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## LET ME SING YOUR SONGS: HOW FINNS FOUND XÖÖMEI

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*The author of this essay, musician and founder of the Throat Singing Association of Finland (1997), tells the story of how an association of throat singing practitioners came to be in Finland, and how to teach this art to those wishing to learn it. The story also covers the author's own musical preferences and his life-changing visit to a week-long workshop led by Boris Salchak from Tuva in 1995. Two years later, the author and other aficionados of Tuvan xöömei founded the Throat Singing Association and started holding festivals featuring invited Tuvan singers and throat singing courses. The author describes his collaboration with renowned Tuvan performers, as well as throat singing scholars from the USA, the Netherlands, UK, Italy, etc.*

*The author holds that throat (or overtone) singing is a special sound practice. Tuvan practices can be compared with similar techniques developed by indigenous peoples of Africa, North America, Japan and Tibet. Throat singing as a practice is closely linked to specific ancient worldviews of peoples and cultures living close to nature. Finns are also considered living in close proximity to nature, which may explain their partiality to throat signing. Dozens actively practice xöömei and*



## ПОЗВОЛЬТЕ МНЕ ПЕТЬ ВАШИ ПЕСНИ: КАК ФИННЫ НАШЛИ ХООМЕЙ

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*Автор — музыкант, основатель Ассоциации горлового пения Финляндии (1997), рассказывает о появлении в Финляндии объединения людей, практикующих горловое пение, и особенностях их обучения. Он повествует о своих собственных музыкальных увлечениях и о поворотном для себя 1995 г., когда побывал на недельном семинаре музыканта Бориса Салчака из Тувы. Спустя два года он и другие увлеченные тувинским хоомеем основали Ассоциацию горлового пения, начали организовывать фестивали с приглашением тувинским певцов и курсы обучения горловому пению. Автор пишет о сотрудничестве с известными тувинскими исполнителями, а также исследователями горлового пения из США, Нидерландов, Великобритании, Италии и др.*

*По мнению музыканта, исполнение горлового, или обертонового, пения представляет собой особую практику звукоизвлечения. Свои наблюдения он сравнивает с известными ему техниками пения коренных народов Африки, Северной Америки, Японии, Тибета. Практика горлового пения тесно связывается с мировосприятием людей древней культуры, близкой к природе. Финны также считаются людьми, тесно связанными с природой. На этом основании автор считает вполне понятным большое увлечение финнов горловым пением. Он насчитывает десятки*

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hundreds have experienced it, which is a much larger percentage than in other European states.

In the essay, the author also focuses on the throat singing courses he has been giving for a while and shares his observations of his students, their motivation, specific training techniques and adapting them to the desires and intentions of his students. He believes that almost everybody can learn singing, and most people can have a command of throat singing. The essay also covers the main problems that aspiring throat singers can face, as well as specific styles of the *xöömei*, concluding with the idea that it is impossible to master throat singing in a short period of time. The key to success is only found in regular and extensive practice.

Keywords: *xöömei*; Tuvan throat singing; Tuvans; throat singing; methods of teaching singing; Finland; Finns; essay

финнов, активно практикующих хоомей и сотни тех, которые им также занимаются. Это в разы больше, чем в других странах Европы.

Автор рассказывает о своих курсах обучения горловому пению и делится наблюдениями о мотивах своих учеников, об особенностях их обучения, об адаптивности методики в зависимости от желаний и намерений обучающихся. По его мнению, пению способны научиться почти все, горловому стилю — также многие. Объясняются основные сложности для начинающих. Отмечаются особенности стилей хоомей. Подчеркивается, что горловое пение освоить за короткое время невозможно, необходим длительный труд, регулярные занятия.

Ключевые слова: хоомей; тувинское горловое пение; тувинцы; горловое пение; методика обучения пению; Финляндия; финны; эссе

## Introduction

The human voice is a mysterious phenomenon. We are using it every day and we think that we know it. Still, most of us hardly know how the voice works or what is the mechanism of hearing is. The effect of the speaking voice is sometimes confusingly powerful, not to mention the singing voice.

