Singing and inclusion
24 November 2023 | 09:00-18:00
*Faculty of Education, Free University of Bozen-Bolzano*
Room: BX A2.34
Presentation

The symposium offers a reflection on the relationship between singing and inclusion in different social and geographical contexts. It hosts world-renowned experts in the field of music education and, in particular, singing education. The symposium programme includes both presentations and workshops dedicated to music and singing education. The presentations will address topics such as reciprocity in education, critical pedagogy, the relationship between singing and disability, singing as a means of inclusion for people with a migrant background, community music, singing in school curricula, and methodology in the study of singing. The main objective of the workshops is to promote new creative methods in music teaching in the classroom as well as in other contexts, including non-formal ones. The event is aimed at training school teachers, music teachers, social workers, students, choir directors and choristers to address relevant issues raised by the complexity of the contemporary world and to recognise and understand differences in order to guarantee universal access to education. The role of inclusion is a topic of interest for both pedagogues and those working in the field of music education, i.e. in contexts where access and participation must be guaranteed for all regardless of differences between individuals. During the lunch break, the university choir unibzVoices will perform in a short concert.
## Symposium programme

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<td>09:10–09:25</td>
<td><strong>Conference opening: Position paper</strong>&lt;br&gt;Johann van der Sandt, Free University of Bozen-Bolzano</td>
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<td>09:25–10:05</td>
<td><strong>Keynote: Singing and social inclusion in children</strong>&lt;br&gt;Graham Welch, University College London</td>
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<td><strong>The roles of music in inclusion</strong>&lt;br&gt;David-Emil Wickström, Popakademie Baden-Württemberg</td>
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<td>10:35–11:05</td>
<td><strong>Including everyone?</strong>&lt;br&gt;Shirley Salmon, independent scholar</td>
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<td><strong>Music and inclusion in universities: “Our Voice. Community University Choir”</strong>&lt;br&gt;Antonella Coppi, IUL</td>
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<td><strong>Workshop: Voice games and techniques as a source of joy and an example of accessible and inclusive music education</strong>&lt;br&gt;Jiřina Jiříková, Charles University</td>
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<td><strong>Inclusion and excellence</strong>&lt;br&gt;Lee Higgins, York St John University</td>
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<td><strong>Singing with children from a migrant background</strong>&lt;br&gt;Johann van der Sandt and Carlo Nardi, Free University of Bozen-Bolzano</td>
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<td><strong>Workshop: From prints to practice</strong>&lt;br&gt;Elisa Seppänen, Sibelius Academy</td>
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<td><strong>From idea incubation to implementation: The Music for Childhood Wellbeing Initiative</strong>&lt;br&gt;Sarah Bartolome, Northwestern University</td>
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<td>17:05–17:35</td>
<td><strong>Considering care: Nel Noddings’ (1928–2022) contributions to approaching divisive issues in choral music</strong>&lt;br&gt;Patrick Freer, Georgia State University</td>
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**Registration:**
https://unibz.ungerboeck.com/PROD/emc00/PublicSignIn.aspx?aat=34794f2f7165414f5a45566e6947496f14e534167526c6c75636f15757685453783375130376c4536633d
Abstracts

Singing and social inclusion in children
Graham Welch [University College London]

The presentation will review empirical evidence concerning the nature of one of the key wider benefits of music, namely how successful group music making and, in particular, positive experiences of collective singing can promote a sense of being socially included. Many countries are concerned about how to promote social inclusion and to reduce a sense of social exclusion. In Europe, social exclusion has been defined as "... a process whereby certain individuals are pushed to the edge of society and prevented from participating fully by virtue of their poverty, or lack of basic competencies and lifelong learning opportunities, or as a result of discrimination" [EC 2009]. In contrast, social inclusion is "... a process which ensures that those at risk of poverty and social exclusion gain the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social, and cultural life and to enjoy a standard of living and wellbeing that is considered normal in the society in which they live" [EC 2009]. For today's research presentation, the underlying theoretical research lens draws both on studies in neuropsychobiology and social ecology. Data will be reported from recent major research findings into children's singing in the UK, Europe and elsewhere in the world. The focus is on exploring the mechanisms by which children's singing competency is shaped, both positively and negatively, within a socio-cultural context that includes early experiences in the home, maturation, singing pedagogy, opportunity, peers and available musical culture(s). The research evidence suggests that there is a developmental continuum of singing which needs to be considered, pedagogically—both in terms of policy and practice, if the intention is also to promote children and young people's sense of social inclusion through music.


