

**Dr. Johan Franzon** is a University Lecturer at the Department of Finnish, Finno-Ugrian, and Scandinavian Studies in University of Helsinki, where he teaches Scandinavian languages and translation. Beginning with his doctoral dissertation on the musical My Fair Lady, he has worked to explore the field of song translation in several articles on topics such as musical theatre translation, choices of song translators, dimensions of singability, and the variable fidelities in Swedish pop song translations. In 2021, he co-edited the anthology Song Translation: Lyrics in Contexts (eds.: Franzon, Greenall, Kvam & Parianou).

Update：

Johan Franzon teaches Scandinavian languages and translation at the University of Helsinki. Beginning with his doctoral dissertation on the musical My Fair Lady, he has worked to explore the field of song translation in several articles on topics such as musical theatre translation, choices of song translators, dimensions of singability, and the variable fidelities in Swedish pop song translations. In 2021, he co-edited the anthology Song Translation: Lyrics in Contexts (eds.: Franzon, Greenall, Kvam & Parianou). In 2022, he debuts as a music producer with a CD of his own translations of Finnish children’s songs.

Song Translation Studies – a multivarious business

From having long been just a sidenote among all the practical descriptions of different kinds of translation tasks, song translation studies have remarkably quickly grown into a research area in and of itself. Rapidly, it seems to have retraced the steps of translation studies at large: from a linguistic/prescriptive phase to a cultural/descriptive turn, now perhaps moving towards a (post-translation) technological turn. However, it is still in something of a quagmire about its central terms. Is there a shared fundament? Are art song and pop song translation two separate worlds? Do we study songs or “musical texts”? What is the relation between opera translation and song translation, between MLT, vocal translation, and “translation and music”? Where do visual elements come in? And subtitling? Does research best fit in under the label multimodality studies, or as a form of literary or theatre translation? Should we even call it translation? What can the large and increasing number of master’s theses bring? In my presentation, drawing from various examples of song translation, I will address as many of these questions as I am able. What seems clear is that a shared conceptualization around the three fundamental elements of song – music, lyrics, and performance – must allow for much variability (both together and independently of one another), while minding also the great importance of genre. Perhaps it can be useful to discuss the translation relation as consisting of variable levels and kinds of approximations and appropriations. Perhaps the theatrical communication model of Ivo Osolsobě (1928–2012) can be useful to make sense of some of the basic melopoetic and presentational qualities, such as references, registers, intertextual resonance, and metatextual reflection.