International Best Practice in the Teaching of Lyric Diction to Conservatorium-Level Singers

by

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Elder Conservatorium of Music
Faculty of Arts
The University of Adelaide

June 2019

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Abstract

This doctoral thesis examines international best practice in the teaching of lyric diction to conservatorium-level singers. It provides a unique perspective on lyric diction teaching in that it focuses on pedagogical process and includes the perspectives of multiple experts across a variety of languages and working in different countries.

Most of the literature regarding lyric diction at the conservatorium level focuses on pronunciation rules and descriptions of relevant articulations. As such, it can be seen to focus predominantly on the 'what' of lyric diction teaching, and significantly less on the 'how'. It rarely explores the role of the lyric diction coach/teacher and his/her pedagogical approach in successful lyric diction learning. This thesis addresses the 'how' of lyric diction teaching by focussing on the pedagogical approaches and priorities of selected expert lyric diction coaches whose work with conservatorium level students is informed by their understanding of lyric diction at the professional level.

Chapters 1 and 2 of the thesis introduce lyric diction in an historical and socio-cultural context and provide explanations of vocal acoustics, singing technique, phonology, articulatory phonetics, and foreign language phonology acquisition as they pertain to lyric diction. Chapter 3 addresses the backgrounds and experience of expert lyric diction teachers and coaches, highlighting the skills and qualities they perceive as integral to the effectiveness of their pedagogy. It also provides an insight into lyric diction coaching for professional singers. Chapter 4 presents analysis and discussion of the key themes that emerged from the primary source materials collected for this study. This encompasses broad-ranging facets of lyric diction pedagogy fundamental to the subject as a whole and applicable to all languages. The key themes emerging from the research indicate pedagogical priorities that diverge significantly from those indicated by much of the lyric diction literature. The analysis is synthesized in Chapter 5, revealing the overall picture of best practice in conservatorium-level lyric diction teaching derived from this research.

Declaration

I certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text. In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint award of this degree.

I give permission for the digital version of my thesis to be made available on the web, via the University's digital research repository, the Library Search and also through web search engines, unless permission has been granted by the University to restrict access for a period of time.

I acknowledge the support I have received for my research through the provision of an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship.

Penelope Cashman

12th June 2019

Acknowledgements

First thanks must go to the interviewees for this research who generously shared their time, professional experience, knowledge, and their passion for lyric diction. It was a privilege to speak with them and this thesis would not exist without their contributions. Particular thanks must go to Professor David Adams whose kind and ongoing interest in this project has been an extraordinary support, and whose advice and feedback have been invaluable.

Sincere thanks to my supervisors Professors Charles Bodman Rae and Ghil'ad Zuckermann for their guidance and feedback throughout my candidature and, in particular, for their confidence in my abilities.

Warmest thanks also to my friends and family who have supported and encouraged me throughout this long process. To Suna Chung, for generously hosting me during my stay in New York, to the Tesselaar and Van Bodegraven family for hosting me during my stay in Amsterdam, to my Mum for her painstaking editing, to my partner Lucas, for his extraordinary patience with me and with so many aspects of this undertaking (it's possible we may now be able to use the dining table again), and also to my son Matthew, whose arrival did derail the project for quite some time, and who has interrupted the writing of every sentence in this thesis at least once, but whose easy-going nature has allowed me to achieve this while in possession of a two-year-old, and who certainly puts the whole project into perspective.

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Introduction

> Vergebliches Müh'n, die beiden zu trennen. In eins verschmolzen sind Worte und Töne - zu einem Neuen verbunden. Geheimnis der Stunde. Eine Kunst durch die andere erlöst![1]
>
> *Capriccio, Ein Konversationsstück für Musik in einem Aufzug,* Op. 85 (R. Strauss 1942)
> Libretto: Clemens Krauss und Richard Strauss

At the beginning of my piano studies at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam my teacher advised me to sign up for the 'Liedklas'. There, in the first lesson, I heard a student performance of Schubert's setting of Goethe's text, 'So lasst mich scheinen'. I sat, transfixed, through a class discussion about Mignon, her extraordinary character, her role in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, and all that Schubert conveys through his setting of her final song. I realised that here was a true combination of literature and music, and it was one in which I immediately aspired to take part.

Through the participation in countless master classes with great song interpreters, both singers and pianists, I learned to appreciate the manifold ways in which meaning and emotion can be expressed through the singing of text. I learned to recognise the thought, skill, and commitment required to achieve a performance in which a singer (and indeed pianist) inhabits a language that might be not their mother tongue as if it were their own, and renders a text that might be centuries old as if it were a creation of the moment. As I began to explore more opera repertoire, playing for my colleagues in lessons and rehearsals, I began to understand the challenges inherent in combining text with the particular vocalism demanded in the operatic context. Later, I began to recognise the unique nature of language use in recitative and the challenges that brings.

Throughout my Masters studies specialising in song accompaniment, there had been no need to argue for the importance of text and lyric diction in singing. During summers spent studying at the Schubert Institut in Baden bei Wien no one would ever

[1] English translation: Fruitless effort to separate the two. Words and Music are fused into one – bound in a new synthesis. Secret of the hour. One art redeemed by the other!

have thought to question whether the text mattered. Yet I discovered that there is sometimes a need to argue for the importance of text and lyric diction in the context of singing students' conservatorium studies and in the opera rehearsal room; I found that the conclusion reached in Richard Strauss' final opera, *Capriccio* – that the words and the music are equally important – is sometimes victim to pressures imposed by money and time.

Having returned to Australia from Masters studies in Vienna, I discovered a different paradigm regarding sung text. Suddenly I perceived a geographical, cultural, and linguistic isolation from the repertoire that had spoken to me so directly. I began doing more vocal coaching, in particular working with singers who were much closer to the beginning of their educational journeys than my colleagues in Amsterdam and Vienna had been. Consequently, I needed to be able to teach many aspects of lyric diction that I had previously taken for granted in the singers with whom I had studied and worked. I had the background of my lyric diction studies in Vienna, but I also began exploring the literature relating to lyric diction, from which I learned an enormous amount. However, I still had many questions about the most effective pedagogical approaches for developing singing students' lyric diction skills. There was very little amongst the literature that could provide me with answers, and I developed this project as a means of answering those questions.

The process of undertaking this study, in particular the extraordinary privilege of interviewing lyric diction teachers with such experience, passion, and generosity, has answered many of my questions, and some that I hadn't known to ask. I hope that this thesis will be of value for others who have similar questions regarding pedagogy of lyric diction that achieves "Worte und Töne - zu einem Neuen verbunden".

What is lyric diction?

Put most simply, 'lyric diction' describes the use of language in singing by singers trained in the western classical tradition.[2] It is, essentially, sung diction. However, the field of lyric diction is broader than this definition reflects, and encompasses pronunciation, the realisation of language within its musical setting, the integration of language with aspects of singing technique, and its use in communication and expression.

While lyric diction might appear to have similarities with diction training for actors or second language learning, it differs significantly from both these areas. It is difficult to imagine an actor ever being hired to perform a role that is entirely in a language s/he cannot speak, either as a native or non-native speaker. Singers, however, regularly confront this challenge. The opera, oratorio, and song repertoire of the professional singer may encompass Italian, German, French, English, Spanish, Russian, Czech, and other less frequently performed languages. Mastery of lyric diction allows singers to perform this repertoire without learning to communicate spontaneously in the languages in which they are required to sing.

While an accent is accepted and even expected of speakers communicating in a non-native language,[3] an accent in a singer's lyric diction is not considered acceptable. If, as we take it to be, language is conceived as an integral part of the musical utterance,[4] then mispronunciation might be compared to poor intonation or inaccurate rhythm. Thus, while lyric diction in itself does not demand a singer be capable of communicating spontaneously in the sung language, the best lyric diction is so idiomatically and expressively convincing that the listener is unable to differentiate the singer from a native speaker.

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[2] This research concerns itself exclusively with western classical singing and thus all vocal references, as well as those to 'singer', 'singing teacher', and 'singing technique' are to be understood to refer only to this field.
[3] See Chapter 2.4.
[4] See Chapter 1.

Yet, the ability to speak a language fluently as either a native or non-native speaker does not eliminate the need for a singer to master the lyric diction of that language.[5] In some cases, the spoken pronunciation and lyric diction of a language may differ significantly from each other, e.g. spoken French and *style soutenu* or 'elevated style' (Nedecky, 2011, p. 3). In other cases, singers may need to eliminate dialectical characteristics in favour of a neutral pronunciation, e.g. Received Pronunciation in English and *Hochdeutsch* or *Bühnendeutsch* in German (Siebs, 1969). Furthermore, the resonance that singers are required to produce and the associated singing technique result in significant acoustic and articulatory differences between lyric diction and speech.[6]

The use of the term 'lyric diction' to describe sung diction is not ubiquitous. 'Lyric diction' is employed frequently in North America and Australia, but less often in the UK and continental Europe. The term was chosen for this research because, unlike terms such as 'language coaching', 'diction', 'pronunciation' or 'Phonetik',[7] it is used only in the context of western classical singing and is widely understood amongst English speakers.

The use of the word 'diction' is not without contention. In *A Handbook of Diction for Singers* (2008, p. xii), one of the interviewees for this research, David Adams, writes that 'diction' has the negative connotations of classroom exercises and learning rules. He suggests that lyric diction might better be described as "skill with a language". UK-based German coach Gerhard Gall feels similarly. In his interview, he said:

> I'm very much about voices and sounds and 'diction' sounds to my ear very academic and very rule-based... 'Lyric' is a great word… however for me 'language coaching' sounds softer and gives me also the opportunity to say: "I want the whole package". The pronunciation is [only] one aspect…

Gall's comment highlights the breadth with which lyric diction coaches and teachers may define the field. As Chapter 3 shows, the nature of the discipline is such that

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[5] See Chapter 4.13.
[6] See Chapters 2.1, 2.2, and 4.10.
[7] The name of the classes I undertook at the conservatorium when studying in Vienna, e.g. Französische Phonetik (French phonetics).

practitioners tend to define it according to their own practice. This is particularly to be observed with regard to singing technique and expression.

There is clearly an intersection between lyric diction and singing technique.[8] Nevertheless, some expert lyric diction coaches and teachers consider elements within this intersection to be beyond their remit and solely the terrain of the singer and singing teacher. Other lyric diction coaches and teachers, however, consider the same elements to be integral to their approach.[9]

Some authors define the field of lyric diction as focussing on pronunciation and articulation (e.g. Johnston, 2011; Paton, 1999), however this project takes a far broader view. It is not only the presence of language, but also the semantic content of that language that differentiates vocal music so strikingly from all other music. Consequently, expression may be seen as fundamental to lyric diction.[10] In her book *Singing and Communicating in English* (2008), interviewee for this research, Kathryn LaBouff, separates the study of "sung speech" into pronunciation, enunciation and expression.[11] In *Singing in French* (1979, p. 2), Thomas Grubb outlines two purposes for lyric diction very much akin to LaBouff's: "1. to facilitate and clarify the singing process by a definition and mastery of the sounds to be sung; [and] 2. to communicate the sounds, meanings, and overall message of a text in an intelligible, natural, and appropriately expressive way." However, Grubb goes on to outline three essential aspects of equal importance (1979, pp. 2-3):

> 1. *pronunciation*, or the conversion of the letters of a word into the proper vocal sounds represented by the symbols of the International Phonetic Alphabet (I.P.A.)
>
> 2. *vocalization*, or the distinct and natural singing of these sounds in all registers of the voice with responsible modification where absolutely necessary, the aim always being toward intelligibility and natural, unhindered vocal production; and

[8] The intersection between lyric diction and singing technique is outlined in Chapters 2.1 and 2.2.
[9] See Chapters 3.3 and 4.10.
[10] See Chapter 4.14.
[11] Interestingly, although LaBouff also acknowledges and encompasses many facets of singing technique throughout her book and in her coaching, she does not explicitly include such aspects within her definition of lyric diction.

3. *interpretative expression,* or the effective communication of the meaning, mood, and character of the text as set to music.

Lyric diction, as represented cumulatively by the interview data collected in this research, includes all three of these aspects.

This study investigates best practice in lyric diction teaching to conservatorium students as described by those expert lyric diction teachers with whom interviews were conducted. Beyond correct pronunciation, the realisation of language within its musical setting, the integration of language with aspects of singing technique, and its use in communication and expression are considered integral to lyric diction for the purposes of this research. While much of the literature regarding lyric diction focuses on the articulatory details of specific languages, this study of pedagogical practice reveals the discipline from a far more multifaceted perspective. It is hoped that the material presented here contributes to an enriched understanding of lyric diction and the processes by which it may be taught.

Defining 'lyric diction teaching' and 'lyric diction coaching'

For the sake of clarity in the presentation of this research, it has been necessary to distinguish between lyric diction coaching for professional singers and lyric diction education provided to conservatorium students. Thus, 'lyric diction coaching' and 'lyric diction teaching' (and therefore 'coach' and 'teacher') are defined as distinct from one another. 'Lyric diction coaching' is defined as work undertaken in regard to lyric diction at the professional level. This may include one-on-one coaching with a professional singer in a private session or work undertaken as a lyric diction coach in preparation for an opera, recording, or recital. 'Lyric diction teaching' is defined as that which is undertaken in the conservatorium context. This may take place in a class context or in one-on-one sessions. Lyric diction teaching encompasses both the introduction of basic lyric diction concepts and skills generally, and pedagogical activity tailored to the individual student.

Such a distinction is necessary for clarity in the context of this research, but it is in many regards an artificial one. Both the lyric diction coaching and teaching roles are pedagogical and, due to variation in the lyric diction skills of professional and student singers, coaching and teaching, as defined here, may sometimes involve working on similar or even identical aspects. According to the definitions outlined here, many of the interviewees are described both as a lyric diction coach and lyric diction teacher, and it is important to acknowledge that these interviewees would most likely consider coaching and teaching to comprise a single activity that is tailored to either the professional or conservatorium context. However, distinguishing coaching and teaching from each other eliminates the need to constantly clarify whether the lyric diction work being described takes place in a professional or conservatorium context.

One of the most significant aspects distinguishing lyric diction teaching from lyric diction coaching, as defined here, is that, due to the educational context in which teaching occurs, the lyric diction teacher has a degree of authority and can require that the student attempt to master the material presented. By contrast, as Chapter 3.3 shows, lyric diction coaching may be seen as more of an advisory role; professional singers cannot be compelled to implement the advice provided to them by a lyric diction coach. Even this distinction is not completely clear-cut; some singing students may receive contradictory advice or find themselves advised by another teacher not to implement aspects of a lyric diction teacher's instruction.

Ideally, lyric diction teaching, as defined here, provides students with a secure foundation, developing their knowledge and skills to prepare them for the demands of professional singing. In this way, the singing student becomes a professional singer who requires, and can implement, a quality of lyric diction coaching that is more sophisticated than could reasonably be expected at the conservatorium level. Though they are defined here as distinct from one another, in best practice 'lyric diction teaching' and 'lyric diction coaching' combine to form a continuum of lyric diction pedagogy.

Defining ‘conservatorium-level’

‘Conservatorium-level’ is used throughout the thesis to denote tertiary/university-level music tuition. It encompasses undergraduate and postgraduate studies equivalent to the levels of Bachelor and Masters degrees (though the institution itself may also offer pre-tertiary and/or doctoral training). There are numerous terms to denote music institutions offering this level of training, e.g. conservatoire, academy, college, college conservatory, school of music, and Musikhochschule. ‘Conservatorium’ should be considered synonymous with all such terms.

Aims

The aims of this investigation have been:

1. To generate new primary source material regarding best practice in conservatorium-level lyric diction pedagogy by interviewing expert lyric diction teachers who have experience at both the professional and conservatorium level.
2. To document and analyse the pedagogical approaches and priorities of expert lyric diction teachers that are applicable across a variety of languages.
3. To synthesise the analysed interview materials in order to reveal aspects of best practice in lyric diction pedagogy that are undocumented or under-represented in the existent literature.
4. To contextualise lyric diction pedagogy with reference to vocal acoustics, singing technique, phonology, and phonetics.
5. To examine research into foreign language pronunciation instruction and learning in order to reveal aspects of those fields that may be relevant and useful to lyric diction pedagogy.

Research Questions

The aims of the project have been investigated and interrogated by means of the following and corresponding research questions:

1. What attributes and skills do expert lyric diction teachers consider essential for providing best practice in lyric diction pedagogy?
2. a) How do expert lyric diction teachers perceive the role of lyric diction tuition at the conservatorium level?
   b) What do expert lyric diction teachers consider to be the key priorities of lyric diction learning at the conservatorium level?
   c) What pedagogical approaches are employed in the international best practice of lyric diction pedagogy?
3. How can qualitative analysis of the interview materials (as data sets) be used to identify elements of pedagogical best practice?
4. How can the fields of vocal acoustics, singing technique, phonology, and phonetics provide a basis for understanding lyric diction pedagogy?
5. What aspects of research into L2 pronunciation learning and instruction are of relevance and use to the field of lyric diction pedagogy?

Doctoral originality

Lyric diction pedagogy in its current form is a comparatively recent phenomenon. To date, no resource has documented or analysed the pedagogical approaches of expert lyric diction coaches; it is this gap the current research aims to fill.

Much of the literature regarding conservatorium-level lyric diction focuses on phonological descriptions and explanations of the relevant articulations. In rare instances it encompasses aspects of preparation, performance, and expression. As such, the existent literature can be seen to focus predominantly on the 'what' of lyric diction teaching, and significantly less on the 'how'. The role of the lyric diction teacher and his/her pedagogical approach in determining the success of lyric diction learning has, until now, been relatively unexplored.

This research addresses the ‘how’ of lyric diction teaching by focussing on the pedagogical approaches of selected expert lyric diction teachers whose work with conservatorium-level singing students is informed by their understanding of lyric diction at the professional level. The interviewees’ experience grants them an insight into the impact of their teaching on the career-long trajectory of singers’ lyric diction development, not merely that which occurs during their conservatorium training.

The originality of this project lies in several areas. The most obvious is the collection of primary source material via the interview process as described in Aim 1. The interviews provide new and valuable primary source material, some of it extending well beyond the anticipated scope of the interview. There was a remarkable enthusiasm amongst the interviewees to discuss the various facets of their work; many spoke about the isolated nature of lyric diction coaching in both the professional and conservatorium context. None of the interviewees had been asked about their pedagogical practice in this manner before and they were both thoughtful and generous in their responses. Some spoke at extraordinary length, far beyond the suggested duration of the interview. All these factors have led to the conclusion that much of the knowledge presented in this research has never before been harvested.

Beyond the collection and collation of primary source materials, the most significant facets of doctoral originality in this project are the analysis and synthesis of the interviewees’ responses to questions regarding their pedagogical priorities and approaches, as reflected Aims 2 and 3. Much of the existent lyric diction literature is of tremendous value, however there is a significant gap in the literature in terms of practical pedagogical approach. As indicated in Aim 3, this research takes an initial step towards filling this gap. It explores the interviewees’ priorities for their students’ lyric diction learning, revealing a significant divergence from those priorities represented in much of the literature. It also explores their pedagogical approaches and style, revealing these to be fundamental to the outcomes of their teaching. The synthesis of the data reveals aspects of best practice in conservatorium-level lyric diction pedagogy that are under-represented in or absent from the literature, making this an original contribution to the field.

The inclusion in this study of perspectives from multiple experts across a variety of languages and working in different countries facilitates a view of lyric diction pedagogy that is both broad and profound; it reveals aspects fundamental to the subject as a whole, applicable to all languages, while also highlighting the variety of ways in which the subject may be approached. The study addresses the characteristics and backgrounds of the selected lyric diction coaches and their work with professional singers in order to contextualise their conservatorium-level teaching. In doing so, it provides a rare insight into the unique combination of skills required of a lyric diction teacher, and the pedagogical significance of those skills. No specific training currently exists for lyric diction teaching or coaching, but this research may well prove valuable to anyone seeking to design such training.

As reflected in Aim 4, in order to create a foundation and context for understanding the aspects of lyric diction explored within the analysis and synthesis of the interview data, the study provides explanations of vocal acoustics, singing technique, phonology, and articulatory phonetics as they pertain to lyric diction. Additionally, the exploration of research into foreign language pronunciation acquisition and instruction as they relate to lyric diction, outlined in Aim 5, is an original contribution to the field. This overview reveals areas of overlap and aspects of potential relevance and use to lyric diction pedagogy.

Method

The topic has been investigated by adopting a straightforward sequence of investigative stages that constitute the method. As indicated by the reference to 'best practice' in the title, the focus of the study is practical. The interviews that comprise the newly created primary source material are focused on the past and/or current pedagogical practice of the interviewees, who have been chosen to provide unique insights into the practice of individual experts. It is the intention that, from these data and their analysis, each interviewee's voice rings clear. This provides the reader with insights into each individual's perspective regarding fundamental aspects of their pedagogical practice. The purpose of this study is to document and explore the nature of the themes that emerged from the data. This may provide a valuable foundation for

further quantitative research in the area. However, within the qualitative focus of this project, it is the themes themselves, the interviewees' insights into them, and the subsequent analysis and synthesis that are of value.

The qualitative nature of this research means that it should not be interpreted quantitatively, as the study does not aim to express information about pedagogical practice in statistical terms. The interviewees are not intended to be representative of all expert lyric diction pedagogues, and nor is the research intended to reach a point of "saturation" as would, for example, occur in a Grounded Theory framework (Flick, 2014). Such an approach would not serve the goals of this research. Therefore, though the analysis of the data indicates when there was consensus or near consensus amongst the interviewees on particular aspects, this is not intended to imply that such consensus would reliably occur within a different selection of experts. As the Literature Review demonstrates, some recent developments in lyric diction literature and pedagogy reflect a desire to apply a one-size-fits-all approach to lyric diction learning at the conservatorium level. This qualitative research, however, reflects the rich variety of individual approaches that exists amongst expert lyric diction coaches. Furthermore, it encompasses and highlights the flexibility required to deal with individual students, providing a valuable and non-prescriptive resource for those in the field.

Sequence

The investigative stages were as follows:

1. Literature Review
2. Preliminary Research
3. Ethics Approval
4. Development of criteria for interviewee selection
5. Interviewee selection
6. Initial contact with interviewees
7. Compilation of interview questions
8. Field trip and Skype interviews
9. Qualitative analysis of interview transcripts

Stage 1. Literature Review

An initial Literature Review was undertaken at the beginning of the project and updated continuously throughout. It encompassed books, online resources, dissertations and articles written in English regarding lyric diction.

Stage 2. Preliminary Research

In addition to the Literature Review, research was undertaken into the history of lyric diction within classical vocal repertoire. A review was made of recent research into vocal acoustics and singing technique as it pertains to lyric diction. Further research was undertaken in the fields of linguistics including phonology, articulatory phonetics, and foreign language pronunciation learning. This research provided a thorough foundation for understanding and interpreting the interview data collected. It forms the basis of Chapters 1 and 2. It is important to note that the interviewees do not necessarily have knowledge of the scientific approaches to singing technique and language outlined in Chapter 2, and nor is this necessary for their work; in many cases their expertise is practice-based, i.e. grounded in years of practical experience. For an outsider to the field of lyric diction, however, this research provides a means of understanding some aspects of lyric diction pedagogy that may otherwise seem confusing or inexplicable.

Stage 3. Ethics Approval

Ethics approval in order to conduct interviews was obtained from the University of Adelaide.

Stage 4. Development of criteria for interviewee selection

It was necessary to develop criteria for the selection of interviewees for the research. It was deemed essential that the interviewees' work with students at the conservatorium level be informed by their experience and understanding of lyric diction at the professional level. This was to ensure that the undergraduate level pedagogy of the experts consulted is based on a profound understanding of the lyric

diction skills required at the professional level. Consequently, the criteria that were determined were: that the experts interviewed must have extensive experience in coaching professionals or performing at a high professional level, while also having extensive experience teaching/coaching singers at the conservatorium level.

Stage 5. Interviewee selection

There are no particular schools or traditions of lyric diction coaching that had to be represented, however it is significant that two former students of renowned lyric diction coach, the late Nico Castel, were amongst the interviewees. In order to seek out appropriate interviewees, the faculty lists of major conservatoria in New York and London were examined. Advice was sought from experts in the fields of opera and singing pedagogy including Richard Hetherington (Head of Music, Royal Opera House Covent Garden), Mary King (highly-regarded voice pedagogue based in London), Deborah Birnbaum (highly-regarded voice pedagogue based in New York). Each of these people provided contacts who either became interviewees or provided further recommendations. Additionally, contacts from the author's time spent studying in Amsterdam and Vienna were consulted.

The scope and budget of the project did not make it possible to attempt to represent a large number of countries, but this was not deemed a necessity. The highly individual approaches that lyric diction coaches develop independently of one another, and the enormous variety of their cultural and linguistic backgrounds regardless of their current location, render this unnecessary.[12] The selection of coaches was restricted to a number of locations within the practical and financial limitations of the study while providing plentiful opportunities for research and data-collection. The term 'international' is therefore taken to mean 'involving several countries' without implying the study is globally exhaustive. The two criteria that were established ensure that the undergraduate level pedagogy of the experts consulted is based on a profound understanding of what is required at the professional level. Consideration was also given to the level of the interviewees' professional work and the reputation of the institutions at which they taught; the interviewees are or have been employed by some of the world's top music schools and opera houses.

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[12] See Chapter 3.

The interviewees were:

1. David Adams (US-based Italian, German, French, and Czech coach)
2. Maria Cleva (UK-based Italian coach)
3. Florence Daguerre de Hureaux (UK-based French coach)
4. Vera Danchenko-Stern (US-based Russian coach)
5. Gerhard Gall (UK-based German coach)
6. Kenneth Griffiths (US-based Russian coach)
7. Kathryn LaBouff (US-based English coach)
8. Marie-France Lefebvre (US-based French coach)
9. Emanuele Moris (UK-based Italian coach)
10. Glenn Morton (US-based Italian and French coach)
11. Isabella Carolina Radcliffe (UK-based Italian coach)
12. Benno Schollum (Austrian-based German coach)
13. Valentina Di Taranto (Netherlands-based Italian coach)
14. Ellen Rissinger (American German-based Italian, German, French, English and Russian coach)

Although Ellen Rissinger does not teach within a conservatorium, she regularly teaches conservatorium level students at summer courses. She has also created one of the most significant online resources for lyric diction learning and, as such, was an important contributor to the research.

Two secondary interviewees were selected in addition to these international lyric diction coaches:

15. Tanja Binggeli (Australian-based Italian coach)
16. Sharolyn Kimmorley (Australian vocal coach and repetiteur)

This was to gain some insight into the nature of lyric diction in Australia at the professional and pre-professional level.[13] Both Binggeli and Kimmorley have extensive experience with Opera Australia, and have contact with recent conservatorium graduates through the Melba Opera Trust. Though she does not consider herself a lyric diction coach, Kimmorley may give advice regarding lyric diction in productions for which she repetiteurs if a lyric diction coach has not been employed. Neither Binggeli nor Kimmorley has taught lyric diction at the conservatorium level. However, data from their interviews has been included where relevant and in many cases it provides a valuable and illuminating context for other material.

Two other Australian lyric diction coaches who have experience at the professional and conservatorium level were identified as desirable interviewees, but though they replied to initial contact, when it came to interviews they were not forthcoming. Two further international lyric diction coaches did not reply to contact and one was only willing to be interviewed for a fee, which did not conform to the ethics guidelines. The latter is, however, a published author, and his publications are quoted in this thesis. One NY-based coach, whose classes were observed during the field trip, agreed to a follow-up Skype interview as she did not have time during the the field trip. However, she did not respond to further email contact to organise the interview. At the recommendation of his colleagues at the College Conservatory of Music in Cincinnati, an interview was conducted with the newly appointed lyric diction teacher, Daniel Weeks. While much of interest was discussed during this interview, the newness of Weeks to his role as a lyric diction teacher of conservatorium-level students (he had been in the job only a year), led to the decision that he did not fit the criteria for the research.

The biographies of all interviewees are provided in Appendix 1. Additionally, Chapter 3.1 describes the backgrounds, qualifications, and qualities of the principal interviewees as derived from interview data.

[13] While this project does not have an Australian focus, the fact that the author lives and works in Australia made an Australian perspective an important inclusion.

Stage 6. Initial contact with interviewees

Initial contact was made with the interviewees in accordance with the Ethics guidelines. Where possible, interviews were organised to take place within the timeline of the 2016 field trip. Other interviews (Binggeli, Kimmorley, Radcliffe, Rissinger, and Schollum) were organised to take place via Skype.

Stage 7. Compilation of interview questions

A comprehensive list of interview questions was prepared based on the preliminary research. This is attached in Appendix 2. The wide-ranging questions were designed to allow the interviewees to highlight their pedagogical priorities while also garnering responses regarding issues that they might deal with without having consciously analysed their approach.

Stage 8. Field trip and Skype interviews

In April 2016 a one month-long field trip was undertaken to New York, Cincinnati, Washington, Amsterdam, and London, during which eleven interviews were conducted.[14] The remaining five interviews (those with Binggeli, Kimmorley, Radcliffe, Rissinger, and Schollum) took place via Skype in 2016 and 2018. There were limitations to the interview format, though in some instances these led to unexpected positive outcomes. The primary limitation was one of time; it was occasionally necessary to prioritise from amongst the questions and to refrain from asking a question that had been answered in another context. (The interwoven nature of many aspects of lyric diction learning meant that the answer to one question often led to discussion of themes relevant to another.) The enthusiasm of the interviewees for their subject often led to extensive and quite passionate responses which, though not directly answering a question, provided data of great value. It was not appropriate to interrupt the interviewees in these instances, and only occasionally appropriate to redirect the discussion if this seemed necessary. The interviewees' spontaneous discussion revealed their priorities, the aspects of their pedagogy they are most

[14] Several days of observation were conducted during the field trip. It would have been desirable for strategic observation of all the interviewees' teaching to form part of the data collection. The time and budget of the project did not allow for observation of all the interviewees teaching (this would have required several weeks in each city). Consequently, observations are supplementary to the interview data and only cited where relevant.

passionate about, and led to the discussion of some themes that had not been anticipated in the preparatory research. This has had a significant impact on the outcomes of the study. In particular, the explorations of lyric diction coaching within the professional context and pedagogical style are derived to a large extent from the interviewees' spontaneous discussion. In instances where a theme clearly emerged early in the interview process, it was discussed with subsequent interviewees. The proposed necessity for a lyric diction coach to be a singer, native-speaker, or both is a case in point.

Another limitation that was encountered during the interview process was that, in some instances, the interviewees interpreted terms used in the questions differently to the manner intended. The word 'prosody' was intended in the linguistic sense (i.e. referring to suprasegmental features), but in many instances was taken to mean study of prosody in the poetic sense. The word 'phonological' was in many instances simply not understood and had to be clarified in lay terms.

Many of the interviewees expressed caution when discussing anecdotes (both positive and negative) that might identify those mentioned. They were also wary when criticising or disagreeing with colleagues, both in the professional operatic context and conservatorium setting. Some asked that parts of their interview not be quoted in the thesis. This can be understood within the context of maintaining trust-based relationships in their work.[15]

Stage 9. Qualitative analysis of interview transcripts

Following the interviews, transcripts were typed and sent back to the interviewees for any adjustments they wished to make prior to analysis.

The analytical process was largely derived from the qualitative content analysis outlined in *The SAGE handbook of qualitative data analysis* (Margrit Schreier in Flick, 2014).[16] This comprised the following steps:

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[15] See Chapters 3.3 and 4.6.

[16] A series of lectures given by Graham R. Gibbs at the University of Huddersfield, and published on YouTube, was also used in determining the analytical process:

1. Generating and defining main categories
2. Generating and defining subcategories
3. Analysis of interview transcripts for subcategories
4. Additional research contextualising the analysis
5. Synthesis

Step 1. Generating and defining main categories

During the transcription process, memos were created regarding significant themes that emerged. These revealed four main categories:

1. Desirable qualities, qualifications, and experience for lyric diction coaches
2. The role of lyric diction studies at the conservatorium level
3. Effective pedagogical approaches employed in teaching lyric diction
4. Key aspects and priorities in conservatorium-level lyric diction learning

These main categories for analysis align with Research Questions 1 to 3.

The first main category, 'Desirable qualities, qualifications, and experience for lyric diction coaches' is explored in Chapter 3. Chapter 3.1 presents the backgrounds, qualifications, and experience of the interviewees. It also presents and analyses their perspectives regarding the characteristics necessary for a successful lyric diction coach. Chapter 3.2 presents extracts from the interviews in which four of the interviewees describe their pathways to lyric diction coaching. This highlights the variety of professional backgrounds from which a lyric diction coach might come. In Chapter 3.3 the interviewees' comments regarding the nature of lyric diction coaching

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Doing a transcription for qualitative research (2012) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KfdrtpQDtBk), *Coding Part 1: Alan Bryman's 4 stages of qualitative analysis* (2011a) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7X7VuQxPfpk), *Coding Part 2: Thematic coding* (2011b) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B_YXR9kp1_o), *Coding Part 3: What can codes be about?* (2011c) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3oo8ZcBJIEY), *Coding Part 4: What is coding for?* (2011d) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xM-9yuBhMc) accessed 29th Jan 2018.

at the professional level are combined with additional research in order to provide an insight into the nature of the work.

Step 2. Generating and defining subcategories

The main categories 2, 3, and 4 encompass several subcategories and sub-subcategories. These are represented in Figures 1 to 3.

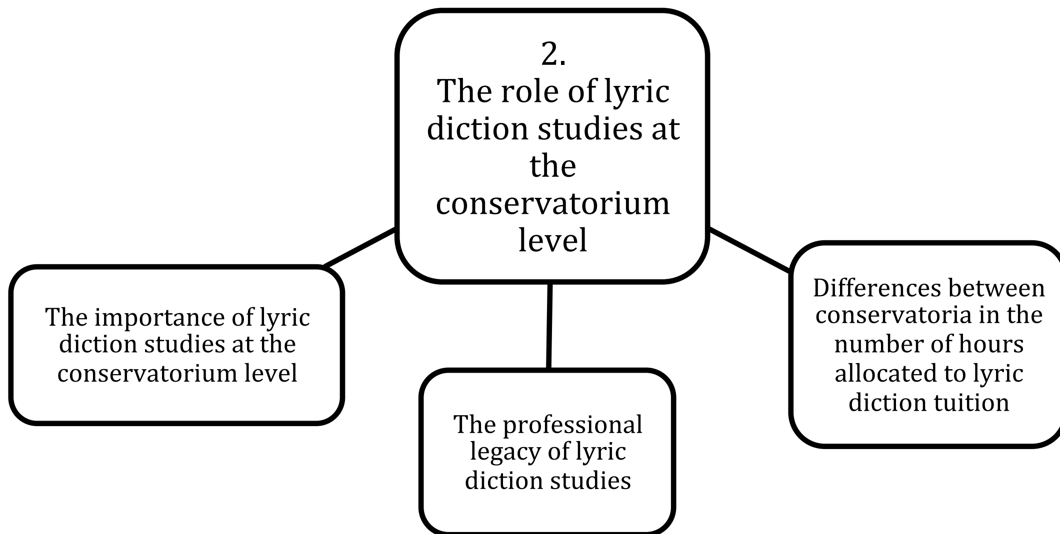

Figure 1.1. Analysis category 2. (Source: Author)

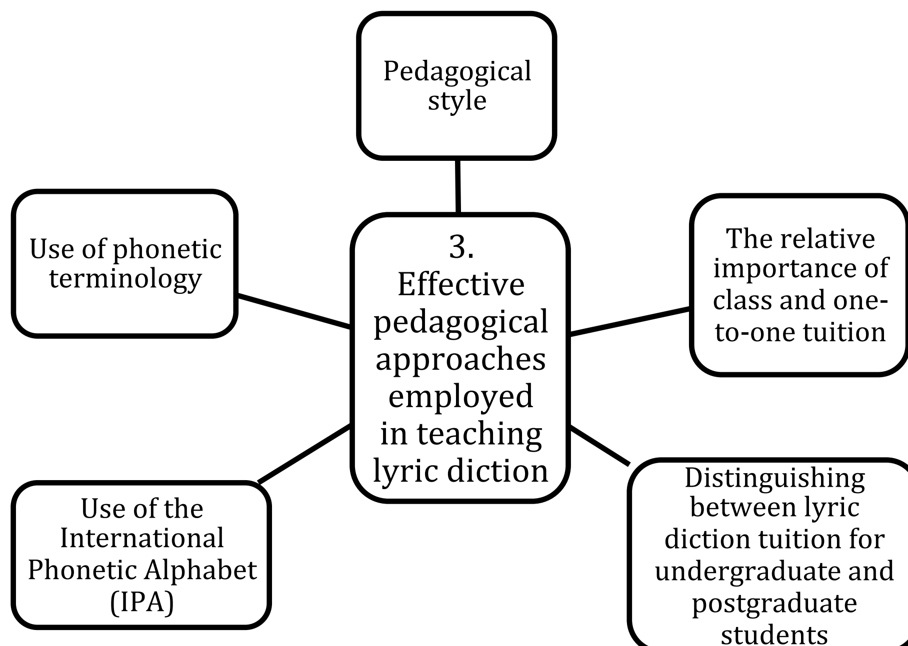

Figure 1.2. Analysis category 3. (Source: Author)

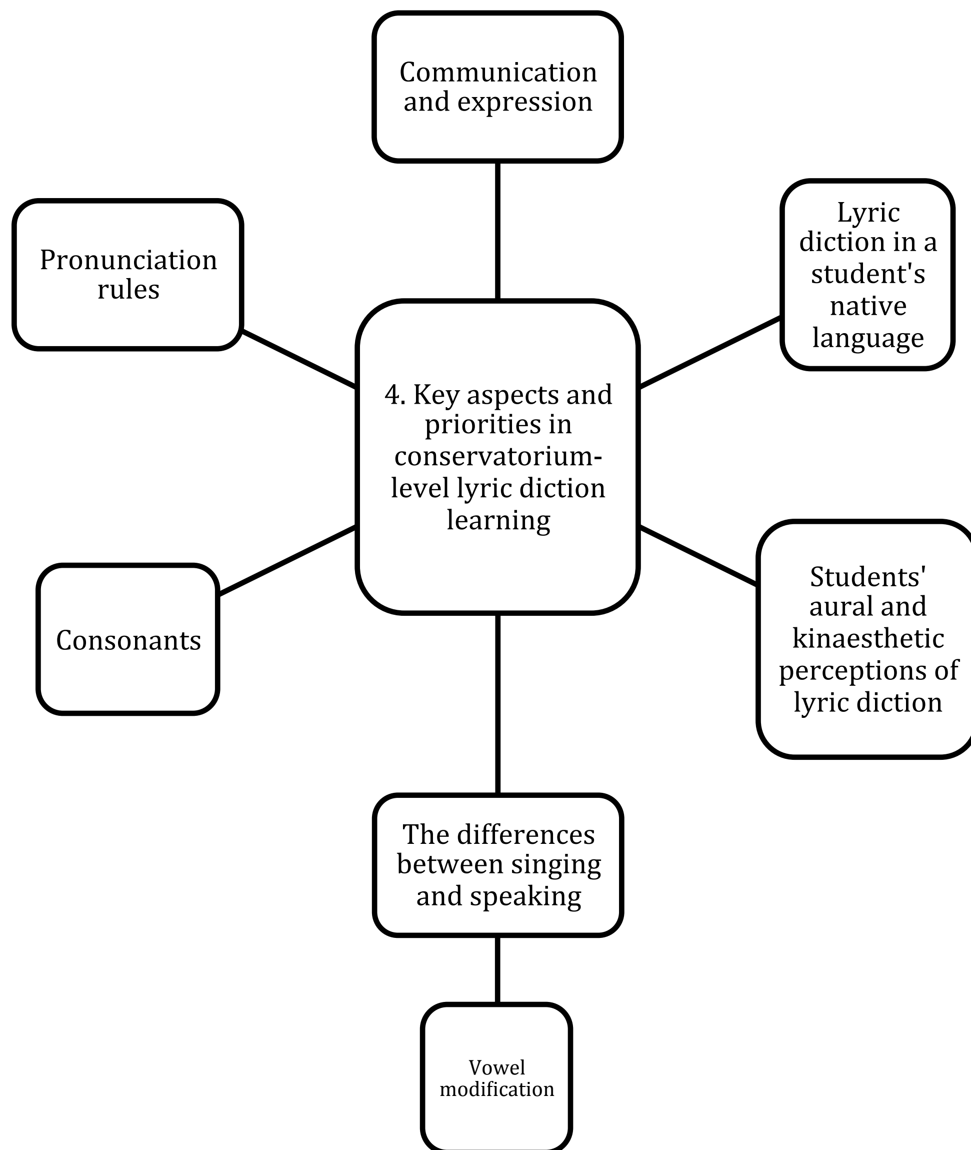

Figure 1.3. Analysis category 4. (Source: Author)

Step 3. Analysis of interview transcripts for subcategories

The process of qualitative analysis continued with the identification of all material relating to each of the subcategories. Memos were created regarding all the interviewees' perspectives on each issue. These perspectives were then mapped to find points of agreement and disagreement, developing a structure for presentation

and analysis. The most salient quotations illustrating the interviewees' perspectives were identified from amongst the material. Consideration was given to the number of interviewees who held a particular opinion, and in cases where there was consensus or near consensus, this was relayed in the analysis. No statistical values were attributed, though such an approach might well be of value in future research. The analysis of all the subcategories is presented in Chapter 4.

Throughout this thesis, all quotations of the interviewees are taken from the transcript of their single interview. As such, it has not been deemed necessary to repeatedly cite those interviews as references. In cases where an interviewee's publication has been quoted, this is explicitly stated and a citation is provided. In Appendix 1, the place and date of each interview is listed with each interviewee's name, these being the identifiers for each transcript.

Step 4. Additional research contextualising the analysis

Additional information that explains, contextualises, or supports the analysis was integrated into Chapter 4. This includes educational theory and the research outlined in Chapter 2. In some cases additional information reflects the author's understanding and professional experience within the field, however all conclusions are drawn from the interview materials and the interviewees' publications.

Step 5. Synthesis

Chapter 5 comprises a synthesis of the analysis presented in Chapter 4. It distils the research into a number of principles and highlights dimensions of lyric diction pedagogy that have, until now, been under-represented in or absent from the literature.

Literature Review

A Literature Review poses a fundamental difficulty when considering the field of lyric diction pedagogy. While there is a substantial amount of literature to be considered, it does not provide an accurate reflection of pedagogical practice. Renowned instrumental and vocal pedagogues have traditionally documented their approaches, or had them documented, in treatises, manuals, and other writings. This is not the case in the field of lyric diction coaching. As Chapter 1 demonstrates, the need for specialist lyric diction coaches has grown with the demand for original language performance of vocal repertoire. Lyric diction pedagogy in its current form is therefore a comparatively recent phenomenon, dating from the second half of the twentieth century. Perhaps reflecting the youth of the discipline, much of the material surveyed in this review presents content for lyric diction studies. Only a very small proportion considers the pedagogical context and manner in which it may best be communicated to students.

The literature explored in this review largely comprises the written word. It also includes recordings and online sources such as podcasts, online audio recordings, and videos. While not exhaustive, this review presents a large amount of material, much of which has great value. However, it is important to bear in mind that there are limitations inherent in communicating via a written medium about a practical, expressive, and aurally manifested skill. Audio and online formats allow for the communication of subtleties that cannot be adequately represented in prose, diagrams, or IPA, but even these media do not cater to the unique learning requirements of individual singers. The need for individually tailored lyric diction pedagogy is a theme that emerges strongly in this research.

While the literature regarding lyric diction displays certain trends and tendencies, it should not be taken to be representative of the entire discipline**.** Some of the recently published lyric diction literature presented in this review appears to indicate a division between some forms of conservatorium level lyric diction pedagogy and the level of lyric diction required in the professional context. Furthermore, the experts interviewed for this research often revealed pedagogical priorities that differ significantly from

those reflected in much of the literature. This could be seen partially as a result of the limitations inherent in the written form. It also reflects the reality that lyric diction coaches worldwide employ unrecorded techniques that they have been taught or have observed, techniques that they have developed, and resources that they have created. Thus, a review of the literature may give a misleading impression of the discipline because an essential characteristic of pedagogical practice is that knowledge and skills are transmitted directly from teacher to pupil.

This Literature Review explores English-language texts regarding lyric diction.[17] Many of these are written by and/or for North Americans, which reflects the fact that systematic study of lyric diction has been and remains most prevalent in North America. The reasons for this are beyond the scope of this study, but it is reasonable to speculate that the need to sing in multiple languages poses a particular challenge for predominantly monolingual native English-speakers (bilingual Canadians being a notable exception). Thus, while early treatises and voice manuals such as those by Garcia, Marchesi, and Lamperti assumed a familiarity with the sung languages (De'Ath, 2015a, p. 61), for many English-speaking students, and particularly those at a great distance from Europe, such an assumption is unrealistic. That said, lyric diction tuition is not only necessary for languages unfamiliar to the student; the distinction between sung and spoken language renders lyric diction tuition necessary in languages the singer may already speak, including their native tongue (LaBouff, 2008; Marshall, 1953).[18]

The literature explored here can be divided into four formats:

- books
- online resources
- dissertations
- articles

[17] While there are many resources relating to linguistics, voice training for actors, and vocal pedagogy that are of use to the lyric diction teacher, this review only explores those specifically pertaining to lyric diction.
[18] See Chapters 4.10 and Chapter 4.13.

This Literature Review explores each of these formats and shows that, while the current lyric diction literature presents a variety of perspectives, recent publications point to some particular trends. It also demonstrates that a significant gap exists within the current literature regarding lyric diction pedagogy, a gap which this research aims to fill.

Books

For those teaching and studying lyric diction in the early twenty-first century there is a relative abundance of literature available in comparison to fifty years ago. The growth in literature that has occurred reflects the change in the role of lyric diction in the careers of professional singers that has taken place since the mid twentieth century. This change is due in particular to an increase in demand for the performance of operatic works in their original language.[19]

Books regarding lyric diction generally present phonological descriptions of one or more languages in a format accessible to the singer.[20] These lay (as opposed to scholarly) phonological descriptions outline the language's rules for pronunciation based on orthographic context. The exception to this is English, which does not allow such an approach due to the irregular and non-phonetic nature of its orthography; in lyric diction texts regarding English, the reader's knowledge of the pronunciation is assumed.

The available texts differ in their structure and in their presentation of phonological descriptions. While all lyric diction books contain systematic descriptions of the articulations of a particular language or languages, the systems, terminology, order of presentation, and levels of detail vary. In some instances the reader is presented with an orthographical context and taught the applicable rule of pronunciation, e.g. Odom and Schollum (1997). In others, the reader is introduced to an articulation and taught the orthographical contexts in which that articulation occurs, e.g. Grubb (1979). Many texts use a combination of the two, e.g. Adams (2008) and Colorni (1970).

[19] See Chapter 1.
[20] See Chapter 2.1.

Articulations are generally categorised into vowels (pure and mixed), semivowels, diphthongs, consonants (single, geminated, voiced or unvoiced), etc. The order of presentation varies, but vowels are usually presented first. John Glenn Paton is one of few authors who offer an alternate order of study. In *Gateway to German Diction* he, like many authors, presents vowels (ordered from bright to dark, mixed, and dipthongs) followed by consonants (ordered by manner and place of articulation). However he also suggests that the reader might choose to begin with consonants that are nearly the same in German as in English and use these to confidently practise words with other sounds (Paton 1999: 34). In *German for Singers* (1997) Odom and Schollum take a particularly interesting approach, presenting "letters and their pronunciation in the order of decreasing difficulty" (1997, p. 23). In all texts, articulations are described in physical terms, and diagrams of the articulators are very often provided. Many texts also provide spoken articulation exercises and texts for recitation, but vocal and musical examples vary in detail and prominence.

In addition to phonological descriptions based on the orthography of each language, texts provide additional phonological descriptions relating to situations in which word structure or grammar affect pronunciation. In many instances, the reader is also presented with a list of exceptions to a rule. This rule-based approach is a necessary feature of the literature. There is, however, variation between texts regarding even the phonological descriptions themselves; some aspects are subject to ongoing debate, while others reflect changes in the spoken language or are considered matters of taste. In one frequently discussed example, Colorni (1970) advocates an open pronunciation of unaccented <e> and <o> in Italian, while subsequently published texts, such as Adams (2008) and Paton (2004), advocate the closed versions of those vowels in an unaccented position. The pronunciation of a word-final <r> in German and vocalic harmonisation in French are two further areas in which opinions differ.

The following general overview traces the development of lyric diction literature in recent decades. While not exhaustive of all publications relating to lyric diction, it provides a significant insight into trends and focal points in the growth of lyric diction literature. The focus of this research is not upon specific phonological descriptions and articulations. Consequently, this overview will not highlight the many discrepancies and disagreements between resources, nor critique the phonological

descriptions employed by each resource, an undertaking that would be well beyond the scope of this research.

In 1871 a prominent English philologist and phoneticist, Alexander John Ellis, was invited to give a speech entitled “Pronunciation in Singing” at the Christmas gathering of the John Curwen’s Tonic Sol-Fa College in London (Ellis, 1877, p. x). Notably, Ellis was also the translator of Hermann Helmholtz’s seminal work *On the sensations of tone as a physiological basis for the theory of music* (Ellis, 1877, p. xi). Ellis’ speech led to the compilation and publication in 1877 of *Pronunciation for singers: with especial reference to the English, German, Italian, and French languages; with numerous examples and exercises for the use of teachers and advanced students*. Ellis described the purpose of his work thus:

> The object of this book is to shew [sic] the course of training which a singer should undergo in order to enunciate his words clearly and accurately, so as to be intelligible to an audience that had no "book of the words”. Throughout the work, the singer, as distinct from the speaker, has been kept in view… Attention is also paid exclusively to the received pronunciation of the English, German, Italian and French languages… The following pages… are written for those advanced students who have sufficient determination to instruct themselves, and who wish to understand the subject in order to instruct others. (Ellis, 1877:xi)

Ellis saw few precedents for this work, writing, “There is not a passage in this book which ought not to be *familiar* to a teacher of singing, although very little of what follows has hitherto found its way into manuals for the singer, and that little is seldom accurate” (Ellis, 1877:xi). As this Literature Review makes clear, the purpose outlined by Ellis might be ascribed to many subsequent texts.

Ellis did not have IPA at his disposal and used his own system of transcription, which he called “Glossic” (Ellis, 1877, p. xi). In publications dating from the mid-1960s onwards, the use of IPA as a means of phonetic transcription in lyric diction is widespread.[21] Most of the literature published prior to the 1960s has now been superseded due to the absence of IPA, outmoded methods of presentation, or changes

[21] See Chapter 2.3.2 for further discussion of use of IPA in lyric diction.

in the expectations of the sung language.[22] Leslie De'Ath provides a comprehensive insight into pre-1950s publications in his article, '"Things have indeed come to a pretty pass"--The Early Years of Lyric Diction Literature' (De'Ath, 2015a), however this review will focus on more recent texts still in use.[23]

In 1965, Kurt Adler, vocal coach, chorus master and assistant conductor at the Metropolitan Opera, published *The Art of Accompanying and Coaching* (1965). This work was initially intended for vocal coaches rather than singers themselves, but the chapter entitled "Phonetics and Diction in Singing" proved so popular that it was later republished separately for singers (1967). This suggests there was already a significant need amongst singers for such a resource. Several other more detailed lyric diction publications followed in relatively quick succession. These included Evelina Colorni's *Singers' Italian: A Manual of Diction and Phonetics* (1970), Richard Cox's *The Singer's Manual of German and French Diction* (1970), John Moriarty's *Italian Latin French German... the sounds and 81 exercises for singing them* (1975), and Thomas Grubb's *Singing in French : a manual of French diction and French vocal repertoire* (1979).[24] Both Colorni and Grubb's textbooks are still considered very valuable references, though Colorni's advice to sing open vowels on unaccented <e> and <o> is often disregarded by those employing her text today (such as interviewees for this research, Glenn Morton and Isabella Radcliffe). Colorni and Grubb are particularly detailed and comprehensive in their approach to Italian and French respectively, encompassing pronunciation and many aspects specific to the musical and sung context; their books are clearly designed with the learning process of the singer in mind. Colorni provides numerous exercises while Grubb places considerable emphasis on the expressive aspects of lyric diction. In fact, Grubb's text is perhaps the most well-rounded of the entire lyric diction literature in this regard. Odom and Schollum's *German for Singers: A Textbook of Diction and Phonetics* was published

[22] For example, Madeleine Marshall's *The Singer's Manual of English Diction* (1953), though it employs IPA and contains much that is of value, no longer reflects the current usage of sung English.
[23] The survey undertaken by Cynthia Mahaney for her doctoral dissertation, *Diction for Singers: A Comprehensive Assessment of Books and Sources* (2006) provides an insight into texts employed by lyric diction teachers in the US at that time, though her survey sample is too small to be statistically significant.
[24] Pierre Bernac's seminal text, *The interpretation of French song* (1976), is not included in this review because its focus is interpretation rather than lyric diction.

in its first edition in 1981 and takes a similar approach, encompassing exercises and musical settings. A second edition was published in 1997.

Since the 1990s, there has been somewhat of a flurry of activity in terms of lyric diction literature. The nature of the published books varies significantly. It seems to indicate three primary, and in some cases conflicting, priorities. These are:

- comprehensive and detailed descriptions of languages
- compact and economical publications including multiple languages
- texts created for the lyric diction class context

Several books in the first category provide phonological descriptions for the lyric diction of languages not previously presented to the English speaker in this manner. These include Nico Castel's *A Singer's Manual of Spanish Lyric Diction* (1994), Timothy Cheek's *Singing in Czech: a guide to Czech lyric diction and vocal repertoire* (2001, revised 2015), Lydia Zervanos' *Singing in Greek: A Guide to Greek Lyric Diction and Vocal Repertoire* (2015), and Benjamin Schultz's *Singing in Polish: A Guide to Polish Lyric Diction and Vocal Repertoire* (2015). Such publications play an important role in broadening the vocal repertoire of the English-speaking singer by providing a means of approaching works that, due to their language of composition, may previously have been deemed inaccessible.

Comprehensive and detailed publications have, however, not been limited to previously neglected languages. Kathryn LaBouff's *Singing and Communicating in English* (2008) is the logical successor to Madeleine Marshall's aforementioned work.[25] LaBouff encompasses Received Pronunciation, American Standard Pronunciation, and Mid-Atlantic Pronunciation, between which a singer may now be expected to differentiate. An extraordinarily detailed work presenting a unique approach to English lyric diction, her book has a strong focus on the sung application of English lyric diction, covering many aspects of vocality and expression in great detail. Two recent publications, Jason Nedecky's *French Diction for Singers: A Handbook of Pronunciation for French Opera and Mélodie* (2011) and Amanda

[25] Similarly, LaBouff was Marshall's successor in teaching English lyric diction at Juilliard.

Johnston's *English and German Diction for Singers: A Comparative Approach* (2011), both present languages already well-represented in the literature. Johnston's approach is particularly noteworthy in that she explores the relationship between English and German, presenting an approach to learning the lyric diction of both languages. She derives much of the German from an understanding of English lyric diction, arguing that the former will be more directly accessible to the native English speaker. This book is designed for the undergraduate and graduate lyric diction course context, but also functions as a reference. The second edition, published in 2016, has an extensive workbook currently available for free download that predominantly contains IPA transcription exercises.[26]

The necessity for singing students to study several languages has created a need for books that include all or some of these languages. *A handbook of diction for singers: Italian, German, French,* by David Adams, was published in 1998, with a 2nd edition released in 2008. Written at the request of Oxford University Press, it is considered by many to be the most detailed and reliable lyric diction text that contains several languages (e.g. Paver, 2009, pp. 4- 10). Notably, Adams covers aspects of Italian phrasal diphthongs, which, as he noted in his interview for this research, had not been dealt with in previous texts, and are often performed incorrectly by both student and professional singers. To illustrate these, and other details applicable to the included languages when sung, Adams provides a large number of musical examples that show the application of lyric diction in the sung context.

Adams' book demonstrates that it is possible to be compact, economical, detailed, and rigorous, however some books that encompass multiple languages are far less thorough or comprehensive. Joan Wall's *International Phonetic Alphabet for Singers: A manual for English and foreign language diction* (1989) and the first edition of Wall, Caldwell, Gavilanes and Allen's *Diction for Singers: A concise reference for English, Italian, Latin, German, French and Spanish pronunciation* (2005) display omissions and inaccuracies. As previously stated, it is beyond the scope of this review to critique these texts in detail, though respondents to Cynthia Mahaney's survey for

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[26] The workbook (Johnston, 2016) is available from: https://rowman.com/isbn/9781442260900/english-and-german-diction-for-singers-a-comparative-approach-second-edition#

her doctoral thesis, *Diction for Singers: A Comprehensive Assessment of Books and Sources* (2006, p. 115), describe handing errata sheets out to their students for Wall's texts. A second edition of Wall, Caldwell, Gavilanes and Allen's *Diction for Singers* was published in 2009, but issues of accuracy and omission remain. The errors are unfortunate, but the omissions highlight the limitations inherent in any 'concise' lyric diction text.

Marcie Stapp's book, *The Singer's Guide to Languages* (1996), is unlike any of the aforementioned texts in that it places a strong focus on translation. This lyric diction textbook is designed for individual use by the English-speaking singer (it assumes the reader has a standard American accent), and encompasses English, Italian, French, and German. In addition to basic phonological rules and detailed articulatory information, Stapp provides a substantial overview of grammar in general, titled 'The Workings of Language' and outlines methods for transcription and translation tailored to each of the included languages.

Books such as those by Adams, Colorni, Grubb, Johnston, Odom and Schollum, and Stapp may be considered a reference for use by singers and pedagogues. Indeed, some interviewees for this research described consulting these texts throughout their careers, even in the case of those coaching their native language (Adams, Lefebvre, Radcliffe, Rissinger). The books are, however, conceived to form the basis of an effective class curriculum when employed and supplemented by an expert. LaBouff's publication also falls within this category. Each of these authors was teaching lyric diction at the conservatorium level when they wrote their texts, however those interviewed for this research - Adams, LaBouff and Schollum – were clear that they do not consider their texts to be a substitute for the pedagogical input of a lyric diction teacher or coach.

Books for the lyric diction class

Since the late 1990s there has been a significant increase in the number of texts that are aimed at and structured around the lyric diction class context. The increasing demand, since the second half of the twentieth century, for singers to be able to

perform in multiple languages from the start of their careers has obliged music institutions to provide lyric diction training at the conservatorium-level. However, the manner in which this training is provided is far from uniform,[27] and not all of those teaching lyric diction have expertise in the field.

Cynthia Mahaney's 2006 doctoral thesis, *Diction for Singers: A Comprehensive Assessment of Books and Sources* provides a very interesting insight into this situation.[28] Mahaney sent a survey regarding the texts employed in lyric diction tuition to the 2004-2005 College Music Society listed members in the United States, or 1,733 institutions. She received 134 responses, 118 of which reported running lyric diction courses. Mahaney conducted 22 subsequent interviews with lyric diction teachers amongst the respondents and fewer than half of those interviewed considered themselves expert in the field (Mahaney, 2006, p. 231). This paints a picture of teachers, many of whom may not have mastery of their subject, teaching under significant time pressure.[29] It also reveals a market of teachers seeking a textbook that presents content in a manner that does not rely upon their expertise for its delivery. The texts by Adams, Colorni, Grubb, and LaBouff, for example, are too detailed and sophisticated to be accessible to an undergraduate student without the selection and mediation of an experienced teacher. Indeed, Adams writes that in order to be used for a beginning class, his book must be employed selectively (2008, p. xii). By contrast, *Diction for Singers* by Wall, Caldwell, Gavilanes and Allen highlights its efficiency and accessibility on the product website; it begins the product description with the words: "So many languages, so little time…"[30]

While Wall's texts might be considered superficial in their approach, this is not the case for all books written for the beginning class context. Odom and Schollum's

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[27] See Chapter 4.3.
[28] Mahaney lists six hundred sources on topics relating to vocal diction, giving the qualification that it is not an exhaustive bibliography on the subject. She has, however, failed to look beyond the title of some of her listed works. She lists, for example, *Voice Lessons: Classroom Activities to Teach Diction, Detail,* Imagery, Syntax, and Tone (2000) by Nancy Dean, but this is actually a book designed in for classroom teachers of writing, 'voice' being used in its literary sense.
[29] Of Mahaney's respondents, 81 combined the teaching of 2 or more languages within a quarter or semester (Mahaney, 2006, p. 255).
[30] https://www.dictionforsingers.com/diction-for-singers-2nd-edition-228.html accessed 3rd Oct 2018.

German for Singers: A Textbook of Diction and Phonetics (1997) is highly detailed. As Schollum related in his interview for this research, the book is in fact based on the content and sequence of his lyric diction teaching at the Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien. Odom, having observed Schollum teach, proposed collaborating on a book to bring the material to a wider audience. In addition to phonological descriptions and word lists, *German for Singers* includes a large number of poetic texts from the Lied repertoire and song extracts.

John Glenn Paton's *Gateway* series is similarly detailed. Paton's *Gateway to German diction: a guide for singers* (1999), *Gateway to Italian Diction: a guide for singers* (2004), and *Gateway to French diction: a guide for singers* (2012) have clearly been designed with the undergraduate student in mind. For example, the simple yet crucial question "What makes Italian sound Italian?" in the introduction to *Gateway to Italian Diction* (2004, p. 18) grants Paton an opportunity to highlight fundamental issues such as clarity of enunciation, open syllables, pure vowels, unaspirated consonants and legato connections between words. Yet, though accessible in their presentation, Paton's texts are reasonably comprehensive in their coverage of the phonological descriptions and articulations for each language. He also introduces quite sophisticated phonetic concepts, e.g. allophones, rarely touched on in other texts. Paton caters to the teacher in a collection of *Teacher's Supplementary Materials* providing accompanying worksheets and quizzes (mainly cloze exercises and IPA transcriptions) based on the content of each book.[31]

Cheri Montgomery has taken the class focus in a somewhat different direction. Her publications include student 'workbooks' for French, English, German, Italian and Latin lyric diction, as well as an *IPA Handbook for Singers, Phonetic Readings for Lyric Diction,* and *Phonetic Transcription for Lyric Diction* (also in an expanded edition). Answer keys and Instructor's Manuals exist as separate publications for each of these volumes, the latter simply being the Student's Manual with the answer key embedded. The workbooks contain a proliferation of activities to occupy the class time of a lyric diction course, with the vast majority of the focus on IPA transcription;

[31] Though, after ordering and twice returning the German supplementary materials, the present author still ended up with a publication printed on only one side of the page- with half the content missing.

up to four thousand words are listed in the workbooks as IPA drills (Montgomery, 2006).

Most of Montgomery's workbooks and Instructor's Manuals cater to the beginning lyric diction class. The necessity for students to receive lyric diction training has obliged music institutions to provide it, often in the absence of those with the relevant teaching expertise. For those entrusted with teaching the class, such resources provide content and structure. It seems that Montgomery's publications are aimed at a market of inexperienced lyric diction teachers with limited class time. Montgomery's publisher, S.T.M. Publishing, features a single customer review on its website which reads:

> Hi Cheri! I finished my first semester in May, using your lyric diction materials. I had the challenge of teaching IPA of five languages (Italian, German, French, Latin, and English) in one semester. It was a difficult challenge, however, your text books made the process easy for me to teach and simple for the students to learn… (https://www.stmpublishers.com/reviews/html, accessed on 25th September 2018).

Note that the reviewer describes teaching the IPA of the five languages (in a semester), and not the lyric diction. While they do include exercises for enunciation, Montgomery's workbooks exhibit a stronger focus on IPA transcription than on speaking or singing. Several of the interviewees for this research expressed concern regarding this aspect of her work and the accuracy of her texts.[32] As Chapter 4.8 shows, all those interviewed for this research felt that IPA must be a tool, but not an end goal.

While advocating for the creation of a positive and interactive learning atmosphere, Montgomery's article 'The Dynamic Diction Classroom' (2011), suggests somewhat short-term pedagogical goals. She writes: "The instructor's agenda is to impart relevant information and to accurately assign the grade. The students' agenda is to make the grade, to enjoy the topic, and to be a valued member of the class" (2011, p. 53). The article outlines a class that is centred on Montgomery's Lyric Diction

[32] No doubt some typographical errors have been corrected throughout the many new editions of each publication (at time of writing the current editions of each workbook range from 3rd to 5th).

Workbooks and describes a process that is almost entirely IPA-focused. Montgomery expresses a desire to "revitalize" the lyric diction classroom, but the dynamism she advocates in this article is limited in focus when one considers the need to develop individual students' lyric diction skills in terms of their singing and expression.

Authors such as Adams, Colorni, Grubb, LaBouff, and Paton appear to conceive of their texts as a means to convey information contributing to the development of the best possible lyric diction, rather than as a means to define the pedagogical process. Montgomery, on the other hand, offers day-long and half-day workshops at which lyric diction teachers receive free copies of almost all her publications and the opportunity to "learn how the workbooks function in the classroom".[33] In providing a formula that caters to the time-pressed, and perhaps inexpert, lyric diction teacher, Montgomery accesses a ready market, and she does not bear the responsibility for its creation. However it does seem that her publications have perhaps been created to suit the immediate needs of the teacher, rather than the long-term needs of the student. One interviewee for this research said: "It sounds like [she's] turning a means to an end into an end in itself… She's kind of making an industry out of this topic". It is hoped that the pedagogical approaches revealed in this research may provide lyric diction coaches with the means to integrate texts such as Montgomery's into a broader and longer-term view of lyric diction.

Limitations inherent in writing about lyric diction

While the written form lends itself well to the presentation of phonological descriptions and IPA transcription exercises, it is not ideal for conveying information to the student regarding the precise movement and position of their articulators, nor the exact nature of the sounds they are required to produce.[34] The interrelationship between lyric diction and phonetics is explored in detail in Chapter 2.3.2, however suffice to say that descriptions of vowel quality in prose using terms such as 'bright' or 'dark' must be associated with an aural reference in the mind of the student in order to be effective.

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[33] https://www.stmpublishers.com/workshops.html accessed 25th Sept 2018.
[34] See Chapter 4.8.

One particularly unreliable means of description is by reference to the student's mother tongue pronunciation, a method that assumes that readers' pronunciations of a shared mother tongue are identical. For the non-American speaker reading a text written for Americans, for example, the information is often ineffective at best and misleading at worst. Wall, Caldwell et.al. provide the following description for the Italian pronunciation of the letter 'o'.

> You will pronounce the Italian *o* in one of two ways: closed [o] as in the English word *obey*, and open [ɔ] as in the *aw* sound in *awe.* (J. Wall et al., 2005, p. 69)

Such a description fails to acknowledge the substantial variation in pronunciation that occurs within American English and is consequently unhelpful to a speaker of Australian or British English. In contrast, David Adams provides very clear qualifications and acknowledges regional differences when occasionally referring to the tendencies of American singers (2008, p. 7).

Comparison between the languages of lyric diction may also be fraught with difficulty. John Moriarty, who developed a multi-lingual approach to lyric diction while teaching classes at the Santa Fe Opera and students at the New England Conservatory (Moriarty, 1975, p. xiii), employs a structure not found in any other text. He presents vowels and consonants and compares their pronunciation in English, Italian, French and German. This approach does clarify some inter-linguistic issues. For example, a singer must understand that the German /e/ represented in lyric diction texts differs in quality from an Italian /e/ and Moriarty's approach clarifies this by denoting the Italian closed /e/ as [e^2]. However, comparative description of vowels also leads to convoluted paragraphs such as the following:

> The tongue position for Italian [i] is neither as high as the French-German vowel, nor as low as the beginning of the English vowel. The Italian vowel has no diphthong glide. The French-German vowel is made with more of a smile then [sic] the Italian vowel. (Moriarty, 1975, p. xiii)

Such comparisons pose difficulties for the student who, given the sequence of the book, is at this point familiar with neither Italian, French, nor German.

Various vowel charts are employed throughout the literature, including the standard cardinal vowel diagram devised by Daniel Jones in the early twentieth century and some devised by the authors themselves.[35] Diagrams representing vowel placement do not aid the student singer unless their parameters are clearly understood. De'Ath argues, for example, that musicians often employ the cardinal vowel diagram in their study of lyric diction without really understanding that it is a theoretical grid, representing the inside of the oral cavity, rather than a chart of the vowels (De'Ath, 2001, p. 60). Nor does the idea of cardinal vowels align with the need to adjust sung vowels throughout the voice in order to maintain resonance, a fact highlighted in the discussion in Chapter 2.1, 'Vocal acoustics and lyric diction'.

Instructions for articulations are also conveyed via diagrams of the articulators and/or described in prose. Some authors, for example LaBouff, and Odom and Schollum, include diagrams of the oral cavity showing tongue positions. Opinions differ widely on the effectiveness of such diagrams as they rely upon the student's awareness of their articulators. Paton believes they are counterproductive, writing:

> In this book you will find no diagrams to show tongue placement. Individual vowel descriptions… give simple statements of what the tongue feels and touches. Vowels are best determined by the senses of touch and hearing and in comparison with each other. Efforts to form the tongue into specific shapes usually fail, leading to confusion and vocal tension (Paton, 1999, p. 9).

This seems reasonable, yet student singers' perception of even what the tongue is doing, and of what it feels and touches, may vary significantly between individuals. Colorni advocates practising with a mirror, saying this allows for "an objective visual control of the speech organs, and is more reliable than vague subjective feelings" (1970, p. 5). However, some articulatory activity critical to lyric diction, for example of the tongue and soft palate, takes place inside the mouth, well out of sight when looking in a mirror. Lyric diction also often requires adjustments too minute to be clearly visible.

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[35] See Chapter 2.3.2.

Like Paton, Colorni emphasizes the importance of hearing:

> In the process of learning to speak a new language or in perfecting one's own, ear training plays a prominent role since one cannot produce a speech sound unless one is first able to 'think" the sound correctly- that is, to hear it within oneself.

This statement is very much in alignment with the Speech Learning Model, one of the models of second language phonology acquisition presented in Chapter 2.4. However, in seeming contradiction, Colorni continues: "But there is another method of conveying the characteristics of a speech sound- through the minute description of the required position and movement of the speech organs…" (Colorni, 1970, p. 6). The author suspects that Colorni, as a very highly regarded lyric diction coach and teacher, probably advocated a combination of both methods in her teaching and made the latter statement somewhat in justification of her written publication.

Indeed, whether via prose description or diagram, there are distinct limitations in conveying information regarding articulations in a written form. This approach is also based on the assumption that all individuals will require the same articulatory process to achieve a particular result. Martin Néron questions this assumption in his 2011 article, 'Coarticulation: aspects and effects on American English, German, and French diction':

> Linguists are just beginning to explore the differences between male and female speech. It goes well beyond the obvious acoustic difference. Tabain and Perrier in their articulatory and acoustic study of French /i/ report an interesting paradox between the articulatory strategy of men and women in order to achieve the same acoustic result, namely a bright spectral timbre characterized by a high F3 for /i/. Their male participants used fronting and rising of the tongue; however, their only female participant used backing of the tongue, which contradicts traditional phonetic descriptions, which, as they argue, are likely modeled on adult male speech. (Néron, 2011, p. 316)

If the implications of these results are true, the ramifications for lyric diction literature are enormous. Are the prescriptive articulatory instructions that are commonly employed either limited in their effect or even inaccurate given the variation amongst the vocal tracts of individuals or between genders? The interviewees' responses in Chapter 4.11 seem to support this suggestion, as does research presented in Chapter

2.4. If there is indeed variation between individuals in the articulation required to produce the same vowel, for example, then the feedback of an expert pedagogue becomes indispensable; the written format simply cannot be tailored to the individual student's needs. This research highlights the role of the pedagogue in aspects such as these, something which the literature until this point has failed to do.

No discussion of lyric diction books would be complete without reference to the vast number of libretto translations and IPA transcriptions made by renowned lyric diction coach, Nico Castel. Castel's monumental contribution to lyric diction is a hugely valuable resource for singers and coaches alike, but is clearly intended as an aid to repertoire learning, rather than as a pedagogical tool. Castel states that effective use of his transcriptions is dependent upon well-developed lyric diction skills in the relevant language (Castel quoted in Waxberg, 2006).

Several of the interviewees for this research expressed frustration that Castel modifies vowels in his IPA transcriptions where he considers it vocally advantageous, but does not alert the singer to the correct vowel.[36] This issue was raised particularly with reference to Italian <e> and <o> in the stressed position. Castel is quite clear about his approach in this regard, writing:

> …I may transcribe the texts with more comfortable open vowel sounds. This is perfectly all right and is what all great Italian singers do instinctively. It is safe to state that very few of the great Italian singers generally observe the [e- ɛ] or [o- ɔ] differences in full-out singing… (Castel, 1994, p. xiii)

Regarding unstressed <e> and <o> in Italian, Castel writes:

> … [S]ome texts state that they are always closed, and other state categorically that they are always open. I say that they are neither. They open or close depending on vocal needs, tessitura and the color of neighboring vowels (vocalic harmonization). (Castel, 1994, p. xiii)

Many of the interviewees for this research argue that vocal requirements, and therefore vowel modifications, differ from singer to singer. They also feel that

[36] See Chapter 4.10.1.

modification must be undertaken with an awareness of the original vowel being modified, something which Castel's transcriptions does not provide. In this regard, Castel's transcription cannot replace the specialist lyric diction coach, a fact that he would no doubt have acknowledged. They remain, however, an invaluable resource for the professional and student singer.

