrainment of choral singers. The subsequent section describes moves in the early twenty-first century toward vocalism that was not centered solely on open vowels, and ushered in a fascination with forms of phonation that had not been manifest or centralized in traditional European-derived choral practice. These discussions allow impressions of what was considered "normal," "fashionable," or, even, at a certain point, "traditional," in twentieth-century choral practice, in order to show how the Roomful of Teeth case studies depart from earlier choral paradigms.

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[26] See de Quadros, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Choral Music* (2012), particularly de Quadros' Introduction, 1–6; and Nick Strimple's chapter, "Choral Music in the Twentieth and Early Twenty-First Centuries," 43–60.

A Hegemony of Open Vowels

Considering the vast, varied history and culture of European-influenced choral practice (only a portion of which has been discussed in the previous chapters), and how choral practice has been adapted in our current technological landscape, a reimagining of choralism seems inevitable in the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries. Throughout the twentieth century, beginning with the works of Poulenc, Messaien, and Britten, choral practice retained focus on open vowels and acoustic resonance, but juxtaposed traditional tenets of voice leading, counterpoint, and harmonic movement with clusters of sound that highlighted the physical aspects of dissonance. Considered a continuation and development, the use of open vowels within cluster chords was the great innovation of the 1960s–1990s. Though a history of repertoire changes is interesting for a variety of reasons, it is the adaptation of vocal technique—and, perhaps more important, the ways that choral vocalism *stayed the same* even as repertoire aims and textures changed—throughout the '80s and '90s that show the inherent acoustic, vocal, and values of choralism within that period.

Reimaginings of what the choir represents, and is "allowed" to do, and should sound like, afford new understandings and uses for choirs and encourage shifts in the skills required for adequate diagnostic embodiment. However, much of the innovation came from Eastern European and Nordic composers, such as Arvo Pärt (b. 1935), Heinrich Górecki (1933–2010), and Jaakko Mäntyjärvi (b. 1963), in vogue in North America and across Europe in the 1990s and 2000s and often performed today. These compositions generally required a performance practice in which most of the singers produced "straight-tone," (see Chapter 3 for discussion of this technique) particularly the women, which helped to highlight dissonances of cluster chords that were especially prominent during this period, and were

adopted by multiple American composers like Morten Lauridsen (b. 1943) and later Eric Whitacre (b. 1970).[27]

Use of prolonged dissonance is often seen as allied with the arrival of "modernity," in that composers might use dissonance to suggest mechanical workings, pain, war, death, and, in a very literal turn, societal discord. The piece that is often referenced in this arena by singers is Benjamin Britten's *The War Requiem*, written in 1961–2 and premiered at the consecration of the new Coventry Cathedral, as the old structure had been destroyed by bombing during WWII. The piece makes use of the Requiem liturgical text, alongside poems by WWI poet Wilfred Owen; is performed by two orchestras, choir, children's choir, organ, and soloists; and juxtaposes functional tonal harmony against gripping dissonant chords (in the choral and orchestral parts). The piece is a fascinating touchstone in that it demonstrates how extended dissonance and cluster chords were proposed, in the mid-twentieth century, as a disruptive force within choralism that still relied on relational understandings of functional harmony. Indeed, the vocal techniques required—in their execution—did not stray from the hegemony of open vowels so prominent throughout Western choral history. Instead, the techniques retained the open vowels, but called upon the singers to negotiate different forms of diagnostic embodied feedback to navigate and tune them, all still based on the overtone series in Just Intonation supported by resonant acoustics.

Cluster chords were soon liberated from negative connotation, and used within more tonally-functional works, but there were certain gestures of these types of clusters—using

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[27] This listing of composers and repertoire is not meant to be exhaustive, as several authors have already developed extensive lists of compositions commonly performed in traditional and modern choral repertoire. See de Quadros, *The Cambridge Companion to Choral Music*, particularly the chapters by Romey and Mahaffey, "A Multiplicity of Voices" for an overview of twentieth century choralism specifically in the United States; Samama, "Choral Tradition in Europe and Israel," and Abbot and Meredith, "Canada's Choral Landscape" for discussions that include the choral culture studied in this dissertation; and, even more exhaustively, Strimple, *Choral Music in the Twentieth Century* (2005), for extensive repertoire lists.

them specifically in penultimate chords of a cadence or the end of a piece, for example, as Morten Lauridsen often does—that became commonly understood as a contemporary addition to choral tradition. Inclusion of cluster chords did not lead to sweeping changes in how choral singers were encouraged to produce sound or favor particular vowel shapes, however. The changes in fashionable repertoire relied on altered sensations within diagnostic embodiment, but further concentration on synchronized vocal alignment and the hegemony of open vowels commonly used when interpreting earlier forms of often-performed choral repertoire.

For example, an article by John Harold Guthmiller from 1986 shows many of the shared values that choral educators espoused regarding vocal technique and timbre. Guthmiller, who was a choral conductor at the collegiate level at the time of that publication, and who continues to conduct today, enumerates the reasons for warm-ups before rehearsals, positing that it is in warm-ups that the conductor can guide vocalization to healthy and pleasing habits for choral repertoire. "The precise goal of such vocalization," he writes,

> …should be to aid in the development of healthy, well-conditioned voices which do not suffer from interfering tensions. Voices in such a state should have the capacity to: (1) Sing comfortably through a range of at least two octaves; (2) Sing with accurate intonation (3) Maintain a steady vibrato, which is regular in both rate and amplitude, and which does not call attention to itself unduly; (4) Resonate all pitches effectively; (5) Change the coloring of vowels from brighter to darker or from darker to brighter without disturbing the other qualities of the tone; (6) Produce an effective legato; (7) Sing with dramatic intensity; (8) Sing with some measure of agility; (9) Maintain stamina and vocal "freshness." (Guthmiller 1986, 14)

Guthmiller suggests that conductors must maintain their aural skills in hearing and diagnosing "vocal problems" because "the conductor's aural and analytical skills…[are] dependent upon a knowledge of the principles of physiology and acoustics that appertain to the singing process" (Ibid., 15).

This discussion, which is geared toward developing effective warm-ups for choirs at the beginning of rehearsal, provides a snapshot of values in choral vocality during this period (and arguably before and after, even up to the present). There is correlation made in Guthmiller's listed goals between vocal "health" and "freedom" and desirable tone quality for choral singing. Rather than tie singers' vocality to particular aesthetic practices imbued in a long lineage of choral tradition, he suggests that if singers are singing healthily, choral blend will not be "disturbed."[28] There are some value-judgments (and vague language) surrounding blend and tone, in that Guthmiller suggests singers should "resonate pitch effectively"—which may refer to tuning, timbre, or blend, depending on the practitioner's point of view—and that vibrato should be in evidence but not "call[ing] attention to itself unduly," which, again, would depend very much on the repertoire being presented, the director's tastes, and the individual voice's overall placement within the choir.

It is notable that, even in more current twenty-first century iterations of choralism, very often commonly male-identified voices (tenors, baritones, and basses) are encouraged to be more free with vibrato, whereas commonly female-identified voices (altos, mezzo-sopranos, and sopranos) are encouraged to "even out" or "straighten" tone. This is justified as a necessity for specific repertoire from early music and traditional choralism (discussed in Chapter 1) in which often the voices first performing the works may have been boys' rather than womens'; and in contemporary works where cluster chords require a straighter tone for beats between notes to be heard in Just Intonation-derived overtones. This often results in singers who identify as female considering their voices as a Janus instrument, encouraged

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[28] See Reid, *The Free Voice, A Guide to Natural Singing* (1972). Guthmiller cites Cornelius L. Reid's book which was perhaps one of the most influential publications to suggest an explicit connection between "vocal health" and vocal technique/sound.

through *bel canto* training to embrace the broader vibrato and timbre of operatic sound even as they are told to thin and straighten their tone. Because these requests are often couched in the terms of "vocal health," it can be confusing for women-identifying singers to figure out what "health" sounds, looks, and feels like, and often leads to damaging conceptualizations around the voice as an indicator of self, personality, or agency.

Noting these ambiguities reliant on taste—and the connection drawn to "healthy," "free," or "natural" vocalization—is certainly not meant as an indictment of these practices, though it might suggest a need for more awareness of the underlying assumptions that afford them and affect singers. However, these hidden values honoring and reinscribing traditional choral style show how the practice is built around authenticity narratives pertaining both to the voice and to the way it must be used within choral repertoire. Throughout the back catalog of *Choral Journal*, there are numerous mentions of "pure" vowels and tone, "accurate" pitch and intonation, and "even" blend—which shows that these terms were, and still are, deemed useful to choral practitioners in that these terms are commonly understood without further explication. *Choral Journal* is a practitional and pedagogical journal, meant to interest and serve teachers, conductors, and (to a smaller extent) singers, rather than cultural scholars. If these terms were, and are, being used, they have facility for this audience, and show what is valued in choralism at amateur, pre-collegiate, and collegiate levels. It is conductors who publish in *Choral Journal* who go on to conduct at universities, institutions, churches, or their own ensembles; and who sing with semi-professional and professional groups. This level of discussion matters in terms of understanding how singers and conductors are taught to understand choral traditions and praxis.

Choral Experimentation in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries

It is within the context of open vowels and cluster chords that vocal experimentation (and appropriation of non-hegemonic traditions) emerges, as a relational innovation to the straight-tone ubiquity. The hegemony of open vowels in new choral music in the latter part of the twentieth century has certainly continued into the twenty-first; choral practitioners are still trained to vacillate between straight-tone and *bel canto* vibrato depending on repertoire and conductor-led notions of style (led, in cases of early music and some contemporary imitators, by the early music performance practice conversations of the 1970s–1990s—see Chapter 2). However, in the 2000s, choral experimentation explored the ways that voice is made relational to acoustic space and to other voices. Canadian artist Janet Cardiff's *Forty-part Motet* (2001) employs forty individual speakers, one for each individual voice line in sixteenth-century English composer Thomas Tallis' sacred motet "Spem in Alium," allowing visitors to experience the piece from different angles outside and inside the ring of speakers. Walking around within Cardiff's installation affords a new appreciation of the specificity in acoustic vantage, quality, and position. One can stand in the middle and experience a mix of voices, or stop right next to one of the speakers and have the benefit of one line highlighted; or walk outside the ring and take in an amalgamation of some direct sound and some diffuse reverberation. Cardiff invites museum-goers into the experience of choralism, in that they are encouraged to listen from the vantage point of different singers and to react to the space around them—in a sense, allowing non-singers to contemplate the diagnostic embodiment, spatial/physical specificity, and vocal techné required to sing such a piece.

American artist, composer, and performer Meredith Monk's *Songs of Ascension* (2009), as performed by her eponymous ensemble, is notably chronicled in Nina Eidsheim's book

Sensing Sound: Singing and Listening as Vibrational Practice due to the piece's emphasis on individual singers' abilities and the ways the work is tailored to specific spaces each time it is performed. Eidsheim, when considering Monk's spatialized approach, notes the viscerally-affecting aspects built into Monk's work—"When […] I first experienced a piece by Meredith Monk and Ensemble, I was deeply affected, but I could not capture what it was about the concert that moved me" (2015, 72). Eidsheim posits that the way that Monk encourages a multisensorial experience within her performances takes advantage of spatial and embodied specificities:

> …considering Monk's work from a multisensorial perspective encourages inquiry into the way in which spatial-material relationships between sound-producing, listening bodies and the spatial-acoustic structures these relationships are organized within contribute to sound's affect. (Ibid., 70)

Eidsheim goes on to query the ways that voice, space, and body comingle within Monk's oeuvre; and suggests that "naturalized" acoustics—the supposition of "normal" sonic elements in performance halls and everyday life, like, she argues, a two-second acoustic decay and a static "two-dimensional" relationship between listener and sonic "object"—are what allow sounds *outside* of the naturalized paradigm to the affectively moving as well as viscerally jarring for listeners and sonic producers alike (2015, 69). However, Eidsheim does little to expand beyond notions of soloistic voice within her investigation of *Songs of Ascension*, and does not fully consider the ramifications of choralism within voice studies. This is a lacuna that still persists in voice studies, but is being addressed by numerous young scholars.

Vocal technique in choral performance changed little in the 1980s and '90s. The tone-quality paradigm between straight-tone singing and more vibrato-heavy styles was explored within many choral genres and settings (secular, sacred, and in-between), though it was likely

that the choir would be encouraged to use one style more than another as a hallmark of the group's vocal identity—or to toggle back and forth between straighter tone and vibrato depending on the origins and style of the repertoire being presented. Along this paradigm, however, there was still a strong emphasis on singing open vowels, which allows the members of a choir in different parts and voice types to blend their sound in an amalgamation that lends itself to acoustically enhanced experience in Just Intonation tuning and resonant space.

The previously mentioned examples of "new" directions in choralism via repertoire were relative outliers when they were first conceived, but eventually these kinds of effects using dissonance became common parlance for practicing choristers—particularly in professional and semi-professional choralism—due to the diverse demands made on singers and ensembles over time as they integrated diverse technical effects and timbral textures into their portfolio of approaches. For example, singer and composer Toby Twining's eponymous ensemble integrated throat singing, alternative systems of tuning (including an entire Mass in Pythagorean Intonation, which could only be accomplished by giving singers earpieces playing pitches to keep them from tuning in situational Just Intonation), and numerous different types of shifts away from open vowels as the predominant vehicle for breath and vocal timbre in choral performance. Twining's expansion of vocalism in concert practice necessitated new repertoire, some of which Twining wrote himself for the group, and required singers willing to try vocal approaches from outside traditional (hegemonic) voice training paradigms. "His fairly traditional jazzy tonality," wrote music journalist Kyle Gann in *The Village Voice,* reviewing a concert of Twining's in 1994, "was diffracted through a

surreal range of vocal effects: lipped filter sweeps, falsettos, whoops, nonsense syllables, and harmonics (singing two pitches at once)" (1994, 84).

Moving into the twenty-first century, there was further interest from composers and choral ensembles—such as Monk and Twining, as well as Roomful of Teeth—in moving beyond the traditional vocal practices of choralism and the hegemony of open vowels, for a variety of reasons. First, there was a shift away from the idea that choral composition should be restricted in terms of a specific tradition of vocal practice that favored Western techniques related to *bel canto* operatic vocal training or, conversely, the straight-tone prominent in boys' choirs. Second, composers and singers newly recognized additional potential of the voice—moving away from pure vowels and intonation—could be realized by using different sounds and embodiments than were generally championed by previous choral composers, conductors, and singers. Even in much of the experimental and film music of the twentieth century, pure vowels and crisp diction had been the hallmark of choral practice. But groups in the later part of the 2010s began to reimagine and expand on the voice's capacities, and work with composers who wanted to redesign how group vocalization is understood and practiced.

Choral practice, up until the twenty-first century, remained mostly unchanged by recording and amplification equipment. As I argue in Chapter 2, choral training was imbued with awareness of speakers, monitors, and recording technique; but, beyond the anxieties of perfectionism for recording purposes, and consideration of recording techniques in venues of performance and recording, the practices of diagnostic embodiment and choral vocality changed little. Though choirs were often amplified through sets of microphones suspended above them (and, sometimes with microphones for specific soloists), the goal of

amplification in these circumstances was to capture the acoustic sounds of the choir performing in space. However, recording equipment, microphones, and soundboards became more portable, delicate, and available, and were brought into choral performance practice in various ways that allowed for different vocalisms to coexist in an aggregate mix, even though some vocal approaches are produced louder than others in unmediated acoustics.

In the new paradigm of experimental vocality, soundboard mixes, individual microphones, and feedback from monitors allowed groups like Twining's to shape sounds that moved away from open vowels and cluster chords, and provided a new mediated "space" for performance. The integration of amplification is a key component in my observations with Roomful of Teeth. In watching them rehearse, and hearing them discuss the mediation they use and tweak the mechanics of the equipment, it is clear they consider the amplification and monitor system as completely necessary to do the group's work. Because the group uses a variety of vocal techniques, often at the same time, that are not bodily amplified in the same way, mixing through a soundboard evens out the volume of different techniques into an imagined soundscape in a mediated "space" of technological invention. That mixed sound is routed through speakers to the audience, yes, but is also sent back to the speakers in a series of monitors located on the floor, just beyond the singers' microphone stands. In a revealing moment I witnessed during the 2018 Roomful of Teeth residency at MassMoCA, Caroline Shaw (alto, and composer) and Virginia Warnken Kelsey (alto) discussed how important Just Intonation and tuning is, and the physical elements of tuning throughout the works. This specifically implies a reliance on tuning, not in the actual space of performance, *but in reaction to the sounds they are receiving in their monitors*; an embodied reaction (through

tuning) to an imagined sonic space (routed and mixed through the soundboard). They asserted that their work would be impossible without the monitors providing this feedback.

That fieldwork observation gives me the latitude I need to discuss space and embodiment within, or through, mediation, and how the interaction with mediated or virtual spaces can still be physical, but divorced from actual acoustic space. The singer is reacting to their own voice, but not the voice that they sounded; it is a voice that has been mediated by forces other than physical space. And they are reacting to their voice implicated with other voices, which are also transmuted from the sounded voice into a mixed amalgam of all their individual voices, and returned through the monitor in a variety of configurations. This is not the same as a solo performer reacting to hearing themselves reflected back using the same methods; the group aggregate sound is the key here, and the embodied sensation of that aggregate holds the tools to shape the body to shape the sound—and perhaps also affords the pleasure of the experience. Noting the way that spatial concerns translate into embodied affect clarifies one of the mechanisms that Roomful of Teeth activates to shift affective regimes in performance. Observing their attempts to curate affect through these means suggests that members of Roomful of Teeth are negotiating affective regimes bound in their expectations of traditional choralism—and do so deliberately, to find ways to encourage specific audience affective reaction.

The two case studies presented in this chapter represent different ways that I have seen Roomful of Teeth reckon with spatial/vocal interaction—and how the group has used these alchemies to intimate affective shifts that rely on relational understandings of the lineage of choral music up until the twenty-first century in order to transgress tradition. This leads to emotionally-charged performances that are predicated on specific audiences' knowledge of

choral tradition. Roomful of Teeth uses the open meditative stance of choral music listeners (discussed at length in Ch 1), alternative vocal techniques and approaches, and a virtualized soundscape in performance to deliberately and drastically shift affect within the performance.

There are, however, major ethical concerns built into this "experimental" aesthetic approach. The first of these case studies shows how the group interacts within a piece that relies solely on Western musical and narrative traditions, and the group predominantly relies on techniques used in Western musical styles (with some modifications, due to their amplification system). The second case study reveals how Roomful of Teeth has come under scrutiny for usurping vocal approaches, lineages, and histories grounded in rich cultural roots that were endangered or warped by colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism. These two sections attempt to invite readers through related narratives of these discussions *and* to draw readers through some affective experiences that *might* be felt by observers of and participants in these discussions.

In Brian Massumi's concept of "differential affective attunement" (2015), the idea of affect and experience is afforded a variety of different interpretations and reactions for each embodied participant, even as they share *spaces*. "We're all in on the event together," he writes, "but we're in it together differently" (2015, 114). And yet, Massumi's category is grounded in the difference between one interpretation and another; the attunement makes affective dimensions infinite relational possibilities. Noting, however, the emerging theoretical connections being made between bodies and cultural histories of experienced violence, it is all the more important to note that bodies enmeshed in violently subjugated histories and lineages will not have access to the same affective responses as those people who do not carry this heavy inscription.