The roles of music in inclusion
David-Emil Wickström [Papakademie Baden-Württemberg]

Children in kindergartens and schools in central Europe reflect the cultural complexity of a population that today is definitely not homogeneous. But do the musical contents taught reflect this complexity? Music can play several roles in an (early) musical education, such as training coordination skills or promoting teamwork through communal singing. Another important point would be to establish musical acquaintance with other cultures and thus an understanding of difference and diversity in the population among children. In other words, promoting respect and tolerance. In order to create a sense of belonging, music can only act as a communication bridge if it does not come (exclusively) from a Christian-European hegemonic perspective. The musics and religions of the actual children in a class or group must be taken into account. Music is - similar to a language - a semiotic system that has to be learned. This is not only about understanding other musical traditions. It also includes learning the languages of the musics that are based on Central European art music or Anglo-American popular music. Thus, in addition to the question of inclusion and as a sign of respect, listening to other musical systems is essential in order to understand and comprehend them.

Including everyone?
Shirley Salmon (formerly: Orff Institute, Mozarteum University Salzburg)
In all groups it is necessary to plan for diversity and consider many factors that are essential for inclusive teaching and learning. In order to cater for different developmental levels and varying needs of the participants it is necessary to look at ways of differentiating. This includes the learning environment, the teaching and learning processes, as well as the contents and products. If we want to include all members of a group in our lessons and sessions, there are fundamental questions that remain the same whatever context we are working in, whether in formal or informal settings or with different age and target groups: How can we include everyone at their own level – where no one is overchallenged, no one is underchallenged? How can we provide settings for learning at different levels and with different modes of experience while ensuring and enabling expression, agency, authorship and creativity? ‘Differentiated Instruction’ (Tomlinson 1995) can be a guide to working with groups of mixed ability in order to further the participation and learning of all participants while supporting creativity, agency and authorship.

Music and inclusion in universities: “Our Voice. Community University Choir”

Antonella Coppi (Università Telematica degli Studi IUL)

In the last two decades in Italy numerous actions have been promoted in favour of disability support and inclusion. With the introduction of Law 170/2010, it was also possible to provide students with specific learning disorders (DSA) with support and compensatory measures previously only granted to students with disabilities during their education in the school. Italian universities have the task of guaranteeing all students with special educational needs (disability report and/or Law 104) the right to study and equal educational opportunities by promoting their inclusion within the academic community.

In this context, the project Our Voice. Community University Choir, inspired by the model of the Venezuelan Coro de Manos Blancas (white hands choir): the manos blancas and born in 1991 from the intuition of Jhony Gómez, a musician from Venezuela’s Orquestra Simón Bolívar, and the choir director Nybeth Garcia, is today a strong presence in rehabilitation and disability support activities, promoting the inclusion of multiple disabilities trough the music practice.

The project Our Voice. Community University Choir aims the enhancing inclinations, passions and artistic abilities that from the voice moves to other expressive channels such as gesture, coordinated movements, in resonance and in the same psycho-emotional-creative frequency [Garcia and Gomez, Rodríguez, 2018] dictated by the expression of musical art. The training actions put in place by the project since the first experiences in the University have been aimed at recognising the right of people with disabilities to actively participate in music practice, living this experience as a real opportunity to access music expression, through inclusive practices and based on “special” methodologies.

Workshop: Voice games and techniques as a source of joy and an example of accessible and inclusive music education

Jitka Jitěkova (Charles University)

In music lessons, we try to give pupils a joyful experience of encountering music. We can start with silence and elementary activities with our own voice. As we explore what our voice can do, we listen to ourselves, to others, we are inspired by the sounds of our surroundings and the vocal expressions of others, we bring our own suggestions in return. We move our voice through movement. We let everyone’s voice be heard.

