

Giving space, giving time, giving flow

Shadow singing as a method for attention in Folk Song Lab

In our time, attention is our most valuable currency, (Nørrestrand, 1997), and it is a challenge to find a longer timespan for focused music-making together that fosters both creativity and flow. To address this, an artistic project called Folk Song Lab (Rosenberg, 2019-2022) was created. The questions posed were whether it is possible today to develop a platform for collaborative, collective voice improvisation that enables creative attention. How long would such a session need to be? Could this platform, by using artistic methods such as *mimicry, play, risk, and reorientation*, developed in earlier artistic projects (Rosenberg, 2013), provide a space for attention and holistic creativity? Offering a longer, more coherent period for collaborative voice improvisation. To explore this, new methods were developed. One of these, which started each session, was called Shadow Singing, meaning that participants “shadow” the person who improvises, using the same melody at the same time, based on the idea that humans are primed to mimic both feelings and actions through the use of mirror neurons. This also develops our ability to collaborate and develop empathy (Trainor (Cirelli et al., 2014). Reflections from participants suggest that the meaningfulness of *shadow singing* and a longer timespan are crucial for giving room for creativity and flow, and that the *shadow singing* method plays a significant role in this process. This presentation will demonstrate, both artistically and through some findings, that this has implications for our attention span and sustainability in today’s society, as well as in today’s complex world.

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Susanne Rosenberg, folk singer, professor, and Doctor of Music, has been a pioneer both in rediscovering the older Swedish style of folk singing and in using it in new artistic environments, involving cooperation with contemporary composers and directors, and with her groups, with which she has toured Europe, Asia, and the United States.

Rosenberg has developed the folk singing environment in Sweden through innovative research in *Kulning* (herding calls), folk song style, improvisation in folk singing, etcetera. She is a professor of folk singing at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm. In 2013 she finished her artistic doctoral studies, *Kurbits-ReBoot: Swedish traditional singing in new artistic context*. Rosenberg has been conducting an interdisciplinary improvisation research project, *Folk Song Lab*, funded by The Swedish Research Council (2019-2022).

Read more:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Susanne_Rosenberg

<https://folksonglab.com/>