In foregrounding my own physical, socio-cultural, and emotional reactions, I attempt here to show my particular alchemic combination of embodied knowledge from years of semi-professional choral practice; engagement with cultural understandings of voice and the female body; and my own ingrained assumptions about the pervasiveness of whiteness and whitewashed historical understandings in choral culture. This is not meant to suggest that *all* listeners will feel, or have felt, as I do. It is simply to offer my own affective perceptions as a type of reciprocal offering to demonstrate how feeling may be guided by these lineages and embodiments ingrained in Western choralism—and to try to show how these deeply-ingrained and shrouded assumptions about voice must be better recognized and understood in order to avoid very real affective damage to non-White communities as vocal technique moves away from the hegemony of open vowels and into realms historically vocalized, actuated by those who are not Western/European, and not of established imperial or colonial lineage. As non-hegemonic vocal embodiments are decontextualized and used to frame a "modern" alternative to traditional choralism, it is imperative that choral scholars and communities pay attention to not only *how* they affectively respond to a piece, but *why*. Since affect theory makes clear that no one will feel exactly as others do, it is important for scholars to pay attention to our own feelings *and* to ethnographically map them so that we can try to recognize the structures that underpin and provoke them. In so doing, we may better understand how our emotions (and the emotions of others) guide our engagements with philosophical argument and theoretical scholarship around musical performance.

The case studies that follow here do focus on specific pieces of repertoire, but, rather than providing a history of repertory changes within experimental choral practice, these snapshots of rehearsal and performance are meant to show how members of the group channel their

own ideas, mores, and vocal abilities through repertoire to emotionally engage their audiences. The repertoire matters in each study in that the choral referents of, and cultural competencies required by, each piece in no small part dictates how the group negotiates their interpretations and affective goals in performing them.

***The Little Match Girl Passion* and Affective Spatialization**

Roomful of Teeth Residency, MassMoCA, August 2018

I sat in the corner of the room, alongside a complex sound rig weaving wires to eight individual microphones and four "monitors"—mini-fridge sized speakers on the floor—facing back at pairs of singers. From my corner, I saw only the backs of the two Sopranos, Estelí Gomez and Martha Cluver. Caroline Shaw (Alto I), Virginia Warnken Kelsey (Alto II) I saw in profile, along with their director, Brad Wells, sitting in the middle of the semi-circle of singers, ensconced in the center of the web of black electrical-taped wires. The four tenors and basses were in shadow, backlit by the 15-foot mill building windows in the rehearsal room upstairs above the black box auditorium at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (Mass MoCA). Next to me, Burkhardt Bilger, a writer from the New Yorker *working on a profile of the group, peered at his laptop.*

Though the group, at that point nine years old, had generally only performed works that were composed for them and their palette of vocal techniques, this year was different. The group was interpreting a renowned work that won the Pulitzer Prize in 2008—"The Little Match Girl Passion" by David Lang. "The source of this is the story," Roomful of Teeth director Brad Wells emphasized after the first rehearsal run-through of the piece. "Whatever we build," he said, "to make it our own, needs to come from that." Lang's piece

has two layers of inspiration—Johann Sebastian Bach's passion oratorios, specifically the Saint Matthew's Passion; and Hans Christian Andersen's "The Little Match Girl," a fairy tale without a happy ending that shows the last memories and imaginings of a child selling matches as she freezes to death alone in the street. Mimicking Bach's structural choices, the work is made up of fifteen short movements. Every other movement is descriptive, telling the story of the Little Match Girl as she lights her matches to ward off encroaching frostbite, remembers her happiest moments, and imagines a better, warmer life. The alternate movements feature commentary, similar to Bach's chorales, that offer emotional internal monologue reacting to the story. In the eleventh movement, titled "From the sixth hour," the chorale commentary and narration are quilted by a single word, uttered first in the voice of the freezing child as she dies, and then echoed by the entire choir (Lang 2008, 60). She sings "Eli, eli." In this utterance, the body of the little girl is merged with the body of Christ—recalling Jesus' last words as reported in the Gospel of Matthew, "Eloi, eloi, lama sabachtani?" ("My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?").

But, here in the rehearsal room, there was a problem.

At a pivotal moment in Lang's piece, the group was chasing a feeling. A way of voicing the "Eli" indicative of Christ's last words voiced by the Match Girl that would adequately enhance the intended emotional content of the piece. The singer given this task in the score, Martha Cluver, was asked to try it again. And again. "Why don't you try it very "on mic?" Wells suggested, and Cluver buried her face in the microphone, making her embodied sound smaller to compensate for the increased amplification. Trying different vocal techniques and technological approaches to amplification equipment, Cluver and the group kept searching—and the only indicators that they hadn't yet found what they were looking for were the

insistent re-rehearsing of the moment, and the slouched shoulders and shuffled feet each time they stopped. Everyone knew they hadn't found it yet—the shock that would bring the audience closer to the piece's devastating content. So they kept trying.

To illustrate these points about embodiment within electronically-curated sonic space, I turn to the observations of Roomful of Teeth's interpretation of David Lang's Pulitzer Prize-winning work, *The Little Match Girl Passion*, that began this chapter. I suggest that there is a specific moment in which the group breaks the space constructed through the soundboard by allowing sonic intervention outside of the curated boundaries of the sound system. When they programmed *The Little Match Girl Passion*, the group had been encouraged by Lang to reimagine how the piece should function within their unusual set of performance practices—and through the group's ubiquitous amplification system that makes a variety of vocal techniques possible.

In every performance and rehearsal, each Teeth singer has their own calibrated microphone; and pairs of singers have a monitor speaker providing them with sound that has already been amplified through a soundboard. The group employs sound engineers to create an electronically-mediated space in which the singers can perform using a wide palette of vocal utterances, rumblings, sighs, and yodels, alongside vocal production more common in choral practice. Because the group uses a variety of vocal techniques, often at the same time, that are not bodily amplified in the same way, mixing through a soundboard evens out the volume of different techniques into an imagined soundscape in a mediated "space" of technological invention. So, whatever sounds Roomful of Teeth "build" around the core story of Lang's *The Little Match Girl Passion* could draw from a variety of sounds and embodiments not necessarily associated with traditional Euro-American choral technique,

using electronic mediation and amplification to make these sounds audible and effective. This resonant disorientation was used effectively by Roomful of Teeth in a moment when they allowed sound outside their curated soundscape into Lang's *The Little Match Girl Passion*.

The first "Eli" in Movement 11 of Lang's work is given to a soprano soloist, who sings the two syllables first in an octave leap, then a ninth leap, then a tenth. The effect—performed by a traditional choir with limited or no amplification, as it was when the piece premiered and has subsequently been performed by traditional choirs—is one muted voice rising, starting out barely audible and emerging into prominence. But Roomful of Teeth could not produce this effect. Everyone—all eight Teeth—are individually amplified via their own microphone. Martha Cluver tried multiple approaches to the solo line.

> That note that's on top of it that says "starting quiet, and gradual"…so I'll get really close to the mic, and sing very softly, and…make it sound different in that aspect instead of just singing more in…a 'choral' tone, or a 'singer-like' tone. I thought about that. And, yeah, it just *wasn't working*, for some reason. There's just something that was needed. (Cluver, personal interview with the author, 2019)

After multiple negotiations and experiments, the performance at the end of the week's residency took shape. I missed the last dress rehearsal of the piece, and therefore was entirely stunned by the end result.

In movement eleven, Cluver, singing "Eli, Eli" in ever-widening leaps, stepped entirely outside of the curved bank of microphones and monitors, faced the audience, and threw her voice out and up to the bare rafters, her full-voiced soprano cry in the acoustically "dry" or "dead" performance space further muffled by heavy cloth stage curtains. In that moment, Cluver broke the imagined sonic space created through the sound board, and renegotiated Roomful of Teeth's terms of engagement with its audience and between the singers

themselves. I asked Cluver, a year after that performance, *why* the decision had been made for her to step off mic in that moment, and how it felt physically, vocally, and emotionally to do so:

> I think it was to show a little bit more struggle. There's this feeling behind the piece. There's this separate thing. […] [J]ust stepping out, me, the way I felt when I stepped out, it just kind of felt like I was *alone* in that moment. There was a spotlight on me. [...].I mean, I had to sing differently. I had to be like, ok, I'm not singing in the mic. I have to sing my full voice and that was a different feeling, you know. (Martha Cluver, personal interview with the author, 2019)

The voice of the little girl is meant to stand out in the score as a prime example of human suffering (linked to the biblical context of Christ dying on the cross). The fact that it begins as one voice—a voice singled out, segregated, wailing into the acoustic undefined void—acts as a magnet for empathetic affective identification. The little girl is given a voice in this moment of crisis, which is pretty much the first time in which we have heard her voice unframed by narration. In choosing to have Cluver step away from the microphone at this point and use only ambient mics and the acoustic space, Roomful of Teeth acknowledged the empathetic immediacy that they believe the child's cry will engender in listeners. The mechanism, via this "broken" mediated space, is based on an assumed ontological connection between space and place. In the case of Roomful of Teeth performing in an acoustically-dead theater transformed into a choral-appropriate space via electronic mediation, the audience assumes that there will be a prolonged, even guarded, acoustic mediated at the sound board that makes the sonic experience possible. As Cluver steps away from the microphone, that space is broken; and along with it, the calibration of emotional investment the audience has been led to expect. By renegotiating the sonic spatial cues at this pivotal and emotionally-charged moment, Cluver changes the sonic potentiality of the performance space and

activates a far bleaker soundscape to highlight the ostracization and neglect that the moment symbolizes.

In Roomful of Teeth's reimagined "The Little Match Girl Passion," the group engages with these described methods in an attempt to curate affect; and, in doing so, betrays each singer's individual understanding of cultural morality, affect, and physical experience. Far from being removed from broader political and cultural contexts, these efforts, these ways of speaking about and singing within space, can indicate how choral music is more generally comprehended and consumed at a socio-cultural level. When the rules of engagement in space—upon which traditional and modern choral practices rely—are broken deliberately, we can see how much these rules of engagement effect the practice of chorality and its connections to common "affective regimes" emphasized and reinscribed by the histories of Euro-American choralism. Martha Cluver's first leaping, tortured cry of "Eli, eli!" sung into an unfocused acoustic void in the eleventh movement of Lang's Little Match Girl Passion breaks a sonic space carefully created and maintained by Roomful of Teeth; and, by breaking that mediated space, the singers harness the power of their soundscape in an attempt to shift affective regimes via physicality.

Partita for 8 Voices, Tanya Tagaq, and the Ethics of Affective Rupture

Anyone making anything new only breaks something else.
—"When My Time Comes," Dawes (2009)

Roomful of Teeth makes use of a panoply of vocal techniques, some very commonly found within the popular, choral, and bel canto training paradigms, as well as a variety of other vocalities from around the world, taught at summer residencies held at MassMoCA in

North Adams, Mass. Started in 2008, the group came to prominence in 2013 when its recording of a piece by Caroline Shaw (who also sings with the group) won a Grammy for the ensemble and a Pulitzer Prize for Shaw. This piece, *Partita for 8 Voices*, was inspired, Shaw said, predominantly by visual artist Sol LeWitt's communications to draftspeople who assisted in producing his abstract murals. Many of the lyrics in the four movements—named "Allemande," "Sarabande," "Courante," and "Passacaglia," after Baroque partita dance suite sections—are drawn from LeWitt's writings, as well as a quote from T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*.

After Roomful of Teeth won a Grammy for its recording of Shaw's *Partita for 8 Voices*, the group began touring around the world, but also visiting colleges and universities to talk about their use of vocalities not normally experienced or discussed in "traditional" Music Departments' choirs or voice lessons.

In 2013, Roomful of Teeth visited Lawrence University in Appleton, Wis., and presented a concert and a workshop masterclass with voice majors. Speaking with professional choral singer Lauren Vanderlinden and Masters in Conducting student Benjamin Hanson, who both attended these events as freshmen, it becomes clear how complex the enthusiasm for Teeth's approach was in the relatively conservative Conservatory of Music at Lawrence:

> Vanderlinden: Freshman year, Roomful of Teeth did come to our school—this was right after they'd won their Grammy in the fall [of 2013]. They came, I think, and they did a concert and they did a workshop with the choirs. And at that point, everyone was like, "Oh, my God, that's so cool," and I was like, this is not that weird! But everyone's [realizing], "Oh my God, you can yodel." And so then, across the campus, you just hear people doing bits and pieces of it, for an entire year.
>
> Hanson: Year?!? It was *the whole four years*. It was a chorus echoing through the conservatory at all hours of every day.
>
> Vanderlinden: But they did a workshop with us and coached us, and everyone seemed really receptive in *that* moment. And then as soon as we did something in the ensemble

> later that year, everyone was like "hmm," <puts her hand to her throat in a protective gesture>, so it was a mixed bag for me. And then [Roomful of Teeth] came back our senior year and did another workshop. It didn't seem unusual [to me], but to a lot of other people are really excited because they came from very different [vocal training] backgrounds, so the general vibe was hero worship, and at the same time utter distaste for the sounds—or not even for the sounds, for the techniques behind the sounds. (Benjamin Hanson and Lauren Vanderlinden, personal interview with the author, 2021)

Vanderlinden notes that she had received an unusual choral/vocal education in that she had worked with a childrens' choir from a young age that switched between various vocal processes, timbres, and approaches—but that most of the students in the Lawrence Conservatory had not. Hanson received, he added, a far more restricted vocal education grounded in conservative choral tradition, and was entirely shocked and excited along with many of his Lawrence classmates, as described above:

> I came into Lawrence [and] I didn't know that "Voice–Performance" was just code for "opera singing" when I started. I wasn't privy to anything about this because my parents didn't know anything about choir singing. I'd not taken voice lessons before. I got there and learned that it was basically opera…and I like doing folk singing-y stuff and like choral music. I never really bought into the opera things, but that was what the program was—so I sought out opportunities to do other things that *weren't* that whenever I could. (Ibid.)

His excitement in hearing and seeing different vocalities performed during his university years, he says, guided his overall interest in voice and helped him to find paths that would allow for vocalisms beyond the operatic training emphasized at Lawrence. He recalls the number of vocal artists and ensembles who performed at Lawrence that presented performance practices and approaches from outside "Western" commonality:

> I remember that we had a lot of exposure to extended vocal techniques in our time there. Not a huge amount of opportunity to use them in university-sanctioned ways, but lots of exposure. I remember Alash [Ensemble], a Tuvan traditional music ensemble, came through [on tour]. That was the first time I'd ever heard of throat singing in my life—no, that's not true—I'd never seen it live. And that was a really eye-opening experience because their singing is so beautiful. And, also, freshman year, Roomful of Teeth came and I have a very distinct memory of—they were part of a series of concerts of guest artists that they brought in. And I remember one day before I went to the concert, I was

> like, I should probably at least look up what this is before I go to their talk. And so I popped open a [internet browser] window and clicked through a couple of tracks. OK, they make weird noises—I get it. And I remember really distinctly writing it off and then going to a class. And then right after that I went to [their] a panel discussion. And that was the first time—I remember sitting in the front row [...]and progressively having my mind increasingly blown for that hour and a half. They started talking about things and demonstrating things. And I just increasingly was like, "OK, what, *what*?!? You can do that?!?" And it was incredible; it was breathtaking. They made so many sounds that I never heard before and hadn't even thought that a person could make, let alone incorporate meaningfully into a musical performance. They talked extensively about the teachers they had and the cultural context that the singing styles originated from, which was, again, new to me as a white boy from extremely rural Wisconsin who didn't know about people that didn't look like me. [It was] just incredible to have my mind blown and sort of the horizons expanded for what singing could be, because that was my first exposure to it. So I just wrote down a lot of names, singing traditions, and places of origin in a notebook as they went.
>
> And then the performance that followed in that week was really incredible, and I think was exactly the right audience for them. I remember when they returned our senior year, a couple of them had mentioned that their performance three or four years earlier at Lawrence University had been a big deal for them as an ensemble, because this is the first time they performed for an audience that liked the music they performed. (Benjamin Hanson and Lauren Vanderlinden, personal interview with the author, 2021)

Asked *why* he thought that the Lawrence University student body and broader audience were open to, and supportive of, these ensembles that moved away from traditional vocalism in the *bel canto* and choral traditions, Hanson explains that there was a culture emphasizing broadened frameworks in performance and vocal production:

> I think that Lawrence is a really cool environment for a lot of things like that to begin with because of the conservatory-slash-liberal arts school that it is, which is sort of a unique hybrid. There was the right mix of people who were good singers and could appreciate what we were listening to. And they're also super primed and ready for something they had never heard before because there's that culture of, "Oh, I'm going to be more weird and like music that's less accessible than you." And that was the coolest possible thing for me as a twenty-year-old at this liberal arts conservatory. It has a culture of finding esoteric music and really getting into it. (Ibid.)

Hanson and Vanderlinden also recalled that different vocal ensembles would be inserted into separate concert series, depending on where they were deemed to fit best and how they were hired. At Lawrence, there were two concert series—one, a "Masterworks" series, was

performed on a main stage in a large venue, and included ensembles like the Kronos Quartet, professional choir Seraphic Fire, and Roomful of Teeth. The smaller stage hosted the "World Music" series, where Hanson and Vanderlinden saw groups like Alash Ensemble (the Tuvan throat singing group Hanson mentions above) and Georgian touring choirs. The segregation is notable, in that it indicts, to a certain extent, both the university and the music industry—bookers, PR, concert promoters, and arts administrators at all levels. Clearly, the students required to attend these ensemble performances were being encouraged to think about these groups differently, though both Roomful of Teeth and Alash Ensemble were presenting vocalisms not commonly heard or valued in Western art music contexts. Roomful of Teeth was considered "experimental," "new," and "avant-garde," whereas Alash Ensemble was "traditional," "ethnic/World," and, at the most basic level, "other."

*　　*　　*

When my body is the archive,
researchers leave their tracks
on my language, my religion,
my inheritance. When my body

is the archive, my stories belong
to someone else, gatekeepers
don't share their passwords,
someone else gets the credit,

applause, a paycheck for my work.
When my body is the archive,
my grandmothers are data points
proving our inevitable demise.

-Deborah A. Miranda (2018, 125)

Archived in Embodied Voice

The following section will trace the ways that Roomful of Teeth have integrated decontextualized cultural understandings of voice into their practices and commissioned repertoire. It will show how those approaches are relationally engaged with traditional choral practices in ways that can alter affective regimes for audiences well-acquainted with Western art music and choral traditions and might inspire decolonizing moves within collegiate music departments, as suggested by Ben Hanson's experience with Roomful of Teeth at Lawrence University. But this section will also foreground the Indigenous bodies and voices, and the vastly different, original and modern, contextualization of Inuit katajjaq (a practice imperfectly infused into Shaw's "Courante") within Inuit communities. First, however, some discussion of how "voice" is theoretically conceptualized in relation to Western art music, and how non-hegemonic voices offers background on how non-Western vocalisms have become weapons used against colonized or provincialized people.

Ana María Ochoa Gautier has written about the process of vocal othering in the context of nineteenth-century Colombia (2014). She shows how native Colombians' "uncivilized"

utterances were considered less-than-human by colonizers, and used as an excuse for violence, enslavement, and various other forms of disenfranchisement.

> Voice was ambiguously located between "nature" and "culture," and thus was central for shaping what those terms meant in this historical period. I explore how listening practices were crucial in determining how the voice was understood and what counted as a proper form of voicing and cultural expression for different peoples…at a historical moment when the colonial itself had to be reformulated…. (Ochoa Gautier 2014, 3)

Ochoa Gautier's scholarship shows how colonizers segregated the Indigenous colonized from their oppressors via forms of vocality in Colombia; but there are certainly other examples of this type of vocal and embodied "othering" that had to be "mastered," "retrained," or simply and violently erased during the processes and tenure of colonization.