The aim of the workshop is to allow participants to try out several voice games and techniques that can be described as simple but varied and that lead to the experience of own vocal possibilities and the common sound of the group. The chosen activities bring relaxation as well as communication, privacy in the group and collaboration and allow to express one’s own creative potential. The aim is to present a set of simple games and vocal activities in music education in which everyone participates, discovers their own possibilities and perceives the joy of encountering music together.

Inclusion and excellence

Lee Higgins (York St John University)
In a community music context, when music participants work with musicians, they are typically in groups co-constructing the types of music to be created and identifying specific tasks and goals, emphasizing learning within the participants’ life context. With musicians working alongside people to actively identify their learning needs, the concept of inclusion has been at the heart of this approach. Responding to the question, How might notions of inclusion and excellence exist as a balanced pairing, this presentation draws upon a collaborative research project with music educator Jennie Henley. Examples of inclusion and excellence are illustrated through two examples of practice and through a discussion, I explore whether excellence is better articulated as a process and inclusion better expressed as an outcome of this process.

**The old, the new and the in-between: Innovating choral pedagogy**  
*Motje Wolf (De Montford University)*

Philosophy of Education has highlighted the importance of child-centred and democratic teaching of children for at least two centuries. We know from authors like Rousseau (1979), Dewey (1938; 1916) and Freire (1970), that the experience and the voice of the learner should be in the centre of the learning experience, rather than being taught by rote. The importance of social interaction within the learning process has been highlighted by Dewey (1938) and Freire proposed problem-posing education to overcome what he calls an oppressive state of education and encourage independent thinking (Freire 1970).

Choral activities in schools often happen outside the curriculum, but still form part of young people’s aesthetic education. Furthermore, we know that choral singing can foster inclusion (Mellor 2013; Welch et al 2014) and wellbeing (Clift 2012; Hallam and Himonides 2022; MacDonald et al 2012). Enabling all children to take part in choral singing, would therefore be a laudable aim. Nevertheless, too often choir pedagogy in schools consists of a teacher who teaches music by rote to children who are neatly arranged in rows and have been given no agency about their learning process. Can we question hierarchical structures and repertoire choices as suggested by Hill (2021) who investigated current choral practice through the lens of Freire’s critical pedagogy? It seems, the thoughts written many years ago by Rousseau, Dewey and Freire are still unheard in current choir pedagogy. Of course, there are exceptional choir conductors who are beacons in choral pedagogy, but whose ways of working are not yet in the mainstream of choir education. This talk will discuss how the writings of philosophers such as Rousseau, Dewey and Freire provide important thoughts for innovating choral pedagogy with children. Current practices will be analysed and new ideas will be proposed and there will be room to discuss best practice.


**Singing with children from a migrant background**  
*Johann van der Sandt and Carlo Nardi (Free University of Bozen-Bolzano)*
In this paper we will present the preliminary results of a research on music-making with children from a migrant background. The first phase of this ongoing project involved singing and ukulele workshops and a concert with children in grade 6–8 in an Italian-language school in Brixen, South Tyrol, in spring 2023. About half of the children in the group had a migrant background: some were foreign-born immigrant children whose family had moved to Italy (first generation); others were Italy-born children in immigrant families (second generation). Also, one of the two instructors had a migrant background, having moved from South Africa to Italy eight years earlier.

When we refer to local children, and especially children from Italian-speaking families, we must bear in mind that we are summoning up personal and collective histories of migration from other Italian regions, especially from the South. In fact, South Tyrol has experienced several migration waves, both inward and outward, that have led to conflicts and affected the region’s institutions and daily life to these days. New migrants in South Tyrol, therefore, face a pre-existing context marked by institutional and social division that practically and discursively shape their experience and opportunities (Zinn 2018).

The workshops were inspired by the teachings of community music, according to which music can be a means of overcoming linguistic, cultural and social barriers and of fostering processes of inclusion. Against this background, the study of the encounter between refugees, migrants and asylum seekers and their host populations is of particular interest (Järviluoma and Leppänen 2012; Rinde 2022).

