

LONGITUDINAL TRENDS IN VOCAL DEVELOPMENT AMONG GIRL CHORISTERS IN A UK CATHEDRAL

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Abstract

For a number of years the authors have been recording, at approximately 6-monthly intervals, the girl choristers at Wells Cathedral in the UK; a specialist music education environment where the training is intense, particularly for the choristers. Each recording includes a read text, spoken and sung consonant-vowel-consonant words, a 2-octave G major scale and a short sung melody. Recordings are in stereo with the output from a microphone on one channel and the output from an electrolaryngograph on the other. These data are enabling trends in vocal change to be quantified for some choristers over a number of years, based on these 6-monthly data collection intervals. Data will be presented that indicates: (1) how pitching develops in terms of pitch accuracy, vibrato, note onsets and note offsets, and (2) how vocal timbre changes in terms of their use of their overall use of output vocal spectrum and its musical use in the context of vocal performance. Such data serves to indicate how the young female voice develops over time when it is in regular (near daily) use in a professional performance environment of public cathedral worship and concerts.