

AEC POP & JAZZ PLATFORM 2024



# HANDS ON!

Methods, skills and sustainability  
for a future in music

ODENSE (DENMARK)  
9 - 11 FEBRUARY 2024



## VoCon

11/02/2024 - h. 09:00-13:00

9:00-9:10 greetings and introduction

9:10-10:00 welcome presentation curated by Syddansk Musikkonservatorium - Danish National Academy of Music, Odense (Denmark)

### Coming Together in Singing. Vocal Leadership and Folk Singing

Lene Høst Mees (singer/performer/composer/teacher, Odense - Denmark)



This very first workshop at VoCon will be all about hands on singing and moving together. Lene will guide us through old Danish medieval ballads and groovy nordic "tral" (singing without words) towards doing some impro as a group.

Lene Høst Mees is a vocalist, composer and teacher. With her roots in the Nordic folk music she has also explored other traditional genres and styles from countries like Tanzania, Bulgaria and Brazil. Lene has a bachelor degree in Nordic folk music and a master in pop/jazz singing and choir conducting. Her passion to combine polyphonic singing with traditional vocal music is the inspiration for many of her musical projects, here among the vocal quartet HØST, the trio Vingefang and the choir Roots. She is also working as a teacher in theory and ear training and all vocal subjects at the Danish National Academy's folk music programme, as well as coordinating the Nordic Master in Folk programme.

10:00-11:00 lecture/workshop

### **South Indian Music: a Inner Revolution**

Raphaëlle Brochet (singer/performer/composer/teacher, Paris - France)



Learn the basics of Carnatic Music and apply them directly into your own musical practice. Ragas, talas, konnakol, ornamentation: these modal and rhythmical tools will bring clarity and strength into your daily routine and truly have the power to revolutionize your musical path. Surprisingly, practicing simple Carnatic exercises can really enrich your practice of improvisation, of interpretation, ground your rhythmical strength, broaden your instrumental technique, and exalt your creativity in general. In the end, diving into South Indian music can really enrich and enhance the fields of performance, in all musical aesthetics, but also teaching, composition and research. Welcome to the land of Carnatic music. Careful: this tradition can be quite addictive, and before you know it, you will be tapping talas on your lap in the street like all of us. You'll have been warned.

It is very rare that one has the pleasure of meeting a true artist. Raphaëlle Brochet's never ending journey into the world of global performing arts and music has led to her becoming a truly powerful and inspiring performer. Her versatility and dedication to learn have all fed into her unique sound, and she is today one of the most sought-after improvising vocalists in Europe. Jazz was truly her native language. Raphaëlle was born to musician parents and started her career at the age of 17 by recording an album with Floris Nico-Bunink (Mingus, Billy Holliday) under the label Daybreak. After studying Jazz in French Conservatories, she spent a year in Montreal and another in New York City, to explore North American performing practices and write music. In parallel to her jazz studies, Raphaëlle went to South India for more than twenty years to study Carnatic singing with Sarada Thota and konnakol with Ghatam Govindarajan. Then she received a full scholarship from the Wesleyan University, USA, and got a Masters of Ethnomusicology from one of the highest ranked universities of the world, specializing in South Indian music. Now based in Paris, her main collaborations include Nguyễn Lê, Sixun, Sophie Alour, Pierre de Bethmann, Ivan Paduart and Heiri Känzig, and she is also very involved in cross-disciplinary projects such as theater, dance and cinema. She is also very active as an educator and gives regular workshops all around the globe.

11:00-11:15 break

11:15- 11:45 open floor session

## **Chromatic Sol Fa as an Ear Training Tool for Vocal Improvisation in Modal Jazz**

Clare Wheeler (Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London - UK)



Learning to scat over functional harmony traditionally focuses on repetition of exercises, familiarising the ear with harmonic patterns and relying on recall. Modal harmony is not always easy to improvise over by ear. Even with good aural ability and familiarity with the harmony, a vocalist may not know what note they are singing in the mode, and therefore not have total control over what they're doing. Reliant on the rhythm section, this can lead to a "listen then react" way of improvising. There is significant research into using hand signals to support language development, and I believe the same neurological theory applies to Sol Fa. By combining Aural/Visual/Kinetic and Theory, the imprint goes deeper than if the student uses only one or two of the available senses. Having the power to make choices in real time because they can track *what they are doing as they do it*, turns the vocalist into an autonomous improviser.

With a background in both Classical music and Jazz, Clare toured with *The Swingles* for 11 years, and is now embarking on other musical ventures. Growing up in Kenya, she has sung in African Gospel Choirs, as well as Gospel Choirs in UK, Jazz Vocal Ensembles, Classical Chamber Choirs, Symphonic Choirs and of course *The Swingles*. She is a solo jazz singer, improviser, composer and arranger, and in addition to her solo work she balances directing choirs and vocal groups with her position at Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London where she is Vocal Jazz Professor and Faculty Chair for Jazz Vocals. As a singer Clare performs all over the world, as a soloist, in choirs and vocal ensembles, singing Early Music, Jazz, Gospel, Contemporary Classical and Pop, following her love of music from across all genres, from singing backing vocals for Jacob Collier's Prom Performance in 2018 with the Metropol Jazz Orkester to brand new original tri-lingual setting of Te Deum by John Featherstone across Europe.

