

In the Beginning was the Word...

**then, presumably,
came the yodel**

Ayodel immediately evokes something archaic and historic, far back in the distant past, we can envisage indigenous alpine people hearing them as they communicate using elaborate vocal call and response. Simultaneously we recognize the yodel as a metaphor for the idea of homeland, even if edelweiss doesn't always come immediately to mind. This is how deeply the overuse of yodeling in Schunkel (this word is unknown in English) films and on records has created associations for everyone: grotesque mountain peaks, bright blue gentian violets, wind warped and weathered alpine huts and their fabled dairy maids, whose message is not of disintegrating farming communities and climate change, but bravely whispers a seductive promise of timelessness "holla radi rido holla rettiti net..."

For some of these reasons, the art of yodeling began declining quickly. Yodeling is also disappearing because it is often regarded as gift or a talent, a mystical, secret breathing ability you're endowed with. This view and attitude towards the art of the yodel brought about a respectful distance to yodeling imagining it a difficult and unobtainable skill without great effort thus threatening yodeling's extinction. Therein lies the hidden seed to be awakened by the wish to yodel To discover the path of yodeling for one's self and others, is to simultaneously demystify yodeling, wresting it from the realm of myth.

There have been many previous attempts to scientifically study yodeling in the hope of discovering a method to bolster the long existing tradition of informal cultural

transmission by word of mouth, or yodel by mouth might seem more appropriate .

On the path of yodeling

Many of these efforts are barely known to us, some, like Josef Pommers, have written stories. His collections and editions of initially 252^{1[1]} and later 444 yodels^{2[2]} are handy, making it easy to carry and sing from a small book. However these were misleading, because in yodeling, everyone needs to be looking into one another's eyes and not into a book. Pommers' collection, however, is an important scientific as well as an historical ethno-musical primary source and reference work. Being conscious of being on the path of an extraordinary "species" of musical culture, innumerable collections by many well-known authors soon followed.^{3[3]} To name them all would be a step too far for these liner notes. Moreover, it would overshadow a phenomenon related to yodeling that fascinates us: In the past, the most important bearers of yodeling were not the collectors and publishers, but the people themselves, in whom the sounding and singing were never silenced. "Oral transmission" is what the researchers succinctly name this process, and they refer not only to the passing on of melody and text from person to person. This process is not bound to numbered documents, but one of densely inscribed memories. Oral transmission, is the conveying of the deeply imprinted and vivid images of people we carry within us, those whom we encountered in the most beautiful moment of our lives.

Yodeling in all mouths and on the

Web

Whoever says we must save yodeling from disappearing should have a look in the World Wide Web. One quickly discovers that yodeling remains a popular theme, whether in the yodeling courses offered all over the world or those available as downloads for individual study. No less respect belongs to the countless published works like "Alpenländische Jodelschule" by Gustl Thoma and Ludwig Merkle, which appeared in 1977 in the Heimeran Press as *Die Kunst des Jodelns* [The Art of Yodeling]. Alongside the seriousness of yodeling, a tongue in cheek seriousness is also present in the countless play on words and the jokes inflecting otherwise meaningless individual vocalisations. Most famous is Loroit's Jodelschule [Loroit's Yodeling Lecture], the legendary, uproarious lectures on yodeling. Bernhard Victor Christoph-Carl von Bülow, alias Loroit, born in 1923 in Brandenburg on the Havel, created a masterful cabaret classic and a piece of world literature with his "Yodeling Lecture."

Yodeling: Between Affection and Rejection

Yodeling doesn't have positive associations for everyone in fact for many it's a stereotype associated with the Alpine regions through films and hollywood. Also in places where yodeling is indigenous because yodeling often takes place late at night with corresponding revelry. Making for an ambiguous picture in which a number of associations of musical aesthetics and particular past-times come together. Simultaneously there's the idea of the yodel as a competition that has become an overused standard of many television shows within the regions where this is a part of the culture. In contrary to all of these stereotypes, there exists the uninterrupted and varied living process of transmission that amazes us. Likewise there is the special love felt by

many of our fellow countrymen when it concerns our own yodeling tradition. Here above all youth last but not least, yodeling as a musical phenomenon also carries a certain weight because of the research of our music universities and the yodeling courses they offer. Yodeling imparts a special sense to individual musicality and physicality. The play with individual tones and the creation of sounds from deep within is a worldwide phenomenon that reminds us that making music is a fundamental part of being human.