Accompanying audio recordings

Although the literature has been written as a means to an aural result, the audio element of lyric diction study sits somewhat uneasily within the written literature. Authors have engaged with this aspect and many sources provide accompanying recordings or listening that is accessible online. Grubb provides an LP (the current audio form at the publication of the first edition), while Odom and Schollum and Paton include CDs with spoken native-speaker recordings of selections of the written text. Cheek and LaBouff have spoken examples online. Montgomery includes "listening assignments" for which the text and IPA transcription are provided, and has very short excerpts of archival recordings available on YouTube. Cox does not provide an audio recording, but writes:

> Recordings of native speaking singers in the two languages [German and French] are indispensable, not so much from the standpoint of imitating the pronunciation of specific pieces as from that of acquiring an ear for the sounds that are peculiar to the two languages… The diction of baritones – because of the range in which they sing – is often the easiest to apprehend. (Cox, 1970, p. 2)

A wealth of audio material is easily accessible to musicians via recordings and online, much of which is of tremendous value to students. Of course, within the available recordings, lyric diction varies significantly. This is not only due to performers' interpretative choices, but also due to regional variations and stylistic changes that have occurred within sung languages over time. Furthermore, in any recording, vowels may be modified by the singer for technical reasons or simply distorted due to

the frequency at which they are sung (Di Carlo, 2007a, p. 444), a situation Cox mitigates by suggesting recordings by baritones.

Regardless of the form it takes, the provision of an aural resource is no guarantee that students will benefit from it. Students must have developed the ability to perceive the aspects and nuances from which they will learn, a process that may require carefully guided listening or gradual training of the students' aural perception. In the vast majority of cases, this requires the presence of a teacher.

Wall et al.'s *Diction for Singers* has, for an additional cost, accompanying online 'Listening Labs' in which students can hear the sample words employed in *Diction for Singers, 2nd Ed*.[37] They can also record themselves saying the words, and then compare the two recordings. A teacher is able to listen to the students' efforts and record or write a comment. This is the only interactive online resource associated with a publication, but is very limited in scope and quite clunky in its interface. All examples are words spoken in isolation, and are thus unable to encompass any contextual, vocal, or expressive facets of lyric diction learning.

Online lyric diction resources

An exclusively online format most easily integrates the aural and theoretical aspects of lyric diction learning. Several multifaceted online lyric diction resources exist, including *IPA Source, Singers Babel*, *The Diction Police,* and *Lyribox.* This review will explore each of these before briefly discussing YouTube videos relating to lyric diction that are available at the time of research.

IPA Source (2003-2019) is a subscription-based website that provides English translations and IPA transcriptions of vocal repertoire.[38] Its catalogue includes 12, 442 songs and arias in Latin, Italian, German, French, Spanish, and English. Created by Bard Suverkrop and Suzanne Draayer, these translations and transcriptions are similar in format to Nico Castel's translations and transcriptions of opera libretti. For each of

[37] https://www.dictionforsingers.com/diction_multimedia_platform accessed 3rd Oct 2018.
[38] https://www.ipasource.com/ accessed 20th Sept 2018.

the aforementioned languages, the website provides free information sheets regarding the use of IPA, and vowel and consonant charts with example words for each articulation. Suverkrop also gives an explication of the German Fach system and aria lists for each Fach. A selection of spoken audio recordings (presumably by Suverkrop) of Latin, Italian, German and French texts is provided, with the following caveat:

> These recordings are intended for pronunciation help for the singer, not as dramatic readings. Although the readings are done by a professional singer with extensive experience with the languages recorded here, whenever possible, you should try to listen to a native singer, or even better, a native actor reading the texts. (https://www.ipasource.com/sound-recordings accessed 20th September 2018)

The occasional transcription error notwithstanding, *IPA Source* is a very substantial and valuable resource for the student singer. The charts, information sheets, and audio recordings provide an additional dimension to its resources beyond the translations and transcriptions.

Singers Babel is a similar resource, but has integrated the aural element for its entire catalogue.[39] For the repertoire within its catalogue, *Singers Babel* offers subscribers or one-off purchasers a BabelGuide™ which contains an MP4 video in which a native speaker recites the original text while the text, a word-for-word translation, and an IPA transcription are displayed. An accompanying printable PDF of the translation and transcription is provided (similar to those at *IPA Source*). It is possible to hear the text recited 'poetically', slowly, and in a version that alternates both these forms line by line. *Singers Babel* includes texts in American English, French, German, and Latin, but does not include Italian repertoire.

Singers Babel distinguishes itself by a large focus on German choral repertoire, including the major choral-orchestral works. It thus advertises itself as a resource that conductors can provide to their chorus members in order to aid repertoire preparation. The website also provides freely available "Sound Sets" in which the user may click on each phoneme of American English, French or German and hear it spoken by either a female or male native speaker. The associated app (for purchase),

[39] https://www.singersbabel.com/ accessed 18th Feb 2019.

BabelSounds (http://www.babelsounds.com/), offers these languages as well as Ecclesiastical Latin, Germanic Latin, and Russian in the same format. The page of the website that is designated for singers reads: "These tools are not a replacement for your teacher or coach, but allow you to learn at your own speed on your own time [emphasis in original]."[40] It is thus clear that *Singers Babel* is intended as a learning aid, rather than pedagogical input.

The Diction Police: Practical Diction for Classical Singers (Rissinger & Germain, 2018) is the most pedagogically-focused online resource for lyric diction.[41] The website began as a podcast produced by one of the interviewees for this research, Ellen Rissinger, an American vocal coach/accompanist on the music staff of the Semperoper in Dresden, Germany. In 2010, Rissinger began producing podcasts in which she discussed specific repertoire and the associated lyric diction issues with specialists including native-speaking singers, conductors, répétiteurs, and coaches. She defined the goal of the podcast thus:

> … to enhance singers' study of diction by hearing the texts of songs and arias spoken by native speakers, to give a broad range of opinions from native speakers on their own language and to give singers practical tools for practicing and learning foreign languages… There are many good diction books out there, but… books are limited to discussing diction in an abstract way. Here we'll bring diction rules to life! (2014)

When interviewed for this research, Rissinger spoke about her belief that many of the people teaching lyric diction in the US have not had sufficient international or linguistic experience:

> They've never actually heard a German person speaking or, if they have, it's been in America. They've had a little one-on-one time, but they haven't come over here [to Germany] and spent time. They haven't been to Italy on a summer program, [so] they haven't really got the flavour of what it's like to be singing the language in a different country where people are critical.

Rissinger felt that a podcast was the ideal medium for increasing the exposure of American students to the sounds of native speakers and the complexities and nuances

[40] https://www.singersbabel.com/singers.aspx accessed 18th Feb 2019.
[41] https://dictionpolice.com/ accessed 10th Sept 2018.

of lyric diction. While one hundred and fifteen of the podcasts are still available (at the time of writing), the website has since expanded and Rissinger has been joined by co-founder François Germain and a team of contributors.

For songs and arias in the somewhat limited catalogue of *The Diction Police*, subscribers or one-off purchasers can access text readings by native speakers, IPA transcriptions, translations into several languages and, in some cases, in-depth video tutorials. The tutorials encompass detailed discussion of pronunciation rules applicable to the texts, articulations, and aspects of the sung language. An additional "Tutorials Section" provides "Diction Lessons- discussions of specific points of lyric diction illustrated by recordings of famous singers; Diction Tips- short video tutorials with a native-speaking diction expert explaining a particular topic in lyric diction; [and] Tongue Twisters for Singers". Finally, a "Full Review Course" comprises a four-part French diction webinar. While much of the material focuses on Italian, German, French, and English, *The Diction Police* also includes podcast episodes regarding Russian, Spanish, Hungarian, Czech, Swedish, Norwegian, and Greek repertoire.

Rissinger and Germain have refined the aim of the website which is now:

> … to provide singers with a comprehensive set of tools for the study and application of lyric diction. Our philosophy centers on hearing the sounds of foreign languages delivered by native speakers who are also professional singers or coaches with a practical understanding of the intricacies of singing language. (Rissinger & Germain, 2018)

The tutorial element distinguishes *The Diction Police* from other online resources that provide transcriptions and text recordings, such as *IPA Source* and *Singers Babel*. Though its repertoire catalogue is very limited in comparison to *IPA source, The Diction Police* is the online lyric diction that most engages with the phonological and articulatory challenges of lyric diction learning. In this sense, it is the most pedagogically orientated of the online resources explored in this review.

A further online resource, *Lyribox,* provides subscribers with IPA transcriptions and recitations of texts by native speakers.[42] Unlike the websites already mentioned, it offers a recorded piano accompaniment, vocal line played by the piano, transposition tools, and a metronome and looping function. While lyric diction is one of the aspects it includes, the other facets of *Lyribox* suggest it has been designed more as overall repertoire-learning tool than as a particular aid to lyric diction learning.

There are numerous YouTube videos regarding lyric diction. These include recitations of song texts by an accented non-native speaker (channel: *Velarde Voice LLC),*[43] recitations by a native speaker with video translation (channel: *Russian Language for Singers)*[44] recitations by a native speaker with accompanying IPA transcriptions (channel: *French Lyric Diction for Singers),*[45] an introduction to the sounds of a lyric diction language (video: *Introduction to Lyric German Diction* on channel: *Daniel Sommer)*[46], and tutorials on specific repertoire (channel: *John Mario).*[47] Given the ephemeral nature of these materials, it is beyond the scope of this review to survey all YouTube videos in detail. In contrast to published materials, YouTube videos have not been peer reviewed and consequently there is considerable variation not only in their quality, but also quite possibly in their intended audience.

The videos provided on the channels *French Lyric Diction for Singers* and *Russian Language for Singers* both have descriptions advertising paid private Skype tutorials with the presenters, so these may have been conceived as a means of advertising coaching services, in addition to the provision of free resources. That said, *French Lyric Diction for Singers* does provide recitations of a large number of texts, and the channel's accompanying summary also explains its slightly idiosyncratic IPA usage.

The video, *Introduction to Lyric German Diction* (2012)*,* might form the basis for a beginning lyric diction class. It presents IPA and demonstrates associated sounds with tips to aid accuracy in the sung context, but does not present phonological rules. The

[42] https://www.lyribox.com accessed 10th Feb 2019.
[43] https://www.youtube.com/user/velardevoicestudio accessed 17th Feb 2019.
[44] https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC8-T7UI2ORiptbFZLKsp9yw accessed 15th Feb 2019.
[45] https://www.youtube.com/user/FrenchDiction accessed 15th Feb 2019.
[46] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8oFMRyErxzM accessed 15th Feb 2019.
[47] https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCNSwNl8luM3IAB7sp_aiJ1g accessed 19th Feb 2019.

description accompanying the video links to Sommer's web page,[48] which advertises a free German lyric diction app (launched 2016) providing over 2500 free IPA transcriptions. The website also advertises Sommer's availability to provide coaching and custom-made lyric diction materials e.g. "Classroom material- handouts, worksheets, IPA transcriptions; [and] Digital Content- instructional videos, record and/or process text recitation, PDFs".[49] With the exception of the channel *Velarde Voice LLC,* on which the standard of recitation is not high enough to be a reliable guide, each of the other channels discussed thus far contains material that may be of use to the lyric diction student wishing to hear a native speaker.

The channel *John Mario*, presented by coach and conductor John Mario, is the most pedagogically-focused YouTube resource.[50] Mario's Italian is accented, but he provides a clear and detailed analysis of the non-phonetic aspects of Italian in a large quantity of repertoire. He also engages with the challenges of the sung context. This material is of considerable use to the lyric diction student.

One video in particular, *Some Thoughts on the Nico Castel Libretto Series--Guide #65* (published Jan 30th 2018),[51] provides information of interest in the context of this review. Mario describes meeting Corradina Caporello, then Italian coach at The Juilliard School, and pupil of and successor to Evelina Colorni, Italian coach and author of *Singers' Italian* (1970). Mario says that he asked Caporello how Colorni taught Italian unaccented <e> and <o>, to which Caporello replied: "She taught them closed". This is, of course, in contrast to Colorni's advice in *Singers' Italian* that these vowels be sung open. Mario points out the possible spectrum that exists within the notion of an open vowel. He also discusses the compromise inherent in committing to text those facets of lyric diction that require more subtlety than the written form can convey. This example demonstrates that literature may very often not provide an exact representation of the author's pedagogical practice. It highlights the importance of the oral tradition in lyric diction pedagogy that this research aims to explore.

[48] http://www.sommerdiction.com/ (Sommer, 2016) accessed 15th Feb 2019.
[49] http://www.sommerdiction.com/services/#custommaterials accessed 19th Feb 2019.
[50] https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCNSwNl8luM3IAB7sp_aiJ1g accessed 19th Feb 2019.
[51] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hhSMCDgDXLs accessed 19th Feb 2019.

The limitation of all these resources, whether text, recording, or online platform, is that they cannot be tailored to suit the individual student. They rely upon the reader or listener's ability to assimilate and implement the information. Yet, as this research demonstrates, the majority of students require individual assistance and feedback in order to accurately implement the information they receive. Just as it would be unreasonable to expect an instrumentalist to refine the manifold aspects of their technical and musical performance without the input of a teacher, lyric diction literature, recordings, and even online tutorials are insufficient for the singer seeking to develop their lyric diction skills. The pedagogical input of a teacher is critical. In regard to the many forms of instrumental pedagogy, there is a wealth of resources regarding approaches and their effectiveness. However, no such resource exploring the pedagogy of lyric diction teaching exists. This is a lack that this research aims to address.

Dissertations

Most English-language dissertations relating to lyric diction focus on languages unrepresented or under-represented in the literature. These include *Swedish art song: A singer's handbook to diction and repertoire* (Hersey, 2012), *A Performance Guide to Mandarin-Chinese Diction and Selected Art Songs by Yiu-Kwong Chung* (Sun, 2012), *Russian Lyric Diction: A practical guide with introduction and annotations and a bibliography with annotations on selected sources* (Grayson, 2012), and *Spanish Diction in Latin American Art Song: Variant Lyric Pronunciations of (s), (ll), and (y)* (Ortiz-Lafont, 2017).

Three available dissertations focus upon aspects of lyric diction pedagogy. Cynthia Mahaney's dissertation, *Diction for Singers: A Comprehensive Assessment of Books and Sources* (2006), has already been extensively cited in this review. It provides an insight into lyric diction literature usage in undergraduate teaching at American music institutions, but, for a quantitative study, has not garnered a sufficiently large sample size in order to be statistically significant.

Barbara Paver's DMA dissertation, *Reconsidering language orientation for undergraduate singers* (2009) is more practically focused. After a detailed Literature Review of a narrow selection of lyric diction texts, Paver explores the role of phonetics employed in lyric diction in relation to anatomy and physiology, as well as consonant and vowel formation. Her focus is on the North American singer, their habits in speech and singing, and the articulatory adjustments necessary to form foreign sounds accurately. Paver prescribes numerous exercises to aid in the correction of North American accents when pronouncing Italian, German, and French in a lyric diction context. She writes from the perspective of voice teacher but derives much of her approach from Peter Ladefoged's *A Course In Phonetics 3rd ed.* (Fort Worth, 1993). Paver's research contains much material of use to the lyric diction coach working with North American singers.

Steven Leigh's Masters thesis, *Testing an approach to teaching Italian lyric diction to opera singers: An action research study* (2016), is based on his own lyric diction teaching. An experienced coach, he uses "the qualitative framework of action research (AR)" to test his "five session, Italian Lyric Diction Course for Opera Singers by examining the validity and efficaciousness of its design, materials, course content, and pedagogical approach of explicit articulatory instruction (EAI)" (p. ii). This approach is based on a process used to improve vowel production in deaf adolescents, which has much in common with the explicit approach to articulatory description present in the lyric diction literature. It is questionable that Leigh should analyse his own pedagogy, given that objectivity is likely to be difficult. However, his data analysis reveals:

> "Twelve Principals [sic] governing [his] teaching process: 1. listening/observing, 2. diagnosing, 3. evaluating the degree of L1 transfer into the L2, 4. spontaneously creating a personalized plan-of-action, 5. determining required background knowledge, 6. determining the ease of attainability by the student, 7. assessing the student's comfort zone" (p. ii).

This process bears similarities to those employed by the interviewees for this research. Notably, Leigh's thesis encompasses both content and pedagogical style; he details his enthusiastic delivery of the class material and his encouraging approach to the provision of feedback. Though limited in scope to Italian and a brief, five-session

course, and somewhat lacking in objectivity, this dissertation is unique in its exploration of lyric diction pedagogy.

Articles

Whereas lyric diction books are written for the student, as well as the pedagogue, articles regarding lyric diction tend to be written exclusively for the latter. By far the most prolific author is Leslie De'Ath, pianist, vocal coach, conductor, and professor in the Faculty of Music at Wilfred Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario. Since 2002 he has been Associate Editor of the 'Language and Diction' column in the *Journal of Singing*, *the Official Journal of the National Association of Teachers of Singing* (US-based). He describes his aims thus:

> … to supplement existing literature for performers and pedagogues on lyric diction, particularly for those languages less well represented, or unrepresented at all. Second, to expand the vocabulary of lyric diction to include terminology and concepts well entrenched in the field of linguistics, but not normally encountered in the musical literature, that have practical value for performers (2016b, p. 465).

De'Ath and his contributors have presented many articles regarding languages previously neglected in the field of lyric diction, providing a valuable resource for the coach or professional singer.[52] However, De'Ath's desire to drag lyric diction coaching and teaching, albeit perhaps kicking and screaming, into an understanding and employment of more sophisticated linguistic principles has no doubt met with a mixed response. After publishing an enormous and challenging article, 'Language and Diction: Phonemics and Lyric Diction' (De'Ath, 2006b), De'Ath repackaged much of the content in a series of seven shorter, simpler articles entitled 'Linguistic Lingo and Lyric Diction'. These encompass 'The Phoneme' (2010), 'Syllabification' (2011a), 'Pronunciation Contrasts' (2011b), 'Lexical Juncture in English' (2012), 'Phrasal Juncture' (2013a), 'Assimilation' (2015c), and 'Phonotactics' (2016a). In the first of these, De'Ath acknowledged the inaccessibility of much of the initial article:

[52] At the time of writing, fifteen articles detail languages other than English, French, German, Italian and Latin.

> It is understandable if the reader has been left perplexed or even exasperated by the density of linguistic detail that can inhere in articles on lyric diction… The series is thus an apologia for some of the innovative policies not generally encountered in the standard lyric diction literature that have been employed in Journal of Singing articles since Volume 59 (2002-2003), that might be construed by some readers as unduly theoretical. (2010, p. 187)

Indeed, two interviewees for this research mentioned that they find De'Ath's articles overly academic and inaccessible. Although they were unwilling to be quoted, both speak from a position of extensive scholarly knowledge in the field. De'Ath's own comments above suggest they are not alone.

Nevertheless, De'Ath's erudition is impressive and his articles challenge the musician reader with linguistic concepts far beyond the practical realm of lyric diction. He often uses his extensive linguistic knowledge to codify aspects of lyric diction that have not been codified in other lyric diction literature.[53] His two extensive articles containing 'Materials for teaching a lyric diction class' (De'Ath, 2005a, 2005b) go far beyond the content that even many expert lyric diction pedagogues might employ in their teaching. These materials are of use, but there is a substantial pedagogical leap required to employ them with student singers. Much of De'Ath's writing can be seen to explain phenomena recognizable from the practice of lyric diction teaching. Whether it is helpful to think about these aspects in such scholarly terms, or to go to such lengths to codify them, is questionable; it seems more than likely that the content of these articles is accessible only to a limited readership willing to engage with the challenge they present. This is certainly in a different realm altogether from the approach of textbooks, such as Montgomery's and Wall's, which cater to the time-pressed, inexpert teacher.

De'Ath's writing is also in stark contrast to the practical approach represented by many of the interviewees' for this thesis. Given the interviewees' practical focus and their reluctance to overwhelm students with complicated terminology, it seems highly

[53] De'Ath's articles include 'Italian vowel clusters in singing, part I: Syllable, vowel length, and stress' (2009a), 'Italian vowel clusters in singing, part II: Application' (2009b), 'Toward a transcription standard for lyric French' (2011c), 'Texting in Italian' (2014), 'Anomalies in the Sound Pattern of German' (2015b).

unlikely that De'Ath's approach is one they would embrace.[54] There are many methods about which De'Ath writes with which expert coaches may well already be familiar, though they may not analyse them in the same manner. For example, in 'Linguistic challenges in the voice studio' (2006a), De'Ath outlines the phonological contrasts between Korean and English in the context of teaching a Korean singing student. Many coaches would be aware of phonological contrasts between their students' native languages and the relevant sung language through extensive experience. De'Ath advocates a systematic approach to the acquisition of such knowledge via codification already undertaken in the field of linguistics.

Many of the aspects of lyric diction that De'Ath aims to codify are likely well known to expert lyric diction coaches, who do not feel the need to frame their knowledge in such a systematic or scholarly way. While aspects of his articles may expand a coach's knowledge of their language, if they are able to understand the linguistic approach, the benefit to the student is entirely dependent upon the material's transmission. This is not an area he broaches. For the performing singer, whose interest in language is practical, expressive, and in no way scholarly, the benefit of such materials is surely very limited.

Martin Néron, a regular contributor to *Journal of Singing,* takes a similar approach. He presents scholarly research on French pronunciation, citing historical and literary sources as well as linguistic research.[55] His articles also present phonetic research pertaining to lyric diction. In 'Coarticulation: Aspects and Effects on American English, German, and French Diction' (2011), Néron presents a linguistic and phonetic analysis of coarticulation in the diction of speakers and singers of American English, German, and French, and the differences between them. He notes that this phonetic variation is often responsible for 'what is recognized as a foreign accent by native speakers', but that IPA is ineffective in representing it (2011, p. 313). This article presents information of great value to the lyric diction coach and casts doubt on the effectiveness of several techniques of inter-linguistic vowel comparison

[54] See, for example, Chapter 4.9.
[55] E.g. 'Singing in French - between theory and practice' (Néron, 2008), 'To be or not to be: notes on the muted E, part I' (Néron, 2012a), 'To be or not to be: notes on the muted E, part II' (Néron, 2012b), 'French nasals: An objective view' (Néron & De'Ath, 2017).

commonly used to teach French and German lyric diction to native English speakers. However, in this, as in Néron's other articles, no suggestions are made regarding the practical application of this information to lyric diction pedagogy.

Some articles do explore lyric diction from a pedagogical perspective. Although somewhat dated, two articles, both by language teachers, highlight the differences between foreign language learning and lyric diction. Jeanette D. Bragger's article in *The Modern Language Journal* entitled 'The Teaching of Music Diction in Departments of Foreign Languages' (1975) illustrates the challenges encountered by language teachers who have not previously worked with singers. Writing for the linguist, Bragger describes the process developed for the teaching of foreign language diction within the department of French and Italian at the University of Massachusetts. She explains that the teaching of lyric diction requires an approach different from that of a regular language or corrective phonetics class because the course does not aim to teach students to speak, read, write, or understand the given language, but rather to give students a general idea of syntax and an opportunity to practise correct pronunciation. A notable aspect of Bragger's article is that she details the process of course design, and the trial of both successful and unsuccessful techniques.

Signe Denbow of West Michigan University also offers insight into a language instructor's experience of teaching lyric diction in 'Teaching French to Singers: Issues and Objectives' in *The French Review* (1994). She notes that "there seems to be no consensus on how best to meet the foreign language needs of singers", and that a lack of consistency in voice programs throughout the US provides little assistance to "unprepared French instructors who find themselves before a group of students in a class entitled 'French for Singers'" (1994, p. 425). Denbow's course design includes French phonetics, IPA, French orthography and sung pronunciation, fundamentals of French grammar as required for French lyrics, and common poetic vocabulary. Both Braggar and Denbow are both sceptical of courses that comprise a 'pronunciation-only' approach, emphasising the importance of basic grammar and comprehension.

It is worth briefly noting that French lyric diction coach Thomas Grubb has quite a different take to Braggar and Denbow on the content of lyric diction classes, writing:

> Courses in the diction of a foreign language are usually cluttered with misguided emphasis on grammar and vocabulary and, occasionally, a flimsy set of general rules for pronunciation. Such courses and attitudes serve to demonstrate the widespread ignorance concerning the role of diction in singing. (1979, p. 1)

Grubb argues that “above all, a course in diction for singers must *not* be ‘academic’”, and that time should not be spent on memorising rules, reading the manual aloud, or grammatical drill, but that “singers should emerge from a diction class ‘warmed up’ from having intoned the vowel-sounds or, better yet, complete song texts” (1979, p. xvi). Given that a large proportion of Grubb’s manual comprises phonological descriptions and instructions for articulation, it would probably be fair to say that the truth lies somewhere in between. Students’ theoretical understanding of the rules is pointless without an ability to implement it effectively. Thus, a class in which students are passive participants is unlikely to prepare them for good lyric diction in their singing. Given their background as language teachers, Braggar and Denbow may have lacked the expertise to bridge the gap between the class content and its sung application.

Several articles by experienced lyric diction teachers provide insights into particular lyric diction challenges. Chiara Zamborlin describes a process very similar to that advocated by De’Ath in her article ‘Gianni Schicchi: A "diction map" for Japanese singers of Italian’ (2008).[56] She offers a comparative description of the syllabic and phonological systems of neutral Italian and neutral Japanese founded on data she has collected through her coaching of Japanese voice students in preparation for a production of Puccini’s *Gianni Schicchi*. Significantly, she notes that language studies are often neglected in Japanese faculties of music (2008, p. 1150). Though phonologically focused, Zamborlin provides many practical suggestions for the Italian coach working with a Japanese native speaker.

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[56] Zamborlin C. K Bradford-Watts (Ed), *Japan Association for Language Teaching 2007 Conference Proceedings*. 2008:1139-53.

Elke Hughes takes a similar approach regarding the teaching of German lyric diction to Australian English speakers in her article, 'Challenges of German diction for Australian singers' published in *Australian Voice*, (2006). As well as providing many standard phonological descriptions for German lyric diction, Hughes outlines twelve German lyric diction difficulties that Australian students encounter, with solutions based on her pedagogical experience. Neither Zamborlin nor Hughes addresses issues specific to the sung context, focusing rather on challenges of phonological contrast. From their biographies, neither appears to have experience as a musician or singer, perhaps explaining why this element is absent from their analyses. The research undertaken for this thesis demonstrates the importance of bridging the gap between the spoken and sung language.

David Adams and Elizabeth Brodovitch both write from a vocalist's perspective. Adams' articles, 'Aspects of consonant articulation in Italian diction' (2003) and 'On Teaching an Italian Diction Class' (2004) in *Journal of Singing* contain much systematic and practical advice regarding teaching Italian lyric diction, in particular to American singers. Based on his extensive experience as a lyric diction teacher at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, Adams highlights the importance of imparting tools and skills to the student so that s/he can continue to develop and refine their expertise in performing the language (2004, p. 177). Adams makes it clear that these skills extend beyond the ability to make and read IPA transcriptions, and he emphasises his effort to balance the theoretical and written portion of the class with practical application in singing. He writes that "the concept of 'diction' should ultimately go beyond that basic level, addressing ways in which the language can be sung more expressively" (2004, p. 179).

Elizabeth Brodovitch's article, 'The Singing Qualities of the French Language' in *Journal of Singing* (2007), is also both scholarly and pedagogically practical. She argues that French is an inherently "singing" language based on "concrete singing criteria of the extension of vocalic duration and continuous air flow release" (2007, p. 74). Brodovitch also demonstrates that "the rhythmic practice that obliges French speakers to pace their breath resources towards the end of the phrases corresponds very closely to the release of breath and techniques of air flow control practised by singers" (2007, p. 74). In one notable pedagogical example, she applies the

enchaînement and tonic stress of French to an English sentence, illustrating not only the difference in prosody between the two languages, but also the influence this exerts in the context of singing. Though limited in scope, the articles by Zamborlin, Hughes, Adams, and Brodovitch all provide an insight into the practical pedagogy of lyric diction teaching, the area that this study aims to explore further.

The interview format upon which this research is based can be found in Arthur Graham's discussion with Nico Castel for *Journal of Voice,* entitled 'Pedagogical opinion: German diction- a dialogue' (1996), and Fred Plotkin's discussion with Denise Masse, Irene Spiegelman and Yvet Synek Graff in *Opera News* (2008). Plotkin's brief article focuses on the professional work of his interviewees whereas Graham's article presents his correspondence with Castel regarding what he describes as "minor points of [German] singing diction frequently neglected in standard teaching" (1996, p. 21). The discussion with Castel is particularly detailed and practical, reflecting Castel's vast linguistic knowledge and enormous pedagogical experience. It is, however, limited in scope.

Two further articles, though not specifically focused on lyric diction teaching, provide valuable pedagogical perspectives pertinent to this research. In an article in *Journal of Singing* entitled 'Teaching Poetry Through Song: A Modest Proposal' (2010), Gerald Seminatore suggests that a pedagogical framework must be developed if a student's exploration of text and meaning is to be more than occasional or haphazard (2010, p. 518). He focuses on students singing in their native language and rightly asserts that, even in this case, the singing student may not understand the literal or figurative meanings of their texts. Seminatore's model involves three levels of approach: a basic level at which the student identifies unfamiliar or confusing words in texts, and clarifies their literal, denotative meanings; an intermediate level at which the student identifies connotative and figurative language employed by the poet and decodes the meaning of this language through inference and insight; and an advanced level at which the student identifies the "musical resources" of the poem. Such a structure would be equally applicable to a student singing a foreign language text. Only through understanding the text is the student able to appreciate the relationship between the

sound of a language and the meaning it expresses, and the musical and emotional effect of the language itself.[57]

A particularly valuable useful and accessible pedagogical resource regarding L1 interference is an article in *Journal of Singing* by Karen Jensen entitled ‘Teaching the ESL Singer’ (2003).[58] Jensen points out that the ideas and methods she explores for teaching an ESL singer may be applied by coaches working with English-speaking students to improve their German, French, and Italian diction. What distinguishes Jensen’s work from much of the other lyric diction literature is its focus on combining theory with practice. She explores the challenges a student may face in accent modification from a neurological, intellectual, physical, and personal level, and offers suggestions for dealing with these challenges. In particular, Jensen identifies ways in which the student may develop an ability to notice and identify new sounds; she highlights the use of IPA as a tool to provide an otherwise unavailable neural connection between a sound and its production, and describes the process required in order for a student to retain the newly learnt information in the permanent memory. Jensen then proposes a method comprising four steps: Explore; Refine; Retain by repeating; Revisit, Relearn, Review (2003, p. 422). The article concludes with a description of this process’s implementation with a Russian student working on an English text.

’Teaching the ESL Singer’ is one of the few articles in the literature that provides a lyric diction coach with techniques that are broadly applicable to the lyric diction teaching process and can be immediately implemented. Jensen outlines a pedagogical process for the teaching of new phonemes that is based on research and a clear understanding of the cognitive processes required of the student. Though limited in scope, Jensen’s article demonstrates the pedagogically-focused approach that this research aims to explore.

[57] See Chapter 4.14.
[58] See Chapter 2.4 for further discussion of L1 interference or ‘transfer’.

Conclusion

While the literature regarding lyric diction displays certain trends and tendencies, it should not be taken to be representative of the entire discipline. As in the field of instrumental music pedagogy, lyric diction coaches worldwide employ techniques that they have been taught or have observed, techniques that they have developed, and resources that they have created. Thus, a study of published materials may give a misleading impression of the discipline because an essential characteristic of pedagogical practice is that knowledge and skills are transmitted directly from teacher to pupil.

The experts interviewed for this research often revealed pedagogical priorities that differ significantly from those reflected in much of the literature. This could be seen as a result of the limitations inherent in writing about a practical and expressive skill. It also reflects a division emerging between some conservatorium-level lyric diction pedagogy and lyric diction in the professional context. For example, the recent focus on IPA transcription in class-orientated materials hints at a divorcing of conservatorium-level lyric diction learning from what one must surely argue is its end goal, the vocal and expressive use of sung language. Those using such content in their teaching would likely gain much from a resource that aids the pedagogy of the lyric diction teacher. This research aims to provide such a resource and to derive it from experts who have experience of lyric diction at the highest professional level.

An increasingly scientific approach to the phonology of lyric diction does not accurately represent the perspective of the lyric diction teacher and coach revealed in this research. Many of the experts interviewed said that they do not regularly employ any of the published literature in their teaching, though they may refer to books and manuals. Though a highly scientific approach to lyric diction contains much of value and interest, the background knowledge it requires of the reader renders it inaccessible to many. Furthermore such material rarely provides information to facilitate its pedagogical implementation. Indeed very little of the current lyric diction literature bridges the gap between theory and practice. While there is a large amount of material available that is of value to singer and coach, it fails to tap into the

resource of expert pedagogical practice that exists at the highest level. It very rarely encompasses pedagogical style, or the necessary focus on the individual student that is required for effective lyric diction teaching. These are two aspects that emerge as significant priorities in this research.

Though the field is comparatively young, in diction pedagogy, as in instrumental pedagogy, the oral tradition is significantly more important than the written. While many of the most successful and respected coaches employ innovative and effective teaching techniques, the details of these are rarely available beyond their immediate sphere of influence. This is one of the great strengths of the teacher-pupil relationships that exist in music institutions, however the result is that knowledge and techniques are often passed down hidden from view. It is the oral tradition into which this project has been designed to tap.

Chapter 1. Text and language in classical singing: their roles and implications for lyric diction

At the conclusion of one of the interviews for this research, the interviewee said that she hoped the completed thesis would be sent to directors of conservatoria in order to convince them of the importance of lyric diction training. The teachers and coaches who were interviewed for this project, and indeed many others who coach, teach, and write about lyric diction, are all passionately convinced of its utmost importance. This thesis demonstrates that they are equally passionate when articulating the reasons for this conviction. Yet it is clear that they feel the need to continue to justify the importance of this aspect of singing. Why is this so? Several of the reasons for this perceived necessity are discussed throughout the thesis. Just as the demands upon a professional singer are numerous and diverse, so too are the areas of training a singing student must undertake in order to succeed within the profession. Consequently, competing priorities and budgetary limitations at the conservatorium level often result in the need to justify choices regarding the investment of time and resources.

Detailed aspects of lyric diction that directly affect the singing student, whether in terms of technique, expression, performance, or career are discussed in the subsequent chapters of this thesis. However, taking a broader view, it is valuable to first examine grounds for thorough lyric diction training from an historical and socio-cultural perspective. Quite simply, why do language and text matter in classical singing? This chapter highlights the integral function of text as both a source of inspiration and a fundamental element in the three principal genres of vocal composition. It then explores the semantic, musical, and expressive considerations involved in considering the language of performance, and their implications for the role of lyric diction.

Though primarily thought of as musical forms, song, opera, and oratorio all combine music and text. They are indivisible from the text, which in many cases predates and inspires the musical creation. Translators Ronnie Apter and Mark Herman (2016) describe an ongoing “battle” between “logocentrism” and “musicocentrism” in vocal music, highlighting that, though the words come first in order of creation, they are

often considered secondary in order of importance. This is evident, for example, in a comment by conductor Mark Wigglesworth, who writes:

> One could argue that the relationship between music and drama in the performance of an opera should be the same as that between composer and librettist during its creation. There is no doubt who is in charge. The words might be written first but composers get the top billing and will not hesitate to ask for changes should the text deviate from their musical vision for the story. (2018, p. 160)

Apter and Herman argue that the prevailing opinions on this issue probably have more to do with fashion than the actual merits of words or music. Indeed, respected vocal coach Kurt Adler wrote: "… the fight must end in a draw. In vocal art the word is lifted up and ennobled by the music, the music is made clear and brought into focus by the word" (1965, p. 43). Based on the quote from *Capriccio* with which this thesis began, it appears that this is a conclusion with which Richard Strauss would have agreed.

One might question whether such a battle is necessary in the first place. After all, the interviewees for this research argue that lyric diction must work with and as part of the music. If the text is to be attributed significance in the performance of vocal works, the classical singer must be equipped with skills that encompass a remarkable combination of multilingualism, intelligibility, and expressivity. An exploration of the role of text in song, opera, and oratorio highlights why this is the case.

Almost all of the vast piano-accompanied song repertoire, whether German Lied, French Mélodie, English Art Song, Russian Art Song, or beyond, takes poetry as its starting point. The poem inspires and is integrated into the composition; Fischer-Dieskau described a song composer as "both assimilator and interpreter" (1984, p. 12). In some cases, the poem may be known and acknowledged as a masterpiece in its own right. Composers were often conscious of this, even if a text is perhaps now more widely known in its musical setting than independently. For example, after a performance of his setting of Goethe's *Rastlose Liebe* [D138] on June 13, 1816, Schubert wrote in his diary: "It cannot be denied that the essential musicality of Goethe's poetic genius was largely responsible for the applause" (quoted in Johnson & Wigmore, 2014, p. 161). This demonstrates the extent to which Schubert felt

Goethe's poem transcended the composition that it had inspired.[59] However, composers do not always choose texts for their literary value. Fischer-Dieskau posits that, while the preference shown by Lied composers for certain poets or "poems of negligible worth" is sometimes difficult to explain, it was "generally, and often unconsciously, a composer's flair for harmonizing his own creativity with the personal character of the poet [that] was predominant" (1984, p. 13).

In addition to a singular text being the source of inspiration for a single composition, a literary genre can even be seen to have an influence that extends to calling a musical genre into existence. Just as the German Lieder of the eighteenth and particularly nineteenth century were kindled by new directions in German poetry (Böker-Heil et al., 2001), so too, for example, was French Mélodie inspired by French romantic poetry and then later the symbolist poets (Tunley & Noske, 2001). It is inconceivable that these musical forms might have come to be without their literary spark.

In the absence of large orchestral forces and scenic devices, the intimacy of song sets the text into relief. This is not the case in the multi-dimensional genre of opera. Desblache (2007, pp. 155-156) describes opera as being "about music and production and text (oral and written, particularly since the advent of surtitles) creating meaning interdependently". Yet, Salzman and Desi (2008, p. 84) argue that both musicologists and music lovers commonly underestimate the importance of the libretto in traditional opera. Interestingly, the fact that they exclude anyone involved in the performance of opera from this accusation suggests that practical engagement with the genre cannot help but reveal libretto's role. Salzman and Desi see the early success of many classic and romantic operas as resting on the stage-worthiness of their libretti in the eyes of their contemporaries. Certainly, the influence of figures such as Metastasio and Da Ponte upon the world of opera is indisputable.

Though usually conceived first, the libretto is typically created specifically for the opera composition, whether as an original text or as a translation and/or adaption of

[59] Yet in his self-deprecation, Schubert failed to acknowledge the impact of the music and text combined; Graham Johnson describes Schubert's setting of *Rastlose Liebe* as "a storm of raw energy and power which was an immediate hit with his circle … and which has been at the centre of the Schubert repertoire ever since" (Johnson).

an existing work. However, a pre-existing libretto may be a source of inspiration for an opera in the same manner as a poem inspires the composition of a song. In his interview for this research, Emanuele Moris, Italian lyric diction coach at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, related an anecdote in order to emphasise the role of text as an opera composer's inspiration. The young Verdi, as yet unsuccessful, declared to his publisher, Giulio Ricordi, that he would no longer compose. Ricordi gave him a libretto by Temistocle Solera which he put in his pocket and later, at home, threw on the piano. It opened to 'Va pensiero sull'ali dorate' and Verdi sat at the piano to compose the now famous and beloved chorus from *Nabucco*. "But why?" asked Moris. "Because he was inspired by the words."[60]

There is, however, often the potential for interaction between librettist and opera composer in a manner that was almost never available to song composers. Though on occasion song composers adjust text, insert repetitions, or choose to exclude verses and, in the case of some song cycles, entire poems, this is rarely in active consultation with the poet. The poem is a complete work before it reaches the hands of the composer who will turn it into song. However, in many instances the librettist and opera composer work together on an opera over a period of time, with influence being exerted in both directions. Benjamin Britten described such interaction with regard to the creation of *The Rape of Lucretia*:

> This "working together" of the poet and composer… seems to be one of the secrets of writing a good opera. […T]he musician will have many ideas that may stimulate and influence the poet. Similarly when the libretto is written and the composer is working on the music, possible alterations may be suggested by the flow of the music and the libretto altered accordingly. [...] The composer and poet should at all stages be working in the closest contact (Britten, 2003, pp. 78- 79)

Thus, just as an opera composer may initially be inspired by text, so too, as Wigglesworth pointed out, may they ask for changes to that text in the service of their overall vision of the work. Britten saw such collaboration as key to the successful composition of an opera and was one of many composers who worked in this manner with his librettists. Renowned collaborations that have produced several operas

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[60] Even if this story is apocryphal, the point is still very much valid.

include that of Mozart with Da Ponte and Richard Strauss with Hugo von Hoffmansthal.

Such collaborations are associated less with oratorio. Traditionally based on sacred texts, though secular oratorios have been composed, the libretto in this genre could be seen to lack an element of originality that may be present in an opera libretto. However, the librettist still has a significant role to play; the chosen text must be adapted for the composition. Lacking opera's scenic elements in its original form (though some oratorios are now staged), the libretto in an oratorio must describe or suggest the action. Thus the text carries the burden of conveying an even greater proportion of the plot than it does in opera.

Whatever the vocal composition, be it a song inspired by a poem, an opera based on a pre-existing libretto or created in collaboration with a librettist, or an oratorio with a libretto based on an adapted text, the words matter. Given the integral role of the text in these vocal genres, the importance of lyric diction (encompassing the facets of pronunciation, vocalization, and interpretative expression) becomes clear.

On both the opera stage and the concert platform, today's classical singers are required to sing in multiple languages. Classical singing has a long and rich multilingual history, with the choice of language for opera in particular carrying historical and socio-cultural significance. Having ascertained that the text is integral to vocal compositions, it is important to explore some of the priorities and considerations that may be taken into account when determining the language or languages of performance, and their implications for lyric diction.

There are four likely possibilities for language choice in vocal repertoire:

- The original language of the text or libretto, which is not the audience's vernacular
- The original language, which is the audience's vernacular
- A translation into the audience's vernacular (assuming the audience shares a common vernacular)

- Partial translation, e.g. recitative in vernacular, arias in original language

A brief historical and socio-cultural perspective gives an insight into each of these choices.

The language most strongly associated with opera is Italian. Originating in Italy in the seventeenth century, opera expanded first throughout Italy, to the court of Louis XIV and the courts of central Europe. Between 1690 and 1790 it spread to another forty courts, to cities of central Europe, and to the kingdoms of Spain, Portugal, England, Denmark, Sweden and Russia (H. M. Brown et al.). The emigration of Italian singers, composers and librettists allowed Italian opera to spread widely, and Italian was also widely spoken in Vienna, the capital of the Hapsburg Empire. France, where French opera had the support of the royal court (Salzman & Desi, 2008, p. 79), resisted Italian opera, and by the mid-eighteenth century, the English ballad opera, the French *drame lyrique*, the German *Singspiel*, and the Spanish stage *tonadillas* demonstrated each nation's attempt to develop an individual style and demonstrate the suitability of their language to musical drama (Mateo, 2014, p. 330). Nevertheless, *opera seria* was associated with the Italian and French languages until the end of the eighteenth century (Desblache, 2007, p. 160).

Russia, Poland, the Czech lands, Hungary, and other parts of the Habsburg Empire also saw the emergence of vernacular opera during the eighteenth century, but it was during the nineteenth century that they developed a 'national opera' bound up with a sense of national cultural identity ((H. M. Brown et al.). Desblache argues that, as "greater variety in topics through a wide range of works expressing burgeoning national identities… gave a new breath of life to opera, …opera in a certain language became a statement of identity, [and] complying with the dominant languages of the genre often implied betrayal" (2007, p. 161). This is an important illustration of the significance attributed to language choice in opera throughout its history.

The nature of the original language may exert a powerful influence on the composition. For example, the distinct characteristics of the Czech language were a determining factor in Janáček's compositional style, stemming from his "obsession for setting naturalistic Czech speech to music, with the correct rise and fall and

rhythmic lilt of his native Moravia" (Mackerras in Cheek, 2014, p. xiii). This has clear implications for lyric diction; when interviewed by Garsington Opera, UK-based Czech lyric diction coach Lada Valešová described the importance of her work in the context of Janáček's compositional process of setting exact speech patterns to music (Valešová, ND).[61] There are countless examples of an integral relationship of text and composition in both opera and song. Benno Schollum, in his interview for this research, described Hugo Wolf's well-known habit of repeatedly reciting the poetic texts as part of the compositional process for his songs. Indeed, Fischer-Dieskau writes that Wolf's adherence to German "speech-melody" is such that in Wolf's works, "the declamatory shape of the song seemed unsurpassable" (1984, p. 20). Composers vary in their fastidiousness regarding the prosody of a language, but the relationship between text and composition can be seen to apply throughout the vocal repertoire, only truly, and conspicuously, absent on rare occasions when a composer has set a language that he or she does not speak. Furthermore, the nature of a language can have a broader music influence. One striking example of this is the influence of the Italian language on the development of *bel canto* singing, which encompasses not only the period-specific style but also the singing technique that is now employed so widely throughout the world.

In this context it is clear that there are several reasons for choosing to perform a work in the original language. Fidelity to the composer's intentions is likely to be a significant factor, both in terms of the sound of the language and its cultural implications. The style, both of the composition and the performers' interpretation, is often very much related to language, as exemplified by Janáček's prosody. Given that a translation must reconcile differences of meaning, syntax, prosody, and articulatory characteristics with music composed for and around another text, the original language is likely to allow the appropriate style to be more easily achieved. Furthermore, a composer who writes well for voices will often also have made judicious choices regarding choice of tessitura and other aspects of text setting that

[61] Interestingly, "the issue of language was undoubtedly a factor in the long delay in the recognition of the work of Leoš Janáček who wrote in Czech but became known, outside of Bohemia and Moravia, in German translations" (Salzman & Desi, 2008, p. 81). Czech-speaking conductor Sir Charles Mackerras was a pioneer in international performance of Janáček's works in the original language.

result in vocal ease (and therefore beauty) and intelligibility being most achievable in the original language.[62]

The desire for fidelity to the original, both in terms of language and music, is supported by the commonly discussed notion of the sound of the words being part of the music itself: the musicality of lyric diction. Salzman and Desi (2008, p. 80) dismiss this aspect, saying that "the notion that the music of language is equal in importance to its musical setting… requires an idealism that is inevitably in conflict with the realities of actual performance". One must question whether such conflict is in fact inevitable. Salzman and Desi refer to opera, but where poetry is set in song, the commonly agreed premise that the sound of language plays a musical role in poetry beyond the transmission of meaning (Hollander, 1956, p. 232) supports the choice of the original language for song repertoire. This goes a long way to explaining why song is translated so rarely in comparison to opera and oratorio. Considering the sound of a language to be part of the music has powerful implications for the role of lyric diction. One of Salzman and Desi's arguments for language's reduced importance is the failure of some professional singers to master their languages sufficiently, though this logic seems inherently flawed. If the original language is chosen in order to be true to the composer's original intentions, linguistically, compositionally, and stylistically, there is an onus on the performer to attempt to achieve that, and an expectation that they will possess the requisite skills. This is not negated by some performers' failure to meet those expectations.

Nevertheless, works are not always performed in their original language, of course. Though advocates of performance in the original language may be quick to point out the reasons for their preference, but there is a long history of the translation of operatic works into the vernacular, which still occurs at opera houses such as the English National Opera and the Wiener Volksoper.[63] Italian opera was translated at small courts in Germany from the middle of the seventeeth century, and in England at

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[62] Translations facilitate vocal ease more rarely than original settings. In this case responsibility lies with the translator, rather than the composer. This is one of the less widely appreciated challenges inherent in creating singable translations.

[63] Ronnie Apter and Mark Herman's recent book, *Translating For Singing: The Theory, Art and Craft of Translating Lyrics* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016) provides an insight into the craft and history of translation.

public theatres from the beginning of the eighteenth (Desblache, 2007, p. 159). During the nineteenth century opera was increasingly performed in translation and, in some cases, works achieved success in a language other than the original. Mateo gives the example of Verdi's *Don Carlo*, originally set to a French libretto, which became known in Italian. She also cites Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, which, after premiering in German in Munich in 1868, was immediately performed "in English (in London), Hungarian (in Budapest), French (in Brussels) and Italian (in Milan, but also in Madrid, where Italianism was still strong in 1897 and where Wagner's opera was not performed in its original language until 1926)" (2014, p. 333). Further noteworthy examples of translation include the first British performance of *La bohème* in Manchester in 1897 in English (supervised by Puccini), and Poulenc's request that his *Dialogues des Carmélites*, of which he was both composer and librettist, be translated into Italian by Flavio Testi for performance at La Scala, Milan, in 1957 (Jonas Forssell in Apter & Herman, 2016, p. 14).

It is important to acknowledge that the decision to translate a libretto may have social implications. During the nineteenth century, opera houses such as The Metropolitan Opera and the Royal Opera House Covent Garden generally chose to present the original language while provincial opera houses offered works in translation (Desblache, 2007, p. 161). Thus developed a rift that is often still manifested today, with artistic superiority attributed to performance in the original language over that in the vernacular. A perceived superiority is even at times seen to extend to the audiences of the former over those of the latter. Since the latter decades of the twentieth century, it has been the international practice to perform operas in the original language, even in smaller houses. The occasional exceptions to this are particularly lighter or comic operas, to which similar prejudices may sometimes be seen to apply. It is not the aim here to make a judgment regarding the merits of original language and translation, but rather to consider the possible reasoning behind each decision and its implications for lyric diction. The examples above show that there was clearly a desire from many composers and audiences for the sung text to be understood by the listener. Bearing this in mind, the importance of intelligible and expressive lyric diction, be it the original language or a translation, is clear.

However, whether or not the composer wished them to understand the text, not all opera-goers are concerned with comprehension. Of opera-goers who do not consider the semantic meaning and content of the words to be vital, Mateo writes: “For uncomprehending audiences who nevertheless enjoy the operas, the words probably function as music” (Mateo, 2014, p. 328). Apter and Herman write acerbically:

> …Some who do not care at all about words enjoy opera only for the sense impressions it makes. For them, opera is a succession of vocal fireworks on syllables that may as well be “la la la,” preferably accompanied by spectacular costumes and scenery. Their credo is, “I don’t care what language I don’t understand opera in.” (Apter & Herman, 2016, p. 39)

Yet if the words function as music, and well they may, then “la la la” is a monotonous theme. Both these perspectives neglect the fact that, while a listener may not understand the semantic content of a language, they can surely perceive the emotional content based on the manner of its delivery. In cases where the meaning of the sung words is not directly comprehensible to the listener, lyric diction can be perceived musically and expressively.

When the original language of a work is the audience’s vernacular, the attitude of the audience may differ significantly. The aspects of textual and stylistic fidelity and vocal ease remain applicable, however intelligibility becomes key. In her book, *Singing and Communicating in English*, lyric diction coach Kathryn LaBouff writes:

> The English-speaking audience has a very different expectation for the musical performances it hears in English from a performance in a foreign language. They expect and want to understand most of the text on first hearing. (LaBouff, 2008, p. 5)

While she acknowledges that heavy orchestration and words set at the extremes of vocal ranges will limit intelligibility, LaBouff argues that ninety to ninety-five percent intelligibility is achievable by singers with good diction knowledge and good singing technique. In fact, she sees this as imperative for the survival of the art form, writing: “If we hope to forge a connection with the younger generation, maintain, and even build opera and concert attendance, the text needs to be clear and communicative” (LaBouff, 2008, p. 5). In the case of American opera, this seems to be occurring.

American composers are composing works “at a prodigious rate” for American audiences (Midgette, 2007, p. 81), suggesting a significant contemporary demand for vocal works in a language that the audience can understand directly.

Where the original language is not that of the audience it is now common practice for the audience to have access to some form of written translation, be it surtitles as in opera, or printed texts as in a song recital. Neither form truly allows the listener to comprehend the meaning of each word as it is sung; surtitles are necessarily a simplified translation of the sung language, and prose translations of song texts are rarely literal and cannot capture the poeticism of the original. Furthermore, written translation is no substitute for the interpretative expression of the performer.

Given the vigorous and passionate debate regarding the use of surtitles in opera and their potential influence on lyric diction, it is worth discussing them in some detail. First employed by the Canadian Opera Company in 1983, surtitles are now ubiquitous in major opera houses. In particular, the use of surtitles for operas sung in the vernacular is a somewhat thorny issue. Initially employed for operas sung in a language foreign to the audience, surtitles are now frequently used when the production is performed in the vernacular, be it the original language or a translation. For example, in 2006 surtitles were introduced at the English National Opera, where operas are generally performed in English translation. This was despite considerable opposition from some parties (though little from the audience- a survey in the early 2000s found 80% of the ENO’s audience in favour (Marcia, 2013)). Notably, the former director of productions at the English National Opera, David Pountney, had once described surtitles as “a celluloid condom inserted between the audience and the immediate gratification of understanding” (quoted in G. M. Brown, 2010). Conductor Mark Wigglesworth expresses this sentiment somewhat differently when he writes:

> The ubiquity of operatic surtitles… encourages a literal approach, and despite their benefits, the danger is that opera’s more elemental power is diminished. Leaving aside the fact that it is hard to truly listen and read at the same time, or that the eye cannot look in two places at once, or that the specific timing of the delivery of the text is no longer up to the performer, by giving our conscious so much power over our subconscious we negate opera’s ability to transport us beyond the here and now. (2018, pp. 176- 177)

Some critics argue that the presence of surtitles leads to singers performing with poorer diction. Others, such as lyric diction coach Maria Cleva, one of the interviewees for this research, feel that the use of surtitles in the language being sung is an insult to the performers.[64] The demand that led to the use of surtitles, be it for a performance in a foreign language or the vernacular, supports the argument that the majority of the audience does, as Mateo argues, expect text to be comprehensible (Mateo, 2014, p. 331). Yet this does not imply that surtitles can or should carry the entire burden of communication and intelligibility. They function as an aid to the audience's semantic comprehension, but are no substitute for the musicality, expressivity, and immediacy of the sung language.

Surtitles are not always used in the audience's vernacular: At the Wiener Volksoper performances are frequently given in a translation into the German vernacular with surtitles in English, the common language of most non-German-speaking audience members. In this instance, surtitles serve the purpose of translation of a translation, the burden of intelligibility for German speakers resting solely with the singers.

The final scenario regarding language choice is that of partial translation. Though rare nowadays, this may include singers singing in more than one language, or different roles being sung in different languages. Until the mid-twentieth century Handel's operas were often sung with the arias in Italian and the recitative sung or spoken in the vernacular where they were performed (Desblache, 2007, p. 159). Interestingly, this is exactly the approach currently employed by a South Australian company, Co-Opera, which performs without surtitles and tours its productions to rural and regional areas of Australia where opera is little known.

The singing of different roles in different languages is now rare given the general preference for performance of works in their original languages. However, prior to the mid-twentieth century, singers often imposed the languages in which they sang (Desblache, 2007, p. 159). An Italian singer based in Italy might have sung all his/her

[64] There is a catch-22 situation here: the surtitles are only an insult if the singers' diction is intelligible. There is, of course, a risk that singers who take presence of surtitles for granted may fail to prioritise their own diction unless text and language are given sufficient priority both throughout their education and during the professional production process.

roles, including Wagner, in Italian, and also performed in Italian internationally. During the 1920s, for example, up to three languages could be heard during the same performance at the Finnish National Opera when notable foreign artists were engaged (Gómez- Martínez in Mateo, 2014, p. 334). Even in the mid-twentieth century, Russian singers who performed roles such as Boris Godunov outside Russia were usually the only member of the cast performing in Russian, the other parts being sung in English, German, or French (Mackerras in Cheek, 2014, p. xiii).

The globalisation of the music industry has changed this significantly. Classical singers are now generally required to learn their roles in the original language, performing them in productions worldwide. Some may specialise in roles in a particular language, for example Verdi in Italian or Wagner in German, but most will be required to sing in several languages; those with poor lyric diction skills will find their employment opportunities to be limited. Most opera houses now rarely perform works in translation. Consequently, opera chorus members will frequently be required to learn works in a variety of languages for a single season. The choice of the original language in the performance of opera may be partially attributed to artistic preference, but globalisation can be seen to have resulted in the increasing practice of original language performance (Apter & Herman, 2016; Salzman & Desi, 2008).

Song continues to be almost always sung in the original language,[65] translation seeming to sit particularly uncomfortably with the exceptionally close relationship between music and poetry in this genre. It could be argued that, in the creation of the song itself, a liberty was already taken with the self-sufficient poetic form, and that translation is simply a step too far.

Whatever the language context, the role of lyric diction is a vital one. If the original language is chosen, this may well be due to the guiding consideration of linguistic and stylistic fidelity to the composer's intentions, and the relevant cultural associations.

[65] Though not entirely. The performance of contemporary art song translations is explored in the research of pianist and University of Toronto DMA candidate Lara Dodds-Eden, whose forthcoming dissertation is entitled: *'Will you play your music if I sing my song?': Singing Translations in 21st century Art Song performance practice*. See also baritone Roderick Williams (2019) regarding his performance of Schubert's *Winterreise* in English (discussed in Chapter 4.13).

However, the frequent use of surtitles in such circumstances implies a continued desire for audience comprehension of the text. Thus, lyric diction must be true to the sound of the language, realising its musical content, and expressively communicating its semantic and emotional message. Where the original language is the vernacular, these aspects are combined with an audience desire for, and indeed expectation of, immediately intelligible sung text. In this instance there is even more onus on the lyric diction of the singers to convey the semantic content of the text; failure to do so will be conspicuous to the audience. Yet one might reasonably argue that there is little difference between these two situations, and that lyric diction that is true to the sound and musicality of the language should consequently be intelligible; poor lyric diction compromises intelligibility, musicality, and expressivity, regardless of whether the audience understands the language. However, where the decision to sing a vernacular translation is taken, it is clear that intelligibility has been prioritised over fidelity to the original. Of course, history shows that this would not necessarily be counter to the wishes of the composer. Moreover, the language of a sung translation will not be devoid of musical aspects; it too will have musical qualities to be conveyed in its lyric diction along with semantic and expressive aspects. Though rare, performances employing partial translation into the vernacular in combination with the original language can be seen to encompass all of these aspects. In all these instances, whatever the language being sung, its semantic, musical, and expressive qualities are absolutely integral to any performance.

There need be no battle between logocentrism and musicocentrism in a singer's work. The role of text as a source of inspiration for composers, its significance in vocal compositions historically, and the essential nature of its semantic, musical, and expressive qualities, make the delivery of text a crucial aspect of any classical singer's performance. For this reason, professional singers require high-level lyric diction skills, the development of which constitutes a crucial element of singing students' training. The pedagogical processes involved in developing these lyric diction skills at the conservatorium level are the focus of the subsequent chapters.

Chapter 2. Concepts pertaining to lyric diction learning

At a fundamental level, beneath the communicative and expressive aspects most obvious in performance, lyric diction can be viewed as a combination of vocal and linguistic skills. This chapter presents a number of concepts that illuminate the study of lyric diction with reference to both vocal and linguistic science and research.

Sections 2.1 and 2.2 explore the sung context of lyric diction with reference to vocal acoustics and singing technique. Section 2.3 explores linguistic concepts that are applicable to the lyric diction learning process: 2.3.1 Phonology; 2.3.2 Articulatory Phonetics. Section 2.4 examines selected aspects of foreign language phonology acquisition research that are of relevance to lyric diction. This information provides a basis for comprehension and analysis of the interview data collected in the course of this research.[66]

Although the concepts described here are central to lyric diction, they are likely unfamiliar to many singers and lyric diction coaches/teachers, including those interviewed for this research. Knowledge of this material is not a prerequisite for best practice in the singing or teaching of lyric diction; much of this material seeks to explain aspects of such practice, rather than to provide a foundation for it. Voice physiology and acoustics, for example, seek to explain how the human voice operates physiologically and how acoustical properties affect vocal tone and resonance (Harrison & O'Bryan, 2014, p. 4). In many instances the material presented here, particularly that regarding vocal acoustics, is the result of very recent research, though the practice it explains has occurred for several centuries. Similarly, while linguistics includes the development of theories to account for and explain the various

[66] It is assumed that the reader is musically literate and familiar with musical settings of texts such as they occur in western classical song, oratorio, and opera, including *recitativo secco* and *accompagnato*. There is enormous historical, cultural and stylistic variation within these settings. In any given instance, the features of the sung language, the nature of the text, and the characteristics of its musical setting will determine the particular challenges a singer may face in conveying its semantic, musical, and expressive aspects. The focus of this thesis is on the pedagogy of foundational lyric diction skills and, consequently, nuances specific to a refined level of professional lyric diction will not be discussed in these introductory chapters. The subsequent sections present information regarding aspects that are relevant to the development of lyric diction skills and the singing of language in the western classical tradition, regardless of the specific linguistic or musical context.

phenomena of language and language use (McGregor, 2009, p. 3), mastery of a foreign language does not require an understanding of the phonological and phonetic aspects described here. While some of the interviewees are no doubt familiar with some or all of the material presented here, for many their familiarity with these aspects would be based on their practical experience, and thus empirical rather than scientific. Nevertheless, singing in a foreign language does require the development and implementation of skills that reliably produce the phenomena these sciences describe and explain. From a research perspective, therefore, a basic understanding of the scientific principles at work facilitates a deeper understanding of these practical skills and the pedagogical processes employed in their development.

2.1. Vocal acoustics and lyric diction

Section 2.1 provides a basic overview of vocal acoustics with particular reference to lyric diction. The study of vocal acoustics highlights the enormous difference between spoken and sung text. It explains how a singer's need to sing specific pitches with sufficient resonance and intensity significantly affects the production of a vowel.

The western classical singer has no amplification other than the resonance they create physically. This must be sufficient to fill an auditorium or project over an orchestra and is integral to the aesthetic of the art form. Therefore, resonance is fundamental to both singing technique and lyric diction. Resonance may be defined as "the tendency of an object or system to respond more strongly to particular frequencies introduced into it" (Bozeman, 2013, p. 9). The vibrating vocal folds introduce frequencies into the vocal tract, which the singer has the physical capacity to alter or 'tune' so that it responds in a manner that creates the desired resonance. In this, the voice is unlike any other wind or brass instrument. In other instruments, the resonator (e.g. the bore and bell of the clarinet) determines the pitch and the vibrator (e.g. its reed) must conform. For a singer, the vibrator (the vocal folds) determines the pitch and the resonator (the vocal tract), which is tuneable, is altered in order to conform (Doscher,

1994, p. 99).[67] Furthermore, unlike any other instrument, the timbre of a voice carries linguistic information: that of the vowel.

Voice scientist Johan Sundberg writes that the two basic aspects to be perceived from voice timbre are the vowel quality and the personal voice quality (Sundberg, 1994, p. 107). The timbre and, by extension, vowel quality, is determined by the resonating frequencies. When the vocal folds vibrate in speech and singing, the air within the vocal tract naturally oscillates more strongly to particular frequencies, which are determined by the shape of the vocal tract. These are referred to as vowel formants. A vowel is identified and distinguished from other vowels based on the frequencies of its lowest two formants, and occasionally the third (Di Carlo, 2007a, p. 443). These formants are labelled F_1, F_2, and F_3, from lowest to highest. Thus, the vocal tract must be altered in order to resonate not only the pitch of the vocal folds and its constituent harmonics,[68] but also to resonate the formants of the required vowel. It is important to note that these formants are not absolute values, but rather spectra, as shown in the following graph, and that the intelligibility of the vowel depends more on the relationship between the formants rather than on their absolute values. This explains why vowels can be understood in high speaking voices as well as low (Di Carlo, 2007a, p. 443).

[67] It is important to acknowledge that the most recent non-linear source-filter theory in fact provides a model in which the acoustic energy may also influence the source, essentially being “reflected back… assisting the efficiency and power of the voice source/vibrator” (Bozeman, 2013, p. 10). Voice scientist Ingo Titze writes that source-filter interaction (vocal folds-vocal tract), which varies between individual singers, can either help or hinder vocal fold vibration (2012, p. 544). This, along with laryngeal position, is beyond the scope of this basic overview of vocal acoustics.
[68] It is assumed that the reader is familiar with the harmonic series.

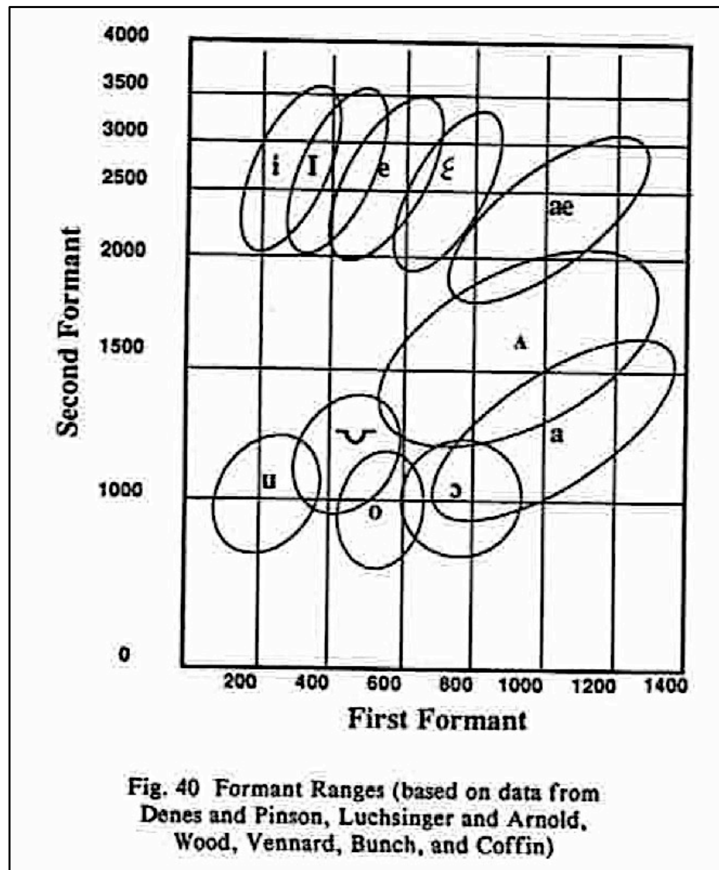

Figure 2.1. The relationship between F_1 and F_2 of commonly used English vowels (Doscher, 1994, p. 138)

Figure 2.1 shows the relationship between F_1 and F_2 of commonly used English vowels. Each vowel covers an area due to the spectrum of frequencies possible for each formant value before the vowel is no longer recognisable. This is similar to a colour palette, which might contain, for example, a shade of orange that darkens until it is no longer perceived as orange, but as red. There may be a period where it could be perceived as either, similarly to the areas of overlap in the graph above.[69]

[69] As listeners, we are not sensitive to differences within a series that that we consider to be versions of the same sound. Consequently, a modified version will still be identified as the same vowel within an accepted span of modification. In fact, the listener will reach a point of sudden change in perception, not a gradual indecisiveness based on the increments of modification (Clark, Yallop, & Fletcher, 2007, p. 309). Vowel modification can therefore be employed not only as an acoustic remedy, but also as an expressive device. This is often referred to as “colouring” the vowels.

F_1 and F_2 are tuned by articulation. This is characterised by internally narrowing the vocal tract with the tongue and by changing the size of the tube exit with modification of the lip shape. If the internal narrowing is near the front of the mouth, F_1 will be lower and F_2 will be higher. If the internal narrowing is closer to the back of the mouth, the reverse will be the case. Rounded lips lower both formants and spread lips raise both formants.

F_1 determines the perceived depth or warmth of the timbre and whether a vowel is perceived as 'open' or 'close'.[70] The higher the first formant, the more open the vowel, and the lower the formant, the more close.

The second formant, F_2, is more responsible for vowel clarity. The location of F_2 determines whether a vowel will be perceived as 'back' or 'front'.[71] Some back and front vowels share the same F_1, but F_2 varies more across the vowels (Bozeman, 2013, p. 15). In instances where two vowels share F_1, if F_2 is closer to F_1 then lower frequencies will be enhanced and a 'back' vowel will be perceived (eg. /u/). If F_2 is further from F_1 then the higher frequencies will be enhanced and a bright 'front' vowel will be perceived (eg. /i/).[72]

F_2 is perceptually dominant in the identification of a vowel. It also tends to be associated with the oral cavity, leading singers and speakers to instinctively exaggerate their oral shapes for greater clarity of diction (Bozeman, 2013, p. 15). However, this is counterproductive in terms of resonance. As French lyric diction coach Thomas Grubb writes: "It is misleading to assume that good diction is founded

[70] The terms "close" and "closed" are both used to describe vowels with a low first formant and a vocal tract shape that is more open near the glottis and narrower near the lips (Bozeman, 2013). Publications opt for one or the other. Due to the inconsistency of usage across the interviewees and the existent literature, they are used interchangeably throughout this thesis, according to usage in the source material.

[71] "Vowels are described phonetically as "front" and "back". Singers often prefer for psychological reasons to call them "high" and "low," or "bright" and "dark" (Miller, 2011, p. 12).

[72] It is also important to acknowledge the 'singer's formant cluster', an extravocalic formant discovered in the 1930s and extensively researched since then. This clustering of formant three and above has been referred to as "shimmer" and "ring" (Di Carlo, 2007a, pp. 446-447). It is characteristic of pitches below approximately D5 and gives classical singers the ability to carry over an orchestra. Physically characterised by a low larynx, open throat and a narrowed epilaryngeal exit (Bozeman, 2013, p. 17), it is more related to vocal technique than lyric diction, and thus beyond the scope of this research.

on exaggerated, highly differentiated vowel sounds. Instead, neighbouring vowel-sounds should always be closely matched in singing by a conscious examination of what they have in common" (Grubb, 1979, p. 6).

The interaction between the harmonics of the sung pitch and the formants of the sung vowel is of absolutely vital significance for a singer. The fundamental frequency of speech will generally be much lower than the first formant of a vowel, providing sufficient harmonics to coincide with vowel formants and thus making vowels easily distinguishable from each other. Even in speech, however, the frequencies of vowel formants do not always coincide with the harmonics of the voice source. This affects higher voices in particular, resulting in a lack of vowel definition (Clark et al., 2007, p. 248). As the fundamental frequency produced by the vocal folds rises, its harmonics move increasingly far apart. This reduces the likelihood of the harmonics coinciding with the vowel formants, which consequently become less distinct and therefore less intelligible. For a singer, for whom resonance is essential, one harmonic of the fundamental frequency must be near the first formant in order for the voice to be fully resonant (Bozeman, 2013, p. 14). This necessity has a profound impact on lyric diction, because it lies at the heart of the tension between vocal resonance and intelligibility. Nicole Scotto di Carlo summarizes this tension thus:

> The phonatory accommodations (bucco-pharyngeal positions) required for proper vocal emission are not always compatible with the articulatory accommodations (positioning of the buccal cavity) necessary to phoneme production. Whenever the phonatory and articulatory accommodations coincide, phoneme intelligibility is spared… In all other cases, intelligibility drops as the phonatory and articulatory accommodations become increasingly antagonistic... The trade-off between the intelligibility of sung words and the beauty of the sound, two fundamentally incompatible goals, is an ongoing and difficult problem confronting opera singers… (Di Carlo, 2007b, p. 564)

This "trade-off" is one with which not only the singer, but also the lyric diction coach must grapple. The interview data collected in this research illustrates the interviewees' awareness of what is linguistically possible within the acoustic parameters determined

by the resonance required of a singer. In many instances, however, this appears to be empirically, rather than theoretically, understood.[73]

Kenneth W. Bozeman's *Practical Vocal Acoustics* (2013) provides a comprehensive and accessible scientific overview of the acoustic phenomena at play in singing, and their pedagogical implications and applications. He identifies two forms of vowel modification: 'Passive vowel modification' and 'Active vowel modification'. Both relate to the interaction between the harmonics of the sung pitch and the formants of the sung vowel.

'Passive vowel modification' is Bozeman's term for "a change in vowel quality accomplished by retaining the vocal tract shape but moving the pitch with its set of harmonics. The change in vowel quality results from the changing relationships and interactions between the stable formants and the moving harmonics". (Bozeman, 2013, pp. 111-112) For the male and lower female voice, the second harmonic of the sung pitch (i.e. an octave above) may cross from below to above F_1 of a vowel. At this point, the timbre is heard to 'close' or 'turn over' (Bozeman, 2013, p. 23). In this instance, the vowel quality changes as a function of acoustics, while the singer in fact maintains the position of the larynx and the shape of the vowel. From a diction perspective, it is necessary to understand that the singer is not modifying the vowel, but that the vowel is being modified as a result of an acoustic phenomenon stemming from the sung pitch. The primary example of this is the 'covering' or 'turning over' of the male voice when negotiating the *passaggio.*

'Active vowel modification' is somewhat self-explanatory. Bozeman writes that it is "historically understood to refer to a change in the vowel quality accomplished by moving the vowel formants from their normal speech locations by means of changes in the shape of the vocal tract in an attempt to find better (more resonant) formant/harmonic matches" (2013, p. 115). It is particularly necessary for higher voices.

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[73] Many singing teachers now employ software in the voice studio that provides sophisticated feedback and concrete evidence of what is occurring vocally. None of the interviewees reported utilizing such technology in their teaching, nor is it referred to in lyric diction literature for the educational context, and thus it has been excluded from this overview. Its value in the context of lyric diction pedagogy warrants investigation.

