

Special Issue of the *Journal of Interdisciplinary Voice Studies*

‘Voicing Belonging: Traditional Singing in a Globalized World’

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Why conduct scholarly and artistic research on traditional singing in the global age? Given the dominance of new communication technologies and the unprecedented commodification of world cultures, investigating vocal practices rooted in oral cultures and traditional ways of knowing may seem futile and irrelevant. Yet, traditional singing is a powerful mode of human creativity, and traditional songs comprise a significant part of what UNESCO has designated as ‘our’ shared intangible cultural heritage. Current debates on cultural diversity demonstrate that rethinking regional, national, transnational, and global notions of cultural identity is becoming increasingly urgent if we are to acknowledge and value the world’s biocultural diversity beyond borders that separate and delineate nation-states, whose sovereignty continues to hinge upon legitimizing constructions of national identity. If, as Caroline Bithell reminds us in *Transported by Song*, ‘the act of singing with others is clearly about far more than simply producing sound’ (2007: xxx-xxxii), how does engaging in singing practices relate to emergent, unstable and conflicting versions of belonging in times of precarity?

This special issue asks what is at stake today in cultural revitalization initiatives, academic research projects, and artistic endeavours that seek to reawaken, restore, preserve, transmit, and at times transform specific vocal traditions whose continuity, resilience, and vitality crucially depend on a repertoire of embodied cultural memory that, as Diana Taylor argues in *The Archive and the Repertoire* (2003), must be performed in order to remain efficacious and meaningful. This performative dimension is a core concern for our special issue since live performance allows for infinite variations linked to the subtleties of interpretation characterizing orally transmitted vocal practices that, as evidenced in Tenzer and Roeder’s *Analytical and Cross-Cultural Studies in World Music* (2011), elude the standard Western notation system. When dynamically reactivated through performance, can cultural memory embedded in these songs—which are often the only remaining vehicle for endangered languages—reveal the contemporary relevance and future potentialities of intangible cultural heritage?

We are calling for contributions from researchers, practitioners, educators, and activists who can reflexively address their positionality when engaging with questions of cultural identity and tradition, and who can critically account for processes of acculturation, identity construction, and musical regionalism linked to the re-appropriation of traditional vocal practices as well as to phenomena of interculturality, hybridity, and fusion.

Topics for article submissions can include but are not limited to:

- Interdisciplinary investigations of traditional singing as a source of knowledge; Contemporary research methodologies of traditional singing; Traditional singing and voice philosophy
- The dis- or re-embodied voice: intersections of traditional singing and technology; Traditional singing on stage/film/sound art
- Ecologies of singing: the aesthetics of spatiality, silence and sound; Transmitting traditional songs to sustain bio-cultural diversity in the global age
- Autobiography, adaptation and translation through song
- Re-imagining vocal traditions: from folk revival to world music; Producing and circulating world voices for a globalized audience; Vocal traditions as intangible cultural heritage; Re-examining notions of ‘folk’, ‘authenticity’ and ‘tradition’ in singing practice
- Traditional songs as training in the conservatoire or Higher Education
- Traditional singing, subjectivity, the nation, ethnicity and racial politics; Indigenous perspectives on the cultural and political relevance of traditional singing; Performing traditional songs as a form of postcolonial/transnational/radical cultural activism; Intercultural, transnational, diasporic and migratory aesthetics of vocal practice
- Traditional singing as a form of spiritual practice

Practitioner-scholars who work in the areas outlined in the CfP are invited to contribute to the ‘Voicings’ section of the journal, which offers a platform for experimentation with non-conventional forms of dissemination, such as:

- Practitioners’ reflections
- Vocal scores and transcripts of music/sound/audio/multimedia artworks
- Annotated interviews

- Photographic essays
- Excerpts of rehearsals, workshops, performances
- Voice essays and blog-style contributions
- Transcripts of roundtables
- Academic discussions of voice in the form of poetic scripts, libretti, mini lexicons, ethnographic notes
- Voice-related documents and archives
- Extended and/or comparative documentations of exhibitions, conferences, events or performances

Proposals (350-500 words max.) should be emailed to both editors by **11th July 2016** at konstantinos.thomaidis@port.ac.uk and virginie.magnat@ubc.ca. Successful authors will be invited to submit their contributions by **3rd October 2016**. Articles and Voicings will appear in the Spring Issue of the journal, subject to peer-review.

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