Numerous scholars have documented similar ideas in texts written by colonizers who came into violent encounter with Indigenous people around the world. For example, James Revell Carr notes how hula practices in Hawai'i were plagued by prohibitions urged by missionaries in the early 19th century (2014, 110); the practice was later secularized, and common Euro-American hymn singing practices in religious services were heavily encouraged, especially when a hymnal was published with Hawaiian lyrical translations in 1823. This vocal practice was a far cry from hula oli (chants), and continued to be favored in Hawai'i throughout the 20th century. Kati Szego documented how Western choral vocal style was emphasized and prized in Kamehameha Schools (for documented indigenous Hawaiian students) in their music programs. She describes "Kamehameha [Schools]'s hegemonic success in resocializing use of the body and sacralizing Western Music…." (1999, 141). Both Szego and Carr make clear that this policing of the voice and of dance is a policing of the body, an assimilation tool, and often denigrates various forms of indigenous tradition, knowledge, and practice. By normalizing certain types of movements and

utterances, colonizers (and those connected to their lineage through established institutions and hegemonies) could assert control over the bodies and voices indigenous people through artistic and musical practice. This certainly affected the people experiencing it; and has led to a great many revitalization and training programs to highlight the traditions that have not wavered and to bring back or reimagine those that have all but vanished.

Indigenous vocality, Ochoa Gautier suggests, was used as an indicator of "civility," or even of "humanity"—relationally measured against the "civilized" "human" voice of Western colonial hegemony, and often used to justify violent genocide, cultural erasure, and community marginalization or exile. This notion, then, presupposes that there is a "civilized" voice to be found in hegemonic culture, and that this was embodied in and produced by colonizers. If this is the case, the idea that the voice can be "civilized," made to be "more natural," or "more human" has been inherited in the culture that Lauren Vanderlinden and Ben Hanson describe as the cornerstone of their education at the Lawrence University Conservatory of Music, and even more broadly to conservatory training in a variety of colonial/academic contexts around the world. Their exposure to voice studies limited their vocal utterances to *bel canto* operatic training and choral traditionalism. Following this logic, it could be maintained that the liberation that Hanson felt (in thought and in voice) as he heard Roomful of Teeth perform is an attempt to decolonize voice training and ideologies long entrenched in performance and academic hegemonies. It is understandable why Roomful of Teeth may have felt they were challenging suppositions about voice and human nature by including various embodied vocalities in their practices and repertoire—and why Shaw and Wells would defend their decisions by claiming they were trying to liberate vocalism from within Western art music tradition. However, Shaw and Wells are drawing

from some assumptions about voice that are built into the very ways we conceptualize it within a racialized frame.

Considering Western philosophical constructions of the voice, it is important to recall that some of the earliest and most fundamental writings within what might be considered the field of voice studies reify a separation between the "natural" aspects of the voice and the aspects governed by language and cultural competency. Roland Barthes' essay "The Grain of the Voice" suggests that vocalism is more effective (and, one could argue, affective) when it is unselfconsciously presented, making use of the vocal instrument with little thought to the way it might be perceived by the listener. Barthes argues that operatic moves toward "dramatic expressivity" in vocal performance obscure the natural voice in the attempt to define the experience of the listener by leading them through the singer's interpretation of lyrical content (2009 [1981], 269). Barthes greatly prefers the voice that is not interpreting for the listener; however, he subsequently fetishizes the lack of awareness and interpretive skill of a non-Western-trained vocalist in order to make his point. "His voice is not personal…" he writes about a nameless "Russian bass:"

> it expresses nothing about the singer, about his soul; it is not original (all Russian basses have this same voice, more or less), and at the same time it is individual: it enables us to hear a body which, of course, has no public identity, no "personality," but which is nonetheless a separate body; and above all this voice directly conveys the symbolic, over and above the intelligible, the expressive[….]That is what the "grain" would be: the materiality of the body speaking its mother tongue[…]. (Ibid., 270)

Thus, we find a fetishization of individuality that is built from rustic embodiment rather than interpretive skill; a simplicity that favors symbolism rather than original thought, built into one of the early investigations of the stuff of "voice"; a text returned to again and again by voice scholars (albeit with a critical eye). Barthes may compliment the bass with his favorable preference, but does great disservice to the variety of voices and abilities found in

the vast region of Russia. He also continues a lineage of "othering" in the study of "folk music" in Eastern Europe, during which true "folk" and "folk music" were defined by scholarly collectors as universally rural, uneducated, and untouched by the outside world.

However, the "folk" of the "folk music" collections in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were generally provincialized to emphasize their connection to the land and collective identity as a type of authenticity feeding into nationhood, as was the case in Johann Gottfried Herder's collections of songs and essays written at the turn of the nineteenth century (Bohlman and Herder 2016, 48); whereas Indigenous people during this time of colonization had been, for many years, displayed, fetishized, and denigrated as non-human, at least in part because of their cultural conceptualization of their bodies—and by extension, voices—that differed drastically from the conquerors from Western Europe (whom they considered civilized). For example, Indigenous people were often displayed as exhibits during the World Fairs, Crystal Palace exhibitions, and other large-scale events of the Victorian and Beaux Arts eras as exhibits, curiosities representing the "native" or "savage" untouched by the rapidly-globalized world under colonial rule. The body, in this case, was objectified and, through that objectification, was commoditized. It was in these eras that the emphasis on the non-European exotic in art encouraged composers to import pentatonic scales, gamelan-inspired sonorities, and insistent drum patterns into their work—not only to conjure images of the people considered less evolved than Europeans, but to embody them in musical textures and timbres; a different way of commoditizing the Indigenous body, by violently tearing sound (or uneducated pastiche of those sounds) from context and embodied performance (Locke 2009).

Ohlone/Costanoan Esselen Nation/Chumash writer Deborah A. Miranda's poem, "When

My Body Is the Archive," illuminates the embodied transformations and affective fallout associated with this line of embodiment, especially in the last three stanzas:

When my body is the archive,
the archives become flesh and blood

with a salty genealogy, a hunger
for truth, rattling beloved bones that hold everything sacred—
and you'll understand at last:

the archive was never inanimate,
never dead;
the archive was never
yours.

* * *

Contextual imperial powers that overshadow and underscore art music in the Western European tradition create massive power imbalances between Roomful of Teeth and the vocal teachers they learn from, the communities they emulate, and the audiences to which they appeal. This is certainly true in part due to the above underlying historiography of voice and embodiment that still forms the cornerstone of academic notions of sound. However, several other immediate and practical/commercial forces also reinforce these power imbalances. Contracts that dictate their pay and allow them to perform in certain spaces alongside other "Masterworks" ensembles; the Western art music education that most of the singers received in mainstream academic institutions that emphasize the singular creative genius of composers and the importance of voice as a specific type of instrument; the notoriety and financial support offered to the group by institutions like the Grammys and the Pulitzer Prize—these considerable advantages, combined with the overall white privilege of the group (as it is made up predominantly of white or white-passing members), makes for an excessively uneven balance of agency and stability. Even as the group gives workshops about

their teachers and the variety of vocalisms they attempt to learn and embody, they are being paid to do so; and, as Tagaq points out in her tweets, the group's overall power is not shared by the predominance of people in Inuit communities.

Additionally, as much as these corrective efforts to redirect Western art music toward a more inclusive set of vocalities, and provide acknowledgement of colonial violence, they can also be viewed as the "tracks on my language, my religion, my inheritance," that Deborah A. Miranda references in "When My Body Is an Archive" (2018, 125). The emphasis on identification, certification, the "naming" of Indigeneity (using the terms dictated by governmental checkboxes, funding categories, and often-shrinking land "rights") leaves many tribal members and tribe-adjacent participants in Indigenous discussions in a no-man's-land, lacking official recognition but holding responsibilities and facing dangers integrated into Indigenous experience.

Canada's governmental recognition of, and funding for, Indigenous groups such as the Inuit is considered far more developed than the pittances and averted eyes offered in the United States. For one thing, it started much earlier; for another, it has provided far more resources. In efforts dubbed "reconciliation"—following the language of the national truth and reconciliation commission in operation between 2008 and 2015, which investigated the harm perpetuated by residential schools—Prime Minister Justin Trudeau centered governmental campaigns around reparation to Indigenous tribes. Even before these formal reconciliation efforts, the Inuit tribe was returned a massive area that they named "Nunavut" (our land) in 1999. Despite these bureaucratic efforts to recognize Canada's Indigenous histories and communities, these efforts have done little to support the isolated communities in the northernmost reaches of the North American landmass. The title of *New York Times*

contributor Catherine Porter's 2019 article—"Drawn from Poverty: Art was Supposed to Save Canada's Inuit. It Hasn't."—highlights a utopian notion that Inuit creators could participate fully and successfully in capitalist structures that had served to deemphasize and impoverish their communities, bridging the gap between the nomadic ice hunting of the traditional past and notions of successful consumerism supply-and-demand in much of Nunavut's icy strife- and poverty-ridden present. As Porter notes, this has not been the case (2019).

This perception relies on the idea that all Indigenous people should be modernized, integrated into the global capitalist systems recognized and supported by most large world governments. This can either be seen as an impetus to help indigenous people confront the immediate issues of substance abuse, mental illness, and poverty; or as a way to recognize, categorize, and further marginalize those who have not benefitted from the positive aspects of a "free market system" that does not recognize the value of anything but money. Ignoring indigenous ways of knowing, living, and being has often been the hallmark of government programs in North America as well as other parts of the world. But the emphasis on art hypocritically suggests indigenous people should capitalize on their indigeneity as a form of artistic expression and commodification in order to successfully negotiate terms of engagement with the structures that leave little room for them in non-artistic arenas. Though this full conversation is beyond the scope of this dissertation, recognizing the larger patterns intertwining art, Indigeneity, modernity, and reification of whiteness and imperial modes of thought is integral to the work in this chapter. The use of Indigenous art as commodity is a troubling trend that normalizes appropriation when profitable for non-Indigenous people and minimizes the inherentance and continuation of Indigeneity in a consumer-driven capitalist

market. The use of Indigenous art motifs as objectified commodities normalizes "borrowing" (appropriating) Indigeneity when it makes money, and hides the practice under the guise of "celebration," a hypocrisy that perpetuates perceptions around Indigenous inclusion in artistic practices, such as in Shaw's "Courante."

These issues are further complicated by the fact that many Indigenous groups emphasize connection with specific areas, geographies, "places" (as discussed in the Introduction of this dissertation) that makes "place" both a defining characteristic of membership *and* a recurring motif in various types of art. The visual artist Ooloosie Saila, from the remote island hamlet of Kinngait (formerly Cape Dorset), Nunavut, who is profiled in Porter's 2019 article, achieved recognition for her vibrant geometric landscapes, drawn in colored pencil at her kitchen table in a streamlined style that has gained popularity in the global retelling of indigeneity iterated in everything from corporate stationery, to nouveau mid-century-modern-inspired interior design, to tattoos on hip (and non-Indigenous) folks. In these cases, as the indigenous art becomes globalized (or inadvertently hitches to an artistic zeitgeist), the place itself is stripped from the artwork, leeching style from source, identity from image.

And as much as place in the natural world can be connected to indigenous identity, the body itself becomes a repository of identifiers and a commodifiable "object" as much as it is a locus of personal identity. When indigeneity is visible, and politically recognized (which also means "politically categorized"), the body can be borrowed by those outside of it, used as a symbol. For example, in Porter's article, Saila goes sightseeing in Toronto and another tourist, noticing her in the crowd, points to her and exclaims "An Eskimo—look!" (2019). Her body becomes a sight to be seen in that moment, rather than a nexus of personal experience, proclivity, temperament, memory, and character.

These bodily violences are compounded when we consider how indigenous people have been encouraged, in recent years of "reconciliation" (in Canada) and various other political engagements elsewhere, to think of their own bodies as a repository for tribal histories, imaginaries, and lineages.

However, the integration of Indigenous approaches to voice in "Western" concert music traditions and milieus often wholesale ignores inherent issues around settler-colonial and capitalist powers—and can even erase the embodied histories that ground them by using these vocalities as a utopian (and, thereby, untethered) alternative to traditional choral voice production. In the next section, I foreground my own reactions to Caroline Shaw's "Courante" from *Partita for 8 Voices*, and show how the piece erases Indigenous context from katajjaq "technique" in order to engage with feminist critiques.

* * *

In October 2019, as the controversy around "Courante" swirled, I thought back to my first experiences with Roomful of Teeth, whom I had already observed over two residencies at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MassMoCA) in the summers of 2018 and 2019. The reason I had chosen to try to observe the group was due to my initial reaction to their workshop at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and their concert at the Music Academy of the West, a well-funded arts organization on a campus in nearby Montecito, California. They toured there in 2017, and, two years later, I tried to revisit the emotional experience of watching and listening to them perform. Admittedly, "Courante" was one of my favorite moments during that performance. Through the gap of two years and

a confusing haze of familiarity due to the observational opportunities I'd had with Teeth, I thought back, looked at my program from the 2017 performance, and tried to write, as openly as possible, what I remembered feeling. At the time, I didn't know this would serve as a tool to reverse-engineer the affective regimes and mechanisms that predicated my reactions. The following field note is removed from the performance, but the vividness with which the occasion is described here shows the impression it made upon me—and, probably, is at least in part due to the "ugly feelings" (Ngai 2005) brought up during the cultural appropriation controversy around the work at the time I wrote it.

My first experience with Roomful of Teeth was an accident.

As a graduate student, I was constantly receiving emails about workshops, master classes, and presentations—most of which I'd learned to tune out. But the one announcing a masterclass/performance lecture with members of Roomful of Teeth in April 2017 caught my eye. In the tiny indoor amphitheater housed on the edge of our crumbling mid-century modern music department, I heard Thann Scoggin (Bass), Virginia Warnken Kelsey (Alto), and Caroline Shaw (Alto and well-known composer) describe their attempts to learn vocal techniques from different parts of the world with the assistance of culture-bearers, practitioners, and teachers from these areas and traditions. Working through Sardinian cantu a tenore, Tuvan throat singing techniques, Death Metal vocals, Inuit katajjaq, South Korean p'ansori, Georgian choral practices, and pop/Broadway belting, Kelsey and Scoggin shared the technical aspects and vocal renegotiations of the learning processes and embodied sonic experiences, and Shaw added thoughtful commentary on how composers have thought about singing practices and what these different styles could offer to composers and performers alike.

The presentation was so fascinating (and, in some ways, so dangerous—moving away from the familiar, comforting but rigorous strictures of choral vocal technique) that I bought a last-minute ticket to their performance that evening at a stunning and well-funded hall in a nearby extremely wealthy enclave. By happenstance, my ticket was for the front row, just slightly at stage right.

I don't honestly remember all of the performance. I remember that when I sat down I took in the unusual stage set up with individual microphones for each singer, but I was prepared for that after the masterclass. I remember being staggered by the idea that voices were "allowed" to do these things in (what I considered) choral practice. Throughout my own vocal training, I was taught that the operatic bel canto *style of vocalism was the ultimate freeing of voice, and would afford the "correct" types of vocal color for all singing—but this meant that any other styles of vocality, including voicing more commonly found in pop, rock, or non-"Classical" vocal styles, were, by default, wrong. Singing with semi-professional auditioned choirs as a teenager and college student, I was often gingerly asked to sing with "straight" or "pure" tone, but the directors asked for this with a grimace, anticipating the outcry from singers (channeling their own voice teachers and pedagogical histories) that the style was "tiring," "harmful," or "bad technique."*

On top of this "straightened" tone—referring to a piercing nasal clarity, without wavering vibrato, that provides a stable and uniform pitch easily harmonized with other voices and taking advantage of the overtone "ring" of shared space—the ways of speaking about straight tone frequently resorted to gendered terminology. "Sound pure!" "Sing gently!" "More like a children's choir!" "As if you were angels!" Men's voices more naturally fell into the straightened tone prioritizing timbre, but they were asked to emphasize

their "manliness"—"Strong!" "With weight and power!" "Deeper!" As the women were asked to deemphasize their woman-ness, and the language suggested that they must mask any femininity developed beyond virginal adolescence, the men were asked to perform their gender in a kind of hyper-masculine, virile, peacocking vocality.

While the language of these directives is not dictating the mechanical techniques affording straight tone, it is what many singers are taught to think about those machinations as they learn them. In my case, this infused these practices with a kind of guarded swallowing of voice to prevent anything that might be considered undesirable mature femininity escaping from my pharynx and into the soundscape. Starting when I was a young singer, my voice was imbricated in my physical awareness and self-consciousness as a not-at-all-petite, relatively curvy teenaged woman. I needed to be smaller. I needed to be sweeter. I needed to have fewer opinions. My voice needed to do what it was told—and what it was being told was that I was not "pure," not "girlish," not "sweet," not "desirable," enough. This translated into walls of tension in my neck, jaw, tongue, shoulders, and even arms; tensions that still plague my singing practice today.

I do specifically remember hearing one piece on the program. Hearing this set, with titles based in Baroque dances forms—Allemande, Sarabande, Courante and Passacaglia—was so emotionally-staggering and redefining for me that whenever I think of that seat in the performance hall, I feel a knot form in my stomach.

The piece was Caroline Shaw's 2012 Pulitzer Prize-winning Partita for 8 Voices*, a 26-minute work written by Shaw in the first few years of Teeth's residencies at MassMoCA. After working with teachers and practitioners, and identifying new skill sets that came more easily to specific members of Teeth, Shaw wrote* Partita *highlighting those abilities, in a way*

that redefined how choral singing could function in a mediated soundscape. The work is bespoke for the group, with each member required to tap into these new skills. New York *magazine praised the piece when it premiered, claiming that Shaw had "discovered a lode of the rarest commodity in contemporary music: joy" (Davidson 2013).*

As the group began the third movement, "Courante," I had to remind myself to breathe normally. I had heard some examples of Teeth's vocalizations in the afternoon workshop—but hearing, and seeing, women use their bodies to produce complex layers of audible breath, passed back and forth in a game that celebrates all the sounds I had been told to hide, brought me to a place in which the visceral was the mental and emotional. And then, the piece unexpectedly juxtaposed this celebration of my vocal fears with the sound that had shaped my vocal practice—the ultimate de-sexed pure choir—with the women humming George Root's mid-19th century hymn "Shining Shore." After introducing the tune, the breathing relay is wound into the hymn's homophony, intertwining physicalities and stances from both vocal practices. Though the men participate, they are only minor accompaniment to this smorgasbord of female vocality. Tears flooded my face and ran down my neck, perhaps visible to the singers, if they had looked my way, who stood only five feet up and twenty feet back from where I sat. Controlling my own breathing became paramount, to avoid disturbing the listeners around me—implicated in the physicalized breath occurring onstage.

I'm not sure I fully heard the last movement, "Passacaglia," after "Courante." I didn't need to.