Higher voices are often required to sing pitches whose fundamental frequency is above the F_1 of the sung vowel. This poses a problem for resonance, as F_1 cannot resonate in the vocal tract if it is below the fundamental. There is simply no harmonic present in order to resonate it. When this occurs, the singer must actively modify, opening the vowel in order to maintain the resonance by tuning F_1 up to the sung pitch. This reduces the differences between the vowels, however, and thus intelligibility. Where the fundamental frequency is much higher than F_1, the only vowel *without* poor intelligibility is /ɑ/ and it is for this reason that all vowels in the upper register are, after a certain pitch, perceived as /ɑ/ (Di Carlo, 2007a, p. 445). Higher voices are, therefore, less intelligible than lower voices due to acoustic necessity. In her article, ‘Effect of Multifactorial Constraints on Intelligibility of Opera Singing (I)’, Scotto di Carlo provides the following diagram of “intelligibility zones” for each voice type:

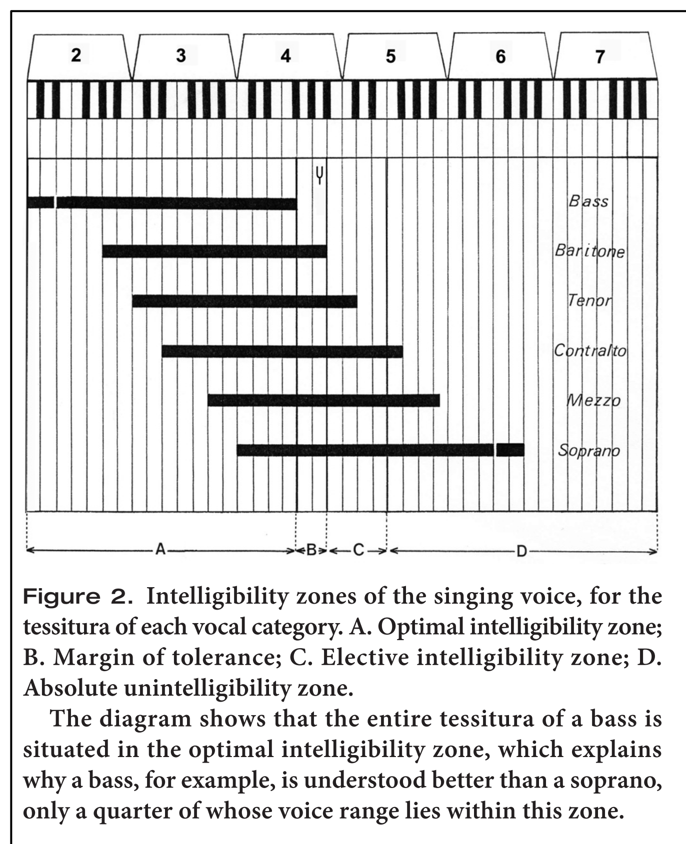

Figure 2. **Intelligibility zones of the singing voice, for the tessitura of each vocal category. A. Optimal intelligibility zone; B. Margin of tolerance; C. Elective intelligibility zone; D. Absolute unintelligibility zone.**

The diagram shows that the entire tessitura of a bass is situated in the optimal intelligibility zone, which explains why a bass, for example, is understood better than a soprano, only a quarter of whose voice range lies within this zone.

Figure 2.2. Intelligibility zones of the singing voice according to Di Carlo (2007a, p. 444)

Though it indicates a dire scenario for any soprano, the representation in Figure 2.2 is far from absolute. The level of vowel clarity a soprano can achieve varies between voice types and individuals; in no two people is the position of vowel production identical, due to the difference in the shape of the palate, the size and shape of the tongue, and its flexibility (Gregg, 2002, p. 434). And, as Bozeman writes: "…with sufficient textual and consonantal context, plus a continued clear conception of the intended vowel, some vowel differentiation and perceived intelligibility is possible surprisingly high in the range" (2013, p. 33). Skilled use of lyric diction facilitates exactly this.[74]

The acoustic phenomena described here may seem far removed from the interpretation and rendering of sung text. The techniques required to produce them are ideally integrated into a singer's technique, becoming habituated and unselfconscious. A singer will no more focus on vocal acoustics while singing than a violinist will consider the physics of standing waves as he or she plays, yet the principles described above are constantly at work in a well-functioning singing voice, and effective lyric diction relies on their presence.

Lyric diction, however expressive, will not be heard if the singing voice does not have the necessary resonance. In order to be effective, therefore, lyric diction must be taught in a way that facilitates the necessary acoustic phenomena and the articulations that produce them. This requires an understanding of how the acoustics of singing differ from those of speech. When these aspects are taken into consideration, lyric diction has the capacity not only to support, but even to enhance the singing voice.

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[74] A study published in *Cognition* entitled 'Processing interactions between phonology and melody: Vowels sing but consonants speak' (Kolinsky, Lidji, Peretz, Besson, & Morais, 2009) suggests that vowels and consonants may be processed by two distinct neurological processing systems. The study indicates that consonants play a more prominent role than vowels in making lexical distinctions. It also cites studies by Bonatti and Mehler that show "consonants are much more suitable than vowels to parse streams into words, using statistical dependencies, with "consonant words" significantly preferred over "vowel words"" (Kolinsky et al., 2009, p. 17). Such research indicates the complex array of factors that play a role in determining intelligibility. Psycholinguistic conditioning also plays a role in text intelligibility, though only in instances where the listener is a competent speaker of the sung language (Di Carlo, 2007b, p. 563).

2.2. Selected aspects of singing technique related to lyric diction

Singing technique is a subject about which opinions are both many and varied.[75] Since the late twentieth century there has been somewhat of a revolution in singing pedagogy due to research in voice physiology and acoustics (Harrison & O'Bryan, 2014, p. 4). The content of the preceding section provides a glimpse into this. Pedagogues vary in their enthusiasm for the results of new research, and the degree to which its many facets are integrated into current pedagogy varies markedly. In an article outlining the value of science and research to singing pedagogy, singing teacher and editor of *Journal of Singing*, Scott McCoy, writes:

> Physiology, resonance, and articulation also are linked inextricably. I'm amazed to discover singing teachers whose pedagogy in this regard is based on belief, not fact, in spite of evidence to the contrary. (McCoy, 2012, p. 529)

Belief-based approaches to musical pedagogy are not confined to singing teachers, however in singing they are compounded by the fact that most of the vocal instrument is not visible and that the kinaesthetic feedback singers receive is often inaccurate. This can lead singers and pedagogues to misconstrue the processes that occur.[76] Yet, taking an analytical approach to the intersection of technique and lyric diction is nothing new. In *A Complete Treatise on the Art of Singing* (1840-1847, revised 1872), ground-breaking singing pedagogue Manuel Garcia, wrote (in French):

> When the singer has not carefully (*avec attention*) [sic] analyzed the mechanism which produces the vowels and consonants, his articulation lacks ease and energy, he does not know the secret of keeping in the voice the development and equality which he would obtain in simple vocalization, and he cannot use to his taste the proper timbre for the passion *(emotion)* [sic] which he would express. (Garcia, 1872, p. 2)

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[75] It is not the intention of the present author to take any particular position or to advocate for a particular approach to vocal pedagogy. For a vocal coach or lyric diction teacher/coach, it is essential to be able to work effectively in the context of contrasting approaches, opinions, and beliefs. However, for the purposes of this research it is important to outline some facets of singing technique that relate directly to lyric diction.

[76] This is not problematic for the individual singer whose technique is working well, but is limiting for the pedagogue who must build a student's technique or solve their technical problems while unable to see most of the student's instrument, or to feel exactly how they use their own.

Garcia's pioneering voice research was the starting point for many of today's advancements, and the "development and equality" of the voice he describes refers to the ideals of the Italian *bel canto* ('beautiful singing') style (Grout & Palisca, 1996, p. 807). However, as McCoy writes, "science… cannot quantify musicality, expressivity, or vocal beauty… Science can help us build the instrument but artistry still is required to play it" (McCoy, 2012, p. 530). This is an important point to acknowledge, as lyric diction may sometimes be considered to belong exclusively to the realm of artistry. Yet, high-level artistry depends upon well-developed technique, and there are many technical aspects of lyric diction, as this chapter demonstrates.

Singing technique can be viewed in terms of a hierarchical sequence: posture, respiration, phonation, resonation, and articulation (Gregg, 2002, p. 432). Within this hierarchy, articulation is reliant upon the optimal functioning of resonance, which in turn relies upon the optimal functioning of the three lower levels: posture, respiration, and phonation. The following section demonstrates that lyric diction is primarily concerned with articulation and resonation, but that the line between lyric diction and singing technique is not easily drawn.

In *The Functional Unity of the Singing Voice* (1994), Barbara Doscher argues that good diction is dependent upon the attainment of a certain degree of technical proficiency, writing: "The functional unity of proper breathing, an efficiently operating vibrator (vocal folds), and a well-tuned resonating tract are the prerequisites for the fine art of intelligible diction" (p. 162). Chapter 4 of this thesis shows that many of the interviewees feel the dependence works both ways. They agree that good diction is dependent upon good technique, but also argue that good technique is dependent upon good diction. This perspective is supported by eminent voice pedagogue Richard Miller, who goes so far as to assert that diction does not exist as a separate entity to tone (2011, p. 27). Janice Chapman, a voice pedagogue of similar renown, agrees. From the perspective of the voice teacher, she writes:

> Singing pedagogues have always considered the articulatory system to be important, but usually have considered it only in terms of clear text. Through multidisciplinary interaction, we now know that the articulators can impinge directly on vocal function and tonal quality. (2006, p. 134)

Chapman's statement highlights the importance of lyric diction beyond the intelligibility of text. The influence of the articulators upon vocal function and tonal quality render lyric diction and singing technique interdependent. It is therefore important to understand how that interdependence functions.

This section discusses selected aspects of singing technique with particular reference to the temporal difference between singing and speaking, its effect on articulation, and the role of the tongue and jaw. It deals first, however, with respiration.

Respiration comes before phonation, resonation, and articulation in the aforementioned hierarchy of vocal development and is generally not considered part of lyric diction. Alternatively described as 'breath management' (which includes the commonly discussed concept of 'support'), it is integral to singing technique, yet remains one of the aspects to which pedagogical approaches and attitudes amongst singers vary widely. Although it features in the data presented in Chapter 4, it is largely beyond the scope of this research.[77] However, given the complex and integrated nature of singing, in practice it is impossible to separate diction from breath management. Richard Miller writes:

> Much impurity of vowels, blurring and smearing of phonemes into indiscriminate transition sounds, early anticipation of consonants or heavy leaning on them, exaggerated accentuation that attempts to mask a technique that does not allow easy articulation – all attest to an inability to maintain a coordinated and consistent flow of breath. The relationship between diction and breath management is such an intimate one that only pedagogical scrutiny demands that they be separately considered. (2011, p. 19)

Adequate breath management is essential in order to produce the acoustic phenomena described in the previous section. It is also required in order to sing consonants that are proportional in intensity and resonance to the resonance of the vowels.[78] Thus, the lyric diction coach may find that their work is limited in its effect when a singer has

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[77] Chapter 4 reveals that some of the interviewees encompass breath in their work while others do not.

[78] The demands may vary between languages. For example, English lyric diction coach Kathryn LaBouff said in her interview that she finds "it takes one to three years for Korean singers to be able to produce consonants strong and aspirated enough to match their vowels and sound English".

difficulty with this underlying aspect. The following discussion of articulatory factors therefore assumes that breath support and phonation are functioning well.

One of the greatest differences between singing and speaking is temporal: the relative lengths of sung vowels and consonants differ significantly from when spoken. In singing, the syllables often have far greater duration than their spoken counterparts. This requires the singer to maintain an articulatory position for much longer than they would in speech. Were the singer simply to maintain the spoken temporal ratio, the result would sound highly unnatural. (This would be comparable to a recording of speech played at half speed.) The vowel is consequently elongated, dramatically increasing the ratio of vowel to consonant. Indeed, Miller describes vocalization as "91riphthongs91" (2011, p. 20). The singer is also often required to maintain one vowel of a diphthong or 91riphthongs for a much greater percentage of the syllable than would occur in speech. The relative proportions differ between languages and depend on the duration of the syllable. For example, in a relatively short musical setting of a syllable, the second vowel of a diphthong is likely to take a greater proportion than that of a syllable with a longer duration.

Avoidance of anticipatory movements is another aspect of singing technique and articulation determined by the elongation of vowels and the need to maintain vowel integrity and resonance. During speech, our articulators are in constant motion and often moving in anticipation of the next phoneme, rather than moving from one fixed position to another (McGregor, 2009, p. 29). This is efficient and does not impede intelligibility. In singing, however, anticipation of the next phoneme (often a consonant) by the movement of an articulator often distorts the vowel, even to the extent of creating an improper diphthong. For example, if the tongue is in the /a/ position and gradually moves towards an /l/, the formants of the /a/ will be significantly altered and both its clarity and resonance will be affected. Many sung consonants must, therefore, be articulated more quickly and crisply than in speech (Miller, 2011, p. 22).

Articulatory habits from speech are very often counterproductive when sung. While these habits may produce speech sounds that are correct, their inefficiencies can have an impact on vocal quality and tone (Chapman, 2006, p. 117). In speech, a tongue

movement is often accompanied by a corresponding movement of the jaw, but in singing this is often undesirable. For singers, the jaw has little role to play in articulation.[79] Where it compensates for tongue movements due to a lack of tongue and jaw independence, the comparative slowness of the jaw reduces the clarity of the consonants and can give the text a "chewed" quality (Chapman, 2006, p. 111). Tongue and jaw independence requires a relaxed, mobile tongue. Indeed, it is difficult to overstate the influence of the tongue in singing as "the shape it assumes and the space it occupies in the resonator tube help to determine the acoustic and phonetic aspects of any phonatory event" (Kantner and West quoted in Miller, 2011, p. 257). Chapman and Morris also note the strength of the tongue, and that it exerts at least 1kg of pressure on the alveolar ridge during each swallow. They write: "This strength cannot be underestimated when it comes to misuse of the tongue and the mayhem such misuse causes to the development of a balanced vocal tract" (2006, p. 105).

The balanced vocal tract described by Chapman and Morris provides optimal space for resonance of the vowel. Doscher writes that this space, along with a relaxed tongue, produces optimum functional efficiency (1994, p. 117), and she advises adjustments be made with a minimum of effort and maximum efficiency to avoid counterproductive tensions (1994, p. 125). It is therefore clear that the tongue is pivotal to both resonance and articulation; tension in the tongue and the tongue root affects both the mobility of the tongue and the quality of the sound.

Significantly more research has been conducted into the vocal acoustics and physiology of vowel production than into consonant production. This is understandable when one considers Miller's notion of "92riphthongs92" and the dominant role that vowels play singing. However, consonants are pivotal to the sung line; not only are they integral to intelligibility, they are also integral to singing technique. Angelika Nair argues that great singers produce consonants with a resonance that rivals the vowels, and lengthen the consonants to maintain diction parity with those vowels (Nair, 2016). However, this is in direct contradiction of Di

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[79] This is not to imply that the jaw should be in a fixed position. Recent research into the use of the jaw can also be found in *The Low Mandible Maneuver and Its Resonential Implications for Elite Singers* (Nair, Nair, & Reishofer, 2015).

Carlo, who finds that sung consonants are, on average, slightly shorter than spoken (Di Carlo, 2007b, p. 559). Di Carlo's research shows that:

> Voiceless consonants and vocalic consonants [consonants whose acoustic structure resembles that of vowels, such as the nasal and liquid consonants] have sung durations that are comparable to their spoken ones. Voiced consonants, whether plosives or fricatives, are shorter in speech than voiceless ones; this tendency is even more marked in singing, where voiced consonants are shortened to the point of becoming about half or a quarter as long as they are in speech, most likely because of physiological constraints of an aerodynamic nature. (2007b, p. 559)

Di Carlo bases her research on sung French while Nair's illustrative example is Italian. It seems likely that the choice of language would influence the outcome of this research and a broader approach seems necessary before conclusions can be drawn. However, where Nair and Di Carlo agree is in that consonants must often be modified from those based on speech habits in order to function optimally when sung. Consonants that are anticipated, or produced with force or tension, disturb the resonance and legato and impede clarity. Consonant articulation emerged a key theme in this study and is clearly a field that warrants further research.[80]

The foregoing discussion provides a brief insight into several aspects of singing technique that have a direct impact on lyric diction. The interdependence of resonance and articulation renders singing technique and lyric diction interdependent, despite the fact that pedagogy may seek to treat them distinctly. The lyric diction coach or teacher's awareness of these aspects, either theoretically or empirically, contributes significantly to their specialisation; where advice regarding lyric diction goes counter to good singing technique, it is doomed to fail. Singers who receive such advice must constantly balance these demands against the proper function of their instrument. This research focuses on lyric diction teachers whose experience and reputation indicate an understanding of this unique vocal context.

[80] See Chapter 4.12.

2.3. Linguistics and lyric diction

As detailed in the Literature Review, the earliest lyric diction textbook in English, *Pronunciation for singers: with especial reference to the English, German, Italian, and French languages* (1877) was written by a phonetician, Alexander John Ellis. It can be no surprise that significant facets of lyric diction pedagogy have been derived from the science of linguistics. Linguistics is defined in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Linguistics* as: “Effectively of any investigation of language and languages if not clearly belonging to some other discipline, such as philosophy, the study of literature, etc.” (Matthews, 2007). It includes the collecting of observations, the forming and testing of hypotheses, and the development of theories to account for and explain the various phenomena of language and language use (McGregor, 2009, p. 3). Linguistics comprises numerous branches, many of which do not relate to lyric diction. However, because a singer must learn the rules for the pronunciation of a language, and how to accurately articulate its phonemes, lyric diction is inextricably linked with the linguistic sciences of phonology and articulatory phonetics.

Phonology and articulatory phonetics provide a framework for the content of lyric diction studies as they are represented in most of the literature: phonology for the rules of pronunciation and phonetics for the articulation. Chapter 4 provides examples of the varied ways in which lyric diction pedagogues may approach these aspects, many of which differ from the literature. The basic principles of phonology and articulatory phonetics that relate to lyric diction provide an insight into these pedagogical approaches, the challenges singers face when studying lyric diction, and the processes that may be employed to overcome them.

To a linguist, the lyric diction studies of undergraduate singers are likely to appear a somewhat peculiar undertaking. The linguist would be forgiven for feeling that elements of their scientific pursuits have been appropriated and compromised. Indeed this is to some extent true. Linguistics, being “the scientific study of language” (Crystal quoted in McGregor, 2009, p. 2), is descriptive rather than prescriptive; it examines language as it is spoken (McGregor, 2009, p. 2). The results of linguistic study, however, provide the foundation for the initial prescriptive aspects of lyric

diction learning. Yet, despite being the two branches of linguistics from which much basic lyric diction pedagogy is derived, the fields of phonology and phonetics would be unfamiliar to many a conservatorium-level or even professional singer.

For the purposes of this project it is useful to define the two branches in juxtaposition to each other. This is a simplification; for many linguists the boundary between the two branches is not so clearly defined (Clark et al., 2007, p. 4).

Phonology is the study of the sound system of language. It is defined by *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Linguistics* (Matthews, 2007) as: "The study of the sound systems of individual languages and of the nature of such systems generally". Within a single language, phonology can be understood as the sound differences that are relevant to that language and how the constituent sounds operate as a system. However, unlike phonetics, the sounds with which it is concerned are symbolic. They are "cognitive abstractions which represent but are not the same as physical sounds" (Odden, 2005, p. 2). Section 2.3.1 provides an introductory overview of phonology as it pertains to lyric diction.

In contrast to phonology, phonetics does not concern itself with the sound structure of a language. Rather, it focuses on the production of sounds, the physical properties of their soundwaves, and their reception and perception by the listener. It comprises three primary branches: articulatory phonetics, acoustic phonetics, and auditory phonetics (McGregor, 2009, p. 29). Acoustic phonetics plays a major role in the vocal acoustics described in Section 2.1, however the primary means employed for describing articulations in lyric diction contexts is substantially derived from articulatory phonetics. Relevant aspects of articulatory phonetics are introduced in Section 2.3.2.

2.3.1. Phonology and lyric diction

The Literature Review showed that books regarding lyric diction generally present lay (as opposed to scholarly) phonological descriptions outlining a language's rules for pronunciation based on orthographic context. The phonological descriptions used in

the lyric diction literature are tailored to the singer. Though the descriptions result from phonological analysis, they are not presented in a form that would be familiar to a linguist. Singers are not required to analyse the phonology of a language or understand the principles at work as a linguist would, but rather to learn and apply the known phonological rules of a language so that they can reliably pronounce it when they encounter it in a musical score. As the preceding sections show, the singer is also required to adapt the articulatory requirements of the spoken language to the sung context.[81]

The following overview of selected phonological concepts provides an insight into the challenges a lyric diction student may encounter, both in learning a new phonology and as a result of the phonology of their native tongue. It encompasses the 'phoneme', 'allophone', 'contrastive' and 'non-contrastive' phones, phonological descriptions, coarticulation, and prosody.

The 'phoneme', which forms the basis of classical phonology, is not a sound in itself but "an abstract idea that usually bundles together a series of articulations into a language-specific unit" (De'Ath, 2006b, p. 550). A single phoneme may be realized in a variety of ways, dependent on its context, but the speaker is often entirely unaware of this because their concept of the phoneme is common to all the realisations. The various realisations of a single phoneme are referred to in linguistics as 'allophones'. This is best illustrated by example.

The final <s> employed in English plurals provides a simple example. In regular speech, the average English speaker would be unconscious of any difference between the final <s> in 'pets' and 'pens'. Yet with heightened awareness, they will notice that the <s> in 'pets' is unvoiced: it is pronounced /s/, during which the vocal cords do not vibrate. By contrast, the <s> in "pens" is voiced: in this case it is pronounced /z/, during which the vocal cords do vibrate. Thus, both /s/ and /z/ are realisations of the phoneme /s/, which the speaker perceives as a single entity. These alternative realisations of a phoneme are termed 'allophones'. When the English speaker analyses

[81] Some languages require more adaptation than others due to their articulatory characteristics. Italian, the language of 'bel canto', for example, requires less adaptation than English.

the pattern amongst plurals, they will deduce that the choice of allophone in the word-final /s/ is dependent on whether the preceding sound is voiced or unvoiced. This is a characteristic of the sound system of English, that is, its phonology.

It would be more difficult for the average English speaker to immediately perceive that the <e> of 'pens' is more nasal than that of 'pets'. This is because vowels in English are often nasalised before nasal consonants (in this case, the /n/), another characteristic of the phonology of English. The difference between two such allophones may be imperceptible and/or insignificant to the native speaker. For a singer, however, the instinctive nasality would be undesirable when singing in languages other than English, and even when singing in English itself. To provide an example of how this might affect foreign language lyric diction, the English speaker's instinctive voicing of a word-final <s> after a voiced consonant is a mispronunciation when applied to German. On the other hand, a German-speaking singing student studying English lyric diction must learn to voice word-final <s> when appropriate, and many other final consonants as well. This demonstrates the way in which instincts based on the phonology of a singer's native language may either interfere vocally or transfer to another language inappropriately, a subject discussed further in Section 2.4. This is key to understanding the lyric diction learning process; the singing student must learn the phonological rules of the new language, while eschewing the phonological habits of his/her own.

Phonology determines the sound differences that are important for a language. Differences between specific sounds may be important within one language, but not within another. If one articulation (or 'phone') can be replaced with another without changing the meaning of the word then they are said to be 'non-contrastive'. A simple example of this in English is /n/ and /n:/. (The colon indicates elongation.) English does not distinguish between the two sounds; words with <nn> such as 'sunny' and 'bonny' are pronounced with /n/, as are those with <n>, such as 'many' and 'tiny'. Though perhaps unidiomatic, an elongation of the /n/ to /n:/ in each of these instances would not change the meaning of the word. The two phones are consequently non-contrastive: English does not use the length of the /n/ to distinguish between words. Italian does, however.

In Italian the two phones are 'contrastive' and the substitution of one for another can create a new word. If the word 'sono' (I am) is pronounced with /n:/, the result is 'sonno' (sleep or slumber). These two words can therefore be described as 'minimal pairs': "two words that are identical except for a single phoneme in a certain position" (McGregor, 2009, p. 344).[82] English speakers, for whom /n/ and /n:/ are non-contrastive, are liable to incorrectly substitute one for the other in Italian unless trained in its phonology. As in the aforementioned instance, incorrect articulation may not merely result in a mispronunciation, but in a complete change in meaning. It is important, therefore, for the singer to have an understanding of all the phonemic sounds of the target language, and how these differ from their own.

Not all languages fit easily within a framework of phonological descriptions for a singer to learn. Of the principal lyric diction languages, Italian is the simplest in its phonology. In most cases, its pronunciation follows logically and consistently from its spelling and Italian can be thus considered a largely phonetic language. Although its phonology is more complicated, German is also largely phonetic (Adams, 2008, p. 145). The complex spelling and unphonetic nature of French present far more of a challenge for the singer, however lyric diction texts still present its phonology via descriptions for the singer to learn. As Néron writes:

> Developing an accurate perception and understanding of any language requires at first a command of the rules that regulate its structure. French is no exception, and the extent of rules that await average English-speaking undergraduate voice majors on their first semester of French diction is there to prove it. (Néron, 2008, p. 595)

Russian also provides challenging phonology combined with the necessity of learning the Cyrillic alphabet. However, it too can be presented by means of phonological descriptions, as Russian lyric diction coaches Vera Danchenko Stern and Kenneth Griffiths described in their interviews for this research.

English, however, defies such presentation due to its highly irregular spelling. Consequently, texts regarding English lyric diction, such as *The Singer's Manual of English Diction* (1953) by Madeleine Marshall and *Singing and Communicating in*

[82] The existence of a 'minimal pair' allows a linguist to determine that the two different phones are distinct phonemes (McGregor, 2009, p. 52).

English by Kathryn LaBouff (2008), assume that the reader is familiar with the phonology of English and focus on those aspects of lyric diction specific to particular dialects and the sung context.

It is important to note that not all elements of pronunciation can be reduced to simple, memorable phonological descriptions based on orthography. Even Italian contains non-phonetic elements, particularly the use of open or closed vowels on stressed <e> and <o>. Singers therefore need to be able to access resources such as dictionaries or apps that provide information regarding such unpredictable phonological aspects.

Additionally, pronunciation is affected by meaning and grammar. To provide examples from three languages: the English word “entrance” will be pronounced differently depending on whether it is a noun or a verb; in French word-final <-ent> will be pronounced differently depending on whether or not it is a third person plural verb ending or not; in Italian a word-final <si> following a vowel will be pronounced differently depending on whether or not it is a reflexive pronoun. Consequently, although lyric diction studies have been defined in contrast to foreign language learning and do not require the singer be capable of spontaneous speech of the relevant language, lyric diction cannot be divorced from meaning with regard to its phonology, let alone communication and expression.

Coarticulation is a significant phonological concept in lyric diction learning. In a lyric diction context, coarticulation refers to the influence of one speech sound upon another, sometimes known as ‘adaptation’ or ‘accommodation’ (Clark et al., 2007, p. 86; Fisher, 1986).[83] This definition, which is in line with Clark, Yallop and Fletcher (2007), contrasts with that of linguists who define it as the simultaneous movement of two different articulators. Within the sphere of lyric diction, one of the most contentious forms of coarticulation is vocalic harmonization in French *style soutenu* (Nedecky, 2011, p. 47).[84] French lyric diction experts disagree on whether it should

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[83] For example, the assimilation of some German consonants in instances such as ‘und du’: /ʊnt ‿du/.

[84] This is the closing in some specific instances of an /ɛ/ to rhyme with an /e/ in the subsequent adjoining syllable, or of an /œ/ or /ə/ to rhyme with an /ø/ in the subsequent adjoining syllable (Adams, 2008, pp. 149- 150).

be employed.[85] Notably, one of the interviewees for this research, Marie-France Lefebvre, said that she had never heard about French vocalic harmonization "as much or as intensely" as she had in the US. David Adams spoke of a conversation he had on this subject with New York-based French lyric diction expert Pierre Valet. Valet explained that the term does not exist in France, and that the distinguished French baritone Pierre Bernac created the concept of vocalic harmonization for lyric diction when he began teaching in the US in order "to make American or English-speaking singers sound a little bit more French, [because] the French slightly anticipate the closed vowel in the next syllable". Opinions regarding French vocal harmonization remain divided, and it is a fascinating example of how the process of codifying a language's phonology for the purposes of lyric diction may end up influencing aspects of the sung tradition.

Vocalic harmonization is also relevant in other languages, for example, the German *Schwa.* Lyric diction author Amanda Johnston describes this as a "vocalic chameleon", explaining that "the color is directly related to the quality of the vowel immediately preceding the schwa…" (Johnston, 2011, p. 160).[86] Such coarticulatory effects not only occur within a word, but also within a phrase.

Consonant assimilation, such as that of German consonant sounds, and the aforementioned French vocal harmonization can be reasonably clearly codified. Other forms of coarticulation, such as the variation of the German schwa, cannot be communicated via a simple phonological description or represented in the IPA employed in lyric diction.[87] The subtle details that are context-dependent and/or beneath the threshold of IPA are one of the many aspects of lyric diction that require

[85] The author has, in interview and master classes, been told both directly and indirectly of the conflict that occurs at one of the world's top opera houses between two French lyric diction coaches who disagree entirely on whether or not to employ vocalic harmonization, and of the confusion that occasionally results.
[86] Paulo Zedda illustrates this in his article 'Linguistic variants and their effects on the singing voice', published in *Australian Voice* (1998). His analysis of Lieder sung by Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau finds that the colour of the vowel in the article "der" varies slightly according to the phonetic context, appearing "to be because the article prepares a kind of phonetic space for the following vowel" (p. 66). However, in this instance it is impossible to determine whether this coarticulatory effect is due to the phonology of spoken German, or as a result of adaptation to the sung context.
[87] See Section 2.3.2.

the input of a teacher or coach, both in the early stages of lyric diction learning and also at the professional level.

Phonology also encompasses ‘prosodies’ or ‘suprasegmentals’: properties such as pitch, stress, loudness, rhythm, and tempo, that are spread over stretches of speech (Clark et al., 2007, p. 326; McGregor, 2009, p. 43). Though the term ‘prosody’ has no single definition (Clark et al., 2007, p. 326), it is clear from the description above that many of these properties will be defined by the musical setting. Yet, prosody is integral to idiomatic rendering of a language and, consequently, to good lyric diction. The literature, however, is far from consistent in how it describes it, if it does so at all. Ellis, for example, wrote:

> …the *length of the syllable*… is not important to the singer, because the time in which he is to pronounce each syllable is strictly assigned by the notes before him, from which he in general is not allowed to deviate in the least degree. (1877, p. 103)

One hundred years later, Moriarty took a similar approach, writing: “Throughout this book, no indication will be given for vowel quantity, because vowel length (long and short), in singing is dependent on the length of the musical note” (1975, p. 27). This is clearly an oversimplification. Nowhere is prosody more important, and incorrect prosody more conspicuous, than in *recitativo secco*. The rhythmic license essential to performance of *recitativo secco* requires idiomatic word stress, which often determines and is indicated by vowel length. Yet even where rhythmic values are notated, the singer may not entirely abdicate responsibility for relative vowel length. In contrast to Ellis and Moriarty, Paton writes that the singer may not ignore vowel length in singing, nor simply sing every syllable for the notated rhythmic length because “vowel length often determines meaning (is phonemic)…[and] musical notation is only approximate…” (Paton, 1999, p. 29).

In many languages there is an integral relationship between vowel length and lexical stress. It is therefore essential for a singer to have an understanding of the sung language’s lexical stress. A stressed syllable is one that is “perceived as prominent due to greater length, loudness and/or higher pitch than other syllables in the word” (McGregor, 2009, p. 352). This feature differs between languages, as exemplified by

the difference between the intensity-based stress in German and English and the duration-based tonic stress in French, which is also applied differently to isolated words than to breath groups or phrases. While a rhythmic pulse is inherent in many compositions, a singer must often reconcile this with the language's lexical stress. For example, correct rendering of the French tonic stress in a phrase context may require the singer to avoid metrical emphasis that seems inherent in music setting, e.g. the emphasis of a downbeat.[88] Moreover, a pitch element of the composition, for example, a high note on an unaccented syllable, may lead to an unnatural lexical stress. The singer may therefore need to counter the natural musical emphasis in order for the language to be comprehensible. In *Singing and Communicating in English* (2008), English lyric diction coach Kathryn LaBouff asserts that "correct application of the natural stress and inflection patterns of the English language" is even more important than exact vowels and correct pronunciation (p. 17) and advocates maintaining the strong/weak pattern of an English phrase even when a musical setting disrupts the natural speech rhythm (p. 20).

The approach to phonology employed in the lyric diction context would likely appear highly simplistic and decades out of date to the twenty-first century linguist (De'Ath, 2013b, p. 59). Since the 1960s, phonology has developed and diversified with the employment of generative and nonlinear approaches. No major elements of these non-classical approaches seem to have entered realm of lyric diction, and thus will not be explored here. Even De'Ath, who advocates passionately for lyric diction coaches and singing teachers to expand their phonological expertise, writes:

> No convincing argument has yet been made that generative and nonlinear approaches have much to offer the musician that the traditional approach cannot – at least, not enough to warrant the steep learning curve required to become versed in their methods and jargon. (De'Ath, 2006b, p. 550)

Very few of the phonological terms above are considered necessary for the singer. Indeed, almost none of the interviewees spoke of using this terminology and many understood the term "prosody" to refer to poetic metre. The aims of phonology and lyric diction are indeed very different; singers only require an efficient and effective

[88] Much may in fact be deduced about the appropriate musical style from the prosodic characteristics of the sung language.

means to develop the skills that allow them to perform text convincingly. Yet, similarly to vocal acoustics, the linguistic phenomena described above are constantly at play in the course of lyric diction learning. An understanding of the underlying principles facilitates a deeper insight into that process, the challenges that may be encountered, and pedagogical solutions. The field of linguistic analysis beyond immediate needs of lyric diction remains, however, the domain of the phonologist.

2.3.2. Articulatory phonetics and lyric diction

Articulatory phonetics is “the study of how speech sounds are produced by the vocal apparatus” (McGregor, 2009, p. 330). This is the branch of phonetics most obviously relevant to the singer studying lyric diction. It is based upon the concept of the ‘phone’, which articulatory phonetics categorises and describes. A phone is the smallest phonetic segment of speech, an articulation considered independently of its role as a phoneme or an allophone (De'Ath, 2006b, p. 551). As has been demonstrated, within a language a single phoneme may be realised by different phones, termed allophones. For example, the aspirated [t^h] in “top”, the unaspirated [t] in “stop” and an unreleased [t˺] in “pot” are all allophones of the phoneme /t/. Of course, the same phoneme may be realised differently in different languages, for example the English use of an aspirated [t^h] and the Italian use of an unaspirated [t] in the syllable /ta/. Furthermore, within a language a single phone may be employed to realise different phonemes.

This overview presents several aspects of articulatory phonetics relevant to lyric diction including the use of IPA, phonetic and phonemic transcription, and categories of articulations, including cardinal vowels. Lyric diction pedagogues have adopted and adapted several aspects of articulatory phonetics. In many instances, singers and coaches whose knowledge is based on the lyric diction literature may be unaware of the way in which linguists employ these aspects.

One of the most significant aspects of articulatory phonetics that has been adopted for use in the field of lyric diction is the International Phonetic Alphabet (henceforth IPA). IPA reflects a systematic approach to the classification of speech sounds. Use of

IPA is now widespread in lyric diction literature,[89] though not in lyric diction pedagogy as a whole.[90] As with phonological descriptions, only certain aspects of IPA have been adopted for use in the context of lyric diction. A brief historical overview provides an insight into how this has developed.

In 1877, prior to the development of IPA, Alexander J. Ellis devised his own system of transcription, 'Glossic', to represent the four languages described in *Pronunciation for Singers*. An inventive and systematic nomenclature that combined the English alphabet with diacritics, Ellis had developed it for the transcription of English dialects. Other such alphabets existed at the time. For example, Alexander Melville Bell had published a system of symbols called 'Visible Speech' in 1867 which, he explained, "constitute a universal alphabet, because by means of them the sounds of any language are expressed with such directiveness that they can be reproduced from the writing by any expert in the system" (Bell, 1890, p. 25). Ellis acknowledged an indebtedness to Bell in the creation of Glossic (Ellis, 1877, p. 25).

'Visible Speech', 'Glossic' and other such systems were rendered largely obsolete by IPA, which was developed by the International Phonetic Association.[91] [92] The Association was established in France in 1886 and initially comprised a small group of language teachers seeking to develop a phonetic notation for use in schools in order to help children acquire accurate foreign language pronunciation.[93] The rapid expansion of the Association and the alterations made to the alphabet in the late nineteenth century led to the creation of a single framework of symbols that is "extensive and flexible enough to accommodate the sounds of any language" (McGregor, 2009, p. 30).

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[89] It is not ubiquitous. For example, an Amazon review of *Singing in Russian: a guide to language and performance* (2012) by Emily Olin laments that it does not employ IPA. (The author has not sighted the text.)
[90] See Chapter 4.8.
[91] However Visible Speech existed alongside IPA during the early period of the International Phonetic Association's existence and was later modified and renamed the 'Organic Alphabet' by Harry Sweet (The International Phonetic Association, 1999, p. 197).
[92] The first form of the Association's alphabet was in fact a modification of the '1847 Alphabet' created by Isaac Pitman and Alexander J. Ellis (The International Phonetic Association, 1999, p. 195).
[93] Interestingly, the International Phonetic Association grew from *L'Association Phonétique des Professeurs d'Anglais* (The International Phonetic Association, 1999, p. 194) which hints at the difficulties that have been caused for centuries by the irregular phonology of English.

Musicians were somewhat slow to employ IPA; Adèle Laeis Baldwin's *Laeis-Baldwin System of Practical Phonetics for Singers and Speakers* (NY, Phonetic Publishing Co., 1923) and May Laird-Brown's *Singers' French* (NY, Dutton, 1926) were the first lyric diction textbooks to employ IPA more or less in its current form (De'Ath, 2001, pp. 57- 58). However, even in the 1970s and 80s alternatives were still being proposed, particularly for choral singing (Diercks, 1974; Maggs, 1981).

In his 1965 publication, *The Art of Accompanying and Coaching,* Kurt Adler (vocal coach, chorus master, and assistant conductor at the Metropolitan Opera in New York) wrote:

> The International Phonetic Alphabet… may be too complicated for every singer to learn… It is a necessity for accompanists and coaches who want to master the intricacies of phonetics and diction for singers… [but] it will then be up to the individual accompanist or coach to judge the intelligence of his singers and use any method of making the sound clear to them. (1965, p. 43)

Notwithstanding Adler's somewhat patronizing comment regarding their intelligence, the chapter entitled 'Phonetics and Diction in Singing' proved so popular that it was later republished as a stand-alone volume for singers (Adler, 1967). Adler's attitude exemplifies the pragmatic use of articulatory phonetics in lyric diction.

Aspects of the linguistic sciences are presented inconsistently throughout the lyric diction literature. For example, use of IPA is not consistent between authors and two different texts may employ different symbols for the same sound.[94] This does not present a problem provided that the meaning of each symbol is clearly presented and it is consistently employed. In all instances, the IPA used in lyric diction is far simpler than that of the phoneticist. The diacritical marks that a phoneticist would use to provide additional articulatory detail are very rarely used, even when they highlight a distinction that the singer is required to make. De'Ath writes:

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[94] Minor discrepancies in IPA usage also occur between dictionaries, for example, so this is not confined to the lyric diction literature.

> … The introductory literature on lyric diction wisely opted for simplicity in nomenclature. There are, however, certain allophonic distinctions that are crucial for singing, which have not always been thoroughly presented in texts. (De'Ath, 2001, p. 59)

This reflects the conflation of ‘phonemic’ and ‘phonetic’ transcriptions in lyric diction, about which De’Ath writes extensively in ‘Phonetic transcription- what it doesn’t tell us’ (2013b). In the linguistic context, IPA symbols within square brackets indicate a ‘phonetic’ transcription and are used to indicate ‘narrow’ (very precise) details of articulation. IPA within slashes indicates a ‘phonemic’ or ‘broad’ transcription and provides fewer details of articulation. A symbol within slashes might have a number of possible pronunciations (allophones). (See the example of the English use of /t/ at the beginning of this section.) Lyric diction literature has tended to ignore this distinction, placing a phonemic transcription within brackets. This relies upon the singer’s knowledge of the relevant language’s phonology and places the responsibility for detailed articulatory description with either the accompanying text or the pedagogue. *A Handbook of Diction for Singers* (Adams, 2008) and the *Gateway* series by John Glenn Paton (1999, 2004, 2012) are notable in their acknowledgement of the difference between phonetic and phonemic transcription and their use of the appropriate slashes. Other authors offer caveats, such as Johnston, who writes:

> The International Phonetic Alphabet Association recommends using the simplest possible symbol in transcribing, eg. all possible symbols for l, can be transcribed as [l] in English. It is up to the singer to know which allophone of l is required at a given moment. (2011, p. 3)

Johnston subsequently employs square brackets throughout her work. This is not a problem in itself because a singer is unlikely to be aware of the implications of square brackets. It is, however, essential that a singer is taught the correct allophone for each context, and that the symbol might represent a different articulation when used to transcribe another language. (E.g. /e/ is pronounced differently in German and Italian although the same symbol is used for both languages.) The somewhat superficial manner in which IPA is employed indicates the importance of the lyric diction

pedagogue's role in providing the contextual information that allows the singer to interpret it correctly.[95]

No matter how detailed an IPA transcription may be, its use is predicated on a segmental view of speech. Yet, as previously established, speech is a continuous stream and it may in fact be impossible to specify the exact moment of delineation between two phonemes (The International Phonetic Association, 1999, p. 5). Division into discrete phones is, however, a reasonable notion and a valuable tool for analysis (McGregor, 2009, p. 30). It is, in fact, particularly useful to the study of lyric diction, in which the continuous stream of speech is replaced by a musical setting dictating temporal values often very different to those that occur during speech. As demonstrated in Section 2.2, singing technique requires a far more segmental approach to articulation than speech does. Thus, while the segmental nature of IPA might be perceived as a limitation in the linguistic context, for lyric diction it may be considered an advantage.[96]

Although lyric diction authors and pedagogues are selective in their use of IPA, an overview of the articulatory principles upon which it is based provides an insight into the articulatory processes involved. Chapter 4 shows that employment of phonetic terminology varies significantly among lyric diction pedagogues. It is, of course, possible to describe articulations in lay terms, as many interviewees reported doing. However, for the purposes of this research, an overview of how articulatory phonetics categorises articulations highlights the complexity and specificity of the articulatory demands placed on a singer.

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[95] In a rare and perhaps revealing review of a lyric diction text by a phoneticist, M. K. C. MacMahon writes of Berton Coffin's *Phonetic Readings of Songs and Arias (2nd edition)* (1982): "Some of my carpings may suggest that singers have a long way to go before they can be sure of achieving 'correct diction' in foreign languages—the fact that the transcription is in almost all respects phonemic rather than something narrower would tend to bear this out—but when one considers that in this day and age Decca can release a recording of Cesar Franck's *Panis angelicus* with Pavarotti singing the Latin word *res* as [ɾes] and his ' backing ' choir of breathy English trebles singing it as [ɹeɪz], then perhaps one should not set one's phonetic sights too high in the world of singing." MacMahon does however acknowledge the essentially practical focus of the resource: "There can be no doubt, though, that this book in the hands of the right sort of singer will prove immensely useful and might even lead to a more conscious and helpful awareness of how foreign languages are pronounced by native speakers. Phoneticians will have reservations about just a few of its pages" (MacMahon, 2009, p. 111).

[96] See Chapter 4.8 for the interviewees' use of and opinions regarding IPA.

THE INTERNATIONAL PHONETIC ALPHABET (revised to 2018)

CONSONANTS (PULMONIC) © 2018 IPA

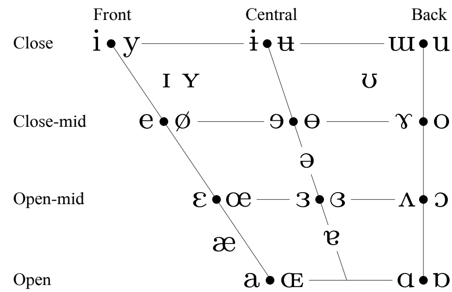
	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Plosive	p b			t d		ʈ ɖ	c ɟ	k ɡ	q ɢ		ʔ
Nasal	m	ɱ		n		ɳ	ɲ	ŋ	ɴ		
Trill	ʙ			r					ʀ		
Tap or Flap		ⱱ		ɾ		ɽ					
Fricative	ɸ β	f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ	ʂ ʐ	ç ʝ	x ɣ	χ ʁ	ħ ʕ	h ɦ
Lateral fricative				ɬ ɮ							
Approximant		ʋ		ɹ		ɻ	j	ɰ			
Lateral approximant				l		ɭ	ʎ	ʟ			

Symbols to the right in a cell are voiced, to the left are voiceless. Shaded areas denote articulations judged impossible.

CONSONANTS (NON-PULMONIC)

Clicks	Voiced implosives	Ejectives
ʘ Bilabial	ɓ Bilabial	ʼ Examples:
ǀ Dental	ɗ Dental/alveolar	pʼ Bilabial
ǃ (Post)alveolar	ʄ Palatal	tʼ Dental/alveolar
ǂ Palatoalveolar	ɠ Velar	kʼ Velar
ǁ Alveolar lateral	ʛ Uvular	sʼ Alveolar fricative

VOWELS



Where symbols appear in pairs, the one to the right represents a rounded vowel.

OTHER SYMBOLS

ʍ Voiceless labial-velar fricative

w Voiced labial-velar approximant

ɥ Voiced labial-palatal approximant

ʜ Voiceless epiglottal fricative

ʢ Voiced epiglottal fricative

ʡ Epiglottal plosive

ɕ ʑ Alveolo-palatal fricatives

ɺ Voiced alveolar lateral flap

ɧ Simultaneous ʃ and x

Affricates and double articulations can be represented by two symbols joined by a tie bar if necessary. t͡s k͡p

DIACRITICS Some diacritics may be placed above a symbol with a descender, e.g. ŋ̊

̥ Voiceless	n̥ d̥	̤ Breathy voiced	b̤ a̤	̪ Dental	t̪ d̪
̬ Voiced	s̬ t̬	̰ Creaky voiced	b̰ a̰	̺ Apical	t̺ d̺
ʰ Aspirated	tʰ dʰ	̼ Linguolabial	t̼ d̼	̻ Laminal	t̻ d̻
̹ More rounded	ɔ̹	ʷ Labialized	tʷ dʷ	̃ Nasalized	ẽ
̜ Less rounded	ɔ̜	ʲ Palatalized	tʲ dʲ	ⁿ Nasal release	dⁿ
̟ Advanced	u̟	ˠ Velarized	tˠ dˠ	ˡ Lateral release	dˡ
̠ Retracted	e̠	ˤ Pharyngealized	tˤ dˤ	̚ No audible release	d̚
̈ Centralized	ë	̴ Velarized or pharyngealized	ɫ		
̽ Mid-centralized	e̽	̝ Raised	e̝ (ɹ̝ = voiced alveolar fricative)		
̩ Syllabic	n̩	̞ Lowered	e̞ (β̞ = voiced bilabial approximant)		
̯ Non-syllabic	e̯	̘ Advanced Tongue Root	e̘		
˞ Rhoticity	ɚ a˞	̙ Retracted Tongue Root	e̙		

SUPRASEGMENTALS

ˈ Primary stress ˌfoʊnəˈtɪʃən

ˌ Secondary stress

ː Long eː

ˑ Half-long eˑ

̆ Extra-short ĕ

| Minor (foot) group

‖ Major (intonation) group

. Syllable break ɹi.ækt

‿ Linking (absence of a break)

TONES AND WORD ACCENTS

LEVEL		CONTOUR	
e̋ or ˥	Extra high	ě or ˩˥	Rising
é ˦	High	ê ˥˩	Falling
ē ˧	Mid	e᷄ ˦˥	High rising
è ˨	Low	e᷅ ˩˨	Low rising
ȅ ˩	Extra low	e᷈ ˧˦˧	Rising-falling
ꜜ	Downstep	↗	Global rise
ꜛ	Upstep	↘	Global fall

Figure 2.3. The International Phonetic Alphabet (The International Phonetic Association, 2018)

Figure 2.3 depicts the entire IPA although, as discussed previously, lyric diction utilises only a selection of these symbols. IPA representations for 'non-pulmonic consonants', 'other symbols', 'tones and word accents', and most 'diacritics' are rarely, if ever, employed in lyric diction. Figure 2.3 shows that IPA divides speech sounds into vowels and consonants. The following sections briefly explain the means of categorisation, highlighting the numerous aspects of articulation over which a singer must have control.

As discussed in Section 2.1, vowels are produced without obstruction of the vocal tract, which acts as a resonator for the vibrating airstream created by the action of the vocal folds. The position and shape of the tongue, lips and soft palate determine the quality of the vowel that is produced. In articulatory phonetics, the three generally recognised tongue heights are 'high', 'mid' and 'low'. Vowels may be characterised by relative tongue position to distinguish between pairs. These are referred to as 'close' and 'open' (Odden, 2005, p. 21). (See 'VOWELS' in Figure 2.3.) Phoneticians also employ 'tense' and 'lax' synonymously with 'close' and 'open', but these terms have not been adopted in singing pedagogy, most likely due to the negative associations these terms have in the context of singing technique. The three degrees of the horizontal position of the tongue that are generally recognised are 'front', 'central' and 'back' (Odden, 2005, pp. 21- 22). Front vowels may be referred to as 'bright' and back vowels as 'dark' due to their acoustic properties, terms frequently employed in the lyric diction context. Lips are generally classified as 'rounded' or 'unrounded' (Clark et al., 2007, p. 26). A lowered soft palate allows the air to pass through the nasal cavity and produces a "nasal" vowel. A diphthong is the combination of two vowels within one syllable, and a 109riphthongs the combination of three within a syllable.

Many singers are familiar with the cardinal vowel diagram devised by Daniel Jones, which is shown under the heading 'VOWELS' in Figure 2.3. This was an attempt to create reference points that are placed on a grid denoting the space in which the tongue moves (Clark et al., 2007, p. 24). As pointed out in the Literature Review, the cardinal vowel diagram is often employed in lyric diction without a clear understanding of what it represents (De'Ath, 2001, p. 60). The cardinal vowel system combines, and to some extent confuses, articulatory and auditory properties: while the

reference points are established at the outer limit of tongue movement for the articulation of the vowel, the intermediate vowels are determined by auditory intervals that do not necessarily correspond with the relative positions of the tongue (Clark et al., 2007, pp. 24- 25). Moreover, studies have demonstrated that speakers generally have several ways in which they are able to produce a specific vowel quality (Lindau (1978) cited in Clark et al., 2007, p. 25). Clark, Yallop and Fletcher (2007, p. 25) also make the very significant point that vowel quality is affected by jaw aperture and larynx height, two aspects that are integral to singing technique, often differing considerably from speech. It is therefore clear that representations on a vowel chart will be far from absolute.

In addition to the cardinal vowel diagram, writers of lyric diction textbooks also employ or create language-specific vowel diagrams, such as those below.

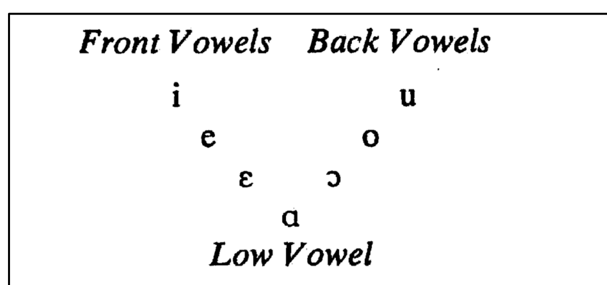


Figure 2.4. Vowel chart from *Singers' Italian* (Colorni, 1970, p. 11)

Colorni's chart of Italian vowels, shown in Figure 2.4, presents vowels according to tongue position. She provides an accompanying description in which she explains that the slanted line between /e/ and /ɑ/ "indicates that the fronting of the tongue and the spreading of the lips diminish gradually when the vowels are spoken from top to bottom" (1970, p. 12) Similarly, the slanted line connecting [u] with [ɑ] "indicates that the backing of the tongue and rounding of the lips diminish progressively when the vowels are spoken from top to bottom" (1970, p. 12). LaBouff employs a similar chart presenting English vowels, as shown in Figure 2.5.

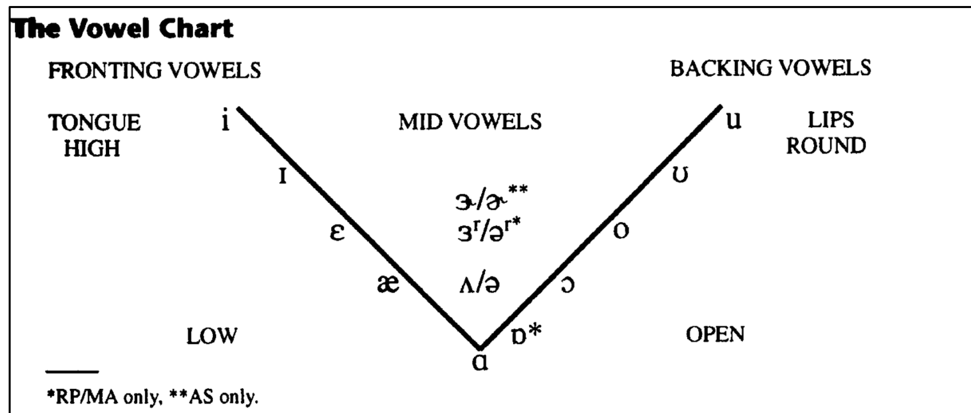


Figure 2.5 Vowel chart from *Singing and Communicating in English* (LaBouff, 2008, p. 35)

LaBouff does not provide an explanation for her chart, and instead accompanies it with basic articulatory instructions for fronting and backing vowels. Without a guide to interpreting the material it presents, LaBouff's chart is somewhat ambiguous. The indication of the tongue being high and low appears to only refer to the fronting vowels, though it also applies to the backing vowels, i.e. the tongue is high for both [i] and [u] and descends according to the chart. However, lip rounding, indicated on the opposite side applies only to backing vowels.

Odom and Schollom present the pure German vowels "arranged schematically" according to the location of the tongue peak (1997, p. 18).

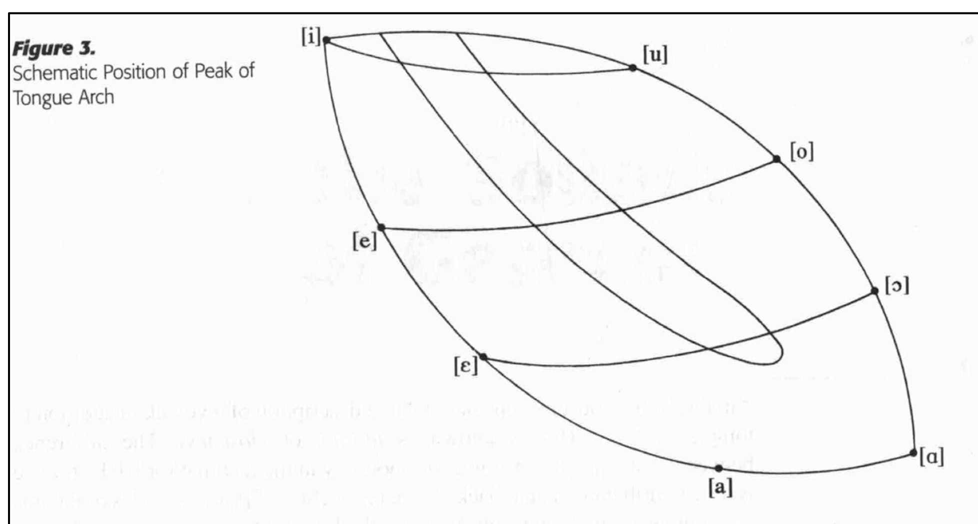


Figure 2.6. Schematic arrangement of tongue peak for German vowels from *German for Singers* (Odom & Schollum, 1997, p. 19)

This schematic representation is problematic not only in its ambiguity, but also in that it does not correspond to the tongue peak locations Odom and Schollum indicate in preceding diagrams. The authors do, however, also direct the reader to cardinal vowel diagrams of English and German vowels contained in an appendix.

Figures 2.4, 2.5, and 2.6 represent vowels along a simplified acoustic continuum and/or make reference to articulatory characteristics. In each instance they are unrepresentative of scale. Such charts demonstrate the difficulty inherent in visually representing vowels' articulatory and/or acoustic properties and are, in practice, very limited in the assistance they provide. Because kinaesthetic feedback can be misleading, it may often be more effective for a singer to correlate a sensation with an acoustic result than to follow instructions or attempt to copy a diagram of an articulatory position. Each of the authors of the texts represented above is (or was) a lyric diction coach for professional singers and conservatorium level students. They are therefore no doubt well aware that visual representations such as the cardinal vowel diagram or diagrams of the articulators provide guidance, but are in essence approximate. The most accurate information is provided by the acoustic result itself, hence the importance of the lyric diction teacher's role.

Consonants are far more easily represented in prose than vowels. Involving an obstruction to the flow of air, consonants are classified in articulatory phonetics by 'place of articulation' and 'manner of articulation' as outlined in the tables below (Clark et al., 2007; McGregor, 2009; Odden, 2005; The International Phonetic Association, 1999). They may be either voiced or unvoiced.

Places of articulation include:

Labial	articulated with the lips, including bilabial (articulated with both lips) and labiodental (articulated with bottom lip in contact with upper teeth)
Dental	with teeth as place of articulation, including interdental (articulated with tip or blade of tongue between upper and lower teeth
Alveolar	articulated by bringing the tip or blade of tongue towards or against alveolar ridge
Palatal	articulated with constriction in region of the palate, including alveo-palatal (articulated with constriction in region just behind alveolar ridge)
Retroflex	articulated with tip of tongue and back of alveolar ridge or palate
Velar	articulated with constriction in region of velum
Uvular	articulated with tongue making contact or approximating to the uvula
Pharyngeal	articulated in the pharynx
Glottal	articulated with a constriction in the glottis

Table 1. Consonant places of articulation

Manners of articulation include:

Stop/plosive	produced when airflow is completely stopped by the articulators for a brief time
Nasal	produced by a rapid short closure, usually between tip of tongue and teeth or alveolar ridge
Tap or Flap	produced by a rapid short closure, usually between tip of tongue and teeth or alveolar ridge
Trill	two or more rapid taps one after another usually with tip of tongue or uvula
Fricative	produced when narrow by incomplete obstruction of vocal tract by articulators results in friction as airstream passes through
Affricate	produced by a stop/plosive followed by slow release accompanied by friction (fricative consonant)
Lateral	produced by air escaping via one of both sides of an obstruction in the oral cavity, eg. tip of tongue against alveolar ridge
Glide/ Semivowel	A vowel-like consonant with minimal obstruction produced when articulators glide quickly from the related vowel to the following sound.

Table 2. Consonant manners of articulation

These consonant articulations are not specific to lyric diction, but represent those employed in speech. However, for both technical and expressive purposes, the singer requires greater awareness and control of these than a speaker.

The manner of release of a stop consonant, for example, is a particularly significant aspect of lyric diction and of singing technique. Voice Onset Time or VOT is the time taken between the release of a stop consonant and the vocal cords beginning to vibrate. It is measured in milliseconds and can be a negative number in cases where the voicing precedes the release of the stop (Clark et al., 2007, p. 37). In cases where the VOT is quite long, as in many English stop consonants, air is released before the voicing commences. This is referred to as aspiration. The same consonant may be aspirated in one language but not in another. It may also be aspirated and unaspirated within the same language depending on its context. (See the aforementioned examples regarding the English and Italian /t/.) A singer is required to have far more control over and variation within their VOT than is necessary in speech. It has significance not only for phonological accuracy, but also for singing technique, as well as being an expressive device. Speech-like aspiration can disrupt the legato line and it may be desirable to reduce or even eliminate aspiration in instances where the spoken language would require it.

Though it is limited in its representation of prosodic aspects, the IPA used in lyric diction does indicate the prosodic element of lexical stress with a symbol prior to the stressed syllable: [ˈ] for the primary stress and [ˌ] for the secondary stress (The International Phonetic Association, 1999, p. 15). (A third symbol for extra strong stress is not employed in lyric diction.) John Glenn Paton (1999, 2004, 2012) and Berton Coffin (1976) choose instead to underline the stressed vowels with a single or double underline. This is in order to direct the singer's attention to the vowel which, Paton explains, should produce a better vocal result (2004, p. 12). Again, this typifies lyric diction specialists' tendency to adapt elements of linguistics to suit their specific needs.

Lyric diction demands an articulatory finesse far beyond that of the average speaker. A speaker is rarely aware of the movements of articulatory organs and his or her impression of speech will almost always be subordinate to meaning (Clark et al.,

2007; McGregor, 2009). Singers, however, must develop an acute awareness of their articulators and the ability to make precise and minute adjustments. The use of articulatory phonetics directs the singer to think phonetically and acoustically, with great attention to articulatory activity. Miller argues that a significant benefit of IPA with regard to singing technique is that it "…requires the singer to view "voice production" in acoustic, not laryngeal, terms… [removing] attention from the laryngeal vibrator itself, over which no direct local control is possible… This directs the singer's attention to the resonation system, over which they do have considerable conscious control" (Miller, 2011, p. 54). IPA facilitates a segmental approach valuable to the sung context and is an aid in clarifying sounds once the singer has built a correct association with each symbol, thus helping the singer to overcome their articulatory habits. However, it does not reflect the refined articulatory continuum along which a singer must be able to differentiate and the prosodic elements necessary for idiomatic and expressive language use. Where its use is not mediated by pedagogical input, there is a danger of IPA becoming "… a language in itself, devoid of any genuine relationship to the genuine article" (Ware, 2001, p. 53). In *A Handbook of Diction for Singers*, lyric diction coach, singing teacher, and interviewee for this research, David Adams, cautions:

> Valuable as IPA is, it is limited in the amount of information it can convey. This is particularly true of inflections over longer phrases. It also must be remembered that the IPA is a means to an end and not an end in itself. It is not uncommon to hear a singer who enunciates all sounds according to the "rules" and yet sounds stilted and unidiomatic. One needs to get past the IPA to the language itself. (2008, pp. xii- xiii)

Singers and lyric diction pedagogues have employed and continue to employ articulatory phonetics in an essentially pragmatic and practical way. Neither phonological theory nor phonetic transcription is the desired outcome here, but rather performance of idiomatic and expressive language. Thus, suggestions for increasing the sophistication of the phonology or phonetics used in lyric diction meet resistance from those who find an overtly intellectual approach at odds with the practical goals. A skilled pedagogue bridges the gap created by the limitations in the way linguistic sciences are used in lyric diction. S/he provides the necessary context, detail, nuance, and feedback specific to the individual singer. Indeed, the nature of the use of the

linguistic sciences in lyric diction reflects the teacher and coach's ongoing role at both the conservatorium and professional level. In order to get "to the language itself", as Adams puts it, the role of the lyric diction pedagogue is pivotal.

2.4. Selected research into foreign language phonology acquisition relating to lyric diction

Chapter 2 has thus far presented an overview of concepts and principles that illuminate the study of lyric diction with reference to both vocal and linguistic sciences. An effort has been made to take a balanced and objective approach that provides a basis for exploring the various facets of lyric diction pedagogy. The phonological and phonetic concepts that have been outlined are longstanding tenets of linguistics, though they may be considered out-dated in the context of much contemporary linguistic research. The areas of singing technique that have been discussed are well documented and, while some aspects of vocal acoustics that have been presented are based on recent investigations, they build on a well-established body of research. Therefore, the foregoing concepts and principles can be considered fundamental elements of lyric diction learning and teaching. They are, however, not always widely acknowledged and are only very rarely presented alongside each other.[97]

Section 2.4 takes quite a different approach. It explores the potential for overlap between foreign language (henceforth L2)[98] phonology acquisition and lyric diction learning. Although there are distinct and significant differences between L2 phonology acquisition and lyric diction learning, there are also similarities, making this an area worthy of investigation. This section highlights those similarities and presents relevant research from the fields of theoretical and applied linguistics. It shows that the intersection between lyric diction pedagogy and L2 pronunciation instruction in particular might well provide fertile ground for research benefiting both fields.

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[97] The author knows of no other instances.

[98] The convention of using the term 'L2' or 'second language' belies the fact that the language learner may already have acquired any number of languages. Thus L2 may in reality be L3, L4, or even L7, for example.

L2 acquisition research is a vast field encompassing the many facets of L2 learning.[99] It draws on philosophy, psychology, sociology, biology, linguistics, and pedagogy (Archibald, 1998, p. 34; Eckman, 2011, p. 91). Because, unlike L2 learning, lyric diction does not require spontaneous language production, it is possible to narrow the focus of this overview to the acquisition and teaching of L2 phonology. This too encompasses an enormous body of research (for an overview see Edwards and Zampini (2008); Chapter 6 of Gass and Mackey (2011)). However, as Derwing and Munro (2015, p. 77) point out, much of this is dedicated to exploring theoretical proposals about the speech acquisition process and not applicable to the pedagogical context. Nonetheless, there are several research areas that are potentially relevant to lyric diction teaching and learning.

Section 2.3.1 dealt with phonology, which is defined by the Concise Oxford Dictionary of Linguistics as: "The study of the sound systems of individual languages and of the nature of such systems generally" (Matthews, 2007). L2 phonology, on the other hand, "attempts to document and explain the pronunciation patterns of non-native learners of a language" (Eckman, 2011, p. 91). Though related, the two areas are very different. The former is focused on codifying the sound system of a language as spoken by native speakers, while the latter explores the nature of L2 teaching, learning, and language production. In publications focusing on L2 pedagogy, rather than theoretical L2 research, the synonymous expression 'L2 pronunciation' is often employed in place of 'L2 phonology' (e.g. Derwing & Munro, 2010, 2015; Levis, 2005; Saito, 2011, in press). As this thesis is written with the non-linguist in mind, the use of the more lay term 'pronunciation' is deemed more appropriate than 'phonology'. Therefore, 'L2 pronunciation' is the term this thesis will also employ.

Linguists distinguish between acquisition and learning, the former being a subconscious process (such as a child learning its native language) and the latter being a conscious process. L2 learners may both acquire and learn L2 pronunciation; the L2 learner may, for example, acquire aspects of pronunciation over time as a result of exposure to the L2, and s/he may also develop aspects of L2 pronunciation due to

[99] L2 acquisition is also known as Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Foreign Language Acquisition (FLA).

learning as the result of instruction. In this thesis, ‘L2 pronunciation acquisition’ will be used as a broad term encompassing both L2 acquisition and learning. Where ‘L2 pronunciation learning’ is employed, it will be used to refer exclusively to learning that takes place as a result of the student’s conscious process, e.g. study or tuition.

This section encompasses several significant areas of research into adult L2 pronunciation acquisition.[100] It first introduces the ‘nativeness’ and ‘intelligibility’ principles, highlighting similarities and differences between L2 pronunciation learning and lyric diction. Two influential theories regarding L2 pronunciation acquisition, Transfer and the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis, are then presented. The concept of ‘markedness’ and the Markedness Differential Hypothesis are also introduced. The relationship between perception and L2 pronunciation is explored with reference to two significant models of L2 acquisition, the Perceptual Assimilation Model and the Speech Learning Model, after which the concept of an ‘interlanguage’ is briefly summarised. The chapter then presents research regarding the variable characteristics of individual learners with reference to aptitude, musicality and motivation. Finally, the chapter explores ‘explicit instruction’ and ‘corrective feedback’ in L2 pronunciation instruction before concluding with a discussion regarding the intersection of L2 pronunciation acquisition and lyric diction learning.

According to Levis (2005, p. 370), L2 pronunciation research and pedagogy have been influenced by two “contradictory” principles: the ‘nativeness principle’ and the ‘intelligibility principle’. The nativeness principle aims to develop L2 speech that is indistinguishable from a native speaker, while the intelligibility principle aims to develop intelligible speech, regardless of how native-like it sounds. Since the 1950s, L2 pronunciation pedagogy and research have made a significant shift between the two.

During the mid twentieth century, the audio-lingual method of language pedagogy was dominant. This was based in behaviourism and focused on oral and aural skills, while grammar and pronunciation were taught implicitly (Archibald, 1998, p. 2;

[100] Due to the vocal maturity required for training in classical singing, it is assumed that lyric diction learners are post-pubescent and that therefore only adult L2 acquisition is relevant.

Derwing & Munro, 2015, p. 21). The L2 learner was required to listen to a native speaker and then imitate them, attempting to sound as native-like as possible. During the 1990s, research emerged showing that very few adult L2 learners ever attain native-like pronunciation (Saito, in press, p. 3), calling into question the pursuit of native-like pronunciation. This is in accordance with the Critical Period Hypothesis (henceforth CPH), which proposes that acquisition of a first language can only take place during biologically determined window of time between infancy and puberty (McGregor, 2009, p. 335). According to CPH, it is impossible to achieve native fluency outside of this window of time. Since the 1990s, both L2 research and pedagogy have subsequently placed an emphasis on intelligibility, acknowledging accent as a normal part of L2 speech (Derwing & Munro, 2015).

Levis characterises the nativeness and intelligibility principles as contradictory (2005, p. 370), however it is not necessary to view them in this way. One does not preclude the other: achieving nativeness in L2 speech is highly likely to confer intelligibility, while a focus on developing intelligibility does not preclude the attainment of nativeness. That being said, it is important to acknowledge that accented L2 speakers may be highly intelligible while native speakers may be unintelligible or at least significantly less comprehensible. In practice, the intelligibility principle encourages L2 pedagogues and learners to distinguish those aspects of pronunciation that are detrimental to intelligibility from those that do not cause communication problems (Levis, 2005, pp. 370-371). The two principles may therefore be seen to differ in their priorities, but not to the extent that they are contradictory.

Lyric diction requires pronunciation to be both intelligible and as native-like as possible. Unlike L2 speech, which has effective communication as its primary aim, lyric diction necessarily prioritises both the communicative and aesthetic aspects of a language. In the sung context, native-like pronunciation of the text is integral to the musical utterance, and arguably as important as the semantic content.[101] However, due to the acoustic and technical challenges outlined in sections 2.1 and 2.2, some of the articulations required in order to achieve the aural impression of both nativeness and intelligibility may not be native-like.

[101] See Chapter 1.

While the aural impression of nativeness is the ultimate goal of lyric diction learning, the compromise inherent in the intelligibility principle is also often required in the context of conservatorium level lyric diction teaching. Conservatorium level lyric diction teachers often need to go through a similar process of prioritisation to that required of L2 pronunciation teachers.[102] The nature of their priorities differs, however. An L2 teacher must prioritise those aspects of pronunciation that have the greatest impact on intelligibility. On the other hand, while bearing intelligibility in mind, the lyric diction teacher must consider those aspects that contribute to a singer sounding least native. For example, a consistently aspirated /t/ or /p/ is unlikely to render L2 Italian speakers unintelligible or even meaningfully reduce their comprehensibility. It will, however, immediately identify them as non-native. Consequently, while quite possibly inconsequential for Italian L2 learners, the correct articulation of an Italian /t/ and /p/ would be a priority for singing students studying Italian lyric diction.

Despite differing priorities, L2 pronunciation acquisition and lyric diction learning have significant common ground. Saito (in press, p. 3) describes four dimensions of learners' sound production in L2 pronunciation:

> 1. Segmental accuracy: Pronouncing new consonant and vowel sounds using L2 forms instead of using their L1 counterparts or … a mixture of L1 and L2 forms
>
> 2. Syllabic accuracy: Processing a range of syllable structures… without deleting any consonant sounds or inserting any epenthetic vowels[103] to consonant clusters
>
> 3. Word stress accuracy: Assigning targetlike word stress via enunciating stressed syllables… longer, louder or/and [with] higher pitch
>
> 4. Intonation accuracy: Demonstrating adequate intonational cues in L2, using rising and falling tones at sentence boundaries

[102] See Chapter 4.

[103] These are known as 'shadow vowels' in lyric diction. While often undesirable in the sung context, they may also be strategically employed to enhance intelligibility in a manner very unlike speech. See LaBouff (2008).

Sung intonation is determined by the melody, but segmental accuracy, syllabic accuracy, and word stress accuracy all fall within the domain of lyric diction. It is therefore clear that research regarding the acquisition and training of these elements in an L2 context may well be relevant to lyric diction learning.

Few controlled experimental studies on pronunciation have been undertaken and much remains to be determined regarding the nature of L2 pronunciation acquisition. However, several important theories and models have been developed since the mid-twentieth century. These have had a significant influence on L2 pronunciation pedagogy and provide valuable information about the cognitive-developmental aspects of L2 pronunciation learning (Derwing & Munro, 2015, p. 24).

Defined by Edwards and Zampini (2008, p. 2) as "the effect of previously learned languages on subsequently learned languages", transfer is in many regards the most important phenomenon regarding L2 pronunciation acquisition. While it is possible for one L2 to exert an influence on another L2, transfer is predominantly viewed in terms of the influence of L1 upon L2.[104] It seems self-evident that L1 affects L2 pronunciation because we can identify the origin of particular accents. That is, we find that L2 speakers often have an accent that makes it possible to identify their L1. Major (2008, p. 83) writes that "even though most L2 phonologists do not necessarily claim or admit that transfer is the focus of their work, transfer is implicated in almost every instance".[105] Applied linguists are perhaps more willing to acknowledge its influence; Derwing and Munro (2015, p. 63) simply state that "it is obvious that many aspects of L2 speech can be attributed to the influence of the L1".

L2 learners are often aware of transfer occurring. This may result in a phenomenon called 'hypercorrection'. Hypercorrection occurs when, in an attempt to avoid L1 transfer, an L2 learner overuses a correction, employing it in contexts to which it does not apply. Examples include the overuse of an initial /h/ in L2 English by native

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[104] There are many possible scenarios for influence from previously acquired languages. Bilingual speakers will have two L1s, for example. Specific scenarios such as this, however, are beyond the scope of this overview.

[105] The most extreme form of transfer occurs in language revival. Zuckermann (2009) demonstrates that successful language revival ought to result in a hybrid language, with the revivalists' L1 impact all over the phonetics and phonology of what Zuckermann calls the emerging 'revival language' (Zuckermann, 2019).

French speakers, and substitution of /w/ for /v/ in L2 English by native German speakers.

In his seminal work, *Languages in Contact* (1953), Weinreich describes various types of sound transfer which may occur, e.g. a learner substitutes the nearest L1 equivalent for an L2 phone (*sound substitution*), a learner uses an L1 allophone that does not occur in the same environment in L2 (*phonological processes*), L1 allophones are different phonemes in L2 (*underdifferentiation*),[106] two separate phonemes of the L1 are allophones in L2 (*overdifferentiation)* (cited in Major, 2008, p. 63). Each of these scenarios is as applicable to lyric diction learning as to L2 pronunciation acquisition.