Ethnographic observation took place concurrently with the encounters with the children, involving interaction patterns, reception of the repertoire, attention and concentration, cooperation, musical and linguistic competence, voice development, physical coordination and self-presentation on stage. As the workshops progressed and group activities led the children to interact more with each other, regardless of previous relationships, contact between local and migrant children also increased and boundaries became more blurred. Three focus groups held in September 2023 partially confirmed this ethnographic observation.


**Workshop: From prints to practice**

*Elisa Seppänen (Sibelius Academy, The University of Arts Helsinki)*

**Objective** – “From Prints to Practice” is a collaborative workshop designed to create a shared space for education and research. Participants will learn how to systematically read academic papers, focusing on vocal practices in music education, and transform their insights into actionable music education activities. The workshop aims to foster critical thinking, reflection, and curiosity, encouraging participants to explore and expand upon research ideas. It also seeks to promote sustainability by forging innovative partnerships between research and practice in music education.

**Content** – The workshop comprises four sections centred around vocal practices in music education.

**Methods** – Participants will engage actively through group discussions, collaborative brainstorming, and practical activities. The workshop encourages a safe and constructive reflection space.

**Applications for Music Education** – This workshop offers opportunities for observing models, reflecting on teaching methods, and creating stimulating learning environments, primarily focusing on vocal practices. It provides a platform for participants to identify challenges and opportunities in integrating research into music education, particularly in vocal instruction. Additionally, it encourages sharing practices and generating insights for future research projects. Join us in bridging the gap between research and vocal music education practice.
From idea incubation to implementation: The Music for Childhood Wellbeing Initiative

Sarah Bartolome (Northwestern University)

The Music for Childhood Well-Being Initiative (MCWI) examines the use of music as an intervention for mitigating stress and increasing the well-being of children. The MCWI team has adopted an innovative research approach, blending biomedical and behavioral methodologies to provide a holistic understanding of the effect of group singing and breathwork on children. In the pilot study, 8- to 11-year-old children have been enrolled in an 8-week singing workshop. Each 30-minute session features a warm-up and body scan, breathwork, and group singing activities. During sessions, participants wear a wireless, mechano-acoustic sensor at the base of the throat to monitor heart rate variability as a proxy for stress. Participants complete an app-based social-emotional check-in before and after sessions to track self-reported sense of well-being. A psychological screener, the State Trait Anxiety Inventory for Children, is also administered before and after singing sessions. After each session, participants engage in a short exit interview about their experience of the activities. With cohorts running in England, Mexico, and the US, the MCWI seeks to build a robust body of data supporting the notion that group singing is good for children’s well-being. In this session, I will share the design, ongoing implementation, and preliminary findings of the multi-site, global investigation.

Considering care: Nel Noddings’ [1928–2022] contributions to approaching divisive issues in choral music

Patrick Freer (Georgia State University)

The purpose of this presentation is to illustrate how care theory and the ethics of care can inform our field’s ongoing conversations about gender identity and sexuality. Issues of gender and sexuality are often considered “divisive topics” in current political parlance, even as our professional associations increasingly highlight these issues in all manner of spoken and print resources. This poster will inform how choral teacher-conductors may consider topics of gender and sexuality within the scope of their professional responsibilities.

This session reports a systematic review of care theory-related literature in choral music and choral music education. Care theory is most notably associated with the work of Nel Noddings, who passed away one year ago in late 2022. Teacher-conductors who struggle with reconciling their moral or religious values with pedagogy reflective of the genders and sexualities of students and choir members might begin with focus on the ethical care of singers as vocalists and musicians. The applications of this research suggest that this can be accomplished through elements of care theory (Noddings, 2013) and through awareness that choral teacher-conductors are both uniquely positioned and ethically required to provide developmentally appropriate, voice-appropriate instruction to the singers who stand before us.
Speakers

