

# **SINGERS' GOALS FOR PRACTICE: VERBAL REPORTS AND BEHAVIOURAL DATA**

*Jane Ginsborg*

Psychology Group, School of Health and Human Sciences,  
Leeds Metropolitan University, UK

## **Background**

Musicians' self-reports during and following practice have been shown to be a valuable adjunct to the analysis of behavioural data.

## **Aims**

This paper investigates the nature of singers' goals, and the extent to which singers' explicit verbalisation of their intentions, together with their evaluation of the degree to which they feel they meet them, contributes to the effectiveness of their practice.

## **Method**

Thirteen female singers of different levels of expertise took part in an observational study. They practised and memorised the same new song over a period of two weeks in a series of four to six 15-minute sessions, which were audio-taped. While the singers practised they provided verbal commentaries; they also completed practice diaries at the end of each session. The data from the singers' vocal practice were combined with the data from their verbal commentaries and diaries. These were analysed in terms of goals explicitly stated or inferred, the extent to which they were actually met or met to the singer's satisfaction, and evaluated by the singer.

## **Results**

The results suggest differences between the higher-level practice strategies used by the singers who were quicker to memorise and to give completely accurate performances of the song, and those used by the singers who were much slower to memorise and made the most errors in their final performances.

## **Discussion**

The combination of concurrent and retrospective verbal data with observations of singers' practising behaviours illuminates the extent to which singers of different levels of expertise identify and meet their goals, and evaluate their success, in relation to their speed and accuracy of memorisation.