At least in the Western world people with a low tone of voice are considered as convincing and a low voice seems to sound comforting. That is why most of the professional voice workers, such as reporters or actors, have low and mellow voices. People who are trying to convince the audience, such as politicians, often force the voice to a low pitch, which may cause a creaky and unpleasant voice.

Voice has a considerable role in communication and it is strange how little attention is paid to it in school education. In Finland even the teacher education program does not give a single course in using the voice, although it is the most important working tool for a teacher. At least this was the situation in the 80's when I was studying. Why is it so? Probably the voice is taken as a gift that you get when you are born without a chance to modify it. People also seem to easily think that a singing voice is also a birth gift and that there is no other way of acquiring it. Either you can sing or you cannot. No wonder that people think that you cannot learn throat singing. My wife had told to her Mongolian friend, that her husband's hobby is throat singing. The Mongolian – not a musician – had quickly replied: "That is not possible, only Mongolians are able to sing *xöömii!*"



The aim of this article is to describe how throat singing found its way to Finland and how Finnish enthusiasts found throat singing. I also describe my ideas of Tuvan xöömei and methods I use in teaching.

### *Learning kargyra unconsciously*

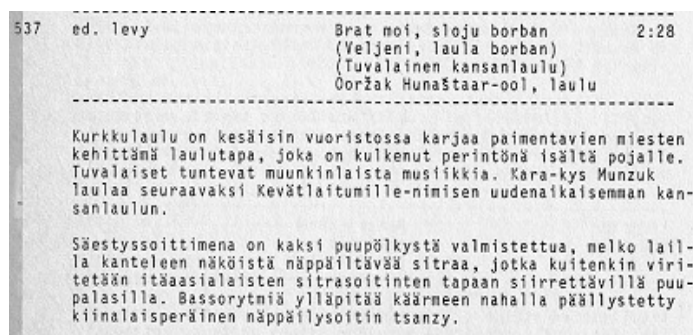
I grew up in a small rural village in Finland in a period, when electricity began to become more common in rural houses. There were only two channels on Finnish radio and only some of the wealthiest houses had a TV. Music offered in radio was mainly classical, folk music and schlagers. Little by little, new, weird and loud rhythm music crossed the oceans. Parents were terrified but we youngsters were excited. Rock stars were admired. Listening was not enough for me, I wanted to try to make that music with a borrowed guitar and cheap harmonicas. In the middle of 1970s my brother carried home a tape recorder with a built-in microphone. I could make my first recording. I was shocked at what I heard. My voice was a lot higher and thinner than I had thought as before I had heard it through the bones of my head.

I had a strong will to sing. I realized that I could imitate a little old bluesmen like Reverend Gary Davis, Howling Wolf and Sonny Boy Williamson whose music was occasionally played on the radio. With a help of some friends I found Tom Waits. I was also fascinated about Louis Armstrong's way of using his voice. I could even sound like him - in my mind at least.

Afterwards I have heard, that even then Ilpo Saunio had played Tuvan folk music in his 32-part program "Music of the People of the Soviet Union". Even now I have not heard the programme, but I obtained the manuscript of the program from the library (Saunio Ilpo and Immonen Kalevi, Pororumpu ja balalaikka - Neuvostokansojen musiikki [Reindeer drum and balalaikka, Music

of the People of the Soviet Union], 1979, in Finnish only). (Picture 1) What would have happened if I had heard that program then and also the performance of Hunastarool Oorzhak, we will never know.

I never started studying music professionally, because I did not believe in my talent and there was no chance to have any kind of musical education in our municipality in those days. Today



Pic. 1. Manuscript of radio program *Pororumpu ja balalaikka* – Reindeer drum and balalaikka, 1979.

Рис. 1. Рукопись радиопрограммы «*Pororumpu ja balalaikka*» (Бубен из шкуры северного оленя и балалайка), 1979.



there is a network of state music schools which cover the whole of Finland. Playing music became a dear hobby to me.

