

10 Lessons from  
the Folk High School

# SING TOGETHER



Dy Plambeck

# Sing together

*Sing together*

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# Sing together

In our song we are simply present in a community, even though we might be alone, because the song transcends us.

By Dy Plambeck

In the kindergarten I went to as a child, we gathered together every morning round the large oak tree in the garden. All the year round. This is one of my first memories, sitting by that huge tree, singing and looking up into its spreading crown. The shoots on the branches, the leaves, which changed colour according to the season and at last disappeared until the shoots returned.

When did you first take part in communal singing? Can you remember? My guess is that it is earlier than you think. Maybe earlier than you can remember. Most of us come across communal singing at nursery. Many institutions start their day with a morning assembly, which often includes a song chosen to suit the child's level, a nursery rhyme or singing games.

But even before the nursery stage, many of us have encountered communal singing. We might have been to an event at a folk high school or at some cultural institution where they practise communal singing. We might have sung a song for a special birthday or a wedding. We might have sung hymns in church. Or we might have sung at home in the living room with our family.

From as early as its 24<sup>th</sup> week of existence, the embryo's ear is sufficiently developed to be able to hear sounds outside its mother's womb. In other words, what is going on around it. But even earlier, it can hear its mother's heartbeat, sounds in the womb, the indefinable rush, which they call "white noise" but which for the embryo may still be a song. At any rate these are sounds that are familiar to the embryo and which create something recognisable.

When I was pregnant with my daughter, I walked around in my flat one hot summer's day with the windows open, and I sang. Suddenly, I could feel powerful movements in my belly as she turned and kicked. Another day I was sitting in the sofa, singing, and everything went quiet inside. It was surely some form of reaction. The song seeps into the body. We humans carry the song with us. We carry our voice inside us as our own instrument, which we can take out and use when we want to.

Everyone can sing. This is something we humans have in common as a species. Animals sing too, but their song