The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (henceforth CAH), based on the concept of transfer, asserts that a learner's L2 pronunciation errors might be predicted by comparing the phonology of their L1 and L2 (Derwing & Munro, 2015, p. 176). Put very simply, the CAH postulates that the aspects of L2 that are similar to those of L1 would be easy to acquire, and those that are different would be difficult to acquire.[107] Based in behaviourism, the underlying assumptions are that "language is a system of habits and that learning the habits of the L1, such as… the articulation of vowels and consonants, greatly influences the acquisition of L2" (Derwing & Munro, 2015, p. 63). CAH describes errors as "(a) phonemic errors, (b) phonetic errors, (c) allophonic errors, and (d) distributional errors (phonotactics)" (Major, 2008, p. 68).

Empirical evidence points to significant weaknesses in CAH (Edwards & Zampini, 2008, p. 2). It has been found that many learners do not make the predicted errors (Major, 2008, p. 64), that predicted levels of difficulty are not borne out empirically, and that CAH cannot account for the differences between individual learners (Derwing & Munro, 2015, pp. 64- 65). In the 1970s, these limitations, in combination with the emergence of cognitive approaches in linguistics, led to the decline of CAH as a favoured model and framework for research (Edwards & Zampini, 2008, p. 2). Yet, both CAH and transfer continue to be influential ideas in L2 pronunciation

[106] This has been observed to be one of the most difficult aspects of L2 pronunciation to acquire (Major, 2008, p. 77).
[107] Leslie De'Ath's contrastive analysis of English and Korean in *Linguistic Challenges in the Voice Studio* (2006a) resembles this approach.

acquisition research (Derwing & Munro, 2015, p. 63; Edwards & Zampini, 2008, p. 3; Major, 2008, p. 68).

CAH played its greatest role in the field of linguistics in the 1960s (Major, 2008, p. 64) and is no longer the dominant model of L2 pronunciation acquisition. Yet, elements of CAH appear to be very much present in current lyric diction pedagogy. None of the interviewees for this research specifically referred to either transfer or CAH, however many described the process of eliminating 'habits' stemming from students' native languages as one of the greatest challenges in lyric diction teaching and learning.[108] It seems that, whereas L2 studies tend to focus on L1 as the transferring factor, the field of lyric diction is inclined to view transfer in terms of articulatory habit. The development of singing technique relies upon singers acquiring new physical skills, including a high level of articulatory sensitivity, flexibility, and control. Furthermore, unlike L2 learners, singers are not required to formulate spontaneous speech.[109] These factors likely contribute to singers conceptually isolating articulatory habit from the normally associated cognitive and linguistic processes. However, not all aspects of language production can be viewed in terms of physical habit. For example, while segmental aspects of pronunciation are susceptible to muscular habit, studies show that L2 learners often stress words according to the phonological rules of their L1, which cannot be explained by muscular causes (Archibald, 1998, p. 50). Therefore, articulatory habit is clearly not the whole story when considering L1 influence. This notwithstanding, singers (and those who teach them) may be inclined to view language production in terms of the musculature and the habitual movements of the articulators, similarly to a pianist who may view piano technique in terms of the gestural habits of the hands and arms. Given that many professional singers achieve native-like pronunciation in their lyric diction, this approach may have something to offer L2 pronunciation instruction.

Fred R. Eckman reformulated CAH to add another important dimension, 'typological markedness', in the Markedness Differential Hypothesis (henceforth MDH) (Edwards

[108] See Chapter 4.
[109] This is not to imply that singers need not be capable of speaking their text. Chapter 4.10 reveals that many of the interviewees for this research have the students speak their text as an integral part of their lyric diction learning and their repertoire preparation.

& Zampini, 2008, p. 3). 'Markedness' refers to the frequency with which a sound is found in the world's languages: a sound that is uncommon and/or complex is considered to be 'marked'; a sound that is common and/or simple is considered to be 'unmarked' (Archibald, 1998, p. 53). MDH hypothesises that L2 sounds that are different from the L1 and marked will be more difficult to acquire than those that are different and unmarked (Edwards & Zampini, 2008, p. 4). Research studies have found that MDH is largely reliable in predicting learners' difficulty in acquiring L2 sounds. They have also found that the degree of markedness correlates with the degree of difficulty (Eckman, 2011). Some isolated attempts have been made to introduce the notion of markedness to L2 pronunciation instruction (Pickering, 2011, p. 342), and it has been discussed with reference to lyric diction by Leslie De'Ath (e.g. 2016b). From a practical pedagogical perspective, it may be of value to explore whether experienced lyric diction pedagogues find MDH to be borne out amongst their students. If so, MDH might be of use in determining areas of pedagogical focus.

One of CAH's limitations is that it does not consider perception and production separately. There is considerable evidence for the link between L2 perception and production (Derwing & Munro, 2015, p. 66; Kissling, 2014, p. 533; Saito, in press, p. 9), as is indeed the case for L1 speech learning (Kuhl, 2000).[110] The relationship between the two processes is complex, however. Studies show that adults have difficulty in discriminating and identifying L2 speech sounds (Derwing & Munro, 2015, p. 24), but that poor production is not always tied to poor perception (Derwing & Munro, 2015, p. 36). Furthermore, it is possible for L2 learners to perceive, to discriminate, and to identify L2 sounds they cannot accurately produce (Derwing & Munro, 2015, p. 65), while some L2 learners can accurately produce a sound distinction they cannot perceive (Sheldon & Strange, 1982). In the late twentieth century two important models for L2 perception were developed: the Perceptual Assimilation Model (henceforth PAM) and the Speech Learning Model (henceforth SLM).

[110] The nature of the link between perception and production may differ significantly between L1 and L2 learning. For a fascinating insight into infant language learning see Patricia Kuhl's article, 'A new view of language acquisition' (2000).

The Perceptual Assimilation Model (developed by Best, McRoberts, & Sithole, 1988) was created in order to explain the ways in which listeners initially perceive unfamiliar speech sounds from an L2 (Derwing & Munro, 2015, p. 68). It proposes that we hear foreign sounds in terms of phonetic categories derived from our L1; foreign L2 sounds are perceptually assimilated into L1 categories to which they are similar. If L2 sounds are too different to assimilate into any category, they are either found to be uncategorizable or not heard as speech at all (Strange & Shafer, 2008, p. 170). This aligns with research by Werker and Tees (2002) which shows that there is a fundamental change in infants' speech perception at about 10 to 12 months of age, after which they can no longer distinguish sound contrasts not present in the languages spoken around them. As a result, it is hypothesised that adult L2 learners hear new L2 sounds through what Derwing and Munro describe as a "perceptual sieve" determined by their L1 knowledge (2015, p. 24). PAM seeks to explain how that perceptual sieve functions.

The Speech Learning Model devised by James Flege is based on a similar concept to PAM. Unlike PAM, however, SLM encompasses both perception and production, linking perceptual processes to pronunciation difficulties in an attempt to explain why some L2 sounds are more easily acquired than others (Derwing & Munro, 2015, p. 24). SLM proposes that L2 sounds which are very similar to L1 sounds will be more difficult for L2 learners to acquire than L2 sounds which are significantly different (Archibald, 1998, p. 49; Derwing & Munro, 2015, p. 68). Postulating a perceptual sieve similar to that described by PAM,[111] SLM predicts that if an L2 sound is assimilated to an L1 category, the difference between the L2 and L1 sounds will be difficult to perceive and the L2 sound will consequently be mispronounced. On the other hand, SLM predicts that an L2 sound that is very different from the L1 will stimulate the formation of a new phonetic category and consequently be more accurately produced (Strange & Shafer, 2008, p. 172). Essentially, the more different an L2 sound is from the L1, the more easily that difference is noticed and the more easily that sound is acquired. The implication of this is that transfer persists more for similar sounds than dissimilar sounds (Major, 2008, p. 73).

[111] Strange and Shafer describe a 'Selective Perceptual Routine' (2008, p. 169).

Unlike PAM, SLM considers L2 phonetic learning over time. It proposes that, because basic auditory sensory capabilities do not diminish, adults retain the ability to establish new perceptual categories. Therefore, adults' perception of non-native contrasts can and does usually improve with experience (Hardison, 2011, p. 351; Strange & Shafer, 2008, pp. 169- 170).[112] SLM posits that, once learners can detect subtle phonetic differences between L2 and L1 sounds, they can form new perceptual categories (Kissling, 2014, p. 533), and their pronunciation will eventually correspond to perception (Derwing & Munro, 2015, p. 68). Thus, if a new sound is accurately perceived, the production of that sound will become increasingly accurate. It is important to note, however, that L2 learners' perception of non-native contrasts may never be as acute as that of their L1 (Strange & Shafer, 2008, p. 185). There is considerable empirical evidence to support SLM (Major, 2008, p. 72), but its creator, James Flege, notes that perception is not able to explain all L2 pronunciation errors (Pickering, 2011, p. 336).

Chapter 4.11 details the interviewees' responses to the interview question regarding the link between perception and production. This issue was explored by asking whether either a singer's aural perception of a sound or their kinaesthetic perception of the corresponding articulation was more important than the other. Most interviewees were of the opinion that the two aspects are equally important. The dominant theme that emerged was that it is necessary for singers to establish a connection between the correct sound, their kinaesthetic sensation when they produce it, and knowledge or a self-defined understanding of what is occurring. In some instances interviewees' described a singer first learning to accurately produce an articulation based on physical instruction, and then to discriminate the resultant sound through association.

In lyric diction pedagogy, the use of IPA is often integral to circumventing the perceptual sieve described in PAM and SLM. Singing students without knowledge of IPA will frequently be inclined to write a pronunciation on their score in terms of

[112] Kissling notes that, "while people do not vary greatly in their auditory perception abilities, some individuals seem better able to process linguistic input in a bottom-up manner and notice more phonetic detail than others, and these processing differences can help explain why some people detect subtle differences between L1 and L2 sounds more easily than others" (2014, p. 535).

their native language. As a consequence, the German "er" might be notated as an English "air", and the German "fleh'", an English "flay", for example. This is a very concrete example of assigning L2 sounds to the closest L1 category, and essentially guarantees L1-accented production. IPA gives singing students the means to notate pronunciation in a form that is distinct from their native language. Through the formation of reliable perceptual and kinaesthetic associations with IPA symbols, students have a means to minimise the influence of L1 articulatory instincts. (See Chapter 5.6.)

This is similar to the approach advocated by Danish linguist Otto Jespersen, which Derwing and Munro highlight in their book, *Pronunciation Fundamentals: Evidence-based Perspectives for L2 Teaching and Research* (2015). In 1904 Jespersen wrote (in Danish):

> The use of phonetics and phonetical transcription [IPA] in the teaching of modern languages must be considered as one of the most important advances in modern pedagogy, because it ensures… exceedingly large gain in exactness. But these means must be employed immediately from the very beginning… Just as easy as it is to get a good pronunciation in this way, just as difficult is it to root out the bad habits which may become inveterate during a very short period of instruction according to a wrong or antiquated method. (Derwing & Munro, 2015, p. 20; Jespersen, 1904)

Derwing and Munro present this quotation in the context of forgotten linguists/scholars with "ideas well worth considering" (2015, p. 20). However, the approach Jespersen describes in his book, *How To Teach A Foreign Language* (1904), bears many similarities to the approaches numerous lyric diction coaches currently employ in order to minimize L1 influence on students' L2 pronunciation. Derwing and Munro's response to Jespersen's work suggests both that it may be of interest to those teaching lyric diction, and that lyric diction pedagogy may be a source of "ideas well worth considering" for L2 pronunciation teachers.

All the aforementioned models, namely CAH, MDH, PAM and SLM, examine L2 pronunciation patterns in terms of native and target languages. Another construct, 'interlanguage', considers the mental system of the L2 learner. Based on empirical evidence that some L2 utterances can neither be attributed to L1 transfer nor to L2

patterns, it suggests that learners create their own version of an L2: an interlanguage (Eckman, 2011, pp. 94- 95). This raises the question of whether, in addition to transfer errors, a learner's interlanguage might be subject to developmental errors, such as those children make when acquiring their L1 (Archibald, 1998, p. 4). Eckman argues that pedagogical processes need to take into account that L2 pronunciation errors may stem from an interlanguage phonological system (interphonology) internalized by the learner (2011, p. 102). One might question whether this concept could be applicable to lyric diction because lyric diction does not encompass aspects of L2 learning beyond pronunciation. However, it is conceivable that a lyric diction student might form an interphonology independent of these other L2 aspects. Further speculation in this regard requires reference to theories and concepts beyond the scope of this overview, but could be undertaken in another research context.

This overview has provided an introduction to selected theories regarding L2 pronunciation acquisition and their potential relevance to lyric diction learning. The selection necessarily omits highly complex and abstract theories that appear to have less applicability to lyric diction learning than those presented, such as Universal Grammar and Optimality Theory. Pedagogically-focused applied linguists note the divide between many such facets of theoretical linguistics and practical L2 pedagogy. Like lyric diction coach and author De'Ath (2006b, p. 550), who finds generative linguistics to have less relevance to lyric diction than classical phonology, Derwing and Munro write that "the emphasis on generative phonology in the theoretical linguistics of the latter part of the 20th century had virtually no lasting impact on pronunciation teaching methods or materials" (2015, p. 22).[113]

Having explored the above models and hypotheses, it is important to consider insights offered by L2 pronunciation research into learner variables. The enormous variability in learners' L2 pronunciation outcomes has resulted in research regarding cognitive and psychological, as well as socio-linguistic and socio-cultural, factors (Edwards & Zampini, 2008; Hardison, 2011). These are vast research areas, much of which has little relevance to lyric diction learning. It is, however, valuable to explore the learner

[113] Among the reasons for this is no doubt the fact that generative linguistics is almost entirely focused upon native language acquisition.

variables of aptitude, musicality and motivation.[114] As Derwing and Munro (2015, p. 46) note, pronunciation is one of the aspects of L2 learning that appears to be particularly influenced by aptitude. This has naturally led to a widespread view that some L2 speakers simply have a talent for pronunciation itself, a belief somewhat supported by the very limited research undertaken into pronunciation aptitude (Derwing & Munro, 2015, p. 46).[115]

Overall aptitude for L2 pronunciation may be due to one or more cognitive or psychological factors. This chapter details research regarding two factors: musicality and motivation. In the following discussions of data pertaining to musicality and motivation, it is important to note that much of the research undertaken into L2 pronunciation is only able to report correlation. Evidence of a correlation is not proof of causation. For example, one particular study by Purcell and Suter (1980) found a moderate correlation between aptitude for oral mimicry and L2 pronunciation achievement. While this is intuitively appealing, there is currently no definitive evidence that an aptitude for oral mimicry aids L2 pronunciation achievement. In the field of L2 pronunciation acquisition, much more empirical research remains to be done.

Musicality is a particularly interesting variable to be explored when considering an overlap between L2 pronunciation acquisition and lyric diction learning. The role of musical ability has received quite some attention from L2 pronunciation researchers and results indicate it may indeed have an effect on L2 pronunciation acquisition. A study of Finnish adults found that those with greater musical aptitude had better English pronunciation than those with lesser musical aptitude (Derwing & Munro, 2015, p. 46), while a study of Japanese adult learners of English showed that those with musical ability had greater receptive and productive L2 phonological abilities (Li & DeKeyser, 2017, p. 618). Research comparing musicians with non-musicians has also provided considerable evidence to show that musicians are more accurate in the

[114] Biological factors and variables such as Length Of Residence (in the L2 country) will be omitted for obvious reasons.
[115] Kuhl suggests that talented adult learners may perceive new speech sounds in the same manner as infants, thus circumventing the 'perceptual sieve' created by their L1 (Derwing & Munro, 2015, p. 66).

identification and/or discrimination of unfamiliar Mandarin tones (Li & DeKeyser, 2017, p. 599).

These results raise questions regarding the definition of musicality, an issue that likely preoccupies musicians more frequently than it does linguists. Certainly, each of these studies defines musicality with different parameters. For example, the 2017 study by Li and DeKeyser[116] comprised non-musicians, 32 of whom had had no formal training and 6 of whom had taken private lessons on an instrument for less than 2 years (Li & DeKeyser, 2017, p. 602). The study measured the participants' ability in pitch perception and found a positive relationship between this and both their perception and production of unfamiliar L2 Mandarin tones (Li & DeKeyser, 2017, p. 618). Whether this relationship would extend to other facets of pronunciation, or whether, for example, rhythmic facility would confer a different relationship, are potential areas for exploration. With reference to lyric diction, it would be particularly interesting to explore the interaction between musical aptitude and the perception and production of vowels given that singers must produce and differentiate between diverse vowel contrasts encompassing several non-native languages, and that they are often required to colour those vowels within an appropriate spectrum. It is important to acknowledge that, though the baseline would be significantly higher than the general populace, musical ability does vary noticeably amongst musicians in general. Thus, within a cohort of singers, it would be possible to explore the interaction of this variable with lyric diction outcomes. Indeed, the multidimensional nature of both musical aptitude and musical training provides enormous scope for research into their influence on L2 learning.

Though not pertaining to learner musicality, a passing comment in *Phonology and Second Language Acquisition* (Edwards & Zampini, 2008, p. 44) assumes striking significance when considering the blurred distinction between musical timbre and linguistic information inherent in lyric diction.

[116] Published as: Li, M. & DeKeyser R. (2017) Perception practice, production practice, and musical ability in L2 Mandarin tone-word learning. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 39(4), 593-620.

> An early study by Miyawaki, Strange, Verbrugge, Liberman, Jenkins, and Fujimura (1975) investigated whether adult speakers of Japanese could distinguish between synthetically generated pairs of English /r/ and /l/ which varied acoustically in their proximity to the English /r-l/ boundary, and determined that they could not. Native speakers of English, on the other hand, had a strictly defined boundary between the two and were able to correctly identify members of the pair no matter how close to the boundary they were produced. **Interestingly, however, the same comparisons presented as music contrasts, rather than language, evoked highly accurate judgments by the Japanese subjects, indicating that these acoustic contrasts are accessible when divorced from language** [emphasis added]**.**

This result suggests significant research possibilities relevant to both lyric diction pedagogy and L2 pronunciation pedagogy. It would be interesting to examine (if possible) the degree to which individual singers perceive text as either language or music and to ascertain the relationship between this and their lyric diction outcomes. For example, the production of vowels might in some ways be advantaged by musically-weighted perception, but prosodic features such as word stress may suffer in such circumstances and be advantaged by language-weighted perception. Research in this area might also provide data valuable to L2 pronunciation pedagogy.

Motivation is an important factor to consider in the mastery of any skill, and singing students' prioritisation of and commitment to lyric diction emerged as a significant theme during the interviews for this research (see Chapter 4). Motivation is very difficult to measure, however a significant number of studies have sought to explore the influence of motivation on L2 acquisition. Analysis of its role has generally been in terms of global measures of proficiency (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2011, p. 398), however research indicates that the role of motivation in L2 pronunciation acquisition warrants further investigation. Notably, a meta-analysis of empirical studies regarding the influence of attitudinal-motivational variables found motivation to be the strongest predictor of achievement in L2 learning (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2011, pp. 402- 403).

From recent research, two studies regarding motivation seem particularly pertinent to lyric diction learning. Derwing and Munro (2015, p. 45) cite a study by Bogaerts et al. in which the ability of Dutch L2 speakers to pass for native speakers is ascribed to high motivation. Kissling (2014, p. 535) makes reference to a study of Polish learners of English which found that learners were able to attain high pronunciation accuracy

through formal instruction "if they were highly motivated (preferably aesthetically motivated), believed they controlled their own progress, and considered their goal realistic", even if they did not display other measured characteristics that would predict such an outcome. The references to "motivation to pass for a native speaker" and "aesthetic motivation" in these studies indicate a potential link to lyric diction. In Chapter 4.2 of this thesis, many of the interviewees for this research cite singers' motivation to prioritise language as a significant factor in determining their lyric diction outcomes, both at the conservatorium and professional level. Future research that reveals more about the role of motivation in L2 pronunciation learning may therefore be of considerable value. It may be of particular use when determining the most effective ways to frame lyric diction studies in the context of singing students' overall conservatorium education in order to ensure optimal learning outcomes.

Attitudes to L2 pronunciation pedagogy in the field of linguistic research have undergone significant changes since the mid-twentieth century. These changes have been both caused by and reflected in research foci and outcomes. In 1980 an influential study by Purcell and Suter found formal instruction in L2 pronunciation to be ineffective and this view became widespread (Derwing & Munro, 2015, p. 53). The prevailing L2 pedagogical approach at the time, 'Communicative Language Teaching', focused on communication rather than language forms and structure, and assumed that L2 learners would acquire pronunciation skills through exposure. Such factors, in combination with the research foci of applied linguistics in general, meant that pronunciation instruction was considered a "very marginalized topic" until relatively recently (Derwing and Munro cited in Sunara, 2018, p. 9). Purcell and Suter's results have since been refuted by empirical evidence (for more details, see Derwing & Munro, 2015) and since the late 2000s there has been a significant increase in the number of studies and publications relating to L2 pronunciation pedagogy. Many of these have demonstrated that instruction for L2 pronunciation is effective (Saito, 2011, p. 11).[117]

Research is, however, yet to provide conclusive evidence regarding the most effective pedagogical processes for teaching L2 pronunciation. Studies show that formal

[117] It should be noted that the majority of L2 pronunciation research has been undertaken into L2 English learning (Derwing & Munro, 2015; Sunara, 2018).

instruction does aid L2 learners, but that it is more effective for some than others (Kissling, 2014, p. 537). Derwing and Munro (2015, p. 24) argue that PAM and SLM suggest that the importance of perception may have been significantly underestimated in the L2 classroom. This would appear to be supported by the aforementioned research indicating that musicality (however we define it) provides an advantage in L2 pronunciation development. Recent research has shown that differences between individual learners may be "strongly tied" to perceptual acuity (Saito, in press, p. 9) and that learners' capacity to benefit from pronunciation instruction could, in fact, be dependent on their ability to perceive and discriminate the relevant sounds (Kissling, 2014, p. 551). Kissling proposes that teachers should give learners time to "hone their perception" before commencing such instruction (2014, p. 551). This is in striking contrast to pedagogy based on CAH, which comprises drill-based activities to eliminate 'bad' articulatory habits and replace them with 'good' ones in accordance with behaviourist principles (Edwards & Zampini, 2008, p. 2). Interestingly, many of the interviewees for this research spoke of the importance of developing lyric diction students' perception. They gave the need for singing students to "hone their perception" as one of the primary reasons for conducting group classes in addition to individual sessions.

Research studies have indicated that methods of L2 pronunciation instruction need to be tailored to students' aptitude in order to be most effective (Kissling, 2014, p. 537). Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin (cited in Kissling, 2013, p. 736) suggest two pedagogical emphases: an "intuitive-imitative" (i.e. acquisition-based) approach suited to beginners, and an "analytical and explicit" approach which presents detailed linguistic features of the language, best suited to advanced learners. Even these two emphases may be too general to be truly effective. Derwing and Munro advise teachers to "set aside time to assess individual learners to identify shared and idiosyncratic problems and provide appropriate assistance" (2015, p. 72). The pedagogical approaches described by almost all of the interviewees for this research incorporate such a process (see Chapter 4).

The two types of pedagogical input for L2 pronunciation that appear most relevant to lyric diction pedagogy are 'explicit instruction' and 'corrective feedback'. In L2 teaching, explicit instruction may be defined as instruction in which the learners are

explicitly told the target linguistic form they are to learn (Sunara, 2018, p. 3) as opposed to implicit instruction, in which they are not. It has been proposed that older learners are not able to learn implicitly, but need to have conscious attention drawn to L2 phenomena (DeKeyser cited in Derwing & Munro, 2015, p. 33). Research syntheses have, however, shown that both explicit and implicit instruction have an effect on L2 learning, with explicit instruction appearing to have a greater effect (Sunara, 2018, pp. 8- 9).

Explicit instruction in L2 pronunciation typically focuses on aspects such as the place and manner of the articulation of isolated consonants and vowels. These might be illustrated with drawings, animated diagrams of the vocal tract, and even wave forms and spectrograms (Kissling, 2013, p. 721). In some regards, then, explicit instruction for L2 pronunciation resembles the approach taken by many lyric diction coaches, [118] though it seems likely that the articulatory control required by singers would be more detailed and refined than that of speakers. Some research has indicated that pronunciation instruction may aid performance on tasks such as reading words from a list, but that it may be less useful for spontaneous speech (Kissling, 2013, p. 721). Such a distinction, which seems a limitation for L2 learning, would not be so in the context of lyric diction because it never requires spontaneous production of the target language.

The interaction between explicit instruction and perception appears to be different to that between explicit instruction and production. A recent study by Simona Sunara (2018) explored the effect of explicit instruction, guided practice, and corrective feedback (defined and discussed below) on the acquisition of the French accentual phrase by English native speakers. It demonstrated that, “while the experimental treatment had a significant positive impact on learners’ production, it did not impact their perception skills” (Sunara, 2018, p. 221). Major (2008, p. 75) surmises that such a scenario may occur because:

[118] None of the interviewees for this research reported employing any technology in their teaching (beyond students making recordings of their classes), so its usage is not examined in this research.

> Most L2 learners who have been participants in research are literate and have had instruction in producing contrasts that they may not have been able to perceive (cf. deaf speakers can produce contrasts they obviously cannot hear).[119] Consequently orthographic cues may have aided production.

Major (2008) clearly refers to segmental, rather than prosodic aspects in this quotation. However it is pertinent to lyric diction learning because, for lyric diction, production is the only required outcome. If explicit instruction improves lyric diction production, its limited effect on perception is not necessarily a problem. Given that singers are not required to respond to spontaneously produced language, they are not dependent for comprehension on their ability to distinguish contrasts. Thus, in the lyric diction context, perception is a priority only if it is a prerequisite for, or significantly aids, production.

The foregoing quotation by Major also raises the issue of orthographic influence on L2 pronunciation. Strange and Shafer (2008, p. 163) note that, in its acoustic structure, "read speech" differs considerably from spontaneous conversational speech. This is likely not a concern for lyric diction because, as already discussed in Section 2.1, the acoustic structure of lyric diction is very different to both read and spontaneous speech. However, researchers have found that different pronunciation issues may arise depending upon whether they elicit read or spontaneous speech samples (Levis and Barriuso cited in Derwing and Munro, 2015, p. 102). These results are particularly interesting given that lyric diction is always based upon written text. It suggests that exploration of L2 pronunciation research for the purpose of lyric diction pedagogy might usefully be restricted to read L2 speech. Regarding the nature of the errors that occur in read speech, Major suggests that, "because orthography is an abstract representation, errors due to orthographic influence tend to favour a more abstract approach" (2008, p. 69). This is the influence that IPA usage in lyric diction pedagogy seeks to circumvent. Major (2008, p. 69) points out that English contains an allophonic flap [ɾ] similar to the Spanish single <r>, but that, due to orthographic influence, English speakers tend to pronounce the Spanish <r> as an English <r>. He

[119] Steven Alan Leigh uses Explicit Articulatory Instruction, based on techniques used to teach deaf children, as one of the pedagogical techniques in the Italian course which is the focus of his masters thesis, *Testing an approach to teaching Italian lyric diction to opera singers: An action research study* (2016).

continues: "…if these learners thought of it as an intervocalic <t> or <d>, they would produce it more accurately". This is exactly the kind of pedagogical technique that is frequently employed in lyric diction pedagogy.

Explicit instruction may encompass 'corrective feedback', which is defined as "an indication to a learner that his or her use of the target language is incorrect" (Lightbown and Spada cited in Derwing & Munro, 2015, p. 176). Such feedback is often central to a musical master class or coaching situation (Duke, 2014, pp. 132-137). L2 pronunciation research indicates that corrective feedback has overall positive effects. It has also found that learners who receive L2 pronunciation instruction in combination with corrective feedback outperform those who only receive the instruction (Sunara, 2018, p. 233). Critical feedback appears to aid both segmental and prosodic aspects of L2 pronunciation, but, as with almost all facets of L2 pronunciation acquisition and pedagogy, its effectiveness appears to vary greatly between individuals (Saito, in press, p. 1). L2 pedagogy describes two forms of critical feedback: a 'prompt' in which the teacher prompts the learner to try again without providing a demonstration, or a 'recast' (or 'reformulation') in which the teacher models the correct usage (Sunara, 2018, p. 8). There is currently no consensus on the most effective technique. Studies suggest that learners must be developmentally ready to receive feedback and that one approach may be more appropriate than another for learners of a particular level of proficiency (Loewen, 2011, p. 29).

Saito (in press, p. 13) writes that the potential of critical feedback can be maximised "(a) when L2 learners have enough phonetic knowledge, conversational experience and perceptual awareness of target sounds; (b) when CF provides model pronunciation forms…; and (c) when the target of instruction concerns communicatively important and salient features". It would be possible to equate each of these three points with one or more facets of lyric diction learning. Exposure to and use of the target language in previous repertoire may be a potential equivalent to conversational experience, while 'communicatively important' features need not be spontaneous. (The importance of communication in lyric diction is a theme that emerges strongly in Chapter 4.)

In terms of L2 research, there is still much exploration to be done with regard to explicit instruction and corrective feedback (Loewen, 2011, p. 36). However, as both approaches play a significant role in lyric diction teaching, the results of such research might be of considerable benefit to those seeking to enhance lyric diction pedagogy. Additionally, the extensive use of explicit instruction and corrective feedback in lyric diction pedagogy also suggest that L2 pronunciation researchers might also find the field of lyric diction pedagogy to be worthy of exploration.

The work of former opera singer Gabriel Wyner is a noteworthy intersection between lyric diction and L2 acquisition. Wyner's book, *Fluent Forever* (2014) outlines a language-learning system derived from recent research in neuroscience and his own language-learning experience. Wyner recommends learners begin by acquiring the pronunciation of an L2 before undertaking any other steps. He dismisses the Critical Period Hypothesis for pronunciation and cites what he considers to be the opera singer's advantage: avoiding the formation of bad articulatory habits by having to develop good pronunciation for singing in a particular language before (if ever) learning to speak it (Wyner, 2014, p. 66). Many of the processes Wyner recommends for L2 learners, such as learning IPA, memorising the phonological system of the target language, and gaining a detailed physiological knowledge of the articulations required, are recognisable from lyric diction pedagogy. Wyner argues that learning to "hear all the sounds in [the] language… helps you learn faster because your memory doesn't need to struggle to store some indescribable new sound" (2014, p. 64). He therefore recommends initial ear training with minimal pairs in the target language in order to "rewire the brain" (2014, p. 57). On the website, www.fluentforever.com, it is possible to purchase flashcard-based 'pronunciation trainers' that have been created in accordance with this principle.

Wyner cites considerable research (also mentioned here) indicating the effectiveness of corrective feedback. While his focus is self-directed L2 acquisition, rather than pedagogy, the importance he attributes to pronunciation in that process is striking. Wyner was a close conservatorium colleague of the current author during studies in Vienna, and has a remarkable intellect. This suggests that aspects of his personal language-learning experience may not have broad applicability, and he does not discuss variability in learners' aptitudes. However, much of *Fluent Forever* is based

on extensive research. If the efficacy of the method is borne out in independent research, it may find wider implementation in L2 pedagogy.

There are considerable differences between L2 pronunciation learning and lyric diction learning. One of the most significant differences is that lyric diction does not require spontaneous language production. Though singers often speak text as part of their lyric diction preparation, they have an opportunity to study and rehearse the sung language, while L2 speakers are required to formulate and spontaneously produce an utterance. There can be no doubt that this dramatically influences the cognitive resources each may devote to pronunciation. Furthermore, singers' development necessarily focuses on developing awareness and control of the articulators beyond that which could reasonably be expected of L2 learners. This likely provides the singers not only an attentional but also an articulatory advantage in terms of pronunciation outcomes. Furthermore, as Chapter 2.1 demonstrates, there are significant acoustic differences between L2 speech and lyric diction.

Yet, there also appear to be areas of research in which the two fields intersect. This chapter has introduced models, concepts, and results from research into L2 pronunciation learning. These offer material that is potentially valuable to the field of lyric diction pedagogy. Despite current L2 pronunciation instruction prioritising intelligibility in contrast to lyric diction's prioritisation of native-like pronunciation, the two fields share considerable areas of pedagogical similarity. Unlike many areas of theoretical linguistics, both L2 pronunciation instruction and lyric diction pedagogy are practically focused, seeking the most efficient and effective pronunciation outcomes for students. Both seek to mitigate the influence of the L1 in students' perception and production of the target language. Research into L2 pronunciation acquisition reveals enormous variability in learners' aptitude for L2 pronunciation and in their L2 pronunciation outcomes. Chapter 4 reveals a similar variability amongst singing students studying lyric diction. Consequently, for both fields, an understanding of the specific learner skills and aptitudes that contribute to optimal outcomes would allow pedagogues to prioritise the fostering and development of those skills. It may be that the same skills and aptitudes are of benefit to both L2 learners and lyric diction students. It seems likely that L2 pronunciation teachers and lyric diction teachers might already benefit from examining each other's pedagogical

practice. Moreover, just as future L2 pronunciation research may provide material of great value to lyric diction pedagogy, similarly targeted research into expert lyric diction pedagogy and its outcomes might also reveal material of considerable value for linguists and L2 pronunciation instructors.

Chapter 3. Lyric diction teachers, lyric diction coaches, and lyric diction for professional singers

Chapter 3 provides a context for conservatorium level lyric diction pedagogy by exploring the relevant attributes of the interviewees and revealing the skills they consider essential for their work. It also describes aspects of lyric diction coaching at the professional level. This provides an insight into the context for which conservatorium level singing students are training and, moreover, reveals important factors common to professional level lyric diction coaching and conservatorium level lyric diction teaching.

Section 3.1 explores the backgrounds, qualifications, and experience of expert lyric diction coaches and teachers through the prism of those interviewed for this research. Although these are shown to vary significantly, analysis of the interview data reveals five core skills that the interviewees consider integral to lyric diction coaching and teaching. This analysis also reveals significant characteristics common to all the interviewees: the desire and capacity for ongoing learning and the continued refinement of their pedagogy.

Section 3.2 presents extracts from the interviews in which four interviewees with very different backgrounds describe the circumstances in which they became lyric diction coaches. These four extracts provide a personal insight into the variety of ways in which lyric diction coaches and teachers may develop their skills, priorities, approaches, and indeed define their own practice.

Section 3.3 focusses on lyric diction coaching at the professional level. Given that an important premise of this project is that conservatorium level lyric diction teaching should ideally be informed by knowledge of lyric diction at the professional level, it is important to explore the latter area. Section 3.3 presents material from the interviews providing examples of the different ways in which lyric diction coaches may approach their work. In particular, it discusses the nature of lyric diction coaching during preparation and rehearsals for an opera. It explores the role of both lyric diction and the lyric diction coach in the opera rehearsal context, and the pressure and demands

placed upon singers. This reveals the importance of a lyric diction coach's ability to form positive collaborative relationships and to tailor their approach to individual singers.

As explained in the Introduction, it has been necessary, for the sake of clarity, to distinguish between lyric diction coaching for professionals and lyric diction education provided to conservatorium students. Thus, 'lyric diction coaching' and 'lyric diction teaching' (and therefore 'coach' and 'teacher') are defined as distinct from one another. 'Lyric diction coaching' is defined as work undertaken in regard to lyric diction at the professional level. This may include one-on-one coaching with a professional singer in a private session or the work undertaken in the role of lyric diction coach in preparation for an opera, recording, or recital. 'Lyric diction teaching' is defined as that which is undertaken in the conservatorium context. This is, in many regards, an artificial distinction; in best practice, 'lyric diction teaching' and 'lyric diction coaching' should combine to form a continuum. According to the definitions employed for this research, many of the interviewees are described both as a lyric diction coach and lyric diction teacher, and it is important to acknowledge that these interviewees would most likely consider coaching and teaching to comprise a single activity that is tailored to either the professional or conservatorium context.

3.1. Lyric diction teachers and coaches

In other fields the reader might reasonably expect to find a common qualification or similar training experience amongst a group of professionals, however there is no standard training for employment as a lyric diction coach or teacher. Nor are there defined prerequisite qualifications or characteristics for becoming one. Consequently, the backgrounds, qualifications, and experience of the interviewees for this research differ considerably. They include native speakers and non-native speakers of the language/s in which they specialise, singers, non-singers, and pianist vocal coaches. Each of the interviewees came to the career as a result of unique circumstances, and each has developed his/her skills in varying directions and by varying means. Many have developed their skills with minimal input from others in the profession and, furthermore, most described working in relative isolation from their fellow coaches.

These factors contribute to considerable divergence in the priorities and approaches of the interviewees. This section provides an insight into the backgrounds and initial coaching and/or teaching experiences of the interviewees. It cannot represent the full spectrum of backgrounds from which lyric diction coaches/teachers may possibly come, just as the interviewees are not representative of all expert lyric diction teachers. However, it is possible to provide an insight into the skills and aptitudes that contribute to the interviewees' success, thus indicating areas in which future lyric diction professionals may wish to gain understanding and expertise.

Having provided a brief overview of the interviewees' pathways to working in lyric diction, this section discusses points of similarity and difference between vocal coaching and lyric diction coaching. It then goes on to explore the role of attention and perception in lyric diction coaching and teaching, and the qualities that the interviewees find integral to their pedagogical success. The five core skills that the interviewees consider essential to their work are discussed with particular reference to being a native-speaker and/or having experience as a singer. Finally, the interviewees' desire and capacity for continued learning are explored in terms of the influence that these characteristics have on their pedagogy.

Benno Schollum is the only interviewee who identified during his undergraduate studies that he wanted to work as a lyric diction teacher. A native speaker of German, he received six years of German lyric diction lessons as part of his singing studies. Schollum undertook his first German lyric diction coaching work at the highly regarded Schubert Institut in Baden bei Wien and the following year began teaching German lyric diction at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna. He retired from this position in 2018 after almost four decades. Schollum has concurrently had a long career as a professional singer.

Both Maria Cleva and Florence Daguerre de Hureaux are former singers who came to lyric diction coaching after periods away from singing. On the basis of their native languages (Italian and French, respectively) and their singing experience, they were invited to begin lyric diction coaching while living in the UK. Both developed their skills through their work. Cleva and Daguerre de Hureaux now coach at numerous international opera houses, including at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden. Cleva

teaches at the Royal College of Music and the Royal Academy of Music in London, while Daguerre de Hureaux teaches at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and the Royal Academy of Music in London. Both also teach in young artist programs such as the National Opera School (UK).

Italian lyric diction coach and teacher Valentina Di Taranto followed a similar path in the Netherlands, as did German coach Tanja Binggeli in Australia. Both Di Taranto and Binggeli are former singers and both were initially asked to begin coaching based on their singing experience and their native language; Di Taranto is a native Italian speaker and Binggeli is bilingual in German and English. Di Taranto coaches at international opera houses, including the Dutch National Opera and the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, and teaches at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam. Binggeli has primarily worked for Opera Australia.[120]

Native Italian speaker Emanuele Moris has a background as an instrumentalist. Moris gained extensive operatic performance experience as a flute player in Italy and also undertook singing and conducting studies. No longer able to play the flute or conduct due to health reasons, Moris was invited to begin Italian lyric diction coaching in the UK by Sir Adrian Boult. Moris subsequently developed a specialisation in the field. Cleva, Dagurerre de Hureaux, Di Taranto, and Moris have all coached at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden. They all worked as lyric diction coaches for professional singers before also beginning to teach at the conservatorium level.

Kathryn LaBouff, on the other hand, began teaching at the conservatorium level before beginning to coach at the professional level. A former singer, voice teacher, and lyric diction teacher of Italian, German, French, English, and Spanish, LaBouff was invited to replace the English lyric diction teacher at the Manhattan School of Music. Shortly thereafter, she was asked to take over the English lyric diction classes of the renowned Madeleine Marshall upon her retirement from The Juilliard School. This led to LaBouff's work as the English lyric diction coach on over 300 productions

[120] Binggeli has not worked as a lyric diction teacher of conservatorium level students. She was included in the study in order to provide an insight into the level of professional lyric diction in Australia and, in particular, into the lyric diction skills of Australian-trained singers beginning their careers. Binggeli spoke at length about her work as a lyric diction coach, thus also providing material that contributed significantly to Section 3.3.

at numerous opera houses, including the Metropolitan Opera. Her approach is published in a book entitled *Singing and Communicating in English* (2008).[121]

Singer and singing teacher David Adams did the majority of his lyric diction teaching within the context of his role as professor at the College-Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati, from which he retired in 2015. Adams, whose facility with languages was a noted strength throughout his singing career, explained in his interview that he did not receive lyric diction classes as a student. However, he attended masterclasses in German at the Schubert Institut in Baden bei Wien and studied with distinguished Italian bass, Italo Tajo. Fluent in German and Italian, and having spent time in Germany and Italy, Adams said he felt confident teaching the lyric diction of those languages. However, he said that he always "felt a little funny" about teaching French lyric diction because, although he sang the language well, he does not speak it fluently. Adams also developed a specialisation in Czech, recording a CD of Czech art songs and publishing *The song and duet texts of Antonín Dvořák : [and] Večerní písně (Evening songs) of Bedřich Smetana* in 2003.[122] At the invitation of Oxford University Press, Adams wrote *A Handbook of Diction for Singers: Italian, German, French* (2nd edition 2008), which is considered to be one of the most comprehensive and reliable texts in the field.[123]

Australian-born Kenneth Griffiths worked alongside Adams at the College-Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati. Having studied and worked as a vocal coach and collaborative pianist in Germany, Griffiths was required to establish lyric diction classes in his first teaching position in the US, at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. Although he was fluent in German and French, with a working knowledge of Italian, Griffiths said:

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[121] LaBouff K. *Singing and communicating in English – a singer's guide to English diction*. New York: Oxford University Press; 2008.

[122] Adams D. *The song and duet texts of Antonín Dvořák : [and] Večerní písně (Evening songs) of Bedřich Smetana : original texts, English translations, phonetic transcriptions, Czech pronunciation and lyric diction, commentary by David Adams.* New York: Leyerle; 2003.

[123] Adams D. *A handbook of diction for singers: Italian, German, French. 2nd ed*. New York: Oxford University Press; 2008.

> Now with hindsight I realise what a horrible diction teacher I was in those first two years… because I was [only] one step ahead of them… I began to learn the problems of teaching lyric diction classes and eventually I realised you have to be so structured. You have to have it really planned out systematically in a way that grows because language, of course, is cumulative. I learned that way what diction classes *ought* to be.

Griffiths began teaching Russian lyric diction, in which he now specialises, as a result of his own passion for the language. This stemmed from performances he gave with a CCM alumnus at the Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow in 1986. After years of intensive language study and periods of sabbatical devoted to the study of Russian phonetics and the use of Russian pronunciation in singing, Griffiths established a Russian lyric diction class at CCM. This led to guest teaching at other conservatoria and running a Russian lyric diction class at the Tanglewood Festival for several years. Griffiths has published his approach in a booklet entitled *Russian for Singers and Coaches* (2nd edition 2016).[124]

Griffiths, Marie-France Lefebvre, Ellen Rissinger, and Glenn Morton all have a background as a collaborative pianist and vocal coach. Lefebvre, Rissinger, and Morton studied lyric diction and vocal coaching as part of their studies in collaborative piano. Lefebvre was profoundly influenced by her lyric diction teacher, Nico Castel, and by her collaborative work with singers while studying at the Manhattan School of Music. She is a native French speaker who specialises as a lyric diction coach of French, amongst other work including performing as a pianist and working as a guest assistant conductor at major opera companies such as the Metropolitan Opera and San Francisco Opera. As a vocal coach Lefebvre works with languages other than French, but in the capacity of a lyric diction coach deals exclusively with French. She prompts at the Metropolitan Opera and is on the faculty at the College-Conservatory of Music at the University of Cincinnati.

In her interview, Ellen Rissinger cited the aforementioned David Adams and Kenneth Griffiths as the most significant lyric diction influences during her studies. A native English speaker, Rissinger's lyric diction coaching of multiple languages has predominantly taken place through her work as a repetiteur on staff at the Semperoper

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[124] Published by Amazon.

in Dresden, and in guest coaching work at conservatoria and in masterclasses. Rissinger is also founder of *The Diction Police*, one of the most significant online lyric diction resources.[125]

Like Lefebvre, native English speaker Glenn Morton studied collaborative piano at the Manhattan School. He specialises as a lyric diction teacher of Italian and French, teaching classes at the Mannes School of Music, the Manhattan School of Music, and The Juilliard School. He has also established summer courses specialising in Italian and French repertoire and language. Morton has worked as a lyric diction coach and assistant conductor for opera companies throughout the US.

Native Russian speaker Vera Danchenko-Stern also has a background as a pianist. At the Peabody Institute she teaches a Russian lyric diction class which she established while a member of the piano faculty. This was inspired by her experience working with professional singers throughout her career as an accompanist, and her observation of the difficulties non-native speakers of Russian encounter when singing the language. Danchenko-Stern has worked as lyric diction coach for opera productions and privately coaches Russian for professional and conservatorium level singers.

Both Isabella Radcliffe and Gerhard Gall discovered the profession of lyric diction coaching after completing university degrees. A native German speaker, Gall trained as a schoolteacher in Germany before pursuing private singing studies. He began German lyric diction coaching and teaching at the suggestion of his singing teacher. Radcliffe, who is bilingual in English and Italian, completed a university degree in music and modern languages before pursuing a career as an Italian lyric diction coach and teacher. Although both studied singing and have some singing experience, neither Radcliffe nor Gall was initially aware of lyric diction as a specialisation. Prior to commencing work as lyric diction coaches, both Radcliffe and Gall spent a period of time in London observing the work of highly experienced lyric diction coaches, including some of those interviewed for this research. Radcliffe and Gall have both

[125] See Literature Review.

coached at the professional level and taught in a conservatorium context since the beginning of their careers.

Because several of the interviewees straddle the professions of vocal coach and lyric diction coach, it is important to discuss this somewhat blurred distinction. The remit of a vocal coach is far broader than that of a lyric diction coach. While also accompanying the singer at the piano, the vocal coach may, according to Hoekman (2004, p. 72), "work on all aspects of singing except vocal technique, which is the realm of the voice teacher". Adler defines the role of the vocal coach thus:

> Coaches teach singers… preparing them for recitals and other performances. They guide singers until their roles are memorized and they are responsible for the development of every shade of dynamics, every nuance of interpretation. They are directly responsible if the singer's diction, his languages, or even his stage presence is at fault (1965, p. 5).

This description might be seen as going a step too far, seeming to absolve singers of any responsibility for their own performance. However, it accurately depicts the breadth of expertise required of a vocal coach. Yet, very much like lyric diction coaches, individual vocal coaches may define their own priorities and develop their own approaches within this. For student singers the coach may often take a more interventionist approach according to the singer's technical, musical, and linguistic abilities. For professional singers, the role of the vocal coach is often characterised as that of an 'outside pair of ears': providing feedback and advice, but leaving final technical and interpretative decisions to the singers themselves.

Given that the responsibilities of a vocal coach encompass text and language (Adler, 1965; Beaudette, 2000; Corcoran, 2011; De'Ath, 2002; Hoekman, 2004), it is not surprising that those with skill in a particular language, or languages in general, also specialise in lyric diction as part of their work. Working as a vocal coach does not preclude also working as a lyric diction coach and/or lyric diction teacher. Thus, the interviewees who perform both roles may sometimes work on lyric diction from behind the piano, i.e. in their role as a vocal coach, and at other times as a specialist lyric diction coach or lyric diction teacher. Kenneth Griffiths, for example, provides

vocal coaching to postgraduate singing students at CCM and also teaches a Russian lyric diction class.[126]

Some interviewees who do not work as a vocal coach felt that playing the piano compromises the ability of a vocal coach to concentrate upon and perceive nuances of lyric diction. Ellen Rissinger acknowledge this challenge, describing vocal coaching work thus:

> You have to play the piano well enough to not ever have to think about playing the piano. And you have to know your languages well enough to be able to correct everybody in the room… I think it's a matter of getting everything to the point where you can really do it without thinking too hard about it, so you can really focus on whichever [aspect] needs your attention at that moment.

In a similar vein, Marie-France Lefebvre described her own development as a vocal coach, and her increasing ability to devote attention to the articulatory processes of the singer.

> I've come to…be much more aware, because of course we do ten things at once. We're sitting there… playing things. Most of the time, fortunately, they're things that we've known for a long time, so we don't have to pay too much attention to ourselves… But to see [the singer] sometimes – "Oh my God, what's your tongue doing?!"… I've learnt to pay much more attention to this and I've cleared many [problems] in this way. But that gets easier as we know more repertoire and have more experience.

Interestingly, Lefebvre also described sitting with her students to work on lyric diction in detail as part of her vocal coaching. This work away from the piano is exactly that which a lyric diction coach or teacher might also undertake.

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[126] Not all vocal coaches work as specialist lyric diction coaches. Eminent Australian vocal coach Sharolyn Kimmorley was also interviewed for this research. She clearly articulated that she does not see herself as a lyric diction coach, and she has not taught lyric diction in a conservatorium context. Kimmorley works on the lyric diction of many operatic languages in the context of her vocal coaching, but has no particular specialisation amongst them. Kimmorley's opera experience, both in Australia and internationally, and as a mentor to emerging singers, places her in a unique position from which to comment on the effectiveness of lyric diction coaching and teaching in Australia.

Rissinger and Lefebvre's comments demonstrate the flexibility of attention that is required of a vocal coach, and it certainly seems reasonable to suggest that the level of attention vocal coaches are able to devote to singers' lyric diction must differ depending upon whether or not they are playing the piano. Multi-skilling is a necessity in the careers of many musicians, however, and undertaking work as a vocal coach by no means diminishes an individual's expertise as a lyric diction coach or lyric diction teacher. Furthermore, capacity for attention, whether influenced by piano-playing or not, varies among individuals, and attention alone does not determine the quality of an individual's perception, as demonstrated in Chapter 2.4. Thus, the acuity of a vocal coach's perception may not necessarily be less than that of a lyric diction coach, even if the vocal coach is required to simultaneously play the piano. However, it should be kept in mind that, with the exception of Sharolyn Kimmorley, all the vocal coaches included in this project were interviewed in their capacity as lyric diction coaches and/or teachers.

Predictably, perception is one of the skills that the interviewees identified as integral to high quality lyric diction coaching. The interviewees' discussion of the skills and qualities necessary for a lyric diction coach and/or teacher revealed five core skills. These were:

1) The ability to perceive accurately what is being sung
2) The ability to envisage the desired production (segmental, prosodic, or expressive) within the sung context
3) The ability to demonstrate the desired production
4) The ability to identify correctly the cause of inaccurate production and provide a solution
5) Interpersonal/pedagogical skills[127]

Individual lyric diction coaches and teachers may possess these skills in varying measure and employ them in different ways. However, this research suggests that all five skills are prerequisites for effective lyric diction teaching and coaching.

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[127] Discussed at length in Section 3.3 and Chapter 4.6.

Many of the interviewees felt that they had personal attributes that were responsible for their ability in one or more of the above areas. For native speakers, this was being a native speaker. For some former singers, this was having a background as a singer. For some native-speaking former singers, it was the combination of both these attributes. These interviewees also felt that the absence of one or both of these attributes would be an insurmountable limitation for others within the lyric diction coaching and teaching professions.

All the interviewees who are native-speakers of the languages they coach and teach consider being a native speaker to be essential for lyric diction coaching and teaching. Gall, Danchenko-Stern, Daguerre de Hureaux, Moris, and Radcliffe were all emphatic that there is no substitute for the sensitivity and accuracy of a native speaker. Gall acknowledged that some non-native speaking coaches do a "fantastic job", but argued that for nuances, which he described as "the last three percent", a native speaker is required. Moris, who is bilingual in French and Italian but only works as an Italian coach and teacher, said:

> We have some other people who teach French and they are not French; the pronunciation is not one hundred percent correct. It may be a small thing, but in the smallest thing you still see the differences… when you come to the point of interpretation and using it in music.

Radcliffe initially stated that a lyric diction coach must be either "a native speaker or a linguist". She then qualified her use of term 'linguist', noting that in some fields it is acceptable for a linguist to have an accent in the language in which they specialise; Radcliffe does not consider this to be acceptable for a lyric diction coach. Interestingly she sees this as having as much to do with a lyric diction production as with their capacity for perception. She explained:

> The sound world [in lyric diction] is so important [that] it becomes possible that native speakers are the way we have to go… How are you going to qualify whether someone has an accent or not if you're not a native speaker?

Radcliffe said that she had been alarmed to encounter lyric diction teachers in the US with a perceptible accent.

Non-native speakers of the language/s they coach and teach did not list being a native speaker as an essential attribute, however in many instances they spoke of what they have learnt and continue to learn from native speaking coaches. Ellen Rissinger described conferring with multiple native speakers when unsure of an exceptional pronunciation. Glenn Morton spoke of aspects of Italian lyric diction he has learnt from his colleague, Ubaldo Fabbri, and from his continued exploration of Italian literature regarding singing and lyric diction. Kenneth Griffiths gave the following advice for a non-native speaker aspiring to be a lyric diction coach:

> Find a coach who you respect and have them work with you on *your* concept of lyric diction (so that your perception is sharpened) and your ability to relate the sound you intellectually understand with the sound you're actually making… That's important and it takes somebody else's ears to help develop that. How can we teach diction if we don't hear what the sounds should be and… demonstrate accurately and correctly? Teaching diction by textbook when you don't really have a kinaesthetic sense of the language is, I think, doomed to failure.

Radcliffe and Griffiths agree that a coach must be able to both perceive and produce the language accurately. However, the assumption among the native-speaking interviewees appears to be that non-native speakers cannot reach a level of perception and production equivalent to that of a native speaker. This is largely supported by the research presented in Chapter 2.4, which indicates that most non-native speakers are likely to be inferior to native speakers in terms of perception and production of a language. Yet, the five core skills outlined above show that competency as a lyric diction coach also depends upon other factors. Furthermore, the use of language in singing differs to that in speech.[128] In some cases, a non-native speaking teacher/coach who has highly developed perception and knowledge regarding the use of language in singing might be more skilled than a native speaker who does not have a similar foundation of singing-related experience and knowledge. The presence of the non-native speaking interviewees amongst the faculty at schools of the quality of CCM, the Manhattan School, and Juilliard indicates that, just as some L2 speakers achieve native-like pronunciation, it is possible to achieve a very high level of lyric diction expertise in a non-native language.

[128] See Chapter 4.10.

Thus, a native speaker's advantage as a lyric diction coach or teacher depends upon the possession of skills in all five areas outlined above. It is certain that none of the interviewees would argue that anyone could become a lyric diction coach or teacher of their native tongue. Vera Danchenko-Stern explained that simply being a native speaker is not enough:

> When dealing with muscle memory, with understanding, it's extremely important that it is done by a native speaker who understands music. A person who is a phenomenal linguist, and fantastic in reciting lyrics and poems with deepest understanding, may not have those moments of adjustment to accommodate…[the difference] between speaking Russian and singing.

Valentina Di Taranto supported this perspective, describing two junior colleagues in order to illustrate the limitations a native-speaking lyric diction coach may exhibit. The first is an actor who, while possessing extensive knowledge about the Italian language, "does not have an ear which is developed for music'. The second is a musician who has studied orchestral conducting, but not opera conducting. Di Taranto said that both these Italian lyric diction coaches are able to identify when pronunciation is incorrect, but are not able to identify the cause. Consequently, while they can demonstrate the desired result, they are unable to describe the process for attaining it. In these instances, a non-native speaker who is familiar with both vocal music and singers' articulatory processes might be a more effective lyric diction coach. This highlights that, within the group of core skills required by a lyric diction coach, the strong presence of one skill does not eliminate the necessity for the others.

The same may be argued regarding the requirement that a lyric diction coach be a singer or former singer. It is indisputable that an understanding of vocal production is integral to identifying the cause of inaccurate production and to providing a solution that is effective within the sung context. The interviewees were unanimous in this regard. The extraordinary resonance singers must produce creates a unique articulatory situation, as outlined in Chapter 2.1. Danchenko-Stern's previous comment clearly indicates that she feels a musician may have sufficient insight into this aspect. (She is herself a pianist, not a singer.) However, Daguerre de Hureaux and LaBouff both felt that a background as a former singer is indispensable. Daguerre de

Hureaux was of the opinion that an understanding of the formation of the sound and modifications according to surrounding vowels, pitch and surrounding pitches would only be possible for a singer or former singer. She said:

> If you're not a singer, I would overall steer well clear of the job… I'm not a singer anymore, but I was, and am perfectly able to know what you can and can't do.

La Bouff also argued that a lyric diction coach must be a singer because the language "must sing well and a pianist can't determine that".

Other interviewees were willing to accept that non-singers might also possess the requisite understanding of vocal production. Moris felt that it was important a lyric diction coach be either an instrumentalist or a singer, while Gall emphasised the importance of a lyric diction coach having knowledge of singing. While not former professional singers, both Moris and Gall have undertaken singing studies, however they did not explicitly give this as a requirement for lyric diction coaching.

Many of the interviewees, both singers and non-singers, spoke of difficulties that may arise when a lyric diction coach does not understand singing technique or the ways in which language may need to be adapted for singers. Some of the interviewees related stories singers had told them of lyric diction coaches who were native speakers without knowledge of singing. These coaches had provided advice the singers were unable to implement in the sung context. Yet, it is highly unlikely that the interviewees would argue that all singers are capable of becoming lyric diction coaches either. Some singers, even those who perform at the highest level, may not have a detailed or even accurate understanding of vocal technique and articulation. Individual singers may perceive their vocal production very differently,[129] and indeed aspects of vocal production may vary between voice types and between individuals.[130] On the other hand, some pianist vocal coaches possess a detailed knowledge of vocal technique and have a nuanced awareness of what is vocally possible for a wide variety of voice types.

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[129] See, for example, *Great Singers on the Art of Singing* (2006, p. 17).
[130] See Chapters 2.1 and 2.2.

While each is a significant strength, being a native speaker, singer, or former singer, is not sufficient to guarantee the expertise necessary in lyric diction coaching and teaching. Rather, these attributes contribute to the group of qualities that are essential for well-rounded expertise. Those coaches and teachers who consider one or two of their attributes to be indispensable are, understandably, identifying one source of their strengths. However, it is necessary to consider the extent to which others without these initial attributes may develop these areas of expertise. Furthermore, these other coaches and teachers may possess strengths in different areas. The presence of non-native speakers and non-singers at the levels at which the interviewees coach and teach suggests that, while advantageous, neither attribute is indispensable. And yet, it is important to note that all those interviewees who work at the Metropolitan Opera and the Royal Opera House Covent Garden are native speakers. There can be no doubt that in such places, at the very highest level of professional lyric diction coaching, the nuances Gall termed the "last three percent" are critical. Chapter 2.4 showed that, all other aspects being equal, native speakers have a fundamental advantage over non-native speakers in terms of perception and production. At the top echelon of operatic performance it may be assumed that lyric diction coaches would be exceptionally capable in regard to the five core skills identified above. In this situation, then, the advantage inherent in being a native speaker would carry far greater significance than it would in the context of conservatorium level lyric diction teaching.

Beyond the issue of native and non-native speakers, and singers and non-singers, it is important to acknowledge the value in having lyric diction coaches with varying strengths and approaches. LaBouff touched on this when she explained the advantage that she felt she had gained by not having a mentor. She felt that "one of the problems… with working with [a mentor] is everybody gets locked into how things should be done and they don't have the freedom to think out of the box and come up with their own method". Di Taranto spoke about the individuality of coaches' approaches as being a characteristic of the profession:

> There's no school for coaching. You have to make it your own: what you think is important. I'm sure that every colleague of mine does it in a slightly different way, even [a] completely different way, because there are so many things you can take care of. I've done it [for] seventeen years and my way of coaching has changed quite a bit in that time.

The notion of lyric diction coaches and teachers 'making the profession their own' is explored further in Chapter 3.3.

The process of change that Di Taranto describes occurring throughout her career also reflects an attribute that was evident in all the interviewees: the desire and capacity for continued learning. All the interviewees said they had learnt 'on the job' and described ways in which their skills had developed and continued to develop throughout their careers. The absence of formal training for the profession no doubt contributes to this, but when considering the pedagogical nature of both lyric diction coaching and teaching, this attribute assumes considerable significance. As John Hattie notes in his seminal meta-study, *Visible Learning* (Hattie, 2012, p. 18), there is evidence that the greatest effects on student learning occur when teachers become "learners of their own teaching". The interviewees appear to have been very much learners of their own coaching and teaching. They describe constantly encountering new challenges such as new articulatory problems presented by singers, new repertoire to be prepared, new production and educational contexts, and new interpersonal relationships to be established and navigated with those whom they teach and coach. The interviewees also described undertaking research, observing master classes, observing colleagues (infrequently, but where possible), discussing issues with colleagues, asking singers for feedback, and developing and refining their approaches. They acknowledged the time it takes to refine their skills; Schollum said, "I learned a lot from teaching. I would say it needs five or ten years of teaching until you are really mature".

Hattie's research also reveals that, "fundamentally, the most powerful way of thinking about a teacher's role is for teachers to see themselves as *evaluators* of their effects on students" (2012, p. 18). The results of a lyric diction coach's and a lyric diction teacher's work are audible in the performances of the singers they coach. This recurring opportunity to observe first-hand the results of their work is a rich source of

feedback regarding the success of lyric diction coaches' and teachers' pedagogy. Such a situation also aligns with empirical evidence regarding effective teaching. During the interviews for this research, all the interviewees described openly evaluating the effects they were able to achieve in their teaching. Some detailed their responses and the adjustments they make as a result of such ongoing personal evaluation. For example, Morton spoke of continually refining his teaching:

> I do think I change my teaching every year, saying, "What was the most effective? If I have these thirty weeks with these students, and this could be my only chance to affect them, how am I going to use those thirty weeks to really make them a more secure, stronger, and a better singer?"

Similarly, Cleva described changing her initial approach to lyric diction coaching in order to maximise her effect:

> In the beginning I thought, "These poor people are not Italian and they're trying to sing in Italian. You've got to make allowances". And then I realised you *mustn't* make allowances… I remembered something that I'd learned as a young girl: you have to ask for one hundred percent in the hope of getting fifty. I put that into practice and I found that [it] is very true. You can't *not* ask. You have to ask for the whole thing and then if you just get close to that, then you're doing alright.

The responses of the interviewees regarding almost all of the key themes discussed in Chapter 4 appear based in the interviewees' desire to achieve the greatest possible pedagogical effect. Indeed, evaluation of their own effects can be seen as the driver for almost all of the interviewees' work and development. While the absence of formal training means that each lyric diction coach or teacher comes to the profession with a unique balance within the constellation of core skills required, those interviewed for this research revealed that they have continually assessed, developed and refined their skills throughout their careers. Hattie's research indicates that such processes are fundamental to high quality teaching more broadly. In the case of the lyric diction experts interviewed for this research, these processes have resulted in exceptional pedagogy.[131]

[131] These and similar themes are discussed further in Chapter 4.6.

3.2. Example profiles: in their own words

Several of the interviewees spoke in detail about how they began lyric diction coaching and teaching. The following interview extracts span the US, UK, and the Netherlands, and provide a very direct and personal insight into four ways in which one might become a lyric diction coach and/or teacher. The text has only been edited where necessary for clarity in order to allow each interviewee's voice to ring through. Though brief, these extracts provide a glimpse into the process by which the interviewees have developed their expertise.

3.3.1. Emanuele Moris

I was a flute player. I came to London to do a conducting course with Sir Adrian Boult, which I did for two years and [then] suddenly I had heart trouble. I couldn't play the flute and I couldn't conduct any more, so I said to Sir Adrian, "I must go back to Italy". He said, "No no. You are not going back to Italy," and I said, "Why not? What can I do here?" He said, " You can do coaching". I said, "I'm not a coach. I'm a blasted flute player who can't play any more". He said, "No, no, no. You coach for me, you [can] coach the Verdi Requiem [and] Mozart perfectly well".

So he sent me to do some coaching and people started to say, "Can you come back? Can you coach this? Can you coach that?" And then the opera house also and I did that [for] many, many years. And then suddenly, thirty-five years ago, the Guildhall, they called me and said, "Can you take over the Italian department?" I said, "Ok, I'll try". I started like this: by chance because Sir Adrian pushed me.

Of course [there were things I found challenging when I first started]. I played in the opera house in Italy [for] many years and I knew the operas quite well as an orchestral player, [but] suddenly I was faced with twenty-five, thirty people in front of me. The first day was terrible. I couldn't understand what to do. I [thought], "What am I doing here?" I said, "Ok, let us sing," and then I realised that that is not correct. "Let's *work*," [I said], and then I started again: "I read a phrase for you and then I sing it for you and then you see what comes." "Stylistically it's not correct," [I said], and then I

explained why, the style and the century, and so on. I felt that I could give because I also studied singing... Suddenly they said, “Oh, that is interesting. That is nice”. [I said], “Place it like this, place this vowel like this,” and I also entered the technique of singing and they produced a better sound and I went on. And I’ve been there for centuries.

…[At Guildhall the singers] are only students and at the Opera House they are professionals, so it’s a different world. The difference is [that] with the students you really have to intervene most of the time. At the Opera House you intervene from time to time when there is something really wrong. Sometimes I even suggested breathing differently and they said, “Oh, that’s good. That’s better”. I was a bass so I know what it means to breathe. Sometimes people sang and I said, “Good, when do you breathe?” “Oh, but I can…” “No you can’t, because if you don’t breathe then ok, you can go to the end of the line, but then you don’t have time to breathe before the next one. And then you die. I want to come to your opera performance but not to a funeral.”

3.3.2. Isabella Carolina Radcliffe

My skills are that I am Italian bilingual and I studied music at university and I sang through university. I helped a friend of mine who was singing songs in Spanish… She wanted help with the language because she said it wasn’t making any sense. I thought, “I wonder if this exists as a profession,” and I looked into it.

I wrote to all the conservatoires and opera companies here in the UK to say: “These are my qualifications, do you need me? Am I useful? Can I work in this area?” A lot of them got back to me. The National Opera Studio got back to me and they said, “Listen, there are many many ways of being an Italian coach. There’s no one school. But if you want, you can come to our coaching sessions at the National Opera Studio and just observe and see what it’s like”. So I went along and I didn’t just observe Italian, I observed French and Italian. I don’t speak German, but I think I might have observed a bit of German as well. I studiously observed the Italian coachings with different coaches. There was one main one, but there were three people coaching

there. And a very, very good French coach, actually. It was useful to me. I studied French at university so I speak French fluently.

When I contacted … the director of the National Opera Studio… he said, “Look we had someone else asking us about this… and she came and observed”. I have to say, I didn’t go to one or two, I went to everything all year. It’s almost like I did the course… By the end there were days Maria [Cleva] couldn’t do for production rehearsals and she just said, “You just go and do that”. So, I did that. They gave me a bit of money at the end, because they could see I was coaching the hell out of that Italian. Those people were going to be good at Italian! So that, I think, was the thing. And I even came back the next year because I’d only had a few jobs, but [Maria] said, “Listen, you’re a coach now, you don’t have to keep coming back”.

As the NOS director said, there are many ways [to be a coach]. Every coach, actually, is different. The approach can be very, very different. From the French coach, obviously, there was a lot of talk about phonetics, which I didn’t know about. I read lots. I read Evelina Colorni, who’s kind of my bible. Basically, it’s all the rules of Italian diction for singers. So I read things like that.

From coaches I learnt their approach: how to listen, how to help…Things like making sure that they can speak the language first before singing it. Little tricks of how to help them, for example, double ‘g’ will sound like “fudge” or things like that. There’s this thing of what do you pick up and what do you not pick up? Do you pick up absolutely everything all the time or do you let some things go because there’s never going to be perfection? And also, the main thing is that the diction and the pronunciation has to be correct, but it’s also the interpretation.

One thing I learnt a lot from Maria Cleva was about character and how to get that out of them. Often these singers who will have sung zillions of arias, they won’t have done the whole role, to understand the character of that character singing that role, where they are, why they’re singing it, and also from a perspective of understanding Italian culture and Italian music a bit more deeply. Someone who’s only sung Britten

or is Chinese or something, to try to get them a little bit into the Italian cultural world and the character- Maria was wonderful for that.[132] And Emanuele [Moris].

Emanuele, because of his experience as a musician, from him [I learned] things about tradition. Ok now I'm nearly forty [in 2016], but then I was a thirty-year-old – what are you going to know about tradition? These are people who have worked with Pavarotti. Maria had worked with Pavarotti, with all the great conductors, and Emanuele had played in their orchestras. I can't pinpoint what it was that I took from them, but just many many little tips along the way.

And Florence Daguerre de Hureaux- she was working for British Youth Opera and I followed her. She was very kind. She wasn't sure initially, but then she saw that I was serious and that I was listening and my ears were wide open, and also that I wasn't actually going to be a French coach. I understand, because it's a very personal thing and some singers are very delicate. It is a thing where you're saying, "That's completely wrong. It's got to be like this," so to have any extra person watching is not great. But that's part of my job as well, isn't it, knowing how to make them feel comfortable and encouraging them and all of that? So all of that was what I learnt from them.

Maria Cleva was a singer, but Florence was also a singer, so [I learnt] tips that she gave them. Something that I still say today [is], "You are singing not only on your stage and the audience is way back there in the auditorium, you've also got an orchestra in front of you. So to spit that text out, to project it, it has to be larger than life to get it across". So things like that I picked up from her…

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[132] Interestingly, Maria Cleva also exerted a significant, if indirect influence upon Australian interviewee Tanja Binggeli. Binggeli described undertaking a period of observation at the opera house in Hamburg: "I mainly ended up speaking to a young repetiteur who had graduated from the Young Artist program at Covent Garden and who was very interested in language coaching. He was really impressed by Maria Cleva. He just raved about how she brought the language to life, worked so well with the singers, and worked really well individually. He sort of gave me a framework to understand what it meant to be a good language coach without my having actually experienced it directly through her".

And Robin Bowman – he was at Guildhall and Florence wasn't at the opera studio then. It was him doing all the French and so he was a lot from phonetics and ear. You do learn from these people how to listen: what to listen out for and *how* to listen. If something's pointed out to you then… you hear it in the next person. So Robin Bowman… had a totally different approach. He also wasn't French, but he had a very individual approach. I can't say exactly how. He talked about books which I went and read up about as well, because you can learn from other languages as well.

Those were the people [Robin Bowman, Emanuele Moris, Maria Cleva and Florence Daguerre de Hureaux] that I really got a lot from. Especially Maria- it was that character thing, because of that importance. There are other coaches who are: "Oh it's an open 'e', it's a closed 'e'," You know, really fixated on these things which, ok, it's correct or incorrect, but do we [care] if it doesn't mean anything? It's the character, the character, the character, which Maria is second to none at helping them with. It's like a director would give them. The other thing is that she is very, very, very traditional, so sometimes in production that's not that helpful, because you know what directors are like nowadays. You need to just be open open open to any interpretation as long as it's somehow still that [text]. But she would give subtext, almost, to that text.

3.3.3. Valentina Di Taranto

I did study singing and the first years of composition in Italy. Then I started singing in a choir because I was interested in choir conducting. When I moved to Holland I carried on my voice lessons at the Conservatory with Margreet Honig. I tried to sing for a while and I did some small productions, but it was difficult to combine with my son. At the same time I was asked many times to coach or to take care of little productions even when I was singing in Italian productions. So that was the start and where I got the idea to switch slowly, first together with singing, and then entirely coaching. It's something you don't learn at school There's no school for coaching. You have to make it your own, what you think is important. I'm sure that every colleague of mine does it in a slightly different way, even completely different way, because there are so many things you can take care of. I've done it since 1999, so it's

17 years [now in 2016]. My way of coaching has changed quite a bit in that time. I find some things more important than others.

I think that having a background as a singer helps. It maybe even helps to have a background as not a very good singer, as I was, because I had to really learn a lot. I learned the most from doing this work though. I'm very curious. I always try to analyse what is good, what is not good, why is this? I ask a lot of singers: "What do you do? What don't you do? What do you prioritise?" I often ask them what their vision is in technical things and I make it my own if I think it will work for my teaching. I get a lot of ideas and I talk a lot with colleagues, colleagues of my own, doing the same job with the same language, Italian. I ask them, "How do you do this?" I'm very curious and I have fantastic colleagues. Even colleagues who are not working with Italian but other languages, I still ask. I'm very happy about the co-operation that there is. Of course, here [in Amsterdam] sometimes there are two Italian productions that overlap and then there are colleagues, but mostly not. But doing work in London, then of course I am in contact with other colleagues there and I always ask, "What do you do? What don't you do?"

3.3.4. Vera Danchenko-Stern

I stopped playing solo repertoire many years ago because [in 1967] I started accompanying officially as an official paid accompanist to my brother Victor Danchenko. We had our first recital in Uzbekistan, Tashkent. Since that time I have worked with beautiful world-class singers. When I immigrated to Canada in 1978 and I started working with Canadian singers, and then, when I continued in the US with absolutely first rank operatic singers who enjoyed singing chamber repertoire as well as Russian repertoire, I faced the same problems. It didn't matter whether it was in Canada or the US, it was a purely phonetic matter of not knowing how to approach the specifics, the peculiarities of the Russian language. [Russian is] my speciality, but I guess it's applicable to every language, because you have to know the specifics to adjust your singing. It was logical for me because the most popular method is, as we used to call it, the monkey method, which means, "repeat after me". "Repeat after me" may work if people can really hear and mimic and find it, but it's not a system. I

started thinking about how to make [Russian lyric diction] a subject to be learned at school when singers are just beginning their singing career, which means a combination of music and words, and words as musical as music itself. So these common mistakes were the main major force for me to start thinking, "How can I teach that?"

… In Canada I had years of experiencing and thinking and then my life changed in 1990 when I moved to the States. It was phenomenal. I was invited to join the piano faculty of this prestigious Peabody Conservatory of Music. At the same time I had a few wonderful singers asking me to accompany and, oh God, the same mistakes, the same problems! That was a time for me to activate my brain and to really start thinking, “Ok, there must be something. There must be a pattern why”.