11:45-12:15 open floor session

## **Innovation and Tradition: Exploring New Fields of Vocal Jazz, a study of European influences**

Barbara Wiernik (Royal Conservatoire Antwerp KCA, Royal Conservatoire Brussels KCB & Vrije Universiteit Brussel VUB - Belgium)



Tradition and innovation are often seen as opposing forces, but in jazz, this research argues that tradition doesn't hinder innovation. Jazz traditions constantly renew, inspiring new elements. Focusing on European vocal jazz, the project recognizes its ongoing identity formation. Despite jazz's American roots, European influences since the seventies have led to innovative practices like blending voices with instruments and experimenting with new sounds. This enriches vocal jazz locally and culturally, exploring the impact of European traditions. The project, *Innovation and Tradition: Exploring New Fields of European Vocal Jazz*, stems from Barbara Wiernik's PhD research *Contemporary Vocal Jazz: An Artistic Cartography of European Encounters* at Koninklijk Conservatorium Brussel (KCB) and Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB). It aims to raise awareness of diverse approaches, assisting young musicians in understanding vocal jazz within a multicultural context.

Barbara Wiernik is a dynamic jazz artist recognized as a singer, songwriter, lyricist, teacher, and researcher. After graduating, Barbara's musical palette expanded during her training in traditional Hindustani and Carnatic singing in India, contributing a unique flavor to her repertoire. Beyond her stage career, Barbara has devoted twenty years to teaching jazz singing and vocal improvisation at the Koninklijk Conservatorium Antwerp and is concurrently engaging in jazz research at the Koninklijk Conservatorium Brussel.

12:15-12:45 open floor session

### **Voice Training Music: Modern perspectives of foundational traditions and Preparatory Repertoire in Vocal Pedagogy**

Stefano Lenzi (singer/pianist/teacher/producer, Rome - Italy)



*Voice Training Music* draws inspiration from the teachings of esteemed pedagogues in both instrumental and vocal realms. With meticulous attention to detail, these maestros curated a progressive preparatory repertoire, seamlessly blending instrumental technique with repertoire. The overarching aim was to preserve a musically valid, stimulating, and aesthetically aligned study experience. Notable examples include Bach's *Little Preludes and Fughettas* or Vaccai's *Metodo Pratico di Canto Italiano per Camera*. Building on the legacy of these classical greats, the *Voice Training Music* project is diligently crafting a collection of exercises presented in the form of modern songs, enriched with progressive and thematic features. Additionally, it provides a set of musically stimulating accompaniments tailored for various foundational vocal exercises. These tools are thoughtfully designed to support the study of modern singing, upholding the didactic principles of the masters while seamlessly fitting within a contemporary aesthetic context.

Italian artist Stefano Lenzi is a versatile singer, pianist, composer and voice teacher. Holding a Jazz Master's from Santa Cecilia Conservatory and a Berklee Professional Music Degree, he possesses an extensive history of lead live performances and recordings. Also an accomplished producer, arranger, Lenzi contributed to the platinum-winning album *Stonata*. His album *Re-Gudu*, published by JazzIt magazine in 2019 with Stefano Lenzi Quintet, received high recognition. With vast global teaching and performing experience, including at institutions like Saint Louis College of Music and Santa Cecilia Conservatory, he established his own voice teaching studio in 2020. Since 2019, Stefano Lenzi has cultivated a valuable collaboration with *New Voice Studio Brilla Paglin*, contributing his expertise to national and international vocal master classes. Engaging in scholarly inquiry, he conducted personal research to formulate a specific introductory repertoire for modern singing education, culminating in the conceptualization of the *Voice Training Music* project.

12:45-13:00 final discussion / planning VoCon future meetings

\*\*\*

about VoCon

VoCon is a Europe-wide platform for vocal Jazz, Pop, Folk and all interested teachers in higher music education. It provides the need for sharing good practice, thoughts on education, and differences in vision and mission in the various European countries. It is a very personal practice-based platform that aims to connect professional teachers in higher education on a 'person to person' base. It is a learning community, practicing what it preaches and also provides and protects free space for sharing topics that emerge on the spot.

\*\*\*

~ VOCAL TEACHERS (VoCon) MANIFEST ~

When being a member of VoCon you are:

- a vocal teacher Jazz and/or Pop and/or Folk in higher music education;
- in an institute that is connected to or open to attending AEC/PJP;
- eager to meet and greet European colleagues in our working field;
- interested in sharing thoughts, vision, mission and practical working forms with colleagues;
- primarily interested in sharing questions instead of giving answers;
- part of a learning community, open to shift angles that may offer new insights;
- critical friend to your colleagues and their contribution in both meetings and VoCon online communication;
- part of a non-strategic platform, that develops from the inside out;
- open to sharing research results, contribute knowledge and be a sounding board;
- open to educational experiment and keen on exchanging all kinds of educational experiences;
- an ambassador that reaches out to colleagues inviting them to take part in VoCon.