Already in the 70's I was interested in the music of other nations but had never heard about throat singing. Not even in 1983, when a Vietnamese-born French musician and ethnomusicologist Tran Quan Hai visited the Kuhmo Chamber Music Festival in Eastern Finland. Tran Quan Hai had found overtone singing already in 1970. I was also unaware of the visit of the famous Mongolian khöömiich Sundui to the same festival in 1984. This information I only heard last year. (Picture 2). Newspapers had written a lot about his visit, but as a busy student I did not hear about it.



Pic. 2. Sundui at Kuhmo in newspaper Kaleva 1984.

Рис. 2. Сундуй в Кухмо в газете «Kaleva», 1984 г.

Before I got in touch with throat singing, I saw a small program of Vladimir Karujev aka Okna Tsahan Zam who had visited Finland in 1992. I was fascinated but not enough to start to look for more information. The Internet was just starting, so finding information would have been very hard. The next year Mongolian Altain Orgil performed at the Kaustinen Folk Music Festival. I heard them on the radio and saw them on TV and was impressed. Still, only after I had listened and tried to sing Tuvan xöömei, I became so touched that throat singing became a part of my life. Later, after 2000, I had goose bumps from hearing Mongolian khöömii and music like Altai Hangai, Transmongolia and Sedaa.

In the 80's while I had moved already to Helsinki, the capital of Finland, my home municipality got a new school and violin teacher. At the end of the decade he founded a folk music festival, which is still alive and going strong. After a couple of years I asked if I could make the graphic design to the festival. I got the job because I did not ask for any fee. Instead of the salary, I had a possibility to take part in

festival singing and playing workshops for free. I had never concentrated on one instrument – quantity comes before quality – and so I went to pick some mandolin, strum the guitar, beat the drum, blow the flute and sing. While I learned new skills, I also got to know some of the best Finnish and foreign folk musicians. After each festival I almost cried at the end of festival and for being very tired after sleeping only few hours several nights. The workshops became the highlight of my summers.

### *Throat singing conquers Finland – and my heart*

Summer 1995 was a turning point in my musical hobbies. Boris Salchak from Tuva had a shamanic performance at the festival and also gave a one week throat singing workshop prior to it. We were about ten students who got their first touch to throat singing. We were sizzling with excitement.

At the same time The Global Music Centre at Helsinki had a collaboration with Albert Kuvezin and the next year the Centre published his Yat-Kha band's album *Yenisei Punk*. Albert had some gigs in Finland and a workshop at Haapavesi in summer 1996. In the autumn Jukka-Pekka Lilja organized a weekend workshop of Albert Kuvezin at his Centre of Nature in Røykkä, Southern Finland. Almost 50 people participated in this workshop. Many of them became my friends. During the weekend we decided to create an association to increase knowledge and advance the practice of throat singing.

The Finnish Throat singing Association was founded 1997 and the same year we started to build up some kind of a festival. It was clear that we needed a Tuvan xöömeizhi to perform at the festival. The internet was still somewhat primitive and after searching I found an enthusiastic volleyball team from Northern Finland who had made a wonderful journey to Tuva. Alongside playing, they had heard the throat singing of Vladimir



*Pic.3. Vladimir Sojan is having a workshop at the first Kieku-festival.  
Рис.3. Владимир Соян проводит семинар  
на первом Кіеку-фестивале.*



Sojan. I had got in touch with Steven Sklar from the US, who had just made a journey to Tuva, and now asked him if he knew of the singer. He replied that Sojan was a great singer. So we dared to start the preparations for the invitation and his trip to Finland. Our budget was naturally very limited and we could offer only a train ticket. So Vladimir Sojan came with his daughter Lilia to Finland to perform at 'Kieku - Festival of Human Voice' in March 1998. (Pictures 3 and 4)

The first Kieku-festival got a lot of attention and we decided to continue. We received funding and so we organized a Kieku festival of a decent size for the next three years. Then suddenly, we lost most of our financial support and we were broke. Motivation to organize large and risky festivals disappeared. We went on with smaller events and had collaborations with other organizers.

