

## Deaf Girl Singing “Someone Like You” – Vocal Somaesthetic Perspective to Singing and Vocal Norms

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The performance of a deaf teenage girl singing Adele’s song has received a passionate reception in YouTube. The debate is about whether she is a “good singer” or not. However, there is musicality and aesthetic quality in her performance that mesmerizes the listener. With this material I will question the aesthetic norms of singing in the popular music culture. In the previous research, the focus has usually been on the voice as heard or measured as an acoustic fact. In contrast, my approach of vocal somaesthetics is focused on the proprioceptive aspects of vocalizing and listening. In the studies of music and disabilities the different ways of listening has been theorized from the point of view of “inhabiting an extraordinary body” (Straus 2011, 158). Could it be possible to redefine the concept of singing as well by approaching different kinds of vocalizations as unique but equal ways of expressing oneself?

### Bio:

Anne Tarvainen (PhD) is an ethnomusicologist focused on the research of human voice. She is also a singer, songwriter, and a vocal coach. In 2012 she finished her doctoral thesis “Singer’s Voice and Expression: A Bodily Approach to Listening to a Singer, Using Björk as an Example” (in Finnish). At the moment, she is working on her post-doctoral study on vocal somaesthetics – the approach she has been developing on the basis of somaesthetics, voice studies, and ethnomusicology.