

STATEMENT

by *Prof. Dr. Simo Lazarov*

on the dissertation of

Sarah Jane Lobegeiger de Rodriguez

Topic of the dissertation:

THE OPERATIC POLYGLOT: ROUTES AND TECHNIQUES IN WESTERN EUROPEAN CLASSICAL SINGING

for the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the professional field 8.3. Music and Dance Art

Sarah Jane Lobegeiger de Rodriguez's dissertation contains 113 pages, 18 figures, and a bibliography with 80 titles. She has published 3 papers during the PhD studies period.

The paper discusses the possibilities of developing the practical studio of the classical singer in order to support his/her independent daily routine. It indicates means and approaches to develop into an "operatic polyglot". A research base on the neural connections of classical singing is discovered. Following the above written ideas comes the question: can individual processes and skills be used in a therapeutic space, which is focused on neurological impairments that affect motor and anatomical activities where there is overlap between singing and everyday functions?

Sarah Jane Lobegeiger de Rodriguez's dissertation clearly defines creative cognition and the singer's body matrix. The interpenetration of possible techniques and modes of working that build into each other creative cognitive processes is outlined. Researched approaches to develop linguistic and acoustic competence in performers of different genres of music, to turn them into "operatic polyglots" are hypothesized.

The keywords employed: *creative cognition, opera singing, phonetic tone tuning, deliberate practice, body matrix, singing neurology* are within the focus of the study. This represents a diversity of facts and documentation commented on in the substantial body of the dissertation in considering **the subject, the aims, the methodology of the research, and the hypothesis.**

The doctoral candidate concludes that "creative cognition is present both during rehearsal and performance. Therefore, the artistic qualities of classical opera singers depend on the

successful mastery of multiple intelligences". The magnitude of this conclusion is much more comprehensive. This circumstance has been explored by Ms Lobegeiger with due analytical precision to conclude that it also develops on a practical level.

It is also noted that: 'making music in singers alters the motor, sensory and multimodal projections of the brain, and there is strong evidence for higher interceptive awareness'. Sarah Jane Lobegeiger de Rodriguez convinces us of the fact that this proposition sufficiently brought to the fore can be taken as a natural fact necessary for tracing the path of universality because "singers have a body memory that stores the motor schema of the complex processes required for their repertoire."

In the dissertation, the conceptual and terminological apparatus has been used and used with precision, and its peculiarities have been highlighted. Concepts in the context of their application are sufficiently defined. The use of the concept of "body memory" is essential in delineating its hypothetical processes.

The multimodal nature of the singing process is in relation to the timbre building process. The PhD candidate proves this with the research materials she has studied. She analyses the ability of the voice in classical singing to create an accurate acoustic picture that is fixed by both the score and the historical premises of the art form. And not least by linguistic requirements.

Sarah Jane Lobegeiger de Rodriguez explores the viability and sustainability of neurologically informed approaches to voice training. Phonology, pitch regulation and resonance emerge as the focus of the research. The line of analysis she traces also addresses prosody in the context of the artistic interpretation classical singers practice on a daily basis and for improving phonetic fluency.

The dissertation repeatedly explores from different angles the nature and rationale of the fundamental issues involved:

Receptivity as a function of the multilingual process, which is achieved through communicative competence beyond second language comprehension

Artistic depth and acoustic integrity

Motor control systems for phonetic tone tuning and phonetic position as the term "phonetic tone tuning" is **unique** in its nature.

The physical properties of singing sound and the properties of vocalized syllables, as well as the physical properties of vocalized segments.

The properties of vocalized syllables and the properties of resonance in classical Western singing with attention to the ability of the singer and the structural and resonance requirements of the operatic/classical voice.

Pitch value with the three basic skills required in phonetic pitch tuning to maintain the desired pitch values at the syllable segment level for the required precision.

The rhythmic value of phonemes in music and the deviations of phonetic tuning.

Prosodic accentuation is discussed.

Processes for learning vocal-phonetic motor skills are consistently and methodically traced in the context of musical presence. An analysis is made of *sound pressure levels* and *phonological tuning* of tone.

In the light of the creative thinking of the operatic polyglot, the phonetic mastery of the repertoire based on the motor learning and the principles of neuroplasticity is related to the ten principles of neuroplasticity and the daily routine of the Western classical singer.

The analysis of the role of purposeful practice in the development of creative cognition in the "operatic polyglot" is interesting.

The text refers to the main issues, namely:

Benefits of body matrix theory, flow and multimodal processing for fine performance.

Auditory feedback and aural tone tuning.

Intensity and process.

Autoethnology and research related to practice.

Keeping a log for recording and assessment.

Refining visual analysis in the practice studio.

Measures of pitch tracking.

Phonetic transcription.

Cross analysis.

Management of phonetic position.

Verbal instructions for phonetic placement in singing lessons

Rhythmic tapping tasks.

Vocal-phonetic visual tasks and voiceless practice.

Kinesthetic motor imagery and graphs.

The six contributions of the thesis are clearly defined and they relate to:

1. ***The cognitive and mechanical processes*** that Western classical singers can deploy.
2. ***A hypothetical model to represent the multifaceted intelligence of classical singing,*** with a choice of the ***body matrix.***
3. ***The creation of a new term "operatic polyglot"*** for the elite singer who has acquired the technical mastery to sing proficiently in languages other than his native tongue,
4. Defining ***new parameters*** of singing pronunciation.

5. Development of a *new term, "phonetic tone tuning,"* to holistically encompass a unique singing skill.

6. Development of a *classification system for phonological errors* and a classification system for phonetic tone tuning disorders.

Sarah Jane Lobegeiger-Rodriguez delves into topics related to core issues. Defined in relation to the specifics of the study, they always keep the *subject, object, goal, and objectives in focus*. The doctoral thesis contains a number of contributions which, considered from practical and theoretical positions, raise it to a high scientific level. The author hopes "that this dissertation will provide singers with the necessary vocabulary to define their technical goals and objectives in order to become "operatic polyglots" and distinguished elite artists with technical and artistic skills."

On the basis of the unquestionable merits of Sarah Jane Lobegeiger de Rodriguez's dissertation, I confidently propose to the esteemed members of the Specialized Scientific Jury to award her the degree of Doctor of Education and Research in the professional field 8.3 Music and Dance Arts.

10.09.2023

/Prof. Dr. Simo Lazarov/