The Haapavesi Folk Festival went on with forwarding throat singing. Artists such as Albert Kuvezin, Kongar-ool Ondar (Picture 5), Tuva Kyzy, and Huun-Huur-Tu from Tuva and Transmongolia and



*Pic. 5. Workshop of Kongar-ool Ondar at Haapavesi 1999, author in the yellow t-shirt.*

*Рис. 5. Семинар Конгар-оола Ондара в Хаапавеси в 1999 г. (автор статьи — в желтой футболке).*



*Pic. 4. Day happening at first Kieku-festival 1998.*

*Рис. 4. Хэппенинг на первом Киеку-фестивале в 1998 г.*

Sedaa from Mongolia have performed and held workshops there. In addition to these, there have been performers in Finland from Altai, Buryatia, Kalmykia, and Chinese Inner Mongolia. I myself have worked most closely with Chirgilchin, Tuva Kyzy, Huun-Huur-tu, Hosoo, Transmongolia and Sedaa. Of the serious practitioners coming from the Western countries, Steven Sklar (USA), Mark von



Tongeren (Netherlands), Michael Ormiston (Great Britain), and Raphaël de Cock with this band (Belgium) have visited Finland. In this group belongs also the Sardinian Tenores Goiné di Nuoro (Italy).

The enthusiastic activity in our association was based on our desire to have training and get to know various throat singers on top of spreading awareness in Finland of this unique art. The bylaws of our association stated that "The aim of the association is to forward the public awareness and the position of different techniques and modes of using voice, especially throat singing."

### ***Throat singing is a rare phenomenon***

A great surprise for me has been the quite limited number of specific singing techniques, on one hand, and how unique the phenomenon of throat singing is, on the other. It is entirely possible that some indigenous people have techniques that are not widely known but otherwise there are only a few exceptions to the norm. It is clear that all people or tribes have their own singing techniques. With quite modest knowledge it is easy to differentiate the Bulgarian, Greek, or Portuguese singing techniques when hearing them. They all are unique but under the so called normal vocal training.

So far I have come across throat-based singing techniques of the Canadian Inuits, South African Xhosa people, Tanzanian Zawose family, some people of Arctic Sea region such as Tsukths, some minorities in Pakistan, Japanese Ainu people, monks in Tibet, and Italian tenorés tradition of Sardinia. With the last mentioned it was striking to note how a quartet's 'bassu' and 'contra' resemble kargyra and höreker. Other unique traditional singing techniques are the 'joiku' of Saami people, yodeling of the Alps region, yodling in Georgian polyphony, whisper singing of Burundi, a yodeling kind of singing of the Pygmies, the Silbo Gomero or whistling language of the Canary Islands, 'joiku' of Viena Carelia of Russia, Swedish cattle call singing and why not the wailing songs of various cultures. This may not be an exhaustive list but shows that it is not common to have a unique way of using voice in cultural traditions. The most surprising fact for me is that Latin America is quite empty in this regard, although one must note there are hundreds of tribes in Amazonia whose traditions are unknown to us.

A very specific aspect of the Altai region's overtone singing is its long melodies. Overtones are generally used quite a lot in instrumental music and some instruments are played with only overtones, such as tromba marina, fujara and other overtone flutes, not to speak of Jews-harp known all over the world. Overtone singing has spread around the world quite rapidly. In the



courses I have held I always promise that during the first lesson everyone will learn to hear and filter overtones. I do not promise that they will learn throat singing techniques as it varies from person to person, depending a lot on the amount of enthusiasm and practicing. On the contrary, producing overtones is not particularly difficult.

