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The psychological effects of singing in a choir on anxiety, mood and sociability

David Budd

University of London, UK

Anecdotal evidence and previous studies have demonstrated that singing in a choir can have beneficial effects for feelings of anxiety and sociability. This has been investigated using both psychological and biological measures. These studies have shown that choir singing can cause a decrease in stress and anxiety, along with reductions in hormones associated with stress responses. However, each of these studies is limited in that they only measure changes at the beginning and end of singing sessions. In our experiment, psychological readings prior, during and after singing, with the hypothesis that anxiety would decrease and mood and sociability would increase and that this would be significant during singing. The aim was to investigate at what point these changes would occur and whether these effects could last for a period of time after singing. We also hypothesised that trait measures of anxiety would be able to predict people's scores on the other measures. We found that anxiety significantly decreased during singing and mood and sociability significantly increased during singing. Trait anxiety could predict mood levels, but no others. In the future an additional measure should be added at the end to ensure a strict ABA structure. Furthermore, a longitudinal study would be able to determine whether singing in a choir can produce long-term effects in reductions of stress and anxiety.

Biography

David Budd completed his undergraduate degree in Neuroscience at the University of Oxford, aged 21. He then moved to Goldsmiths College, University of London to pursue a Masters in Music Psychology.

thedavidbudd@gmail.com

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