**Northern Voices Opera Project**

The Northern Voices Opera project was an interdisciplinary PaR project which took place in 2014-5, and aimed to develop techniques whereby a Northern English accent could be heard in the operatic singing voice.

Context

Unlike theatre, operatic sung accents are dominated in the UK by an adapted form of Received

Pronunciation; although some regional accents are occasionally used in Britten, for example, no

Northern accented opera has been written. LaBouff, for example, does not mention Northern

accents at all in her brief survey of regional accents in opera.

Methodology and Outputs

The project sought to create and test new material based on the speech patterns and rhythms of northern English, and set a libretto jointly developed by the composer and poet Ian McMillan

of the project consisted of a series of five workshops.

Participants in the workshops were: Omar Ibrahim, who premiered the role of the ‘Northern Shepherd’ in Harrison Birtwistle’s 1986 chamber opera *Yan Tan Tethera*; Conrad Nelson, Director Theatre Company; singers Zoe Milton Brown, Richard Strivens, Nick Sales, Tom Eaglen, and Sarah Helsby Hughes, poet Ian McMillan, sociolinguist Philip Tipton.

It was funded by Arts Council England, and took place between July 2014 and March 2015. (Grants for the Arts £14710)

Evidence of this process is presented in:

1: summary video of phase one R and D project, including evidence of the use of the International Phonetic Alphabet

2: videos of the four songs created in this phase

3: scores in pdf of the songs