* * *

As emphasized in the previous section, embodied violences can be inscribed on Indigenous people through lineage from initial colonization, ongoing disenfranchisement, and rejection from capitalist systems that would allow the communities to otherwise thrive in current global conditions. In centering my own body in the vignette above, I hope to offer some glimpse of the mechanisms activated in Shaw's *Partita for 8 Voices* that make non-Western art music vocalism relational to more traditional choralism—and to show the effectiveness of the piece in conveying a particular affective experience to bodies like mine that is also the piece's greatest ideological flaw.[29]

In response to Tagaq's critiques, Shaw wrote, "I was interested in exploring the notion of weaving, women's voices, interlocking patterns, support systems, and challenging people's notions of how female breath is perceived" (Shaw 2019). "Courante" brings together two very different vocal manifestations from divorced contexts, activating memory and cultural competency while simultaneously underlining the cultural structures that scaffold them. This can usher in an unusually strong physical/emotional reaction—as it did in me when I first heard the piece. The recognition of gender normative strictures on voice, and the redefinition of femininity—female bodies— through different vocalic prisms moved me through my own past struggles with gender performance and showed the strength, variety, and creativity inherent in the female voice but silenced through patriarchal suppositions and tutorials. In writing about "erotics," Deborah Wong notes the complicated experience of feminist listening, writing:

> Feminist music scholars often listen to music with both pleasure and bifocal discomfort, knowing that our pleasure is at odds with our political beliefs. We listen to music with the utopian hope that the patriarchal politics of sexuality and erotics can be redirected, even if we can only partially imagine what that might look, sound, and feel like. This is a

[29] I am white and female, raised in an upper-middle class tax bracket; but, more broadly, I refer to the bodies that can move more-or-less freely and enjoy relatively unquestioned agency within hegemonic society.

permanently suspended and anticipatory erotics of musical pleasures directed toward social equality and justice. Feminist scholars know that gendered inequality is deeply eroticized and that the objects of our research are shaped by erotic attachment. (2015, 180)

In the case of Shaw's "Courante," the piece seemed to support a feminist hearing for me. However, it *did not* support an Indigenous listening, all the more crucial because of the integral role that katajjaq techniques (and composition, as Tagaq points out) play in the piece. On the one hand, katajjaq references a different kind of womanhood than the straight, cisgendered culturally-enforced norm. On the other hand, it was a womanhood that was already manifest, though threatened, in Inuit communities and histories; not easily understood by those outside of Indigenous contexts—in other words, most of the people that make up Roomful of Teeth audiences. The piece does not recognize, in its structure, that the gender alterity it proposed as a counterpoint *already is* its own specific practice of Inuit womens' embodied vocality. The construction of this piece, in redefining affective regimes by confronting traditional femininity and sexuality, supports a supposition about audience that precludes Inuit readings—a manifestation of "hungry listening," Dylan Robinson's terms that encompass settler colonial co-opting of Indigenous materials into Classical concert music practices. Concert music, even experimental new composition, is still founded on ontological assumptions about performance that are not universally shared in Inuit culture—which alters the affective regimes available to Inuit listeners, though they are hearing and seeing a simulation of embodied vocality belonging to their own histories and lineages.

In considering the mechanism of this type of musical engagement with tradition—featuring it, recognizing it, subverting it in kaleidoscopic cyclical redefinition, constructing new affective regimes by staying in relation to old ones—Shaw and Roomful of Teeth have found a glorious way of querying norms and systems of oppression in classical music. But, in

using embodied practices from vastly different, often colonized, contexts, the piece highlights how the mechanism comes with newly-established (though long-needed) situational caveats and cultural ethics, all the more necessary due to the potential affective potency of the approach. The "affective regime" is shifted specifically through katajjaq voicing decontextualized from Indigenous Inuit context. As katajjaq is brought into relation with straight-toned hymnal choralism in "Shining Shore," it can be seen as a utopian alternative to gendered norms of voice training bound in "Western" femininity. This juxtaposition between the two vocalities affords an affective potency via the physical aspects of affect, in seeing and hearing voice produced in drastically different ways by the same bodies. But the origin or history of katajjaq does not matter in this use of the vocal "technique." As it is stripped of context, the affective shift is wrought simply by the juxtaposition, not by katajjaq technique or history. My physical and emotional (i.e., affective) response was not founded in an understanding of Inuit vocality or femininity; it was understood as an unadulterated and welcome release from strictures I had faced as a female choral singer raised and trained in a Western hegemonic context.

Roomful of Teeth's querying of the fabric of choral vocality through its combination of tradition and deliberate subversion is a risky move, leading to a fragile state—in that, as the new affective regime is subsequently queried, its unset, raw surface is easily troubled, stripped, overlayed, or destroyed, as it was when Tagaq criticized Shaw and Roomful of Teeth. In her critiques, she shifts the affective regime of interpretation for a second time, refocusing the narrative on the Inuit women who practiced that vocality as an integrated part of their femininity. This changes how the piece can function in broader affective and cultural milieus because of the Indigenous voices breaking through the hidden bedrock of the work's

white racial frame (Ewell 2020), laying bare the underlying affective regimes that rely on whiteness and cultural appropriation to be effective.

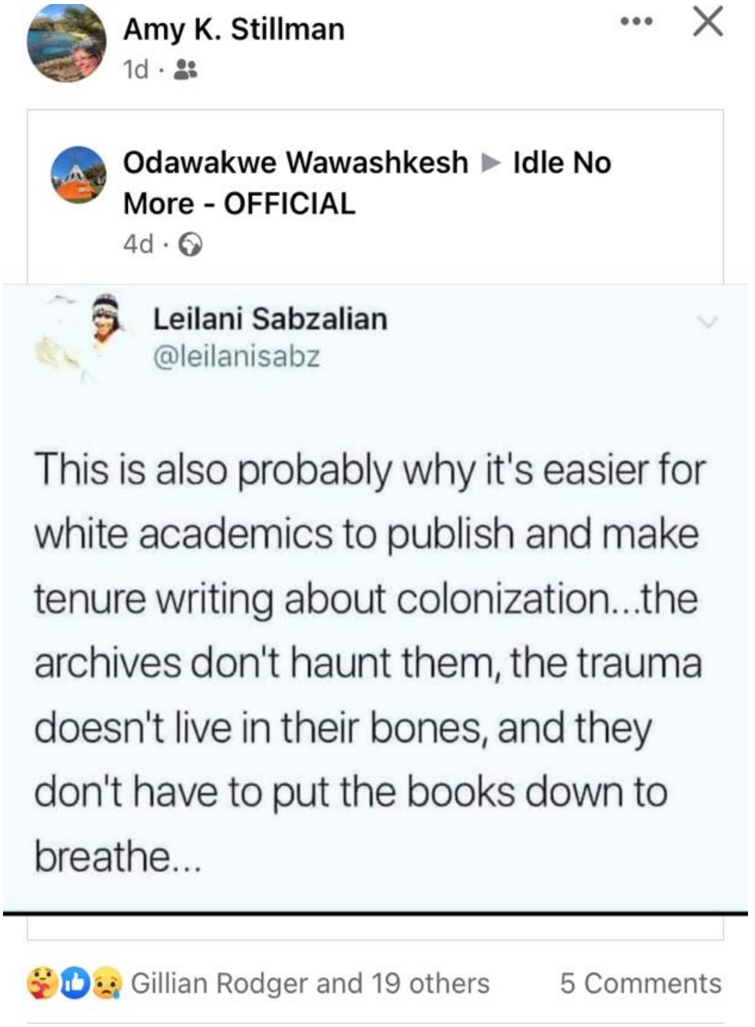


Image 16. *Screenshot of a meme posted initially by Indigenous studies academic Leilani Sabzalian (Alutiiq) and shared by music and cultural studies academic Amy Ku'uleialoha Stillman (Kānaka Maoli), September 2021.*

Discussions around Indigenous listening, representation, and inclusion in academia have surged. The works by Dylan Robinson and Deborah A. Miranda noted in the previous section are only two of many articles, books, and artworks that approach issues of ingrained colonial and imperial structures and attitude. White (or systemically-favored) academics *must* pay attention to our emotional engagements with cultural materials so that we can better

understand why we feel as we do, and how that connects with structural hegemonies. These affective impressions make their way into White scholars' work, regardless of our level of openness. It seems a key time to model vulnerability and subjectivity in our scholarship, as Indigenous scholars are noting the inherent inequalities of White scholarship that do not consider the affective labor with which Indigenous scholars are constantly tasked, as shown in the meme screenshot above.

In order to rationalize and protect the strong affective experience we had with problematic music repertoire and performances, an affective shield is often placed around those precious experiences via what Sianne Ngai calls "ugly feelings"—"feelings…[that] are explicitly amoral and noncathartic, offering no satisfactions of virtue, however oblique, nor any therapeutic or purifying release. In fact, most of these feelings tend to interfere with the outpouring of other emotions" (2005, 6–7). Ngai notes that these "ugly feelings" can allow people the latitude to ignore key aspects of power within art and politics, and can downplay the moral prerogatives of cultural inclusion (Ibid., 3). My own feelings, just before I presented at the conference mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, were, I confess, ugly ones. I felt a mixture of what Ngai calls "anxiety" and "irritation" that "Courante," a piece so dramatically moving to me as a woman and a participant in and lover of choralism, could be considered extractive or harmful. What would that mean about my own response to the work?

In *Loving Music Till It Hurts,* William Cheng discusses impulses to "protect" our musical affective experiences, and, indeed, perhaps protect the music itself in a misguided

anthropomorphized understanding of art as its own entity, subjectified because of the way it makes us feel:

> As music vibrates our bodies sympathetically, it can move us to react empathetically. When we perceive our beloved music hurting, we hurt a little, too. It sounds illogical. We know music isn't truly an organism, so we should rest easy knowing it's free of pain receptors. In another sense, the fantasy is not strange at all. As a companion, music can do so much for us, mean so much to us, and even grant us a profound sense of self and humanity. We feel called to love and protect music, as parents would defend their young, or as lovers would guard each other. (2020, 2)

It seems that my "ugly feelings," which Ngai claims can resist catharsis or emotional release, were being used to discount the affective content of Indigenous intervention in "Courante." I used these feelings to shield the memory of how moved I was in hearing "Courante" unexpectedly and for the first time. As a defensive mechanism, this move may have indeed, as Cheng suggests, assumed that the music itself (and perhaps the composer, the ensemble, and experimental art music in general) needs protection from those who claim affection for it.

It took over two years to come to some kind of understanding surrounding the complexities of power dynamics, hegemonies, and affective shifts inherent in the work and my response to it. And, I will confess, I still find "Courante" effectively moving to this day, albeit a complicated and bittersweet pleasure.

In this work, I have attempted to be vulnerable about my own affective experience, and the recalibration that was necessary to center appropriately on Indigenous affective experience of Shaw's "Courante." This investigation illustrates our own blindness to hegemonic systems and asks us to examine how our feeling/affect is accomplished as artists and scholars. It also highlights the ways that we become protective of musical experiences to which we have attached strong positive affective memories.

The same scrutiny is needed in new arenas of performance and composition. As Roomful of Teeth stretches the boundaries of space, body, and voice, powerfully guiding affect in choral performance, new ethical responsibilities emerge. The group, and composers working with them, are ethically called to think more about how their approach to choralism puts traditional choral performance in relation with non-Western, non-hegemonic modes of voicing; how that juxtaposition speaks differently to different communities; and how they must be mindful and respectful of those affective power imbalances. Each circumstance of cultural intersection and appropriation in music, as in art, must be queried beyond its affective content and effectiveness for those favored by a possessive investment in whiteness—and, as Robinson suggests, many circumstances call for refusal (both for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people) to further protect Indigenous ways of life and thought and to make room for resurgence. Choralism, as I have stressed throughout this dissertation, is a powerful force in these cultural interrogations and in guiding affective regimes. This disruption and rerouting of affective regimes surrounding performance, as Ana Hofman suggests in a different context, allows "choirs [to] produce a fictional space positioned in the interplay between experience and expectation, memory and possibility, bringing new dimensions into the politics of the future through a reconnection with the past" (2020, 102). With this power comes responsibility. We—scholars, artists, cultural consumers—must ask ourselves, *whose* past? *Whose* future?

* * *

Choralism throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, as discussed early in this chapter, provided an alternative to traditional choralism by proposing the physical emplacement of prolonged cluster chords, a relational pairing with tonal harmony relying on the overtone series for physical imbrication. And, later on, Roomful of Teeth proposed another set of vocalities and spatialization that could be placed in relation with traditional choralism to create specific affective shifts through unexpected embodiment and sonic engagement. The works that Roomful of Teeth commission and perform rely on an audience with at least broad understandings of the traditions of Western choralism to make the juxtaposition between acoustic and virtual space, and open vowels and non-hegemonic vocalities, affectively evocative. Construction of these affective regimes as they are liberated from traditionalism but still rely on tradition to be effective must also instigate a concept of ethics that guides these interactions and intercessions.

Increasingly, connections between voice, space, affect, and ethics are being considered in choral practice. These considerations give rise to an entirely new era of semi-professional and professional choralism devoted specifically to social justice, equity, environmentalist, and reconciliation aims, with choirs building performances around particular activist or advocacy aims and honing their messages around carefully considered affective regimes and ruptures. The next chapter will show how these ethical considerations surrounding affective shifts are key in these groups' endeavors—as are experimental uses of voice, some of which have already been highlighted in my analyses here. As I have shown in this chapter, however, the ethical considerations of affect—as well as appropriation and embodiment—will persist in experimental choralism and vocality due to a newly-heightened awareness not only of the vocalities used in performance, but of how, why, and for what ends, they are employed.

Chapter 5

Sounding Good? Experiences Within Choral Activism and Advocacy

And I went down to the demonstration
To get my fair share of abuse
Singing, "We're gonna vent our frustration
If we don't we're gonna blow a fifty-amp fuse"
-"You Can't Always Get What You Want," The Rolling Stones

"You can't always get what you want—but if you try sometimes, you get what you need." The Rolling Stones point out the odd paradox of engaging with others and recognizing our own subjectivity and theirs. As the cornerstone of choral praxis as I have defined and described it in this work, the recognition and renegotiation of self and other as mutable and part of a situated space, place, and time is a key aspect of group voicing. It is also a prime dimension of group protest and activism, particularly in the use of voice as a catalyst for change. The idea that *not* voicing about discontent and injustice might "blow a fifty-amp fuse" indicates that, yes, the voice is a powerful catalyst. But the statement also shows how the release of voicing is in aid of the *voicer,* even if it may have effects that could aid others who cannot use their voices in service of justice. While we may not get what we want when voicing dissent—political gains or changes, end to violence or injustice—we can, in some circumstances, "get what we need" in the affective release valve within the voicing itself.

Therefore, it is important to consider the new wave of activist/advocacy choirs in the US and around the world, groups that espouse political, social, and ecological agendas within their performance practices, repertoire, and even, in some cases, in their operating structures and ethos. What are these groups accomplishing, both by declaring what they "want" and by getting what they "need" in choral social justice engagements? How do singers affectively

experience these endeavors through curating their voices, and how may those affective experiences ally with their outward goals of advocacy?

This final chapter is the most affectively bound to me as the teller and curator of these tales, enmeshed within my own experiences as a member of Boston-based activist/advocacy choir Voices 21C. My inclusion within the group over the last several years, throughout the duration of my PhD efforts, has guided so many of my thoughts in other aspects of this broader work, alongside other choral efforts that I have not discussed in this dissertation. The radically subjective approach I take in this writing, and the insistence on first-person voice, is in an effort to avoid the distancing language of the academy; I was not a witness and/or interpreter only. I was a feeling, listening, and voicing participant.

Throughout this chapter, I reflect on my own earlier written work and related projects that chart a course through my fieldwork differently than the previous chapters have allowed. By including fragments of conference papers, an article written for *SEM Student News* in totality, and images of the program I designed for a Voices 21C performance, I am attempting to break up the smoothed-over narratives of ethnographic scholarship. Through this, I endeavor to show how my own viewpoints and corresponding affects have altered throughout the course of my fieldwork with the ensemble, and how my affective and intellectual engagements with the group have not been static or even stable. By including these artifacts, I hope to invite the reader to move through the landscape of choral advocacy efforts *with me*, as opposed to presenting foregone conclusions about a narrative that I have settled upon for this scholarship. In some cases, I use footnotes to call attention to these areas. This approach is, I hope, inviting readers into the affects and timeline of my own experiences by exposing different intended uses and audiences for the scholarship I include

here, and also serves as a reminder that all scholarship likely has the same cracks underneath the surface, no matter how well plastered over within scholarly narratives and theoretical connections. I hope to show that efforts within scholarship, as well as in activism, keenly benefits from constant reconsideration, situational positioning, and resistance of fixed narrative, either in our own fieldwork experiences or in theoretical approach.

Many of my experiences with the group have been marked by ambivalence. First, what did it mean that I was participating in the group and also including my experiences as "fieldwork" for dissertation efforts? A composer/performer colleague in the group once challenged me, over a glass of wine: "So, you're only doing this for the research, extracting from what we do?" My response was layered; I explained that performance, and time spent with large numbers of people, is nerve-wracking for me, producing anxieties that I often had to emotionally logisticize around in order to participate fully and openly within the ensemble's rehearsals, tours, and performances. The ethical concerns that she voiced—that I wasn't really invested, and remained a detached observer—had also worried me. To fully "buy in" to the experiences with Voices 21C, I was constantly creating and reworking a personal moral code for participating with the group that fully exposed my own personality, vocal ability (or lack thereof), and emotional/affective state within discussions and rehearsals, as this seemed a key component to working in good faith within Voices 21C. Predicating constant vigilance, this code of conduct and attention kept me present in rehearsals, but often in-my-head and nervous before and after I worked within the group, worried about my overall impact on the group as an academic researcher, my vocal ability and aesthetic, and concerns about my ambivalence toward the "activist/advocacy" messages that are the hallmark of this organization. Adding to paranoia that comes with traveling on

red-eye flights from LAX to BOS for rehearsal weekends caused me to become an affective battle-ground as I tried to sort out my introverted tendencies, my responsibilities and privileges as a “researcher,” and also the dues owed to the group.

Ambivalence about “activism” and “advocacy” through choral praxis, repertoire, pedagogy, and performance have been a primary locus for deep thought and affective triage during my time with Voices 21C. When I first joined the ensemble in 2016, the same year the that Voices21C was founded, I was concerned that the group might be an organization of singers who wanted to feel satisfied within their musical investments by broadcasting their political views and activist interests. This, I worried, was performative in a way that precluded effective change or conversation. Dramatizing others’ painful, traumatic, and/or violence-ridden situations—refugees, the incarcerated, queer folks and women—to gain a boost of smug pride about their investment in social justice issues seemed likely and integrally problematic. What does an activist/advocacy choir actually offer to the people who are habitually marginalized by structures and institutions like Boston University where many of our rehearsals took place, or the university at which I was studying, the University of California, Santa Barbara, for that matter? How much of these efforts were the result of a masturbatory inclination to broadcast moral superiority and chide audiences for their lack of investment or action? Would we have audiences that weren’t already to some extent aware of and receptive to these types of messages? In summary, what do choral ensembles with activist/advocacy aims offer to make a substantial difference—and is that the point at all?

Throughout my fieldwork, I observed engagements with socially-conscious repertoire and performance practices in several instances with choirs that are *not* explicitly activist/advocacy ensembles according to their mission statements or outward publicity. For

example, Roomful of Teeth's performance of Lang's *The Little Match Girl Passion* could be read as a protest against neoliberal privileging of ambition and self-interest over community care, and this was how it was discussed in rehearsal curation. And after the scandals involving Roomful of Teeth, Caroline Shaw and Brad Wells, and "Courante" (discussed in the previous chapter), the ensemble has shifted its practices to privilege new compositions commissioned from BIPOC and Indigenous composers and artists. However, that move seems explicitly reactive to previous issues, rather than reflecting an overarching ethos that Roomful of Teeth has espoused since its inception.