Why Yodel?

Perhaps it is to pass on melodies so that they are not lost to memory but more compelling must be because of the effects that producing sound, that of making music have upon all of us. The free interplay of energy the creativity that yields new variations, and the further sharing of this experience this is when emulation becomes inflected with invention.

Yodeling tosses the entire debate about preserving folk songs out the of window. Not yodeling, rather, we should and need to be preserving ourselves. We're the ones who, instead of using are losing our inherent musical ability. Musical renovations! This would be a huge effort of restoration, ensuring the existence of a singular part of quality of life for us. Yodeling offers the chance to participate in music. In yodeling resides the entire art of articulation and expression - unlimited by language, expressive nuances become that much more strikingly audible and visible. Whoever yodels, expresses everything and simultaneously says nothing. They revel in heights and depths as if engaged in very personal confessions. Everyone can yodel, it is not a gift from birth, and thus yodeling is de-mystified.

The CD: Learn to Yodel

In over 25 years, the interest in our yodeling course has never faded and this testifies to a great demand. During these years, we've developed various methods to address this interest. The idea of fostering yodeling through a sing-a-long CD comes from Hans Martschin from Greith bei Mariazell, who along with his family was the first to develop one. You can get his Jodel-Lern-CD [Learn to Yodel] containing the best yodels from Mariazell region by writing to: martschin@a1.net.

Never Muddle a Musical Moment

The CD in front of you comes from a very regional and very personally influenced repertoire. Awakening the joy in yodeling making it possible to have at home the chance to practice as if you were in an alpine hut or a tavern and not to muddle or miss the chance to join in the next round of yodeling.

But these moments are irreplaceable, these magical times of music making that enable us to forget the everyday. We should prepare ourselves well for occasions to sing. For many, the discovery of one's own voice is the first step into a new pastime.

The Culture Bearers and their Goods

We are connected to Franz Zöhrer, a retired contractor and son of a mountain farmer from Laufnitzdorf, by a decade-long friendship and many fun-filled hours spent singing. Ever since he became known as a "living song book" through his participation

in countless music festivals and classes he's taught at the Universities of Music in Graz and Vienna, hundreds of young musicians and students have paid him respect. A great many of our yodels and songs come from him, the patient and profound master teacher to whom we, with deepest respect, dedicate this CD.

A different but equally profound impression remains with us from Gretl Steiner and Heli Gebauer of Ramsau. Through their old-fashioned interpretations of melody, they both constantly embodied the essence of this art; singing and yodeling are born from sentiment, out of images, from longings and from passions. Yodeling is pure emotion and holds within a small trace of the origins of humankind. Unlike choral music, which strives for the optimal blending of human voices in unison, in yodeling, each individual voice stands uniquely in the foreground. The result should not be measured by the standards of art music. The great measure of this music comes from the passionate and emotional necessity to make music that lived experience compels. We have both Gretl and Heli to thank that this dimension of music has been so boldly returned to the foreground.

And there are many further encounters with those able to express the joys of life through music. Take the railroad man Leo Berger from Übelbach who always yodeled while sitting in the engine of his train. Or the farmer Hans Neuhold, known as "Wiemann" from Semriach, whose songs and yodels belong to the farm where his parents spent many an hour singing. We also thank Hans Martschin, the retired bank director who collected and sang many yodels in and around Mariazell, and thus kept yodeling alive among the people. And who can forget the elderly Franz Seebacher who taught us his "Bibi be boba" yodel on a bench at the Restaurant Kölblwirt in Johnsbach in the Gesäuse National Park, leaving behind in us a few

fragments of music and of images from a world born of music.

