

**Jennifer Beynon - Martinec**, B. Mus., B. Mus. Ed., M. Mus., is an Interdisciplinary Ph.D. candidate in Music, Medicine and Education at Memorial University of Newfoundland. Jennifer is a voice and music education graduate from the University of British Columbia and the University of Western of Ontario.

A former singer with the World Youth Choir and the Juno-nominated Canadian Chamber Choir; Jennifer was a choral conductor and vocal teacher at St. Michael's Choir School (Toronto), the Amabile Boys Choir (London), the Bach Children's Choir (Toronto), a private voice teacher and conductor with two Czech boy's choirs where her choir one the prize of the public from the Montreux Festival, a voice teacher at the English International School of Prague and a lecturer in vocal and choral music education at Charles University (Prague) and Memorial University (St. John's & Grenfell Campus', NL). Jennifer has been involved as a conductor and/or vocal technician preparing soloists for the following recordings: *Rejoice and be merry* (Pueri Auri, 2011), *Songs of my homeland* (Pueri Auri, 2011), *Boni Pueri & Guests* (Kings Production, 2008) and *The most beautiful Christmas Carols* (Supraphon, 2007). During her time with the Czech Boys Choir, Jennifer regularly prepared soloists for professional tours all over Europe, Canada and the United States. This past year, Jennifer was the vocal technician the Atlantic Boychoir produced its first recording entitled, *Gloria* (2018).

Jennifer has been awarded several grants and scholarships; most notably, the Don Wright Scholarship for Vocal Music (University of Western Ontario, 2001), the Lloyd Bradshaw Scholarship in Choral Conducting (University of Toronto, 2003) and the Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship (SSHRC, 2016) for her exciting research on the adolescent boy's changing voice.

Jennifer designed the early music program *Musicking Tots*, which was first introduced in the Czech Republic in 2010. *Musicking Tots* continues to be a valued program and has been launched in both Ontario and Newfoundland. An active performer, clinician, adjudicator, presenter, researcher, author, and teacher with interests in the changing voice from birth to adulthood; Jennifer is a sought after adjudicator and clinician on the male changing voice. Currently, Jennifer lives in St. John's Newfoundland with her family

and is the Co-Artistic Director of the Atlantic Boychoir, and an Artistic Director of the Atlantic Girls Choir.

**My research: That awkward moment: A new method to instill confidence in teenage boys' singing**

Singing is an important means that not only describes, renews, and creates Canadian culture, but also benefits Canadians in many other ways, such as the community-building that occurs in shared arts creation and expression. Such experiences generate feelings of empathy and identity while conveying cognitive, social, emotional, social, and health benefits to the individuals involved in the singing and to those listening. Ensembles such as mixed voice and male choirs bring large numbers of people together in the act of music-making, creating a shared sense of accomplishment and pride in Canadian nationalism, while simultaneously working together toward artistic excellence. Singing is the most personal of all musical expression and at this time we worry as we watch the numbers of males involved in singing decline.

At the same time, in the field of music education, approximately 40% of the research articles about singing written since 2000 focus solely on the adolescent male singer and his changing voice. However, with fewer and fewer males singing than ever before, the current research methods and findings are not as useful as they might be. While the methods described do work in certain circumstances, it seems that we have not yet found optimal ways of teaching singing to young boys, nor have we had meaningful communication about the issues teenage boys face who require the skills to disregard traditional masculine stereotypes when they want to engage in singing. Of those boys who do choose to sing in their formative years, the greatest number drop out when their voices begin to change as they reach puberty, sometimes because of peer pressure and ridicule, but more often because the methods used to train the voice are simply not effective.

At this point I am in the process of developing and testing a new (and perhaps controversial) a means to free the vocal instrument from tensions and preconceived ideas that contribute to unhealthy vocal production, an aspect especially critical for youth who

emulate popular singing styles. Specifically, can a method of training be developed to aid singers throughout the change and influence the end result? Working with a medical ENT specialist, vocal experts, and boys in three geographic settings, I will set up lessons for these boys and with videotapes, regular testing mechanisms, and interviews over the period of my doctoral studies, I will observe and analyse the results, revising and refining the pedagogical model for optimal results. It is my hope that my doctoral studies at Memorial will serve to increase the number of males participating in singing, bringing them to a better understanding of musical relevance in our cultural life in Canada.