I began to think of studying Russian phonetics. [Of] my system… a phenomenal part was from my late husband who was a linguist and journalist. We worked very seriously and very hard and I had a fantastic authority to check. He was not a musician, but as far as phonetics go, it has to be scientific because it’s too different from the way you speak. So I started by learning myself and then after quite a while when I began to realise what can be done. I started thinking of what to do at Peabody. By then I played for almost all my colleagues. When they approached Russian repertoire I was fighting for all the same things [as them], musically and artistically, so it was absolutely lovely.

In February 1991 I started to talk to our [then] chair of department, phenomenal singer Phyllis Bryn-Julson, about offering this – adding to our three ‘singing-in’ classes (‘singing in Italian’, ‘singing in German’ and ‘singing in French’). Now we have had ‘singing in Russian’ for twenty-six years. The faculty just embraced this idea! She said to me, “I don’t understand anything but could you give me as a proposal just the names of the composers we may hear at your recitals?” I said, “How many names do you need? Fourteen, fifteen?” She said, “No, maximum five”. So I gave her about ten.

In 1992 I went back to Russia for the first time since I left and I brought a fantastic American soprano, Carmen Walter, with me. Her work on vocal aspects combined

with my work and my master classes. My colleagues, people who I went to school with, were asking me to stay after master classes and they were writing every word [I said]. They had tons of questions about how I get certain results the music needs. I said, “We went to the same schools, I don’t know!” But I do know: it’s because I was analysing everything. It’s experience. It’s the ability to listen, the eagerness to learn and know more and, before everything, learning the scientific way, and what is behind that science… I learnt so much because after I corrected a singer I always asked, “Is that comfortable?” [If] yes, we could go on. If not, then we had to see how to create what [we needed to hear].

3.3. Lyric diction coaching for professional singers

This study was undertaken on the premise that conservatorium-level lyric diction teaching should be informed by a knowledge of lyric diction at the professional level, including both the quality demanded of professional singers and the nature of the coaching they receive. The principal interviewees were chosen for their experience teaching at the conservatorium level and their extensive professional experience as either a singer and/or lyric diction coach. Though the focus of the interviews was on pedagogical practice at the conservatorium level, several of the interviewees discussed the coaching work that they undertake with professional singers. On analysing these discussions it became clear that the lyric diction coaching these interviewees undertake with professional singers provides a broader context within which to consider their conservatorium-level teaching. Furthermore, for these interviewees there appears to be a link between their responses to the demands of lyric diction coaching in a professional context and their pedagogical approaches at the conservatorium level. While they place greater emphasis on the need to establish relationships of trust with professional singers than with students, it is clear that the interviewees view the tailoring of lyric diction instruction to the capacity and needs of the individual singer as essential to achieving the best lyric diction outcomes for both students and professionals.

Unlike conservatorium level teaching, much of the focus of lyric diction coaching is upon style and nuance, rather than the teaching of fundamental skills. As Sections 3.1

and 3.2 showed, it is a characteristic of the profession that many lyric diction coaches have developed their own approach, including the aspects upon which they focus and the manner in which they engage with the singers they coach. It is therefore to be expected that their priorities and approaches differ, in some cases dramatically. This was reflected amongst the interviewees.

The approaches lyric diction coaches take regarding stylistic aspects may, of course, vary similarly to the manner in which stylistic interpretation varies amongst instrumental musicians. Valentina Di Taranto gave the example of *raddoppiamento sintattico* (phrasal doubling) in Italian, saying, “Some colleagues do them all, some colleagues do none. Some colleagues do some, [and] some colleagues do it in some repertoire, but not in other repertoire”. However, lyric diction coaches also differ in their prioritisation of far more fundamental aspects of the language, for example focussing more on vowels than on consonants, or vice versa. Di Taranto quoted one of her colleagues, who jokes, “I care more about vowels than I do about my mother!” as a case of a coach who prioritises vowels over all else.

Discussions with Di Taranto and Cleva, who both coach at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, highlighted the variation in approach that may occur, even between coaches working at the same opera house. Cleva was adamant that: “What… a language coach shouldn’t do is meddle vocally, even if he or she knows about [vocal technique] and thinks about it”. She noted that correcting a singer’s vowel may sometimes help them vocally, but argued that this should not be the lyric diction coach’s intention. Cleva acknowledged, however, that many of her colleagues disagree. Di Taranto is one of those. Indeed, she may have been speaking of Cleva when she said:

> I know a very good coach who thinks, “…You sing how you sing. Your sound is something that you have to take care of with your voice teacher”. I think she knows a lot about sound and these kinds of things, but she does not interfere with that. I have heard her say things that are fantastic, but there was a singer of whom you could not understand one word because of her vocal technique and [this coach] said, “Well it’s not my responsibility to do that”.

Di Taranto described the focus of the aforementioned coach as being upon expression, the style and progression of recitatives, and the development of each role. She noted, however, that other lyric diction coaches consider the development of a singer's role to be beyond their remit. This illustrates the extent to which each lyric diction coach may define the scope of the profession for him/herself.

LaBouff appeared to agree with Cleva when she stated that a lyric diction coach should aim "to *not* touch on technique". However, LaBouff defined another goal of her lyric diction coaching as being to "open [the singer's] voice up". There is thus a significant difference between LaBouff's and Cleva's approaches. Cleva argues that a lyric diction coach should never have singers' vocal improvement as an aim, and only focus on language. On the other hand, LaBouff sees lyric diction as a means by which vocal improvement may occur, though exclusively through the coach's advice regarding language and without any direct reference to singing technique. The approaches of Di Taranto and LaBouff reflect the interrelatedness of lyric diction and singing technique, which is depicted in Chapters 2.1 and 2.2 and explored further in Chapter 4.

Of course, variation in priorities and approaches amongst lyric diction coaches results in individual singers finding the advice of some coaches more useful than that of others. One interviewee explained that she worked with an internationally celebrated tenor who, when describing his experiences with French lyric diction coaches, said that he had not enjoyed French diction with a coach who "obsessed over each vowel". As a fluent non-native speaker of French, this tenor had found the approach of another lyric diction coach, who worked on the flow of the text, to be far more beneficial. Variation amongst lyric diction coaches is not always advantageous however. Another interviewee spoke of a highly experienced singer working at the Metropolitan Opera. This singer was left "confused and unsure" by the diametrically opposed approaches to vocalic harmonization taken by the two resident French lyric diction coaches.

Professional singers cannot be compelled to implement the lyric diction advice they receive. The exception to this is the rare instance in which their job may be on the line; Daguerre de Hureaux spoke of one occasion on which management informed her that a singer would be sacked if his French did not improve. She noted, however, that

this is extremely uncommon. One can assume that in most instances a singer's lyric diction will need to be at an appropriate level in order to be cast in a role in the first place.

The interview data indicated that two primary factors might contribute to a singer choosing to, or at least appearing to choose to, ignore the advice given to them by a lyric diction coach. The first is an inability to reconcile the suggestions with their vocal production and/or strongly engrained articulatory habits. The second is an inability to give the requisite attention to lyric diction within the pressured production process of an opera. Many of the lyric diction coaches interviewed acknowledged singers' prerogative in both these regards. Rissinger encapsulated the situation quite bluntly, saying: "They have their technique; if they don't like what I'm saying, they won't use it". LaBouff said many singers had described previous productions to her, saying: "Well, [the lyric diction coach had] great knowledge, but I had to leave most of it at the door because it tied me up in knots. I can't use it. I can't sing that way". LaBouff explained that once she demonstrates the compatibility of her lyric diction advice with singing technique by giving singers a suggestion that opens up their voice, they are generally eager to have her input.

Singers who have sung a role many times, may present a different challenge for a lyric diction coach. This situation was described by Di Taranto:

> [Working on the expressive development of the text] with singers who [have done] twenty billion Don Giovanni and the same production five times – it's difficult… Sometimes you can add something about the development, or this length, or these colours. Some people really do appreciate it because they have… a new idea and don't go on automatic pilot. Some singers brightly say, "That's how I do it," and they don't want to think about anything new. I just leave them of course.

Di Taranto's description yet again highlights the fact that, while the only realisation of a lyric diction coach's work is by the singer, the coach cannot actually insist that the singer implement their advice. In this context, interpersonal/pedagogical skills (the fifth of the core skill areas outlined in Section 3.1) become essential. Indeed, all those interviewees who work as lyric diction coaches emphasised the critical importance of their interpersonal and pedagogical skills. They described creating a personal dynamic

in which their advice is most likely to be taken and implemented, so that they are able to achieve as much as possible within the rehearsal situation. As Chapter 4.6 shows, this appears to be broadly manifested in lyric diction pedagogy at the conservatorium level as well.

The remainder of this chapter explores the nature of lyric diction work in preparation for an opera. The value of understanding the professional environment in which lyric diction coaches often work is twofold, providing an insight into experience of both the lyric diction coach and the professional singer. The following discussion reveals the context in which a coach must create the personal dynamic mentioned above and also shows how the complex and often pressured production process of an opera may limit the singer's ability to give attention to lyric diction. This latter aspect also highlights the necessity for singers to develop strong lyric diction skills during their conservatorium studies. After discussing the time pressure under which singers often work, this section explores the influence of the conductor and the director in the rehearsal process, the vulnerability singers may feel, and the enormous amount of input they receive. It also reveals the importance that many of the interviewees attribute to gaining the trust of the singers with whom they work in this environment.

A lyric diction coach who is employed to work on an operatic production is essentially responsible for the quality of the language in the performances. This is also the case when they are employed to assist in the preparation of a recital or recording. However, at the professional level, the majority of a lyric diction coach's work usually takes place in the operatic context. If a lyric diction coach first meets singers during rehearsals for an opera, the singers will already have undertaken significant preparation. Each singer will have memorised their role and will therefore have established vocal habits regarding singing technique and lyric diction. This situation has a significant impact on the choices a lyric diction coach may make regarding their advice to singers. As Kathryn LaBouff explained:

> The biggest problem is [that singers] are always under time constraints. They show up for a production and it has to be off-book, learned. There isn't the time then to go back and woodshed and refix things. I can throw things at them and some of them are good at taking things on. Other [singers] just go, "Whoa, we can't do this".

Some opera companies integrate detailed lyric diction coaching into the rehearsal process, but others do not. Daguerre de Hureaux gave Glyndebourne and the Royal Opera House Covent Garden as two examples of companies that do.

> Glyndebourne is the place where they usually put everything at their disposal to give you the ability to do your job the best possible way... I will be in constant contact with [the Director of Artistic Administration] and say, "So-and-so will need a lot of work and have extra sessions," and usually they will accommodate [this]... Ditto for Covent Garden: I immediately identify the people who are in need and mention that to the relevant people [in order] to try and sort it out.

There can be not doubt that the ability of a company to cater to such needs is determined by both time and budgetary constraints. These large companies are likely to have a far greater capacity to allocate resources to lyric diction than smaller companies. The need to work in great detail or on fundamental lyric diction issues would ideally take place in preparatory or one-on-one sessions. Daguerre de Hureaux believes that it is sometimes more effective for a company to invest in preparatory lyric diction coaching for singers prior to the production process than in lyric diction coaching only during the production rehearsals. She said that in cases where a company's budget for lyric diction coaching is limited, she may advise them regarding the most effective use of her time. Daguerre de Hureaux gave the example of a production of Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* in Zagreb, for which she worked with singers months prior to the production rehearsals, describing the results as "very positive". She added that she makes herself available to do preparatory work with internationally based singers via Skype when a company facilitates this.

Several interviewees explained that, once rehearsals have begun, the timing of advice provided to the singers can be crucial. Lefebvre explained that the focus of a lyric diction coach must vary depending upon the point at which they find themselves in the rehearsal process. She described this as "a rhythm as to what is the priority at [a particular] stage". Notably, Lefebvre said a similar rhythm must apply in the pedagogical process at the conservatorium level. Many of the interviewees expressed an understanding that the timing of their suggestions to singers is as important as the suggestions themselves. LaBouff said: "It has to be the right time, when [the singer

has] time, and they feel they can [implement it]". However, the nature of an opera rehearsal process may prevent such a time occurring. Di Taranto spoke of giving great consideration to the things she says, how she says them, the moment she says them, and even *if* she says them.

The combination of music and drama that defines opera also defines the rehearsal process, and the two principal figures in this process are the conductor and the director. The nature and effect of their interaction is eloquently described by conductor Mark Wigglesworth in his book, *The silent musician: why conducting matters* (2018). He writes:

> A relationship between a conductor and a director is often intense. This is not so much due to the egos of those involved – both are well versed in working with confident people – but because an opera makes so many demands of both a musical and a dramatic nature that the leader of each wants to prioritise the efforts that serve their own specific department. The best conductors and directors care about their work a great deal. In isolation that care can be limitless, but collaboration halves the time available while simultaneously doubling the complexity of the project… (p. 158)

Wigglesworth's book provides a considerable insight into the preparation of an opera, and he acknowledges the frequent existence of "artistic tensions" between conductors and directors (2018, p. 158). Within this framework, the place of the lyric diction coach is far from clear-cut. Di Taranto described working "together, either with the director or the conductor", and said she finds this collaboration plays a pivotal role in the effectiveness of a lyric diction coach's work. The implication that the rehearsal process involves opposing teams is not unusual; Binggeli said that, while the director is in charge during production rehearsals, the lyric diction coach is "on the conductor's team". Radcliffe also described the need for a lyric diction coach to ally him/herself with either the director or the conductor. She related some advice she had received from her mentor, Cleva, in this regard.

> Maria [said] your relationship with the conductor is key, because if he cares about the language, if [advice regarding language] is coming from you and from him, or if he's backing up what you're saying, then it's going to be a lot easier for that to happen… Because conductors mainly come from the musical side and from the language side of things, [s/he's] the one you can work really well together with. Or not.

These comments portray a working environment in which relationships often play a decisive role in the outcome of the lyric diction coach's work. The absence of such a relationship with the conductor or director can disempower the lyric diction coach, as Radcliffe also described:

> If it's just you and you're the only one in that corner, and it can be, …people in rehearsal will use you if they need you and if you're in their way they'll want you out of the way. That sounds very cynical, but it's true, because some people think [language is] important, [and] some people will think it's not.

Di Taranto, Cleva, and Radcliffe's remarks make it clear that the collaboration of a lyric diction coach with the conductor or director of a production may grant their advice an authority or significance that it might not otherwise have. Radcliffe's comment also indicates that the importance attributed to lyric diction within a rehearsal process may vary, not just between the conductor and the director, but also among conductors and directors in general. Given that the focus in production rehearsals is largely dramatic, rather than musical, the attention given to language in that context may depend very much on the priorities of the director. These factors can combine to place the lyric diction coach in a somewhat difficult position. Binggeli described her experience thus:

> Being on the artistic team of an opera company is a great honour, but the language coaches tend to be on the lowest rung of the artistic ladder. I'm talking about the production rehearsal where, basically, you're always scrambling for time. We'll sit there for six hours a day and then have no allocated note-giving time. Once the singers are on break, or if they're released or at the end of the day, we have to run up to them and try to communicate these notes that we've been scrambling down for six hours. It's a tricky process.

Binggeli also gave contrasting examples of a director's engagement with text. In cases she described as "exceptional circumstances that happen occasionally if the director is particularly language-savvy", she spoke of being invited to the floor to help the singers deliver the text or to talk through it. At the other end of the spectrum, she described a prominent movie director who carried CD liner notes of the opera throughout the production rehearsals and, because he was uncomfortable reading the

language being sung, would give the singers cues from the English translation. In many cases these bore little relationship to the sung text.

While Cleva's advice to Radcliffe characterised the conductor as being most invested in the text of the opera, text might well be seen as integral to the drama and thus equally important to the director. Wigglesworth writes:

> If the conductor is interested in the drama and the director is interested in the music, the singers are empowered to deliver both with equal commitment and the audience will experience the work of the composer and librettist without any disconnect between them. (2018, p. 158)

This comment is somewhat ambiguous with regard to text; Wigglesworth seems to be attributing responsibility for the work of the librettist, i.e. text, to the director, but it is not clear if he refers to the sound or to the meaning of that text, or both. Elsewhere, he describes the conductor coming to the rehearsal process with a sense of the character of each role (2018, p. 166), something which is surely derived as much from the text as the music. The combined musical and semantic qualities of text seem to result in it straddling the domains of conductor and director more than either music or dramatization. Though beyond the scope of this project, a deeper exploration of the roles of lyric diction and lyric diction coaches within the development of an opera production might consider the relative language skills and stated priorities of individual conductors and directors, the way vernacular text is treated versus that of a foreign language, and the impact of surtitles on attitudes towards text from performers as well as audiences.[133]

Many of the interviewees were frank about the challenges of being a lyric diction coach in an opera rehearsal context, but they were also quick to recognise the challenges faced by singers. Furthermore, there was widespread acknowledgement by the interviewees of a certain vulnerability that singers may often feel. This extended beyond the professional context to singers studying at the conservatorium level. However, several of the interviewees specifically acknowledged the pressure

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[133] Surtitles are discussed in Chapter 1.

professional singers may be under, both during opera rehearsals and performances. Binggeli described it in this way:

> Singers are such vulnerable, exposed creatures… They… perform under this very unique pressure, and in order to make it possible they have to make themselves so vulnerable… It's very difficult and it's very emotional, but basically in order for them to be able to do what they can do they have to stand like an animal with its belly out… for hours at a time.

It is noteworthy that Wigglesworth, writing from a conductor's perspective, also describes a sense of emotional nakedness in opera. He writes:

> Operas force the performers to bare their souls in a far more open way than symphonies do. You cannot pretend you are not exploring deeply personal issues. (2018, p. 152)

Such vulnerability may not only be associated with opera, however, but also with the very nature of the singing voice; unlike any other musical instrument, the voice is indivisible from its player. In *The musical temperament: psychology and personality of musicians* (1996, p. 173) Anthony Kemp writes: "The singer's instrument is personal, invisible, and very complex, and in a performance it is the vocalist's personality that is presented, together with any vocal defects that are perceived as belonging directly to him or her". He continues: "Whereas other instrumentalists have to be very aware of 'what is me' and 'what is not me', the singer has to take ownership of everything that occurs, including the defects of the 'instrument'" (1996, p. 173). Interestingly, there is little documented research that makes specific reference to identity and the voice in the context of a professional singing career, as Jane Oakland notes in 'Negotiating an 'Opera Singer Identity'' (2014). Oakland argues that "any understanding of what constitutes a sense of self for a singer must also take into account the embodiment of the vocal instrument" (2014, p. 229). This understanding can play an important role in working with singers, and was manifested by many of the interviewees, as exemplified by Binggeli's comments above. Both Gall and Schollum raised the idea of a relationship between the soul and the voice. Gall described singing as "soul strip tease", while Schollum spoke of "putting technique and [the] soul or psyche together" in singing. The fact that they perceive singing in

this way clearly influences the way in which they work; both described teaching in a manner that takes into account the emotional vulnerability a singing student may feel.

There is also a physical vulnerability inherent in being one's own instrument. If a singer becomes ill, their instrument is compromised. This physical reality can have a psychological affect. A study which encompassed over a third of the entire population of professional opera singers in Sweden showed that, while the respondents reported relatively low levels of concern about criticism from the audience and significant others, they reported considerable concern about vocal malfunctioning (Sandgren & Ericsson, 2007, p. 2). This concern was manifested in excessive thoughts regarding vocal malfunctioning and "extensive engagement in health-promoting strategies" (Sandgren & Ericsson, 2007, p. 3). The vulnerability that results from these physical and psychological aspects of singing may be compounded by the requirements of the opera rehearsal process and the nature of operatic performance. Wigglesworth acknowledges this when he describes the demands placed upon opera singers.

> Conductors expect singers to express in public real emotions that the text and dramatic situation make explicit. We ask them to sing, dance, act, feel, emote, think, count, remember, listen, commit and collaborate. We want them to be egocentric while claiming responsibility for an interpretation they might not agree with, and we need them to do all this however they may be feeling physically at the time. (2018, p. 168)

This description provides a valuable insight into the complexity of the task of which lyric diction forms part.

An awareness of the sensitivities of singers and the pressures upon them may influence many aspects of a lyric diction coach's approach. The importance of gaining the trust of professional singers was a dominant theme when the interviewees discussed their work as lyric diction coaches. Daguerre de Hureaux said:

> You've got to gain their confidence, immediately… When you have a production and you've got four weeks or whatever, [the] number one [task] is to bond… Sometimes it's difficult and I have to find something we have in common… It's my responsibility that they trust me and not simply because of my knowledge… They have to trust me as a human being, [and] that I'm here to support them completely. That's a huge part of the work.

Cleva agreed, saying that she finds that a lot of lyric diction coaching "is psychological". She emphasised the importance of a lyric diction coaching being able "to suss a person out, and how to handle them". She said that, even with decades of experience, she is continuously learning with regard to her approach.

> We're such a different bunch of creatures and you have to treat everybody differently... [With] some people you can be direct. [With] some people you can't be direct. [With] some people you have to be very careful only to do the most crass things and [not] go too much in detail because then they'll turn you off. You can see the shade coming down and then you've lost them – there's nothing you can say anymore.

Binggeli explained that her understanding of the vulnerability of singers has a powerful influence on her manner. She described herself as a "particularly un-narky coach, almost to a fault",[134] and said that she deliberately employs enthusiasm as a means of being both emphatic and gentle.

Expectations in regard to the interpersonal approach of a lyric diction coach may be cultural to some extent. Given the narrow geographical scope of this project, this is not an aspect about which it is possible to form any conclusions. However, Gall, who is German but undertakes his lyric diction coaching and teaching in the UK, described learning the necessary sensitivity "the hard way", having lost jobs due to his initially direct approach. He considers some of this to be culturally based: "[In] England, there is this slight thing of shoulder patting and, 'Darling you were wonderful, if you don't mind, we could possibly...'" Gall also stated that he finds attitudes vary at different levels of the profession, saying his experience is that top-level singers are more inclined to say "Cut the crap, give it to me straight. I don't need to hear how wonderful I am". Expectations may also have changed over time. Cleva noted that in her youth a singer might be sacked for repeatedly making the same error, but that this is no longer the case. She emphasised that now, "whatever happens, one must never offend the singer".

[134] 'Narky' is a British term meaning bad-tempered or irritable.

Not all lyric diction coaches succeed in this regard, it seems. Binggeli explained that when she introduces herself as the German coach to international singers at Opera Australia, she often finds they look at her with an expression that implies, “Oh shit, there’s a German coach”. She finds that even singers of the highest level often tell her of “super negative experiences” they have had with German coaches. This has led Binggeli to believe that “German coaches tend to be sticklers and really tricky and insensitive”, perhaps a camp into which Gall may have initially been seen to fall. Binggeli said she finds it counterproductive to “tear someone down”. The establishment of trust depends on more than manner, however. It is also vital that the singers know the coach has an understanding of the sung context, and will thus not require them to attempt anything that compromises them vocally. LaBouff said that diction coaches are often thought of as “dangerous”, which she attributes to lyric diction coaches who are not “helpful vocally”. LaBouff finds that, when she begins working with them, singers may be defensive as a result of such experiences. She related the following anecdote:

> …[All singers] need to have a sort of team around them. So when they have someone new who… they have to work with, they go, “Okay, now can I [trust]?” Early on I did a production for Houston Grand Opera of *A Little Night Music*. It had Sir Thomas Allen, Frederica von Stade, [and] Evelyn Lear in it. [In] the first rehearsal, after I got to know Frederica von Stade, she leant over to Thom Allen and said, “She’s one of us”, and all of a sudden everybody [smiled] because I’m a singer. I’m a singer, so they feel like I’m on their side. The coaches, the director, and the conductor think I’m on *their* side. Truth is, I’m on everybody’s side.

In addition to emphasising the importance of singers feeling they can trust a lyric diction coach’s understanding of singing, this quotation encapsulates an aspect that seems to be crucial to lyric diction coaching in the operatic context; it appears that a lyric diction coach’s ability to form positive collaborative relationships with the conductor and the director, if possible, and most importantly with the singers, is key to maximising the outcome their work. While good collaborative skills are essential in many artistic contexts, the unique nature of singing and singers, the pressure of an opera rehearsal, and the somewhat ambiguous place of a lyric diction coach within the personnel working on a production, appear to heighten the importance of trust-based interpersonal relationships between lyric diction coaches and the singers with whom they work.

It is noteworthy that those interviewees who do not regularly coach in an opera production context did not discuss their interpersonal engagement with students in the same detail as those who do. The importance of relationships in lyric diction coaching, and particularly within a production context, may have a significant effect on the pedagogical styles of those particular coaches when they teach at the conservatorium level. Chapter 4.6 explores the pedagogical style of all the interviewees in their teaching. It reveals that, whether or not they also coach at the professional level, expert lyric diction teachers employ many approaches at the conservatorium level that can be seen to relate to aspects contributing to the effectiveness of professional lyric diction coaching. This may be due to characteristics that are common to singers at any level, the influence of coaching experience upon pedagogical approach, or both; the data for this research does not allow a deduction to be made in this regard. However, such a deduction is not essential. What is important is the conclusion that the quality of the relationships lyric diction coaches and teachers establish, be they with students or professional singers, is key to optimal lyric diction outcomes. Due to the focus of the existent lyric diction literature on content, rather than approach, this is an aspect of lyric diction pedagogy hitherto largely unmentioned.

It may be that the challenges faced in a production context contribute to the development of a lyric diction coach's particular pedagogical skills and sensitivities. Certainly, the interviewees who work in an opera context revealed a desire and ability to tailor advice to the capacity of individual singers, and to determine the optimal timing for this advice and the ideal manner in which to deliver it. These qualities are, however, fundamental to student-focused pedagogy in any context and, as Chapter 4 shows, common to all the interviewees to varying degrees. Given the extent to which L2 pronunciation aptitude varies between individuals, as shown in Chapter 2.4, the necessity for individually tailored lyric diction pedagogy seems logical. Again, however, this aspect has not received significant emphasis in the existent literature. This project demonstrates that an acute awareness of the needs of the individual is central to both effective lyric diction coaching and effective lyric diction teaching.

Chapter 4. Key themes emerging from the interviews

Chapter 4 presents the key themes that emerged from analysis of the primary source materials collected during this study. As outlined in the Method,[135] sixteen interviews were conducted, providing over twenty-three hours of interview data.[136]

From the transcripts, four main thematic categories emerged:

1. Desirable qualities, qualifications, and experience for lyric diction coaches
2. The role of lyric diction studies at the conservatorium level
3. Effective pedagogical approaches employed in teaching lyric diction
4. Key aspects and priorities in conservatorium-level lyric diction learning

The first of these categories has been dealt with extensively in Chapter 3. Categories 2, 3, and 4 encompass sub-categories, henceforth referred to as themes. Each of the themes within categories 2, 3, and 4 is presented as a section of this chapter.[137] In each section, the theme is introduced and a bullet-point summary of the interviewees' responses is provided. This is followed by discussion and analysis of the interviewees' responses, including quotations from the interview transcripts and, where relevant, reference to secondary source materials.

Sections 4.1 to 4.6 address broad aspects of conservatorium-level lyric diction pedagogy, its delivery, and its outcomes. Sections 4.7, 4.8 and 4.9 deal with specific aspects of pedagogical content that feature prominently in lyric diction literature, revealing the role these aspects play within the pedagogical practice of the interviewees. Sections 4.10 to 4.13 explore questions relating to differences between speaking and singing, and their pedagogical implications in terms of students' perceptions of lyric diction, use of consonants, and the challenges of native-language

[135] See Introduction.
[136] Several days worth of classes were observed in New York and London. It would have been desirable for strategic observation of all the interviewees' teaching to form part of the data collection, however the time and budget of the project did not allow for observation of the teaching of all the interviewees. Consequently, observations are supplementary to the interview data and only cited where relevant.
[137] See the Introduction for a visual representation of thematic organisation in Figures 1-3.

lyric diction. The final section, 4.14, examines communication and expression through lyric diction, and the interviewees' pedagogical approaches to these aspects.

The interviewees were asked if they distinguish between lyric diction for art song, oratorio, and opera. Some interviewees described needing to bear in mind the size of the accompanying forces and perhaps make small articulatory adjustments. However, the overwhelming response was that, at the conservatorium-level, no distinction between the forms need, or even should, be made. Consequently, all the following material should be considered relevant to art song, oratorio, and opera.

Throughout this chapter, as throughout this thesis, all quotations of the interviewees are taken from the transcript of their single interview. As such, it has not been deemed necessary to cite those interviews repeatedly as references. In cases where an interviewee's publication has been quoted, this is made clear and a citation provided. In Appendix 1, the place and date of each interview is listed with each interviewee's name, these being the identifiers for each transcript.

4.1. The role of lyric diction tuition as part of conservatorium-level singing studies

All the interviewees were asked how important they consider lyric diction tuition to be for singing students at the conservatorium level. The question was intended not only to provide a justification for this project, but also to reveal the contribution lyric diction studies make within singing students' overall conservatorium education. The interviewees were unanimous in considering lyric diction tuition to be an essential element in conservatorium-level singing studies. They gave numerous reasons. These can be seen to fall within three main areas, as shown below.

1) The development of singing students' practical skills:

- The interdependence of singing technique and lyric diction skills
- The need for singing students to develop awareness and control of their articulators

- The tendency for students' diction skills to be characterised by speech habits from their native language
- The need to prevent singing students from developing bad diction habits
- The large number of languages in which singers must perform, and the need for them to understand and master the differences between those languages

2) The fostering of singing students' attitudes towards text and lyric diction:

- The need for singing students to perceive language as a tool for singing
- The need for singing students to prioritise text when learning and performing repertoire
- The need for students to understand that the meaning of the text is integral to the music and expression

3) The establishment of a foundation for singing students' further lyric diction development:

- The need for singing students to have achieved a level that allows them to refine their lyric diction skills when they reach an opera school or young artist program, and the inefficiency that results when singers at these more advanced educational levels require basic lyric diction training

These reasons encompass the development not only of practical skills, but also of an attitude and approach towards lyric diction that the interviewees consider to be career-long necessities.[138] They also reveal lyric diction to be an integral aspect of conservatorium-level singing studies, and one that intersects significantly with singing technique, communication, and expression. The following discussion and analysis illustrate the interviewees' awareness of the overall educational outcomes necessary in order for singers to prepare for professional careers, and the role of lyric diction within them.

The reason given most frequently for the importance of lyric diction tuition as part of conservatorium-level studies was the interdependence of lyric diction and singing

[138] See following section, 4.2.

technique. LaBouff described lyric diction and singing technique as going “hand in hand”, and lyric diction as “the backside of the vocal technique coin”, while Rissinger described lyric diction as “part of the [singing] technique”. Binggeli characterised language as “the building blocks of a healthily created sound”. Some interviewees gave specific examples of the interdependence of singing technique and lyric diction. For example, Lefebvre emphasised the importance of establishing pure vowels at the conservatorium level. She said that, “in order for vocal production to be clear, the vowels have to be addressed” and that “[an absence of] diction, or a lack of clarity, creates… many issues with vocal production”. Similarly, LaBouff described poor lyric diction as “interfering” with vocal technique, pulling it “down” and “back”.

While the detrimental effect of poor lyric diction upon singing technique was observed, so too was the corresponding positive effect that good lyric diction can have. Adams elaborated on this in several regards:

> Good diction and good vocal technique are closely related. While some fine singers have less than ideal diction, think Joan Sutherland for example, the more usual pattern I have observed is that when singers pay close attention to diction concepts such as clear, well-defined vowels, crisp consonants that help to define the vocal line, certain aspects of vocal technique improve. Good diction enhances legato line. It does not compromise it. Good diction also promotes good breath management.

This response is particularly noteworthy given that Adams has been both a singing teacher and a lyric diction teacher, and thus responsible for the development of both singing students’ technical and lyric diction skills. The interviewees’ perspectives regarding the interdependence of lyric diction and singing technique are supported by the content of Chapters 2.1 and 2.2, which outline several significant ways in which the two areas intersect. Given that a singing student will ideally establish a solid foundation of singing technique during their conservatorium-level studies, it follows that the development of lyric diction skills is a necessary part of that process.

Yet, while the interdependence of lyric diction and singing technique was reiterated in many instances throughout the interviews, and also with reference to professional singing, some of the interviewees felt that it is not widely understood by singing students. They expressed frustration that some singing students perceive language as

something additional, or as an aspect that gets in the way of singing. Gall described it as “absolutely crucial” that “from the very start, [singing students] understand that language and singing work together”. He continued: “I find it super crucial that the young singers understand that the language is a tool rather than something getting in the way”. Without asking students themselves, it is impossible to definitively state why they might view language as additional or “getting in the way”. However, if lyric diction is integrated late in the process of learning repertoire, singing students may feel that it disrupts habits of phonation and articulation that have already been established. Such a perception may also develop as the result of an educational focus on technical development that does not include certain aspects of lyric diction, such as consonants.[139] It is interesting to note that the two coaches who spoke particularly passionately about fostering singing students’ perception of lyric diction as an aid to good singing, rather than an impediment, were Gall and Danchenko-Stern. As a German and Russian coach respectively, each deals with a language containing many consonants. If students perceive text and lyric diction as “getting in the way” of singing, they are highly unlikely to prioritise either of these aspects in their vocal development or in performance. Thus, the attitudes towards text and lyric diction that are fostered among students can be seen to be critical to their practical skill development.

An additional practical reason given for the importance of lyric diction tuition at the conservatorium level was the need for singing students to develop awareness and control of their articulators.[140] This might be considered as much a part of the process of developing singing technique as it is part of developing lyric diction skills. Di Taranto likened the process of learning to form both vowels and consonants with the tongue to that of learning to walk, implying the fundamental nature of these skills. Adams, Morton, and Schollum also stressed the need for singers to be aware of what their articulators are doing in order to produce articulations. Schollum spoke of the characteristics of vowel and consonant production required for each of the commonly sung languages as each training the articulators in a different way.

[139] Pedagogical approaches to consonants are discussed in detail in Section 4.12.
[140] The fundamental importance of a singer’s awareness and control of the articulators was also referred to in Chapter 2.2.

Awareness and control of the articulators also relate to the elimination of speech-based articulatory habits and to the avoidance of forming bad lyric diction habits, which were two further practical reasons given for the importance of lyric diction tuition at the conservatorium level. The interviewees all acknowledged the tendency for students' lyric diction skills to be characterised by speech habits from their native language. Adams noted that most undergraduate singers in the US may have studied Spanish for one or two years in high school, but that otherwise often "the only knowledge they have of the major foreign languages for classical singing is through their voice lessons". He explained that their "diction skills are usually rudimentary and characterised by speech patterns and habits from spoken English". Radcliffe, working in the UK, finds that many singing students there are "very reticently shy with languages" and "find it embarrassing". She attributes this to the fact that they have "barely done French" in school and are used to speaking English whenever they travel. Given that most of the interviewees were based in the US and UK, it is unsurprising that the monolingual upbringing and minimal foreign language learning of some students was found to be a limitation. However, the need to overcome speech-based articulatory habits is not confined to English speakers. For example, Di Taranto's experience of singing students' diction habits was similar to that of Adams although she teaches in the Netherlands, a country known for its multilingualism. In Di Taranto's case, she teaches Italian lyric diction amidst a cultural and institutional focus on Germanic repertoire, and often finds her students' Italian lyric diction skills to be initially rudimentary and strongly characterised by Dutch and/or German articulatory patterns. This may also be seen to reflect the fact that multilingual speakers often speak non-native languages with production that is strongly influenced by by their native tongue, as shown in Chapter 2.4. Thus, multilingualism does not necessarily guarantee a significant articulatory advantage in terms of lyric diction.[141] All singing students need to overcome speech-derived diction habits in order to facilitate their technical development and a capacity for singing in a variety of languages. While the particular adjustments may vary, the difference between the

[141] Of course, it is likely to aid understanding of text and, therefore, suprasegmental skills and expression.

articulatory requirements of singing and speaking requires training of new articulatory skills regardless of the student's native language.[142]

The process of learning new articulations and training the articulators must, however, be undertaken correctly. Griffiths, who works as a vocal coach for postgraduate students, spoke of his difficulties in trying to correct lyric diction mistakes that students had developed during their undergraduate studies. He therefore emphasised the importance of singing students' exposure at the undergraduate level to "good [lyric diction] teaching". Given the aforementioned influence of lyric diction upon the development of singing technique, this importance can be seen to relate not just to the prevention of linguistic errors, but also errors of vocal production.

While most interviewees spoke with a focus on their language of specialisation, some also acknowledged the practical challenge of the large number of languages in which singers are required to perform, and the time it takes to become proficient in the lyric diction of each one. Only then can singing students be aware of the differences between the sung languages. Morton described the absence of this awareness as a "handicap" for singers. Given that the differences between sung languages extend beyond articulatory details to encompass prosodic, stylistic, and musical aspects essential to high-level performance, the advantage of singing students starting the lyric diction learning process early in their conservatorium studies is clear.

The impact that singing students' attitudes towards text and lyric diction have upon their practical skill development has been touched on already with particular reference to the need for singing students to perceive language as a tool for singing. Many interviewees also spoke of the need for singing students to develop an awareness of the importance of text and lyric diction from the beginning of their studies. For example, Radcliffe felt that if students are not taught lyric diction from the conservatorium level, "they don't prioritise the fact that they will have to be singing in a *language,* not just syllables". Along with Danchenko-Stern, Moris, and Schollumn, Radcliffe spoke of the need to develop students' understanding that text, meaning and music are integrally related. Danchenko-Stern described the "musical

[142] See Chapters 2.1 and 2.2, and Section 4.13.

message" as "absolutely united with the message of the lyrics". She argued that it is impossible to separate the two because the text is what "attracted the composers". Similarly, Schollum emphasised the importance that student singers understand from the beginning of their studies that the composer's point of inspiration was almost always the text. Notably, he also argued that the integration of text, meaning, and music allow the singer to experience an expressive and physical freedom when performing that is otherwise not possible.[143]

Many interviewees described these two aspects – the prioritisation of text when learning and performing repertoire, and an understanding that the meaning of the text is integral to the music and expression – as essential to singing students' long-term development and success. Yet, Danchenko-Stern and Radcliffe expressed frustration that such attitudes towards text and lyric diction are not always fostered during conservatorium studies. To the layperson objectively considering the act of singing, it may seem somewhat extraordinary that a singer would not consider text a priority, yet this theme recurred frequently during the interviews. Singing students and singing teachers may sometimes view the process of learning to phonate as all-consuming and phonation may consequently become divorced from language, lyric diction, and even meaning and expression. In some cases, the course offerings of conservatoria may not prioritise text and lyric diction within the framework of singing students' studies.[144] For example, Binggeli and Kimmorley expressed particular frustration regarding the attitudes towards text and lyric diction they see manifested by young, pre-professional singers in Australia, many of whom are recent conservatorium graduates. Both find that, in many instances, young pre-professional Australian singers do not attribute importance to the text and lyric diction and/or do not have the well-developed lyric diction skills. Binggeli and Kimmorley see the nature of students' conservatorium-level education as partially responsible and believe greater emphasis must be given to text and lyric diction in Australian conservatoria.[145]

[143] These themes are explored in detail in Section 4.14.
[144] See Section 4.3.
[145] The career implications for singers with limitations in their lyric diction skills are explored in Section 4.2.

Daguerre de Hureaux argued that singing students must learn to prioritise text and meaning during their conservatorium-level studies because time pressure can encourage superficiality among professional singers. She explained:

> Unless you've [developed] good habits very early on, you will later on rely on being a quick reader, being intelligent enough, and using your voice… to hide the fact that you really have not dug deep enough into the meaning of the text.[146]

All the reasons given by the interviewees for the importance of lyric diction at the conservatorium level reflected a desire to provide a foundation for singing students' development beyond the conservatorium level. The need for efficiency during singing students' conservatorium studies was also broadly acknowledged and lyric diction tuition was cited as contributing to such efficiency. Radcliffe, for example, described conservatorium-level lyric diction studies as a "short-cut". She said: "[Singing] in a different language is just a new skill, and there are tools, so the more that those tools are laid out clearly and given priority at the beginning of training, the better". Cleva and Moris both described working at the National Opera Studio (UK) and in the Royal Opera House Jette Parker Young Artists Program with conservatorium graduates who have not received such initial lyric diction training. Cleva said that singers who need to do lyric diction "ground work" at these higher levels can "lose half a year" in their development. Similarly, Moris argued that lyric diction learning should not be left to the end of a singing student's period of study, saying that those singing students who do not begin developing their lyric diction skills early in their studies often need to spend a lot of time doing so later on.

However, Griffiths made an interesting distinction regarding the outcomes of students' studies. He felt that for those singing students who do not progress beyond a Bachelor's degree, lyric diction studies are unlikely to prove crucially important unless they open up a possible career in a language-related area. However, for those students who do progress into postgraduate study and then into a singing career, Griffiths felt the early exposure to good lyric diction teaching is vital. It is, however, very difficult to predict the trajectory of each singing student's development. The premise of interdependence between lyric diction and the development of vocal

[146] See Section 4.14.

technique implies that singing students who may have the potential to progress beyond undergraduate studies could well be hindered in doing so by lack of good quality lyric diction instruction.

In conclusion, there was universal agreement amongst the interviewees regarding the importance of conservatorium-level lyric diction studies, and considerable overlap in the reasons they provided. Lyric diction tuition was never characterised as an isolated facet of singing training, but rather as an integral aspect of conservatorium level singing studies that encompasses singing technique, communication and expression, and the development of skills and habits that are essential for singing students' long-term career success. The effects of good lyric diction tuition and those of its absence are explored in the following section.

4.2. The professional legacy of lyric diction training

Two interview questions were asked regarding professional singers, with the intention of eliciting answers that would help to define the educational goals for conservatorium-level lyric diction teaching. The first concerned skills and strategies the interviewees see manifested by professional singers with excellent lyric diction. The second concerned the interviewees' experience of professional singers with difficulties or limitations in lyric diction.

When asked to describe the skills and strategies manifested by professional singers with excellent lyric diction, most of the interviewees cited two aspects that they observe to be of primary importance:

- The singers' dedication to continuing to refine their lyric diction throughout their careers
- The singers' prioritisation of language during their preparation of repertoire

Three other issues were raised:

- That increasingly high standards of lyric diction are demanded as singers advance within the profession
- That a secure foundation of lyric diction skills allows singers to implement the refinements demanded of them within the professional context
- That professional singers are responsible for continuing to develop and refine their lyric diction skills

It is noteworthy that the characteristics repeatedly described by the interviewees with regard to professional singers who have excellent lyric diction did not include any details of execution or aspects specific to the interviewees' particular languages of specialisation. Rather, they focused on the overall attitude and approach manifested by the singers. It would be reasonable to conclude that those professional singers whose lyric diction is of the highest level have developed their capabilities far beyond the mastery of fundamentals, and that it is their overall approach that warrants the most discussion. The notion of prioritising language recurred numerous times in this context and this implies that some professional singers *do not* prioritise language. Indeed, the discussion of professional singers who exhibit difficulties in lyric diction bore this out.

All the interviewees had encountered professional singers who exhibit difficulties or shortcomings in their lyric diction. Several spoke of the challenge this can create in the context of production rehearsals, where lyric diction coaches need to consider the other demands being made of singers when giving advice regarding lyric diction.[147] The interviewees had encountered the following:

- Basic lyric diction errors, i.e. errors of pronunciation
- Unidiomatic use of the language, e.g. suprasegmental errors
- A lack of nuance in the use of language
- An inability or unwillingness to implement lyric diction advice given in the context of a production

[147] See Chapter 3.3 'Lyric diction coaching for professional singers'.

The interviewees proffered the following causes for the aforementioned difficulties:

- A lack of knowledge of pronunciation rules
- A lack of knowledge of phonetics and IPA
- A negative association with a particular language, e.g. a belief that it is more difficult to sing than other languages
- A lack of conservatorium education, or insufficient lyric diction tuition at the conservatorium level
- A failure to recognise the standard of lyric diction required
- A failure to prioritise language and lyric diction as part of role preparation and/or professional development

As the following discussion shows, the interviewees cited several basic aspects of lyric diction execution that they have found lacking in those professional singers who have lyric diction difficulties or shortcomings. They also identified the factors they saw as contributing to the singers' shortcomings. These responses clearly show that a lack of practical lyric diction skills and basic lyric diction knowledge, both of which would ideally be developed during conservatorium-level lyric diction classes, contribute to professional singers having difficulties or shortcomings in their lyric diction.

However, the interviewees' responses to both questions reveal that, beyond practical skills and basic knowledge, there is an overall attitude and approach to preparation of repertoire essential to excellent professional lyric diction skills. This corresponds to the interviewees' responses regarding the importance of lyric diction tuition at the conservatorium level, which encompassed the fostering of students' overall attitudes towards text and lyric diction.

Most of the interviewees have worked at a variety of professional levels throughout their careers. Consequently, they have experienced working with professional singers with varying levels of lyric diction skills, in many cases according to their respective professional level. For example, in her work at the Dutch National Opera, Di Taranto does not encounter singers who have significant difficulties or shortcomings in their

Italian lyric diction. However, she said that she does encounter them in "smaller productions" (i.e. productions that might be considered to be at a lesser professional level). Di Taranto explained that the most common error in smaller productions is the stopping of a vowel in anticipation of a consonant. When this occurs, Di Taranto takes the singer aside to see if s/he is open to the correction of this fundamental aspect of Italian diction. She said, "You have to see if they are really curious and they like to learn, or if they are resistant… Mostly they want to learn".[148]

While Di Taranto described articulatory shortcomings, Radcliffe said she has experienced working with professional singers who made errors due to their lack of knowledge regarding Italian pronunciation rules. She did not specify the professional level at which this occurred, simply exclaiming it happens "all the bloody time!"[149] Radcliffe added: "In defence of the teachers, [the singers] probably have been told at some point, but it has to be systematic, and it has to be very clear and prioritised". Radcliffe's comment suggests that a lack of priority given to lyric diction tuition during conservatorium studies may limit outcomes, even when tuition is provided.

All the interviewees acknowledged that there is a limit to how much can be taught in a conservatorium context, and that a graduating student is not a finished product in terms of lyric diction. However, they saw conservatorium-level lyric diction tuition as contributing to the development of the skills and knowledge that allow professional singers to prepare repertoire thoroughly and independently. This is a process they considered essential to high quality lyric diction.

In one example of this process, Danchenko-Stern told the story of a former student (who she did not identify) who was contracted to sing the role of Eugene Onegin in Tchaikovsky's opera of the same name only three weeks before the performance. As the singer was a native English speaker and would be performing the role in Russian, management offered him a score with a transliteration, which he declined. To their disbelief and scepticism, he said that he would do the transliteration himself.

[148] Resistance from professional singers to lyric diction advice provided in a production context is discussed in Chapter 3.3.
[149] It is important to note that, at the time of interview, Radcliffe had not coached at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, which would be considered the highest professional level in the UK.

Danchenko-Stern concluded the anecdote: “By the time he had finished a transliteration of Onegin, he knew it off by heart. That’s how I teach”. Such pedagogical focus on the development of singers’ independence was widespread amongst the interviewees. Many noted the professional and financial advantages gained by professional singers when the lyric diction skills they have developed during conservatorium studies allow them to engage in thorough and independent preparation before seeking the input of a lyric diction coach.

Though all the interviewees acknowledged that the luxury of extended preparation time is not always possible in the singing profession, they noted the discipline of those singers who have excellent lyric diction, regardless of time constraints. Radcliffe spoke with some exasperation of those students and professionals who do not undertake the process of “opening a score, going to the words [and] translating the words” before they begin singing. She noted that those who use language best in their singing, “translate the whole bloody opera – they don’t just translate their bit”. She described this as a discipline, and an act of prioritisation, saying, “They do it first, and they always do it, and they won’t cheat, and they won’t cut corners”. Radcliffe emphasised that this process is vital to achieving high quality lyric diction.

Similarly, in her role as vocal coach and repetiteur, Kimmorley said she had observed that those professional singers who are highly skilled in lyric diction devote a long period of time to preparation, and demonstrate “an absolute commitment to language preparation being given the same weight as every other preparation”. It is important to note that the fostering of such commitment was one of the reasons the interviewees considered lyric diction tuition essential at the conservatorium level.

The establishment of lyric diction skills during conservatorium level studies also leads to professional singers having the ability to understand and implement lyric diction advice in the professional context. Chapter 3.3 has illustrated the importance of this ability. LaBouff, for example, said that she has had several opera companies say to her: “We can always tell which students are yours, because they know what they’re doing. You can give them one comment and they’ll just go and fix all these things”. LaBouff added, “And that’s the point”. In instances where she is required to coach

former students in a professional context, she noted that, "it's much faster… We're all speaking the same language".

One of the ways in which conservatorium level lyric diction tuition contributes to a "common language" for use at the professional level is through the study of IPA. US-trained Rissinger, who works at the Semperoper Dresden in Germany, described the relative ease with which she helps American singers with their lyric diction, due to the nature of their conservatorium lyric diction tuition. She portrayed a different situation regarding German singers, few of whom have learnt IPA:

> …It can take a little bit longer because [German singers often] don't have the basic understanding of phonetics or the basic concepts that we [Americans] have to learn from scratch… IPA gives us a language that we can all communicate in. When people haven't learnt that language, then suddenly you're trying to find ways of explaining [lyric diction concepts] to an adult that they have never heard before.

Similarly, UK-based Daguerre de Hureaux said, "I work in opera houses. I have to give notes. I have not got time to learn the particular hieroglyphics of every single singer… IPA is a universal language".

As these quotations indicate, though it functions as a universal tool, IPA is clearly not yet an entirely universal part of lyric diction tuition, particularly throughout Europe.[150] However, given that Daguerre de Hureaux is UK-based and coaches throughout Europe, it does appear that IPA usage is spreading beyond the US, albeit perhaps slowly. Unsurprisingly, its initial usage in many cases seems to be for French lyric diction, which is notoriously unphonetic. Significantly, Rissinger and Daguerre de Hureaux's comments indicate that a lack of IPA knowledge may lead to a singer's inability to understand and/or implement lyric diction advice given in the context of a production, be it in the US or in Europe.

The ability to understand and implement lyric diction advice contributes to the capacity of singers to develop and refine their lyric diction throughout their professional careers. When professional singers have strong lyric diction skills, rather than remedying shortcomings, the input of a lyric diction coach facilitates increased

[150] For the interviewees' perspectives regarding IPA, see Section 4.8.

refinement. LaBouff, for example, explained that, having developed such skills in her classes, many of her students continue to seek private English lyric diction coachings with her on their repertoire long after they have graduated. LaBouff cited Renée Fleming as a particularly noteworthy example. Having studied English lyric diction with LaBouff at Juilliard, Fleming sought her assistance with the lyric diction of all her English language roles during the early years of her career. LaBouff said Fleming continues to contact her whenever she has a question regarding English lyric diction. Their relationship has now spanned decades.

The fact that a singer of Fleming's calibre continues to seek advice regarding lyric diction illustrates the extent and level to which lyric diction may be refined throughout a singer's professional career. The importance of this ongoing process was repeatedly emphasised by the interviewees. For example, Morton said that professional singers with excellent lyric diction possess an "understanding [that] how to use the elements of lyric diction… is something that continually needs to be explored and developed", while Griffiths stressed that language requires "a constant polishing…" and that, as a professional singer, it is necessary to become "more and more sophisticated in your knowledge and use of the language". Griffiths also noted that, the higher the professional level, the greater the expectations of singers by lyric diction coaches and conductors. Moris supported this observation. He observed that, even at the level of The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, where he works, refinement continues to be required.

> [Lyric diction] is very important. That is why [there are lyric diction coaches] at the opera house at Covent Garden… Even great singers sometimes… have to be reminded that it is necessary to remember to make a little bit more emphasis on one word because [of] the phrase, or especially sometimes in the *recitativi*.

The need for continuous development and refinement of one's craft is familiar to all musicians. However, the fact that the interviewees attribute dedication to the continued refinement of lyric diction as contributing to the success of those professional singers who have achieved a particularly high level of lyric diction suggests that this quality is not ubiquitous. While it is rarely possible to reach the level of lyric diction required at the top of the profession during conservatorium studies, it is possible to instil in the students an understanding that an ongoing

commitment to the refinement of their skills will be required career-long. Adams said that "one of the most important points that a diction class should impart" is that "good lyric diction skills are vitally important to good singing, and that acquiring such skills is an ongoing process".

When asked about the difficulties professional singers may exhibit with lyric diction, several interviewees cited the lack of lyric diction skills in a particular language as sometimes causing a professional singer to "fear" that language.[151] Daguerre de Hureaux, for example, described the difficulty of encountering singers at every level, from postgraduate students and young artists to middle-aged professionals, who do not have a solid basis of undergraduate French lyric diction. She said:

> It's highly problematic. I've multiple ways of teaching for these people because, remember, the person arrives with all their fears, their lack of knowledge, or what they think they know but they don't know.

Similarly, Lefebvre reported encountering young singers already on "high profile career paths" with "huge gaps" in their French lyric diction skills. She felt that French is "more complicated or more difficult" than many of the other commonly sung languages, and can consequently become a source of "fear" to those who have not had adequate training in the language. Certainly, the challenges inherent in the phonology of French may make it a language that poses particular difficulty for a professional singer who has not received tuition in its lyric diction.

An absence of lyric diction tuition may also lead to misconceptions about a language. Danchenko-Stern, for example, said she finds that many singers have misconceptions about singing in Russian. When she asks them to sing in a *bel canto* manner, as they do in other languages, they often reply: "But it's Russian". This implies that Russian cannot be sung in a *bel canto* manner, however Danchenko-Stern argues that it can and must be. She maintains that, when sung correctly, Russian is as comfortable as

[151] It is necessary to note that the sensitive nature of a lyric diction coach's work and the necessity for diplomacy and rapport when working with singers in productions made discussion of professional singers' lyric diction shortcomings uncomfortable for some of the interviewees. Cleva, for example, was unwilling to provide any specific examples of difficulties she has encountered amongst singers with whom she had worked.

Italian, and attributes singers' poor Russian lyric diction to ignorance; Danchenko-Stern was quick to acknowledge that Russian lyric diction is not offered at all conservatoria and that many professional singers may need to initiate their own learning and seek out (and pay for) tuition in lyric diction if they are required to sing in Russian.

Misconceptions and negative associations regarding a language may also be created by a singer's educational experience. For example, Gall said that some professional singers carry with them the psychological impact of comments made regarding German during their formative educational years, e.g. a teacher's dislike of the German language, or a teacher's belief that German is particularly difficult to sing. Gall said that he finds this may result in singers having a career-long belief that singing in German is unavoidably awkward, and went so far as to describe some professional singers as "traumatised". Similarly, Binggeli spoke of encountering negative attitudes towards singing in German among the singers with whom she has worked. When working with a singer for the first time, Gall now always asks if they enjoy singing in German and, if they do not, he attempts to ascertain those elements with which they are struggling and to provide assistance. Aspects of German, such as its consonant-orientated nature, may bring with them articulatory challenges that some singers consider greater than those of Italian, for example. However, conservatorium-level lyric diction tuition that equips singers with the skills to meet those challenges, for example, revealing the expressive palette of the German consonants, is likely to prevent the development of negative associations.

The interviewees were asked about the impact of conservatorium-level lyric diction tuition, or the absence thereof, on students' long-term success. All felt that lyric diction skills were crucial to career progression. Cleva cited instances in which deficiencies in lyric diction had excluded professional singers from career opportunities that might otherwise have been available to them. She explained that several singers who had successful careers at the English National Opera (where all operas are performed in English) had not succeeded at the Royal Opera House. Cleva said that this was "not because of their ability, their voice, or their personality," but because "they just couldn't cut it with the languages". Similarly, Chapter 3.3 cited an instance in which Daguerre de Hureaux was told by the artistic director of a top

international opera house that a particular singer would be sacked in a week's time if his French did not improve.

Given that this research has been undertaken from Australia, it was noteworthy that Binggeli and Kimmorley felt Australian singing students and professional singers may have their opportunities limited by deficiencies in their lyric diction skills. Kimmorley said that all the pre-professional singers she knows from Australia and New Zealand who have gone overseas have found their level of lyric diction to be below that of their international colleagues. It is during their overseas training, she said, that such students "catch up" on the necessary skills. Likewise, Binggeli said that Australian singing students can "only catch up to where they need to be through catching up on coaching". She felt that in the UK and Germany allowances may be made for Australian singing students' deficiencies in lyric diction, and the necessary tuition provided. However, Binggeli did not see this as the case elsewhere, saying: "France – no way. Italy – obviously no way".

Di Taranto also spoke of the crucial importance of Italian lyric diction when her students from the Conservatorium van Amsterdam go on to undertake national and international auditions. She too emphasised the fact that, with training and dedication, excellent lyric diction skills can be developed. In particular, Di Taranto described a "sound expectation" that she feels applies when singing in Italian. She said, "This sound is not connected to the passport you have. You can have it because you learn it…"

The importance of training and dedication to the initial development of excellent lyric diction skills was reiterated time and again during the interviews. For professional singers, the prioritising of text and language in general, and during preparation in particular, was a dominant and recurring theme. Not one interviewee stated that a professional singer could have high-level lyric diction skills without attributing importance to language in their singing or dedicating attention to its preparation.

Interestingly, the idea of a talent or gift for languages was mentioned very infrequently. While some singers do possess an aptitude for the learning and delivery of language, many find it an area at which they have to work hard to achieve a high

level. The interviewees did not appear to see the necessity for such hard work as an impediment to success. They did, however, see the lack of commitment to language as limiting professional singers, both artistically and professionally. It is noteworthy that Kimmorley, though not a lyric diction coach or teacher, spoke about this particularly passionately. She feels that singers who have not sufficiently prioritised their lyric diction skills perform at an artistic level "a notch or two below where they could be". She gave the very striking example of a well-known Antipodean baritone, saying:

> I was sitting listening to [him] yesterday and I thought, "If you'd bothered to learn Italian… if you could really say these texts and use [the language] in your seduction, your performance would go to a really international level. At the moment it's good Australian or New Zealand, but it's not good Metropolitan Opera level because you haven't bothered.

Kimmorley's comment, and obvious frustration, highlights an issue raised by several of the interviewees. Just as hard work, rather than aptitude, was seen to be pivotal to excellent lyric diction, so too was the responsibility of professional singers to take initiative regarding the development of their lyric diction skills. Several interviewees observed that, rather than being due to an insurmountable limitation in a professional singer's abilities, ongoing difficulties in an aspect of lyric diction might be due to a failure to prioritise the aspect sufficiently and take responsibility for its improvement. They saw conservatorium-level lyric diction tuition as playing an important role in fostering singing students' understanding of that ongoing responsibility.

It is evident that conservatorium-level lyric diction tuition can provide only an initial part of the lyric diction skills required by singers at a high professional level. However, the potential legacy of such tuition was made clear by the responses of the interviewees regarding the lyric diction of professional singers. The question regarding the skills and strategies of professional singers with excellent diction was framed in order to elicit descriptions of desired education outcomes for conservatorium-level lyric diction. When considered in this light, the answers do not so much provide information regarding curriculum content as convey an overall attitude to lyric diction that might be cultivated in the conservatorium context. This attitude is that text and lyric diction are of fundamental importance to singing, and that they should be prioritised within the preparation of repertoire, and developed and

refined career-long. The cultivation of such an attitude ties in with the importance of fostering a positive view of lyric diction and thus avoiding the trauma and fear some of the interviewees described having encountered amongst professional singers.

Significantly, the factors the interviewees cited as contributing to difficulties or shortcomings in lyric diction at the professional level also prevent independent preparation and inhibit the ongoing development and refinement of singers' lyric diction skills. The interviewees argued that the continued development and refinement that is necessary in order for singers to advance in the profession requires a secure foundation of basic lyric diction skills and, in many cases, an understanding of phonetic concepts including IPA. Furthermore, while some singers may have greater aptitude than others in regard to lyric diction, the overwhelming attitude of the interviewees was that lyric diction skills are largely learnable, requiring the correct pedagogical input and sufficient dedication of the singer, whether at the conservatorium or professional level. This perspective, combined with the fact that deficiencies in lyric diction skills may have a significant negative impact on the career trajectory of a singer, signals the importance of effective lyric diction pedagogy within the training of conservatorium-level singers.

4.3. Differences between conservatoria in the number of hours allocated to lyric diction tuition

Although the preceding sections indicate lyric diction to be of integral importance within the context of singers' conservatorium training, conservatoria vary dramatically in the quantity of lyric diction tuition they provide. This study focuses upon the pedagogical approaches of the interviewees and, as such, is not concerned with the specific course offerings at the conservatoria with which the interviewees are/were associated. Consequently, no systematic survey of lyric diction course offerings was undertaken for this study, and none of the interview questions was designed to elicit information regarding course hours allocated to lyric diction tuition. However, the subject of course hours arose spontaneously in several interviews, and in others it was prompted by a follow-up question. The interviewees' comments revealed an extraordinary variation in the quantity of lyric diction tuition offered by

the conservatoria at which they were teaching. It was therefore deemed valuable to discuss the issue within this analysis of the interview data.

Decisions regarding hours allocated to subjects within a course framework are rarely, if ever, granted to individual pedagogues. Thus, while some interviewees spoke positively about the course framework in which they taught, others expressed considerable frustration. At the time of interview, the latter interviewees felt that the number of hours for which they were contracted to teach lyric diction was inadequate to their students' needs.

At the time of interview, the number of class hours allocated to undergraduate-level lyric diction tuition by the conservatoria at which the interviewees taught included:

- Two one-hour classes per week for a single language for a year
- One forty five-minute one-to-one session per week for a single language for two years
- Ten thirty-minute one-to-one sessions per year for a single language for two years
- One fifteen-minute one-to-one session per week for a single language for one year

At the Masters level, class hour allocations included:

- Two ninety-minute classes per week for a single language for a year
- One forty five-minute one-to-one session per week for a single language degree-long
- Two one-hour classes per week for a single language for a semester
- One fifteen-minute one-to-one session per week for a single language for a year
- Nothing (One institution at which an interviewee was teaching did not provide lyric diction tuition at the Masters level.)

As stated, each of these allocations is for a single language. In some instances, particularly at the Masters level, students were required to study the lyric diction of several languages concurrently. Thus, the overall time allocated to their lyric diction studies was sometimes two, three, or even four times greater than those listed above. Those interviewees who taught each of their classes for one hour or more per week, or a student one-to-one for forty-five minutes or more per week, appeared content with the time allocated to lyric diction. All the others felt, to varying degrees, that the quality of their pedagogy and the students' outcomes were compromised by the limited tuition time.

It is important to bear in mind that course offerings at conservatoria are subject to change. For this reason, and at the request of some interviewees, no specific institutions are identified. Yet, it is impossible to deny that the variation in class hours allocated to lyric diction is extraordinary, particularly considering that all these conservatoria have well-established international reputations.

There was a discrepancy between US and UK/European institutions in the number of class hours devoted to lyric diction tuition. All US-based interviewees were content with the number of lyric diction class hours students received, as were some UK/European interviewees. However, all those interviewees who felt the number of class hours devoted to lyric diction was inadequate were teaching either in Europe or the UK.

Several of the US-based interviewees indicated they were aware that European conservatoria generally did not approach lyric diction in as systematic or intensive a manner as those in the US. Morton felt that the "codification" of lyric diction in the US had developed due to an awareness that American singers are unlikely to have a natural connection to the European languages. He said:

> Along the way somebody said, "Gosh, if we're going to be teaching singers, they're really going to need to know all of those languages. How are we going to do it?" And it evolved into, "Well, they're going to have to learn diction…" This system is a stronger system than in conservatories in Europe simply because… [in Europe] they take [language skills] for granted and diction is really not taught, [or] at least it's not taught very much.

Morton's description of the contrast between US and European conservatoria does appear to be somewhat borne out by the small sample of conservatoria associated with this study. The tendency for European opera houses to perform operas composed in, or translated into, the vernacular until the latter decades of the twentieth century may have contributed to a lack of systematic lyric diction tuition in European countries. By contrast, the lyric diction training in US conservatoria was developed in order to equip American singers for working in exactly that European context.

Daguerre de Hureaux, who teaches French lyric diction in London and has coached throughout the UK, Europe, and Asia, described the difference she has found between US-trained professional singers and those from elsewhere in Europe and the UK:

> You'll find that most American [singers] have come through the same kind of phonetic diction training with something solid, so at least the basics are there…. Then when I go to Poland or Norway, we are talking really [about]… the formation of each vowel… and they really do not know. [I find the] same thing in England.

This reflects the thoroughness that Adams cited as a strength of the conservatorium training singers receive in the US. He commented on the large number of American singers who have worked in and continue to work in German opera houses, noting that, since the latter part of the twentieth century, American singers have "had a reputation in Germany of being extremely grounded in all aspects of their craft, which would include languages".

Interestingly, one interviewee suggested there has been a shift in lyric diction priorities at some UK conservatoria. Cleva, whose teaching and coaching experience in the UK spans several decades, described witnessing an improvement in the standard of lyric diction amongst UK conservatorium graduates in the four or five years prior to 2016 (the year of interview). She said:

> Here [the conservatoria] are beginning to give importance to language already at the undergraduate level. Before they used to wait until [singers] were coming in [to programs such as the National Opera Studio and Jette Parker Young Artist Program] and it's not too late, but it was a lot more work for them… In the past four or five years I've noticed a difference… If [singing students] start [lyric diction while] undergraduates, by the time they get to us in the various opera schools [i.e. post-conservatorium training] they know what you're talking about. … It's not a blank page for them and I think that is a very positive thing… Then you can refine things. Then you can talk about subtext… because the groundwork is already done.

Cleva's comment illustrates the benefits of singers being provided with "groundwork" in lyric diction throughout their conservatorium studies. Particularly given the career-long nature of lyric diction refinement, as discussed in the preceding section, it seems obvious that advancement in that process would be an advantage to any professional singer at the beginning of his/her career.

An in-depth exploration of the reasons for a discrepancy between US and UK/European conservatoria in their lyric diction course offerings is beyond the scope of this study. However, Morton's suggestion that languages may be "taken for granted" in Europe and the UK is not unreasonable. If students are, by and large, familiar with the sung European languages as a result of school study or a multilingual upbringing, there may well be an institutional attitude that lyric diction is something singing students can 'pick up' throughout their conservatorium training without systematic tuition. However, when this attitude is viewed within the context of research into L2 pronunciation learning, as outlined in Chapter 2.4, it becomes clear that a systematic approach is necessary in order to ensure that the native language of the singing student does not influence their lyric diction. Furthermore, many international students studying singing in Europe and the UK, particularly those from Asian countries, are very unlikely to have a familiarity with the sung European languages that is commensurate with that of their European colleagues. For these students, thorough lyric diction tuition is essential. Additionally, the differences between sung and spoken language point to the necessity for lyric diction tuition to be provided to all singing students, regardless of their linguistic background.[152]

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[152] The differences between sung and spoke language are discussed in Sections 4.10 and 4.13.

It certainly cannot be said that all European and UK conservatoria are lacking in their lyric diction offerings. The small number of conservatoria associated with this study makes it impossible to form a meaningful statistical conclusion, and nor is that the intention. However, within this very small sample, there is a far greater variation in the quantity of lyric diction tuition offered by the conservatoria in Europe and the UK than by those in the US. This variation does raise questions about the optimal quantity of lyric diction tuition that might be provided to singing students and is an area that warrants further investigation.

4.4. The relative importance of class and one-to-one lyric diction tuition

As the preceding section showed, the quantity of lyric diction tuition provided to singing students in conservatoria varies considerably. In some instances the interviewees were satisfied with the time allocated to their conservatorium students and the format in which they themselves were required to teach. Others, however, were not. Quantity of tuition aside, the mode of delivery is one of the key areas in which lyric diction tuition differs, being generally either in a class or one-to-one format. The interviewees were therefore asked their opinion regarding the relative importance and effectiveness of group and one-to-one teaching of lyric diction.

Almost all the interviewees answered that it was optimal to have both class and one-to-one lyric diction tuition. The primary points they made were:

- Information relating to aspects such as pronunciation rules and phonetics can be efficiently conveyed in a classroom context.
- Listening to their colleagues hones students' listening skills and their judgement regarding aspects of lyric diction.
- Students who are not able to hear the differences they make when adjusting their lyric diction benefit from the feedback of a class audience.
- Students who see their colleagues working and receiving correction in a supportive class context may be more willing to take correction and try new things.

- In a class context, class size and time limitations may make it difficult to give students the individual feedback they require to make substantial progress.
- One-to-one teaching is necessary to deal with a student's individual qualities and difficulties.

The interviewees were almost unanimous regarding these aspects. The only interviewee dubious about the value of a group setting was Schollum, who teaches singing students in weekly individual lyric diction sessions throughout their undergraduate and postgraduate study. He felt that, though it would be possible to teach the "very basics" in a few group lessons, students really need to receive individual feedback throughout the process of lyric diction study. It is worth noting that Schollum has significantly more one-to-one contact time with the students than any of the other interviewees, and that this may have quite some bearing on his response. Daguerre de Hureaux, by contrast, finds that she has to repeat the same basic information "endlessly" at a conservatorium at which she is only contracted to offer very brief individual lessons. She said, "Let's do the phonetics in a group, together… and then I don't have to repeat it".

The general consensus was that a class setting allows for efficient teaching of fundamental aspects such as pronunciation rules and IPA, but that students must receive individual feedback on their production. The class context was taken to include a masterclass element in which an individual student sings in front of the class and receives correction, which they are then required to implement. Many of the interviewees spoke of the value of this for those listening as well as those singing. Moris said:

> When you work in a class, everybody (if they're intelligent) listens and the correction that you make to one of their colleagues, they will register that and they will know what to do…

Cleva described students learning from their colleagues "not only…what to do… [but] what not to do", while Di Taranto, who has no class teaching allocation, encourages her students to observe their colleagues' individual lessons in order to facilitate this.

The importance of singing students hearing each other is supported by research showing the interaction between perception and production, as discussed in Chapter 2.4. Several interviewees described the class context as allowing students to "tune" their ear, developing their aural perception by observing. Griffiths described using the class context as an opportunity to have students advise each other, thereby learning to identify errors aurally and provide correction.

Gall felt that some students are shy in the group context and that there are things he cannot ask of a student when they are in front of a group that he can broach in a one-to-one context. He, Daguerre de Hureaux, and Rissinger all spoke about importance of a collegial element in a class context. Daguerre de Hureaux explained:

> Very importantly, they listen to each other. They watch, so they learn from each other, which has [several] effects: learning from each other, listening, watching other people, developing their sense of judgement, if that's a good word, and bonding… They need to be compassionate towards each other, and it's only when you're aware of the people's weaknesses and your own, and happy to expose them in a trustful way, that you're going to get somewhere.

LaBouff works with students individually in class, i.e. in a masterclass format, and finds she has sufficient contact time with students for that to be effective. However, both Griffiths and Lefebvre, felt that in large classes with inadequate contact time, students were very much limited in their development; Griffiths described the difficulty of addressing a single student's "inabilities" when teaching a class. Indeed, the primary limitation of the class context mentioned by most interviewees was the inability to provide sufficient feedback to individual students, whether due to time pressure, class size, or both.

All the interviewees felt that individual lyric diction tuition is vital, whether it occurs one-to-one or in a masterclass format. This is very much in keeping with the interviewees' focus on the development of lyric diction as a skill set which each individual student must be able to employ effectively. Moris said that in one-to-one teaching he can "deal with the individual voice", explaining that "not one voice is equal to another, so the difficulties have to be faced on a personal basis". Similarly,

Danchenko-Stern described the importance of "personal adjustment" for each singing student, saying, "I love to work individually because there are no two sopranos alike. There are no sets of muscles the same".

There was resounding agreement that both class and individual lyric diction tuition are necessary at the conservatorium level if students are to reach their potential. Had there been time to ask the interviewees to stipulate their ideal ratio of class time to individual tuition, there may have been variation in their responses. However, they were unanimous in arguing that one-to-one tuition, whether individually or in a supportive class context, is indispensable at some point in students' lyric diction development.

4.5. Distinguishing between lyric diction tuition for undergraduate and postgraduate (i.e. Masters) level students

The interviewees were asked whether, given the variety of educational backgrounds from which singing students come, it is possible to distinguish between lyric diction tuition for undergraduate and postgraduate (ie. Masters) level students. This question was based on an understanding that the educational paths of singing students often vary significantly, unlike those of instrumentalists. Instrumentalists will generally have had years of tuition and experience when accepted into conservatorium study, but the nature of the singing voice is such that its quality and potential may not be revealed until an individual's late teens or even early to mid-twenties. Thus, some postgraduate singing students may not have had any undergraduate singing training at all. Furthermore, singing students may vary markedly in the nature and quality of their educational background, the possession of vocal talent being tied neither to academic ability, nor to educational privilege.

All the interviewees had encountered undergraduate and postgraduate students who exhibited a wide range of abilities and experience with regard to lyric diction. When asked whether it is possible to distinguish between the two educational levels, their responses revealed several themes:

- Singing students at both the undergraduate and postgraduate level may vary dramatically in skill and experience with regard to lyric diction.
- There is a significant pedagogical challenge in catering to this range within a class context.
- For optimal pedagogical outcomes, it is necessary to cater to the level of the individual student, be they an undergraduate or postgraduate level student.
- It is necessary to instil basic lyric diction concepts at the undergraduate level.
- Postgraduate-level lyric diction tuition should consist of refining singing students' existing lyric diction skills.
- The same lyric diction principles should be conveyed at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels; the distinction between the two levels is with regard to the difficulty of the repertoire to which those principles are applied.

As these last two points show, differing perspectives emerged regarding postgraduate tuition. Some interviewees felt that postgraduate lyric diction tuition should ideally consist of refining singing students' existing lyric diction skills. They acknowledged, however, that in some cases this is not possible, and students require a remedial approach. Other interviewees argued that, regardless of the level of students, the lyric diction principles to be conveyed at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels are the same. Instead, they saw the distinction between the two levels are being determined by the difficulty of the repertoire to which singing students were required to apply those principles.

The interviewees' responses reveal a difficulty in distinguishing clearly between lyric diction tuition for the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. In fact, this project was originally designed to explore only undergraduate level lyric diction tuition. However, early on it became obvious that fundamental lyric diction skills are often taught at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Consequently, the parameters of the project were redefined so as to encompass both levels of conservatorium-level lyric diction tuition.