Rather than focusing on ensembles that may connect with social justice or activist causes as an ancillary effort to their overall goals/mission statement, this chapter highlights a group for which activist/advocacy is a primary goal, supported in different ways via choice of repertoire, performance practices, and discussion throughout the rehearsal process. I offer some more traditional ethnography about Voices 21C, but broaden the discussion beyond ethnographic participation-observation to ask questions about what activist/advocacy efforts via choralism offer. By discussing how *I* have changed through the process of singing with this group, I hope to address the gentle queries and suggestions in William Cheng's *Just Vibrations: The Purpose of Sounding Good* (2016). Cheng writes:

> People and musical pieces are obviously different entities, yet people routinely identify *with* music and identify *as* musical, sounding out subjectivities through melodies, lyrics, and bodies. Without painting an exceptionalism portrait of musicianship, is it possible that people who work with music for a living can lead by example in agendas of interpersonal care and communication? Could we go beyond modest understandings of empathy as a complement to musicality, and venture empathy *as* a resonant form of musicality? If part of musicianship can involve listening for better worlds, then musicology has the potential to initiate various progressive currents in ethics and critical thinking. To be clear, this isn't saying that music makes us good people. It's saying that certain aural positions may hold profound uses outside the music classroom, and that as much as anyone else, musicians and music scholars already recognize the immense challenges and rewards of listening creatively and caringly. (10)

Cheng points to the way that bodies are included in the questions of community investment, ethics, and sound. "Beyond questions of words and feelings, *Just Vibrations* reimagines the viability of solidarity and optimism through our pressures to sound good and hear good in daily life, where *sounding* and *hearing* signify more capaciously than as the literal faculties of able minds and bodies" (Ibid., 9). He asks how, and whether, investments in socially-organized sound—music included—can prepare us to be more earnest and caring in our daily lives and within our local and global perspectives. "I've been led to wonder, therefore, whether musical skills ever enable or prime us to listen better to *people* and to take up love's labors more broadly" (Ibid., 10).

In conversation with Cheng's questions, I think of this chapter as a "thought experiment with nerve endings," the bookend to the Eton Choirbook historical "thought experiment" that forms the core of Chapter 1. My imagination could roam more or less unchecked in the Eton Choirbook example due to temporal distances from materials and affective investments of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century England. However, the affective and ethical heft of participating in a social justice choir has come with personal reckonings, emotional modulations, redistributed subjectivities, liminal ever-shifting engagements, and the development of situational codes of ethics at every turn. The exposed nerve endings in this experiment are my own, and centering them within this work have pushed me to identify and interrogate the sensations and emotions that allow me to navigate both choral participation and social activism and advocacy.

I do not, and will not in this chapter, claim that choralism in itself as a practice is inherently a force for "good" in the world. Claims of automatic community via choir membership (as discussed in Chapter 2) is always circumspective, and therefore

exclusionary. Even when choirs are claiming social justice, activist, and/or advocacy claims, there is a complex nexus of powerful hegemonies, reification of colonized hierarchies and repertoire, and privileging of imperial thought embedded in choral praxis and the practices reactive to those traditions. Even the singers and programmers who work against these colonial aims are working *reactively*. Voicer-curators are recognizing, and perhaps more important, expecting audience recognition of, the traditions of choralism in order for their departures to be legible as "alternative." As Engelhardt, Bancroft, Rule, and Wang definitively state multiple times in a 2022 article, "chorality is ethically neutral" (76, twice on 78, 83, 93).

> Much work on chorality dwells on its integrative, inclusive, efficacious aspects, as if the "anticipatory assimilation" of a voice into a community is "so powerfully unifying" because it is simply a matter of voicing and recognition. We are more hesitant about chorality's ethical potentials. Our both-and approach upholds chorality as collective and collected. By collective, we mean voicing something in common as an otherwise heterogenous multitude; a mergence of bodies and voices around a common purpose, sentiment, or belief. And by collected, we mean voices curated, shaped, excluded, or silenced relative to a sonic ideal or ideology; a conglomerate of bodies and voices brought within or kept without. Whether one is part of chorality's grasp or positioned outside its sonic-social world, chorality, in its institutional and spontaneous forms, lasts as long as its common cause or common sound. (Ibid., 78)

In this article, the four scholars fight a specter that haunts general popular conceptualizations of choralism: that choralism is a simile for community in harmony, demonstrative of collective strength and support, direct representational democracy, and that choirs, in themselves, are physical and ideological manifestations of these virtues. In popular reckonings that often serve to guide choral singer and aficionados' discussion of choralism, community, and feeling, these shibboleths are repeated *ad nauseam*, to the point that they become hackneyed and increasingly removed from a modern understanding of colonial and imperial power structures where distrust of societal norms has become ubiquitous and

pervasive. However, this language has become a shorthand substitute for the embodied and memorialized meaning inherent in choralism (as demonstrated in previous chapters), a set of metaphors that often obscure the far more complex dynamics of power and feeling embodied in choral praxis but which serve as a placeholder that can connect one singer/experiencer to another.

The entrenched assumption of virtue around choralism provides a specific challenge to scholars, particularly ethnomusicologists who have been entrained to privilege the people we observe, interview, and with whom we develop relationships, and around whom we center our scholarship. As an ethnomusicologist, it is hard to ignore these "choralism as virtue" intimations and arguments when it's the folks you're trying to represent with accuracy and integrity who posit them. It has seemed throughout my own observations that it is important to wade through these assertions to the personal affects and investments that underpin them, and to question how these perceptions color singer/listener engagements with choralism in important, meaningful, and sometimes overwhelmingly emotional, ways. In his investigation of congregational musical practices in Mennonite communities in Alberta (2018), Jonathan Dueck includes a quote from a choral director that indicates the intensity of reaction congregant-singers experience in the midst of rite-based choralism at First Mennonite Church:

> We started out at a rip-roaring pace and in the last verse we broadened that thing out to just as majestic as you can imagine. That place was packed. Everybody was singing at the top of what they sing, and we just [he pauses and inhales deeply and dramatically] . . . It was really something else . . . The congregational singing was just amazing and the people that came back were just thrilled. (165–166)

Making the choice to include this quote in his final chapter, Dueck has privileged dialogue that refuses to metaphorize about choral "meaning" and, rather, discusses the power

of the experience through a specific refusal to ascribe meaning. By describing this moment of overwhelming sound, physical engagement, and emotion, the director (who is not named) simply refuses to go beyond "…it was something else…" in reckoning with the meanings inherent in choral physicality, musicality, repertoire, cultural competency, and repertoire. Though it seems that this quote could be easily left out of scholarly work, omitted for lack of "content," the director's (and Dueck's) refusal to diminish the experience by ascribing an immutable crystallized "meaning" is one of the more striking and illuminating inclusions in the chapter.

In my fieldwork, I have avoided many of the issues described above because professional choral singers tend to reckon with their efforts and contributions a little differently than amateur or community singers who have peopled most ethnographic scholarship around choralism. Though professional and semi-professional singers may hold opinions about "community," "virtue," or even "ethical neutrality" around choralism, their efforts generally lie elsewhere—particularly in the curation of sound via embodied vocalism and relational adjustment (though they wouldn't use these terms either). By listening to rehearsal processes and discussions and basing interview questions or casual inquiries around what I hear and see, and asking for further explanation rather than for open-ended rumination, I have shaped my scholarship around my own understandings of rehearsal interactions. This is a double-edged sword, in terms of "biased" scholarship. Because I have attempted to describe some of the physical and emotional structures that animate choralism, a strong confirmation bias is built into my systems of listening and questioning. However, I hope that my own experiences with semi-professional choralism—etched before my research began—have provided the skills for a scholarly iteration of "diagnostic embodiment" that allows me to attempt

interpretation of what I observe, question, privilege, and feel in my fieldwork with professional groups. This approach moves beyond the recognition of positionality and personal reflexivity in scholarly work in that it moves beyond simple chronicling of my affective experiences in fieldwork. I have attempted to dig into the meanings, forces, and regimes behind my own affective experience, and integrated them into the theoretical constructs that I have proposed throughout this dissertation. Essentially an act of self-study within the broader studies of this work, I am acknowledging the frames in which I myself exist and trying to learn, as best I can, to understand why I think through affect the way that I do as I participate in an activist/advocacy choir and also as I work within academia.

This approach to scholarship in the humanities is far from unprecedented. Following the example of comparative literature scholar Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht (2004), I have found in expanding degrees throughout my trajectories of scholarly thought—and visible in the morphing tone moving through the chapters of this work—that understanding and experience, along with analysis and meaning, is always personal and relational. Gumbrecht's identification of materialism, periodicity, and historicization as prognostication as key fallacies of humanistic study has further animated the fields of performance studies and ancillary parts of affect theory and sound studies investigations. The extremely personal and confessional nature of this chapter is meant to harness the skill sets and developing (though imperfect) self-awareness that has grown through my studies and research into something that can address some situational aspects of affective regimes which intimate a less operationalized or manipulative set of mechanisms) in the body, voices, times, places and spaces that I have inhabited and exhibited.

Throughout this chapter, I am responding to the experiences I had with Voices 21C with

a dialogic "ear" (both metaphorical and sonic), picking through several lines of discussion and thought that have come up with others or have occurred to me as a scholar, singer, and individual trying to build an ethical investment in the world in which I live. Within this broader project I have tied choralism to sonic physical experience and affective mechanisms, and suggested that these cultural-historical structures of feeling and the more gravitational concerns of physical sensation and sound curation are enmeshed, bound in systems that can, at any time, be cultural, political, social, personal, collective, exclusionary and/or inclusionary, global and/or local, communal and/or isolationist, via memory, aesthetics, sonic acoustics, and relational interaction. If this is the case, then choralism, by means of the specificity wrought in diagnostic embodiment and the physical and metaphorical reckonings with combinatory "voice," may be both locus and instigation for "empathy *as* a resonant form of musicality" (Cheng 2016, 10). While chorality is, indeed, "ethically neutral," can it be a gateway to a different type of listening and sounding based on ethics within specific engagements with activist and advocacy attempts, due to its specificity as a liminal, relational, and meditative practice?

Of course, the answer is "perhaps." As with all situational engagements, choralism can do many things at once even for one person, and offers kaleidoscopic possibilities for different participants. I can only speak to my own experiences, what my fellow Voices 21C singers and directors say about their experiences, and how the ensemble collates and curates discussion about activist/advocacy aims and performance goals. This is a difficult proposition, and one that relies on an openness and vulnerability in this scholarship-memoir (as it moves away from the overarching claims in the earlier chapters) that entirely depends on the generosity of you, the reader, to resist what Cheng (2016), via Sedgwick (1997) and

Bersani (1990), calls "paranoid readings:"

> Paranoid impulses lurk in the recesses of academia. Years ago, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick came up with the term *paranoid reading* to describe the mainstream strategies of modern critical scholarship. Academics, according to Sedgwick, are trained to write in a manner that preemptively repels potential knocks against their work. With abundant qualifiers, quotes, caveats, and precautionary self-disparagement, the savvy scholar anticipates and suppresses others' grievances before they can be aired. Building on the ideas of Melanie Klein, Sedgwick found problems with these bids for power and, even more so, with aspirations to omnipotence. As Heather Love puts it, paranoid readings involve "familiar academic protocols like maintaining critical distance, outsmarting (and other forms of one-upmanship), refusing to be surprised (or if you are, then not letting on), believing the hierarchy, becoming boss." Paranoid work desires authority. Driven by negative affects and a "hermeneutics of suspicion," such scholarship aims to outfox, to enact power, and to produce results beyond reproach. It embodies a form of "strong theory" that is expository, generalizable, and glaringly ambitious, "disavowing its affective motive and force, and masquerading as the very stuff of truth." (Cheng 2016, 3–4)

The scholarship above, with the exception of Cheng's reinscription, is not particularly new. These discussions blossomed in affect theory, feminist, and queer scholarship forty years ago. And yet, defensive writing and paranoid reading practices have only continued, valorized in graduate student classrooms, encouraged in publication draft and review processes, instigated in fieldwork approaches, used as a cudgel to discourage creative engagement and enthusiasm for critical theory conversations that still allow room for community investment and care. And as Cheng points out as he internalizes Heather Love's invocation of the hermeneutics of suspicion (Love 2010, 236), it is those who are most paranoid that often gain positions of power and become the most debilitatingly critical and insecure scholars and academic community members, due to hegemonic systems of academia favoring "ownership" or "mastery" of ideas:

> By actively mining for the threats in the world, practitioners of paranoid readings rarely fail to unearth the truths that they are chasing. With seductive rhetoric and logic, they produce self-satisfying critiques, which in turn affirm, after the fact, that no one can ever be paranoid enough. (Cheng 2016, 4)

Decades before Cheng's work, Sedgwick suggested an alternative binary to destructive paranoia—"reparative readings" (1997), after work done by Melanie Klein in the 1940s and '50s. Sedgwick infers that the "repair" suggested in "reparative" is not about reinforcing our uncritical affinities for the subjects and objects that focus and inhabit our research—also known as "loving music till it hurts" the communities around it, in William Cheng's 2019 reckoning of the same name—but rather a generosity and collaborative critical investment in the things we engage with:

> No less acute than a paranoid position, no less realistic, no less attached to a project of survival, and neither less nor more delusional or fantasmatic, the reparative reading position undertakes a different range of affects, ambitions, and risks. What we can best learn from such practices are, perhaps, the many ways in which selves and communities succeed in extracting sustenance from the objects of a culture—even of a culture whose avowed desire has often been not to sustain them. (Sedgwick 1997, 35)

Why have I spent countless (er, actually not—3,500 and counting) words laying out a proposition for reparative, rather than paranoid, scholarship?

Because in participating with Voices 21C I had to retrain, and even destroy and reconstruct, my own critical frameworks from paranoid to reparative, addressing the questions I pose above earlier in the chapter with humility rather than smug superiority, situational awareness rather than omnipotent authority; building personal/professional ethics that could guide me as I went. I was aided in doing so by choral skills, including diagnostic embodiment in physical and affective atmospheres. I have needed to learn to sit with affective (physical/mental/emotional) discomfort as I worked through my own personal reckonings with privilege, whiteness, and ambivalence—and to diagnose what these affects were, how they motivated me, and whether they could and should be rerouted to be of better service to others and a more just and joyful world.

This last chapter cannot espouse the same form as the previous ones simply because I was embedded in the process in a different way. It is not only due to the fact that I was a participant-observer rather than a witness only, though that shift has been discussed often in the Mantle Hood (1960) lineage of participant-observation in ethnomusicology as a foundational aspect of research in this vein. It was also because of the engagements that Voices 21C seemed to require of me as a contributing, sentient individual as well as a singer-performer. Moving through my engagements (and eventual fieldwork) with Voices 21C, I felt called to enact a personal comprehension and code of ethics around how to participate in the group and what my "job" was as an individual "voice" in the V21C cohort as a singer and also as someone who listens and feels through the group's activist/advocacy commentary and aims. Listening, in my conceptualization of ethics within the V21C paradigm, is of the utmost importance— as a singer, a thinker, and an empathetic community participant.

Brandon LaBelle theorizes the act of "listening" as a primary step in individual navigation and renegotiation of power structures in everyday life, and suggests that sound is a part of that process (though not totally encompassing it):

> […]turning to sound as a medium and topic, as an acoustic question, I work at elaborating its force as one that also turns us toward each other in ever-demanding and ever-enriching ways. A turning that contributes to the power as well as to the paying of attention. The notion of "paying attention" is suggestive for understanding attention as an act, a gesture, and also an economy; it underscores attention as contributing to a balancing of power, of relational intensities and struggles, of ethical responsiveness and interpersonal engagement. In listening, as that moment of turning, or of being turned, one pays into the economy of attention, animating the social and common bonds to which one is indebted. (2021, 2–3)

LaBelle points to an ethics that doesn't only include listening—it makes listening, and interpretation, fundamental to moral structures and considerations of community and care. His project relies on a connection between sound, affect, and politics that can, he claims,

construct situationally-invested, nuanced, and constantly-(re)considered moral/ethical stances on responsibility and privilege. He terms this possibility "acoustic justice," defined as a "view onto the ongoing birth of civic or common life by attending to the ways in which the power of people is figured and refigured through a relation to sound, audibility, attunement, interruption, and the arrangements we make to hear something different, as well as to hear differently" (Ibid., 2). "Attention is a nurturing act," LaBelle claims, "providing the basis for learning, for knowing, and for understanding. In this sense, it works at extending oneself: toward other knowledges, other viewpoints, other ways of living" (Ibid., 4). Labelle's concept makes situational interpretation an ethical imperative, which disallows for unexamined consumption of materials and experiences.

Taking LaBelle's "acoustic justice" and listening practices into account makes it all the easier to claim that choralism and "diagnostic embodiment" can lead to more meaningful and helpful engagements with power, privilege, and responsibility. I have demonstrated throughout this work that choralism, as a practice, relies on physical, mental, and emotional diagnostics and calibration, which in itself is embedded in "listening" practices—listening to the space, to other singers, to one's own voice (as imbricated with others or in solo manifestation), to individual physical, memorialized, and emotional experience, to calibrate collaborative and effective artistic mechanisms and goals. It seems that, given how much of the choral practice in this form and at this level is founded on developing, honing and reimagining these multiple kinds of listening investments and skills, choralism can be a defined gateway toward the "acoustic justice" paradigm that LaBelle suggests.

I say "can" twice in the previous paragraph, because this is not a catch-all experience. Simply because several valences of listening are developed through choralism doesn't

automatically lead to nuanced consideration of social justice issues, power dynamics, colonialism/imperialism, race relations, climate change concerns, etc., and our own personal responsibility within these challenges. Taking that step requires considerable work and practice—in research/knowledge building, developing desire to consider uncomfortable ideas and question comfortable hegemonies, deliberately engaging with people that often aren't included in choral communities of care, and many other areas—that makes these efforts akin to a meditative outreach practice. Meditative because it is personal, embodied, emotional, mentally-taxing, difficult work that can only be done by an individual reckoning with the most intimate and unflattering parts of themselves; outreach because it draws participants outside of their comfort zones to interact with a broader world and the beings that live in it, without the safeguards of inattention that generally make the world an easy place to navigate for so many of us. Choralism is "ethically neutral." But, when combined with activist/advocacy aims, choralism may be harnessed to reconsideration and reconstruction of situational and grounded ethics when singers and listeners focus their attention and deliberately work to avoid the pitfalls of ego and insularity.

In this, more than any other, chapter of the dissertation, it seems paramount to let readers into that process, and invite them to the kind of reparative reading, thinking, and feeling that goes beyond "reflexivity" to relational and liminal intersubjectivity birthed through responsibility of care to those with whom we interact in all the worlds in which we move and feel called to invest our energies. Emotionally-open creative collaboration can breed exuberant, and often prolifically generative, interdisciplinary and cross-cultural possibilities. My ideas and writing in this chapter are vulnerably porous, and will be understood in a variety of ways by different readers, even if they are seeking to dismantle arguments in

service of ego or "mastery." However, generous reparative reading that meets me in this vulnerable state can reward gentle scholars keen to avoid the aggressive de(con)structive approach to scholarship that is a hallmark of aggressive academicism. The above request to readers is not meant as a (paranoid) bid to suspend your critical engagement with the ideas and descriptions in this work. I fully *hope* that readers will question—redirect—redefine this work as they read. Scholars can only become *less* afraid of reader critique when we trust them to invest without the need for mastery, omnipotence, theoretical bludgeons, etc. However, in this "thought exercise with nerve endings" request for reparative reading, I hope you perceive vestiges of the humbling process I had to follow throughout my participation with Voices 21C. My work with the group has not made me question *less*. I now question *differently*, and entertain a meta-narrative about my affective and psychological motives for each line of questioning. It is this double-layer of gentle yet surgically-specific inquiry that forms the ethics I built around working within, describing, and theorizing about the group. Cauterizing as I go, I try to activate the nerve endings as I work through the thought experiment, and show you what I feel, hear, and see to interpret.