As we have seen above, throat singing is a very rare singing technique. It is quite difficult as well. It is easy to connect it with mysticism as the sound does not always seem to come from a human being. I still remember at the beginning of my throat singing history how throat singing sounded both virtuosic and primitive. Still today, it takes me to somewhere in ancient times. Xöömei may also sound ghostly as if coming from the other world. Is this due to the close relationship with nature and shamanism prevailing in the core regions of throat singing? Although shamanism with its spirits has vanished in the past in Finland, we Finns still have quite close relationship with nature. The forests and spending time in nature are very important for a majority of Finns. Maybe this is one reason for the interest in throat singing.

The fact that I do not believe in spirits of nature has not diminished the experience of spirituality or even sacredness of nature, music and singing. Also for me, music as a great experience in nature gets me to tune into unexplainable frequencies. My breathing stops, tears start shedding, and my mind is filled with peace and happiness. This kind of ecstatic experiences I have had maybe have happened the most from throat singing. Quite a few of my students have had similar experiences. Throat singing has made an impact on me that no other music has been able to do before.

### ***Finns and throat singing***

Why are Finns so enthusiastic about throat singing? Is it therefore that the first activities took place in a suitable moment and many advocates for throat singing were formed? Sometimes it may be up to one person to start a movement. There had been a small-scale enthusiasm about throat singing in mid-80's when ethno-musicologist Ilpo (Ilja) Saastamoinen enthusiastically recorded some music influenced by throat singing with his band Pohjantahti in 1986. Obviously, they had also other interests and, as the dissemination of information was more difficult than nowadays, the activity ceased quite soon. In the following decade the situation was much better due to new media such as the Internet and e-mail. We could have world-wide connections easily. So, the throat singing enthusiasm could have started in whichever country. Despite





of this, there is only one throat singer in Sweden, as far as I know. I know there are dozens of German overtone singers sing but only few throat singers, as well as in Poland, Hungary, Italy, France, Spain and in already mentioned Belgium. In Finland there are dozens of serious practitioners and hundreds of those who practice it every now and then. There must be more than a thousand of those who have taken part on a throat singing course. The awareness of throat singing has risen enormously in Finland: At the time of my first throat singing gigs only few in the audience knew of throat singing, nowadays almost all have had some previous encounters with it. I do not know whether the situation has improved in other European countries.

With reason one can state that on the whole, Finns have a special relationship with throat singing. What kind of people come to throat singing courses then? I have posed the question of who you are and why do you want to learn throat singing to hundreds of students. No typical profile can be made of a throat singing course attendee, the variation is too big. Maybe the biggest group is the "multi-enthusiasts" - the concept was invented at one course. Is it that the Finns have so weak a connection to their own cultural traditions – apart from the sauna and Christmas delicacies – that they easily get excited of other peoples' traditions, such as oriental dance, samba, flamenco – and throat singing. The occupations vary from school children to retired citizens, from professional classical musicians to gardeners. Skill-wise from professional musicians to people who say that they never have sung. In my early days as a throat singing trainer there was even a student who said that he knows nothing of throat singing and has never even heard of it!

There are various motives for an interest in throat singing. Most of the students want an introduction to it, to find out what it is about and try it themselves. Some are looking for a more permanent practice, having usually trained earlier by themselves. Professional and semi-professional musicians are exploring new ways to use their voice. Many of them have a project in mind.

I have held many kinds of courses, from a two-hour throat singing night to regular meetings during one term. The most frequent is a two-day course lasting six hours over the two days as this is enough to accommodate the concentration ability and voice stamina for the majority. Nowadays I have begun to offer packages of three lessons for private students. Three hours held with an interval of a few weeks has proved to be a good basic course. The students will have an opportunity to practice between the lessons and the rehearsed techniques stay in their muscle memory. In a weekend course people do get excited but the practicing will be forgotten when the learnings fade away from



their memory and body, and there is no one to ask.

In addition to your own practice, developing new teaching modes is a constant process. I do not imagine to be anywhere close to being a perfect throat singer but I do believe that I am far enough to share my knowledge and experience. Teaching gives a lot of boost to my own practicing and makes me constantly think of what I am doing and how to develop my skill further. Due to my other activities, I have only a few workshops annually.