In the US, singing students who have undertaken undergraduate singing studies have generally had some lyric diction classes, but the quality and quantity of these classes may vary markedly. Both Adams and LaBouff commented on this, with LaBouff noting that often some postgraduate students will have previously undertaken courses that "didn't go into any depth at all". In some instances, the level of students' lyric diction may be no reflection of their vocal potential. For example, Lefebvre spoke of a Masters student she had taught who had "extraordinary vocal talent, and had had next to no diction as an undergrad". She said that there was "a discrepancy between both his vocal talent and development, and the level of [his] diction and… understanding of language". Adams also noted that almost all students who have completed undergraduate studies in the US "have some background in IPA". When considering optimal pedagogical outcomes, it is particularly noteworthy that a background in IPA does not always correlate with a level of lyric diction skill.[153]

Variation in students' lyric diction levels is not confined to postgraduate classes. Morton, for example, described the range of lyric diction levels he has experienced amongst both postgraduate and undergraduate students.

> In my undergraduate classes I've had singers who are so sophisticated, [and who have] had [so much] experience, that I'm working on interpretation right from the beginning because they're so good… But at the same time… in the graduate diction classes it can range from someone who is very easy with the language to somebody who has a hard time saying a single word.

Classes such as Morton's comprise a large number of international students amongst whom lyric diction levels vary enormously. All those interviewees teaching in the US commented on this, and noted that some international students have had no lyric diction tuition at all when they enter postgraduate studies.[154]

Those interviewees teaching in Europe and the UK reported a similar experience, also with their domestic students. This reflects not only the variability of undergraduate

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[153] See Section 4.5.

[154] During the field trip both standard and remedial lyric diction classes at the Manhattan School of Music were observed, the latter being designed for those postgraduate students with limited lyric diction experience. Standard lyric diction classes were 1hr twice weekly, while remedial lyric diction classes were 1.5 hours twice weekly.

lyric diction course offerings, but also the important fact that some students' first formal singing studies take place at the postgraduate level. As Radcliffe explained, some students "come in at postgraduate [level] and have done something else entirely before, never had any kind of Italian, [while other students may] have done degrees in Italian, or French…"

Catering to this range of student abilities and experience within a class context is a significant pedagogical challenge. Morton, spoke of "finding how [to] accommodate… the needs of every one of the students in the class, while trying to keep everyone's attention". Radcliffe described this as a "major difficulty", saying, "If you're running a class, it's very very difficult to know how to pitch it". However, she considered the manner in which a lyric diction teacher deals with this difficulty to be critical. Clearly, the opportunity to work with individual students, be it one-to-one or in a masterclass context, is required in order to provide teachers with some opportunity to cater to each student's specific needs.

The interviewees all agreed that, for optimal pedagogical outcomes, it is necessary to cater to the level of the individual student, be they an undergraduate or postgraduate level student. Of course, for most undergraduate students it is necessary to instil basic concepts. Adams, Griffiths, Di Taranto, and Levebvre all described postgraduate tuition as ideally being a process of refinement, but, as Adams explained, "In some cases it's more remedial than that; they have to either learn stuff that they never did learn in the first place, or completely review, or unlearn some misconceptions". Similarly Di Taranto described being willing to start "from scratch" with Masters students who have not had Italian lyric diction tuition.[155] However, she said that her approach to the teaching of postgraduate and undergraduate level students would be the same. This perspective was shared by LaBouff and Moris. Neither LaBouff nor Moris felt that postgraduate level lyric diction tuition should differ significantly from that of the undergraduate level. Rather, they argued that the repertoire of the students provides the distinction. LaBouff summarised this as follows:

[155] At the time of interview, Di Taranto did not teach lyric diction to postgraduate students at the Conservatorium van Amsterdam, no lyric diction classes being offered at that level, but gave private lessons to those who requested them.

> I have the same [content] for undergrads as grads. The music gets more difficult and is more demanding technically, so I set the same ground work for both and then how it's applied is based on the repertoire. It's more the requirements of the repertoire [that change] rather than giving [the students] different information.

LaBouff's comment highlights the fact that, due to the interaction between singing technique and lyric diction, repertoire that is vocally more challenging often poses greater difficulties for lyric diction. These difficulties may not relate to interpretative details, but rather to the interaction of lyric diction with musical aspects such as range, tessitura, melodic contour, tempo, dynamics, etc.[156] Interestingly, in *Intelligent Music Teaching* (2014, p. 35), Robert Duke argues a similar case for all music performance studies, writing: "What changes as musicianship develops over time is not the nature of the skill itself but the technical demands of the contexts in which the skill is demonstrated".

While there was some variation amongst the interviewees with regard to their approach to teaching postgraduate lyric diction, there was universal acknowledgement of the range of lyric diction ability and experience evident amongst undergraduate and postgraduate students. This range contributes to a blurring of the two educational levels, making it very difficult to create a clear pedagogical distinction between undergraduate and postgraduate tuition. Thus, even those interviewees who felt that postgraduate tuition should focus on refinement acknowledged that this is not always possible.

The importance that the interviewees placed upon establishing foundational lyric diction skills prior to attempting further refinement was evident in all responses. So too was their awareness of the need to cater to the level of each individual student in order to achieve optimal pedagogical outcomes. This need aligns with the research presented in Chapter 2.4, which revealed the significant individual variation that exists within L2 pronunciation learning. Acute awareness of individual students was revealed to be key to the pedagogical approach and success of the interviewees generally, as shown in the following section.

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[156] For example, lyric diction becomes more difficult as the vocal range within repertoire increases; the challenges posed by the interaction of harmonics and vowel formants throughout a singer's vocal range are outlined in Chapter 2.1.

4.6. Pedagogical style

The interview data revealed pedagogical style to be an integral and deeply considered part of the interviewees' practice. Almost all the interviewees spontaneously referred to this aspect of their teaching at some point. Some did so while describing the characteristics of good lyric diction teaching, others in regard to the aspects of their teaching that they consider most effective. In some instances the topic was raised in relation to difficulties the interviewees had encountered in their teaching, or advice they would offer an inexperienced lyric diction coach. The fact that pedagogical style emerged as a highly significant theme, despite the fact that none of the interview questions specifically addressed the issue, underlines its importance. Indeed, almost all of the interviewees felt that their pedagogical style is central to the success of their teaching.

The pedagogical style for conservatorium-level lyric diction teaching that the interviewees described aligns very much with the approach to lyric diction coaching for professional singers described in Chapter 3.3. Chapter 3.3 illustrated the importance of relationships in lyric diction coaching, and particularly within a production context. It also showed that the interviewees who have worked in the context of professional opera production rehearsals have a desire and ability to tailor advice to the capacities of individual singers, and to determine the optimal timing for this advice and the ideal manner in which to deliver it. These emerged as key elements of pedagogical style at the conservatorium level as well.

It would have been ideal to conduct an objective analysis of each interviewee's pedagogical style, but this would have required extensive and systematic observation of their teaching practice, which was beyond the budgetary scope of this study. Therefore, this section presents an overall picture of pedagogical style as derived from the interview data. Each interviewee described those elements of their pedagogical style that they believed contribute most to their effectiveness as pedagogues. There was considerable overlap amongst the responses, revealing five major elements:

- Identifying and catering to each student's skill level

- Establishing trust-based relationships with each student and within each class
- Providing well-timed and appropriate feedback to each student
- Demanding a high standard from students
- Fostering in students a perspective of lyric diction development that extends beyond the period of their study, and providing the tools for that development

Cumulatively, these five elements can be seen to represent best practice in pedagogical style for conservatorium-level lyric diction teaching, based on the interviewees selected for this project.

Pedagogical style is an area in which one might expect to find enormous variation between individual teachers. Even a general school education usually provides a student with the experience of a huge range of pedagogical styles. And, while schoolteachers are provided with standardised training that includes aspects of pedagogical style, lyric diction teachers are not. Rather, each of the interviewees has refined their pedagogical style and the content of their teaching throughout their careers. Chapters 3.1 and 3.2 showed the highly individualised nature of that process, even to the extent that individual teachers/coaches may vary in how they define the scope of the field of lyric diction itself. Yet, there was remarkable overlap amongst the interviewees regarding elements of pedagogical style. This demonstrates how fundamental these elements are, an assertion that is supported by examining the elements of pedagogical style identified by the interviewees in the context of educational research.

The educational research primarily referred to in this analysis is that of John Hattie, widely known as the researcher behind *Visible Learning* (2009). *Visible Learning* was a pivotal study that evaluated the effect sizes of aspects that affect learning outcomes. It synthesised the findings of 800 meta-analyses of 50,000 research studies, involving more than 150 million students, using the statistical measure of effect size to compare the impact of many influences on students' development.[157] *Visible Learning* continues to be updated and has been influential in teacher professional development

[157] There has been some recent criticism of the statistical approach taken in *Visible Learning* (Bergeron & Rivard 2017) to which Hattie has responded. However, the research used as the point of reference for this analysis is largely qualitative.

and educational policy worldwide. It now encompasses university level education (Hattie, 2015). Unsurprisingly, Hattie's research shows that the student is the greatest source of variance in learning. It estimates that about 50% of the variance in learning is as a result of the student (2015, p. 87).[158] However, it also shows that 20% to 25% of the total learning variance is due to teachers, making them "among the most powerful influences in learning" (2012, p. 22).

In *Visible learning for teachers : maximizing impact on learning* (2012), a subsequent publication based on the results of the original study, Hattie describes the results of an additional qualitative study undertaken in collaboration with Richard Jaeger to determine the characteristics of expert teachers. This study was motivated by research showing that outcomes for students who are taught by expert teachers are better than for those who are taught by teachers who may be experienced, but not expert (Hattie, 2012, p. 30). After reviewing the literature on the distinctions between expert and experienced teachers Hattie and Jaeger sent their findings to expert teachers and pre-eminent researchers in the field in order to gather their responses. This led to the identification of five "major dimensions" of expert teachers:

> Expert teachers have high levels of knowledge and understanding of the subjects that they teach, can guide learning to desirable surface and deep outcomes, can successfully monitor learning and provide feedback that assists students to progress, can attend to the more attitudinal attributes of learning… and can provide defensible evidence of positive impacts of the teaching on student learning. (Hattie, 2012, pp. 27- 28).

The importance of high levels of knowledge and understanding is self-evident in the context of lyric diction pedagogy. However, based on the dimensions above, Hattie lists five practices of expert teachers that provide a valuable context within which to consider the aspects of pedagogical style the interviewees identified important. The five practices are:

a) Expert teachers can identify the most important ways in which to represent the subject that they teach.

[158] This aligns with research into L2 pronunciation acquisition, which shows the effect of aptitude on learning outcomes, as discussed in Chapter 2.4.

b) Expert teachers are proficient at creating an optimal classroom climate for learning.
c) Expert teachers monitor learning and provide feedback.
d) Expert teachers believe that all students can reach the success criteria.
e) Expert teachers influence surface and deep student outcomes.

(Hattie, 2012, pp. 29- 30)

Hattie's research largely concerns teachers who have been trained to work within schools, and was undertaken in order to find ways of improving education in general. However, most of the lyric diction teachers interviewed for this project have backgrounds that do not include specific pedagogical training. Yet, the interviewees' descriptions of pedagogical style display a remarkable correspondence to the characteristics Hattie identified as belonging to expert teachers. The following analysis explores each of the elements identified by the interviewees in the context of the corresponding practice identified by Hattie. It suggests that pedagogical style is integral to the success of the interviewees' teaching, and that an understanding of its constituent elements may be of great value to those wishing to achieve optimal outcomes in the teaching of lyric diction to conservatorium-level students.

The interviewees considered their ability to identify and cater to each student's skill level to be of central importance in their pedagogical style. This was evident in the previous section, in which the interviewees spoke of catering to individual students at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. However, the interview data indicate that this awareness extends beyond major discrepancies in skill level to encompass the variation one might expect to find within any class context. For example, Radcliffe described a particular strength of her teaching as being "the awareness that everybody needs different things [and] needs to be helped in different ways". She explained, "It's not a blanket, 'This is what it is'… Even [when teaching] a class, it's taking care that you're seeing what that person is lacking…" Similarly, Morton described structuring his class in order to cater to the needs of individual students:

> The second half of the class is about the students singing. That's my chance to really hear them and say, "Ok, where are you? How do we move that particular element of diction to a higher level, so that you can be more free?"

Such an approach aligns with Hattie's description of the ability of expert teachers to "identify the most important ways in which to represent the subject that they teach" (Hattie, 2012, p. 28). This process of identification requires an awareness of students' needs. This leads to expert teachers making "lessons uniquely their own by changing, combining, and adding to the lessons according to their students' needs and their own teaching goals" (Hattie, 2012, p. 28). A similar process was described by many of the interviewees. They considered the ability to adapt spontaneously to the needs of individual students, and to be flexible in their approach, as integral to their pedagogical style. Daguerre de Hureaux, for example, described the importance of

> … listening, being there, looking at the other human being, and seeing what they need. Being able to think on your feet very quickly as to the best way you can get from A to B, i.e. from your position of knowledge to imparting that knowledge… in the most efficient, compassionate, and human way possible.

Of course, the initial choice of an approach to "get from A to B" may not always be successful. Di Taranto noted the importance of developing various ways of communicating the same thing. She said, "If one [way] does not work, I try with a second, and if that does not work, I try with a third". The teacher's ability to adapt very often requires experience and self-reflection, a process Adams described from a career-long perspective. He said he was initially "less open to different ways of presenting the material" but that, throughout his years of teaching, "the realisation that people learn in different ways" became "more prominent". Such critical self-reflection was a feature of many of the interviews.

Many of the interviewees described the establishment of trust-based relationships with each student, and within each class, as key to their pedagogical style. This aspect clearly aligns with the approaches to lyric diction coaching in a production context discussed in Chapter 3.3. It also aligns with Hattie's findings that "expert teachers create classroom climates that welcome admission of errors; they achieve this by developing a climate of trust between teacher and student, and between student and student" (Hattie, 2012, p. 29).

Several of the interviewees described creating a "climate of trust" within the class. Daguerre de Hureaux, for example, described the need to create a class in which the

students are “compassionate towards each other,” saying, “it’s only when you’re aware of the people’s weaknesses and your own, and happy to expose [your own weaknesses] in a trustful way, that you’re going to get somewhere”. Danchenko-Stern spoke of developing “a wonderful class” in which “[students] are not scared to open their mouth in front of their peers” and there is no “competition in a harsh way”. She described saying to the students: “You all came here to learn, but I’m learning from all of you. This is where I welcome all your questions, concerns, and frustrations”. Such an approach to teaching, in which “teachers become learners of their own teaching” has also been shown to have the greatest effect on student learning (Hattie, 2012, p. 18).

Chapter 3.3 discussed the development of trust-based relationships between lyric diction coaches and professional singers. This was presented in the context of characteristics unique to the singing voice and the demands placed upon professional singers in an opera rehearsal process. While the latter aspect is not relevant to conservatorium-level lyric diction tuition, those aspects relating to the vulnerability of singers and the relationship between voice and identity remain applicable. The age of conservatorium students was also raised as contributing to a need for trust. Cleva, Gall, and Schollum spoke about this in particular. Cleva described conservatorium students who have just come out of their teens as “pretty fragile emotionally” and spoke of the importance of trying “to create an atmosphere [in which] you know they will take things from you”. Similarly, Gall characterised lyric diction teaching, and lyric diction coaching in general, as “a situation of trust”. He spoke with great frankness about how he learnt the necessity of trust-based relationships when teaching and coaching lyric diction; negative feedback and the loss of work when he first began in the profession led Gall to change his pedagogical style significantly.

The interviewees identified the provision of well-timed and appropriate feedback to each student as a key aspect of their pedagogical style. Clearly, the nature and delivery of this feedback contributes significantly to the creation of a “climate of trust”. However, it is also essential to demanding a high standard from students, another of the five aspects of pedagogical style identified by the interviewees. The ability to demand a high standard within a climate of trust was illustrated by Moris who, when asked what works best about his approach said: “I’m very insistent. When

something is not correct, I don't let it go. I try to do as much as possible… until they get it ninety percent right. If it's ninety percent right, it's ok". Moris said that his insistence has resulted in him being called "the gentle hammer" at the Guildhall. Yet, along with this insistence, he explained, "Also… [my approach works] because I'm very open. They always call me the grandfather… I think the warmth is very important, [in order] not to create any tension… But… it is important [that] a student understands that you care… for their future".

The interviewees identified three important aspects of giving feedback: informing the student of an error or area that needs development, providing them with information that facilitates development, and informing when they have made an improvement. Morton said, "I'm pretty honest with the students. I… want each individual student to be aware of where [s/he] is, and how to get to the next level". Similarly, Cleva advocated that, having established trust, one should "then just be matter of fact about it… What's right is right and what's wrong is wrong". However, she added: "Be big enough to let them know when they do something right that it's very good. Don't just keep quiet about it. But don't be easy on them either". The importance of combining high standards with the acknowledgment of progress was also expressed by Gall, who said, "It's always good to aim for perfection, although perfection doesn't exist, but [also] to always see progress in little things and make the student, or even professional, aware of the progress".

Many of the interviewees spoke of the importance of ensuring students have the ability to take on and implement feedback. Di Taranto described this in terms of sensitivity regarding: "[What] I say, and how I say it, and *if* I say it, and more importantly, the moment [I] say it". The choice and timing of feedback is regarded as one of those aspects distinguishing expert teachers. As Robert Duke writes in *Intelligent Music Teaching* (2014, p. 91):

> Expert teachers… formulate decisions about what-to-teach-now on the basis of (1) the importance of each incorrect aspect of the students' work in relation to (2) its potential effect on the students' overall performance and (3) the probability that the students are actually capable of effecting a positive change in the short term.

Several of the interviewees described such a process and many acknowledged that there is no point working on aspects or presenting content for which the student is not developmentally ready. This corresponds to Hattie's finding that "expert teachers are skilled at monitoring the current status of student understanding and the progress of learning towards the success criteria, and they seek and provide feedback geared to the current understandings of the students" (Hattie, 2012, p. 29).

The interviewees' seeking of feedback was reflected in the importance they attributed to recognising and responding to a student's reception of their input. For example, Lefebvre spoke of "backing off" after observing a student's discomfort when asked to read a text aloud, because "it's not going to yield anything good if [the student] is that reluctant or uncomfortable". Di Taranto also spoke of recognising when she is encountering resistance from a student: "Then I have to let [the issue] go". No doubt such sensitivity contributes to maintaining a climate of trust.

Hattie highlights expert teachers' use of feedback they receive about the effect that their teaching is having. In the lyric diction context, such feedback is constantly evident in students' singing performance, but, as shown above, students may also provide such feedback in their responses, verbal or otherwise. LaBouff recommended lyric diction teachers ask each student for feedback regarding the advice they have given. She said, "If something opens them up and gets them to sing better, they will usually tell you, but you also need to know when it feels less comfortable, and they won't want to tell you that". Such feedback contributes to the ongoing pedagogical refinement that the interviewees described.

The final two characteristics of expert teachers identified by Hattie are that "they believe all students can reach the success criteria" and that they "influence surface and deep student outcomes" (Hattie, 2012, pp. 29- 30). In the context of lyric diction, surface student outcomes include students' knowledge of phonological rules and their ability to produce articulations accurately. Deep student outcomes include a prioritisation of text, an understanding that lyric diction is integrally related to meaning and expression, and a dedication to lyric diction development beyond the conservatorium context. It is striking that the remaining two elements of pedagogical style identified by the interviewees are "demanding a high standard from students",

and “fostering in students a perspective of lyric diction development that extends beyond the period of their study (and providing the tools for that development)”. These can clearly be seen to correspond to the characteristics listed by Hattie.

The lyric diction standards demanded of professional singers provide a benchmark for lyric diction development. While several of the interviewees expressed an understanding that some students may have an articulatory or learning-based difficulty that limits their lyric diction outcomes, those interviewees did not indicate that this should lower the standard they demand. All interviewees acknowledged that conservatorium-level lyric diction studies are rarely sufficient to bring singing students to a high professional level. However, demanding high standards not only maximises students’ achievement, but also illustrates the level that will be demanded of singing students professionally, and their need for ongoing lyric diction development. Adams expressed this very clearly when he said:

> In ten weeks or fourteen weeks you can’t expect everybody to reach a high level of proficiency. But the goal is that they understand where they need to go, that they understand what they still need to do to get to a higher level. Actually, that’s something that students over the years have told me after the fact – that they learned to appreciate that [from me].

Given the variety of levels with which singing students begin their conservatorium-level lyric diction studies, and that lyric diction learning takes place career-long, “meeting the success criteria” could therefore be defined in varying ways. Taking a long-term view, it might only be possible to determine whether a student has met the success criteria once they have reached a professional level, after the conclusion of their conservatorium education.

A long-term view of lyric diction learning is supported by the interviewees’ high standards regarding not only the content of students’ learning, but also the quality of that learning. Radcliffe, for example, said: “I’m not the kind of coach that uses tricks to help. I really want to know that they know [the content]. I’m not going to do it for

them". This approach facilitates the independent and thorough preparation that the interviewees saw as contributing to excellent lyric diction at the professional level.[159]

The reasons given by the interviewees for the importance of conservatorium level lyric diction tuition (see Section 4.1) reflect the surface and deep student outcomes of their teaching. To recap, these fell within three areas:

1) The development of singing students' practical skills, e.g.:

- The interdependence of singing technique and lyric diction skills
- The need for singing students to develop awareness and control of their articulators
- The large number of languages in which singers must perform, and the need for them to understand and master the differences between those languages

2) The fostering of singing students' attitudes towards text and lyric diction, e.g.:

- The need for singing students to prioritise text when learning and performing repertoire
- The need for students to understand that the meaning of the text is integral to the music and expression

3) The establishment of a foundation for singing students' further lyric diction development

While area 1) might be considered to be a surface outcome, areas 2) and 3) are deep outcomes. Much of the current lyric diction literature primarily addresses area 1), and may thus be seen to focus largely on surface outcomes. These are, of course, essential lyric diction skills, without which areas 2) and 3) serve no purpose. However, Section 4.2 showed that the deep outcomes outlined in areas 2) and 3) are critical to singing students' long-term lyric diction development and professional excellence. Hattie's findings show that it is the ability to influence deep student outcomes that particularly distinguishes expert teachers (2012, p. 33). Given that these deep outcomes are

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[159] See Section 4.2.

critical to optimal conservatorium-level lyric diction learning, it is clear that expert lyric diction teaching is of great importance.

The interviewees have each developed their pedagogical style through their own assessment of the outcomes of their teaching and their response to that assessment. The correspondence of the elements of pedagogical style prioritised by the interviewees to the practices of expert teachers listed by Hattie is striking. It suggests that, where the pedagogical goal is the optimal effect upon student outcomes, and performance is a clear measure of that effect, pedagogical excellence may be based upon common factors, whatever the field or the training of the teachers. Pedagogical style has not previously been explored within the lyric diction literature. Though not conclusive, this analysis provides an insight into pedagogical excellence in conservatorium-level lyric diction teaching based on the practices of the interviewees. It may, therefore, be of considerable value to novice lyric diction teachers or more experienced lyric diction teachers wishing to enhance their practice.

4.7. Pronunciation rules

The preceding sections have addressed broad aspects of conservatorium-level lyric diction pedagogy, its delivery, and its outcomes. By contrast, this and the following two sections deal with specific aspects of pedagogical content that feature prominently in lyric diction literature. Pronunciation rules (i.e. phonological descriptions), IPA, and phonetic terminology are all academic precursors to the practical aspects of lyric diction. As the Literature Review showed, most lyric diction books largely comprise the presentation of pronunciation rules, IPA transcriptions of the pronunciations, and the use of phonetic terminology to describe the associated articulations in prose form. Amongst the many facets of lyric diction, these fundamentals are those that lend themselves best to the written form. The interview questions upon which the Sections 4.7, 4.8, and 4.9 are based were asked in order to determine the role these aspects play within the pedagogical practice of the interviewees.

Pronunciation rules are a fundamental aspect of lyric diction learning.[160] They provide students with a link between the language in its written form and its corresponding articulations. Consequently, the interviewees were asked how they teach pronunciation rules and what difficulties students have in learning them. Given the focus upon pronunciation rules in the lyric diction literature, it might have been predicted that, at the undergraduate level, the teaching and learning of pronunciation rules would be a significant priority for the interviewees. However, even those who have authored textbooks demonstrated significantly less preoccupation with pronunciation rules than with other aspects of lyric diction. All acknowledged the importance of students knowing how to pronounce the written text, and knowing which resources to refer to in situations where no pronunciation rule applies. Nevertheless, they seemed to consider this a self-evident step of far less significance than the practical skill of actually singing the language, which was their prime pedagogical focus.

Several themes emerged from their responses:

- The complexity of the pronunciation rules varies between languages.
- Pronunciation rules are most effectively learned through their practical application.
- Pronunciation rules should be presented systematically.
- Knowledge of a language's pronunciation rules is an initial step in the process of developing lyric diction skills.
- Some students struggle to learn pronunciation rules, though this does not necessarily affect the quality of their singing, provided they have access to good quality coaching.

Most of these responses are fairly predictable. The most striking aspect of many of the interviewees' responses to this question was their brevity in comparison to responses to other questions. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the length of the interviewees' answers generally corresponded to the phonological complexity of the language/s in which they specialise, i.e. those who teach Russian lyric diction had far more to say than

[160] See Chapter 2.3.1.

those who teach Italian lyric diction. Among the interviewees' languages of specialisation, only English was deemed so unphonetic as to defy codification into a series of pronunciation rules. Both French and Russian do allow for such a process, although they are more complex than Italian and German. In fact, only the Russian lyric diction teachers believed their language to be especially phonologically challenging. The German and Italian lyric diction teachers considered their languages to be phonologically straightforward, although Cleva did emphasise the difficulties created by the non-phonetic aspects of Italian. Daguerre de Hureaux said that, while the phonology of French is complex, students are able to recognise the pronunciation very quickly once they have learnt the basic rules. She acknowledged the difficulty they might have in memorising the rules and advocated a learning process based on practical application.

This was the theme that emerged most strongly from the interview data: pronunciation rules are best learned through their practical application. For example, Daguerre de Hureaux outlined a pedagogical process of working through five songs in which the students become increasingly independent. In the first song the students learn the French lyric diction pronunciation rules by applying them to the text, and in the second song she again guides them through the process. The students learn the third song together with Hureaux, but with less assistance, "and then", she said, "they're fine for the fourth and fifth". Similarly, Griffiths and Danchenko-Stern both give regular homework to their Russian lyric diction classes in order to clarify the students' understanding of consonant rules in particular. Griffiths described this as learning through "practice and experience", while Danchenko-Stern said she does not consider the learning of pronunciation rules to be a process of memorisation. She said: "It's practical implementation, because it's not about memorising, it's about what you do with them". Rissinger was of a similar opinion. She felt that students may sometimes be required to learn pronunciation rules without the necessary examples. Like Daguerre de Hureaux, Rissinger advocated applying all the relevant rules to a song or aria. She likened memorising rules without examples from the repertoire to learning "in a vacuum" and said it is "bound to fail". However, she said that when students can associate a rule with aria or song, they are far more likely to retain it. Rissinger uses her podcast as a means of contextualising pronunciation rules and said that the process of creating the podcasts consolidated her own knowledge. She

emphasised the importance of "making [pronunciation rules] useful, … something that works, that you need to use, [rather than] something you have to memorise".

This approach not only facilitates students' learning of pronunciation rules, but also contributes to their ability to prioritise text in their preparation of repertoire. Singing students need to be able to apply their knowledge of pronunciation rules in order to prepare text independently when learning repertoire, both at the conservatorium level and then as professional singers. IPA transcriptions, while plentiful, do not exist for all repertoire, and those that are available are neither perfect nor without contention.[161] Without a thorough knowledge of pronunciation rules and the ability to apply them to their repertoire, singers (both student and professional) may find themselves reliant on coaches at every stage of their learning process.

Several interviewees spoke of the importance of pronunciation rules being presented in a systematic manner. Griffiths and Danchenko-Stern underlined the necessity for a systematic presentation of Russian consonant rules in particular. Both have devised and refined their own system of rules. Griffiths gave a detailed explanation of how he introduces this system to his students and described how he has modified his approach during his years of teaching. He said that he streamlined his initial approach to avoid confusion, explaining:

> Having worked our way through all of the consonants in the [Cyrillic] alphabet and their various possible pronunciations, then I apply consonant rules. What happens when you have consonants back to back? Which consonants affect which consonants? Which consonants are susceptible, which consonants are not susceptible? … I've formulated that into a series of rules which we then put into practice.

It is important to note that both Griffiths and Danchenko-Stern had to establish their own system for teaching the pronunciation rules of Russian. Unlike the lyric diction languages of Italian, French, and German, the phonologies of which have been comprehensively outlined in multiple lyric diction textbooks since the 1970s, there

[161] See Literature Review re Castel's use of vowel modification, etc.

were no equivalent resources for Russian lyric diction when Griffiths and Danchenko-Stern began teaching.[162]

Adams and Radcliffe emphasised the need for pronunciation rules to be presented systematically, but stressed the importance of their sung application. So too did Griffiths who, after detailing his teaching of Russian pronunciation rules, said:

> I see no point in doing all of this business if we don't apply it by putting it into practice by singing… so it's [now] more streamlined, how I get to "now I've covered the theoretical stuff"… The most important thing is to apply what all this theory has produced to singing.

All the other interviewees shared this perspective; while the learning of pronunciation rules is an important precursor, it is the singing of lyric diction that is important. Furthermore, difficulty in mastering pronunciation rules is not, in fact, an insurmountable impediment to good lyric diction skills. As Adams pointed out:

> Some students do well in [the theoretical aspects of] lyric diction classes, yet don't sing the languages particularly well, while other students may not do well in the classroom yet find their own way to effective use of the language in singing.

This comment shows that a student's intellectual understanding of pronunciation rules must be considered independently of his/her ability to produce the language accurately and expressively. Adams spent the first half of each of his lyric diction courses introducing pronunciation rules, and the second half in practical application of those rules. He explained that, "the fact that the second half was practical application was more effective for those students that don't respond that well to a traditional classroom setting". Adams reflected, " I imagine that there are ways of structuring such a class now that I never explored, or presenting the material in a way that might have been more effective for different kinds of learners".

Several interviewees spoke about variation in students' learning styles.[163] Gall said he observes a wide variety of approaches to academic learning amongst his students.

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[162] See Literature Review.

Given the variety of educational backgrounds from which students come, a variety of academic levels and approaches is to be expected. This is particularly likely to be evident in the learning of the pronunciation rules because it is one of the more academic aspects of lyric diction. However, as the interviewees made clear, knowledge of pronunciation rules is not the primary goal of lyric diction learning.

It is interesting to contrast the interviewees' approach to pronunciation rules to that espoused by Montgomery in her article, 'The dynamic diction classroom' (2011). The article outlines the structure she advocates for teaching a lyric diction class based on her published textbooks.[164] Some of Montgomery's recommendations are similar to those of the interviewees, such as creating a "positive, encouraging atmosphere" (p. 54). She also advocates the practical application of pronunciation rules, but the nature and scope of that practical application differs dramatically from that of the interviewees. Montgomery writes: "One of the most effective and engaging ways to initiate interest in language study is through group assignments at the board" (p. 54). She then describes a process in which lists of words are projected across the board and students apply diction rules by transcribing words into IPA and enunciating them. As a further challenge, students are asked to do so in a timed manner. Word lists are provided for homework, the number of words in each unit being "specifically designed to fill a fifty minute period" (p. 57). "By following this procedure", Montgomery explains that, "students will be exposed to approximately 240 lyric words per class meeting and over 4,800 words in a full semester" (p. 57). This approach does not include any application to sung repertoire.

Montgomery's word lists are made up of words from vocal repertoire, but it seems that some of the time spent applying pronunciation rules to lists of words might valuably be redirected towards the application required of students when preparing and performing their repertoire, i.e. to phrases and texts, and to singing. Certainly, the differences between Montgomery's approach and those of the interviewees are significant. She writes: "As diction instructors, we love order, rules and guidelines.

[163] Though a couple of interviewees referred to "aural" or "visual" learners, the widespread educational notion of "learning styles" (for which there is in fact very little evidence- see Pashler, McDaniel, Rohrer, and Bjork (2008)) was largely absent from the interview data.
[164] See Literature Review.

Our lesson plans should reflect this type of organization" (2011, p. 58). The aspects of pedagogical style described by the interviewees in the previous section suggest that they would disagree with this characterisation. This extends to the application of pronunciation rules themselves. In the most striking evidence of this, Adams (whose book *A Handbook of Diction for Singers* (2008) outlines the pronunciation rules of Italian, German, and French and provides guidelines for their application in the sung context) said: "In my opinion, the greatest trap of the pedagogy of diction for singers is an application of the rules that is too rigid… Students must be made aware that… strict application of learned rules is not always the best choice". While clearly advocating a systematic approach to the teaching of pronunciation rules, the interviewees revealed flexibility and adaptation to be key elements of their teaching. Furthermore, as the following section shows, for many of the interviewees, the process of creating IPA transcriptions does not form part of their teaching. For others, it is only a small proportion. Montgomery has been a prolific author of workbooks for conservatorium-level lyric diction studies, and the approach she advocates, based on these workbooks, places the learning of pronunciation rules and the use of IPA at the centre of students' lyric diction studies. The interviewees for this research, however, do not do so. Rather, they perceive lyric diction learning far more broadly, viewing pronunciation rules as the precursor to the true focus of lyric diction pedagogy – the effective use of language in singing.

4.8. Use of the International Phonetic Alphabet, and its strengths and weaknesses

IPA is used in almost all the lyric diction literature published since the late twentieth century, and particularly extensively in books intended for use at the conservatorium level.[165] It would, therefore, naturally form part of lyric diction studies based around that literature. However, it does not follow that all lyric diction teachers use IPA, because not all lyric diction teachers base their teaching on such resources.[166] Consequently, the interviewees were asked two questions regarding IPA. These

[165] See Literature Review.

[166] This was borne out by the interviewees' responses regarding the literature they use – some use none at all.

regarded if/how they use IPA, and what they consider to be its strengths and weaknesses.

There was considerable variation in the extent to which the interviewees reported using IPA. This appears to be influenced by the interviewees' location and their language of specialisation. All the US-based interviewees use IPA as an integral part of their teaching, with the exception of Italian lyric diction teacher Glenn Morton, who uses it rarely. American-trained, and at the time of interview (2016) German-based, coach Ellen Rissinger uses IPA extensively. Of the five UK-based coaches, three employ IPA, one employs it rarely, and one not at all. Moris, who employs it rarely, and Cleva, who does not use it at all, both specialise in Italian. UK-based Italian lyric diction teacher Radcliffe uses IPA, but, along with Morton, Moris, and Cleva, does not consider it essential for Italian. Both Daguerre de Hureaux and Gall both use it as an essential part of their coaching. Schollum and Di Taranto, based in Vienna and Amsterdam respectively, rarely employ IPA in their lyric diction teaching.

Many of the interviewees felt that IPA is unnecessary for Italian lyric diction learning. The phonological rules of Italian are simple and reliable, and exceptions, such as open and closed <e> and <o>, are easily notated without IPA, e.g. grave and acute accents.[167] Gall, Radcliffe, and Di Taranto all felt that, while IPA is of significant assistance when learning the lyric diction of German and particularly French, it is not necessary for Italian. Morton, a self-described "IPA nerd" as a student, said he finds less and less use for IPA in his Italian lyric diction teaching. He said: "What do you do with it? First of all 80 to 85% of written Italian is identical to… IPA, so a lot of that's just boring". He considered it important to learn the symbols for [ʃ] or [ʎ] or [ɲ], while DiTaranto considered even these symbols unnecessary. She employs IPA if her student is already familiar with the symbols and has correctly learned the associated sounds.

It is important to highlight that, while these interviewees did not consider IPA necessary for Italian lyric diction, they did consider it a useful tool for lyric diction

[167] Cleva, for example, has her own symbols for denoting open and closed vowels.

learning in other languages. Schollum, for example, used IPA extensively in his collaboration with American professor William Odom on the book *German for Singers* (1997). However, he explained that this was because the book was tailored to the English-speaking reader. Schollum's German lyric diction students in Vienna require a reasonable level of German proficiency for their studies. Combined with the largely phonetic nature of German, this renders IPA mostly redundant in Schollum's teaching. He did, however, say that he uses IPA occasionally with non-native German students.

Despite rarely employing it in his coaching, Schollum considers knowledge of IPA to be a career necessity for singers. This is striking because, as both Schollum and Rissinger noted, many singing students and professional singers on the European continent are not familiar with IPA. By contrast, Daguerre de Hureaux said she finds US-trained singers usually have IPA knowledge.[168] Schollum speculated that Americans' lack of exposure to foreign languages and their sense of distance from Europe have led to their extensive IPA use. Morton's comments (reported in Section 4.3) regarding the nature of lyric diction instruction in the US support this.

Rissinger expressed frustration with the lack of IPA use in Europe. She gave an example (detailed later in this section) of German singers who were unable to differentiate between French vowel sounds as an occasion upon which IPA would have provided a means by which to do so. It would be incorrect to assume, however, that all US-trained singers are familiar with IPA; US-based Marie-France Lefebvre spoke of occasionally encountering even young singers in significant American opera houses who have not learnt IPA.

All of this indicates that IPA usage is less widespread than the lyric diction literature would indicate. For predominantly phonetic languages such as Italian, it may be deemed largely unnecessary. For German lyric diction, it appears useful for non-German-speakers learning the phonology, but unnecessary for German-speakers. For some languages it may be useful in initial lyric diction learning and, then become unnecessary. For example, in *Singing in Czech* (2014), Timothy Cheek writes that

[168] See Section 4.3 for quotation.

Czech linguists tend to find IPA “cumbersome” when applied to their “extremely phonetic” language. He uses IPA, however, believing it to be “the best means of learning Czech diction for the English-speaking novice” (2014, p. xviii). Cheek writes that singers who have studied his book and sung several Czech works will probably need IPA only minimally. Thus, for some languages, IPA functions as an initial tool, from which the singer may eventually gain independence.

Chapter 2.3.2 gave an overview of the history of IPA and its use in the context of lyric diction literature. It showed the manner in which lyric diction authors and teachers have adapted IPA from the complex alphabet of symbols used by linguists in order to create a simple system for use in lyric diction. It also explored some of the advantages and limitations of IPA as it is employed for lyric diction. In order to ascertain the interviewees’ perspectives regarding these advantages and limitations, those who were familiar with IPA were asked what they perceive to be its strengths and weaknesses.

One theme emerged particularly dominantly from the interviewees’ responses: IPA is useful as a tool, but its use is not an end in itself. All those who employ it concurred that there are many more elements required for good lyric diction than can be represented by or gleaned from an IPA transcription. The following aspects were those most frequently considered to be IPA’s strengths:

- It is international and uniform. This facilitates communication about lyric diction between professionals and students from different linguistic backgrounds.
- It is a means of transliteration that is abstracted from the singer’s native language.
- Its segmental approach is well suited to sung language.
- It allows students and professionals some degree of independence in their lyric diction work, allowing them to make use of resources such as Nico Castel’s transcriptions and IPA Source.

The following aspects were most frequently considered to be IPA's weaknesses:

- It is not precise enough to reflect variations in sounds between languages and subtle variations of sounds within a language.
- It is ineffective without the singer having correctly learnt the sound associated with each IPA symbol in each language context.
- It represents language syllabically and is thus unable to represent aspects of prosody (suprasegmentals), "flow", and expression.
- An overemphasis on IPA may lead singers, and students in particular, to "sing IPA", and not to engage intellectually or emotionally with the language itself.

All of the interviewees who answered these questions, even those who do not employ IPA for their own language of specialisation, felt that the ability to use IPA was an important skill for conservatorium-level singers to develop. The need for singers to be able to sing in several languages means that, while IPA may not be essential for all the languages, it is a useful tool for lyric diction overall.

Opera productions throughout the world often involve singers from numerous linguistic backgrounds. The same can be said of many conservatoria, particularly those of the highest level, which cater to international students from a wide range of countries. A lyric diction coach or teacher may be unfamiliar with the singer's native language, and communication may take place in a language that is non-native for both (e.g. English). IPA provides a means by which lyric diction coaches and teachers can communicate about language sounds with all singers, regardless of their background. Without IPA, such communication may become inefficient and imprecise. Daguerre de Hureaux described exactly such a scenario:

> I use the French phonetics for French language, obviously. Why do I do that? I work in opera houses. I have to give notes. I have not got time to learn the particular hieroglyphics of every single singer. When I was faced in La Scala with eight different nationalities, one of them was Hungarian. Every time I said it was an open vowel he said to me: "Oh yes, it's closed". For him clearly it sounded "closed".

If singers and coaches share an understanding of IPA, communication can occur with reduced risk of such inaccuracy or confusion. This point was emphasised by Adams who, along with the majority of interviewees, considered uniformity and internationality to be two of IPA's most significant strengths. Rissinger described it as a "shortcut" for communicating about language. She spoke about her first job in Germany and the shock of coming from US-based training and lyric diction work in which use of IPA had been commonplace.

> In my first job in Germany I was coaching *Dialogues of the Carmelites* [by Poulenc], which was in French, to Germans who had never studied French, didn't speak English, and didn't know any phonetics. It was so hopeless. It was the most confusing thing ever for an American girl straight out of the country and for the Germans too, because they had no means of writing what I was saying and making a difference between an [ø] and an [œ] and a schwa. They had no understanding of how to do that at all.

IPA would have given these singers a means by which to clarify and notate these sounds. Without it, the singers were reliant on language sounds and notation with which they were familiar (i.e. those of German), and these did not encompass the necessary sounds of French.

Rissinger gave another example of German singers who, in this case, were unfamiliar with the notion of open and closed vowels and therefore unable to notate an [ɛ] vowel. Instead, they employed orthography from German, writing <ä> to denote the sound. As Rissinger pointed out, this "is something slightly different". Rissinger's examples illustrate the limitations created by the "perceptual sieve" through which we hear new non-native language sounds, a concept that is discussed in detail in Chapter 2.4. They also show that, without IPA, that sieve is not only aural, but also orthographical.

Even when singers can perceive the required sounds accurately, IPA may be an essential means of accurately notating these sounds. Lefebvre described the danger of inaccurate transliteration. She pointed out that, even in cases where singers have "phenomenal ears", they might then notate the language sounds in a counterproductive manner. For example, in the absence of IPA, singers who are capable of producing the necessary articulations accurately often make inaccurate written notes about language sounds using transliteration based on their mother

tongue. The transliteration may then lead to mispronunciation, due to the strength of the singers' articulatory instincts when faced with a visual cue from their native language.

Danchenko-Stern gave an example of singers' native-language articulatory instincts when describing her work with primarily American English-speaking singers in a production of a Russian opera.

> Working with the chorus of Washington Opera in 1996, I saw a transliteration and it was not unified in the sound. [If] you see English, you sing English. You sing what you see because there is no filter in between your vision and your English. It's a momentary reaction… But if you see IPA, it's abstract from everything else.

The abstraction of IPA from the singer's native language also circumvents the articulatory instincts of singers that result from the orthography of the language to be sung. For example, Lefebvre described working with singers who had difficulty avoiding pronouncing silent letters in French due to the influence of the appearance of the language upon their articulatory instincts. She said that an IPA transcription eliminated that difficulty and also made them realise "how much they were influenced by what they were *seeing* because [French] was not a language they spoke". This scenario would be familiar to any coach who has struggled with the persistent presence of /n/'s in English-speaking singing students' French nasal vowels.

Even when the sung language is the singing student's native language, IPA can play an important role. This was highlighted by US-based English lyric diction coach, LaBouff. She noted that English-speakers take English for granted and never really register its constituent sounds.[169] This is common to most of us with regard to our native language and reflects the instinctive process by which we learnt that language.[170] LaBouff finds IPA "clarifies the thinking" of English-speaking students, and gives them a means by which to "start registering the sounds, and what they are, and what they need to be". She has her students make IPA transcriptions as an initial process in order to "fine-tune" their language perception. A precise conception of

[169] See Section 4.13.
[170] See Chapter 2.4 for the distinction between "pronunciation acquisition" and "pronunciation learning".

each sung vowel also aids the singer in extending that vowel, without anticipating the next consonant as they would in speech.

Knowledge of IPA allows singing students and professional singers to make use of the considerable resources available to them in IPA, e.g. Nico Castel's transcriptions of numerous libretti and the transcriptions of arias and songs available through websites such as *IPA Source*.[171] These resources are in some cases contentious and far from error-free, but even Cleva described them as "good for the uninitiated".[172] Both Gall and Daguerre de Hureaux emphasised that, despite their limitations, these resources save singers both time and money, allowing them to do initial language preparation themselves. Having discussed the value of these resources, Gall described the decision to learn IPA as a "no-brainer".

Notwithstanding the strengths of IPA, all the interviewees identified weaknesses in its use for lyric diction. One of the most frequently mentioned weaknesses was that the symbols of IPA employed for lyric diction are not precise enough to reflect differences in sounds between languages and the subtle variations in sound that may occur within a language.[173] Regarding comparison of sounds between languages, Adams cited /e/ as a symbol used in Italian, French, and German to denote a vowel that in fact varies between the languages. Rissinger pointed out that every single language has a slightly different schwa and that, even within a language, the schwa may be coloured differently depending on its context.[174] She also highlighted the use of the symbol /t/ for the letter <t> in both German and Italian, despite the difference in the manner of articulation and resultant consonant. The full IPA, as linguists employ it, would offer a diacritic marking to distinguish between the two, but such diacritics are almost never employed in lyric diction. IPA's imprecision can also pose a significant challenge for authors writing about lyric diction; Schollum spoke of

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[171] See Literature Review.

[172] Cleva, like many of the interviewees, expressed frustration with Castel's vowel modifications. See Literature Review for more detail.

[173] It is important to note that the complete International Phonetic Alphabet as employed by linguists and phoneticians does in many cases provide means for denoting variations, but that these are often unknown to those who have only learned the simplified form of IPA employed for lyric diction. This is discussed further in Chapter 2.3.2.

[174] The logo for her website, *The Diction Police*, is an IPA schwa with a prohibition sign for this reason.

spending "days and days" deciding on the IPA symbols to be employed in *German for Singers* (1997)*,* which he co-wrote with American professor of German, Dr William Odom.

While acknowledging the imprecision of IPA, both Adams and LaBouff pointed out that differentiating between languages is not a problem if the user is simply aware of the differences from the start. After all, a singer is always aware of the language being transcribed. This highlights, however, that use of IPA for lyric diction is entirely dependent upon the singer being familiar with the language sounds specific to each language *before* using IPA; the symbols alone do not supply sufficient information for a reader to deduce these sounds.

This point was emphasised emphatically by all the interviewees. If a singer does not know the articulation represented by an IPA symbol, it serves no purpose. If s/he has learned the incorrect articulation, then using IPA is entirely counterproductive. Chapter 2.4 showed that the ability to perceive a non-native language sound accurately does not necessary correlate with the ability to produce that sound accurately. Therefore, singers need to know not only the sound that a given IPA symbol represents, but also to know the precise manner in which to produce that sound. Daguerre de Hureaux stressed the need for students to learn the shape and formation of every vowel, saying, "The sound is just not enough". This highlights the importance of a lyric diction teacher providing feedback regarding the articulations that the student is producing in response to IPA symbols.[175]

The segmental nature of IPA was cited above as a strength, in that it reflects aspects of sung language. As Griffiths pointed out, it also allows singers to analyse the complex consonant clusters that occur in languages such as German and Russian. However, while this segmental approach may be useful initially, it does not lead to idiomatic or expressive language use. Lefebvre spoke of the inability of IPA to represent the natural flow of the French language. She also said that, while IPA addresses individual sounds, "it does not address inflection". Similarly, Adams pointed out that, even when one has transcribed a text into IPA, "there are times when

[175] See Section 4.11.

you take certain liberties with some of those sounds, particularly vowel sounds". In order to make lyric diction idiomatic and expressive, and also in response to the musical context, e.g. tessitura, singers need to employ a palette of vowel colours that is more subtle and varied than IPA can represent. Likewise, singers may choose to slightly lengthen or shorten a consonant based on its linguistic and musical context. Such subtleties are below the visual threshold of IPA, but they are integral to expressive lyric diction.

Many of the interviewees expressed concern and frustration that singers, and particularly singing students, who are over-reliant on IPA end up "singing IPA". This was described as a syllabic approach to singing, divorced from the flow and meaning of the text. Radcliffe said she finds that a focus on IPA leads to singers singing sounds rather than language. She explained: "[IPA] is symbols… It takes it away from the actual language element of it, and then you're just reading these signs rather than reading a language". Kimmorley shared this perspective. She finds that singers who are reading an IPA transcription do not engage with the original language, and often lose sight of the words that led to the transcription. She gave the hypothetical example of a singer who is unable to identify a noun in a French text because, due to a liaison between words, s/he is uncertain of where one word ends and the next begins. Kimmorley also said that the segmental nature of IPA often results in singers being "too focused on the vertical rather than the horizontal", and that the language consequently sounds like the result of "putting coloured blocks together". This analogy is a particularly effective one, because the "coloured blocks" of IPA allow for a manner of thinking about lyric diction that would not otherwise be possible, and which can be very useful. However, this must be only a starting point. As Griffiths explained, "we [then] have to get away from singing one syllable at a time to making the syllables add up to words, and then making the words into phrases – musical phrases [and] verbal phrases". Likewise, Schollum spoke of the artistic elements of lyric diction, which require a perspective of language that extends far beyond IPA. He said: "It's not like in a pharmacy where you have a recipe and you can put it together; every sentence can have a hundred…slight differences… [IPA] is a basic thing. It can teach you some technique, but not art".

This quotation encapsulates the interviewees' perspectives regarding IPA. IPA is a useful means for communicating about lyric diction, and a tool that enables singers to circumvent the perceptual sieve of their native language, and to access resources. However, the interviewees were emphatic that there are many more elements required for good lyric diction than can be represented by an IPA transcription. It is only a starting point for lyric diction learning, and must be perceived as such.

4.9. Use of phonetic terminology

Like IPA, the phonetic terminology employed in lyric diction has been adapted from articulatory phonetics.[176] Unlike IPA, which is employed in a fairly uniform manner throughout the lyric diction literature (though symbols may differ slightly, the level of detail provided is usually the same), the extent to which phonetic terminology is employed varies considerably.[177] It was deemed valuable to ascertain the extent to which the interviewees use phonetic terminology in their pedagogical practice.

The interviewees were asked about the phonetic terminology they employ in their teaching. The responses varied significantly, from a comprehensive labelling of articulations in terms of place and manner of articulation, to a complete eschewing of all phonetic terms. The striking thing about these responses was that, despite the interviewees having made very different choices regarding their use of phonetic terminology, the reasons they gave for their choices were the same: to provide clarity regarding the movement and position of the articulators, and to maximise singing students' physical awareness of their articulations.

The majority of interviewees favoured minimal use of phonetic terminology. All the interviewees emphasised that it is more important for the singer to be able to produce articulations than to be familiar with the terminology that describes them. Those who do use phonetic terminology felt that it heightens the singer's awareness of their articulators and eliminates confusion. Those who use it minimally or not at all made the following points:

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[176] See Chapter 2.3.2 for the categorisation of vowels and consonants according to IPA.
[177] See Literature Review.

- Lyric diction coaches and singers are neither linguists nor phoneticians and therefore do not require the terminology employed by linguists and phoneticians.
- Singers may find phonetic terminology hard to understand, or be intimidated or overwhelmed by it.
- The use of phonetic terminology does not aid the singer's awareness of their articulators.

Before discussing the interviewees' responses, it should be mentioned that the interview question was formulated based on the assumption that all the interviewees would, to some degree, be acquainted with phonetic terminology. This assumption turned out to be incorrect. Even the word "terminology" appeared to mean different things to different interviewees. Some interviewees took it to mean anatomical terms, others, articulatory classifications.

Morton and Schollum use phonetic terminology as an integral part of their teaching. Schollum starts with the German terms (the language in which he teaches) and then also introduces Latin terms, which he considers "basic knowledge". Morton said that at the beginning of the semester he goes through the Italian consonants, describing them "in their very boring technical terms": "Consonants are described in two ways, either by which articulators are involved, number one, and the second is how the breath flows or does not flow". Morton was emphatic that this is not so that students can be tested on the material, but rather so that they consider the meaning of the terms and the physical implications.

> … Labiodental. What does that mean? So it's lips and teeth. Or dental, what does that mean? That your tongue is touching the back of your teeth… They have to know physically what's going on in there and I want them to analyse this.

Both Morton and Schollum find that this phonetic terminology aids the development of students' physical awareness. Morton gave several examples. In one, he cited the importance of understanding that /k/ and /g/ in Italian are medial-palatal consonants, and therefore articulated much further forward than in English, because the place of articulation "affects the quality and clarity of the vowel that follows". Morton also

emphasised the importance of singing students understanding "how breath flows through a consonant". For example, he tells his students: "This is a plosive consonant, which means that the air stops. This is a nasal consonant – the air goes through the nose. This is a lateral consonant – the air travels on the sides of the tongue". Morton argued that such terms contribute to students' ability to experience the flow of air when they articulate the consonants, and that this in turn allows them to achieve a greater legato.

The other interviewees' responses revealed that they employ various forms of terminology to varying degrees. There was also considerable divergence of opinion about the role of terminology in developing singers' physical awareness of their lyric diction. Several interviewees interpreted 'terminology' as meaning anatomical descriptions. For example, Cleva said that, while she's "not wild about getting too analytical or too technical about these things", in Italian "everything happens from the hard palate, dental and labial. There are just two sounds that are just soft palate". Cleva believes a student must be made explicitly aware of this and she finds that these descriptive terms are effective. She also gave the following example:

> With the [Italian] <t>, [I need] to get them used to flatten the tongue… So when I see that they are having a lot of trouble, I ask them to push the tongue against the teeth… and then it won't spit… Sometimes I think you do have to use that kind of terminology because otherwise it's too [confusing].

Cleva clearly understood 'terminology' to refer to anatomical description; when asked if she would also use terms such as 'bilabial' and 'labiodental', she replied, "I don't go that far".

Like Morton, Schollum, and Cleva, Moris emphasised the importance of his students developing a physical awareness of their lyric diction. However, he said he employs no terminology, instead using the following process:

> Once they get the right sound, I always say, "Now repeat it and when you are on that sound, stop and keep repeating that sound until it gets into your mind where your tongue is, your cheeks are placed, your throat is placed, your jaw is placed. Just photographically try to remember how you feel when you hear this sound so it will help you remember it".

It is interesting to consider whether a singing student might go through a very similar process of analysing and remembering the sensation of an articulation with both Moris and Morton, simply using different vocabulary in order to describe it.[178]

The importance of the articulatory outcome, rather than the means of describing the articulatory process, was emphasised by many of the interviewees. LaBouff said: "I think the concepts are great, but if they aren't applied then there's no point". In her book, *Singing and Communicating in English* (2008), LaBouff used terminology she derived from theatre voice books and literature regarding speech pathology. Throughout the book, she employs terms for the place and manner of articulation. Interestingly, in the several hours of classes observed during the field trip for this project, LaBouff used very little phonetic terminology in speaking with her students, who were presenting repertoire for coaching in front of the class. This may have been because they were nearing the end of the academic year and such aspects had been covered in the preceding months. However, it seemed in keeping with her aforementioned statement. Adams echoed her point, saying that knowing the terminology does not automatically result in students being able to "do it better or sing it better".[179] He added that, if this aspect "is dwelt on as an end in itself, it can become counterproductive".

Adams was one of several interviewees who emphasised the considerable difference between lyric diction and phonetics. He pointed out that he does not have a degree in linguistics and that, when he wrote *A Handbook of Diction for Singers* (2008), he did not know a lot of phonetic terminology. This is particularly noteworthy; that a highly successful singer and lyric diction teacher should only feel the need to learn phonetic terminology when commissioned to write a book suggests that expectations of lyric diction literature differ from those of practical lyric diction pedagogy.

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[178] Such processes are explored further in Section 4.11.

[179] In his book, *A Handbook of Diction for Singers* (2008), Adams does not use phonetic terms for the place and manner of articulation. Instead, he uses expressions such as "well forward", rather than 'dental' and describes Italian consonants as "hard", "soft", "voiced", "unvoiced" and "unaspirated".

Rissinger is a similar case. Having made podcasts prolifically since 2010, she had felt it necessary to undertake linguistics studies shortly before the interview (in March 2016) and was thus familiar with phonetic terminology. However, she argued that such knowledge is unnecessary for singers. Likewise, Danchenko-Stern emphasised that lyric diction is not "phonetics as a science" but rather involves "phonetics for singers".

Danchenko-Stern was one of several interviewees who spoke of the danger of confusing, intimidating, or overwhelming singing students with terminology. She said she refers to "dental" consonants, but otherwise minimises terminology, because "kids are sick of new terminology". Gall also felt that use of phonetic terminology would require students to "learn another thing which they don't need". He said that, while for some students it is "important to know physical things, …a slightly medical terminology would [not] help that process".

For many of the interviewees, phonetic terminology was seen as a potential source of confusion for students, and indeed teachers. Griffiths said he talks "in terms of our everyday vocabulary, rather than jargon". He continued, "I will not use all of the diction jargon…you find in all of the big diction books, which I find only confusing". Radcliffe emphasised that she feels the need to keep her language as simple as possible. She uses the terms "voiced", "unvoiced", "hard" and "soft" to describe consonants in her Italian coaching and said that, even in that case, "some people look at [her] like, 'What the hell does that mean?'" Daguerre de Hureaux went so far as to say that, for some singing students, terminology is "terrifying". She added that she does not have the time to teach students an "anatomy course", but that nor is that the point of her teaching. Rather, she has "a system that allows them to get from A to B and does not include a huge amount of anatomy and great jargon".

How is it that phonetic terminology can be seen to lead to both clarity and confusion in the teaching of lyric diction? No doubt, this is entirely dependent upon the manner in which it is introduced and employed by the teacher. Any term, whether highly technical or relatively simple, is likely to confuse the singing student if it is one with which they are not familiar. Therefore, infrequent use of phonetic terminology would likely be counterproductive. Both Morton and Schollum described employing

phonetic terminology from the beginning of their lyric diction courses, and using it throughout. They create a clear conceptual link between the words and the students' articulatory movements and corresponding sensations. It was particularly noteworthy that Morton feels that phonetic terms clarify students' awareness of the flow of air, and thereby facilitate better legato. This is no doubt based on students' understanding that, for many consonants, the air does not stop, but rather redirects around the articulatory obstruction. It would, however, be possible to achieve this understanding without the use of phonetic terminology. In fact, as the interviewees pointed out, the terms used to facilitate the students' awareness of manner and place of articulation are far less important than the awareness itself.

The introduction of phonetic terminology does require singing students to learn new terms. Some of the interviewees argued that this overburdens the students or intimidates them from the outset, thus limiting their achievement; this argument might be well founded in many instances. It is important to note that Morton, LaBouff, and Schollum, all of whom use phonetic terminology, have some of the most generous class time allocations amongst the interviewees, which may provide them with the opportunity to reinforce and clarify phonetic terms.

In retrospect, it might have been more effective to ask the interviewees about their teaching vocabulary in far more general terms, avoiding the use of the word "terminology", in order to ascertain a clearer view of each interviewee's approach. Nevertheless, all the interviewees clearly choose their vocabulary in order to achieve clarity regarding the movement and position of the articulators, and to maximise singing students' physical awareness of their articulations. The fact that the interviewees have found different ways of doing this illustrates that effective lyric diction teaching does not depend upon vocabulary choice, but rather the way in which the chosen vocabulary is employed.

4.10. The differences between singing and speaking

The remaining sections of this chapter present the interviewees' responses to questions relating to sung aspects of lyric diction, lyric diction in a student's native language, and communication and expression through lyric diction. Such facets of learning arise as the students apply their knowledge of pronunciation rules and the associated articulations in the sung context. These aspects are less-clear cut than, for example, pronunciation rules. Perhaps therefore, they are much less represented in the lyric diction literature. Yet, as the following discussion shows, these areas are of great importance to the interviewees, sometimes reflecting their conception of the field of lyric diction itself. Some lyric diction teachers (such as Montgomery, cited in Section 4.7) may not include singing in their lyric diction teaching, however it was central to the pedagogy of all the interviewees.

The differences between singing and speaking, and students' aural and kinaesthetic perceptions of lyric diction, are discussed in this and the following section, 4.11. These are areas of great pedagogical significance, and the interviewees' comments regarding these issues serve to both define and bridge the gap between spoken and sung language. Section 4.12 presents the interviewees' perspectives regarding the essential role of consonants in lyric diction in terms of clarity, expression, and singing technique. Section 4.13 shows that, while the gap between spoken and sung language applies equally to lyric diction in a student's native language as to non-native languages, native-language lyric diction poses particular challenges. It reveals the interviewees' perspectives regarding those challenges. Finally, in Section 4.14, communication and expression through lyric diction are discussed with regard to their importance in the context of conservatorium-level lyric diction tuition and the interviewees' associated pedagogical approaches.

There are, quite obviously, significant differences between singing and speaking. Many of them are discussed in Chapters 2.1 and Chapter 2.2. These differences pose challenges in terms of lyric diction because adjustments may need to be made to language in order for it to be sung, or in accordance with tradition or aesthetic preference. The differences between singing and speaking pose challenges for the

lyric diction teacher in terms of which aspects to prioritise and how to approach them pedagogically. This is terrain on which lyric diction and singing technique intersect. Lyric diction teachers may, therefore, be cautious or choose not to offer advice regarding some aspects about which a student's singing teacher might have strong opinions.

When asked what students need to understand about the differences between singing and speaking, the interviewees gave a wide array of responses. Two major themes dominated: legato and resonance. Several additional aspects also emerged:

- There are significant differences between spoken and sung language.
- In some languages, there are specific differences in pronunciation between the spoken and sung language.
- Differences notwithstanding, speaking a text is often an integral part of preparing to sing it.
- In order to create a sound that is recognisable as the spoken language, the singer might need to produce a sound that to them neither feels nor sounds like the sound they wish the listener to perceive.

There was unanimity amongst the interviewees regarding the importance of legato, but regarding resonance there was considerable variation, and even disagreement. Some interviewees considered resonance the most important aspect of their lyric diction work, whereas others felt that it was beyond their remit as a lyric diction teacher or coach.

In a few instances, the interviewees replied that there should be no difference between speaking and singing. In each of these instances, however, a follow-up question revealed that they were aware of significant differences between singing and speaking, but considered these to be self-evident. Furthermore, it seemed that the initial responses of these interviewees may have stemmed from a desire for sung language to have a similar level of intelligibility and nuance to spoken language; to

consider the two to be different seemed to risk implying that this need not be the case.[180]

This section first presents the interviewees' various responses regarding the differences in between sung and spoken language, including specific differences in pronunciation. It then explores the central role of legato in sung language and reveals the manner in which most of the interviewees use speaking to establish this and other characteristics of lyric diction. Finally, the issue of resonance is explored, leading into a subsection that specifically addresses vowel modification.

The interviewees presented differences between spoken and sung language from the points of view of context, timing, pitch, and in terms of "magnification". Daguerre de Hureaux contrasted sung language with language in the context of spoken conversation. She highlighted the role of guesswork in the latter, and the degree to which a listener may rely on context for comprehension. Daguerre de Hureaux also made the point that conversation takes place in a common language and that, even if one speaker has a noticeable accent, they can generally still be understood.[181] Singers, on the other hand, often sing to an audience that does not speak the sung language. In order to communicate with such an audience, Daguerre de Hureaux felt that a singer must be more "emphatic" than a speaker would be. She described this in terms of energising articulations, and "offering key words" more clearly than one would do in speech.[182]

Daguerre de Hureaux's point is an important one. In daily language use, responsibility for comprehension is shared between the speaker and the listener. The listener's ability to respond verbally and physically, i.e. with facial expressions and body language, provides the speaker with continuous live feedback as to their intelligibility. The speaker is thus able to tailor all aspects of their communication, not only the clarity and expressiveness, but also the words themselves, to the listener. On the other hand, a singer has predetermined words (which may or may not be particularly comprehensible to start with), may be communicating in a language their audience

[180] See Section 4.14.
[181] See Chapter 2.4 for discussion of the 'nativeness' and 'intelligibility' principles.
[182] The latter aspect is discussed further in Section 4.14.

does not understand, and does not receive the same continuous live feedback. Thus, the burden of intelligibility lies entirely with the singer. In song, even a clarifying dramatic element is absent. Surtitles and dramatization aid communication in opera, but surtitles only provide semantic content (simplified at that), while scenic elements generally occur on a large scale – few in the audience are close enough to read a singer's facial expressions, for example. Therefore, finer points of expression, if they are to be communicated, must be conveyed by the voice.

Both Daguerre de Hureaux and Schollum pointed out that, except in *secco recitativo,* speakers make use of a flexibility in timing that is rarely possible for a singer. Schollum said that, while "an actor can make an emphasis, or stop, or breathe wherever he wants", singers often have a "very strict almost corset of rhythm". Daguerre de Hureaux said that, regarding timing, unlike speech, "for singing, everything is planned".

LaBouff also emphasised the effect of timing in singing, describing the language as being in "slow motion" and "under a microscope". This temporal effect is different to that described by Daguerre de Hureaux and Schollum, relating to vocal production rather than prosody. In *Singing and Communicating in English* (2008, p. 8), LaBouff explains that "minute exactness is required in lyric diction because the sounds are sustained for a much longer time than when spoken. They must be absolutely correctly produced for communicative clarity and to avoid vocal tension". [183]

While LaBouff described lyric diction as language "under a microscope" in the temporal sense, other interviewees referred to the idea sung language being "magnified" in different ways. Schollum related the idea of magnification to the range of pitch required for singing. He noted that, while in speaking we use the range of about a fifth, a singer must sing over a span of more than two octaves and therefore requires far more energy. Schollum felt that an incorrect articulation that might seem insignificant in speech could be "five times as strong" when sung, "because you do it one octave higher with much more energy, and that can hurt these little vocal cords easily". Di Taranto referred to magnification in terms of vocal resonance, saying,

[183] This temporal aspect is discussed in Chapter 2.2.

“Speaking is just a small part and it’s multiplied... when you sing”. Finally, Morton associated magnification with the aesthetics of lyric diction, describing lyric diction as an “exaggerated… and polished version of the spoken language”. He said that, while the beautiful and musical sound of an Italian speaker is a starting point, “the best Italian speaker does not have as good diction as you need to sing”.

Some of the most obvious differences between sung and spoken language are particular conventions of pronunciation, often founded on long-established traditions determined by aesthetic preference or vocal ease. In some instances, there is a diversity of opinion regarding these differences, and a recent and increasing inclination towards articulations that more closely resemble the spoken language.

Marie-France Lefebvre highlighted two commonly discussed examples in French: the uvular <r> and the vowel in ‘les’, ‘mes’, ‘tes’ and ‘ses’. In both instances she prefers the established tradition, which she learned from her teacher Nico Castel. In the case of the <r>, this is for predominantly technical reasons.

> I was taught early on by Nico, and by everybody, to always flip <r>s… However… at some point the ground shook and the first time I heard Natalie Dessay she came to sing a gala concert in DC and… she was singing with guttural <r>s. I thought I was going to stand up on my seat in the opera house and say, “Oh! Excuse me!” [*laughing*]. I have very mixed feelings. Personally I think in the opera house [guttural <r>s] are almost impossible… I don’t think it carries [and]… I think it does exactly what I don’t like consonants to do: it really interrupts the flow of air for most people… I think in song it can work in some repertoire, but not in everything.

In the case of the French words ‘ces’, ‘des’, ‘les’, ‘mes’, ‘tes’ and ‘ses’, Lefebvre learnt them as open vowels from Castel, and she acknowledges this is an aesthetic preference.

> There is now a school of thought that believes strongly that they should be closed [and] a lot of French speakers who want them [like that]. It’s not a nice way to say it, but to me, like to [Castel]… it’s street language – that’s how people speak. It’s true that a lot of us close them when we speak, but I think in lyric diction there is a beauty to all those being open.

Lefebvre was at pains to point out that she is rarely inflexible or dogmatic, as she feels “that goes against anything we do”. Yet, the differences between lyric diction and “street language” are aspects that may be considered the “polish” to which Morton referred above.

The nature of such polish may, however, change over time. The pronunciation of the German <r> is an example of shifting opinions and taste. The <r> may be flipped, rolled, or in some contexts pronounced as a second Schwa sound (/ɐ/) in sung German. An increasing prevalence of the /ɐ/ pronunciation reflects a transformation that has occurred in common speech (Ophaug, 2010, p. 572) and, where two possibilities exist for a given context, a flip or roll may sound old-fashioned.[184] However, the pronunciation that is most common in speech, the uvular <r>, is still not considered appropriate for singing (Adams, 2008, p. 106). This shows that, while some aspects of lyric diction may change to reflect changes within the spoken language, other elements of the spoken language may remain undesirable in a sung context. This is no doubt for technical and practical reasons, the articulation of the uvular <r> being disruptive to the vocal line and placement, and difficult to hear, as Lefebvre explained above. Regarding the uvular <r>, Rissinger said: “Nobody does this in [sung] German. Nobody”.[185] She emphasised that such differences between the spoken and sung language make it necessary for singers to undertake specialist lyric diction studies.

The adjustment of language for singing is a particularly interesting aspect of lyric diction pedagogy, because sometimes the adjustments themselves make the sung language intelligible.[186] That is, if the singer were to sing the language as it is spoken, it would come across less intelligibly and, therefore, *less* like the spoken language

[184] De’Ath (2004a, 2004b) and Ophaug (2010) have written about this extensively in *Journal of Singing*.
[185] There are rare exceptions regarding use of the uvular <r>. In correspondence regarding this issue, interviewee David Adams wrote that German bass-baritone Franz Mazura, who sings the role of Dr. Schoen in the Boulez recording of Berg’s *Lulu*, consistently uses a “guttural <r>”. He suggested this may be because Mazura originally trained as an actor. Interestingly, Adams also pointed out that Italian bass Cesare Siepi and tenor Cesare Valletti employ “scarcely noticeable” uvular <r>’s that do not interfere with their legato, noting that some Italians employ a uvular <r> in their speech (D. Adams, personal communication, 18 May 2019).
[186] The strategic use of shadow vowels is a case in point (see LaBouff 2008).

than when adjustments have been made. This reflects the change in acoustic parameters that occurs in singing.

One of the most significant adjustments of language for singing is the creation of *legato.* Meaning “bound” or “connected” (Chew, 2001), legato is essential to singing, but is not a characteristic of all lyric diction languages. English and German are the most obvious non-legato examples. Legato was the aspect of lyric diction that was most frequently mentioned by the interviewees as the way in which singing differs from speech. For example, LaBouff described English as a “Germanic stop-language”, saying that in English we “punch at things when we stress things”, and that this must not be transferred to a vocal line. In order to have legato while still sounding idiomatic, LaBouff advocates that emphasis must occur on the idiomatically correct syllables, but in an Italianate manner significantly different to that which one would employ when speaking. She calls this “pulsing the phrase” and, in her book *Singing and Communicating in English*, instructs the singer to “swell on the stressed vowel sounds rather than punching them” (2008, p. 24).

Adams, Gall, and Kimmorley spoke of the legato that it is possible to achieve when singing in German. Gall said that an important part of his lyric diction teaching and coaching is to remove prejudice about German being “harsh” or “chopped”. One of the characteristics of spoken German is that every word beginning with a vowel is preceded by a glottal stop though, as Adams explained, “such an approach results in inelegant [sung] German, to say the least”. Gall spoke of the importance of “singing legato in German and understanding that the final consonant leads… into the next word”. He continued, “I can elide one word to the next. Even when it comes to a word ending in a consonant and the next word starting on a vowel – well personally I don’t like the word ‘glottal’. I prefer the word ‘rearticulation’, [and] if I have to use ‘glottal’ I would say ‘Italian glottal’ or ‘soft glottal’. These comments illustrate the ways in which glottal characteristics of German may be eliminated or minimised to facilitate legato when singing. In fact, Gall explained that, when he began his training as a lyric diction coach, he was under the impression that the focus of his work would be on correct pronunciation. He now considers the most important aspect to be developing

"the sense of legato, the sense of how one word is connected to the next".[187] Notably, Kimmorley also described German as "a beautiful *bel canto* language when it is sung well".

The term *bel canto* has long been associated with legato singing (Jander & Harris, 2001), and this has much to do with the legato quality of the Italian language. Colorni describes spoken Italian thus:

> Each [Italian] phrase, uttered with the most perfect "legato," sounds like a single long flowing word. It is precisely this unrelenting, flowing smoothness, in addition to its predominantly vocalic pattern, that endows the language with its extraordinary, striking, melodiousness. (1970, p. 124)

Di Taranto even prioritises legato over accuracy in her Italian lyric diction teaching. She said:

> I also think that if you sing beautifully, if you have the legato, which is the basis of the language, and you can't pronounce the /ʎ/, no one dies, definitely not. That won't be the reason why you don't get an audition, I think. Of course you don't want to have a strong accent, I don't want to say that, but it's all quite relative.

However, even Italian requires adjustment to enhance legato when sung. For example, Cleva explained that a singer must establish the short vowel preceding a double consonant to a far greater extent than a speaker would: "You establish the vowel and then you put the double consonant. It's necessary to do [the double consonant], but not overdo it or you cut the voice in two. You never, never, never must do that".

Like Cleva, Danchenko-Stern referred to the danger of a speech-like approach to short vowels in any sung language. She expressed frustration with the lack of legato she sometimes encounters among her students:

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[187] Section 4.12 shows the creation of legato in German to be related as much, if not more, to the connection of consonants within consonant clusters as to vowel onsets.

> You're dealing with an instrument, which means we're dealing with sound, which means we're dealing with vibrations. How do harp players have to end the sound? They stop vibrations. And singers are very happily killing the cantilena! Why? Because they stop on the short vowel and they take a break before the next. It's almost invisible, yet chop chop chop… I say: "I need litres of olive oil between notes"– that's my legato.