Sarah Bartolome (Northwestern University)
Dr. Sarah J. Bartolome is an Associate Professor of Music Education at Northwestern University. She earned degrees in music education from Ithaca College (BM), Northwestern University (MM), and the University of Washington (PhD). Dr. Bartolome’s scholarship in music education has been published in such journals as the Journal of Research in Music Education, Research Studies in Music Education, and the Music Educators Journal. She is the author of World Music Pedagogy V: Choral Music Education (Routledge 2019) and co-author of a forthcoming book on gender expansive music education (Routledge 2024). Her research interests include participatory music making as social capital, world music pedagogy, gender expansive music education, and trauma-informed approaches in music education. At Northwestern, Dr. Bartolome serves as the Co-Lead for the Music for Childhood Wellbeing Initiative, an interdisciplinary research effort sponsored by the Buffett Institute for Global Affairs. In addition to teaching undergraduate and graduate courses at Northwestern University, she also serves as the Associate Director of the Evanston Children’s Choir.

Antonella Coppi (Università Telematica degli Studi IUL)
Antonella Coppi is Associate Professor of General and Social Pedagogy at the Department of Human Sciences, IUL Telematic University, Florence. Involved in academic teaching activities since 2003 as a contract lecturer and collaborator in numerous research projects at the Universities of Perugia and Modena and Reggio Emilia, from 2016 to 2022 she has been a researcher at the Faculty of Education of the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, Single-Cycle Degree Course in Education Sciences.

Patrick Freer (Georgia State University)
Patrick K. Freer is Professor of Music at Georgia State University where he conducts the Tenor-Bass Choir and directs the doctoral programs in music education. Dr. Freer has held Visiting Professorships at the Universität Mozarteum Salzburg (Austria) and at Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (Spain), and has been in residence as a guest conductor for the Bogotá Philharmonic Orchestra (Colombia). His degrees are from Westminster Choir College and Teachers College-Columbia University. Dr. Freer is Editor of the International Journal of Research in Choral Singing and former longtime editor of Music Educators Journal.

Lee Higgins (York St John University)
Professor Lee Higgins is the Director of the International Centre of Community Music based at York St John University, UK. He was the President of ISME (2016-2018) and the senior editor for the International Journal of Community Music (2007-2021). He was author of Community Music: In Theory and In Practice (2012, Oxford University Press), co-author of Engagement in Community Music (2017, Routledge) and co-editor of The Oxford Handbook of Community Music (2018). Thinking Community Music (OUP) is due for publication in 2024.

Jiřina Jiřičková (Charles University)
Jiřina Jiřičková is the Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Education at Charles University in Prague and an assistant professor at the Department of Music Education. Her professional interests include music didactic topics, music teacher competencies and Orff Schulwerk. She is a member of the presidium of the Czech Music Council, a president of the Society for Music Education of the Czech Republic, a second vice-president of the Czech Orff Association and a lecturer of the latter two. She is the organizer of the Music Olympiad of the Czech Republic and a member of the International Music Olympiad Committee. She also teaches at the Grammar School and the Music School of the Capital City of Prague. She is the choirmaster of a hundred-member children’s choir.

Carlo Nardi (Free University of Bozen-Bolzano)
Carlo Nardi received his PhD in Sciences of Music from the University of Trento with a dissertation on audio mastering. He is Lecturer (RTD) at the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano. His work has focused on the use of technology from a sensory perspective, authorship and creativity in relation to technological change, the organisation of labour in music-making, and sound for the moving image. Between 2011 and 2013 he was General Secretary of IASPM, the International Association for the Study of Popular Music. He is a music performer, sound engineer and composer of music for the moving image.

Shirley Salmon (independent scholar, formerly: Orff Institute, Mozarteum University Salzburg)
Shirley Salmon, MPhil., PGCE, BA, studied music, trained as a kindergarten and primary school teacher, and studied educational science. She has worked for over 40 years as a music and movement teacher with children, young people and adults with different abilities and disabilities in extracurricular and school institutions and contexts, in formal and informal settings and as a freelancer particularly in mixed-abled groups. She lectured at the Orff Institute of the Mozarteum University Salzburg from 1984 - 2019, where she established the study area ‘Music and Dance in Social Work and Inclusive Pedagogy’. From 2000 to 2015 she taught at the teacher training universities in Graz, Austria. She gives lectures, workshops and courses in Austria and internationally and has published books, a DVD and numerous articles.