### *What do I teach in throat singing courses*

I myself have learnt all what I know in attending courses of Tuvan and Mongolian singers, through listening, studying all the material available, connecting to other throat singing practitioners and a few short trips to Tuva. As I have not been born or even lived in throat singing regions, my contact with that life is quite superficial. I have grown up with physical work done out in the open air, and that is why the life in Tuvan countryside felt familiar although the chores and the way of life are very different from those in the Finnish countryside in the 60's. I can sense the original meaning and ways of throat singing based on my knowledge but due to the inexistent deep connection I concentrate on teaching techniques in the way I understand them.

My throat singing courses' content is affected by the expectations of the group and its level of knowledge and skills. Normally, there may be both professional musicians and beginners in a course. In that case I take the middle ground without forgetting the extremes. It requires imagination but is not impossible by any means. It is surprising that the professional musicians may be quite unfamiliar with overtones.

At the beginning of the course there is always a round sharing of the backgrounds and expectations of the student. I often ask about these things already in advance but it is not always possible. Only in this phase is the focus of the course decided. The course program always has some flexibility so that it can be modified according to particular interests or difficult issues that may arise.

Often someone in the course says that he or she cannot sing but hopes that throat singing will suit him/her. I always reply that I have both good and bad news: throat singing is singing as well, which is bad news. The good news is that almost all people are able to sing. Throat singing can help in starting to sing.

When the starting point of the students has become clear, I go through a compact package of throat singing techniques, history, and phenomena



generally. I present throat singing techniques also with my own voice, always trying to make the students use their own voices as soon as possible. The course is organized for singing. On the first day we will not rush into making xöömei sounds. Instead, I start warming up the voices by making acquaintance with the human overtones. So I teach a couple of ways to filter overtones. For some students it is easy to learn it, others have to work more to make them audible. It is surprising how unconscious we are in our relationship with our tongue, which has central role in overtone singing. Whatever the language of a person is, he/she will be able to pick the relevant overtones for each vowel. When I ask the students to make a cup out of their tongue and it to touch the molar teeth and form a hollow with the roof of their mouths we are in trouble. I always encourage them to play and exercise their tongues. I also pay attention to the role of the soft palate of the mouth. Producing overtones requires a good mouth acoustics and a soft mattress will not facilitate this.

### ***My view on throat singing techniques***

For most people the first idea of throat singing technique is pressing. This happens even though especially the Tuvan technique may be quite relaxed. The high pitched drone/fundamental of the traditional Mongolian throat singing also gives an impression of hard pressing. When the basic sound of xöömei is searched I do not mention pressing at all. The first exercise may be to produce as natural sound as possible with a little tension in abdominal muscles. I will ask the students to pay attention what is happening in us. We notice that the reflex is the same as when holding our breath. Also when we need all strength to a hard exercise, we close the vocal fold area. You do not let the energy to escape but instead you direct it to your body.

I keep repeating that there is no pressing in the throat above the vocal folds and false vocal folds and, nor in larynx or the roof of mouth when we form the xöömei basic sound, on the contrary. We will try to make a good and large channel for the voice. Our brain hears remnants of sounds of different kinds of throat pressing and groans in xöömei and intends to imitate them – partly unconsciously. Therefore I try to convince my students that in the beginning there is no use to think about the quality of the voice. You just have to trust that when the technique is correct the voice will begin to sound correct.

On the Day of Voice in spring 2016 I went to the Helsinki University Hospital's Phoniatic Outpatient Clinic to have my vocal folds filmed through endoscope during xöömei singing (the video is available at my home page kurkkulaulu.



fi), and I was convinced that the false vocal folds are the most important factor in forming basic xöömei, not only kargyra. It has been known for long that the false vocal folds vibrate half slower than the true vocal folds in kargyra and produce a sound one octave lower. In the video one can clearly see that it is indeed the false vocal folds which diminish the channel of voice and make the pressing sound in the voice.