Case Study: Voices 21C at the Rochester ACDA Conference, March 2020[30]

Voices 21C, led by Artistic Director and Ethnomusicologist André de Quadros, recontextualizes sound and performance practice that deliberately shifts affective regimes away from traditionalism to call attention to the inequalities and violences wrought by

[30] Sections of this chapter were written in 2019 as a portion of a conference paper, offered in conjunction with a discussion about Roomful of Teeth and "Courante." I note these sections in lighter text here. This is a tool to show how this scholarship has evolved over time, and how my own modes of thought have developed as I think through this event—always changing, hopefully allowing my viewpoints and feelings to morph rather than immutably crystallize. It's also an interesting contrast between the writer's "voice" I adopt(ed) for conference paper legibility and authority versus the less outwardly-confident voice of the sections I am currently writing.

imperialism, racial enslavement, and xenophobia. In March 2020, the American Choral Directors Association (or "ACDA") met in Rochester, New York, and the group was commissioned to be one of two invited choirs on the program. I have been a member of Voices 21C since its conception in 2016, and participated in the development, rehearsal process, and final performances of this project.

Voices 21C was founded on ideas about social justice and equality that inform performance practice, programming, and the group's overarching narrative, as well as group functions and ethos. Each program they formulate contains "sets" of pieces linked by a common theme, and connected through various types of movement, theatrical engagement, and, sometimes, literal narration, highlighting cultural context that relates to the pieces and the theme. When the group was invited to perform, they were asked by conference organizers to create a program about "social justice."

I became involved with this program in the fall of 2019, six months before the ACDA Conference. De Quadros, along with Bradford Dumont and Krystal Morin—who collaborate on artistic decisions for the group, and eventually settled on the title "Artistic Leadership Committee" for the printed program—conceived of a three-set performance that would be entirely memorized and choreographed and would present three social-justice issue areas, one in each set. As a part of the ensemble's "mission statement"—or perhaps their "contract" with their members is more accurate—there is a mandate to share opinions and collaborate with the artistic leadership as they shape programs, to bring up concerns or suggestions as we feel called to do so. Several folks, in lead-up emails and our first rehearsal, were concerned about the length of the program—an hour, memorized, with choreography and three full sets with numerous shifts of feeling and focus—and I myself expressed major concerns around

the length, arguing that the stamina needed was perhaps too much to bear through in a way that would best musically represent us. The American Choral Directors Association was, and is, notoriously judgmental around the aesthetics of sound and performance presented at these conferences, and since we were an invited (meaning, paid) ensemble, we had a lot to uphold in terms of a musical reputation, I argued.

Musical precision and sonic aesthetics are of a secondary priority for Voices 21C. Though the group is almost exclusively peopled by singers who are music educators and choral directors—with a few composers and academics thrown in—much of the rehearsal time in the group is spent on group conversation, improvisatory exercises (vocal as well as theater-derived), and some rehearsal on pieces that are deemed musically tricky. The expectation is that each singer will arrive with pieces memorized from their own practice, and that the limited rehearsal time the group has together will be spent in developing the performative and theoretical aspects of the performance via these group conversations around the issues to be highlighted in the performance sets.

This has always been a difficult aspect for me in working with Voices 21C. My own love of choralism and choral practice had been developed through invested musical rehearsal practice that emphasized music study, practice, sonic relationality, and a private responsibility to engage with the broader ensemble to create a specific aggregate sound. I loved, and still love, this paradigm. The process of building something with others, through vocal and sonic means, small adjustments, musical gnostics and drastics (see Abbate 2004), gave me so much as a socially-anxious, body-conscious, depressive teenager that still helps me to negotiate my own identity and usefulness as a voice, a body, a person. The satisfaction I feel as everyone builds to a nexus of relational understandings and physical engagements

with musical scores guiding us is fundamental to my love of choralism, as are the physical and affective manifestations of resonance that I mention in Chapter 1 of this dissertation. Enjoying individual music preparation and study, group rehearsal, and interpretive decisions-making (as is possible in smaller ensembles) via discussion and individual nuance is not the primary goal or value of this ensemble. These are secondary, or even tertiary concerns to Voices 21C.

The primary motivators for Voices 21C seem to be two-fold. On the one hand, encouraging singer-participants in the ensemble to deeply consider various forms of identified violence, inequality and inequity, insecurity, persecution, and systemic erasures and injustices, and to find ways of naming and expressing our relationships, reactions, and responsibilities to and within these harmful systems. And on the other, finding ways of encouraging audiences, via choral-dramatic performances, to engage openly and deeply with the same systems we ourselves have investigated in rehearsals. I felt strongly that in the 2020 ACDA performance we had to demonstrate a level of well-practiced choralism that offered solid vocal performances and sonic experiences for our audiences. Because these audiences, made up of choral directors and educators, would be highly distracted if these elements were lacking, they might discount or disengage with the more pointed social justice themes of the concert. I also firmly believe(d) that the honed physical experience of choralism via the spatial aspects of a performance venue and the embodied mechanics of the overtone series is far more effective in inviting audiences to reach a meditative state, and thus to *feel through* the performance and the ethical calls that underpin it. (These cultural and sonic means of engaging with other singers and an audience via connotative ritual are discussed extensively in Chs 1 and 2, and complicated in Ch 4.)

The concerns that I voiced regarding the length and complexity of the program were shared by others in the group, but the ensemble's artistic team—particularly Krystal Morin and Bradford Dumont, both accomplished conductor/directors and music educators—worked to assuage the group's fears and to build an impressive three-set program that addressed distinct issues of societal injustice. Each set was made up of works that were contrasting in musical content to avoid being either "boring" or "depressing" repertoire aggregates when addressing difficult themes and topics. There was also a variety of suggested movement levels discussed between singers (artistic leads included) for each piece individually and each set as a whole.

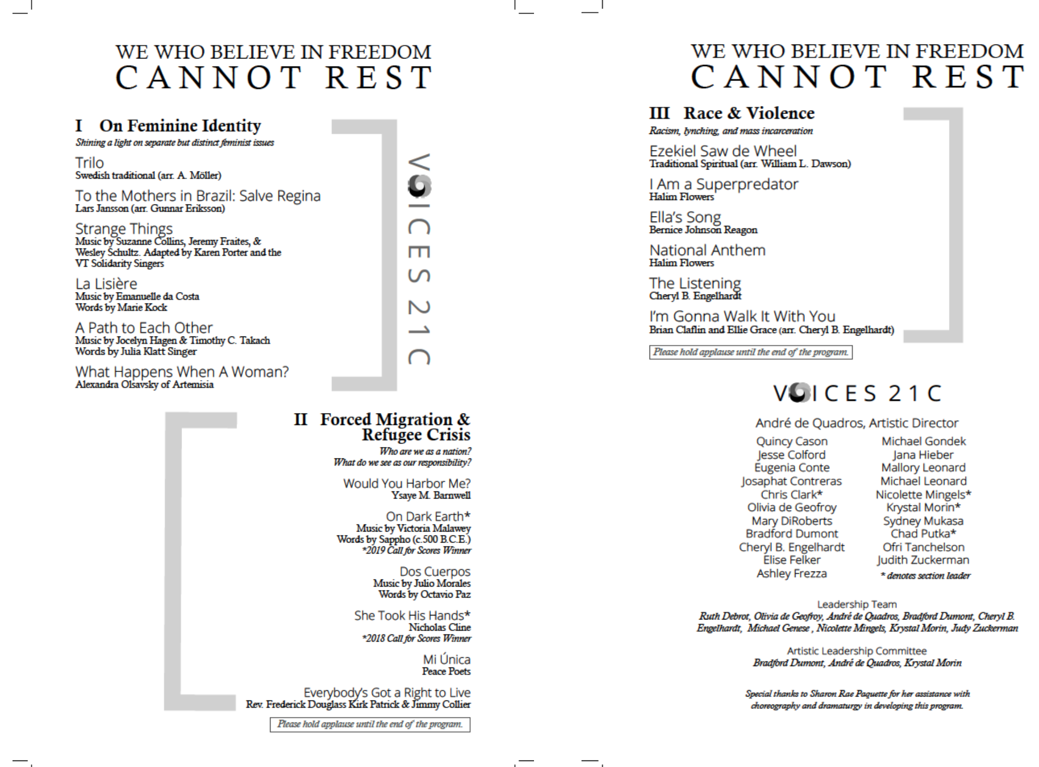
The movement aspects of Voices 21C is another deviation from what director de Quadros and other founding members see as a hegemonically dominant form of choralism with a "stand and sing to the audience" visual aesthetic that, they feel, is off-putting, overly-traditional and formal, and does little to express or incite emotion from audiences. I myself think that movement can be effective, but that sometimes sonic and affective considerations benefit from a more static approach that encourages singer interconnection and sonic "mixing" in the space that allows for nuanced diagnostic embodiment that I discuss elsewhere in this dissertation. I did express some concerns about movement during ensemble discussions, urging us as a group to have different ways of engaging with the audience and using movement when we have specific curatorial goals in mind rather than always moving to avoid being like other choirs (a reactionary move, rather than one based in creative communication). These conversations were common during rehearsals, and all singers were encouraged to participate as repertoire, narrative creation, transitional flow between pieces, and different "moods," "vibes," "feelings," or "focus" were discussed. However, my

viewpoints were often somewhat idiosyncratic compared to those voiced by the rest of the group—not necessarily quarrelsome, but often working from a slightly different angle than others, bringing up issues and questions that hadn't already been raised. This was discussed, even touted, by artistic director de Quadros in moments of acknowledgement during which he recognized each person for their individual contributions to the group. I was referenced as an incisive thinker and presence fueled by my academicism. However, when so many others in the group were being praised for their "heart," "creativity," or exceptional vocal contributions, I always felt that this was simply referencing and reinforcing my "squeaky wheel" personality within the ensemble. It took me years of feeling and writing through these concerns to come to a place of peace with these descriptors, where I could believe that my unusual way of participating was valued and useful. I have also realized through reckoning with my skills, tendencies, and personality traits via Voices 21C participation that many of the ideas I present throughout this dissertation were instigated and developed through participation with and interrogation of Voices 21C.

The resulting hour-long 2020 ACDA Rochester performance was curated over hours of discussion, experimentation, and negotiation within the full ensemble rehearsals and an absolute ton more work by the artistic team as they thought through and adjusted to group ideas, rehearsal accomplishments (and failures), and their understandings of the professional choral audiences—singers, directors, and other practitioners—we would have in Rochester. I reproduce the first few pages of the twenty-page program for this event below because it indicates the intended aesthetic of the ensemble's performance and the sets' content and structure—but also because I am proud of how it looks, and feel good about my involvement with it. I was allowed to design and lay out the program (though Cheryl B.Engelhardt, a

Voices 21C singer and the group's composer-in-residence at the time, amalgamated the cover image), and this felt like an act of service to the group in which I was "actually contributing," away from the insecurities I felt as a "squeaky wheel" analytical thinker and voicer during discussion, or as a mediocre alto in the group's aggregate sound.[31]

[31] I include the printer's guide marks in these images as a visual mark of my work on, and pride in, the design of the programs, and a vestige of the work I put in during several rounds of edits and thought-provoking conversations in February 2020 as the program proof developed. These are another example of how printed aspects of our scholarship can reflect our own affects and investments as we include our subjective experiences within our narratives—some symbolic (i.e., printer's guide marks) and some more explicitly named in text body. Inclusions like this can provide some affective nerve endings to materialist performance ephemera.



WE WHO BELIEVE IN FREEDOM
CANNOT REST

I On Feminine Identity
Shining a light on separate but distinct feminist issues

Trilo
Swedish traditional (arr. A. Möller)

To the Mothers in Brazil: Salve Regina
Lars Jansson (arr. Gunnar Eriksson)

Strange Things
Music by Suzanne Collins, Jeremy Fraites, & Wesley Schultz. Adapted by Karen Porter and the VT Solidarity Singers

La Lisière
Music by Emanuelle da Costa
Words by Marie Kock

A Path to Each Other
Music by Jocelyn Hagen & Timothy C. Takach
Words by Julia Klatt Singer

What Happens When A Woman?
Alexandra Olsavsky of Artemisia

VOICES 21C

II Forced Migration & Refugee Crisis
Who are we as a nation?
What do we see as our responsibility?

Would You Harbor Me?
Ysaye M. Barnwell

On Dark Earth*
Music by Victoria Malawey
Words by Sappho (c.500 B.C.E.)
**2019 Call for Scores Winner*

Dos Cuerpos
Music by Julio Morales
Words by Octavio Paz

She Took His Hands*
Nicholas Cline
**2018 Call for Scores Winner*

Mi Única
Peace Poets

Everybody's Got a Right to Live
Rev. Frederick Douglass Kirk Patrick & Jimmy Collier

Please hold applause until the end of the program.

WE WHO BELIEVE IN FREEDOM
CANNOT REST

III Race & Violence
Racism, lynching, and mass incarceration

Ezekiel Saw de Wheel
Traditional Spiritual (arr. William L. Dawson)

I Am a Superpredator
Halim Flowers

Ella's Song
Bernice Johnson Reagon

National Anthem
Halim Flowers

The Listening
Cheryl B. Engelhardt

I'm Gonna Walk It With You
Brian Claflin and Ellie Grace (arr. Cheryl B. Engelhardt)

Please hold applause until the end of the program.

VOICES 21C

André de Quadros, Artistic Director

Quincy Cason
Jesse Colford
Eugenia Conte
Josaphat Contreras
Chris Clark*
Olivia de Geofroy
Mary DiRoberts
Bradford Dumont
Cheryl B. Engelhardt
Elise Felker
Ashley Frezza
Michael Gondek
Jana Hieber
Mallory Leonard
Michael Leonard
Nicolette Mingels*
Krystal Morin*
Sydney Mukasa
Chad Putka*
Ofri Tanchelson
Judith Zuckerman
** denotes section leader*

Leadership Team
Ruth Debrot, Olivia de Geofroy, André de Quadros, Bradford Dumont, Cheryl B. Engelhardt, Michael Genese , Nicolette Mingels, Krystal Morin, Judy Zuckerman

Artistic Leadership Committee
Bradford Dumont, André de Quadros, Krystal Morin

Special thanks to Sharon Rae Paquette for her assistance with choreography and dramaturgy in developing this program.

Images 17–19. *Cover and program pages from the Voices 21C performance at ACDA Rochester, March 2021. Cover image by Cheryl B. Engelhardt. Layout and design by the author.*

The program (fully choreographed and memorized) encompassed three areas of activist/advocacy concerns—the first two centering around relative positions of, and violence against, the "feminine" (women and female-identifying people) in various contexts, and refugee crises, then at a peak in Europe and the US due to wars and persecution in Syria and North Africa. There were several affective approaches curated into these sets. In some pieces—"Trilo" in the first set (arr. Möller), and "Would You Harbor Me" (Barnwell)—we were static, facing the audience, focusing our voices and our attention outward. In others—"To the Mothers of Brazil: Salve Regina" (Jannson, arr. Eriksen) and "Dos Cuerpos" (Morales)—we moved into groupings and tableaus, building a story around the piece we were singing or creating shapes and gestures that could involve the audience on different levels. All of the choreography and interpretation of the pieces had been discussed minutely,

as opportunities to invite the audience to invest in the issues displayed and discussed through these pieces and their placement in this program; it was in these Voices 21C rehearsals, out of all the rehearsals I attended throughout my fieldwork, that affect was most explicitly discussed as a valence of communication and a curatorial goal of performance.

The third, and last, set in this performance highlighted intertwined issues of race in the United States and the excessively high percentage of prisoners and the formerly-incarcerated who are people of color. The set featured Halim Flowers, an author, poet, and visual artist who had been incarcerated for 22 years, since he was 16 years old, and had only been released a year prior, in 2018. The beginning of the set was listed as William Dawson's arrangement of "Ezekiel Saw de Wheel," a piece often performed at the end of traditional choral concerts as a celebration of embodied singing, a release after "heavier" or "more serious" fare. Indeed, placing spiritual arrangements by composers like Dawson or Moses Hogan or ensembles such as Sweet Honey in the Rock at the end of programs is common, in a practice I've heard described as a "happy, clappy encore." This reinforced an affective regime centered around the "release" of broad, embodied vocality and an atmosphere of audience excitement and appreciation.

This rendition was different, however—not due to the actual musical performance, but in the way the performance was ontologically contextualized.[32] The opening is a scathing commentary on the connection between commonplace lynching, through the story of Jesse Thornton, murdered by a lynching mob in 1940 in Alabama, to the composition of this spiritual by Dawson nearby. This narrative indicates a broader connection to lineages of slavery and violence often erased from common spiritual performance practice. Sydney

[32] I am featured in this video at around 1:42, speaking the last lines just before Mukasa begins his improvisation.

Mukasa's solo improvised elegy, sung as he knelt on the stage in a move imitating Colin Kaepernick's now-famous protest of the National Anthem, introduces the musical material in a pensive reckoning with the lynching narrative.

In part, this move was exceptional in that it was enacted in a room full of choral practitioners, many of them staunch traditionalists who always had programmed spirituals at the end of concerts as a kind of embodied ecstatic release. But on the other hand, the introduction was a deliberate effort to alter the affective regimes surrounding the performance of spirituals; to expose the nerve endings of racial injustice and indict the structures and people that have allowed African American spiritual arrangements to be downplayed as "non-serious," "less important," or "non-intellectual"—while at the same time divorcing the histories of violence inherent in song practices born from slavery in the United States. The piece was pretty much sung as originally written by Dawson, and performed standing in a fairly traditional "arc" formation and with bel canto vocal techniques; but the atmosphere was raw and electric.

The efficacy of the performance was predicated on some assumptions, made by performers and composers, of cultural "affective regimes" that were to be subverted. The prevalent affective regime was undermined and a new regime reformed. This rupture caused a deliberate and explosive redefinition of affective atmosphere in performance. The newly-founded affective regime is fragile in that it disrupted the comfortable assumptions we make as performers and listeners. And this new regime is easily undermined again—more easily, even, than the assumptive traditionalism it replaced.[33]

[33] This section in lighter text is influenced by, and in term predicated, my article with Max Z Jack, "The Art of Making a Scene" (2022), in which we suggest that protest, activism, and vocal disruption are founded on the destruction of prevalent affective regimes and the formation of new ones in the same acoustic spaces. This section was written first (for the SEM Annual Conference in 2020), but "The Art of Making a Scene" was being

This disruption and rerouting of affective regimes surrounding performance, as Ana Hofman suggests in a different context, allows "choirs [to] produce a fictional space positioned in the interplay between experience and expectation, memory and possibility, bringing new dimensions into the politics of the future through a reconnection with the past" (Hofman 2020, 102). But it also affords new ethical concerns, and fragile situational potential for further disruption and redirection away from the chosen narrative. This births a concept of ethics within construction of these affective regimes as they are liberated from traditionalism. The redirection of affective regimes in choralism makes full exploration of levels and layers of interpretation, ownership, and embodiment essential. These redirections could differently, and sometimes callously or negatively, disturb people that have an entirely different inscribed affective and memorialized history, as is discussed in relation to Roomful of Teeth and "Courante" in the previous chapter. Born of the relatively recent movements to recognize privilege of many kinds, an "ethics" connected to affective regimes is increasingly policed by artists and listeners alike, and Voices 21C performers spent a good deal of time discussing how their logistics and programming served affective goals and ethics in this performance to attempt a type of affective legibility that would be effective *and* productive/non-hurtful for audience members.