Elisa Seppänen (Sibelius Academy)
Elisa Seppänen (M.A Ed & M.M Ed) is a dedicated musician and education designer committed to fostering creativity and collective learning in music education. With a diverse range of musical interests and a solid academic foundation, Elisa Seppänen combines her passion for music with her expertise in education design. She is dedicated to creating engaging and collective learning experiences, integrating music with various art forms and embracing global education themes. Currently, she imparts her knowledge as a Lecturer in Music Education at the Sibelius Academy, University of Arts in Helsinki.

Johann van der Sandt (Free University of Bozen-Bolzano)
Johann van der Sandt completed his studies at the University of Pretoria, and his choral conducting at the Institute of Choral Conducting in Gorinchem, Netherlands. He is a sought-after juror, composer and choral clinician. He is a professional choral conductor and has led numerous choirs throughout his career. Before his appointment as professor of music education at the University of Bolzano in Italy he was professor of choral conducting at the University of Pretoria, South Africa and choir director and musical rector at the Drakensberg Boys Choir School, South Africa. Apart from his teaching and research interests at the University of Bolzano, he also leads the male choir Brummenet and the Provincial Youth Choir of South Tyrol.

Graham Welch (University College London)
Formerly a Primary school teacher for many years, Professor Graham Welch PhD has held the UCL Institute of Education (formerly University of London) Established Chair of Music Education since 2001. He is a Past President of the International Society for Music Education (ISME) (2008-2014) and elected Chair of the internationally based Society for Education, Music and Psychology Research (SEMPRE). He holds Visiting Professorships at universities in the UK and overseas, and is an ex-member of the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Review College for Music (2007-2015). Publications number over four hundred and embrace musical development and music education, music and general teacher education, the psychology of music, singing and voice science, and music in special education and disability. New publications include: The Oxford Handbook of Early Childhood Learning and Development in Music (December 2023) with Margaret Barrett; an updated Oxford Handbook of Music Education (2018, five volumes) with Gary McPherson; the Oxford Handbook of Singing (2019) with David Howard & John Nix; and three Routledge books with colleagues: New Approaches in Applied Musicology with Adam Ockelford (2020); Desired Artistic Outcomes in Music Performance with Giliano Dalagna & Sara Carvalho (2020); and The Artist and Academia with Helen Phelan (2021).
David-Emil Wickström (Popakademie Baden-Württemberg)
David-Emil Wickström studied Scandinavian studies, musicology and ethnomusicology at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, University of Bergen and University of Copenhagen. His areas of research include the revival of Norwegian traditional vocal music, post-Soviet popular music (primarily Belarus, Ukraine, Russia and Germany) as well as higher music education. Currently employed as Professor of popular music history at the Popakademie Baden-Württemberg he is also the program director for the artistic Bachelor degree programs “Pop Music Design” and “World Music”. He is a member of the research group “Russian Space? Concepts, Practices, Representations (RSCPR)” at UiT Noregs arktiske universitet. In addition, he chairs the editorial board of the AEC project “Power relations in Higher Music Education” and is a founding board member of IASPM D-A-CH.

Motje Wolf (De Montford University)
Dr Motje Wolf works as Senior Lecturer in Education at De Montfort University where she teaches and researches Music Education. She co-founded ‘Singing in Music Education’, a Special Focus Group of the European Association of Music in Schools. Her research centres around voice pedagogy, choral pedagogy and making music with sounds. Motje’s research is inspired by her ‘other’ career as mezzo-soprano and working with young and old voices as choral conductor. She works as a choral director at Shrewsbury Cathedral and also leads three community choirs. She sits on the board of trustees for Sing Up and is on the editorial board of the International Journal of Research in Choral Singing. Motje loves supervising PhD students internally and externally of her own institution and is interested in hearing from potential PhD candidates. Motje also enjoys working with local and international singing students in her studio Singing with the Wolf (http://www.singingwiththewolf.com).