To my mind, it would be appropriate to call xöömei, kargyra, sygyt and also open xöömei as basic styles of throat singing. The sound formation of the latter is clearly different from the former ones. The false vocal folds are more apart and the voice sounds more freely in the larynx. One could call it horekter, but on the other hand also the proper xöömei is also chest voice. I am not generally very eager to argue the "right" classification of the throat singing styles. I think that the classification is connected to the socialist system on one hand, and to the general Western need of classifying things, on the other. The naming of styles naturally facilitates the discussion if they are agreed on. What makes this even more difficult is that in Mongolia the styles are mostly named and classified differently although some similarities exist such as kargyra-kharkhyraa and xöömei-khöömii.

Other exercises in use in my courses are naturally the imitation of animals and motor vehicles, the bacon frying technique adopted from Steven Sklar, connecting motion to the pharyngeal constrictors used by Michael Ormiston and the seamen's wrestle used by Otkun Dostai. I have noticed huge individual differences among students which techniques are working the best.

When teaching kargyra we usually talk about "clearing the throat" and modifying growls into a longer drone. Imitating animals helps with this, too, thus giving a proof of the starting point of the history of throat singing. I myself had already learnt kargyra a couple of decades before my encounter with throat singing. Capturing the idea of xöömei was slower. I realized that if I filter the growl of kargyra away I approached xöömei. In learning of kargyra there are huge individual differences. It is very hard for some students to adopt it, while others just open their mouths and have a clear kargyra sound even if they had not heard about it before. This latter is quite rare though, but I have witnessed a case like this. The students who get their kargyra-instrument going easily have usually previously studied on their own and played a lot with their voice.

### ***Constant learning***

The dream of learning throat singing during one course is not very rare. People imagine that throat singing is a trick to be taught in a moment. That is



why I always point out the fact that the work only starts in the course and the main task is done at home by practising. The majority of students naturally understand that learning correct techniques takes time and effort, but maybe are quite surprised with the amount of work it requires. The proportion of those Finns with even a moderate throat singing ability is much lower than one would imagine, thinking of the amount of students in throat singing courses over the time they have been arranged. Many of them are able to growl *kargyra*, but *xöömei*, not to mention *sygyt*, is too difficult for them.

For those who have previously known almost nothing about throat singing, a two-day course is sufficient to teach what the throat singing techniques are about. For those numerous students who have practised on their own, a course may be a place to correct wrong techniques and impressions and guide them to a more correct and healthier voice formation. It is quite usual that after a two-day course the students may continue practising for some time but quite soon the instructions are forgotten and the enthusiasm tends to fade away.

For very few of all who have been in my or someone else's course throat singing will become a permanent hobby. However, everyone might keep connection to throat singing and at least some understanding of what it is about. Every year there are some enthusiastic students who make it a life-long hobby.

I keep constantly considering ways of sowing the seeds for a continuous hobby and how the students could make use of throat singing. I have tried to organise continuation courses or throat singing nights, but so far with little success. I have always received positive feedback on my teaching, though. Therefore the reason for a low success cannot be the quality of my teaching, but rather the fact that throat singing is considered as too demanding technique. One has to confess that you will master ukulele much faster.

### ***Who has the right to throatsing?***

There are a lot of Finns whose hobby and even profession lies with folk music of different cultures. A lot of discussions covered the issue of whether we have a right to learn other peoples' singing techniques which comes deep from their heritage. I have an impression that there are versatile attitudes among different people and cultures towards enthusiastic foreigners studying their cultural singing techniques: some want to keep their singing techniques to themselves and take the foreigners' interest as a threat to their culture, while others are thrilled about the interest of strangers.



My principle is to respect the indigenous culture and not to act as their representative. My interest is only positive in raising the awareness of audiences. This awareness increases understanding, with growing possibilities for locals to earn income through increased tourism and performances. According to my own experience, getting to know other cultures increases peace building and friendship in the world, and this we do not have abundantly these days.

In Finland we celebrate the year of singing with a slogan "All sing", launched by the Finnish Folkmusic and Dance Centre. Let us sing together.

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