Lefebvre expressed a similar frustration with the lack of legato she encounters in both students', and even professionals', sung French. This is noteworthy, because, to someone unfamiliar with lyric diction, Russian and French (Dancheko-Stern and Lefebvre's respective specialisations) might appear to have little in common. Yet, legato was a unifying principle for all the interviewees. For example, Cleva argued that "singing a legato line on a vowel should be the same" in all languages. She continued, "To chop off the voice… I don't think any language wants that". When asked what principle she considered common to lyric diction across all languages, Danchenko-Stern made the same point. She was convinced that her colleagues would share her perspective.

> Not to interrupt the vocal line. Are we all on the same page with that one? All and everybody! Because singing is *bel canto*, cantare! Endless line! It's a seamless change of bow on the strings! …That's what we all struggle for.

In this, the interviewees proved her correct.

When discussing the differences between sung and spoken language, Adams made the very valid point that, because many singing students do not speak the languages of which they are learning the lyric diction, they do not necessarily need to learn the differences between, for example, spoken Italian and sung Italian, or spoken German and sung German. Rather, he said such students are "coming at [lyric diction learning] simply as a kind of mechanical process, or learning how to pronounce the languages without improper speech habits [from their native language] getting in the way". Adams acknowledged that "putting it that way makes it sound very mechanical and artificial," but also said that the process can result in singing students sounding "remarkably authentic". Notably, Adams said that he devoted a significant part of his classes to having students speak. He described this as: "Not speaking for conversation, but speaking the language so that it sounds reasonably authentic *before*

they sing". Indeed, despite the differences between spoken and sung language, all the interviewees, with the exception of Danchenko-Stern, considered the speaking of text to be an integral part of preparing to sing it, and therefore an integral part of their lyric diction teaching.

The interviewees gave several reasons for the importance of speaking the text. Many spoke of speaking the text, both in the original language and in translation, as a means to establishing an expressive connection between the text and its meaning.[188] However, speaking was also seen an essential preparation for singing in other ways.

Many of the interviewees emphasised the importance of finding the natural flow and stress of language away from the influence of the notated rhythm and the music's metrical structure. Lefebvre described the failure to "speak the text away from the rhythm" as "the deadliest thing". In French, her language of specialisation, metrical emphasis can destroy the accentual phrase of the language. However, this was not only a concern of the French lyric diction teachers. Gall noted that Bach and Schubert, for example, may set German text in a manner in which "the stress of the word is slightly different to the natural stress of the music". He argued that, having the students speak the text allows them to "achieve a bit of both".

Although *secco recitativo* does not have the same rhythmic or metrical implications as other settings, its delivery may be affected by the notated score if singing students do not begin by learning the text as it is spoken. All the Italian lyric diction teachers who were interviewed stressed this point. Cleva explained:

> When you learn recitative, it's so important to speak it first, and then put the notes to it. Not first the notes and then the words, because especially the Mozart recitatives are so brilliantly written that they follow the language anyway. He writes a crotchet and he doesn't mean a crotchet, all he means is that's where the stress of the word goes. He's only written that because it's in 4/4 time, but he doesn't really mean it… When they learn the music first… it becomes unnatural.

The establishment of legato is somewhat less applicable to recitativo, however many of the interviewees considered careful, supported speaking of text to be essential to

[188] See Section 4.14.

the establishment of legato lyric diction in all contexts. For example, Gall maintained that, “if you speak a text in the right way, it is actually the perfect preparation for singing it”. He described this manner of speaking as “with proper breath”, “connected with the body” and “really making a point of how the words are connected”. Gall said that this is “much more conducive rather than just speaking words and sounds”, but acknowledged it is difficult, saying, “It’s actually really hard work… and some students are not actually capable of doing that. Sometimes I make them do it in slow motion to taste the words”. Both Lefebvre and Morton also spoke of the importance of speaking text with support. Lefebvre said,

> We ask them to speak it with support… It sounds funny, but it has to be that way. Ideally singers would speak that way all the time, even when they’re not dealing with their text or their opera or their something, but it sounds a little bit strange or mannered.

Morton related the maintaining of support to a maintaining of “position”, saying that Italian speakers do not let the end of a phrase drop in the same manner as English speakers, for example. He advocates speaking the text in order to train students to “stay in that high position”.[189]

While the manner of speaking advocated by the interviewees differs significantly from colloquial speech of the languages, it also differs from singing. Adams noted the tendency of singing students to “get into singer-mode” when singing, which “brings in a whole slew of attitudes and mindsets”. He continued, “If they get away from that and just speak the language, it can clear away some of that extraneous singer stuff”. In a similar sense, speaking can be seen to reduce the singing student’s cognitive load, allowing them to focus on aspects of breath support, legato, and articulation without the additional concerns of pitch and rhythm.

The technique of intoning text on a single note is an intermediate step between speaking and singing, and is employed by Danchenko-Stern and Daguerre de Hureaux. Danchenko-Stern described it as “sung speaking”, while Daguerre de Hureaux said:

[189] Several hours of Morton’s classes were observed during the field trip and all commenced with the students taking turns to read Italian texts and receive feedback.

> I work with a text legato very slowly. There's no point when a singer reads something to me [syllable by syllable]. It's not alive– [the syllables] are not connected to each other… I make them work a lot on a monotone with breathing.

Danchenko-Stern and Daguerre de Hureaux also integrate the notated rhythm into this process. Daguerre de Hureaux said she is "absolutely certain that you can do almost ninety percent of your work in preparation, reading in rhythm, with the [vowel] shapes and really going from one shape to the other".

Intoning text on a single pitch bridges the gap between legato speech and singing by incorporating aspects of resonance. Chapter 2.1 showed that the resonance required for singing is a key difference between singing and speaking, even if the speaking is in a performance context. As Schollum pointed out, even for relatively small audiences, speakers are nowadays inclined to use a microphone, whereas opera singers sing without amplification for audiences of up to three or four thousand. This distinction did not always exist. In an interview in *Opera Today* (Yohalem, 2011), scholar and conductor Will Crutchfield makes the point that "the microphone displaced the kind of vocalism that had made opera possible. That sort of training had been necessary, not only for opera but for politicians, preachers, for actors and singers on Broadway, for anyone who had to fill a room and be understood". In a sense, western classical singing could be seen as one of the last bastions of such vocalism.

All the interviewees demonstrated a great awareness of the interaction between resonance and language, even if they did not discuss it explicitly. For example, Lefebvre described herself as initially being "guilty of looking for perfect vowels", but said that her experience had taught her that in many instances perfect vowels are not compatible with beauty of sound.

> People don't want to stay and listen to a recital if it sounds ugly, even if all the words are clear. The sound is ugly because it's all tight because of what we make them do. That's not good at all.

This comment illustrates the challenge inherent in lyric diction of balancing vocal resonance and intelligibility. Lefebvre noted that a "tight" approach to lyric diction

might cause the singing student pain.[190] Similarly, Di Taranto highlighted the importance of using lyric diction to support resonance in order to avoid vocal injury when she described the "sound expectation" associated with the resonance of sung Italian.

> If you say [ˈbeːne] or [ˈbɛːne] basically I couldn't care less, but if the vowels [e] or [ɛ] are at the back, that's when I correct, because it won't sound Italian and the resonance won't sound good enough for projection in opera. I think every language has its own characteristics, but I think that the resonance is what has to come first otherwise you are either not going to be heard or destroy your voice…

Though Di Taranto addresses resonance in her teaching, she pointed out that not all lyric diction coaches feel that it is their place to do so. This was borne out by the interviewees. For example, Morton spoke passionately about the process of searching for vowels in which the singer has a sense of emptiness, allowing the vocal instrument to accept and amplify resonance, however Gall said he always refers students to their singing teacher with regard to resonance. Gall said that, while he may have opinions, he tends not to offer them because he does not wish to interfere with their singing technique. Similarly Cleva, having stated that a singer's resonance is entirely different when they sing than when they speak, was adamant that a lyric diction teacher/coach must not "meddle vocally", even when s/he has the knowledge and expertise to solve an issue. She argued that the difference in resonance between speech and singing has no implications for pronunciation, though she does advocate vowel modification in some circumstances, as described in the following sub-section.

Resonance, and therefore vowel modification, may be viewed as points of intersection between the responsibilities of the lyric diction coach and the voice teacher. Given the occasional territorial disputes between voice teachers and lyric diction coaches, it is important to explore the ways in which these aspects may be approached. Though beyond the remit of this study, one can surmise that the interviewees might treat these aspects significantly differently in a professional context than in a conservatorium context. However, the following subsection shows that the highly individual approaches developed by the interviewees mean that, even at the conservatorium

[190] Zedda writes about such an approach to French lyric diction in his article 'Linguistic variants and their effects on the singing voice' (1998), which is referred to in Section 4.10.

level, there is considerable divergence in how they approach these issues, if they do so at all.

4.10.1. Vowel modification

Chapter 2.1 showed vowel modification to be acoustically necessary in order to maintain resonance when singing. Consequently, the interviewees were asked about their use of vowel modification and their attitudes towards it. All the interviewees agreed that some kind of "modification", "adjustment", or "accommodation" of vowels is at times necessary when singing. However, they described dealing with vowel modification in various ways and to varying degrees. Some of the interviewees explicitly incorporate aspects of vowel modification into their teaching, while others said they do not (although in some cases it later appeared that, in fact, they do). Several interviewees had strong opinions regarding vowel modification, but considered it largely outside their remit as lyric diction teachers. Those interviewees said that, while they might make suggestions regarding vowel modification, they always recommend students consult with their singing teachers, within whose pedagogical terrain they considered it to fall. Despite these differences, the interviewees were both unified and emphatic on two points:

- The singer must know the correct vowel.
- The result of any modification must sound to the listener as much like the correct vowel as possible.

Several other issues were also raised:

- Particular care must be taken with vowels in the passaggio and high register, and the necessary accommodations must be made.
- The manner in which modification takes place varies between voice types and individuals.
- Singers are often taught to modify vowels too early in their studies.
- Both student and professional singers often display a tendency to modify vowels too frequently, or to over-modify vowels.

Only one interviewee initially indicated that vowel modification is unnecessary. Moris, who studied singing as a bass, said, “My teacher was a soprano for Toscanini and she always told me: ‘You can do everything with the right pronunciation. High or low, it doesn’t matter. You can do it.’ And it is true”. However, he then continued: “Of course you can modify just a little. But very, very little”.

All the interviewees conveyed a reluctance to interfere with aspects of singing that fall within a voice teacher’s area of responsibility. As a consequence, they approach the issue of vowel modification with considerable caution. For example, Radcliffe and Gall both agreed modification was necessary, but stated that, after giving a student advice regarding a vowel, they always advise the student to check with their teacher. Radcliffe said that, while she can hear a lot and knows a great deal about what is required, she considers her role to be “advisory”. Griffiths said that he simply acknowledges to the students that some of their voice teachers teach vowel modification according to tessitura, that some do not, and that he is not in a position to define what must be done. (Interestingly, as shown later in this section, Griffiths did in fact describe giving advice that might be considered vowel modification.) A close collaboration between lyric diction coaches and students’ voice teachers within the conservatorium may allow the lyric diction coach to offer such advice with more assurance; LaBouff, for example, said that she knows the priorities of her students’ voice teachers regarding vowel modification and tailors her advice to each student accordingly.

The interviewees discussed the need to make adjustments to vowels according to tessitura, voice type, and according to the individual singer. There was a focus on flexibility and sensitivity rather than any one-size-fits-all approach. Both Adams and Schollum spoke about the importance of navigating the passaggio with care. Schollum explained this in the context of the older German vocal technique, in which vowels were substituted from just below the passaggio: the [a] with [o], the [e] with [ø], and the [i] with [y]. “This is no longer”, he said, “it’s now just a little bit more focus and a little bit more awareness in the passaggio area”. Adams described vowels as “modifying themselves” acoustically throughout the vocal range, and said that he prefers to assist that process by letting it happen appropriately, rather than imposing

it.[191] Morton agreed. In discussing Berton Coffin's prescriptive Vowel-Pitch Charts (Coffin, 1976), he spoke of the danger of over-intellectualising the process of vowel adjustment, and thereby diverting the singer's attention and limiting their sensitivity. Morton said that the singer's intuition plays an important role in vowel modification: "You have to think about things, but really basically in the end it's not in your brain, it's in your body".

Adams and Gall discussed the varying forms of vowel modification required by different voice types due to differences in tessitura. For example, Adams pointed out that a soprano singing a high note may orientate a vowel differently to a tenor singing the same vowel on a high note because, acoustically, there is an octave's difference. Gall also spoke of the vowel modifications required by a specific voice type, which may differ from others within the same vocal range. He gave the example of a dramatic soprano needing, "probably somewhere around an E, to think a closed /o/ more open" in order to prevent it becoming /u/. He advocated a similar approach with /e/, saying that, without opening the vowel, "[they] will end up singing 'lieben' when [they] want to sing 'leben'". Gall saw these aspects as determined very much by the individual singer, saying, "These are little things, but they are something you need to figure out about your own voice".

Adams emphasised the differing necessities of individual voices with regards to Castel's IPA transcriptions of libretti. As previously mentioned, Castel modifies vowels as he deems appropriate, but does not indicate when he has done so. Nor does he provide the singer with the linguistically correct version. Adams highlighted the difficulty this poses for singers, saying, "Well, that's [Castel's] opinion, and that's fine, but one singer in taking your symbol literally might sound just fine, another might sound very distorted". Adams considers it best to learn the pronunciation rules of the language and then make adjustments as required.

Indeed, all the interviewees were emphatic that singers, be they student or professional, must know the true vowel in order for the result of vowel modification

[191] See discussion of interaction of vowel formants and harmonics in Chapter 2.1.

to sound as much like that vowel as possible. To this end, Morton spoke of distinguishing between the vowel and the “space”.

> The essence of the vowel is never modified, must never be modified. The space is modified according to where you are in your range, because naturally higher notes require a greater deal of space… It’s not even modification, it’s just accommodation… meaning that you’re going up and the goal is just to be comfortable… to be as natural as possible.

Griffiths spoke of a similar approach. He gave the example of saying to a student: “You need an /a/ space for that note, but I want to hear something like an /e/ or an /i/ up there. So can you do that with the shape of the tongue inside the /a/ space?” Griffiths said that, in this manner, he finds he is able to hear the necessary vowel without ever using the term “vowel modification”. Similarly, Morton argued that one hears very great singers who are able to sing a beautiful /i/ vowel on a high C because they have accommodated the need for space.

Though adamant that the singer must know the true vowel, many of the interviewees acknowledged that a modified vowel, while sounding correct to the listener, may sound incorrect to the singer. Several interviewees mentioned the adjustment of the lips on an /i/ vowel as an example of this. Cleva, Gall, and Rissinger all advocate singers use an /y/ (in Gall’s case, he recommends they “think” it) when adjusting an /i/ vowel in the passaggio and above. Rissinger described using this technique in the phrase, “der Liebe Glück” in Pamina’s aria, ‘Ach, ich fuhl’s’.[192] Cleva suggested it as a means of avoiding the substitution of an /a/ vowel in “Ist wie ein Gruß vom *Hammel* [sic]”’ instead of the correct “Ist wie ein Gruß vom Himmel”,[193] which she finds one frequently hears. Cleva applies the same approach in Italian. In these instances, although the soprano may not feel that she is singing an /i/ vowel, the effect for the listener in fact closely resembles one, and vocal quality is not compromised in the manner that would occur if she were to attempt a pure /i/ vowel. Similarly, Adams described the need to adjust an /a/ vowel on a high or passaggio note, saying, “If you sing too literally a pure /a/ it can actually distort the vowel because it’ll spread, so [I suggest] going to a darker /a/, or /ɑ/ or even /ɔ/”. This comment highlights one of the

[192] From *Die Zauberflöte* (Mozart)
[193] From *Der Rosenkavalier* (Strauss)

most important aspects of vowel modification, which Adams expressed very clearly: "The point… is that you modify the vowel so it sounds correct to the listener, even though it may sound to the singer, who's not used to doing it, distorted".

Vowel modification may, in some instances, be employed by singers to create a greater sense of vocal security. However, in some of these cases, it may be possible to sing the true vowel. Adams gave the example of working with sopranos who prefer to sing closed vowels towards the lower head register.

> Where it's supposed to be a more open vowel, and I like the colour of that open vowel, I'll say, "You're singing it closed, I know, because it feels more comfortable, but just try to open up the vowel". Almost always they do and [the] class… say, "Oh yeah, that's really good!" I ask them "Was that hard?" and they say, "No, it's just less secure". They're taking a little bit of a risk.

Cleva, Gall, Moris, Radcliffe, Rissinger, and Di Taranto all spoke of often hearing singers, both student and professional, unnecessarily modifying or "over-modifying" vowels. Radcliffe said that many students modify vowels "all over the place to very little effect", a habit that she considers unnecessary and vocally unhealthy. Similarly, Di Taranto said that when students get into the pre-passaggio, the passaggio, and just beyond the passaggio, they frequently over-modify. She finds this results not only in their failure to sing the correct vowel, but that the form of the vocal instrument is changed in a manner detrimental to the sound quality. Rissinger said that she finds that singers modify appropriately fifty percent of the time, but that the other fifty percent of the time they "just try to sing /a/, not realising that /a/ is probably the last thing they should have sung on that note". Several interviewees mentioned the danger of singers inappropriately resorting to an /a/ vowel whenever modifying, and thus becoming unintelligible. For example, Cleva explained that singers should "modify to the extent that [the vowel] is still recognisable". She said, "Of course you can't sing '/ˈko:me/' on a top C, but let me understand that you know that it isn't… '/ˈka:me/'. Rissinger gave a similar example from Pamina's aria, 'Ach, ich fuhl's',[194] in which the soprano must sing the /i:/ of "Liebe" on a G and B flat above the stave:

[194] From Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte.*

> I don't know how many times I've heard somebody sing Pamina and not even bother to try and sing an /i/ vowel. They sing it so far back and so far wrong because they think: "Oh, I just have to sing an [a], it's too high". The second they sing the /i/ vowel, they realise how much easier it is.

This highlights the fact that a highly modified vowel may not, in fact, confer greater vocal ease than something that more closely resembles the original.

All the interviewees were not only adamant that the singers must know the correct vowel, but also that the result of vowel modification must sound as much like the correct vowel as possible. Both Rissinger and Kimmorley felt that students are taught to modify far too early in their studies, leading to a reluctance to even attempt the correct vowel in difficult tessituras. Rissinger saw this as creating an attitude amongst singing students that "it doesn't matter what vowel you sing". Interestingly, Kimmorley felt that frequent over-modification of vowels often stems from students singing works beyond their means early in their development. She attributes this situation to the pressure some conservatoria place on singers to sing operatic arias "in the first and second years of undergraduate [studies], when they can't sing a scale in tune". In this context, vowel modification becomes a means of survival, and a habit. It is striking to consider that inappropriate early repertoire choices might have this impact, establishing a habit that long outlasts its necessity.

However, avoidance of vowel modification can be counterproductive, and students therefore need to be taught how to employ it effectively (though not necessarily by their lyric diction teacher). For example, LaBouff spoke of coaching distinguished American singer, the dramatic mezzo soprano Dolora Zajick, at the Metropolitan Opera on Tobias Picker's *An American Tragedy*. Zajick said that she had not realised she could modify vowels in English as she did in other languages. She now has LaBouff teach at her school for dramatic voices so that the students learn a process of vowel modification via English in order that they may then be open to those possibilities in other languages.

The need for vowel modification is integrally related to the need to create resonance when singing, and thus forms one of the primary differences between singing and speaking. It is a complicated and nuanced issue that many of the interviewees appear

to approach carefully in their teaching. The interviewees' responses indicate the importance of fostering a considered and judicious approach to vowel modification in conservatorium-level singers. They emphasised the importance of singers knowing the correct vowel and ensuring that, to the listener, the result of any modification resembles the correct vowel as much as possible. Feedback from a singing teacher or lyric diction teacher is clearly essential in this regard. The interviewees also highlighted the danger of a *carte blanche* approach to modification and, in particular, unnecessary substitution with the vowel /a/. The essence of the process described by the interviewees was that, where vowel modification is necessary in order to maintain resonance, it takes place in order to have the vowel sound correct. It is not a licence for a complete vowel substitution. Though not all the interviewees broach the subject in their teaching, it is clear that lyric diction coaches and teachers must have a sophisticated and practical understanding of vowel modification in order to tailor their lyric diction advice to the acoustic and technical demands of the sung context. This points to the highly specialised nature of lyric diction teaching, and its importance at the conservatorium level.

4.11. Hearing, feeling, and knowing: students' aural and kinaesthetic perceptions of lyric diction

The teaching of lyric diction comprises elements of both L2 pronunciation pedagogy and singing pedagogy. Chapter 2.4 presented an overview of several significant areas of research into adult L2 pronunciation acquisition. It showed that there appears to be a relationship between perception and production in L2 pronunciation learning, and that the role of perception may have been significantly underestimated in the L2 classroom (Derwing & Munro, 2015, p. 24). Recent research has shown that differences between individual learners may be "strongly tied" to perceptual acuity (Saito, in press, p. 9) and that learners' capacity to benefit from pronunciation instruction could, in fact, be dependent on their ability to perceive and discriminate the relevant sounds (Kissling, 2014, p. 551).

In the context of L2 pronunciation acquisition, perception is exclusively taken to mean aural perception. However, this is not the case in the context of singing. Due to

the inaccuracy of the aural feedback a singer receives when singing, kinaesthetic feedback, and therefore kinaesthetic perception, play a significant role in singing. While L2 students' kinaesthetic perception of pronunciation has not been accorded the same research interest as aural perception, studies do indicate that explicit instruction regarding articulations has a positive effect on L2 pronunciation learning (Sunara, 2018, pp. 8- 9). Such instruction, which typically focuses on aspects such as the place and manner of articulation (Kissling, 2013, p. 721), relies to a considerable extent on L2 students' kinaesthetic perception.

The teaching of singing relies upon and combines perception and explicit instruction. Put very simply, the process of learning to sing may be both aurally and physically directed, i.e. singing students may be given an aural model to imitate, or they may be instructed to undertake a physical action via concrete instruction, or via imagery that initiates the physical action. Students therefore rely upon their aural and kinaesthetic perceptions of singing.

Considering the role of aural perception and explicit instruction in both L2 pronunciation learning and in singing, it is unsurprising that "the ability to demonstrate the desired production" and "the ability to identify the cause of inaccurate production correctly and provide a solution" were among the skills the interviewees considered essential to high quality lyric diction coaching and teaching. Given the inconclusive science regarding the relative importance and effectiveness of perception and explicit instruction in L2 pronunciation learning, it was deemed important to ascertain which, if either, of the two aspects the interviewees consider more important in the context lyric diction learning. This was expressed in terms of outcomes for the lyric diction student, i.e. the relative importance of singing students' aural perception of lyric diction and their kinaesthetic perception of lyric diction.

This interview question provoked a great deal of discussion. Most of the interviewees were of the opinion that the two aspects are equally important. Their answers to this and the follow-up question regarding ways in which both aural and kinaesthetic perception may be developed explored a range of areas. The dominant theme that emerged was that it is necessary for singers to establish a connection between the correct sound, their kinaesthetic sensation when they produce it and a knowledge or

self-defined understanding of what is occurring when this happens. As was the case regarding other areas of lyric diction, the interviewees emphasised the importance of singers' practical skills. The ability to perceive a language is not sufficient; singers must know how, and be reliably able, to recreate the language sounds. Gall was very direct when asked the relative importance of a singer perceiving a sound aurally or kinaesthetically. He replied: "They need to produce [the sound]. That would be the priority". While admittedly not answering the question, this highlights the essentially practical nature of lyric diction.

Many aspects relating to the aural and kinaesthetic perception of lyric diction and the development of these skills were discussed:

- A singing student's background and language exposure may influence their facility for language perception.
- It takes time for a singing student to "tune" their ears to a language.
- The ability of a singing student to perceive a sound aurally does not automatically result in their ability to produce it.
- Teachers may use a variety of ways to aid singing students in producing an articulation correctly. This may include demonstration, mimicry and comparison, explicit instruction, and imagery.
- Singing students need to define the process by which they are producing a sound. This may be defined by a coach's description, observed, based on the student's knowledge of his/her articulators, or defined by the singing student based on their kinaesthetic perception.
- Producing an articulation requires physical control that may take time to develop.
- The sensation in the articulators varies between languages, i.e. languages feel different to produce.
- Singing students may go about the process of learning to produce a lyric diction sound in a variety of ways.

The interviewees mentioned many of the aforementioned aspects spontaneously and, while there was diversity of opinion, there was also considerable convergence. Each

of these issues was raised by several of the interviewees. It is noteworthy that many of these aspects align with the results of research into L2 pronunciation learning, outlined in Chapter 2.4.

Accurate aural perception of a language is not a simple skill that can be developed quickly. As Chapter 2.4 revealed, a singing student's linguistic experience, be it their native language or exposure to foreign languages throughout their life, will influence the way in which they perceive language sounds. This phenomenon was characterised as a "perceptual sieve", the existence of which was also emphasised by many of the interviewees. Several interviewees gave examples of students who encountered difficulties in perceiving language sounds, and some also described their own difficulties when learning languages. Schollum spoke of the difficulties Japanese students encounter in perceiving the difference between the consonants <l> and <r> as well as <f> and <h>, saying "because [these sounds] don't exist in their language… you have to train their hearing". He also described facing similar difficulties differentiating Russian language sounds when he first began learning the language.

Griffiths described the process of introducing students to the Russian /ɨ/ vowel and their tendency to relate it to vowels with which they are familiar. He said that they may consider it a combination of vowels from French or German, for example, and that they look at him "in horror" when he says, "No, it is a pure Russian vowel. It has no equivalent anywhere else in the world".

French-Canadian Lefebvre spoke of the influence a student's home language has on their perception of language, describing her own tendency to perceive all <o>s as closed /o/ as a result of her mother pronouncing them in that way. However, not only the student's native language, but also the languages they have been exposed to can influence their aural perception. In relation to this, Daguerre de Hureaux raised the issue of social background influencing her students' ability to perceive French language sounds. She said that some of her students are at an advantage due to numerous summers spent holidaying in France, this opportunity being associated with a particular demographic of British society.

Often, a specific sound may be difficult for a student to identify or differentiate. Gall gave the example of English-speaking students finding it difficult to identify the difference between an open /ʏ/ and a closed /y/. He said that he often needs to elongate the normally short former vowel before the students can distinguish it from its closed counterpart. This is similar to the example given by Rissinger in Section 4.8 regarding the difficulty German speakers have in perceiving the difference between a French /ø/ and /œ/. For German speakers, the distinction between these vowels depends on length as much as quality; [œ] only exists as a short vowel in German, e.g. *Götter*, unlike French, in which it may be elongated, e.g. *cœur*.

LaBouff who, along with David Adams, felt aural perception must precede kinaesthetic perception, described using phonetics to facilitate the process of identifying and differentiating between language sounds. She said: "We spend a lot of time writing things out, transcribing things, listening to what the sounds are, and figuring out what they are phonetically. That… fine-tunes their ear". Schollum also described this process of training students to perceive language sounds as "tuning" their ears to a new language. He emphasised the time that is required for this process to occur.

None of the interviewees claimed that accurate aural perception of an articulation was sufficient for its accurate reproduction except in exceptional cases. Griffiths said: "I do a lot of demonstration, but I realise that my demonstrating isn't going to give them the ability". Danchenko-Stern felt similarly, saying, "Ear training is a possible and necessary part, but an understanding of implementation – *that* comes from my class".

Interestingly, very few of the coaches spoke of encountering a large number of singers who can imitate accurately without correction or refinement. Radcliffe spoke of occasionally encountering students who are "amazing mimics", but Daguerre de Hureaux said those with a "super ear" are "extraordinarily very few". She added, "Relying on the ear is one thing, but it's not a fool-proof way". Chapter 2.4 presented research indicating that musicality may have a positive influence on foreign language pronunciation learning. However, the studies cited defined musicality narrowly, and with varying parameters. One might expect all professional musicians to have more refined aural perception than non-musicians, however this does not negate the

influence of the “perceptual sieve” created by one’s native language. Nor does it necessarily translate into a gift for oral mimicry.

All the coaches spoke of processes by which they make a singer’s production of an articulation, be it vowel or consonant, more accurate. These varied significantly. Most common was a process of refinement through verbal instruction, which resembles the process of explicit instruction discussed in Chapter 2.4. Moris said he demonstrates first and that, “once they hear it, it will be up to them to find out how, physically, you can produce it”. He described then aiding the singer by using verbal instruction for a physical movement, for example, “Ok, put the jaw down a little more”. Moris also uses imagery, for example, “Pronounce it more vertically, not so much horizontally”. Adams described demonstrating and then explaining why a sound is different to that of another language. He gave the example of “the higher lift of the palate” for a German /ɛ/ in comparison with its English equivalent. Rissinger also said she becomes “explainy” when describing the articulators in order to refine a singer’s production of a sound. Lefebvre, however, said she adapts her general approach to each student. For some students she might describe exactly what the tongue does, whereas for those with little awareness of what their articulators are doing, she sends them to observe their actions in a mirror. In other rare cases she finds it sufficient simply to demonstrate.

Morton refines a student’s production through a process of experimentation that he guides via verbal instruction. This is done within the class setting. He gave the example of working on a student’s /i/ vowel.

> “Ok, that is a version of the /i/ vowel, but it’s not an Italian /i/ vowel because the Italian vowels are so extreme. It’s as far as you can go into that vowel, and how tightly you can focus it. That’s when it’s really pure.”

Morton’s students also develop their aural perception by observing. He described the “wonderful experience” of all the members of the class nodding when, after a process trial and error, a student “hits the vowel exactly right”.

It need not be only the coach who provides instruction. In Griffiths' class the students also correct each other. He said: "That to me is really important, that they hear other people doing it correctly or incorrectly, and then they help that person fix it… [thereby] learning: what do you do to fix that sound that is wrong?"

Unlike some of the other interviewees, Daguerre de Hureaux does not like to refer to the anatomy of the articulators in the process of refining a student's articulation. Rather, she has established a system using the "shape" and "space" for each vowel, as well as colour in order to facilitate a process of refinement. When asked whether she would consider either aural or kinaesthetic perception more important than the other, Daguerre de Hureaux replied that she considered shape more important. She finds that having the image of a shape for a vowel makes a lot of sense to singers for whom "[learning] is visual". She stated that, even for those singing students with a "super ear", "when you add the shape as well… and the space, then they can make real progress". Daguerre de Hureaux described the visual image having a direct influence on the physical action of the singer: "Remember that the singer will feel they're doing a shape but they're not. There's the visual aspect and the feeling aspect".[195]

Di Taranto uses a different approach, though she too avoids anatomical reference. In fact, she said that she no longer gives instruction about physical actions because she has found that singing students often describe a physical experience different to her own. Di Taranto described a process in which she demonstrates the desired sound and, once the student has imitated this sound, she echoes what she hears from them, juxtaposing it again with the desired result. She said, "They try, and they feel the difference. Then I let them define the difference, whatever the definition they have, and then I try to remember the student's definition".

This importance of the singers "defining the difference", as Di Taranto described it, relates to the idea of singers knowing how they produce a sound, and articulating that knowledge for themselves. All the interviewees attributed considerable importance to this process, while acknowledging it make take many forms. Di Taranto made this point somewhat humorously when she gave an example of a student defining the

[195] Daguerre de Hureaux has devised a unique approach to teaching French lyric diction and was reluctant to provide more specific detail about her techniques.

sensation in the tongue as that of “a flower on a Monday morning opening at 10.50”. Her argument was that it does not matter how a student articulates their understanding of production, merely that that understanding is reliable and effective.

The methods by which each of the coaches refines students’ lyric diction production also provides the students with a vocabulary for defining what they are doing, from Moris’ instructions to Hureaux’s shapes.[196] While some of the interviewees felt that aural and kinaesthetic sensation needed to be combined with accurate knowledge of the articulators, other teaching methods that have been described reveal approaches that might be described as less concrete. However, there does seem to be consensus regarding three fundamental aspects. These are that the singer must be able to reliably recreate the correct sound by reference to: 1) their aural model, 2) the sensation of the articulators when that sound is produced, and 3) a knowledge or description of that physical process that is meaningful and reliable for the individual singer.

Many of the interviewees acknowledged that it may take quite some time for a student to develop these skills and the associated understanding. This is due in part to the fact that, as Schollum pointed out, most non-singers are usually largely unaware of the movement and position of their articulators when they speak or even sing. Morton, for example, described lyric diction teaching as a process of “awakening a student’s senses”. Thus, through their lyric diction learning, students develop a sense of awareness that is unique to those in a vocal profession.[197]

The time this process takes is also due in part to the physical development necessary for production of certain articulations. Lefebvre described the difficulty English-speaking students have with the French /y/ vowel.

> I always tell them, “You have a hard time making the /y/ sound because your upper lip doesn’t know how to do this and you can have all the vowels in your head that you want, but until you have a little muscle here [on your upper lip] you won’t be able to say /y/ properly”.

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[196] This clearly relates to the interviewees’ use (or eschewing) of phonetic terminology, as discussed in Section 4.9.
[197] This is not confined to singers; actors may develop a similar awareness.

Indeed, each language requires different physical capabilities, and the challenges these pose for singing students will differ depending on their linguistic background. In this regard, Schollum likened languages to sports.

> Every language trains your tongue, trains your lips, [and] trains your soft palate in a very specific way. [Just] like football trains the legs and whole body in a different way than skiing, …languages have their own rules and also specialised use of the muscles.

Adams illustrated this notion by comparing the "default" positions of English and French speakers.

> English speakers when they're thinking, they say "uhh, ummm". Well, French speakers say "/œ/", so /œ/ is their default mouth position. So, if when you sing French you're just always here [*demonstrates /œ/ mouth position*], it's somehow going to sound more authentic…. In English we don't do this.

Adams also emphasised the difference between English and both Italian and German, in which the vowels are formed with "a greater brightness and upwardness". He spoke of singers needing to be made aware that certain things will feel different from what they're used to. Radcliffe echoed this point, saying: "English speakers will find [Italian] vowels very difficult to place because of the way they're placed in a completely different part of the mouth. English vowels are very far back; Italian vowels are much brighter and forward". Gall, who also spoke of the importance of "feeling the sounds in the body", advocated the use of "reference words" for each articulation. Students who are confident in their production of a reference word in the target language can then use that word as a physical and aural reference when encountering the relevant articulation in a different context.[198]

It may take singing students a considerable period of time in order to learn to produce new articulatory positions reliably. Schollum noted that, even when a student has an intellectual understanding of what is required, the body takes longer to learn what to do. He said, "It takes years until your speaking tools [are]… tuned in this new

[198] Reference words can also be employed to aid in the learning of pronunciation rules.

language”. Cleva also spoke of the time required for the development of “muscle memory”. She explained:

> It’s like practising scales. If you go into it fast, you can’t do it…. I personally believe that you must never be afraid to repeat. [The students] mustn’t think they’re doing something by rote. They’re not. They’re just getting it into the muscles”.

These perspectives are supported by the research presented in Chapter 2.4.

All the interviewees acknowledged that individual students learn to produce an articulation by different processes. Rissinger, while believing aural and kinaesthetic perception to be equally important, noted, “all of us have one better than the other, and then we just have to work on the other”. Di Taranto felt that, regarding aural and kinaesthetic perception, the student should focus on the aspect that works most effectively for them: “You may hear the difference, you may feel the difference, or both. I never suggest there is one better than the other”.

Radcliffe felt that students approach these aspects in a variety of ways. She almost seemed to think aloud in her response to the interview question.

> I would say that they go together and that everybody’s different… If you can’t hear [the sound], you’re kind of in trouble because you’re the one that has to make it, so the ear is probably really key. But if you can’t hear it, perhaps you can feel [the articulation]. Or [perhaps] you can hear that [the sound] is not right, but you don’t know how to correct it, so then you have to feel it… But the knowing where to place [the articulation] – sometimes you can hear it’s wrong but you don’t know how to correct that, so knowing where it is placed will help that. But without the ear to double check that it’s right or not… I do think they go together.

This quotation provides an insight into the roles of aural and kinaesthetic perceptions in lyric diction learning. Almost all of the interviewees felt that neither form of perception takes precedence over the other. However, they all maintained that it is necessary for singing students to establish a connection between the correct sound, their kinaesthetic sensation when they produce it, and a knowledge or self-defined understanding of what is occurring when this happens. The interviewees considered the latter aspect necessary in order for singing students to be able to produce the

desired articulations reliably and independently. The significance of this knowledge or self-defined understanding was not anticipated in the interview question. However, the interviewees' responses indicate it to be a pivotal step in the lyric diction learning process, and it must therefore be considered an essential part of conservatorium-level lyric diction pedagogy.

4.12. Consonants

The subject of consonants was not broached explicitly in the interview questions. However, many of the interviewees differentiated between consonants and vowels in the context of their discussions. The nature of their comments made it clear that consonants are a particularly important theme in their pedagogy. In particular, the interviewees spoke of the specific roles consonants play in lyric diction, and of common misconceptions about the nature of sung consonants. They also gave specific pedagogical examples regarding consonant production in their languages of specialisation.

Several themes relating to consonants emerged from the interview data:

- Consonants should not be perceived as interrupting the vocal line.
- Consonants are integral to legato singing.
- Consonants require "support".
- The quality of sung consonants has an effect on the vowels preceding and following them.
- Consonants are essential to intelligible and expressive lyric diction.
- Particular consonants often pose difficulties for singing students.

Additionally, two of the interviewees, Adams and LaBouff, have written extensively about their approach to consonants. Their publications are cited throughout this discussion.

There was a sense among the interviewees of a need to come to the defence of consonants. Several of the interviewees pointed out that, while consonants are

sometimes perceived as the "enemy of legato singing" (LaBouff, 2008, p. 114), they are, in fact, an integral part of legato singing. Danchenko-Stern, for example, said: "[Consonants] are not objects in the way of the vowels. I have very clear graphics of the consonants: they are a skeleton. Our muscles need to hang on something". Cleva also declared the notion that "consonants get in the way" to be "a lot of bunk", characterising consonants as a "diving board". She said, "You can't dive without it. And that's what gives the word its 'thing'". These comments portray consonants not only as contributing to legato, but also as providing the structure and character of a word.[199]

The likely reasons for a perception of consonants as an impediment to legato singing are twofold. One relates to the focus in singing pedagogy on the production of vowels. As LaBouff explains in *Singing and Communicating in English* (2008, p. 113):

> As students of singing, a great deal of time and attention is spent on vocal production of the various vowel sounds and practically no time is spent on the correct production of the consonants that precede, follow, and surround the vowel sounds. Taking into account the difficulty of learning to sing well and the number of years required to learn this skill, it is completely understandable that the thrust of the work in the vocal studio is on perfecting the vowels with little time left over for the consonants.

LaBouff is sympathetic to the time pressure singing teachers face regarding the development of their students' vowel production. However, she does attribute singers' difficulties with English consonant production to a "lack of concentration on the production of the consonants within the vocal studio" (2008, p. 113). This situation is equally applicable to consonants in other languages as well, and highlights the importance of a lyric diction teacher's role. Yet, consonants are not solely the pedagogical responsibility of the lyric diction teacher. In his article, 'Aspects of Consonant Articulation in Italian Diction' in *Journal of Singing* (2003, p. 247), Adams, as both singing teacher and lyric diction teacher, writes that "proper execution

[199] These perspectives are based on principles of lyric diction technique and expression, however they are supported by research into the neurological processing of language. See 'Processing interactions between phonology and melody: Vowels sing but consonants speak' (Kolinsky et al., 2009).

of consonant sounds should be of concern not only in diction classes but also in the voice studio".

The second factor contributing to the perception of consonants as an impediment to legato is a tendency for singing students to transfer speech-related articulatory habits to the sung context. In the interviews for this study, this was particularly noted with regard to English-speaking singers. Adams, whose students are predominantly English speaking, described singing students anticipating consonant sounds "by moving the tongue, or moving the lips, and therefore distorting the vowel before the next syllable".[200] He provided the example of the consonant /l/, as did Lefebvre, who described "the famous /l/" as causing problems for English-speaking students.[201] Miller writes of the effect of such consonant anticipation in *The Art of Singing* (2011, p. 23), saying that, due to the temporal difference between singing and speech, "in singing… the ear perceives the manoeuvres [of the tongue or lips] as an alteration of vocal timbre, hence an interruption of the legato". [202]

Morton spoke of consonants being "painted with a broad brush stroke" which fails to acknowledge the variety of characteristics that exist among them. In terms of a perception that "consonants interrupt breath flow", he said, "Actually, they don't… all the time". Morton spoke at considerable length about the importance of aligning continuant consonants as closely to vowels as possible. This is a point Binggeli also made, saying that, "in many cases [consonants] can be understood as some sort of vowel". Morton argued that, "the key to understanding legato is understanding how breath travels through consonants":

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[200] See Chapter 2.2.
[201] Adams, also mentioned the tendency of American singing students to maintain elements of a retroflex <r> while simultaneously articulating it as a flip or roll.
[202] It would be interesting to document whether the perception of consonants as an impediment to legato also exists in Italy and France, and Quebec for that matter, where the articulatory habits of native Italian and French speakers are different to those of English and German speakers. It seems likely that challenges for such singing students would lie in the aspiration of consonants and in the articulation of consonant clusters, which are characteristics of the latter two languages. In this regard, much of the data presented in this section is likely only to be applicable to singing students with particular articulatory habits.

> In order to create a perfect legato line the air moves through the open continuant consonants like <l>, <m>, <n>, >r>, just like it moves through a vowel. The only difference is that the air is diverted… The airflow of a vowel goes straight out the front of your mouth. The airflow for an <l> is diverted around the sides of your tongue. The airflow for an <m> or an <n> is diverted through the nose. Having understood that, it's a question of feeling your way through a line and seeing how the air just is diverted but it's not slowed down… If you are able to not change the speed of the breath, then you are able to achieve pure legato.[203]

Adams also writes about the "utmost importance" of singing students understanding the process for proper execution of consonant sounds. In particular, he highlights the difference in sensation between unvoiced sounds in which the airflow is interrupted, and voiced sounds through which airflow continues, such as those described by Morton above. Another key aspect of vowel production that Adams discusses in his article is the need for singing students to maintain a vowel shape behind a consonant "so that there is resonant sound supporting the consonant" (2003, p. 248). He emphasises this in particular for voiced continuing consonants, whether single, double, or in consonant clusters. However, Adams also advocates an approach to unvoiced stop consonants in which singing students "imagine maintaining the preceding vowel as the [double unvoiced stop] consonant is sustained, even though there is in fact no sound happening". He explains: "Imagining the vowel will help maintain poise within the vocal tract" (2003, p. 249). These comments highlight the interaction between consonant production and vowel production; without the maintenance of resonance and "poise within the vocal tract", legato singing is not possible.

Closely related to the flow of breath through consonants is the issue of "support" on consonants. Lefebvre spoke of seeing the effects of a consistent approach among singing teachers at College-Conservatory of Music (University of Cincinnati) to teaching the support of consonants.[204] As a result, she said, "most students [studying at CCM] can hear and feel when they don't do it". The relationship between the support of consonants and maintenance of legato is clear. Schollum stressed that it is very important that singing students do not "think the consonants in the mouth area".

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[203] This explanation can be seen to relate to Morton's use of phonetic terminology, discussed in Section 4.9.

[204] Clearly, these singing teachers at CCM deal with consonants in the singing studio; CCM is also the institution at which Adams taught.

This was not to suggest that correct articulation is unimportant; he stressed that singing students must know the articulation area of each consonant “exactly”. However, he emphasised:

> The mouth is just the accelerator, but the engine is the support system. If… you think the consonants only in your mouth, they will kill you. If you think [the consonants] on your diaphragm, they will be helpers. They will open the door to the vowels.

The interviewees expressed the idea of consonants “opening the door to the vowels” in a variety of ways. For example, LaBouff said to her class at the Manhattan School of Music: “Everybody, [use the] consonants to make it project, and the minute you get better consonants, the vowels get bigger. They go where the consonants are”. This is a concept she explores in her book, writing, “When released and handled properly, the consonants help maintain the forward placement of vowels and help the voice achieve its bloom” (2008, p. 114). Several of the interviewees highlighted the relationship between the placement of consonants and that of vowels, showing that consonants affect both the vowels that precede them and those that follow them. Correct preparation and articulation of a consonant (i.e. the avoidance of anticipation) prevents the distortion of the previous vowel, while support of the consonant contributes to the maintenance of support for the preceding vowel. The placement and support of a consonant also influence the placement and support of the subsequent vowel. This clearly also relates to Adams’ comment regarding the maintenance of a vowel and “poise within vocal tract” (2003, p. 249).

Danchenko-Stern’s image of consonants providing a “skeleton” for lyric diction is reflected in the proportions of consonants to vowels, both within a language overall and within individual words. For example, LaBouff and Gall both pointed out that English and German have a high ratio of consonants to vowels. As a consequence, the necessity of elongating vowels when singing must be balanced against maintaining an element of the consonant-to-vowel ratio, which is necessary for intelligibility. Gall gave the following examples:

> Sometimes (and I believe it is similar in English) the stretched vowels don't make sense… The German word is 'und', and rather than singing 'uuuuuuuuund', [it's better if] you just go more for the double /n:n/ feeling and the /t/ feeling, and then you go on from it.… It's also partly being idiomatic. [This also applies to] the word 'das', for example, and [the German word] 'was'.

Gall explained that, as a result of stretching the vowel preceding a consonant cluster, a singing student "will not be ready for [his/her] next word and it will sound, laboured, hectic, not relaxed". He highlighted that, in such words, professional singers with excellent German lyric diction keep a proportion between the vowels and consonants that allows time and support on the consonant/s.

Similarly, LaBouff highlighted that consonants are essential for intelligibility in English and must be savoured. In *Singing and Communicating in English* (2008, p.114), she writes that "Doubling or tripling the duration of the initial sustaining consonant of the stressed syllable of the words receiving stress helps to highlight the key words for the listener". Both this and the lengthening of corresponding stop-plosive consonants were aspects she worked on repeatedly in her classes, as observed during the field trip for this study.

It is essential to point out, however, that the interviewees did not see the elongation of consonants, even stop-plosive consonants, as an impediment to overall legato. Adams acknowledged that this may seem somewhat counterintuitive to students, and they may need to be "reassured" that even double stop consonants do not compromise a vocal line (2003, p. 248). Gall emphasised the importance of "understanding connections" between consonants, especially clusters of consonants, while LaBouff describes consonants as "the connective tissue that sustains the legato and propels it forward" (2008, p.14). Binggeli described "overturning [singers'] sense that consonants are at odds with what they understand singing to be" through extending their sense of legato and "helping them experience their voice through these sounds".

Languages differ in the articulatory and expressive importance of their consonants. This is clearly described by Timothy Cheek in his book*, A Guide to Czech Lyric Diction and Vocal Repertoire* (2014, p. 4):

> When approaching a new language, it is helpful to ascertain whether it is by nature vowel-oriented or consonant-oriented. For example, English clearly makes use of consonants for expressive purposes, and is therefore consonant-oriented. If we stress the word *so* or the word *lovely* in *She is so lovely*, we will probably lengthen the initial consonants in those words. The same holds true for the German language: *Sie ist so schön*. The most vowel-oriented language is French. When the French want to stress a particular word, they will lengthen a vowel that is not normally long. Italian is slightly less vowel-oriented than French because of its double consonants.[205]

Indeed, the difference between languages in vowel-orientation or consonant-orientation can be a source of difficulties for singing students. For example, Daguerre de Hureaux, Radcliffe, and Lefebvre commented on the difficulty English-speaking students have in articulating consonants quickly. Lefebvre described a "difficulty" of French as being the need to have "fab vowels on either side of a quick consonant that doesn't let too much air escape". This description is equally applicable to Italian vowels either side of a single consonant. Interestingly, Danchenko-Stern described requiring a similar approach in her *bel canto*-based teaching of Russian lyric diction. She likened the duration of some consonants to the width of a single hair, or the horizontal measurement of a blade.

It is likely that some singing students encounter difficulties with consonant articulation due to the fact that consonants of different lengths are non-contrastive in their native language.[206] For example, Adams, Cleva, and Moris mentioned that many of their English-speaking students have difficulty differentiating between double and single consonants in Italian. Cleva noted this is particularly evident in words that contain a single consonant preceding a double consonant, such as "diletto". She finds that non-Italian speakers have a tendency to elongate the single /l/ as well as the /tt/. Regarding such words, her pedagogical technique is to ask students to elongate the first vowel in order to avoid the student truncating it and lengthening the single consonant. Additionally, Adams recommends recording the students who have this difficulty, as only then may they be able to hear exactly how they are articulating the single consonant (2003, p. 250). An English-speaking singing student's doubling of the <l> in this Italian context is, in fact, an unintentional manifestation of exactly the

[205] Cheek's argument is that "first impressions can be misleading" and that Czech is in fact vowel-orientated, bearing some remarkable similarities to Italian (2014, p.3).
[206] See Chapter 2.3.1.

technique LaBouff advocates above for singing in English: the doubling or tripling of the duration of the initial sustaining consonant of the stressed syllable of a stressed word.

Several interviewees noted the varying difficulties in articulating consonants that can result from different native languages. Schollum noted Japanese-speaking students struggle to differentiate <l> from <r> and <h> from <f> in German lyric diction, as these distinctions do not exist in their native language. In another example, Di Taranto highlighted the tendency of Dutch-speaking singing students to "articulate [Italian], especially when there's a lot of text, [by] moving the jaw a lot, so you can't have any flow". She described the need for singing students to "articulate as much as [possible] with lips and tongue instead of … moving the jaw a lot", noting, "that work takes a long, long time and it is not consistent with other languages".

Some difficulties may be unique to specific consonant contexts. Moris gave a particularly interesting example regarding the consonant cluster <ns> in Italian. He demonstrated that, if the tongue touches the palate on the /n/, it "cannot do anything else but /ts/" when moving to the /s/, and explained that this is a characteristic of Italian pronunciation in the south of Italy. Moris teaches his students: "When you have a /n/ followed by an /s/, never go with the tongue touching palate. Leave it in the middle of the mouth like it were just a little nasal sound…" He continued: "I know it's difficult, [but] /nts/ is terrible when you sing it".

The interviewees considered optimal consonant production essential to intelligibility, legato and vowel production. Furthermore, many spoke of the importance of the expressive possibilities of consonants. This perspective was not confined to those specialising in consonant-orientated languages. The interviewees portrayed the selective elongation and emphasis of consonants (according to the phonologies of each language) as a principal palette for expressive use of language. Many of these aspects lie below the visual threshold of an IPA transcription and, like variations in vowel colour, depend for their implementation upon the experience and taste of the singing student, or their lyric diction teacher.

The interviews conveyed a sense that consonants are sometimes unfairly demonised in the context of singing pedagogy. It is clear that consonant production poses significant challenges, indeed Lefebvre felt that consonants "are underestimated in how many problems they present". However, the theme that emerged clearly in this regard is that what matters is how consonants are produced. When produced correctly, consonants are tools that aid legato singing and contribute to clear and expressive lyric diction. It was clear that the development of these tools is a key part of the interviewees' approach to their conservatorium-level lyric diction pedagogy.

4.13. Lyric diction in students' native languages

In *Singing and Communicating in English* (2008, p. 5) LaBouff writes of

> … an almost cavalier assumption on the part of some performers and administrators of musical organizations that since this is the vernacular, English speakers already have an "inborn skill and sensitivity to singing in English" and therefore need give no further attention to its communicative delivery. This would never be the case for classically trained actors. Sadly, this is often the case with singers.

While LaBouff refers to English, this quotation could apply easily to the vernacular in many contexts. The implication of LaBouff's comment is that, for those singing students who speak one of the lyric diction languages as their native language, study of that language's lyric diction is as essential as the study of lyric diction in languages that they do not speak. While much of the preceding discussion may appear to apply only to the lyric diction pedagogy of students' non-native languages, much of it applies equally to students' native languages. However, singing in one's native language also brings with it issues that do not apply elsewhere. As the following discussion shows, not all the qualities conferred by being a native speaker of a language are advantageous in terms of lyric diction.

Although speech-related articulatory habits certainly come into play when singers sing in a language that they do not speak, these habits are not associated with use of

the relevant language in its spoken form.[207] In the singer's native language, however, such an association is guaranteed to exist.[208] Furthermore, singers will access the meaning of text in their native language differently, and likely more directly, than that of a language in which they are less fluent. Given such differences, the interviewees were asked what particular difficulties students encounter when singing in their native language, and what pedagogical approaches the interviewees employ in dealing with these difficulties.

By far the most common response was that singing students have a tendency to be overconfident, and often consequently complacent, regarding lyric diction in their native language. This tendency was also noted to extend to the students' comprehension and communication of a text's meaning. Several other points also emerged:

- Students are often unaware of their articulatory habits when they speak their native language and this transfers to their singing.
- Students must learn how to adapt their native language for singing and for the performance context.
- It is often necessary for students to learn a neutral, non-regional version of their native language for singing.

Of the interviewees, lyric diction coaches of Italian, German, French, Russian, and English had all encountered students and professional singers who were overconfident and therefore complacent regarding lyric diction when singing in their native language. Students' first point of contact with non-native lyric diction languages is often in the context of learning to sing them. However, they may assume that they are capable of singing their native language without further input in terms of lyric diction. The interviewees' responses suggest this is almost never the case. For example, Danchenko-Stern said that she found insufficient attention among Russian native speakers to the details of the language and "absolute ignorance of the rules of singing [in Russian]". She characterised the attitude as,"[Russian] is so familiar to me- why

[207] See Adams' comment in Section 4.10.
[208] See Chapter 2.4.

should I study how to sing it?" to which her response was: "Are you kidding?" Cleva said that Italian native speakers sometimes put insufficient effort into making their Italian lyric diction clear because they are "at home with it". Likewise, Lefebvre described the danger of French-speaking singers feeling too comfortable with their native language and not paying attention to the specific nature of some vowels as they would with another language. Almost all the interviewees made the same point regarding a lack of attention to articulatory detail in students' native languages.

Singing students' failure to make themselves clearly understood when singing in their native language may often be caused by speech-related articulatory habits. Therefore, the process associated with foreign language lyric diction, i.e. of becoming aware of one's articulatory habits and developing new articulatory techniques, also applies to learning to sing in one's native language. As discussed in Chapter 2, a speaker is rarely aware of the movements of articulatory organs and his or her impression of speech will almost always be subordinate to meaning (Clark et al., 2007; McGregor, 2009). LaBouff writes that, because of this, singers must treat their native language "with as much care and precision as we give the foreign languages in which we sing" in order to sing that language effectively (2008, pp. 3- 4). Singing students therefore need to learn the nature of the articulations required, and to eliminate speech habits that may be detrimental. Schollum spoke of the need for singers "to retrain the nature of things that they were not aware of before, because they just learned it without awareness". If this does not occur, he argued, "when you have to sing high notes or on a high range all the time, then tiny little errors kill you". Thus, speech-based articulatory habits can create not only lyric diction problems, but technical problems as well.

Several interviewees discussed the importance of singing students learning a neutral, non-regional pronunciation of their native language that can be understood by a broad audience. This aspect was raised with reference to English, Italian, German, and French. LaBouff finds that it takes time for students to "neutralise" their lyric diction and, for example, to understand that "this is the way my family pronounces it, and this is the way it is here, and this is the way it is in the south, and this is the way it is in this country, but *this* is the neutralized vowel that the majority of people understand". In fact, LaBouff teaches American Standard Pronunciation, British Received

Pronunciation, and Mid-Atlantic Pronunciation, which is not a spoken dialect, but rather a "hybrid pronunciation used to blend [American Standard Pronunciation and British Received Pronunciation]" (LaBouff, 2008, p. 8). According to LaBouff, these may be considered the three neutral pronunciations of English, and each is employed according to the origin or setting of the repertoire being sung.

Schollum described the process of learning the neutral German "stage pronunciation" that is required of German native-speaking students. He specified that this process is necessary not only for Austrians (he taught in Vienna), but also for singing students with dialectical influences from various regions in Germany. Schollum made the point that "the German we use in singing doesn't actually exist anywhere" and explained the necessity for the creation of Theodor Siebs' *Deutsche Aussprache,* published in 1898.

> … [*Deutsche Bühnenaussprache*] became necessary in the late nineteenth century because the trains and the possibility to communicate were so much quicker that singers and actors could jump in for someone in Berlin from Vienna, or vice versa. They sang beautifully, but they sang with the Viennese sound and the people in Berlin said, "Oh that's strange. She has a good voice, but her pronunciation is strange". And the same happened when the Berlin singer was singing in Vienna. So they had to produce a stage version of German and this was Siebs, which is still the basic work.[209]

Given that *Deutsche Bühnenaussprache* is not a dialect spoken outside of the performance context, it stands to reason that native German speakers will need to learn it. Native French speakers face a similar task; the distinctions between spoken and sung French that Lefebvre discussed in Section 4.10 are examples of the ways in which sung French differs significantly from the vernacular. Sung Italian also generally requires a neutral (Florentine) Italian pronunciation. This may also need to be learned by Italian native speakers; many Italians have two distinct ways of speaking, using both a local dialect and standard Italian (Paton, 2004, p. 15).

This is not to imply that a neutral pronunciation is always desired. It is important to acknowledge that it may also be necessary for singers (be they student or professional) to master the lyric diction of a dialect. This may be essential to

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[209] Deutsche Bühnenaussprache applies to theatre, as well as to singing.

establishing the character of a role, or the locale of a production. Some songs are written in a dialect, e.g. Venetian or Neapolitan, and require the appropriate pronunciation. Like the study of all lyric diction, the mastering of any dialect requires the same awareness of one's articulatory habits and development of new articulatory techniques.[210]

Singers may also be required to sing an historical version of their native language that feels unfamiliar. Rissinger spoke with some exasperation of working on John Harbison's opera, *The Great Gatsby*, with American singers who baulked at singing "/nju/ York" saying, "That doesn't feel right to me, I wouldn't say it that way". Her response was: "Well of course you wouldn't say it that way, but we're talking 1920s!"

Interestingly, Cleva feels that the modernisation of English lyric diction to reflect contemporary speech habits has contributed significantly to a loss of intelligibility. She described the use of English surtitles at the English National Opera (where works are performed in English) as "a terrible insult to the singers", but saw it as a consequence of the change in the nature of the lyric diction employed. Cleva pointed to older recordings of operas in English with, for example, use of the flipped /r/, in which the singers are more intelligible than in current versions. This bears similarities to the ongoing discussion regarding the reconciling of lyric diction with contemporary speech habits in both German and French.

It is important to note that the interviewees did not view a neutral pronunciation as restrictive or inflexible, a fact already evident in several comments already cited throughout this chapter. For example, Adams described "rigid" application of pronunciation rules as "the greatest trap of the pedagogy of diction for singers",[211] while Lefebvre said that being inflexible or dogmatic "goes against anything we do".[212] Di Taranto was also very clear in this regard, one example being her statement

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[210] In *Communicating and Singing in English* (2008), Labouff provides guides to singing in many regional English dialects found in vocal repertoire. She advises that "intelligibility is the highest priority in any dialect work. Often it is best to use only a few of the characteristics of a dialect and give a "flavour" of it rather than every single characteristic and lose intelligibility" (p. 266).
[211] See Section 4.7.
[212] See Section 4.10.

that, "If you say /beːne or /bɛːne/ basically I couldn't care less, but if the vowels /e/ or /ɛ/ are at the back, that's when I correct".[213]

These comments align to some extent with the perspective presented by French-based Italian lyric diction coach and singing teacher, Paulo Zedda, in his article 'Linguistic variants and their effects on the singing voice', published in *Australian Voice* (1998). Zedda writes that "singers can have good Italian vowel definition without the Florentine accent, and misinterpretation of this fact can be harmful to many voices" (1998, p. 66). He argues that it is that it is possible to adapt some Italian singers' native regional accents into the sung language, noting many great Italian singers have done so, and that forcing singers to confirm to the "mythical" Florentine variant may compromise them vocally (1998, p. 66).[214] Zedda also writes that he has "come across some young French singers whose operatic careers have finished because they were slaves to an absurd concept of diction which damaged their vocal production, particularly in relation to the range and tessitura of the classical repertoire". He argues that this "is not the fault of the French language, but a bad aesthetic of its diction, a purist concept dating back to the seventeenth century" (1998, p. 68). Zedda's article focuses on native-speakers; certainly, the speaking of a language variant applies more frequently to native speakers than non-native.[215] He concludes that language variants, particularly those of French and Italian, can in fact lead to articulatory practices that make singing easier. Recognition of this fact, and abandonment of the search for a "pure language," Zedda argues, "will promote a healthier approach to vocal production and expressive singing" (1998, p. 68). While not advocating complete abandonment of neutral pronunciations, all the interviewees for this research emphasised that lyric diction must enable healthy vocal production and that use of language in a manner that does not achieve this cannot be considered good lyric diction.

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[213] See Section 4.10.

[214] Zedda's doctoral thesis, *La variante linguistique du "Belcanto" : essai de phonétique articulatoire* (1993) treats the Italian language of the operatic repertory as a linguistic variant called the "belcanto variant" and describes an approach to lyric diction within that variant.

[215] Although the non-native speakers may speak an identifiable language variant (a native German speaker who speaks British English, for example), articulatory habits derived from the speaker's native language are normally present, if not dominant (See Chapter 2.4).

Speech-related habits from regional pronunciations can, however, negatively affect both singing technique and intelligibility. The tendency of English native speakers to place vowels further back than native speakers of Italian, German, and French is commented upon in almost all lyric diction texts, and was mentioned by almost all of the interviewees. Kimmorley described difficulties that Australian and New Zealand native English speakers encounter when transferring speech habits to singing in English.

> Australians… tend to drop a lot of vowels out. Our speaking is very lazy. It's very far back a lot of the time (but New Zealand is worse) so that we don't think about bringing a lot of the vowels into [a] forward position.

Kimmorley also noted that Australian singers rarely support consonants sufficiently. The same problem was described by Rissinger in reference to American singers. She said that they often fail to support, and therefore to project, English consonants when they occur within a word (less so at the beginnings and the ends of words). Rissinger attributes this to the softening of American spoken consonants, for example the substitution of a /d/ for /t/ within words such as 'later'. Several interviewees gave the example of singers needing to support sung consonants in English far more than their spoken counterparts; Lefebvre described English consonants as requiring "extra energy" when sung. All these factors suggest Zedda's argument regarding variants of Italian and French might be significantly less applicable to variants of English, the latter differing far more in its spoken articulatory characteristics from optimal vocal production.

Several interviewees suggested that one of the factors contributing to the persistence of articulatory problems when singing in their native language may be a singing student's expectation that the language should feel and sound to them like their spoken language. Rissinger felt native speakers' lyric diction is negatively affected by their desire to "sing a language rather than diction," arguing that "an audience that's already a hundred feet away from you over the orchestra needs you to sing diction". She emphasised: "What it sounds like to you on stage and what it sounds like to me in the audience are two different things".

Interestingly, some interviewees cited expressive difficulties singing students may encounter when singing in their native language. For example, Griffiths felt that students take the meaning of a text for granted in their native language because their understanding of it comes more easily than in another language. As a consequence he hears students "giving [themselves] a voice lesson while singing", rather than attempting to communicate the meaning of the text. Moris finds that singers sometimes sing worse in their native language than in other languages because they feel that they are being expressive when in fact they are not. He attributes this to an overconfidence based on their familiarity with the language: "Oh, it's my tongue, I can use it, I can sing in it". Moris' response was: "Yes, but sometimes because you feel it yourself, you don't remember that you have to express that to others". Thus, it seems therefore that the familiarity students feel with their native language can contribute to a lack of projection in terms of both articulation and expression.

In developing a sung version of the language that works vocally and projects in a performance context, adjustments clearly need to be made. However, in order for the language to be intelligible for the listener, vowel and consonant qualities need to be recognisable. Kimmorley discussed the danger of "Italianising" English, while LaBouff spoke of the importance of avoiding "singerese". The latter is the substitution of foreign pronunciations, usually Italian, which are too far from the original sound to be recognisable. Such pronunciations may seem vocally convenient for the singer, but they do not serve the purpose of intelligibility. LaBouff writes: "Even if vowels need to be modified for vocal reasons, the modifications should not be detectable to the audience. English vowels must always "read" as real and honest to the listener" (LaBouff, 2008, p. 5). The singing student may, therefore, need to learn new articulations for singing in their native language that are neither the established speech habits associated with that language, nor the articulatory habits associated with other languages in which they sing. In this regard, the process of lyric diction learning in one's native language resembles that of any other language.

The adjustment or elimination of speech habits emerged as one of the key issues in singing in one's native language. This process is very similar to that of learning foreign language lyric diction. The most significant difficulty that the interviewees cited was, in fact, attitudinal: singing students (and indeed professional singers) may

underestimate the articulatory and expressive requirements of good lyric diction in their native language. The strongest message emerging from the interviewees in this regard is that singing in one's native language requires the same meticulous and systematic attention to articulatory and expressive detail as singing in any other language.

The question regarding students singing in their native language was couched in terms of difficulties they face regarding lyric diction. This was perhaps too narrow a focus, because it did not allow for an exploration of the pedagogical opportunities to be explored when students sing in the language to which they most closely relate. Esteemed British baritone, Roderick Williams, writes: "Forging an emotional connection to the words I hear and sing can be done most truthfully and powerfully in my own language" (2019). This comment is made as Williams describes his experiences of performing Schubert's *Winterreise* in German and in an English translation by Jeremy Sams. In doing so he reveals that what he has learnt from singing *Winterreise* in his native language can have a profound influence on his performance of the work in German.

> Singing [*Winterreise*] in English to an English-speaking audience awoke a wave of emotion in me... I realized later that I hadn't experienced that so vividly when singing in German because there was a barrier, a filter in place; my conscious mind was concentrating on the job in hand rather than roaming freely… It was an awareness of the present that I can carry through into my German language performances of the cycle. My readings of each of the songs in English has helped me to establish a much deeper connection to the journey that goes beyond merely translating each German word.

While singing their native language poses challenges for students, it also presents a pedagogical opportunity. It is in their native language that singing students are best able to perceive the effects of lyric diction itself. The students' observations of the articulatory and expressive results of lyric diction in their native language serve to highlight the impact of the same meticulous and systematic approach when singing in languages to which their perception is not so finely honed. Furthermore, as Williams reveals, when students deeply engage with the meaning of text in their native language, they are provided with an insight into the expressive connection they might seek to create in every language in which they sing.

4.14. Communication and expression through lyric diction

> Indeed… what constitutes the real beauty and value, the final *raison d'être,* of singing, is the combination, the mixing, the indissoluble union of sound and thought. No matter how beautiful a sound may be, it is nothing if it expresses nothing.
>
> Reynaldo Hahn, *On Singers and Singing* (1957, pp. 26- 27)

The interviewees were asked how important they considered the teaching of expression and communication of meaning through lyric diction at the conservatorium level. While the terms were not explicitly defined for the interviewees, the phrase "expression and communication of meaning" was used in order to encompass both the semantic content of text, i.e. the meaning to be communicated, and the associated emotional expression. Predictably, the interviewees tended not to distinguish between communication and expression, however, in all cases, the meaning of their responses was clear. They were unanimous in their conviction that communicating the meaning of a text while interpreting and expressing its emotional message is the goal of lyric diction and indeed of singing itself.

Many recurring themes emerged from the interviews:

- The act of singing is and must be an act of communication and expression.
- Student singers are often preoccupied by other aspects of singing and therefore neglect communication.
- The singer must understand the word they are singing in the moment they sing it in order to communicate the meaning most effectively.
- Making a personalised translation of the sung texts aids the singer in communicating more effectively.
- Listeners who do not speak the sung language are able to sense that a singer is communicating with them and understand, to some degree, the content of that communication. Conversely, they can sense when a singer does not know what they are singing about.
- There can be expressivity inherent in the way an articulation is executed.
- Breath can be considered part of expressivity through lyric diction.

- Expressivity through lyric diction must be trained and rehearsed.
- Many teachers and coaches would prefer a performance in which the singer communicates effectively, but has some flaws in the pronunciation, to a performance in which the singer has perfect pronunciation but fails to communicate.

Most interviewees emphasised the fact that singing is an act of communication and expression, and that the purpose of both the voice and of language is to communicate. Adams posed the question "What is the point of lyric diction if it is not to express text and textual meaning?" while Schollum expressed the opinion that, like an actor or a painter, if a singer does not communicate, their singing is "useless". Danchenko-Stern described the voice working "in order to pass the musical message" which is "absolutely united with the message of the lyrics". She was one of several who argued that the compositional process proves text to be the foundation of the musical utterance.[216] Cleva explained:

> You have to know what [the text] is about because the music is expressing the text anyway. It's not the other way around. You set music to a libretto. You don't set a libretto to music.

Yet, despite this, Radcliffe expressed frustration that she frequently encounters a lack of "insistence on intention and understanding the meaning of the words" in the conservatoria in which she works. She said, "[It] seems such a basic thing, but I don't think it's drummed into [the students] enough". For Radcliffe, as for all the interviewees, lyric diction encompasses not just pronunciation, but expression and interpretation.

It was clear that all the coaches had encountered singing students who did not know the meaning of the text they were singing and/or who failed to communicate it. There are many possible reasons for this. LaBouff said she finds working on expression with her students to be an "uphill battle":

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[216] See also Chapter 1.

> Especially with young singers, they're developing an instrument and so they're very focused on vowel production, on various different things, so everything gets very mechanical and there's no [word] stress at all, nothing. They're just working on the best syllable they can make on every single note. So to get them to have that overview of what they need to be working toward is important.

Kimmorley felt that this situation occurs to some extent as a result of the focus in students' singing lessons. Her perception is that "voice teachers by and large still don't put enough emphasis on words because it's all about sound". Some voice teachers might argue that a focus on pure phonation is a necessary developmental phase, but the interviewees emphasised that they see vocal technique and lyric diction being interdependent, and expression as integral to both.[217] Gall quite simply stated that he does not believe there is any point in working on a song or an aria when a singing student does not know what they are singing about.

Moris and Morton both described a process of building lyric diction skills to the point of expression. They develop accurate pronunciation with students, but work on the phrasing of the language and on expression as soon as the students are able. Moris felt it was impossible to "split" pronunciation and expression. He likened the basics of pronunciation to a foundation, the purpose of which is to "build a beautiful building" of expression; the foundation clearly serves no purpose in the absence of the building. This perspective is also clearly expressed by Thomas Grubb in *Singing in French* (1979, p. 99). At the conclusion of the first half of the book, he writes:

> Too many stop here in their study of "diction", assuming that once the technical aspects have been mastered, their work in this area is done. It has truly only begun, for correctly pronounced and vocalized words are worthless if they do not express feelings, moods, ideas and so on.

While clearly sharing this view regarding the purpose of lyric diction, Adams was the one interviewee who did not feel that that the allocated class time allows a lyric diction teacher to focus extensively on expressivity in conservatorium students' initial lyric diction classes. He said that one can simply remark, for example, "That was much more expressive, by improving the way you executed that particular sound", but that there is not time to explore expressivity in more depth. Rather, Adams appears to

[217] See Chapters 2.1, Chapter 2.2, and Section 4.1.

see expression as a subject for focus later in a singing student's lyric diction learning. (Adams describes lyric diction learning as a continuum spanning beyond conservatorium studies.) For the other interviewees however, expressivity remained a key element despite the numerous practical details to be encompassed in a lyric diction class. LaBouff felt that communication and expression should in fact go "hand in hand" with the new concepts students were learning.

In the case of arias and recitative, Radcliffe highlighted the importance of a singer's portrayal of character. She described her mentor, Cleva, as "second to none" in helping singers to develop this in their lyric diction. Interestingly, Cleva associated expression and communication with musicality, saying, "I think that if they know what they're singing about and if they have any musicality at all, [expression] will happen. How can you help but be carried away with it?" She also described the opposite scenario:

> You can tell immediately if someone's singing in a foreign language [and] they don't understand what they're singing about. They might get the notes right, they might get the pronunciation right, but you can tell: "He doesn't have an idea what this is about".

Indeed, several interviewees said they believe an audience is able to perceive the degree to which a singer understands his/her text. They also felt that a singer must communicate in such a way that even listeners who do not understand the sung language feel that they are able to comprehend some of the meaning and a great deal of the emotional expression. Rissinger argued that this is the area in which lyric diction plays its biggest role. She believes a singer has a responsibility to consider how s/he can render text in such a way that "it makes sense [so] that even people who don't speak the language understand what [the singer] is trying to get out of it".

Daguerre de Hureaux spoke passionately of the impact a singer's intellectual and emotional engagement with the text can have on his/her performance.

> I hear you say, "Well, does it make a difference to the audience?" … Undoubtedly yes, even if you do not speak a word of the language, because you will have an emotional involvement in what you're singing which will communicate itself to the audience. Not to the level of understanding you would love them to have, but at least it will help.

She noted that there is a danger that professional singers may take an increasingly superficial approach to text as their career demands increase. Therefore she considers it vital that student singers establish the habit of "digging deeply" into the meaning of text during their conservatorium studies.

Many interviewees stated that, in order to have emotional involvement while singing, singers must know the meaning and emotional implication of every word at the moment that they sing it. Schollum described a process of a singing student "willing themself into the meaning of the poetry… and tasting every sound and asking themself, 'What does this word mean to me?'" This requires a degree of familiarity with the language. Griffiths noted that until they achieve a certain level of expertise with the language, a singing student simply will not know which words are "emotive". This level of expertise is not synonymous with an ability to speak the language, however. As Bernac writes in *The Interpretation of French* Song (1976, pp. 11- 12)*:* "One is not obliged to speak a language fluently in order to sing it correctly…" However, he continues, "Obviously he must understand the exact meaning of each phrase, of each word that he sings".

One aspect seen to impede singing students in their understanding of text was a lack of education in grammar and poetry. Daguerre de Hureaux and LaBouff both cited these aspects as two of the most common difficulties encountered by students. Daguerre de Hureaux, who analyses texts with her students, said that she sometimes has to teach them basic grammar such as nouns, adjectives and verbs, while LaBouff also finds that her students may have "no background in [grammar] at all". LaBouff also noted that in the US, where she teaches, poetry seems to have been cut out at the high school level and that students can therefore feel "very uncomfortable' when dealing with poetry. She said, "I don't know how you sing art song if you're not comfortable [with poetry]".