That said, this was a particularly difficult set to sing and to witness for many of us (as we discussed in rehearsals); and there was no "trigger warning" before this performance save for

negotiated between Jack and I during that time. and was presented on a panel about affective regimes with Jack and Daniel Stadnicki, with incredibly in-depth and generous feedback from our respondent Benjamin Tausig. This chapter owes much to the process of writing "The Art of Making a Scene" and to the feedback we received from Tausig and others during that panel. That article also includes a vignette describing Voices 21C's impromptu performance in a Rochester restaurant of one of the pieces in the first set of the ACDA program, "What Happens When a Woman…?" (see pg. 140). In that vignette, I attempt to show how vocal disruption can be kaleidoscopically understood as affectively-modulating, political, socially-activist, and/or none of the above, which chimes with my musings in this chapter.

the explicit discussions in the latter part of our twenty-page program that laid out some of the reasoning behind programming and performance curation. Therefore, this performance was not without its ethical risks of traumatizing the audience, particularly people of color and/or those who had experienced various types of discrimination, violence, and generational trauma. It was a strong and moving set to be a part of, and—we heard from audience members—to witness; but it could also be read as manipulative and/or harmful depending on the situation of both the singers and the audience. In my reckoning with affective ethics and curation via choralism, and the diagnostic embodiments I am called upon to enact as a performer and viewer/listener, I became far more aware of the situational aspects of ethics as associated with performance. Performing to a group that can be reached through choral means (by their own proclivities as choral practitioners, or as activists and advocates already keen to engage) presented specific opportunities for affective curation and ethical musings and approaches that would not always be available or appropriate in other circumstances and performance modes/venues.

Many of the discussions during rehearsals, as well as reactions to the performances, were driven by understandings of traditional choralism and the roles that choral music is expected to fulfill, and how those expectations can be used to drive specific activist and advocacy aims in positive and productive ways, rather than via a high-handed scolding of the audience via blame, provocation, or indictment. In curating the performance for that specific audience, to that specific stage space, and with specific and intensely scrutinized aims in mind, Voices 21C made use of their physical and emotional diagnostics to hone their affective and philosophical messages as well as their sound. Though there is no way of saying how each and every audience member reacted to the performance, the effort in itself, and the

atmosphere in the hall as the performance took place, made use of the modes of attention embedded in religious (Ch 1), nation-building (Ch 2), and cinematic (Ch 3) choralism to guide those present through a gamut of emotional engagements with ethics and politics. It is notable that the performance was curated *for choral professionals*. The singers, myself included, of Voices 21C could be somewhat aware of that self-selecting and exclusive group's general knowledge base of choral repertoire, history, and uses in current contexts. Via this shared knowledge base, Voices 21C built a program designed to use the mechanisms of traditional choralism—by subverting, reorienting, recontextualizing, and, in some cases, reinscribing them—to serve a set of activist and advocacy aims.

It could be argued that any political aims—positive, negative, "ethically neutral," etc.—could be served by such a combinatory set of efforts; indeed, this is borne out by other uses of choralism in nationalist movements and political rallies (discussed in Ch 2). However, we can push beyond the choral-cultural aspects of "belonging" that often are used to build community in large gatherings by considering the challenges to the audience that were embedded in this performance. Rather than whipping up fervor for causes already key to the ACDA gathering, Voices 21C was using the choral medium to implore audiences to examine their personally-held beliefs and ethical structures. This "move" is only possible when curated to a specific audience, and the mechanisms of this attempt are only legible via the intents of the performers—there is no solid way of assessing the efficacy or outcomes of audience reception. However, these efforts on the part of the singers, and the mechanisms they devise from their knowledge and physical engagement with choralism to reach the audience, seem to indicate response to some of William Cheng's foundational questions about how musical engagement could, situationally-applied, encourage further empathy for

other beings in the world around us. Empathetic engagement via music is *never* assured, only a glimmering possibility. But, in this case of Voices 21C at the ACDA Conference, the ensemble deliberately quests for this utopian empathy through choral understandings, traditions, transgressions—and, through these surgically-selected mechanisms, affective regimes.

The (Dis)comforts of Activism/Advocacy

The above example is not predicated on the mechanisms or the audience reception of affective atmosphere or political engagement. Though music may be touted as transformative in these contexts for audiences, my interest in this process has focused on how performers in this group may use their choral knowledge, skill sets, and physical-emotional understandings to further engage and empathize with others, be it through deliberate social justice action or simply in engaging in discussions about, and with those, generally omitted or erased from everyday experiences. Cheng's "sounding good" is, yes, about sounding; and I have made cases throughout this dissertation that sounding with one's own voice has specific connotations and powers that are tied to the physical and metaphorical acknowledgement of "voice as self," "voice as identity," and "voice as agency." But the sounding alone is not enough to guarantee empathetic and productive engagement with parts of the world often omitted or ignored in quotidian inattentive experiences (see Jack & Conte 2022). It takes a constant attention of thought, triaging both the ideas underneath activist efforts *and* the inherent emotional satisfactions and insecurities of it, to "sound good." This process should never feel entirely satisfactory, and should be an uncomfortable constant renegotiation—a little bit like the joys and challenges of diagnostic embodiment that I claim is at the very heart of choral praxis. And

constant review, repositioning, situational recognition, intersectional privilege and agency—this "balance of opposing forces," (Sayers 1935, 423)—is a way of life that can encourage more empathy and connection and less self-satisfaction and -aggrandizement, when consistently practiced. It is a constant becoming, rather than a set identity or crystalized character that can be put on and taken off in different parts of one's life. In the case of singers, the singer as voicer, listener, body, disembodied consciousness, liminal-relational and yet isolated by the peculiarity of their attention, embodiment, and memorialized experience all at once, is a reminder of the negotiation of self every day that makes room for reinvention and discovery.

This reinvention and discovery process can be a fraught and difficult one, and much of the conditional ignorance encouraged by late-stage capitalism is designed to minimize this discomfort. Even the aims of activism and advocacy—when touted as an expression of outward "virtue" or a fundamental personality trait—can be neutered through ego, self-promotion, and self-soothing behaviors that reassure each of us that we're "doing something," "helping" simply by using our voices (sung or spoken) in castigating the actions and motives of others. My concerns regarding this kind of activism often drove my own discomfort, bordering on cynicism, in participating in a "social justice" choir like Voices 21C—and I was often nervous during rehearsal discussions when we seemed to be blaming or chiding audience members for not doing more or being more aware. However, my cynicism was another kind of inactivity, an effort defend myself from charges of doing too little, of not engaging enough, which I only began to notice later in my time with Voices 21C, around 2019 when we began preparing the program for the ACDA Rochester performance.

Because of my concerns about avoiding both complacency and cynicism, I developed a

personal code of ethics to engage with, and constantly modify, around how I participated with the group; what I said in discussion; and how I thought about others' contributions during these conversations. Borrowing from the diagnostic embodiment relationality of the choralism we practiced, I tried to be more open, more forgiving of myself and others, and more collaboratively available as I approached rehearsals with the group. That did not mean shutting down the voices in my head that kept asking "what does this *do* for folks who need help?" or "how are we connecting with audiences who might benefit and engage with these messages?" or "who could be better at involving and encouraging?" or "how do the demographics of this group reify and/or redefine the makeup of modern choral practitioners" or "who else should have a say here, and should we be speaking for them at all?" Rather, this meant that I myself needed to take personal responsibility to grapple with these questions rather than force the group to reckon with all of them all at once like I was. Just as I would modulate my own timbre or modify my volume or match pitch with other voices in different choral "moments," I would modulate my engagement, questioning when I really felt it would lead to necessary, productive, and beneficial discussion.

In 2020, during the COVID-19 lockdown, Voices 21C became involved with an organization called "The Choral Commons," envisioned originally as a clearinghouse of educational resources for pedagogical choirs (K-12 and university-level) that sought to include social and environmental justice themes in their choral repertoire and praxis. During that time, Voices 21C provided collaborative project templates in reaction to podcasts that the Choral Commons founders André de Quadros (of Voices 21C) and Emilie Amrein (University of San Diego) conducted with artists and activists on many different issues. I asked if I could devise one of these template projects, and was assigned a podcast with Bobby Iacovello, a formerly

incarcerated person who now works for advocacy group The Transformational Prison Project in Boston.

The experience was a fraught one in many ways. I found engaging with this podcast particularly difficult because I have not visited a prison, and have only known a few people who have been incarcerated. Because this was the second part of a two-part podcast on the Empowering Song Project, in which de Quadros and others offer musical and creative engagement in prison settings to incarcerated people, I wanted to be sure not to reproduce the previous "Part I" podcast-related prompt. Therefore, I went in a different direction and tried to activate empathy in the involved singers and in listeners, asking singers to reproduce the physical manifestations of when they have felt silenced or vocally-restricted. However, I had many concerns with this approach that were not resolved even after I collated a sort of sonic "sculpture" out of the prompt responses from several singers. Though I was proud of this work, and also of my own vocal participation, I was nervous about how much of myself I had inserted into both the prompt and my vocal responses to it.

That vague suspicion never abated. I felt called to write through the experience, and produced the following article for *SEM Student News*, a student-produced publication that I had served as the editor of from 2019–2021. I reproduce the whole of this article below in a sans-serif font, including footnotes and citations as a vestige of the specific time in which I worked through these issues, trying to carefully investigate my unease without discounting the experiences I could never truly connect with from settings of incarceration.

“Desert of the Heart”: Subjectivity and Connection in Arts Advocacy
Eugenia Siegel Conte (University of California, Santa Barbara)

In the summer of 2020, a Boston social justice activist choir I sing and do fieldwork with, Voices 21C, collaborated with a new consortium of choral practitioners and activists on creating educational materials. This collective, The Choral Commons, hosts a detailed website dedicated to providing advocacy and activist discussions and materials for choral practitioners in their classrooms and communities. They also host a podcast, in which they talk to choral practitioners about programs that approach issues of activism and advocacy.[1]

During that summer, two podcasts highlighted issues around race and incarceration, discussing programs that bring group voice practices into prisons as collaborative art and community- building for inmates. Featuring the voices of incarcerated and formerly-incarcerated people, the podcasts walked through what these participants thought community art making, group singing, and choral experimentation meant to them. The podcasts focused on the silencing and violence within prisons that made vocalizing, collaborative creative practice, and emotional vulnerability exceptionally powerful for incarcerated people.

I was asked to curate a virtual audio project to go along with the second of these podcasts. This episode featured founders and participants in the Empowering Song Project at Massachusetts Correctional Institution-Norfolk.[2] The commission was to create a “conceptual” choral prompt and piece responding to the Empowering Song Project. I was encouraged by one of The Choral Commons’ founders, Emelie Amrein, to consider including the last stanza of W.H. Auden’s poem, “In Memory of W.B. Yeats” (1940), that is often set to a Conrad Kocher hymn tune (1858):

In the desert of the heart
Let the healing fountain start,
In the prison of his days
Teach the free man how to praise.

As I developed the project prompt, I hoped to inspire creativity, empathy, and, perhaps, instigate community action to support inmates or the formerly-incarcerated. What resulted is a choral sculpture based on “restricted voice”—voices that have been constrained, monitored, and policed.[3] In trying to imbue the prompt and sculpture with an emotional touchstone that might be understood in choral community contexts, I transposed vocal restriction into a realm that might provide common ground for people outside of the prison system. The aim of this piece was to encourage the sculpture participants to think deeply about their own voices, embedded in their own nexus of power, privilege, and responsibility—and to try to genuinely do so myself. Inspired by the collaborative and vulnerable activities I had done in rehearsals with Voices 21C,[4] as well as the generous and creative work of Tomie Hahn[5] and Pauline Oliveros’ sonic meditations,[6] this prompt was all about finding discomfort through embodied voice and openly sharing it.

Keen to emphasize the policed boundaries of the voice and the freedom it often metaphorically signifies,[7] I reached back into my own physical experiences and thought deeply about a period of several months when my own voice was publicly targeted—inhibited, discounted, mocked—by repeated faculty abuse of power when I was a student attending classes. I collated some of the embodied experiences I had during that time; how it felt to be silenced, chastised, and baited in that setting and how it changed me as a person and scholar. From that, I created the project prompt for participating Voices 21C singers:

> *Think of an instance when you felt you needed to say something, but couldn't. Breathe. Try to awaken that memory enough that your body, mind, and emotional center are inside it.*
>
> *Bring an awareness to your body's posture; to where you feel pressure or tension. Think about what you wanted to say. Think about why you couldn't say it.*
>
> *Begin recording on this Soundtrap[8] project. Do some vocalizations in Am or CM/m (of any type, but using pure vowels) that "plug in" to this feeling of impotence, frustration, or hesitation that you feel. Feel free to extend consonants or change from vowel to vowel. Make whatever noises come out. Try not to censor yourself; but allow your body to take a break when needed. When you submit this recording on Soundtrap, please edit out long periods of silence; but don't try to edit in the moment. Do whatever feels authentic and don't worry about the product. This does not have to be super performative or theater-driven. This is about you, and your experience. Please do not listen to anyone else's vocalizations on the Soundtrap before you record your own.*
>
> *Stop the recording. Breathe. Center. Find your way back to your full, unhindered voice doing whatever works for you.*

In espousing this approach, I hoped to invite participants in the "choral sculpture" to consider their own embodied relationships with their voices and what physical and emotional feelings of restriction can be felt when voice is curbed or silenced by cultural forces. This exercise was intended to encourage engagement and empathy when considering the choral experiences of incarcerated people. However, the prompt also provided an avenue that allowed me to aestheticise and obliquely make public my own experiences of being silenced—experiences that still affect my day-to-day life. As much as I might have experienced this kind of abuse in a university setting, at least I could talk about it, however obliquely—at least I was allowed in the classroom in the first place—at least I had robust support networks of family and finance—at least I wasn't battling constant discrimination and violence on multiple fronts every day. The incarcerated participants in these prison choir projects the podcast highlighted had few, most likely next to none, of the privileges I enjoy. Yet I wanted to create a work that could link my body to theirs' in whatever empathetic capacity I had to draw from, and encourage the other choir members to do the same.[9]

However, when choir members had returned their recorded snippets and I was working to edit together a kind of choral sculpture that would become the audio piece “You/Don’t/Say,” I thoroughly considered ethical implications. How much of this piece was to encourage the choir’s singers and podcast’s listeners to consider the inherent discomfort of silenced or mangled voice, and how much of it was a vampiric codicil to the activist/advocacy intent that framed the piece, *specifically* for me to express my own unresolved embodied affective issues?

As I thought more about these questions surrounding privilege, advocacy, affect, and voice, I began to realize how embedded these questions are within my personal, artistic, and scholarly life, and that they should be centered explicitly in my work and interactions. Increasingly, my scholarship focuses on the affective experiences that undergird, guide, and motivate how we engage with others in shared spaces, sonically and otherwise. However, the particulars of individual affect are rarely transposable or fully understandable to another embodied person. This leads me to radically, often unattractively, center my own body and affective experiences in my own work, to identify some of the cultural privileges and hegemonies that encourage affective response in my own body and to suggest how some of the culturally-wrought mechanisms of affect function. I’m constantly analyzing and theorizing my emotional responses to better understand my “voice” as a scholar is situated. How can I collate my emotional experiences within an ethical framework that shows the personal affective impetus and payoffs of engagement within activist and advocacy work? How can my own affective experiences offer something of theoretical value to the people with whom I attempt to communicate?

As I edited the choral sculpture, these questions lingered. I realized I could not afford a pat resolution in the piece if it was to reflect my personal construct of ethical investment in social justice via radical empathy and self-knowledge. The last part of the audio track was a presentation of the Auden/Kocher hymn, and, in the first iteration, I made it an intimate communal rendering of individual voices singing “together” through technological means. The second iteration centered around a solo soprano, with interruptions of inhibited voice from earlier in the piece invading around the tune. And the third, final presentation was of the choir, together again, but both clarified and warped—with cleaner ending consonants and better-synchronized movement, but under a disturbing old-time-radio-esque filter that made the group sound distant, disengaged. Auden’s words seemed to denote a certain self-satisfaction, particularly in the pedagogical suggestion that we could “teach the free man how to praise.” Ending the piece in this way was my attempt at an admission that I was so far away from experiences of incarceration that my investment in public advocacy needed to be self-aware enough to avoid self-righteousness. I tried to create an ending to the piece that served as a reminder to never feel as if activist work is “done,” and to avoid feeling as if one’s role in changing cultural-political landscapes is universally that of “underdog” (as I had felt in the classroom) or “advocate” (as I hoped to be in working with The Choral Commons). But these reminders were “notes to self,” red strings implicitly tied to *my* fingers as *aides-memoires*. What did it mean that I, as curator of this piece, was highly invested in corralling my own motives and experiences?

I've been encouraged, as a writer, to believe that my scholarly "voice" is best served when I offer some kind of final "take," a denouement that cleverly uses language to wrap up the argumentative threads and theoretical through-lines. I'm beginning to distrust that, as it offers self-satisfaction antithetical to continual renegotiation and cyclic questioning. I would like to find a way to avoid finishing this reflection with its own circumscribed resolution. This aesthetic-ethical realm *should be* boggy, shifting, dangerous, and difficult to traverse. Thinking through the questions inherent *should be* a constant job, and should inform future decision making, instigate deeper community connection, compel gratitude and grace, and, most of all, subvert ego and ill-temperament. [10] As we work toward a more equitable and kind world, the necessary adjustments to our thought processes, cultural understandings, and community engagements will constantly change—which means we need to change with them. "Teach the free man how to praise" ultimately could mean embracing a more questioning and examined life, rather than relying on emphatic justification of an unchanging self. Or perhaps I should not articulate what the piece "means" when released from my own subjectivity. Perhaps I should accept the ethical responsibility of voicing *without* the privilege of maintaining an aesthetic meaning after the piece has been shared with others, as I simply cannot know how the piece will reflect their own divergent experiences. Perhaps my residual memory of making "You/Don't/Say" should only lead to more recriminations and questions, chanted in cyclic meditation in the desert of my heart.

Acknowledgements

Composer/Activist and Voices 21C founding member Michael Genese was instrumental in helping me to formulate and edit "You/Don't/Say." His thoughtful response to this essay has also been invaluable—he drew my attention to Zadie Smith's "Suffering Like Mel Gibson," and offered generous encouragement as I developed this conflicted reflection on activism and advocacy.

Notes:

[1] For example, there are three podcast series through the Choral Commons—one dedicated to cultural organizing through choralism; one for community music conversations; and one specifically highlighting gender diversity in choral practice.

[2] The podcast features Bobby Iacoviello, a formerly-incarcerated Empowering Song participant and current organizer with the Transformational Prison Project, ethnomusicologists Emily Howe and André de Quadros, as well as choral director Emilie Amrein. https://www.thechoralcommons.com/blog/empowering-song-incarceration-and-the-choir?categoryId=173533.

[3] In using the terms "restricted" or "inhibited voice" throughout this essay (and binaries "unrestricted voice"/ "unhindered voice") I refer to physical, sociocultural, and self-enacted means of stopping or belaboring the physical act of voicing. The reality is that the human voice can be shaped in many ways for many purposes, but this binary is only useful insofar as it denotes the voicer's embodied feelings of

comfort, candor, and unbridled creativity as they voice; and the physical encouragements or barriers to making vocal sounds.

[4] Voices 21C operates on a model of discussion and experimentation. Theater exercises predicated on activist/advocacy themes are integral parts of rehearsal and program development and guide performance decisions for the group. Finding, and working through, discomfort certainly is not unusual within these exercises, and there are safeguards to make singers feel comfortable in either participating or backing away from an exercise or project.

[5] Tomie Hahn's work in embodiment and affect guided the questions I asked in the prompt, particularly her investigations of how experience may be consciously or unconsciously guided by imagined preconceptions, physical forces, and meditative engagement. "'It's the RUSH: Sites of the Sensually Extreme" (2006) and her invited presentation at the 2021 American Musicological Society Annual Meeting were particularly inspiring in the writing of this essay.

[6] During March and April of 2020 I participated in Zoom-based versions of Oliveros' "Tuning Meditation" in a project sponsored by the International Contemporary Ensemble. Introduction to Oliveros' guiding texts for "Tuning Meditation," and participation within the work in a virtual space, influenced the prompt for "You/Don't/Say."

