

The Beauty of Technical Imperfection: Choral Members' Perceptions of Aesthetic Issues in Performance

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Abstract: This presentation is based on socio-musical research carried out on two English amateur choirs: a community choir in Southwest England and a Bach choir in the Greater London area. The research addresses the perceptions that amateur choristers have of aesthetic issues in music performances both from the perspective of the choristers as performers and as audience members. This talk will examine the attitudes of amateur choristers towards the somewhat problematic evaluation of a 'good performance' and what a good performance must deliver to the audience. The extent to which amateur choristers regard a 'good performance' as being dependent upon • musical / technical perfection • profundity of interpretation based on the performers' awareness of the historical/emotional/socio-musical context of the work • the extent to which the performers actually bond with the audience doing the performance in a more personal or intimate way will be discussed. The talk will conclude with an examination of the aesthetical boundaries separating professional from amateur music performances - as these boundaries are drawn with reference to the canonical values of the Western music tradition.

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