If necessary, Moris will guide students to a point of understanding. He asks a student to read the text first, so that he can determine their level of understanding. In a comment that reflects the grammatical difficulties Daguerre de Hureaux and LaBouff cited above, Moris said he finds that students sometimes believe they understand a text because they know the meaning of the individual words, but that they have not considered the grammatical structure of the sentence and the influence this has on the relative importance of words. He gave the example of parenthetical statements (Italian '*incisi*') and the need to sing these in a way that makes sense. If the student needs help, he will go through the meaning of the text as part of his lyric diction teaching. Without this work, he said, "you sing the notes, …[but] you want to sing the meaning".

Several interviewees expressed frustration that not all singing students sufficiently prioritise meaning. Kimmorley said she finds singers often do not fully understand the text they are singing. She asked, "How could you contemplate singing a role with pages of recitative without really understanding the language? I don't understand. It defies me. Still continues to". Radcliffe shared Kimmorley's exasperation. She finds that students "do a translation and then they put it in the cupboard… and they forget about it". Radcliffe feels that when singing any language, including their native language, students need to be asked, "Why are you singing that? What does it mean? Why?" She acknowledged that it is difficult for a singing student to be "really saying the words" in the moment as they sing in a language they don't speak, but, like almost all the interviewees, was adamant that it is essential. Along with Moris, Radcliffe emphasised the necessity for a singing student to not only understand their own text as it is sung, but that of those with whom they are performing, whether it be in recitative, duet, or ensemble.

Several of the interviewees use a technique of personalised translation to help their students reach this point of understanding. Gall requires his students to provide a literal word-for-word translation of their text, but also to have made their own "personalised translation". In this version, the singer should choose words that they connect with personally, even if not an exact translation of the German. He explained: "All the 'Ach's and 'O's- sometimes it's "Wow" or "F***". That's part of it". Daguerre de Hureaux uses a similar approach. She recommends a grammatical and

semantic analysis followed by identification of the key words in a word-for-word translation. After this she says:

> You can pick up a book like the French Companion or whatever. This is great… It's got mistakes, but it gives you an idea… But then put it away and you've got to make a translation in your own words. And I mean in your own words so that it may sound not terribly… well, you wouldn't print it at the Wigmore Hall. "He's left" might be translated in yours as "He's buggered off"… And that's absolutely fine.

Gall then requires his students to speak their personalised translation with meaning, as a performer would, and to then speak the German with the same impetus. He finds that through this process the student is able to reconcile occasions where "the stress of the word is slightly different to the natural stress of the music". Most of the time the student is able to achieve "a bit of both".

This process also avoids a situation in which a lyric diction coach or teacher might direct a student to "Emote on that word!" Griffiths described this scenario as artificial, saying that he believes emotion must be brought into a performance as a result of the meaning of the language, and not the pronunciation alone. Morton also found that students are sometimes told, "Be more expressive," but struggle to know how. It is therefore important to consider how a singing student's understanding of the text is communicated to the audience through their lyric diction, and how their emotional connection with the meaning of the text is expressed. Rissinger and Danchenko-Stern considered the ability to emotionally connect with the meaning of the text to be a form of musicality. This view bridges what might be viewed as a conceptual leap between language and music. In the same way that an instrument creates musical expression through all aspects of the sound it produces, e.g. pitch, duration, attack, timbre, etc., so too can the human voice create musical expression through all aspects of the sound it produces, whether they originate in the sung language or the musical setting.

A singer's emotional connection with the meaning of the text can, for example, be expressed in their use of vowel colour; a singer may change the timbre or 'colour' of a

vowel in a way that has an emotional implication for the meaning of a word. Danchenko-Stern explained this using the example of an /a/.

> If you want to express a happy /a/, that's one /a/. If I need a lament /a/, they learn, just from singing any literature, what to add to your /a/ in order to darken it. Usually it's /o/ or even /u/ sometimes.

She gave 'Porgi, amor' from Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro* as an example in which the colour of the vowels will differ depending on the singer's emotional intention. She also contrasted Renee Fleming's and Mirella Freni's interpretations of Tatiana's letter scene from Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, saying:

> [Vowel colour] is what you feel. It's your reaction. It's like in painting- shades of colour… It's finding what you want to say. If you console someone, that's one colour. The palette must be unlimited with shades. So your prime is /a/ and then you add millions of colours, mix it together, try it. "No, I need more of this or of that." That's how it works.

Danchenko-Stern describes a deliberate and considered approach to vocal colour, but even non-singers would be aware of the impact emotions have on the production and sound of their speaking voice.[218] Di Taranto spoke about the impact of emotional expression on overall vocal colour, rather than that of individual vowels. She considers it dangerous for students to sing "angry" arias because, as a result of their understanding that the character is angry or upset, inexperienced singers "tend to close the [vocal] instrument", having translated "this feeling into a wrong [vocal] position". The challenge is for the singing student to convey such emotions while maintaining healthy vocal production. This issue highlights the immediacy of the effect a singer's emotion or emotional intent can have on their sound production. This can be used to the singer's advantage and can inspire many interpretative choices,[219] but also presents some risk in terms of singing technique and must be judiciously managed.

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[218] This is audible and visible in the YouTube video, *USC-EMO-MRI corpus for emotional speech*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T4KRbENmFDk (Kim, 2014).
[219] The physical effect of emotion can also be employed in singing technique. For example, Bozeman writes about the use of "affect" to "promote good acoustic and laryngeal registration" when turning the voice. He also lists affects that specifically encourage the involvement of the thyroarytenoid muscles and the cricothyroid muscles (2013, pp. 91- 92).

While consonants are not associated with colour, they can also be used in a manner that has both musical and expressive effect.[220] Rissinger gave the example of the line "Doch wenn du sprichst:" from Schumann's song cycle *Dichterliebe* on texts by Heine. In Schumann's setting, the vocal line pauses before continuing: "ich liebe dich!"('But when you say: "I love you!"'). Rissinger describes using all the sounds within the final /çst/ of "sprichst" in order to "make the sentence go on and make the longing come out".

Both Morton and Griffiths also gave examples of emotional expression through consonants. Morton approaches this concept via his students' native languages. He asks them: "How do we play with language? How do we play with sounds when we're being expressive? What kind of things do we hang on to?" He then relates this to how they might use such techniques to communicate with their audience.

> [I ask]"What is the consonant that evokes pleasure?" and they go "Hmmmm".
> "What is that consonant?"
> "It's an [m]."
> "Ok! If it happens to be a long [m], then lingering on that longer immediately conveys to the audience that you're experiencing something pleasurable".

Morton also gave an example of from Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro.*

> I say, "Can you please come up with some swear words for me?" They inevitably come up with words that begin with [f] or [ʃ] or [s]. What are those consonants? They're fricative consonants. Literally, they have friction in them. If you're doing the count's aria, who's so frustrated- "Hai già vinta la causa! Cosa sento?"- the elongation of those fricative consonants shows us his state.

Griffiths emphasised that the use of lyric diction to "enhance the emotional effect… has to come out of the language itself, not out of diction studies". However, Adams felt that an articulation can be expressive in and of itself. He stated that a perfectly executed double consonant in Italian is in itself expressive and went so far as to say that even without a particular expressive intent, "just by doing it well, it expresses that

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[220] See Section 4.12.

word”. Adams was the only interviewee who expressed this opinion, but it highlights the musicality of language and suggests an element of onomatopoeia.[221]

It seems likely that in such a case an expressive effect would be limited to small elements such as single words; in order to create coherence at the level of the sentence or phrase, or over an even larger period, articulatory choices must be made that both determine the sense of the text and the emotional expression with which it is delivered. Moris explained that the placement of a word within a sentence determines its importance and whether it should be emphasised. He described occasionally removing rests that occur where a phrase is ongoing and in other circumstances inserting them to highlight two separate parts within a phrase. It was not clear if this was exclusively in the context of recitative, but this seems likely. Moris also explained how, within a legato line, a singer can “make a little emphasis, without splitting, on the beginning of a word in order to make the word important and to say, ‘This is the key word of the phrase’”. Daguerre de Hureaux also spoke of the importance of “offering key words” more clearly when singing than in speech. LaBouff has systematised this process, and in *Singing and Communicating in English* (2008, p. 22) provides a diagram of a “hierarchy of stress”. She allocates primary stress to nouns and active verbs; secondary stress to adjectives, adverbs, interrogative pronouns, and negatives; and delineates articles, prepositions, conjunctions, pronouns, and auxiliary and linking verbs as non-stressed.

Communication and expression can be argued to begin even before the first sound has been uttered. Several of the interviewees mentioned the significance of breath in relation to communication and expression, though some voice teachers might consider this to lie exclusively within their pedagogical terrain. Daguerre de Hureaux, Gall, and Kimmorley stressed that the manner in which a singer prepares for a phrase must

[221] This is a documented effect; for example, in many languages the high front [i] vowel conveys a suggestion of smallness e.g. *little, itsy-bitsy, mini,* etc. There is also a related phenomenon called phonoaesthesia, in which particular phones in a language tend to be associated with certain meanings, e.g. <gl> in English is associated with brightness, eg. *glisten, gleam, glow, glint*, while <sl> is associated with liquid-like movements, e.g. *slip, slide, slither, slink* (McGregor, 2009, p. 91). In all these instances, perfect production of the word could be argued to express its meaning.

reflect the meaning and emotional content of what they are about to sing. Daguerre de Hureaux saw this as an essential part of natural communication:

> A lot of singers… think on the spot rather than the moment. They don't use the silence, they don't use that intake of breath to see, to think, and then speak. We all do that. Normally when we speak, the thought is ahead.

Gall and Kimmorley emphasised that this is not possible if the singer does not know what they are singing about. Kimmorley linked preparatory breath to vocal colour, saying that a singer's emotional intention will determine how they prepare for the phrase and the combination of intention and preparation will influence the vocal colour. She continued, "If [singing students] don't have any concept of what they're about to sing, of course [the breath] is not going to mean anything".

Gall also explained how breath is integrated into the articulatory aspects of lyric diction.

> The difference between a very good performer and an outstanding performer is for me the breath, the breath being defined not by vocal necessities, but by what you are about to say. That makes all the difference, but that is only possible if you know exactly what you're talking about and… know… how the language can help you achieve a dramatic breath. Sometimes you can bounce off a final consonant into that breath. Sometimes you choose not to. Sometimes you'll have a shadow vowel. Sometimes you won't. Sometimes you have to shorten a note to get the breath in. You need to know how to do that in each language… That's detailed work, but that's all important.

Gall's comment highlights that the expressive role of a breath can be perceived not just in terms of what follows it, but also in terms of how the breath begins, and the use of language that leads into and even precipitates that breath.

The interviewees were obviously convinced that singers' understanding of text and consequent emotional intention have a significant impact on their lyric diction and on their performance. However, the fastidiousness with which the interviewees approach many other facets of lyric diction clearly demonstrates that understanding and emotional intention alone are insufficient. As Adams put it: '"You can have all the expressive intent you want but if your diction is poor it's not going to work". Both

Rissinger and Moris talked about the importance of having all aspects, even those relating to communication and expression, securely prepared prior to performance. Rissinger described the danger of singing students wanting aspects to “just happen”, and argued that “nothing just happens. Everything is rehearsed”. She continued: “Then you can be free in the moment to do whatever comes to you but it should not wait until that moment that the audience is there”. Moris spoke with humour and exasperation of a belief that the adrenalin of performance will allow singers to render correctly language phrasing that they have been unable to achieve in rehearsal.

> In England there is a phrase which I never liked: “Oh, it will be alright on the night.” It’s not going to be alright on the night if it’s not alright now! What is this: it will be alright on the night? … If it’s wrong, it will be wrong! People laugh at me when I say this. “Oh, because the adrenalin…” Adrenalin has nothing to do with learning your part! The adrenalin might help you being a little more active, a little more alive, but not in the phrasing. The phrasing if you do it wrongly now, you will do it wrongly on the night, and tomorrow night and in one month’s time.

Several interviewees felt that if the phrasing and “flow” of the language are present in a singing student’s performance, small-scale lyric diction imperfections, though not ideal, are not an impediment to successful communication. Lefebvre said that she would prefer a singer who “who has some perfectish [sic] vowels, some less perfect, but a clear sense of syntax and delivery, and understanding of the text, and the flow of the language, and can make it sound more natural” to a singer with perfect vowels but no sense of the phrasing and flow of the language. Gall said that he would rather listen to someone who knows exactly what they are singing about and has a sense of the drama and flow of the language than someone who has perfect pronunciation but could be “singing the telephone directory”. Both Gall and Lefebvre said that the phrasing and flow of the language are required in order for the listener to understand what is being sung.

Lefebvre also described a “rhythm as to what is the priority” during a singer’s preparation, be it in the opera house or conservatorium. She described a singing student learning the placement of the vowels and developing a natural sense of the musical rhythm and the rhythm of the language for a work. However, close to the performance, she felt the focus must be on communication, regardless of other aspects that might still need improvement.

> As we approach performance day, or jury, or whatever it is at the end, maybe if the choice is between on the last few days perfecting two or three vowels or actually managing to express some of what the story is telling, at the end it needs to communicate, because that's the only reason we do this, right? There's no point in giving a diction demonstration but nothing [else].

As this section demonstrates, the interviewees spoke with passion about the importance of communication and expression through lyric diction. Their responses encompassed many themes, but these combined to reveal a broad pedagogical structure. Overall, the interviewees advocated initially developing students' pronunciation, but incorporating work on phrasing and expression and soon as students are able. They acknowledged that a basic level of familiarity with each language is required in order for students to know which words are most important, and therefore require expressive emphasis, but they did not equate this with students needing to learn to speak each language as an L2. Making a word-for-word translation and a personalised translation of their texts were considered important steps for singing students. However, some interviewees noted students might require help in order to understand grammatical structures and poetic aspects. All considered it essential that students know the meaning of each word when they sing. The interviewees gave numerous examples of how students can be taught to manifest expression through vowel colour, consonant articulation, and the use of breaths. The importance of training and rehearsing such means of expression was emphasised. Though expression may be associated with spontaneity in speech, several interviewees argued that these aspects must not be left until performance.

Overall, the interviewees portrayed expression and communication of meaning as the central goals of lyric diction. All the facets of lyric diction were seen to serve the purposes of communicating with an audience and expressing the emotional content of the text. The interviewees attributed enormous importance to fostering an understanding of these goals in their conservatorium-level students.

5. Synthesis of themes emerging from the research

Chapter 4 provided an analysis and discussion of the key themes that emerged from the interview data gathered in this research. These themes encompass broad-ranging facets of lyric diction pedagogy. In Chapter 5 these themes are drawn together to reveal the overall picture of best practice in conservatorium-level lyric diction teaching that has been derived from the interview data.

Section 5.1 presents an overview of the interviewees' priorities within their lyric diction teaching. This overview indicates that the interviewees consider the elements of lyric diction learning that dominate the existent lyric diction literature to be important. However, it shows that they attribute greater importance to the sung application of those elements at an articulatory level and in terms of communication and expression. Significantly, while the elimination of students' speech-related habits was revealed to be central to lyric diction pedagogy, the interviewees also emphasised the importance of maintaining and/or recreating aspects of natural communication and expression as part of lyric diction.

Section 5.2 summarises the interviewees' perspectives regarding the role of lyric diction within singing students' conservatorium-level studies and places this within the continuum of singers' career-long lyric diction development. It then goes on to consider optimal forms for the delivery of conservatorium-level lyric diction tuition. The section also describes the role of the lyric diction pedagogue as derived from this research, highlighting the skills and attributes necessary for lyric diction teachers.

5.1. Key priorities in conservatorium-level lyric diction pedagogy

As shown in the Literature Review, much of the literature regarding, or for use in, conservatorium-level lyric diction can be seen to focus predominantly on the 'what' of lyric diction teaching, and significantly less on the 'how'. The picture of lyric diction pedagogy that emerges from this study provides an insight into the 'how' of lyric diction teaching. This includes methods for teaching the aspects of lyric diction

represented in the literature. It also encompasses aspects that are either rarely mentioned, or largely absent from the lyric diction literature.

The learning of lyric diction can be viewed in terms of singing students' acquisition of required knowledge and their development of practical skills through which that knowledge is applied. Pronunciation rules are perhaps the most academic aspect of lyric diction learning, forming a large proportion of the knowledge a singing student must acquire. In some of the interviewees' languages of specialization, such as French and Russian, the learning of pronunciation rules entails the mastery of a large quantity of material. The Literature Review showed that many of the existing written resources regarding lyric diction focus on the presentation of the pronunciation rules of one or more languages in a format accessible to the singer, together with descriptions of the relevant articulations. However, within the overall picture of lyric diction pedagogy revealed by the interview data, the learning of pronunciation rules is considered an initial, self-evident step leading to the development of more important practical skills.

This research indicates the importance of a pedagogical approach in which pronunciation rules are presented systematically. Each of the interviewees said they had developed and refined their own system for teaching pronunciation rules throughout their careers.[222] This highlights the fact that there are many effective systems by which pronunciation rules may be presented. However, within the picture of lyric diction pedagogy that emerges from this study, an emphasis is placed on singing students mastering pronunciation rules through the application of those rules to texts from the vocal repertoire, i.e. in the context in which singing students need to apply that knowledge during their studies and throughout their careers. The research shows that the interviewees view the mastery of each lyric diction language's pronunciation rules as contributing to students' ability to prepare text independently when they become professional. However, the interviewees acknowledged that some students who learn pronunciation rules easily struggle with their practical lyric diction skills, while others who struggle to learn pronunciation rules may demonstrate a facility for accurate and expressive sung lyric diction. This is significant, indicating

[222] In some instances, such as Adams' *Handbook of Diction for Singers: Italian, German, French.* 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press; 2008), this approach is available in published form.

that, where student and professional singers have access to IPA resources and good quality lyric diction coaching, difficulties they face in learning pronunciation rules may, with hard work, be overcome.

This study shows mastery of IPA to be an indispensable part of singing students' conservatorium-level lyric diction training. However, it indicates that IPA is not essential for all lyric diction languages. For largely phonetic languages, such as Italian, the employment of IPA was shown to be unnecessary. Yet, even those interviewees who do not use IPA as part of their teaching or coaching consider the ability to read and employ IPA to be an essential skill for all professional singers. Overall, the interviewees see IPA as a highly useful tool for communication about language sounds which, particularly in the professional context, has the advantage of being independent of the singers' and coaches' native languages.

Like pronunciation rules, the teaching of IPA (where it occurs) is an initial step within the picture of lyric diction pedagogy that emerges from this research. The interviewees outlined the benefits of IPA in the initial stages of the lyric diction learning process, particularly the correspondence between the segmental nature of IPA and the temporal and articulatory characteristics of sung language. However, the interviewees also highlighted the shortcomings of IPA when dealing with more refined elements of lyric diction such as prosody, flow of the language, and expression. Within the pedagogical approach described here, IPA is thus an initial tool from which singing students ideally gain independence, if not during their lyric diction studies, then subsequently. The ability of students to make IPA transcriptions was considered a skill to be developed as part of their lyric diction studies of languages for which IPA is employed, but did not emerge from the interview data as a significant educational outcome. This study indicates several important aspects of lyric diction pedagogy regarding IPA use. These are: making students aware of the purpose of IPA while also highlighting its limitations; ensuring students have associated the correct sounds and articulations with each IPA symbol in each language context; fostering in students an understanding that much of the process of lyric diction learning extends beyond that which can be represented by IPA.

While much of the lyric diction literature employs phonetic terminology, this is not reflected in the picture of pedagogical practice revealed by this research as a whole (though two interviewees do employ phonetic terminology extensively). Many of the interviewees advocate minimal use of terminology, and there is significant variation in the vocabulary the interviewees employ to describe articulations. Notably, the discussion of phonetic terminology revealed an important and unifying pedagogical approach: all the interviewees consistently employ vocabulary that they have chosen for clarity regarding the movement and position of the articulators, and in order to maximise students' physical/kinaesthetic awareness of their articulations. The interviewees achieve these pedagogical goals through differing choices of vocabulary, which reflect the contexts in which the interviewees teach/have taught, the class time available to them, and students' capacities. These findings indicate that phonetic terminology is not essential in lyric diction pedagogy. They show that, in best practice, any vocabulary used to describe articulations must facilitate clarity regarding the movement and position of the articulators, maximise students' awareness of their articulations, and be employed consistently as part of the pedagogical process.

The ways in which students describe and clarify the nature of their articulations emerged as a key theme when considering the relative importance of their aural and kinaesthetic perceptions. Aural perception was considered equal in importance to kinaesthetic perception, and the interviewees described the need for students to "tune" their ears to each language. This study indicates that the teaching of lyric diction within a class context that includes individual student performance and feedback facilitates this process. Both aural and kinaesthetic perceptions play a significant role in the pedagogical approaches the interviewees use when guiding singing students to correct articulations, which include demonstration, mimicry and comparison, explicit instruction, and imagery. However, the interview data revealed a third key element in this process that had not been anticipated in the question. This key element is the need for students to establish a connection between the correct sound, their kinaesthetic sensation when they produce the sound, and a knowledge or self-defined understanding of what is occurring when this happens. The students' knowledge or self-defined understanding was acknowledged to take many forms, reflecting the significant variation that exists between individual students, and highlighting the importance of a pedagogical style that caters to that variation. The vocabulary choices

of a lyric diction teacher are, however, likely to exert an influence on the form the students' knowledge or self-defined understanding takes.

Within the picture of lyric diction pedagogy revealed by this research, the sung implementation of lyric diction is of primary importance. All the interviewees place a focus on the development of students' practical lyric diction skills, and all structure their teaching in order to facilitate as much focus on practical skill development as possible. This development occurs through a pedagogical approach in which students sing and receive individually tailored feedback from the lyric diction teacher. The importance of feedback in the development of individual students' practical lyric diction skills cannot be overstated, and the provision of individual feedback can be seen to play a role in all the subsequent areas of pedagogical focus.

There are significant differences in pronunciation between spoken and sung language based on tradition, style, or vocal necessity. However, this study indicates that such aspects need not be presented as differences if singing students do not already speak the language to be sung. Nevertheless, singing in any language requires articulations that differ substantially from the articulatory habits of speech. Within the pedagogical approach revealed here, considerable focus is placed on aiding each student overcome his/her speech-based articulatory habits in order to attain optimal lyric diction. When considering the adaptation of language to the sung context, the dominant theme that emerged from this research was legato. The development of a legato approach to sung language is a key pedagogical priority within the approach revealed in this study, whatever the spoken characteristics of the language of specialisation. The interviewees universally emphasised the role of consonants as essential to the creation of legato, and argued that consonants should never be perceived as interrupting the vocal line, a perception with which they clearly often contend. Fostering this view of consonants was shown to be critical to effective lyric diction pedagogy. To this end, within the picture of lyric diction pedagogy that emerges from this research, an emphasis is placed on ensuring that each student has an understanding of the place and manner of each consonant articulation, with a particular awareness of the role of breath and, where applicable, voice, within the production of each consonant.

Though resonance is an obvious and significant difference between sung and spoken language, not all the interviewees consider it part of the field of lyric diction. Therefore, some of the interviewees deal with resonance as part of their pedagogical approach, and some do not. However, all the interviewees acknowledged the importance of resonance and demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of its impact upon sung language. Thus, aspects of resonance that may also fall within the terrain of the singing teacher need not be considered part of the approach to lyric diction pedagogy that emerges from this study. However, an approach to language use that facilitates that resonance is shown to be essential.

Unsurprisingly, given that vowel modification is a function of and contributor to resonance, the interviewees' approaches to it vary accordingly; some do not address vowel modification within their pedagogical approach to lyric diction teaching. However, all the interviewees demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of the nature of, and need for, vowel modification. They all argued that a singer must know the correct vowel when modifying, and that the result of any modification must sound to the listener as much like the correct vowel as possible. The interview data revealed considerable concern that singing students are taught to modify vowels too early in their studies, to modify vowels too frequently, and to over-modify vowels. On the basis of the results of this study, it would be reasonable to exclude the teaching vowel modification from conservatorium-level lyric diction studies. However, where a lyric diction teacher chooses to include vowel modification in their teaching, the pedagogical approach revealed by this research is one in which students are provided with a clear understanding of the goals of vowel modification, when to employ it, and effective techniques appropriate to their voice type and level of development.

The teaching of lyric diction necessarily focuses on differences between singing and speaking. However, within the pedagogical approach to lyric diction revealed in this study there is also a focus on those aspects of lyric diction that are *similar* to speech. These include rendering the natural prosody of the language, knowing the meaning of each word, and using breath as part of an expressive utterance. As part of this pedagogical approach, crucial importance is attributed to speaking and/or intoning text in preparation for singing. Speaking and/or intoning the text facilitates the development of prosodic/suprasegmental aspects of language, allowing singing

students to find the natural flow and stress of the language away from the influence of the notated rhythm and the music's metrical structure. The prosodic/suprasegmental aspects of the language may then be reconciled with the metrical, rhythmic, and musical context of the setting where necessary. Speaking the text was also shown to be a means of establishing an expressive connection between the text and its meaning.

While use of breath might generally be considered to fall exclusively within the terrain of the singing teacher, this research indicates its relevance to lyric diction. It indicates that the use of preparatory breaths in a manner resembling, in terms of expression, the use of breath in speech may play a role in the convincing use of language. Within the pedagogical approach that emerges from the interview data, expressive use of breath is based on the principles that a thought precedes the corresponding utterance, that this thought exerts an influence upon the expressive nature of the breath in preparation for that utterance, and that the expressive nature of the breath will have an impact on how the utterance is perceived by the listener. The level of priority attributed to breath varies among the interviewees; some treat it peripherally, whereas others consider it an area of key pedagogical focus.

Communication and expression clearly emerge from the interview data as the overarching goals of lyric diction pedagogy. Almost all the interviewees feel that these aspects must be emphasised in conservatorium-level lyric diction tuition, notwithstanding the knowledge and practical skills that require development as part of singing students' conservatorium-level lyric diction learning. Moreover, even the interviewee who found there is insufficient time to address communication and expression at the conservatorium level considered these aspects to be the ultimate goal of lyric diction learning. Indeed, all the interviewees see the many facets of lyric diction as serving the purposes of communicating with an audience and expressing the emotional content of the text.

Within the picture of lyric diction pedagogy that emerges from this study, communication and expression are encompassed in the following ways: ensuring students know the meaning of every word in the moment they sing it, having students undertake personalised translations of a text, encouraging students to use breath as an expressive tool, providing students with the tools for expressive use of the sung

language (according to the articulatory characteristics of that language), and ensuring students rehearse those aspects of lyric diction that contribute to expression. For both singing students and professional singers, this research reveals the importance of prioritising communication and expression in the final stages of preparation for a performance, rather than focussing on articulatory accuracy in the absence of communication and expression.

Notably, this study shows all the aforementioned areas of lyric diction pedagogy to be equally applicable to lyric diction in students' native languages. However, the interview data suggest that students themselves do not always perceive the necessity for such an approach to singing in one's native language. These findings indicate the importance of a pedagogical approach to lyric diction that fosters students' understanding that singing in one's native language requires the same meticulous and systematic attention to articulatory and expressive detail as singing in any other language.

5.2 The importance of conservatorium-level lyric diction tuition and the role of the lyric diction teacher

This study clearly shows lyric diction tuition to be an essential part of conservatorium-level singing studies. The findings indicate that the reasons for this include the interdependence of singing technique and lyric diction skills, the need for singing students to develop awareness and control of their articulators, and the need for singing students to overcome speech-based articulatory habits. These can be seen to relate to the areas of pedagogical focus discussed in Section 5.1. Further reasons contributing to the importance of lyric diction tuition at the conservatorium level that emerged from the interview data were the need for singing students to perceive language as a tool for singing, to prioritise text when learning and performing, and the need for singing students to understand that the meaning of the text is integral to the music and expression. This research shows conservatorium-level lyric diction tuition to be essential in establishing the lyric diction skills, attitudes, and approaches that the interviewees perceive as defining professional singers with excellent lyric diction; the interview data reveal that those professional singers who have excellent lyric diction

prioritise it within their repertoire preparation, undertake thorough and independent work on text, and are committed to the ongoing development and refinement of their lyric diction skills. Accordingly, within the picture of lyric diction pedagogy that emerges from this study, importance is attributed to demanding a high standard from students and fostering their understanding that lyric diction development extends beyond the conservatorium context as part of conservatorium-level lyric diction pedagogy.

Almost all of the difficulties or shortcomings with lyric diction that the interviewees described encountering among professional singers were fundamental aspects that would be addressed in comprehensive conservatorium-level lyric diction training. These included errors in pronunciation, prosodic/suprasegmental errors, and an inability to understand and/or implement the advice of a lyric diction coach. These shortcomings were attributed to a variety of causes, including the singers' lack of knowledge of pronunciation rules and/or IPA, negative associations with a language, a failure to recognize the required lyric diction standard, and a failure to prioritise lyric diction in repertoire preparation. While conservatorium-level lyric diction tuition can only provide an initial part of the lyric diction skills required at a high professional level, it establishes a foundation facilitating singing students' independent preparation, ongoing development, and refinement of their lyric diction as they progress through further training and into the profession. Thus, effective conservatorium-level lyric diction tuition also prevents singing students from entering the singing profession with difficulties or shortcomings relating to lyric diction that may prove to be career limiting.

This study finds that there is no single qualification or background required in order to become an effective lyric diction teacher. While being a native speaker of the relevant language and a singer/former singer were shown to be advantageous in some regards, they were not shown to be essential prerequisites for being an expert lyric diction teacher.[223] Rather, the research indicates that effective lyric diction teachers may come from a wide variety of backgrounds, and that different backgrounds may confer

[223] It appeared necessary that a lyric diction coach be a native speaker when coaching at the highest professional level. However, this study is not of sufficient scope to be conclusive in this regard.

particular strengths. A group of essential core skills required for both lyric diction coaching and teaching was identified from the interview data. These core skills are:

1) The ability to perceive accurately what is being sung
2) The ability to envisage the desired production (segmental, prosodic, or expressive) within the sung context
3) The ability to demonstrate the desired production
4) The ability to identify correctly the cause of inaccurate production and provide a solution
5) Interpersonal/pedagogical skills

The aspects of lyric diction presented in Chapter 2 reveal the complexity of the contexts to which skills 1) to 4) apply, and the knowledge and expertise upon which such skills must be based. While any effective pedagogy requires a deep knowledge of the subject matter and an ability to communicate that content, overall pedagogical style, skill 5) listed above, emerged from this research as a theme of great significance. Indeed, the interview data show that most of the interviewees consider their pedagogical style to be central to the success of their lyric diction pedagogy.

The picture of pedagogical style that emerged from this study is one in which the lyric diction teacher caters to individual students and establishes trust-based relationships with each student and within each class. Notably, the importance of establishing trust-based relationships was common to both conservatorium-level lyric diction teaching and lyric diction coaching of professionals. This can be seen to relate to particular vulnerabilities characteristic of singers, but it is also associated with expert teaching in general. The interview data indicate that a lyric diction teacher's capacity and opportunity to adapt to each student's level, be they an undergraduate or postgraduate student, is essential for optimal learning outcomes. This is based on the principle that it is essential for each student to establish foundational lyric diction skills prior to attempting further development. Thus effective pedagogical style was shown to include the provision of well-timed and appropriate feedback to each student. Given the high standards of lyric diction required of professional singers, the pedagogical style revealed in this research also encompasses demanding a high standard from

students and fostering in students a perspective that lyric diction development extends beyond the period of their study.

The results of this research indicate that lyric diction pedagogy can only be optimally effective when the teacher has the skills to tailor their tuition to individual students and is enabled by the class format and allocation of hours to do so. It is, of course, necessary for lyric diction teachers to communicate basic curriculum content, such as pronunciation rules and IPA. However, the need for singing students to develop practical articulatory and expressive skills, both of which are subject to considerable variation between individuals, requires lyric diction teachers to provide individualised feedback. The context in which lyric diction is taught must, therefore, facilitate both these processes. Additionally, the results of this study point to the importance of students hearing each other in a class context in order to develop their skills of aural perception. Consequently, effective conservatorium-level lyric diction tuition requires a class size and frequency that provide sufficient time and opportunity for both the teaching of essential content and for students to perform individually (i.e. in master class format). Alternatively, a teaching format that comprises classes in which essential content is conveyed, including demonstration and performance, together with supplementary individual coaching sessions, would cater to these requirements.

Though the scope of this study is narrow in regard to the music institutions associated with the interviewees, it does reveal enormous variation in the quantity of lyric diction tuition afforded to conservatorium students. The varying class hours allocated to lyric diction across the institutions at which the interviewees teach, or have taught, no doubt indicates varying degrees of budgetary capacity. However, it is also reasonable to conclude that such variation also indicates differing degrees of importance attributed by institutions to lyric diction tuition within conservatorium-level singing studies. This is significant when considering the finding that conservatorium-level lyric diction tuition is essential to the development of the skills, habits, and attitudes that characterise professional singers who have excellent lyric diction, and that these skills, habits, and attitudes are of critical importance within the career-long continuum of lyric diction learning. Indeed, the continued development and refinement of lyric diction skills, and a singer's ability to implement refinements demanded of them in the professional context, may be career-enhancing where the singer possesses the

other skills necessary for the profession. It seems that a significant process would need to occur in order to establish uniform lyric diction curriculum requirements at conservatoria across the countries in which the interviewees teach. Nevertheless, the results of this research regarding the importance of lyric diction tuition at the conservatorium level suggest that standardisation of the curriculum requirements for lyric diction tuition for conservatorium-level singing students is an area that warrants investigation.

Conclusion

This thesis has presented a view of conservatorium-level lyric diction pedagogy that highlights both its complexity and its importance. Through analysing the pedagogical practice of numerous expert lyric diction teachers whose collective expertise encompasses several languages and is grounded in their understanding and experience of lyric diction at the professional level, it has revealed a broadly applicable picture of best practice in lyric diction pedagogy. Much of this research has been based on primary source materials generated through interviews with expert lyric diction teachers based in the US, UK, Germany, Austria, and the Netherlands, and through supplementary interviews with an Australian-based lyric diction coach and vocal coach. Few of the interviewees are published authors in the field of lyric diction and, prior to this study, none had been asked about their pedagogical practice in this manner. Many spoke of the rarity of opportunities for lyric diction teachers and coaches to discuss their work and/or observe their colleagues at work. It is hoped that the present study has made a worthwhile contribution to the discipline by providing an insight into the interviewees' pedagogical practice in a manner that has been previously unavailable.

Chapter 1 placed the use of text and language in classical singing in an historical and socio-cultural context. It outlined the role of text as a source of inspiration for composers, its significance in vocal compositions historically, and the essential nature of its semantic, musical, and expressive qualities, arguing that these aspects make lyric diction a crucial aspect of any western classical singer's performance.

Chapter 2 provided a foundation for understanding and analysing the primary source materials collected in this study. Sections 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3 presented an overview of important concepts that illuminate the study of lyric diction, providing an explication of vocal acoustics, singing technique, linguistics, phonology, and articulatory phonetics as they apply to lyric diction. These chapters highlighted the complex and unique nature of lyric diction, and provided an insight into the scientific principles at work in both the development of lyric diction skills and the pedagogical processes that facilitate that development.

Section 2.4 explored the potential for overlap between foreign language (L2) phonology acquisition and lyric diction learning. It showed that, although there are distinct and significant differences between L2 phonology acquisition and lyric diction learning, there are similarities warranting investigation. In particular, research into the processes of L2 phonology acquisition and into L2 pronunciation teaching reveals aspects that may be relevant and useful to the field of lyric diction pedagogy. The juxtaposition of L2 phonology acquisition and lyric diction learning is an original contribution to the discipline and an area warranting further investigation. Equally, the field of lyric diction pedagogy may offer material of value to linguists and L2 pronunciation instructors.

Chapter 3 provided a context for conservatorium level lyric diction pedagogy. Sections 3.1 and 3.2 explored the backgrounds, qualifications, and experience of expert lyric diction coaches and teachers through the prism of those interviewed for this research. Section 3.1 presented the research findings regarding the essential core skills required for lyric diction coaching and teaching. Such an examination of the roles of the lyric diction coach or teacher, and the necessary qualities, has not been undertaken in any other research context and this chapter provides material that is of value to those wishing to train or employ lyric diction coaches and teachers. It shows that there is no one qualification or background required in order to become an effective lyric diction teacher, but rather that effective lyric diction teachers may come from a wide variety of backgrounds, and that different backgrounds may confer particular strengths.

Section 3.3 presented material from the interviews providing examples of the different ways in which lyric diction coaches may approach their work. In particular, it discussed the roles of lyric diction and the lyric diction coach in the opera rehearsal context, highlighting the pressure and demands placed upon singers. In doing so, it provided an insight into the professional context for which conservatorium-level lyric diction tuition aims to prepare singing students and revealed factors common to professional level lyric diction coaching and conservatorium-level lyric diction teaching. This is an insight rarely available to those outside the profession, and of

particular value to lyric diction teachers who have not had the opportunity to work as coaches for professional singers in such a context.

Chapter 4 presented analysis and discussion of the key themes that emerged from the primary source materials collected for this study. This initially highlighted the importance of lyric diction tuition as part of conservatorium-level singing studies (4.1) and demonstrated the potential impact of conservatorium-level lyric diction training, or its absence, on singers' subsequent professional work (4.2). The chapter then showed the significant variation that exists between conservatoria in the hours allocated to lyric diction tuition (4.3) and discussed the merits of class and one-to-one lyric diction tuition (4.4) before highlighting the challenges inherent in catering to the variety of lyric diction levels manifested by students undertaking undergraduate and postgraduate (i.e. Masters) study (4.5). This discussion revealed the importance of tailoring lyric diction tuition to the individual student, an aspect that was explored more fully in Section 4.6, 'Pedagogical style'. The findings regarding pedagogical style were analysed and discussed in the context of general educational research, confirming the expert nature of the pedagogy presented in this thesis. Sections 4.7, 4.8, and 4.9 presented the pedagogical approaches of the interviewees to pronunciation rules, IPA, and phonetic terminology respectively. These sections demonstrated that the focus of much of the literature regarding lyric diction is on those aspects of lyric diction learning that the interviewees consider preliminary to the primary emphasis of their pedagogical practice: the development of students' practical lyric diction skills. The pedagogical approaches of the interviewees to the practical aspects of lyric diction learning were explored in Sections 4.10 to 4.14. These chapters showed that the creation of legato through the use of language is central to the successful adaptation of spoken language to the sung context (4.10), that vowel modification should be approached with caution, if at all, at the conservatorium level (4.11), and that students' aural and kinaesthetic perceptions of their articulations are equally important, but must be combined with a knowledge or self-defined understanding of the action producing the articulation. The effect of consonants was shown to be sometimes misconstrued, with the interviewees revealing a pedagogical focus on the use of consonants to create legato and enhance intelligibility (4.12). The teaching of the lyric diction of students' native languages was explored, highlighting the importance of a similar pedagogical approach to that employed with students'

non-native languages, despite frequent perceptions that this may be unnecessary (4.13). Finally, communication and expression through lyric diction were shown to be the ultimate goal of all lyric diction pedagogy and learning, warranting pedagogical attention even at the conservatorium level, despite the need to develop fundamental lyric diction knowledge and skills (4.14).

Chapter 5 provided a synthesis of the key themes that emerged from the interview data, revealing the overall picture of best practice in conservatorium-level lyric diction teaching that was derived from this research. This comprised an overview of the key priorities in conservatorium-level lyric diction pedagogy (5.1), the role of conservatorium-level lyric diction, and the qualities and skills of expert lyric diction teachers (5.2).

This thesis is the first study to focus on best practice in the teaching of conservatorium-level lyric diction. By tapping into the oral tradition of lyric diction pedagogy, this study has provided a broader view of the discipline than has been presented in the literature to date. It has also provided an insight into the unique combination of skills required of a lyric diction teacher, and the pedagogical significance of those skills. Rather than advocating one particular and prescriptive pedagogical approach to teaching lyric diction, this study has aimed to create a rich resource from which those seeking to begin exploring the role of lyric diction teacher, or to enhance their existing expertise, may draw.

Beyond this study, the pedagogical process of lyric diction teaching has received little attention from researchers. This thesis provides a starting point for future researchers who may wish to undertake more detailed investigations in this field. Areas such as the overlap between L2 phonology acquisition and lyric diction learning, optimal structures and allocations of class hours for lyric diction within singing studies at the conservatorium level, and potential course design for training as a lyric diction teacher or coach warrant further attention. Furthermore, research that involves the extended observation of expert lyric diction teachers would provide much material of value. Although the interview questions for this study were designed to elicit specific examples, the nature of the interview format resulted in quite broad responses. Extensive observation would yield many more specific examples. Broadening the size

and scope of the project undertaken here would also provide valuable additional material.

This study has shown conservatorium-level lyric diction teaching to be a complex, specialised, and essential undertaking. It is hoped that it not only contributes material of value to those working within the field, but that, for those outside the field, it facilitates a greater appreciation of the skills and achievements of those whose pedagogical expertise is often hidden from view.

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Appendix 1. Biographies of all interviewees

David Adams (interviewed in Cincinnati, 11th April 2016)

David Adams served as Professor of Voice and Head of the Performance Studies Division at the College-Conservatory of Music, University of Cincinnati, before retiring in 2015. He has served on the faculty of the Aspen Music School, and has been artistic director of the Opera Theater and Music Festival of Lucca (Italy), and its successor, CCM Spoleto, summer programs of the College-Conservatory of Music. Prof. Adams is the author of *A Handbook of Diction for Singers* published by Oxford University Press (now in its second edition), and *The Song and Duet Texts of Antonín Dvorák*, published by Leyerle Publications. He has also written articles for periodicals, including *The Journal of Singing*. Students of his have won prestigious competitions, including the Metropolitan Opera Auditions, the Houston Grand Opera and the National Federation of Music Clubs, and have participated in the major summer apprentice programs. Former students are singing professionally in Europe and the US and are teaching throughout the US.

As a performer, specialized areas of interest included the evangelist roles in J. S. Bach's Passions (A "superb diction and feeling," *Dayton Daily News*), Czech vocal music (Janácek's *The Diary of One Who Vanished*: "…a splendid performance. He evoked so much beauty from the vocal lines and the Czech text," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*), and contemporary music (*Musical America* called him "a compelling interpreter" of Elliott Carter's *In Sleep, In Thunder*). His interest in Czech vocal music culminated in a CD recording of songs of Dvorák and Smetana in January 2005.

Before his teaching career, Adams sang as lyric tenor in opera and concert in Italy, Austria, Germany, Luxembourg, and the US. In Austria and Germany he was a member of the resident ensembles of the Vienna Kammeroper, Kaiserslautern Pfalztheater, and Saarländisches Staatstheater, and also appeared on German television. In Italy he sang with the Opera Barga Festival for three years. He has performed as tenor soloist with numerous regional orchestras throughout the US. He has degrees from Indiana University and the University of New Mexico, and pursued additional studies at L'Accademia di Santa Cecilia, Rome, Italy as the recipient of a Fulbright Grant.

(Source: https://ccm.uc.edu/about/directory.html?eid=adamsdh&thecomp=uceprof_0 accessed 5th June 2019)

Tanja Binggeli (Skype interview, 11th July 2018)

Tanja Binggeli is a freelance voice coach and the German Language Coach for Opera Australia. Tanja has a BA (Languages)(Hons) from the University of Sydney, and a Masters in Design from the University of Technology, Sydney. For the past 12 years, Tanja has worked as a voice coach on the German language productions for Opera Australia, including two complete seasons of *Der Ring des Nibelungen* by Richard Wagner. From 2008-2016 Tanja worked under then associate music director of OA, Tony Legge managing music department and young artist program for the company,

working on a wide range of projects during this time, from marketing, artistic liaison and producing.

In addition to her work in for Opera Australia, Tanja works a freelance voice, speech and breath coach. As a speech and voice coach, Tanja has worked with people ranging from TEDx speakers and Google whizz kids, on air journalists, academics, senior executives, cancer survivors and school students. Tanja teaches the opera course at NIDA, delivers pre-performance talks for the Australian Chamber Orchestra and is in the process of writing her first book on the topic of classical music and the human body.

(Source: Tanja Binggeli)

Maria Cleva (interviewed in London, 25th April 2016)

Maria Cleva has been coaching at The Royal Opera, Covent Garden for over thirty years. She has also coached at the WNO, Opera North, Scottish Opera, Glyndebourne Festival. Her other coaching credits include the Marinsky Academy, St. Petersburg, the Munich State Opera and the Vienna State Opera.
Maria has worked on many recordings as Italian coach for Deutschegrammophone, Philips and Decca with Sir Colin Davis, Sir Neville Marriner, Sir Georg Solti, Trevor Pinnock CBE and Sir John Elliot Gardner among others.
She teaches at the Royal College of Music, Royal Academy of Music and the National Opera Studio.

(Source: https://www.nationaloperastudio.org.uk/faqs/maria-cleva accessed 5th June 2019)

Florence Daguerre de Hureaux (interviewed in London, 28th April 2016)

Born in Paris, Florence Daguerre de Hureaux (LRAM Hons. Hon ARAM) settled in London in 1982. She graduated from Nice University and subsequently trained as a singer at the Royal Academy of Music in London and at the Centre de Musique Baroque de Versailles in Paris.

As a freelance translator, she worked for many years for EMI as well as other labels such as Chandos, Harmonia Mundi, Deutsche Grammophon, Chandos, Boosey & Hawkes, Faber Music and Decca.

Because of her interest and love for the French language and repertoire, she soon became in great demand as a French coach, working in opera houses all over England and Europe. Recent productions include: Glyndebourne (*Le Comte Ory, Pelléas et Mélisande, L'Enfant et les Sortilèges, l'Heure espagnole* and *Carmen*), Royal Opera House (*Platée, Carmen, Manon, Werther, Les Troyens*), la Scala (*Carmen*), Salzburg Festival (*Benvenuto Cellini, Moïse et Pharaon*) Stockholm Royal Opera and Danish Opera (*Carmen, Orphée, Alceste, Roméo et Juliette*), Tel Aviv (*La Juive*) and De Nederlandse Opera (*Platée, Guillaume Tell*). As well as lecturing and doing pre-concert talks, she has worked with many distinguished singers in preparation for operatic roles, recitals and recordings.

Florence has a passion for French song and is keen to help young singers programme recitals and explore a wide repertoire ranging from the 19th to the 21st century. She loves working with young artists and is part of the coaching staff at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, the Royal Academy of Music, the National Opera Studio and the Young Artists Programme at ROH. Recent Guildhall productions include *Chérubin*, *Le Dialogue des Carmélites* and *La Navarraise/Le Portrait de Manon*.

Florence lives in East Sussex with her husband and three daughters.

(Source: https://www.gsmd.ac.uk/music/staff/teaching_staff/department/5-department-of-vocal-studies/378-florence-daguerre-de-hureaux/ accessed 5th June 2019)

Vera Danchenko-Stern (interviewed in Washington, 16th April 2016)

Vera Danchenko-Stern was born in Moscow into a family of professional musicians. She graduated from the Gnessin Institute of Music in Moscow with honors in piano, solo performance, chamber music, vocal and instrumental accompaniment. Danchenko-Stern taught at the Gnessin Institute and toured as an accompanist throughout Russia and Europe before emigrating to Canada in 1979, where she joined the faculty of the Royal Conservatory of music in Toronto. She has performed highly acclaimed concerts with her brother, violinist Victor Danchenko, in major cities for sold-out houses throughout the world.

Since moving to Washington, D.C. in 1990, Danchenko-Stern has been heard often here and in Baltimore. Concert appearances include accompanying Pavel Pekarsky's Kennedy Center debut, the Washington debut of Ilya Kaler (triple prize gold medal winner of the Tchaikovsky, Paganini, and Sibelius competitions), and voice recitals with Medea Namoradze, Mikhail Manevitch, Sergei Leiferkus, Jerome Barry and Nikita Storojev, to name a few. Other artists such as violist Rivka Golani and violinist Martin Beaver engaged her as an accompanist. In 1997, she accompanied soprano Carmen Balthrop singing Rachmaninoff's romances at the Carnegie Hall gala in honor of the 850th anniversary of the founding of Moscow. After Danchenko-Stern started teaching the course 'Singing in Russian' at the Peabody Conservatory, she induced the entire voice faculty into participation in the "Evening of Slavic Songs" sung in five different Slavic languages.

Danchenko-Stern has completed several tours in Russia. In 2001, she brought her singer-students of the Peabody Conservatory (soprano Pamela Hay – student of Phyllis Bryn-Julson, and baritone Timothy Mix – student of John Shirley-Quirk) for the Golden Ring Russian tour with performances in St. Petersburg, Moscow, and Yaroslavl. For the first time American vocal students demonstrated their art in front of the native audiences singing Russian repertoire in Russian. Their recital in St. Petersburg during this tour took place at the residence of the Consul General of the United States and was a great success. "Closing my eyes I would have imagined that the singers were native Russians," commented the eminent Russian composer Sergey Slonimsky after the concert. This performance led to the invitation to participate in

the International week of the Conservatories in 2002, dedicated to the 140th anniversary of the founding of the St. Petersburg Conservatory. This International Festival was staged during the first week of October, 2001. Three Peabody students (soprano Christine Kavanagh – student of Phyllis Bryn-Julson, mezzo-soprano Catrin Rowenna Davies – student of Marianna Busching, baritone Timothy Mix – student of John Shirley-Quirk, and tenor Pablo Henrich from Catholic University) gave a full-sized stunning performance at the Glazunov Hall of the St. Petersburg Conservatory and received standing ovations from the enthusiastic audience which they entertained with a selection of classical Russian repertoire sung in Russian and music of Broadway. All was accompanied by Danchenko-Stern.

Danchenko-Stern serves as a Russian diction coach for the Washington National Opera. Her repertoire includes participation in the production of Tsar's Bride by Rimsky-Korsakov (1994), Boris Godunov by Mussorgsky (1997), Queen of Spades (2001), and The Maiden of Orleans (2005) both by Tchaikovsky. In 2003, Danchenko-Stern was invited by the Honolulu Opera Theater to coach the soloists and chorus for the first Russian opera in the company's repertoire for Evgeniu Onegin by Tchaikovsky. She was also engaged in this capacity to work with the Baltimore Symphony chorus for the production of Prokofiev's Ivan the Terrible under the baton of Maestro Yuri Temirkanov. Deeply committed to the development of young artists, Danchenko-Stern continues to serve on the faculty of the Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University and the Catholic University of America. She is sought after as a judge, master teacher, and chamber pianist and teaches piano at her private studio in Alexandria, Va. Her recent master classes were presented at Princeton University and at Michigan State Universities. With two alumnae of the Peabody Conservatory, soprano Susan Harwood and mezzo-soprano Patricia Green, Danchenko-Stern has founded a group called Trio Lyrica.

She has been included into the centennial edition of Who's Who in American Women and is a "National Associate Artist of SAI."

(Source: https://peabody.jhu.edu/faculty/vera-danchenko-stern/ accessed 5th June 2019)

Valentina Di Taranto (interviewed in Amsterdam, 18th April 2016)

Following her classical education in Treviso, Italy, Valentina Di Taranto studied composition at the Conservatory of Padua and voice with Iris Adami Corradetti and Claude Thiolas. She pursued further vocal studies with Margreet Honig at the Amsterdam Conservatory and worked with Dame Janet Baker.

For the past 15 years Valentina has been coaching productions at the Nationale Reisopera and the Nationale Opera & Ballet in the Netherlands as well as at the Göttingen International Handel Festival. More recently she has been coaching productions at the Drottningholm Opera Festival in Gothenburg, at the Bolshoi Theatre, at the Glyndebourne Festival and at the Royal Opera House.

Valentina has a broad knowledge of repertoire and styles, stretching from Monteverdi to Dallapiccola. She has participated in many historically informed recordings and

performances of works by Handel and Mozart. Her future engagements include a recording for Opera Rara.

Valentina is passionate about working with young singers. She is Italian language coach at the Amsterdam Conservatory, guest coach in the Jette Parker Young Artists Programme and is part of the coaching staff of the Young Artists Programme at the Bolshoi Theatre. She lives in Amsterdam.

(Source: http://www.samling.org.uk/leaders/valentina-di-taranto/ accessed 5th June 2019)

Gerhard Gall (interviewed in London, 24th April 2016)

Gerhard Gall was born in Treuchtlingen, Germany and graduated from the University of Bayreuth where he was also part of the extra chorus of the Bayreuther Festspiele.

As a German Language Coach he has worked with singers of the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, the Bayreuther Festspiele, the Deutsche Oper, the Staatsoper and the Komische Oper in Berlin, the Bavarian State Opera in Munich, the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf, the Opéra de Paris, the Opéra national du Rhin in Strasbourg, the Royal College of Music, the Royal Academy of Music, Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, the Cardiff/Welsh International Academy of Voice, and the National Opera Studio, London.

He has collaborated with the Opéra La Monnaie in Brussels (Lohengrin, Die Zauberflöte, Tristan & Isolde), the Staatsoper in Berlin (Die Zauberflöte), Palau de les Arts Reina Sofía in Valencia (Die Zauberflöte), Grange Park Opera, (Capriccio, Tristan und Isolde, Die Walküre, Hänsel & Gretel), Longborough Festival Opera (Der Ring des Nibelungen, Tristan & Isolde, Tannhäuser, Der fliegende Holländer), the Royal Academy of Music (Die Dreigroschenoper, Die Zauberflöte and Prologue Ariadne auf Naxos), the Royal College of Music (Die Zauberflöte), Guildhall School of Music & Drama (H.W. Henze's Phaedra & Der Landarzt and opera scenes from Fidelio and Capriccio), Classical Opera (Orpheus at the London Handel Festival), Opera Bergen (Fidelio), Decca Records, Chandos Records, Universal Music, Oxford Lieder Festival, the BBC Singers, Tenebrae, Philharmonia Voices, and Exaudi as well as with numerous other choirs and vocal ensembles.

In addition to his engagements as Language Coach, Gerhard also teaches German and French language, and works as a freelance translator and interpreter.

(Source: http://www.gerhardgall.com/About.html accessed 5th June 2019)

Kenneth Griffiths (interviewed in Cincinnati, 10th April 2016)

Before arriving at CCM, Kenneth Griffiths taught at Indiana University and the University of Tennessee and has held numerous master classes throughout the U.S. and Australia. He has accompanied professional recitals in Australia, Japan, England, Germany, Russia and the U.S. for such artists as Kathleen Battle, Susan Dunn, John Garrison, Ben Matthews, Susanne Mentzer, Jessye Norman, Stanford Olsen, David Shifrin, Benita Valente, Sarah Walker and Delores Ziegler. He has appeared as concert narrator in Schoenberg's *Ode to Napoleon* with the Arditti, LaSalle and Vermeer Quartets and is also featured on the Deutsche Grammophone recording of the same work with the LaSalle Quartet.

Since 1992, he has been a faculty member of the Tanglewood Music Festival vocal/accompanying program where he teaches master classes and "Russian For Singers" and also prepares recital and chamber music ensembles. In 1995 and 2000, he was a jury member for the Robert Schumann International Vocal Competition in Zwickau, Germany. He studied piano in Australia and Europe and accompanying with Gerhard Hüsch in Munich and at Indiana University.

In the spring of 2004 he served on the jury of the prestigious International Lieder Duo Competition sponsored by Hugo Wolf Society in Stuttgart, Germany. This tri-annual competition is devoted to the lieder repertoire of specific composers and this year it focused on the songs of Brahms, Schoenberg and his pupils. During the summer of 2004 he served for the third time on the jury of the International Robert Schumann Lieder Competition in Zwickau, Germany.

(Source: https://ccm.uc.edu/about/directory.html?eid=griffikr&thecomp=uceprof_0 accessed 5th June 2019)

Sharolyn Kimmorley (Skype interview, 27th February 2018)

After studying at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, Sharolyn Kimmorley AM joined the Music Staff of The Australian Opera and has assisted in the preparation of a vast range of works with many distinguished singers and conductors. In 1985 she became Principal Répétiteur for The Australian Opera and in 1987 was appointed Head of Music Staff. From 1994 to 1999 she was the company's Artistic Administrator, following which she was Opera Australia's Director of Music Administration until June 2003.

Sharolyn Kimmorley is regarded as one of Australia’s finest vocal coaches and accompanists. She has recorded for the ABC Classics, taken part in Chamber Music Concerts, and accompanied some of the world's most distinguished recitalists.

In January 2009 Sharolyn became a member of the Order of Australia in recognition of her work as an accompanist and the nurturing and mentoring of emerging artists. In 2017 Sharolyn was the recipient of the MOST Achievement Award in recognition of her long and distinguished career.

Sharolyn is currently Artistic Manager and Scholar Advisor for the Dame Nellie Melba Opera Trust, Artistic Director of The Opera Club (Christchurch) and Guest Vocal Coach at the Tiroler Festspiele in Erl, Austria.

(Source: Sharolyn Kimmorley)

Kathryn LaBouff (interviewed in New York, 5th April 2016)

Faculty member, Manhattan School of Music, since 1984 (current assistant chair of Voice faculty). Faculty member, The Juilliard School, since 1986; Pre-College since 2008. Coached and prepared more than 300 opera productions in English. U.S. premieres include Tobias Picker's *An American Tragedy* and John Harbison's *The Great Gatsby* for the Metropolitan Opera; Nicholas Maw's *Sophie's Choice* and Scott Wheeler's *Democracy* for Washington National Opera; Mark Adamo's *Little Women*, Carlisle Floyd's *Cold Sassy Tree*, and André Previn's *Brief Encounter* for Houston Grand Opera; Mark Adamo's *Lysistrata* for Houston Grand Opera and New York City Opera; Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Anna Nicole* for Brooklyn Academy of Music/New York City Opera; Jonathan Dove's *Flight* for Opera Theatre of Saint Louis; and Nico Muhly's *Dark Sisters* for Gothman Chamber Opera.

Author of *Singing and Communicating in English: A Singer's Guide to English Diction*, which is used by professionals and music schools throughout the English-speaking world. Featured contributor to the *Diction Coach* guides for the *G. Schirmer Opera Anthologies*. Frequent coach for the Lindemann Young Artist Development Program at the Metropolitan Opera. Board and faculty member for Dolora Zajick's Institute for Young Dramatic Voices. Former faculty member: The Curtis Institute of Music, Yale University, Cornell University, Ithaca College, Mannes College of Music, and the Banff Centre for the Arts.

B.M., M.M., D.M.A: University of Michigan, voice performance. Voice studies with Eva Likova, Helen Hodam, and Doris Yarick-Cross. Attendance Certificate: Conservatorio di Santa Cecilia, Rome, Italy. Role study with Maestro Luigi Ricci, Rome, Italy. Tito Gobbi Opera Workshop, Fiesole, Italy.

(Source: https://www.msmnyc.edu/faculty/kathryn-labouff/ accessed 5th June 2019)

Marie-France Lefebvre (interviewed in Cincinnati, 12th April 2016)

Marie-France Lefebvre works regularly as a guest assistant conductor at major opera companies, including the Metropolitan Opera and San Francisco Opera. She was a member of the full time Music Staff of the Washington National Opera from 1994-2004. She has worked with Wolf Trap Opera, Santa Fe Opera and Seattle Opera, and was the program and music director for the 20th Century Opera and Song Interpretation Program at the Banff Centre for the Arts.

Lefebvre has also worked as a prompter at Washington National Opera, the Metropolitan Opera and at San Francisco Opera, working with singers including José Carreras, Plácido Domingo, Lawrence Brownlee, Samuel Ramey, Ferruccio Furlanetto, Renée Fleming, Dame Kiri Te Kanawa and Verónica Villaroel. She has

assisted Nicola Luisotti, Sir Simon Rattle, Emmanuel Villaume, Roberto Abbado and Heinz Fricke.

Lefebvre currently serves as official accompanist for the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions in Washington, DC. She has been heard on many CBC Radio recitals, and has performed with artists including Samuel Ramey, Dmitri Hvorostovsky, Bruce Ford, Denyce Graves and Harolyn Blackwell.

Lefebvre studied piano with Monique Collet-Samyn, Marek Jablonski, Dale Bartlett, Donal Nold, Artur Balsam, Joseph Seiger, Martin Katz, Arthur Greene, and Soeur Claire Dubois. She holds a DMA in Piano Accompanying from the University of Michigan and an MM in Accompanying from the Manhattan School of Music.

Prior to joining CCM in 2008, Lefebvre served on the faculty of the Michigan State University School of Music (2004-2008) and previously was a guest instructor at the University of Maryland. She worked as a guest French diction coach with The Curtis Institute of Music from 1999-2004.

(Source: https://ccm.uc.edu/about/directory.html?eid=lefebvme&thecomp=uceprof_0 accessed 5th June 2019)

Emanuele Moris (interviewed in London, 28th April 2016)

Emanuele Moris was born in Imperia (Italy) on 20 March 1938. Since an early age he showed a great interest in classical music. Music became in fact his profession in life. He studied the Flute in Torino with Maestro Arturo Danesin and Singing with Miss Morano. After spending a number of years as a Flautist playing with Symphony Orchestras and Opera Orchestras in Italy as well as conducting the "Orchestra da Camera di Torino" in many concerts in Italy and other countries, he decided to come to London, where he studied conducting with the great English Conductor Sir Adrian Boult. Unfortunately, because of ill health, he had to abandon his playing and conducting and, on the advise of Sir Adrian, he became an operatic coach.
Since 1983 he has been Professor of Italian Repertoire and also Italian Language for singers at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama. He is also a coach at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, both for the Main House and for the Jette Parker Young Artist Programme as well as for the National Opera Studio. He also works with the BBC Symphony Chorus, the English National Opera, the Opera North (Leeds). He is also a visiting Professor at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama (Glasgow).

(Source: https://www.gsmd.ac.uk/music/staff/teaching_staff/department/6-department-of-opera-studies/277-emanuele-moris/ accessed 5th June 2019)

Glenn Morton (interviewed in New York, 14th April 2016)

One of New York City's most sought-after vocal coaches, Glenn Morton is a teacher of Italian Diction, French Vocal Literature, and Song Interpretation at Manhattan School of Music, where he has been on the faculty since 2003. He is also on the faculties of Mannes College, the New School for Music, and the Juilliard School. For more than 20 years, he has worked with opera companies throughout the US as an assistant conductor, program director and diction coach. These include the Santa Fe Opera, The Opera Company of Boston, Opera Delaware, Sarasota Opera, Tulsa Opera and the New Orleans Opera. As a pianist, he collaborated on two recordings for Opus records.

He received a Bachelors degree in piano performance from the Hartt School of Music, and a Master of Music degree in collaborative piano from the Manhattan School of Music. His work includes a wide variety of collaborations with companies such as the Opera Company of Boston, Tulsa Opera, New Orleans Opera, Sarasota Opera, Opera Lyra Ottawa, Santa Fe Opera, and Glimmerglass.

Mr. Morton serves as the founding Artistic Director of Classic Lyric Arts, Inc., a non-profit organization encompassing CLA Italy in Novafeltria, Italy, founded in 2009, and CLA France in the Périgord region of France, founded in 2012, providing advanced training in the techniques and traditions of French and Italian lyric music to emerging opera singers.

(Source: https://www.msmnyc.edu/faculty/glenn-morton/ accessed 5th June 2019)

Isabella Carolina Radcliffe (Skype interview, 28th June 2016)

Isabella Radcliffe, born in London of Anglo-Italian parents, grew up bi-lingual in Italian and English. She studied Music and Modern Languages at Durham University and later as an Italian Language Coach at the National Opera Studio with Maria Cleva. Isabella studied singing with Ruth Holton and has sung in small and large choruses including New London Chamber Choir, London Oratory Junior Choir and London Philharmonic Chorus.

Isabella coaches regularly at the major UK and international opera companies and music colleges including: Royal Opera House, Opera de Lille, Glyndebourne, Welsh National Opera, Scottish Opera, Opera North, Garsington, English Touring Opera, British Youth Opera, Georg Solti Accademia, Royal College of Music, Royal Academy of Music, National Opera Studio, Jette Parker Young Artists Programme at Covent Garden, Welsh International Academy of Voice, Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Associated Studios, Morley College.

She has also worked for the record labels Opera Rara, Sony Classical, Linn Records and Hamonia Mundi, for the Gabrieli Consort and Players, the King's Consort and for BBC2's TV programme "Maestro". Isabella is proud to be involved in the Glyndebourne Academy, an inspiring new operatic development project which aims to support gifted and talented young singers, directed by Mary King.Isabella was

recently elected as Honorary Associate of the Royal Academy of Music and is a grateful recipient of the Leonard Ingrams Award from Garsington Opera.

(Source: http://isabellaradcliffe.com/#/biography/4539019647 accessed 5th June 2019)

Ellen Rissinger (Skype interview, 13th March 2016)

Ellen Rissinger is an American Vocal Coach/Accompanist on the music staff of the Sächsische Staatsoper (Semperoper) in Dresden, Germany. She came to European attention in December of 2008, when she accompanied a performance of Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* for the Deutsche Oper am Rhein in Düsseldorf on one hour's notice.

She started her career in the United States working with companies such as the Opera Company of Philadelphia, Pittsburgh Opera, Kentucky Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Baltimore Opera, Knoxville Opera, Opera Theater of Pittsburgh. She was music director of Glimmerglass Opera's 25th Anniversary tour and of Opera Iowa and was on the faculty of Carnegie Mellon University for several years.

In 2003, Ellen moved to Germany, where she has since worked at the Semperoper, Oper Frankfurt, Deutsche Oper am Rhein, Stadttheater Pforzheim, Mainfranken Theater Würzburg. In 2013 she worked with Bregenz Opera Festival on the World Premiere of Andre Tschaikovsky's *The Merchant of Venice.*

Since 2005 she has been a much-sought-after master teacher with many of the summer music programs in Europe, including: The International Performing Arts Institute (IPAI) in Kiefersfelden, Germany; The International Music Festival of the Adriatic (IMFA) in Duino, Italy; University of Miami's summer program in Salzburg, Austria; AIMS in Graz, Austria; as well as at many universities throughout the US, including: Boston Conservatory; Oklahoma City University; Murray State University; The Hartt School; Western Connecticut University and the Boston NATS Chapter, among others.

Ellen holds a B.F.A. in Piano-Performance from Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, as well as an M.M. in Accompanying from the University of Cincinnati's College-Conservatory of Music. She continued her training in the young artist programs of Aspen Opera Theater Center, Des Moines Metro Opera, Florida Grand Opera and Glimmerglass Opera.

As the producer and host of **The Diction Police** podcast since April 2010, she has led the way for classical singers and coaches from all over the world to hone their foreign language skills. Its companion site, The Diction Police: Special Diction Unit, offers phonetic transcriptions, poetic and word-for-word translations and interviews on song and opera texts for a more complete experience. Ellen is fluent in German and English, is conversant in Italian, French, Spanish and Modern Greek, and continues to work on her conversational ability in Russian.

(Source: http://www.ellenrissinger.com/about-1/ accessed 5th June 2019)

Benno Schollum (Skype interview, 4th April, 2018)

Austrian baritone Benno Schollum studied at the Vienna University of Music with Josef Greindl, Roman Ortner and Robert Schollum, and has himself taught [German lyric diction] there since 1983. He is the co-author of the highly successful book German for Singers (Schirmer, New York) which has become the standard work of its kind in North America., and regularly gives Lied masterclasses with the emphasis on diction at the Franz Schubert Institute, Zagreb Music Academy, Royal Academy and Royal College of Music in London, the Sibelius Academy Helsinki and elsewhere.

His repertoire extends from the great oratorios to opera, operetta, musicals, lieder, chansons and Viennese music. He has performed among others with the Berlin Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Vienna Symphony, the Spanish National Orchestra, BBC Philharmonic, Vienna Symphony, the Spanish National Orchestra, the RSO Madrid, Sinfonia Varsovia and the Tchaikovsky Symphony Orchestra of Moscow with conductors such as Yehudi Menuhin, Mstislav Rostropovich, Philippe Entremont, Adam Fischer, Zoltán Kocsis, Djansug Kakhidze, Tamas Vasary, Vladimir Fedoseyev, Jesús Lopez Cobos, Antoni Wit, Stefan Soltesz, Jacek Kaspszyk and Stanislaw Skrowaczewski.

His recital programmes include all the Schubert cycles which he has sung across three continents, with Die Winterreise featuring notably in the current season.
Benno Schollum played the role of Kuno in the film production of Carl Maria von Weber's Der Freischütz (www.huntersbride.com) which went on general cinema release in December 2010 (directed by Jens Neubert with the London Symphony Orchestra under Daniel Harding, and also featuring Juliane Banse, Olaf Bär, Franz Grundheber, René Pape and others). This year sees numerous concerts in Austria, Finland, Turkey and a series of performances of Beethoven's 9th Symphony with the Japan Philharmonic under Maestro Junichi Hirokami, a concert performance of Beethoven's Fidelio in Graz, a concert with Wiener Concert Verein and Vladimir Fedoseyev in Vienna's prestigious Musikverein and a performance of Schönberg's "A Surviver from Warsaw" in Budapest with the Hungarian National Orchestra and James Judd. 2015 starts with several performances of Schubert's "Winterreise" in Austria and Hungary. He is a member of Jury of the Reszkow Vocal Competition in Poland.

Among the CDs he has recorded are Wilhelm Busch in Wort und Ton with Stephan Paryla and Russell Ryan (Preiser Records), Schubert's Winterreise (Graham Johnson, piano). Haydn's Creation, Händel's Messiah, Beethoven's 9th Symphony and various Schubert Masses (Sinfonia Varsovia, Yehudi Menuhin, Warner Classics), and Tchaikovsky's Iolanta (Tchaikovsky Symphony Orchestra, Vladimir Fedoseyev) .

(Source: https://www.mdw.ac.at/gesangundmusiktheater/?newlang=en&PageId=241 accessed 5th June 2019)

Appendix 2. Interview questions

Within the educational context

- How important are lyric diction studies at the undergraduate level?
- Does the way in which lyric diction is taught affect students' success?
- What are the characteristics of good lyric diction teaching?
- Are there aspects of lyric diction pedagogy you feel are commonly misunderstood? If so, what are they?

Skills and Concepts

- What skills or strategies does it take to have excellent lyric diction as a professional singer? How do you begin to develop these skills at the undergraduate level?
- Specifically related to the language/s you teach/coach: What are the most important lyric diction skills a voice student needs to develop at the undergraduate level? Could you describe one or two ways you teach these?
- Are there any major concepts an undergraduate voice student needs to understand in their lyric diction learning? If so, could you give one or two examples of how you communicate these concepts?
- What are the most common difficulties voice students encounter when learning lyric diction? Could you describe one or two ways in which you deal with these?

Order of presentation

- Is there a particular sequence to your lyric diction teaching? If so, could you briefly describe it, and explain why you take this approach?

Phonological Rules

- What difficulties do voice students encounter when learning the many phonological rules of lyric diction? Could you describe one or two ways in which you deal with these difficulties?
- Could you describe how you teach phonological rules? Why do you choose to do it in this way?

New articulations

- What process do you use when teaching voice students a new articulation? (Perhaps using an example articulation.)

Aural and kinaesthetic perception

- What is more important: the voice student's ability to hear language sounds or their kinaesthetic sense in producing these sounds? If one is more important than the other, could you please explain why?
- How do you develop voice students' listening skills?
- How do you develop voice students' kinaesthetic awareness?

IPA

- How do you utilize IPA (if at all)? What are its strengths and weaknesses?

Terminology

- What terminology do you use in your lyric diction teaching? E.g. linguistic or phonetic terms.

Singing versus speaking

- What do undergraduate voice students need to understand about the difference between speaking a language correctly and singing it? Can you provide one or two examples of how you teach this?
- How do you deal with vowel modification in teaching/coaching lyric diction to undergraduate students, if at all?
- What do voice students find most difficult when singing in their mother tongue? Could you describe one or two ways in which you deal with these difficulties?

Prosody

- How important is it to teach prosody at the undergraduate level? Could you provide an example of how you teach prosody? (Perhaps using example phrase.)

Expressivity and communication

- How important is it to teach expressivity and communication of meaning through lyric diction at the undergraduate level?
- Could you provide one or two examples of how you teach expressivity and communication of meaning?

Opera, oratorio and song

- Do you distinguish between lyric diction technique for opera, oratorio and song when teaching at the undergraduate level? If so, could you provide one or two examples of how you do so?

Class and 1-1 lyric diction teaching

- What are the advantages and disadvantages of class and 1-1 lyric diction teaching at the undergraduate level? Do you think both are required?

Literature

- How adequate is the current lyric diction literature? (Including books, articles, web pages, podcasts.)
- How do you use the current lyric diction literature, if at all? Are there resources you wish were available?
- Have you created lyric diction resources? If so, could you briefly describe them and explain why you created them?

Postgraduate

- Given the variety of educational backgrounds from which voice students come, how possible is it to distinguish between undergraduate and postgraduate level lyric diction teaching?
- How should postgraduate lyric diction teaching differ from undergraduate level teaching?

Professional

- Have you ever encountered professional singers with difficulties in lyric diction that could have been avoided by better training early on? If so, could you describe one or two of those difficulties and how they could have been avoided?

Individual qualities of the coach

- What do you think works particularly well in your teaching method?
- Are there aspects of your teaching that you believe are unique? If so, could you describe them?
- Do you see evidence of mistakes by other lyric diction teachers?

Challenges in lyric diction pedagogy

- Are there things you found difficult when you first began teaching lyric diction? How have you dealt with those aspects?
- Are there things you still find difficult to teach?
- What advice would you give an inexperienced lyric diction coach?

Interaction/Collaboration

- How much do you interact with other lyric diction coaches?
- How beneficial is interaction between coaches?

For authors:

- What inspired you to write a book?
- What were the difficulties you encountered in writing about lyric diction?
- How do you hope your book is used?

Conclusion

- What, if any, are the most commonly agreed principles for lyric diction teaching across the profession, regardless of language?