[7] Voice has been discussed as a multi-faceted aspect of personhood and agency in scholarship. Recently, Katherine Meizel's Multivocality: Singing on the Borders of Identity (2020) tests the delineations and limits of voice as a physical/acoustic manifestation, agential force, and understanding of self and other by showing how singers comprehend their own voices in political landscapes.

[8] Soundtrap is a free online tool that allows musicians to collaborate on projects remotely by adding their own tracks in a multi-track deck. It is currently owned by Spotify.

[9] Zadie Smith has recently written about the differentiation between personal suffering and relative privilege, which may be one way of conceptualizing the struggle inherent in this essay. This differentiation could forward discussion around activism and affect. "Class is a bubble, formed by privilege, shaping and manipulating your conception of reality," Smith writes, "But it can at least be brought to mind; acknowledged, comprehended, even atoned for through transformative action. By comparing your relative privilege with that of others you may be able to modify both your world and the worlds outside of your world—if the will is there to do it. Suffering is not like that. Suffering is not relative; it is absolute. Suffering has an absolute relation to the suffering individual—it cannot be easily mediated by a word like 'privilege'" (34). Smith is donating proceeds from this book, *Intimations: Six Essays*, to the Equal Justice Initiative and the COVID-19 Emergency Relief Fund.

[10] There are many ways of thinking through these questions, and some of the approaches I espouse here may be far less healthy or available to individuals who do not have the privileges I enjoy. This is all the more reason that I have personalized this essay, in that these affective negotiations of voice, self, responsibility, ethics, and advocacy must be personal and, above all, safe for the mental health and well being of the individual involved in this reckoning.

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Meizel, Katherine. 2020. *Multivocality: Singing on the Borders of Identity*. London: Oxford University Press.

Smith, Zadie. 2020. "Suffering Like Mel Gibson." In *Intimations: Six Essays*, 29–36. New York: Penguin Books.

This essay was submitted to *SEM Student News* for the issue after I had ceased to be the editor of the publication. It was too long (though I very well knew the word limits), and, in the first draft, was far more explicit about the distance I felt between my own white upper-middle-class upbringing and the overwhelmingly BIPOC population represented in settings of incarceration. *SEM Student News* operates with a review system in which the publication's copy editors provide feedback to the Assistant Editor and Editor regarding each submission with a recommendation to publish or not publish, including questions for the author and suggested edits. My first set of responses from the editors were relatively cutting. "White guilt" was mentioned several times by copy editors, as were ethical concerns with even talking through the self-serving side of activism and advocacy rather than centering the voices of incarcerated people in this piece (to whom I didn't have access beyond the podcast). I felt very close to the piece, and very raw and vulnerable, given the personal connections I had made in the prompt and my vocalizations to my own experiences of systemic silencing. But I was also in a position of relative power as the previous editor. I

pushed back on the current editor (Jesse Freedman, UC Riverside) and assistant editor (Hannah Snavely, UC Riverside) to reconsider the piece, and lamented the paranoid reading (a term I hadn't yet learned, but was able to describe) of the copy editors to the piece. I did cut the piece, and took out the more explicit references to privilege and race that had disturbed the first editors' read-through, but it was still published long, and Freedman felt more comfortable calling it an "emerita submission" than having it presented as a regular article in the *Student News* issue.

While it may have been true that the copy editors, along with Freedman and Snavely, approached the piece with a paranoid urge to dismantle it due to the ever-present pressures in the field of ethnomusicology to be vocal social justice advocates in all of our scholarly endeavors, I was also very much at fault for pushing the piece and my agenda through to publication. Though the piece itself ends with a suggestion that the narratives we build as scholars, musicians, and thinkers, should be more open-ended, less prescriptive, and, above all, more kind to others and ourselves, I did indeed cause harm within the interactions I had with these colleagues. I am still proud of this piece, and feel like it says something that speaks to the experience of activism in music (and perhaps more broadly in art endeavors); but that pride is complicated by a shame that, I hope, will inform and positively influence my interactions with others in my professional and personal endeavors to come, and in my broader scholarly and teaching goals, too.

Scholarly engagements such as this one might seem removed from the choral experiences I have described earlier in the chapter; however, I don't believe I could have thought through the nuances of my engagement with *Student News* or with The Choral Commons in these terms before I had worked with Voices 21C, or before I had formed my interest in affect

theory that informed both my scholarship and my weekly psychotherapy sessions throughout my time as a PhD student. Turning my body into a diagnostic sensor of my own affective state, and cataloguing how things feel and how those feelings can be self-serving and/or in service of others, is most definitely drawn from years of choral vocalism and the transposition necessary in Voices 21C to a different valence of diagnostics. This was a highly personal shift, and as much predicated by the other parts of my life that guided my growth and change as a person as it was Voices 21C. I would also note that it is highly unlikely that everyone, or even one other person, had the exact same shift of mentality and affective attention that I did, or would scholarly narrativize and theorize it similarly. But the fact that this did happen for me intimates that attempts at "sounding good" through music, in this case specifically through choralism, *is possible*.

Discussions around affective self-diagnostics—recognizing our affective states and judging what they do for ourselves and for others—is just as important, if not more so, for scholars as it is for activist/advocacy choirs. Turning paranoid scholarship inward and then tempering it; turning it on its side for more thorough reflexivity; operationalizing it in the choices I make as I engage with students, colleagues, mentors, and all the people I encounter, seems like routes toward ethical diagnostic embodiment, born, at least in part, of my own investments with choralism. In identifying my own insecurities, it dawns on me that we, as scholars, are often asked to ignore or abdicate the parts of our emotional life that guide our fieldwork to avoid "unprofessional" or "biased" observations and theorizations of the events we contextualize in our scholarship. I think that the reasons behind this urging are often about the responsibilities we have as researchers to honor the communities in which we work. However, ignoring or abdicating our own emotional navigation as we try to represent a

clear picture or narrative for readers often backfires. Our emotional life, health, and connections to ethics and community engagement always drive our observational efforts; and rather than ignore or obscure them, perhaps we should find ways to acknowledge them more fully in our own work.

Examinations in this vein can espouse various avenues of questioning depending on materials and specific approach or method, and are being attempted more frequently in scholarship over the last ten years. For example, Denise Gill recently wrote about the affective feelings that become attached to citing from established lineages of philosophy, critical theory, and anthropology, noting the comfort and smug participatory reification of a "canon" of thought that disproportionally emphasizes the work of white, male, thinkers from "the global North" (2020) in service of symbolic capital. Gill insists that "a more reparative approach to theorizing about affects and musics must entail articulating the affective impulses we bring to our research as individual scholars." She continues:

> This means actively assessing our theoretical comfort zones. What, we might ask, are the affective aspects of making particular theoretical and rhetorical choices? How does it "feel" to situate one's work in a given celebrated intellectual tradition? The result of a thorough interrogation of any scholar's theoretical habits will, at a minimum, allow us to question why we do the things we do, while also opening the potential to understand implicit bias in structures of knowledge production. (Ibid., 341)

Gill walks through several ways of interrogating, interrupting, and intervening in protected and comfortable canons of citational practice that rely on recognizing our own complicity and the affective ballast it affords us. "Celebrating the unsettled and the unknown is an affective move: the transference of my attitudes and appraisals may produce positive, negative or neutral feelings for you as reader." The recognition of how a reader may (or may not!) feel as they navigate someone else's scholarship is, in itself, an important point, and my chapter has been aimed at revealing some of my own affective journeys while allowing for,

and even inviting, reader affective experience as they read. But Gill also notes that this move toward liminal subjectivity rather than dictatorial narrativized reflexivity is a disruptive act, even as it may be a generous and generative one:

> It is also an interruptive and intervening turn, action intended for rattling theoretical tendencies with the hope of improving our conversations. After all, what is the import of studying affect/emotion/feeling/sentiment? It is an endeavor for tracking unevenness, for staying in play, for identifying 'affective containers' (Ahmed 2014 [2004]: 224), for imploring us to move or to move on. Thinking with affective practices is about embracing unknowability as a theoretical position to be inhabited in and of itself. It requires all of us to recognize our attachments and pronounce the ways we reside in our theories, with the grounded assumption that intellectual work, at its core, means theorizing for more ethical, attentive and critical ends. What do you think? (Ibid. 353)

By insisting that her own affective experience cannot be ignored, but should be made explicit in order to allow for readers' own affective experiences within them, Gill parallels the interplay I suggest in terms of "diagnostic embodiment." Constant relational (re)cycling between singers and shared acoustic, in which each voicer must constantly assess their own place and usefulness for a group goal sounds an awful lot like the kind of relational awareness and interaction Gill is suggesting should be the cornerstone of future scholarship.

Gill's suggestions are only one way of entering into a more liminal-subjective relationship with oneself and fellow scholar/participants in service of building stronger conversations (rather than unilateral arguments). In *Dave Brubeck and the Performance of Whiteness* (2023), Kelsey Klotz finds another path toward constant questioning and resisting stable narrativization in her own journey as a white scholar that focuses on archival work. She openly reflects upon the less attractive aspects of her emotional journey as she edited the book, and how her affective experience was rooted in the very whiteness she was attempting to point out and critique:

> Before this book was published, reactions spanned the gamut and included both support of what some referred to as "activist musicology" and questions rooted in white fragility

> seeking to preserve Brubeck's (and the questioner's own) white innocence. Even as I was completing the book, I felt pulled to the white anxiety I both heard and imagined, as I recognized familiar performances of whiteness in others, performances that I have put on before. In one conversation, I was repeatedly questioned on how various future audiences might perceive Brubeck after reading various portions of the book. It took an entire month and the advice of a close mentor to realize how such encounters had already begun to threaten the arguments in my nearly fully drafted project. White tears and fears combined in anxiety over Brubeck's "goodness," and I had begun to write and edit within those all too familiar performances of whiteness. But fear of what? A fear of the rupture of white innocence, of what comes with the loss of solidarity in the performance of whiteness, of a new kind of unenculturated performance? […] It was all too easy to slip back to familiar, even if emotional, performances of white anxiety and innocence, and to unfairly equate my intellectual fears with the very real fears of racial violence that were literally happening all around me in the wake of George Floyd's death. Put simply, I have had to constantly critique and re-critique not only my work but my approach to the work. (2023, 25)

I have chosen to cite the two scholars above in instances where they personally reckon with their subjectivity and relationality to socio-political constructs for several reasons. First and foremost, it is because they are women in similar positions and from similar backgrounds to my own. They are white, female, and relatively privileged within the academy, and they speak from experiences and within systems of power that are recognizable to me. I wish to avoid, if possible, in this personal work to harness the experiences of others to explain my own trajectory who have not had the relative comforts and stabilities of my own experience. Secondly, they are mentor (Gill) and mentee (Klotz) within the structures that guide scholarly development and advancement in academics—Gill was the "close mentor" to Klotz. It is natural that the ideas and ethos of scholars so intertwined would influence and guide each others' thought processes. And, third, it is because I have my own personal/professional engagements with both Klotz and Gill, and have spoken far more extensively to both of them about these issues and more. Their insights and approaches have irrevocably and inspirationally changed my trajectory as a scholar, an experience that deserves to be

memorialized here both as a note of gratitude and a full confession of influence in this logical argument.

My participation with Voices 21C started to strip away the imaginary boundaries between self and scholar, dismantling them like stage walls in a black box theater. Stripping away the scholarly veneer on top of my writing has been difficult, and in many ways I have felt as Klotz did, though I do not particularly address race in this chapter or overall in this dissertation (which is important work for another time and project; see the Introduction and Epilogue for further discussion). It felt like the distance I was expected to espouse from my own emotional process would stymie the overall conversations I wanted to have—which is why I have attempted this chapter as a very personal set of reflections that allow readers to see struggles underneath the arguments I have made. In that transparency, I have discovered an entirely new set of questions, and a new openness, perhaps even a naïve fearlessness, in relation to my colleagues as I invite them in to this endeavor.

This is only one type of activist/advocacy choir. Some groups specifically program works by underrepresented composers or invite less-represented musicians and artists to collaborate. Some ensembles build their performance and recording efforts around "awareness" of issues, espousing different traditions and subversions of choralism to gain audience attention and invested thought. There are as many approaches to activism and advocacy in choralism as there are choral ensembles and practitioners that consider themselves under this umbrella—and scholarship should, in part, catalogue and question these efforts. However, this chapter has been primarily about how to engage, via choralism, with my own "better angels," and to keep up a constant cycle of self-discovery and -critique in order to situationally engage with others in good faith and constructive spirit. The best

choral experiences I have had have been liminal-relational, bound in space and time by the others sharing it and by my own nexus of thought, memory, and embodied feeling—and, in celebrating these experiences, I hope to find a way to further hone my own balance of critique and creativity as I work to build empathy for and with the world around me.

In connecting with Cheng's "sounding good," I hope I have shown one personally-specific way that choralism can encourage engagement in good faith with social justice, activism, and expanding communities of care. Due to the hurdles of hubris and ego involved in "helping" through activism, I would argue that every avenue toward constant questioning of self and engagement with others *must* be precarious, situational, in a state of becoming. Earlier in this chapter I briefly referenced my favorite fiction book, *Gaudy Night* by Dorothy L. Sayers (1935). Her main character Lord Peter Wimsey, a privileged and intelligent member of the English gentry who suffers from deep existential grief and shellshock in the aftermath of World War I, describes himself as "at best, a balance of opposing forces," referring to his engagement with privilege, embodiment, education, and responsibility. He and his future wife Harriet Vane collaborate on a sonnet that describes, for her, the refuge that academic scholarship offers from the complexities of everyday life in the first stanza. Vane writes:

> *Here, then, at home, by no more storms distrest,*
> *Folding laborious hands we sit, wings furled;*
> *Here in close perfume lies the rose-leaf curled,*
> *Here the sun stands and knows not east nor west,*
> *Here no tide runs; we have come, last and best,*
> *From the wide zone through dizzying circles hurled,*
> *To that still centre where the spinning world*
> *Sleeps on its axis, to the heart of rest.*

Wimsey adds another stanza to the first, addressing the balance needed in daily life to reckon with the tensions between privilege and responsibility:

Lay on thy whips, O Love, that me upright,
Poised on the perilous point, in no lax bed
May sleep, as tension at the verberant core
Of music sleeps; for, if thou spare to smite,
Staggering, we stoop, stooping, fall dumb and dead,
And, dying so, sleep our sweet sleep no more.
(Sayers 1986 [1936], 360–361)

As much as their poem becomes a philosophical statement about romantic love as well as scholarly endeavors in the last stanza, it seems also to speak to Cheng's concepts, both in the ethical abdication of "loving music 'till it hurts" (2019, see Ch 4) and the far more difficult negotiations of "sounding good." The tensions of music, its "verberent core," are akin to our constant striving for balance between joyful pleasures of overwhelming abandon and the responsibilities of privilege that make joys possible for ourselves and for others. The more we can feel these tensions in our bodies and minds, diagnose and contextualize affects as they drive us, and understand the lineages we carry through cultural influence and subject position, the better we can approach situational ethical engagements with the world.

It seems that choralism is already encouraging this tension, engagement and renegotiation. I just need to constantly (re)learn how to hear the call—and respond in kind.

EPILOGUE

BUILDING A GENEROUS ROOM

How can our minds and bodies be grateful enough that we have spent
Here in this generous room,[…]this evening of content?
-Sara Teasdale (1933)

Given the ambiguous and personal conclusions of the previous chapter, it seems odd to formally conclude this dissertation. In Chapter 5, I suggest that a constant reorientation through diagnostics—whether it be the physicalized diagnostic embodiment of sonic practices such as choral singing; or a triage of our own affective state, experiences and motives—can provide a more examined engagement within affective regimes that guide us through our life in the world. However, I also learned that this work is never done, and should never become a static identity or marker of pride.

Chapter 4 offers a glimpse of the journey as I recognized my own complicity within the affective regimes that favor hegemonic whiteness within art music and experimentalism in the United States, for example. That experience, though hopefully formative of a new type of attention on my part, does not mean that I have arrived at a permanent enlightened state regarding that issue or the many other issues of inequality within the power paradigms of modern life.

Though I did not write these chapters in order, it occurred to me late in the drafting process that each chapter traced a different type of thought process, from the historical archival work in Chapter 1, to the sociopolitical questioning of Chapter 2, film and media studies approach in Chapter 3, and Indigeneity and whiteness studies intersectionality in Chapter 4. Chapter 5, I was surprised to find, moved almost entirely into my own subjectivity

(though there are certainly elements of this, particularly in the preceding chapter). Though I do not believe that all scholarship should, or even could, take up the stance that I offer in Chapter 5 around my own experiences with choral activism and advocacy, I do believe that the deconstruction inherent in that chapter accomplishes something more than reflexive posturing. The privileges given to us as scholars—access, fellowship, institutional support, and so much more—comes with more affective responsibility than a statement of personal positionality can honor. Scholars who discuss music and sound—topics to which many scholars have been drawn because of their love of and investments in them—should be encouraged, as a part of their education and continued participation in academia, to go beyond the surface reflections of self and dig into the affects that drive them, even when those motives are "ugly." If scholars hone the diagnostic embodiments of affect and encourage reparative engagements, we may find a way to build this generous room that accommodates *more*—more (and more demographically-diverse) scholars, more sounds, more musics, more physicalized practices, more creative ideas, and (even) more rigorous and forward-thinking scholarship founded in principles of community care.

Perhaps I have added a few tools and honed my senses throughout this (de)construction project—at least, I hope I have. Rather than celebrate those small adjustments, however, it is more important to recognize the future work that must be built into and around the diagnostics of affective and embodied experience as I pursue new projects, and as I (hopefully) work with and learn from students and colleagues in classrooms and rehearsal spaces, and the spaces we build and places we define through written scholarship.

The "generous room" that Teasdale mentions in "Grace Before Sleep" is a space made possible by faith—in her case, through the lens of Christianity. However, the idea of a

“generous room” relies on another concept of “faith”—the faith in the others who sing along with you, diagnostically embodying your voice along with everyone else’s, and the acoustic of the space and place you share. Delicate navigations of sound, affect, and ethics identified in this scholarship has, at least for me, become analogous to generous and reparative scholarship and teaching praxes, in that both require affective diagnostic embodiment and subsequent attempt to understand how to contextualize these constant triages and ethically respond. As scholars in music studies continue to investigate the nooks and crannies of sonic experience, I suggest that we are called to recognize our affective, as well as institutionalized and intellectual, complicity in imperially-defined academics and broader societal culture. This analogy also intimates that every engagement hinges on sensing one’s own motives and affects and recognizing the navigation of self and other necessary to build a set of ethics within that moment—and to do it all again in the next, these responses accruing in an aggregate where we can truly attempt to *do better*.

Akin to the constant navigation of voice, body, and space in diagnostic embodiment, this attitude of attention, adaptability, and humility can generously offer the room to renegotiate the power dynamics of imperialism in academia, whether entirely removing them or trying to exist within the system and alter it from within. Reminders that our physical and emotional lives are not separate from each other—not even in the smallest relational interactions—can turn us toward practice of cyclic diagnostics, considerations, and repositioning. In this cycle, there is the possibility to decolonize our bodies and minds so we may ethically engage with academia and the broader societies in which we live. Binding the burden of affective self-awareness to our own backs while offering grace and encouragement to others as they

attempt their own path within this awareness makes paranoid reading and scholarly outlook unnecessary and retrogressive.

There is much more to say about choral practice, choralism, and the interconnectivity of body to voice to sound to space. I would like to expand the materials from Chapters 1 through 3 in order to lay groundwork for scholars investigating choral practice within sound and voice studies paradigms, alongside affect. As mentioned in the Introduction, there has been much ethnomusicological work on choirs and race, but little about these groups' vocal practices in acoustic spaces within various contexts. Nevertheless, I hope that these chapters serve as a beginning, tying together choral interactions between space and voice and the dual-resonance of affective experience.

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