This CD contains a small portion of an immense wealth of melodies and their variations yodeled by Hermann Härtel Jr., Hermann Härtel Sr., Ingeborg Magdalena Härtel, Marie Theres Härtel, and Dietlinde Härtel for self-directed study,

User's Guide

The Transcriptions

The transcriptions printed in the supplement are meant only to serve as a reference for clearing up uncertainties about the text and as a guide for melodies. However, for the actual learning with the CD, the transcriptions have no use.

Vocal Pitch

You yourself should determine the ideal pitch by considering the questions: Where are my vocal strengths? In which range do I feel comfortable and am I able to yodel strongly?

Warning: The musical keys in the transcriptions will not coincide with your personal vocal range. They just represent the listening examples and are useful for your initial study. However, as soon as you begin singing freely, you should give priority to your own vocal range and to those with whom you are singing ignoring the transcriptions.

Text

The text of a yodel is enormously important. It must be powerfully articulated in order to build the "Anjodeln" into an emotional signal. Without knowing the text, there is

only a mumbling that doesn't suit regular speech and certainly not a yodel. You will often think you've heard the same yodel articulated differently. You're right there exist countless variations that represent the extraordinary vitality of the yodel genre.

Melody

As with the text, so to with the melodies and the other voice parts and counterparts: there are many variations. This Learn to Yodel CD offers only some of the numerous possibilities. Never hesitate to make regional differences part of your repertoire.

On Yodeling Technique

Technically, yodeling is the alternation between chest and head voice or the alternation of registers. This facilitates other shifts between tones and this is something you should practice. This "Kipp-technique" ["tossing" or "throwing"-technique"] has much to do with the vocables of the yodeling - "i," "u," and "ü" for higher pitches, and "a," "e," and "o" for lower pitches. Large jumps in interval are best accomplished through legato (slurring the tones together). "Kipping" the voice can also be described as a practiced "cracking" of the voice. You experience this if you scream when frightened or when expressing deep anger - the voice "cracks" sharply. The cultivation of this sharp forcefulness is the best path to yodeling. To be able to yodel strongly, but with much emotional expressivity, one needs this technique as well as the ability to deliberately change registers at will. Note: Yodeling is closer to screaming and hollering than it is singing.

Forcefulness and emotion are two pre-requisites in yodeling passions are unleashed and existing moods come into play. First and foremost, however, yodeling depends on you and your instrument and the enthusiasm that you are able express in sound.

Naturally, this is not about being shy, people are waiting to hear you. But avoid having a yodel as a mere clump of acoustically sterile chords. Experiment with the sounds that you can already make, yodel according to your own current state of mind - this bit of musical advice should take absolute precedence in your practice.

Practicing your voice always brings great benefits. The car is a good place for this. The more you use your voice, the more confidently you'll hit your pitches. Your voice is an instrument and, like all instruments, it must be taken care of.

Practicing with the CD Examples

The ordering of each yodel on the CD has a didactic purpose. First, there are easy, two-part and parallel yodels, and later, yodels that become progressively more difficult.

The examples contain the following parts:

"Bibi be boba," 2-part Yodel; tracks: 4-6

[4] The yodel with all voice parts

[5] The first part in the foreground, the second part in the background

[6] The second part in the foreground, the

first part in the background

You have the chance to sing along with and then practice each part. It's important to know that in yodeling, you should know all the parts. Thus, when singing together, you're able to easily switch roles.

Please use page 28 to track your progress. Take seriously each chance you have to sing your yodel. This is the only way to build your own repertoire that will then enable you to make each yodeling gathering that much richer.

Certificate

Don't be impatient, for now it's practice, practice, practice. Later you can contact us at the address provided and we'll gladly respond.

252 Jodler und Juchezer, Wien 1892

444 Jodler und Juchezer aus Steiermark und dem ostmärkischen Alpengebiet, Wien 1902

Weiterführende Literatur:

Evelyn Fink-Mennel: Jodler und Juch. Registerwechselnder Gesang im Bregenzerwald (mit Tonbeispielen 1937- 1997) (Schriften der Vorarlberger Landesbibliothek 16), Graz - Feldkirch 2007

Luchner- Löscher, Claudia: Der Jodler. Wesen, Entstehung, Verbreitung und Gestalt. München- Salzburg 1982